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STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CASE ANALYSIS OF SAFARICOM (K)

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1.0 Introduction

The importance of strategic management case analysis cannot be gainsaid. David (2011) defined a strategic management case as a detailed description of a situation faced by an organization, involving the evaluation of an organization's internal and external conditions while at the same time raising issues concerning the organization's mission, strategies, objectives and policies.

David (2011) views a strategic management case as an important tool for developing the ability in strategic managers to evaluate business situations critically in order to analyse options, make choices and find solutions to the challenges that they face every day.

Although Safaricom (K) is East Africa's largest and most profitable telecommunications company, posting a net profit of Ksh. 38.1 billion for the FY ending March 2016 (Mukami, 2016), a critical assessment of its strategic business units is a prudent strategic management practice which can enhance its performance and productivity.

The purpose of this paper is therefore to undertake a case analysis for Safaricom (K) in the context of the following areas: An Overview of the company, A critical evaluation of the vision and Mission statements, External Environmental Assessment, Internal Environmental Assessment, Strategic Analysis and Choices, Ethics and Social Responsibility, Strategic Review, Evaluation and Control , Conclusion and References.

2.0 Safaricom (K): An Overview

Safaricom was incorporated as a private company, with limited liability, under the Companies Act in 1997 to provide communication services. However, in 2002 following the Kenya Government's purchase of 60% shares in the company it was converted into a public company with its 60% controlling shares held by Telkom Kenya Ltd, a state corporation. Telkom Kenya Ltd continued holding controlling shares in Safaricom, for the Kenya Government until 2008 when in a public share offer the Government sold 25% of its shares to the public by which act Safaricom ceased to be a state corporation (source: Safaricom /linkedin, 2014).

Safaricom performs five core functions, namely; Voice communications (Talk-Time) services, Mobile money transfer services, M-Shwari banking, Messaging and Mobile data services. These five services are conveyed to the customers through one network, the Safaricom Broadband. Safaricom is the leading provider of converged communications solutions in Kenya. It has the widest mobile network in the Country with a subscriber base of over 25.2 million and a market share of 64.7% (Mukami, 2016). Safaricom employs over 4000 staff directly and more than 500000 indirectly, and has about 3000 base stations countrywide. It has the largest call centre in Sub-Saharan African (Source: Safaricom/linkedin, 2014).

Safaricom is also the market leader in mobile money transfer services. With over 17 million subscribers served by over 79000 outlets countrywide, Safaricom's M-PESA mobile money transfer services is the biggest and most developed mobile payment system in the World (Safaricom/LinkedIn, 2014). M-PESA mobile money transfer enables both local and foreign subscribers to make payments, send/receive money and also save with M-Shwari. M-PESA is also the leading channel for facilitating a cashless economy through enabling subscribers to undertake commercial transactions with commercial banks and Business-to-Business transactions at the touch of a button.

Owing to its countrywide connectivity Safaricom continues to be the leading Internet supplier to both businesses and individual consumers. Despite competition from its rivals (especially Orange (K) and Airtel(K)) Safaricom provides high speed, secure and reliable internet connectivity (www.safaricom.co.ke/business/connectivity.

Besides the aforementioned Safaricom does provide genuine electronics like handsets, laptops modems, etc. Safaricom Business.co.ke also provides cloud computing and audio/video conferencing.

3.0 Vision and Mission Statements

Strategists, the people charged with the responsibility of ensuring the success of an organization often consider the development of the vision of the organization as the first step in strategic planning (David, 2011).

According to David (2011) a vision statement answers the question "what do we want to become?"(David, 2011). It's a declaration of an organization's objectives based on the organization's environment. David (2011) is of the view that vision constitutes an ideal situation which an organization aspires to achieve. Arline (2014) considers a vision statement as a futuristic statement intended to inspire and give direction to employees of an organization rather than to customers. A clear vision statement provides the foundation for developing a comprehensive mission statement David, 2011).

An inspection into Safaricom's website gives the vision of the company as: "Our vision is to transform lives". It then goes on to give the relationship between the vision and its values thus: "Our vision is anchored by the values of speed, simplicity and trust ". The statement; "Our vision is to transform lives" is loaded and lacks clarity in that it does not specify in which areas of human endeavour Safaricom expects to transform peoples' lives. This vision statement contradicts David's (2011) view as it's not only unclear but it's also too general for Safaricom to derive a comprehensive mission statement from it. There is no indication in the statement to prevent anyone from imagining that Safaricom is in the business of, say health in order to transform lives. There are many aspects of human endeavour that transform peoples' lives.

Safaricom should show which, in particular, they are engaged in. Perhaps this lack of clarity in the vision may explain why Safaricom seems not to have published her mission if at all.

Reframing the statement to include the phrase "through communications technology" would have added flavour and improved the vision. The vision statement would then be, "To be a World leader in transforming peoples' lives through convergent communications technology."

David (2011) describes a mission statement as an enduring statement of purpose that defines the core functions of an organization. According to David (2011) a mission statement charts the future direction of an organization and seeks to answer the question "what is our business?" Arline (2014), while supporting this position defines a mission statement as a present-based statement intended to convey a sense of why the organization exists, to both its employees and customers.

There seems to be a significant omission in Safaricom's strategic planning process in that nowhere in Safaricom's website or Safaricom Kenya's Official Page do we find a statement of Safaricom's mission or its semblance! It's simply inconceivable that a company of Safaricom's stature can operate without a clear statement to communicate its purpose. A company's mission statement is an important tool to employees and customers alike and may not be treated as a corporate secret weapon. Whether this omission is deliberate or not is not clear. Perhaps Safaricom's near dominance of the communications' industry in Eastern Africa, reducing the effects of competition has dampened her strategic focus.

Safaricom's core business lies in providing communications solutions; voice services, mobile money transfer, M-Shwari services and internet services. A relevant mission statement would therefore entail the inclusion of these core functions in the statement. The following is an example of a relevant mission for Safaricom:

"To provide efficient communications services to the residents of Kenya in particular and the world in general".

4.0 External Environmental Assessment of Safaricom

External environmental analysis is a requisite condition for strategic planning (David, 2011). According to David (2011) a complete external environmental analysis may be conducted by using the following tools; the SWOT analysis, the Competitive Profile Matrix (CPM), the External Factor Evaluation (EFE), and the Boston's Consulting Group (BCG). This analysis seeks to provide an evaluation of Safaricom's external environment using these tools. The tools will be arranged as follows; Key Opportunities and Threats in Safaricom, the External Factor Evaluation Matrix (EFE), the Competitive Profile Matrix (CPM), and The Boston Consulting Group.

4.1 Key Opportunities and Threats in Safaricom

An evaluation of an organizations' external environment involves assessing the organizations' external opportunities and threats (David, 2011). External opportunities and threats include economic, social, cultural, demographic, environmental, political, legal, governmental, technological and competitive trends and events that could affect an organization's performance in the future (David, 2011).

The table below provides a summary of specific opportunities and threats that Safaricom could address in order to safeguard its leadership position in the communications industry in future. A follow up discussion ensues to show how these opportunities and threats can influence Safaricom's future performance.

	Opportunities		**Threats**
i)	Expansion into global markets	i)	Competition from rivals
ii)	Online marketing	ii)	Global changes
iii)	New technology	iii)	Regulatory requirements
iv)	Joint ventures/ Acquisitions	iv)	Political risks
v)	Reduction in customer attrition	v)	Unfavorable economic climate
vi)	Customer loyalty	vi)	Unethical practices
vii)	E-Commerce	vii)	Environmental conservation
viii)	Improved power supply		

4.1.1 Opportunities:

(i) Expansion into global markets

The M-PESA, Safaricom's mobile money transfer service is the leading mobile money payment in the world serving over 17M subscribers in 79000 shops in Kenya (Safaricom/LinedIn, 2014). This leadership position is only based on data from within Kenya's borders. The efficient and secure mobile money transfer service that M-PESA has continued to offer has won the confidence of not only the domestic consumers but also consumers from across the rest of the world. With the appropriate legal backing and patenting M-PESA has the potential to expand beyond the borders of Kenya and into the rest of the world.

Although Safaricom is the dominant player in the communications industry, (SafaricomlinkedIn, 2014) the communications industry in Kenya is not yet saturated and Safaricom, with its aggressive marketing policy and enhanced customer relations stands to gain more ground. The unqualified recognition of M-PESA as the most successful mobile money transfer in the world (Safaricom/LinkedIn, 2014) provides synergy and an opportunity for more Safaricom products such as Sambaza, Okoa Jahazi and Mshwari to enter the world communications market.

(ii) Online Marketing

The Market leadership position that Safaricom occupies in Kenya and Eastern Africa in providing communications services predisposes it to expand its online sales and marketing. According to Linton (n.d) customers prefer online marketing because of reduced costs, convenience and reach-ability among other reasons. Reduced costs of advertising coupled with the convenience of marketing throughout the day are a strong appeal and attraction to customers and Safaricom could take advantage of this situation to promote its volume of sales.

(iii) Access to new technology.

The many new products and services that Safaricom continues to release into the market is a testimony that it embraces innovation and technology. There are opportunities at the global market for benchmarking on new technologies which would improve its performance.

(iv) Entering into joint ventures and acquisitions.

One effect of competition is to increase costs of doing business. Safaricom, with its compelling position in the communications industry reserves the opportunity to buy out some of her competitors or enter into mergers and partnerships in order to reduce costs attributed to competition. Airtel (K) one of Safaricom's major competitors has already adopted this strategy by buying out YU (K).

(v) Reduction in customer attrition

Customer attrition, also called customer turnover refers to the loss or defection of customers. Markidan (2015) contends that the major reason determining customer attrition is the quality of customer service, adding that customers abandon a business because of poor customer support experiences. Safaricom can strengthen its position in the industry if it improves its customer services and relations. To achieve this Safaricom will need to look at customer support services not as a cost that requires reduction but as an investment that prevents customer flight and hence promotes productivity.

(vi) Customer loyalty.

Although Safaricom's mobile rates continue to be relatively higher than those of its competitors (Nyabiage &Were, 2014) customer numbers continue to increase every year. Part of the reason for this has to do with Safaricom's high penetration and improved customer care (Kachwanya, 2014). These two combine to facilitate not only increased customer numbers but also repeat purchases from existing customers, thus enhancing customer loyalty. This is an area Safaricom could significantly exploit in future to further strengthen its customer base and market leadership.

vii) E-Commerce

E-Commerce involves conducting commercial transactions over the Internet. One advantage with E-Commerce is that it's cost-effective. The advent of the Internet has meant that businesses are directly connected to their suppliers and customers thus eliminating the 'in-queue' waiting. The saving in time in effecting transactions by both businesses and customers is one of the most popular conveniences in e-commerce (Khurana, n.d). The use of e-commerce is an opportunity Safaricom can use to transact her businesses more efficiently and hence increase her profitability.

Viii) Improved power supply

Delivery of services is occasionally affected by disruptions in power supply. The positive initiatives that the Kenya Government has been putting in place to increase and diversify sources of power supply provide an advantage that businesses can use to cushion their power supply needs and improve their operations. The geothermal power generation and the wind energy currently being exploited in the country have the potential to provide adequate power to the national grid and cater for business needs in the country.

4.1.2 Key Threats in Safaricom

(i) Competition

Safaricom has two main competitors, namely; Airtel(K) and Telkom's Orange(K). As noted earlier Safaricom's market share in the first quarter of 2014/2015 was 66.7% down from 68%. This figure has now come down to 64.7 % in 2015/2016 (Mukami, 2016).Within the period 2014/2015 Aitel's market share rose to 16.5% from 15.7% and that of Orange also rose from 8.5% to 9.2%. These statistics indicate that although Safaricom is the dominant market leader, the market competition is still rife. This competition is a real threat to her future dominance and especially taking cognizance of the fact that the Communications Authority of Kenya is under pressure to force Safaricom to delink M-PESA from her and form a separate company.

(ii) Effects of global change.

Contemporary business environment is today engulfed by the dynamics of change. Political, socio-economic, cultural, technological, legal and ecological changes dictate that organizations like Safaricom adapt to these by initiating change management programmes. Change management programmes especially those that are customer-oriented are particularly preferred. Unless these changes are properly managed they pose a great threat to the organization.

(iii) Regulatory requirements.

All companies operating in Kenya are subject to regulations from the Central Bank and the relevant regulatory authority. The Safaricom parent regulator is the Communications Authority of Kenya. Since Safaricom's inception in 1997, some regulatory highlights have included mobile termination rates requirement (MTRS) of 2010 providing a glide-path of continued reduction of termination rates from ksh.4.42 to ksh0.99 and the renewal of operating licence of USD of 27M covering 2014-2024 (Source: www.safaricom.co.ke/about-us). These regulations pose a challenge and a threat to the operations of the service provider.

(iv) Unfavourable economic conditions.

Changes in the economic climate will ultimately affect the operations of an organization. If, for instance, interest rates increase the prices of commodities will ultimately increase. Peoples' disposable incomes will decrease and thus lower their purchasing power. Companies will experience this through reduced sales and profits. A forward looking company will therefore foresee and prepare for these eventualities and put in place remedies to cushion itself from loss of business.

(v) Political risks. No business is insulated from the ravages of politics. Changes of governments will inevitably bring about new philosophies which are likely to impact on business policies and plans. For instance, different political regimes may have different taxation policies based on their political philosophies. These will obviously affect those businesses which hold different political views. Safaricom should be aware of this and find its balance so that its position is not in jeopardy.

(vi) Unethical business practices.

The corrupt-ridden social-economic climate in which businesses find themselves in this country predisposes them to all manner of unethical conducts. Replication of organizations' products by rival companies is a possibility. Taking kickbacks even by government employees to change the rules of the game is not an unusual matter. These have the potential of increasing the cost of doing business while at the same time lowering the quality of products and services. This is a challenge organizations must be prepared to face as it's a threat to their existence.

vii) Environmental conservation.

Although corporate social responsibility expenditures on the conservation of the environment is a social good and a positive gesture of an organization to the community in which the organization undertakes business it's nevertheless a cost to the organization which has the effect of reducing profits. The public awareness on environmental conservation and the conservation regulations that governments put in place to safeguard conservation of the environment usually put a strain on businesses by raising their operational costs. Viewed thus, acts of corporate social responsibility become a threat that businesses have to contend with.

4.2 External Factor Evaluation Matrix (EFE)

The external factor evaluation matrix is a strategy tool that analyses an organization's external environment to identify opportunities and threats (Jurevicius, 2014). It's a summary of the factors in the external environment that can be used to make strategic decisions.

The initial step in determining EFE involves identification of the key factors (opportunities and threats) of the organization with the potential of influencing its performance. Each factor is assigned a weight between 0 and1 based on how important the factor is considered to be in the success of the company. All the weights should add up to 1 (David, 2011). Each factor is again given a rating depending on how effectively the company's strategy responds to opportunities and threats (David, 2013). These ratings are given on a 4-1 scale where: 4- means superior response, 3- above average response, 2-average response and 1- poor response (Jurevicius, 2013). The score for each factor is calculated by multiplying the weight with the rating.

Below is an example of an EFE Matrix model, based on the guidelines extracted from David(2013) and stated above that may be used to evaluate Safaricom's external environment.

	Opportunities	**Weight**	**Rating**	**Score**
1	Expansion into global markets	0.11	4	0.44
2	Online marketing	0.06	2	0.12
3	New technology	0.10	3	0.30
4	Mergers, partnerships acquisitions	0.05	1	0.05
5	Reduced customer attrition	0.08	3	0.24
6	Customer loyalty	0.10	3	0.30
7	E-Commerce	0.10	3	0.30
8	Improved power supply	0.07	3	0.21
	Threats			
1	Competition from rivals	0.09	3	0.27
2	Effects of global changes	0.06	3	0.18
3	Restrictive regulatory requirements	0.04	2	0.08
4	Unfavourable business climate	0.05	2	0.10
5	Political risks	0.03	2	0.06
6	Unethical business practices	0.03	2	0.06
7	Environmental conservation	0.03	2	0.06
	Total	**1.00**		**2.77**

A low figure indicates that the company's strategies are not sufficiently well designed to respond to the company's opportunities and defeat its threats (Jurevicius, 2014). In the case of Safaricom, the score of 2.77 on the 4-1 rating scale is slightly above average. The Company's strategies are responsive to the opportunities available. They are also capable of defeating threats. It's however recommended that the management of Safaricom designs strategies to address customer attrition as a result of high costs of data and voice calls. A review of the pricing policies of voice calls and mobile data could be revisited to bring these at par with those of the competitors.

4.3 Competitive Profile Matrix

A Competitive Profile Matrix (CPM) is a powerful strategic tool that compares a firm and its rivals and reveals their relative strengths and weaknesses (Jurevicius, 2013). It is a tool that firms use to evaluate their competitive environments by using critical success factors in the industry. According to Gates (2010) critical success factors (CSF) are a handful of key areas where an organization must perform well in order to achieve its mission. (Jurevicius, 2013) concurs with this view and sees a critical success factor as a key performance area which must be performed at the highest level of excellence in order to bring about success in the firm (Jurevicius, 2013).

In order to undertake a Competitive Profile Matrix for Safaricom and its competitors (Airtel and Orange) in Kenya the following critical success factors will be analysed:

(i) The brand reputation
(ii) The Market share
(iii) Clear strategic direction
(iv) Customer satisfaction
(v) Mobile money transfer services
(vi) Mobile call rates
(vii) Internet speed
(viii) Cost of data bundles
(ix) Network infrastructure
(x) Financial position
(xi) Customer service
(xii) Variety of products and services
(xiii) Innovation in products and services
(xiv) Customer loyalty
(xv) Effective corporate social responsibility
(xvi) Customer service outlets
(xvii) Management
(xviii) Low production costs
(xix) High quality products
(xx) Positive public image

The analysis requires that each critical success factor is assigned a value subjectively, between 0 and 1 depending on its importance as a success factor in the industry (Jurevicius, 2013). All these subjective values add up to 1.0. This value is referred to as the weight. Then the companies are rated depending on how well they are performing in each key area, with a subjective rating between 4-1 where 4 is the highest performance (Jurevicius, 2013). Each company is then scored by multiplying weight with rating. The scores are then added and the sum of the scores used to make decisions about the performance of each company.

Based on the above conditions the following is a possible competitive profile matrix for Safaricom, Airtel and Orange.

		Safaricom	**Safaricom**	**Airtel**	**Airtel**	**Orange**	**Orange**
Critical Success Factor	**Weight**	**Rating**	**Score**	**Rating**	**Score**	**Rating**	**Score**
Brand reputation	0.02	4	0.08	2	0.04	2	0.04
Market share	0.06	4	0.24	2	0.10	1	0.05
Clear strategic direction	0.04	2	0.08	2	0.08	2	0.08
Customer satisfaction	0.05	2	0.10	2	0.10	2	0.10
Mobile money transfer services	0.07	4	0.28	1	0.07	1	0.07
Mobile call rates	0.06	2	0.12	3	0.18	3	0.18
Internet speed	0.02	4	0.08	2	0.04	3	0.06
Cost of data bundles	0.04	2	0.08	3	0.12	3	0.12
Network infrastructure	0.04	4	0.16	2	0.08	2	0.08
Financial position	0.04	4	0.16	2	0.08	2	0.08
Customer service	0.05	2	0.10	3	0.15	3	0.15

Variety of products and services	0.03	4	0.12	2	0.06	1	0.03
Innovations	0.06	3	0.18	2	0.12	2	0.12
Customer loyalty	0.05	3	0.15	1	0.05	1	0.05
Effective CSR	0.03	3	0.09	1	0.03	1	0.03
E-Commerce	0.06	4	0.24	3	0.18	3	0.18
Customer service outlets	0.05	3	0.15	2	0.10	2	0.10
Strong management	0.05	3	0.15	2	0.10	2	0.10
Low production costs	0.05	3	0.15	2	0.10	2	0.10
High quality products	0.05	3	0.15	3	0.15	3	0.15
Positive public image	0.03	4	0.12	2	0.06	2	0.06
Global expansion	0.05	3	0.15	2	0.10	2	0.10
Total	1.00		313		2.09		193

The Competitive Profile Matrix above shows that Safaricom (K) is the strongest performer in the communications industry with a score of 3.13. The others, Airtel (K) and Orange (K) have scores of 2.09 and 193 respectively. The matrix does also show that Safaricom is weakest in call rates and data bundles and therefore needs to revise them downwards.

4.4 The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Matrix

The BCG matrix is a planning tool used by companies to evaluate the strategic position of the brand portfolio and their potential (Jurevicius, 2013). It classifies business portfolio into four categories based on two variables; Market Share and Market Growth (Jurevicius, 2013). These four categories are displayed on four quadrants as Stars, Cash Cows, Question marks and Dogs.

The four categories are explained below to help in placing the Safaricom portfolio. A diagrammatic illustration is also shown:

Stars:

-- they operate in high growth industries and maintain high market share

---they have low earnings but are stable

--- they are both users and generators of cash

--- they are the primary units in which the company should invest money

--- they have neutral cash flow since all earnings are invested.

Cash Cows:

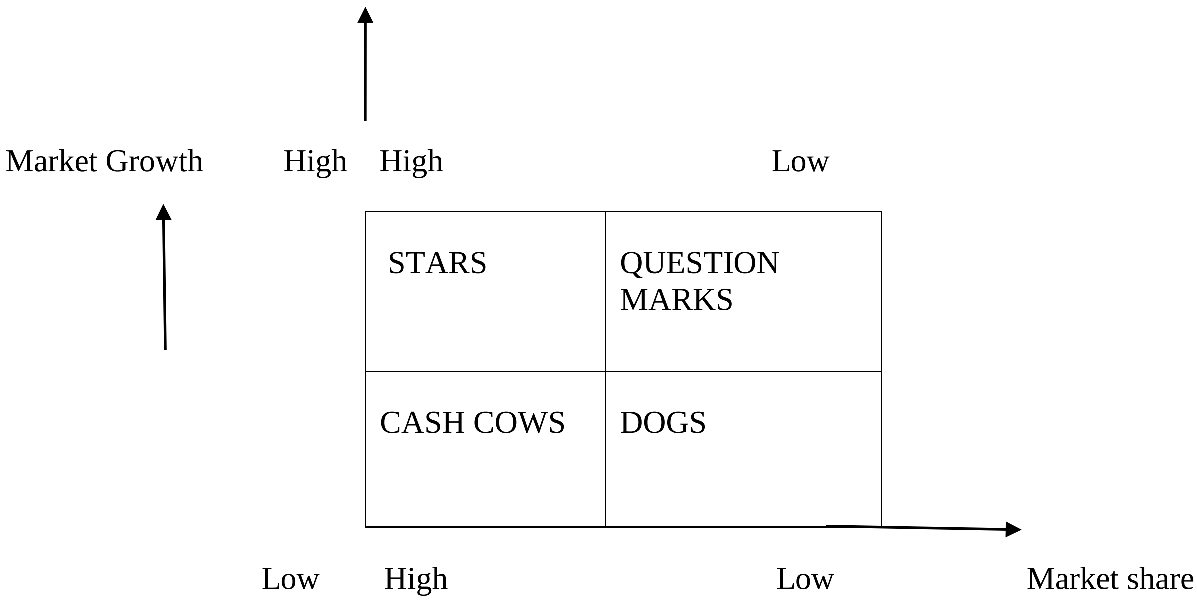
----they have high market share and operate in a low growth industry. They are expected to be on their maturity stage in the product life cycle.

---these are the most profitable brands in a company and should be ‘milked’ to provide as much revenue as possible

--- they have high and stable earnings

--- their high earnings should be ploughed back in Stars for growth. Cash cows should only be supported to maintain the market share.

--- they have a high and stable cash flow



Question Marks:

--they have low, unstable but growing earnings.

--- they have a low market share in a fast growing industry

. --- they have the potential to become Stars.

--- they have a negative cash flow

Dogs:

--they have low market share and operate in a low growth industry

--they have low and unstable earnings

--they are not worthy investing in unless they support other products.

--they have neutral or negative cash flow.

Source: Jurevicius, (2013). Strategic Management Insight

Analysis of Safaricom's portfolio using the BCG Matrix entails subjecting each of her products to this model to determine the category in which it lies. Then appropriate investment strategies are recommended based on the suggestions of the model.

The following is a list of Safaricom's major portfolio brands:

i) M-PESA Mobile money transfer
ii) Lipa na M-PESA
iii) Mobi-cash
iv) Mobile Calls
v) Messaging
vi) M-Shwari
vii) Internet services
viii) Electonics
ix) Audio/Video-Conferencing
x) Corporate Social Responsibility

The table below, which shows a summary of Safaricom CEO's revenue report for the year 2014, will act as an aid in placing Safaricom's portfolio on the BCG Matrix:

Product/Service		Revenue (Ksh. Billions)			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
1	M-PESA	11.78	16.87	21.84	26.56
2	Messaging	7.54	7.77	10.15	13.62
3	Service Revenue	88.20	100.19	118.05	138.36
4	Voice Revenue	63.50	68.96	77.33	86.30
5	Mobile data & Fixed Service Revenue	5.37	6.59	8.73	11.88

Source: Safaricom/LinkedIn ,2014

Any analysis of Safaricom's portfolio, using the BCG Matrix, on the basis of the income streams above is clearly a nullity. None of the strategic business units fits any of the four categories of the BCG Matrix. One would be tempted to classify all the products under 'Stars' except that a key condition for placement under 'Stars' is that income inflows equals income outflows, which is not the case in any strategic business unit where all of them generate incomes in excess of expenditures .

	Product/Service	BCG- Category	Recommended Strategy
i)	Call services	Cash Cow/Star	Invest for stability
ii)	Text messages	Star	Invest for growth
iii)	M-PESA Mobile money transfer	Star	“
iv)	Lipa na M-PESA	Star	“
v)	M-Shwari	Star	“
vi)	Internet services	Star	“
vii)	Electronics	Star	“
viii)	Audio/ Video conferencing	Star	“
ix)	Mobi- Cash	Star	“
x)	CSR	Question Marks	“ to maintain current level-stability

This observation casts doubts on the relevance of the BCG Matrix, as an analytical tool for product portfolios especially when dealing with excellently performing companies like Safaricom, where every product appears to be a ‘Star’ in its own market segment.

The four classifications given by the BCG Matrix fail to take into account other factors besides market share and industry growth in the product markets, which may influence revenue earnings and hence distort the status of the product portfolio in the BCG Matrix. Monopolistic practices may be one such a factor.

The market dominance status that the Communications Authority of Kenya, the industry regulator, recently conferred on Safaricom (Kuria, 2015) was driven by the need to increase competition in the industry. One effect of market dominance is that the dominant industry operator is capable of increasing prices and reaping supernormal profits without necessarily losing any of her customers. This seems to be the scenario with Safaricom’s Voice calls where, in spite of her relatively higher prices Safaricom continues to be the market leader. Thus, a product could earn revenues in excess of investment expenditures even when it’s on its growth stage, in its product life cycle, due to imperfections in the product market. This appears to be the case with all of Safaricom's products, whose earnings outweigh investment expenditures, due to its market dominance which has the effect of reducing competition.

5.0 Internal Environmental Analysis

The internal environment of an organization refers to internal strengths and weaknesses that the organization can control (David, 2011). These strengths and weaknesses arise in the organization's functional areas of management, marketing, finance/accounting, production/operations, research and development, and management information systems (David, 2011). The internal assessment of an organization can be done by use of the SWOT (Strengths and Weaknesses,) Analysis.

The table below shows some of Safaricom's internal strengths and weaknesses

	Strengths		Weaknesses
i)	Leadership in market share	i)	High mobile telephone call charges
ii)	Variety of products and services	ii)	Frequent jamming of network
iii)	Wide network coverage	iii)	High data charges
iv)	Innovativeness	iv)	Lack of mission statement
v)	Strong mobile money transfer service	v)	
vi)	Economies of scale		
vii)	Strong management		
viii)	Customer care relations		
ix)	New products and services		
x)	Strong financial base		
xi)	Many service outlets		
xii)	Strong public image due to strong CSR presence		

At a glance the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. It's however important to describe each of the strengths and weaknesses in some detail to show why they are strengths or weaknesses to the company and how they influence the company's ability to optimise its services to its customers and hence generate profits.

5.1 Strengths

(i) **Market leadership**:

Safaricom commands a 64.7% share of the communications market in Kenya (Mukami, 2016). One advantage with this controlling position is that the market leader has to grapple with the challenge of maintaining high standards in order to maintain that position (Root 111, n.d). It's little wonder that Safaricom continues to deliver high quality products and services into the communications industry. The market leader is also the perceived preferred brand and stands a good stead in acquiring any required financing for business expansion (Root 111, n.d).

Another advantage of market leadership is that the market leader enjoys a premium price as a result of her status. The Business Dictionary defines a premium price as the price of an elite product that a firm charges above the price of competing firms in order to make the product appeal to more affluent customers. That Safaricom continues to price its products well above those of its competitors and still makes profits may perhaps find an explanation in the concept of premium price. It's true that communications products are elitist in nature and a price differential would appeal to those customers who relish the consumption of goods of ostentation. Whether or not this is Safaricom's reason for pricing its products well above those of its competitors is debatable but cannot be wished away.

(ii) **Variety of products:**

The concept of product mix is important in an organization as it helps meet customer needs by providing their primary products under one roof. This helps an organization to increase sales and profits (Edmunds, n.d). It also helps the organization reduce its dependence on one product and save the organization from collapse in the event of failure of the product in the industry.

Some of Safaricom's product mix in the communications industry include; voice calls and text messages, money transfer services (M-PESA), M-shwari, Okoa Jahazi, Lipa na M-PESA, Internet services, safaricom data, modems, laptops and handsets, among others. This product mix enhances loyalty among customers who may not want to switch over to other competitors (Joseph, n.d).

(iii) Wide network coverage

Safaricom has undoubtedly the widest network convergence in Kenya. The point here is that Safaricom is able to reach and provide its clientele with telephone, video and data within the same network and over a wide area. This extensive penetration enables Safaricom to reach a wider subscriber base and increase its profits.

(iv) Innovativeness

The 2013 Issue of Fast Company, one of the World's most respected business magazines named Safaricom (K) as the 9th most innovative company (Macharia, 2014). The criteria of naming the most creative company of the year are based not just on growth and profitability but also on progressive models and ethos of creativity (Macharia, 2014).

Innovation is about changing or creating more effective business processes, products and ideas (Business Magazine). Towards this end Safaricom stands out ahead of her competitors. The many products and services Safaricom continues to roll out into the communications industry is a clear testimony of her leadership in innovation.

(iv) Strong mobile money transfer service.

Of all the products and services Safaricom has developed M-PESA mobile money transfer service has been the most successful (Safaricom/LinkedIn, 2014). In the 2014 end-of-year report the Safaricom CEO, reported that M-PESA's services earned the Company revenue of Ksh 26.56b representing about 18.4% of the total revenue collected for the year. The CEO's report for the year ending March, 31st 2016 showed that M-PESA earned Safaricom a staggering Ksh 41.5 billion in revenue.

That M-PESA has been acclaimed as the world's biggest and most developed mobile money transfer service (Safaricom/LinkedIn, 2014) should be a cause of worry to her competitors. The commanding position occupied by M-PESA in the Kenyan mobile money transfer market is attested by Safaricom's competitor, Orange (K) who, in an on-going advertisement in the electronic media, continues to urge customers to buy 'KADUDA' her dual- SIM phone so that they can use one line for sending money (by M-PESA} while they use the other to communicate.

(vi) Economies of Scale

The Economist Magazine (Oct. 2008 Issue) defines economies of scale as the cost advantages that a firm gains as a result of large scale production. By increasing its output of, say modems or laptops Safaricom is able to reduce the unit cost of each of these products as the fixed factors do not increase in the same ratio. These reduced costs translate into increased profit margins. This is clearly an advantage to Safaricom. The perplexing thing, however, is that despite these advantages accruing from economies of large scale production Safaricom continues to charge higher prices relative to its competitors. One would expect that reduced cost of production would be passed on to consumers in form of lower prices which would act as an incentive and hence increase the subscriber base.

(vii) Strong management

The critical role of strategic management in an organization involves aligning the mission and vision with operations (Boundless, 2014). Towards this end the management of Safaricom seems to outdo its competitors as was observed by Kachwanya (2014). The fact that Safaricom continues with its market dominance in the communications industry despite relatively higher product prices would tend to confirm Kachwanya's (2014) contention that indeed Safaricom has the best assembly of responsive strategic managers in the Kenyan communications industry. There seems to be justification in this contention especially taking into consideration that there was a flawless leadership change in 2010 which ushered in Bob Collymore after the exit of the former CEO, Michael Joseph. This is really a strong point in favour of Safaricom and a critical success factor.

(viii) Customer care relations

The use of multiple platforms, including Twitter, to reach her customers any time of the day, seems to have entrenched Safaricom as the leading customer care service provider in the communications Industry in Kenya (Kachwanya, 2014). A one-on-one comparison between Safaricom and Airtel (Kachwanya, 2014) has revealed that Safaricom is far more responsive to customer needs especially in customer calls where it ensures that the calls go through and that there is somebody on hand to receive and respond to them. The action by M-PESA, of reversing to the sender money send to wrong destinations has been especially efficient. The customer care desk has been quite helpful in recovering such money.

(ix)New Products

Safaricom's dominant position in convergent communication is not in dispute (Safaricom/LinkedIn). Convergent communication refers to the co-existence of telephone, video and data communication in a single network. Apart from the M-PESA mobile money transfer service that's a world beater Safaricom has released many new products into the market. Lipa na M-PESA, Okoasim, Sampaza, emergency top-up service and M-Shwari are other additions. In addition to these Safaricom provides quality modems and laptops. Safaricom has also provided a revolutionary business transactions option, Mobi-bank, in collaboration with the Kenya Commercial Bank in which a businessman is able to undertake withdrawals from the bank and make payments from the comfort of his home, without handling any cash.

(x) Strong financial base

Safaricom continues to be one of the few companies in Kenya that consistently generate profits from her investments. A glance at Safaricom's revenue centres for the period 2011-2014 suffices to illustrate this observation.

Figures in Ksh.billions.

Revenue centre	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
M-ESA	11.78	**16.87**	**21.84**	**26.56**	
Messaging	7.54	7.77	10.15	13.62	
Service Revenue	88.20	100.19	118.05	138.36	
Voice Revenue	63.5	68.96	77.33	86.3	
Mobile data & fixed service Revenue	5.37	6.59	8.73	11.88	
EBITDA	35.4.4672	37.5	49.24	60.94	
Free Cash Flows	4.46	9.35	14.51	22.69	
Total Revenue	94.83	107.00	124.29	144.67	

Source: Safaricom CEO's Report to the Shareholders for the year 2014

The report shows that all revenue centres improved consistently over the period 2011-2014. These are positive indicators of the financial well being of the company and a boost to the shareholders' confidence in the company.

(xi) Many service outlets

Safaricom maintains over 79000 outlets in Kenya serving over 25.2 million people in Kenya. The deep penetration and distribution of these service outlets mean that Safaricom can channel her products across the entire Kenyan landscape. Marketing can also be more efficiently managed leading to an increase in the subscriber base and profits. This is an advantage Safaricom does not share with her competitors who are only struggling to stay afloat.

(xii) Positive public image

One reason Safaricom's presence is much more felt than that of its competitors in Kenya has to do with its prominent corporate social responsibility role. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization defines corporate social responsibility as a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. Safaricom exercises this role through the Safaricom Foundation, a charitable trust established in 2003 (Muriuki, 2008). Safaricom Foundation performs her CSR projects in Kenya in the areas of education, sports, health, water, arts and culture, emergency relief and environmental conservation.

5.2 Weaknesses

(i) High mobile phone calls

The subject of mobile call rates has already been addressed earlier. Safaricom continues to charge the highest rates in the Kenyan market (Kachwaya, 2014). A comparison between Safaricom's and Orange's call rates in the media, in which we are told to 'do the math' gives credence to this observation. The call rate per minute for a Safaricom-to-Safaricom call, according to the advertisement costs ksh.4.00. The cost per minute for a Safaricom –to- other networks call is also ksh.4.00. The cost per minute of an Orange- to-Orange network costs ksh.2.00 while that from Orange-to- Other networks costs ksh3.00. These figures clearly depict Safaricom as not only relatively expensive but also insensitive. That customers are not drifting to other networks is surprising but Safaricom's extensive penetration and good customer service have a role to play in checking customer attrition.

(ii) Frequent jamming

A general observation and an unpleasant experience by all Safaricom customers has been the frequent network congestion possibly due to jamming caused by the huge numbers of customers. M-PESA services have equally been affected. These disruptions have not only affected communication generally but they've also inhibited M-PESA transactions. It's also a security risk when communication is cut off following prolonged periods of network failure. This is a weakness Safaricom can ill afford.

(iii) High data cost

The incessant price wars between Safaricom and her competitors have often forced Safaricom to undertake retaliatory measures in order to remain afloat in the mobile data market. In March 2015, Airtel provided an attractive data package called the UnlimiNETpackage which was not only cheaper but a customer whose data ran out could still continue browsing though at a lower speed (Mutuma, 2015). What was more; if a customer browsed at a full speed of 256kbps he could enjoy free Facebook, Twitter and Gmail services. Safaricom in a bid to protect her market share had to lower her data costs. The current price war pitting Safaricom and Orange where Orange is said to be faster and charging lower in data costs is a weakness Safaricom has to surmount to protect her market leadership.

(iv) Lack of Mission Statement

A search for Safaricom's mission statement doesn't seem to bear fruit. As David (2011) states a mission statement is a crucial document as it defines an organization's future direction. During these times of intense rivalry from her competitors it's not conceivable that an organization of the stature of Safaricom can do without knowing the reason for its existence. Whereas the management may well be aware of the core functions of the company, this does not augur well for the future of Safaricom if the employees are not rallied behind the vision and mission of the company as they would otherwise lack ownership and support. This is certainly not healthy for Safaricom.

5.3 Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Matrix

The procedure for determining the internal factor evaluation (IFE) of an organization is similar to that of determining EFE. Key internal factors with the potential to influence the performance of the organization are identified, from its strengths and weaknesses. These factors are weighted with the total weights adding up to 1. These weights are assigned on the basis of the importance attached to the factor in determining the organization's performance. The factors are again given ratings based on how strong or weak the factor is perceived to be in the organization. The weights and ratings are multiplied to give the scores. The IFE is found by adding up all the scores.

Below is an IFE matrix based on the strengths and weaknesses identified above.

	Strengths	Weight	Rating	Score
i)	Leadership in market share	0.06	3	0.18
ii)	Variety of products and services	0.05	3	0.15
iii)	Wide network coverage	0.10	4	0.40
iv)	Innovativeness	0.10	3	0.30
v)	Strong mobile money transfer service	0.11	4	0.44
vi)	Economies of scale	0.05	3	0.15
vii)	Strong management	0.05	2	0.10
viii)	Customer care relations	0.08	3	0.24
ix)	New products and services	0.04	2	0.08
x)	Strong financial base	0.07	3	0.21
xi)	Many service outlets	0.05	2	0.10
xii)	Strong public image due to strong CSR presence	0.03	1	0.03
	Weaknesses			
i)	High mobile telephone call charges	0.07	3	021
ii)	Frequent jamming of network	0.05	2	0.10

iii)	High data charges	0.03	1	0.03
iv)	Lack of mission statement	0.06	2	0.12
	Total	1.00		2.84

The IFE matrix above shows that on a 4-1 scale Safaricom's 2.84 performance is average implying that there is still room for improvement. Strategic options open for this improvement will be addressed later. However, Safaricom would be advised to improve on the quality of network services and cost of telephone calls and data charges.

6.0 Strategic Analysis and Choice

According to David (2011) strategic analysis and choice deals with generating and evaluating alternative strategies as well as selecting strategies to pursue to enable a firm to achieve its mission and objectives. According to David (2011) the procedure for generating and selecting strategies involves assembling all those stakeholders who were involved in defining the vision and mission statements and who also conducted the environmental audit of the company.

The participants, assembled, would then use the mission statement and the environmental audit to brainstorm and identify strategies which would then be discussed and alternative strategies ranked in order of attractiveness (David, 2011).

David (2011) defines the following three stages in strategy formulation, namely;

i) Stage 1- The Input stage: In this stage a summary of the basic input factors needed to formulate strategies is extracted from IFE, EFE and DPM.
ii) Stage 2- The Matching Stage: In this stage key internal factors are matched with key external factors and a relevant strategy recommended.
iii) Stage 3- The Decision Stage: This stage involves an objective evaluation of feasible alternative strategies.

From the IFE, EFE and CPM analyses of Safaricom conducted earlier the following factors have been identified for purposes of strategy formulation.

Key external environmental factors: - New markets

- Competition from rivals

- New Technology

-Online marketing

- Adverse effects of change

-Unfavourable economic conditions

Key internal environmental factors: -- Strong money transfer services

-- Wide network coverage

--Customer care relations

--Strong financial base

--High mobile call rates

-- Innovativeness

The table below shows a match between key internal factors with key external factors and the resultant strategies recommended for implementation.

Key internal factors	**Key external factors**	**Resultant Strategy**
Strong money transfer service	New markets	Launch M-PESA into the world market
Wide area coverage	Online marketing	Improve on network connectivity
Customer care relations	Adverse effects of change	Capacity building especially on change management
Strong financial base	Unfavourable economic conditions	Maintain steady market prices and operate at normal profits
High call rates	Competition from rivals	Adopt cost-leadership strategy
Innovativeness	New Technology	Develop new products

For Safaricom the following priority order of strategies would suffice for her to maintain her market leadership:

i) Launching M-PESA into the World Market.
ii) Adopting a cost- leadership strategy
iii) Developing new products
iv) Capacity building
v) Improving network connectivity

vi) Maintaining steady prices and operating at normal profits.

Below is some justification for the choice of the strategy identified.

i) Launching M-PESA into the world market

M-PESA is by far the most successful mobile money transfer service in the world (SafaricomlinkedIn, 2014). It has a dominant presence in the Kenyan market. By penetrating the world market Safaricom will not only expand the operations of M-PESA and hence increase her profitability but it will also leverage the marketing and sale of her other products. The uniqueness and advantage of M-PESA relative to her foreign competitors is her ability to reach even the far-flung areas in the countryside due to her low level of infrastructure investment. There is therefore a big market for Safricom's M-PESA in most of the African continent where the situations obtaining are similar to those found in Kenya.

ii) Adopting a cost-leadership strategy

Safaricom maintains higher call rates compared to her competitors. Being the market leader Safaricom enjoys economies of scale in her production. A reduction in her call rates increases both her subscriber base and her market share.

iii) Development of new products.

The analysis carried out earlier indicates Safaricom's endowments in innovation and finances. Safaricom can use her strong financial capability to fund research and development of new products. An increase in the portfolio base means that customers have a one-stop shop and this increases their loyalty in addition to promoting cross-selling.

iv) Capacity building.

Safaricom maintains one of the best customer care centres in Kenya. Her response to customer needs is unparalleled. Changes in the external environment will however affect her ability to cope with customer needs and pressures from her competitors. There is therefore the case for building employees capacity to deliver on their mandates through training, especially on customer services.

v) Improving network connectivity

One of the most serious limitations to Safaricom's service delivery is in network connectivity. Prolonged periods of network failure due to congestion of the network are challenges that customers have had to grapple with. The company needs to use its vast resources to improve on the quality of its network infrastructure in order to ease congestion and take advantage of online marketing opportunities and increase penetration.

vi**) Maintain steady prices and operate at normal profits**

The advantage with a company with a strong financial base in an economy that is experiencing adverse economic conditions is that it can cushion customers from price changes by opting to earn normal profits and maintaining steady prices. Fluctuations of international prices of petroleum or actions by the Central Bank to stabilize exchange rates may trigger a rise in interest rates. These increased interest rates would push up prices. A company like Safaricom may decide to maintain its market share by refusing to adjust prices upwards but opt, instead to earn normal profits.

7.0 Ethics and Social Responsibility

According to MacNamara (2015), ethics is a science of conduct concerned with knowing what's right and wrong and doing what's right. Business ethics is defined as the critical examination of how people and institutions behave in business (Macdonald, 2010). It consists of examining appropriate constraints on the pursuit of self-interest in the case of an individual or profits in the case of a firm (Macdonald, 2010).The word 'Critical' involves examining and critiquing moral beliefs and practices to determine which of these beliefs and practices constitute ethical conduct.

The concept of social responsibility may be viewed as about how companies manage their own businesses in order to produce an overall positive impact on society (Baker, 2004). The United Nations Industrial Development Organization views corporate social responsibility as a management concept in which companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their businesses and interactions with stakeholders.

The two concepts, ethics and social responsibility seem to be intertwined, with social responsibility trying to operationalize ethics. In fact Meaden (n.d.) views social responsibility as a sub-set of ethics: like a topic within ethics.

There seems to be no evidence connecting Safaricom to any unethical conduct. This is corroborated by the Daily Nation report of March 3, 2015, in which the Bob Collymore, the CEO said, as custodians of shareholder money Safaricom would not be expected to enter into any activities where unethical behaviour exists. This was after he had stopped sponsorship of Kenya's Rugby 7s for financial impropriety (Business daily Africa, 3/2/2015).

On the subject of social responsibility Safaricom seems to be a strong player as has been highlighted by Atudo (2014). In this study Atudo identifies major beneficiaries of Safaricom's sponsorship areas as; Education, Sports, Health, Water, Arts and Culture, Emergency reliefs and Environmental Conservation. The table below illustrates Safaricom's corporate social responsibility sponsorship of various projects for 2013 (Atudo, 2014)

Project	No. Funded	Amount (Ksh. Millions)
Education	60	81
Sports	6	10
Health	25	38
Water	8	24
Arts & Culture	2	23
Environmental conservation	11	15

Safaricom conducts its corporate social responsibility role through the Safaricom Foundation which was founded in 2003 (Safaricom/LinkedIn, 2014).

8.0 Strategy Review, Evaluation and Control

As a result of changes in a firm's environment strategies are bound to become obsolete. This calls for a systematic review, evaluation, control and execution of strategies (David, 2011). According to David (2011), strategy evaluation undergoes three stages: examination of the basis of a company's strategy, comparison of a company's expected results with actual results, and taking corrective measures.

Safaricom's strategies, like those of other companies will occasionally need to be reviewed and evaluated in order for her to cope with the changes particularly in her external environment. In this paper the recommendation for this task is the use of the Strategic Evaluation Matrix developed by David (2011).

Have major changes occurred in the firm's internal environment?	Have major changes occurred in the firm's external environment?	Has the firm progressed satisfactorily towards achieving its objectives?	Result
No	No	No	Take corrective actions
Yes	Yes	Yes	Take corrective actions
Yes	Yes	No	Take corrective actions
Yes	No	Yes	Take corrective actions
Yes	No	No	Take corrective actions
No	Yes	Yes	Take corrective actions
No	Yes	No	Take corrective actions
No	No	Yes	Continue present strategic course

The Strategic Evaluation Matrix involves the examination of the internal and external environments to find out whether or not set objectives have been met (David, 2011). A decision is then taken on the basis of the results obtained and appropriate corrective actions taken.

The procedure in this evaluation involves developing revised IFE and EFE Matrices which focus on changes in both the internal and external environments and reacting to those changes on the basis of the responses in the Strategy- Evaluation Assessment Matrix shown above, developed by David (2011).

In the case of Safaricom, factors in the internal environment are reviewed against changes in the external environment and depending on the responses given, an appropriate recommendation is given. If for instance, there have been no changes in both the internal and the external environments and the firm has not progressed then the recommendation is that corrective action be undertaken to bring about progress. On the other hand, if there have been no changes in both the internal and external environments but the firm has progressed satisfactorily then the recommendation would be to continue with the present strategic course.

David (2011) maintains that the process of strategy review, evaluation and control ought to be continuous in order to keep abreast of the dynamics of the organizational environment.

9.0 Conclusion

The subject of strategic case analysis is central to strategic management as it helps strategists align an organization's resources to its operations in order to achieve its mission and goals. Business management must therefore embrace strategic management practices like case analysis which keep their businesses in focus towards efficient utilization of scarce resources as they strive to reach their vision.

Safaricom (K) is the leading player in the communications industry in Kenya. This notwithstanding she has to continuously formulate, implement and review her strategies in order to be responsive to the needs of the industry and maintain her leadership in the market. As a market leader Safaricom would need to up her research and development capabilities and develop new products and processes to maintain the gap between her and her competitors.

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