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2019
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The creation of unique value offerings by entrepreneurs in South Africa

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460879

A research article submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

Johannesburg, 2019

Protocol number: WBS/BA460879/969

DECLARATION

I, Sebenzile Temaswati Dlamini, declare that this research article is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business Administration, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Sebenzile Temaswati Dlamini



Signed at: Linbro Park, Sandton

On the 13th day of June 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Brian Barnard, for the unwavering support and dedication throughout this study, for his patience, time and motivation. His guidance provided insightful perspectives on the research topic and encouraged me to think critically. I thoroughly enjoyed this learning journey and I could not imagine having a better supervisor for the research.

This study would not have been possible without participants. I would like to thank the participants for taking the time out of their busy schedules to participate in the interviews. The views shared have contributed significantly to the success of this study.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my parents and friends for their moral and spiritual support throughout the research journey.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Nominated journal:	South African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Marketing
Supervisor / Co-author:	Brian Barnard
Word count †:	14998
Supplementary files:	Research instrument (interview questions)

† Including abstract and references page

ABSTRACT

The study investigates how sophisticated and advanced entrepreneurs are in terms of customer benefits (CB), and examines how entrepreneurs incorporate CB in products and unique value propositions. The basic CB set: functional, symbolic, experiential and cost, is expanded to an extensive array of sixteen (16) CB.

The study found that all CB are generally already established or implemented. Some CB are well-known, common, well-implemented, and elementary to implement, while others are not. The implementation of certain CB may require original and innovative thought. Not all CB are well understood or grasped. A number of CB can still be exploited and developed further. It commonly occurred that one CB was (mis)taken for another. Entrepreneurs are not necessarily well-trained and well-informed about CB, and generally have need of learning and developing further in terms of CB, and their application. CB are not that application-specific or -dependent. Many of the CB are possible for many of the entrepreneurs and their businesses. In many instances, the CB may imply further product extensions. Benefit composites are typical. Additional benefit intricacies include how quickly CB realize, co-existence and co-occurrence of CB, complications related to application of CB, and ethical and moral issues related to CB. Overall, a customer focus may imply a benefit focus.

Creating appropriate product or service attributes that translate into CB, as per customer demands is vital in the face of fierce competition. Entrepreneurs should be knowledgeable and skilled in the application of CB if they are to remain the preferred customer choice. The study unravels entrepreneurs perception of CB and further makes one key recommendation; to the study the prevalence of knowledge and application gaps with regards to the benefits: Whether benefit knowledge gaps continue to exist, and whether the application of certain benefits still lack, after awareness of the benefits have been corrected and improved.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, innovation, value, value-creation, unique value proposition, marketing, customer benefits.

ABBREVIATIONS:

CB	Customer benefits

1. Introduction

Faced with constantly changing customer demands, volatile economic conditions and fierce competition, many organizations are constantly searching for ways to remain competitive in the market. In the past, organizations have looked internally for sources of competition such as organizational capabilities and processes (Woodruff, 1997). However, constantly changing customer demands, coupled with the ease at which customers can access information, present compelling reasons for organizations to consider an outward orientated source of competition that focuses on delivering unique value offerings to customers. Organizations that do not invest in unique value offerings are more likely to go out of business or lose market share as they are outperformed by those who have a comprehensive value-creation strategy (Smith and Colgate, 2007). Lin and Lin (2006) also suggest that emphasis is put on firms to explore customer value creation as a vehicle for sustainable competitive advantage.

Given the impetus of competition, entrepreneurs are faced with the challenge to not just create more customer value but unique customer value than competitors, if they are to remain the preferred customer choice (Lindman et al., 2012). Notably, entrepreneurs usually have a different idea of what unique customer value are to that defined by customers. This knowledge gap creates the potential for entrepreneurs to miss opportunities to create unique value offerings for customers (Woodruff, 1997). One approach to creating customer value, as suggested by Smith and Colgate (2017), would be creating appropriate product or service attributes that translate into unique customer benefits that mirror customer demands.

The purpose of the study is to examine entrepreneurs' perception and knowledge of the types of customer benefits (CB) they can incorporate and build into product offerings, in order to differentiate and create unique value propositions. The study delineates and explores sixteen types of customer benefits, and subsequently investigates entrepreneurs' perceptions, knowledge, and expertise regarding these customer benefits. In particular, it considers how knowledgeable entrepreneurs are with regards to the CB, how extensively they consider and apply CB, whether there are gaps in their consideration of the CB, and whether there are particular technicalities or intricacies that accompany the implementation of the CB. Thus, the

study looks at how entrepreneurs see the CB, whether they consider all the CB, the CB they do consider, the CB they neglect, and when they consider certain CB.

The research addresses the following research question: how sophisticated and advanced are entrepreneurs in terms of CB? Consequently, it considers the following sub-problems:

- How knowledgeable are entrepreneurs with regards to CB?
- How do entrepreneurs utilize and incorporate CB?

The study contributes to marketing and entrepreneurship literature. It provides insights into the creation of unique value propositions, and the proficiency of entrepreneurs in this regard. The study predominantly focuses on customer benefits as a proxy for customer value. It mainly investigates the perceptions of experienced entrepreneurs with regards to CB. Although the impact of industry on CB, and perceptions thereof, are considered negligible the study narrowed its focus to entrepreneurs in the services industry but did not segment and constrain according to business type or segment nor constrain according to specific CB expertise.

Assumptions; Customer benefit is assumed to be the principal factor of customer value. The impact of industry on CB, and perceptions thereof, are considered negligible. It is assumed that all the CB are applicable to any industry to some extent. It is also assumed that the impact of expertise on CB, and perceptions thereof, are negligible. True creativity would require the entrepreneur to be proficient in a number, if not all CB

The delimitations of the study are:

- The sample only includes experienced entrepreneurs in the services industry. The perceptions and opinions of entrepreneurs outside this premises are not considered.
- The population of the study solely includes entrepreneurs in South Africa.
- The study is mostly concerned with experiences and opinions of entrepreneurs
- Entrepreneurs are defined and identified as individuals with a minimum of one business or partnership and/or a firm and have a minimum three years' experience in business

2. Literature review

The literature review identifies the dominant themes in customer benefits (CB) as outlined by previous research, exploring customer benefits that entrepreneurs can build into products. It engages in the body of literature to assess how entrepreneurs can utilise and incorporate CB in their offerings in order to differentiate and create unique value propositions.

2.1 Introduction to customer benefits

Hur, Park & Kim (2010) define benefit as a subjective feeling of fulfilment or satisfaction that is associated with the consumption or use of a product or service.

Homburg, Kuester, Beutin & Menon, (2005) suggest that customer benefit be distinguished as two constructs; core-benefits and add-on benefits. Core-benefits are defined as the basic attributes of a product or service that are necessary to make the product be. They are the product or service qualifiers. Add-on benefits on the other hand go beyond the core-benefits and form the basis of competitive advantage as they are not typically required but nice-to-have benefits. They may be viewed as thrill factors.

Smith and Colgate (2007) and Wang, Liang, & Joonas (2009) suggest four types of benefits namely; functional, symbolic, experiential and cost benefits, which are derived from product and non-product (services) attributes. Functional benefits are technical or physical advantages of a product or service (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Examples are price, safety fulfilments and value-add services. They are what motivate customers to purchase the product or service. Symbolic benefits are the more extrinsic advantages of a product or service (Wang et al, 2009). They relate to self-esteem fulfilment, social approval or personal expression (Kyguoliene, Zikiene, & Grigaliunaite, 2017). For example, consumers may value the exclusivity of a product or service. Experiential benefits relate to attributes such as satisfaction, convenience and any other feel good experiences for the customer (Wang et al, 2009). Cost value is defined as the cost benefits of purchasing a product or service realised through minimizing the price or

opportunity costs involved in purchase, ownership and use of the product or service (Smith and Colgate, 2007).

The authors identify different sources of value for each category. Functional value is derived from creating appropriate product or service features and attributes, or focusing on performance or appropriate outcomes or consequences. That is, the source of this value is product attributes such as aesthetics, quality, customization, reliability, operational benefits, effectiveness, etc. Experimental value is derived from ambience, aromas, pleasure, and enjoyment, created from emotional value or from trust and responsiveness created through social-relational value with the customer. Sources for symbolic value are products that provide a means of self-expression such as expensive fragrances, fancy cars or products that provide personal-meaning such as music, comfort-foods and vacations. Customers attach or associate psychological meaning to the products. Lastly, sources of costs value are identified as provision of convenience in attaining the product, reduced operational risks through guarantees and warranties, and reduced product price.

Barnard (2018) suggests making a difference between necessary and redundant benefits. Redundant benefits do not necessarily add value to a product. Entrepreneurs need only to incorporate those benefits that deliver the intended value to the customer. Kim, Kim, Garrett, & Jung (2015) note that customers make purchasing decisions by taking into account product attributes that can offer benefits that satisfy their needs and expectations. To that end, (Wang et al, 2009) suggest that entrepreneurs should invest in processes and products that create both symbolic and experiential benefits as they are the main sources of customer satisfaction. Won-Moo, Jungkun, & Minsung (2010) also suggest that to increase customer retention rate, entrepreneurs should invest in functional and economic (costs) benefits.

2.2 Customer benefit types in greater detail

Barnard (2018) delineates 16 customer benefit types. Although more elaborate, there are significant correspondence between these and the four benefit types (functional, symbolic, experiential and cost) mentioned by Smith and Colgate (2007) and Wang, Liang, & Joonas (2009). The customer benefit types are discussed next.

..1 *Cost, economy*

Customers are primarily incentivised to engage in relational exchanges by money savings (Gwinner et al, 1998). The authors suggest that organisations may reward customers who have an enduring relationship with them with special pricing considerations. Furthermore, (Barnard,2018) states that the cost, economy benefit is also derived from products that realises economy improvement, where the output cost cheaper or less is required to obtain the same output.

A number of examples of economy as a primary benefit that is easily demonstrated to consumers, exist in mobile learning (Mehdipour and Zerehkafi, 2013), laser printing, manufacturing, carwash (Polonsky and Rosenberger, 2001), green products and policies (Peattie and Crane, 2005; Prakash, 2002; Cronin et al, 2011), and software as a service (Weissman and Bobrowski, 2009).

In addition to these examples, (Polonsky and Rosenberger, 2001) also suggest long-life compact fluorescent light bulbs. They argue that these bulbs are much less expensive than traditional ones in the long run although their relatively longer payback period and higher up-front costs prompts many consumers to think of them as less an investment warranting life-cycle costing.

..2 *Capacity, efficiency, throughput, speed*

A product that offers this benefit allows for the same output to be realised efficiently and quicker, the product has greater capacity (Barnard, 2018).

A number of products include benefits based on efficiency and cost-effectiveness, for example: mobile learning (Mehdipour and Zerehkafi, 2013), training and development (Hoffman et al, 2008), hybrid cars (Ginsberg and Bloom, 2004), the internet (Polonsky and Rosenberger, 2001) and telephone, elevators, cars, etc. (Barnard, 2018).

..3 *Simplicity, ease of use, convenience*

Ease of use, simplicity and convenience also constitutes a prominent customer benefit. Examples include alleviating burden on customers with little prior experience (Sharples, 2000), reducing purchase and use hassle, and reducing effort. Examples of the second point include recalling customer preferences (Gwinner et al, 1998), offering one-stop shops (Tschirky et al, 2000), matching buyers and sellers (Tschirky et al, 2000). Examples of the third point would be convenience foods (Scholderer and Grunert, 2005). Loose et al (2013) state that, for food products in general, convenience is related to time savings and reduced efforts regarding preparation, cooking and cleaning.

Karvonen (2000) notes that usability is often defined as "the extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context of use". Lee et al (2015) point out that usability has been a major theme in human–computer interaction (HCI) research. Usability has been commonly associated with the notion of the ease of using a target product.

In terms of simplicity, (Margaria and Steffen, 2010) state that companies such as Apple incorporate simplicity as a fundamental design principle. Apple - for example, simplifies both the handling of its products and their maintenance and robustness. Users value this benefit and enthusiastically pay a premium price for it.

..4 *Extent, span, duration*

Quality of the product derives this benefit for customers. These are typically products that last longer or extend the lifetime of somethings. Examples include products such as quality clothes, refrigerators, camera and film, etc. (Barnard, 2018).

Homburg et al (2005) also state that product related service in the form of maintenance increases the durability of the products and therefore enhances product lifetime, which presents another benefit to customers. Sustainable consumption and the circular economy are premised on reduced resource use through increased product durability and lifetime (Runkel, 2003; Cooper, 2005; Van Nes and Cramer, 2005).

..5 *Flexibility, variation, variety*

Product flexibility is defined as the degree of responsiveness (or adaptability) of a system to the multi-dimensional needs of the customers and to any future change in a product (Qureshi et al, 2006). Gwinner et al, (1998); Homburg et al, (2005) suggest that flexibility refers to the extent to which suppliers are willing to accommodate and tailor offerings to customers' particular needs. Some companies allow customers to design and configure their own products (Dewan et al, 2003). Offerings like E-Learning, Mobile learning and lifelong learning tools (Sharples, 2000) adapt to the customer, also by being self-paced and available anywhere. They can be personalized (Mehdipour and Zerehkafi, 2013).

In terms of product variety, (Tseng et al, 1997) argue that, product variety and speed to market are increasingly becoming vehicles for competitive advantage. They argue that the competition among firms has ceased to be strictly a price completion as consumers demand high-quality, low-priced and customized products. To offer product variety, (Levav et al, 2010) note that companies such as a typical U.S. paint manufacturer offers 2,000 different colours. In addition, (Waller et al, 2000) point out that product variety can be achieved through the extension of options and modification of characteristics of a product, that is, product customization. To that end, (Levav et al, 2010) note that product customization permits consumers to directly construct their preferred product via a sequence of attribute decisions. This is a great way to differentiate in the market as (Waller et al, 2000) suggest that companies that engage product customization, while maintaining reasonable cost levels, are expected to have exemplary profitability and market share.

..6 *Reliability, dependability*

Market advantage may be gained by demonstrating higher reliability than competitors (Littlewood and Strigini, 2000). Reliability and dependability is suggested by (Barber and Darrough, 1996) to imply that the products made available to consumers are what they were supposed to be. Littlewood and Strigini (2000) and Kleyner and Sandborn (2008) define reliability as the ability of a product to perform as intended (i.e., without failure and within specified performance limits) for a specified time, in its life cycle application environment and

dependability as a product's reliability, availability, maintainability, quality, and safety. It seems therefore that product reliably is proxy to its dependability.

Examples of products that aim to improve reliability or dependability, include robotic activity to replace human activity that is known to be rather failure-prone (Littlewood and Strigini, 1993) and control of aircraft, industrial plants, railway and air traffic, weapons and military units, banking and commercial transactions (Littlewood and Strigini, 1993; Firesmith, 2004).

Some advantages of predicting reliability include providing advance warning signs of failure, and the reduction of life cycle costs by reducing inspection and unscheduled maintenance (Mishra et al, 2002).

..7 *Health, longevity, safety, risk-reduction*

Angell and Relman (2002) note that for millions of Americans, many of the drugs marketed by the pharmaceutical companies are essential for health, and even for life.

Kamat and Nichter (1998) argue that health is becoming increasingly pharmaceuticalized and commodified as more and more people conveniently "reach for the pill" at the first sign of ill health or malaise. Parallel to this, (Applbaum, 2006) argue that in pharmaceuticals specifically, "lifestyle drug" marketing techniques which were initially intended for cosmetic and sexual enhancements have now been broadened to include other areas of medicine such the blockbuster "maintenance drugs" intended for daily or lifelong consumption. These are products such drugs for allergies, insomnia, and acid reflux and these products derive the health, safety and risk-reduction benefit for the user.

Other examples of products targeted at specific health conditions and safety like cardiac include pacemakers (Van Hemel et al, 2004) and the pharmacological reduction of heart rate (Bucchi et al, 2007) airbags (safety/risk reduction), and organic food (Barnard,2018).

..8 *Sensation*

Holbrook (1994) sees play - value derived from the pleasure of engaging in some activity - as a customer benefit type. To engage consumers' senses and offer pleasure, (Krishna, 2012) suggests that marketers use sensory marketing to engage the consumers' senses.

To attract the human senses, (Hultén et al, 2009) point out that more and more shops, supermarkets, hotels, destinations, restaurants, malls, and shopping centres are incorporating emotional linkages that derive the pleasure benefit for customers. For examples, Starbucks capitalises on creating and delivering a sensory experience to consumers as a way to strengthen the brand. The authors state that consumers derive value not just from the product or brand but rather in the consumption experience(s) derived therefrom.

According to (Krishna, 2012) many food manufacturers are emphasizing on how their product appeals to the different senses. They play with ambient sound, like music, in sand actual time spent in the shop/ restaurant and actual spending to influence consumer mood.

..9 *Psychological (elementary) – comfort, leisure, luxury, indulgence*

Day and Crask (2000) point to emotional value – the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of its ability to arouse feelings or affective states. Smith and Colgate (2007) suggest that products that offer the psychological benefits; comfort, luxury and indulgence include luxury goods such as Calvin Klein fragrances, a Volkswagen Beetle. These products speak to the customer's goals and desired states.

Bagozzi et al (1999) note that emotions arise in response to appraisals one makes for something of relevance (incident, episode) to one's well-being. Goals are defined as the object of one's desired states, where states are broadly defined as outcomes, events or processes. The self-regulation of goals is believed to be the main function of emotions, and emotions may be seen as (part of) coping processes.

It seems therefore that customers derive these psychological benefits from products that respond to their desires and goals and usually these are luxury/exclusive products.

..10 *2.2.10 Psychological (advanced) – aesthetics, sentiment, perception, sense of being, sense of belonging*

Barnard (2018) points out that this benefit is human centred and is derived from products that have psychological benefits. As examples, the author suggest products such as social media platforms, television, radio and magazines. To understand how for example, social media derives this benefit, (Holbrook, 1994) notes spirituality, morality, esteem and aesthetics as types of customer benefits. Esteem in particular is said to arise as a value from contemplation of one's own status as reflected in the opinion of others.

Proxy to the sense of belonging benefit is social benefits. Social benefits create a sense of belonging as they focus on the relationship itself rather than on the outcome (or result) of transactions. In some service settings "commercial friendships" may develop between providers and customers. It may increase customer commitment to the service provider (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2002). Furthermore, (Gwinner et al, 1998) suggest that customers feel connected and a sense of belonging after a relationship premised on trust and confidence in the product/ service provider has been established between the customer and the organization. This way customers may perceive social benefits as a result of having developed a relationship with the provider.

In addition, (Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2012) note that self-expression as a psychological motive induce some consumers to purchase green energy brands. These customers are noted to experience psychological benefits from being environmentally friendly, as well as their capacity to incur extra costs for the sake of the environment and society.

..11 *Power, authority, dominance*

The power, authority, dominance benefit is human centred. By purchasing or consuming the product the human is equipped, and empowered and as such exercises power in his environment (Barnard, 2018). Holbrook (1994) notes politics as ground that derives the power, authority and dominance. Barnard (2018) also notes products like atom bombs, guns, social media, radio, television, universities to have attributes that derive this benefit for customers. One can deduce that, universities, for example offer power, authority and dominance benefit through self-

equipment and social-cognitive competence which empowers students to exercise power/authority in their environments. Expanding on this, (Sharples, 2000) notes that lifelong learning has gained popularity through attempts to harness it as a means of providing people with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in a rapidly-changing world.

Parallel to this, (Bailey et al, 2009) note that, related to physical education and school sport, the emerging games ethic claims social benefit from sports. Sports participation creates developed leadership qualities, team spirit, deferred gratification and character. Sports participation improves self-esteem, self-perception and psychological well-being. It can be deduced that sports contribute to process of power, authority and dominance development.

..12 *Alteration, adaptation, modification, conversion*

The product allows for a change in ether the environment or itself in a way that is beneficial to the user. Focus is on the utility of the output. With the product the environment is modified, or converted (Barnard, 2018). An example of this is conversion of U.S wineries post-production waste into fertilizer (Polonsky and Rosenberger, 2001) and the use of refrigerators, air-conditioners, and infra-red (RD) /night vision to modify the environment (Barnard, 2018).

Zafar et al (2010) point out that in military-purpose surveillance, forward-looking infrared (FLIR) visual surveillance is used for its advantages in night vision to secure military camps, reassure soldier security, and detect suspected terror activities in the battle fields. Johnson (2004) states that night vision devices provide enormous benefits. They enable personnel to carry out operations under conditions that would not otherwise be possible.

Examples of product alteration are the used of biodiesel which has become increasingly attractive because of its environmental benefits and its renewable origin (Francisco et al, 2010) and the use of alternative fuels. Höök and Aleklett (2010) note that continued reliance on oil is unsustainable and this has resulted in interest in alternative fuels. In South Africa, coal is altered to liquid fuels through coal liquefaction technologies and the liquid fuels can have been successfully used in several cases.

..13 *Restoration, regeneration*

This benefit is derived from a product that makes it possible to repair, restore or regenerate something. Examples are adhesives, washing machine, tools, organic food, glue, etc. (Barnard, 2018). Tarkiainen and Sundqvist (2005) suggest that organic food has health restorative benefits. Siro et al (2008) share the same view suggesting that consumers more and more believe that foods contribute directly to their health by providing the necessary nutrients to improve their physical and mental well-being. Functional foods may restore and regenerate the general conditions of the body, decrease the risk of some diseases, and could even be used for curing some illnesses.

Another example of a restorative product is wellness tourism. Mueller and Kaufmann (2001) state that wellness tourism restores and regenerates tourists' health through stress-relief. One can infer that products such as spar treatments fall under this category as well.

In medical science, the concept of regenerative medicine is premised on using the body's own stem cells to repair tissues (Strauer and Kornowski, 2003). As example, stem cell therapy has been proposed as future therapies for neuro-degenerative diseases (Lindvall et al, 2004).

..14 *Negation (waste, side-effects, complications)*

This benefit is derived from products that reduce or eliminate waste, side effects or complications. Examples are products such as water predicators, flushing toilets, solar energy, etc. (Barnard, 2018). Ginsberg and Bloom (2004) also mention energy-efficient, water-conserving washer and dryer units as products that offer the negation benefit. They suggest that consumers value these products to the point that some are willing to pay an up-front premium for them.

Moreover, (Cronin et al, 2011) note that consumers' willingness to pay premiums for green products has led to organizations worldwide recognizing the appeal of environmentally friendly products and strategies. These companies seem to benefit as well.

The use of these products not only benefit consumers but producers as well. Rex and Baumann (2007) found that using less chemical products by 15% since the introduction of ecolabels for

household detergents saw the market share of ecolabelled printing paper is grow to more than 70% in the Nordic countries, and in Sweden, the market share of ecolabelled laundry detergents to 90%.

Atasu et al (2008) suggest that recycled products also derive the negation benefit. Recycling recovers value from used products by reducing both the natural resources needed to make a new product and by eliminating what would have been waste.

..15 *Elimination*

The product eliminates or reduces certain requirement, processes or the effort in use. Examples are bank cards, robotics, vehicles, etc. (Barnard, 2018). Technological products are suggested to predominantly offer this benefit. Mehdipour and Zerehkafi (2013) point out that Mobile learning devices are more lightweight than books and PCs while (Sharples,2000) argue that technology can form part of the environment that mediates learning, for example, by providing simulated labs, virtual worlds that mirror real locations, and online classrooms and colleges. The given examples illustrate how technology eliminates the effort in use of books and PC and the requirement to physically be at a place to facilitate learning.

Polonsky and Rosenberger (2001) note that Toyota is pursuing to offer this benefit by eliminating the need to own a car. The company is running a program whereby people purchase “transportation” by buying access to an electronic automobile fleet that can be used to travel short distances to shops and/ or connect with traditional public transportation. Uber is a similar example of a product that eliminates the requirement for one to own a car in order to be mobile.

..16 *Input, basic material*

This benefit is derived from products that generally are inputs for other products. Examples are cement, glue, plastics, paper, internet, etc. (Barnard, 2018). Mehdipour and Zerehkafi (2013) note that M-learning offers this benefit by being the platform through which multimedia content delivery and creation as final products are generated.

Another example is noted by (Sawhney et al, 2005); InnoCentive, a Web-based market by Eli Lilly is seen as a product which enables collaboration with lead users and communities of experts who have expertise to solve innovation related problems. The final product is the new products from the R&D efforts.

2.3 Conclusion

The elaborate CB listed above extends the basic CB: functional, symbolic, experiential and cost. Evidently, it provides an extensive array of benefits that entrepreneurs can incorporate and build into products to create unique value propositions. Entrepreneurs usually have a different idea of what customer benefits are to that defined by customers creating a knowledge gap in the application of customer benefits. (Woodruff, 1997). Furthermore, (Avlonitis and Salavou ,2007) suggests that active entrepreneurs embody more unique product innovativeness compared to passive entrepreneurs. To this end, the study proposes that *whilst a number of the benefit types are common and typical (cost, economy; capacity, efficiency, throughput, speed; simplicity, ease of use, convenience), a subset of the benefit types are more unique and perhaps less considered (psychological; power, authority, dominance). A number of the benefit types are also rising in prominence (restoration, regeneration; negation; elimination). Furthermore, whilst some of the benefit types are easier to implement and realize, a number of the benefit types may require more extensive levels of knowledge and skills*. It is an open question as to how advanced entrepreneurs are in terms of the CB and their application.

The literature review concludes with the following research question: how sophisticated and advanced are entrepreneurs in terms of CB? It includes the following sub-questions:

- How knowledgeable are entrepreneurs with regards to CB?
- How do entrepreneurs utilize and incorporate CB?

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research methodology or paradigm

..17 *Qualitative study*

Sale et al. (2002) notes two research paradigms; quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative methods is generally used to measure and analyse hypotheses within a free-value framework. The method takes the position that there is only one truth, an objective reality and therefore cannot access subjective experiences of participants. Noor (2008) states that a general approach to gain insight, discover and interpret a phenomenon rather than test a hypotheses is the qualitative route. The study thus employed a qualitative methodology in attempt to gain substantive insight of the entrepreneurs' perspectives and knowledge on customer benefits. This methodology was appropriate for the project because the research aimed not to test a hypotheses as there is no existing conceptual model on the research question, but to establish rich, detailed, in-depth interpretation of the entrepreneurs' experiences and knowledge of CB and to do so without losing any contextual details that may be missed through quantitative research methods.

3.2 Research design

The research employed a mixture of semi-structured interviews and open-ended interviews. Semi-structured interviews entailed preconceived questions which could be modified during interviews while open ended interviews let the conversation develop in an unstructured framework but within area of research (Teillingen, 2014). Semi-structured interviews were employed to cover and discuss each CB and utility but more open ended interviews were used to delve into each CB and afford participants a degree of freedom to share their own experiences and opinions.

..18 *Population and sample selection*

a. *Population*

Kalof et al. (2008) define a population as a total of all specimens studied. The population of the research constituted entrepreneurs in the services environment in South Africa.

b. *Sample*

Palinkas et al. (2015) suggest that purposeful sampling yields rich information and aids in gaining in-depth insight from participants. This sampling method best suits the purpose of the research and therefore will be utilized. The research deliberately selected entrepreneurs in the Johannesburg, Gauteng region as the research sample. The Johannesburg sample was chosen for practical reasons, ease of access and cost reasons.

The study narrowed its focus to entrepreneurs in the services industry to ensure manageable and comparable results but did not segment and constrain according to business type or segment nor constrain according to CB expertise. Participants were identified through professional and business networks. A total of ten (10) entrepreneurs in the service environment was used as the sample for the study. This sample size was considered appropriate to gather rich data as it was believed that the interviews would saturate at this point, with no additional insights gained. The researcher believes that the sample size was indeed sufficient to gather rich and relevant information. The selection criteria was as follows:

- A minimum of one business or partnership and/or a firm
- A minimum three years' experience in business

3.3 Research instrument

Semi-structured interviews were employed as the research instrument. The interview questions were distilled from the literature review in order to cover all the intended areas of the research while also giving the researcher flexibility in how they approach the different respondents. Noor (2008) notes that semi-structured interviews afford the interviewer flexibility in how they

approach different respondents while still covering the same areas of data collection. Each interview on average lasted an hour. The scope of interviews is provided as a supplementary file.

3.4 Data collection process

The interviews were conducted face to face and telephonically. Appointments were arranged at convenient location and time as deemed by the respondents. A consent letter was emailed to all participants prior to the interviews to ensure ethics compliance. The consent letter stated the purpose of the research, and assured the participate that all data, name and details would be kept confidential. The message also advised that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw at any time during the course of the interview. Contact details of the researcher and supervisor were also provided.

Interviews were recorded using a smartphone device. The participants were requested to give consent to record the interview before the interview. The interviews were recorded so a so as to adequately and accurately capture the account of the conversation. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded, and further analyzed.

3.5 Data analysis and interpretation

Byrne (2015) refers to a number of methods that can be used to analyze qualitative data, which include discourse analysis, thematic analysis, grounded theory to mention but a few. The study used thematic analysis method. The following steps as outlined by (Byrne, 2015) were followed.

Step1: Transcribed and reviewed data so as to become familiar with data. The researcher listened to the recordings and typed out word for word the conversations. The recordings were played over again to verify accuracy.

Step 2: Systematically generated codes by grouping concepts, words from the data. Concepts were identified by working through each section of the data and selecting (coding) as many interesting and relevant patterns as possible. The patterns/concepts were highlighted as

comments on the transcript.

Step 3: Identified themes from the generated codes by grouping related codes into themes. The themes were consolidated into a single document from which a mind map was created.

Step 4: Reviewed themes/mind map relating to the data and looked for patterns to make sense of the entire dataset. At this stage the themes were depicting a clear picture and starting to tell a story.

Step 5: This stage involved reviewing and analyzing the themes in relation to the research questions. Quotes were selected form the interviews to back up inferences/conclusions and drew the results back to the research question.

Step 6: Lastly, a detailed write-up of the analysis in relation to the research questions was carried out. The narrative of the data was presented in this section.

3.6 Validity, reliability and limitations

..19 *Validity*

To produce a trustworthy report, two types of validity were considered; external and internal. External validity is the extent to which findings can be generalized to greater population, times or setting. Internal validity is the extent to which the research is justified on conclusions made from findings (Johnson, 1997). Since the objective of the research was to gain insight from subjective experiences of the population, weak externalisation was considered acceptable. To ensure internal validity, the following steps were taken:

- Pilot studies were carried out to test that construct and concepts (wording) used in the interview were understood and that the instrument gathered what it should. The researcher also leveraged the pilot studies to familiarize themselves with the interview guide and examine bias throughout the process.
- Triangulation, which is asking the same question in different ways was also carried out during the pilot studies to gauge if the respondents gave the same response.

..20 *Reliability*

Reliability is the degree to which results are considered consistent and accurate and with the qualitative method, precision and credibility of the results is of concern (Golafshani, 2003). To help reliability, the researcher took the following steps:

- The researcher did not experiment with the questions during interviews but stuck to the interview questionnaire.
- The researcher made sure the context of the research and interview questions were well understood. Misunderstandings during the interviews and unclear questions were clarified.
- To encourage the participants to provide truthful and reliable answers the researcher maintained an objective stance throughout the process by fostering an environment where participants were free to give accounts of their experiences, with no right or wrong answers.

..21 *Limitations*

The researcher was mindful of the following limitations and weaknesses of the study;

- Using interviews as data collection instrument implies that the researcher is actively involved in data collection and data is mediated through this human instrument, which may result in a one dimension view and interpretation of the data (Atieno, 2009). To avoid this, the researcher remained objective during interviews, included and analysed all data in the write up without neglecting other valuable relevant information, whether supportive or contradictive.
- The nature of the research limits the testing of data for statistical significance. Therefore, the findings of the research cannot be extended to other populations with the same degree of certainty as findings from a quantitative research (Atieno, 2009). The researcher was mindful of this, however quantitative instruments could not be employed because the nature of the research required in-depth, detailed data that could

accurately be captured through qualitative instruments. To manage this limitation, the researcher narrowed the focus of the study to a specific industry in order to get comparable responses across the sample size and therefore can, to a degree extend the results to other populations.

4. Results of study

This chapter presents an assessment of the benefits that help answer the main research question and sub-questions to this study.

The study sampled ten entrepreneurs in the services space. The study did not segment and constrain according to business activities. Customer benefit is assumed to be the principal factor of customer value. The impact of business activities on CB and perceptions thereof are considered negligible. The business activities ranged from marketing consulting services, general business consulting services, small business coaching/ incubation, market entry and promotions strategists, and business management and administration services.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how sophisticated and advanced entrepreneurs are in terms of CB. It includes the following sub-questions:

- How knowledgeable are entrepreneurs with regards to CB?

- How do entrepreneurs utilize and incorporate CB? That is, how extensively they consider and apply CB, whether there are gaps in their consideration of the CB, and whether there are particular technicalities or intricacies that accompany the implementation of the CB.

Below the participants' assessments of the benefits are individually captured in tables and the possibility and prominence of the benefit within the business are reviewed. The table columns from left to right, are the participant number, the evaluation of the benefit, and the description of the benefit and its application. With regards to the evaluation of the benefit, for each participant, each benefit is ranked according to application or utility (1 = present; 2 = absent, and not possible; 3 = absent, but possible), and recognition or awareness (4 = recognized; 5 = not recognized; 6 = partially recognized). A benefit being present, means the business is

actively implementing the benefit. Conversely, a benefit being absent, means the business is not actively implementing the benefit. A distinction is made between benefits that are not actively implemented, and that are not really practically implementable – practical; and benefits that are not actively implemented, and that are not actually practically implementable – practical. A benefit that is recognized, implies the participant is fairly cognizant of the benefit. Conversely, a benefit that is not recognized, implies the participant is not cognizant of the benefit. A benefit that is partially recognized, implies the participant is only vaguely aware of the benefit.3

4.1 Presentation of results

..22 *Cost, economy*

Most of the participants rather focused on value offering, than price competition. Consequently, the benefit: cost, economy, did not receive a lot of attention, and was not predominant. As some entrepreneurs pointed out, "the degree of the value or the financial benefit that the customer derives is far more than the input costs". It seems that value consciousness surpasses cost consciousness in the services space. At the same time, it is taken that, in most cases, the benefit is certainly possible, and may either imply a blue ocean strategy – competing on both cost and value – and/ or product line or range extension – offering both predominantly cost-focused and value-focused products. Overall, the particular benefit is well known.

Participant	**Benefit ranking**	**Description**
1	3; 4	More of a focus on return on investment. Hence, more a focus on offering value, than competing on price per se.
2	3; 4	Rather value conscious, than cost conscious. Focus on quality, more than cost.
3	3; 4	The participant does not seem to focus on cost, focuses on quality rather Making sure the customer receives or realizes more value, than what the customer is charged
4	1; 4	Definitely a cost consciousness, and trying to make it as affordable for the customer as possible. This benefit is evidently present and focused on.
5	3; 4	Little (nothing) suggests a focus on this benefit per se.
6	3; 4	Product/ service innovation, rather than cost competition.

		Focusing on saving the customer costs over the long term, may be seen as a form of this benefit. This benefit is not really present, or being strongly focused on.
7	1; 4	Cost, economy. A focus on making/ keeping it affordable. (Collagen :) A focus on cost. Keeping it affordable.
8	1; 4	The participant is trying to achieve economies of scale, and is focusing on and conscious of price. In a way, he is trying to compete on cost as well. Things like economies of scale will allow him to offer things like discounts, etc.
9	3; 4	Some focus on and consciousness of cost. At the same time, focusing on offering/ adding additional value – net positive value.
10		

..23 *Capacity, efficiency, throughput, speed*

In general, the benefit: capacity, efficiency, throughput and speed is well known, and well represented. Most (all) participants are cognizant of the benefit, and incorporating it into their products. This is evidenced by some of the considerations the entrepreneurs have taken in creating their offerings, such as "focusing on improving the customer's performance" or "increasing the efficiency of the customer, simply by making the customer more effective", "process automation" and "helping customers with their capacity issues, as this affects their capacity significantly." This is hardly surprising, given that the relationship to and impact of the benefit on success or performance is well established. It is quite evident, clear, and recognized that and how the benefit impacts performance.

Participant	**Benefit ranking**	**Description**
1	1; 4	A strong focus on marketing efficiency. A focus on marketing ROI and related performance measures. Other observable results from the mails (as product sent to customers' customers) are also expected, like return mails (responses). This introduces an accuracy and efficiency component.
2	1; 4	A lot of emphasis on strategy, and then also grand strategy, which relates to the way the customer plans to compete and get ahead. It can be depicted as success: helping the customer to be more successful. It thus relates to accuracy and efficiency; doing things right.
3	1; 4	Increasing the marketing efficiency of the customer. The business is able to improve the efficiency of some of their customers' businesses.

4	1; 4	Increasing the efficiency of the entrepreneur as customer, simply by making the entrepreneur more effective as an entrepreneur.
5	1; 4	Improving the efficiency of customers' businesses. Making the customer's business more efficient – doing things differently
6	1; 4	Helping the customer become more efficient. Helping LE's with their capacity and capacity planning.
7		-
8	1; 4	There is evidence that this benefit is present. Customers resident on the same platform can make things easier (more efficient) for a number of stakeholders. Making the processes, particularly customer processes of government, more efficient.
9	1; 4	An increase in marketing and (thus) organizational efficiency. The participant is helping businesses to both market more efficiently (it is faster or costs less), and to market more accurately (targeting etc., is more accurate).
10	1; 4	Speed. Creating value through speed of service or delivery. The customer's business is made more efficient, and capacity is increased.

..24 *Simplicity, ease of use, convenience*

This constitutes another basic, well-known and familiar – elementary - benefit. Consequently, most participants are fully aware of the benefit, and are incorporating it into their products. At the same time, one of the first instances of confusing or misconstruing a benefit occurs and is recorded here. Some entrepreneurs interpreted and incorporate the benefit as either flexibility in their business model or offering, while some misconstrued it for "absolute flexibility, always on availability and reliability". This may or may not be unfair assessment. Participants did not necessarily have the full list of benefits beforehand, and did not necessarily prepare or study the benefits prior to the interview. Knowing the list of benefits beforehand, could have affected how participants categorized and contextualized benefits. On the other hand, it provides a much more truthful assessment of how benefits are actually considered, and not considered.

Participant	**Benefit ranking**	**Description**
1	1; 4	Online platform and editors. Made the technology very simple to use. Have made marketing as service a lot simpler.
2	1; 4	Customer focused. Focusing on making it as simple and convenient as possible for the customer.

3	1; 6	The participant is rather discussing empowerment – what would constitute as empowering the customer, and the power, authority, dominance benefit – and the quality of work as focus or aspect. The participant mentions adopting to the needs of the customer. This would suggest that the benefit may be present, although nothing was mentioned that specifically points to it. It seems also that she is going out of her
4	1; 4	Making (a lot of) things very easy and simple for the entrepreneur as customer. Making the journey of the aspirant or novice entrepreneur in becoming experienced, very easy and hassle-free.
5		-
6	1; 4	Making it (things, the process) more convenient for the customer. At least for the LE: The business takes the hassle out of government legislation and regulation. Making it easy for SME's too. Not too stringent in terms of requirements, etc. Being accommodative.
7	1/3;4/6	(Collagen :) Although perhaps not a major benefit, there is some aspect of this benefit. It constitutes a very easy and convenient protein. An easy protein intake. The ability to purchase it online certainly increases convenience.
8	1; 4	Indeed, making it easier for the customer. Making it simpler, faster, and more efficient for customers. Helping people put things in order. Offering extended services and products.
9	1; 4	Making it very easy for the customer to make use of the participant's services. Consultation is not always fun, but she changes that around.
10	1; 4	Expanding into other markets is made simpler, etc. Offering a holistic solution to customers.

..25 *Extent, span, duration*

This particular benefit starts to depart and deviate from – break away from – the (group of) elementary benefits. It is still relatively straightforward and known, but based on its application, it becomes apparent that it is intermediate, in terms of complexity (elementary/ advanced). For example, some of the entrepreneurs related that extending the span or lifetime of their customers' businesses "is not a hard and fast rule but it does happen". The benefit cannot be guaranteed. "It's not a machine that you put into a factor to say if you use this machine you can get 10 years on the machine and your life expectancy on business". Already, there are rather innovative, and perhaps uncommon, unique or distinct, applications (as part) of the benefit.

Participant	**Benefit ranking**	**Description**

1	1; 4	The product helps customers to stay connected to their own customers. Can argue that the product extends the lifetime of customers' customers – it helps with customer retention.
2	1; 6	The benefit is possible. One can argue that, to simply help the customer's business with marketing and strategy, particularly long term, and perhaps re-branding, are all extending activities. It extends the organization and ensures its survival. Thus, an activity that increases the foresight of the customer's business
3	1; 4	The participant is discussing growth and (in the context of) globalization: Helping customers to expand. Talking about globalization equally involves rebranding and repositioning businesses in a sense. Especially through rebranding, product lifetimes are extended.
4	1; 4	The business can extend the career and career span of entrepreneurs as its customers.
5	1; 4	Being broad and thorough when it comes to being able to identify problems. For start-ups, this particularly translates into life span – the likelihood and ability to survive and get off the ground.
6	1; 4	In a sense, extending the lifetime or shelf life of the entrepreneur. The SME/ entrepreneur moves to a higher bracket and level. In many cases, if the entrepreneur can get it right once, he is set for life. He will likely be independent as entrepreneur thereafter, as he will know the ropes and process, etc.
7		-
8		-
9	1; 4	Marketing, and more efficient marketing, can increase a product's lifetime and revenue.
10		-

..26 *Flexibility, variation, variety*

This still constitutes a well-known and (therefore) elementary benefit. Most participants are well aware of the benefit, and incorporate it into products. Most participants are very accommodative of customers and their needs, and adapt accordingly, extensively. The entrepreneurs regard this benefit as "the service offered, the added value for the customer."

Participant	Benefit ranking	Description
1	1; 4	Offering custom-designed or customized products to customers, according to their needs. There is a lot of flexibility or freedom on the side of the customer in using the product. The business is able to cater for a variety of customers – big and small.
2	1; 4	Very conscious of the customer's unique requirements, and adapting to it. A lot of adapting to customers' needs.
3	1; 4	The business is adapting standard processes according to customer needs, and is solving very unique problems.
4	1; 4	Much adapting to the customer and offering the customer a lot of flexibility.
5	1; 4	Adjusting to the entrepreneur as customer, and his particular needs. Adapting to customers' needs and problems. Also able to be creative in this regard. This reference to creativity is rather equated to flexibility. The participant is able to adapt to very unique businesses, circumstances and problems.
6	1; 4	Adapting to individual customer needs. Offering customized services.
7	1; 4	Sports shoes versus recreational shoes: Shoes for multiple occasions.
8	1; 4	The platform allows the service providers flexibility to configure and adapt the platform to their specific needs. Customers are able to configure the modules.
9	1; 4	A focus on flexibility. Adapting to the customer. The participant is very flexible, and adapts to the customer. Tailoring and extending the offering to each customer's specific needs.
10	1; 4	Adapting to customers' unique needs. Adapting to the lifestyles, and thus needs, of customers, for example when they need to travel, etc., particularly to Africa

..27 *Reliability, dependability*

Given it is a well-known and familiar concept, the benefit is well-known, but intermediate in terms of complexity (elementary/ advanced). Most participants are well aware of the benefit, and most participants incorporate the benefit. It is possible to approach the benefit both from the perspective of the business, and the perspective of the customer. From the business' perspective, it implies a focus and emphasis on expertise – being perceived as reputable, and an expert or guru. Its expertise causes a business to be seen as reliable and dependable. From the customer's perspective, emphasis is on receiving and accruing the benefits associated with having access to an expert. The expertise of the business as expert spills over to the customer, and the customer directly benefits from it. The benefit causes the customer to receive more

expert input, and increases stability and accuracy of/ for the customer. In many cases, the benefit implies participants are helping customers to get and do things right.

Participant	Benefit ranking	Description
1	1; 4	One can argue that there is some degree of this benefit, in that marketing reaching customers, can be guaranteed. Although only delivery, delivery of mails can be guaranteed. The benefit is also present, to the extent that the product helps the customer to market more accurately and consistently. Also, the benefit is present, to the extent that the customer can capitalize on the mentioned reputation of the business – in this case, the consistency and reliability of the business. As mentioned, a focus on marketing ROI and related performance measures. Other observable results from the mails are also expected, like return mails (responses). This introduces an accuracy and efficiency component. Collecting feedback, having developers further develop products, watching the competition, and proposing to big clients – all things the business does - are all ways to push this benefit: reliability and dependability, from the vantage point of the business – being seen as reputable. It increases the expert-factor – expertise – of the business, and this realizes as reliability and dependability.
2	1; 4	The results or targets are noted and agreed upfront. Noting results upfront is very much the guru benefit. As noted, coaches should help with performance – improve and increase performance. Part of performance would be accuracy. Doing the right things right, and stop doing the wrong things. Also, the coach builds and banks on his reputation and credibility. And credibility – being an expert or guru - offers certain benefits to the customer. The coach is likely reliable and dependable, in the sense that he will provide expert input and advice, because he is an expert. The participant discusses integrity and reputation. He is much discussing the benefit from his perspective or side, not that of the customer. Being dependable and reliable, in other words reputable. To be reputable has benefits, and the participant may even require it, and compete that way. At the same time, it also sets certain standards of excellence: to be really good in what you offer and provide. From the customer's perspective the benefit would imply to be more accurate: To do more of the right things, and less of the wrong things. And it is likely that the participant is helping his customers in that way, through his consultations.

3	1; 4	If the business is building and relying on its reputation, it is aiming to activate this benefit. Desiring to be seen as distinct, based on credibility. So, being a credible, reliable, and informed source and service provider. As customer, you go to them, because they are the experts. Also, reducing marketing error on the side of the customer. Preventing the customer from marketing in the wrong way. From the perspective of the business, the benefit is present and strongly focused on. The business is trying to provide quality, and to be reputable. It comes down to being an expert and professional, and all the benefits that come and associate with that. Being a guru is interpreted as providing a reliability, dependability benefit. You are reliable, accurate, and consistent. From the customer's perspective, the benefit is also present. Consulting on marketing, implies marketing is (made) more effective, and less marketing errors are made. Preventing the customer from making wrong marketing decisions, choices, moves, and increasing the accuracy of marketing. The business is also doing business consulting. Thus, it can again be argued that the accuracy of the business is improved. Making more right decisions and moves, and less wrong decisions and moves. In what the participant is describing, she is actually very much helping the customer to be consistent. Literally. Few businesses get implementation right. She is focusing on implementation, by providing a guide and 'workshop' or consultation sessions for/ around it. She is also describing strategy, and helping the customer business with strategy, which is also increasing business accuracy – more right choices and less wrong choices.
4	1; 4	Increasing the credibility (standing) of the customer. Through experience, etc.], also offering the customer reliability, resulting in stability and backing (support). The reputation, brand, credibility, experience and expertise of the business itself, and the impact it has on the entrepreneur as customer. There is definitely spill-over and impact due to this. The benefit of the business as a very reliable partner, and the benefits this holds. It is almost like a very credible or highly regarded book or online source - reference. Also, approaching the benefit from the perspective of reducing the error of the entrepreneur as customer. The number of faults, mistakes, bad choices, etc., that the entrepreneur makes. It is related to the efficiency of the entrepreneur, but different. Here, it is specifically the number of errors he makes, and reducing that.
5	1; 4	The participant is predominantly emphasizing experience and thoroughness. Both are benefit composites really, yet with strong benefit: reliability premises. The participant mentions putting measures in place, which is interpreted as (focusing on) improving the accuracy of the customer's business. Reputation. Trust. Being dependable and reliable. Increasing the accuracy of the customer. Reducing error within the customer's business (stop doing the wrong things). Bringing vast and extensive (business) experience to the table. The participant is really able to sniff out problems and make improvements others will not even pick up. His experience is bound to spill over onto the customer, and push the customer to the next level.
6	1; 4	Reputation. The reputation of the business relies on the quality of service offered to both SME and LE customers. A focus on quality work. Making everything just more stable and certain. Removing uncertainty and risk. Making things a lot more certain for the customer. Definitely for LE's: Making their supply chain and capacity a lot more reliable and certain. Removing/ reducing complications. Helping entrepreneurs become more accurate. Trust. Knowing the business is reliable

7	1; 4	An ethical base/ foundation and consistent customer value. A reliable product and seller. Trust: The ability to trust someone with something like your health. Sports shoes versus recreational shoes: Shoes specifically for jogging.
8	1; 4	Improving the reliability, etc. of government, or helping government to improve its reliability (filling the gap). The benefit is present in moving from estimates to accurate measures – accurate billing. Trust; Being dependable; Professional relationship; being very professional.
9	1; 4	Reputation. Word of mouth. The value may only be apparent to the customer in the end, after he has gone through the process. The participant strives to be known to be reliable. She keeps promises. The participant increases the marketing efficiency, and thus the organizational efficiency. If it results in a marketing department, etc., that consistently markets better, this benefit is definitely achieved and provided. Being known to be reliable, increases repeat business for the participant, and ease of mind for the customer.
10	1; 5	The participant does not actually think this benefit is provided. Looking to new markets and entering new markets. Knowledge and trust are key here. Building relationships. Adding value by connecting people. Creating value through (initiating) collaborations. Trust and transparency. Reliability is increased for the customer. Markets are a lot more stable. The market risk of the customer is reduced, which implies a reduction in marketing error, and an increase in marketing accuracy.

..28 *Health, longevity, safety, risk-reduction*

The benefit may not be too unfamiliar, yet it is a more advanced benefit, and one of the more advanced benefits. The benefit is easily and readily interpreted in a very narrow sense, ”yes, particularly in the use of the factories, we have a technical manager who also looks after the HSE side so the answer to that is yes” and the first instances of participants not fully aware of the benefit, and offering the benefit, are recorded. Many of the participants are already offering the benefit, by reducing risk and stress for their customers, but without really cognizant of it, and realizing it. Few participants related the benefit to risk-reduction, and only those with a very clear and direct health focus, was more cognizant of the benefit. It is believed that there is still significant potential to further offer and extend this particular benefit, and that participants will easily and readily do so, the moment they are more cognizant of the benefit.

Participant	Benefit ranking	Description
1	1; 6	One can argue that the benefit is present, to the extent that it reduces the stress of the customer. Also, the product should reduce uncertainty in the marketing and (thus) the business of the customer – more efficient and accurate marketing should, among other things, lead to more customer feedback, particularly in this case, and thus a business that is easier to manage.
2	1; 6	(Removing stress emanating from) lack of understanding and capacity. Reducing uncertainty. Increasing certainty. Reducing stress. Increasing (intermediary) results and feedback, so that progress is clear. The personal view of a customer is mentioned, not just the business or professional view. The participant also mentions helping customers with their confidence
3	1; 6	Reducing risk and uncertainty – stress – for the customer. The benefit is possible.
4	1; 6	Reducing the risk and stress of/ for the entrepreneur as customer. The benefit is interpreted very directly, perhaps also due to lack of awareness and knowledge of the benefit. The participant believes he provides a health benefit, but thinks it is indirectly via confidence as benefit, rather than directly. Confidence should improve or impact health. Still, the participant is not directly calling it stress, and rather states and emphasizes the converse of the argument: lack of confidence (which can be associated or equated to stress) reduces health. The participant is rather noting the psychological benefit he provides, instead of the health benefit.
5		-
6	1; 6	Reducing risk. Risk and uncertainty are reduced (particularly) for the LE. (Even, stress is reduced for people of the LE.)
7	1; 4	A Focus on health. (Collagen :) Clear, specific health benefits. Healthy aging. Sports shoes versus recreational shoes: Health implications of right/ wrong sport shoes. Also risk reduction. Online shopping – making online shopping as secure as possible
8	1; 4	Improving people's lives and living standards. In that sense, and in this context, also reducing people's risk. Well-being: reducing stress. Reducing risk and improving well-being
9	1; 4	The participant helps to reduce the risk for customers. Risk to the customer is also reduced, by allowing the customer to first 'test' the offering.

..29 *Sensation*

The benefit may be perceived as familiar, but just as easily misconstrued. It is definitely more of an advanced benefit that is more difficult to incorporate, particularly outside of a narrow-minded conception. Not all/ many participants are fully aware of the benefit, and how to implement and incorporate the benefit in their products, although there is evident and significant room to do so. Correspondingly, many participants interpret the benefit in a very direct sense (to constitute pleasure), and thus fail to recognize potential to implement and apply the benefit.

In many ways, apart from, or outside of, a primary focus on pure pleasure, the benefit has more of a complementary role. It forms part of, gets behind, supports, and complements other benefits. Perhaps it may simply be seen and defined as: involving the senses, for (to realize) some benefit. Many participants provide marketing. The benefit, and invoking the benefit, should naturally be embedded in and part of marketing, particularly in the sense of activation of and incorporation of the senses, as part of and when communicating value to customers. It is much similar to invoking the benefit as part of learning, which is discussed next. A number of participants also provide learning. Again, sensation can comprise a significant and important part of learning, whereby the senses are incorporated into and forms part of learning, thereby enhancing, and even accelerating, learning. The senses, and also sense or vivid experiences, are triggered and invoked, as part of learning, to enhance learning. In a very similar way, a number of participants equally focus on surroundings and environments – enhancing surroundings and environments, and their appeal, to enhance attitude, participation, inspiration, motivation, etc., this way. Another way the benefit is applied, is the immediate feeling or sensation a product may invoke upon consumption – how the product makes the customer/ consumer as person feel, the moment he has the product in his possession, and consumes it, also in the sense of image and looks/ appeal.

Participant	Benefit ranking	Description
1	1; 4	It is possible that the business is helping its customers to incorporate sensation in their marketing to their customers.
2	1; 6	The participant does not think he actively or intentionally provides the benefit. But, much like the benefits: psychological (elementary) and psychological (advanced), sensation is much psychological or simply subjective. Thus, the participant may not intend on the benefit, but deliver it in any way. Similarly, providing peace of mind to the customer may also not be his direct intention, but nevertheless something he does. The fact that he is a coach, and interacts at the personal level, and gets rather close with people, and the fact that he provides intermediary results and points to intermediary successes, suggests that he is stimulating the senses, and indeed providing the benefit. Although it may only be temporary, and for short periods of time, he is likely making people feel good, and better – about themselves, circumstances, or in general.

3	1; 4	Providing the visuals or experience to go with consultations, work or advice – physically and actually showing the customer what it would look like. It is taken that this constitutes the benefit. Also, marketing in general builds on sensation. It is taken that marketing very much involves this benefit. Thus, it is strongly expected that the benefit is present.
4	1; 6	6 The participant does not believe the benefit is present. Yet, there is sufficient evidence that it actually is. Using sensation to market the customer. A lot of the promotion of the entrepreneur as customer builds on sensation. The business offers marketing services to the entrepreneurs as customers, whereby the business promotes the entrepreneurs. That very much builds on sensation. The entrepreneur is made to appear, present, and come across as "appealing." Thus, the business is in fact using and building on the benefit.
5		-
6	1; 4	Minding the environment. Ensuring pleasant surroundings and environments, for conducive surroundings and environments. Possibly a strong link between sensation and learning. It is possible to make learning more pleasurable, memorable, or efficient through sensation. And sensation can induce learning itself, such that the sensation becomes valuable to the person.
7	1; 6	Looks, image (at the moment of consumption); instigating a certain feeling or sensation with the person, associated with having or consuming the product. (Collagen :) The product may have a certain taste. Looks; Image (at the moment of consumption). Sports shoes versus recreational shoes: Looks; Image; Specific feeling (at the moment of consumption).
8	1; 6	Incentivizing people/ behaviour indirectly invokes this benefit, but it may only be more indirectly. The senses are involved as part of shaping behaviour, which involves other benefits, and not more directly for its own sake. Possibly making a very mundane activity and environment, like government services, as appealing, pleasant and accommodating as possible. Involving the senses for learning. Involving the senses can deepen the learning experience, and can give the person a memory.
9	1; 4	Taking parts or aspects of the offering, that may not be pleasurable, but necessary, and making it more enjoyable. Also, using the senses to increase experience, experiences, interaction, and transfer, like learning. (Helping customers with) using and involving senses to increase the impact, effect and benefit of a product.
10	1; 4	Treating customers 'nicely', particularly during conferences and summits. Thus, ensuring pleasurable, conducive, and inspiring surroundings and environments. Also related to the psychological benefits, ensuring that customers do not even realize they are away from home, when they travel (abroad).

..30 *Psychological (elementary)*

Perhaps surprising, the benefit is not that well-known, particularly when considering participants' awareness of the benefit. Although not that readily applied by participants, the benefit may actually not be that difficult to implement. In many instances, it involves entreating customers, and catering to luxury needs. Interestingly, few participants consider providing luxury services, and extending product lines or ranges in that way. Here, luxury needs may also simply be described as above-average needs or expectations – defining what going the extra mile, and raising the bar, entail, and then providing it. It is doubted whether this is ascribable to a lack of demand. Rather, it is taken that it simply constitutes an untapped opportunity and market.

Participant	Benefit ranking	Description
1	3; 6	The benefit is interpreted very directly. The benefit can be present, to the extent that the business caters to and offers extended services to posh or upmarket clients. Or, one can argue that the benefit is present, to the extent that the business helps its customers to market to, reach, and offer extended services to, posh or upmarket customers, or simply to market more exclusively – incorporate luxury and indulgence into marketing
2	1; 6	As a coach, the participant can certainly cater to upper class clients, and provide them extra services related to comfort and leisure. A coach is also associated with a luxury. The participant discusses success or accomplishment: Luxury in the sense of wealth, and reaching such a state. Helping the customer become wealthy. It is believed that the benefit is present, because it is the belief that the participant essentially pampers his customers, as he is very mindful of their well-being, mood, etc. He is customer-focused, in all the meanings thereof. Coaching is also more of a luxury service.
3	3; 6	This benefit is possible, if the business follows a boutique or posh strategy or segmentation as well. Just that image activates the benefit
4	3; 6	It is possible for the business to incorporate the benefit. The benefit can be present and instigated, if it is a posh school, or if the customer is inflated – i.e. creating a bubble around the customer. If the business is a posh school, it would entail the benefit. And if the business puts the entrepreneur as customer in a bubble, it would constitute the benefit too.
5		-
6	3; 6	The benefit is not really present, and it may be difficult in the business' context. Offering this particular benefit may conflict with the business' focus on/ of forming and constituting a middleman between LE's and SME's, and assisting in terms of legislation, which may be far more of a standard, standardized, or regulated process – having more of a set outcome, or set or definite deliverables. This may contrast with offering more upper-class services. At the same time, the business may simply consider a separate product line or extension.
7	1; 4	Health shoes sold by the business, for instance. Some buy it for comfort and leisure. It can be luxury as well. (Collagen :) It is possible to position and market it as a luxury and indulgence. Comfort in the sense of bodily comfort, and the opposite of pain. Sports shoes versus recreational shoes: Comfortable shoes. Luxury shoes. Being at ease about the product.

8	3; 6	Nothing the participant mentions, creates the idea that this benefit is active. If the participant were to offer services where someone will do the customer's business on his behalf – go to a government department on behalf of the customer, to pick up something, for example – it would constitute this benefit.
9	1; 4	The participant provides benefits along the line of comfort, leisure, luxury, and personal indulgence – considering the personal demands of the customer. The participant is addressing and catering for customer's needs like not wanting others to know, which is seen as a type of personal indulgence, or subjective need, much related to character or personality.
10	1; 4	Adapting to the lifestyles, and thus needs, of customers, for example when they need to travel, etc., particularly to Africa.

..31 *Psychological (advanced)*

Although less of an elementary benefit, and more of an advanced benefit, participants are generally well aware of the benefit, and how to add and derive value through the benefit. "The goal is to build trust between people and customer relationship in every practical way and so the answer to that is, yes". The connection between psyche, and success or performance, is well formed, realized, and ascribed to. Self-image and self-confidence form prominent aspects of psyche. Other aspects include perspective (outlook), ambition. Then, relationship, and reaching/ attaining deeper levels of relationship, and the benefits this unlocks, form an additional component of the particular benefit.

Participant	**Benefit ranking**	**Description**
1	1; 4	In a sense, what the participant is describing, is helping relationships with their own customers, through effective and accurate, but also high-level marketing. The business may offer the benefit to its own customers, through success – impacting and shaping the success of customers.
2	1; 4	The participant is likely to impact the psyche of the person he is coaching. He is also there to improve the performance or success of the person he is coaching. This can also include self-image and self-confidence. It is thus considered and kept in mind that the participant is consulting, and thus likely impacting confidence and psyche.

3	1; 4	The participant is discussing increasing confidence and self-confidence of customer businesses: Increasing the confidence of the customer, because he sees the participant believes in him, his business, and the potential in both cases. The business is impacting the way the customer business sees itself, and thinks of itself – its self-image. Marketing is much about image, and the business itself adopts the image. The success factor and aspect: Improving the self-image of the customer business, and shaping the way the customer business thinks. Also, instilling a sense of meaning and purpose. The more successful a business, the more the sense of purpose and accomplishment.
4	1; 4	The participant is describing instilling a certain culture in the entrepreneur as customer. The participant is also describing providing a certain culture and environment to the entrepreneur as customer. This affects the entrepreneur's thinking, creativity, and innovativeness. So, very much psychological. Also, again much connected to success.
5	1; 4	A focus on success: increasing the success of the customer, and making the customer more successful. Customers feeling more successful, thinking more successful, acting more successful/ differently.
6	1; 4	A focus on success. Impacting and working in on (self) image and the psychological aspects of success. The participant also mentions soft skills. Soft skills may equally constitute a benefit composite. It translates to personhood, and the success of the person. It can involve the benefit: psychological (advanced), as well as the benefit: Power, authority, dominance.
7	1; 4	Image created or advanced/ enhanced by products, as an advanced psychological construct. (Collagen :) The product can impact how the person feels about himself, and how the person feels about life in general
8	1; 4	Instigating (a) certain behaviour may have psychological consequence: Feeling great, better about yourself, your world/ environment, etc.
9	1; 4	Helping the customer to be successful, and achieve success. Helping customers with a sense of purpose. Increasing the confidence of the customer. The participant is referring to self-esteem. It can also be seen as confidence. The participant very specifically discusses increasing personal confidence. It can of course also be work or business confidence. A consultation is bound to (also) increase work and business confidence.
10	1; 4	The psychological aspects of success and being successful. The participant's business increases the success of customers, and thus makes them feel relevant. One can also say the business increases the confidence of their customers (through marketing and entering new markets, and to enter new markets).

..32 *Power, authority, dominance*

The benefit is less known, and also a more advanced benefit. Yet, a number of participants are already extensively providing the benefit, by being consultants, and doing consulting work. The benefit is predominantly provided through knowledge transfer, and learning (teaching, education). A number of participants are empowering their customers, through their knowledge and expertise. For example, one of the participants related, "So I kind of believe that if we don't equip them with everything we haven't done our job right, otherwise we would be forcing them to use our services because then I am the only who knows how their brand works. So we equip them, train them to help their business flow." The benefit may also entail increasing the experience of customers, and providing customers with experience. Also, conducting data analysis. Furthermore, certain products themselves may provide this particular benefit, as the product may impact the image and perception of the consumer.

Participant	Benefit ranking	Description
1	1; 4	The tools and services the business is providing to its customers, are definitely empowering the customers. Also, the business acts as a marketing consultancy, so based on this very fact, there is empowerment involved. The participant is describing helping customers with customer relationship building. This is also a likely consequence of empowering, and having empowered, the customer.
2	1; 6	The participant discusses the benefit more in the context of confidence, which may be more the benefit: Psychological (advanced). It is seen as more of a psychological aspect, rather than a knowledge aspect. Yet, it is likely that the benefit is present and offered, given that a lot of consultation and (thus) empowerment take place. The participant mentions helping customers think for themselves.
3	3; 6	The benefit is likely offered, to the extent that the business is consulting. The business is perceived to be a marketing consulting house.
4	1; 6	Increasing the likelihood of success of the entrepreneur as customer, and empowering him. Empowering the customer through coaching and education. Making (a lot of) things very easy and simple for the entrepreneur as customer. Making the journey of the aspirant or novice entrepreneur in becoming experienced, very easy and hassle-free. (The participant is also noting self-image. Working in on that and changing or impacting that, would constitute more the benefit: psychological (advanced).)
5	1; 4	Consultation and education. Empowering customers. Also, the transfer of knowledge already mentioned: Knowledge and experience spilling over to the customer. In addition, being broad and thorough when it comes to being able to identify problems.
6	1; 4	A strong focus on and delivery/ offering of this benefit. Consultation. Empowering through education and consultation. Empowering the SMEs. Definitely offered to the secondary customers – the SMEs. It can also be empowering the LE's. It can be for the primary customers – the LE's (large enterprises) - to the extent that they are taught/ shown how to deal with SME's and legislation/ compliance (BEE), and to the extent that this can become, or be turned into, a core competency and competitive advantage

7	1; 4	Status products and symbols can elevate the person through his image: image can impress power, authority, dominance, etc. Other than that, the benefit is not really present, except for the fact that the participant consults and educates customers. The benefit is present to the extent that he helps customers make the right decision. But, it must be true consultation, and not just simply part of, or an extension of, marketing. The customer is taught on his body, food, and health, and that should empower him to make better choices.
8	1; 4	Empowerment: Data analytics, future needs, etc. Gamification, learning, information, analytics. In providing service providers with data, this benefit is enacted. Empowering people (customers) to make better decisions. Empowering a person by shaping his behaviour. In a sense, educating him. Helping (certain) customers to learn.
9	1; 4	Building on knowledge. Providing knowledge and expertise. Increasing the knowledge/ power of customers. Helping businesses understand the digital landscape. The position (power and dominance) of the customer is improved. Customers become more competitive and better positioned.
10	1; 6	The benefit is interpreted very directly. The participant discusses corporate social responsibility. Competition and the environment are pushing innovation – forcing one to be innovative.

..33 *Alteration, adaptation, modification, conversion*

The particular benefit is less evident, and more advanced in nature. Awareness of the benefit is not always complete. Yet, the benefit is extensively applied. Its environment is an integral part of a business, and many participants consider the environments of businesses as customers, as part of their consultation services. The focus and objective are to impact and shape the environments of businesses as customers. This may involve the way the environment is perceived, and it may involve physical resources or facilities, technology, and actual actions.

Participant	Benefit ranking	Description
1	1; 6	The person is describing what relates more to strategy – how the business survives and stays competitive. This might indirectly highlight a number of benefits the business focuses on. At the same time, helping customers and their businesses to survive and stay competitive, can constitute the benefit. Marketing can simply be seen as constantly shaping, or attempting to shape, the environment, and from that perspective, the business is helping customers to shape their environments.
2	1; 4	Impacting/ shaping the customer's environment, and helping the customer to impact/ shape his environment. The participant is one of the few that recognizes his impact on the environment of the customers' businesses. Working in on and changing the environments of customers' businesses. It is taken that the benefit is active and offered.
3	1; 4	The participant is actually discussing using marketing to change the business environment of the customer's business. Changing the business environment of the customer's business through marketing.
4	1; 6	The participant is discussing the benefit from the vantage point of physical facilities. So, again, he is interpreting the benefit very directly. Physical facilities as part of the benefit is not wrong – by providing facilities, the business may indeed change the environment of the entrepreneur as customer, and what is available to him, and thus what he can do and can achieve. But it is possible to add to this: focusing on and changing the business environment and business context of the entrepreneur as customer. Because he is empowered, the entrepreneur interacts differently with his environment.
5	1; 4	Impacting the business environment of customers.
6	1; 4	Making the customer more successful in his environment. This is seen as changing and impacting his environment. Impacting and changing the customer's (business) environment and supply chain, particularly that of LE's.
7	1; 4	(Collagen :) If the product is or can be used as an enhancement (enhancer), then this benefit can be claimed
8	1; 4	Shaping the customer's environment, and the way the environment is experienced. The participant is affecting the setup or nature of the customer's environment. Greater efficiency can amount to more pleasurable environments. Making the customer's environment more enjoyable.
9	1; 4	The participant raises technology. Introducing the customer to technology would constitute a means to alter his environment. Additionally, interpreting the customer's environment for him – on his behalf, which normally happens during a consultation – would also constitute an example of this benefit.
10	1; 4	Markets and the business environment are transformed for customers.

..34 *Restoration, regeneration*

The particular benefit may sound elementary, but generally has sophisticated and advanced implementation – implementation and application of the benefit are not always straightforward or intuitive. Not all participants are fully cognizant of the benefit, and how to implement and apply it. Yet, participants demonstrate and have found a number of original and innovative applications of the benefit. Most participants as consultants are able to restore and regenerate or revive customers' businesses, performance, brands, and markets. Data analytics is also taken to have a regenerative component, also because of the embedded and underlying information and knowledge. Some participants also align with government and social programs, and this entails restoration and regeneration components too.

Participant	Benefit ranking	Description
1	1; 4	The participant is describing data processing, data analytics, data mining, and even big data. In a sense, they are recycling data, reusing data, and giving new meaning to data. Customer data, etc. Data analytics generally constitutes a benefit composite. Part of data analytics can be considered to constitute this benefit, as it has a regenerative nature and component.
2	1; 4	This particular benefit is possible, to the extent that the participant is not only coaching, but also counselling – in the sense of helping a customer to regain his performance. Restoration and regeneration can pertain to the brand or the business' performance; restoring the business' reputation; restoring and helping to restore purpose. It is taken that the benefit is offered.
3	1; 4	Rebranding and repositioning businesses – bringing customers up to speed and up to date. Rebranding would constitute this benefit: It revives and it brings up to date.
4	1; 4	It is generally difficult to motivate the presence of this benefit. The entrepreneur as customer is generally novice and inexperienced, hence there is not much to restore, because there was little beforehand. On the other hand, if the business has or can introduce a restitution or redress focus, particularly linked to government or social programs and causes, like BEE, etc., the benefit can be claimed. Because the business is also subsidized by government, one can also claim the benefit. In this sense, the benefit accrues to government, and is restorative or regenerative in terms of the economy, etc. Receiving funding in the form of grants or donations, would also suggest the benefit.
5	1; 4	Helping customers who are struggling with profits.
6	1/3; 6	The participant rather mentions and describes new business development, which may not necessarily constitute restoration or regeneration, but rather continuation – the benefit: extent, span, duration. The benefit may be possible, if business performance is restored.
7	1; 4	There may be products that restore or regenerate, given the business' health focus. (Collagen :) Restoration and recovery of health. Restoring the body.
8	1; 4	Restoration of society and communities

9	1/3; 6	The benefit is considered in the sense of illumination – an awareness of true potential or hidden potential. The ability to unlock further/ more value. It reminds of and borders on the benefit: Power, authority, dominance. It becomes an issue of initial or realized potential versus true potential – whether what is considered to be restored, did initially exist. Clearly, the participant can help a customer regain market share, etc., and that would constitute this particular benefit. So, it is certainly possible for the participant to provide this benefit. Restoring the business' performance or brand to its original state, or better than the original state, would definitely constitute this particular benefit. Although original state, or better than original state, is mentioned, only some improvement would already suffice to declare the benefit.
10	1/3; 6	The business might help to restore a customer's markets. Business or market turnaround

..35 *Negation*

Again, the benefit may sound elementary, but has advanced implementation and application that are not necessarily straightforward or intuitive. The benefit is easily and readily interpreted in a very direct sense. Few participants fully grasp the benefit. Yet, the benefit is readily implemented, even though participants may not be cognizant or intentional about it, and application is original and innovative. Common application is business process improvement, and negating complications associated with business processes and inefficiencies. Other types of complications that are also negated, are complications pertaining to strategy and strategy implementation, markets and entering new markets, marketing (processes), entrepreneurial start-up, government regulation and compliance, and governance.

Participant	**Benefit ranking**	**Description**
1	1/3; 4/ 6	This benefit is typically interpreted in a pollution type of sense. Although there is little to suggest the benefit is active, the benefit may be present, to the extent that the business eliminates waste, side effects and complications associated with marketing. This is possible, given that the business improves market efficiency and accuracy of customers. In that sense, the customer's business and customers may experience less waste and complications, respectively, with regards to marketing. The elimination of cold calling is raised. It points both to more efficient and accurate marketing, relating to the efficiency and reliability benefits, but also negation of waste (wasted effort) and complications (calling the wrong people).

2	1/3; 4/ 6	The benefit is alluded to. It also seems as if the benefit is associated with efficiency. The participant may manage to offer the benefit from time to time, when he is able to advise on a better business process that changes things around, and for the better – that improves on the way things are done. By being a coach, the participant should also be able to negate a lot of the complications of strategy formation and execution, because he becomes the right arm or the assistant that takes care of the process.
3	3; 6	The participant interprets the benefit very directly. The benefit is not truly evident in what the participant discusses. Through marketing and business consulting, it should be possible to provide this benefit to customers. As already discussed, business process re- engineering forms a classical example. Thus, the benefit is possible, although noting is noted to truly suggest it.
4	1; 6	What the participant is describing, are the benefits the entrepreneurs as customers themselves again build into their products. This likely constitutes and involves benefits other than this particular benefit, for example offering and providing an empowerment benefit. Alternatively, this can be interpreted as the business indirectly offering and attaining the benefit through its customers, by helping its customers to attain this benefit through their respective products. However, much suggests that the business is in fact directly providing this particular benefit. The business is much removing the complications associated with starting a business, and getting off the ground as an entrepreneur.
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6	1; 4/6	Negating the impact of government regulation. Smoothing it over: Making it so that LE's do not feel the impact 4/ 6 of government legislation as much.
7	1; 4	(Health) products that possibly reduce side-effects or complications. (Collagen :) Negation of health related side effects and complications. Negating possible complications associated with taking the product (also in the sense of using the product wrongly/ incorrectly). Negation of modern foods' effects and shortcomings, etc.
8	1; 4/6	The participant interprets the benefit very directly, in the context of the environment (pollution). Very directly: Moving to a paperless and zero-waste society. If paper is seen as waste, then this benefit is present. Paper is negated as a side-effect or -product of communication. Complications that the platform can negate, involve complications around and pertaining to governance: moving towards more seamless governance.
9	1; 4	More efficient marketing can reduce waste (less wasted effort), and can reduce side-effects and complications, associated with marketing to the wrong people in the wrong way. The customer attaining higher marketing response or success rates, can be seen as increased efficiency, increased accuracy, and reduced waste. Negating waste, by making processes more efficient.
10	1; 4	Reducing complications for the customer. Market complications are reduced. There is also the sense of the image of the customer. Reducing or eliminating side-effects when a customer enters a new market.

..36 *Elimination*

The benefit enjoys greater awareness, with moderate complexity in terms of application and implementation. Overall, participants are generally aware of the benefit. Application and implementation of the benefit involve and build on obsolescence and competency. Through specialization, and economies of scale, and perhaps scope, participants are able to eliminate the need for in-house competency on the customer's side, as they are able to provide certain competencies and capabilities more economically and efficiently. Participants are essentially helping customers to run and operate leaner businesses. Participants are also continually replacing and updating the old, with the new, making the old obsolete – new products, processes, etc., in the place of older instances and versions. Obsolescence generally implies innovation, progress, and doing things better. Overall, participants are able to eliminate: processes, input resources, products, administration, and also things like physical presence (by rather moving online).

Participant	Benefit ranking	Description
1	1; 4	The business and product eliminate other forms of less efficient marketing. The business and product may eliminate the need for a strong marketing department or marketing skill within the customer's business too. It may assist customers who do not necessarily have a strong marketing unit or director.
2	1; 4	The participant is discussing eliminating input resources and capital. Working with limited capital, and helping customers in this way. Being innovative, and following an innovative approach. Focusing on creativity. Replacing and even eliminating old products with new ones: Making them obsolete.
3	1; 4	The participant refers to throwing away the obsolete, in place of the current or present. Being up to date and updating. Thus, approaching this benefit from the perspective of obsolescence. Eliminating the existing, and rendering it obsolete. It also refers to and involves a focus on innovation and creativity. Again, it can also be argued that the business is eliminating the need for strong in-house marketing capacity and competency on the side of the customer. This would be helpful particularly for SME's.
4	1; 4	The business has eliminated a number of requirements around starting a business, and getting it off the ground, particularly by providing the facilities (that it does). The entrepreneurs as customers do not have to source and put down their own facilities. The business also eliminates a lot of administration and searching functions for the entrepreneur as customer.

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6	1; 4	As with other cases/ participants, one can argue that the participant is eliminating the need for in-house capability and competency to deal with government legislation and SME's, that would likely have been less efficient. The participant mentions online learning and coaching. When considering online learning and coaching, there is an element of elimination. Eliminating the need for physical presence.
7	1; 4	(Collagen :) One can argue that it eliminates the need to eat other sources of protein. For instance, vegetarians may like this. Or people suffering from certain meats, eggs, etc.
8	1; 4	Eliminating the need (of government) for certain in-house services and capabilities through the platform. In a sense, eliminating (forced) dependency on government.
9	1; 4	The participant refers to outsourcing. Outsourcing that eliminates the need for certain functions, competencies, etc. in-house, would be an example of the benefit: Elimination. Economies of scale, etc. make outsourcing the better approach. It would be more difficult to build the competency outsourced to a comparable level in-house, and it is used too irregularly for it to be more practical in-house, than external.
10	1; 4/6	There may be a reduction or elimination of processes, systems, even partners or subsidiaries, because of the 4/ 6 business and what it provides. The business reduces a lot of overhead for its customers, and may substitute an entire business unit, etc., on the customer's side.

..37 *Input, basic material*

The benefit is less known, and its application and implementation may be more complex, and even ambiguous, unconventional, or controversial. A number of participants are implementing physical platforms that their customers then incorporate and build on. Data is also seen as an input or basic material.

There may be some controversy around whether to include non-physical, but more abstract platforms, under this particular benefit: Whether human resources development, innovation platforms, and more abstract platforms, like systems and processes, essentially constitute platforms that realize this benefit. One may be more willing to accept innovation platforms as constituting a platform. Although perhaps less physical, the subsequent exploitation of the platform is far more visible, evident, and direct. It is clear that/ how customers are incorporating and building on the platform, and how customers are benefiting from, exploiting, and capitalizing on the platform. Human resources development essentially puts down a platform (foundation) within an individual. This platform can and is subsequently exploited, but mostly only

with time (not immediately), and perhaps also less directly (in a more detached fashion). Capitalization on the platform essentially differs. Business systems and processes also may constitute platforms (as procedures and routines) that customers build on, but this would then imply giving the platform to customers, rather than providing and availing the platform to customers – it constitutes indirectly providing and availing the platform, rather than directly providing and availing the platform, and may constitute building and putting down the platform on the customer's side, rather than the business' side. Again, capitalization on the platform essentially differs. Hence, overall, it becomes a question and issue of how physical or tangible the platform must be, as well as specific requirements, prerequisites, etc., with regards to exploitation of the platform, to be met.

Participant	Benefit ranking	Description
1	1; 4/ 6	The participant is discussing data and information processing. The benefit is essentially present on 2 counts. First, the business provides an actual platform, that customers use, and generate marketing products with/ from.
2	3; 6	The participant is actually discussing a platform, and building a solution on top of a platform. Yet, this rather implies that he has automated and optimized his processes to some extent, or as much as possible. The benefit is not truly evident in what the participant mentions. He is not offering any concrete platform. Any abstract platform should generally be the result of another benefit offered. Consequently, his platform is more something the participant uses and benefits from, than the customer. Generally, the benefit is possible: The participant may offer or utilize a business or business process platform that he offers customers, and that he consults from.
3	3; 6	The benefit is not really evident in what the participant mentions and discusses. There is little to suggest that the benefit is being offered. The business is not really providing this benefit. Others are not building on top of the business' services per se. Customers are incorporating their input, but it does not constitute building on their products or services. Others (customers) are not extending the business' products or services, and it is not really possible to identify and recognize the business' products or services (embedded) within the customers' offerings or processes.
4	1; 4	The benefit is indeed present. The business is creating and providing a business and innovation platform. It is providing a platform for entrepreneurs to build businesses and be innovative.

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6	1/3; 4/ 6	The participant may essentially be describing the benefit: restoration, regeneration here. Developing an entrepreneur as individual and customer, may refer to and imply putting down a platform in the life of the entrepreneur as customer. It is possible to argue that it is not truly a (physical) platform, and not a platform that is readily, directly or immediately capitalized on. At the same time, it can be argued that this is exactly what is done, what LE's do, and what the associated legislation aims to achieve in the first place. In this sense, human resource development may be seen as creating platforms, input material, and thus constituting the benefit: input, basic material.
7		-
8	1; 4	(Providing) a platform is a primary objective. By catering to service providers, this benefit is enacted. Offering extended services and products. Offering a platform for employment. Forming a platform others can build on.
9	1; 4	The participant is actually helping customers to create their own platforms – she is helping customers to implement marketing platforms. She is not offering a platform herself per se, but is rather creating such platforms on the customer's side - helping customers to create their own platforms.
10	1; 4	The business may be seen as a marketing (and business) platform. It is possible to informally refer to the business as a springboard.

4.2 Further Findings

Composites

A number of benefit composites-a collection of benefits, were surfaced during the interviews. Participants would typically mention and believe to be providing and offering a particular benefit, which then constitutes a benefit composite. Examples of common benefit composites are: quality, success and performance, excellence, growth, experience or expertise, assistance, data processing, etc. None of the lists under this section are necessarily exhaustive, and should not be taken as such.

..38 *Quality*

Some of the benefits that may be included in quality, are listed below. The list is not necessarily exhaustive.

Table 18: Quality as benefit composite.

1. Cost, economy.	2. Capacity, efficiency, throughput, speed.
3. Simplicity, ease of use, convenience.	4. Extent, span, duration.
5. Flexibility, variation, variety.	6. Reliability, dependability.
8. Sensation	9. Psychological (elementary).
10. Psychological (advanced).	

..39 *Success or performance*

The predominant benefits accompanying success or performance, are listed below. In general, it entails empowering the individual (or customer, etc.), shaping his psyche, attitude and mind-set, and improving his accuracy and efficiency (which are not the same thing).

Table 19: Success or performance as benefit composite.

2. Capacity, efficiency, throughput, speed.	6. Reliability, dependability.
10. Psychological (advanced).	11. Power, authority, dominance.

..40 *Expertise*

This is also informally referred to as the guru benefit. The dominant benefits thereof are listed below.

Table 20: Expertise as benefit composite.

2. Capacity, efficiency, throughput, speed.	6. Reliability, dependability.
7. Health, longevity, safety, risk-reduction.	10. Psychological (advanced).

11. Power, authority, dominance.	12. Alteration, adaptation, modification, Conversion.

..41 *Data processing*

The important benefits of data analytics and processing are listed below.

2. Capacity, efficiency, throughput, speed.	6. Reliability, dependability.
11. Power, authority, dominance.	13. Restoration, regeneration.
16. Input, basic material.	

..42 *Assistance*

The dominant benefits of offering assistance are listed below.

Table 21: Assistance as benefit composite.

3. Simplicity, ease of use, convenience.	8. Sensation.
9. Psychological (elementary).	10. Psychological (advanced).
13. Restoration, regeneration.	

5 Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the study as presented in the previous section. The discussion of findings helps answer the research questions and compares the results to the stance taken by the research.

5.1 Discussion on findings

..43 *Research question 1: How knowledgeable are entrepreneurs with regards to CB?*

The results indicate that a number of the benefits are common, well-known and run-of-the-mill. On the contrary, a small number of the benefits are not common, well-known, or run-of-the-mill. The benefits are summarized below.

Cost, economy

Well known benefit, however, contrary to the notion that entrepreneurs primarily incentive their customers to engage in relational exchanges by money savings (Gwinner et al, 1998), the participants placed greater focus rather on value offering, than price competition. Benefit was not predominant. There is an opportunity to incorporate the benefit, by competing both on cost and quality (product extension).

Capacity, efficiency, throughput, speed

Well known benefit. Well implemented benefit. Very basic, simple (easy) benefit. This is hardly surprising, given that the relationship to and impact of the benefit on success or performance is well established. To this end, a number of products include benefits based on efficiency and cost-effectiveness, for example: mobile learning (Mehdipour and Zerehkafi, 2013), training and development (Hoffman et al, 2008), hybrid cars (Ginsberg and Bloom, 2004), the internet (Polonsky and Rosenberger, 2001).

Simplicity, ease of use, convenience

Well known benefit. Well implemented benefit. Very basic, simple (easy) benefit. The benefit's prominence amongst entrepreneurs is not surprising as Lee et al (2015) pointed out that usability has been a major theme in businesses such as human–computer interaction (HCI) developments and has been commonly associated with the notion of the ease of using a target product. Indeed a number of entrepreneurs/companies such as Apple incorporate simplicity as a fundamental design principle (Margaria and Steffen, 2010).

Extent, span, duration

Relatively straightforward and known benefit. Intermediate application complexity. Unique application.

Flexibility, variation, variety

Well known benefit and well implemented benefit. Very basic, simple (easy) benefit. The results are expected for entrepreneurs in the services environment; a highly competitive environment and as per (Tseng et al, 1997) argument; competition among firms has ceased to be strictly a price competition but product variety and speed to market are increasingly becoming vehicles for competitive advantage.

Reliability, dependability

Well known benefit. Well implemented benefit. Intermediate application complexity. Focus on expertise.

Health, longevity, safety, risk-reduction

Not really an uncommon, unusual, unfamiliar benefit. Still, a more advanced benefit. A pervasive – well implemented – yet inadequately understood benefit. Readily and easily interpreted in a very narrow sense. The benefit is not fully exploited, and implementation can be further developed and extended. Knowledge/ awareness of the benefit is lacking.

Sensation

Familiar, but generally misconstrued and poorly understood benefit. A more advanced benefit. Readily and easily interpreted in a narrow sense. (A benefit that is) more difficult to implement. Knowledge/ awareness of the benefit is lacking. The benefit has significant potential, and can be further developed and extended. Current application of the benefit is not that widespread.

Psychological (elementary)

Not a well-known benefit. Not really significant awareness of the benefit. The benefit is not that readily applied. The benefit may actually not be that difficult to implement. The benefit has significant opportunity still.

Psychological (advanced)

More of an advanced benefit. Generally a well-known and well-understood benefit, with significant awareness of the benefit, and its application.

Power, authority, dominance

A less known, and more advanced benefit. Still, already a pervasive and well- implemented benefit. The benefit may be accompanied and characterized by a focus on expertise. The benefit may be offered and delivered through products or services (people).

Alteration, adaptation, modification, conversion

A less evident, and more advanced benefit. Awareness of the benefit is lacking. Yet, the benefit is extensively applied. Environments are a great focus of the benefit. Environments may be shaped, by changing the way the environment is perceived, and it may involve physical resources or facilities, technology, and actual actions.

Restoration, regeneration

The benefit may sound/ seem more elementary than it really is. A benefit with sophisticated and advanced implementation, that is not necessarily straightforward or intuitive. Implementation and application of the benefit are not always straightforward or intuitive. Awareness of the benefit, and its implementation, is not complete (extensive or comprehensive). Yet, original and innovative applications of the benefit already exist.

Negation

Also a benefit that may sound/ seem more elementary than it really is. A benefit with sophisticated and advanced implementation, that is not necessarily straightforward or intuitive. The benefit is easily and readily interpreted in a very direct sense. The benefit is not really fully understood or grasped. Yet, the benefit is readily implemented, even though participants may not be cognizant or intentional about it, and application is original and innovative. Negating complications is a prominent focus and application of the benefit.

Elimination

The benefit enjoys greater awareness, with moderate complexity in terms of application and implementation. Generally significant awareness of the benefit.

Input, basic material

The benefit is less known, and its application and implementation may be more complex, and even ambiguous, unconventional, or controversial. Implementation of the benefit is already established. Implementation types may be conventional or unconventional, and premise on concreteness/ abstractness (also physicality/ tangibility), and (method of) capitalization. Unconventional (and perhaps controversial) implementation of the benefit may include: human resources development, innovation platforms, and more abstract platforms, like systems and processes.

..44 *Research question 2: How extensively do entrepreneurs consider and apply CB, are there particular technicalities or intricacies that accompany the implementation of the CB?*

a. *How extensively do entrepreneurs consider and apply CB*

The application of benefits varies between being elementary, and being complex and advanced. Some of the benefits may be relatively easy and straightforward to implement, whilst others are more difficult to implement, and generally require original, creative, and innovative thought. Some benefits are already pervasive, without necessarily being well understood or grasped. A number of benefits can still be exploited and developed further. Regardless of any shortcoming, all benefits are generally already established or implemented – have practical existence and application.

b. *Technicalities or intricacies with the implementation of the CB*

- Participants did not always understand and grasp certain benefits. On occasion, participants would struggle to properly differentiate between the benefits, and would take, substitute, and mix a benefit for/ with another. It frequently happened that participants described a particular benefit, as/ under another benefit – took one benefit for another. No participant was truly familiar with, knowledgeable or informed about, and experienced in, all of the benefits. It shows that participants have not necessarily thought of all the benefits, and their application.

- Being in services, some of the participants have, and come across, very diverse customers. Because of this, technically and hypothetically, such a participant should be able to know, provide, and implement all of the benefits through his customers. Particularly if he has a diverse client base, there should not be a benefit the participant does not come across, deal with, or cannot apply.

- Participants intuitively practice some (a lot of) the benefits, but are not (fully) cognizant of them. Many of the benefits are possible for many (all) of the participants and their businesses. Few participants/ businesses can argue that the benefits do not readily apply to them, or that they cannot find application for the benefits. In many instances, the benefits may imply further product extensions.

- The notion of not a quick-fix product, mentioned and raised by participants, implies and indicates that some products' benefits may take time to realize, and may not be immediate. Also, some benefits can directly or indirectly invoke additional benefits, either immediately, or with time. Benefit composites are typical and, a number of common benefit composites exist, like quality. Benefits of course have different levels or layers. For instance, they can apply to an individual, or an organization. Hypothetically, some of the benefits may conflict – it is not possible to offer and focus on a certain benefit, whilst offering and focusing on another. Yet, little evidence of this was empirically found. Certain benefits and their application may raise ethical and moral questions and issues. Applying or not applying a benefit in a certain way, may be accompanied by and associated with ethical and moral standing - raise or point to ethical and moral questions or issues.

- The participants predominantly come from and operate within services. Whether consideration and application of the benefits are easier or more difficult for services, relative to products, is left as an open question.

- A customer focus may imply a benefit focus. There may be complications to delivering certain benefits.

5.2 Results comparison to research proposition

In terms of how knowledgeable entrepreneurs are with regards to CB and how extensively they consider and apply CB, if there are any particular technicalities or intricacies that accompany the implementation of the CB; the following benefit types were common and typical amongst the entrepreneurs;

- cost, economy;
- capacity, efficiency, throughput, speed;
- simplicity, ease of use, convenience,
- flexibility, variation, variety
- reliability, dependability

A subset of the benefit types were more unique, less known and less considered;

- psychological (elementary)
- power, authority, dominance).
- input, basic material

Some of the benefit types were also rising in prominence amongst the entrepreneurs;

- psychological (advanced)
- elimination

And lastly, some of the benefits were more advanced and inadequately understood but there is evidence of application;

- health, safety, risk-reduction
- Sensation (satisfaction through the five senses)
- Alteration, modification, adaption

- restoration, regeneration
- negation

The findings above are in line with the research proposition whilst some disprove it and a few reflect new developments. ***Research proposition***: a number of the benefit types are common and typical (cost, economy; capacity, efficiency, throughput, speed; simplicity, ease of use, convenience), a subset of the benefit types are more unique and perhaps less considered (psychological; power, authority, dominance). A number of the benefit types are also rising in prominence (restoration, regeneration; negation; elimination

5.3 Practical Implications

The study found that entrepreneurs intuitively practice a lot of the benefits, but are not (fully) cognizant of them and lack knowledge in the application of some of the benefits. In practise, it implies potential to learn and develop further in terms of the benefits, and application of the benefits. Entrepreneurs are not necessarily well-trained and well-informed about the benefits, and don't always fully know the benefits, and their meaning or definition. A number of benefits have the potential to be developed further in terms of application.

The expectation is that further awareness of and education in the benefits will increase and expand application and implementation of the benefits. Consequently, entrepreneurs would extend their competitive strategies in terms of unique value offerings and fortify their market share. As already outlined, organizations that do not invest in unique value offerings, are more likely to go out of business or lose market share, as they are outperformed by those who have a comprehensive value-creation strategy (Smith and Colgate, 2007). Therefore emphasis is put on firms to explore customer value creation as a vehicle for sustainable competitive advantage (Lin and Lin, 2006).

6 Conclusion

A number of characteristics pertaining to the benefits surfaced. These include: awareness, cognizance; comprehension, grasp; familiarity; pervasiveness; and complexity, including application-complexity. All benefits are generally already established or implemented. Some benefits are well-known, common, well-implemented, and elementary to implement, while others are not. The implementation of certain benefits may require original and innovative thought. Not all benefits are well understood or grasped. A number of benefits can still be exploited and developed further. It commonly occurred that one benefit was (mis)taken for another. Participants are not necessarily well-trained and well-informed about the benefits. Participants have need of learning and developing further in terms of the benefits, and application of the benefits. Benefits are not that application-specific or -dependent. Many of the benefits are possible for many (all) of the participants and their businesses. Few participants/ businesses can argue that the benefits do not readily apply to them, or that they cannot find application for the benefits. In many instances, the benefits may imply further product extensions.

Some benefits may take time to realize, and may not be immediate. Also, some benefits can directly or indirectly invoke additional benefits, either immediately, or with time. Benefit composites are typical and, a number of common benefit composites exist. Benefits may occur at and apply to different levels or layers. Hypothetically, some of the benefits may conflict. Yet, little empirical evidence of this was found. Certain benefits and their application may raise and accompany ethical and moral questions and issues. A customer focus may imply a benefit focus. There may be complications to delivering certain benefits.

In a nutshell the study found that in terms of how knowledgeable entrepreneurs are with regards to CB and how extensively they consider and apply CB, if there are any particular technicalities or intricacies that accompany the implementation of the CB; the findings concluded above are in line with the research proposition whilst some disprove it and a few reflect new developments.

7 Future research

Future research can further look into the following:

1. Sample set; Products: A greater focus on the application of the benefits in the context of products. A more extensive sample set. The study focused on services, a product focus may produce different results that add on to entrepreneurship and marketing theories.

2. The prevalence of knowledge and application gaps with regards to the benefits: Whether benefit knowledge gaps continue to exist, and whether the application of certain benefits still lack, after awareness of the benefits have been corrected and improved.

3. Unique cases and applications: This may involve a narrow focus on specific benefits and their application, or unique and innovative application of certain benefits. It may also focus on the more complex benefits.

4. Benefit enhancement: Advancing the benefits and their application. This may involve demonstrations and examples of benefits applied in practice and show how entrepreneurs have advanced in terms of incorporating CB into their offerings. The study would add to entrepreneurship and marketing literature, specifically in the area of CB applications.

5. Marketing theory and benefit composites: The specific characteristics of benefit composites. Reinterpreting certain marketing concepts, in the context of and through the benefits, and benefit composites.

6. Benefits and competitive advantage: The generation and development of competitive advantage through benefits and a focus on benefits. The study would shed light on whether there are competitive advantages generated though CB and how well entrepreneurs have leveraged CB in creating competitive advantage.

7. Entrepreneurship within services: the opportunities that exist within services, and how entrepreneurs identify opportunities within services, particularly through a focus on benefits.

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