

«My dream is to spread wealth to all Nigerians»

- Aliko Dangote

ALHAJI ALIKO DANGOTE

BIOGRAPHY OF RAW MATERIALS TITAN

THE 21 SECRETS OF SUCCESS IN BUSINESS

DRAWN FROM THE LEGENDARY
JOURNEY OF THE RICHEST BLACK
BUSINESSMAN IN THE WORLD

ACHILLE WEALTH PhD

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all those who want to impact the world
by unleashing their legendary talents.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wanted to know why some people live a life of wealth and abundance, while most struggle financially? Are there qualities, characteristics, and traits wealthy people share in common, that the vast majority don't have or don't ever develop? The answer is a resounding - Yes!

In this groundbreaking book, “THE 21 SECRETS OF SUCCESS IN BUSINESS DRAWN FROM THE LEGENDARY JOURNEY OF THE RICHEST BLACK BUSINESSMAN IN THE WORLD,” Aliko DANGOTE the "noble son of KANO," reveals the answers to all questions about happiness, money, wealth, success, prosperous and abundant life, throughout his legendary and exciting career.

You'll discover the fundamental principles, methods, and strategies he has used to achieve

prosperity and his incredible dream to be the RICHEST BLACK BUSINESSMAN IN THE WORLD. Within these pages, you will go to the exciting and wonderful discovery of the 21 Secrets that led to the building of Africa's largest industrial and financial empire estimated at 25 billion dollars by Forbes magazine in its recent ranking in March 2014. By comprehending the methods and techniques that have been used to create wealth, you're going to know how to break the barriers standing in your way of affluence and achievement.

Achille Wealth

**BIOGRAPHY OF
RAW MATERIALS TITAN**

ANCESTRY

Young Aliko was born in the ancient city of Kano of the famed groundnut pyramids. Kano has been a commercial center for centuries with it being a focal point for all kinds of economic activities, ranging from the sale of slaves in exchange for salt to the trade in spices, kola nuts, leather, cotton, sugar, and gold. Alhaji Alhassan Dantata (given the alias Tata by the nurse who raised him; Dantata means “the son of Tata”) was his maternal great grandfather and he also learned the art of business and making money from his own father.

By 1913, he was the largest exporter of kola nuts in West Africa. The coming of the colonial masters with the railway was too good an opportunity for him, so he took advantage of the rails to move his kola nuts along the Lagos-Kano route.

With time, he became the sole distributor for the Lever Brothers (later Unilever), and in addition to the profits of the groundnut boom, he was already super-rich, the richest in Nigeria. By 1955, when he died, he was clearly, the richest in West Africa.

The children of the late polygamous merchant swore to an oath by the Holy Koran with their father on the deathbed, to work together and not split the family's business empire. Till today, the Dantatas run things in Nigeria -without any complaints.

Groundnut trader, Sanusi Alhassan Dantata, Nigeria's first millionaire, was the eldest of the siblings and was the overseer of the family's business activities.

Dangote grew up in the loving care of his maternal grandfather, Sanusi who took Aliko, his first grandson, into his care after the untimely death of his father.

transformed the family business even beyond the wildest dreams of their late father. This grand old rich man died in 1997 and left many children, two of whom are Mariya, his eldest daughter and Umm Aliko (the mother of Aliko). Going back to the 1950s Mohammed Dangote, was a businessman, fellow member, and ally of Sanusi Dantata. This man would later meet Mariya, the daughter of his friend, through her father and his business associate, Sanusi Dantata. Mohammed Dangote dabbled into politics and was even a member, Northern House of Assembly and belonged to the Northern People's Congress (NPC) of the Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello.

In the 50s, the two lovebirds were joined together in holy matrimony in Kano. That was the fusing point of the Dantatas and the Dangotes.

BIRTH OF VICTORIOUS MAN WHO DEFEND HUMANITY

On the 10th of April 1957, a bouncing baby boy weighing just a little above three kilograms was born in Kano. The radiant mother was Mariya, and that small baby boy of that day is the reason you are reading this. A week later, he was named after his father while his overjoyed grandfather, Sanusi Dantata, gave him the name Alhaji Aliko Dangote. “Aliko” means “the victorious one who defends humanity.”

Dangote did not grow up with his mother and did not know much of his father (he met him on very rare occasions) as he died in 1965 when he was just eight years old. He was raised by his maternal grandfather who was very fond of him and made sure he lacked nothing while growing up in their expansive Koki Quarters in Kano. Dangote later said: “All that I am today and that I have become, I owe it to him.”

FAMILY

From his own mother's side, Dangote has three siblings: Sani, Bello, and a younger brother who died in an air crash in Kano with Ibrahim Abacha. Dangote's mother, who became a widow in 1965 is still very much alive and was honored with a degree by the Bayero University, Kano (BUK). She runs one of the largest charities in Nigeria but is protected from the public eye. When Dangote bought his recreational boat, he named it after his Abiyamo (Mother), calling it Mariya.

SCHOOLING

For someone who grew up in Kano, a city of knowledge, it was no surprise that Dangote took to educating himself.

Like many of his peers growing up under the great influence of Islamic scholars of the old city, he took off to one of the oldest universities on

earth, Al Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. Here are some highlights of his educational journey:

-1964: Kano Capital Elementary School (during break time in the high-brow primary school with other school kids who wanted sweets, Aliko would bring out a handful and told his jolly good friends that they could have one for a dime. (He was that sharp.)

-1964: Sheikh Ali Kumasi Madrasa (Arabic School). He attended the Quranic school when he returned from the primary school, a pattern that is common with many Nigerian Muslims.

-1972s: Capital High School, Kano.

-1973s: School of Economics & Business, Al Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt, where he received a degree in business studies and administration. In addition to all these forms of formal education, he also got a great deal of

informal education from his grandfather, which he makes use of even now. He said, “All my business acumen and instincts I inherited from my maternal grandfather. As his first grandson, he poured his business wizardry into me. I would not have been where I am today without him; a very great man, loving, and caring.”

BEGINNINGS IN BUSINESS

Before I proceed any further, I must make it abundantly clear that although Dangote was born with a platinum spoon and onto the laps of luxury, influence, and power, he defined his own path to greatness and carved a niche for himself by becoming a man of independence – detaching from the family business, setting up his own enterprise in 1978 and transforming it into a global success.

This writer strongly believes that even without his privileged background, Dangote had all it takes to reach the capstone of the financial pyramid. For someone who grew up in a business environment, Dangote took interest very early in entrepreneurship ventures. He said” I can remember when I was in primary school, I would go and buy cartons of sweets and I would start selling them just to make money. I was so much interested in business. Even at that time, I was very used to buying and selling. It was in my mind all through.

I did that on a part-time basis. I usually bought packets of sweets and gave some people to sell for me. I would join them whenever I closed from school. I would collect my profit and give them something out of it. And we continued like that.”

When he left for Lagos as a 20-year-old in 1977, Nigeria was enjoying stupendous oil profits

and the military government of the day decided to ruin some of it on FESTAC'77. There was massive construction going on in various parts of the country and it was at that moment Dangote went to his beloved grandfather to ask for a loan so he could import cement which will be used for some of the FESTAC buildings. He narrates, "For me, I started small as a trader in cement. Then I left cement around 1978.

Because there was this armada and cement was difficult to get at that time. I had my own money which my grandfather gave me free, but then he gave me also an additional loan of N500,000 (about \$3,000) which was big money in those days. At that time (1978), you could purchase ten Mercedes Benz cars with that amount as each was sold for N5,000, while a Volkswagen Beetle went for N900 to N1,000. The money was quite a substantial amount then. The loan was supposed to be paid back whenever I was okay;

maybe after three or four years. But I paid the loan back within six months.”

The real genius of Dangote is his ability to transform that seed money of yesterday into the billions of dollars today. The crux of the matter here is not that he got a helping hand from his rich grandfather but what he did with the assistance.

Throughout the Obasanjo regime down to Shagari, Buhari, and IBB, there were vast construction projects: estates, federal universities (like UNILORIN), and so on. Also, cement was obviously needed. Obasanjo and Dangote, who was still working with his uncle, first met in the 1970s when he was the Federal Commissioner (Minister) of Transport. Also, while he was in Lagos, he learned a lot from his uncle, Usman, who had already formed solid ties with the military governments and received rice importation deals in 1970 at the end of the 30-month Nigerian Civil War. When their fellow Kano man, the late Murtala

Mohammed came to power, his 27-year-old uncle was one of those contracted to decongest the Nigerian seaports in Lagos and made huge fortunes.

With time, Aliko was brought on board, following them to business meetings in the dead of the night. It was during this time in Lagos, he began to learn how to speak the Yoruba language.

While working with his uncle in Lagos, “squatting in his office,” he learnt a lot. He said of those times: “I started with the business of cement, which was giving us a lot of money because, at that time, Nigeria was making so much money and we were doing a lot of constructions. On a vehicle, which I normally get from my uncle, I was making about N1,350 to N1,400 per day, and I had an allocation of about 3-4 trucks including Saturdays and Sundays. Later, I realized I was making a lot of money though, then I didn’t have a lot of ideas of what to do.

It was only cement business that I knew, and I was stuck in it until 1980, when I started knowing Lagos, becoming a Lagosian, and understanding where to go and find people to buy import licenses from. Within three months, I paid my grandfather back because I had no further need of his money.”

BECOMING A BILLIONAIRE

It took Dangote three decades to amass one billion US dollars. His journey is a very interesting one, showing all the features of luck, opportunity, hard work and divine providence. Under the Shagari regime, there was an unprecedented importation of essential commodities and products. Dangote’s company then named Alco Company was one of the major importers.

He also supplied huge tonnage of cement to the governments at different levels, embarking on construction of vast housing projects.

When the Shagari government decided to also pay more attention to the construction of Abuja, the proposed new Federal Capital Territory, Dangote's cement company was also on point. When General Muhammadu Buhari came to power in 1983, he clamped down on all the importation and dirty deals of the Shagari regime.

Businessmen and tycoons like Dangote were not too happy with the new draconian regime but he played it calm and quickly adapted. If you cannot adapt to changes in this world and keep blaming all kinds of external forces, your chances of survival are seriously limited.

Being the smart man that he is, while other businessmen were complaining and groaning under the iron fists of Buhari and Idiagbon, his Ilorin-born no-nonsense deputy, Dangote, veered and formed Dangote General Textiles Products Enterprises and focused on what the government of the day wanted: exportation of local products

such as gum arabic, cotton, millet, cocoa, leather products, cotton, and cashew nuts.

Some years later, Dangote paid a visit to Brazil where he saw the wonders of manufacturing. He was inspired and motivated at the same time. He thought that even though Brazil was hugely indebted as a nation, their manufacturing sector was vibrant enough to support the economy. He made up his mind to go into manufacturing and he continued exportation and reaped huge profits until IBB came on to the scene and kicked out Buhari and company.

He said of his trip to the Latin American nation: “The first company I visited was called Arisco, and the company produced 503 different items. I was impressed when I went to one of their factories. They had over 4,000 workers. In Nigeria, at that time, we were not into manufacturing – the only manufacturing company we had at that time was textiles. Going to Brazil, I

thought that we were at the same level with Brazil because I used to hear of Brazil as a debtor nation owing so much money. But when I went there, I saw massive industrialization. It was unbelievable. I started thinking of how they came to have these things in Brazil and we don't have it in Nigeria. So, with that now, when I came back, I said, okay, fine, I want to venture into industry.”

**THE 21 SECRETS OF SUCCESS IN BUSINESS
TAKEN FROM THE LIFE OF THE RICHEST
BLACK BUSINESSMAN IN THE WORLD**

Secret

1

Have a Purpose

“After my death, I want to be remembered as Africa’s greatest industrialist.”

- Aliko Dangote

The first lesson from the richest man in Africa is undoubtedly the starting point of all success. Aliko Dangote recommends to anyone wishing to succeed to set a strong goal. In fact, he himself is the embodiment of the power of a life fueled by a purpose. Very soon, the richest black man on the planet has set a very high goal in life and every day he runs with passion towards achieving of this goal.

Secret

2

Focus obsessively on your goal

"Having a goal is not enough; you need to focus obsessively on performance, without scattering your energies. Do not get distracted. Those are the only ways to accelerate the process of achieving your goal."

- Aliko Dangote

Dangote is a focused man. He sets personal goals he wants to achieve in business and continue religiously without any form of distraction or dispersion of ideas. He completed all the steps of his objectives and has also built its success without losing its allure. He said: "Even if I make friends in politics, I do not allow policies to distract me."

Secret

3

The power of a strong mission

"Power to the basic needs of over 150 million Nigerians."

- **Aliko Dangote**

A thorough study of the life of the African Aliko Dangote icon shows us that its overall success is hinged on one factor – its mission. This mission is the fuel that drives its business and allows the company to dominate their market. Aliko Dangote became a billionaire because he had a very strong mission and that mission is: "Power to the basic needs of over 150 million Nigerians." We also learn from Aliko Dangote that the spirit of entrepreneurship is embodied in the mission statement and if this mission is strong, it will continue to drive the

business of the entrepreneur to success, even after his death.