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iWAY NEWS

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iWAY AFRICA | DEFINING BROADBAND IN OVER 26 COUNTRIES ACROSS AFRICA



Letter from the Group Managing Director

Dear iWay Subscribers and Partners,

We are happy to acknowledge that the last 6 months have seen Afsat strive to achieve its corporate vision of being the leading communication solutions provider in Africa through the provision of world class efficient and cost effective internet and intra-corporate connectivity solutions. It is with this in mind that Intelsat, Ltd., Afsat's partner and the world's leading provider of fixed satellite services honored Afsat Communications Ltd for excellence in Corporate Networks during the Intelsat Excellence Awards for the Africa Region in Cape Town, South Africa in December 2008. I sincerely thank all the Afsat Community and its customers for all the

support they have given for us to be honored.

Over the years Afsat Communications has strived to provide world class solutions. We continue to commit ourselves towards provision of reliable services both to our distributors and end customers.

This year we have committed more resources to expand our infrastructure in all the markets that we operate in and also emphasize more on training of our personnel to be ahead with the ever changing telecommunications sector.

I personally wish to thank all our distributors, our customers and all the Afsat community for their continued support to make our story successful. ■

Salim Suleman
Group Managing Director
Afsat Communications Africa Limited

iWay Business Server



Inline with its vision to provide efficient and cost effective internet and intra-corporate solutions, Afsat will be launching "iWay Business server" in the first quarter of 2009. The product will offer an easy way to access internet through iWay's core products. The iWay business server will enable an organization decide which networked services that specific individuals should access. The product is designed for both the large, small and medium sized organizations.

The iWay business server is designed with distinct core features to enhance customer browsing experience.

Some include:

- Easy Access to the internet.
- Firewall protection i.e. Viruses and spam.
- E-mail management services. ■

Distributor survey

Afsat has launched its yearly distributor survey. This survey will focus on operational issues that distributors are facing in today's marketplace. Afsat has encouraged all distributor members to participate in this comprehensive survey, which covers loyalty, service improvement, benefits of iWay service among other parameters.

This exercise will be completed by the end of January 2009. ■

In December 2008 Intelsat announced the recipients of its 2008 Intelsat Excellence Awards for the Africa Region in Cape Town South Africa.

The recipients of the Awards were leading African communication companies. Intelsat's 2008 honorees demonstrated unparalleled growth of service offerings and technological innovations they provided to their customers throughout the continent. According to Flavien Bachabi, Intelsat's Regional Vice President, Africa. "Intelsat has served Africa for more than 40 years, providing satellite communications infrastructure to broadcast, telephony and broadband providers. Our partnerships with our customers, such as those we recognized, have fostered economic growth throughout the continent by supplying critical applications for development in Africa. We will continue building such relationships to ensure satellite transmission services remain an integral part of African network offerings."

This honorary from Intelsat Ltd demonstrated Afsat's ability to bridge the digital divide through provision of reliable communications solutions for corporate networks. ■

Afsat gets Recognition from its Partner Intelsat Ltd for Excellence in Corporate Networks

Over the years Intelsat Limited, the world's leading provider of fixed satellite services has been partnering with Afsat Communications to bridge the digital divide in Africa.



Callkey Networks wins ICT Award



Call key East Africa Asst. General Manager Robert Kimani receiving an award for Best Utilization of ICT for supporting corporate strategy from the Minister for Public Service Mr. Dalmas Otieno. ■

Kenya's Computer Society of Kenya (CSK), ICT Excellence Awards were held on Tuesday the 25th of November, 2008 at the Hotel Inter-Continental in a black-tie gala dinner. The Computer Society of Kenya (CSK) is the recognized association for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry and professionals in Kenya, attracting a large and active membership from all levels of the IT industry and providing

a wide range of services to its 6,000+ members. Over 450 high profile guests and who's who in the ICT industry attended the annual convocation. Each year various awards are awarded to individuals and companies for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the enhancement of computing and communications industries and the society in general. These individuals and companies represent role models for

the future generations to follow in their footsteps. The judges' criteria included quality of service, excellence, contribution towards universal access of IT, and evidence of innovative thinking. 2008's theme was "Pushing the Boundaries of Technology Innovation and Corporate Excellence". Callkey Networks has been the recipient of this award in 2007 and 2008. ■

iWay at the BPO Conference

In support of Kenya's National Outsourcing Initiative, Afsat participated in AITEC Africa's fifth African Outsourcing & Contact Centre Conference, held at the Laico Regency Hotel formerly Grand Regency Hotel in the heart of Nairobi City. This event came at a time when the Government of Kenya has set aside over US\$ 1.3 million to establish a Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Park which will provide an enabling environment for the industry growth which includes proper infrastructure as part of its commitment to Vision 2030. The vision for the BPO sector in Kenya is to be "the top off shoring destination in Africa by 2012". The event was a business to business networking platform for participants to share knowledge and best practices in the industry with delegates drawn from entire Africa and the rest of the world. ■

Afsat launches new billing platform

Afsat is happy to inform its distributors and end users that it has launched a new iWay billing platform. This is an innovative product that will enhance efficiency and encourage interface between the end users and distributors. The new iWay billing platform known as the, MQs will replace the current billing system; iWay subscriber management system (SMS) which has been used previously.

This platform is designed to give maximum benefits to the iWay users.

These benefits include:

- Viewing own contact details e.g. names, contact person, email address etc.
- View technical details about equipment/network details e.g. LAN 1 IP, subnet mask, NOC, Streaming Status, the IRU Serial Number, Modem Type, email address, allocated usage.
- View historical changes that have taken place e.g. Change of (equipment) IRU, Change of service Plan etc.
- View usage reports e.g. IP Based Usage-Summarized & IP Based Usage-Detailed reports.

- Register a ticket via (comment box) that is sent to the distributor on issues regarding the iWay services.

The new billing platform will make it easier for our customers to manage their accounts easily and encourage efficiency.

For more information on this new billing system kindly contact us on: billing@iwayafrica.com ■

Competing Technologies in Telecommunications

Later this year, the SEACOM cable that shall cover 15000 kms shall land at the Eastern Coast of Africa from Mtunzini in South Africa, linking Mozambique, Madagascar, Tanzania, and Kenya, before landing in Mumbai and Marseille in France i.e. the cable project offers international fibre optic bandwidth to Southern and Eastern Africa, linking the region with Europe and Southern Asia. The EASSY cable that shall cover 10000 kms will connect South Africa, Mozambique, Madagascar, Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti, and Sudan to the rest of the world. The cable shall be ready for commercial service in quarter 2 of 2010. SEACOM and EASSY are also known as FIGHTING FIBRES since

they are meant to serve the same route.

Much of this fibre connectivity is highly being awaited by service providers especially across East and Southern Africa in anticipation that broadband prices will significantly drop. However, it is speculated that this will take time as the parties involved in the cable layout process have to first recoup their initial investments associated with this process. There are also several instances where fibre transmission has ended up being disrupted, affecting thousands of customers due to cable cuts evident on those such as SAT-3 including the most recent Sea Me We 3 and Sea Me We 4, which connect countries between Western Europe and Southeast Asia, and the Flag Europe Asia cable, which stretches from the U.K. to Japan.

This gives the reason as to why most operators still rely on satellite transmission especially single-hop as a reliable means of direct connectivity for customers to the internet backbone. Other technologies also exist such as wireless (3G, WiMax, Wi-Fi hotspots, EVDO), leased lines, ADSL though they are also prone to multiple potential points of failure.

Sub-marine cables are mainly used to provide internet backbone connectivity to the rest of the

world while the inland (in-country) fibre cables are also used to backhaul (connect) wireless (WiMax, 3G, CDMA and voice) or leased line traffic being provided by telcos to satellite gateways or these undersea cables for redundancy purposes. That is why in most cases across Africa, fibre connectivity does not solve the last mile problem (reaching the end user's doorstep) creating a mix of wireless, dial-up or ADSL connections from clients' premises that terminate onto fibre connecting points in most towns on base transmitting stations or switching centres. Another reason being the cost of this fibre terminating equipment including cost of laying the fibre (civil works involved) up to the end user is also quite high leaving it to few individuals or corporate customers (cellular companies, telcos, banks, insurance companies) who can afford it.

With issues arising out of the last two paragraphs, they hype on the much awaited landing of the marine fibre cable on the Eastern and Southern Coast of Africa shall create demand for more of ICT amongst businesses in Africa and the world as well which will eventually create more demand for a reliable broadband service via satellite.

Operators across Africa who have heavily invested

in satellite connectivity anticipate future exponential growth with the landing of these undersea cables. This is because much of satellite capacity shall be off-loaded or released to them from ISP's which do not intend to continue using this capacity, but opt to utilise marine fibre bandwidth, meaning there's still growth for satellite connectivity across Africa. ■

Customer Support

The integral business tool

In today's world the customer shapes every decision made by any organization and industry.

Customer support has become an important department within any organization and very crucial as it is often the decision driver when defining organization business decisions and strategies to be made. Evolution of customer needs set the platform for both organizational and industry changes. There is not any better reservoir of this information other than the customer support. Slowly, customer support is moving to the forefront

as was the case before where it was relegated to behind the scenes.

It takes a centre stage in any organization. Afsat focuses not only on solving clients' problems but also satisfying their needs by providing useful, descriptive and relevant information. Customers will always use the fastest and easiest path when they are in need. Businesses tend to prefer queries be directed to a web-based customer service channel. This can only happen if there is a clear incentive for customers to use that channel in preference to others like face to face and telephone.

Afsat provides incentives like historical information through complain sheet form, provision of easy ways to update personal information and enhance functionality not available in other channels e.g chat. Customer support is an important element in marketing of products. Therefore an organization needs to strive integrate customer support requirements into new and existing products.

In most cases customer support staff use in-house systems that are different to those being used by customers. While this shields customers from

unnecessary complexity, the in-house systems are frequently more up-to-date making other communication channels less attractive.

We at Afsat believe that there are real opportunities for businesses to review their customer support strategies by considering how customers can best be served online and providing real incentives for them. This business will free off customer support staff to manage non-routine and complex problems. Customers on the other hand benefit from quick and easy resolution of the majority of their support requirements.

The customer is the backbone of any business unit. The kind of support a customer gets from an organization determines the trust he/she has in the organization. It is on record that most companies are getting big churn as a result of poor customer support services.

Afsat strives to achieve a competitive edge through provision of world class support services to current clients ranging from information provision to physical attendance to the client. By this Afsat assigns, manages, routes and resolve customer

support cases across diverse communication channels, including phone, fax and Web.

Automated case management and e-mail notification also ensures that everyone stays in the loop, and consequently the customer receives only top-notch service. We save valuable time by giving customer support representatives all the information they need within a single powerful application.

We no longer waste time hunting for contracts, invoices, or other data in disparate systems or departments.

We believe the customer deserves the most courteous attention we can give them. They are the lifeblood of this and every business. ■

Afsat Services handing the financial contribution to Mrs. Lydia Okech, Chairperson in Nairobi for Suba Grassroots Development Organization which facilitated the support for The Association of the Physically Disabled of Kenya. ■



James Turuthi, Marketing Manager Afsat Services hands over financial contribution to Mrs. Lydia Okech, Chairperson in Nairobi for Suba Grassroots Development Organization. ■

Corporate Social Responsibility

Afsat marked the International Day of Disabled Persons 3 December 2008, with a donation to Association of the Physically Disabled of Kenya. Photographed below is James Turuthi, Marketing Manager

iWay Africa Commended for Elevating Standards of Health, Education and Commerce during the DRC Communication Summit



Margaret of Afsat Communications with the Minister of Postal and telecommunication at the DRC Communication Summit. ■

Afsat communications through its brand iWay participated as an exhibitor

during the prestigious DRC communication summit held in Kinshasa

November 2008. This prestigious event was organized by the Global VSat Forum (GVF). GVF is an association of key companies involved in the business of delivering digital fixed satellite systems and services to consumers, and commercial and government enterprises worldwide.

During the event Afsat Communications and other telecommunications firms were commended



Nadia of Congosat (Afsat Distributor) briefs a Visitor during the DRC Communication Summit. ■

by the Minister of Post and Telecommunications for the Democratic Republic of Congo for their support

by displaying of advanced systems and services for DRC. ■

