MIDDLE EAST THE VOICE OF THE CHANNEL ISSUE 295 | APRIL - MAY 2022

SHIFTING RIORITIES

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7

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Coverage







AI Parental Controls

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EDITORIAL





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YEAR OF THE CUSTOMER



s we emerge from the pandemic and go back to living 'normal' lives, it is clear that in order to thrive and grow, the channel business must re-orient its priorities and focus on the one thing that matters today: the customer. In fact, all research and expert predictions point to the fact that if the customer is not given the attention they deserve, the business can die a painful death. However, to focus completely on the customer, channel partners must embrace the leading trends of today: the cloud and cloud security.

To examine this further, we've brought you a cover story that probes these trends and speaks to experts about the channel and its way forward. It discusses how channel partners will need to offer a diverse range of technological solutions as well as deep experience in the areas most valued by consumers to boost their chances of success in this climate. We're not spoiling the suspense for you: read on to find out what the journey of the channel industry looks like.

To add another dimension to this narrative, we have featured special interviews with channel frontrunners in this issue. Sherifa Hady, Vice-President Channel, Europe Middle East & Africa at Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company, discusses the increasing interest in Network-as-a-Service among organisations in EMEA. VM, Manu, General Manager, Avientek & Aveek Roy, Regional Director MEA&APAC, Sangoma talk about their partnership and what it means for the unified communications sector in the region.

That's not all: In an exclusive tete-a-tete, Simran Bagga, Head of Engineering at Omnix International, tells Reseller ME how its partnership with Team Viewer allows it to cater to the needs of key economic sectors by supporting them with Mixed Reality (MR) and remote management solutions. In another interview, Kamran Khayal, General Manager at Trigon LLC, tells Reseller ME how the company's customer-first approach and focus on innovation are helping it stay ahead of the changing market. Last, but not the least, Ahmad Al Qadri, Chief Executive Officer at Evanssion discusses the company's partnership with Noname Security and what it means for cybersecurity in the region.

In addition to all of this, we have the regular opinion, perspective and insight columns that offer a wealth of information about the channel industry and the way ahead. So, make sure you don't miss this issue. Happy Reading!

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TOP STORIES

VAD TECHNOLOGIES ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT WITH COHESITY





beyond zero trust."

VAD Technologies, an established IT and technology value added distributor in the Middle East & North Africa, has announced a partnership with Cohesity, a leader in next-gen data management solutions.

VAD Technologies will use their strong Partner Ecosystem across the Region to bring Cohesity's Next-Gen Data Management Solutions to customers across the Middle East. This will enable organisations to radically simplify how they manage their data, and will help them to develop cyber resilience so they can quickly defend and if needed, rapidly recover data in the event of a cyberattack.

"Cohesity joins our technology portfolio at the right time, as we are constantly acquiring disruptive next generation technologies to ensure that our Partners can always offer the latest and in demand

QUALYS LAUNCHES ENHANCED PARTNER PROGRAM TO DRIVE GROWTH

Qualys, Inc, a pioneer and leading provider of disruptive cloud-based IT, security and compliance solutions, has announced that it is reinforcing its commitment to the channel with the launch of an enhanced channel and integration partner program.

"Partners are strategic to our overall growth strategy, and our enhanced program will reward their commitment and protect investments while also furthering Qualys' investment in programs and people," said Suzanne Swanson, senior Vice-President of Global Partners, Qualys. "The bottom line: Qualys is empowering partners by making our renowned Cloud Platform and more than 20 IT, security and compliance apps available to them, accompanied by the best possible support, tools and resources to help expand joint business."

with Disruptive Technologies and that is one of the key reasons why we feel so excited about this Partnership. With their significant footprint in the public and enterprise markets, the team at VAD serves an important and already established partner ecosystem".

attacks with a sophisticated Threat

Defense architecture. We are excited to

partner with Cohesity and promote the

Data Management Platform that goes

"In this partnership with VAD, we

can address our customers' number

one concern today, developing cyber

resilience against cyberattacks like

ransomware,"said Gregg Petersen,

Regional Director Middle East and

Africa at Cohesity. "VAD Technologies

has a proven track record of working

Industry's First Comprehensive Next Gen



Suzanne Swanson, senior Vice-President of Global Partners, Qualys

Qualys is committed to the creation and distribution of meaningful integrations with technology partners across the ecosystem to reduce risk and accelerate the path to continuous security for modern enterprises. The program has been uniquely designed to foster close collaboration and enable partners to realise significant value when leveraging the power of the Qualys Cloud Platform.

solutions to their clients," said Mario M. Veliovic. General Manager at VAD Technologies. "Businesses across the region have learned that it's crucial to protect their business from sophisticated ransomware

AVAYA ANNOUNCES ENHANCEMENTS TO AVAYA ONECLOUD

Experiences That Matter

Avaya, a global leader in solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration, has announced an enhancement to Avava OneCloud to dramatically reduce the complexity associated with virtualising customer interactions. Avaya Virtual Agent is a ready-to-deploy, configurable service that delivers the full benefits of virtual, AI-based communication experiences to businesses - immediately elevating their customer experience.

Avaya Virtual Agent enables organisations to quickly deploy Avaya-designed, pre-built, cloud-based self-service agents instead of building them from scratch. It leverages the Avaya OneCloud Experience Platform, which reimagines communications composability, providing customers with the option of constructing their own workflows or subscribing to pre-built experiences. This also enables businesses to participate in the Experience Economy by elevating their customer interactions beyond just making them more efficient to also making them more engaging to capture increased customer time and attention. The Avaya Experience Builders community can assist businesses with getting started or with addressing more advanced deployment requirements.

"Experience is everything today, and companies need to provide an entirely new level of responsiveness that adapts to the changing needs of customers and employees, even in the moment," said Simon Harrison Senior Vice-President and Chief Marketing Officer at Avaya. "Avaya Virtual Agent makes it easier for organisations to rapidly compose the interactions that businesses need to ensure more engaging and memorable experiences."

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TOP STORIES

RIVERBED UNVEILS TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGY TO DELIVER UNIFIED OBSERVABILITY TO GLOBAL CUSTOMERS



Riverbed has launched a broad strategy to bring industry-leading unified observability to customers worldwide and accelerate growth. Front and center in the company's strategy is the development of an expanded unified observability portfolio which will unify data, insights and actions to solve one of the industry's most daunting problems: how to provide

.....

seamless digital experiences that are high performing and secure in a hybrid world of highly distributed users and applications, exploding data and soaring IT complexity.

"This marks an exciting new chapter for Riverbed," said Dan Smoot, President & CEO, Riverbed. "We're capitalising on our trusted brand, the dynamic growth, and market momentum for our visibility solutions to position Riverbed as a dominant leader in the rapidly growing observability market."

"Through our vision to deliver a highly innovative, differentiated SaaSbased Unified Observability portfolio, we will meet an urgent customer need and disrupt the market. We are focused on helping our customers transform massive amounts of data into actionable insights, so they can drive enterprise performance and deliver exceptional digital experiences," he added.

TENABLE AGREES TO ACQUIRE BIT DISCOVERY



Tenable Holdings, Inc, the Cyber Exposure company, has announced that it has signed an agreement to acquire Bit Discovery, Inc., a leader in external attack surface management (EASM). Combining Tenable's marketleading Cyber Exposure solutions with Bit Discovery's EASM capabilities will provide customers with a differentiated 360-degree view of the modern attack surface – both inside out and outside in – to identify and eliminate areas of known and unknown security risk.

Discovering and gaining insight into every part of a business's digital footprint

are essential steps of any effective cybersecurity program. Discovery has never been more critical, given the reliance on critical internet-facing services, applications and APIs. The problem for most organisations is that they are largely blind to the full and everchanging scope of internet-facing assets and services. With its powerful EASM solution, Bit Discovery eliminates this problem by continuously monitoring the Internet, allowing customers to rapidly discover and identify all externally facing assets that could become exploitable targets by cyber criminals.

CLOUD BOX TECHNOLOGIES ACHIEVES DELL TECHNOLOGIES TITANIUM SOLUTION PROVIDER STATUS



Cloud Box Technologies (CBT), an IT services specialist in the UAE, has announced that it has become a prestigious Titanium Solution Provider within the Dell Technologies Partner Program. CBT is an upward evolving organisation with extensive understanding of the technology landscape and best practices followed regionally and globally. To reach this top tier level, CBT demonstrated inherent high level of sales, pre-sales and implementation capabilities.

The CBT and DELL partnership stands witness to the company's alignment and focus on Dell Technologies business objectives and the brand's forward strategy. With deep focus on the Enterprise segment, CBT aims to be the leading SI for DELL.

Ranjith Kaippada, Managing Director, Cloud Box Technologies said: "We truly believe that strengthening our partnerships is what drives us to continuously build on our strengths. Constant improvement is the order of the day, and this enables us to be ahead of the curve across the board. We will continue to enhance our value addition to maximise client satisfaction and collaborate with them on technology initiatives. Parallelly, we are increasing our technical and consultative capabilities to cater to the varied and dynamic needs of the regional market. This achievement is also a testimony of the commitment by Dell Technologies towards building an exceptional partner experience."

FRESHWORKS ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY CRM FOR E-COMMERCE ON SHOPIFY



Freshworks Inc, a software company empowering the people who power business, has announced that the Freshworks CRM for e-commerce is now available in the Shopify App Store. The solution integrates directly with Shopify to provide its millions of merchants with a unified CRM that enables live conversational support, marketing and sales where and when consumers want to buy online.

"The Freshworks CRM platform can now enable millions of Shopify businesses to make their store as delightful and intelligent as the biggest online retailers," said Prakash Ramamurthy, Chief Product Officer at Freshworks. "Built on a unified data model, the solution gives merchants a complete view of their customers. In a time of low tolerance for error, our platform helps merchants avoid alienating customers with things they hate—like repeating order information or wading through irrelevant products."

Freshworks CRM for Shopify is a unified marketing, support, and sales solution purpose-built for Shopify storefront owners. Merchants can create more engaging customer experiences by segmenting and marketing to their customers based on custom Shopify events like cart abandonment and firsttime visitors; and by automating and personalising messages across email, livechat, WhatsApp, and SMS using pre-built Shopify Playbooks.

KEYSTON IT DISTRIBUTION ACQUIRES AL MASA, ANNOUNCES GLOBAL EXPANSION



Keyston IT Distribution has announced the full acquisition of Al Masa, a renowned regional and global provider of the latest technology products, solutions, and services. The acquisition includes Al Masa's offices, its teams and its existing deals with local and international manufacturers. The deal confirms Dubai's position as a magnet for innovationbased investments and a ground for those seeking to launch their ambitions, projects, and businesses across the global horizons.

As a result of the new deal, Keyston's mandate seeks to contribute to the growth of technology companies, drive digital transformation, and technological prosperity, as well as help customers implement their strategies as per the needs of the digital economy. The acquisition was announced at a ceremony attended by representatives of the top technology companies in the hardware and technology industry. Keyston's operations will commence from Dubai and expand across the GCC region and Iraq with future plans to expand to most international markets.

Mahdi Amjad, Founder and CEO of Keyston, said: "We are launching from Dubai a new era in the distribution of various information technology products, and we are fully confident in the ability of our team to strive and innovate modern solutions to achieve an unprecedented qualitative leap in this growing sector, which we have pioneered and excelled at."

AMANA CAPITAL APPOINTS JOY DABEET AS CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER



Amana Capital, the MENA's leading online financial trading firm, has announced the appointment of Joy Dabeet as its new Chief Marketing Officer.

Leveraging her experience, Dabeet will spearhead marketing, comms, product innovation, advertising as well as the brand's digital marketing initiatives. She will also be responsible for developing and executing strategies that build Amana's position as a leading digital trading firm and will partner closely with the operations team to drive sales.

Dabeet is a marketing leader with deep expertise in leading disruptive innovation and leading high-performing teams to deliver transformational growth. Her appointment aligns with Amana's transformational agenda, as the company continues to grow its existing business and accelerate the expansion and digital transformation across all customer touchpoints.

NEWSMAKERS

SOPHOS UNVEILS POWERFUL CLOUD WORKLOAD PROTECTION ADVANCEMENTS



Sophos, a global leader in next-generation cybersecurity, has unveiled advancements to Sophos Cloud Workload Protection, including new Linux host and container security capabilities. These enhancements accelerate the detection and response of in-progress attacks and security incidents within Linux operating systems, improve security operations and bolster application performance.

According to new SophosLabs research, distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) tools, cryptocurrency miners and various types of backdoors were the top three types of Linux threats detected by Sophos in a dataset from January through March 2022. DDoS tools accounted for nearly half of all Linux malware detections during this time, likely due to automated attacks attempting to reinfect updated servers rapidly and repeatedly. SophosLabs has also detected a recent increase in ransomware attackers attempting to use tools targeting virtual machine hypervisors, many of which run on Linux environments, to carry out their attacks.

"Linux environments continue to grow in surface area as organisations around the world increasingly migrate workloads to the cloud. Even though Linux is widely considered to be one of the most secure operating systems, it still harbours inherent and application-based risks and it is not immune to cyberattacks," said Joe Levy, Chief Technology and Product Officer at Sophos. "Attackers target Linux hosts and containers because they are high value, and often under protected. Sophos Cloud Workload Protection already automates and simplifies the prevention and detection of these attacks on Windows systems, and now Sophos is providing the same observations and capabilities to Linux operating systems."

VEEAM APPOINTS JOHN JESTER AS CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER

Veeam Software, the leader in backup, recovery and data management solutions that deliver modern data protection, has announced that it has appointed John Jester as Chief Revenue Officer (CRO). Jester will lead Veeam's go-to-market growth strategy and help build upon Veeam's position as the #1 provider of Modern Data Protection solutions spanning Cloud, Virtual, Physical, Hybrid, SaaS and Kubernetes.

Jester joins Veeam from a successful tenure at Google Cloud where he helped build the go-to-market organisation through his leadership of the Customer Experience organisation; in this role, he drove cloud adoption and business value for customers, supporting Google Cloud's growth to over \$23B ARR. Prior to Google, Jester



spent 20 years at Microsoft leading sales organisations and reimagining the GTM across the customer lifecycle.

SERVICENOW APPOINTS INDUSTRY VETERANS TO KEY POSITIONS



(L) Ali Kaddoura, Country Manager for the United Arab Emirates and (R) Feras Bilto, Country Manager for Saudi Arabia at ServiceNow

ServiceNow, the leading digital workflow company making the world work better for everyone, has announced the appointment of new leaders to spearhead its ambitious expansion in the Middle East and Africa region.

Ali Kaddoura will be Country Manager for the United Arab Emirates and Feras Bilto will be Country Manager for Saudi Arabia. The appointments follow the opening of ServiceNow's offices in Dubai, UAE, last year and reflect the company's view of the MEA region as a key territory for expansion. Over the past year, ServiceNow has seen tremendous growth. Global subscription revenue for the fiscal year was US\$ 5.57 billion. This brings the company closer to its goal of becoming the leading enterprise software company of the 21st century, with more than US\$ 15 billion in annual revenue. "Today's

enterprises are pursuing digital transformation at

scale, and they are doing so at previously unseen speeds," said Mark Ackerman, Area Vice-President for the Middle East and Africa at ServiceNow. "Across the world, IT stakeholders want to reduce complexity, empower employees and increase organisational agility. Governance and compliance are also a concern, especially in sectors such as FSI. When you put all of this together with the hybrid architectures unleashed by the cloud, you begin to see the need for what ServiceNow brings to the table – slick, automated digital workflows that support the business by greatly enhancing customer and employee experiences, as well as reducing costs."

CLOUDFLARE & CROWDSTRIKE EXPAND PARTNERSHIP TO BRING ENHANCED ZERO TRUST SECURITY CAPABILITIES



Cloudflare, the security, performance, and reliability company helping to build a better Internet, announced it is expanding its partnership with CrowdStrike Holdings, Inc, a leader in cloud-delivered protection of endpoints, cloud workloads, identity and data. Cloudflare is integrating its Zero Trust platform with CrowdStrike Falcon Zero Trust Assessment (ZTA) to give joint customers simple and powerful controls to ensure employees have secure access to applications wherever they are working. Through this integration, Cloudflare and CrowdStrike are bringing together world-class technologies to provide joint customers with Zero Trust capabilities that are unmatched in the industry.

"Every business needs to protect users and teams no matter where they are or how they're working," said John Graham-Cumming, Chief Technology Officer at Cloudflare. "Cloudflare's Zero Trust platform delivers comprehensive protection to organisations of all sizes. Now we're making it even easier for joint customers of Cloudflare and CrowdStrike to benefit from new combined security features for the connect-from-anywhere economy."

CYBEREASON UNCOVERS GLOBAL CHINESE ESPIONAGE CAMPAIGN TARGETING MANUFACTURERS IN NORTH AMERICA, EUROPE & ASIA



Cybereason, the XDR company, has published new research on Operation CuckooBees, a 12-month investigation into Winnti Group's (APT 41) global cyber espionage campaign targeting manufacturers across North America, Europe and Asia in the Defense, Energy, Aerospace, Biotech & Pharma industries.

During its investigation, Cybereason discovered that Winnti conducted

Operation CuckooBees undetected since at least 2019, likely siphoning thousands of gigabytes of intellectual property and sensitive proprietary data from dozens of companies. Cybereason published two reports, the first examining the tactics and techniques of the overall campaign, and the second providing a detailed analysis of the malware and exploits used.

"Operation Cuckoo Bees research is the culmination of a 12-month investigation that highlights the intricate and extensive efforts of the Chinese state-sponsored Winnti Group (APT 41) to abscond with proprietary information from dozens of global Defense, Energy, Biotech, Aerospace and Pharmaceutical companies. The most alarming revelation is that the companies weren't aware they were breached, going some as far back as at least 2019, giving Winnti free unfiltered access to intellectual property, blueprints, sensitive diagrams and other proprietary data," said Lior Div, Cybereason CEO & Co-founder. PANDEMIC IMPACTED COLLABORATION BETWEEN CTI TEAMS & BUSINESS OPERATIONS GROUPS, FINDS THREATQUOTIENT-SPONSORED SANS CYBER THREAT INTELLIGENCE SURVEY



ThreatQuotient, a leading security operations platform innovator, has announced the results of the 2022 SANS Cyber Threat Intelligence survey. This year representatives from more than 200 organisations participated in the SANS 2022 Cyber Threat Intelligence Survey.

The 2022 SANS Cyber Threat Intelligence survey shows that many cyber threat intelligence programs can meet the challenge associated with this type of threats.

"An increasing number of respondents are reporting they are early in their cyber threat intelligence journey and going through the same growing pains that many companies who now have robust cyber threat intelligence programs previously faced," said Firas Ghanem, Regional Director, Middle East & Pakistan at ThreatQuotient.

"While some programs are just getting started due to growing, complex threat environment, organisations can rely on cyber threat intelligence providers to fill in gaps as their programs mature," Ghanem added.

Collaboration between cyber threat intelligence teams and business operations groups, have been in decline since the shift to remote work in response to the pandemic. Organisations find coordination that was already not as intuitive when organisations were primarily in person, even more difficult now.



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Up to AMD Ryzen™ 9<u>5900HX</u> mobile processor



Up to NVIDIA® . GeForce[®] RTX3050 Ti Laptop GPU



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OPINION // FORTINET

3 KEY COMPONENTS TO Raising the bar on Digital Acceleration

Jonathan Nguyen-Duy, Vice-President, Global Field CISO at Fortinet



nyone paying attention to the speed at which networks have been evolving must also understand the impact these changes have had on cybersecurity. Gone are the days when you could just place a firewall at the edge of your network and call it good. Today, security needs to be everywhere, at every edge, following every user, and tracking and securing every application and workflow end-to-end-especially as they move across and between different network environments.

The challenge for CISOs is that few security solutions are up to the task. Even those that claim to be "network-aware" do not provide the depth of integration or broad deployability that organisations require. In addition, every bit of the network, even those segments in a constant state of change, that is not covered by a centrally managed and deeply integrated policy represents a blind spot in your protection-and an opportunity for cybercriminals to worm their way into your network. Building an effective security strategy for today's digital organisations requires three key components.

Network and Security Convergence

Converging security and the network is more than just a marketing catchphrase. A Security-driven Networking strategy places security front and center in every network decision, ensuring that nothing in the network ever changes—not even optimising a connectionwithout appropriate protections in place. But that's just the start. True convergence also means that security and the network teams work together to address critical issues they couldn't solve independently. Automatically segmenting and monitoring IoT devices, maintaining zero trust policies for accessing the network or applications, or consistently enforcing policies for applications and workflows that flow across and between multiple clouds and physical network environments require the network and security to work together as a unified solution.

Security Consolidation

No discussion about convergence would be complete without addressing the issue of consolidation. Consolidating security solutions using a platform-based strategy expands visibility and enables true automation that can span the network. It allows AI-powered technologies and services to span the network rather than be limited to a tiny subset of solutions. A platform built around a common OS helps eliminate conflicts and user error when configuring and orchestrating diverse solutions-especially those deployed at different edges of the network. But not any platform-based solution can do this. An effective platform not only needs to be deployed natively in any environment but also seamlessly translate policies between those ecosystems. Of course, best-ofbreed enthusiasts balk at consolidated platforms. They argue that such an approach often saddles them with

sub-par products that can diminish the effectiveness of their security. In some cases, that may be true. However, best-of-breed, point products don't necessarily mean the best solutions. Multi-vendor, best-of-breed strategies require staffing, investments and resources to effectively integrate and managed multiple products—the very same limitations that stymie efforts to close gaps in visibility and control. Therefore, any platform candidate must be built using open APIs and common standards so that third-party solutions can be easily integrated, giving IT teams the best of both worlds.

Exceptional Performance

Today's enterprises are increasingly software-defined, using highly responsive computing to deliver better business outcomes and user experiences. Serving our customers, partners and employees requires consistent security and network performance on any device, for any user, from any location.

An effective security platform needs to do its job without bottlenecking traffic or bogging things down. However, that is precisely what many security solutions do when it comes to table-stakes functions like inspecting encrypted traffic. According to Google, over 95% of internet traffic is encrypted.

Yet most firewall performance drops precipitously when tasked with inspecting that traffic. It's because they were built with off-the-shelf CPUs that were never designed to support such processor-intensive tasks. @

WHY NaaS?

Sherifa Hady, Vice President Channel, Europe Middle East & Africa at Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company, discusses the increasing interest in Network-as-a-Service among organisations in EMEA.



ccording to a recent survey run by Coleman Parks on behalf of Aruba (a Hewlett Packard Enterprise rompany), interest in

Network-as-a-Service (NaaS) is rising rapidly within organisations across EMEA, as the need for sustained digital transformation in a post-COVID world forces them to re-evaluate their current infrastructure. In fact, NaaS was acknowledged as a topic of discussion in 86% of EMEA companies – and a frequent one in almost 1 in 3 (30%).

When asked about the reasons behind this interest, financial efficiency emerged as one of the main anticipated benefits, with over three quarters (76%) of respondents – from a base of 5,400 EMEA IT leaders – expecting NaaS to help reduce operational costs, and 60% thinking it could enable a shift from CapEx to OpEx. But flexibility – both in terms of the network and team time – was another primary driver. In the following Q&A, Sherifa Hady, Vice President Channel, Europe Middle East & Africa at Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company sets out the context for the growing interest in a more flexible consumption model for the network and what this could mean for channel partners.

What is Network-as-a-Service?

A fundamental barrier to adoption identified in our research was a lack of overall understanding of NaaS. While 100% of technology leaders said they are familiar with the term, only two in five claimed to fully understand what it means.

And this confusion is often something we see mirrored in the channel – with companies using a variety of terminology to describe the concept. To help close this education gap, partners may find themselves needing a simple definition for how NaaS differs from existing models in offering customers tailor-made solutions. For the purposes of our research, we defined NaaS as when an organisation has over 50% of its network rollout, operations and life cycle management delivered by a third party on a subscription basis.

From a channel perspective, this translates into a partner offering customers a combined bundle of hardware, software and services, paid for by subscription. Payments are recurring and may be structured based on a customer's exact business requirements, meaning they preserve their capital by paying only for what they use. They aren't locked into expensive infrastructure and rigid contracts. And they have the flexibility to scale their network as needs (certainly) change.

How does it differ from Managed Services?

In a growing number of cases, NaaS is also now being expanded to include third-party management of the network, i.e., what we'd traditionally call Managed Services. Boiled right back, with Managed Services you are offering to handle the network on behalf of the customer, while with a combination of NaaS and Managed Services you are offering to let them use your equipment as well.

Obviously Managed Services isn't a new concept – but networking has, to date, been one of the less established offerings – certainly when you compare it to something like Managed Print Services.

With Managed Services as part of your NaaS solution, you are promising customers the ability to harness the experience, skills and time of true networking experts to leverage the full potential of their network.

And that can be a highly attractive sell when you consider the customer landscape! Aruba customer, Morne Fourie, who works as a Senior System Engineer at next gen financial services platform Mukuru explains this well:

"We recognised that a strong network was key to everything but we didn't want to be tied up managing the infrastructure and resolving issues. Given our other workloads and the pace of growth it made sense to bring in a third-party to plan and manage the refresh and ongoing operations."

Why are we talking about NaaS now?

Just ten years ago, enterprise flexibility was considered a nice-tohave in most sectors – a competitive advantage or a perk for improved collaboration and processes.

Now as companies battle pandemicrelated lockdowns and re-openings, digital transformations and technological advancements, new hybrid workplaces, and ongoing economic and societal disruption, flexibility is an imperative to rebound and thrive. And the modern business is only as flexible as its network infrastructure.

But as device numbers grow, endpoints diversify and connectivity demands increase, keeping up with rapid change can be overwhelming for IT departments. IT teams must ensure that enterprise networks deliver reliability, security, scale, and compliance – while dealing with constantly moving goalposts. Beyond managing the network, teams are also under mounting pressure from leadership to drive innovation and business outcomes.

This has created something of a perfect storm for NaaS – giving budget constrained customers more options for how they consume IT and use their internal resources, and partners more options for how to satisfy customers' needs.

What has prevented customers from exploring NaaS previously?

This sounds like a simple question, but the answer is a complicated one and will vary by customer.

One of the main reasons is that customers aren't used to consuming the network in this way and will have their budgets structured accordingly. Others will like the sense of comfort/ control from buying and running things themselves. The terminology itself also hasn't helped – although broadly people understand the offer when you break it down into buying equipment and/or a service and bringing someone in to manage things.

The new factors listed above have acted as a trigger point though for customers to take a step back and think about whether there is a better way for them to run their IT.

OBVIOUSLY MANAGED SERVICES ISN'T A NEW CONCEPT - BUT NETWORKING HAS, TO DATE, BEEN ONE OF THE LESS ESTABLISHED OFFERINGS - CERTAINLY WHEN YOU COMPARE IT TO SOMETHING LIKE MANAGED PRINT SERVICES."

How can channel partners capitalise on this initial customer interest?

At this stage we'd recommend making NaaS a discussion point for customers – opening the conversation about it being an option and gauging their readiness for it.

As NaaS adoption takes off, it will then be about showing them relevant success stories – giving them confidence in the validity and benefits of what for them is a new and untested model.

If the customer wants to keep going in the traditional way then that should be fine – it is all about giving them options to choose from based on what is right for their business. This is also what we're trying to do with our partners – enabling them in multiple ways.

What is your advice for partners who are interested in exploring NaaS?

Some partners have been offering as-a-Service for years but might just be getting started with networking as a new practice. Others are only moving into the area now and are having to transform their business to do so – maybe changing their compensation scheme for example to match a different commercial model.

Because NaaS isn't something you can dip your toe into – it takes commitment to be successful.

Ultimately our message for partners is the same we suggest for their customers. We want you to have thought about NaaS and question it – what the shift in the market means for you, whether it is a model that is applicable for your customers and what they are trying to do. And if it is – in what way, how does it fit your capabilities, where are your gaps, what do you need to do?

With NaaS we firmly believe the partner differentiation will be even more important – the specifics of the service you offer and your specialist vertical knowledge and experience.

Whatever you then decide is right for business – and however you want to move forward – we're here to support you.

FOSTERING MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIP

Bilal Saleem, Channel Partner Sales Manager, HID GLOBAL MEA tells Reseller ME all about its partner program and benefits.





hat is the importance of a partner program? Partner programs generate mutual

benefits and growth to manufacturer vendors and distribution channels. Through the channel, manufacturers are able to obtain specific insight into current challenges customers are facing, so they can maintain a roadmap of new product offerings and solutions that are continuously improving upon their current ones. In turn, manufacturers support channel partners with all the relevant marketing and sales enablement resources needed to help move the needle in the sales funnel-from prospecting to qualification and closing the deal. As a worldwide leader in trusted identity solutions, HID Global strives to maintain a close relationship with our channel partners. The HID Advantage Partner Program provides the foundation that supports the success of our partners across the six business areas that define HID Global: Physical Access Control, Secure Issuance, Identity & Access Management, Citizen ID, Extended Access Technologies, and Identification Technologies.

Please give us a brief about your channel program and outline the key features of the program.

HID's Global Advantage Partner Program is not only designed to foster mutually beneficial relationships with our partners, it allows them to benefit from loyalty incentive programs, obtain continuing product education and have the latest information about HID's go-to-market efforts and campaigns.

The HID Advantage Partner Program is one unified program designed to be more than a sales reward—a true partnership—serving two categories: Resell and Technology.

RESELL PARTNERS

Resell Partners are Integrators, OEMs, Distributors, and Resellers that sell, market, and deliver HID Global products and solutions. Resell Partners earn Silver, Gold or Platinum status each year based on objective, systematic criteria,

Powering Trusted Identities

including total revenue across all HID Global products, product mix, product competency, technology integration, and planning and coordination. Ascending to a higher program tier enables resell partners to access higher-value benefits, helping them increase the value they deliver to customers.

TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

Technology Partners are Managed Service Providers (MSPs), Sales Agents, Systems Integrators and Alliance Partners that have their own products and incorporate or use HID Global products and solutions. Alliance Partnership benefits vary and are by invitation only. Technology partners do not have status tiers but must have a program agreement, product competency, technology integration, and planning and coordination each year. Resell

What are the benefits of the HID Advantage Partner Program?

From a sales enablement standpoint, we can help our partners learn, grow and increase revenue by offering the following benefits:

- **Partner Portal Community:** engage with HID Global and other partners with access to exclusive partner content such as presentations, whitepapers and sales enablement tools.
- **HID Academy:** gain knowledge and increase credibility with our comprehensive training curriculum, available in a virtual classroom environment featuring how-to videos, and other courses for role-based knowledge and skills. Learning tracks are available in both sales and technical areas of interest.
- Product Early Access & Beta Software Participation: learn and interact with our new product offerings.
- Marketing Programs and Tools: take advantage of HID Global's marketing programs and tools to reach out to new prospects and leads, nurture existing customers prospects, and generate demand.
- Market Development Fund (MDF): increase and improve your marketing objectives with a shared

program, including joint planning and campaigns. Only available to Gold and Plantinum partners.

- Use of the HID Advantage Partner Program Logo: advertise your HID Global expertise.
- **Customer Leads*:** Discover interested prospects directly from HID Global.
- **Partner Locator Tool:** new customers will find your company easily with a custom entry in our exclusive partner directory on our website.
- Joint Marketing Planning: we work with you to develop your marketing plan combining different tactics to reach out and convert prospects.
- **Campaign-in-a-box resources:** access the latest co-brandable marketing assets, enabling you to create your own marketing campaigns for HID Global's products and solutions.

Additionally, your your sales and profitability can be improved with the following incentives:

HID'S GLOBAL ADVANTAGE PARTNER PROGRAM IS NOT ONLY DESIGNED TO FOSTER MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR PARTNERS, IT ALLOWS THEM TO BENEFIT FROM LOYALTY INCENTIVE **PROGRAMS, OBTAIN CONTINUING PRODUCT EDUCATION AND HAVE** THE LATEST INFORMATION **ABOUT HID'S GO-TO-MARKET EFFORTS AND** CAMPAIGNS."

- **Opportunity/Deal Registration:** help secure prospects and close deals with access to resources and support before and during the sales process.
- Joint Business Planning: we work with you to develop a go-tomarket strategy. Only available to Gold and Platinum partners.
- **Channel Incentives:** receive exclusive rebates, promotions and spiffs to pass along to your customers and increase sales.

How do you ensure channel partners flourish in a highly competitive market?

We strive to earn our partners' trust and ongoing loyalty by fostering a community that is transparent and scalable. Our HID Advantage Partner Program is thoughtfully designed to recognize and reward partner expertise in solving customers' most pressing security identity challenges. To enable partner success, we offer a best-in-class training program, HID Academy, to provide the knowledge and credibility needed to deploy our solutions with confidence, high profitability, and various sales incentives.

How can a new partner enroll to the Advantage Partner Program?

The Advantage Partner Program is designed to be as seamless and streamlined as possible, both in application and execution. A completed Program Assessment is needed to join the Program. This is an automated process that objectively determines a Reseller Partner's single tier designation (Silver, Gold, Platinum). It is conducted at the HID Global relationship level, which combines all global business segment revenue (except for GovID). It is based on total revenue across all HID products, product mix revenue, and technical competency (Academy Learning Paths), technology integration, and planning/coordination.

To learn more about the Advantage Partner Program and how to join our program today, visit the HID website at https://www.hidglobal.com/partners/ become-a-partner

FORGING AHEAD

VM, Manu, General Manager, Avientek & Aveek Roy, Regional Director MEA&APAC, Sangoma, tell Anita Joseph about their partnership and what it means for the Unified Communications market in the region.



hat does the collaboration with Sangoma mean for the Unified

Communications (UC) market in the region?

Manu: Avientek is well known in the technology industry as one of the prominent distributors of Audio Visual (AV) products and solutions in the Middle East, Africa and India. We're growing as well as strengthening our presence and market share in the AV segment. As a part of this expansion, we have started a new department for Unified Communication to support our partners in the UC domain. In regards to our partnership with Sangoma, Avientek now serves as the single point of contact for UC and AV. Teaming with Sangoma, which is renowned for its highquality Canadian products and affordable price, Avientek will be able to break into the enterprise Unified Communication market. Sangoma also assists enterprise customers who face challenges in terms of quality support and pricing.

What made you choose Avientek as a distributor?

Aveek: Sangoma has been a wellestablished player in the Unified Communications segment for almost 35 odd years. We have been in the Middle East for close to around 15 years now, with major customers in the region, Avientek is a leading name in the distribution industry for the AV segment.

Voice is AV's external collaboration. When we consider voice as a technology and a necessity, we can see that it is a mission-critical requirement. Avientek understands that because of its experience in the AV domain. Therefore, when we connect with Avientek, we connect with all the vendors and partners who they work with in terms of providing all the support of all the systems and solutions from the beginning and then extending it to the voice segment. So basically, everyone who requires AV also uses the voice system, so we're just increasing our penetration in the market.

Secondly, with Avientek offices spread across the GCC region, they provide us with much broader coverage in terms of placing feet on the ground and distributing our services and support facilities to a larger number of people. So Avientek is a strong fit for us in terms of increasing product sales in this particular region.

What are the unique features of Sangoma products?

Sangoma is a complete Unified Communication company. We're possibly the only company that brings in all the elements of unified

TOGETHER, WE HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO PROVIDE EVERYTHING END-TO-END, RIGHT FROM OPEN SOURCE TO VALUE-BASED SOLUTIONS, WHICH ARE IN HIGH DEMAND IN THE MARKET. " communication-software hardware, connectivity solutions, security solution, anything that you do with Unified Communication. That is something that even the major market share industry players cannot provide.

With our headquarters in Canada, we provide a very reliable, stable product which is running across more than hundreds of enterprises and we also operate two of the biggest open sources, Asterix and FreePBX, which are used by more than 30 million businesses.

So together, we have the potential to provide everything end-to-end, right from open source to valuebased solutions, which are in high demand in the market.

As of today, what is happening is that more and more people are opting for a work-from-home culture. Sangoma happens to be an element that becomes very essential because it is quick to deploy and it is available both in the cloud and on-premise. It's completely unique and caters to the entire market sector. So, whether it's a five-person firm or a large enterprise running thousands of extensions, whether on-premise or in the cloud, we provide comprehensive solutions for the entire range of businesses and the whole industry, for that matter.

What is the role of UC in the future of remote work?

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that physical domains are no longer relevant. Officers do not matter. So you do not have to have real estate to work; work continues regardless of where you are. What actually made all of this happen is UC, because when you're working from home, till the point of time you don't see face-to-face, you don't talk to each other, you are not using your personal mobile phone to call company work, nothing gets done. So collaboration and UC are here to stay. Also, more and more companies are now giving employees the option to work from home permanently, because the amount of money that they're saving on real estate, more or less compensates towards the employee benefits. So all of this leads to having UC as a central part where you would want your employees to be available during their office hours without any stress. This indicates that you will need to have them engage over a common platform where they can share files, share screens, talk to each other, see each other, collaborate and iam on the same screen. All of this is provided by Sangoma. So, we believe that UC is going to play a very significant role in the future.

Moreover, the pandemic has taught us to do most things remotely. So in case, there's a lockdown, you should be able to install, run, administer, and maintain a system. That is why I say, UC is going to prove very, very critical. In fact, many of the industry's biggest names are migrating entirely to UC, where Sangoma already has a presence.

Can we expect new product launches this year from this new collaboration?

Sangoma as a company has always been innovating. We strive to provide our customers with valueadded and value-for-money services, and we always move with how the world works. We try to stay one step ahead. So obviously you will be seeing some new product launches. There will be a new set of phones which are coming in-IP phoneswhich are much more reliable.

Videophones can also be expected to be released in the near future. There is a cloud service that is going to be launched sometime soon. There will be an integrated platform too, which will provide an entirely different aspirational UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS IS GOING TO PROVE VERY, VERY CRITICAL. IN FACT, MANY OF THE INDUSTRY'S BIGGEST NAMES ARE MIGRATING ENTIRELY TO UC, WHERE SANGOMA ALREADY HAS A PRESENCE."

look towards the Unified Communications segment.

So there are a number of things that are being launched. With this joint partnership, we expect Avientek to be at the forefront for bringing these solutions to market. In fact, many of their customers would look at completely webbased collaboration systems, which is what Sangoma stands for. So it's a very big step in terms of collaborative marketing, taking joint solutions to the market that provide a complete end-to-end solution for customers.

What is your outlook for the regional UC market in 2022? What are some of the trends customers can look forward to?

The outlook for 2022 is that it will be unpredictable. You never know what's going on in the world right now. Every time you believe something has stabilised, something else destabilizes—like it's a 'lockdown-unlockdown' scenario. UC is here to stay, and its popularity is only going to grow. I notice a lot of emphasis on cloud computing, remote working, and Bring Your Own Device—in fact, the whole region is going toward becoming SIP-enabled, or IP enabled. So, gone are the days when you had to run a cable to every residence to get a phone line; now all you need is a single cable to get Internet TV or telephony in your home or office. That is going to stay and that is a trend that is going to create a lot of opportunities. Because if you look at this whole region, there are millions of lines that are still uncovered and these lines are going to be converted to IP, and this provides a great potential for us because we have products like session border controllers and IPenabled systems, which would fit into these sort of opportunities. This is one trend.

The introduction of far more advanced phones is the second trend. The soft clients today, which for example, you would actually end up carrying your office or the phone to a client with which you can message, collaborate, do video calling, conferencing on your corporate network at one go-and that is also going to be a very important part of the trend which you see in this region because up till now there were a lot of complications in running those clients. But now, for us also, it is becoming easier with the advancement of technology, to use these clients across the board. But now, for us also, it is becoming easier with the advancement of technology, to use these clients across the board. So probably UC is something which we are going to see as a very solid trend and we look forward to inventing and expanding more on that to provide more cutting-edge features on our products so that our customers are happy and they can work at ease. 🗠



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Atlas Pro 6 Mesh WiFi 6 dual-band system

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AX5400 up to 5.4 Gbps

0

Covers homes with up to **4-5 bedrooms**

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The Qualcomm[™] Immersive Home 216 Platform transforms home & business WiFi to wired-like stability and speed.

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It's simple to set up and lets you manage your network or prioritise devices from anywhere, all with the free Linksys app.

Linksys.com

OPINION // A10 NETWORKS

EASY ACCESS **TO CLOUD-**NATIVE **APPLICATIONS IN MULTI/** HYBRID CLOUD

Amr Alashaal, Regional VP-Middle East at A10 Networks o stay ahead of competition, organisations are constantly looking for ways to drive innovation with speed and agility, while maximising operational and economic efficiency at the same time. To that end, they have been migrating their applications to multicloud and hybrid cloud environments for quite some time.

Initially, these applications were moved to the cloud using a "liftand-shift" approach, retaining their original monolithic architecture. However, such monolithic applications are unable to fully exploit the benefits offered by cloud, such as elasticity and distributed computing, and are also difficult to maintain and scale.

Consequently, as the next evolutionary step, organisations have started to rearchitect their existing applications or develop new ones as cloud-native applications.

A related aspect to deploying cloudnative applications is that of using automation to do so. Organisations deploying such applications have had success in automating the deployment of the underlying infrastructure on which these cloud-native applications run, as well with the initial deployment of these applications. They have, however, struggled with the subsequent steps, such as making these applications accessible to end users, scaling the applications up and down, or moving them from one cloud to another.

The main reason for this is that load balancers, which are used to front-end these applications, and make them accessible to end users, were designed with monolithic applications in mind, and hence are unable to keep pace with the agile manner in which these cloud-native applications are deployed.

These load balancers were designed for a deployment process in which network resources for the applications are provisioned manually by network and security teams, a process that could take days if not weeks, and TO KEEP PACE WITH CLOUD-NATIVE APPLICATIONS, ONE NEEDS AN APPLICATION ACCESS SOLUTION THAT ENABLES THE LOAD BALANCER TO DYNAMICALLY MANAGE NEW CLOUD-NATIVE APPLICATIONS AS THEY ARE DEPLOYED AND SCALED."

then manually configured on the load balancer. This process clearly inhibits achieving the goal of automation to which organisations aspire.

Further compounding this problem is the fact that when deploying applications in multi-cloud and hybrid cloud environments, each public cloud provider has its own custom load balancer and management system. For example, AWS has its own Elastic Load Balancing solution, which is different from Microsoft's Azure Load Balancer. This makes the task of automating application deployment even more complex and time consuming. It also makes the task of applying a consistent set of policies across the different cloud environments more error prone as each load balancer has its own separate configuration.

To keep pace with cloud-native applications, one needs an application access solution that enables the load balancer to dynamically manage new cloud-native applications as they are deployed and scaled.

One way to achieve this is by deploying a connector agent that connects the load balancer to the cloud-native applications. Such a connector could monitor the lifecycle of the cloud-native applications, and automatically update the load balancer with information to route traffic to these applications. This would help eliminate the delays associated with the manual process.

This process would work when deployed in a single cloud, but to truly make it work in multi-cloud and hybrid cloud environments, the solution would need to available in different form factors, such as physical, virtual and container, so it can be deployed in both public and private clouds. Having a solution that works consistently across the different cloud environments also provides the associated benefit of being able to apply a consistent set of policies for accessing the application, irrespective of the cloud in which it is running.

Finally, the solution should have deep integration with automation tools such as Terraform, Ansible and Helm, so that the whole application deployment process can be automated.



KEEPING PACE WITH THE TREND

Kamran Khayal, General Manager at Trigon LLC tells Reseller ME how the company's customer-first approach and focus on innovation are helping it stay ahead of the changing market.

OUR STRONG WORKFORCE IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR ORGANISATION, HELPING US STAY AHEAD IN OUR FAST-CHANGING DIGITAL WORLD.



in the Middle East region and is a part of the multi-billion-dollar Dubai-based Al-Ghurair Group. We are the authorised distributor for IT and consumer electronic brands like Samsung, LG, Acer, Asus, BenQ, D-Link, Netgear, PeopleLink, Transcend, Philips, and many more. In UAE, we have a high level of penetration across verticals such as hospitality, healthcare, finance and banking, education, government and ministries by offering cutting-edge, turnkey solutions covering areas such as digital signage, interactive displays, and AV solutions, and lot more. We also provide consultancy, integration, maintenance, and aftersales support. Apart from the UAE, we also have offices in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman.

Digital transformation is now in full swing in the region. How is Trigon helping customers in their digital transformation journey? We have been investing in enhancing our digital technology capabilities and built significant scale and depth over the years. In fact, we have industry-leading display technology that is creating a huge impact by elevating our customers business with digital boards. Customers from retail, hotels, corporate, educational institutions, and government sector are the main beneficiaries of our comprehensive display portfolio, which has helped them in changing their business models to digitised and more ROI. Digital transformation is making companies



change their business models and adapt to the new normal which entails an increasing demand for digital collaboration applications. We are well positioned to address the new normal trend by providing a variety of solutions covering areas such as face recognition, non-contact temperature detection technology, next-gen video communication solutions, desktop monitors, notebooks & PCs and Audio- Video peripherals focused on various industry verticals to achieve higher productivity, better customer service, reduced operational expenses, and greater ROI for the organisations.

What are some of Trigon's unique strengths and capabilities that have helped its growth? Our strong workforce is the strength of our organisation helping us to stay ahead in our fast-changing digital world. The product portfolio of Trigon combined with our unique business model and our commitment to delivering an outstanding customer experience is our unique capabilities which have helped us grow in this region.

Tell us about your partner ecosystem

Trigon has a vast partner ecosystem and engages with a network of various ICT partners. The Trigon ecosystem includes important partners who help us provide end-to-end solutions, from system integrators to installers. Partners across the ecosystem, include more than 20 world-renowned IT vendors who are continuously delivering innovative products & solutions – all of which enable enhanced collaboration and increased productivity for customers. Also, we are actively engaged with more than 500+ channel partners, System Integrators & AV consultants, 200+ Retail Partners, and also 100+ Endcustomers.

How did 2022 begin for Trigon and what's the rest of it looking like?

We had a good start to year 2022 and have managed to exceed our budgeted targets for Q1. There is a strong rebound from the pandemic and due to the rapid IT infrastructure spending, I am more bullish on the regional market. Also, the UAE leads the Arab world in digital progress and preparedness for the future to move into the era of data and advanced technologies supported with Artificial Intelligence. And, we also believe that the negative impact of the Ukraine/Russia crisis on the region will only be marginal. 🗠

INTERVIEW // OMNIX INTERNATIONAL



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Simran Bagga, Head of Engineering at Omnix International, tells Anita Joseph how its partnership with Team Viewer allows it to cater to the needs of key economic sectors by supporting them with Mixed Reality (MR) and remote management solutions.

mean for Omnix? We recently announced our partnership with TeamViewer that aims for both companies to build a strong alliance to introduce new and innovative solutions in line with Omnix's commitment towards driving new business in the region. Our collaboration with TeamViewer is extremely important as it enables both companies to build a strong alliance for digital transformation solutions and boost productivity across UAE with TeamViewer's remote access, remote IT Management, Augmented Reality (AR) and Internet of Things (IoT) solutions.

hat does the

TeamViewer

partnership with

This partnership also enables Omnix to cater to the needs of Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC), Manufacturing, Oil & Gas & Multimedia sectors, by supporting them with Mixed Reality (MR) and remote management solutions.

Tell us more about Omnix's presence in the region

Omnix is headquartered in the UAE, with an active presence across Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain. Today, Omnix employs over 1,500 professionals with offices in Dubai (HQ), Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman. In addition, Omnix offers part of its technical services towards application development and quality assurance through the Omnix International competency centre in Egypt.

Remote working is all the rage now. How will this partnership benefits customers looking for advanced, cutting-edge remote working solutions?

WHEN IT COMES TO WORKING FROM HOME, TEAMVIEWER'S REMOTE WORK SOFTWARE ALLOWS EMPLOYEES TO ACCESS THEIR OFFICE COMPUTER - COMPLETE WITH ALL ITS FILES, PROGRAMS, AND COMPANY NETWORKS. Remote working, remote management and augmenting the frontline work force are considered the new norm. Across the world, businesses big and small are rolling out their own versions of remote work. When it comes to working from home, TeamViewer's remote work software allows employees to access their office computer – complete with all its files, programs, and company networks. By installing TeamViewer software, customers will have a secure connection from a home PC or laptop to a work computer.

At Omnix we couple smart glasses like Vuzix with TeamViewer's remote assistance solutions. Industrial and manufacturing facilities are expected to operate at optimum efficiency to maximise high-quality output and reduce costs across the entire value chain. But with possibilities of the best equipment and machines malfunctioning, it leads to downtime and reduces productivity. Additionally, frontline workforces are not always equipped to wait for in-person technical support. Every on-site repair cost adds up quickly thereby impacting the bottom line. This is where the fastpaced demands and ever-changing value chain tasks and processes can be support frontline workers in real time with solutions such as TeamViewer's remote support solutions powered by Augmented Reality (AR), integrated with wearables and mobile devices which are always one tap or a voice command away.

What is Omnix's plan for 2022?

Our plan for 2022 includes strengthening our AR solutions and augmenting the frontline workforce across the Middle East targeting the Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC), Oil & Gas, Marine & Manufacturing sectors. We plan to actively participate in events such as Digital Twin events, GITEX & BIM Middle East where we can showcase TeamViewer solutions for Augmented Reality, as well as remote support and management.

Omnix, with its association with the engineering councils across the Middle East, will be educating millions of engineers to encourage them to realise the benefits of AR & Remote management. SPOTLIGHT // BARCO

50 YEARS FROM LED'S LIGHTBULB MOMENT

LED has become the byword for creative potential in everything from massive concert venues to the board rooms of the Fortune 500. More than that, LED, and video wall technology more generally, is starting to transform the way we think about space in the workplace and beyond.

By Piet Vanhuyse

s French philosopher Henri Lefebvre noted in the 1970s, space is not a constant that you fill up and move around in, rather it's produced by people and their interactions with material space. When the structure and scenery of a space change, so do peoples' interactions with it, and by extension, the meaning of that space shifts too. When a space in a company building is transformed through a video wall that facilitates employee engagement, or an eye-popping visual display, LED is helping to transform the way people perceive that space. As members of the workforce interact with that video wall, it becomes a new centrepiece of the organisation, and most importantly, a vital part of that firm's story.

But what exactly is LED, and how did it come to be? With humble origins reaching back as far as 1907, light-emitting diodes are simply solid semiconductor devices that emit light when an electric current is passed through. To generate the dynamic and crisp light range that LEDs are known for, various materials are used to produce photons at different wavelengths and light of different colours. High-brightness red and amber LEDs use the aluminium indium gallium phosphide (AllnGaP) material system, whereas blue, green, and cyan LEDs use the indium gallium nitride (InGaN) system. Between them, they cover the entirety of the spectrum of light as their relative intensities are controlled to produce colour across the range.

LEDs first became popular in the 1970s, capturing the cultural imagination as displays on alarm clocks. Until the mid-90s LEDs had a limited range of colours, and in particular commercial blue and white LEDs did not exist; AllnGap and InGan opened up the palette of colours to a degree previously unimaginable. As the colour palette expanded, so did the uses for LED.

By the late 1990s, LED walls were being used as fixed installations in the retail and public signage sector, as well as at tradeshows and events. By the early 2000s, the size of the panels needed to mount LEDs on

THE HISTORY OF LED IS STILL BEING MADE, AND THE TRAJECTORY OF THE DISPLAYS OF TOMORROW IS BEING WRITTEN IN STUNNINGLY CRISP TECHNICOLOUR."

became smaller, and this helped pave the way for the types of creative use most associated with the technology. In 2003, the curved applications that dominate control rooms and broadcast environments to this day emerged. As time wound on, LED became democratised. Display processors became smaller and integrated in screens, allowing smaller Digital OutOf-Home (DOOH) displays to leverage LED tech for smaller, more intimate spaces outside the usual markets that still demanded a visual punch. In line with the more intimate space that LEDs entered, 2017 saw the start of the narrow pixel pitch (NPP) era. Descriptive of the density of pixels on the screen, NPP means less empty space between pixels, which in turn means smoother borders between pixels, finer details, and a closer optimal viewing distance for those huddled around the screen.

Today, we see companies of all sizes and across a variety of industries tap into the potential of LED. For the viewers of Al Arabiya, the evolving thought process around LED and space meant being able to install three curved LED video walls that provided a hyper-realistic snapshot of the 24hour news cycle. As viewing habits have evolved, so has the threshold for what a news organisation needs to represent to be authoritative. By providing the hyper-realistic imagery, viewers have now grown used to a significant 140m2 LED wall surface and colour excellence thanks to an integrated image processing platform.

The history of LED is still being made, and the trajectory of the displays of tomorrow is being written in stunningly crisp technicolour. While there are still certain pain points in the overall customer journey to be resolved, with the inherent fragility of the hardware during handling next to be tackled, the march towards finer pixel pitches will facilitate a redefinition of the way we see LED in workspaces. As the technology evolves so will our thought process, and digital signage as a byword for the lunch menu in the canteen or "just" a screen above Glastonbury will be left behind. The history of LED is the history of the evolution of space, and the future looks bright. 🚥

SHIFTING DRIORITES

As the channel industry emerges from the shadow of the pandemic and moves into the new normal, we take a look at what has changed.

s we leave the uncertainties of the pandemic behind and begin to revert to "normal" as we know it, the channel industry seems to be at a crossroads: its business model has changed and there is a major technological revolution across the board, which has resulted in increased service expectations for channel partners as they assist businesses in navigating, surviving, and thriving in this new world. To answer this demand, the role of channel partners has shifted from typical technology consultants to something more akin to "business consultants" during the last two years.





CHANNEL PARTNERS WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND EMPOWER CLIENTS ACROSS THEIR ENVIRONMENT."

So, are channel partners playing a larger role in the channel ecosystem in 2022? Where can we expect to see growth and investment? We try and piece together the role of the channel partner in 2022 and beyond, and decipher some of the leading trends that define the channel market this year and beyond.

To begin with, we anticipate that the channel ecosystem will be transformed by 2022. Rather than focusing on a single speciality, channel partners will continue to grow and empower clients across their environment. This expansion

COVER STORY

will provide customers with a better experience while also generating new levels of opportunity and participation for channel partners. Channel partners will need to offer a diversity of technological solutions as well as deep experience in the areas most valued by consumers to boost their chances of success in this climate.

Experts say partners will also need to evolve from transactional business models to selling holistic solutions that drive measurable outcomes. To put it simply, partners must adopt outcome-based selling of end-toend solutions, while implementing lifecycle services to improve longterm adoption of the technology.

Barb Huelskamp, SVP, Global Partners and Alliances, Alteryx is of the opinion that the channel market is hugely competitive and that customers need to know exactly who they should be doing business with, in order for the industry to thrive.

"Our approach with the partner program redesign acknowledges that partners want to invest their resources in organisations that reward activities such as opportunity registration, training, certifications, co-marketing, and joint business planning," she says. "We want our enhanced partner program to reflect our mission and values and adhere to industry best practices, driving value for our partners and enhancing business outcomes for our customers."

Another aspect is the increased focus on security. As we continue to see the terrible consequences of high-profile security breaches, global firms are being pushed to regularly estimate the risk of a cybersecurity assault and adopt a more aggressive and proactive security strategy. However, this should not detract from the employee experience, but rather enhance it; the necessity for an excellent employee experience has never been greater.

"With decentralisation now, the boundaries of the organisation have become invisible," says Kinda Baydoun,

ORGANISATIONS WORLDWIDE LEARNED **INVALUABLE LESSONS FROM** THE PANDEMIC. **INCLUDING WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO THEM AND THEIR END USERS. THE IMPORTANCE OF IT TO BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND** THE CHANGES **NEEDED TO** MEET THE NEEDS **OF A HYBRID** WORKFORCE."

Manager of Channels & Distribution -Middle East, Veeam Software.

"Data is all over, necessitating a need for a comprehensive security strategy to safeguard all entry points. Modern Data Protection and management technologies will be a number one priority for CIOs and IT managers to combat the increasing incidence of cyberattacks, including ransomware that has huge negative ramifications for organisations. And finally, we see an increased interest in Kubernetes as a critical piece of an enterprise's cloud infrastructure. This has created a new area around container-native data protection that needs addressing," she adds.

Another rising trend is that of the cloud. According to a report, the latest Canalys data estimates that expenditure was over US\$2 billion more than in the previous quarter and US\$14 billion more than in Q1 2021. The top three cloud service providers have benefited from increased adoption and scale, collectively growing 42% year on year and accounting for 62% of global customer spend.

"Cloud has continued to be a hot market and transformation strategies are emphasizing digital resiliency to face the market challenges of today and tomorrow," notes Canalys Research Analyst Blake Murray. "To be effective in resiliency planning, customers are turning to channel partners with the technical and consulting skills to help them effectively embrace hyperscaler cloud services."

Kinda Baydoun points out that cloud adoption continues to be one of the key trends, as partners are racing to having their operations "cloudready" to capture the high potential of this market," she points out. "The adoption of cloud is accelerating in the Middle East, fuelled by the pandemic, government spending on smart cities and public sector projects and the availability of an expanding range of data centre," she adds.

Amr Alashaal, Regional Vice President - Middle East at A10 Networks opines that to stay ahead of competition, organisations are constantly looking for ways to drive innovation with speed and agility. while maximising operational and economic efficiency at the same time. "To that end, they have been migrating their applications to multicloud and hybrid cloud environments for quite some time. Initially, these applications were moved to the cloud using a "lift-and-shift" approach, retaining their original monolithic architecture. However,

such monolithic applications are unable to fully exploit the benefits offered by cloud, such as elasticity and distributed computing, and are also difficult to maintain and scale. Consequently, as the next evolutionary step, organisations have started to rearchitect their existing applications or develop new ones as cloud-native applications," he says.

Perhaps the most significant trend will be that of the emergence of the marketplace.

To meet the demand for different goods, there is likely to be increased adoption and involvement with markets as a strategic endeavour. Marketplaces enable suppliers and channel partners to enter new markets at a cheaper cost while providing greater value to customers. As marketplaces continue to evolve in 2022, more firms will be able to explore a wider range of goods while lowering the cost and complexity associated with traditional channel sales.



GLOBAL FIRMS ARE BEING PUSHED TO REGULARLY ESTIMATE THE RISK OF A CYBERSECURITY ASSAULT AND ADOPT A MORE AGGRESSIVE AND PROACTIVE SECURITY STRATEGY."

With the emergence of the marketplace, the role of a channel partner will shift from vendor-specific trusted adviser to ecosystem orchestrator. Moving from 'traditional resale' to a partner-empowered ecosystem orchestration model is important to client retention and overall business success. As a partnerenabled ecosystem orchestrator, the partner has a greater understanding of the customer's core business and a keen interest in optimising information technology operations across all platforms, including cloud, infrastructure, and solution purchase, Partner of Record (PAR) enabled and adoption rewards will replace product resale profitability. Furthermore, to align with IT contractual agreements, professional services will be raised to Virtual C-Level advising services paired with managed service options."

Finally, it's amply clear that there are likely to be "flexible work" expectations this year, which means that everyone will want the same superlative experience no matter where they are. The challenge will be how channel partners can deliver these expectations, whether it's via remote login or combining data from other applications to offer a seamless experience.

"Organisations worldwide learned invaluable lessons from the pandemic, including what's most important to them and their end users, the importance of IT to business operations and the changes needed to meet the needs of a hybrid workforce," says Kumaravel Ramakrishnan, Evangelist at ManageEngine. "ITSM teams played a critical role in ensuring that business operations continued during the pandemic, from overseeing BYOD policies and the provision of mobile assets to implementing self-service features and chatbots, investing more in business

AS MARKETPLACES CONTINUE TO EVOLVE IN 2022, MORE FIRMS WILL BE ABLE TO EXPLORE A WIDER RANGE OF GOODS WHILE LOWERING THE COST AND COMPLEXITY ASSOCIATED WITH TRADITIONAL CHANNEL SALES."

continuity planning and offering IT service delivery and support."

To sum up, it is clear that the channel industry has a mixed bag ahead of it. There needs to be a complete overhaul of its business processes and increased focus on the customer, if the channel operating model is to survive and thrive. As Arshad Munir Sharif, Managing Director at Kyndryl Saudi Arabia says: "Changing the existing cloud model is a hugely complex ask, extending beyond an organisation's tech stack to the wider business. The more manageable approach, therefore, is to develop a resilience framework, consisting of step-bystep processes, requirements, and considerations to bring IT towers into a more cohesive alignment. The challenges lie in both developing an exhaustive resilience framework in the first place, and then actively retrofitting it to your existing tech stack and internal operations." 👳

INNOVATION // QNAP

QNAP TS-x64U: PROVIDING FLEXIBILITY TO IT NETWORKS

Powered by an Intel Celeron N5105/ N5095 quadcore 4-thread processor, the TS-x64U is also equipped with an AES-NI encryption engine and 4GB DDR4 memory, and is upgradable up to 16GB dual channel.

NAP recently introduced the quadcore rackmount TSx64U NAS with dualport 2.5GbE and PCIe expandability, for high speed transmission and virtualisation applications. The TS-x64U enables you to not only install a QM2 card for M.2 SSD caching or Edge TPU for AI image recognition, but also allows for convenient virtual machine display and seamless multimedia streaming.

Powered by an Intel Celeron N5105/ N5095 quad-core 4-thread processor, the TS-x64U is also equipped with an AES-NI encryption engine and 4GB DDR4 memory, and is upgradable up to 16GB dual channel. According to Jason Hsu, Product Manager at QNAP: "The TS-x64U NAS series adds high flexibility to IT network infrastructure deployment with high performance, high-speed I/O ports and high expandability. Offering versatile business applications, the TS-x64U meets requirements for optimised data storage, backup, sharing, disaster recovery and hybrid cloud."

That's not all. TS-x64U is shipped with QTS 5.0, using the new Linux kernel 5.10. QTS 5.0 optimises overall system performance and NVMe SSD over-provisioning & cache performance to enhance TSx64U functionality.

The TS-x64U includes rich NAS home/business applications, such as HBS (Hybrid Backup Sync)





which realises efficient local/ remote/cloud backup jobs; Blockbased snapshots that make data protection and recovery easier and effectively mitigate the threats of ransomware; HybridMount which provides cloud storage gateways that integrate private and public cloud storage and enable local caching; Virtualization Station and Container Station that enables light virtualization applications; QVR Elite that helps deploy a cutting-edge smart surveillance system; and KoiMeeter which provides a complete cross-platform video meeting and wireless presentation solution. Not only that: home users will also be able to enjoy a wide range of multimedia applications (including Plex®), streaming capabilities and a builtin HDMI port, which lets them enjoy their multimedia on their device of choice.

For more details, please contact Alex Tsai, MEA Sales Manager, at alextsai@qnap.com. 😄 INTERVIEW // EVANSSION

ADDRESSING SECURITY GAPS

Ahmad Al Qadri, Chief Executive Officer at Evanssion, on its partnership with Noname Security and what it means for cybersecurity in the region.



hat does the partnership between Evanssion & Noname Security mean

for cybersecurity in the region? It is no surprise that APIs have become one of the biggest security blind spots for organisations and a majorly targeted attack vector. What this means is while APIs are extremely important for increasing all the right business parameters like collaboration, flexibility, and faster time to value, they also pose the biggest risk of being exploited and breached today.

Noname Security and Evanssion have teamed up to address this critical and relevant security challenge for organisations across the Middle East. We have seen that our joint effort over the past few months has been overwhelmingly validated. We are currently working with most of the banking and telco organisations across the region in helping them discover the gaps to building and defining their API security framework. Our aim is to ensure that we are building the right awareness about the importance of this domain for customers and channel partners alike.

How would you describe the API attack scenario in the region?

Both globally & regionally, APIs have been the most targeted attack vector over the past 2 years. This has happened primarily due to a lack of discovery; organisations are unaware of all the APIs present in their environments and secondly; misconfigurations at the time of building APIs.

The current security stack adopted by most organisations are based on WAF's, which are first generation application security platforms and not purpose built to understand or discover APIs, let alone protect against API attacks. Another misconception is that API Gateways would solve these challenges; however, these tools are built for API lifecycle management and authentication and include only basic security features. Both these approaches do not address the challenges faced by organisations that are looking to adopt best practices for securing their APIs.

We have observed a few key elements that are common in most of the conversations we hear from our customers; It is extremely important to have an updated inventory of APIs running across multiple environments – On-prem and/or cloud. The need for classifying APIs by their function & type of date handled is key; The need to use ML for detecting anomalies and misconfigurations; Active testing of APIs is very important to deploy APIs with confidence.

Tell us more about Evanssion and its presence in the region.

We partner with niche players in the cybersecurity and cloud native domain from around the world to evangelise technology. Built on

WE PARTNER WITH NICHE PLAYERS IN THE CYBERSECURITY AND CLOUD NATIVE DOMAINS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO EVANGELISE TECHNOLOGY." the foundation of identifying and providing early access to technology disruptors and remarkable start-ups from the hotspots of innovation, we proactively work with customers in addressing their security challenges.

We were born in the Middle East and have been operating across the region for the past 12 years with our headquarters in Dubai and regional offices in Abu Dhabi and Riyadh. Our mission is to identify gaps and areas of concern in security that are being addressed globally and to bring those solutions to the region to provide easy access to innovation to our partners and customers in their digital transformation journey.

What's the cybersecurity landscape looking like, in 2022?

Organisations in the region are maturing their digital transformation journeys with mass adoption of cloud. SaaS, PaaS, and IaaS has accelerated increased choice of private, hybrid or public cloud providers. These come with their own set of challenges from a security standpoint to be addressed. A shift to focus on cloud native security and newer areas within cybersecurity will be witnessed with incumbent OEMs focusing on moving to address these areas for their customers and rethinking their messaging to be more in-line with this business movement.

Over the past few years, security has become a business enabler as opposed to being a friction point. We believe that the days of 'security vs agility' are far behind us as organisations have matured to having conversations of shifting left and embedding security into their strategy during the initial stage. Besides API Security, we believe that future security teams will have an increased focus on assessing their supply chain risk, cyber resiliency, securing identities, enhancing their security analytics programme, and AppSec to support the business transition to cloud. 🚥

SECURITY // SAMSUNG

SAMSUNG INTERNET 17.0 PUTS PRIVACY AND SECURITY FRONT AND CENTER

The official version of Samsung Internet 17.0 is now ready for download on Google Play or Galaxy Store

amsung Electronics Co., Ltd. has officially released Samsung Internet 17.0, an upgrade that brings user-centric privacy and security features to the browser. The latest version includes Smart anti-tracking and HTTPS priority access set as defaults, with new ways of web authentication. The overall user experience has also been enhanced, with drag and drop tabs, and additional language options for translation to meet a wide variety of user needs.

"With each new generation of Samsung Internet, we have committed to engineering a superior browsing experience that never compromises on privacy or security," said Heejin Chung, Head of Web R&D Group at Mobile eXperience Business, Samsung Electronics. "Samsung Internet 17.0 is the result of years of research that has allowed us to put our most powerful and protected browsing experience yet in the hands of any Galaxy user."

Privacy by Default

Samsung Internet 17.0 enhances the AIpowered Smart anti-tracking function, which is now turned on by default. This feature will help to block third parties attempting to track users' personal information and users can also default to a safer HTTPS setting when typing a URL on Samsung Internet 17.0.

Fast and Easy Access to Privacy Activities

Samsung Internet 17.0 gives users a comprehensive overview of how Samsung's browser is protecting their web experience. With Samsung Internet 17.0, a visual snapshot of a user's privacy dashboard is available via the Quick Access page. This offers a detailed record of weekly activities and settings that can be adjusted to suit users' privacy preferences.

Samsung Internet 17.0 also provides a way to use external security or on-device



security keys as an alternative for SMS or App-based two-factor authentication.

A Smoother, More Powerful User Experience

Samsung's latest browser update includes several enhancements to its overall user experience, including the ability to drag and drop tabs into custom tab groups. This makes navigation and organisation smoother and faster.

Samsung Internet 17.0 will also bring improved search experiences across bookmarks, history and saved pages. The browser recognises common user typos and can process word-based matching queries to find phrases or sentences from a database based on bookmarks and saved pages. Phonetic matching also enables searching for specific terms based on how they sound, and translation capabilities have been bolstered with the addition of five languages, bringing the total to 26.


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SAUDI ARABIA SHOWS STRONG INTENT TO DRIVE A CLOUD-FIRST, CLOUD-Smart and multicloud strategy



utanix, a leader in hybrid multicloud computing, announced the Saudispecific findings of its fourth global Enterprise Cloud Index (ECI) survey and research report, which measures enterprise progress with cloud adoption. It is apparent that the adoption of cloud services in Saudi Arabia is growing, driven by national efforts such as the Kingdom's vision for Cloud-First Policy, which was announced in October 2020. Nutanix's ECI report finding supports this vision, as the research has showed that 81% of respondents in Saudi Arabia agree that multicloud is the ideal operating model for their IT infrastructure. Saudi companies appear to be in the planning phases of multicloud adoption, currently maintaining multiple independent infrastructures over which they're distributing data and workloads. Private clouds slightly dominate the infrastructure landscape, indicating some cloudification of legacy applications. 25% of respondents in Saudi continue to exclusively operate three-tier data centers with the intent to slash data center use to 9% in 2024; while ramping up the use of integrated multiclouds.

Like most ECI respondents around the world, those from Saudi Arabia said they face inter-cloud security, mobility, management, and skillset challenges as they embark on infrastructure change. The continued emergence and maturity of containers and tools, that abstract data and applications from underlying cloud platforms, centralise and integrate operations, and automate processes across cloud platforms, should alleviate these difficulties over time. The Kingdom has foreseen that with increased adoption, maintaining users' data privacy and ensuring cybersecurity will remain a top-ofmind moving target indefinitely.

Commenting on the findings, Mohammad Abulhouf, Senior Sales Director KSA, Bahrain & Qatar at Nutanix said: "Nutanix is committed to supporting the Kingdom's vision of cloud-first and cloud-smart. Such cloud-first policies are very effective in enhancing the awareness of cloud services in the region, which in turn will accelerate adoption. Our research indicates that the adoption of multiple clouds, private or public, is underway in Saudi Arabia. Companies in the Kingdom are looking to multicloud to better service their customers and citizens. Cloud is a journey, not a destination; and Nutanix is committed to the region's strategy by supporting organisations with the technology, expertise, and industry leading customer support."

Key findings from this year's report include:

1. Multicloud is the dominant IT model worldwide among ECI companies, and the adoption rate in Saudi Arabia is on the rise: Early adopters in the Kingdom which are (25%) of ECI respondents from Saudi Arabia, said they currently use multiple clouds, private or public, as their most common IT deployment model. Private cloud-only deployments slightly dominate in Saudi Arabia, though workloads appear to be distributed somewhat evenly among independent private clouds, three-tier data centers, multiclouds, and public clouds. This diverse distribution implies IT shops in transition and in the early stages of their multicloud initiatives. Respondents from Saudi Arabia said they'll accelerate multicloud adoption quickly, citing intentions to increase penetration to 57% within three years.

2. Multicloud motivators. The reason Saudi respondents cited most often for using or planning to use multicloud, was to better support

COMPANIES IN THE KINGDOM ARE LOOKING TO MULTICLOUD TO BETTER SERVICE THEIR CUSTOMERS AND CITIZENS."

customers (47%). Second was to improve remote work and collaboration (36%). In equal numbers, 35% also mentioned the ability to scale easily and on-demand, business continuity improvements, and executive cloud mandates as driving IT infrastructure change in their organisations.

3.Public cloud adoption: Respondents from Saudi Arabia indicated that they are in the early stages of public cloud use. More than half the respondents there reported using no public cloud service at all (54%). Just 5% said they use the services of three or more public cloud providers.

4. Application mobility: A high majority of respondents in Saudi Arabia (83%) said they moved applications from one IT infrastructure to another last year. This is a high rate of mobility, but it is coupled with legacy data center use, which indicates early planning phases of multicloud strategy. The data indicates that struggles to overcome impediments such as skills scarcity and management and operational complexity are slowing deployment. Among Saudi companies that moved one or more applications last year, the two biggest reasons were to improve security and regulatory compliance and enable faster application development. Heightened

activity will likely soon follow: 81% said container technology—which packages applications with all their dependencies for simplified movement among cloud infrastructures—was important to their companies now or would be within 12 months.

5. Security concerns reign **supreme.** While multicloud adoption is rising, these are early days that create some challenges. Both in Saudi Arabia (54%) and globally (49%), respondents mentioned managing security across cloud borders most often as a multicloud management difficulty. Saudi respondents named maintaining consistent performance, second most often, notably more than average, while the task of integrating data across cloud environments consistently ranked in the top three most-mentioned issues among ECI respondents.

6. The challenges of any new technology are compounded when expertise for implementing and managing it is hard to find. The majority of Saudi respondents (83%) said they lack some internal IT skills needed to meet business demand, specifically in artificial intelligence/ machine learning (50%) and IT automation (45%). In addition, 84% agreed that to succeed, their organisations need a way to simplify the management of multicloud environments. The skills deficits and concerns over increasing IT complexity were common among most ECI respondents, and they underscore a growing requirement for tools that integrate and, to a degree, automate processes across cloud platforms.

For the fourth consecutive year, Vanson Bourne surveyed 1,700 IT decision-makers around the world in August and September 2021. The respondent base spanned multiple industries, business sizes, and the following geographies: the Americas; Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA); and the Asia Pacific Japan (APJ) region.

Mohammad Abulhouf, Senior Sales Director KSA, Bahrain & Qatar at Nutanix. 💿

RED HAT HELPS RIYAD BANK AMP UP AGILITY AND Responsiveness with Open Hybrid Cloud

Leading Saudi banking institution eyes greater scalability and speed to market through cloud-native adoption and digital transformation fueled by Red Hat's open source technologies.

ed Hat, Inc., the world's leading provider of open source solutions, has announced that Riyad Bank, a leading financial institution in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), has implemented a hybrid cloud strategy built on Red Hat's portfolio of open hybrid cloud technologies, including Red Hat OpenShift. Red Hat's open innovation is a keystone of the bank's drive to speed up innovation and time-tomarket of digital services and products.

Ali Al Shami, Country Manager, KSA and Bahrain, Red Hat, said: "As fintech innovation fuels the disruption of business models and digitalises customer expectations, Riyad Bank is responding in kind with its comprehensive digital transformation program backed by Red Hat's open innovation. We're pleased to work with a team so passionate about making a highly productive and creative contribution to fintech, and look forward to further collaborating with Riyad Bank to establish an agile foundation for its modern apps."



RIYAD BANK CHOSE TO BUILD A FLEXIBLE PLATFORM BASED ON CONTAINERS AND KUBERNETES, SEEKING TO IMPROVE IT TEAM PRODUCTIVITY AND BETTER RESPOND TO EVOLVING BUSINESS DEMANDS. Riyad Bank is on a digital transformation journey aiming to boost its competitiveness in an expanding fintech market as well as contribute to achieving the Kingdom's Vision 2030. To do this, the bank is working to increase financial inclusion and support development, growth and diversification in the banking sector, efforts that are driven in part by emerging IT advancements.

Jamil Barakat, Executive Vice-President, Business Technology Division, Riyad Bank, said: ""Riyad Bank's enduring mission to help people, organisations and society achieve their financial aspirations requires us to maximise our flexibility so we can more rapidly amass new capabilities and experiences and lean into change. For this we need to be empowered by world-class technology platforms and a technology partner that understands our goals and pain points - we found this in Red Hat. Our innovation platform based on Red Hat hybrid cloud technologies is helping us fulfill our modernisation



strategy and in turn drive development for the financial sector in the Kingdom, helping make it a hub for investment and innovation."

Riyad Bank chose to build a flexible platform based on containers and Kubernetes, seeking to improve IT team productivity and better respond to evolving business demands. The bank wanted a comprehensive, cloudnative solution that encompassed open source code and open standards while also enhancing interoperability with current and future IT investment and limiting the total cost of ownership. To meet these varied needs, Riyad Bank selected the industry's leading enterprise Kubernetes platform in Red Hat OpenShift for crossorganisational deployment along with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform to provide IT automation at scale. The bank has also enlisted Red Hat Consulting and used Red Hat Learning Subscriptions to establish a framework for repeatable microservices and create a comprehensive training plan. The end goal is to foster a more open organisational culture and up-skill teams in agile methods like DevOps to help generate further efficiencies.

To support its cloud infrastructure Riyad Bank is also relying on Red Hat OpenStack Platform as a foundation for its private cloud and Red Hat OpenShift Data Foundation and Red Hat Ceph Storage for its storage needs.

The approach taken and impact achieved by Riyad Bank on its transformation journey led it to be named a regional winner in the Red Hat EMEA Digital Leaders Awards 2021.

MANAGEENGINE ITSM SURVEY SHOWS Shifting priorities for it teams in the Era of Hybrid Work

IT Asset Management cited as biggest remote IT support challenge, followed by communication and collaboration

> anageEngine, the enterprise IT management division of Zoho Corporation, has announced the results of its survey, The State of ITSM Two Years Into the COVID-19 Pandemic, following up on a similar survey conducted in 2020 to understand the challenges the pandemic has caused for IT service teams.

The latest findings indicate that organisations are grappling with a new set of problems that were not previously deemed the top priorities.

• With three-fifths of the workforce now working in a hybrid mode, managing IT assets (46%) and communication and collaboration (41%) have emerged as the biggest challenges. • Both jumped to the top spots, registering a positive difference of 11% and 7%, respectively, when compared to the 2020 figures.

• The most significant shift in reported challenges was a drop from 36% to 22% for securing company and client data in a distributed network. This change is likely the result of the proactive efforts of IT teams to ensure remote working risks were minimised.

"The survey clearly reveals that traditional IT needs to transform itself in the post-pandemic world to cater to the new realities in the workplace," said Kumaravel Ramakrishnan, Evangelist at ManageEngine. "Selforganising teams, high-velocity workflows and a digital-first approach to customer experience are the hallmarks of new age, democratised IT. At ManageEngine, our focus is



on helping customers embrace these changes and better support their users and businesses in hybrid workplaces."

Studying the 2-year pandemic impact on ITSM teams

To understand how well organisations have coped over the now twoyear-long pandemic, the impact on operations and which factors have influenced success, ManageEngine surveyed 437 IT professionals globally across a range of topics in late 2021.

The survey focused on seven areas as they relate to ITSM: work locations, the impact of employees working remotely, financial and asset management implications, the business view of IT, security and governance issues, third-party services and technology assistance and business continuity success AT MANAGEENGINE, OUR FOCUS IS ON HELPING CUSTOMERS EMBRACE THESE CHANGES AND BETTER SUPPORT THEIR USERS AND BUSINESSES IN HYBRID WORKPLACES." levels. The survey yielded key insights that can help organisations and teams continue working efficiently and securely despite a distributed workforce.

"Organisations worldwide learned invaluable lessons from the pandemic, including what's most important to them and their end users, the importance of IT to business operations and the changes needed to meet the needs of a hybrid workforce," said Ramakrishnan. "ITSM teams played a critical role in ensuring that business operations continued during the pandemic, from overseeing BYOD policies and the provision of mobile assets to implementing self-service features and chatbots, investing more in business continuity planning and offering IT service delivery and support," he added. 🝩

TRUTTUT

44

SONALI BASU ROY

MARKETING MANAGER, BULWARK TECHNOLOGIES



IDEAL MORNING ROUTINE:

Waking up with a refreshing glass of water, a rejuvenating session of yoga, getting ready for work & also making my little princess ready for school. This is followed up by a healthy breakfast to energise & kick-start to prioritise my activities for the day.



LESSONS FROM 2021: A good challenge/lesson which I constantly try to overcome in all my marketing initiatives is to develop accurate metrics to measure the outcome of the marketing activities in relation to the direct sales/revenue generated from such Marcom activities. The outcome of a successful marketing campaign may not be immediate and may take a while to derive actual lead generation & ROI from the activity. Also limited budgets, timeframes and marketing perception in the industry add to the list of challenges. I also feel it is important to balance my personal & professional career giving both the required importance for a healthy workpersonal life balance with constant support from my organisation & my family to achieve this.

FIVE THINGS I CANNOT LIVE

WITHOUT: Family, friends, smartphone, fantastic collection of lipsticks from different brands & my technology gadgets.

•

THE MOST UNDERRATED TECHNOLOGY: Blockchain

5

5 FUTURE GOALS: Career Enhancement, exploring new places worldwide, taking up advanced courses for knowledge enrichment, community service and staying healthy & happy.

OVER TWO-THIRDS OF UAE WORKERS Believe ai & data science will impact Their Role in the Next Five years

The YouGov study commissioned by Dataiku reveals the country to be pro-AI and ahead of its EMEA peers on awareness and action, but work still needs to be done to democratise the use of data and AI.

he United Arab Emirates (UAE) leads EMEA in the leverage of data, data science and artificial intelligence (AI) for the purposes of decision making and business growth, according to a report commissioned by Dataiku, the platform for Everyday AI.

The survey was conducted by YouGov in early 2022 and involved 2,487 decision makers from across France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, and the UAE. It revealed UAE respondents to be the most convinced of data's utility in the workplace, with 84% considering it essential compared with the EMEA average of 69%.

The UAE has long been established as a world leader in Artificial Intelligence, having been the first nation to appoint a minister of state for AI. And in early March 2022, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), in collaboration with the UAE's Artificial Intelligence Office, announced the launch of a special license for companies that focus on AI. In support of the country's Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2031, the license rewards firms for their efforts by granting Golden Visas for select employees.

YouGov's Dataiku-commissioned report reveals that some 71% of UAE respondents have been using more data over the past five years, a figure that is again significantly higher than the EMEA average of just over half (55%). Some 71% of UAE respondents believe they will use even more data in the next five years compared to an EMEA average of 52%.

"The findings in our report clearly establish the UAE as highly aware of the power of data and AI," said Sid Bhatia, Regional Vice President & General Manager for Middle East & Turkey, Dataiku. "We believe this a direct consequence of the government's forward-looking position on these technologies. We see this in its Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2031; we see it in the federal government becoming the first to appoint a minister of state for AI; and we see it in DIFC's move to issue special AI licenses. Our findings also highlight the widespread acknowledgement that enterprise AI is an organisational asset that will define the business of the future and the industries of the future."

"There is clearly a need to democratise the use of AI if it is to gain widespread acceptance as a tool of prosperity," Bhatia said. "It is only when all people within an organisation see AI as a partner in change that they will come together and collaborate. Then stakeholders can deliver the culture needed to build a digital business. Through this culture change comes Everyday AI, where organisations can truly capitalise on data science to gain the kind of insights that lead to innovation."

"Under Everyday AI, the use of data

becomes almost pedestrian," Bhatia explained. "AI is so ingrained and intertwined with day-to-day operations that it's just part of the business, rather than being used or developed by one central team. That is the future we see for forward-thinking business communities like the UAE." \bigcirc





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