

# Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison Charts AI North Star Strategy to Excellence

Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison (IOH) is a digital giant that empowers Indonesia as a telco. Having recently merged from two top players to one, the company has a thriving subscriber base exceeding 100 million, connecting Indonesians across more than 17,500 islands. Together with its partner, Huawei, IOH was the 2024 winner in the Telecoms Excellence category at the Glotel awards. In this article, Desmond Cheung, Chief Technology Officer at IOH, navigates us through their journey to excellence.

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When Indosat Ooredoo and Hutchinson merged back in 2022, we decided our vision was to empower and connect Indonesia as its preferred digital telco. In the spirit of mutual cooperation, our mission is to deliver world-class digital experiences that enrich society, and prop up the digital economy of our country. As part of our journey, we are transforming ourselves into a Techco so that we can better deliver world class digital experiences to enterprises, business, and governmental institutions, and other organizations.

The captain of every ship must navigate with precision and care to chart their course safely. Navigation is an art, of course, with many constantly shifting parts; but the



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one constant is the North Star, or Polaris, which does not move in the night sky. Our Polaris is the people we serve. If we use them to ground our sense of direction, we are assured to arrive at our destination.

We know people are no longer just asking for connectivity. They need more: they need access to digital services. The Internet is a need like water in modern society. And in the future, we believe AI will be as vital as air.

## Following Polaris

This is why we have designed the AI North Star Strategy,

oriented to the needs of the people first and foremost. Following this formula, we plan to revolutionize Indonesia's digital landscape.

Our growth strategy stands on three pillars. Firstly, at IOH, we must build ourselves up as an AI Native Telco, applying AI to every aspect of our business. With AI at our core, we are enhancing network services and can deliver an outstanding user experience.

The second pillar is to evolve into an AI Native TechCo, which involves exploring new business, new technologies, and new industries. This will help us attract even more strategic partners and initiate collaborations similar to



our relationship with Huawei to prop up the local digital economy.

Thirdly, IOH is evolving into an AI Nation Shaper. As such, we have opened an AI Centre of Excellence so that we can create a talent ecosystem. This gives us the ability to bring in the best professionals to work in a nurturing environment that fosters growth. Through such an approach, we also lay a foundation for the development of national AI capabilities with key ecosystem partners.

The first stage of our plan has been to redefine the Digital Intelligence Operations Center (DIOC) to serve as

the nerve center of Indosat's network operations. The DIOC can provide real-time insight and proactive service management, meaning we can monitor and predict issues. This way, we can solve problems quickly and work to prevent them from happening in the first place. This is all in the name of customer experience.

## Putting Customer Experience First

We have made such headway on our transformation journey thanks to centering on our customers. In col-

laboration with Huawei, our O&M is highly automated by AI, which allows us to perform experience-centric network consolidation. Huawei also initially helped us complete network integration using Multi-Operator Core Network (MOCN) technology in over 46,000 sites across Indonesia, which combined our separate networks when Indosat Ooredoo and Hutchinson first merged. We converged our Network Operations Center (NOC), Service Operations Center (SOC), and Network Performance Management (NPM) to bring all our data into one repository, which is essential to the new way we conduct O&M.

Following these game-changing upgrades, our mobile and broadband customers have benefited from better connectivity, lower latency and streamlined services. As a result, customer complaints have dropped by more than 30%. We can proactively predict issues and quickly spot the root causes of problems, which has fundamentally changed our technical customer support; our mean time to resolve (MTTR) is 55% faster.

Third-party reports show that our new-and-improved network leads in every dimension when it comes to voice, video, gaming and more. Huawei, as our partner, helps us bring the best user experience to the market. This has resulted in double-digit growth year on year in EBITDA, ARPU, and data traffic, as well as 23.4% growth in our Multimedia, Data Communication, Internet (MIDI) business.

## Reaching for the Stars

To continue on this journey, there are two key points of orientation: people and data. Data is fundamental to future growth. The skills and abilities of our people, their knowledge, is our most important asset, the kernel of our organization. AI serves as the wind in our sails, our accelerator. This will propel our digital future.

We aim to improve our stability of operations through a data-driven approach with heightened levels of automation. This not only benefits customers but our own employees, as machine and AI assistance make their work burdens manageable even through our company's

explosive growth. We look to heavily invest in research and development and provide a platform for innovation.

By making all our services cost-effective, we are pioneering to make AI a tool that is accessible to everyone. Just as we are working to eradicate the digital divide, we are also seeking to prevent a similar AI divide in the future.

At the moment, we cover about 93% of the entire nation, but are still working hard to increase that and deliver a marvelous experience to all. In particular, we think 5G will come into play here, particularly when coupled with our AI agents. Indonesia's digital economy is one of the fastest growing in the world — forecast to be worth \$360 billion by 2030 — and we are excited to contribute to it.

Looking towards 2025, IOH will continue to expand network coverage, striving to lead globally in AI applications across all facets of its infrastructure, especially combining AI capabilities with 5G technology. We are already seeing advances in AI aligning with mass 5G rollouts in Indonesia, creating optimal conditions for IOH to leverage the latest AI and 5G technology. For example, by coupling agentic AI with 5G, it will be possible for every child to have a personal tutor, every patient a personal nurse. And these are just a couple of examples of the vast potential of 5G plus AI. The ultimate goal is to ensure that all Indonesians, whether consumers or businesses, can fully benefit from both 5G and AI.

