Harnessing Technology for Organisational Excellence

SeamlessHR

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Introduction

This is a guide to using technology as a driver for five-star corporate performance

There is a sad narrative about Africa, one which suggests it to be the least continent in the world, superior only to itself and subordinate to others; especially Europe or America.

Besides being far from the truth, as history has proven, Africa has consistently demonstrated its capacity to solve problems with little or no resources.

Our story where knowledge and invention is concerned has always been one of ingenuity, splendour, thirst, and astonishment.
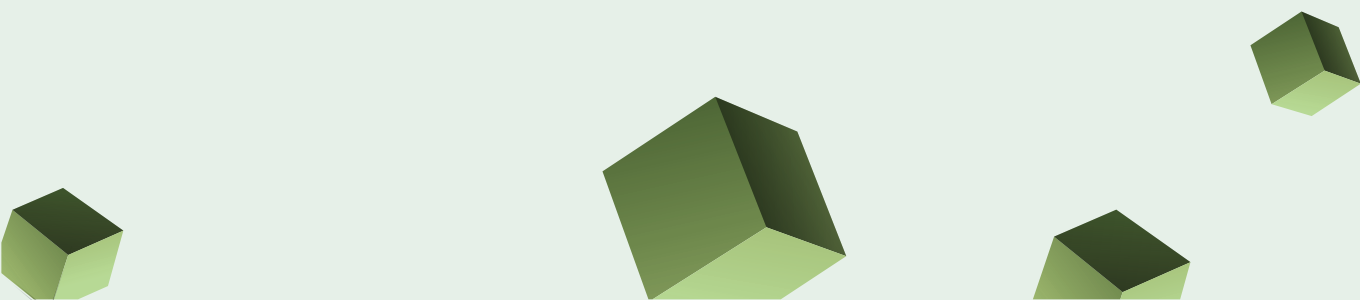
LET'S EXPLORE A
FEW CASES

The Benin Moat

Mansa Musa I & The Sankore Madrasa

Ori Olokun

THE BENIN MOAT

Considered to be the largest single archaeological phenomenon on the planet around 1460AD.

In 1974, the Guinness Book of World Records recognized the walls of Benin City as the world's largest earthworks prior to the mechanical era. Even today, the idea of it is still a marvel.

The Benin Kingdom, one of the oldest and most developed states in West Africa, was also one of the first cities to have a semblance of street lighting and advanced town planning. Many have spoken of its gorgeousness, including a Portuguese traveller who documented his experience of the old Benin City around 1600.

According to him, Benin was greater than Lisbon as a city. He mentioned how surprised he was to see such a well-planned city in Africa. Around that same time, documenters spoke of London as a city of pollution, thievery, prostitution, murder, bribery and black-market trading.

> "
> **The Benin walls were four times longer than the Great Wall of China and consumed over 100 times more material than the Great Pyramids of Egypt.**
>
> Said to have taken an estimated 150 million hours of digging to construct each wall, it is still one of the largest man-made earthworks.

However, all of that Benin City has been completely destroyed by the well-recorded British annexation.

A STORY BY THE GUARDIAN, UK, PUTS IT THIS WAY

"Benin City's planning and design was done according to careful rules of symmetry, proportionality and repetition now known as fractal design. The mathematician Ron Eglash, author of African Fractals – which examines the patterns underpinning architecture, art and design in many parts of Africa – notes that the city and its surrounding villages were purposely laid out to form perfect fractals, with similar shapes repeated in the rooms of each house, and the house itself, and the clusters of houses in the village in mathematically predictable patterns."

"

When Europeans first came to Africa, they considered the architecture very disorganised and thus primitive. It never occurred to them that the Africans might have been using a form of mathematics that they hadn't even discovered yet.

Ron Eglash.

Mathematician and Author of African Fractals

MANSA MUSA I AND THE SANKORÉ MADRASA

Sankore University–the first and still standing black university in Timbuktu–boasted one of the largest libraries in the world at the time

The story of Mansa Musa I, king of the Malian kingdom in the 1300s, who is acclaimed to be the wealthiest person that ever lived with an estimated worth of about $400 billion, is striking.

Mansa Musa I envisioned and built the University of Sankore in Timbuktu as a centre of learning, staffing it with jurors, astronomers, and mathematicians. The Sankore University was equipped with housing for 25,000 students and nearly one million manuscripts. This great university existed before other great institutions like Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard.

In 1324 C.E, he made a trip to Mecca through Egypt, causing a stir that upset. His entourage of nearly 60,000 people had 12,000 slaves carrying 1.6 kilogrammes of gold bars each, and 80 camels, each carrying 300 pounds of gold.

On that trip, he spent so much in gold that its value was diluted and the economy of Cairo was affected, struggling to recover 12 years after his brief stay.
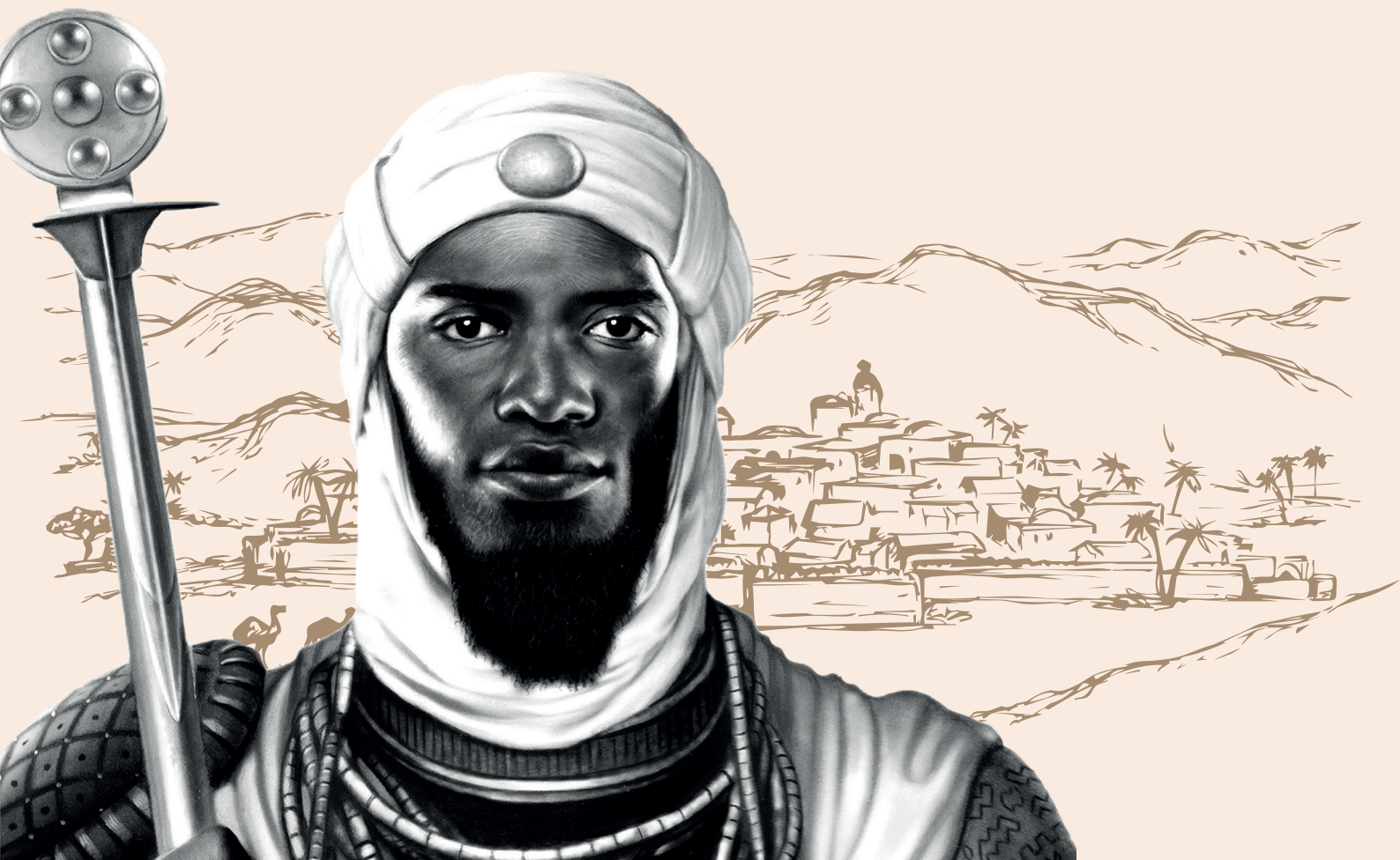
ORI OLOKUN

The Bronze Head from Ife was a work of art so technically advanced that it was rated "too sophisticated to have been created by African hands" and widely mistaken by foreigners to be a treasure from the long-lost city of Atlantis.

Discovered in Ife Nigeria, the Ori Olokun was a wonder to behold. So much so that those who discovered the artefact had a hard time reconciling with it as Made in Nigeria. They found it hard to believe Africans could have made something that brilliant 500 years earlier.

The German archaeologist who discovered the Ori Olokun made a statement that further drives home the point of how the world has looked down on Africa.

He Said ...

"

I was moved to silent melancholy at the thought that this assembly of degenerate and feeble-minded posterity should be the legitimate guardians of so much loveliness

Sadly, this is the narrative that the world has passed on to Africa. A lot of social engineering has happened that has made us believe that we are indeed degenerate and feeble-minded.

With the Transatlantic slave trade running for centuries and colonisation continuing, that African narrative of greatness has almost been lost.

But all that has changed.

Connecting the Past, Present and the Future For Competitive Performance.

Connecting The Past, Present and the Future for Competitive Performance.

In the past, the African collective would refer to any form of technology as witchcraft simply because it was new, inconsistent with the norm, or just beyond their understanding.

In many ways, things are far different today. Africans are now building technology that stands at par with, or in some cases, better than the best tech in the world. Africans are increasingly behind countless innovations across the world, living out our inherent capacity to bring something out of little or nothing

All over the world, technology and capital driven by Africans keep reaching new highs, thereby rewriting our collective narrative.

What are the factors expected to further enable this unprecedented about-turn?

> **For the first time in**
> **400**
> **years, Africa is now positioned to export technology to the world.**

THE AFRICA TECH RENAISSANCE

Africa is becoming the fastest-growing region for technology investments in the world.

In 2021, $5 billion was invested in African technology. Spare a moment to take that in. In 2005, there was zero investment in African tech and no significant venture capital investment in Africa for eight years afterwards, 2013, when companies like Konga and Jumia appeared on the scene.

All of the factors of production are coming together for Africa now at a pace that has never been seen before since slavery and colonisation. An abundance of capital and skill through more experienced entrepreneurs has caused a shift, resulting in rapid invention and market growth.

More than ever, the population has given rise to abundant labour as more software developers, product managers, and designers are training themselves to the point where Nigeria is exporting the best to companies around the world. And, of course, vast land is available.

So, in the next few years, as we ship technology to the world at an even more rapid pace, there will be people in Europe, America and indeed all over the world running their businesses on African technology. Africa's private and technology sectors are coming to their own at a scale that will lift the entire content.

A RISE IN THE ADOPTION OF SOFTWARE

To reduce complexity and enable genuinely strong organisations, we must automate.

Despite all of the possibilities, there is more work to be done. African organisations, especially the new ones are seeing the need to go beyond reproach when it comes to critical operational areas such as equality, diversity, and inclusion.

To get ahead, they are adopting global best practices in operations, finance, HR, and governance. Leading the way in that process of accountability, fairness, and effectiveness is technology.

The oldest company in the world is a Japanese company called Kongo Gumi.

Founded in 578 AD, making it a 1,500 year-old company.

The current manual-first or human-only way of doing things will hinder the success that is possible and available. We must be able to create and set healthy organisations that can run in perpetuity, and this cuts across government, corporate, educational and religious institutions.

Amazon has 1.6 million employees, while Walmart has 2.2 million employees, which is nearly the population of Gambia.

2.2M Employees	Population of Gambia	
2.2M Employees	Walmart	
1.6M Employees	Amazon	

That a 100-year old Nigerian-founded company is not commonplace is a clear sign that our view of building companies needs to change. While First Bank and Union Bank might come to mind, it is important to note that they were set up by the British.

African institutions, governments and businesses can be better than they currently are, especially with the added leverage of technology, which can help us to leapfrog many years of diminishment. Technology drastically reduces human effort by thousands of percentages and improves the economy of scale.

Case in point, the effect of the recent pandemic on the global economy was reduced by technology which opened the world to new possibilities for healthcare, creativity, labour, and much more.

That said, everything does not start and end with technology. Human-centred organisational design has an equally significant role to play. Strategic Human Capital Management, the kind that is only possible when HR is not burdened by mundane activities, and a culture of inclusion will sustain organisations that want to endure because people make organisations.

A Call to Action

A CALL TO ACTION

How technology can help Africa build stronger businesses

To reach beyond the bend, business and HR leaders alike must begin to look at and consume technology differently to build healthy businesses in this new era. To achieve that, leaders must do the following:

## Prioritise Company-wide Knowledge

This is the first thing to do to ensure the organisation is not only aware of, but responsive to the competitive edge technology offers. Beyond this, leaders must constantly push to champion the cause, be willing to admit where they do not have sufficient information and plug that gap quickly. The organisation must be as diverse and liberal as technology itself is to remain ahead.

Cloud technology, software, automation, machine learning, big data, cryptocurrency, software development, Web 3, artificial intelligence and more are changing the way work and business are done.

Taking in small but consistent bites of technology news will help grow your knowledge of technology over time.

> **We must encourage conversations and questions questions that drives the knowledge of technology at a pace more elevated than before.**
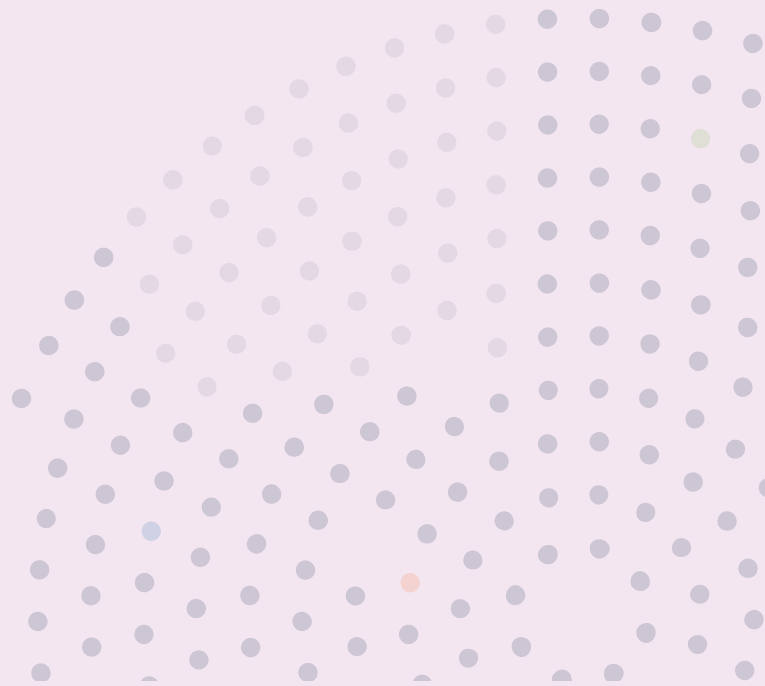
Be Bold About Automation

The processes used in many businesses are manual, so laborious in fact that people and managers cannot be entirely strategic about many other important things.

At SeamlessHR, we are helping companies tell our software what to do when it comes to crucial end-to-end HR and Payroll concerns so they can have more time on their hands to be strategic about their people and lead their organisations to successful gains

It is important to constantly ask: Can technology handle this instead? What can we do with automation here? How can technology save executive time and improve this process?.

By asking those questions and having them objectively answered, you are setting the right foundation for stress testing your process, trimming excesses, and eventually saving costs while improving output.

To a large extent, overall morale and efficiency will also improve as people get to do work that requires deep, creative thinking rather than worry about mundane tasks that drain their time and creative energy.

Automation is rapidly becoming a must-have for companies that want to move fast and far.
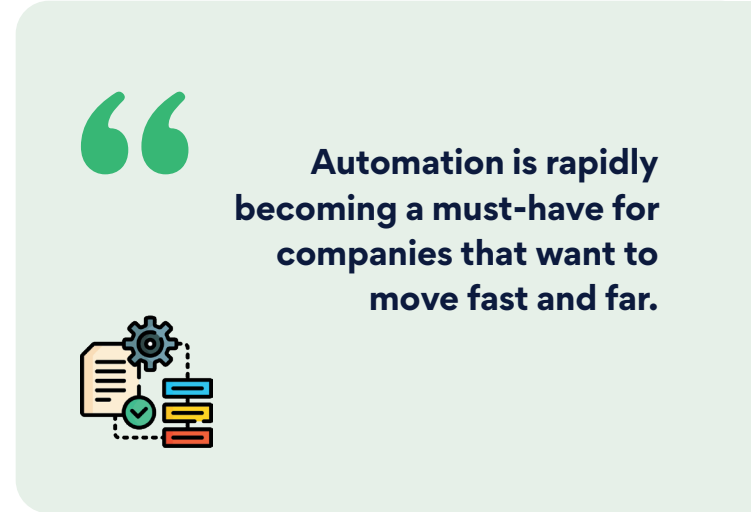
There is no basis for the concern that automation will make people lose their jobs, as this is not true. Where human capital continually learns and improves, technology will always be an asset.

Automation will not be the main reason people lose jobs. Rather it will create more opportunities and make organisations stronger to hire more people.

America, the technology capital of the world, had a 4% unemployment rate before the pandemic. Nigeria, with a relatively low level of automation, is at a whopping 33%.
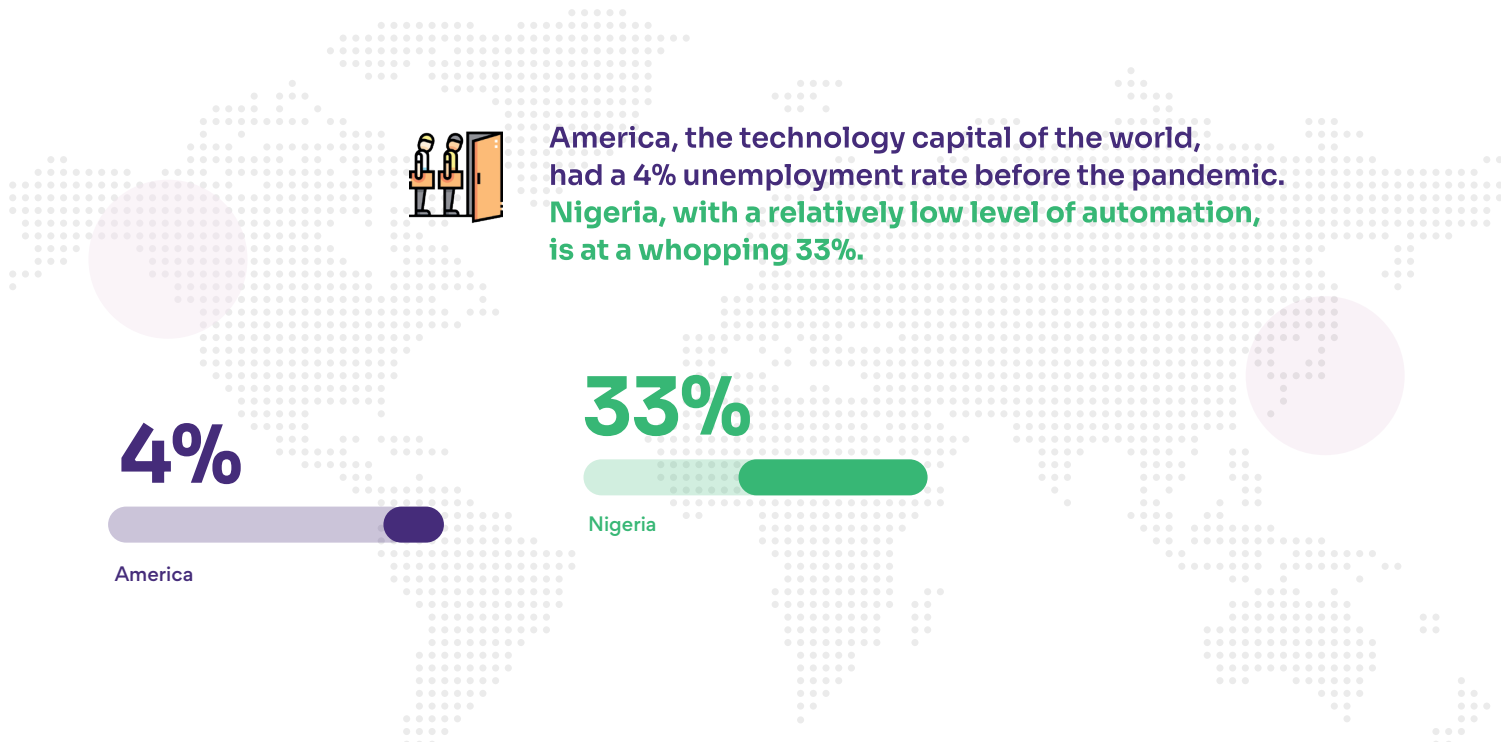
33%

Nigeria

4%

America

Reframe the Cost

Exciting and promising as it sounds, leaders and executives must be prepared for the reality of adopting good technology: An upfront cost that diminishes over time, followed by high trending gains.

As a result, business leaders must reframe their perspective of seeing cost as an obstacle rather than an upfront investment into greater efficiency and optimization. A more expensive cost and present danger is doing nothing to prepare our organizations for the times and market dynamics ahead, most of which are unravelling so fast.

We must confront and overcome the cost bias objectively and as extensively as our organisations can afford. When in doubt about technology, choose pace over inaction.

Spending on aspects that will provide quick and substantial returns, with the discipline to go further when the benefits become obvious, will deliver more success than shutting a plan down because of the overall cost.

When in doubt about technology, choose pace over inaction.

Mastering the ROI narrative––the ability to sell the story of technology choices to stakeholders and demand accountability in implementation––will also help to achieve comprehensive buy-in and support.

Optimising your Human Resources with Technology

OPTIMISING YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES WITH TECHNOLOGY

People are still the mightiest resource, empower them to be truly great

Every organisation has a set of desirable and non-nego- tiable goals that it must achieve to validate the success of its vision and mission. To reach this destination, how- ever, engaging the right people and empowering them is critical.

That being so, leveraging your organisation's workforce in ways only technology can is vital to improving performance and leading your company to success. At SeamlessHR, our robust product suite has helped customers optimise HR and Payroll in very important ways:

Labour-free HR Processes

Much has been said about the fluidity, speed, and strategic alignment that automation can bring to human capital development within organisations that are brave enough to embrace technology.

For example, the right HR management software will provide your business with an easy-to-use Employee Self Service (ESS) portal that gives employees and leaders a platform to quickly attend to the most impor- tant administrative needs, reduces the overall time spent on repetition that the HR team is usually subject- ed to, and allows for more strategic HR functions that directly support revenue generation to take the centre.

> " Employees can update their personal information, request for leave, payslips, nominate a relief officer, and more by using the ESS portal on the SeamlessHR software. All that happening en masse without a single moment of valuable business, HR, and line manager time lost.

Real-time Workforce Intelligence for Rounded Decision Making

What is the morning vs afternoon work trend within your organisation? About what time of the year do people request to go on vacation the most? How about knowing how close teams and functional units are to achieving important KPI?

These are the type of data points that support your decision making as a leader or manager technology is embraced and allowed to support your organisation.

Generating reports becomes a lot faster, making it easier to spot trends and gain insight into your business operations.

With insights gained from HR analytics, your organisation can optimise everything from recruitment, to onboarding, payroll, performance management, and so much more – resulting in improved business operations, employee engagement, and even reduced attrition rates.

> " **Timely access to people analytics makes your organisation proactive about gaining business advantage and more perceptive in the face of potential challenges.**

Secure Data Management

One of the most important things about cloud solutions is data protection for the company, its people and proprietary information. Your most important information is not within easy reach nor can it be accessed without set authorisation.

Our enterprise grade software lets users access information and make HR-related requests from wherever

they might be, securely. For your organisation this means productivity does not slack, the job gets done whether employees are entirely remote or away for just a few days. Additionally, the software allows you have full control over information access by managing rights and permissions given to users.

> **SeamlessHR is also ISO 27001:2013 certified and fully NDPR, GDPR compliant, aligning with the highest global standards for storing, managing, and securing user data.**

Let's get started

Put your organization on the right track with HR technology for the modern workplace.

Visit our website for more information.	**Book a personalised demo with us today.**

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Emmanuel is a co-founder and CEO at SeamlessHR, Africa's leading cloud-based HR and payroll technology company. A trained medical doctor, his work and entrepreneurial experiences span multiple industries, including human resources management, healthcare, education, and technology.

Before SeamlessHR, Emmanuel served on the founding team of Lifeplan Healthcare Limited as assistant project director on the largest private equity funded hospital project in West Africa ($100million). He has also previously worked as an investment banker in the Investment Banking Division of Goldman Sachs, London.

Emmanuel is a TEDx speaker and a frequent conference speaker, delineating the role of entrepreneurs in nation-building and defining the future of Africa. Emmanuel studied Medicine and Surgery at Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria. Previously, he practiced as a medical doctor at St. Nicholas Hospital, Lagos.
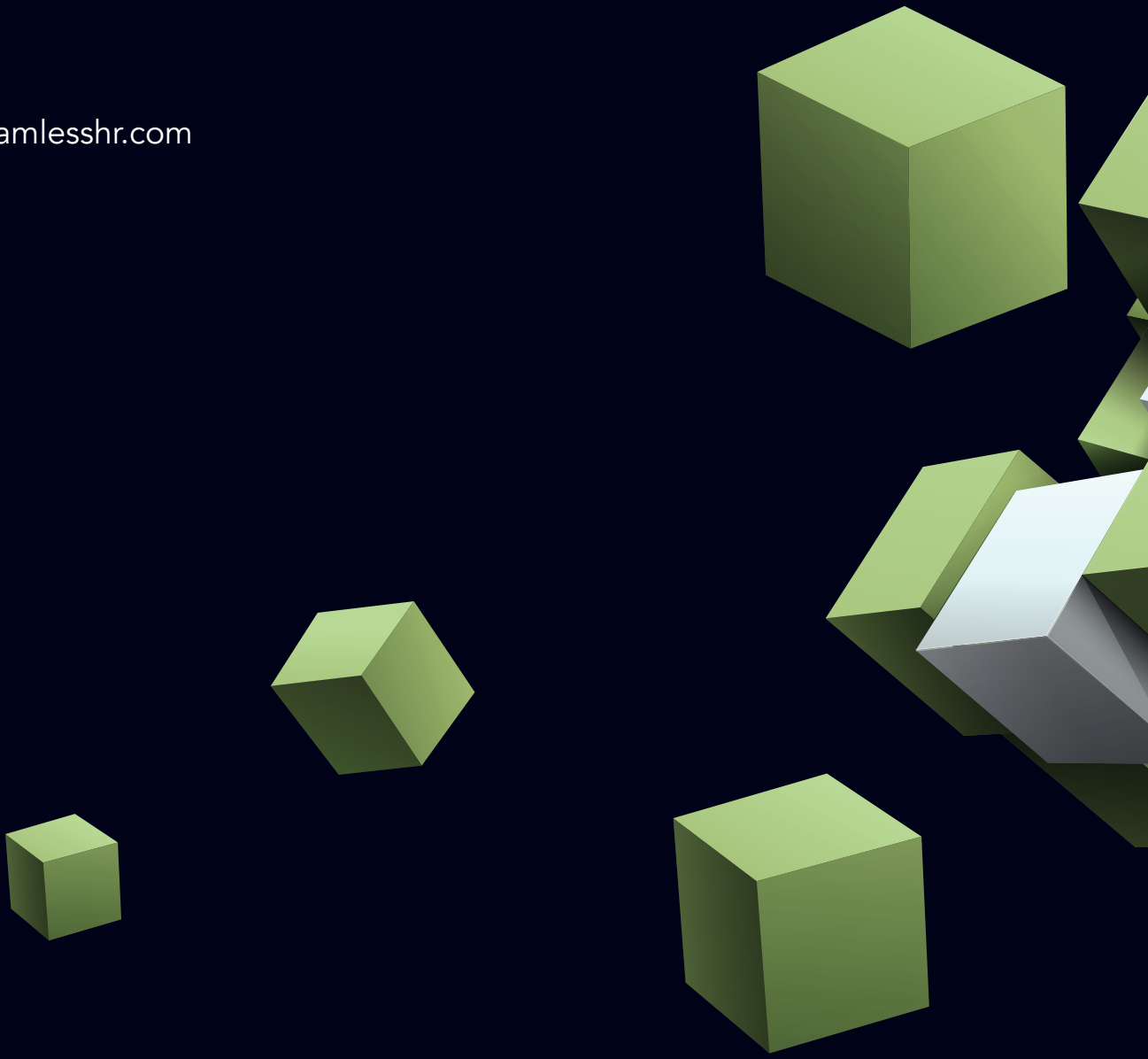
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YF is a Senior Human Resources Executive with over 20 years experience across the Banking, Telecommunication and Management Consulting sectors. He is passionate about knowledge sharing and making a difference, especially with the younger generation in the area of work, workforce and workplace; the future of work and the work of the future.