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A PLATFORM THAT 'WORX'

Fred Lherault, Field CTO EMEA at Pure Storage, spoke to CNME Editor Mark Forker about the capabilities that its Portworx platform provides for users, and claimed that it represents the dawn of a new era when it comes to containerization.

Pure Storage took its //Accelerate forum to Saudi Arabia for the first time in what was another demonstration of its commitment to the digital transformation efforts being pursued by the Kingdom.

During the event, CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to Fred Lherault to learn more about Pure Storage's Portworx offering, the significance of the Evergreen//One Storage as-a-service solution in the KSA – and the significance of the company taking Accelerate to the region for the very first time.

Lherault kick started our conversation by highlighting how the whole container movement began in terms of being a space for stateless workloads, but how it has evolved over time.

“Containerization was designed for stateless workloads. However, the whole data piece wasn't part of the original design. It's only as we moved to the next generation of containerized platforms that people started asking, how do I get the same agility and cloud abstraction



for my data that I get for my computer networking with Kubernetes? So, that's where we starting with Portworx and primarily the goal of Portworx is to first of all

to provide the same way of managing, controlling and automating data regardless of where the application is deployed, whether that be in the public cloud, on-prem, the edge, or in the datacentre,” said Lherault.

Lherault pointed out some of the differences between Portworx and Kubernetes.

“Portworx provides that abstraction of the storage infrastructure, and also connects it as it is tightly integrated into Kubernetes, which gives you the ability to consume data through the same tools. Portworx allows you to do any type of data application, and there is high availability of data between different applications within the cloud, or even just replicating it from one cloud to another, and all of those things don't exist within Kubernetes, but they do with our Portworx platform,” said Lherault.

Lherault also outlined how one of the key components of Portworx was its ability to enable users to work in a 'policy-driven' way.

“One of the most important parts of Portworx is the ability to work in a

policy-driven manner. If you think about the world of traditional applications they don't change every day, when you deploy a server, it's going to live for months if not years. It's very easy to say that this application lives here, and here is going to be a small number of servers, but in the world of containerization, first of all the application may be changing constantly, and it may also be scaling up and down, so it's really difficult for a human to know where the data is and more importantly to change the data and all the storage requirements at the speed of Kubernetes. What we do with Portworx is work in a policy-driven manner, and the people that are building the platform will define classes of resources and that includes when to expand, for example in terms of storage, when you reach a certain threshold it will expand the storage automatically by 25%. It needs to be orchestrated automatically because in this world the applications and data are changing radically faster than in the old traditional world. I think the key element of Portworx is being able to move away from doing things manually, and just define those classes of services and let the platform do the automation," said Lherault.

One of the major announcements being made at Pure Accelerate was the availability of the Evergreen//One Storage as-a-service solution in the KSA marketplace.

According to Lherault, one of the most significant elements of the availability of their Evergreen//One Storage as-a-service solution in Saudi Arabia is the fact that it enables their customers to move to a full as-a-service model in the way they consume infrastructure.

"We're all trying to serve developers and datacentres, and we're all building cloud platforms that are geared towards their needs and requirements, and in order to do that then you build the platform, and that old saying

Evergreen//One in terms of helping to grow the platform non-disruptively," said Lherault.

He added that it is ultimately designed to give autonomy to customers and reduce their overheads.

"It is designed to enable customers to build cloud services for their own internal users and the IT being able to move at the speed that is needed whilst also limiting the up-front investment," said Lherault.

Lherault concluded an excellent interview by reinforcing how important

"One of the most important parts of Portworx is the ability to work in a policy-driven manner."

rings true, 'build it and they will come'. However, most organizations have no idea how quickly the platform can grow, it may grow at 20% per-year, or it may grow at 200% per-year, and if you're operating and acquiring infrastructure in a normal way then you would potentially have to acquire far too much infrastructure in advance of when you actually need it. Whereas with Evergreen//One you can really de-risk the investment by starting small, which means if the platform starts growing much faster than you expected then you have all the SLAs behind the

the burgeoning KSA marketplace is not just for Pure Storage, but for the IT industry as a whole.

"The Saudi market is hugely important for us, but it is important for the entire tech ecosystem in general. This is where we are seeing the most investment especially around AI in this country - and anyone that is serious about technology and data has to be here because all of these new AI use-cases are redundant without the data behind them, and that's what we are here to unlock for our customers across the Kingdom," said Lherault. ■

DRIVING BETTER EXPERIENCES

Omar Akar, Regional Vice President, CEE-META at Pure Storage, told CNME Editor Mark Forker, that the company was committed to delivering brilliant cloud experiences for its customers in the KSA marketplace.



our commitment to the Saudi marketplace and to what the country is trying to achieve in terms of its digital transformation. Over the last 12 months we have witnessed how determined the country is to transform its economy into a knowledge-driven economy that is underpinned and driven by technology. They have also placed a huge emphasis on their cloud operating model. In addition to this, the establishment of the cloud computing shared economic zone, which has been designed to pave the way to drive more widespread cloud adoption across the various sectors across the Kingdom,” said Akar.

Akar said that they want their customers in the KSA to be able to experience the same smooth processes when they broker infrastructure on-prem as they can in a public cloud.

“What we do with Evergreen//One is try to bring the cloud experience on-prem by delivering an SLA-driven infrastructure. We want our customers here in Saudi Arabia to broker infrastructure on-prem the way they do it on a public

Omar Akar has said that the availability of the Evergreen//One solution in Saudi Arabia was a testament to its commitment to the digital agenda of the Kingdom.

Akar was in conversation with CNME Editor Mark

Forker during Pure//Accelerate in Riyadh.

Akar said Pure Storage was firmly aligned with the ambitious economic and technological reforms currently underway in the KSA.

“The availability of Evergreen//One is part of

cloud. We want them to buy outcomes and SLAs, we don't want them to have to manage infrastructure in the traditional way," said Akar.

Akar also outlined how Evergreen//One gives their customers SLAs across a range of different elements which includes the availability, performance, data protection, resiliency, and most importantly of all sustainability.

"What we have recently announced is the fact that we're going to take it one step further with our customers when it comes to sustainability. We're basically going to pay for the electricity bill for the energy that they consume in their datacentre. We are so confident in how sustainable and energy efficient our technology is, that we will pay and put the commitment into an SLA.

"We are extending the on-prem as-a-service and SLA-driven infrastructure to ensure our customers have a cloud-like operating model. Our customers have the ability to move to a distributed cloud architecture, whilst maintaining seamless user experience across all cloud deployments," said Akar.

Akar conceded that he has been surprised by the rate of adoption of cloud-native platforms in Saudi Arabia.

"The report commissioned by IDC showed that 31% of customers in Saudi Arabia will be adopting cloud-native platforms, and will be deploying their new digital services and workloads on cloud-native platforms

and eventually will start using and capitalising on containers. We are seeing figures between 20-50% of workloads being moved into cloud, which shows that cloud native is something that is happening now in our region, and it's important for our customers to adopt cloud-native technologies now to ensure they are keeping up with customer demands," said Akar.

Akar said that another indication of its commitment

East region, and we held it here in Riyadh. Over the last few years, we have geared a lot of investment to the KSA marketplace because we recognise the immense potential that lies here in Saudi Arabia, and that is why we have invested right across the board," said Akar.

Akar concluded a brilliant conversation by reinforcing how Pure Storage is a customer-centric organisation.

"We have established

"What we do with our Evergreen programme is bring the cloud experience on-prem by delivering an SLA-driven infrastructure."

to the Saudi market was its investment in Portworx.

"Portworx is a unified data services layer to accelerate the deployment of cloud-native platforms by delivering a comprehensive set of data services including persistent storage and data protection to support the adoption of container-based applications," said Akar.

Akar then touched on the significance of having Pure//Accelerate in the Middle East region for the very first time.

"Pure//Accelerate Saudi is a testament to our commitment to this market. It is the very first time we have taken Pure//Accelerate to the Middle

multiple depots across the country in a bid to better support our customers, field engineers, and customer success managers because they are very important to us as a key cornerstone when we are working with customers. We are a customer centric organisation, maintaining customer satisfaction is critical for us, and we have been investing heavily in the Saudi market and we will continue those investments. We see the potential here and the real appetite for change in terms of technological advancement and innovation, and we want to be a big part of that journey," said Akar. ■

IT'S ALL IN THE PERFORMANCE

Qusai Sawalha, Country Sales Manager at Axelerated Solutions, spoke to CNME Editor Mark Forker, at Pure//Accelerate in Riyadh, where he outlined how the high-performance technology provided by Pure Storage really differentiates the company from other market players.

Pure Storage have made no secret of the fact that they are a 100% channel-focused company, and that their partners are a key part in their success.

The channel is a very important medium for Pure Storage in the KSA marketplace, and one of their partners is Axelerated Solutions.

CNME Editor Mark Forker secured an exclusive interview with Qusai Sawalha, Country Sales Manager at Axelerated Solutions, at Pure//Accelerate in Riyadh, in an effort to find out more about their collaboration.

Sawalha said that the partnership was a perfect fit for both entities.

“We started our relationship with Pure Storage back in 2021. We wanted to help our customers have solutions that would enhance their performance and give them the performance that they wanted, and we found that with Pure Storage in terms of storage technology. The relationship with Pure



Storage came about largely because we were both a good fit for each other. Pure Storage had just entered the KSA marketplace and were keen to work with a relatively new channel partner like Axelerated Solutions in order to help them drive their vision. We've been in the market since 2016, and we've enjoyed great success, but the partnership between us and Pure Storage has really taken us to another level, and the collaboration has been great for us both," said Sawalha.

Axelerated Solutions have enjoyed phenomenal growth since their inception as a company in 2016. Its focus on three business units was their main engine for growth.

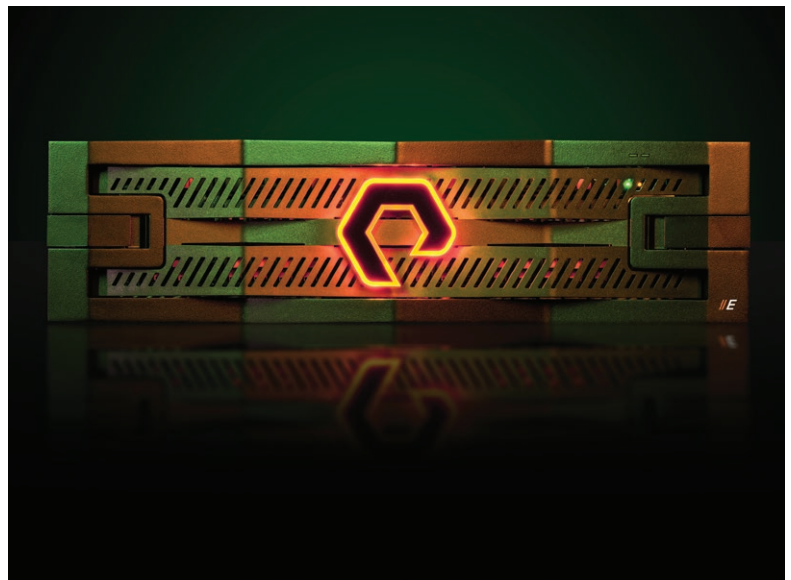
"We are focused on infrastructure solutions and have developed a reputation for being a leader in this space. We started from humble beginnings with a team of 3 people, but have grown the company to 115 people. However, a key illustration of our success and growth is the contrast in our turnover of revenue. In the first year we generated \$3 million, but that now has grown to \$80 million annually. We have three main business units in our company, which are infrastructure implementation engineers, service engineers, and we also have our pre-sales and sales departments and these units really help drive growth and maintain our position as a market leader," said Sawalha.

When asked what differentiated Pure Storage from other technology players, Sawalha said its high-performance and speed of delivery really set it apart from other players in the marketplace.

"Look if you go to any market today, and you want to buy technology then what are the fundamentals that you are looking for? If you are looking for high-performance, speed and delivery when it comes to storage technology, then this is exactly what Pure Storage delivers. When we go to our customers and propose Pure Storage, and we inform them that we will deliver the solution in 4-5 weeks maximum, and the implementation will not take more than

3 hours, then it's an easy sell. It's high-performance technology, and is in the best-in-class for what our customers are looking for in flash arrays and the storage capabilities provided are unrivalled. We're selling Pure Storage easily because of the high quality of the technology provided by them, it's that simple. The three key words that we use for our customers are fast in delivery, high in performance and fast in implementation," concluded Sawalha. ■

"If you are looking for high-performance, speed and delivery when it comes to storage technology, then this is exactly what Pure Storage delivers."



AN INNOVATION NATION

CNME Editor Mark Forker attended the inaugural **Pure//Accelerate** event in Riyadh, in which the company reiterated and reinforced how it was committed to its mission which is to accelerate digital transformation for businesses across the KSA.

Pure Storage has firmly established itself as a market leader when it comes to uncomplicating data storage.

Its diverse portfolio of products and solutions are empowering its customers with the ability to extract all the value they need from their data, whilst at the same time reducing the complexity and expense of managing the infrastructure behind it.

Pure Storage has held a number of Pure Accelerate events globally, but this was the first time it had taken the event to the Middle East.

The choice of Saudi Arabia was strategic because the KSA is pursuing one of the most progressive and transformative economic reformation programs in the form of Vision 2030.

That blueprint is going to reduce the Kingdom's dependency on oil, and will serve as a springboard on its path to a digital economy, with the country putting foundations in place that will enable it to become one of the most technologically-advanced nations in the world.

A key stakeholder in that will be Pure Storage, and at Pure//Accelerate, which was held in Riyadh on November 6th, the company highlighted the role it is going to play in helping to fuel and drive digital transformation across the country.

Hundreds of IT leaders, partners, customers and Pure Storage executives descended on The Fairmont Hotel for the event.



Abdullah Al-Baz, Country Manager at Pure Storage, kickstarted the event with an excellent presentation.

He charted how Pure Storage is fully committed to helping organizations across Saudi Arabia reach their digital transformation goals.

"We want to be the go-to partner that organizations

trust to drive their digital transformation across Saudi Arabia. An innovative country deserves innovative solutions. Our mission is to accelerate digital transformation, and support Saudi organizations on their multi-cloud journey," said Al-Baz.

Al-Baz concluded his presentation by documenting the success Pure Storage has enjoyed in terms of market growth in the KSA marketplace since its entry into the market in 2019, and said that the company was now well-positioned to expand its presence following the availability of some of its cutting-edge products and solutions.

Next onstage was Omar Akar, Regional Vice President, CEE-META at Pure Storage.



He stressed the need for organizations across Saudi Arabia to embrace cloud-native platforms to achieve digital success.

“A report by IDC, showed that 95% of new digital workloads are going to be deployed on cloud-native platforms, so embracing a cloud-native approach is a critical success factor for businesses to achieve their digital goals in the KSA,” said Akar.

Akar added that digital transformation is a race.

“82% of the most digitally matured organizations across the world have an agile mindset. Digital transformation is about people, processes and technologies, but it is all underpinned by data,” said Akar.

Next to take the stage was Alex McMullan, CTO International at Pure Storage, who delivered a presentation entitled Innovating the

The focus of his presentation then shifted towards the topic of sustainability.

Pure Storage has drawn acclaim for its strong leadership when it comes to its approach to sustainability.

He highlighted the impact its Pure//E platforms were having in significantly reducing carbon emissions.

“Pure Storage has committed to reducing scope 3 (sold product) emissions

to sustainability,” said McMullan.

The audience were then treated to a brilliant presentation from Shahin Hashim, Associate Research Director, Middle East, Turkey and Africa at IDC.

He provided a detailed and fascinating deep dive into the market trends in the KSA marketplace – and examined what businesses needed to do to bridge the existing data gap, whilst he also examined the challenges and

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Digital Future.

The central theme of his presentation is designed to illustrate how the company’s philosophy is embedded in customer-centricity.

“At Pure Storage, we use the best technology to reduce operational costs, and improve customer experiences,” said McMullan.

by 66% per petabyte, and the launch of Pure//E platforms enables customers to achieve <1W/TB for the first time ever. This is a significant milestone, and only serves to reinforce our unwavering commitment

opportunities presented by AI across the Kingdom.

However, he said that it had become evidently clear that Saudi enterprises were increasingly in favour of a private hybrid approach when it came to the cloud.

“A private first hybrid approach is the preferred choice for Saudi enterprises, regardless of their digital leadership status. A public cloud only approach is avoided unanimously,” said Hashim.

Abraham Barnes, Senior Director, Subscription Portfolio, at Pure Storage, and Simon Malek Jahanian, Senior



POST EVENT REPORT



Director, International Sales Finance at Pure Storage, were next to take the stage at Pure Accelerate Riyadh, to jointly deliver a presentation, which highlights the capabilities of the Evergreen// One Storage as-a-service solution.

One of the biggest announcements being made at Pure//Accelerate was the fact that the solution was now available in Saudi Arabia.

Abraham Barnes said one of the key capabilities within the Evergreen// One solution was its evolution in terms of its new Block and File Archive Tier.

"It is ultimately designed for the long-term storage of datasets, and is a new alternative to other vendors, or the public cloud," said Barnes.

Simon Malek-Jahanian, focused on how the zero data loss protection provided by the updates to the Evergreen//One solution was

a gamechanger for many enterprises across the region.

"It guarantees data durability, and in the event of loss, or corruption, we will help to recover. We also provide 12 months service credit if we fail," said Malek-Jahanian.

Ahmad AlTwaiiry, Director, Azure GTM Lead for Middle East at Microsoft, conducted a presentation that took a closer look at the capabilities of the Azure VMware Solution.

He highlighted how it gave end-users the flexibility and autonomy to manage their applications across different environments.

"It runs your VMware workloads natively on Azure, supported and operated by Microsoft. It allows you to manage and secure applications across VMware environments and Microsoft Azure with a consistent operating framework."

Hussam Baafeef, Channel Manager, Saudi & Bahrain at Pure Storage, then moderated a brilliant fireside discussion with Mohammad Hakmi, Solution Lead and Digital Transformer, at Ministry of Justice - KSA.

In a candid exchange he explained the role played by Pure Storage in facilitating and driving their digital

transformation as an organisation over the last few years.

He lavished praise on Pure's product portfolio, but singled out the performance element that it delivered.

"We selected Pure Storage because their infrastructure is unrivalled. It's been 18 months since we adopted their solutions, and from Day 1 the performance has been incredible, it just works perfectly. It's helping us to streamline facilities for our citizens," said Hakmi.

Fred Lherault, Field CTO EMEA, at Pure Storage, was next onstage to deliver a keynote presentation at Accelerate Riyadh, entitled 'Data for a Faster World'.

He highlighted how by the end of 2023, we will have generated three times as much data as we did in 2019.

Lherault said that the scale, availability, quality and resilience of data has never been higher.

However, the central theme of Lherault's presentation was how customers could really 'unlock the potential of Kubernetes' by leveraging the capabilities of Portworx by Pure Storage.

"Portworx enables users to use one platform to run any database. You can build





applications anywhere, safe in the knowledge that you have access to production at scale, availability, reliability and security,” said Lherault.

After the conclusion of the presentations, there were then 12 fantastic breakout sessions delivered by customers, and partners of Pure Storage.

A wonderful event reached

a fitting conclusion with an amazing illusionist act from Mind2Mind that left attendees speechless.

However, nobody can have any 'illusions' in terms of just how committed Pure Storage is in terms of really driving the Kingdom's digital transformation over the next digital decade of change. ■



PICTURE SPECIAL





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