

Mobile Marketing Winner\$

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East Africa COM

Dear Mobile Marketing Winner\$ Team Member,

Mobile Marketing Winner\$ are a network of marketing and PR specialists. We are dedicated to educate and coach, consult and support to save you time and money when it comes to engineering your mobile marketing campaign.

This week features part two of Mobile Marketing Winner\$ Team Leader Laretta Ngakane's report back on the recently held two day East Africa COM mobile conference in Nairobi, Kenya, which she co-chaired.

Until next week...

Best wishes,
Your Mobile Marketing Winner\$ Team

Report Back on 2009 East Africa COM (Part 2)

by Mobile Marketing Winner\$ Team Leader [Laretta Ngakane](#)

I am back to give you more feedback, or should I rather say "my opinion" and uptake on the recently staged East Africa Com conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

I think that it is clear that end-user focused strategies will be the focal point for network operators moving forward. Aside from pricing issues, access to technology, mobile commerce, all of which were touched upon and equally represented by the exhibiting companies at the conference, the development of relevant end-user targeted content is the next big step for operators.

So far, we have seen East Africa becoming a suitable playground for ambitious players due to the conducive nature of regulations and exchange controls in the region. As touched upon in my previous piece, I believe that the inability to finance economic stimulation and growth has seen governments bending towards private initiatives. Having said that, there are positive outcomes to this scenario as we see the unbankable accessing facilities and rural communities increasingly becoming part of the global village through access to communication.

The initial stage of establishing mobile network presence in the region is yesterday's news. Operators, with their current technological focus, are fine tuning their service delivery offerings and will soon have to reckon with issues of growth and sustainability. In the areas of growth, operators have a number of options and we have already been witness to some these through Zain, Orange and Safaricom. These strategies have so far required financial investment to accomplish expansion plans that include cross-border acquisitions, financial services partnerships and convergence. Content still does not feature heavily in this space and the conference merely skimmed the surface.

East Africa can perhaps learn from a South African network driven content provider approach. South Africa has seen local operators, MTN, Vodacom and Cell C, capitalise on subscribers by deploying re-sell strategies. Although currently representing non-core sub-branded business, these operators have opportunistically entered the 'content' arena where secondary revenues are being generated.

East Africa, like South Africa, has access to an array of mobile content. The differentiator in a bid for the creation of a successful business however lies with the ability to understand the needs of the end-user.

Operators, unlike most independent content providers, are already one step ahead of the game as they are in the unique position of mining their already massive subscriber databases in an attempt to develop focused content.

Alternatively, there are numerous opportunities for independent mobile content providers. One example would be MXit, a Stellenbosch, South Africa based company that started out as an IM and has, over the years, added audio, video and text content to attract over 10 million users in South Africa, the Americas and Europe.

Clearly, East Africa is ripe and ready for the picking in terms of forging partnerships with the various operator networks for the proviso of complementary content strategies.

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