

The Essential CIO

Insights from the
Global Chief Information
Officer Study

Safaricom

Making money mobile

13.5 million
customers

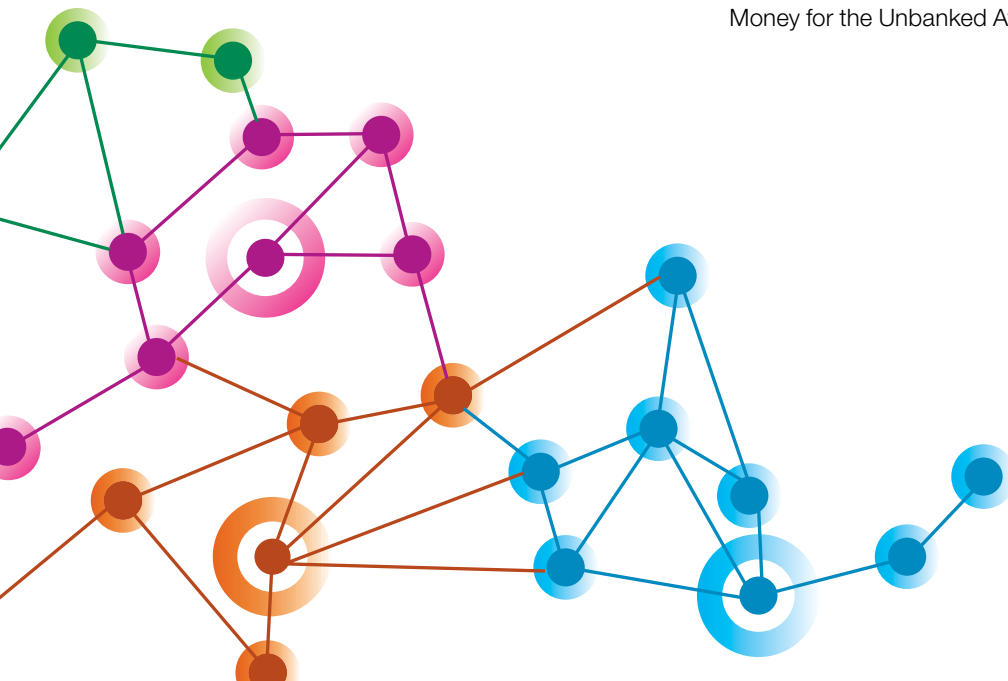
and over 24,000 agent outlets since 2007

Safaricom is one of Kenya's leading mobile network operators.¹ It's also transformed the way money moves around Kenya and made a big difference to millions of people's lives with its mobile banking service, M-PESA (m is for mobile and pesa is the Swahili word for money).²

Most Kenyans don't have bank accounts – and even when they do, they often have to travel miles to find a branch, since there are only 750 banking outlets in the entire country. But carrying cash is risky. M-PESA solves all these problems. It lets people without a bank account transfer funds quickly and easily via their mobile phones.

Customers register with an M-PESA agent – usually a cell phone dealer, gas station, chemist, supermarket or shop – and buy electronic value (e-value), which they can then send, via secure text messages, to any other mobile phone user in Kenya. The recipient collects the cash by going to any M-PESA agent, entering a secret code and showing an ID.

M-PESA has been hugely successful. It now has 13.5 million customers and has over 24,000 agent outlets since its launch in 2007.³ The service has also been extended to Tanzania, Afghanistan and South Africa, with trials underway in India. Safaricom itself has deservedly won numerous accolades for its pioneering vision – including, most recently, the Mobile Money for the Unbanked Award at this year's Global Mobile Awards 2011.⁴





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Notes and sources

- 1 “About safaricom,” <http://www.safaricom.co.ke/index.php?id=541>
- 2 “The Economist Innovation Awards 2010.” The Economist. <http://www.economistconferences.co.uk/innovation/socialandeconomicwinners2010>
- 3 “Safaricom wins backing in row with rivals over sharing M-PESA.” Microfinance Africa. March 7, 2011. <http://microfinanceafrica.net/microfinance-technology/safaricom-wins-backing-in-row-with-rivals-over-sharing-M-PESA/>
- 4 “Safaricom, Airtel and Orange Wins Global Mobile Award.” TechMtaa. February 16th, 2011. <http://www.techmtaa.com/2011/02/16/safaricom-airtel-and-orange-wins-global-mobile-award/>



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