

DHL confirms strategic investment in UK-based Link Commerce

DHL Express has acquired a minority stake in Link Commerce, the UK-based e-commerce firm that helped the logistics company develop its [DHL Africa eShop platform](#). Hennie Heymans, CEO of DHL Express sub-Saharan Africa, says that the acquisition demonstrates the company's commitment to growing e-commerce on the continent.



Hennie Heymans, CEO of DHL Express sub-Saharan Africa

“Acquiring a stake in Link Commerce – the company behind the Mall for Africa platform – shows our tremendous support of e-commerce in Africa. It also positions us to realise our ambitions of growing the eShop offering globally and to work on the scalability of the platform when the opportunity arises,” Heymar says.

As part of the acquisition, Heymans has been made a board member of London-based Link Commerce L

Chris Folayan, founder and CEO of Link Commerce and Mall for Africa, comments, “DHL’s investment in Link Commerce is a perfect fit. With the DHL investment we are now able to grow faster by leveraging the amazing shipping network DHL has built globally. This will help us expand our white-label turnkey B2B e-commerce platform and provide online shoppers with the ability to shop more at great shipping rates, fast.



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DHL Africa eShop platform rolled out to 34 additional countries

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The DHL Africa eShop offers African consumers access to over 200 US- and UK-based online retailers, with purchases delivered directly to their door, by DHL Express. According to DHL, the platform continues see "massive growth" in sub-Saharan Africa, just over one year after its initial launch.

"The platform was developed in partnership with Link Commerce and initially launched in 11 African countries in April 2019. It was an immediate success, gaining around 5,000 subscribers within the first six weeks. Today, DHL Africa eShop is live in 34 countries across sub-Saharan Africa with tens of thousands users across the continent," says Heymans.

Covid-19 altering purchasing behaviour

He adds, "Online buying behaviours and product mixes have evolved quite significantly since the onset of Covid-19. Some of the most popular items on the platform now include productivity and communications devices to support remote working, home and kitchen appliances, entertainment gadgets and health-related products, in addition to the historic orders of fashion and beauty products.

DHL says that consumer interests have shifted towards goods that are harder to source locally. With brick-and-mortar retailers in many regions operating at reduced capacity, consumers have turned to online shopping to acquire the goods they need.



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"It's been great to see eShop providing vital online shopping access during this time, with impressive growth coming from countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda, Angola, Uganda and Kenya during the various stages of lockdowns, and with South Africa back on board to access e-commerce, we are thrilled for our users to be able to use the service offering once more.

"Basket sizes have also increased, as shoppers seek to get all of what they need immediately, rather than space out their orders. Online shopping supports the ultimate level of social distancing – connecting consumers to everything they need at a click of a button," says Heymans.

Opportunities for e-commerce in sub-Saharan Africa

He explains that while the e-commerce market in sub-Saharan Africa has been largely overlooked by international retailers in the past, it currently offers some of the biggest opportunities for rapid growth in the world.

E-commerce is proving to be one of the most important and fastest-growing market sectors in Africa. [A report](#) published by Rapid B2C forecasts that Africa's online retail market will reach an 11-digit dollar value in 2020, while another report by the McKinsey Global Institute estimates that this value could potentially reach \$75bn by 2025.



E-COMMERCE

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"These growth predictions, coupled with the incredible demand and quick uptake of the DHL Africa eShop offering, confirm that this acquisition is the right move to ensure DHL Express is geared for continued

growth,” adds Heymans.

He concludes, “Our strategic investments in innovative technology and connectivity across the region are aimed at promoting global trade while enabling businesses and individuals across the continent to leverage global opportunities.

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