



# National University of Science and Technology

Think in Other Terms

**Building bridges with the community: Can Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Or Investment (CSI) be relied on as an effective Marketing Strategy in the Zimbabwean Mobile Telecommunications Industry. A case study of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe.**



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MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN MARKETING**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, scholars and managers have made tremendous efforts to determine the strategic marketing value of corporate social responsibility (CSR). This research study was directed at closely analyzing how local companies were applying CSR in the marketing of their products and a case study of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe was used.

The research study's major motivate was to find out if CSR could be relied on as a marketing strategy by Zimbabwean companies. The objectives of this research study were to find out: if Econet customers were aware of the company's CSR programmes; how information on the company's CSR programmes was communicated to customers; if these CSR programmes influence customers to subscribe with the company and if company's customers and employees were allowed to contribute towards formulation of the company's CSR programmes.

The research study was exploratory and a convenience sampling procedure was employed to come up with respondents which were interviewed. A sample size of seventy-five Econet customers based in Harare was selected for the study as well as ten managers who were found to be directly in charge of the company's CSR programmes. The sample size was arrived at mainly based on judgmental sampling as well as through the use of previous similar researches. An interviewer completed and structured questionnaire was used to gather information from the company's customers and a research guide to obtain information from the management category of respondents.

Data obtained from the field research was analyzed using the SPSS 12.0 package. Graphs, pie charts, cross tabulations and simple tables were employed in the data analysis and presentation stage of the study.

The research results showed that customers were always monitoring the impact of an organization's business operations in the community as well as its efforts to enrich the community in which it operates and were well aware of such programmes. The research results gave an indication that the radio, television, newspapers, the internet, word of mouth and text messages were media channels which enabled customers to know of the existence of CSR programmes run by Econet. Added to that, the results also showed that CSR endeavors by organizations have potential to bring notable sustainable benefits in form of, among others, customer fidelity, sales and market share growth, sustainable product preference and employee loyalty. Customers and employees of Econet were allowed to offer contributions towards formulation of the company's CSR programmes and strategies.

As a result of the evidence that organizations stand to benefit a lot from CSR programmes, companies are encouraged to view CSR activities as a form of investment as well as an indispensable strategic marketing tool. The need to dedicate both financial and human resources cannot be overemphasized if CSR is to be employed to play a strategic marketing role in an organization.