

NetOne threatens to name and shame customers

By [Dumisani Ndlela](#)

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NetOne Cellular, the country's smallest cellular network operator by subscribers, has threatened to name and shame its post-paid customers with outstanding bills as it battles to free itself from a financial quagmire.

In a statement issued last week, the NetOne financial director, Godfrey Tarupuwa, said defaulting post paid customers had to clear outstanding amounts with the network or risk being embarrassed by publicly disclosing their names in the media.

"NetOne hereby gives the defaulting customers two weeks time from the date of publication of this press statement to make payments or make appropriate payment arrangements.

"Failure to clear the outstanding amounts leaves NetOne with no choice but to publish the names of the defaulters in the media and take legal action," said Tarupuwa in his statement issued Thursday, 16 December 2010.

Discount on bills

Tarupuwa said NetOne had given a 30% discount on bills incurred between January 2009 and March 2009 provided customers settled their bills not later than 31 August 2009 but many customers had snubbed the offer.

Zimbabwe ditched its currency for the US dollar and other offshore currencies in January 2009, forcing NetOne to work out bills in foreign currency even for calls that had been made during the Zimbabwe dollar regime.

Many of its customers consequently received hefty bills after dollarisation, forcing them to give up their post paid NetOne lines for those of competing networks.

NetOne did little to retain these customers, who were the major source of income.

The exodus of contract customers, the majority of whom were top company executives and middle managers whose bills were on corporate accounts is understood to have hit NetOne's bottom line.

ABOUT DUMISANI NDLELA

Dumisani Ndlela is a Zimbabwean journalist specialising in business and financial reporting, with experience reporting on commodities, stock and financial markets, advertising, marketing and the media. He has previously reported from a number of regional countries as well as from the UK and Germany on commodities and regional integration. He can be contacted on dndlela@yahoo.co.uk.

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