



# Transforming the African Retail Landscape

Opportunities, challenges & solutions



Overview

African Retail in a Nutshell

With a population of almost 1.4 billion people, 500 million+ internet users, and 330 million+ eCommerce consumers<sup>1</sup>, Africa is widely viewed as retailing’s next gold rush. Nineteen of the top 20 fastest-growing countries in the world are in Africa. The African population is expected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050. <sup>1</sup>

A staggering 53 percent of income earners in Africa are between 16 and 34 years old, representing an age group that tends to be more aware of and eager to try new products. <sup>2</sup>

The impact of Africa’s younger, educated and urbanised consumer demographic is visible in Africa’s GDP growth between 2010 and 2019. At 4 percent, the continent overshadowed the GDP growth of the EU28 (1.7 per cent) and LATAM (1.7 per cent). <sup>3</sup>

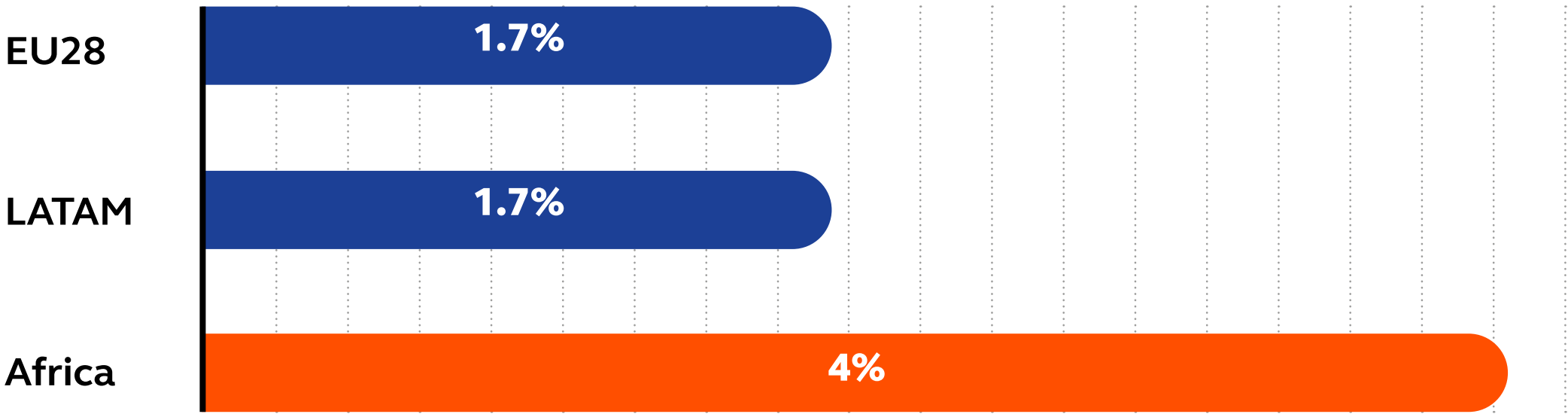
Enabling cross-border trade

Africa’s trade climate is expected to become even more attractive for new market entrants and Pan-African operations.

In 2018, the African Union (AU) brokered the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This development resulted in the world’s single most extensive free-trade zone by including 44 of the AU’s 55 countries in the agreement. AfCFTA aims to reduce tariffs on 90 per cent of all goods and facilitate the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people. The AfCTA was officially launched in January 2021. However, the agreement is being implemented following a phase-based approach, much of which is yet to be finalised. <sup>5</sup>

The five largest economies on the continent are Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Morocco and Egypt. These countries also have the most competitive retail sectors, and their eCommerce sectors are growing rapidly, thanks to several leading companies which operate across the continent. Leading players include Jumia, Konga, Takealot, and Kilimall. <sup>6</sup>

Africa’s economy has significantly expanded over the past decade and on average faster than most other regions



Gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 4% per year between 2010 and 2019, more than twice that of the EU28 (1.7%) and Latin America (1.7%) over the same period. <sup>4</sup>

Wholesale and retail sales (trade services) has become the second largest sectoral contributor to Nigeria’s GDP, 16.4% in 2018 with an estimated market size of

US\$109 billion

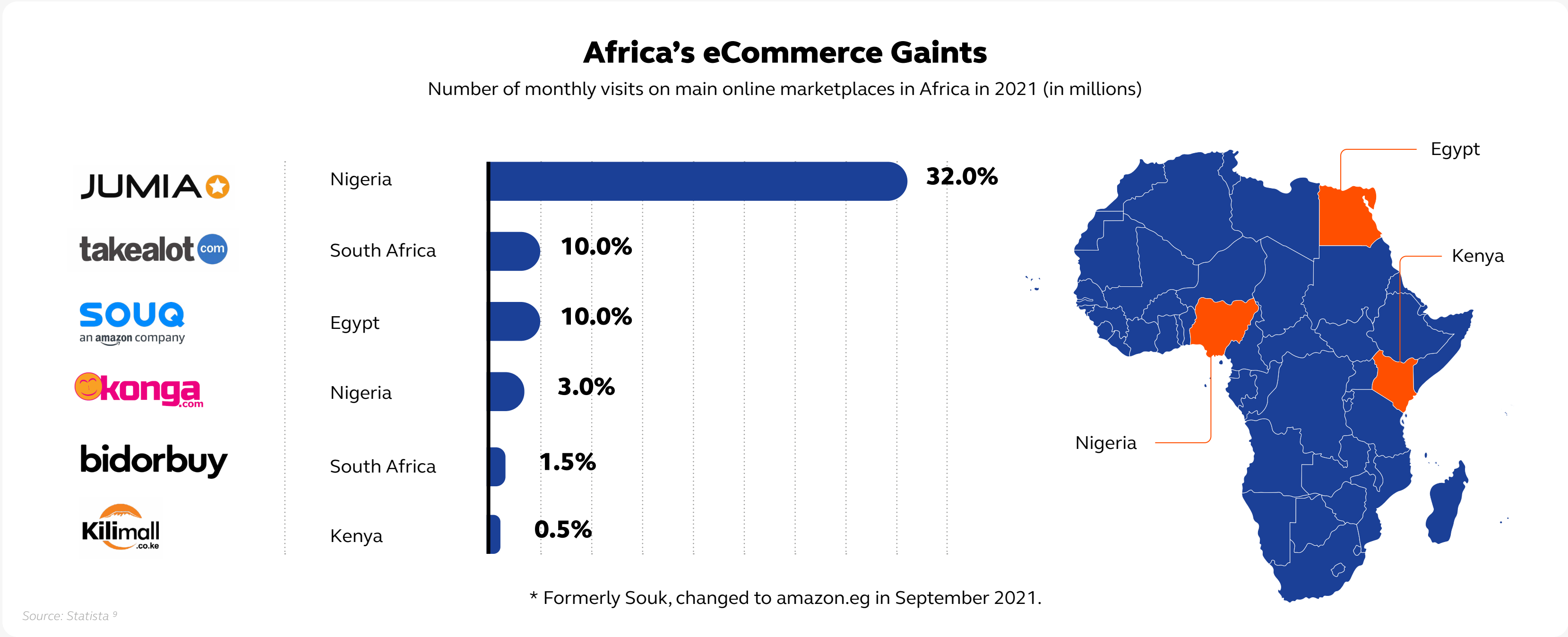
Source: (<https://ngembassy.info/page/investment-in-trade>)

Overview

# Addressing Infrastructural Challenges

African eCommerce faces numerous challenges, like a lack of national street address systems in many African countries and the expense of last-mile delivery. Most Africans also are unbanked.<sup>7</sup>

Both formal and informal retail are hampered by Africa’s annual shortfall in infrastructure investment, between **US\$67 billion** and **US\$107 billion**. It hinders development in the logistics sector as it imposes a 40-60% surcharge on the cost of goods.<sup>8</sup>



The eCommerce sector is not just facing infrastructural challenges – there is a need to educate consumers about online retail and gain their trust. According to a 2021 Boston Consulting report, 40 per cent of African smartphone users do not know how to make purchases online. Education and trust are the predominant factors contributing to this shortfall. Among the respondents in the study, 85 per cent indicated they do not know where to find products online, and 82 per cent said they do not trust eCommerce sites (see graph on the next page).<sup>10</sup>

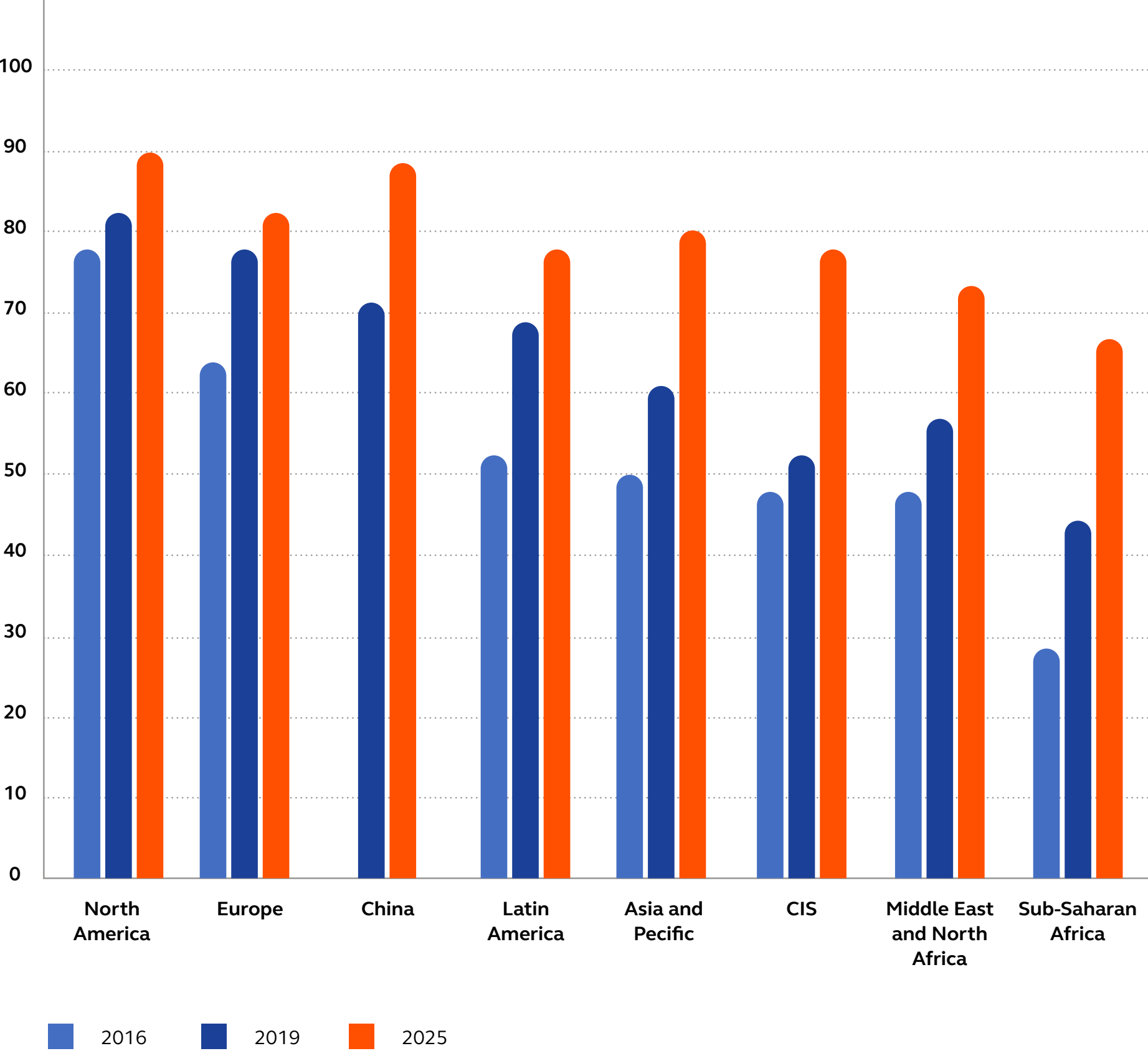
Africa remains under the global eCommerce average - even in Africa’s biggest markets.<sup>11</sup> The continent is seeing a continuous increase in technology-related productivity in sectors like financial services, education, health, retail, agriculture and government. These sectors are predicted to reach a value of between **US\$148 billion** and **US\$318 billion** by 2025.<sup>12</sup> It also is forecasted that the continent will experience the greatest growth in smartphone adoption by 2025.<sup>13</sup>

### Main reasons for not buying online (Urban areas)

- Don't know where to find the products 85%
- Lack of trust in eCommerce sites 81%
- Difficult process to return the product 79%
- Don't know how to buy online 42%
- No bank account 40%
- Long delivery time 36%
- Preference for “touch and feel” before purchase 14%
- Lack of confidence in product quality 8%
- Lack of confidence in online payments 6%



### Smartphone adoption (Percentage by region)





Overview

# Modernising Informal Retail

Nigeria has established itself as a vibrant hub for new tech businesses, with e-retailer Jumia as one of the country’s biggest success stories. The Carrefour Group partnered with Jumia to offer Carrefour-branded products on their eCommerce website.<sup>14</sup> Jumia also made its NYSE debut in 2019, surpassing a US\$1 billion valuation.<sup>15</sup>

The number of digital shoppers in Africa doubled between 2015 and 2021. The most competitive markets in retail are Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Morocco and Egypt, also the five largest economies on the continent.<sup>16</sup> In these countries, digital buyers purchase clothing, shoes, and consumer electronics.

But while digitalisation is a significant game-changer in Africa’s retail sector, it’s important to note that informal trade remains dominant in consumers’ buying habits.

## Informal Sector

Retailers in the informal sector distribute approximately 80 per cent of all household consumer goods. Informal businesses represent 92 per cent of firms in Nigeria.<sup>17</sup>



**92%**  
Informal Businesses

**80%**  
All Household Consumer Goods

Source: CFC Africa Insights – Rising to the Digital Challenge in Africa, available at <https://casablancafinancecity.com/rapports-africainsights/?lang=en>



**Forward-thinking entrepreneurs and startups are launching e-Logistics and eCommerce supply chain startups to address infrastructural challenges informal traders experience.**

These B2B startups provide 24/7 marketplaces from which informal retailers can order stock and consolidate highly fragmented supply chains to allow retailers to pay as they go, providing higher profit margins for smaller and informal businesses. The new partnerships and business models that result from these initiatives are expected to drive significant transformation in informal trade.<sup>18</sup>

Wasoko is one of the continent’s fastest-growing B2B retailers. They partner with key stakeholders in distribution hubs that they manage and connect digitally to corner shops. Shop owners can order stock by phone, ensuring their products are consistently available and company agents fulfil them. Thanks to technology originating from Mobile Money, B2B companies like Wasoko can also use data to offer retailers credit.





# Country Specific Landscapes

Nigeria





# Nigeria

**Commonly referred to as “the giant of Africa” because one out of four Africans is Nigerian.**

According to Kearney’s 2021 Global Retail Development Index, Nigeria is one of the most densely populated nations globally, with one of the most prominent young demographic groups (20 to 39 years old) in Africa, accounting for more than a quarter of the population. The World Population Review reports the median age is 18.4, and the Nigerian population is expected to surpass the United States in 2047.





## Landscape

# Nigeria

Wholesale and retail is the third-largest contributor to their GDP<sup>19</sup> – the food and grocery retail sector alone had total revenues totaling US\$ 6.7 billion in 2020. This revenue had a compound annual growth rate of 5.8 per cent between 2016 and 2020. **The value of the informal retail market is hard to quantify, but is estimated at US\$100 million.**<sup>20</sup>

The most prominent players in the formal retail sector have an average of 14 stores each. This number is meagre compared to African nations like Kenya and South Africa, where the top retailers have approximately 70 and 2 000 premises, respectively.<sup>21</sup>

### Local successes (and foreign failures)

Over recent years, international brands that have entered the retail sector include Swarovski and South Africa's Pick n Pay. Global brands like Mango, Zara, Hugo Boss, Lacoste and Nike operate under franchise agreements. Other retailers had less success in Nigeria, citing business costs, inflation, and volatility as reasons for their eventual departure.<sup>22</sup> South Africa's Shoprite had a well-established presence since it entered the market in 2006, but these challenges led to its eventual withdrawal in 2021.<sup>23</sup> At the time, they had 25 stores in Nigeria. Local brands seem to have a competitive advantage, with players like [FoodCo](#), [Justrite](#), [Ebeano](#), [Jendol](#), [H-Medix](#), and gaining market share.<sup>24</sup>

Nigeria's younger demographic is a driving force in the growth of eCommerce and technological advances in the retail sector. Thanks to their tech-savviness, they are sensitive to the customer journey and prefer convenient, frictionless shopping. International fashion brands, new products and the latest mobile technology are integral to their retail habits. On the other end of the spectrum, most Nigerian households are low income and price-sensitive, preferring traditional, informal and secondhand retail offerings.<sup>25</sup>

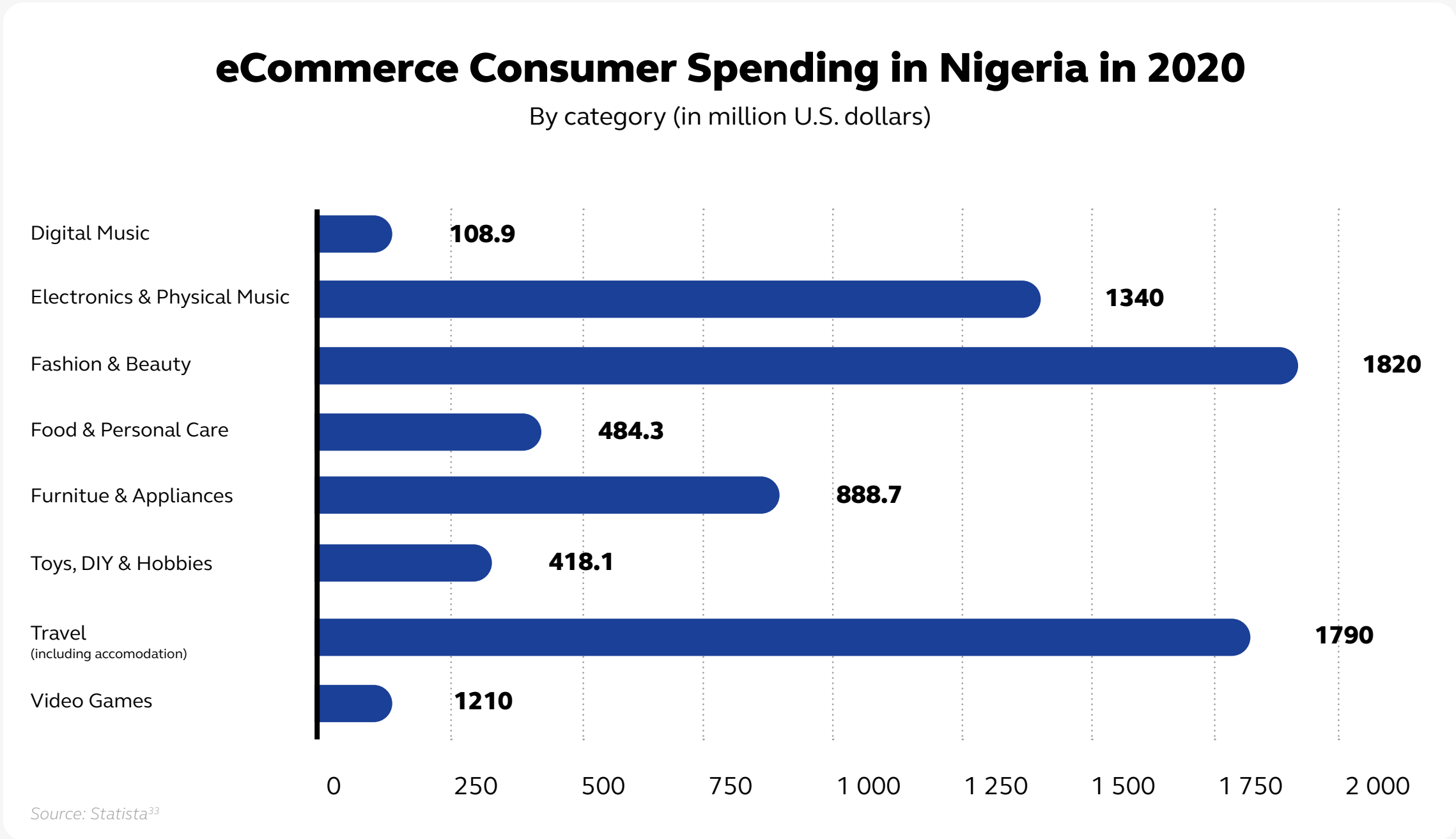
As in most retail markets across the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic stimulated growth in eCommerce, attracting many traditional consumers into the e-retail space. However, the growth in this sector remains slow, with a predicted compound growth rate of 13 to 15 per cent between 2020 and 2025.<sup>26</sup>

Leading players in the Nigerian eCommerce Market include [Jumia](#), [Konga](#) and [PayPorte](#).<sup>27</sup> Other notable e-retailers are [Jiji](#), [Ebeosi](#) and [Kusnap](#). One of the fastest-growing online stores in the Nigerian market is [zikelcosmetics.com](#), which achieved sales of about **US\$0.5 million** in 2021. Its revenue growth amounted to 347% in the previous year.<sup>28</sup>

FoodCo launched an online supermarket in 2020 – a first in the Nigerian grocery retail space. The company claims to have created a seamless customer experience that is comparable to the brick-and-mortar experience. Customer enquiries, orders and deliveries are handled through instant messaging services like WhatsApp.<sup>29</sup>







### Limited digital transformation

While internet usage continues to rise in Nigeria, digitalisation is yet to drive significant transformation in the standard brick and mortar retail sector. Local retailer FoodCo is one of only two multi-channel retailers in the country. This is because online supermarkets tend to have limited product offerings compared to physical stores. FoodCo is managing to be successful by offering more variety and harnessing technology like Whatsapp to provide a seamless shopping experience.<sup>31</sup>

**Nigeria’s booming startup sector identified an opportunity to bridge the gap between traditional, informal and modern retail. For example, startups like Omnibiz and Alzero offer B2B eCommerce platforms connecting FMCG manufacturers to retailers by digitalising supply chains. Flutterwave and PayStack are also tapping into the retail and eCommerce value chain.**

Cash remains king in the Nigerian retail sector. However, more people are using credit cards and mobile money apps. The Nigerian government encourages digital transacting as it provides an opportunity to boost tax revenues.<sup>32</sup> According to data from the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS), Nigeria recorded more than 655 million point-of-sale (POS) transactions valued at US\$13 billion in 2020, a 50 per cent increase over 2019.

The rising availability of 4G networks and smartphones also contributes to the increase in digital transacting. Smaller retailers sell products on social media channels like Facebook and WhatsApp, especially when consumers opt for cash-on-delivery.<sup>33</sup>





# Country Specific Landscapes

Morocco ➔





# Morocco

**Morocco's retail sector is stimulated by favourable regulatory measures that aim to establish the country as a commercial and financial hub linking Africa and Europe.**

The nation is attracting considerable investment from the foreign and private sectors. Most of their foreign direct investment comes from France and Spain.<sup>34</sup>

Traditional retail – often family-owned or at open-air markets - still dominates the Moroccan market. Modern retail formats operate primarily in urban populations like the Casablanca-Rabat region and smaller cities like Agadir, Tangier, Fes and Meknes.<sup>35</sup>





# Landscape

## Morocco

The Kingdom has seen a significant increase in supermarket chains operating in the sector. The number of large and medium-sized supermarkets, and hypermarkets doubled between 2014 and 2020. This increase represents 20 per cent of the sector’s market share in 2020 against 12 per cent in 2014.<sup>36</sup> Brick and mortar supermarkets are expected to expand to account for 30 per cent of all retail sales by 2025 – a 10 per cent increase on the current 20 per cent.<sup>37</sup>

According to a study by the Sunergia Group, the four major brick and mortar retail players are Marjane, Label’vie, BIM and Awak Assalam (see figure).



Other notable players include [Fawaz Alhokair Company](#), a relatively new player in the local retail market, planning to launch 25 stores over the next ten years. French neighbourhood supermarket chain [U Express](#) and big retailers like [IKEA](#) and [Decathlon](#) are also making inroads in the market.<sup>38</sup>

On the digital transformation front, the [Label'Ve Group](#) (operator of Carrefour stores) and [Jumia Group](#) launched a home delivery service with flexible payment options in 2020. Cash on delivery remains the norm in the market, but credit card use is on the rise.







Morocco is the 60th largest market for eCommerce globally, with a revenue of US\$1 billion in 2021.<sup>39</sup> Morocco's high internet penetration rate of 75 per cent enhances the sector's growth.<sup>40</sup> The industry demonstrated significant year-on-year growth during the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2021, eCommerce activity spiked with a 48.4 percent increase in transactions and 30.5 percent in spending compared to 2020.<sup>41</sup>

**The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated online food retail**, and many Moroccan grocery retail chains launched their own apps and delivery services. The Kingdom had 1,000 active eCommerce websites in 2020 – 300 more than in 2019. Online payments also increased by 46.5 percent.<sup>42</sup>

The biggest player in the Moroccan eCommerce Market is fashion retailer [Shein.com](#), which had a revenue of **US\$35 million** in 2021, followed by [Electroplanet.ma](#) at **US\$10 million** and [Zara.com](#) at **US\$10 million**.<sup>43</sup>

## A price sensitive market

By the third quarter of 2021, online purchases by consumers aged 15 to 64 amounted to 29 per cent of total purchases. The popularity of online price comparison services reflects the market's price sensitivity – no fewer than 14 per cent of digital users utilise these services. A total of 11 per cent of digital users ordered groceries on the internet.<sup>44</sup>

Many eCommerce transactions happen outside the banking circuit, thanks to many businesses offering cash as a payment option. However, digital payments are increasing, with 67 per cent of online consumers paying their bills online, according to payment service CMI.<sup>45</sup>

A further breakdown of CMI's findings indicates that 37 per cent of these consumers spent money on fashion, and 27 per cent paid online for water and electricity usage, airline tickets, telecommunications and hotel accommodation. Meal delivery services are also increasing through services like Glovo and Jumia, with 24 per cent of e-consumers making purchases in this segment. Streaming services like Netflix, Spotify and YouTube take up 23 per cent of online purchases.<sup>46</sup>

Like other retail leaders on the continent, B2B startups like [Chari.ma](#) and [WaystoCap](#) are starting to play a significant role in modernising the traditional retail sector.<sup>47</sup>





# Country Specific Landscapes

South Africa 





# South Africa

According to KPMG, retail is the third-largest sector of the South African economy, with a prevalent divide between the informal and formal retail industries.<sup>48</sup>





Landscape

South African Informal Trade

Informal retail comprises spaza shops, small-scale fresh produce vendors, flea markets, and hairdressers. [The 2021 South African Township Marketing Report](#) found that spaza shops contribute 5.2% to South Africa’s GDP, employing 2.6 million people, and at least five million individuals were working in the informal sector in August 2021.<sup>49</sup> It is estimated that 90% of transactions in this sector are in cash.<sup>50</sup>

Lower-end grocery retail chains like Shoprite capitalise on the growth of the middle class, offering value-added services such as money withdrawals and transfers, event and flight tickets and iTunes or Google Play vouchers. Clothing retailers like Mr Price, Ackermans and PEP also offer financial services such as personal loans and insurance.

They explore opportunities to bridge the gap between formal and informal retail through brands like Usave, which offers their products in a smaller format as a no-frills discounter.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to Shoprite, key players in the food retail sector include Checkers (owned by Shoprite), Pick n Pay, Food Lovers’ Market, Spar and Woolworths. Dischem and Clicks dominate the health and beauty retail sector.



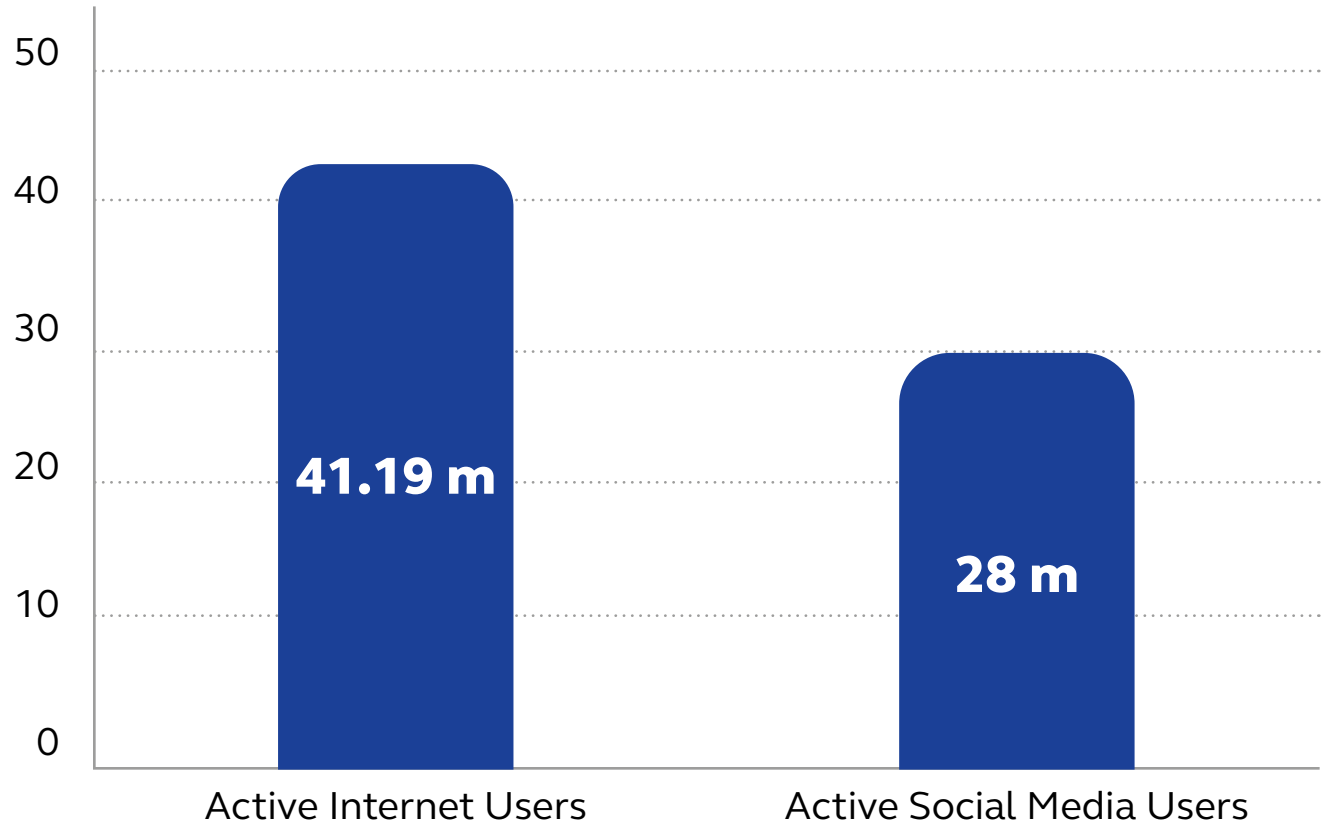
5.2%  
GDP contribution

2.6 million  
employees

90%  
cash transactions

Digital Population in South Africa

as of January 2022 (in millions)



More than 40 million South Africans out of the country’s estimated population of 60 million are active Internet users.

Source: Statista<sup>52</sup>



### Online retail is booming (thanks to Covid-19)

Retailers are also leveraging technology to drive sales and better engage with customers – especially with the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>53</sup> Total growth in online retail amounted to 66 percent in 2020, at a value of **US\$1.8 billion**. Grocery purchases increased by 54 per cent, and clothing by 56 per cent.<sup>54</sup>

The increase in eCommerce purchases in the grocery sector can largely be ascribed to retailers harnessing app-based technology to make the shopping experience faster and more convenient. Checkers launched their **Sixty60** delivery service at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, providing consumers with access to groceries through their Sixty60 app and delivering purchases within 60 minutes. By 2022, they were processing and delivering up to 10 000 orders per day. Direct competitor **Pick n Pay** and higher-end retailer Woolworths have followed suit with their **Woolies Dash** service.<sup>55</sup>

Industry experts forecast that this growth is expected to gain momentum, reaching growth figures as high as 100 per cent year-on-year over the next few years. Omnichannel retailers are experiencing exceptionally high growth figures, although their online gains have been partly offset by declines in foot traffic in their brick-and-mortar stores.<sup>56</sup>

The biggest player in South Africa’s eCommerce sector is **Takealot.com**, which reported a revenue of **US\$602 million** in 2021. Another significant market player is **Superbalist**, which noted **US\$85 million** in revenue in the same year. Omnichannel food and clothing retailer **Woolworths** reported **US\$57 million** in revenue in their eCommerce activity. **Together, these three stores account for 15 per cent of South Africa’s online revenue.**<sup>57</sup>

One of the fastest-growing omnichannel stores in the South African eCommerce market is new market entrant **decathlon.co.za**, who reported sales of about US\$5.1 million in 2021 – a spike of 266 per cent over the previous year.<sup>58</sup>

### Cash remains king

No fewer than 90 per cent of transactions in South Africa are still cash-based.<sup>59</sup> Digital payments are more likely to be prevalent in higher-income sectors.<sup>60</sup> QR code-based payment services like **Zapper** and **Snapscan** are popular amongst higher-end consumers, and contactless payment methods through smartphones and -watches are also becoming more prevalent.

The entry of more accessible electronic payment devices – previously limited to larger retailers – is transforming payment methods in the informal sector. One of these service providers is Yoco, a local fintech company, which reported an increase from 80 000 merchants in 2020 to 120 000 in 2021.<sup>61</sup>

Other B2B startups are capitalising on the informal sector by providing logistical and financial support. One of these startups is **Zande**, which cuts out the intermediaries and makes bulk purchases directly from manufacturers. They also provide last-mile delivery to spaza shops through their driver program. Other players in this field include Shopit, Vuleka and Shelfline.<sup>62</sup>



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As a third-party eCommerce service, **OneCart** is also gaining popularity as an on-demand grocery delivery service. They have partnered with retailers like **Pick n Pay, Food Lovers’ Market, Dischem, Clicks** and wholesaler **Makro** as part of their delivery service from brick-and-mortar stores.





# Country Specific Landscapes

Kenya ➔





# Kenya

**With supermarkets taking up 30 to 40 per cent of trade, Kenya's retail sector is said to be the second most highly developed in Africa.<sup>63</sup>**

The industry showed significant growth in recent years – between 2014 and 2019 alone, the number of retail stores has grown by 54 percent.<sup>64</sup> In 2021, the retail sector contributed 8.1 percent of the country's GDP.<sup>65</sup>





## Landscape

# Kenya

Shopping habits seem to be transforming in Kenya, with more consumers moving from informal to formal retail. Their basket values are rising at a significant rate – over the past year there was a 67 per cent increase. This is a clear indication that consumers’ incomes are on the rise.<sup>66</sup>

While basket values might reflect an increase in disposable income, it’s vital to remember that over 80 percent of Kenyans are employed in the informal sector. The average formally employed Kenyan earns around 785 USD per month, and half of Kenyan households earn less than US\$100 per month.<sup>67</sup> Urbanisation is happening rapidly. However, the greater majority of the population still lives outside urban areas - according to the World Bank, only 30 per cent of Kenyans live in cities.<sup>68</sup>

Nakumatt and Tuskys were key players in the Kenyan market until they went under due to infighting among family members, excessive debts, tax-related issues and poor management. This created an opportunity for new brands to enter the market, giving rise to retailers such as Naivas, Carrefour, Quickmart, Cleanshelf Supermarket, and Kipchimatt Supermarket.<sup>69</sup> Dominating the high-end market is Carrefour. <sup>70</sup> South African players Shoprite and Massmart had stores in this segment, but both brands exited the Kenyan market in 2021, citing economic challenges and operational complexities as reasons for their departure.<sup>71</sup>

Kenya’s eCommerce market grew exponentially during the Covid-19 pandemic, as in most countries. A 2021 study by Mastercard revealed that 79 per cent of Kenyan consumers had shopped more online during the lockdown.<sup>72</sup> Kenya’s eCommerce market grew by 44 per cent in 2021 – significantly higher than the global average of 29 per cent. It is the 54th largest market in the worldwide eCommerce landscape and recorded a revenue of US\$2 billion in 2021.<sup>73</sup>

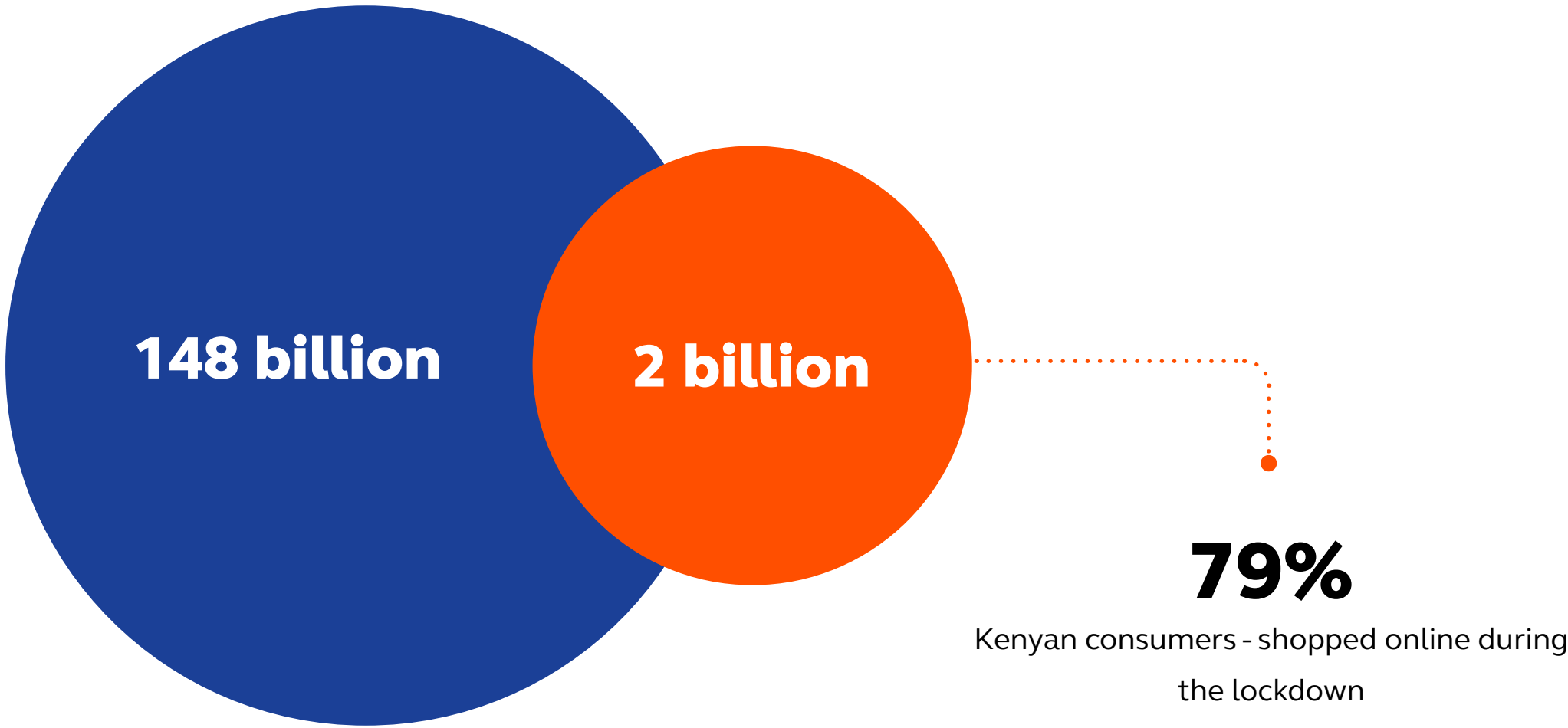
## Infrastructural challenges

Logistical costs remain a challenge, especially in transporting and delivering goods. The major contributing factors to these difficulties are infrastructure and fuel costs.<sup>74</sup>

[Mydawa.com](#) is the most significant player in the Kenyan eCommerce market in terms of earnings. The store had a revenue of **US\$9 million** in 2021. Next in line is [Jumia](#), which reported revenue of **US\$4 million**, and [Phoneplace Kenya](#), with **US\$3 million** revenue.<sup>75</sup> But while MyDawa outshines its competitors in terms of revenue, Jumia is consumers’ favourite online shopping platform. According to numbers released by Statista, 42 per cent of respondents prefer Jumia above competitors like [Kilimall](#) (11 per cent), [OLX](#) (7 per cent), [Alibaba](#) (6 per cent) and [Facebook Marketplace](#) (4 per cent).<sup>76</sup>

### Kenya vs Global Average

Value in US\$







One of the fastest-growing online stores in the Kenyan market is [Advanced Builders](#), which recorded sales of about US\$0.2 million in 2021. This amounts to a 93 per cent improvement on the previous year.<sup>77</sup>

Phoneplace Kenya operates in the largest eCommerce segment in Kenya, being Electronics and Media. **This segment alone accounts for 41 per cent of the eCommerce revenue in Kenya.** Fashion is the second-largest segment at 31 per cent, followed by Furniture and Appliances (13 per cent), Toys, Hobbies and DIY (8 per cent) and Food and Personal Care (7 per cent).<sup>78</sup>

Social-commerce or community-focused eCommerce is revolutionising retail in Kenya, with businesses like [Tushop](#) providing smaller community retailers an opportunity to buy fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) online. These goods are then distributed within their communities, saving consumers up to 60 per cent on groceries compared to buying in supermarkets, micro-retailers or informal traders. They are in the process of expanding throughout Nairobi after generating US\$3 million in pre-seed financing, led by [4DX Ventures](#).

In addition to Tushop, [Marketforce](#) offers a similar, albeit more formal B2B service. They developed the RejaReja app, allowing informal traders to digitally order and pay for products.<sup>79</sup> The startup managed to secure an astonishing US\$40 million in its first capital financing round.<sup>80</sup>

## Mobile Money Matters

Kenya is taking the lead in Africa with digital payments. According to a 2022 survey by Visa, 71 per cent of businesses in Kenya use cash as a means of payment, compared to the much higher use of cash in South Africa (90 per cent) and Nigeria (94 per cent). Most digital payments concentrated on food, entertainment, tours and accommodation, agriculture, transport and delivery, and professional services.<sup>81</sup>

An impressive 94 per cent of Kenyans use mobile money, and 44 per cent of them increased their usage of mobile money during the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>82</sup> [M-PESA](#), launched by [Safaricom](#) in 2007, is widely viewed as Africa's biggest success story in the mobile money market – and it originated in Kenya, establishing it as a leader in financial inclusion. No fewer than 30 million Kenyans utilise this service.<sup>83</sup>





# Country Specific Landscapes

Senegal >





# Senegal

Strategic market research service Euromonitor views Senegal as one of twenty “future markets” globally that will notably impact the consumer goods landscape.

Regarded as one of the most stable countries in Africa, it also suffers from a 46 per cent poverty level. Despite this, Senegal has the second-fastest growing economy in West Africa.<sup>84</sup>





# Landscape

## Senegal

According to the CIA World Factbook, Senegal’s median age is 19.4 years. This younger demographic can potentially drive Senegal’s retail sector to new heights, especially from a digital transformation perspective.<sup>85</sup>

The healthy growth in Senegal’s retail sector is already reflected in its average year-on-year increase of 4.13 per cent between 2010 and 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic’s impact is evident in that the industry expanded by 31.2 per cent in the second quarter of 2021. This starkly contrasts with when stringent lockdown measures were in place – in the second quarter of 2020, the retail sector contracted by 20.1 per cent.<sup>86</sup>

The per capita expenditure in Senegal is below the Sub-Saharan average, with major disparities between urban and rural areas.<sup>87</sup> Almost half of the population (45 per cent) lives in cities.<sup>88</sup> In the capital, Dakar, expenditure is twice as high as the national average.<sup>89</sup>

With many citizens enjoying higher income levels, they can explore and afford new goods and services. The rising upper-middle class is driving demand for supermarket chains, increasing official retail statistics. This wealthier demographic prefers international brands, primarily American and French products, which are generally perceived as better quality than local products.<sup>90</sup> Senegalese women are big consumers of beauty and skin-care products and are attracted by American brands.<sup>91</sup>

### The dominance of international players

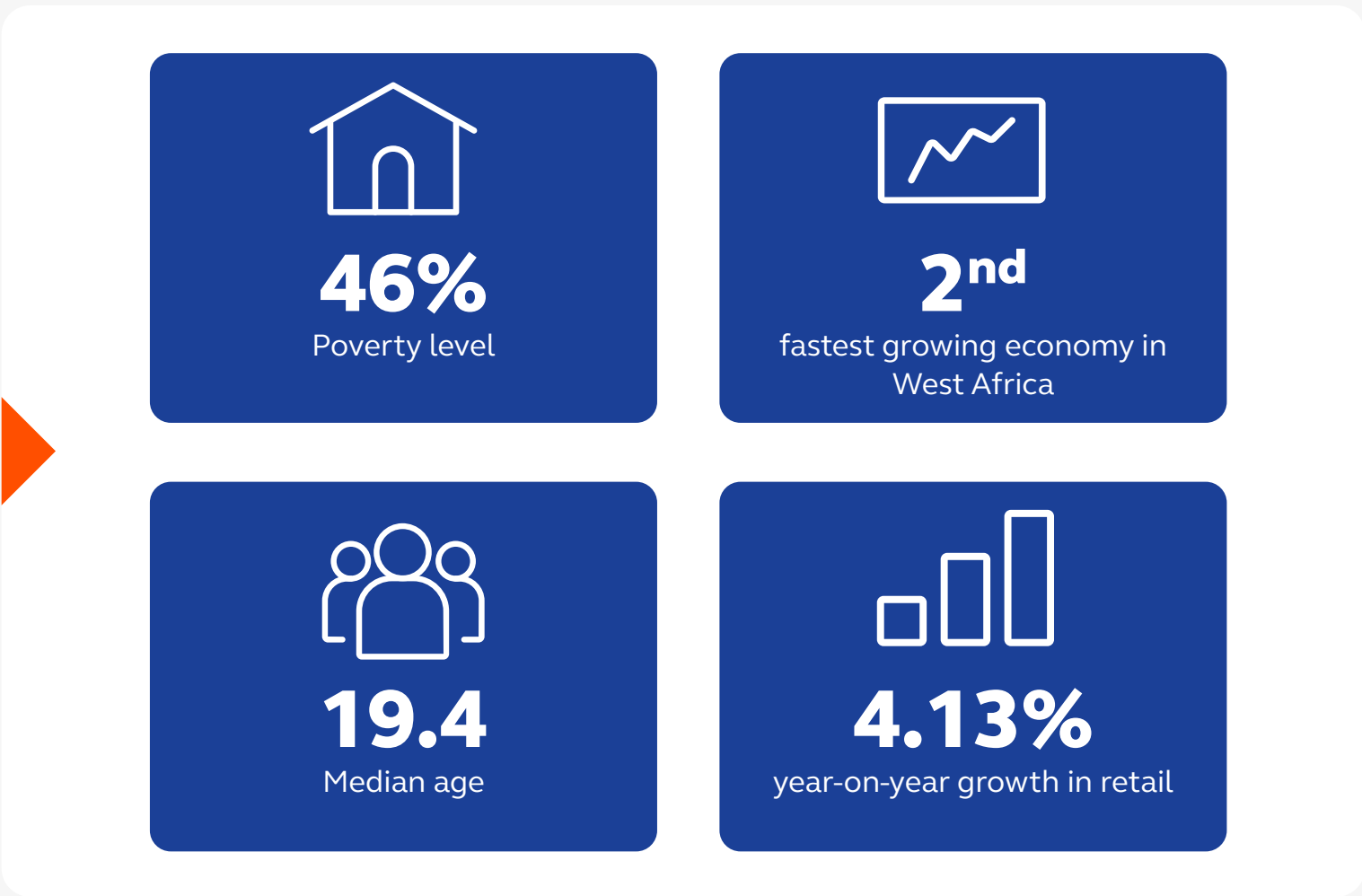
Leading the hypermarket and supermarket landscape are French retailers [Auchan Retail](#) and [Casino](#) - situated mostly in Dakar and making up an estimated 2 per cent of the food retail sector.<sup>92</sup>

Another supermarket chain, CityDia, is a subsidiary of Carrefour. They have opened several stores in Dakar and convenience stores at Total petrol stations. Atac, also from France, mainly distributes French brand supermarket products.<sup>93</sup>

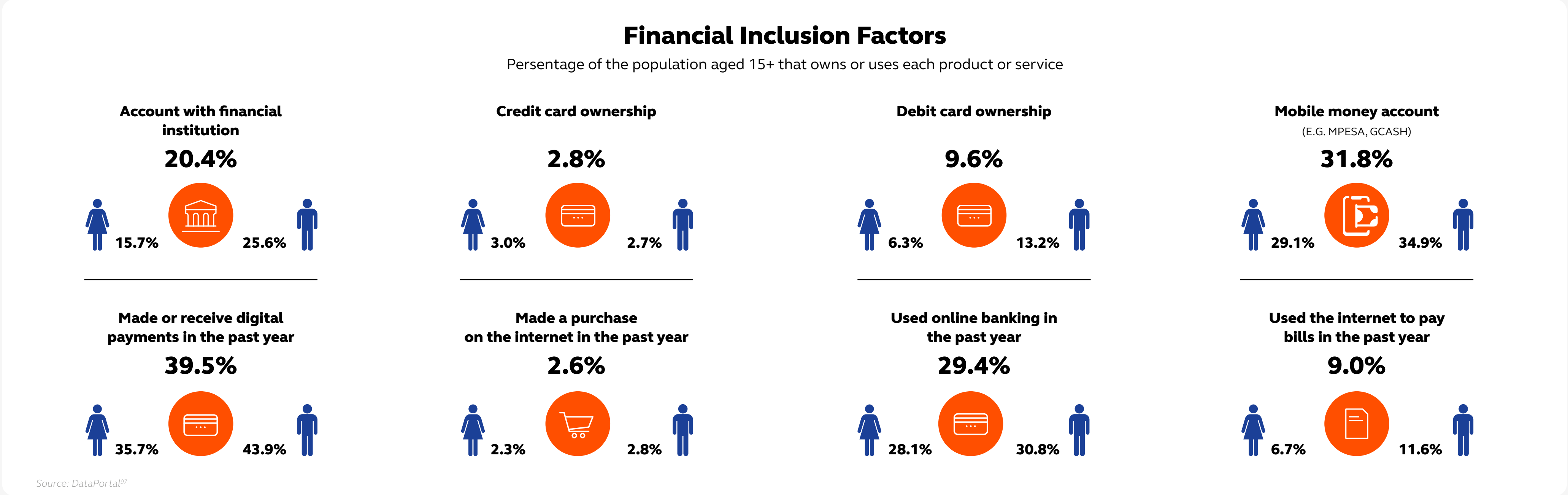
Senegal’s bustling informal sector continues to dominate the Senegalese mass retail market. It consists of thousands of small independent shops, kiosks and traditional open-air markets. This sector accounts for as much as 80 per cent of food wholesale and retail activity.<sup>94</sup>

The retail sector’s consumer appliances and household care segments are driven by young adults’ demand for modern homes. This is because the housing market is gradually transforming from sand-floor shacks to houses with water supply and electricity access.<sup>95</sup>

The Senegalese eCommerce landscape is yet to make a dent in the country’s retail landscape. A marginal 2.6 per cent of the population made online purchases between 2021 and 2022.<sup>96</sup>







According to the Apple App Store’s free downloads rankings, top app players in the Senegalese eCommerce market include Shein, Alibaba.com B2B Trade, Jumia, Amazon, Ali Express, ZARA, Fashion Nova and Pretty Little Thing (PLT).<sup>98</sup>

Recent studies are limited, but according to statistics from 2016 <sup>99</sup>, people between 25 and 34 were the most active in this sector, followed by the 18 to 24 age group. Other findings from the 2016 study concluded that men represented the majority of online transactions at 58.5 per cent.

### Online buyers in Dakar

Most online buyers (61 per cent) were in Dakar, and the most purchased products were fashion items and accessories, jewellery and watches, and electronic products and components. The vast majority of buyers (95 per cent) paid cash on delivery, and Facebook was the most requested social network amongst these buyers.<sup>100</sup>

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the Senegalese government launched a concerted effort to promote the eCommerce sector. Some initiatives included the creation of a public eCommerce platform, projects for internet infrastructure development and legislation governing data collection. The objective of this campaign was to encourage online shopping and ensure deliveries of essential supplies as authorities tried to curb physical contact among residents.<sup>101</sup>

The limited uptake of eCommerce doesn’t mean the Senegalese do not utilise the internet for their money matters. Between 2021 and 2022, 39.5 per cent of the population made digital payments, 29.4 per cent used online banking, and 9 per cent paid bills online.<sup>102</sup>



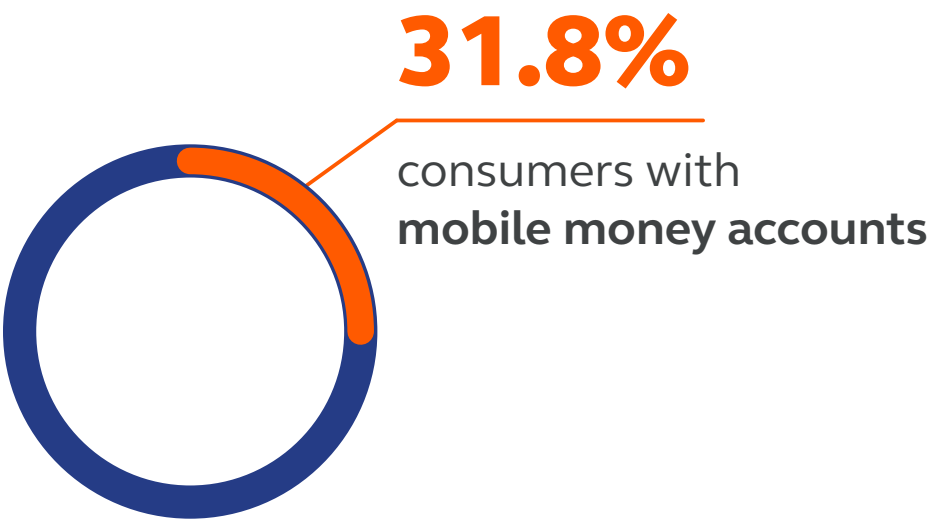
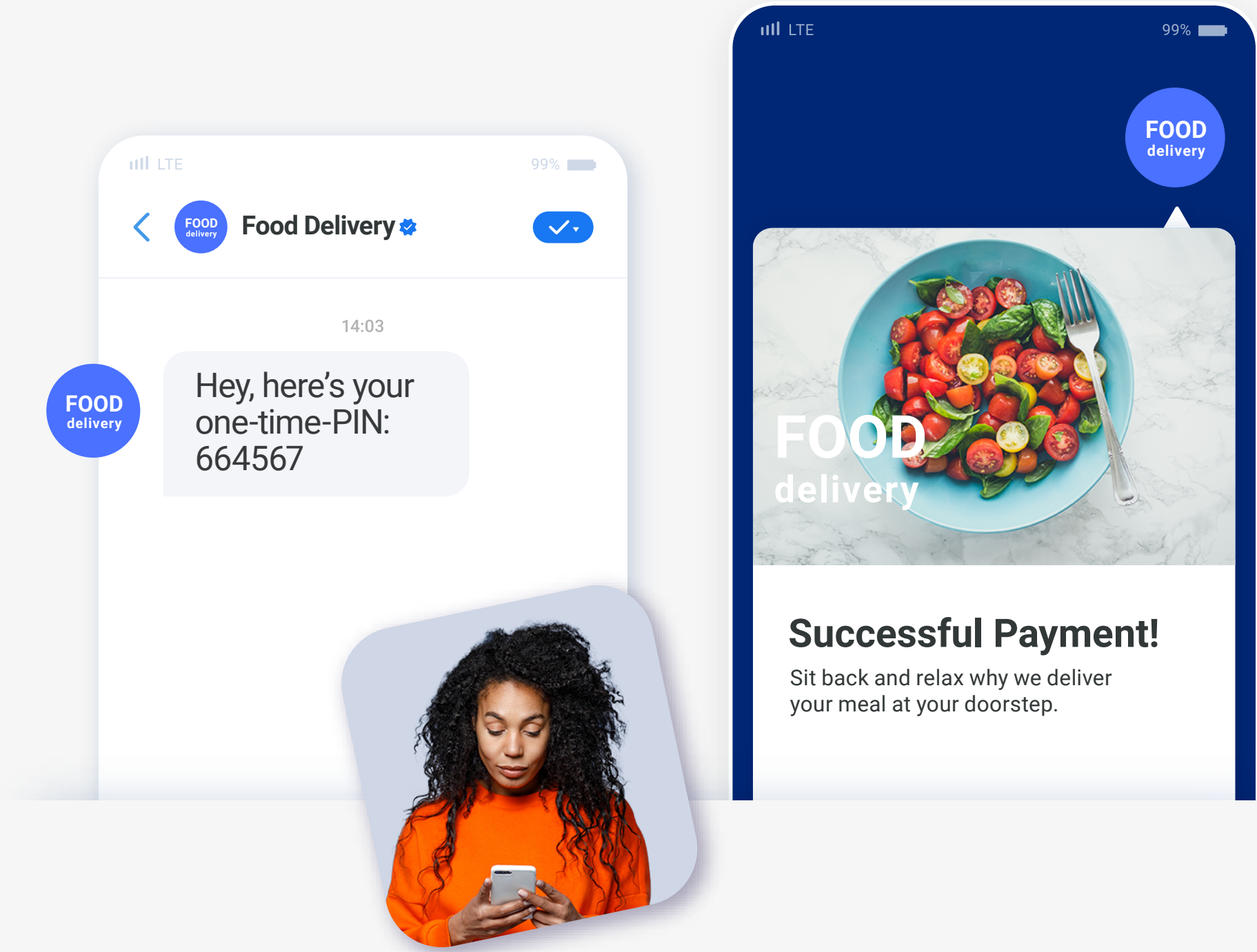
Mobile money payments are taking up a significant portion of transacting. No fewer than 31.8 per cent of consumers have mobile money accounts in Senegal. This is particularly significant, considering only 20.4 per cent of Senegalese have accounts with financial institutions.<sup>103</sup> The leading player in Senegal's mobile money market is Wave, with four to five million people using the service. Wave processes billions of dollars in annual volume and has partnerships with UBA and Ecobank for its Senegal operations.<sup>104</sup>

### Bridging gaps in informal trade

Similar to neighbouring states like Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda, where there is a continuing divide between informal and formal trade, startups are launching innovative, tech-based solutions to mobilise informal retail. [Wasoko](#), a Nairobi-based B2B company, is one of these startups that made headlines in the first quarter of 2022 when it managed to raise US\$125 million in a Series B round of funding and rebranded as Wasoko. This coincided with their entry into Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, their first entry into West Africa.



A notable B2B startup that originated in Senegal is [ProXalys](#), which provides a supply service for everyday consumer goods (such as onions and potatoes) with instalment payments and free delivery within 24 hours. In February 2022, the business announced that they managed to raise US\$150 000 in pre-seed funding to deploy their operation in Dakar and other key Senegalese regions.<sup>105</sup>







# The Rise of Mobile Money



# Empowering Consumers

## The Rise of Mobile Money

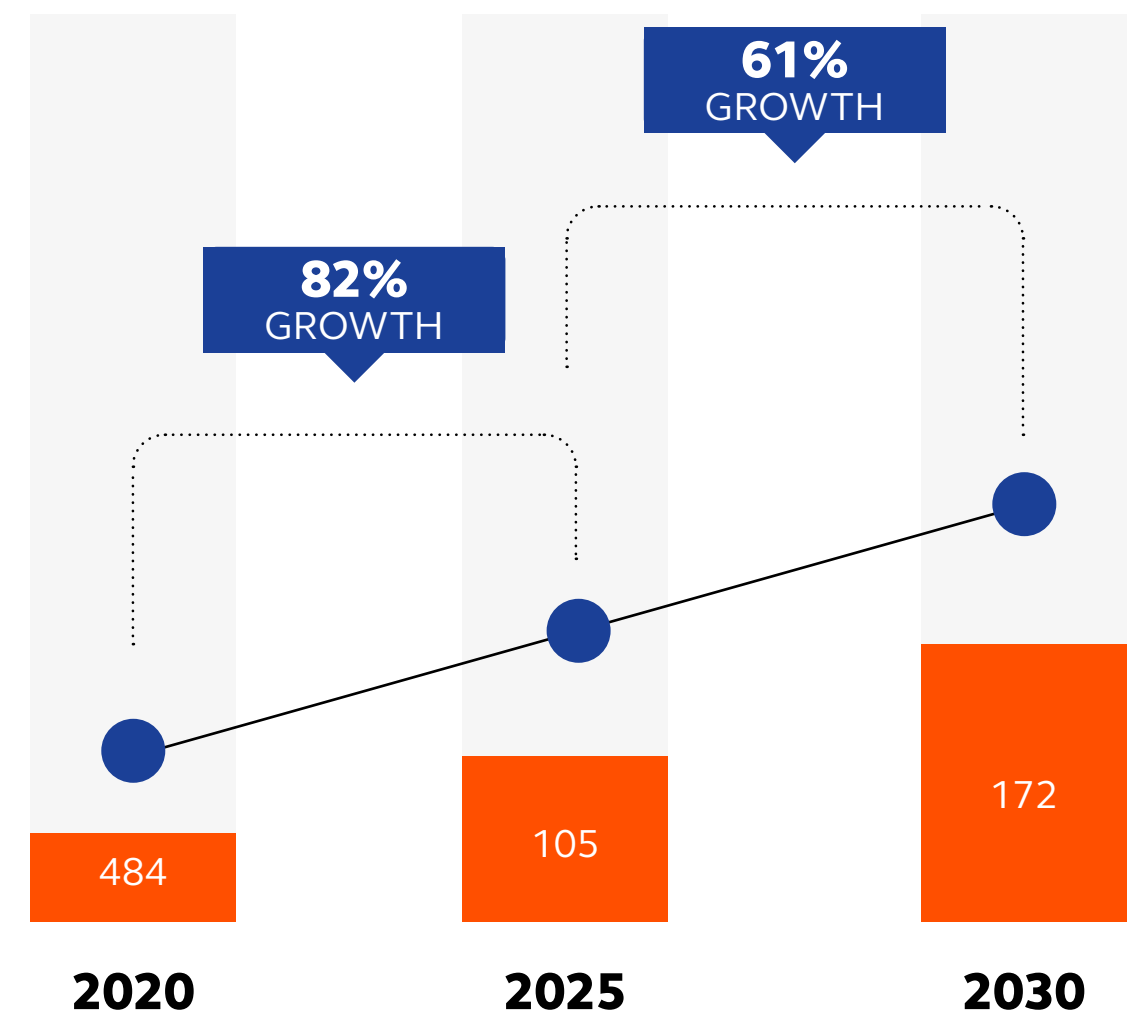
According to Statista, most countries on the continent rely on cash – mainly due to the predominance of informal retail and the unbanked. Even in eCommerce, customers often use cash-on-delivery payments.

However, many analysts believe the annual growth rate of mobile money and other contactless payments might cause the African population to leapfrog the use of credit cards or traditional bank accounts.<sup>106</sup>

PWC expects the volume of contactless payments across Africa to grow by 78 per cent between 2020 and 2025 and then by 64 per cent between 2025 and 2030, making it the continent with the second-fastest-growing cashless payment market in the world.<sup>107</sup>

### Number of cashless transactions in billions

Cashless transactions volume will be more than double by 2030



Source: PWC





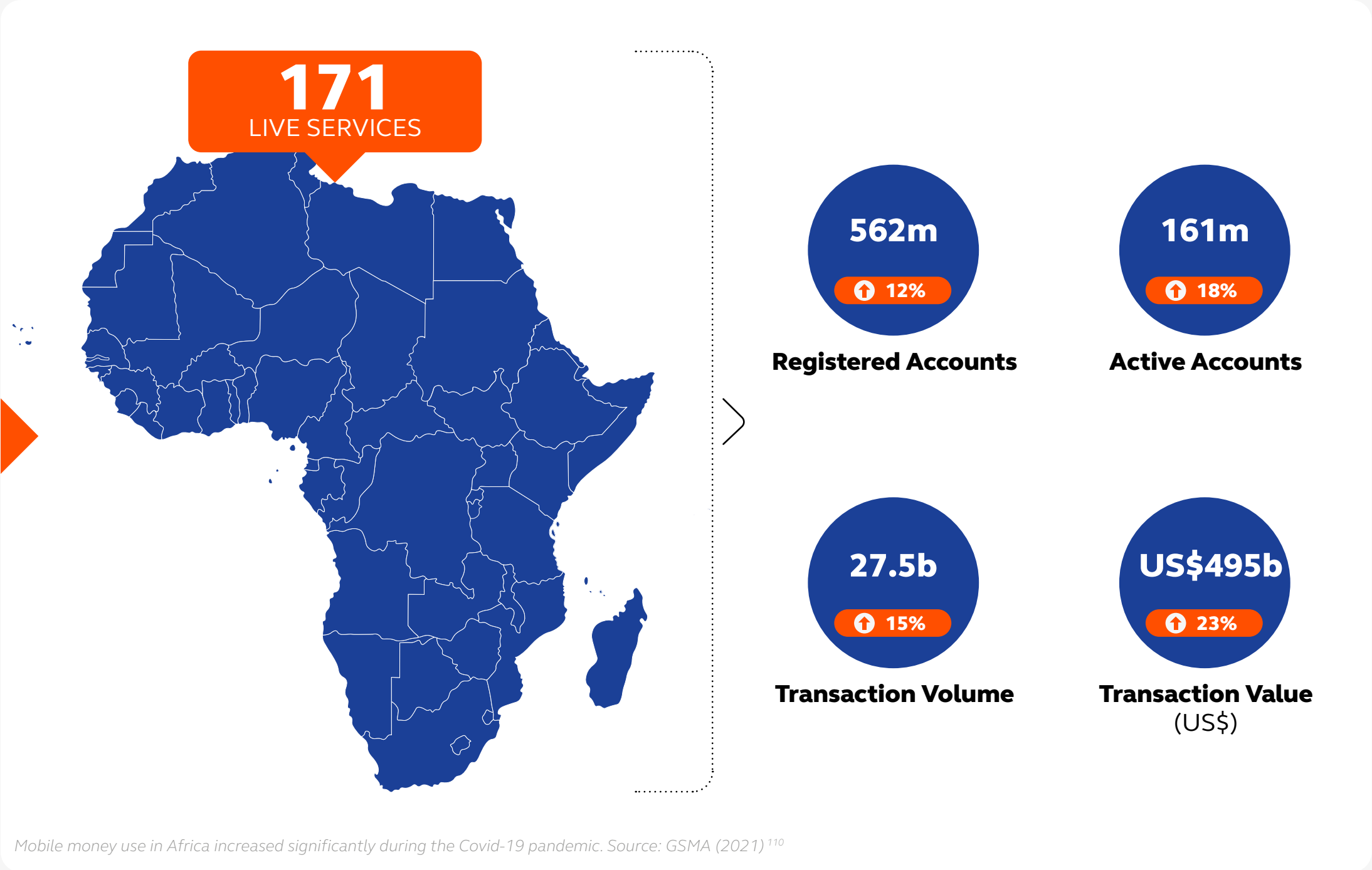
Mobile money has significantly contributed to the bottom line of telecommunication providers in Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone, 144 mobile money providers are driving change in the way consumers transact. Players like M-Pesa, MoMo and Orange Money account for most of the market share.<sup>109</sup>

Mobile money services are provided by telecommunication companies and supported by a network of licensed agents. These mobile money services allow registered users to deposit cash into a virtual wallet and use those funds for payments and purchases, including peer-to-peer (P2P) payments.

Mobile money provides financial inclusion to consumers who don't have access to banking. It also offers a way to participate in the economy without a bank account. According to 2021 data from the GSM Association, registered mobile money accounts in Africa grew 12% to 562 million in 2020, while monthly active accounts were 161 million, an 18% increase. Total transactions hit 27.5 billion (up 15%) valued at \$495 billion (up 23%). It has 171 active mobile money services (see figure).<sup>111</sup>



M-Pesa is viewed as the trailblazer in the African mobile money sector. It is run by Vodafone and Kenyan telecommunications provider Safaricom and provides payment and financial services, even if a customer has no access to a bank account.<sup>112</sup> After being in operation for a decade, more than 50% of Kenya's GDP went through M-Pesa (DW, 2019). In the Ivory Coast, USD 30 million goes through mobile money daily.<sup>113</sup> Over the years, the service has expanded to seven countries, totaling 51 million users in 2022.<sup>114</sup>







**Taking African retail to  
the next level**



# Taking African retail to the next level

African retail has reached a critical moment – an opportunity to meet customers’ shifting behaviours and preferences to gain longer-term customer loyalty. Retailers that don’t prioritise the customer experience risk losing out in this new market.

## Omnichannel solutions are critical to meeting customers’ needs

Urbanisation, access to mobile communications and a growing younger demographic will continue to drive growth and innovation in African retail.

More variety and competition will both contribute to developing a more modern and connected consumer base. Retailers prioritising the customer experience by meeting consumers on their preferred channels will have a competitive advantage. Following an omnichannel approach is the perfect way to make the most of this opportunity.

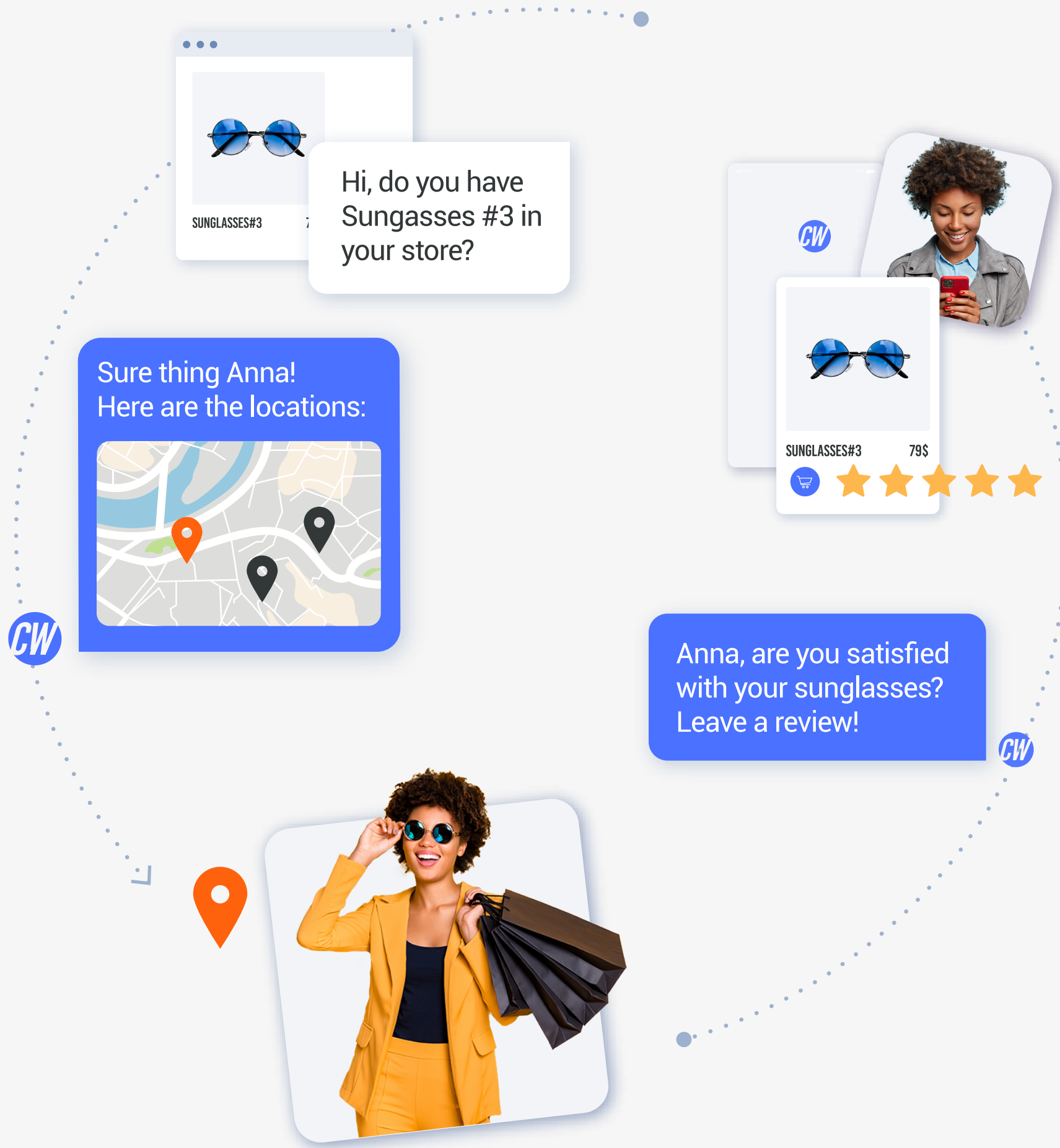
Omnichannel experiences encompass home, in-store, and on-the-go shopping via mobile devices. And each engagement platform requires a different strategy for reaching customers that considers their specific situations and communication preferences.

Retailers can unify all engagement channels and deliver an exceptional experience to their customers with the right technology. That is, meeting them where they are today and communicating in the channel of their choice as we embark on the future of retail.

## Inflation and variety driving higher expectations

As they move from informal to formal retail and eCommerce, African consumers will have more variety.

More variety will also lead to competitive pricing, and factors like rising inflation will make consumers reevaluate priorities and reconsider how and when they spend their money. The vendors and service providers that provide the best customer experience will excel in this competitive space.













## Improving Customer Experience (CX) Innovation is a must

Fundamental to the changing tide in retail is the focus on the customer experience and omnichannel solutions to meet customers where they are, literally and figuratively.

As more retailers enter the African landscape, it will no longer be enough to ensure a desirable in-store or online shopping experience. Empowered consumers will seek – and find – retailers that prioritise customer satisfaction. And as more consumers have modern communication channels like Whatsapp at their disposal, they will expect retailers to engage with them on their platforms of choice.

Forward-thinking retailers will know modern customer satisfaction starts before the customer has even stepped into a store or logged in to a website or mobile app. They will also know it extends after they’ve made a purchase.

### Ensuring an optimal Customer Experience means:

-  **Using data** to understand buyer preferences and target products and communications to those preferences.
-  **Harnessing automation** to deliver contextual interactions with customers where they are and over their preferred channels.
-  **Customer service “in the cloud”** so all agents have real-time access to purchase behaviour, order information, past purchases, home store preferences, and more. From an automated assistant service to speaking directly, customers want interconnected channels. And this is where the digital contact center takes center stage.
-  **Embracing multiple channels** such as SMS, email, and automated chatbots to enhance customer service technology capabilities, freeing up call agents to only focus on the most pressing customer issues.
-  **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** to augment further the potential of customer service and contact center management.
-  **Data security** is a must to ensure consumers and businesses are protected from identity theft.

As African retailers expand and modernise, they have an opportunity to invest in enhancing their omnichannel customer experience, communications, and engagement platform. In doing so, they can entrench themselves in the minds of consumers who want to shop with brands that understand their needs and share their values.”





# A rising need for touchless customer engagement




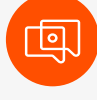

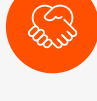
As more Africans move forward with access to retail and the internet, they will want effortless experiences, contactless payment options, and personalised content and offers.

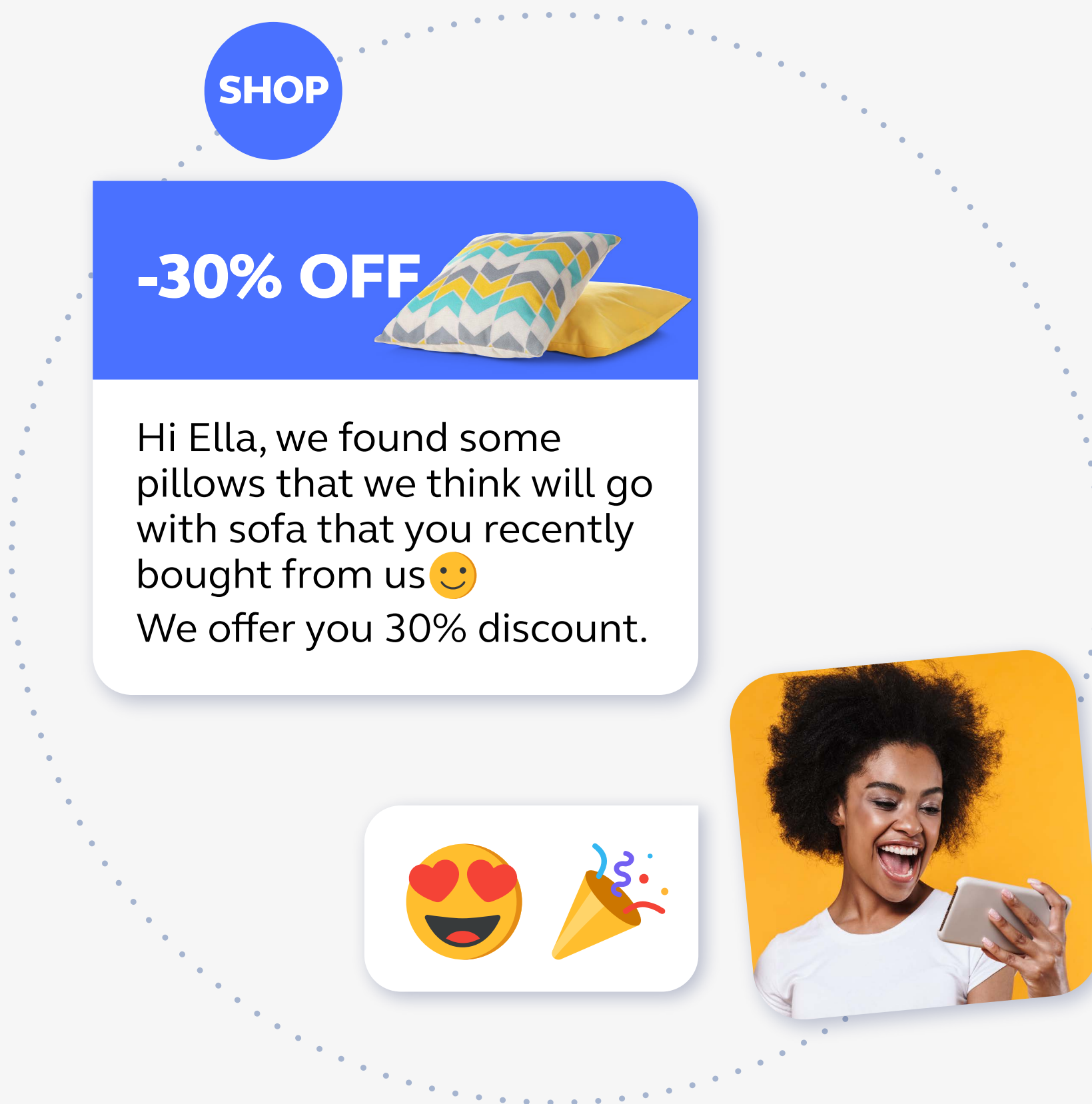
While most Africans might be unbanked, the demand for mobile money solutions and other digital payment forms will make it vital for retailers to adopt touchless engagement strategies for improving everything from employee productivity to customer lifetime value.

Touchless customer engagement provides a wealth of consumer data that can influence how vendors engage, market, upsell, and incentivise customers to remain loyal to your brand. And considering the rising smartphone penetration throughout the continent, it will be non-negotiable to provide a solid, user-friendly app experience.

Whether your business operates on a B2B or B2C basis, providing a satisfactory customer experience will enable you to learn much about your customers’ needs and get closer to them. The engaged, connected consumer is your best customer.

**Touchless engagement can include:**

-  Digital browse and checkout
-  In-app customer service powered by AI chatbots with a friction-free pass off to humans
-  Delivery updates and order refinement
-  Push notifications
-  User authentication
-  Customer satisfaction surveys







# Customer Engagement



## Customer Engagement

# Reimagining Retail with Touchless Customer Engagement

### Contactless shopping, dining, and grocery:

Decrease human interaction by making browsing catalogues, menus, ordering, delivery, and payment digital. Stores can offer complete eCommerce ordering and payment or a hybrid approach enabling in-store appointment booking, self-directed checkout, and payment.

### Getting chatty with chatbots:

Customers have become accustomed to communicating with robots via chatbots and automated SMS messages. For consumers, interacting with keyword-driven chatbots via channels like WhatsApp or SMS means that many of the answers they need from a customer service perspective are available in a matter of moments – for example, a store’s opening hours or a delivery update. Then, when a more personalised, human response is needed, their inquiry can seamlessly escalate to an agent.

### Timely feedback:

Modern messaging also provides a perfect platform for customer feedback. WhatsApp lets customers quickly get in touch about late deliveries or unsatisfactory orders. With swift action, this will minimise the likelihood of customers taking to social media to complain about a service. Messaging also helps manage and coordinate delivery fleets to ensure optimal pickup and delivery times, so everything runs smoothly.

## Building trust through touchless customer engagement strategies

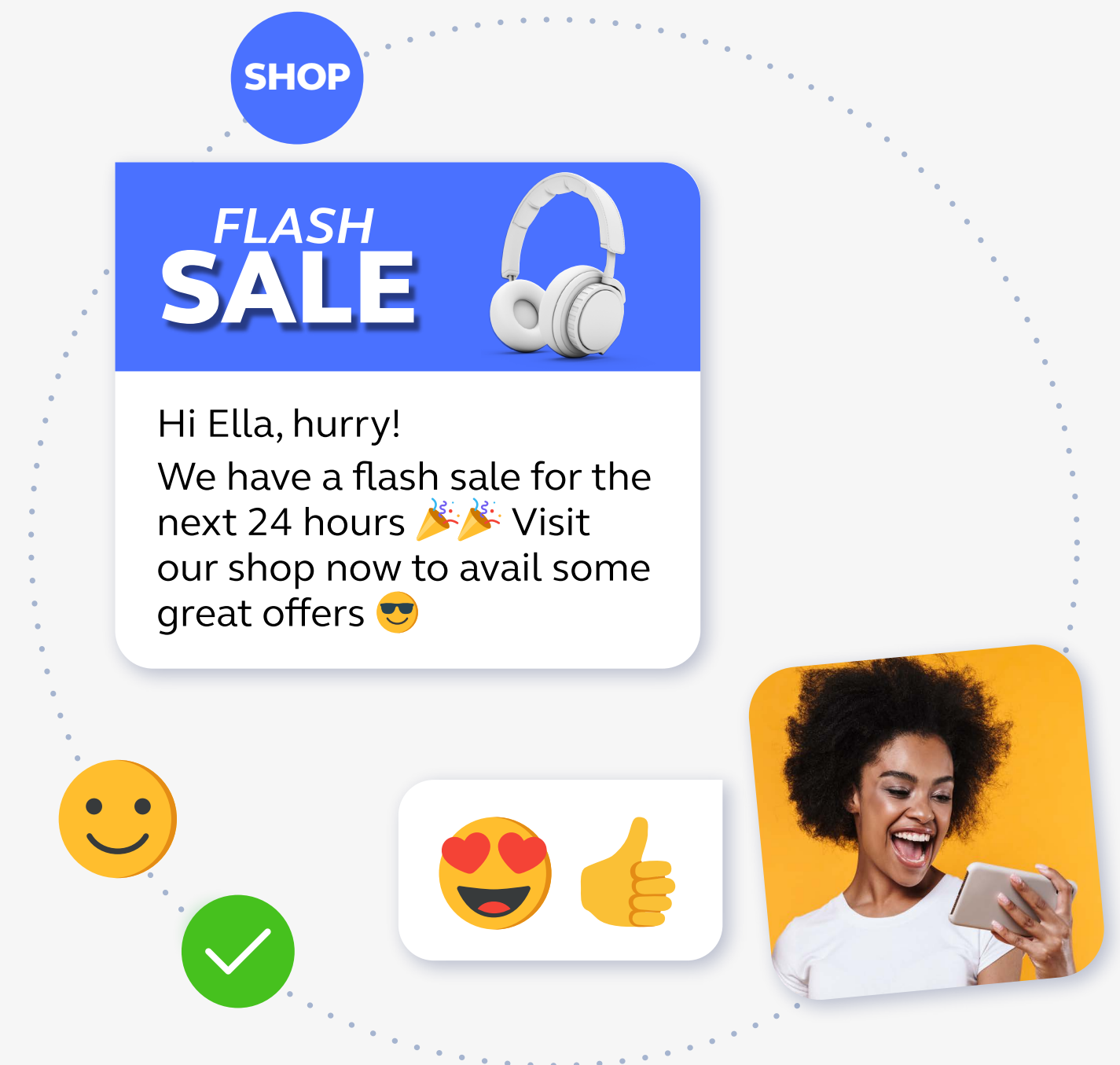
The long-term impact of touchless engagement in customer experience means putting in place technologies and processes that allow customers to choose their preferred communication channels and whether or not they want to opt-in or out of human interaction.

By incorporating Infobip into your customer experience strategy, you can give your customers a choice over how they want to engage—chat, voice, or other virtual experiences.

Ultimately, empowering customers with a choice over how they want to connect, collaborate, and engage helps build trust and is key to establishing long-term customer relationships.

The most crucial change cited by retailers investing to meet the needs of changing consumer expectations is the requirement to support a [connected customer experience](#). More than half of retailers rate [CX Innovation](#) as a priority for transformation over the next three years.

As a result, retailers who create end-to-end journeys that let the customer own the process are the best poised to give customers the experience they demand.





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