2016 outlook with Edward Lawrence

By Edward Lawrence

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Edward Lawrence is an entrepreneur with over 10 years of experience in the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) sector. He is the co-founder and director of Business Development at Workonline Communications, a Network Service Provider (NSP) offering wholesale connectivity solutions and specialised enterprise services in sub-Saharan Africa. Lawrence has held directorships of several companies across various industries, including the telecommunications, information technology, marketing, automotive and music industries.

Edward Lawrence

We asked Lawrence to share his top trends and insights with us.

▦ *What are the key trends for the Year 2016 that you are monitoring?*

Edward Lawrence: The growth of IPv6, which we expect to extend significantly in 2016 and even into 2017 to support the exponential growth in volumes of connected devices. With IPv4 resources soon to be exhausted in Africa, the market will be forced to take up IPv6.

The consolidation of the wholesale enterprise and retail segments of the internet service provider industry, which we are seeing as a trend in Europe. More growth in the wholesale network service provider industry in Africa, as the demand for quality bandwidth continues to grow.

▦ *Your 'game changer' trend for next year?*

Lawrence: Innovation in service level agreements where quality and quantity of bandwidth become increasingly monitored and rewarded or penalized. The precision of these models will result in the continued reduction of costs and increased competition within the market. We expect these cost reductions to filter into the retail market, which will mean better quality networks and reduced costs for the end consumer.

▦ *How will you keep yourself and your team inspired during the next year?*

Lawrence: I find transparency within the organisation extremely important in this regard, especially when looking at the success of the business. It ensures that the team are aware of the difference they are making, inspires them to keep working hard and gives them something to be proud of. We have a lot to achieve and complete in 2016 and I think the passion necessary for this comes from the knowledge that together we are building something great.

::: *What is your core strategy for nurturing creativity and surfacing innovation in you and your teams?*

Lawrence: More than anything, I believe a flat structure is core to our success. We encourage and nurture communication between all individuals within the organisation. We also try to ensure our employees and colleagues are happy and satisfied within their roles and are not feeling overwhelmed. We believe in giving them freedom to carry out research in the industry and providing them with the tools to expand this research and in effect their knowledge.

::: *What do you hope to see less of going into the New Year?*

Lawrence: Less regulation within the telecoms market. More deregulation will encourage foreign investment.

::: *What do you hope to see more of in 2016?*

Lawrence: - More adoption of IPv6
- More international companies building out into the local market
- More political stability, where possible
- An increase in the Business Confidence Index to improve the prospects for foreign investment

::: *What advice do you have for the industry for the next year in this tough economy?*

Lawrence: Owing to the fact that it is going to be a tough year for businesses all over the world, I would say that cash flow is the most important element. Businesses who are in a position to do so should work towards lowering debt finance and increasing cash on hand, in order to protect the business.

::: *How do you personally, keep up with current trends?*

Lawrence: I'm a firm believer in having open lines of communication within the organisation and across the industry, attending important industry events and conferences, and exchanging ideas and information with other industry professionals.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Edward Lawrence, co-founder and director of Business Development at Workonline Communications

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