

Telecom Namibia: An Emerging Leader in Africa

By Rianne Reiss – Senior Manager, Tellabs Global Services Marketing and Strategy

Although demand for voice services has flattened in many mature markets, subscriber growth is exploding in developing countries around the world. Customers in emerging markets now account for more than 50 percent of the world's telecom subscriptions, according to a recent study by Gartner Group. This study also predicts that 69 percent of all mobile and fixed-line telephone users will be located in developing markets by the end of 2010.

Disposable income in Africa is generally low, and many customers face financial hardships. Despite these constraints, end users in developing countries often spend five times more of their disposable income on communications than their counterparts in the developed world.

Clearly, the fundamental need to communicate and access information is as strong in emerging Africa as it is in the developed world. "The need to communicate with others and share information is an important and fundamental part of the human experience and extends to all cultures and regions throughout the world," said Tim Ayers, Tellabs global consulting services director.

Service providers in emerging Africa are moving quickly to grow their networks and deliver advanced services to keep up with demand. The 40-plus sub-Saharan countries that make up emerging Africa share a common vision of being change drivers in the region and are passionate about the need to provide access to information and distribute knowledge throughout their population. Arguably, few service providers have a management team more devoted to becoming regional leaders than Telecom Namibia.

"Customers in emerging Africa expect the same services and network quality as customers in First World countries," said Coenraad Coetzee, general manager, ICT & Corporate Business Solutions at Telecom Namibia. "Our customers are looking for us to provide advanced services like metro Ethernet and bandwidth on demand. Telecom Namibia is committed to rising to the challenge and providing the communication tools and access to information we need to continue growing and developing as a nation."

As Telecom Namibia transforms its business model toward next-generation technologies, it often encounters the same barriers that challenge other service providers in developing markets, such as skill-set shortages, budgetary pressures, bandwidth constraints, infrastructure challenges and lack of expertise in new and significantly more complex technologies. To help overcome these barriers, Telecom Namibia increasingly relies on partners such as Tellabs to provide the expertise needed to complement its own staff and capabilities.

"Good partners are critical to our business. We are looking for partners who not only deliver quality products but also add value to our business," said Coetzee. "The companies we choose to partner with need to be committed to the success of Telecom Namibia and to the success of emerging Africa as a whole."

Tellabs Global Services recently demonstrated this commitment by providing consulting services and developing a comprehensive business plan for metro Ethernet services to help Telecom Namibia make business and financial decisions about the future of their Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) business. Tellabs' deep understanding of Telecom Namibia's technology requirements, business challenges and local market drivers enabled Tellabs to deliver a plan that included a detailed market analysis, service launch strategies and roadmaps, service definitions and a robust financial analysis.

The business case enabled Telecom Namibia's management team to move towards the market release of their first metro Ethernet service with the confidence that their decisions were supported by a sound business plan. With the launch of their progressive metro Ethernet plan, Telecom Namibia is well on its way to achieving their company blueprint of becoming a state-of-the-art ICT company by 2010.

"Our partnership with Tellabs has contributed to the success of Telecom Namibia by helping us reduce costs and reduce our time to market," said Coetzee. "We consider Tellabs a partner, not just an ordinary supplier. We will increasingly look to partners like Tellabs to help us deliver the services our customers are demanding."

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