

Senditoo looking to conquer Africa in 2017

Senditoo, a new mobile airtime startup, has started 2017 with ambitious plans to become one of Africa's fastest growing airtime transfer services.



Takwana Tyaranini

The company buoyed by funding secured in December, has started an aggressive marketing campaign to expand its share of the \$3 billion global airtime market.

Guinean Ibrahima Soumano and Zimbabwean Takwana Tyaranini founded the company in March last year. Based in the UK the company allows users to send instant mobile phone top-ups to more than 140 countries across the world, including 39 in Africa.

“The greatest need for people living and working in the diaspora is to stay in touch with their relatives and friends and be up to speed with important developments back home. With Senditoo, we’ve found a way to keep the African conversation flowing, in three easy steps: enter your number on our platform, make a payment and instantly, credit is received,” co-founder Tyaranini explained.

“With mobile phone penetration in Africa standing at around 67 per cent today, there’s clearly a huge need for airtime to keep that flow of conversations going,” he added.

Connected to over 400 mobile operators across the globe with a reach of 4.5 billion prepaid phone users, Senditoo is quite possibly one of the world’s largest airtime transfer networks.

In its short life span, the company has raised well over \$350,000 in funding, with \$329,690 of that coming as recently as December, led by three French investors – Thibault Launay, Romain Girbal and Célia Grémy. The three have interests and experience in emerging markets and telecommunications and are already involved in several ventures in Africa.

Building on previous impressive investments of approximately \$350, 000, the new investment will go towards expanding Senditoo in Africa and position it as the leading airtime transfer service from Europe to the continent. To boost its ambitious plans, Senditoo aims to raise more than \$2 million in funding in early 2017.

Encouragingly, there is an active pool of investors who are looking to the African market as the 'new frontier' and seeking out viable opportunities to invest in. Research by start-ups portal Disrupt Africa shows that tech start-ups on the continent received a total amount of funding in excess of US\$185.7 million in 2015.

The idea of starting the online mobile top-up platform crystallised after Tyaranini's business partner, Soumano, visited relatives in rural Guinea in April, 2015. Instead of carrying gifts to offer them, as is customary, Soumano bought some mobile airtime vouchers which he distributed among his relatives and their neighbours.

"Seeing the impact made by that small gift of a few mobile minutes was a lightbulb moment for Ibrahima and when he returned to the UK, we immediately tucked into the idea. The result was the birth of Senditoo, which we initially named Ozaremit before rebranding it last October and launching it with a new API that allows us to develop new business-to-business partnerships," Tyaranini said.

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