

# VODACOM TANZANIA

## BRINGING TECHNOLOGY TO TANZANIA



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*Vodacom managing director for Tanzania, Rene Meza, discusses how Vodacom Tanzania is continually evolving its product and service offerings in order to remain the country's leading cellular network*

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It was in 1993 that, with the passing of the Communications Act, the government of Tanzania began to plot a course to liberalise the communications sector within the country. In the years since competition has gradually increased in the fields of mobile cellular services, radio paging, internet and data communication services, helping to affirm the communications sector as one of pillars of Tanzania's social and economic development.

Today the title of leading cellular network in the country belongs to Vodacom Tanzania, a subsidiary of the Vodacom Group that was created in the aftermath of Vodacom securing the winning bid to operate a GSM cellular network and provide Public Land Mobile Network (PLMN) services in December 1999.

Having gone live on 14 August, 2000, the company had connected 50,000 subscribers with its first four months of operation, before taking this number past the one million mark by the end of September 2004. In January 2007, Vodacom Tanzania reached another milestone when it brought its connected subscriber base up to three million, becoming the first mobile network in the country to do so. Today, it serves more than 10 million customers and counting.

As the company has grown, so too has its commitment to supporting the community in which it does business. The Vodacom Foundation has supported over 120 projects in the country in the areas of health, education and social welfare. From building classrooms to spearheading the fight to eradicate fistula, a complication of child birth, in Tanzania by 2016, Vodacom Tanzania is committed to



using its technology to augment government efforts to achieve its Millennium Development Goals so as create a better life for all.

“In recent years,” explains Vodacom managing director for Tanzania, Rene Meza, “the telecommunications sector in Tanzania has been driven by a gradual merging of technology. Not long ago, a fixed line telephone was a luxury item enjoyed by the vast minority of people and this too was the

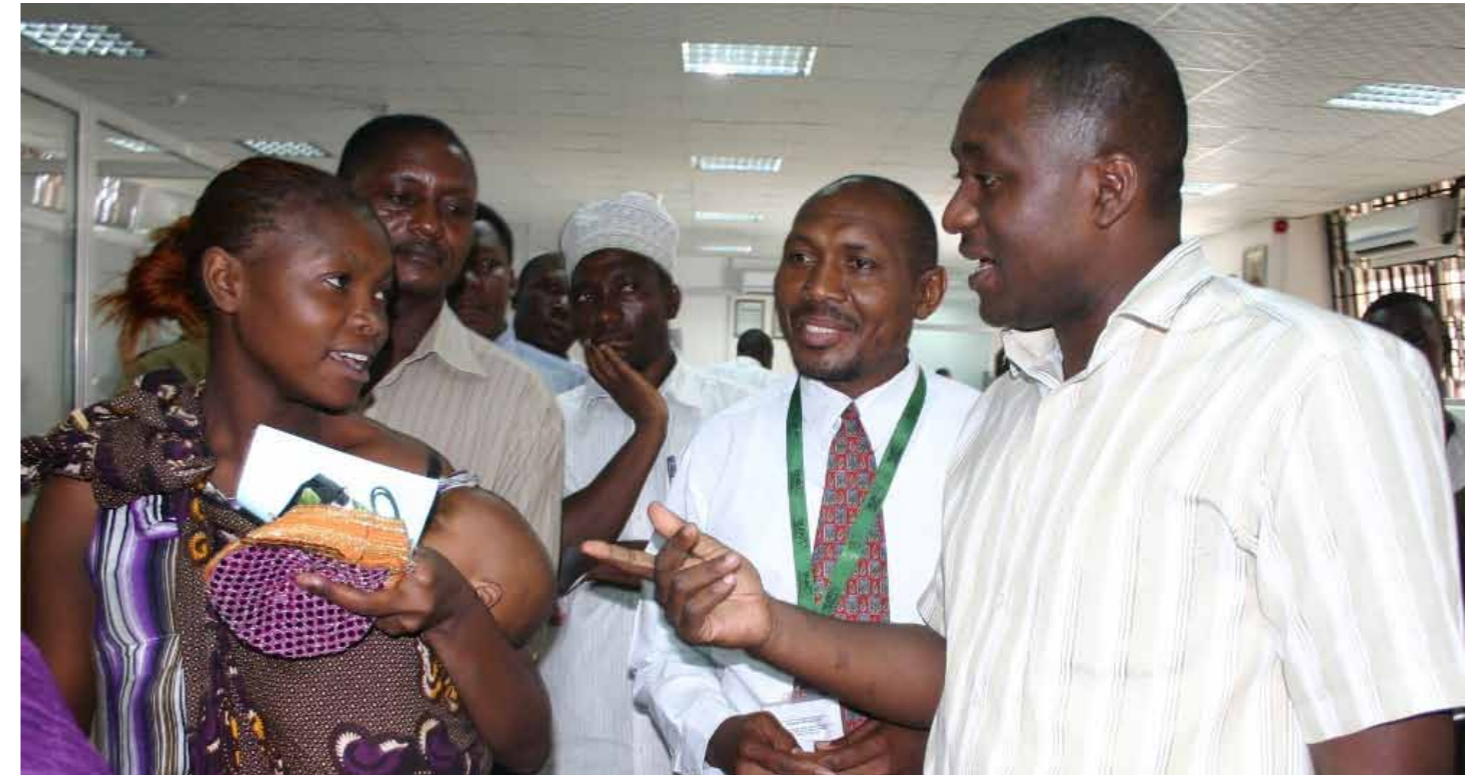
case when it came to mobile phones. Fast-forward to today and the mobile phone has completely transcended the action of simply making and receiving calls, allowing users to carry out financial transactions, access the internet, watch movies and so forth.”

In order to meet this ever growing list of consumer demands and requirements, Vodacom Tanzania has brought a number of innovations and first to the market. Perhaps

“THE VODACOM FOUNDATION HAS SUPPORTED OVER 120 PROJECTS IN THE COUNTRY IN THE AREAS OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE”



Head of Vodacom Foundation, Yessaya Mwakifulefule (right) hands over medicines to Dr. Haruna Mhina, the Chief Medical Officer at Nyamisati Medical Center, Rufiji District, Pwani Region



Salim Mwalim, External Affairs Manager, Vodacom Tanzania (right) speaks to bank customers in Dar es Salaam recently, when Vodacom conducted an M-Pesa education day

the service that stands out most is its M-PESA money transfer service.

“This is a total payment solution,” Meza continues, “which does not require users to have bank accounts. This was an important consideration when it comes to Tanzania as it is home to literally millions of people

who do not operate bank accounts and can barely meet the minimum qualifications to open account. With M-PESA, Vodacom customers can deposit up to TSH 5m/- for free, send and receive money and withdraw cash from any agent in the country. They can also access their bank accounts from

**4.5  
MILLION**

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**Active M-PESA users  
in the country today**

the comfort of their homes. Today we have 40,000 active agents and 4.5 million active M-PESA users, while more than 200 organizations accept bill payment via M-PESA”

Given the vast majority’s inability to meet banking condition in Tanzania, mobile money transfer is a major driver of the sector. A youthful

and educated population which is constantly seeking to be at par with the rest of the world demands services that will enable it to get there.

Indeed, Vodacom Tanzania sees itself today as being much more than simply a mobile phone company, transforming itself over the years into a total solutions provider.



Vodacom Tanzania Managing Director, Rene Meza, addresses guests during the launch of LTE trial in Dar es Salaam recently



Kelvin Twissa, Head of Brand Marketing and Communication, receives certificate at 2012's Employer of the Year Awards



Vodacom Tanzania is opening up customer shops across the country in order to serve its customers effectively

**“VODACOM CUSTOMERS CAN MEET ALL OF THEIR COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS WITH A SINGLE SERVICE PROVIDER”**

In an effort to cater for ever growing corporate needs in the country, Vodacom recently established its Vodacom Business division, a leading provider of converged communication solutions that are customer-centric, technology-driven, cost-effective, and innovative and generate sustainable value.

“Vodacom customers,” Meza says, “can now meet all their communication requirements,

from mobile telephony through internet access to hosted applications, with a single service provider. Through the division, we are able to offer a comprehensive portfolio of access technologies and data solutions to help organisations of all sizes achieve the agility they need to compete successfully in a connected world.

Despite the considerable progress that the

company has made in Tanzania, challenges do still remain. Limited spectrum resources, for example, continues to hinder the implementation of certain technologies that require the use of spectrum in specific bands. This often results in delays in, or failure to, implement innovative services or programmes that are seen as very much needed in order to place Tanzania on par with other countries in terms of technology.

Nevertheless, Vodacom Tanzania is buoyed by the fact that the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), through various administrative actions, has been able to minimise the impact of this challenge and is continuing in its efforts to optimise the utilisation of spectrum resources.

As he looks to the immediate future, Meza has a pretty good idea of where the industry is heading and the role Vodacom Tanzania has to play. “I believe that we will continue to see a merging of technologies driving market trends and growth, with virtually anything that can be connected, being connected via Vodacom technology. With the distinction between communication services and broadcasting for example becoming increasingly blurred, this is certainly an exciting time for this industry.” **BE**

For more information about Vodacom Tanzania visit: [www.vodacom.co.tz](http://www.vodacom.co.tz)



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