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# STRONG CONNECTIONS

Chi-Mau Sheih has been part of Chunghwa Telecom for over 43 years. Technology has come a long way since then, but Shieh continues to adapt his company to cope with the constant changes.

CHI-MAU SHEIH / President CHUNGHWA TELECOM

The Telecoms industry doesn't make life easy for itself. As technology accelerates, the demands for faster more efficient delivery combined with a need for cheaper accessibility, push many telecoms providers to the edge, as they constantly battle for customers.

Meanwhile, as technological breakthroughs continue to explode onto the scene, more and more new digital companies are entering the Telco market with innovative business models, leaving many of the 'old guard' striving to keep up, as they attempt to respond to the latest customer needs.

Companies seem to be constantly changing their management, in order to keep pace with these new market demands. In fact, in today's business climate it seems rare for any company to keep the same faces around for long - but that's where Chunghwa Telecom (CHT) is the exception to the rule.

Chi-Mau Sheih became the President of CHT in January 2017 but had served in various management positions within the company since 1976, including Senior Executive Vice President and President of both Southern Taiwan and also Central Taiwan Business Groups.

CHT is Taiwan's largest integrated telecommunications services company that provides fixed-line, mobile, broadband, and internet services. The company also provides information and communication technology services to corporate customers.

However, times are tough and the market is as changeable as ever, as Sheih explained. "In our mobile business, we continue to retain our market-leading position. But in mid-2018 the number of fixed network broadband subscribers in Taiwan was slightly down on the year to 5.7 million. This market has become saturated, which explains why there has been a small decrease year on year in the fixed network, which is mainly due to the mobile substitution effect."

This example is typical of this market. As it gives with one hand, it takes away with the other, and it seems to be a balancing act to try and keep all the services in check.

"It is about constantly staying on top of things and catering to your customers' needs," says Sheih. "Demand for high-speed broadband continues to increase because of streaming media, 4kTv, Internet of things and smart home-related services. There is a huge amount



Chi-Mau Sheih has helped keep CHT a market leader

of competition and yet we have increased our market share by being more competitive with prices and, in order to further solidify our position, we have encouraged our customers to migrate to our faster fibre service - which now accounts for nearly 80% of our subscribers."

This need to constantly renew and stay relevant is not new to Sheih. He has previously overseen multiple milestone projects for the company, including establishing the Cyber Security Department, implementing 4G offerings, which enabled CHT to become the first

*"Nobody relishes a price war"*

operator in Taiwan to launch 4G services and he was also responsible for spearheading the full commercialisation of the company's cloud computing initiatives.

With new mobile companies continuing to emerge and angle for their share of the market with enticing offers, Sheih has again had to stand his ground and battle for CHT's customers' loyalty.

"In June 2018, the number of mobile subscribers reached 28.9 million in Taiwan," he explains. "We enjoy a leading position in the mobile market with a 36.4% market share. But due to ongoing fierce competition from our competitors, the mobile market has become very challenging for our limited data plan pricing and we have needed to adapt and counter

the offers made by our competitors. Nobody relishes a price war, but we remain committed to providing our customers with the best mobile experience."

This promise is not just lip service, as CHT was recently recognized by Speedtest as the fastest mobile network in Taiwan, as well as the leader in 4G download speeds.

CHT is also striving to stay ahead of its competitors when it comes to embracing new technology and, with the ongoing ambition of keeping Taiwan at the forefront of new developments, they have recently signed strategic partnership deals with both Nokia and Ericsson, in order to build 5G trial networks, with the aim of launching a pre-commercial 5G network in 2020.

As Sheih points out; "Our main revenue still comes from traditional telecom-based business and we need to refine that. The fixed mobile business remains competitive and we have defended it well so far from our five main competitors. However, in 2020 we will have 5G and a great deal of IOT opportunities will arise



CHT Head office in Taiwan

from this. It is something we will be ready for."

Technology is always looking forward but when it comes to people, looking back and embracing experience is often dismissed. Chi-Mau Sheih has a proven track record and, hav-

ing experienced so many seismic changes in his business, he is well placed to face the future challenges for both Taiwan and CHT. Having stayed around longer than most, you'd be a brave man to bet against him. ↗



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