



KaHero eyes double growth as MSMEs seek digital tools

By Beatriz Marie D. Cruz
Reporter

LOCAL POINT OF SALE (PoS) platform KaHero is targeting to double its reach in the next three years, banking on rising demand among micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) for digital solutions to improve efficiency and scale operations.

“Our goal is to double our reach in the next two to three years, helping tens of thousands of MSMEs scale through our solutions,” Paulo Raval, head of sales and marketing at KaHero, said in an e-mailed reply to questions.

He said the company is aiming for annual growth of 30% to 40%, supported by a shift in mindset among MSMEs. “The biggest driver is that more MSMEs are now actively looking for digital solutions to make their work easier.”

MSMEs account for 99% of registered businesses in the Philippines, but many still struggle with structural barriers such as limited funding, slow internet connection and uneven access to technology. KaHero said it wants to fill this gap with accessible and customizable digital tools.

The platform allows business owners to manage operations in a single hub. Users can monitor franchise reports, track performance metrics, streamline purchasing and customize their online stores.

Its features include a cloud-based PoS system, inventory and

employee management, shift scheduling and analytics.

KaHero serves about 1,000 MSMEs in the Philippines and overseas, spanning industries such as food and beverage, retail and services — including restaurants, cafés, pharmacies and kiosks. Subscription pricing starts at P8,000 yearly, according to its website.

To broaden its reach, KaHero is preparing to roll out a “sachet” pricing model designed for flexibility.

“We plan to let MSMEs pay only for the tools they need, with bundles depending on their size and stage, including access to artificial intelligence (AI)-powered features like smart analytics, expense tracking and customer insights,” Mr. Raval said.

Competition in the PoS and MSME tech space remains stiff, with multiple players offering cloud-based solutions. Connectivity issues in far-flung areas also remain a challenge. Still, KaHero sees these risks as opportunities to innovate.

To increase adoption, the company is refining its interface to be simpler and more mobile-friendly, while developing AI-driven tools tailored to industries. Planned upgrades include smarter analytics dashboards, automated expense tracking, AI chat support, and deeper customer insights.

“We’re working on smarter analytics, expense tracking, AI chat support and customer insights to help MSMEs make faster, better decisions,” Mr. Raval said.

EDITOR NORMAN P. AQUINO

BusinessWorld
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

Launchpad | SI/5

Panaderia de Molo to open first Metro Manila branch in 2026

By Almira Louise S. Martinez
Reporter

ILOILO-BASED Panaderia de Molo, one of the country’s oldest bakeries, is set to expand to Metro Manila with a planned branch in Quezon City by 2026, bringing its famed molo ball soup and baked goods closer to a wider market.

“Along with others who are part of the fifth generation, we are now based here in Manila,” Amanda Treñas-Gan, the bakery’s manager, told *BusinessWorld* in an interview. “We want to make it available also to Manila people who are familiar with the product and to those who are not yet familiar with us.”

The bakery has been catering to Metro Manila customers through



PANADERIA DE MOLO FACEBOOK ACCOUNT

pick-up and delivery orders since 2022, but Ms. Gan said they wanted a physical presence that would let diners sit down and enjoy their products. The Quezon City branch is expected to include coffee on the menu to attract younger customers.

“Usually, the younger ones who know about it are those whose parents or grandparents introduced it to them,” she said. “So, we’re opening a Manila branch to introduce and reintroduce Panaderia de Molo.”

Ako Packaging develops cassava-based ‘green’ plastic bags

By Edg Adrian A. Eva
Reporter

BULACAN-BASED startup Ako Packaging is producing 100% compostable plastic bags made from cassava starch, offering local businesses an alternative to conventional plastics that take centuries to decompose.

“The cassava bags actually melt in hot water, and they’re fully compostable,” Nikki L. Sevilla, Ako Packaging chief executive officer and co-founder, said in an interview. “They can be eaten

by microorganisms, so they are a direct replacement for plastic packaging.”

Unlike traditional plastic bags that may take 20 to 500 years to degrade, Ako Packaging’s products can break down in about 180 days and may be disposed of with food waste. The bags are made from biomaterials, combining cassava resin with plant-based additives to balance biodegradability and durability.

“So, it can be used for food crops or ornamental crops. That’s the benefit of using compostable packaging,” Ms. Sevilla said.

Plastic pollution has been a longstanding environmental challenge in the Philippines, contributing to risks such as wildlife harm and flooding. Greenpeace Philippines said in July that waste clogging waterways worsened recent flooding, urging the government to curb plastic production.

The Philippines produces about 2.15 million tons of plastic waste annually, with about 35% ending up in the environment or landfills, according to a 2023 report by the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Ms. Sevilla said that given the scale of the problem, alternatives such as bioplastics should be ex-

named Provincia de Iloilo,” he said in a Facebook Messenger chat. “Women were visible and active participants in the economy, whether in running bakeries, operating eateries or engaging in trade.”

“This speaks volumes of Iloilo’s progress,” he added.

Mr. Lujan said Panaderia de Molo is “a window into the progress of Iloilo society,” with its history tied to both religion and commerce.

“The humble *panaderia* (bakery) of Molo is emblematic of a broader cultural and economic vitality that has long defined Iloilo’s identity,” he added.

By branching out to Manila, Panaderia de Molo hopes to preserve its heritage while introducing its legacy recipes to new generations of Filipinos.

plored more seriously. With the country’s worsening plastic waste problem, something must be done, and one option is to explore better alternatives, she said.

Ako Packaging’s cassava bags have been adopted by several micro, small and medium enterprises. The company is now seeking partnerships to scale up production into the hundreds of thousands or even millions of bags each month.

The startup is also continuing research to improve its cassava-based bags, which have limitations, such as unsuitability for wet items.

BusinessWorld

ONE-ON-ONE

ONLINE INTERVIEW SERIES

RECONFIGURING BUSINESS
AMID MEGATRENDS

An Exclusive Interview with BusinessWorld Editor-in-Chief Cathy Rose A. Garcia

BUSINESS
TRANSFORMATION
FUELED BY AI AND DATA

CARL RAYMOND R. CRUZ
PRESIDENT AND CEO
GLOBE TELECOM, INC.

SEPTEMBER 22, 2025
11:00 A.M.

CULTIVATING VALUE IN THE
MIDST OF CLIMATE CHANGE

FREDERIC C. DYBUNCIO
PRESIDENT AND CEO
SM INVESTMENTS CORPORATION

SEPTEMBER 23, 2025
11:00 A.M.

CONNECTIVITY AT THE CORE
OF THE PHILIPPINES' DIGITAL
TRANSFORMATION

BENJAMIN B. AZADA
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER
CONVERGE ICT SOLUTIONS, INC.

SEPTEMBER 24, 2025
11:00 A.M.

BUILDING A NEW PATH
IN URBAN LIVING

WILLIAM THOMAS F. MIRASOL
PRESIDENT
FEDERAL LAND NRE GLOBAL, INC.
VICE-CHAIRMAN
FEDERAL LAND, INC.

SEPTEMBER 25, 2025
11:00 A.M.

Catch it on BusinessWorld and The Philippine Star's Social Media Pages.

@BWorldPH | @PhilippineSTAR

@BusinessWorldTV

GOLD SPONSORS

SILVER SPONSORS

BRONZE SPONSORS