



## Keeping Ahead in ICT

*Vodacom*

### **Voice-over**

It's a low cost idea. This is an unused shipping container but it now contains the most advanced cellular technology, adapted for use in townships of rural areas.

### **Neville Ndumo, Vodacom**

This is a community service telephone so it's going to be cheap because the government's regulating the tariff, it's only sixty cents per minute that you can charge, and it's part of the government's way of forcing Vodacom to have cellular telephoning not to be for a select few, but giving the people all across the strata of society. They will not own the 'phone here but at least they can make a 'phone call using GSF technology.

### **Voice-over**

They aren't like mobile 'phones used by the rich. They're actually fixed to the wall so they won't be stolen, and calls are subsidised by the operators. They're known as 'phone shops. They aren't selling 'phones, they're selling airtime. Vodacom has developed this radical idea to address part of their community obligation, intending to install six hundred across the country.

### **Alan Knott-Craig, Chief Executive, Vodacom**

What people generally do is to say well if these areas are Third World and poor, let's put old, you know, cheap, re-used technology in there. Wrong approach altogether, you know, go for the most modern technology, it's the best way to do it, and I think GSM have proved that in South Africa quite well.

### **Voice-over**

Vodacom needs local people to run the 'phone shops but black people could find it difficult to borrow money. Today the government encourages banks to give loans to black businesses. In the township of Daveyton, halfway between Johannesburg and Pretoria, Peter Dzingwa is one of South Africa's new entrepreneurs.

### **Peter Dzingwa, Phone Shop Owner**

By a stroke of luck I ran into a guy from Teljoy, who was one of the cells providers for the Vodacom system, whereby he mentioned the fact that I, I said to him look, I'm trying to get a cellular 'phone, and then he ran me through these things, and said no, no, no, no, you're a bad credit risk, he refused to get me a 'phone. I was very upset about that, but well look, the man was reading from whatever the credit bureaux were saying. Then he said to me there is also a system coming up, that Vodacom is going to put up a public telephone, that type of thing – are you interested? Now when we kicked off, that was in 1994, I think it was on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, we have your five telephone lines, some containers have ten, but I opted for five because I felt that if you put in ten, our guys they do get a bit rowdy when they speak over the 'phone. Now if you got ten then, I thought I'm turning this thing into a circus now. This is supposed to add value to people's lives. Anyway, I started with that five, and it went on, it was just like a piece of cake, it was fantastic, it brought wonderful, you know, value to the people's lives in the cells that now they could communicate, they could say to their loved ones, and matches that type of situation.