

Eliminating Queueing Could Lift SA Economy

Cutting the time each productive South African spends waiting in line not contributing to the national accounts is a simple and effective way to lift gross domestic product (GDP).

That's the word from Laurence Seberini; co-founder of Camatica, a Johannesburg-based start-up specialising in facial recognition for business. "If we could halve the amount of time South Africa's 22 million workers spend waiting to contribute to the country's economic output through their purchases, we could really make a positive impact on GDP," explains Mr Seberini.

"Every day, millions of us waste hundreds of thousands of productive minutes waiting to hand over our money to the engines of our economy. Buying goods and services needs to happen much faster to create more jobs," he says.

Mr Seberini has such an aversion to the wastefulness of queuing that earlier this year he instructed his colleagues at Camatica to source and develop an Artificial Intelligence-based queue buster. The result is QueueAlytics, an AI-powered facial recognition solution specifically-designed for the queue-prone South African retail sector.

"Today, Camatica can use a mix of world-leading and locally-developed software to analyse frustrating queues in retail environments like banks, grocery stores and others.

"Our product can notify store manager when a queue has gone over a set threshold and it can provide a web report to the head office to see which stores have unacceptable queues.

"In-store management can set different parameters to be applicable to their environments. So, for example, when a queue gets to five people, the manager can be notified that more till points need to be opened," explains Mr Seberini.

"For many of us, facial recognition is becoming our first exposure to the growing phenomenon of AI," says Mr Seberini. However, he adds, our faces are already being analysed. He explains that travelers and shoppers are already being scanned for their safety by state-of-the-art optics at airports, retail stores and other public places where citizens' safety could be compromised by repeat troublemakers worthy of attention.

"A product like this can really provide bricks and mortar stores with the edge they need to survive the onslaught of mobile and online commerce," concludes Mr Seberini.

More information is available on camatica.co.za