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**Making sense of
all the data in your
business operations**

**South Africa's
trade outlook
for 2024**

**5 COST-EFFECTIVE
STRATEGIES TO
OPTIMISE E-COMMERCE
DELIVERY**

**GLOBAL LOGISTICS
EXECS SEE COMING
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**While Transnet
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Why you need to embrace data dashboards

By Mihir Daya, Senior Business Analyst at Transnova Africa



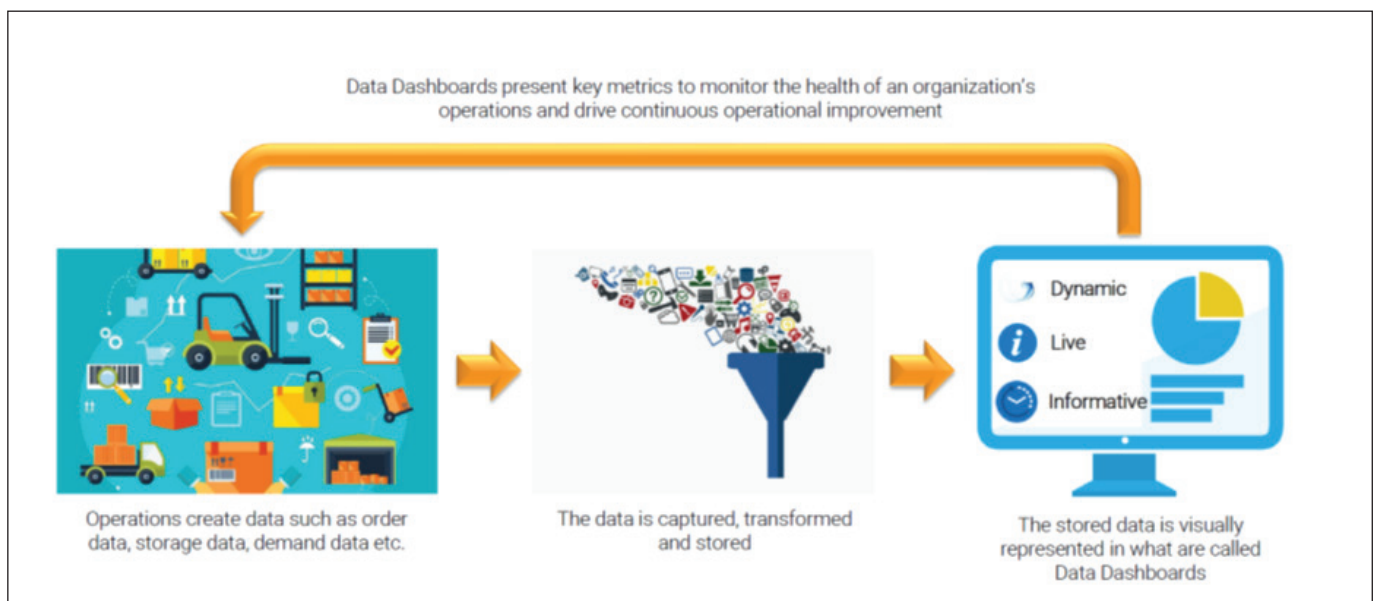
Data dashboards will help you make sense of all the data in your business operations.

Data has changed our lives in so many ways, helping to improve the processes, initiatives and innovations of organisations across different industry sectors through the power of insight. Data improves daily decision-making, but, with so many stats, facts and figures to choose from, it can be daunting to know where to start. Enter data dashboards – one of the best innovations in business intelligence.

A data dashboard is an information management tool that collates big data and visually structures the front end of the data in a dynamic, live, informative fashion. The visual structure of the data tracks, analyses

and presents key metrics to monitor the health of an organisation's operations and drive continuous improvement.

Behind the scenes, a dashboard connects to your files, attachments, services and APIs, but, on the surface, displays all this data in the form of tables, line charts, bar charts and gauges. A data dashboard is the most efficient way to track multiple data sources because it provides a central location for businesses to monitor and analyse performance. Real-time monitoring reduces the hours of analysing and long lines of communication that previously challenged businesses.



Why choose to implement data dashboards?

Data dashboards have an immediate and tangible impact on an operations environment. Key examples are:

- Continuous tracking of business performance (KPIs) at all levels.
- Guiding focused improvement and accurate prioritisation.
- Efficient problem-solving.
- Clear accountability and statistical performance analysis.

Data dashboards allow for informed decisions to be made, resulting in improved delivery and efficiency in an operations environment. The continuous tracking of performance across the operations value chain enables immediate action to be taken where there are constraints or to proactively resolve business disruptions before they occur. The continuous tracking of operations performance and actioning constraints in the value chain results in a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

How will your business benefit from data dashboards?

Most businesses use multiple services to track KPIs and metrics, which takes up time and resources to properly monitor and analyse. Dashboards use raw data from these sources, spreadsheets and databases to create tables, line charts, bar charts and gauges in a central dashboard that users can look at and immediately understand the key metrics they are looking for. Data dashboards simplify end-of-month reporting by allowing users to communicate information at any time without hours of preparation and analysis.

The business questions that a dashboard answers depend upon the industry, department, process and position. Analytical dashboards are typically designed to help decision-makers, executives and senior leaders establish targets, set goals and understand what and why something happened with the same information they can use to implement appropriate changes. An analytical dashboard does this based on insights from data collected over a period determined by the user (i.e. last month, quarter or year).

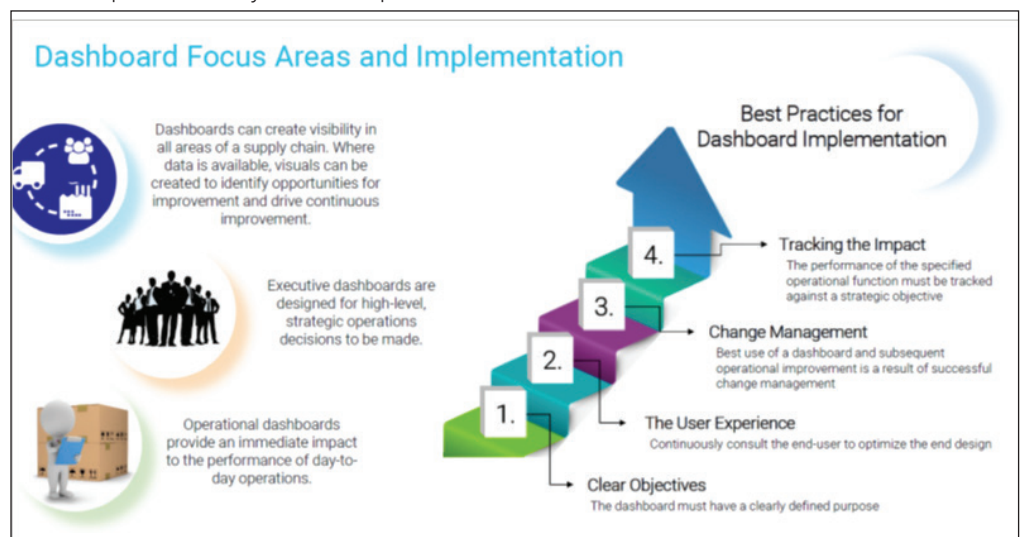
Best practices to implement data dashboards

The best data dashboards answer important questions about your business. Unlike advanced business intelligence tools, dashboards are designed for quick analysis and informational awareness. The following best practices will ensure that the implementation of dashboards in an operations environment sustainably delivers the required visibility. Sustainable visibility results in operations teams and management being able to use data dashboards to identify opportunities for improvement and grow the culture of continuous improvement in the organisation.

1. Clear objectives. Data dashboards are a tool to enable operational improvement; therefore, when developing dashboards, a clear objective for what the tool needs to deliver must be defined. While developing the dashboard, the objective will always be a guiding beacon to ensure the development and final product meets business requirements. An example of a clear objective is using data dashboards to reduce inventory levels across an organisation's central distribution centre (CDC) and network of regional warehouses.

2. End user design. To meet the objectives of the dashboard, it must be designed to ensure the end user will be able to deliver maximum impact from the tool. The end user of the dashboard must be continuously involved in the development of the front-end to ensure immediate acceptance and usage of the dashboard. Depending on the level within an organisation of the user, the design of the dashboard will vary.

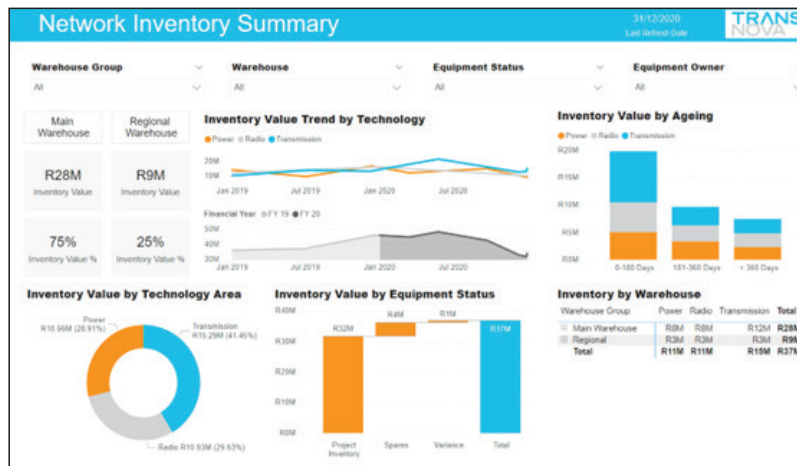
Executive dashboards are designed for high-level, strategic operations decisions to be made. The objectives of the dashboard and the level of information that the executive requires will determine the final structure of the dashboard.



Linked to the previous example, the executive may require the data dashboard to provide the following key metrics:

- Inventory value trends in each of the regional warehouses.
- Aging analysis of the current inventory.
- Flow of goods into and out of each warehouse.
- Monitoring of safety incidents in each warehouse.

Executive data dashboard example.



Operational dashboards provide an immediate impact on the performance of day-to-day operations. The user of the dashboard could vary from a machine operator, inventory controller or warehouse manager to a process engineer. Ensuring the dashboard is designed with, and for, the end user will result in the user being able to immediately put the dashboard tool to use.

Designing dashboards with the end user enhances the change management process, ensuring successful acceptance of the powerful tool into the business's value chain.

3. Change management. The success of implementing a 4IR (Fourth Industrial Revolution) tool into an operations environment is heavily reliant on the success of the change management programme. Due to the clear objective of the dashboard and focus on perfecting the user experience, the change management process is entrenched in the dashboard development.

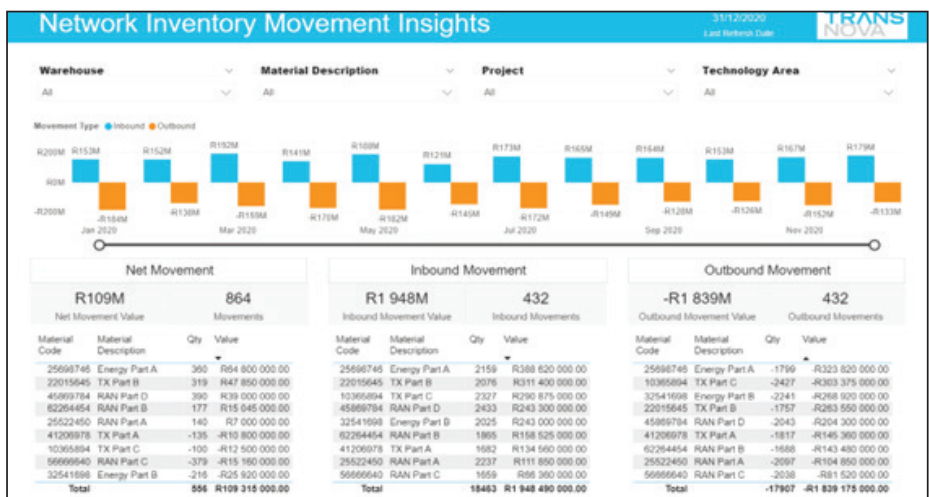
Successful change management will result in immediate use of the data dashboard, leading to improved operational improvement. Along with the end user buying into the dashboard, business rules, processes, training and governance structures are updated to ensure all new dashboard users are prepared to successfully navigate the tool.

4. Tracking the impact.

Dashboards as an operational continuous improvement tool track the performance of the specified operational function linked to its strategic objective. The visibility of the operational performance highlights opportunities for improvement. As per the previous example, a dashboard that provides a view of the inventory level analysis of all warehouses will allow the executive to determine which warehouses have inventory values that are trending in the wrong direction. The executive has a holistic view of what is happening in all the regional warehouses through one dashboard. As soon as a warehouse's inventory levels increase beyond a desirable metric, then the executive can take action with the relevant warehouse manager.

By following these four principles of effective dashboard implementation, organisations can achieve enhanced operational visibility, clear identification of operational constraints and statistical performance analysis for both processes and employees. Combined, the impact of these data dashboards creates a platform for an operations environment to develop and thrive from a culture of continuous improvement. •

Operational data dashboard example.



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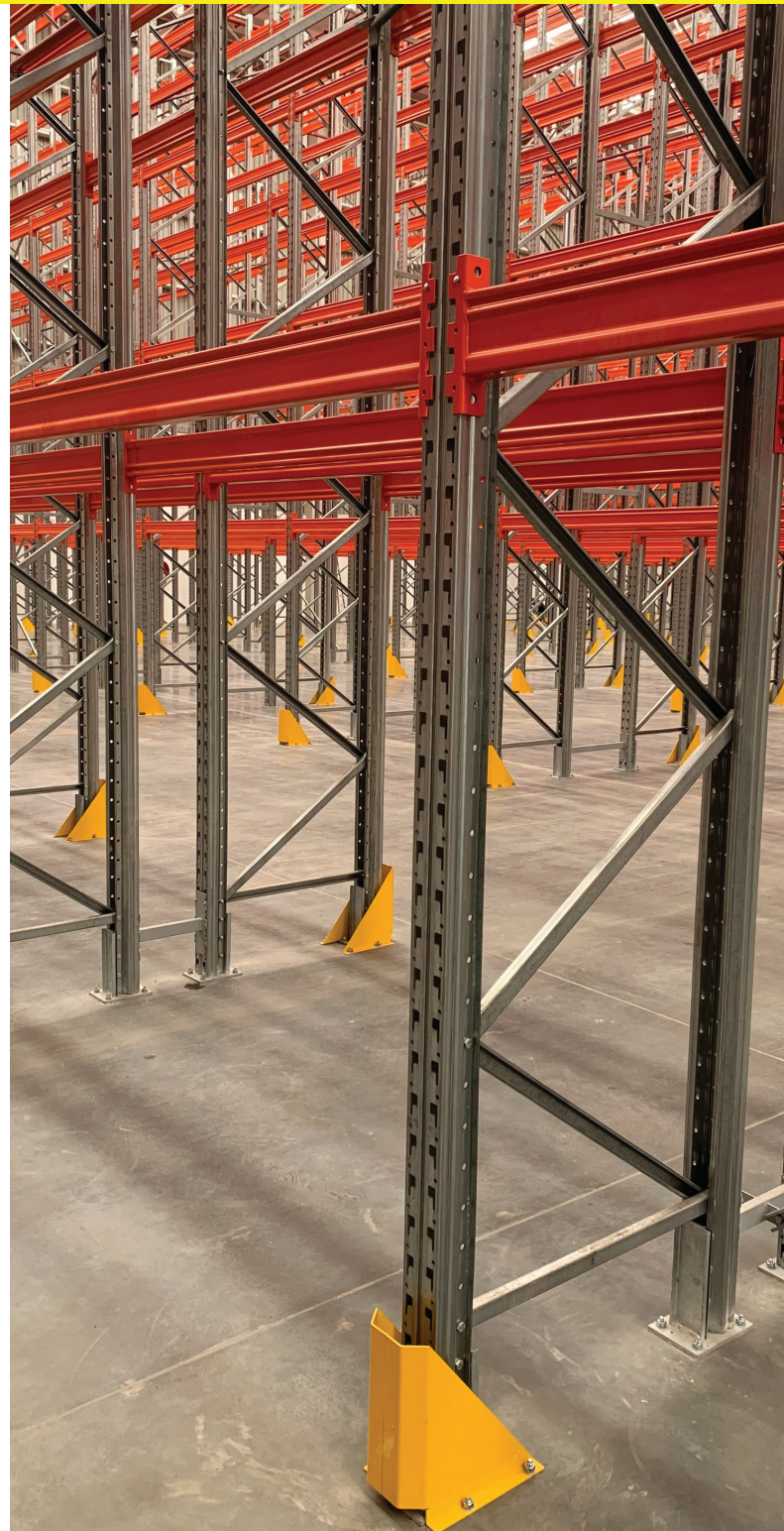
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5 cost-effective strategies to optimise e-commerce delivery

By Shermandra Singh, Speaker, Author and Commercial Director at Dovetail Business Solutions



E-commerce is steadily driving global retail, with consumers in Africa increasingly turning to online stores for their shopping needs. Amid this transition, a key determinant of success and growth for online businesses lies in their delivery mechanism.

E-commerce delivery can be defined as the processes an online retailer employs to get purchased products directly to the customer's doorstep. With online shopping, instant gratification is removed, meaning that the speed and ease of delivery become crucial components of customer satisfaction. Also, it's a strategic lever that affects revenue, with efficient delivery systems often leading to repeat business, positive customer reviews and word-of-mouth referrals.

However, delivery systems can be expensive, often eating into profit margins. This is where cost-effective delivery strategies come into play. A well-optimised and budget-friendly delivery system can not only reduce costs, but also improve the

end-user experience, resulting in increased customer loyalty and overall profit. As such, learning how e-commerce delivery cuts costs with effective strategies and by implementing cost-effective approaches is an essential skill for online businesses today.

Understanding the costs of e-commerce delivery

Understanding your e-commerce delivery costs is fundamental to identifying areas where savings can be made. The delivery process is not just about getting the product from point A to point B; there are several expenses associated with it that can quickly add up. Several cost drivers in e-commerce delivery

impact the bottom line. Some of the most common ones include:

- **Delivery distance:** Longer routes often mean higher costs.
- **Package weight and size:** Heavier or larger items are typically more expensive to deliver.
- **Rush deliveries:** Urgent deliveries or next-day shipping can significantly increase costs.
- **Returns:** Failed deliveries and returns can rack up expenses, particularly if the return rate is high.

Strategy 1: Negotiating shipping rates with carriers

E-commerce businesses depend hugely on their ability to deliver products to their customers in a quick, efficient and economical manner. A substantial part of operating expenses in e-commerce is shipping costs. Hence, negotiating lower shipping rates with carriers becomes a significant cost-effective strategy. Reduction in shipping rates directly impacts your profit margins and can give you a competitive edge in pricing your products.

The value of negotiating shipping rates can't be overstated. Contrastingly, failure to land a good deal can result in overpaying, harming your less-than-ideal pricing. To effectively negotiate with shipping carriers, develop an understanding of your typical shipping profile, including the volume, weight and destination of your shipments. Leverage this data to create a compelling case for a rate reduction.

Another tip is to consider working with multiple carriers as this gives you the advantage of choosing the most affordable option. An additional strategy is having a fallback option, which enhances your negotiation power. Remember, carriers also need your business and can likely meet your terms more than you realise.

Strategy 2: Implementing an efficient packaging process

In the e-commerce realm, your packaging process can directly impact both your delivery costs and customer satisfaction levels. When not executed properly, you may find yourself overspending on materials and postage while also running the risk of damaged goods upon arrival.

The logistics behind package delivery are often dictated by weight and dimensions. Bulky or improperly shaped packages can lead to increased shipping costs. Additionally, less-than-

optimal packaging can result in damaged items, leading to replacement costs and lowered customer satisfaction.

Adopting a few cost-effective measures in your packaging process can significantly streamline your e-commerce delivery and reduce costs:

- Implementing a standard packaging size where feasible.
- Making use of lightweight, quality packaging materials.
- Investing in bulk supplies to benefit from economies of scale.
- Considering eco-friendly packaging solutions, which can be cheaper and appeal to environmentally-conscious consumers.

Strategy 3: Leveraging technology for delivery route optimisation

Utilisation of technology has become a vital part of a cost-effective e-commerce strategy. One area where this holds significant value is in optimising delivery routes. Delivery route optimisation technology leverages advanced algorithms to determine the most efficient way to deliver packages. Such technologies take into consideration a variety of factors, including distance, time, fuel consumption and traffic conditions. They include:

- Easy-to-use dashboard for monitoring delivery status.
- Predictive technology for identifying route problems ahead of time.
- Real-time tracking options to maintain transparency with customers.

When employed correctly, delivery route optimisation technology can cut costs significantly. There are numerous benefits:

- **Decreased fuel expenses:** By choosing the most efficient routes, you can cut down on fuel expenses.
- **Reduced delivery time:** Faster, more direct routes allow for quicker deliveries, which also means less time spent on the road and, therefore, lower labour costs.
- **Improved customer satisfaction:** Customers are likely to appreciate the faster delivery times and the increased transparency, which can enhance your company's reputation and boost sales in the long run.

Strategy 4: Utilising third-party logistics providers (3PLs)

In a bid to streamline operations and maximise cost efficiency, many e-commerce businesses are turning to third-party logistics providers. 3PLs take control of the



warehousing, packaging and delivery of your products. They leverage their vast networks and competencies to facilitate efficient delivery processes. This takes care of the intense effort and substantial cost associated with managing an independent delivery system. Outsourcing delivery to 3PLs presents numerous benefits that can lead to significant cost savings:

- **Economies of scale:** 3PLs can handle high volumes of deliveries, allowing for price reductions through economies of scale.
- **Enhanced expertise:** 3PLs come with specialised knowledge and skills that can help guarantee efficient operations and minimise costly errors.
- **Alleviated burden:** No need for significant investments in delivery infrastructure, meaning more resources can be allocated to other areas of your business.
- **Flexibility:** 3PLs can scale services to match your business needs, preventing unnecessary expenditure during low sales periods.

Strategy 5: Offering customer-friendly delivery options

Every e-commerce business aims to attract and retain customers by catering to their unique needs and

convenience. One of the most effective ways to do this is by offering multiple customer-friendly delivery options. Customers want choices in every aspect of their shopping experience, especially when it comes to delivery. Faster delivery schedules, better tracking options and convenient delivery locations can significantly influence a consumer's purchasing decision. By offering versatile delivery options, your e-commerce platform can adequately meet customer demands while optimising operational costs. Implementing options like click-and-collect or local pickup can drive down delivery costs. Here's why:

- Click-and-collect eliminates the cost of last-mile delivery, as customers pick their orders from a selected store. This strategy also helps increase in-store sales.
- Local pickup services reduce transportation costs and offer more flexibility to customers, thereby enhancing their shopping experience and loyalty.

No matter your business scale, these are the strategies that you can implement right away. By enhancing your e-commerce delivery with these cost-effective methods, you're sure to notice a positive impact on your bottom line. Remember, success in e-commerce often comes from optimisation and relentless improvement. So don't wait; start optimising your e-commerce delivery today. •



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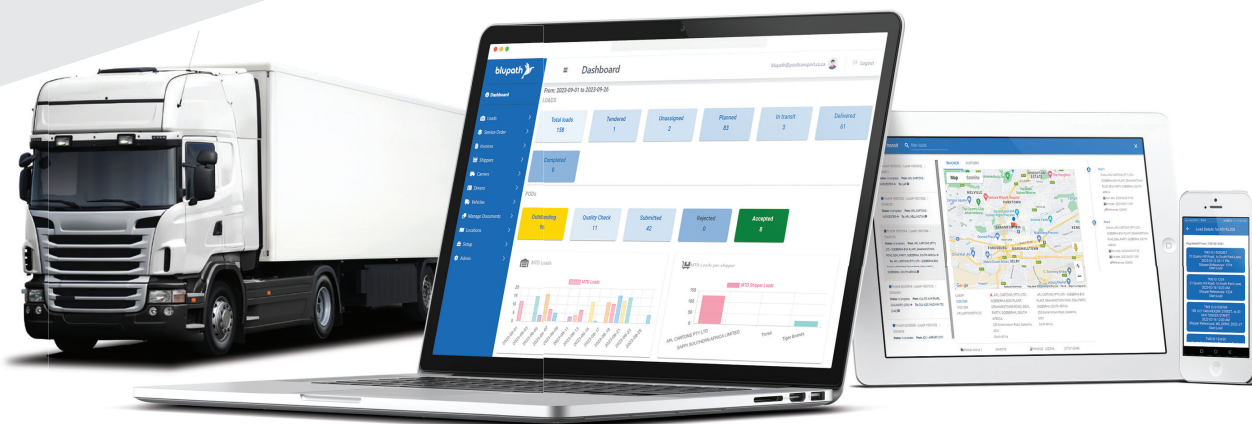
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Will a WMS resolve your supply chain issues?

By Michael Badwi, Chief Business Officer and Founder of Supply Chain Junction



Free your new warehouse management system (WMS) to deliver increased efficiency, accuracy and inventory control, not just mild relief from your current problems.

Senior management isn't happy... expecting a pleasant stroll through your warehouse, they found it an ordeal. After their string of speeches and a distinct lack of listening, they share their finding. To you, it's a simple statement of fact.

"There's a mountain of excess inventory and our customer service levels are inadequate. It's clogging our warehouse and hurting our business." And their insightful conclusion? "It's inventory mismanagement... but we'll fix that."

You try to explain, but are interrupted as they say: "A new WMS will fix this mess!" In a second attempt to explain, you're interrupted again. "No need to thank us. We're here to solve your problems." Someone shakes your hand and adds: "That's why we're in senior management."

A panacea for all problems?

Such an offer is great news. A new WMS will deliver increased efficiency, accuracy and inventory control. Each of these benefits you, your warehouse and your customers. But, a new WMS won't fix any underlying problems. It might offer some mild relief, but not if there are serious upstream problems. They need fixing.

Anyone with problems upstream has problems downstream. Problems in planning and procurement show up in inventory – either too much or too little in the wrong place at the wrong time. A new WMS can

drive significant benefits, but it isn't the perfect panacea for all those upstream problems.

Help!

This issue came up in a discussion with a group of customers. They could all recount similar situations from their junior careers. Their management teams launched into a new software implementation underprepared and they found themselves needing to correct an endless list of upstream problems. This was on top of existing time and budget pressures. It pushed internal and external team relations to the limit.

Their common view in hindsight was that a seasoned WMS implementation team has seen many supply chains from the inside. Yes, they're attuned to the issues, their drivers and their solutions. Yes, within reason they can give some fast, free and frank advice. But, unless you request it, you don't sign them up to fix all the issues in your supply chain.

They will set your warehouse up for success, but you need to play your part. You need to give the implementation team and their WMS the oxygen they need to thrive. You need to fix your own problems first – the causes, not the symptoms.

Which team are you on?

In the past, I have seen client teams at both extremes. At one end, the calm, well-resourced and organised operation. At the other end, the overworked, under-



resourced and chaotic one. Both had successful outcomes, both followed their own distinct paths.

At one extreme, the WMS implementation team has clear air to execute their tasks. The WMS team has open access to all in the client's team. They can discuss operational issues, understand constraints, agree on solutions and proceed. Finding time for training is often the challenge, but an efficient implementation gives more time to train the client's team.

At the other extreme, the WMS implementation is a daily grind of challenges. The client team is a challenge to meet with. They find it difficult to explain their processes. They disagree on the solutions. Time to work on the WMS implementation shrinks. Milestones stretch further apart. The WMS implementation team must split its time. WMS implementation stops while supply chain processes are rebuilt. These aren't only within the warehouse operation, but upstream too.

Implementations are best for clients who know what they're doing, what they need and are keen for you to

deliver. Give me the overworked, under-resourced and chaotic lean team any day.

Maximise your ROI

A good WMS implementation team will always be able to highlight a client's supply chain issues. No WMS will reach its potential return on investment while these remain unfixed. Why put new sails on a boat with a hull covered in barnacles? The best time to fix those problems is before the WMS implementation begins. Improvements made upstream afterwards may conflict with the new WMS. Are those WMS conflicts identifiable and fixable? Yes. Is it ideal and efficient? No.

Spend time to save time

Successful WMS implementations depend on a foundation of solid supply chain processes. With all due respect to your senior management, you know the state of your upstream processes. You know where the 'rocks' lie. You know what needs fixing. Fixing known upstream problems today will save time tomorrow. Remember, you want your new WMS to deliver its full capability. Your new WMS can deliver increased efficiency, accuracy and inventory control. You want more than mild relief from upstream problems. •

Valentine's Day – a global cold chain challenge

By Andre Luecht, Global Strategy Lead for Transportation, Logistics and Warehouse at Zebra Technologies



How suppliers, logistics and warehousing companies can make sure their cold chain is the best it can be during peak buying times such as Valentine's Day.

Imagine going to a shop and it's out of roses, chocolates or luxury dining for two – it might mean a romantic plan is spoiled and reverting to a less-than-ideal backup option. In February, Valentine's Day is upon us again. For retailers, it's a peak time for gift buying – roses, chocolates, luxury items and special offers. Total spending in 2023 was expected to reach \$25.9-billion, according to National Research Foundation (NRF) data.

And, like in previous years, things can go wrong. One risk is around wasted inventory – flowers, cosmetics, food – because these are sensitive to humidity and temperature. For example, the rose supply chain is global, with countries like Ecuador, Colombia, Kenya and the Netherlands growing, harvesting and shipping roses across the world. Timing and temperature are everything – they need to be picked and processed at the right time and transported thousands of miles at the right temperature and environment so they're fresh, crisp and colourful for shoppers.

Cooling via vacuum and forced air methods, removing infected flowers and avoiding botrytis blight and damage from frost while in storage and transit are some of the concerns that harvesters and logistics managers have to think about when it comes to the cold chain. Exposure to the wrong environment could cause wasted inventory, lost revenue and negative consumer experiences. But how can suppliers, logistics and warehousing companies make sure their cold chain is the best it can be?

Cold chain and environmental data visibility

Supply chain managers need accurate, timely, high-level views of their inventory and supply chain with

'air traffic control' platforms that connect, analyse and leverage data across the chain. These platforms provide predictive insights and analytics for road, sea, air, rail and last-mile routing and allow transport and logistics teams to build custom solutions with APIs and leverage AI assistants for problem identification and solving. For example, if a delayed arrival of an empty truck is reported, a loading dock manager can turn to their workforce management solution to reallocate labour. They may have four workers they can send to help load or unload another temperature-sensitive shipment to minimise exposure to warmer (or colder) temperatures. In another scenario, the platform may be able to reconcile weather reports with anticipated transit routes to recommend a delayed departure. The shipment may be late, but it's better to be late than throw away pallets of roses on arrival because they were temperature-compromised.

At an operational level, environmental monitoring systems can use sensors in heating, ventilation, air conditioning and other systems to track air, humidity, light and other conditions in cold storage. They monitor conditions across a space, giving managers visibility into what is happening. Meanwhile, environmental sensing systems monitor temperature, humidity, light and other conditions down to the item level and even after an item has left cold storage. This means sensing systems can travel with inventory such as roses, monitoring conditions, location and time as they move and share that information during transit and upon arrival.

Sensors can range from simple chemical-based sensors and passive USB monitoring devices to more advanced Bluetooth-enabled ones. For example,



the data captured via temperature sensors, location beacons and radio frequency identification (RFID) at the time the roses were unloaded from a trailer, put in inbound staging, released from staging and taken to cold storage can be aggregated and compared using prescriptive analytics. Should the temperature rise or drop at any point, managers can identify the trouble area and time frame to rectify the root issue and prevent a reoccurrence. They can also use the data to determine the potential impact of the temperature change on product quality. Recent advancements in data logger technologies leverage Bluetooth and near-field communication (NFC) connectivity. Cold chain managers can now see what's happening inside a box or crate without needing to open it, making it convenient to track temperature variations in near-real time.

Data from these wireless-enabled data loggers is typically sent to the cloud. The inventory or quality control manager can then sign into their private portal to view the data for an entire shipment. Modern data loggers come with a security layer that provides secure

connections to block unauthorised access, prevent data manipulation and provide encrypted data transmissions to help defend against security breaches.

Every rose has its thorn and right now, costs and delays continue to mount in the Panama Canal, and conflict in the Red Sea shows no sight of ceasing as far as sea freight is concerned. While the wider industry faces labour challenges and a decline in airfreight demand, transport and logistics companies and the retailers they serve are feeling yet more pressure. However, recent data suggests warehousing and logistics leaders are heading in the right direction to make their operations a lot more visible, resilient and secure.

Sixty-seven percent of decision-makers plan to implement temperature monitoring sensors and smart labels, while 91 percent want to move to cloud-based systems for improved supply chain visibility. Whether an online order or in-store browsing, it's a disappointment when things aren't available, especially for special occasions like Valentine's Day. Sensors and cloud platforms are helping make that a thing of the past. •

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Future-proofing the supply chain in sub-Saharan Africa

By Mohammed Akoojee, CEO and MD for sub-Saharan Africa at DP World



An agile and forward-thinking approach is imperative to expedite change and enhance growth to achieve optimisation and harmonisation in sub-Saharan (SSA) supply chains.

Trade resilience has emerged as the cornerstone of success in today's dynamic global supply chain industry. Amidst the backdrop of growing macroeconomic risks and rapid changes in many parts of the world, this robustness has become essential for navigating the complex dynamics defining the current trade landscape in SSA and the broader continent.

Africa, with the world's youngest population and growing urbanisation rates, boasts an attractive market – both as a global trade partner and within the continent, with intra-African trade expected to increase at a compound annual growth rate of almost 4 percent over the coming years. Logistics will continue to play a pivotal role in facilitating and enhancing intra-African trade and connecting Africa and the world, with the African logistics industry expected to double over the next three to five years.

However, regional supply chain pressures, such as inefficient infrastructure and high logistics costs of two to three times more than leading global economies, significantly impact food and trade inflation, amplifying challenges in a region already facing complex dynamics, including political instability and elections in some African countries this year, climate change, food security challenges, global geopolitical tensions as well as inflation and currency headwinds.

Future-proofing supply chains to be more robust and flexible not only fortifies SSA's connection to world trade routes, but also promotes increased intra-African trade, with integrated supply chain solutions becoming increasingly vital to navigate the dynamic trade environment.

The most prominent supply chain trends for SSA in 2024 focus on building resilience and sustainability, economic sensitivity, flexibility and leveraging technological innovation for increased visibility.

Future-proofing the supply chain

Increasing awareness of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues will continue to drive better decision-making in supply chains. The growing call to reduce carbon emissions and address climate change will continue in 2024, pushing businesses to adopt electrified or renewable energy approaches.

The electrification of vehicles offers a resounding opportunity for the industry to meet net-zero targets. Adopting this approach throughout the value chain will unlock the full potential for carbon emission savings. Moreover, skills and talent development play a crucial role in addressing the industry's skills shortage by providing training and upskilling opportunities. Nurturing the future leaders of the supply chain is vital for sustained digitisation and decarbonisation efforts.

Resilient food supply chains

The global climate crisis continues to negatively impact nutritional food sources for millions of Africans every year. Further, roughly 82 percent of Africans facing acute food insecurity reside in countries of conflict. These challenges have placed increased pressure on the supply chain industry to establish innovative solutions to improve market access and bring essential food products to people across the continent, including in remote areas. Cold chain storage will continue to grow as an impactful solution to reinforce African supply chains and equip logistics providers with the infrastructure to address this growing concern.



Infrastructure and onshoring

Addressing historical infrastructure challenges in SSA, such as port inefficiencies, requires intentional and collaborative efforts. Ongoing supply chain efforts to develop infrastructure, invest in free zones and establish manufacturing and processing hubs will enhance onshoring ventures across the continent. Integrated logistics frameworks are essential and not only offer business benefits like cost savings, but also bring job creation and underscore intra-African trade opportunities.

Technology as a driver

The digitisation of the supply chain will be an ongoing trend in SSA, empowering the region to overcome historical infrastructure challenges and ushering in a new era of business. Africa's growing youth population positions the continent as an ideal market for global players, with e-commerce acting as the catalyst. In addition, artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) will enable end-to-end visibility for customers and provide businesses with data for predicting disruptions and making insights-driven decisions, including on production and transport capacity.

SSA, rich in resources, has a competitive advantage in the global supply chain as the heavy reliance on exports from the region continues to yield demand across trade borders. As digitisation and automation continue to grow in 2024, the supply chain industry will continue to work towards building harmonious and optimised trade flows, propelling the African continent's overall growth.

The 2024 Trade in Transition report, commissioned by DP World and led by Economist Impact, reinforces this outlook, with almost 30 percent of regional surveyed business leaders anticipating that Africa will emerge as the third-largest market in 2024, trailing only Europe and North America. The report highlights new trade pacts, predictions of increased intra-African trade and executives' commitment to integrating technology to bolster supply chains and gain real-time insights. This aligns with ongoing efforts to fortify SSA's supply chains, ensuring they remain resilient, sustainable and integral to the global trade landscape. •

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Funding small businesses in transport

By Lebo Letsoalo, Founder and CEO at SincPoint



October was transport month and with the theme ‘Siyakha – we are building’, it is important to appreciate the economic importance of the transport sector for South Africa, at the centre of which is reliability and safety and, more crucially, the contribution potential of the sector to the transformation agenda of the country.

This transformation must prioritise the inclusion of small businesses more deliberately in the entire value chain of the transport sector. One of the most important ways to enable such transformation is funding for SMEs in this sector to accelerate their equitable participation. The country’s Transport Charter commits players to use B-BBEE as a tool to develop a world-class, cost-effective and efficient modally integrated transport sector that promotes entry of black people into the industry to stimulate economic growth.

The charter recognises that South Africans from previously disadvantaged backgrounds – the majority of whom are black people – must participate in this industry in a meaningful way if we are to realise pragmatic, sustainable and equitable growth. The sector plays a critical role in the country’s economic development and growth. It contributes 8-9 percent to South Africa’s total GDP and has the potential to generate four jobs for every R1-million invested. It is, therefore, undoubtedly one of the most important sectors, especially in aiding and fast-tracking the country’s economic recovery in a post-pandemic environment.

However, and as an example, the sector remains one of the least gender-transformed in the country. It is thus vital that a concerted effort to address this and to support women in general becomes central to

our transformation objectives. According to the 2022 Mastercard Index, women entrepreneurs in South Africa have made substantial progress in overcoming gender-based discrimination and growing their businesses, but still face fundamental structural and social challenges, many of which worsened since the pandemic.

The index further shows that the country has improved in women empowerment and support for female entrepreneurship. Empowerment in the country has moved from 62.8 percent to 91.2 percent in recent years. It, however, warns that there remains an issue in funding for women-owned businesses. It says that 80 percent of women-owned businesses with credit needs are either underserved or unserved.

In November last year, recognising this, we set up a fund aimed at bolstering women-owned transport and logistics companies. This is achieved through our partnership with Transcend, Inqolobane Investment Trust and the Black Industrialist Group.

Through the Inqolobane Investment Fund, we want to mitigate impeding obstacles facing businesses owned by women – and especially black women – through strategic investments aimed at fostering tangible transformation in the sector by increasing their participation. We want to fundamentally eradicate financing obstacles facing them as transport operators.

This is the culmination of the initiatives that have been held in previous years and in very recent times, including the Women in Transport Summit. This fund is a specially thought out financing instrument that places transformation and empowerment above issues such as qualifying criteria – often making it extremely difficult for black owners and emerging businesses to access funding.

We recognise that some of these businesses will remain challenged in their quest to access scale and growth-enabling funding resources. We have thus decided to place our efforts on eliminating these

difficulties and focus on the big-picture goals, which are transformation and empowerment.

Although the fund is designed to target road transport and logistics, sectors such as rail, aviation and maritime will form part of key industries. These actions are informed by the core mandate set out as part of the objectives of the private-public partnerships formed to not only confront issues in the sector, but to continuously take action to ensure sustainable and consistent transformation in an industry that is extremely important to the development of South Africa. •



The importance of supply chain collaboration through technology

By Vanessa Schonborn, Executive Head of Transport and Logistics at Vodacom Business



Collaboration is vital to the success of any supply chain ecosystem.

Transport and logistics companies know only too well why fostering relationships between all stakeholders in the supply chain can help to ensure smoother operations and greater success, especially in times of disruption, economic pressures and market uncertainty.

As businesses embrace technological innovation, supply chains are giving way to interconnected ecosystems of collaboration. Gartner predicts that by 2026, more than 50 percent of large organisations in the supply chain will compete as collaborative digital ecosystems rather than discrete firms – sharing inputs, assets and innovations. By working together, companies within the supply chain can use technology to increase visibility, deliver better service and explore new business opportunities.

Improving communication across the ecosystem

One of the first steps in bringing supply chain partners together and overcoming barriers to collaboration is to improve communication, not only between organisations, but the cross-functional teams within them. Replacing incompatible legacy systems with technology such as cloud-based platforms, Internet of Things (IoT) devices and collaborative software solutions can help to break down traditional silos, reduce bottlenecks, create centralised points of contact and connect stakeholders from any location at any time.

Enhanced constant omnidirectional communication enables responsiveness, agility to sudden changes and

stronger relationships between supply chain partners. This can lead to closer collaboration, clearer shared objectives and greater synthesis in the supply chain – to benefit all partners and customers too.

Sharing data for better results

Through shared end-to-end platforms and interconnected systems, previously disparate supply chain partners can exchange crucial information seamlessly and support one another in unforeseen events. In transport and logistics, this facilitates better coordination and ensures visibility until the last mile for both customers and businesses. It also unlocks the potential for data-driven insights. By leveraging advanced artificial intelligence and analytics capabilities, organisations can optimise processes, predict market trends and address supply chain challenges in real-time, ushering in a new era of informed decision-making.

Sharing business information places emphasis on data quality, privacy, usage and exchange. The data also needs to be kept secure when communicated across the supply chain and in keeping with regulatory obligations, especially for multinational transport and logistics companies working in various geographies. Furthermore, as data becomes a valuable business asset, effective collaboration between players in the supply chain ecosystem requires building trust and long-term partnerships to meet combined objectives.

Working together for future growth

Collaboration extends beyond mere information

exchange; it is about unlocking synergies and creating value. From collaborative product development to joint innovation initiatives, technology-driven partnerships in the supply chain foster a culture of continuous improvement. This, in turn, translates into enhanced efficiency, reduced costs and the ability to capitalise on new markets.

Of course, the supply chain is often complex and vast, involving many players, some external, and interactions before goods even reach their final destination. Harnessing the collective strengths of each segment depends on the connectedness of all stakeholders in all sectors. Technology has the power to link the ecosystem, overcome challenges and open doors to possibilities.

For example, the informal market in Africa – the backbone of economic activity on the continent – offers supply chain businesses significant opportunities to expand distribution reach. However, many of these small business owners are constrained by physical limitations when ordering and paying for goods, which are often in low quantities. Transport and logistics companies can collaborate with suppliers as well as financial technology providers to overcome these barriers. Using connectivity as the link in the supply chain between all these partners increases visibility and enables the distribution of goods to various informal vendors cost-effectively with mobile money as a convenient payment system. As a result, collaboration can drive a more inclusive, profitable market, leading to socio-economic upliftment.

Driving sustainability goals

As the world grapples with social and environmental challenges, supply chains can use collaborative technologies to be more environmentally conscious and socially responsible. Collective efforts can lead to the development of eco-friendly practices such as shared transportation resources, optimised routes to minimise emissions and the implementation of green innovations

to reduce waste, as well as the ability to respond proactively to ethical concerns.

Using technology collectively, supply chain partners have access to increased visibility of the impact of operations and can track progress and use data and analytics to address environmental and social issues. By working together, stakeholders can create a supply chain that aligns with global sustainability goals.

Enabling collaboration through a technology provider

For successful collaboration, there needs to be a unified approach by all partners in the supply chain. Too many systems, too many platforms and a lack of cohesion in using technology effectively can result in wasted time, resources and money and lead to fragmentation. As organisations in the sector continue to digitalise, they need a technology partner that understands their unique needs and offers services to enhance supply chain collaboration through seamless, scalable, flexible integrated solutions.

We believe that a technology partner must have the expertise and capabilities to guide businesses through the digitalisation process and enable them to get the most from collaboration using an entire technology stack. This should include services such as providing IT infrastructure, cloud hosting and data centre facilities, high-capacity, reliable connectivity, superior cybersecurity and a centralised point of contact across locations.

The collaborative supply chain powered by technology is a strategic imperative for businesses aiming to thrive in today's competitive and ever-evolving landscape. The integration of collaborative technologies fosters resilience, agility and innovation, propelling supply chains into a new era of efficiency and responsiveness.

At the heart, the collaborative supply chain connects organisations and people to transform not only the industry, but also the lives of the customers it serves. •

Ctrack offers a wide variety of innovative fleet management solutions

Running a business in the transport and logistics industry is fraught with challenges that can only be conquered by partnering with a well-developed telematics and fleet management platform.

Ctrack boasts almost 40 years of experience and now offers an all-encompassing solution with the ability to tailor-make solutions to cater for businesses of all sizes operating in a wide variety of industries.

"Ctrack offers next-generation telematics and data intelligence that allow business owners and fleet managers to optimise their transport and logistics operations," says Hein Jordt, Chief Executive Officer of Ctrack Africa.

In today's challenging business environment, quality data is vital for a business of any size that relies on a fleet of vehicles and equipment. GPS technology and onboard sensors facilitate real-time data insights.

Crystal, Ctrack's cutting-edge platform, ensures that whether you are a small business owner with a single delivery van or are managing hundreds of trucks in far-flung corners of the country, you can view the status of your fleet from one easy-to-use platform via any device with an Internet connection.

Crystal seamlessly interprets a wide variety of data streams and can make recommendations on optimising of routes, fuel saving and improving driver safety, giving owners the 'Power to Predict'. Reporting is simple and showcases just what you want to see or offers in-depth information when needed.



*Hein Jordt,
Chief Executive
Officer of
Ctrack Africa.*

Crystal allows business owners to keep an eye on what they need to know, when they need to know it, and this proactive approach facilitates the foresight to act before it is necessary to react.

Crystal offers flexible customisation options, enabling Ctrack to effectively monitor and manage a wide range of assets. Myriad data is collected, interpreted and packaged, allowing you to make informed decisions about the next trip, which are smarter, safer and quicker than the last.

Crystal efficiently tracks service intervals, enabling proactive and well-timed vehicle maintenance scheduling to confidently reduce and avoid

unnecessary downtime. Crystal can be used to fine-tune fleet operations, cut costs and tick all the right boxes to always remain compliant.

Improved customer interaction is built in by automatically giving a heads-up about route delays or a detailed account of deliveries, collections and shipment times. Crystal facilitates a way to build trust and credibility for customer service excellence.

Driver behaviour can be managed and improved thanks to in-cab communication, navigation assistance and incident alerts. The driver app streamlines the driver's workload by offering a variety of functionalities such as navigation, messaging, pre-trip reports and driver scoring in a single location. Productivity and efficiency are optimised thanks to job scheduling and route planning, rich fleet analytics, SMART integration and the live productivity dashboard.

The way vehicles are used has a direct effect on your bottom line and Crystal facilitates fuel consumption monitoring, engine performance monitoring via CAN Bus, cold chain monitoring and a 24/7 bureau service, allowing you to easily manage usage daily.

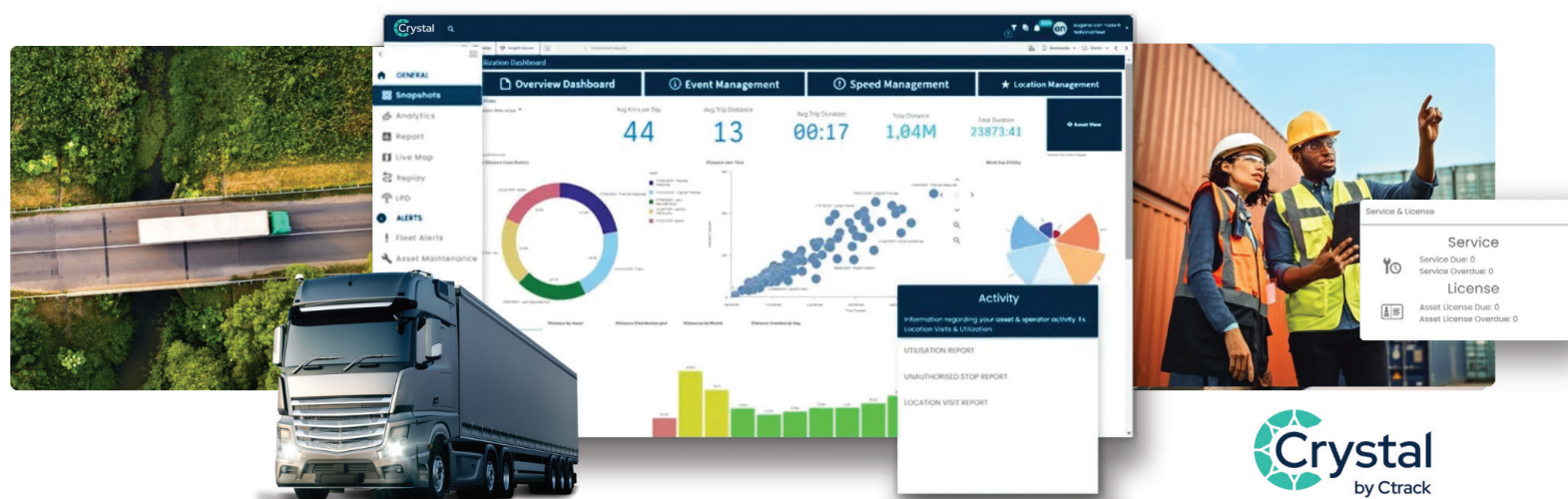
Safety and security are guaranteed thanks to a variety of features including 24/7 stolen vehicle

response, driver identification, video camera solutions and door sensors.

SMART integrations can seamlessly connect with third-party applications that cater to your specific industry needs such as activating bespoke SMILE scripts, monitoring trailers, keeping an eye on temperatures in the cold chain and managing the integration of third-party hardware.

Crystal by Ctrack's unique differentiators can be applied to any industry and are modular, allowing fleet managers to expand and scale down the required functionality seamlessly as their business needs ebb and flow, meaning that you only pay for what you need and use. Modules include features such as Route Planning, Electronic Proof of Delivery, Job Management, Analytics and Live In-cab Cameras.

"Harnessing the power of telematics, tracking and data analytics is no longer reserved for big businesses with massive fleets, but can lead to significant advantages, especially for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Ctrack offers a wide variety of functionality that is available when you need it, all from one easy-to-use platform, making it the ideal partner for surviving this ever-changing industry," concludes Jordt. •



Private sector must take control of failing SOEs

By Gavin Kelly, CEO of the Road Freight Association

The Road Freight Association (RFA) says the private sector must take control of failing state-owned entities (SOEs) to save South Africa's supply chain.

The Road Freight Association (RFA), as the largest representative of road freight operators (companies) in South Africa, is involved in the Road Transport (02) and Security (07) Workstreams of the National Logistics Crisis Committee (NLCC).

The RFA is involved in the discussions relating to the challenges facing logistics in general, but specifically in those discussions that affect road freight (ports, rail, intermodal and cargo specific operations of Transnet and its affiliated subdivisions). The current state of affairs in the ports and rail network did not 'suddenly' happen in the last two weeks – indeed, even Transnet is noting that specific issues at Richards Bay happened over two years ago.

The RFA is steadfast in its opinion that the deterioration of our ports and rail has been a slow, continued process over at least 10 years and the management of Transnet (and its full subsidiaries) have been fully aware of the challenges and continuously informed of these by both structures within their respective organisations and the private sector.

Nothing was done to counter this – neither to reverse nor hold the decline. The executives, management and ministers who have led public enterprises (state assets

and management thereof) and the various subsidiaries of Transnet are the ones to blame.

The NLCC seeks to reverse decay, corruption and collapse. This will be a lengthy process and there is very little trust or faith left in those who allowed the collapse under their watch to now suddenly become the 'saviours'.

Plans and projects are emanating from the NLCC, but the knowing concern that these are just talk (as in so many other instances) remains in the minds of many. Transport, logistics, market-related activities, running efficient and reliable supply chains and ensuring good competition to ensure growth and sustainability are the purview (ambit) of private business. The private sector needs to be given far more control over the failing and lethargic SOEs that are throttling the economy.

Now that the various SOEs are feeling the pressure, suddenly 'short-term' plans are being put into place to 'ramp up operations'. Why wasn't that done many years ago? A long road lies ahead of South Africa in terms of bringing ports and rail infrastructure back to a position of efficiency. We need the private sector to drive and control the nursing back to life of our vital supply chain infrastructure and nodal points. •



5 fleet management trends for 2024

By Justin Manson, Sales Director at Webfleet



Webfleet, Bridgestone's globally trusted fleet management solution, has forecast five fleet management trends that are on the horizon for this year.

Fleet management is undergoing major advances and 2024 will be a decisive year in two key areas: safety and decarbonisation. In addition, technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) applied to automotive will drive new challenges and opportunities in the sector. Here are Webfleet's five fleet management trends that are forecast for this year:

1. AI in the automotive industry

AI is revolutionising everything, from programming to data management, cybersecurity and training. It also plays a crucial role in the automotive industry, advancing issues such as autonomous driving, road safety and user experience. This trend will continue in the coming months, with AI being used to train autonomous vehicles, improve emergency braking systems, detect fatigue, predict vehicle maintenance and optimise routes in real-time, ultimately improving mobility in cities.

2. Sustainability

Reducing the environmental footprint has become one of the most important goals for companies globally, alongside meeting increasingly stringent emissions targets. Many European cities have already implemented low emission zones (LEZ) and by 2030, zero emission zones (ZEZ) will be introduced, permitting only vehicles that do not emit to circulate.

3. Fleet electrification

2024 will be the time to transition fleets to electric vehicles (EVs). Rapid technological advances, combined with a global commitment to sustainability, create a particularly favourable environment for electrification. According to a Webfleet study on the electrification potential of vehicle fleets, 61 percent of commercial vehicles in Europe could be replaced by an electric alternative. Moreover, companies with EVs save on

average 5,665 litres of fuel per vehicle per year, €3,599 (R74,893.82) in costs and 15 tons of CO₂ per vehicle per year.

Electric trucks on South Africa's roads will be joined by vehicles powered by gas, specifically compressed natural gas or liquefied natural gas, and fuel cell trucks.

4. Smart charging for electric vehicles

One challenge confronting companies with EVs is smart charging. What's the point of using EVs if recharging is done using non-renewable energies? The market is starting to implement systems that ensure the use of clean energy during the charging process of EVs. This not only improves battery health and increases residual value, but also facilitates charging when grid costs are lower, leading to energy cost savings. *Editor's note:* Solar-powered charging may be more of a necessity than a choice here in South Africa.

5. Fleet safety

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that traffic accidents result in 1.3 million fatalities and 50 million injuries every year. To address this, a global strategy has been drawn up to reduce road deaths and injuries by at least 50 percent by 2030. The strategy involves establishing measures such as setting driving and resting time limits and using in-vehicle technology to promote safe driving styles.

Even better news is that there will be safer trucks on South African roads in 2024 and into the future. Global truck manufacturers are constantly striving to introduce innovative safety features. Unlike in the past where many were optional extras, features such as lane guidance and collision avoidance are fast becoming standard features in the newer models. •

SA's trade outlook for 2024

By Denys Hobson, Head of Logistics at Investec



Global growth is expected to be subdued, if not stagnant, in 2024 and amidst this slow growth and the challenging market conditions, global trade is also expected to be sluggish. According to The World Bank, global trade growth in 2024 is anticipated to be only half the average of the decade before the pandemic.

We expect this year to be quite volatile. Inflation globally has been coming down and the market consensus is for interest rate cuts to come into effect later in the year. GDP growth is still muted and added to this, current geopolitical tensions are high. While these tensions currently only have a direct effect on certain regional trade routes such as Europe-Asia, should they escalate, they certainly can destabilise global trade and supply chains in many ways.

As an example, the recent military strikes in the Red Sea have resulted in sea freight cargo being delayed in transit and, subsequently, companies impacted have had to airfreight additional stock to compensate for the sea freight delays. This pushes up the demand for airfreight and with an increase in demand, the airfreight rates also increase. This leads to higher landed costs. Sea freight costs also increase on trades impacted by the current Red Sea situation because shipping lines have diverted their vessels around the Cape of Good Hope, which increases their transit times and costs as well as reduces their capacity and equipment availability.

It is also an election year for more than 50 other countries this year and we know that this can create uncertainty in various forms such as investments and policy, but it also can bring about positive sentiment depending on the respective outcomes.

Weather patterns are becoming more volatile and extreme and can have the ability to impact global capacity and routes. One just has to examine the recent

drought in Panama to see the impact of climate change on global trade. If there are significant increases in weather events for extended periods, we may experience disruptions to supply chains.

From a South African perspective, the biggest concern is the efficiency of ports and rail infrastructure. If sustainable progress isn't made soon, we may see further route and capacity changes on South African in- and outbound routes as it has become too expensive for vessels to be stuck in ports for days and weeks. Shipping lines could utilise their capacity more effectively on other trades if required. We may even see some removal of direct sailings or only have limited sailings coming into South Africa, which will reduce available capacity and increase freight rates.

Transnet's financial performance is worrying and all eyes will be on National Treasury's budget speech in February regarding a possible bailout. Key leadership positions within Transnet also need to be finalised.

The rand is also expected to remain under pressure and with ongoing concerns around Transnet and load-shedding, investor confidence remains muted. Moreover, it's a big election year, which may cause some uncertainty.

While much is underway at Transnet to improve performance across multiple areas, we still don't expect rail to operate efficiently this year, which will still likely be a hindrance to the industry and South Africa's economic



growth. Getting it where it needs to be – with tangible change – is going to require substantial collaboration across private and government sectors as rail and ports need to work together to achieve meaningful change and progress. This, of course, will require clear policies, transparency, investment and decisive leadership.

Generally, given the last few years, we should be able to adapt much quicker to supply chain shocks – learning from the lessons of the past and being able to adjust to any disruptions. However, importers need to be cautious; they need to watch their costs closely, adjust lead times where required and examine ways of ensuring that their

working capital is effectively utilised. Financial discipline is key and market conditions will eventually become more buoyant, which will open additional avenues and opportunities for growth both locally and abroad, and importers need to be able to take advantage of these.

My advice: Close collaboration with your key supply chain stakeholders and financial partner(s) is essential. Have a clear understanding of changes to market and industry conditions and the impacts these could have – they do present opportunities. Take time to plan effectively for scenarios that could pose a risk to your business. •

Hijacking prevails – driven by the target on business vehicles

Tracker's vehicle crime statistics for the period January to June 2023 reveal that a business vehicle is twice as likely to be hijacked than stolen.

The Tracker Vehicle Crime Index reveals that hijackings still dominate, accounting for 55 percent of all national vehicle crime incidents versus theft at 45 percent. However, while the hijacking-to-theft ratio for personal vehicles is relatively even at around a 50/50 split, a business vehicle has a far higher hijacking propensity at 65 percent versus theft at 35 percent.

The index aggregates information from Tracker's more than 1.1 million subscriptions. Tracker's data indicates that a business vehicle is 59 percent more likely to experience vehicle crime and 32 percent more likely to experience hijacking than a personal vehicle.

Gauteng is still the province that experiences the most vehicle crime with 60 percent of the total vehicle crime incidents, followed by KwaZulu-Natal at 17 percent and the Western Cape at 9 percent. The same

trend applies when examining business vehicle crime, with Gauteng at 55 percent, KwaZulu-Natal at 16 percent and the Western Cape at 14 percent.

However, KwaZulu-Natal business vehicles are more likely to encounter vehicle crime when considering Tracker's provincial customer base of business vehicles, exceeding proportional representation of crime incidents by 27 percent. This is followed by Gauteng, exceeding proportional representation of crime incidents by 16 percent.

Western Cape business vehicles are less likely to experience vehicle crime relative to the national business customer base, yet are six times more likely to be hijacked than stolen. Second to Gauteng in terms of business vehicle hijacking volume, the Western Cape has a hijacking-to-theft ratio of 85 percent to 15 percent.

There is also statistically lower business vehicle crime collectively for provinces other than Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. However, the crime that occurs in these regions is again skewed towards hijacking, with business vehicles in these areas three times more likely to encounter hijacking versus theft.

Nationwide, a higher proportion of vehicles are reported hijacked on Fridays and between the hours of 11am and 3pm, while theft is mainly reported on Saturdays and between the hours of 11am and 3pm.

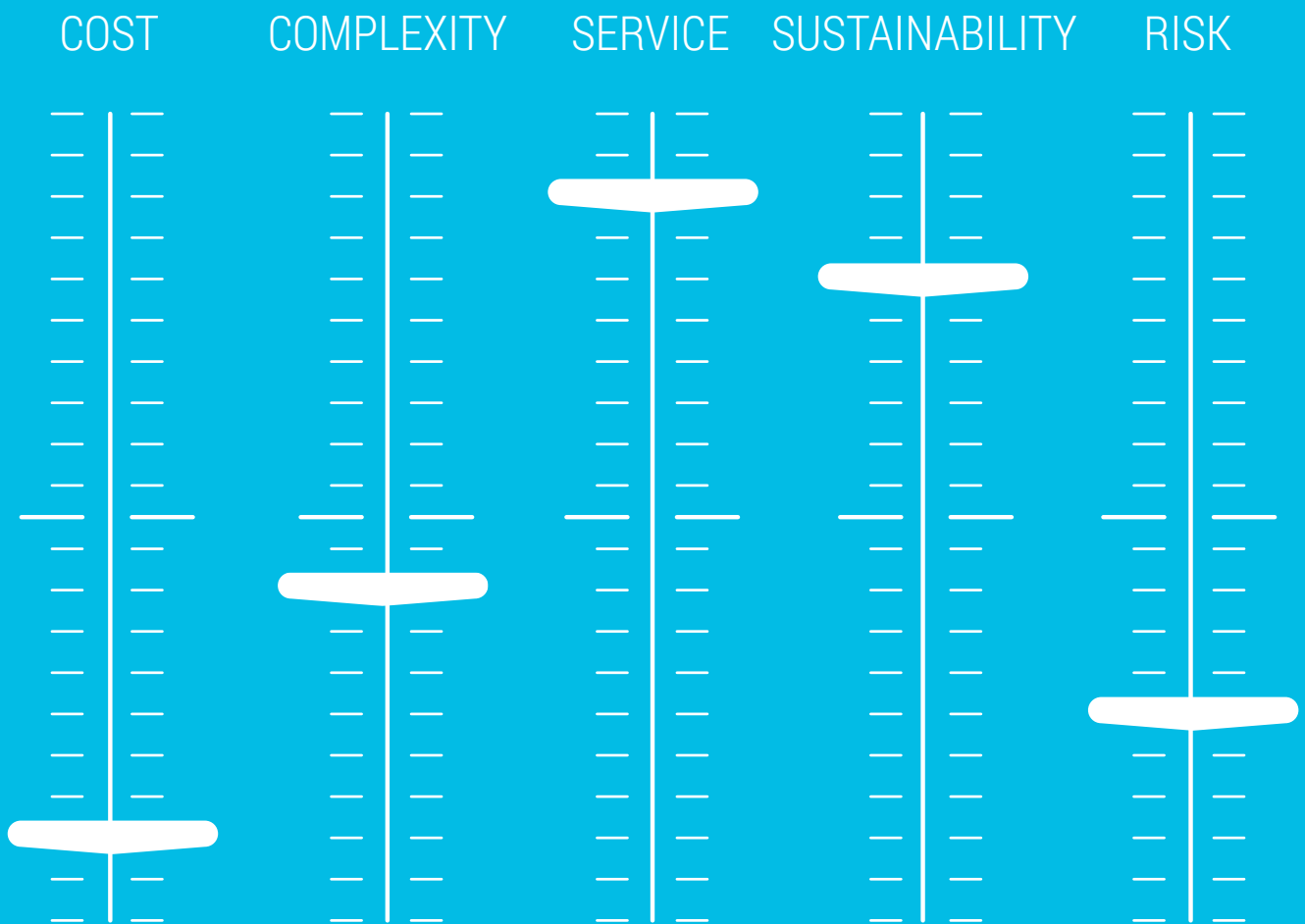
"Crime sophistication varies provincially, usually linked to emerging crime opportunities such as changes within regional transportation logistics," says Duma Ngcobo, Chief Operating Officer at Tracker. "We are currently seeing the emergence of more sophisticated vehicle crime syndicates in Gauteng and escalating violence accompanying vehicle crime in KwaZulu-Natal. Businesses and consumers should remain aware of the risks and always be vigilant on our roads. Partner with a trusted vehicle tracking and recovery company offering proactive and pre-emptive services designed to help protect drivers, vehicles and cargo." •



*Duma Ngcobo, Chief
Operating Officer at
Tracker.*

There, that's better.

In today's challenging operating environment, how do you find the right balance between service, cost, sustainability, and risk in your business?



At Transnova, we jointly create opportunities that unlock value in our customers' supply chains through deep focus on supply chain & network modelling, digital twins, logistics strategy and inventory optimisation. We then put in the platforms, workflow and technologies to make it sustainable ensuring optimised logistics cost and improved customer satisfaction.

To find out how we can help you find the right balance in your supply chain, please visit www.transnova.co.za to request a free consultation.

TRANS
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Compliance is more than just legitimacy or excellence

By Petrus Gerber, Supply Chain Solutions Manager at Bidvest International Logistics



How and why logistics companies using compliance can play a role in building the heart and soul of our nation.

If South African logistics firms hope to compete in both the local and global market, they need to embrace compliance, not only in terms of laws and regulations, but also social aspects that impact the world around us. It is important to understand that compliance is not only the responsibility of a company's compliance officer, but of every single person within the organisation.

Our logistics sector is bound by numerous regulations and with very good reason. Accidents and incidents that occur can be highly detrimental to a business. In 2022, for example, a South African online retail company made headlines for all the wrong reasons after being found in contravention of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, with general safety regulations and hazardous chemical agent regulations violated at its Gauteng warehouse.

On the transport side, there have been several major truck accidents on the N3 corridor resulting in the loss of life. In one case, the vehicle was found to be unroadworthy, while in another, it was established that the driver had been on duty beyond the specified number of driving hours.

Companies that fail to comply with regulations accordingly find themselves facing a significant threat of heavy fines, reputational damage or, in some cases, jail time for owners and directors.

In recent years, the need for logistics firms to comply with environmental legislation and regulations has grown exponentially, with policies in place to reduce the planet's carbon footprint. From January 2024, companies falling within the European Union will be taxed heavily if they fail to reduce their carbon emissions. These laws will impact South Africa as the country's motor industry, which exports

thousands of vehicles to the EU each year, will need to select supply chain partners that are fully compliant.

Not adhering to environmental regulations in Europe can directly impact the country's vehicle manufacturers and, by extension, the jobs they can offer South Africans. Figures from the South African Association of Freight Forwarders show that for the week ending 20 October, 14 percent fewer vehicle units were exported than in the corresponding period last year, further illustrating that the sector cannot afford non-compliant partners.

Then, of course, there is being compliant with South Africa's laws and policies, including employment equity, BEE and addressing the divide between rich and poor – highly complex social aspects that also require high levels of compliance. South Africa's governance record is also not the best given what transpired during the state capture years, so a company will not be doing the country any favours if it's pursuing corrupt relationships.

There are several aspects companies need to consider when it comes to compliance such as the area in which they are operating. Where hazardous materials are being stored, for example, there needs to be an understanding of the regulations, certifications and permits that need to be in place and a checklist to ensure every box is ticked.

Laws and policies may also change, which is why it is crucial for logistics firms to closely monitor government gazettes. Firms would also do well to bolster their compliance efforts by implementing standards under the International Organisation for Standardisation. Regular auditing ensures compliance, which, in turn, assures clients that the business is above board in its operations. •

New study predicts 2024 African trade boom

New research commissioned by DP World and led by Economist Impact forecasts a booming African trade landscape in 2024, with senior executives predicting a surge in intra-African trade fueled by new trade pacts and tech investments.

However, African firms remain cautious as inflationary pressures, economic uncertainty and political instability threaten to impact growth. Over 26 percent of the executives surveyed identified heightened inflation and economic uncertainty as the primary limitations on expanding imports, a 7 percent increase on the previous year. Additionally, nearly 20 percent pointed to political instability in crucial source markets as their primary constraint, up 4 percent year-on-year.

The latest Trade in Transition study captured the perspectives of African trade experts and senior executives during a period of unprecedented transformation as heightened global geopolitical risk, climate change and significant advancements in technologies create both challenges and opportunities.

African business poised for intra-African trade growth

In light of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), executives across the continent expect intra-regional trade to grow in 2024. Some 28 percent of the surveyed business leaders expect sub-Saharan Africa to be their largest export market this year, up from 19 percent of respondents the previous year. Only Europe (38 percent) and North America (34 percent) rank higher in the list of regions expected to provide the greatest contribution in terms of export sales.

Almost three-quarters agreed that government actions, such as enhancing regional trade agreements, have positively impacted their supply chain strategies. This highlights the significant role governments can play in creating a favourable environment for business growth and trade expansion.

Technology set to increase resilience and efficiency

In the face of persistent challenges posed by systemic issues and political instability, businesses across Africa are strategically embracing technology as a transformative investment.

While AfCFTA should help to reduce a significant amount of tariff barriers, long transport times and high costs due to significant border control and long waiting times, complex customs and bureaucracy remain a concern. High transport costs were cited as the second biggest challenge facing businesses when increasing both their import and export sales.

In response, businesses in Africa are increasingly investing in technology to adapt. Notably, 38 percent of executives identified the use of digital tools for improved inventory management as the primary strategy to reduce overall trade and supply chain costs in Africa. Further, 45 percent of executives plan to implement advanced automation and robotics to gain real-time insights and forecast disruptions in their supply chains in 2024.

This aligns with global findings, which reveal that executives across all sectors and regions found technologies that improve supply chain efficiency and resilience to be by far the main source of optimism for the future of global trade.

“Regional trade agreements, exemplified by AfCFTA, stand out as powerful tools to address the intricate challenges within the region’s trade and supply chain infrastructure,” shares Mohammed Akoojee, CEO and Managing Director, sub-Saharan Africa at DP World. “The nine percentage point increase in the proportion of Africa-based executives projecting that sub-Saharan Africa will be their biggest export market is a case in point. The synergy of public and private sector partnerships to enhance investment, strengthened trade agreements and technological advancements also position the continent for growth and resilience.”

John Ferguson, Global Lead, New Globalisation at Economist Impact, adds: “The findings of this report reveal a remarkably positive outlook for African trade in 2024 and shed light on the beneficial effects of trade agreements like AfCFTA. Through such regional cooperation, economies can leverage scale, enhance competitiveness and attract significant investment across the continent.”

Moving toward Industry 4.0

By Tennille Bell, General Sales Manager at
Programmed Process Outsourcing (PPO)



Learn more about the convergence of business process outsourcing (BPO) and transformative trends in 2024.

As we progress into the year 2024 and the future, the convergence of technological advancements and evolving consumer expectations will continue to reshape how businesses operate. From micro-fulfilment centres driving efficient on-demand last-mile deliveries to robotic warehouses enhancing supply chain efficiency and e-commerce embracing omnichannel integration and sustainability, the transformative trends for Industry 4.0 are diverse and impactful.

A term first coined in Germany in 2011 to describe the computerisation of manufacturing considered the fourth industrial revolution, Industry 4.0 is seeing the use of smart technology and real-time data to increase productivity and reduce costs. Interestingly, this is also a convenient convergence point for BPO, which will function as a strategic catalyst for industries looking to embrace the transformative trends of Industry 4.0. By providing expertise, agility, technology integration and operational efficiency, BPO partners empower businesses to navigate the complexities involved in their industry evolution to stay competitive in a rapidly changing business environment.

Micro-fulfilment centres to meet the need for speed

Rapidly becoming essential elements in e-commerce, micro-fulfilment centres cater to the growing need for swift last-mile deliveries. Although compact urban warehouses provide a strategic edge by ensuring speedy order fulfilments and express processing of orders, the integration of micro-fulfilment centres into logistics strategies poses both challenges and opportunities for businesses. Challenges range from logistical complexities in setting up and managing these centres to potential mishandling of stock and overstocking, which can potentially lead to increased

holding costs. On the other side, great opportunity lies in first-order processing, increased time efficiencies, enhanced customer satisfaction as well as cost reductions, particularly in shipping.

To effectively address challenges and make the most of presented opportunities, businesses must establish or align with reputable micro-fulfilment centres. Here, strategic partnerships with BPOs specialising in logistics and warehouse management can make all the difference.

BPO plays a pivotal role in providing clients with access to advanced tools for managing inventory and optimising the last-mile delivery process by enabling access to technologies such as automation, predictive analytics and artificial intelligence (AI). BPO not only ensures efficient task execution in the absence of these technologies, but also underscores how their integration significantly improves overall operational efficiency.

The rise of efficiency from automation to robotic warehouses

Automation, AI and robotics are already revolutionising warehouse operations around the world, making good on promises of unparalleled efficiency and accuracy. Robotic warehouses deploy advanced technologies to handle tasks from inventory management to order fulfilment, optimising workflows, minimising errors and enhancing overall supply chain performance. While these technologies streamline operations, the human element will remain essential as the role of individuals in the process shifts from labour-intensive tasks to more knowledge-based and skill-dependent functions. In this respect, strategic BPO partnerships can ensure the seamless integration of automation technologies into operations, allowing businesses to



benefit from enhanced efficiency without losing the human touch in handling exceptions, returns and overall process management.

Omnichannel integration to blur the lines between online and offline

With e-commerce in the mix, there is no longer a clear separation between online and offline shopping experiences. Instead, e-commerce has led to an increasingly seamless integration of both. Retailers are successfully managing omnichannel integration to provide customers with a cohesive shopping journey, and technologies such as AI, machine learning, voice search and chatbots all play a pivotal role in delivering a consistent and integrated customer experience across their chosen channels.

Adopting tech and omnichannel strategies is crucial for e-commerce growth and BPO partners are vital assets in this journey. The use of AI and machine learning for analysing customer data, combined with the implementation of conversational technologies like voice search and chatbots, will significantly impact the customer's experience, satisfaction and loyalty.

Towards a greener tomorrow with sustainable e-commerce

The e-commerce industry is undergoing a paradigm shift towards sustainability as consumer preferences for eco-friendly packaging and shipping practices drive the change.

Businesses are adopting innovative biodegradable materials and working toward implementing carbon-neutral logistics solutions to address environmental concerns associated with online retail growth.

While challenges exist in balancing sustainability with operational efficiency, the commitment to greener practices marks a significant step forward. BPOs, with their focus on operational efficiency, cost savings and expertise in navigating regulatory challenges, play a vital role in assisting e-commerce businesses to adopt and implement sustainable practices incrementally within their means.

BPO – a strategic accelerator for Industry 4.0

As Industry 4.0 continues to unfold, businesses that welcome these transformative trends into their operations will position themselves for relevance, growth and success in the future. Strategic alignment with BPO partners becomes a key differentiator in overcoming the complexities of an evolving industry.

From micro-fulfilment centres to robotic warehouses and seamless omnichannel integration, BPOs will make a major impact with their expertise and agility, contributing to operational and cost efficiency. As technology advances, the human element remains integral, ensuring a synergistic blend of innovation and expertise as e-commerce businesses seek to make their mark and establish their competitive edge in Industry 4.0. •

The ongoing evolution of procurement

By Debbie Tagg, Chief Operating Officer at Smart Procurement

Procurement has evolved from a dog-eat-dog world to empowering underdogs, collaborating with suppliers and caring for the environment and communities.



The ongoing evolution of procurement has seen the profession develop from a back-office function to a driver of business strategy. It has also shifted from a competitive dog-eat-dog arena – where the lowest price was the top prize – to one in which underdogs are developed, suppliers are partners and care for the environment and communities is non-negotiable.

This is an exciting and inspiring time to be in procurement and we can expect even more in 2024 as procurement continues to evolve, as we keep challenging procurement traditions and as more stakeholders recognise procurement's power to do so much more than just get goods and services at the best price. Procurement has the power not just to add value for organisations, customers and suppliers, but to grow economies, protect the environment, uplift communities and drive real change in the world.

From a historic dog-eat-dog approach to get the lowest price at any cost, procurement today strives to uplift and empower underdogs like small businesses. Small businesses are the backbone of South Africa's economy, employing around 60 percent of the workforce and making a substantial contribution to the GDP. The number of small businesses in South Africa is

rising and with the right support, they can make an even greater impact on the country's economy and employment rate.

Procurement leaders are increasingly recognising the competitive advantages that small suppliers can bring to big businesses – with their drive, innovation and entrepreneurial flair. Localisation and supplier diversification strategies also form part of most organisations' plans to manage risk and ensure resilience in today's constantly volatile environment.

Today's astute procurement professionals collaborate with and even upskill their suppliers to ensure that everyone wins. They understand the critical importance of collaboration and transparent communication with suppliers. Forging strong, long-term partnerships, understanding suppliers' challenges and sharing information is in everyone's best interests. They consider diversity, equity, inclusion and sustainability in procurement practices and policies because, today, procurement can be a force for good. Procurement functions are now geared to lead their organisations. They are at the heart of insightful data, demand influencing and sustainability.

Sustainable procurement practices and policies are topping the agendas of leading organisations. By 2024, sustainability reporting is expected to become a significant trend in the procurement industry.

The growing focus on risk management, collaboration, communication and sustainability means that technology is more important than ever in procurement. Today's procurement teams are data-driven and need to have comprehensive, transparent, real-time views of sourcing and spending as well as platforms that enable suppliers to access the requisite data. This means that technology skills are essential in procurement teams.

While the procurement profession proved its mettle in navigating risk in recent years, it cannot rest on its laurels now because supply chain volatility has become the norm. Procurement and supply chain practitioners played a pivotal role in ensuring that their organisations managed production and delivery disruptions in recent years. The volatility, economic pressures, shortages and risk will not abate in 2024. With the recent rise in global conflicts and climate events and, in South Africa, the ongoing electricity crisis, water outages, freight rail and ports crises, the chaos is set to continue. Procurement professionals must manage this by sharing knowledge, expanding their skills, building resilience, managing risk and even using it as a competitive advantage.

The growth of the Africa Supply Chain in Action (ASCA) Conference is a testament to the growing recognition of the vital role played by supply chain and procurement. ASCA 2023 saw almost 1,500 African supply chain and procurement professionals from 70 countries gather online to examine the skills, strategies and solutions needed to accelerate African economic development and growth in a post-pandemic new world.

As a result of its success since it was launched in 2020 by Smart Procurement and SAPICS (the Professional Body for Supply Chain Management), ASCA has become an annual rather than a biennial virtual conference. The fourth Africa Supply Chain in Action takes place on 13 March, 2024.

Procurement's evolution will continue as the profession shifts and pivots with the ever-changing, uncertain, disruption-fraught business environment. We need talented, skilled, knowledgeable and qualified procurement professionals more than we ever have to rise to the challenges, succeed and add value in this exciting, dynamic and increasingly important profession. •

Tech trends impacting the freight forwarding industry

By Renko Bergh, Co-Founder at CTRLfleet

Digital transformation is becoming a must in the freight forwarding industry. With uncertainties becoming the norm, freight forwarders will need the right tools to ensure that they can survive and thrive despite the supply chain's challenges. Aside from helping freight forwarders control and coordinate the movement of goods, digital freight forwarding solutions help businesses in a variety of ways:

- Give companies the ability to centralise operations and analyse data in real-time.
- Allow automation to simplify operational work.
- Integrate functions for greater efficiency.
- Provide companies with the ability to measure and analyse data to overcome demand and supply challenges.
- Allow freight forwarders to improve customer service by providing real-time shipment data to their clients.

These advantages will help freight forwarders plan and prepare for the uncertainties expected in the near term. Moreover, the simplification of tasks and the ease of training can help solve staffing issues.

As the Internet of Things becomes more widely deployed across all aspects of logistics, artificial intelligence (AI) is seen as the next wave to gain more traction in 2024. AI may come from algorithms that analyse historical data to help logistics software automate procedures and make operations more efficient. AI helps freight forwarding companies by minimising guesswork in both planning and procurement.

By analysing trends, AI can help minimise human errors when managing inventory and buying cycles. While manual interventions and scrutiny can help improve compliance, intermediaries like freight forwarders might be well off employing AI to monitor a diverse and ever-growing trade volume.

While customs processes could be strenuous and resource-intensive, the influx of AI-based tools can help hasten workflows. AI-based tools can help read and ingest data with impeccable accuracy, removing manual scribing errors. AI can read and process documents, identifying necessary details that it extracts to auto-populate customs documents. This can then be verified by brokers, expediting the process with a high degree of data accuracy. •

The ransomware dilemma: To pay or not to pay?

By Warren Bonheim, Managing Director at Zinia



The rise of ransomware attacks has become an alarming trend, causing business leaders to grapple with a difficult question: Should they negotiate with ransomware attackers and pay the demanded ransom?

This dilemma poses many challenges and businesses must weigh the potential consequences of their decisions. Many think that paying the ransom may be the quickest way to regain access to critical data and systems, particularly in companies where downtime translates to substantial financial losses or even risks lives such as in health care or emergency services.

There is no guarantee that the attackers will honour their end of the bargain and provide decryption keys or release the stolen data even after the ransom is paid. Businesses may end up losing money without resolving the issue. In effect, paying ransoms provides financial incentives to cybercriminals, encouraging them to continue their illegal activities.

Some believe that because stolen data may include sensitive information about customers or employees, paying the ransom can prevent the exposure of this data, mitigating the risk of lawsuits, regulatory fines and reputational damage. However, the real danger of this is that companies might become trapped in a cycle of paying ransoms instead of addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities and not invest in more robust cybersecurity measures.

6 tips on staying ahead of ransomware attackers

1. Don't wait to become a victim. Thinking it won't happen to you is dangerous because hope is not an effective strategy, especially with the increasing sophistication and business of cybercrime. Strengthening your cybersecurity makes it more difficult for attackers to penetrate your defences.
2. The weakest link for cybercriminals is people. Your employees pose the greatest danger to the business because they may inadvertently let ransomware pass into the company by clicking on links or visiting websites that pose a risk. Security

awareness training combined with regular assessments to test employees' vulnerabilities is critical.

3. You need a cybersecurity platform that has round-the-clock monitoring, built-in automated incident response and AI-led techniques to quickly and automatically block or investigate threats. Smart platforms also have data intelligence gathering of incidents from all over the world where AI analyses and learns from this data for predictive prevention to stay ahead of cybercriminals.
4. Beyond automation, you can also strengthen your security through a team of human-led threat hunters who actively seek out anomalies, unusual patterns and other indicators of compromise that automated systems may have missed. Their goal is to identify and act against security threats before they can cause significant damage or data breaches within your business.
5. Recently, there's been an increasing trend where attackers only return half of the stolen data and then demand the same ransom again to release the remainder. To safeguard against such scenarios, it's crucial for businesses to implement a robust and secure cloud backup strategy. This ensures the ability to restore data in the event of a ransomware attack, enabling uninterrupted business operations.
6. Companies do not have to invest in the latest technology, nor hire in the skills to do so; rather, you can get affordable enterprise-grade solutions by using a cybersecurity provider for a month-to-month service. These providers have the most advanced systems in place that are constantly being updated to adjust to different attack scenarios.

In conclusion, rather than facing the ransomware dilemma in the first place, companies can prioritise prevention and preparedness to strengthen their defences, making it more difficult for criminals to launch attacks. Additionally, by having a proper data backup plan in place, data can be quickly recovered. •

Electric forklifts keeping pace with e-commerce warehousing demands

By Stephen Mostert, National Technical Manager at CFAO Equipment SA



The rise of e-commerce is changing the way warehouses are designed and operated, with experts predicting that it will increase the size of the global forklift market.

Online shopping (e-commerce) has taken the retail industry by storm, with some sources predicting that by 2040, almost 95 percent of all shopping will be at least in part facilitated by e-commerce. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in fewer visits to brick-and-mortar shops, with many large retailers managing to effectively capitalise on a change in consumer demand by shifting most of their operations online.

As consumer spending habits are changing, so too is the way suppliers and manufacturers deal with this growth. In particular, the rise of e-commerce is changing the way warehouses are designed and operated.

The ever-shifting retail landscape is keeping managers of traditional forms of warehouses on their toes. Today, speed is the name of the game – consumers can review, compare and purchase items faster than ever with the expectation of delivery without delay.

To accomplish this race against time, warehouses now look very different from in the past. E-commerce requires businesses to not only stock a larger selection of items, but also have additional space available for the technology and equipment facilitating the various high-speed processes taking place.

Warehouses today need premises large enough to accommodate goods and employees as well as the automated equipment carrying out certain processes. They also require much taller interiors to allow for higher stacking of merchandise.

Experts predict that e-commerce will increase the size of the global forklift market and electric lifting and carrying machines specifically will help retailers and logistics

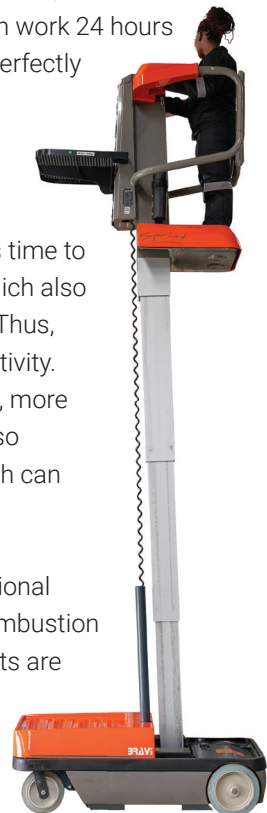
specialists meet carbon-neutrality goals. With forklifts that are fitted with internal combustion engines no longer being allowed in closed warehouses, electric forklifts, especially those using lithium-ion batteries, are becoming more dominant.

Until about a decade ago, old generation forklifts that used diesel or gas-driven engines were popular. Over the past few years, we have seen a steady increase in demand for battery-operated equipment as businesses strive to reduce their carbon footprint. In material handling, especially in the e-commerce sector, time is money.

With forklifts powered by lithium-ion batteries, downtime is significantly reduced. These machines can work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, perfectly meeting the needs of e-commerce outlets.

Unlike lead-acid batteries that emit fumes, the lithium-ion battery has zero emissions. Lithium-ion batteries require less time to charge than their lead-acid counterparts, which also have to rest before they can be used again. Thus, your fleet will benefit from increased productivity. Since lithium-ion batteries maintain a higher, more stable voltage throughout a shift, you will also experience higher forklift performance, which can translate to increased output.

The size of a forklift is also key to operational efficiency. Whereas forklifts with internal combustion engines were bulky, their electric counterparts are more compact and contribute to the goal of maximising operational space within a company's warehouse or distribution centre. •



PEP goes live with Manhattan Associates WMS and Supply Chain Junction

By Frank van den Broek, WMS Design Lead at Supply Chain Junction



After more than three years of extensive collaboration with PEP, Manhattan Warehouse Management System (WMS) has been successfully implemented in the new PEP Distribution Centre (DC) in Hammarsdale, KwaZulu-Natal.

The 90,000m² DC is equipped with the latest technology and will service over 2,500 stores across southern Africa. PEP's DC leverages three innovative picking methodologies that enable it to handle one of the largest volumes in Africa.

The initiation phase involved interactive training sessions to familiarise stakeholders with Manhattan terminology, project methodology and the Supply Chain Junction (SCJ) solutions team. Solution design was done fully remotely at the time due to COVID-19 restrictions and brought with it both challenges and opportunities. Once the team got to grips with these newfound challenges, a productive collaboration emerged as the team worked towards a signed-off solution design that addressed all key Manhattan WMS functionality required in Hammarsdale DC.

The large size of the DC and extensive operational requirements expedited the inclusion of many different functionalities: yard management, pre-receiving, receiving, inbound printing, inbound QC, dimensioning, cross-dock,



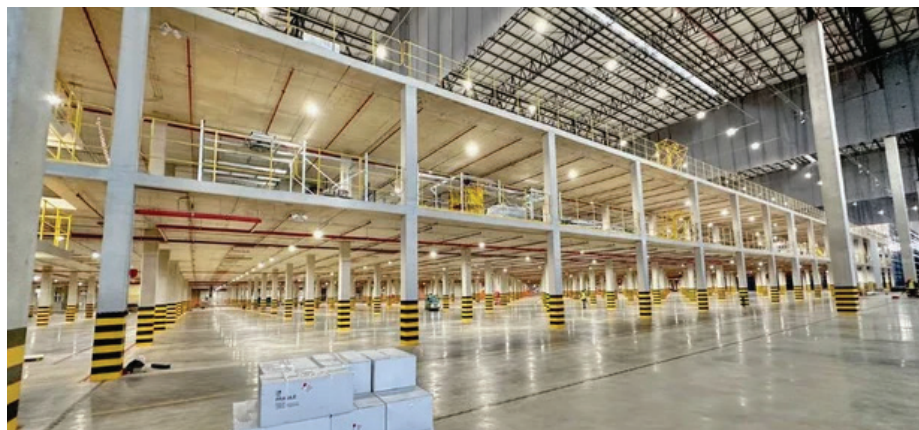
putaway, waving, put to store, full case picking, cluster picking, tote picking, WES pack sorter integration, outbound printing, outbound QC, shipping, inventory management, cycle counting, slot optimisation, labour management, oSCI, reporting and dashboarding.

Building the solution

Upon completion and approval of the design, the SCJ solutions team embarked on building the solution. In close collaboration with the PEP WMS systems analysts, test scripts were developed throughout the build phase. The build phase

was managed using the Agile project methodology and resulted in the desired involvement from the PEP super users – training them as Manhattan WMS experts. Several minor and major design changes were processed while building the solution, all tracked through formal change control.

As COVID-19 restrictions slowly relaxed, the SCJ and PEP teams were finally able to meet each other in person



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(despite not being able to shake hands) and the first in-progress site visits took place. It was during this visit that the mammoth size of the DC and this project started to sink in.

Testing, testing and more testing

As the building progressed, the solution build phase was reaching completion. All the configured and developed functionalities were required to seamlessly work together within Manhattan WMS and concurrently integrate with other applications.

To test this accurately and holistically, an integrated test plan was developed with all parties in the software landscape. Unit testing was first signed off, followed by systems integration testing (SIT). The key success factor in SIT was the execution of end-to-end (E2E) scenarios where interfaces between WMS, host systems and WES were tested. The final part of testing was user acceptance testing (UAT) where all functionality and exceptions were tested in detail.

Integrated testing was executed on-site in Hammarsdale. This was considered a key milestone in the project as this was the first opportunity to see how the physical warehouse, WMS, WES, WCS, host systems, etc. all work together.

Professionalised training with MET

A facility of this size brings with it a large staff complement. To onboard employees systemically and professionally, PEP used MET Fastrack (MET) as its learning management system (LMS). The PEP WMS System Analysts were trained on how to use MET and worked together with SCJ to develop the necessary training modules. Upon approval of the training



material, all Manhattan WMS users were fully trained and assessed with MET before they could start working in the DC. The training material and assessments on MET are now a key part of the onboarding process of new employees in Hammarsdale DC.

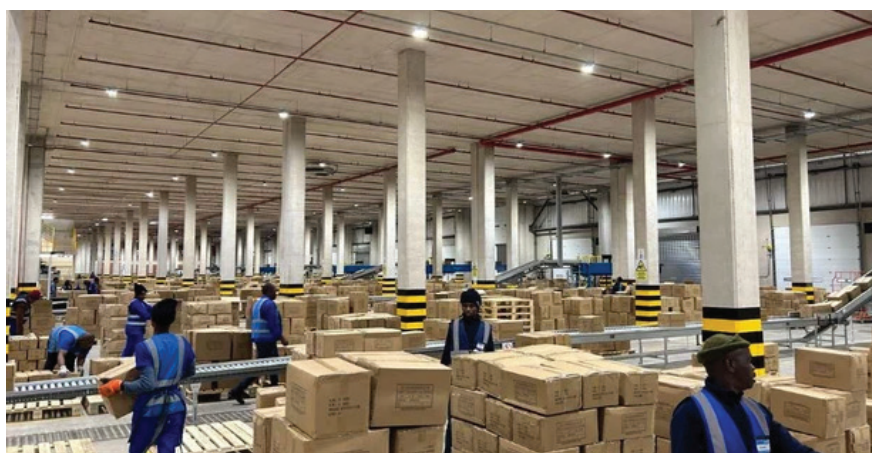
Day in the life of (DILO)

To evaluate how the DC will operate and to iron out day-to-day operational issues, SCJ takes projects through day in the life of (DILO) simulations. PEP was fully on board with this approach from the onset of the project and made sure to spend an extensive amount of time on DILO. Real inventory was used to simulate the full end-to-end process with people. This helped to identify issues, understand user-system interactions and allowed all teams in the project to make final adjustments before go-live.

Go-live

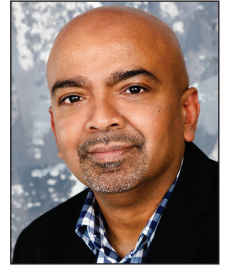
After working together through all testing phases and DILO, the entire project team was ready for go-live. The strategy was to use a slow ramp-up and get used to processing real stock from real purchase orders coming in and real stock being picked for real stores. As with all go-lives, some teething issues were picked up and resolved by the support teams and some changes were implemented to accommodate operational realities that were not faced before.

It took less than three weeks to roll out full inbound functionality, and outbound caught up to full production capabilities in week four. With up to 3.5 million units going in and out of the warehouse every week, PEP Hammarsdale DC is one of the largest shipping facilities in the country. •



AfCFTA can unlock economic growth in Africa

By Mervyn Naidoo, Group Chief Executive Officer at ACTOM and Chairman of the Manufacturing Circle



The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) can support the development of local OEMs and unlock economic growth on the continent.

In most African countries, local manufacturers tend to look towards imported equipment when choosing an original equipment manufacturer (OEM), often selecting imports from the Far East due to the lower costs associated with these products. This is mainly because many African countries lack the capabilities and manufacturing capacity to locally produce equipment across various industry segments, which often makes the procurement of equipment in-country difficult and expensive.

This means that, by default, many African manufacturing companies turn to the West, Europe or most commonly the East – particularly China – to source equipment. However, the benefits of lower upfront costs are generally negated by the life cycle costs of the imported products.

On the other hand, equipment manufactured by local OEMs has the benefit of being backed up by local competence and intellectual property, providing equipment owners with support and maintenance throughout the product's life cycle. As is often the case, imported equipment can quickly become useless and obsolete due to a lack of spare parts and expertise to maintain it.

Economic stimulus

Additionally, developing a local vertical supply chain that can support equipment from cradle to grave brings wider economic benefits to a country, including an economic stimulus that ultimately leads to the expansion of industry, job creation and increased gross domestic product. Typically, manufacturing multiplies employment – for every job created, many more are created in the vertical supply chain.

As many African countries grapple with high unemployment rates, developing and growing local and regional OEM capabilities would see more people become economically active, which would drive greater demand for resources such as electricity, water, data and service. An economically active population also creates demand for infrastructure growth and services, in turn boosting demand for locally manufactured equipment.

Hence, the reasons for African countries to actively look at using the existing demand for equipment manufacturing to stimulate regional economies and create jobs, as opposed to importing goods and benefiting other economies, are compelling.

While the generally lower cost positioning of equipment imported from the East does make it tough for African manufacturers to compete, it is not impossible. African manufacturers need to look aggressively at how to position themselves to be competitive against foreign OEMs and the key to this will be to leverage the benefits of AfCFTA.

Incentivise trade

The reduction in tariffs under AfCFTA will automatically contribute to promoting the use of locally manufactured goods on the continent as it will introduce an element of increased competitiveness and open borders to facilitate trade between countries. At the same time, governments will have to play their part to incentivise trade between African countries, which will ultimately stimulate regional economies across the continent.

One of the key outcomes that must flow from AfCFTA is that African countries must effectively meet the demands of manufacturers on the continent by effectually exploiting the readily available raw materials needed for equipment manufacturing. Many of the resources required to produce these products are found on the continent and these should be beneficiated locally to add value.

The establishment of local manufacturing plants and factories will, in turn, stimulate economic growth and ensure sustainability in terms of cradle-to-grave life cycle support for locally manufactured equipment. This will unlock economic growth in Africa. If done wisely, AfCFTA can help to boost African economies and change the plight of many countries on the continent. •

Our own inconvenient truth – national logistics

National logistics – a sector of transcendental importance to the national economy – has experienced watershed moments this year.

The situation intensified in the third and fourth quarters, when capacity issues at all key ports reached crisis point, resulting in severe backlogs of freight and costly delays, impacting the complete supply chain – to name just two of many other severe consequences. In the main, the impacts are due to high inefficiencies and infrastructural collapse.

“The national logistics crisis is our own ‘inconvenient truth,’” says Dr Juanita Maree, Chief Executive Officer of the South African Association of Freight Forwarders (SAAFF). “The full extent of the position must be fully understood and, at the same time, it is equally important to know that the issues are being addressed by government and the private sector as a matter of national importance of the highest priority from a platform of shared responsibility. Without a functioning logistics network, 60 percent of our economy is at risk since trade in goods represents the major portion of our national economy and demands the uninterrupted movement of goods.”



Dr Juanita Maree, CEO of SAAFF.

“Over the past two weeks, leaders from across the logistics, supply chain and transport sectors have supplied exhaustive detail of the situation to business and the nation, generating wide media coverage. The message from industry highlighted the issues, while at the same time underscoring solutions that are, by and large, matters covered in the logistics roadmap to recovery and the work of the National Logistics Crisis Committee (NLCC),” maintains Dr Maree. “This is all work in progress, thanks to the collective focus. But it is no secret that fixing the fundamental issues requires time and significant resources. To be sustainable, the approach requires a complete overhaul of the strategy and operational approach to the management of port and rail infrastructure – these are matters at the top of the agenda at parliamentary, institutional, national and regional levels.”

Dr Maree continues: “The reality is that the issues are now with us and impact indiscriminately all sectors of the





economy – the people of South Africa, other African countries, regional economies and, indeed, our international partners are all affected. This conversation must continue, but it must be accompanied by immediate action.”

“Over the last decade, our terminal efficiency has declined by 28 percent compared to our internal targets. Benchmarked against globally recognised best practices for ports of a similar size, current throughput at 84 percent of demonstrated capacity is 50 percent below norm. While the knock-on impact of the situation cannot be underestimated, I am greatly encouraged by the stage we have reached – the open conversation has widened the collaboration and great courage and determination have been apparent across all the platforms,” says Dr Maree.

The logistics sector is passionate and fully committed to the solutions and wholesale transformation that are required. This is evident in the way representative bodies have come forward and leaders from across every sub-sector are standing up, calling for reform and driving corrective action, with government right behind the movement.

Beyond the crises of today, fundamental changes are required for South Africa to reclaim its rightful place as the continent’s top, trusted enabler of intra-Africa trade here and a key player across global markets.

The fix demands much more than bricks, mortar and machinery; it also calls for a revolutionary approach and that is the need to rebuild logistics on new foundations. Intra-port competition is a practice we need to embrace. This approach will bring about important, new dimensions, introducing greater efficiencies through the dynamics of increased competition and structured collaboration between all the national ports – Durban, Cape Town, Ngqura, Gqeberha, Richards Bay – while enabling the opportunity to benchmark performance among our ports, on the fly and in line with new world standards.

Logistics is the oxygen that breathes life into the national economy. The renewal of an efficient multi-modal logistics network and the rehabilitation of the rail system, alongside the upgrade and maintenance of the port infrastructure and equipment, are critical priorities to offer reliability of service, a principal KPI in the drive for excellence and, indeed, based on the principle of shared infrastructure and shared responsibility, a KPI shared by private sector and government alike going forward.

People are at the heart of the reconstruction. Excellence through capacity building, skills development and a focus on enabling integrated technology are recognised as essential strategies for the country’s economy to rise again. •

Navigating the complex waters of African logistics

This article has been adapted from a recent discussion on Michelin's 'What's Treading' podcast featuring Stephen Masters, Over Border and Project Manager at MSC South Africa



Africa has long been considered a land of untapped potential, teeming with natural resources, diverse cultures and emerging economies. At the forefront of unlocking this potential is the continent's logistics industry.

Sea freight is the dominant method of importing and exporting across the continent. This reinforces the influence that the global transport economy has on regions like South Africa. The ripple effect of global incidents such as the blockage of the Suez underscores the interconnectedness of the logistics world.

South Africa's geolocation offers a unique advantage. Globally, from a geographical point of view, we're the halfway point between the East and the West. This midpoint position has the potential to turn the country into a significant logistics hub. Even so, businesses must remain cognisant of the challenges such as the rapidly increasing competitive landscape and the significant amount of work South Africa must still do to strengthen its logistics sector.

A significant challenge is the dated infrastructure, especially concerning rail and road transportation. We suffer from an aging infrastructure here in southern Africa. This decay affects not just transportation, but also the broader sectors.

The ongoing electricity crisis exemplifies this, noting its crippling effects over the past few years. It's been something we've had to endure as many businesses have been compelled to find alternative power sources.

Opportunities to be had

Yet, amidst these challenges, optimism flourishes.

Several avenues of growth and opportunity were identified. Africa holds a unique position with a need for solutions tailored to the African context. We need to sit with our partners and say this is what works in Africa and we need to tailor that accordingly.

In the realm of international partnerships and trade relations, Africa is far from a passive player. Instead, it's a continent that has a wealth of insights and assets to offer. We can Africanise them (the partnerships) to fit in our environment, our economy and our logistics networks.

There exists a need for innovative thinking. The world is rapidly changing and sticking to outdated models and strategies will only hinder growth. It requires thinking outside the box... it's driven by passion and vision.

Focusing on local

When it comes to the future of the industry, all this could suggest a move towards more localised solutions. These better reflect the unique logistics landscape across the continent while still leaving opportunities for international partnerships. Moreover, it means acknowledging the past and present challenges, learning from them and forging a path forward with determination and adaptability.

In summary, Africa stands on the cusp of a logistics revolution. While challenges abound, so do opportunities. Through conversations with industry experts, a clearer picture of the future emerges – one that's hopeful, dynamic and, above all, promising for the African continent. •



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SAPICS 2024: 'Supply Chain Metamorphosis'

Taking place from 9-12 June, 2024 in Cape Town, this year's SAPICS Conference will be held under the theme 'Supply Chain Metamorphosis' and hosted by SAPICS (the Professional Body for Supply Chain Management) in association with SAAFF (the Southern African Association of Freight Forwarders).

Now in its 46th year, the event brings together industry experts, thought leaders and professionals from around the world and across the supply chain spectrum. "This year's conference promises to deliver unparalleled insights, networking opportunities and cutting-edge solutions to address the ever-evolving challenges in the field of supply chain management," comments SAPICS President MJ Schoemaker.

"In today's volatile business environment, supply chains have had to undergo a significant transformation. They are no longer linear processes. They have become dynamic and interconnected ecosystems capable of rapidly adapting to emerging technologies, market trends and global challenges. Supply chain metamorphosis will be in the spotlight at SAPICS 2024 to ensure that supply chain professionals are equipped to understand the changes, challenges and opportunities in this new supply chain landscape. Attendees can expect to gain valuable insights, forge meaningful connections and stay ahead in an industry that is continually changing and advancing."

SAAFF will collaborate with SAPICS to co-host the conference for the second consecutive year. "Attendees last year experienced a dynamic exchange of ideas



MJ Schoemaker, President of SAPICS.



Dr Juanita Maree, CEO at SAAFF.

through engaging presentations, interactive workshops and spirited discussions. The event not only showcased cutting-edge research, but also fostered meaningful connections, laying the groundwork for future collaborations between SAPICS and SAAFF," says SAAFF CEO Dr Juanita Maree.

"Delegates who take advantage of the early bird discount will secure their spot at the must-attend 2024 SAPICS Conference and enjoy substantial savings on the registration fee. This limited-time offer reflects SAPICS's commitment to elevating, educating and empowering the supply chain community across Africa. We want to ensure that the incredible learning and networking opportunities offered by the SAPICS Conference are as accessible as possible to all supply chain practitioners," Schoemaker concludes.

Early birds have until 31 March to qualify for a discounted registration fee for the annual SAPICS Conference and Exhibition. Visit <https://conference.sapics.org> and register before the deadline or contact the Conference Secretariat at Upavon Management on 011 023 6701 or email info@upavon.co.za.

Global logistics execs foresee surge of African investment

Nearly 62 percent of global logistics professionals say their companies are planning additional or first-time investments in Africa, according to a closely watched yearly industry survey.



Agility's Vice
Chairman,
Tarek Sultan.

The survey of 830 logistics executives is part of the 15th annual Agility Emerging Markets Logistics Index, a snapshot of industry sentiment and ranking of the world's 50 leading emerging markets. The index ranks countries for overall competitiveness based on their logistics strengths, business climates and digital readiness – factors that make them attractive to logistics providers, freight forwarders, air and ocean carriers, distributors and investors. In the 2024 index, the rankings of most African economies changed little from a year earlier, but businesses indicate they are looking ahead at massive population growth and trade expansion spurred by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"This is the most optimism we've seen about Africa in the 15 years of the index," says Agility Vice Chairman Tarek Sultan. "Africa's population will double by 2050 when one in four people on the planet will be African. International businesses realise that the time is now for Africa – they need to invest, establish their brands and develop the next generation of African talent if they're going to ride the coming wave of growth."

China and India were one and two in the 50-country index rankings. In Africa, Egypt (20), Morocco (22), South Africa (24) and Kenya (25) were the top performers, followed by Ghana (31), Nigeria (36), Tunisia (37), Tanzania (41), Algeria (42), Uganda (43), Ethiopia (45), Mozambique (46), Angola (47) and Libya (50).

Egypt has Africa's highest ranked domestic logistics opportunities – 13th in that category; South Africa (15) was tops in Africa for international logistics; Morocco (12) has Africa's best business fundamentals; and Kenya

(9) is Africa's most digitally ready and the continent's highest-ranked country in any category.

More than 63 percent of survey respondents say their companies continue overhauling supply chains by spreading production to multiple locations or relocating it to home markets and nearby countries. China, the world's leading producer, stands to be most affected: 37.4 percent of industry professionals say they plan to move production/sourcing out of China or reduce investment there.

Shipping and logistics costs that soared during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath are still climbing, but at a slower rate, the survey found. One way shippers expect to cope is by increasing the use of digital freight forwarding from 37.8 percent today to 52 percent in five years.

John Manners-Bell, Chief Executive of Ti, says: "Supply chain managers are still coming to terms with the political and economic instability characterising the post-COVID-19 global economy. Geopolitical relationships are changing rapidly and this is having a major impact on international trade and risk profiles. Businesses need to be alive to the opportunities and threats that exist in emerging markets and use data, such as the Agility Emerging Market Logistics Index, to inform agile decision-making."

Transport Intelligence, a leading analysis and research firm for the logistics industry, has compiled the index since it was launched in 2009. View the 2024 Agility Emerging Markets Logistics Index at <https://emli.agility.com/>.

SA start-up offers cutting-edge solutions for transport industry

IN THE dynamic world of logistics and supply chain management, the introduction of innovative solutions is not just a trend, but a necessity. 2024 sees the birth of a South African start-up, CtrlFleet, co-founded by industry veterans Renko Bergh and Wichard Sullwald, bringing a wealth of knowledge and expertise to their solution offering.

CtrlFleet specialises in transport management software, a critical area in the logistics sector. The company's entry is timely considering the increasing complexities and demands of transport and fleet management. The duo's vision is not just to create a product, but to forge a solution that addresses the nuanced needs of fleet owners and transport operators.

The transport industry, constantly on the move, faces numerous challenges, ranging from route optimisation and order execution with driver application to real-time tracking and compliance issues such as customer portals for live ETAs. CtrlFleet's solutions aim to streamline these aspects, making operations more efficient and cost-effective. This is not just about introducing technology into existing systems, but about integrating intelligent solutions that adapt to the unique challenges of the industry.

Bergh and Sullwald's approach is grounded in their deep understanding of the industry's pulse. Their software is designed from the ground up to provide real-time data and the ability to meet the needs of every control room to execute and control their orders and fleet, helping businesses make informed decisions. The importance of data-driven decision-making in logistics cannot be overstated, especially in a sector where timing and precision play crucial roles.

CtrlFleet's co-founders have complementary theoretical backgrounds and share the same hands-on practical experience and exposure in the transport industry. Bergh holds a master's degree in supply chain and after gaining broad industry experience, co-founded



Renko Bergh and Wichard Sullwald, co-founders of CtrlFleet.

a business that focused purely on the implementation of existing software in the transport, warehouse and data visualisation sectors.

Sullwald holds a master's degree in applied mathematics (cum laude) and after experience in the financial tech sector, he trialed and tested transport management solutions for the optimisation of operations at his family-owned transport business.

With a shared passion for the digitisation of the logistics industry, the vision for CtrlFleet is to be the preferred next-generation transport management software provider in Africa and abroad.

CtrlFleet's entry into the market signifies a step towards modernisation in the transport and logistics industry. With their innovative solutions, Bergh and Sullwald are not just offering a product, but are partnering with businesses to navigate the complex logistics landscape. •

While Transnet stalls, Port of Maputo sets record levels in 2023

MAPUTO PORT Development Company (MPDC) has announced its annual results, highlighting significant growth in various metrics, consolidating its position as one of the region's main economic drivers.

Of the 31.2 million tons handled in 2023, approximately 25 million were made up of various ores, including chromium, ferrochrome, magnetite, coal, phosphate ore, vanadium, titanium, copper and vermiculite, among others. "The handling of these cargoes reflects the diversification strategy on which the Port of Maputo has focused in recent years," says Osório Lucas, MPDC's Chief Executive Officer.

One point to highlight is the more balanced distribution of the volumes transported. While 61 percent was handled by road, 39 percent was transported by rail, indicating a significant increase of 8.4 percent in rail use compared to the previous year – setting another record for the Port of Maputo.

"The sustainable growth of the transportation corridor continues to be a concern for MPDC. Although there is growth in rail handling, demand for the port has grown exponentially and so we will continue to work with Mozambique Ports and Railways (CFM) to seek a better balance between rail and road cargo," explains the executive director. Another of the measures

adopted by MPDC during 2023 to mitigate road congestion was the November opening of the Truck Traffic Management Park in Pessene.

The substantial increase in the volume of cargo has had a direct impact on the value of the fixed and variable fees paid to the government of Mozambique. In this context, the Port of Maputo contributed more than \$41-million (excluding taxes and dividends to shareholders), marking a growth of 29 percent on last year. This financial increase consolidates the port's economic contribution to the country's development.

The year 2023 was also marked by a strong investment in Mozambican culture. The various celebrations associated with the Port of Maputo (20th anniversary of the concession to MPDC, 120 years of the Port of Maputo in partnership with CFM and the end of the year in partnership with Rádio Moçambique) were marked with unique musical shows, accessible to the general public, with a strong focus on national musicians and artists.

The social investment component included support for Kanyaka, with participation in the rehabilitation of the passenger transport vessel and investment in the executive project that will allow work to begin on the rehabilitation of the Kanyaka jetty in 2024. •



Goler partners with Relog to offer financially sustainable expansion path

GROWING YOUR business or expanding your warehouse capacities shouldn't be hindered by the cost of capital or the ability and availability of in-house skills and resources. Goler, a new brand in the industry, aims to enable its customers to focus on what they do best – growing their business. Through its partnership with Relog – a logistics and supply chain consulting and infrastructure design company, Goler offers a bespoke turnkey solution in its ability to not only develop efficient and sustainable logistical solutions, but also the ability to finance these solutions in a way that best suits your business.

In an innovative approach, their design and finance turnkey solution will strengthen your balance sheet while ensuring the operational solution and associated equipment developed and specified by Relog strengthen your operational capability to grow your competitive advantage – especially when every cent counts.

Operational solution design

Through its partnership with Relog, Goler offers clients the opportunity to leverage Relog's expertise, supplier relations and buying power to develop fit-for-purpose operational solutions that will support your business strategy and growth ambitions.

Equipment financing, procurement and implementation

Goler offers a solution financing option that can suit

various business and financial needs. It makes acquiring and implementing the correct equipment simple. With a well-designed solution in hand, Goler can source and secure the necessary equipment at the best possible price on your behalf.

Through this solution, companies can avoid large, upfront cash outlays in their operational equipment budget with predictable, fixed monthly payments. Relog's extensive cross-industry experience can also ensure that your developed solution not only meets your current operational needs, but can be scaled and tweaked to fit your future operational needs as your business and the market change.

Through Goler, you can finance the project, from detailed designs to installation and training. Floris Visser, Director at Goler and CEO of Relog, sums it up: "Goler offers so much more than just financing. With the help of Relog, whose fees are also part of the financed solution, you will get the best equipment at the best price with the assurance that it is the right fit for your operational needs based on sound industrial engineering principles and many years of cross-industry experience from the experts at Relog."



Floris Visser, Director at Goler and CEO of Relog.





DHL partners with VulPro for Africa's largest vulture relocation project

LOGISTICS COMPANY DHL has partnered with VulPro in South Africa to deliver the largest relocation of vultures ever undertaken in Africa. As part of this unique conservative initiative, DHL was responsible for the transportation and security of 160 birds from VulPro Hartbeespoort to VulPro in Shamwari Private Game Reserve in the Eastern Cape. This concludes the first phase of the project to secure the future of wild vulture populations in southern Africa, with 160 Cape and African white-backed vultures settled into their new home at Shamwari Private Game Reserve.

"This delivery continues a proud tradition at DHL of supporting animal conservation efforts," says Anthony Beckley, VP of Operations, DHL Express SSA. "We are thrilled to have played a critical role in the safe delivery of these endangered birds. Complex projects like this allow us to showcase the power of our DHL network and deliver on our purpose of connecting people and improving lives."

Kerri Wolter, VulPro CEO, adds: "VulPro is the only vulture conservation organisation of its kind on

the continent and is spearheading population restocking and supplementation to address the severe decline of African vulture species. We are extremely excited to have partnered with organisations such as DHL, which understand the important role that these birds play in the environment."

DHL has been an active supporter of VulPro since 2015 and has assisted the organisation with several smaller-scale relocations throughout the partnership. This momentous move involved over 50 volunteers, took 18 hours and all 160 birds were loaded in just three hours before embarking on the 1,042km journey. •



DHL provided transportation and security for 160 vultures, which were carefully loaded in specialised crates.

Overnight road services – a viable alternative to airfreight

IN A landscape where businesses demand swift and dependable logistics solutions, Seabourne Logistics is offering an innovative overnight road service (ONR), setting new industry standards and delivering goods punctually and rapidly. Designed to provide quick and efficient deliveries throughout South Africa, reaching destinations typically serviced by air, the overnight service creates a competitive edge in today's fast-paced market.

"The success of our overnight road service can be attributed to our dedication to quality, reliability and cost-effectiveness," says Garry Harris, Director at Seabourne Logistics ZA. "We understand that our clients' success depends on their ability to have goods delivered on time and within budget and we take that responsibility very seriously."

Transporting goods overnight by road presents numerous benefits. The foremost advantage is its cost-effectiveness, offering potential savings of up to 50 percent compared to airfreight services. Moreover, it excels in cargo handling, boasting greater space and flexibility than airlines. This facilitates the transportation of hazardous materials and liquids, which may be subject to stricter airborne regulations.

"While road transport does have its limitations, it is considerably more accommodating, permitting the carriage of items like aerosols or lithium batteries that may be restricted on flights. Importantly, our service consistently upholds high-quality standards, ensuring minimal disruptions," continues Harris.

Seabourne has created distribution hubs and fulfilment centres that are strategically positioned across the country to cater to its growing clientele. Not only has it increased the service's reach, but also allows for more efficient transportation networks.

*Garry Harris, Director
at Seabourne
Logistics ZA.*



The company has invested heavily in the development of this service. All line haul vehicles are equipped with long-range tanks and anti-fatigue cameras that are consistently operated by a double crew, whose activities are closely monitored by a 24-hour control room. Iveco Turbo Daily 50C 70 vehicles with reinforced heavy-duty tow bars and 1.5-ton trailers are operated within their warranty period on the overnight road service, ensuring reliability. The fleet is subjected to bumper-to-bumper service checks every second to third day, depending on the rotation schedule.

The vehicles have dimensions measuring 4,5m (length) x 1,7m (width) x 1,9m (height), with a carrying capacity of 2.5 tons and 16 cubic metres of space. The trailers have dimensions of 3,3m (length) x 1,6m (width) x 1,7m (height) and can carry 1-1.5 tons with 9 cubic metres of available space. To enhance their robustness, the rear sections of the vehicles are equipped with aluminium cladding walls and Marley-type floors, complete with sunken securing points.

"Businesses, driven by price sensitivity and competition in service delivery, are increasingly opting for this intermediate service that ensures next-day delivery," explains Harris. "It holds great value in industries like the automotive sector, where the quick movement of parts is crucial. It offers convenience and flexibility, allowing for multiple deliveries in a single trip to remote places often left out of next-day delivery. More so, we're constantly working on expanding our service reach and footprint across the country, providing our clients with a cost-effective solution," concludes Harris. •

The SPAR Group redefines township shopping through local partnerships

IN A series of first-in-South Africa partnerships forged to stimulate local economies and revolutionise the shopping experience for township residents, The SPAR Group is collaborating with local providers to power its SPAR2U delivery service in underserved areas across the country. This move is challenging the notion that townships are high-risk areas and cannot be adequately serviced.

One such partnership is a collaboration with KasiD, a food delivery service that has played a pivotal role in launching the SPAR2U home delivery service in Tembisa. The relationship between SPAR and KasiD will enable the roll-out of SPAR2U services in Kempton Park, Kaalfontein, Ivory Park, Soweto, Mamelodi and Glen Marais.

SPAR2U is also establishing partnerships with Delivery Ka Speed in Pretoria, expanding its reach to Mamelodi and Hamanskraal, and will soon be rolling out partnerships with other local providers to offer SPAR2U in townships across the country.

“Residents in these areas can now easily access SPAR2U by downloading the app, placing an order from their favourite store and our partners will handle the delivery,” explains Blake Raubenheimer, Omnichannel Executive at The SPAR Group. “A significant portion of South Africans reside in townships and should have the same access to the ease and convenience of online shopping and home deliveries as residents in city areas. But, SPAR2U deliveries by our partners are not just about ease and convenience; they’re primarily about seizing cost-saving opportunities. Township residents no longer have to queue at taxi ranks and travel long distances for their shopping. Neighbours are collaborating, pooling their grocery needs, sharing delivery costs and ultimately saving money.”



These savings, previously spent on travel, are being directed towards purchasing food, directly benefiting families. The expanded variety of groceries available through the SPAR2U service is also empowering households to diversify their food choices, including brands and products they might not have previously considered.

“At The SPAR Group, we understand that for the poorest 10 percent of households, food makes up 40 percent of their total expenditure. Food is expensive right now and so, if we can help our shoppers save, either through our house brand SPAR products or through delivering their groceries to their doors, then we’re committed to that, regardless of their location. We are deeply dedicated to becoming a part of these communities, delivering SPAR retail services through our local partners who possess an acute understanding of local needs, actively support local causes and provide employment for individuals from the very communities they serve,” says Raubenheimer.

As purchasing and delivery habits evolve, The SPAR Group aims to proactively adapt to the changing landscape to introduce SPAR Rewards, conditional offers, single-product and multi-product purchasing incentives, combo deals and more to enhance the township shopping experience.

“We want to empower township shoppers in the digital era, making shopping more accessible, convenient and cost-effective for all. We are proud to stand by our commitment to serve and uplift South Africa’s townships. Together with our dedicated partners, who exemplify The SPAR Group’s core value to serve the communities in which our member stores operate, we look forward to continuing to reshape the future of township retail,” concludes Raubenheimer. •

VW partners with DHL Express SA for pilot test of ID. Buzz Cargo fleet

DHL EXPRESS has partnered with Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles for the pilot test of the ID. Buzz Cargo fleet in South Africa. Four ID. Buzz Cargo units will be placed at the DHL Express Service Centres in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban for six months. The units will be utilised for specialised last-mile delivery service as part of DHL's local pilot test of its global zero emissions logistics target.

The introduction of the ID. Buzz Cargo test fleet is an effort towards the realisation of Volkswagen Group South Africa's electric vehicles strategy for the Volkswagen brand in South Africa. The test fleet will assist Volkswagen to build awareness of its electric vehicles in South Africa and to obtain learnings that are key to the brand's electric vehicles strategy.

Thomas Milz, Director of Sales and Marketing at VWSA, says: "Our partnership with DHL Express on the ID. Buzz Cargo test fleet marks the beginning of

Volkswagen's long-term plan to gradually introduce its electric vehicles to the local market. At the end of the pilot test, we hope to have gathered sufficient information and insights on the readiness of the local market for the introduction of a commercial electric vehicle such as the ID. Buzz Cargo. We are very excited to partner with DHL, which shares a similar commitment of zero emissions by 2050 in accordance with the Paris Climate Agreement."

Jed Michaletos, Managing Director at DHL Express South Africa, adds: "As the world's leading logistics company, we have a responsibility to set an example in our industry and be a sustainability leader. DHL Express has committed to achieving zero emissions by 2050 through a number of initiatives, one of which is ensuring that we have at least 60 percent electric vehicles for last-mile deliveries by 2030. We are excited to partner with VWSA to pilot its ID. Buzz in our South African operations." •

Thomas Milz (Director of Sales and Marketing, VWSA) and Jed Michaletos (Managing Director, DHL Express South Africa).



ISUZU Trucks celebrates 11-year reign as top brand in sector

ISUZU Trucks proudly celebrates its outstanding 11-year reign as the number one brand in South Africa's cab-over-chassis medium and heavy commercial vehicle (MCV and HCV) segments. Despite market challenges, ISUZU Trucks continues to lead the pack, reinforcing its commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction.

Medium commercial vehicle segment

In 2023, ISUZU Trucks maintained a significant presence in the MCV segment. The sales results showcase the brand's resilience and market leadership:

- 2023 total volume: 1,632 units, reflecting a 5.1 percent decline from 2022's 1,720 units.
- 2023 market share: 30.8 percent, indicating a 1.4 percent decrease from 2022's 32.2 percent.
- ISUZU Trucks secured the top volume-selling cab-over-chassis (excluding van and bus) position for all 12 months, with March standing out, achieving a remarkable 198 units.

Heavy commercial vehicle segment

ISUZU Trucks' performance in the HCV segment highlights its adaptability and strength in a dynamic market:

- 2023 total volume: 1,160 units, compared to 2022's 1,223 units.
- 2023 market share: 21.2 percent, reflecting a notable 0.7 percent increase from 2022's 20.5 percent.
- Despite a decrease in volume within the segment, ISUZU Trucks has successfully increased its overall market share.

The success is further exemplified by the NPR 400 and FTR 850 models, which stood out as the top volume-selling model derivatives, showcasing the brand's ability to meet diverse market demands.

"We are immensely proud of this achievement and grateful for the support of our valued customers, dealerships and partners who have played a crucial role in our continued success," says Craig Uren, Senior Vice President Revenue Generations (SACU) at ISUZU Motors South Africa. He furthermore expresses gratitude for the continued support of customers, dealerships and partners, stating: "These results reinforce our dedication to providing high-quality, innovative solutions. ISUZU Trucks remains committed to setting industry standards and driving the future of commercial transportation." •





Bidvest Mobility showcases mobile computing and barcode technology

AT THE Propak Cape 2023 Conference and Exhibition, Bidvest Mobility demonstrated the key role that mobile computing and barcode technology play in the packaging and labelling industry.

Bidvest Mobility exhibited alongside five other companies in the Bidvest Group, which collectively represent a comprehensive portfolio of world-class packaging and labelling solutions, under the Bidvest Packaging brand. Bidvest Mobility has years of expertise in providing mobile computing and barcoding solutions that harness the power of mobile technologies to meet the most demanding business challenges whilst driving transformation throughout the supply chain.

Bidvest Mobility showcased how mobile solutions empower businesses to manage, track and monitor goods anytime, anywhere with real-time visibility

from first mile to last mile across the supply chain.

"This results in improved productivity and margins, operational efficiency and enhanced customer satisfaction through a seamless delivery experience," says Simon Grisdale, Managing Executive at Bidvest Mobility. "While highlighting our mobile enterprise software solutions and services, we also displayed some of the latest global technology in print, scanning and mobility."

Other companies present at the Bidvest Packaging stand included Aluminium Foil Converters (AFC), Lufil Packaging, Masterpack, Rotolabel and S&N Labels. While each company operates separately servicing its own customer base, they complement each other and provide the southern African market with a comprehensive range of focused solutions for industry-specific packaging and labelling requirements. •

Qiktruck puts driver welfare first

QIKTRUCK LOGISTICS, a start-up in the industry, has announced a groundbreaking partnership with WELO Health, also a start-up in the healthtech industry. This collaboration empowers QikTruck Logistics drivers to access health care services from anywhere, ensuring their well-being is a top priority.

In an industry known for its fast-paced and demanding nature, QikTruck Logistics is setting a new standard for driver care. Through this strategic alliance with WELO Health, it is committed to transforming the driver experience, making comprehensive medical services accessible to its valued team members. The company's drivers can now access medical consultations, advice and support from virtually any location, whether on the road, at home or at one of their hubs.

The collaboration with WELO Health brings a comprehensive suite of health care services, including virtual doctor consultations, on-site health care at depots, prescription services and more. Drivers will receive top-tier health care solutions when and where they need them.

QikTruck Logistics doesn't view itself as just a logistics company, but a community of drivers who ensure the seamless flow of goods across the nation. Its commitment to driver welfare is unwavering and the partnership with WELO Health marks a significant milestone in delivering on that promise.

QikTruck Logistics is a non-asset-based 4PL model that partners with drivers on a per-load basis. The funding model for the benefits provided to drivers is structured to ensure a fair and sustainable partnership. Each load is associated with a predetermined compensation and as part of the funding model.

QikTruck allocates a portion of the load revenue to cover benefits, which may include health insurance, retirement plans and other incentives aimed at enhancing the overall well-being of its drivers.

Also, to encourage optimal performance and reliability, the company incorporates performance-based incentives into the funding model. Drivers who consistently meet or exceed



Wesley Sono, Chief Operations Officer at QikTruck Logistics.

delivery expectations may receive additional bonuses or rewards to recognise their dedication and hard work.

"I am honoured to announce the partnership between QikTruck and WELO Health," declares Wesley Sono, Chief Operations Officer. "As we support nearly 2,000+ drivers throughout South Africa – often with their indispensable helpers, providing access to on-demand medical care, including doctors and nurses, is a top priority. We would also like to extend our gratitude to our drivers, the true backbone of our company. Without their dedication, we wouldn't have reached the heights we have today. This collaboration exemplifies our commitment to the well-being of our team, recognising their indispensable role in our success."

"We are extremely excited about this partnership and the difference it will make for QikTruck Logistics drivers. Health care on demand without limiting productivity is our play. We could not have chosen a better partner with whom to do this," adds WELO Health CEO Zanele Abraham Matome. •

Mother of three takes home 2023 #ThankYouTrucker award

CYNTHIA THALA, a dedicated Bulk Vehicle Operator with Unitrans, has achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first woman to secure the coveted title of the 2023 #ThankYouTrucker competition. "This prestigious victory not only highlights Cynthia's exceptional skills and unwavering commitment to her profession, but also underscores the invaluable contributions of women in the trucking industry," says Carli Venter, Chief Strategy Officer at Unitrans, speaking at the award presentation ceremony. "Her remarkable achievement is a testament to her determination and dedication and Unitrans is immensely proud to have her as part of our team."

Cynthia started her career as a bus driver. Her fascination with the world of truck driving began as she observed bulk trucks making deliveries during her previous job. Despite discouragement from friends who deemed it an unconventional choice for a woman, her husband stood firmly by her side, encouraging her to pursue her dream. She embarked on her journey with Unitrans in March 2019 as the first female Bulk Vehicle Operator (BVO) – another first for her and Unitrans.

Having dedicated four years to Unitrans, Cynthia is well-versed in her responsibilities and duties as a driver. She meticulously inspects her vehicle before and after trips, prioritising on-time deliveries while maintaining a steadfast commitment to safety, not only for herself, but for those around her as well. Cynthia's unwavering dedication and reliability are evident in her track record, which includes delivering 11.4 million litres without incident, with zero cross-overs and spills; completing 855 trips and 952 drops; achieving 651 days without injury, ensuring her personal safety; and maintaining 651 days without violating life-saving rules.

A delighted Vusi Nkuna, General Manager at Unitrans and Thala's Line Manager, thanked IVECO and the Road Freight Association (RFA), as well as Thala. Nkuna said that Thala had never shied away from challenges and embraced all opportunities. "We are proud of you, Cynthia. You are an ambassador and a role model for our business and our team!"

On winning the award, Thala thanked her team and family. She added: "In particular, I would like to thank my



Gavin Kelly (CEO of the RFA), Cynthia Thala (winner of the 2023 #ThankYouTrucker competition) and Martin Liebenberg (MD of IVECO).

grandmother, who sold vegetables to support us. It is not easy to drive alone at night, but God is with me, so I don't fear. We are all striving to be the best." Thala intends to share her cash award of R50,000 with her family, which includes an orphaned child that she homes, and will invest the remainder. Her aspirations include co-owning a trucking business with her husband in the future.

The #ThankYouTrucker competition is a project of the Road Freight Association (RFA) and IVECO SA that was initiated three years ago. The aim of the competition is to recognise, celebrate and reward our unsung heroes on the road, our truck drivers.

Martin Liebenberg, Managing Director of IVECO, commented that the competition has grown and that this year had the highest number of entries. "Cynthia's win shows that trucking is no longer just a man's world," he said, adding that she is a beacon of hope for all women in South Africa.

Congratulations also go to Gerhardus 'Pikkie' Klaase and Nkosinathi Peaceman Chiliza, who came in second and third places respectively. •

Serco's new refrigerated trailers – lighter and brighter

SERCO IS breaking new ground in terms of vehicle weight reduction with its expanded line of refrigerated trailers. The cutting-edge innovations empower customers to tailor their transport solutions, setting a new standard for efficiency and customisation.

"Our injected panel technology, which we have offered for several years, has given customers improved durability and thermal performance," explains Clinton Holcroft, CEO of Serco. "Now, the new Protec Plus with its upgraded side wall panels and superior finishes and our Protec Lite – both offering significant reductions in tare weight – have expanded the range of customised options available to customers."

Holcroft says the Protec Plus was at the forefront of Serco's latest offerings. "With an opulent finish, this premium model boasts panels fortified by a 70-density polyurethane injected foam, ensuring unmatched durability and a polished exterior. The addition of pristine white external capping elevates its aesthetic appeal."

Inside, recesses for load lock rails and aluminium profiled scuff plates minimise wear and tear, while a surface-mounted LED strip light enhances interior visibility, rendering obsolete the need to drill into the roof to mount electrical fittings.

The Protec Lite is designed to meet the demands of payload-driven transporters, with its intelligent design and the incorporation of high tensile steel on the chassis resulting in a significant weight reduction of more than 700kg compared to its standard counterpart.

"For the insulated body, robust Protec steel external facing is fused with a lightweight composite interior skin, enabling us to champion both strength and performance. Our comprehensive range ensures every customer finds their perfect fit, underscoring our commitment to giving our clients the competitive edge," Holcroft adds.

A leading South African transporter handling distribution for a large local retailer ordered 19 Protec Plus trailers ahead of the 2023 festive season, while two of the new Protec Lite trailers have already been delivered to a long-standing customer specialising in long-distance refrigerated transport. •

Clinton Holcroft, CEO of Serco.



ISUZU hands over three ISUZU D-MAX bakkies to Gift of the Givers

ISUZU MOTORS South Africa recently handed over three new ISUZU D-MAX bakkies to humanitarian aid organisation Gift of the Givers, renewing its commitment to amplify efforts to bring critical disaster relief to affected areas, often in hard-to-reach and remote locations across South Africa.

The handover is a continuation of a partnership started in 2019 where a total of three ISUZU D-MAX bakkies and three ISUZU trucks were donated. The partnership has since seen these vehicles help Gift of the Givers with much-needed logistical support in carrying out its humanitarian work and disaster relief efforts across the country, often navigating difficult terrain to reach those communities facing adversity.

The ISUZU D-MAX bakkies are built for solid performance, fuel efficiency and reliability, which will continue to allow the Gift of the Givers teams to service areas that are difficult to reach. In 2019, ISUZU handed over three water tankers, still used today in efforts to provide water to drought-stricken areas such as Makhanda, Graaff Reinet, Somerset East, Alice and Fort Beaufort, transporting an average of 250,000 litres of water per month.

"At ISUZU Motors South Africa, we care about the communities within which we operate. As a responsible

corporate citizen, we are committed to taking action and boldly doing more to make a positive impact in uplifting vulnerable communities. Our collaboration with Gift of the Givers reflects the core team values of our organisation and has significantly expanded our ability to rapidly respond to our communities when they need it most. We pride ourselves in being a company that builds reliable vehicles that bring hope to our communities," says ISUZU Motors South Africa's Senior Vice President: Human Capital and Corporate Affairs, Mongezi Hermans.

The partnership has provided Gift of the Givers with fundamental support needed to further extend its disaster relief efforts to provinces that have suffered from devastating floods and drought, including the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

"As we receive these three ISUZU D-MAX bakkies, we are extremely motivated to do more. These vehicles are lifelines that serve as critical logistic tools, especially with mobilising our teams to reach communities situated in challenging terrains. Transport forms a big part of what we do as we are often the first point of contact to provide disaster relief to those in need, making our partnership with ISUZU invaluable," says Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, Founder of Gift of the Givers. •

ISUZU Corporate and Public Affairs Department Executive Lebogang Makoloi hands the keys to Gift of the Givers Foundation Spokesperson and Project Coordinator Ali Sablay.





Clark to showcase new products at LogiMAT 2024

INDUSTRIAL TRUCK specialist Clark, represented locally by Kempston Material Handling, will be presenting numerous innovations in the field of electric counterbalance trucks and warehouse technology at LogiMAT in Stuttgart, Germany from 19-21 March, 2024.

The highlights of Clark's stand include three new electric forklift truck series with lithium-ion technology, which are intended to replace and supplement the existing Clark electric forklift truck fleet. The new electric forklift trucks are designed for a wide range of applications. With the emission-free electric forklifts, Clark is aiming to make its intralogistics more sustainable and climate-neutral. The new electric forklift truck series with 48 and 80 volts cover load capacities from 1.6 to 3.5 tons. With numerous ergonomic improvements and modern safety functions, they ensure maximum efficiency with a low total cost of ownership.

The LWio15 low-lift pallet truck with a load capacity of 1,500kg is designed for light transport tasks and use over short distances and is equipped with a long-lasting and powerful Li-ion battery. It also proves its worth in space-critical work areas and narrow aisles. The pallet truck drives and lifts purely electrically so that the operator can operate the device without any effort.

For more demanding applications in pedestrian operation, the PWio20 low-lift pallet truck has a load capacity of 2,000kg. This manoeuvrable pallet truck proves its worth particularly when transporting heavy loads in goods distribution, production or warehousing. The pallet truck is supplied with a Li-ion battery (24V, 100Ah) and an integrated charger. The compact and lightweight PWio20 is ideal for use in confined working areas such as warehouse zones, sales rooms or for transporting on lorries. The side support castors ensure excellent stability and climbing ability on uneven surfaces or ramps.

Thanks to its exceptional manoeuvrability, the Clark SWX16 high-lift truck with a load capacity of 1,600kg is ideal when goods need to be moved quickly and safely in confined spaces with a hand-operated device. With a maximum lift height of 5,500mm, the pedestrian stacker can also reach higher shelves.

Kempston Material Handling Division Manager Grant Brehany is excited about the prospect of the revised SRX16 reach truck, LWio15 and LWio20 lithium powered low-level pallet trucks and the SWX16 electric high-lift pallet truck being launched in South Africa. "These products are sure to make an impact in the South African market in the months to come," he concludes. •

Logistics News publisher completes 7.5km Robben Island swim to fund memorial scholarship

DALAN HOLTON wears several hats in the business world – one of which is publisher of this esteemed magazine. As he's about to hit the big 50, he decided a year ago to celebrate by committing to training towards a gruelling and icy swim through shark-inhabited waters to raise funds for a cause that was close to his heart – the Daniel Lopes Memorial Scholarship (DLMS).

To raise funds for the DLMS, Dalan launched a crowdfunding campaign on BackaBuddy with a target of R50,000. To date, his efforts have raised over R65,000 – exceeding his target and still rising with the opportunity to help more students in need.

As with many charitable causes, the story behind the scholarship is unfortunately tragic. During his own time at King Edward VII School (KES), Dalan forged a lifelong friendship with Antonio Lopes as they were both in the school swimming team and graduated together. Many years later, on 15 December, 2018, Antonio's son, Daniel, tragically passed away at the age of 12 in a freak accident. In his memory, the Daniel Lopes Memorial Scholarship was founded to support students facing



financial hardships, ensuring that they could benefit from the rich educational and extracurricular offerings that an institution like KES can offer.

The fund assists promising students by covering 50 percent of their tuition fees at KES for their entire high school career, offering them the opportunity to thrive in an environment that nurtures academic and personal growth. The scholarship not only offers financial support, but also encompasses emotional, social and academic guidance through the TAG Foundation.

On 14 February this year, the cold Atlantic Ocean sympathised with the challenging task ahead of Dalan and offered up rarely seen smooth conditions – ideal for the demanding swim. The swim started in the early morning at Robben Island, covering a distance of approximately 7.5km and finishing at Bloubergstrand, though currents can extend this swim by up to an extra kilometre. Motivated by his commitment to the memory of his friend's son and the students that the foundation supports, Dalan powered through and completed the challenge in an impressive two hours, seven minutes and 15 seconds.

The team at *Logistics News* commends Dalan's achievement on the day and the hundreds of hours required to train towards this singular moment. He has since committed to swimming the same route next year to continue to raise funds and aims to reach a sub-two-hour time.

If you are inspired by Dalan's efforts or the story behind the creation of these scholarships, please consider donating to this campaign on BackaBuddy: <https://www.backabuddy.co.za/daniel-lopes-memorial-scholarship-5824967004013241637>.

Alternatively, donate via SnapScan: https://pos.snapscan.io/qr/Dalan_Holton. •



Logistics News – 40 years of delivering valuable content to our supply chain industry

LOGISTICS NEWS covers all aspects of supply chain management from sourcing of raw materials to delivery of finished products. For 40 years, we've been the leading publication in South Africa that consistently offers relevant insights and valuable content for local supply chain professionals.

Logistics News, now published in digital format, is distributed to a combined readership of over 25,000 active recipients. Logistics News and Vicenda have partnered to combine their distribution databases and create the largest circulation in the logistics and supply chain management industry.

Karl Murray has joined the Logistics News team as Managing Editor to drive fresh content and increase reader value. Karl has over two decades of experience in creating unique content and innovative content-sharing platforms for supply chain professionals across all levels, having produced hundreds of industry events that have hosted thousands of local delegates.

Get involved!

With a focus on reader value, each issue shares insights on best practices, local and international trends, industry news, emerging technologies and thought leadership from industry experts.

Our drive to feature over 90 percent local content has yielded excellent results; however, we're keen to expand our range of contributors even further.

We encourage industry practitioners to share their insights, experiences and perspectives with our readers. If your submission offers value to our readers, we will gladly consider it for publication.

Email karl@logisticsnews.co.za for any editorial submissions.

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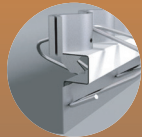




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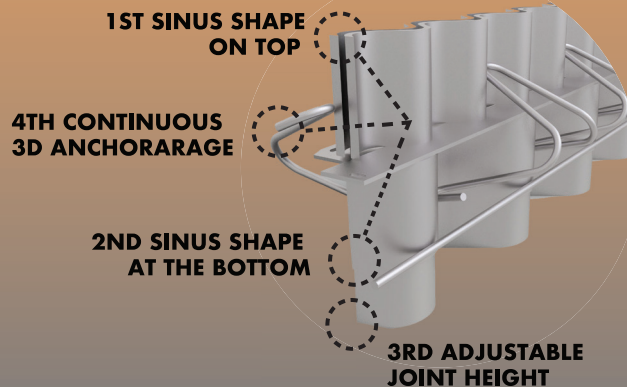
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