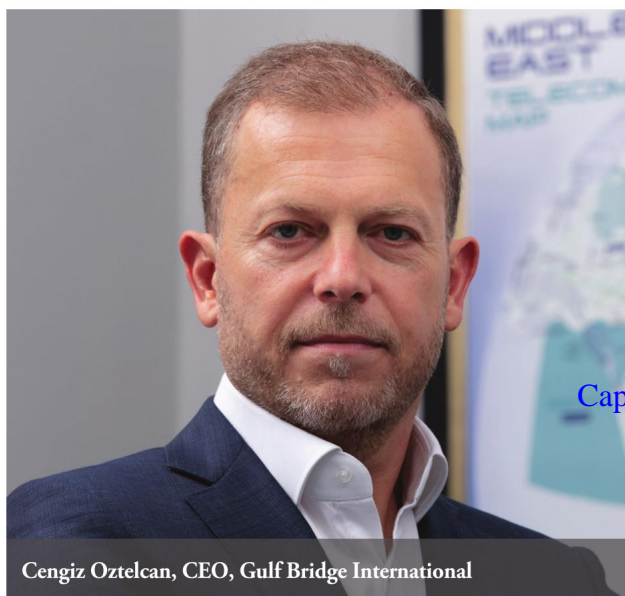




## GBI'S CUSTOMER-FIRST APPROACH TO ENABLING TOMORROW'S DIGITAL ECONOMY

QATAR-BASED CONNECTIVITY PROVIDER GULF BRIDGE INTERNATIONAL IS LOOKING TO FURTHER SOLIDIFY ITS CUSTOMER-FIRST MARKET APPROACH, WHICH INVOLVES PROTECTING CUSTOMERS AT ALL COSTS. CEO **CENGIZ OZTELCAN** EXPLAINS HOW THE COMPANY IS GOING ABOUT THIS, AND HOW IMPORTANT RELIABLE CONNECTIVITY IS AHEAD OF THIS YEAR'S WORLD CUP



Cengiz Oztelcan, CEO, Gulf Bridge International

### **Q. What are GBI's main focuses in the market at present and how are these reflected in the services it offers?**

We're trying to further demonstrate our ability to be a preferred partner and trusted advisor. GBI is closely following connectivity technology trends and moving into software-defined networks; we are ensuring that our service delivery is seamless, our lead times are shorter, and that we are agile as part of our customer-first market approach.

The region is at a critical stage in the development of its digital economy. GBI is focused on elevating its capabilities from an enhanced services perspective, increasing our capacity and the availability of our GBI Smart Network to support this journey.

Rather than coming up with services and then trying to sell them, we're trying to do this in reverse order and really try to understand what customers need first.

### **Q. What makes GBI different from its peers?**

We really go the extra mile; we try to go above and beyond the normal way of doing business.

The GBI Smart Network is uniquely positioned and has enabled us to have a wealth of experience in the region, allowing us to adequately navigate the region's geopolitical landscape to support customer needs. GBI's North Route into Europe provides us with a proprietary route that offers greater redundancies, lower latencies and more options for crossing from the East to West.

But we're not just going to kick back and say that we have a premium or advantage: we're going to take this as an incentive to make things even better.

**Q. I understand that GBI has introduced a capacity protection programme to deal with the issue of submarine cable cuts. How will this make a difference to your customers?** Whether we like it or not, we suffer unfortunate incidents in our network and get cable cuts. Depending on many different factors, repairing these cuts may take some time.

Starting this year, we've kicked off our Capacity Protection Programme, which is built on four pillars: restoration, protection, optimisation and a proactive approach to fault prediction. We will ensure that under no circumstances are our customers disadvantaged if there is a cable cut. Instead, we'll work on restoring their services and offering protection by taking a proactive approach on our network topology and design, as well as our repair process.

GBI recently provided restoration services to customers that contractually did not even qualify, just to show how serious we are. I want to emphasise that under no circumstances will we leave our customers unattended and without resolution if there is a case of unexpected network failure.

We're not just saying this, we're ready to walk the walk. I'm sending an open message to the industry: come and try GBI and see for yourself, and we'll take care of you.

### **Q. How does this link into the need to provide reliable connectivity during the World Cup in your home country, Qatar, at the end of this year?**

It's the first time that a country from our region is going to host this event, and it is extremely important for Qatar and the region to have a successful World Cup.

We are one of the key behind-the-scenes enablers in connectivity infrastructure supporting the event. Any connectivity that we provide on our GBI Smart Network is critical because over a million are expected to come to Qatar to watch it. But more so, billions will be tuning in from their home countries.

We're working with the relevant authorities and broadcasters here in Qatar to ensure that services are reliable and redundant, in addition to preparing contingencies for any potential incidents.

**Q. How do you envisage GBI continuing to evolve in the future?** GBI was born a purely submarine network operator. We're going to try to evolve in two directions. One is trying to expand our footprint into new developing regions.

The second is that we're going to try to become more and more of an end-to-end services player, meaning we're going to try to acquire local access and local fibre in some of the critical countries where we operate, as well as data centre services.

In this industry, connectivity is key. And if you're just a piece of that puzzle, as a submarine connectivity provider, you're not able to fulfil the whole demand on your own.

Through this evolution, GBI will continue to make strides turning both Qatar and the region into an attractive commercial destination and global connectivity hub. 