



Digital Edge

October 2023

**Innovating for
the Future**

Founder's Note:

Celebrating A Legacy Of Innovation



The past few years have been a gruelling but rewarding journey of legacy building for CWG. Our brand has had to live up to its name, which is associated with sustained value and an innovative culture, while constantly adapting to changing times and methods. CWG has been at the forefront of technological strides in Nigeria and Africa since its inception in 1992, and recent achievements have further bolstered this. In addition to previous commitments to continuously earn our clients' trust with excellently executed solutions and reward the board and shareholders' support with a profitable venture, our scope has expanded to include practical industry leadership. We recognise our place in the frontiers and have grown more comfortable with its inherent responsibilities, including reflecting global technology standards and leading our Nigerian and African counterparts along the same path.

We envision Digital Edge Magazine to embody CWG's professional competence through our products & services, professional networks and industry perspective, a goal we are proud to have so far achieved. This edition, however,

takes it a notch higher by reflecting all that plus a new flavour that represents our current positioning. It comprehensively captures the convergence of technology, culture, and the human experience, from technology creators to users, through compelling storytelling, innovative design, and an overall human-centred approach. Undoubtedly, this is one 'tech product' made by humans for humans!

With the recent boom in AI technology, we have seen an influx of innovative solutions that ease human existence and enhance our abilities, so this generation can arguably claim to have achieved the peak of human evolutionary efforts so far. Still, many fear the continuous technological evolution will cause our

technological evolution will cause our society to lose its human touch. Will Artificial Intelligence replace human input? Do we have to prepare for a war against machines? Are we adequately equipped to handle the responsibility of a fully tech-driven reality? Can we even achieve a fully tech-driven reality? These are some critical questions on the minds of stakeholders. As human needs evolve to match available machinery, business leaders are left wondering how to stay relevant with compounding concerns surrounding gaining new or maintaining existing market share and satisfying stakeholders.

When I became CEO in 2019, I was immediately tasked with leading the team on a transformation project to reset our business objectives against global industry dynamics. What a tall order! To an outsider, a CEO's job is often oversimplified as managing daily operations and ultimately 'selling for profit'. While this constitutes one stream of obligation, it certainly gets more strategic than that. The Digital Edge publication and this edition, in particular, examines some of the composite conflicts that a tech leader confronts daily to make decisions that birth the glorious solutions that power modern life. Also, I have written more about my leadership experience in the magazine. Essentially, what you now have before your eyes is the complete picture, an anthology of reflective pieces that, as a whole, cover the multi-layered aspects of innovative practice.



Adewale Adeyipo

Group Managing Director /
Chief Executive Officer, CWG



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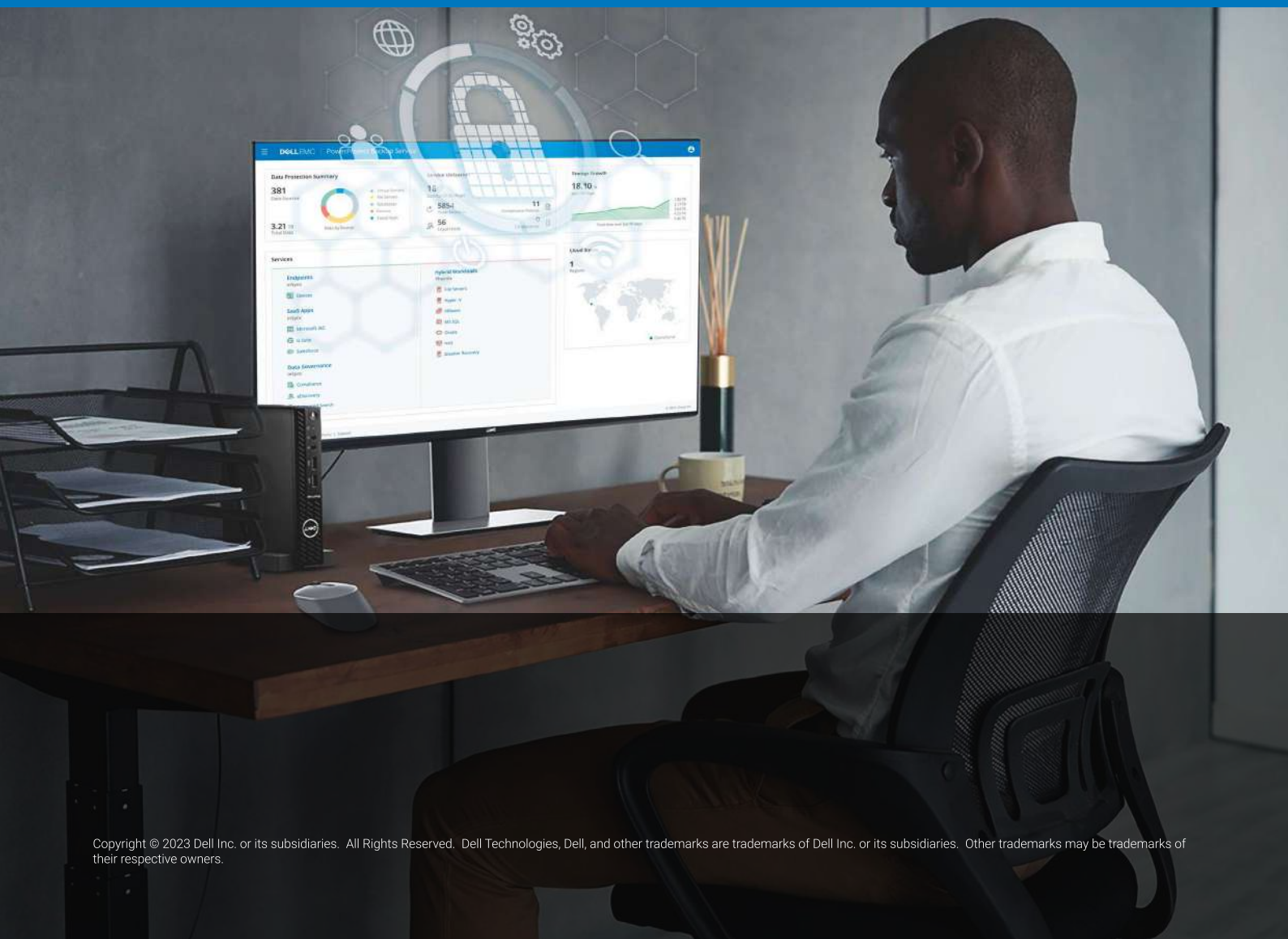
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Editor's Note:

Innovation is a Home Game



Koshedo Seun

Head, Brand and Marketing
Communications, CWG Plc

For a long time, the idea of innovation and its implications seemed distant and unattainable, especially in a society like Nigeria with our global socioeconomic positioning. The notion often pointed at historical figures like Michael Faraday and modern enigmas like Elon Musk. It was nearly impossible for a random lower-class Nigerian kid to picture themselves in the context. For sure, once in a while, we heard incredulous stories of a talented child who built a mechanised car with a wooden frame and scrap wires. But the word mainly was applied locally to belaboured inventions and unrealised dreams. Little did we know that the definition of innovation was broad enough to accommodate solutions from Margeret Knight's square-bottomed paper bag (1871), to Josephine Cochrane's Dishwasher (1886), to Mary Anderson's Windshield Wiper (1903) and other mundane items like drinking straws, post-it-notes and bubble wrap!

Like many founders and product leaders today, I was raised with dreams and ambition. Yet, we must all learn the art of turning potential into a sustainable reality. As a young, ambitious intern, my idea of possibility was dreamy and mostly far-fetched. Wet behind the ears, there were many walls I wanted to break down and a few more I desired to build, all at the same time. But, like many of my peers, I was soon pushed to the edge of burnout. My big and distant dreams were weighing me down, and I appeared to be failing. But was I? Or did I simply need a change in perspective and methodology? At first, I fell victim to what may I can describe as “destination

satisfaction”, where the value of my endeavours was placed on an outcome, forgetting that every step in the process was as important as the final output. Besides, I totally ignored the 'little wins' and fixed my eyes on the big fish. How naive.

As I mature in my career, with about equal measures of wins and losses lessons, I realise that success is simply a matter of perspective and input. Perspective defines the definition and limitations we place on our dreams, while input describes the work we put in to build from said perspective. Charity begins at home, and so does innovation. Sometimes, the greatness we seek is within reach, and we only need to look more simply. For instance, in your quest to become an internationally acclaimed anything, have you tried starting locally? Being a person of bold visions and persistent efforts, I have seen some mountains move, including this publication. And one thing I can confidently tell you is that success is more assured with home advantage.

This edition of Digital Edge magazine brings the concept of innovation down to earth. In it, we deconstruct the highfaluting perspective of technology and present multiple dimensions of innovative solution development from ideation to execution and, eventually, presentation. We have also included interview features with relatable figures from around the industry. We hope some of our readers who are already well-established as successful business leaders find their journey reflected and that those still underway would see a future they can attain.

All the best in your innovation journey.

Editorial Team

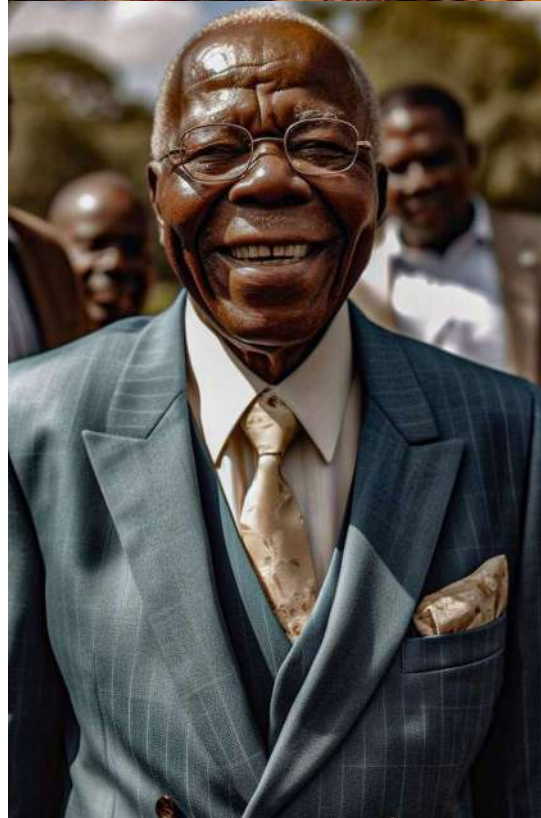
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Rediscovering African Culture & Reimagining Seniors Citizens through AI

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Once a mere concept of speculation, AI has emerged as an omnipresent force, revolutionising industries and automating our regular lives. Similarly, AR has shattered barriers, blending virtual and physical worlds to provide awe-inspiring experiences.

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Behind the Cover

Art by
Adepoju Emmanuel

To commemorate the explosion of technological growth in the African ecosystem, DE reached out to the captains and minds behind this movement.

These discussions helped us understand where the Continent is now, and the tools and dedication needed for greater expansion.

This is what fueled the imagery of a Futuristic Urban African Society brought to life in our cover.

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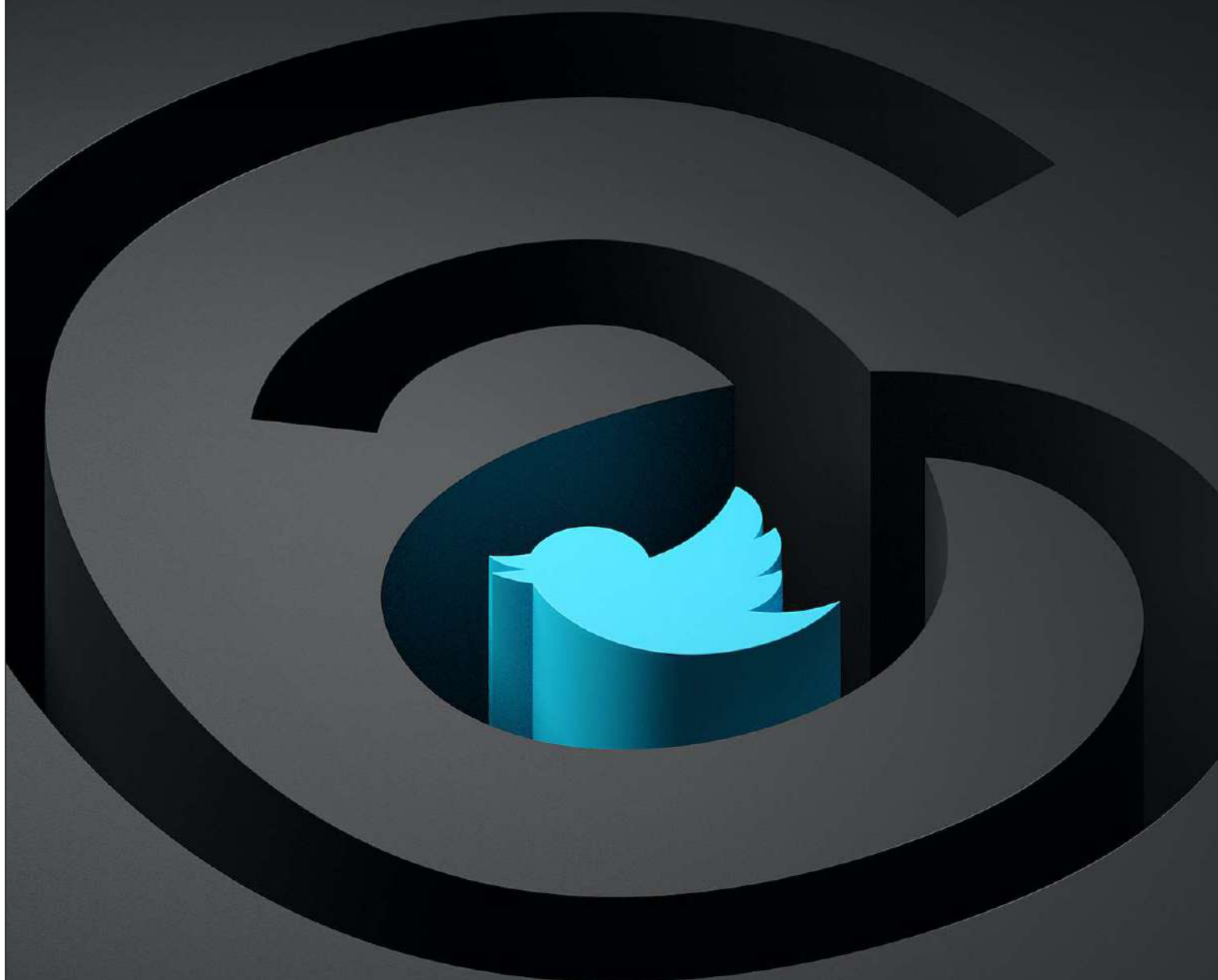
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IS TWITTER HANGING BY A THREAD?

“Let's do this. Welcome to Threads🔥”



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For months, maybe years, Twitter has weathered numerous setbacks ranging from mass layoffs and feature malfunctions to rumours of soon-to-launch clone apps and top advertisers churn, but the quoted words of Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg above, announcing the launch of Threads, Twitter's latest rival app, may very well bring the latter to its knees.

Following its global release (excluding Europe) on July 6, Threads raked in an unprecedented 100 million+ users within five days from mostly organic demand, as Mark threaded on July 9. He also mentioned that Meta has not "even turned on many promotions yet".

This historic feat has spotlighted Twitter, raising questions about its future and ability to stem the tide of its declining user base. Although reports of a user crunch have been around for a while, owing mainly to the app's controversial updates since the Elon Musk era, the ultimate fall

from grace can be primarily attributed to Meta's new venture. With Twitter's ongoing crisis, many seem to believe Threads could be Meta's big break at pulling a David in the race for Twittersphere.

Multiple webmaster analysts reported a significant decline in Twitter's user base just a few days after Meta launched Threads, in addition to the mass migration of anti-Twitter users and other digital consumerists. On July 10, Cloudflare's CEO Matthew Prince shared a chart on Threads that confirmed what we already knew was happening; Twitter's slow and steady fall. In his words, 'Twitter traffic tanking'.

Similarly, Similarweb's Senior Insights Manager, David Carrat, reported on July 9 that, "In the first two full days that Threads was generally available, Thursday and Friday, web traffic to twitter.com was down 5% compared with the same days of the previous week."

"We've been reporting for a while that Twitter is down compared with last year – June traffic was down 4% – but Threads seems to be taking a bigger bite out of it," he blogged.

Since it appears to have struck gold by becoming the fastest-growing social media network and the poster app for how to sell great tech products, the question now on all our lips is: 'How is it that Threads, a new text conversation app with incredibly minimalist and bare-bone features has managed to amass 25%, and counting, of its behemoth competitor, Twitter?'

First, Threads owes much of its rapid growth to Meta's strategic use of Instagram as a launchpad. Interested users must only download and sync the former to the latter. And the best part is, unlike other social platforms, Threaders (hmm, someone needs to come up with a catchier name) do not have to build followership from scratch, as the app offers an option to reconnect with their existing Instagram followers.

Another major driving force for Threads' instant popularity is a silent but hard-to-deny factor – Meta has seller credibility. Their products are tried, even if not entirely trusted. They run four billion-plus-user platforms across Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, and Instagram, all of

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In the first two full days that Threads was generally available, Thursday and Friday, web traffic to twitter.com was down 5% compared with the same days of the previous week.

”

which are giants in their respective social network niches. For Threads, that is four billion+ potential considerations should Meta thread their other social networks as they have with Instagram!

Of course, there is also the apparent fact that Meta understands social (much more than Elon-led X Corp) and knows how to compete. They know how to scale and generate revenue from advertising-led social networks and how to build – or, let's face it – buy successful platforms. For one, while it is true that not every one of their clone apps, like IGTV versus YouTube, IG Reels versus TikTok or IG Story versus Snapchat, has successfully overthrown the competition, it is also true that these ventures get instant buy-in.

However, one key strategy Meta hopes to deploy against Twitter is to branch off the latter's core content focus on politics and hard news. To differentiate Threads, Zuckerberg and the Head of Instagram, Adam Mosseri, have emphasised the app's aim of tapping into audiences beyond Twitter's traditional user base.

“The goal isn't to replace Twitter. The goal is to create a public square for communities on Instagram that never really embraced Twitter and for communities on Twitter (and other platforms) that are interested in a less angry place for conversations,” Mosseri threaded.

And when a user (@alexheath) probed about content moderation, he responded, “Politics and hard news are important, I don't want to imply otherwise. But my take is, from a platform's perspective, any incremental engagement or revenue they might drive is not at all worth the scrutiny, negativity (let's be honest), or integrity risks that come along with them.” “There are more than enough



amazing communities – sports, music, fashion, beauty, entertainment, etc – to make a vibrant platform without needing to get into politics or hard news,” he noted in the same post,

The above implies that Threads is not only looking to attract Twitter's original user base but also aiming to broaden the conversation. If Threads can blend both worlds, Twittersphere and Instagramsphere, through content and design, there may be little anyone can do to prevent the imminent fall of Twitter.

Moreover, it's more than the tech and conversations driving users away from Twitter. Since Musk's takeover in 2022, the controversial billionaire has implemented several unpopular changes at Twitter, including; mass layoffs, feature monetisation (Twitter Blue, TweetDeck, edit button & longer-form tweets), withdrawal of verification badges from legacy accounts, and most recently, setting tweet-view limits.

On the other hand, it hasn't been all nirvana for Threads either, considering the heralded Johnny-come-lately is missing dozens of features users have hitherto enjoyed. Without functionalities like direct messaging, trending topics, following-only feed, post search, edit button, quoted tweets, the super app functionality of Twitter, and, perhaps my favourite of all, a desktop interface, Thread's usability is basic. Nonetheless, we must trust in Zuckerberg's promise of more features. Only no one knows how soon.

Feature upgrades are not the only thing Meta and Zuckerberg need to look out for with their latest product. In what might be an acknowledgement of competition, Twitter has threatened a lawsuit against Meta, accusing it of trade secret theft by employing former Twitter staff, an accusation Meta dismissed through spokesperson Andy Stone.

“No one on the Threads engineering team is a former Twitter employee — that's just not a thing,” he threaded. (Seriously, there's got to be a catchier term!)



Regardless of how Meta's team achieved it, Threads seems designed to conveniently rival Twitter in influence and profitability. Considering its current organic growth trajectory, planned launch in Europe and upcoming feature upgrades, as well as the potential impact of paid promotions and cross-promotion across other Meta platforms, Threads may well be on track to reach a historic 200 million daily active users within the next two years, a feat Twitter could only achieve after five years.

It is also poised to rake in enough revenue, mainly from advertising, to rival Twitter. Bloomberg projects that Threads could contribute around \$8 billion in annual revenue to Meta by 2025. Where would all this money come from? One thing Zuckerberg has mastered is the art of selling tech and providing attractive RoI to big-buck advertisers. In 2022 alone, Facebook's total ad revenue reached \$113 billion. And because Facebook's audience network drives tons of value and income for global brands and advertisers – more than any other platform, incorporating Threads, with its audience niche, will likely skyrocket Meta's potential RoI.

For now, Threads has emerged as a formidable challenger to Twitter's reign, rapidly gaining hundreds of millions of users and sending shockwaves through the social media verse. A progressive decline in traffic, combined with superior user onboarding and engagement on Threads, has left Twitter hanging by a thread. As the battle for social media supremacy and tech dollars unfolds, the future of Twitter hangs in the balance, and only time can tell if its purchasable blue check verification model will catapult it to new heights. Until then, Threads will remain our shiny new toy!

DOUBLE TAKE:

Rediscovering African Culture & Reimagining Seniors Citizens through AI



To be or not to be – that is the question on the lips of the art world since the public introduction of AI-generated works.

They have given birth to some extreme views and everything in between; while some are mesmerised by machine competencies and curious about further possibilities, others are afraid that this is only another step towards a tragic end where AI kills everybody and takes over the world. Amidst the controversy, Nigerian filmmaker and artist Malik Afegbua is making a name for himself and influencing world views and social actions. His digital art collection, Fashion Show for Seniors, has attracted global media acclaim,

including praise from Oscar-winning costume designer Ruth Carter, famous for her work with Marvel Studios.

In this interview, Malik takes DE on a creative journey through his thoughts and art portfolio.

DE: How did this all start for you?
Malik: I have always tilted towards the creative side. I set up my first business in the dorms while studying in the UK – a clothing line that sold hoodies to students in and out of my campus and at bars. Then

I moved back to Nigeria in 2010, and by 2011 was struggling to adjust to a new environment and different economic realities. I had to change strategies and consider new directions to channel my creativity profitably. Fortunately, I got gifted a Canon 5d Mac 2 camera around the time, marking a career pivot. It birthed a new curiosity about the impact of storytelling and how it shapes the world.

DE: When in the AI evolution did this idea seem feasible?
Malik: I am a film director and run a production company where we shoot films, TV commercials and other visual media requiring creative innovation. About six



years ago, I started experimenting with Virtual Reality (VR) to enhance our productions and tell massive stories. Besides, I am an avid fan of sci-fi films, and their futuristic perspective inspired me to explore the same for our local productions. So I went to banks, schools, and even Google to garner support, but most people didn't see it and were reluctant to invest in the vision. By 2020, VR had become pop culture and a safer investment, but I had moved on to Augmented Reality (AR). I started working with AI about two years ago before its mainstream adoption. And that's how I stay ahead, by proactively searching out the next tech. I ask myself, what is the next innovation? What will appeal to the world in the next three

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DE: What comes first for you – The art or the tech?

Malik: I'd have to say, Art. Because art, to me, is storytelling, and storytelling is life. Without it, nothing exists. The tech is just to enhance art, to bring it to life. The

general living experience, like conversations, can be expressed through technology – through film, media, visual art or even AI. No matter how it's told, the human story is art.

DE: As someone who straddles the intersection between art & technology, do you consider AI-generated work a sustainable art form?

Malik: It is. Although we are still trying to find the best ways to maximise its use, the more we understand AI technology, the more sustainable it will get. And considering how much acceptance it is garnering, with massive investments from major industries, we will have adequate resources to standardise the AI industry. As a film director, I shot my last commercial for American Express in December of last year. I have only done a little work in the traditional film space



Malik Afegbua is a Nigerian born and based contemporary artist, virtual reality curator, and film director. Malik is a culture architect who strongly believes in harnessing the enormous power of storytelling to shift mindsets and evoke emotions, regardless of the medium of expression. He is a Bachelor of Arts graduate from the University of Surrey, London, and the Lead Visioner and Chief Executive Officer of Slickcity Media, a full-fledged innovative media production company with expertise across the entire media value chain.



since I started with AI because I have been working with major corporations like IBM, Marvel Studios & Cadbury. That tells me that the future always looks towards tech, and no matter how much you fight it, tech always wins. Eventually, it will be more sustainable for everybody.

DE: Many artists are wary of the fast-growing acceptance of AI-generated content; some even appear threatened by it... What are your thoughts on this? Does AI pose a threat to the craft & livelihood of "real-life" artists?

Malik: I believe if these artists truly understood the potential value of AI technology, they would regard it more as an ally than a threat. AI is not a replacement for human skill; instead, it is a tool, an enhancement tool. Like a remote control for your AC/TV or Photoshop to airbrush your pictures – these all work with AI on a less sophisticated scale. We need to learn the mechanics so that we can control its use. AI has been around for a while but is now more accessible to the public through relatable solutions. A writer can now easily access AI software to help with their work; you could have a mental block and use that to get an outline. Generally, artists can activate their imagination and get inspired through AI. Just yesterday, I created a video with pictures from my Elder's Fashion concept, and they're now moving like real people. And it's all human imagination channelled with the aid of AI. So I'd say we look to the positive, which outweighs the negative.

DE: Does AI improve the chances of profitability for creative artists?

Malik: Definitely. Some companies have approached me simply because they knew I could

help reduce their project timelines. Everything can be faster and of better quality due to automation and enhanced imagination. For example, while working with Marvel Studios on a film recently, I learned that it typically takes six weeks and six Illustrators to achieve what two of us did in three days. I can't say much because of NDAs, but we did the film's entire costume & art direction. Artists who understand the usefulness of AI will be able to offer more value and thereby see more profit.

DE: What real impacts can AI have on human society regarding socio-economic development?

Malik: A lot of things. For instance, the Elder Fashion concept was initially an aspirational project designed to inspire, delight and advocate for a marginalised group. As a result, we now have a real fashion show in Amsterdam with human models and attendance by a global audience. Now imagine what we can achieve on a large scale – changing social perception, rebuilding lost histories & reestablishing cultures through AI reimaginings. Africa has lost so much of its history and culture to factors like war, natural disasters & colonisation, and we can use AI tools to regenerate some of that. And, of course, such art & culture projects can significantly boost our economy through tourism.

DE: Do you foresee a happy ending with AI, or will it all end in tears?

Malik: I don't think it will end like a typical sci-fi film, with some Terminator-like character or the end of the world kind of story. At worst, we may have some bad (human) eggs who choose to deploy advanced tech for unethical purposes. But that's more of a human problem than



an AI one, and humans will find a way with or without AI. Ethics and regulations are user-dependent, so if anything, we should be more scared of ourselves than the machines. Still, I am optimistic that it won't end in tears.

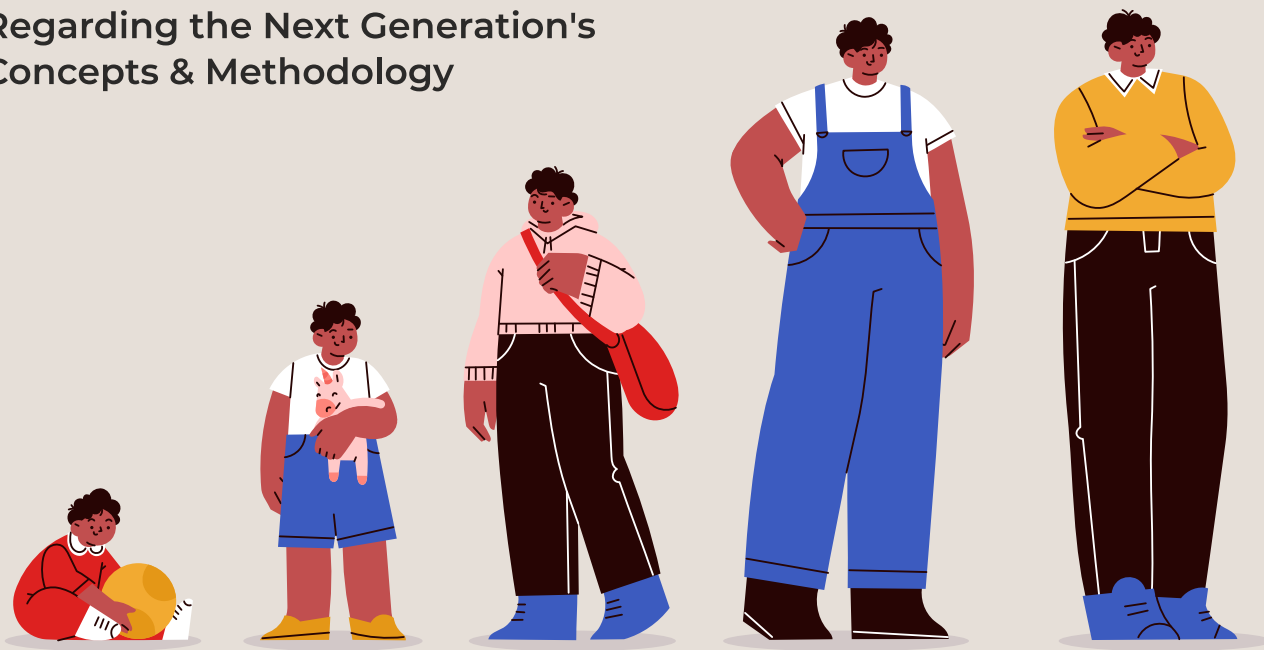
DE: Is Nigeria ready for AI?

Malik: Nigeria is ready for anything! We are special people – smart and intelligent, regardless of what others might say or think. Just look at how much we're trying domestically without sophisticated means and little governmental support. Besides, everywhere you go in the world, there's bound to be a Nigerian making waves with one thing or the other. So yes, once we find our way around understanding how AI can potentially develop our society, we can begin to consider mass adoption and localised innovation.



The Young Have Grown:

Regarding the Next Generation's Concepts & Methodology



Despite frustrating economic circumstances, there is no denying the abundance of potential markets in Nigeria. Innovation Strategist & author of “The Venture Matrix for the Future of Africa (Gameplan)”, **Toyin Bamidele**, champions Africa's transition to a digital economy within the current decade, firmly believing that the next frontier for economic prosperity would come from undergraduate communities. Toyin has gained a unique perspective through his career foray across different industry segments, from leading growth and partnership at an Ed-tech start-up to designing programmes for Venture

platforms and coordinating the Nigerian Start-up Bill, leading engagement and adoption liaison across states. He currently works as the Digital Innovation Officer of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). He is one of the maiden fellows of the Young African Catalyst Venture Capital Programme and the inaugural recipient of the rising star fellow award.

Toyin is a man on a mission, and he gets on the drawing table with Digital Edge (DE) to explore next-gen outlooks on creating and deploying tech solutions from & for Africa.

DE: How did you make the leap from being a university-trained psychologist to heralding the

adoption of the digital economy through the African tech ecosystem?

Toyin: It wasn't such a leap for me, really, because my undergraduate years as a Psychology major introduced me to complexities that technology now enables me to solve. I attended a great institution, but my education seemed incomplete since the school system didn't account for the technological changes outside of it. It didn't make sense to me that even though platforms like YouTube and Udemy have decentralised knowledge acquisition, I still had to attend overpopulated classes & participate in a pedantic curriculum with little real-life value. So I found a community

that gave me a platform to rewrite my learning story and express my disruptive nature. Also, I was lucky enough to ask myself the right questions; rather than asking 'what I wanted to become in the future', I considered persistent local problems I could invest part of my life resolving. Such contemplation led me to the paradox of Africa – for instance, how Nigeria, although boasting abundant human and natural resources, overtook India to become the poorest country in the world in 2018. My mission is to contribute towards engaging the flexibility of the digital economy to close that gap, if not entirely but significantly.

DE: What exactly does an “Innovation Strategist” do?
 Toyin: *On a broad scale, an innovation strategist is one who can objectively project the impacts of a changing system and help maximise that reality for profitable outcomes. I contextualise my innovation strategy around three concepts: driving digital transformation, promoting inclusive growth & development, and exploiting the digital economy to create more prosperity. To achieve these, I design and facilitate the implementation of programmes that promote digital entrepreneurship. I've also contributed to policy initiatives to ensure legislative support and continue to enable stakeholder conversations within the*

ecosystem.

DE: Let's talk about your book, “The Venture Matrix for the Future of Africa (Gameplan)”, where you proposed a 7-phase infrastructure to create an inclusive & sustainable prosperity template for Africa... Please give an elevator pitch of your concept and how readers can apply it profitably.
 Toyin: *In a nutshell, my book proposes a new narrative about how ambitious young people in university communities can champion Africa's prosperity by creating solutions to local problems. For instance, what if we can incentivise a Precious in Yabatech to create a solution for issues in Yaba or someone else in Lautech to solve problems relative to Ogbomoso? Imagine not 'needing' to be in Lagos or any other “silicone valley” to build the next unicorn! Gameplan describes a roadmap for a new generation of social entrepreneurs who will trigger profit by creating relatable solutions in their immediate communities.*

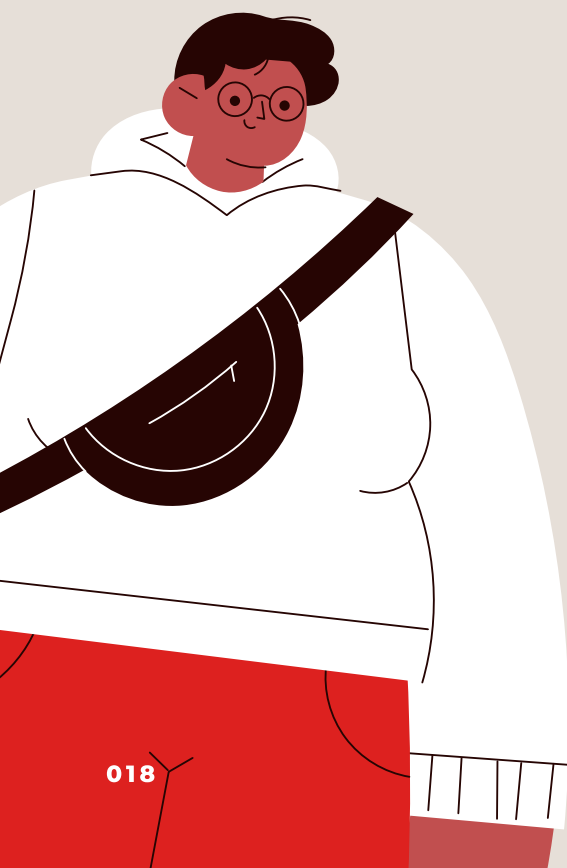
DE: In your opinion, what makes a product viable, and why do some products, like Microsoft Zune, fail despite having a solid parent brand and presumable access to resources?

Toyin: *Failure is complex, and I don't think anyone can claim to understand its dynamics fully. Still, I'll highlight four tips for product success using the Zune vs iPhone context. Firstly, correctly define your*

product. Zune overlooked an exciting innovation in their technology; they had created a system for the social discovery of music, trailblazing a path for products like Shazam & Spotify. Secondly, play to your audience. Apple learned about their customers, and the insight influenced their marketing. Remember their ad – “Here's to the Crazy Ones”? They derived a unique market, different from the regular user who just wanted to buy electronics. They appeal to the creators, disruptors – to the crazy ones. Thirdly, compete with strategy. Zune – and this is my perspective – did not seem to understand the prevailing market values of its time. They came five or six years after Apple released the iPod, a product that introduced a new experience for consuming musical content. For a competitor, the strategy should focus on the “experience”, not the product. And that's where Zune got it wrong; they simply created another product with no updated experience. In summary, to build a viable product, one must look out for one's Product, the Market and its Competition.

DE: All eyes have been on Nigeria as a profitable resource for the tech evolution, with quite a number of our tech talent, from copywriters to product developers, having transcended into global markets; is this good news or bad news for Nigeria?

Toyin: I'd instead take a non-binary approach to this consideration. I don't think it's a good or bad thing. There are just advantages and disadvantages, as with most things in life. On the upside, we have the validation of our local resources. Secondly, this "japa" phenomenon reveals a viable value stream for Nigeria and Nigerians. After spending most of our independent years selling oil, we can now export skills/talents, a more relevant commodity in today's age. Thirdly, we gain what I call cultural diffusion; having more of our people go out there and experience new cultures will expand our local reality. Conversely, a significant challenge for talent emigration is that our society doesn't seem to have a consolidated approach to solving our human capacity development problems. And I hope we get it this decade; otherwise, it will cost us another 20 to 30 years. As a nation, we need a more precise plan for developing more local



talent and incentivising those in the diaspora to invest their experience and knowledge back home.

DE: Some say that the startup culture has degenerated into a toxic work culture that essentially puts profit before people. Do you agree with this? (Follow-up Question: How can it be helped?) Toyin: Without undermining other people's reality, I think this is a very subjective issue. There are stories about toxic workplaces; valid as they may be, they are not the total representation of the ecosystem. It may be unfair to make that the sole narrative when so much good is being done. We need to find a balance. In any case, toxic work culture is a byproduct of deeper socio-economic issues. When you have a double-inflation economy without adequate support for entrepreneurs, a cannibalistic environment emerges, where people have to survive at any cost, it is like a bucket of crabs. But with fair advantages and economic opportunities, the average citizen has hope of a reward for their effort, and toxicity would no longer be the norm. Following this, we can implement accountability measures to check anomalies, like how the media – Tech Cabal and co – recently exposed some defaulters. Consequence becomes easier to execute when the business environment doesn't incentivise greed and foster cannibalism.

DE: Still on your industry contribution, what is The Nigerian Startup Bill, and what is the implication for young tech founders and their products in Nigeria?

Toyin: The Nigerian Startup Act is a

revolutionary legislation that can position Nigeria as an innovation hub for economic advancement in Africa. It offers an engagement platform through which the public and private sectors can procreate legislation that enables young entrepreneurs and the economy, in general, to thrive using technology. The Act offers three exciting solutions for founders: Representation, Incentivisation, and Legislative Protection. Where once, our legislative framework had no industry representation, we now have a law that accounts for a start-up/founder's existence within our constitution. Second, the Nigerian Start-up Act incentivises digital entrepreneurship – with legal backing comes the confidence of purpose. And to top it off, founders now have legislative protection and can offer the same to their investors.

DE: What is the most essential element in the tech founder journey?

Toyin: Every founder's journey is unique, and advice needs to be relative. For instance, a difference exists between being a founder in Nigeria and anywhere else. The former entails building within a dysfunctional market. Nevertheless, the one vital ingredient for any founder is not to do it alone; find a community. For example, my work at Consonance Club provides early-stage support to founders, including access to learning resources. Participate in incubators – even if you don't win – just to be part of a network. Because it's a crazy journey, and doing it alone might just drive you over the edge. But in the company of other crazy people, maybe you can redefine sanity.

INDUSTRY WATCH: TOP 5 TECH TRENDS SHAPING 2023





So far, this year has unveiled rapid advancements in tech from Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Augmented Reality (AR). Once a mere concept of speculation, AI has emerged as an omnipresent force, revolutionising industries and automating our regular lives. Similarly, AR has shattered barriers, blending virtual and physical worlds to provide awe-inspiring experiences.

These technological breakthroughs have captured the collective imagination and sparked critical discourse. Yet, amidst the buzz and excitement, a crucial question looms: are these trends to become cornerstones in our future, or are they mere novelties destined to fade away soon?

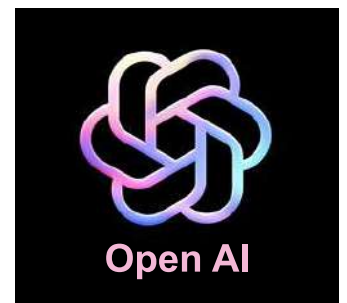
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI): FRIEND OR FOE



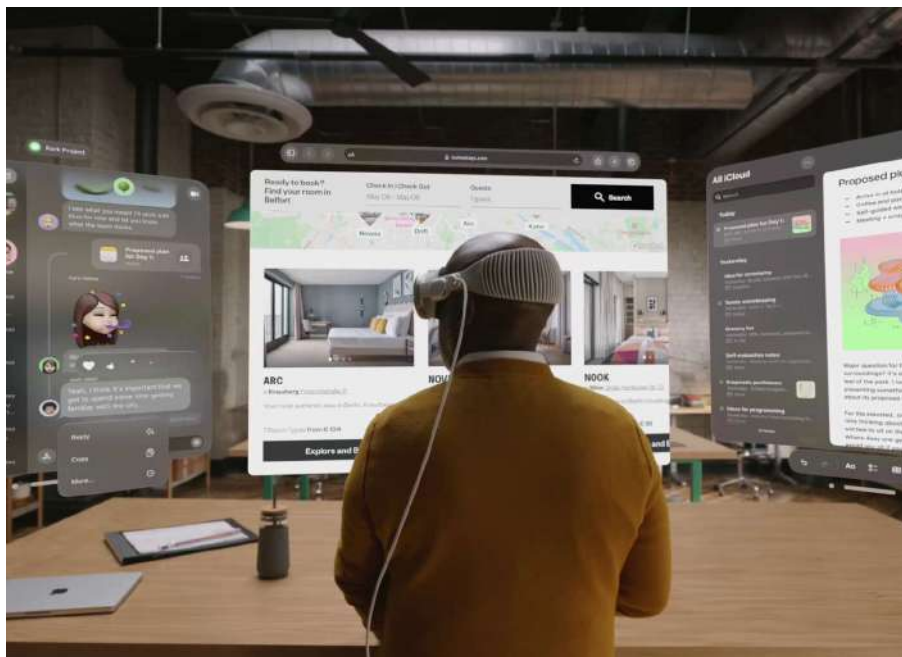
The growth of artificial intelligence (AI) has been extraordinary in recent years, with a 2.5x increase in adoption rate since 2017. AI-powered smart assistants like Siri & Alexa have become integral to daily living. These intelligent companions have transformed how we interact with technology and our environment. Besides, approximately 50% of organisations have integrated it into business operations, demonstrating its pervasive influence.

AI technology is gaining ground across industries, including; finance, healthcare, manufacturing, etc. It is no longer limited to large enterprises but has become democratised through accessible open-source solutions, cost reductions, and streamlined systems. Open AI, an innovative AI research laboratory, is a prominent exemplar of this trend. In addition to its astonishing \$29 billion valuation, experts project the company will achieve a remarkable \$1 billion in revenue by 2024.

Furthermore, AI is useful for optimising business operations. This technology enables rapid and efficient customer support and facilitates the creation of targeted content that resonates with the audience, saving valuable time and resources. For instance, customer service representatives can respond instantly to inquiries, and teams can generate personalised marketing and educational content without relying on copywriters.



OpenAI is a private research laboratory that aims to develop and direct artificial intelligence (AI) in ways that benefit humanity as a whole. The company was founded by Elon Musk, Sam Altman and others in 2015 and is headquartered in San Francisco.



AUGMENTED REALITY (AR): ENHANCING OUR REALITY

The applications of augmented reality (AR) are vast and diverse, spanning industries from gaming and education to home design. Its technology has unlocked boundless possibilities, captivating imaginations and fostering innovation on a grand scale.

"You can see, hear, and act with digital content just like it's in your physical space. You're no longer limited by a display." -Apple CEO Tim Cook said during the Unveiling of its Apple Vision Pro.

Big tech players like Apple, Meta, and Microsoft have since dived in. Apple's CEO, Tim Cook, believes AR will change our lives, and his company recently hit a pivotal milestone with its ARKit platform deployed via iOS 11. Apple has also announced the impending arrival of their long-awaited mixed-reality headset, set to become available in 2024.

The accessibility of AR-powered glasses has allowed users to integrate digital content into their real-world experiences. According to a Bloomberg report, Apple had initially slated the launch of its highly anticipated AR glasses for 2023. However, they've postponed the release until 2025 due to unforeseen circumstances.

5G REVOLUTION: FAST AND FURIOUS CONNECTIVITY

5G revolutionises communication by enabling the expansion of other technologies through three key factors: speed, latency, and high capacity.

Firstly, 5G delivers impressive download speeds of up to 10 gigabytes per second, facilitating the rapid transmission of large data volumes. Secondly, it significantly reduces latency, ensuring nearly instant

response times for data transmissions. Such speed is crucial for web browsing and real-time communication between devices. Thirdly, 5G caters to the increasing demand for connectivity by offering high capacity and concurrency.

With the growing number of connected devices and sensors, 5G can support up to one million connected devices per square kilometre, accommodating the vast amount of data they generate. That this exists first, especially as early as 2023, is mind-blowing to many tech enthusiasts.





CRYPTOCURRENCY: STILL THE FUTURE OF FINANCE?

Cryptocurrencies have gained significant attention in recent years. The surge in popularity is fueled by the distinct concept of the platform, providing a fully decentralised metaphorical betting experience where users can “assume the role of the house and establish their odds”.

Evaluations of the cryptocurrency market are highly volatile due to influences from market demand, regulatory changes, and technological advancements. Regardless, Chancer Coin, a cryptocurrency launched for presale on June 13, 2023, has raised \$750,000 in just four weeks.

Regulations and government attitudes towards cryptocurrencies vary in different countries, impacting their adoption and use. Yet, it has been over fourteen years since Bitcoin, the first cryptocurrency, was introduced, and the buzz remains..



INTERNET OF THINGS (IOT): A CONNECTED LIFESTYLE

The Internet of Things (IoT) shapes our daily lives and professional endeavours by integrating intelligent machines, monitoring capabilities, and widespread connectivity across consumer, commercial, and civic domains. Smart homes with voice-activated lights and thermostats, wearable devices tracking our health, and cities implementing smart infrastructure have all become part of the IoT revolution.

According to IoT Analytics' May 2023 report, global IoT connections experienced an 18% growth in 2022, reaching 14.3 billion active endpoints. Anticipating further expansion, IoT Analytics predicts another 16% increase in the global number of connected IoT devices in 2023, projecting 16.7 billion active endpoints. The Internet of Things (IoT) will continue connecting our devices, homes, and cities.

CONCLUSION

Navigating the complexities of the trends and innovations that shape our digital world is no joke! Each of the examined trends has garnered praise and criticism alike. Now, it is up to you, the readers, to determine the most crucial for you. Which tech trends have enhanced your daily routines? Conversely, which ones have fallen short of their promises, leaving you unimpressed and ready to move on?



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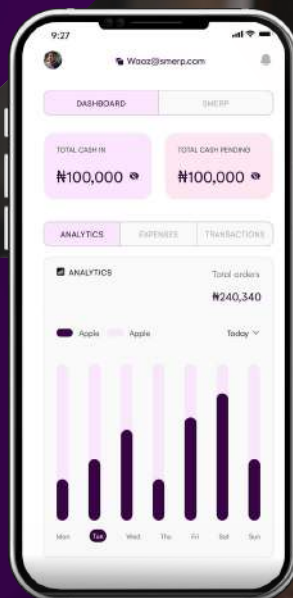
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Adewale Adeyipo

Group Managing Director /
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STARTING IN RETROSPECT

5 Things I Wish I Knew Before Becoming CEO

A leader must strategically combine soft and hard skills to satisfy all stakeholders. A newly appointed CEO may step into the role feeling confident about their abilities; after all, they must have done well enough to earn the promotion. Still, most will admit later admit to being overwhelmed at some point.

When I started, there were many things I didn't know and had to learn. Here are five leadership lessons from my experience; I hope they buy you some time and help to optimise your journey.

You May Not Get It Right the First Time.

"Mistakes are portals of discovery." - **James Joyce.**

The truth is, no one is ever truly ready to be a leader. One grows into the role. No matter the level of preparedness, you'll undoubtedly make mistakes. Tough to accept, maybe, mainly because it is counterintuitive and because the higher you go, the more expensive your mistakes can be. Still, they are unavoidable, especially if you're pushing limits as you must! My advice is, be transparent and own your mistakes. Don't be afraid to admit what you don't know or ask for help.

You Need People

*"Great things in business are never done by one person.
They're done by a team of people."* - **Steve Jobs.**

No matter how noble your vision is, the outcome's success depends a lot on other people. You need people to buy into your dream as part of the execution or to accept the output. Don't underestimate anyone, no matter how they appear. Be open to different perspectives. Remember, whatever you're building is first for others — as a team lead, putting your personal preference before the corporate goal is in poor taste. You can't possibly have all the skills required to build your venture. Although he may have envisioned and facilitated the execution, Elon Must did not single-handedly make Space X. Like a new mum protective of her little bundle of joy, you must learn to let go.

Don't Undermine Your Role

"Your role as a leader is even more important than you might imagine. You have the power to help people become leaders." - **Ken Blanchard.**

Be consistent in character & value. The truth is, as a leader, you're held responsible for everything. You are no longer just your own man but a man of the people. It's why the president of a nation, essentially its CEO, would be named in addressing issues in any aspect of society. A leader must envision value, mobilise players, monitor executions and ultimately deliver results! To paraphrase Peter Drucker, a CEO is the link between the outside and the inside. It is a heavy mantle to wear.

It's Lonely at the Top

"All great and precious things are lonely." - **John Steinbeck.**

Everyone is counting on you as a leader, often leaving you needing someone to rely on. You have to learn to encourage yourself and move on your own steam.

And because leadership also comes with authority which might be tempting to explore, you must have internal & external checks in place to avoid a descent into tyranny. It is essential to cultivate an environment where your team feels safe to share positive & negative feedback. Be accountable.

The higher you go, the harder it is to get unbiased insight about yourself and the world around you, so if you find loyal people who can also maintain their autonomy of perspective, keep them!

No Guts, No Glory

"The price of success must be paid in full, in advance."

You can be anything you want if you fulfil the requirements. Nothing is free in life; even if you get an opportunity on a platter of gold, someone somewhere probably paid for it. The road to glory is gory. It will be challenging, but you will win if you believe. Breathe, you'll survive. Pay the total price of becoming; it's worth every dime.

Dear Leader,

One key ingredient of success, in my experience, is hope; against all odds, hope. You may risk appearing like a fool to others in your passion or even failing despite your conviction; still, I charge you, in the words of Simon Sinek, "take the risk of optimism."



Adewale Adeyipo

Group Managing Director /
Chief Executive Officer, CWG



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Are We There Yet?

How Far is Too Far for a Technology-Driven Reality?

History is rife with underestimations – and often in its projection of the future. One of the most popular and somewhat comical is American astronomer Clifford Stoll's prediction that the internet wouldn't last. In 1995, Stoll described the internet as a fad in an article he wrote for Newsweek magazine. He argued, among other things, that the Internet could not replace traditional communication, touting the advantages of human contact.

The titular enquiry is in and of itself interesting because, on some level, it suggests that we're not already 'there'. However, even a cursory consideration of modern society will reveal, perhaps alarmingly, a near-complete dependence on technology. Case in point, when, since we all got smartphones, was the last time anyone had to memorise a phone number or a house/email address? How about the fact that two people on opposite sides of the globe can communicate in real-time, or that, barring cost and other human factors, one can land at Heathrow from Lagos by noon and still make it back before bedtime? While these may seem like primary use cases for technology, the fact only proves the point.

And such was the vision that spurred philosopher Marshall McLuhan when he coined the term "Global Village" in 1964 to describe much of what he thought the world would become – essentially what it is now. Still, there are questions.





Technology Makes Everything Better, Or Does It?

Technology has made everything better. First, its impact on human quality of life, mainly through medicine, cannot be overstated. According to UN data, the global average life expectancy is 73 years in 2023, up more than 53% from 47.6 years in 1960! Although scientists attribute this spike to several factors, there is a consensus that technology is one of them.

Healthcare professionals have become equipped for proactive & innovative practice. Early discovery of cancers, especially before metastasis, is estimated to prevent up to 32% of deaths within ten years of patients' diagnosis. These days, even routine checkups using high-tech devices can expose potentially fatal diseases, including; cardiovascular, neurological, metabolic, and mental health-related issues. Moreover, the advent of Telemedicine is helping to provide patients with flexible care options.

The evolution of modern work culture & social communications can mark another milestone. Since the COVID-19 lockdowns, there has been a significant increase in remote & hybrid jobs. These jobs have pumped the mass adoption of virtual communications tools ranging from the simple functionalities of WhatsApp to more complex collaborative tools like Zoom, Google Meet, Trello, Mural, etc.

Then there is Blockchain, one of modern technology's most exciting & versatile discoveries. The Blockchain is a digital network that securely stores data in blocks and links them to distribute information. This model is the bedrock of several other advancements, including supply chain management, intellectual property protection, decentralised file storage, and cryptocurrency.



The above are only a few of the dividends of a tech-driven society. Indeed, every sphere of modern life has gained some way from the research & development associated with the digital revolution. Or has it?

Let's Blame Technology for Everything

One major downside of modern digital strides, only apparent to some, is the widening gap between the upper and lower classes. A close examination of tech evolution reveals an uncomfortable notion – that the progressive mechanisation of our global society is partly responsible for socioeconomic inequality.

The Third Industrial Revolution, also known as the Digital Revolution, was accompanied by novel inventions, a great deal of which depended significantly on high-speed internet. And while many enjoyed the upgrade and all the exciting trappings of frontier technologies, others who couldn't access reliable broadband were left behind.

Similarly, The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), where the world currently is, brings an unmatched level of automation into nearly every aspect of human life, including work and leisure. Expert projections now depend on advanced methods like machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI). And although AI is great for efficient living, it unfortunately reduces the need for human effort. According to a report from outplacement company Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc., 3,900 people lost their jobs to AI in May 2023. The report also revealed that 2023 has the lowest hiring rate between January and May since 2016.

Tech Is Still Too Expensive

In the end, what appears to some as the dividends of a digital utopia may largely exclude people in underserved communities. This exclusion may occur because the access and education required to harness evolving tech properly is still too expensive for many. As of 2019, Johanna Drucker, a professor of Digital Humanities at the University of California's Department of Information Studies, maintained a relatively grim outlook on the future of digital life:

"There may be huge improvements in some people's lives and negative impacts for many, many more - pollution, toxins from waste generated by electronic media, deregulation of labour conditions for workers in high-tech industries, deterioration of support systems and social infrastructure and so on," She noted.

Still, the emerging Fifth Industrial Revolution could generate a more inclusive adoption programme under proper policy applications. Suppose the ecosystem can provide widespread access to robust ICT infrastructures and the required skills and technical knowledge to identify and use tech. In that case, there may be hope for the masses after all.

Where is the Line?

Any further dive into a tech-driven reality would have to rely deeply on AI, a reality experts have expressed wariness about. Years ago, renowned theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking told the BBC that full artificial intelligence could end the human race. Hawking

believed that once AI reaches a certain point, it would re-design itself at a rate much faster than biological evolution, meaning that AI could potentially supersede humans.

Another glum forecast came from Alan Turing, the acclaimed father of modern computer science, who posed that artificial intelligence would not take long to "outstrip our feeble powers." Turing predicted that machines would converse with each other, sharpen their wits, and eventually take control.

In an interview with CNBC, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella expressed concern that the only way to mitigate the dangers of AI while maximising its opportunities is for the entire society to come together. A tall order for the human race, indeed! Likewise, Elon Musk commented on the potential damage AI can cause. Despite being one of the founders of OpenAI, Musk described AI as an "immortal dictator".

"AI doesn't have to be evil to destroy humanity - if AI has a goal and humanity just happens to come in the way, it will destroy humanity as a matter of course without even thinking about it, no hard feelings", he observed

A global race has now commenced to monitor the development, application, and adoption of artificial intelligence. For instance, the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) is creating regulations for generative AI companies. In addition to several guidelines initially announced in April 2023, China wants AI companies to

obtain licences before releasing generative tools.

Relatedly, European Union (EU) Parliament has also passed an AI draft to regulate development within its territories. The act requires that all AI-generated content is appropriately labelled. It also restricts law enforcement from using technology to predict criminal behaviour. Furthermore, Parliament would remain ready to scrutinise any other high-risk use cases.

As we drive further into a tech-driven reality, lawmakers worldwide will seek regulation to mitigate emerging technologies' potential dangers. No doubt, critical observations on the effects of advanced technology are valid and must be responsibly considered.



In April 2021, the European Commission proposed the first EU regulatory framework for AI. It says that AI systems that can be used in different applications are analysed and classified according to the risk they pose to users. The different risk levels will mean more or less regulation. Once approved, these will be the world's first rules on AI.

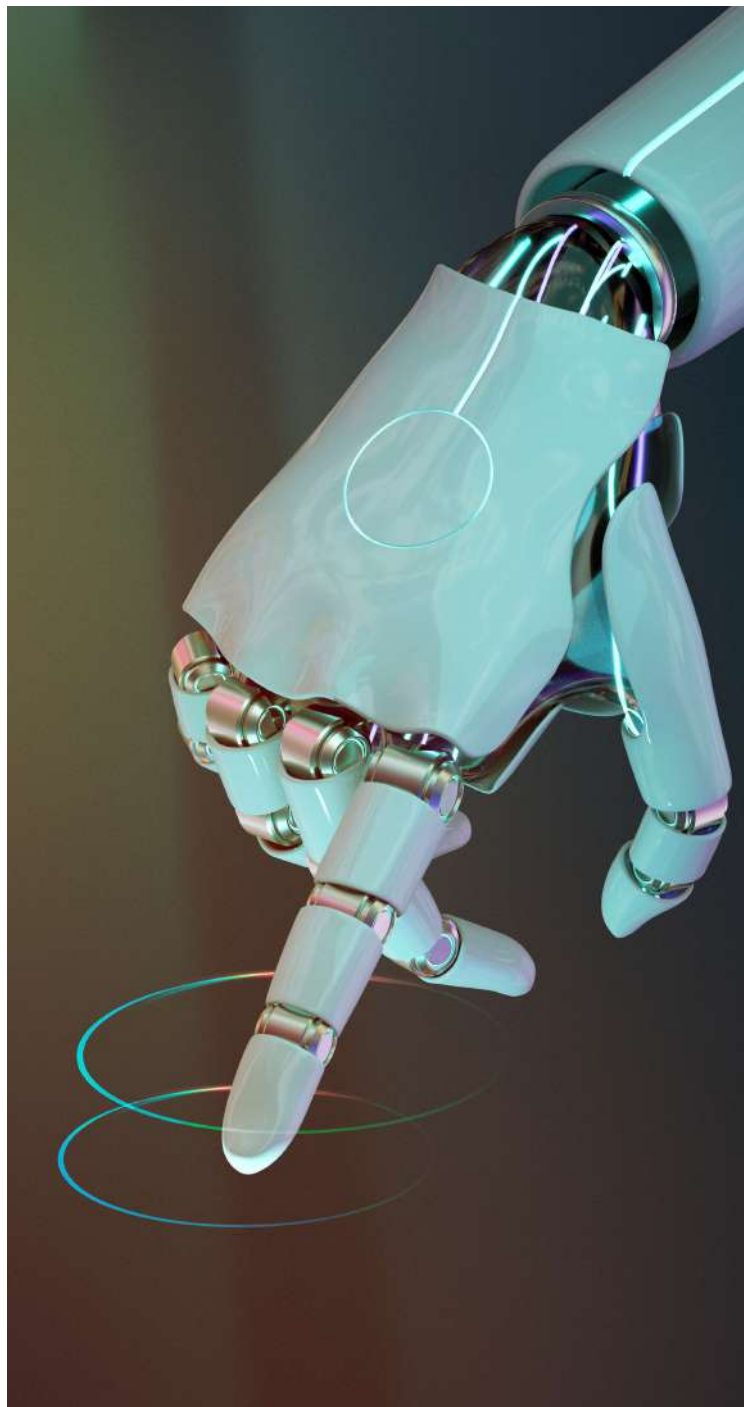
Striking a Balance

Perhaps we have already gone too far. Otherwise, now may be the best time to strike a balance, starting with a few evaluative questions:

Who is at the wheel of this seemingly unstoppable vehicle? What should be done about our concerns? Overall, what is the net gain versus the net loss? And ultimately, what do we hope to achieve by answering these questions?

Are we to aim for solutions that somehow decrease the rate of technological advancement - like creating smartphones that are not very "smart" or artificial intelligence that isn't too "intelligent"? Notwithstanding, any definite attempt to delineate the scope of technological evolution might just be too complex and at risk of, eventually, unravelling - pretty much everything since the abacus!

So far, Technology has enriched humanity in diverse ways, and it may be near impossible to limit its application without jeopardising the basic structure of society. We should not lash out in a fear-driven response against perceived danger but with curiosity & hope for a scientific examination of the next phase of our evolution. After all, the foundation of AI is human insights, and as the intelligent creators of an intelligent system, we can make Technology even as it makes us!

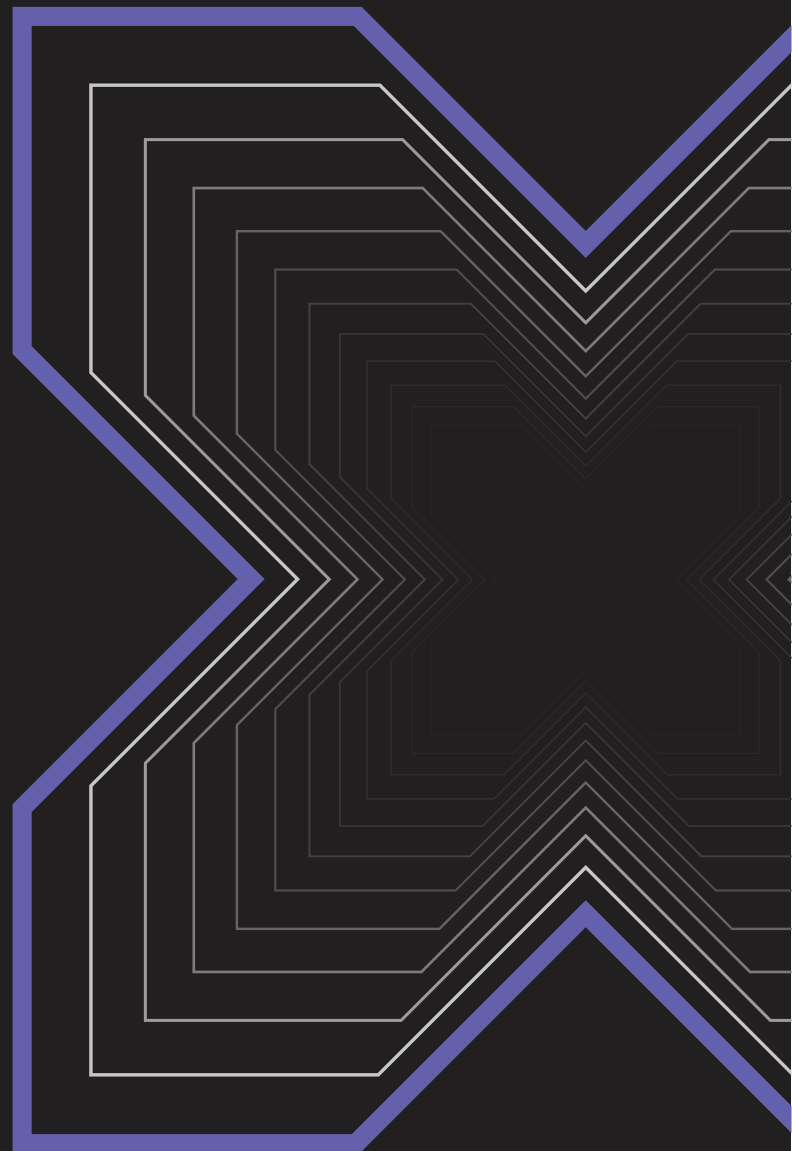


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IRETI YUSUF

LEADING AN EFFICIENT TECH TEAM IN A FAST EVOLVING INDUSTRY.

What does a typical workweek look like for a CTO? Is the role different in a tech company than in other industries?

In an organization, the role of a Chief Technology Officer (CTO) holds immense significance, especially within a technology company. The CTO is a pivotal figure responsible for driving the technology strategy and operations of the organization. This role encompasses several key aspects, starting with technology strategy. The CTO takes the lead in shaping and executing the technology strategy, which involves identifying emerging technologies, assessing their relevance, and determining how they can be harnessed to gain a competitive advantage. Essentially, the CTO sets the course for future technological development, making it a central role in any tech-centric organization.

The CTO plays a significant role in overseeing the development and maintenance of core products and services. Close collaboration with engineering teams is essential to ensure that products align with both technological advancements and customer needs. This involves



making critical decisions about the technology stack, frameworks, and tools used, considering factors like scalability, security, and efficiency.

Technical expertise is another hallmark of a CTO's role in a technology company. Deep technical understanding, whether in software development, data science, or hardware engineering, is essential. The CTO often gets directly involved in solving complex technical challenges and making architectural decisions.

In contrast, the role of a CTO in a non-tech organization, such as a bank, differs in several ways. Here, technology is primarily seen as an enabler rather than the core product. The CTO's focus is on optimizing existing processes, ensuring data security, and improving customer experiences through technology.

Regulatory compliance is a significant concern for CTOs in banks due to the high level of industry-specific regulations. Ensuring that technology infrastructure aligns with these regulations becomes a critical responsibility.

Risk management takes precedence for CTOs in banks. They must mitigate cybersecurity risks and ensure the resilience of technology systems, collaborating closely with cybersecurity teams to protect sensitive financial data.

Legacy systems are another challenge faced by CTOs in banks. They often need to manage the transition from legacy systems to modern technology without disrupting critical operations.

Lastly, enhancing the digital customer experience is a major focus for CTOs in banks. This includes services like online banking, mobile apps, and secure payment systems, all designed to improve the customer journey.

With the tech industry boom in Africa, what roles do you think tech pioneers like yourself and large corporations like CWG have to play in ushering in the new wave of tech enthusiasts and promoting indigenous tech solutions and services in Africa and the world?

In the midst of the tech industry boom in Africa, tech pioneers and established corporations like CWG have pivotal roles to play in shaping the future of technology on the continent and beyond. Our responsibilities extend far beyond our business interests; they encompass fostering innovation, nurturing talent, and promoting indigenous tech solutions and services.

One of the key roles we have is to champion homegrown technological solutions. Africa is rich in talent and creativity, and we should harness this potential to develop solutions that address local challenges. Whether it's in fintech, healthcare, agriculture, or education, supporting startups and innovators to create solutions tailored to African needs is essential. CWG, for

instance, has been at the forefront of developing e-government solutions that help improve governance and services in Nigeria.

Tech pioneers and established companies should actively engage in mentorship and skill development programs. We need to nurture the next generation of tech enthusiasts by providing them with the knowledge and guidance they need to succeed. At CWG, we've initiated various mentorship programs, internships, and collaborations with universities to bridge the skills gap and empower young talents.

Staying ahead of the game in the tech industry requires constant innovation. We must allocate resources to research and development (R&D) to explore emerging technologies and their applications. At CWG, R&D is a fundamental aspect of our operations. It allows us to explore new frontiers, develop cutting-edge solutions, and adapt to changing market dynamics.

As a CTO, collaboration and strategic partnerships are often crucial. Can you share a few examples of partnerships your company has formed to enhance its technological capabilities or expand its reach?

Certainly, collaboration and strategic partnerships are indeed vital for a company's growth and technological advancement. At CWG, we've actively sought partnerships that enhance our technological capabilities and extend our reach.

CWG has formed strategic alliances with global tech giants like Oracle, SAP, Dell, and Infosys Technology. These partnerships allow us to access cutting-edge technologies, best practices, and global expertise, which we integrate into our solutions. For instance, our collaboration with Oracle enables us to offer robust database management solutions to our clients, enhancing our position in the market.

In line with our e-government solutions, CWG collaborates closely with government agencies in Nigeria. We've worked with various government bodies to implement systems that improve service delivery, revenue collection, and transparency. These collaborations have not only strengthened our technological capabilities but also contributed to the development of the nation.

As a Payment Terminal Service Provider (PTSP), CWG works closely with banks and financial institutions. Our partnerships with these organizations ensure the seamless deployment and management of point-of-sale (POS) terminals. These collaborations contribute to the growth of digital payments in Nigeria.

What technological trends do you anticipate will significantly impact the tech services industry, and how is CWG preparing to adapt to these changes?

In the ever-evolving landscape of technology, several trends are poised to significantly impact the tech services industry. At CWG, we recognize the importance of staying ahead of these trends to continue providing innovative and relevant solutions to our clients.

AI and ML are transforming industries across the board. We anticipate AI becoming increasingly integrated into our solutions, especially in areas like data analytics, predictive maintenance, and customer service automation. We're investing in AI talent and infrastructure to develop AI-driven products and services

that provide enhanced value to our clients.

With the growing threat landscape, cybersecurity remains a top concern. CWG is committed to enhancing its cybersecurity offerings. We're investing in advanced threat detection and response systems, cybersecurity training for our teams, and partnerships with leading cybersecurity firms to ensure our clients' data and systems are protected.

Cloud technology is revolutionizing how businesses operate. We are aligning our services with cloud platforms like AWS, Azure, and Google Cloud to offer scalable, flexible, and cost-effective solutions. This includes migrating existing applications to the cloud and developing cloud-native solutions. IoT is driving the convergence of physical and digital worlds. We anticipate more IoT applications in sectors like agriculture, logistics, and smart cities. CWG is actively exploring IoT solutions and partnerships to help clients leverage the power of connected devices and data.

The rollout of 5G networks will bring faster and more reliable connectivity. CWG is closely monitoring 5G's development and is prepared to leverage this technology for innovative solutions, especially in the IoT and telecommunications sectors. VR and AR are finding applications beyond gaming, such as in training, education, and remote collaboration. CWG is exploring how these technologies can be integrated into our solutions, such as virtual training environments and interactive customer experiences.

As data regulations evolve, data privacy and compliance will remain critical. CWG is dedicated to

ensuring that our solutions meet the highest data protection standards. We are also providing consultancy services to help our clients navigate the complex landscape of data regulations. Sustainable practices are gaining importance. CWG is committed to reducing our environmental footprint and assisting clients in adopting sustainable tech solutions, such as energy-efficient data centers and eco-friendly hardware.

Blockchain has applications beyond cryptocurrencies, including supply chain management and secure transactions. CWG is researching how blockchain can enhance the security and transparency of our solutions.

The future of work includes hybrid and remote models. CWG is developing and enhancing solutions that support remote work, from secure remote access to collaboration tools.

Technological projects can be complex and challenging. Could you provide insights into how your team manages project timelines, resources, and potential setbacks to deliver successful outcomes consistently?

Every successful project begins with meticulous planning. Our teams start by defining clear project objectives, scope, and deliverables. We develop detailed project plans that outline tasks, timelines, dependencies, and resource requirements. This planning phase ensures that everyone involved understands their roles and responsibilities.

CWG employs experienced project managers who are well-versed in handling technological projects. They oversee project execution, monitor progress, and ensure that timelines are met. Their expertise in

risk management helps identify potential setbacks early, allowing for proactive solutions.

Efficient resource allocation is essential for project success. We carefully allocate human and technological resources based on project requirements. This includes assigning skilled team members, ensuring access to necessary hardware and software, and optimizing resource usage to avoid bottlenecks. Effective communication is a cornerstone of successful project management. We maintain open and transparent communication channels among team members, stakeholders, and clients. Regular status updates, meetings, and progress reports ensure that everyone is on the same page and can address issues promptly.

Collaboration with our clients is vital. We involve clients in the decision-making process and seek their input at key project milestones. This collaborative approach ensures that the project aligns with their expectations and goals. After project completion, we conduct post-implementation reviews to assess the project's success and gather feedback for continuous improvement. This practice allows us to learn from each project and refine our processes.

Technology is ever-evolving, and our teams are committed to continuous learning and skill development. We stay updated with the latest trends, tools, and best practices in the tech industry to deliver cutting-edge solutions.

Cybersecurity has always been a critical concern for tech companies and their clients. How does CWG prioritise and integrate security measures across all your service offerings?

CWG operates with a comprehensive security framework that spans all our services. We consider security from the very inception of any project, ensuring that it's an integral part of our development and implementation processes. We have a dedicated team of cybersecurity experts who are well-versed in the latest threats and mitigation strategies. These professionals work diligently to identify vulnerabilities, assess risks, and design robust security measures.

Periodic security audits and assessments are conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of our security measures. This practice helps us identify areas for improvement and fine-tune our security protocols. We believe that an educated client is a secure client. We provide guidance and resources to our clients to enhance their awareness of cybersecurity best practices. This collaborative approach ensures that our clients actively participate in securing their systems. CWG adheres to industry-specific security standards and regulations. This includes compliance with ISO 27001, which sets the standard for information security management systems. Such compliance provides an additional layer of assurance to our clients.

Africa is a major tech consumer market; how can we evolve into global developers for tech services and products?

Africa's journey from being a major tech consumer to becoming a global tech developer is an exciting and ambitious goal. It might seem challenging, but it's entirely within reach.

It all starts with education. We need to invest big in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education. By doing this, we're giving our young minds

the tools they need to innovate and create amazing tech solutions. We can't do this alone. We should team up with tech hubs and innovation centers in places like Silicon Valley, Europe, and Asia. This collaboration can open up opportunities for us to learn from the best, get valuable mentorship, and even attract investments from around the world.

Ever had a great tech idea but didn't know where to start? We need more tech incubators and accelerators across Africa. These places offer budding tech entrepreneurs the support, advice, and funding they need to turn their ideas into reality. Let's build a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. Governments and businesses can help by offering incentives like tax breaks for research and development, grants for startups, and rewards for innovative ideas.

Every startup needs a financial boost. Venture capital and angel investors play a big role in helping tech startups grow. Governments and financial institutions can create special funding programs just for tech companies, making it easier for them to get the cash they need. We need rules and regulations that encourage innovation while also protecting people's ideas. When we have clear and fair rules, it makes Africa more appealing to tech investors and helps inventors feel safe.

Profit is important, but it shouldn't be the only goal. We should focus on creating tech that solves real problems

both here in Africa and around the world. When we provide value, profits naturally follow. Collaboration is key. Let's get tech companies working together with traditional industries like farming, healthcare, and energy. Mixing these ideas can lead to exciting new solutions that work for both local and global challenges.

With remote work becoming more prevalent in the tech industry, how do you see this affecting the efficiency of a company?

The surge in remote work within the tech industry is shaking up how businesses function and how teams collaborate. Remote work brings a bag of advantages like flexibility, tapping into a wider talent pool, and trimming down operational expenses. Nevertheless, how it impacts efficiency hinges on its implementation.

CWG sees the perks of remote work but knows it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. Our approach melds flexibility with a results-oriented mindset. We champion a hybrid work model that gives employees the freedom to work remotely or from the office. This approach caters to different work preferences and ensures we strike the right balance.

We harness technology to make remote collaboration a breeze. We arm our tech teams with cutting-edge tools for seamless communication and project management. We hone in on results and productivity instead of mere hours clocked. Performance metrics gauge output, ensuring remote employees contribute effectively.

CWG places great emphasis on employee well-being. We offer resources and support to help our team members maintain a healthy work-life balance, whether they're in the office or working remotely.

The future of remote work at CWG will likely keep evolving based on employee preferences and tech advancements. We remain adaptable and open to tweaks that amp up efficiency and cater to our team members' needs.

To sum it up, remote work can swing a company's efficiency pendulum, for better or worse. CWG's game plan centers on flexibility, tech wizardry, performance-driven evaluation, and team members' well-being to ensure peak output in this ever-changing work terrain.

What crucial advice would you give a tech founder looking to hire a CTO? What should they look out for?

When you're in the exciting phase of hiring a Chief Technology Officer (CTO) for your tech startup, it's like setting the course for your company's future.

First things first, what does your startup really need from a CTO? Think about where you are in your startup journey, what your product or service is, and where you want to go with it. Do you need someone to build your tech from scratch, manage an existing tech team, or set a grand tech strategy?

Now, let's talk about tech. Dive deep into the candidate's tech skills. They should be like a pro in the tech stuff your startup works with. Look for folks who've nailed similar tech challenges before. Startup life is like a rollercoaster, right? It's essential your potential CTO knows how to ride it. They should've been in startups before, where things are fast, funds are tight, and every day's an adventure.

Your CTO isn't just a tech wizard; they're also a leader. They need to build and

lead a tech squad, make smart calls about what to do when, and make sure things get done right and on time. Startups are like puzzles; challenges pop up all the time. Your CTO should be a master problem solver. Ask them how they tackle tech puzzles and if they've got creative tricks up their sleeves.

In a nutshell, hiring a CTO for your startup is like building a dream team. Take your time, interview wisely, and find someone who not only speaks tech but also speaks your startup's language.



AJAI AIYESA

THE INTRICACIES OF BUILDING INNOVATION FOR NIGERIA FROM THE DIASPORA

Amid the “Japa” tsunami, what motivates you to return home especially with a new venture?

Migration is a familiar idea; people worldwide have and continue to migrate for several reasons, including livelihood.

Nevertheless, there is often a lingering connection to one's heritage. African Americans still constantly seek to embrace their cultural roots in one form or another.

That is how deep home connections are. So

yeah, memories of my childhood in challenges in Nigeria inspired me to consider possible solutions to some social issues.

According to data from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, we have about 80 million unemployed youths and, as of 2021, 76 million illiterate adults. That is cause for concern, and like many Nigerians in the diaspora, I am very concerned.

Fortunately, I have the background and professional training to do something about it. I once worked as a private tutor during NYSC and am familiar with the landscape. So, I conceived a product based on my experience and leveraging technology to solve problems back home.

Tell us about your product – What is Dice Tutors & what value does it propose to Nigerians?

Dice Tutors facilitates an interactive platform where students can easily access competent

“

Dice Tutors facilitates an interactive platform where students can easily access competent teachers. This product places education in the marketplace that is accessible to everybody; talk about education on demand.

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teachers. This product places education in the marketplace that is accessible to everybody; talk about education on demand. Our services are currently available to students at primary and secondary levels but will eventually expand to cover tertiary and professional learning. One unique advantage that Dice Tutors offers is a personalised tech-based model that enables users to create requests based on individual learning requirements, schedules and budget specifications. Think of it as an Uber for learning services. For instance, User A can request a week-long coaching session for their child on specific subjects/topics, and our app generates tutor options based on their requirements. It's flexible for everybody; users can set conditions, while the tutor can fix their price within certain boundaries.

How have you addressed the issue of security verification & professional assessment for your tutors?

We have different levels of verification – Initial registration is easy, but we conduct a thorough background check before onboarding any tutor. We verify their identity and qualification. Then, we conduct a test and one-on-one interview to assess the tutor's competence. Considering the business's sensitive nature and the Nigerian market's low trust nature, this is our priority. We aim to create a safe platform for our users. We expect that guardians and data privacy enrol underage students, and we don't share user info beyond the agreed-upon basics required for effective transactions.

Considering how competitive the tech product space has become, what is the key to creating a

balance between sustained value & a profitable venture?

I believe in a unique product plus continuous improvement. Make sure that you give enough value for it to gain attention. Customer-centric solutions do best in the market. Cold as it may sound, a product developer may be better off following the customer than their dreams. Otherwise, one may end up with products that satisfy personal desires for achievement but which nobody wants to buy. So, it is essential to put the customer needs at the centre, create value, and continuously adapt it to evolving customer needs. Market trends and other factors are helpful only to the degree that they reflect the customer's needs.

What challenges did you face as a diasporan creating a practical tech solution for problems localised in Nigeria, and how did you manage them?

One major one is the issue of trust – building a reliable team to collaborate with from my home base in the US. And trust is not only in terms of material resources but also in capacity – verifying competence and correctly evaluating passion. Although we have a physical location, everyone on our team works remotely from different parts of Nigeria. There is also the challenge of executing global standards with local limitations. While pushing the team to achieve international standards, respecting their understanding of domestic realities is essential. Then, people assume that once a person lives abroad, they lose touch with local realities. This is false because, first, many are driven abroad by challenges and stay connected through family & friends. I mean, Nigerians abroad have recently protested social issues from the diaspora! My life experience led to the development of Dicxe Tutors,

and that's the beauty of our brand story.

From your experience, what makes a great product team?

I think it's been able to, from the beginning, allow everyone to have a say. In addition to having the right people knowledgeable in their respective fields, they must be passionate about the cause you are trying to channel. Set up an interview to evaluate professional skills and understand their view about the project because that will be a driving force.

What is the latest technology you believe can influence your product's success & impact the edu-tech industry?

We hope to integrate AI into our platforms. AI tools are changing the dynamics of learning and formal education globally. However, we also know that with greater access comes a need to manage information. While we leverage AI capacities such as automation, speed and vast data resources, our human team can design processes that account for human experience and create wholesome learning solutions. We look forward to collaborating with AI.

TOBI GBEMISOLA

THE TECHBRO HUSTLE:

MY NO-CODE JOURNEY TO PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

How did you go from a 'disgruntled employee' to a start-up founder?

My journey started in 2015 when I finished university. Despite my background in Psychology, I opted to pursue a career in digital marketing because of my passion for writing and online community engagement. Seven years and a few jobs later, I observed some parallels and similarities in the modern workplace – unhappy employees, many of whom have been disillusioned by unmet expectations. This realisation got me thinking about how great it would be to get a preview of a company's culture before accepting employment there. And even though some platforms like Indeed and Glassdoor already existed, they were not specific to an African or Nigerian audience. Sure, we have Nairaland and Twitter, but it gets pretty chaotic out there. That's how I found a niche for JobHunch. I was so excited and desired to see the idea come to life there and then! At first, I wished I was a Product Developer. Then, I wondered what made one and if I could be one. Eventually, I started bringing my vision to life, especially after discovering a no-code platform that helped me transition easily.

What exactly is “no-code development,” and is it a sustainable career path, especially considering the recent surge in AI's evolution?



No-code development is simply building software without writing code. Typically, one must hire a software developer or write the code to develop an App. The former may be cost-intensive, and the latter may be time-intensive, especially for beginners. With no-code development, anyone can build stuff independently without spending too much. It involves visual development, manually moving web page items to desired specifications. AI is not a threat to no-code; it can help simplify the process further and accelerate the adoption. We must not undermine the human need for vocation & general engagement, and there is a certain satisfaction derived from building anything, including concepts. Which is why I don't believe AI will ultimately erode human effort. In fact, no-code platforms are

looking to integrate AI into their process to make App creation seamless for humans.

Beyond being a “safe space for victims of toxic workplaces”, what is the value proposition for JobHunch?

How can users & employers leverage the platform to create/promote a wholesome workplace culture?

JobHunch mainly targets job seekers and company employees. The principal value proposition is for employees to scrutinise potential workplaces BEFORE they work there. We do have a forum for unburdening, where users can anonymously “rant” about their work challenges. Still, our main aim is for job seekers to gain insight about potential employers and be equipped to make informed decisions. Imagine leaving a lousy job hoping for better, only to be confronted with worse. I mean, people knowingly take subpar jobs all the time and can power through with managed expectations. So basically, JobHunch empowers employees to take control of their employment decisions. The platform also serves as a feedback mechanism for employers looking to optimise their work culture and promote employee mental health.

One crucial aspect of your platform is workplace reviews. How do you ensure the credibility and authenticity of these reviews?

Yeah, we took that as a priority from the beginning because we wanted to assure the audience of the authenticity of our platform's users – they are real people. So, we built our community on user anonymity with a firm commitment to data protection. We take security seriously, and our team works tirelessly to keep out hackers and other third-party infiltrators. Our policies prioritise

confidentiality, and under no account would we divulge information shared on our platforms to employers. In addition to user-protection measures, we also have community guidelines to discourage malicious campaigns against employers. We do not support or permit group mobilisation against organisations or libellous attacks against individuals on our platforms. In short, we look out for both employer and employee.

How does JobHunt differentiate itself from similar platforms (e.g. Glassdoor)? What unique features does it offer its users?

Firstly, we focus on the African market. Generally, Nigerians and Africans prefer not to comment publicly about their workplaces. This wariness may be because of punishment or a lack of trust in the facilitating platform. Yet we see with social media platforms like Twitter and Clubhouse that people have much to say when given a safe space. Still, while international platforms offer feedback mechanisms, they are not designed to protect local interests fully. JobHunch is responding to the current generation's longing for transparency and accountability with a localised solution. Secondly, our review platform supports end-to-end, from interview to resignation. For example, users can write reviews about job interviews – was it a straightforward process? Were you required to pay anyone or do anything shady for a chance to be employed? We are not here to encourage company-bashing but to promote transparent processes and people accountability.

What is the next step for JobHunt? What are your plans for the app?

I get excited when I think about the future of JobHunch. Although we're primarily a job reviews platform, considering market trends and AI evolution, we can be so much more! For one, we're looking to integrate AI tools on our platform to help optimise the job search process for users. First, they input job specifications; then, AI suggests the next steps. Users will be able to create resumes, generate personalised cover letters, and track applications on JobHunch. Also, we plan to facilitate efficient career planning, where users can estimate the requirements for and work towards their desired career. Our team is working hard on some of these and hopes to release new features in a few months. Ultimately, the general focus is on adding value to the users. So, even beyond AI, we are on standby to keep JobHunch relevant with evolving technologies.

Building for the Market

A Guide to Successful Product Launch

by Moradeke Akintola (Business Director Platforms, CWG)

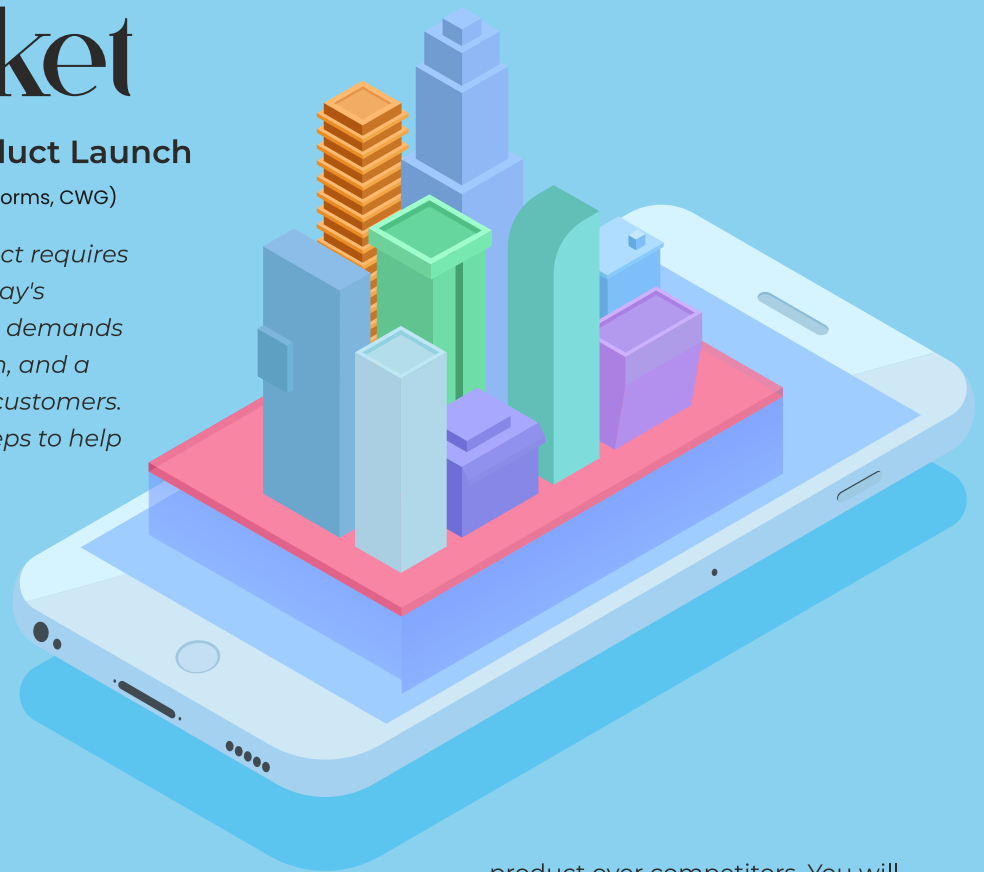
Successfully launching a tech product requires more than an innovative idea in today's dynamic and competitive market. It demands careful planning, strategic execution, and a deep understanding of your target customers. This article explores the essential steps to help you navigate the journey.

8 Strategic Steps to Gain Widespread Acceptance of Your Newly Introduced Tech Product

1. Identify Your Target Customers

The first step in building for the market is understanding your target customers. You can achieve this by conducting thorough market research to identify their needs and preferences. Efficient market research provides valuable data on how customers will accept the product, allowing for modifications before final deployment.

Profoundly understanding your target customers allows you to tailor your product and marketing efforts to meet their needs effectively. By gathering demographic data, conducting surveys, and engaging in user interviews, you can gain valuable insights into your target



customers' expectations. This information will guide your product development process, ensuring your solution meets their requirements.

2. Define Your Unique Value Proposition

Defining your unique value proposition (UVP) is crucial to stand out in a crowded market. What sets your product apart from existing offerings? How does it solve a problem more efficiently or innovatively?

Craft a compelling UVP that communicates the benefits of your product to potential customers. Remember that your UVP should resonate with their needs and motivate them to choose your

product over competitors. You will more likely capture your target audience's attention by highlighting your product's unique features and benefits.

3. Build a Strong Brand

Creating a solid brand identity is instrumental in gaining customer trust and recognition. You can achieve both by developing a consistent and compelling brand image that aligns with your target audience's values and aspirations. For instance, you may design a visually appealing logo, establish a cohesive brand voice, and maintain a robust online presence through your website, social media, and other marketing channels.

A well-crafted brand fosters

customer loyalty and sets the stage for a successful product launch. You connect with your audience beyond the product by communicating your brand's message and values.

4. Prioritize User Experience

User experience (UX) plays a vital role in determining the success of a tech product. So, invest in designing an intuitive, user-friendly interface that ensures seamless interaction between your customers and your product. You may also conduct usability tests and gather feedback during the development phase to refine your product and make it as user-centric as possible. By prioritising UX, you enhance customer satisfaction, encourage positive reviews, and generate valuable word-of-mouth marketing. A positive user experience drives adoption and builds a loyal customer base.

5. Develop a Robust Marketing Strategy

Launching a product without a well-thought-out marketing strategy is like releasing a masterpiece into the void. To avoid wasting time and effort, create a comprehensive marketing plan outlining your target audience, key messaging, distribution channels, and promotional activities.

You can leverage online and offline marketing techniques, such as search engine optimisation (SEO), social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, content marketing, and targeted advertising, to reach your potential customers effectively.

Also, you must continuously monitor and periodically measure the effectiveness of your marketing efforts. Reporting on metrics is one



way to optimise your marketing strategy. Promoting your product to the right audience through the most effective channels can increase your brand's visibility and generate customer interest.

6. Engage with Early Adopters

Identifying early adopters within your target market is essential – customers eager to try new technologies and provide feedback. Engage these customers during the pre-launch phase to gain insights, testimonials, and user-generated content. You may offer exclusive access or other incentives to build a loyal community around your product.

You can create a foundation of support and advocacy by fostering relationships with early adopters. Their positive experiences and feedback will help refine your

offering and serve as social proof, encouraging others to choose your product.

7. Plan for a Seamless Launch

A seamless launch helps create momentum and positive perception, setting the stage for a successful market entry. Create anticipation through teasers, sneak peeks, and beta testing. Also, consider organising physical launch events, webinars, or influencer collaborations to generate buzz and court media coverage.

Timing is crucial when it comes to product launches. Plan a launch date that aligns with your target market's expectations and industry trends. Above all, ensure your website, e-commerce platform, or app is fully functional and optimised to handle traffic and transactions smoothly.



8. Continuous Improvement and Customer Feedback

A successful product launch is only the beginning of an extensive journey. Constantly collect customer feedback and address any concerns or issues that arise. Regularly update your product with new features, improvements, and bug fixes to enhance customer satisfaction and retain their loyalty.

Similarly, foster open communication channels, such as user forums, support tickets, and social media interactions, to establish a strong customer relationship.

By listening to your customers and iterating your product, you can stay ahead of market trends and evolving customer needs.

In Conclusion

Launching a tech product in today's competitive market requires a well-executed strategy that encompasses understanding your target customers, crafting a unique value proposition, building a solid brand, prioritising user experience, developing a robust marketing plan, engaging with early adopters, planning for a seamless launch, and fostering continuous improvement through customer feedback.

Following these guidelines can pave the way for a successful product launch and achieve widespread acceptance among your target audience. Remember, building for the market is dynamic, and adapting to evolving customer needs is the key to long-term success in the tech industry.



The test of the pudding may be in its tasting, but the actual test of a product is at the funding stage. Although securing third-party investment often validates product viability, it also throws start-up founders into a frenzy to prove true to projections. After many years of trying to save flailing businesses, Samuel Olojede, CEO and Founder of Pitch Deck, found a niche that helps set the stage for attracting & sustaining investor interest. He recently sat with DE to share some insights

SAMUEL OLOJEDE

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FUNDING, PITCHES & PRODUCTS

In your experience, what role does funding play in product development, and how important is that role?

Funding is critical, as it determines everything from product scope to marketing reach. Considering the product development lifecycle, the ideation phase probably requires the most minimal monetary input, and even that isn't guaranteed, especially if you have a paid team aboard. Cash input is a definite requirement from product conception to validation, testing, launching, and through continuous product improvement.

Do all startups need to source for funding and investment rather than bank on the successful commercialisation of their product to generate income for expansion or growth?

Not all startups source funding at the beginning of their journey because an existing or potential customer base is a necessary advantage during funds seeking. Commercialisation might be stretching it because it connotes an extensive degree of success, which could negate the need for financing. However, early-stage fund seekers need customers. I often advise our clients to do foundational work, securing a pipeline of customers to impress potential investors and increase their chances of funding.

What are some funding alternatives apart from the traditional investor model?

Grants, or what I describe as crowdfunding through sale, are a couple of options for early-stage funding. While the former requires no repayment and may rely on shared values, the latter, as a strategy, builds on a ready market or loyal ready adopters. For example, a business can charge an annual due and collect cash upfront rather than a monthly subscription to fund its operation. Nevertheless, the need for external funding is seldom avoidable, partly due to the upfront cost of product development & deployment, or in pursuit of an opportunity for a big break.

Pitching is considered a crucial step in securing investments – What are some considerations for drafting a successful pitch, particularly for African startup founders?

Pitching is one of the most effective ways to market yourself or your product as a founder since it provides a platform for selling your story. One primary consideration for a successful pitch is timing. In my experience, some pitches are premature, and the product team often needs to collect more market data to justify their projections. I advise building credibility for your product and confidence in your presentation. Another best practice is the pitch template, which should be concise & industry-specific. Investors are typically time-conscious, and an industry-specific template helps them pick out the necessary information to decide quickly. Besides using a suitable template, founders must research the philosophy of the person or people they seek investment from. Your pitch may appeal to Investor A's mission or

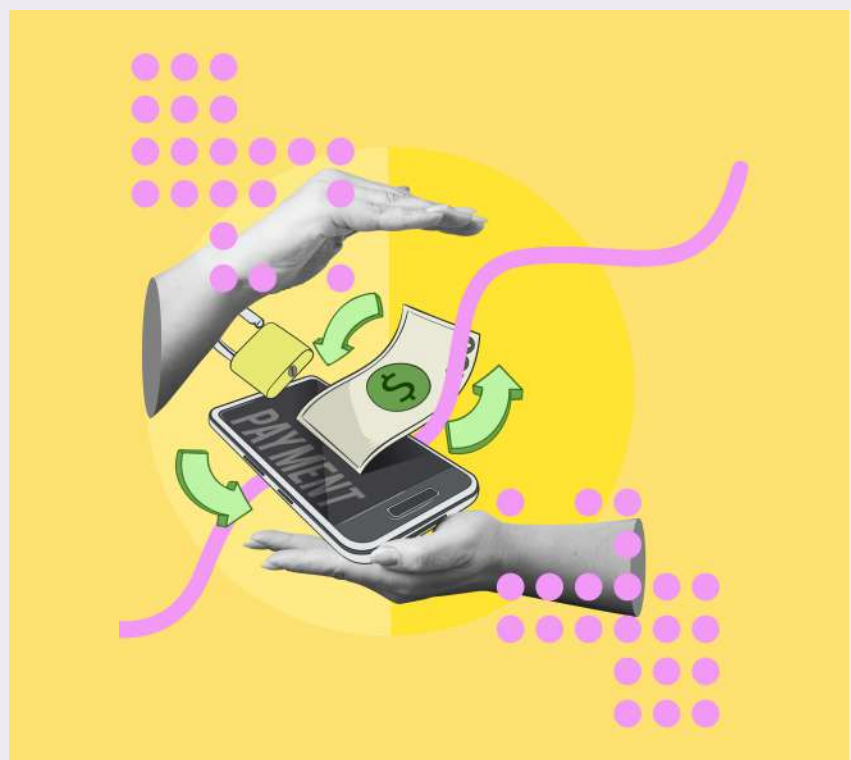
funding philosophy during the roadshow but do nothing for Investor B. Presenting a generic document may suggest your team has done inadequate research and made poor effort. An overall pitch deck may work for public presentations, but remember to include a customised value proposition for each investor. Also, remember to include a call to action since the aim is to stimulate interest in your product and invite further conversation.

What are some common reasons promising products might fail to secure the necessary funding despite having a solid business plan or prototype?

One of the most common reasons I found for product failure is the product team's low level of preparedness. There are specific market research points that you need more than Google or a month-long focus group to

discover. You may need to run your business for between nine & eighteen months to gain firsthand knowledge. Experienced investors often look to do the best deal and quickly sniff out bluffs. So you need evidence of quality to market research to sustain their interest.

Another thing is investors may feel you need to be more radical with your revenue growth. For instance, an investor could look at your midline and wonder why you incur so many fixed expenses. How do these fixed expenses contribute to your top line? In the search for investment, especially at the beginner stage, every spend must reflect in your revenue to reassure potential investors of your team's accountability. Also, you need to be very dynamic about your revenue models, that is, how you collect cash, to





guarantee investors of your potential profitability.

What role, if any, do mentors, advisors, or accelerators play in guiding startups through the product development process, especially in attracting investment?

Networks play a significant role in general business success; specifically, chances of acquiring investor funding are negligible without them. Even in everyday life, big breaks are more often than not achieved through recommendations. My business has seen more profit in the past three months than it did since its inception in 2016, thanks to a reconnection with an old schoolmate. Build your network – If you don't have mentors and advisors, get into schools like accelerators and incubators that can give you access to the network and resources you need. Many ambitious founders undermine this step and attempt to go from creating a prototype to raising two million dollars overnight, but soon discover product success is a long-term effort. Although it may take longer than initially planned, when maximised, accelerator programmes are more

strategic than throwing darts, hoping it hits the bullseye.

What is the most challenging pitch you have ever done, and what are some of the lessons you derived from it that could be helpful to young founders?

Generally, when pitches get hairy, we still find a way to make it work, but there is one that comes to mind for going entirely south. The client was in the logistics business with vast experience and over 100 million transaction volumes. They were evidently more knowledgeable than our team, but we put our pitch experience over their industry insight. After three failed attempts to create the selling pitch, the client gave up and moved on. It became apparent they weren't just trying to discredit my team's work when I discovered they got into a funding programme with a pitch created by someone else in the industry. This experience taught me that sometimes, when founders ask for help with their pitch, they really mean, "I want to create my pitch through your eyes", while we

handle the background components like research, linguistic compliance & presentation. We've applied this lesson to our pitches where relevant since then.



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The Future of Work:

Tech Talent vs Open Source AI

written by Afolabi Sobande (Group chief Operating Officer, CWG)

The scope of work is being revolutionalised by Artificial Intelligence (AI), causing standards and controversies to rise equally. Consequently, businesses need to balance their use of advanced technology with the need for human talent. What a dilemma! On the one hand, machines automate some human tasks, leading to job losses. Conversely, AI can create new jobs, as businesses need people to develop, deploy, and manage AI systems.

In this piece, we will examine the critical impact of AI on employment and how stakeholders can manage the outcome.

The Rise of Open-Source AI

Open-source refers to a software development model that publicly makes tools and technology available for modification and distribution. This approach is a major catalyst for innovation and has gained significant traction globally. Developers are encouraged to experiment, build upon existing models, and create novel applications, triggering a noble cycle of knowledge sharing and system improvements.

Similarly, Open-source Artificial Intelligence fosters a collaborative and inclusive ecosystem. Its decentralised framework promotes accessibility by reducing the cost of developing and deploying AI systems. Whereas large organisations with substantial resources monopolised the industry, open-source frameworks such as TensorFlow and PyTorch have levelled the playing field. By making AI technologies available to a vast community of developers & smaller enterprises, open-source initiatives stimulate

creativity and accelerate the pace of AI's advancement.

The Value of Human Tech Talent

Due to its continuous development, there is a growing concern that artificial intelligence will eventually replace human talent. However, there are several reasons this may not happen.

First, AI still needs to be capable of replicating humans' creativity and problem-solving skills. AI systems can be very good at following instructions and completing tasks but need help 'thinking' creatively or developing new solutions to problems.

Second, AI systems still need to learn to understand and respond to human emotions. Emotional intelligence is essential for a product team, as they must interact with customers and stakeholders professionally and empathetically.

Third, AI will have to learn to cultivate relationships with people. Social interaction is another crucial skill for tech workers, as they need to build trust and rapport with their colleagues and clients.

Generally, humans can play more prominent roles than AI in the following areas:

- Providing insights and perspectives that AI systems cannot
- Embracing flexible work cultures and general adaptability to change
- Creative and innovative problem-solving
- Building organic relationships with customers and stakeholders.

The Impact of AI on Employment

While the net effect of the current wave of AI emergence on employment is difficult to predict, we expect it to go both ways. Some people will lose their jobs to automation, and new roles will emerge for others. According to a study by McKinsey Global Institute, up to 800 million jobs could be lost to automation by 2030. However, the study also found that up to 950 million new jobs could be created in the same period. The new jobs will include healthcare, education, and customer service roles.

The most likely to be automated jobs are repetitive, predictable, and rule-based. These include positions in manufacturing, transportation, and customer service. On the other hand,

skills complementary to AI, including; creativity, problem-solving, and social intelligence, will be in high demand. Businesses will need people who can work with artificial intelligence to develop new products and services and solve complex problems. Other in-demand skills include data science, machine learning, and software engineering. These skills will be essential for developing and deploying AI systems.

Maintaining a balanced approach to tech talent and open-source AI is best. Businesses should invest in AI talent and consider open-sourcing their AI systems to secure skills and resources for future use. Open sourcing creates a global pool of knowledge and expertise for industry-wide benefits. It also helps to attract new talent. Furthermore, companies can ensure they have the skills needed to work with AI systems by upskilling their employees.

The Future of Tech Talent vs Open-Source AI

Although the outcome of the struggle between human tech teams and artificial intelligence is still uncertain, both will play a role in shaping work cultures. While Open-Source is essential for its acceleration and cost management, human talent will remain relevant in AI's development and deployment. By leveraging the synergies between humans and technology, organisations can build innovative and inclusive teams that thrive in an AI-driven world. Embracing the collaborative spirit of open-source AI and investing in the continuous development of tech talent will be crucial for organisations to stay competitive and succeed in the evolving future of work.





THE RISE AND IMPACT OF DIGITAL HEALTHCARE IN WEST AFRICA

There is no denying that digitalisation is the key to sustainability and mass impact in any field, not least of all healthcare. Medical innovators and investors have recently taken a broad interest in the area, and the future of medical tech in Africa appears bright. Dr. Ayomide Joe, with a medical degree and Ph.D. in Biomedical and Health Information Sciences, is well-equipped to develop, implement and advise on digital healthcare solutions. In this interview with DE, Dr. Joe shares insights into digital healthcare systems in Africa, the impact of technology, and future projections.

How did your medical background prepare you for a digital health product management role?

Dr. Joe: One of the most important things one learns in medical school is finding solutions to problems and making strategic plans for their implementation. The medical school also teaches one to ask pertinent questions and understand an issue to find the best solution. All these are helpful skill sets that are important to working effectively as a Product manager (PM). The other aspect is that I have mostly worked as a PM for healthcare startups, so my healthcare

background and experience have played significant roles in my day-to-day work.

DE: What digital health products or services have you worked with, and what was your role in their development or implementation?

Dr. Joe: I have worked on many digital health products and services. I have founded and operated three startups and been involved in various capacities as project manager, lead and medical director for other initiatives and services. My role has usually varied between acting as a clinical expert, leading operations or managing the development and design process for many of these. I founded my



first startup in Medical school. It was called *effiwe.net*, an online repository of medical education materials for healthcare students. After that, I ran *Wellvis.org*, a telemedicine and health education platform, and recently, I was managing operations for *Arteri.africa*. I have also acted as a clinical advisor and strategist for *Virufy.org*.

DE: When evaluating the adoption of digital healthcare products, what criteria do you consider, and how do you assess their potential impact on patient outcomes?

Dr. Joe: Well, that's a very nuanced question, but the most essential thing would be to look at usage patterns and how widely they are used by different groups. The other thing to consider would be the feedback concerning service effectiveness and efficiency and the overall user experience. Impact measurement will often involve conducting pre- and post-deployment assessments to see if it has changed anything or moved the needle for the problem the product was designed to solve.

DE: Digital healthcare is gradually gaining ground in West Africa. How can the government and private sector further drive this platform to improve the local healthcare system?

Dr. Joe: Most of all, governments need to focus on fixing the system and ensuring the availability of basic infrastructure. The private sector can't handle the investment and resources required in those areas. Once those are taken care of, building scalable and sustainable digital healthcare products becomes more manageable. Another helpful measure is for the government to partner with and support the private sector with funds and

opportunities for public deployment of digital healthcare solutions. They are doing that presently, though. They just need to do more.

DE: How can telemedicine and remote monitoring technologies improve patient care, and how can the African healthcare system leverage this?

Dr. Joe: Telemedicine and remote monitoring technologies can revolutionise healthcare in Africa by increasing access to care, improving the quality of care, and helping reduce costs. African governments can leverage these technologies by investing in infrastructure, training healthcare providers, and funding their use, especially in places with limited healthcare access.

DE: How do you see artificial intelligence and machine learning impacting the field of digital health, and what potential benefits or challenges do they present?

Dr. Joe: The potential is massive, already impacting healthcare and digital health. It makes it easier to understand and derive relevant insights from massive healthcare data, helping clinicians make better decisions to improve their quality of care. Other use cases include early detection of outbreaks and surveillance. The benefits are unlimited depending on how and where they are applied. Still, some challenges exist, especially in Nigeria and across Africa, including limited clinical datasets and concerns of algorithmic bias from tools developed outside the continent. The lack of governance and legal frameworks raises accountability issues for AI outcomes. Infrastructure challenges, like limited internet and electricity, further constrain AI integration in the region.

DE: Some people expect healthcare products and services to be cheap at the very least. Is this a realistic

expectation, especially with the advent of digital products?

Dr. Joe: Often, the unit economics does not support the idea of cheap healthcare, and affordability can mainly be achieved by subsidy, whether through grants or other means. However it is done, someone has to pay for it. Running digital health companies is costly given the sheer volume of work required, from research, development and deployment to operations and labour costs. Besides, there are challenges around how people seek and buy healthcare and limitations to things like smartphones and the internet, which reduces the available market and limits likely revenue. All these pose considerable risks for investors and heighten the need for incentives in terms of profitability. So, societies that depend primarily on the private sector for medical value have to pay for it, sometimes a lot.



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Innovation for Beginners:

4 Steps To Ensure Your Team's Growth

We all have that one colleague full of buzzwords and feedback; everyone avoids them because they never seem to do any actual work. The point is, like "iteration" and "jump on a call", innovation is fast becoming a buzzword in the modern workplace: innovative ideas, teams and solutions. Yet nothing seems to change with the people, processes & outcomes.

Admittedly, change is easy to plan at abstract board meetings. The problem is execution. But think of it this way: if software upgrades can stop the work day and sometimes even crash an entire system, imagine what the human equivalent will entail! Innovation is a by-product of an evolving mind, not the most effortless state to sustain in today's fast-paced world. You can teach an old dog a new trick with the right strategy & persistence. Here are four baby steps to help you move the needle toward building an innovative team:

Cultivate Engaging Work Culture

Whether it's a Wok Wednesday where you order Chinese or one day remote, having something to bond over is essential. And none of those cheesy performative games & hangouts by HR. Everyone knows management-driven activities eventually feel obligatory, so let the team set the pace. You may assign a random overseer or shift co-ord duties around. You will be surprised by how much you'll discover about your team that can help design team efficiency systems. Natural

environments inspire people, and creating a genuine interactive space with your team is a sure way to activate innovative thinking!

Utilise Digital Tools

That meeting could have been an email. Yep, we said it. Move from regular emails and initiate team collaboration using modern tools like Trello & Mural. In addition to enhancing productivity, technology tools will help exercise your team's mental muscles. Create a system where everyone has to learn something new periodically, even Jane from accounting! Never mind the grumbling & killer looks. Most team members secretly show off new skills to others outside of work!

Automation is another way to promote an innovation culture. For example, schedule social media posts with native tools like Meta or third-party platforms like Hootsuite or Planoly. There are also paid tools like Grammarly & Typeform for content editing and data gathering. Additionally, you can use AI tools like

Chatgpt to generate ideas and escape creative blocks. Automating routine tasks frees human minds for more strategic business engagements.

Promote Flexible Team

Communication
Nope, this email doesn't find me well, and I'm pretty sure no one has any regards left in them by 11 a.m. on Monday. Talk more of a warm one! Can we normalise making internal work communications flexible? Charity, they say, begins at home, and we say friendly customer engagement starts with an interactive team! Honestly, no one likes a stuck-up service provider. Perhaps you're afraid to appear unserious to the customers, but have you considered that the external audience may trust a team with warm energy between them more easily?

Another thing to consider is the prospect of being where your



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audience wants to work. Imagine a customer becoming an employee because of their experience with your team! Now that – is a definite win!

Shoot Some breeze

Work on some projects with no particular aim for profit. Give room for people to exercise their imaginations. they have room to facilitate crazy ideas . Some team leads even assign reading and expect staff to do it on personal time, compounding stress and building resentment. So,

Innovation is not a sprint; it is a marathon. And that is the one thing one doesn't "just do" (sorry, Nike). In summary, two rules apply to a marathon and building an innovative team: practice with progressive milestones and pace yourself.





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