

VoIP puts consumers at centre

Switching to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for South African telecommunications needs can slash phone bills significantly, in some instances by as much as 40%. More to the point is that these service providers put consumers first.

"Those savings are definitely a major motivator when it comes to convincing consumers and business users to switch from fixed lines to VoIP," says Mitchell Barker, founder and CEO of WhichVoIP.co.za, a directory website containing a comprehensive list of South Africa's top VoIP providers. "But beyond that, some VoIP providers are proving that they genuinely have their customers' best interests at heart."



Mitchell Barker

In a country where innovation in telecoms has often been hindered by bureaucracy, monopoly, collusion and high prices, a consumer-driven provider sounds almost too good to be true.

MTR scuffle

He refers to the ongoing legal scuffle between MTN and Vodacom, two of South Africa's largest mobile operators, against the country's telecoms regulatory body, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), about the latest proposed mobile termination rate (MTR) cut implementation - those fees that mobile operators pay each other to carry calls on each other's networks.

"While they were fighting against the lower MTRs, the rate cut had to be pushed back to April 1, which means that it was more time that consumers were short-changed, since Telkom Mobile had already agreed that they would pass on those savings to their customers."

The proposed MTRs will see the interconnect fee drop from the current rate of 40c to 20c, which Cell C and Telkom Mobile will pay Vodacom and MTN to carry calls on their networks, while Cell C and Telkom Mobile will be able to charge Vodacom and MTN 44c per call on their networks. Over the next three years, ICASA plans to have reduced the MTR to 10c for all operators.

Functionality on VoIP solution

Bryan Driessel, MD of MIA Telecoms, says, "The company has decreased its call rates in line with the interconnect rate cut drop. It is committed to continuing to do so and has gone the extra mile in other ways to ensure that it stands out from and stays ahead of the rest of the growing pack of VoIP providers in South Africa."

The company offers some additional functionality on its VoIP solution. "These supplementary services include useful business tools such as audio conferencing, voice recording and mobility, which will save time and effort when one needs to relocate to a different office," Driessel concludes.

For more information, go to www.whichvoip.co.za.