A WONDERFUL WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES
BRINGING INNOVATION TO YOUR WORLD
2 New leader, new logo, new zest
Bader Al-Kharafi has been a Zain Group board member since 2011 and Vice-Chairman since 2014, and so when he was appointed Group CEO in March 2017, he already possessed a fantastic understanding of the business.

3 A refreshed logo and new brand positioning – “Unlocking Opportunities”
After a decade, the Zain brand was refreshed in November 2017.

6 Making innovation and entrepreneurship work
Zain’s collaboration with iflix is a perfect example of the meeting of minds between two companies harnessing innovation to drive improved customer experience.

10 Zain in motion
Looking back at an eventful and rewarding 2017

12 Building the regional data provider of choice
As a sustainable and innovative digital communications company, Zain remains focused on exceeding customer expectations via fast and reliable data services.

16 Delivering cash to the people
At Mobile World Congress 2018, Zain Group announced the publication of its annual thought leadership report, this year entitled, ‘Saving Lives by Empowering People through Zain Cash’.
Bader Al-Kharafi has been a Zain Group board member since 2011 and Vice-Chairman since 2014, and over the years has become extremely familiar with Zain and its operations. Thus, his appointment to the position of Group CEO in March 2017, saw Al-Kharafi take charge with a fantastic understanding of the company’s progress, as well as the challenges it faces.

The commoditization of voice, intense price competition, and high levels of mobile penetration means that operators such as Zain need to perform at their optimum to remain competitive and relevant. Under Al-Kharafi’s leadership, all Zain operations have continued to follow an “execution-focused digital lifestyle strategy” based on six transformational initiatives: Customer Experience; Operational Effectiveness; Value Management; B2B opportunities; Digital Frontier and Innovation; and Talent Development.

Zain’s goal is not simply to ensure customer satisfaction, but rather to build a base of promoters, aware that positive customer experience and advocacy drives competitive advantage, leading to faster organic growth and lower operating costs.

Group operating companies across all eight markets focus on prudent management of operational costs, with an emphasis on improving the quality of service, network reach and performance, and the growth of data services, while maximizing smart city developments, IoT and B2B growth opportunities.

In doing so, Zain’s overriding mission today is to have a positive impact on the communities it serves, while undertaking initiatives to maximize the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and promote social innovation.

Two landmark transactions

Zain finds itself in the midst of truly momentous times, having witnessed the acquisition of its treasury shares by Omantel last year, which brought immediate tangible liquidity and reduced debt benefits that will allow it to further invest in network upgrades. Zain also concluded the ground-breaking agreement to sell and lease back its telecom towers in Kuwait, in a regional first.

The purchase by Omantel of Zain Group’s treasury shares amounting to 9.8% of the issued shares for US$846 million in August 2017, marked the beginning of a new era for Zain Group as the company looks to bolster its position as a leading telecom conglomerate in the mobile industry across the region. Omantel later opted to further consolidate its investment by acquiring an additional share of 12.02% of Zain’s capital.

Al-Kharafi noted that Omantel’s show of confidence in Zain’s strategic direction is an enormous endorsement of the strategy that is being pursued, and the transaction is set to have a positive impact across operations for many years to come. Zain and Omantel are currently
exploring numerous business-enhancing and synergistic opportunities, and the potential for value creation is enormous.

Al-Kharafi also acknowledged that the sale of Zain's towers in Kuwait to IHS Holding Limited, in partnership with Towershare Management Limited, for US$165 million marked the start of a strategy to unlock value from the company's fixed infrastructure. It was decided that this value can be much more efficiently deployed in new technologies and higher yielding investments.

IHS is one of the largest tower companies in Africa, Europe and the Middle East, managing over 23,300 towers in five countries. This deal paves the way for further network expansion and infrastructure sharing in Kuwait, with the selling of telecom towers set to be replicated in other Zain markets, enabling the company to focus on its core business and enhancing customer experience.

**Innovation is Zain’s DNA**

All the efforts being undertaken by Al-Kharafi are aimed at Zain becoming one of the leading trendsetters in the digital revolution in the region and providing its customers an exceptional mobile experience. Innovation is part of the company's DNA, and it is making substantial investments in driving its innovation.

Al-Kharafi has also identified new business areas, value-adding strategic partnerships, accretive acquisition opportunities and synergistic corporate venturing investments which, collectively, are set to create new revenue streams to fully maximize the Group’s high-speed broadband networks, customer assets, network intelligence and payment and billing infrastructure.

Within the digital services and innovation, Zain is focused on identifying opportunities in the smart city space, e-entertainment, m-health, e-education, online gaming, online commerce, m-advertising, m-payments, m-insurance and other financial technology services domains as well as cyber security.

In a monumental step forward for Zain in its journey to become the premier digital lifestyle provider in the MENA region and to diversify its services and future sources of revenues, Zain established a joint venture with iflix – a world-class Streaming Video on Demand (SVoD) provider across many of its markets.

Zain also enhanced its important Zain Cash service in Iraq and Jordan to support the vast unbanked population estimated at 90% in Iraq and 75% in Jordan. Across these two countries, Zain Cash added new services such as virtual MasterCard, in-app services, QR code store payments, paying at an agent, loyalty programs, and e-commerce platform.

From a technology standpoint, Al-Kharafi highlighted that Zain successfully tested 5G technology in Kuwait, achieving maximum throughput speeds of over 70 Gbps over 2GHz spectrum. This speed represents one of the highest-ever recorded in the region, placing the company at the forefront of 5G innovation.

Big Data Analytics is a crucial factor in Zain’s digital transformation journey and the company is developing some pioneering capabilities in this area, having established an enablement platform that acts as a foundation for an enterprise-wide Big Data ecosystem at the operational level to execute upcoming technical and business use cases.

**A refreshed logo and new brand positioning – “Unlocking Opportunities”**

At a Human Capital Forum organized recently by Kuwait non-profit organization Nuqat, Bader Al-Kharafi delivered a keynote presentation to the audience on the vital importance of ‘Investing in Creativity for Social Impact’. In his presentation, Al-Kharafi spoke of how the Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought about radical changes in business, highlighting the importance and benefits of enabling a creative culture and the need to adopt innovative mechanisms in educational systems to provide future generations with necessary skills as well as the need to invest heavily in human resources, notably in youth and women.
The ‘Generation Z’ graduate initiative is aimed at bridging the gap between today’s curricular and the future’s unpredictable corporate environment. The program identifies bright, young Kuwaitis who the program assists in developing their soft skills to foster collaboration and team effectiveness, enhance creativity and enable innovative thinking. In this way the program prepares graduates to enter the workforce and contribute successfully to Zain’s digital lifestyle aspirations.

Now in its third year, the program has seen eight graduates join Zain Group as full-time employees and their track record to date has been impressive, with a notable achievement being the launch of Zainiac, an internal innovation program. This project provides a platform for all 6,000 plus Zain employees to offer their ideas, thereby fostering a creative and collaborative spirit among employees.

Transformations continue to be reflected across Zain under Al-Kharafi’s leadership, as new ideas and innovative approaches are embraced. After a decade, the Zain’s brand was refreshed in November 2017. Whilst the previous look and feel of the brand has served Zain well, the evolution was based on customer research across markets - and reflects the dynamism of the world around us, and Zain’s own digital lifestyle strategy aspirations.

The refreshed logo and other brand elements ensure the brand’s continued relevance, and will further elevate Zain’s brand equity, which is currently valued at over US$2.3 billion and ranked the second most powerful brand in the MENA region.

Zain’s logo now appears in a fetching silver-metallic shade, while it retains the radiant swirl, the black background has been removed. Preserving its essence, the enhanced logo encapsulates both the company’s heritage and its future, moving towards a prestigious, timeless, and elegant look and feel. The silver-metallic shade symbolizes innovation and high-tech, as Zain aspires to shine in this multi-screen digital age.

Al-Kharafi pointed out that the new brand positioning strategy – ‘Unlocking Opportunity’ – celebrates Zain’s desire to build positive momentum in transforming society, with the company focused on empowering customers and connecting them to the new opportunities the world offers, as we grow, share and enjoy life.

Women Empowerment

Zain is very proud of the introduction of its all-female empowerment initiative, aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering women in the organization to act, lead, develop, and succeed. The program is already running internally and was given its unveiling at an event in November 2017 attended by over 300 women from across Zain’s footprint. The expectation is for this meeting to become an annual event, geared towards producing an actionable implementation plan for the next year.

The program is of enormous personal interest to Bader Al-Kharafi given that today women account for less than 25% of Zain’s workforce while only 14.5% of senior leadership positions are held by females; a situation that led the Group CEO to take decisive action and implement a target to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions to 25% by 2020. Al-Kharafi firmly believes that championing gender diversity at Zain is both a prudent and correct move that will create competitive differentiation as well as increase the ‘happiness’ factor, which will lead to greater creativity and ultimately improve the company’s bottom line.
Digital developments remain key

Zain has adopted a data monetization strategy that is aimed at delivering healthy and sustainable growth in mobile data revenues while enabling its customers to enjoy a truly digital lifestyle. Innovation is part of Zain’s DNA, and if one looks back across the history of the company over decades, one can see the company always striving to bring the latest and best technologies to its markets as soon as practicable.

Group data revenues represent approximately a quarter of all Zain Group service revenues, and this figure is growing all the time. The telco believes as more data is consumed, and digital services accessed, there is also a requirement for further investment in network upgrades and resources to aptly serve individual and business customers.

B2B (Enterprise) is one of the most dynamic and innovative areas at Zain, and a growth engine for its operations. The company is addressing the B2B market in a segmented way, serving companies of all sizes, whether they be home offices, small medium enterprises, large corporations or government organizations with dedicated B2B teams.

Strategic relationship with FOO is bearing results

Zain Group’s investment in Lebanon mobile solutions provider FOO in 2016 is proving fruitful on multiple fronts. FOO has supported the telco in building its life-enhancing mobile money platform, Zain Cash in Iraq and has developed numerous customer centric mobile apps for several Zain operations. In addition, and significant for Zain’s business growth and digital lifestyle strategic aspirations, FOO is helping build a Group application programming interface (API) in coordination with Apigee (a Google subsidiary) that will be launched in the first quarter of 2018. This API will eventually connect all of Zain’s operations across the region into a single enablement platform, accelerating innovation and creating market opportunities for global digital players as well as individual developers to launch services to Zain.

Since Zain’s strategic investment in FOO in 2016 the technology company has supported the telco in building its life-enhancing mobile money platform, Zain Cash, as well as with other digital initiatives.

FOO is fast becoming a fintech powerhouse in the region and has attained prestigious accreditation with both Visa and MasterCard as an approved Digital Partner, the only fintech player in the region to have earned such.

Zain is evolving from being a mobile centric operator to a full-service ICT player, developing innovative mobile, fixed-mobile, fixed, IoT and cloud-based solutions for enterprises and governments in each market. One recent focus and success has been Introduction of a new data center in Kuwait, serving the local market with co-location, disaster recovery, Cloud and data center managed services. There are plans to replicate this successful venture in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, with the primary focus being on enabling the business growth of customers.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Group CEO congratulates Ghazi Attallah, CEO of NXN on the rebranding of the company from neXgen

NXN becomes smart technology advisory firm of choice

Zain is witnessing more profitable traction from its smart city arm NXN (formerly neXgen). Following the smart metering deal with Kuwait Ministry of Electricity and Water in the first half of 2017, NXN also signed a MoU with the National Digitization Unit (NDU) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, marking the Kingdom’s first step towards harnessing open data to help accelerate the digital transformation of the Kingdom. NXN has continued its fast-growing journey as one of the thought leaders within the region’s Smart Nation, Smart City and Smart Government advisory and managed services space.
Making innovation and entrepreneurship work

Launch of iflix across markets

In February 2017, Zain Group and iflix, the leading Streaming Video on Demand (SVoD) service for emerging markets announced the formation of iflix Arabia, a joint venture entity charged with rolling out iflix’s world-class entertainment service across several Zain markets.

With more than 170 studio and distributor partnerships worldwide, iflix offers users a vast library of top Hollywood, regional Arabic, popular Turkish, Bollywood and other local TV shows and movies, including many first run exclusives and award-winning programs.

The service was launched mid-2017 and is now available to Zain customers in Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan and Sudan. The joint venture will benefit from and leverage Zain’s established market leadership and build on learnings iflix acquired via its exposure to the market in Asia. Zain and iflix will work together in capitalizing on rapidly growing internet and smartphone penetration in the Middle East, and the huge appetite for digital content and entertainment in this region.

iflix’s propriety compression and adaptive bit rate technology further ensures that users enjoy a great viewing experience, enabling the service to stream smoothly even on 2G phones. Each subscription allows users to access the service on up to five devices, including phones, laptops, tablets, and television sets.

Creating ideal conditions for entrepreneurs in Lebanon

At the end of January 2018, touch Lebanon, managed by Zain Group, launched the “touch Innovation Program” (TIP), a platform on which entrepreneurs in Lebanon can exchange ideas and motivations. The initiative is in partnership with ArabNet, a hub for Arab digital professionals and aspiring entrepreneurs to connect and learn.

The aim of TIP is to engage and support the local digital economy in Lebanon in areas such as innovation and entrepreneurship through collaborating with startups and the identification of potential partners.

ZINC stands out

From an innovation perspective, the superlative progress of the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) in Jordan stands out across the region. The creative start-up culture and successful commercial launch of many young Arab entities out of ZINC is impressive. Notably, in a ceremony held in Dubai in January 2018, ZINC was a recipient of the Mohammed bin Rashid Awards for Young Business Leaders accolade for the Best Social Entrepreneurship Responsibility Initiative in the Arab World.

TIP is a platform on which entrepreneurs in Lebanon can exchange ideas and motivations. The initiative is in partnership with ArabNet, a hub for Arab digital professionals

touch innovators will also have access to touch LAB’s workspace serving as a platform for entrepreneurs wishing to take their startup ideas to the next level. touch innovators can benefit from Antwork’s offerings for entrepreneurs and enjoy unlimited free access to their basement workshop space, and use of the co-working space. This will offer entrepreneurs a chance to be a part of a wider community of entrepreneurs and innovators through various workshops and mentorships.

It is planned that every six months, TIP will identify and select 4-6 promising entrepreneurs who will then have access to touch LAB as a working space for meetings, products and services launches, and to host workshops.
Deepening roots and ties to the region together

The partnership between Zain Group and Huawei grows stronger every year. The two companies have collaborated on numerous projects to drive forward digital transformation across the Middle East. Their cooperation has resulted in innovative new ICT solutions and improved user experience for Zain’s customers.

Zain Group has regularly been an early adopter of new Huawei technologies. In Kuwait, Zain has tested and deployed FDD8T8R, an innovative solution with the potential to radically improve spectrum efficiency. Additionally, Zain successfully tested Huawei’s cutting-edge 5G Massive MIMO solution, resulting in a network capacity increase by a factor of five.

In May 2017, Zain and Huawei again combined forces to hold the fourth annual Zain-Huawei MBB Summit. Under the theme of “4G Evolution Towards 5G,” the event explored what organizations in the Middle East can do to facilitate the onset of 5G. The summit covered a range of themes from 4.5G to indoor digitalization and operations’ innovation.

The summit culminated in the signing of another strategic Memorandum of Understanding between Zain and Huawei. The MoU promises further collaboration in the field of 5G and continued cooperation in the testing and deployment of cutting-edge solutions to further improve the user experience of Zain’s customers.

From 2014 to 2016 Zain and Huawei held three consecutive MBB summits to explore how to evolve to 4.5G and how to improve network performance, capacity, and efficiency based on the use of 4.5G mobile broadband technologies. And Zain and Huawei signed an agreement in 2016 to jointly plan Zain’s Smart Network strategy, to ultimately increase network performance and capacity with less CAPEX, enhance network efficiency and thereby reduce OPEX, and help to expand new business opportunities such as bespoke home and enterprise services.

Throughout the Middle East, Huawei and Zain have been strengthening their strategic partnership across various technology initiatives.
The Story of Our Brand Refresh

1. We went to our markets
2. We met with our customers and listened
3. We continued to refresh everything...
4. Digital templates
5. We went to our markets
6. And new segmented active patterns
7. And new segmented active patterns
8. With authentic photography
9. Fresh advertising
10. Digital templates
The Story of Our Brand Refresh

Our brand has been a major success for 10 years. It has been an amazing journey to retain the value of our brand while also keeping us inspiring, vital and relevant in our customers’ lives.

Using these insights we started the Brand Refresh Journey.

1. Presentation templates
2. A beautiful simplified new master logo
3. Complemented with vibrant backgrounds
4. Proudly displayed via new store fascias
5. Zain business identity
6. Amazing social media
7. Business cards
8. Until we had completely refreshed guidelines
9. What a journey!
A look back at the significant strategic developments at Zain during 2017

January
• Touch launches Vinli, bringing the advanced connected car solution to Lebanon, including in-car Wi-Fi, cloud-based connected car apps, and advanced safety services.

February
• For the third consecutive year, participation in the EFG Sailing Arabia - The Tour (SATT) 2017 competition.

March
• MoU with innovative Canada-based Myca Health Inc. to rollout a world-class mobile health platform.
• A first for the region: Joint venture with car-sharing specialist, YOYO.
• Zain joins ‘Telecom Infra Project’ to develop next-generation telecom infrastructure, an initiative co-founded by Facebook, Intel, Nokia, SK Telecom, Deutsche Telekom and others in 2016.
• First telco group in the region to join Amazon Web Services Partner Network to provide resilient cloud solutions to organizations in the Middle East.
• Iraq’s Zain Cash introduces chanbar.com e-commerce platform to encourage Iraqi online entrepreneurs to turn ideas into reality.

April
• Brand Finance ranks Zain as the second most powerful brand in the region.
• Efforts in making technology virtualization a reality wins ‘Best NFV/SDN Solution Provider’ at 5G MENA Awards.
• Zain Saudi Arabia singled out as having the ‘Best IoT Application/Service’ at 5G MENA Awards.

May
• Launch of iflix service across five markets.
• Zain Kuwait signs a development, management, and operation agreement with country’s Ministry of Electricity and Water to manage smart electricity and water systems.

April
• Publication of thought leadership report: “Leveraging Technology to Protect the Rights of Children”.

January
• Honored with “Outstanding Contribution to the Mobile Industry Award” for 2017 by the GSMA.

February
• Brand Finance ranks Zain as the second most powerful brand in the region.

April
• Brand Finance ranks Zain as the second most powerful brand in the region.

May
• Launch of iflix service across five markets.
June

• Zain Saudi Arabia announces the acquisition of additional 10MHz of 1800MHz spectrum.

• Zain Kuwait and IBM launch Cloud Disaster Recovery service providing enterprise customers with cloud-based business continuity capabilities.

July

• Zain Jordan launches first phase of Zain Cash mobile e-wallet service at Point-of-Sale terminals across the country.

• Zain Iraq restores over 200 sites as well as sales channels in affected previously no-go North and West regions of Iraq.

August

• Publishes sixth annual sustainability report entitled ‘Innovate for a Sustainable Future’ aligned with the United Nations Guiding Principles.

• Zain Bahrain and Bahrain Basketball Association commemorate 10th anniversary of partnership with a new identity for the Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

• Zain Sudan signs a three-year strategic partnership with La Liga, to promote Spanish professional soccer across Africa.

September

• Zain Kuwait achieves over 70Gbps speed in 5G trial.

• Zain kicks-off the fourth installment of Zain Great Idea (ZGI) accelerator program, aimed at identifying and fostering young, hi-tech entrepreneurs in Kuwait.

October

• Collaboration with Nuqat to introduce IN•DIG•GO, a unique creative new education program for children in Kuwait.

• Zain Kuwait agrees to sell and lease back its telecom towers for US$165 million to IHS and Towershare in a regional first.

November

• Zain addresses growing industry Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) threats with a new mitigation service, collaborating with F5 Networks to deliver cybersecurity services.

December

• Zain Jordan and MasterCard agree to provide financial services to two million residents in the Kingdom, expanding features of Zain Cash.

• Zain and Omantel complete treasury share sale representing 9.84% of Zain’s fully paid in and issued share capital for US$846.1 million.

• Deal with Cisco to future-ready Zain’s network architecture to meet the evolving demands of customers.
As a sustainable and innovative digital communications company, Zain remains focused on exceeding customer expectations via fast and reliable data services. The company continues to invest in network upgrades and expansions, launching appealing data-centric packages and delivering improved mobile experiences to customers everywhere.

Zain is determined to be the data provider of choice by transforming into a comprehensive platform that enables customers to enjoy a truly digital lifestyle. This will be achieved by enabling the latest mobile technologies and availing a wide spectrum of relevant solutions including information and entertainment options.

Data Monetization

Across all operations for 2017, Zain witnessed 22% growth in data revenues year-on-year. The contribution of data revenues to overall gross revenues increased from 29% to 33%, fueled by a corresponding increase in data usage of 45%.

Zain has adopted a data monetization strategy that is aimed at delivering healthy and sustainable growth in mobile data revenues. This strategy is localized in each market via specific initiatives.

In Kuwait, Zain launched the BOLT hotspot device, offering customers the latest superfast CAT 11 network technology on its nationwide 4G LTE network. The operator also introduced exclusive loyalty offers for postpaid customers, allowing them to add a device from a wide range of smartphones, tablets and internet routers, as well as "PlayStation and Xbox" entertainment devices.

Zain Saudi Arabia maintained momentum in the post-paid mobile broadband (MBB) market by offering routers, Mi-Fi devices and game consoles on unlimited plans in return for commitment. The operator also expanded its post-paid MBB portfolio by launching capped plans, to cater for customers with moderate data needs and unified pricing across small and large screen offerings.

Zain Jordan witnessed a year of significant growth in data usage and revenues, underpinned by offering generous data capacities at higher spend levels on its 4G LTE network. The strategy included continuous upgrade offers to customers consuming over 70% of their data plans using telesales, SMS and in-browser channels. The operation also introduced competitive starter mobile internet plans to attract non-data users. M2M dedicated packages were offered.

Zain Sudan launched basic internet packages as well as introductory "bite-size" 4G plans to grow the base of mobile data users in the market. The operation continues to expand its 4G LTE network.

Zain Iraq is promoting its all-you-can-eat daily and weekly data bundles that have proven very effective in increasing mobile data penetration. Zain Iraq has also expanded its data portfolio, upselling options upon consumption of bundles and/or offering credit; in addition to new internet solutions for schools and vehicles amongst other users.

Mobile Advertising

Zain Iraq partnered with Huawei and media agency Out There Media to launch an award-winning mobile advertising campaign. Using micro-targeting and campaign optimization techniques, the customer response to the campaign was extraordinary, reaching 600,000 customers with an average click through rate of 1.41% and a peak of 3.5%, which is 30 times higher than industry benchmarks.

It was the first campaign in the region to win two prestigious awards – Gold and Silver – at the Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) Dubai Smarties Event. Zain Iraq has used this initiative as a catalyst for further campaigns to raise brand awareness, increase revenue and drive customer advocacy.
Turn on 5G with Ericsson’s complete 5G Platform

Today, data-heavy applications like virtual and augmented reality and 4K/8K video streaming are just around the corner; and the increased demand that will come with them will require network strength to increase in the same stride. In anticipation of this, we have developed a 5G Platform that addresses the needs of the first movers in 5G, with solutions that enable current networks to evolve smoothly into the next generation of networks. In line with this, we’ve released our first commercial 5G RAN software that will allow you to turn on 5G in your commercial network as early as Q4 2018.

“At Ericsson, we are committed to working closely with Zain and offering our continued support in transforming their networks for next generation technologies,” said Wojciech Bajda, Head of GCC and Global customer unit Zain, at Ericsson. “This valuable collaboration will power all futuristic applications like self-driving cars, virtual reality, and networked robots – and, surely, other exciting technologies we haven’t even thought of yet.”

Be the first to deploy 5G
First to market means first to revenue. In fact, a majority of operators that launched LTE first in their market have succeeded in increasing their market share. Creating a 5G first-mover advantage will allow you to strengthen your brand as a technology leader, capture lucrative early 5G adopters, deliver enhanced Mobile Broadband services, and explore new use cases and business models.

By turning 5G on in your commercial network in Q4 2018 and taking advantage of the launch of our first commercial 5G RAN software, you can attain that critical 5G first-mover position and ensure sustainable growth. Our 5G RAN software provides multiband support for global deployment and allows you to use new frequency spectrum as it becomes available, boosting your enhanced Mobile Broadband so you can start offloading traffic to 5G (that also enhances the 4G experience for your subscribers).

Grow 4G now with 5G-ready products
In the face of digital transformation, mobile data traffic growth will continue relentlessly. Meeting this demand and creating long term value in your network will require you to invest in 4G infrastructure that is ready to handle 5G. The installed base of Ericsson Radio System radios from 2015 onwards is capable of running 5G NR technology with a simple remote software installation. This also applies to all of our delivered Ericsson Radio System micro radios as well as for our existing Radio Dot System portfolio.

Accelerate 5G and IoT growth
The Ericsson distributed cloud solution enhances the 5G capabilities of our 5G Platform by providing an execution environment for cloud application deployment across multiple sites. Managed and orchestrated as one solution, it improves latency, security and resilience, and fulfills regulatory requirements of 5G-enabled use cases to provide you with a common and open cloud platform for all workloads.

Strengthened Ericsson Radio System portfolio
The latest products from our Ericsson Radio System portfolio will allow you to densify your network, increase capacity and meet ever increasing consumer expectations for performance. Our radio products support Massive MIMO technology to enable a smooth evolution from 4G to 5G and address the need for increased capacity while simplifying ease of adoption and installation. We’ve also added a new category of radio products called Street Macro – a new site type that lets you grow your network in dense urban areas when available radio locations are limited.
Customer Value Management

Zain strongly believes that its customers are its most important asset, and providing them with a differentiated experience is a critical factor in the company’s future success.

During 2017, Zain entered into an agreement with FlyTxt, a global leader in customer data analytics software solutions and employed advanced analytics to create bespoke offers for its customers, which were augmented by its new campaign management system.

B2B - A major growth area

B2B is one of the most dynamic and innovative areas at Zain, and a growth engine for our operations. Zain addresses the B2B market in a segmented manner, serving companies of all sizes, from Small Office, Home Office (SoHo) to large corporations and government organizations with dedicated B2B units.

Zain is evolving from being a mobile centric operator to a full-service ICT player, advancing innovative mobile, fixed-mobile, fixed, IoT and cloud-based solutions for enterprises and government entities.

Zain establishes one-on-one, long-term, relationships with enterprise customers through a mix of touch-points including key account managers, technical sales engineers, phone sales, Zain shops and digital channels.

Differentiated customer care is at the core of Zain values and all its enterprise customers enjoy multi-channel premium B2B after-sales support, with dedicated account managers, service managers, and priority contact center operations.

Milestones for Zain’s B2B activities in 2017 included:

- Launch of Direct Internet Access and VPN services in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Introduction of data connectivity solutions, over LTE, Microwave and Fiber, with premium Service Level Agreements.

- Launch of innovative leased line services over LTE technology, in Saudi Arabia. This is a high-quality connectivity solution, with fast implementation and the best in-market SLAs.

- Launch of International VPN in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Enterprises and governments can now connect, through Zain’s International MPLS network to their branches abroad.

- Launch of fixed-mobile converged voice offer in Kuwait, over an UCaaS platform. Customers can now cover their fixed and mobile voice services, PABXs, video-conferencing solutions and messaging needs in one integrated platform.

- Introduction of a new data center in Kuwait, serving the local market with co-location, disaster recovery, Cloud and data center managed services.

- Launch IoT managed SIM platform in Saudi Arabia, empowering customers to manage their IoT SIMs.

- Launch of International VPN in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Enterprises and governments can now connect, through Zain’s International MPLS network to their branches abroad.

- Launch of fixed-mobile converged voice offer in Kuwait, over an UCaaS platform. Customers can now cover their fixed and mobile voice services, PABXs, video-conferencing solutions and messaging needs in one integrated platform.

- Launch of a push-to-talk service, over LTE in Kuwait, integrating voice, video and location services as an alternative to traditional TETRA networks.

- Revamp of the mobile value proposition in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan and Sudan, adding greater value to Zain Business offers, and, expanding the portfolio to cater to the needs of all usage profiles.

- Zain Kuwait began the implementation of the largest IoT-smart meter project roll-out in the Middle East, comprising of a six-year BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) project for the Ministry of Electricity and Water, extending to 880,000 smart meters.
Zain Group-Nokia Partnership: Synonym for Unmatched Customer Experience

Zain Group operators in the Middle East have been partnering with Nokia to ensure unmatched customer experience for their subscribers with Nokia’s superior technologies such as the recently deployed FastMile, MEC, EdenNet SON and professional services, among many other advanced technologies.

In Saudi Arabia, Zain KSA has deployed Nokia’s Multi-access Edge Computing (MEC) platform for the delivery of two smart applications in the vicinity of Mecca, allowing the subscribers to navigate the crowds and ensure the best mobile experience during the Umrah and Hajj pilgrimage. The Zain People Finder application helps them to easily locate and meet up with friends and family. The Live Hajj application allows them to view video streams from the Al Rahmah Mountain in Arafat and the Jamarrat area for them to identify the best and quietest time of the day to perform the ‘flinging of the pebbles’ ritual.

Sultan AlDeghaither, Chief Technology Officer of Zain Saudi Arabia, said: “In keeping with our commitment to offer the best possible services to our subscribers, we have invested in modernizing our network in the Hajj area. The deployment of the Nokia MEC platform and two smart Hajj applications on this network is yet another milestone in our evolution toward building smart cities in the kingdom.”

In addition, Zain Saudi deployed Nokia’s FastMile technology to provide a superior customer experience. The deployment of FastMile, the first for Nokia in the Middle East and Africa region, provided seamless 4G macro network coverage to reach users located in a challenging environment. Also, with Nokia software EdenNet SON, Zain Saudi Arabia delivers a superior experience during Hajj and Ramadan as the software help Zain effectively manage the surge in voice and data traffic in Makkah and Medina.

In Iraq, Zain selected Nokia to modernize and expand their radio networks with Nokia’s most advanced technologies including Nokia Flexi Multiradio 10 Base Station and Nokia Mass Event Handler across Karbala, Najaf and Basra. There was a special focus on the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf in order to meet the increased data and voice traffic during Zeyara and beyond which further improved the indoor and outdoor coverage in both urban and rural areas, as well as enabled increase data throughput, leading to an overall superior customer experience.

Rami Andraos, Head of Zain CBT at Nokia, said: “Nokia fully understands Zain Group’s requirements in all countries including Kuwait, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi, Jordan, Bahrain and Sudan, and is committed to providing our advanced technologies to continuously evolve its network to enable unmatched customer experience.”

Zain Group operators in the Middle East have been partnering with Nokia to ensure unmatched customer experience for their subscribers with Nokia’s superior technologies such as the recently deployed FastMile, MEC, EdenNet SON and professional services, among many other advanced technologies including Nokia Flexi Multiradio 10 Base Station and Nokia Mass Event Handler across Karbala, Najaf and Basra. There was a special focus on the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf in order to meet the increased data and voice traffic during Zeyara and beyond which further improved the indoor and outdoor coverage in both urban and rural areas, as well as enabled increase data throughput, leading to an overall superior customer experience.

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At Mobile World Congress 2018, Zain Group announced the publication of its annual thought leadership report, this year entitled, ‘Saving Lives by Empowering People through Zain Cash’

Zain’s latest thought leadership report, available only online on www.zain.com, showcases how Zain Cash, a dynamic and life enhancing mobile banking service, transforms people’s lives, particularly those of the most vulnerable in society. The report draws much of its primary data from examples found in Iraq, with NGOs and humanitarian aid agencies being key Zain Cash users.

It is estimated that 89% of Iraq’s adult population does not possess a bank account, though the great majority of these unbanked adults own a mobile phone. Many adults have begun to use their phones beyond just voice and text messaging, to include activities such as sending and receiving payments and other transactions.

The report highlights how shared value and value creation should drive a company’s strategy when developing offerings for a market, as it helps sustain the business by creating new ways to achieve economic success. ‘Saving Lives by Empowering People through Zain Cash’ examines how this application is an example of the strong link that exists between Zain’s core commercial activity and the transformational impact that this service has on people’s lives.

In March 2017, the Zain Cash service was extended through the introduction of chanbar.com, a multi-channel, cloud-based e-commerce platform to support Iraqi online entrepreneurs. Chanbar.com allows small and medium-sized businesses to launch customizable online stores within 24 hours at no charge to the businesses.

Chanbar.com eliminates the cost and effort related to designing, coding, hosting, integration and other set-up activities, enabling entrepreneurs to kick off their e-commerce projects swiftly. The initiative also encourages off-line merchants to open new digital retail channels effortlessly.

In January 2018, Zain Cash announced the introduction of the Quick Response Code (QR code) in-store payment system in the country, which is expected to completely re-shape the payment industry.

The square QR code is displayed in-store and can be scanned by the Zain Cash application to conduct a transaction. It is a successful payment method used in other parts of the world.

QR codes provide merchants with a cost-effective way to accept in-store payments without needing costly infrastructure or even an internet connection to process transactions. The system provides an easy and convenient way for stores to print QR codes and display them ready for payments, while also giving merchants a straightforward way to cash-out from Zain Cash’s 3,000 agents nationwide in Iraq.
Zain’s progress continues to draw accolades

Awards

Since its introduction in 2007, the Zain brand has been identified across the MENA region as the best telecom brand on numerous occasions from various regional organizations.

For the fourth consecutive year, in 2017, the Zain was identified as the ‘Best Brand for Telecom in 2017’ at the Telecoms World Middle East Awards.

The 2017 Ramadan TV Commercial entitled “We Sing with Love” that went viral and became a global sensation won numerous awards.

At the highly coveted CommsMEA Awards in November 2017, Zain was awarded the Best Marketing Campaign in recognition for its bold and impactful 2017 Ramadan TV Commercial.

Additionally, the 2017 Ramadan TVC won eight awards (1 Gold, 1 Silver, 5 Bronze) plus “One Special Merit Award for Boldness” (plus 3 other shortlists) at the prestigious Global Cristal Awards held in December 2017 in Courchevel, France. More than 3,900 creative campaigns from more than 50 agencies across the globe entered the renowned competition.

These accolades recognize the outstanding performance of Zain’s brand across its markets, which has come to represent the highest standard of customer experience across all touch points.

Social media

Zain invests heavily in its brand and services on all media channels, contributing to increasing the loyalty amongst customers in addition to attracting new ones. As we move towards a digital world it is particularly pleasing to see significant growth of customer advocacy – demonstrated via the fans, comments and views on all our social media channels.

By the end of December 31, 2017, Zain Group and its local operations reached 9 million fans on Facebook (a 10% annual increase), more than 6.5 million followers on Twitter (25% annual increase), and 1.2 million on Instagram (20% annual increase). During 2017, Zain Group and operations’ YouTube channels have had a remarkable 125 million views.
SAVING LIVES BY EMPOWERING PEOPLE THROUGH ZAIN CASH