

F R O S T & S U L L I V A N

# 2024 COMPANY OF THE YEAR

*IN THE MALAYSIAN  
MOBILE SERVICES  
INDUSTRY*

F R O S T & S U L L I V A N

BEST  
2024 PRACTICES  
AWARD



## Best Practices Criteria for World-Class Performance

Frost & Sullivan applies a rigorous analytical process to evaluate multiple nominees for each award category before determining the final award recipient. The process involves a detailed evaluation of best practices criteria across two dimensions for each nominated company. U Mobile excels in many of the criteria in the Malaysian mobile services space.

AWARD CRITERIA	
<i>Visionary Innovation &amp; Performance</i>	<i>Customer Impact</i>
Addressing Unmet Needs	Price/Performance Value
Visionary Scenarios Through Mega Trends	Customer Purchase Experience
Implementation of Best Practices	Customer Ownership Experience
Leadership Focus	Customer Service Experience
Financial Performance	Brand Equity

### Addressing Unmet Needs

Addressing the needs and opportunities for seamless connectivity in East Malaysia and service offerings for the enterprise segment, U Mobile embarked on rapid expansion in East Malaysia and growing the

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enterprise segment holistically with customized solutions. The company’s population coverage in East Malaysia has reached 82.3% and is steadily increasing. To acquire customers, U Mobile launched the affordable, unlimited, and 5G-powered U Borneo prepaid and postpaid plans in 2023, which start from as low as RM15 per month.

To improve customer services and enhance customer experience in East Malaysia, the company opened its first full-service retail stores in Sabah at Imago Mall and Sarawak at Vivacity Megamall. It further engaged with East Malaysians on the ground to drive awareness and build

strong brand affinity. For example, as part of the “Cara U Sabah Festival,” U Mobile showcased the best of Sabah’s rich culture and talent, including staging Stacy Anam, U Mobile’s East Malaysian brand ambassador, to draw in the crowd at the festival. Then, adding to the local Kaamatan festivities, the “Cara U Sabah: Kaamatan” event was held opposite the Kadazan Dusun Association. Lastly, as a platinum sponsor for SUKMA 2024 in Sarawak, U Mobile showcased its 5G Advanced innovations that intrigued and

enticed East Malaysians, including offering an immersive 360-degree view of the sports event in real time using virtual reality technology.

To grow its customer base in the enterprise segment in Malaysia, U Mobile focused on addressing the needs and opportunities of the workforce and supporting digital services offered by enterprises. The company launched plans targeting the workforce. For example, the RM0 iPhone for 6 months plan waives the first 6 months installments for either an iPhone 13 or 14 (128 GB and 256 GB). The company offers the U Biz 98 5-line bundle for micro-SME with 2 complimentary 5G devices and 1 complimentary 5G router. A highlight and critical differentiator is the complimentary global roaming provided monthly, capped only after 15 GB and free incoming calls from 63 destinations, so its micro-SME customers can stay connected with their partners without incurring bill shock and/or raking up high travel claims. For the office, U Biz 5G Office bundles offer a complimentary Wi-Fi 6 5G router from RM68 per month, and U Biz

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Fibre 10Gbps offers uninterrupted connectivity at RM1,899 per month with complimentary secure DNS, which shields from scams, phishing with no configuration required, and a fixed public IP address for a single server. The plans offer a better customer experience with quicker response times, increasing the satisfaction and loyalty of its enterprise segment customers.

To support digital services offered by enterprises, the company ensured it customized the required services to meet the specific needs of enterprises. For example, the U Biz DIA service provides dedicated internet access (DIA) to support mission-critical applications. The U Biz P2P service

offers point-to-point (P2P) connectivity to seamlessly link headquarters and branch offices using layer 2 connections. The U Biz Private network service offers elevated security measures, privacy protocols, and comprehensive data control with an isolated communication channel. The U Biz Managed SD-WAN service offers traffic management for optimal business performance. The U Biz Wi-Fi service offers bespoke Wi-Fi solutions that cater to varying customer needs. The U Biz IoT service enhances operational performance, security, and innovation with IoT solutions tailored to the enterprise’s specific industry needs.

### **Leadership Focus**

In February 2024, U Mobile partnered with ZTE and Huawei Technologies on 5G and 5G-Advance (5G-A) technology. Both companies are technology partners with technical solutions and extensive experience, especially in the more advanced Chinese and Middle Eastern markets. Leveraging development with global technology players increases U Mobile’s leadership edge in 5G, helping it accelerate 5G adoption within the enterprise segment and elevate customer experience. It can more effectively and efficiently explore the potential of 5G innovation and how it can digitally transform various industries, particularly with 5G solutions and use cases for the enterprise segment. An equally critical enabler is the opportunity for U Mobile to upgrade its technology to better support enterprises.

With ZTE, U Mobile can undertake containerization and autonomous network initiatives and evolve its 5G virtualized core network to containerization, which will lead to greater efficiency, speed, and agility for both consumer and enterprise segment applications. ZTE can also help improve the intelligence of U Mobile's network with the development and deployment of an autonomous network and the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI)/machine learning. With an autonomous network, mobile network operations will be more efficient and reliable, and better mobile network performance can be achieved. With Huawei Technologies, U Mobile can leverage scenario-based private network solutions, 5G technology solutions such as green and efficient radio, access and backhaul transport, core network cloudification and distribution, and 5G innovation ecosystem development. Huawei's expertise in ecosystem development is industry-notable and will benefit U Mobile, which will gain access and exposure to service integrators and solution partners. This will widen the scope for the company to spur innovation and foster cross-industry collaboration in Malaysia.

With technical and 5G capability in place, U Mobile's effort and dedication to shaping a digitally inclusive future with enterprises and supporting Malaysia's ambition to be a digitally enabled and technology-driven nation is starting to bear fruit, with early results showing promising outcomes.

In May 2024, U Mobile collaborated with Enfrasys Solutions on a proof-of-concept (PoC) to assess the feasibility of automating Transocean Logistics' container inspection process, a critical aspect of logistics operations. The AI solution Container Vision, an industrial application running on multi-access-edge computing (MEC) by Enfrasys Solutions, leveraged U Mobile's 5G private network enabled by ZTE infrastructure. As a result, Transocean Logistics became the first container depot to automate its container inspection process using 5G technology to capture and log defects in real time. Results show improved response time in defect detection and turnaround times for defect filing and reporting. Reportedly, a 70% reduction in manual effort was achieved for container inspections through the digitalization of the end-to-end inspection process enabled by 5G and AI. This PoC successfully showcased how 5G technology can advance the logistics industry by delivering enhanced digital solutions enabled by improved connectivity, service reliability, and performance of the 5G private network.

In July 2024, U Mobile collaborated with FGV Prodata Systems, a subsidiary of FGV Holdings (FGV Group), to leverage the company's 5G mobile network and solutions to enhance FGV Group's connectivity and digital infrastructure. U Mobile will offer 5G managed network services for FGV Group and its stakeholders' operations and jointly cocreate and deploy innovative digital platforms and solutions such as smart agriculture, smart building, and smart surveillance. Automation and digitalization will increase efficiencies and savings on operational costs for FGV Group and its stakeholders' operations. The partnership will prioritize cutting-edge digital infrastructure crucial for supporting digital transformation initiatives, as this will enable FGV to maintain its leadership in the global palm oil industry.

### ***Price/Performance Value***

U Mobile innovates so that its products and services offer unbeatable value at accessible price points. It provides seamless, unlimited connectivity to the masses with various options tailored to different needs and budgets. For many years, the company has maintained its prepaid stronghold, ranking No. 1 in unlimited prepaid plans for product construction. In 2023, the company improved its prepaid plans and made them even more value-for-money by doubling the speed offered with the Unlimited U Prepaid plans

while maintaining the same price. Its prepaid plans now offer speeds of up to 24 Mbps for only RM25 per month. Its revised Fair Usage Policy allows for pushing boundaries with seamless streaming, gaming, and browsing, unlike the experience with close competitors. As a result, the company received recognition for its prepaid plan by PC.Com in its Reader's Choice Award for the sixth consecutive year in July 2024.

The company actively attracts higher average revenue per user (ARPU) customers (e.g., postpaid, broadband, and families). U Mobile's 5G U Postpaid plans offer features and benefits to meet the connectivity and lifestyle needs of today, such as up to 1,000 GB on 4G or 5G data, free global data roaming and incoming calls from 63 destinations, and easy ownership of 5G devices through U PayLater and U SaveMore. The 1,000 GB data quota can be used within hotspots or shared among up to 6 U FamilyShare lines. U Mobile upgraded its U Postpaid 68 plan in September 2023 to offer double the data quota at 200 GB monthly for 5G/4G data for the same price of RM68 per month. Customers can use data allocations within hotspots and while roaming in Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand. Customers can also add on 2 UFamilyShare lines at RM38 per line per month. A complimentary new phone can be added to the bundle if customers opt for a 36-month contract. The upgraded U Postpaid 68 is also offered as part of the Malaysian government's Pakej 5G RAHMAH and Insentif Pascabayar RAHMAH Penjawat Awam initiatives at a special price of RM58 per month. For this package, a new 5G device can be bundled with the upgraded U Postpaid 68 for RM240 per month within a 24-month contract. As a result, the company has been recognized for its postpaid plan by SoyaCincau in December 2023. In its effort to provide the best value for the price compared to similar market offerings despite market challenges, its revenue, postpaid subscribers, and broadband subscriber numbers have all increased year on year in July 2024.

### ***Customer Purchase Experience***

U Mobile's innovation leadership is well recognized in the Malaysian market. The company innovates constantly to create strong competitive differentiators and always looks to push the boundaries and explore new ways to ensure customers enjoy the power of technology. Since the launch of 5G in Malaysia, the company has been focused on delivering innovative 5G products and services to customers. It was the first mobile operator in Malaysia to offer an unlimited home 5G broadband solution without a contract with the launch of its U Home 5G plan. This plan targets customers in areas without fiber availability by offering unlimited fiber-like speeds with a hassle-free, plug-and-play solution compatible with a modem or router of the customer's choice. Following the successful launch and early adoption of U Home 5G, the company rolled out even more options to make U Home 5G even more affordable to drive further demand for its unlimited home 5G broadband solutions. Additional options launched included bundles of U Home 5G with value-added product and service offerings, for example, entertainment packages, Wi-Fi 6 routers, and 4K TVs.

For example, the U Home 5G x Sooka Premium plan is a 5G broadband and entertainment package sold at an affordable price exclusively to U Home 5G customers. The U Home 5G CPE bundle plan is a complimentary Wi-Fi 6 router with a 24-month contracted 5G broadband at RM68 per month. Adding the Wi-Fi 6 router enhances the speed and reliability of U Home 5G. The U Home 5G Samsung bundle plan is a complimentary Wi-Fi 6 router and a Samsung 4K Smart TV (options range from 60" to 85") paired with the U Home 5G and priced to start from RM65 per month. The highlight of this bundle is the 85" inch Crystal UHD DU7000 4K Smart TV, which is a new addition to not only the Samsung line-up but also the



industry line-up. With attractive payment options, including U PayLater and U SaveMore, customers also enjoy a waiver on the initial three-month installment on the TV and free delivery and TV installation service when they sign up for the U Home 5G bundle.

To target customers in areas with fiber availability and widen its reach, the U Home Fibre plan is available to over 1 million more homes, especially homes in high-rise buildings along the Western coast of Peninsular Malaysia, through TIME dotCom's fiber infrastructure footprint. The plan offers 30Mbps at RM139 per month, expanding the company's existing portfolio that offers speeds of 100Mbps, 500Mbps, and 1Gbps.

### ***Customer Ownership Experience***

Since its inception in 2007, U Mobile has been committed to bringing affordable and accessible seamless connectivity to all Malaysians. As such, its widely available mobile network provides high-quality mobile services throughout Malaysia. For its dedication to delivering value and exceptional service, U Mobile has earned its customers' trust and firm support. The company takes customer feedback from surveys, social media, and customer support channels seriously and uses them to identify opportunities for enhancement and development to drive continuous improvement.

In September 2023, Opensignal declared U Mobile as the winner in overall download and upload speed experience based on its Mobile Network Experience report findings. Between March and August 2023, U Mobile caught up with close competitors to lead after delivering massive improvements in the average download speed of more than 2-fold in just 6 months.<sup>1</sup> As all mobile operators in Malaysia had improved their network performance over the same period, it was a notable achievement for U Mobile to surpass the performance of close competitors. It went the extra mile to serve customers better in terms of speed. U Mobile also led the way in 5G availability, which it continued to lead into the following year, albeit alongside close competitors as a global leader in 5G availability assessed and awarded by Opensignal in the 2024 5G global awards.<sup>2</sup> In September 2024, U Mobile stood out on its own as a 5G global winner in 5G games experience ahead of close competitors. Achieving international recognition such as this boosts the company's reputation and branding at the global level.

In its ongoing effort to improve its mobile network performance and enhance Malaysia's digital landscape, U Mobile partnered with AmBank in July 2024 for financial solutions to meet its 5G network deployment needs. A shared vision to accelerate the deployment of the second 5G network in Malaysia to drive innovation to deliver value for stakeholders and enable technological advancement and economic growth for the country fuels the partnership. In tandem with getting funding locked in, U Mobile has partnered with major infrastructure providers, including EDOTCO and four other network facility providers (NFPs) (Bullish Aim, EdgePoint Towers, Naza Communications, and OCK Group). These collaborations seek to drive efficiency in the 5G infrastructure rollout. Specifically with EDOTCO, U Mobile is working on a site consolidation plan to lower mobile network operations costs. Staying ahead of the curve, the company collaborated with ZTE, a technology partner, and CelcomDigi, a close competitor, to showcase the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://soyacincau.com/2023/09/27/opensignal-mne-sept32-u-mobile-fastest/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://technave.com/gadget/Opensignal-Digi-Maxis-U-Mobile-and-Yes-are-all-5G-Global-Leaders-for-5G-Availability-40214.html>

possibility of 5G-A. For its effort, the collaboration has been recognized by the Malaysia Book of Records for having achieved the world's fastest speed on mobile service at 30.8Gbps with 5G-A during a live trial conducted in Sarawak.

### **Brand Equity**

As U Mobile grows to become a formidable player in Malaysia, the company continues to navigate challenges that include facing intensified competition in the saturated mobile services market in Malaysia, driving growth and monetization while the consumer and enterprise segments are increasingly under economic strain to manage spending habits more prudently, and having to continuously innovate to meet ever-evolving customer needs. These challenges make customer acquisition, monetization, and retention harder than in previous years. Despite the obstacles, U Mobile continues to impact the local community and its environment positively.

U Mobile recognizes the local community's need for fast and reliable connectivity and its role in promoting digitalization for the next generation. As part of its vision to be Malaysia's favorite mobile and digital services provider, U Mobile is committed to bringing the benefits of 5G technology to customers, including consumers, enterprises, and the public sector. With its advanced, scalable, and 5G-ready network infrastructure, the company brings the benefits of combining 5G technology with AI, automation, and MEC in solutions that enable enterprises to work seamlessly and unlock value. Enabling the digital infrastructure needed to continuously drive digital adoption helps the more technologically advanced enterprises maintain market leadership. To more directly impact the community, the company brought the benefits of digitalization to education institutions where, under its U Mobile Digital School initiative, it aims to accelerate digital adoption in the education sector by developing and introducing new services and solutions such as cashless payments, digital attendance taking and security tracking, AI platforms to support learning and development, and advanced Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) courses. The initiative benefits students, parents, and administrators by streamlining operations and promoting sound money management habits. Impacting its customers is positively impacting its brand, which will help the company overcome industry challenges.

As part of its commitment to its environmental and social responsibility agenda, U Mobile converted its existing banking facility of up to RM1.4 billion into a sustainability-linked financing in November 2023. Facilitated by CIMB as Sustainability Structuring Agent and Joint Lender and Sustainability Lead Arranger with UOB Malaysia, the arrangement entitles U Mobile to receive rebates on its loan interest rate based on the achievement of committed Sustainability Performance Targets whereby the company has committed to reduce its Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by implementing energy-efficient and solar power-based solutions within its operations. Specifically, the company aims to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) intensity by 7.7% by 2023 and 11.4% by 2024, respectively, compared to 2021 as the baseline year. Striving passionately to make a sustainable future possible for the community, the company has unveiled its first Sustainability Report as part of its Towards a Sustainable U initiative. To date, U Mobile has converted 19 sites to solar hybrid solutions and has fitted 2 out of 5 of its operations centers with solar panels. Going forward and into 2025, U Mobile plans to accelerate 5G and 5G-A adoption, strengthen its presence in East Malaysia, and customize service offerings to better fit its enterprise segment to increase brand visibility and drive brand affinity in Malaysia.

## Conclusion

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Over the past year, U Mobile rolled out many new plans to address market needs and entered into multiple partnerships to tap into 5G's potential. The company's efforts to innovate will likely receive a boost from technology upgrades; with better technological capabilities and a wider scope, the company can make an even bigger impact on the local community and the country's growth. By constantly pushing boundaries and creating competitive differentiators, U Mobile is quickly becoming a formidable participant in the Malaysian mobile services market.

With its strong overall performance, U Mobile earns Frost & Sullivan's 2024 Malaysia Company of the Year Award in the Mobile Services industry.



## What You Need to Know about the Company of the Year Recognition

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Frost & Sullivan's Company of the Year Award is its top honor and recognizes the market participant that exemplifies visionary innovation, market-leading performance, and unmatched customer care.

### Best Practices Award Analysis

For the Company of the Year Award, Frost & Sullivan analysts independently evaluated the criteria listed below.

#### *Visionary Innovation & Performance*

**Addressing Unmet Needs:** Customers' unmet or under-served needs are unearthed and addressed by a robust solution development process

**Visionary Scenarios Through Mega Trends:**

Long-range, macro-level scenarios are incorporated into the innovation strategy through the use of Mega Trends, thereby enabling first-to-market solutions and new growth opportunities

**Leadership Focus:** Company focuses on building a leadership position in core markets and on creating stiff barriers to entry for new competitors

**Best Practices Implementation:** Best-in-class implementation is characterized by processes, tools, or activities that generate a consistent and repeatable level of success

**Financial Performance:** Strong overall business performance is achieved in terms of revenue, revenue growth, operating margin, and other key financial metrics

#### *Customer Impact*

**Price/Performance Value:** Products or services provide the best value for the price compared to similar market offerings

**Customer Purchase Experience:** Quality of the purchase experience assures customers that they are buying the optimal solution for addressing their unique needs and constraints

**Customer Ownership Experience:** Customers proudly own the company's product or service and have a positive experience throughout the life of the product or service

**Customer Service Experience:** Customer service is accessible, fast, stress-free, and high quality

**Brand Equity:** Customers perceive the brand positively and exhibit high brand loyalty

