

# Celtel Uganda changes brand name to Zain

 By [Walter Wafula](#)

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It's not a secret anymore. In a matter of hours, Zain will officially become the new brand name of pan-Africa telecommunication company Celtel International, as its parent company, Zain Group, seeks to fortify its African market and give it a global face. Zain is an Arabic word for beautiful, good and wonderful.

The little anticipated change, has until today been closely guarded by the company's officials as a big secret that will be unveiled at an extraordinary show that will take place tomorrow night, 1 August in Kampala at the Lugogo Cricket Oval.

During the last thirty days, the red and yellow Celtel brand has slowly succumbed to its death while the Zain name has quietly emerged in hot pink, black and green. Celtel has been flushing its new name on small advertisement boards pinned on retail shops, Celtel airtime distribution outlets, as well as its double cabin pick-ups with a hot pink colour and the thick black name, Zain, on their new logo. The company also tested its new name on the display screens of its customers' cell phones on Wednesday.

Zain officials in Kampala as well as ZK Advertising and Webershandwick, its official PR company in London and Kampala, remained silent on the ceremony. However, trails of the secret have been widespread since early July. What is very obvious is that Celtel Uganda will publicly embrace the name Zain at the show featuring famous US-based Haitian musician and producer Wyclef Jean and DJ Benny D.

Brian Mukisa, a marketing and branding expert in Kampala commented that the re-branding "will give the company a new feel and look which people always want to associate with."

He also warned that re-branding is a very costly exercise that will require Zain to invest a lot in marketing and communicating the brand. "They need to pull down old bill boards, and re-brand selling points with the new brand. It is a very costly and painful venture and it takes time but a multinational like Zain will easily overcome these challenges," he added.

Uganda will be the second African country to embrace the Zain brand after Sudan while others like Kenya, Zambia, and Tanzania will follow in the near future. In the Middle East the name is well known in Kuwait - where Zain's parent company, Mobile Telecommunication Company (MTC) was founded - as well as Iraq, Jordan, and Bahrain, according to the group's website. The company currently operates in 14 African countries.

ABOUT WALTER WAFULA

Walter Wafula is a seasoned journalist who has reported for the *Daily Monitor* newspaper in Kampala-Uganda. He is also a contributor on Bizcommunity.com website. Email Walter at wafwalt@yahoo.com and connect on LinkedIn.

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