

Maintaining excellent connections

By **VIKRAM SINHA**

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holds an MBA from the International Institute of Management and attended the Future Business Leaders and Business Managers Programme in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad, India as well as the Advanced HR Programme of the Michigan Ross School of Business in Ann Arbor, USA. Prior to joining Ooredoo Maldives in 2014 he was Managing Director of Airtel Seychelles and previously he worked in numerous functions including sales, distribution, marketing, human resources and customer care with Airtel, Coca Cola and STAR TV in India.

Ooredoo, which means “I want” in Arabic, reflects the aspirations of our ambitious customers and symbolises our drive to use communications technology to help people achieve their potential.

Despite the challenges of an island nation spread over several thousand miles of the Indian Ocean, Ooredoo Maldives has made satisfying high expectations its goal: our mobile communication service has changed life for residents, while also improving the experience of tourists visiting the islands.

Now the second largest operator in the country, Ooredoo Maldives covers 99 per cent of the Maldives with 2G networks, and 84 per cent with 3G+ networks. More than one-third of the population also has access to 4G networks.

We are passionate about being part of the digital future of the Maldives’ many communities, and we strongly believe that we can help enrich people’s lives and stimulate human growth by continuing to build relationships with our customers.

Headquartered in Qatar, and with a consolidated global customer base of more than 107 million people, Ooredoo’s market extends from the Middle East to North Africa, and includes the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. In every market, we strive to enrich the lives of our customers by deliver a full range of engaging and innovative communication services.

Recognising the sweeping changes that telecommunications has brought to our lives, Ooredoo has taken steps to stay ahead of the curve. In recent years we have worked hard to create a stronger, smarter company. This is especially true for our operations in the Maldives.

The majority of operators in the world build their networks for local customers only, rarely thinking about the needs of visitors. With only 320,000 citizens, but 800,000 tourists annually, the Maldives is an exceptional case. In the Maldives, we have inhabited islands with certain needs, and we have resorts that have a completely different set of needs. We have set up customised telecommunication infrastructure specifically for our resorts, where customers expect the highest quality roaming services.

This has meant not just providing a fantastic high-end data experience. The towers we deploy determine the coverage area, and those have to be harmonious with the environment and not higher than the trees on

the island. Even in smaller resorts, we had to deploy more than one cell site to cover the entire resort. It’s already done and it was expensive.

Enjoying the beaches, reefs, resorts, and water activities, there are plenty of moments that tourists want to share with their families, friends and colleagues. In the past, sharing was one-on-one. You would write a postcard, or you would speak to your close friend to explain the experience after you went back. Today, we share one-to-many. Via a simple social networking click, we can share with as many people as we like. Sharing has quickly evolved from offline to semi-online to online, thanks to the evolution of mobile broadband and smart terminals.

Harnessing the power of our better, faster networks to support our customer’s digital lifestyles is a priority for us. In the Maldives this means helping customers to enjoy live TV streaming, online music, gaming and socialising services along with other life-enriching services. It has also meant an overhaul of our customer service to further improve the Ooredoo experience.

Since we took on the Ooredoo brand in 2013 we have embraced the company’s corporate social governance tradition, by working to make a positive impact on the local community.

For example, we give boys, often from remote communities the chance to learn from world-class coaches at a football clinic hosted by Ooredoo and Paris-Saint-Germain.

While tourism contributes about 30 per cent of GDP, fishing is also a major part of the economy. Therefore, in addition to the core telecommunication services for the tourists, Ooredoo developed special services for the fishing boats such as Geo-fencing. If a fishing boat ventures beyond the Maldives’ territorial waters, the crew will receive an SMS followed by a call to inform them.

2014 was a record-setting year for Ooredoo: the group was nominated for a total of 64 international awards, winning 42 of them. As we continue to launch innovative products and provide an even better experience for all of our customers we believe that 2015 will be a bigger, faster, and better year.

Our journey started from humble beginnings. Strong organic growth, prudent investments, the hard work of our team in all our markets, and the growth and loyalty of our customers have combined to make us one of the world’s most exciting communications companies spanning half the globe.