

INSIDE BATELCO'S RECIPE FOR GLOBAL SUCCESS

The keys to success aren't just new products and services, says Batelco's **Adel Al-Daylami**. People and partnerships can't be neglected either – and they are big reasons why Batelco has thrived amidst enormous transformation in the company, within Bahrain and across the wider world



It is one thing to say the world – and consequently, the business climate – is changing. It’s really a whole other thing to not just survive such changes, but thrive amidst them.

Adel Al-Daylami, chief global business officer for Batelco, says that achieving success amid the constantly changing communication and business environment locally, regionally and internationally, really comes down to a simple formula. “It’s a simple magic that we have... The key element is the people that you have,” he says.

Those people have been helping Batelco Global thrive. As Al-Daylami says: “Batelco has been developing a carrier friendly ecosystem supported by a strong value proposition to attract international carriers and content providers to the Kingdom and to reach global locations in the East and West from Asia to Europe and the Americas. The ecosystem is designed to cater for the ever-growing data demands. Batelco has recently launched a Carrier Neutral Transit Zone (Global Zone), regional data centre collocation, and IP transit and internet exchange (Manama-IX) which is managed by a world leader Amsterdam-IX.”

Additionally, Batelco has also launched BGN (Batelco Global Network) to meet the demand for reliable high bandwidth connectivity and capacity serving the different needs of global services and customers.”

That may be a lot, but Al-Daylami says it’s been possible thanks to Batelco’s vision and team.

He expands on this – and why good people are really the “secret sauce” for any



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“When it comes to operators, we are using more or less the same technology. What makes the difference is people. All business is about people,” comments Al-Daylami.

Business is also about partnerships, and it’s something that Batelco has particularly excelled in.

Part of it is simple necessity and adapting to the changing times.

“Those days of anyone working alone are gone,” he asserts, adding this even applies to industry ‘giants’ like Amazon or Microsoft or Google.

In other words: technology companies today are interdependent – because technology itself is interdependent.

Al-Daylami says: “partnerships are for the benefit of everybody.”

There’s another ingredient to add to the recipe for success: being responsive

to changes. Al-Daylami says that has been a critical reason Batelco has been able to stand out in a market that, although small in terms of overall population compared to other Middle East countries, is as ultracompetitive.

“If you have these two elements, partnerships and responsiveness, you will have success.”

But what, really, makes Batelco different? Al-Daylami has a quick answer.

“Our experienced and highly skilled teams put customers at the heart of everything we do,” he says.

“Being responsive and acting as a consultant to our customers are key attributes in making our business unique.”

According to the chief global business officer, other important factors include efforts to invest and adopt in ‘cutting edge’ technologies. Additionally, Bahrain’s laws and regulations, which have been built through ongoing discussion and collaboration play an important role. “We are very proud of the level of regulatory support in the Kingdom of Bahrain,” he adds.

But what are some of the things Batelco is working on to achieve success, both in the near term and further into the future?

According to Al-Daylami, there are a number of initiatives that the operator has been working on. “We have two exciting new services, Global Zone and Manama-IX [Manama Internet Exchange],” he says. We also announced the launch of our Uptime Institute Certified Tier III data centre earlier this year, and we have a second Tier III data centre planned and in process.”

“Our focus will be how to turn Global Zone and Manama-IX into a leading hub point of exchange in the region. Our aspiration is to expand Global Zone’s presence in the region and beyond by connecting to other data centres and connect IXs together as well.”

He expands on what Global Zone is and how it works. “Global Zone is a carrier neutral digital business platform based on a highly secure Tier III data centre, located in Bahrain, the heart of the Arabian

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Gulf. Global Zone is built to support the development of the digital economy and attract leading ICT players by enabling them to meet and exchange data in a robust ecosystem.”

And Manama-IX?

“Manama Internet Exchange (mn-ix) is the internet traffic exchange platform interconnecting global networks within the Global Zone, the neutral transit zone. mn-ix meets the demands of the global network operators and content providers from a comprehensive integrated platform. It also contributes toward the development of internet services across the region including interconnecting regional Internet exchanges, cloud service providers, CDNs, data centres and retaining regional traffic, leading to ultimately enhancing the user experience.”

Al-Daylami says these initiatives reinforce a simple ethos for the company.

“We support digital economies.”

Batelco is also planning on expanding its global presence with more points-of-presence (POP’s) and Internet exchanges in other locations – which reflects the success of Batelco’s business reach which continues to expand.

Al-Daylami says while Batelco already provides cloud services for the local market, there are plans for taking its cloud-related services to the regional market too, particularly focussing on cloud services for enterprise and small to medium sized organisations.

This is only natural, he says, since so many services are already based in the cloud – and far more are likely to migrate there in the future, particularly with the explosion of IOT (Internet of Things) devices and ever-increasing amounts of

data being generated. There are other services that Batelco is planning, too. Al-Daylami says big initiatives include, among other things, strengthening the current partnerships to grow the company’s partnership circle, introduction of innovative solutions, expanding its global presence by entering into strategic alliances for the development of new cable systems, introducing managed services to further support customers and delivering an exceptional experience to them, offering professional and consultancy services to help customers reduce costs, improve business operations and increase productivity – and many more things.

And 5G? That’s a given – it’s already being rolled out across Bahrain.

“Batelco is very proud to have launched this technology in the Kingdom’s market due to the importance of 5G technology in enabling the digital economy and enhancing the telecom sector,” comments Al-Daylami.

Al-Daylami elaborated on the importance of Batelco’s partners and joint ventures, noting that the company’s strong partnerships are not just local, but also regional and global.

“We maintain very strong relationships with our partners and as a result, of such collaborations, we have witnessed several achievements that support our growth agenda,” Al-Daylami says.

“I can see that regional players work closely with international carriers, while I believe they should collaborate regionally to help each other in strengthening business ties. With partnerships, all of us will succeed,” he adds.

And Batelco?

“We are focussed on continuing to be a major contributor in the evolving ecosystem,” Al-Daylami concluded.

And given their track record so far despite the continuous evolution of communication technology and a very competitive playing field, there’s little doubt they will continue to succeed.

Proof of this: the company’s financial results for the first half of 2019 were up from the same period in 2018 – and the future looks bright. ◻