The Art of Putting IT All Together

An Interview With Corry Hong, CEO of UNICOM Global

The Art of Putting IT All Together

An Interview With Corry Hong, CEO of UNICOM Global

By Mary Shacklett

Enterprise Executive recently visited with UNICOM Global's founder, president and CEO, Mr. Corry Hong. UNICOM is a privately held, global technology company that was founded in 1981 with a single IBM mainframe CICS software product. Today, UNICOM consists of more than 40 corporate entities around the globe, and is one of the fastest growing information technology companies in the world with more than 70 million customers in 140 countries.

Corry leads the company with the same passion and energy he had when he started more than 35 years ago, one of the industry's longest tenures at the helm of a major technology firm. On the heels of a string of recent transactions with IBM, Bob Thomas,

founder and editor-in-chief of *Enterprise Executive,* traveled to the new UNICOM Technology Park I & II in Northern Virginia to talk with Corry to understand UNICOM in 2016 and how the company plans to lead the industry over the next few years, and beyond.

Enterprise Executive: Corry, it's been four years since our last interview, and it seems UNICOM Global has continued to grow extensively since then. How has that happened?

Corry Hong: It is a pleasure to again be speaking with *Enterprise Executive.* The last four years have been extraordinary for UNICOM Global. Since our last conversation, UNICOM has grown more than 800 percent

and completed 18 progressive acquisitions that have expanded our operations throughout the U.S., as well as across the U.K., Germany, Finland, U.A.E., Ireland, India, China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Today, UNICOM has customers in 140 countries. Our core business units include technology, real estate, insurance, finance, travel, global logistics, government, engineering, telecom and trusted manufacturing. The engine that continues to power UNICOM's growth is our M&A activity and UNICOM Capital Financing Services.

In just the last three months, we completed five acquisitions with operations in more than 20 countries. A growing organization like UNICOM places great emphasis on new emerging market strategies and recruiting adequate human capital resources with the appropriate skills. To successfully introduce a new structure into an established working organization, we created a new UNICOM organization called "TeamBLUE." UNICOM TeamBLUE incorporates logical boundaries to build a larger framework in order to consolidate the existing core business values from both our existing organizations and our newly acquired organizations. UNICOM TeamBLUE blends the teams, using a proprietary approach that includes a broader framework that incorporates job content, job domain, alignment of IT assets, integration of core business units and expansion of

management independence.

With more than 40 corporate entities around the globe, and a growth rate of three to four new corporate entities annually, there is a pervasive sense I try to constantly convey to the entire UNICOM Global organization— Think Big, Act Big and Move Quickly!

EE: *At the end of 2015, you completed your seventh acquisition in the previous 24 months with IBM, the Rational System Architect product suite. How are these recent acquisitions important for UNICOM and the industry at large?*

Hong: I am very excited about the acquisition of Rational System Architect from IBM. This critical product in the Enterprise Architecture (EA) space is heavily relied upon by the broader government and defense industries. UNICOM is very focused to invest in the EA space, bringing new functionality and capabilities to the market quickly. Just as we have with previous IBM acquisitions, UNICOM will be organizing a Customer Advisory Board and User Group Meeting in the spring of 2016 to meet with clients to discuss the roadmap and direction for the product. Many Rational Focal Point (Product and Portfolio Management) clients are also using Rational System Architect. Last year, UNICOM acquired Rational Focal

Point from IBM, and this allows us to tightly couple Product Portfolio Management with Enterprise Architecture, providing a very clear direction of the market. We will engage with government leaders in the EA space along with CEOs across major enterprises, to help them bridge the gap between vision and execution with the help of Rational Focal Point and Rational System Architect.

EE: *IBM's CEO, Ginni Rometty, has outlined three "pillars" that are the foundation for their strategy: Cloud, Data and Engagement (Social and Mobile). How does UNICOM support these IBM initiatives?*

Hong: According to the World Bank, there are more than 3.2 billion users accessing the Internet, and 6.9 billion mobile-phone subscriptions, an astounding 95.5 percent of the world population. In excess of 2.5 quintillion bytes of data are created daily. However, 80 percent of this data is unstructured data like video, audio, mechanical signals, chemical senses and scientific images, and vast amounts are being accumulated from mobile devices. Much of this data is merely being recorded without the ability to mine the data for analytics. Capturing these massive amounts of unstructured objects under the z/Enterprise Data Lifecycle Environment (which IBM calls "system of systems"), is essential, as well as establishing modular-links to the Watson Cognitive Computing Environment for real-time predictive analytics. This will transform IBM, the IBM organization and the way we live our lives.

In 2016, IBM will celebrate the 52nd anniversary of the announcement of the IBM mainframe back in 1964. UNICOM and IBM have been trusted business partners for the past 35 years—from the System/370 era to today. With the seven recent acquisitions from IBM with 10,000 customers in more than 50 countries, these mission-critical enterprise software solutions collectively provide UNICOM with the ability to support

IBM's Cloud and Data Lifecycle Initiatives to master structured data and the collection of unstructured object data to feed IBM's Watson real-time predictive analytics. It is a key focus for UNICOM.

Interestingly, this new trend in analytics reminds me of the AUTOMON/CICS architecture I authored more than 30 years ago, which runs as a z/OS JES Subsystem with an asynchronous SRB modular-link to a target CICS TS ASCB environment. The product captures, manages and performs predictive analytics to take corrective actions automatically to prevent system crashes, recover storage violations, improve performance and escalate productivity without human intervention. History repeats itself!

EE: On Dec. 15, 2015, UNICOM acquired Washington Technology Park I & II, now known as "UNICOM Technology Park I & II" in the Washington, DC area. What was the significance of this purchase?

Hong: UNICOM has been awarded key Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) government contract vehicles, including the $20 billion NASA SEWP V, the $22 billion DHS Eagle II and the $20 billion NIH CIO-CS procurement contracts.

UNICOM Technology Park I & II is one of the largest technology parks in the Washington, DC/Northern Virginia area. It is in an 1,100-acre technology park that includes a colonial style conference center with 48,000 SF of meeting space, a golf course and athletic fields. With state-of-the-art facilities, including a 40,000 SF datacenter, 20,000 SF call center, Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) conference centers and a large auditorium to hold key events, these properties demonstrate UNICOM's willingness to invest in the future of our country, and to create up to 1,000 new jobs. In addition to providing a resource for government agencies and regional customers, UNICOM Technology Park will become a showcase for all UNICOM divisions.

EE: Tell me about UNICOM's Technology Internship Partnership and how that is helping build the future.

Hong: UNICOM Technology Intern Partnership (TIP) has been one of the most rewarding initiatives UNICOM has created. This internship program creates opportunities within UNCOM Global's more than 40 corporate entities for current students and alumni of member institutions. This has
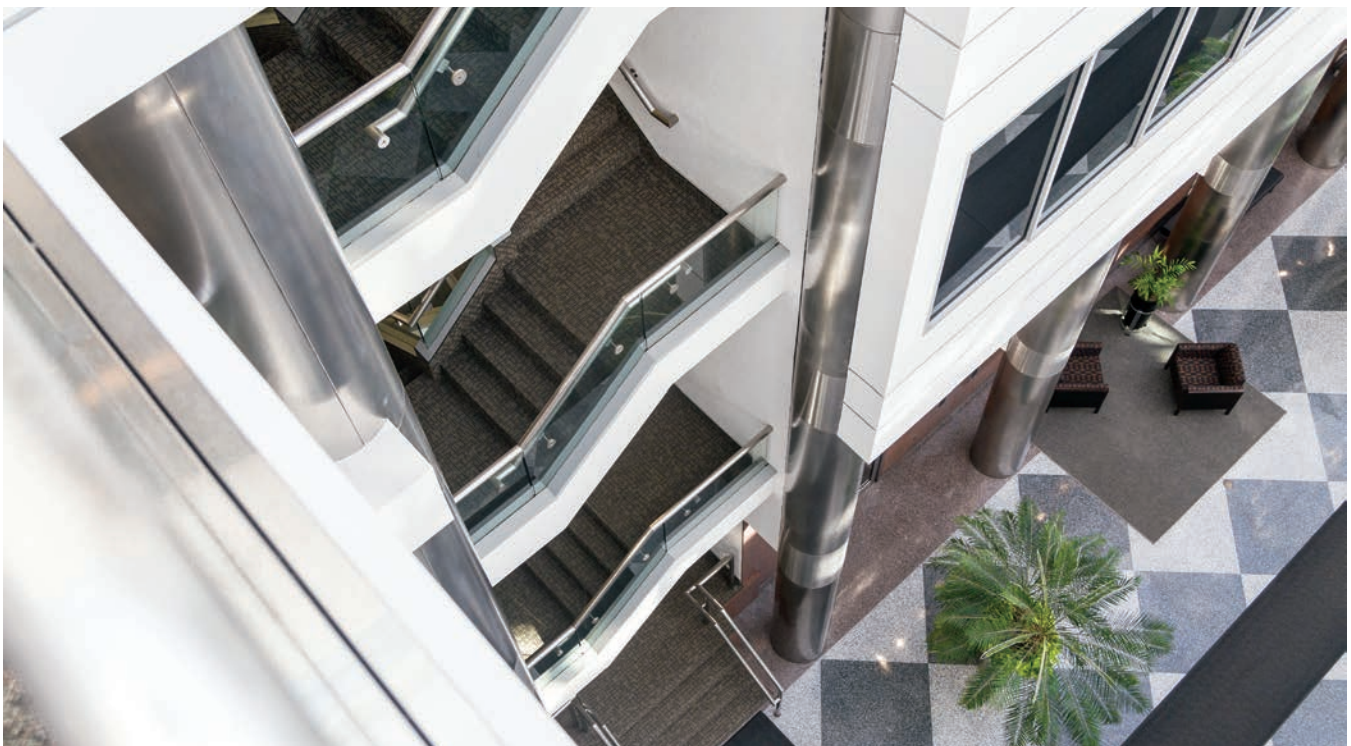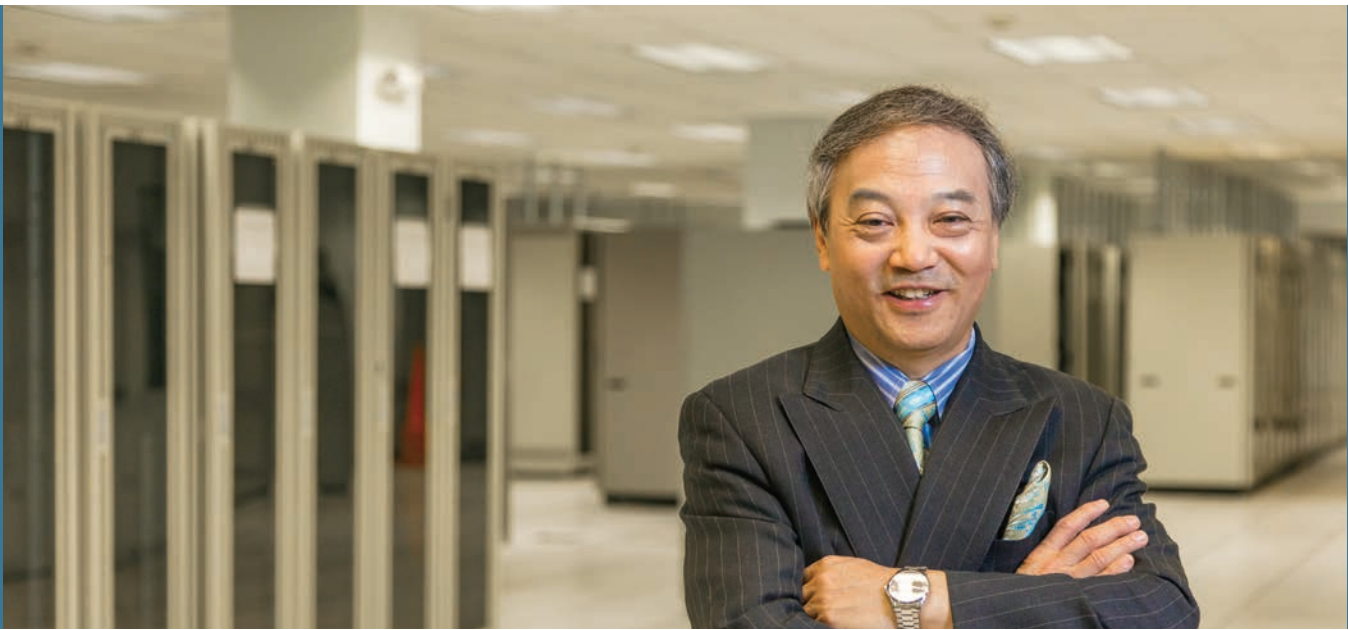
allowed UNICOM to bring the local community together to help foster leadership development and to help build the next generation of business and technology professionals. Many of these interns have joined UNICOM to help power our future. The interns are given an opportunity to participate in M&A transactions, UNICOM Capital structured financing deals, as well as the broad-based operations across the many technologies we have. It's a joy to provide direct mentoring to eager, young minds as we work together to build the future.

EE: UNICOM was founded as a mainframe CICS software company. What do you see the future of the mainframe's role to be, and how will UNICOM continue to innovate?

Hong: IBM is celebrating the 47th anniversary of the birth of CICS. Consider for a moment—the idea that *any* technology could last for half a century is mindboggling! In those same 47 years, so many hardware architectures, operating systems, databases and applications have come and gone, yet, here in 2016, IBM's CICS TS is the most advanced enterprise computing platform in the world, continuing to power the world's largest and most transaction-intensive customers. According to IBM, 92 of the largest 100 banks run CICS TS under z/OS, a platform that is capable of running 2.5 billion transactions per day on a single mainframe.

The new IBM z13 air-cooled and water-cooled mainframes are the most cost-effective, yet powerful solutions to drive mobile, cloud and predictive analytics solutions, with availability and on-demand capacity that other platforms cannot begin to match. This is why UNICOM has doubled-down, investing in new business transactions to add to our stable of z/Enterprise technologies. From there, we are continuing to invest in new R&D to enable our systems network infrastructure products for mobile, secured file share and cloud environments. We are agressively working to port some of our open systems solutions to the IBM z Systems platform for more robust, enterprise-ready performance, which extends the value of our customers' investments.

EE: You bring up an interesting point about the right place for an Enterprise application to be implemented. How do customers transform business computing with today's needs for support of IoT (Internet of things) and mobile into enterprise-class performance?

Hong: That is the right question to ask because the world of IoT and mobile computing with secure, cloud-based file sharing is driving exciting innovation and the rapid deployment of new applications and capabilities in household appliances, simple devices to monitor your health, location-aware applications and just about any idea you can

> The new IBM z13 air-cooled and water-cooled mainframes are the most cost-effective, yet powerful solutions to drive mobile, cloud and predictive analytics solutions, with availability and on-demand capacity that other platforms cannot begin to match. This is why UNICOM has doubled-down, investing in new business transactions to add to our stable of z/Enterprise technologies.

think of. But all of this has two common elements at the core—rapid transaction processing that needs to scale and massive amounts of data aggregation that is available for real-time business intelligence and/or predictive analytics. So, CxOs should be evaluating how the application is written, and where it is made available for users to access, but they must also build the backbone platform to both service the intensive computing demands, and to make sense of all that data. This is where IBM's z/Enterprise solutions provide the underpinnings to enable this exciting new world. Too often, start-ups focus only on the front-end and take for granted the need for enterprise computing, transaction processing, Big Data analytics and storage, enterprise security, scalability, performance and even total cost of ownership.

EE: You seem to have the energy of a start-up entrepreneur, now 35 years after starting UNICOM. What keeps you so motivated?

Hong: I am living the American Dream! When I was growing up in Seoul after the Korean War, we had nothing but we saw tremendous support from the U.S. government. One day, a U.S. Army soldier gave me a chocolate bar. That moment inspired me to come to the U.S. and work hard and dedicate myself to be a partner and part of the U.S. economy. As a young man growing up in Korea, the decision

to come to the U.S. and to study computer science were two of the best decisions I have made. I am a Korean by *birth* and I love the country of my ancestors. I am an American by *choice* because I love this country and all that it represents in so many areas of human endeavor. It was truly a humbling experience when I was invited to the historic Cannon Caucus Room of the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, DC to receive the Institute for Corean-American Studies (ICAS) Liberty Award. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is my foundation. It is a privilege and joy to look at what we've accomplished, and to work with architects, scientists, PhDs, engineers, ex-military generals and commanders, innovators and industry leaders, who are part of what UNICOM is around the world. Our partnership with IBM has grown over the last two years in ways I could only have imagined when I started. But the key part of my daily motivation is that I truly believe *it's all upside, and the best is yet to come!* **EE**

Mary E. Shacklett is president of Transworld Data, a technology and market research firm. Her technology experience includes positions as vice president of Software Development at Summit Information Systems, a financial systems software company, and vice president of Strategic Planning and Technology at FSI International, a multinational semiconductor company. She has been actively involved in the publishing industry for more than 20 years as an editor and writer.
Email: mshacklett@twdtransworld.com