

Doing business in Africa - role of technology

DHL held its 5th annual Global Technology conference in April 2015, featuring a number of key sessions on doing business in Africa.

Under the theme of 'Connecting Markets, Trends & People', the conference hosted some 300 delegates, including many of its customers from leading global technology companies. Topics included the latest trends, innovations and solutions affecting the technology supply chain and focusing on the Middle East and Africa as key regions of interest with high growth potential.



Potential of the African continent

The 'Rise of Africa' plenary session and several workshops set out to explore the potential of and expectations for the African continent, with discussions on how to best navigate existing challenges and trade barriers and tap into growth. Speakers from a number of African companies illustrated how they successfully operate in various African markets.

Ashish Thakkar, Founder and CEO of Mara Group, gave conference delegates interesting and thought-provoking insights with his keynote themed 'Inspiring Africa: Capturing Chances'. Konga's Sim Shagaya and Tayo Oviolu, CEO of Paga, made the case for doing business in Africa, advising companies to move beyond negative media hype and become familiar with African countries on the ground in order to explore and tap into the tremendous potential that exists.

Experts predict continued strong growth in the technology sector across Africa, with savvy entrepreneurs such as Shagaya and Oviolu leading the way in e-commerce and mobile payments, and technology segments such as mobile phones still growing at a rapid pace. It is predicted that internet usage on mobile phones will increase 20-fold in the next five years in Africa, which is double the rate of growth in the rest of the world.

Delegates learnt about African consumers' preferences, such as paying retailers via mobile phone rather than cash and an increasing appetite for well-priced mobile devices, fuelled by a rapidly growing middle class. Discussions were also held around Africa's potential for becoming a manufacturing destination for technology goods.



Charles Brewer

Highly dynamic industry

Rob Siegers, President, Global Technology Sector, DHL said, "The technology sector is a highly dynamic industry and the pace of change is rapid. We currently see two distinct trends: the advance of new technologies, such as the Internet of Things, big data, cloud computing and others which are changing business models as technology companies are looking to enhance their products by building services around them - and an increasing focus on tapping into growth in emerging nations.

"While growth is slowing in some of the traditional markets, emerging nations are gaining importance for technology companies, and Africa is of particular interest to many of our customers. At this year's conference, we aimed to connect customers with experts who are already successfully running their businesses in Africa. Our plenary sessions and workshops were tailored to give unique insights into doing business on the continent and facilitate knowledge sharing and networking."

Charles Brewer, MD of DHL Express Sub Saharan Africa adds, "We had a team of logistics experts from across Africa on hand to facilitate knowledge sharing and networking, demonstrating that the group is a strong partner to the technology sector across the continent. We have been in Africa for 37 years and are well positioned to support customers with their end-to-end supply chains and tailor-made logistics solution to help them overcome challenges and tap into the continent's tremendous growth opportunities."

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