

Laptops and latte... not an option for Rwandan business people

'Coffee shop working' may be trendy in some Western cities, but laptops with latte are not to the taste of Rwanda business people, according to Regus, the global provider of flexible workspace.

In its latest research report, Regus asked business people worldwide, across East Africa and in Rwanda whether a coffee shop really is an ideal place to work. The answer - locally and globally - was a resounding 'No'.

The international survey covered 26 000 businesses in more than 90 countries. East African respondents highlighted numerous shortcomings of the coffee shop as a work environment.

The three biggest drawbacks were:

- Lack of privacy as many documents and conversations are confidential (91% of the East African sample raised these concerns)
- Having to look after belongings at all times (74%)
- Unreliable or slow internet access (74%)

Many respondents in the East African region (64%) said background chatter affects productivity while 62% cited lack of access to office equipment as a disadvantage.

Coffee shop working is not an option

Most (59%) regarded coffee shops as a no-go area for client meetings.

Peter Vieira, area director: East Africa and Zambia for Regus, noted: "Across Africa, multinational business accounts for about 60% of our client-base.

"These businesses have strict data security protocols. Coffee shop working is not an option.

"Regus business centres are served by sophisticated computer systems with advanced security features to ensure data integrity - a key issue for our clients, as our latest research survey makes clear."

Regus operates in a business centre in Rwanda: Dar es Salaam, Seaport. Regionally, Regus is represented in Rwanda,

Madagascar, Uganda, Mauritius, Kenya and Tanzania. The office solutions provider serves a mix of local and international businesses.

Its clients in the small and medium enterprise (SME) category serve the local economy and may also work as suppliers to multinationals. They therefore share concerns around client confidentiality.

Image is another priority for SMEs

Vieira explained: "A professional setting with access to modern office technology is a vital consideration for Rwanda SMEs.

"High productivity is also essential. Downtime caused by a power failure at your favourite coffee shop is simply not acceptable."

For this reason, both the SME and multinational clients of Regus appreciate the investment made by the workspace provider in power generators that operate independently of the local electricity grid.

This commitment to 24/7 uptime is a standard feature of the Regus service offering across sub-Saharan Africa.

"Rwandan's love their coffee," added Vieira, "but it will take a lot to convince our clients they can mix laptops and latte without compromising data integrity and their productivity levels."

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