Trailblazing into the Future of **Telecom + Technology**

Bridge Alliance CXO Forum

Synthesis by
twimbit

Region
Singapore

Date
17 October 2024

Reimagining telecom's next *chapter*

Twenty years ago, when Bridge Alliance first formed, a mobile phone was just that – a phone. Today, as the 35 telecom members gathered in Singapore for the 2024 CXO Forum, we're witnessing something remarkable: the transformation of telecommunications into the foundation of our digital lives.

The conversations in Singapore weren't just about celebrating two decades of collaboration; they revealed how profoundly the industry is evolving. As someone who's watched technology waves come and go, what stood out most was the shift in mindset. Telcos are no longer content to be the invisible thread connecting our digital world – they're reimagining their role in it.

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bridge alliance | 20 YEARS

Bill Chang, Bridge Alliance's Chairman, captured this transformation perfectly when he described the Alliance's future as a "platform of platforms." It's an elegant concept that recognizes something essential: in tomorrow's digital ecosystem, value comes not just from connecting points but from creating possibilities.

Four key themes emerged that will shape our industry's next decade:

A vision takes shape

Tech mindset

The most interesting shift isn't just about adopting new technology – it's about thinking like a technology company. Telcos are rediscovering their innovative roots, viewing their networks not as infrastructure but as platforms for possibility.

AI's quiet revolution

While headlines focus on chatbots and content generation, telcos are using AI in ways that actually matter: predicting network issues before they affect customers, personalizing services in meaningful ways, and reimagining customer care. It's less about replacing humans and more about empowering them

APIs bridges

The Bridge Alliance API Exchange (BAEX) represents something powerful: the ability to turn regional diversity into global strength. It's transforming how telcos collaborate, making cross-border services as seamless as local ones.

Enterprise opportunity

Perhaps the most promising development is how telcos are becoming true partners in enterprise digital transformation. It's not just about providing services; it's about co-creating solutions that help businesses thrive in a connected world.

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Looking ahead

What makes this moment particularly fascinating is that telcos aren't just adapting to change – they're helping shape it.

> **"**
> Our journey is just beginning; our best years are ahead as we redefine telecoms for a connected, intelligent future. **- Bill Chang**

The path forward isn't about dramatic disruption but thoughtful evolution. In a world where digital experiences become increasingly central to how we live and work, telcos are uniquely positioned to blend reliability with innovation, stability with agility.

The next chapter of telecommunications isn't being written in isolation – it's being crafted through collaboration, shaped by customer needs, and driven by a vision of connectivity that goes far beyond traditional boundaries. For those of us watching this industry evolve, it's an exciting time to be part of the journey.

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The platform revolution

The industry's approach to growth is undergoing a radical reformation. At the heart of this change is "platformization" – a response to what has perhaps been 5G's greatest challenge: monetization. But this isn't just about adding another layer to existing services. It's about fundamentally reimagining how telcos create and deliver value.

The integration of 5G with edge computing is particularly fascinating because it:

- Creates platforms for diverse applications
- Enables AI-as-a-Service delivery
- Reduces dependency on hardware infrastructure
- Opens new revenue streams beyond traditional connectivity

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The AIoT Opportunity

The convergence of AI and IoT (AIoT) is emerging as a game-changer. Telcos are no longer content to just connect devices – they're becoming orchestrators of intelligent, connected ecosystems. By developing sophisticated AI models that can make sense of IoT data, they're positioning themselves as enablers of digital transformation across industries.

Bill Chang's vision of a "platform of platforms" takes on new meaning in this context. It's not just about connecting networks – it's about creating an intelligent fabric that can:

- Simplify complex technological interactions
- Enhance customer experiences through predictive intelligence
- Enable cross-industry innovation
- Scale solutions globally through partnerships

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The power of collective innovation

What makes Bridge Alliance's approach particularly compelling is its emphasis on collaboration.

This collaborative spirit is manifesting in:

Shared platforms

- Joint development of AIoT solutions
- Cross-border service delivery
- Unified API frameworks

Digital inclusion initiatives

- Expanding access to digital services
- Financial inclusion through telco-led solutions
- Bridging the digital divide

AI-Driven innovation

- Shared AI models and learnings
- Collaborative research and development
- Joint platform development

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Our journey is just beginning; our best years are ahead as we redefine telecoms for a connected, intelligent future. **- Bill Chang**

Synthesis by twimbit

Customer-centricity as north star

> " The most important thing is truly understanding our consumers: their pain points, the severity of those pain points, their location, and whether we have the license to play in that market.

Ernest Cu
President and CEO, Globe

Customer-first approach is shaping how telcos:

Identify new opportunities

Develop solutions

Scale innovations

Choose partnerships

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Notable achievements

The alliance's progress is already visible:

- Deutsche Telekom's addition expanding global reach
- Investment in AI and IoT capabilities
- Evolution of the API Exchange (BAEX)
- Customer-centric digital transformation initiatives

Future direction

Looking ahead, Bridge Alliance's vision includes:

- Deeper integration across sectors
- Enhanced focus on AI and IoT
- Expanded cross-border services

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The path forward

The telecommunications industry stands at a pivotal moment where connectivity meets intelligence, where platforms meet possibilities, and where collaboration meets innovation.

Success in this new era requires:
- Bold vision in platform development
- Strategic integration of AI and IoT
- Strong partnerships across industries
- Unwavering focus on customer needs

As Bridge Alliance enters its third decade, it's clear that the future belongs to those who can combine connectivity with intelligence, scale with agility, and innovation with impact. The next chapter of telecommunications isn't just about connecting people – it's about enabling possibilities through intelligent, collaborative platforms.

After all, in a world where everything is connected, the value lies not just in the connections themselves, but in the intelligence and possibilities they enable.

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The new consumer playbook

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Telcos are reimagining the customer relationship

There's a fascinating shift happening in telecommunications. Walking into a telco store today feels more like entering a tech boutique than a utility office. It's a transformation driven by a generation that has never known a world without smartphones – and two telcos, Taiwan Mobile and Optus, are showing us what this future might look like.

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The art of digital alchemy

What caught our attention about Taiwan Mobile's approach isn't just their "Telco + Tech" strategy but it's how they're turning traditional telecom strengths into modern advantages. Think of it as digital alchemy: transforming basic connectivity into golden customer experiences.

Their three-pillar approach tells an interesting story:
- A robust network foundation (because even digital natives need reliable connectivity)
- Gifts as a Service (turning transactions into relationships)
- Tech-driven products (making the network work harder)

But here's what makes it clever: Taiwan Mobile isn't just adding digital services, they're weaving them into the fabric of daily life. Their Momo e-commerce integration isn't merely about selling more stuff; it's about making their service indispensable. Even their move into EV charging shows an understanding that tomorrow's telco needs to be wherever tomorrow's customer is going.

> "
>
> **台灣大哥大**
> Taiwan Mobile
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> R.IP. digital transformation, it's AI-first now. Telcos have a choice: marry tech to become the critical link in the new B2AI2AI2X chain, or be irrelevant. The battleground isn't just customer needs, it's owning that first – and last – point of contact.
>
> **Jamie Lin**
> President, Taiwan Mobile

Synthesis by **twimbit**

The challenger's advantage

Optus brings a different perspective to the same challenge. Being the challenger in Australia's market has given them something valuable: the freedom to reimagine what a telco can be. Their customer-obsessed approach is not just marketing speak but it is survival strategy.

What is particularly interesting about Optus's playbook is focusing on their full ecosystem of product and services to bring unique value and loyalty propositions to customers in an effortless way. Their commit more, get more philosophy shows an understanding that in a digital world, value is not just about price, it is about the entire experience ecosystem.

OPTUS

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In the age of digital-first, our mission is to meet customers wherever they are—delivering seamless, personalized experiences that adapt to their lifestyle

Renee Garner
Vice President, Optus

Synthesis by **twimbit**

The bigger picture

Looking at both approaches, three key insights emerge:

Digital isn't optional

The shift to digital isn't about adding new channels but fundamentally reimagining how services are conceived, delivered, and experienced.

Personalisation is power

From Taiwan Mobile's metaverse experiments to Optus's adaptive service models, the future belongs to those who can make each customer feel uniquely served.

Beyond the pipe

Tomorrow's successful telco won't just connect customers to the digital world they'll be an essential part of it.

What makes these transformations particularly noteworthy isn't just the technology involved it's the shift in mindset. These companies are showing that being a telco in the digital age isn't about defending traditional territory; it's about exploring new frontiers in customer experience.

The lesson? In a world where connectivity is ubiquitous, the differentiator isn't the network, it's what you enable customers to do with it.

Beyond the AI hype

Synthesis by twimbit

While many industries are still debating whether AI is more hype than substance, some telcos are quietly revolutionizing their operations with practical AI applications. SK Telecom and Telkomsel's experiences offer a fascinating glimpse into what happens when AI moves from PowerPoint presentations to actual deployment.

Real-world AI use cases reshaping telecom

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SK Telecom's pyramid of possibilities

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> If you just resell AI services, you miss the real value. Telcos need to access customer data to unlock true AI potential.
>
> **Will Cho**
>
> VP and Head of Strategic Partnership, SK Telecom

SK Telecom's approach to AI is particularly intriguing because it acknowledges something fundamental: AI implementation isn't a single leap but a carefully structured journey. Their "three-layer AI pyramid" strategy offers a practical blueprint for telcos wondering where to begin:
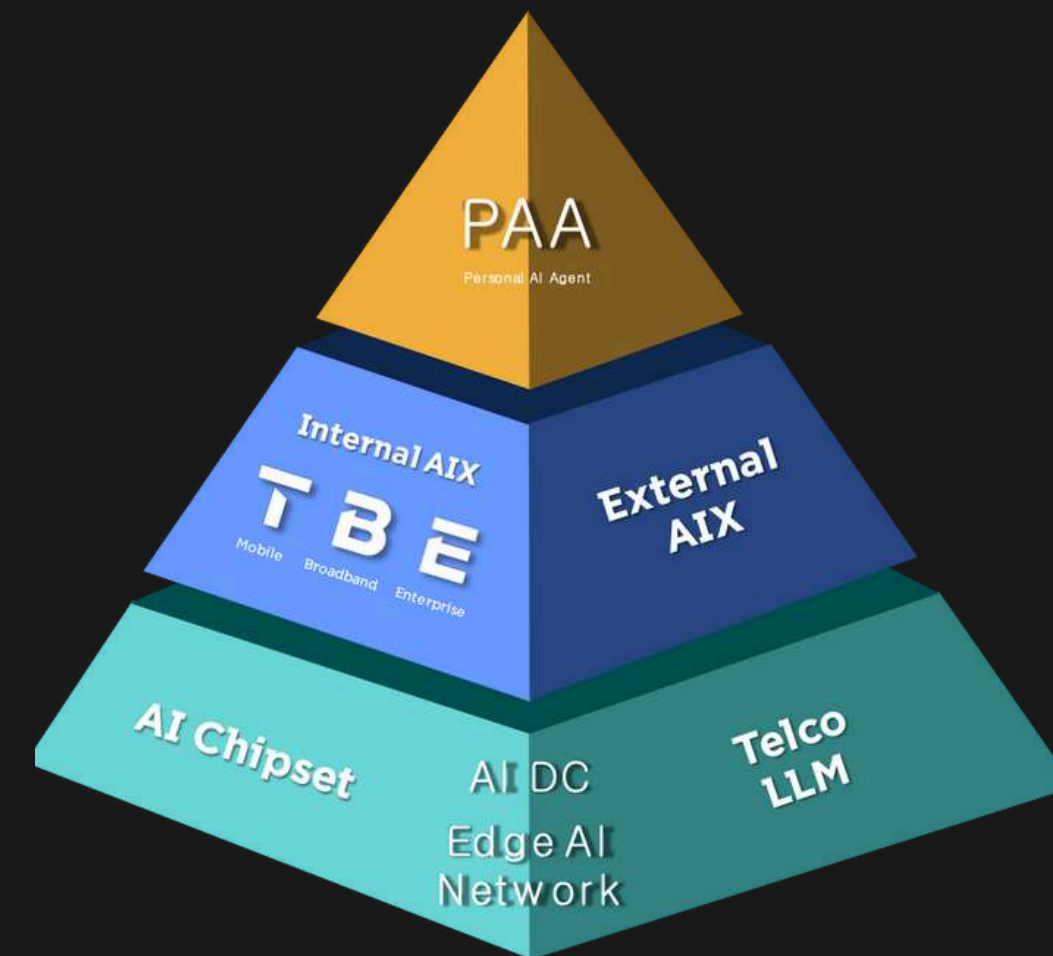
What makes this approach smart is its recognition that AI isn't just about adding features – it's about creating a complete ecosystem of capabilities.

Telkomsel's Veronica: AI with a human touch

While SK telecom showcased its infrastructure strategy, Telekomsel shows us what's possible at the customer interface. Telkomsel's AI assistant Veronika isn't just another chatbot – she's a glimpse into the future of customer service. The numbers tell a compelling story:

- 186,000 daily customer interactions with Veronika
- 93% of customer interactions are fully handled by Veronika
- 85% reduction in workload for human agents

But what's particularly interesting isn't just the efficiency gains, it's how Telkomsel has made AI feel natural by teaching it to understand local dialects and sentiments. This isn't just about automation; it's about creating authentic connections at scale. Additionally, rather than replacing humans with AI, Telkomsel fosters collaboration between AI and humans by assigning more complex customer queries and issues to human agents for personalized handling and resolution.

> " Gen AI has challenges... There were data privacy concerns. We must protect customer data and comply with regulations, integration complexities, merging AI with existing systems requires careful planning and execution
>
> **Derrick Heng**
> Chief Marketing Officer, Telkomsel

Synthesis by twimbit

Three takeaways for the AI era

Looking at both approaches, three critical lessons emerge:

From reactive to proactive

The real power of AI in telecom isn't just in solving problems – it's in preventing them. Predictive maintenance and proactive customer support are just the beginning.

Efficiency meets experience

The best AI implementations don't just cut costs; they enhance the customer experience. It's about finding that sweet spot where operational efficiency creates customer delight.

New revenue horizons

Both companies show how AI can open up new business opportunities – whether through enhanced services or entirely new offerings.

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The invisible bridge

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Today's vehicles are computers on wheels, and tomorrow's will be rolling data centers. This transformation goes beyond the automotive industry, showing how APIs and data are quietly revolutionizing every industry they touch. The insights shared by Mitsubishi Motors and Deutsche Telekom offer a fascinating window into this evolution.

Data and APIs – connecting tomorrow's world

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The connected car revolution

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The biggest difference from the existing smartphone customers is our vehicle runs everywhere in the country, in the desert or kind of jungles, and where customer doesn't need to connect, but for the vehicle driver want to be connected.

Kazuaki Iwamoto

Corporate Vice President, Division General Manager, Mobility Business Division, Mitsubishi Motors

Mitsubishi Motors' perspective is particularly enlightening because it highlights a crucial shift in how we think about connectivity.

What makes this observation powerful is its recognition that vehicle connectivity isn't just about convenience – it's about:

- Safety in remote areas

- Real-time navigation updates

- Enhanced driving experience

- Predictive maintenance

The challenge isn't just technical; it's about reimagining what a car can be when it's always connected, always aware, and always learning.

Synthesis by twimbit

Deutsche Telekom: Building global bridges

Deutsche Telekom's approach to IoT reveals another crucial insight: in the connected world, no one can go it alone. Their strategy combines two powerful elements:

- Leveraging 5G infrastructure
- Building strategic alliances

It's a humble acknowledgment that even giants need partners in the IoT age. Their focus on scalability and local profiles shows an understanding that global IoT isn't just about technology – it's about creating seamless experiences across borders and systems

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Strategic alliances are essential. Even the most valuable telco brand cannot address global connectivity challenges alone

Dennis Nikles
Managing Director, Deutsche Telekom IoT

Transforming sectors: The wider IoT landscape

Connected cars continue to grab headlines, but the transformation stories emerging from other industries are just as exciting:

- Healthcare: Remote patient monitoring and smart medical devices
- Manufacturing: Predictive maintenance and supply chain optimization
- Utilities: Smart grid management and resource optimization

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In the digital age, data is as valuable as connectivity. Telcos that successfully monetize data will define the next era of telecom.

Ng Tian Chong
CEO, Singtel Singapore

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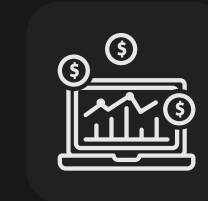
The API economy: Making it all work

What ties all of this together is the Bridge Alliance API Exchange (BAEX). Think of it as the digital equivalent of shipping containers, standardizing how different systems talk to each other. This standardization is crucial because it:

Simplifies cross-border applications

Enables rapid service development

Creates new monetization opportunities

Synthesis by twimbit

Three key takeaways

Standardization is key

The success of IoT depends not just on connectivity, but on how easily different systems can work together through standardized APIs

Data is the new currency

The value isn't just in collecting data, but in turning it into actionable insights and new services

Customer focus drives innovation

The most successful IoT implementations start with customer needs and work backward to the technology.

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Looking forward

What makes this moment in technology particularly exciting isn't just the possibilities of IoT and APIs, it's how they're enabling entirely new business models and customer experiences. We're moving from a world of isolated systems to one where everything can potentially talk to everything else.

The winners in this new landscape won't necessarily be those with the best technology, but those who can best orchestrate the complex dance of devices, data, and services. As telcos position themselves at the heart of this transformation, their role is evolving from providing connectivity to enabling possibilities. After all, in a world where everything is connected, the value lies not just in the connections themselves, but in what those connections enable.

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From utility to strategic partner

Synthesis by **twimbit**

The **enterprise evolution** of modern telcos

Sometimes the most compelling stories of digital transformation come from unexpected places. DBS Bank's journey from "worst to first" in banking offers a masterclass in digital reinvention – one that telcos would do well to study as they reshape their enterprise relationships.

Synthesis by **twimbit**

The DBS metamorphosis

What makes DBS Bank's transformation particularly fascinating isn't just the result, it is how they got there. Bidyut Dumra, their Group Head of Innovation, tells a story that's less about technology and more about reimagining what's possible when you put digital at your core.
Their journey offers three key lessons:

1. APIs aren't just connections; they're business enablers
2. Digital transformation starts from within
3. Success comes from embedding yourself in customers' daily lives

> "
> The future is in serving customers wherever they are. Digital solutions are no longer optional but essential.
>
> **Bidyut Dumra**
> Group Head of Innovation, DBS Bank

Synthesis by **twimbit**

The telco opportunity

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> Enterprise partnerships are critical in the digital age.The platforms and APIs that we build with partners are to deliver meaningful solutions for customers. Bridge is in a privileged position to facilitate the speed to adoption.

Mark Chong
Deputy CEO, AIS

The fireside chat between Mark Chong (AIS) and Ng Tian Chong (Singtel) revealed something interesting about telcos' evolving role in enterprise transformation. With the emergence of platform-oriented business models and the Open Gateway initiative, telcos are now in a position to build a sustainable API-driven business while scaling their reach regionally. The launch of API exchange (BAEx) by Bridge Alliance enables enterprises to easily access regional telco APIs, unlocking seamless cross-border opportunities. Telco is no longer just providing the pipes but they're becoming architects of digital possibility.

Singtel's Paragon Play

Singtel's Paragon platform represents a smart pivot in how telcos can work with enterprises. By reducing the complexity and time needed to adopt 5G and other cutting-edge technologies, it's lowering the barrier to entry and enabling innovation.

AIS's industry focus

Mark Chong's focus on industry-specific ICT solutions highlights a critical shift: one size doesn't fit all when it comes to enterprise services.

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Three paths forward

Industry-specific innovation

The future isn't about generic solutions but about deep understanding of sector-specific needs. Paragon's approach shows how platforms can be both powerful and adaptable.

Managed service evolution

The shift from selling services to managing outcomes stands for a fundamental change in how telcos create value for enterprises.

Scale through customization

Seemingly contradictory, the ability to scale while supporting customization is becoming a key differentiator in the B2B space.

Wong Soon Nam
Chief Strategic Planning Oficer
Telkomsel

Synthesis by **twimbit**

What's particularly interesting about this evolution is how it mirrors broader changes in the technology landscape. Just as cloud providers have moved from infrastructure to platforms to solutions, telcos are making a similar journey in the enterprise space.

The key difference? Telcos bring something unique to the table – deep understanding of connectivity combined with local presence and relationships. It's this combination that could make them particularly powerful partners in digital transformation.

The bigger picture

Looking ahead

The enterprise opportunity for telcos isn't just about selling more services – it's about becoming integral to how businesses operate and innovate. As DBS's story shows, true digital transformation isn't about technology alone; it's about reimagining what's possible.

For telcos, the message is clear: the future of enterprise services lies not in being a utility provider but in becoming a transformation partner. Those who can make this shift, combining technical capability with industry understanding and customer centricity, will find themselves not just taking part in the digital economy but helping to shape it.

After all, in a world where every company is becoming a technology company, who better to guide that transformation than those who build and maintain the digital foundations of modern business?

Synthesis by **twimbit**

Charting the course for telecom's next decade

As the Bridge Alliance CXO Forum 2024 drew to a close, one couldn't help but feel a sense of both anticipation and responsibility. Bill Chang's closing remarks weren't just about setting targets, they were about something more fundamental: reimagining what a telco can be in an increasingly connected world.

Synthesis by twimbit

Four pillars for the future

AI as core business DNA

We're moving past the era where AI is just an efficiency tool. The leaders of tomorrow will weave AI into the fabric of their operations, using it not just to optimize but to innovate and create new value.

The power of ecosystems

The lone wolf era of telecommunications is over. Success will come through carefully orchestrated partnerships that expand capabilities and reach. It's not about going it alone – it's about going far together.
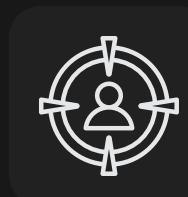
Beyond the pipe dream

The shift from connectivity provider to digital solution architect isn't optional – it's existential. Tomorrow's telcos will be judged not by the bandwidth they provide but by the possibilities they enable.

Customer-centric innovation

In the rush to embrace new technologies, the customer must remain the north star. Innovation without purpose is just novelty.

Synthesis by twimbit

What makes this transformation particularly challenging is the need to balance innovation with reliability.

This isn't just about adding new services or adopting new technologies. It's about maintaining the trust that telecommunications companies have built over decades while pushing the boundaries of what's possible.

A delicate balance

" The future is about being part of the conversation at the forefront of innovation, fuelled by trailblazing visions, supported by collective foresight and cohesion.

Dr. Ong Geok Chwee
CEO of Bridge Alliance

Synthesis by **twimbit**

The Bridge Alliance advantage

In this context, Bridge Alliance's role becomes particularly crucial. As a platform that connects diverse operators across regions, it offers:

- A testing ground for innovation
- A framework for collaboration
- A multiplier for individual efforts
- A bridge between different markets and cultures

Synthesis by twimbit

In the next decade

The telecommunications industry has always been about connecting people, but the nature of those connections is evolving rapidly. As we look to the next decade, success will require:

- The agility to adapt to changing technologies
- The wisdom to maintain what works
- The courage to reimagine what's possible
- The humility to learn from each other

The final word

Perhaps what's most exciting about this moment in telecommunications isn't just the technology at our disposal, it's the possibility of reimagining how we connect, communicate, and collaborate. The next chapter of telecom won't be written by those who simply adapt to change, but by those who help shape it.

As Bridge Alliance leads its members into this future, the goal isn't just to grow bigger, it's to grow better, smarter, and more connected. After all, in a world where everything is connected, the quality of those connections, technical, commercial, and human, will determine our success. The future of telecommunications isn't just about connecting devices or networks. It's about connecting possibilities. And that's a future worth building together.

Synthesis by **twimbit**