Case Study 3

Optimetriks: crowdsourced data for better decision-making in African retail

OPTIMETRIKS
Crowdsourced Distribution Monitoring

Founding year	2015
Geography	Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Cameroon, Ghana, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, DRC
Team	Paul Langlois-Meurinne — Co-founder and CEO Augustin de Choulot — Co-founder and CTO Marc de Courcel — Co-founder and COO
Tweet pitch	Optimetriks is a crowdsourced data collection mobile solution designed to improve the distribution of Africa's fast moving consumer goods companies.

www.optimetriks.com

There is a growing opportunity for Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies in Africa's expanding household consumption market (Kenya alone represents $28 billion in retail sales annually[1]). In spite of the growth in consumption, the majority of retail sales still happen in small outlets. In Kenya, about 70% of the population do their daily shopping in open markets and through other informal channels[2].

Distribution is therefore costly, fragmented and dependent on multiple layers of intermediaries. Brands have limited information on their markets and commercial performance, which leads to errors in assessing dynamics, universe size, stocks levels, merchandising or pricing.

Launched in 2015, Optimetriks' solution leverages a community of users, paid per visit, to perform retail census and audits, collect data on the ground and take pictures at outlets through Optimetriks' native Android application and a Facebook Messenger chatbot. The aggregated crowdsourced data is then screened and cleaned, photos are analysed through an artificial intelligence solution and the results are displayed to FMCG companies through live web business intelligence dashboards.

Headquartered in Nairobi, Optimetriks and its team of 15 staff, which spans four countries, has so far (as of July, 2017) conducted over 250,000 outlets visits and collected over 1 million data points thanks to their 1,500 strong community of users. This data has been supporting 10 companies in improving their distribution across Africa.
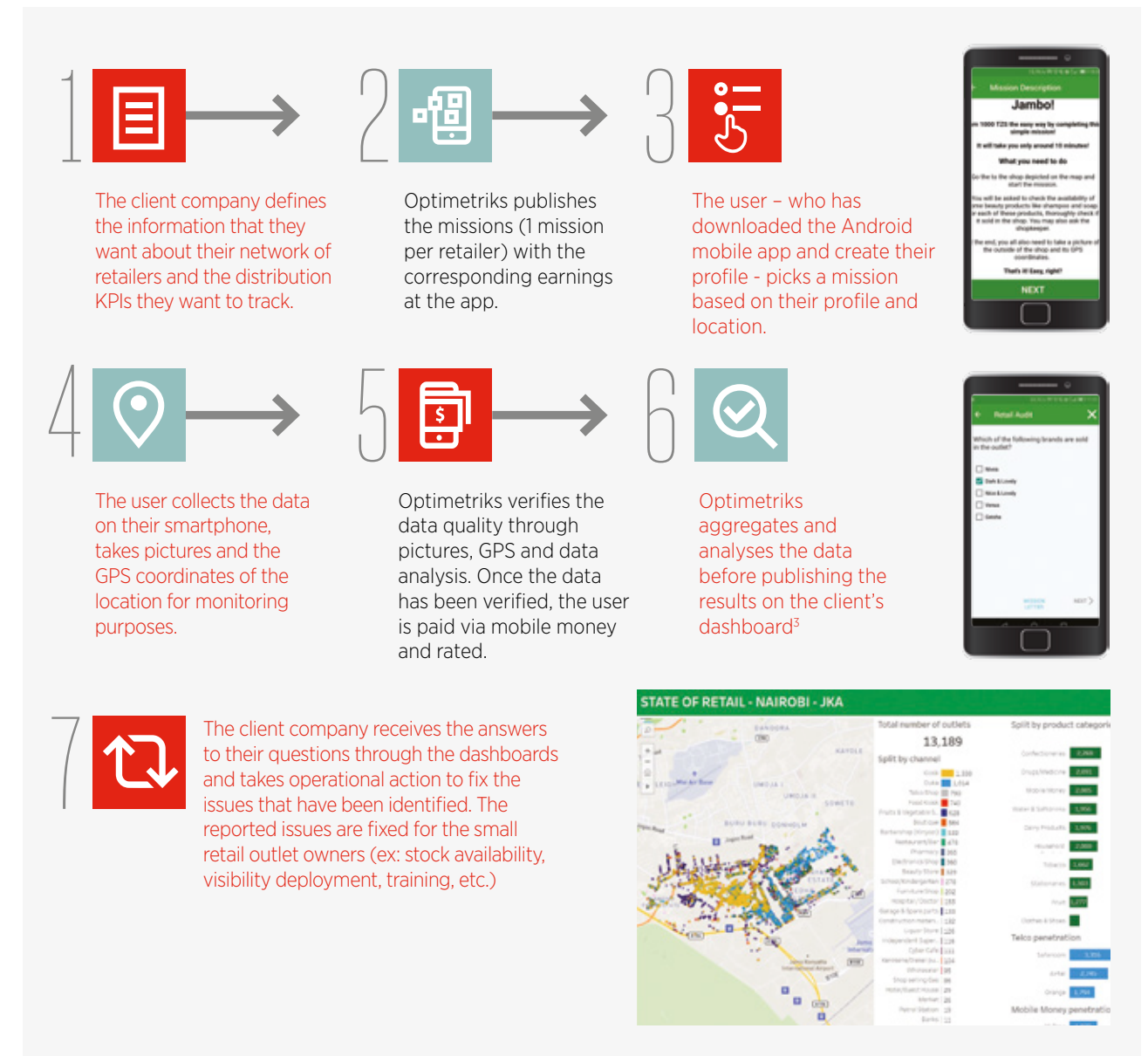
FIGURE 1

Retail outlet visits conducted by Optimetriks in Africa 2015-2017

Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania	Cameroon	Others*
100 000	80 000	40 000	20 000	10 000
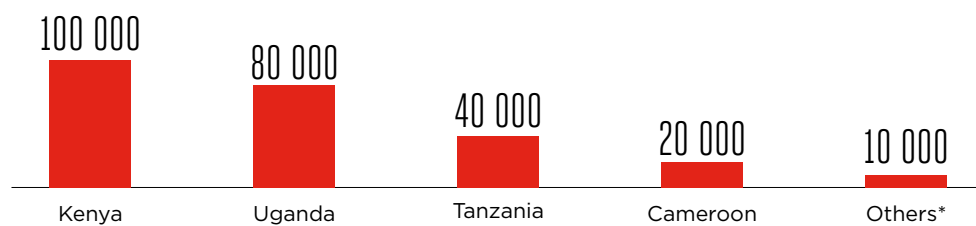
Others constitutes DRC, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Mali

1   According to AT Kearney's The 2017 Global Retail Development Index™
2   According to AT Kearney's The 2017 Global Retail Development Index™

How the service works

1 The client company defines the information that they want about their network of retailers and the distribution KPIs they want to track.

2 Optimetriks publishes the missions (1 mission per retailer) with the corresponding earnings at the app.

3 The user – who has downloaded the Android mobile app and create their profile - picks a mission based on their profile and location.

4 The user collects the data on their smartphone, takes pictures and the GPS coordinates of the location for monitoring purposes.

5 Optimetriks verifies the data quality through pictures, GPS and data analysis. Once the data has been verified, the user is paid via mobile money and rated.

6 Optimetriks aggregates and analyses the data before publishing the results on the client's dashboard[3]

7 The client company receives the answers to their questions through the dashboards and takes operational action to fix the issues that have been identified. The reported issues are fixed for the small retail outlet owners (ex: stock availability, visibility deployment, training, etc.)

On the user side, Optimetriks runs on a native Android mobile app. Due to the nature of the data collected, including pictures and GPS coordinates, users need to be equipped with smartphones (even entry-level devices). The data captured is pushed to Optimetriks servers in real time. If the mission is located in a low-connectivity environment, the app enables offline data collection and the data is synced with Optimetriks servers when the user is back online.

Optimetriks also uses a Facebook Messenger chatbot for some of the missions. This leverages the Messenger mobile app interface, which is already familiar to many users in Africa. It is essentially a two-way communication tool through which users can express feedback, share their location, take pictures, rate a picture or a video displayed, etc. Questions are pushed by Optimetriks' bot as part of an automated conversation and the users respond to them as they appear. Optimetriks is the first data collection and analytics firm in Africa to leverage a mobile chatbot channel.

3   "State of Retail – Nairobi" – Optimetriks proprietary census of Nairobi, identifying 80,000 unique outlets with their characteristics, pictures and GPS location

Working with mobile operators

In order to process the payment of earnings to users, Optimetriks has integrated with mobile money APIs in the countries where they operate and can therefore process these transactions through bulk payments. Beyond this mobile money API integration, the main way in which Optimetriks is currently working with mobile operators in Africa is by offering them its commercial services in monitoring their agent networks' performance in terms of market share measurement, merchandising presence, product awareness, etc. The team has conducted this type of work with Tigo Ghana, Orange Mali, Zantel and Airtel Uganda.

For example, Tigo Cash Ghana has recently started using their end-to-end solution to enable live field reporting from their 40 sales representatives across the country.

> "Optimetriks is a relevant technological solution that gives us real time insights from our mobile money agents across Ghana, which we then use to influence the performance of Tigo Cash. Their end-to-end solution is easy to deploy, agile and reliable."
>
> **Carl Eli Pomeyie, Head of Mobile Financial Services, Millicom (Tigo) Ghana Ltd**

> "Optimetriks has performed a national assessment of our distribution network performance in record time, with high quality results. The provided information, along with the web visualisation, has proved very useful in helping us to improve our services."
>
> **Idrissa Diallo, Head of Distribution, Orange Mali**

Changing lives

1 NO POVERTY

Optimetriks unlocks additional income for its users, who are often students. The team estimates that working on missions for Optimetriks generates up to 40% additional income for the users and that each user usually supports five people around him/her (children and/or parents). Optimetriks' 250 most active users have therefore been supporting around 1,250 people around them.

Beyond the users, Optimetriks is also indirectly supporting small shop keepers as the challenges they face (stock levels, distributors visit frequency, merchandising, training needs etc.) can now be reported to the FMCG companies that supply them with products, and those FMCG companies can take the necessary measures to fix those issues.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

> "I finished my studies at Makere University in Kampala in 2015. I now work as a Marketing Executive for my uncle's printing company. I have been working with him for the last 4 years, along with completing my studies and now my missions/projects with Optimetriks. My last assignment with Optimetriks was to perform around 20 store checks to assess the presence and the strength of a leading local dairy brand in the market. Thanks to the money I earned from the missions I conducted through the Optimetriks app, I was able to send money back home to Soroti to develop our family's agriculture business."
>
> **Simon Ekocu, 25, Optimetriks user**

Working with the GSMA Ecosystem Accelerator

Optimetriks received a grant from the GSMA Ecosystem Accelerator Innovation Fund in April 2017 to:
• Improve the existing service through enhanced platform capabilities;
• Improve the user scoring mechanism and the design of customised training material; and
• Advance the service in Kenya and Uganda

By doing so, Optimetriks is planning to unlock additional income for more than 700 new users by the end of the grant in 2018.

Beyond this funding, the GSMA Ecosystem Accelerator is supporting Optimetriks in strengthening its relationship with mobile operators across three main areas:
• Improvement of mobile operators' distribution efficiency[4]
• Insurance of consistent customer experience at agent level for mobile users
• Integration with mobile operators' mobile money APIs