



AIRTEL KENYA

INNOVATION IN COMMUNICATION

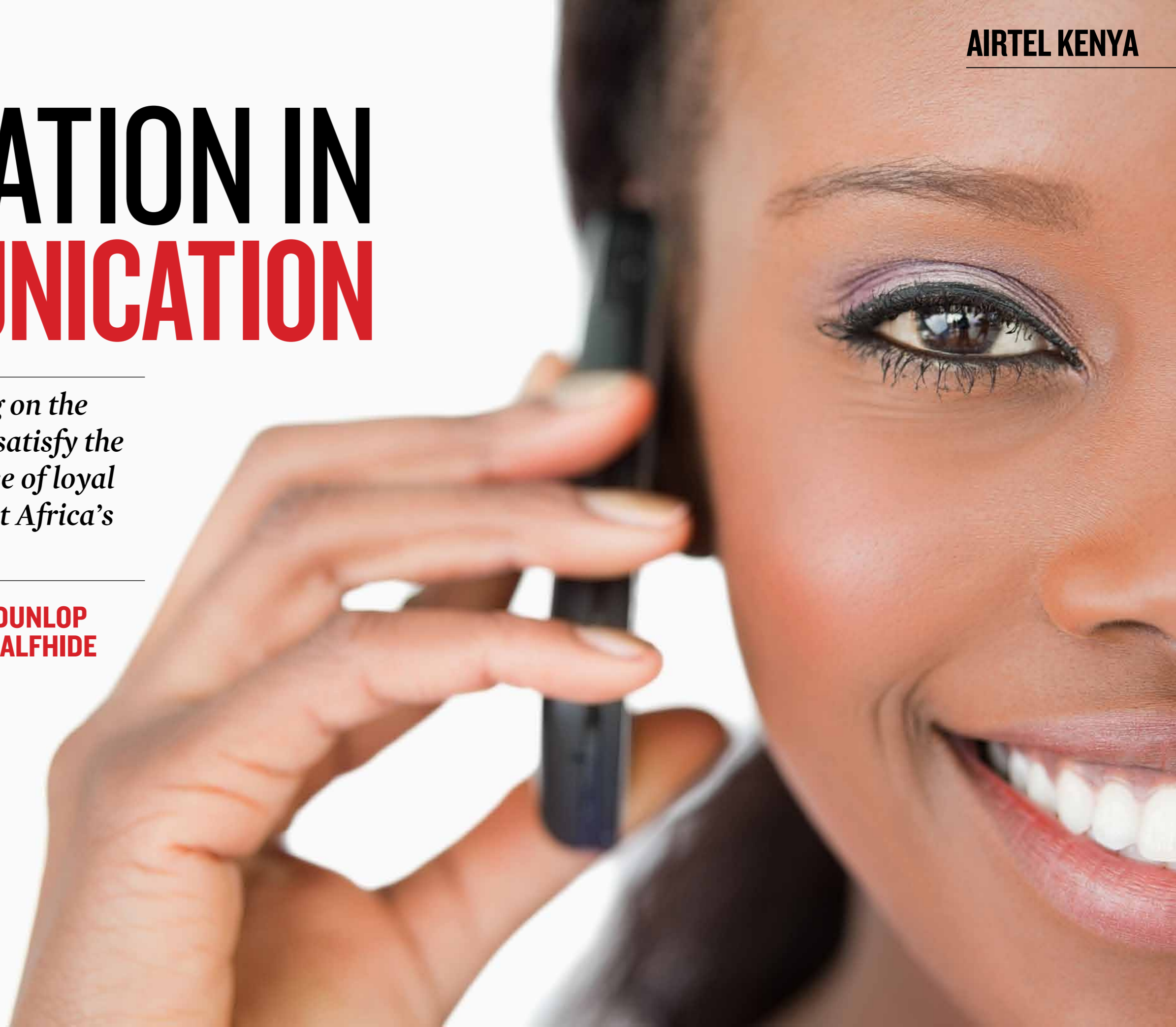


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INNOVATION IN COMMUNICATION

Airtel Kenya is focusing on the power of innovation to satisfy the needs of its growing base of loyal customers in one of East Africa's fastest-moving markets

WRITTEN BY: **CATHERINE DUNLOP**
RESEARCH BY: **RICHARD HALFHIDE**





Mobile phones are no longer an aspirational product but a necessity

Airtel's African operations are owned by Bharti Airtel Limited, a leading integrated telecommunications company with operations in 20 countries across Asia and Africa. Headquartered in New Delhi, India, the company ranks amongst the top five mobile service providers globally in terms of subscribers.

In India, the company's product offerings include 2G, 3G and 4G services; fixed line, high speed broadband through DSL, IPTV and DTH; and enterprise services including national and international long-distance services to carriers. In the rest of the geographies, it offers 2G and 3G mobile services. Bharti Airtel had over 255 million customers across its operations at the end of May 2012, a figure that is continuing to grow rapidly month-on-month.

The company's current operations in Africa include: Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

"Our operating model is extremely efficient, which gives us flexibility on what we can deliver to the consumer," states managing director for Kenya, Shivan Bhargava. "When we came in, one of the first things we did was to ensure that the consumer got value for their money

through the right innovative products and service." This helped in rapidly driving the increase in the mobile penetration levels in the country.

The incremental penetration offered Airtel a strong platform from which to launch new products. "We launched Airtel Money in August 2011 followed by the launch of the fastest mobile internet on Airtel 3.75G in Kenya in February 2012."

Bhargava believes that Bharti Airtel has much to bring to the industry in Kenya in terms of identifying with consumer needs. "The mobile market here is about 12 years old," he explains, "and consumers had been paying exorbitantly high prices for calls and data—so obviously, penetration was going to be low. We appreciate at Airtel that mobile phones are no longer

an aspirational product but a necessity. So we have to make ourselves available to as much of the population as possible—that is what we are striving to do.

"We cover over 90 per cent of the population currently, and we bring out services that entice and delight each and every customer," he continues. "So we've got products for the masses as well as niche products; and we try and market them within every consumer segment."

Airtel's main target market is the younger generation. "Our focus is on the youth of Kenya, for sure—we have products and services young people will buy into.

**255
MILLION**

Bharti Airtel customers
as at 31 May 2012



Airtel's main target market is the younger generation

In Africa for example, the second biggest number of Twitter users is in Kenya. So our brand is aimed at young people—and keeping the brand locally relevant is absolutely the key to our being able to move with the times.”

It is this targeted marketing that has helped Airtel's success, he explains. “Every country in Africa is of course extremely

different: it is a large continent, and within that there are many time zones and many different cultures. Even within East Africa, the motivation levels and the behavioural patterns of consumers are extremely varied from one country to the next.”

So although the strength of the Airtel brand applies worldwide, consumer needs and new products are dealt with at a local

level in order to fulfil the unique motivations of consumers wherever they are.

Airtel has remained committed to deepening its network coverage and introducing communication opportunities that bridge the digital divide. Airtel embraces the Kenyan spirit of success, with its youthful Kenyan consumers and future leaders, giving them a platform from which to work and play and to achieve their dreams in the best way they know how.

As for the future, the company intends to develop more new and exciting products that meet the needs and demands of its growing and loyal customer base. “This year we will be focusing on related products, delivering upon what our research teams

tell us is required by the consumer—we will bring products to the consumer that move beyond the voice side of things,” says Bhargava. “So we will be focusing more on innovation—the consumers over here are extremely savvy and they are looking for products that reflect their status.”

Bhargava is not fazed by the challenges of the market. “Yes, we are a very small player currently in Kenya, but our designs are larger: we are not going to slow down until we achieve our goals.” **BE**

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