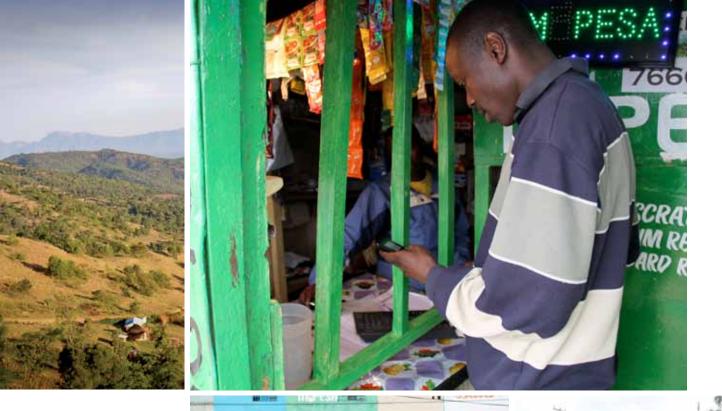# Mobile Money for the Unbanked

Designing & Delivering Agent Training for Mobile Money Deployments

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Benefits of training an agent network

The ability of mobile money agents to smoothly deliver cash and e-money to customers has major bearing on the success of a mobile money service. The 2011 GSMA Global Mobile Money Adoption Survey found that the agents of the eight fastest growing mobile money deployments had significantly more activity (up to 64.8 transactions per active agent outlet per day with an average of 28.5) compared with the agents of other services (average of 3.8 transactions per active agent outlet per day).

To drive high level agent performance, training is one of the more powerful levers available. Well trained agents are more likely to drive transaction volumes for the operator, educate the customers on how the service works and deliver error free transactions. Indeed one mobile money manager went so far as to say that it is only through well trained agents that mobile money revenues can be ensured.

Agent training best practice
Looking across effective mobile money agent networks, there are five areas of best practice in agent training:

- **All members of the mobile money distribution channel require training** Business owners, shop handlers, agent management teams, Master Agents, foot soldiers, etc. are all important members of the distribution team who need to have a complete understanding of the mobile money product.
- **Centralised training is effective at the beginning of a deployment but will likely need to evolve to regional decentralised training as the agent network grows** Mobile money services have the option of centralised trainings at headquarters, regional training programs in key hubs or training agents on site at their place of business. The maturity of the mobile money service and stage of development of the agent network determines the optimal model.
- **Agent training is not a onetime event** Agents will need refresher courses on a periodic basis and will need training on new products. Agent training should be thought of as an ongoing part of a mobile money service.

- **Dedicated trainers with clear KPIs for performance management is necessary to deliver effective agent training** The choice to use in house trainers or to outsource training all together depends on the size of the distribution network, the quality of the training resources, and the oversight the mobile money manager has over training.
- **Training curriculum must go beyond the practical "how to" of executing mobile money transactions** It importantly must also cover the business case for how to make money on mobile money, the company guidelines for agent behaviour and regulatory compliance requirements. Trainees should be evaluated at the conclusion of the training with a pass/fail assessment and on an ongoing basis at their point of business.

This article has primarily been written with wallet based MNO led services in mind. However, the topics covered here are likely to have relevance for mobile money services powered by banks and third-party players as well as money services offered over-the-counter.

"Agent training" goes beyond just training agents! All members of the mobile money distribution channel require training.

Depending on the distribution structure of the mobile money service, there are a number of individuals who will need to be trained on mobile money. Education levels, literacy and numeracy will significantly vary across each of these groups and will need to be taken into consideration in designing training curriculum and training format.

Business owners
The business owner is the person in-charge of one or multiple outlets which will be offering mobile money. Critically, he or she is the person who has put up the capital to invest in the mobile money business. As such, it is important that he or she is trained on the service their outlets will offer and is bought into the business case of mobile money. The owner should understand its benefit to customers and see the value mobile money brings to the business as a whole, including increased foot traffic and opportunity for incremental sales on their other products.

This will give the owners the confidence to push their outlets to drive the business. Additionally, he or she will better manage their business and better handle their staff. Included in business owners' trainings should be skills to manage their handlers, including basic book keeping, end of day reconciliations, etc.

Handlers
Handlers are the individuals who directly interact with customers and facilitate transactions at the points of business. All new handlers will need to be trained before offering the service. Financial services agents are tasked with the responsibility of not only providing service to customers but also educating them and carrying out the business in the stipulated manner. As such, not only are they seen as the face of the company by the customer, but are expected to be experts in the subject matter.

With that in mind, training the handlers before offering the service is mandatory. In some deployments, it's the handlers training that will determine whether or not the agent outlet is allowed to start offering service. Handlers are normally put through rigorous training and by the end of the training given an exam which they are expected to pass to satisfy the service provider of their readiness. Poorly trained handlers contribute to poor customer experience at the retail outlet, resulting in low customer uptake/usage and increased incidences of fraud.

Operators will benefit from encouraging the business owner to take care when recruiting the handler. Handlers must be willing to be trained and have effective communication skills already. As they are required to be dedicated on the service, continuous up-skilling of the staff is essential. Many deployments face challenges of high turnover of handlers, which results in the frequent training of new handlers. There really is no other way around it.

Some deployments are considering certifying trained, competent handlers in an effort to manage this high turnover, as many of them move from one agent to another. With the certification in place, re-training may not be required.

Foot soldiers
A number of mobile money services use foot soldiers/mobile agents to register customers and/or aide the customers in performing their first cash-in. Given the profile and incentive structure of foot soldiers, there tends to be high churn, making training an expensive proposition.

But as with handlers, there is no way around it. If a mobile money service uses the foot soldiers/mobile agents as new customers' first interaction with the mobile money service, they must be adequately trained. This is probably a shorter training than the full agent training, but must convey (a) how to explain to a new customer the key benefits of using mobile money; (b) how to register customers; (c) how to teach customers to use the mobile money interface, taking special care with clients who may not have high levels of literacy; (d) how to answer the FAQs new customers may have.

Agent Network Management Teams (ANMTs)
The team which manages the agent network is essential in scaling the agent network while ensuring the agents provide consistently high quality service. These may be (a) employees of the mobile money service provider who add mobile money as part of their other duties (common with MNOs whose sales and distribution teams double up managing airtime resellers and mobile money agents); (b) employees of the mobile money service providers who directly manage the agents, on an exclusive basis; (c) specialised third parties outsourced on contractual basis; (d) large retailers with established retail network.

The ANMTs generally play various roles which may include identifying, training and managing agents. Given their mandate typically goes far beyond training, their knowledge of the service must be exceptional. Critically, they are expected to not only be aware of the "how to" of the service but also the benefits of mobile money, the business case for doing mobile money and basic business principles in order to guide the business owner and handler.

Master Agents, aggregators and distributors

Deployments which use Master Agents, aggregators and/or GSM/airtime distributors in their distribution model will need to train these additional layers of the channel. As Master Agents have the responsibility of recruiting and managing agents, they will need to be trained beyond the traditional "how to" of the service. Their training will need to include the recruitment process, so as to ensure quality agents are brought on board, and the critical aspects of managing cash and e-money, as liquidity management will be the key success driver for Master Agents.

Given Master Agents are in frequent contact with the mobile money agents, it is tempting to pass the agent training responsibility to them. However, they are unlikely to be reliable resources for agent training. As further discussed in the section of selecting and managing trainers, the incentive structure of Master Agents, aggregators and distributors is typically not aligned against this objective.

The use of centralised, decentralised or onsite training models depends on the maturity of the mobile money deployment

The model for agent trainings varies significantly by the stage of maturity of the mobile money deployment. Centralised training schemes tend to be more common prior to the launch of a mobile money scheme; Regional and onsite training schemes are more common once mobile money deployments are live. Additionally, the content of the training curriculum tends to evolve over time, as more and more people in the market gain greater awareness and understanding of the service.

Training new agents pre-launch is ideally done as centralised, group training

It is typical for mobile money services to have a centralised approach to agent training at the launch of a mobile money deployment, whereby agents are required to attend a mandatory training session held at a centralised location. Training agents in a centralised place may be

costly but it helps build a sense of belonging and ensures buy-in, which can be incredibly valuable at such an early stage when the service has not launched. Several considerations for centralised trainings are relevant:

- Proximity of the training centre in relation to the retailers' outlets;
- Compensating the retailers who may be forced to close their shops to attend the initial training, which may generally last for one day;
- Expenses related to providing meals/ refreshments and in some instances accommodation.

Group trainings are useful especially if prospective agents are aggregated from the same area, as there's ease of sharing between participants and relevance to their markets. In certain circumstances, the trainer may use the local/native language to make the training effective, and people from the same locality are more likely than not to understand this language.

In addition, distance from the training centre has an impact on number of agents recruited for the service. For instance, in the Philippines, the guidelines set by the Central Bank (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas) required all agents to go to the capital city Manila for training. This was expensive and significantly restricted the number of retailers that could become agents. The Central Bank later relaxed this rule, with positive effects on the growth of the distribution network.

Pre-launch training has to be timed in such a way that there is not a huge time lag between the training and service launch to avoid the need for re-training agents, which entails additional expenses. Depending on how many agents the mobile money service is starting with at launch, getting them all trained may take one to two weeks. Ideally, pre-launch training should be done at least two weeks in advance, giving the service provider sufficient time to distribute any collateral, business tools that agents may require. Some providers may actually want to distribute the collateral one to two days before service launch to counter against competition, but the fact is that by the time the training takes place, it is very possible that the service is already public information.

Post-launch, training of new agents is best done through a decentralised approach

Once the mobile money deployment has launched, new agents joining mobile money will need to be trained and existing agents may also seek to improve service delivery or gain a better understanding of the service.

Because potential agents may already be aware, or even better, have already become users of the service, post launch training may be easier and faster than pre-launch training. Some of the challenges initially encountered in conceptualising mobile money, which may sometimes take painstakingly long to explain, may have been overcome.

After the launch of a service, there is normally pressure to quickly scale up agent numbers to popularise the service. **With that in mind, decentralised regional training is optimal as this allows more agents to be trained faster**. This may entail setting up training centres in important hubs that would have been identified such as the initial remittance corridors or areas identified as requiring agents due to perceived customer demand for the service.

The benefit of decentralised training for retailers is that they are encouraged to attend as these trainings will be within close proximity, allowing them to quickly return to their businesses. However, for the service provider, this approach likely means additional resources.

Moving to the regional training approach is typically done by establishing centres that can be used on a consistent and continuous basis. Alternatively, training centres in the regions can be hired as needed as has been done by many service providers. This will be informed by the service provider's agent acquisition strategy. Putting in place a long term plan may in the end be more cost effective, as established trainers in the regions will have been identified and with a sense of continuity, may have lower turnover.

Some examples of cost-effective regional training hubs are as follows:

- One MNO offering mobile money initially tried to do agent training in the capital city with follow-up visits to the shop as required. But as the footprint of agents spread across the country, this was no longer feasible. Two years after

launch, they set up regional training centres with standing training sessions. This allowed both new and old agents to come in for trainings at any time. Former teachers from that locality were trained up to become the local trainers and are paid just for the training sessions they provide, saving money over trainers having to come from the capital each time.

- Training centres can be developed from existing infrastructure. For instance, one MNO uses space available at its retail centres/shops as a training centre, by installing the necessary training tools. With this, there is no extra overhead in terms of rental payments, which is a huge cost saving.
- Another mobile money service provider entered into an agreement with an MFI with a national infrastructural presence to use its centres for training agents. They have gone even further to identify champions within the MFI responsible for delivering the training.

Agent training is not a one time event

Ongoing training

Mobile money service providers will need to keep in touch with the agents during the nascent days of the service. Agents will want assurance that they are "doing it right," as it is their money which is at stake. For this reason, existing agents must be visited consistently and this visit should be exploited by the service provider to (a) enhance the agents' business through re-training; (b) identifying further training needs; (c) motivate the agent on the business case of mobile money. This also helps in relationship building, critical for the success of the business.

Refresher trainings

Agents should always have the option to get access to refresher trainings. This is a critical aspect for agents of mobile financial services. These refreshers may be done centrally or onsite. With active agents, onsite trainings are more effective as they address the specific issues an agent may be facing. However, centrally planned trainings are still beneficial for agents since it gives them time to share common experiences gathered in offering the service.

In most cases, ongoing training and refresher trainings are undertaken at the same time especially when done onsite.

Trainings for new services

As the service develops and new features are added, agents need to be kept informed and up-skilled. SMS blasts and memos are a timely way to update agents on minor changes to the product, but the most effective communication and awareness is built when agents are visited and introduced in person to new services. Where possible, a technical simulation of using the new service should be done so agents can become familiar with the new feature. The new services training can also be undertaken at the same time with refresher trainings, since more often than not the same resource is used to train agents.

Safaricom's M-PESA in Kenya uses its quarterly agent forums which are held regionally to introduce and sensitise agents on new services. In other instances, onsite visits are used to introduce the new services mainly focused on creating awareness and addressing FAQs by providing relevant brochures. Some new services may involve a select number of agents (e.g. M-KESHO) and this makes regional centralised trainings more appropriate.

Recourse for agents in breach of trainings

Agents are required to provide the mobile money service according to the service provider's guidelines and generally are also required to adhere to legal and regulatory requirements. Training of agents before they start offering the mobile money service should be compulsory. Several deployments have been effective in ensuring that agents only start offering services after they have been adequately trained. This they do by providing business tools only after successful completion of the training by the agent.

Compulsory training will reduce agent infractions and give the operator recourse against agents when they are in breach of stated guidelines. For agents in breach of guidelines, mobile money providers may choose to give them the opportunity to be re-trained, at the conclusion of which, they are given a second chance to continue offering services.

Effective training hinges on well designed and well managed trainer KPIs

To achieve high quality training programmes, there must be someone in charge, responsible for developing the training strategy and organising the delivery of the programme. The training manager may or may not be a dedicated resource at launch, but over time with large distribution networks, dedicated resources will likely be required.

Master Agents and Agent Network Management Teams are not adequate resources for training agents

Some mobile money programmes will look to save costs by using existing resources already working in distribution to train others in the channel. Unfortunately this proves ineffective. The incentives and KPIs of master agents and sales teams are ultimately to drive sales, growth, transaction volumes, etc. They typically do not have KPIs on quality assurance or compliance. As such, they cannot be counted on to deliver the full scope of training.

In-house vs. outsourced training

Some mobile money programmes are in the fortunate position of having a trainer or training department in another part of the company which can be leveraged for training mobile money agents. Other MNOs will look to outsource this part of the mobile money business, given the time required to design and deliver quality training.

Both resourcing strategies can be effective. The choice depends on which option has qualified talent, which option is cost effective and which option gives the mobile money manager greatest oversight. Mobile money training programmes will need to be dynamic to incorporate market feedback on where there are gaps in customer understanding and the introduction of new products. As such, it is quite important that the mobile money manager has influence to evolve the training curriculum and training model as required.

Whichever trainer is used, they will need to acquaint themselves with the processes and regulatory requirements of the mobile money service and be sensitised to the nuances of the needs of the mobile money agents. Field visits to both urban and rural areas are vital in building deep understanding of how the business works, the agents role in delivering the product and

what type of training is required. Focus should also be placed on product demos. **This so-called training of the trainers is an essential precursor to any trainer being deployed in the classroom and should be undertaken by a senior mobile money team member.**

KPIs

As with any area in the mobile money business, well designed KPIs and incentives are essential to high quality training. **KPIs for the trainers should include the training outputs i.e. number of agents/handlers trained and the training outcomes i.e. agents providing high level of customer service thanks to the training.**

See Annex 1 for a sample KPI for a Head of Training for mobile money at one particular MNO.

Ongoing monitoring of agents is essential to determine training effectiveness and identify future training needs

Agent trainings need to be tracked in terms of who has been trained, when they were trained, what products they were trained on and whether they attended refreshers. But to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the training, one must assess customers' experience registering and conducting transactions.

Almost all mobile money services have individuals regularly visiting the agents, either for sales purposes, for monitoring purposes or some combination thereof. These individuals will naturally uncover training gaps in the agent network and identify where more support is required. It is essential this information is regularly provided to the training team and incorporated into subsequent trainings.

If there are consistent training gaps identified by the field staff, the training programme and/or trainers will need to be improved.

Effective training curriculum covers much more than just the basic "how to" of conducting mobile money transactions

Training curriculum varies across mobile money deployments and across the different members of the distribution chain which need to be trained, but the key considerations in designing the curriculum are as follows:

- **Expect four to six hours for training sessions** A thorough agent training will typically last around six hours for a new deployment. As the deployment matures, trainees are more aware of the service and trainers are more experienced in delivering training, this may reduce to four hours. Beyond the length of the curriculum itself, the duration of the training will also depend on (a) the novelty of mobile money in this particular market; (b) the literacy and numeracy level of the trainees; (c) the complexity of the service, internal processes, compliance procedures, etc. Adequate time should be allocated to the handset demos and trainee practice transactions.

- **The resources and equipment for the training must include handsets** PowerPoint, flipchart, fliers, brochures, manuals, video presentations, etc. can all be useful resources in delivering effective training. But having handsets available for demos is essential. Additionally it is advisable for trainees to have access to dummy handsets or be able to use their own handsets on dummy accounts to practice transactions during the training.

- **Low agent to trainer ratio is necessary for effective training** As with any classroom like environment, there is a limit to how many individuals can be trained effectively at once. This is particularly of importance with mobile money because the handset demonstrations and practice on dummy handsets is quite important and requires low trainer-to-trainee ratio. A ratio to target would be one trainer to approximately 25 agents.

- **Training should cover how to make money on mobile money** Agents should leave a training not only knowing how to perform mobile money transactions but also how to earn from mobile money. Calculations should be shown on how many transactions need to be done each month to generate healthy commissions and examples should be shown of how to work the float frequently to increase return on capital.

- **Training should conclude with meaningful assessment** Whatever the format of the final assessment, it is recommended that the exam be pass or fail. Trainees which do not pass should be required to return for another training session. It is also important to ensure the person marking the exam does not have incentives to ensure agents pass.

See Annex 2 for a sample Agent Training curriculum.

ANNEX 1: KPIs for Head of Training

Potential frauds in mobile money		
Objectives/Deliverables	Activities to meet the objectives	Measurement Criteria
Ensure Mobile Money Team (Internal & External Customers) are adequately trained and updated on new info	■ Develop training process for the mobile Money team (agents, staff, corporate, etc.) ■ Clear communication to agents and mobile money team on training calendar	■ Number of agents trained vs. target (target is derived from number of agents recruited and available for training) ■ Availability of detailed and documented training process ■ Adherence to the developed training process
Identification, Set up & Monitoring of Regional Training Centers	■ Appoint regional trainers for each region ■ Manage regional trainers ■ Attend x number of regional trainings in each region per quarter	■ Number of operational training centers set up vs. target ■ Number of regional trainers per region vs. target ■ Number of regional trainings attended vs. target ■ Quarterly review of regional trainers' effectiveness
Assess Quality of Agent Training	■ Visit x number of agents per month to assess quality of service offering using a predetermined template ■ Continuous review of agent training curriculum to enrich with up-to date info ■ Certification of agents	■ Accuracy of agent training curriculum and availability of up-to-date versions ■ Relevance of agent training material ■ Number of agents certified vs. target
Undertake Training Needs Analysis	■ Evaluate current training gaps within the agent network and suggest improvements ■ Evaluate training gaps within the mobile money team (internal staff) and recommend appropriate actions ■ Review training needs based on business and technology changes ■ Incorporate feedback from sales team and regional trainers on areas training improvement	■ Accuracy of training needs identified ■ Alignment of training with business and technology changes ■ Submission of bi-annual training needs analysis report
Reporting & Administration	■ Monthly/weekly reports on trainings undertaken ■ Monthly/weekly trade visit reports ■ Prepare training plans in advance ■ Evaluate/Assess trainees on completion of training ■ Facilitate training in all the regions	■ Accuracy of reports (up to 100%) ■ Number of reports sent monthly ■ Timeliness of reports ■ Availability of at least one month training plans ■ Average percentage pass mark attained by agents

ANNEX 2: Training Curriculum

Following is an overview of the elements for a mobile money agent training, outlined for agents, both business owners and handlers. For training Agent Network Management Teams, Master Agents, aggregators, distributors, etc., additional elements may need to be included. Education levels, literacy and numeracy vary across each group of trainees; curriculum, training materials and training format needs to be adjusted accordingly.

1) **What is mobile money?** This is especially important for new launches or markets where mobile money is new

2) **How to make money on mobile money**
   The business case needs to be made for the business of mobile money

   ■ What is a mobile money agent? What are the roles & responsibilities of an agent?

   ■ Why become a mobile money agent? Benefits of becoming an agent

   ■ Agent commissions and opportunities for revenue – show calculations how agents can develop mobile money into a strong revenue stream, especially with balancing product mix

3) **The mobile money ecosystem** Outlining actors (agents, aggregators, super agents, master agents, etc.) and their roles in delivering mobile money

4) **How mobile money works** Step by step guide on how mobile money works for agents, including step by step screen shots.

   ■ Agent interface - This session should include practical demos, either through a training platform with multiple handsets where agents can practice, through dummy accounts or agents are given their SIMsv/tills so they can practice transactions.

     ■ Introducing agent menu/interface + customer menu/interface

     ■ Agent registration - steps for registering till, pin creation, changing pin, etc.

     ■ Float management

   ■ Customer registration for Mobile Account/ e-wallet services only
   ■ Cash-in
   ■ Cash-out for registered users
   ■ Cash-out for non-registered users
   ■ Processing bill pay
   ■ Balance check
   ■ Call helpline
   ■ Customer interface - Agents should be familiar not just with their agent menu but also the customer interface and how it works for the customers. Training on the customer interface would again include screen shots, practical demos on the handset and agent practice on handsets.

     ■ Customer registration, if relevant
     ■ Cash-in
     ■ Cash-out for registered users
     ■ Cash-out for non-registered users
     ■ Processing bill pay
     ■ Balance check
     ■ Buying airtime
     ■ Change pin
     ■ Calling helpline

   ■ Compare & contrast agent account vs. customer account

5) **Security for mobile money**
   ■ Agent PIN and importance of keeping it confidential
   ■ Consumer protection – customers must be taught to maintain their own PIN and not share with anyone else
   ■ Filling up log book as required
   ■ Process and recourse for transactions sent to wrong numbers
   ■ Protection against fraudsters
   ■ ID verification for customer transactions

6) **Customer service**
   - Importance of customer education when registering customers
   - Sales strategies to register new customers
   - Customer service support routes available to the customer for resolving mobile money issues

7) **Agent obligations**
   - Branding & merchandising
   - Penalties for failure to comply (grave irregularities)
   - T&C from MNO/Service provider
   - Service provider support
   - On-going training availability
   - Monitoring
   - Periodic evaluations

8) **Liquidity management**
   - What is liquidity/float management
   - Components of Liquidity Management
     - Upfront capital
     - Float planning
     - Rebalancing of float
     - Review of float levels
     - KPIs for agents
     - Float monitoring (and monitoring tools)

9) **KYC/AML/CFT**
   - What is KYC and service provider policy on KYC
   - What is AML/CFT and service provider policy AML/CFT
   - Money laundering risks for financial service (mobile money)
   - What agents can do to prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorism

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