

Digital marketplaces on the rise in Africa

Africa's high mobile penetration rates as well as its young population have contributed to the continent's positive response to digital marketplaces and on-demand services.



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Several notable marketplaces that have grown exponentially on the continent include Nigeria's Jumia, South Africa's Takealot and the international e-hailing service Uber. This year, the continent sees the arrival of new multinational marketplaces, including most recently Temu.

However, there is room for growth in the maturation, service offering and operational efficiency of marketplaces in other industries, including insurance, hospitality, transport, financial services and others.

Both businesses and consumers must familiarise themselves with the continent's growing relationship with marketplaces and assess what this means for entrepreneurship, innovation and meeting growing consumer demands on the continent.

True marketplaces

Consumers want a true marketplace in every sense. There are a few digital platforms that allow you to see a real price that you can buy for insurance, like with Checkers60, but these are generally from a single product supplier. Imagine if you could get the Woolworths, Checkers, Pick n Pay and Spar price for an item in one place and buy right then in one Super App.



Zando Global launches to compete with Shein and Temu

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The African continent's embrace of digital marketplaces marks a significant shift in its entrepreneurial landscape, fostering innovation and meeting growing consumer demands.

"It's all about meeting consumer needs and the evolution of the marketplace - a trend that comes with both opportunities and challenges," says Ayanda Mvandaba, CEO of online non-alcoholic beverages retailer, Drink Nil.

"It expands the reach of a product or service and enhances accessibility to consumers, however it presents a challenge in that it requires constant innovation and strategic adaptation to stand out amidst a growing array of options."

The power of contextual data for marketplaces

One of the most impactful measures to undertake involves dismantling data silos within an organisation. The same is true with the development of any marketplace.

"It's critical to recognise that information fuels every department within an organisation. Ensuring access to contextual data empowers customer-facing teams to have impactful engagement with the customers, thereby improving the experience they can provide," comments Zoho's regional manager, Africa, Andrew Bourne.

Furthermore, it enables the delivery of personalised experiences to each customer, further augmenting their perception of the organisation. In this regard, the implementation of a customer experience platform assumes significant importance. Ideally, such a platform should offer seamless and contextual flow of data between different systems, single sign on (SSO), and granular access control.

Marketplace capabilities are being prioritised

The [Salesforce State of e-Commerce Report](#) found that one-third of commerce professionals — across industries and business sizes are prioritising adding marketplace capabilities to their existing ecommerce experience.

Marketplaces make it easy (and fast) to diversify revenue streams, reduce inventory risk, and win customer loyalty. Joint innovations enhance data management, improve customer experiences, and enable AI-powered applications.

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