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SECURE BY DESIGN

Binson Xu, President MENA Region at Hikvision, has outlined that their security philosophy is based on the concept of 'secure by design', his views on the video security market in a post-pandemic world, and the company's strategy for further growth and diversification in the market in 2022.

Binson Xu



How would you describe the video security market in the region, especially post-pandemic?

At the beginning of the pandemic, the demand for video security equipment decreased significantly for some time. However, as the world and the region recovered, the market returned to growth with an overall demand higher than pre-COVID times.

People began to care even more about their personal safety and in their communities. There was also an upsurge in demand from online businesses for remote monitoring solutions and services. So, in short, the video security business is doing very well right now.

What has Hikvision's strategy been, for growth and diversification in the market?

We normally divide the business into channel business and project business. As far as the channel business is

concerned, we always keep improving our channel coverage to make sure that all our customers can get easy access to our products and services. This is a key element of our strategy.

For the project business, our main objective is to provide solutions to our customers across different verticals, to make sure they can really meet their business requirements and expectations. This is also a key strategic focus area for us.

During the pandemic, we changed all our sales and marketing services and facilities from offline to online/offline, to ensure the best possible response time and efficient support for our customers.

How does Hikvision ensure the security of its products?

First of all, Hikvision has implemented 'Secure-by-design', which is a cybersecurity philosophy or approach that aims to bake security into every stage of a product's production process. It begins at the conceptual phase when a video camera or other product is still on the drawing board, and it extends through development and testing, right through to final production and delivery.

Hikvision has its own cyber labs to make sure all our hardware and software are certified and quality-checked and adhere to the most rigorous international certification standards.

We follow all standard protocols and APIs and upgrade our firmware and software regularly to make sure we can improve and enhance our products as per market requirements. This is basically what we do, to make sure our products are safe and secure for use.

"For the project business, our main objective is to provide solutions to our customers across different verticals, to make sure they can really meet their business requirements and expectations."

What is Hikvision's plan for the regional market in the coming years?

Again, for the region, we have divided our business by channels and projects. In the channel, we have already achieved good coverage to support our customers effectively, and now we would like to provide a one-stop-shop solution for all partners, so that they can benefit from access to a wider range of products from Hikvision.

For the project business, we can see that the trends shaping the market right now are digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) and that the demand for cloud and IoT are also ramping up.

Our goal is to provide vertical solutions matching those opportunities and the fundamental needs of our end-users to protect people and assets, while also improving operational efficiency to help make their businesses more profitable. So that's going to be our strategy and focus for the region.

"Hikvision has implemented 'Secure-by-design', which is a cybersecurity philosophy or approach that aims to bake security into every stage of a product's production process."

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CYBERSECURITY IS NOT A ONE-TIME INVESTMENT

Husni Hammoud, Managing Director, ESET Middle East spoke at length on their philosophy regarding cybersecurity, key findings from their latest threat report that could impact the cybersecurity ecosystem in 2022 and on their plans for GITEX Global.

Husni Hammoud



We have seen an exponential increase in the volume of cyberattacks since the onset of the pandemic, and earlier this year high-profile ransomware attacks on Colonial Pipeline and JBS rocked the industry and had devastating economic consequences for those involved. What do businesses need to do to better protect themselves from ransomware and other forms of cyberterrorism? Are the current tools and solutions on the market redundant?

Protecting data and devices from cyber attackers is a very tricky business, it requires both technologies and humans to work in tandem. Cybersecurity is not a one-time investment, but an ongoing process. It is very important that the companies carry out periodic assessment of their systems to evaluate and plug the gaps immediately.

Ensuring sensitive data and devices are backed up, encrypted and have strong authorisation protocols. Education, awareness, routine training, updating response protocols are the



few key elements that can help any organisation enhance its defence against any attack.

Well, not every tool or solution can be labeled as redundant, which is why organisations need to develop a security program that allows them to factor in their respective security requirements, and accordingly they need to arm themselves with needed technology solutions, and ensure they are not adopting anything which is soon going to be obsolete.

ESET just recently published their threat report for 2021, what are the key threats that you believe will play a prominent role and dominate the discussions in the cybersecurity ecosystem in 2022?

Trends highlighted by the ESET Threat Report, ransomware will still be the most dominating threat especially as cyber criminals keep on changing their tactics and intensified brute-forced attacks. Most likely there will be rise in the number of phishing campaigns targeting people working from home.

Vulnerabilities in IoT will provide new battle ground for hackers to stay more active and AI/ML will further gain momentum in the cybersecurity space. Geo-targeted attacks will be on the rise and healthcare sector will continue to be at a receiving end. Cloud security will remain a big concern for worry.

ESET are regarded as one of the best security companies in the world, with their anti-virus and firewall products lauded by security professionals globally. However, in your opinion what is it that differentiates ESET from other market rivals?

ESET is a well balanced, financially

“Organisations need to arm themselves with needed technology solutions, and ensure they are not adopting anything which is soon going to be obsolete”.

prudent company without any unhealthy pressure from investors. For past 30 years, our main focus has been on R&D and developing products that take care of the security concerns of individuals, security professionals, IT heads, CEOs and CISOs. The company today boasts over 175 researchers and 11 global research centers spread around the globe.

With less focus on hype and more on R&D, the company has invested in most advanced technologies such as AI/ML among others. The investment in human expertise helps us provide the most accurate threat intelligence possible due to threat actors being intelligent opponents. ESET's endpoint products contain a cloud reputation system made up of 110 million sensors that feeds relevant information about the most recent threats and benign files.

Can you tell us about your participation at GITEX Global, can we expect the launch of new solutions and products?

ESET has been part of GITEX for several years now, and this year we will be showcasing our entire suite of products and solutions. Although, we will be highlighting the capabilities of our cloud portfolio and focus on the ESET PROTECT Platform during the event.

The ESET PROTECT brings the easy and automated management of ESET's wide portfolio of security solutions with

two deployment options: on-premises and cloud. Since the launch of this new solution earlier this year, it has now become the new cornerstone for security management in ESET's cloud-based business offering, capable of catering to organisations of all sizes.

The introduction of ESET PROTECT Cloud reflects the well-recognised shift in the security landscape from on-premises security software solutions to cloud-based services. ESET recognises that many businesses are moving toward a “cloud first” approach, so a security software offering that aligns with this strategy is essential.

ESET PROTECT Cloud provides a cloud-based console for managing ESET security solutions deployed in a network with real-time visibility into both on-premises and off-premises endpoints. The console allows users to manage existing ESET products, including ESET Endpoint Security, ESET Dynamic Threat Defence, and ESET Full Disk Encryption. Customers of ESET Cloud Administrator will be automatically and seamlessly upgraded to ESET PROTECT Cloud.

To ensure businesses of all sizes are equipped with the right solutions, ESET is offering a selection of subscriptions tailored to the specific business needs of home offices, small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs), managed services providers (MSPs), and enterprises.



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MULTI-CLOUD WILL TAKE YOU TO THE NEXT LEVEL

George Pawlyszyn, General Manager MEA, Rackspace Technology, has outlined how their ability to bridge private and public allows Rackspace to help legacy customers migrate to the cloud faster by understanding both ends of the journey.

George Pawlyszyn



Can you outline to us how your company has demonstrated its ability to leverage its technological expertise to help business transform their day-to-day operations to adapt, evolve and meet the demands of the digital economy?

Once migrations are complete, the need for service providers doesn't simply end. Once customers move into the cloud, their ability, and realisation of their ability, to innovate massively accelerates their propensity to use technology. Rackspace Technology manages cloud environments at every stage of the transformation journey, irrespective of which hyperscaler environment is adopted.

In 2021, our Middle East and Africa operations will account for 40 per cent of Rackspace Technology EMEA's growth thanks to our multicloud offerings. We recently launched Elastic Engineering, a flexible way to consume cloud services with the support of a team of experts

to develop assessments, migrations and manage cloud services in a scalable way. Also, our ability to bridge private and public cloud allows us to help legacy customers migrate to the cloud faster by understanding both ends of the journey.

Digital Transformation has accelerated rapidly since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, but as an IT leader and expert, what are the key principles and processes businesses need to define and determine before embarking on their digital transformation journey?

Cloud adoption will continue to expand, leading to a \$1 trillion market by 2024, according to IDC. The growth of this adoption accelerated during the pandemic, but Rackspace Technology was well-placed to respond to the high demand as companies pivoted to more cloud-centric ways of working.

As companies evolve rapidly, especially as they seek to become less reliant on legacy technology, operational challenges inevitably arise. One of the key considerations for many organisations must be to choose the right cloud provider, or combinations or cloud environments. The choice can be overwhelming, so working with an impartial expert can help to make the decision easier.

No two organisations will have the same requirements or face the same challenges in their cloud journeys. Just identifying this is a crucial first step for IT leaders who might assume that simply by having a multicloud system in place, they have done all they need to do.

We know that technology is advancing more now than it has ever done so in the past, but what is your vision for the future in terms of the tech trends that are really going to drive change and foster further innovation in the next 3-5 years?

Rather than the technology itself, the biggest trend will be the change in the way businesses view the implementation of new IT. The pandemic has accelerated the pace of technology change for businesses and has fundamentally altered organisations' appetite for risk.

Over 18 months ago, many organisations were risk averse, largely adopting a cautious and conservative approach to technology implementation. However during the pandemic, businesses were somewhat forced to forget about risk and instead focus on the opportunities technology offers – many of which have been vital for companies to stay afloat.

Companies must build a conduit between their business and IT teams to make taking these risks successful and for fast digital transformation to take place. Ultimately this means that tech teams need to have a deeper understanding of their companies' day-to-day work to deliver on business outcomes and ultimately drive the success of their organisations at a quicker pace.

We know that cybersecurity is a major challenge in the current IT ecosystem, and we have seen the damage done by a series of ransomware attacks over the last number of months. In your expert

“As companies evolve rapidly, especially as they seek to become less reliant on legacy technology, operational challenges inevitably arise.”

opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing businesses in today's climate?

A fundamental part of ensuring a secure IT ecosystem is in place is to provide security training and awareness which is ongoing and not just a point in time, or annual, activity. This regular education will ensure that the security team are aware of any vulnerabilities and the latest threats and are able to respond in a more timely manner.

Ultimately, IT security isn't just the role of the technology team. It is an end-to-end business function as data owners reside in the business. Many business leaders do not understand the role of security and therefore distance themselves from the topic, instead of trying to gain a better understand and educate themselves. IT security needs to be a discussion at the leadership table and not just within the IT department as through wider collaboration and awareness, security holes can be plugged for efficiently.



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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITH INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION

Zaidoun Arbad, COO at Starlink, talks about how businesses are transitioning into the next phase of digital transformation with intelligent automation.

Zaidoun Arbad



The evolution of Digital Transformation post pandemic

The main driver for organisations to prioritise Digital Transformation (DX) post the pandemic was to ensure business continuity, maintain a competitive edge and most importantly to enhance customer experience.

Majority of the B2B organisations started their digitisation project plan three-to-five-years prior to the pandemic.

However, with the onset of the pandemic they were pushed over the technology tipping point that transformed businesses forever and were forced to accelerate their digital adoption at a dramatic pace covering anything related to remote working and virtual workplace with emphasis on securely accessing applications hosted on the cloud.

Challenges faced by enterprises in the DX journey

With this evolution in technologies and situational occurrences, businesses – big and small had to transform themselves into digital enterprises and focus on how to take the DX journey forward that would inculcate a mindset of continuous improvements and innovation with long term benefits in mind.

To be successful, organisations were required to have the right set of tools, right expertise, and guidance to drive best results.

Organisations that preferred to stick to the traditional operational methods found it challenging to match the pace of digital transformation. While the ones fiercely adopting digital transformation stayed longer in the game and are today recognised as leaders.

Fast-tracking DX journey with Intelligent Automation

As per Gartner 91% of organisations are already engaged in some form of digital initiative. Digital Transformation emerged from the need to become agile, optimise productivity and deliver value.

So, what's next? Organisations are expected to continuously adopt advanced technologies to keep up with the competition and respond to the market demands especially in a market where customers are expecting a digital-first experience.

Therefore, it become imperative for businesses to keep 'Automation' at the core of any DX strategy and leverage on the latest technologies to deliver faster, better experiences at minimal cost.

Banking and Finance was one such sector that is predominantly process

“Organisations that preferred to stick to the traditional operational methods found it challenging to match the pace of digital transformation.”

oriented which took to digitisation and realized that a shift in the culture that embraces innovation was inevitable. At this stage, we saw large enterprises evolve into the next phase of digital transformation with Intelligent Automation where they introduced robotic process automation (RPA) and artificial intelligence (AI) to automate complex end-to-end processes.

Driving value with StarLink's IA ecosystem

With StarLink Intelligent Automation, we aim to empower enterprises looking to build an automation-led digital transformation program with advanced technologies powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation to achieve increased productivity at reduced cost, greater accuracy, and improved customer experience.

We onboarded a holistic Intelligent Automation ecosystem that covers

- ✓ Intelligent Process Automation
- ✓ Intelligence Content Capture
- ✓ Intelligent Autonomous Digital

Platform Automation

- ✓ Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning
- ✓ Intelligent Data Automation and Data Science Automation ✓ Advanced Data Cloud Management and Master Data Management

From Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Advanced Analytics, StarLink iA ecosystem can enable advanced automation and help organisations unlock new possibilities for higher operational efficiency and business success. Early adopters are already reaping great benefits.

'StarLink Transforms with Intelligent Automation', the theme for 2022 is aimed at assisting customers revolutionise their business operations by securely incorporating intelligent technologies to become agile and resilient. This innovative approach will help reimagine business processes and accelerate growth:

- ✓ Enable enterprises customers across different business verticals to speed up their digital transformation journey.
- ✓ Reduce costs by augmenting the workforce and improving productivity
- ✓ Improve accuracy through consistent processes and approaches to enhance quality
- ✓ Improve customer experience
- ✓ Address compliance and regulations with confidence

With StarLink Intelligent Automation, our mission is to bring in best-of-breed technologies driven by Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to help enterprises across the different industries boost their efficiency, control costs, and achieve true digital transformation.



STARLINK

TRANSFORMS

WITH INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION

THE DIGITAL ECONOMY RUNS ON SOFTWARE, WE MUST PROTECT IT

Satya Gupta, Cofounder and CTO, Virsec spoke with regards to their approach to providing cybersecurity solutions, the acceleration of digital transformation in recent years and what he believes to be the biggest cybersecurity challenges facing businesses in today's climate.

Can you outline to us how your company has demonstrated its ability to leverage its technological expertise to help business transform their day-to-day operations to adapt, evolve and meet the demands of the digital economy?

Today's digital economy runs on software – and Virsec, with its deterministic approach to cybersecurity, focuses on protecting an organisation's software applications from ransomware and other sophisticated attacks. By using our cyber protection technology, enterprises can stay focused on their business objectives rather than constantly looking behind their shoulders for bad cyber actors. Why? With

our platform, the company doesn't need to spend time looking for needles in the haystack; instead, they can take protective action quickly, in milliseconds, so they can stay focused on their mainstream business. Virsec's technology also eliminates threats from vulnerabilities lurking undetected from cyber threats. As a result, even those enterprises that do not respond promptly to patching are still protected. Additionally, they can also reduce operating costs. For example, one of our largest customers was able to reduce the need for security analysts from three full-time analysts, 5 days a week, to just six hours of a single analyst's time for the entire week.

Digital Transformation has accelerated rapidly since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, but as an IT leader and expert, what are the key principles and processes businesses need to define and determine before embarking on their digital transformation journey?

Over the past 18 months, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated digital transformation. Now, organisations are increasingly deploying more software thereby expanding their attackable surface. It is critical that all organisations conduct an audit of all possible attackable surfaces in their business. Then, you want to make sure that all your logins are good i.e. stolen credentials



Satya Gupta

are not in play. Turn on two-factor authentication and make sure company procedures for password complexity and history are met. Once logins are authenticated, you need to monitor

network and server activity to ensure your data is not getting exfiltrated. Regarding server activity, you want to make sure it is the developer's code – not an attacker's code – that is being executed.

“With our platform, the company doesn't need to spend time looking for needles in the haystack; instead, they can take protective action quickly, in milliseconds, so they can stay focused on their mainstream business”.

We know that technology is advancing more now than it has ever done so in the past, but what is your vision for the future in terms of the tech trends that are really going to drive change and foster further innovation in the next 3-5 years?

Looking ahead, I expect attack surfaces for enterprises will continue to grow and, as a result, security spending will also increase. I expect computers to get smaller and replace current devices, just as the desktop was displaced by the laptop. I also see a significant rise in the manufacturing and adoption of smart devices, from vehicles, manufacturing, healthcare and even invading our homes and putting more of our personal information at risk. As AI/ML make their way into products making them smarter, the danger of these solutions going rogue is also imminent.

We know that cybersecurity is a major challenge in the current IT ecosystem, and we have seen the damage done by a series of ransomware attacks over the last number of months. In your expert opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing businesses in today's climate?

Due to digital transformation, there is more data thereby making your organisation more of a target. Today cyberattackers are scanning the Web looking for targets. Within ten seconds of putting up an Internet facing server, you will be targeted. Traditional security solutions such as EDR platforms can only protect you in minutes; you need to be able to protect your servers in milliseconds if you want to counter today's cyberthreats. The good news is that Virsec provides protection in milliseconds – or less – so you can stay focused on conducting your business instead of looking over your shoulders for bad cyber actors.



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“We are at the inflection point for the next paradigm shift in cybersecurity and Virsec does what is needed: protect application workloads at runtime. This is the new battleground.”

– **John Chambers**, Virsec Investor and Strategic Advisor and Former Cisco CEO



We invite you to learn more: virsec.com | info@virsec.com

CLOUD IS AT THE HEART OF A BUSINESS'S DX JOURNEY

Maya Zakhour, Channel Director, Middle East and Africa, Italy and Spain, NetApp outlines the how their technology solutions aid organisations in meeting digital transformation goals, technology trends to watch out for in the coming years and the biggest cybersecurity challenges facing businesses today.

Maya Zakhour



Can you outline to us how your company has demonstrated its ability to leverage its technological expertise to help business transform their day-to-day operations to adapt, evolve and meet the demands of the digital economy?

Digital transformation essentially involves the building of a digital ecosystem in which there are coherence and seamless integration between customers, partners, employees, suppliers, and external entities, providing greater overall value to the whole. It is a strategy of enabling business innovation predicated on the incorporation of digital technologies into your operational process, products, solutions, and customer interactions. The strategy is focused on leveraging the opportunities of new technologies and their impact to the business by focusing on the creation and monetisation of digital assets. NetApp has revolutionised its solutions to help enterprise organisations meet their digital transformation goals.

Because cloud is at the heart of a business's DX journey, we ensure that we help build a unique cloud strategy for businesses – irrespective of whether they are moving enterprise applications or production-level workloads to the cloud, a private cloud, or taking a hybrid cloud approach. Our solutions help increase productivity, ensure quick and easy scalability and efficiency. We've also forged partnerships with the world's biggest hyperscalers like Google Cloud, Microsoft Azure, IBM Cloud and AWS.

Digital Transformation has accelerated rapidly since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, but as an IT leader and expert, what are the key principles and processes businesses need to define and determine before embarking on their digital transformation journey?

Digital transformation (DX) is essentially business transformation and businesses must be clearly focused on transforming themselves into something that their customers are demanding. To succeed, businesses require IT transformation, and hybrid multicloud infrastructure deployments are the heart and soul of real and effective IT transformation. Successful a DX strategy is dependent on managing the exponential growth, intrinsic value, and movement of data. It requires incorporating and managing data in a complex, hybrid world where data resides in your data centre, in the cloud, at the edge, and through externally linked applications and platforms. The growth and manageability of that data need to be effectively governed to make sure of data sovereignty, security, and cost containment.

To address these data challenges, gain competitive edge, and thrive in the

digital transformation era, NetApp data fabric solutions enable your digital transformation journey in this complex, hybrid cloud world. From award-winning cloud backup solutions to synchronising and securing data seamlessly between clouds and on-premises solutions, NetApp has focused on enabling your digital transformation journey.

“Technology will continue to drive innovation, and data is playing a central role in helping organisations from manufacturing to biotechnology, to stay competitive”.

We know that technology is advancing more now than it has ever done so in the past, but what is your vision for the future in terms of the tech trends that are really going to drive change and foster further innovation in the next 3-5 years

Technology will continue to drive innovation, and data is playing a central role in helping organisations from manufacturing to biotechnology, to stay competitive. We see AI playing a prominent role in how businesses

harness and use data. Organisations across nearly every industry are adopting AI to stay competitive, drive growth, and decrease expenses. Whether powering self-driving vehicles, pioneering genomic medicine, building chatbots, or leveraging predictive maintenance, success with AI is completely dependent on real-time access to large amounts of data.

We know that cybersecurity is a major challenge in the current IT ecosystem, and we have seen the damage done by a series of ransomware attacks over the last number of months. In your expert opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing businesses in today's climate?

Ransomware attacks are growing threat to organisational security and data availability. These attacks cost far more than the ransom price demanded. There are costs of recovery, operational disruption and lost revenue, potential legal implications, and even loss of brand value. Ransomware response strategies are vital to preparing for such attacks, and business continuity plans that include data backup and recovery can be instrumental in reducing the impact of a ransomware attack. Viable backups, isolated from a ransomware attack loop, are a key component, and streamlining recovery point objectives to uninfected data points helps protect against reinfecting systems.

As a global leader in data storage, NetApp offers a broad range of strategies, tools, and services to help your organisation stay resilient against ransomware threats, mitigate recovery efforts, and reduce recovery time. Data security is the foundation on which privacy and compliance are built.



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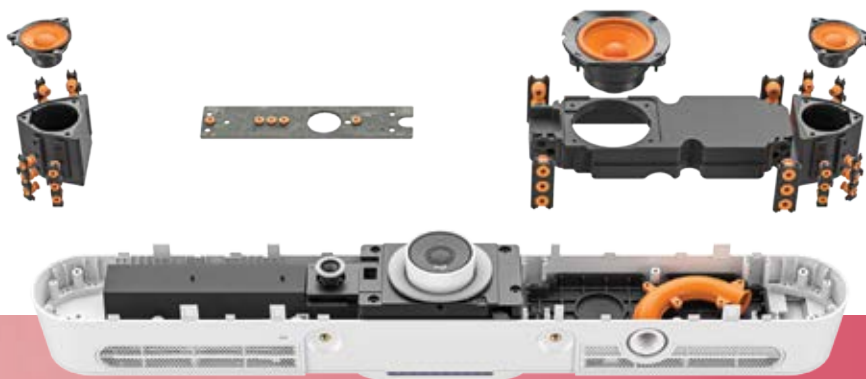
Growth of video meetings from 2019 to 2020¹

71%

Information workers who use video **at least once a day**²

**#2
AND
#3**

Rank of web and group VC solutions among enterprise digital investments³



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TECHNOLOGICAL LEADERS MUST STICK TO THE PRINCIPLE OF OPENNESS

Timofey Matrenitsky, Head of the Guardant Branch, Aktiv, and Vladimir Ivanov, Head of Business Development, Aktiv talk about the importance security technologies have on wider society, representing the Russian security sector at GITEX 2021, and how they plan to offer unique benefits for UAE Partners.



Timofey Matrenitsky

You represent the Russian information security sector at Gitex Technology 2021. Why are information security technologies so important for society today and why is it so important for world countries to share them?

Timofey Matrenitsky: General global digitalisation is gradually leading to the fact that the world is becoming a single information space with very indistinct boundaries. In addition to new opportunities for international business and society as a whole, this IT transformation inevitably generates new risks associated with information security.

The protection of the global digital space should be built according to the same technological approaches and principles. However, many countries today report a shortage of qualified specialists in the field of information security and complain about the corresponding difficulties in finding and applying modern security solutions.

Therefore, representatives of different

countries should help each other master new technologies and create complex platform solutions. It is well known, that Russia has one of the world's strongest information security industries. It occupies a leading position in the field of IT system and critical infrastructure protection, as well as in many others, in both public and private sectors. In addition, Russia can boast a rare highly competent workforce, a developed IT market and a whole range of strong private companies with their own unique technologies and products that surpass world analogues.

What makes you unique for your UAE partners? What do you expect from Gitex?

Timofey Matrenitsky: We expect that our information security solutions and technology stack will be in demand abroad. Our main advantage in comparison with the products of global players is high adaptability to various needs and tasks. In Russia, for example, international IT giants involved in the information security industry are simply leaving the market today. Their solutions turned out to be unable to meet the requirements of local customers, and these companies are simply not ready to adapt and make necessary improvements for local markets.

On the opposite, we adhere to the position of technological openness. We are ready to share technologies, competencies and expertise with our partners, and create joint solutions taking into account local specifics and requirements of a particular market. This is why we came to Gitex!

“We adhere to the position of technological openness and are ready to share technologies, competencies and expertise with our partners”.



Vladimir Ivanov

How can states find a balance between interest in modern technologies and technological sovereignty?

Vladimir Ivanov: Today, at the most global level, we are seeing an increase in the need for ready-made integration platforms in order to successfully implement large-scale digital transformation projects. Indeed, when it comes to important and complex solutions implemented at the state level, such as Smart City, the Unified Medical Information System or the Tax Platform, developers cannot do without the solutions created by their colleagues from the IT and information security sector that have already been tested in practice.

However, it is necessary to take into account the technological independence factor. Global IT solutions should be designed in such a way as to guarantee not only

compliance with the requirements of local regulators, but also the further ability to independently maintain and develop the created infrastructure, regardless of the geopolitical situation in the world.

What solutions have you brought to GITEX that you would like to show to your partners in the UAE?

Vladimir Ivanov: Of course, integrating a platform solution into a large-scale digital transformation project is a difficult and complex task.

We are constantly solving it with our Russian partners, and we have already built sufficient experience: in almost every large private or state-owned company you can find our Rutoken and Guardant information protection products and solutions, which provide identification and authentication to users of IT systems, protect software from illegal copying, and ensure the security of cyber-physical systems in the IoT sphere.

And today, with the increasing importance of information security in the digital transformation era, we look forward to finding new partners at GITEX.



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and electronic
signature

2

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HOW CAN BUSINESSES KEEP UP WITH THE CHANGING INDUSTRY?

Nidal Abou-Ltaif, President, Avaya International speaks about the digital transformation taking place across the industry, technologies businesses should adopt to remain competitive and how they have empowered organisations with Avaya OneCloud.

Nidal Abou-Ltaif



What do you make of the current state of the industry?

It's an incredibly exciting time. After seeing the world struggle with the difficulties of the pandemic for the last 18 months, we're finally seeing light at the end of the tunnel. The world is returning to normal; GITEX will be completely in-person again, and international travel is opening up.

But what's even more exciting is the transformation that's currently taking place across almost every business sector. The pandemic showed us there is no one-size fits all model for the new ways of delivering experiences, and enterprises realise that their customers and employees expect personalised experiences, wherever they are, and however they're choosing to interact.

Governments and businesses are waking up to this fact – the pandemic accelerated these customer and employee demands, particularly on the digital front, and now there's this huge transformation agenda taking place. This is very obvious at the regional level, where you have governments setting out their visions for a post-pandemic world, and the private sector is following. We see the UAE aiming to build the best and most dynamic economy in the world, with significant investments being made in upskilling young talent and creating a nation of coders. Likewise, we see Saudi Arabia investing \$1.2 billion in technology initiatives.

As a technology leader, it's an incredibly exciting time to be in this region.

At GITEX 2021, we're essentially answering the question of how businesses can keep up with all of this change. We recognise the challenges and opportunities within the world, and we understand that delivering unforgettably positive experiences is among the most powerful differentiators for businesses today.

So, we'll be showing that, to deliver those experiences, a 'composable' approach is needed. What do we mean by composable? Well, to keep up with these ever-changing customer expectations, business providing great experiences can't be satisfied with monolithic, apps in a cloud world. Instead, they need solutions that can be composed, as needed, regardless of whether the application sits on-prem or in the cloud.

We're also showcasing the composable solutions that enterprises need to succeed in this new world – with Avaya OneCloud, our AI-powered experience platform at their core, and several Experience Builders using them to show how businesses can meet the API economy head-on.

And in line with the aspirations of the UAE to create a tech-savvy workforce – and our own dedication towards growing and nurturing talent in the region – we've partnered with the GITEX High Flyer initiative. This is one of the largest and most ambitious technologies internship programmes to be launched in the region, and we're providing support to the initiative by empowering participants with our strong legacy of innovation and communications expertise, and taking on five winning students for internships at the end of the programme.

Like I said, there's a lot happening, and it's exciting.

What are the big conversations happening at the leadership level in the companies you work with?

Today it's all about 'Total Experience', encompassing an entire customer journey from web enquiry to after-sales support and beyond, with our customers. When today's consumers connect with organisations, they want experiences that are simple and seamless. If the company that they are counting on cannot provide them with what they need, these customers will go

“Delivering unforgettably positive experiences is among the most powerful differentiators for businesses today”.

find another company that can. And the only way to satisfy these customers is by addressing the 'Total Experience' and composing personalised customer journeys for them. It's our job to show just how to do that with the Avaya OneCloud platform.

As businesses continue to embrace hybrid models, which technologies should they focus on to remain competitive?

We know that consumer and employee demands are constantly changing. And, despite the extremely positive environment we find ourselves in, we know that the current situation can still be fluid. So for a business, it can be difficult to keep pace and be flexible – especially if you're using older technology that prevents you from quickly rolling out new services.

The approach we're proposing with Avaya OneCloud means embracing agile, services-based applications with large ecosystems that enable capabilities to be quickly composed as and when needed. And the composability of the technology is key – it's no longer good enough to say that a deployment will take six months. You need to be able to deploy new technologies and capabilities within hours.

What are the biggest trends that impacted the market you're operating in this year?

The hybrid work model remains a big

challenge, and opportunity, for many businesses and verticals. If we look to the UAE, we know that it's been safe to welcome employees back to the office for many months now, but we also know that employees can do their best work when they're given a choice as to how they work. The challenge is being able to cater for any scenario, but the opportunity is a competitive edge and the entirely new business models that can emerge based on premise of hybrid work. It's very exciting to be helping our customers create agile, powerful digital workplaces for their specific, evolving needs.

How is your company enabling regional organisations to embrace a bold digital future?

For sure, there's been a bright light shone on the need for agility and adaptability. Many organisations with inflexible applications have struggled to respond as quickly as necessary to the new changes and demands that have been placed on them over the last 18 months. And consumers have grown accustomed to contactless and self-service, as well as virtual engagement. Today, only the companies that can meet these demands will thrive.

With Avaya OneCloud, we're providing the flexibility and speed to value that organisations need to succeed in this new world. It's helping organisations realise the power and potential of an API-based model and create the composable enterprise, with features that can be composed in minutes with modular capabilities. It also provides the AI capabilities that can offer human-like, automated support that speeds responsiveness. And it delivers evolved workstream collaboration that supports the composable enterprise while enabling organisations to move at the speed of their customers and employees.



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DATA IS THE PRIMARY DRIVER OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Sakkeer Hussain, Director – Sales & Marketing, Middle East & Africa at D-Link outlines how his company is helping its customers deal with the challenges of the digital economy, the need for a clear strategy when implementing a new vision – and that data will continue to be main driver in digital transformation.

Can you outline to us how your company has demonstrated its ability to leverage its technological expertise to help business transform their day-to-day operations to adapt, evolve and meet the demands of the digital economy?

Now more than ever, technology has increasingly become deeply rooted in our lives. As organisations continue to embrace digital-first strategies, connectivity has become an intrinsic need to stay competitive.

As a global leader in connectivity solutions, D-Link is constantly innovating to provide enterprises today with relevant ground-breaking technologies and superior products to enable them to thrive in the digital era.

Our offerings such as the Nuclias Connect and Nuclias Cloud Remote Network Management Solutions saw a significant uptick over the last 18 months, especially at a time when remote working solutions were critical for organisations' business continuity.

These solutions enabled businesses to effortlessly manage their networks from the cloud, while enjoying benefits such as cost-

savings, end-to-end control and security.

Seamless network connections and fast Wi-Fi are also vital to the success of digital workspaces, remote business models and e-learning. This has also prompted the demand from regional telcos for a solution that will help support increased network bandwidths to ensure continuous connectivity.

To answer this pertinent market need, we launched the state-of-the-art Wi-Fi 6 routers – DIR-X1560 EXO AX AX1500 and DIR-X1860 EXO AX AX1800 – early last year. The devices are powered with Wi-Fi 6 (802.11ax) technology, ensuring that they deliver faster speeds, greater capacity and less network congestion.

Furthermore, to support seamless and secure wireless connectivity for today's remote workforces, we also have an extensive portfolio of dual-band or tri-band routers including our flagship Wi-Fi Router AC1200 Dual Band and EXO Wi-Fi Router AC2600 MU-MIMO. D-Link routers are also integrated with a Mesh Network system, which offers seamless, secure and high-performance Wi-Fi connectivity.

Digital Transformation has accelerated rapidly since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, but as an IT leader and expert, what are the key principles and processes businesses need to define and determine before embarking on their digital transformation journey?

Any digital transformation strategy needs to start with a clear vision, hence, the journey should first start with determining the 'why'. Many leaders often believe that digitalisation starts with investing in technologies and the 'why' is only discussed afterwards.

This is a backwards approach, which often leads to failure. A key first step is identifying a compelling business case and clear business value in embarking on your digital transformation journey.

Then the next step is aligning business goals with IT objectives. Traditionally, the IT team is called upon by the company's leadership when there is a need for them to fix systems or services.

Today, that is no longer the case as technology increasingly becomes a key business driver. Digital transformation is not a one-off project, it is an ongoing process that's a catalyst to the evolution and success of the business. Therefore, the IT team needs to be a co-creator of the organisation's digital roadmap.

Another key pillar of the digitalisation journey is culture change. Digital transformation should be a shared vision among everyone within the organisation. All members of the business should embrace the culture of innovation and have an appetite for change.

The next step is developing a strategy. You don't have to overhaul your entire business' systems or infrastructure in one go. You can start with small projects that provide a valuable impact on the business.

Doing so will give you 'quick wins', which will not only provide you with an opportunity to showcase the success of the



Sakkeer Hussain

initiative and win over employees, but also help you learn from the process and apply the success to a bigger project later on.

Last but not least is finding the right partners and expertise. Embarking on a digital transformation is no small feat, therefore, you cannot do it alone. That's why it is important to find the right technology partners as well as implementation partners to help you determine the right technologies and processes that will enable you to achieve your vision.

We know that technology is advancing more now than it has ever done so in the past, but what is your vision for the future in terms of the tech trends that are really going to drive change and foster further innovation in the next 3-5 years?

Data will remain to be one of the primary drivers of digital transformation. Businesses today have access to more data than ever. By 2025, the total amount of

digital data created worldwide will rise to 175 zettabytes, according to IDC.

With customers seeking more hyper-personalised experiences and services, businesses will need to develop data-driven strategies to consumer demands.

Another technology that will accelerate change is 5G. This technology will enable greater speed to move more data and more responsive services. 5G will fuel innovation at the edge because it will speed up compute and processing power at the network edge.

5G will be especially important as the number of IoT devices rises. It will also pave the way for the success of use cases such as telemedicine, smart city and autonomous cars among others.

Finally, artificial intelligence (AI) will transform a variety of industries.

The applications of AI are limitless. It can enable hyperautomation and intelligent processes across retail, transportation,

manufacturing and more. It can also enhance aspects such as cybersecurity, making them more efficient and intuitive.

We know that cybersecurity is a major challenge in the current IT ecosystem, and we have seen the damage done by a series of ransomware attacks over the last number of months. In your expert opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing businesses in today's climate?

Social engineering attacks such as phishing remain to be a big concern for organisations. This is primarily because many threat actors find this as a very effective technique in gaining access to an organisation's system. It exploits the weaknesses of unaware or misinformed employees and tricks them into clicking links or emails that will open the doors for a hacker to infiltrate their organisation's network. Therefore, it is vital for enterprises to have a robust security awareness programme, especially as they continue to embrace remote or hybrid working models.

Another challenge is the rise of mobile security threats. With the prevalence of remote working, employees often utilise personal devices or connect to insecure networks to complete their day-to-day tasks. Furthermore, to increase productivity, many remote workers also tend to download and install unsanctioned cloud applications. In doing so, they put their corporate data at risk.

Lastly, the biggest challenge, which has been around for the last few years, is the skills gap. While every industry across the world is focused on embracing the latest technology, there remains the challenge of the lack of qualified professionals for current and emerging IT roles. Therefore, global technology players have a responsibility to help foster future technology professionals, which will help build a more successful and sustainable IT ecosystem.

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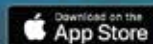


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VIDEO COLLABORATION IS KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF 'WORK FROM ANYWHERE'

Loubna Imenchal, Head of Video Collaboration, Africa, Middle East, Turkey, and Central Asia at Logitech discusses the strengths of video collaboration in today's digital economy, key principles to keep in mind before embarking on a digital transformation journey and major cybersecurity challenges for the IT ecosystem.

Loubna Imenchal



Can you outline to us how your company has demonstrated its ability to leverage its technological expertise to help business transform their day-to-day operations to adapt, evolve and meet the demands of the digital economy?

There is no doubt that organisations across all verticals have accelerated their digital transformation journey since COVID-19 hit. Hybrid models of operating have become the norm, and teams have been forced to work and collaborate in more innovative ways. As part of their broader transformation plans, and given the current scenario, organisations increasingly understand the value of video collaboration tools to keep teams connected and collaborate effectively — with each other, and with partners and clients.

In the current situation, with restrictions on people's movement having an impact on the ability of organisations to collaborate, video collaboration tools have an important role to play in helping organisations execute their plans effectively, and they can overcome these obstacles by investing in the right video conferencing tools for their needs.

Before the pandemic, executives travelled to physical meetings and used video conferencing only occasionally — usually for calls with colleagues or clients in another city or overseas. But now the situation has transformed, and video conferencing has become the primary means of holding meetings. Furthermore, organisations in the Middle East increasingly understand the importance of having the best possible quality audio and video to enhance their meetings and to make a good impression on partners and customers.

As the Middle East emerges from the pandemic, we expect to see demand remain strong. While organisations will no doubt return to having some face-to-face meetings and limited business trips, video conferencing will remain a pillar of communications and hybrid work.

Organisations will also scrutinise the value of face-to-face meetings and business travel

with more zeal than before, and management will be acutely aware that executives can take part in more video conferencing meetings than face-to-face meetings on a given day. The potential productivity gains and cost savings are enormous.

Video collaboration will be key to the success of 'work from anywhere' models. Members of teams working in different locations need to collaborate, and quality video calls are one of the best means of ensuring team members feel psychologically connected. It helps motivate teams, fosters collaboration, and helps boost innovation and problem-solving. We have seen this during the pandemic, and the same will hold true in the post-pandemic period, with hybrid working models set to be a mainstream feature of the modern workplace.

Q2. Digital Transformation has accelerated rapidly since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, but as an IT leader and expert, what are the key principles and processes businesses need to define and determine before embarking on their digital transformation journey?

Before any digital transformation process, organisations need to understand what they are trying to achieve and why, so that the project has a real purpose and is aligned with the organisation's vision and mission. All concerned departments should be involved in the process from the earliest stages so that everybody is on board and feels involved. When people feel like they are stakeholders, they are far more likely to be enthusiastic and energised about a transformation project, and when everyone is enthused and pulling in the same direction, great things will happen.

Q3. We know that technology is advancing more now than it has ever done so in the past, but what is your vision for the future in terms of the tech trends that are really going to drive change and foster further innovation in the next 3-5 years?

I believe we will see the adoption of automation

and AI accelerate even further in the coming three to five years. AI, along with 5G, cloud and Edge technology will be used in ever more nuanced ways to enrich our lives.

A good example of how Logitech is using AI to boost collaboration is our Rally Bar and Scribe products. Logitech Rally Bar and Rally Bar Mini, which are purpose-built video collaboration solutions for mid-sized rooms and small meeting rooms respectively, feature built in AI. Both video bars come equipped with Logitech RightSense technology and AI Viewfinder, a second camera dedicated to computer vision. The camera detects human figures and processes where they are in real-time, enhancing the precision of Logitech RightSight auto-framing and camera control so meeting participants are always in focus, whether they are late joining or moving about.

“While organisations will no doubt return to having some face-to-face meetings and limited business trips, video conferencing will remain a pillar of communications and hybrid work”

Logitech Scribe is an AI-powered whiteboard camera that is compatible with leading services like Microsoft Teams and Zoom. It broadcasts whiteboard content into video meetings with incredible clarity, virtually transporting everyone into the same room. The AI enables the device to render the user invisible, so that they don't get in the way of the content they are creating on the white board. It's ideal for education and we're excited about bringing it to the Middle East.

Video collaboration will continue to grow in importance and will take on increasingly significant roles in sectors including education and healthcare, where professional grade video

collaboration has the power to boost learning and help save lives.

We know that cybersecurity is a major challenge in the current IT ecosystem, and we have seen the damage done by a series of ransomware attacks over the last number of months. In your expert opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing businesses in today's climate?

One of the biggest challenges being faced by organisations today is ensuring that remote teams collaborate and communicate effectively. Even as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, it appears very likely that many people will continue to work remotely some of the time, and virtual meetings will remain as a key component of people's working lives. In this light it is imperative that organisations ensure that their employees have the tools they need to be engaged and productive wherever they are working.

As remote workforces transition into long-term hybrid working styles, workers need easy-to-use, enterprise-grade collaboration tools as they move between home and office.

In terms of engendering a culture of collaboration, video conferencing tools are important for keeping your workforce active, engaged, and connected with their colleagues. This is important for people working remotely and can have an impact on an organisation's ability to retain talented staff.

Employees who feel engaged will also be happier and more productive, producing better work and better results for your company.

Human beings are naturally social. Working remotely can lead to alienation from your colleagues. Seamless, quality video collaboration overcomes this. A relatively small investment in video collaboration technology pays off very quickly through increased productivity from a happier workforce, reduced demand for IT to fix glitches, and improved relationships with partners and customers, who can also benefit from seamless video collaboration with your organisation.

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ZERO TRUST SECURITY IS CRITICAL

Avinash Advani, Founder and CEO of Cyberknight, has expressed his belief that Zero Trust Security needs to be at the forefront of the minds of decision-makers when it comes to implementing their digital transformation strategy.

Can you outline to us how your company has demonstrated its ability to leverage its technological expertise to help business transform their day-to-day operations to adapt, evolve and meet the demands of the digital economy?

CyberKnight is a cybersecurity advisor and a VAD. We have tailor-made our portfolio offering around Zero Trust Security. As we emerge from the pandemic, several key dynamics are being considered in upcoming plans that put Zero Trust Security at the top of the Board agenda.

Firstly, security decision makers are now looking to optimise their secure remote access as well as cloud architectures, since many organisations were thrown into work-from-home mode overnight when the pandemic struck.

They instantly realised the inefficiencies and pitfalls of traditional security infrastructures. Secondly, as the perimeter suddenly grew exponentially with remote working, managing trust became a challenge, and ensuring that the right users, applications, and devices were given access to sensitive data

became even more critical.

Thirdly, digital transformation initiatives have accelerated and complex hybrid environment that ensue, naturally introduce security gaps which need to be bridged with intelligent cybersecurity. Lastly, cyber-attackers have been taking advantage of the expanded attack surface and the number and types of attacks have increased dramatically.

Our ZTX methodology incorporates emerging and market-leading cybersecurity solutions that protect the entire attack surface, by leveraging AI, threat intelligence and collective defense. CyberKnight helps security and risk teams at enterprise and government customers simplify breach detection, prevention, and incident response, while addressing regulatory compliance.

Digital Transformation has accelerated rapidly since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, but as an IT leader and expert, what are the key principles and processes businesses need to define and determine

before embarking on their digital transformation journey?

Zero Trust Security fundamentally secures digital transformation, but there are some critical assumptions that need to be considered, followed by key steps that need to be taken.

Organisations first need to focus on data-centric security, which always follows sensitive data. Then, it is important to be aware that the network is always hostile from omnipresent internal and external threats. It is also essential to look at trust differently from traditional security architectures, wherein the internal network no longer equals trustworthiness. Finally, every user, device and traffic flow will need to be proven while logging and inspecting all traffic.

When the journey to Zero Trust Security begins, businesses first need to discover and identify their sensitive data. They must be able to answer the questions, "Where is my sensitive data and who owns it?"

Then, they will need to gain visibility and map the flows of the sensitive data



Avinash Advani

and its transactions. This time the questions that need to be answered are, “Who is accessing my sensitive data and from where, where is it going, when is it being used, how is it being used, when is it being used?”.

Once these answers are ready, businesses can proceed to architect the Zero Trust micro perimeters: Identity, Data, Networks and Applications, each of which need to be considered as separate projects.

We know that technology is advancing more now than it has ever done so in the past, but what is your vision for the future in terms of the tech trends that are really going to drive change and foster further innovation in the next 3-5 years?

From an IT Security trends perspective over the next few years, ML and AI will

play key roles in the SOC, businesses will rise quickly to cloud adoption, implementation of Zero Trust Security will become crucial, end-to-end detection and response capabilities leveraging XDR for threat hunting will be the norm.

Threat intelligence and behavioral

“When the journey to Zero Trust Security begins, businesses first need to discover and identify their sensitive data.”

sharing will also be commonplace to reduce attacker lateral movement and IR times, and human security will drastically be improved through user empowerment plus automation of phishing defense.

We know that cybersecurity is a major challenge in the current IT ecosystem, and we have seen the damage done by a series of ransomware attacks over the last number of months. In your expert opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing businesses in today’s climate?

Budgets were severely impacted during the pandemic, and although we believe we are entering a post-pandemic world, it may take some time for budgets to return to pre-pandemic levels and then grow from there. Simultaneously, the CISO role is becoming more important, and reporting up to the Board regularly is part of the new normal.

Additional challenges that these leaders face include doing more with less, e.g., covering more requirements with less budget, addressing cybersecurity goals with limited resources, consolidation of tools but with more coverage etc.

When it comes to ransomware and similar threats, it is vital that businesses rapidly ramp up their security maturity and posture, because foundational security, like a ransomware solution stack is all that a business needs to minimise the impact of becoming the next victim and statistic.

As attackers are constantly moving faster than security controls, stopping zero-day targeted attacks will still require advanced security tools, but let’s take it one step at a time.



CyberKnight



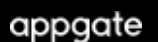
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COLLABORATION IS THE KEY

S.M. Hussaini, CEO of Almoayyed Computers, believes that 'collaboration' will be critical in the post-pandemic world – and will fuel innovations and investment in security, blockchain and cloud.

S.M. Hussaini



Can you outline to us how your company has demonstrated its ability to leverage its technological expertise to help business transform their day-to-day operations to adapt, evolve and meet the demands of the digital economy?

Staying aligned with technology developments and delivering the benefits of these changes has been a consistent USP of our business.

We saw the imminent needs of the emerging digital economy well in advance and invested in our own readiness.

We started evangelising the advantages of moving to cloud and achieved some major success in making the cloud transformation



possible for our clients across different market verticals – be it the government entities, banks, payment service providers or healthcare service providers. RPA has been another focus area for us.

We not only helped our customers embrace this automation but made skills development possible through various academic alliances. In addition, we took the lead in applications modernisation to make them ready for the digital era.

We were particularly successful with low-code based application developments and interestingly, the major beneficiaries were our customers in the banking sector. Overall, we helped our customers transform their applications as well the platform to excel in the digital era.

Digital Transformation has accelerated rapidly since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, but as an IT leader and expert, what are the key principles and processes businesses need to define and determine before embarking on their digital transformation journey?

Pandemic made the world realise the profound impact technology can have on our personal as well as professional lives. But for technology that was already in place along with the quick adoption of digital tools, things would have been a lot more challenging and far more damaging.

While we look at digital transformation as a need and a key strategy to stay relevant and meet growth objectives, we need to define the outcomes in advance. The outcome

“The key challenges businesses are facing currently is obtaining trained resources and increased budget for security initiatives.”

should encompass the expected impact on the organisation from within as well as how they are seen from outside.

The outcome can be of varied nature – value creation for internal and external stakeholders, new revenue stream, better customer retention, better service experience and so on. In short it is important to define the outcomes, list the internal and external impacts as the tools needed maybe different.

Besides, to make the transformation successful a concerted effort is required towards making the adoption of the new tools and the new way of working, as easy and widespread as possible.

We know that technology is advancing more now than it has ever done so in the past, but what is your vision for the future in terms of the tech trends that are really going to drive change and foster further innovation in the next 3-5 years?

The future technology trends will be guided by the pace of technology adoption as well the post-pandemic new normal. Undoubtedly, our

behaviour, personal and professional lives shall change. If I were to single out one key trend it shall be collaboration.

It shall not only increase, but also become all encompassing. From people to people, device to device and app to app – we shall see enhanced collaboration, fuelling the adoption of IoT, AI/ML and further creating the need to invest more in blockchain and security while Cloud becoming the de facto platform.

We know that cybersecurity is a major challenge in the current IT ecosystem, and we have seen the damage done by a series of ransomware attacks over the last number of months. In your expert opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing businesses in today's climate?

The key challenges businesses are facing currently is obtaining trained resources and increased budget for security initiatives. The initiatives often involve not just technical controls but also changes to people behavior and processes.

Ransomware as we know is a result of poor cybersecurity hygiene. The security situation is very dynamic and fast moving with businesses getting left behind while trying to catch-up with the changing landscape. Most businesses have not adopted to yesterday's threats let alone dealing with the current ones such as cloud security, identity management and sophisticated threat actors.

Businesses must prioritise security as much as they prioritise digital transformation.

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THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

Vildana Karalić-Avdić, Infobip's Head of Marketing MENA, believes that a seamless and elevated customer experience is critical in ensuring enterprises meet the demands of their end-users in the ever-evolving digital economy.

Vildana Karalić-Avdić



Can you outline to us how your company has demonstrated its ability to leverage its technological expertise to help business transform their day-to-day operations to adapt, evolve, and meet the demands of the digital economy?

We are particularly proud of how our full stack of SaaS solutions built around the AI segment has played a pivotal role in pushing businesses forward by elevating how they engage with their clients. After all, the digital economy is about connecting individuals and companies.

By empowering businesses and making them more accessible to their client base through our SaaS and CPaaS solutions, we are enabling them to adapt to shifting trends in customer engagement and evolving business operations.

Customers today want to

communicate with brands and businesses over platforms that are familiar, fast, and reliable. This is where we help businesses meet those demands, by ensuring their end users get the most value in real-time and through their preferred channels.

Digital Transformation has accelerated rapidly since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, but as an IT leader and expert, what are the key principles and processes businesses need to define and determine before embarking on their digital transformation journey?

Let me start with an important step, in my opinion. That is ensuring you have top management buy-in, vision, and willingness to make the switch.

Before embarking on this journey, you need to invest in a growth mindset, an internal culture ready to make the shift. The next step is to assess your internal readiness in terms of mindset and in terms of operations.

The next step is to observe your current growth strategy and evaluate what tweaks are needed to accommodate the transformation. For example, if you want to integrate cloud-based communication solutions, do you have a solid communication strategy? Have you embraced a customer-centric approach?

Lastly, when it is time to make the change, it is crucial to invest in a platform that is easy to manage and seamless to integrate with different channels.

At Infobip, we were also pushed to diversify our portfolio of products & solutions and tailor them further to

help businesses and customers stay afloat and thrive during the challenging pandemic times. It all boils down to being agile and ready to embrace the change.

We know that technology is advancing more now than it has ever done so in the past, but what is your vision for the future in terms of the tech trends that are really going to drive change and foster further innovation in the next 3-5 years?

I would say that it will all revolve around effortless experiences & communication. It will come down to creating solutions and technologies

“For us, it’s all about frictionless omnichannel solutions that aim to elevate the customer journey and overall experience.”

that are making people’s lives easier in a nutshell. We are incredibly excited about what’s next on Infobip’s horizon in that sphere. For us, it’s all about frictionless omnichannel solutions that aim to elevate the customer journey and overall experience.

Data-driven solutions are part of the way forward where SaaS and CPaaS play an integral role with the overall aim of further product optimisation to enhance the customer experience at every step.

Lastly, we project that more businesses will make the necessary shift to cloud-based contact centers to ensure that clients receive the support they need when they need it, and over the channels they use daily.

We know that cybersecurity is a major challenge in the current IT ecosystem, and we have seen the damage done by a series of ransomware attacks over the last number of months. In your expert opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing businesses in today’s climate?

Maintaining stringent and evolving security measures play an integral role in an organisation’s strategy. IT decision-makers need to double their efforts to identify solutions that address their changing business needs and keep ongoing security threats at bay.

When looking for an omnichannel solutions provider, one of the essential determining factors that need to be evaluated is the service provider’s security. Infobip is putting a lot of focus on the security, protection, and privacy of data.

We have very strict security and privacy policies & standards in place. This makes it possible for us to provide a truly frictionless experience for the end-user. Therefore, it is important for businesses to look for solutions that are agile and adaptable in terms of growth strategy and meeting security requirements.

Technical competency, or lack thereof, is another challenge. Businesses must invest in providing regular training to empower their staff and ensure security measures are being followed.



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