

Data centres, cloud services key to MTN Business's growth plan

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MTN Business, is set to open more data centres in key markets where it operates as it rolls out its cloud services and video-conferencing to more markets.



MTN's Pieter Verkade. Image: LinkedIn

MTN Group chief commercial officer Pieter Verkade said multinationals were expanding aggressively in Africa, providing new revenue streams for the group.

"We have ambition to grow our market share on the continent, by further supporting key sectors of the economy in our markets," he said.

"The environment is good and customers are increasingly looking for advanced services," he said.

MTN is expanding its product and service portfolio in Africa to include "machine to machine" - the remote, wireless exchange of data between devices such as navigation systems, meters, and security alarms.

In South Africa, MTN Business has faced a challenging period but it has a number of products and services in the pipeline. Among these are more partnerships with Internet service providers to resell its mobile data services.

This follows a similar partnership signed with Afrihost last year.

Growth potential

Kanagaratnam Lambotharan, head of MTN Business in South Africa, said while the market was challenging, there was still growth potential across a wide range of services. These include hosting, and voice-over-Internet protocol.

In South Africa MTN Business will focus on beefing up its 3G and LTE networks to lift capacity to cater for, among other things, ISPs that it plans to partner with.

Expansion of communications infrastructure is also key for MTN Group, which recently entered into a partnership with global network specialist group PCCW Global.

The agreement will allow MTN to expand coverage of its global virtual private network to countries where it currently does not have a presence in Europe, Asia and North America.

MTN's enterprise customers with global operations will be able to communicate with their branches and employees worldwide.

With regard to e-commerce or online retail, Verkade said MTN intends to offer business the opportunity to create a web presence. E-commerce will be driven through MTN's partnership with Rocket Internet, an Internet enterprise incubator.

MTN Group is shifting its strategy beyond voice to maximise the technological developments.

It has identified information and communications technologies (ICT) business, e-commerce, collaboration and other data services including mobile money as areas that have potential to contribute significantly to revenue.

MTN Business is expected to increase its contribution in the next few years. The division has a presence in 24 countries including Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya.

It has data centres in nine countries including Cameroon, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda. The plan is to have a data centre in each market where it has a presence.

The company focuses on providing end-to-end managed information and technology as well as telecommunications services.

MTN expects to invest US\$300m over the next two to four years in two entities as part of its agreement with Rocket.

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