

Sunrise prioritizes new applications after launching Europe's first 5G network

Sunrise may have been first past the post in Europe with 5G rollout, but the Swiss telco knows that its work isn't yet done. Sunrise former CEO Olaf Swantee explains that the company's current areas of focus are developing the applications to drive the uptake of 5G, while overcoming coverage challenges due to Switzerland's diverse geography.

By Linda Xu



Gearing up for 5G

At Huawei's 2019 Mobile Broadband Forum in Zurich, Olaf Swantee declared that now's the right time for the industry to "gear up" for 5G and push rollout forward.

"Let's not wait until 2025. Let's drive this thing forward," he told the audience. "Let's treat 5G as a true moonshot and make sure that we implement it as quickly and efficiently and effectively as possible, with a multitude of applications that are good for society, business, and consumers."

However, Swantee also noted a major challenge in its 5G rollout was public sentiment, pointing to a huge amount of fake news generated in social media highlighting 5G's perceived health risks. "Because we were first, we probably attracted more attention from abroad and within the country," he says. "That was hard because it had a ripple effect on the issuing of permits," which he adds are notoriously difficult to secure in Switzerland. In a country as mountainous as Switzerland, Swantee said there were many

“

The Sunrise 5G network is the biggest in the country and sets a benchmark in terms of coverage quality.

”

challenges as well as successes, like being the first operator in the world to deploy a 5G-capable network in a ski resort.

Sunrise customers are benefiting from an Internet connection that's up to ten times faster with 5G, he says, adding: "It's like fiber optics through the air. We launched a world first with the Sunrise Internet Box 5G. For the first time it's possible to combine internet, TV, and landline for homes and businesses, all via 5G."

Looking ahead, its goal is to move as quickly as possible with further rollouts and extend the number of applications. The launch of a joint 5G innovation lab in Zurich with Huawei – the first of its type in Europe – will help expedite success by enabling enterprises to test and verify applications.

5G in 3D

Using Huawei equipment, Sunrise deployed the first commercial 5G three-dimensional network in Europe, comprising a simplified platform combining macro station, micro station, and the digital indoor system.

The three-layer network architecture allowed Sunrise to quickly rollout its 5G infrastructure across the country.

The vendor's simplified macro station, the Super BladeSite, was added to each of Sunrise's existing 4G macro sites to deliver basic 5G coverage and capacity. Huawei's portable 5G micro stations (Book RRUs) were installed on readily available lampposts in cities and towns, supplementing macro station deployments in places with poor coverage or heavy-traffic areas. The third layer used the vendor's LampSite to deliver indoor coverage in hotels and pavilions in Zurich and in more than 20 Sunrise shops.

Between now and the end of 2019, Sunrise plans to launch 5G indoor coverage as a service for business-critical applications such as automation and monitoring production processes.

5G for all

The operator has taken a different approach to the rollout than most other 5G deployments

“

Let's treat 5G as a true moonshot and make sure that we implement it as quickly and efficiently and effectively as possible, with a multitude of applications that are good for society, business, and consumers.

”

around the world, focusing on rural areas where FTTH isn't available. Swantee believes that 5G can meaningfully reduce the digital divide between urban and rural areas and improve sustainability by improving efficiency. "The most important immediate benefit of 5G is the ability to connect cities with rural areas," he says, noting that while 22 percent of the population still has "generally terrible" Internet service, most countries have the same problem as Switzerland.

Connecting rural areas with 5G can also have a positive impact on the environment, Swantee says, as people can turn to online shopping rather than

driving to cities.

Its 5G network now covers more than 300 towns and cities across Switzerland, counting only places where coverage reaches at least 80 percent of the local population. "Easing deployment was the fact 4G coverage is 96 percent geographically," he says. "We were ready with 4G, while a lot of countries still have a lot of homework to do on 4G."

5G: A broad array of applications

Sunrise and Huawei are also jointly conducting

Next-Gen
Smartphone Gaming

Sunrise
GAME CLOUD

The advertisement features a black background with white text. At the top, it reads "Next-Gen Smartphone Gaming". Below this is a logo consisting of a yellow cloud shape containing a white plus sign and three white dots, with the text "Sunrise GAME CLOUD" underneath.

90% LESS HERBICIDE USED

REDUCE YOUR COSTS AND YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The image shows an aerial view of a green agricultural field with a white path or road cutting through it. A white text box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text "90% LESS HERBICIDE USED" in bold and "REDUCE YOUR COSTS AND YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT" in regular font.

“

It’s like fiber optics through the air. We launched a world first with the Sunrise Internet Box 5G. For the first time it’s possible to combine Internet, TV, and landline for homes and businesses, all via 5G.

”

tests involving gaming, farming, live streaming, and manufacturing.

Gaming: Swantee points out that cloud gaming is ideally suited for 5G due to its lower latency compared with 4G and ability to deliver high-end graphics. In collaboration with its platform partner Gamestream, the operator launched the Sunrise Game Cloud 5G app in November.

Agriculture: He also sees a huge opportunity for 5G to make farming even more effective and efficient, reducing its environmental impact and optimizing areas like milk production. In fact, agriculture is ripe for

transformation. At MBBF, Dr.Thomas Anken, Head of Digital Production for Switzerland’s Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, notes that “agriculture today is still an analogue business and not very digitalized. But the potential is huge. 5G will mean we don’t need intelligence in the machine, all the intelligence will be in the cloud. Then the service and maintenance of farming machines will be much easier – all updates of the machine can be done in the cloud. It will be much easier to collect all the data and improve the systems.”

The sun is rising on 5G in Europe and now’s the time to start realizing its potential. [www](#)

