

Assignment

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Executive Summary

This report examines TradeMark East Africa organisation's strategic management and explores a new way forward for delivering innovative customer service. The report sheds a light on internal and external factors that influence strategy planning as well as new ways to meet the expectations of modern customers. Modern customers desire high quality and unique customer service that is personalised to customer wants, therefore, the report assesses options for TradeMark East Africa organisation to take customer centric strategy approach in the future.

TradeMark East Africa is a trade facilitation organisation that promotes prosperity and endeavours to reduce poverty in Africa through trade. TMEA main goal is to reduce trade barriers through regional trade integration as well as increase business competitiveness. (TradeMark East Africa, 2011). TradeMark East Africa strategy is to simplify trade regimes (STRs) through multi-channel engagement and to digitalise trade to connect with the hyper-personalised customer wants. The report proposes multi-channel customer service that implies to provide a system that can handle customer expectations smoothly across channels. This requires a good understanding of customer behaviour, and to develop strategies that are personalised and designed to service the customer. TMEA Strategy was developed based on extensive consultation with regional and national stakeholders and responds directly to the customer needs of the region, particularly, in East Africa Countries (EAC). TMEA objective is to deliver a primary mission of contributing to increased trade competitiveness in Eastern Africa, however, the changing customer demand requires new strategic approach that is dynamic and multifaceted. COVID-19 pandemic challenges our way of doing business and an inevitability to restructure the organisation. The report also examines how the new strategy development might affect other departments as well as ways to strength consumer loyalty and increase revenues.

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Acronyms

TMEA	-	TradeMark East Africa
STR	-	Simplified Trade Regime
COVID-19	-	Corona Virus Disease 19
PESTLE	-	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environment
ROI	-	Return on Investment
SWOT	-	Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat.
Fig	-	Figure
SWIFT	-	Single Window Information for Trade programme
EAC	-	East Africa Communities.
HoA	-	Horn of Africa
SOAR	-	Strength, Opportunity, Aspiration, Result
EATN	-	East Africa Trade Network
E-Cargo	-	Electronic Cargo
AFCFTA	-	African Continental Free Trade Area
MSMEs	-	Micro Small Medium Enterprises
ICT	-	Information Communication Technology.
STEF	-	Safe Trade Emergency Facility
R&D	-	Research and Development
AI	-	Artificial Intelligence
App	-	Application

Introduction

Strategy refers to setting goals and priorities for the organisation and to ensure mobilising resources to achieve goals and objectives of the organisation. Strategy is to shape organisation's future direction that is aligning with the mission and vision of the organisation. (Whittington et al, 2017, p. 5-6). In the management theory, strategic management is to point out the objectives of the organisation and the actions to achieve towards the purpose. (Lynch, 2015, p. 9-11).

TradeMark East Africa abbreviated (TMEA) began its operations in 2010 and its first strategic phase was accomplished in June 2017. TMEA's second strategic phase for the six years from 2017/18 to 2022/23 known as "Strategy 2" is under way and the strategy can be broadly divided into three categories: cooperate strategy, business strategy and functional strategy.

At a business level strategy, TMEA management aims to understand more about the customers and stakeholder to gain competitive advantage, whereas, at a cooperate level, the goal is to make decision of what business the organisation ought to be in. Social media and technological advances created self-aware modern consumers and TMEA strategy is to strengthen corporate credibility, integrity and expertise that are increasingly influencing consumer choices. Modern consumers are fickle and difficult to maintain loyalty (Guest ,1964), therefore, TMEA strategy should explore multi-channel customer service to stay in the competition.

The report assesses the factors that influences strategy planning and can be categorised into:

1. Internal factors. TMEA internal factors refer to identifying weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities and threats. In this report we use SWOT analysis to understand more about TMEA's business model competitiveness.

2. External factors refer to wider context that affects business and stakeholder management. This could be political, economical, or social and as such we use PESTLE analysis to guide us while planning and making strategic decision.

TMEA is dynamic organisation and target its investment to build the strength and resilience of the Eastern African Trade Network (EATN), with the trade corridors of Eastern Africa as its major components, however, COVID-19 pandemic challenges the old ways of doing business. TMEA supports truck drivers by providing E-cargo tracking system to improve efficiency of cargo delivery through the corridor roads as well as improves performance of the drivers. TMEA developed COVID-19 customised tracking software app in response of re-opening borders of EAC to ensure that trade along the corridors and borders are undisrupted. TMEA personalised customer service deepened the trust and loyalty of the customers as well as protects government frontline staff. (Mckinsey and Company, The care of one, 2020).

The report encourages TMEA to accelerate digitisation of trade networks to gain strategic competitive advantage, but also addresses limitations of technology. Enterprises and systems alone without skill labour cease to exist, therefore, the report seeks for strategy to retain skill labour and at the same time reduce cost. Finally, the report examines how the new strategy of restructuring the organisation might affect other departments as well as addresses risks and suggests TMEA to develop mitigation plan.

Recommendations

The main aim of strategy development is to give direction of the organisation's future and address business competitiveness. In the wake of COVID-19, TMEA cooperate strategy should develop organisational restructuring plan and ways to adopt the ever-changing consumer behaviour. TMEA strategy should prioritise customer centric approach that responds to personalised customer wants.

TMEA also should assess a seamless omnichannel customer experience that is dynamic and efficient. (Mckinsey and Company, The care of one, 2020). Use of technology improves work efficiency and is reliable (Krasadakis, 2008), therefore, the report supports TMEA to strengthen trade digitalisation for faster business growth.

1. TMEA strategic management and analysis

TMEA strategy two offers a greater customer outreach and growth compared to strategy one.

Figure 1 demonstrates intervention strategy to maximise results and targets to reducing barriers to trade (Outcome 1) and improving business competitiveness (Outcome 2), however, COVID-19 pandemic requires change of business environment and reassessing strategy for future success.

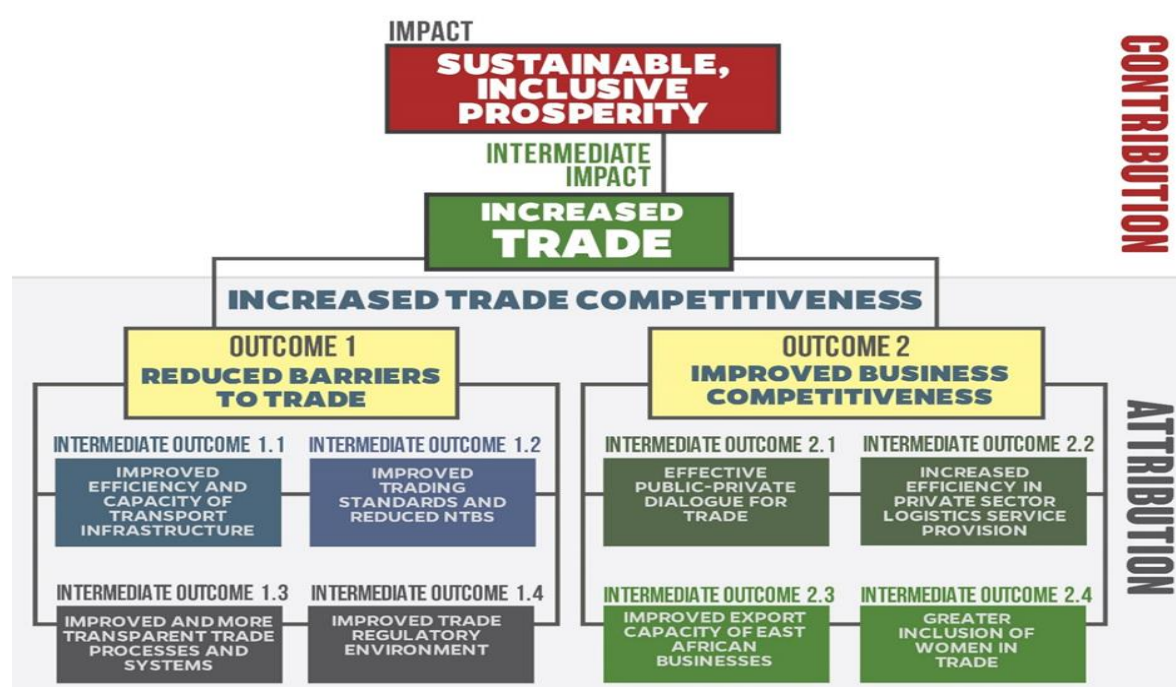


Fig1: TMEA results chain for strategy 2. (TradeMark East Africa, 2017)

Organisations are seeking for survival strategy and ways to improve the business model to adopt the reality of COVID-19. Decision making requires information gathering through social media and other virtual channels and to communicate with the customers/stakeholders to gain competitive.

This report therefore assesses both external and internal factors that can influence strategy planning and proposes useful analysis tools, for example, PESTLE and SWOT.

1.1. External factors of strategy planning

Organisations endeavour to develop strategy that gives stability, resilience, and profitability in a fast-changing environment. Change is always on the horizon and the organisation's ability to shift strategy and adopt into new environment determines survivability of the organisation. Organisations have little control of a change from an external environment that can have significant effect of the organisation's business model. New government policy or legislation can force organisations to reshape the business model and the recent COVID19 pandemic affected TMEAs core markets, thus, a change to adopt was inevitable.

Like other continents, COVID-19 had seriously affected African economies mainly in terms of loss of productivity and trade, and there are estimates that African economies fall of about 1.4% in GDP, with some small economies facing contraction of up to 7.8%. (Gondwe, 2020).

Change from an external environment can be unexpected such as change of government policy; however, it is essential to develop framework that gathers, analysis and interprets data that gives you insight information of external threats and provides opportunities. An effective way to assess external factors is to use PESTLE analysis and this report examines external factors that can influence TMEA's strategy by using PETLE analysis and Porter's five forces analysis.

1.1.1 PESTLE analysis

PESTLE analyses refer to (political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental) and scrutinises the external aspects that affect business operations. (Day, 1990; Walsh, 2005).

- *Political.* TMEA mission is to promote regional trade integration in EAC and reduce trade barriers, especially nontariff barriers in the region. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) promises a new era of trade collaboration, however, political instability in EAC and HoA such as, wars, military coup and terrorist attacks affects regional trade integration at times. (Miller, 1992). Recent conflict between Ethiopia federal government and Tigre people affected trade routes in the region and caused sudden price increase of fruit and vegetables while the spread of the Covid-19 already disrupted critical supply chains in the region.
- *Economic.* East Africa economy grew approximately 5.9% for the years of 2017-2019 (African Development Bank, 2018) and the EAC had experienced an increase of population in the past decades too. TMEA's intervention focused on leveraging the economics of scale and integration of trade in the region. There are, however, consistent high inflation and tax rates that affects consumer purchase power. Moreover, there is poor infrastructure in the region that increases cost of doing business and the recent COVID-19 challenges the concept of free trade movement in particular the vulnerable traders of MSMEs.
- *Social.* The changing behaviour of the modern consumer is affecting the strategy of organisations. Young generations shop online and probe around social media channels to discuss products and services. TMEA strategy is to adopt the needs of modern customers and understands that different demographics require different strategy approach. TMEA understands the importance of customer feedback and designs the products only after a thorough discussion with the stakeholders. Modern customers tend to co-create value by actively participating in the business brand process, therefore, customers might share knowledge that can help the design and modelling of the business. TMEA strategy two prioritises gender- responsive business modelling to address the issue of gender inclusion.

- *Technology.* There is insufficient software infrastructure to support trade in the EAC and TMEA introduction of ICT for trade aims to reduce barriers to trade in the region through automation of trade processes and systems. ICT for trade intervention targets:

1. Government agencies to implement Single Window Information for Trade Systems, that links EAC regional traders to regional agencies and offers solution to a complex trade sector

2. Development of online trade information portals to improve access to critical information on import/export

3. Modernisation of customs systems that help to eliminate lengthy process of manual activities when acquiring trade documents; reducing transactional costs to acquire trade regulatory documents; and increasing process of transparency therefore increasing the stakeholder's confidence and trust in the management of trade regulatory documents.

(TradeMark East Africa, 2017)

- *Legal.* The food sector is quite sensitive in the region and the unpredictable government policies such as high taxation affects business growth (Bianchi, 2009). There are also weak regulatory frameworks and outdated trade policies that could increase cost of doing business. TMEA intervention is to develop export capability framework that helps EAC to firstly trade within the region at a cheaper cost and export EAC commodities to overseas.

- *Environment.* Refers to sudden climate change such as disasters (floods, droughts etc) that can have impact on the business planning. TMEA respond is to develop safeguarding department that analysis potential risks to the business and proposes climate resilience framework to mitigate risk.

1.1.2. Porter's five forces analysis

Porter's five forces is a strategy tool that is used to understand whether new products or services are profitable. The strategy can also be used to analyse firm's strength, and ways to improve weaknesses and to avoid mistakes. Some organisations use the strategy to screen competition and battle against each other, while others see an opportunity to cooperate and add value to the market share. (Whittington et al, 2017, p. 14, 64 and 71).

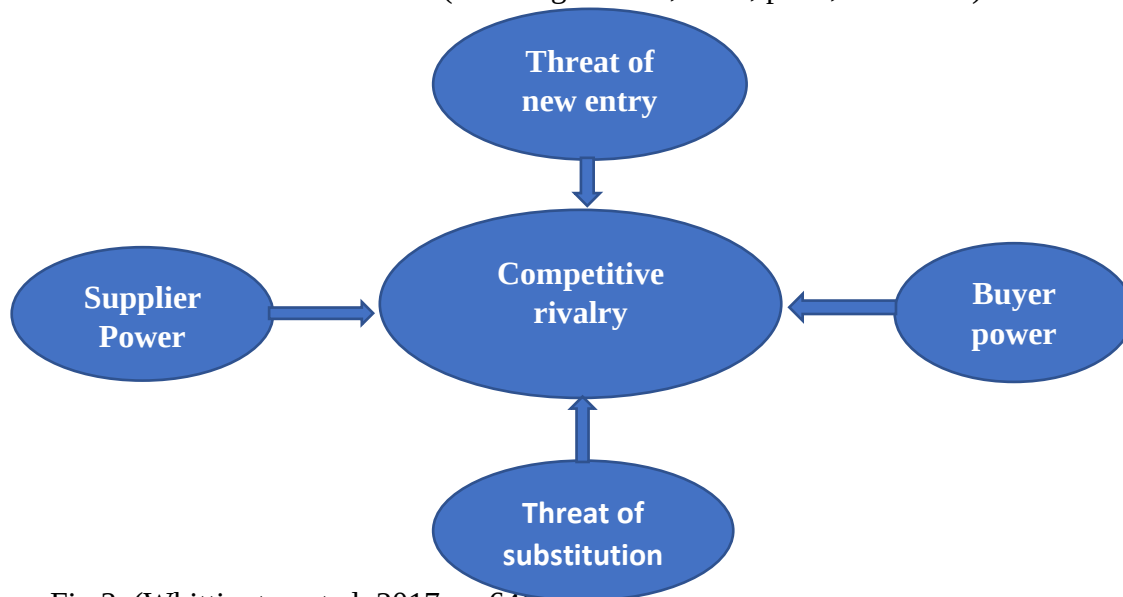


Fig 2. (Whittington et al, 2017, p. 64)

1. *Competitive rivalry*. TMEA strategy of regional integration is to ensure EAC countries to trade within and attract customers by reducing cost of doing business as well as to facilitate market access to EAC firms with the view of increasing exports in the future.
2. *Supplier power*. This refers to how unique the company's product is and how easy is to switch to cheaper alternative. TMEA's single window information for trade is unique and attractive in the region, thus, connecting vast traders across the region.
3. *Buyer power*. Refers to the ability of buyers dictating the prices and TMEA's approach is to attract large customers to limit the threat of small number of customers.
4. *Threat of new entry*. Refers to how easy is to enter organisation's market and TMEA's SWIFT technology have strong barrier to entry.

5. *Threat of substitution.* Refers to customers attempt to do organisation's business model in different way. In 2006, the founder of TMEA challenged the concept of doing business in EAC so that to reduce cost of trade. The idea was to address trade barriers and find practical solution to the existing high trade costs.

1.2. Internal factors of strategy planning

Organisations have routine internal analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses and an information regarding on strengths and weaknesses can be obtained from the organisation itself. The internal strategy analysis considers organisation's operational cost, fixed cost and management, training expenses, and compares to the competitors. The outcome of the analysis helps senior leadership team to develop strategy to achieve mission and objectives of the organisation.

1.2.1. SWOT model analysis

This report uses SWOT analysis to assess TMEA business environment in the strategic management planning process. According to (Stacey, 1993) "SWOT is a tool to analyse an organization's strengths and weaknesses in its resources and capabilities as well as identifies the threats and opportunities of its environment"

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
What TMEA does well? TMEA automates trade portals and in particular SWIFT system.	TMEA is non profit organisation, therefore, limited resources are a challenge.	There are few competitors in EAC to digitalise trade platforms and offer regional trade integration.	Unpredictable government change of policy is a challenge, and the region suffers from high taxations.

1.2.2. SOAR model analysis

SOAR and SWOT seem to address similar issues but differ in a way. SOAR is broader and focuses on organisation's current strengths and builds on the vision of the future for developing strategic goals. SOAR strategy is more collaborative approach and is a visionary by giving opportunity for talents to grow and leadership within the organisation. Critics of SOAR suggest that the strategy is too optimistic thinking and sometimes ignores the harsh realities of the marketplace.

- **Strength.** TMEA ICT for trade project is to automate trade platforms so that business transactions are faster, thus, reducing costs.
- **Opportunity.** There are few competitors in the region to digitalise trade systems so to increase business competitiveness.
- **Aspirations.** TMEA goal is to reduce poverty and increase prosperity in EAC through trade.
- **Results.** TMEA is a result-oriented organisation and targets 10% reduction of time and cost of doing business in strategy two. According to Peter Drucker "what gets measured gets improved". (Strachman, 2013).

1.2.3. Bowman's Strategy Clock

Bowman's strategy clock is a tool that helps to analyse positioning of the market based on prices and values.

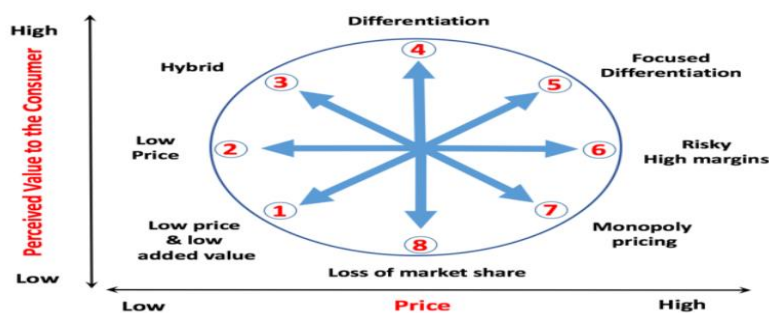


Fig 3. (Hitesh, 2019)

1. *Low price and low value added.* TMEA objective is to reduce cost of doing business therefore, services are low in value.
2. *Low price.* TMEA's strategy to reduce cost of trade by 10% is to target lowest cost option for buyers.
3. *Hybrid.* As the name suggests, the strategy is to ensure price competitiveness and at same time promote product value addition.
4. *Differentiation.* SWIFT is a unique portal in the region that helps customers access vast trade information in the region and gives TMEA a competitive advantage.
5. *Focused differentiation.* TMEA E-cargo tracking system is high value products that supports regional truck drivers and connects to government agencies; thus, the product is efficient but at high price.
6. *Risk high margins.* Organisation's strong brand determines the risk to go for higher price without value addition to the product. TMEA COVID-19 tracking app is a good example.
7. *Monopoly pricing.* Although TMEA monopoly on SWIFT product means little threat on new entrants, however, the organisation must keep an eye on external factors.
8. *Loss of market share.* This might refer to change of strategy and the organisation to move away from the market or aggressive new entrants that have better strategy with low prices.

Finally, Bowman's strategy clock can help the foundations of the strategy at an early stage while, SWOT and PESTLE can support the organisation's long-term vision and mission.

2. Innovative customer care

There has been a shift of consumer behaviour in the past two decades and many organisations strive for constant readjustment of the organisation's strategy to maintain higher level of

customer services. (Sarah, 1955, p.3-4). Modern consumers are co-creators of products and are pushing processes by using social media and online platforms. In addition, customers feedback is vital component of strategic planning since a negative comment can damage brands. The report sheds a light on TMEA approach of digitalising trade and reshaping customer experience to stand out of the competition crowd.

2.1. Personalised services

The old style of mass production, general design and one size fit for all consumers have been challenged by the changing consumer behaviour that is closely connected with the product making process and to tailor products to customer wants. The report suggests that TMEA to develop personalised service to the clients by understanding customer wants and knowing by name as well as offering discounts to loyal customers. (Furgison, 2016). COVID-19 is challenging the business delivery framework and companies are exploring new strategy to retain customers in the absence of physical world. TMEA truck driver clients in the EAC have been seriously affected by the closure of borders, thus, required TMEA to react before customers know the intervention and support plan. The intervention plan was timely and strengthened customer loyalty, therefore, the report concludes that there is strong correlation between customer experience and loyalty.

TMEA truck driver customer care programme is a long-term strategic approach to ensure an increased efficiency of the EAC trade corridor roads, therefore, TMEA developed long term business metric to support the vision of the business.

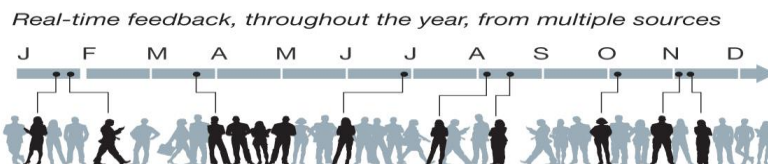
Customer loyalty is associated with emotions and feelings; therefore, loyalty can fluctuate over time, however, TMEA metrics helps to monitor performance and give a real time feedback. The below figure demonstrates a performance monitor software that can provide a real time feedback to analyse customer behaviour.

Continually crowdsourcing performance data provides fresher and more timely insights.

An online app facilitates the collection of real-time peer feedback from multiple sources throughout the year.



- Structure feedback along set performance dimensions or treat more informally.
- Request feedback at any time—eg, from leader, team member, or customer.
- Use badges and comment field for additional nuances.
- Offer unprompted feedback.



McKinsey&Company

Fig4. (McKinsey, 2016).

2.2.1. White gloves service

White-glove service refers to attention to detail, speed and convenience that offers high standard products and services that are uniquely customised to customer wants. (McKinsey and Company, 2020). This requires organisational restructuring to serve the customer-centric purpose and new investment of technology to build detailed profiles of each customer. Typical challenge could be choosing the right technology to build robust data and capabilities that can efficiently handle customised individual customer profile.

TMEA engages customers through consultation meetings prior to product development and ensures attention to details. COVID-19 tracking software was carefully designed to offer a unique solution of the challenges that truck drivers were facing early 2020. Critics of white-glove service approach suggest that it is an expensive exercise to build individual customer profiles; however, it is a highly rewarding strategy as you can attract life-long loyal customers. In

the long term, customer centric organisations can build structured big data that can be easily customised to individual wants at relatively low cost.

The report supports that TMEA adopts white-glove service to acquire and retain customers in the wake of COVID-19. Earlier, the report suggested that PESTLE analysis would help TMEA to screen external factors while developing new strategy, however, COVID-19 seem to stay longer, and SWOT analysis could help the R&D department to address the threats and opportunities ahead. One way to increase opportunities is that TMEA uses omnichannel customer experience that provides seamless integrated channels that is customised to individual wants.

2.2.2 Omnichannel approach

Technological advances enabled modern customers to access information by using multiple social media or online platforms and interacting products and service providers accordingly. Organisations' effort for customer satisfaction had broadened the customer journey concept and the report assesses customer choices in pre-purchase, purchase, and post purchase lifecycle. (Bianchi et al, 2016). Single window for trade information (SWIFT) is an integrated online trade platform that connects customers to vast stakeholders at multiple channels. SWIFT is designed to meet the strategic target of time and cost reduction; therefore, the report highlights the importance of SOAR strategy model.

Critics of SWIFT suggest that the online platform is vulnerable to sudden internet loss that can affect customer experience. Customer can not use multi-channels because SWIFT is only supported by internet and customer alternative is to call the company.

2.3. Advantages of technology and Artificial Intelligence

TMEA core objective is to automate trade platforms in EAC for efficiency and cost reduction of doing business. Many organisations developed chatbot software that can handle customer

inquiries and might provide natural human alike response. COVID-19 aspired organisations to restructure ways of working that might have increased labour productivity. Working from home cut the long commuting hour to and from home as well as eliminates other office distractions. Technology improves our way of living and in the case of TMEA, it increases trade efficiency and transparency, therefore, it is inevitable that artificial intelligence will dominate customer service in the future.

2.4. Limitations of technology and Artificial Intelligence

Critics of artificial intelligence suggest that chatbot service and human customer service experience are dissimilar. Artificial intelligence chatbot service lacks empathy and might not understand human feelings that is essential to hyper-personalised strategy.

3. Organisational restructuring and sustainability

TMEA is registered in Kenya as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with branches in fifteen countries in Africa. (TradeMark East Africa, 2011). The governance structure comprises of a number of distinct but interconnected organs which jointly ensures that TMEA is nimble, accountable and effective organisation. TMEA shareholders approve strategic plan annually to ensure return on investment, whereas the board of directors provides oversight of the operations and ensures progress is made that is aligning with the strategic objectives of the organisation.

COVID-19 had challenged TMEA's core business and the socio-economic impact in the region is severe as well as, COVID-19 affected the implementation phase of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). TMEA organisational restructuring plan is crucial to cope with the dramatic changes (Dicken, 1998) and to remain competitive organisation, therefore, an innovative customer service strategy that is fast, convenient, and easier should be developed.

The report shed a light on external and internal factors that influence strategy development, and

we assess the role of the stakeholders and customers using PESTLE, SWOT, and SOAR analysis.

3.1. Stakeholder forum

TMEA loyal customers and partner organisations are stakeholders that engage with the board of directors regularly and hold thematic consultations to provide an appropriate accountability and mechanism while developing new strategy. COVID-19 is an external challenge that affects business delivery; therefore, stakeholders should assess appropriate technology that can deliver similar results while working remotely. The report examines TMEA resilience to sudden onset and innovative strategy to retain customers. E-cargo tracking system for truck drivers had provided efficient way of delivering cargo, however, government policy change to close the borders of EAC had profound effect of the business model. TMEA response was to develop specific programme called Safe Trade Emergency Facility (STEF) that aims to keep the trade safely running along the corridors and to ensure critical supply chains and goods are supplied at an affordable price.

3.2. Skill labour development

Like other organisations, COVID-19 forced TMEA to downsize organisation's employers but endeavours to keep talents that are expensive to replace. No matter how organisations invest in advanced technology, organisations still need skill labour to make sure the technology works.

TMEA strategy is to develop leadership within the organisation and provides learning and development scheme that rewards high performers. PESTL, SWOT, and SOAR, can be used as environmental scan tool that gives strategic direction to retain skill labour.

3.3. Sustainability

Given the scale of the COVID-19 challenge, the report supports TMEA response strategy to develop STEF programme to deliver for the customers. TMEA developed new tracking application that support both government officials at the borders and truck drivers with real time information and comprised of necessary documents including COVID-19 test certificate. Sustainability should target the core of TMEA strategy of trade efficiency and cost reduction and to understand the threats and opportunities of potential trade-offs in the design phase.

3.4. Effects of strategy change on other departments

There three levels of strategy development and the report examines how the COVID-19 response strategy is affecting other departments of TMEA.



Fig 5. (Business-to-you, 2019)

- *Corporate Strategy.* Refer to identifying the purpose of the organisation and what business should the organisation be in the future as well as identifying available resources to gain competitive advantage. (Lynch, 2006, P. 6-7). There are three main aspects of corporate strategy.
 1. *Strategy analysis.* To describe the mission and objective of the organisation and in this case, TMEA mission is to develop and promote EAC trade integration and business competitiveness.

2. *Strategy development.* TMEA strategy development is to assess trade facilitation options and select promising market. In this case, TMEA focus on automation of trade process.
3. *Strategy implementation.* TMEA have credible implementation plan that is result oriented and aims time and cost reduction of trade in EAC.

In the wake of COVID-19, corporate strategy team have reviewed the business model and addressed possible threats and opportunities. The corporate team proposed Safe Trade Emergency Facility (STEF) programme to the board to protect trade along the corridors and possible increase market share.

- *Business Strategy.* TMEA business strategy team stepped in once the board approved the STEF project and start programming. The business strategy team conducted on series of consultation meetings with the stakeholders and customers to get the buying. TMEA vision is a customer-led organisation and consultation meetings offer multichannel communication to target customers for the purpose of increasing product value (Luck and Moffatt, 2009). COVID-19 is restricting trade flow across the corridor, therefore, increasing trade cost. The business strategy team job is to develop strategy that makes the ports, borders, and critical supply chains safe for trade. The report encourages business strategy team to regularly engage with the customers to develop niches in the market.
- *Functional strategy.* This refers to ensuring that corporate and business strategy objectives are achieved and optimising resources to maximise profitability. The strategy focuses on product customisation and value creation; therefore, the strategy involves in the activities of day-to-day decision making such as designing product, delivering product to customer, raise finance and other daily required services.

Strategy development may have an effect on some of the organisation's department. COVID-19 restriction of working from home had affected the administration department that deals with office helpers, such as, drivers and cleaners. Likewise, STEF project was designed for TMEA customers to recover from COVID-19, therefore, adding value to sales and marketing but not to finance department that have limited resources for emergence project.

4. Risk and mitigation plan

Risk and uncertainty in strategic planning can be described to the ever-changing business environment that is unpredictable and may impact on organisation's performance and results. (Miles & Snow 1978).

There are five steps or risk framework.



Fig 6. (Shankar, 2014)

4.1. TMEA risk approach

Risk is about predictability of outcomes. Higher risk implies that outcomes are less predictable; lower risk that predictions are likely to be more accurate. TMEA corporate strategy team attempt to predict results during STEF project planning to achieve return on investment (RoI). Risk exists and changes throughout time, therefore, the report suggests to acquire knowledge that might limit risk impact. TMEA stakeholder consultation meetings can utilise PESTLE analysis to examine political, economic, social, technology, legal and environment risks.

The report assesses risk strategy management and suggests that TMEA strengthens regional partnerships to have an insight information on politics and develop connections

to succeed at higher risk activities, which yield a higher return (both social and economic) on investors' money. The challenge for TMEA is to manage its risk profile pro-actively, so that the appropriate level of risk is attained in investment decisions and management of implementation; high enough to deliver strong returns that capitalise on TMEAs capabilities and low enough for outcomes to be sufficiently predictable to attract funds and satisfy the fiduciary concerns of investors.

4.2. Assess risk

Modern customers are fickle by nature and organisations' risk assessment strategy can determine plans to keep customer loyalty as well as reassures investors.

TMEA assesses risks according to likelihood that the risk will materialise and impact on TMEA if it does materialise. The assessment of likelihood and impact then enables TMEA to focus on those risks which are most serious in terms of impact and which are relatively likely to materialise. The report suggests for each of these risks, a mitigation approach should be developed, and implementation of agreed actions to be monitored closely. Key risks with the greatest impact and highest likelihood should be measured, monitored, and reported, including using selected key risk indicators.

5. Conclusion

This report shed a light on TMEA strategy to deliver to EAC customers by addressing high costs to trade in the region. The report gives an overview of strategic management and planning to give TMEA direction and ways to improve mobilisation of resources to gain competitive advantage. The report proposes number of strategic analysis tools such as, PESTLE, SWOT, and SOAR to give an understanding of the external and internal factors that influences strategy development.

The aim of the report is to assess new strategic direction to discover a new way forward for delivering innovative customer care to ensure future resilience and sustainable competitive advantage against the COVID-19 pandemic. The report suggests that TMEA adopts customer centric approach to get insight information of customer wants and enhance customer loyalty. The report finds that one way to achieve customer centric objective is to conduct on consultation meetings prior of product designing. Modern customer behaviour had changed, and customers shop online and probe around social media channels to discover better deals, therefore, the report encourages TMEA to develop seamlessly integrated channels that are specific to individual design. This might be expensive exercise and requires restructuring an organisation as well as acquiring new technology. Technology and AI improves our way of working and can improve customer experience, however, AI software lacks empathy that is essential to designing personalised customer service. Moreover, the report suggests that organisations need skill labour regardless of the availability of advance technology to ensure the system works as it should be, therefore, the report encourages TMEA to develop strategy for talent acquisition and retention. Finally, the report suggests that TMEA develops sound risk strategy that focus on high-risk probability scenarios and to develop broad strategies to mitigate the risk.

Recommendation

The findings of this report are to encourage TMEA to focus on customer centric approach that gives the organisation a competitive advantage in the era of hyper personalised customer service. The report recommends that TMEA uses number of strategy analysis tools to scan the environment and understand internal and external factors that influence strategy. The consumer behaviour had changed in the past; therefore, the report recommends that TMEA develops innovative customer service that is catered to individual wants. The report recommends TMEA to adopt white-glove service that focus on attention to detail and offers high quality standard products to stand out from the crowd. Modern customers do not shop until company's products appear on multiple channels; therefore, the report recommends product high visibility to gain competitive advantage. Moreover, the report suggests that TMEA strengthens trade automations in the EAC since the pace of technology is changing rapidly. Finally, the report recommends that TMEA develops risk framework that can identify risk and mitigate it.

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