Twiga Foods Taps Google Cloud to Improve Food Security and Reduce Waste Production in Kenya

Technology meets food.

NAIROBI, Kenya, Oct. 11, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- Google Cloud announced today at Next'22 a collaboration with Twiga Foods, an e-commerce platform that provides fresh local produce to shops of all sizes across Kenya, that will be a catalyst in enhancing food security in the country. Twiga Foods will leverage Google Cloud technologies in running an efficient food value chain that connects farmers directly with vendors to bring high quality, locally harvested fresh produce to people every day—increasing accessibility to food items in Kenya. The collaboration will also allow for more accurate ordering of food items, which will lead to the reduction of waste of perishable goods during the distribution process.

Twiga Foods decided to establish its core IT infrastructure on Google Cloud when its customer base began growing exponentially in 2015, and the need to scale operations digitally became more critical. Twiga first began to store all of its business and operational data securely on Google Cloud using the Big Query data warehousing product. This, in turn, led to the transformation from a manually driven company to a technology-enabled business that relies on artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) tools—applied on top of the data warehouse—to make smart business decisions in real time.

Today, there are approximately 1,000 farmers in Kenya who benefit from Twiga's dynamic pricing capability, ensuring they are paid fairly for their products. The capability is powered by Big Query and Data Studio, Google Cloud's data analytics solutions, and factors in local dynamics that impact pricing. This functionality enables Twiga to make the correct decision on the price it gives to each of its customers.

The digital transformation of Twiga Foods on Google Cloud also empowers the 140,000 vendors who rely on the company to receive fresh produce for their shops every day. Today, vendors can purchase products on credit based on their credit score. Twiga relies on the analysis of vendor data on Big Query, which leverages insights such as vendor metrics and modes-of-ordering to create a credit score for each customer.

With the help of Google Cloud technologies, Twiga Foods also introduced waste minimization efforts in its value chain for perishable goods. Through analyzing historical data of product purchases and quantities on Big Query and Data Studio, Twiga Foods determines the types and quantities of produce that need to be purchased for each day of the week based on demand, and creates a weekly plan accordingly. The ability to plan one week in advance ensures that products are not wasted due to ripening and during distribution.

Niral Patel, Director, Google Cloud Africa said: "The work we are doing with Twiga Foods is not just about an e-commerce platform choosing a cloud provider to run its systems and store data. It also is about showing how technology and the power of AI and machine learning can help a nation address sustainability challenges head on such as waste reduction and food security. Twiga Foods is a pioneering company that is looking at some of the most pressing issues we have in Africa and bringing in technology to come up with viable, long term sustainable solutions that can make a difference in people's lives."

Caine Wanjau, Chief Technology Officer, Twiga Foods said: "Today, Twiga foods enables households in Kenya to have access to higher quality fresh produce that is farmed locally at affordable prices. Shop owners can now dedicate their time to growing their business and spending time with their families, rather than spend hours every day procuring and stocking up products. Farmers get a fair chance at earning decent incomes and being paid adequately for their products. This is all being enabled by bringing in technology to help us look at our business and customers in a profound manner, relying on data in real-time to make the best and smartest decisions for our people and the country."

In addition to using data and AI/ML to price products and assign credit scores, Twiga Foods also established its warehouse management system on Google Cloud that enables the automation of all the logistical processes and optimization of space at its 20,000-square-meter warehouse that manages an average of 2,000 tons of produce daily. The end-to-end process—when an order is placed to when it is dispatched—is now automated with Google Cloud.

The team at Twiga Foods was also able to reduce 40% of the cost of deliveries with the help of Google Cloud's route optimization tools. The company's fleet routing algorithm for deliveries is built on Google Cloud and provides dynamic routing capabilities that schedule an average of 12,000 deliveries based on prioritization and proximity daily. This has also meant that all vendors across 12 cities in Kenya receive their orders before 1 p.m. every day.

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