

# Orange Jordan: Putting customers FIRST



Nayla Khawam, Chief Executive Officer of Jordan Telecom Group

*As of July 1, 2009, Nayla Khawam assumed her new responsibility as Chief Executive Officer of Jordan Telecom Group. At this occasion, Telecom Review talked to Mrs. Khawam about her new position at Orange Jordan, their latest services, achievements, competition and the constant focus on putting customer first.*

## **On a personal level, can you share with us your background and experience in the telecom industry?**

I was born in Lebanon and moved to France in 1974 where I graduated in Statistics and Economics from National Institute of Statistics and Economic Administration and in Mathematics from Université de Paris VI. In my 25 year career in the field of telecommunication, I have been fortunate to have gained extensive experience, holding a number of key positions with Group France Telecom – Orange.

My most recent role, prior to joining Orange Jordan, was Area Director for Île de France (Paris Region) where I was in charge of commercial and technical departments for mass market and business clients. Prior to this I was the Head of Customer Services for landline, mobile and internet for the entire Group France Telecom, Orange, in France and was also a member of the Orange France executive board with the responsibility of customer services for Orange mobile. I also worked as a forecast manager for France Telecom, playing an integral role in the negotiations with the French Government during the preparations for the liberalization of the telecoms sector and have also held a number of positions within the company in strategic planning, distribution and human resources.

## **How do you feel about joining Orange Jordan's family?**

To have been given the opportunity to work in the Middle East is a true honor. As a place close to my home country, Jordan is dear to my heart and I am very excited about the challenge of working for Orange Jordan. We at Orange are determined to help the country reach its target of 50% internet penetration by 2011, an integral part of His Majesty's vision to position the Kingdom as a regional ICT hub. I am proud to be a member of a team which, even at this early stage as CEO, has managed to effortlessly impress and motivate me with their drive and ambition.

## **In the middle of the global economical crisis; how is Orange Jordan doing?**

Since the successful integration of four companies in 2006 under the umbrella of Jordan Telecom Group, followed by the adoption of the global Orange brand in 2007, the company has grown from strength to strength. During 2008 Orange Jordan maintained its position as the number one operator in the Kingdom with a total number of customers reaching 2.52 million, 3.4 percent higher than 2007.

Our focus on performance and execution has paid off. We achieved a turnover of JD 401.4 million in 2008 compared with JD397.9 million in 2007 with our net profit exceeding the JD100 million

mark - The most successful financial results in the history of the Group so far.

These achievements underline our consistent strategy of providing innovative quality solutions while continuously driving our business into new markets. Guided by our 'Growth 2012' strategy which focuses on an ambitious, but realistic set of goals, the coming years will involve further consolidation of the brand into the local market and a drive to continue to deliver innovation, quality and service across the Middle East region.

## **What are the main changes that you are aiming to do within Orange Jordan?**

The high level of success and growth which Orange Jordan has enjoyed over the years and the current retention of 2.52 million customers are strong indicators that the company is heading in the right direction. The idea is not to change our existing approach or strategy, which has guided us into becoming the market leaders, but to build on our successes while continuously improving our products and services.

Looking ahead, the focus for Orange Jordan will continue to be on providing exceptional quality of service on all levels, launching the latest innovative products and services and maintaining our unwavering drive to increase broadband penetration in the Kingdom.

## **Broadband is the future. How do you work at Orange Jordan to increase broadband penetration and Internet usage in the Kingdom?**

His Majesty's vision to position the Kingdom as a regional ICT hub has been a driving force in our business and is in line with a number of services and offers we have launched as the sole integrated telecom operator in the Kingdom.

Orange Jordan was the first operator to bring the internet culture to all Jordanians through the internet bus and tents initiative which started in 2002 and involved extensive touring of the country to promote internet culture and acceptance of this technology.

Our continuous reductions in end user prices and IP connectivity fees, reaching a current total of 70% over the last 2 years, and our ongoing infrastructure upgrades have resulted in direct benefits for customers and end users.

Orange Jordan has introduced the latest innovations in technology including advanced IPTV, the revolutionary iPhone; the new generation WiFi Livebox and Bitstream resulting in extremely affordable packages for end users. All these innovative services

support to increase broadband penetration in the country. Today, this has led to a reach of over 170k broadband users in the country. We are working with the TRC to further spread broadband in the region, and continue the education of Jordanians on internet.

**Excellence in customer service is your number one priority. Are you going to work on improving further your customer care and call centers?**

We will continue to listen to what our customers want. With the most advanced segmentation system in the Middle East, our operations will always be guided by the needs of our customers. In order to provide them with the right solutions, quality of service has to be our number one priority - Not only quality of customer service, but quality in all aspects of our business, from installation and distribution to call centers and sales and marketing. There are also external factors that need to be taken into consideration when improving quality of service such as internet interruptions which are often beyond our control. We are taking strong action by working closely with the relevant external parties, such as the civil works department, to ensure that these interruptions are kept to a minimum and do not adversely impact the quality of service for our customers.

**The telecom regulator in Jordan has rejected your bid for a 3G license. How do you review TRC's decision?**

Orange Jordan is extremely proud to have made an offer for 3G spectrum. We were surprised by TRC's decision not to allocate this spectrum to us: at a time of world economical crisis, Orange Jordan was the sole operator to have made an offer for 3G spectrum, and hence committed to invest millions on 3G in Jordan despite the very limited stand alone business case of that technology. We hope that the Jordanian community as a whole appreciates and supports our efforts in this field.

**Are you willing to bid again?**

It is widely known in the telecom industry that wireless broadband requires 3G to truly serve the mass. 3G already exists in 12 other countries in the region. It is, therefore, only natural for Jordan to offer the service as well. Orange Jordan is confident that the authorities recognize and support the importance of introducing 3G into the Jordanian telecom market.

We are convinced that 3G should be deployed in Jordan as soon as possible and as the sole integrated telecom operator in the country we truly believe our commitment and willingness to sustain the national economy and develop the telecom sector in the Kingdom are true factors that need to be taken into consideration when selecting the right telecom operator to whom the spectrum will be allocated.

For the past three years we have been eager to launch 3G in the market and our position on this has not wavered. We remain committed and given the opportunity, at a reasonable price with reasonable conditions, we are certain we can make the launch of 3G in Jordan a success.

**How do you evaluate the Jordanian market when it comes to telecommunications (Challenges, weaknesses and opportunities)?**

Liberalization and privatization of the Jordanian telecoms market has resulted in enhanced offerings for the consumers at increasingly competitive rates. Even though this creates a dynamic environment for all telecom companies to operate in, continuously exciting and challenging them, it could also be perceived as a weakness as it could result in a pure price war. Price alone has never been the selling proposition for Orange Jordan. Our strategy has always been to maintain quality coupled with innovation and we are highly aware that a war on price reduction could be at the expense of quality and value of service. With regards to opportunities, at Orange Jordan we embrace innovation and we are proud to have introduced numerous advanced services in the Kingdom and look forward to the enormous opportunity which the introduction of 3G into the market would bring.

**How do you look at the emergence of Internet players to the telecom sector (threat or opportunity for operators)?**

In today's telecoms market, Jordan is considered to be the most competitive in the Middle East. Healthy competition is good not only for the customer who benefit from competitive rates and services; but also competition allows employees to deliver a more professional service. Orange Jordan's strategy has always been focused on providing innovative and quality services at reasonable prices, a key factor for the survival and success of any operator. We welcome competition and hope that our competitors will help us spread the internet culture in all parts of the country and not only in Amman.

**With voice ARPU declining, do you consider that value-added services became operators' new source of revenue?**

On a global level, market for digital content is growing rapidly and is forecast to reach US\$135 billion by 2010. Investment in digital content by telecom operators will help off-set the fall in traditional voice revenues.

The Middle East is one of the youngest regions in the world with approximately two thirds of the population under 25 years of age.

In Jordan the statistics stand at 61% below the age of 35. Arab youth today are globally-connected trendsetters, always on the lookout for the latest in technology. They are a prime example of today's global consumers who are increasingly looking for choice, flexibility and control over their media experience. At Orange Jordan, we listen to what people want and provide them with the best value for money. This approach is what keeps us one step ahead of the competition and we are proud of our position as leaders and trendsetters in the market. We are working on various initiatives to bring Arabic content to Arabic speakers. That is why we just created a team that will be 100% dedicated to content across fixed, mobile and internet.

**What are Orange's latest value-added services?**

As the sole operator in the Kingdom to offer a 'one-stop shop' providing fixed, mobile, internet and content services, we understand the importance of value-added services having delivered numerous innovative solutions and services to our customers.

The new generation WiFi Livebox came with new bundles of the double play offer and was closely followed by the launch of the advanced Internet Protocol TV service ('TV from Orange'), the first-of-its-kind in the Kingdom and outside of the GCC, providing customers with high quality broadcast TV, Video on Demand and a host of new interactive services.

Orange Jordan continues to expand its corporate services for the Jordanian business market including the provision of business internet voice service using hi-tech VoIP technology to ensure cost efficiency and ease of business communication.

To guarantee that customers receive the very best mobile internet experience Orange Jordan is proud to have introduced the revolutionary iPhone 3G to Jordan, the only operator in the Kingdom to offer this innovative product. We also delivered the first nationwide EDGE coverage in the country for wireless internet access, enabling our customers to be connected anytime anywhere and our offer of global roaming for prepaid customers is the only one in the Kingdom.

As part of the 'Growth 2012' strategy, Orange Jordan is also pushing into new market segments, already developing its position as leaders in 'Managed Service Provider' (MSP) which primarily involves managing telecom and IT related networks and services for business customers in various sectors. One of the key projects we are currently looking at involves working closely with the government of Jordan to introduce the first e-Health services to the Kingdom. This project would be initiated through our new Technocentre and will involve the support of Orange France Telecom who is already an important player in the e-Health arena in Europe.



**Finally, what are the key words that best describe Orange and that you want to deliver to your customers?**

We are the sole integrated telecom operator in Jordan, capable of servicing all our customers' needs. We represent one of the best brands in the world, known to provide innovative and quality services at affordable prices to every member of the community. Our customer-centric approach to business revolves around simplicity and transparency. We deliver pioneering products and services using the latest global research and technology, continuously striving for excellence and best-in-class.

More importantly, our guiding principals for this year and 2010 are to keep customers at the heart of everything we do and provide them with the highest quality standards: quality in services offered and quality in customer experience. **IT**