

VimpelCom Picks New CEO

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Third-largest mobile operator VimpelCom has appointed a former TNK-BP executive to run its Russian business, the company said Wednesday.

Mikhail Slobodin, previously executive vice president of strategy and new business development at energy company TNK-BP, will head the phone company's business in Russia, VimpelCom said in a press release. TNK-BP was bought by Russia's top oil producer Rosneft earlier this year.

Slobodin is replacing Anton Kudryashov, who has run VimpelCom's Russia division since the beginning of 2012. Kudryashov is moving to VimpelCom's executive board to run business development from the company's head office in Amsterdam. He will also be responsible for mergers and acquisitions.

VimpelCom has assets in Italy and various emerging markets, but its largest market is Russia, where it has lagged behind rivals New York-listed MTS and MegaFon.

"The replacement of the CEO may be followed by a further management reshuffle in Russia as well as strategy revision," Gazprombank analyst Sergei Vasin said in a research note.

"The attempt to boost efficiency by changing the management may encourage investors somewhat," Vasin wrote. "However, gauging the effect will only be possible when the new management's intentions become clear."

VimpelCom also recently hired the former finance chief of the biggest U.S. mobile provider, Verizon Wireless, as it moved its shares to U.S. technology market Nasdaq after nearly two decades trading on rival NYSE Euronext.

VimpelCom was not immediately available for further comment.

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