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Dateline AGL – Information communication technology (ICT) tools for small enterprises

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The Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) was incorporated in 1998 for the purpose of promoting the private sector-led social and economic development in Tanzania. As an apex and focal private sector organization, TPSF is the voice of the private sector and the umbrella body for private sector associations and corporate bodies in all sectors of the economy, including trade associations.



Tanzania Private Sector Foundation
Trusted Leadership

In 2019, the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) contracted with the Canadian Executive Services Organization (CESO) to provide training on customer analysis and Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools.

TPSF has been providing their members with traditional techniques/services which are quickly becoming obsolete due to improved communication technology, changed needs by members, changed business environment in world markets, and changed government policies on business and investment. As a CESO volunteer adviser, I was assigned to train and mentor newly recruited staff in the membership department. Training and mentoring included a simplified way of recruiting more members using digital tools.

I briefed the new staff on past work for TPSF on integrated marketing communications, branding, membership surveys, and marketing technology. Then, I prepared a folder of files that included PowerPoint decks with notes, past reports, and past member surveys to educate and



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inform membership staff of member opinions and recommendations from past CESO assignments.

Free graphics software for inhouse flyers and brochures

Staff was introduced to simple and free software for producing flyers, brochures and forms for networking, public relations, special events, and recruitment. With these information communication technology tools, staff could prepare communications products quickly without the need for high-end products produced by professional graphics designers. Staff was introduced to producing products using Publisher, Paint, Canva, and QR code creators and readers. Knowledge of basic communications design tools would enable speedy responses to opportunity and cost savings to TPSF.

I suggested that the hard copy newsletter be migrated to a digital product distributed online through an email marketing campaign application with a few hard copies available for members who do not have Internet capabilities or capacity for communications from TPSF. TPSF already distributed an e-news through its MSME web portal, but the newsletter to all members was distributed as a hard copy only and as a pdf file attached to email. There were limited metrics to assess the success of the campaign.

Introduction to integrated marketing communications (IMC) and customer experience management (CEM)

Before exploring marketing communications technology that might be applied at TPSF, I explained the notion of IMC and CEM, so the staff would have some grounding in the principles to appreciate the technology used for recruitment and member retention.

GoToMeeting/GoToWebinar were demonstrated more than once to emphasize the power for communications and sharing documents in real time throughout Tanzania, all African countries, and abroad. In doing so, I demonstrated how TPSF can save travelling costs and generate revenue through webinars. The use of GoToMeeting/GoToWebinar would reduce travel and contribute to reducing the carbon footprint for Tanzanian industry.

Constant Contact for email marketing campaigns was demonstrated using live and past campaigns. The demonstrations showed how the metrics collected on campaigns can be used for targeting prospects and existing members who show interest in campaign articles and following

up with direct contact by email, texting, and phone. Email marketing campaigns contribute to a reduction in energy used for marketing, paper products used, and a reduction of waste.

Email database

TPSF had an email database used for distributing a pdf file of its hard copy newsletter. The pdf file could be as large as 4 MB and might be rejected by servers or unable to download depending on the Internet service of a member. It was recommended that the publication transition to an e-news distributed by Constant Contact (CC) over an email database exported to CC to collect informative metrics for membership staff so they could make personal contact with members.

If prospects are included on the database, membership staff can make personal contact with prospects to discuss issues of interest, offer membership, and close sales.

TPSF uses Survey Monkey to survey its members. Membership staff can combine the use of Survey Monkey with Constant Contact to generate even more metrics about its client base and prospects to improve membership retention and recruit members.

TPSF social media

I reviewed the online presence of TPSF with staff over socmed sites. Content was kept current and well managed. Graphics could be improved using Canva to adjust images to fit the templates of the social media sites. I recommended that TPSF consider a LinkedIn company page to widen its social media influence. In addition, I suggested that training to improve staff capacity using WhatsApp would improve communications and standardize TPSF communications with clients and prospects.

Takeaway

It can't be assumed that new hires have equal training and knowledge in information communication technology because all are not responsible for the same function. Among other things, customer relations staff are focused on invoice collections, communications, event planning and data management. With training and mentoring in the application of information communication technology, new hires in membership or customer relations departments are better prepared and equipped to communicate with existing members to make their experience with an



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enterprise meaningful and attractive, while delivering consistent messages.