

Abstracts of Keynote Speakers

Environmental and Social Customer Relations Management model for Small and Medium Enterprise Acceleration in Africa

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Abstract

The main objective of this article is to present an analysis of a client relationship management model that places emphasis on the formation of theoretical foundations for client focus, engagement and data bases in relation to business performance and acceleration. The fundamental question is: How can SMEs socially leverage client focus, engagement and data management for the realization of business acceleration? The environmental and social model hypothesizes that client focus, engagement and data management relate positively to new and existing client interest generation, repeat business and market segmentation. Essentially, and for purposes of business acceleration, SMEs can engage in and respond to client expectations in such ways that not only create demand for the product or service, but generate repeat business in addition to product or service modification and improvement. A disproportionate number of SMEs in Africa crumble within six months to one year after the initial business start-up. Very many others take long to even reach break-even point while others realize very low and slow profits. Many SMEs in Africa fail to recognize the power of CRM as driven by client engagement and data base management for purposes of repeat business and profit acceleration. Studies have affirmed that customer retention and repeat business have a significant impact on profitability. Microfinance firms continue to emerge in micro-economies of Africa in general and a number continue to struggle to remain afloat. This article analyzes the CRM model in order to generate interest and recommend a practical approach for SMEs in Africa in general. The content analysis method was employed based on critical thematic aspects of the CRM model. The key finding was that there is a positive relationship between CRM and business growth and acceleration. However, there is a notable gap in the use of technology for purposes of data base construction, use and management. Many SMEs in Africa will have to leverage technology in order to realize effective CRM.

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