



## Entrepreneurial Competencies and Performance of Table Water Firms in Minna Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*The establishment of table water production firms in Minna Metropolis has been on the increase following NAFDAC's certification. However, a large number of these firms collapse within the first two years of operation due to poor performance. The competencies of the firms' owners and managers are believed to play a crucial role in enhancing firm performance (Bikefe & Daniel, 2022). Therefore, this study examines the effect of entrepreneurial competencies on the performance of table water firms in Minna Metropolis, Niger State. A quantitative research design was adopted, with a structured questionnaire administered to 131 table water firm owners/managers selected through simple random sampling. A total of 119 fully filled questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that opportunity and conceptual competencies have a positive and significant effect with firm performance, accounting for 20.2% of variations in firm performance ( $F=9.689$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). However, relationship competency showed a positive but insignificant effect on firm performance. The findings suggest that table water firm owners/managers should prioritize developing opportunity and conceptual competencies to enhance firm performance. Additionally, they should focus on improving relationship competencies by interacting with others, maintaining personal networks, and negotiating for better future performance. The study recommends that owners/managers attend entrepreneurship training to avail themselves of available opportunities and gain a competitive edge over competitors.*

Key words: Entrepreneurial, competencies, performance, table-water, owner

### 1.0 Introduction

The table water industry in Nigeria has experienced rapid growth in recent years, driven by increasing demand for safe and clean drinking water (Adekunle & Dakare, 2020). The establishment of table water production firms are on the increase by NAFDAC's certification, large number of these firms are seen to collapsed within the first two years of commencement, however the competencies of the firm's owners and managers is believed to play a crucial role in enhancing firm performance (Bikefe & Daniel, 2022). This is because human body requires a constant supply of water, and table water is deemed ideally secure and safely to quench such thirst (Nsiah-Asamoah & Buxton,

2021). Nigeria has seen a considerable surge in the growth of table water production, with the registration of more than 3,000 factories every year; Even with this surge in growth, numerous businesses fail within the initial two to five years of operation (dayoadetiloye.com, 2019). However, the performance of the table water firms in Minna metropolis has been inconsistent, within the metropolis where some firms will not be complying with quality standards in the management of resource viability as well as market trends (Adekunle & Omoregbe, 2022).

Firm performance is determined by the interaction of various internal and external organizational activities, which collectively influence the firm's overall effectiveness (Alalawi, 2020; Umrani et al., 2022; Akomea, 2023). Moreover, the competencies of the firm's owners and managers are also believed to play a crucial role in enhancing firm performance (Bikefe & Daniel, 2022).

Entrepreneurial competencies remain paramount in equipping organizations to successfully achieve outstanding performance (Mokbel Al Koliby et al., 2024). Thus, the strength of the entrepreneurial competencies of the firm owners/managers has a propensity to positively impact the attainment of the firm objectives, notably, performance and growth (Pulka et al., 2021). In this context, entrepreneurial competencies, entailing the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to start, manage, and expand a business successfully (Rehman et al., 2023), substantively impact table water firms' performance. Despite evidence that entrepreneurial competencies form a core component of success by firms (Kanaan-Jebna, 2022). Earlier investigations show that the high failure of firms can primarily be attributed to weakness in areas such as financial management, lack of competencies required for the business (Ede, 2021; Olujide, 2022).

Besides, the frequent partial or total closure of table water companies even during favorable business conditions proves that most firm owners/managers do not have the required competencies. In Nigeria as well, empirical research about the entrepreneurial competencies and performance of table water firms is very scanty. Also, the effect of entrepreneurial competencies on firm performance is understudied. The purpose of this study is to address the research gap and enrich the existing literature by examining the effect of entrepreneurial competencies on the performance of table water firms in Minna Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Concept of Entrepreneurial Competencies**

Competencies are connected with the willingness of an entrepreneur to take risks along with his/her overall success in business (González-López, et al., 2021; Sakib, et al., 2022). Entrepreneurial competencies were significant for business organizations to be able to optimize performance and maintain a competitive edge, innovation, and growth as well as sustainability and projected success (Sakib et al., 2022; Alkhodary, 2023). Khan et al. (2022) defined entrepreneurial competence as an amalgamation of motivations, inherent and acquired characteristics, as well as specific personal traits, skills, and knowledge applied by owners/managers to consistently effect management

and development for the optimal performance of their organizations. According to Ida-Ketut & Partiwi-Dwi (2021), entrepreneurial competencies are the vital traits, agility, skills, and pieces of knowledge that entrepreneurs must have if they want to survive in business. Pratikto et al., (2023) related the entrepreneurial competence of a business owner/manager to be able to deal with challenges through a supportive environment. As defined by Agustina (2021), entrepreneurial competencies refer to high-order personal features, including personality traits, knowledge, and skills, which facilitate successful task execution among business owners and managers. Similarly, (Umar & Iorpuu, 2024) opined entrepreneurial competencies as ability to recognizing opportunities, capitalizing on them, ensuring survival, creating employment, and contributing to economic growth.

### 2.1.1 Domains of Entrepreneurial Competencies

Previous studies (Manet al., 2002; Khanam & Sakib, 2020; Ibidunni et al., 2021; Kovid, et al., 2021; Kaigama, 2023; Aftabet al., 2024) have identified six key entrepreneurial competencies namely, Opportunity, relationship, commitment, organizing, conceptual and strategic competencies. This study concentrates on three of these competencies: opportunity competency, relationship competency, and conceptual competency.

Table 1. Domains of entrepreneurial competencies:

Entrepreneurial Competencies	Behavioural focus	Preliminary Elements
Opportunity Competencies	Deals with scanning and ability to make tangible use of available opportunities.	Opportunity recognition Opportunity seeking, development
Relationship Competencies	Competencies related to connecting with one another.	Communication, Relationship building, Networking
Conceptual Competencies	Deals with different conceptual abilities which are reflected in the behaviours of the entrepreneur	Analyzing, Problem solving and decision making, Innovating, Risk taking

*Source: adapted and modified*

### 2.1.2 Relationship between Opportunity, Relationship, and Conceptual Competencies and Firm Performance

#### i. Opportunity Competency

Refers to the ability of a firm's owner/manager to sense, search for, discover, exploit, and evaluate profitable market opportunities through various means. These are entrepreneurs who possess ample opportunity recognition skills to identify market trends, innovate ahead of those trends, and strategically position their business for competitive advantages (Hanaysha, et al., 2024; Egbetade et al., 2024; Ercantan et al., 2024). What sets entrepreneurs apart is their unique ability to identify opportunities amidst difficulty, transforming challenges into prospects for growth and innovation (Shino et al, 2024),

research in developing economies showed that entrepreneurs who actively seek opportunities in rapidly changing markets tend to outperform their counterparts (Aftab et al, 2024). Studies have shown that opportunity competency does significantly impact the growth and profitability of firms, as it is a means for gaining advantage over existing competitors with intention of presenting market gaps (Ahmad et al, 2021).

## **ii. Relationship Competencies**

This competency is defined as the skills of networking, managing customer relationships, and building partnerships for business purposes acquired by the entrepreneur (Chisam et al, 2022; Edmund, 2024). Managing relationships strongly encourages cooperation, access to resources, and customer loyalty which are all determinants of better performance (Al Koliby et al, 2024). According to an investigation that studied small enterprises in developing markets, those entrepreneurs with good relational skills managed to legitimately access funding, negotiate better contracts, and widen their market frontiers (Chikweche & Bressan, 2021; Ibidunni et al, 2021). This strongly makes it easy to conclude that relationship competency provides immense relevance to the survival and success of a firm (Idris & Abubakar 2020; Kornelius 2020).

## **iii. Conceptual Competencies**

This competency connotes contingent capabilities portrayed in firm owner or manager behavior relating to planning, analysis, problem-solving, perception, creativity, innovation and integration of a mixture of complex business variables (Foss et al, 2021; González-López et al., 2021). High conceptual skill owners can foresee risks, adapt to changing markets, and formulate business alternatives (Alloush & Al-Haddad, 2022). Empirical studies shows that conceptual competency positively correlates with innovation performance, thereby offering companies the ability to operate in an uncertain environment and to create sustainable competitive advantages leading to firm success (Sarwar et al., 2024).

## **2.2 Concept of Firm Performance**

Firm performance is a vital issue that has been examined greatly across disciplines (Otto,et al., 2020; Akpa,et al., 2021). Different definitions are given about firm performance depending on the background and framework under consideration (Anwar and Abdullah, 2021; Adula,et al., 2022). Its effect on boosting a country's economy, alleviating essential social problems, and fighting unemployment has lately attracted much attention from every researcher and scholar alike (Tanchangya,et al., 2024). Looking at numerous studies from countries worldwide, whether developed or developing, the stress on the subject is quite apparent (Puni & Anlesinya, 2020; Khatib & Nour, 2021). Performance is widely regarded as the benchmark for measuring firms' activities over a specified time (Charles & Ochieng, 2023; Bui and Krajcsák, 2024).

According to Zona,et al. (2018), firm performance is the effect of a combination of factors producing projected results. Csiki,et al. (2019) affirmed that firm performance is an output that augurs the firm's ability to connect, integrate, and use both internal and external resources under appropriate measure and timing. Similarly, Wardani & Eliyana

(2020) explain performance as the sum total outcome related to job completion and serves as a reflection of a firm's achievement in attaining and satisfying its goals.

### 2.2.1 Evaluation of Firm Performance

Evaluation of firm performance is a critical aspect of business research, as it enables organizations to assess their progress, identify areas for improvement, and make informed strategic decisions. According to Kornelius,*et al.* (2020), firm performance can be evaluated using various metrics, including financial performance, market performance, and organizational performance. Firm performance can be evaluated using various metrics, including:

**a. Financial Metrics:** return on assets (ROA), return on equity (ROE), earnings per share (EPS), revenue growth, profit margin, and cash flow return on investment (CFROI), the financial measures emanate from the accounting statements based on the financial records of the firm (Gofwan, 2022; Olayinka, 2022).

**b. Non-financial Measures:** This measure relies on self-report or personal opinion of managers, customers and investors; it is connected to non-monetary instruments in explaining performance (Khan,*et al.*, 2024; Anna & Akhigbe, 2023), indicators for measurement in this direction include the following:

**i. Market Metrics:** market share, customer satisfaction, brand reputation, market growth, and competitive advantage

**ii. Organizational Metrics:** employee productivity, innovation, corporate social responsibility (CSR), employee engagement, and leadership effectiveness

**iii. Operational Metrics:** efficiency ratios, quality metrics, supply chain performance, innovation pipeline, and risk management.

### 2.3 Table Water Firms

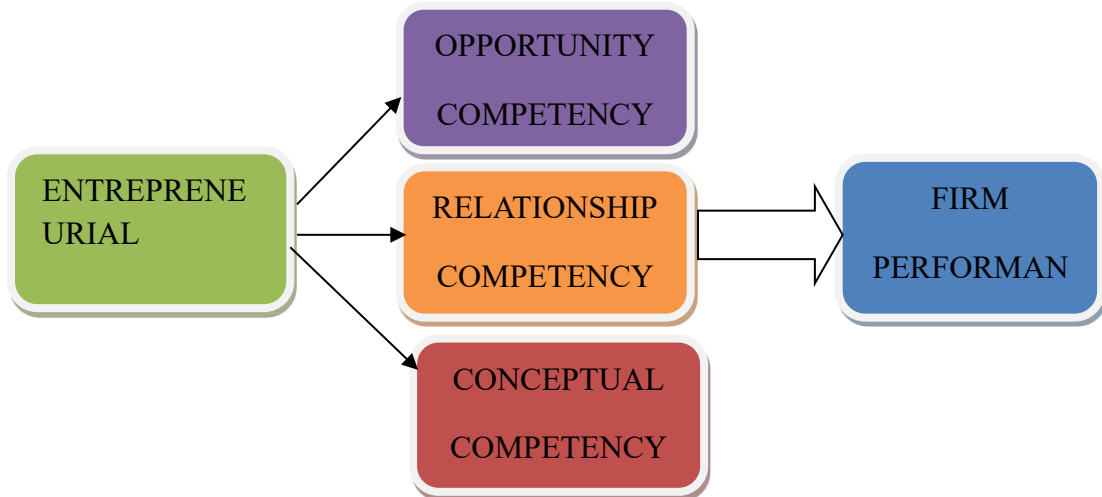
Table water firms, also known as the bottled water industry in Nigeria, have experienced significant growth in recent years. This growth is driven by factors such as inadequate public water supply, increasing demand for clean drinking water, urbanization, and rising health consciousness among consumers (Osunbor, *et al.*, 2023; Adekunle,*et al.*, 2024). In Minna Metropolis, the hot climatic conditions characterized by excessive sunshine also contribute to the increased demand for bottled water, thereby fostering the growth of table water firms. This expansion has led to the emergence of numerous firms striving to meet the escalating demand.

The global bottled water market size was estimated at USD 183.4 billion in 2020 and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.3% from 2020 to 2027 (Li,*et al.*, 2020). In Nigeria, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) regulates the production of packaged water in line with WHO standards. After inspection, certified table water firms are issued approval numbers. However, challenges such as non-registration, expired licenses, and poor hygiene practices persist (VON, 2021; Business Day, 2021).

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and firm performance. Notably, no prior study has specifically examined the connection between these two concepts in relation table water firms in Minna metropolis. Therefore, the variables used to conceptualize entrepreneurial competencies are presumed to be related to firm performance.

**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework depicting graphical relationship amongst the predictors and firm performance.



Source: Man *et al.*, 2002 (adapted)

## 2.5 Theoretical Framework: Resource Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory originated from Edith Penrose's 1959 work, which described a firm as a combination of resources. The RBV continued to develop as a key perspective on strategic planning and development into the 1990s. The article "Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage," published in 1991, by Jay Barney, is a foundation article for this theory.

Resource-based approaches center competitive advantage on superior resource and capability development. Such resources have to be valuable, rare, unique, and non-imitable. Barney defines firm's resources as those assets, capabilities, processes, attributes, and knowledge necessary to formulate and implement competitive strategies.

RBV theorists thus concluded that the performance of the organization is a result of character building, enough information, and understanding of relevant tasks specific to the sector. This would help the owners/managers of that firm to choose the right composition of competence. Firm owners'/manager's ability is here seen as essential and prized resources for performance and competitive advantage.

This study, utilize the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which aids in the allocation of usable resources within an organization, human resources, and material resources. The same RBV lays emphasis on entrepreneurial competencies being important to



organizational performance and sustainable competitive advantage (Mitchelmore, et al., 2014).

## 2.6 Empirical Review

Pranowo, et al. (2020), this study examines the relationship between entrepreneurial competence, innovation capability, and business success in Indonesia's footwear industry in Indonesia. This research uses a survey method with a quantitative approach. Questionnaires were distributed 340 of 450 were returned. The hypotheses were examined by structural equation modeling. The results show that entrepreneurial competence influences innovation capability, and both factors positively impact business success. The study highlights the importance of enhancing innovation capability and entrepreneurial competence to improve business success in the industry.

Ibidunni, et al. (2022) this study investigated the impact of entrepreneurial competencies on innovation performance in Nigeria's informal SME sector, considering the role of the business environment. The study used survey research design and quantitative approach. The findings from a survey of 296 entrepreneurs revealed that certain competencies (organizing, conceptual, learning, strategic, opportunity, and risk-taking) are crucial for achieving higher innovation performance. Additionally, the study showed that entrepreneurial competencies can help mitigate environmental pressures, allowing entrepreneurs to gain control over their environment. The study contributes to entrepreneurship literature by identifying essential competencies and contingencies, providing a practical guide for stakeholders to prioritize investment in key competence areas.

Sakib, et al. (2022) this study empirically examined the impact of entrepreneurial competencies on SME performance in Bangladesh. Data from 115 entrepreneurs was analyzed using PLS-SEM, revealing that organizing, leading, learning, relationship, and commitment competencies positively impact SME performance. However, strategic and opportunity competencies had no significant effect. The study contributes to the understanding of relevant entrepreneurial competencies in a developing country context, providing insights for policymakers and entrepreneurship training programs. The competency measurement framework developed in this study offers a unique tool for designing targeted training programs for entrepreneurs.

Rehman, et al. (2023) investigated the impact of the management control system (MCS) package on business performance in SMEs, examining the mediating role of entrepreneurial competencies and the moderating role of business strategy. A total of 372 questionnaires were used in this research for analysis purposes using partial least square–structural equation modeling. Cluster sampling was used and nine states out of 16 states were selected randomly. The results show that MCS elements positively influence entrepreneurial competencies, which in turn impact business performance. The study contributes to the literature by addressing a significant gap in the understanding of MCS packages and business strategies in SMEs.

## 3.0 Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and the performance of table water firms in Minna metropolis. The target population comprises 159 owner-managers of table water

production firms with at least five years of operation (Association of table/sachet water and beverages producer, Minna). Using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula, a sample size of 131 was determined at a 95% confidence level and 0.05 significance level. Simple random sampling ensured representativeness and minimized bias. Primary data were collected through self-administered questionnaires, and descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze demographic characteristics and relationships among study constructs, respectively.

### 3.1 Model specification

In modifying the model for the study, an econometrics model was employed to examine the effects of the independent variable (opportunity, relationship and conceptual competencies) on dependent variable (firm performance). The research model was also derived from the theoretical framework. The effect among the variables was then depicted below:

$$FP_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 OPC_i + \beta_2 RC_i + \beta_3 CONC_i + \mu$$

$$FP_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 OPC_i + \beta_2 RC_i + \beta_3 CONC_i + \beta_4 X_i + \epsilon_i$$

Where:  $FP_i$  = firm performance

$\beta_0$  = constant (coefficient of intercept)

$OPC$  = Opportunity competency (ability to identify and exploit business opportunities)

$RC$  = Relationship competency (ability to build and maintain business relationships)

$CONC$  = Conceptual competency (strategic and analytical thinking in business)

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$  = Coefficients estimating the effect of entrepreneurial competencies and control variables on firm performance

$X_i$  = Control variables (firm size, industry type, business experience, education level of entrepreneur, access to finance, etc.)

$\mu$  = Error term

## 4.0 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Results Presentation

Out of one hundred and thirty-one (131) administered questionnaires, one hundred and nineteen (119) copies of the questionnaires were dully filled and returned from the respondents and analyzed.



**Table 2: Demographic characteristics of respondents and firm information**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid %	Cumulative %
Sex				
Male	108	90.8	9.8	100
Female	11	9.2	9.2	100
Owner/Manager age				
Less than 30	12	10.1	10.1	100
31- 35	28	23.5	23.5	100
36 – 40	32	29.6	29.5	100
41 and above	47	39.5	39.5	100
Education Level				
O level	5	2.5	2.5	100
National Diploma (ND)/NCE	18	51.1	51.1	100
HND	53	44.5	44.5	100
Bachelor degree	39	32.8	32.8	100
postgraduate	6	5	5	100
Level of Investment				
5,000,000 to 10,000,000	5	4.2	4.2	100
11,000,000 to 20,000,000	17	14.3	14.3	100
21,000,000 to 30, 000,000	56	47.1	47.1	100
31,000,000 above	41	34.5	34.5	100

Formal Training				
Yes	93	78.2	78.2	100
No	26	21.8	21.8	100
Numbers of employees				
Less than 10	11	9.2	9.2	100
10 to 50	56	47.1	47.1	100
51 to 199	44	37.0	37.0	100
200 and above	8	6.7	6.7	100
Years of Operation				
1-5 years	8	6.7	6.7	100
6-10 years	65	54.6	54.6	100
11-15 year	27	22.7	22.7	100
15 and above	19	16.0	16.0	100

Source: Author's Field Survey 2025

Table 2: present the demographic characteristics of respondents and firm information feature of the study, the overall result shows that the majority of table water firm owners/managers in Minna Metropolis are male, aged between 36-40 years, and hold a Higher National Diploma (HND) or Bachelor's degree. Most firms have invested between ₦15,000,000 to ₦23,000,000, and have been in operation for more than 10 years.

**Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis Model <sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.449 <sup>a</sup>	.202	.181	.4403	2.052

a. Predictors: (Constant), OC, RC, CC

b. Dependent Variable: FP

Source: Author's Field Survey 2025

Table 2 presents the regression analysis, showing that entrepreneurial competencies explain 20.2% of the variation in firm performance ( $R^2 = 0.202$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ). The standard error of 0.4403 indicates the extent of unexplained variation.

**Table 3 ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	5.636	3	1.879	9.689	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	22.296	115	.194		
Total	27.931	118			

a. Dependent Variable: FP

b. Predictors: (Constant), CC, RC, OC

Source: Author's field survey, (2025)

Table 3 revealed that population parameters were found to have a significant p value of 0.000 which is lower than the 0.05. This is a clear indication that the data used in the study was adequate and reliable for making conclusion of the variables under study since the value of significance (p value) is lower than 5%. The F statistic critical at 5% level of confidence was (3, 115) = 9.689, P=.000). The study concludes that the overall model is significant and that the independent variable (OC, RC, and CC have effect on firm performance of table water firms in Minna metropolis.

**Table 4: present the Result of Regression Analysis Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	.307	.276		1.113	.268	-.239	.854		
OC	.495	.135	.330	3.660	.000	.227	.763	.856	1.168
RC	.040	.103	.035	.385	.701	-.165	.244	.864	1.157
CC	.381	.167	.204	2.288	.024	.051	.711	.875	1.142

a. dependent variable: FP

Source: Author's field survey, (2025)

Table 4 shows that opportunity competency has a significant positive effect on firm performance ( $\beta = 0.330$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), indicating a 33% increase in performance for each unit increase in this competency. Conceptual competency also shows a significant positive effect ( $\beta = 0.204$ ,  $p = 0.024$ ). However, relationship competency, though positive, is not significant ( $\beta = 0.035$ ,  $p = 0.701$ ), suggesting minimal impact on firm performance.

## 4.2 Discussion of Findings

The study finds that opportunity and conceptual competencies significantly enhance firm performance, while relationship competencies have no effect. Regression results confirm that only two of the three competency types positively impact performance, highlighting the value of opportunity competency as a key internal resource in line with RBV theory.

Opportunity and conceptual competencies are valuable internal resources that enhance firm performance and sustain competitive advantage. The study shows that conceptual competencies help owners/managers make informed, innovative decisions, while their absence may hinder performance. These findings, consistent with Mashavira & Chipunza (2021) and Kovid et al. (2025), support the RBV theory by highlighting the strategic role of entrepreneurial competencies in firm success.

The results also indicate that table water firm owners/managers tend to undervalue relationship competency, which requires improvement for better future performance. Although the probability value associated with relationship competency is high, suggesting that enhancing this competency could yield improved outcomes in the long run. This finding is consistent with previous studies that explored the effect on these concepts (Nasuredin, et al., 2016).

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of entrepreneurial competencies in enhancing firm performance. Both practitioners and researchers should focus on developing the entrepreneurial competencies and skills of firm owners/managers through training and development programs. By doing so, firms can improve their performance and gain a competitive edge in the market.

### Recommendations

Results of this study notwithstanding, the following recommendations were suggested. Given the strong link between opportunity competency and performance, firm owners/managers should develop their ability to recognize, manage, and exploit opportunities, converting them into profitable products with significant customer benefits.

Owners and managers need to focus on relationship competencies through interaction with peers, suppliers, employees, and customers. It is also important to maintain a personal network of working contacts for enhanced future performance.

Owners/managers of table water companies should actively involve themselves in decision-making processes with situational analyses of problems under conditions of uncertainty while encouraging and accepting creative and innovative solutions. Another critical factor entails the acceptance of calculated, work-related product risks by the organization.

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