

Improved Earnings through the Information Board Management Business

By Moses Gichuru¹

Moses Gichuru demonstrates how the Information Board Management (IBM) business has improved the earnings of his network members by relating the progress of some of his IBMs.

The Information Boards in Nakuru



Yuventalis Mokaya, Top Market IB, Nakuru

Yuventalis Mokaya is an AgriTrade Information Board Manager (IBM) in the Top market which is a busy retail market in Nakuru. He has been working as an IBM for AgriTrade since May 2009 and this business has already made a big difference to his income. He shares the responsibility of collecting, sharing prices and running the board with Anthony Ndirangu. In Nakuru we have one Information Board (IB) in the Central Wholesale Market and one at the Top Market. For each board we have two IBMs; the advantages of this is that the board has a high turnover of adverts, which is more attractive to the customers, and we can also be certain to have regular price information collected. Market information from Nakuru is sent to AgriTrade by 11:00 each market day by SMS. In return come SMS bulletins for the Nakuru boards, which give the prices of the main commodities from the main markets in Kenya. We intend to have more boards soon so that the IBMs have one each but with the council tax at Ksh 6,000/ per year, we decided to start with two IBs for four IBMs in Nakuru town and then to expand from there.

Every Saturday, as Regional Manager, I meet with the Nakuru IBMs to hear reports on the week's business and to discuss plans for our group. Many people come to see the boards. They see the contact numbers of the IBMs and phone if they want to place an advert or respond to a notice on the board. The adverts are varied; from goats to houses and computer equipment. We also have a service of returning lost identity cards (IDs) handed in to the board, which earns the IBMs Ksh 100/ per ID. Earnings from the board from adverts and lost IDs vary; but a monthly earning of Ksh 1,500/ for each IB is an average.

Earnings from Commissions and Product Marketing

On top of this Yuventalis and the other IBMs earn through commissions on small deals for sales through the board, for example Ksh 600/ for a bicycle worth Ksh 6,000/. By sourcing cereals and beans, either from farmers or from the wholesale markets, and selling these to schools or the millers he gets an average commission of Ksh 800/ per deal. IBMs also earn commissions by marketing flour for some of the Nakuru millers. Using a hand drawn cart Yuventalis sells flour around the slum area in town. By selling a 10 kg bag of maize flour he can earn around Ksh 30/ commission.

Building Up Income from the IBM

Yuventalis and his wife are very happy about working with AgriTrade and the earnings he has made as an IBM over the last six months. He has used his own IB to source a dairy cow,



goats and chickens for his family. First with the extra income from his board he was able to afford to buy a dairy cow for Ksh 30,000/. This gave him another income stream; his Ayrshire cow produces ten litres of milk a day, he uses five litres for the family and sells the remaining milk at Ksh 40/ per litre. From the sales of the milk he has been able to buy two goats, one of them is pregnant, which will bring in more income. Yuventalis has also been able to buy 57 chickens (layers), which lay about two trays of eggs per day. He sells these privately and to local shops at Ksh 10/ per egg.

¹ Interviewed by Anne Dennig in November 2009

RAVI Loans for Nakuru IBMs

Our other IBMs in Nakuru have also been able to build up their incomes. Elijah Kinyanjui IBM at the Central Market has been able to take a RAVI loan for a motorbike. Using the bike he has been able to increase his income from sourcing produce from farmers and marketing flour for the millers.



Anthony Ndirangu is another IBM for the Top Market. Besides his marketing and sourcing work for the millers, he has through a RAVI loan been able to start a side business supplying molasses to farmers as an ingredient of their cattle feed. He buys this in bulk from the sugar factories and sells it in 20 kg cans to the farmers.



Future Plans

I am happy with the progress of the Nakuru IBM network during 2009 and the services that we have provided to all our clients- farmers, traders and processors. One way that our IBMs will be expanding their businesses in 2010 is by extending our sourcing services for the Nakuru millers by contacts with our network in Uganda.

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