



THE MARKET

Based in bustling Nairobi, Text Book Centre (TBC) is where Kenyans go for all their literary requirements. From text books for higher learner to children's books, novels, magazines and the latest in New Age and international literature, Text Book Centre meets the needs of any reader.

TBC's primary target market is kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, tertiary colleges and universities, professionals, libraries, offices, foreign missions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government organisations. The company currently controls about 20 percent market share in the educational books sector and holds a substantial share of both Professional books for Higher Education and the stationery trade.

Because educational books are seasonal, product sales figures vary throughout the year based on the national school year and curriculum. Sales are promoted largely through newspaper advertisements, sales personnel and direct mail. TBC's annual turnover for its last complete financial year was substantially over One billion Ksh

At the core of Text Book Centre's offering is quality products and the provision of excellent service, a strategy that has seen the company survive in a highly competitive business.

Reinforcing its brand status in the book-selling industry through more professionally managed retail outlets located in the city environs, TBC's policy is to continue expanding to prime locations countrywide, with a view to growth across East Africa. With this in mind, TBC opened its first branch outside Kenya in Kampala, Uganda in 2009. Franchising is an option management is reviewing as it strives to double TBC's turnover in the next five years.

With its finger on the pulse of the educational and recreational learning markets,

Text Book Centre is looking at embracing the eBook concept to complement its range of laptops and other IT products.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Way back in the 1970s, the brand's progressive thinking made history as it staged Kenya's first-ever outdoor book festivals in Nairobi, Mombassa and Kisumu. This is not the only time this brand has made history, however: In 2005, TBC achieved a target turnover of KSh one billion, and was the first company in its field to have a fully stocked stationery section alongside a book selling section.

It was also first to integrate the academia book section with general interest sections.

In an initiative intended to develop and enhance the value and status of creative writing in Kenya, Text Book Centre has been a major sponsor supporting the Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature from 1992 until now.

The brand was also the first to import specific and individual stationery requirements for its discerning customers. With the largest and most diverse mix in a retail setting, TBC offers some 18 000 sq. ft of space for readers to peruse a huge variety of books and stationery.

HISTORY

Two dynamic businessmen - Mr MJ Rughani and Mr SV Shah - founded Text Book Centre in 1964 in a bid to meet the book requirements of the increasing number of schools in newly independent Kenya. The company's provincial bookshops merged and moved to a central location in Nairobi to service bookshops across Kenya and neighbouring countries.

Bookshop operations began in 500 sq ft. premises on Kijabe Street, Nairobi, with five employees. Sales at that time could barely pay salaries and much marketing and travelling cross-country was required to create awareness of the company's services. Financial constraints at one point required a partnership with EJ Arnold Publishers. Supply to neighbouring countries was initiated and fairly good business opportunities developed, but these failed due to payment defaults.

Undeterred, TBC continued to grow and undertook distributorships for UK publishers and local authors wishing to take advantage of its distributional network. Stationery and general interest books were introduced in 1980. Four years later, TBC opened retail outlets in shopping malls.

From its humble start, TBC grew to acquire a plot of 5 000 sq ft. in 1968 and a further expansion of 5 000 sq ft. later as the wholesale business thrived countrywide. A retail branch on Kijabe Street for

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...much more than a bookshop!

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general interest books was opened and in 1984 moved to a larger space at Sarit Centre.

In the 2000s, the company increased its retail space at Sarit Centre to almost 10 000 sq ft and opened another branch in the same centre that focussed on professional books. TBC now has some 70 000 sq ft of retail space and a staff complement of 150. Much growth has come through a distribution deal with Safaricom mobile phone air-time cards, meeting another customer need.

THE PRODUCT

Dealing mainly in text books for every educational level from kindergarten to university, TBC also carries a broad range of professional books, academia and general interest books covering various interests including gardening, yoga, sports, Health, Africana, cookery, self-help and motivation and a wide range of Children's books for all age groups.. Branded stationery products are also available, with TBC holding the agency for Rexel Office Products like staplers, shredders, overhead projectors, box files, art material and other office equipment.

The TBC branded products help provide education and knowledge and increase literacy in Kenya.

Low mark-ups keep prices affordable, making it possible for millions of Kenyans to read and improve their education.

TBC uses environmentally friendly, heavy duty, longer lasting canvas and jute bags for the packing of its books and stationery.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A comprehensive range of Information



ACCO BRANDS

First Choice for Office Products

Rexel **GBC**

TEXT BOOK CENTRE LTD

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Technology (IT)

products and supporting material was introduced to complement the stationery and office requirements. This includes various brands of laptops, computer accessories as well as office telephones.

Stationery giant Pelikan from Germany and Text Book Centre signed a strategic partnership deal in 2009 which sees Pelikan's vast range of products in the office and writing lines, hobby & crafts and printer consumables augmenting TBC's growth and consolidating its stationery business, whilst bringing world class products to Kenyans.

PROMOTION

Brand promotion includes various media channels, with the exception of television. Radio ads are flighted on Capital FM, Kiss FM, East Fm, Sound Asia and Kameme FM and print initiatives include Nation and Standard newspapers.

Road shows in collaboration with radio stations and outdoor advertising in the form of banners on main highways take the brand to the people. Exhibitions at schools, universities and libraries and

participating in book fairs every September and October generate much interest from TBC's target market.

Direct mailing of catalogues to the educational fraternity has been a mainstay of promotion for many years, carrying a full list of products and items available at the TBC shops. There has not been any proactive marketing on the Internet as the majority of the clients do not have access to computers, although this is an area that TBC is considering entering actively.

As part of the brand's CSR programs, it has been associated with Presidents Awards for over 20 years; as well as others like Ministry of education, Ministry of tourism, Kenya Wildlife and many more.

The brand's payoff line has changed over the years, in keeping with its dynamic market growth. The original slogan "The Book Worm" gave way to "Supermarket for School Supplies" and "Where Quality Counts". Today, consumers find "Much More than a just a Bookshop....."

BRAND VALUES

Text Book Centre is associated with service, quality, reputation and pricing. The brand promise is to serve the needs of customers timely and its commitment is to educating, providing books and knowledge to the nation and excellent pricing.

"Much more than a bookshop..." and "Supermarket for school supplies" payoff lines are just two of the motivational factors that reflect the company ethos. TBC has an in-house policy of ensuring it meets the needs of Kenya's educational sector by stocking all current titles required.

THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT TBC

- The growth of the mobile telecoms business in TBC's retail outlets created a spinoff into a separate subsidiary company, Citadel Cellular Communications, in 2008
- TBC Academic Department – creating the all new concept of professional books buying was - conceived by Mr S V Shah
- Generations of Kenyans have benefited from the services provided by TBC, which can rightfully say that TBC is "the best base camp for the journeys of the mind"