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# Comm.

DECISIVE COVERAGE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

## INFLECTION POINT

Cash injection pushes Friendi Group to next stage on path toward IPO

## IN SEARCH OF GROWTH

Operators advised to seek organic growth as M&A boom unlikely to rekindle

## SMARTPHONE EFFECT

High-end devices replace low-end phones as main engine of growth

US\$4.99 P&P charge for international markets



## New tagline: INNOVATION

*Zain focuses on innovation in place of acquisition to fulfil its global ambition*

Abdul Malek Al Jaber,  
CEO of Zain Jordan and  
COO of Zain Group

# Reaching out across the Middle East

Comba Telecom is a leading supplier of infrastructure and wireless enhancement solutions to mobile operators and enterprises, helping to enhance and extend their wireless communications networks. Having been in the Middle East since 2008, Comba has chalked up a number of impressive engagements with prominent customers, and believes developments such as convergence and LTE will only see it strengthen its position in the market further



**E**stablished in 1997 and listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, Comba Telecom researches and develops wireless technology through its R&D centres in China and the USA. Through its manufacturing base in China, Comba is able to conduct advanced testing of equipment, and operates one of the largest microwave anechoic testing chambers in the region, thus ensuring quality in its products.

With a track record of success in the China market, Comba has been steadily expanding its international operations, with the Middle East region forming a significant part of that strategy. Present in the UAE since 2008, with localised sales and technical engineers, Comba has been raising the awareness of its products and capabilities amongst the operator and vendor community, and been well-received as it does so.

Comba's innovation, rapid response and turnaround time, combined with its ability to adapt to unique requirements is gaining the company admirers across the Middle East. Add to this Comba's products and value-for-

money proposition, and it becomes clear that the company has all the ingredients to positively impact the communications sector in the region.

## **Flexibility and customisation is key**

Boasting a product line that spans wireless enhancement solutions, antennas and subsystems, wireless access points, and network solutions; Comba is able to deliver turnkey offerings beyond the customer's expectations.

"We match all the specifications of our competitors, but are a lot more flexible and adaptable in the way we deliver solutions to customers," says Hani Al-Hadidi, Comba's regional technical solutions manager for the Middle East. "We are very quick in customising products and solutions for customers, and because things move and evolve so quickly, that is a clear competitive advantage. In some cases our lead-time can be as short as three weeks or less."

## **Growth in LTE and IBS**

Comba's in-building solutions (IBS), for example, are gaining phenom-

enal traction in the Middle East, with engagements with the region's leading telecom providers.

"Nowadays operators do not offer full turnkey contracts to a single vendor, so there are more opportunities for different vendors to deliver various components in the rollout of a network," says Orlando Bilon, IBS project manager for Comba in the Middle East. "The deployment of LTE in a number of Gulf markets including the UAE is a fantastic opportunity for

Comba as we are able to provide an end-to-end LTE compatible IBS solution, incorporating design, planning, implementation, testing, as well as the supply of the hardware," he adds.

Comba's solutions cater across technologies, from GSM to UMTS and LTE. Christopher Bayan, another IBS project manager with Comba in the Middle East, points out that the company already has wireless access points at 2.5GHz. "We are already in the position to equip the integration of indoor cover-

#### Snapshot of Comba Telecom

Comba's product portfolio includes repeaters and boosters, antennas and subsystems, passive accessories and digital microwave links. With over 50,000 deployments around the world, Comba's end-to-end network solutions include consultation, network design, optimisation and commissioning.

Comba's clientele include companies such as Etisalat, Saudi Telecom, Reliance Communications, Vodafone, China Mobile, AT&T, Nokia Siemens Networks and Ericsson amongst others.

Through its direct offices and distribution network, customers are assured of rapid support at all times. Comba's sales and support operations encompass the globe with offices covering Asia Pacific, North and South America, Europe, Middle East and Africa.

Hani Al-Hadidi, Comba's regional technical solutions manager for the Middle East



age to outdoor capacity," says Bayan. "Our product range including outdoor LTE antennas, indoor Omni antennas, and our IBS services and training, together with our network management systems are all in significant demand."

Fixed-mobile convergence in the telecom network space is another growth opportunity for Comba, with mobile, wireless and fixed networks offering greater opportunity for ubiquitous connectivity. Al-Hadidi says Comba's transmission equipment is another area that has generated positive reactions from the market, with the company acting as a global OEM/ODM supplier to core equipment vendors and digital microwave systems vendors.

Comba provides high performance, low-cost products and services, including outdoor units (ODU), digital microwave antennas and couplers, and indoor units (IDU).

"Our clients can look to reduce the expenses and time-to-market associated with new product development and launch through the outsourcing of the design, development and



*At the Forefront of Wireless Solutions for Mobile Operators*

Excellent Quality Leads  
to a Prosperous Future...

# Comba



Wireless  
Enhancement



Antennas



Microwave  
Links



WLAN

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### Financial stability with strong results in 2010

Comba reported that during 2010, the group retained its strong growth momentum. Revenue surged 17% to US\$668 million.

During 2010, Comba cemented its position as the leader in the China market: the number of mobile phone users grew rapidly and telecom operators continued to invest in the optimisation of their 2G and 3G networks, thereby driving a surge in demand for its solutions.

With the global economic recovery, Comba Telecom also performed well in the international markets. In 2010, revenue from international and core equipment manufacturers rose 17% to US\$89 million, accounting for 14% of the total revenue of the group. During the year, Comba secured a series of network optimisation and wireless solution orders from international operators while optimising the OEM and ODM business, thus raising Comba's revenue from international markets. Comba continued to make strides with a number of benchmark projects during the year, such as the ALMA project in Chile, a DAS solutions project in North America and an LTE trial in Latin America, reflecting the high recognition of the Comba brand.



Christopher Bayan, IBS  
project manager with  
Comba in the Middle East

manufacturing elements to Comba," says Al-Hadidi. "To date, thousands of Comba's OEM products have been deployed worldwide in wireless communication and broadband networks."

### A solid commitment to the Middle East

Aside from the Gulf region, Comba also has engagements in Egypt and Libya and with its diverse exposure to the region; it believes it is better positioned to understand the dynamics that relate specifically to the Middle East. The company's product portfolio already holds an enviable position in the market, and is only set to be further strengthened and complemented by the solutions Comba has in the pipeline.

The company's digital repeater is set to become available during the second quarter of the year, and is an ideal solution for urban area coverage. It is optimal for both indoor and outdoor applications with Comba AFC technology deployed in this repeater in order to reduce the antenna isolation requirement. UNC technology is also available to reduce uplink interference for dense urban area deployment.

"We have a business unit within Comba that looks after only solutions,

which means providing solutions on the part of the client, and this sense of partnership and cooperation is an important element of how we operate," says Rami Salem, IBS project manager with Comba Middle East.

All said, the Middle East is an important market to Comba, and it views its time in the region as the first of many successful and industry-enhancing years to come.



Rami Salem, IBS project  
manager with Comba in the  
Middle East



Orlando Bilon, IBS project  
manager with Comba in  
the Middle East