

Airtel Kenya accuses Safaricom of derailing MNP process

According to Airtel Kenya, Vodafone's Safaricom has slowed down the three-week old mobile number portability (MNP) process, by erecting technical blockades that have derailed efforts of over 6,500 customers to migrate from its network. In a letter to the Communications Commission of Kenya, CCK, director general Charles Njoroge, Airtel Kenya says Safaricom had now adopted a new tactic to subvert the MNP process.



"It was a refreshing moment to have had a resolution on the matter we raised with you on Safaricom last weekend and while we appreciated the quick solution then, we have now run into yet another brick wall with Vodafone's Safaricom. The matter this time round is that some customers wishing to move to Airtel from Safaricom are unable to complete the porting process because the SMS' that they send to 1501 are not being delivered," says Rene Meza, Airtel Kenya MD.

Airtel launch investigation

Meza said if the underhand tactics employed by Safaricom to defeat MNP are left unpunished, customers will not experience the anticipated freedom.

"We initially thought that this was due to a simple and isolated case affecting a few customers, following which we launched an investigation and went to the extent of buying Safaricom SIM cards which we have taken through the process over the last 48 hours with no success with a similar result.

Last week, while acknowledging that the MNP process may have been bogged down by technical hitches, Njoroge directed operators to solve such issues expeditiously. "As a result of the technical challenges, some ported numbers were not accessible in the recipient networks, resulting in non-seamless customer experience. Assurances were given that the causes of the glitches had been identified and to a large extent resolved, and that the pending ones would be sorted out by the end of today (13 April 2011)," Njoroge said after the operators meeting last week.