Smarter business trends in Africa influenced by mobile

Mobile trends show how innovation can ripple through societies, boost economies and help the continent skip over development hurdles. Mobile consumption differs in all African countries, therefore, mobile solutions need to be tailored.

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Tech accelerator programmes being established in African countries

Globally, the proliferation of internet access via broadband, wireless and mobile connectivity has created the foundation for new business ecosystems. Africa has witnessed particular application of this trend in Africa as companies seek to tackle key challenges including power shortages, access to education, health and the limited availability of data. Tech accelerator programmes are being established in many African countries to motivate entrepreneurs to solve specific African issues through mobile solutions.

An example of 'new' business ecosystems is, Ampion a leading pan-African entrepreneurship initiative that enables young Africans to start ICT companies therefore creating considerable social and economic impact. They have teamed up with Merck, a leading company for innovative and top-quality high-tech products in healthcare, life science and performance materials. The main aim for the partnership is to create the first e-health accelerator in Africa. Where e-health startups will be incubated and supported in their aims to create mobile tech solutions for e-health.

Lynette Hundermark, the co-owner and founder of Useful and Beautiful, a mobile product strategy and development company with clients in South Africa and Nigeria, states "Launching accelerator programs, suggests that the companies involved understand that the local entrepreneurs will create mobile solutions with a clear understanding of the current mobile status of the particular country. Some African countries are still mostly feature phones and involving local talent allows the businesses to create mobile solutions that suit the particular country. African countries are unique in their culture, therefore, their mobile consumption patterns when it comes to apps and mobile will be different".

Developing solutions that suit Africa

The key feature in Africa is the rise of mobile phone access, and it's good to note that the businesses mentioned below, like Useful and Beautiful, have focused on their users and matched the development of the mobile solutions to suit their target audiences.

M-KOPA: "Pay-as-you-go" energy services for off-grid customers in Kenya and Uganda.

Esoko: Communications platform in Ghana that allows farmers access to market prices and allows them to place buy or sell orders. Other mobile agriculture service providers include iCow in Kenya and mFisheries.

Payment Pebble: Technology device developed to enable SMEs and large enterprises to make and receive payments via a smartphone or tablet.
Weza Tele: Mobility solutions in commerce, supply chain and distribution and mobile payments integration.

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