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SA's top mobile plans

By Staff Writer, ITWeb
Johannesburg, 26 Nov 2014

Read in this story Key highlights

A new study of SA's postpaid mobile plans, in terms of the consumer value they hold, has shown Telkom expanding its lead over its competitors.

New York-based telecommunications research firm Tarifica – launched in SA in July with the deployment of Tarifica Score – has positioned SA's fourth mobile operator, with around 2% market share, Telkom Mobile, as top of the consumer chart when it comes to its contract plans.

Tarifica Score is the firm's proprietary algorithm that weighs every feature of a mobile plan (including usage allotments, geographic coverage, data speeds, value-added features and promotional elements) against the plan's total costs, in order to determine its precise consumer value relative to other offers in the market. Scores range from zero – being the worst – to 100, representing the best.



After they are scored, plans are divided into two categories – "with phone" and "SIM only" – and then subdivided into five price segments, creating a total of 10 groups. Of these groups, Telkom's plans led the field in October, achieving Tarifica "top value plan" status in five groups.

Cell C rated second best, winning three of the 10 price segments. MTN and Virgin Mobile SA were each able to earn just one "top value plan", while SA's largest operator Vodacom, after offering the top overall SIM-only plan in the market two months ago, dropped out entirely.

Melissa Mascarenhas, Tarifica's SA analyst, comments on the most notable development in the market during October: "The addition of unlimited on-net data to Telkom's SmartPlan 100, 200 and 500 plans with the purchase of a phone considerably enhanced the already solid consumer value of these offers."

Mascarenhas says there is no similarly priced alternative in SA that includes the volume of allowances available with these plans. "Given that Telkom already had the top Tarifica Scores in September, this

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new promotion served to further expand the operator's lead."

Tarifica programme manager Will Watts says consumers are flooded with plan variations and constantly shifting promotions and deals in today's marketplace – the majority of which come with different costs and services and access networks of differing strengths. Tarifica Scores, he says, can assist in making a decision that will likely impact consumers for up to two years. Local mobile operators' Tarifica scores can be accessed under "Tarifica score SA market leaders" [here](#).

Key highlights

Throughout the period studied by Tarifica, Telkom led all operators in market segments won every month, according to the firm. "The operator was generally competitive across all price levels, but particularly dominant in plans with phones – often winning more than 60% of the awards in this category."

Cell C captured the second most top value plans each month, winning largely in the lower to mid-priced segments, particularly for SIM-only plans.

Vodacom started off winning a respectable two market segments, SIM-only plans less than R100 per month and between R101 and R300, in both July and August. After the expiration of promotions that had driven these high scores, however, Vodacom's top scores dropped significantly, leading to the operator not having a single winning plan in either September or October.

Virgin Mobile was able to capture between one and two top value plans each month. These were always in the lowest price segments and Virgin Mobile's plans were generally not in contention in any of the higher priced segments.

Finally, says Tarifica, MTN fared the worst of any operator, failing to win a single market segment until October. "Even then, MTN's Sky plan just barely edged out Vodacom's Red VIP for the top SIM-only plan costing over R1 000 per month."

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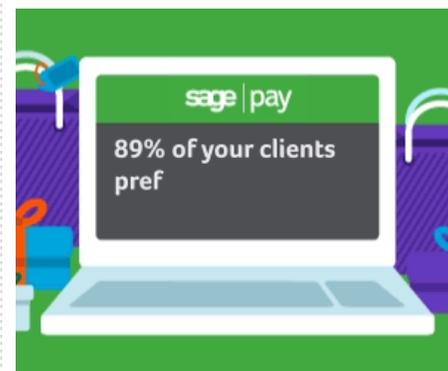
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