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DELIVERING A TOTAL EXPERIENCE

WALID GOMAA,
CEO OF OMNIX INTERNATIONAL
TELLS CNME HOW THE COMPANY IS
FULLY COMMITTED TO DELIVERING
A 'TOTAL EXPERIENCE' TO ITS
CUSTOMERS IN OUR FAST-PACED
DIGITAL ECONOMY.

LENOVO
EMEA PRESIDENT

MAZARS
MANAGING PARTNER

SCOPE
REGIONAL SALES
DIRECTOR



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In terms of our evolution as a company over the last 12 months, what we have tried to do is brings our two divisions together to be able to provide a total experience for our customers.”

EDITORIAL

A LEAP INTO THE FUTURE

Over the last number of weeks, it has been impossible to avoid the hype surrounding the 2nd edition of LEAP in Riyadh.

The tech symposium has been billed as a platform that allows all the major IT players globally to demonstrate how they can leverage their technologies to help the KSA achieve their Vision 2030 aspirations.

The Kingdom, in a bid to reduce their economic dependence on oil, have completely embraced nascent technologies as part of their efforts to completely transform the nation into a global hub of innovation and entrepreneurship – and if you haven’t already noticed, they are in a rush to get there!

One of the companies that are positioning themselves as an accelerator for Saudi Arabia are IT behemoth Lenovo.

CNME managed to speak to Giovanni Di Filippo, President EMEA at Lenovo ISG, to learn more about the commitments the company is making to the KSA.

In a candid interview, Di Filippo was bullish about the opportunities that are emerging within the KSA – and disclosed that Lenovo has signed some ‘hugely significant’ MOUs that really rubberstamps their long-term commitment to enabling Saudi Arabia to achieve its transformation goals.

Di Filippo said, “The announcements that we are going to be making at LEAP are going to be significant to our longevity here, and we are very excited at the role we are going to play in Saudi Arabia’s transformation.”

On the front cover of February’s edition of CNME is a wonderful interview with Omnix International CEO Walid Gomaa.

Gomaa has enjoyed a phenomenally successful career in IT ecosystem across the Middle East region, and in a career spanning 30 years, he has held executive positions with IT giants such as IBM, Oracle, Dell and Huawei to name just a few.

He was appointed CEO of Omnix International just over a year ago and is on a mission to expand the company’s presence across the Gulf, but particularly in the KSA.

As is the case with all our front cover interviews in CNME, it is a long-form discussion and we cover a lot of ground during the conversation.

However, the standout message from Gomaa, was the fact the company wants to deliver a ‘total experience’ for its customers in our new digital economy.

Gomaa said, “In terms of our evolution as a company over the last 12 months, what we have tried to do is brings our two divisions together to be able to provide a total experience for our customers.”

In addition to this, CNME also spoke to Khaled Almarzooqi, VP of Projects at Bayanat.AI.

Bayanat.AI operates under the umbrella of G42, and in a fascinating insight into what the company does, we learned more about its unique ELT project, described as a gamechanger when it comes to global aviation safety – and its mission to help the UAE achieve its sustainability goals.

LEAP was not the only show in town during February.

Mitel held their own symposium in the UAE, which was designed to help them better communicate their goals and principles to their channel ecosystem.

The edition in the UAE, is just the first in a series of roadshows that the company has planned across the region, with Kuwait next on the agenda.

CNME spoke to Asif Khan and Feras Zeidan to find out more.

We also have some excellent thought leadership articles from Pure Storage, Bayzat and an excellent interview with Regional Sales Director at SCOPE, Yazan Jammalieh.

Enjoy February’s edition of CNME, and in March’s magazine we will have ALL the coverage from our CIO Leadership Awards, which takes place at the Taj Exotica Resort & Spa.

Mark Forker
Editor

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Cisco reveals top tech insights for digital transformation ahead of LEAP 2023



(L-R) Reem Asaad, Vice President, Cisco Middle East and Africa & Salman Faqeeh, Managing Director, Cisco Saudi Arabia.

Ahead of LEAP 2023 technology conference in Riyadh, Cisco has shared its insights into technological trends that will help businesses in the region make the most of digital transformation. Cisco sees security, hybrid work, multi-cloud architectures and sustainability as key themes in 2023, all powered by connectivity and a next generation of networks.

Visitors of LEAP will experience the following trends and latest

technologies, designed to accelerate public and private customers' agendas for a digital and green future, at Cisco's booth under the theme of "Powering A Connected & Sustainable Universe":

Commenting on Cisco's participation at LEAP, Reem Asaad, Vice President, Cisco Middle East and Africa said: "With its rapidly developing and diversifying economy, Saudi Arabia looks to digitisation to play a key role. For more than

25 years, Cisco has been working with the Kingdom on its innovation journey, through initiatives such as our Country Digital Acceleration (CDA) program and Cisco Networking Academy. As we continue to help the nation realise its Vision 2030, LEAP serves as a significant platform for Cisco to showcase the possibilities of a digital and green future".

Salman Faqeeh, Managing Director, Cisco Saudi Arabia said: "Through our presence in the Saudi market since 1997, Cisco has shared its expertise and technology to positively impact economic growth, job creation and skills development. This year at LEAP, we aren't only unveiling our ground-breaking digital technologies, we're also highlighting our commitment to spurring innovation and growing the technology ecosystem in the Kingdom. We will also celebrate the 25th global anniversary of the Cisco Networking Academy, while showcasing its local impact in Saudi Arabia. Till date, the academy has trained more than 274,500 learners in the Kingdom with in-demand IT skills, preparing them for the jobs of the future".

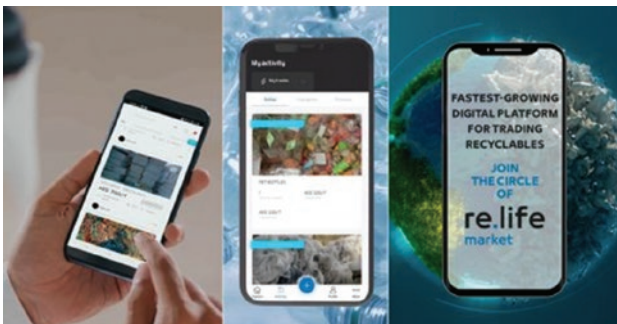
re.life market recorded over 150,000 tonnes of recyclable material traded in 2022

re.life market, the virtual marketplace for business-to-business buying and selling of recovered commodities, recorded over 150,000 tonnes of recyclable material being traded on the platform in 2022,

amounting to over AED100 million in value. This is a major milestone for the platform, which was launched by re.life in 2021, and a powerful indicator of the shift in the industry towards more efficient and sustainable ways of trading recyclables.

The re.life market platform connects buyers and sellers of recyclables in a virtual B2B marketplace, with several trade options for a transparent and

fair bidding process that meets the specific needs of buyers and sellers. Trades are possible across categories of recyclables, including ferrous and non-ferrous metals, plastic, paper, wood, e-waste, glass, and rubber. re.life market also verifies the quality of recyclables being traded on the platform and provides guarantee of payment to sellers when a trade is completed. While buyers are guaranteed that high-quality recyclables will be allocated to them, sellers have the assurance of receiving payment. Buyers also have greater access to in-demand material and sellers are empowered to command fair prices. Of the over 150,000 tonnes of recyclables traded on the platform to date, metals, plastic, paper, and aggregates were the most traded categories.



Intel introduces the 4th Gen Xeon Scalable Processors, Max Series CPUs and their latest GPUs



Intel marked one of the most important product launches in company history with the unveiling of 4th Gen Intel Xeon Scalable processors (code-named Sapphire Rapids), the Intel Xeon CPU Max Series (code-named Sapphire Rapids HBM) and the Intel Data Centre GPU Max Series (code-named Ponte Vecchio), delivering for its customers a leap in data centre performance, efficiency, security and new capabilities for AI, the cloud, the network and edge, and the world's most powerful supercomputers.

Working alongside its customers and partners with 4th Gen Xeon, Intel is delivering differentiated solutions and

systems at scale to tackle their biggest computing challenges. Intel's unique approach to providing purpose-built, workload-first acceleration and highly optimised software tuned for specific workloads enables the company to deliver the right performance at the right power for optimal overall total cost of ownership.

Additionally, as Intel's most sustainable data centre processors, 4th Gen Xeon processors deliver customers a range of features for managing power and performance, making the optimal use of CPU resources to help achieve their sustainability goals.

CommScope's latest tech solution delivers ultra-high-resolution video streaming

CommScope, a global leader in network connectivity solutions, announced that RUCKUS Networks is introducing a new series of entry-level, scalable edge switches with 25 Gbps uplink ports. This series includes the first entry-level enterprise switch to deliver fibre-to-the-room connectivity.

"The ICX 8200 series is a wired platform optimised for wireless service delivery, purposefully designed to handle the next generation of wireless-first and IoT campus networks", stated Bart Giordano, Senior Vice President, RUCKUS Networks, CommScope. "Our newest product line will not only support today's most advanced Wi-Fi technology, but also future generations of Wi-Fi, and includes three models that will deliver a fibre-to-the-room solution".



Bart Giordano, Senior Vice President, RUCKUS Networks, CommScope.

Cyber Immunity to be a key security theme across the region in 2023 and beyond

Threat landscape insights and predictions for 2023 show that META region will remain a target for increased cybercriminal activity. Today's hyper-connected world requires to reconsider the way we approach cybersecurity. This is why Kaspersky has spent several years developing the methodology of creating Cyber Immune IT products – those with 'innate' protection against cyberthreats. Cyber Immune IT systems bring closer a safer and more resilient digital world where Kaspersky Cyber Immunity is the new norm. So, we'll continue to build strategic technological

partnerships based on the Cyber Immune approach.

Data from the Kaspersky Security Network shows that between January to September 2022, every third user in the META region was affected by online and offline threats. Above this, Kaspersky reports that in 2022 there has been an increase in the number of persistent and



sophisticated attacks targeting various states in the META region.

Cyber Immunity is an IT system's inherent ability to withstand cyberattacks without requiring any additional security tools to be applied. Most types of attacks on a Cyber Immune system are ineffective and unable to impact its critical functions. Cyber Immunity is especially beneficial for industries where IT systems are subject to higher cybersecurity, reliability, and predictability requirements, such as manufacturing, the energy sector, transport infrastructure and smart city systems.



Nidal Abou-Ltaif has been promoted to the role of Senior Vice President – Global Head of Sales at Avaya, as the ongoing executive shake-up at Avaya continues under the stewardship of CEO Alan Masarek.

Avaya's Abou-Ltaif land a new global role

Previously President for Avaya

International, the company's EMEA and APAC operation, the new role gives Abou-Ltaif a global remit, including the Americas. Abou-Ltaif will continue to serve as head of international sales in this role.

"As global head of sales, I will continue working with the team to simplify our go-to-market & channel strategy, deliver #ExperiencesThatMatter across our customer segments, and continue empowering our customers and partners in their journey to cloud", Abou-Ltaif, wrote on LinkedIn. "Maintaining a customer-centric mindset and understanding that customers are at the heart of our business are key to our successful transformation here at Avaya".

Abou-Ltaif's expanded role is the latest appointment in an ongoing shake-up of Avaya's executive team as the company works to transform its business and overcome its financial challenges.

In August last year, Avaya removed CEO Jim Chirico following an earnings miss, and appointed industry veteran Alan Masarek to the top job. Since taking post, Masarek has appointed a new interim CFO, simplified the company's reporting, and streamlined its portfolio.

Schneider Electric sets its sights on transforming the electrical retail sector

Schneider Electric, a leader in the digital transformation of energy management and automation, has launched the Schneider Electric Online Marketplace – an e-commerce platform aimed at creating an easier and faster shopping experience for the UAE electrical retailer market.

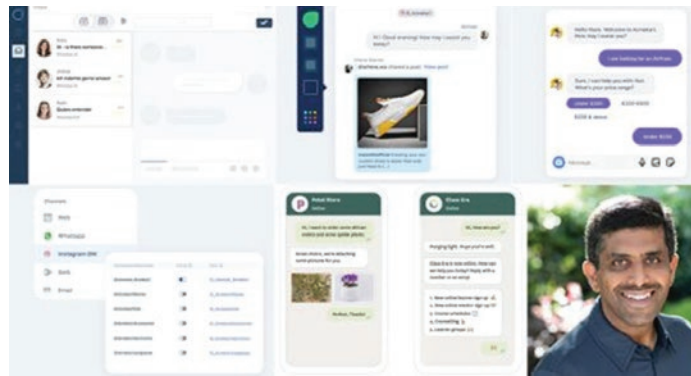
Alper Vargel, Gulf Vice President of Home & Distribution for Schneider Electric, said: "We are thrilled to launch our Schneider Electric Online Marketplace in the United Arab Emirates. It will significantly expand our reach as the retail industry pivots to e-commerce, providing our partners



and customers with faster, easier, and more convenient ways to improve the way they do business".

Vargel added, "Schneider Electric is leading the digital transformation of the retail market with tailored e-commerce platforms such as these in the Gulf and across the globe too".

Freshworks and Meta work together to elevate customer experiences



Freshworks Inc., today announced that companies around the world have increased customer retention by using Freshworks' conversational AI bots to automate communication with buyers through WhatsApp, Instagram Messaging, and Facebook Messenger. International companies like MTN Cameroon in Africa, Body & Fit in Europe and The Giving Movement in Dubai have elevated their customer support efficiency on Meta's messaging platforms using Freshworks' Freshchat, Freshdesk and Freshsales products.

With over two billion daily active WhatsApp users, nearly two billion daily active Facebook users, and more than two billion monthly active

Instagram users, Meta provides the world's most popular messaging platforms. The Meta Business Messaging integrations with Freshworks' CX and CRM products make customer and prospect engagement easy for support, sales, and marketing teams. With Freshworks AI-powered bots, businesses can tailor and automate messaging journeys for each channel, configure workflows across multiple channels or languages, and efficiently train bots with NLP learning capabilities.

Tenable plans to accelerate cybersecurity development through next generation solutions

Tenable, the Exposure Management company, today announced Tenable Ventures, a corporate investment program. Tenable Ventures will focus globally on early-stage start-ups developing novel capabilities that help customers discover, assess, and manage cybersecurity risk across their attack surfaces to better prevent successful attacks.



Amit Yoran, Chairman and CEO, Tenable.

With initial plans to invest up to \$25M, Tenable Ventures will provide early-stage financing to start-ups in highly competitive cybersecurity markets such as Israel and the U.S., to help with the development and go-to-market strategies for exposure management solutions. Tenable Ventures also will work with start-ups to improve product design, create consistent and shareable data models, enterprise readiness and more.

"Tenable Ventures represents Tenable's ongoing investment in and commitment to sponsoring the next generation of innovative cybersecurity capabilities and the teams behind them", said Amit Yoran, Chairman and CEO, Tenable. "These companies share our vision for enabling customers to manage their exposure to cyber risk".

Mitsumi Distribution opens state-of-the-art logistics centre in JAFZA, Dubai

Mitsumi Distribution is thrilled to unveil the opening of the Mitsumi Logistics Centre (MLC), its second brand-new warehouse in Jebel Ali-Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The facility will serve as the central hub for the company's operations in the Middle East and Africa.

The facility features advanced technology and equipment, including storage automation systems, advanced security and real-time tracking. At 75,000 square feet, it can handle a substantial volume of goods and is equipped to meet the expanding demand for distribution and logistics services in the area. This facility will serve as the second distribution centre for Mitsumi Distribution in Jebel Ali, elevating logistics to new heights.

"We are excited to open this new facility in Jebel Ali, which will serve as a strategic hub for our operations in the Middle East and Africa", said Jagat Shah, Chairman & CEO of Mitsumi Distribution. The new Mitsumi Logistics Centre (MLC) will enable us to offer our Partners an even higher level of service and support, and we look forward to continuing to grow our presence in the region".



Jagat Shah, Chairman & CEO of Mitsumi Distribution.



Mathias Bachsleitner, EVP of Global Partnerships and Alliances, Infinigate.

Infinigate Group appoints a new Executive Vice President of Global Partnerships & Alliances

Infinigate, the value-add distributor of cybersecurity, secure networks and secure cloud solutions, is appointing Mathias Bachsleitner as EVP of Global Partnerships and Alliances.

Mathias brings over fifteen years' experience in international, strategic alliance management – including recent appointments at Orange Cyberdefense, SecureLink Group, NTT Security and Integralis.

In his role, Mathias will foster organic growth for Infinigate across EMEA by reinforcing strategic vendor partnerships, ramping and scaling rising vendors and forming new alliances. His mission is to complement and complete Infinigate's cybersecurity portfolio, incorporating a wide range of leading-edge solutions for both the SME and enterprise segment.

Mathias Bachsleitner says: "Infinigate is exceptionally well positioned in a market which continues to grow strongly. I am looking forward to working with an expert team to build strong, strategic vendor partnerships based on trust and collaboration, and making the most of our opportunity for our mutual success".

LENOVO

LENOVO HELPING KSA TO TAKE THE 'LEAP'

CNME Editor Mark Forker secured an exclusive interview with **Giovanni Di Filippo**, President EMEA at Lenovo Infrastructure Solutions Group, to learn how the company is going to leverage their technologies to 'enable' Saudi Arabia to achieve their transformation goals – and explained how the company has been able to become the market incumbent in the entry storage space.

10

Lenovo is known globally as an aspirational company that is always testing the boundaries as to what's possible when it comes to its technology.

The ambitious mindset that is embedded in the cultural fabric of Lenovo filters from the top down.

Lenovo Chairman Yang Yuang is on a mission to make the company the market incumbent when it comes to infrastructure solutions globally.

In 2013, he wanted to make Lenovo the No.1 PC provider in the world – and he achieved that within 7 years.

Can Lenovo leverage their technology, knowhow and expertise to conquer the infrastructure solutions space worldwide?

Only time will tell, but the man tasked with the

responsibility of establishing Lenovo as a force across the EMEA region is the dynamic Giovanni Di Filippo.

Di Filippo has carved out a hugely successful career in the IT ecosystem across EMEA, holding several high-level executive positions with major IT players such as Riverbed, SAP, Cisco and Sun Microsystems.

The passion, energy and enthusiasm he has for his current role at Lenovo is very palpable throughout our conversation – and he is very confident that the company can achieve the ambitious targets set by their chairman.

We kickstarted the conversation by briefly

touching on Lenovo's participation at GITEX Global last October, which Di Filippo described as the 'most successful' event he has ever participated in.

"GITEX was without doubt the most successful event that I have ever participated in my 25 years working in the IT industry. The energy at our stand was electric, and the sheer volume of customers and prospective clients that we engaged with throughout the duration of that week was simply incredible. I think the key to our success was the fact that we didn't showcase products at GITEX, instead we opted to display solutions at our booth. The solutions were



The announcements that we are going to be making at LEAP are going to be significant and we are very excited at the role we are going to play in Saudi Arabia's transformation."



intelligent and infused with smart technology and that really appeared to resonate with those visiting our stand during GITEX,” said Di Filippo.

It has been well publicised that Saudi Arabia is undergoing a seismic economic transformation under the progressive leadership of MBS.

In a bid to reduce the country’s dependency on oil, it is embracing nascent and disruptive technologies to turn the nation into a global hub for technology, entrepreneurship and tourism.

As a result of this, there is a swathe of new opportunities emerging in the region for tech heavyweights like Lenovo to really help Saudi Arabia

meet the objectives and goals of their Saudi Vision 2030 plan.

LEAP, is an IT and technology conference held in Riyadh for the first time in 2022, and in 2023, Di Filippo is planning on using the event as a platform to help him take Lenovo to the ‘next level’.

“I now want to take what we did at GITEX to the next level. I have spoken to my leadership and marketing teams at great length in terms of what I want us to do at LEAP. We are going to present localised solutions that we have built locally in the KSA, on our stands during the conference. We will sign several major Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with a whole host of government

officials and businesses from across Saudi Arabia. The government officials that I have been engaged with from the KSA have shown a real interest to use our intellectual property from a technology perspective to help them ‘leapfrog’ to get them to where they want to go quicker in terms of their Vision 2030 ambitions and goals,” said Di Filippo.

Di Filippo was unequivocal when he declared the key message that he wanted to deliver on behalf of Lenovo was they wanted to help enable the country achieve its goals in a ‘sustainable’ way.

“It’s fair to say that there is so much going on in Saudi Arabia, that it can be difficult

to keep up with everything that is happening, such is the speed and scale at which the country is transforming. However, the key message that Lenovo wants to deliver at LEAP, is that what we want to help enable in the country will be sustainable,” said Di Filippo.

Di Filippo said the announcements being made at LEAP were ‘significant’ and that they were making a long-term commitment to the KSA.

“As a Fortune 500 company you can’t go into a market and make a 1-year commitment and then pull out, it’s just not possible. We want to establish long-term relationships that are fundamentally built on trust. The announcements that we are going to be making at LEAP are going to be significant to our longevity here, and we are very excited at the role we are going to play in Saudi Arabia’s transformation,” said Di Filippo.

Di Filippo said that there was incredible demand coming out of the KSA – and that the leadership is trying to fast-forward some of their 2030 vision initiative to 2025.

“A perfect example of the phenomenal demand in Saudi Arabia is the fact they are building 37 datacentres, and by 2025, these datacentres should be able to provide 1000MW in capacity. In order to help scale this, an area that we are getting heavily involved in right now is high-performance computing as a service across different industries. When you do high-performance computing as a



service it allows you to start to scale with the demand coming from the industries and that’s why the KSA are so keen and eager to work with us because they know we have the HPC & infrastructure as a service and we are a market leader globally,” said Di Filippo.

Di Filippo conceded that the expectations of the KSA leadership are demanding, but expressed his confidence that Lenovo can facilitate their transformation goals.

“We have 30% of the worldwide Top 500 benchmark for high-performance computing, and we were also recently recognised at SC22

for our efforts in developing Green IT. At Lenovo, we have two concepts, the first one is everything as-a-service and the second concept is asset recovery service (ARS), so we are confident that we can meet the expectations and demands of the KSA leadership and help drive them forward,” said Di Filippo.

Di Filippo highlighted Lenovo’s journey into the storage industry, and expressed his immense pride at how over a period of six years they had established themselves as the market incumbent in terms of revenue.

“If you look at EMEA from a total addressable market, I think it’s fair to say that a lot of people completely underestimated how big the total addressable market was for intelligence data management storage. It’s almost the same size as the server market. In EMEA, \$29bn is the total addressable market, so you have about \$16bn on the server and around \$13bn on the storage. When we started this journey six years ago it became very clear to us that we needed to not only focus on the server. We know our servers are the best products on the planet, but we identified that we really wanted to leave a large footprint and acquire market share in the storage industry. It took us six years to get there, and at the end of last year IDC commissioned a report that said Lenovo EMEA is the No.1 player in entry storage in terms of revenue, and that was huge for us,” said Di Filippo.

The charismatic Lenovo executive paid tribute to the role played by their channel partners in helping them achieve their goals in the storage space.

“We have said it many times in the past, but we are a channel-first company. The channel was undoubtedly the catalyst to our success on entry storage. We had the right promotions, initiatives and the right go-to market, but more importantly the channel accepted that our products were exceptional and they started to sell it with their own solutions, and that

in a nutshell is how we became the No.1 player in the market last quarter. Our objective is to remain in that No.1 position in EMEA, but whilst it’s hard to attain the market incumbent position, it’s even harder to retain it,” said Di Filippo.

Lenovo’s commitment to the channel has been well documented, but I was intrigued to know how they rank and evaluate their channel partners to determine which ones are their most valuable.

Di Filippo said that they monitor ‘active partners’ on a monthly and quarterly basis.

“We have 15,000 partners across the EMEA region, and 5-6,000 of those are located in the Middle East & Africa region – and what we do on a monthly and quarterly basis is examine which of these partners have been active. An active partner is someone that does at least one, or more transactions in a month, or a quarter. We look at how many of these active partners are trading with us on a transaction, and what sort of transaction is it? Is it server, storage, software, or services? We are keen to understand what kind of reselling partners we have, are they pure transactional partners, are they solutions partners, services partners or system integrators? We have partner profiles that we can clearly see, and we use

that information to build our dashboards, and it quickly becomes evident which channel partners are really performing for us,” said Di Filippo.

Lenovo are enjoying huge success, but there is an old adage that says if it’s not broken then don’t fix it.

However, in the fast-paced world of technology and IT, it appears that companies constantly have to reinvent the wheel to stay competitive, so what is the secret to Lenovo’s success and how does Di Filippo plan to keep them on top?

“When I joined Lenovo over three years ago, I built a concept called 7x7. What that essentially means is seven priorities delivering seven initiatives in a bid to outperform the markets and drive new growth. However, your strategy does always need to evolve and be fluid, if I look at my very first 7x7 initiatives compared to my most recent one, there are changes. In terms of talent recruitment and sales enablement very little has changed. However, one area where I have made changes is in relation to our investment in ISVs (International/Independent Software Providers). We want ISVs to understand that our core competency is to produce the best platform on the planet. My mission is to ensure that the ISVs are using our platform for their total solutions because as I said we have the best platform in the world,” concluded Di Filippo. **cnme**



We want ISVs to understand that our core competency is to produce the best platform on the planet.”



A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR ALL

CNME Editor Mark Forker secured an exclusive interview with **Khaled Almarzooqi**, Vice President of Projects at Bayanat AI, to learn more about its unique ELT project that has been engineered to make the UAE a global leader in aviation safety – and how the company’s overall strategy is aligned with the UAE government in a bid to foster and build a sustainable future for all.

Khaled Almarzooqi began his career as an engineer in the UAE Armed Forces, before joining the Abu Dhabi Monitoring and Control Center, (ADMCC) where he served in a number of senior executive positions.

He made the move to Bayanat in August 2021, and was appointed as the Director of Artificial Intelligence for the geospatial solutions provider – he was promoted in December 2022 as the Vice President of Projects and he is being tasked with driving the future direction of the company when it comes to the deployment and integration of AI technology.

Almarzooqi began the conversation by documenting the evolution the company had undertaken over the last 40 years.

“Bayanat has a long and rich heritage in the UAE and has been in operation for over 40 years. The company was acquired in 2020 by G42, an AI and cloud computing company

that was established in 2018. Prior to the acquisition by G42, it’s fair to say that Bayanat was considered to be a classical mapping and surveying company, whereby we undertook the normal process of acquiring data, processing it, and creating maps. However, the advent of predictive geospatial intelligence, which we call gIQ, represents the fusion of Bayanat’s geospatial expertise with G42’s artificial intelligence capabilities – and it’s powering us into the future,” said Almarzooqi.

Almarzooqi said the company was focused on a number of key industry verticals and believes their portfolio of solutions can really equip organisations with the tools to make better, informed decisions.

“We provide comprehensive world-class geospatial AI solutions to a growing number of sectors such as defense, environment, energy and resources, smart cities and transportation. We believe our solutions harness vast amounts of premium and unique data from a range of Earth observation sources, such as satellites or High-Altitude Pseudo Satellites (HAPS) as well as a variety of other sensors paired with AI to drive truly intelligent decision making,” said Almarzooqi.

The UAE is regarded as the most innovative country in the Arab world, and the role played by entities like Bayanat, under the umbrella of G42 is crucial in its continued quest and mission to make new technologies a reality across the nation.

Almarzooqi highlighted how the company is heavily involved in making the concept of autonomous mobility a reality.

“We are working on a number of initiatives to



Bayanat is fully aligned with the UAE’s vision of a sustainable future for all.”



advance new technology in the UAE. A perfect illustration of this was our successful launch of TXAI, the first autonomous taxi service in the Middle East. We have also recently partnered with a European company to work on the development of high-altitude pseudo satellites (HAPS), which when it launches will be the first in the Middle East,” said Almarzooqi.

Another example of the UAE’s progress as a bastion of technological progress and prowess is evident in its space program. Over the last few years, the UAE has sent one of their citizens into space, and their Mission to Mars project was a phenomenal success.

According to Almarzooqi the UAE is inspiring a new generation of space explorers

and scientists.

“We are exploring an entire space program, having recently signed a public-private partnership with the UAE Space Agency to develop and operate a Geospatial Analytics Platform for the Space Data Center. Bayanat is going to offer an innovative ecosystem for earth observation downstream applications by enabling large-scale data management and processing capabilities to generate analytics reports from earth observation satellites that cover a wide range of sensors,” said Almarzooqi.

Sustainability has now

become firmly embedded in the future strategies being pursued by governments, organizations and multinational companies.

Bayanat is aligned with the UAE on their mission to become a global leader when it comes to sustainability, with a string of unique partnerships and long-term commitments.

“Through recent partnerships, we are conducting environmental surveys of the oceans. Our partnership with Environment Agency Abu Dhabi will also address various environmental challenges. We are well aligned with the UAE’s



Bayanat benefits from strong data sovereignty capabilities, which is especially relevant for government data.”



strategy for innovation and sustainability, and we believe it is embedded into Bayanat's DNA," said Almarzooqi.

An ELT (Emergency Locator Transmitter) is a critical piece of hardware that helps the National Air Safety Agencies help locate an aircraft should an unfortunate event occur. The quicker the agencies can locate the signals from the ELT, the sooner they are able to identify the location and respond to the crisis.

Bayanat's ELT project, has been described as the first of its kind in global aviation safety. Almarzooqi outlined the nuances of the project in more detail.

"Currently, ELT devices are manually removed from the aircraft for testing and placed back on the aircraft once

done. However, Bayanat's ELT innovation enables the testing of the aircraft's ELT without having it being removed from the aircraft in its operational state. This ensures that the ELT hardware and the entire process of connectivity and test output, are tested and confirmed as working. The process of receiving test signals is governed through the electronic cloud to provide the highest standards of cybersecurity and facilitate the passing of information to the relevant authorities," said Almarzooqi.

Almarzooqi added that this provides regulators and airlines with huge confidence that the ELT testing outcomes are absolute and meet the robust and rigid regulations that are in place.

"The fact that it brings the airline and the regulators on the same platform, ensures there is a single source of truth for all stakeholders. Beyond safety, for the airlines and regulators, the benefits range from productivity savings, improved compliance, real time clarity on ELT inventory status," said Almarzooqi.

He added that the company's mission was part of the overall objective of the UAE, which is to make the nation a global leader in aviation safety.

"We know that the UAE has always been an early adopter for technology innovations to either make the world a safer place, or improve the quality of human life in every field. Our ELT project is a pioneering smart technology initiative

to support the vision of the United Arab Emirates to be a leading player in the field of aviation safety and artificial intelligence," said Almarzooqi.

As stated above, Bayanat is known for providing world-class AI-powered geospatial intelligence solutions, but in terms of what ultimately differentiates the company from other geospatial providers globally, Almarzooqi believes it's a combination of factors, but does credit the role played by G42 in taking the company to 'another level'.

"I think it's very evident that Bayanat has expanded beyond data acquisition and mapping. We are constantly looking to grow and explore new technologies and capabilities, create new ventures with start-ups, push through new technology, and expand geographically beyond the UAE. Bayanat benefits from strong data sovereignty capabilities, which is especially relevant for government data. Through our relationship with G42, we are able to offer our clients customised offerings with the cost benefits of cloud based predictive analytics solutions. Bayanat has regional advantage to offer high quality precision location data. We mapped the UAE to develop the mission critical data infrastructure for the operation of unmanned systems, including HD maps and HD positioning, and these are just some of the key differentiators that distinguishes us from our market rivals," concluded Almarzooqi. 



WE HAVE THE 'SCOPE' FOR MORE SUCCESS

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Yazan Jammalieh**, Regional Sales Director, Middle East, Turkey and Africa, at SCOPE to find out how the company is expanding its market presence across the region, its unique partnership with SOCRadar – and how the capabilities of its technical team is what differentiates the distributor from its market rivals.

Yazan Jammalieh is a prominent IT leader with over 20 years of experience in the Middle East region.

During that time, he has held senior roles at companies like Barracuda and InfoWatch, but he is perhaps best-known for his work at SCOPE.

In the earlier part of his career, he spent eight years at SCOPE, firstly as a product manager and then as the company's Regional Business Development Manager.

In 2020, he re-joined SCOPE as the Regional Sales Director for the Middle East, Turkey & Africa – and has played a key role in helping the IT distributor enjoy year-on-year growth across the META region.

In an engaging and candid interview, Jammalieh kickstarted the conversation by documenting what his primary roles and

responsibilities are as the Regional Sales Director for SCOPE.

"I'm responsible for managing the sales operations for SCOPE across the Middle East, Africa and Turkey – and it's my job to set the sales targets and establish the KPIs for my sales team in all the key markets that we are present in across the region. I also have additional responsibilities such as playing a proactive role in our business development – and I work very closely with our vendors to ensure that we are achieving the set targets that have been predetermined by them," said Jammalieh.



Our value centres on deep-rooted strategic vendor relationships, collaborating closely on our go-to-market and channel strategy. With a world-class vendor portfolio, our channel partners can access established and emerging technology vendors."

As we know the UAE has firmly established itself as a hotbed for new innovations and technologies over the last decade, and as a result other Gulf nations across the region have used the UAE as a template in a bid to replicate its success.

The adoption of nascent technologies is a key component in large-scale transformation, and there has been a tsunami of transformation across the Middle East region.

The introduction of new disruptive technologies is another important part of Jammalieh's job at SCOPE.

"It's also part of my

job to introduce nascent technologies into the region, so what I try to do is establish what sort of technologies and solutions are absent from the IT ecosystem in the Middle East, Africa and Turkey, and see how we can adopt these technologies to help us overcome the challenges facing our customers. In order to do that, it's imperative to focus on strategic partnership with the right technology vendors. We deliver excellence in core distribution services to over 800 partners and 20 global technology vendors complementing our product portfolio with dedicated sales support, product support, technical training, logistics, marketing and professional services," said Jammalieh.

Jammalieh then provided us with a snapshot and insight into SCOPE's market presence across the META region and beyond, and disclosed that its biggest market in terms of revenue would be the Middle East region.

"We are present all across the Middle East, Africa and Turkey, and we also have some operations in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. However, our main focus is mainly concentrated on the Middle East market. We have physical offices in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Riyadh and Jordan, but I would say that our biggest market in terms of revenue would be the Middle East region," said Jammalieh.

Jammalieh said that in terms of the cybersecurity landscape, the UAE marketplace was very mature, but stressed that Saudi Arabia



was maturing rapidly due to their ambitious economic transformation program Vision 2030.

The role of the channel ecosystem in the Middle East has been well-versed, but when asked what are the key credentials SCOPE look for when selecting their technology vendors, Jammalieh said there were a number of factors at play.

"Our value centres on deep-rooted strategic vendor relationships, collaborating closely on our go-to-market and channel strategy. With a world-class vendor portfolio, our channel partners can access established and

emerging technology vendors. We provide end-to-end support from enablement, pre sales, post sales, logistics, marketing and technical support," said Jammalieh.

The MEA cybersecurity market size was USD 15.66 billion in 2018 and is expected to reach USD 31.82 billion in 2023, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 15.2% during the forecast period. Major growth factors for the MEA market would be an increasing need to meet government and regulatory requirements, and a growing sophistication level of cyber-attacks.

"For us, the pre-sales

activity is an extremely important function, and we look to our channel partners to determine what the customer pain points are and find out how can we address those issues,” said Jammalieh.

Interestingly, Jammalieh said that the company was moving away from the traditional system integrators, and instead was looking for channel partners that provided a consultation.

“In the current climate, we know there are many issues facing businesses across the IT landscape, and one of the most pertinent is migrating to the cloud and finding the right cloud model that works for your business, but there are other problems unique to each business. So, traditionally we would work with systems integrators exclusively, but what we need now is a consultant, so essentially we need our channel partners to take a more consultative approach,” said Jammalieh.

Last year, SCOPE signed a major partnership with threat intelligence company SOCRadar, which only serves to reinforce its commitment to the security services and solutions that it provides to its customers.

“At SCOPE, we are very focused on cybersecurity, and we know it is an area that is constantly evolving due to the complex nature of the threats that are continuing to emerge. We believe that the threat intelligence concept and capabilities that SOCRadar has is going to become of paramount importance to businesses of all shapes and

sizes, because it has the ability to give businesses the visibility they need to tackle threats in real-time, it’s a preventative measure, but it’s also proactive,” said Jammalieh.

Jammalieh also disclosed that 80% of their products are security-focused and added that they now have a dedicated cybersecurity division.


“Whether you’re an Enterprise, Medium or Small business, you need cybersecurity assurance. With our vast experience in cybersecurity space, we will not only help you identify and gain visibility on your weaknesses; but put you in the right path to mitigate threats and reduce your attack surface with our in-depth testing and auditing. We offer services such as penetration testing, vulnerability assessment, configuration review, source code review and red teaming,” said Jammalieh.

Jammalieh also stressed how security was everybody’s responsibility.

“We know that security is a huge challenge, and once that has become even more profound in our work from anywhere world, and the threats are constantly evolving, so it is critical you have threat intelligence infused within your system in order to be proactive. 80% of our products are cybersecurity-focused and

the other 20% is based on networking performance. Awareness is critical, and we have seen that a lot of these phishing attacks happen internally. Security is everybody’s responsible and we have to change the current mindset. Data is the new oil and it informs your present and future decision making, so the prevention of data loss is so important to all businesses in the current climate – and you have to protect your assets effectively 24/7,” said Jammalieh.

In terms of what really differentiates SCOPE from its other market rivals, Jammalieh believes it’s the strategic partnerships enabling the organisation to provide cutting edge technology coupled up with SCOPE technical team capabilities that really gives them an edge.

“Our technical team is unrivalled. They really give us an edge, and I’m extremely proud of them. As a distributor we are in-between the channel and the vendor, so we have to support both sides. We support the vendor and are in many ways an extension of what they do – and we help the channel in order to help them with their sales and deliver their solutions. Our technical capability, knowhow, expertise, and trust is what really differentiates us from our rivals,” concluded Jammalieh. 



Our technical capability, knowhow, expertise, and trust is what really differentiates us from our rivals.”



WE HAVE GOT THE 'VISION'

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Asef Sleiman**, Sales Director at GBS, to find out how the IT company is positioning itself to capitalise on the burgeoning opportunities in the KSA market - that is being driven by the ambitious aspirations of its economic transformation program Vision 2030.

Asef Sleiman is a man on a mission, and the affable IT leader has been tasked with the responsibility of shaping the tech landscape for GBS in Saudi Arabia.

In a candid interview, Sleiman declared that GBS is fully committed to contributing to the future of the Saudi marketplace - and wants to make a lasting impression on their clients in the KSA.

GBS Sales Director, Asef Sleiman tells CNME that he believes they can leverage the company's track-record of success in the technology sector to lead the new deployment of innovative IT and digital transformation solutions across the Kingdom.

Can you provide our readers with more information on GBS as a company?

GBS is the expansion of the technology cluster of Ghobash Group which consists of CNS and GCG enterprise UAE Based group.

GBS benefits from the stability, resourcefulness and combined experience of one of the largest and most diversified business groups in the UAE.

Our proven expertise across Digital Infrastructure, Cloud Solutions, Cyber Security, printing, enterprise solutions, and digitalisation are the outcome of best-of-breed partnerships with global technology leaders which our Head Office companies,



We believe in the KSA market and we are making a big commitment to be one of the top technology players in the Kingdom."



CNS Middle East and GCG-Enterprise Solutions, have established in the region.

In adapting our approach specifically to the KSA market, GBS is focused on delivering a real difference to our client's businesses and ambitions and has gained a reputation for developing highly-effective, innovative and fully integrated digital solutions.

We don't focus on pushing products or services, but more so on addressing business challenges.

What differentiates GBS from its market rivals across the region?

We started our operations in the KSA two years back,

however we have accumulated experience of over 35 years in the region.

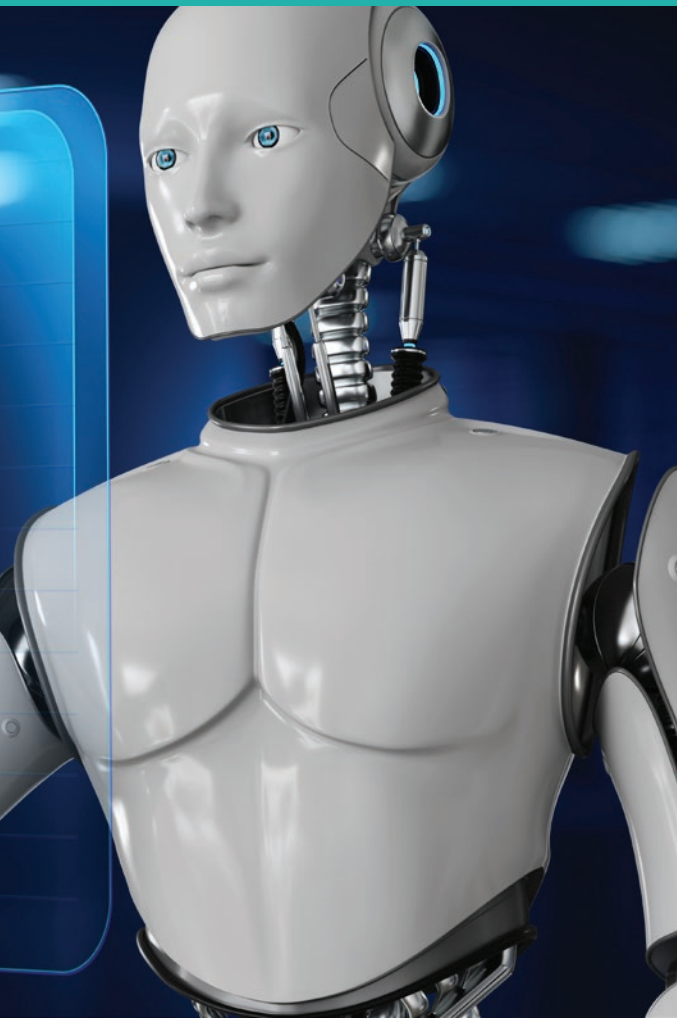
We understand the value of technology for businesses and we address business challenges to make a strong impact on the business from operational efficiencies and total cost reduction. In addition to this we are creating new revenue streams for the business in different verticals like healthcare, O&G, transportation, education and Government.

Our portfolio of solutions consist of a wide range of products and services, and together with our partners, we have worked diligently over the years to strengthen our internal resources.

This allows us to offer comprehensive end-to-end solutions via a very robust eco-system. Today, GBS provides complete solutions around Cloud with Oracle, along with disaster recovery solutions for enterprise as well as the government. In Riyadh, our solutions are busy linking all the new bus stations (approximately 100) via a centralised platform.

Experts agree that KSA is the next technological hub for the region. What are the focus areas which will facilitate the Kingdom's Vision 2030? How does GBS contribute to and support the Kingdom's journey forward?

From a strategic standpoint,



the Government wants to elevate the Kingdom to a higher level of efficiency, transparency and technological advancement, with a focus on setting benchmark standards for critical areas such as security.

This mandate is linked to a specific deadline which Saudi wants to achieve in order to become a leading destination for investors, who are envisioned to contribute to the realisation of the country's future ambitions.

This drive has naturally led to heavy investments and a huge surge in developing an effective and world-class digital infrastructure. The Government is also compelling multinational

companies who have been active in the region to set up or move their Headquarters to Saudi.

These developments create the ideal backdrop for a drastic digital-focused transformation and we are starting now to see the results.

As for our contributions, we believe we are going to work on two tracks; the first to ensure that strategic customers have the required technology infrastructure, and second to help mature customers adopting the journey of Digital Transformation.

We consider the requirements of our customers and how we can best meet their strategic objectives.

We have a dedicated team of consultants in different domains of technology who champion GBS' ability to assess, understand and plan both short term, as well as long term factors while complying with Government requirements.

GBS positions itself as an innovative, regional one-stop-shop provider of technology enabled solutions and services, focused on enabling strategic business objectives. We take pride in being vendor agnostic and delivering solutions which help our clients' business to transform and take on the future with total confidence.

What are the future ambitions of GBS?

We believe in the KSA market and we are making a big

commitment to be one of the top technology players in the kingdom.

We see ourselves as one of the top five leaders in the market. We believe we are on track to achieve our vision.

We are working to increase our coverage to gain more market share, fortify our sectoral expertise, especially across the fast-growing healthcare, education, oil & gas and transportation sectors, which are all aligned as mission-critical fronts that will enable the Kingdom to realise its Vision 2030.

With the KSA market growing by leaps and bounds and so much more to be accomplished on different fronts, GBS aims to be at the forefront of this evolution, as the preferred digital transformation and solutions provider.

I am also happy to share that our approach and track record speak for themselves, as our solutions have been very well-received and we have been fortunate enough to gain a very steady and rewarding base of referrals.

We are also extremely excited about a number of new ground-breaking solutions which we will be introducing in the very near future. These will serve as pioneering innovations, and the first-of-their-kind in KSA.

Finally, we truly believe with our experience in the region we can add value to the KSA market, and we appreciate the support we have received from the local authorities to facilitate operations. 



DELIVERING A TOTAL EXPERIENCE

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Walid Gomaa**, CEO of Omnix International to learn more about its solution offering designed to deliver a total experience, its new Metaverse frameworks, its ambition to conquer the Saudi Arabian marketplace – and what differentiates the company from its rivals.

Walid Gomaa needs no introduction to the IT industry in the Middle East.

In a career that began in 1987, he has enjoyed an incredible professional career, one that has seen him work with IT and technology behemoths such as IBM, Oracle, Dell EMC, HPE, and Huawei.

You could be forgiven for thinking that Gomaa was entering the twilight of his career, but that couldn't be further from the truth – as he is now the CEO of Omnix International, and IT solutions provider that has been in operation for over 30 years.

He was appointed CEO in January 2022, and his energy, enthusiasm and drive to help Omnix International grow was palpable throughout our conversation.

Gomaa kickstarted the discussion by giving CNME an overview of Omnix

International, and he outlined how the company has recently been structured into two divisions.

“Omnix International has been in business for over 30 years – and we primarily operate across the Gulf region. The company is currently structured into two divisions, which are known as Omnix Engineering and Omnix Digital. In terms of the engineering division, we are primarily focused on providing solutions for the Architecture Engineering & Construction (AEC), Product Design & Manufacturing and the Media & Entertainment industries. We also provide solutions and services around Building Information Modelling (BIM), OpenBIM, Common Data Environment (CDE), Virtual Design & Construction (VDC), Geographic Information System (GIS), Autodesk training and also outsourcing & managed services operations for BIM projects. Notably, we

are the value added distributor of Autodesk in the Lower Gulf region.” said Gomaa.

Gomaa disclosed that the company has now complemented its offerings through additional capabilities and services.

“It became quite evident to our team that when we implemented Building Information Modelling (BIM), Virtual Design & Construction (VDC), Common Data Environment (CDE) solutions that customers were always facing challenges when it came to performance. What we decided in order to overcome this, was to design our own branded hardware after extensive R&D. We call it Hardware Optimization Technology (HOT). It has been a huge commercial success for us. Also Omnix Engineering offers solutions & services in the areas of Augmented/ Virtual/Mixed reality, Multimedia and Lidar scanning & Surveying.” said Gomaa.



To help our customers to bridge their skill gap in areas like cybersecurity and network management Omnix launched Center of Excellence (XOC). Omnix XOC includes a unique combination of Security Operations Center (SOC), Network Operations Center (NOC) and Operations Control Center (OCC).

In addition, we help our customers to meet their sustainability goals by guiding them on how they can best utilize current infrastructure using observability solutions.

This can help customers in reaching net zero emission goals in countries like UAE and Saudi Arabia.

There have been huge digital transformation demands over the last number of years and Omnix International has been leading the way to cater for the ever-evolving customers needs.

“Our second division is called Omnix Digital, and that is primarily focused on looking after solutions that our customers are looking for in the new digital economy.

We provide solutions that range from application modernisation & integration, data & analytics, process automation, conversational AI, cybersecurity and smart infrastructure. When we talk about smart infrastructure, we are referencing the audio-visual experience, smart spaces, physical security and ICT technologies. We are wrapping all of this with our outsourcing and managed services offerings to help our customers transform,” said Gomaa.



It has been well-documented that we are now living in the 'experience economy' – and Gomaa highlighted how Omnix is fully focused on delivering what he described as a 'total experience' for his customers when asked how the company had evolved.

"In terms of our evolution as a company over the last 12 months, what we have tried to do is bring our two divisions together to be able to provide a total experience for our customers. When we speak with our customers about

the solutions and services they need, we – as a trusted services provider- demonstrate that we can cater for their needs from edge devices to backend applications & infrastructure and anything in between to deliver total experience," said Gomaa.

In terms of the way they approach the innovation and design of their products and services, Gomaa conceded that they took a very customer-centric approach, declaring that they wanted to give their customers autonomy, control and choice in a bid to be their preferred solution provider.

He added that it was critical that they are always 'relevant to their customers.

"A message that I am constantly reinforcing to all my team is the need for us to be relevant to our customers. This relevancy works two ways, and one of them is the fact that we listen to the pain points of our customers and then come up with solutions that help them address these challenges. We always thrive to be the solution provider of choice to our customers," said Gomaa.

Interestingly, he also disclosed how the company was moving more towards being a service provider than a generic systems integrator.

"We are focused and concentrated on being much

more centric around services and solutions. The way we approach it is to listen to our customers and understand their requirements. Now, you might think well that's a given, that's quite basic, but many companies don't do the basics. They don't listen to their customers, and instead focus on trying to sell products that potentially do not meet customers objectives," said Gomaa.

A recurring problem that Gomaa encounters with many of its customers is the fact that they want to build something to address their challenges but they just don't know how to do it or where to start.

To solve this issue, Omnix takes a two-fold approach.

"A lot of customers are in need to build something that will be transformative for their business, but they don't know how to implement it. That can be due to lack of knowledge or skills on the subject. What we do in this case is bring a different perspective to the table. For example, we provide them with comprehensive consultation for the types of challenges they are facing, and we show them the solutions to help them overcoming the challenges. Alternatively, we listen to our customers challenges, that are unique to them, and we then proceed to work together with them to build the right solution that they need," said Gomaa.

The Metaverse is all the rage within the IT ecosystem globally – and the visionary leadership of Gomaa has seen Omnix International move quickly to develop a



A message that I am constantly reinforcing to all my team is the need for us to be relevant to our customers."



framework designed to foster an environment that will drive use-cases for the concept that is being tipped to be the future of our society.

“I think it’s fair to say that many of our customers know what the Metaverse is, but they don’t know how to make use of it in their businesses. Our team has been building a framework around the Metaverse and have been developing a stack of solutions.

Since we are in early stages of the metaverse adoption, not many customers can come up with the use-cases. Here comes Omnix expert team role. Essentially, what we are doing is start with sharing Omnix Industrial Metaverse framework, we explain to them how the Metaverse framework will work for them, and we tell them what they need to do in order to identify the use-cases they need to go after and target for the Metaverse,” said Gomaa.

Gomaa briefly added that the process function initially begin with consulting, and then moves across to building the solution and infrastructure, which ultimately serves as a platform to build the use-cases that are going to allow customers to capitalise on the opportunities emerging in the Metaverse space.

The UAE has traditionally been the biggest market for Omnix International in terms of revenue generation, but like other IT leaders they see the burgeoning opportunities in the GCC region and in particular Saudi Arabia.




“Historically our largest market is in the UAE, and that remains the case. However, we decided to put special focus on Saudi Arabia market. The market in Saudi Arabia is growing rapidly and they are on a mission to accelerate the technology adoption to cater for the digital transformation needs in a very fast pace,” said Gomaa.

Gomaa said the biggest problem Omnix International has encountered with some of their customers is managing their expectations when it comes to execution speed.

“They want to accelerate the adoption and be ahead of the game. To do that, they want to implement projects in the shortest time possible and our job is to help them. One of our biggest strengths in expanding

our business in Saudi is our track records in delivering successful projects across the region. We share our know-how in implementing similar projects which gives them confidence in terms of what we can do,” said Gomaa.

The dynamic CEO of Omnix International concluded a wonderful interview by outlining what he believed differentiated the company from its market rivals.

“I believe that one of the areas that differentiates us is the depth of the portfolio solutions and skills that we have. If you look at our engineering team they have their own competitors, and our digital team has competition, but if you bring these two together and infuse all of their capabilities into one powerful force, you will not find many organization that can match our capabilities. It is my goal to continue driving the integration between the two divisions which serve as our unique value proposition to our customers,” concluded Gomaa. 



I really believe the depth of our solution portfolio creates Omnix with a unique value proposition.”

BAYZAT

DEFINING THE WORKPLACE OF THE FUTURE

Brian Habibi, Chief Customer Officer at Bayzat, has outlined the 3 digital platforms that he firmly believes is going to define the workplace in 2023, in an exclusive op-ed for February's edition of CNME.

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The world of work has changed. The speed of the evolution is incredible and some of the largest shifts have been driven by digital innovations.

Workforces across the region continue to fine-tune their ambitions, outlooks, and expectations. People are driving the change.

It is because of employee priorities that new workplace paradigms are here to stay, not because of the technology itself (although it has been pivotal in enabling businesses to grow in the new working landscape).

The dominance of mobile-first, always-on solutions is established. People want them and tech teams have been rising to the challenge of successfully delivering them. Expectations are thus driving the modernisation of the workplace.

The personal cubicle, adorned with family photos and



meaningful mascots, has been relegated to the status of quaint relic. Even hot-desking is being phased out.

And hybrid work environments — the talk of the town mere months ago — have been swept away by nebulous discussions that seem more suited to the art world than the business community: “Oh, the workplace isn’t a place anymore; it’s more of a concept built around

flexibility, personalisation, and inclusiveness, where ‘you do you’.”

That was a brief journey through the mind of the Employee of the Future.

So, how do we accommodate the talent-bearers of tomorrow? Technology, that’s how. But not just more of the same. Here are the three essential digital platforms that will deliver the workplace concepts that the modern Middle East professional has come to expect.

Self-service HR

Consumers expect self-service systems — apps that are a few swipes and clicks away from what you want — movies, flights, groceries, and the rest. And as employees, these individuals expect the same self-service at the office — wherever or whatever that may be.

Barring a few laggards, organisations have ditched



paper in favour of digital alternatives. And yet, even this may not be sufficient, Excel just won't cut it anymore; unstructured documents are even more cumbersome.

So, the 2023 employee will book a vacation (flights, hotels, waterparks, mopeds) with a handful of screen-taps. Can you imagine their reaction if they must then spend half a morning filing the paperwork for the associated leave?

Employees expect agility and flexibility and research shows that over half (56%) of MEA employees could probably be dissuaded from actively hunting for new jobs if their company invested in automation. Self-service modules are a great way to deliver such innovation to them.

Beyond their happiness (and resultant productivity)

is a range of other benefits to the business, including streamlined processes and data from business intelligence — insights into work patterns and common grievances; insights that are all but impossible without digitisation.

Digital performance management

Quiet quitting (doing the absolute minimum required to fulfil your contractual obligations), and career cushioning (having more opportunities in the pipeline so you can quickly resign if your employer pushes you too far)



Evolution, revolution, call it what you will; we are in a time of change, and we need to respond or be swallowed up by the moment."

are doing the rounds as the talent industry buzzwords of the year.

Countering them is not easy, especially as managers have less face time with their team members than in the days of the cubicle.

But there is an answer to many of the problems we now face in the hybridised, indescribable, ever-changing workplace of the future. Digital performance management brings objectivity, precision, accuracy, and speed.

Employees have a positive experience. HR has a positive experience. And the business has all kinds of positives, not least the growth of its workforce and their capacity to innovate.

With digital performance management, metrics, agreements, who said what at meetings — everything is in the open.

This is crucial for the hybrid world where teams are scattered to the four winds. Everyone has an unassailable source of truth, leading to more rational and balanced decisions and a greater acceptance of outcomes.

In an environment where events are recorded rather than perceived, decisions based on those events are trusted to a greater degree. Trust leads to motivation; motivation leads to productivity; productivity leads to profitability.

But in a recent Bayzat survey of UAE businesses, 72% said they either do not have a formal performance-management process in place or have yet to digitise it. Clearly as a business community, we need to do better.



Employee super apps

It may sound like a fringe comic-book hero, but the super app is fast becoming the core expectation of the digital-native set. According to one survey, some 59% of millennials expect their employers to offer mobile-optimised tools.

Super apps can consolidate multiple apps for both customers and employees. The business ecosystem is easier to support, and costs diminish, so benefits all round.

The rise of the super app is happening already, but it is set to accelerate. Nine of every 10 UAE organisations offer some kind of mobile app, but the sheer number and scale of such offerings is becoming

overwhelming for DevOps teams.

So, consolidation of platforms into super apps is appealing. Users get more uniform experiences and technical staff can be more agile, extending the app in a rational and manageable way.

Apart from saving time and cost, super apps for employees can have positive impacts on their engagement and boost collaboration.

They can also be integrated

with digital performance management for a furtherance of transparency.

The future, today

Evolution, revolution, call it what you will; we are in a time of change, and we need to respond or be swallowed up by the moment. At the transition of one year to another we often obsess about when to zig and when to zag.

What did I do wrong in the previous year, and will I get it right in the next? Digital platforms shield us from the perils of guesswork and standardise everything we offer to employees into a single space.

It is not business as usual. It is not more of the same. It is the future, today. **crme**



It is because of employee priorities that new workplace paradigms are here to stay, not because of the technology itself.”



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MAZARS

YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS INTELLIGENCE

Veronica Martin spoke to **Mohammed Abu Hijleh**, Managing Partner at Mazars UAE and **Azzam Ani**, Partner – Technology & Innovation at Mazars UAE to find out why so many businesses need to adopt and infuse ERP software and Business Intelligence (BI) solutions into their daily operations to remain relevant in the ultra-competitive digital economy.

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Can you give our viewers a brief overview on what services Mazars provides to its customer base – and what are the key industry verticals that you are focused on?

Mohammed Abu Hijleh:

Mazars is one of the top international firms in the world. It operates in more than 120 countries, one of which is the UAE, for the past 20 years.

We are globally famous for being assurance service providers, which is the audit services. However, we have been able to expand our services to include risk advisory, financial advisory, accounting, outsourcing tax, technology and many other services.

In the UAE, we service some of the top international firms such as Telus, Schneider, LVMH etc. We have been able to grow massively over the past 10 years, we have tripled in size, we are





seeing further growth within the UAE and we are looking to expand in Oman as well.

Being an integrated firm helps service and cater to our clients because some of our international clients are present everywhere in the world, so we are able to service them here, as well as abroad.

We are also present in the UAE market in terms of servicing local clients such as the Chamber of Commerce of Abu Dhabi and many in Dubai.

In our fast-paced digital economy, it is critical that businesses are both agile and fluid - and use their data to make better informed and intelligent decisions. The implementation of ERP software has been a gamechanger for many enterprises in terms of enhancing their day-to-day operations. From your expert perspective, how important is it for organizations to implement ERP software in the current climate?

Azzam Ani: As many of your audience may be aware, ERP is not a new concept, such systems have existed in one form or another since the 90's or even 80's.

Over the years, many organizations have realized the value of adopting ERP systems by seeing increased productivity, reduced costs, and enhanced decision making.

I believe in this day and age, having an ERP system has become more of a "Need" rather than a "Want", especially for growing small businesses and mid-market companies, and I believe many companies already realize this.

However, what we are seeing in the market today, is more of a move from outdated or lesser known ERP brands to more globally renowned solutions

such as the likes of Oracle NetSuite ERP.

That is because Companies are realizing there are certain limitations with those other ERP solutions, and therefore they are coming to us for upgrades.

So yes, it is essential to have the right ERP system in place, and I believe Oracle NetSuite is the right choice.

You have previously declared that businesses need to adopt both ERP and Business Intelligence. However, business intelligence is a broad term - and can be quite vague. In your opinion, what is the definition of business intelligence, and what are its key characteristics?

Azzam Ani: The term BI is mostly synonyms with reporting, dashboards, and



We have been able to grow massively over the past 10 years, we have tripled in size, we are seeing further growth within the UAE and we are looking to expand in Oman as well".

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

BI

BENCHMARKING

DATA MINING

DATA VISUALIZATION

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data visualizations, and that is exactly what the end result of BI projects are.

I believe BI is about establishing the strategy and the technology to have data in the hands of company decision makers. It involves the processes of collecting, storing, and analysing data to improve business performance.

Some of BI's key Characteristics are;

Collection: BI solutions usually pull from multiple data sources, so a BI solution should have the capability to connect to various sources and pull that data to a central repository for it to be analysed and distributed to the different data users across the organization.

Storage: I believe to have a

successful and sustainable BI solution, a central repository such as a Data Warehouse (DW) is required. While it is possible to have BI without a DW, a DW will certainly supercharge a BI solution.

A DW needs to be well architected and modelled so accurate reporting can be delivered and Data Governance can also be achieved.

I won't get into details related to Data Warehousing now, as this is a much broader topic. However, I'd like to encourage Clients to get in touch with us to have further

discussions if interested in more details related this topic.

Analysis: data processing and retrieval is a major factor contributing to the success of a BI solution. BI depends on how well database tables are designed and how efficient database queries are written and executed.

Having this in place will enable real time reporting and effective data analysis by the various Data Users across the company (e.g. Company Executives, Strategists, Data Analysts, etc).

Data should be readily



I believe there is no BI without ERP, and ERP is not fully beneficial without BI. Therefore, these two must definitely co-exist."

available through Executive Dashboards, Mobile BI, Self-Serve Data Cubes so decision makers can act on it in a timely fashion.

Why do businesses need both – and how do ERP and business intelligence complement each other within the framework of a company's daily operations?

Azzam Ani: ERP serves as a process management tool, whereas BI serves as a reporting tool that is either embedded within ERP (which has certain limitations) or that sits on top of an ERP (considered more flexible) using specialized BI Tools.

Further, ERP is used by company staff to enter day-to-day transactional level data. Whereas BI is used by senior managers and analysts

to analyse historical data from ERP and other systems to drive business insights.

ERP is potentially one of the many systems companies use to operate their business today.

For example, many companies have an e-commerce side to their business, all that clickstream (not related to financials) data is accumulating and doesn't reside in an ERP, this data still needs to be analysed to improve online sales, customer retention, promotions, etc.

So, when this website data gets merged with ERP data, one can only picture the value that can be derived. This is just a simple example to illustrate the concept.

So, just to conclude, I believe there is no BI without ERP, and ERP is not fully beneficial without BI. Therefore, these two must definitely co-exist.

Mazars has an incredibly strong reputation across the UAE, but what is it about the company that differentiates itself from its market competitors?

Mohammed Abu Hijleh:

Let's be frank here, we are all offering the same services. So, differentiation is mainly due to us as people.

At the end of the day, we are in the industry of providing services, so it's about people, face-to-face, partners and engagement. Our partners are very hands-on. You can always speak to a partner about your engagement and that partner would be knowledgeable enough to answer you.

I don't know about the competition in general what

they do with that, but our partners are very engaged.

They are on top of their engagements, they are in direct contact with the clients, and we try our best to ensure that the client is happy at the end of the day. Is that a differentiator? I don't know, but so far, it's helped us well in growing.

Our partners are very hands on, which is helpful in the journey, it helps with the client relationship, and it helps us grow as time passes on.

What are your primary objectives and goals for 2023?

Azzam Ani: Mazars in the UAE and globally realize that the future of business is digital and have decided to invest in the technology and innovation to further grow its client base, so I'm definitely excited for this.

As for our goals, from a Business Development point of view, we are looking to continue with the strong momentum we had last year and are looking to grow our Data Management Services and our Oracle NetSuite portfolio further this year.

Oracle NetSuite is a leader in multiple well-known industry analyst reports due to its strong financial core and other well-known features, so the product certainly sells itself.

From a Product Development point of view, we are working on a couple of innovative products in the areas of Continuous Audit and Mobile BI, they are currently in the prototype phase and should be ready to be shared with our clients by end of calendar Q1 2023. **enme**





MITEL

MITEL ON A MISSION TO EMPOWER

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to Mitel executives **Feras Zeidan** and **Asif Khan** ahead of their Mitel UAE symposium in Dubai, that has been engineered to cultivate and foster an environment that enhances greater partner empowerment and enablement across their channel ecosystem in the Middle East.



The Mitel UAE symposium which was held on 9th February, 2023 at The Address in Dubai Marina, is the first in a series of roadshows being conducted by Mitel along with its distributor Mart Networks that will be taking place across the Middle East in the forthcoming months.

In a candid interview, the Mitel leaders highlighted why these types of events are so important in terms of not only elevating their channel partners to new heights, but to reinforce their values and principles as a company.

How important are events like these for Mitel to really highlight the impact their portfolio of products and solutions are having on the IT eco-system across Middle East?
Feras Zeidan: Every vendor



that is extremely serious about partner empowerment and enablement has to continuously invest in partner education and engage with the channel to demonstrate innovation, share the roadmap and the partner programme evolutions from classical on prem into hybrid cloud, etc. This is a continuous process. At Mitel, our channel is the key to our success so we consider that investing in channel partner events is essential.

Apart from roadshows, we've also developed the competence circle for example, which is a complete educational series on a bi-weekly basis that educates our partners on key technologies, targeting both sales and technical sales.

So for us, training and certification, tools improvement, face-to-face events and meetings, webinars, specifically for our platinum and gold partners is critical. Equally the alignment with our distributors is important to help us cover & grow our silver and gold silver partners.

We are a family, it's a team sport – and our role as a vendor is to continuously provide value to our channel community through trainings, appropriate partner programs, incentives and empower them to be able to support each and every organisation on their transformation journey.

A key element of the value chain we provide to our partner are third party integrations and alliances. When you look at the government and the private sector, their digital transformation can only be successful if we work to deliver

Our role as a vendor is to continuously provide value to our channel community through trainings, appropriate partner programs, incentives and empower them to be able to support each and every organisation on their transformation journey.”

an integrated solution, able to seamlessly connect with Microsoft Teams for instance, to a telemedicine third party solution, or to enable Whatsapp integration in the contact centre solution and advanced recording. All our alliances are built to deliver total end-to-end solutions, and these events are an opportunity to empower our partners and promote our ecosystem overall.

What can attendees expect to learn from the executives delivering keynote presentations at the Mitel Symposium?

Feras Zeidan: This event addresses two types of partners. Those who are already part of our family: these partners are already onboarded, certified, they're doing business with us and thus know intrinsically the value of Mitel.

On the other side, there are new partners, who are interested, or who want to work with a major vendor like Mitel.

So, during the Mitel Symposium we focus on demonstrating our technological and commercial

values as well as our ability to integrate with third party technologies.

On the portfolio front, attendees get an overview of our roadmap and hear from the innovations and the continuous evolutions we're making on our products and solutions. As an example, we showcase a demo of the Mitel assistant that will be launched in the next months, a free software that will integrate our IP telephony infrastructure with Microsoft Teams.

We also put the emphasis on the scalability, redundancy and security of our solutions, which are more than ever critical points for organisations of all sizes.

What are fundamentally the key outcomes and objectives that Mitel wants to achieve with this conference?

Asif Khan: The Mitel Symposium is Mitel's primary channel event for the Middle Eastern market, and we opted to start with UAE, followed by Kuwait and other dates across the Gulf and Middle East region in the months ahead.



We're looking to communicate our values, showcase our solutions, our innovations and updates and share what's next at Mitel.”



Fundamentally, we're looking to communicate our values, showcase our solutions, our innovations and updates and share what's next at Mitel.


We also aim at introducing the value proposition from Mart Networks to our channel partners, be it in terms of product fulfilment, logistics, operations, credit or technical pre-sales support. Our partnership with Mart Networks is already proving to be very successful in the African region, and that's the reason why we decided to extend it to Middle East.

Can you tell our readers more about the partnership between Mitel and Mart Networks?

Asif Khan: Mitel first signed a partnership with Mart Networks a few months ago to address the African region.

We recently extended our contract with them in the Middle East region, and this Symposium is the first event in the UAE to launch and roll out this partnership to our channel partners.

With this agreement Mart brings a lot of value to our channel partners as they have the resources and the logistics on the ground, making sure that the products are fulfilled effectively and efficiently to our partners. They also provide presales as well as post-sales support to our channel partners, together with financing.

What we gained out of this relationship thus far in the African region is a huge success, and we are confident we can replicate this with Mart Networks in the Middle East. 

INFOBLOX

THE FUTURE DOMAIN

Mohammed Al-Moneer, Sr. Regional Director, META at Infoblox, has penned an exclusive op-ed that outlines how decentralised working requires thorough secure DNS management.

Where is your data stored? Where is the software located? You used to be able to answer these questions by pointing to the cabinet where your server was located.

Today it is more difficult. Is it on your own server(s)? In the cloud? Both, everywhere and nowhere? Without Domain Name System (DNS), you have no idea.

In a world in which organisations increasingly work decentralised, it becomes all the more important that you arrive at the right destinations.

This makes the system that regulates this, DNS, even more important for the organisation. Bad DNS management not only limits productivity, but also brings increasing security risks.

DNS has traditionally been referred to as the telephone directory of the Internet. In daily use, you get online access to information via domain names, such as wikipedia.org.

Browsers, on the other hand, communicate via Internet Protocol (IP) addresses. DNS translates domain names



into IP addresses so that browsers can find the correct information.

Every device connected to the internet has a unique IP address that other machines use to communicate with this device. DNS servers save people from having to remember long, complex IP addresses.

The role of DNS is changing

About a decade ago, chances were your applications and data lived in the physical infrastructure of a single data center. Today, all that has changed: Applications and data

are typically spread across multiple endpoints thanks to the rise of cloud technologies.

Over time, the tools that control traffic have also changed. Like the rest of your digital infrastructure, DNS is more dynamic than ever today.

You are selling DNS short by calling it a telephone book. The DNS servers act as hubs for countless connections between applications, data, and users. The title of 'traffic controller' is therefore not out of place.

Security - the challenge in DNS

Safety is an important responsibility for every air traffic controller. Security has also become a hot topic for DNS.

Because DNS is an attractive target for attacks. For example, it is increasingly used as a tool in DDoS attacks, but DNS is also attacked to redirect web traffic to malicious servers.

When everyone works in the office, the role of security is reserved for firewalls and similar measures.

But when employees, applications and data are decentralised, DNS also needs to know which routes an information request can and may take.

In concrete terms, this means that DNS blocks the visit of known malware sites for all users in the network. When a user clicks on a phishing link, DNS blocks access so that no malware is downloaded. In its role as traffic controller, DNS thus ensures that you do not accidentally download malware.

It is important that you as



an organisation have control over this. Great to let your navigation system determine which route will lead you the fastest to your holiday destination, but is it desirable to give an external party control over the routes within your organisation?

If possible, Google's traffic controller will always refer you via and/or to Google. The same goes for every major cloud provider. This quickly leads to dependencies, making it less

easy to set up a multicloud environment, for example. Therefore, do not bet on one (cloud)horse!

Are you going for the toll road or the B-road?

DNS traffic can easily be compared to the route you take

to the campsite in the South of France. You can go to your destination via the toll road, or you can take a B-road. If you take the toll road you are safe and in control, but via the B-road there are more obstacles.

Do you want to be sure that you will arrive safely at your destination in this rapidly changing world? Then arrange for an independent traffic controller to guide you through the obstacles of the modern internet. cmme



Like the rest of your digital infrastructure, DNS is more dynamic than ever today.”

VMWARE

CHAOS IS A FRIEND OF MINE

Hervé Renault, VP Cloud EMEA at VMware, has reinforced the importance of being smart in a bid to navigate the challenges that we all face in what he described as a 'world of chaos' in an exclusive op-ed for February's edition of CNME.

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Whatever industry we operate in, no matter the size of our organisation; we're all running in the same race.

The one to ensure that we're

at the forefront of customer experiences, winning business and operating as efficiently as possible, which is only harder during these times of increasing political and economic uncertainty.

Everyone is gearing up to win this race in the same way, through digital transformation and data. According to our Multi-Cloud Maturity Index, by 2024, 95% of organisations across EMEA will be looking to their data as a revenue driver, with 46% recognising it as a significant source of revenue – up from 29% today.

Applications define whether you win or lose

The race to drive revenue from data continues to be defined by how quickly, securely and profitably organisations can get new applications, or re-write existing ones, to market in pursuit of their strategic goals.

While these applications used to exclusively live in data centers, they have over time moved in the cloud; and over time new clouds have evolved to offer new capabilities.

Multi-cloud as an essential enabler

There are private clouds, hosted entirely on-premises; public clouds, hosted externally by cloud providers; and hybrid clouds, combining the benefits of both. A few years ago, we

saw the beginnings of local clouds, residing at the edge at distributed sites.

And most recently sovereign clouds, driven by the demands of new data protection legislation.

Multi-cloud is now the default in a world where an organisation's most valuable assets – its apps, data, workforce and infrastructure – are no longer centralised in physical buildings but distributed anywhere and everywhere.

A clear path to greater revenue and growth

The value of multi-cloud is well and truly proven. Almost everyone (95%) agrees that multi-cloud architectures are now critical to business success; with 48% believing those who don't adopt a multi-cloud approach risk failure.

Almost half (46%) believe multi-cloud use has had a very positive impact on revenue growth, while 46% also believe it has had a very positive impact on profitability. In fact, only 4% believe multi-cloud is not critical to business success.

Increased complexity and chaos

To see this value, organisations must cut through the increased complexity and chaos that can come with operating multiple clouds, which most companies are.

Senior leaders we spoke to say their ambition to realise more value from data this way is being held back by issues with security, skills, difficulty stitching different cloud environments together and siloed access to data.

Organisations must also improve the control they have over their operational and cloud expenses, which is a concern if data is to drive genuine business value.

Common roadblocks for all

Each cloud has a different model. Multiple models mean increased complexity and therefore increased risk and cost.

Moving apps to the cloud and from cloud to cloud is difficult, time-consuming and costly; as is training and re-training teams to manage apps after a migration, especially with the current skills scarcities in the IT marketplace. All this expensive complexity is crying out to be simplified.

Simplify, secure, scale

Cloud smart companies are choosing to use a single, multi-cloud platform on which they can build, run, manage and secure all applications, consistently, at scale across all clouds.

Take the McLaren Racing team as an example. It relies on a range of key applications to enhance vehicle aerodynamics; optimise car components; and make real-time, data-driven racing decisions.

By using a hybrid of trackside infrastructure, its own data centers and public cloud environments for running

essential apps, McLaren is maximising the value of multi-cloud to help win races.

Using a smart multi-cloud platform enables companies like McLaren to choose the best environment for specific applications, with all the visibility, efficiency and control required, at less risk and faster time to value.

It also enables them to choose the right environment for the right data, including latency sensitive information that needs to remain close for performance. Something that is of increasing importance with the deadline for DORA hitting next year.

And because they're using the same platform, tools and management across all environments, there's no need to re-tool, re-train and so on. With belts tightening in response to the downturn expected this year, it's all too easy to push investment on the back-burner in favor of holding tight.

But history has taught us those who continue to invest in smart areas are the most likely to rebound and thrive. Smart multi-cloud enables organisations of all shapes and sizes to deliver positive outcomes for the organisation and its stakeholders.

Now is not the time to freeze in the chaos, but rather to be smart and win the race. [GTM](#)



Organisations must cut through the increased complexity and chaos that can come with operating multiple clouds, which most companies are.”

PURE STORAGE

WHY WE NEED TO GO GREEN

In a superb op-ed, **Fred Lherault**, CTO EMEA and Emerging Markets at Pure Storage, passionately makes the case for why green storage can serve as the cornerstone for a more sustainable and cost-efficient data centre as countries scramble to meet net-zero commitments.

The Middle East and Africa (MEA) region has become one of the brightest zones on the global digitisation heat map.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) government has invested in boosting global competitiveness through the digital economy with a strategy to have it contribute 20% of gross non-oil GDP in the coming years.

Digital technology is seen as the answer to many societal issues — from commercial success and economic growth to the trickier aspects of delivering on net-zero commitments. When it comes to the latter, the region is in the global public eye — COP27 was held in Egypt and COP28 will come to the UAE this November.

This juncture is the perfect time to discuss data centres

and their environmental impact. The UAE is leading the charge on data centre expansion, with hyperscale providers like Microsoft and AWS already staking market claims here.

While admittedly, data centres are vital engines of economic growth, when it comes to sustainability, they can leave much to be desired. Power consumption in a data centre can often account for more than half of total operating costs.

They also have a significant carbon footprint (global estimates are 3% of energy consumption and 2% of carbon emissions, on a par with commercial aviation). However, there are technology choices which significantly reduce energy consumption and make a positive impact on the sustainability of data centres.

As a digitisation leader and host of two climate conferences in as many years, the region is making strides to address this issue. Many governments and private enterprises are looking to make data centres cleaner and greener.

The MEA green data centre market already constitutes an estimated 10% of the region's overall market, with colocation operators showing their initiative by investing in efficiency-enhancing programs as part of their own sustainability goals.

Each has realised that more sustainable data centres can benefit the bottom line. This makes green technology — and storage in particular

— a key consideration when building these data centres.

Modern flash storage: Three green advantages that can save your budget

A major drawback of HDDs is their poor storage density compared to SSDs. Flash offers much higher capacity per drive, with drives of almost 50TB offered by some vendors, which will only rise in the coming years, compared to spinning disk's 20-something TB.

In addition, a spinning disk — with its moving parts — draws far more power than flash. HDDs draw several watts during reads and writes, and a similar amount when idle as the disks remain spinning and available.

Flash's working power draw is similar but mere milliwatts when idle. Additionally, SSDs are significantly better at random access performance — a key requirement for many production applications — than HDDs and therefore require a lot less components to power data hungry applications.

The next green saving comes from the emergence of modular storage hardware upgrades. It used to be that when you needed more capacity or controller processing power there

was little choice except to replace the entire array.

Now, some vendors can swap out and upgrade individual components non-disruptively, even across generations. Forklift upgrades are universally expensive, wasteful and disruptive for the business but they can be a thing of the past if you choose the right vendor.

Lastly, the actual consumption model of storage procurement has been disrupted in recent years by the introduction of Storage as-a-Service (STaaS).

These offerings can help energy efficiency and combat e-waste, including the ability to flex up and down as required, all based on constant software monitoring of your storage estate without having to deploy hardware upfront for the next 3-5 years, which helps reduce the electricity bills by only powering what is required in the short term.

However, it's important that the STaaS offering comes with a Service Level Agreement (SLA). Without monitoring and an obligation to deliver what has been agreed, there is no real service. This means, for example, that if the agreed performance and capacity are jeopardised, the provider must resolve this proactively.

All of these advantages make the data centre more sustainable and can help both your bottom line and the environment.



Your green storage strategy should cover how you pay for the capacity for the actual technologies deployed.”



Flash as a green solution: what to look out for

Flash media in storage products should be table stakes, but be sure to look into the details of flash storage offered. While the flash media may be the same for different vendors, storage vendors differentiate themselves by engineering their own data drives and controller software to make flash devices denser and more efficient, to bring greater reliability and longer lifecycles.

Data reduction can be built into the storage system to bring further density improvements.

Meanwhile, upgrading individual components brings the ability to scale up capacity and boost performance independently and avoid wasting processing or storage resources.

If a vendor offers to upgrade part of the system over several years beyond the traditional refresh cycle, then all the better as it gives an increased lease of life to storage systems and reduces e-waste.

Here is where modularity converges with as-a-service models. Look for a storage vendor that offers non-disruptive upgrades based on monitoring and prediction of usage stats and the ability to grow and upgrade the storage system on-demand over time.

This should come with a variety of service levels, in block, file and object storage, and include cloud capacity.

Options to pay for storage infrastructure should range from buying outright with refreshes on a subscription basis, through to as-a-service where the equipment is the

While admittedly, data centres are vital engines of economic growth, when it comes to sustainability, they can leave much to be desired."



property of the vendor and upgrades come seamlessly, as required and predicted by AI/ML-driven monitoring and telemetry.

Organisations should also look for solutions that enable them to track storage hardware efficiency via a variety of metrics. These include:

- Power used compared to nominal power load across fleet, data centre or array
- Greenhouse gas emissions estimated based on power usage
- Watts used per unit of data stored

Your green storage strategy should cover how you pay for capacity for the actual technologies deployed. Look for a storage vendor that understands that.

Considerations should also be given to the vendor's policies

of sustainable and ethical procurement as well as targets that aim to reduce greenhouse gases in the supply chain.

Trust but verify

Be sure to ask vendors for evidence their customers have saved money. It's possible to find customer testimony where rack space and power consumption have been slashed by figures as high as 75% by moving from legacy storage to modern, modular, flash-based products.

Careful selection of technology infrastructure such as flash storage can save costs because SSDs provide denser, more efficient capacity along with hardware modularisation and "as-a-Service" approaches to data storage.

No more over-provisioning, forklift upgrades, or the expense, disruption and e-waste that come with them — a great start on one's ESG journey amid the rampant instability of today's energy markets.

Consider not just what vendor data sheets say in terms of energy efficiency for a given product but also what configurations are deployed in real life and what their customers see in their own production environment.

Finally, as the maxim goes, trust but verify. You should collect and monitor power usage metrics for your storage systems and other infrastructure components.

Smart power distribution units (PDUs) are an essential tool in the green data centre that help organisations identify how and where energy is being used. [cmc](https://www.cmc.com)



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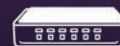
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