









# OZODKHON DAVLATSHOEV

## Tajikistan



Company  
[www.tcell.tj/en/](http://www.tcell.tj/en/)

**Company Overview** Tcell is the largest leading mobile and data company in Tajikistan. It employs 500 additional 3,000 jobs from its direct contracts and rolling out 4G services. It has the high-capacity fiber transmission infrastructure that not only connects the entire country, but also links Tajikistan to India and Afghanistan. Tcell is now being positioned as an innovative, digital company transforming digital intelligence, smart and IoT and fintech-employing efficient broadband services. It has become a Model of bringing the latest technologies to Tajikistan. It was the first company to bring GSM, 3G and 4G to one of the first countries in Eurasia to receive and deploy 5G technology.

### What was your inspiration for starting your company?

20 years ago my country desperately needed to bring the (then) latest technology of GSM in order to open up as it was well known that investment in telecommunications could fast-track the development of the country. As an investment officer, my first investment project was learning from success stories from neighboring Uzbekistan. The investment pitch for Tcell was approved in 2000. Since then, it has seen tremendous growth and remained the number one company in the market despite intense competition.

### What is a top highlight from your entrepreneurship journey thus far?

Nothing can replace hard work when it comes to achieving success. Being bold has its own dividends and amazing opportunities, particularly economic opportunities when it comes to starting new businesses and investments. It is satisfying to realize 20 years later that you happen to have been in the sector that creates the market from the outset. Invest in people: own your journey but do not be selfish. Spend one hour to plan your strategy, sometimes a better decision than moving (in the wrong direction fast and firm). Learn to fail and fail fast.

### How has COVID-19 impacted the entrepreneurship climate in your country?

It took a bit of time to adjust to new realities, like a primarily contactless world and logistical issues. In a landlocked country, amidst a challenging geopolitical environment, logistics are a primary challenge, which is impacted as well as the choice and availability of goods and services. Given that labor migration is also a significant contributor to the economy, pandemic restrictions had a dramatic impact on the inflow of proceeds from remittances.

A lack of hard currency (from remittances) created a deficit in the trade balance, dramatically depreciated the value of the local currency, and therefore goods and services more expensive, given that Tajikistan is still largely import dependent. It has, however, created opportunities for rethinking local industries, especially the agricultural sector, with a focus on refocusing on local markets.

**HIKMAT  
ABDURAHMANOV**

*Uzbekistan*



**Organization: TEAM University**

[teamuni.uz/](http://teamuni.uz/)

**Organization Overview:** TEAM University is a privately funded entrepreneurial university founded in 2020 and located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It is the first entrepreneurial university in Uzbekistan and partners with London South Bank University, another university with outstanding entrepreneurial programs. TEAM University is recognized for its practice-based research, academic excellence and core values of developing social wellbeing and collaborating with staff and students of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

### **What was your inspiration for starting your organization?**

TEAM University is the most inspiring project with which I have ever been involved. Throughout my life, I have seen how the university experience transforms youth. Personally, I have benefited greatly from studying both locally and abroad. So, when Uzbekistan started to open back up and the government announced that it welcomed the private sector to partner with higher education, without hesitation I started to work on this partnership between education and entrepreneurship alongside seven business partners and leading representatives within the local business community. It took us about two years of meeting dozens of local and foreign institutions — including immense support from our friends in the CAMCA Network across Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Kazakhstan. Thanks to the collaboration within our network, we learned so much. Finally, in April of 2020 we received the government decree on the establishment of TEAM University.

### **Where do you hope to see your organization in the next 5 years?**

Alongside several more specific goals and initiatives, we hope that TEAM University will be a leading private entrepreneurship institution in the country and broader Central Asia.

### **How has COVID-19 impacted the entrepreneurship climate in your country?**

In April of 2020, it was near disaster. As with countries across the globe, no one was expecting such unknown changes brought by the pandemic. Fortunately, with a year dedicated to intense work aimed to reshape and restructure our business model, I personally think that our business team is consequently more agile and strong, as well as leaner and resilient. Some entities had to drop out along the way, but many, like ours, adapted to the new reality.



**ZACK  
BATSAIKHAN**  
*Mongolia*



Companies: Unread Media and WorldPlus Digital

[www.unread.media](http://www.unread.media) / [www.vtv.mn](http://www.vtv.mn)

[www.wplus.world](http://www.wplus.world)

**Company Overview:** Unread Media + VTV is a hybrid media company that empowers the next generation through disruptive storytelling and experiences. Recently merged with nationwide broadcasting television channel, VTV, and new strategic investors including Ard Financial Group, Unread Media is aiming to become the biggest public media group and media-tech solution provider in Mongolia.

WorldPlus Digital is a technology company specializing in digital publishing tools and platforms. WorldPlus — its primary product — offers a fully interactive library of world-renowned magazines. The company's additional services include Whytelabel, a way for publishers and third parties to create standalone platforms based on proprietary technology.

### What are some top highlights from your entrepreneurship journey thus far?

Unread Media has just acquired VTV, a nationwide broadcasting channel. Considering that there are only 15 nationwide channels in Mongolia, that is a massive milestone. WorldPlus Digital was first launched on top of Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, and then Tokyo, Japan. I was also named to *Forbes Mongolia* “30 under 30” in 2015 for my entrepreneurship efforts.

### What was your inspiration for starting your companies?

All of my ventures are dedicated to empowering and inspiring the youth and young professionals in Mongolia through the use of technology, innovation and positive, original and independently produced content.

### How has COVID-19 impacted the entrepreneurship climate in your country?

COVID-19 has been very challenging for startups and SMEs due to long-lasting lockdowns and mismanagement within the government. While jobs have been lost and companies have been liquidated, everyone is doing their best to adjust to the new normal and newly adopted remote work culture. However, I also think that COVID-19 has accelerated some positive trends within e-government, digital banking solutions, ecommerce, cryptocurrency and other technology-based innovations such as saliva-based COVID testing developed by Mongolian scientists.

