

## **Mr. Sanath Pilapitiya- Chief Technical Officer of Etisalat Lanka.**

Amiable, down to earth and friendly, Etisalat Lanka's Chief Technical Officer Mr. Sanath Pilapitiya has been in the company for over 16 years having joined in 1993. Describing himself as a person with strong determination to achieve his goals, he always follows certain principles as a guideline. Educated at Trinity college, he has a BSc (Hons) from the University of Peradeniya with a 1<sup>st</sup> class, after which he topped the hiring test at the then Celltel, joining as a planning engineer. Now the CTO, his role within the company is to ensure maintenance of a certain grade and quality of service to the customer, network expansion in line with the growth plan and tangible contribution to the growth of the business. In simple terms, he is totally responsible for the whole network, including Information Technology.

In leading his technical team he adopts the approach that he were initially used on him, "From the day I joined I was encouraged to contribute ideas and opinions, which empowered me to make suggestions. It was a very interactive and progressive approach, which I continue to adopt with my team. Employees are very happy when they are empowered and engaged. Therefore we have driven the company in way where we try to implement any good suggestions. Keeping the employees happy has been in the culture for a long time and I also try to adopt it when leading my team. After all, as a service company, if the employees are not happy- then you cannot make the customers happy."

During his 16 years in the company he has seen many developments in technology, most of which he was directly apart of, "when I joined there were only four cell towers for CellTell and its steadily growing ever since. Also, at that time the only available technology was analogue cellular, from which in 2000 we moved to GSM. There was no sophisticated equipment back then. We learnt a lot as things progressed and new technologies came in. Regrettably, we were a little late to get into GSM but in the long run we were able to enter the market with the latest and most compatible GSM technology, which was manufactured with future proof technology. We were also the 1<sup>st</sup> to introduce pre-paid which became very famous." Going forward, they hope to become leaders in technology with the financial backing of Etisalat introducing the latest and best technology into Sri Lanka.