



A regional leader

It has been another impressive year for SingTel that has embraced everything from making a huge impact on the maritime market to sponsorship of the first ever F1 night race in Singapore. Helen Jameson speaks to SingTel's Executive Vice President Bill Chang about the year that has past and what the future holds.



Question: Mr. Chang, thank you for your time. 2008 has, once again, been a very busy and exciting year for SingTel. Can you tell us about some of the highlights?

Bill Chang: There have been many highlights in a very fruitful and challenging 2008.

One of the year's key highlights was the launch of our Office-At-Sea suite of satellite solutions in April. This enables vessels to communicate seamlessly and cost-effectively with their headquarters on land. The solutions include 'always-on' unlimited broadband Internet and intranet access, email, low-cost Voice over IP (VoIP) calls, GSM onboard and ship surveillance. With Office-At-Sea, ships effectively become seamless extensions of the shore-based office, resulting in cost reductions and improved business productivity for our customers.

With the launch of our Global Maritime Very Small Aperture Terminal (GMVSAT) service, we are also proud to be the first satellite service provider in Asia to offer a maritime broadband service that provides seamless, worldwide coverage over all major shipping routes. This is achieved through our strategic alliances with top-tier satellite service providers around the world. The service is also the first in the world to offer customers secure connectivity to offices on land over a private terrestrial network.

SingTel has collaborated with Inmarsat to launch its FleetBroadband service. This is a high capacity, pay-as-you-use broadband solution that enables maritime customers to communicate wherever they are. It can serve as an excellent platform for our Office-At-Sea suite of ICT solutions.

We were very excited to sign a Memo-



randum of Understanding (MOU) with the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) to promote maritime technology research and development. This landmark agreement seeks to further strengthen Singapore's position as a global maritime telecommunications hub and international maritime centre. By creating a platform for innovation and knowledge-sharing, we hope to increase the adoption of ICT services in the maritime industry.

Innovation has become a way of life at SingTel. We aim to provide companies with an innovative one-stop Infocomm Technology (ICT) experience that will take their businesses to the next level. And I am very pleased that our efforts have been rewarded with a number of accolades.

Question: In September, it was announced that ST-2 will be launched in 2010. Can you give us some more details on the satellite, the markets it will cover and the services it will offer?

Bill Chang: The ST-2 satellite will offer significantly greater capacity than ST-1 and wider coverage to also include emerging markets such as the Middle East. We are well placed to meet the strong demand for fixed and mobile satellite services, including our innovative IP-based solutions, which are transforming the way our customers do business. Even before its launch, about two-thirds of ST-2's capacity has been pre-booked.

Question: Over the past two years, SingTel has been focusing on the maritime market and the use of satellite communications. The company has even received a Frost and Sullivan Technology Award for its maritime services. Can you tell us more about SingTel's innovations in this area and what we can expect in the future?

Bill Chang: We were delighted to receive the prestigious 2008 Asia Pacific Frost & Sullivan Technology Leadership Award in the field of Maritime Broadband Communications. This award recognises SingTel's leadership in developing innovative solutions to improve communications at sea and address the rising challenges of the maritime industry. Our Office-At-Sea suite of maritime services and our Global Maritime VSAT service are some of the notable innovations that were given special mention.

The award also recognises our collaboration with the Singapore Maritime Academy (SMA) to establish the Satcom@SMA maritime satellite solutions innovation hub - the first of its kind in the Asia-Pacific.

SingTel also won the prestigious Seatrade Asia Award for Technical Innovation. We won this award for developing the world's first 1.5m C-band stabilised satellite antenna, together with our partner SeaTel. The antenna allows sea-going vessels to





enjoy significantly higher bandwidth than a traditional 2.4-metre C-band antenna at a lower cost, with an option for dedicated bandwidth.

We have recently signed a teaming agreement with Becker Marine Systems Communication to offer managed Infocomm Technology (ICT) solutions for the global maritime industry.

Under the agreement, Becker Marine Systems Communication seeks to incorporate SingTel's suite of Maritime Satellite solutions into its managed services platform. SingTel will explore offering Becker Marine Systems Communication's umc.connect portnet@ship2shore service in more than 80 seaports worldwide. With this solution, vessels close to the shore can reduce costs by switching their satellite broadband connections to SingTel's high-speed land-based WiFi or mobile networks.

SingTel works closely with an ecosystem of top-tier vendors and service providers to accelerate innovations in the maritime industry and offer solutions that help shipping companies achieve success. We invite interested partners to join us in turning ideas into reality!

Question: SingTel's business covers a wide range of technologies. How big a part does satellite play in the overall business?

Bill Chang: Satellite services play an important role in SingTel's overall vision for the corporate business market. They enable us to lead and shape key markets such as the maritime, broadcast and logistics industries.

SingTel has collaborated with Globalstar to deliver a powerful track and trace solution that is ideal for logistics companies and government and non-government organizations (NGO). This innovative new service greatly improves supply chain management and security by providing superior visibility of assets.

The service is possible through a new gateway which is operated by SingTel. This provides Globalstar satellite coverage throughout Singapore, Malaysia and significant portions of Indonesia and much of the surrounding maritime region, including the strategic Strait of Malacca.

The SingTel Group has significant opera-

tions in Asia-Pacific, Australia, Europe and the United States. In addition to satellite services, we provide a comprehensive portfolio of services that include voice and data services over fixed, wireless and Internet platforms.

We have the ability to bring our diverse range of solutions together to offer customers a one-stop ICT experience that is truly world class. In other words, we can help customers reduce overheads and free up valuable company resources by taking care of their end-to-end ICT needs, thus giving them a vital competitive edge. With our ready infrastructure, rich ICT resources and expertise, we are able to relieve companies of the complexities of managing systems and allow them to focus on their core competencies – the activities that help them achieve their goals.

Question: What do you feel will be the trends and developments in the satellite industry to look out for in 2009?

Bill Chang: In previous economic downturns, businesses looked for ICT solutions that helped them to lower their costs. More businesses migrated to IP-based infrastructures to enable multi-services over an integrated and secured network, thus boosting productivity and improving cost control. Despite the scale of the current downturn, we believe businesses will continue to turn to ICT providers to streamline their processes and operations.

The more successful ICT providers will transform the way their customers do business through innovative solutions. For SingTel, innovation is central to everything we do.

With the improvement in satellite ground technologies, IP over satellite has proved to be a cost-effective and viable solution for many companies. We have seen tremendous success in our maritime broadband and satellite IP services. We believe there will be increasing adoption of these solutions in the next three to five years, and this may result in the migration of terrestrial IP applications to the satellite IP platform.

This will lead to the emergence of ecosystems of partnerships as companies migrate their terrestrial applications to work in the new world of Satellite IP.

We will also see more optimisation techniques being deployed, similar to the terrestrial broadband world. This will enable companies to maximise the use of their satellite bandwidth – essentially squeezing more content into every megabyte of data.

Moving forward, we believe the focus for telcos will no longer be on providing bandwidth and connectivity alone. It is what you do with the bandwidth that matters and we see tremendous opportunities in the areas of managed services, professional services and software as a service (SaaS).

The SingTel story has been one of transformation. We are no longer a provider of mainly traditional 'carriage' services such as leased lines, voice and bandwidth. We have become a leading one-stop provider of next generation Infocomm Technology (ICT) services in Singapore and beyond. SingTel has made the transition into what industry experts term the Telco 2.0 era, characterised by carriers who successfully integrate fully-managed solutions and applications into their traditional telecom offerings.

Question: Where will SingTel's main areas of focus be next year for the coming year?

Bill Chang: For the coming year, we will continue to introduce more innovative solutions for maritime, broadcast and logistics companies.

For example, we are also developing a cutting-edge real-time video transmission solution over Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) IP networks. This promises to provide higher data rates for the delivery of content. SingTel has developed an MPEG 4 over DVB-S2 solution that allows broadcasters to deliver content using significantly less satellite bandwidth without any reduction in video quality. This solution will enable broadcasters to reduce costs.

To aid in the development of innovative broadcast solutions, we are looking to establish a Broadcast Innovation Centre. The first of its kind in Asia-Pacific, this will be complete with state-of-the-art testing facilities.

Through our alliances with top-tier satellite operators around the world, we will continue to expand our global footprint to meet the strong demand for fixed and mobile services. ■

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