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BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMES  
(AIJBES)**[www.aijb.es.com](http://www.aijb.es.com)**THE POTENTIAL AND BENEFITS OF COMMERCIAL  
RECORDS CENTERS FOR BUSINESS COMPANIES IN  
MALAYSIA: A CONCEPTUAL PAPER**

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**Abstract:**

Information found in records is a valuable resource and a key component of a successful organization. For enterprises to safeguard and preserve records as proof of activities and transactions, a systematic approach to record management is crucial. The amount of their inactive records is significantly rising for many businesses and organizations. Records management lowers the risk involved in handling documentation of an organization's operations, which may have an impact on the operation, administration, performance, and reputation of the organisation. When an organisation faces the challenge of having too many files and not enough space for offices, it will begin to consider moving to off-site storage. The concept of outsourcing, or subcontracting selected services, has become a highly accepted management tool. This phenomenon becomes an opportunity to the commercial records center as an alternative place for agency and company to outsource their records storage. As a long-term answer to the issue of where to store and manage their records and information, several agencies and businesses have chosen to use commercial record center. Therefore, an in depth understanding about benefits of CRC is needed to ensure the successful of outsourcing activity among CRC companies. An extensive literature review was conducted to identify the potential and benefits of using CRC in records storage activities. The study highlights an overview potential and benefits of CRC in context of business environment in Malaysia. The purpose of this study is to investigate and

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overview the benefits of using CRC in records storage activity and comparative finding between CRCs on services offered by them. This study elaborates the benefits of using CRC in order to increase the efficiency of the organizational performance.

**Keywords:**

Records Management, Business Records Management, Business Companies, Commercial Records Center, Malaysia

## Introduction

Malaysian firms have seen an enormous increase in the amount of paperwork and data they must keep on hand during the past 25 years. Although predictions have been bantered about for more than a decade, the "paperless office" continues to represent nothing more than an elusive goal for most companies. In fact, the amount of their inactive records is significantly rising for many businesses and organizations. The number of idle files and documents is increasing because of extensive litigation, governmental requirements, and extended retention terms, among other factors. Storage costs become a problem as the volume of internal records keeps growing. Nasrudin et al. (2018) state when an organisation faces the challenge of having too many files and not enough space for offices, it will begin to consider moving to off-site storage. People who choose to store sensitive documents indoors run the danger of them becoming mouldy or mildewed or becoming contaminated by pests. Confidential files need extra padlocks to keep out criminals, while combustible materials might be kept in the unit next to the business owner.

Agencies and companies now have an option to outsource their records management activity if their having problem in handling their records. The concept of outsourcing, or subcontracting selected services, has become a highly accepted management tool. Furthermore, outsourcing records to commercial records center is one of the accepted alternatives to manage the records (NARA, 2023). Moreover, several companies outsource their records administration due to concerns about security, space, cost, and service (Katulwa, 2019). This phenomenon becomes an opportunity to the commercial records center in attracting the new client. Many agencies and businesses have chosen commercial record centre as a long-term solution to the challenge of storing and managing their records and information.

The services-oriented industry is considered highly competitive and challenging. In Malaysia, the commercial records center sector is fairly young. The Klang Valley and other regions of the nation saw the most growth for this CRC business. Approximately 13 commercial record centres, including Crown Records Management Malaysia, Regalia Records Management Sdn Bhd, Tropical Baggage Sdn Bhd, PRISM Sdn Bhd, Recall Sdn Bhd, Sure-Reach Records Management Sdn Bhd, Safeguards Corporation Berhad, AF Document Management Services Sdn Bhd, Intercity(M) Sdn Bhd, and Data works Management Sdn Bhd, are located in Malaysia, according to preliminary research. The market value of this potential business in Malaysia was between RM30 and RM35 million in 2007, and it has shown double-digit growth of between 15 to 30% in recent years (Cheng, 2008). PAK Records Center (2015), Podraza (2015) and Sullivan (2015) concur that there are by using a commercial records center facility, the organisation will is most likely to enjoy some of the 16 unchallenged benefits as follows: space cost savings, reduced operating costs, climate controlled environment, authorized and secure destruction, vital records protection, online backups , digital archives, security,

protection against disaster, accessibility, facilities, web based interface, service capabilities, file management , improved productivity and labour efficiency (Dube, 2013).

## Literature Review

### *Key concept of Records Management*

Records contain information that is a valuable resource and an important business asset. In order to safeguard and preserve records as proof of transactions and activities, companies must take a systematic approach to record management. National Archives of Malaysia (2009) defines records management as the management of information resources in a manner that makes information easily accessible, securely protected and stored, and correctly disposed of when necessary. Records management is a specialized discipline that is concerned with the systematic analysis and control of information created, received, maintain, or use by an organisation pursuant to its mission, operations, business process and activities (Saffady, 2021).

There are several reasons to handle records. Touray (2021) highlights the reasons for records management as follows.

#### *Preserve Corporate Memory*

An effective records management program may make sure that the work, research, and data gathered by an employee during their employment are documented and handled properly even after they have left the company.

#### *Support Better Decision-Making*

A sound records management program makes ensuring that judgments are made based on evidence that has been documented rather than frequently faulty memories.

#### *Control the Creation and Disposal of Records*

Controls over the creation, maintenance, and destruction of records must be implemented by policies and procedures. A good records management system would make it easier to organize, identify, and legally dispose of the records that are no longer needed for day-to-day business operations.

#### *Reduce The Costs of Operation*

The administration of an organization's information resources would be improved by a good records management system, resulting in lower expenditures on supplies and equipment.

#### *Improve Efficiency and Productivity*

Ensuring that information is available when needed, a good records management system increases efficiency and production.

Additionally, records management makes ensuring that data and records are not repeated inadvertently, maintaining accuracy and version control while also saving money. Historical records are maintained for future use thanks to good records management. Records serve as evidence of what has been done by the organization or institution since they are any information made or received and stored as proof of transactions or correspondence by a person or entity.

### ***The Lifecycle Concept of Records***

Prior to the creation of any records, policies, procedures, and priorities should be established. Nevertheless, depending on how recent the data are, different departments or agencies may be responsible for managing them on a daily basis. Records that are used regularly by the organization that developed them are frequently referred to as "current records." Semi-current records are those that must be retained even though they are no longer regularly used. They should now be eliminated from existing systems, in part so that they do not consume extra space. Most of these records eventually become outdated and can be deleted, but some are kept around because they continue to be useful for research or as proof. These recordings become 'non-current records,' some of which are preserved as archives.

Some records may be destroyed (in accordance with the disposal schedules) when they are no longer current but still somewhat useful. Most documents ought to be moved from the record offices to a single location where they can be preserved safely, utilised as sources of knowledge, and subsequently disposed of methodically. The records center is located here. A company may have multiple records center or multiple storage sections within a single records centre. Even if the institution has records in multiple places, they should all technically be a part of the same records centre. Most semi-current records must be retained for varied amounts of time due to administrative, financial, or legal reasons. Some ought to be maintained because it's believed they'll be useful for research. It is the responsibility of the records and archives institution to maintain these types of records in a way that allows for their retrieval for use when necessary and their proper disposal when the time comes.

### ***Records Center Versus Commercial Records Centre***

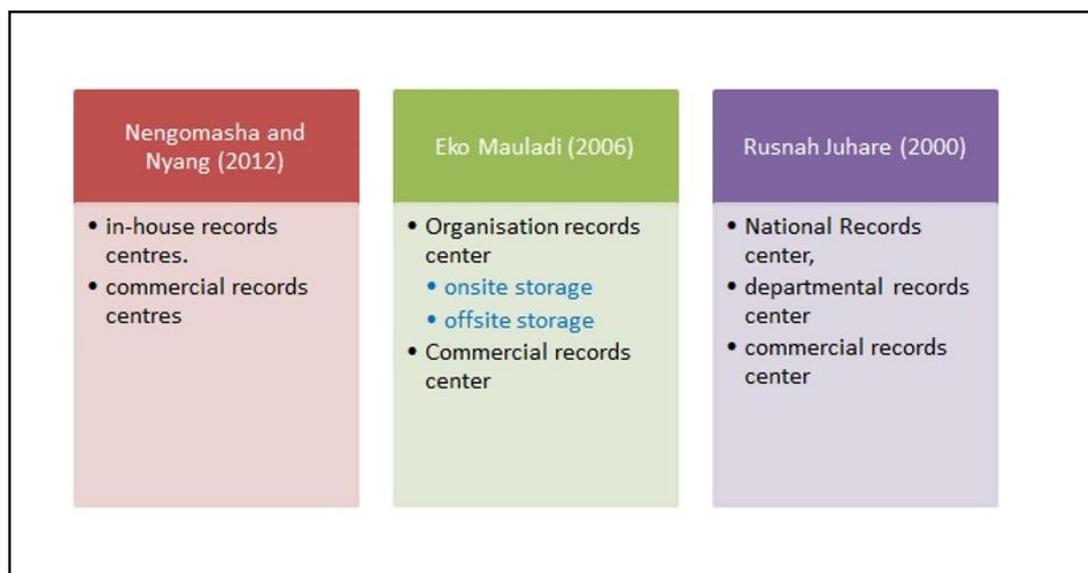
A records center is defined as "a building or part of a building designed or adapted for the low-cost storage, maintenance and communication of semi-current records pending their ultimate disposal" (IRMT, 1999). Commercial record centres are facilities that offer services for storing paper records for businesses. In some circumstances, they also offer storage for records stored in electronic formats. Commercial records centers store paper records, and some offer temperature-controlled storage for sensitive non-paper and important paper media. There exists a skill organisation for business records centers (Podraza, 2015). Records centers serve as low-cost storage areas for non-current records before their appraisal and transfer to the national archives. Records that are only occasionally used in the conduct of current business are considered semi-current records. Economically speaking, keeping these records in inexpensive storage makes sense. This is provided by a records center using high-density storage. The documents are kept in a way that makes it simple for their owners to retrieve them when needed. Meanwhile, a commercial records center is a records center that offers services for a fee and holds the records of other companies (ARMA, 2015).

### ***Types of Records Centers***

Mauladi (2006) stated that there are two different types of records centers, Organization records center and Commercial records center. Organization records center can be categorised into onsite storage and offsite storage according to the location. According to IRMT (1999), onsite storage most likely shares a facility with the record-creating agencies or can be a free-standing structure located close to the primary record-creating agencies but in a location that allows for minimal capital and ongoing expenditures as well as practical communications. Meanwhile Offsite storage can be defined as physically remote facility or site equipped to provide protected storage for magnetic or optical media, microfilm, and paper records (Business

Dictionary, 2015). According to NARA (1998) off-site storage is a facility other than an agency's normal place of business where vital records are stored for protection.

However, according to Rusnah (2000) there are three types of records center (Figure 1) namely National Records centre, departmental records center and commercial records centre. National records center normally Established by federal government on the country to maintain and manage the records from federal government ministry or public agency records before transferred to national archives. The main or headquarters building is often where the departmental records center is located. Each department occasionally has its own records center. In order to save money, it maintains and manages semi-current and non-current records while adhering to RC standards. The Commercial Records center is a profitable private organization. It offers services such record storage, retrieval, and referencing, as well as disposal plans and long-term preservation. Maintain and protect contemporary records as well, including those on magnetic tape, optical disks, microfilm, and film.



**Figure 1: Types of Records Centre**

Source: Author's Interpretation

### ***Function And Services of Records Centre***

The records centre's role is to store semi-current records and keep them accessible for usage up until the time of their disposal. As a result, the records center serves as a short-term or intermediate storage facility. In other words, it serves as a transitional step between the record-keeping offices of the organization and the archive institution. All areas of the government or organization can benefit from the broad service the records center offers. It is a low-cost, high-density storage space with a mechanism for accessing and reviewing the stored records. Regardless of quantity or format, the records center receives and makes available all records that have any lasting value. Additionally, it serves as a bridge between archive institutions and operational agencies' records offices (IRMT, 1999).

According to Smith (2004) the records center is the fail-safe location for the protection of information assets and it provides the basic elements of any disaster prevention program. A

records centre's duties include receiving records from the organizations that created them, storing them, providing off-site storage for important data, offering a reference service, and retrieving records at the owners' request. applying and putting into practice disposal schedules, destroying documents in accordance with schedules for document retention, and transferring documents that need to be preserved permanently to an archive facility (IRMT, 1999).

According to Musembi (1996) in Kenya, the services rendered by records center include: interpretation and implementation of the Public Archives Act (Cap 19) of 1965, planning and coordination of records management programmes, survey and appraisal of non-current records, conducting records management seminars for heads of department and officers in charge of registries, processing of new accessions, provision of reference services to government officials and members of the public, disposition of non-current records, provision of advice to record creating agencies on proper records management practices.

The services-oriented industry is considered highly competitive and challenging. Commercial records center industry has grown and prospered over the past few years. Commercial records center has gained more clients by providing the advanced services with latest technological equipment and standardize practices to meet their customers' expectations of service quality. In this light, the CRC industry is facing intense competition which could be associated with the fact that they offer similar products and services to their clients (Abbot, 2001). Services that provide by commercial records center can be categorized into two, typical services and other services. Typical services include traditional paper storage, on-line access and reporting, supplies (records boxes, tapes, labels, etc.), project labor (pack outs, purges, etc.), data entry, destruction services, retention date management, pick-up and delivery services. Other services that may be offered include document imaging/scanning service, scan on demand retrieval, computer back-up and rotation services, on site mobile shredding on-site, consulting services, copying, and faxing services, audit space with internet access.

## **Methodology**

An extensive literature review was conducted to identify the potential and benefits of using CRC in records storage activities. Source reviews were published in academic journals, book chapters, peer review studies, conference papers also theses and dissertations. In addition, authoritative web sites were also examined to provide an overview of the issue research.

## **Discussion**

### ***Business Records Management in Malaysia***

Throughout the world, all organizations, whether large or small, public or private, have one thing in common: each produces records and information. Information is one of the world's most important resources. It is needed daily to solve problems and make decisions affecting the future. What people accomplish in organizations depends upon the information they possess. Except for non-documentary information, business information is transmitted between and disseminated among persons and organizations in the form of records. Business records serve as the corporate memory of an organisation and provide a mechanism by which organisations can be held accountable for the actions and transactions that they have to execute (Ndedje, 2010). One of the essential characteristics of a record is its value. Most records are of temporary value: that is, like most organizational assets, their value for business purposes tends to decline as time passes and, at some point, they become useless and may be discarded.

To be effective, records need to be managed. Records management is the application of systematic and scientific controls to recorded information required in the operation of an organization's business. Organizations achieve the benefits of records management by establishing formally organized records management programs. One of the core concepts of records management is the life cycle concept, in which appropriate records management controls are applied to the records, during the stages of their creation, distribution and use, storage and maintenance, retention and disposition, and archival preservation.

As the government of Malaysia is striving towards the establishment of a well-informed and knowledgeable society, organizations are expected to have their information organized effectively. The number of laws and regulations currently in force in Malaysia should be sufficient to alert businesses to their responsibilities for their records, but their effectiveness is debatable. Businesses should be more aware of the risks they run of being unable to produce credible information where audit is concerned, and litigation is involved. The ability to create and maintain the appropriate records and to locate them when and where required has an impact on the cost-effective management of businesses.

According to Yusof (1999), firm records were kept in five different locations, including the library, administrative departments, dispersed sites, or none of these. The wide range of places where records are maintained suggests that respondents are unaware of how crucial it is to have a central location where established protocols for organizing documents may be put into practice. It may be simple for the office in question to keep records at every office, but this may prevent documents from being arranged in the most effective and efficient way possible. The answers to this question also suggest that most businesses are unaware of one of the key advantages of a records management system the ability to transfer records from relatively expensive to relatively inexpensive housing. For some reason, even though records center storage is less expensive than office storage, respondents do not seem to understand the significance of setting up a central location (a records centre) to house their inactive records. Businesses in Malaysia will benefit from education and training on record management programs, as they are aware of the necessity of maintaining records to carry out their daily operations. CRCs have a great chance to sell their goods and services in Malaysia's present economic climate. The poll finds that few businesses understand the principles and practices of records management, and many businesses do not keep vital papers. The need of keeping records needs to be made clear to businesses. Experience has shown that inadequate records management can result in a corporation closing in industrialized nations.

### ***Commercial Records Center in Malaysia***

Records management began in the USA in 1948 when the Hoover commission established a task group under the leadership of Emmett Leahy to address the issue of managing the continuously growing number of records in the USA and the rest of the world. On October 14, 1948, the task force's report was submitted to the commission. It was then delivered to Congress in 1949. Similar to this, the committee established in the UK under the leadership of Rt. Hon. Sir James Grigg delivered her findings to Parliament in 1952. These, along with other factors, were crucial in developing the idea of records management (Abioye, 2007).

National Archives Act 2003 gave the National Archives of Malaysia the needed authority to be responsible for the current records management in the public sector such as in process of appraisal and disposition, transferring records, destruction of records, and other. Day to day creation of records have growth tremendously. This responsibility becomes a big challenge to

National Archives to make sure all the records effectively well managed. This situation only refers to the public records in a government sector. As we know private sector also play a main role in country development. They also created valuable records that must be maintain effectively. As a long-term answer to the issue of where to store and manage their records and information, several agencies and businesses have chosen to use commercial record centre. For many years, the commercial records center sector has offered enterprises assistance with record management.

The commercial records center sector is still relatively new in Malaysia. The Klang Valley and other regions of the nation saw the most growth for the CRC sector. Approximately 13 commercial records centres, including Crown Records Management Malaysia, Regalia Records Management Sdn Bhd, Tropical Baggage Sdn Bhd, PRISM Sdn Bhd, Recall Sdn Bhd, Sure-Reach Records Management Sdn Bhd, Safeguards Corporation Berhad, AF Document Management Services Sdn Bhd, Intercity(M) Sdn Bhd, and Data works Management Sdn Bhd, are located in Malaysia. The list of established commercial records center in Malaysia was displayed in Figure 2.



|   |   |
|---|---|
|    | Crown Records Management Malaysia       |
|   | Regalia Records Management Sdn Bhd      |
|  | Inter-city MPC (M) sdn Bhd              |
|  | PRISM Intergrated Sdn. Bhd              |
|  | Tropical Baggage Sdn Bhd                |
|  | Sure-Reach Records Management Sdn Bhd   |
|  | Safeguards Corporation Berhad           |
|  | AF Document Management Services Sdn Bhd |
|  | Dataworks Management Sdn Bhd            |
|  | Recall Sdn. Bhd                         |

**Figure 2: Commercial Records Center in Malaysia**

Source: Author's Interpretation

In Malaysia for example, Crown runs three Records Management Centre in Malaysia, one each in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Johor. The storage space at Crown Kuala Lumpur has recently been increased. For their international clientele, the warehouse extension offers cutting-edge document management facilities with a capacity of more than 700,000 cartons. No other moving or records management firm in Penang comes close to the facilities that Crown Penang has expanded into and relocated into. While the Johor branch is now housed in a 20,000 square foot facility with the capacity to manage up to 120,000 cartons, Crown Penang is now housed in a 9,000 square foot facility with racking for 75,000 cartons. Regalia Records Management Sdn Bhd, the largest locally-owned Records Management Company in Malaysia, is another example of a commercial records centre. They provide thorough and affordable records

management solutions in addition to their knowledge and experience to address the difficult business issues that devoted customers face.

### ***Benefits of Commercial Records Centre***

Podraza (2015), Sullivan (2015) and Brian (2015) concur that there are by using a commercial records center facility your organisation will is most likely to enjoy some of the unchallenged several benefits as follows:

#### ***Space Cost Savings***

Without sacrificing access to the records, expensive office space is preserved. The frequency of these records' references does not justify keeping and managing them in a costly office space. The organization may be able to avoid leasing property and associated expenditures by storing records at a commercial records centre, or the extra space may be used to satisfy other space needs the organization may have. In other cases, the extra space created by transferring documents off-site can even take the place of deliberate office expansion plans.

#### ***Reduced Operating Costs***

Inactive records can be stored and managed in the workplace without the need to buy and maintain additional filing hardware and software. More documents can be stored per square foot in records center thanks to efficient equipment than in offices. Additionally, they typically offer access to an online database for managing an organization's inventory of records.

#### ***Climate Controlled Environment***

Certain types of information demand specialized climate controls, which can be expensive and challenging to implement. You can save time, money, and frustration by using the data centre's specific climate-controlled facilities, which give comprehensive protection for long-term preservation of data.

#### ***Authorized and Secure Destruction***

Records center has protocols in place to ensure that records are destroyed methodically and only with the proper authorization, minimizing the possibility of records being destroyed carelessly, arbitrarily, or for personal gain. According to the client organization's records retention and destruction policy, they offer discreet and secure records and computer media shredding, pulverizing, and recycling services. They guarantee that records will not be lost or kept longer than necessary, and correct deletion procedures guarantee compliance with local, state, and federal privacy laws.

#### ***Vital Records Protection***

Documents from client companies must be safeguarded in case of fire or other disaster. If a disaster strikes, having copies of the client company's critical paper records stored at the records center will serve as insurance. In order to prevent the costly time and effort needed to reconstruct mission-critical information in the case of a disaster, vital documents that are necessary to the client organization's continued operation are preserved. and appropriate deletion procedures assure adherence to national and state privacy laws.

### ***Facilities***

Commercial records center offers a level of security that is uncommon in other types of storage spaces. Most facilities are made specifically for managing records. Therefore, security, climate control, and fire protection are of the utmost importance. They often enable and provide a higher level of protection because they are aware of federal records retention regulations.

### ***Service Capabilities***

Most of commercial records center provide considerably more than just storage. Most off-site records center provide a full range of records management services, including media storage and destruction, scanning, records storage, pickup and retrieval, and storage. In other words, they provide solutions that streamline corporate operations and lessen the number of distractions that records managers in an organization must deal with. Most record centre provide access 365 days a year.

### ***File Management***

Something most organizations struggle with is maintaining the integrity of its archived records. A common example is when an employee goes to the archives searching for a file. Once they find the file, it is anyone's guess as to what they do with that file.

### ***Compliance***

Companies often have retention schedules that need to be implemented and followed for legal reasons. A commercial record centre can help your company by notifying you when records are due for review or destruction.

### ***Safety***

Many commercial records centers adhere to the established operating and safety standards offered by PRISM (Professional Records and Information Systems Management) and NAID (National Association for Information Destruction). Most reputable record centre are also members of other organizations or have credentials in a variety of fields with a concentration on records management.

### ***Challenge in using Commercial Records Centre***

Main disadvantages of outsourcing records storage are loss of managerial control over outsourced operations, threat to security and confidentiality, quality problems, organizational and personnel problems and strategic location. The fact that managing external resources requires specialized abilities, a mix of the skills of people and process management, contract management, and power negotiation, is the first drawback relating to the loss of control over the outsourced operations. Once agency or company sign a contract to have another company perform the function of an entire department or single task, actually they are turning the management and control of that function over to another company. The outsourcing company will not be driven by the same standards and mission that drives clients Company.

The second significant drawback of outsourcing is that the company must give up some degree of confidentiality on its most important business secrets. In order for the outsourced partner to complete the task at hand, it might also need to transfer information such as login credentials, client information, crucial specifics about company processes, and safety precautions performed. There is always a risk of data theft or fraud, which could result in a loss of reputation

and client confidence even if the outsourced partner has undergone rigorous testing for their internal security procedures (Rajib, 2015).

Third, expecting better service from the outsourcer than from internal workers is one justification for outsourcing. In order to prevent a negative impact on the quality of the goods and services produced, the outsourcing company must be picked in this manner. If not, the corporation risked losing its market share (Anderson, 2001). The outsourcing company will be motivated by profit. Since the contract will fix the price, the only way for them to increase profit will be to decrease expenses. If they meet the conditions of the contract, the clients will pay. In addition, the clients will lose the ability to rapidly respond to changes in the business environment. The contract will be very specific, and clients will pay extra for changes. CRCs must provide high quality services. By offering quality and effective customer service plus with the product quality itself, it can make each of the commercial records center different from the other. When customer service meets or exceeds the customer expectations, the customer starts to put confident and trust towards the company's abilities and thus inclined and willing to spend more money to use the company's products or services (Abdul Aziz, 2015).

Fourth, the commercial record centre must ensure their staff should have adequate experience levels and combined of skills not only in its new information technology positions, but also in the computer science, information and content management, business systems analysis, large-scale procurement, communications and organization-change management, training, and project management staffs because it relates to technical issues. The quality of files became poorer; they ran on for years and years; ephemeral and policy papers were mixed. Record overload grew worse as registries in the public sector attempted to cope with excessive quantities of paper which could be destroyed or sent to centre designed for the storage of inactive records or to the National Archives. Exacerbating these difficulties were the wasted expenditure on storage of useless papers, the loss of valuable information and the frustration of professional and clerical staff who wished to operate at a high standard but found it impossible to do so. Correctly positioned and distributed within a redesigned organizational structure, those groups will be managed by the best of the best (Pali, 2015).

Finally, the record centre needs to be close to the location it will serve and in a secure area. Employees of the company may need to visit the record centre for audits or research and should feel comfortable when visiting the facility. If rapid response is the main criterion, proximity should be considered. If disaster recovery considerations are part of the evaluation process, a more distant facility may be more appropriate. A flood plain or an area where there may be structures housing hazardous materials need to be avoided (Faber, 2004).

## Conclusion

Businesses in Malaysia would benefit from education and training on record management programs since they are aware of the importance of maintaining documentation for their daily operations. CRCs have a great chance to sell their goods and services in Malaysia's present economic climate. The survey finds that few businesses comprehend the principles and practices of records management, and many businesses do not keep critical papers. The need of keeping records needs to be made clear to businesses. Experience has shown that inadequate records management can result in a corporation closing in industrialized nations. Additionally, because technology is advancing so quickly, successful CRCs must keep up with the most recent breakthroughs and impart the advantages of those advancements to their consumers. By offering quality and effective customer service plus with the product quality itself, it can make

each of the commercial records center different from the other. When customer service meets or exceeds the customer expectations, the customer starts to put confident and trust towards the company's abilities and thus inclined and willing to spend more money to use the company's products or services.

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