

Qwicart changing the way Ugandans shop for groceries

By [Tom Jackson](#)

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Ugandan startup Qwicart is bidding to change the way people shop for groceries with a mobile app that allows people to shop from a variety of supermarkets using their phones.



Launched in the middle of last year, the [Qwicart](#) team has serious pedigree. Moses Byaruhanga is the former chief executive officer (CEO) of Cheki Uganda, while his business partner Joshua Mugisha used to run Brighter Monday, in the country.

Uptake of Qwicart – which runs on both Android and iOS – has been swift, with more than 700 downloads and over 60% usage. In August it plans to increase its coverage by onboarding 17 more mainstream stores to add to the eight it already has.

Mugisha said research had shown there were 540 supermarkets in Uganda's central region with over 250 daily walk-ins, and twice that at weekends.

“A majority of these walk-in users were facing the same challenges relating to time spent at supermarkets and the tedious process of moving to different stores in search of an elusive product,” he said.

“This coupled with the ever increasing usage of mobile phones in Uganda meant that if we were to innovate in this space, we had to consider winning on mobile and creating a strong value proposition that eliminated most if not all of the existing challenges related to grocery shopping.”

Qwicart does just that, with the self-funded startup the first mover in the space.

“We consciously chose to test the concept in the Ugandan market, due to it being more manageable and one in which mistakes can easily be fixed without significant impact owing to the low uptake of digital innovation,” said Mugisha.

“This is not to spite the Ugandan market, but rather present it as a great ground to try out things. We are hoping to launch the product to the Kenyan, Rwandan and Zambian markets, with the ambition of becoming Uganda’s first exported digital innovation across Africa.”

For now, proving the concept and tweaking the product to suit the market’s needs is the strategy, with Qwicart making money through delivery charges, subscriptions and promotions. It is seeking investment, but not aggressively.

“We will definitely be looking for investors at a certain stage but, for now, we keep on moving at manageable speeds,” Mugisha said.

“The main difficulty has been the slow adoption of digital innovation within the market. We however expected this and are working to ensure that we last long enough to see the expected digital uptake in Uganda and Africa as a whole. There is still so much that can be done in this market to support a faster uptake of digital innovation, such as government support, reduction in the costs of internet, access to resources for startups in this space, and so much more.”

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