

Mobile content market gets a dash of Spice

Africa's mobile services company, Spice VAS Africa is expected to sign a deal with a South African operator, and chief executive, Arun Nagar believes that the company's focus on content will revolutionise the local mobile industry for operators and mobile users alike.

Spice, a value-added services (VAS) platform provider on the continent, has already signed some of the country's music labels to bolster a compelling line-up of mobile offerings. Nagar believes the South African mobile market is "rich with opportunity" for operators to lock in customer loyalty and market share with great content.

"Data is huge, but content is king when it comes to the uptake of mobile in Africa, and specifically South Africa," said Nagar. "We take content seriously, which is why we've signed some of South Africa's top talent to go with our exclusive artist deals in the rest of Africa. The penetration rates we've achieved in Africa - up to 25% in some markets - talks to the success of this approach."

Nagar also believes South African mobile users are about to experience something of a revolution in their mobile music experience, with functionality that includes allowing users to create personalised playlists on any phone, effectively turning even the cheapest phones into veritable iPods.

Spice has only been operating in South Africa for six months, but has already signed deals with music labels like Universal, EMI, Soul Candi, Ghetto Ruff, Vonk Musiek, Real Musik and Select Musiek. Across Africa, it boasts tie-ups with some 560 local artists.

Spice is headquartered in Singapore, but has grown its operations across Africa rapidly in the past two years on the back of a product suite that includes voice and infotainment products and managed services, with Caller Ringback Tones (CRBT) and Mobile Radio as its flagship offerings.

"It's all about ensuring that a right mix of local and international content is readily available on our platforms at all times. We're confident that this tried and tested recipe will help us rapidly establish ourselves in South Africa," said Nagar.