

MEMORIES

The Way We Were 🎵

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Axiata
Advancing Asia



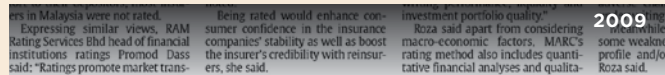
2008
First TMI Extraordinary General Meeting in Kuala Lumpur



2018
Tan Sri Datuk Wira Azman Hj Mokhtar,
Tan Sri Jamaludin Ibrahim and
Tan Sri Ghazzali Sheikh Abdul Khalid
at the Axiata 10th Anniversary Dinner celebration



2006
Bollywood themed gala dinner at the
Axiata Staff Retreat in Penang



TMI unveils new name but limits itself to Asia

KUALA LUMPUR: TM International Bhd, which has launched new name Axiata Group Bhd with a tagline *Advancing Asia*, ironically announced that it is limiting its expansion within Asia.

President and group chief executive officer Datuk Seri Jamaludin Ibrahim said this was its strength as it knew the region well.

"We don't want to pretend that we know the countries outside Asia. One of the decisions we made after the de-merger is that we are going to be focused," he said after the launch of the new name and logo yesterday.

The company has operations in 10 Asian countries with a total population of 1.5 billion but it has only 90 million subscribers in these markets.

Jamaludin said given the current economic situation, Axiata was in the process of reducing its capital expenditure further from the current RM4.5bil.

The figure stood at RM5.4bil pre-



Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar (left) and Datuk Seri Jamaludin Ibrahim with the company's new name and logo

viously. "We're doing exactly that and we know that we won't go beyond RM4.5bil," he said.

that we can replicate.

One of the items we have identified is the roll-out costs. So if we can come out with a more efficient way

"The operating companies are looking at reducing the opex. At the

2009 ...
meanwhile
some weakne
profile and/o
Roza said.

Axiata is a
making it

"We have a help benchmark the best in the

side the regi
where we sta
not say it all,
point," Jamal

He said Axiata will launch 3G services in 2008, and Cambodia will be the first market.

On acquisition, the company will approach with a line yet.

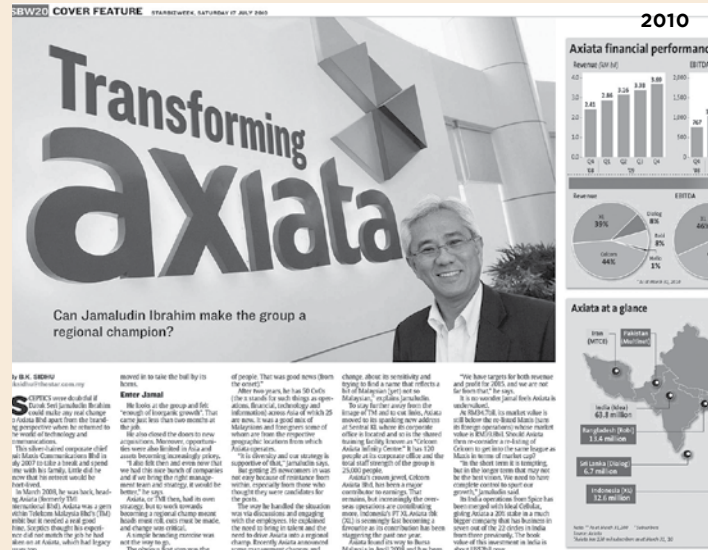
Meanwhile, a new identity as a key regional telecommunications

The expected increase of RPI

total group allocation budget amount is negative.



2013
Axiata staff retreat in Krabi



Can Jamaludin Ibrahim make the group a regional champion?

Connecting People. Developing Talent. Expanding Footprint. Championing Digital Innovation.



2018
Axiata launches its refreshed workspace in Kuala Lumpur



2018
L - R: Tan Sri Jamaludin Ibrahim, David Lau,
Dato' Izzaddin Idris and Tengku Dato' Sri Azmil
Zahrudin attending a Board Meeting
in Kuala Lumpur



2017
Axiata Sports and Recreation Club organises
internal badminton tournament



2019
Axiata staff retreat in Penang

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Axiata Through the Decade



2014

Axiata staff retreat in Langkawi



2015

Employees in Kelantan to provide flood relief

In a decade Axiata Group Berhad has evolved from a Regional Champion towards becoming the New Generation Digital Company. Its leaders chart the path to blazing a trail in the region, enabling connectivity and empowering citizens

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Events, highlights and turning points in building a regional powerhouse

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▶ Dr Farid Mohamed Sani	▶ Dato' Sri Mohammed Shazalli Ramly
▶ Rema Devi Nair	▶ Reza Abdul Rahim
▶ Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar	▶ Dato' Yusof Annuar Yaacob
▶ Dr Hans Wijayasuriya	▶ Darke M Sani
▶ Datuk Ganen Sarvananthan	▶ Datuk Azzat Kamaludin



PG 2
Insights

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PG 6
Gallery 1:
Curating a Company



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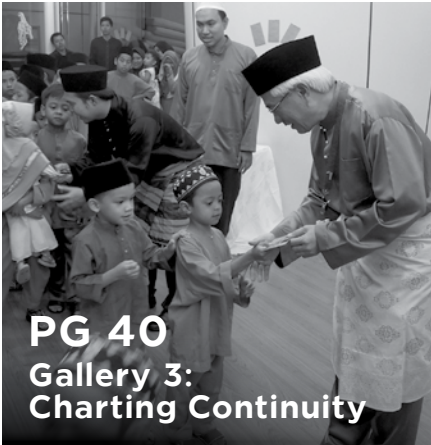
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| ▶ Suresh Sidhu | ▶ Datuk Abdul Rahman Ahmad |
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| ▶ Mohamad Idham Nawawi | ▶ Michael Kuehner |
| ▶ Thayaparan S Sangarapillai | ▶ Khatijah Begom Shah Mohamed |
| ▶ Datin Sri Badrunnisa Mohd Yasin Khan | ▶ Mohd Khairil Abdullah |
| ▶ Dato Dr Nik Ramlah Nik Mahmood | ▶ Asri Hassan Sabri |
| | ▶ Dato' Izzaddin Idris |



Insights

Creating Champions

It's not only with nostalgia that we should look back at the history of Axiata, says Tan Sri Jamaludin Ibrahim. The founding and current President & Group CEO admits, while it is important to acknowledge the company's history, greater value is placed on the application of the learning gained from the experiences of past leaders and colleagues.

"Experiences shape who we become. Who we are today is based on who we were then, artfully captured in our memories," asserts Tan Sri Jamaludin Ibrahim unreservedly. He is often inspired by Barbra Streisand's hit *The Way We Were*, appreciating the beauty of looking back and gaining from the lessons learned to move forward.

Similarly, when experiences collectively combine in a company like Axiata Group Berhad, its aims become achievable. A collaborative recollection, as captured in this book "Memories", encapsulates the last decade's enterprising vision, considerable accomplishments and significant triumphs, charting the resolute journey of drive, determination and dedication.

Axiata was officially formed in 2009 to build a vision framed from an inspirational, progressive Malaysian perspective. The journey to become a regional telecommunications champion began when its precursors, Telekom Malaysia International (TMI) and Celcom, were demerged from Telekom Malaysia in 2008.

This is a necessary exercise as part of the Government-Linked Company (GLC) Transformation Programme mandate to transform major Malaysian companies into regional champions by 2015.

Under the purview of Khazanah Nasional Berhad, the new Axiata began to lay the foundation for a next-generation GLC. An opportunity to build, together with emerging markets, a multi-country, multi-cultural, multinational company. Right from the outset, the intent was to foster expertise, knowledge and dynamism.

Axiata extended a carefully calibrated footprint, increasing its customer base. By 2011, says Chairman Tan Sri Ghazzali Sheikh Abdul Khalid, "We embarked on Axiata 2.0, to build upon our new yet solid company foundation to catapult ourselves into the top echelon of the region's high-performing companies."

Axiata's founding Chairman, Tan Sri Datuk Wira Azman Hj Mokhtar, is well aware of the limits of hypercompetition in mobile services, a sector known for being at the leading edge of technology and digitalisation: "TMI and Celcom, before the demerger, were constrained by the history of their location within Telekom. They needed to be unleashed to thrive and we needed a replay," he affirms. "In this regard, Axiata was an opportunity to do both: to become a regional champion and a new generation digital company, a model for other GLCs."

**TAN SRI
GHAZZALI
SHEIKH
ABDUL
KHALID**

CHAIRMAN

“

Malaysia is a small country by international standards, and sometimes people mistakenly think that, coming from a small country, we should not dream big or think in global terms to be the best in the world.

”

I would like this book to inspire Malaysians, to show them the best, standing shoulder to shoulder, that we can stand tall with the best in the world. In building a company that can compete and succeed internationally, that is the story, the inspiration and the legacy that I hope Axiata can impart to aspiring young Malaysians. To nurture and plant the seed in our young people's minds that *Malaysia Boleh* is not an empty slogan.

The inspired vision connected with Tan Sri Jamaludin's commitment to steer Axiata by spearheading the Group on the proffered platform and developing talent to become leaders on a global scale of competence. "By nature, I love to see people grow. So, instead of leaving it to chance, I felt this nation's future CEOs should be nurtured," he reveals. Another incentive that compelled him was the challenge to transform a local company into a multinational entity, to compete worldwide with the industry's best.

Advancing lives across Asia and connecting people established an Axiata culture that resonates with every employee. A key business imperative, till today, is drawing on and embracing the diversity within the organisation. This ensures competitive advantage, encourages innovative thinking and harnesses varied perspectives in finding new ways of working as a modern, agile and digital (M.A.D) community of individuals.

Axiata's sustainability agenda has also been guided by its purpose of Advancing Asia. This involves focussing on improving quality of life for customers and communities through digital connectivity services and being a critical enabler in the growth of emerging regional digital economies.

The distinctive views expressed in Memories by individuals who have significantly contributed to Axiata is testimony to this realised vision. The heartening melange of voices from across Axiata's landscape tells compelling stories, with the personal and the professional converging in a captivating tapestry of tales woven with experiences, enthusiasm and honesty.

Set against the backdrop of an increasingly disruptive industry, the narratives in this book reveal inspiring rewards. The people of Axiata are empowered and committed, developing their capabilities and deepening their resolve. As these contributors to the Axiata journey attest, a broader mission to be part of a larger, significant national agenda motivates each individual's experience. This is what enables them to take advantage of thinking differently and exploring novel ideas.

Having played a role early on in the formation of Axiata, Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar, who had helmed Telekom Malaysia as Group CEO before the demerger, continues to watch with great interest. He follows the Group's progress as it lays claim to a central position in the region, "It is my hope that Axiata will continue to grow profitably and be the Malaysian flag-bearer internationally."

“

With this book, I hope people will not only look back at our past with nostalgia. It's our history and, while it's great to acknowledge how we started and have grown since then, it's more important to hold in high regard the learning we can gain from our esteemed leaders, colleagues and associates.

”

I would like the readers of this book to think about what we have done and, hopefully, be inspired in their own personal or business journeys. Our next generation, too, can learn from our achievements and mistakes and strive to do better in the future.

**TAN SRI
JAMALUDIN
IBRAHIM**

**MANAGING DIRECTOR/
PRESIDENT & GROUP CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Milestones

Building a Regional Powerhouse

» 2008

- **Demerger TM and TMI** (which includes Celcom) on 25 April 2008.
- **TMI is listed** on the Main Board of Bursa Malaysia Securities on 28 April 2008.

» 2009

- **Unveiling Axiata as the new company name, brand and logo** on 31 Mar 2009.
- Operating Companies under the Group completes rebranding exercise to incorporate the new name and the new Prism logo.
- Launch of Vision to become a Regional Champion by 2015.

» 2010

- Axiata Bangladesh Limited (AxB) launches their new identity under a new name "**Robi**".

» 2014

- **XL Axiata acquires Axis Telekom** in March 2014 and becomes the second largest telco in Indonesia.
- **Launch of Axiata Digital Services (ADS)** to spearhead digital initiatives and drive Axiata's transformation into a New Generation Digital Company.
- **Launch of Axiata Digital Innovation Fund (ADIF)** with an investment of RM100 million to spur innovation and growth in Malaysia's digital ecosystem in Dec 2014.
- Axiata's market capitalisation reaches RM62 billion in Nov 2014.

» 2015

- **Axiata becomes a Regional Champion** - recognised as one of the leading telecommunications groups in Asia with a revenue of USD5 billion, serving over 275 million subscribers.

» 2016

- **Acquisition of Ncell** in Apr 2016, marking Axiata's entry into a fast-growing market and the largest telco in Nepal.
- **Robi and Bharti Airtel consolidates** in Nov 2016, strengthening its position as second largest telco in Bangladesh.
- edotco becomes the 13th largest Independent Tower Company in the world.



» 2011

- Unveiling “**Prisms by Axiata**”, an 83-foot steel sculpture by renowned Malaysian sculptor Rahman Abdullah, adding a new landmark to KL Sentral’s skyline.

» 2012

- Launch of **Axiata Young Talent Programme (AYTP)**, a developmental scholarship for young Malaysians with RM100 million investment commitment via the Axiata Foundation.

» 2013

- **Dialog completes acquisition of Suntel** fixed line network and becomes the largest telco in Sri Lanka.
- **Smart concludes merger with Hello** in Feb 2013 and becomes the largest telco in Cambodia.
- **Launch of edotco**, ASEAN & South Asia’s first and largest independent communications infrastructure company.

» 2017

- **Unveiling Axiata’s Triple-Core Strategy** towards becoming the New Generation Digital Company by 2022:
 - o Transforming from Mobile-Centric Telcos to Converged Digital Operators
 - o Pivot from Portfolio Company to 3 Lines of Digital Businesses
 - o Advance Tower Business from Regional to Global Champion
- **Launch of Axiata Arena**, the first corporate sponsored stadium in Malaysia.
- **Innovation Network Corporation of Japan (INCJ), Khazanah Nasional & the Retirement Fund (Incorporated) (KWAP)** invests USD700 million in edotco.

» 2018

- Introduction of **Axiata’s “Shifting Gear” strategy** towards Profitable Growth & Cash Generation.
- **Sumitomo invests USD20 million in Axiata Digital Advertising (ADA)** in July 2018.
- Axiata celebrates its 10th Anniversary.

» 2019

- Combined valuation of **Axiata’s Digital Portfolio exceeds USD640 million**.
- **Mitsui invests USD20 million in Axiata Digital** in May 2019.

» 2020

- Signed **First-Of-Its Kind Islamic Sustainability-Linked** Financing of USD800 Million.
- Strategic investment and collaboration in **Digital Fintech Services with Great Eastern**.
- Collaboration with Telefónica on **Digital Services for the Enterprise Segment**.



Curating a Company

In the Early Years

TMI as Axiata was known prior to the demerger, had begun a global footprint investing in technology and new ideas from countries as far away as Malawi, Guinea and South Africa. The sought-after geographical expansion was eventually brought closer to home, focussing on developing economies in fast-growing ASEAN and South Asia.

In an extremely dynamic environment Axiata began operations with a clear undertaking, determined to do things differently and break well-worn traditional moulds in corporate culture. The next phase of its evolution was to become more embedded in the business, integrating their cluster of assets and moving forward as one rebranded organisation.

While there was much excitement and anticipation of the future, the existing footprint had to be constantly reviewed and businesses refined. “What brought everybody together, I think, had to do with all of us recognising it was vital for us to demonstrate that this new entity had to show success and show it quickly,” recalled Dato’ Yusof Annuar Yaacob, who was then CEO of TMI.

In the early days the frenetic pace was equalled only by the thrill of ascertaining market entry opportunities, assessing options and building a worthy portfolio. There was a need to pay due respect to the cultures and countries in which it operated, yet at the same time imprint its own identity.

In the process of creating a modern-day template for success in a fast-evolving industry, the Group was motivated by a broader agenda beyond financial returns. Axiata’s vision and mission never wavered from “Advancing Asia”. Operational challenges in a competitive market were the new normal in an industry constantly disrupted, whether by technology or market movements. Key decisions demanded agility and nimbleness, yet also courage in the development of capacity. With experience and expertise came confidence.

In this early period, Rema Devi Nair, Head, Group Regulatory Affairs Axiata (2008 – 2014), embarked on a period of deep and intense understanding of the mobile business, both commercially and technically. “The adventure turned to managing risks associated with existing investments, building a pool of skills in regulatory management and institutionalising best practices.”

The Axiata story according to Dr Hans Wijayasuriya, Corporate EVP & Regional CEO, South Asia Axiata, is one of positivism, innovation and disruption built on the foundation of deep humanity which respects people and diversity. He added, “There is no ‘one right way’ to build a multi-national champion. I believe there is an ‘Asian way’ which is founded on human-centred Asian value systems, and on this landscape this Malaysian model stands tall among its peers.”

Can it be that it was all so simple then?



2008

L - R: Tan Sri Radzi Mansor, Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar, Tan Sri Jamaludin Ibrahim and Tan Sri Datuk Wira Azman Hj Mokhtar at the Listing of TMI on Bursa Malaysia

“But Axiata proved again and again, in a difficult industry, that we were professional, we had integrity and we had the trust of the people that we served.”

Tan Sri Datuk Wira Azman Hj Mokhtar

Founding Chairman
Axiata, 2008 – 2018



The big idea behind setting up Axiata was that we wanted to create a regional champion, a next generation GLC.

This initiative was part of a greater design, the GLC Transformation Programme that was officially launched in 2005 to transform GLCs into high-performing entities, targeting several companies to emerge as regional champions by 2015.

The programme was born out of a need to restructure and transform major strategic companies that were institutive and important to the nation, but ailing. It was part of a bigger national agenda after the Asian Financial Crisis to ensure that the GLCs delivered high performance and growth in key industries such as airlines, infrastructure and telecommunications. In 2004 I was brought in to spearhead the work at Khazanah to drive the transformation of these companies.

First, we needed to make sure that, once these companies began to heal and were getting stronger, how we could make them even stronger. The only way was for them to be competitive, subjected to competition not only in Malaysia – where, if anything, they could be accused of being, by the nature of their industry, trapped in a monopoly. Or they could go regional and, by doing so, no longer be dismissed as just a *jaguh kampung*. The globalisation trend meant that borders and barriers were basically being taken down. If we didn't go out to compete, we'd be left defending our positions instead. We thought that, since the world was coming to us, we might as well go out and take on the world.

To become a regional champion needed certain conditions. Everything had to be multi-cultural and multi-national. TMI and Celcom, before the demerger, were constrained by the history of their location within Telekom. They needed to be unleashed to thrive. We needed a replay and hence the demerger.

My colleagues and I at Khazanah had the idea to demerge at least two years before it transpired. We could not demerge until we felt that, for example, a company like Celcom was strong enough to sustain itself and survive the demerger. In other words, the operational restructuring must be in place before you can actually drive what was essentially a financial play to demerge into two companies.

There was a lot of work put into the corporate restructuring of TM. Axiata was born out of that. We also spent almost two to three years developing TM's Performance Improvement Programme (PIP). We also had to ensure that Axiata didn't embark on an unnecessary spree of acquisitions unless there was a fit with what they had in hand. More importantly, Celcom and TMI had to ensure that its subsidiaries which later became the core of Axiata had to improve its operational efficiency.

In creating a regional champion, we of course considered many factors.



At that time, we saw it as a great but receding window of growth in the mobile industry. In the first five years we saw growth in Indonesia, India and Bangladesh, the world's largest and fastest growing markets. After that, as per the trend everywhere growth in the mobile industry flatlined. So, we were able to take advantage of that period and in practically all markets that we entered, we were able to gain market share, market position. A testimony of the great work the Axiata team was beginning to do.

In putting Axiata together, it was critical to also ensure we had the right leadership in management and Board. It took us six months to persuade Tan Sri Jamal to come on board. He is key but I didn't know him that well, so I must credit Dato' Sri Mohamed Nazir Tun Abdul Razak for the introduction. I told him the idea when he was on break after retiring from Maxis Communications Berhad in 2007. He was big on talent development and I thought this was the button I should push. I said, "Here's an opportunity to actually build a regional champion. You have done fantastically well in one country, and now I'm offering you the chance to do fantastically in 10 countries and to really develop talent on that footprint." One of his conditions, very particularly, was that I chair the company!

I did, and remained Chairman until 2018. Being the Chairman of a big company like Axiata is a full-time job and I did it with great pleasure and great honour. I didn't chair any other listed company incidentally, given all the other responsibilities that I had.

Tan Sri Jamal was key and so was the Board we put together. Here we had the opportunity of a clean slate and basically approached the best Board we could think of, to best fit Axiata's new aspirations. One of our founding Board members was Juan Villalonga Navarro. We managed to convince him, and his experience as the former Chairman and CEO who grew Telefonica Group from USD10 billion to USD100 billion in four years was very relevant.

When we first started, managing relations and political variability in many countries were key. We were chasing growth in developing countries like India and Bangladesh. Inevitably, in those developing markets their legal, financial and political systems needed navigation and the choice of someone like the current Chairman Tan Sri Ghazz, as a former senior diplomat proved very apt.

Then there was Datuk Azzat, a very experienced lawyer who still handles many cases; David Lau, who was incredibly good with financial control. Pak Gita Irawan Wirjawan from Indonesia was just as significant, and was appointed as Indonesia's Minister of Trade in October 2011. Whoever we brought in from Indonesia left soon after because they became so good and were appointed ministers in their country. We also had Ann Almeida, a Penangite originally, who was Group Managing Director, Human Resources, HSBC, one of the world's largest banks. Along with Dato' Yusof, Ken Shen and Suriyani as the Company Secretary and others, this was the founding Board. Jamal also had a cascading effect, he was able to then hire great people under him in management.

If you have the right idea, the right thoughtfulness in planning, and then manage to get the right CEO and a very sound Board then you have a good chance. To me, those were some of the key attributes of a successful company.

In pioneering and steering the evolution of a homegrown regional champion, the challenges were numerous. Among them were the usual cost competition pressures, multiple regulatory issues and the advance of the digital revolution. But Axiata proved again and again, in a difficult industry, that we were professional, we had integrity and we had the hard-earned trust of our stakeholders. We also proved that we were disciplined and discerning in our M&A activity. That was the Axiata way of doing business, both in operations and deals, and being able to attract very strong cross-cultural teams.

I was honoured and privileged to have been there. I had made a promise so I continued, probably dedicating 10% of my time to Axiata. When you consider there were 99 or so other very large companies demanding my attention under Khazanah, I justified this as an R&D lab for Khazanah, trying to break new ground with new styles and new geography. In that sense, Axiata did literally break new ground and became a homegrown regional champion we can all be proud of. Alhamdulillah. May this be a base for its next 10 years and beyond!

“It was like a family, despite the fights we fought to stay together.”

Dr Farid Mohamed Sani

Founding Board Member
Axiata, 2008 - 2011



As a founding Board Member, when I look back now I am proud of what we managed to achieve after the demerger. The creation of Axiata. Everything else after that was the outcome of that execution. Of course there were a few things that didn't happen as we planned originally. But they turned out better in the end and, knowing what I now know, I would have still recommended the same.

What I remember most of my three years there is how challenging it was for Axiata to be in possession of a united front, as it came with so many holding entities. We managed to bring them all together, housing them under one roof. It was like a family, despite the fights we fought to stay together. At the end of the day when push came to shove, with the mounting challenges, we argued and fought to overcome the obstacles. Not necessarily in the most systematic way, but that was par for the course.

Part of my personal learning was our ability to accept people from different cultures and understand them. That did not come from formal meetings in the boardroom - by that time a decision would have already been made. It was keen personal engagement beforehand to get to know and understand one another that sealed the deals.

It takes a lot to build company culture. Right from the beginning, we had a very people-centric organisation. Back then we were trying to make Axiata a leadership engine, and everyone contributed to its creation. We value talent, wherever they are from and whatever their backgrounds may be. Even today, Axiata has many staff from countries like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh based in Kuala Lumpur.

It's hard for me to comment on Axiata after 2011. However, I do think some of the occasional country challenges after that could have been handled better. I think perhaps they tried too hard in the headquarters to expand while, in certain countries, the mobile markets were facing a downturn. Having said that, we were also very aware of the challenges that were coming. Voice usage erosion and data's prominence were predicted long before their reality, and they have become real issues now.

Looking ahead, to stay the course Axiata could learn from its past to let go of egos. If you ask me, the best days of Axiata were when we set aside our egos. On our worst days, egos got in the way.

The way I see it, the future for a mobile and telecommunications company is whether it will go forward alone, or need partner companies that have a larger footprint. There are always newer ways of doing things.

“The camaraderie at SLT meetings was enjoyable, especially when we all donned costumes of our alter egos (mine was Wonder Woman) and threw caution to the wind at our highly energetic annual staff retreats.”

Rema Devi Nair

Regulatory Advisor to Group CEO, edotco, 2016 – Present

Head, Group Regulatory Affairs, Axiata, 2008 – 2016

Head, Regulatory Affairs, TMI, 2003 – 2008

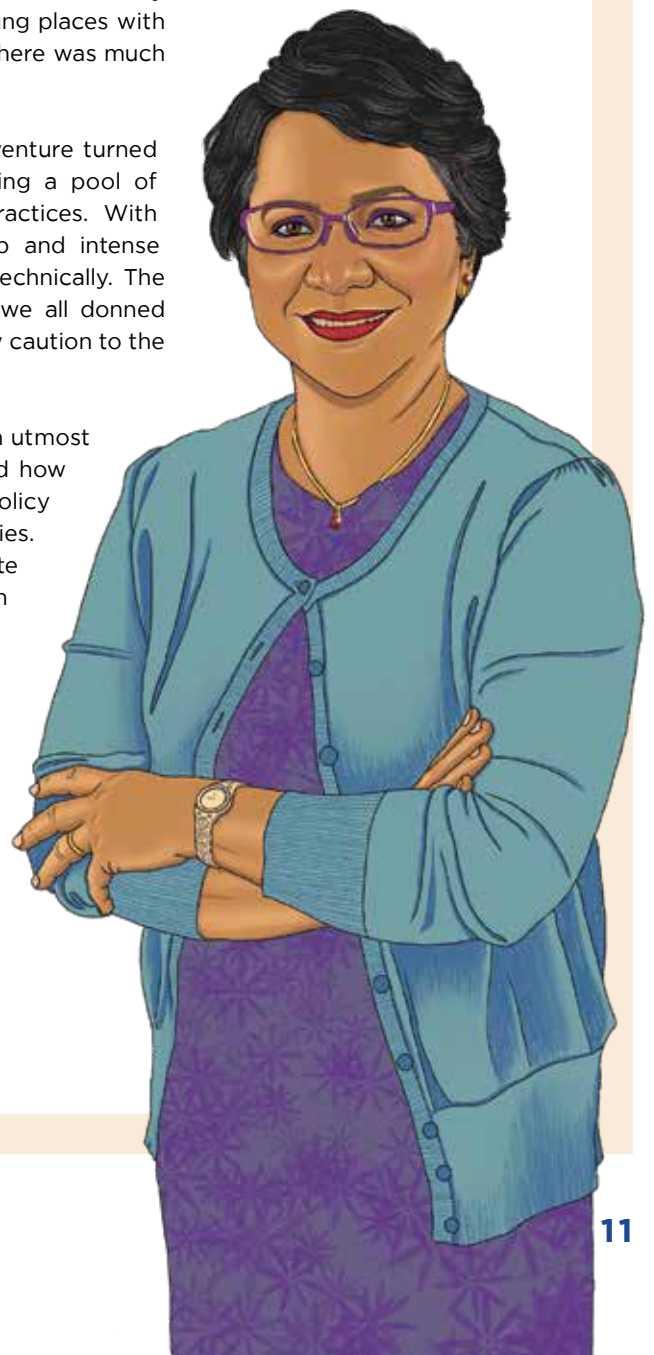
I transitioned into Axiata Group in 2008 from my earlier role as Head, Regulatory Affairs, at TMI, a role I had held since 2003. The early years were marked by a hectic pace of market entries and new ventures; highlights were entry into Indonesia, India, Pakistan and Singapore. Simultaneously, the strategy of bringing TMI's investments closer to home also meant divestment from earlier investments in South Africa, Malawi, Guinea and Ghana.

Divestment from these markets meant that conference calls across crazy time zones with Axiata's Legal Counsel and our external legal counsel became a daily norm. It also meant that we no longer needed to travel to far-flung places with multiple stop-overs like Blantyre, Lilongwe or Conakry. All in all, there was much learning in many of these transactions.

Moving on to Axiata as Head, Group Regulatory Affairs, the adventure turned to managing risks associated with existing investments, building a pool of skills in regulatory management and institutionalising best practices. With Tan Sri Jamal at the helm, I embarked on a period of deep and intense understanding of the mobile business, both commercially and technically. The camaraderie at SLT meetings was enjoyable, especially when we all donned costumes of our alter egos (mine was Wonder Woman) and threw caution to the winds at our highly energetic annual staff retreats.

Looking back at my nine-plus years at TMI/Axiata, I can say with utmost confidence that my most compelling memories revolved around how much of my learning about navigating national institutions and policy making took place while also navigating the notorious traffic of cities. Getting to meetings through the traffic snarls of Dhaka with the late Fazlur Rahman, Colombo with Dr Hans Wijayasuriya, Jakarta with Ibu Nies Purwati or Delhi with Rajat Mukherjee, also meant having highly insightful conversations that made these trips effortless.

Amid such generosity of mind and spirit, it was not uncommon for colleagues to become lifelong friends. And that has made all the difference.



“Having played a part in its early formation, I continued to watch Axiata growing into the region with great interest; as a banker when I was at Maybank, as a Minister when I was in Cabinet and as a shareholder when I was at PNB. Now, as the Chairman of the Board of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, I continue to follow Axiata’s progress with great interest.”

Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar

Group CEO
Telekom Malaysia, 2004 – 2008

Axiata will always have a special place in my heart, having played a part in its coming into being. Having completed my task of turning around the UEM Group, I returned to TM where I had served as Group Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in 2001, in a bigger capacity as Group CEO, on 1 July 2004. This was part of the larger transformation of GLCs aimed at improving their performance, governance and nation building role.

The mandate given to me was to transform TM into a regional telecommunications company, with particular emphasis on mobile communications. The experience of turning around UEM Group, and having previously been CFO of TM, made me feel relatively comfortable in taking on the TM CEO task. The mandate was clear, while the people and the business were familiar to me.

TM originated as a government department called Jabatan Telekom Malaysia that was corporatised and subsequently listed on the then Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE) in 1990. Although TM had been listed for more than 14 years then, its corporate culture was still not as competitive as one would expect of a large public-listed telecommunications company. An all-round transformation was needed. Organisationally, we streamlined management structure, brought in new talent to complement existing technical staff and strengthened the performance management system/balanced scorecard.

Culturally, we removed the traditional morning and afternoon tea breaks associated with the public sector and implemented a 5-day week with the extended working hours usually associated with the private sector. Many people thought removing tea breaks was an impossible task back then, but the staff and union officials were very receptive as they appreciated the need for cultural change and the benefits it would bring to TM and its people. We improved customer service and revamped our Kedai Telekom outlets into a more customer-centric distribution channel called TM Point, backed by better trained staff, more efficient processes, upgraded IT systems, competitive products and a more pleasant environment.

Business-wise, we expanded our mobile operations into Singapore and Indonesia, and strengthened our presence in Cambodia and Sri Lanka. The acquisition of a strategic stake in Mobile One (M1), Singapore’s third mobile operator, in 2005, was relatively straightforward as it was both earnings- and cash-accretive from day one.

The acquisition of PT Excelcommindo Pratama Indonesia (XL), the third mobile operator in Indonesia in 2004, however, was more complicated as it required significant public relations efforts to convince the previous owner - the Rajawali Group - to sell the majority stake in XL to TM, instead of to other competitors. This included arranging for a friendly soccer match between TM Football Club (TMFC) and FC Malang in Malang, Indonesia, as part of efforts to build a better understanding between TM and the Rajawali Group. These two acquisitions, together with the strengthening of TM’s existing operations in Cambodia and Sri Lanka, enabled TM to be a regional telecommunications company.

During the first 18 months of the transformation, TM made significant progress overall, with improved financial performance and higher contribution from our international operations. However, our domestic operations were not doing that well. The traditional fixed-line business was growing much more slowly than anticipated due to migration to mobile communications. At the same time, Celcom, the domestic mobile communications subsidiary of TM, despite registering higher revenue and profit, was losing market share to rivals Maxis and DiGi.

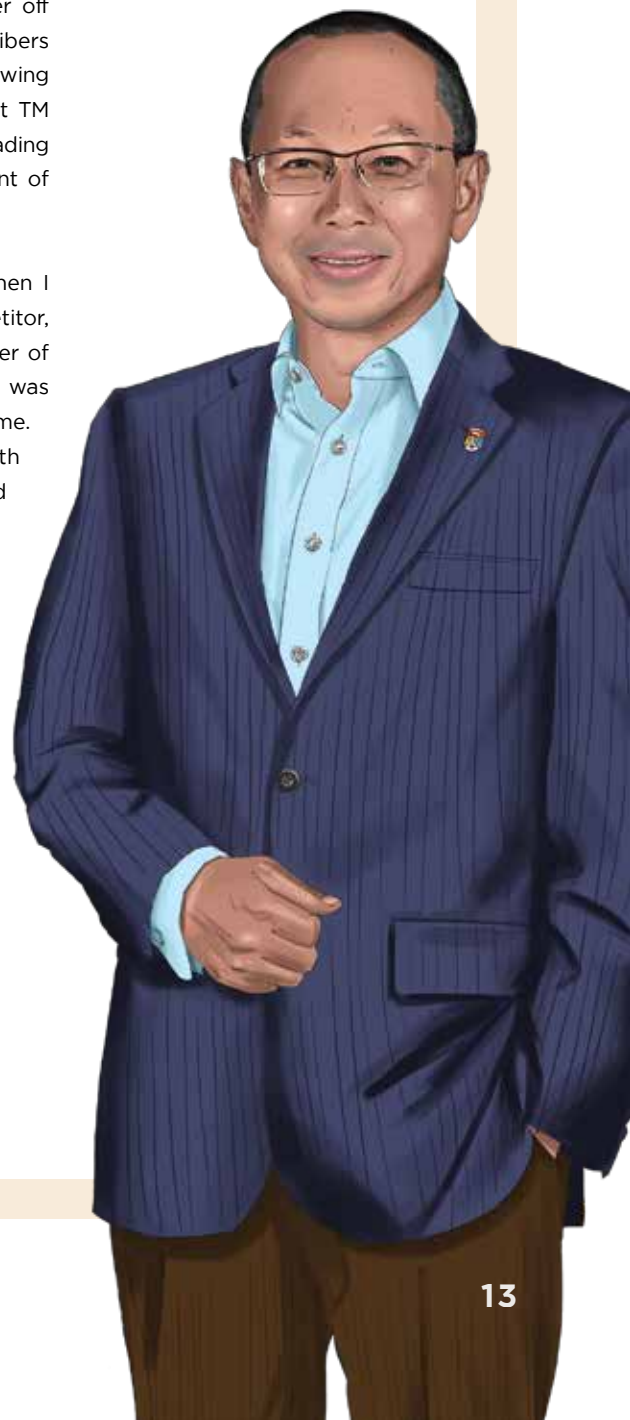
Realising this worrying trend, the TM Board and management formulated and executed a holistic performance improvement programme that enabled TM to grow its data business and Celcom to regain market

share. The fundamental improvements in customer service, distribution channels, network quality, business expansion and financial performance were reinforced by a global rebranding of TM into a competitive, private-sector-driven, regional communications company.

Having addressed the fundamentals of the business and as part of the efforts to enhance shareholder value, it was decided that the TM Group would be better off being demerged into two separate listed entities. TMI with some 40 million subscribers under Celcom and other regional mobile communications business under its wing was successfully demerged and listed on Bursa Malaysia in April 2008. That left TM re-positioned as the National High Speed Broadband (HSBB) Champion, spearheading the national HSBB deployment in Public Private Partnership with the Government of Malaysia. The demerger “unleashed” Axiata Group to grow further across Asia.

I was in the midst of planning for the TM demerger exercise in May 2007 when I received an “awkward” proposition from the then Chairman of TM’s competitor, Maxis Communications, Tan Sri Megat Zaharuddin, who was also a board member of Maybank. Ironically, Tan Sri Megat was also Chairman when Dato’ Sri Jamaluddin was CEO of Maxis. Coming from the chairman of a competitor, it was rather odd to me. Tan Sri Megat then clarified that Maybank was looking for someone with sound banking/credit experience who had run a large organisation and who had the experience to grow a company internationally into the region to succeed Tan Sri Amirsham, who was planning to retire as Maybank CEO.

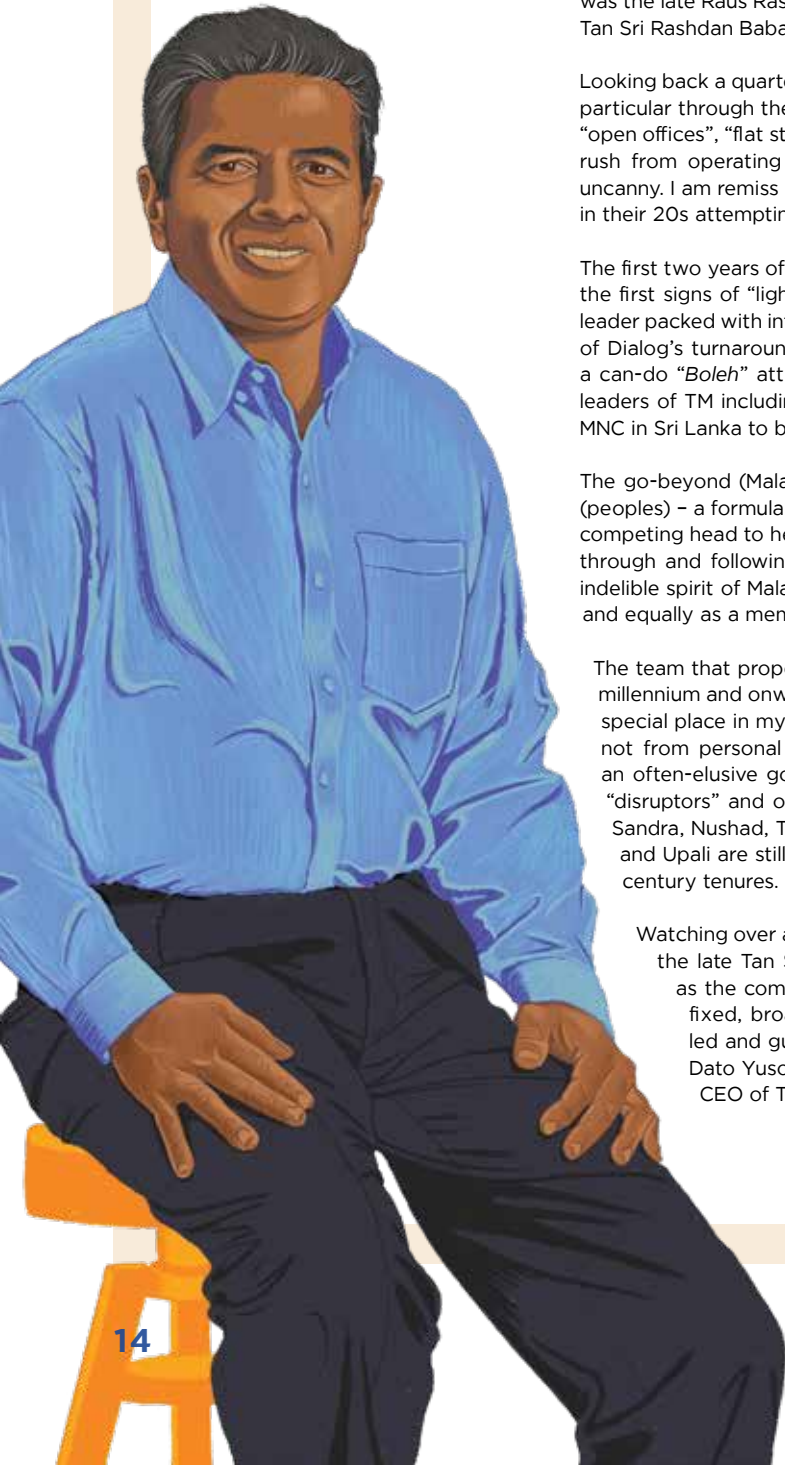
TMI was subsequently rebranded as Axiata in 2009. Having played a part in its early formation, I continued to watch Axiata growing into the region with great interest; as a banker when I was at Maybank, as a Minister when I was in Cabinet and as a shareholder when I was at PNB. Now, as Chairman of the Board of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, I continue to follow Axiata’s progress with great interest. It is my hope that Axiata will continue to grow profitably and be the Malaysian flag-bearer internationally.



“The Axiata story is unique in many ways. Central to the story is positivism, innovation and disruption on the foundation of a deep humanity which respects people and diversity.”

Dr Hans Wijayasuriya

CEO – Telecommunications Business / Group EVP, 2020 – Present
Corporate EVP & Regional CEO, South Asia, Axiata, 2016 – 2020
CEO, Dialog, 1997 – 2016
CEO, Axiata Digital, 2012 – 2014



The invite to pen a reflection on my life at Axiata poignantly coincided with the milestone of completing 25 years with the Group.

It all began around a small, round table in a derelict building in downtown Colombo. I happened to be the third employee on record of the fourth entrant to Sri Lanka's mobile sector. A joint venture between Telekom Malaysia and the Maharaja Organisation of Sri Lanka. Our CEO then was the late Raus Rashid. The Board of MTN Networks (as it was then known) was chaired by Tan Sri Rashdan Baba, the Chair of TM, and included Dato Mohd Said, the CEO of TM.

Looking back a quarter of a century to those early years from the vantage of the present – in particular through the lens of today's entrepreneurship vocabulary of “startup”, “disruption”, “open offices”, “flat structures”, “seed investors”, “risk capital” and importantly the adrenaline rush from operating at the edge of bankruptcy – the parallels and similarities are truly uncanny. I am remiss in not adding to the list a team of hungry and inexperienced individuals in their 20s attempting to cut through an incumbent dominated market.

The first two years of Dialog's journey were punctured by the usual startup pains. Then came the first signs of “light” with Dato Zaini Diman – the CEO appointed in 1996 – an inimitable leader packed with infectious enthusiasm and deep-set trust in his team. Zaini was the “pivot” of Dialog's turnaround and the company I inherited as CEO in 1997 was one charged with a can-do “Boleh” attitude. Uniquely, and stemming from the vision and foresight of senior leaders of TM including Dato Said, Nor Hisham and the late Nor Zainal, Dialog was the first MNC in Sri Lanka to be empowered with a largely localised management team.

The go-beyond (Malaysia) formula of the 1990s was unique in its respect for fellow Asians (peoples) – a formula of co-creation and mutual learning, and realisation of Asian Champions competing head to head with those from advanced nations. The war cry of “Malaysia Boleh” through and following the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 remains etched in my mind. This indelible spirit of Malaysia continues to be a source of personal inspiration – first as an Asian and equally as a member of a Malaysian corporate family.

The team that propelled Dialog from No. 4 to No. 1 in the three years leading into the new millennium and onwards to becoming Sri Lanka's first USD1 billion market cap retains a very special place in my mind (and heart). My admiration and affection for these leaders stems not from personal affinity but from their innate capability to work relentlessly towards an often-elusive goal, putting team and company before self. Some of these pioneering “disruptors” and organisation builders from amongst the likes of Razak, Mothilal, Anoja, Sandra, Nushad, Thivanka, Samsu, Omar, Rosman, Wan Zaidan, Supun, Pradeep, Shayam and Upali are still with us in the Axiata Group, and will soon clock up their own quarter-century tenures.

Watching over and guiding us with wisdom and inimitable warmth was our father figure the late Tan Sri Radzi – Dialog's Chairman for nine years spanning the IPO as well as the company's transition from a mobile market leader to a quad player across fixed, broadband and television businesses. We also had the privilege of being led and guided by acutely tenacious strategists and sharp-shooting executors in Dato Yusof, the head of International Ventures, and Tan Sri Wahid Omar the then CEO of TM.



The crystallisation of the Axiata Group in 2008 through its demerger from TM signified a visionary and precise articulation of a regional (Asian) champion under the leadership of Tan Sri Jamal. A vision which built upon the Malaysia Inc value system to establish a unique MNC formula which embraced diversity and placed at its centre the “people”, alongside integrity and performance ideals second to none. A vision which today, continues to be lived and enriched by pioneer members of the Senior Leadership Team, Datin Badrunisa, Azwan, Gim and Suryani alongside Darke, Yap, Annis, Dominic, Vivek, Anthony, Asri and Hadi who have strengthened the team over the years to follow.

I have been fortunate to have worked closely with Tan Sri Jamal over the past decade and will be repeating what I am sure will be etched in every page of this book when I say that Axiata is inseparable from his deep-set humanity – meaning that the organisation he has created along with his SLT and country CEOs and leadership teams, is one which cares for people – not only within the companies we manage, but across the communities we serve and the nation-building stories we are proud to be a part of. Aptly, Axiata’s tag line resounds – Advancing Asia. For those of us not of Malaysian origin, and our in-country teams, the opportunity to deliver transformation and advancement to the lives of our own nations and people has been rich reward.

Dialog’s second wave was spawned by the shock of a perfect storm in 2007 – an unholy mix of a heightened civil war, global oil crisis, inflation and interest rates in the mid-twenties, and a brutal price war. The two years to follow proved to be the most trying, and also the most educative, in my career. I believe the same goes for many others in the Dialog team who implemented a rebound from “hero to zero to hero again” – to use the narrative of the business media.

The learnings from this phase of our journey could fill a book of their own – but central to the rebound were the fundamentals of recognising and “owning” mistakes early and proactively, the importance of transparency and accountability of leaders, and the invaluable ingredient of shareholder trust combined with the support of the wider Axiata team. I recount with gratitude the encouragement and trust extended to us by Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar and the Axiata Board throughout these most trying of times. Pivotal to the “rebound” and the exponential trajectory to follow was the leadership of Datuk Azzat and stewardship of the Dialog Board which, as a construct, was and continues to be unique in terms of the rich diversity and wisdom of its independent directors. Moksevi Prelis (a leading banker) and Mohamed Muhsin (former CIO of the World Bank) have each contributed in excess of a decade towards Dialog’s progress.

The learnings from the downturn were not wasted and a re-shaped and invigorated Dialog never looked back. The value of refreshed leadership came to the fore in the form of Azwan, Suresh, Amali, Lucy, Anthony and Jerry, all key players in the Group Axiata Senior Leadership today. Dialog catapulted on the energy of its rebound to subsequently become the most profitable integrated telco and highest valued brand in Sri Lanka.

Commencing in 2014 Tan Sri’s Jamal’s passion for leadership talent development saw fruition with the spawning of new leaders from within Axiata’s talent pool. Supun, Dian, Suresh, Khairil, Mahtab and Idham took on the reins of OpCo leadership and are today at the forefront of Axiata’s battle for regional supremacy.

The pinnacle of Dialog’s second wave was the CEO transition in 2017 following which Supun and his team have elevated Dialog to a position of internal and external strength far surpassing what I could have ever achieved – a source of singular pride and the best reward I could have received.

Creation as well as reinvention have been powerful DNA strands innate to the Axiata ethos. The pioneering team at Axiata Digital I had the privilege of working with during 2013 and 2014 have made bold and disruptive strides under Khairil’s leadership to prove that a telco is in no way disqualified from being a leader in disruption. Today, I have the privilege of learning from and working with great leaders and teams across our MNOs in Bangladesh and Nepal, as well as the Digital Transformation and Enterprise domains across the Group.

The snippets I have recounted are in no way a comprehensive account of the achievements of this great company. I hope, however, that one could extract from my sketch and the rest of this book the fact that the Axiata story is unique in many ways. Central to the story is positivism, innovation and disruption on the foundation of a deep humanity which respects people and diversity.

There is no “one right way” to build a multi-national champion. I believe however that there is an “Asian way” which is founded on human-centred Asian value systems, and on this landscape the Malaysian model stands tall among peers. Successive leaders of the TM and Axiata Group have lived up to and beyond the ideal of this model in creating a regional digital champion which is globally competitive. It is my humble wish that we continue to live up to these ideals and continue to exceed the expectations of our leaders, Tan Sri Ghazzali, Tan Sri Jamal, Dato’ Izzaddin and the Board of the Axiata Group, as we continue to advance Asia into the next decade.

“The colourful stories of all the personalities that management had to deal with, in both managing the gradual divestment process in Africa and at the same time reinvesting those funds in the new markets, always meant that we had very interesting Board meetings!”

Ganesh Sarvananthan

Board Member
Telekom Malaysia International, 2004 – 2008

I joined the Board of TMI, the predecessor entity of Axiata, at the end of 2004, shortly after joining Khazanah. Christian da Faria was then CEO and the late Tan Sri Radzi was the Chairman. Tan Sri Wahid, who was CEO of TM, was on the Board. We worked through a period of divesting TMI's African investments and reinvesting the proceeds closer to home in Southeast Asia and South Asia. The colourful stories of all the personalities that management had to deal with, in both managing the gradual divestment process in Africa and at the same time reinvesting those funds in the new markets, always meant that we had very interesting Board meetings!

I stepped off the Board just as the company listed itself with the demerger from TM. There were also very challenging moments, particularly as we all lived through the sharp equity market declines during the Global Financial Crisis, and the company needed more equity. Khazanah supported that via a rights issue and it was the right commercial decision.

TMI and Axiata have long had a culture of reinventing themselves, which many large corporates are often afraid to do. I continued to watch Axiata's growth from a distance after I left Khazanah in 2014 and wish it all the best as it celebrates its 10-year anniversary and seeks to embark on a new chapter ahead.



“Although there was an initial challenge of shifting my mindset in working in OpCos versus working for the Corporate Centre, it was priceless exposure that helped to shape my leadership quality after I was appointed as XL’s CEO.”

Dian Siswarini

President Director, XL, 2015 – Present
Served in various roles in XL and Axiata, 2009 – 2015

Congratulations on Axiata’s 10-year anniversary!

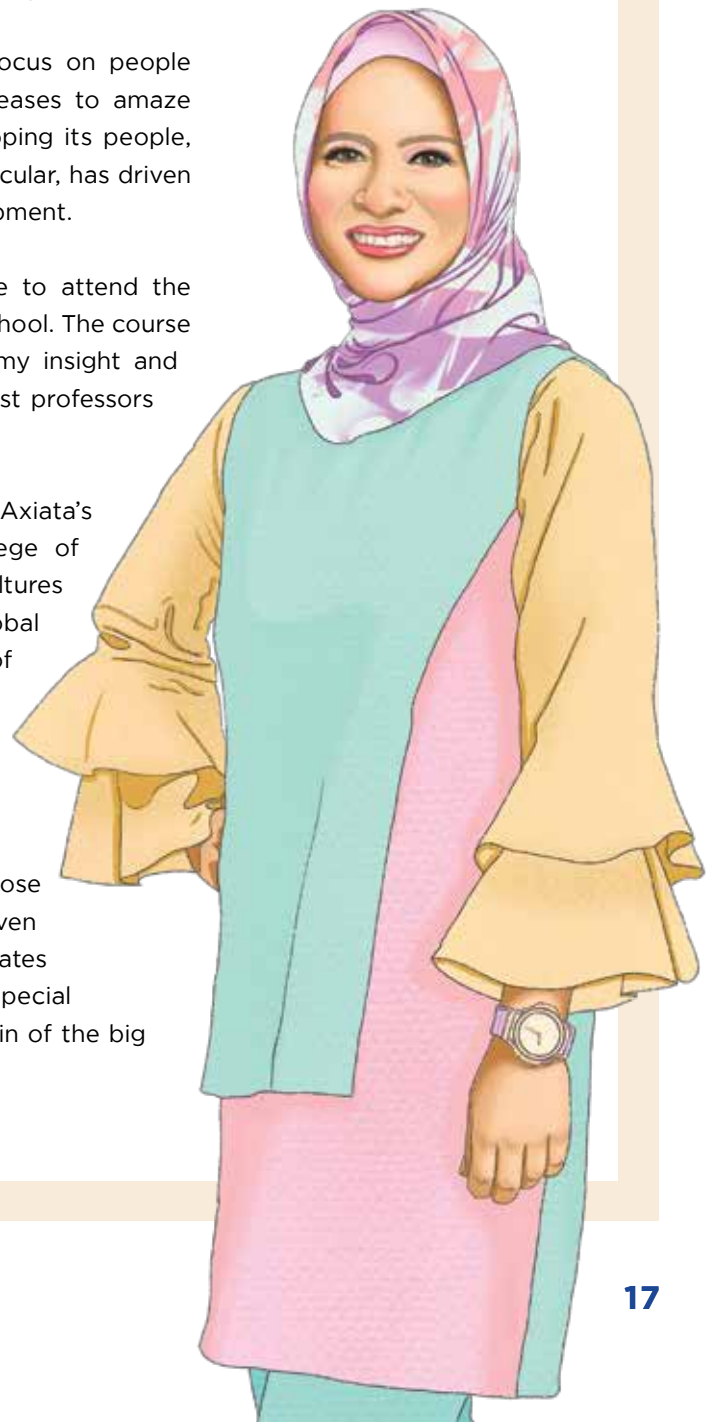
My relationship with Axiata began in 2009 when it acquired XL Axiata, as part of its newly-formed regional company. I remember being filled with excitement as we began our journey together. We believed that developing together, with a larger business scale allowing XL to rise to higher levels.

I respect this company for its profound attention and focus on people development. The way Axiata invests in people never ceases to amaze me. Being part of Axiata, I can feel its sincerity in developing its people, including me, as a global talent. The Axiata culture, in particular, has driven XL to become more appreciative of its own people development.

In 2013, Axiata offered me the opportunity of a lifetime to attend the Advanced Management Programme at Harvard Business School. The course was one of my best educational experiences, enriching my insight and providing me with the opportunity to interact with the best professors and executives from around the world.

In 2014 I moved to Malaysia as Chief Marketing Officer in Axiata’s Corporate Centre. Once again, I appreciated the privilege of being exposed to a global environment with multiple cultures and mindsets. It was in these times that I sharpened my global perspective. Although there was an initial challenge of shifting my mindset in working in OpCos versus working for the Corporate Centre, it was priceless exposure that helped to shape my leadership qualities after I was appointed as XL’s CEO.

If I had to choose one word to describe Axiata, I would choose “care”. I have witnessed how Axiata’s success is also driven by its undeniable care of the people within. That motivates us to accelerate our performance in achieving targets. A special tribute to Tan Sri Jamal, who has been an incredible captain of the big Axiata ship.



“Axiata - a simple, single sound that unites the region and a sole pronunciation that sometimes makes us forget our differences.”

Dato' Sri Mohammed Shazalli Ramly

Corporate EVP & Regional CEO, ASEAN, Axiata, 2017 – 2018
CEO, Celcom, 2005 – 2017

I remember sitting in the Cinnamon Coffeehouse in Colombo in 2009 with Tan Sri Jamal, Dr Hans and a few others debating on how to pronounce Axiata, the new name. Is it Acceiata, Arcciata, Essiata, Asksiata, Asiata? And many more were thrown into the mix. With our diversity, there were several ways of pronouncing the name.

We had a very good laugh imagining how it might sound in 10 years, if we were to realise our regional footprint. I recall Tan Sri Jamal stepping in and saying, “We shall pronounce it as AAZZIATA”

From that day on we universally embraced that one sound. The brand name that today is on the tip of the tongues of millions of our customers around the world. Axiata - a simple, single sound that unites the region, and a sole pronunciation that sometimes makes us forget our differences.



“A lot of effort was put into developing people, an important investment, which has obviously paid off with very good development programmes at various levels.”

Reza Abdul Rahim

Senior Vice President & Head, Group Corporate Finance
Axiata, 2009 – 2011

In the early days the one factor that stood out for me was the openness within Axiata. Post demerger from TM, we were trying to form our own identity, not only with the new company, but across all the other companies throughout the group. One of the key attractions of working with Axiata then was making a mark for a brand new entity with regional growth potential.

The strategy for Axiata was well articulated at the time, whether it was organic or inorganic growth, operational strategy or governance – the overall big picture objectives were consistent. There was also consistent engagement and communication between the management team and staff. The effort was necessary for us to be cohesive across the group. Across the region the message and branding were as consistent as much as the countries and cultures were varied.

My greatest satisfaction then was implementing the various capital management initiatives and evaluation of various M&A opportunities for decisions by the Board. We had a lean team and we had to be thorough in our analyses in order for the Board to make good decisions. We were working on multiple transactions at the same time, one after another, interacting with other departments and OpCos as well as dealing with advisors, bankers and consultants.

If there was anything that I thought Axiata did very well then, it was how we were all engaged to ensure we work together within the corporate office and all the OpCos. There was a concerted effort to ensure everyone was singing the same tune, basically.

Another Axiata quality I remember very clearly was the amount of focus on training, people and career development. A lot of effort was put into developing people, an important investment, which has obviously paid off with very good development programmes at various levels.



“The people I interacted with were true professionals in every sense of the word. Folks were motivated to drive shareholder value and, more importantly, to do what was right as well as do the right thing.”

Dato' Yusof Annuar Yaacob

Executive Director and Group CFO
Axiata, 2008 - 2010

When the idea came about to separate TMI from TM, I for one had mixed feelings. While I acknowledged the benefits, I also felt a sense of separation for an organisation that had always been part of Telekom Malaysia. At the time while most Malaysian companies were focused on growing their domestic operations, TM had the foresight and courage to begin investing in markets in South East Asia, South Asia, as well as Africa. This was even more remarkable because Telekom Malaysia had not so long before been only a department within the government.

One of the primary challenges at the time was around how the organisation would take shape from a culture perspective as, a few years prior to the separation, the entire organisation had undergone a significant change. Assets in Africa were sold, proceeds used to expand in South East Asia, especially in Indonesia and at home, and Celcom had only recently been acquired by TM. So, while the economic benefits of having a mobile-focused organisation were clear, the organisation - which had a history going back 20-odd years - was, in effect, relatively new.

As with anything new, there was a tremendous amount of excitement within the organisation once Axiata became a stand-alone entity. In each jurisdiction, while the issues facing the businesses had some similarity, they were also very different. All this combined with the need to continually review the footprint, especially the question of how Axiata could scale up in large markets such as India and Indonesia. What brought everybody together, I think, had to do with all of us recognising that it was vital for us to demonstrate that this new entity had to show success and show it quickly. Even though the behaviour was nowhere articulated directly, the sense of pride that all of us had in being part of a momentous change drove our ambitions.

Axiata has demonstrated that diversity is at its core and has always been its strength. Its people are of different nationalities, with wide-ranging skills and in practising gender equality, has time and time again provided the foundation required to navigate its toughest moments. The people I interacted with were true professionals in every sense of the word. Folks were motivated to drive shareholder value and, more importantly, to do what was right as well as do the right thing. That spirit, I am sure, continues today.

One of my fondest memories of the early days of Axiata was the culmination of earlier work at XL Axiata. XL needed to find its mojo and it went down the path of completely revamping its business which, in effect, changed the whole industry landscape. With the benefit of hindsight and not wishing to take away the hard work put in by the folks at XL, the changes at the time - while revolutionary - were in fact inevitable. These efforts reached their natural conclusion with Axiata monetising the success with a sell-down of its stake. The team celebrated the success at an off-site in Bali that was planned with such precision that it would have given the “minute-factory” model a run for its money. It was probably the most enjoyable weekend I have ever had in Bali.

Farewells are always difficult, yet when I said my goodbyes the outpouring of emotions I felt from nearly everybody was overwhelming, even for somebody who prides himself on always maintaining a cool front. It was then I realised that I wasn't just saying farewell to colleagues but, more importantly, I was saying goodbye to friends. And therein lies Axiata's strength - its people. Ten years on, I believe a lot has changed, but also I am happy that certain things have not.

The folks at Axiata remain first-class.



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“The best corporate strategy in the world will not be successful without the right people with the right culture. That’s why they say Culture eats Strategy for breakfast.”

Darke M Sani

Group Chief HR Officer
Axiata, 2011 – Present

One thing I will always remember about my stint in Axiata will be the company’s efforts in building a brand new culture. The Group CEO, backed by the Axiata Board, wants “Uncompromising Integrity, Exceptional Performance” (UIEP) to be shared core values for the whole Group. “Please make it happen,” was the instruction to the “culture” team.

Culture, a big word, is fuzzy to many. We say values get translated into behaviours and practices that can be observed. Add all of the above and you get the Axiata culture. That’s the theory in simple terms.

In practice it’s very hard to achieve. The effort began in 2013 to educate, engage and instil the values, beginning at the Axiata Corporate Centre, then cascade them throughout the Group. This was not a one-off campaign, but a transformational mindset change that will take many years.

Put simply, UIEP means pushing ourselves to high levels of performance, while holding ourselves to the highest standards of conduct. It’s aspirational but, at the same time, inspirational. The UI part of the value was more challenging. What is “integrity” to an employee? It’s not just about rejecting corruption but acting ethically and professionally in your everyday behaviour, doing the right things - even when no one is watching you.

Naturally, there was a healthy dose of scepticism. “Is the top management walking the talk?” “If I speak up, I’ll get into trouble.” “What if my boss does things which are not right?” “It’s harder to win business because the competitors are not very strict about these things.”

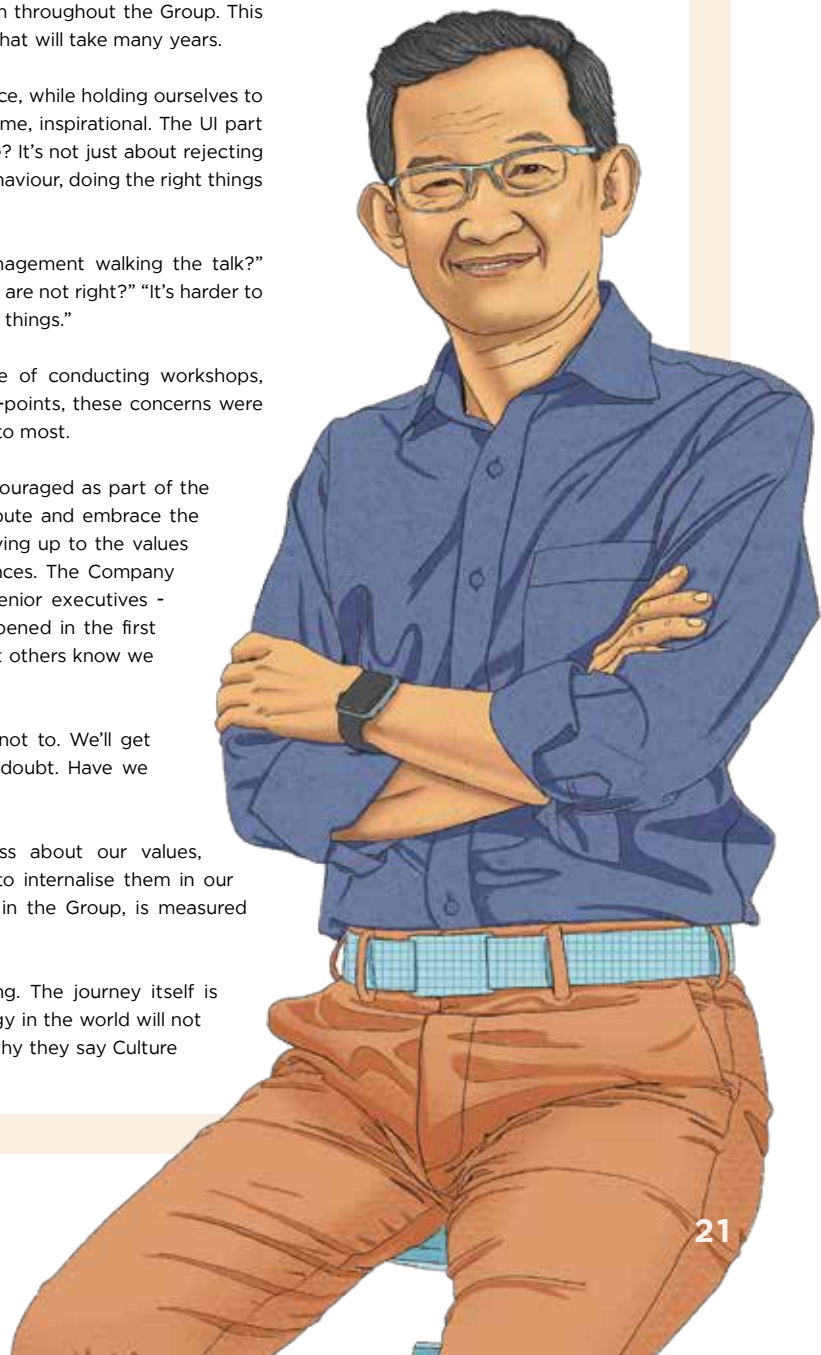
There are good answers to all the above questions. In the course of conducting workshops, town halls, coaching sessions, manager interactions and other touch-points, these concerns were discussed and internalised. Not to the satisfaction of all, I’m sure, but to most.

When discussion and open questioning of matters like these are encouraged as part of the culture-building process, then people will feel empowered to contribute and embrace the values. And consequences must be clear and enforced. Do well in living up to the values and you’ll be rewarded; violate them and you’ll face the consequences. The Company has taken action when necessary - against junior colleagues and senior executives - usually with some regret and disappointment that misconduct happened in the first place. At times we share high-level anonymous information only to let others know we are serious. However, we avoid humiliating people.

In enforcement sometimes we get it right, sometimes we seemed not to. We’ll get better at achieving the right balance, but the intention is never in doubt. Have we achieved our lofty goals? Far from it.

I think we have achieved good progress in increasing awareness about our values, demonstrating our commitment to stakeholders and taking action to internalise them in our behaviour. The commitment to UIEP, now a commonly used term in the Group, is measured annually ensuring that this is always on our radar.

Trying to nurture this thing called “corporate culture” has no ending. The journey itself is important because that’s culture in action. The best corporate strategy in the world will not be successful without the right people with the right culture. That’s why they say Culture eats Strategy for breakfast.



“To me it’s quite simple. You can take my view, accept it or modify it. That’s fine, but I think it’s important that honesty and integrity remain your guiding light.”

Datuk Azzat Kamaludin

Chairman of edotco Group, 2016 – 2020

Chairman of Dialog, 2008 – 2020

Board Member, Axiata, 2008 – 2018



I'd like to think that Axiata is the prototype of a Malaysian company of the future, as well as a company of the present. From how it constituted its Board and working with different cultural groups to developing talent on merit and not pandering or having to look over its shoulder. Other companies can learn from it.

The first thing I was impressed with and fascinated by when I came on board was the Board's composition. Although we didn't have gender diversity in the beginning, we certainly had some racial diversity and foreign participation. I believe that variety has been embedded in our Board compositions, thus contributing to Axiata's success.

We always enjoyed a good collegial camaraderie in the boardroom, which helps discussions. As everyone is well versed in their areas of expertise, no one hesitates to express their views. And it is our duty to voice our views and not be afraid of repercussions, because that is what we are there for. It's never personal when an issue requires thorough discourse. It helps when the diversity is overarching and people aren't afraid to speak up.

From my first Board appointment my guiding light, complemented by my more than 45-year company law career, has always been the interests of the company. When this guide is challenged you speak up, or when, as the last resort when a client disagrees with you, you discharge yourself. To me it's quite simple. You can take my view, accept it or modify it. That's fine, but I think it's important that honesty and integrity remain your guiding light.

The leaders and employees of Axiata are all very confident of themselves, secure in the knowledge that they know who they are and their areas of expertise. When you are in that kind of position, you do not have to push your ego, you give and take. We have very good people here as we recruit among some of the best in the business.

I believe a company is a company of people. And you have to make the people who work with the company feel that they belong there, and want to work there as long as they can. And do things for the company as much as they can. That's key. Yet people are the first to get dispensed with. There should be more money spent on human resources rather than machines. Maybe I'm generous or too compassionate, but I always feel that we should reward people as much as we can.



One of our greatest challenges in the early days was ensuring that we could work with all the operating companies, made up of different nationalities and cultures. We did that through working out the terms of engagement, in understanding each other and in ways of interacting that we constantly reviewed and revised. We needed to have a clear *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* with them that did not breed antagonism. I thought this was key to enabling the kind of co-operation, collaboration and close-knit working relationship that eventually emerged in Axiata. Here, we've built a relationship where we respect one another, yet each company maintains its independence as a separate entity, forged by mutual benefit.

Another positive development was our good talent management. Staff from the OpCos were trained and moulded in our Corporate Centre, giving them a boost in their careers. It helped the Group to better itself to take advantage of the OpCos and meet our other goal, to ensure that - as much as possible - senior positions in these holding companies were all homegrown. I think we have succeeded in that to a very great extent.

One of my most memorable times in Axiata was when I was appointed as a director and Dialog Chairman and was sent out there for the first time. Although I knew Sri Lankans when I was a student as very intellectual and good people, I had not really interacted with them.

I was flabbergasted to find out that, although Dialog was number one in the industry, it was losing money. We did turn it around eventually, and I found the people working there were the *creme de la creme*, and in our case some of the best that Axiata has. I have been there 10 years, and find staff arriving at the office early in the morning almost bursting with energy and enthusiasm. With such vim and vigour, the Sri Lankans I found to be both a delight and a revelation. It's a great company with really great people, if you get the right people, give them the right conditions and environment - they can do wonders. I would certainly like to be known as a *bona fide* Sri Lankan.

On the other hand, a key challenge in the last decade was the time and interest taken up by our investment and shareholding in India. It caused me a lot of anxiety because some of us felt that we should be there, while others maintained that India was a very difficult country to operate in. While we were excited by it, in the end we did not make any decisions until developments outside our control overtook us.

As a company operating in emerging markets there is always the fear that we may have to resort to corrupt influences to make things work. This fear was allayed as we were very clear that we would not allow that to happen, of course sometimes at the cost of what we wanted. Some might say that we could have been more successful, but I think we did the right thing.

Just like when we came up with the name Axiata. As Malays we were concerned that the name might carry a bad connotation, or it might not be right. I understood later that the Chairman had actually checked with Samad Said, Malaysia's renowned novelist and poet, and we received an *imprimatur*, a seal of approval.

It did not matter that it had no meaning but, even back then, in everyone's mind we knew we were going to add meaning to it. And that's what we did.

Gallery 2:

Crafting A Culture

As a Regional Champion

Diversity is the basis of Axiata's development into a champion. The prescient vision from the beginning was to encourage and inspire people to build a successful company, while developing their own strengths to achieve their professional goals.

"I believe a company is a company of people. You have to make the people who work with you feel that they belong," contends Datuk Azzat Kamaludin, one of Axiata's founding Board members. The Board's composition impressed him with a variety and diversity that has been embedded in successive Boards. He remarks, "I'd like to think that Axiata is the prototype of a Malaysian company of the future, as well as a company of the present. From how it constituted its Board and working with different cultural groups to developing talent on merit and not pandering or having to look over its shoulder."

The Axiata Young Talent Programme (AYTP) is one such Axiata initiative that nurtures and trains this country's future CEOs and corporate leaders. The programme focuses on future skills that complement digital competencies, in these times including communication skills, critical thinking and creativity. In order to fit the culture, great effort is exerted in sourcing for the right people whose values, purpose and passion align with the company's vision.

Suresh Sidhu, edotco CEO, considers himself privileged, not only to have served in various Group roles, but also to have enjoyed incredible adventurous experiences. He was overwhelmed by Sri Lankan resilience in the aftermath of war and surprised at the liveliness on the streets of Pakistan.

"While I joined for the opportunity to create an Asian champion and have been privileged to be able to do that twice, with Axiata and edotco," he emphasises that, "the true takeaway from my time here is the passion of all the people I have worked with and continue to work with."

In harnessing the rich diversity and culture of people in the countries it operates in, Axiata ensures it empowers each of its OpCos to act on behalf of their customers. It also supports them in building their own companies with customers and partners.

Axiata has both fortified its claim in Malaysia and strengthened its position in ten other countries: Pakistan, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore and Indonesia. In the process, the cultural exchange and knowledge-sharing has prompted new ways of working and of sourcing solutions from varying viewpoints.

Founding Board member David Lau, when asked to describe Axiata in one word, chooses people's "resilience". As a witness to hard times, taxing setbacks and intense competition, he realises, "It is this resilience in our people that I'm most proud of. Every time we bounce back."

Or has time rewritten every line



2009

Dialog launched “Nenasa” a satellite digital broadcast based distance learning channel in collaboration with the National Institute of Education (NIE) and the Ministry of Education

“It was a rare opportunity for me to be in the company of such distinguished personalities, and to endeavour to contribute, worthy of the trust and confidence placed in me as a fellow Board member.”

Tan Sri Ghazzali Sheikh Abdul Khalid

Chairman, Axiata, 2018 – Present
Founding Board Member, 2008 – 2018

It was an honour and a privilege for me to have been invited to join a Board whose members had impeccable credentials, proven record of distinguished service in their specialisation, and unquestioned integrity. There was no doubt in my mind that the newly de-merged company would be shepherded by a Board dedicated to ensuring the highest standards of good governance and operational efficiency. It was therefore a rare opportunity for me to be in the company of such distinguished personalities, and to endeavour to contribute, worthy of the trust and confidence placed in me as a fellow Board member.

I was also keen to be associated with Axiata as it was engaged in mobile telecommunications, a sector that I believed would have the potential to have tremendous impact on not only our economy, but also on society at large. By keeping up with rapid technological advance and embracing innovative applications that mobile telecommunications offers, Axiata will be enhancing our economy's productivity and competitiveness, improving the likelihood of realising our aspirations of becoming a developed high-income nation sooner rather than later.

The initial years post-demerger were intense, as the Board was absorbed in providing guidance in revamping the legacy structures, systems and processes to create the foundation of a new, high-performing, Malaysia-based multi-national company. The Board pored over extensive medium- and long-term strategic plans impacting the company's future trajectory, crafted on various forecasting scenarios and financial projections, and approved what we felt was the best strategy and plan for the company's success and sustainability.

The first phase of Axiata went by in a blink, and, by 2011, we embarked on Axiata 2.0, to build upon our new yet solid company foundation to catapult ourselves into the top echelon of the region's high-performing companies. As a company with an existing footprint in South East Asia and South Asia, it was only natural for us to prospect for opportunities to extend our presence into new markets in the region. We were careful to balance risks against potential upsides to shareholder value creation.

So, when the right opportunities came along, we did not hesitate to proceed to enter new markets or consolidate our presence through mergers and acquisitions. Through our carefully calibrated inorganic exercises, we were able to enlarge our footprint, increase our customer base, enhance the scale of our operations, and strengthen our financial metrics.

Not resting on our laurels, by 2016 we embarked on Axiata 3.0, evolving from a Regional Champion towards becoming a New Generation Digital Company, with our Triple Core strategy. In forming the new vision, I had to continuously be on my toes to understand not only the current state of industry play, but also grasp the possibilities ahead with the industry's future landscape.

The Board often deliberated on the very fundamental role of a mobile operator and its place in the future, with the emergence of new competitors and disrupters. The Board had to carefully weigh the uncertainties attached to many of our current indicators, the dynamic evolution of the industry, and the underlying assumptions about future trends, as we performed our role of supporting the vision of Axiata the New Generation Digital Company.

Looking at where Axiata is today, I'm imbued with modest pride at what Axiata has been able to achieve since the demerger in 2008. Apart from its impressive financial strides over the last eleven years, Axiata has also carved out an enduring reputation for its management professionalism, long-term commitment to employee career development, and contribution to the national development agenda.

The national and international awards garnered by Axiata year after year attest to the capacity and capability of the Group to deliver the very best among its peers in products offered and services rendered.

Axiata's CSR programmes, both in Malaysia and abroad, have been acknowledged by experts as transformational and effective, and received the enthusiastic support of recipient organisations. Axiata's core values are rooted in Uncompromising Integrity / Exceptional Performance (UI.EP). We are committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct, and in demonstrating honesty, fairness and accountability in all dealings. A key differentiator that sets Axiata apart is our constant push to deliver not only outstanding financial performance, but also outstanding contribution to people and planet.

The experience of being an Axiata Board member has been one of continuous learning, in every aspect of the duties and responsibilities of the role, particularly with the rapidly evolving industry cycles and continuous re-invention of Axiata over the years.

The diversity of the agenda in Board and Committee meetings is trying and can only be satisfactorily dealt with through diligence and hard work. An effective Board member will need to put in the time and effort needed to understand the complexities and nuances of the various issues that the Group faces, to be able to contribute to Board deliberations and decisions.

Board discourse is characterised by robustness, thoroughness and forthrightness, thus making for an enriching and edifying experience for me. It has sharpened my evaluation skills, to sift the wheat from the chaff, to weigh pros and cons, and to dive into the core issues at hand and, within the available time, to come to a decision.

I have also been impressed by the sense of ownership and responsibility of the Axiata leadership team. While they are specialists in their respective fields, they are open to embracing new ideas to deliver on their mandates. I have enormous respect for them and draw from them as an example of how one should approach any task entrusted, including the discharge of my fiduciary duties as a Board member.

Due tribute must be paid to the exemplary leadership of Tan Sri Jamal and his superb team for their zeal, commitment and creativity in transforming Axiata into the company that it is today. Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar, the previous Board Chairman, was of pivotal importance in providing leadership at such a critical juncture in the company's life. He brought to bear his protean talent in helming the Board's deliberations with endearing affability and sagacity, the hallmarks of a seasoned and highly respected corporate leader. Axiata will always be in his debt

Going forward, as we cruise further into these trying times, my faith and confidence in Axiata is unshakeable.

Tan Sri Jamal has built a formidable team who cut their teeth through both good and trying times, a battle-tested force ready to face any surprises. They have demonstrated unmatched grit and resilience in meeting challenges, and they possess the creativity to surmount any impediments that would jeopardise the pursuit of their goals. I'm convinced that they will be able to elevate Axiata to the next level in the ever-increasingly competitive marketplace. My optimism is grounded firmly on the demonstrated strength of our band of diverse identities that make up the stellar Axiata team.



“Seeing how our work was empowering Sri Lankan lives and enterprises fuelled my passion for the organisation and thus began this amazing journey.”

Supun Weerasinghe

Director/Group CEO, Dialog, 2017 – present

CEO and MD, Robi, 2014 – 2016

Group Chief Strategy Officer, Axiata Group Berhad, 2013 - present

Served in various roles at Dialog, 1999 – 2012



The Dialog story begins in 1995, a story empowered by Malaysian Foreign Direct Investment and Sri Lankan talent, bringing together a single vision to make the power of mobile communications affordable and available to every Sri Lankan. So was born the fourth entrant to Sri Lanka's mobile telecommunications sector.

Seeing how our work was empowering Sri Lankan lives and enterprises fuelled my passion for the organisation and thus began my amazing journey. When I joined Dialog 20 years ago, almost straight out of university, I had no industry experience. With Dialog being a fledgling last entrant to Sri Lanka's infant mobile industry, this decision came with its fair share of risks and uncertainty. However, by the year 2000 we had redefined Dialog's business model and began transforming Sri Lanka by taking mobile telephony to the masses.

By 2005, Dialog had become the undisputed market leader and was ready for Sri Lanka's biggest IPO to date. During my first decade at Dialog, it evolved into a quad play telecommunications giant, and I grew from a fresh graduate into a business leader. Dialog has given me many opportunities to thrive, driving my potential. Axiata extended its support with the challenge of leading the strategy function as the Group Chief Strategy Officer in 2013, and as CEO of Robi Axiata in Bangladesh in 2014. In Bangladesh we transformed Robi into a strong number-two player through a challenging merger with Airtel, and transformed Bangladeshi cricket into a global leading force by sponsoring its national team.

It was a great honour and a privilege to assume Dialog's leadership mantle from my mentor, Dr. Hans Wijayasuriya in 2017. While it was overwhelming to step into leading Sri Lanka's largest connectivity provider, I was confident, thanks to the continuous guidance and support from the Board, my colleagues on the Senior Management team and everyone in the Api Dialog Family.

Axiata, led by Tan Sri Jamaludin, is the largest foreign investor to Sri Lanka, having invested approximately LKR299 billion (USD2.5 billion) since 1994. Axiata is also recognised as the first company to invest USD1 billion in Sri Lanka with its investments being deployed towards making 'available' advanced connectivity solutions at 'affordable' prices to all Sri Lankan citizens.

Two decades ago, critics were vocal about Dialog's business viability, and its focus on technology leadership as a sustainable strategy. Nevertheless, we have defied all odds. Dialog has become Sri Lanka's most valuable brand and we are at the forefront of building a digital Sri Lanka through affordable yet world-class connectivity solutions.

We are honoured to serve over 15 million Sri Lankans and to be a part in some way, large or small, of every Sri Lankan home and enterprise. Today, we are at the cusp of the 4th Industrial Revolution. We will continue to play an empowering role in Sri Lankan life – igniting and sharing the passion of this great nation, empowering our champions and delivering the future. Today, in the lives of every Sri Lankan citizen and enterprise, we continue to create the next chapter of the Dialog story....

“To be in a great big Asian company is sometimes like being in a great big Asian family – full of drama, but also laughter. You know you are alive!”

Suresh Sidhu

CEO, edotco Group, 2014 – 2020

Served in various roles in Celcom, Dialog and Axiata, 2009 – 2014

I consider myself very lucky to be a part of four experiences, each one unique, in my time here. Corporate Centre, Dialog, Celcom and now finally edotco. I guess the KPI format we set up at Regional Development may be the lasting contribution for everyone – don't everyone all thank me at once!

Adventure is a big part of my memories – and the sense that we are here to help nations.

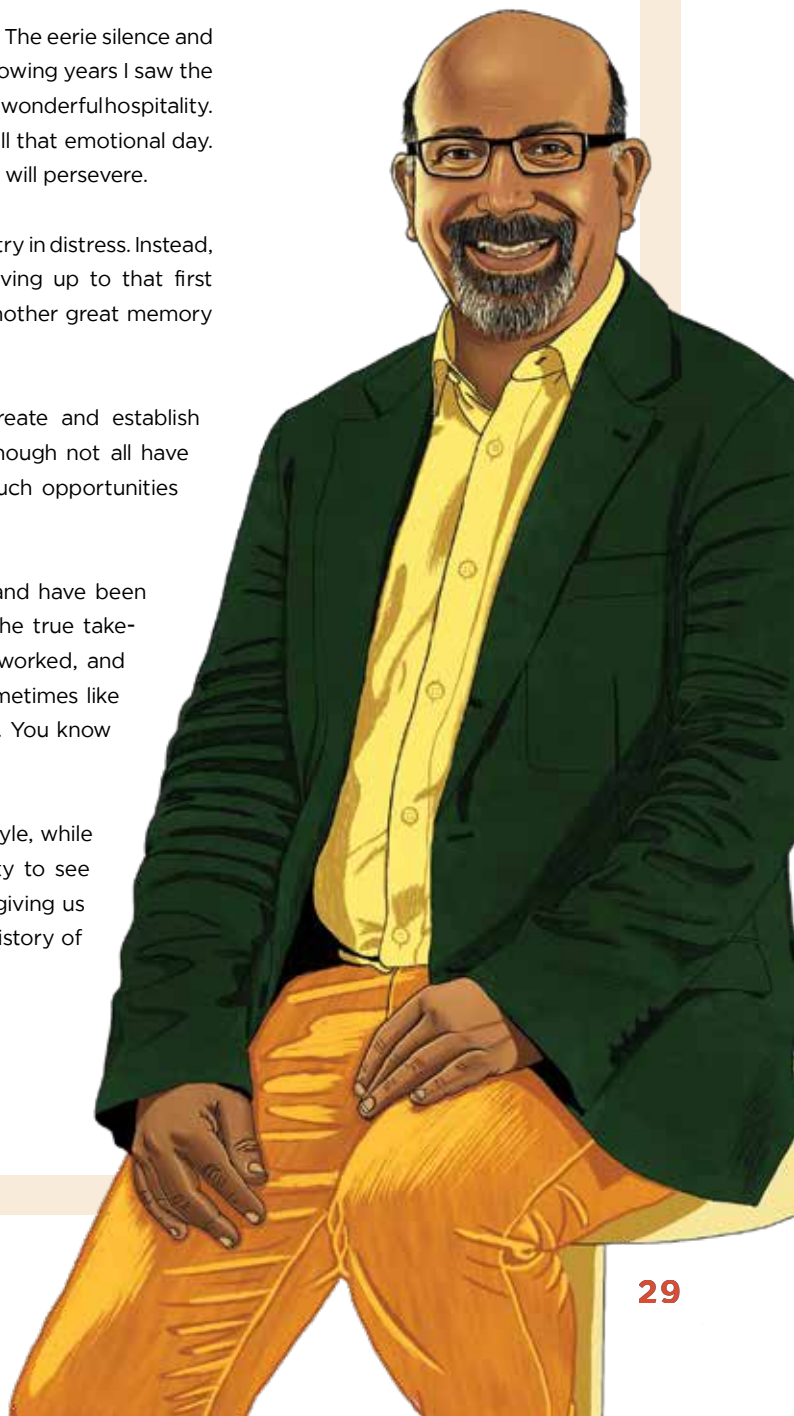
I remember heading to Sri Lanka a month or so after its war was over. The eerie silence and numerous road blocks were signs of the country's trauma. In the following years I saw the people's strength and experienced Sri Lanka's renowned passion and wonderful hospitality. I was in Dialog when the Galle Face Green was reopened and I recall that emotional day. The nation faces new challenges but my personal history tells me it will persevere.

When I first visited Pakistan, I was prepared for a war zone and a country in distress. Instead, I was met with lively crowds and a city full of positive buzz. Living up to that first experience, the country has not failed to continuously surprise. Another great memory for me in developing a business there.

Perhaps, the best part for me has been the ability to help create and establish edotco. Many of us have had opportunities like this at Axiata. Though not all have succeeded, how many other companies would entrust us with such opportunities and experiences?

While I joined for the opportunity to create an Asian champion and have been privileged to be able to do that twice, with Axiata and edotco, the true take-away from my time here is the passion of all the people I have worked, and continue to work with. To be in a great big Asian company is sometimes like being in a great big Asian family – full of drama, but also laughter. You know you are alive!

Through it all the constant has been TSJI's calm and unflappable style, while continuing to hold us to high standards. I always admire his ability to see the big picture with such clarity. However, it's his commitment to giving us opportunities to grow that really sets him apart. I hope when the history of Axiata is settled, this will be the way we all remember him best.



“These days, with the speed of digitalisation and the increasing risk of cybersecurity attacks (something we never spoke about 10 years ago), we have no choice but to move faster through project implementation by a central development team, drawing on best resources and ideas from all operating companies.”

David Lau

Founding Board Member
Axiata, 2008 – 2020



I was really taken aback at the last Axiata AGM when it was pointed out by a shareholder that I have remained on the Axiata's Board for too many years. How time flies when you enjoy the challenges and fun in the more than 150 Axiata Board meetings I have attended over the years. I hope this article serves as a record of my experience and lessons learnt which future board members could benefit from.

I was with the Royal Dutch Shell Group in the Netherlands when I was invited to join the Board in April 2008. I knew nothing about the telecommunications business, but I believe Axiata wanted me for my experience in Shell to provide oversight on the governance and controls of the business and the financial reporting. It was a very steep learning curve for me.

I still remember the intense discussions we had in 2009 to choose the new name. When “Axiata” was proposed, I was probably the only one in the room who was not very keen on the name, as I thought it had no meaning and it sounded like an insurance company. How wrong I was! I am glad I was overruled, and “Axiata” has turned out to be a great name, a brand known across Asia. I was then, and even now, quite useless in branding!

Getting the right talent was always a challenge. From day one, Tan Sri Jamal has always been passionate about talent development and believed in recruiting good, top-notch talent, including recruiting experienced international talent. The Axiata Young Talent Programme (AYTP) is a perfect example that still stands out today as one of its kind in the structured identification and development of young talent in Asia. I am very proud of what Axiata has achieved in talent management, providing an exemplary model for other companies to follow.

In my first few months, I noticed that the then Group CFO was almost 100% preoccupied with M&A issues. Tan Sri Jamal very quickly supported my request to recruit a good Controller who would be able to pay attention to Financial Reporting, Governance and Controls. We brought in Yap Wai Yip, a very experienced ex-IBM Controller. My life was suddenly much easier.

In the early days, Axiata grew very fast. When we first started, Axiata's Profit After Tax (PAT) was just under RM500 million. We grew very quickly to just under RM2.9 billion in four years. Our Chairman then, Tan Sri Azman, always reminded us not to be complacent when times are good. He insisted on us addressing the “What are the 10 things that could go wrong?” and to prepare for hard times to hit. Dialog and XL both went through great profits only to see significant falls into losses.

The Celcom example was the most spectacular case. Celcom had 32 continuous quarters of revenue growth. EBITDA and profit were also growing, with plenty of cashflow. Fantastic business, in those “go-go” days. Then we had to change our lagging and about-to-be-obsolete IT (BSS) system. The Board was constantly appraised of the project progress against the Plan and, just before going live, the project manager presented to the Board the final checkpoint - all ready to go live.

We were within budget, on time and the Board applauded the project manager and her team. Little did we know that on the cut-over to the live system, we would start seeing problems when we had to deal with high-volume transactions which were not properly assessed in the user acceptance tests.

To register a new SIM card took up to four hours, when previously it had taken less than two minutes.



Our customers moved to our competitors. Worst of all, thousands of dealers around the country stopped promoting our Celcom SIM cards. We lost over 6,000 dealers during this period. Our daily top-ups fell from a high of RM11 million a day to less than about RM7 million a day, and we incurred a drop of about 40% in pre-paid sales.

How did we allow this to happen? More importantly, as Chairman of the Audit Committee, why didn't I see this coming and prevent it from happening?

The most important lesson I learnt from this exercise was that the management and the Audit Committee must encourage staff not to hide bad news. It is important to create a safe atmosphere so that staff do not feel afraid to report bad news quickly, not after we have had lost 40% of our sales.

Second lesson: "Never underestimate the difficulties of changing a major IT system in a company". A huge IT system change-out in a company should be treated like a heart transplant. Put your best guys in the project, not just from IT but from the business - whose sales will suffer if the system is not implemented well.

We also have had some very exciting times and intense discussions in the Board on M&A. On some of them we got badly burnt and I still carry the scars. Discussing the M&A proposals took up almost half our time in the boards. Often, I felt like I was in an MBA class learning from the guru, the professor Tan Sri Azman, who reminded us how to do a proper valuation, and about execution risks and political risks.

Some lessons from M&A: Never trust a "handshake" agreement. Always insist on a contractual agreement. I remember sitting with Tan Sri Jamal in front of a country's highest authorities, who shook our hands and offered us their strong assurance on an issue. But they never fulfilled their promise.

If a deal is too good to be true, be very careful. Always allow for more things to go wrong than expected. Avoid giving "options" in an M&A deal, if possible. If it is advantageous to offer an option, give it with caution and know the full financial and (especially) accounting impact that will arise from the option. In the case of a tower acquisition in one country, the seller was allowed an option to put his shares in Axiata at X times EBITDA. The business did very well, and every quarter, when the EBITDA grew, the increase in the valuation went straight as an accounting loss to Profit/Loss - a very painful result.

The Audit Committee must insist on seeing the full accounting impact of an M&A deal before the deal is proposed to the Board for approval; e.g. impact on Balance Sheet, P&L and ROIC. Always have an exit strategy and stick to the strategy throughout the deal. Never be sentimental about an asset. In the "Idea" case, we got out two years too late.

Our Capex Intensity (i.e. Capital expenditure divided by Revenue) hit around 30% for some of our operating companies. This means that if you do not achieve double-digit revenue growth (over 10%) in a year, your PAT will reduce significantly as you will be hit with higher depreciation.

This reminds me of the advice given by Oprah Winfrey on buying a new dress. "If you buy one new dress, you must throw out one old dress from your wardrobe," she said. "Otherwise, your wardrobe will overflow and you will have no more room to move."

The same thing applies in business. Celcom has about 11,000 towers vs 10,000 in Maxis, but Maxis' revenue is 30% higher. We keep building new towers and we never review towers which support very little traffic to shut them down - hence our operating costs keep going up. I am so pleased to see that finally Celcom has now identified some towers to shut down, with probably zero impact on revenue.

Axiata in its early days adopted a "light touch approach", allowing operating companies the freedom to design and build their own systems and processes which, considering the resources in the Centre at that time, was the right strategy. Partly as a result of this, large operating companies would never adopt a best practice designed and working effectively in a smaller operating unit. Basically, for them, if it is "not invented here", it is not good enough.

These days, with the speed of digitalisation and the increasing risk of cybersecurity attacks (something we never spoke about 10 years ago), we have no choice but to move faster through project implementation by a central development team, drawing on best resources and ideas from all operating companies.

This sharing is also a big driver in reducing our operating costs, something every company must address in view of the current trend of flat or negative revenue growth. Now I am glad to see more top-down approaches being pushed by the Centre into operating companies. In 2019, I am glad all operating companies are urged to adopt "operational excellence", prioritising delivering free cash flow ("Cash is king and operational excellence is queen.").

“The glue that sticks all of us together, not only in the way we think, but also in the way we act to move towards an agreed common direction and objective - in short, the working culture - is our Tan Sri Jamal.”

Annis Sheikh Mohamed

Group Chief Corporate Development Officer
Axiata, 2011 – 2020
CFO, edotco Group, 2020 – Present



Starting a day early marked my first foray into a world outside after 18 years in investment banking, with a mid-year Board retreat in Bangladesh. My first day at Axiata as Chief Corporate Development Officer and I was all ready and excited to contribute and impress in front of my Board, CEO, and new colleagues.

At the end of the first day of the retreat I was left with a few A4 sheets, comprising not notes but abbreviations. That I didn't really understand, even after resorting to Google. When I returned home, my first few words to my wife were, "Very nice *biryani* in Bangladesh. Superb. But I doubt if I made the right choice to move out of banking."

More than eight years and two contracts later (hopefully with the third on its way), hundreds of proposals reviewed, successful closure of multiple acquisitions, mergers and disposal of assets, I have enjoyed every single minute of my time spent here.

Blessed with good colleagues, the main, if I may say, glue that sticks all of us together not only in the way we think, but also in the way we act to move towards an agreed common direction and objective - in short, the working culture - is our Tan Sri Jamal.

Equipped with a superb memory and the ability to easily dissect and compartmentalise complex issues and situations into few parts for ease of understanding, discussion and - hopefully - solution, Tan Sri Jamal has never failed to impress me throughout my tenure in Axiata. His passion for people development I will always treasure the most. That sincere effort to see that everyone is treated fairly in all aspects, from career development and opportunities, all the way to compensation and welfare.

I am now able to tell my wife, "I have made the right choice." The past 10 years have been great with their ups and downs, and I know for certain that the next 10 years will be equally interesting and challenging.

“It is only appropriate that the culture and vision of this company continue to change. If we do not change with the times, we’ll be irrelevant. That is why we all have to embrace it.”

Mah Yong Sun

Board Member
Celcom, 2010 – 2018

From my observation during my tenure in Axiata there is a tremendous focus on people and talent. From finding the right people, to rewarding them and supporting them to help drive forward the company and its ambitions.

Through his many years of experience in MNCs, Tan Sri Jamal has ensured continued focus on this as a key prerequisite for success.

Axiata must be brave enough to meet the constant changes and challenging disruptions that’ll keep coming its way. Hence, it is only appropriate that the culture and vision of this company continue to change. If we do not change with the times, we’ll be irrelevant. That is why we all have to embrace it.

And the only way to do so is through nurturing and maintaining the best talent pool. My pet subject is people. I always come back to it. By keeping our eyes on the right matrix, led by a pool of the best people in the marketplace, our future will be nothing short of tremendous.

My greatest satisfaction has been seeing one of Malaysia’s jewel GLCs operating to its capacity, for me to be able to contribute to its tremendous growth and, most importantly, give our people the opportunity to be successful.



“When we look back to this time from the future - even if we could have done a lot more - nevertheless we all will be able to stand tall and proudly say, ‘We have done it!’”

Yap Wai Yip

CFO, Dialog, 2019 – Present

Served in various roles in Robi, Smart and Axiata, 2008 – 2019

A typical conversation...

10 years ago

“Where are you working now? TMI? That’s Telekom, right?”

“No, I am working in TM International.”

“Oh, Telekom-lah.”

“No...”

(sigh)

Eight years ago

“Where are you working again - Ah-Xi-Ah-Ta?”

“No, it’s called Axiata.”

“Oh, what kind of insurance company is that?”

“No...”

(sigh)

Today

“Where are you working now?”

“I am working in Axiata.”

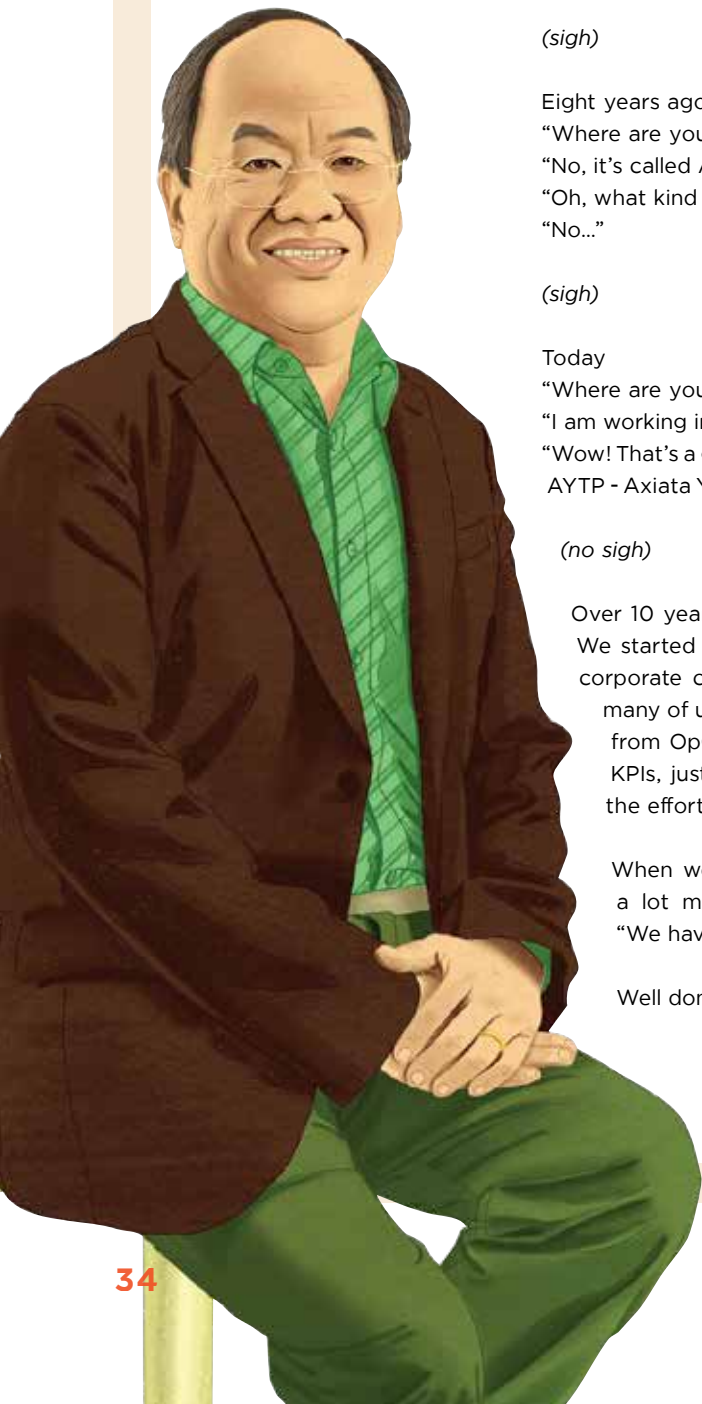
“Wow! That’s a great company! One of the top 10 in Bursa Malaysia. Axiata runs the famous AYTP - Axiata Young Talent Programme. Axiata is one great homegrown Malaysian MNC...”

(no sigh)

Over 10 years is short, timeline-wise, yet for many of us it has been a long journey. We started off as a bare company carved out of TM, and we had to build an MNC corporate centre from ground zero. The long hours and the sweat and tears that many of us had to go through. Together with the hard-earned trust and confidence from OpCos, aligning and streamlining many internal processes, score cards and KPIs, just to mention a few. The recognition we receive today makes it worth all the effort.

When we look back to this time from the future - even if we could have done a lot more - nevertheless we all will be able to stand tall and proudly say, “We have done it!”

Well done for the one decade of achievements, Axiata!



“I fondly remember the town halls, the Diwali Bhangra performances, dragon dances for Chinese New Year and Hari Raya open houses, where all of us used to come together to celebrate the spirit of one team.”

Amandeep Singh

Group CTO
Axiata, 2012 – 2019

The very first project I worked on was putting together a bid document to acquire a Myanmar mobile licence. For four months we worked relentlessly. That was also the first time I spent a night at the office with a few hours of sleep, at my desk, perfecting the bid document. Although all cross-functional teams put together a brilliant document, unfortunately we did not win that bid.

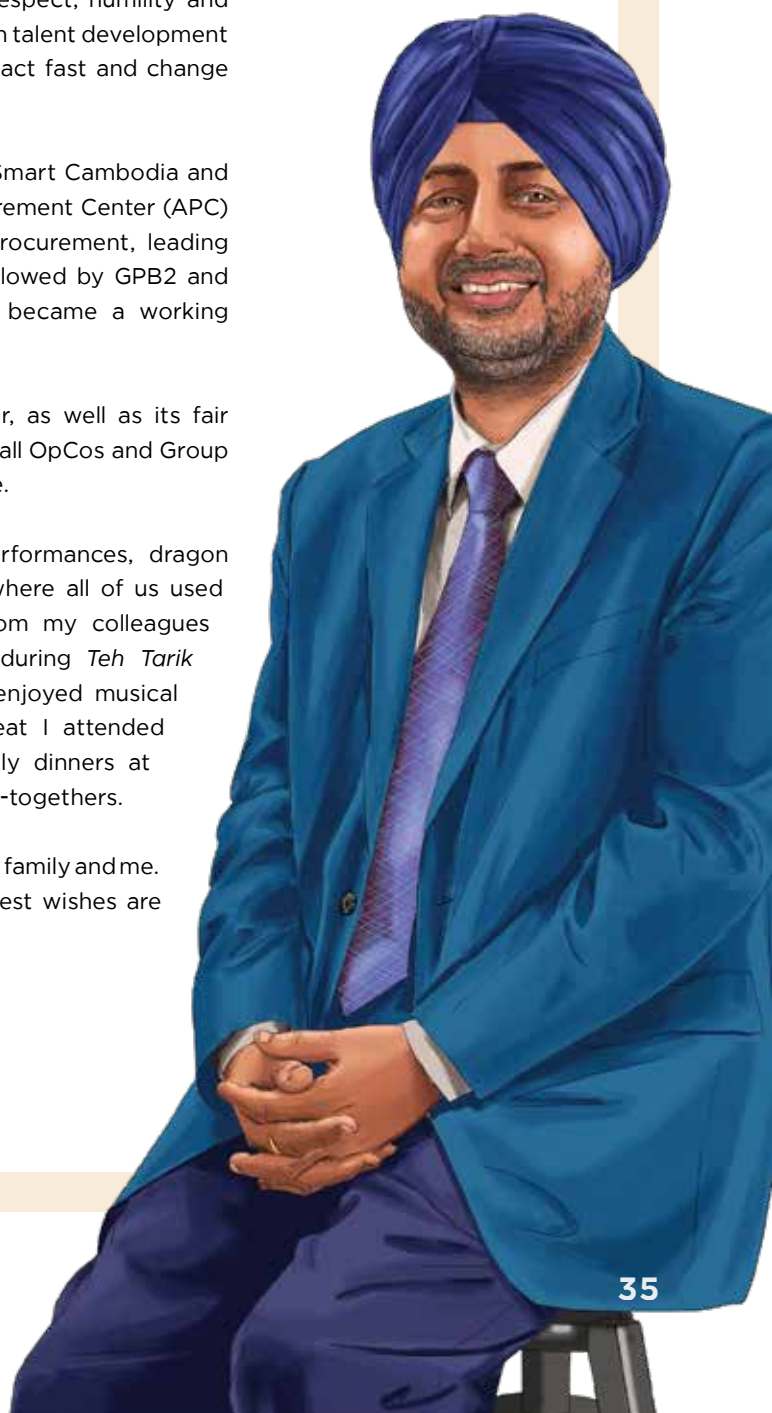
Over the years, I learnt many key lessons, including mutual respect, humility and teamwork, empowerment and focus on sustainability. Investing in talent development is the way to build the future and, of course, the “spot early, act fast and change quicker” mantra.

Some of my most memorable events were the acquisition of Smart Cambodia and rebranding it from “Hello” to “Smart”, creation of Axiata Procurement Center (APC) to leverage synergies and cost advantage through Group Procurement, leading to the development of first-ever Global Price Book (GPB), followed by GPB2 and putting together the Network Vision 2020 document that became a working reference across OpCos.

The company had stupendous business success year-on-year, as well as its fair share of challenges - especially during FY2016 and 2017, when all OpCos and Group teams came together to turn around the business performance.

I fondly remember the town halls, the Diwali *Bhangra* performances, dragon dances for Chinese New Year and Hari Raya open houses, where all of us used to come together to celebrate the spirit of one team. From my colleagues I have learnt many things like slang phrases - especially during *Teh Tarik* sessions - and numerous thought-up excuses. I thoroughly enjoyed musical performances by my colleagues, and every employee retreat I attended remains deeply embedded in my memory. As are the family dinners at Tan Sri Jamal’s and Tan Sri Azman’s places, and Family Day get-togethers.

In summary, those years were one of the best periods of life for my family and me. I do cherish every single moment of my time at Axiata. My best wishes are with the company for all times to come.



“The dream of being one of the very few Malaysian corporations to build a globally competitive business regionally remained central throughout the organisation, from the Board of Directors and senior management to the typical Axiata talent.”

Datuk Abdul Rahman Ahmad

Board Member
Axiata, 2013 – 2016



It was a privilege and honour for me to be involved in Axiata for almost four years. Throughout my time here, three things struck me the most.

The first was how talented, smart and diversified the Axiata team was, from the senior management of its holding company across all of its operating companies, to the middle management and even the young talent who had just joined the group. Their motivation and enthusiasm to help build Axiata as a leading telco organisation was palpable and infectious.

Secondly, I realised how challenging the telco industry proved to be. The speed of change within the industry was, and continues to be, immense. The capital investment required to continually invest to be at the fore of industry leadership is highly significant and necessary for survival, even though the payback and returns remain highly uncertain. The difficulty of managing different country regulatory environments, culture and politics was constant and, at certain times, appeared insurmountable.

However, what struck me the most was that, despite these challenges, the Axiata team remained fully committed to their goal of being a leading regional telco organisation. The dream of being one of the very few Malaysian corporations to build a globally competitive business regionally remained central throughout the organisation, from the Board of Directors and senior management to the typical Axiata talent.

And that is the essence of Axiata. Regardless of the organisation's future as it attempts to navigate these challenges, I believe this central vision and dream of Axiata will continue to endure, propelling the organisation and its talents to greater heights ahead.

Congratulations, Axiata, on your 10-year anniversary. May Allah forever bless the organisation and its talent.

“The respect and civility of dealings and the drive for diversity and high standards was notable.”

Bella Ann Almeida

Board Member
Axiata, 2011 – 2017

My abiding memory of my time with Axiata is the grace and professionalism of individual Board and team members I had the privilege of interacting with. The respect and civility in dealings and the drive for diversity and high standards were notable. On a lighter note, the standard of local *kueh* snacks was equally high and the ability of (male) colleagues to *joget* and *ronggeng* at an Indonesian offsite was memorable!

All businesses compete for success and the leading benchmark is maintaining high global standards. This inevitably requires honesty, ambition, change and - most importantly - humility and good values to recognise and navigate relevant change. As a Board member, and given my human capital focus, I have had the privilege to observe and contribute to this.

Axiata's senior management development programmes, in particular, are world-class, as is the encouraged mobility of talent into relevant roles to groom them. I was very proud to see this. Conversely, more objectivity and timeliness in dealing with both weaker performers and those in decaying areas will accelerate productivity and comparative financial returns. Both are necessary for medium-term success.

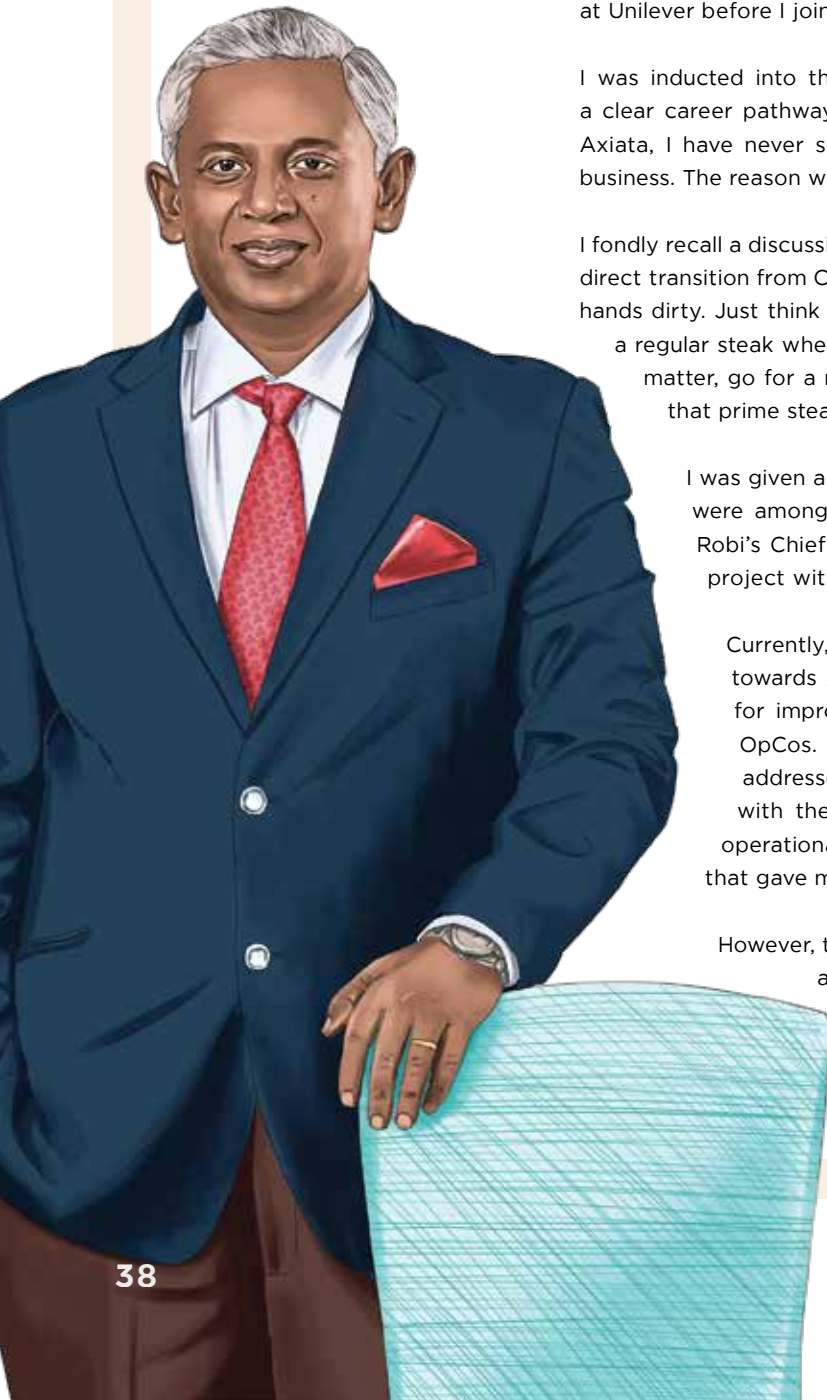


“The best part is that the company is still hungry to grow and has the right vision, strategy and - most importantly - the people in place to make it happen.”

Mahtab Uddin Ahmed

MD/CEO, Robi, 2016 – Present

Served in various roles in Robi and Ncell, 2010 – 2016



When I first heard of Axiata's tagline, “Advancing Asia”, I thought to myself that they had probably picked the wrong continent to advance. But, as I started my journey with Axiata, I realised that the company is sincere about its promise.

Axiata's solemn focus on developing its people convinced me that the company means business. After eight riveting interviews over two days with Axiata's top management, I felt compelled. Even though I was at the peak of my career working at Unilever before I joined Robi in 2010 as its Chief Financial Officer.

I was inducted into the Group Accelerated Development Programme and given a clear career pathway. Many top corporations cut their training budget but not Axiata, I have never seen the company compromise on this vital aspect of the business. The reason why I am where I am today.

I fondly recall a discussion with Tan Sri Jamal. I had asked him why I couldn't make a direct transition from CFO to CEO. He told me: “Mahtab, I first want you to get your hands dirty. Just think that you're walking into a nice restaurant. Would you order a regular steak when you can see that a premium steak is available, or, for that matter, go for a regular lobster instead of a fat, juicy one? I need you to be that prime steak or the fat, juicy lobster.” That sealed it for me.

I was given an opportunity to grow as an individual. INSEAD and Harvard were among the stepping stones towards my current position, as was Robi's Chief Operating Officer in 2014 and my short stint for a special project with Ncell.

Currently, all OpCos have stepped up and contribute almost equally towards Axiata's growth. However, I feel that there is a lot of room for improvement in order to achieve optimum synergy across the OpCos. Besides, Axiata is too accepting of failure, this needs to be addressed. When I look back, I regret one of my notable successes with the company. As the project sponsor, I was responsible for operationalising edotco in Bangladesh. In hindsight, this was a success that gave me plenty of nightmares down the line.

However, the best part of this company is that it is still hungry to grow and has the right vision, strategy and - most importantly - the people in place to make it happen.

“As a Group operating in a competitive and challenging environment in many different jurisdictions, this ‘University of Life’ called Axiata offered many opportunities to experience the whole roller coaster corporate ride.”

Suryani Hussein

Group Company Secretary, Axiata, 2008 – Present
Head of Legal & Secretarial, Celcom, 2002 – 2008

Codenamed Project Ontario the demerger, first announced in September 2007, was executed in record time with legal completion achieved on 25 April 2008 followed by three days later, the listing of TMI on the main market of Bursa Malaysia. I was then the Head of Legal and Secretarial of Celcom and was roped in to be part of the project team, and then entrusted with the responsibility of being the Group Company Secretary of TMI.

It was hard in the beginning. Starting from ground zero as a new Group but TMI as a company had been operating well as an entity for a number of years. For a while there was a clear distinction between the ‘old/classic TMI’ employees and new ones click-clacking in our heels on the wooden floors of Menara TM.

Circa March 2009 TMI found its new name and identity - Axiata. That same year, we found a home in KL Sentral. Advancing Asia became our tag line and while we worked hard to build a new distinct company, the original aspiration of being Regional Champion was never far from sight. Bit by bit, as we faced new challenges and celebrate new achievements together, the difficulties of the past became slowly irrelevant.

Those of us who have preserved through the years have seen it all, the good, the bad and the ugly. As a Group operating in a competitive and challenging environment in many different jurisdictions, this “University of Life” called Axiata offered many opportunities to experience the whole roller coaster corporate ride. There certainly is never a dull moment!



Charting Continuity

Towards Becoming a Digital Champion

Despite the current relentless hurtling into the digital age, the sustainability imperative of this era entails social considerations. Courage is also required in working with customers and within ecosystems to form shared aspirations.

In 2014, aware of the impending digital revolution, the Axiata team embarked on a programme to invest in digital companies to acquire knowledge to transform a legacy telecommunications company into a digital business. In the process, they infused the extracted digital concepts, thinking and technology into their own traditional business.

Datin Sri Badrunnisa Mohd Yasin Khan, Group Axiata Learning Officer, has been with the Group since 2008. For her, a treasured key learning insight is the ability to learn. This is a function of one's willingness to go out of the comfort zone, not always knowing if the result will be positive. She states, "Instead of being safe and 'narrow', if you risk embracing changes and situations, you will grow 'broader' and stronger."

In pursuit of its vision to be the New Generation Digital Champion by 2022, Axiata adopted IR4.0 principles and technologies to enable a Group-wide digital transformation. This intensified the Group's competitive advantage.

Axiata Digital (AD) CEO Mohd Khairil Abdullah is particularly proud of AD's growing success as a digital platform engaged in digital financial services, APIs and digital marketing. What is most exciting for him about digital is taking mundane daily tasks and reimagining the entire experience with technology. The ultimate challenge is to create something meaningful for customers. "A recent significant milestone has been evolving the organisation from a venture builder of tech start-ups into an operator of successful digital businesses," he asserts. As a result of proving that telcos can create thriving digital businesses, in early 2019, Mitsui & Co., Ltd bought a stake in the business.

The forming of Axiata Digital Innovation Fund (ADIF) is one of Celcom CEO Mohamad Idham Nawawi's fondest moments. Raising the RM100 million fund to help Malaysian start-ups required convincing the Board and identifying partners to co-invest, "Together with MAVCAP, we launched the Fund with an initial RM80 million and, to date, it has invested in 18 local digital companies."

"The Group's five-year digital journey, in terms of the culture we have cultivated - to experiment without fear of failure - is encouraging. We are about trying, and trying something new without criticism," explains Tan Sri Jamal on the premise of looking at the bigger picture.

If we had the chance to do it all again



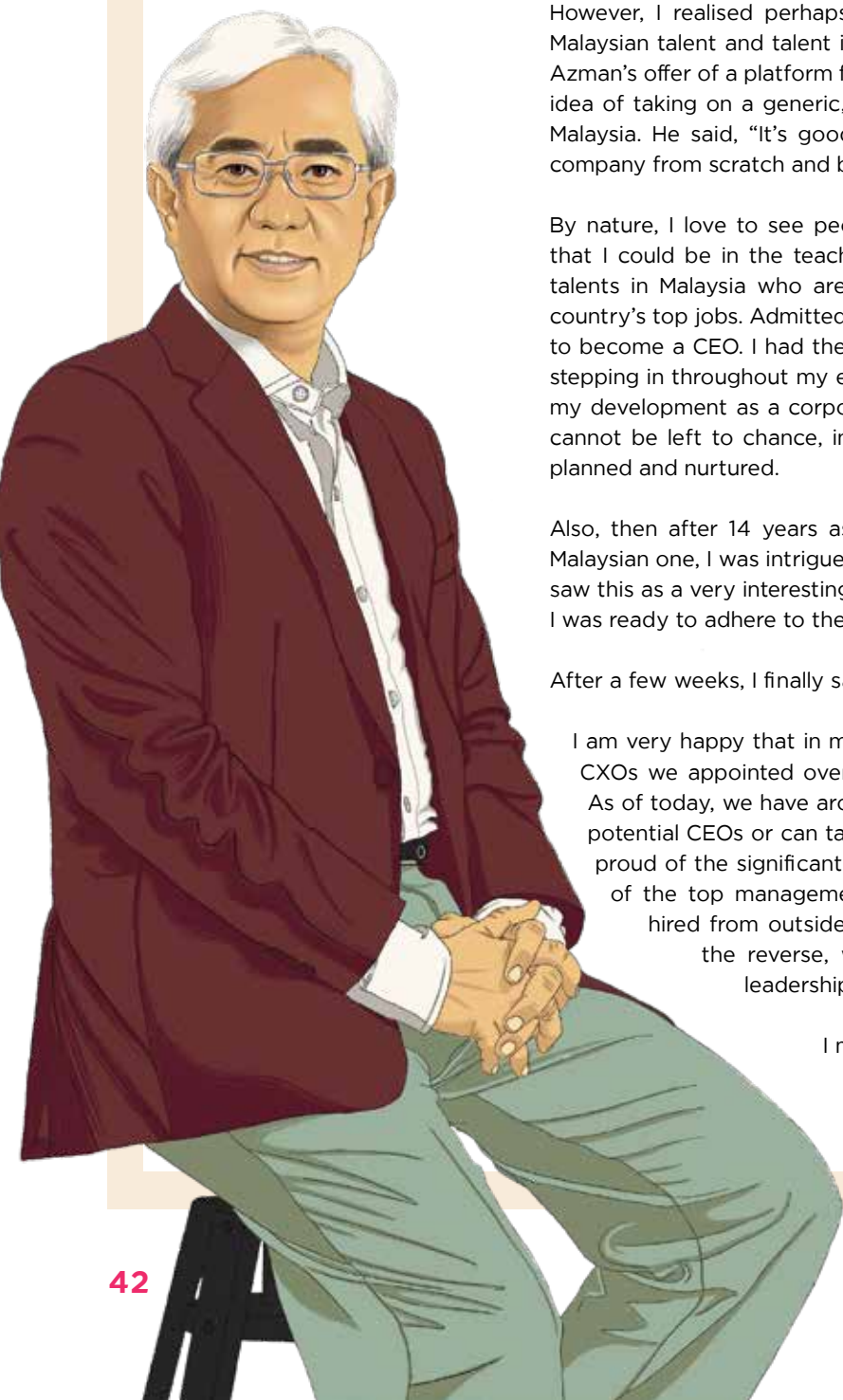
2018

Visit by YB Gobind Singh Deo, Minister of Communications & Multimedia and Al-Ishsal Ishak, Chairman of MCMC to launch of refreshed Axiata workspace in Kuala Lumpur

“To be effective in my work, I am always conscious of the importance of vision and strategy. At the same time, I am very aware I should only spend 10%, not even 20%, of my time on that. The rest is all about execution.”

Tan Sri Jamaludin Ibrahim

MD/President & Group CEO
Axiata, 2008 – Present



When I was first approached by Tan Sri (then Dato') Azman Mokhtar back in 2007 to take on the leadership role in Axiata (or TMI and Celcom as it was known then), I was not very keen. At that time, I wanted to do something very different and not another corporate job and especially not in the telecoms industry.

However, I realised perhaps I did have some “unfinished business” in building Malaysian talent and talent in general, I have always felt I could do more. Tan Sri Azman's offer of a platform for my vision appeared more attractive than my initial idea of taking on a generic, overarching role in Khazanah to build talent across Malaysia. He said, “It's good timing. After the demerger, you can develop this company from scratch and build a platform to develop talent.”

By nature, I love to see people grow. I did spend a year as a lecturer and felt that I could be in the teaching field. It's a pity we have not produced enough talents in Malaysia who are able to confidently take on the challenges of our country's top jobs. Admittedly, I have been very lucky in my path as I did not plan to become a CEO. I had the great fortune of great bosses, and fantastic people stepping in throughout my early career to guide me and create opportunities for my development as a corporate leader. But it was clear to me that “leadership” cannot be left to chance, instead, this nation's future CEOs should be properly planned and nurtured.

Also, then after 14 years as a CEO in a multinational organisation and later a Malaysian one, I was intrigued by the possibility of turning a GLC into an MNC and saw this as a very interesting challenge. Last but not least, as a grateful Malaysian I was ready to adhere to the mantra that ‘thou must do national service’.

After a few weeks, I finally said yes to Tan Sri Azman.

I am very happy that in my 11 years here in Axiata, the seven CEOs and many CXOs we appointed over the last four years were all promoted from within. As of today, we have around 800 top and middle management staff who are potential CEOs or can take on the senior leadership roles. I'm also immensely proud of the significant leap we made in this aspect. When we first started, of the top management posts across the Group, almost 80% had been hired from outside the company. In the last four years the results are the reverse, with more than 80% of those promoted to senior leadership positions or CEOs came from within.

I must admit that I did not expect us to grow as big as we have today. To put it into perspective, we are now in eleven countries with revenue almost 2.5 times



larger than when we started. As for our name, Axiata, I'm very proud that today, it is well-known across the global telecoms industry. Whenever I go for international conferences with telecoms CEOs anywhere in the world, when I mention Axiata and almost everyone would have heard of this 10-year old organisation.

From the very start, our vision was to become a Regional Champion, so we adopted diversity as one of our key strategies. Diversity in Axiata is really gratifying to me. We have 38 nationalities working for us. When we see people from various nationalities and races working towards a common goal, it helps us realise the world is a lot bigger. It is filled with people who think very differently from us, with lots of new ideas and new innovative ways of doing things. By opening ourselves up in this way, harnessing different skills and ideas, we are continually challenged. This is the strength of diversity.

Therefore, we made sure that we hired the right people, those with appropriate skills and who believed in diversity and teamwork. We encouraged them to help build Axiata to become one of the largest and most successful companies in the region, inspiring them to rally behind that vision. Our performance and compensation system help steer people towards what we wanted to achieve. By 2015, we believe we achieved our goal of becoming a regional champion, flying the Malaysian flag high in Asia. By then, the financial achievements speak for themselves and we were known regionally and beyond, in the telecommunications industry.

But even before that, in 2014 itself we were already contemplating the question of What's Next? The question is: how do we transform a legacy telecommunications company into a digital one? We knew we had to do something but had no idea exactly how to do it. Fortunately, nobody else knew either!

But rather than waiting and watching on the side at what was happening elsewhere in the world, we decided to infuse digital-company concept, thinking and technology into our traditional businesses. With strong support from

our forward-looking board, we decided to be more daring and take the industry leadership role. By the end of 2015, we had our new vision.

We got everybody to rally behind the roadmap of becoming a New Generation Digital Company. We embarked on a group-wide digitisation programme across all functions. We did have a slow start, and in fact failed to take the lead in the markets except for two OpCos. But fast-forward, by 2019, we are either at par or ahead of many of our competitors. Although still a work-in-progress, our digitalisation programme encompasses our products/services, processes (external and internal), technology and most of all, our 'organisation and people'. It embodies the culture we want to build, as well as the people we want to hire, to enable us to achieve that objective.

In our digital journey over the last five years, we've built a culture to experiment without fear of failure. We do not penalise or punish people for making mistakes. In fact, we encourage them to try again, try something new without criticism. The reason I emphasise this is that too often companies, people and the public look at mistakes and losses, but not at the bigger picture. We dare to challenge the norms and how people look at us. I think we should allow companies to nurture this attitude in Malaysia.

We made many mistakes and to be frank, some of the initiatives did not do as well as they should. But we persevered. By experimenting we will keep learning and adapting to new ways, and in the process, challenge ourselves. But that's not the only way. We also encourage our people to challenge each other, to learn from other industries.

Apart from "digitising" our so-called traditional business, we also embarked on building new Digital/Internet businesses, mostly organically. In 2015, we then embarked on the new journey.

Two years ago, after investing USD250 million in more than 23 digital companies, our companies valued at USD640 million by early 2019.

On another initiative, we have Axiata Analytics Centre (AAC) that employs almost 200 staff. They are at the forefront of using analytics and also Artificial Intelligence to solve complex business problems to develop a new explorer culture here. It's the atmosphere and the environment we nurture to allow people to generate new ideas. At AAC we sanction 20% of their working hours to pursue their own interests, allowing them to experiment or derive analytics unrelated to Axiata. We want to build on this new kind of skill. Perhaps this is one of the most important capabilities of any company to cultivate in the age of disruption.

Disruption can be detrimental, but it makes life very interesting. Some businesses we created have become the disruptor to the disruptors. For example, in our integrated digital advertising business, ADA, we not only disrupt traditional advertising companies, but use tech data and business model innovation to disrupt other digital advertising companies.

To survive disruptions, we developed a culture we call M.A.D. (Modern. Agile. Digital). Being M.A.D is all about a modern and progressive approach with the agility to encompass being simultaneously proactive and reactive and using the digitalisation concept and mindset to adapt. We are building a new culture.

I must say, my time here has been like a mini-roller-coaster ride. Just imagine, we are talking about 40-plus quarters after almost 12 years! Quarter by quarter, looking at the results and knowing we will not have a perfect picture. To top that, we also have to grapple with unpredictable regulatory environments and all kinds of circumstances beyond our control.

Case in point, back in 2016. Just as I landed in a country for an appointment with a telecoms minister over lunch, I was told that he had been replaced. Yet I still met him, albeit over a farewell lunch. Not too long after, I was scheduled to meet with the prime minister of another country. But when I arrived very late that night, I was told there was an announcement that the prime minister would be replaced. Same thing with another minister in a different country.

Lots of ups and downs. Just when I hear good news from one country, I will get bad news from the next. But I have since learned the art of receiving bad news! To be proactive, to react and respond very quickly, thoughtfully and calmly. I have since then in my role in Axiata, taught myself to prepare for any possibility.

I wish I could say that I know the future of telecommunications. I don't, and truth be told, no one does. What we can do is to position ourselves well, develop the building blocks and be agile to adapt. Being a chess player when I was in school, I remember while we can't predict the opponent's next move, we must position ourselves well by taking control of the 'centre boxes'. By doing so, we can react better or in today's word, be agile. Along the way we can experiment, improvise, learn and adjust, even as we move a few steps back or forward, all the while building blocks learning and progress. While we don't have all the answers, doing nothing is worse. So, what we have done is to believe we must transform ourselves into the next-generation company.

To be effective in my work, I'm always conscious of the importance of vision and strategy. But, at the same time, I'm very aware that I should only spend 10%, not even 20%, of my time on that. The rest is mostly about execution. As a CEO, you obviously cannot execute everything, instead you must enable execution. You get the right people, the right

organisation, the right processes and strategy to empower people to execute. That is my main role, an active enabler.

My job is also to build an 'institution' so that the company can prosper and sustain without huge dependency on existing management and people. It sounds easy, but to me, that's a huge part of the CEO role. It's not just about getting short term results.

Looking back, business-wise I'm quite proud that this GLC is largely managed like an MNC, with a Malaysian flavour at heart. It means we must be very performance oriented. We must produce results – financial and non-financial. We must attract, hire and retain top performers and team players. We must strictly manage non-performers, but with a heart and being compassionate, respectful and humane. That makes us different from some MNCs.

In fact, all our companies have done very well. Smart in Cambodia has successfully grown five times bigger. So has Robi in Bangladesh. XL in Indonesia and Dialog in Sri Lanka have all tripled in size respectively since we started. It gives me a lot of satisfaction to see how successful they are. Plus, all of them have been some of the best performers, if not the best in their respective markets.

As I said, the reason I joined this company is not just about the business, it is about developing talent. When I look back on what we have done, the many recent CEOs whom we have been nurtured from within and our mix of potential leaders from a combination of nationalities.

Within that context, I'm also very proud of our Axiata Young Talent Programme, where we have spent RM70 million of the pledged RM100 million, successfully developing 2,200 primary and secondary students and young professionals into future CEOs. Hopefully, 20 to 30 years from now, many of them can take on CEO positions that this country can take pride in.

We have also launched a programme to build Malaysian digital entrepreneurs, investing RM50 million, working with Malaysian Venture Capital Management Bhd (MAVCAP) and Johor Corporation. With the RM90 million under the Axiata Digital Innovation Fund (ADIF), we sought to identify, nurture and invest in Malaysian digital companies. So far, we have invested in more than 20 companies and, hopefully, in a few years some of them will become unicorns. We can take pride in being part of their journey.

I take personal pride and happiness specifically in these sets of achievements working together with my management teams and staff across the group. To me, that makes my journey in Axiata very worthwhile. When I look back, I see an MNC company; I see highly motivated staff; I see our contributions to all the countries we operate in and communities we serve, especially in Malaysia.

When I look back too, I have to thank Tan Sri Azman for giving me this opportunity to lead this company, and of course a long list of people who have guided, supported and helped me in the whole journey.

I now realise that my job is still and will always be an "unfinished business"; but I hope we have built an "institution" that will continue or carry our vision into the future.

“As a result of the past three years’ activity, we have achieved material progress, with significant milestones realised on this ongoing journey.”

Peter Chambers

Board Member
XL, 2006 – 2020



Tan Sri Jamal asked me to chair the Cyber Security Steering Committee (CCSC) as he regarded the cyber challenge as a major risk to the Group. Jamal provided his full endorsement of the initiative and empowered the CCSC with full autonomy to address the challenges. This displayed a vision that was ambitious, but necessary, from the Group CEO. Thank goodness for this vision.

We had to overcome many difficulties. From coordinating across the company and the creation of internal capability to enabling understanding of the issues and challenges in creating a core team to drive change. It took us 12 months to identify and recruit a leader, requiring an extensive international search. We were successful in creating a base to address the challenges.

Today our programme is fully endorsed by the Group, significant progress has been achieved and we have held our first Cyber Information Day. The Information Day was a significant milestone as it brought all the OpCos and Management together, in one place, to have an honest dialogue regarding the challenges. Of note, the event was officiated by Tan Sri Jamal who mentioned that he could not stay for the whole duration. However, on that day, as his interest peaked, he returned half an hour later and stayed for the entire day. An important moment in our journey!

As a result of the Group's effort, over the last three years we have made significant progress, establishing a solid platform for addressing future challenges.

Here's an amusing aside, relating to when I met Tan Sri Jamal for the first time at Jakarta's JW Marriott Hotel.

I had heard many stories about his approach and his time at Maxis. What impressed me most was his willingness to understand the Indonesian market and culture, and his inimitable low-key and humble approach that allowed for true understanding.

Interestingly, my next meetings with Tan Sri were all at hotels, The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta and The St Regis Bali Resort. It took four encounters to finally meet him in a formal environment. I thought, at least when we meet, we will not be short of coffee and food!

As our working relationship progressed, I have found Jamal to be gracious and giving of his time to the betterment of the organisation. His embracement of the cyber challenges has provided Axiata with an outstanding basis to tackle future cyber and data challenges.

Importantly, Axiata is a Group that should and will be an attractive place for the next generation of technology talent to shape the future of communications.

“My story, while less dramatic than that of Captain Nathan Algren, shares similarities in principle and in the journey towards self-discovery.”

Mohamad Idham Nawawi

CEO, Celcom, 2018 – Present

Group Chief Corporate Officer, Axiata, 2012 – 2018

My acquaintance with Tan Sri Jamal goes back a long way, from our IBM days in the early 90s when he was the boss of my boss, to throughout his Maxis days. Just like kismet, our paths kept crossing in our individual journeys. In 2012, Tan Sri Jamal, upon hearing of my departure from P1, asked me what I was doing next. I told him that I wanted to start my own consultancy company. He said, “Very good. And why don’t we be your first client?”

From that moment, my Axiata journey started. Through Incite Consulting I rendered my services to Axiata to manage the Axiata Business Transformation Programme. This programme saw the birth of, among others, edotco and Axiata Digital Services (ADS). I, for one, was thrilled to be a part of this formative period.

A year passed, then TSJI asked me again, “What do you want to do next?” My response, “I don’t know.” “Where do you need help?” I asked him back. And we left it at that.

A few days later, over breakfast, I started drawing on a napkin what I thought would be the next phase for Axiata: How do we push Axiata to the next level from a different lens, as globally responsible corporate citizens, building its mark in sustainability, to truly delivering its purpose of Advancing Asia as a regional champion. That morning, we introduced the fourth “Pillar” into Axiata’s vision: Planet and Society (on top of Profit, People and Process).

Thus began my new chapter as Axiata’s Group Chief Corporate Officer.

We worked tirelessly on Axiata’s first annual Sustainability Report. Truth be told, getting the initial buy-in was not easy, as most people think that sustainability is just a newly glorified word for CSR. We persevered, focused and stayed the course. All the sleepless nights and hard work paid off when Axiata won the award for Best Sustainability Report in 2014.

One of my fondest moments in Axiata was during the formation of Axiata Digital Innovation Fund (ADIF), a RM100 million fund to help Malaysian startups. We worked very hard to convince the Board and to find partners to co-invest. Together with MAVCAP, we launched the Fund with an initial RM80 million and, to date, it has invested in 16 local digital companies.

I am very proud to have worked with such great regulatory and corporate affairs teams across the Group. When I saw an untapped source of knowledge for us to learn from one another, we took the initiative to bring everyone together, to work more closely, and to exchange and build talent. Regulatory is a subject that is boring to most, but we must acknowledge that it is a scarce skill that is critical to the sustainability of our franchise. By learning the social and political landscape of each country we were able to define and strategise the most diplomatic approach in doing business there.

And now my journey continues towards making Celcom a champion again!



“To merge new technology and green innovation while aiming to provide the best possible service to our customers.”

Thayaparan S Sangarapillai

Board Member
Axiata, 2020 – Present
edotco, 2016 – Present
Robi, 2015 – Present



It is very exciting to be a part of the industry’s modernisation taking place currently. To merge new technology and green innovation while aiming to provide the best possible service to our customers.

The health and safety aspect, too, has been raised to the next level. Telecommunication towers have always been very labour-centric, with the steel structures sitting unattractively and uneasily within communities. With edotco the biggest innovation has been using drones to cost-effectively maintain networks and reduce human risk. We have had accidents, electrocution, and last year a vendor suffered a heart attack. Today, drone innovation minimises human contact in high-risk areas in Bangladesh and Cambodia, where strong winds are part of their weather pattern. Through effective drone maintenance we are able to involuntarily avoid injuring people from the nearby communities. Drones are currently used in Malaysia while drone use in all other territories is pending approval by the relevant authorities.

Sustainable design innovations within edotco have significantly reduced overall carbon emissions and increased extensive use of renewable energy. These include bamboo towers as an alternative in Bangladesh, as well as sharing of towers with other network providers to save cost, bring efficiencies and reduce redundancy in infrastructure. Our world’s resources are limited and we use shared infrastructure. That is the only way to go. And the decommissioned towers will be recycled.

My greatest satisfaction so far has been in getting involved with going green with the innovations available.

“The ability to learn is a function of your willingness to go out of your comfort zone.”

Datin Sri Badrunnisa Mohd Yasin Khan

Group Axiata Learning Officer, 2019 – 2020
Served in various roles in Axiata, 2008 – 2019

To be honest, I didn't quite know what I signed up for when I was unexpectedly offered a regional position - due to my overseas operations experience when I was with Shell - by the then interim TM CEO Tan Sri Dato' Sri Abdul Wahid Omar.

I didn't know who I would be reporting to, so as HR it was exciting when Region-Co CEO was finally revealed as Tan Sri Jamal. From that day onward, for me an exciting new vision unfolded. I'm glad I was there when it all began and we had autonomy at our corporate headquarters to form policies, not just to implement them.

Some of the key milestones for me were Axiata's listing on Bursa Malaysia, the launch of a new brand, the fiery first Axiata Senior Leadership forum, my introduction to the board and socialising in leadership circles with other GLCs. I was so excited when I saw the first TVC and the billboards on Jalan Sultan Ismail that I felt the whole world would be as excited as me. I felt so proud to showcase my company.

What I treasure the most is the learning insights, my non-exhaustive list includes:

- Diversity is necessary not for just widening the talent pool, but for raising performance standards. Like the time when I was always top of my class in a village primary school, as opposed to my urban missionary secondary school, resulting in my first-term grades slipping down the ranks. Axiata is such a place, to raise standards.
- Focus is absolutely key. In as much as we want to expand in every direction, given the possibilities, it will not create impact. Instead, it will lead to a 'dilutive' effect. From leading the AYTP, I learned to set a specific vision or goals but deliver them creatively.
- The ability to learn is a function of your willingness to go out of your comfort zone. Instead of being safe and "narrow", if you risk embracing changes and situations (despite not always knowing if the end result will end up positive) you will grow "broader" and stronger.



“Competence, commitment, courage, collaboration and clarity of purpose are visible elements of the Axiata ‘DNA’”

Dato Dr Nik Ramlah Nik Mahmood

Board Member
Axiata, 2017 – Present



After almost a year of self-imposed “garden leave” upon my retirement as Deputy Chief Executive of Securities Commission Malaysia in March 2016, I was appointed to the Board of Axiata Group Berhad on 21 March 2017.

Typically, public-listed companies are known to a capital market regulator for their notoriety or infamy. Those that get noticed for their glory and greatness, for doing the right things, for upholding the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and corporate conduct, are few and far between.

Axiata, however, was known to me for consistently being in this minority group, routinely contributing towards raising corporate governance standards in Malaysia. It is an exemplar of the best that corporate Malaysia has to offer, a GLC par excellence. This is manifested in the fact that, since the introduction of the ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard in 2012, an effort spearheaded by Securities Commission Malaysia, Axiata has always been among the top 10 Malaysian companies. In fact, in many of those years Axiata was in the top five.

At the ASEAN level, I had the privilege of knowing that Axiata was always in the top 20 among 550 companies from ASEAN countries. Axiata has also, through the years, won many accolades and excellence awards.

Hence, for a newly retired regulator, joining the Board of Axiata was one thing that I did with a deep sense of pride, but also a great deal of trepidation. How can I meaningfully contribute to the board? What do I know about the telco industry? Was there a fit for me in a board comprising such experienced members and charismatic and award-winning chairmen and CEOs?

At my first meeting the distinguished and affable Tan Sri Ghazzali helped address some of my initial doubts. However, I was then told that in joining the Board I would pave the way for Datuk Azzat’s retirement. He is a very experienced and highly respected senior legal practitioner and the fact that he was already a Commission Member when I joined the Securities Commission as a manager in 1993 compounded my apprehension.

It is now more than two years and my experience has been nothing short of exhilarating. Axiata’s management team, comprising highly qualified and talented people of many nationalities and led by the energetic and charismatic Tan Sri Jamal, provides strong support to the Board.

Competence, commitment, courage, collaboration and clarity of purpose are visible elements of the Axiata “DNA”. True to my expectation, the Board is a powerhouse of knowledge and experience, where diversity extends beyond gender to age, nationality, experience and qualification. Discussions are robust. Views are given with candour and conviction, but never at the expense of the strong camaraderie among Board members.

The Chairman of the Board, (Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar and, since 2018, Tan Sri Ghazzali) steered the meetings with fair and firm hands, delicately balancing the distinct but symbiotic roles of Board and management. Given the scale of Axiata’s business and presence in many countries in the region, meetings can be long and intense but, clichéd as it might sound, there is a never a dull moment.

Meanwhile, I am still trying to catch up with the frenetic pace of change that is sweeping across the telco industry worldwide....



“Axiata is changing lives. From Battambang to Bhaktapur, from Narayanganj to Negombo, from Melaka to Makassar, our digital networks are the lifeblood of everyone who uses them – farmers, students, teachers, doctors, storekeepers.”

Dr David Robert Dean

Board Member
Axiata, 2017 – Present

The digital revolution has changed the world in the space of a few years. When Axiata was born 10 years ago, the smartphone was still in its infancy and many of the services we now enjoy daily were little more than a twinkle in their founders’ eyes.

The numbers speak for themselves. In just 10 years the number of people using the Internet in the countries where we operate has increased from about 8% of the population a decade ago, to about 55% today. In Malaysia, almost 90% of the population use the Internet today, compared with 55% a decade ago.

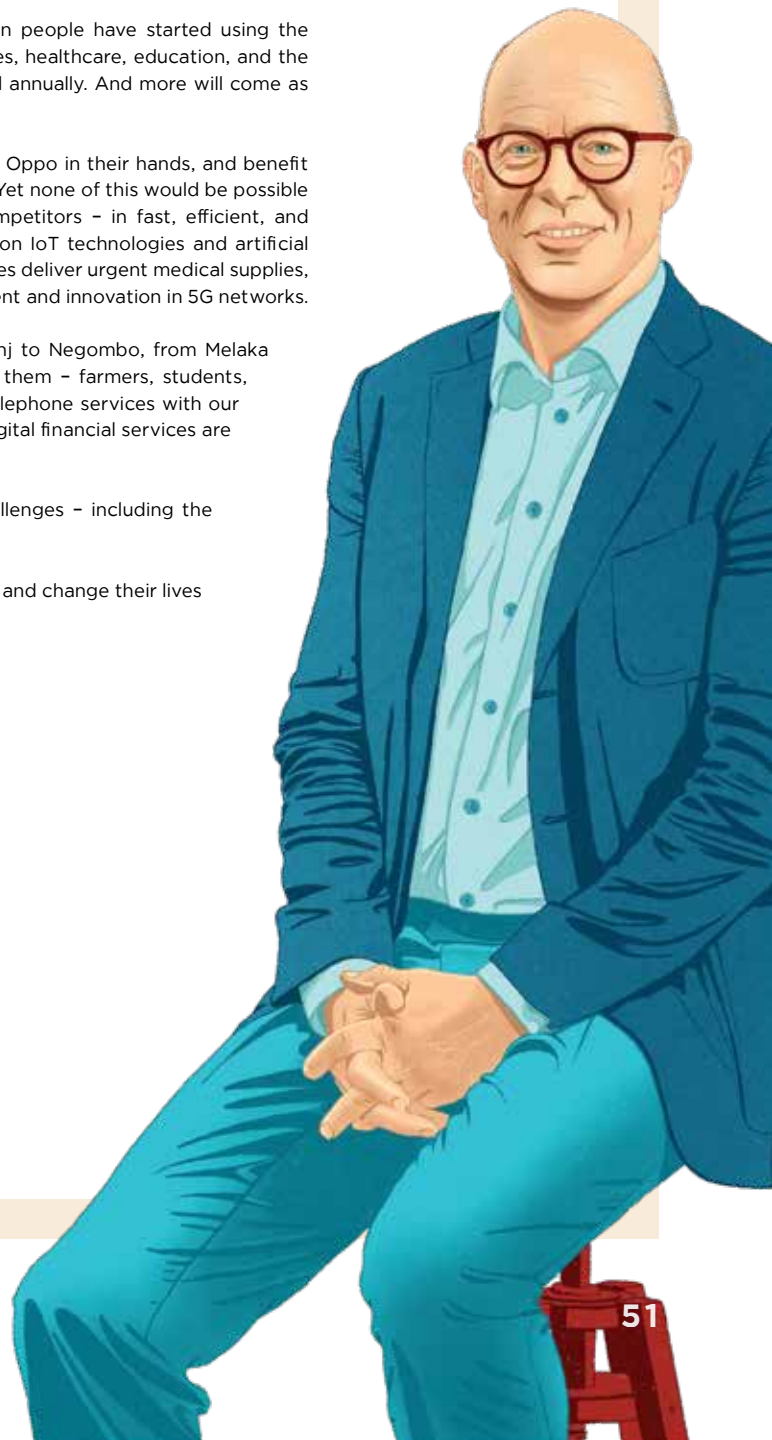
In other words, in our footprint of countries, roughly a quarter of a billion people have started using the internet in the past decade, and now have better access to financial services, healthcare, education, and the job market. Tens of billions of dollars in additional GDP have been delivered annually. And more will come as millions more begin to enjoy the fruits of the digital revolution each year.

Today, consumers hold products from companies such as Xiaomi, Vivo, and Oppo in their hands, and benefit from services provided by the likes of Lazada, Grab, Google, and Facebook. Yet none of this would be possible without the years of investment and innovation – by Axiata and our competitors – in fast, efficient, and increasingly ubiquitous networks. And, looking ahead, a smart world built on IoT technologies and artificial intelligence, where self-driving cars operate in our towns and cities, and drones deliver urgent medical supplies, or food for the family dinner, will not be possible without continued investment and innovation in 5G networks.

Axiata is changing lives. From Battambang to Bhaktapur, from Narayanganj to Negombo, from Melaka to Makassar, our digital networks are the lifeblood of everyone who uses them – farmers, students, teachers, doctors, storekeepers. In our early days we pioneered low-cost telephone services with our “minute factory” and, more recently, our investments in LTE networks and digital financial services are helping accelerate the transition to a digital economy.

In future, these networks will also help us address humanity’s biggest challenges – including the climate crisis and other environmental threats.

As a Board Member, I am confident that Axiata will continue to touch people and change their lives for the better. I am honoured to be part of this journey.



“Axiata stood out as an innovative, bold and forward-looking company.”

Dr Lisa Lim Poh Lin

Board Member
Axiata, 2018 – 2020

Compared to other global telecommunications companies, Axiata stood out as an innovative, bold and forward-looking company. Over the years, I am very impressed by the calibre of the management team and Axiata’s ability to attract and retain talent.

It is a privilege to serve on the Board of Axiata and work with Tan Sri Jamaludin Ibrahim and his management team. Tan Sri Jamal often listens more than he speaks, and he excels in his ability to influence and guide his people to achieve a common goal. Under his leadership, Axiata has achieved many great things and established itself as one of the most respected telecoms companies in Asia and globally and perhaps, more importantly a place where its employees are stretched and empowered to give their best.



“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.

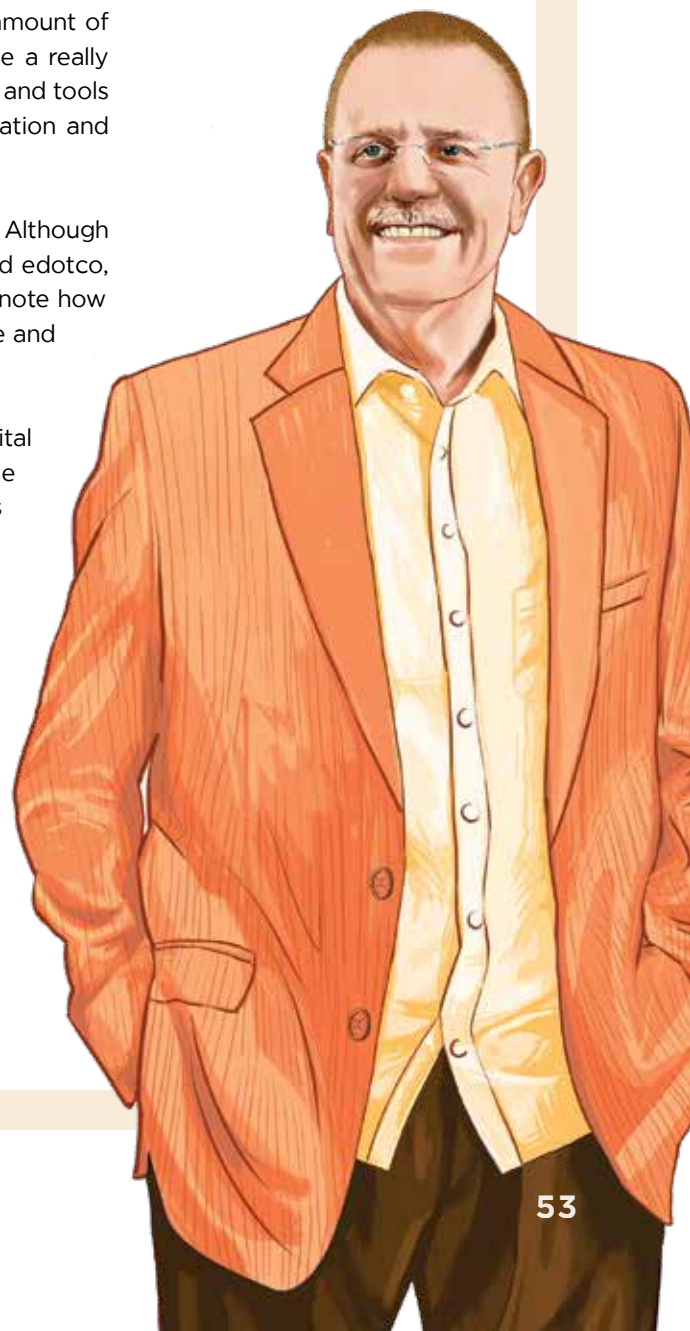
Over the last decade, in different countries and roles, it has been an exciting journey. Turning around Bangladesh with a great team, including a total rebrand from Aktel to Robi, was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. With great talent in Bangladesh and the help of the Axiata universe, as well as a good 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.



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

Khatijah Begom Shah Mohamed

Board Member
Celcom, 2016 – Present



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.

“I truly enjoyed getting down in the trenches with the team to enable the future of telco to become more digital.”

Mohd Khairil Abdullah

CEO, Axiata Digital, 2015 – Present

Group Chief Marketing and Operations Officer, Axiata, 2012 – 2015

My past seven years in Axiata has been a thrilling and significant experience. Everything I have achieved here stemmed from my need to give back to the nation that helped groom me in my younger years. Despite living and working abroad for 23 years, I was compelled to return and utilise my skills to make a real impact.

In many ways, joining Axiata back in 2012 as Group Chief of Marketing and Operations was akin to “National Service”. Axiata aligned well with my prior experience and I was able to holistically contribute towards its mission.

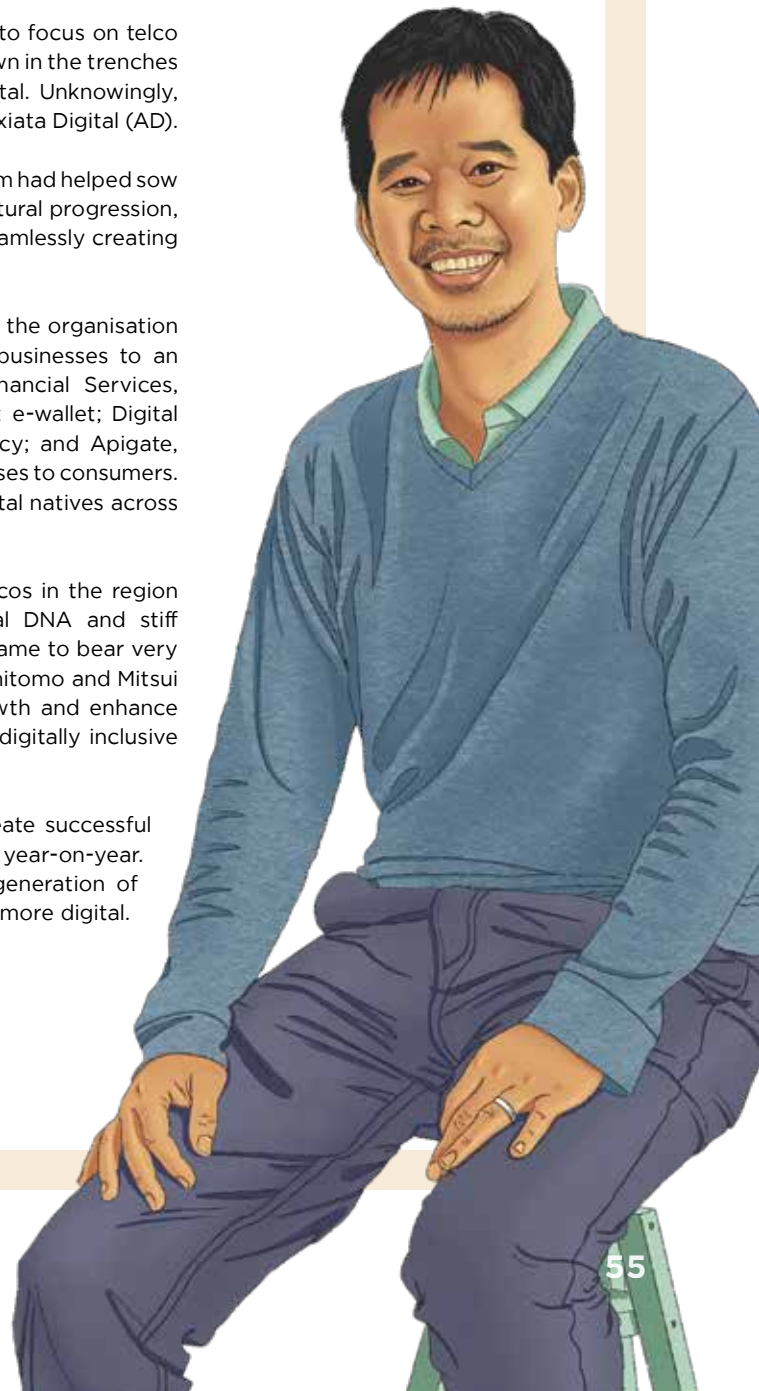
It was an exciting period because there was still enough headwind to focus on telco levers to drive growth in our core business. I truly enjoyed getting down in the trenches with the team to enable the future of telco to become more digital. Unknowingly, I was also being prepared for the next shift in my career – leading Axiata Digital (AD).

My experience in San Francisco in the late 90s during the dotcom boom had helped sow the seeds for my transition to become the CEO of AD in 2014. A natural progression, as the direction began to focus on building a digital-centric telco, seamlessly creating digital businesses to leverage on our telco assets.

The most significant milestone at AD has been pivoting the focus of the organisation from a venture builder of tech start-ups with a portfolio of 30 businesses to an operator of three core digital businesses. These are: Digital Financial Services, which comprise Boost, proudly homegrown and Malaysia’s largest e-wallet; Digital Advertising through ADA, Asia’s largest independent digital agency; and Apigate, an emerging global platform company that digitally connects businesses to consumers. These three businesses aim to champion the next generation of digital natives across Southeast Asia.

Creating sustainable digital businesses is not easy, as very few telcos in the region have succeeded for two main reasons - different organisational DNA and stiff competition. However, the blood, sweat and tears the team put in came to bear very sweet fruit when we received validation and monetisation from Sumitomo and Mitsui & Co, two Japanese conglomerates. This has helped fuel our growth and enhance how we accelerated digital adoption to ensure a future-ready and digitally inclusive society for rural consumers, SMEs and MNCs.

The greatest success for me has been proving that telcos can create successful digital businesses and watching them flourish and grow year-on-year. On a personal level, it has been the joy of grooming the next generation of business leaders, as we continue to forge ahead to make the region more digital.



Scan to enjoy the interactive AR content

“I joined Axiata at the time when the telecoms industry was going through an evolution to meet our customers’ thirst for everything digital. Axiata had to re-invent itself to meet this demand, and I was glad to have the opportunity to be part of this digital transformation.”

Asri Hassan Sabri

Group Chief Corporate Officer, Axiata, 2018 – Present
CEO, Axiata Business Services, Axiata, 2018 – 2019
Group Chief Business Operations Officer, Axiata, 2016 – 2018



When I was presented with the opportunity to work for Axiata in 2016, I certainly didn’t hesitate to seize it for two obvious reasons. Firstly, Axiata has the erstwhile reputation of being a well-run MNC, more so than a Malaysian GLC. The idea of working across many Asian markets where Axiata is present was certainly very appealing; to learn and understand the ways of doing business in fast-growth nations. Travelling and working in these diverse environments have been super crazy at times but very gratifying, and I’m grateful for this rewarding experience.

Secondly, it’s also to do with the fact that Tan Sri Jamal is helming the company and, given his knowledge and hands-on leadership, I knew Axiata is on the right path. I am also familiar and friendly with most of the senior leadership team, for whom I have the greatest of respect for their respective capabilities. One of the things I have learned over my many years of working is that a great company is run by great people. Axiata has done very well in that it hires the best people and puts them in the right roles. The company has achieved its great heights mainly because of the people and the ethos that built this company.

I joined Axiata at the time when the telecoms industry is finding its place in the global digital revolution, competing fiercely to meet our customers’ thirst for everything digital. Axiata had to re-invent itself to meet this demand, and I was glad to have the opportunity to be part of this digital transformation. In a way it’s reflective of how fast things move for us in this industry, and hence the need for all of us to be agile. Speaking of agility, I was lucky to be given the opportunity to have three different roles within the company in a short period of time – certainly kept me on my toes all these years!

I have been with Axiata for almost four years now. A short period of time compared to my other peers, but long enough to develop some very genuine friendships. On many days, coming to work to the Axiata office feels like the meeting of friends and family over open discussions, honest feedback, and the collective effect of people being productive and having fun while at it.

“Unequivocally, as with any organisation, it is the workforce that determines its destiny.”

Dato' Izzaddin Idris

Executive Director/Deputy Group CEO,
Axiata, 2020 - Present
Served as Board Member of Axiata since 2016

It has been just over three years since I was appointed to the Axiata Board in November 2016 whilst at the helm of an infrastructure and services group. Outside in, I was always impressed with the Board's vision and governance, Axiata's numerous achievements, the leadership of Tan Sri Jamaludin Ibrahim and his “merry team”. And, given my finance background, I can't help but marvel at the continuing investments despite the constantly challenging landscape!

Admittedly, the Board meeting the day after my appointment was daunting, as it was a revelation to the mobile telecommunications business. The “perfect storm”, as described by the then Chairman Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar, that Axiata confronted was not for the faint-hearted. Tough decisions ensued, especially around Axiata's investment in India, resulting in a significant impact on profitability in subsequent years.

I am indeed privileged to be able to draw from my fellow Directors their immense knowledge and wisdom in navigating the past challenges. Undoubtedly Tan Sri Ghazzali Sheikh Abdul Khalid, who eloquently stepped in as Chairman, provides the calm stewardship for the Board to continue charting Axiata's future while balancing the needs and interests of all stakeholders.

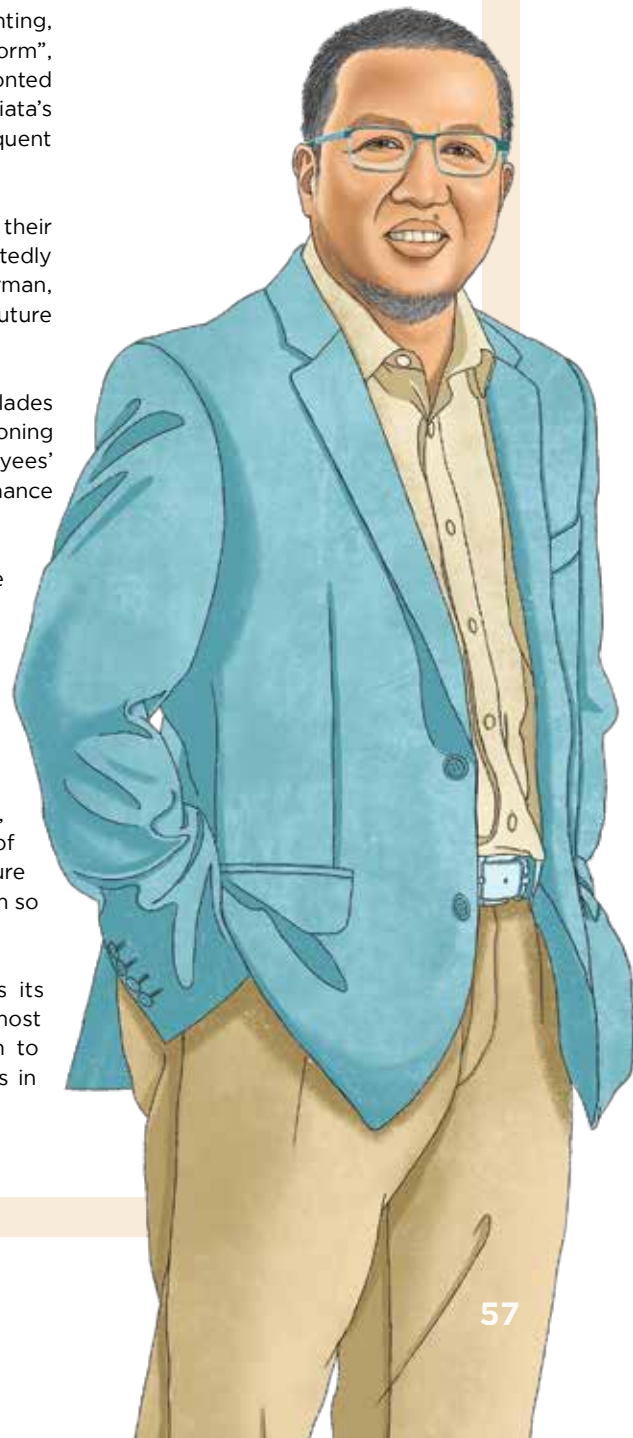
Over the years Axiata and its subsidiaries have been bestowed numerous accolades and awards, both in Malaysia as well as the respective markets. Whilst mentioning those awards here would be self-serving, what struck me as unique is the employees' relentless pursuit of living the values, be it in sustainability, governance, performance or customer satisfaction.

An inimitable trait of Tan Sri Jamaludin is his calm appearance despite facing the most adverse and demanding situations. Even with a confluence of issues from every key stakeholder – staff, regulators, partners, investors – together with challenging business/financials, his composed demeanour remains unruffled. There is always a solution! Perhaps due to this quality and brand Axiata the organisation has been able to attract some of the best talent in the industry.

The “contrarian finance phenomenon” is the constant reality of an ever-changing capital-intensive industry in order to retain and improve service level and quality, as well as satisfy dynamic customer sophistication and be at the forefront of technology. And yet cashflow and profitability are stable, at best. While the culture of Operational Excellence is a journey by itself, Axiata has a ready-made platform so that an effective execution programme can yield quick results, I am certain.

Unequivocally, as with any organisation, it is the workforce that determines its destiny. Team Axiata has not ceased to amaze me with their continuous, almost incessantly high level of energy, zest, camaraderie, creativity and innovation to adapt the businesses and compete effectively while managing all stakeholders in the various markets.

It is this key differentiator that will future-proof the organisation.





2016

With Minister of Communications Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak at KL Converge



2017

The Axiata Sports and Recreation Club Football Team



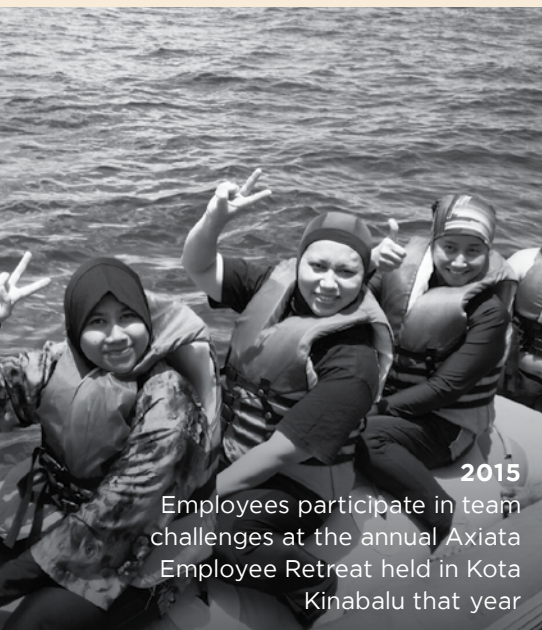
2018

Axiata holds offsite Employee Townhall at UEM Tower in Kuala Lumpur



2014

Axiata staff retreat in Langkawi



2015
Employees participate in team challenges at the annual Axiata Employee Retreat held in Kota Kinabalu that year



2015
Axiata Ladies participate in weekly Zumba classes organised by the Sports and Recreation Club



2016
Celebrating the first Townhall with Ncell employees in Kathmandu, Nepal



2012
Axiata staff retreat in Pangkor



2017
Celcom and Ericsson in collaboration to bring 5G to Malaysia

Acknowledgement

Memories

Without the overwhelming generosity and support of our mentors, friends and colleagues, this book would not have been possible. With their enthusiasm, dedication and willingness to share personal stories, the rich and detailed account of Axiata's journey to becoming a Regional Champion and transforming into a New Generation Digital Company is on record.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and acknowledge each person who participated in this project, beginning with our past Chairman, Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar, who first mooted the idea of producing this book, even going as far as to name it Memories. My thanks also to Chairman Tan Sri Ghazzali Sheikh Abdul Khalid, all present and past members of our Board of Directors, as well as our

CEOs and senior leadership across the Axiata Group for your continuous and unstinting efforts and commitment to Axiata's continued growth and aspirations. A special thanks to Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar for his kind words and insights on the transition of TMI in the early days.

Collectively, each individual story contained in this book has brought life, colour and profundity to the tapestry that is Axiata as we know it today.

As Barbra Streisand sang, "So it's the laughter we will remember, whenever we remember, for the way we were." In many ways I hope these reminiscences give readers a glimpse of the first 10 years of a company we grew together.

Tan Sri Jamaludin Ibrahim



Of Design, Digital Illustrations and Augmented Reality

Each experience is illustrated using Procreate app for digital painting and Wacom smart pad with photoshop and illustrator software. Each piece of art is hand-drawn with attention to detail, effect and personality, to capture individual nuances.

To further enhance the reading experience, a customised app combines image recognition and Augmented Reality technology to deliver selected video interviews instantaneously as you read. This interactive reality-based display adds to the reader's real-world experience. A selection of videos representing invaluable thoughts, lessons and reminiscences are also available to download.

Lastly, to further complement this unique experience that goes beyond print in this digital era, you can find stories like these, and more, here at www.axiata.com/storyteller/memories, a repository of Axiata narratives that together capture a significant era in the making of a regional Malaysian icon.

Step 1
Search for i-Nova App in Apple App Store or Google Play from your smartphone.

Step 2
Click the app and install.
(Please check your device compatibility before installing)

Step 3
Once installed, click open to launch the Augmented Reality (AR) App.

Step 4
Click the start button from the i-Nova App to launch the AR camera.

Step 5
Look for the "AR icon" in the book and scan the book cover image with AR camera to enjoy interactive AR content.

Step 6
You may click on the interactive buttons to explore additional contents.

Lyrics on Pages 5, 7, 25 and 41 credited to:
Barbra Streisand, Alan Bergman, Marilyn Bergman, Marvin Hamlisch
"The Way We Were" The Way We Were, Columbia Records (1974)

The book can be downloaded at www.axiata.com/storyteller/memories

Lighting the corners of our minds



MEMORIES



ADDRESS

Axiata Tower,
9 Jalan Stesen Sentral 5,
Kuala Lumpur Sentral,
50470, Kuala Lumpur.