

The year 2010 was marked by a series of events including the auction of 3G and BWA services, the rollout of services by operators, and global expansion by some. The year saw considerable churn in the sector on the whole, at both the senior and middle management levels. Bharti Airtel, for one, moved several of its top officials to run its African operations following the acquisition of Zain Telecom, while bringing in several key officials from there to work in its Indian business.

tele.net tracks the movement of the top telecom officials during 2010...

Ministry of Communications and IT

Facing severe censure for his role in the allocation of 2G spectrum licences, which is estimated to have cost the exchequer a loss of over Rs 1.7 trillion, the then A. Raja, minister of communications and IT, had to resign. India's human resource development minister Kapil Sibal was given the additional responsibility of the Ministry of Communications and IT.

Bharti Airtel

The year 2010 began with some key exits from team Bharti. The company's chief marketing officer (CMO), Sanjay Gupta, resigned to take over as chief operating officer (COO) of Star TV. Soon after, Bharti Airtel's executive director Syed Safawi joined Reliance Communications (RCOM) as chief executive officer (CEO) of the wireless business division. R. Chandrasekhar, head of brand and media at Bharti Airtel also resigned to join Reliance Mobile in a marketing role. Chandrasekhar was with Airtel for three years and played a key role in the company's brand communications.

Bharti Airtel went in for a major restructuring exercise. As part of a top management reshuffle, Dr Jai Menon, CIO of Bharti Enterprises, and director, technology and customer services, Bharti Airtel, was promoted as group director for IT services. He is responsible for establishing the Bharti Group's IT architecture and security standards, and works closely with the international business group led by Manoj Kohli. Amrita Gangotra succeeded Menon as director, IT, Bharti Airtel, India and South Asia, and reports to Sanjay Kapoor, who took over as CEO, India and

South Asia, with effect from March 2010.

In April, Bharti Airtel appointed Kelton Drew as president, enterprise services. Drew, earlier managing director of Telstra International, was largely responsible for turning around his previous company's international operations. He replaced David Nishball, Bharti's earlier head of enterprise services, who returned to Singapore in March 2010. Nishball is now responsible for expanding Bharti's enterprise operations in other overseas locations (apart from Singapore and Hong Kong). The company also brought in Nokia India's marketing head Vineet Taneja as its executive president for the southern region. Taneja was the second most senior executive for Nokia's Indian operations.

Towards the second half of the year, Bharti Airtel's CTO Jagbir Singh resigned from the company to join RCOM as president of technology and networks. Bharti Airtel appointed Sanjeev Kumar Saxena as CEO, mobile services, Delhi and NCR. Saxena, a chartered accountant by training, has been with Bharti Airtel for the past 15 years. During his tenure, he has served as CEO of the upper north (Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir) circles and as COO of the Orissa circle.

Airtel Africa

After its acquisition of Zain's African telecom assets, Bharti Airtel decided to structure its operations in Africa into three separate divisions, each headed by a separate CEO. These divisions are Bharti Anglophone (comprising the English-speaking countries – Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia); Bharti Francophone (comprising the French-speaking countries – Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Congo B, Madagascar, Niger and Gabon); and Nigeria (the continent's largest telecom market). To head the Anglophone division, Bharti Airtel brought in Essar Telecom's CEO Jayant Khosla, who is currently based in Kenya. For the Francophone countries, it appointed Zain's COO Tiemoko Coulibaly as CEO. Bharti Airtel's executive director (ED) for enterprise services, Rajan Swaroop, took over as CEO and managing director for the Nigeria operations, while the erstwhile CEO for West Bengal and Orissa, Deepak Srivastava, was appointed as COO and ED in Nigeria. The company also appointed Sunil Colaso, CEO of the Ruia-owned Warid Telecom, as head of the distribution and marketing divisions across all the 15 geographies in Africa.

Yves Mayilamene, who was heading HR for Zain Africa's Francophone operations, was appointed as head of Bharti's HR division for all 15 countries. Caba Pinter, who was heading

the finance functions of Zain in that region, was made deputy chief financial officer (CFO) of Airtel Africa. N. Arjun was given the responsibility of integrating all the African operations into a common entity. Rahul Gupta, chief customer services officer for Bharti Airtel's mobility business in India, was appointed as head of customer services for Africa, while Rupinder Goel, who led the technology services vertical across businesses for Airtel in India, was made CIO of Airtel Africa. Bharti Airtel also appointed Sam Elangalloor as managing director (MD) for its Tanzania operations. Prior to this, Elangalloor was CEO of Airtel Telemedia Services.

Andre Beyers was hired as CMO for Bharti's African operations in August 2010.

The latest appointment was that of Somasekhar Vellapakkam Ganapathy as MD of Airtel Uganda. Prior to this, Ganapathy worked as hub head and executive senior vice-president at RCOM.

Reliance Communications

RCOM undertook a restructuring exercise of its wireless business leadership team in the first quarter of 2010. It appointed C.S. Rana, Akshay Kumar, Vivek Garg and Nilanjan Mukherjee as the four regional heads for its national GSM and CDMA operations. They report to Satish Seth, group managing director, Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group. Under each regional head, there is now a team of individual circle heads known as hub heads. For its global operations, RCOM hired former Vodafone Essar director and chief technology officer (CTO) Naresh Gupta as president, Reliance Globalcom. Meanwhile, Arun Sur, RCOM's networks head, joined the special projects team, which is responsible for exploring mobile service opportunities in overseas markets like Africa and Sri Lanka. S.P. Shukla, who was president of the wireless division till September 2009, was reported to join as head of the special projects team.

This was followed by a series of senior-level recruitments where over half a dozen senior executives were hired to strengthen RCOM's management structure. Sitapathy Chavali, a former Vodafone Essar employee, was recruited as wireless CTO for RCOM. He has earlier worked with Idea Cellular and Lucent Technologies, USA. Former Bharti Airtel executive Nagesh Rajanna was appointed the national head of sales and distribution. Other executives who were brought in from different companies include Anuraj Prashar from Airtel and Naresh Gupta from Vodafone Essar. Meanwhile, Adrian Williams was appointed as head of human resources, Prashant Gokarn as the head of 3G services and Suresh Jayaraju as head of new-age value-added services.

RCOM also appointed C.S. Rao as head of its corporate affairs and regulatory divisions. Prior to this, Rao was MD, Intel, South Asia and the Middle East.

Meanwhile, George Varghese, president, enterprise broadband business, RCOM, and Inder Bajaj, head, Reliance Infratel (RCOM's tower arm), resigned from the company. S.P. Shukla took over the reins at Reliance Infratel in addition to his duties as president of special projects, RCOM.

Tata Teleservices Limited

In an attempt to achieve a more efficient management structure, Tata Teleservices Limited (TTSL) changed the roles of four of its top officials. Deepak Gulati, formerly president of the company's GSM and 3G business, was made executive president of the mobility division, including mobile services based on the CDMA platform. Gulati has been with TTSL for over two years. A.G. Rao, who headed the technology and networks division of the company, was appointed as executive president, in charge of the enterprise and technology division. Lloyd Mathias, earlier head of marketing, was appointed president, corporate monitoring, involving risk management, audit, business process re-engineering, brand development and governance. Pankaj Sethi, president of corporate services, was elevated to the position of head, Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) Limited, the listed arm of TTSL.

Vodafone Essar

Harit Nagpal, who was serving as group marketing director for Vodafone Plc, decided to resign and join DTH service provider Tata Sky. Nagpal was with Vodafone Essar for about nine years.

Idea Cellular

Pradeep Shrivastava resigned as CMO, Idea Cellular, after eight years of being with the company.

Virad Kaul left Idea Cellular to join Zee Turner as CEO. Kaul was with Idea Cellular for four years, serving as COO for the Uttar Pradesh (West) circle. He also held additional charge of the Delhi and Haryana circles for a few months in 2010.

Aloke Malik resigned from his post as COO of Idea Cellular's eastern operations. He will be moving to ESPN STAR Sports as MD, ESPN Software India.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited

Gopal Das took over from Kuldeep Goyal as chairman and managing director (CMD) of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL). Das joined BSNL as director of human resource development in 2007. Prior to this, he was chief general manager at Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited in Mumbai. Goyal, who served the state-owned company for three years, completed his term on July 31, 2010.

New entrants

In March 2010, Sistema Shyam TeleServices Limited (SSTL), which provides mobile services under the MTS brand, appointed K. Sunil as COO of its Tamil Nadu and Kerala circles. He replaced Srinirao Saripalli, who moved to the company's corporate centre as director, new initiatives. Sunil earlier worked in various capacities in Etisalat DB, Vodafone Essar and Reliance Infocomm.

SSTL appointed Arvind Kumar as COO for its Uttar Pradesh (East and West) circles. Prior to this assignment, Kumar was hub head for Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir at RCOM. SSTL also hired Ashoo Sethi as COO for its Mumbai and Maharashtra circles. His last tenure was at Dishnet Wireless Limited (Aircel) as circle business head for Kolkata and West Bengal.

Meanwhile, Stein-Erik Vellan resigned as MD of Uninor. Vellan was instrumental in launching

the company's India operations. In his place, Telenor's head of operations for the Asia region, Sigve Brekke, has been given additional charge as the company's MD.

Rohit Chandra also stepped down from his post as COO of Uninor and was replaced by Yogesh Malik. Chandra had joined Uninor as executive vice-president, operations, in 2008 when the company was incorporated.

Former South Asia chief of Alcatel-Lucent, Ravi Sharma, who also had a short stint in Videocon's telecom business division, joined the Gujarat-based Adani Group as CEO of Adani Power. Sharma exited Datacom in 2008 due to the prolonged dispute between the Nahata Group and the Dhoots of Videocon.

Industry associations

Following the departure of T.V. Ramachandran from the Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI), T.R. Dua, deputy director general, took over as officiating director general. This was soon followed by the appointment of Rajan S. Mathews as the new director general of the association. Prior to joining COAI, Mathews was COO, US operations, and vice-president of Telargo, where he oversaw the company's US operations, including its financial, accounting, treasury, tax, administrative and HR functions.

COAI appointed Bharti Airtel's CEO Sanjay Kapoor as chairman for 2010-11. Kapoor succeeds Sunita Reddy of Aircel. Idea Cellular's MD, Sanjeev Aga, was appointed as vice-chairman.

The CDMA Development Group appointed Lloyd Mathias, president and CMO of TTSL, as co-chairperson of its Device Strategy Council (DSC). Mathias is responsible for helping DSC to define its priorities and requirements in order to expand the selection of CDMA2000 devices.

In October 2010, the Manufacturers' Association for Information Technology (MAIT), which represents India's IT hardware, training and research and development (R&D) sectors, appointed Sandeep Nair as its president for 2010-11. Nair, who is also president of Emerson Network Power, was previously vice-president, MAIT.

Others

While Bharti Infratel appointed Devender Singh Rawat as its CEO, Viom Networks' deputy CEO and CFO Probal Ghosal resigned, citing personal reasons.

Meanwhile, Manoj Dawane, CEO of Mauj Mobile (a part of the People Group), left the company to join Ericsson. Tulip Telecom announced the appointment of Sanjay Jain as CEO. In his previous role at Tulip Telecom, Jain served as CFO for almost a year.

VAS provider Spice Digital appointed Lokesh Gupta, Sudhir Kathuria and Pankaj Gupta as COOs for its northern and eastern region, western region, and southern region respectively. The move comes after two previous COOs of the company left in quick succession. Mohit Rampal resigned in August 2010 to join Motricity as managing director for South Asia, and Vinish Kathuria left in June 2010 to join Smile of India as director. Lokesh Gupta, COO for the northern and eastern region, has 15 years of experience in the telecom industry. Kathuria, who will now be managing the western region, has 19 years of experience in sales and marketing. Pankaj Gupta has been with Spice Digital for over two years. He has previously worked as associate vice-president for SPANCO Telesystems and Solutions for over three years, and also as country manager for Crompton Greaves.

Globally too, a significant amount of reshuffling was seen throughout the year, especially at the senior executive level.

Asim Ghosh, former CEO of Vodafone Essar, resigned from the board of Vodafone Essar (formerly Hutchison Essar) to head the oil business of Canada's Husky Energy. Husky Energy is owned by Hong Kong-based business tycoon Li Ka-Shing, who also owns Hutchison Whampoa.

Aricent appointed Arun Sarin as a director on its board. Sarin, the former CEO of the Vodafone Group, is currently a senior adviser at KKR. He retired from Vodafone in 2009.

Telcordia Technologies named Anil Pandey head, Telcordia India Labs (India R&D centre), Chennai. Pandey will oversee the company's software and services development for its service delivery solutions division in India. Pandey previously worked at Huawei Technologies as associate vice-president, business line head, application and software.

Shali Thilakan was appointed MD, India operations of Cable & Wireless Worldwide. In the past 10 years, Thilakan has held various leadership roles in the company.

As part of the restructuring of its top management, Alcatel-Lucent appointed Vivek Mohan as president of its services business. Mohan, who served as the head of Alcatel-Lucent India, replaced Andy Williams besides becoming a member of the company's management committee. Meanwhile, Munish Seth took over from Mohan as country head.

Nokia Corporation also restructured its management for the second time in less than a year. According to the new structure, which came into effect from July 1, 2010, Nokia's devices and services business was divided into three units – mobile solutions, mobile phones and markets. The mobile solutions unit is headed by Anssi Vanjoki, the mobile phones unit by Mary McDowell and the markets division by Niklas Savander. Kai Oistamo was appointed chief development officer and head of corporate development. Meanwhile, Rick Simonson, head of Nokia's mobile phones unit, decided to retire, though he continues to remain a senior adviser to the company. Nokia also created a new position, that of chief technology officer, and appointed Rich Green for the same.

Nokia also brought in Stephen Elop, head of Microsoft's business division,

as president and CEO, replacing Olli-Pekka Kallasvujo.

Orange Business Services (OBS) appointed Bala Mahadevan as CEO of its India operations. It also appointed Vivek Badrinath as executive vice-president of its enterprise communication services. Based in Paris, Badrinath was also made a member of the company's executive committee. Prior to this appointment, Badrinath was serving as executive vice-president, networks and operations.

Navin Vohra, vice-president, sales for India and SAARC at Andrew Solutions was promoted to

vice-president, sales for Asia Pacific. In his new expanded role, Vohra will be responsible for leading all of Andrew's customer-facing sales activities in the Asia-Pacific region, including India but excluding China.

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