

**AN EXPLORATION OF KEY ACTIVITIES  
IN COMMUNITY MALL BUSINESS**



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## **AN EXPLORATION OF KEY ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITY MALL BUSINESS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study is to investigate factors and activities that the developer must concerned for doing community mall business. The paper is using qualitative research to gather data. Two existing developer was used for case studies. Triangulation method which consists of interview, observation and documentary been used to analyze the data collection. The results show key factors and activities that affect the community mall business also support community mall developers to understand the nature of its business.

**KEY WORDS:** Real Estate/ Community Mall/ Land Developer

33 pages



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

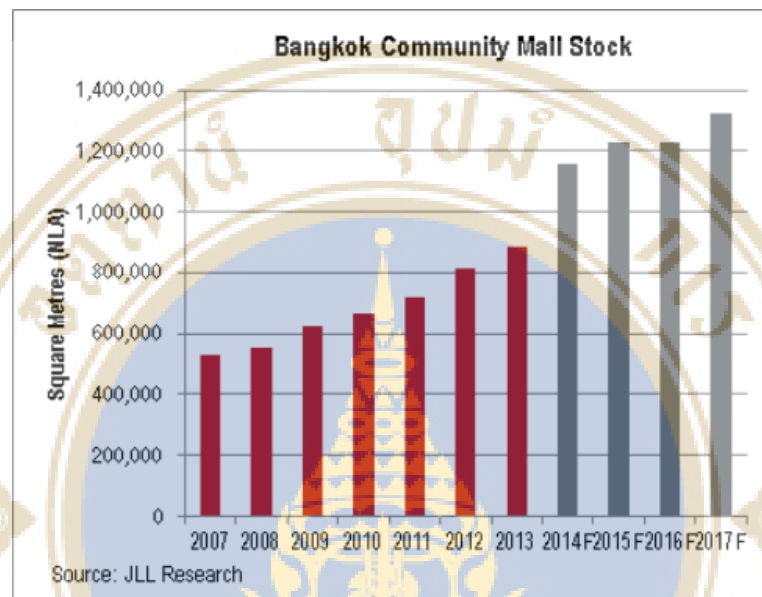
#### **Background and problem statement**

In the past, nearby fresh market and grocery store were destinations for locals to purchase their food supplies. With new technology, general markets have been rebuilt into vertical plaza of air-conditioned shopping malls. In addition, shopping malls have become more commercialized offering diverse range of products and services. Today, many shopping areas have adopted new trend of community malls to give customer new shopping experience and to differentiate themselves from other competitors. Community malls have become popular business model, which provide basic goods and services such as skin clinic, dentist, hair salon, restaurants, and grocery store, aiming to serve user with modern lifestyle (thairetail.blogspot, 2011).

Since 2008, Community mall or modern lifestyle malls have become the most dominant field for real estate developers. Community mall have gained popularity over the past few years due to lifestyle changes that shifted toward modern living where people seek for convenience (Madan, 2014). We can categorized mall activities into four categories: consumption activities such as making planned and unplanned meeting with acquaintances and watching other; participation in activities initiated by the mall management; and entertainment activities, such as going to see a movie or sitting in eateries (Bloch et al, 1994; Gilboa, 2009).

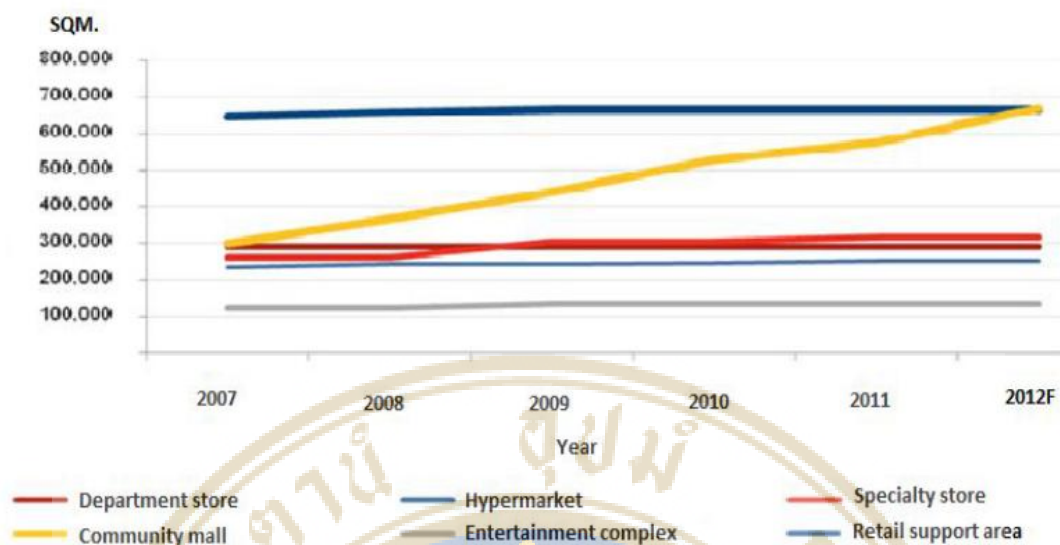
It is necessary for shopping area to adapt itself to suit altered lifestyle of Bangkok people who seek for convenient dining. Thus shopping area should adopt atmosphere that promote relaxation. As shown in figure 1.1, the stocks of community mall area and retail space are increasing every single year to match the customer behavior that has been changed (Pimhataivoot, 2014). It is Thai consumer behavior that causes lifestyle change which strongly correlates with growth of community mall

in Bangkok and other areas. Thai people are living in a face pace society, where people are always in urgent and rush. Traffic congestion is also a common problem in populated areas like shopping malls. In addition, parking spaces in shopping malls are always occupied. Hence, Thai lifestyle is very inconvenience and people often waste their time on the road and/or finding parking space in the shopping mall.



**Figure 1.1 Bar chart of community mall stock in Bangkok area (Pimhataivoot, 2014)**

Another factor contributing to the increased in new shopping mall and community mall development is increasing number of residential projects in suburban area which attract retail developers to build shopping area to serve the needs of people living in the new residential housing. Almost 204,700 sq.m. was completed in 2013 around Bangkok area which approximately 128,000 sq.m. in community mall (Colliers International Thailand, 2012).



**Figure 1.2 Line diagram of the growth in square meter in each type of shopping places which community mall continue increasing every single year (Colliers International Thailand, 2012)**

Academic researches focuses on malls began as early as the late 1960s. There are many researchers focused on mall patronage and driving time (Bearden, 1977; Bellenger et al., 1977; Brunner and Mason, 1968; Bucklin, 1967; Cox and Cooke, 1970; Moore and Mason, 1969). The studies become broader and expand in different places for finding the aspect, features and behaviors of shopping in mall. Examples of these broader interests include mall atmospherics (Grossbart et al., 1975), mall image (Finn and Louviere, 1996); mall shopping frequency (Roy, 1994), mall browsing behavior ( Jarboe and McDaniel, 1987), location choices within a mall (Ghosh, 1986), mall excitement (Wakefield and Baker, 1998) and shopper circulation through a mall (Brown, 1991). One of the major characteristics with malls is that they have developed into leisure and social places as well as shopping alternatives (Feinberg et al., 1989; Bloch et al., 1994). Victor Gruen the designer said that the true mall has to be located near the social need and also alternative to the existing retail. Community or “shopping town” where people could enjoy, eat at sidewalk locations, meet the same preference, and shop all in the same location (Gruen, 1973). Not only mall researcher but Marketing academicians have also noted the leisure and social dimensions to malls. Bloch et al. (1994) called malls consumer “habitats” and places where varying patterns of behavior can be found.

This thematic paper will focus mainly on trend of community mall, and the key activities and operation stage in each life cycle period. In addition, this paper aim to investigate the mechanism to maintain the facilities, to give solution to new and current developers, and to understand the factors that developers need to take into consideration for new community mall development. This paper will be beneficial for community mall owners who can use the findings in this paper to manage and maintain the cash inflow from their tenant who rent in their facilities.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To identify important activities that has an impact on new development of community mall and able to motivate consumers to shop at community mall.
2. To study how to manage community mall in each stage for giving the well management plan to the reader.

### **Expected Benefits**

1. Better understanding of the effect of influencing factors in each phase
2. Necessary strategic information about new community mall development.
3. Knowledge on important activities that can contribute to the strength point of the community mall

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Factors for developing community mall**

Entrepreneurship is the first step for start doing a business venture, organizing the necessary resources and assuming the associated risks and rewards. The meanings and roles of Entrepreneurship can be defined in different explanation, Carland et al. (1984) said that entrepreneurship could be defined in terms of innovative behavior allied to a strategic orientation in pursuit of profitability and growth; Gartner (1989) defined it as the creation and management of new business and the characteristics and special problems of entrepreneurs; while Hisrich and Peters (1992) said it is the process of “creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, financial, psychological, and social risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction”. Moreover, it can be define as the process of extracting profits from new, unique, and valuable combinations of resources in an uncertain and ambiguous environment (Amit et al., 1993)

There are two important factors to be concerned in retail real estate. First, retail real estate has to change based on confluence of economic forces, demographic trends, shifting consumer preferences, technological advances and aggressive retailer strategies. Second, location play an important role for creating the influences on nature of retail economic activity (Roulac ,1994). Shopping malls need to adapt themselves to meet community influences, preference and trends along with where a shopping mall is located, defines a mall’s community, social and economic impacts. Moreover, structural trends also affect shopping malls by reflecting the changes in design and forms, excess mall space, consumer demographics and behavior (Carn et al., 1995). Customer experience can be positive by the services provided but experiences are not the extreme factors that offered by the economic, it is a customizing a good automatically turn into a service, so customizing an experience able to turns into

distinct (Jame H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II, 1998). In a business context, knowledge, skill, trait, motive, attitude, value or other personal characteristics is a success factor that are essential to the role and that can differentiate to perform performance (PEPDS, 2004). Project success can be defined as in terms of better cost, schedule, quality, safety, and participant satisfaction than the normal expectation (Ashley et al., 1987 cited in Sanvido et al., 1992). De Wit (1988) remarked that a project should considered an overall success not only a single factor if the project meets the technical performance specification or goal to be performed, and the high level of satisfaction among project team, clients and user of the project effort, that is an overall success. In term of construction, it can define success as a given project participant according to the degree which project goals and expectations are met. The goals and expectation must include technical, financial, educational, social, and professional aspects (Sanvido et al., 1992)

Every Real estate projects has a specific set of success factors which cannot transfer from one project to another (Liu, 1999) but there are some common characteristics in projects: limited budget, schedule, quality standards and mall activities the link between factors to factors. There are also varies from of project due to the composition of project team, constraints of resources, availability of local technical and managerial expertise, competence of contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers, physical attributes of project, environmental conditions and geographic location (Belout and Gauvreau, 2004). Most of the investor will determine on the benefits from investing shopping mall in different perspective point from other careers, shopping mall's management for sustaining the property value, creating and gaining the benefits at the same time, rental rates, marketing and leasing activities, relationships among tenants and customers, public subsidizes and support for transportation serving the mall. Taxing policy and sales tax revenue, community services and the stability of economic development are the critical value of shopping malls (Jewll, 2001).

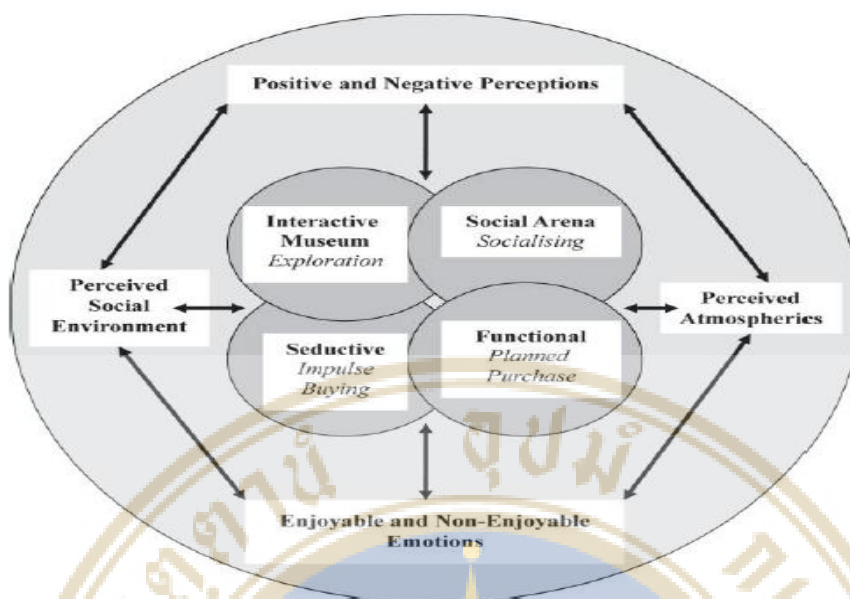
The core objectives for service companies should be reformed to be customer-focused and be able to serve high quality and cost effective service to support customers (Shaw and Haynes, 2004; Rondeau et al., 2006). Service quality and customer satisfaction are two core concepts that are all the marketer have been

studied based on theory and practice (Spreng and Mackoy, 1996). Service quality and customer satisfaction are two relative but distinct concepts. According to Van Ree (2010), to evaluate the services quality, it should be in long term while customer satisfaction is a transaction specific evaluation. He also argued that service quality is a priority of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction could lead the difference between customer perception and expectation on service quality, therefore a higher level of perceived service quality would lead to a higher level of customer satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988 and Van Ree, 2010).

The project planning and control have to be discussed before execute the product (Kerzner, 1987; Pinto and Slevin, 1988; Phua and Rowlinson, 2004). Since project planning and control related to many aspects such as goal setting, legal and contractual risk management, procurement management and change management. Construction project in large scale needs to follow thorough planning very carefully before the starting the execution, then follow up while project is on progress. The well management for not being late according to the plan is able to control on the project financial that not over the budget and the creditability of the project itself (Arain and Low, 2005). Effective planning and control is clearly defined goals for the successful completion of project. One construction manager also emphasized on the same and said:

**Project planning and implementation of effective control mechanism is the backbone of any construction project. You can have plenty of resources but weak planning and lose control will lead to nothing. And this has to be done in the very initial stage of the project. If you continue to rely on emergent planning and contingency control, project is destined to produce less than expected results.**

To be clear on the meaning of the planning, it means that the project have to be done before or on time without any delays due to the schedule (Clarke, 1999). Therefore, setting very clear, realistic, identifiable, and goals by all project participants is necessary (Lim and Mohamed, 1999).



The appendix above shows how the attractiveness of the mall attracts the experience of users in which it tends to engage in impulse buying of the user. In addition, they are highly applied store atmospherics. The express of enjoyable emotion take the positive perception to the malls. Indeed, the number of non-enjoyable emotions motivate by the seductive experience of the participants in the highest among all the groups. Impulse buying, the majority of the reflecting in the seductive experience describes impulse buying or efforts to avoid impulse buying. Impulse buying is described as an unavoidable act in most cases (Shaked Gilboa and Iris Vilnai-Yavetz, 2011).

Once the visitors perceived the overall physical environment of community mall, it can lead the emotion, feeling and affect able to bring the visitors to become a customer (Chebat and Michon, 2003; Chebat and Morrin, 2007 and Dennis et al., 2010). Shopping mall are highly competitive business due to the limit of capacity and declining customers (shim and Eastlick, 1998; Lehew and Fairhurst, 2000) where the promotional activities propose are to increase mall traffic and differentiate mall image (Lehew and Fairhurst, 2000). The pioneering work of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 132) defied experiential consumption as comprising playful leisure activity, sensory pleasures, daydreams, enjoyment and emotional response. Some literature said that customer experience are the composed of sensory, cognitive/intellectual, affective, social and physical/behavioral dimension (Brakus et al, 2009; Verhoef et al, 2009).



Mall image can be managed, promoted, and improved by the mall managers but they have to be recognized on it (Kupke, 2004). Branding is well known in consumer products, brand image can be used to measure and help towards customer satisfaction and commercial success of shopping malls (Dennis et al., 2002b). The nature of the mall image can be divided into three image dimensions namely, shopping environment and variety, parking, and shopping environment and professionalism (Ruiz, 1999). There is an instrument called “SCATTER” to assess the consumer perspective on the attractiveness of shopping center. The “SCATTER” instrument included 21 attributes categorized into five factors, namely, location, quality and variety, popularity, facilities and sales incentives (Wong et al., 2001).

## 2.2 Strategic stage

The model of product life cycle stage is widely accepted that a product or service starts through from its introduction stage until final removal from the market (Mercer, 1993). There is a pattern of product life cycle that can take the opportunity as a consideration on the business whether it is able to influence or manage the shape of the curve (Shaw, 1989) or whether size of firm or technology are an influence (Agarwal and Audretsch, 2001). The life cycle model has been applied to industries to track the process, development, dominance and decline of an industry (Frankl and Frieder, 2000).

**Table 2.1 Phases of Management (Churchill and Lewis, 1983)**

Phase 1 Conception	Phase 2 Survival	Phase 3 Stabilisation	Phase 4 Growth orientation	Phase 5 Rapid growth	Phase 6 Resource maturity
Develop viable product/service	Sufficient sales for break-even	Maintain customer base and market niche	Developing resources and sales for growth	Maintain adequate cash flow and establish expenses controls	Control financial gain from growth and eliminate inefficiencies
Deliver product/service	Generate cash to grow, pay expenses, survive in business	Eliminate problems draining cash	Develop management and internal systems to growth	Increasing customer base and market share	Professionalising management, finance, budgets, etc.
Develop an adequate customer base	Continue business development within niche	Company can stay here barring environmental/other changes	If cash flow outstrips growth, firm may “drop back” to earlier phase or go bankrupt	Professional managers may replace original owner	Well-developed financial resources

**Table 2.2 Management and leadership skills that entrepreneurs perceived as being most importance in particular stage (Churchil and Lewis, 1983)**

Conception	Survival	Stabilisation	Growth orientation	Rapid growth	Resource maturity
Communication	Financial management	Financial management	Communication	Communication	Communication
Administration	Communication	Vision	Motivating others	Vision	Motivating others
Vision	Marketing	Planning and goal setting	Financial management	Planning and goal setting	Financial management
Time management	Vision	Communication	Vision	Financial management	Planning and goal setting
Planning/goal setting	Motivating others	Motivating others	Planning/goal setting	Problem solving/decision making	Problem solving/decision making
Human resources	Planning/goal setting	Relationship building	Relationship building	Relationship building	Customer/vendor relations
Business and tech knowledge	Customer/vendor relations	Problem solving/decision making	Business and tech knowledge	Motivating self	Ethics and culture
Financial management	Employee development	Employee development	Problem solving/decision making	Leadership/management skills	Motivating self
Problem solving/decision making	Problem solving/decision making	Marketing	Leadership and management skills	Human resources	Leadership/management skills
Leadership/management skills	Business and tech knowledge	Business and tech knowledge	Human resources		

Most of the company noticed that loyalty is a competitive advantage when compete with other company if without the customer loyalty, even the best company in the world may lose of their business model. Moreover, loyalty plays an important role that able to make trust and profits to a company. The positive attitudes to the brand lead the loyalty and repeat purchasing (Keller, 1993).

Service quality is a major driving force in developing and understanding of knowledge to deal with the customer (Gerrard and Cunningham, 2001). They defined service quality as the gap between customers' expectation of service and their perception of the service experience. The various gaps visualized in the model are:

- (1) Gap 1: Difference between consumers' expectation and management's perceptions of those expectations, i.e. not knowing what consumers expect.
- (2) Gap 2: Difference between management's perceptions of consumers' expectations and service quality specifications, i.e. improper service-quality standards.
- (3) Gap 3: Difference between service quality specifications and service actually delivered i.e. the service performance gap.
- (4) Gap 4: Difference between service delivery and the communications to consumers about service delivery, i.e. whether promises match delivery.

(5) Gap 5: Difference between consumers' expectation and perceived service. This gap depends on size and direction of the four gaps associated with the delivery of service quality on the marketer's side.

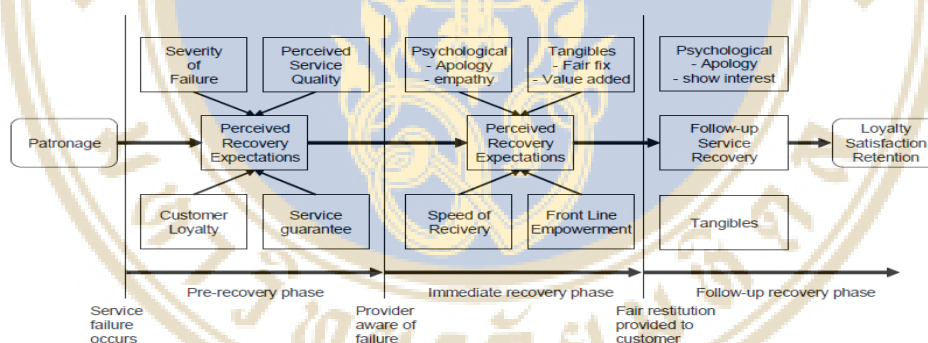
The relation between creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are important and related to each other. According to Sternberg and Lubart (1999) entrepreneurship is a form of creativity and can be labeled as business activity because most of the new business is general model but it can turn the idea of creation to the opportunities and growth of business (Lee et al., 2004; Nystrom, 1993). Moreover, the true entrepreneur can explain the differentiation among another by the entrepreneurial skills: creativity and innovation.

To remain cash inflow for the shopping mall owner are the main objectives to sustain their business so the managers have to seek the strategies to make more revenue from the existing space (Majumdar, 2005). The vacant space in each floor can apply to leasing space by developed the unproductive space to become kiosks that can generate profit from the rental fees. Since malls receive much of their income from space leased to retail stores, this practice has increased mall profitability (LeHew and Fairhurst, 2000). Kiosks used small space for sale and store which placed in walkways of shopping mall, the rental fees of renting kiosks can be charged expensive compared to the standard space (Dalton and Holland, 2003). According to Tanker (2008), total revenue realized by malls from kiosk rental represents approximately 10 percent of annual mall sales. However, though profitable when used for kiosks, the mall walkway space has been traditionally reserved for customers to freely walk between stores or relax on mall-provided seats and benches (Damas and Schendel, 2008). The competition between retail is not only price and value but the retailer need to determine at least 5 types of benefits which consist of: (1) Dominant merchandise assortment, (2) Fair prices, (3) Respect for customers, (4) Time and Energy savings, and (5) Fun (Berry, 1996)

The marketing job has grown over the past decade as retailers want to sustain and create the attractive image to maintain their customers. The competition between products is no longer important but the task of the marketer is to identify the components that needed to develop to compete with the competitors: product offer and positioning, store location, customer service, quality, retail design and

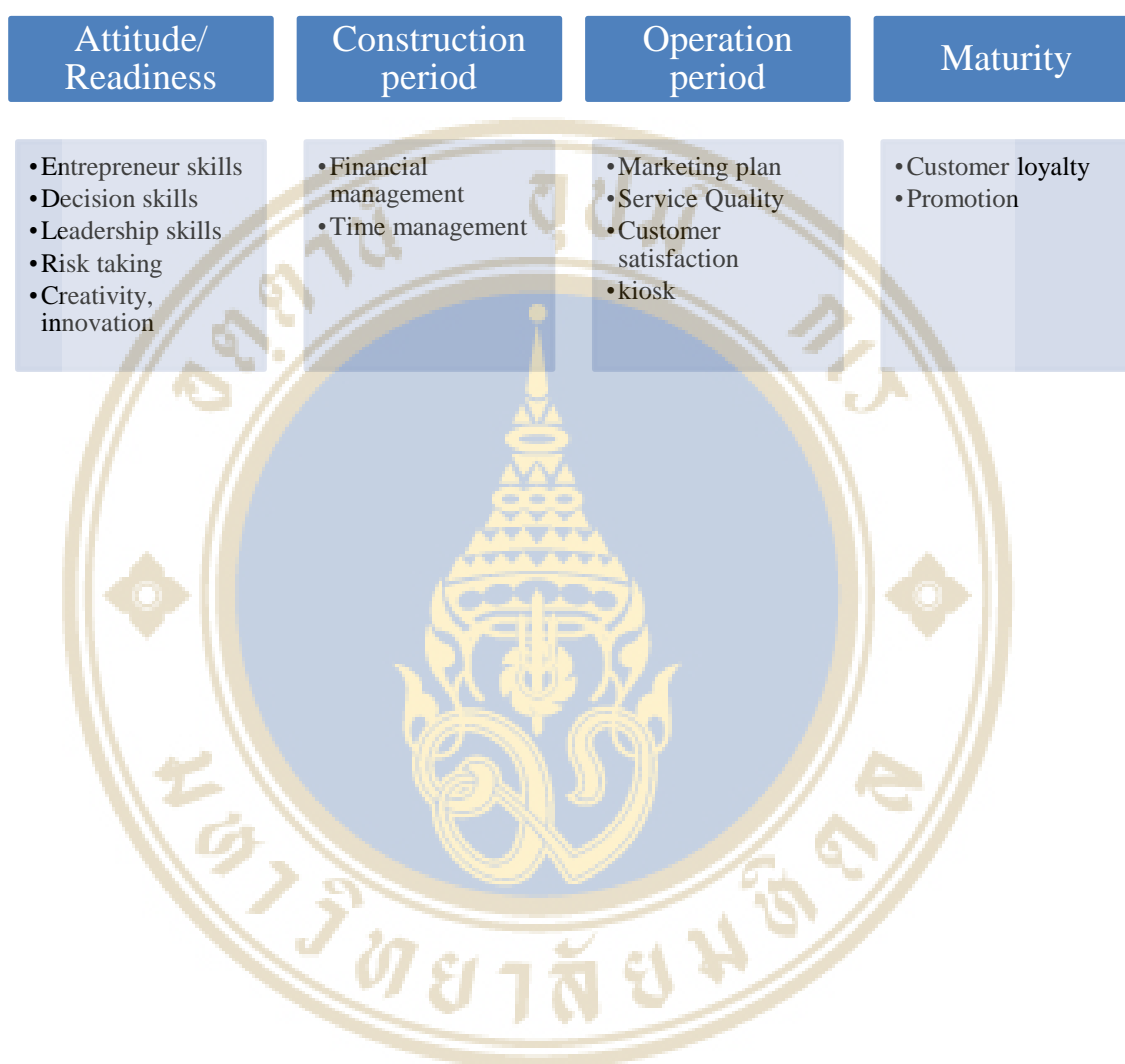
store image, retail promotion, retail advertising, price points and other channel members (Gilbert and Ballou, 1999). In the next century, the successful retailer have to be able to build it owns core strategies and adapt to the situation; once the consumers perceive a brand, everything in the store or connected with the store, has it brand value. To gain the competitive advantage is to provide a higher value than any competitor, but at lower cost and offer unique products and services. Differentiate the customer service through convenience and added-value to the user. Quality of service may failure to deliver below the customer expectation (Bell and Zemke, 1987). A service mistakes are occurred occasionally, service firms must prepared the recovery strategies to recover service failures. To resolve problem, change the negative attitude to positive, dissatisfaction to satisfaction are the actions that need to be involved in service for maintaining the customers (Miller et al., 2000). Hart et al. (1990) found that stress is a good recovery can turn terrible frustrated customers into loyal ones.

**Figure 2.1 A service recovery framework**



## 2.3 Conceptual framework

### Community Mall Business & Components Development Framework



## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter will focus on the outline of this research and also the approach to obtain the information, which will be used to support the objectives of this thematic paper.

#### **Research approach**

This thematic paper will mainly focus on the qualitative method which data collection and conceptual framework will be based on the view point of literature review. Qualitative method will help to gain some insight of the developer information, to understand their goodwill on their land, also to know their background and to understand the view point from the expertise. There is an article suggests the use of qualitative research that this technique is a theory for understanding and finding the research and context for proving the fact from the internet (Sally and Perry, 2003). Most of the time, qualitative method used interviewing for collecting and interpreting data (wording) without any numbers of the information from the interviewer (Dick, 1990b). In the process of the in depth interview, the question must be prepared mostly compete unstructured then starting from the overview to specific of those topics. Qualitative is a methods that try to acquire the understanding through the nature of the topic by theory and observation (Weick, 1984; Iran et al, 1999). Moreover, direct and in-depth interview knowledge of a research setting is necessary to achieve the clear concept so qualitative method are collected data by face-to-face with people for observation and verbal communication. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are the things that we need to concern by using the qualitative method. Credibility means the achievement of the accurate identification and description of the topic that is influenced by the setting, the population and theoretical framework used in the study. Credibility in this study was achieved by investigating two case studies. Transferability is to estimate or

approximate the positivism paradigm on concept to analyze the theory of the data. Transferability is driven by credibility, dependability and confirmability and is enhanced by triangulation (Jick, 1979). Dependability is a concerned on the unexpected information that the changing in data or theory be flexibility and developing on the analyze methods. Finally, confirmability has to focus on two factors. First, the conclusions of the data should be reasonable, and second, to confirm the research findings by confirmed with another researcher.

### **Data collection**

Triangular method will be chosen to support this thematic paper which will compare two cases studies that will be based on the literature review. The purpose of triangulation is to obtain the information then confirm the findings through the different perspectives. Triangulation method is using several methods with appropriate strategies for gathering the information. Question can be asked in the different and appropriate method to be cover in the conceptual framework. Reason for using triangulation method is because we want to communicate relationship between each framework for developing a research strategy that uses triangulation. The strategies will help the researchers who use triangulation to better understanding the position of their work and making appropriate choices during the study that can lead the effectiveness to complete theories. We also use lessons learned from three studies (interview, documentation, observation) to gain the idea concept from several issues that researchers encounter when using methodological triangulation. Moreover, we show how triangulation can also be used to review through the research for making contributions more value to management research (Amundson, 1998). The technique for using the information to support the knowledge by adopted the data collection to become the evidence or confirmation support the process of triangulation method (Burns and Acar, 2001). Normally, the data will be collected by focused interviews, focused interviews were primary developed to communications research; the experimental can be based on the current situation which is appropriate to the case studies for observing the uncontrolled situation (Merton et al., 1956). The interviewing period would take around 30-45 minutes to obtain the information from the senior

manager to explain the detail of their project. The priority of the interviews process should begin with the general information and objectives of the case study also the personal information of the interviewee. All interviews were tape-recorded with subjects' permission. In generally, interviews should able to response and prepare on the over questionnaire and uncovering of the exploration (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1994). The task of the interviewer is to avoid bias on his or her own perspective which may cause the unproductive information.





## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDING AND DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Interview 1**

##### **Interview part**

##### **Business Background**

The community mall was developed by one of the most popular furniture companies in Thai market. They have been doing Furniture business since 1973 with a total of 36 showrooms in Thailand today. After their success in furniture business, they expanded their business by entering community mall project in 2007. Nowadays, they have two community malls under their management team.

Not only community mall that they had diversified their business activities but selling electronic and Cafe are their on-going projects in 2015. The reasons behind for entered into community mall projects are because they want to offer a convenience space to their visitors by providing destinations for social interaction, shopping, dining, and purchasing furniture. With this idea, they developed one-stop service community mall. Also, a big piece of land is available on hands; therefore, they decided to put it in good use as for the rental space and a warehouse. Changing from a tenant to an owner (or landlord) is better because they no longer need to rely on other party. Even though, the location of this land is not located in downtown Bangkok, but people from rural area are moving into Central Business District which consequently leads to an expansion of Bangkok and create many more opportunities for the developers. (Interviewee 1, 2015)

##### **4.1.1 Attitude & Readiness**

According to an executive interview with senior manager, the important thing that we need to concern in the preparation phase is about the attitudes, which consist of (1) risk taking, (2) creativity & uniqueness, and (3) entrepreneur skill are

needed to develop community mall. Risk tasking is prominent in real estate business because it is a sector that requires high and long term investment which takes at least 6-8 years or even longer to achieve the break even. In addition, it also depends on other internal and external factors, which can be uncontrollable. Internal factors refer to the well team management, design and architecture that matched the customer preference and its ability to draw traffic. External is about the political problems and unpredictable situation that may occur e.g. flood, robbery etc. He said that **“we can’t control it but we can minimize the risk”**. Creativity and uniqueness, marketing and architecture must work together to identify and specify the customer need, team has to do the marketing research and survey on the competitors, leasing price, and shop proportion, shop layout, mood and tone of design to suite for both our customers and their customers as well. Decision making and negotiation skills are required for providing the clear direction to subordinate.

#### **4.1.2 Construction period**

During the construction period, time management is very important because time is closely related to financial management. A clear, effective, and practical schedule has to be established by project manager and it is project manager’s responsibility to monitor and ensure that tasks are completed according to the plan on time. The material specification must be identified according to the design selected or recommended by the architecture in charge of the project. Because community mall development involves high investment and equity are limited resource for finance, company often required to rely on financial institution as their alternative way to raise more fund. Thus, cost of debt occurred. If project is delayed, cost of debt is likely to increase. Hence, a well-planned schedule is important at this stage. It is not only the money that is a concern when a project is delayed, trustworthy of the brand perceived by the tenant also experience the impact of delayed project. In this stage, staff have to be more detail about the shop proportion. The management team used the location analysis to be more explicit about shop proportion. They said that shop proportion targeted at customer with family is divided into 50%, 30%, and 20% for food & beverage, fashion, and services, respectively. The different location and target group has different shop proportion but food & beverage always be the highest proportion

for community mall. Marketing & Communication have to be shown on billboard, Internet and local new papers to create the customer awareness.

#### **4.1.3 Operation Period**

In generally to start operating the community mall, the construction have to be entirely completed but the operation system team said that 60% completion is already enough to open in the pre-opening stage and will follow up to 100% in the Grand opening stage. Reasons for having two opening stages are because of the contract & agreement with the tenants that clarify as a promise in the paper which force the owner to open the property on time. Second, the high and long term investment has to be covered by the rental fees. This is the strategy to earn money as fast as possible to shorten the break-even period. The policy and penalty for being in the community mall must be compound in the contract. This can help the owner to lower the tenant problems in the future. For people management convenience and minimizing fixed cost, security guard, mate and technician should be outsourced. In term of services, they said that there are two types of services 1) Community mall services 2) Shop services. Community mall services are about the parking availability, air-condition system, toilet, safety and etc. Shop services are consists of post office, banking, delivering, dining and shopping. These two services are required as important for community mall that need to provide to user. To give good quality service is a critical factor in service business. If the company failed to deliver good service, it is impossible to gain customer satisfaction. To gain customer satisfaction is to give and offer beyond the need. Tenant management is another problem that we also need to concern.

There are two types to sell the leasing space 1) Negotiate rental fees with main leaser (work as outsource) then let them manage the leasee or 2) set up the in-house team to sell the space. The interviewee used both strategies to find tenants, which they said that they have pros and cons in both ways. Pros and cons. Marketing and communication plans have to be announced in advance to maintain positive brand image and brand awareness. In the competitive market, a well operation plan can lead the customer to repurchase or revisit the place. If we cannot not provide what

customers need, customer revisit cannot be guaranteed because there are other alternative destinations in this market.

#### **4.1.4 Maturity**

In the mature stage, events and marketing campaign are important. This project used competitor analysis to create an event or campaign. An example of competitor analysis mentioned by the interviewees was about Christmas celebration event. From competitor analysis, The Crystal park planned to host a concert to create traffic during the festival so they should not plan to host a concert to attract people because it would mean direct competition with The Crystal park. So they chose to focus on launching special promotion to create traffic with a belief that people prefer to enjoy their shopping hours with discount and promotion rather than attending the concert for celebration. They used indirect competition to compete; they believed that **“if he keeps doing the same activities there is no benefit to both community malls”** (Interviewee 1, 2015). Customer loyalty is also another key factor to make community mall survive. They came up with the VIP parking lot in which the customer can gain the privilege only if the clients shop more than the requirement for 3 months. There is another campaign to promote customer loyalty through money refund. For normal clients, they have to purchase 1,000 baht to get 100 baht refund. However, for VIP client only 800 baht worth of shopping can yield the same amount of refund. These can help to transform behavior to district and become loyal to the community mall.

Nowadays, there is around 600,000 to 700,000 people visiting community mall a month. The research & data collection that they gained from previous project will support and develop their team to become an expert in the community mall business.

#### **Documentation**

They declared as the biggest community mall in Ratchaphruek area which is the community mall for family. The design and architecture are unique than the surrounding shopping malls, it consists of both open space area and in-door area ([www.travel.thaiza.com](http://www.travel.thaiza.com)). In 2012, Thairath newspaper's journalist had a chance to

interview the third generation of this community mall management's team. He mentioned that the reason for developing community mall is because they want to serve a shopping destination for people in the surrounding area. So with addition of super market and other service, they can easily become a one-stop service for family and people living around the area. He also mentioned that location is a competitive advantage. Moreover, they had organized Antique Flea market 2 days a week to emphasize the 24 hours community mall which is distributed into 5 zone, antique car zone, vintage zone, second hand zone, flooding market and warehouse zone. Feedback on this activity is very well due to the design and the uniqueness of the night market. The market became a destination for people whose sleep late ([www.iurban.in.th](http://www.iurban.in.th)). They also creates and emphasize their active image by frequently update their activities and campaigns on their Facebook page.

### **Observation**

Based on my observation when I was visited this community mall, there were a lot of people using services. Parking availability and security guards were well managed. Moreover, the service quality experienced were better in term of standard comparing to other shopping I have visited before. The parking area is connected directly to the community mall areas which create the sense of convenience for the user. The floor plan and plan layout are easy to navigate and it also attract people to spend money i.e. it can lead people to enjoy good meal then continue shopping in one place. Its architecture differs from other shopping destinations which confirm that they want to emphasize their uniqueness of design.

## **4.2 Interview 2**

### **Interview part**

#### **Business Background**

It was established in 2011 under the real estate developer who generally developed residential projects. The Company has nine years of experience with six

successful residential projects. Founder of this community mall was General Manager of the company before he discovered that community mall business is attractive. Thus, he motivated the shareholders to invest in community mall project. The location where this community mall was developed is also a residential project. The site was not completely utilized to the full scale of land for sole residential. They decided to leave vacant space of land in front, next to the main Rama 2 road. Land size of this project taken around 16 rai. The main proposes of developing community mall was because they want to create traffic and sell their residential project in a higher price. After they started operating, the profit gained from their residential project was increased by 15-20%. So he said that his project was success. It can create traffic to their land, create brand recognition, increase residential project profit, and increase their land value. The interviewee captured the idea of community mall while he was travelling in other country. He believes that the community mall trend will eventually arrive in Thailand, therefore, he decided to study and research on community mall business. He also believed that Rama 2 road is suitable area for community mall development because it is the main transportation road to freight product form other city to Bangkok. Hence, location selection to develop community mall is important.

#### **4.2.1 Readiness & Attitude**

In the first stage, the attitudes that all developer must have for developing community mall are risk taking, decision making skills, uniqueness and clearly identify the community mall concept. Once all these factors had been concerned, it will be easily to manage the community mall. Although the founder have had 9 years of experience in real estate business, high investment remain as an important factor for risk management that he has to take into consideration. The location that he has selected to develop the community mall is far away from developed area, so marketing research and survey are the way to minimize risk of failure before investing on the project. Decision skills are required during brainstorming period, executives had to determine whether to continue on with community mall project or not because the location selected is too far from the city centered. In the end, He made his decision to take the risks for foreseen opportunities because he believes in its potential opportunities. He said that if he did not hold on to this opportunity, this opportunity

would eventually fall into other people hands. One stop-service community mall concept is introduced because location is far away. He aims that this community mall would be a place for people to relax and enjoy their life. He targeted people living around Rama 2 area and people are travelling out of Bangkok via East of Thailand route or entering Bangkok after their vacation.

Uniqueness of the design is another important factor to be considered because it can either attracts or discourages customers to come into the mall. As we know that Thai people love to take photos and share them on social media. The uniqueness of the design can be another powerful tool to spread word of mouth of the mall and also the best way to create awareness. The uniqueness can deduct the cost of marketing once the design match the need of customer in a specific group.

#### 4.2.2 Construction Period

Project layout in term of the zoning of shopping area, food court or services is essential to develop community mall. The developer must have layout before construction. Enough parking lot and the location of parking space is important and need to be clarify because it determine the convenience of the users to access the community mall. **“The different between community mall and shopping mall is convenience so the developer must concern about but if not then forget about community mall business”** (Interviewee 2, 2015). Another important attributes in the checklist are cost control plan and safety management. Cost control must be done in corresponded with the project schedule to avoid cost of interest. In the case where the project is being delayed, the cost will increase and the burden is directly on the owner. Consequences of delayed project include lose of money, longer period of project payback and lose of brand quality and trust. During construction period, responsible team should start seeking for tenants particularly supermarket, food court, Foodland, and 24 hours convenience stores because they can persuade people to visit the mall. Thus, choosing the right tenants is very important. It is critically important that the policy and regulations agreed between owner and tenants are clear and strict for easier tenant management. Before the grand opening, all team members need to recheck the systematic to make sure that everything is complete and ready for use because if there is any accident, the creditability will be negative in customer perception.

### 4.2.3 Operation Period

Once moving into the operation stage, they faced problem of the community mall's image. Some people said that it is too high-society and they cannot afford to spend their time and shop at the location. This is critical because with word of mouth, many people may avoid visiting because they are scared of overpriced. This is when management team should take action by changing image from high-society to affordable price. Moreover, there are pros and cons to the operation of community mall because it is an open shopping space operated 24 hours 7 days a week. The pros are that community mall is a one stop service where people can both shop and dine at the same place. In contrast, the cost of operation and maintenance are relatively high compare to shopping that have strict opening hours. He came up with solutions to reduce cost of operation by controlling cost budgeting. He promoted staff to use less paper and use pieces tissue system than roll. He's also using outsources-services for easier management and reducing fixed cost. In addition, he ensures the service quality of the community mall himself instead of hiring a professional to manage it. To subsidize the cost, he also sold cooking gases to tenants to earn some profit. According to Interviewee 2, he also said that **“financial cash inflow and operation cost must be cover by itself if not, it's a failure”**. There is a research results found that people spending 30 minutes for eating only but with shopping they will spend around 1 hour and 30 minutes. According to the research results, tenants will be the important player to keep customers in the community mall. Even though most the owner focus on cash inflow more than tenants but income came from rental fees so the trust between owner and tenants are important too. Therefore, being attentive and create relationship with the tenants is a must (Interviewee 2, 2015).

### 4.2.4 Maturity

Services, convenience, campaign and promotions are the activities that must be focused in the maturity stage. Services and conveniences are a must to serve beyond the customer expectation; those services must be ready in right place at the right time. Rickshaw, Tire pump, Battery Jumper and Spare parts are the support tools that provided to their customer. Campaign and Promotion on the Traditional day, festival day or pop up events have to be organized as frequent as possible to keep



continuous activities and maintain traffic in the community mall. **Cost of advertising for campaign and promotion is high if promoting frequency but it can decrease by finding sponsorship who wants to promote their branding, it can subsidize the cost.** Decision skills and Entrepreneur skills are needed in the stage for negotiating with tenants and managing cash inflow. There was a case where tenant protest because they were unable to pay the rental fee with a reason that they cannot sell their product and rental fee is too high. The aim of the protest was to reduce cost of rental. This is when the owner has to make their decision based on their paradigm. However, if the preparation in the stage is clear, the opportunities of problem occurred is low. Co-operate promotion among tenants is a win-win promotion, tenants gain customers, income and re-check their quality while owner gains traffic, customer awareness, tenants trust and loyalty and rental fees.

### **Documentation**

This community mall project has used around 500 million baht for its construction. They hope to become landmark or destination for traveller who are going to the South of Thailand. The target customers are people who live in Samut Sakhon Province around 80%-90% and another 10% is for the traveller (Thairath, 2012). The concept "The Harbor Of Joy" means the modern community mall with joyful, happiness, warm and one stop service. It able to attract even a inter brand like McDonald and Starbuck. McDonald is the store which likely to stand alone and drive thru to serve their customer but Starbuck is not. This community mall is the first community mall where there is a Starbuck drive thru ([www.muangthai.com](http://www.muangthai.com)). They also adopt green building concept which influence the design and architecture to promote energy saving though material specification. Green areas provide more requirements and more ventilation for the community mall ([www.manager.co.th](http://www.manager.co.th)). They also update their activities and campaign frequently through their Facebook to attract tourist.

### **Observation**

I went to this community mall on weekday at noon for the interview with the founder. Once I arrived, the architecture and design was the first thing that I felt is

different, unique than other community mall. They have 300-400 parking spaces plus a large empty land that can be used as parking space when it needed to serve the convenience. The environment is smooth and comfort, however, there were salty smell from fish market and sea located nearby. It took a few minutes to familiarize myself with the smell. I had lunch here and found that the price of food is similar to the market which is considering affordable. They plan their layout to spread over wide area connecting to the main Rama 2 road so that people can easily spot and perceived the mall as a large scale community mall. Based on what I have seen, they have a potential to become a destination for tourist of Samut Sakhon province.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

This research was conducted based on information gathered from literature review in which conceptual framework was drawn. The information was verified by the experts with direct experience in the field. Triangulation method has been used in many ways: interviews, documentation and observation to collect accurate information. I categorized community mall business into 4 phases of concern then analyze factors and activities that needed in each phase for developing community mall which the phase are consists of Attitude/Readiness, Construction, Operation, and maturity. After I have integrated all the information gathered from this study, I discovered that the concern during the attitude/readiness stage are decision skills, risk taking skills, entrepreneur skills, clear identified concept, uniqueness and creativity. In construction stage, the development should concern about project timeline management and financial management, project schedule, tenant selection and polity, safety concern, and brand image. In operation stage, cash inflow and cost control management, service management, market communication, and tenant management are every important to take into consideration. Lastly, important attributes in maturity stage include service quality, customer satisfaction, marketing strategy, and decision skills. The table below represents the factors and skills that need to have for developing community mall.

Attitude/ Readiness	Construction period	Operation period	Maturity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Decision skills</li> <li>•Risk taking</li> <li>•entrepreneur skills</li> <li>•Concept identification</li> <li>•Uniquess &amp; Creativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Financial&amp;time management</li> <li>•Project schedule</li> <li>•Tenants selection/ policy</li> <li>•Brand image</li> <li>•safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Cash inflow&amp;cost control management</li> <li>•Service &amp; operation management</li> <li>•Market communication</li> <li>•Tenants management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Service quality</li> <li>•Customer satisfaction</li> <li>•Marketing strategy</li> <li>•Decision skills</li> </ul>

## 5.2 Recommendations

Successful developers have their own strategy to manage and operate community mall to survive in the business. Strategies and activities for community mall development and operation are different compared with the same industry. However, there are various common factors/ activities that affect the business in this industry as listed the diagram below.

Attitude/ Readiness	Construction period	Operation period	Maturity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Decision skills</li> <li>•Concept &amp;Design</li> <li>•Data Analyze</li> <li>•Risk taking</li> <li>•Long term investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Financial&amp;time management</li> <li>•Quality Control</li> <li>•On Time</li> <li>•Tenants selection/ policy</li> <li>•Attractive tenants</li> <li>•Income&amp;Traffic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Cash inflow &amp; cost control management</li> <li>•Income&amp;Operating cost</li> <li>•Tenants management</li> <li>•Negotiation skills</li> <li>•Co-ooperate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Service quality</li> <li>•Customer satisfaction</li> <li>•Beyond customer expectation</li> <li>•Marketing strategy</li> <li>•Competitor analysis</li> <li>•Sale promotion</li> <li>•Pop-up events</li> </ul>

This is not a key to success, but it is a guideline for developing and operating community mall in Thailand, which may be beneficial to the new developers and investor who want to enter or invest in this business sectors. All of they identified key

factors has its own important, however, interrelated in the big picture in which they determine the successfulness of the project. Financial and time management are the essentials for business planning and if the plan is clear, the following processes are easy to follow and control. Tenant selection is another essential factor because tenants themselves can motivate the traffic to the community mall. Key success for doing community mall is to take cares of our customer and customer of our customers (user).

### **5.3 Limitation**

Qualitative research was the only method used for collection data in this thematic paper. Moreover, only two case studies were investigated due to the time limitation. Hence, the data may not be able to represent all community malls in Thai market, however, this research can create awareness on factors and activities that are important for considerable for community mall development.

### **5.4 Future Research**

This thematic paper directed the focus to developer perspective on motivating supply into the market. Future research could be done to investigate user opinion on the same factors in order to compare the requirement from both supply and demand side on the community mall market. More research should be done to identify the needs of customer and identify factors that influence customer satisfaction. An appropriate method to collect customer information in this case is through questionnaire survey.

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