

PARGO - LAST MILE DELIVERY REDEFINED FOR AFRICA

Developed nations are fully indulging in 4th industrial revolution (4IR) solutions, pouring huge financial resources into innovative omni-channel delivery services aimed at giving customers more options.

Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, for example, is building an ecosystem of digital services which it says will see customer experience enhanced by augmented reality, AI, and facial recognition.

Alibaba has also successfully incubated fully digitised supermarkets and smartphone-powered experiences across China where customers can browse the shelves, shop, and have their goods delivered within minutes.

Amazon will soon be launching Prime Air Delivery Drones and has been testing an autonomous six-wheeled delivery robot named Scout to see if it can withstand exterior surfaces and safely navigate around obstacles in its path.

BARRIERS TO 4IR DELIVERY

While the rest of the world is speeding towards fully-fledged 4IR delivery solutions, African countries are lagging.

“Most African countries and industries are just not as far as their counterparts in more developed countries. There are still many basic problems that must be solved in order for Africa to engage in the 4IR,” said Lars Veul, Pargo Director and Co-Founder.



The logistics industry for one is still grappling with basic challenges, of which access is the biggest.

“75% of the Sub-Saharan population refrains from shopping online due to scant delivery options caused by inconclusive addresses, vast distances, missed deliveries, and high costs, especially to informal residential neighbourhoods and small rural towns,” said Veul.

The country also faces challenges with poor infrastructure, high unemployment rates, large economic inequalities, lack of skills development, high crime rates, and inadequate urban planning.

While all these challenges affect the roll out of 4IR delivery technologies seen in other countries, the continent is ripe for disruption, as it has large, untapped market potential, and offers opportunities for the development of unique and creative business models.

eCommerce in South Africa is also already going mainstream as a result of the country’s 80% smartphone adoption rate, an annual eCommerce growth-rate of 25%, and high Internet penetration.

PARGO ADDRESSES AFRICA'S PROBLEMS

“Pargo plays a critical role in this, as it helps solve delivery challenges by creating access through an extensive network of designated Pargo Pick-up Points, located at popular retail stores across Southern Africa such as Clicks, FreshStop at Caltex, Spar and Lewis,” said Veul.

The courier service’s smart logistics platform uses technology and big data to solve the challenges of last-mile delivery, managing the entire supply chain from A to Z.

Pargo is also continuously developing and improving its platform to create more innovative delivery options and an omni-channel delivery experience, through instant click and collect, simple returns and in-store fulfillment, so that customers have more choice when it comes to delivery. ■