

“I feel privileged and thankful that I could be part of an amazing journey of new experiences, learnings, challenges and successes in creating a Regional Champion and a New Generation.”

Michael Kuehner

Board Member, Robi, 2014 – Present
CEO, Celcom, 2016 – 2018
Served in various roles in Axiata, 2013 – 2016
MD/CEO, Robi, 2009 – 2013

Ten years ago when I was in my comfort zone - after a successful 30-year career in Siemens and Nokia Siemens Networks - I was tempted with an Axiata CEO position in Bangladesh by an executive search agent. Exploring new territory, taking on new challenges and I was suddenly eager to become part of a team to build a regional champion.

Over the last decade, in different countries and roles, it has been an exciting journey. Turning around Bangladesh with a great team, including a total rebrand from Aktel to Robi, was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. With great talent in Bangladesh and the help of the Axiata universe, as well as a good amount of research, courage and planning, in no time we managed to become a really popular brand. It was also an opportunity to tap practices, processes and tools that worked well in other Axiata companies; this culture of cooperation and exchange has become one of Axiata’s core strengths.

Being part of the team creating edotco was another amazing chapter. Although the initial processes were unwieldy between Axiata’s subsidiaries and edotco, in the end it was about operational excellence. It was impressive to note how the razor-sharp management focus created exceptional performance and company values, in Axiata’s inimitable dynamic and agile manner.

A more recent fundamental reformation was Celcom’s digital transformation journey. As a software engineer for mainframe computers at the beginning of my career, I worked with machines that had a fraction of a smartphone’s specifications but were at least 1,000 times larger in size. Over the years I experienced the first Internet revolution, the mobile revolution and, finally, the digital revolution.

Although more opportunities were created in shorter time frames, these innovations came with their own challenges such as cyber security. I will always remember our first major cyber attack, and managing it successfully from all angles was challenging. A couple of sleepless and thrilling nights later, the team was able to defend against the attack successfully.

I feel privileged to be a part of this amazing journey of new experiences, learnings, challenges and successes.

