Managing a pit emptying enterprise

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Introduction

• Overview of my pit emptying business
• Achievements
• Challenges
• Future plans
Context

Kampala, Uganda
My enterprise

- Established 2013, with support from Water for People
- Based in Kampala, Uganda
- Service customers all over Uganda
- Mainly landlords, schools, hospitals,
- Emptied over 3 250 pits to date
Gulpers

Gulper 1

Gulper 2
Emptying process

Hook out solid waste

Insert gulper & pump

Fill drums and load on the truck
Sludge Transport & Disposal

Filled barrels on pickup ready to go

Delivery to the treatment works
Site cleaning

- We emphasize high levels of cleanliness
- We move with cleaning items e.g. jerry cans, water in reserve barrels, basins, buckets, brushes etc
- We do not ask the customer for any of these
Wide Range of Partnerships

- Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA)
- National Water & Sewerage Corporation
- Water for People Uganda
- National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
- Etc.
Marketing

- Door to door – fliers
- Radio & TV talk shows
- Meeting with local leaders and health inspectors
- Linking with Services Brokers
- Doing demonstrations
- Etc.

Marketing is only necessary in the dry season when business is slower
Diverse Services Support Sustainability

- Installing Sato Pans
- Constructing standard local septic tanks & latrines.
- Collecting sludge samples for Makerere University.
- Hiring equipment, selling protective gears to up coming entrepreneurs
- Selling pit odour management additives
Achievements

- Enough equipment
- Well trained operators
- Two trucks & marketing motorcycle
- Referrals from KCCA Call Centre
- Executive offices
- We pay taxes
- Our families are happy
- Ready customers
- Recognition of the value of our service.
Some Challenges in the Field

- Much rubbish in pits
- No proper space for equipment cleaning
- Complying with licence conditions and regulations
- Heavy traffic
- Reaching the treatment works before it closes at 6 pm
Overcoming Challenges

Emptying deep pits

- 7 – 12 meters is common
- Too deep for a Gulper alone
- 3 liter jerry can on a rope
- Big focus on health & safety
  - Gloves and protective clothing
  - Clean all surfaces as we work.
Overcoming Challenges 2

National Water treatment works in Kampala can’t accept sludge in barrels

- Designed for vacuum tanks with hoses
- We designed a funnel with hosing at one end and a cage screen in the middle to screen out rubbish.
Future plans

- Increase capacity
  - a third small truck
  - more barrels
  - more operators and marketers
- Expand to 25 pits/month
- Build our own treatment plant
- Invest in a cesspool emptier truck
- Extend services to Congo DRC
Thank you