



A comprehensive approach to digital transformation in Africa's convenience and fuel industry



The objective of [The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa \(2020-2030\)](#) is clear: “To harness digital technologies and innovation to transform African societies and economies [...]” Africa’s nations have pledged to keep working together to foster an integrated and inclusive digital society and economy that improves the quality of life for all Africans.

The private sector is—as always—expected to play a significant role in this journey. Forward-thinking companies realize that stagnancy in the digital age is not an option. The convenience and fuel industries are no exception. This transformation is necessary as more consumers gain access to digital capabilities like mobile phones and the Internet, become more tech-savvy, demand more convenient and personalized options, and have less time to waste.

As a result, convenience and fuel industry players need to reimagine how they do business to meet the market demands and make the most out of the great growth opportunity that lies ahead for

Africa. However, while many are already seeing technological advancements, not everyone is at the same place in their digital transformation journey.

Ready, set, go! But where do you start?

Aside from streamlining your business, your customers should be the focus of your digital transformation, so the first step is to define how you envision the customer journey. It begins long before the consumer ever sets foot in your location, with the decision of what to buy and where to buy it. It continues with the visit at your forecourt, the in-store purchase, and the feedback experience. Knowing what the customer experience should be at each stage in the journey will help inform your technology mix.

As mobile phone availability and affordability increase, and as an additional 300 million people are expected to come online by 2025 in Africa (according to the African Union Commission), the impact on the industry is already visible. Digital interactions and mobile-first experiences become increasingly important, not only for your customers, but also for your employees.

That's why your technology deployments should be designed to ensure end-to-end visibility, increase efficiency and productivity, attract and retain customers, and provide a competitive advantage. With these things in mind, here are a few key areas of technology investment to consider.

Covering the basics: point of sale, back office, and home office

As a retailer, your mission to provide exceptional customer experiences shouldn't jeopardize your bottom line. The facilitators of a profitable operation include:

- Reducing inventory shrink and foodservice waste
- Ensuring perpetual inventory availability
- Increasing customer throughput and staff portability

This is where point-of-sale, back-office, and home-office software can help. By connecting, collating, and centralizing data from every part of your business, you have the real-time insights to make the most out of the limited time and resources you have at your disposal. With a robust and reliable solution suite, you can centrally manage your pricebook and your complete inventory (including full recipe yield) while ensuring consistent reporting and rolling up disparate data into one version of the truth for all sites and business ownership models.

Consider investing in [a single, modern technology platform](#) that supports your entire operation: convenience, fuel retail, and foodservice. This way you can streamline your operations with seamless integration across all the systems of your business, from the forecourt to the store, to the headquarters.

Maximizing traffic, engagement, and revenue with loyalty programs

Loyalty is probably one of the hottest topics in the industry right now. Compared to non-members,

loyalty members are more likely to make an in-store purchase each time they fuel their vehicle. They also tend to spend more per store visit.

Many retailers are no longer asking if they should do loyalty—they're asking how to do it better. A good loyalty program profitably changes your consumers' behavior. Profitability is something you shouldn't forget when making decisions about your loyalty and marketing strategy. Because, if it's not profitable, it's not right.

The right marketing solution helps you gain a competitive advantage, attract and retain more loyal customers, and drive profitable consumer behavior with offers and insights. [A comprehensive and unified marketing platform](#) designed specifically for the industry can be a valuable tool in the implementation of your customer experience vision.

Digitalization increases cyber risks

As many businesses embrace their own digital transformation and deploy more business applications and edge devices, cybersecurity is becoming increasingly important. Although they provide great convenience for customers and employees, Internet-connected endpoints such as automatic tank gauges, POS systems, and digital displays also serve as potential entry points for cyberattacks. Securing your networks and devices, particularly where you have limited IT staff, is paramount to protecting your technology investments and ensuring customer trust and loyalty to the brands and locations you operate.

When you're trying to accelerate your digital transformation, you can't afford to let security threats slow you down. Consider simplifying and securing your IT environment with [industry-specific security solutions](#).

Choosing the right partner



True to the proverb "if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together," you can't achieve digital transformation success in a silo. You need the right partners at your side. For over 38 years, PDI has helped convenience retailers and petroleum wholesalers adapt to changes in the industry by leveraging the latest technologies. We serve the entire supply chain, have a proven track record of delivering measurable value.

Learn how to modernize your technology and elevate your customer experience at pdisoftware.com.

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