

The FutureList

Opareta

Innovation Memo


Innovation In Words




A note from the Co-founder of Opareta, **Michael Schwartz**;

Opareta is bridging gaps, empowering agents, and reshaping Africa's financial landscape.


Opareta

- 
Fintech

- 
Mobile Money / SaaS

- 
opareta.com

- 
USD 1,250,000

- 
2022

Executive Summary

Opareta is transforming the mobile money ecosystem in Africa by providing innovative digital tools that streamline operations for mobile money agents and their intermediaries. The platform offers a comprehensive suite of services, including float management, performance monitoring, and digital onboarding. Opareta enables mobile money agents to digitize their operations, optimize liquidity, and improve the efficiency of their networks. By addressing key challenges in agent-led distribution, Opareta is helping create a more secure and efficient mobile money ecosystem across the continent.

Despite its potential, Opareta faces several challenges, including navigating regulatory changes, managing cybersecurity risks, and competing in an increasingly saturated fintech landscape. As the company continues to scale, maintaining robust data security, ensuring compliance with regional regulations, and adapting to market demands will be crucial. Additionally, Opareta must continue to innovate and improve its platform to remain competitive and meet the evolving needs of its users, including agents, field teams, and mobile network operators.

Looking ahead, Opareta is well-positioned to expand its impact within the mobile money sector by leveraging its platform's adaptability and strong partnerships. The company's focus on digitizing agent networks and enhancing operational efficiency provides a solid foundation for future growth. As Opareta continues to expand across African markets, its commitment to innovation, financial inclusion, and operational scalability will be key drivers in shaping the future of digital financial services on the continent.



Michael Schwartz
Co-founder and CEO

Michael began his career in the investment industry, before leading Corporate Finance at Fenix Intl and PEG Africa, two of Africa's leading Solar Home Systems businesses. He has likewise supported a number of African startups with fundraising and business development, establishing himself as one of the continent's leading startup operators.



Raymond Besiga
Co-founder

Ray brings a wealth of software/product experience to Opareta, having founded his own software consulting platform called Sparkplug. He's spent the last decade delivering digital projects for clients like the World Bank, MTN Group, and UNICEF, before serving as the Fintech as a Service PM for Nigerian Unicorn Flutterwave.

Innovation Spotlight

Core Functionality/Features

Opareta offers a comprehensive set of tools and features designed to empower users across the mobile money ecosystem.

- At the agent level, the Android mobile app streamlines transactions through secure APIs, maintains a digital ledger for transaction tracking, and facilitates efficient liquidity management via wallet consolidation and predictive analytics.
- Field teams benefit from data-driven capabilities, including agent network monitoring, route optimization, and inventory management. For network managers, Opareta provides a dashboard equipped with onboarding and CRM services, float/cash reconciliation, performance analytics, and fraud detection, enabling effective oversight and management of the entire commercial hierarchy.
- This integrated platform reflects Opareta's commitment to user-centric design, ensuring that agents, field teams, and network managers can perform their roles efficiently and confidently.

Design and User Experience

Opareta's design approach includes the following principles:

- Design with users
- Ensure that every digital interaction is either informative or actionable
- Integrate global design principles with local context into our design language

By pushing to understand the motivations of their users, the environment in which they operate, and the barriers they may encounter, Opareta leverages design to minimize friction and build confidence. Specifically, Opareta has built a vertically integrated platform for agent network management that caters to the varying needs of agents, field teams and network managers:

- **Agents:** For an agent, a typical day requires making transactions over USSD, manually recording these transactions, managing their float and cash position, and minimizing fraud instances during interactions with clients. The Opareta agent product - an Android mobile app - alleviates these pain points by facilitating fast and secure transactions via APIs, tracking these transactions via a digital ledger and business reports, and simplifying liquidity management through consolidation and predictive analytics.
- **Field Teams:** Field teams struggle to keep track of agent visits, plan their workday routes, and manage inventory within their assigned territories. Opareta's app leverages data to empower these teams with agent network monitoring, float/cash collections, and route optimization.
- **Network Managers:** Network managers must handle cash logistics while monitoring performance across their commercial hierarchy. Opareta provides dashboard tools that support all agent network management activities, including onboarding and CRM services, float/cash reconciliation and liquidity management, performance analytics, and fraud detection.

Performance Metrics

- To ensure that the platform tools are reliable, scalable and efficient, the Opareta team has built atop the Google Cloud Platform, a global standard for Site Reliability Engineering.
- In addition, they have incorporated a number of development, deployment and security processes in line with adherence to the ISO 27001 certification standards. This has resulted in a reported 99.99% server uptime during their period of operation.
- Regarding Opareta's website and web application, the company has scored 99% on the Performance scorecard, with a First Contentful Paint of 0.5s, Total Blocking Time of 10ms, and a Speed Index of 0.5s.
- Opareta scored 98% on the Accessibility scorecard thanks to a fast, secure, fully responsive website, and 100% on the Best Practices scorecard thanks to a strong Content Security Policy that significantly minimizes the risk of cross-site scripting attacks, and constant monitoring of third-party libraries to avoid use of deprecated or insecure technologies.

Integration/Compatibility

- The Opareta platform leverages the company's partners' transactional data, complemented by other data sources generated by user interactions with Opareta's apps and products, to ease their liquidity constraints and optimize their commercial and field operations.
- To do so, Opareta integrates directly with client systems, prioritizing solutions that give the company access to real-time events while at the same time ensuring the privacy and security of any sensitive information. This often means establishing VPN access and consuming messages from a distributed event store like Apache Kafka.
- The resulting data products are then made available to Opareta's customers through their own web portal, where the digitization of their commercial hierarchy, paired with role-based and row-level security, ensures that data is only ever accessible to the individuals who have the right permissions.

Safety, Compliance, and Sustainability

Opareta is responsible for protecting the data of its partners and their agents. From a regulatory perspective, Section 21(2) of the Data Protection and Privacy Act, 2019, of the Republic of Uganda provides that data controllers desirous of entering a data-sharing agreement with data processors must have a data-sharing contract, and such contract shall require the data processor to establish and maintain the confidentiality of personal data, as well as have in place security measures necessary to protect the integrity of the data.

This means Opareta must enter into a data integration agreement with its partners, and ensure all requirements of the Data Protection and Privacy Act and Regulation 32(1) of the Data Protection and Privacy Regulations. In order to ensure that Operata is compliant with the Act, the company has each of the following in place:

- A valid data protection certificate - Opareta is a certified data collector/processor/controller under the PDPO.
- Data Protection and Privacy Policies.
- Information Security Policies.
- Records Management Policies.
- Incident Response and Complaints Handling Procedures.

Innovation in Business Model

Opareta boasts a dual-sided revenue model, with MNOs / their intermediaries paying a SaaS fee while supporting downstream agent acquisition. Specifically, Opareta earns in two ways:

- Equip MNOs with agent network management software in exchange for a fixed SaaS fee and a percentage of transaction fees that flow through Opareta's environment.
- Own the yield on embedded products offered to agents through the app.

This revenue model likewise represents a competitive advantage. While other players in the ecosystem jostle to acquire agents directly, Opareta has outsourced this to partners that already own these relationships.

By equipping MNOs with an automated agent management platform, Opareta likewise gains access to their agents via deep software integrations. This represents a meaningful distribution advantage, as Opareta turns what is otherwise an acquisition cost for most competitors into revenue (i.e. from CAC into SaaS). From there, Opareta can still offer agents embedded finance through the company's mobile app and do so more effectively thanks to the data provided by the MNO partner.

Scalability of the Innovation

Opareta's innovative platform addresses the challenges within the mobile money ecosystem by providing a comprehensive solution that empowers Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and their agents.

Leveraging data-driven agent profiles, Opareta offers tools for agent network management, an app-based interface for agents, and embedded products to strengthen agent businesses.

By automating activities traditionally outsourced to Super Agents, such as registration, performance monitoring, analytics, liquidity management, and field team optimization, Opareta significantly reduces transaction fees and enhances revenue for both MNOs and agents. The platform's adaptability is evident in its expansion strategy, utilizing software partnerships for cost-effective scalability across the continent.

With successful launches in Angola and the Gambia and a new partnership in Zambia, Opareta's model demonstrates its capacity to evolve and thrive in diverse markets, positioning it well to meet increased demand and embrace future advancements in the digital financial services landscape across Africa.

Market Impact & Future Outlook

Mobile money has underpinned a digital financial services revolution across Africa. Unlike traditional payment platforms, mobile money doesn't require a bank account, instead relying on informal networks of agents for Cash-in / Cash-out services. Despite playing this crucial role, agents are unable to work directly with the MNOs, relying on agent network managers (Master Agents) as a highly inefficient go-between. These Master Agents fail to address the liquidity constraints, fraud risk, and burdensome onboarding processes that translate into high transaction failure rates and limited innovation in the mobile money ecosystem.

Opareta solves these problems for MNOs and their agents, with distribution software that addresses the mobile money industry's biggest challenges. This begins with comprehensive, data-driven agent profiles, which are then leveraged to offer platform tools for agent network management, an app-based interface for agents, and embedded products to fortify the agent business. The Opareta platform automates many of the activities that are outsourced to Master Agents, including agent and customer registration, performance monitoring and analytics, agent liquidity management, and field team optimization. By digitizing all agent network management processes, Opareta can not only reduce the fees accruing to the Super Agent but likewise increase MNO and agent revenues via improved demand fulfillment.

Societal & Environmental Impact

Opareta's work holds significant broader implications for both society and the environment. In terms of societal impact, Opareta is contributing to the financial inclusion and empowerment of marginalized communities. By addressing the challenges faced by mobile money agents who serve low-income and last-mile communities, Opareta's platform facilitates access to essential financial services. This not only enhances the economic well-being of individuals but also supports broader societal health by fostering financial resilience and stability.

In terms of environmental impact, Opareta's focus on limiting commute times and prioritizing virtual meetings aligns with sustainability goals. By encouraging a reduction in physical travel and promoting virtual communication, the company contributes to a decrease in carbon emissions and environmental footprint. While the primary environmental impact is limited, Opareta's efforts align with global sustainability initiatives by adopting practices that minimize the ecological impact associated with business operations.

Potential Funding & Partnership Opportunities

With Opareta having successfully secured a strategic investment, underscoring their potential to revolutionize the mobile money landscape, potential funding and partnership opportunities could further support their growth:

- **Venture Capital Funding:** Opareta could explore venture capital funding from investors specializing in fintech and digital financial services. Opareta aims to enhance its platform's capabilities, expand its reach, and drive meaningful impact in fostering financial inclusion and efficiency within the mobile money ecosystem.
- **Strategic Partnerships with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs):** Collaborating with MNOs could provide Opareta with access to a wider network of mobile money agents and customers. By partnering with MNOs, Opareta can integrate its platform directly into existing mobile money ecosystems, enhancing its reach and impact.
- **Technology Partnerships:** Forming partnerships with technology companies could help Opareta enhance its platform's capabilities and accelerate innovation. This could involve integrating third-party software solutions, leveraging emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, or collaborating on research and development projects.

Potential Roadblocks & Risks

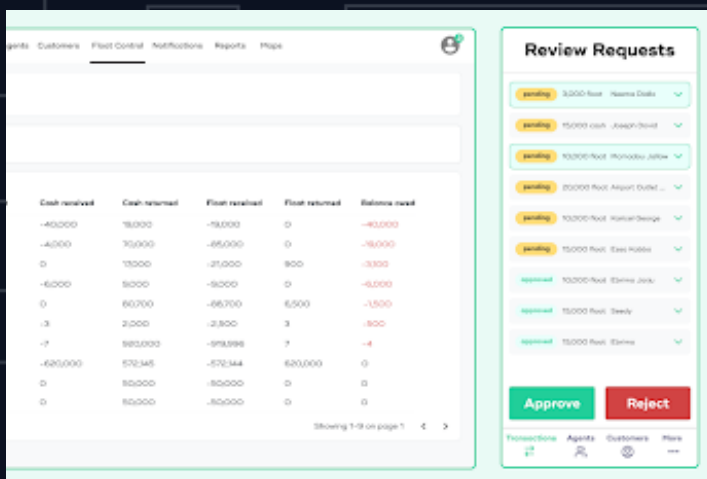
- Changes in regulatory environments or shifts in market dynamics can impact the company's operations.
 - **Mitigation:** Regularly monitor and stay abreast of regulatory changes, maintain open communication with regulatory authorities, and proactively adapt the platform to comply with evolving requirements.
- The reliance on data integrations exposes the company and its partners to potential cybersecurity threats and system vulnerabilities.
 - **Mitigation:** Implement robust cybersecurity measures, conduct regular security audits, invest in the latest encryption technologies, and ensure a proactive response plan in case of a security breach.
- Increased competition or market saturation may affect the company's market share and growth prospects.
 - **Mitigation:** Focus on continuous innovation, product differentiation, and improving user experience. Diversify services to offer unique value propositions and explore partnerships to expand market reach.
- Economic downturns or financial instability in target markets can impact the adoption of digital financial services.
 - **Mitigation:** Maintain a diverse market presence, conduct thorough economic assessments before expansion, and establish financial contingency plans to navigate economic uncertainties.

Conclusion

Opareta holds significant potential within the digital financial services sector, particularly in the African mobile money ecosystem. Opareta's commitment to addressing challenges with the agent-led distribution model, including liquidity management, fraud risk, and agent/customer onboarding, positions it as a key player shaping the future of digital financial services of the continent. Overall, Opareta is strategically positioned to make a lasting impact on the industry by fostering a more seamless, secure, and efficient mobile money ecosystem.

Innovation In View

How **Opareta** brings innovation to life

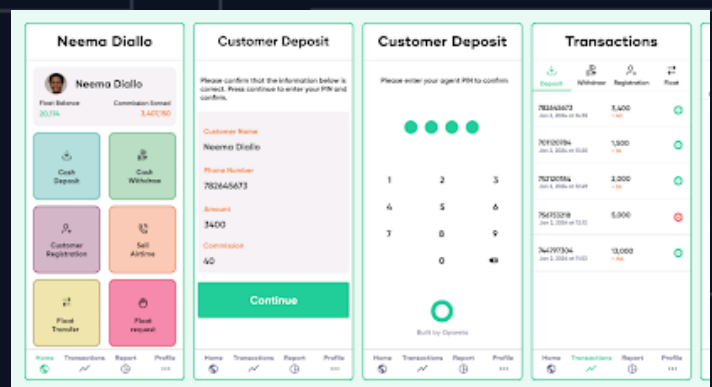


Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)

- **Float Management:** Manage liquidity within your agent network via automated float & cash reconciliation.
- **Performance Monitoring:** Leverage flexible, real-time analytics to drive strong performance across your agent network and commercial hierarchy.
- **Digital Onboarding:** Accelerate agent and customer acquisition while reducing regulatory risk via our digital KYC platform.
- **Field Team Management:** Maintain control over commercial operations by equipping your field teams with digital tools to manage their activities.

Agent Interface

Drive higher transaction volumes by consolidating all agent activities into one easy-to-use app interface.



Contributors

The FutureList

Esther Ndagire
Fintech Innovation Scout

The FutureList Research Team

Opareta

Michael Schwartz
Co-founder and CEO

Raymond Besiga
Co-founder

The FutureList

Notes on our methodology

About The FutureList

The FutureList is dedicated to identifying and linking innovative technology companies with the investors, talent and strategic growth partners they need to rapidly scale their innovation. The FutureList leverages its network of local Innovation Scouts, a comprehensive online platform, and curated events to rapidly spot and match opportunities. The FutureList network has already profiled over 6,000 innovative companies, investors and partners globally.

We scout across a broad range of sectors in tech, aiming to identify the most innovative startups globally. This includes everything from AI to biotech, renewable energy, and more. The 10 categories we currently focus on are: Agriculture (farming, food, beverages, crops, forestry, aquaculture, livestock, irrigation, veterinary, etc.), Climate (electricity, energy, environment, renewables, recycling, circular economy, carbon credits, cleantech, etc.), Education (e-learning, school management, assessments, upskilling, tutors, languages, etc.), Enterprise (legal services, AI, cyber security, market research, recruitment, HR, customer success, consulting, SaaS tools, business analytics, etc.), Finance (banking, capital, trading, lending, personal finance, insurance, crypto, real estate, etc.), Health (medicine, biotech, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, public health, digital health, hospitals, health records, wellness, fitness, beauty, etc.), Infrastructure (architecture, materials, computer networks, safety, law enforcement, construction, data centers, machinery, telecom, wireless internet, manufacturing, etc.), Media (marketing, influencers, animation, arts, gaming, fashion, content, platforms, music, publishing, translation, editing, etc.), Mobility (delivery, transportation, etc.), and Supply Chain (e-commerce, warehousing, logistics, retail, etc.)

About Our Innovation Scouts

Our Innovation Scouts are experienced professionals from diverse sectors with a keen eye for groundbreaking technologies and business models. They undergo rigorous training to ensure they provide maximum value to the startups they work with. They conduct their research on a volunteer basis. We have strict ethical guidelines in place. Any Scout with a potential conflict of interest is recused from the process to ensure fairness and objectivity.

About Our Innovation Memos

Innovation Memos provide a comprehensive profile of an innovator, whether its a startup, hub, investor or more established corporate, highlighting technological and business model innovations. The Memo is written in direct consultation with a verified representative from that entity, and also outlines suggestions around how to rapidly scale their innovation further through use of The FutureList's network. Once published, the Memo accessible to our network of investors, partners, and the general public for free on our platform. The Memo process is completely free for the companies featured as well. The entire process, from initial contact to publishing the Innovation Memo, typically takes about 4-6 weeks, but this can vary based on the startup's availability and responsiveness. Our goal is to promote and scale innovation globally. The FutureList platform and events are sponsored by partners.

Scaling Innovation

How **The FutureList** identifies and scales innovation globally



Ecosystem and sector mapping

Our Innovation Scouts identify the most innovative early-stage and growth-stage tech companies across key sectors in tech hubs around the globe.



Innovation memos and platform profiles

Our Innovation Scouts interview founders and tech executives to publish innovation memos and create a comprehensive company profile on our public online platform.



Introductions to strategic opportunities

Our Innovation Scouts share company profiles with relevant investors and strategic growth partners across our global ecosystem, and facilitate warm introductions where requested.



Private dinners and fireside chats

Our exclusive evening events bring together founders, tech executives and other special guests for networking and interactive discussions around technology and innovation.



Global summits & learning trips

Featured companies will be invited to larger annual events held at the regional and global stage that connect the most innovative companies with opportunities for further visibility.

Sponsor

The FutureList platform and events are sponsored by partners.



Sand Technologies, a global technology services company with presence across Silicon Valley, France, the UK, Romania, and several emerging markets, is at the forefront of supporting scale-ups worldwide in overcoming the challenges of rapid growth. We're currently aiding businesses in the United States, New Zealand, Denmark, the Netherlands, the UK, the UAE, South Africa, Kenya, and numerous other locations in developing scalable technology products, constructing world-class tech teams, enhancing revenue generation, and elevating customer satisfaction.

Learn more at www.sandtech.com

The FutureList

