

Enterprise

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ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS ADVISORY FOR CHANNEL PARTNERS

HUSSAIN ABD RAB
AL NABI,
MARKETING
DIRECTOR - SAP
MIDDLE EAST NORTH

INVISIBLE INTERFACES

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HDD image is tentative and subject to change

**TOP 10
BEST IT COMPANY
TO WORK
FOR 2019**

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for Thursday
to end!**

**Some wait
for Sunday
to Begin!**



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Happy New Year!



ANUSHREE DIXIT

EDITOR

ANUSHREE@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM

GEC Media Group wishes all readers a very happy and prosperous New Year 2019. May this year bring great success to you and your business.

2018, as we have seen, has been a year of fearless innovations and transformation. If we take a quick look at 2018, one of the greatest transformation that we have seen was the telecoms increasingly transforming as ICT players. Apart from expanding their portfolio to newer business streams, they also leveraged their efforts in driving digitization.

Infrastructure projects leading upto Dubai Expo 2020 gained great momentum and we saw a boost in the digitization avenues opened by the real estate and construction sector. Blockchain and Fintech continued to rule the charts as the top priorities for CIOs and CEOs for 2019 apart from multi-cloud.

Enterprise Channels MEA is also taking some great steps as a ICT Media to live with this wave of transformation. From our stories, grids and themes to our events, we are revisiting our market approach to walk hand-in-hand with this transformation that the market is buzzing with. As you turn the pages, you shall see a new flavor of discussion that we intricately take up with the channel chiefs and leading channel players. One cannot negate the critical role that these channel players will be playing the leading the vendors and customers on the road to transformation. We also spoke to some key players in the market and got to know their 2019 roadmap. Our cover feature this month has SAP talking about the 'Invisible Interfaces' and how cognitive, voice and image recognition tools will redefine customer experiences in day-to-day life. Certainly, a good read!

That's not all. In 2019, readers will see us going in depth to various countries not only in Middle East, but across Africa and Asian market as well with various industry transforming topics and events. Future IT Summit 2019, our flagship event will be back this year on March 13, 2019 at The Armani Hotel, Burj Khalifa. Its time to #RevolveDX.

Happy Reading! 📖

Enterprise CHANNELS MEA

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Emirates Islamic Introduces 'Cardless Cash Withdrawal'

As part of its commitment to provide the best customer experience in digital banking, Emirates Islamic has introduced Cardless Cash Withdrawal – a unique feature available on the Bank's Mobile Banking App.

Customers can now initiate the cash withdrawal from the Bank's Mobile Banking App and the funds can then be withdrawn from any Emirates Islamic ATM without using a debit or credit card. This innovative service also allows the Bank's customers to make transfers to recipients using only their mobile phone number. Beneficiaries will receive an SMS with a one-time PIN to withdraw the amount transferred from the closest Emirates Islamic ATM.

Commenting on the new service, Wasim Saifi – Deputy CEO, Consumer Banking and Wealth Management, Emirates Islamic said: "Emirates Islamic has been a pioneer in introducing digital innovations in the Islamic banking sector and we are extremely pleased to launch the Cardless Cash Withdrawal service for our customers. Cardless Cash Withdrawal provides a seamless banking experience for our customers, merging the convenience of our Mobile Banking App with the accessibility of our wide ATM network. Using this service, our customers can transfer cash instantly to anyone including individuals who may not have an account with us, who can then withdraw the cash without a Credit or Debit Card from any Emirates Islamic ATM. We are confident that this service will bring increased convenience to our customers."

CAREEM AND RTA LAUNCH JOINT VENTURE IN DUBAI

Dubai's Road and Transport Authority (RTA) in partnership with the ride hailing company Careem will launch a new e-hail taxi service which will be operational from April 2019.

The service will be rolled out to the public with almost 11,000 taxis. Through the new company, users will be able to book RTA taxis through an online booking with the aim of reducing the expected waiting time for a taxi as well as allowing direct payments to be made online. The RTA has said that it is the first partnership in the world between a government transport authority and the private sector. A company name and logo will be revealed in the coming months. The RTA says that customers will still be able to hail taxis in the street.

DUBAI MUNICIPALITY LAUNCHES BUILDING PERMITS APP

Dubai Building Permits App which includes all procedures of government departments for building permits was launched by Dawoud Al Hajiri, Chairman of Dubai Building Permit Development. The app, called Dubai BPS, is available on iOS and Android systems. According to reports, the app was launched after a comprehensive review of the procedures of government departments. The app allows investors and developers to track the status of their applications and complete its procedures through a single screen. It is integrated with all approval bodies involved in construction permits in Dubai. The app serves as a unified system through which applications for permits are submitted and action is taken directly on these requests by all parties concerned with their own approvals.

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1st April 2019



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Juniper Networks Helps Enterprises Simplify Data Integration

Juniper Networks revealed new offerings as part of its Juniper Networks' Advanced Threat Prevention (JATP) Appliances, enabling enterprises to detect malware, understand behavior and mitigate threats with just one touch. This solution leverages data from any third-party firewall or security data source, avoiding unnecessary vendor lock-in. Eliminating complex, time-consuming data collection configurations, Juniper is helping security teams improve their organization's security posture by simplifying and accelerating security operations. Juniper Networks revealed new capabilities that build upon the open architecture of its unified cybersecurity platform. Now security teams can easily create custom data collectors right in the JATP Appliances platform, enabling the

ingestion of threat data from any Juniper or third-party firewall. Leveraging an intuitive user interface without the need for custom code or pre-defined integrations, Juniper is simplifying operations in multi-vendor environments. This new capability introduces easy-to-use customization controls for security analysts to collect, parse and pinpoint specific data without relying on outsourced customizations. It also automatically integrates with the single, comprehensive timeline view offered by the JATP Appliances, streamlining investigation and remediation by bringing the most important threat behavior details to the forefront more quickly. The JATP Appliances provide up to 12x productivity gains over manual processes for malware investigations.

CRITEO RELEASES 'STATE OF AD TECH 2019' REPORT

Criteo released the "State of Ad Tech 2019" report which evaluates how today's marketers can successfully convert audiences throughout each stage of the purchasing journey. Criteo surveyed 901 direct response marketers in partnership with Euromonitor International, to better understand the challenges of converting customers in today's complex digital ecosystem.

The report results underscore just how fragmented ad budgets have become as marketers look for results across so many different channels. From paid display and social media marketing to content and SEO, we asked how marketers spend their money and which channels are most effective.

Michele Iozzo, Managing Director Middle East & Africa at Criteo said: "Our findings show that marketers have learned valuable lessons when it comes to addressing customers during different stages of the purchasing lifecycle while navigating challenges like multiple channels, and quality and relevance of data. This was also evident in the focus of the AdTech Forum by the ArabNet Digital Summit Dubai on how brands ensure that their digital marketing activities in the region were being optimized." activity controls.

COUNTDOWN BEGINS FOR THE 21ST EDITION OF INTERSEC

The countdown has begun for the 21st edition of the security, safety, and fire protection trade show in Dubai, with global suppliers zooming in on a Middle East market that is estimated to more than double in value over the next six years. More than 1,300 exhibitors from 59 countries, including 18 of the world's top 20 commercial security providers, are set to participate at Intersec 2019, which takes place from 20-22 January at the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The annual three-day event, organised by Messe Frankfurt Middle East, covers the seven sections of Commercial Security; Fire & Rescue; Perimeter & Physical Security; Safety & Health; Homeland Security & Policing; Information Security; and Smart Home & Building Automation. It will arrive as regional demand for these solutions soars at a compound annual growth rate of 15 percent from 2018 to 2024. According to analysts 6WResearch, the Middle East market for commercial and cyber security, fire protection, smart home solutions, and drones, worth a combined US\$7 billion in 2018, will grow to US\$16.4 billion in 2024.

ACRONIS AND NIO FORMULA E TEAM SHOWCASE CYBER PROTECTION TECHNOLOGY IN KSA

Acronis hosted its partners and customers at the Saudi Ad Diriyah E-Prix in the Saudi capital of Riyadh. As the first Formula E race held in Saudi Arabia, the e-prix was a chance to showcase Saudi culture and traditions for the thousands of attendees. For Acronis, it was also

an opportunity to showcase the use of its cyber protection technology in motorsport, particularly by its partner NIO Formula E Team, which competed in the race.

Gerry Hughes, Team Principal of NIO Formula E Team, addressed Acronis'

partners and customers following the race, saying "We were delighted to have Acronis at the race and proud to have them as team partner. With Acronis' cyber protection and artificial intelligence (AI) expertise, we are ready for new projects together."

Hughes also commended Acronis for having a global network of distributors, allowing customers to receive a personalised service in many countries around the world. In Saudi Arabia the company is represented by StarLink and Ingram Micro.

Samer Jadallah, Regional Manager KSA & Bahrain at StarLink said: "Acronis offers the most secure backup to protect this data, allowing customers to manage all of their protected devices from a single console, which they love."



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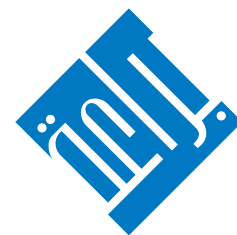
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ADNOC Adopts Blockchain for Oil & Gas Operations



The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) has successfully collaborated with IBM, piloting a Blockchain-based automated system to integrate oil and gas production across the full value chain. The system provides a secure platform for the tracking, validating and execution of transactions at every stage, from production well to the end customer.

According to ADNOC, using Blockchain technology will reduce the time it takes to execute transactions between ADNOC's operating companies and significantly increase operational efficiencies across its full value chain. It will also improve the reliability of production data by enabling greater transparency in transactions.

The project was announced by Abdul Nasser

Al Mughairbi, ADNOC Digital Unit Manager, at the recent World Energy Capital Assembly, in London. At the event, ADNOC shared its ambitions and early successes in embedding Blockchain and other advanced technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, across its business to enhance operational efficiency, drive profitability and unlock new value from oil and gas resources to seize the opportunities created by Oil and Gas 4.0.

Al Mughairbi said: "We believe this could be the first application of Blockchain in oil and gas production accounting anywhere in the world. It demonstrates how ADNOC is leveraging innovative partnerships to unleash the power of technology and creative thinking to enhance efficiencies and deliver greater performance.

NUTANIX INTRODUCES XI CLOUD SERVICES FOR THE MODERN MULTICLOUD ERA

Nutanix made available its Xi Cloud Services, a new suite of offerings designed to create a more unified fabric across different cloud environments, that gives IT teams the freedom to run their applications on the optimal platform, not restricted by technology limitations. Xi Cloud Services is comprised of five distinct offerings at launch, including Xi Leap, a native extension of the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform providing disaster recovery as a service.

According to the recent Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Index, enterprise workloads running in both private and public clouds are expected to jump nearly 20% in the next two years. Through Xi Cloud Services, Nutanix makes it easier for companies to integrate cloud services into their multicloud deployments, whether by natively extending their Nutanix environment beyond the boundaries of a traditional datacenter or by finally gaining the visibility and insight into their infrastructure deployments across platforms to monitor costs and ensure compliance.

60 SECONDS

INFOVISTA TEAMS UP WITH WESTCON-COMSTOR

Infovista has partnered with Westcon-Comstor to strengthen and scale its global channel presence. With this announcement, Infovista completes its global roll-out of a 2 Tier enterprise Go-To-Market channel strategy. Through the partnership, Westcon-Comstor is expected to introduce Infovista Ipanema to new partners and service providers throughout the world.

Z SERVICES PARTNERS WITH ONELOGIN

Z Services has revealed a strategic partnership with OneLogin, to bring advanced single sign-on, MFA and unified access identity management capabilities solving this critical issue for customers in a solution that addresses applications in the cloud and on-premise. This will add a critical and differentiating layer to Z Services' existing and leading cybersecurity-as-a-service portfolio, which customers across the region access in a subscription model, directly from Z Services and from leading telcos.

BATELCO PARTNERS WITH CISCO MERAKI

Batelco has partnered with Cisco Meraki to provide Batelco's small and medium enterprise customers with a managed comprehensive WiFi solution. The smart managed WiFi solution based on the Cisco Meraki Access Point extends to enterprise customers various features, including a wide range of high speed WiFi and strong coverage, Zero Touch Provisioning (ZTP) technology, Location Analytics, business grade firewall, bandwidth control, multi-SSID Support, and application control.

IEC TELECOM GROUP EXPANDS INTO EUROPE

IEC Telecom Group expands its presence in the Scandinavian market, as part of the company's global expansion plan in the EMEA region. The global provider of managed network communication solutions recently opened a new office in Copenhagen, Denmark. The new office, located close to Kastrup airport, will primarily focus on the maritime market.



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CYBER SENTINELS

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Oman's largest data center in Launched in Jebel Akhdar



Datamount has launched the nation's largest commercial data center at Jebel Akhdar. A cost-efficient, data center facility with a total floor area of around 9000 square meters, the center will accommodate around 1000 racks, making it the Sultanate's largest scale-data center. The company will leverage this highly reliable, scalable, state-of-the-art facility to further grow its data center services.

At a glittering ceremony held at Kempinski Hotel on 29th November which was graced by His Highness Sayyid Shihab Bin Tariq Al Said, Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan, Datamount launched its data center.

Designed by technology partners NxtGen Data Center & Cloud Technologies, one of the well-known data center service providers, Datamount's

facility is being established to provide leading Data Centre services to government entities, corporates and various business enterprises, locally and internationally. The company aims to support clients achieve their commercial goals and service objectives, through the facility.

On the momentous occasion Datamount signed a contract with Ministry of Defense Pension Fund for leasing its land at Jebel Akhdar with a total area of around 28,000 sq mt.

It also signed a partnership with Awasa as a strategic Telecom Services provider and with Avaya for providing cloud communications service.

Datamount also signed up with Pulse Information Technologies (Rittal solution provider) for building a mini data center of 20 racks.

APLA ENTERS A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH CGG

Apla has partnered with the Centre for Good Governance (CGG) Hyderabad, Government of Telangana to deliver blockchain infrastructure, application and services to government entities in India as well as in other regions in the near future. The partnership is part of the organization's strategic plan to continue to expand its regional presence in Middle East and South Asia.

"We're seeing a growing number of organizations across the public sector beginning to explore how blockchain technology can help streamline or modernize operations and are excited to deliver blockchain solutions in collaboration with CGG," commented Muhammed Arafath, Executive Director at Apla.

"With the project in India currently in its roll-out phase, we are also exploring various use cases across Smartcity projects and eGovernment cloud computing initiatives and we look forward to expanding our partnership with different technology companies in A.I. and IoT across different markets in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The UAE, being an international tech and innovation hub, is one of our main focus markets as well."

Making it easier and more efficient to access emerging technologies such as A.I. and blockchain, Apla together with its delivery partner CGG, enable government entities in India now to accelerate the deployment of digital services that are smarter, more resilient, secure and better integrated.

BIOS MIDDLE EAST AND VECHAIN LAUNCH BLOCKCHAIN-AS-A-SERVICE

VeChain and BIOS Middle East have signed a MoU to co-market and implement a framework of blockchain-as-a-service (BaaS) and blockchain-enabled cloud services.

VeChain's wide range of blockchain solutions for enterprises comprising of the IoT are ripe for major cloud service providers

like BIOS Middle East to provide a variety of BaaS offerings to existing clientele across Energy, Finance, Retail, PetroChem and Healthcare industries in the Middle East.

BIOS Middle East and VeChain recognize that in order for large scale blockchain revolution to happen, companies will

require help with designing, migrating and managing their blockchain solutions to realize its tremendous benefits.

BIOS Middle East is integrating its own Security-as-a-Service offering, known as BIOS Secured on the VeChain blockchain. "Leveraging on BIOS Middle East's

expertise in Cloud Services and System integration, I believe Dominic's team will help accelerate adoption and transactions on VeChain's platform. Starting from Dubai, one of the world's blockchain-friendly states," said Sunny Lu, Co-Founder, and CEO of VeChain.

"BIOS Middle East will work with VeChain to

extend its proven solutions on the blockchain to be directly accessible to Middle East and African organizations through the CloudHPT platform, which will potentially bring thousands of transactions on a daily basis," said Dominic Docherty, Managing Director, BIOS Middle East added.



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Symantec Unveils Industrial Control System Protection

Symantec introduced Industrial Control System Protection (ICSP) Neural, the industry's first neural network-integrated USB scanning station that helps organizations protect critical infrastructure by preventing the devastating physical consequences of cyber-attacks on operational technology (OT).

OT is mission-critical in industries such as energy, oil and gas, manufacturing, and transportation, but legacy systems are often outdated and nearly impossible to secure with traditional endpoint security. Companies have typically relied on unscanned USB devices to update these systems, increasing the potential for malware infection and targeted attacks.

The threat of cyber warfare – including physical damage and personal safety – is very real and the consequences are potentially devastating. Despite this, the industrial control systems that power critical infrastructure often run on outdated Windows systems leaving them vulnerable to both known and unknown threats. For example, the infamous Symantec-discovered Stuxnet worm used USB-based malware to manipulate centrifuges in Iranian nuclear plants – ultimately sabotaging a key part of the country's nuclear program. To help combat this type of threat, the U.S. government elevated its Cyber Command to a full combatant command in May 2018.



WEB CLIPS

QOGNIFY TO ACQUIRE ONSSI

Qognify has signed a definitive agreement to acquire On-Net Surveillance Systems, Inc. (OnSSI) and the OnSSI company – SeeTec GmbH. In bringing these technology solution portfolios together under one roof – including Qognify VisionHub, OnSSI Ocularis and SeeTec Cayuga – Qognify becomes one of the largest VMS, Video Analytics, PSIM and critical incident management companies in the world. Qognify is backed by global investment firm Battery Ventures.

DENASTER CHOOSES ORACLE NETSUITE

Denaster General Trading LLC, an UAE based retail distributor that helps international brands such as Bang & Olufsen, Parrot and Nokia reach consumers across the Middle East, has chosen Oracle NetSuite to support its international expansion into India and the UK. With NetSuite, Denaster will be able to take advantage of the cloud to gain a single view into key business metrics across its entire operations and quickly and easily set up local operations in new markets.

TERADATA VANTAGE NOW AVAILABLE

Teradata Vantage – the company's next-generation analytics platform – is now available to all customers. Vantage enables enterprises to uncover actionable answers to the toughest business questions by tightly integrating the best analytic functions and engines to provide a scalable, agile platform that enables enterprises to drive business value. It also provides access to a wide variety of descriptive, predictive and prescriptive analytics; autonomous decision making; machine learning functions; visualization tools and more, deployed across public clouds, on-premises, on optimized or commodity infrastructure, or as-a-service.

ADSSA AND MICROSOFT HOST 'AI HACKFEST'

The Abu Dhabi Smart Solutions and Services Authority (ADSSA) hosted its inaugural Hackfest in partnership with Microsoft. The four-day event brought together government delegates and Microsoft's Artificial Intelligence experts to collaborate, envision, learn, and develop AI applications and algorithms to empower Abu Dhabi's government entities and employees to achieve more.

SOPHOS XG FIREWALL ADDS LATERAL MOVEMENT PROTECTION

Sophos XG Firewall now includes lateral movement protection to prevent targeted, manual cyber-attacks or exploits from infiltrating further into a compromised network. The SophosLabs 2019 Threat Report discusses a rise in targeted ransomware. With the SamSam ransomware campaign estimated to have earned more than \$6.5 million, it is not surprising that criminals are attracted to this method. In these attacks, cybercriminals target weak entry points and brute-force Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) passwords. Once in, they move laterally, working one step at a time to steal domain admin credentials, manipulate internal controls, disable back-ups and more. By the time most IT managers notice what's happening, the damage is done. "Many organizations are set up to protect against automatic bots, but not interactive, human-driven attacks. If active adversaries get into a system they can 'think laterally' to troubleshoot roadblocks, evade detection and move around. It's hard to stop them unless the right security measures are in place," said Dan Schiappa, senior vice president and general manager of products at Sophos.



MOVEMENTS



NetApp appoints [KRISTIAN KERR](#) as VP - Partners & Pathways - EMEA Region



Fine Hygienic Holding appoints [YAHYA PANDOR](#) as CIO



Spire Solutions Appoints [EHAB DERBAS](#) as Country Manager for KSA



NUMBER GAME

\$32.30 bn

Data Centre Solution Market to be worth USD 32.30 billion by 2020: MarketsandMarkets

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Site24x7 Introduces AI-driven Microsoft Azure Monitoring

Site24x7 introduced its AI-powered Microsoft Azure monitoring as well as its chatbot integration with Microsoft Teams. Site24x7 Azure monitoring enables IT teams to manage over 100+ Azure products using Azure Insights API in near real-time thus making it valuable for IT teams to gain actionable alerts, bring down resolution time, and gain visibility into their hybrid clouds. With the introduction of Site24x7 chatbot for Microsoft Teams, DevOps and application owners will be able to get the health status of critical applications in their familiar workplace chat room.

Many organizations are adopting a hybrid cloud environment, creating the need to monitor a growing mix of both on-premises and multiple

cloud infrastructures. The global hybrid cloud market overall, is expected to grow from USD 44.60 billion in 2018 to USD 97.64 billion by 2023, according to B2B research company MarketsandMarkets.

Addressing this growing challenge, Site24x7 brings together existing capabilities for monitoring user experience, infrastructure monitoring and application performance management into one unified solution that can deliver full stack monitoring in hybrid environment, thus giving DevOps & IT Teams a holistic view into their IT infrastructure. Additionally, Microsoft Teams chatbot integration helps in enhancing productivity in organizations grappling with hybrid environmental challenges.

LENOVO EXPANDS THINKAGILE PORTFOLIO

Lenovo Data Center Group is further expanding its ThinkAgile portfolio to provide an innovative solution for customers who desire the agility of the public cloud and the security of a private cloud. To address this growing customer trend, Lenovo – together with Cloudistics, the cloud software platform company – has developed the ThinkAgile CP Series composable cloud platform, a 'cloud-in-a-box' that offers all of the conveniences and ease-of-use of a public cloud environment, secured behind the customer's own data center firewall.

"ICP had been an early adopter of the Cloudistics' cloud platform as well as a Lenovo reseller. After hearing about these two companies coming together to deliver the Lenovo ThinkAgile CP Series, the entire ICP team jumped at the chance to position the new series to our valued customers," said Sal Saglik, Director of Business Development, ICP Corp. "The ease of use, rapid deployment and scalability of ThinkAgile CP will allow us to deliver a cloud-like experience in a complete and secure solution without the costs and complexities of the public cloud."

DED AJMAN REVIEWS GOVERNMENT PRIVILEGES FOR ENTREPRENEURS

The Department of Economic Development – Ajman, organized a Government Privileges Forum for local, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in partnership with the National Program for SMEs. The forum, which was held at the Ajman Saray Hotel, discussed the privileges offered by the National Program for SMEs, which operates under the Ministry of Economy, and how to coordinate with stakeholders to promote the products for national projects locally and internationally, and how to provide support for entrepreneurs.

H.E. Ali Issa Al Nuaimi, Director General of DED-Ajman, said: "The recent event formed part of the department's initiatives to back local investments by building a friendly environment for entrepreneurs. We aim to develop SMEs business and empower local entrepreneurs to help achieve success across various economic sectors".

H.E. Al Nuaimi added: "The National Program for SMEs is one of the most prominent national initiatives that emphasize the country's drive to support entrepreneurship. It provides all SME players with the right knowledge and opportunities to flourish in their respective businesses and ensure their active contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and economic diversification effort."

TP-LINK WITH SHIVA COMPUTERS ORGANIZES A CHANNEL-PARTNER MEET

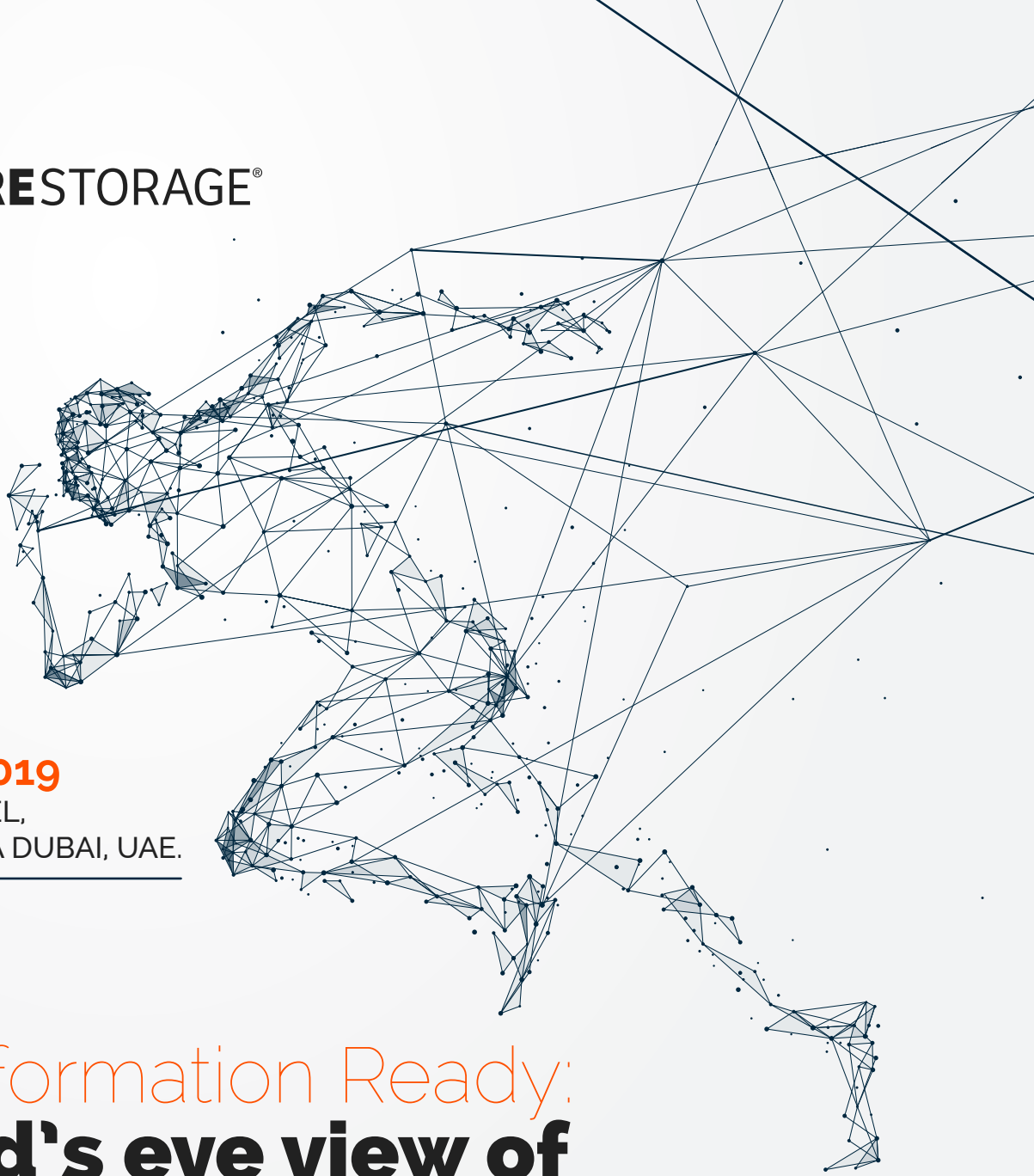
TP-Link organized a channel-partner meet in collaboration with Shiva Computers LLC. The meet was outlined to create new strategies and unfold opportunities for channel partners in the Middle East region as well as introduce the SMB product range. The engaging event was held at JW Marriot Marquis Hotel, Dubai that

comprised of a pleasant evening that started with networking session, followed by industry insights from Shiva Computers and TP-Link. Sony Mathew – Channel Manager (SMB), TP-Link MEA FZE presented a comprehensive presentation of SMB product line – Networking products like Jetstream, Omada, Pharos and Safestreams.

The highlight of the event was the new and advanced Omada Hybrid Cloud Platform, a cloud solution that provides professional & centralized wi-fi network management. Omada platform offers different types of controllers and Access Points. Omada Hybrid Controller manages and monitors the statistics of all the APS in real-time. It will

give the advantage of On premise and Cloud controller. User can monitor stats, view graphical analysis of network traffic, create a captive portal, upgrade or reboot the system and even scale your network to boost your business. Insights on using and controlling the product via Omada mobile app was also demonstrated.

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“UAE’s Sports Medicine and Technology Most Impressive” says Shah Rukh



Recently, Indian film star and producer Shah Rukh Khan toured nanoM, a state-of-the-art sports and human performance facility based in Dubai that provides comprehensive health and fitness analyses.

Shah Rukh, who spent more than two hours at the facility, signed the clinic’s wall of fame and said: “I’ve visited many facilities around the world, including ones in the US and Europe, and nanoM’s equipment and technology are the most impressive by far.”

“I can see why professional footballers, cyclists and cricketers use nanoM’s services. My team –

the Kolkata Knight Riders – and I will definitely be back for health and performance assessments,” he added.

Karan Rekhi, Vice President – Operations of Nano M, an Emirates Healthcare Company said, “We were delighted to host SRK at our facility. Our wall of fame is almost completely covered; I believe word spreads when you offer excellence. nanoM is the facility of choice for sports professionals and celebrities seeking to enhance their performances and address existing or potential injuries.”

Other famous visitors include English football legend Frank Lampard, who underwent a series of tests at nanoM earlier this year, and Lee Peltier, who plays for Cardiff City.

nanoM is a unique, premium health assessment facility with technology that is at least a decade more advanced than that in other facilities. The latest equipment is used to analyse health, fitness, total body functionality and physical performance capabilities, and the facility has a movement analysis area with high definition cameras to monitor and analyse whole body motion.

MCAfee REPORT EXAMINES CYBERCRIMINAL UNDERGROUND

McAfee released its Labs Threats Report: December 2018, examining activity in the cybercriminal underground and the evolution of cyber threats in Q3 2018. McAfee Labs saw an average of 480 new threats per minute and a sharp increase in malware targeting IoT devices. “As long as ransoms are paid and relatively easy attacks, such as phishing campaigns, are successful, bad actors will continue to use these techniques. Following up-and-coming trends on the underground markets and hidden forums allow the cybersecurity community to defend against current attacks and stay a step ahead of those in our future,” said Christiaan Beek, lead scientist at McAfee.

Each quarter, McAfee assesses the state of the cyber threat landscape based on in-depth research, investigative analysis, and threat data gathered by the McAfee® Global Threat Intelligence cloud from over a billion sensors across multiple threat vectors around the world.

BT TO DELIVER THE LATEST SD-WAN AND CYBER SECURITY SERVICES FOR IXOM

BT has signed a contract to deploy a new generation of network technology for IXOM. It will see IXOM benefit from BT’s latest software-defined wide area networking (SD-WAN) and cyber security managed services as it shifts applications and data to the cloud to drive agility, efficiency and innovation. IXOM’s new network will connect over 1000 employees at 55 sites across 14 countries. It will support the company’s digital transformation by delivering over seven times more bandwidth than its existing infrastructure and offer a step change in resilience with dual connectivity to 35 major sites. It will be built around BT Agile Connect, a BT managed service based on an SD-WAN 2.0 solution by Nuage Networks from Nokia. This offers enhanced control and understanding of network infrastructure and traffic flows, a much faster, simpler and more secure way of setting up new sites, reduced complexity and lower costs. BT will also deliver a 24x7 global cyber threat detection, investigation and response service. Managed from BT’s Australian Cyber Security Operation Centre and interfacing directly with IXOM’s in-house team, it will be based on a market-leading security information and event management (SIEM) platform combined with specialist cyber analyst services. This will help protect IXOM from rapidly evolving threats.

CISCO HELPS UAE ENTERPRISES EMBRACE THE CLOUD FASTER WITH NEW SOLUTIONS

Cisco is unifying its security and software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) technologies to help organizations in the UAE and the region embrace the cloud faster with choice and confidence.

The WAN is undergoing a radical transformation. Today, organizations host their applications in multiple clouds – public, private and SaaS. The way people work has also changed; employees connect from coffee shops and

airport lounges, instead of just the office. Now, organizations must rely on the Internet to connect users to business-critical applications. This has resulted in a new Cloud Edge – the intersection of networking and security.

Until now, SD-WAN solutions have forced IT to choose between application experience or security. By evolving its SD-WAN portfolio, Cisco is addressing the new realities of the Cloud Edge. Cisco SD-WAN can help

IT deliver better application experiences and make users more productive with unmatched simplicity and scale. And now, best-of-breed security can be easily enabled anywhere it is needed, from the branch to the cloud.



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BUILDING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR CHANNEL EMPOWERMENT

"WE GIVE OUR PARTNERS A KEY DIFFERENTIATOR AND FUTURE-READY SOLUTION TO ENSURE THEIR CUSTOMERS A GUARANTEED PROFITABILITY NOT AVAILABLE FROM ANY OTHER VENDOR TODAY."



MAYA ZAKHOUR,
HEAD OF DISTRIBUTION AND
ALLIANCES, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA,
NETAPP

? What is NetApp's channel strategy for 2019? What are the training and development programs that you provide to your partners to stay in line with your vision?

For 2019, NetApp will highlight further the role of our channel partners not only in our business growth but also in the success of our cloud-first strategy. Showcasing our best industry solutions in this age of digital transformation will remain paramount in 2019 and our channel partners are critical in making sure that we reach our target market in a strategic manner. Specifically, we aim to showcase our best-in-class flash portfolio designed to lead our clients to the next high-performance data management solutions, in addition to our HCI solution and cloud

data services portfolio. This is aligned with the recently expanded Fueled by NetApp program, which is aimed at delivering go-to-market solutions with scale-out, guaranteed performance, automated management, data assurance, and global efficiencies.

Furthermore, we will focus on forging new alliances to add to our growing list of partners, that recently has been enlarged Lenovo and NVIDIA. As for training and development, we have our Unified Partner Program developed to provide our partners access to our industry-leading products, enablement, and tools, in addition to our Get Successful Partner Enablement Program, which focuses on knowledge, skills, and tools needed to develop a fruitful, profitable, and lasting practice in selling NetApp solutions and services.

? How critical has been the role of channel in NetApp? What are the biggest challenges and opportunities you are facing in building NetApp's channel presence?

Our channel partners are critical in our success as an organization. They are fundamental in our mission to build result-oriented information technology infrastructures required to succeed in today's digital transformation era. The expansion of Fueled by NetApp program and our cloud-first strategy further complement this goal.

One of major challenges is to enable our partners about lucrative and profitable cloud practices. All of our partners are selling cloud, but most partners don't think they are making money selling it. We intend to address this by throwing the spotlight on opportunities in relevant areas. For example, if they are selling AWS, why not sell Cloud Volumes for AWS? Another area of development is developing the skillset in selling our solutions. The tendency to simply sell storage rather than envisioning the ways in which the solution can empower end-users remains a challenge. Resellers must educate themselves about how an enterprise storage solution is managed, manipulated, handled, and leveraged, to fully

assist the customer and manage their IT environment into a DATA FABRIC architecture.

? How can partners grow their business and remain profitable with NetApp?

As a partner-centric organization, NetApp has laid down all the key tools to help our partners grow their business and become profitable. Our certification is one such tools, ensuring that our partners are designing, installing, administering, and supporting their NetApp solutions efficiently and successfully. Aside from our training and certification program, our incentives and reliable products and services are also key to making our partners profitable. In addition the new business in which NetApp has entered in the last quarters: HCI and cloud, enable our partners to reach NEW buyers and NEW business.

? Credit issue and low margins have been one of the most pressing issues for distributors and integrators in the region in 2018. How did NetApp fare in this part?

To mitigate similar margin challenges for distributors and integrators, NetApp came up with effective incentives and promotion programs that cater to distributors as well as to integrators. These programs ensure that rebates and incentives compensate for the low margins, which happens rarely with our distributors and partners.

? Building the best channel case for channel empowerment - What is NetApp's mantra for this?

Our mantra revolves around innovation and technological progress to help address and create new markets and demand. Digital transformation is happening everywhere, and we want, together with our partners, to help our customers into this journey. We want to empower our partners and ensure that they capitalize on fresh opportunities to enhance their brand and expand their customer base. ➡

Gartner's Top 10 **Strategic** Technology Trends for 2019

Intelligent

#1



Autonomous Things

#4



Augmented Analytics

#7



AI-Driven Development

Digital

#2



Digital Twins

#5



Empowered Edge

#8



Immersive Technologies

Mesh

#3



Blockchain

#6



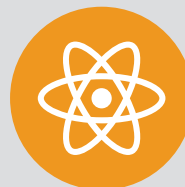
Smart Spaces

#9



Ethics & Privacy

#10



Quantum Computing

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Risk Management 360

PAUL JOHNS, JOINED SAI GLOBAL IN OCTOBER 2017— A TIME WHEN COMPANIES WERE COMBATING THE PROLIFERATION OF EMERGING DISRUPTIONS AND THERE ROSE A DIRE NEED FOR CREATING A MUCH MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO MANAGING RISK. A QUICK READ ON HIS PERCEPTION OF THE DISRUPTIVE MARKET AND HIS VISION IN ALIGNING THE OFFERS IN SYNC.



PAUL JOHNS,
CMO, SAI GLOBAL

■ BY: ANUSHREE DIXIT

Max Gladstone, an American fantasy writer had once said that “You live in a grim universe, and that is risk management for you”. Companies that are embarking on a digital transformation initiative today seldom fail because they are not in a position to assess, approach, manage and govern the risk that transformation brings along. According to market experts, not all unknown threats are unknown and what seems unforeseen can be foreseen.

Well, this is one of the significant proposition that Paul Johns, Chief Marketing Officer at SAI Global, brings to the table in one of my recent tete-a-tete with him. Looking back in history, SAI (Standards Australia International) Global had the most pivotal role to play in establishing the standards and technical documentation of the successful building of Sydney’s iconic Harbor Bridge in 1922. Since then, a lot has evolved but

the risk is intact.

Paul joined SAI Global in October 2017— A time when companies were combating the proliferation of emerging disruptions and there rose a dire need for creating a much more comprehensive and collaborative approach to managing risk. “We are into five key business areas that include— Assurance, Private Equity, Property, Mortgage & brokerage, and standard risk management business that is largely Australian but increasingly moving into UK and Ireland. When I joined SAI Global, my core responsibility was to bring all the areas of business together and create one story.”

Paul is the CMO for four of the significant business. “GCC is a huge market for us that considers regulation, risk, and governance seriously. UAE, especially, has very ambitious plans and it is impressive to see how the leaders are building a very matured, sophisticated and transparent regulatory framework,” says Paul.

ADDRESSING THE SECURITY GAPS

According to Paul, companies that do not follow security regulations should be levied a severe data penalty. For Paul, it is more about commitment than education. “I do not see any skill gap or skill shortage in this region, contrary to popular beliefs. DIFC is a very mature regulator and the rules laid out are much transparent and I feel it is much advanced than the other counterparts.

What we need to see is a real engagement between the regulators and enterprises that shall force compliance as a dedicated art form which has to be taken seriously.”

SAI 360

Recently SAI Global unveiled the next generation of risk management with SAI360, a suite of solutions that enables organizations to advance confidently meeting the volatile nature and proliferation of emerging disruptive threats and rising regulatory requirements. Under the weight, acceleration, and intricacies of these emerging threats such as cybersecurity, data privacy, compliance and the need to protect brand reputations, leading industry analysts and the marketplace signalled there is now a need to take a new approach to collectively manage risk.

THE PARTNER PYRAMID

Paul says that SAI Global relies heavily on its selected yet exclusive partner network in the region. According to him, there is three kind of partners— Traditional partners, Exclusive partners, and Selected partners. “We work in a hybrid model where we create a mix of the right kind of partners. Whenever we design a solution, we look for a partner who can come in with the right business model and give a finishing touch to the product by automating that solution from a technology point of view or a deployment point of view.”

In 2019, the company is aiming to generate 60% of its revenue through channel partners.

FINALLY

Talking about doubling their presence and size in the MEA region, Paul says that he believes the team has done a great job in bringing the most relevant technologies to the region. He also adds that the customers heavily influence some of the products that they are building in the U.S that they have in the Middle East.

In my closing note, I ask Paul how he perceives the market from a competition point of view being the global CMO. Paul says, “There are two types of competitors in the market – Contenders and Pretenders. We contend with our strength of being in this market for a long time. We have over 100,000 customers across the world. As the name suggests, we are global.” Paul signs off. 🏠

RECENT UPDATES

- SAI Global Introduces EthicsAnywhere - Ethics & Compliance learning solution
- Launched SAI360, next generation of risk management solution
- Recognized as a Visionary by Gartner in the inaugural “Magic Quadrant for Integrated Risk Management
- Expanded its North American presence with the opening of a new corporate global headquarter in Chicago
- Named Top Vendor in GDPR Solution and Services at Cyber Sentinels Security Award 2018



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A New Era in InsurTech

AS DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES DRAMATICALLY RESHAPE INDUSTRY AFTER INDUSTRY, MANY BUSINESSES ARE PURSUING LARGE-SCALE CHANGE EFFORTS TO CAPTURE THE BENEFITS OF THESE TRENDS. IN A NEW MCKINSEY GLOBAL SURVEY ON DIGITAL TRANSFORMATIONS, MORE THAN EIGHT IN TEN RESPONDENTS SAY THEIR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE UNDERTAKEN SUCH EFFORTS IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS. YOU CAN SEND ACROSS AN ARTICLE OR A RESPONSE TO THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF IT OR ITS VALUE.



MICHELE GROSSO,
CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF
DEMOCRANCE

Just about every traditional industry has been disrupted with the advent of new technologies, and the pace of change is picking up. But technology on its own is without meaning, and cannot drive a digital transformation. Aside from the focus on technology, I believe that partnerships are yet another effective digital transformation strategy that companies should take a closer look at.

Partnerships, when forged between the right partners who have similar goals and values, can be used as the foundation for stagnating industries to innovate and create new value for customers. Partnerships can also be a lot more effective than having to reinvent the wheel and build innovative solutions from scratch.

For instance, conventional insurance companies – which have outdated administration processes and human distribution channels – are

in the midst of an upheaval due to new insurance technology (InsurTech) players. Traditional insurers are now starting to realise the importance of partnering up with these InsurTech entrants, so that they do not miss out on new opportunities.

As an InsurTech start-up, Democrance partners up with insurance companies to help digitize their operations, from mobile-first, fully digital distribution of products to claims management. Democrance's proprietary platform also offers the insurer real-time customer data and behavior analytics. This digitisation of the insurance process automates what were formerly expensive and manual processes, thus lowering the cost of product sales and administration.

The lowered costs mean that insurers can break into new customer segments that were previously not economically-viable, such as the low-income populations. More than half of the world's popu-

lation live without any kind of social or financial protection, and access to this untapped market of customers by utilising technology is Democrance's core offering for insurers. As the name suggests, our aim is to democratize insurance for those who need it most but can afford it least.

Another aspect of our business is to forge unique partnerships between insurance firms and distributors, such as a mobile network operator (MNO) or money transfer operator (MTO). Our role becomes that of an intermediary, who manages the entire value chain between the insurer and distributor.

Using Democrance's platform, the MNO or MTO can sell and service insurance products simply through a mobile phone. Telecommunications companies and remittance houses struggle with stiff competition, but offering insurance to their customer base creates a diversified revenue stream and also boosts customer loyalty by addressing another aspect of their lives.

By harnessing the power of technology and symbiotic partnerships, I believe that the insurance industry can unlock new markets and at the same time create social value for populations that were previously excluded from the benefits and protection that insurance offers.

There has been a lot of focus on what digital transformations can mean for a company's productivity and bottom line, but we should not forget that digital transformations can bring about social benefits as well. 🏡

Empowering Intelligent Transformation in a Digital Age

WITH THE DEVELOPING TRENDS IN MIND, LENOVO IS HELPING TO TRANSFORM PRODUCTIVITY AND COLLABORATION BY SETTING THE SCENE FOR HELPING PEOPLE WORK SMARTER WITH INNOVATIVE EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES



**RICHARD
WILCOX,**

REGIONAL DIRECTOR, LENOVO
DATA CENTRE GROUP (DCG)
MIDDLE EAST

The speed at which digital transformation has been taking shape in the last decade is unprecedented. It has had major implications on the way businesses operate in the Middle East and around the world. Industry analyst IDC expects that by 2020, at least 55% of the world's organizations will be digitally determined, transforming markets and re-imagining the future through the implementation of new business models and the provision of digitally enabled products and services. This oncoming era of digital transformation will require complete intelligent transformation.


Some major trends are going to be accelerated in the next year, the first of which is Smart IoT. It's

no longer enough for tech companies to provide smartphones, laptops, servers, storage and networking products in silos. Large organisations need great solutions and the value comes in providing a holistic vision of a world that is not only connected but smart.

Another undeniable accelerator of intelligent transformation is Artificial Intelligence. As voice, gesture and movement come to the fore, we'll see an era of ambient computing emerge which will be defined and enriched by advances in AI, speech recognition, machine learning and cloud computing.

How can we forget about 5G? 5G download speeds will transform how people engage with the world overnight. We will be seeing this new

trend transform mainstream things like driverless cars, smart wearables, gaming, home security and industrial intelligence. Finally, AR & VR are not just for gamers anymore. Shrewd observers know that the effect these fast-developing technologies are having on business is nothing short of transformational.

In conclusion, for businesses to take advantage of these trends next year and the years after that, they will need to invest in infrastructure that is open yet secure, flexible, and delivers speed and reliability. With these developing trends in mind, Lenovo is helping to transform productivity and collaboration by setting the scene for helping people work smarter with innovative emerging technologies. 

A New Era in Vehicle Technology

IF TECHNOLOGY IMPROVES COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE - ALONG WITH NON-NEGOTIABLE TOPICS LIKE SAFETY AND CLEAN AIR - WHY DON'T WE EXPLORE THAT FURTHER? CONTINENTAL BELIEVES IN PROMOTING ALL OF THESE TECHNOLOGIES.



ALEXANDER
KLOTZ,

HEAD OF TECHNICAL CENTER INDIA,
CONTINENTAL

We are probably living in the most interesting time in history, when the power of technology to transform lives is visible to each one of us, every day. A tech revolution of this magnitude is a rare phenomenon. For industries such as ours, driven by technology, this is exciting at the same time challenging. This is also when the real value providers stand apart from the noise makers. For a technology company like Continental, our list of products is expanding as the automotive industry continues its rapid shift towards software and mobility services.

The biggest advantage of digitalization is that it makes innovative vehicle technology even more attractive. For example, at Continental we are using the ever-expanding possibilities of digitalization to create intelligent solutions for new mobility solutions, information management, technologies for increased road safety, more fuel-

efficient drive systems, etc. If technology improves comfort and convenience - along with non-negotiable topics like safety and clean air - why don't we explore that further? Continental believes in promoting all of these technologies. Because eventually, all of these contribute to making our lives better each day - I would say that technology solutions are becoming more democratized. Intelligent transportation systems, the increasing software and electronics content in vehicles, all of it together make the vehicles of tomorrow even more attractive. In the future, high performance computing, embedded SW, connectivity together with cloud-based software solutions from Continental will offer not only more convenience for drivers and passengers, but also for the transport industry. Interestingly, digitalization of our everyday living space also now allows the increasing integration of mobility as well.

The acceleration of AI will further drive digi-

talization's success in multiple industries. With the automotive already on its way to become a "computer on wheels", the AI industry has the possibility of eventually becoming bigger than the automobile industry today. Tomorrow's car will be something you can talk to, for example discuss the best route to take. When you want to park the car, you will simply ask your car to park by itself. This is going to revolutionize urban economics.

Of course, opportunities and challenges co-exist. To guarantee the future of any business we must always be ready to adapt and change. We must create solutions that address the needs and problems of tomorrow, keeping in mind the trends, the pace of change, the efficiency needed to keep pace with it, etc. As the head of Continental's in-house R&D Center, which works on several pathbreaking innovations for world markets, I can confidently say that technology will be the gamechanger and THE key differentiator that creates competitive advantage among peers. Another major shift is, industries will also no longer be watertight compartments. Industries will merge, technologies will come together to create new segments. Technology is calling the shots. 🔥

Offering Quality & Secure Solution

"WE ALWAYS FOLLOW AN AGGRESSIVE APPROACH IN THE MARKET AND OUR SUCCESS IS RESULT OF THE APPROACH, OUR KNOWLEDGE, ABILITY TO DEFINE SOLUTION TO CUSTOMERS BASED ON THEIR NEEDS AND BUDGETS."



**ABDUL
GAFOOR,**

MANAGING DIRECTOR, SMARTWORLD

? Tell us in brief about SmartWorld and your portfolio

SmartWorld is a card technology and security specialist catering to Middle East and African market for nearly 15 years. SmartWorld has strategic partnership with almost ten leading brands in this industry.

? Who are the key technology partners that you work with?

Our portfolio includes specialization in smart card technology covering projects in banking card personalization, EMV testing tools, Driver's license projects, SIM card personalization projects and quite a lot of consultancy driven projects on card, payment and security domains.

? Tell us more about your go-to-market strategy in the region.

SmartWorld is known for growing brands in the region. The brands that we have nurtured is part of our sales and marketing strategy. We always follow an aggressive approach in the market and

our success is result of the approach, our knowledge, ability to define solution to customers based on their needs and budgets.

? What are your key strengths in secure issuance and access control?

Our key strength in secure issuance is the end to end solution we are capable to deliver. We also have application customization and development capabilities which helps us pin to exact needs of our customers. On secure issuance with SmartWorld is ME distributors for MAGICARD, Card Exchange software, ImageDEC cards brands. Access control, we cater to the needs of the industry. We work with security integrators of varied levels and supply access control readers, diversified electro mechanical locking systems, access control accessories etc. We are strategic partners of Allegion in the region and we also have our own brand on EM locks and accessories which is popularly known as SWC.

? Which are the key verticals/ industries that you cater to?

As you are aware, security both in terms of card personalization and logical security is a key element in all verticals. Key verticals include Government, Transportation, Finance & Banking, Healthcare, Insurance etc.

? How are you gearing up for Intersec and what are the key technologies that you would be showcasing?

Intersec 2019 is a key event for both SmartWorld & its partners Allegion and Magicard. Eg: Magicard is launching its Ultima re-transfer model in the market during Intersec which the industry and its customers been waiting for so long. Allegion is highlighting Schlage mortise lock and push bar's for door applications and we invite all our customers to attend live demo at our booth. ■



PEEP INTO CES 2019

"WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS, STAYS IN VEGAS" THEY SAY, BUT NOT AT CES. THE ANNUAL CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW HAS RETURNED AND THOUSANDS OF TECH ENTHUSIASTS WILL GET A CHANCE TO EXPLORE THE LATEST GADGETS AND DEVICES. LAST YEAR OLED TELEVISIONS, SAMSUNG AND HUAWEI MOBILE PHONES GRABBED THE ATTENTION. WHAT WILL THE VIEWERS GET TO WITNESS THIS YEAR?

Every year in January, the Las Vegas Convention and World Trade Centre is transformed into a demo showcase of the latest technology from over 4500 exhibitors. In 2019, the show will be held from 8th January to 11th January with focus on new technologies like autonomous vehicles, robotics, 5G etc.



4500

EXHIBITING COMPANIES



180,000+

ATTENDANCE



6500

MEDIA



155+

COUNTRIES

EXHIBIT DATES & HOURS

	TECH EAST	TECH WEST	TECH SOUTH*
TUESDAY, JAN. 8	10 AM-6 PM	10 AM-6 PM	9 AM-5 PM
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 9	9 AM-6 PM	9 AM-6 PM	9 AM-5 PM
THURSDAY, JAN. 10	9 AM-6 PM	9 AM-6 PM	9 AM-5 PM
FRIDAY, JAN. 11	9 AM-4 PM	9 AM-4 PM	CLOSED

EXHIBITOR PROFILE



From tech powerhouses to innovative startups, companies big and small from all industries come to CES to introduce the latest innovation to the global market.



Exhibitors feature products from all facets of tech, from audio, vehicle technology and wireless to drones, augmented and virtual reality, 3D printing, sensor tech and more.



Manufacturers, developers and suppliers gather at CES to not only showcase game-changing technology to the world, but to also build strong business relationships with new and existing industries.

LOCATION – LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, USA

Sands Expo, The Venetian, The Palazzo, Wynn Las Vegas and Encore at Wynn (Encore) Features the innovative power behind the industry's emerging technology, including revolutions in fitness and health, wearables, smart home, smart cities and other high-growth technologies changing the world. It's also home to Eureka Park, the startup community at CES.

TECH WEST

ARIA, Monte Carlo and Vdara
The CES epicenter for the advertising, content, marketing and entertainment communities, hosting a variety of C Space activities, including conference sessions, networking events, exhibits and hospitality suites.

TECH EAST

TECH SOUTH

Las Vegas Convention and World Trade Center (LVCC), Westgate Las Vegas (Westgate) and Renaissance Las Vegas Where innovations in audio, drones, gaming, augmented and virtual reality, artificial intelligence, vehicle technology, video, wireless devices, wireless services, digital imaging/ photography or anything "I" come to market. It's also home to many international exhibitors.



The DNA of the Data Center Performance

IT spending in the MENA is poised to reach \$155 billion in 2018, hitting a three-year high, according to a recent report by Gartner. It predicts that spending in the data center systems sector will touch 4.6 billion.



■ RICHARD WILCOX, REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR DATA CENTRE GROUP, LENOVO ME

Undoubtedly, markets like the UAE and Saudi Arabia are leading the charge in the adoption of new-age technologies like IoT, AI and blockchain, underpinned by the UAE Vision 2021 and Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, respectively. The adoption of these advanced technologies requires pioneering data centers that offer immaculate performance and efficiency. No matter the industry or geographical location, when working with customers, one fact remains universal: performance matters in the data center.

The surge in the demand for cloud storage over the years, has resulted in a global increase in the availability of data centers. Notably, end users today significantly rely on online transactions which led to a further increase in data generation, driving the data center market forward. With over 2.5 Quintillion bytes of data produced daily, performance management has become more crucial than ever.

A challenge faced by IT professionals in this aspect is identifying and conducting performance management activities in an effective and cost-efficient manner. With the everchanging landscape of the data center infrastructure and its complexity, managing performance demands a lot of time and focus from IT professionals in enterprise. Despite the challenges, every organization must proactively ensure data center performance is managed effectively in order to avoid the risk of facing catastrophic failures which could impact the deployment of reliable services and overall business performance.

Ultimately, whether it's building enterprise infrastructure to run critical apps for smarter solutions or deploying an advanced high-performance computing (HPC) cluster to research the cure for cancer and offer optimum healthcare treatments, server performance is the backbone of every business-critical data center initiative. And while costs and ROI matter,

the effectiveness of technology is ultimately measured by the success or failure of the IT project.

Customers today are aware of the significance of having a reliable data center in place, and now measure systems based on their performance as they understand its contribution to the success of a business operation. With today's substantial investments in new, high-tech and demanding initiatives, such as data analytics and high-performance computing deployments, customers are demanding more processing power at greater speeds in order to keep up with the massive amounts of data that are being collected and analyzed as part of these projects.

In short, whether you're running data analytics, virtual infrastructure, augmented reality, an IoT deployment, or a customized app that improves employee productivity, server performance is a critical component to ensuring these data center projects succeed. ➤

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INVISIBLE INTERFACES

Gesture, Gaze, and Voice controlled technology are now the frontiers to a world of cognitive superpowers.

■ WORDS: ANUSHREE DIXIT <ANUSHREE@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM>

? Our everyday life today is no less than a science fiction. Things we used to watch in sci-fi movies a decade back are becoming a reality today. How are these visual and cognitive interfaces breathing a new life?

Donald Arthur Norman, a thought leader in cognitive science, noted in 1990, "The real problem with the interface is that it is an interface. Interfaces get in the way. I don't want to focus my energies on an interface. I want to focus on the job...I don't want to think of myself as using a computer, I want to think of myself as doing my job." In the same vein, futurist and science fiction writer, Arthur C Clarke famously said, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic". Decades later, these statements are being vindicated by currently emerging trends.

? What would be the key trends to watch out for?

It is this confluence of magic, technology and human qualities that we are witnessing today, where our interfaces with technology are slowly melding with our physical self. Isobar's Trend Report 2018 calls this Body Talk and cites it as one of the key trends to watch out for in the year ahead, where temporary electronic tattoos that use the contours of your skin as smartphone

controls or a gesture detecting smart jacket, are some compelling examples of this era of superpowers that is already underway.

According to a 2017 Salesforce report, 57% of users expected voice assisted smart assistants to have a moderate or significant role to play in their lives by the year 2020 (1). However, considering Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg have already revealed that their companies are working on a direct brain interface, I imagine it's possible that even voice assisted User Interfaces are likely to be old hat sooner than we can probably imagine.

? How do you see the alliance of human emotions with emerging technologies?

In my experience, technology makes its most significant impact when it is allied with human emotions. Had automobiles only been about getting from point A to B, car advertisements wouldn't feature lifestyle as the main selling point. Often dubbed 'The Empathy Machine', an AI-enabled layer of Virtual Reality represents, in my opinion, an upgrade of the end user and not just that of the interface. The intersection of our bodies, wearables, and smart environments will eclipse all previous examples of emotional connection with technology.

As young children, I and my friends avidly read the adventures of our favorite comic book heroes. The superpowers these characters possessed fired our imaginations

**HUSSAIN ABD
RAB AL NABI,**
MARKETING
DIRECTOR -
SAP MIDDLE
EAST NORTH





ARE WE FINALLY ENTERING THE ERA OF SUPERPOWERS? TODAY, VOICE-DIRECTED DIGITAL ASSISTANTS SUCH AS APPLE'S SIRI, AMAZON'S ALEXA AND MICROSOFT'S CORTANA, ARE NO LONGER THE STUFF THAT MAKES SCIENCE FICTION. SENSORY INTERFACES LIKE IMAGE & VOICE RECOGNITION, VR AND AR ARE ADDING AN ALMOST SURREAL DIMENSION TO OUR LIVES, FAST REPLACING TAP & TYPE INTERACTIONS. BUT CAN THESE TECHNOLOGIES STRADDLE BOTH OMNIPRESENCE & INVISIBILITY WHILE BALANCING MAGIC & HUMANITY TO DELIVER COMPELLING USER EXPERIENCES?

and thrilled us. Invisible interfaces promise nothing less than enabling such superpowers for us all. They will disrupt how we consume and interact with everything from content to commerce, in increasingly blurred physical and digital dimensions.

Voice and image recognition can use our aesthetic and emotional preferences for more personalized searches. According to the 2018 voice shopping consumer adoption report, 26% of smart speaker owners are already using them for shopping and the number is growing (1). Supermarket chain Target is partnering with

Pinterest to introduce the Lens visual search technology (2). This personalized relationship with each user is, to my mind, the critical evolution that will unite technology with us at an empathetic level, rather than merely as a utility.

? Today, technology is omnipresent. How is it fusing with a customer's everyday experience and rewriting the norms simultaneously?

Every iteration of technology fundamentally changes human civilization. With tap & type era interfaces replaced by sensory, gaze or gesture interactions, the digital world will be disrupted like never before. The version of the digital world I can see emerging would most likely become completely fused with everyday experience.

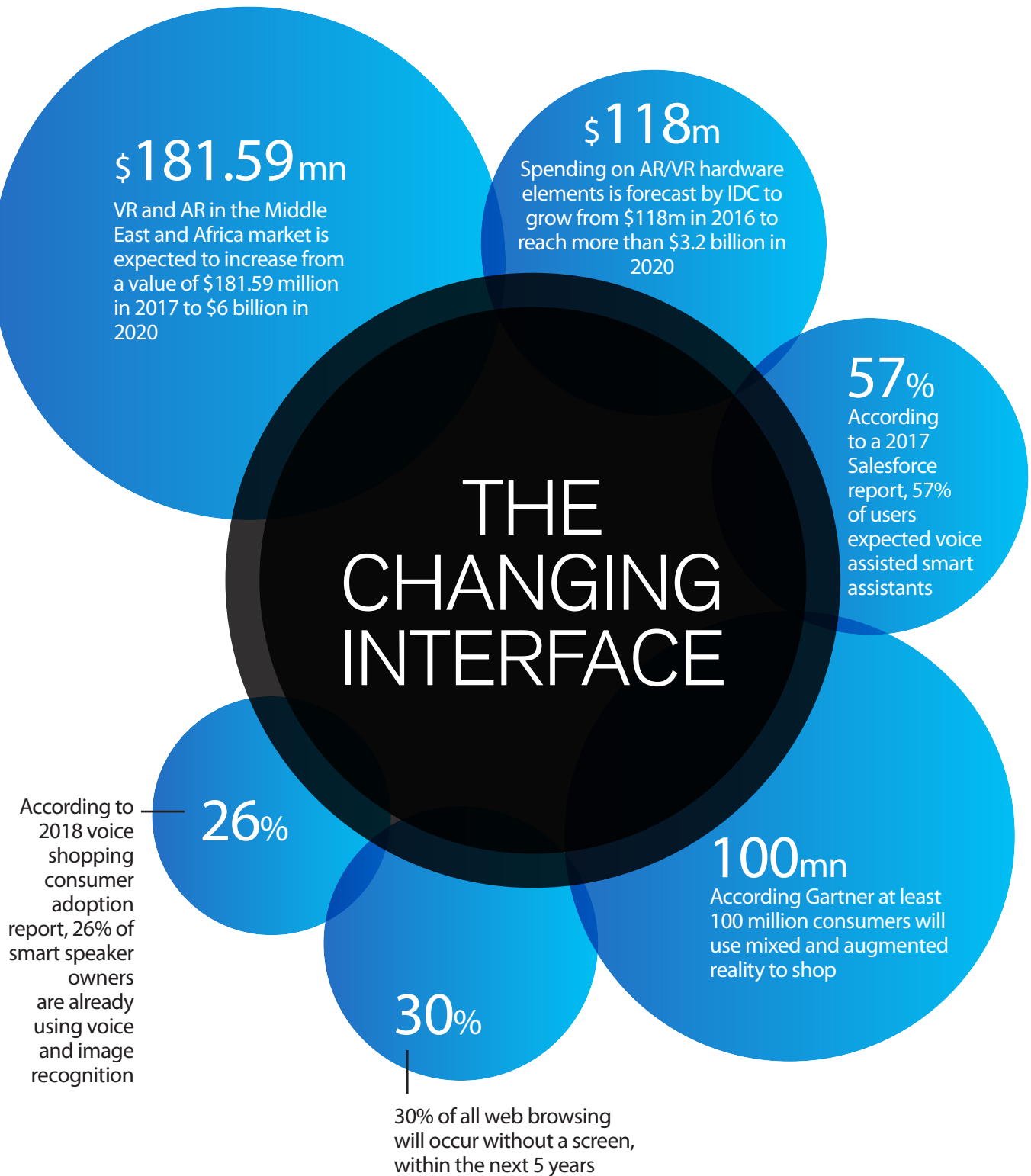
As an end-user, this will enable customer experiences that will influence decision-making, reinvent search and even impact brand recall, by bridging emotion and convenience of use. The future is often imagined as a shinier and slightly more evolved version of the present. However, with technology embedded in the environment, and interfaces becoming invisible, I often wonder if the most advanced technologies of tomorrow will be closer to the magic that Arthur C Clarke referred to.

? Tech experts are predicting that Zero User Interface will change the way consumers interacted with technology. What is your take on this?

Zero User Interface (Zero UI) is the term for intuitive ways to link humans to technology using their movements and voice alone. Such designs include voice-controlled remotes, haptic-based technology that responds to gesture and augmented or mixed reality. Mixed-reality or physical reality will effectively allow people to interact with technology using wearables, sensors and their bodies. According to a recent Gartner report, at least 100 million consumers will use mixed and augmented reality to shop, and 30% of all web browsing will occur without a screen, within the next 5 years (3).

? One of the predominant or quintessential need that any sci-fi movie protagonist/antagonist has is to know or rather control the future. With these emerging capabilities, how much control will a consumer have?

A large part of how this emerging technology is reshaping customer experience will derive from the quintessential need of humans to 'look into




the future.' The predictive capabilities of VR and AR allow customers to 'try-on' makeup, experience how furniture would look in their rooms, all without having to buy a product. The possibilities of these sensory interfaces are endless.

And to my mind, these invisible interfaces will help us create a world in which technology will

always be available to accept user input, without being overly distracting in any way. By being discrete and in our environment, rather than a device, artificial intelligence will seamlessly become a part of everyday decision making, fulfillment of needs and necessary tasks.

In fact, by making several pre-emptive deci-

sions for users, from driverless cars to temperature and environment control, invisible interfaces will enable technology as an extension of the human being. If the clothes and fragrances we wear reflect our personality and self-expression, how differently will we view ourselves, when technology is just as discreetly augmenting us? 



AVINASH
ADVANI,
CEO, SPIRE SOLUTIONS

“Disruptive distribution is a methodology that forces one to rethink and redefine what it means to be a VAD.”

Fierce. Fearless. Disruptive.

FOR AVINASH ADVANI, THE NEW CEO OF SPIRE SOLUTIONS, DISRUPTION IS DUCTILE! TO HAVE A VISION THAT IS FIERCE YET CALM IS PIVOTAL TO GIVING SHAPE TO IT. IN A VERY ‘EDGE-OF-THE-SEAT’ INTERVIEW, AVINASH SPEAKS ABOUT HIS TOP PRIORITIES AS A CEO FOR THE DISRUPTIVE VAD, WHICH IN HIS DEFINITION IS A HUNGRY HIGH-PERFORMANCE MACHINE.

■ BY: ANUSHREE DIXIT <ANUSHREE@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM>

It was a Thursday evening and there was a birthday celebration in progress at the Spire Solutions office. Avinash Advani, with his vibrant smile (for those who know Avinash, this would resonate) greets my way to his new cabin. It was altogether a festive aura.

(Blame it on that aura, we ended up completely discarding the discussion points that were shared earlier as a part of the norm.)

Having met Avinash several times in his previous organization, this question comes to me naturally. From an outsider to an insider, how has

Avinash's perception of Spire Solution changed or evolved? And thus, begins the conversation.

THE INGREDIENTS OF A ‘DISRUPTIVE’ COMPANY

As an outsider, Avinash admits that in spite of having had various fallacies about the company, he did not fail to notice that Spire always participated at THE critical events in the region and always took the top sponsor spot. This somehow drove home the fact that the company knew what they were doing and were at the top from a

marketing standpoint.

“I certainly agree that we are a small company but we are a hungry, high-performance machine. The company is built upon some fundamental business principles and the team that make up this company are some of the best people in the industry who possess impeccable business development and technical expertise. Secondly, the portfolio of the company is the best of breed. Every single product in the portfolio is highly sought after in the market. Other than the people and the products, what truly inspires me is our

MBOS AND SMART KPIs (FOR VENDOR ROI)



Channel strategy



Customer Strategy



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dedication to customer satisfaction— The core principle upon which the company's culture is built," says Avinash.

"Agility, Humility, Respect, Integrity, Passion and Technical expertise— all of these filter up and focuses on customer success and this culture runs through the veins of the company. I have personally witnessed that Spire Solutions is a preferred security partner for the resellers and more than 750 customers, that further validates my statement," he adds.

THE EDGE OF A DISRUPTIVE VAD

Spire Solutions recently revamped its tagline as the 'Disruptive Distributor'. While many players in the market tend to associate disruption with walking with buzzwords, for Spire Solutions disruption is a methodology. "It is a methodology that forces one to rethink and redefine what it means to be a VAD. The tagline Disruptive Distribution truly is in sync with our customer and partner engagement model and it is one of the key differentiators that positions us a league apart from the other players. Our services are unique. In 2019, we shall be launching some niche and leading services that currently no distributor has brought to market," says Avinash.

Launch is scheduled for 2019 so things are still under the wraps and Avinash chooses to keep hush for now and let things take their course.

THE VALUE PROPOSITION OF A DISRUPTIVE VAD

As a disruptive VAD, Spire Solutions' key mantra is to align with the vendor by achieving the quickest time to value, maximizing the ROI with the most rapid market penetration.

"We ensure that we align with our vendors like an extension of their team. It might sound like a common phrase – being an extension to the vendor, but the difference is that all of our vendors, irrespective of their local or global presence, are aligned with Spire because of the sales and technical excellence that we bring to the table. We have over 250 named accounts out of the 750+ whom we meet with regularly and address their pain points and challenges. Whether we cover those technologies or not, the relationship we maintain with them is purely consultative. Simultaneously, on the channel side we are aligning with key partners in each country," he adds.

According to Avinash, disruptive distribution is three dimensional— Bridge the gap between what the end users want and what vendors provide and bring that to the resellers to effectively connect the triangle. The next step is building a service portfolio that supports addressing customers' new

requirement.

ALIGNING WITH THE VISION OF A DISRUPTIVE VAD

Being a disruptive distributor, Spire aims to accelerate the customer's journey to the cloud. "We want the customers to know that there are tools that can provide cloud security avenues that can yield huge benefits. In the IoT space, we recently signed up with Finite State – the IoT security vendor with the largest database in the world for IoT firmware. We are huge in vulnerability and risk management as well so this partnership is directly aligned with the strategy where we can address any vulnerability in IoT firmware," says Avinash.

"The term disruptive distribution does not mean going after new things that are not relevant but it is about re-inventing services that are relevant," he adds.

BEING A DISRUPTIVE CEO

People, Product, and Processes— these are the 3 key disciplines that Avinash banks on.

"The kind of work I love to do is where I get to learn every single day. I take all these 3Ps into account for any vital decision that I make. Internally, this would correspond to building a team of superstars and making the portfolio evolve into a market leading and innovative story. Externally, it would be to maximize the revenue and profit for the shareholders. My passion stems from this and as every CEO my vision is to expand our footprint globally and build the most comprehensive cybersecurity portfolio bringing in leading vendors to make us No 1.

STEADY AS A TORTOISE OR FEROCIOUS AS A TIGER?

Disruption knows not what procrastination is! But it is equally important to give time to your decisions. For Avinash, it is a perfect blend of both the approaches that make you a new age CEO. "I am an ambitious person. So, I want to see Spire Solutions portfolio offering in the No 1 position. But I also need to make sure that we do not rush into any decisions. Achieving growth expectations while maintaining the highest level of profitability is essential to us. You have to make realistic decisions. Hence, the decisions have to be steady and the pace, ferocious.

FINALLY

What is the one message that Avinash has for his regional colleagues?

"Do not remain stagnant! Disrupt!" ➡

UNRAVELLING THE TRUTH

"IT IS INEVITABLE TO SEE A FORM OF MONITORING IN OUR ENVIRONMENT WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF ENSURING PROTECTION OR AS A FORM OF SECURITY, YET USED FOR THE WRONG REASONS IT CAN MOST CERTAINLY BE A POWERFUL ATTACK TOOL"



NEDI IVANOV,
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,
TRUSTED SYSTEMS

? Tell us about Trusted Systems & your services. When was the company established?

Established in late 2010, Trusted Systems was designed to tackle a challenge that appeared present in a number of industries at the time, namely the lack of expertise in Digital Forensics expertise. Backed by a plethora of consultancy and government experience and topped off with qualifications in Cyber Forensics, Risk, Cyber Security and IT Audit, we saw the need to support the legal field with our expertise - something that has been our main objective for the past eight years.

? What is your go to market strategy?

Well, we are very niche in what we do. Digital forensics is by itself considerably young and somehow technically challenging for the everyday bystander, so marketing does not come easy. We tend to rely heavily on word of mouth in the legal and technical circles as our work builds trust and strong relationships, but this is not to say that the multiple vectors of marketing have been left untapped.

? Digital Forensics as a concept and demand is evolving quite rapidly since the last few years. How effective a tool can this be to nab the cyber intruders?

Digital Forensics is by definition an extension of forensic science and a necessary part of pre-emptive measures like Compliance. Having said that, any company, government or establishment that wants to stay ahead of the cyber-infused investigations and lawsuits is a vital part of the enhancement drive in the area of Digital Forensics.

Yet Cyber Forensics is merely a tool, an extension of your skill and knowledge, thus if the entity does not have well-designed, applicable and accepted policies, laws or frameworks, no amount of tools can help. As such, it is most certainly a deterrent for the cyber intruders, but if we are to be completely frank, jurisdiction tends to help them overcome most of the hurdles presented at their doorstep.

? What is your take on third party monitoring for security?

This is a particularly interesting question with supporters on both sides, but generally we tend to approach it from a more logical angle.

Preemptive actions do have their benefit, with at least a matching cost. One cannot expect complete privacy, yet complain about the lack of security, and vice-versa. The first thing one would be taught if you are to attack or protect an asset is that you need to know every possible detail about

it, which in time can and surely will evolve into consistent monitoring, as every ounce of information can be deemed relevant and/or important. With that in mind, it is inevitable to see a form of monitoring in our environment with the objective of ensuring protection or as a form of security, yet used for the wrong reasons it can most certainly be a powerful attack tool. Is that to say that we should stop using it?

? Share with us your major success stories.

Unfortunately, we are always rather limited in our ability to delve in our success stories due to the nature of our work, but I would say that we have been involved in a number of high profile investigations, which have had some very serious repercussions for some very well-known people in EMEA and APAC. It also goes without saying that our involvement has been spared in all of the articles and media.

We can, however, go to the extent of saying that our services have been requested and provided to a number of global banks and investment funds, oil and gas, large construction groups, automotive and general manufacturing conglomerates, real estate and medical companies, in addition to infrastructure and professional service providers to name a few. Unsurprisingly, over the course of our existence, we have faced a number of intellectual property theft, contractual disputes, extortion, embezzlement, espionage and in essence everything that can reside on an electronic chip, which in the current state of technology is basically everything.

? With 2019 around the corner, what are you plans for the year ahead?

As odd as it sounds, we plan on entering 2019 without a specific objective. Our primary goal is to help as much as we can and as many as we can while still doing what we enjoy and are good at (one might argue being the best in the Middle East!), so with that in mind 2019 is simply yet another year of what we expect would be a litigation-riddled roller-coaster filled with technical challenges and their accompanying emotions. 🚀

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INDUSTRY

The march towards the digital revolution shall continue to disrupt various sectors. With the rise of advanced technologies like Robotics, IoT, AI, Drones, the dynamics of the manufacturing industry is set for a makeover.

■ BY: DIVSHA BHAT ■ PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

The technological revolutions are interesting. With better phones, high-speed internet connection, life is just easier. The problem is that it's also having a huge impact on the way we live and how our society functions. This raises serious questions like - What will our lives look like in the future? Will the robots steal our jobs? Etc.

The Fourth Industrial revolution has expanded the opportunities of digital transformation and increased its importance to an organization. Industry 4.0 which is powered by advancements that include Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, IoT, etc. has attracted the investors' attention. Fifty-five percent of the industry's business globally have transitioned to this fourth industrial revolution. Industry 4.0 carries limitless opportunity and options for technology investments. But what is its impact on the organizations?

IMPACT OF INDUSTRY 4.0 – CHANGES FOR BETTER

What is the impact of Industry 4.0 on businesses? – This question is like asking what is the impact of computers on a business. Entire business would disappear just like the horses were replaced by cars. For instance, ride hailing services like Uber and Careem are taking over the market as the preferred mode of transport. Driverless cars will create an entirely new business. Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain will create unimaginable possibilities. Online shopping and delivery services through drones are redefining the retail experience.

Undoubtedly, Industry 4.0 will make an

organization more efficient and productive.

According to reports, the UAE manufacturing sector is expected to account for 25% of the country's GDP by 2025. To survive, the manufacturers must focus on Industry 4.0 technologies to in order to leverage this growth. PwC says – For businesses in the Middle East, the fourth industrial revolution creates the potential to reap cost savings of US \$ 17.3 billion per year and gain US \$ 16.9 in incremental revenue.

“UAE manufacturers are reinventing their business models to focus on value-added services, and/or entering new geographic markets or adjacent market segments. Today's Industry 4.0-outfitted factories are empowered to drive productivity, and this keeps costs down while ensuring quality and consistency across manufacturing processes globally,” said Terri Hiskey, Vice President of Product Marketing for Manufacturing at Epicor Software.

Claude Schuck, Regional Manager, Middle East & Central Africa at Veeam also believes the manufacturing sector is quickly moving towards the point where virtually everything will depend on digital technology. “In a fast-moving and highly competitive environment, making the best use of digital – and acting on the insights it delivers – could be core to securing a place in the future. However, while digital presents incredible

opportunities, it also presents greater challenges than ever before,” he said.

Completely agreeing with Claude, Industry 4.0 does provide challenges as well. Despite the potential benefits, there are people who are reluctant to embrace the changes. As the Fourth Industrial Revolution continues to change the way organizations perform, new challenges arise. (See Fig 1)

EMBRACING THE CHALLENGES

It is an undeniable fact that the Industry 4.0 has huge potential to address the world's critical challenges from reducing congestion in big cities to increasing energy efficiency, etc. According to PwC, Middle Eastern companies report they are making substantial investments and this is translating into increasingly advanced levels of digitization and integration. Recently, Unilever in Dubai installed a complete end of line Industry 4.0 solution for its personal care factory. According to a press release, the company upgraded its





UNFOLDING AT BREAKNECK SPEED

plant with the state-of-the-art technology that ensured faster, shorter, and highly responsive production lines, reducing lead time to the market.

In December 2018, The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) successfully collaborated with IBM piloting a blockchain based automated system to integrate oil and gas production across the full value chain. The system provides a secure platform for the tracking, validating and execution of transactions at every stage, from production well to the end customer.

Sam Tayan, Managing Director for Sage Middle East says that the manufacturing industry is rapidly evolving, re-inventing itself with the adoption of technology which has streamlined and simplified various manufacturing processes. "Enterprise Resource Management (ERM) software can now deliver real-time feedback and

alert companies of defects or damaged goods."

Sage has helped customers to simplify and smoothen their operations and optimize business performance. Sage's customer Terraco, manufacturer of exterior insulation and finish system (EIFS), operates across several countries and encountered challenges in managing and capturing information as a single structure. "By implementing Sage Enterprise Management's solution, the company was able to not only manage and capture data but also utilize it beneficially. The solution offered Terraco the capability of multi-legislation, multi-language, and multi-currency functionality in a secure environment," Sam added.

With the companies rapidly adopting Industry 4.0, what role is the government playing in this technology?

“



”

CIO SPEAK

A. RAHEEM,
HEAD OF IT, AG MELCO

"There is no question whether Industry 4.0 is a reality; I'd like to cite some major disruptions like (i) cheap and cloud-ready computational power, smart sensors and low-cost connectivity have led to tremendous rise in data volumes, (ii) advanced analytics and machine learning have enhanced quick and intelligent decision making, (iii) augmented-reality systems have led to decrease in errors while improving labor efficiency, (iv) 3D printing has redefined just-in-time (JIT) and (v) our robots on the production line are AI-powered and "talk" to each other. These drivers have already disrupted conventional business models in manufacturing and we've just begun!"

INDUSTRY 4.0 IN GOVERNMENT

In September 2017, the UAE government launched the UAE Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The UAE Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution aims to strengthen the UAE's position as a global hub for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and to increase its contribution to the national economy by means



“TODAY’S INDUSTRY 4.0-OUTFITTED FACTORIES ARE EMPOWERED TO DRIVE PRODUCTIVITY, AND THIS KEEPS COSTS DOWN WHILE ENSURING QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY ACROSS MANUFACTURING PROCESSES GLOBALLY,”

TERRI HISKEY,
VP OF PRODUCT MARKETING
FOR MANUFACTURING AT EPICOR
SOFTWARE”



“IN A FAST-MOVING AND HIGHLY COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT, MAKING THE BEST USE OF DIGITAL – AND ACTING ON THE INSIGHTS IT DELIVERS – COULD BE CORE TO SECURING A PLACE IN THE FUTURE”

CLAUDE SCHUCK,
REGIONAL MANAGER, MIDDLE EAST &
CENTRAL AFRICA AT VEEAM




“THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IS RAPIDLY EVOLVING, RE-INVENTING ITSELF WITH THE ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGY WHICH HAS STREAMLINED AND SIMPLIFIED VARIOUS MANUFACTURING PROCESSES,”

SAM TAYAN,
MD, SAGE MIDDLE EAST.



of advancing innovation and future technologies. The strategy also outlines the path to achieve the future experience of government services by providing intelligent and interactive government services around the clock to achieve customer happiness and to position the UAE as a model for interactive cities using artificial intelligence to achieve sustainability. The UAE Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution focuses on a number of key fields; some of them are innovative education, artificial intelligence, intelligent genomic medicine and robotic healthcare.

THE FACTORIES OF THE FUTURE

We can see that the march towards the fourth industrial revolution has already begun. In the process of creating more agile and market focused competencies, companies will need to define strategic goals tailored to meet their requirements and select core competencies that they want to digitize. This will ensure that they streamline processes between business units and across all operations. It is also crucial that leaders prepare their organizations for a journey of change culture and management. CIOs will need to develop a joint strategy with other C-level executives and support the discussions. 

The New Economics of Data: An Imperative for Change

How a combination of business and regulatory upheaval have brought IT to a tipping point in acting on data.



■ JOHAN SCHEEPERS,
DIRECTOR OF SYSTEMS ENGINEERING MESAT AT COMMVULT

A combination of a dramatic change in business requirements coupled with regulatory upheaval, embodied by GDPR, is taking IT organizations to a tipping point where they must take a much more pro-active approach to understanding and managing their data.

The Current State of Data in the Enterprise

Over time IT has created numerous copies of data for protection and governance purposes. This has been matched by a trend of increasing volume of copies used to gain insights from data. Analyst research on Copy Data Management shows that 45-60% of total storage capacity consists of 'copy data', whilst 82% of those organisations surveyed have at least 10 copies of each database.

These statistics illustrate how, over time, copies of data have proliferated based on a variety of use cases. Test, development, business continuity, operational recovery and analytics have all spawned multiple copies of data, each with its own discrete set of supporting infrastructure. Of late the shift to digital business has increased the requirement for the business to inspire high levels of customer trust combined with a regular supply of fresh business insights. For IT that means continuous service delivery – which relies on copies of data for failover and recovery purposes, and data lakes - which combine numerous sources of data for analytics.

One of the most intractable problems is the

number of discrete Backup/Recovery, Retention & Compliance products in the Enterprise. The same analyst research showed that on average, each enterprise had 5 – 10 different Products installed with up to 50 potential data copies. This presents a significant burden to IT, with many discrete points of monitoring, management and reporting.

GDPR Changes the Rules

GDPR changes the rules of data and storage management. The requirement for each business to know and manage personal data means that businesses must know their data overall in order to determine what data is personal and subject to the GDPR regulations. GDPR's strict breach notification rule means that organisations also have to determine the nature of the breach, its scale, who has been affected, and how it occurred within 72 hours for notification purposes.

Rebalancing for Scale

The phenomenon of large volumes of relatively loosely managed data in the data centre also presents a barrier to scaling digital projects and initiatives. Reducing unnecessary copies of data, and the infrastructure used to support them, can contribute significantly to IT's ability to rebalance the portfolio towards BI/Analytics and Cloud Services, the most popular investment areas to shift to.

Mind the Gap

The increasing importance of data and

data-related skills and needs to be taken into account in planning. A recent survey of IT staff shows that data management and analysis are statistically equal in importance to "offering a high quality service/product" and "having a long-term plan" – the top scoring priorities. This shows that IT personnel and executives think data management and analysis are among the most essential priorities for future businesses' success.

GDPR as a Catalyst for Change

Instead of treating GDPR as a investment with little in the way of a return other than compliance, it is more fruitful to build a plan that will address the demands of GDPR whilst simultaneously equipping the company with better set of data capabilities. As one CIO said at Gartner Symposium 2017: "I do not see GDPR as a problem, I see it is a catalyst for change". Taking a shared services approach to data across the spectrum of business requirements rather than tackling them discretely is likely to result in a set of capabilities that will serve the organisation more broadly by and assist with digital transformation.

Conclusion

Taking GDPR as the start point and working through a plan designed to serve the wider needs of the organization makes good sense. Encompassing the use of data as well as focusing on protection and governance it will serve the IT organization in good stead as it seeks to support the shift to digital business. 

STRONG PILLARS FOR SMOOTH BUSINESS

"OUR TECHNICAL EXPERTISE HAS BEEN APPRECIATED BY MANY OF OUR PARTNERS & CUSTOMERS BOTH IN SMB's AND LARGE ENTERPRISES ALIKE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE OUR CUSTOMERS WITH PRODUCTS AND SOLUTION WHICH SAVE THEM TIME, MONEY AND EFFORTS AND ALSO GREAT TECHNICAL SUPPORT THEY REQUIRE"



**VARGHESE
MENACHERY,**
CTO, EPILLARS SYSTEMS

BY: DIVSHA BHAT

? Tell us more about ePillars

ePillars was incorporated in the year 2007. We are a leading IT solution provider based in Dubai. We provide solutions based on new technologies which will immensely benefit the organizations and also provide a high return on investment. We have two segments – SMBs & large Enterprises. For SMBs we provide ERP, PBX and IT infrastructure solutions and for large enterprises, we have specialized applications such as Automated Org Charting, Learning & Talent Management Systems and also Digital Signature solutions for paperless office. We also have a strong portfolio in Information Security, especially in digital signatures & certificates.

? About customers

Our major customers include First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB), Emirates NBD, du Telecom, RAKBANK, Al Rajhi Bank KSA, ooredoo Telecom, Commercial Bank of Qatar, Union National Bank, Aramco Gulf Operations, Kuwait Oil Company, American Express etc.

? Tell us about your partnerships for the year 2018.

In the year 2018, we had added three major partnerships – DocuSign, GlobalSign and ECS Financials, all of which are leading products in their respective domains. We are one of the premier partners of DocuSign in the region. DocuSign offers e-signature solution which is based on the same technology as SSL certificate. It allows companies of all sizes to quickly digitize the entire agreement process – all the way from preparing agreements to signing and managing them from anywhere in the world on any device in few seconds and minutes. Since 2006, the electronic signature law is in place in the UAE. But due to security reasons, eSignature is often less used. The situation has changed drastically for the better with the introduction of digital signature from DocuSign which is a highly secured platform. Also, govts. In the region are actively pushing for digitization towards 2020. Paper-based document processing are manual and time-consuming. The major advantage of digital signature compared to standard eSignature or handwritten signature is that it is backed up by a highly secure technology such as PKI, which brings the much-needed security and assurance and is also eco-friendly.

We have core strengths in Information security domains such as digital SSL certificates & signatures and also see huge support for this from the government.

DocuSign has more than 60% worldwide market in large enterprises and we are working towards having the same growth here.

ECS Financials offers a complete solution in the area transaction processing to financial institutions and corporates. We are their only ECS integrated financial message service partner in

the Middle East. The company has got SWIFT certified products. Message Hub – their all in one solution can integrate with any of the internal applications like Oracle ERP, SAP, etc. with external networks and applications including SWIFT.

ECS Financials was founded in 1999 in New York and later expanded into South America, Malaysia, Africa, and the Middle East. They have recently started operations in Dubai.

GlobalSign is an identity services company providing cloud-based PKI solutions for enterprises. Their various solutions are a document and email security, managed PKI & CA services, Identity and Access Management, Access Control & Authentication.

Our technical expertise has been appreciated by many of our partners & customers both in SMBs and large enterprises alike.

? Share with our readers about your ERP Solutions and HD video conferencing solutions.

We are one of the leading companies offering a suite of different ERP solutions. This include SAP Business One, odoo, ERPNext and Zoho One. They are all comprehensive suite of business applications including Sales, CRM, Project management, Warehouse management, Manufacturing, Financial Management, Human Resources etc. The user interface and workflows can be customized and the system helps business implement and follow best practices.

For HD Video Conferencing, we partnered with Aver Information 4 years ago. Aver is a Taiwan based company and provides great turnkey solutions for video conferencing needs. They also provide solutions that go along with WebEx and Skype for Business.

? What are your plans for the year 2019?

We will continue to provide our customers with products and solution which save them time, money and efforts and also great technical support they require. In 2019, we intend to continue our focus in the Middle East & Africa markets. ➡

Lessons from the UAE: Digitizing VAT



■ MANSOOR SARWAR, REGIONAL DIRECTOR - TECHNICAL SERVICES & PRE-SALES AT SAGE

The extensive use of technology during the introduction and post-implementation of value-added taxes in the UAE, on the part of the Government and UAE-based businesses, has led to a smooth transition to a taxation regime. It is a remarkable feat, especially in a region that has never had to deal with much taxation previously.

In the past ten months and prior, there were many UAE companies that took on the challenge of VAT as an opportunity to upgrade their accounting systems and processes. Not only did this decision help them become compliant, it also boosted staff productivity. There was less time wasted on VAT invoice creation, reconciliation of input versus output of value-added taxes, reverse charge calculations and VAT return filing.

In addition, the savings from potential non-compliance penalties – which can run into hundreds of thousands of dirhams – are also significant. The improved accounting systems brought about enhanced processes and controls that go beyond taxes and encouraged greater transparency in the corporate sector.

On the government front, the UAE Federal Tax Authority (FTA) ensured that the VAT process was digitalized from end-to-end through their online portal, from registration to tax audits. VAT return filings are only available online, and the process is completely paperless, while the auditing process is also designed to be more efficient and less intensive for companies who are using


FTA's approved Tax Accounting software and software vendors were advised by the FTA about digital audit file generation.

Nevertheless, there will always be some pains, as with the introduction of anything new. We have observed several repeated mistakes made by companies. The most common is the issuance of non-compliant invoices due to outdated business systems. Under the VAT law, the invoice must have the words "tax invoice" clearly stated; be in UAE Dirham or converted to UAE Dirhams and be issued within 14 days of the date of supply of goods or services. It must include the name, address and tax registration number of the supplier, date of issue, a description of goods or services, the total amount payable and the total VAT chargeable in addition to few more details that are clearly mentioned in Executive Regulation governing this. Needless to say very easy to make mistakes if you are doing manual invoicing or using a dated software.

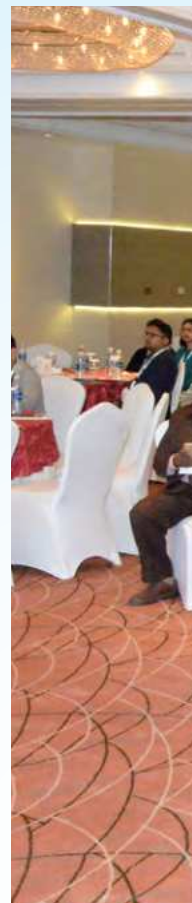
At our last VAT Roadshow having spoken to hundreds of business owners, especially of small and medium businesses, it appears cost concerns

are main reasons why many do not want to upgrade their accounting systems. In reality, there are many cost-effective solutions available in the market, as software as a service (SaaS) and cloud-computing continue to revolutionize the business management software industry.

Companies in the UAE are in a much better position now than when they first started with regards to VAT. Almost all eligible businesses have filed more than one return successfully. They also understand the concepts like zero-rated supplies, exempt supplies, and reverse charge with greater clarity. There is also better comprehension of concepts like Tax Groups & Designated Zones. We are also seeing a growing number of businesses are preparing themselves for VAT refund process and enabling themselves for tax audit.

The UAE's drive towards positive change is encouraging, as it shows determination by the leadership to create a sustainable economic future that does not focus solely on petrochemical revenues, while continuing to deliver high-quality public services. 

THE TAX TRANSFORMATION WORKSHOP



On 9 October 2018, the Kingdom of Bahrain released its Value Added Tax Law under Royal Decree No 48 of 2018. The VAT implementation date will be 1 January 2019. Bahrain's VAT Law differs in key areas from corresponding legislation introduced in Saudi Arabia and UAE in that it provides for more and broader zero-rates and exemptions, with a view to balance a range of relatively unique socio-economic objectives.

In November 2016, the Gulf Cooperation Council Member States executed the Common VAT Agreement of the States of the GCC, outlining the framework that member states should follow when implementing their domestic VAT rules. Saudi Arabia and the UAE implemented their VAT systems on 1 January 2018. Bahrain released the VAT Law on 9 October 2018 via the Official Gazette website. The Royal Decree states that VAT will be implemented on 1 January 2019.

In order to prepare financial decision makers in

Bahrain to prepare for these process changes, with effect from 01 January 2019, GEC Media Group organised the Tax transformation Workshop in Bahrain. GEC Media Group, publishers of Business Transformation, Enterprise Channels MEA, The Titans, Cyber Sentinels, successfully completed the Tax Transformation Workshop on 19 December in Bahrain. The workshop was held in partnership with AI Society Bahrain, Affiniex Partners, Sage Middle East, and Valto Technologies. Close to 75 senior and middle level financial



executives attended the workshop at the Gulf Convention Centre, with the total number of attendees closer to 100.

The event was kickstarted by a key note from Dr Jassim Haji, President of The AI Society Bahrain. His topic was titled - Using AI and Machine Learning technologies in VAT implementation. This was followed by an overview of the VAT guidelines due to be implemented in the Kingdom of Bahrain by 01 January 2019 by Tanmay Saxena, Head of Department, Tax Services at Affiniar Partners. Saxena also presented how the GCC VAT framework will impact business in Bahrain.


Mansoor Sarwar, Director of Technical Services at Sage Middle East, presented both a global and regional overview of how the VAT tax system benefits governments and how it will help GCC nations reduce their budget deficit in the post-oil economy. Sarwar explained the fundamentals of the VAT process, elements of VAT invoicing, and other guidelines to be kept in mind while implementing the VAT taxation system. Sarwar also explained the Sage software application and the various features that enable VAT reporting and VAT analytics.

“At Sage, we develop solutions to aid businesses of all sizes in delivering quality products and services to their customers. With the introduction of VAT earlier this year in UAE and Saudi Arabia, we rolled out tax-compliant software in the GCC region to help businesses adjust easily. We have tailored our products to suit each country’s VAT law and currently, we are customising software solutions that comply with Bahrain VAT laws as more details emerge,” said Mansoor Sarwar, Director of Technical Services and Pre-Sales, Sage Middle East, during the workshop.

The hands-on explanation of the Sage application was continued by Faraz Afzal, Pre-Sales Consultant at Sage Middle East. The concluding key note session was delivered by Vinayan P, CEO of Valto Technologies on SWOT analysis of document management. All the delegates engaged in

a lively question and answer discussion during the individual sessions. Networking between the event partners, delegates and attendees continued into the lunch break.

With the implementation of VAT across the countries of the GCC, businesses need to invest in an accounting solution that streamlines tax collection, record-keeping, and reporting processes. The solutions from Sage, include essential elements for a start-up, small and medium businesses or enterprise, needed to run with efficiency and flexibility.

“Some businesses may find adapting to new changes challenging at the beginning, but with the right support, the transition can be smooth. Business owners should view VAT as an opportunity to support the local economy, boost corporate transparency and optimise operations – not as an administrative burden or a daunting task,” advised Sarwar at the end of the workshop. 

STANDING STRONG

SUCCESS THROUGH FOCUS— LIVING UP TO THIS TAGLINE, ASBIS HAS HELD A FIRM GROUND AS A VOLUME AND VALUE DISTRIBUTOR, REGARDLESS OF THE EVER-CHANGING AND EVER-EVOLVING MARKET CIRCUMSTANCES. AS THE COMPANY CELEBRATES TWO DECADES OF EXCELLENCE IN THE REGIONAL MARKET, WE SIT DOWN WITH HESHAM TANTAWI, VICE PRESIDENT OF ASBIS MIDDLE EAST TO CHURN OUT HIS VISION AND ROADMAP FOR 2019 AND BEYOND.



HESHAM TANTAWI,

VP, ASBIS MIDDLE EAST

■ BY: ANUSHREE DIXIT

Team Asbis is enjoying a gala time. The company recently celebrated two decades of establishment in the UAE. With their revisited tagline— Success through Focus, the volume and value distributor is all set to win the market in 2019 and beyond with some key aces up its sleeve. As we speak, Asbis has recorded a milestone revenue of \$2+ billion for the year 2018.

? What is your success ingredient?

You can find the answer in our tagline. Success through Focus. We are focused on the number and type of partners we add, the solutions we provide and the ROI we generate. These fundamental principles define our way to success.

? What were the key milestones that you set and achieved in 2018?

Our growth is organic and has been in three



areas— Volume business, value business, and market consolidation. Value business is undoubtedly one of the highest growth areas. We are seeing a rapid growth in solutions and consolidations as well as the market inclines more and more towards solutions.

? In 2017, you had mentioned that Asbis is aiming to become a one-stop-shop provider for all IT needs. How far have you come with this vision?

We will be a complete one-stop-shop in 2019. In 2018 we added numerous new solution vendors to our portfolio that further enhanced and boosted our market reach in the solutions business. On the component side, we are already a one-stop-shop and growing further. In 2018, we added new vendors to our portfolio like Accelstor, TYAN, Pure Storage, CompuLocks, SonicWall, etc that will further reinforce our commitment to satiating the solutions appetite of the region.

? Which have been the most favorable markets for you in 2018?

UAE, KSA, Egypt, Algeria are some of the critical markets for us. Our revenue is a result of the growth we achieved in both volume and value business. The most significant contributors to the volume business are Intel, Logitech, Seagate, AMD and value business are Supermicro, TP-Link, Lexmark, Grandstream etc.

? Tell us more about your revisited tagline 'Success through Focus' and how it syncs with the Asbis pattern of providing 100% ROI to the vendors.

It is about focusing on everything we do. When we focus on building value for a vendor, we ensure that the ASP is higher compared to the others in the market. The Asbis pattern is straightforward. We have account managers for all business units and we have PLSMs who run the communication with the vendors.

? What is the Hesham mantra in achieving this success? What is your attitude towards planning and failing?

I am a great believer of this thought; Fail to plan is plan to fail. Whenever you hear about a new technology or a new solution, you will see that Asbis is already on board with that and is well ahead of the market. We do not have pressure on vendor targets as we always overachieve the targets. This reputation helps the vendor reach us with any new technology that they have and they know we are capable of carrying that to the market and we have the initiatives to open new avenues.

? What are the top 3 priorities that you set for yourself in 2019?

In 2019, our top three priorities will be to continue gaining from consolidation, grow on solutions and building blocks of enterprises and to grow 25% in business. 🚀

RASILIENT SYSTEMS AND SEAGATE TECHNOLOGY PROVIDE VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS FOR ZERO 6 MALL

Seagate SkyHawk video surveillance storage solutions help Rasilient customers maintain unmatched data integrity, storage reliability and scalability to address future growth

Rasilient Systems is a global provider of server and storage architecture designed specifically for IP video surveillance systems. The company has partnered with Seagate Technology to integrate Seagate's SkyHawk surveillance hard drives across Rasilient's solutions. The partnership between Rasilient Systems and Seagate Technology is intended to solve frame rate drop, which is one of the IP

surveillance industry's biggest problems.

ZERO 6 MALL IMPLEMENTS VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SOLUTION

Security is always a key concern for developing and running a major retail destination, which is why Zero 6 Mall used Rasilient, in partnership with Seagate Technology, to deliver a high-performing video surveillance storage and server system to deliver the safety and protection its customers expect and deserve.

RASILIENT'S NEXT-GENERATION SURVEILLANCE STORAGE SYSTEM

Using Seagate SkyHawk technology, Rasilient delivers high performance video surveillance storage solutions that can process and store video from four times as many cameras per server as other solutions, delivering higher resolution footage, improved analytics, and enabling customers to increase their sensor counts and make decisions faster.

Rasilient's system for Zero 6 Mall is designed to be future-proof. Its purpose-built technologies lower CAPEX and OPEX by extending product life expectancy and enabling scheduled maintenance instead of reactive maintenance as systems age. The video surveillance system in place at the mall provides petabytes of storage using Rasilient's fully redundant ApplianceStor AS85R Server and PS5000 Rackmount IP Storage.

In addition, Rasilient wanted to tackle a common problem of frame drops and reduce video loss for Zero 6 Mall, and ultimately achieve the goal of 0 frame rate drops. One of the initial challenges Rasilient faced was the lack of dedicated surveillance drives available on the market. Hard drives for standard desktop computing



applications are not designed for the heavy 24/7 read and write loads that IP surveillance systems require. Dedicated surveillance hard drives such as Seagate's SkyHawk drives are specially designed to handle these loads with minimised chance of dropped frames.

"Security is always the top concern in designing and developing a tourist and resident destination like Zero 6 Mall. Rasilient is honoured to have been chosen to help secure this impressive and unique facility," said Sean Chang, CEO of Rasilient Systems.

Issa Ataya, MD of Alef Group, the parent company of Zero 6 Mall said - "We are confident that Rasilient Systems will provide the most innovative and state-of-the-art technology for Zero 6 Mall."

RASILIENT ACHIEVES 'NO FRAME DROP' CERTIFICATION WITH SEAGATE SKYHAWK

Seagate's SkyHawk drive technology powers Rasilient's 'No Frame Drop' (NFD) video surveillance storage solutions. Rasilient customers like Zero 6 Mall can capture and store every single camera frame, which is crucial to the mall's operations which at times may face a variety of security scenarios and require for video retrieval.

Zero 6 Mall is just one of many projects Rasilient has completed in the UAE and surrounding areas over the last few years, according to Chang: "With the successful implementation of quality and reliable video surveillance solutions for projects like Zero 6 Mall, Rasilient continues its growth in the very important Middle East market." ➔

BUSINESS NEED

- Implement video surveillance server and storage solutions with minimal dropped frames

SOLUTION

- ApplianceStor AS85R Server and PS5000 Rackmount IP Storage (with Seagate SkyHawk) and video management software (VMS)

BENEFITS

- High performance video surveillance storage
- Reduction in video recording loss
- Storage reliability and scalability
- Supports higher resolutions
- Real-time analytics
- Increased camera and sensor counts
- No frame drop
- Four times as many cameras per server
- Zero recording gaps

SOLUTION FEATURED

- IP video surveillance system



GV 1 PROJECTOR

BenQ unleashes an instant entertainment for lifestyle trendsetters with its newest creation GV1, a portable LED projector. BenQ GV 1 is a palm-sized, light-weighted portable LED projector to carry entertain-

ment literally anywhere! This compact projector GV1, is battery operated and streams movies, videos, and music via Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or USC-C without setup hassle or connectivity concerns.

KEY CAPABILITIES

- Battery Operated
- Streams movies, videos, and music via Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or USC-C
- A convenient adjustment hinge allows 15° of tilt range for GV1's high-mounted projection lens,
- Enables 77cm of vertical image offset for the 100" projected image to be placed at a comfortable viewing height.
- Automatic keystone correction
- Ensures uninterrupted entertainment via dual-band Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity,
- Allows direct hotspot wireless streaming capability when Wi-Fi is not available
- Includes a single USB-C port which can stream media via DisplayPort over USB and read and play media files directly from USB-C flash drives
- Equipped with a 5-watt chambered speaker
- 3-hour battery life
- Delivers long-lasting DLP picture quality with precise colors and razor-sharp clarity
- 30,000-hour maintenance-free LED light source



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TP-LINK DECO M4

TP-Link launched the Whole Home Mesh Wi-Fi System with a new appearance—Deco M4, the newest addition to the brand's lineup of mesh solutions. Unlike the previous disc-shaped, Deco M4 is an affordable column-shaped product that provides the AC1200 whole home mesh Wi-Fi, which is ideal for medium houses. Multiple units are able to seamlessly work together to create a home network unlike any seen before.

KEY CAPABILITIES

- Maximum Speeds: 300Mbps on 2.4GHz band and 867Mbps on 5GHz band.
- Maximized Range: Seamless coverage up to 2,800 sq. ft. (two-pack).
- Seamless Coverage: Wireless connections and optional Ethernet backhaul work together to link Deco units, providing even faster network speeds and truly seamless coverage.
- Expand Coverage: Add more Deco units to expand Wi-Fi coverage to match the size of your home.
- Simple Setup and Management: The Deco app makes network setup and management a breeze.
- More Devices: Supports connection of up to 100 devices.
- Parental Controls: Block inappropriate websites, restrict time spent online, and get monthly reports.



- QoS: Prioritizes devices when necessary for the fastest connections.
- IPv6: Supports the latest Internet Protocol Version 6.
- 2 Gigabit Ports: Dual Wan/Lan functionality
- Extensive Compatibility: Works with Amazon Alexa and IFTTT and is compatible with all Deco models.

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