

Reseller

MIDDLE EAST

THE VOICE OF THE CHANNEL

ISSUE 291 | NOVEMBER 2021

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INTERVIEWS

- VAST Data
- Dell Technologies
- StarLink

SUBSCRIBING TO CHANGE

Fadi Moubarak, Vice President – Channels, Avaya International, on how Avaya is helping partners harness new transformation opportunities.



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CONTENTS

ISSUE 291 // NOVEMBER 2021



TOP STORIES

- 5** News roundup from the channel business world.

INTERVIEWS

- 12** Silmi Khanfir, Director of Cloud and XaaS-Middle East & Africa at Mindware, on how the pandemic has been a learning experience and the plans that Mindware has in store for 2022.
- 14** SecureLink signs distribution agreement with NetSPI.
- 16** Phil Lewis, SVP Solution Consulting EMEA and APAC at Infor, on what makes the company different.



- 24** AOC announces availability of new AGON Porsche Design gaming monitor in UAE.

- 40** Martin Uchytel, Director-Dell Financing, MERAT, about the APEX Flex on Demand solution, the growth of the As-a-Service consumption model and the importance of the channel ecosystem in the region.



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Echoes of Success



Anita

Anita Joseph
Editor

This year's GITECH Technology Week, held from October 17-21, was a huge success in more ways than one: Not only did it mark the return of physical events after over a year, but it also reinforced the resilience of the human spirit with its massive turnout and enthusiastic footfall. Yes, the event was a resounding success and we couldn't be happier.

This issue of your favourite magazine has exclusive interviews from the major players at GITECH—we bring you stories of triumph and resilience, change and innovation, growth and diversity—in short, we provide you a snapshot of the transformational changes that the channel industry has gone through in the last 18 months—close-up and first-hand.

Our cover story with Avaya has Fadi Moubarak, Vice President – Channels, Avaya International, discuss how the past 18 months have unearthed huge transformation opportunities in the channel and how Avaya is helping its partners harness these opportunities.

Another interview with Silmi Khanfir of Mindware, takes a look at how the pandemic has been a learning experience and the major plans that the company has in store for 2022.

We also have Infobip's Vildana Karalić-Avdić telling us all about how their business has adapted to meet the demands of the digital economy, the acceleration of DX since the onset of the pandemic and the current cybersecurity climate.

There's lots more—we're not giving away any surprises here. Of course, there are the usual top news stories, insights, opinion pieces and detailed reports packed into this issue—everything to make sure you have a great read. And for those of you who missed GITECH, well, our interviews will tell you everything you need to know.

Before I close, let me also remind you about the next big event which is just round the corner—the Reseller ME Excellence Awards 2021 which celebrates exceptional channel players who have sustained and driven their businesses despite challenging market circumstances and led the space with pioneering strategies and solutions. Nominations are ongoing and we can't wait for the 23rd of November when it all unfolds.

So, what are you waiting for? Happy Reading!



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D-LINK WINS THREE GOOD DESIGN AWARDS FOR PRODUCTS THAT ENRICH LIVES



data to NAS. Multi gigabit technology enables the 2021 Red Dot Award winner to accelerate network efficiency and make feasible simultaneous,

D-Link Corporation has announced that their DCS-8635LH 2K QHD Pan & Zoom Outdoor Wi-Fi Camera, DMS-106XT Multi Gigabit Unmanaged Switch, and DCH-S1621KT Whole Home Smart Wi-Fi Water Sensor Kit have received the Good Design Award 2021.

The DCS-8635LH is an outdoor surveillance camera with 2K QHD resolution, 360-degree coverage with its motorized pan feature, and AI-based features such as person detection, vehicle detection, and auto-person tracking to protect the home. The camera is also a 2021 Red Dot Award and 2021 iF Design winner.

The DMS-106XT is D-Link's unmanaged switch with five 2.5G Ethernet ports for uninterrupted streaming and gaming, as well as one 10G Ethernet port for storing

high-performance online activities.

The DCH-S1621KT is D-Link's easy-to-use water sensor kit that pairs long range, low power sensors with a wall plug sensor/hub to provide reliable water leak detection and efficient user alerts. Also a 2021 CES Innovation Award winner, the water sensor kit is a smart home solution that provides safety for the home and loved ones. "We are grateful to be recognized by Good Design, as it emphasizes D-Link's commitment to ward enhancing quality of life for everyone," explained D-Link Chairman Victor Kuo.

"D-Link will continue to deliver products that are more user-friendly and function-integrated to support Good Design's efforts in promoting designs that contribute to society."

AVAYA NAMED A VISIONARY IN 2021 GARTNER MAGIC QUADRANT FOR MEETING SOLUTIONS

AVAYA

Avaya, a global leader in solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration, has announced it has been recognized as a Visionary in the 2021 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Meeting Solutions. Gartner defines 'Meeting Solutions' as offerings that "blend communications, collaboration and content sharing to enable virtual meeting scenarios to satisfy a variety of use cases." Avaya was recognized as a Niche Player in previous years and in 2021 report is has been recognized as a Visionary for Avaya Spaces in only its second year of availability in the market.

Avaya Spaces is an immersive meeting and workstream collaboration platform combining video meetings, chat, a document repository, and task management. Meeting and collaboration spaces are persistent where anyone in the team can think out-loud to be better connected with their team.

Avaya Spaces enables the composable enterprise, providing agility to support changing business needs, models, and ways of working – ideal for the hybrid environment.

"In today's on-demand workforce, work gets done regardless of location or set schedules," said Simon Harrison, SVP and CMO, Avaya. "We all need tools that streamline tasks and unify teams. Working from anywhere means business decisions need to be made in an always-on, dynamic environment. Designed for collaborating before, during, and after the meeting, Avaya Spaces helps customers pull it all together. Avaya was recognized as a from Niche Player in the 2020 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Meeting Solutions and in 2021 report is has been recognized as a to a Visionary we believe based on the solutions' ability to deliver a unified experience, streamline complex workflows and geographic reach."

NETAPP EXPANDS HYBRID CLOUD SOLUTIONS PORTFOLIO TO UNLOCK BEST OF CLOUD



NetApp, a global cloud-led, data-centric software company, has announced new additions and enhanced capabilities across its hybrid cloud portfolio to help organizations modernize their IT infrastructures and accelerate digital transformation. Delivering new secure ways to consume and operate data services on-premises and in the cloud, NetApp hybrid cloud solutions make it simpler for enterprise customers to put their data to work — wherever and whenever they need it.

As the only solutions provider with native integrations for the world's largest public clouds, NetApp's industry leading ONTAP software continues to serve as the foundation for hybrid cloud. With the latest release of ONTAP, NetApp is introducing enhanced protection against ransomware, expanded data management capabilities, and NVMe/TCP support for accelerated performance.

The company is also announcing new digital wallet capabilities for NetApp Cloud Manager and enhanced data services for simplified administration across a hybrid cloud, more flexible consumption options to better control costs, as well as new Professional Services offerings to help customers unlock the full value of on-premises and hybrid cloud resources.

"The promised benefits of migrating to the cloud may be profound, but many IT departments are still working to overcome on-premises challenges, like managing the complexity and costs of moving data, protecting against ransomware, and ensuring reliable performance for critical applications," said Brad Anderson, Executive Vice President, Hybrid Cloud Group at NetApp. "As the hybrid cloud specialist, NetApp can help enterprises move their digital transformation efforts forward to deliver business results faster and within budget—whether they are still developing a strategy or in the middle of executing large-scale migrations."

TOP STORIES

STARLINK & TAMDEED PROJECTS, AN ETISALAT SERVICES HOLDING CO. SIGN MOU FOR END-TO-END TELECOM, ICT SYSTEMS INTEGRATION & MANAGED SERVICES



StarLink, the fastest growing specialized cyber and cloud VAD in the MEA region and Tamdeed Projects, an Etisalat Services Holding company – part of Etisalat Group; have entered a strategic alliance to collaborate in the intelligent automation, cyber and cloud domains.

The two companies signed an MoU at GITEX 2021 and agree to work together and leverage on each other's vast experience in various areas of expertise. The focus will be to join efforts and offer best-of-breed solutions and services and play an integral role in enabling organizations thrive, become resilient and elevate their digital transformation journey to the next level with automation and artificial intelligence.

The partnership is directed at having a holistic approach towards cybersecurity with intelligence

automation, cloud and datacenter, provided from an array of cutting-edge solutions in the StarLink portfolio and capitalizing on the training expertise & facilities along with services offerings.

Mahmoud Nimer, President, StarLink, said: "This partnership is very strategic to StarLink and as a 'Digital Advisor' we will extend our consulting services to Tamdeed Projects to empower their customers with advanced technologies delivered through our end-to-end and extensive solutions portfolio supported by highly skilled professionals in the cyber, cloud and intelligent automation space."

Tareq Salman, General Manager/Tamdeed Projects commented: "Tamdeed Projects are delighted to have this partnership. We see a big ambition to grow the business. Partners like StarLink will allow Tamdeed Project to continue to scale and expand. Specially that Tamdeed Project stands out as a leader in the market transforming into a total Telecom and ICT Systems Integrator and Managed Services Provider. By working with StarLink, there's a positive outlook for years to excel in business unique value proposition together".

ETISALAT PARTNERS WITH MICROSOFT TO SECURE UAE'S DIGITAL BORDERS



Etisalat has announced a new partnership with Microsoft to enhance the security of the UAE's digital border and infrastructure. Etisalat is the first Telecom in MENA to embark on such a partnership. This new collaboration with Microsoft's digital crime unit (DCU) will further strengthen digital security in the region to meet the fast-growing demand for threat intelligence. The partnership will bring together Etisalat's local network visibility with Microsoft's global threat intelligence feeds, focused on identifying specific cyberthreats and actors relevant to the UAE. With the UAE embarking on new initiatives and world class events such as the EXPO 2020, Etisalat is a key player in securing these strategic

assets, ultimately enhancing the digital security of the UAE in partnership with Microsoft.

"With a large part of the customer base operating online, strong network security has become a business necessity for the telecommunication sector," said Ayman A Alshehi, Vice President, Network Security, Etisalat. "We align with the UAE Vision 2030 and "Project of the 50" that propel design and execution of digital projects based on need and sustainability. Microsoft's DCU supports our views and champions this partnership to adopt a strategy that would help the UAE protect digital borders and enhance the country's cyber defences. This is an opportunity to leverage their data security and derive further insights from our scaling capabilities to aid enterprises of any size to counter cyber threats today. This digital transformation approach significantly positions cybersecurity at the center of its journey."

The partnership will extend Microsoft's Digital Crimes Unit (DCU) to identify, investigate, and disrupt malware-facilitated cybercrime and nation-state-sponsored activity by applying unique legal and technical solutions.

HP PRESENCE USHERS IN NEW ERA OF HYBRID WORK



HP Inc. has introduced HP Presence, a new portfolio of conferencing and collaboration solutions for people to truly work together and feel connected – especially when they're not in the same room.

While the shift to hybrid has given people freedom to work from virtually anywhere, the way people work together, both in and out of the office, is evolving. Eighty percent of executives are changing office spaces to focus more on collaboration. IT teams are also challenged with keeping people connected with productive and secure technology, making conferencing and collaboration solutions a top priority for 67% of IT departments.

HP's charter for end-to-end collaboration solutions led the company to develop a new way of bringing together its PC hardware and software innovations, and long-standing expertise in security. HP Presence ushers in a new era of hybrid work with meeting space solutions, PCs, and peripherals designed for better conferencing experiences.

"With hybrid here to stay, pre-COVID technology simply can't solve for the new ways people work. Without the right technology, people aren't being heard and their ideas are getting lost. Every voice deserves to be heard – whether they're sitting in the meeting room or at their kitchen table," said Andy Rhodes, Global Head of Commercial Systems and Display Solutions at HP Inc. "HP Presence fits the work world of yesterday, the world of today, and is future proofed for tomorrow's collaboration needs, so no matter where you work, no thoughts are left behind."

TOP STORIES



Rónán de Hooge

INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES TO GAIN SECURE, CLOUD-BASED OPERATIONAL DATA SHARING WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF AVEVA DATA HUB

AVEVA, a global leader in industrial software, driving digital transformation and sustainability,

has announced its first SaaS offering that integrates key features of the market-leading PI System™ operations data management platform with the AVEVA industrial software portfolio.

AVEVA Data Hub, a secure, cloud-native hub for aggregating, managing and securely sharing operations data to gain new insights and improve operating performance, will deliver the proven operations data-sharing capabilities of OSIsoft Cloud Services (OCS) through the convenient AVEVA Connect industrial cloud platform.

AVEVA Connect subscribers will enjoy the flexibility to access AVEVA Data Hub services alongside any mix of other AVEVA cloud,

hybrid and on-premises solutions as their business needs change, using the AVEVA Flex subscription program.

“Customers are telling us that it’s not a question of whether they will adopt the cloud to view, enrich and share real-time and historical operations data, but how and when,” said Rónán de Hooge, AVEVA’s Executive Vice-President of Information. “AVEVA Data Hub provides this answer, making it easy to aggregate and contextualize on-premises and remote data sources and securely share insights with a colleague across town, a business partner on the other side of the world, or even a data science application in the cloud for predictive modelling.”

Customer applications for the technology have ranged from ensuring safe drinking water with predictive notifications to preparing data for advanced analysis to monitoring critical, remote equipment.



CommScope has announced its new hardened connector Prodigy, designed to accelerate and simplify field installation for the fibre networks of the future.

The Prodigy system utilises universal, small-form hardened connectors for interoperability across different fiber terminals and cable assemblies. The compact footprint enables smaller, higher-density terminal footprints, while the self-aligning connectors minimise the chance of connection errors. To facilitate cable changeouts and upgrades, the system allows converter attachments to be deployed

COMMSCOPE LAUNCHES PRODIGY PORTFOLIO OF HARDENED CONNECTORS

without replacing or splicing the drop cable.

“Prodigy revolutionises network architecture by making FTTH installations truly plug-and-play,” said Rob Wessels, Vice President, Network Cable, CommScope. “We worked closely with our global operator customers to create and refine Prodigy—applying our broad vision for faster and simpler FTTH networks to building the best connector solutions. These hardened connections will enable operators to simplify installation and minimise their cable footprint today, while facilitating the necessary upgrades and maintenance to their networks for years to come”.

NETSCOUT'S VISIBILITY AS A SERVICE PROVIDES TURNKEY PROTECTION FOR CRITICAL IT SERVICES



Michael Szabados

NETSCOUT SYSTEMS, INC., a leading provider of cybersecurity, service assurance, and business analytics solutions, has introduced its NETSCOUT Visibility as a Service (VaaS)

managed service offering, which provides 24x7 testing, monitoring, troubleshooting, and reporting for customers’ critical IT services and applications. Built on NETSCOUT’s nGenius service assurance solutions, the service leverages the deep expertise of the company’s VaaS engineering team to help alleviate the burdens faced by corporate and government IT organizations worldwide.

“Businesses have had to adapt to compete in tough talent acquisition and new remote work environments placing increased pressure and demands on IT teams,” said Michael Szabados, Chief Operating Officer at NETSCOUT. “VaaS helps enterprises identify and resolve problems quickly to maintain productivity while also helping to ensure an exceptional end-user experience. In addition, our customers benefit by extending the value of the investment they’ve made in our service assurance solutions to deliver higher returns,” he added.

VaaS is available as a subscription-based service for both existing and new customers. For existing customers with a deployed nGenius solution, the service provides continuous monitoring and triage. Additionally, the service offers proactive testing of critical applications and services, notification of appropriate customer contacts if an issue is detected, triage and performance reporting.



Bill Conner

SONICWALL RETURNING CHOICE TO CUSTOMERS BY SECURING ANY MIX OF CLOUD, HYBRID & TRADITIONAL NETWORKS

SonicWall, a global leader in physical, virtual and cloud-focused cybersecurity solutions, is

emphasizing the return of customer choice for securing and scaling a mix of cloud, hybrid and traditional environments.

“Too many times organizations have been forced to change the way they operate in order to secure access to their networks, data, devices and people,” said SonicWall President and CEO Bill Conner. “We’ve been busy innovating cloud and virtual solutions that help organizations secure complex blends of networks, including virtual, hybrid, cloud and on-premises

deployments.”

SonicWall’s cloud innovation is driven by the need to solve complex security and connectivity challenges by delivering power, flexibility and choice to customers and partners. SonicWall has collaborated with organizations worldwide to build some of the most secure and robust hybrid networks.

CYBEREASON AND TAQNA CYBER PARTNER TO SECURE SAUDI BUSINESSES & GOVT AGENCIES



Cybereason, the leader in operation-centric attack protection, has announced a partnership with Taqnia Cyber, the cybersecurity arm of Saudi Arabia's government-owned technology investment company, Taqnia, to bring best-of-breed technologies and cybersecurity capabilities to large enterprises, and defense and government organizations across the kingdom.

As part of the partnership, Taqnia Cyber, will act as both a reseller and systems integrator for the Cybereason Extended Detection & Response (XDR), Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR), and Endpoint Protection Platform (EPP) solutions. Cybereason will provide Taqnia Cyber with technical and sales training and marketing support, as well as joint lead-generation and business development support. Saudi Arabian businesses were the targets of cyberattacks more than seven million times in the first quarter of 2021.

"We stand as the kingdom's trusted advisor on technology matters, counseling entities that include military and defense organizations," said Dr. Zeyad Alkhalifa, CEO at Taqnia Cyber.

"Taqnia Cyber is Saudi Arabia's established cybersecurity champion — a fueler of growth and sustainable development," said Tarek Kuzbari, Regional Director for the Middle East and Turkey at Cybereason. "Cybereason was among the first vendors in the region to deliver a viable endpoint protection platform, and we look forward to helping joint customers end cyber-attacks, reduce network risk and support defenders in protecting critical assets."

AL GHURAIR SELECTS ARUBA TO CREATE PLATFORM FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, CULTURAL CHANGE & NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise

company, has announced that UAE-based Al Ghurair Investment has implemented networking technology from Aruba that delivers resilient, future-ready infrastructure to accelerate digital transformation.

The technology provides a scalable secure network template for consistent deployment and user experience, enables consistent wireless-first workplace with bandwidth to support critical business applications, cuts Wi-Fi deployment times from days to hours and enables Zero Touch deployments across international operations.



"The Al Ghurair family name is synonymous with the development of the region itself. Like the UAE, Al Ghurair Investment has constantly evolved, embracing new ways of doing things in the pursuit of excellence. Our digital transformation is the next exciting part of our development, as we turn to technology to become a more data-driven, efficient and agile business," said Marinda Sheahan, Group Vice President - IT, Al Ghurair Investment.

DVCOM SIGNED ON AS EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTOR FOR ONESCREEN IN THE UAE



DVCOM Technology, a leading value-added distributor in the Middle East, has recently been appointed as the exclusive distributor for OneScreen, a reputed global provider of collaboration and interactive solutions for the Middle East region. DVCOM currently represents some of the most dynamic ICT vendors and solutions offerings in unified communications, interactive collaboration, networking, physical security, and audio-visual conferencing solutions.

DVCOM has continually expanded its distribution network with up to 300+ partners across this region. It was one of the first in deploying Open-Source Telephony solutions in the MENA region 13 years ago. The Partner Enablement Program

(PEP) run by DVCOM continuously has equipped partners to run their business solely on DVCOM's Vendor portfolio and asserting brand presence in their respective regions through in-house training, both online and offline.

DVCOM has well-established global connections that are focussed on developing lasting partnerships with its vendors and suppliers, the latest one being with OneScreen. The brand uses military-grade technology in its solutions for corporates. Their solutions come with the most powerful Android OS currently available in the market to enable users with the best-in-class technology available out there. Renjan George, Managing Director, DVCOM Technology LLC said, "OneScreen is a well-recognized brand and adding such an innovative provider like them to our list of vendors will bring in immense value for DVCOM's business. We are proud and excited to be the exclusive distributor for OneScreen's collaborative future-ready offerings. We are confident that this association will help unlock new opportunities for both DVCOM and OneScreen."

AXIS TO HOST SECOND HIGH-IMPACT TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE AT EXPO 2020



Timo Sachse



Etienne van der Watt

Acknowledging the vast leap technology has made in the last few years, and in celebration of the innovation we see today, Axis Communications is hosting its second conference, titled 'Artificial intelligence for a smarter, safer tomorrow', on 17 November 2021. The event promises an insightful experience with experts discussing how new industry trends are shaping our world and driving the development of smarter, safer, and more sustainable cities. Axis Communications will be presenting six transformative technology conferences at Expo 2020 from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. As an official partner of the Sweden

Pavilion, these events will take place in the expo's Sustainability District in Dubai. "This conference will showcase the immense opportunity technology has provided to society and how we can tap into its power to keep us safe," explained Etienne van der Watt, Regional Director – Middle East & Africa at Axis. "Innovative cameras, Internet of Things (IoT) sensors, and surveillance analytics are the gateway to enabling a smarter future for businesses and for overall urban life."

Timo Sachse, Axis Product Analyst EMEA, added, "Technologies such as artificial intelligence have the potential to positively impact public safety, urban mobility, and environmental monitoring. At Axis, we're consistently working towards developing the best applications and ethical usage of new technologies."

AVEVA ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENTS OF CASPAR HERZBERG AS CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER & HELEN LAMPRELL AS GENERAL COUNSEL & COMPANY SECRETARY



Caspar Herzberg



Helen Lamprell

AVEVA, a global leader in industrial software, driving digital transformation and sustainability, has announced the expansion of its executive leadership team with the appointments of Caspar Herzberg as the company's new Chief Revenue Officer, and Helen Lamprell, OBE as General Counsel and Company Secretary. The new appointments, in London and Dubai, strengthen AVEVA's international footprint and digital transformation capabilities at a time when business relies on interconnected

solutions for global workforces. Both leaders bring a wealth of global expertise to AVEVA when they join on November 1. Herzberg has over two decades of international experience within the technology sector. Raised in Egypt, Herzberg has a degree in Arabic and Modern Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Oxford, and an MSc in International Politics from SOAS University of London.

AVEVA will leverage his deep expertise to lead the global sales organization and to strengthen the capabilities of partners around the world. Herzberg, who is fluent in English, Arabic, French and German, will be based in Dubai.

solutions for global workforces. Both leaders bring a wealth of global expertise to AVEVA when they join on November 1.

Herzberg has over two decades of international

OMANTEL & INFOLINE TO DELIVER EFFORTLESS EXPERIENCES ACROSS ENTIRE CUSTOMER JOURNEY WITH AVAYA ONECLOUD CCAAS



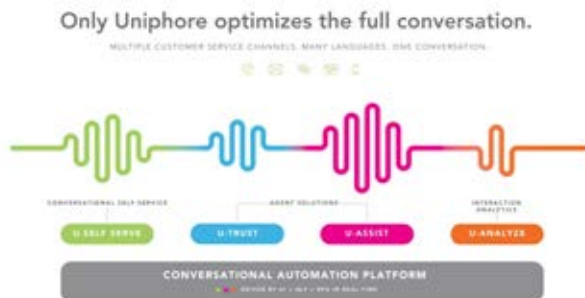
Avaya has announced a new partnership with Infoline, Omantel ICT's business process outsourcing leader, that will see Infoline significantly advance customer experience across the Sultanate as it adopts Avaya OneCloud Contact Center as a Service. One of the first deployments of its kind in the region, the Avaya solution will enable Infoline, a subsidiary of the Omani telecom "Omantel", to seamlessly meet the demands of a regional market set to grow by 6.9% annually to 2028, when it will be worth almost \$20 billion. The new technology will deliver effortless experiences across the entire customer journey – whether they're interacting via voice, web, chat or email.

"At Infoline, we are keeping pace with changing expectations by committing to a digital-ready customer experience, and through our partnership with Avaya, we are enabling our joint clients with the same capabilities. Avaya OneCloud CCaaS will further empower our clients with the advanced solutions needed to address fast-moving customer demands, and help them move forward with the e-Oman vision and strategy," said Aladdin Abdullah Baitfadhil, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Infoline and VP of Consumer Business Unit at Omantel. "Our priority is, and always has been, enriching the experience of our customers, and the technology that we choose is always based on that principle. With Avaya OneCloud CCaaS, we will be able to deliver meaningful experiences for end customers regardless of their chosen interaction method, while also empowering our own agents to drive increased customer loyalty on behalf of our clients," said Mohammed bin Hamad al Maskari, Chief Executive Officer at Infoline.

UNIPHORE UNVEILS INDUSTRY'S BROADEST & MOST COMPREHENSIVE CONVERSATIONAL AUTOMATION PLATFORM

Uniphore has announced that it has completed its acquisition of Jacada and is unveiling the industry's most comprehensive platform that will further enable enterprises to transform customer experiences.

Uniphore's integrated Conversational Automation platform now combines Conversational AI, workflow automation, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), low-code/no-code capabilities and a business user friendly UX to transform and democratize customer experiences. This empowers contact center agents to deliver highly effective, personalized and empathetic interactions.



Digital transformation is key to contact centers providing the ultimate modern-day customer service experience and how conversations are handled during the entire customer journey — pre, during and post interaction.

With the successful close of the Jacada acquisition, Uniphore will continue to expand globally including enhancing its centers of excellence around the world.

VISIONLABS' NEW BIOMETRIC PAYMENT TERMINAL TRANSFORMS PAYMENTS INDUSTRY



VisionLabs, the world's leading facial recognition company, has announced the launch of its pioneering biometric payment hardware — the VisionLabs LUNA POS Terminal. The certified terminal is the first payment device to enable both traditional credit card payments and biometric facial recognition payments in one. With six design and three utility patents filed, the device is set to radically disrupt everyday biometric payments. VisionLabs' state-of-the-art facial recognition software is already used in more than 60 countries by enterprises across

banking and finance, retail, transport and a wide range of other sectors.

The VisionLabs LUNA POS Terminal is the first payment terminal to support both traditional payment methods whilst also facilitating transaction authorization via biometric facial recognition. It offers the hardware, supported by VisionLabs' AI-driven facial recognition algorithm, to empower banks and merchants to offer their customers the world's first complete, contactless solution. For consumers, the LUNA POS Terminal offers a better, safer digital transaction experience.

The LUNA POS Terminal offers merchants and banks a complete contactless solution. For customers, this means a seamless way to pay using biometrics, though they can still opt for traditional payment methods — chip cards, magnet stripe, standard contactless payment, and Near Field Communication (NFC) — should they wish to.

VERITAS SIMPLIFIES DATA BACKUP TO THE CLOUD



Doug Matthews

Veritas Technologies, the leader in enterprise data protection, has 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 defense against Ransomware," said Doug Matthews, Vice President of product management at Veritas. "Organizations 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."

Provisioning cloud-based storage with a self-managed public cloud service provider requires a series of cumbersome steps that can introduce security and compliance gaps.

Recovery Vault will simplify this process and reduce risks by providing a secure, familiar and unified interface—NetBackup—to both manage backup and recovery and easily provision cloud-based storage with freedom to choose from leading cloud storage providers. This affords customers the flexibility to automate provisioning of cloud storage among different providers on an application-by-application basis all within a single subscription.

NEWSMAKERS

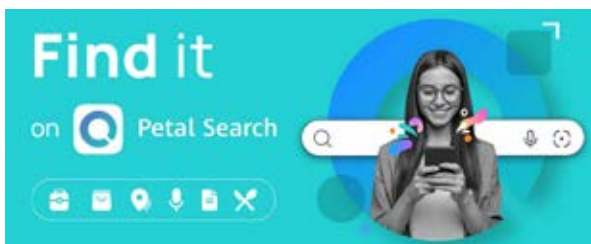
HUAWEI'S PETAL SEARCH PARTNERS WITH NOON.COM, JUMIA, ALIEXPRESS & WEGO

Petal Search, Huawei devices' leading search engine, invites users to begin their search journey and drop their mall visits as it welcomes bargains and exclusive offers from leading

brands across the Middle East and Africa. Browse clothing, pay your bills, book a PCR test, access governmental portals, book flights and hotels, shop for electronics or beauty products, and much more via a few taps on the search engine.

Users can access exclusive deals and offers through Petal Search across the region's favourite brands.

noon.com: Explore the Middle East's leading e-commerce platform, which provides users in KSA, the UAE and Egypt with millions of items to shop from with everything from mobiles, and tech to



beauty, fashion & home available. Users can have access to noon's latest offers and trends through Petal Search.

In addition to shopping, Petal Search introduced users to the new "Nearby" feature that allows them to explore restaurants, cinemas, shopping malls, gas stations, libraries, coffee shops, attractions, and more, that are close-by. Petal Search will continue to enhance its features and welcome additional brands to boost users' shopping experience. It is certified for GDPR, promising users a safe and protected surfing experience.

NUUDAY INFUSES AI INTO CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WITH AVAYA ONECLOUD EXPERIENCE PLATFORM

Nuuday, Denmark's largest provider of broadband, communication and entertainment services, has launched "Josefine," an AI-powered voicebot capable of delivering dynamic,

immediate and personalized experiences for customers interacting through its Avaya OneCloud communications and collaboration platform. The assistant, composed with Avaya OneCloud CCaaS and Google Cloud Contact Center AI, represents a leap towards what Nuuday calls the 'Cognitive Customer Universe', an AI-driven ecosystem that can optimize customer service and experience based on customers' ongoing interactions with Nuuday.

"In a highly competitive market, our investments in customer experience aim at solving the tradeoff between achieving high customer satisfaction



levels, increasing efficiencies in our operation and maintaining the motivation and engagement of our customer service agents," said Jesper Frederik Gottlieb, Vice President at Nuuday.

Nidal Abou-Ltaif, President at Avaya International, said: "Staying true to its brand promise, Nuuday is taking the lead in developing services that make life its customers' lives easier, and the company is redefining what is possible with technology as it seeks to take customer and employee experiences to new heights. It is our privilege to support Nuuday as it continues on this impressive journey.

CYBERCUBE LAUNCHES NEW EDITION OF ACCOUNT MANAGER TO ADDRESS RANSOMWARE, PRICING CHALLENGES



Ashwin Kashyap

Cyber risk analytics leader CyberCube has launched Version 3 of Account Manager – its software-as-a-service application designed for underwriters.

Cyber underwriters face many challenges when evaluating, selecting, and pricing risks for long-term profitability. Account Manager enables underwriters to make efficient, data-driven risk selection decisions.

This new version of Account Manager addresses many pressing needs in today's market. Over the past two years, losses have been on the rise due to ransomware, phishing, business email compromise, and other types of cyber threats. Account Manager Version 3 equips underwriters to make astute underwriting risk decisions by providing a host of new risk indicators including ransomware-specific insights. In addition, Version 3 offers a financial loss model that helps underwriters make more informed pricing decisions through an objective analysis of the loss potential of a company.

Ashwin Kashyap, Co-founder of CyberCube and Chief Product Officer, said: "In a hardening cyber insurance market, Account Manager helps underwriters generate alpha by helping select and price risks appropriately through targeted risk-specific insights. CyberCube's experts have curated risk factors, such as evidence of infrastructure abuse, that can help boost underwriting performance significantly. In addition, we have connected these risk factors to loss, enabling market participants to price risks adequately and achieve sustainable growth."

STAYING AHEAD OF THE GAME

Silmi Khanfir, Director of Cloud and XaaS-Middle East & Africa at Mindware, tells Anita Joseph, Editor, Reseller ME, how the pandemic has been a learning experience and the company's plans for 2022.



IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE IS A NECESSITY TO DIGITISE FASTER AND MOVE A LOT FASTER TO THE CLOUD. THE PANDEMIC WAS A KIND OF PROOF-OF-CONCEPT FOR MANY CUSTOMERS THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, MIGRATING APPLICATIONS TO THE CLOUD WORKS."

The pandemic has been a learning experience, says Silmi Khanfir. "Therefore, it's a pleasure to be back at GITECH with a

stronger portfolio, taking advantage of the lessons that we learnt during the crisis. We realised that there a lot of solutions that go in the direction of more security and business continuity-solutions that allow customers and business partners to have faster connectivity, continuous accessibility and acceptable performance because they are working remotely. This hybrid workplace concept forced us to focus on other solutions and emerge stronger this year."

According to him, the technologies that will drive growth next year will focus on how to avoid sudden, unexpected situations in future. They will be centred around business continuity and sustainability-how businesses can make sure that their applications are up and running even during emergencies and unexpected crisis situations-how can businesses provide their teams with a seamless

online working environment that allows them to collaborate, meet and interact virtually and access business applications from anywhere, how can they help business partners and clients move faster or accelerate their cloud/digital transformation.

"These are not new topics, but the pandemic brought them to the foreground and accelerated conversations around them," Khanfir says. "So, it's clear that there is a necessity to digitalise faster and move a lot faster to the cloud. The pandemic was a kind of proof-of-concept for many customers that, for example, migrating applications to the cloud, works. Pre-pandemic, a lot of customers were reluctant about the idea of the cloud and they were thinking in a very traditional manner. Now, they are seeing several customers implementing digital transformation successfully and realising that clients and end-users are looking for cloud-based solutions, so they are more confident and encouraged to do the same."

He also points out that pandemics and crisis situations like these very

often come with deep learnings. “A lot of vendors at this point need our help as distributor, to make the channel aware of the need to move from the costly and inflexible traditional models to the subscription and consumption-based business. So, this is what we see as a huge trend. Another relevant trend is that everything you used to have in your data centre, can now be provided as a service. So we don’t need it permanently and locally, we can outsource it or buy it as a service and pay only what we need and use. This is what we call ‘Everything-as-a-Service’-all these services allow customers and partners to overcome sudden, unforeseen situations like the pandemic.”

So, how are partners coping post the pandemic? “We learnt from the pandemic how to sustain our business and we are sharing these best practices with our partners and advising them about how to transform their businesses to be sustainable for

the future and to move away from traditional solutions and become more flexible and agile. This is what end-users want and business partners must follow the trend and help them with transformation,” Khanfir says.

That’s not all: Mindware has major plans in store for 2022.

“There are four new aspects that we are announcing at GITEX and which we intend to focus on in 2022: we have signed on a couple of new vendors, new hybrid cloud providers and also we have enriched our marketplace with new ISVs that are part of our cloud ecosystem and for which we are announcing an attractive program, including enablement, marketing and incentives to support them in

their cloud transformation journey leveraging Microsoft Azure. We are also announcing a new refreshed offering of professional services from consultancy, to implementation to migration to optimisation of cloud environments-this is what we are adding to our portfolio of services. We are announcing as well, a new support centre to help our business partners address issues that their end-users have, so that they can provide an end-to-end support structure. The next important things is our geo expansion in Africa. This year, we merged three distributors from the MIDIS group into our Mindware business since we have a larger region to cover, additional countries and we will be physically present in four countries in Africa, so that’s going to be one of our key focus areas,” he adds. 

Silmi Khanfir

SECURELINK SIGNS DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT WITH NETSPI

The partnership will help enterprises manage their attack surface with tech-enabled penetration testing services.



Aaron Shilts & Manish Pardeshi

SecureLink, the Trusted Risk Advisor and subsidiary of StarLink, has signed a distribution agreement with NetSPI, a leader in Enterprise Security Testing and Attack Surface Management, for the MEA region.

Pioneers in penetration testing, NetSPI is changing the pentesting scenario to make it easier for enterprises to track trends and improve their vulnerability management program. The technical assessments include web application penetration testing, mobile application penetration testing, source code review, infrastructure vulnerability assessment, red teaming, and breach & attack simulation.

Through this partnership, NetSPI can capitalize on SecureLink's consultancy,

sales, and marketing expertise, utilize the direct connect with decision-makers in their extensive customer base to create and convert opportunities for cybersecurity testing services provided by NetSPI, as well as take advantage of the years of trust built by SecureLink in this region.

Manish Pardeshi, Director, Cybersecurity Practices, SecureLink said: "We are privileged to onboard NetSPI in our ecosystem that can offer our customers a more continuous and scalable assessment of their environment with NetSPI's Penetration Testing as a Service (PTaaS) and ensure real-time visibility and full control over the testing program."

"We are proud to announce our partnership with SecureLink, the well-established cybersecurity leader in the

MEA region. Together we will transform the cybersecurity testing industry with NetSPI's technology-enabled services and expertise," said Aaron Shilts, President and CEO at NetSPI. "In partnership with SecureLink, multinational enterprises in MEA now have access to NetSPI's penetration testing and adversary simulation services to test their applications, networks, and cloud at scale and better manage their expanding attack surface. The sophistication, methodology, and value, provided by SecureLink and NetSPI is unmatched," he added.

About NetSPI

NetSPI is the leader in enterprise security testing and attack surface management, partnering with nine of the top 10 U.S. banks, three of the world's five largest healthcare companies, the largest global cloud providers, and many of the Fortune® 500. NetSPI offers Penetration Testing as a Service (PTaaS) through its Resolve™ penetration testing and vulnerability management platform. Its experts perform deep dive manual penetration testing of application, network, and cloud attack surfaces, historically testing over 1 million assets to find 4 million unique vulnerabilities. NetSPI is headquartered in Minneapolis, MN and is a portfolio company of private equity firms Sunstone Partners, KKR, and Ten Eleven Ventures. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. 



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infor

Phil Lewis

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Phil Lewis, SVP Solution Consulting EMEA and APAC at Infor, tells Anita Joseph what makes the company different.

Infor is a company with a difference and according to Phil, there are many things that make it so.

"There are many things that make Infor different," Phil says. "We do lots of things incredibly well. But there's really five key areas, from my perspective, and the number one is cloud, number two is industry specific, number three is digital built-in, number four, reduce time to value and number five, an unusual one, our ownership structure is very different in the market. So, if we start with the first one, cloud, you know, here we are at GITECH and every application vendor in this building if you speak to them, they will all tell you they're in the cloud. Everybody's in the cloud, and you have to be if you are not SaaS, if you are not cloud, you're actually not relevant anymore in today's market. But some people are doing it really well, and other people are doing it not so well. And what I mean by that is I have this concept of being 'on the cloud', or being 'in the cloud'- to be true cloud you have to be in the cloud. So what do I mean by that? Well, on the cloud, a vendor can take an old, on-premise, traditional application and load that onto Google, or AWS or Azure, and then they call it cloud. But it's not cloud, you're just hosting your old application in somebody else's data centre. At Infor, we've taken a different approach. We've gone down the road of investing huge amounts of money, billions of dollars, into our product strategy and a big component of that product strategy is 'true cloud'. We've partnered with AWS since 2014. They are our strategic partner for cloud. We have enabled our applications to use more than 130 AWS web services, our applications don't work without being in the cloud. We've engineered our applications to be truly multi-tenanted, which gives massive advantages to us in terms of managing all of that, but huge advantages to our customers in terms of economics. So that's

the first thing – true cloud. And if anybody is thinking about moving to the cloud, it's hugely important that they understand the difference. You don't want to be on the cloud, you have to be in the cloud".

"Number two, industry-specific.

The market today is screaming out for industry-specific applications. People want applications that are built to support what they do. They are fed up with buying a generic application and then modifying it and bending it and folding it to make it work for them because that's so restrictive, massively expensive to maintain and it actually stops the ability to innovate, dead in its tracks. So, customers are demanding technology that's built for purpose, technology that's built for their industry. And that's exactly what we do at Infor. We have some core focus industries, and we don't deviate away from those industries, and then we design, we develop we deploy industry-specific solutions for those industries. We don't try to be all things to all people. We focus on core industries and then we do those incredibly well. So, when a customer now uses an Infor solution, we have a zero-modification policy. The fact that the application has been built to support distribution or healthcare or automotive or industrial manufacturing, if you're in one of those industries, our application will support you. You will not need to modify it-it is based on industry best practices. There's a statistic that was mentioned last night actually by IDC, that 50% of G-2000 companies, ie the 2000 largest companies in the world, will be deploying industry specific software by the end of 2022. So Infor is incredibly well positioned to take advantage of that. We see ourselves as the number one industry-specific cloud company. That's number two".

"Number three, digital built-in: We have this maniacal focus around cloud, around industry-specific. And, really, that whole industry-specific strategy is designed to give our customers the control that they need in their business, control in their operations and business processes. So, if that's the part that gives them the control, it's our technology platform that we call Infor OS that really gives our customers the digital capabilities that they need to optimise and transform. And that's really important today. It's a real challenge for customers to deploy digital capabilities. Whereas with Infor in our platform, all of those, cutting-edge technology components-big data,



THE MARKET TODAY IS SCREAMING OUT FOR INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS. PEOPLE WANT APPLICATIONS THAT ARE BUILT TO SUPPORT WHAT THEY DO. THEY ARE FED UP WITH BUYING A GENERIC APPLICATION AND THEN MODIFYING IT AND BENDING IT AND FOLDING IT TO MAKE IT WORK FOR THEM."

artificial intelligence, machine learning, IoT, predictive analytics, extensibility, user experience design is all delivered and standard within our technology platform. It's already connected, so customers can use it straightaway. They don't have to bolt anything on, they don't have to integrate anything, it's all there. So when you put all of that together, it gives you everything that you need, not just to control your business, but optimise how you operate, and to transform your business using digital capabilities".

"Number four: It's vital that we do everything that we can to enable our customers to use that as quickly as possible. So we actually have a unique deployment methodology that is an agile approach we call it Engage and it is what is based around something that we call 60-30-10. So if you think about all of the customer requirements and all of the things that they need within their business, typically we can support 60% of their requirements without doing anything, just using our product as it was designed to be used. Then the 30 is where we may need to do some light configuration of the system. It may be slightly updating your screen, it may be creating a new report, it may be changing a business process, but it's very quick and easy to do, so that takes us to 90% pretty quickly. But we can't forget about the 10%. The 10% is typically the stuff that makes every customer unique. It's their differentiator, it's their USP, and that's where we may start to use

extensibility we'll heavily use our Infor OS digital capabilities to actually deliver that final 10%. In relative terms, the 10% can take a lot of time compared to the 90% but it's the bit that's actually critical to our customers. So, this is tried and tested, we have a customer in Saudi Arabia that just went live Al Jazira Equipment (or AutoWorld) . They deployed our Infor CloudSuite Equipment using 60-30-10 approach, they got themselves live really quickly – a fantastic success – and they're up and running on a multi-tenant true cloud. So we've proven that this approach works. So 60-30-10 is a guideline. Maybe it's 70-20-10 maybe it's 60-35-5. But typically, is around about 60-30-10".

"So that brings us to number five. Last one. And this is quite an unusual one, because you don't really hear many tech organisations, talk about their ownership. And we have a unique ownership, where we are owned by a privately-owned conglomerate, a called Koch Industries. They have revenues of \$130 billion a year and what that means to us is that we don't have the pressure of Wall Street on our shoulders. All of our competitors have shareholders that they have to answer to. And that really drives them into kind of taking a short-term perspective, having to do things that aren't necessarily the right things, but because they need to prove a point to their shareholders they need to drive their share price. And that introduces incorrect behaviour in some of the things that our competitors are doing. But with Koch Industries we do not have that quarter-on-quarter pressure. Koch Industries actually has a 30-year rolling plan for Infor. 30 years! That's a long-term view. And that means we can do the right things at the right time, as we see fit, not because shareholders are asking us to, not because we need to do something with the share price, but because it's the right thing to do to create value for us, and to create value for our customers. One of the key principles of Koch, and therefore Infor, is that we believe in something called virtuous cycles of mutual benefit, which in its simplest terms means "we succeed when our customers succeed".

So, that really is the viewpoint of Infor. "If you want to know what makes us different – true cloud, industry specific, digital built in, reduced time to value and owners with a long-term view. So, what really makes us different? We are here to make a difference".

SHIVA IT DISTRIBUTIONS (SHIVA GROUP) SIGNS EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT WITH HIKVISION FOR WI-FI SEGMENT

Shiva IT Distributions has been a frontrunner and trendsetter in the region, providing the growing market with cutting-edge network products and solutions for the last 17 years.

In a significant development, Shiva Group, a leader in the IT business sector, has signed exclusive distribution agreement with global brand Hikvision for its Wi-Fi segment, addressing the growing demand in the market for advanced connectivity solutions. Shiva Group is also showcasing Hikvision's latest, cutting-edge range of Wi-Fi and SMB solutions at Crowne Plaza on Dubai's Sheikh Zayed Road, during the GITEX Technology Week being held from October 17-21.

The highlight of the roadshow is an exclusive launch of Hikvision's solutions portfolio on the third day, giving partners, customers and visitors an exclusive opportunity to understand the Hikvision brand in detail.

With the pandemic having accelerated the work from home culture and set in motion a hybrid working scenario, both enterprises and the SMB segment are

increasingly seeking to connect their workforce seamlessly and securely. As Hikvision's sole distributor for Wi-Fi products, Shiva Computers will address this growing need.

Shiva Computers has been a frontrunner and trendsetter in the region providing the growing market with best-in-class network products and solutions for the last 17 years.

Naresh Kumar Lohano, Founder & CEO, Shiva Group of companies, said it is a matter of great pride being appointed exclusive distributors for Hikvision for GCC, the global leader in network, video surveillance and IOT solutions. He added that Shiva Group will work hand-in-hand with channel partners to consolidate and enhance Hikvision's market share for SMB and Wi-Fi products in the region.

"We have a team that will collaborate closely with partners, resellers and retailers on Hikvision's products and offer pre-sales expertise, training and other support as and

when required. Shiva Computers will also work closely with vendors to make sure that the go-to market approach is perfectly aligned and in sync with market growth," he added.

Syed Yusuf Maricar, General Manager at Shiva Group of companies said the company has been appointing partners and resellers across the region in order to make sure that channel partners get all the required support. He said they would work jointly with Hikvision to ensure that the channel ecosystem is equipped with the right kind of training and awareness that will help them grow and diversify into more business opportunities in their respective markets.

Shiva Group has also expanded its team in order to handle the Hikvision distribution business in the region and will soon enroll interested partners into their exclusive partner program for Hikvision's products.

About Hikvision:

Hikvision is a world leading IoT solution provider with video as its core competency. Featuring an extensive and highly skilled R&D workforce, Hikvision manufactures a full suite of comprehensive products and solutions for a broad range of vertical markets.

About Shiva IT Distribution:

Shiva IT Distribution, part of the Shiva Group of companies is a leading supplier of IT networking range of solutions to the region and has been in operations for the past seventeen years. The company has recently expanded to ensure it is able to meet demand of its channel partners for superior quality products from leading Technology vendors. 





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HALF OF GULF BUSINESS LEADERS FEAR INCREASED COMPETITION AS DATA TRAINING PROGRAMMES STALL

Whilst digital transformation initiatives accelerate at breakneck speed, Alteryx research shows over half of senior Gulf leaders face an ever-growing challenge to deliver on core data projects

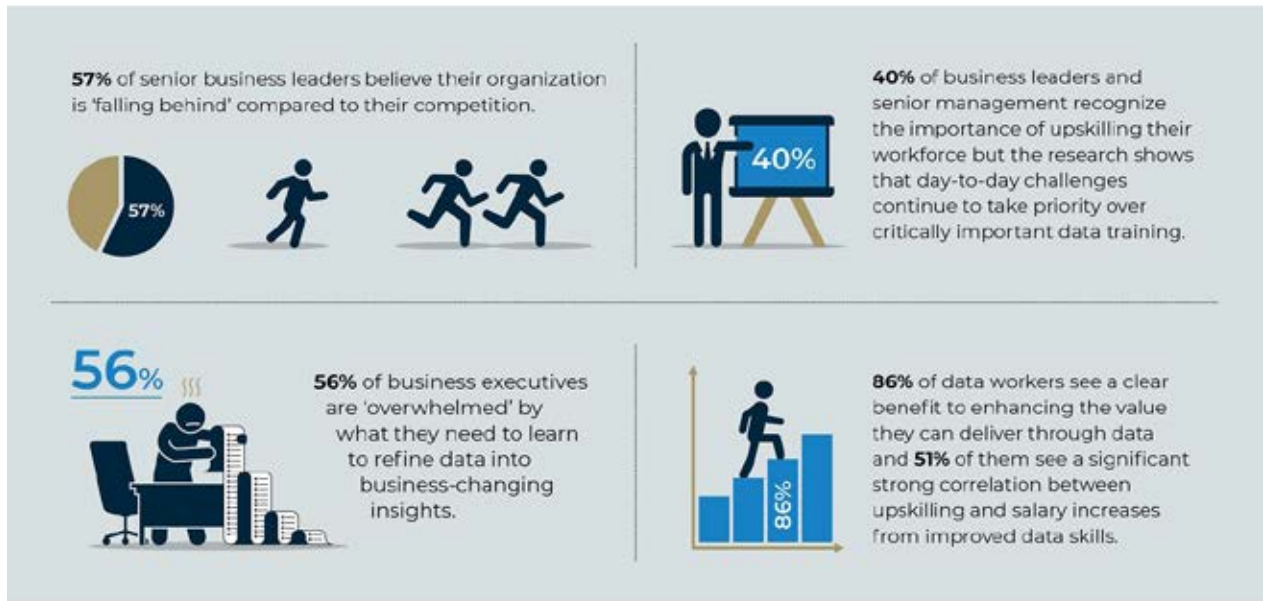


Alan Jacobson



Kerry Koutsikos

Data Project Delivery: a Challenge for Gulf Leaders



UAE & KSA – YouGov survey results commissioned by Alteryx.

Alteryx, Inc., the analytics automation company, has highlighted a core discrepancy between the accelerated pace of digital transformation and the provision of the foundational skills needed to deliver it. Despite workers' confidence in providing business value through their data skills, the research calls future digital competitiveness into question due to stalled digital upskilling in recent months.

In a survey of 300+ data workers in the UAE and KSA, Alteryx discovered that 57% of senior business leaders believe their organisation is 'falling behind' compared to their competition. 56% of these executives also confirm they are 'overwhelmed' by what they need to learn to refine data into business-changing insights.

Almost half (40%) of these business leaders recognise that driving upskilling initiatives is the responsibility of 'top management', but the research shows that day-to-day challenges continue to take priority over critically important data training. 45% of data workers are unable to upskill at as they continue to be pulled

into day-to-day tasks, while one in four (24%) do not know where to start.

Leadership and data workers: priorities at loggerheads

40% of Gulf C-Suites, VPs and business unit leaders responsible for driving upskilling strategies see little difference between the skills needed today and those needed in five years' time. Despite this lack of forward-thinking from business leadership, 86% of data workers see a clear benefit to enhancing the value they can deliver through data. Interestingly, 28% have already begun this upskilling journey, and 18% say they have already completed it.

For Gulf business leaders, understanding and fully utilising digital skills is essential for success. Enabling these workers to use their skills for business benefit will also significantly drive competitiveness. 51% of data workers admitted they see a significant strong correlation between upskilling and salary increases from improved data skills, with 10% expecting a 71-100% salary increase and 57% expecting a salary increase of at least 21% from upskilling. With this high expectation of a salary increase, it comes as no surprise

that 64% of Gulf data workers are motivated to upskill themselves outside of business-led training.

"The fields of data analytics and digital transformation continue to challenge companies to break the mould and deliver new and constantly evolving ways to upskill and deliver ROI," comments Alan Jacobson, Chief Data and Analytics Officer at Alteryx. "A core feature of digital transformation that is often underconsidered is the human factor, and the development of the foundational skills required to make such projects a success.

"With data workers entering employment at any and all skill levels across the analytic continuum, leadership must commit with conviction to evolve beyond any antiquated approach to data literacy and analytics utilisation and drive a cultural shift to delivery within their organisation that starts with employees. Only by making long-term commitments to prioritise - and investments to incentivise - good quality data work will the workforce be empowered to deliver more efficient outcomes and ensure competitiveness going forward." 

LEADING THE WAY

Nidal Othman, CEO, StarLink, on the company's spectacular growth, operational excellence and technological innovations.



Nidal Othman,
CEO, StarLink

What has StarLink's sales growth been like in 2021, now that Q3 is over?

We had an outstanding year so far. The sales target for 2021 is 500 million USD. We closed Q3 as planned with 350 million USD, which is 70% of our annual sales target. So, we are optimistic about achieving the additional 150 million USD in Q4 and as a result, the sales revenue has gone up by 25% year-on-year.

Tell us about StarLink's GTM strategy and its evolution in the last 16 years.

StarLink went through a massive transformation in the last 16 years. Our mission has always been to reshape the distribution landscape with our unique and unbeaten go-to market strategy, maintain our innovative, true value-added distributor status and to be a trusted cyber and cloud advisor to our customers.

If I must summarise our three key pillars-the first is our proactive sales team who are committed to drive and meet all business goals. We believe that this allows us to maintain our value proposition and stay ahead of the curve.

The second is our next-generation portfolio in partnership with over 50+ market leaders and vendors, supported by our customer success department with a professional support team,

technical support, and training. We believe this allows us to deliver and bridge the gap between what the vendor is trying to achieve in the market and the partner capabilities.

The third is our operational excellence - with a cutting-edge intelligent tool, state-of-the-art backend systems and processes which allow us to run our day-to-day operations in the most productive and efficient way.

What's new in the StarLink portfolio?

This year, we established the intelligent automation business in partnership with seven market leaders and vendors who are specialised in process automation, AI and advanced services, data and content-intelligence solutions.

Tell us about the evolution of the StarLink solutions portfolio and how it has helped organisations enhance their customer experience.

StarLink's solutions are designed to empower our customers to accelerate their digital transformation journey in a secure manner. We believe that the most critical or valuable asset for an organisation after their people, is their data - or to be more specific, their sensitive data. So, the customer should know where they are storing their sensitive data - on-cloud, or on-prem and how they are communicating and transferring their sensitive data and most importantly who has access to their sensitive data. Customers should also be able to validate and ensure that their sensitive data is not at risk, in order to meet the company's compliance and standard requirements. The bottom line is that sensitive data must be safeguarded and protected. Deploying Cyber, Cloud and Intelligent Automation solutions will allow customers to better manage and automate their data and processes 24/7 with 100% accuracy. So, to summarise, we call this integrated solutions approach the "data lifecycle."



STARLINK WENT THROUGH A MASSIVE TRANSFORMATION IN THE LAST 16 YEARS. OUR MISSION HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO RESHAPE THE DISTRIBUTION LANDSCAPE WITH OUR UNIQUE AND UNBEATEN GO-TO MARKET STRATEGY, MAINTAIN OUR INNOVATIVE, TRUE VALUE-ADDED DISTRIBUTOR STATUS AND TO BE A TRUSTED CYBER AND CLOUD ADVISOR TO OUR CUSTOMERS."

StarLink has been growing from strength to strength - give us an insight into your operational excellence.

In the last 16 years, we have managed to build a solid foundation that can be summarised into:

Our Logistics strength - our capability to deliver door-to-door shipment in 20 countries and be able to transact with our partners with local billing.

Our technical support solution rate which is almost 95% - which means that we escalate to the vendor, only 5% of our technical support cases and 95% of our technical support cases are resolved and addressed by the StarLink technical support team.

StarLink Training Academy trains more than 5,000 trainees, which

empowers the customer with the right expertise and knowledge. We deliver this training through our certified training facilities across the region.

StarLink has investment in more than 60 highly qualified professional teams who have the capability and skills to deliver and deploy the most sophisticated projects with a high customer satisfaction score. As a result of all of this, we maintain 92% customer retention.

Add to this, our strong financial position and balance sheet have ensured that we manage to maximize the financial facility extended to our partners.

Finally, as a quality-driven, customer-centric organization with security in our DNA, StarLink achieved the ISO 27000 & 9000 certification as a proof of our continued commitment to deliver quality services to our customers.

What is your strategy for 2022?

In October this year, we announced our strategy for 2022, which is all about transforming with intelligent automation. The focus will be to build awareness in the market and ensure that AI & automation are on the top of the agenda for our partners and customers. So, we strongly believe that intelligent automation will be the transformation engine and driver that will position us as the 'VAD of the Future'.

What is your outlook for the partner community?

We cannot scale without our partners, and they play an integral role in our five-year roadmap, as well as our growth strategy for the future. We strongly believe that partners must be specialized, so that they can have an edge which comes with thorough expertise in their domain. They also need to build their services team around cyber, cloud and IA, as these are the fastest growing technologies. Furthermore, we want our partners to expand across different regions, in addition to focusing on their local market. 

AOC ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF NEW AGON PORSCHE DESIGN GAMING MONITOR IN UAE

Launching for the first time in Virgin Megastores through its distribution partner Techxhub



Gaming display specialist AOC has officially launched the AGON Porsche Design gaming monitor in the UAE. Available through Virgin Megastores, the PD27 features top-of-the-line performance that brings professional display technologies—a must-have for any hardcore gamer.

Porsche Design is already known for exclusive lifestyle products that take form and function on a whole new level. When combined with AOC's unique red dot winner 2020 gaming displays under the AGON line, you're getting the best possible gaming monitor that brings a lattice structure design inspired by a Porsche car rollcage.

"We are proud and excited about collaborating with such a fantastic partner like Porsche Design within Middle East region through our Distribution Partner Techxhub & Region's Top Retailer Virgin Mega store," said Carol Anne Dias, Sales Director Middle East & Africa at AOC. "The Porsche design heritage goes perfectly with our state-of-the-art display technology. We believe together with our partnership, thanks to our terrific and completely unique monitors, we can provide gamers across the region with an unrivalled gaming experience," she added.

The PD27 is a 27-inch 1000r curvature display that comes with a QHD (2560 x

1440) resolution plus a 240Hz refresh rate. There is also Adaptive Sync plus HDMI 2.0 and DisplayPort 1.4, along with Display HDR 400 support plus 90 percent DCI-P3 coverage.

"The launch of Porsche Design monitors across Virgin stores will give gamers the opportunity to experience this world-class product. We as Techxhub strive to bring the very latest trends in technology to the region & focus on ecosystem-based demand creation, channel-based customisation and a solution-based customer proposition," said Sachin Kapoor, Vice President IMEA at Techxhub.

The new AGON Porsche Design gaming monitor features an ambient light behind the screen that allows for a more immersive experience, along with dual 5W speakers enhanced with DTS Sound. A Wireless Gaming Keypad allows you to configure and access different monitor settings including FPS, RGB, etc. at a press of a button. The monitor is also the

first to have a boot-up sound that mimics the Porsche engine.

"We are excited to launch the Porsche Design Monitors across our stores. This best in class monitor will be a fabulous offering to the gaming fraternity," said Aymen Datsa, Regional Product Manager at Virgin Megastores.

The Porsche Design gaming monitor also includes a user configurable Projection Logo that projects an image of the AGON or Porsche Design logo right below the display. A new OSD is also included on the PD27, which continues the unique design language of the Porsche Design brand.

The new model will be with Techxhub, the authorized distributor for AGON Porsche Design monitors to the UAE. Techxhub is one of the leading distributors for gaming peripherals and accessories in the region.

The AGON Porsche Design gaming monitors launches exclusively through Virgin Megastores in UAE. As with all of its displays, AOC offers a 3-year warranty with on-site exchange service. The new PD27 model is priced at AED 3,499 (excluding VAT). 





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THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF VIDEO COLLABORATION

Logitech's video collaboration solutions, including Rally Bar and Scribe, created a buzz at GITEX this year.

Logitech, which was recently ranked number-1 worldwide in video conferencing hardware by Synergy Research, created a buzz by showcasing its top video collaboration solutions at GITEX in Dubai last month in conjunction with its partner Avientek.

Among the products on show were Rally Bar, Logitech's next generation portfolio of video conferencing solutions for small, medium and large rooms. Rally Bar is a portfolio of appliance and PC-based solutions that works with today's leading video conferencing services such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

Logitech Rally Bar and Rally Bar Mini feature built-in AI. Both video bars come equipped with Logitech RightSense technology and AI Viewfinder, a second camera dedicated to computer vision. The camera detects human figures and processes where they are in real-time, enhancing the precision of Logitech RightSight auto-framing and camera control so meeting participants are always in focus, whether they are late joining or

moving about.

Logitech also demonstrated Scribe, an AI-powered whiteboard camera for meeting rooms and classrooms. Compatible with leading services like Microsoft Teams and Zoom, Logitech Scribe broadcasts whiteboard content into video meetings with incredible clarity, virtually transporting everyone into the same room.

With Logitech Scribe, AI enables the device to render the user invisible, so that they don't get in the way of the content they are creating on the white

board. "It's a truly unique product. It's ideal for education and we're excited about bringing it to the Middle East," said Loubna Imenchal, head of video collaboration, Africa, Middle East, Turkey, and Central Asia at Logitech. "Being able to share content in this way has a really powerful impact on virtual lessons and collaboration. It also makes life much easier for the person presenting, who can focus on the message they are trying to get across rather than worrying about whether the viewers can see the white board."

In addition to exhibiting its products on its partners' stands, Logitech also held meetings and 1-1 demonstrations at a



dedicated meeting room in the Conrad hotel, close to Dubai World Trade Centre.

"It was great to meet with customers at GITEX and demonstrate the advantages of our newest innovations and how they can help companies boost efficiency, innovation, and employee and customer satisfaction," Imenchal said. "Video collaboration has never been so important. Organisations across the region have experienced the importance of keeping their teams connected during the past two years, and there is a growing awareness of the advantages of using enterprise-grade solutions. Even as many people venture back to places of work and education, hybrid models are now an

established mode of operations for many organizations."

Furthermore, many companies have come to understand that significant productivity gains can be achieved through effective video collaboration. Before the pandemic, executives travelled to physical meetings and used video conferencing only occasionally — usually for calls with colleagues or clients in another city or overseas. But now the situation has transformed, and video conferencing has become the primary means of holding meetings. Organizations will scrutinise the value of face-to-face meetings and business travel with more zeal than before, and management will be acutely aware that employees can take part in more video conferencing meetings than face-to-face meetings on a given day.

Aside from productivity gains,

video collaboration brings advantages including enhanced employee and partner engagement. Employees who feel engaged will also be happier and more productive, producing better work and better results for their organisation. "Human beings are naturally social. Working remotely can lead to alienation from your colleagues," Imenchal said. "Seamless, quality video collaboration overcomes this. A relatively small investment in video collaboration technology pays off very quickly through increased productivity from a happier workforce, and improved relationships with partners and customers, who can also benefit from seamless video collaboration with your organization."

While video collaboration is important across verticals, the healthcare and education sectors are experiencing a particularly high level of transformation.

In the healthcare sector, video collaboration proved particularly useful during the pandemic, enabling patients to speak to doctors face-to-face without travelling and its associated risks of infection. With video collaboration, a patient in one clinic or hospital can be checked by a specialist who may be hundreds of kilometres away in another clinic. With high-end video collaboration solutions, the specialist can see the finer details, help diagnose ailments and offer advice.

"It's all about increasing access to care, enhancing patient experiences, and improving outcomes, with technology as an enabler," Imenchal said. "Logitech is very active in healthcare. Using our webcams, healthcare providers can convert any small room or workspace for telehealth to connect providers to patients, and patients to family members in long-term care. Our high-end conferencing cameras like MeetUp or Rally give professional-quality video and audio for specialist consultations. Meanwhile, our webcams such as Brio 4K are extremely versatile, and can easily be connected to a PC and be rolled into the hospital room on a cart."

Logitech is also seeing huge demand in education, with COVID-19 speeding up a shift towards distance learning. The company has equipped numerous schools and universities in the region with video conferencing technology, helping teachers to engage seamlessly with students thanks to superior audio, video and ease-of-use provided by solutions such as Rally Bar and Scribe. 

Loubna Imenchal



**BEYOND THE
PANDEMIC, THE
LONG-TERM
OPPORTUNITIES
ARE VAST.”**

Fadi Moubarak

SUBSCRIBING TO CHANGE

With great change comes great opportunity. That's the view of Fadi Moubarak, Vice President – Channels, Avaya International, anyway. In this exclusive interview, Moubarak explains to Anita Joseph, Editor at Reseller Middle East, how the past 18 months have unearthed huge transformation opportunities in the channel, and how Avaya is helping its partners to harness that opportunity.

“When you're finished changing, you're finished.”
These words by Benjamin

Franklin, recorded around 350 years ago, are today more relevant than the US founding father could ever have imagined. The pandemic accelerated seismic shifts in the IT industry that were already happening, and today it's the businesses that moved quickly with the times that are faring best.

Small wonder, then, that Avaya is encouraging its partners to “subscribe to change” to reap the rewards of the new world emerging in front of us. According to Fadi Moubarak, Vice President – Channels, Avaya International, the changes we're seeing in the market – particularly in regards to the experiences that customers and employees now demand – represent a huge opportunity for Avaya and its partners. And he wants the company's partner community to be ready to embrace that opportunity.

To find out how Avaya is going to support its partners as they ‘subscribe to change’ – the theme for the upcoming Avaya Partner Forum, taking place both live and online via Avaya Spaces – we

sat down with Moubarak for an in-depth look at where the market is heading.

The regional market as a whole has been witnessing major changes and shifts across every industry. Some are struggling, others are doing well. What's your take on the market now, and what are the opportunities in the channel?

The market remains relatively volatile compared to what we were seeing before the pandemic – both at a regional level and a global one. As you'd expect, that volatility presents its own challenges, which our partners and customers are continuing to deal with. But, crucially, it presents a lot of opportunities, too.

Indeed, the very fact that most organisations are gearing themselves up to be agile enough to address the unknown is creating an opportunity. We've seen the importance of business continuity over the past 18 months, and the businesses that are now back into their cycles of growth are investing heavily to make sure they aren't stung by unforeseen circumstances again. That's an opportunity for Avaya and its partners – both in the customer experience and employee experience space. We could be talking about increased spend on workstream collaboration to re-align to a work-from-anywhere culture, or the roll-out of AI to lessen the load on stretched contact center agents.

These are short-term wins that are partners have been helping our joint customers with. Beyond the pandemic, though, the long-term opportunities are vast. And that's because organizations have realized that improving the quality of experiences through both the customer and employee journey is today among the most important differentiators and creators of brand affinity. And that's where Avaya and its partners excel – creating experiences that matter for our customers' customers.

Avaya has been constantly innovating on its solutions portfolio. So what are the latest updates and how can partners benefit?

We know that organizations are paying more attention than ever on the customer and employee experience. But with the demands of these groups constantly changing, it's become almost impossible to keep up using legacy technologies. The experiences that people demand just can't be satisfied with monolithic, glass-ceiling apps in a cloud world; experiences must be 'composed', and that's what our innovation is focused on.



THE BEAUTY OF A COMPOSABLE PLATFORM LIKE AVAYA ONECLOUD IS THAT IT'S EASY TO BUILD THE SOLUTIONS ONCE YOU UNDERSTAND THE REQUIREMENTS."

With the assumption of cloud as a given, experiences can be composed as and when they're required – with deployment times of hours, rather than months. And with Avaya OneCloud, we're enabling our customers to create the unique experiences they need—in the moment.

This doesn't mean embracing public cloud across the board, or having to rip and replace an entire technology stack. It can be a hybrid architecture, extending what you already have, using something out-of-the-box, or a customized, new solution that meets your specific needs. The outcome is what's important, and the outcome is being able to compose what you need right away.

So you'll see our key investments in using cloud to make it easier to roll out new services. And we have proof-points on that: For instance, with Avaya Spaces, we were able to leverage NVIDIA's cloud platform to quickly roll out AI-powered noise cancellation and immersive presenter features. That's composability in action.

And you see the same thing in the contact center space. We're helping our customers roll-out voice biometrics, or natural language voice bots, by composing solutions using our platforms and technologies from our technology ecosystem partners for that innovation.

In this world of fast-moving innovation and on-the-fly composition, the role of the partner is of course changing. There's less of a focus on installing and implementing, and more on helping the customer to consume and compose with the technology in the most appropriate manner. So our partners are upskilling when it comes to customization, integrating multi-cloud infrastructures, and taking advantage of a vast technology ecosystem.

And those efforts are reaping great rewards: The end customers who cannot compose solutions on the fly will have a very difficult time competing in the experience economy. The opportunity, therefore, is in enabling our joint customers to not only compete, but to win in that economy.

Tell us about your Edge partner program and how it's evolving to meet the new demands of the partner community.

The Avaya Edge program is the vehicle through which our partners can really harness this opportunity, and like the technology, it's going through an evolution. With the growing number of our customers demanding cloud models, we recognize the importance of getting our partners business-ready to address those demands.

So the Edge program is shifting its focus to deliver greater rewards for partners consuming cloud-based applications. And it rewards partners even further for winning cloud-based deals with new, rather than existing, customers.

That's just a small example of how we're fine-tuning our program to enable our partners to help customers use Avaya OneCloud to compose the solutions they need to address changing demands. In other areas, we've reduced the need to invest in traditional certifications, which are no longer relevant in the cloud space, while we've encouraged new types of certifications that partners should go in for.

We're also encouraging partners a lot to invest in verticalization – to take those OneCloud solutions and create their own wrap on them for their specific industry. For example, one of our partners has composed a branded version of Avaya Spaces to enable virtual real estate consultations. It's great use case that shows an understanding of the customer, the business and the market, and how to address those requirements with our solutions.

The Avaya Partner Forum is taking place in November. How is it going to reflect the challenges we've been speaking about, and the new world of work?

Of course, hosting an event during this time we call the 'new normal', we're organizing something that's hybrid. It's about meeting the wide-ranging demands of our partner community: No matter how many people are able to attend in



person, there are always going to be those who can't make it.

So our event is face-to-face and we're very excited about welcoming those who can travel in-person, but we're also broadcasting live around the world for those who aren't able to. The agenda has been designed to take both setups into consideration, with shorter, web-friendly sessions taking place at appropriate times for an international audience.

In terms of the content of the event, we'll be addressing the trends and challenges we mentioned earlier – and the huge opportunities there are in delivering experiences that matter. The pandemic showed us there is no one-size fits all model for the new ways of delivering experiences, and organizations now realize that their customers and employees expect personalized, immersive experiences, wherever they are, and however they're choosing to interact. Avaya OneCloud is the best way to deliver these experiences, and we'll be showing our partners just how powerful the platform

can be when it comes to addressing their customers' demands.

What's your outlook for the channel, now that 2021 is over and 2022 is coming up?

This is an incredibly exciting time for Avaya and its partner community. We were able to help our customers address the challenges of the pandemic, and with a renewed focus on providing unforgettable experiences, our customers are turning to us for their post-pandemic plans, too. The world is returning to a new type of normal, and we have this amazing opportunity to put our platforms right at the center of that new normal.

The pandemic accelerated customer and employee demands for better experiences, particularly on the digital front, and now there's a huge transformation agenda taking place to address that. You have governments setting out their visions for a post-pandemic world focusing on better citizen experiences, and the private sector is following suit.

Our opportunity is to provide the platforms that are flexible enough to accommodate these changes. Many organizations with inflexible applications have struggled to respond as quickly as necessary to the new demands that have been placed on them over the last 18 months. Consumers and employees have grown accustomed to contactless and self-service, as well as virtual engagement. Today, only the companies that can meet these demands will thrive.

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

We'll see all of these trends really accelerate in 2022, and we can't wait to see what we can achieve with our partners as we address them.

Finally, what's your advice to the partner community?

In the pre-pandemic world, partners were an extension of the vendor. In the cloud world, this has been reversed; our partners are an extension of the customer. So I'd stress that our partners should understand the customer and their requirements before anything else. The beauty of a composable platform like Avaya OneCloud is that it's easy to build the solutions once you understand the requirements.

Our message to our partners is that you're an extension of the customer, so help us understand the customer requirements needs, challenges and opportunities. The better we both understand them, the better we'll be able to serve them. Nothing beats a happy customer. 

LOOKING AHEAD

Amanulla Khan, Managing Director of Linksys Middle East, Turkey & Africa, spoke to Anita Joseph, Editor, Reseller ME, on what it meant to be participating at GITEX and what to look forward to next year.

A portrait of Amanulla Khan, a middle-aged man with short dark hair, wearing a grey suit jacket over a light blue button-down shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. A yellow name tag with the word 'LINKSYS' in black capital letters is pinned to his left lapel. The background is a blurred white wall with some faint blue text visible.

LINKSYS

Amanulla Khan



WE PROJECT THAT MORE BUSINESSES WILL MAKE THE NECESSARY SHIFT TO CLOUD-BASED CONTACT CENTERS TO ENSURE THAT CLIENTS RECEIVE THE SUPPORT THEY NEED WHEN THEY NEED IT, AND OVER THE CHANNELS THEY USE DAILY."

What does it mean to be participating at GITEK this year and what are some of the products/technologies you are showcasing?

Last year, there was a lot of uncertainty because of the pandemic. This year, we couldn't be more confident about everything. This pandemic has re-emphasized the fact that selling Wi-Fi is a noble cause. Today, everything is around Wi-Fi and it powers even the smallest of things. The most important thing with Wi-Fi is that it should work. I shouldn't have to worry about it. I should be confident knowing that it is always there and can be depended on. So this GITEK, we take pride in showcasing our 30 years of our legacy and the new innovations and all the learning from all these years.

So the first thing we have done, which we haven't done ever before, is to venture into mobile Wi-Fi. We believe that 5G is a real revolution which is going to change the dynamics of everything in the world-not just technology, but everything that we do today. That's why we're foraying into the 5G space. You see a lot of consumer-driven products, commercial products and industrial products.

The second thing we're focusing on is our routers and Mesh technology, Wi-Fi 6 and the new technology which is Wi-Fi 6E, which will soon be ratified. This product is available in the US today and the moment is it given the go-ahead by the authorities here, it will become available here. The USP of this product is that it provides an unparalleled user experience. This is the focus on the consumer space.

On the commercial space, which is the SMEs, we have enhanced our portfolio of products. About two years back, we had announced our first cloud manager-the Linksys Cloud Manager and now we've added a host

of products onto this portfolio. We have added an outdoor access point, we have added an indoor access point which will be used in large villas, hospitality and education sectors. So we have a complete portfolio of products which start with indoor access points, to indoor access points. From the technology perspective, we have Wi-Fi 5 today and we are launching Wi-Fi 6 access points for businesses in December.

We have something else that's unique: The software that guarantees the best experience. What we have is Linksys Smart Wi-Fi and each of our mesh solution comes with Linksys Smart Wi-Fi. With this product, we give you, the consumer, the control of our network where you're able to view the number of devices connected on your network, you're able to limit the kind of usage, the kind of bandwidth and prioritise bandwidth on applications. What's more, you're also able to control the kind of access that your kids have, to the Internet and the various websites.

So, what's the next year looking like, for Linksys?

The pandemic has taken everything online and with more and more employees working from home, you need access to the same resources and the same quality across the board. In fact, they would like to get the same experience they got when there were physically present in office. So the main thing is providing those resources to our ever-growing employee network. The remote working trend is going to continue and that's going to be the biggest challenge. We're also making a lot of investment in educating the customer, especially about MESH.

We foresee an exciting future, especially since the partnership we have developed with Fortinet and they're the world leaders in cybersecurity. We have several interesting product launches lined up and we're looking at a very dynamic period ahead. 

SHIVA IT DISTRIBUTIONS

(SHIVA GROUP OF COMPANY)

WHERE EXCELLENCE MEETS EXPERTISE

Over the years, the group has entered into key partnerships with major technology vendors which helped build a strong reputation and develop a robust and best-in-class range of products and solutions.



Syed Yusuf Maricar

Shiva IT Distributions (Shiva Group of Company) is an IT business sector leader in the region with various divisions focused on distribution, trading, system integration and consulting. Based in the vibrant city of Dubai, the group began operations as a reseller almost two decades ago and since then, grew and made significant inroads across the Middle East, Turkey, Africa and CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States markets with its own niche customer base and separate

divisions looking after distribution and systems integration.

Over the years, the group has entered into key partnerships with major technology vendors which helped build a strong reputation and develop a robust and best-in-class range of products and solutions that resonated strongly with customers and addressed the growing needs of an evolving market.

While the networking domain has been the key focus, Shiva Group also caters to a diverse and exclusive range of IT products, solutions and services. With an extensive reseller network and focus on value addition at every stage-from consulting, sales, marketing, channel development, implementation, support and training, the group has become renowned for world-class partnerships and customer-centric operations. In addition, its extensive expertise in the ICT sector and a growing multicultural workforce have ensured that customers always have access to world-class solutions, professional service and maximum value on their investments. Innovation is its driving force and the group is on a continuous journey to spearhead the adoption of digital technologies and help businesses across the region in

their digital transformation journey.

“Shiva Group is fuelled by a passion to become the partner of choice and always striving to exceed customer expectations. The pursuit of excellence has been its hallmark and the key to its long-standing success in a highly competitive market,” said Syed Yusuf Maricar, General Manager at Shiva Group of companies.

What makes Shiva Group different is its unique approach to the market. The group serves a client base of more than 500 SMB customers in its business. It has partnerships with more than 50 top technology vendors across different product lines and its systems integration group has worked on major IT projects for various government organizations as well as leading corporate entities in the private sector. Its pricing support for partners is among the best in the industry, helping the channel stay profitable and relevant. Shiva Group also has a team of engineers with global certifications in leading technologies. Winning accolades and recognition from leading global players is but natural for Shiva Group, with its uncompromising focus on excellence.

Visit the company’s website www.shiva-computer.com for more details.

JABRA AND LENOVO COLLABORATE ON INTEGRATED VIDEO CONFERENCING MEETING ROOM SOLUTION

The solution includes Jabra's innovative 180° panoramic 4K plug-and-play video solution PanaCast 50 and Lenovo's ThinkSmart Core Kit.



Jabra has teamed up with Lenovo to offer an end-customer solution delivering intuitive, fast and seamless video conferencing solutions for meeting rooms at the touch of a button.

The solution includes Jabra's innovative 180° panoramic 4K plug-and-play video solution PanaCast 50 and Lenovo's ThinkSmart Core Kit. This is made up of ThinkSmart Core, which is optimised for business productivity and collaboration, as well as being pre-loaded with Microsoft Teams Rooms to help employees connect and share wherever they are, and the ThinkSmart Controller, a 10.1-inch, 10-point touch HD display that allows users to initiate and control meetings, as well as share content and work with colleagues working remotely.

Initially available in the EMEA region, the Jabra PanaCast 50 & Lenovo ThinkSmart Core Kit brings together the best technology from two of the biggest names in digital collaboration and creates a new standard in meeting room set-ups. Video conferencing

and collaboration will be effortless courtesy of the most superior video and audio equipment in one, easy-to-use package.

A new standard in video conferencing solutions

This suite of products promises to deliver a new standard in video conferencing and is the ideal solution for flexible working and the modern meeting room. Users can collaborate with their team at the touch of a button, whether they're working from home, the office or anywhere else in between.

The Jabra PanaCast 50 is engineered to be the world's first new-normal-ready intelligent video bar. Its 180° field of view allows for social distancing in meeting rooms so you no longer have to worry about huddling closely in confined spaces. Also, it effectively takes on the role of the 'director' of your meeting – intelligently adjusting the video stream to follow the action in the meeting.

Lenovo's purpose built ThinkSmart

Core is powered by an 11th Gen Intel Core vPro processor and delivers connectivity to support any meeting room configuration. Its understated yet stylish design means it can be placed discreetly, and it has ports to support multiple audio and visual accessories, and integrated cable management.

The ThinkSmart Controller boasts a 10.1-inch 10-point anti-glare, anti-smudge touchscreen display. Its easy-to-use Microsoft Teams interface makes it ideal for meetings and collaboration. Users can easily initiate and control meetings as well as share content, making it easy to collaborate with colleagues wherever they are working. It even has Integrated Infrared sensors that detect when participants enter the room and automatically turns the system on and off.

The partnership was announced during a meeting between Andrea Recupero, Head of EMEA Smart Collaboration at Lenovo and Joel Hamon, President EMEA & CALA at Jabra. Commenting on the partnership, Hamon said: "We are thrilled to be collaborating with Lenovo and the launch of the Jabra PanaCast 50 & Lenovo ThinkSmart Core solutions is an exciting step in delivering intelligent and secure meeting room solutions. With hybrid working the new normal, businesses everywhere are thinking about how best to collaborate and offer the most advanced meeting room set-ups with minimal technical input required. We are confident that this solution will help businesses take their conferencing and collaboration capabilities to new heights."

The Jabra PanaCast and Lenovo ThinkSmart Core solution will be available in EMEA from select distributors. 

SAAS ELEVATES HOW BUSINESSES INTERACT WITH CUSTOMERS

Vildana Karalić-Avdić, Infobip's Head of Marketing MENA, discusses how their business has adapted to meet the demands of the digital economy, the acceleration of DX since the onset of the pandemic and the current cybersecurity climate.



WE PROJECT THAT MORE BUSINESSES WILL MAKE THE NECESSARY SHIFT TO CLOUD-BASED CONTACT CENTERS TO ENSURE THAT CLIENTS RECEIVE THE SUPPORT THEY NEED WHEN THEY NEED IT, AND OVER THE CHANNELS THEY USE DAILY."

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

We are particularly proud of how our full stack of SaaS solutions built around the AI segment has played a pivotal role in pushing businesses forward by elevating how they engage with their clients. After all, the digital economy is about connecting individuals and companies. By empowering businesses and making them more accessible to their client base through our SaaS and CPaaS solutions, we are enabling them to adapt to shifting trends in customer engagement and evolving business operations. Customers today want to communicate with brands and businesses over platforms that are familiar, fast, and reliable. This is where we help businesses meet those demands, by ensuring their end users get the most value in real-time and through their preferred channels.

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

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

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

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

Lastly, when it is time to make the change, it is crucial to invest in a platform that is easy to manage and



Vildana Karalić-Avdić

seamless to integrate with different channels.

At Infobip, we were also pushed to diversify our portfolio of products & solutions and tailor them further to help businesses and customers stay afloat and thrive during the challenging pandemic times. It all boils down to being agile and ready to embrace the change.

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

I would say that it will all revolve around effortless experiences &

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

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

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

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

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

When looking for an omnichannel solutions provider, one of the essential determining factors that need to be evaluated is the service provider's security. Infobip is putting a lot of focus on the security, protection, and privacy of data. We have very strict security and privacy policies & standards in place. This makes it possible for us to provide a truly frictionless experience for the end-user. Therefore, it is important for businesses to look for solutions that are agile and adaptable in terms of growth strategy and meeting security requirements. Technical competency, or lack thereof, is another challenge. Businesses must invest in providing regular training to empower their staff and ensure security measures are being followed. 

UAE'S EMARAT TRANSFORMS CONNECTIVITY EXPERIENCES FOR CUSTOMERS & EMPLOYEES WITH ARUBA'S WAN EDGE TECHNOLOGIES



Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company, has announced that UAE fuel service-station operator Emarat is set to optimize its wireless, wired, and WAN infrastructure with Aruba technology and introduce automated, cloud-native Edge computing for an all-round enhanced user experience.

Emarat has been serving customers across the UAE for four decades with a focus on delivering superior customer experience and empowering the company's employees to be more productive. The company has signed an agreement to provide superior indoor and outdoor Wi-Fi coverage as part of its digital transformation initiatives. Aruba's solutions will bring seamless connectivity and simplified operations through best-of-breed technology.

Emarat, which operates in Dubai and the Northern Emirates, will adopt Aruba's SD-Branch solution. SD-Branch brings together best-in-class, software-defined networking infrastructure and unified management capabilities such as assurance, orchestration, and security, to optimize performance across wireless, wired, and WAN architectures and minimize operational costs.

Additionally, Emarat will leverage the power of Aruba's ESP (Edge Services Platform), the industry's first cloud-native solution for automating, unifying, and securing the Edge, all driven by advanced AI that proactively addresses network issues before they lead to business impact. Emarat will also deploy access switches, indoor and outdoor Wi-Fi 6 access points, branch gateways, and Aruba's security platform, all managed through a single console via Aruba Central.

Aruba partner Mideast Data Systems will deploy the solution across facilities. Through a single centralized management console, Emarat will be able to effortlessly oversee a high-performance Wi-Fi 6 network that is ATEX-compliant for hazardous environments. Advanced AI will monitor the health and performance of the infrastructure. Software-defined branch connectivity will transform LTE-based connection experiences, allowing secured access for guests, comprehensive visibility, granular control, and automated policy enforcement. The solution will seamlessly integrate with various initiatives of Emarat in the near future.

Aruba is proud to be a part of Emarat's digital transformation journey by delivering best-in-class, multi-purpose solutions that fulfill the expectations of the modern customer – always-on, responsive, low-latency connectivity that supports a peerless front-end experience. 

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PowerStore is backed by the Future-Proof Program and Anytime Upgrade to deliver peace of mind.

INNOVATING TO STAY AHEAD

Martin Uchytíl, Director-Dell Financing, MERAT, tells Anita Joseph, Editor, Reseller ME, about the APEX Flex on Demand solution, the growth of the As-a-Service consumption model and the importance of the channel ecosystem in the region.

What is Dell Technologies announcing around APEX?

We are announcing the launch and availability of APEX Flex on Demand in the UAE, Saudi and Qatar, APEX, which is part of the overall APEX solutions portfolio that is being rolled out across the globe. With APEX Flex on Demand, customers can acquire the technology they need to support their changing business, with payments that scale to match their actual usage. Today's fast-moving

Martin Uchytíl



business environment drives the need for immediate technology solutions availability. Many customers buy excess capacity upfront and pay for technology they don't use, which consumes additional budget and creates the risk that other critical projects will not be funded. Flex on Demand allows customers the elastic capacity to pay for technology as they use it, and the payment adjusts to match their actual usage. APEX Flex on Demand is open for all of Dell Technologies infrastructure stack. Customers really have a full choice of whatever product in whatever configuration they would like to use.

Why is APEX such a big focus for Dell Technologies?

Customer needs are changing and have been changing for a while now. Digital transformation has been happening even before the pandemic and all the businesses have started to seriously think about where the future is going and how we can thrive. As they do this, they start thinking of what business outcomes they can deliver to their customers and all of a sudden they started to feel the pressure of delivering simplified and more agile IT solutions, so that they can focus on the business outcomes rather than wonder how to spend time and focus on operating IT infrastructure. So the customers are looking to Dell Technologies as the leading IT solutions provider in the world. We're the only organisation that has an end-to-end solutions portfolio to deliver as a service, flexible consumption solutions that can enable them to tackle their future needs. For us, this just strengthens the belief that we're on the right journey because for more than a decade, we've been working on flexible consumption solutions as a service and delivering them to the customers. APEX is an evolution of our efforts at what we've been designing for over a decade now, because we've been listening to

customers, we've been looking at the market and at what is happening in the industry. We, therefore, started to innovate further on the solutions that we already had and expand the portfolio. Which is mainly APEX, because we believe that it fully represents where we want to get to.

What are your views on the growth of the As-a-Service consumption model?

At the moment, as customer needs change, the future needs are less predictable by businesses, so they're thinking about how can we have what we need available to us without having to go through the typically

lengthy procurement processes, and how we can we avoid over provisioning and under provisioning resources which has always been the problem and nowadays it is even more so. Recent studies predict that by 2024, over 50% of data centre resources will be consumed on an "as-a-service" basis. And more so, moving those resources to the Edge from the data centre is becoming much more difficult for the customers to predict, plan, budget and manage. So, from our perspective, we're trying to deliver the solutions that allow customers to focus on the business and allow them to let us manage, define, design and deploy for them so that they can refocus their energies and budgets on critical issues that allow them to succeed. At the moment, businesses are really looking for ways to drive efficiencies, while spending less resources to do so. That's what we listen to, we're working very hard to innovate, enable and bring more and more solutions that can help customers thrive in the multicloud world.

How does this affect the channel?

That's the critical part. If you think about the channel in the Middle East, channel is the key to success for Dell Technologies. Our channel ecosystem has grown very strong over the decades that we've been working together, forging these partnerships and relationships-in fact, the channel ecosystem has been on the top of our mind. So, we make sure that together, we can offer the right solutions-because our channel partners are facing exactly the same challenges that we talked about-the customers are asking our channel partners-"help me solve my business or technology challenge, -I typically would have purchased from you what I needed in the past, now I need a different solution." So, we are here to offer those solutions together with our channel partners, to satisfy customer needs. 



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REDEFINING DATA ARCHITECTURE

Haider Aziz, Regional Director Middle East & Africa at VAST Data, discusses how the company aims to redo the entire data centre stack infrastructure by addressing hardware and storage problems.



FROM A FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE, AND EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER RELATIVE TO OUR GROWTH, IS THAT WE'VE OUTPACED ANY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANY IN TERMS OF REVENUE WHILE MAINTAINING VIGILANCE OVER OUR COST STRUCTURE TO ACHIEVE CASH FLOW POSITIVITY EXITING OUR SECOND FULL YEAR OF REVENUE."

How are you solving legacy infrastructure problems?

It ultimately comes down to the tiering of data. There are a lot of limitations. With new applications and algorithms, you really want fast access to the entirety of the dataset, and so the whole concept of tiering is now obsolete. We're building a brand-new architecture that allows us to break those age-old trade-offs between price and performance and capacity and resilience, and to build one system that really does collapse that pyramid of storage tiers.

What are some of the shifts and changes in the enterprise?

Ten years ago, it was all about rows and columns and transactional databases and the beginning of analytics. Data is changing both in its form and in the access patterns. We need very fast access to very large types of data – images, video that computers can now analyse and gain insight from. We're now seeing more natural data, pictures, video, and genomes. Things

that computers really didn't have any business analysing before are now becoming much more interesting. This is also transforming the access pattern because these data sets are so much larger than the ones that we had before, but they need very fast access in order to run these training and inference algorithms.

Tell us about your global presence, especially as it relates to the Middle East.

We're growing globally. Have started with building a foundation of customers in North America and Europe and are now having success in the Middle East.

Can you talk about the health of your business?

From a financial perspective, and even more important to consider relative to our growth, is that we've outpaced any infrastructure company in terms of revenue while maintaining vigilance over our cost structure to achieve cash flow positivity exiting our second full year of revenue. In terms of the minimum revenue requirement over the past 12 months, we've delivered 10X above the \$10 million threshold

and expect to continue our growth trajectory for the foreseeable future.

Tell us about your customers/ markets?

We see a lot of success wherever there's a combination of a lot of data and the requirement to access it very quickly, over and over again, and so that ranges from AI and analytics workloads. For example, in Live Sciences, we do a lot of genomics, medical imaging and brain research, in the financial space, a lot of backtesting of algorithms in terms of going over trade data and understanding how new algorithms need to trade going forward. Just as an example on that, if a hedge fund before could backtest on one week's worth of data or two weeks' worth, because that's what they could fit on that top tier that they had before, now they can do the entirety of their history 10 years back, 15 years back. And instead of taking four or five hours in an overnight batch process where the quants need to come in the morning and see what the results are, if it's good or not, now they can do it in minutes, and so it becomes interactive. In a completely different space, there is great opportunity in media and entertainment. For example, a large animation company told us that they could not have developed their latest movie without VAST, and they showed us movements in hair and shadows, and they said, "Our animators have been asking for these types of abilities for years now and we couldn't give it to them because of an infrastructure bottleneck. Now that we have infinite access to all of the information, they can do whatever they want".

Haider Asiz



MANAGING DECARBONISATION & DIGITISATION REQUIRES TECH INDUSTRY TO STEP UP

Joe Baguley, CTO, EMEA, VMware, argues that tech companies have a responsibility to help customers decarbonize their growing digital operations and achieve their sustainability goals.

Joe Baguley

There's a dilemma in modern business. In every sector, organisations are on a digital transformation mission to ensure they remain viable and competitive. Companies are eagerly embracing revolutionary technologies - like blockchain, virtual reality, edge computing, machine learning and AI - as they pioneer new business models and keep pace with new trends.

But their increasing reliance on these computationally intensive technologies hinders another important corporate goal: to reduce their carbon footprint. Although exact figures are debated, it's accepted that the data centres that power these businesses are significant consumers of global electricity and contribute as much carbon into the air as the aviation industry. And these emissions are predicted to double by 2025.

Mounting Pressure to Reduce Carbon Footprint

Businesses are facing mounting pressure from multiple sources to decarbonize their operations.

Consumers, sparked by recent environmental disasters including heatwaves, flooding, wildfires and hurricanes, have a newfound awareness of the climate crisis. People have learned, with alarm, that our online habits come at a cost to the planet - in one year our collective love of Netflix is enough to power 40,000 average US homes. As a result, consumers are now holding companies to account on the environmental impact of their operations.

Investors, spurred by the growing evidence-base for a connection between environment, social and governance (ESG) policies and operational resilience and business success, are now using ESG as a signal for investment decisions. Similarly, companies are increasingly

tying executive compensation to sustainability metrics.

This is all happening against a backdrop of stringent regulation. The number of countries legislating for net-zero carbon goals by 2050 or earlier is steadily increasing. The European Green Deal, proposed by the European Commission, is particularly ambitious. It proposes that all 27-member states become carbon-neutral by 2050.

Like the targets set under the COP21 Paris Climate Accords, achieving these goals requires a multi-faceted approach to decarbonisation. Every industry has to pull its weight, and that includes the IT industry. Tech companies have a responsibility to help customers decarbonize their growing digital operations and achieve their sustainability goals.

With that in mind, here are three key areas where IT companies should be stepping up:

1. Intrinsic Sustainability from the Start

From energy-efficient coding onwards, sustainability should be a built-in characteristic of all new products and solutions. Taking an 'intrinsic sustainability' approach to design and development will ensure the energy consumption, carbon emissions, electronic waste, water usage and broader environmental impact for each product and service through its entire lifecycle is always considered.

The fact is, it's easier to build a more sustainable ecosystem from the start than to reverse engineer one at a later stage. Bitcoin for example is never going to be able to lower the carbon-intensity of crypto-mining – it's baked into the system. Tim Berners Lee, credited as the inventor of the World Wide Web, has described bitcoin mining as "one of the most fundamentally pointless ways of using energy."

Another example is machine learning and artificial intelligence, both huge consumers of computational power. As the tech industry heads collectively down the road to these super-smart algorithms, we need to think intelligently and make sure we are being as energy-efficient as possible. That includes the way in which the algorithms are deployed, as well as the associated hardware and software.

2. Push Sustainability through the Supply Chain

Every company is both a producer of products or services, as well as a consumer of others' goods and solutions. That means every tech company has an opportunity to cause a positive chain reaction of sustainability through the supply chain, and hence help customers reduce their carbon footprint.

For example, some tech companies are adopting 'responsible sourcing' methods that demand sustainability from their suppliers. By building these requirements into contracts, sustainability is cascaded up the supply chain.



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Similarly, if companies build sustainability into their own products and services, and demand sustainability from the partners selling their products, it has the same effect in the other direction.

A case in point is recent research by the 451 Group. It showed that organisations want their cloud providers to give them contractually binding efficiency and sustainability commitments. In other words, companies want tech suppliers who can prove they're reducing their environmental impact, which in turn helps them 'green' their own supply chain and meet their own sustainability objectives.

That's a powerful motivation for tech companies to engage suppliers and partners in their own sustainability journeys, building environmental

standards into contracts, and procuring goods and services only from those who are themselves environmentally responsible. The goal should be a carbon-neutral supply chain.

3. Build Sustainability into Business Operations

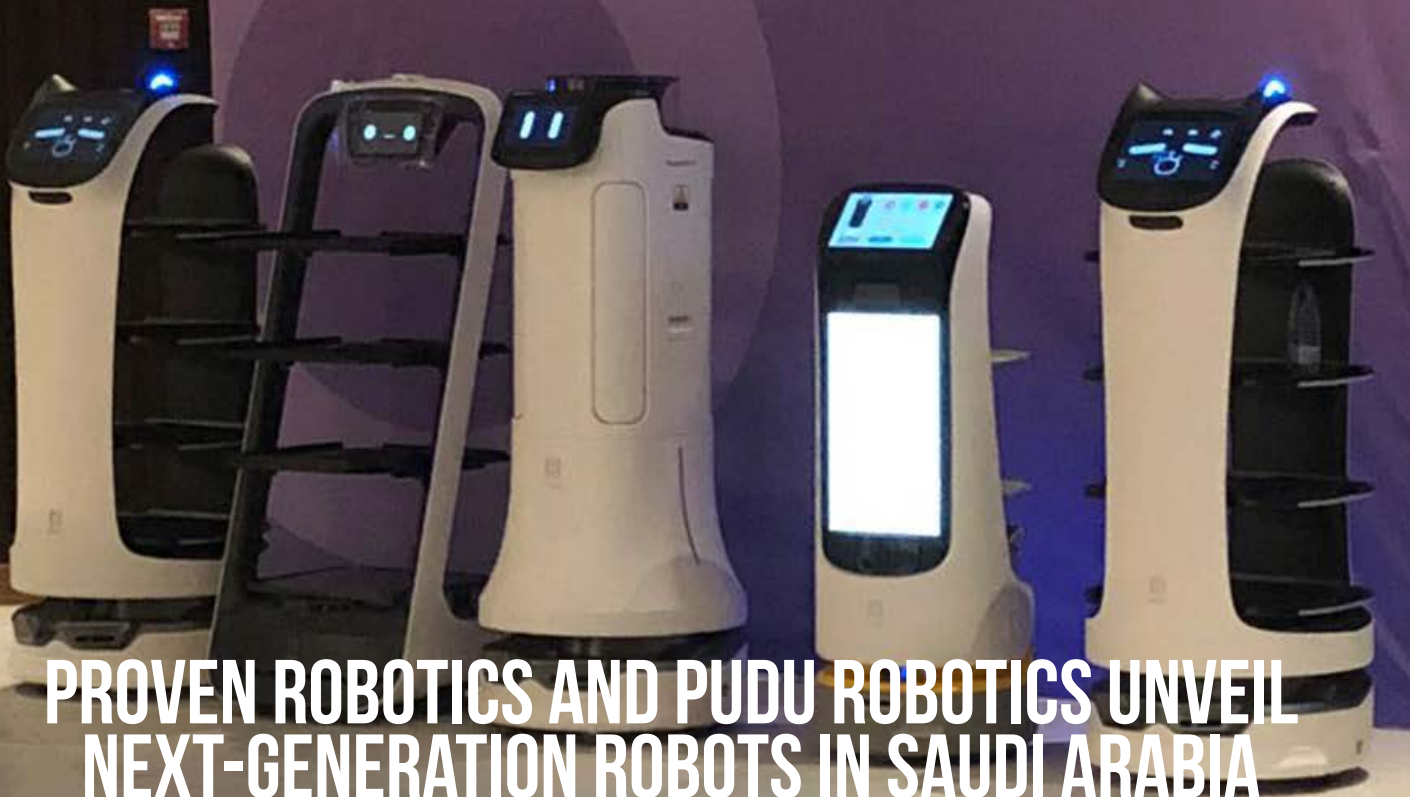
To reduce the carbon footprint of the tech industry, we must all play our part in building environmental sustainability into our own global business practices and operations. For many IT companies, the goal is to decouple business growth from carbon emissions and resource consumption. This starts with understanding, monitoring and classifying an organisation's carbon emissions.

Scope 1 emissions result from company-owned and controlled resources, like heating sources or vehicles. Scope 2 are emissions made indirectly by a business, mainly when the electricity it buys is being produced on its behalf. Scope 3, usually both the biggest and hardest to tackle, brings us back to the supply chain. These emissions are those the organisation is indirectly responsible for, from buying products from suppliers through to its products when customers use them.

Businesses are understandably progressing fastest to reducing Scope 1 and 2 which are in their control, for example by switching to renewable energy or electric vehicles. But they have less control on how Scope 3 emissions are addressed, which makes it harder to tackle. This is why organisations are rightly assigning the responsibility to the C-Suite.

Despite climate concerns, the shift to digital is unstoppable. Tech companies must therefore lead the way in reducing the environmental impact of IT. We must set our own ambitious targets. We must be more transparent, more collaborative, and more engaged with all our stakeholders and wider communities. If we all play our part, businesses and society will continue to reap the rewards of digital solutions while simultaneously supporting the battle against planetary warming. 


 PROVEN ROBOTICS



PROVEN ROBOTICS AND PUDU ROBOTICS UNVEIL NEXT-GENERATION ROBOTS IN SAUDI ARABIA

Introduce Pudu's signature robots – Kettybot, Bellabot and Pudubot – for the first time in the Kingdom at launch event

Proven Robotics, a state-of-the-art venture by Proven Solution, and Pudu Robotics, an international high-tech enterprise dedicated to the design, R&D, production and sales of commercial service robots, held a launch event to unveil Pudu's signature robots – Kettybot, Bellabot and Pudubot – for the first time in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The live event presented an opportunity for both the companies to showcase the brilliance of these robots in improving efficiencies through AI technology, reducing operating costs and simplifying processes. Representatives from Proven Robotics and Pudu Robotics discussed the growth of robotics in the region, and the role of AI and robots in Saudi Arabia's ambitious drive towards making automation and artificial intelligence a core pillar in the nation's economic development strategy.

Visitors attending the Riyadh Season 2021-22 were able to watch demos for Kettybot, Bellabot and Pudubot, robots that were developed to transform the operational landscape and improve efficiency. Bellabot robot was designed to revolutionize the human-robot interactive system, helping make manual tasks in customer-servicing obsolete; while Kettybot and Pudubot are service delivery robots and can act as a utility assistant in several industries.

With a vision of becoming the leading robotics solutions provider in the Middle East, Proven Robotics has been providing cutting edge robotic solutions and a robotics management system that can be customized to fit business needs, enabling local and regional organizations to take full advantage of emerging applications and solutions. Through its partnership with Pudu Robotics, the company aims to offer fully scalable robotic automation solutions for customers in a wide range of industries

and several customer facing sectors.

"There is an increasing demand for robotics across many industries, and this demand is expected to rise, driven by the introduction of new technologies, a growing need for automation fueled by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the need for contactless and automated interactions. Our agreement with Pudu Robotics comes in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 that emphasizes economic diversification and aims to support businesses and organizations in Saudi Arabia to utilize the efficiencies created by robots to stay ahead of the curve. We are committed to working with our customers to deliver solutions that match their needs, helping them stay competitive and relevant in an ever-evolving digital era," added Zaid Al Mashari Group CEO of Proven Arabia.

With superior offerings and global footprints, Proven Robotics and Pudu Robotics plan to host more roadshows in the future. 

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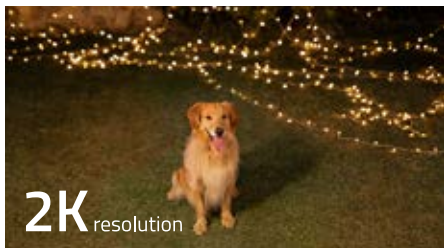
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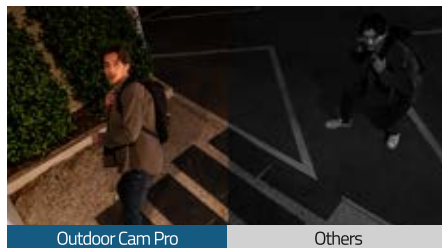
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