

Taking drone solutions to new heights

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Astral Aerial Solutions is an affiliate of Astral Aviation, an established all-cargo airline with over 20 years of experience operating within Africa. Astral offers drone services that provide a new dimension to logistics, aerial photography, aerial surveillance reconnaissance, inspections among other industries.



Kush Gadhia, co-founder & business development manager of Astral Aerial Solutions

Astral Aerial recently took part in #Africa4Future, an initiative between Airbus BizLab and the GIZ's (the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) Make-IT in Africa. The programme was implemented by Meltwater Entrepreneurial School of Technology (MEST) and InnoCircle to drive innovation, build businesses and unlock new potential.

We chat to Kush Gadhia, co-founder and business development manager of Astral Aerial to find out more about the drone services that bring about a new dimension and their startup journey...

Can you tell us a bit about Astral Aerial?

Astral Aerial is a drone operator based in Nairobi. We have has two main focuses; large drone deliveries and agriculture mapping.

■ ***When, how and why did you get started?***

We were founded in late 2016, the directors of Astral Aviation, the mother company, received a big push from three young entrepreneurs who noticed an opportunity to use drones in Kenya. After they completed their university degrees, the company was formed.

■ ***What is the core function of Astral Aerial?***

Agri-mapping and large deliveries.

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

Regulation has been the major obstacle.

■ ***What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs?***

Dream big and don't give up.

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

Receiving an LOI (Letter of Intent) from the World Food Programme (WFP) for our efforts in developing the heavy lift use case for deliveries.

■ ***What is the importance of startup accelerator/incubator programmes?***

Startup accelerators are important in meeting similar startups and developing business relationships with them. They also expose startups to larger networks with bigger companies and teach skills that are usually lacking in startups.

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

Passion for the field you are in provides the drive to keep going. Resilience is also important and helps entrepreneurs get back on their feet when they go through failure.

■ ***Tell us about your biggest struggles as entrepreneurs, as well as some major highlights***

Our greatest struggle is staying positive in an environment that is hindered by regulatory issues. Staying motivated is a challenge. One of our biggest highlights was starting our commercial agri-mapping operations in collaboration with one of the other startups in the program.

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

It is more satisfying than a desk job working for someone else.

■ ***What is the importance of entrepreneurship?***

Entrepreneurship builds new innovative businesses.

■ ***Where would you like to see Astral Aerial in the next 5 years?***

A well-known brand in the ecosystem operating in several countries across Africa.

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