

## **Epicentric Growth Model**

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### **Abstract**

This strategic growth model for the micro enterprise is designed through a technique denominated epicentric. This growth model uses as base the quantum physics theory to explain the growing movement of the micro enterprise as the model is implemented. The growth is dynamic as a ripple that advances gaining terrain as the business expands. It will be possible to measure efficacy and efficiency of each growth strategy applied to the enterprise and complement, improve or even change them as the results are documented. This is why the epicentric growth model for small business is ethically innovative, since it presents a model of ethical and social sustainable business with a view to long-term and focused on the benefit of all components of society, from individuals as consumers of goods and services, to businesses with their search for growth and economic stability. This model takes into consideration the business' situations as a starting point instead of the selection of one strategy as a base, giving the micro enterprise person a clear guide of how its growth and the selection of growth strategies must be taken, parting from its present business reality.

### Introduction: model necessity

There is necessity for new strategies and new procedures or models about how a micro enterprise should begin to grow. Pryor, Toombs, Anderson, & White (2010), found that in order to improve their organizations and their operations, small business leaders should utilize various management models and standards in conjunction with quality initiatives and tools. In fact, they should integrate quality initiatives into the strategic management of their organizations. Many of the existing models for micro enterprises growth require the acquisition of new debts or the risk of existing capital. Thus, the necessity arises for a model of sustainable growth of the micro enterprise without incurring in financing, new debt, or the spending of the enterprise's capital in saving.

This model is presented as a theatrical model at this moment. The method of addressing the problem presented in this project is the implementation of a new model denominated epicentric growth model. Dynamic capabilities counter this effect and are defined as the ability of the firm to reconfigure operating capabilities and thus allow the organization to adapt and evolve (Newey, & Zahra, 2009). The model involve the expansive and dynamic growth of the micro enterprise by expanding the services or products offered by the enterprise from less to more, like expanding waves or ripples, using the clientele base at the same time that revenue is increased: a base service or product is offered, revenue is gained, a new service or product is added to the existing one, more revenue is gained by the offer of two services instead of one, a new service or product is added to the previous ones, more revenue is gained by offering all the services or products previously acquired always having the base service or product as the epicenter.

Osuagwu (2009) found that the strategic management practices of Small Business Enterprises (SBEs) show effectiveness in both quantitative and qualitative measures of performance. In according to these findings, the use of strategies for the micro enterprise should not be limited to the use of a particular one. For this model, different strategies are used, growth strategies like CRM strategy, collaborative alliances, and feedback. Strategies like the one described by Marguerite Berger (1997) explain the general goal:

Bank for the Development of the Micro enterprise consists in expanding the economic opportunities in Latin America through sustainable and dynamic development of the microenterprise. The objective is to promote the necessary conditions for the growth and development of the sector in the region. Wiklund, Patzelt, & Shepherd, D. A. (2009) found that a major reason for these shortcomings, it is argued, is that this literature is highly fragmented several theoretical perspectives have been developed, but there is little conversation between these perspectives. That makes clear the necessity for economic models focused in the use of strategies applicable for the micro enterprise.

The design of this model derives from the premise that says that micro enterprises must function as systems of expansive waves. The administration of enterprises must be seen as a science that relates with the other sciences of the universe. Particularly, it is aimed in this project to use physics as a crystal through which it will be seen the growth of a micro enterprise. Aramburo (2011) explains that physics can be considered as just a judicious description of the world and of life and that it uses mathematical language because it is very economic and precise. Physics is not a matter of ontology, that is to say, a philosophy, and because of that it does not pretend to explain the mysteries of the being or of the no existence. It is a matter related to the everyday common but explained with good taste. Nouruzi (2010) explain that implementing new strategies are necessary to be competitive in the area of crises today. Multidisciplinary thinking for a manager is a competitive advantage for the organization. Coaches as well as the employees should prepare themselves with quantum skills as well, for take advantage in the global economy. Also Noruzi (2010) conclude “it is only when a management style moves from being intuitively applied to a planned and systemized process that it can be perfected. Only then can it be substantially transformed from being an art to becoming a science. Once it transitions into a science, it becomes testable, measurable, more predictable, and, most importantly, repeatable.” This model uses particularly, a relationship between quantum physics and business administration.

Therefore the perspective of the enterprises interrelating with their environment must not be lost. In words of physics, enterprises contrive in motion, actions, and reactions that relates them to their environment. According to El Prisma (2011) enterprises are viewed as an open system that is in continuous interrelationship with their environment, with the medium that surrounds them. The surroundings provide the financial resources, manpower, and raw material that are submitted to a process of transformation and then return to the surroundings. A wide process of transformation is promoted by a wide productive process, production of goods and services. Also, enterprises are compared with an open system that picks what it needs from its surroundings and, once it has been transformed, it returns the product to its surroundings. That process makes the system to auto control and auto equilibrate.

When the computer prototype animated model is in work, it can be appreciated the movement of the stages that symbolizes growth which at the same time is interpreted administratively as business and economic growth. This movement is very well defined by the quantum physics. According Ciencia Polar.com (2011) quantum physics derives from the definition of the position of the particles being defined by a function that describes the probability of a given particle being in a given position at a given instant. In the application of this theory to the epicentric model of growth it would imply the position of the primary stage or stage of beginning denominated the client.

For Ciencia Polar.com (2011) quantum physics brings a new concept of information based on the quantum nature of elemental particles, which open new possibilities for the processing of data. When applying this view to the epicentric model, it explains clearly the way in which movement of information is used through the stages

of the model in pro of the growth of the microenterprise. The constant feedback and flux of the information at each one of the stages are the basic and essential blood for the success of its application to the micro enterprise and consequentially to the economy.

The epicentric growth model uses a combination of growth strategies with the goal of helping the micro enterprise to develop parting from its center or most important point which is the client. Therefore, the first strategy to be used in the model in its first two stages is the process called Customer Relationship Management (CRM). According to Goldenberg, B. (2008) the CRM targeting small medium business offer easy-to-implement solutions with opportunity for a quick return of investments (ROI). Also in the publication comments that the CRM spending within the SMB's segment is predicted to grow at a compound annual growth rate of nine percent until at list 2011.

This makes it essential for the model to be actualized and tempered to the present reality of micro enterprises and thus be cemented on a strong base in relation of the client. Studying the Current Status of Technology Adoption (2006) found that Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) play a critical role in nurturing industrial innovation, constituting 40 percent of highly innovative firms in 2002. SMEs also play a significant role in enhancing the competitiveness of an economy through the process of economic renewal by creation, elimination, and restructuring of economic sectors. Technology and the CRM has been a critical factor in enabling SMEs to play this regenerative role in the U.S. economy. Mendoza, Marius, Perez, & Griman, (2007) explain that most organizations have perceived the customer relationship management (CRM) concept as a technological solution for problems in individual areas, accompanied by a great deal of uncoordinated initiatives. Nevertheless, CRM must be conceived as a strategy, due to its human, technological, and processes implications, at the time an organization decides to implement it. For the epicentric growth model, the main base to begin the growing of an enterprise parting from the center and outward is the client. The stages of knowledge of the client and knowledge of the products in need for the client are strongly recommended with strategies of CRM so the products or services added to the micro enterprise will satisfy the needs of the clientele and at the same time be translated into revenue to the enterprise that will allow the desired economic growth with the minimum of capital contribution from the part of the micro enterprise.

One of the most essential parts of the epicentric growth model is feedback. The efficacy and efficiency of a model and its strategies is based in timely and adequate feedback (Chiavenato, 2006). The feedback cycle indicates that strategic management is a permanent process (Robbins&Coulter, 2000). Neckopulos (2010) concluded that successful marketing to small-businesses requires a sophisticated segmentation of customers and prospects through superior knowledge of their business needs—as well as the creation of a system of ongoing customer feedback. Once the strategy is implemented, a monitoring of its execution it must be done with the goal of determining up to which point are the strategic objectives achieved.

Feedback serves the micro enterprise to reaffirm the existing goals and strategies or to suggest changes that go affine with the actual necessities of the client and of the business. Gravelle (1995) found that dynamic also sometimes referred to as estimates that allow for "feedback" effects. That is why the epicentric growth model in its last stage gives the most importance to feedback as the special weapon to measure the satisfaction of the client with the new products or services acquired through the alliances with other micro enterprises. At the same time, feedback is the link that makes cyclical the process of expiation returning it to its first stage to begin the whole process anew.

## Etical empresaris model

In modern times we are in a period of transition and establishment of new regimes tempered to the great technological, communicational, and social changes that mankind had never experienced. According to Miranda & Ruiz (1999), the fact is that we are in a historical era in which more people increasingly becomes aware of the relationship between ethics, science, and technology. To establish this relationship we have ethics as the core concept, understood in its broadest sense as the discipline which studies the moral evaluation of human acts, or how to explain the conditions of a fair coexistence. According to this view, ethics is an instrument of human orientation, which allows choosing the courses that are consistent with human dignity.

Today companies need to move their business strategies to strategies with strong ethical foundations, driven by the even stronger consumer's search for ethically responsible companies. A company should know that today more than 40% of people under thirty years of age have gone to college or have an equivalent education, regardless of whether they completed or not, that means we face the best prepared potential audience of consumers in history, which will not be easy to "bait" in the ethical, or quality of service (Alcoberro, 2002). The time when the price was the only important element in deciding the consumption is over, or is about to end. These data imply a growing need from the consumers' (individuals) part to ethical practices by the companies at the time of making decisions as consumers of goods or services of the companies.

To Fontrodona & Sison (2007), the usual considerations about the nature of the company, depends heavily on explanations of Coase, together with input from the agency theory and shareholder theory. Despite the requirements of objectivity and neutrality, it has been difficult to provide a place for a type of business ethics that recognizes the personal nature of the human being and the business contribution to the common good according to these premises. Also Fontrodona & Argandoña (2011), pose that some difficulties for a proper understanding of business ethics lie in the design of the organizations which promote or hinder ethical behavior: therefore there is a need for business models that help small businesses to develop and grow within a framework of business ethics and benefit for all. Business ethics guides the decision-making in a context of systemic relationships where dialogue and consideration of the interests of affected groups-stakeholders-are a new form of management (Schiavoni, 2006). A model of social entrepreneurship framed in ethical business models would provide broad benefits to all stakeholders in society. According e.com culture (2011) Social entrepreneurship is the result of the union of intentions, efforts, proposals and actions arising from community organizations, state and other actors to address social needs, from development business practices where the focus is the welfare of people.

The epicentric growth model for small business is an ethical business model from the perspective of social entrepreneurship, since it promotes partnerships between small businesses that will drive the economies of their people helping each other to stimulate economic growth and social development. The model encourages the growth of small businesses based on mutual aid (strategic alliances), although it is recognized that this growth can be slow, it will be constant, permanent and beneficial to all components of society, from entrepreneurs or business owners to government and society. This is why the epicentric growth model for small business is ethically innovative, since it presents a model of ethical and social sustainable business with a view to long-term and focused on the benefit of all components of society, from individuals as consumers of goods and services, to businesses with their search for growth and economic stability.

### Epicentric Growth Model for the micro enterprises

The micro enterprise and the small enterprises face daily their desire of growth but most collide with the reality of lack of capital among other problems that prevents them begin their growing career. The epicentric growth model seeks to provide the micro enterprise and the small business a model of growth at low cost and constant advance that will allow them start to grow from the fundamental that the enterprise has which is the clients.

The model for the micro enterprise and small enterprise derives from the assumptions of the business is economically stable, there is enough knowledge of its operations and it has a strategic planning delineated such as mission, vision, and objectives. In this way, the management will be able to use the model so it will help them in the selection of growth strategies through each one of the stages or ripples of development of the enterprise. Part of what the model proposes is a growth more or less like going up the steps of a stair where each step is riskier than the previous one for which the idea is to go up but in a progressive manner. Also, the model proposes a growth in a dynamic way like expansive waves, perhaps as a single wave that gains terrain in its path. These steps or ripples are showed in appendix 1 and described as fallow:

#### Knowledge of the client

Knowing the client is simply to try to sell them more of the current product to the current clients. Macpherson, & Holt (2007) founds that the human and social capital, organizational systems, and client knowledge networks combine to facilitate or restrict growth of the small business. The fundamental of this stage or wave is for the enterprise to use the clients of the current operations to obtain information about products or services that could be added to increase sales. The micro enterprise must hand out questionnaires, document dialogues with the clients and carry out feedback strategies to gain knowledge about the clients' necessities to attain ways to make the client buy more. This is the essence of the first step of the epicentric growth model using existing tools of the micro enterprise to improve sales giving them the possibility of growing through getting all across the market for growth as for recognition of the brand (of the enterprise).

#### Knowledge of products in necessity by the client

Gaining knowledge of products in necessity by the client is easier than thinking in new clients. The idea of the new product is for the new product to be compatible with the current business model so the current clients will feel natural buying the new products from the enterprise and perceive an environment of growth and solidification (Vogel, & Cagan, 2002). Current client necessities which were collected in the previous stage are then analyzed. The products with higher among the current clients are documented. The market, prices, and compatibility of product are studied with the goal of proceeding to the next stage of the model.

#### Establishing alliances with micro enterprises

For the next stage of the model it is recommended the establishment of alliances with small dealers of products or services related to the small Enterprise that generally the client would buy in packages or would need in sets. The alliances are low cost strategies because the small business man does not incur in the purchase of new machinery, expansion, or excessive investments in order of being able to offer new products or services within their business. The objective is to grow expanding the market where the business is located from one city or town to another. It must be taken in consideration that

the growth with this model is delineated and measured. Therefore the management must know the market to be expanded with clarity, depth, and amplitude.

It is essential to know the competitors. The growth into other countries and the concept of internationalization must be taken as future plans once the local expansion has been successfully achieved. The business men must take the decisions of logistic type in pro of the enterprise and the reduction of operational expenses, but taking into account that the essential finality of the business is top put the products of the enterprise as accessible as possible for the clients in the highest quantity of cities, towns or locations adjacent to the enterprise's location. In other words, if the products are sold in stores with door to the street, try to sell through another channel of distribution as could be sales through mail or a virtual store via internet (Phillips, 1993).

To supply the business of the technology as a weapon of growth is the essence of this stage. Specific analysis must be done about the needs of the clients in order to acquire technology that will allow the small business person to satisfy those needs and so maximize the sales by client. In this case it is about having included in the agreements of the alliance promotion of the products or services of the first business in the second business of the Alliance and vice versa.

#### Complete the sale of services or products

The products and services that are the result of the alliance between micro enterprises are offered. This act produces new flows of sales associated with the new services or products bringing to the enterprise a higher capital to join efforts in their way towards growth. At the same time, in this stage, the model begins to stage one in order to newly begin to grow to other products and services that will help to the growth of the enterprise. It is indispensable in this stage to count on a process of feedback before the client's satisfaction about the new products or services to adjust all offered services or products of the enterprise to the same level of quality.

#### Model applicability

The applicability of the epicentric growth model happens in a factor of 1 to four times the growth of the micro enterprise, based on the analysis of the annual income records of four businesses during the years from 2005 to 2009 when the model was applied. It is taken as an example a small business dedicated to the industry of entertainment for children in the field of party equipment and related goods market. The micro enterprise Inflatos has its origins in San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico in the year 2002. To the end of 2005 it registered an average monthly income of \$1,300 based on the data found in its sales books. The next year of operations it registered a similar income to the previous year, an average monthly income of \$1,400. During its first four years of operation, its average monthly income was \$1,400. Operations in this stage respond exclusively to the rent of the equipment in possession of the enterprise while having no alliance with any other enterprise in the market.

During the three months considered as the peak of the season for the industry of inflatable equipment, May, June, and July 2006, it was begun a process directed by the management of Inflatos of informal interviews to the clients who were buying services of rent of inflatable equipment to the enterprise with the goal of knowing possible additional services that they would want in their birthday parties. All these casual and informal interviews were documented in a form named History of the Client, which would be later tabulated and analyzed all similarities in the needs of the interviewed clients.

As a second step, during the months of August, September, and October 2006, interviews and visits were made in other micro enterprises that offered party and

inflatable equipment services in order to choose the providers of services that the clients had marked as their primary needs. The micro enterprises that offered the services in need for the clients were offered the alternative of collaborative alliances to cover the needs of the already existing clients. The first service added in 2007 was the service of a clown which was the dominant factor in the interviews among the clients of Inflaitos.

For the year 2007 it began the application of the epicentric model and strategic alliances are acquired with other competitor companies in the geographical area and additional services are also acquired to add them to what was already being offered to the existing clientele. For this year, only the clown service was added to the inflatable equipment offers. In the end of 2007, the business reported an average monthly income of \$2000. Table one in the appendix shows in detail the income for 2007.

In 2008, a new alliance is established with the services of DJ and a collaborative alliance is formed with an inflatable equipment enterprise in the central area of the island to cover the exceeding of activities that Inflaitos possessed and also in order to add services of carousel, mechanical bull, and dunk tank. With the before mentioned alliances, in the end of 2008, the business registered an average monthly income of \$2,900. Table two in the appendix presents in detail the income by sale of services during the year 2008.

In 2009, two independent clowns joined the business through alliances. For the year 2009, the average monthly income registered is \$4400. Table two in the appendix presents in detail the income by sale of services during the year 2009. These new alliances caused an increase of sales in an average of 46 percent throughout the three recorded years. Graphic one represents a continuous growth of income by sales generated by the use of the epicentric growth model in the micro enterprise Inflaitos. Graphic two shows the constant percent increase of income during the three years of application of the epicentric growth model showing a constant and growing increase in its income through the continuous use of the epicentric growth model. (See graph 1 and 2 in appendix 2)

The micro enterprises of entertainment that formed strategic alliances with Inflaitos, some of them which were Jumping City, Carlos DJ Services, and the three independent clowns, registered a monthly increase in the sales of their services of between 28 to 30 percent which resulted in an increase of the income for the group of enterprises that made a strategic alliances of around 34 percent. This serves as initial prove that the model not only increased the individual income of each business that applied the model but also increased the income of the group of businesses participating in the collaborative strategic alliances. In other words, it increased the income in the local economy of the region where all these businesses are established in Puerto Rico.

The data for this analysis was collected from the sales books of the enterprise Inflaitos and from the interviews with managers and owners of the other micro enterprises that formed collaborative strategic alliances with Inflaitos. This analytical study was made with only one micro enterprise with the goal of exposing the applicability of the epicentric growth model. It is recommended to make a bigger scale study with a representative sample of micro enterprises from multiple regions and different economies to standardize and validate the final applicability of the epicentric model.

In conclusion, by implementing this model, it is expected that the micro enterprise will develop a constant expansion and growth. At the same time, since the expansion of services and products is based on alliances with other micro enterprises, it is expected that those other enterprises will also expand and grow. Colapinto (2010) it states that for small business to keep grow, it must engage in detailed planning for sales and marketing, which includes knowing its customers, suppliers and the impact of promotions and advertising.

This growth, as presented before, is expected to work as expanding waves and, if the model is implemented by the enterprises in the alliances, while the necessity of new services and products arises, new alliances will be needed which will cause the expansion and growth of all the micro enterprises involved resulting in a chain reaction that will produce economic growth of the region in which the enterprises are functioning.

The model results original and innovative in the sense that it differs from other models that are based on the acquisition of new products or services by the means of prolonged debt through financing or loans that add economic responsibility or require using or putting at risk the capital of the micro enterprise. "Pérez, V. (2001) found that getting the vision that the micro enterprises are important actors for promoting not only employment but also for contributing to the economic development process". The model also promotes the simultaneous growth of several micro enterprises which promotes growth for local economy which thus is expected to promote global economy. In a sense, this model presents a change in perspective because it looks at the micro enterprise growing from its center outwards at the same time that recognizes its center place in the local economy while recognizing and promoting the assisting and helping of one another to make the global economy grow (See appendix 3).

Gill, Biger, Mathur, Shah, & Bhutani (2010) found that the factors that can affect the prosperity to grow and expand of a small business are perceptions of lack of expertise, family-business role conflict, and lack of management skills. That the reason that this vision of the epicentric model needs the active participation of professionals in research, education, practice, and policy making because it requires a change of mentality where the small enterprises support each other and each one is not seen as one small unit but as a whole group strong enough to continue growing even if one of the small enterprises involved fails for any reason, and so, keeping the economy moving.

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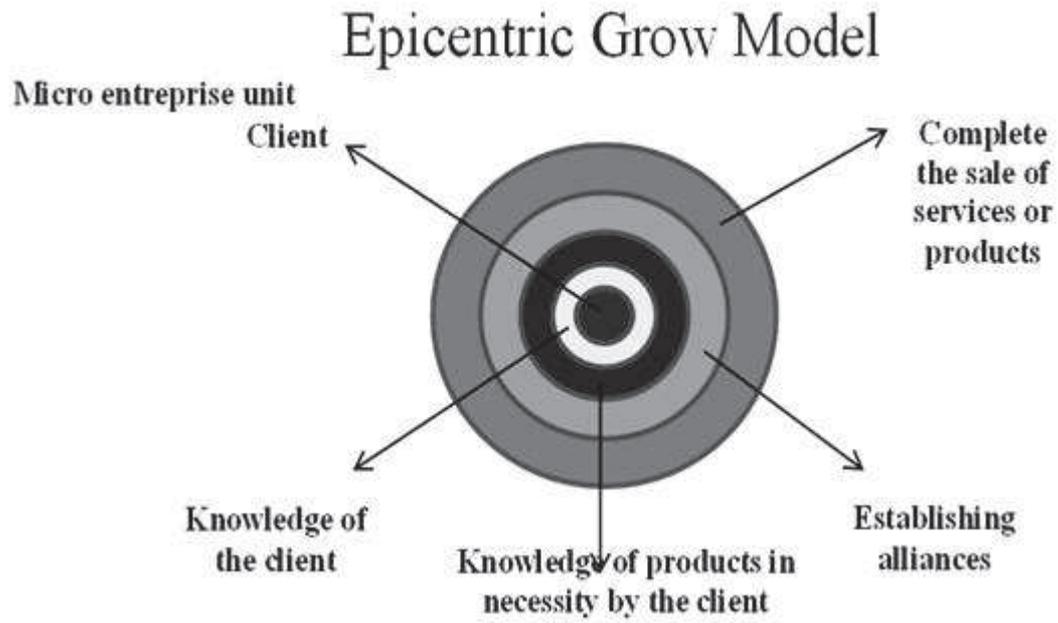
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Appendix:

Appendix 1:

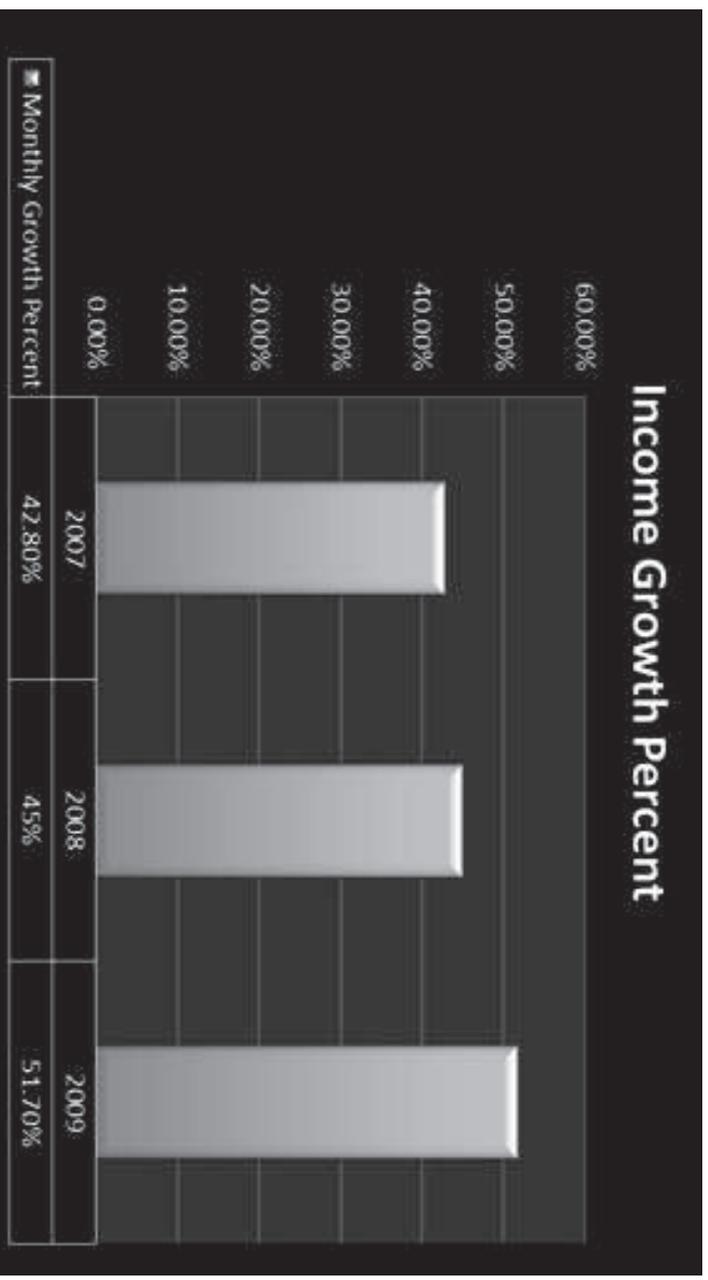


Appendix 2:

Graph 1



Graph 2



Appendix 3:

## Epicentric Grow Model

