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WHERE TECHNOLOGY MEANS BUSINESS

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DIRECTOR SALES EMEA

LENOVO'S TELECOM
DIRECTOR EMEA

DELL TECHNOLOGIES
SENIOR DIRECTOR MERAT

DIGITAL TO THE CORE

KAMEL AL-TAWIL, MANAGING DIRECTOR – MENA, EQUINIX
BELIEVES THAT A 'DIGITAL CORE' IS FUNDAMENTAL IN
ACHIEVING YOUR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION GOALS IN
THE RAPIDLY-EVOLVING DIGITAL ECONOMY.

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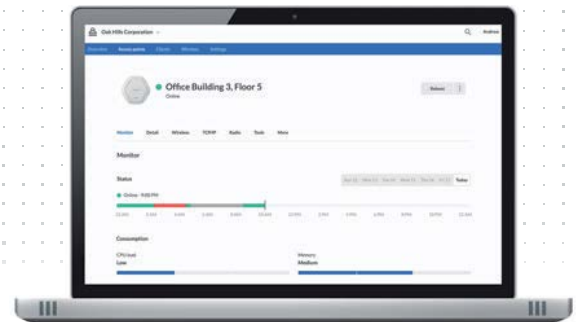
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GITEX Global demonstrated how some of the world's most innovative companies were leveraging their cutting-edge solutions and technologies to drive transformation."

GITEX GOES 'GLOBAL'

GITEX was a casualty of the global pandemic in 2020, and although the conference still went ahead in December last year, it was very a different version to what we have become accustomed to over the years.

However, the region's flagship IT and technology symposium was back with a bang this year!

GITEX Global demonstrated how some of the world's most innovative companies were leveraging their cutting-edge solutions and technologies to drive transformation across multiple industry verticals in the new and rapidly changing digital economy that we are currently immersed in.

The event lived up to its billing, and it truly was a 'global' event, with key industry stakeholders coming from the United States, Canada, UK, Germany, Italy, Ireland, India, China and South Africa to name just a few to participate in the 5-day conference.

CPI Media Group enjoyed a very successful week and conducted over 100+ interviews, including face-to-face discussions with some of the most prominent thought leaders from the IT ecosystem.

Our coveted Future Enterprise Awards, held on Day 1 of GITEX were also a phenomenal success.

Rather inevitably, November's edition of CNME is packed with interviews from GITEX and we really do have some compelling and candid conversations with IT leaders that have been tasked with the responsibility of driving new growth and innovation for their companies in what has been dubbed the 'experience economy'.

On the front cover, we have a terrific interview with Kamel Al-Tawil, Managing Director, MENA at Equinix.

In a wide-ranging interview he stressed the importance of having a 'digital core' to be able to implement the digital transformation that you really need to yield and seize on the undisputed benefits brought by technologies such as cloud and AI.

In this month's edition of Women in Tech, we spoke to Loubna Imenchal from Logitech, who documented the difficulties she has faced in climbing the corporate ladder in the IT industry, and whilst she conceded that strides have been made, she declared that a lot more needs to be done to address gender disparity in the IT sector.

Lenovo's Antonio Bocigas highlighted how telecom operators need to adopt a collaborative approach to building new revenue streams for their business and made the case for Open RAN, which he believes can derive huge value for service providers in the current landscape.

Alakh Verma, CEO of Centriq, outlined how he was confident the success his company has enjoyed in empowering retailers with greater visibility on their data in the United States, can be replicated here in the Middle East, and disclosed there had been interest from some companies in the UAE and Bahrain, who wanted to invest in the boutique solutions provider.

In addition to this, we have brilliant interviews with Accedian, Huawei and Falcon Pack, and exclusive op-eds from Dell Technologies and GCG.

Enjoy!

Mark Forker
Editor



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6 News

CNME rounds up the biggest regional and global developments in enterprise technology, which includes the announcement that Automation Anywhere has appointed their first ever CPO. A report from Gartner indicates that government investments in AI have increased but workforces remain skeptical – and Moro Hub have announced a new strategic partnership with Milestone Systems.

10 Savio Dias, Senior Director - Sales Engineering, EMEA and APAC at Avaya talks about the impact the GITEX High Flyer program has for nurturing new talent in IT.

20 Loubna Imenchal, Head of Video Collaboration, AMECA at Logitech outlines what needs to be done to level the playing field when it comes to gender equality in the

IT industry in our latest edition of Women in Tech.

36 Marco Fanizzi, General Manager, EMEA at Commvault highlights how they are leveraging their expertise to better protect their customers from the increased threat of cyberattacks.

40 Antoine Abi Aad, General Manager, Emitac Enterprise Solutions explains the unique capabilities presented by HPE's GreenLake cloud consumption model.

44 Alakh Verma, CEO at Centriq, illustrates how the boutique solutions provider is empowering retailers to make better decisions by giving them greater visibility on their data.

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Automation Anywhere appoints its first CPO



Adi Kuruganti, CPO, Automation Anywhere

Automation Anywhere, a global leader in robotic process automation (RPA), today announced it has appointed Adi Kuruganti as its first chief product officer.

Kuruganti joins Automation Anywhere from Salesforce where he spent the last 15 years, most recently as Senior Vice President and General Manager of the Experience Cloud business unit. His expertise includes building cloud-first digital platforms, including customer and partner portals, commerce storefronts, websites, mobile apps, and other omnichannel digital experiences. During Adi's tenure at Salesforce, his team helped build vaccine management, contract tracing, and solutions that powered other digital transformation initiatives for customers around the world.

"Adi's deep cloud expertise will accelerate our market leading cloud-native, AI-powered automation solutions", said Mike Micucci, Chief Operating Officer at Automation Anywhere. "I'm thrilled to have Adi on board as we fast-track innovation for new and existing customers".

"During the pandemic, organisations accelerated their digital transformation initiatives as employees and customers transitioned to a hybrid work-from-anywhere model", Kuruganti said. "Cloud-native intelligent automation became the critical technology powering this change. Automation Anywhere is the leader in cloud-based automation and I am excited to empower our customers with new, innovative automation solutions that unlock human potential and transform the way we work"



Logitech Video Collaboration Takes the Lead

As technology continues to reshape work, Logitech is uniquely positioned to help address emerging and evolving hybrid work trends. Raising the bar on meeting room solutions and optimising video conferencing for the hybrid worker, our products have become a hallmark for frictionless user experiences and scalable deployments for every meeting space. We owe our success to our customers, who believe in the quality of our VC products, from conference cameras to complete room solutions.

Loubna Imenchal, Head of Video collaboration for AMECA region (Africa, Middle East Turkey, and Central Asia), said: "The results of recent surveys are

very encouraging and confirm what we see in the field here in the Middle East. Organisations increasingly recognise the value of high quality, seamless video collaboration, and with the ongoing shift to hybrid working and learning, we look forward to helping teams collaborate with our best-in-class video collaboration tools".

Logitech Video Collaboration is on a mission to elevate video conferencing for all – and we aim to keep leading the way. Visit our VC hub today to learn more about how Logitech is raising the bar on meeting room solutions and optimising video conferencing for hybrid work.



Moro Hub announces partnership with Milestone Systems

Moro Hub (Data Hub Integrated Solutions LLC), subsidiary of Digital DEWA, the digital arm of Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Milestone Systems, a leading provider of an open platform video management software, as part of its continuous efforts to fast-track the Moro Hub's digital transformation efforts. The agreement was signed between Mohammad bin Sulaiman, CEO of Moro Hub and Jos Beemink, EMEA Director and Acting Vice President, Milestone on Monday 18th October 2021 at GITEX Technology Week at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

"The Milestone-Moro Hub MoU will play a pivotal role in Moro Hub's initiatives to be a leader in the deployment of the most innovative technologies available today. Our collaboration is also aligned with our efforts to boost Dubai's bid to become the smartest city in the world and help achieve the objectives of UAE Centennial 2071 and Dubai 10X initiative. We are happy to collaborate with Milestone in our endeavours as it joins our ever-expanding network of technology partners. Through this partnership, Moro Hub will also be able to explore and reach out to private and public sector businesses in the region", Mohammad bin Sulaiman, CEO of Moro Hub said.

Gartner Says Government Organisations Are Increasing Investment in AI, But Their Workforce Remains Apprehensive



Government organisations around the world are adopting artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to help them achieve their public purpose or mission, but government employees are still concerned about the technology's impact, according to Gartner, Inc.

Thirty-six percent of government respondents in the 2021 Gartner CIO survey indicated that they planned to increase investment in AI/machine learning in 2021.

Chatbots or conversational agents are leading the way in government AI technology adoption, with 26% of survey respondents reporting they have already deployed them. A further 59% expect to have deployed them within the next three years, according to the Gartner Digital Transformation Divergence Across Government Sectors survey.

However, a separate Gartner survey found that AI technologies are still viewed with a level of uncertainty, especially among the government employees who have not worked with any AI-backed solutions. More than half (53%) of government employees who have worked with AI technologies believe they provide insights to do their job better, compared to 34% of employees who have not used AI.

"Automation, insight and intelligence are all interconnected priorities for government leaders", said Dean Lacheca, senior research director at Gartner. "But the operational and services delivery workforce are absolutely critical to the success of any attempts to automate or augment their ways of working. Leaders can generate more acceptance by clearly linking the technology to practical outcomes that benefit government employees and support mission objectives".

While chatbots and conversational agents are currently the most widely adopted, the most significant AI technology for governments in terms of planned adoption is machine-learning-supported data mining. Sixteen percent have currently deployed it and a further 69% plan to within the next three years.

Beyond the two leading AI technologies, government organisations also plan to implement more specialised AI solutions, such as geospatial AI (GeoAI) which uses AI methods to produce knowledge through the analysis of spatial data and imagery. The lower uptake reflects the fact that it is more relevant to sub-sectors of government such as defence and intelligence, transportation, and local government.

EnGenius Enhances Security focus with new Cloud PRO Access Points featuring AirGenie



Alishan Zaidi, Sales Director, EnGenius

EnGenius, a globally leading networking brand that provides high-performance, end to end networking solutions for small to mid-size businesses, is introducing the new EnGenius Cloud PRO Access points featuring pre-built enterprise grade security features to secure the wireless networks against malicious cyber-attacks. With the new solutions, EnGenius is ensuring that Businesses will be able to prevent any unauthorised access to their wireless networks and secure all authorised users.

An increasing number of malicious cyberattacks on corporate networks in the past year has underscored the need for organisations to enhance their wireless security. The hybrid work model has only accentuated the security risks with remote workers seeming especially vulnerable to such attacks. The new EnGenius Cloud PRO Access points are aimed to secure both on premise and remote workers who at any point during their work may need to access sensitive data that may be either from on premise infrastructure or from the cloud.

Alishan Zaidi, Sales Director at EnGenius says, "EnGenius has always been a pioneer of breakthrough networking technologies and with our AI enabled EnGenius Cloud, we helped deliver unprecedented ease and efficiency in network management, right from deployment to monitoring and troubleshooting. We are now enhancing our Cloud enabled Access Points portfolio with these launches allowing organisations to detect and take action against rogue APs that are conduits for cybercrime".

New Aruba Survey Uncovers Emerging Security Threats Linked to 'Generation Novel'



Morten Illum, Vice President, EMEA for Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company.

After years of responding to the needs of Gen X and Gen Y, a new study from Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company, suggests employers have a whole new generation to grapple with post-pandemic – with 85% of hybrid workers saying they identify with the traits of the emerging Generation Novel (Gen-N).

Coined by digital anthropologist Brian Solis, Gen-N describes a cross-generational cohort of people who thrive on digital-first experiences, and

place greater value on personalisation, customisation, and transparency from the brands they buy from, work for, and support. Above all else, they also understand, use and demand more from technology than ever before – both at home and work.

According to the study of 5,018 hybrid workers across EMEA, 78% of respondents say they use technology more now than they did before COVID-19, and 75% consider themselves to be 'digitally savvy'. Sixty-nine percent of respondents agree they now have more of an opinion on the technology they use at work and 71% feel it's important to be able to customise their workplace tech set-up to suit their individual preferences.

The survey also revealed the risks this new generation will bring to the workplace if their expectations continue to go unmet. As it stands, only 38% of respondents say they have any significant choice in their workplace technology. Without the right technology, workers indicated they will

experience decreased productivity (35%) and a poorer work/life balance (23%). Gen-N's expectations around increased flexibility and confidence in their technical abilities also opens businesses up to a number of security risks relating to where, when, and what employees connect to the network – with 50% of respondents, for example, claiming they are more likely to try to resolve a tech issue themselves now than they would have been before the pandemic.

"Our research suggests that this emerging generation of hybrid workers, with its evolving behaviours and heightened expectations, will put new demands on employers when it comes to workplace technology", said Morten Illum, Vice President, EMEA for Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company. "In order to mitigate the security risk that Gen-N poses, as well as boost efficiency within their workforce and support their employees, businesses must address these new needs. Striking the balance between an open but secure network will afford employees the flexibility, freedom and personalisation they now seek, without compromising on security".



Bob Cai, CMO, Huawei's Carrier Business Group.

As a leading global provider of ICT infrastructure and smart devices, Huawei incorporates green development into everything they do. They see this as part of their social responsibilities.

Introduced by Bob Cai, Chief Marketing Officer of Huawei's Carrier Business Group, at the Huawei Green Better World Summit, ICT infrastructure will play a central role in emission-reduction efforts, and Huawei said assisting with

Huawei showcases green 5G technologies at the Better World Summit in Dubai

this was part of the company's social responsibilities.

Cai said, "With our innovative products and solutions, we will help operators cut carbon emissions and make their networks more energy efficient. We also want to work with operators and use ICT to better enable other industries to cut carbon emissions and become carbon neutral faster".

"Right now the ICT industry enables other industries, like coal mining, like ports, like manufacturing," Mr. Cai told the summit. "ICT can make a great contribution to these industries to not only improve efficiency, but to bring green solutions to realise carbon neutrality".

Mr. Cai described how Huawei deployed technologies such as 5G, IoT and cloud to industries such as agriculture, where it

improves the management of farmland.

This is illustrated by Huawei's operations in Switzerland, where the company has worked with partners to use 5G to control drones used for the targeted inspection of crops. AI on the cloud allows intelligent computing and control, reducing pesticide use by four-fifths and herbicide use by half. Green ICT technologies will offer similar benefits to myriad other industries, Mr. Cai told delegates.

As well as assisting other organisations with their efforts to cut carbon emissions, Huawei is working to reduce its own carbon footprint.

At next year's MWC Barcelona, Huawei will hold a green development forum, with all industry partners and operators welcome to attend.

Veritas Simplifies Data Backup to the Cloud



Doug Matthews, Vice President, Product Management, Veritas.

Veritas Technologies, the leader

in enterprise data protection, today announced Veritas NetBackup Recovery Vault, a simple, fully-managed storage as a service data repository for Veritas NetBackup. Generally available later

this year, Recovery Vault will provide mission critical ransomware resiliency as a purpose-built, air-gapped storage tier for backups, while reducing the cost and complexity of using cloud storage from a selection of leading providers for long term retention and reliable recovery of backup data.

“Backup data represents the last line of defence against Ransomware”, said Doug Matthews, Vice President of Product Management at Veritas. “Organisations need a simple, secure and cost-effective way to adopt cloud storage for long term data retention. It is absolutely imperative for enterprises to have the cloud repository Recovery Vault will provide, backed by the market leading solution they trust for their recovery needs—NetBackup”.

Kingston FURY Line Unleashes Its PCIe 4.0 NVMe Performance SSD



Kingston FURY, the gaming division

of Kingston Technology Company, Inc., a world leader in memory products and technology solutions, today announced Kingston FURY Renegade SSD, its next generation PCIe 4.0 NVMe M.2 drive for gamers, enthusiasts, and high-power users. Kingston FURY Renegade SSD delivers cutting-edge performance in high capacities using the latest Gen 4x4 controller and 3D TLC NAND.

By maximising the available bandwidth of PCIe 4.0, Kingston FURY Renegade SSD achieves speeds up to 7,300/7,000MB/s read/write and up to 1,000,000 IOPS to deliver amazing consistency for an exceptional gaming experience. The drive is optimised to reduce game and application load times, stream and capture with ease and give your system an overall boost

in responsiveness. Available in high capacities up to 4TB, users can store an extensive library of their favourite games and

media and still have space for the latest titles. In addition to formidable speeds and massive capacity options, Kingston FURY Renegade SSD combines a slim M.2 form factor and an advanced low profile, graphene aluminium heat spreader to keep your drive cool during intense usage and bring superior performance to the tightest of spaces in gaming PC's and laptops.

“Kingston FURY Renegade SSD pushes the limits of PCIe Gen4 technology to equip users with the high-performance storage required to elevate their gaming setup and experience as a whole”, said Tony Hollingsbee, SSD Business Manager, Kingston EMEA. “Users can combine the Kingston FURY Renegade SSD with the Kingston FURY memory line for the ultimate team to help keep them at the top of their game”.

International Securities complete their Cloud transformation with CNS Middle East



International Securities, the UAE

leading stock market and investment brokerage, a subsidiary of International Holding Company, has become the first brokerage firm in the UAE market to be completely transformed into cloud. The project has been delivered completely by CNS while both organisations will continue their partnership for managing the entire cloud platform.

Ayman Hamed, CEO International Securities said: “There is no doubt this is an important milestone in International Securities journey, the Cloud transformation is just a first step toward building better and secure journey for our clients, and the fact we were the first brokage firm in the UAE to shift to cloud platform give us an edge ahead of the competition. CNS teams were successful in delivering the required solution without interruption in the business which give us confidence to continue the partnership”.

Hatem Hariri, Managing Director, CNS Middle East Said: “CNS long history in serving the BFSI market is very well known by the industry. We have been trusted to deliver critical technology application and services to financial institution for the last 20 + years. We are very proud to have partnered with international securities on this critical, and sensitive technology migration to the digital world for them. We are very proud to have completed this cutting-edge project and to be trusted by International Securities to partner with them on their digitalisation journey and get their critical information seamlessly into the extremely secure environment of the cloud”.



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A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

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CPI Media Group hosted their prestigious Future Enterprise Awards at Ritz-Carlton Hotel DIFC, on Day 1 of GITEX Global. The awards paid tribute and celebrated the companies and individuals from the IT ecosystem in the Middle East that have demonstrated phenomenal excellence in the field of IT and technology.



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MIMECAST

BEING HELD TO RANSOM

Brian Pinnock, Cybersecurity Expert at Mimecast, has penned an exclusive op-ed for CNME, in which he outlines how the exponential increase in ransomware attacks spells the end of business-as-usual



Brian Pinnock
Cybersecurity Expert at Mimecast

Even as the world remains in the grip of a global pandemic that is showing no signs of abating, another threat is vying for the crown of number one risk to the global economy.

In scenes reminiscent of action thrillers, high-tech criminal organisations are targeting high-value organisations and critical national infrastructure.

Data is being locked away in encrypted formats and criminals

are demanding ransoms for millions in exchange for the release of data or, in some cases, the promise to not release sensitive customer and company information such as passwords and ID numbers publicly (in what is known as double extortion attacks).

These ransomware attacks are forcing organisations offline, which can lead to major disruption of an organisation and their supply chains. Downtime means organisations are unable to deliver services which could be catastrophic when it affects critical national infrastructure.

Following a series of highly publicised ransomware attacks on businesses and critical US infrastructure, the US Department of Justice has announced it is elevating investigations of ransomware attacks to a similar priority level as terrorism.

Middle East organisations targeted

In Mimecast's State of Email Security 2021 Report, 78% of UAE respondents admitted to a business impact due to a ransomware attack in the past 12 months, with six days being the average amount of downtime.

Common consequences for UAE organisations affected by a lack of cyber preparedness include data loss (37%), business disruption (34%), damage to their reputation (30%), loss of productivity (36%), financial losses (20%) and negative impact on regulatory compliance (25%).

The research aligns with a statement made by the Head of UAE Cybersecurity, Lt Col Mohamed al-Kuwaiti, who noted a 'cyber pandemic' as the country saw an increase of at least 250% in cybersecurity incidents, most notably phishing and ransomware attacks.

Recent research by IBM also brings into stark relief the cost of data breaches to Middle East organisations. According to the latest data, the Middle East incurs the second-highest average cost per data breach of 17 regions surveyed, a staggering \$6.93-million per data breach.

Organisations, desperate to get their data back and avoid downtime as well as damage to their customers and reputations, are paying huge sums to these criminal organisations.

Mimecast research found that 43% of organisations in the UAE that suffered a ransomware attack paid the ransom, but only 44% of these actually recovered their data. Fifty-six percent of organisations that



According to the latest data, the Middle East incurs the second-highest average cost per data breach of 17 regions surveyed, a staggering \$6.93-million per data breach.”

paid the ransom never got their data back.

However, in a twist of irony, ransom payments are playing into the hands of criminals. When an organisation suffers a ransomware attack and makes the payment, they become prime targets for future attacks.

And cyber insurance is no longer the silver bullet: many insurance firms no longer cover the cost of ransomware payments.

A layered security strategy approach for best protection

What can organisations do in response to the growing threat of ransomware attacks?

First, harden the email perimeter. Email remains the most attractive attack vector. Using a mature, cloud-based secure email gateway with advanced inbound and outbound scanning remains the most effective way to do that.

Second, deploy a layered email security strategy to augment the built-in email security of solutions such as Microsoft 365. Mimecast's State of Email Security 2021 report found that 93% of Microsoft 365 users in the UAE believe their organisations need additional email security to protect against email-borne threats.

Third, protect and preserve corporate data by archiving to an independent, separately secured environment. This allows organisations to recover their data in the event of a successful ransomware attack while also maintaining a lean amount of data that reduces the organisation's exposure and

attack surface.

Fourth, establish an email continuity plan that allows you to continue operating in the event of a cyberattack or other disruption. As the lifeblood of modern business productivity, email is essential to keeping the business running in the wake of a disruptive event, including ransomware attacks.

Fifth, support end-users by empowering them with regular and effective cybersecurity awareness training. This helps strengthen overall organisational defences and removes opportunities for threat actors to breach the perimeter due to human error or negligence.

Sixth, employ new technologies such as AI and machine learning to bolster the capabilities of security teams. Such tools can be invaluable in helping recognise patterns for detecting threats or vulnerabilities, equipping security teams with greater visibility over potential risk areas.

Finally, organisations must monitor and control shadow IT. With the rise of the hybrid digital workplace, the lines between employees personal and professional lives are increasingly blurred.

Unsecured Wi-Fi, public file sharing services and insecure website access all increase the risk to the user and, by effect, the organisation.

By gaining greater visibility over applications, security teams are better able to monitor which apps are being used and block those that pose a risk to organisational defences. **crme**

AVAYA

FLYING HIGH

CNME spoke to **Savio Dias**, Senior Director – Sales Engineering, EMEA & APAC at Avaya International, to find out more about the impact the GITECH High Flyer program can have on addressing the talent acquisition issues that exist in the global IT ecosystem – and how the initiative strengthens and reinforces the UAE's reputation as a hub of technological progress and innovation.

Savio Dias

Senior Director – Sales Engineering,
EMEA & APAC at Avaya International

Dias is one of the well-known and respected IT thought leaders across the Middle East, and he was part of the judging panel at the GITEX High Flyer program which was held during the recent edition of GITEX Global in October.

Avaya is a company that recognises that talent needs to be nurtured and has been a long advocate of programs like the GITEX High Flyer initiative, which is specifically designed to find the next generation of thought leaders in the Middle East.

Dias believes that the High Flyer program represents a great platform for creative and talented minds to put their best foot forward to bring new ideas and energy to sectors like IT, education, sustainability and healthcare.

“The High Flyer Program is testament to the immense talent and creativity of young minds in the region. I believe the High Flyer initiative is a truly great platform. We are living in an era of widespread digital transformation, and a lack of talent is going to become the greatest hurdle to overcome, but the high flyer program is proof that talent exists in abundance. The program started 6 months ago and GITEX was the culmination of it. Again, it is the culmination of one small step, but the beginning of a whole new step,” said Dias.

The GITEX High Flyer program drew participation from 500 of the region’s most promising students from 15



At Avaya, we are focused on nurturing talent and our support of the GITEX High Flyer is a great example of this.”

top academic institutions from all over, including Abu Dhabi, Cairo, and Ras Al Khaimah. They all submitted applications to secure one of a hundred internships at leading public and private sector organisations, IT leaders such as Avaya.

The selection process tested the students’ technical, problem-solving and presentation skills in areas such as education, sustainability, healthcare, mobility and evaluated their teamwork, communication skills and creativity.

Dias reemphasized how attracting the best talent is a key focus for Avaya in order for them to reinforce their position as a global leader in unified communications.

“At Avaya, we are focused on nurturing talent and our support of the GITEX High Flyer is a great example of this”, said Dias.

He added that Avaya’s role in the program is a strategic investment in the future of not only Avaya, but the regional technology industry as a whole.

“The programme consolidates the UAE’s position as a

knowledge and innovation hub, and the quality and talent of the young minds here is just phenomenal.”

The judging criteria for the GITEX High Flyer program consisted of parameters like the idea, the presentation, the feasibility of the idea and how easy it is to execute the idea. In terms of the selection process the judging panel determined that there was five key criteria that had to be met, whilst it also depended on how well they answered the judges’ questions.

Dias added that the whole experience was exciting and eye-opening. “It was diverse, it was multicultural and the ideas came from everywhere. The High Flyers was an absolutely amazing program and it just shows how creative and versatile the youth of today are – and gives us a renewed sense of optimism and hope that the future is in good hands with the next generation of leaders that are going to emerge.”

GITEX High Flyer is the latest initiative supported by Avaya to develop technology talent around the world.

Avaya Academy, launched over three years ago, helps provide a direct progression for new graduates and IT industry newcomers to begin their technology careers.

With many current Avaya employees and experts having graduated from the Academy, it has been proven to enhance technical skills and address changing customer demands. **crme**

LOGITECH

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

In this month's edition of Women in Tech, CNME Editor Mark Forker sat down with **Loubna Imenchal**, Head of Video Collaboration, AMECA at Logitech, to discuss the barriers and obstacles she has had to overcome during her decorated career in both the IT and Industrial sectors.

Loubna Imenchal

Head of Video Collaboration, AMECA at Logitech

Women in Tech is a monthly spotlight feature, which documents and highlights the role of female trailblazers in the IT industry across the Middle East, and in our latest installment we spoke to the wonderful Loubna Imenchal from Logitech and formerly of Johnson Control and Honeywell to find out more about her journey.

It has been documented that gender disparity is still very prevalent in the IT industry and in my capacity as a journalist at GITECH Global, I witnessed first-hand the disproportionate breakdown that exists between

genders when it comes to C-Level positions within the IT ecosystem.

In a compelling and very forthright interview, Imenchal charts the difficulties she has faced and admitted that during her ascent up the corporate ladder she was forced to fight, and it is evident that nothing has been handed to her.

"I've been lucky that I have worked for multinationals that started to proactively encourage the integration of women within the IT industry. However, when I began my career, especially at companies like Honeywell and Johnson

Control, they were very male dominated organisations, and it was extremely rare to have a woman in a leadership position within the company, it just was something that did not happen. It was a very good journey for me though, because it was so uncommon and against the grain, it was great to be able to show and use my story as a use case and an example that women could indeed attain leadership positions within companies such as these. I think it's fair to say that it is easier to attain leadership positions in the IT industry as opposed to an industrial environment, but many barriers still exist within IT," said Imenchal.

The Head of Video Collaboration

at Logitech conceded that many improvements to bridge the gender divide has been made – but stressed that a lot more needed to change to level the playing field.

“We can’t deny that there has been improvements, and I believe that this has come from education. However, I do think that the education sector needs to do more. I had the opportunity to teach in the American University in Morocco, but I could see firsthand that many women were simply not applying for positions within the IT environment because they still believe it is closed off to men. They are reluctant to invest themselves into a career, in which they believe the same opportunities will not apply to them, or they feel the opportunity to scale and achieve promotions within these enterprises are simply not there,” said Imenchal.

Many global enterprises have embarked upon programs and initiatives that promote greater diversity and Imenchal is encouraged by the proactive measures taken by these businesses, but also bemoaned the fact that many archaic beliefs regarding women in leadership still exists.

“I think it’s fair to say that recently many companies have started to make a concerted effort to start encouraging greater diversity within their workforces and have implemented policies that ensure a certain percentage of their C-Level executives are

women. Multinationals on a global scale are encouraging diversity, and diversity is good. Unfortunately, there are many who believe outdated stereotypes like women are not risk takers – and perceive it to be some sort of a weakness if a woman in a leadership position is cautious in terms of protecting the business and reluctant to take a really big risk. Men would not be held the same standard, so it is wrong, and it is all about perception. If you look at history some of the greatest political leaders in



Multinationals on a global scale are encouraging diversity, and diversity is good.”

the world are women, so it just doesn’t stack up,”

Imenchal was emphatic and unapologetic when she claimed that she has had to work harder than her male counterparts, because again the environment has been cultivated to suggest that she would not be up to the job.

“I have had to work harder than my male counterparts to be able to put myself in a position where I have assumed leadership positions, and that’s just the reality of the situation. It can be exhausting because you are always trying to prove yourself and show that you can do the job, which over

time can be trying. I would encourage women not to be afraid, personally I took it as an opportunity to show that I can do it and demonstrate that I am more than capable. You need to try and turn a negative situation into a positive one. I think that because I was constantly questioning myself it pushed me to become better, and I never ever became complacent, or allowed myself to fall into a comfort zone, whereas my males peers didn’t have to question themselves because there are surrounded by an environment that tells them they are doing good just because they are male, whereas if you are women there is doubt as to whether or not you can succeed,” said Imenchal.

In terms of what advice she would give other women looking to follow her lead and replicate the success she has enjoyed, she was unequivocal in stressing the need for them to be themselves.

“People have approached me and said how did you do it? I always tell them that they must trust themselves. Trusting yourself is the key. It is important that they do not listen to destructive feedback, constructive criticism is good, because people are trying to help you become better, however, the ones that are telling you that you are never going to make it are talking about their own experiences. They don’t know you, and they don’t know how limitless you can be. Trust yourself and work hard and you can achieve what you want to achieve,” said Imenchal. **crme**

PROTIVITI

PROTIVITI-LEADING THE TECHNOLOGY CONSULTING PRACTICE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

With the global business landscape becoming increasingly volatile and digital transformation on the ascent, the need for expert insight and futuristic vision becomes imperative. CNME Editor Mark Forker, caught up with senior executives at Protiviti Member Firm for the Middle East Region, a global business consulting firm, to understand how they help businesses address challenges and opportunities in key areas such as technology, digital transformation, business process improvement, risk management, compliance, transaction advisory and internal audit.



"PROTIVITI IS BUILT ON VALUES OF INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY, AND WE ARE HIGHLY MOTIVATED BY THIS PURPOSE. THIS MEANS THAT PROTIVITI NOT ONLY LEVERAGES THE LOCAL TALENT IN THIS REGION BUT ALSO HARNESSES THE POTENTIAL OF THE YOUTH AND CONTRIBUTES TO THEIR GROWTH."

Arindam De, deputy CEO, Protiviti Member Firm for the Middle East Region.

As digital transformation gathers steam, and the business landscape becomes increasingly complex – full of rapidly shifting consumer preferences and new operating models, the need for the right advice and timely insights are becoming more important than ever. Unfortunately, the plethora of solutions and technologies available today have made it difficult to see in the fog, and the relevant expertise remain elusive. This is where Protiviti steps in, with its extensive insights, tailored approach, and unparalleled collaboration ecosystem. In fact, it's innovation-centric processes, futuristic vision and values of inclusion have made it a force to reckon within the Middle East region. The firm has been part of many strategic consulting



Ranjan Sinha



Adib Ibrahim



Mohammed Arshad Hussain



Niraj Mathur



Ramakrishnan Viswanathan



Rohan Lasrado

engagements in the region over the last decade-and-a-half, successfully delivering on engagements across diverse industries, and supporting businesses achieve their technology adoption and digital transformation objectives. Globally, Protiviti was named to the 2021 Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For® list and has served more than 60 percent of Fortune 1000® and 35 percent of Fortune Global 500® companies. The firm also works with smaller, growing companies, including those looking to go public, as well as with government agencies.

“Protiviti is built on values of inclusion and diversity, and

we are highly motivated by this purpose,” says Arindam De, deputy CEO, Protiviti Member Firm for the Middle East Region. “This means that Protiviti not only leverages the local talent in this region but also harnesses the potential of the youth and contributes to their growth. Due to the high standards of education in the region, we’re seeing more and more technology-oriented resources adding enormous value to organisations and to their entire digital transformation journey,” he adds.

The firm has been involved in several key projects in the region where it is working closely with stakeholders to enable digital services for local communities.

“One recent example is where we have delivered on a new digital platform allowing subscribers to view and manage their shipments and digital communication online for federal government organisations,” says Ranjan Sinha, managing director, leading the technology consulting practice in the region. “We’re also working in the areas of stitching and operating fintech platforms and recently we became operators for a supply chain financing platform that facilitates seamless transition and adoption for organisations in the region to minimise discrepancies in financial instruments and provide assurance on delivery and project completions.”

That's not all: Protiviti is also working on projects, helping government organisations with issues such as data privacy and security to make sure that the journey towards digital, and in some cases cloud, is well managed. "We are collaborating with many of our long-time global partners and alliances in product space to offer these services to our clients in the region. We are also working on other initiatives around digital learning experience projects with various government organisations," Ranjan adds.

For Protiviti, its partner ecosystem is equally vital to the long-term success and futuristic strategies of the firm. As Adib Ibrahim, managing director – Technology Strategy & Operations points out, "Alliances and partnerships help us offer full set of solutions to our clients across technology and digital domains. We work with alliance partners to jointly develop go-to-market strategies for clients who are looking for both consulting and implementation services." Elaborating further on the partnership ecosystem Rohan Lasrado, Managing Director, Alliances adds: "We have built

alliances across technology domains, ranging from digital experience and automation, integrations, business apps including ERPs and CRMs, technology operations, security, privacy and cloud by embedding technology automation."

The firm has devised an "agile" approach to building up infrastructure and resource capabilities to address client demands in a rapidly changing technology landscape. Since the pandemic, cloud adoption in the region has been growing at a fast pace. To cater to this niche requirement of organisations and to support their transformation initiatives, Protiviti offers a wide gamut of services, intended to assist organisations to decipher the complexity of cloud.

"We have taken an agile and hybrid approach for addressing this market need, whilst constantly assessing and evolving our service delivery models to meet client expectations," points out Mohammed Arshad, managing director for Emerging Technology Solutions, "Whilst we are building capacities of our own with the right infrastructure and resource capabilities to scale up, we are also working with our key alliances and partners to source required capabilities on need basis, including cloud solutions. Further, we are also addressing the expectations of each country in our region of operations to build infrastructure and resource capabilities, catering to the demand, in alignment with local regulatory requirements."

What's interesting here is the approach that Protiviti has developed towards combining technology adoption with its expertise in risk & compliance, as one of the leaders in Financial

Service space. For this purpose, the firm has joined hands with several FinTech, RegTech and SupTech solutioning players to deliver end-to-end value proposition for clients, in the areas of functional advisory, data management and solution implementation. Ramakrishnan Viswanathan, managing director – FS Technology cites a case in point. "Our collaboration with Monimove, which is a leading supply chain finance solution provider allowing organisations to bring their entire supply chain value stream on a single platform. This not only enables the supply chain finance ecosystem, but also provides the firms with complete visibility across the supply value chain that will enhance overall governance and help them mitigate operational risk."

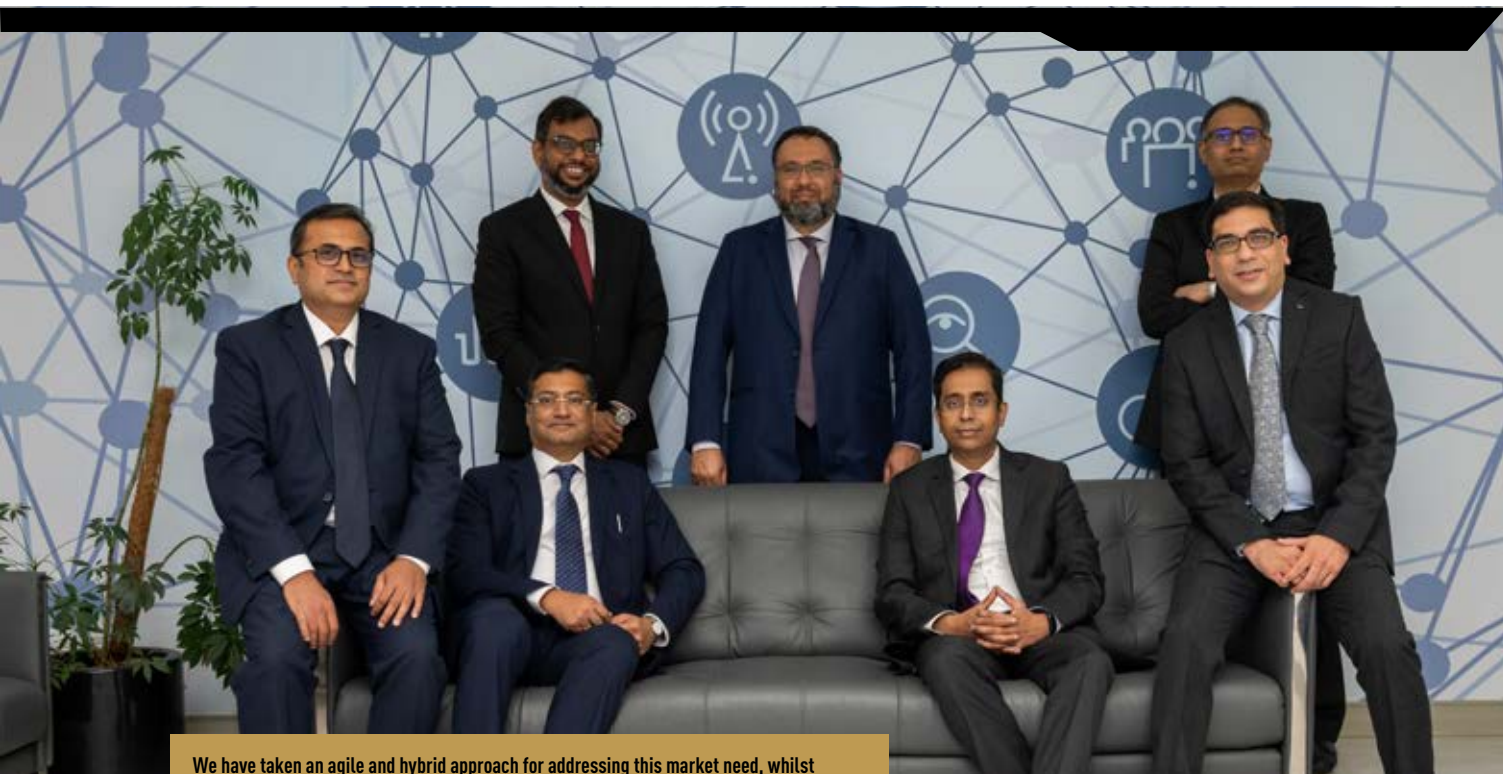
As central banks in the GCC region are digitising their supervision function, Protiviti teams are working with regulators to streamline data management and implement RegTech, SupTech solutions, and are looking to collaborate with providers like FNA."

That's not to say data security and privacy isn't at the top of the firm's agenda. As Niraj Mathur, managing director for Security and Privacy Solutions mentions, "We see a major change in the approach towards security in the past decade, privacy on the other hand has become a major concern for organisations over the past 5 years. The security and privacy concerns are consistently amongst the top concerns of not only CISOs or CIOs but for CEOs and the board members as well. The same has been highlighted in our latest edition of Top Risks Report 2021."

Protiviti's research findings



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indicate that security is at the top of every organisation's business agenda today, because of the following factors:

1. Huge increase in cybercrime incidents
2. Impact of incidents is tangible and directly to the business i.e. loss of revenue, reputational loss which leads to the need for accountability.
3. Increasing awareness amongst senior management
4. Regulatory Frameworks and cyber security / privacy laws
5. New risks emerge as organisations adopt digitisation, a necessity for most businesses.

"We are in a dynamic environment today where security and privacy cannot be ignored or become an afterthought. A lackluster approach towards security can negatively impact the P&L statements today and organisations could lose their hard-earned profits, due to incidents or pay hefty fines. Organisations have realised cybersecurity risks are not an IT

issue, it's a board level concern. At the same time, the attention paid to security and privacy is only expected to increase with more maturity setting in (GCC regulatory laws and focus on compliance) as we move forward," Niraj adds.

The firm has strongly leveraged its rich experience, stemming from executing complex engagements across diverse client base and industries in the region. It also has market access and coverage to continuously build and enhance large scale delivery centers, capable of delivering onshore/ offshore services or through hybrid models across GCC, India and Egypt.

While the tech consulting team at Protiviti seems geared up for a strong growth trajectory as it bridges the gap between business needs of its clients and strong portfolio of technology solutions, there is the challenge of talent shortage and domain skill that could be a matter of concern.

According to Arindam, talent

is at times inherent with existing resources, and many a times, is required to be built upon within the organisation through learning and development initiatives. "Although it can be a long journey, it provides assurance that the talented resources of our organisation get the opportunity to pursue fields that they are most inclined towards. Certainly, there are challenges in hiring talent for niche and growing areas of technology such as cloud computing, cyber security etc. However, we tackle it by sourcing the requisite talent from anywhere in the region, at the same time also nurturing our existing resources into these niche areas. Protiviti's consulting portfolio is now ahead of the curve in assisting industries for technology adoption. We consistently assess market needs and also rely on internal and external market intelligence to forecast and meet the diverse needs of the GCC market," he concludes. **cme**

LENOVO

YOU NEED TO BE 'OPEN' TO CHANGE

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Antonio Bocigas**, Telecom Director, EMEA Lenovo at GITEX Global, to learn why he is a strong advocate of an 'open ecosystem' approach to building new services and products that generates and drives growth for telecom operators.

Antonio Bocigas

Telecom Director, EMEA Lenovo at GITEX Global

Antonio Bocigas is a veteran of the IT and telecommunications industry. He has been the Telecom Director for the EMEA region at Lenovo since 2019, and prior to that he has held high-profile roles with Cisco and Intel.

Telecom operators have witnessed the complete decimation of some of their traditional business models such as voice and SMS, triggered by the advent of OTTs like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Skype.

Digital transformation is everywhere, but as we know connectivity is a fundamental component of the new experience economy that now

fuels how we live, work, and learn, so that inevitably provides operators with huge opportunities to generate new revenue streams.

However, Bocigas believes that operators need to take a collaborative approach when it comes to building the products and services that their customers want in the digital economy.

"I think from a telecommunications perspective the UAE is very innovative – but we're now living in an era that can be described as 'new IT' and with that comes challenges and hurdles. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated digital transformation and

service providers have had to embrace transformation. I firmly believe that service providers will be the drivers of transformation for so many industry verticals globally because a fundamental component in every transformation is connectivity. From my perspective I feel that service providers really need to build solutions with an ecosystem of partners, it needs to be collaborative and in partnership, because if they try to build them on their own it will be a struggle as they will lack the relevant expertise in certain areas," said Bocigas.

Bocigas also highlighted the impact edge computing and 5G is going to have for operators and stressed the importance of determining key use-cases, whilst he also outlined how

the leadership shown across the Middle East fosters an environment that allows innovation to flourish.

“When you talk about edge computing you are not talking about 5 or 10 datacenters, you are talking about thousands of sites. It is a completely different business model, and it is about use-cases and not connectivity. We have 5G, but we need to determine what we are going to do with it to transform industries and really leverage the power of the technology. I really believe that in the Middle East we have a great opportunity to really lead this transformation because of the environment that the leadership cultivates across the GCC – and other service providers outside of this region are looking towards the Middle East to see what direction they are going,” said Bocigas.

The Telecom Director at Lenovo said that some operators remained focused on winning the consumer battle and called for them to re-alter their thinking if they want to seize on the opportunities presented by disruptive new technologies.

“The business model for operators is critical. Operators need to determine what exactly they want to do because some of them are fully focused on winning the consumer battle, whilst others want to win the enterprise battle, but I think they need to think differently. We are trying to help operators to give them access to the key technologies at play and what the ecosystem is bringing to the table,” said Bocigas.

Bocigas highlighted how he believed that an Open RAN



Operators need to determine what exactly they want to do because some of them are fully focused on winning the consumer battle, whilst others want to win the enterprise battle, but I think they need to think differently.”

approach is the model that operators should pursue, claiming that it allows them to become more autonomous and less dependent on traditional ICT vendors.

“Open-RAN is a different way to build networks, so instead of working with traditional vendors like Nokia, Ericsson, or Huawei they can use their own stack – and they can work with other vendors that will provide the right features for them, because if you wait on traditional vendors like Nokia you have to wait until the next release. With an Open RAN approach you can build services from the start and you can monetize them, so I firmly believe that having this open ecosystem will yield a lot of benefits and new revenue streams for service providers and this is where Lenovo can help,” said Bocigas.

Lenovo is one of the most innovative companies in the world and is present in over 160 countries globally. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic that company has illustrated the global capability to manufacture and distribute the

products that our customers need.

“In January last year, despite all the challenges we faced due to the global pandemic, we were able to deliver 96% of all the products that are customers requested from us. I believe we have an incredibly broad portfolio to build the different solutions that service providers are looking for,” said Bocigas.

In what was a brilliant, insightful, and engaging interview, Bocigas concluded the conversation by insisting that operators have now acknowledged that they need to move quicker when it comes to following market trends and demands.

“The Middle East region is exciting. I had a conversation with Etisalat yesterday and a key focus for them is in smart cities, whilst I also spoke to du, who expressed their exciting ideas and plans. However, at the end of the day, customers want solutions. The connectivity provided by service providers needs to be for something and it must have a purpose. I have been in this industry for 25 years, but what we are talking about now compared to 5 years ago is completely different, that’s an example of the speed at which technologies are maturing, markets are changing, and demands are evolving. Traditionally, operators are a little bit like elephants, and the nature of their business models insist that they take it step-by-step. But now they know that just need to move faster and if they adopt an open ecosystem approach then they will yield the benefits of the digital economy,” said Bocigas. **crme**

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People believe that cloud adoption is the end, but at Equinix our belief is that cloud adoption is part of a journey towards global digital transformation.”



EQUINIX

DIGITAL TO THE CORE

CNME Editor Mark Forker secured an exclusive interview with **Kamel Al-Tawil**, Managing Director – MENA, Equinix, to find out how the global digital infrastructure leader is empowering their customers and partners to have the security, scalability and 'digital core' they need to succeed in the new digital economy.

There are many examples that we can use to illustrate how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives. The requirement for us to wear masks when we enter public places and the need for us to have a negative PCR test before we travel are just two 'new norms' that we have become accustomed to.

However, it's fair to say that the most tangible change to our lives has been the change in terms of the way we work.

Enterprises on a global scale were forced to embrace working remotely as part of an effort to maintain business continuity in the early weeks and months of the pandemic, but an increase in productivity and efficiency coupled with the fact that employees wanted a more flexible approach to their work-

life balance means that working remotely is here to stay.

However, as Al-Tawil points out many corporate IT networks were simply unable to cope with the exponential increase in data that was being generated due to the seismic shift in the way we conducted our business.

"As we all know the pandemic has set a new norm in terms of how people work, collaborate and engage. However, as a direct result of this new normal environment, many employees now work remotely and the traditional way in which they collaborate is now done virtually. This has placed a great stress on corporate IT networks to handle the exponential surge in data. Digital consumption has increased ten-fold, but what quickly became evident was many corporate IT networks were simply not ready or equipped to cope with that rapid

change in digital consumption,” said Al-Tawil.

Equinix is a global leader when it comes to digital infrastructure and Al-Tawil declared that their mission is to really help and empower digital leaders to enable their digital infrastructure.

“We strive to provide our customers and partners with a global, scalable, and secure digital infrastructure that allows them to effectively consume digital services in a much faster, secure, and scalable way. We have seen many deployments from our global customers, and we have witnessed that most of the content and cloud providers are residing within our ecosystem, or what we call the Equinix platform. This enables our users in the enterprise and public sector space to be closer to the content and cloud providers which also helps them to build fast and resilient digital infrastructures,” said Al-Tawil.

Al-Tawil also cautioned against enterprises looking for a one size fits all approach to the cloud, saying no such model exists, whilst highlighting the benefits of its Equinix platform.

“We have seen a seismic shift towards the cloud because of the optimization, efficiency, and scalability of cloud.

However, at the same time we have seen that there is no one cloud fits all model, so the new normal entails of a new age of multi-cloud and hybrid cloud strategies. This is where we believe the Equinix platform with our global footprint

across 250+ data centers and 26 countries, makes us very well-positioned to support our partners and customers into extending their digital platform to meet the demands and challenges of the new digital economy,” said Al-Tawil.

Al-Tawil is one of the most revered and respected technology evangelists in the Middle East IT ecosystem, but he outlined the importance of having a watertight strategy when embarking upon cloud and digital transformation journeys.

“People believe that cloud adoption is the end, but at Equinix our belief is that cloud adoption is part of a journey towards global digital transformation. For that adoption to be successful then you need to have a robust digital transformation strategy. There are some key components required in a comprehensive digital transformation strategy and they include a secure, scalable digital infrastructure that will allow users to consume digital services in a much easier and simpler way,” said Al-Tawil.

He added that it was also critical that enterprises have an adequate change management strategy because there is no point implementing digital for the sake of digital.

“Digital transformation needs to be implemented to improve your efficiency, cost optimization and growth. You must be able to extend your services to the edge to allow proximity to digital ecosystems, whether that is your partners,

customers, cloud providers, or suppliers. We believe these are the foundational components of a proper digital transformation strategy,” said Al-Tawil.

Equinix is the global leader in digital infrastructure and has been operating in this space for many years, a key factor in its success according to Al-Tawil has been their digital platform.

“The Equinix platform extends across multiple countries and ecosystems. We believe that we connect all these components into our Equinix digital platform that allows us to help our customers to achieve their digital transformation objectives. On top of this, it is very important that we enable digital services to our customers through our fabric platform entitled the ‘Equinix Fabric’ – and we provide an enterprise cloud connectivity solution that allows our customers to build scalable, secure multi-cloud and hybrid cloud platforms,



We provide an enterprise cloud connectivity solution that allows our customers to build scalable, secure, multi-cloud and hybrid cloud platforms.”



DIGITAL ECONOMY



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which is the real enabler for an adequate digital transformation strategy,” said Al-Tawil.

Digital transformation has become a key priority for any business that wants to thrive and survive in the new digital economy. It is on top of the agenda for decision-makers across multiple industries globally.

Al-Tawil believes that this demand for digital transformation has been inevitably fueled by the changes that have occurred as a direct result of the pandemic, and the different ways users are consuming digital infrastructure.

“We live in a virtual world

now and most of our meetings are conducted virtually. Equinix has sponsored the Global Exchange Survey (GXI) and for us some of the key takeaways from the report is the fact that people need to deploy a digital core, and this really is fundamental for any digital transformation. You need to have a strong digital platform that will allow you to integrate all your digital services and digital consumption, whether that be cloud, on-prem, multi-cloud, or hybrid, so a strong digital core is a key component for effective digital transformation,” said Al-Tawil

He concluded a superb interview by adding that

two other key components of digital transformation is bringing your digital services to the edge and becoming part of a digital ecosystem.

“You need to extend your digital core to the edge, and by extending to the edge you need to have a proximity to rich cloud ecosystems like your partners and suppliers. You also need to deploy what we call secure edge services. Finally, you need to be part of what we call a digital exchange, or a digital ecosystem. We believe that these three components are the ultimate key to ensuring successful digital transformation,” said Al-Tawil. **cme**

INFOR

GETTING CLOSER TO YOUR CUSTOMER

CNME Editor Mark Forker secured an exclusive interview with **Khaled AlShami**, Senior Director of Solution Consulting for MEA, at Infor, to find out more regarding its activity in the Middle East, its industry-specific approach to the marketplace – and how becoming closer to their customers is bringing them greater value.

Can you give our readers an overview on what Infor has been doing in the region?

Infor has been here in the region for quite a long time – more than 15 years. But that was through resellers and the channel business. 2016 was the year where Infor decided to add its direct business, so we can be closer to all customers.

We put a major investment in the region when we established our HQ in Dubai Internet City. We opened another office in Saudi Arabia in Riyadh the year after, and we also acquired a major systems integrator in Egypt, in order to develop a pool of resources that can serve our customers in the region and we established also center of excellence in Cairo city, in order to facilitate consulting services.

So, frankly, it helped us a lot to be very close to our customers, to understand their demands, to have this kind of relation where you can meet them, talk to them, understand

their requirements and bring them better value.

I think we are going in the right direction and we will continue investing in this region. This region is a growth region and we're all committed to it.

Can you explain to us how importance an event like GITEX is for Infor?

Absolutely. This is our fifth year we are doing GITEX, and every year I see how this region is really transforming into a digital economy. You see what the UAE is doing – for instance they appointed a minister of AI a few years ago. That's phenomenal. That's ahead of the rest of the world.

GITEX is an opportunity where you can see the strategy of the country; how companies are aligning themselves to serve the government's vision.

It's also a very good opportunity to meet our customers and to showcase to them the latest developments that we have made this year,

with a clear focused message that we are an industry-specific cloud solution provider and that makes a big difference.

Everyone is now looking for specific solutions for specific needs. This is what we're good at and we can help our customers embrace the digital life well.

Can you tell us more about Infor's approach to being industry-specific?

The approach is very simple. You need to understand your customer's business. This is what we do. So, if you look at our industry CloudSuites, you will see years of experience and best practices in the domain.

We have made every effort to make sure that we shorten the time to value for our customers – we need to reduce the cost of implementation for our customers and you need to work with them to generate quantifiable business outcomes that they are aspiring to. So, it's not about just installing a new business application, it's about making sure you are helping your customer achieve success.



We have made every effort to make sure that we shorten the time to value for our customers.”

What are your future plans for the region?

We are seriously committed to the region, so we have some aggressive growth plans. We want to be increasing our market share, so we are putting our investment into the headcounts in UAE and in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Also, we are bringing for the first time, the Infor Young Talent Program where we will be partnering with key universities in the region to develop the youth and to hire from the local markets for young talents that we can bring to Infor, where we can train them and give them what they need in order to be ready for the market and the challenges presented by the digital economy. **enr**



Khaled AlShami
Senior Director of Solution
Consulting for MEA, at Infor

CLOUD BOX TECHNOLOGIES

GIVING YOU DIRECTION FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Ranjith Kaippada**, Managing Director, of Cloud Box Technologies, onsite at GITEX Global, to find out how their solutions and strategic approach helped enterprises, who he said were left 'directionless' following the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

It has been well-documented by now that businesses and organisations that failed to embrace disruptive technology and adopt a digital transformation strategy were left severely underprepared when the global economy shuddered to a halt in March 2020.

There can be no doubt that the pandemic has accelerated the rate of digital transformation across all industries. But many enterprises have encountered issues in terms of how you gauge which technology to adopt and which not to?

How can you ensure a tailor-made solution for your organization that is industry-specific? Well, enter Cloud Box Technologies, a value-added System Integrator that is trusted, reliable and

recommended by industry peers to help businesses achieve their digital transformation goals.

Ranjith Kaippada, is one of the most prominent thought leaders in the IT ecosystem here in the Middle East, and through his leadership he has guided Cloud Box Technologies into a strong market position, where they have become a key partner for companies seeking digital transformation.

According to Kaippada, many businesses were left completely 'directionless' during the pandemic – and they had no idea how to get to where they needed to go.

There was an acknowledgement from business leaders that they had to go 'digital' but talking

about it is very different to actual execution.

"When the outbreak happened, it was sudden and unexpected. Organizations were directionless. Everyone talked about digital transformation, but many businesses simply did not know where to start, or how to implement the right solution that would enable them to maintain business continuity and empower them to carry out their operations on a day-to-day basis," said Kaippada.

Kaippada highlighted how this demand from so many enterprises represented Cloud Box Technologies with an opportunity to capitalise and leverage their expertise and diverse portfolio of solutions to equip business leaders with the tools they needed to thrive and survive in the new digital economy.

"We offer the expertise required for organizations on their digital



Ranjith Kaippada
Managing Director, of Cloud
Box Technologies



Businesses will be back stronger than ever, and Cloud Box will be there as an advocate for them to consult, understand and enable them to deliver what they want on the path of digital transformation.”

transformation journey. Our core strength is the value-added services we provide through our certified implementation, engineering, and consultancy, whilst we also provide tailor-made solutions for each organization. We understand the workloads, licenses, storage, and virtualization required and tailor solutions to meet customer requirements,” said Kaippada.

A further illustration of the growth of Cloud Box Technologies is its partnership with Dell Technologies.

This year’s GITEX Global was the company’s first, and one of the key messages it was conveying to attendees at this symposium was its relationship with Dell Technologies, of whom they are a platinum partner.

He highlighted the unique capabilities provided by some of Dell Technologies products.

“This was our first time at GITEX, and we were excited to be part of this incredible technological event. We were very honored to share a stand with Dell – and we focused on Dell EMC PowerStore Storage as well as the advanced Dell EMC VxRail Hyperconverged Infrastructure solutions this GITEX. PowerStore is a high-end next generation storage solution that can transform IT businesses and Hyperconverged Infrastructure solutions is an integrated solution in a box. They will be next ‘buzz makers’ in this region that will help companies in digital transformation and work transformation,” said Kaippada.

Kaippada stressed his belief that the growth of digital transformation across the region will not slow down despite the fact the global economy is now entering what he described as a post pandemic phase.

He’s confident that Cloud Box Technologies can continue to build on the market share it has gained over the last 18 months – and will continue to serve its customers and partners and be the ‘go-to’ partner for digital transformation for businesses all over the Middle East region.

“Businesses will be back stronger than ever, and Cloud Box will be there as an advocate for them to consult, understand and enable them to deliver what they want on the path of digital transformation.” concluded Kaippada. **enme**

COMMVAULT

PROTECTING YOUR GREATEST ASSET

Marco Fanizzi, VP and GM - EMEA at Commvault, believes there has been a mindset shift in terms of the way enterprises view cloud technologies since the onset of the global pandemic – and explained how they are leveraging their expertise to help their customers protect their data amidst the backdrop of an increase in cyberattacks.

The rate in which data is being generated is growing exponentially year-on-year, but what has added further complexity to that in terms of managing and protecting that data, is the fact that due to the COVID-19 pandemic more data is being generated outside the compounds of corporate IT networks as employees work remotely.

According to Fanizzi this has inevitably created an environment in which opportunistic cyberhackers can attempt to hack systems and carry out ransomware

Marco Fanizzi
VP and GM - EMEA at Commvault

attacks on a large scale, and that is something that they have seen a huge increase in across the global IT ecosystem.

“There is no doubt it we are living in a data era, and increasingly we are hearing more and more about data monetisation. However, the onset of the pandemic accelerated this concept, but also companies were forced to move their workforce into a remote environment, which inevitably meant that the data followed them home. We have witnessed globally an exponential increase in ransomware attacks and the hackers have identified an opportunity through the vulnerabilities presented by employees working remotely. They are using remote workers to gain access into the data centers to encrypt the data,” said Fanizzi.

However, Fanizzi believes that this seismic shift in the way we work has prompted enterprises to reimagine they way they view the cloud and now see it as a new way to run their day-



I believe that these factors have forced enterprises to think about cloud as an operating model, and not simply where the data resides.”

to-day business as opposed to being somewhere they stored their data, citing that the traditional method of storage was now archaic and outdated.

“I believe that these factors have forced enterprises to think about cloud as an operating model, and not simply where the data resides. This multi-cloud approach is very attractive to all our customers because quite simply the cost to maintain data in a traditional environment is no longer affordable,” said Fanizzi.

Commvault is a global leader when it comes to data management and backup solutions, and they have been leveraged their expertise and knowledge to help their customers cope and overcome the challenges they have faced over the last 18 months.

Fanizzi stressed the importance of equipping their customers with the ability to scale in a cost-effective manner – and added that they were investing aggressively in new technologies to enable to continue to serve their customers and give them the tools they need to thrive and survive in the digital economy.

“Customers need to have the capabilities to scale their data in a standard way, whilst maintaining the cost. However, it’s been well documented by now that data is the new oil and hackers are attacking this because they know every business greatest asset is their data. From a Commvault perspective our

focus is on maintaining our ability to follow our customers trends, and we are constantly investing in new and disruptive technologies to enhance the services we provide. We believe it is critical to invest in people and knowledge to stay relevant and be able to deliver the experiences that our customers expect from us,” said Fanizzi.

The interview with the charismatic figurehead of Commvault’s Middle East operations was conducted onsite at GITEX Global 2021, the flagship IT conference in the region.

Fanizzi said he was enthused by being back at GITEX – and pointed out that due to added challenge now associated with travelling, those that were at GITEX Global truly wanted to be there, whereas in the past, many attended such events because they simply had to.

“It is fantastic to be back, and this region is so exciting in terms of the growth prospects here and the opportunities that exist. GITEX has always been a phenomenal show, but I think there was a renewed sense of just how important it really was following the pandemic, which obviously resulted in a much more condensed version of the conference in 2020, with many companies unable to travel. Two years ago, these events were taken as a given, now people are acutely aware that time is important and if they have to fly then they need to protect themselves, so if they are here it means they really want to be here,” concluded Fanizzi. **cme**

GCG

THE FACE OF CHANGE

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to GCG Enterprise Solutions' General Manager **Naser Darwazeh** – a UAE-based business leader who has overseen the growth of the Ghobash Group's technology cluster to meet the needs of an ever-changing business world while driving the market's thirst for innovation.

During your tenure, Ghobash Group's business technology cluster has experienced significant changes over the years. Can you offer a little history behind the journey to today's GCG Enterprise Solutions and how your vision for the business has taken shape?

Well, many significant changes have taken place in just recently, but as the result of decades of preparation and industry research, experience and foresight.

Back in 1982 our enterprise was simply a supplier of printers to local companies. The rapidly growing economy in the region exponentially increased the need for printed documents, as did the expense and stress.

I saw an opportunity to move from a box mover (as we were called back then) to a business solutions provider. The idea to turn print, document and imaging management into a paid service worked and our clients' responded well. They were paying someone to save them money!

Gulf Commercial Group

– Digital Imaging & Office Services Solutions became well-known in the office services market, and growth was organic. We updated our products before the need required and sought out new ways to make printing easier with better results, faster, and cheaper with the help of improving technologies – always learning.

As digitalisation trended, I was excited about its potential for business connectivity, and we researched technologies that would bring the workplace together. Consolidated printing systems were a boon, using integrated software to centralise an entire workforce's printed output on one state-of-the-art multi-function printer... we were changing the face of enterprise daily.

A printing specialist in a paperless world?

Document management took yet another turn with environmentalism. People started to print less and email more. Large volumes of valuable financial and legal documentation were bouncing

from workstation to workstation with little or no control.

Businesses needed solutions that would consolidate non-paper documents into a central, accessible and secure environment, while dealing with tons of legacy documentation taking up valuable storage space.

For this, our software solutions would turn printer scanners into massive data collection machines, capable of collecting an image of a document and extracting information from that image then processing it according to set rules defined by the user.

At this point, I realised that if we were going to support our clients successfully with the best service, we'd need to split our focus. I decided we'd form two companies with different value propositions. One would continue with managed print services, which we called MPS (Managed Print Services), and another bold new venture called GCG Enterprise Solutions could specialise in new technologies to shake up the business world!

The pandemic was an unexpected driver of change as we introduced our clients to many business technologies that would otherwise have taken years to adopt. We now offer our clients everything from cardless access systems to digital signatures, which is amusing because we remove physical contact while bringing everything together virtually.

Tell us more about the work that GCG Enterprise Solutions does now?

For me, Enterprise Solutions refers to all aspects of technology that enhance business management. Our solutions make business easier, from technology that improves the way we talk to

clients across popular platforms (while gathering business-useful information) to emerging technologies that maximise a company's operational efficiency. We help our clients harness the power of their commercial data to make more profitable decisions.

Our automation solutions use bots and artificial intelligence to perform any number of repetitive tasks, which reduce personnel overheads. It allows a client to re-direct capital into core business functions and internal innovations. It also means instantaneous analysis of data, presented on accessible platforms for the benefit of users at every level. The result – more involved and inspired employees.

Our value-added digital transformation service starts with an in-depth study of a business's needs and pain points.

We then draw from an ever-growing pool of cutting-edge technologies from the world's leading innovators (Microsoft, Kyocera and ViewSonic, to name a few) to find the simplest solution to meet those needs to our client's satisfaction. Study-solution-satisfaction!

I rely on the expertise of my team to help our clients understand the benefits of every solution to guide them on their digitalisation journey and realise their business goals.

You speak about making business processes more efficient and faster. Can you give our readers a real case scenario?

A case study? OK. I'm not at liberty to mention which client; suffice it to say it's one of the more prominent names in the energy sector. They already had a five-year managed-print-

services agreement with our print division, and since we had established a first-class reputation for quality and service excellence we were asked to bid and won.

The challenge was a decades-long legacy documentation backlog, with an archaic records and information management system limited to physical retrieval. There was no standardised digitisation process or ECM in place.

We were tasked to implement a long-term digital transformation and green initiative that would convert an estimated 280 million paper documents into 600 terabytes of indexed images. The two-year-long project is still underway, and we have a production line of about 85 personnel who receive and process between 200 and 300 boxes of paper documents a day.

Documents range in size from A5 to A0 and pertain to all parts of the business from HR to accounts payable and even engineering projects' blueprints.

With accurate and high-quality information capture at their fingertips, our team constantly

updates the intelligent scanning software to identify specific types of documents, analyze captured metadata, and archive it all into a centralised Intelligent Information Management.

The project will create a digital backup of the entire archive—a perfect disaster recovery option—and the benefits for our client will be numerous:

Online and controlled access of documents to authorised staff across the entire enterprise.

All the risks related to physical retrievals such as document loss, leakage, and damage, will be mitigated.

Digitalisation means complete control over information and the availability of documents can be restricted, monitored and audited.

Document restoration – the software automatically manages old and critical documents that have deteriorated and damaged

Lessons learned throughout the process will enable AI to process all future documentation. **cnme**



Naser Darwazeh
General Manager, GCG
Enterprise Solutions

EMITAC ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS

THE DREAM TEAM

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Antoine Abi Aad**, General Manager, Emitac Enterprise Solutions, to find out more about their truly historic partnership with HPE - and how its GreenLake solution is helping businesses become more efficient and cost-effective when moving their operations and processes to the cloud.

Antoine Abi Aad is an IT veteran and has enjoyed a distinguished career that has spanned over 30 years. He was appointed as General Manager of Emitac Enterprise Solutions in 2019, and he has played a key role in reinforcing their reputation as the leading systems integrator and IT managed services providers across the UAE.

In a compelling interview with CNME, he documents their lengthy partnership with HPE, which many industry analysts have described as a 'dream team', the approach Emitac takes when managing

its large portfolio of customers – and the benefits of HPE's GreenLake solution for customers seeking to remove the complexities of transitioning their operations to the cloud.

Abi Aad highlighted the importance of their collaboration with HPE and disclosed that they are serving over 100 customers that are using HPE technologies.

"Emitac are the company that brought HPE to the Middle East market in 1978. We have been partners for 43 years, and a large chunk of our partnership has been exclusive. The intrinsic nature of our collaboration was illustrated by the fact that in many instances clients thought employees of Emitac were part of HPE and vice-versa. This observation was unsurprising because our partnership is so intertwined. During our collaboration we have embarked upon some major and complex projects in which we have served some of the largest multinational enterprises and government organisations across the UAE. Today, we are serving and assisting over 100 clients based on HPE technologies, which also serves to reinforce the partnership we have and the key role Emitac plays in integrating HPE solutions

Antoine Abi Aad
General Manager, Emitac
Enterprise Solutions

across the IT ecosystem here in the Middle East,” said Abi Aad.

Emitac are a company that have branded themselves as an organisation that is ‘customer-centric’. According to Abi Aad they are always looking to innovate themselves and explained how they always focus on two key areas when dealing with their customers, whilst he also highlighted the importance of automation in the new digital economy.

“We face a continuous challenge at Emitac in terms of always having to re-invent ourselves, so we can put the latest cutting-edge technologies at the disposal of our customers. When we engage and interact with our customers’ we always focus on two key aspects, and the first one of those is we want to leverage our knowledge and expertise to enhance their operation and we try to do this by introducing automation. We want to ensure that all their processes are running efficiently – and we also equip them with high availability and business continuity solutions to make sure that they don’t have downtime, or a period when they can’t operate. The second key focus area for us is helping our customers with cost optimisation and the cost effectiveness of their operation. We reduce their costs by proposing an advocating for a managed services approach, in which we can offer them higher quality services and solutions at a much more affordable and cost-effective rate,” said Abi Aad.

The global pandemic as we know has triggered digital transformation and has sparked



HPE are proposing their GreenLake solution to the market, which is a very intelligent solution that is enabling clients to manage their IT on-prem in a cost-effective manner.”

an increase in demands for new services and operating models in a series of industries and business verticals, and as Abi Aad discloses there has been an increase for managed services across the board over the last 18 months.

“Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the demand for managed services has grown exponentially and one of the main reasons for that is many enterprises were forced to hire personnel that had very specific and niche skillsets, but it has emerged that they are also utilising them on a 50-60% basis. However, when they come through us via managed services, we can offer them the same expertise, but they will be paying significantly less because we can share these resources amongst 2-3 different clients and this is how we can give them focused and dedicated support,” said Abi Aad.

HPE GreenLake has been described as a ‘gamechanger’ in the IT ecosystem and the General Manager at Emitac explained the intelligence that is embedded into the solution – and outlined how its helping enterprise overcome challenges presented by transitioning to the cloud.

“HPE are proposing their GreenLake solution to the market, which is a very intelligent solution that is enabling clients to manage their IT on-prem in a cost-effective manner, where they only pay as they-go, or as much as they consume, essentially, it’s a consumption-as-a-service model. GreenLake allows the client to only pay based on what they are using out of the technology that is being deployed on their premises. We know that moving to the cloud can be complex and challenging for many companies, but GreenLake can now help these enterprises navigate the complexities associated with cloud migration where they will pay based solely on consumption, so they get the same cloud experience and offering but it’s on-prem for them. It makes financial sense for our clients and this model is now trending amongst all of our clients,” said Abi Aad.

He concluded a wonderful and insightful interview by stating that despite the fact Emitac have been a success for half a century, they want to continue to be a success for another 50.

“We have been in this business for the last 50 years, and we are aiming to stay there for the next 50 years. Our image and brand are very important to us, as is our history. We always strive to deliver the best-in-class solutions and services to our customers, and we believe that we provide unrivalled customer-centricity to all our customers, and our ability to that is what really differentiates us from our market rivals,” said Abi Aad. **enr**

HUAWEI

A TEMPLATE FOR SUCCESS

CNME Editor Mark Forker sat down with Huawei's **Alaa Elshimy** at GITEX Global, however, the pair didn't discuss the global ICT vendors portfolio of solutions and cutting-edge technologies, but instead focused on his new book entitled 'The Future is Here: IR4.0 – Business Transformation for Value Creation.'

Alaa Elshimy is the Managing Director and Senior Vice President of Enterprise Business Group, Huawei Middle East, and is one of the most highly regarded and respected technology thought leaders in the IT ecosystem across the region.

He has used his substantial platform as a technology evangelist to compile a book that will serve as a template for C-Level executives to drive and deliver digital transformation.

He cited his bemusement and dismay at a report produced by McKinsey in which 74% of enterprises were not moving towards The Fourth Industrial

Revolution and embracing new technologies because quite simply they didn't know how to get to where they needed to go.

"To be honest, what inspired me to write this book was a report compiled by McKinsey, who found that 74% of organisations were not transitioning towards Industry 4.0, simply because they did not have the know how to implement digital transformation across their business operations. Honestly, I felt a real responsibility to address this issue, and I began to research and look for literature and material on the subject, but I didn't find anything that could really help CXO's, or someone working within the industry to help their organisation transform, so I felt I needed to do something to correct that," said Elshimy.

Elshimy added that the world is transforming and called for stakeholders from across the global IT ecosystem

to adopt a collaborative approach to really drive transformation across industry verticals, citing that collaboration is key in the new digital economy.

Having discovered what his inspiration was behind writing the book, I wanted to find out more about the book contents. Elshimy was unequivocal that his novel was not a technology book.

"The book is not a technology book, it is a business book, and it is written specifically with CXOs in mind. The book is divided into three main parts, the first of which examines and explains what Industry 4.0 is, because I believe that there is a lot of confusion and conflicting definitions of what the Fourth Industrial Revolution really is, so I have tried to the best of my ability to explain it all in the simplest and clearest way," said Elshimy.

Elshimy also used his book, which has been produced as a template, or strategic blueprint to enable business leaders to execute on their digital



The book is not a technology book, it is a business book, and it is written with CXOs in mind."



transformation goals to illustrate the key technologies fueling Industry 4.0.

“In my book I have highlighted how 5G, AI and Cloud are the main building blocks driving and fueling Industry 4.0. I have outlined and explained in detail what these technologies are bringing to the market, and I also provided some technical expertise and information to make it easy for everyone to understand and process it, and language is very important to be able to deliver the message that you want in an effective way,” said Elshimy.

As he stated earlier in the interview, Elshimy has positioned his book as a ‘business’ one, and he cites success stories in terms of digital transformation in key industry verticals such as transportation, banking and utilities. He stressed that he

wants his book to be a source of inspiration for those seeking to implement change.

“I have illustrated case studies in the book which clearly demonstrate success stories when it comes to digital transformation, and in the utility chapter I document the successful transformation of DEWA. We also highlight other industry verticals such as banking, transportation, and government. Ultimately, I wanted to share different success stories from a range of different global sectors with customers to give them the confidence and a blueprint to follow in terms of how others did it, so they can replicate the digital transformation process for their own organisations,” said Elshimy.

He concluded the interview by stressing that his primary objective for ‘The Future is Here’ is that it serves as a guide to empower and enable others to achieve digital transformation on the scale they need to in order to thrive and survive in the digital economy.

“It is a guide for digital transformation and the primary objective for me was to ensure that the book was not overly technical. I wanted it to be written in a language that every CXO understands and can relate to and resonate with, and essentially the end goal of that is to create value to their business. If want CXOs to be able to leverage the information in the book to generate new value for their businesses,” said Elshimy. **cme**

Alaa Elshimy
Managing Director and Senior Vice
President of Enterprise Business
Group, Huawei Middle East

CENTRIQE

GIVING CUSTOMERS THE 'EDGE'

CNME Editor Mark Forker secured an exclusive interview with **Alakh Verma**, CEO of Centriqe, to find out how the IPA and AI solutions provider is driving new business productivity for retailers – and highlighted how its ProfitEdge solutions is empowering its customers to maximise their revenue streams.

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Alakh Verma
CEO of Centriqe

A lakh Verma has enjoyed a decorated and distinguished during his three decades in the IT industry – and developed a reputation as being a prominent thought-leader during his time at technology behemoths Microsoft and Oracle.

However, Verma has now been tasked with the responsibility of driving growth for Centriqe, a boutique solutions provider that is helping businesses within industry verticals such as retail and hospitality to completely transform their operations by processing and managing their data in a more intelligent way.

Centriqe, which is a Silicon-Valley headquartered company has enjoyed phenomenal success in the United States, but it is looking to expand their footprint in the Middle East & Africa, and



CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to Verma during his visit to the UAE for the region's flagship IT and technology conference GITEX Global.

In a compelling interview, Verma explained more about the company and the role it is playing in terms of enabling industry verticals severely impacted by the global pandemic to do more with their data.

"We are focused on AI, IPA and blockchain based solutions that equips business leaders from the retail, and hospitality sectors to have the descriptive, predictive and intelligence tools they need to be able to make better informed decisions in their day-to-day operations. We know that as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic,

many businesses within these sectors were hit hard, and as a result we have witnessed an economic downturn in industry verticals. We're helping these sectors increase their gross operating profitability in real-time," said Verma.

Verma conceded that the nature of data is changing all the time – and stressed that due to volatility of data being generated it was critical for businesses to have a predictive model to help them decipher the data to help them better understand their customer.

"We are giving them not only greater visibility on their data but also the ability to process the data properly with a predictive model. Data is changing, traditionally it was transactional, but now it is conversational, and all

this data needs to be captured properly to give businesses meaningful insights on what their customers patterns and behaviors are – and how they can take action to yield the benefits for their business," said Verma.

Verma also highlighted how our expectations as consumers has been enhanced by the advent of technology and that businesses need their data to be processed in 'real-time'.

"Data needs to be unified, and we can process it in real-time on a cloud platform. Businesses want real-time intelligence instantly, not after a week. We process data on open-cloud infrastructure such as Oracle, Amazon, Azure or Google Cloud and we then integrate data coming in from various data sources such as

point of sales systems, so we capture the data and process it in real-time which essentially provides intelligence. We give our customers predictive guidance so they can take corrective action with their day-to-day decision-making,” said Verma.

Profit Edge is a framework that has been designed for gross operating profitability and runs on Oracle cloud natively. It is also based on open architecture and a microservices based containerized app, so when you build containerised microservices it can easily be deployed on any other cloud architecture and is compatible and easily transferable.

“We just launched Profit Edge in the Middle East during GITEX Global, and it has two key components. The first is what we call the revenue maximizer, which essentially explores how we can maximise your revenue streams that are coming in from various channels. We are addressing omni-channel revenue streams, the footfall in many physical stores has reduced, so we need to transform their e-commerce infrastructure to allow its customers to engage with their products and services. Once they engage with the retailers website they know the patterns and behaviors of their customers, which can ultimately empower their decision-making,” said Verma.

The second component of



We are giving them not only greater visibility on their data but also the ability to process the data properly with a predictive model.”

ProfitEdge and what is unique about the solution is its cost optimisation capabilities.

“We are addressing the cost architecture and cost structure very effectively. We know what is required to deliver these types of services and the objective is to do more with less by automating a lot of the processes. We are bringing IPA and conversational chatbots to help businesses interact and execute the order of their customers. It is a smart intelligent system that is working on behalf of the businesses that are deploying the solution and integrating it into their operations,” said Verma.

In terms of his expectations for growth and investment in the Middle East & Africa, Verma is confident that they can replicate the success they enjoyed in the United States.

“We are bringing the best practices and models that are being applied in the US to the Middle East marketplace. Global brands that are coming

to the Middle East and Africa are showing a lot of interest in what we are bringing to the table, whilst we are also generating huge interest from our strategic partners such as Intertec and Almoayyed Computers in Bahrain, who have expressed an interest in investing with us to expand the Centrique footprint across the region,” said Verma.

Verma said that companies believe that Centrique is a boutique solution, which can help grow their businesses through system integration that provides them with an end-to-end solution for different lines of their business.

“We are talking to a lot of major companies in the Middle East, who see value in our solutions and have expressed an appetite to not only integrate the solution with Centrique but to also invest to in an effort to increase their monetization,” said Verma.

When asked what he believes distinguishes Centrique from its market rivals, Verma cited its ‘best-in-class’ services.

“Centrique is very nimble and agile and that is differentiates us from others in the market according to the stakeholders and customers who are deploying our solution. We have integrated our entire platform with the best-in-class and that is driving huge value to customers that are using our solutions to transform the way to run their businesses,” said Verma. **cnme**



Russia has a powerful cybersecurity industry.
We are No.1 in strong authentication, electronic signature
and software protection domains.

Create a secure cryptographic environment
at the state level for the exchange of essential
information.

1

Strong
authentication
and electronic
signature

2

Software monetization
and protection against
reverse-engineering

3

Consulting
and training
in cybersecurity

Be sure you are protected



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DELL TECHNOLOGIES

FIRING UP THE EDGE

Murray Irvine, Senior Director, Data Centre Compute and Solutions – MERAT, Dell Technologies, has penned an exclusive op-ed in which he examines and explores the opportunities that can be yielded from embracing edge computing.



Murray Irvine
Senior Director, Data Centre
Compute and Solutions –
MERAT, Dell Technologies

As our lives become increasingly connected, there is more data to be processed than ever. We're no longer talking about gigabytes or even terabytes—the new unit of scale is the

Zettabyte, equivalent to a billion terabytes. Our growing reliance on this data makes the evolution of core cloud technologies critical. Keeping up and staying ahead of the curve as these demands increase is already

business critical – and requires an infrastructural step-up.

This incoming data deluge requires automation and sustainable management. Edge computing is the answer to processing woes. Technology leaders know it is no longer a nice to have, it is essential for businesses looking to innovate with real-time insights in a digital-first era. We need to turbocharge compute power to feel the benefits of connected devices that provide real-time AI-powered insights, whether it's in our factories, cars or shops.

There is much to be gained for society as a whole, as well as the businesses that serve them when it comes to ramping up infrastructure at the edge – to seize today's opportunities and prepare for tomorrows. Setting the groundwork now will serve businesses well in the medium and long-term when 5G brings more innovative technologies online. Firing-up the edge – and putting automation in the hotseat is key.

Overcoming data challenges with Automated Edge computing

Today's highly complex and distributed data landscape means many organisations struggle to manage workloads, applications, and data securely from edge to hybrid cloud. According to Gartner, 75 % of enterprise data will be processed outside a traditional centralised data center or cloud by 2025. As these workloads grow there will be more demand

on compute, speed and agility. So, it's imperative that these issues are addressed swiftly, with IT infrastructure and modernised platforms that support data-driven goals to meet these challenges.

Additionally, in our rapidly evolving digital landscape, vectors for attack have grown exponentially. Businesses need to make the most of the resources they have on hand to enhance infrastructure security within every layer of the ecosystem, while meeting compliance requirements. Even the best security practices have a short shelf life when hackers are exposing these new attack surfaces faster than they can be fixed. Building proactive resilience and embedding trust into digital transformations with security by design is key. This will help secure interactions, providing the ability to anticipate potential threats.

These challenges can be met with edge solutions that combine the supercharged compute power to combat



Employing the edge technology solutions that enable businesses to focus on innovation, addressing real-world human-centric problems is key.”

intense workloads at speed, with inbuilt automation to enhance productivity and seamless management. According to the Dell Technologies 2020 Digital Transformation Index, organisations in UAE and Saudi Arabia have high confidence in Edge computing's capabilities, with edge application investment expected to be higher (51 %) among organisations in UAE and Saudi Arabia compared to the global average (28 %). Apart from keeping businesses competitive, getting to grips with edge solutions will crucially enhance the sustainability of data management too.

Sustainability is key to a future-proof edge

When we process data at the edge, we are actually reducing a lot of power consumption which is ultimately kinder to the environment – it also requires a smaller cooling footprint. At the same time, compute power is boosted, essentially doing more with less. The more we evolve edge computing to meet the needs of businesses and generate better outcomes, the more we accelerate inevitable adoption. The quicker businesses jump on board the edge computing bandwagon, the quicker we can minimise resource heavy data transfers between devices and data centers.

What's more, as edge computing lays

the groundwork for 5G connectivity, it forms the backbone of a core technology set to help bridge digital divides – connecting those in more remote areas. Paving the way for 5G means preparing for a world in which everyone has access to digital educations, healthcare and governments. Understanding the bigger picture and human impact from today's infrastructural decisions should empower businesses as they embark on digital transformations.

Seizing future opportunities from the edge

Employing the edge technology solutions that enable businesses to focus on innovation, addressing real-world human-centric problems is key. But finding the solutions that help them to adapt and grow in the data era too, is gold. It is imperative that amid today's many challenges and opportunities, businesses build their foundations with a long-term view, taking advantage of the immense compute power at the edge and turbocharging insights with automation. There really is no other way to stay on top of the complexities of future data management landscapes. Let's put automation in the hotseat, paving the way for intelligent cities, homes and real-time services, and bringing a smarter, more intelligent world to life. **crme**

FALCON PACK

FALCON AIMING TO SOAR

CNME Editor Mark Forker managed to secure an exclusive interview with **Syed Ehtisham**, IT Director at Falcon Pack, to find out more about 'Falcon Wings', which is the name of its digital transformation project that the company embarked upon using SAP technologies with its implementation partner Seidor MENA.

Syed Ehtisham
IT Director at Falcon Pack

Falcon Pack has been in the manufacturing industry in the region for the last 30 years, and despite starting out on a small scale, the company has grown exponentially and now generates over \$800 million in turnover year-on-year.

However, as Ehtisham points out the nature of the fast-moving digital economy has forced industries to change, and the manufacturing sector was not immune to transformation and had to integrate new technologies to maintain operational efficiency.

"There has been a rapid

change in the global dynamics within the manufacturing sector, so it was critical that we embraced new technologies to adapt and respond to these changes. We had initially been using Sage ERP, but due to the speed at which technologies have advanced the application was no longer fulfilling our market and operational requirements. Our expectation was to have an integrated supply chain solution that provides us with robust reporting when it came to our financials and good customer experience which is so important in the new

experience economy that we now find ourselves in," said Ehtisham.

Ehtisham is an experienced IT professional that has enjoyed a stellar and successful career, but he revealed in a candid discussion that he was cautious about going with a third-party application due to the sheer size and scale of the transformation project at hand.

"I was looking for a product that could cater to all our requirements, but I was cautious against going with a third-party application, because sometimes there can be issues with third-party applications that can be difficult to resolve, so essentially, I was looking for a one-stop destination

that could meet our needs. SAP were my ideal choice initially, but we still invited other companies to pitch to us and that allowed us to do a product comparison,” said Ehtisham.

Ehtisham disclosed that Falcon Pack were not going to rush into the digital transformation project without having all their bases covered and this was evidenced by their decision to hire a consultant to work with them for 1 year. The consultant then compiled a comprehensive business case document, and once this was established then they reached out to software vendors.

“Once the business document was formulated, we proceeded to engage with the software vendors, and we selected SAP. However, traditionally what happens is SAP will come and sell the product and leave, but we wanted to avoid this, so what we did was choose Seidor MENA to work with us. We met with them, and we discussed the project in forensic detail with the process leads and that how the project was initiated,” said Ehtisham.

Ehtisham also highlighted how the consultants, and the experts from SAP and Seidor all advocated for Falcon Pack to retain their foundation system when embarking upon their digital transformation journey.

“We were looking for manufacturing interface intelligence and manufacturing execution services, which is essentially a one-stop destination for automation. Interestingly, when we had the initial discussion with SAP



Individual use cases were identified by the process owners after the business process mapping to avoid recreating the same issues in the new system.

and Seidor MENA, and prior to that with our consultants, they all advised us to stay with our foundation system, which is SAP S/4 HANA. We took their advice because quite simply it made sense to us. Following these meetings and consultations, we submitted all our requirements and put them into two categories, which were ‘must haves’ and ‘nice to haves’,” said Ehtisham.

One of the primary goals of Falcon Wings implementation according to Ehtisham was to make the business processes more efficient and integrated.

“The existing processes were mapped, and business process models were finalised to aid in finalising the requirements. Individual use cases were identified by the process owners after the business process mapping to avoid recreating the same issues in the new system. The process models also helped in ensuring that all the necessary requirements for each department were covered with the proposed solutions. The business process mapping also helped in identifying the processes that needed to be modified to align with SAP best

practices,” said Ehtisham.

The dynamic IT Director at Falcon Pack also explained how from the initial stages of the project, that stakeholder buy in was considered essential to the timely completion and success of the project.

“To achieve the goals of the project, it was essential for the project members and all stakeholders to understand its scope and their role in the project. To achieve this, project charter was prepared and shared with all stakeholders at the beginning of the project. The project charter detailed the entire scope of the implementation project and detailed the responsibilities of resources who will play a key role in the success of the project including FP Project Manager, Steering Committee, Seidor Project Manager, and Technical and Functional Consultants. This helped aligning the resources towards a common objective, provided clarity on the roles and responsibilities, and facilitated onboarding the resources for the project,” said Ehtisham.

In terms of the roadmap the plan is to complete phase 2 in Q1 of 2022, but we have plans for subsequent phases for digital transformation until 2025, as in, there is a well defined roadmap and strategy for digital transformation until 2025. We know that many projects face bumps and obstacles over time, but with Ehtisham at the helm it is destined to be a successful transformation project for Falcon Pack, which will solidify their position as leaders in the manufacturing industry. **crme**

JAMSHED

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Jamshed Khan, a technology evangelist and IT expert has penned an exclusive op-ed for November's edition of CNME, in which he examines and explores the impact of AI in today's experience economy and what role it is likely to play in the future.

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A lot is being talked and discussed about Artificial Intelligence (AI) today and as technology is changing ever faster, role of AI is increasing in our lives by the day. So, the first question is "What is AI". This, in simple words, can be described as a software that analyses data & makes decisions that require intelligence & expertise level of human beings.

This data collection & analysis by these technologies enables humans to predict future challenges/issues that might occur and prepares them to be ready to handle them in an efficient manner. These machines work in an adaptive manner and

improve their intelligence and capabilities through self-learning process (Deep Machine Learning).

As a result of immense storage capacity, processing speeds and analytic techniques used, AI enabled machine are capable to process & analyse massive amount of data with high level sophistication with precise levels of accuracy in decision making. A major addition within AI is deep machine learning, a trait solely associated with human beings until now.

Despite the lack of familiarity and clear understanding by most of us, AI is a technology that is transforming all aspects of our life. It is a complex

& broad spectrum tool that enables decision makers to rethink how we collect data, integrate information, analyse data, and use the resulting insights to improve decision making.

Many recent time surveys have revealed that decision makers are aware of AI concept and acknowledge the potential technology holds but are unclear how they might deploy the technology in their processes/companies and how such deployment will benefit their businesses.

So, the question is why do we need AI or machine learning at all? Let's work it out backwards. As globalisation and population is increasing businesses are trying to reach foreign territories and handling



Jamshed Khan
Technology Evangelist

huge number of customers. To handle their businesses properly they need data, and today we don't talk about data rather we talk about big data. So, this leads us to data collection which can be analysed.

In order to handle big data corporate entities need to adopt technologies that will automate data gathering processes, so that data is collected faster and chances of error are minimised. Bots enabled by AI are doing a fantastic job in collecting & analysing data.

Bots have long term memories so they can remember customer behavior, their

query patterns & what matters them the most. So, they can collect data accordingly, analyse it and provide analytics to decision makers so that they make timely and quality decisions to be market ready and address future challenges more efficiently. Sales force uses feature called "Einstein" within their process that analyses billions of processes per day and by doing that, it is getting smarter over time.

This system based on its analyses provides crucial insights to support & sales teams and advises them on best relevant/practical next action item.

AI is playing a big role in cloud computing to enable us make projections and take required actions in time. This automation of processes lets human beings to focus on more complex issues facing today's ever challenging environment.

A project by PWC revealed that AI Technology is projected to increase global GDP by 14% by 2030. Artificial intelligence is already altering the world, in terms of how we live, work & communicate, and posing important questions for society, businesses, policy makers & governments.

The big question is how AI & deep machine learning going to affect human intelligence. To what extent

data will be protected & shared by different machines? Will we be tech slaves? A very basic example is that most of us don't remember even close family or colleagues contact numbers because we rely solely on the address book provided in mobile phones.

As bots and machines do most of intelligence work, will our analytical capabilities be hampered due to such practices? Another major aspect being debated is surrounding robots. Many researchers are more concerned/skeptical with the adverse effect of robots and chances of robots taking over humans.

AI is fully objectives based, it behaves and functions to achieve defined objectives. So how we define and what objectives we put in place is critical to overall process. There are misconceptions, reservations and negativity concerning the role of AI in different technologies.

Every technology or new development throughout human history has had two sides of it so such mindset relating to AI is obvious and practical. Mobile phones were invented to provide mobility and real time communication but it has been used by many to spy on users and take advantage of their shortcomings. Social media platforms today are being used by many for illegal & anti-social activities.

So, such challenges existed and will happen in future as well. But the major aspect



In time humans won't need to learn and understand technology, rather technology will learn to understand humans."

of AI is that just like any other tech it's been used worldwide and there is still no proper framework to monitor, standardise & get the developers accountable.

To do so world community will have to work together to create global frameworks that will manage such future tech. getting whole world together and making them agree for common regulation has proved to be a challenge in the past even for very critical & life threatening issues like global warming & weapon development.

So only time will tell how



the global communities & individual governing bodies will function and approach AI in a cohesive manner.

These and numerous other questions provide a very hazy picture today & tech giants, who are developing & integrating AI in their solutions, are reluctant to debate on negative side of AI usage in different technologies & processes.

But only time will clear the haze and make us understand the role of technologies involving our day to day lives. What is clear however is, that the role of AI & deep machine learning is growing by the day and there is no stopping that. It will evolve and affect our lives never imagined before. In time humans won't need to learn and understand technology, rather technology will learn to understand humans.

We can expect wonderful things to happen that will improve & save lives as a result of evolving technologies like AI & deep machine learning. But what will be the adverse effect is yet to be seen. **crime**



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