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LE RÉSEAU DES **SMARTPHONES**

BUSINESS COMPANIES, FACING THE HEALTH CRISIS

"The key to resilience is flexibility," says Eddy Kapuku, CEO of Airtel Madagascar

For the resumption of the Thursday morning roundtable, Eddy Kapuku, Managing Director of Airtel Madagascar was the guest of AmCham - the American Chamber of Commerce in Madagascar. An opportunity for an overview of the impact of the pandemic on the telecommunications sector and a sharing of experience in the face of the health crisis.

February 18, 2021, the theme of the day for AmCham's first post-conflict roundtable was **"Strengthening Business Resilience in the Face of Covid-19 "**. Members and partners of the American Chamber of Commerce were numerous to exchange with Eddy Kapuku, expert in marketing and telecommunications.

Globally, as in Madagascar, this pandemic was economically fatal. As a result of the barrier measures adopted (lockdown, state of health emergency, etc.), the majority of activity sectors have slowed down. Telecommunications have not been spared.

"Like tourism, hospitality and aviation, the mobile phone industry has suffered from the effects of this pandemic. In our case, Airtel Madagascar recorded a drop of around 30% in sales to individuals, or 90% of its customers. And despite the doubling of our turnover in the B2B market, as a whole, Airtel saw a decrease of almost 50% of its turnover in the first months following the declaration of the state of health emergency in the Big Island ", according to Eddy Kapuku.

Be resilient

"Flexibility" is the key which allowed Airtel Madagascar to face this difficult situation. The need to reorganize to stay in the race with **"careful management of resources and costs. At the employee level, the majority have had the privilege of teleworking, with the exception of the technical team responsible for maintaining the network. From a logistical point of view, to anticipate the closing of the borders, we have ordered our provisions for one semester, instead of our usual monthly orders"**, said the Managing Director.

On the commercial front, given the restrictions adopted in the context of the state of emergency, maintaining proximity to customers has not been easy for most companies. A challenge that Airtel was able to meet thanks to its digital know-how. **"As customers could not come to us, we went to meet them, at their homes, while respecting barrier gestures. We therefore bet on more effective digital actions and television media actions. It was an opportunity to exploit our full potential in digital matters by creating or strengthening solutions in this direction, such as mobile banking, and by contributing to the promotion of online education "**, he maintained.

People, at the heart of all concerns

Eddy Kapuku took advantage of this meeting to remind people that people are at the heart of Airtel's values through its societal actions. During this period, Airtel Madagascar showed its solidarity through its support for various Malagasy institutions, in charge of coordinating the fight against the virus. Support materialized by donations of masks, basic necessities and other items given in particular to the CCO, the Urban Municipality of Antananarivo and the nursing staff.

Always human, with **"attentive listening to customer needs in order to respond to them as well as possible, as quickly as possible and at the lowest cost in these times of crisis"**. To questions from the audience concerning the rude competition between telecommunications operators, this manager replied that "given the context, we have been focused and we will continue to be focused on solutions to provide to our customers and on the improvement of digital communication to maintain contact with them".

Help companies to build their resilience

Airtel has thus provided a choice of solutions to support companies in strengthening the resilience of their operations. Indeed, faced with the unexpected situation caused by the pandemic, many companies, especially SMEs, were not prepared.

The need to adapt has therefore become essential to ensure the survival and even the growth of these companies in times of crisis, thus considering telecommuting and collaboration solutions based on connectivity. The Managing Director of Airtel presented the solutions, at affordable prices, which were the most requested, thus generating the growth observed in the B2B segment:

- Guaranteed speed Internet connectivity and guaranteed availability thanks to three redundant international outlets
- AVAYA videoconferencing and collaboration solution



- Interconnection of remote offices for companies with several sites or branches
- VPN solution extendable to employees' homes thanks to portable routers
- Cloud service with capacity hosting in client / server mode (IaaS, CaaS, SaaS)
- Possibility of payment by Airtel Money

Eddy Kapuku concluded his intervention by affirming that, **"during this health crisis, Airtel has strived to provide security and quality solutions for both our private customers and our B2B customers by maintaining an activity while also preserving the health of our employees. Our social commitment was not neglected either. It was our listening skills and teamwork that enabled us to cope".**

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