Are you having a 'Blue Monday'?

By Evan-Lee Courie   19 Aug 2019

"Facial recognition software can potentially recognise a 'Blue Monday' simply by scanning employee expressions," says Laurence Seberini, co-founder of Camatica, a Johannesburg-based startup specialising in facial recognition for businesses.

Used responsibly by HR professionals, facial recognition systems can more rapidly pick up instances where intervention is needed to help an employee overcome personal challenges that may be affecting work attendance.

We chat to Laurence Seberini to find out more about Camatica, which recently added to its suite of facial recognition AI-powered products by launching 'mood analytics'.

⊞ *Could you tell us a bit about Camatica?*

Camatica is a tech company that focuses on AI and computer vision to add value and intelligence to business. There are tens of thousands of video cameras being used by business, but all of them are essentially used for "after the fact" evidence.

Camatica seeks to provide a layer of intelligence to these video feeds that can add real value to a business and solve real issues.

Identify a shoplifter - easy. Notify the branch manager to open more tills to alleviate a queue of a frustrated customer - not a problem. There is so much room for computer vision and AI and we plan to be front and centre in that space.

⠿ *When did Camatica start?*

Camatica started in 2018 in Johannesburg at our Blairgowrie offices.

⠿ *What are some of the services you provide?*

We provice the following services:

- **Face Crime**: detects and notifies when a criminal enters a space.

- **Face Analytics**: analyses visitors in terms of the number of visitors, the duration, unique visitors and repeat visitors, age range, gender, mood and more.
- **Face CRM**: detects and notifies when a VIP enters a space.
- **Face Attendance**: analyses when staff arrive, leave and take breaks.
- **Queue Alytics**: detects and notifies when a queue reaches a certain number.

⠿ *What is the core function of Camatica?*

Our core function is to provide value and solve problems using AI and computer vision.

⠿ *We are currently in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. How has Camatica embraced this fusion of new technologies?*

Deep learning, AI and computer vision are changing the world, from self-driving cars to solving a crime. Camatica embraces this new technology fully and has developed solutions to help solve real-world problems facing businesses today.

⠿ *What are some of the obstacles you've had to overcome since starting out?*

We've had the following obstacles:

- **Education**: Many businesses do not know about computer vision and do not fully understand the benefits. They see it as a cost increase and do not see that in most cases it actually saves money.
- **Video quality**: you need an HD feed to take full advantage of computer vision. Some businesses are using outdated cameras.
- **Edge computing**: Given the general poor internet connections at retailers our solution has to rely on edge computing and solve the problems in store without accessing the cloud. We have had to solve many hardware related issues to deliver a cost-effective edge solution that works continuously and reliably.

⊞ *What has been your proudest achievements thus far?*

We have installed three POCs in three major retailers.

⊞ *What does the future of entrepreneurship look like to you?*

Being able to adapt and evolve really fast. The world is becoming hyper specialised and if you can't keep up you will become irrelevant!

⊞ *What is the importance of startup accelerator/incubator programes?*

These programmes take away a lot of the headaches involved with starting up so you can focus on producing great affordable products that deliver.

⊞ *What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs?If you think all the ideas have been done, and all the billionaires already exist, then you have the wrong mindset. I believe in the unborn billionaire. At some point in time, a person will be born who will become a billionaire. Just think of the head start you have over this person. You are educated, you can read and write, and make things happen in this world. They are not even born.*

⊞ *What do you believe are the traits an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed?*

Resilience. The ability to see the big picture and also watch the details very closely. To be able to run on the lowest costs until you get some cash flow. The best ideas fail because they run out of cash.

⊞ *Tell us about your biggest struggles as an entrepreneur, as well as some major highlights.*

Leaving law and joining Vodacom in new product development was a major jump out of my comfort zone, but this taught me that you can adapt to almost anything and skill up at any stage of life. Colonel Sanders only got it right after 70, so there is really no excuse for not trying.

⊞ *Why would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur?*

Jobs are no longer guaranteed, so shift from sending out your CV to sending out an invoice - it's far more satisfying!

⊞ *Where would you like to see Camatica in the next 5 years?*

I would like Camatica to be a very established player in the computer vision space bringing a layer of intelligence to a business that would otherwise not exist without us.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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