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ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS ADVISORY FOR CHANNEL PARTNERS

Hameedullah Khan,
CEO, SUDO.

PIONEERING TOMORROW'S TECH

SUDO Empowers the Middle East with Cloud Expertise and AI-Driven Innovation

Tapping into the zeitgeist

When the curtains go up on the region's biggest technology event this month, all roads will lead to Dubai's World Trade Centre. Gitex Global is hailed as the ultimate platform for new business opportunities, and channel partners should make the most of this event. Most top-tier vendors and distributors have confirmed their presence, showcasing the latest and greatest in technology. Beyond networking, Gitex offers a perfect springboard to explore new vendors entering the Middle East market and scouting for channel partners. The region's strong economic stability, combined with supportive government policies, is attracting many tech vendors to establish a presence here. As we know, the go-to-market strategy for tech suppliers in this part of the world has traditionally been indirect.

This year's Gitex focuses on prominent industry trends, including AI and cybersecurity. Incidentally, these are some of the most lucrative areas for channel partners looking to grow their business and margins.

In the last few issues, we have highlighted the emerging opportunities for channel businesses in rapidly evolving technologies. These sectors continue to offer tremendous growth potential for channel partners who are keen to innovate and adapt.

In this issue of EC, we turn the spotlight on the leaders behind the scenes—the prominent channel managers who are not only identifying these opportunities but also actively reshaping partner relationships. Through their strategic thinking, deep industry knowledge, and sharp analytical skills, they are redefining how businesses collaborate, building stronger, more effective channel partnerships that drive success for both vendors and partners alike. By sharing their insights and approaches, we hope to inspire other channel leaders to push the boundaries of what is possible in this dynamic market.

GEC Media Group will have its biggest presence ever at the show, and we'll be on the ground for all five days, gauging the pulse and bringing you the latest developments through our print and digital platforms. We hope to see you there.

JEEVAN THANKAPPAN

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MASTERING THE CLOUD

he Grand Finale of the
rld CIO 200 Summit 2024

A celebration of technology leadership and innovation

THE WORLD CIO 200 SUMMIT

SOUTH AFRICA   15-19 SEPT, 2024

GRAND FINALE

The 2024 World CIO 200 Summit Grand Finale, hosted in Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa, set a new standard for excellence in celebrating global technology leadership.

More than 200 CIOs, CISOs, and visionaries from all corners of the world came together in a dazzling show of collaboration, innovation, and leadership, igniting the future of digital transformation like never before.

Hosted by the Global CIO Forum, this summit was the pinnacle of a 50-country journey. It was a gathering of tech pioneers, the brightest minds in the industry, who didn't just meet to talk but to redefine the future of business.

Here is how it unfolded over four days.

Day zero
Day zero saw guests welcomed and checked in, collecting their event badges, access passes, and merchandise in preparation for the exciting activities and networking sessions ahead. A key highlight of the opening day was the Archery Challenge 2024, powered by Sentient Archery. Over 100 CIOs participated in this thrilling test of precision and leadership, aiming to hit the bullseye and claim the title of Archery Champion. The activity not only tested physical prowess but also symbolized the sharp decision-making and accuracy required of top IT leaders in today's fast-evolving tech landscape. This activity was sponsored by Quixy.

Following the adrenaline-pumping archery competition, the day shifted to a more relaxed and celebratory tone with a spectacular tribute show, "SIMPLY THE BEST", celebrating the greatest musical icons of all time at The Barnyard Theatre, Emperors Palace. Attendees were treated to an unforgettable performance, bringing a blend of music, entertainment, and nostalgia to close out the first day of the summit.

The evening concluded with the World CIO 200 2024 Grand Finale Welcome Dinner held at the iconic Tribes African Steakhouse & Grill. Guests savored the finest in African cuisine while reflecting on the day's accomplishments and gearing up for the summit's key discussions and presentations over the following days.

Day one

Day one of the prestigious World CIO 200

Grand Finale unfolded at the Birchwood Hotel & OR Tambo Conference Centre, marking an extraordinary gathering of global CIOs, IT thought leaders, and industry innovators. The event kicked off with an early morning Breakfast & Networking session, where attendees engaged in meaningful conversations and exchanges over coffee. The relaxed networking atmosphere set the tone for a day packed with enriching content and discussions, all centered on technology leadership and innovation.

The day officially began with a welcome note delivered by Ronak Samantaray, Co-founder and CEO of GEC Media Group, who set the stage for the remarkable sessions that followed. His welcome speech highlighted the significance of global collaboration in addressing the evolving technological landscape, emphasizing the role of CIOs as

strategic enablers of digital transformation.

Jeevan Thankappan, Managing Editor of GEC Media Group, followed with an Editor's Note, offering a deep dive into the event's core theme and discussing how technology can transcend borders and create a global impact. He recognized the growing importance of digital leadership in the face of emerging global challenges, reinforcing the need for innovation and collaboration.

The morning sessions continued with Charbel Zreiby, Regional Director, Channel Data Center Specialists at Dell Technologies, delivering a keynote focused on the transformative power of AI across industries and the importance of embracing AI to stay competitive in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

His presentation was followed by the next keynote by Ricky Kej, three-time Grammy Award Winner and United Nations Goodwill Ambassador, who shared his thoughts on "Uniting Cultures, Transcending Borders."

Sharing his journey as a musician and environmentalist, Ricky emphasized the interconnectedness of music and nature. After 13 years of producing over 3,500 commercials, he decided to stop producing commercial music and instead focus on creating music that addresses social and environmental issues.

This was followed by thought-provoking session by Alan McSmith, a wilderness guide from South Africa, who discussed the importance of connectivity and being human,

emphasizing the inclusion of future generations and non-human entities as stakeholders.

His presentation invited the audience to reflect on their perceptions and navigate through existential crises by facing fears and changes beneath the surface, using an anecdote from the Okavango Delta to illustrate this concept.

Ali El Kontar, CEO of Zero&One, took the stage next, emphasizing leadership and personal accountability. To foster change in an organization, leaders must be the change they wish to see in others, taking ownership of problems and actively seeking solutions. This modeling of behavior will encourage others to follow suit, improving teamwork and performance, he said.

This was followed by a presentation from Amit Veer, Founder & CEO, Coffeee. io-merchandise sponsor of the event-focused on offshoring with AI-powered tech recruitment, addressing the global tech talent shortage, particularly in industries like software engineering. He highlighted the key benefits of offshoring, especially to India, which offers a large pool of skilled tech professionals at lower costs, 24/7 operations, and no language barriers.

The presentation from Raif Abou Diab, Country Manager - South Gulf & Sub Saharan Africa at Nutanix highlighted the significance of Nutanix's hybrid multi-cloud platform and its role in simplifying IT environments. The key message is that Nutanix enables organizations to run applications and data across various environments, including on-premises, private,

and public clouds, with a unified platform.

The afternoon kicked off with a sumptuous lunch and networking session, allowing attendees to connect further and reflect on the discussions from the morning. Following lunch, the Leadership Masterclass was led by Dr. Antoine Eid, founder of Meet YourSelf, which is the world's first science-based workplace DNA assessment and reporting tool that combines three key scientific areas together to deliver the most comprehensive and applicable results for performance at the workplace.

In the evening, the spotlight turned to the much-awaited Ambassadors Meet, an invite-only session that brought together ambassadors of the World CIO 200 2024 initiative. The exclusive gathering fostered deep discussions on leadership challenges and opportunities,

with ambassadors sharing their experiences in driving technological advancements across various industries.

As the day transitioned into night, the event's grand Gala Dinner commenced, starting with an opening note by Richa S, Chief Commercial Officer of GEC Media Group. The dinner provided a perfect blend of celebration and recognition, highlighted by a stellar performance from Manoj George, an internationally renowned violinist and music composer, alongside Ricky Kej, whose uplifting melodies symbolized the spirit of positivity and cultural diversity.

The event continued with the Ambassadors Recognition ceremony, where outstanding global leaders were honored for their exceptional contributions to the GCF community and the broader IT industry. This was followed by the presentation of the GCF Preferred Partner Awards, recognizing key partners who played a significant role in advancing the goals of the Global CIO Forum.

Day two

The day commenced on a serene note with a Mental Wellbeing Program led by world-renowned Yoga Guru Sumit Manav. His session, titled "Mindful Meditation – An Inward Journey," focused on nurturing mental wellbeing, a vital aspect for today's leaders. In a world driven by fast-paced technological change, Sumit emphasized the importance of grounding oneself through mindfulness, enabling leaders to manage stress and maintain a sense of balance in their personal and professional lives. The participants were guided through meditation techniques aimed at fostering clarity and focus—qualities essential

for navigating complex decision-making processes.

Venkatesh Mahadevan (Venki), Board Member of CaaS, delivered an insightful opening address titled "Moving the Needle" through storytelling and real-world examples of transformation. He highlighted key examples from around the world, emphasizing the power of accessibility, collaboration, and innovation in driving change.

Venki inspired the audience to identify ways in which they can "move the needle" in their respective fields, stressing that even a single idea can create significant change.

He encouraged a mindset of collective action and innovation, asking leaders to consider their roles in shaping the future, especially with innovations like AI and ChatGPT. He closed with a powerful reminder: "Do not die with the music inside your head," encouraging the audience to share their ideas and foster innovation rather than holding them back.

The address was a mix of humor, inspiration, and deep reflection, leaving the audience motivated to take action and create lasting change in their organizations.

Keynotes and Thought Leadership
The morning session featured a lineup of influential speakers sharing thought-provoking insights:

- Mohammed Abdul Hadi, Director of Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions at StorIT Distribution, delivered the Partner Keynote, highlighting the future of enterprise infrastructure and the evolving role of technology in driving growth and operational efficiency.

- Aphiwe Qhama Menziwa, Founder of Tembisa Ratanga, took the stage with an inspiring talk titled "A Place of Hope," where he shared the story of how his organization is transforming lives in disadvantaged communities, showcasing the power of technology in driving social

change.

- Mayuresh Kothari, Technical Director at Secureworks, provided a keynote focusing on cybersecurity and the growing challenges of protecting digital ecosystems in an increasingly interconnected world.
- Jayakumar Mohanachandran, CRO of CaaS Research, shared his insights on "AI Foresights and Outlook 2024-25," offering a glimpse into how artificial intelligence will shape industries and redefine the future of business. His insights provided valuable context for CIOs as they plan for AI integration into their operations.

Technology and Innovation Presentations

The technological landscape took center stage as thought leaders shared groundbreaking insights:

- Gautam Nimmagadda, CEO of Quixy, introduced "The Power of No-Code Platforms for Seamless Applications." His talk underscored the efficiency and agility

that no-code platforms offer for businesses to rapidly develop and deploy applications, reducing dependency on traditional development cycles.

- Rajeev Dutt, General Manager of SwissGRC, joined virtually for a session titled "GRC for Strategic Excellence and Operational Resilience," shedding light on how governance, risk, and compliance solutions are integral to building

Later in the day , Sumit Manav returned to the center stage to captivate the audience with a second session, "Your Path to Lifelong Wellbeing." Building on his earlier meditation program, Sumit offered actionable tips for embedding mindfulness practices into daily routines, empowering leaders to achieve sustained mental clarity and physical vitality.

The last of the morning's partner keynotes was delivered by Caryn Vos, Senior Manager of the Crypto Division at Altron, who said the company has become a trusted leader with a full stack of solutions that bring centralized security controls, policies, and compliance into heterogeneous and dynamic hybrid cloud environments

The highlight of the afternoon was a Leadership Masterclass led by Haragopal Mangipudi, the founder of guNaka, renowned keynote speaker, and author. The session, specifically tailored for CIOs, delved deep into the complexities of modern leadership.

Global CIO Forum Finale: Reflections and Future Outlook

The event concluded with a reflective

session led by Anushree Dixit, Global Head at GEC Media Group, where she recapped the highlights of the forum and discussed the future outlook for the CIO community. Her talk served as a call to action for all attendees, inspiring them to implement the knowledge gained over the course of the forum to shape the future of their organizations.

Anushree also hosted the highly anticipated Day 2 Lucky Draw, adding an element of excitement to the closing moments of the event.

With the formal proceedings concluded, attendees prepared to depart from the hotel to catch their flight to Cape Town. This marked the beginning of the next chapter of their journey as leaders, armed with insights, connections, and strategies gained over the course of the Global CIO Forum.

Day three

The final day of The World CIO 200 2024 Finale unfolded in Cape Town with a dynamic blend

of excitement, exploration, and celebration, offering attendees an unforgettable experience that encapsulated the spirit of innovation, adventure, and connection.

The participants took part in the Harley Davidson Chauffeur Rides. This thrilling experience allowed guests to discover the scenic beauty of Cape Town from the seat of legendary Harley Davidson motorcycles, alongside vintage cars, which offered a nostalgic yet exhilarating touch to the journey. As the riders roared through Cape Town's picturesque routes, braving the rain, the energy was palpable, and the scenic beauty of the Cape left an indelible mark on everyone. This high-octane adventure provided a unique and memorable way to immerse in the natural splendor of the region, blending adventure with exploration.

Following the excitement of the morning rides, attendees were treated to a serene and indulgent picnic and wine tasting at the renowned Simons Restaurant located at Groot Constantia, one of South Africa's most iconic wine estates. The afternoon was marked by relaxation, where participants savored a selection of fine wines while enjoying gourmet delicacies in the peaceful ambiance of the vineyard. Surrounded by lush landscapes and centuries-old winemaking traditions, the wine tasting offered a luxurious pause in the day's activities, giving everyone a chance to unwind and relish Cape Town's culinary and viticultural excellence.

As the day progressed, attendees were given some well-deserved leisure time, allowing them to relax, explore Cape Town further, or reflect on the week's transformative discussions and experiences. This break provided a personal moment for attendees to recharge before the evening's highly anticipated events.

The highlight of the evening was the electrifying session featuring husband and wife adventurers Chris and Julie Ramsey, who shared their experiences from their pole to pole expedition in an EV.

Their talk, titled "Charged for Change: The Electrifying Journey of Chris and Julie Ramsey," delved into their passion for adventure and sustainability, showcasing how they had overcome challenges along the 17,000 mile route.

In every way, the final day was a fitting conclusion to The World CIO 200 2024 Finale, blending adventure, relaxation, insightful discussion, and celebration. The day left participants with a profound sense of community and a shared commitment to innovation and transformation in the tech world. The finale will be remembered not only for its high-profile speakers and engaging activities but also for the inspiration and connections it fostered among the global CIO community. ↖

05 NOVEMBER 2024
UAE

12 NOVEMBER 2024
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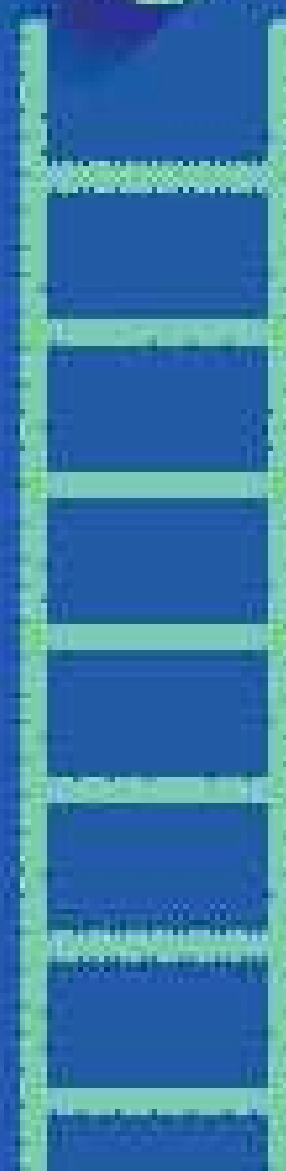BROUGHT TO YOU BY

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How GCC telecom operators can close the digital divide and accelerate the region's digital transformation

Naorus Abdulghani,
Group Chief Technology Officer,
Beyond ONE

The GCC region stands at the cusp of a digital renaissance, driven by ambitious initiatives like Saudi Vision 2030 and the UAE's digital transformation goals. This vision promises a future where technology and innovation empower individuals, businesses, and communities, driving unprecedented growth and prosperity. However, to fully unlock this potential, a crucial challenge must be addressed: the benefits of the digital age are accessible to all.

While the GCC is making significant strides in technological advancement, a digital divide persists, limiting the participation of certain segments of the population in the digital economy. From rural communities and migrant workers to lower socioeconomic groups and SMEs, many face barriers to accessing reliable and affordable connectivity. This disparity not only hinders individual progress but also hampers the region's overall digital transformation.

The inability to connect at the speeds necessary to utilize today's digital tools can derail any attempt to improve access to services like fintech, edtech, and health-tech, particularly outside of major cities where network speeds can vary greatly. It's like trying to navigate a modern highway with a horse and cart - the journey is not just slow, it's impossible. If success in becoming the world's leading digital economy is achieved, individuals and businesses need to be empowered to participate fully in the digital economy.

Telecom operators, as the architects of the region's digital infrastructure, have an opportunity to bridge this divide and accelerate progress. By evolving from traditional telcos to techcos, they can offer a broader range of services beyond connectivity, empowering individuals and businesses to thrive in the digital age. This transformation requires a shift in mindset, from a focus on infrastructure alone to a broader vision of enabling digital inclusion and a more connected and empowered society.

This transformation demands a radical rethinking of personalization and inclusivity. It's about understanding the unique needs of diverse communities and tailoring solutions that cater to their specific requirements. It's about recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach is no longer sufficient in a world where digital access is as essential as electricity or water. It's about creating an environment where everyone feels valued,

> *From rural communities and migrant workers to lower socioeconomic groups and SMEs, many face barriers to accessing reliable and affordable connectivity.*

heard, and empowered to explore the digital world without limitations.

The future of digital services lies in creating an integrated ecosystem that seamlessly connects people, businesses, and governments. This ecosystem should provide access to a range of services, from high-speed internet and cloud computing to fintech, edtech, and health-tech solutions. It should be built on a foundation of robust and reliable infrastructure, ensuring that everyone can benefit from the power of technology.

As the 'Age of AI' beckons, it's time to get serious about data resilience

Rick Vanover,
Vice President of Product Strategy,
Veeam

Around the world, the focus on the energy transition is intensifying, driven by the need to create a sustainable future for our planet and the generations to come.

2023 was the hottest year on record and scientists suspect that changing temperatures are linked to rising greenhouse gas emissions, 75% of which stem from fossil fuels. Earlier this year, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) experienced more rainfall than it had seen since records began 75 years ago, an adverse weather event of the kind that's affecting more and more countries worldwide. Climate change will only affect us further, unless we work together to accelerate the energy transition today.

Having spent much of the past eight months across the GCC – from Qatar and Saudi Arabia to the UAE – I'm not only fascinated by how the UAE have successfully brought the world together for COP28, but by the leading role the Gulf states are playing in countering climate change with innovation. They're investing in renewables as well as Climate Tech and are attracting the best and brightest to the region to build a greener future.

How is the UAE advancing sustainability?

The GCC is now one of the world's largest markets for renewable energy. The UAE, alongside other Gulf states, has rolled out over 30 programs to drive sustainability such as the Green Agenda 2030 and Net Zero 2050 Strategy. Underlying these initiatives is a firm commitment to economic diversification, with the UAE continuing to foster the expansion of its non-oil economy, which has been growing at an enviable 6% a year.

Renewables are key to the UAE's diversification efforts and the country's investment in them significantly exceeds its devotion to fossil fuels, having committed $50 billion to clean energy projects and planning to commit the same amount over the next decade. But as important as renewables, are novel energy storage solutions.

Can today's batteries power the energy transition?

As a young and agile nation, the UAE has a history of being quick to adapt. In just over 50 years, the country has become an innovation hub at the forefront of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Fintech, Genomics, and much more. And while the UAE's Deep Tech ecosystem is still in its early days, there's an opportunity to fast-track its growth to complement investment in

> **The UAE, alongside other Gulf states, has rolled out over 30 programs to drive sustainability such as the Green Agenda 2030 and Net Zero 2050 Strategy.**

renewables with more energy innovation.

Because the UAE – like much of the region – has sulfur in abundance, the GCC could become the epicenter of battery industry disruption and the transition from lithium-ion to lithium-sulfur batteries. Sulfur, unlike conventional battery materials like cobalt, manganese, and nickel, doesn't have to be mined, costs a fraction of these materials, is three times more energy-dense than traditional battery materials.

Common vulnerabilities remain unpatched; what can the CISO do?

Eran Livne
Senior Director, Product Management, Qualys

When the United Arab Emirates (UAE) became the scene of mass cloud migration in 2020 and 2021, the move was of enormous importance to business continuity. But for those enterprises that had previously treasured their on-premises autonomy, it was a time of chaos for the IT and security teams tasked with defending their architecture.

This led to many problems. Chief among them was vulnerability patching. Consider the rather obvious observation that teams cannot monitor, audit, patch, and protect what they cannot see. The UAE-based SOC became a stressful place to work. In one study from earlier this year, some 155,000 vulnerable assets were uncovered in the UAE and more than 40% of critical flaws were found to have remained unpatched for longer than five years. These figures are mirrored in the 2023 Qualys TruRisk Research Report. Findings included that, on average, attackers take 19.5 days to weaponize a vulnerability that takes 30.6 days to patch. In the 11.1 days in between, attackers do not sit idle. Initial-access brokers (IABs — those who crack the walls and doors open and then sell the holes they have made to other threat actors) are opportunists that will pounce on the easiest prey and punish the unpatched flaw.

Vulnerabilities and misconfigurations are gifts to cybercriminals. But despite patching being a top priority for every CISO, problems like tech sprawl, system compatibility, and downtime scheduling stand in the way of robust vulnerability management. Zerologon (CVE-2020-1472) exploits a flaw in Microsoft's Netlogon Remote Protocol to elevate privileges to full domain access. Despite a fix being released in August 2020, based on our research, Zerologon was used at least 56 times in 2023. And the Apache Log4j Remote Code Execution vulnerability, more commonly known as "Log4Shell" (CVE-2021-44228), was used 77 times in the same year despite being patched in December 2021.

Action stations

While each organization has its own issues that hold it back from patching, each will face the common testing and staging phases. After that, we can assume a further formal workflow to greenlight a production fix. Whatever time it takes for this process to complete must be added to the 11-day window where organizations stand vulnerable to attacks.

> *Findings included that, on average, attackers take 19.5 days to weaponize a vulnerability that takes 30.6 days to patch.*

Allied forces

This approach works best if security professionals join forces with IT admin teams and DevOps teams to present a united front. Fortunately, the modern C-suite reads and watches the news headlines about cyber incidents. In light of this awareness, and the reality that Middle East data breaches cost an average U$8 million, it has become easier to join the dots between security risk and business risk. But SOCs must still respect the goals of other departments, liaising with individual leaders on their operational priorities so that security goals become more business-centric — specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). This methodology will highlight areas for improvement, including within business processes.

Two-thirds of healthcare organizations hit by ransomware, Sophos survey finds

John Shier
Field CTO, Sophos

Sophos has released a sector survey report, "The State of Ransomware in Healthcare 2024," which revealed that the rate of ransomware attacks against healthcare organizations has reached a four-year high since 2021. Of those organizations surveyed, two-thirds (67%) were impacted by ransomware attacks in the past year, up from 60% in 2023. The rising rate of ransomware attacks against healthcare institutions contrasts with the declining rate of ransomware attacks across sectors; the overall rate of ransomware attacks fell from 66% in 2023 to 59% in 2024.

Alongside an increase in the rate of ransomware attacks, the healthcare sector reported increasingly longer recovery times. Only 22% of ransomware victims fully recovered in a week or less, a considerable drop from the 47% reported in 2023 and 54% in 2022.

"While we've seen the rate of ransomware attacks reach a kind of "homeostasis" or even declining across industries, attacks against healthcare organizations continue to intensify, both in number and scope. The highly sensitive nature of healthcare information and need for accessibility will always place a bullseye on

the healthcare industry from cybercriminals. Unfortunately, cybercriminals have learned that few healthcare organizations are prepared to respond to these attacks, demonstrated by increasingly longer recovery times. These attacks can have immense ripple effects, as we've seen this year with major ransomware attacks impacting the healthcare industry and impacting patient care," said John Shier, field CTO, Sophos.

"To combat these determined adversaries, healthcare organizations must adopt a more proactive, human-led approach to threat detection and response, combining advanced technology with continuous monitoring to stay ahead of attackers."

Additional findings from the report include:
- Ransom Recovery Costs Surge: The mean cost of recovery in a healthcare ransomware attack was $2.57 million in 2024, up from $2.2 million in 2023 and double the 2021 cost
- Ransom Demands vs Payments: 57% of healthcare institutions that paid the ransom ended up paying more than the original demand
- Root Cause of Attack: Compromised credentials and exploited vulnerabilities

> **Only 22% of ransomware victims fully recovered in a week or less, a considerable drop from the 47% reported in 2023 and 54% in 2022.**

were tied for the number one root cause of attack, each accounting for 34% of attacks
- Backups Targeted: 95% of healthcare organizations hit by ransomware in the past year said that cybercriminals attempted to compromise their backups during the attack.
- Increased Pressure: Organizations whose backups were compromised were more than twice as likely to pay the ransom to recover encrypted data (63% vs. 27%)
- Who Pays the Ransom: Insurance providers are heavily involved in ransom payments, contributing in 77% of cases. 19% of total ransom payment funding comes from insurance providers

Marsh McLennan and Zurich urge public-private action to bridge cyber protection gap and boost resilience

Marsh McLennan and Zurich Insurance Group highlights the critical need for greater public sector involvement to strengthen societal resilience in the event a catastrophic cyber event occurs.

The whitepaper, Closing the cyber risk protection gap, emphasises the urgent need for innovative solutions to close the gap between risk and insurance – particularly for small and medium-size businesses that are often uninsured or underinsured – as rapidly-evolving cyber threats are outpacing the capacity of traditional insurance and risk management solutions to fully mitigate them. It highlights mass malware and mass cloud outage as examples of cyber incidents that are currently considered insurable up to a certain level of financial loss, and events such as critical

John Doyle, President & Chief Executive Officer, Marsh McLennan

infrastructure failure, which are generally considered uninsurable.

John Doyle, President & Chief Executive Officer, Marsh McLennan, said, "The severe threat presented by cyber risks requires collective action to bridge the protection gap. The insurance industry and the public sector must fully understand the spectrum of insurable and currently non-insurable cyber events."

Mario Greco, Group Chief Executive Officer, Zurich Insurance Group, said, "The threat of cyberattacks poses a significant risk to both societal and economic stability. As insurers, we can offer some degree of protection, but we must acknowledge that large-scale, catastrophic cyber events present substantial accumulation risks that cannot be borne by the private sector alone."

Microsoft expands its Global Engineering Development Center's footprint to the UAE's capital, Abu Dhabi

His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan,
Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council

Microsoft has announced it is expanding its Global Engineering Development Center footprint to the UAE. A new development center, which will be established in Abu Dhabi, one of Microsoft's first engineering centers to be launched in the Arab world, joining the company's global portfolio of development centers across key strategic locations around the world.

Microsoft's Engineering Development Center in Abu Dhabi will be part of a global ecosystem of centers dedicated to the creation of AI innovations, cloud technologies and advanced

cybersecurity solutions. The engineering teams at the center will create cutting-edge solutions that will be part of Microsoft solutions globally.

This announcement is the latest in a series of investments by Microsoft that further strengthens the UAE's position as a global hub of tech innovation and talent. Microsoft's strategic partnership with G42 has been instrumental in establishing a thriving local technological ecosystem, and the new Microsoft Engineering Development Center will build on these efforts by not only creating

cutting-edge technologies in the region but also attracting top tech talent from around the world to develop tailored solutions that tackle pressing challenges in critical industries globally.

His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, said, "As a hub of innovation, Abu Dhabi is well-positioned to lead global efforts in AI, championing transformative solutions that benefit both people and the planet. Abu Dhabi's advanced digital and physical infrastructure, combined with the UAE's strategic location at the heart of the world, allows us to drive positive, far-reaching impacts across industries and societies alike."

Satya Nadella, Chairman and CEO, Microsoft, said, "We are committed to ensuring transformative technologies, like AI, benefit everyone broadly and create local opportunity. Our Engineering Development Center in Abu Dhabi will bring new talent to the region and help power innovation that will drive economic growth and job creation for both the UAE and the world."

ManageEngine rolls out first-ever decision intelligence platform for enhanced IT operations

ManageEngine has announced a significant upgrade to its flagship IT analytics solution, Analytics Plus. Version 6.0 introduces Spotlight, a contextual recommendations engine powered by AI, designed to identify key inefficiencies in IT operations and suggest corrective strategies.

The 2023 State of Analytics Engineering report found that time to business insight is the biggest challenge for nearly 50% of surveyed directors. Spotlight dramatically reduces the time IT managers and CIOs spend analyzing various IT metrics and coming up with remedies to fix structural fault lines in operations. By incorporating decision-intelligence capabilities, Analytics Plus now facilitates contextual decision-making, addressing a crucial gap in traditional analytics software.

For instance, Analytics Plus can analyze correlations between the age of IT assets, their frequency of failure, and the mean time to repair. Based on these parameters, it suggests the optimal time frame for asset replacement.

Rakesh Jayaprakash,
Product manager and chief analytics evangelist at ManageEngine

This approach ensures that organizations neither dispose of assets prematurely, losing usable value, nor retain them for too long, negatively impacting employee productivity. With the introduction of Spotlight, ManageEngine reinforces its commitment to enhancing IT operations through intelligent, data-driven solutions.

"While traditional analytics tools excel at providing a platform for analyzing any type of data, they often lack the necessary context of the data they are analyzing. Deriving meaningful and context-specific insights is becoming increasingly challenging due to a significant disconnect: the people performing the analysis are skilled at mining data but often lack the IT context, making it difficult to translate findings into actionable business decisions," said Samantha Hall, Service Delivery Manager, Leathams Ltd., a UK-based food supplying company.

Analytics Plus' built-in AI engine is programmed to study common IT processes and identify solutions to achieve desired results more quickly. Spotlight acts like an assistant, constantly monitoring for bottlenecks or operational inefficiencies and offering tips for corrective action. By bringing in IT context and leveraging AI capabilities, Analytics Plus ensures that organizations can address issues more effectively and efficiently.

TXOne Networks brings cutting-edge AI-Powered OT defence security to GITEX 2024
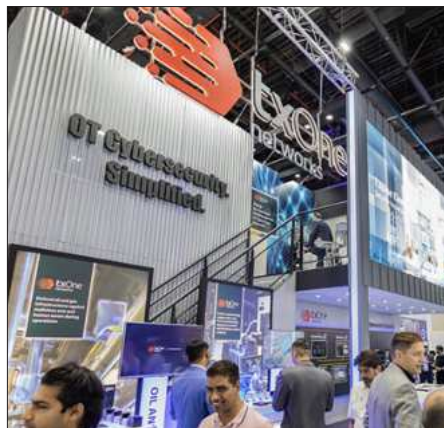
This year at GITEX, TXOne Networks will showcase its groundbreaking OT defence framework designed to protect mission-critical assets across industries such as manufacturing, oil and gas, and critical infrastructure.

Visitors to TXOne Networks' stand (H24-D70, Hall 24) will experience the innovative SageOne Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS) protection platform, along with a significant update to the Edge product line. The integration of AI into the Edge solutions simplifies security configuration, reducing setup time while enhancing threat detection accuracy with fewer false positives. In addition to product demonstrations, TXOne's Chief Revenue Officer, Stephen Driggers, will participate in the "AI, OT & IoT Critical Infrastructure Leaders Panel" on October 15th, discussing the critical role of AI in OT and IoT security.

With a focus on bridging the divide between IT and OT teams, TXOne's theme for GITEX 2024, "Keep the Operation Running", emphasizes the importance of operational continuity in OT environments. As industrial networks become more interconnected with IT, new challenges have emerged. In a recent report by Cisco, 41% of firms' IT and OT teams work independently on cybersecurity efforts. However, 92% of executive leaders believe that a unified solution would dramatically improve security postures—a critical need that TXOne's solutions directly address.

"As the lines between IT and OT networks continue to blur, a holistic approach to cybersecurity solutions is essential to integrate both systems, enabling organizations to proactively manage threats and ensure operational resilience. We are proud to lead the charge in fostering collaboration between these traditionally siloed teams," said Dr. Terence Liu, Chief Executive Officer of TXOne Networks.

In the past year, TXOne has experienced significant revenue growth, driven by key customer wins. The company has also received industry recognition, including acknowledgment from Frost & Sullivan for its achievements in IT/OT network protection. TXOne Networks has expanded its presence in the Middle East and Africa (MEA), establishing teams in key markets such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and South Africa, with plans to enter additional markets, including Iraq and Nigeria.

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Oracle marks 35 years in the UAE with ground breaking AI and multi-cloud innovations at GITEX 2024

Industry leading Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Multi Cloud innovation that is geared to solve complex business challenges in every industry, and help acecelerate the UAE and wider Middle East's AI economy will be the key focus for Oracle at GITEX GLOBAL 2024.

Celebrating its 35th Year of supporting the UAE's growth ambitions with latest digital technologies, Oracle will showcase a comprehensive portfolio of AI solutions including next gen cloud applications on a best-in-class AI cloud infrastructure and state-of-the-art generative AI innovations.

"This year, at GITEX, we celebrate 35 years of supporting the UAE's growth ambitions with state of the art local cloud infrastructure, latest cloud technologies, developing top talent, and

expanding our local presence", said Nick Redshaw, senior vice president – Tech Cloud, Middle East and Africa, and UAE country leader, Oracle. "The UAE's leadership has set forth an inspiring vision in the AI era, and we are yet again ready to support national aspirations with powerful AI innovation from Oracle. At GITEX GLOBAL 2024, our customers, partners, and visitors

will experience enterprise ready AI solutions and innovative multi cloud solutions to drive unprecedented innovation and achieve seamless cloud interoperability."

Business and technology leaders can also experience Oracle's specially designed AI focused interactive pods across finance, healthcare, human resources, customer experience and many more functions. Furthermore, Generative AI demo stations operated by Oracle's AI experts, will also help visitors explore customized growth scenarios for their businesses.

Oracle will also explain why du, e&, stc, Uber, DHL, Hyatt, and many more regional and global organizations have chosen Oracle Cloud solutions for driving major business transformations.

Epson establishes new regional operation headquartered in the UAE to advance customer-centric growth

Epson has established a new sales company to serve businesses, and consumers within one of the world's most dynamic regions for technology adoption, with operations set to begin in October 2024. Headquartered in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, the new operation reflects the immense potential that Epson sees across the Middle East, Türkiye, Africa, and Central & West Asia (META-CWA).

With craft and care at its core, Epson META-CWA is reimagining what technology can do for consumers, businesses, and the planet. Through its extensive in-market network, the company will continue to bring to market Epson's high-quality technology solutions in the printing, scanning, visual display, manufacturing, and lifestyle categories across the region – supported by Epson's renowned service quality. This includes providing tailored enterprise solutions to an expanding customer base in sectors such as education, healthcare, financial services, construction, tourism, hospitality, retail, and entertainment.

In recent years, Epson has reported strong double-digit sales growth across the META-

Neil Colquhoun, President, Epson EME (META-CW Asia) Middle East, Türkiye, Africa & Central West Asia.

CWA region, with portfolios such as its education solutions growing by more than 100% between FY2022 and FY2023.

The new regional operation is being led by Neil Colquhoun, as President for Epson

META-CWA, who has spent more than a decade with the company.

"At Epson, we take pride in what we design, manufacture, and deliver. This expansion into the Middle East, Türkiye, Africa, and Central & West Asia represents more than just business growth — it's about connecting with the heart of local needs and delivering technology that empowers people and businesses, all while caring for the planet and building a more sustainable future," notes Colquhoun. "Moreover, this structure will give our talented on-ground teams even greater opportunity to support the continued business growth with local partners."

Supporting customers to reduce their environmental impact through sustainable technologies is a particular focus for Epson META-CWA, with ongoing investments in initiatives and processes that limit its own environmental impact. Epson have switched to 100% renewable electricity globally in Epson owned sites by the end of 2023.

Epson's goal is to become carbon negative and eliminate use of exhaustible underground resources such as oil and metal by 2050.

Check Point launches new MSSP portal for easier service delivery and partner management

Check Point has introduced a new Portal for managed security service providers (MSSPs) and distributors, streamlining service delivery and making business interactions with Check Point much easier.

According to Canalys, the global MSSP market is projected to grow by 14.2% annually, driven by increasing cyber threats and the need for specialized security services. However, MSSPs and channel partners today face a range of challenges—from efficiently scaling their services, managing multiple customers across disparate security solutions, ensuring compliance with evolving industry regulations, to balancing operational costs with profitability. The Check Point MSSP Portal offers a powerful solution to overcome these hurdles, enhancing security and streamlining operations.

Francisco Criado, Check Point's VP of

Francisco Criado,
Check Point's VP of Global Partner Ecosystem Organization

Global Partner Ecosystem Organization, said, "Our new Portal is here to make life easier for our valued partners, enhancing efficiency and driving business growth. We are deeply committed to our partner ecosystem, and this Portal stands as a testament to our dedication, serving as a powerful ally in the fight against cybersecurity threats."

At the core of these advancements is a meticulously designed, user-centric Portal that enables effortless onboarding of partners—a process that previously took as long as a week and now takes only two minutes. This efficiency not only saves time but also reduces operational costs for MSSPs. The Portal seamlessly integrates MSSPs into the Check Point Infinity Platform, marking a significant achievement in Check Point's MSSP program and transforming business operations.

Proofpoint unveils comprehensive data loss prevention solution

Proofpoint has launched a proprietary, partner-friendly, end-to-end information protection framework, providing organisations access to unmatched expertise, industry benchmark data and proven methodology in designing, implementing and maturing data loss prevention (DLP) programs.

While DLP programs and technology are undoubtedly maturing, only 38% of organisations say they have a "mature" DLP program. Today, organisations with complex needs are looking for more comprehensive solutions that go beyond traditional DLP measures. Until now, the industry has been lacking a practical framework that addresses the challenges of deploying a DLP program across a rapidly evolving, multi-channel data risk landscape.

Proofpoint's NIST-inspired framework, managed by Proofpoint and its certified partners, offers unmatched expertise and efficiencies for organizations. It provides a blueprint for using people, processes, and technology to analyze user behavior and

Rohit Dixit, Executive vice president and chief customer officer at Proofpoint

content, applying best practices to enhance data protection.

The new framework leverages Proofpoint's human-centric approach to information protection, combined with over 20 years of experience in designing and operating tailored DLP programs for some of the world's most security-conscious organisations. It also offers a CISO Visualisation Workshop, an in-depth, guided exercise for organisations seeking to implement a best-in-class DLP program. Proofpoint certified partners can leverage the framework to help customers identify critical maturity gaps, evaluate benchmarking against industry peers, and determine a strategy and timeline for prioritising and addressing impacts based on Proofpoint's analysis and recommendations.

"Today, data is at risk because of human behaviour," said Rohit Dixit, executive vice president and chief customer officer at Proofpoint. "The rise of the perimeter-less workplace has dramatically increased the complexity of delivering a modern, adaptive, risk-based DLP program for most organisations."
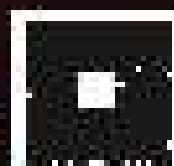
Heimdal and emt Distribution aim to dominate the Middle East cybersecurity market

Heimdal and emt Distribution announce a strategic partnership that combines Heimdal's advanced cybersecurity solutions with emt Distribution's deep market expertise.

The collaboration will deliver sophisticated yet user friendly products to the Middle East. With Heimdal offering the widest cybersecurity stack in the world, and emt Distribution being the region's leading distributor, the partnership is well-positioned for success.

Together, they are committed to educating the market on how strategic consolidation, training, and strong vendor relationships will maximize value. Bringing a new dynamic to the market. Under this partnership, the two parties have promised to:

Roll out Heimdal's Patch Management solution right away, as it's a clear improvement over existing tools in the market.

M Mobasseri
Co-Founder and CEO of emt Distribution META

Provide local hosting in the United Arab Emirates by 2025, offering compliant, high-performance cloud services tailored to regional needs.

Drive new technology adoption with pioneering tools, like the Threat Hunting and Action Center, along with emt Distribution's market know-how.

Offer easy-to-use technology, hands-on training, and show how a SOC can close security gaps while boosting profits.

M Mobasseri, Co-Founder and CEO of emt Distribution META, said, "As we work closely with many cybersecurity experts and CISOs, we consistently encounter a range of challenges, particularly the complexity of managing numerous platforms. These platforms not only require specialized expertise but are also resource-intensive and costly.

Kingston brings Next-Gen performance with NV3 PCIe 4.0 NVMe SSD

Kingston Digital Europe Co LLP has announced it is shipping the NV3 PCIe 4.0 NVMe SSD for users looking for high capacity 4×4 NVMe PCIe performance in a compact form factor.

The Kingston NV3 PCIe 4.0 NVMe SSD is a robust next-gen storage solution powered by a Gen 4×4 NVMe controller. The Kingston NV3 delivers read/write speeds of up to 6,000/5,000MB/s, ensuring a faster system capable of handling a variety of workloads, from editing to gaming. The drive optimizes system performance and

delivers value without compromise. Its compact single-sided M.2 2280 (22x80mm) design allows for storage expansion up to 4TB while saving space for other components. As a cost-effective storage solution, the NV3 is ideal for creators and gamers looking to enhance their PC performance.

"We are excited to elevate the user experience with the next-gen successor, NV3," said Tony Hollingsbee, SSD business manager, Kingston EMEA "Whether upgrading to meet the evolving demands

of working from home or building a new gaming PC, the NV3 is designed to deliver speed and dependability at an attractive price point."

Available in capacities from 500GB – 4TB, NV3 will give users storage space they need for applications, documents, photos, videos, games and more. NV3 will also include 1-year free Acronis® True Image for Kingston software, alongside the Kingston SSD Manager application, enabling users to monitor drive health and disk usage, update drive firmware, and securely erase data.

AnaAkhtar receives prestigious AAA Accreditation, marking a milestone in education

AnaAkhtar has received the prestigious AAA accreditation. This recognition underscores AnaAkhtar's commitment to advancing education, particularly in the areas of social, emotional, and behavioral development.

AnaAkhtar is a bilingual Arabic and English educational platform designed to enhance the teaching of social, emotional, and behavioral skills for students in grades 1 to 12. The platform combines video modeling, interactive scenarios, and AI-driven emotional reflection to create an engaging and effective learning experience. AnaAkhtar aims to support students, parents, counselors, and educators in building a strong foundation for personal growth and community involvement.

Issued by the American Accreditation Association, the accreditation requires training
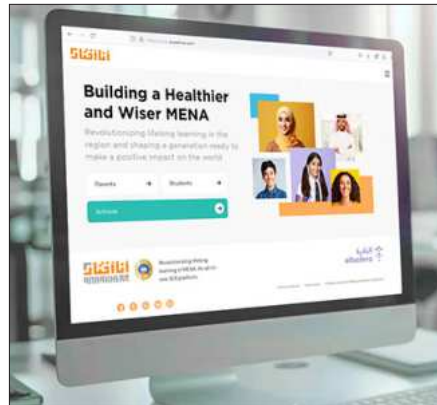
agencies to demonstrate their competence, ensure that their trainers are qualified, and confirm that their curricula meet the necessary standards. The accreditation process involves evaluating the training provider's corporate structure, facilities, staffing, curriculum,

product development, and administration.

The prestigious accreditation reflects AnaAkhtar's dedication to quality and innovation in education. The platform's approach, which integrates technology with culturally relevant content, stood out during the rigorous evaluation process, underscoring its role as a leader in educational solutions for the region.

"We are honored to receive the AAA accreditation, which affirms our efforts to provide meaningful educational experiences. Together with my co-founders, Mr. Hussam Ghazzawi and Mr. Eyad Deep, we are focused on developing a platform that positively impacts students' lives and contributes to their personal development. This accreditation is an important step in achieving our goals", said Eman Al Otaibi, Founder of AlBadera Holding.

Huawei Cloud launches AI-Ready infrastructure in Saudi Arabia to boost Vision 2030

Huawei Cloud has announced a groundbreaking series of artificial intelligence (AI) initiatives at today's Huawei Cloud Summit Saudi Arabia 2024, aiming to accelerate Saudi Arabia's digital transformation and support the Vision 2030 goals.

The event gathered over 600 guests and showcased the most updated development of key AI technologies, especially AI-ready model training and inference, and the company's innovative ecosystem resources from the world and China. On the other hand, dozens of top companies' business leaders explored how Huawei Cloud's products and solutions can enhance their competitiveness in this country, including using Pangu models to enable industry intelligence.

The launch of these initiatives presents advanced AI capabilities and significant investments in local talent and enterprises, positioning Huawei Cloud as a key enabler of the Kingdom's economic diversification efforts. The full suite of AI capabilities includes technologies for providing ubiquitous computing, reduced costs, more secure data,

and a better service experience from the edge cloud. Across the Kingdom, Huawei Cloud is able to deliver a latency as low as 25 ms.

"With strong will and long-term partners, we can realize the strategic vision," said Steven Yi, president for the Middle East and Central

Asia of Huawei, during his welcome speech. "Huawei remains committed to the Middle East and Central Asia with continuous innovation, deep industry insights and digital talent cultivation to accelerate the Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia."

Redington partners with Zoho to drive digitalization in Africa

Redington has announced a strategic partnership with Zoho Corporation, a leading global technology company.

This alliance will drive digital transformation across Africa, providing businesses of all sizes with easy access to Zoho's advanced solutions. Redington's network will support seamless implementation and ongoing assistance, enhancing operations, collaboration, and customer experiences in the region.

As per the terms of the agreement, the partnership extends to primary countries in the continent including Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Angola, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Cameroon.

Through Redington's extensive channel reach, businesses can access a comprehensive suite of Zoho solutions. This includes Zoho Workplace, which is a unified platform for

enterprise collaboration, encompassing email, document sharing, office suite, and more. Channel partners will also have access to Bigin by Zoho CRM, which is a pipeline-centric CRM solution specifically designed for small and micro- businesses, empowering them to manage customer interactions and close deals

efficiently. African businesses will also be able to leverage Zoho ZeptoMail, which is a robust transactional email delivery solution, ensuring critical business messages reach their targets reliably.

"This partnership between Redington and Zoho is a game-changer for businesses across Africa. By bringing Zoho's best-in-class cloud solutions to our vast channel ecosystem, we're empowering businesses of all sizes to leapfrog the competition," said, Nehal Sharma, Vice President, Cloud Solutions Group, Redington MEA.

With Redington's support, deep market expertise, and exceptional channel strength, businesses can leverage Zoho's comprehensive suite of products to streamline operations, boost productivity, and achieve growth across diverse industries.

Gartner predicts 15% rise in global information security spending by 2025

Worldwide end-user spending on information security is projected to total $212 billion in 2025, an increase of 15.1% from 2024, according to a new forecast from Gartner, Inc. In 2024, global information security end-user spending is estimated to reach $183.9 billion.

"The continued heightened threat environment, cloud movement and talent crunch are pushing security to the top of the priorities list and pressing chief information security officers (CISOs) to increase their organization's security spend," said Shailendra Upadhyay, Senior Research Principal at Gartner.

Since the release of GenAI, attackers are increasingly employing tools along with large language models (LLMs) to carry out large-scale social engineering attacks, and Gartner predicts that by 2027, 17% of total cyberattacks/data leaks will involve generative AI.

As organizations continue to move to the cloud, Gartner analysts expect an increase in cloud security solutions, and the market share of cloud-native solutions will grow. The combined cloud access security brokers (CASB) and cloud workload protection

Shailendra Upadhyay, Senior Research Principal at Gartner

platforms (CWPP) market is estimated to reach $8.7 billion in 2025, up from forecasted $6.7 billion in 2024.

The global skills shortage in the cybersecurity industry is a major factor driving investment in the security services market (security consulting services, security

professional services and managed security services) which is expected to grow faster than the other security segments.

"The continued growth in security spending in the MENA region is primarily driven by the constantly evolving regulatory environment and the rise in cyberattacks," said Upadhyay.

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Stand No : D20, Hall:24

black hat
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KSA RICEC, Riyadh KSA
Stand No : U100, Hall:1

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WSO2 launches Micro Integrator 4.3 with AI-powered integration development

WSO2 has launched version 4.3 of WSO2 Micro Integrator, introducing significant upgrades that enhance developer experience, performance, and capabilities. The new version streamlines API, service, and system integration, helping organizations manage workflows more effectively, simplify processes, and speed up time-to-market.

"For over a decade now, thousands of deployments have leveraged the power of WSO2 Micro Integrator to streamline connectivity among applications, services, data, and clouds," said Selvaratnam Uthaiyashankar, senior vice president & general manager – integration at WSO2.

Among its many new features, WSO2 Micro Integrator 4.3 introduces an enhanced integration flow designer. This provides an intuitive low code editor that simplifies the process of building integration flows. Developers can visually design

Selvaratnam Uthaiyashankar,
Senior vice president & general manager - integration at WSO2

integration sequences, eliminating the need for complex coding and enabling faster iteration cycles.

WSO2 Micro Integrator 4.3 also streamlines support for Continuous Integration/Continuous Deployment (CI/CD) pipelines, making it easier for DevOps teams to integrate with automation tools and cloud platforms. This leads to smoother

transitions from development to deployment, allowing businesses to scale their operations with greater ease. Performance optimisations further elevate the release, as WSO2 Micro Integrator 4.3 has been fine-tuned to handle increased workloads and complex integration tasks while maintaining speed and reliability.

Moreover, compatibility with existing ecosystems has been enhanced in this version. WSO2 Micro Integrator 4.3 seamlessly integrates with existing WSO2 platforms and third-party services, ensuring that organisations can adopt the new version without disruption to their current systems.

"WSO2 Micro Integrator 4.3 reflects our commitment to helping enterprises unlock the full potential of their digital ecosystems by simplifying the integration process," said Uthaiyashankar.

Pig butchering scams rise with new targeted tactics, study finds

Cryptocurrency scams have surged in 2024, with billions in inflows making them a major area of illicit activity. Chainalysis reports that 43% of this year's scam funds have gone to newly active wallets, up from 29.9% in 2022, indicating a rise in new scams.

Also notable this year has been the marked decline in the average lifespan of scams. Between 2020 and 2024 YTD, the average number of days scams were active has significantly decreased, starting at 271 days for scams that began in 2020, and ending at 42 days so far for scams beginning in 2024. "Taken together, these two data points strongly suggest that scammers are pivoting away from elaborate Ponzi schemes that cast a wide net, to more targeted campaigns like romance scams or address poisonings," said, Eric Jardine, Cybercrime Research Lead at Chainalysis.

Earlier this year, in its 2024 Crypto Crime Report, Chainalysis researchers estimated that based on average payment size, romance scams — also called pig butchering scams — have had the worst impact on victims, of all scam types. Also concerningly, the company's

Eric Jardine, Cybercrime Research Lead at Chainalysis

data suggests that this type of scam activity has grown by 85x since 2020. From 2022 to 2024, just one such organisation, a popular fraud shop, received US$10.5million from scammers known to perpetrate romance scams. With this

shop selling 'seasoned' social media profiles for anything between US$5 to US$20 per account, scammers could have purchased between 525K and 2.1M social media profiles they could then use to target victims.

EDB and Redington partner to drive AI and data sovereignty across MEA

EDB has announced a strategic partnership with Redington to accelerate digital transformation and data sovereignty across the Middle East and Africa (MEA). As AI adoption surges across the region, this collaboration ensures enterprises can leverage AI while maintaining control over their data in compliance with local regulations.

MEA is a region of rapid technological advancement with a growing emphasis on open source technologies to fuel growth and transformation. With AI spending in the region projected to grow at 37% annually, reaching $7.2 billion by 2026, the demand for secure, scalable data platforms has never been higher. EDB and Redington will equip enterprises to meet these needs with solutions that streamline transactional, analytical, and AI workloads while ensuring

Stew Hale
Global Director of Channel
Sales at EDB

compliance in highly regulated verticals.

At GITEX Global 2024, EDB will showcase EDB® Postgres® AI, a unified platform for transactional, analytical, and AI workloads. The platform allows organizations to

optimize performance, ensure high availability, and maintain robust security while navigating the challenges of hybrid and multi-cloud environments and meeting jurisdictional data requirements.

"Organizations need to develop, consume, and operationalise their AI and data for their own platforms, wherever, however, and whenever they want," said Stew Hale, Global Director of Channel Sales at EDB.

Redington, as a key EDB distributor in the region, will enable enterprises to modernize their infrastructures and deliver AI and data solutions that are purpose-built for MEA's unique regulatory landscape. This partnership underscores the growing role of open-source technology in driving innovation while maintaining the highest levels of data control.

HID announces major expansion with continued investments in Saudi Arabia, at Intersec Saudi 2024

HID has announced its expansion in Saudi Arabia at Intersec 2024, with continued investments in talent acquisition, cutting-edge technology, and its channel ecosystem. As part of its strategic focus on the Middle East, the company aims to strengthen its presence and enhance service offerings to meet the growing demands for secure physical access control solutions in the region.

"The Middle East is a strategic priority for HID with Saudi Arabia as one of our key growth markets, and we are dedicated to delivering tailored solutions that address the unique security needs of government entities and businesses here," said Gustavo Gassmann, VP of Emerging Markets for Physical Access Control at HID.

During Intersec Saudi this year, HID is exhibiting from Booth 1-B24 to unveil its latest innovations in physical access control technologies, designed to address the evolving security needs of the region. Key showcase includes:
• Next-generation Controllers: The new MP Controllers deliver enhanced flexibility and security for businesses of all sizes,

featuring cybersecurity measures like vulnerability scanning, compliance-ready technology, and secure boot processes to ensure maximum protection.
• Expanded Line of Readers: Now available in white, HID Signo Readers offer customization options to fit varying aesthetic and budgetary needs,

enabling seamless integration into any environment.
• Access control in a mobile-first world: HID Mobile Access® Technology offers a mobile-first solution that eliminates the need for physical cards, providing a more efficient and secure way to manage access using any iOS or Android device.

The AI Times

INSIGHTS FOR A SMARTER WORLD

The AI Times, the latest publication from GEC Media Group, is set to debut, marking its place as the region's premier magazine dedicated to the cutting-edge world of artificial intelligence. The AI Times is poised to become the go-to source for the latest AI trends, industry insights, and groundbreaking projects, engaging a focused audience across the MENA region.

THE AGE OF AI
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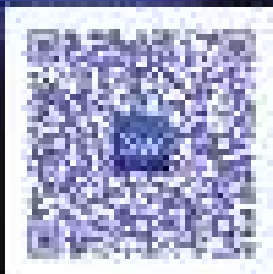
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Securing critical assets at GITEX 2024

Can you provide an overview of the key products, solutions, and use cases that you'll be showcasing at GITEX 2024?

At GITEX 2024, we are excited to present a comprehensive portfolio of products, solutions, and services that address the most pressing challenges in today's cybersecurity landscape.

Our first focus area is Application Security. We provide end-to-end solutions that span from DevSecOps consulting—helping organizations establish secure development practices—to products designed to accelerate application release cycles while simultaneously enhancing security. In this domain, we also emphasize security assessment services across various platforms, including ATMs, POS systems, and web and mobile applications, ensuring all digital assets are thoroughly protected.

The second focus is Industrial Cybersecurity. Operational Technology (OT) environments, which often form the backbone of critical national infrastructure, require specialized protection. With over 20 years of experience safeguarding critical infrastructure, Positive Technologies offers the Industrial Cybersecurity Suite, a complete set of solutions that enables organizations to build OT Security Operations Centers (SOC) and enhance the cybersecurity maturity of their industrial systems. Additionally, we offer highly specialized services, such as OT and SCADA security assessments, to help clients proactively identify and mitigate potential threats in their critical environments.

Our third key focus area is MSSP (Managed Security Service Provider) Services. As the market increasingly shifts towards managed services, we have developed a comprehensive portfolio to support our partners, whether they are just beginning their MSSP journey or have an established set of services. Our MSSP solutions are designed to empower partners to deliver high-quality, scalable cybersecurity services.

What is the central theme of your booth or overall presence at GITEX?

The central theme of our presence at GITEX 2024 is protecting the critical assets of organizations and establishing a Result-Driven Cybersecurity framework. Our approach ensures that clients can safeguard their most valuable assets, or "crown jewels," with confidence, while also providing clear metrics to measure the effectiveness and return on investment in cybersecurity. Our solutions are designed to offer both security assurance and quantifiable outcomes, aligning cybersecurity strategies with tangible business goals.

Do you have any significant announcements, keynote speeches, technical briefings, or awards planned for GITEX 2024?

At Positive Technologies, our focus is always on practical cybersecurity and delivering real-world, hands-on experience. This year at GITEX, our pavilion will not only showcase our latest products and services, where

Ilya Leonov
Regional Director MENA,
Positive Technologies

visitors can engage in in-depth technical discussions with our experts, but it will also feature a dedicated space for educational tracks, expert reports, and workshops.

In this area, our specialists will conduct hands-on workshops, present insights from our latest dark web observations, and share updates on our extensive contributions to the cybersecurity industry, including our educational initiatives. We believe in demonstrating our capabilities in a tangible way, so we encourage attendees to stop by and experience our commitment to cybersecurity firsthand.

Lexar to showcase cutting-edge memory and storage solutions at GITEX Global 2024

Can you tell us what brings Lexar to GITEX this year and how the company plans to showcase its latest innovations?

For over 25 years, Lexar has been a trusted name in memory and storage solutions, relied upon daily by thousands of customers in the Middle East. We've proudly participated in GITEX Global for several years, using this event as a platform to build partnerships and strengthen our channel ecosystem. GITEX has also allowed us to showcase our cutting-edge technology and demonstrate our commitment to shaping the future of memory and storage solutions.

What are the key highlights or products that Lexar is focusing on at GITEX 2024?

Under the theme 'WOW Lexar', the new suite of products launched at GITEX Global, comes with massive capacities at blazing speeds, and are targeted at the Middle East region's growing base of professional photographers, videographers, gamers and content creators. Our product showcase includes portable SSDs, memory cards, DRAM and other memory products.

At this edition of GITEX Global Lexar is offering a unique DIY engaging activity for all visitors to make their own USB drives, which they can take home for free.

Lexar's latest innovation suite at GITEX Global:

Memory Cards:

Lexar's new suite of memory cards includes the CFexpress 4.0, ARMOR series and SD 8.0. The company is showcasing four new CFexpress 4.0 memory cards leveraging the next-gen PCIe 4.0 performance. The lineup includes the TYPE-B DIAMOND, GOLD, SILVER, and the TYPE-A GOLD card, all enabling seamless 8K RAW video shooting, with massive capacities ranging from a minimum of 1TB to a maximum of 4TB boosted capacities.

The Lexar ARMOR series include GOLD SD UHS-II and SILVER PRO SD UHS-II cards, the world's first memory cards made of 316 stainless steel. They offer IP68 waterproofing, dustproofing, and bend-resistance—ideal for outdoor filming.

For the SD8.0 card, Lexar Professional GOLD PRO SDXC Express Card delivers up to 1700MB/s read speeds—over 5x faster than SD4.0 cards.

Portable SSDs:

Lexar Professional Go Portable SSD with Hub is a revolutionary 1-2TB portable SSD for seamless mobile video shooting. It offers unmatched freedom and portability, working alone or with a hub to add lights, mics, and power. The USB 3.2 Gen 2 SSD delivers blistering 1050MB/s read and 1000MB/s write speeds, enabling 4K 60fps ProRes video capture directly on iPhone 15 Pro/Max and beyond.

Fissal Oubida,
General Manager and Global Marketing Director – Middle East, Africa, and India, Lexar.

Lexar ARES RGB 2nd Gen DDR5 Desktop Memory is an exclusive series featuring premium SK hynix DRAM chips and blazing-fast speeds of up to 8000MT/s. The upgraded exterior design blends classic and fashionable elements.

Lexar is also introducing the new 'pexar' brand and its product—the pexar digital picture frame. Featuring an excellent 2K and anti-glare display, it is a smart WiFi frame that serves as a shared photo album for the whole family, making it a perfect gift for loved ones. ↖

The state of the threat: How to combat an evolving threat landscape

What is the Secureworks State of the Threat Report?

This is the 8th edition of Secureworks State of the Threat Report which provides a concise analysis of how the global cybersecurity threat landscape has evolved over the last 12 months. The information within the report is drawn from the Secureworks Counter Threat Unit™ (CTU™), an elite team of threat intelligence researchers, and their firsthand observations of threat actor tooling and behaviors.

What has had the most impact on the threat landscape this year?

This has been a year of several successful law enforcement operations which have caused widespread disruption to ransomware operations. These changes are important for organizations to understand as it means there is less repeatability and structure in how threat groups are operating, and a greater need to be alert for a wide variety of tactics.

Tell us more about the actions by law enforcement.

One of the most significant actions by law enforcement was the takedown of the LockBit leaksite. In our previous report, LockBit accounted for 25% of the victims listed on name-and-shame leaksites – it was by far the biggest threat group. With this group disrupted, our researchers tracked 31 new threat groups entering the ecosystem. That's a 30% increase in active ransomware threat groups over the past 12 months. Ransomware was a landscape previously dominated by a few, but it is now home to a broader set of emerging ransomware players. As smaller groups look to become established, it means there is less repeatability and structure in how they operate, and organizations need to continue to remain alert for a wider variety of tactics.

What kind of changes in tactics is the Counter Threat Unit seeing?

In the past year, threat actors are increasingly stealing credentials and session cookies to gain access by using Adversary-in-the-Middle This potentially reduces the effectiveness of some types of multifactor authentication (MFA), a worrying trend for network defenders. These attacks are facilitated and automated by phishing kits that are available for hire on underground marketplaces and Telegram. As AI tools have become widespread and readily available, it was inevitable that cybercriminals would take note as they look to scale. Since mid February 2023, Secureworks CTU researchers have observed an increase in posts on underground forums about OpenAI ChatGPT and how it can be employed for nefarious purposes. Much of the discussion relates to relatively low-level activity including phishing attacks and basic script creation. ↖

Gopan Sivasankaran
General Manager,
META at Secureworks

Innovative tech solutions

In an exclusive interview, Jacob George, Regional Technology Services Manager at Syscom, elaborates on the products and services they will be showcasing at GITEX 2024.

How do you keep your services up-to-date with the fast-changing technology landscape, especially in cloud, IoT, and cybersecurity?

One of the primary areas I focus on is ensuring that our team remains well-versed with the constantly evolving technologies. As you know, technology is always advancing, with new vendors, brands, and innovations continuously emerging in the market, each offering something unique. Staying ahead in this dynamic landscape requires a concerted effort to keep both our sales and technical teams updated on the latest technologies and solutions available.

Our objective is to equip them with the knowledge and awareness of current and emerging technologies. This ensures that when we engage with customers, we can take a consultative approach, offering them solutions that reflect the most recent advancements and options available. By doing so, we provide tailored and cutting-edge solutions that precisely meet our clients' evolving needs.

As for Syscom's extensive experience across diverse industries such as healthcare, education, oil and gas, construction, hospitality, and banking, we understand that each sector comes with its own set of unique challenges and requirements. To address these, we develop and implement tailored IT solutions specifically designed for each industry.

Our technical teams are adept at understanding the distinct needs of these industries and matching the right technologies to meet those demands. Whether it's ensuring compliance with healthcare data regulations or optimizing operational efficiency in oil and gas, our teams craft solutions that are customized for each sector.

Can you share examples from the healthcare or oil and gas sectors where your solutions have been successful?

In the healthcare sector, data management is crucial, unlike other industries, due to the sensitive nature of patient information and regulatory requirements. For example, healthcare providers are required to maintain patient data for a significant period—typically a minimum of 10 years, or even longer. Essentially, the data must be preserved for as long as the patient's life, making it a lifelong responsibility for the healthcare provider to ensure that the information remains accessible and secure.

To address these challenges, we have developed archiving solutions specifically designed to store and maintain patient data for extended periods, ensuring that the data remains intact and available for as long as it is needed. These solutions not only allow for secure long-term storage but also include robust disaster recovery (DR) capabilities, which are critical in healthcare environments. Our tailored archiving and backup systems are designed to handle the vast amounts of data generated in the healthcare sector while ensuring quick

Jacob George,
Regional Technology
Services Manager – MENA,
Syscom

recovery times in the event of a disaster. The speed of disaster recovery and the longevity of the archived data are key features we focus on to meet the stringent requirements of healthcare institutions.

As for how the rise of AI and the advent of cloud computing are impacting system integrators and resellers, there has indeed been a shift. The COVID-19 pandemic taught us that remote and hybrid work models are viable long-term options. With the development of AI and other cutting-edge technologies, tasks that once required physical presence can now be managed remotely. Everything is now accessible at our fingertips, eliminating the need to be physically present at an office or meeting room.

Companies are increasingly aware of the technologies available to streamline remote work, making it easier for employees to work seamlessly from anywhere—whether using a laptop, mobile device, or other systems. AI and cloud-based solutions have made these transitions smoother and more efficient.

As a result, system integrators and resellers must adapt their approaches, focusing more on providing solutions that facilitate remote work and capitalize on AI's potential to improve efficiency and flexibility.

So with the rise of the remote work, as you say, and increasing demand of 24 by 7 IT support, how does Syscom maintain a high level of service and responsiveness for clients who rely on both onsite and support?

At Syscom, we prioritize remote support as it's the fastest and most efficient method for addressing customer needs. Our engineers can quickly connect to the customer's environment and troubleshoot remotely, ensuring an almost immediate response. However, in scenarios where remote support is not feasible—such as when the internet is unavailable or the entire system is down—we shift to onsite support. In these cases, it's important to factor in travel time for the engineer, which can result in a response

time of two to four hours. Although onsite support might introduce delays due to travel, remote support offers near-instant resolution, with engineers connecting within minutes. Our aim is always to resolve issues remotely for faster results, but when that isn't possible, we ensure an engineer arrives onsite within four hours.

What is your agenda this time at GTEX?

Our primary focus at GITEX will be showcasing a range of our solutions. One key area will be unified communication, particularly how businesses can communicate cost-effectively while ensuring seamless connectivity, regardless of whether an employee is traveling or working in-house. We will be presenting platforms that enable smooth communication in corporate settings.

Additionally, cybersecurity will be a significant focus. We'll demonstrate the latest security options, discuss the evolving methods used by hackers, and how our solutions help combat these threats. ↖

Cloudera's future vision: AI, Hybrid, Sustainability

In an exclusive inerview with Charles Sansbury, CEO, Cloudera we dicussed about the vision of Cloudera and the trends that are shaping the data management industry right now.

Talk about Cloudera and its vision for the next five years?

Cloudera is currently the leading provider of an enterprise data platform, serving some of the world's largest companies and government agencies—essentially the biggest data users globally. Many of these organizations have built their data platforms on Cloudera, making it a key player in managing massive amounts of data.

Looking ahead, with the rise of machine learning and AI, the focus for our customers has shifted. They have vast amounts of data stored in Cloudera's platform—likely more than in any other system worldwide. The challenge they now face is how to extract meaningful insights from this data, such as identifying historical trends and patterns. While Cloudera already provides the capability to store and manage large datasets, our goal is to help companies leverage this data to make smarter business decisions through precise analytics, data science, and AI.

The market is evolving rapidly, and we believe that the companies best positioned for success will be those that enable their customers to effectively manage and trust their data. These companies will play a foundational role in shaping how large organizations integrate AI into their operations moving forward.

How does your strategy align with today's multi-cloud and data platforms?

Let me start by reiterating that our customers are some of the largest and most established companies in the world. Many of them have been operating for decades, which means they have complex infrastructures—data centers running critical applications, private cloud environments, and increasingly, public cloud infrastructure. Cloudera is unique in that we are the only company that can provide seamless data management and analytics across all these environments.

We offer true hybrid capabilities, allowing organizations to manage workloads across on-premises, private cloud, and public cloud environments. This is especially valuable for large enterprises with global IT infrastructures, as it enables them to optimize their workloads. They can match each task to the most suitable platform—whether that's based on computing requirements, security needs, data sovereignty, or cost efficiency.

Initially, much of the innovation in data and analytics, particularly related to AI, took place in the public cloud. However, as companies think long-term, they're increasingly adopting a hybrid approach, bringing more workloads back on-premise while still leveraging public and private cloud platforms.

Another key trend we see is that companies want flexibility within the public cloud space. With multiple hyperscalers dominating the market, many organizations are looking to avoid vendor lock-in. Cloudera's

Charles Sansbury,
CEO,
Cloudera

platform supports this by allowing customers to run workloads across different public cloud providers, maintaining their flexibility and avoiding dependence on a single vendor.

So how do we differentiate ourselves? First, we're trusted by the world's largest organizations. Nine of the top ten banks, eight of the ten largest telecommunications companies, and leading global automakers and government branches all run their data and analytics on Cloudera's platform. Our ability to scale and manage large computing jobs is unparalleled.

What are some key global trends which is shaping the data management industry right now?

It's important to clarify that when I talk about our market, I'm specifically referring to the Global 2000—the largest companies in the world. These organizations face challenges that are distinct from those encountered by smaller companies with less complex data needs. In our market, there are three key trends that we, as a company, are focusing on.

The first is making hybrid environments a reality. A recent study by Barclays, a major investment bank, highlighted the rapid shift towards cloud-based technologies, with many companies moving quickly to adopt the cloud. While some saw great success, others were disappointed—either due to limitations in cloud functionality or unexpected costs that weren't as efficient as anticipated. This has led to the realization that for the world's largest companies, hybrid architecture is the ultimate goal. Our focus is on making these hybrid technologies operational.

The second trend is the adoption of modern data architectures, particularly the open data lakehouse model. This approach allows companies to manage data from multiple sources in different locations, leveraging new open table formats like Iceberg to run queries and analyses. More and more large companies are embracing these technologies as part of their data strategy.

The third key area is enabling AI initiatives. Hybrid environments, modern data architectures, and AI are all converging. It's important to note that Cloudera is not in the business of building large language models. Instead, we focus on managing the data and providing the tools and infrastructure that support AI efforts.

What are the major challenges that companies face in their data journey? And could you elaborate on that and how to tackle those?

Large, global companies are inherently complex and often operate with distributed systems. Many have grown through acquisitions, which means over time, they've built these intricate and decentralized IT infrastructures—what we call an "accidental architecture." The ideal architecture that technology companies design on paper often doesn't reflect the reality these large organizations face.

One of the key challenges they face is managing distributed data sets and stores that are varying stages of technological evolution. The question becomes: how can you overlay a data mesh across these disparate data sets,

bringing them together into a unified format so they can be managed and used to train models? While there's excitement around the capabilities of AI tools like ChatGPT, much of the groundwork for companies involves less glamorous tasks like data engineering and preparation.

I often use a farming analogy to explain this. When we think of farming, we picture neat rows of crops growing, but that final step of planting and growing is only about 10% of the effort. The bulk of the work involves preparing the soil—removing rocks, tilling the earth, and adding nutrients. Similarly, for companies, a large portion of the work required to get ready for AI is in preparing the data. Industry analysts agree that data engineering and wrangling is a significant part of this process.

Many companies aren't progressing as quickly with AI as they hoped because they underestimated how foundational this data preparation is. This is where we excel. Companies are realizing how crucial it is to have a robust data platform in place before they can effectively move forward with AI initiatives. Now, regarding sustainability—it's a hot topic globally, and we take it seriously. While Cloudera, as a software company, has a relatively small environmental footprint, we recognize the increasing power demands of computing. We're working closely with customers and hardware vendors to optimize compute usage and reduce power consumption. For example, we've collaborated with hardware providers to ensure that our software runs as efficiently as possible on their systems to minimize energy use. ↖

Key trends and innovations shaping the UAE's mobility and transportation Sector in 2024

Islam Abdul Karim
Regional Head, Yango
Middle East

What are the key trends currently shaping the mobility and transportation sector in the UAE, and what role does Yango play in this?

The UAE's mobility and transportation landscape in 2024 is defined by the increasing integration of Mobility as a Service (MaaS), the rise of autonomous and electric vehicles, and a growing emphasis on sustainability. Platforms like Yango, offer an interconnected system that unifies multiple modes of transport, from ride-hailing services to public transport service information. This frictionless travel model is becoming increasingly popular in the UAE as it aligns with the country's vision for smart, efficient cities, and is expected to push the UAE's MaaS market towards $3.8 billion by 2029.

How have UAE government initiatives impacted the mobility landscape?

Government initiatives are pivotal in driving the growth and competitiveness of the mobility landscape through smart city development and green transportation policies. Smart city projects leverage data-driven solutions to enhance traffic management, alleviate congestion, and optimize public transportation systems. Green transportation policies promote electric and autonomous vehicles, contributing to reduced emissions and improved energy efficiency. Additionally, the UAE aims to deploy 42,000 electric vehicles in the next six years, supporting the broader regional trend of having 1 million active autonomous vehicles in the Middle East by 2035.

How are IoT and AI being used to improve the efficiency and safety of transportation systems in the UAE, particularly in urban settings?

IoT devices, such as smart sensors and connected vehicles, collect real-time data on traffic patterns, weather conditions, and vehicle performance. This information feeds into AI-powered systems that analyse patterns and trends, enabling cities to optimize traffic management, reduce congestion, and improve response times.

For instance, AI-powered systems can continuously analyse traffic, predict demand surges, and dynamically allocate resources, which ensures that people experience minimal wait times, even during peak hours.

In a region rapidly embracing AI technologies, which are projected to have a $320 billion positive impact in the Middle East by 2030, the integration of AI within transportation ecosystems signifies a significant advancement toward smarter cities. This shift is setting a new standard for urban mobility and enhancing the overall efficiency and safety of transportation systems.

How do public-private partnerships (PPPs) enhance urban mobility in the UAE?

Collaborations between the public and private sectors are vital for advancing urban mobility, as they merge resources, expertise, and technology to drive innovation. A prime example is the partnership between Yango and the Integrated Transport Centre "Abu Dhabi Mobility" of the Department of Municipalities and Transport, which has resulted in the launch of an advanced taxi booking service in Abu Dhabi. This service enhances connectivity by integrating city taxis into the company's user-friendly platform, streamlining the booking process for both residents and tourists. ↖

Evolving Snowflake's data cloud

Mohamed Zouari
General Manager Middle East, Turkey, and Africa at Snowflake

How is Snowflake evolving its Data Cloud strategy to meet the growing needs of enterprises in terms of data storage, analytics, and security?

Snowflake's AI Data Cloud strategy is focused on providing organisations with a data foundation, to enable easy, trusted and efficient enterprise AI access. This enterprise data strategy is driven by a modern cloud-based and scalable data platform focused on data outcomes rather than infrastructure management, which is a significant shift from traditional on-premises solutions, and vendor lock-in agreements.

Since our founding in 2012, the security of our customers' data has been our highest priority, and to this day, Snowflake is committed to continuously strengthening our industry-leading, built-in security policies to deliver a trusted experience for our customers.

How is Snowflake integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) capabilities into its platform?

At Snowflake, AI and ML capabilities are deeply integrated into the platform to provide enterprises with a seamless and secure environment for building and deploying machine learning models and generative AI applications. Cortex Analyst (public preview) and Cortex Search, offer powerful capabilities for querying and retrieving information from large datasets using natural language, eliminating the need for complex SQL queries. Companies can leverage enterprise-grade large language models (LLMs) such as Snowflake Arctic, Meta Llama 3, Mistral Large, Reka Core and more to perform tasks like summarization, classification, and document search with ease.

Snowflake's AI and ML integration is designed to be accessible to a broad range of teams. Whether using no-code, SQL, Python, or REST API interfaces, teams can build and deploy models without the complexity of managing infrastructure.

How does Snowflake make it easier for customers to discover and collaborate on the data, models, and applications?

As cloud adoption accelerates, with 68% of Middle Eastern companies planning to migrate most of their operations to the cloud by 2025 (according to PwC's EMEA Cloud Business Survey 2023), data collaboration capabilities have become more critical.

Snowflake facilitates seamless data discovery and collaboration through its secure data sharing and Snowflake Marketplace, enabling organisations to access, share, and monetise data and applications in near real-time. This removes the need for complex extract, transform, and load (ETL) processes or data movement, and the risks and costs typically associated with data movement and integration.

Can you share more details about your industry-specific solutions?

Snowflake offers industry-specific AI Data Clouds, tailored to meet the unique needs of sectors such as financial services, the public sector, healthcare, retail, telecommunications and advertising & media. The flexibility, scalability, and in-built security and governance of Snowflake's platform help industries drive innovation, optimise operations, and enhance data-driven decision-making, rooted in fact, rather than guesswork.

For financial services, our platform enables a connected data ecosystem, helping banks, insurers, and payment providers to collaborate securely, leverage AI-driven insights, and optimise data for quantitative trading, customer analytics, and financial crime prevention.

MASTERING THE CLOUD

Hameedullah Khan, CEO of SUDO, discusses how the company is helping businesses across the Middle East embrace cloud technologies, tackle the challenges of cloud migration, and leverage cutting-edge AI solutions to drive innovation

Can you provide more information about SUDO and the services you offer?

We are a trusted cloud consulting company recognized by AWS as an Advanced Tier Partner, Well-Architected Partner, and the region's first and only AWS MSP Partner with both DevOps and Resiliency Competency. Our deep expertise spans implementing CI/CD pipelines, driving AI-powered innovations, and ensuring business continuity with robust backup and disaster recovery solutions. At our core, we specialize in cloud consulting, migration, cloud-native app development, and security and compliance, helping businesses unlock the true potential of the cloud. While AWS is our primary focus, we also deliver tailored solutions across other leading cloud platforms to meet the customer's unique needs and requirements and business goals.

When migrating businesses to the cloud, what are the typical challenges they encounter? Do you lift and shift or replatform and refactor the applications?

That's an excellent question, and it's something we often hear from our customers. The specific challenges they face depend on their existing infrastructure. When transitioning from an on-premises data center to the cloud, we assess each application to identify the most suitable migration approach. For applications that need to be moved quickly, such as those affected by an expiring data center lease, a simple lift-and-shift may be the best option. Meanwhile, applications that would benefit from enhanced performance, cost optimization, and advanced cloud security features are better suited for a modernization strategy.

Our approach is always tailored. We evaluate each application based on the customer's business goals and recommend whether it should be lifted and shifted, refactored, or modernized. As an AWS cloud experts, we usually recommend a combination of these strategies, tailored to specific workloads based on application criticality, technical feasibility, and business objectives. The goal is to prioritize the migration of less complex applications using lift-and-shift, while strategically refactoring high-impact or high-complexity applications for a cloud-native future. This phased approach ensures risk mitigation, better performance, and faster cloud adoption across the organization.

Hameedullah Khan
CEO
SUDO

How do you customize cloud strategies given that each industry and customer have unique needs?

Customizing cloud strategies starts with gaining a deep understanding of the client's business context, industry-specific requirements, and unique challenges. This involves conducting a thorough cloud readiness assessment to evaluate existing infrastructure and determine which workloads to prioritize for migration or modernization.

Selecting the right cloud model—whether public, private, or hybrid—is crucial, along with choosing the appropriate services like IaaS, PaaS, or SaaS based on scalability, flexibility, and compliance needs. A tailored architecture design is developed, often incorporating multi-cloud or hybrid solutions, microservices, and containerized applications to meet performance and cost objectives. Key considerations include implementing robust security measures, regulatory compliance, and identity and access management. Cost management tools and optimization strategies are applied to control expenditures, while DevOps practices and continuous monitoring enable ongoing improvement, ensuring that the cloud solution evolves alongside business goals and market dynamics.

So, we work with the customers to ensure that whatever engagement we have with them, whether it's a cloud migration or modernization, is aligned with their business goals and strategies.

What if a customer wants to implement a multi-cloud strategy? How do you handle those situations?

When a customer wants to implement a multi-cloud strategy, it's essential to start by understanding their objectives, such as avoiding vendor lock-in, leveraging specialized services, or meeting compliance needs. The solution involves designing an integrated architecture that utilizes the strengths of each cloud provider, ensuring interoperability, data governance, and secure inter-cloud connectivity. Cloud-agnostic tools like Kubernetes, Terraform, and centralized monitoring solutions should be leveraged to manage and orchestrate resources uniformly. Security must be a top priority with centralized identity management and encryption strategies. Finally, a strong governance and cost management framework should be established to maintain visibility and

regulatory requirements. Additionally, they foster innovation and collaboration, improve disaster recovery capabilities, and align with sustainability goals. As public sector organizations increasingly recognize these benefits, they are leveraging cloud technologies to enhance service delivery and improve citizen outcomes, and as an AWS cloud consulting company and maximizing the benefits of cloud adoption.

This ability to quickly scale and access cutting-edge technologies like AI is one of the main reasons we see the public sector moving to the cloud.

Are you focusing on AI and ML technologies, and how are you building expertise in that area?

Yes, absolutely. At SUDO, we focus on AI and machine learning (ML) technologies by fostering strategic partnerships, engaging in continuous learning, and gaining hands-on experience. We collaborate with leading technology providers and utilize AWS services like SageMaker and Rekognition to deliver scalable solutions.

Our team prioritizes professional development through certifications and training, particularly in AWS's machine learning offerings, while also applying our expertise to real-world customer projects across various industries. Additionally, we actively participate in industry forums and contribute to the broader community, ensuring we remain informed about emerging trends. This comprehensive approach enables us to create innovative, tailored AI and ML solutions that drive success for our clients.

Do you see a demand for AI as a service, particularly from SMBs that can't afford to build in-house AI capabilities?

There is a growing demand for AI as a Service (AIaaS) among small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) that cannot afford to develop in-house AI capabilities. AIaaS offers cost-effective, scalable solutions, enabling SMBs to access advanced technologies without significant upfront investment.

By leveraging AIaaS, these businesses gain access to expertise, facilitate rapid deployment, and enhance decision-making through data analysis, all while allowing them to focus on core competencies. Additionally, AIaaS helps mitigate risks associated with implementation by providing robust security and compliance measures, making it an attractive option for SMBs aiming for digital transformation and competitive advantage. ↖

control, while ensuring future scalability and support through a comprehensive multi-cloud roadmap.

We often work with customers who require multi-cloud solutions, especially when compliance or data localization is a concern. For example, businesses in sectors like healthcare and FinTech may need to ensure their data stays within specific regions. In those cases, we help them integrate multiple cloud providers, such as AWS, Microsoft Azure, and Oracle Cloud.

Security is particularly important, as workloads may exist across different cloud providers. We focus on how data will transfer between these workloads, and how they will access services from different clouds. These strategies are crucial for ensuring data security, as the primary reason for adopting a multi-cloud approach is data management. Therefore,

it is vital to protect data and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, which were the initial factors in choosing a multi-cloud strategy.

Do you see a growing demand for public cloud services in the public sector?

Yes, there is a significant and growing demand for public cloud services within the public sector. As organizations increasingly recognize the benefits of cloud computing, they are transitioning to public cloud solutions to enhance efficiency, scalability, enhanced security, foster innovation and access to advanced technologies.

Public cloud solutions enable organizations to reduce capital expenditures through a pay-as-you-go model, accommodate fluctuating workloads, and adhere to stringent

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Future channel trends

Shaista Ahmed
Director Channel, Alliances, OEM &
Distribution – Emerging Markets at Nutanix

How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

Collaboration with partners is essential to create a strategic plan that aligns both parties' goals. This plan should include mutual objectives, key performance indicators (KPIs), and action steps, and should aim to create joint value propositions or bundled solutions that address specific market needs. The partnership must be positioned to deliver mutual benefits and be prepared to adjust goals and strategies based on changes in the market, technology, or business environment. It is crucial to communicate changes clearly and ensure the partnership adapts accordingly, maintaining mutual benefits in achieving the shared goals. This approach helps to sustain motivation and commitment.

Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?

Strategies vary depending on the market and product maturity. The key is to identify common goals and support partners with a combination of comprehensive training programs, joint marketing, co-branding initiatives, segmentation, performance-based incentive programs, and rebates.

For example, Nutanix leverages its Elevate Partner program, which emphasizes the importance of competencies, ensuring that partners have the necessary certifications and training. The program also features a robust rebate system designed to reward and recognize partners' contributions, including individual and company rebates. With a clear focus on partners that are strategic to the business, Nutanix provides exclusive marketing materials, access to a partner portal, and a partner demand center.

How do you manage conflicts or competition

between different channel partners?

Trust is the foundation of any successful partnership. Developing a relationship based on trust and transparency is essential, and promoting open communication ensures that both parties are aligned with the same goals. Addressing any issues or misalignments proactively by collaborating on solutions benefits both parties and keeps the partnership on track. Channel teams should create joint business plans that outline how both parties will work together to achieve the set objectives, including specific actions, timelines, and responsibilities.

What trends do you see shaping the future of channel management in the tech industry?

An increased focus on partner experience through advanced analytics and data-driven decision-making is becoming more prevalent. AI and automation are transforming channel management by streamlining repetitive tasks, enhancing lead scoring, and providing predictive analytics. Companies are prioritizing ecosystem partners by collaborating with a diverse range of entities, including startups, industry consortia, and technology integrators, to develop more comprehensive solutions and access new markets.

How do you approach training and educating channel partners on your products and services?

Assessing the specific needs and existing knowledge levels of channel partners is essential for tailoring training to their requirements and ensuring its relevance and effectiveness. Detailed and accessible training resources should be created, including product manuals, sales playbooks, and FAQs. Various formats, such as videos, webinars, and interactive modules focused on specific use cases and value propositions, can help partners become true extensions in the market.

Implementing a certification program to validate partners' knowledge and skills serves as motivation for partners to deepen their expertise and assists customers in identifying qualified sellers. Dedicated Channel SEs can drive

enablement with focused partners and distributors.

In what ways do you measure the success and ROI of your channel partnerships?

Measuring the success and ROI of channel partnerships is crucial for understanding the effectiveness of strategies and ensuring that investments yield positive returns. Key methods for evaluating and measuring performance include assessing partner performance metrics, monitoring partner engagement, and tracking the growth trajectory of the partnership, including new opportunities, expanded market reach, and overall business development.

What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

Several key qualities can make a significant difference in driving successful partnerships. Some of the key elements are:

* Alignment with Nutanix's business goals. Is this engagement a strategic fit for both parties.
* A strong track record in sales and marketing capabilities.
* Positive reputation and credibility in the market.

What impact do emerging technologies like AI and automation have on channel management?

AI and automation have a significant impact on channel management, transforming how businesses interact with partners, manage operations, and drive growth. AI can analyze large volumes of data, providing actionable insights into channel performance, partner behavior, and market trends. Automation tools streamline processes such as onboarding new partners, managing contracts, and handling customer inquiries, resulting in faster and more efficient operations and reduced time to market.

How do you stay competitive and adapt your channel strategies in a rapidly changing tech landscape?

Starting with a proactive and flexible approach is essential for drawing up and executing an effective plan. Keeping up with industry trends, emerging technologies, and market shifts is crucial. Vendors and partners should invest in innovative approaches to reach customers and solve problems, focusing on solutions rather than individual products. Prioritizing exceptional customer experiences by understanding customer needs and preferences is important, and ensuring that channel strategies align with these expectations is necessary.

Personal
Insights

Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

My aspiration is to get into senior leadership positions, where I can influence organizational strategy and drive significant change, gaining international experience and working with diverse teams than can help me broaden my perspective and create a meanigful impact in the industry.

Are there any executives in the business world that you particularly admire or see as role models?

There are many leaders that I admire for various reasons, including their ability to drive change, their innovative thinking, and their commitment to creating an impact. The likes of Satya Nadella , Elon Musk , Indra Nooyi, Ratan Tata offer valuable lessons in leadership and business strategy.

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

I love travelling, exploring new places and experiencing different cultures. It helps me gain new perspectives and create memorable experiences with family and friends. A foodie at heart, I enjoy cooking different cuisines and eating good food.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

Starting out as a new channel manager in the tech industry can be exciting and challenging. My personal suggestion would be to start with building strong partnerships based on trust and open communcation which forms a base of any relationship.

Some key elements that come to mind are:

Understand Your Product and Market: Know the features, benefits, and differentiators, and stay up-to-date with industry trend

Focus on Training and Support

Invest time in training your partners on your products, sales processes, and marketing strategies

Stay Agile and Adaptable: The tech industry evolves rapidly, so be prepared to adapt your strategies and approaches.

Foster Collaboration: Encourage collaboration between your internal teams and channel partners. Align marketing efforts, share best practices

Patient and Persistent: Building successful channel relationships and programs takes time. Stay persistent, be patient, and focus on long-term success rather than quick wins.

Most importantly, celebrate every important milestone with your partner to recognize and motivate them and foster the feeling of "One Team"

Focusing on these areas can help the channel sales managers to lay a solid foundation and contribute to the growth and success of both, the company, as well as channel partners.

Aligning for growth

Sujay Patil,
Regional Sales Director,
Kissflow

❓ How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

We recognize partners as the extended arm of Kissflow, and the enabler of our reach across markets at scale. We therefore prioritize mutual alignment on vision, positioning, addressable market, short term objectives and long-term goals. This is reviewed and continuously course corrected with a data-driven approach that brings the leadership and other stakeholders from both parties to the table.

As a vendor, we provide all the tools and resources to our channel community and constantly review and update these to keep pace with evolving customer demands.

❓ Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?

At Kissflow, we believe that maintaining regular interaction with our partners at all levels of the organization is key to success. This ensures alignment and fosters strong collaboration. We also place a strong emphasis on a vertical-focused approach, working closely with partners to tailor solutions to specific industries.

Training and enablement are ongoing priorities for us, as we understand the importance of empowering our partners with the latest knowledge and skills. In fact, we actively support partners in building a dedicated Kissflow practice within their organization to deepen their expertise.

❓ How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?

Conflicts are inherent to channel ecosystems that fail to promote and prioritize transparency. Apart from introducing a clear system that offers opportunity registration and protects partners for the efforts they put in, we as an organization have followed the strategy of having a limited number of partners in the region. This focus on strategic relationships means we can dive deeper and better support each partner, while also ensuring sufficient scope for each to thrive without conflict.

❓ What trends do you see shaping the future of channel management in the tech industry?

Some of the key trends we're seeing include a growing focus on vertical-based approaches, where having a specialized set of skilled partners for each vertical is becoming essential. This ensures that we can offer tailored solutions that truly address the unique needs of different industries.

Another major trend is the introduction of AI into the planning and forecasting processes, extending throughout the entire channel management lifecycle, including the sales cycle. AI is helping streamline operations, making channel management more efficient and insightful.

❓ How do you approach training and educating channel partners on your products and services?

We have a comprehensive training program for our channel community that includes extensive online courses as well as onsite Workshops and specializations. There are separate programs for sales, pre-sales and implementation teams of the partner.

Kissflow's vision is simplicity. Not only is it very easy to onboard the platform for the end customer, but it's extremely easy for the channel community to build a successful Kissflow Practice within their organization.

Personal
Insights

In what ways do you measure the success and ROI of your channel partnerships?

The simplest way to measure success is through revenue generated by the channel, including total sales, recurring revenue, and year-over-year growth driven by channel partners. We also track pipeline velocity as a key performance indicator. Additionally, market penetration is crucial, reflecting the partner's ability to unlock new markets or verticals for Kissflow.

What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

Key qualities we seek in partners include their prior experience in selling or providing services for similar platform products like Kissflow, as well as their ability to expand into new markets for us. We also consider the partner's geographic reach, and the skills they bring, such as domain and industry expertise that complement our offerings.

What impact do emerging technologies like AI and automation have on channel management?

A data driven approach is the key when it comes to Channel Management and AI is going to play a crucial role in every stage of Channel Management - right from profiling, planning, and account mapping, to forecasting, demand generation and even supporting the channel when it comes to proposing the right solutions to their customers.

How do you stay competitive and adapt your channel strategies in a rapidly changing tech landscape?

The channel community is your extended arm and is often closest to the customer. Hence, it's extremely important to hear and act on feedback from the channel. We have established multiple, consistent lines of communication. We try to ensure that this community has more market-specific expertise than us, has more boots on the ground, and has more Centers of Excellence than us.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

As a Channel Manager, you will be the face of the company to the channel community. It's therefore extremely important that you communicate the vision, goals, short term and long-term objectives of your company to the Channel. You should know the solution, product and its value Proposition in and out.

Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

Kissflow's culture is one that empowered leaders to act like entrepreneurs. It is something that I've greatly appreciated and look forward to developing more through my career.

Are there any executives in the business world that you particularly admire or see as role models?

I think Michael Dell, CEO of Dell, is not only an inspiration to me but has been for millions worldwide. His ability to keep pace with the changing technology landscape, his acute financial acumen, and his ability to deliver exponential growth consistently over the last 40 years are mind boggling. The journey from a room to a US$100billion empire is nothing short of awe inspiring.

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

Some of my hobbies include studying ancient history, following cricket, and yes I do enjoy a healthy amount of Netflix over weekends.

Strategic partner synergy

Ghassan Abou Rjeily,
Regional Channel Sales Manager
Emerging EMEA, Riverbed

How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

Strong, long-term partnerships are predicated on alignment between the vision and ambitions of the two organisations. This is why, this is always the focus of my very first discussions with potential partners. Through clear and transparent dialogue, I am keen to learn their priorities and definitions of success. I then map their goals to ours. I think it's critical – from the perspective of both parties – to recognize that when visions and targets are fundamentally misaligned, it is usually better not to forge a partnership as this will inevitably fall short.

Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?

We've all heard the adage, 'play to your strengths', but I think it's equally important to be mindful of weaknesses. With this in mind, we've created heatmaps to understand and identify our partners strengths and weaknesses. These allow us to effectively allocate opportunities to the partner with the right knowledge, portfolio, and priorities.

This heatmap takes into account not only expertise in Riverbed's technology and solutions, but also historical engagements, and projects delivered for specific verticals.

How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?

In our view, competition is a good thing as it motivates the partners to invest more in a technology and establish expertise to acquire market share. We manage conflicts by asking the partners to conform to a clear and transparent deal registrations process once they identify an opportunity. This would be the ultimate legal document that would resolve any potential conflicts. An essential tool that I use to resolve conflict is documentation. When everything is well documented, the proof at a time of conflict can be readily presented.

What trends do you see shaping the future of channel management in the tech industry?

Artificial Intelligence, machine learning and automation for on-premise and cloud solutions tend to be the key trends that are shaping the channel. Partners are now in a race to be enablers of their customers' migration to the cloud. And as they do so, it is incumbent on them to leverage smart technologies that will enable them to help their customers to do more with less resources.

How do you approach training and educating channel partners on your products and services?

Training and education are key factors for the success of our partners. At Riverbed, we provide free access to our learning portal for all our partners to help them get he necessary technical education on our solutions. Comprehensive as this may be, we recognize that this must be supplemented with additional resources to empower partners with everything they need to sell and implement our solutions. This includes sales trainings for our partners to educate them about our solutions, manage rejections, manage competition, while our technical consultants engage our partners' engineering resources to shadow them while they are designing a solution, conducting end-customer workshops or implementing projects.

Personal
Insights

In what ways do you measure the success and ROI of your channel partnerships?

When it comes to the success of our partnerships, we consider a range of factors. We consistently evaluate how well resources are allocated to work on Riverbed, and how effectively partners can present a sales pitch for our solutions. Their ability to conduct technical workshops, demos, and implement proofs of concept is also key. We look at how independently they can respond to RFPs and generate revenue without relying on the Riverbed team.

What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

As a start, a strong channel partner should be focused on specific noncompeting technologies that complement each other to provide seamless solutions that add value to customers. Of course, in this era where economic challenges can cause project and payment delays, healthy balance sheets and financial capacity is highly valued.

What impact do emerging technologies like AI and automation have on channel management?

Like any new technologies, AI and automation are disrupting the ecosystem. Some partners will quickly adapt and incorporate it in their portfolio while others would fall behind, instead remaining focused on legacy technology. New technologies require investments from the partners to train and establish labs for their teams and even attend to market opportunities in a competitive manner in order to build references.

How do you stay competitive and adapt your channel strategies in a rapidly changing tech landscape?

Through our focused R&D efforts, innovation and constant market analysis, Riverbed has and will continue to remain ahead of the curve. This affords us the time to start educating our partners long before new trends become necessities.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

Consider yourself to be the COO of a huge ecosystem. Learn about market trends, technologies, economies, political and social developments and more. Be agile and adapt to different scenarios in order to maintain partner profitability and employer perseverance.

Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

Through my career, I've had the privilege to work in different roles, from engineering, project, sales, operations, marketing and business development management. Now having acquired skills across a wide spectrum, I strive to lead my team across a large region to deliver success to organizations either directly or through the channel ecosystem.

Are there any executives in the business world that you particularly admire or see as role models?

I have multiple role models from both within the region and internationally who I follow and admire. The leadership style of Mena Migally, now regional VP at Veeam, strongly resonated with me, I admire the knowledge and strength of Alex Thurber, SVP - Channel of Riverbed, and I have been impressed by the channel model that Maya Zakhour, the Director of Channel at NetApp, developed. And finally, I look up to Dr. Ruba Borno the Worldwide VP of Channels and Alliances at AWS and her methods and ways to develop the markets and redefine the support of the channel community.

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

My priority goes to my family and together, we enjoy precious moments that are forever etched into my memory. My personal hobbies are motorcycle rides, power boating, playing guitar, professional photography, and clay pigeon shooting.

Driving Success Through Partnership and Innovation

Alessandro Porro
VP Global Channels at
OPSWAT

🌀 How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

Fundamentally, the two parties should have two basic mutual goals: first, provide customers with top-quality and reliable solutions and services; second, build/grow a mutual business. To address the first goal, we first mutually need to identify and address the specific needs of the customers, and channel partners can conduct comprehensive assessments, provide tailored recommendations to address specific risks, provide ongoing support and training, and partner with trusted cybersecurity vendors, such as ourselves, to offer the best solutions and stay updated on the latest tech and best practices to keep organizations safe against evolving threats.

🌀 Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?

One successful strategy for driving growth through channel partnerships involves fostering collaboration, strategic alignment, and resource sharing. By developing a mutual business plan, both parties can align their goals and leverage each other's strengths effectively. For instance, OPSWAT's Partner Program exemplifies this approach by providing regional resources such as channel managers, sales managers, pre-sales engineers, marketing managers, and technical support teams, all supported centrally by OPSWAT HQ. This setup allows more brand awareness and demand generation, allowing OPSWAT and its partners to address market needs more effectively.

🌀 How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?

The vendor needs to set and communicate clear business rules, and adhere to them at all times. This allows for reliability on a Partner Program, and often partners will go out of their way because they know it may be reciprocated down the line.

🌀 What trends do you see shaping the future of channel management in the tech industry?

Trends that can be seen shaping the future of channel management in the tech industry are the advancement in AI, digital transformation and cloud technologies. AI enhances threat detection, vulnerability management, and response capabilities, enabling channel partners to offer advanced security solutions that proactively mitigate cyber threats. Automating repetitive tasks allows cybersecurity professionals to focus on strategic activities.

The adoption of digital transformation and cloud platforms also presents opportunities for channel partners to offer comprehensive security solutions tailored to businesses undergoing these changes. This includes securing cloud environments and ensuring compliance.

🌀 How do you approach training and educating channel partners on your products and services?

Through our award-winning OPSWAT Academy, partners can (and are required) to obtain certifications at no cost. This will allow them to obtain a deep understanding of cybersecurity and OPSWAT's approach. Additionally, we have specific tracks designed for the various personas within a partner organization, as well as tracks that vary according to partner profile or focus.

🌀 In what ways do you measure the success and ROI of your channel partnerships?

Ultimately (and going back to the first question), it is by understanding how satisfied our mutual customers are, and how we have grown the business together. With the proper partner profiling, recruitment,

onboarding, enablement, and management in place, the likelihood of having highly effective and productive partnerships is very high. Ultimately, we have two key benchmarks that we utilize, new business revenue growth and partner-sourced new business ratio.

What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

The most important qualities to look for in a channel partner include alignment with your goals, a deep understanding of the target market, and a strong track record of performance and reliability. Technical proficiency is crucial but so is a commitment to ongoing training and support to stay current with product updates. Effective communication and a customer-centered approach are also essential, making sure that the partner can address client needs effectively and maintain a strong, collaborative relationship.

What impact do emerging technologies like AI and automation have on channel management?

AI is having both positive and negative impacts for the industry. On the positive side, it has significantly strengthened cybersecurity with advanced threat detection and rapid response automation, enhancing overall resilience. However, concerns arise regarding potential misuse, ethical considerations, and the need for regulations to mitigate risks associated with AI. Malicious actors can also leverage AI to amplify their attacks – posing additional risks that organizations should be aware of.

How do you stay competitive and adapt your channel strategies in a rapidly changing tech landscape?

To stay competitive and adapt your channel strategies in a rapidly changing tech landscape, focus on continuous learning and flexibility. Regularly update your understanding of industry trends and emerging technologies through research, training, and industry events. Keep close engagement with your partners to understand their evolving needs and adjust your strategies to them.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

For a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry, my advice would be to focus on building strong relationships and understanding between both your partners and their customers. Start by investing time in learning about your partners' businesses, their goals, and their unique challenges. This knowledge will allow you to allocate resources effectively.

Personal
Insights

Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

My relentless goal is to fulfill OPSWAT's ultimate objective, which is to be part of the cybersecurity strategy and posture within any/all Critical Infrastructure customers, globally.

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

It is difficult to find time for such, but football, water sports, the beach, and skiing (all with my children) are a primary source of decompression!

Aligning for mutual success

Abdul Rehman Tariq Butt,
Regional Director – Middle East
at SolarWinds

🌀 How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

Alignment begins with mindset. At SolarWinds, we view our channel partners – irrespective of their tier in our Transform Partner Program – as an extension of our own sales team. This means treating their resources as we would our own, in terms of transparency, onboarding, training, empowerment, and ongoing engagement.

Just as we are mindful of our quarterly targets and bottom line, we work closely with our partners to ensure they are on track to achieve their revenue goals. We don't limit ourselves to quarterly reviews; instead, we maintain a monthly and even weekly cadence.

🌀 Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?

Our channel success is rooted in one simple principle – we listen to our partners. Early in 2022, we conducted our channel Net Promoter Score (NPS) survey. The survey resulted in an NPS score - which is higher than the industry average. Based on partner feedback, we launched our Transform Partner Program, which focuses on partner enablement, revenue growth, and offering multiple paths to success. In the region, this program has been incredibly well received, especially as it is complemented by a highly relevant solution for profitable business opportunities – SolarWinds Observability.

We also recognise that to thrive and stand out in the market, our partners need to build thriving ecosystems. We therefore work to understand their technology roadmaps and position our solutions within the broader context of their portfolios.

🌀 How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?

Our Transform Partner Program ensures robust protections are in place for our partners, with a clear and transparent deal registration process.

Moreover, I've mandated that my team treat lead sharing as a two-way street. Partners who consistently bring opportunities to the table are rewarded by having projects directed their way. Our lead-sharing criteria are also clear and transparent, favouring partners who have worked to elevate their standing within the tier structure of our program. We assess not only the partner's capabilities but also the relevance of their ecosystem to the specific project.

🌀 What trends do you see shaping the future of channel management in the tech industry?

The general perception is that channel management, from both the vendor's and partner's perspectives, is primarily an exercise in relationship-building. While the importance of strong, trust-based relationships cannot be overstated, this perception belies the number of formal processes actually involved. The sheer amount of documentation required can be staggering, potentially placing a huge strain on partner resources. I believe one of the most significant shifts will be towards the use of AI to automate and streamline some of these processes, saving valuable time for partners while ensuring the quality of documentation – which is essential for transparency, efficiency, and operational excellence – remains uncompromised.

🌀 How do you approach training and educating

channel partners on your products and services?

This goes back to my earlier point about not differentiating between partners and our internal team members. So, while our distributors play an irreplaceable role in recruiting and onboarding new partners, we take it a step further by enabling partners' technical, sales, and support teams with the same level of training and education as our own teams receive.

In what ways do you measure the success and ROI of your channel partnerships?

We, of course, track traditional success metrics such as the number of deals initiated, revenue growth, and so on. However, I believe one of the factors that's somewhat harder to accurately quantify – yet plays a crucial role in our success – is the brand recognition and positioning of SolarWinds that is made possible by our channel. As the technology provider to 96% of the Fortune 500, our brand's credibility speaks for itself.

What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

Alignment is what matters most to me. Partners who share the same objectives and aspirations are the ones most willing to invest the effort required to forge strong, long-term relationships. We've even seen partners extend their ecosystems to include products that complement the SolarWinds portfolio, ensuring customers benefit. This level of commitment is incredibly valuable and, of course, rewarded.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

I would advise channel managers to consider each partner they engage with as their customer. Ultimately, these are the organisations that will take your message to the market, so you need to invest the time and effort to ensure they have a rock-solid understanding of your solutions, product roadmap, and how these fit into their business strategy. If you think of channel relationships as a one-way street, you're bound to fail. But if your partners feel you're just as invested in their success, the results will soon follow.

Personal
Insights

Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

Having been actively involved in the Middle East IT industry for many years, I've seen organisations here gradually evolve into global pioneers. The significant year-on-year growth in IT spending, the constant stream of breakthrough innovations, and commendable government initiatives around growing the region's digital economy all reflect the fact that today, Middle East enterprises are setting new global benchmarks. I believe there is a need for global recognition of this, as it will not only fuel further advancement in the region but also help diffuse best practices from the region into other geographies.

Are there any executives in the business world that you particularly admire or see as role models?

My role models in business are individuals I've had the opportunity to work with directly. They've shaped my career and leadership style. While the list is long, and my admiration and gratitude towards them is deep, I would choose the most recent to answer this question. Sudhakar Ramakrishna, our CEO, is someone who inspires me. Through trust and empowerment, he has the ability to motivate me to always meet and exceed his expectations. I believe that's the mark of a great leader, a trait that ensures people throughout the organisation are giving their very best.

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

Though people now find this hard to believe, as recently as three years ago, I was intimidated by public speaking. Recognising how important this skill is to my career, I addressed it in a way that was fuelled by my passion – cricket. Not only do I love playing the sport, but I also took up commentating, which has made me a confident orator. I'd recommend this to anyone: if your hobby can enhance your career – whether it's growing as a leader, learning team management, or something else – there's nothing quite like it.

Channel-Driven cyber success

Harish Chib,
VP Emerging Markets –
Middle East and Africa,
Sophos

🌀 How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

At Sophos, we prioritize transparency and consistent communication with our channel partners to ensure alignment. We collaborate closely with partners to develop joint business plans that reflect both their strategic goals and ours. By aligning around shared objectives such as market growth, customer satisfaction, and cybersecurity excellence, we foster a mutually beneficial relationship where all parties are invested in success.

🌀 Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?

A key strategy we've implemented is the Sophos Partner Program, which provides tailored incentives, training, and resources to support the growth of our channel partners. This includes co-marketing initiatives, access to cutting-edge cybersecurity solutions, and regular training to stay ahead of evolving threats. By helping our partners enhance their expertise and customer relationships, we've seen significant growth in both market share and revenue.

🌀 How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?

Conflict management between partners is essential for a healthy channel ecosystem. At Sophos, we use a deal registration system that helps to minimize potential conflicts by ensuring transparency and fairness in how leads and opportunities are allocated. We also promote open communication and encourage collaboration between partners where synergies exist. In cases of conflict, we have clear escalation paths to resolve issues while maintaining strong relationships.

🌀 What trends do you see shaping the future of channel management in the tech industry?

In the tech industry, the rise of as-a-service models and increasing demand for managed security services are key trends influencing channel management. Additionally, there's a growing need for channel partners to develop specialized expertise, particularly in areas like cloud security, AI-driven threat detection, and zero-trust architectures. Building deeper relationships and equipping partners with the tools and knowledge to handle these evolving needs will be crucial.

🌀 How do you approach training and educating channel partners on your products and services?

Sophos provides comprehensive education through our Sophos Partner Portal, which offers on-demand training, certification programs, and regular webinars. We also focus on hands-on learning experiences, including product demos, workshops, and direct support from our sales engineers. By offering continuous education, we ensure that our partners are well-versed in the latest cybersecurity trends and solutions, enabling them to better serve their customers.

🌀 In what ways do you measure the success and ROI of your channel partnerships?

We measure the success of our channel partnerships through a combination of metrics such as revenue growth, market penetration, customer satisfaction, and partner engagement in our programs. We also

assess the effectiveness of joint go-to-market initiatives and track partner certification rates. By measuring both qualitative and quantitative outcomes, we ensure that our partnerships deliver mutual value and drive long-term growth

What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

We seek channel partners who share our commitment to cybersecurity excellence and have a strong understanding of customer needs. The ideal partner is one that is adaptable, highly skilled, and proactive in addressing emerging threats. Additionally, we value partners who are collaborative, have a strategic vision, and are willing to invest in training and certification to deepen their expertise in Sophos solutions.

What impact do emerging technologies like AI and automation have on channel management?

AI and automation are reshaping cybersecurity, allowing partners to offer more sophisticated, scalable, and efficient solutions. For channel management, this means providing partners with the tools to integrate AI-driven threat detection and response into their service offerings. It also emphasizes the importance of continuous education to help partners leverage these technologies effectively. Sophos is heavily invested in these areas, and we actively work to integrate these advancements into our partner solutions.

How do you stay competitive and adapt your channel strategies in a rapidly changing tech landscape?

To remain competitive, we constantly refine our channel strategies by staying closely aligned with market demands and technological advancements. This includes regularly updating our Partner Program, investing in new product innovations, and offering flexible consumption models like Sophos' MDR (Managed Detection and Response) services. We also foster an open feedback loop with our partners to ensure we adapt quickly to their needs and changing customer requirements.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

For a new channel manager, the key to success is building strong, trust-based relationships with your partners. Understand their unique business needs, listen actively, and invest in their success. Keep yourself informed about the latest industry trends, especially in your product domain, and be prepared to pivot your strategies when needed. Flexibility, communication, and a long-term vision are essential to thriving in the fast-paced tech industry.

Personal
Insights

Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

As Harish looks forward in his career, his primary goal is to continue fostering innovation and growth in cybersecurity across emerging markets. He aspires to play a pivotal role in driving digital transformation and helping organizations adopt advanced cybersecurity practices. Additionally, he wants to empower the next generation of leaders within the industry, ensuring they are well-equipped to tackle the evolving challenges in the cybersecurity landscape.

Are there any executives in the business world that you particularly admire or see as role models?

Harish Chib has always admired leaders who combine vision with integrity and adaptability. Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, stands out for him. His ability to transform Microsoft into a cloud-first, innovation-driven company while maintaining a strong focus on culture and empathy is truly inspiring. Similarly, he admires leaders like Bill Gates and his philanthropic efforts, using technology as a tool for global change.

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

Outside of work, Harish is passionate about maintaining a balanced lifestyle through physical and mental wellness. He practices yoga and meditation regularly, which helps him stay grounded and focused. Running is another way he stays active, as it clears his mind and boosts his energy. He also enjoys reading, particularly on topics related to leadership, technology trends, and self-development. Above all, spending time with his family is a top priority and a source of joy amidst his professional responsibilities.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

For a new channel manager, Harish's advice is to focus on building strong, strategic relationships with partners. Start by working closely with them to develop a clear business plan that aligns both their goals and yours. It's essential to integrate innovative solutions, such as security-as-a-service, into their offerings. This will not only differentiate their business but also address the growing demand for managed security services.

Understanding your partners' needs and challenges, being adaptable in a rapidly changing landscape, and offering value-added solutions like Sophos' managed detection and response services can significantly enhance their success. Additionally, stay updated on industry trends and constantly invest in learning to be a trusted advisor. The tech industry moves quickly, and helping partners adopt and implement cutting-edge technologies will ensure long-term, sustainable growth.

Partner, protect and thrive

Uday Shankar Kizhepat
Vice President & General Manager
MEA Region,
WSO2

How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

At WSO2, we ensure alignment with our channel partners by fostering open communication and a shared vision. We collaborate closely to tailor solutions that drive mutual growth, ensuring that our goals are consistently aligned and have the best interest of our customers always set as the north star.

Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?

WSO2 software products offer systems integrators and resellers the necessary building blocks to quickly, easily, and securely build digital innovation for their customers. Our Partner Program offers financial benefits tied to partner levels and has created a deal protection policy to protect the partner who has nurtured and developed the account.

For Demand Generation, we work together with partners to create co-branded campaigns, provide marketing development funds (MDF), offer sponsorship opportunities, and marketing collateral.

How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?

We manage conflicts or competition between channel partners through transparent communication and clear guidelines. By fostering collaboration and maintaining fairness, we ensure that each partner is empowered to succeed while contributing to the overall growth of our ecosystem.

Partners have access to the deal registration portal and deal protection policies are available based on the partner's level of engagement, which includes factors such as the timeliness of deal registration, depth of customer engagement, involvement in solution development, and demonstrated competencies. This approach helps safeguard the interests of active partners and fosters a competitive, yet collaborative ecosystem.

What trends do you see shaping the future of channel management in the tech industry?

The future of channel management in the tech industry is being shaped by increased digitalization, the rise of ecosystem-based models, and a shift towards solution-oriented partnerships. Agility, data-driven strategies, and deeper collaboration will be key to driving innovation and mutual success.

Another significant trend reshaping channel management is the emphasis on collaboration. Partnerships between entities that possess varied skill sets can greatly enhance a customer's ability to adopt and integrate complex technologies effectively. Additionally, there is a growing focus on channel partners that specialize in private cloud services, a trend that is gaining momentum in Middle East countries due to stringent data sovereignty regulations.

How do you approach training and educating channel partners on your products and services?

We prioritize ongoing training and education through tailored programs, hands-on workshops, and continuous support. We provide self-paced training through WSO2's dedicated learning management system. This platform offers extensive product videos that allow learners to study at their own pace. Alternatively, partners looking to acquire specialized, industry-specific skills may benefit from our instructor-led training programs, which are designed to deliver personalized, hands-on learning experiences.

By empowering our channel partners with in-depth product knowledge and the latest updates, we ensure they are equipped to deliver maximum value to our customers.

In what ways do you measure the success and

ROI of your channel partnerships?

We measure the success and ROI of our channel partnerships through many key metrics such as revenue growth, customer satisfaction, and market expansion. Additionally, we assess the effectiveness of competency development, collaboration, and the ability to meet mutual business objectives.

What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

We value channel partners who demonstrate strong market knowledge, a customer-centric approach, and a commitment to innovation. Integrity, collaboration, and the ability to align with our long-term goals are also key qualities we prioritize.

We also validate the financial stability and technical capability of our partners to ensure that they can render the services to our customers without any glitches.

Open and transparent communication is something that is expected from all our partners.

What impact do emerging technologies like AI and automation have on channel management?

AI and Automation has made a significant impact on channel management by fuelling predictive analytics in terms of market demands, partner profiling and selection, optimizing resource utilization, dynamic price offerings and many more .These technologies help us streamline processes, personalize partner support, and scale our ecosystem effectively.

How do you stay competitive and adapt your channel strategies in a rapidly changing tech landscape?

We stay competitive by continuously evolving our channel strategies through innovation, market insights, and agile decision-making. By closely monitoring industry trends and maintaining strong partner relationships, we adapt quickly to meet changing customer needs and emerging opportunities.

Furthermore, we support our partners with value-added services such as the Quick Start Program, Architectural Reviews, and QA services to deliver successful value to customers.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

As a new channel manager, your primary focus should be on building trustworthy and robust relationships that can stand the test of time. Transparency, ethical collaboration and open communication is key.

Personal
Insights

Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

With over two decades of professional experience, I have been handling leadership roles in various global and regional companies and would like to bring in this experience handy in guiding customers through their digital transformation journeys.

As a certified Cloud Practitioner and Digital Change Champion, I would like to use this expertise in guiding enterprises across diverse verticals, build their cloud adoption strategies and manage change.

Are there any executives in the business world that you particularly admire or see as role models?

There are quite a few inspirational leaders who have transformed the sectors that they have played in such as Jeff Bezos - the founder CEO of the biggest retail industry globally, Amazon which started as an online bookstore and has now evolved into the world's largest online sales company and Steve Jobs, a visionary and genius who co-founded Apple and transformed the company into a world leader in telecommunications and oversaw the launch of such revolutionary products as the iPod and the iPhone.

However, my stand-out role model leader has been Ratan Tata who was the Chairman of the TATA Group as his has been an inspiring story of driving growth with humanity and ethics. Through running one of the largest business conglomerates, he followed an ethical and compassionate leadership model.

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

Beyond my professional endeavours, I love reading, especially historical literature and traveling to various countries to understand diverse cultures. I am a big movie buff and an ardent fan of classical music. I love hiking and spend time playing outdoor sports over the weekend when the weather permits.

Unlocking growth

Loubna Imenchal
VP / Head of enterprise business video
collaboration AMECA Africa Middle East
Turkey Central Asia, Logitech

🌀 How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

Partnering with Logitech opens the door to AI-driven enterprise hardware, software, and services that enable hybrid work and enhance productivity across diverse workspaces. The Logitech Partner Connect Program is a win-win for Logitech and its partners, as it offers a consistent, streamlined approach to partnering that is designed to drive growth and success for everyone involved. Partners have access to best practices guide in the partner portal to help them build on Logitech's brand to execute effective go to market strategies.

🌀 Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?

The Logitech Partner Connect Program has worked very well for us and our partners. it is designed with partners in mind. The program introduces various strategies to drive growth, enhancing the partner experience through access to our entire product portfolio and simplified program management. Partners can choose their collaboration model based on their unique business needs and growth priorities. We've also automated engagement for easy self-service resources and provide training and certifications to keep partners updated on our latest innovations. These types of strategies are vital to foster strong relationships, while also driving mutual success for both Logitech and our partners.

🌀 How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?

The Logitech Partner Connect Program is more than a series of relationship terms and incentives. It seeks to create a level playing field for all partners, with streamlined program management that is easier to administer and quantify value. With different program tracks available featuring different requirements and incentives, partners can choose the path to profit that suits their business. Moreover, the Logitech Partner Connect Program offers partners the opportunity to be certified with Specializations that recognize their unique capabilities and value propositions. .

🌀 What trends do you see shaping the future of channel management in the tech industry?

Integrating AI and automation into channel mechanisms is set to enhance management efficiency and make partnerships more rewarding. As customer demands evolve, vendors with collaborative channel strategies will be better positioned for success. Logitech Select, a premium service plan for Logitech room solutions, offers customers peace of mind and guaranteed uptime, enabling partners to boost profitability and strengthen customer relationships.

🌀 How do you approach training and educating channel partners on your products and services?

Logitech believes that when partners gain more knowledge, they can sell more. The Logitech University offers a one-stop, on-demand source for Logitech training. Located within the Logitech Partner Connect Portal, it provides easy self-service training resources to maximize partners' sales and marketing efforts. These resources help partners to get in-depth knowledge of Logitech Team and Personal Workspace Solutions, so they can better recommend and tailor solutions to deliver more value to end customers.

In what ways do you measure the success and ROI of your channel partnerships?

We assess the success and ROI of our channel partnerships through intelligence-led market development funding tailored to each partner's needs, ensuring accountability for received resources. Regular business planning sessions align our go-to-market strategies and share key market insights, enabling both Logitech and our partners to make informed decisions that drive mutual growth.

What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

Specific qualities in channel partners are highly valued by Logitech. The most important qualities we look for in a channel partner include a strong motivation and productivity, along with a clear understanding of the industry and customers' needs. We value partners who demonstrate a dedication to a customer-centric mindset, providing strong local insights to effectively navigate market intricacies. Additionally, sharing similar values with Logitech is crucial; we seek partners committed to sustainability, fair and transparent business practices, and fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion.

How do you stay competitive and adapt your channel strategies in a rapidly changing tech landscape?

To remain competitive in the fast-evolving tech landscape, we collaborate closely with our partners to address their challenges, developing a global program that allows for regional flexibility. We create focused teams to refine processes and enhance partner experience while carefully evaluating pricing to prevent channel conflict. By tailoring enablement to partners' specializations and incorporating their feedback, we continuously improve our strategies.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

Like many aspects of the technology sector, channel management is rather demanding, hence dedication is essential, particularly when one is doing his/her first steps. To succeed in this dynamic and competitive field, channel managers need an arsenal of skills and qualities. Among other things, they must be able to take fast decisions, easily adapt to unforeseen circumstances, and develop their strategic and analytical thinking.

Leading the change in channel strategies

Prashant Menon
Channel Leader UAE at Check Point
Software Technologies

🌀 How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

Check Point Software aligns with its channel partners through a structured Partner Program, which features a tiering system designed to simplify progression and engagement. The program offers enhanced discounts and rewards, supporting partner growth and specialization. Continuous training and certifications keep partners informed of the latest technologies and trends, ensuring they can effectively implement Check Point solutions. This ongoing investment drives mutual success and growth by ensuring both parties work towards common objectives.

🌀 Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?

Check Point Software enhanced its Partner Program by streamlining tier progression and introducing a new pricing model. This change has boosted partner performance by simplifying the quoting process and increasing deal registration incentives, leading to quicker customer responses and higher deal closure rates. Additionally, our focus on specialization and training, including free certifications, empowers partners to develop niche expertise, driving growth and strengthening our market position.

🌀 How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?

Conflicts and competition between channel partners are managed through a structured approach that emphasizes transparency and fairness. Check Point employs clear guidelines for advancement and resource allocation, helping to mitigate potential conflicts. The company maintains an environment of open communication and collaboration, ensuring that all partners are aware of the established guidelines and expectations. Regular feedback channels are in place to address any issues promptly and to ensure that partners have access to the resources and support necessary for their success. By upholding principles of honesty and ethical conduct and fostering a balanced and cohesive partner ecosystem, Check Point effectively manages competition and promotes a collaborative working environment.

🌀 How do you approach training and educating channel partners on your products and services?

Check Point Software provides a comprehensive suite of training and certification programs designed to equip channel partners with the skills needed to excel. These programs include certifications such as Check Point's Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) and Check Point Certified Security Expert (CCSE), which contribute to partners' comprehensive skill sets and reinforce their proficiency. This not only empowers partners but also adds value to mutual customers, who benefit from a versatile and well-informed approach to security solutions in their purchasing decisions. Certification badges serve as valuable marketing tools, allowing partners to showcase their capabilities and further promote their offerings.

🌀 In what ways do you measure the success and ROI of your channel partnerships?

To evaluate the performance of our channel partners, Check Point has streamlined its metrics within the Partner Program, simplifying the partnership model to four distinct levels: Advanced, Professional, Premier,

and Elite. Each level is contingent upon the partner's attainment of requisite certifications, emphasizing skill proficiency as a key metric. By prioritizing partner skill sets, we ensure that our partners are well-equipped to meet the diverse needs of our customers effectively.

Additionally, revenue generation remains a crucial metric, albeit secondary to skill proficiency. We recognize that revenue growth naturally follows when partners possess the necessary skills to deliver value-added solutions to customers. Therefore, while revenue performance is assessed, it is ultimately seen as a reflection of the partner's ability to leverage their expertise to drive business success.

What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

At Check Point, we seek channel partners who are deeply committed to cybersecurity and adaptable to industry changes. Key qualities include a proactive approach to understanding technology trends, especially in cybersecurity threats. Proficiency in Check Point's solutions and relevant certifications are essential. We value partners with a strong grasp of customer environments and regulatory requirements, like data residency. Continuous training to address skill gaps and a commitment to high service standards are also important. Ultimately, we look for partners who aim for long-term success and can deliver substantial value to customers, fostering mutually beneficial relationships in the dynamic cybersecurity landscape.

How do you stay competitive and adapt your channel strategies in a rapidly changing tech landscape?

Check Point supports partners with essential resources and training to excel in a competitive market. For new partners, foundational training in basic technology concepts is provided to ensure a comprehensive understanding of Check Point's security solutions. Existing partners undergo upskilling with advanced training modules focusing on emerging technologies crucial for addressing modern security threats.

Continuous learning is encouraged, with access to regular training sessions and resources through a newly launched portal and app. These platforms centralize resources for self-training and staying updated on Check Point's latest messaging and technologies. Additionally, partners have access to resources typically available to Check Point's internal teams, enabling them to pace their training and meet customer requirements effectively. By providing comprehensive support and resources, Check Point empowers partners to deliver significant value and remain competitive.

Personal
Insights

Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

I would like to maintain strong, collaborative relationships with partners to drive mutual growth and success. Building trust and enabling partners to excel.

Aim to innovate channel strategies by leveraging data and emerging technologies to optimize performance. Staying ahead of market trends and understanding End customer needs will be crucial. While upholding the vision of the organization would want to lead by example and inspire a high-performing team, advocate continuous learning, and adaptability to different industry situations.

Are there any executives in the business world that you particularly admire or see as role models?

Sundar Pichai is whom I admire the most. Apart from the fact he had humble beginnings, his leadership qualities, commitment to innovation, and dedication to fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion is what sets him apart.

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

In my free time, I love listening to Music and Audio books.

I particularly embrace nature walks. When I have more time at my disposal, I love to travel, engage in hiking and visiting new places.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

Building trust with your partners is key to any business. Your relationship with partners finally is going to be the difference in performance. Understanding the partner goals is of paramount importance. Enabling the partners and giving them the necessary resources for them to succeed will help the relationship. Keeping an open line of communication between the channel manager and partners is advisable.

Adapting to the changing needs of the industry should also be taken into consideration.

Optimizing channel collaboration

Sujoy Banerjee
Associate Director - Sales & Channel
Business, MEA Region,ManageEngine

🌀 How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?
Aligning your business goals with those of your channel partners is crucial towards the long-term success of any business. We practice transparency and implement clear communication lines to ensure that we are all in sync. It is important to involve your channel partners during the planning phase. This ensures that there is a joint effort in defining the business expectations. Also, it is important to involve partners during such talks so that the business vision is clearly stated and there is no issue of any miscommunication.

🌀 How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?
Healthy competition is always appreciated between channel partners. We believe this would enable us to achieve good results. However, we do set clear guidelines to ensure that roles, the responsibilities, and their expectations are always kept in check. We also ensure there is transparency in communication to ensure that all partners can voice their issues if any and there is a forum to discuss any problems that could be an issue for them. We always get feedback from partners to ensure that there is complete alignment with the business objectives and expectations.

🌀 How do you approach training and educating channel partners on your products and services?
ManageEngine believes in providing and equipping channel partners with the latest know-how through seminars, training modules and meetups to ensure that partners are delivering value to our customers across regions. Certification programs such as ManageEngine Certified Professional (MCP) and ManageEngine Certified Sales Professional (MCSP) validates that the partner involved is an expert in sales strategies as well as proven in managing and deploying our suite of products seamlessly to our customers.

🌀 What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?
While evaluating channel partners, we mostly look out for qualities that would foster a successful, long-term relationship with them. The main idea would be to have someone who is also invested in the working of the business and understands the vision and objectives of the business. It is crucial for us that channel partners understand what we work towards and align themselves towards that. We also actively look for innovative minds that is keen on exploring new ideas and approaches to doing the business that could potentially deliver value to our customers in a unique or more effective manner. We also appreciate it if they are also keen on upskilling themselves and want to learn more about the business, the market, and the latest trends.

🌀 What impact do emerging technologies like AI and automation have on channel management?
Like every other sector that has been evolving using emerging technology like AI and ML, the same has been experienced in channel

management, especially in collating data and analyzing performances. AI has helped in gathering and analyzing lots of data to understand market trends further, customer trends, and customer needs, as well as looking into partner performances, which helps to set clear expectations and goals. Predictive analytics has gone a long way towards helping us understand customer needs and also tailor our efforts based on market trends.

How do you stay competitive and adapt your channel strategies in a rapidly changing tech landscape?

For any channel strategy to succeed, you have to have the right set of channel partners who are ready to work for the business and for its success. The best or ideal way forward would be to keep them in the loop regarding business objectives and vision going forward. This would enable them to envision how their collaborative efforts will work towards an end goal or objective. On top of that, it is also important to keep them aligned with the latest updates, especially in a challenging space like B2B tech. Staying ahead of the curve would include keeping your partners well-trained and updated on the latest technology and how it can collaborate towards satisfying the needs of the customer.

Personal
Insights

Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

My future aspiration would be to lead a global sales organization. An organization that prioritizes shaping high-impact sales strategies, how to drive effective revenue growth and to establish myself as a key contributor to the company's success at an executive level while also mentoring and nurturing the next generation of leaders in sales.

Are there any executives in the business world that you particularly admire or see as role models?

Amongst business executives and global leaders, I do keenly follow Elon Musk. He is a shining example of how a visionary is supposed to be. His achievements in the electric vehicle industry and the sales acumen and tactics he displays make him an inspirational figure. Also, the insights shared by Brian Tracy, a prolific writer and a sales figure, have helped me and countless others in our sales career trajectory.

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

Outside of work, I enjoy networking and building relationships, staying updated on industry trends, mentoring aspiring sales professionals, and participating in community or charitable activities. Additionally, I find relaxation and inspiration in hobbies like sports, music, travel, or spending time with family and friends.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

For any aspiring channel manager, my advice would be to have a deep understanding about the products as well as the market itself. Learn your competitors and understand the competitive landscape. Improving your communication skills is another important aspect to focus on. The communication skills will enhance your people/social skills that will help you foster good relationships with others. A business can only succeed when you build strong relationships with people and like they say, there is no "I" in "Team" and success in a business mostly depend on the collaborative effort of many. To stay on top of things, I would also advise timely training and investment into learning new skills in order to stay ahead.

Partner Success Unleashed

Aslam Jamal
VP, Global Partnerships & Channels, EMEA
at ServiceNow

🌀 How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

Partners are moving from an extension of the team to an equal co-pilot on our journey to become the platform for digital businesses – in fact 92% of projects for ServiceNow solutions, are delivered by our partners. We also recognize that traditional ways of working aren't applicable, particularly in the age of AI and GenAI. To adapt to the rapidly changing business landscape, we focus on building strong, collaborative relationships by combining the value of ServiceNow's AI platform for business transformation (the NOW Platform) with our partners' deep capabilities to create a powerful synergy—truly the best of both worlds.

According to UnivDatos, MEA Digital Transformation Market was valued at US$ 91.3 billion in 2020 and is anticipated to reach US$ 253.5 billion by 2027 which means there is a significant opportunity for a collaborative ecosystem to seize and co-create together. Giving partners guidance and flexibility is key, which is why we have recently added vertical specializations to our partner program. These are designed to help our partners differentiate across the ecosystem, expand their support, services and solutions; increase revenue opportunities and grow their ServiceNow practice.

Ultimately, we prioritize a simplified, transparent, and collaborative approach to our partnerships. We believe that when we work closely together, we set the stage for mutual growth and customer success.

🌀 Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?

One of the most effective strategies we've implemented to drive growth through our channel partnerships is rooted in the principle of mutual trust. We're redefining what it means to be a partner by focusing on complete transparency and increased flexibility.

Our new multi-year program includes fresh incentives designed to empower our partners as they guide their customers through digital transformation journeys. For instance, we've introduced the Partner Development Fund, which gives partners access to curated marketing packages and materials. This enables them to effectively promote their services and enhance their visibility in the market. Our ServiceNow Product Partner Advisory Councils offer an opportunity to exchange on best practices and learnings so we can all develop together.

We also launched a new deal registration rebate globally in August, aimed at attracting additional brands to benefit from ServiceNow technology. This initiative is all about incentivizing partners to bring in new business, which is vital for growth.

Additionally, we revamped our Partner Finder tool, making it easier for partners to showcase their accomplishments and for customers to find the right ServiceNow partner for their needs. This not only elevates our partners but also enhances the overall customer experience.

🌀 How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?

Conflicts usually occur when there is a lack of rules of engagement or a bad programmatic approach. We have a very mature program that protects partner investments, around a specific opportunity or account, via mechanisms such as deal registration to avoid conflicts arising.

🌀 In what ways do you measure the success and ROI of your channel partnerships?

We have very specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for our partners – one set focused on sales strategy and one around implementation.

In terms of strategy, we look at things like the amount of joint business and incremental revenue growth. A very important metric here is the

amount of business that is partner sourced – business where the partner brings the account to ServiceNow.

Another key indicator is the amount of business that goes through partner paper (i.e. where the partner resells or acts as a service provider). This KPI is a leading indicator of the maturity of the partner – the more business that goes through partner paper, the more self-sufficient that partner is when it comes to bringing ServiceNow's value proposition to end customers.

On the implementation side, we track quality of deployments and specifically pay attention to the ServiceNow certified lead at the partner that is managing the implementation.

❓ What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

The criteria differ based on the category of partner. When I look at the large global alliance partners like a KPMG or a Deloitte, it is all about making sure that the services they provide, from advisory to implementation, are a strategic fit with the sectors we want to focus on. This allows us to build really strong joint value propositions, via vertical-specific solutions for customers.

For service providers, we look for partners that can build custom solutions for customers, based on the Now Platform, and can then offer those to customers as a managed service.

❓ How do you stay competitive and adapt your channel strategies in a rapidly changing tech landscape?

Partners speed up business transformation and are key to addressing the major trends directing market growth. AI and more recently, GenAI, are clearly shaping the future of the way we work and to facilitate the fast deployment and responsible use of GenAI, ServiceNow has expanded our strategic alliance with EY to provide solutions for GenAI compliance, governance and risk management and enhance the experience of EY professionals and clients.

Personal
Insights

❓ Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

Over the next 5-10 years, I want to deepen my impact in the partner ecosystem. I truly love helping companies scale their reach and business through strong, collaborative, mutually beneficial partnerships.

To that end, I want to continue refining our partner strategy and programs so that working with us becomes an undeniable choice for our partners. That milestone would mean that we're not just offering great solutions and services, but that we've created a genuinely collaborative and supportive environment. While I recognize how far we've come, I'm excited about the journey ahead and the work still to be done to elevate our partnerships even further.

❓ Are there any executives in the business world that you particularly admire or see as role models?

There are several global companies and channel leaders that I draw inspiration from on a daily basis. Google, as a company, has done a nice job in making themselves more partner friendly. I also have a soft spot for Cisco, where I worked for 10 years. I believe they have set the gold standard when it comes to building a programmatic approach that drives the right partner behaviors and fosters strong partner loyalty.

And I look to our own Erica Volini, SVP Global Partnerships and Channels at ServiceNow – she is an agent of transformation and has been the force behind driving partner centricity at ServiceNow.

❓ What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

I spend 90% of my free time with my seven year old daughter, who definitely has me wrapped around her little finger. And while I have several passions, the one I do indulge in, in the 10% of free time I have left, is motorsports. I am not just a fan, but enjoy competing as well and chalk out a few weekends a year for this. Not only is it exhilarating but it is a great way to escape the stresses of corporate life.

❓ What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

When you are a partner manager, you are doing something bigger than a sales job. You are advising and coaching entire company sales organisations on how to sell your solutions. So, my recommendation for any young channel manager would be to focus on honing some of the core business management and marketing skills. The more advisory the approach you take to the job, the more impactful you will be to the broad portfolio of a business, so that you can build strong partnerships and drive value for customers.

Thriving in an AI-driven world

Narayanan Venkataraman
Head of Channel MEA at HP

🌀 How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

In the age of AI, HP is committed to driving innovation and enhancing collaboration with channel partners to stay aligned with the rapidly evolving technological landscape. The integration of AI is transforming business models, and it is essential for HP and our partners to move in sync. A prime example of this alignment is our newly launched HP Future Ready AI MasterClass, powered by HP University, designed to empower our partners to unlock AI-driven opportunities, positioning them at the forefront of the market.

HP maintains open and consistent communication with our partners. It ensures to employ a multi-faceted approach to communicate goals, updates, changes, and other important information to our channel partners. HP has a dedicated HP Partner Portal where partners can access a wealth of information such as product updates, marketing materials and training resources.

🌀 Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?

Collaborating with channel partners is essential for HP's growth and success. Selling IT services and solutions provides significant value and profit potential for both partners and HP. HP's enhanced Managed Services Suite includes offerings like Managed Device Services, enhanced Managed Print Services, and a new Managed Print Service subscription, tailored to partner strategies.

HP provides a sales toolkit with marketing playbooks, training, operations guides, and sales support to help partners sell managed services more effectively. Additionally, HP will introduce simplified support packages for HP Support Services next year, offering partners three distinct options for their customers.

🌀 How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?

HP has procedures put in place to ensure that partners are able to work alongside each other. The company has a deal registration program where partners can register specific opportunities they are working on. This provides recognition to partners who first identify and register a potential sale in a particular area. The company also established clear rules of engagement that define how its channel partners should interact with each other in shared territories.

🌀 What trends do you see shaping the future of channel management in the tech industry?

Channel management in the tech industry is evolving with a focus on building comprehensive partner ecosystems rather than managing individual partners. Digital transformation is driving the use of advanced tools and platforms for greater efficiency, while enhanced data analytics provide insights into partner performance and market trends.

🌀 How do you approach training and educating channel partners on your products and services?

Training and marketing are crucial for achieving positive business results. HP's Amplify Impact provides training programs through HP University, accessible via the HP Partner Portal. Participants engage in technical training, exploring business-computing network solutions and witnessing real-time demonstrations of how industry solutions implement HP products.

Personal
Insights

In what ways do you measure the success and ROI of your channel partnerships?

HP offers the More for More benefit and compensation program, and the Fast Lane joint demand generation process. Aimed at driving an increase in sales across the HP portfolio and delivering a more satisfying and complete customer experience, the More for More enhancement leverages a rate multiplier to boost compensation for qualified partners.

The Fast Lane joint demand generation process simplifies reimbursement of marketing development funds via an automated process for claims and payments, dramatically improving the turn-around time and overall experience for eligible partners.

What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

Building successful channel partnerships hinges on identifying and leveraging complementary strengths. Only through fostering collaboration and developing a common focus on customer needs, will manufacturers and partners be able to attain mutual success. First and foremost, it is crucial to have an alignment on business goals.

What impact do emerging technologies like AI and automation have on channel management?

The HP Workforce Experience Platform (WEX) is HP's first AI-enabled digital experience platform, designed to enhance workforce potential. It provides personalized technology recommendations based on employee usage patterns, improving the traditional PC refresh cycle.

WEX monitors endpoints across various operating systems and devices, including computers, peripherals, printers, and videoconferencing equipment, regardless of brand. HP's partnership with Microsoft Copilot integrates WEX to automate tasks and enhance device uptime for employees.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

As a new channel manager, it is imperative to focus on building strong, collaborative relationships with your partners by understanding their goals, challenges, and aligning them with your company's objectives. Leverage data and insights to track performance and make informed decisions, while staying adaptable to the fast-changing tech landscape.

Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

In my career, I aim to achieve key milestones by leveraging my extensive experience in IT and channel management across the MEA region, Singapore, and India. My goal is to build strong collaborations with emerging channels, focusing on mutual growth to enhance HP's leadership and become a leading channel vendor in the Middle East and Africa. I strive to expand our influence through innovation, strategic partnerships, and exceptional service, ultimately driving advancements in channel management and contributing to HP's sustained success.

Are there any executives in the business world that you particularly admire or see as role models?

I was privileged to work with exceptional leaders who have mentored me along the way, and I am thankful for the wisdom they have passed on to me. I particularly admire the current HP CEO, Enrique Lores, who is a very compassionate leader. His rise within HP is a hallmark of dedication and vision.

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

Outside of work, I invest time in activities that enhance my well-being. Spending quality moments with my family, whether at home or traveling, strengthens our bond and creates lasting memories. I'm also passionate about current affairs, regularly reading multiple news sources to stay informed. Cricket is another long-standing interest of mine, as I enjoy following matches and tracking players. Additionally, health and fitness have become a recent passion, with regular gym sessions transforming my physical and mental well-being, fostering discipline and resilience.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

As a new channel manager, it's crucial to build strong relationships with partners by understanding their goals and aligning them with your company's objectives. Use data to track performance and make informed decisions while remaining adaptable to the fast-changing tech landscape. Maintain open communication to foster trust and proactively address partner needs. Stay updated on industry trends and invest in partner training and resources to support their success.

Driving success together

Geoff Greenlaw
Vice President, EMEA & LATAM Channel
Sales at Pure Storage

🌀 How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?

My team and I developed what we call the 4P Strategy, which focuses on Partnerships, Programs, Processes, and People.

Partnerships: This is how we build scale and reach in the market. I'm not interested in recruiting 100 new partners in the Middle East. Instead, I want to leverage the partners already invested in us—those with a growth mindset, commitment, and loyalty to the Pure brand. Rather than bringing on new partners, we focus on activating more sellers within our existing partner network.

Programs: This is how we drive profitable growth for our partners in a predictable way. Over the last 12 months, we've enhanced our partner program, and we will continue to do so. We incentivize partners with new registrations and encourage them to sell our full portfolio, not just one type of technology. We also motivate individual sellers at our partner companies through rewards like credit cards, so it's not just the entity being rewarded, but also the individuals driving success.

Processes: For us, it's about making it easy to do business with Pure. Our partners often tell us that we're incredibly simple to work with. We offer easy-to-use initiatives like "campaigns in a box" that partners can brand and drive through their customer base. Another key aspect is building joint business plans with partners, conducting quarterly reviews, and holding each other accountable.

People: This is how we activate our community. Whether it's a CEO, sales director, CIO, or technical director, I believe that every person at Pure should have an established relationship with their counterparts at our partner organizations.

🌀 What can you share like any successful strategies you have implemented to drive, go through Channel partnership.

There are two key areas I want to highlight, starting with our guiding principles, which are well-known across our partner ecosystem. I've touched on one already, but here's a summary of all three:

Less is More: This principle focuses on investing in fewer but larger initiatives to enhance partner focus. We aim to be more relevant to a smaller, dedicated group of partners who are deeply invested in us, rather than spreading our efforts too thin across the region.

Back to Basics: This is about building on what we do best—creating a solid partner foundation. It's centered around maximizing scale and reach, dividing and optimizing resources for effective account and segment coverage, building trust, and leveraging partnerships to drive new logos and growth opportunities.

Extreme Accountability: This principle ensures that we're optimizing performance across the entire partner ecosystem. We hold our partners accountable through specific metrics and KPIs that drive success for both parties.

Protecting our Install Base: We're accelerating our subscription model to stay in tune with the market shift towards subscription-based approaches.

Expanding the Portfolio Sale: Instead of focusing on a single technology, we offer a wide range of solutions like FlashBlade, Portworx, and Cloud Block Store, enabling partners to get deeper and stickier with customers through a more comprehensive offering.

🌀 How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?

Yes, it's a common occurrence in every environment, but we've developed a process that effectively manages conflict, and it all starts with deal registration. I'm very clear with our partners about the benefits of deal registration. First,

it offers them a better price in the market because they brought the opportunity to us.

More importantly, it secures that partner's role in the deal. There's no confusion with our sales teams—if a partner brings us a deal, we proceed with that partner. And if other partners approach me about the same opportunity, I transparently inform them that we are already working with someone on it.

So talking about like the future of the Channel management. So what trends do you see? Will shape will be shaping future of like channel management and tech industry.

What we're seeing most in the region is that many of our traditional resellers and partners are starting to shift towards a hybrid model. In addition to reselling, they're building managed services businesses, which significantly enhances their value. This approach not only provides a steady stream of annual recurring revenue but also gives them an additional capability. Customers who may be hesitant to fully transition to hyperscalers, due to budget or resource constraints, are now exploring the option of outsourcing services like storage, backup, or disaster recovery as a service.

What impact do emerging technologies like AI and automation have on channel management?

From their perspective, Pure is undoubtedly seen as an enabler of artificial intelligence, providing them with a platform to accelerate and grow their revenues. But AI is just the beginning. There are numerous other solution areas and use cases where our partners are discovering significant value with Pure. A prime example is video surveillance, which is currently a very hot topic. Whether it's in airports, hospitals, law enforcement, or driven by regulations like those in the UAE, video surveillance is creating new opportunities for our partners in areas they may not have traditionally operated in.

Personal
Insights

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your personal life?
A big passion for football, for photography.

What advice would you give to a new Channel Manager starting out in the tech industry?
Focus on what I call the "critical few." Identify the three key priorities that will make the biggest impact on your organization and partnerships. Execute those flawlessly before moving on to the next set of priorities. Don't try to do too much at once—avoid attempting to "boil the ocean."

Leading the charge

Stefan Diedericks
Global Partner Enablement Leader
Oracle

🌀 **How do you ensure alignment between your company's goals and those of your channel partners?**

Alignment is achieved by fostering a collaborative approach emphasizing joint innovation and value co-creation. Oracle's 430,000 customers rely on us and our partners to co-develop solutions that enhance cloud capabilities and business processes to accelerate our customers' ambitions. This joint focus on customer success ensures that both our goals and those of our partners remain closely aligned, driving mutual growth.

🌀 **Can you share any successful strategies you've implemented to drive growth through channel partnerships?**

A successful strategy has been our partners leveraging our extensive cloud services portfolio to co-create industry-specific solutions with our partners. This has resulted in faster time-to-market and increased revenue streams for the joint parties. Oracle partners that tap into Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) have seen a 25-30% increase in efficiency, demonstrating the power of collaboration to drive sustainable growth.

🌀 **How do you manage conflicts or competition between different channel partners?**

We manage conflicts by creating a structured framework that encourages collaboration and clear delineation of responsibilities. I believe ecosystem leaders should emphasize governance structures that promote fairness and transparency, reducing competition and fostering a cooperative environment. By providing partners clearly defined roles and opportunities within the ecosystem, one ensures they can co-exist and contribute without friction, aligning their efforts to broader goals like innovation and market growth.

🌀 **What trends do you see shaping the future of channel management in the tech industry?**

The future of channel management will be shaped by AI-driven insights and automation, allowing for hyper-personalized partner engagements and scalable management solutions. According to McKinsey, companies that harness AI are 2.3 times more likely to see growth in market share, as automation streamlines partner activities and decision-making processes. Moreover, the push toward ecosystem strategies suggests a growing emphasis on collaborative networks that drive innovation and create value beyond traditional partnerships.

🌀 **How do you approach training and educating channel partners on your products and services?**

At Oracle we employ a focused yet continuous learning approach, combining digital training platforms with personalized coaching to help partners fully leverage our products and services. I've personally seen how effective training in ecosystems should focus on strategic alignment, sales readiness, technical skills and creative innovation. This ensures partners can translate product knowledge into customer value.

🌀 **In what ways do you measure the success and ROI of your channel partnerships?**

We look at success through a balanced lens—revenue growth, customer satisfaction, and partner engagement all play a role. It's not just about hitting numbers but also about building relationships that drive long-term impact. Seeing partners grow alongside us and hearing positive feedback from customers is a true measure of success.

Personal
Insights

What are the most important qualities you look for in a channel partner?

We look for partners who are agile, passionate, and share our commitment to innovation. It's not just about what they bring to the table today, but how we can grow together tomorrow. I value partners who are curious, collaborative, and truly customer-centric.

What impact do emerging technologies like AI and automation have on channel management?

AI is transforming channel management by enabling enhanced decision-making, predictive analytics, and providing real-time market insights. It helps partners make more informed choices, reduces risk, and automates routine tasks, allowing teams to focus on strategic initiatives. As AI tools analyze historical data and social trends, they reveal opportunities that were previously hidden, positioning us to stay ahead of emerging market shifts and drive better outcomes for both partners and customers.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

Focus on building strong, trust-based relationships with partners while staying proactive in learning about emerging technologies like AI and data analytics. I recently read in Harvard Business Review that choosing the right ecosystem partners can improve growth by 50%, so carefully selecting and nurturing these relationships is crucial. Additionally, staying informed on industry trends and adapting quickly to new opportunities is key. I recall a McKinsey article saying that organizations which prioritize innovation in their ecosystems tend to outperform their competitors by up to 5% in profitability. I would venture to say that Oracle's recent performance has clearly proven how important this is for us and our partners.

Looking ahead in your career, what do you aspire to achieve?

I aspire to continue fostering innovation, leadership development and human centric cultural evolution by leveraging technology ecosystems to unlock our collective potential, while growing partnerships that contribute to a thriving, interconnected business ecosystem.

Are there any executives in the business world that you particularly admire or see as role models?

I deeply admire leaders who champion the advancement of human potential through collaborative behaviours. For me, role models come from any part of society, not only our own industry. I admire leaders who balance visionary thinking with practical execution like, Nelson Mandela, Margaret Thatcher and Michelangelo Buonarroti.

What activities, hobbies, or passions do you pursue outside of your professional life?

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, visiting museums, experiencing theater shows and traveling the world. These moments recharge me and provide a creative outlet from my demanding schedule.

What advice would you give to a new channel manager starting out in the tech industry?

In addition to what I've stated above, I would say, remain curious and focus on continuous learning. Channel management is a journey—balance the tactical with the strategic, and always keep your partners' and customers' success at the forefront of your daily execution.

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The Future is Here, and It's Smarter Than You Think!

Remember when Artificial Intelligence seemed like something out of a sci-fi movie? Robots running the world, human-like machines with feelings, and cars that drive themselves (okay, that one is actually real now). Well, AI has officially moved from the big screen into the everyday, and it's doing more than just taking over our Netflix recommendations. It's transforming how businesses protect their data.

AI has become a powerful tool in modern business, with many organizations already using it to enhance their operations. However, not everyone is jumping on the AI bandwagon just yet. Some companies hold back due to concerns about ethics, legal implications, and security risks. Ironically, though, AI is one of the best solutions for addressing those exact worries. Its advanced capabilities in monitoring, detecting, and responding to potential threats make it a game-changer in protecting data and ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards.

Sehrish Tariq
Assistant Editor
GEC Media Group

How AI Keeps the Baddies Out

Ever wish you had a superhero on your team who could monitor your business's data around the clock? Enter AI. One of AI's greatest superpowers is anomaly detection—it's like having Spidey senses for your data. It can detect when something isn't quite right, and more importantly, when someone might be poking around where they shouldn't be.

Picture this: you're in charge of keeping your company's applications secure. Someone— let's call them an "uninvited guest"—tries to access sensitive data. AI is like that hyper-alert coworker who's always two steps ahead. It spots the suspicious behavior, flags it, and BOOM! The security team is instantly notified, stopping the intruder in their tracks. No capes needed.

But AI doesn't just call for backup—it can take action itself. With the right setup, AI tools can block unauthorized access or alert security personnel the moment they spot something fishy. This way, you don't just detect the danger—you stop it in its tracks.

AI and Data Security: The Dynamic Duo

So, how exactly is AI doing all this magic? Let's break it down with some of the coolest use cases of AI in data security:

- Threat Detection: AI monitors network traffic like a hawk, spotting anything unusual, which helps boost intrusion detection. Think of it as having eyes everywhere, 24/7.
- Fraud Detection: Ever wondered how businesses catch fraudulent payments or insurance claims? AI analyzes transaction patterns and raises red flags when something looks shady.
- Risk Assessment: AI can assess how vulnerable your systems are and make recommendations to beef up security. It's like having a personal trainer for your data security posture.
- Phishing Prevention: We all know the dreaded phishing emails trying to trick us into clicking a shady link. AI-powered email filters detect and block these, stopping phishing attacks before they even hit your inbox.
- Incident Response: When something does go wrong, AI automates the response process—quickly patching up security holes and helping your team get things back on track.
- Identity and Access Management (IAM): AI adds an extra layer of security by improving biometric authentication (like fingerprint or face recognition) and analyzing user behavior to detect any funny business with login attempts.
- Secure User Authentication: Need stronger authentication for sensitive data? AI can adjust security levels based on the context of a user's access request. It's like putting a bouncer at your digital door that gets tougher when needed.

Why You Should Care

Here's the thing: cyberattacks aren't slowing down. They're getting more sophisticated, and your business needs to be ready. AI isn't just a tech fad—it's the future of data protection. By using AI to monitor, detect, and respond to threats, businesses can be more secure than ever before. And the best part? AI doesn't need coffee breaks. It's on duty 24/7.

Whether it's stopping hackers from getting into your network, detecting fraudulent activity before it hits your bank account, or preventing phishing emails from reaching your employees, AI has got your back. And it's only going to get better from here.
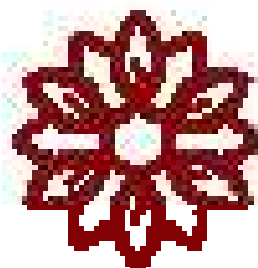
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