



COVER STORY

Enrico Bagnasco

An Enthusiastic & Inspiring Global Telecom
Leader Determined to Ensure Results

Chief Executive Officer,
Sparkle



“I’m still as enthusiastic as I was in my early days, because telecommunications is an essential infrastructure for all our personal and professional lives.”

Leading the future of the global telecom industry

Sparkle is a leading global service provider, first in Italy and among the top worldwide, offering a full range of infrastructure and connectivity services to carriers, OTTs, ISPs, media and content providers and multinational enterprises through a 600,000 km proprietary fiber backbone stretching from Europe to Africa, the Middle East, the Americas and Asia and a direct presence in 32 countries.

We interviewed its CEO Enrico Bagnasco to discuss the new dynamics in the global telecommunication market as well as his vision for the future.

Enrico Bagnasco, Chief Executive Officer of Sparkle, has been working in the telecommunications industry all his life. He is still as enthusiastic about it as he was in his early days because he believes that telecommunications are an essential infrastructure for all our personal and professional lives.

Realizing the meaning and the necessity of teamwork

Bagnasco holds a degree in Computer Science from the University of Torino. Before being appointed Sparkle's Chief Executive Officer in November 2022, he was its Chief Technology Officer.

He has also served as TIM CTO's Product & Portfolio Manager and led TIM Technology Innovation with a

focus on 5G, network virtualization and slicing, big data analytics, and cognitive computing.

Before that, Bagnasco held different management responsibilities in Telecom Italia in the areas of OSS, Service Platforms and Network engineering, including IP metro, CDN, wireline broadband access, home devices, VoIP/IMS, contact center, video platforms and IoT services.

Bagnasco joined CSELT (Telecom Italia's R&D center) in 1988 and led research and standardization activities on network management and service platforms in the ETSI, ITU, and TeleManagement Forum.

He started his career in Telecom Italia's R&D labs (at the time known as

CSELT) and recalls that technology and system/network architecture were his basics. Then came organizational responsibilities of increasing size and complexity and very soon he realized the meaning and the necessity of teamwork.

“My main inspiration is 'teamwork' because only the coordinated effort of many different core competencies (technology, sales, operations, product, finance, legal, people) makes it possible to achieve challenging goals. The best recognition that I have received is the spontaneous positive feedback from colleagues of different teams in the company,” says Bagnasco.

His approach to Sparkle's agenda is based as much as possible on cross-



“Delivering according to plans is achieved only when all team resources take their own responsibilities for contributing to the common goal.”



functional meetings, where the topics to be discussed have been analyzed from the different areas of expertise (sales, tech, finance, legal).

“I never want to play the role of my C-level reports, but I rather have to review the end2end implications of the case at hand. Indeed, numbers take up most of my time,” he shares.

Bagnasco believes in leading by example. “My enthusiasm, my energy, and my knowledge are directly visible to colleagues. In addition, our targets and goals are common, but my colleagues' role is defined and specific so that everyone knows that their results are part of a bigger plan,” he observes.

Measuring the significance of innovative ideas by their business impact

Sparkle is a leading global service provider, first in Italy and among the top worldwide, offering a full range of infrastructure and global connectivity services – capacity, IP, SD-WAN, colocation, IoT connectivity, roaming and voice - to national and international Carriers, OTTs, ISPs, Media/Content Providers as well as multinational enterprises.

As a major player in the submarine cable industry, Sparkle owns and manages a network of more than 600,000 km of fiber spanning from Europe to Africa and the Middle East, the Americas, and Asia and has a direct presence in 32 countries.

For Bagnasco, the keywords are aggregation and automation. He firmly believes that the future of the Telecom industry will require tackling both actions: on the one hand, achieving the right economies of scale to support the Capex-intensive approach that network infrastructure requires, and on the other hand, exploiting the many advantages

of automated and streamlined processes.

“Both initiatives will support the recovery of business growth and stability that the telecommunications sector has lost in recent years,” he insists.

Bagnasco notes that Sparkle measures the significance of innovative ideas by their business impact. They can take many forms: a new network architecture, providing the same traffic capacity at lower costs, a commercial agreement with a peer to extend the reciprocal market coverage, or the adoption of new platforms to achieve process automation.

“It is never just about technology, but always a combination of processes and commercial framework,” he explains. “My vision is for Sparkle to be held up as an example by the industry for the specific knowledge we demonstrate in the construction, operation, and sale of network infrastructure (in particular subsea cables and open hubs) and services and in running automated and streamlined operational and commercial processes. Our three-year plan is focused on this vision.”

Ensuring that his results become his message.

For Bagnasco, success is the actual achievement of the goals and targets that they have declared for their company.

“It may sound like an oversimplified definition but delivering according to plans is achieved only when all team resources take responsibility for contributing to the common goal; when all issues are resolved with grit; and when communication, internal among teams and external to customers and suppliers, is transparent and solution-oriented. Indeed, a very challenging set of tasks,” he maintains.

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Bagnasco observes that solving challenges is the essence of their work. While challenges come from all directions, in his experience, their solution is always a combination of dialogue with the party involved and identification of viable alternatives.

Over the years, Bagnasco has dealt with challenges from technology, operations and customers, but he shares that in his recent experiences, a new set of issues has had a heavy impact, such as COVID, geopolitics, energy costs and that dealing with these new elements is forcing them out of their comfort zone.

In closing, Bagnasco remarks that his goals are to ensure that the outcome is the primary focus, so that the three-year plan they have designed for Sparkle is delivered: thus, his results become his message.

 **SPARKLE**

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A World Class
Executive Coach with
a Track Record of
Success Delivering
Sustainable
Transformation

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A Leader with Self-
motivated, Open-
minded and Customer
Satisfaction Focused
Mind-Set

PG. 22

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