Samsung targets infrastructure deals in Africa

By Walter Wafula

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After impressing African consumers with stylish mobile phones, tablet computers, and flat screen TV sets, Samsung, a global consumer electronics company has set its eyes on lucrative IT infrastructure deals with governments in Africa - in its quest for more growth on the continent.

Saiju Panicker, country manager for SamsungIT in Uganda, notes that the company is equipped with a portfolio of products and services that aim to help African governments build the efficient and technology driven infrastructure that is necessary to succeed in the coming years.

"As a business that has a solid footprint in South Africa and is quickly expanding its African market - targeting 100% growth in West, East and Southern Africa, to deliver connectivity and content to the people of Africa," Panicker said at the media launch of the Samsung Week in Kampala last week.

He added, "We are focused on three key premises to grow our business; One core pillar is our business-to-government relations. In line with this, we have developed a number of key solutions that look to optimise public sector operations as well as aid in delivering cost efficiencies."

Some of the cost efficient solutions that the firm is looking at delivering to the government include branded systems such as; Smart Education, Smart e-Governance, Smart Safe Community, Smart Job Creation and Smart Healthcare - an end-to-end solution for any government operation.

These solutions have already been implemented in some countries in Africa based on each countries requirements and the firm promises to deliver the same to the Uganda government.

ICT is a critical enabler

Amos Mulago, country manager for Samsung Uganda, observed that, "ICT is a critical enabler of economic activity in an increasingly networked world providing direct opportunities for manufacturing, service provision and job creation.

As such, schools, health facilities and similar social institutions should be connected to bridge the wide digital divide in Africa and to bring affordable access to information services and voice communication for people in Africa.

"It is here that we believe we offer government departments the opportunity to elevate this change, to align to international best practice through the clever use of technology, and to ensure that skills development, optimised working environments

and solid service delivery are top of the African economic agenda," Mulago said.

Other major global players in Africa's public infrastructure space include Ericsson, Huawei, Cisco and Nokia Siemens.

Samsung, just like Nokia, has been successful at delivering on-demand consumer electronics to various African markets. For instance, today, Africa reportedly accounts for 40% of Samsung's Galaxy Note handsets because of the high demand for mobile solutions on the continent.

Samsung Week

To further strengthen its relationship with the African customer, the South Korean-based company holds the Samsung Week in Uganda. The consumer focused week is part of an Africa wide initiative which aims to increase local knowledge and awareness about the company, showcase the company's latest products, reward loyal customers and explore potential business opportunities with key Ugandan partners.

According to Tessa Caleb, the corporate marketing manager for Samsung East Africa, Samsung recognises the importance of Africa as a rapidly growing and increasingly sophisticated market and therefore the Samsung Week gives the company an opportunity of interact with its clients and get feedback from business partners directly in a variety of forums across the country.

The week started in Kampala on 25 November and will move to strategic locations across the country, closing bak in Kampala on 1 December. Throughout the Week, Samsung will showcase its latest consumer electronics including smart phones, Galaxy Tabs, flat screen TV sets, laptops among others. It will also carry out road shows with free service clinics where its customers can take any of their Samsung products to be repaired at no cost.

ABOUT WALTER WAFULA

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