

## ESSAY ON THE STAGES OF BUSINESS GROWTH

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### *A CASE STUDY ON SABEH CLOTHING SALE COMPANY*

In August 2019, in Makeni city north of Sierra Leone, the Sabeh clothing sale Enterprise started as a Clothing retail business. The only worker at that time was the CEO, he rented a small room in the central business part of the city. His startup capital was one million five hundred thousand Sierra Leone Leones (1,500,000 Sierra Leone Leones), which is equivalent to 145 US Dollars. He had to pay for renting the business office for 500, 000 Sierra Leone Leones and he uses the balance 1,000,000 Sierra Leone Leones to buy his products to retail. The CEO was everything, he ran all errands himself, and he supervised the business. At the time, getting customers to buy in his shop was difficult taking into consideration the size, the people's perception that he might not have quality goods. Within a period of two months the customers that enters his shop to buy daily began to increase, he has to attend to multiple customers at the same time because he is unable to do so he lost some daily customers especially the busy Ones, and those who do not have patience. And sometimes when he wanted to use the restroom, customers could not find him in the shop they tend to leave. But as sales continue to rise, goods were also so many for him to handle or control he was able to hire a shop boy (sales assistant) to help him in sales/marketing and attending to customers, goods coordination.

Within a timeframe of five (5) months, the Business reaches stage 2: survival stage as written by Virginia Lewis the business was able to thrive as a result of good customer care, the business was able to satisfy its customer's especially with the provision of quality goods and services. The objective of the business was to provide quality goods at a great price as compared to other similar Businesses. The customer base of the Enterprise grew, and there were so many customers flooding the shop at this particular time. So the worries of getting customers was no longer existing, now it's time to think of breaking even (return on investment). So the strategy he set up was to get more sales per day (increase daily sales) and that will not happen when they rely on the sales at the shop. So he hired two offline salespersons. This person takes several goods in places outside of the city, and big towns to sell and this strategy boost their sales and shoot-up the profits. So the CEO's aims for increasing the business came into a reality. He knew the bigger the size of the enterprise the more profits he generates. He was able to move the business from the small office room to an open space that fits the Business type. Now they are four in the company. Planning and forecasting, the setting of monthly sales targets were then visible in the company as the CEO is not a direct salesperson at the moment He supervises the hired staff.

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According To Neil C. Churchill & Virginia L Lewis (Five stages of Business Growth, May-June 1983, Harvard Business Review)

After one and half years running the business, the net worth of the Enterprise took a huge rise, as it was valued at 6,000 US Dollars (based on stock Inventory). The CEO is a visionary person, expanded the business internally first by adding other products such as jewelry and other fashion products to the already existing clothing products. In doing so he splits the products into categories and hired new salespersons to coordinate the sales of each of the products category. Four new staff were added to the already 3 existing ones.

The rapid growth of the company became a priority of the CEO, so he then appointed the first staff who was the assisting salesperson at the begging as the Assistant Manager. The total number of employees is now seven (7). In reaching the mark of two years of operations, the company expanded by establishing two new Business spaces in two other districts in the region, those new business Centers need people to manage them, in this case, the organization structure had some changes. Each Business center was managed by a manager, and he was then moved from being a shop manager to managing and supervising, and monitoring to maintain the status quo. Each Business center had 7 staff including the manager of the center who manages the finance and staff and the manager assistant who is in charge of marketing, Inventory management. The company had a total of Three Business centers and 22 staff including the CEO.

The company is at a stage where the CEO no longer buys from exporters, due to good management practices at the company, the profit became huge and the operations of the company took a sustainable route. He began to order goods from the factories, the company even have some custom-made goods available, and some products have the name and logo of the company. The CEO implemented some systems of checking stock every three months across all the Business centers, and another one to keep track of the finances by opening a single account, also the annual staff ceremony which aims to set new yearly plans, and to motivate staff as well by giving prizes to top-performing staff.

The business was able to move to International level by Launching a Branch in Guinea a Neighboring Country to Sierra Leone, due to the brilliant financial control systems that were put in place, the CEO was able to consolidate and control the financial gains.

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