

# Making M2M SIM management SME-friendly

By [Kees Snijders](#)

20 Jul 2015

Using SIM cards have become a way of life for the digital citizens of today. With our reliance on smartphones and tablets, these tiny components are integral to staying connected. For small to medium enterprises where cost efficiencies are essential, managing SIMs have never been more important. Kees Snijders, MD of Flickswitch, takes a closer look.



Kees Snijders

SIMs extend beyond just data and voice billing in the devices of employees. They play an essential role in machine-to-machine (M2M) communication. Forming part of the Internet of Things, M2M enables systems to communicate with other devices anywhere in the world.

## Multi-device connectivity

"This means that organisations can have multiple connected devices that transmit large amounts of data back into the corporate back-end. So what happens if there is an error on the SIM embedded in one of these devices or there is no air-time to send the information back to head office? In a world where deliverables are measured in hours (sometimes minutes), the business impact could be severe," says Snijders.

He says M2M applications extend into all vertical industries so business owners cannot afford to rest on their laurels. From a smart meter in a home to a vehicle tracking device, there are very few aspects in our lives that are not affected by SIMs.

"And while these are consumer examples, consider the potential for enterprise-level systems. Already, there are specialised applications in the utility infrastructure leveraging M2M. Take waterworks as an example. SIMs play a crucial role in sending information on dam levels and water and gate flow to municipalities. Without having these remote systems in place, the process not only slows down but it greatly increases the risk of error that can have life or death repercussions."

## SME appeal

Until recently, M2M has been something that was left to large businesses. But thanks to the evolution of technology, even smaller companies can start benefiting from such systems. Unfortunately, SMEs have been held captive by not being aware of the alternative solutions out there.

"SMEs have unique challenges and requirements. From an affordability perspective, they cannot use providers who assist the likes of large tracking companies or mining houses. Instead, they need a niche-services provider they can trust and is capable of understanding their business to provide them with a SIM management and control solution that fits their organisation," adds Snijders.

Not only should such a service provider help manage employee SIMs (smartphones and tablets), but it should also be able to provide assistance outside the pockets of users. Snijders says that, unlike the majority of the European and United States markets, the connectivity of SIMs (especially in M2M) in Africa need to be managed on a prepaid basis.



PublicDomainPictures via [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

## An African approach

"We have seen the local SME M2M market predominantly being on prepaid. In addition, when one looks at the rest of Africa, statistics show that almost 98 percent of the market is relying on prepaid SIMs. This presents a massive opportunity for an experienced service provider such as ourselves, to work closely with SMEs and implement bespoke solutions fitting their focus areas."

Part of a SIM management approach needs to be reliable and real-time monitoring of SIMs in the field. These devices should communicate when they need to be topped up with data irrespective of time or location. Secure M2M communication is also vital. An SME, therefore, needs a full-service partner that is capable of managing all aspects of this journey in order for the business owner to focus on the core operational strategy.

"We have seen that if SMEs want to take ownership of this problem, they run into difficulties - both in terms of funds and in terms of human resources required to manage all aspects of the SIM lifecycle. By removing the elements of uncertainty around SIM management, our clients can rest easy in the knowledge that this integral element is taken care of."

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kees Snijders, is a co-founder and director at Flickswitch, a technology company in the mobile telecoms space focusing on the management of machine-to-machine data SIM cards across various African mobile networks.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>