THE VOICE OF THE CHANNEL



ISSUE 302 | DECMBER 2022



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

tahawultech.com

CP

Solar Powered Camera

No network cable required

Powered by solar energy, this kit sets up without any electrical wiring.

Easy installation

Easy set up without mechanical equipment-reducing the installation costs and time.

Can withstand bad weather

Prone to extreme weather such as strong wind and rainstorms.



40₩



n **4**G





Scan to Learn More



in HIKVISION-MENA

🔘 HIKVISIONMENA 🕒 HIKVISIONMENA

HIKVISION





Anita Anita Joseph Editor



F-mail: anita.ioseph@cpimediagroup.com



TahawulTech Twitter: @TahawulTech

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/



Instagram: @TahawulTech

THE YEAR THAT WAS...

e bid farewell to another eventful year-a year that will remain etched in everyone's memory as the year of recovery, a year of rejuvenation and of transformation. A year where we experienced triumph and sorrows in equal measure; a year where we counted our losses and celebrated every tiny gain. Indeed, there is no denying that 2022 has been a year of significant learning and stock-taking. After a dull two years of

the pandemic and its aftereffects, the year 2022 was a story of growth, resilience, survival and continuity. It was a year that saw commitment, optimism, innovation and stock-taking at every level.

As we bid farewell to this momentous year, we look ahead at what is to come and how we plan to deal with it. This year-ender issue tries to spread a message of hope and of strength. To begin with, we bring you a pictorial cover story roundup of the most important event that the channel witnessed in 2022-the Reseller ME Partner Excellence Awards. This event was a shining star in the vibrant events landscape of Dubai-it brought together the who's who of the channel industry to celebrate its triumphs, resilience and survival during the worst of the pandemic and after.

This issue also brings you insights, reports, perspectives and information from the leading lights of the channel industry. Throughout the pages, you will discover how the industry has grown and kept pace with different technologies and market demands. It also brings you interesting and unusual perspectives from industry decision makers about tech trends for the coming year, as well as the usual opinion segment and the top news roundup from the channel world. So, dear readers, this issue is different, it's memorable and it's optimistic. Happy Reading!

A MEMORABLE AND OPTIMISTIC YEAR

FOUNDER, CPI

Published by

Publication licensed by Dubai Production City, DCCA PO Box 13700 Dubai LIAF

Tel: +971 4 5682993

© Copyright 2022 CPI All rights reserved

While the publishers have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of all information in this magazine, they will not be held responsible for any errors therein.

Dominic De Sousa (1959-2015)

EDITORIAL Editor Anita Joseph

OnlineEditor

natasha.pendleton@cpimediagroup.com Sales Director Sabita Miranda

ADVERTISING

Group Publishing Director

Kausar Syed

kausar.syed@cpimediagroup.com

Publishing Director

Natasha Pendletor

sabita.miranda@cpimediagroup.com

anita.joseph@cpimediagroup.com

Daniel Shepherd daniel.shepherd@cpimediagroup.com

PRODUCTION AND DESIGN Designer Prajith Payyapilly prajith.payyapilly@cpimediagroup.com

DIGITAL SERVICES Web Developer Adarsh Snehajan webmaster@cpimediagroup.com





ISSUE 302 // DECEMBER 2022







NEWSMAKERS



07 News roundup from the channel world in the region and beyond.

HIGHLIGHTS

16 Snapshots of the greatest event of the year-The Reseller Partner Excellence Awards 2022



26 Vikas R Panchal, General Manager at MENA, Tally Solutions, on the top tech trends and how businesses should prepare for 2023.

34 John Engates, Field CTO at Cloudflare, on how the Chief Zero Trust Officer role will emerge within larger organisations

EAGLEPROAI

D-Link



Experience the **Power** and **Convenience** of **Artificial Intelligence** Powered Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi that's smarter, safer, faster, and more affordable than ever.



Wi-Fi

6





D-Link

Ok Google

amazon alexa





AI Mesh Optimizer

AI Wi-Fi Optimizer

AI Parental Controls

AI Traffic Optimizer

AI Assistant

RED HAT HELPS ENTERPRISES MODERNIZE AT SCALE WITH NEW MIGRATION TOOLKIT

Red Hat, Inc., the world's leading provider of open source solutions, has announced the general availability of Migration Toolkit for Applications 6, based on the open source project Konveyor, aimed at helping customers accelerate large-scale application modernization efforts. The toolkit enables customers to better assess, prioritize and modernize their applications across hybrid cloud environments on Red Hat OpenShift, the industry's leading Kubernetes platform.

Few would disagree that the technology landscape has shifted dramatically in recent years. According to Red Hat's 2022 State of Application Modernization Report, organizations plan to modernize 54% of their custom applications during the next year, and over a quarter of these workloads during the next six months. In the medium term, respondents also reported that 80% of applications will be modernized in the next two years. It's clear that the reliance on virtualization, as we currently understand it, has shifted. Organizations are embracing cloud-native technologies to meet heightened user expectations and market competition, but this doesn't happen overnight. With Migration Toolkit for Applications and related services and offerings, Red Hat is helping customers modernize applications at their speed and on their timelines.

Migration Toolkit for Applications is an integrated assembly of tools that support Java application modernization and migration projects at scale across a broad range of use cases. James Labocki, senior director, product management, Red Hat, said: "Hybrid cloud isn't just the future of computing—it's here now, and Red Hat is determined to give our customers the tools, direction and intelligence to help them bring their applications to this new world. We know that transformation doesn't happen overnight, which is why Red Hat Modernization Toolkit for Applications is designed to accelerate modernization, not stifle it, by easing the process of bringing traditional applications to a hybrid cloud-ready platform with analysis and automation."





HISENSE PARTNERS WITH SAUDI ARABIA'S UNITED MATBOULI GROUP TO EXPAND PRESENCE IN KINGDOM

Hisense, one of the largest

home appliance and consumer electronics company, has signed a partnership deal with Saudi Arabia's United Matbouli Group (UMG), one of the most prestigious consumer electronics distributors in the Kingdom, thus opening a new pathway to of business opportunities for Hisense in the Saudi market.

Through this partnership, Hisense intends to expand its commercial business network as well as reach out to its end-users in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia providing best of technology and products. As an officially appointed distributor of Hisense in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UMG will support the brand with business networking capabilities and their expertise of distribution, warehousing, after-sales-services and develop connection in the retail space for sales. The agreement was signed by Jason Ou, Hisense President of Middle East and Africa, and Adnan Matbouli,

Chairman of United Matbouli Group during the 2022 Annual Partners Conference in Qatar; witnessed by top management of distributors and retailers from across the Middle East and Africa region

President of Hisense Middle East and Africa, Jason Ou, said: "As one of the leaders in the consumer electronics market. it is crucial for Hisense to mark its presence in the Middle East region. Alongside the increasing brand visibility that Hisense garnered during the FIFA World Cup, it is imperative for the brand to be physically available to all its consumers. Our partnership with UMG underlines our dedication to expand in the regional markets, increase our availability and provide the best brand experience to our customers as well as business partners. We look forward to working together with UMG, driving on each other's strengths and expertise with an intension of growth and sustainability in the market."

NEWSMAKERS

VECTRA RECOGNIZED IN LATEST GARTNER MARKET GUIDE FOR NETWORK DETECTION AND RESPONSE

The 2022 Gartner Market Guide for

Network Detection and Response report, published in December, shows that security and risk management leaders should prioritise NDR as a complement to other detection tools, focusing on low false positive rates and detection of anomalies that other controls don't cover. Vectra was recognized in the report for Vectra Threat Detection and Response Platform.

According to the report, "Organisations rely on NDR to detect and stop activity after a successful attack, such as ransomware, threats from within the network or lateral network traffic. NDR complements other technologies that trigger alerts primarily based on rules and signatures, building heuristic models of normal network



behaviour and spotting anomaly." The report further mentions that "Security and risk management leaders should

prioritise NDR as a complement to other detection tools, as it focuses on low false alarm rates and anomaly detection that other solutions do not cover."

"We believe that Vectra s recognition in the Gartner Market Guide confirms our position as a trusted partner offering proven solutions for network detection and response," says Taj El-khayat, Managing Director – South EMEA at Vectra, recognized as a Representative Vendors in Network Detection and Response category.

"To stem the tide of threats, security teams need full visibility into their environments so they can detect signs of an attack before it becomes a breach. With the right configuration, NDR can provide effective protection against ransomware," he said.

G42 CLOUD AND DELL TECHNOLOGIES SIGN MOU TO ACCELERATE UAE CUSTOMERS' DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION EFFORTS



Dell Technologies and G42 Cloud have signed a memorandum of understanding to help customers in the UAE accelerate their digital transformation drive by collaborating on cloud, security and IT and managed services. The memorandum was signed by Walid Yehia, General Manager - UAE, Dell Technologies and Talal Al Kaissi, CEO of G42 Cloud at the Dell Technologies Forum 2022.

The two companies will work together

across various areas including Private Cloud Solutions, as well as Consulting, Residency and Managed services. This collaboration aims to serve the UAE by enabling customers manage their day-to-day business operations and accelerate digital transformation with a more secure and consistent cloud experience. The agreement will allow the two companies' customers to leverage the best-of-breed features and performance, including computing, data storage, and data protection needs. It aims to assist customers unlock and capitalize on cloud experiences and drive innovation.

Walid Yehia, General Manager - UAE, Dell Technologies, said: "To succeed in an increasingly digital economy, businesses need agile and scalable solutions that allow them to innovate and transform their operations. At Dell Technologies, we aim to simplify this journey with our comprehensive portfolio of solutions and services. We are happy to work with G42 Cloud in its efforts to encourage organizations build a robust digital future."

ARUBA'S SUSTAINABILITY Framework

Phil Mottram, President, HPE Intelligent Edge business

s the leader for Aruba, HPE's Intelligent Edge business, I spend a good portion of my time talking to customers and partners about the strategic goals of their businesses. Our conversations typically cover a wide range of business concerns such as workforce productivity, operational efficiency, automation, and network security, yet recently rising to the top of this list is sustainability.

Increases in governmental regulations, skyrocketing energy prices, and the impact of extreme environmental events in their communities are forcing companies to evaluate their carbon footprint and to find ways to reduce their emissions to become net zero by 2050. While some companies are further along than others, a recent Forrester survey found that 58% of Global Fortune 200 companies have named a sustainability lead, and 55% have established greenhouse gas emission targets.

To get to net zero, organizations must extend their view beyond their own operations' emissions to the emissions created by their products and services used by customers. Aruba recognizes we have a shared responsibility to our customers, and in addition to innovations in our product designs, we are actively pursuing additional ways of helping our customers reduce emissions generated by network operations.

As I previously highlighted, Aruba's focus is on enabling efficient IT operations with the goal of minimizing environmental impacts across the product lifecycle and reducing the total cost of ownership for our customers. We approach efficient IT using the following framework:

- **Energy efficiency** Deliver an optimum level of power, storage, and connectivity with the lowest possible input of energy.
- **Equipment efficiency** Maximize IT processing power and storage capabilities with fewer IT assets.
- **Resource efficiency** Engineer products to work efficiently within data centers and at the edge, while requiring the least amount of support equipment and staff for power conversion, cooling, and resiliency.

Maximizing efficiency in each of these categories requires a modern network architecture designed for agility and performance at scale. Every element of the ecosystem contributes to the overall efficiency of the network, and when considering the sustainability attributes of individual products, we look at three main functions:

- **How they are made** Activities related to creation, production, and lifecycle management
- How they work Operational properties that optimize power efficiency and performance
- **How they are used** Use cases that help customers lower their carbon footprint

How Aruba products are made

How a product is made has a significant effect on its value to our customers, including features supported, quality of service offered, cost of ownership, and environmental impact. When developing a new product, Aruba considers every element of the product lifecycle, including design, material composition and acquisition, production, packaging, transportation, and post-use disposition to ensure they meet our customers' evolving needs and expectations.

How Aruba products lessen their environmental impact:

- Our products are free of heavy metals and ozone depleting components
- New products are designed to use low-halogen PCBs
- Our products are engineered to be easily recycled
- All products are manufactured in compliance with strict regulatory and HPE-directed requirements
- Our product packaging is comprised of up to 80% recycled materials
- We also offer valuable lifecycle management services that alleviate the burden of managing and responsibly dispositioning network assets. With global reach and the largest technology recovery centers in the world, HPE offers IT asset lifecycle solutions to help customers reclaim asset value, simplify lifecycle management activities, and create circularity as they migrate to HPE GreenLake for Aruba.

How Aruba products work

Equally as important to the performance and sustainability profile of our products is how they work. We use innovations that enable maximum power efficiency such as power management features, platform operation, built-in intelligence, streamlined workflows, and standards compliance.



How Aruba products work more sustainably:

- Patented intelligent power management features in Aruba access points minimize power consumption by consuming an average of only 50% of the total power capacity in real world deployments.
- Energy efficient Ethernet and the use of 80+ certified power supplies on Aruba switches reduce power consumption by 50% and - up to 80% or more during periods of low data activity.
- Cloud-based network management hosted in energy-efficient data centers is reported to be 3.6 times more efficient than traditional enterprise data center operations.

The AI and automation in Aruba's management platform, Aruba ESP (Edge Services Platform), diagnoses network issues in real time, accelerating IT response, lowering help desk tickets, and enabling efficient power usage. Inefficient networks are analogous to leaky water pipes. Just as leaky pipes waste water, inefficient networks waste energy. A network draws power to operate. For example, by using AIOps, you can eliminate 75% of your helpdesk tickets, improve the efficiency of your network, and reduce the amount of wasted power and human capital (which can be better spent on strategic initiatives) that would otherwise be spent on resolving network anomalies. Client authentication issues, inefficient load balancing, switch port errors, and a host of other network issues lead to unnecessary power consumption.

How Aruba products are used

It is also important to examine the ways our customers leverage our products to deliver value to their businesses, including secure highperformance connectivity that empowers workforce productivity, streamlined workflows that drive IT resource optimization, and additional applications that enable control of key resource consumption. For instance, Aruba's network management console consolidates multiple functions on a single cloud platform, simplifying IT workflows and reducing the number of point solutions. Our customers can avoid purchasing additional hardware, power, and HVAC resources.

Aruba Central also enables Zero Touch Provisioning of equipment, which allows devices to be centrally configured, shipped to remote locations and easily installed, eliminating the need to send skilled technicians to remote locations. Not only is this process more efficient, but it also lowers greenhouse gas emissions by 650g CO2 for every kilometer not driven .

There are also innovative IoT applications that enable efficient resource management and smart office improvements - including sensors that monitor power, lighting, cooling, and water to name a few. Aruba's network architecture enables direct connection of these devices through Bluetooth, Zigbee, and PoE ports on APs. Having a direct connection not only enables customers to broaden the mechanisms used to make their corporate environments more efficient, but also eliminates the need for overlay appliances that would increase cost, carbon emissions, and lifecycle management activity.

While I've noted a few sustainabilityfocused innovations, there is much more to be done, and we are just getting started. As an industry leader in sustainability, HPE has committed to become net zero by 2040, with an interim goal of lowering Scope 3 emissions - those generated by our customers while using our products by 42% by 2030. As an integral part of HPE, Aruba actively supports these goals.

To accelerate momentum, we have mobilized cross-organizational teams to further investigate and develop sustainable features, responsible supply chain solutions, and Tech for Good initiatives that will improve the sustainability profile of how our products are made, how they work, and how they're used. I am excited about the great work being done by these teams, and I look forward to sharing more with you in the months to come.

NETWORK INTERNATIONAL APPOINTS Sandeep Chouhan as group chief Business transformation & Technology officer



• etwork International (Network), the leading enabler of digital commerce across the Middle East and Africa (MEA) region, has announced the appointment of Sandeep Chouhan as Group Chief Business Transformation and Technology Officer.

Bringing global experience in spearheading Business and Technology Transformations at some of the world's leading financial institutions and payments businesses, Sandeep will be responsible for

SANDEEP WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DRIVING NETWORK'S GROUP-WIDE STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION TO ACCELERATE BUSINESS GROWTH. driving Network's group-wide strategic transformation to accelerate business growth, operating efficiency and innovation in processing and acquiring products, as well as reducing time-to-market for banks, merchants and fintechs.

A reputed figure in the global banking and payments industries, Sandeep most recently served as Group Chief Operating Officer of Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB). He brings with him over thirty years of consumer banking and payments experience in business management, digital transformation, technology modernisation and agile operations. Sandeep has a track record of building and running technology, digital and operations at Citi, Discover Card, Barclays, Mashreq, CBQ and ADIB.

"Sandeep's experience as a Transformation and Technology expert of leading financial institutions and payments businesses will ensure that we accelerate product innovation and time-tomarket for our customers, enabling them to achieve their goals," commented Nandan Mer - Group CEO of Network International.

Sandeep Chouhan – Group Chief Business Transformation and Technology Officer at Network International, added, "I am honoured to be joining the MEA region's most prominent payments enabler, and absolutely thrilled to be spearheading innovation and strengthening our technology offerings to provide world-class digital services to our customers and create the next-generation payments ecosystem.





Works with all modems and ISPs.

Multi-gigabit
WiFi 6 speeds

Make the most of WiFi 6.

Linksys Atlas Pro 6 with Intelligent Mesh[™] is a dual-band WiFi 6 system that delivers next-level streaming, data traffic and uninterrupted video conferencing to more than 30 devices per node simultaneously.

Access to 160 MHz — the least congested channels available on the 5GHz band — unleashes WiFi 6's incredibly fast connectivity.



Dual-band Mesh WiFi 6 system

Up to 3,5X faster speeds than WiFi 5^{\circ}.

Mesh WiFi 6 delivers true gigabit speeds—up to 5.4 Gbps with 6-stream connectivity—throughout your entire home or business, inside & out.

160 MHz capable.

Access to the least congested channels on the 5 GHz band unleashes the true power of WiFi 6, allowing work-from-home, online learning, streaming & gaming devices to operate simultaneously without reduced bandwidth.

More WiFi Channels.

Dynamic Frequency Selection (DFS) provides access to more channels, reducing interference from neighbouring networks.

Industry-leading technology.

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

Easy setup & control.

t's simple to set up and lets you manage your network or prioritise devices from anywhere, all with the free Linksys app. **30+ devices** Capacity per node.

맘

AX5400 Accumulated speed up to 5.4 Gbps.

?,

Covers homes with up to

2-3 bedrooms per node (±230 m²/1 floor).



Model# MX5500 Available in 1-, 2- or 3-Pack: MX5501, MX5502, MX5503

*As compared from 802.11ac to 802.11a

MIDDLE EAST BUSINESSES & Employees at odds over Workplace innovation: VMWARE RESEARCH

With growing economic uncertainty, business leaders could be driving employees back into the office with hope that it will enable greater employee innovation and productivity.

Imost all (81%) of survey respondents in the Middle East believe their organization is more innovative if employees are in the office, according to research unveiled today by VMware Inc, a leading innovator in enterprise software.

The study, "The Distributed Work Dilemma: When Innovation and Job Satisfaction Compete," conducted by Vanson Bourne on behalf of VMware, highlights how survey respondent's views on where they feel they are most innovative are at odds with where they would prefer to work, with 82% of respondents in the Middle East having higher job satisfaction if they can work from home. In addition, more than half (56%) of EMEA respondents with anywhere and hybrid working policies, where they can work in an office and remotely, report increased morale, creativity (52%) and collaboration (53%) within their teams since prior to the pandemic.

With growing economic uncertainty, business leaders could be driving employees back into the office with hope that it will enable greater employee innovation and productivity, but with little certainty on its real benefit.

In fact, a higher percentage of organizations with anywhere- and hybrid-work policies have formal metrics in place to track innovation and its impact on the business and employees. Nearly all organizations in the EMEA region with an anywhere work policy (97%) have metrics in place to monitor innovation levels versus 82% of those with an office-only policy.

"Greater economic uncertainty is propelling businesses to become even more focused on innovation and productivity, but this shouldn't be at the expense of all the progress made in developing more flexible working practices," said Shankar Iyer, senior vice president and general manager, End-User Computing, VMware. "Research has shown that allowing hybrid work creates happier, more engaged, and more collaborative teams, which can naturally lead to increased productivity. Employees believe they can achieve their best work when given the choice of hybrid working, combined with the tools to support this, yet business leaders believe the office is where innovation is driven. Our research suggests that

more companies need to deploy formal metrics to measure impact to ensure perception does not outweighing reality. Those with hybrid working policies are clearly taking this very seriously."

Over the next 12 months, the vast majority (83%) of Middle East organizations surveyed are planning to invest significantly more in their digital culture, and more than a third (38%) are prioritizing investments that fuel innovation and creativity. Driving innovation to create business efficiencies, cut costs, or increase market attractiveness is clearly a business imperative.

Automation and digital tools are helping organizations do more with less. Among businesses where investment in automation has increased, half (56%) of businesses in the Middle East are investing in automation to help increase employee experience and productivity. Additionally, 51% are looking for automation to help accelerate innovation, while 53% seek to create faster and lower-cost operations. The highest levels of investment are concentrated amongst organizations with hybrid- or anywhere-work policies



versus those with office-only policies. This suggests that business innovation and productivity must be prioritised, but not at the expense of working location flexibility.

Iyer adds, "The mythical inflection

point where all employees are officebased is not guaranteed to happen. Companies must continue to strike the right balance between boosting innovation without crushing employee motivation and productivity. By investing in digital collaboration tools, automation, and team-building policies, business leaders can drive efficiencies and boost success while still offering the flexibility of office or remote working." SPOTLIGHT // STARLINK



STARLINK SIGNS UP WITH Rapid7 for middle east Distribution

This partnership will cater to the Middle East distribution of the Rapid7 portfolio



tarLink, an Infinigate Group Company, has announced expansion of its Risk and Compliance portfolio with the onboarding of Rapid7, a leader in cloud risk and threat detection. This partnership will cater to the Middle East distribution of the Rapid7 portfolio.

Today's threat landscape is boundaryless and the attack techniques are novel, which can come as a nasty surprise. With enterprises transitioning to the cloud, cloudfocused threats are on the rise and the need to detect risks and respond in real-time is becoming a high priority across various industries. With a very strong combination of cloud risk management and threat detection capabilities, Rapid7 empowers enterprises to secure their businesses by reducing the attack surface and eliminating threats with zero compromise.

Ahmed Diab, COO, StarLink commented, "The SecOps teams

AS A VALUE-ADDED DISTRIBUTOR, STARLINK WILL SUPPORT THE PARTNERSHIP WITH TECHNICAL, MARKETING AND ON-GROUND EXPERTISE. are weighed down by the enormous load and velocity of threats and are under tremendous pressure to ensure their organization's data and assets are secure. The two comprehensive offers by Rapid7 - Threat Complete and Cloud Risk Complete - empower the teams to contain advanced threats and deliver world class cloud security. Rapid7 strengthens our Risk and Compliance portfolio and jointly we look forward to providing an innovative experience to enterprises and keeping their businesses secure and protected."

"We are delighted to have forged this strategic partnership with StarLink, which reaffirms our commitment to helping our customers and channel partners across the Middle East," said David Howorth, Vice President EMEA Sales, Rapid7. "With the adoption of cloud technologies increasing rapidly across the region, we believe that StarLink shares our vision to simplify the complex by providing a relevant platform of security solutions to support their extensive partner network."

As a value-added distributor, StarLink will support the partnership with technical, marketing and onground expertise as well as open up StarLink's extensive channel network to generate new business opportunities for Rapid7 in the region and to meet with the roadmap that has been jointly put in place for 2023.

he Reseller Partner Excellence Awards 2022 celebrated the trendsetters in the channel industry who deployed a future-forward approach while driving business and leading the market with cutting-edge technologies.

Reseller Middle East's Partner Excellence Awards has been the industry's most prominent event over the last decade. It showcases and applauds the successes of the regional channel business, saluting the excellence and resilience of individual executives and firms.

💸 tahawultech.com

Reseller

PARTNER EXCELLENCE

2022

This year, the awards celebrated trendsetters in the regional channel industry who deployed a future-forward approach while driving business and leading the market with cutting-edge technologies. It recognized the excellence of key players-vendors, distributors, system integrators and resellers- who drive the channel industry and maintain a value-driven approach despite challenging circumstances.





www.tahawultech.com // Reseller Middle East // DECEMBER 2022







CLOUD VENDOR OF THE YEAR AWARD Aruba, a hewlett packard Enterprise company

BEST VALUE-ADDED DISTRIBUTOR OF THE YEAR Evad



CISCO REPORT PROVIDES TOP TRENDS ON RISK REDUCTION AND IT SECURITY

At Cisco we believe that business and IT leaders need to train, and ultimately, encourage the organization's workforce to implement MFA and passwordless technologies.

he 2022 Duo Trusted Access Report has been released by Cisco under the slogan "Logins in a Dangerous Time." The paper examines information from 13 billion Cisco Duo authentications performed globally on over 50 million unique devices.

Overall, the report shows that companies recognize and use multi-factor authentication (MFA) and passwordless technologies as important elements for risk reduction and IT security.

"Digitization in the region and beyond, paves the way for a surge in cyber threats at all levels across organizations. With companies rigorously adopting hybrid and remote working models, indispensable business devices such as laptops and mobile phones are now more vulnerable than before. At Cisco we believe that business and IT leaders need to train, and ultimately, encourage the organization's workforce to implement MFA and passwordless technologies to ensure their assets are updated with additional layers of security," said Fady Younes, Cybersecurity Director, EMEA Service Providers and MEA.

The report highlights the following important insights:

- Passwordless adoption continues to rise: our data shows a 50% increase in the percentage of accounts allowing WebAuthn authentication and a fivefold increase in WebAuthn usage since April 2019.
- Biometrics have stalled: The percentage of phones with

biometrics enabled held steady at around 81% (a minor increase from 2021), indicating that progress towards biometrics across the board has stalled.

- MFA continues to strengthen passwords: Multi-factor authentication holds strong while adding to the security of only traditional password usage. The number of MFA authentications using Duo rose by 38% in the past year.
- Cloud usage continues to rise: An increasing number of authentications are attributed to cloud applications, with a 24% rise in the percentage of cloud applications in 2022.

• Hybrid work and back to the office: Remote access authentications peaked in 2020 but have declined since then.



SPOTLIGHT // G42-DELL TECHNOLOGIES



G42 CLOUD & DELL TECHNOLOGIES SIGN MOU TO ACCELERATE UAE CUSTOMERS' DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION EFFORTS

ell Technologies and G42 Cloud have signed a memorandum of understanding to help customers in the UAE accelerate their digital transformation drive by collaborating on cloud, security and IT and managed services.

The memorandum was signed by Walid Yehia, General Manager -UAE, Dell Technologies and Talal Al Kaissi, CEO of G42 Cloud at the Dell Technologies Forum 2022.

The two companies will work together across various areas including private cloud solutions, as well as Consulting, Residency and Managed services. This collaboration aims to serve the UAE by enabling customers manage their day-to-day business operations and accelerate digital transformation with a more secure and consistent cloud experience. The agreement will allow the two companies' customers to leverage the best-of-breed features and performance, including computing, data storage, and data protection needs. It aims to assist customers unlock and capitalize on cloud experiences and drive innovation.

Walid Yehia, General Manager

- UAE, Dell Technologies, said: "To succeed in an increasingly digital economy, businesses need agile and scalable solutions that allow them to innovate and transform their operations. At Dell Technologies, we aim to simplify this journey with our comprehensive portfolio of solutions and services. We are happy to work with G42 Cloud in its efforts to encourage organizations build a robust digital future."

Talal Al Kaissi, CEO of G42

Cloud, said: "I am particularly excited and proud of signing this strategic agreement with Dell Technologies and of the opportunities we plan to unlock together, domestically and abroad. Cloud technologies today are helping economies expand and meet new market demands. G42 Cloud is focused on driving value and helping businesses to succeed in a digital-first world. The MoU allows us to explore both companies' wide range of offerings and support our customers to maximize their business outcomes."

THE TWO COMPANIES WILL WORK TOGETHER ACROSS VARIOUS AREAS INCLUDING PRIVATE CLOUD SOLUTIONS, AS WELL AS CONSULTING, RESIDENCY AND MANAGED SERVICES.



Empower SMEs With Digital

Helping Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) implement digital transformation Huawei provides a range of product portfolios and solutions that can help enterprises to focus on their business growth and achieve their goals.

Available Products:

Campus Switches | WLAN | Access Routers | IdeaHub OceanStor Data Storage | Data Center Switches and more...

Stock Available, Delivery in 2 Weeks



Learn More



Contact Us enterpriseME@huawei.com e.huawei.com/ae

Æ D

TALLY SOLUTIONS: TOP TECH INNOVATIONS AND HOW TO PREPARE FOR 2023

Vikas R Panchal, General Manager at MENA, Tally Solutions, reveals the top tech trends and how businesses should prepare for 2023.

ell us the top trend/tech innovation that will disrupt your industry. Digitisation is taking the front seat and organisations are turning to business management software to stay ahead of competition, remain compliant and meet customer expectations. In 2023, integrated business management software that can handle vast amounts of data and can be tailor-fit to an organization's unique needs will take centre stage. Tools which are not just easy to install and use but can be accessed from anywhere in the world offering absolute data security and privacy will be of interests for corporates as well as small and medium businesses. In addition, business management software that are driven with artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities and offer automation, real time analytics, convenience, and speed, all in one package will shine a spotlight in the new year.

How should businesses prepare themselves in 2023?

2023 is going to be an impactful year with the launch of the corporate tax in the UAE. On this note, we'd recommend that businesses adapt to the changing landscape which focuses on digital solutions to drive their operations as well as remain compliant. Adopting the right tools and technology solutions will help



them be prepared to accept the new regulations seamlessly. In addition, Tally Solutions is also all geared to

assist the businesses in the UAE with our advanced solutions as they step into the new year.



DISPLAY & CONTROL SOLUTIONS WITH PRESENTATION MATRIX & SCALER











enquiry@mbal.ae www.malcotechnology.com LinkedIn.com/@MalcoTechnologies Facebook.com/@MalcoTechnologies Instagram.com/@Malco_Technologies Twitter.com/@MalcoTechnolog1

Business Bay, #014, 801 P.O.Box: 6257, Dubai, UAE

10 OF THE YEAR'S BIGGEST CYBERATTACKS

Here's a round-up of some of the worst hacks and breaches that have impacted a variety of targets around the world in 2022.

Phil Muncaster, guest writer at ESET

he past year has seen the global economy lurch from one crisis to another. As COVID-19 finally began to recede in many regions, what replaced it has been rising energy bills, soaring inflation and a resulting cost-of-living crisis – some of it spurred by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Ultimately, these developments have opened the door to new opportunities for financially-motivated and statebacked threat actors.

They have targeted governments, hospitals, cryptocurrency firms and many other organisations with impunity. The cost of a data breach now stands at nearly US\$4.4 million – and as long as threat actors continue to achieve successes like those below, we can expect it to rise even higher for 2023.

Here are 10 of the worst cyberincidents of the year, be it for the damage they wrought, level of sophistication or geopolitical fallout. The list is in no particular order, but it makes sense to open it with malicious cyber-operations that took aim at Ukraine and immediately raised concerns about their wider ramifications and associated cyberrisks faced by the wider world.

Ukraine under (cyber)attack:

Ukraine's critical infrastructure has found itself, yet again, in the crosshairs of threat actors. Early into Russia's invasion, ESET researchers worked closely with CERT-UA on remediating an attack that targeted the country's grid and involved destructive malware that Sandworm had attempted to deploy against high-voltage electrical substations. The malware – which ESET named Industroyer2 after an infamous piece of malware used by the group to cut power in Ukraine in 2016 – was used in combination with a new version of the destructive CaddyWiper variant, most likely to hide the group's tracks, slow down incident response and prevent operators of the energy company from regaining control of the ICS consoles.

More wipers. CaddyWiper was far from the only destructive data wiper discovered in Ukraine just before or in the first few weeks of Russia's invasion. On February 23rd, ESET telemetry picked up HermeticWiper on hundreds of machines in several organizations in Ukraine. The following day, a second destructive, data-wiping attack against a Ukrainian governmental network started, this time delivering IsaacWiper. Internet down. Barely an hour before the invasion, a major cyberattack against commercial satellite internet company Viasat disrupted broadband internet service for thousands of people in Ukraine and even elsewhere in Europe, leaving behind thousands of bricked modems. The attack, which exploited a misconfigured VPN device to gain access to the satellite network's management section, is believed to have been intended to impair the communication capabilities of the Ukrainian command during the first hours of the invasion. Its effects were felt far beyond Ukraine's borders, however.

Conti in Costa Rica: A major player on the cybercrime underground this year was ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) group Conti. Once of its most audacious raids was against the small South American nation of Costa Rica, where a national emergency was declared after the government branded a crippling attack an act of "cyber terrorism." The group has since disappeared, although its members are likely to simply have moved on to other projects or rebranded wholesale,

A MAJOR PLAYER ON THE CYBERCRIME UNDERGROUND THIS YEAR WAS RANSOMWARE-AS-A-SERVICE (RAAS) GROUP CONTI.



as RaaS outfits generally due to avoid scrutiny from law enforcers and governments.

Other ransomware actors were

also in action in 2022. A CISA alert from September explained that Iranaffiliated threat actors compromised a US municipal government and an aerospace company, among other targets, by exploiting the infamous Log4Shell bug for ransomware campaigns, which isn't all that common for state-backed entities. Also intriguing was a US government compromise in November that was also blamed on Iran. An unnamed Federal Civilian Executive Branch (FCEB) organization was breached and cryptomining malware deployed.

Ronin Network was created by Vietnamese blockchain game developer Sky Mavis to function as an Ethereum sidechain for its Axie Infinity game. In March it emerged that hackers managed to use hijacked private keys to forge withdrawals to the tune of 173,600 Ethereum (US\$592 million) and US\$25.5 million from the Ronin bridge, in two transactions. The resulting US\$618 million theft, at March prices, was the largest ever from a crypto firm. Infamous North Korean group Lazarus has since been linked to the raid. The hermit nation has been traced in the past to thefts worth billions of dollars, used to fund its nuclear and missile programs.

Lapsus\$ burst onto the scene during 2022, as an extortion group using high-profile data thefts to force payment from its corporate victims. These have included Microsoft, Samsung, Nvidia, Ubisoft, Okta and Vodafone. Among its many methods are bribery of insiders at firms and their contractors. Although the group had been relatively silent for a while, it re-emerged at the end of the year after hacking Grand Theft Auto developer Rockstar Games. Several alleged members of the group have been arrested in the UK and Brazil.

International Red Cross (ICRC): In January, the ICRC reported a major breach that compromised the personal details of over 515,000 "highly vulnerable" victims. Stolen from a Swiss contractor, the data included details of individuals separated from their families due to conflict, migration and disaster, missing persons and their families, and people in detention. It was subsequently blamed on an unnamed nation state and occurred when an unpatched system was exploited. **Uber:** the ride-hailing giant was famously breached back in 2016 when details on 57 million users were stolen. In September it was reported that a hacker, potentially a member of Lapsus\$, had compromised email and cloud systems, code repositories, an internal Slack account and HackerOne tickets. The actor targeted an Uber external contractor, most likely grabbing their corporate password from the dark web.

Medibank: All of the Australian health insurance giant's four million customers has personal data accessed by ransomware actors in an attack which may end up costing the firm US\$35 million. Those responsible are believed to be linked to infamous ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) outfit REvil (aka Sodinokibi) with compromised privileged credentials responsible for initial access. Those impacted now face a potential barrage of follow-on identity fraud attempts.

Whatever happens in 2023, some of the cautionary tales from these 10 major incidents should stand everybody, including CISOs, in good stead. Get your cybersecurity processes and operations right, organize cybersecurity awareness trainings for all employees, and partner with reputable security companies whose solutions can stand up to the complex methods deployed by threat actors.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION //

ETISALAT BY E& PARTNERS WITH VMWARE TO ENHANCE ITS SD-WAN AND SASE OFFERINGS

tisalat UAE, branded as etisalat by e&, has announced a partnership with VMware to expand and enhance its Software-Defined Wide Area Network (SD-WAN) and Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) services for its business customers in the UAE.

The partnership will enable etisalat by e&'s public and private sector customers to strengthen their networks without the need for costly physical infrastructure, and allow them to monitor network performance, adjust network settings remotely, and embrace new technologies including cloud, AI, and Edge.

The new solutions will give customers highly secure access to their applications from the closest available links, maintaining optimum performance and productivity for users.

By bringing members of distributed workforces on to the same virtual network, the solution will allow companies to simplify their remote working arrangements, ensuring that people, apps, and devices can communicate securely from anywhere.

The enhanced SD-WAN and SASE



services will help etisalat by e& in its mission to drive digital innovation while supporting initiatives including the UAE Digital Government Strategy 2025.

Hamad Mohamed Al Marzooqi, Senior Vice President of Pre-Sales and Business Operations, etisalat by e&, said: "This partnership with VMWare to deploy state-of-the-art SD-WAN and SASE technology will give organizations across the UAE the solutions they need to grow and accelerate their digitalization journey. This is in line with the overall vision of the UAE leadership to position the country as a global ICT hub and achieve leadership in the digital space. We stand by our commitment to providing best-inclass innovative solutions, harnessing advanced technologies, and maintaining our cutting-edge telecom infrastructure offerings. We will continue to act as the trusted partner and advisor of businesses by enabling enterprise connectivity and beyond connectivity requirements, which, in turn, will accelerate the digital economy."

Ahmed Auda, Vice President & GM, Middle East, Turkey & North Africa, VMware, said: "This partnership demonstrates the power of SD-WAN and SASE solutions to drive efficiency, security and innovation, helping organizations of all shapes and sizes in the UAE to become smarter and more agile. We look forward to continuing to support Etisalat by e& as it raises the bar for business services."

VMware SD-WAN and SASE solutions are built around utilizing the cloud as a primary resource for customer applications and provide a reliable and secure connection between the enterprise network and modern apps, ultimately improving end-user experience.

NEW SOLUTIONS FROM VMWARE WILL HELP ETISALAT BY E&'S BUSINESS CUSTOMERS BECOME MORE AGILE, WHILE STRENGTHENING THEIR ABILITY TO INNOVATE AND SUPPORT DISTRIBUTED WORKFORCES.

Smart security for every home.



Ring lets you monitor every corner of your property, no matter where you are. With a Video Doorbell at your door and Security Cams around the house, you can create a Ring of Security around your entire home.

With Ring, you're always home.



PREDICTIONS // 2023

SAS'S KEY TECH AND Analytics predictions For 2023

Bryan Harris, Executive Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, SAS outlines the top tech and analytics predictions for 2023.

Emerging technologies disrupt the industry. Emerging technologies, like blockchain, esports and simulation, are disrupting traditional industries, offering future-focused innovation and converging into the next iteration of the web. These technologies are causing an explosion in the rate, complexity and volume of data, and creating an even more pressing need for analytics, machine learning and AI to help make sense of it all. Looking to the future, they offer opportunities to reimagine the ways we solve complex problems, and ultimately scale human observation and decision-making.

eneral

Disruption fuels analytics

innovation. In 2023, disruption will continue to change us, our society and the way we do business. Advancements in areas such as natural language processing, conversational AI, predictive modeling, complex simulations, and computer vision will continue to make positive impacts on businesses and society. The stark reality is that the volume of data being created daily is far exceeding the collective human capacity to make sense of it. I believe the human need to overcome this information overload will lead to even more innovation in analytics and AI.

AI

Trust and explainability are top priority. As organizations ramp up their adoption of AI models in their organization, trust and explainability will be the number one expected feature. You can't deploy hundreds of AI models in a business if the users/ consumers don't trust the results. AIdriven decisions must be defendable and explainable, especially when AI makes a recommendation or decision that is surprising or unintuitive.

Emergence of AI model

marketplaces. Coming soon are industry-specific AI model marketplaces that enable businesses to easily consume and integrate AI models in their business without having to create and manage the model lifecycle. Businesses will simply subscribe to an AI model store. Think of the Apple Music store or Spotify for AI models broken down by industry and data they process.

Data management becomes automated with AI. We continue to see organizations struggling to keep up with the speeds and feeds of their data, spending 80% of their time simply wrangling data and 20% of their time performing analysis and modeling. Over the next decade, one of the largest impacts AI can make to overcoming the information overload is by automating data management processes so customers can spend 80% of their time performing analysis and deploying more models into production.

Emerging Technologies Digital and synthetic twins take center stage. The next generation of the analytics life cycle will see a focus

BLOCKCHAIN AND ESPORTS INDUSTRIES WILL CONTINUE TO CONVERGE.





on simulating complex systems to help prepare for any possible scenario or disruptive event with digital and synthetic twins. Introducing rare events into our modelling and simulation will be key to understanding the highest probabilities of outcomes when the past is not a predictor of the future. From there, businesses can make rapid and resilient decisions to minimize risk and maximize profits.

Blockchain moves from hype to

mainstream. Blockchain will continue to evolve out of the hype cycle and into the of role of transforming more traditional business realms. Blockchain's strong connections to the emergence of NFTs, cryptocurrencies and other headline-grabbing technology developments can make blockchain appear unsuited to more traditional environments and challenges. But leaders across industries will need to find ways to square blockchain's exotic reputation with its practical, everyday potential capabilities to be a true force in business. Blockchain is the natural progression of how software reduces the cost of business.

Blockchain simplifies the mundane but

increases risk. Blockchain and cryptocurrency are disrupting traditional payment methods across multiple industries and a "blockchain bellwether," the financial services industry offers a glimpse of the future of blockchain. We are going to see blockchain move from away from high tech activations towards simplifying mundane and everyday processes like reading an article behind a paywall. Enabling microtransactions for online activities will give control back to content providers and offer new incentives for content owners to develop new markets and for others to discover content.

On the risk side, the decentralized digital currency supports a natural extension of the internet that isn't controlled by a centralized authority. And since money can be swapped almost instantly across blockchain platforms, it has created new avenues for money laundering and fraud. With heightened security and privacy threats of blockchain will come the need for analytics to predict and prevent risk.

Blockchain and esports converge.

Blockchain and esports industries will continue to converge and there will be blockchain-first built games in the next five to 10 years. Esports now relies heavily on analytics, machine learning and AI to provide a professional experience for many gamers and fans across the world. From finding parity in players during matches and analyzing interactions inside each universe to tracking and promoting inventory you can buy – the data to analyze in gaming is endless and will continue to grow.

PREDICTIONS // CLOUDFLARE

CHIEF ZERO TRUST OFFICER ROLE TO EMERGE WITHIN LARGER ORGANIZATIONS: CLOUDFLARE

John Engates, Field CTO at Cloudflare

he Rise of Chief Zero Trust Officer Over the last several years, ransomware, data breaches, and other cyber campaigns have been hugely disruptive and cost organizations and governments millions. In response, the Biden administration issued an executive order in May of 2021 to implement a Zero Trust security architecture across the federal government. While recent reports from the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) show some agencies are on track, others appear to be falling behind. When governments need to move quickly and cut across organizational boundaries, they often appoint a czar to take charge of a particular program and see it through to implementation or execution.

As private sector organizations embrace digital transformation and move their operations to the cloud, they too are looking to zero trust to help provide a robust and secure network infrastructure. Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) has emerged as a cloud-delivered convergence of network access and security services and is a common approach for enterprise zero trust adoption. The challenge however is that in many organizations, responsibility for networking and security live in different parts of the organization and these groups often rely on different vendors in their respective areas. Breaking down the silos between security and networking teams and choosing the right tools, products, and vendors to align with desired business outcomes is critical to implement zero trust in larger enterprises.

As pressure to implement zero trust intensifies, I predict that a role analogous to a "Chief Zero Trust Officer" will emerge within some large organizations. This person will be the zero trust czar for the enterprise and



will be the individual responsible for driving a company on its zero trust journey. Their job will be to bring together siloed organizations and vendors and ensure that all teams and departments are aligned and working toward the same goal. If resistance is encountered, the zero trust czar should have the backing of senior leadership (CIO, CISO, CEO, Board of Directors) to make decisions quickly and cut across organizational boundaries to keep the process moving ahead. Whether the very bold title of Chief Zero Trust Officer becomes reality or not, an empowered individual with a clear mandate and a singular focus may just be the key to getting zero trust across the finish line in 2023.

2023 Sees the Death of "The Password"

Phishing attacks continue to be a significant problem for companies around the world. Even with regular security awareness training, users will eventually click a wrong link and fall victim to an attack. And unfortunately most cyber attacks begin with a phishing email.

Cloudflare itself was attacked this year by a sophisticated, targeted SMS-based phishing attack. A total of 76 Cloudflare employees received the phishing link in text messages on their phones. Three employees fell for the attack and clicked the link and entered their credentials. But unphishable, multi-factor authentication in the form of FIDO2-compliant security keys in conjunction with zero trust access prevented the attacker from breaching our systems. Other companies that used less secure time-based one-time passwords (TOTP) weren't as lucky, and many were breached by the same attackers.

Username and password authentication even when combined with common forms of multi-factor authentication is just not enough anymore. Enterprises can enable stronger FIDO2-compliant security keys along with zero trust access today if they're using a system like Cloudflare's to make it much tougher on attackers.

But the best way to protect most users and their credentials may be to remove the burden on the end user altogether. The FIDO alliance envisions passwordless sign-in everywhere. Logins will use your face or fingerprint instead of the old username-password combo. A FIDO sign-in credential, sometimes called a "passkey", will make it easier on users and harder on the attackers. If there's no password to steal, hackers won't be able to harvest credentials to carry out their attacks. We predict many websites and applications will adopt passwordless login using the FIDO Alliance passkey standard beginning in 2023.

The Cloud Takes on Compliance

Governments around the world are rolling out new privacy regulations. In Europe, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which became enforceable in 2018 gives individuals more control over their personal data and how it's used. Other countries worldwide are following suit and using GDPR as a model. In the US, there are five states with new consumer privacy laws that take effect in 2023 and more states are considering legislation. And at the federal level, lawmakers are slowly putting forward their own privacy regulations with the American Data and Privacy Protection Act ("ADPPA") which is an online privacy bill that aims to regulate the gathering and storing of consumer data.

Companies must now understand and comply with this patchwork of regulations as they do business globally. How can organizations hope to stay current and build compliance into their applications and IT systems?

We believe the majority of cloud services will soon come with compliance features built in. The cloud itself should take the compliance burden off companies. Developers shouldn't be required to know exactly how and where their data can be legally stored or processed. The burden of compliance should largely be handled by the cloud services and tools developers are building with. Networking services should route traffic efficiently and securely while complying with all data sovereignty laws. Storage services should inherently comply with data residency regulations. And processing should adhere to relevant data localization standards.

Remote Browsers Resolve Device Complaints

Security policies, privacy laws, and regulations require all companies to protect their sensitive data; from where

THIS PERSON WILL BE THE ZERO TRUST CZAR FOR THE ENTERPRISE AND WILL BE THE INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBLE FOR DRIVING A COMPANY ON ITS ZERO TRUST JOURNEY. it's stored and processed, to where it's consumed in end-user applications. In the past, it was relatively straightforward to fully control end-user devices because they were often issued by and dedicated to company use only. But with the increasing use of personal smartphones and tablets, the bring-your-own-device (BYOD) trend has been picking up steam for several years and was even more readily embraced during the various stages of the global pandemic.

Looking ahead, it's our belief that this pendulum of BYOD will swing back toward tighter security and more control by the IT organization. The need to consistently enforce security policies and privacy controls will begin to outweigh the sense of urgency and demand for convenience we encountered during the last few years. But because so much of our digital lives live in a web browser, this control may take a different form than in the past. This new form will mean more control for IT administrators AND a better user experience for employees.

Browser Isolation is a clever piece of technology that essentially provides security through physical isolation. This technique creates a "gap" between a user's web browser and the endpoint device thereby protecting the device (and the enterprise network) from exploits and attacks. Remote browser isolation (RBI) takes this a step further by moving the browser to a remote service in the cloud. Cloud-based remote browsing isolates the end-user device from the enterprise's network while fully enabling IT control and compliance solutions.

Some say in this remote browsing model that "the browser is the device." Instead of BYOD, it might be appropriate to call this "BYOB" or Bring Your Own Browser. Most companies are looking to better balance the security and privacy needs of the company with the user experience and convenience for employees. At Cloudflare, we use our remote browser isolation in conjunction with zero trust access to protect our users and devices. It's completely transparent to users and strikes a perfect balance between security and user experience. We believe remote browser isolation will be embraced broadly as IT leaders become more aware of the benefit and just how well it works. 📟

HISENSE MEA PARTNERS CONFERENCE ENDS WITH UNFORGETTABLE FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Experience

Partners, distributors, and Hisense executives gathered in Qatar to go 'Beyond Limits', learn about regional successes, and company's growth plans for the future.

he 2022 Hisense Middle East and Africa (MEA) Partners Conference successfully concluded in Qatar. Hisense, the multinational home appliance, and consumer electronics manufacturer gathered more than 150 distributors, partners, and top Hisense executives in Doha for its partners meet for the semi-finals of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, of which Hisense is an official sponsor.

Under the theme of 'Beyond Limits', the aim of the Hisense MEA Partners Conference was to inspire attendees to achieve further growth and drive Hisense to become a market leader in the region's appliance and electronics retail segment.

"We have had a great 2022 and our next year's objective is to be the top performer in all the markets," said Jason Ou, President of Hisense Middle East & Africa. "The brands overall strategic approach has accelerated the brands positioning and competitiveness which we have witnessed in our increasing product demands. Parallelly, FIFA sponsorship was a big advantage for Hisense to increase its brand equity and awareness that gave us humungous exposure to lead in the market." Another highlight of Hisense's achievements lies in its enhanced operation capability. By incorporating the local culture and Hisense management philosophy, Hisense has successfully built 66 overseas companies, 23 R&D centers and 31 production bases, striking success in the global markets.





At the MEA Conference, Hisense regional leadership including Ismail Al Hurani, COO of Hisense Middle East and North Africa, Luna Nortje, Deputy General Manager of Hisense South Africa, Denis Ostir, Senior Director of VIDAA International, Angela, General Manager HA Product department of Hisense International, Allen Bie, General Manager AC

Product department of Hisense International, and Fazalur Rahman, Marketing Director of Hisense Middle East & Africa, took the opportunity to present the next 3 years vision and the blueprint of the strategic approach demonstrating Hisense's plans to accelerate the growth and momentum for business and brand development.

Key growth pillars include product competitiveness achieved through the launch of technology products that will further expand the current product line-up. Hisense will also be focusing

UNDER THE THEME OF 'BEYOND LIMITS', THE AIM OF THE HISENSE MEA PARTNERS CONFERENCE WAS TO INSPIRE ATTENDEES TO ACHIEVE FURTHER GROWTH. on penetrating the market across the MEA region to consolidate market share and fortify dominance in key regions. Lastly, Hisense will continue to build brand equity and raise awareness through various marketing initiatives, along with improving the current business infrastructure, establishing dedicated production bases and research & development centres to expand the service network, and launch additional brand stores across the MEA region over the next three years.

Furthermore, at the event, the attending partners also got a chance to witness the latest Hisense display technology like Laser TV, premium range of ULED TV, Smart range of Home Appliances as well as the latest Mini-Led 8K TV model.

Following the success of the MEA Partners Conference, 150 attending partners were taken to watch the FIFA World Cup 2022TM Semi Final match between the Argentina and Croatia. It indeed was an impeccable experience for all the partners to witness the match from the stadium. OPINION // FRESHWORKS

AI CHATBOTS COULD HELP OVERCOME WORKFORCE CONSTRAINTS

he war for talent is playing out across the globe, and UAE employers are no exception. Many are experiencing huge challenges in recruiting and retaining the people they need to thrive and grow. Demand for skilled employees has never been higher and competition for talent is fierce, exacerbated by factors such as remote work, new types of visas, a greater focus on flexibility by employees and more.

There's no doubt that employees are at the heart of an organisation and it's their efforts that enable businesses to succeed. That said, it's not always easy or feasible to fuel growth and expansion – especially in times of economic uncertainty – by growing the workforce. In the current climate, it's increasingly difficult to attract and keep good people, and that heavily impacts a business's ability to satisfy customers.

Turning to technology is therefore an attractive solution. And tech is certainly an effective way to streamline businesses and create efficiencies. But with artificial intelligence (AI) being touted as the silver bullet to all business challenges, actually implementing practical use cases can be both challenging and intimidating.

Given the talent crunch, conversational AI is a smart place to start. This is the tech that allows chatbots, or virtual agents, to have online conversations. This AI subset uses concepts like machine learning, neural networks and natural language processing (NLP) to build chatbots that can engage customers virtually and rapidly resolve their issues.

Here's how conversational AI can help fuel the expansion of organisations, without the need for hiring extra resources.

24/7 support on any channel

Conversational AI chatbots can support customers on any channel all day, every day. This means it doesn't matter where your customers are from, or what time they reach out – the AI chatbots are ready to engage. You can make them available on your website, and on social channels



Head, Middle East & Africa, Freshworks

like Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp. This is a great service for customers, who can get in touch using their favourite channels, whenever it suits them.

These chatbots can smoothly handle simple questions or issues and, furthermore, they can then add more information to provide an even better service. Rather than simply explaining how to return an item, for example, the conversational AI chatbot can then ask the customer what was wrong with the product. This not only gives customers a better experience, it also gives your business some useful immediate feedback.

Of course, organisations should expect there to be more complex queries that a chatbot cannot resolve. But in such cases, these bots can either pass the conversation immediately to an agent, or gather details for an agent to follow up on as soon as they can. Either way, it keeps customers happy as they aren't ignored out of standard working hours, and expectations have been set. Not only that, the agent will have the information they need, empowering them to more readily resolve the issue.

Provide multilingual support

People generally prefer to be spoken to in their native language, with research showing that you can boost the likelihood of repeat buys by 73% if you provide support in your customers' native language. Because the UAE is made up of a diverse mix of cultures and has a huge expat population, many organisations need to support different languages. And not only that, as your company grows, you'll potentially start winning customers from other regions and countries. This is particularly likely today as most businesses have a digital presence, making it easier to reach a global audience. It's even more important to be able to provide multilingual support to all customers if this is the case.

Of course, it's not viable to employ people from every region to serve customers in their native language. With conversational AI chatbots, you can provide multilingual support as they're equipped with translation software. This is an extremely useful resource, particularly for companies operating in a multilingual region such as the Middle East.

Enable upselling

Chatbots are increasingly commonly used to resolve customer tickets and issues. However, conversational AI chatbots can also be used to upsell to customers – and so far, this capability is much less widely utilised. These chatbots can understand customer preferences and context by making enquiries and learning from their purchase history and cart details. This enables them to provide relevant recommendations to upsell and crosssell, suggesting products and services that customers might want.

Conversational messaging and this kind of proactivity is an excellent way to engage customers, and the technology can be utilised to reach out to customers with updates, reminders and campaigns based on visitor activity. Companies can use AI chatbots to collect visitor data over time and can use that information to qualify leads, and then to assist the sales team with converting those leads.

Beating the talent crunch with conversational AI

There are many benefits to utilising conversational AI chatbots. Implementing a conversational messaging solution improves customer satisfaction, while at the same time streamlining processes. During this era where companies are fighting for talent, it's never more important to make teams more efficient – and happier – by automating simple, repetitive tasks and focusing resources on more skilled and higher-value activities.



O

Growing "True" Value-Added IT Distributor the Middle East regions with on-the-ground presence in 7 countries

The Bastest Growing VAD

www.gulfitd.com





Jears of Excellence

As we mark this grand milestone, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to those without whom, this would not have been possible - Our Dear Customers, Partners & Employees.

