



Zhuo (Joe) Han

**EDITORS' NOTE** Joe Han was appointed to his current post in January of 2013. He joined China Telecom Americas in October 2009 as Vice President in charge of Sales and Marketing. Prior to coming to the U.S., Han was at Shanghai Telecom, where he had worked since 1994. He began his career at China Telecom Shanghai as an Assistant Engineer. He has held several positions, including most recently that of Director of the Central District. He was also the Director of Government and the Enterprise Accounts Department at China Telecom Shanghai. Han received a B.S. in Applied Physics from Shanghai Jiao Tong University, a Master of Business Administration from Fudan University, and a Master of Science, Operational Communication, from the Coventry University of United Kingdom.

**COMPANY BRIEF** As one of the largest international subsidiaries of China Telecom Corporation Limited, China Telecom Americas ([ctamericas.com](http://ctamericas.com)) has built, and continues to expand and operate, the most technologically advanced suite of telecommunication services in support of MNC's mission critical operations. The company supplies some of the world's largest and most demanding corporations with advanced data services, wholesale voice, and managed services, by leveraging the multibillion-dollar network investment in ChinaNet, CN2, and their global transport network. China Telecom Americas' team has customized solutions for companies in numerous industries, including finance, content and media, manufacturing, telecommunications, retail, hospitality, and software development.

**Would you talk about the history of China Telecom and how the company's operations in the Americas have developed?**

We were once like the AT&T of China, but since deregulation and reform, there has been more competition in the country, and we have needed to go abroad. The United States is the first country

# International Growth

**An Interview with Zhuo (Joe) Han,  
President, China Telecom Americas**

we invested in overseas, and we have been quite successful over the past 15 years.

**Are you offering the products and services that many traditional carriers offer?**

We are the incumbent carrier in China with huge infrastructure, which has been built through the years, offering everything from traditional telephone line to cloud and mobility solutions.

In the U.S., we mainly focus on multinational corporations. With a global network and U.S. backbone, which we heavily invested in in recent years, we are able to provide data center, global MPLS, Internet, and cloud solutions.

It has always been a learning experience, but we have been lucky, not only because we are hardworking but because of the mutual investment between two countries.

**Who is your target market in the Americas?**

The U.S. economy is very strong, mostly because of Fortune 500 companies that keep investing overseas. China is one of the most important markets for them, originally because of manufacturing but now, it's because of the market. This investment keeps growing.

We approach these companies because our goal is to be a global player like AT&T and Verizon. When they want to have the service in another part of Asia, we can do that; if they want service in Europe, Latin America, or even Africa, we can do that as well, because we have invested in the infrastructure.

At the same time, Chinese enterprises in the U.S. are naturally our target customers. The number was small but has since grown significantly in the recent years.

**How hard is it to differentiate in the space when services sound similar?**

Competition drives improvement, and only the best can survive. The investment we made into infrastructure in China, APAC, and has globally differentiated us from competitors. Service quality and flexibility also help us to win and retain business.

**Is the brand awareness where you hoped it would be in the U.S. at this stage?**

We have positioned ourselves differently in the U.S. compared to how we have done it in China, as we are mostly focused on large enterprise business. We have not done much advertisement, but mostly took a direct sales approach.

Branding is always important. A lot of customers still do not know who China Telecom is or they don't know China Telecom in the U.S. We should go to more industry events and seminars, and run

more workshops. This is a sector in which we will invest to build the brand and to raise awareness.

We just started to serve consumers this year, launched a mobile service in the U.S., and partnered with U.S. carriers as a virtual mobile service provider.

We're mostly targeting the Chinese community for this service, in which China Telecom is already a well-known brand. We will use popular Chinese social media, such as WeChat, and take part in local community activities to promote the China Telecom brand.

**How important is innovation in the Americas?**

The U.S. is leading the world on innovation in many sectors. Our customers are innovative with their businesses, and expect advanced networks and services to help them expand their businesses.

China Telecom has built a global optical transmission network that can provide highly reliable, low latency, and up to 100G global connectivity to our customers. Our investment in data centers and cloud platforms also helps our customers to deploy their application quickly and with great flexibility.

**How did you build the right workforce?**

Fifteen years ago, we only had three employees and all of them came from China. Now, more than 80 percent of our employees are local hires. Among all directors and executives, only 30 percent are expatriates from China. Local employees brought us local knowledge, business connections, and longer-term employment. As with any other multinational corporations, localization of employees also represents China Telecom's commitment to local communities. Many very smart people from around the world are in the U.S., making it the best talent pool one could ever find for a company anywhere in the world.

**What are you most focused on when you look ahead?**

There are huge opportunities over the next few years, with strong bilateral investment in both countries. We are riding the wave. The U.S. market is huge and great, the Chinese market will become as big as the U.S. market very soon. The Internet keeps changing the world in finance, manufacturing, service, and other fields. There is so much innovation, which will also drive change at the carriers. China Telecom Americas will keep investing in mobile and cloud infrastructure with cutting-edge technology. At the same time, as our business and employment grows, embracing an innovation culture will continue to be important. ●