

What do people want from mobile?

By [Tshepiso Seopa](#)

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The little communications device that first started as a tool to simply receive and make calls has evolved so much that now it has a lot of additional services and accessories. One such is mobile TV, which, as with other new media tools, can embrace well as other social tools that bring together small communities. In doing so, it creates a funnel for campaigners who are aiming to sell or promote products to niche markets.

The banking industry embraced mobile telephones saw opportunities to communicate and send notices to clients. Businesses saw opportunities to market products and services to the consumer using the device.

Soon consumers might not even have to sit on a couch to watch TV anymore, "Because just as we expect the world to go more and more mobile and internet to bring new opportunities to reach new people, it is also important to view mobile TV as one channel among many to reach the consumer. Use all the channels innovatively to reach your consumers," says Ikka Vakiparta, head of business system enablers for Nokia Middle East and Africa.

"It is important to understand that mobile TV is a different channel from traditional TV. People are expecting different type of content on mobile as compared to traditional TV. And I'd like to urge the content developers to innovatively think [about] new formats for mobile," adds Vakiparta.

The way the TV industry in South Africa is structured has made it difficult for new entrants to enter or to penetrate a market that is said to be highly lucrative. "It is impossible to know what kind of business models will be taken by the players who are awarded spectrum, as ICASA has not yet awarded the licenses for the spectrum. We have seen a lot business models in countries in which mobile TV has been launched. In certain markets the service has been available in only a single operator's network (for example Hutchison 3G in Italy). In some other markets the service has been freely available to all consumers. The business models have also varied from fully free, to bundled with device, to free on certain networks to monthly subscription and pay-per-view, says Vakiparta, who says his company's devices can "support all different models".

Says Vakiparta: "A key observation we have seen is that to make a successful introduction of the mobile TV service there is a need for all the parties to work together. This basically means the broadcasters, operators and handsets providers. We believe that similarly, as all other content has transformed from fixed into mobile, so will TV. Think for example of FM Radio. Most of our devices have a built-in FM radio and according to our understanding over 30% of FM radio listeners do it on their mobile phones. If you are now told that you would have to go home and sit in a piece of furniture to listen to FM radio, would you do it?"

He says mobile TV is a natural evolution for TV and it will benefit several industries. "What we have seen is that traditionally

there is a dip in TV usage with teenagers as they don't return to normal viewing numbers until they have a family of their own. What we have seen lately is that this dip is getting deeper and longer. This is a problem to advertisers as this demographic is the one that many of the big advertisers want to reach. This is becoming problem to governments as well, as they do not have a communication channel to youth," he says.

ABOUT TSHEPISO SEOPA

Tshepiso Seopa was a junior journalist at Bizcommunity.com

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