

## POCO launches flagship F5 smartphones in PHL

SMARTPHONE brand POCO launched its new flagship phones in the Philippines, the F5 and F5 Pro 5G.

“What sets us apart is a lot of smartphones in this segment will really focus on one specific category. Right now, it’s camera. We wanted to make [the F5 Series] an all rounder,” Angus Kai Ho Ng, head of product marketing at POCO Global, said during the launch event last week.

The official said the POCO F5 Series of smartphones offers great performance for value, adding that the company aims recreate and popularize affordable flagship devices.

“There’s no one better than us,” Mr. Ng said.

He said the main challenge for POCO is the presence of competitor brands with aggressive pricing in the same e-commerce channels they are on.

“We are not trying to go for a premium feel. In terms of branding, we’re more down to earth and we want to be closer to our users,” Mr. Ng said. “Luxury is the last thing we want to be.”

“We want to do something and make change for the industry in tech — directly straight-forward, product driven, and build an emotional connection with users.”

The Pro model of the F Series returns after two years, with the last Pro phone being the F2 Pro.

The F5 Pro is powered by a Snapdragon 8+ Gen 1 processor and a 5,160mAh battery

that supports 67-watt turbo charging technology.

It has a WQHD+ 120Hz AMOLED display at 1,400 nits peak brightness that can display 68 billion true-to-life colors.

The F5 Pro can shoot videos in 8K resolution. It has optical and electronic image stabilization.

Meanwhile, the F5 is the first smartphone to feature the Snapdragon 7+ Gen 2 processor in the global market, POCO said.

The F5 has a cooling system, the LiquidCool Technology 2.0 Vapor Chamber, that absorbs and dissipates heat generated while playing processor-intensive games.

Mr. Ng noted that the cooling system of the F Series sets these phones apart from competitors.

The POCO F5 features a 120Hz Flow AMOLED Dot-Display with 1920Hz PWM (pulse-width modulation) dimming and SGS-certified Low Blue Light Ex eye care technology.

It supports 4K resolution in video capture with a 64-megapixel main camera.

The recommended retail price for the POCO F5 Pro is from P26,999 to P30,999, depending on the storage and memory options, while the F5 is priced from P20,999 to P22,999.

Both phones can support 8GB and 12GB of RAM with 256GB of internal storage, while the F5 Pro can be availed of with 512GB of storage, the first in the POCO F series. —

**Miguel Hanz L. Antivola**

# Mobile app business affected by poor connectivity — Opensignal

THE mobile app business suffers when connectivity is poor as it turns users off from spending more time in apps, global consumer analyst Opensignal said.

“When there’s poor connectivity, users spend less time in apps as they become dissatisfied with the experience and are less likely to retain apps on their device,” said Ian Fogg, who authored the Opensignal report.

It found that users spend 20% less time in each app session when with poor connectivity. App retention rates are also 49% lower for users whose connectivity is consistently poor after a week.

The Philippines’ mobile internet is ranked 79<sup>th</sup> in the world,

with a median download speed of 25.63 megabits per second (Mbps), according to Ookla’s March 2023 report.

Meanwhile, Philippine fixed broadband placed 41<sup>st</sup> with a median download speed of 90.57 Mbps.

“Poor connectivity directly affects app revenues as well as increasing user dissatisfaction. Almost all apps are monetized either through in-app purchases or advertising,” Mr. Fog added.

The Opensignal study found that smartphone users globally have a poor cellular signal during 29% of app sessions, resulting in fewer adverts being shown to users and thus hurting app revenues.

“Additionally, if users spend less time in apps, they are more likely to cancel ongoing paid subscriptions or uninstall an app,” it said.

Users with Wi-Fi also tend to exhibit a greater drop in app session length of 38% during the average 11% of time that the Wi-Fi signal is poor.

The importance of this data is crucial to countries like the Philippines, whose citizens partake in heavy internet usage despite inconsistent connectivity, according to Opensignal.

“With greater satisfaction, users are less likely to uninstall apps. Users, app developers, and app publishers will all benefit

through improving connectivity for all,” Mr. Fogg said.

The Philippines ranked third among the countries spending the most time using the internet, as per an October 2022 report by We Are Social and Hootsuite.

Internet users aged 16-64 years old in the country spend an average of nine hours and 39 minutes per day, it found.

Opensignal added that video players, lifestyle, and navigation apps see the largest drops in app session length, with more apps also being uninstalled on day one when there is poor connectivity. — **Brontë H. Lacsamana**

## Transforming customer experience: What will the future look like?

By Gibu Mathew

THREE years into the pandemic, organizations and employees have permanently adopted practices that will forever change the workplace as we know it. Meanwhile, brands have refined their services to ensure improved customer experiences. Customer experience (CX) is continuously changing.

We have ushered in a new era of CX. Customer service has expanded across different channels and has developed new practices to reach a wider audience. Many companies have strengthened their CX efforts to differentiate their brand from competitors who offer similar products and services and share the same audience.

Business leaders are beginning to determine which habits adopted during the pandemic will wither and which habits will stay. So, here are our predicted CX trends that will shape the interactions between businesses and their customers:

### • CEOs will take the lead on digital transformation (DX).

While digital transformation has been underway for several years, the past two years have seen it faster than ever. Now more than ever, the urgency to prioritize DX was pushed to an existential challenge. It doesn’t apply to just the IT infrastructure to optimize internal operations anymore but has extended across the entire business ecosystem, primarily driven by how customers now consume content and make purchases. This has resulted in a fundamental transformation for the many organizations as a whole, especially

as customers now prefer to interact with brands through digital channels.

According to a Consumer Insights report by PwC, among the top preferred channels of Singaporeans to purchase products are online via smartphones, online via smart home voice assistants, and online via tablets. As such, it is expected that, from a CIO’s responsibility, DX will likely transition to a CEO’s, having a strong focus on improving customer experiences. As customer consumption behavior is rapidly evolving, it is now up to the CEOs to articulate a technology-led and outcome-driven business strategy, rather than seeking how to support existing strategy with technology.

### • BizOps will be elevated to a strategic level.

Digitalization and elevating business strategy go hand in hand. The pandemic

has accelerated the adoption of BizOps, the strategic direction to unify the information flow from different business functions like sales, marketing and customer service, so that decision making is not done in silos, among businesses. It will soon be more common to utilize BizOps at a strategic level to optimize internal operations. As technology becomes a primary driver of growth, rather than being an afterthought, the importance of BizOps teams shall only increase further.

*Gibu Mathew is vice-president and general manager for Asia-Pacific, Zoho Corp.*



### Cryptocurrency, from SI/1

Mr. Medalla noted informal lenders are now closely tied with e-money issuers, taking advantage of how Filipino households tend to have low access to formal lending.

“These are potentially great improvements in consumer welfare, we should be open to it, but at the same time, as in any opportunity, there are dangers. And this is where we’re looking at it as regulators,” Mr. Medalla said.

FSB Chair and De Nederlandsche Bank President Klaas Knot said the board will be putting in various forms of investor protection when regulating the crypto assets space.

“We have money laundering issues. Whether we like it or not, in some criminal investigations, crypto comes to the fore more often than we would’ve liked in cases like text fraud and also outright trafficking of drugs, money laundering, tax evasions, etc.,” he said.

If countries are not willing to comply with the standards set by the FSB, Mr. Knot said the jurisdictions will have to face “supervisory scrutiny.”

“If we have individual holdouts, individual countries that are not willing to implement the standards, you will very quickly see all the crypto asset activity that migrate to jurisdictions like that,” Mr. Knot said.

Countries are expected to implement a global regulatory framework for crypto assets by 2024 to 2025.

Mr. Knot said they are currently working on high-level recommendations for the global regulatory framework to be submitted during the Group of 20 (G20) meeting in July.

“Today’s meeting of the RCGA reflects the recognition of the close interconnections within our financial system and also between our economies, and indeed recent developments have once again showed a light on the truly global nature of the financial system,” Mr. Knot said.

“The full, timely, and consistent implementation of international financial standards remains key to bolstering global financial stability,” he added.

Established in 2009, the FSB is a body that monitors and makes recommendations about the global financial system.

In a statement on Wednesday, the FSB said its members discussed how to address the vulnerabilities and enhance the resilience of the nonbank financial intermediation (NBF) sector in Asia.

Members also shared experiences and developments in regulating crypto assets, NBFs, and financial markets in their jurisdictions and recognized the need to mitigate the risks that may arise from them.

“They acknowledged the FSB’s recommendations for the regulation, supervision and oversight of crypto-assets and markets and its recommendations targeted at global stablecoin arrangements,” the FSB said.

The FSB RCG Asia is co-chaired by Mr. Medalla and M. Rajeshwar Rao, deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India.

The RCG Asia comprises financial authorities from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. — **K.B. Ta-asan**

### NGCP, from SI/1

In a separate statement, Mr. Tulfo said he met with the President “to get the cooperation of different government agencies to swiftly address the issue with NGCP.”

The senator proposed to return the systems operation of the country’s transmission grid to Philippine state-owned National Transmission Corp. and leave its maintenance to the NGCP.

Senator Francis Joseph “Chiz” G. Escudero has opposed his colleague’s proposal to re-nationalize the NGCP, saying “it might discourage foreign investors” from doing business in the country.

“The renationalization of formerly owned sold state assets is a policy that the National Government should be very careful about or should be more circumspect about as it might send a wrong signal to existing and potential investors,” Mr. Escudero said in a statement.

“I don’t support it... [The] policy U-turns can be destabilizing and surely expensive.”

Calls to investigate NGCP’s operations have resurfaced amid increasing tensions between Manila and Beijing, which has been conducting expansive activities in Philippine territories in the South China Sea.

Mr. Tulfo, in his meeting with Mr. Marcos, said China’s stake in the NGCP may pose national security threats.

Citing an intelligence report, he said China has the capability to remotely access the country’s national grid and sabotage it. He noted all the instructions posted in NGCP plants about operations of sensitive equipment, including manuals, are written in Chinese characters.

At the Senate Energy Committee hearing on Wednesday, Ronald Dylan P. Concepcion, NGCP assistant corporate secretary, said only Filipino citizens are manning its substations, not Chinese nationals.

“The only Chinese that are in the country that are connected to NGCP are three, and these are the members of the board [who] represent shareholdings of SGCC,” he said.

Mr. Concepcion explained that the Chinese instructions on NGCP equipment are due to the fact that these were provided by a Chinese company. “The instructions to the system were in Chinese originally but also they have English translation [for our] Filipino engineers,” he said.

However, Senator Ana Theresia “Risa” N. Hontiveros-Baraquel said it could be possible for a state-owned enterprise to use its powers to collect intelligence about a country.

“It’s not easy to say that there’s no national security threat [when there’s]

another country [with a] state-owned enterprise that has an obligation to collect information or intelligence to give to their government in Beijing about our country and even our government,” she told the hearing.

Ms. Hontiveros-Baraquel noted that China “has not been treating us as a friend” amid heightened tensions over the West Philippine Sea.

Mr. Tulfo said the Joint Congressional Energy Commission, once it convenes, will investigate the possible revocation of the NGCP’s franchise.

### CAUSE OF CONCERN

Terry L. Ridon, a public investment analyst and convenor of InfraWatch PH, said the fact that a Chinese state-owned firm has a stake in the NGCP will always be a cause of concern because of the country’s ongoing dispute with China.

To allay fears over possible Chinese control over the grid, Mr. Ridon said authorities should determine if the NGCP engineers operating the grid are mostly Filipinos.

“If Chinese nationals are doing work other than technical advice, this will certainly be a cause of concern,” he said in a Facebook Messenger chat.

Mr. Ridon said the country’s energy infrastructure can be vulnerable to attacks, citing the cyberattacks against Ukraine that caused a shutdown of its power systems that resulted in significant economic losses.”

“The same can happen in the Philippines if left unchecked, particularly if the government fails to determine the breadth of control of a Chinese state firm over the national grid,” he added.

Chester B. Cabalza, founding president of the International Development and Security Cooperation, said SGCC’s stake in NGCP is “more of a moral question than a legal one since Philippine authorities have suspicions and doubts over a Chinese business partnership on a critical energy infrastructure, which may impede the course of our national security.”

To ensure the security of the national grid, personnel and officials from energy infrastructure “must also be trained on national security framework aside from its regular safety protocols,” Mr. Cabalza said in Facebook Messenger chat.

“There should be a strong coordination with the defense and security sector since it entails the protection of the basic needs of the people and the country,” he added.

Mr. Cabalza also called for stronger domestic laws against espionage. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza and Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**



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### NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS’ MEETING

To all Stockholders:  
Notice is hereby given that the 2023 Annual Meeting of the stockholders of SOCResources, Inc. shall be held on 16 June 2023, at 2:00 P.M. Based on the resolution of the Board of Directors during its special meeting held on 20 April 2023, the Annual Meeting will be conducted virtually via Zoom.

The agenda for said meeting is as follows:

1. Proof of notice and quorum;
2. Reading and approval of previous Minutes;
3. Report of Management;
4. Ratification of the acts of the Board of Directors and Officers;
5. Election of Directors;
6. Appointment of Auditors;
7. Other Matters: and
8. Adjournment

For the purpose of the meeting, only stockholders of record at the close of business on 17 May 2023 shall be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. In light of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Company will not be conducting a physical Annual Stockholders’ Meeting. The stockholders may only attend by remote communication, by voting in absentia, or by appointing the Chairman as proxy. Stockholders intending to participate via remote communications must notify the Corporation by sending an email to [socinfo@socres.com.ph](mailto:socinfo@socres.com.ph). Attached is the instruction for joining and participating in the virtual annual meeting.

If you cannot attend the meeting but would like to be represented thereat, you may appoint a proxy in writing and file the same, together with the appropriate Board resolution for corporate stockholders and Special Power of Attorney for individual stockholders, with the Corporation on or before 02 June 2023. Duly accomplished proxies may be sent to [socinfo@socres.com.ph](mailto:socinfo@socres.com.ph) or hard copies at SOCResources, Inc. 4th Floor Enzo Bldg. 399 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue Makati, City. Said proxies shall be validated until 5:00 pm of 08 June 2023.

The Organizational Meeting of the Board of Directors will immediately follow after the annual stockholders’ meeting. It will likewise be conducted via remote communication.

WE ARE NOT SOLICITING PROXY.



**MAGILYN T. LOBA**  
Corporate Secretary

#### PARTICIPATION VIA REMOTE COMMUNICATION

The annual stockholders’ meeting will be conducted by remote communication via Zoom Application. Stockholders may attend and participate at the annual meeting by following the instructions below:

1. Stockholders who intend to participate remotely should notify the Corporation by sending an email to [socinfo@socres.com.ph](mailto:socinfo@socres.com.ph) not later than 02 June 2023at 5:00 pm.
2. An email confirmation, link for registration and other instructions for the registration and voting will be provided to the stockholders who will indicate their intention to participate at the annual meeting. All successfully registered Stockholders will receive an electronic invitation via email containing the Meeting link and password, including the rules and procedures for the meeting.
3. We advise all stockholders to log onto the meeting link at least 45 minutes before the meeting starts, to avoid any technical difficulty. The meeting broadcast will start promptly at 2:00 in the afternoon.
4. Only Stockholders (or their proxies), who have notified the Company of his/her/its intention to participate in the Meeting by remote communication, will be included in the determination of the existence of a quorum.
5. Further, the meeting shall be recorded in audio and video format and copies thereof shall be retained by the Corporation.