

*“Life in Axiata is a continuous transformational journey, never arriving.”*

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Having been on the “go” with my previous roles in three leading multinational companies and having set up and run my own company as an entrepreneur, I anticipated the role of a Celcom Board member to be somewhat dull and bureaucratic, saddled with long meetings.

Much to my pleasant surprise, it was very different – intense, engaging, much like my multinational days – and I soon realised that, under the leadership of Tan Sri Jamal, it was led and run like a multinational organisation.

In my three years, I have been involved in a total overhaul of the organisation, transforming the business of Celcom to raise it to second position from third in the market in just one-and-a-half years. A transformational journey that saw impact at all levels within the organisation, as well as with its dealers and partners.

I saw the management evolve from a defensive culture to a proactive one, from a “we know what we are doing” to “let’s learn from others”, from a “me” to a “we” culture, from a vertical culture to a horizontal culture beginning and ending with the customer. The team collectively became open, welcoming new ideas, insights, views. This became very enlightening to me, having experienced this and seen this many times in my career. It is this organisation’s openness that enables it to assess reality, reflect, conduct dialogues and explore options to create impact at that scale.

As a result, throughout Axiata, I now observe the close collaboration between the management and the Board and between the organisation and its partners and stakeholders. Transformation in Axiata is not a time-based programme, it is the way of life, and this culture drives Axiata to keep leaping on to the next levels.

There’s never been a moment of feeling that we have achieved, therefore we can take it easy. On the contrary, the momentum to propel forward is as strong as ever, enhancing the portfolio, building our value proposition, building talent, building organisational capabilities for digital, developing innovative products, enhancing old partnerships, building new ones, institutionalising execution excellence.

I have also seen how people can make a difference. Just having the right people in the respective roles change happens quicker, goals are achieved faster. And this constant shift of people keeps going, never staying stagnant. We are always challenging the status quo, constantly utilising our brain matter on how to be better, how to inspire, how to turn information and knowledge into insight and how to be the best.

As the quote goes “Life is a journey, not a destination.” Life in Axiata is a continuous transformational journey, never arriving. It is not an easy feat to turn around and transform a sizeable organisation, as it requires great people and great leadership teams. Kudos to everyone in Axiata and to the man at the helm of it all, Tan Sri Jamal. As for me, I am proud to be a part of this team.

