

Future Trends Written Report
Based on Analysis of the Team's Chosen Community / Organisation in Mid-Term and
Final Evaluation

Community / Organisation Studied: Anjie International Express

Preamble: "COVID-19 will reshape our world. We don't yet know when the crisis will end. But we can sure that by the time it does, our world will look very different" - Joseph Borrell

Indeed, we often hear that we are now living in a new normal, but even this "new normal" has changed even in the past few months. From lockdowns to partial lockdowns; from dining out being banned to safe management measures being introduced at dining establishments; from WFH to hybrid working arrangements; from no travel to travel bubbles being implemented - in a post-pandemic world, we are all trying to adapt and find our feet.

How have organisations been affected by these shifting norms? How have communities been coping? In this project, seek to hear the perspectives of organisations and users in communities. Hear the challenges they face and project these 5 years into the future. Find an underlying problem and attempt to solve it with a well-researched action plan.

STEP 1. Identify Challenges

Read the Future Scene carefully and generate ideas for challenges, concerns, and possible related problems. Choose the 5 most important challenges and write them in the space provided. Include applicable research with appropriate in-text citations.

Challenge #1:

During the interview, it was stated that there were hygiene problems that were faced by the companies when dealing with the handling of cash, thus "no physical cash was used for payment". This could possibly become more prevalent in the future with the increasing concerns over hygiene standards and knowledge. So, using cash as a method of payment may no longer be feasible in the future. A study done by Wageningen University and Research shows that "the median 50% of notes from the USA contained bacteria in the range from 2.5 to 14 CFU per cm² ." [1] This shows that a large amount of bacteria can be transferred from one individual to another easily using cash as the mode of payment. Especially in the post-pandemic climate, where more customers would be conscious of hygienic issues in relation to payment methods. This could lead to more customers not choosing the delivery service in question due to concerns over hygiene.

Challenge #2:

It was stated during our interview that the company may be too environmentally harmful as it uses a lot of vehicles to transport goods around the world, especially during the pandemic, where many rely on the delivery industry to shop for goods. In our interview, it was stated that “Prices for Cargo are increasing during the Pandemic”, which may be because of the growing importance placed on reducing carbon emissions, something which cargo shipping produces a lot of. In fact, maritime shipping produces “940 million tons of carbon emissions annually.” [2] However, in the post-pandemic future, business may not be booming as it is now, especially with guidelines stipulated by respective governments. One of the environmental targets set by one of the world's largest economies like China states that by 2025, the Chinese government aims to “reduce carbon emissions by up to 60%.” [3] This will put a burden on the delivery industry, which relies heavily on vehicles like trucks and ships to transport goods to consumers around the world. With the world shifting towards a lower carbon emission mindset, the delivery industry may be hit hard by the new regulations and business may decrease. This may also affect local delivery businesses, as the Singapore government also aims to “cap carbon emissions after 2025” [4], hampering the potential efficiency and speed of said services as they are limited to the amount of transport they can use while keeping in line with the new regulations, all of which would cause a dip in revenue.

Challenge #3:

During the interview, our interviewee stated that they were hiring more employees, until the “Number of employees have doubled in 2020”. It was also stated that their company was making a lot of money off of the business boom created by the COVID-19 crisis as the “volume of total profits have seen an increase of 300% as compared to that of previous years”. This could lead to companies having a complacent attitude and trying too hard to capitalize on the opportunity in front of them. As such, the companies could be susceptible to over-reaching the market. An investigation by Schwab Asset Management shows that due to investors over-reaching the yield and overloading their portfolios with lower-credit-quality bonds, the 2008 financial crisis was triggered. The second chart of the COVID-19 pandemic shows a similar pattern. During the most recent iteration of this phase, the Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Corporate High Yield Bond Index was outperforming U.S. Treasuries, as was the Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Aggregate Index, where they had predicted the same trend in this situation [5]. By overreaching their yield, they face the danger of crashing in the market and may come out of COVID-19 even worse than before.

Challenge #4

During the interview, both companies stated that the practices they adopted during the pandemic might no longer be necessary post-pandemic and will only serve to add to the spendings of the company. As stated by Mr Kelvin Zhuo of Anjie International express, he expects that the “business model of running the company will change after the pandemic is over”. As a result, he anticipates some redundancies in practices and policies after the pandemic ends as is inevitable with a shift in business models.

Challenge #5:

During the interview, one of our interviewees said that “The whole industry will continue to grow bigger and bigger and there will definitely be more competitors as everyone wants a piece of the delivery industry pie.” This could be a potential problem, as a delivery company now has to be different or advantaged over their contemporary rivals in order to stand out amongst the others, just to be able to fend off other competitors. An article from the BBC states that “Competitors can be problematic for businesses. For example, some competition can be territorial (within the same location or area), where one business tries to force other businesses to close down by setting its prices extremely low or putting on offers that other businesses can’t compete with.” As a result, facing more competitors will be a challenge for the delivery company.[6]

STEP 2. Craft the Underlying Problem

Using the challenges listed in Step 1, identify a problem of major importance to the chosen community / organization in the future. Write your Underlying Problem making sure your question clearly explains the action that will be taken and the desired results/goal of that action.

Incorporating Challenge(s) **#5**

Underlying Problem:

There is an increase in the degree of competition in the delivery industry due to the rise in demand of delivery services during the COVID-19 pandemic, causing a decrease in profits for the company. In what ways might Anjie International Express stay relevant despite the added competition in 2026 so that they do not lose relevance in the delivery industry?

STEP 3. Produce Solution Ideas

Generate solution ideas to the Underlying Problem in Step 2. Choose the 5 most effective solutions and write the elaborated ideas in the space provided. Include applicable research with appropriate in-text citations.

Solution #1:

Anjie could hire staff from the IT industry to digitalise their services. The company can aim to digitalise all services by 2026 including payment and customer service. This will allow for a more sustainable environment in the post pandemic normal in the midst of increased competition. This is because during Covid-19, face-to-face contact was strongly discouraged, which forced companies around Singapore to find digital solutions to their problems. As such, the new normal will require companies to take on more digitised methods of operation. How this solves the problem of an increase in competition is by bringing more convenience for the customer. Digital interactions involve much less hassle than conventional forms of interaction due to the reduction in travel time. This will make Anjie more attractive than their competitors. Apart from the above mentioned method of digitalising the company's services, the company can also train their employees to be more adept in using digital modes of working. According to a Mckinsey study, the companies that performed the best during the pandemic were most likely to have digitised services in place. 67% of interviewees agreed that it was the fact that they were more technologically advanced than others in use of digital technologies before the crisis that then became an advantage on their continued success in the pandemic. Of the 12 changes which the survey had queried upon, respondents across sectors and geographies are most likely to report a significant increase in remote working and customer preferences for remote interactions, and this trend is expected to continue, as in the same study, respondents reporting significant changes in these areas and increasing migration to the cloud are more than twice as likely to believe that these shifts will remain after the crisis than to expect a return to pre crisis norms. Thus, the solution of digitalisation is very relevant to the post-pandemic normal. [7]

Solution #2:

Anjie can use more advertising to promote their services. Such advertising includes real-life posters, advertisements on websites like Facebook or Carousell. These advertisements can contain the various services they provide for their customers, inclusion of positive reviews from customers and information on how to contact them. This way, more potential customers who may be looking to employ their services could become exposed to the company, which will in turn expand their customer base outreach. Statistics show that businesses make an average of \$2 in revenue for every \$1 they spend on Google Ads [8]. This shows the efficacy of advertisements, especially through online promotions, and how engaging in online advertisement exercises would help the company surpass others in terms of sales.

Solution #3:

Another solution is to cooperate with other supplier companies more. Establishing more relations with bigger companies would attract more potential customers. For example, a F&B delivery company can come to an agreement with a large fast food or restaurant chain, allowing customers to have more options and buy what they want through their services, ensuring that customers continue to utilise the delivery companies' services. In recent years, FoodPanda dominated the food delivery industry because of their wide selection of food, satisfying customers' cravings with their numerically diverse options. 61% of Singaporeans who use delivery apps use FoodPanda as their go-to source for F&B delivery as of June 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.[9] Similarly, Anjie could work with even more countries' manufacturing companies across the world, offering customers more variety in getting what they want, edging them towards becoming the preferred delivery industry, trouncing competition. Hence, one of the solutions is for delivery companies to cooperate with other supplier companies more.

Solution #4:

Anjie could also be more appealing and surpass competition by appealing to their source of income, customers. By making their delivery services more accessible and convenient for customers to use, customers will feel less hassle when utilising these services. For example, delivery services could have an easy-to-navigate online app or website to allow consumers to quickly and easily order/deliver what they need with a few simple clicks of a button. They could also boost their customer service hotline to ensure that customers do not have any trouble when using their services. As only 14 percent of marketers say that customer-centricity is part of their business strategy, such a solution will allow Anjie to stand out in uniqueness in services provided [10]. Hence, companies could also be more appealing and surpass competition by bringing convenience to their customers and becoming more customer-centric.

Solution #5:

A solution for Anjie to deal with hyper competition from other companies is through investments into other sectors. A company that has multiple channels of income will be more stable and less risky than a delivery company with only one source of income. This can be seen from Grab, which was initially a taxi-booking service mobile app in 2014. Although the app still has that function, it has expanded into other services and is one of Singapore's main "super apps". Aside from its initial transportation services, Grab has launched its own digital payment service called GrabPay, investment services called GrabInvest, insurance services called GrabInsure and of course, 3 delivery services. The first is GrabFood, allowing consumers to order food deliveries from countless restaurants and hawkers. The second is GrabMart which is an on-demand everyday goods delivery service for groceries, packaged food, healthcare products, beauty products, gifts and many more. The third is GrabExpress which is an on-demand delivery service that helps you to send items such as documents, parcels, and gifts to your business partners, family and friends. [11] This has been very successful as Grab has 25 million monthly transacting users, or unique users that have paid for a product on its platform, and completed 1.9 billion transactions last year and is one of the most successful local companies [12]. Hence, A proposed solution for Anjie to deal with hyper competition from other companies is through investments into other sectors.

STEP 4a. Select Criteria

Generate criteria to determine which solution idea does the best job of solving your Underlying Problem and/or addressing the Future Scene situation. Select the 5 most important criteria for measuring solution ideas and write them in the spaces provided.

Criterion #1:

How expensive would the solution be for Anjie to implement in the post-pandemic normal?

Criterion #2:

What is the required expertise of personnel needed for Anjie to carry out the solution in the post-pandemic normal?

Criterion #3:

How practical is it for Anjie to implement this in the post-pandemic normal?

Criterion #4:

For how long of a duration can this solution last to satisfy the underlying problem for Anjie in the post-pandemic normal?

Criterion #5:

How much time is required for Anjie to implement this solution in the post-pandemic normal?

STEP 4b. Apply Criteria

List the solution ideas from Step 3 on the grid. Use each criterion to rank the solutions on a scale from 1 (poorest) to 5 (best). The weighting for one important criterion may be doubled if necessary.

Step 3 Sol'n #	Solution Idea	Criteria					Total
		Practicality	Sustainability x2	Time	Cost	Expertise required	
#1	Digitalisation	4	8	3	2	3	20
#2	Advertising	3	2	5	3	5	18
#3	Additional Cooperation with other companies	2	6	2	4	2	16
#4	Increasing Convenience for Customers	1	4	4	5	4	18
#5	Investing into other Sectors	5	10	1	1	1	18

STEP 5. Develop an Action Plan and Evaluate its Feasibility

Develop your top-scoring solution idea into an Action Plan. Thoroughly explain how the Underlying Problem is solved, how the plan will be implemented, and how the community / organisation will be affected. Explain how this Action Plan is feasible with secondary research consulted, preferably also with primary research (feedback from chosen community / organization)

Action Plan derived from Solution #1:

By the year 2026, (When)

Anjie International Express Pte Ltd will introduce digitalisation into their company themselves in order to stand out from the hypercompetition between other companies. (Who)

Such an operation can be done in Singapore. Although Anjie has a website currently, an English website would be beneficial to the company as some customers here in Singapore are much more proficient in English than in Chinese. Thus, a new, English website can be designed here in Singapore with Singaporeans in mind and for Singaporean employees to cater to the Singapore market, which will make Anjie stand out more among other companies as a local-focused business that is catered towards users in Singapore. (Where)

This process of digitalisation includes development of digital interfaces such as a website and a Facebook or Carousell page promoting the website and improved UI in such websites that they use. (What)

Anjie can do so by hiring web designers, developers experienced in the field of website making and collaborations with other companies to employ some of their services like Shopify. These experts in the field can train existing employees to be more digitally adept and can design a user-friendly and functional website that improves their experience when employing Anjie's services while keeping the functionality of the website itself, incorporating features such as one-click, encrypted and secured payment and easy tracking of parcels shipped overseas for a fee paid by the consumer to ensure peace of mind while using Anjie's services. The website also includes easy-to-understand infographics and signposts guiding the user throughout the website to facilitate fast and easy use of the website to employ Anjie's services, and an on-site chatroom to answer any queries that the customer has and is more convenient than the current system that Anjie uses. (How)

Furthermore, as trade restrictions ease between Singapore and China, more commercial opportunities could surface in Singapore which requires the services that Anjie provides as it may be the new normal to use delivery services to transport items overseas or locally especially after the pandemic. In addition, the current website is relatively bare of information, and no extensive pertinent information is provided to the customer unless they contact the company directly through WeChat, a platform used infrequently by Singaporeans as only 33% of the population uses the platform [13]. As a result, with the current state that Anjie is in, they are unable to stand out amongst competitors to cater to customers, which then forms another reason for them to implement digitalisation. This will allow consumers to have a more interactive interface and make business deals much more convenient for both parties, delivering to customers a much more pleasant experience when purchasing for their services, and persuading for future engagements of services. Thus, this will allow Anjie to stand out from the crowd as a "better choice" for customers amidst the current over-competitive scene in the delivery industry. (Why)

However, a potential problem for such an upgrade is the large numbers of labour required for the website design, which may increase cost of the project and such talent may not be easily sourced as other companies may do the same considering that similar headhunts would be engaged in by other companies. A possible remedy to such a problem is that Anjie can relocate some of the current website designers and service providers from China to Singapore, and aid them with the creation of the website. Furthermore, Anjie can provide some training for web design and development for existing Singaporean workers to prepare them to aid in the development of the website. This solves the problem of the need to increase manpower to implement such a solution. (Potential resistors)

In 2023, in the span of 2-3 months, Anjie can headhunt and search for potential web developers and designers online and send some of their existing workers for training for up to a year. Afterwards, in 1-2 months, Anjie can purchase servers for their website to run on smoothly. In 3-4 months afterwards, these designers and developers can work on designing a functional and user-friendly landing page and portals for customers to access their various services while Anjie themselves will find different companies to employ their payment services like Shopify. After this process, in less than one month, Anjie can launch a beta version of the website after testing the website to catch any potential flaws and kinks that may have been overlooked in the original testing of the website. If there are any flaws spotted by early users, the web developers can easily fix the issue, and an official version of the website can be launched in 4 months or more, which would comfortably fit the deadline of 2026. (Timeline)

When we reached out to Anjie International Express' Managing Director Mr Kelvin Zheng Zhuo with our action plan, he commented that it is "a good recommendation to have a revamped English Website to engage more local customers. More user-friendly UI would also help the company to lower the training cost and increase the revenue." Thus, this shows that the action plan is potentially effective in helping Anjie International Express to stand out amidst the hypercompetition in the delivery service scene and is feasible as it has been confirmed to be by the organisation we are working with.

Considering the above, we would feel that digitalisation is the most feasible solution for Anjie to assist in their standing out amidst the project hyper-competitive scenario after the pandemic, which is the underlying problem we have identified.

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Cite the resources you consulted using the APA format.

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