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INNOVATION AT HEART

SAKKEER HUSSAIN, DIRECTOR - SALES & MARKETING, D-LINK MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA, ON HOW THE COMPANY HAS CONSISTENTLY BEEN LEADING THE MARKET IN TERMS OF OFFERING UNIQUE, CUTTING-EDGE PRODUCTS AND SOLUTIONS THAT EQUIP PARTNERS AND CUSTOMERS TO CONFIDENTLY BUILD THEIR OPERATIONS IN THE DIGITAL ERA.

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STRATEGIC VAD PARTNER



ISSUE 305 // MARCH 2023



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INNOVATION IS KEY

Attracting and retaining customers in the digital world is no longer just about service levels and product offerings, but also about world class experiences and innovation across every touchpoint. The success of any innovation is in its adoption, and the key to driving adoption is in customer engagement.

In the channel industry, in particular, innovation is the need of the hour. To innovate means to survive, it means to thrive. At a time when the market is at a tumultuous high and business dynamics is changing every day, the channel industry needs to be alive and alert to these ups and downs, if it is to maximise business outcomes.

Our cover story with Sakkeer Hussain of D-Link discusses how the company has adopted an innovation-first policy that cuts through the heart of all its operations. Sakkeer talks of how D-Link's products and solutions are equipping their partners and customers to confidently build their operations in the digital era.

We also have special interviews with DICOTA, Trigon and WSO2, to name a few, where senior officials discuss how their strategy and vision for the future have resulted in business growth and stability.

But that's not all this time. We have two very special features lined up: One, on the leading Women in the Channel Industry and Two, on the just-concluded Women In technology Forum & Awards 2023, which was a resounding success by all accounts. We take you, image by image, word for word, through both these features, which are sure to delight and entertain.

Of course, we have the regular columns and opinion pieces, all of which examine and spotlight the need to change in tune with the times. So make sure you don't miss your copy, Happy Reading!



EQUIPPING PARTNERS TO INNOVATE

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MICROSOFT UAE TO HOST IGNITE SPOTLIGHT TECHNOLOGY EVENT FOR DEVELOPERS & IT DECISION MAKERS

Microsoft UAE has announced the return of Ignite Spotlight, an event related to Microsoft Ignite – the company’s flagship networking and skilling summit for technology enthusiasts. Returning as an in-person event, tailored to individual markets, Microsoft Ignite Spotlight is aimed to empower the region’s technical decision-makers and developers’ communities.

Microsoft Ignite Spotlight will follow the Microsoft global Ignite flagship event, and attendance will be by invitation only. The 9th March skilling day will feature in-person sessions conducted by Microsoft experts including demos, skills training and technology update sessions. The Spotlight breakout sessions will support the five themes of the flagship but add localised dimensions to give attendees the ability to design and build more flexible, scalable, and more secure digital solutions that enhance experiences for customers and employees.



“Our key aim for Ignite Spotlight is to teach local audiences about maximising productivity utilising the Microsoft Cloud,” said Naim Yazbeck, General Manager, Microsoft UAE. “Ignite Spotlight takes our empowerment of the region’s developer community one stage further as we host

a special event for the key innovators who are leading digital transformation across the Middle East. They will be able to enhance their skills and learn how to optimise supply chains and enhance workflows through automation, to bring new efficiencies to their ventures.”

A10 NETWORKS’ NEW SERVICE ADDRESSES EXPANDING CYBER THREAT LANDSCAPE

In response to the growing demand from customers for tools that will help defend against DDoS attacks, A10 Networks has announced that it is launching A10 Defend, a pilot software-as-a-service (SaaS) offering, with threat insights combining unique network traffic know-how and analyses of indicators of compromise used to carry out attacks. A10 uses internal networking expertise working across a large global customer base along with cybersecurity research to create unique and actionable insights into our customers’ use case needs.

A10 Networks’ own research now tracks upwards of 15.4 million DDoS weapons. This presents a significant threat to organisations, large and small. At the same time, customers are increasingly overwhelmed with new security solutions, a lack of expertise and compressed budgets during a time of economic uncertainty.

“Our deep understanding of network traffic combined with primary research into cybersecurity helps us to tailor the service as an enhancement for customer vertical industries as opposed to generic cybersecurity solutions. This service further enhances A10’s solutions to provide customers with timely, relevant and tailored threat insights required to better protect their networks,” said Dhrupad Trivedi, president and CEO of A10 Networks.



TENABLE TO SHOWCASE EXPOSURE MANAGEMENT PLATFORM AT GISEC 2023

Tenable, Inc., the Exposure Management company, will exhibit at GISEC Global, taking place at the Dubai World Trade Centre from March 14 - 16, 2023. At the event, Tenable will showcase its Tenable One Exposure Management Platform and Tenable OT Security (formerly known as Tenable.ot).

“For too long the security industry has created point solutions that focus on very specific aspects of cybersecurity,” said Maher Jadallah, Senior Director Middle East & North Africa, Tenable. “Tenable has challenged this approach, enabling customers to proactively address, manage and reduce cyber risk across their entire infrastructure — be it cloud, IoT, OT or other platforms. Our team will be on hand at GISEC to help visitors understand how they can focus their efforts to prevent likely attacks, and accurately communicate cyber risk to their business partners to improve performance cross-functionally.”

The Tenable team will be offering demonstrations of its new Tenable One Exposure Management Platform, as well as Tenable Vulnerability Management formerly known as Tenable.io®, Tenable Security Center (formerly known as Tenable.sc), Tenable OT Security, and Tenable Identity Exposure (formerly known as Tenable.ad) from booth A85.



JUNIPER NETWORKS BRINGS MORE SIMPLICITY, SCALE AND SECURITY TO ENTERPRISE NETWORKING



Juniper Networks, a leader in secure, AI-driven networks, has announced a new cloud-hosted campus fabric workflow that facilitates the successful deployment of enterprise networks to expedite time-to-service and minimise troubleshooting costs. In addition, the new Juniper Networks EX4400-24X distribution switch delivers the power of Mist AI and the cloud to enterprise campus distribution deployments and low-density data center top-of-rack environments. These additions to Juniper's award-winning wired switching portfolio bring even more scale, performance and security to the AI-driven enterprise.

"Traditional on-premises solutions for microsegmentation are extremely complex to deploy and manage, making it difficult

to achieve their full promise of security and flexibility," said Sudheer Matta, Group VP Product, AI-driven Enterprise at Juniper. "The latest addition to our AI-driven enterprise solutions solves this, combining the power of Mist AI and the simplicity of cloud with standards-based EVPN/VXLAN to create a secure, open and seamless solution for campus fabrics with additional microsegmentation capabilities."

Earlier in the year, Juniper received the 2022 Gartner Peer Insights Customers' Choice distinction in Enterprise Wired and Wireless LAN Infrastructure, which recognises vendors and products rated by end users. Juniper has an overall rating of 4.9 out of 5 based on 469 reviews as of December 23, 2022.

BULWARK PARTNERS WITH CONTINUITY TO SECURE ENTERPRISE STORAGE & BACKUP SYSTEMS

Continuity, a leading provider of cyber resilience solutions, has announced its partnership with Bulwark Distribution FZCO. Together, the two companies are dedicated to securing organisations' storage and backup systems, to withstand ransomware and other cyberattacks.

The partnership is based on Continuity's StorageGuard, a security posture management solution that will enable Bulwark's channel partners and system integrators across United Arab Emirates and other GCC countries & the Indian sub-continent regions, to automatically detect, prioritise and remediate vulnerabilities and security misconfigurations in their clients' storage and backup systems. This will help them protect their data, and ensure recoverability.

Enterprise storage and backup systems are becoming a growing target for ransomware. Cybercriminals realise that an



attack on a single storage or backup system is the biggest determining factor to show if an organisation will pay the ransom.

"StorageGuard is an exciting innovation that fills a gap for our customers. For the first time, our partners can help their clients harden their storage and backup systems, to improve cyber resiliency and data protection. Organisations will be able to automatically detect all security risks, and prioritise them in order of urgency and business impact," said Jose Menacherry, Managing Director at Bulwark Technologies.

MANAGEENGINE TO SHOWCASE RECENTLY-ENHANCED SIEM SOLUTION AT GISEC 2023



ManageEngine, the enterprise IT management division of Zoho Corporation, has announced its participation in the upcoming Gulf Information Security Expo & Conference (GISEC) to be held at the Dubai World Trade Centre on March 14-16, 2023. Having first participated in 2013, this year's edition will mark 10 years of ManageEngine's presence at the premier security event.

"The digital ecosystem is fast evolving due to technological advancements. But so are the threat actors. Unsurprisingly, cybersecurity remains the top priority for CIOs and CISOs in the region. Organisations should focus on identifying high-risk vulnerabilities and address them immediately. GISEC offers us a great platform to showcase our powerful cybersecurity capabilities and help address the security concerns of organisations," said Nirmal Kumar Manoharan, Regional Director of ManageEngine.

ManageEngine will showcase all its security offerings, including its SIEM solution, Log360, to which a security and risk posture management dashboard was recently added. This new feature offers granular visibility into weak and risky security configurations of systems and users. It also continuously assesses the Active Directory security risk posture based on Microsoft's security guidelines. These security and risk posture management features will help enterprises implement a proactive security strategy and prevent cyberattacks before they occur.

HID AND IPASSPORT TO BRING NEW IDENTITY VERIFICATION SOLUTIONS TO THE TRANSPORTATION SECTOR

HID, a worldwide leader in trusted identity and physical security solutions, and iPassport, a provider of solutions that enable organisations to implement digital identity technologies, recently signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on a new identity verification solution for the transportation industry. This solution will make its debut at the Passenger Terminal EXPO 2023, March 14-16 at HID Booth #1244.

Navigating through the airport requires a sequence of touchpoints and processes—from check-in to baggage drop, security checkpoint, all the way to retail/duty-free shopping, lounge access and boarding. And with millions of travelers experiencing delays, cancellations, baggage mix-ups and the continued strain on airport staff, the passenger journey has become more complex than ever.

Airlines need reliable and swift identity verification to provide passengers with



a secure, seamless journey that's long overdue.

"Today, moving through an airport securely requires an ongoing and seamless identity verification system that not only enhances the passenger experience, but also optimizes efficiencies for everyone. HID is excited to collaborate with iPassport to bring this new solution to

market," says Vito Fabbriozio, Managing Director of Biometrics, Extended Access Technologies at HID.

With HID's modular approach, airlines and airport operators are now able to add identity verification capabilities quickly and easily to existing systems without having to "rip-and-replace" or perform expensive migrations to a new platform altogether.

NOORVIA FZCO- SPECIALIST TECHNOLOGY DISTRIBUTOR, SIGNS DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT WITH NEAT

Under the agreement, Noorvia will deliver Neat's solutions in GCC and Egypt.

Neat designs simple and elegant video devices that make virtual meetings feel almost as natural as meeting face-to-face. Seamlessly bringing rich and meaningful experiences to people's work, interactions, and lives across any meeting space, Neat devices have crystal-clear audio and video and advanced capabilities supporting an enhanced, engaging, and safer hybrid working and learning environment.

"Neat's Global Partner Program has enjoyed great success to date, and we are excited to expand the program to include Noorvia," said Wayne Mason, EMEA/APAC Distribution Lead at Neat.

"We share a passion for solving customer challenges in the meeting space and delivering innovations that drive the future of video collaboration. We look forward to working closely with Noorvia to make Neat meeting spaces even more accessible to businesses of all sizes across GCC and Egypt. Together, Neat and Noorvia will serve as a force with channel partners, to address the current pain points of



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meeting room solutions. We are confident that Noorvia's market expertise will allow us to expand our reach in the region and introduce organizations to the best and neat way possible," Mason added.

"We all faced the challenge of virtual meetings, the personal touch was missing, enterprises are in real need of a simple solution that actually works," said Nirmal

Menon, Director- Channel and Sales, of Noorvia. The portfolio from Neat is catering the needs of phone booth rooms, executive offices, hotdesking, small, medium to large conference rooms, and collaboration rooms. We invite all channel partners and end users to our innovation center in JAFZA to experience the wonder of AI-enabled and Microsoft Teams, Zoom-certified devices of Neat.

CRESTAN SIGNS STRATEGIC DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT WITH YOGOSHA FOR MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

This agreement will aim to easily enhance enterprises security posture with Yogosha's unique Vulnerability Operations Center (VOC).

Crestan, a value-added distributor in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, today announced a partnership with Yogosha for the distribution of the vendor's Vulnerability Operations Center (VOC) platform in the MENA region.

Yogosha was founded in 2015 by entrepreneurs & long-time infosec enthusiasts who shared the same vision: build a safer world by bridging the gap between communities and people working towards a better security. That means organizations and ethical hackers, but also CISOs, developers, security teams...

Yogosha has designed a VOC – a Vulnerability Operations Center.

- A hub to detect, manage and fix vulnerabilities.
- A platform to bring together all communities – CISOs, ethical



BY COMBINING CRESTAN'S EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES WITH YOGOSHA'S STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY EXPERTS, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT WE CAN HELP OUR CLIENTS STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE .



hackers, dev and sec teams...

- A battleground to run multiple security operations – VDP, penetration testing and bug bounty.
- A command center to oversee all vulnerability management strategies.

Sandra Salame, General Manager at Crestan International, commented "By combining Crestan's expertise and resources with Yogosha's state-of-the-art technology and security experts, we are confident that we can help our clients stay ahead of the



curve when it comes to cybersecurity threats. Together with Yogosha, Crestan is committed to educating the market and securing organizations, by finding vulnerabilities before they are exploited by malicious actors. We are thrilled to be part of this mission and look forward to a fruitful partnership with Yogosha."

Oliver Quix, Regional director at Yogosha, added "Today, Yogosha is growing very quickly throughout the Middle East Region. Crestan's expertise will allow us to stabilize this growth and have an even further reach throughout the Gulf. With Crestan's resources and commitment and Yogosha's talented researcher community and innovative Vulnerability Operations Center, the goal is simple: find vulnerabilities before the wrong hackers do, educate the market and secure local institutions. Yogosha is sure that this is the right time and place to step up the offensive security game, but together with Crestan, we go from 'sure' to 'confident' !" 



REDEFINING DISTRIBUTION

Anita Joseph caught up with Kamran Khayal, General Manager at Trigon, to find out how technology adoption and a customer-first strategy have helped the company stay ahead of a demanding market.


In a distribution market that is highly competitive, how does Trigon manage to stand out and be the leader?

Trigon, as a leader in a highly competitive distribution market, has been able to maintain its position due to a combination of various factors. Trigon has built a strong brand image over the years, which has helped us attract new

customers and retain existing ones. Our reputation for quality products, excellent service and reliability has made Trigon the preferred choice for many customers in the regional ICT distribution market.

We at Trigon, believe in strong supplier and customer relationships. Trigon has established strong relationships with its suppliers over the years, which enables them to offer a wide range of high-quality products at competitive prices. This has helped us to differentiate from our competitors

and gain a loyal customer base. Also, Trigon focuses on a customer-centric approach. We have always placed a strong emphasis on understanding the needs of our customers and providing them with personalised service. We have a dedicated team of professionals who work closely with customers to identify their requirements and provide customized solutions. Another important factor which differentiates us from others is our efficient logistics and distribution network which enables us to deliver products to our customers



WE AT TRIGON, BELIEVE IN STRONG SUPPLIER AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS.





in a timely and cost-effective manner. This has helped us to improve customer satisfaction and gain a competitive advantage. Trigon has been quick to adopt new technologies and innovative solutions to enhance their product offerings and improve customer experience. For instance, we have recently added brands like HikVision and Hisense to our portfolio which will offer innovative and reliable security solutions. Overall, Trigon's success can be attributed to a combination of these factors, which has helped us to stand out from our competitors and become the leader in the highly competitive distribution market.

How would you describe the distribution market in the Middle East?

The distribution market in the Middle East is diverse and complex, with variations across countries and regions. In general, the distribution market is characterized by a mix of large and small players, including multinational corporations and local businesses. The distribution market in the Middle East is also affected by various factors such as government policies, economic conditions, and social and cultural factors. For example, some countries in the region have imposed regulations on foreign companies operating in the distribution market, which can impact the market structure and competition. One notable trend in the distribution market in the Middle East is the increasing adoption of technology, particularly e-commerce platforms. This has been driven in part by the

COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting shift towards online shopping. Overall, the distribution market in the Middle East is dynamic and evolving, with both challenges and opportunities for businesses operating in the region.

Innovation is at the core of Trigon's activities. How does Trigon incorporate innovation into its daily operations?


As a leading ICT Distributor with a strong legacy of 25+ years, Trigon understands the importance of innovation and how it can drive growth and success in today's constantly evolving market. Trigon incorporates innovation into its daily operations in several ways to stay ahead of the curve in terms of new technologies and trends. This allows the company to provide its clients with the latest and most innovative solutions in the market. Trigon works closely with its technology partners to identify new and emerging technologies that can add value to its clients. By leveraging these partnerships, Trigon can offer its clients innovative solutions that meet their evolving needs. We, at Trigon, provide its employees with regular training and development programs to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to work with the latest technologies and offer innovative solutions to clients. We are quick to embrace new technologies and trends to stay ahead of the curve and offer innovative solutions.

Overall, Trigon's commitment to innovation is a key factor in its success as an IT distributor. By incorporating

innovation into its daily operations, Trigon can stay ahead of the competition and provide its clients with the most innovative solutions in the market.

What are your plans for the region this year?

Our plans for the market this year include:

- Analysing market trends and identifying emerging technologies to expand product offerings.
- Improving customer service and support by investing in better training and tools for customer-facing staff.
- Strengthening relationships with suppliers to ensure timely and reliable delivery of products.
- Developing a comprehensive marketing strategy to increase brand awareness and drive sales.
- Implementing a robust inventory management system to optimize stock levels and reduce costs.
- Investing in cybersecurity measures to ensure the protection of sensitive customer and company data.
- Developing and implementing strategies to enhance the company's online presence and e-commerce capabilities.
- Streamlining internal processes and operations to increase efficiency and reduce costs.
- Expanding into new markets or regions through strategic partnerships or acquisitions.
- Keeping up with regulatory changes and compliance requirements in the industry. 



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A big congratulations to ALL our award winners who were recognised for their outstanding contributions to tackling the biggest issues in the cybersecurity space.

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SASE - AN EMERGING ENABLER OF ENTERPRISE EDGE NETWORKING

Mohammad Jamal Tabbara, Head of Solutions Architect, Middle East, Turkey, & Africa at Infoblox



First identified by Gartner in 2019, Secure access service edge or SASE is a new model for networking and security designed to meet the growing demand for network architectures that are more fluid, secure, and easy to manage.

The SASE concept addresses the network complexities associated with distributed enterprises. It is a response to the constraints of traditional hub-and-spoke architectures, tool proliferation, siloed solutions, and manual processes that prevent organisations from moving at cloud speed. A SASE network merges networking and security capabilities, is built using cloud-native principles, is delivered in the cloud on an on-demand, SaaS basis and relies on DDI as a foundational, unifying layer.

It is anticipated that in the future, we might see AI playing a crucial role in SASE network security by enabling real-time threat detection and response, as machine learning algorithms can soon be able to train itself to detect anomalies and patterns in network traffic, allowing organisations to respond quickly to potential threats or even trigger an automatic remediation on both security and network levels.

SASE: simplifying the network edge

Using cloud-native architectures, SASE unifies networking and security into a single platform, informed with the

user's network context. Organisations deploy and manage a SASE network from the cloud as SaaS-based capabilities.

In a SASE framework, the burden of managing and securing a network moves from labor-intensive, server-based appliances in the data center to virtual and containerised applications in the cloud. As a result, SASE networks enable organisations to:

- Simplify management
- Scale elastically
- Dynamically deploy networking and security capabilities as needed
- Consume versatile network and security capabilities as cloud-based applications

Key integration capabilities missing from SASE implementations

You might be forgiven for assuming that if you deploy a unified SASE platform, your network would consequently be enterprise-grade at the edge. If only it were that simple. Unfortunately, SASE implementations currently lack essential integration necessary for enterprise-edge networking. That should come as no surprise. After all, the vital integration we're referring to here involves the same core network services that most IT, networking, and security organisations consistently undervalue.



USING CLOUD-NATIVE ARCHITECTURES, SASE UNIFIES NETWORKING AND SECURITY INTO A SINGLE PLATFORM, INFORMED WITH THE USER'S NETWORK CONTEXT.

How core network services enable SASE networks


In a SASE model, networking and security capabilities are intended to be tightly integrated and interoperable. And yet, to achieve its full potential for integration, a SASE-based platform must be able to harness the network services that are common to all networking and security functions — DNS, DHCP, and IP address management. Most SASE implementations, as currently offered, do not adequately integrate these services into their platforms. When incorporated as a foundational layer in SASE-based networking, core network services deliver the following advantages:

- **Centralised visibility.**
Data residing in core network

services provide enhanced network visibility for SASE implementations, enabling networking and security teams to monitor and manage devices and application usage centrally across physical, virtual, and cloud infrastructure.

- **Network user context.**
Similarly, core network services, such as DNS, enable SASE deployments to optimise network operations and automatically secure application access at the edge.
- **Local survivability for distributed locations.**
Resilience is a top priority for a SASE network. Applied effectively, core network services can ensure continuous Internet access for distributed locations any time they lose connectivity to headquarters.

Cloud-native delivery for core network services

The SASE framework emphasises the use of cloud-native design in networking components. As you weigh your options for incorporating core network services into the design of your edge network, seek out solutions built using cloud-native microservices and containers. Containerised instances of DDI services are faster and easier to manage than virtualised alternatives. They also consume far fewer resources and deliver extremely low latency, providing you with the dexterity and resilience you need at the network edge. 



TRANSFORMING THE CLOUD

Uday Shankar Kizhepat, Vice President and General Manager- Middle East and Africa Region, WSO2 tells Anita Joseph how WSO2's cutting-edge solutions give enterprises the flexibility to deploy applications and services on-premises, on private or public clouds, or in hybrid environments.



What were some of your milestones for 2022?

WSO2's mission is to help enterprises create awesome digital experiences quickly, easily and securely. Our focus was to provide deployment flexibility to our customers whether it was on premise, on a private cloud or a public cloud. In 2022, we went a step further and announced our SaaS models as well. This has been possible with the launch of Choreo and Asgardeo which significantly lowers the skills, time, and cost barriers in delivering the new and secure digital experiences.

As an organisation, we had a successful 2022 as we received recognition from leading analysts like KuppingerCole and Forrester. We also completed our Series E funding round with \$93 million investment from Goldman Sachs and Info Edge. We established a sales presence in Saudi Arabia and enhanced it by forging partnerships with renowned partners in the Kingdom. We also hosted our very first partner-led customer event in Saudi Arabia with attendees from the banking, healthcare and government sectors. This has accelerated in securing customers from



OUR VISION FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS IS TO EXPAND OUR CUSTOMER BASE IN NEWER MARKETS WITHIN OUR REGION BY ONBOARDING NEW PARTNERS AND ESTABLISHING AND ENHANCING OUR PARTNER NETWORK.

various industries in KSA ranging from reputed universities to the government institutions. WSO2 also expanded its customer base to 6 new countries in 2022.

What new products / launches we can expect in 2023?

While we continue to enhance our products - Choreo and Asgardeo - we will also be launching our WSO2 API platform for Kubernetes around Q2. This is aimed at supporting multiple use cases in the cloud-native, Kubernetes environment. We also plan to conduct more customer workshops in key markets this year to help customers understand our product roadmap and leverage our solutions in a more effective manner.

What initiatives have WSO2 taken to increase its global presence and support its customers?

In the last few years, WSO2 has expanded its community of developers, engineers, partners and customers through our worldwide offices. We have also expanded our channel network to 150+ global partners and also empowered and enabled them through our training and certification programs conducted by our WSO2 trainers.

Participation in various industry events across the globe such as GITEX in the Middle East and the Gartner summits & Symposium have supported our objective of increasing our regional and global brand recognition.


How are you gearing up for the next few months?

Our vision for the next few months is to expand our customer base in newer markets within our region by onboarding new partners and establishing and enhancing our partner network in the regions we operate in. We are also providing expert architecture reviews and customer support team insights as additional services to help customers in their digital transformation journeys.

We are planning a Suhoor networking event for our customers in the Middle East and Saudi Arabia during the Holy Month of Ramadan in 2023.

What can customers and industry players expect from you in this quarter?

We are now fully ready to offer multiple deployment options to our prospects and customers across private cloud and public cloud options, in addition to traditional on-premise deployments. The launch of our SaaS models will help customers to start their digital transformation journey with less capital expenditure.

The continued drive by governments to mandate open APIs in verticals, such as banking and healthcare, has increased the demand for our Open Banking and Open Healthcare accelerators. While it may not be the first country in the Middle East to introduce open banking, the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) made an important announcement at the start of 2023 issuing instructions to banks to begin sharing information via open banking application programming interfaces (APIs). The new framework is expected to come into force at the end of 2023, giving banks less than a year to comply and release their own open banking APIs. Customers can leverage our specialised partner network in their areas of business to help them in this process. 

MARKETING WITH A DIFFERENCE

In an exclusive to Reseller ME, Sirin Akrouk, the newly appointed Marketing Manager for Middle East and Emerging Africa, Pure Storage, opens up about her role, responsibilities, background and challenges that women in the technology field face.

Tell us about yourself: your educational background and years of experience

I am a passionate Marketer by education and experience. I hold a Business Administration degree with a minor in Marketing from The American University of Rome as well as a Master's degree in Marketing, Management, Communications and Media at the Paris Sorbonne University in 2015.

I started my career 18 years ago at an agency before making the switch to the client side to work for USAID's program, Local Economic Development in the Communications division in Jordan. In 2008, I made the decision to move to Dubai to join Microsoft as part of the Central Marketing Team for the Gulf region. Since then, I have worked at Intel and Oracle leading marketing, communications and customer advocacy.

I am excited to join Pure Storage as a Regional Marketing Manager for the Middle East and Emerging

Africa region to share my knowledge and experience and be part of the company's growth.

Tell us about your new role and responsibilities

My role is to bring exciting marketing strategies in alignment with Sales and Channel teams to create brand awareness and increase pipeline for the Middle East and Emerging Africa region. Bringing together the entire customer and partner ecosystem to create co-marketing plans that help achieve results is top priority. I am also eager to engage with third parties to stay up-to-date with market trends.

What are some of the challenges that women entering the technology field face?

From both personal experience and speaking to my network, women can feel outnumbered, find it hard to manage work-life-balance and overcome stereotypes and biases. However, a lot has changed and there are more and more women working across technology. I find the tech industry is amongst the best in offering measures to help achieve a good work-



balance. For any women entering the industry, I'd advise to surround yourself with people who support and appreciate you, can coach and guide you along a successful career.

Do you think there needs to be more inclusion and diversity in the technology space?

It's essential for all companies regardless of the industry to embrace inclusion and diversity. Companies have a lot to gain as it brings fresh perspectives to tackle work challenges and make the workplace more appealing to attract a wider range of talent. Though there's always room for improvement, I feel that the technology industry is doing a lot in this regard.

What are some of the unique leadership qualities that women bring to the table?

Although I wouldn't want to generalise and paint all women with the same brush, from my personal experience, women tend to bring certain qualities such as empathy, collaboration, good listening skills, better understanding of work-life-balance and sharing success. RME



**BRINGING TOGETHER THE ENTIRE
CUSTOMER AND PARTNER
ECOSYSTEM TO CREATE CO-
MARKETING PLANS THAT HELP
ACHIEVE RESULTS IS TOP PRIORITY.**



INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Michael Mühlenbruch – CSO at DICOTA, tells Anita Joseph how the company's people-first strategy has made it the first choice among clients and the general public.

Tell us about **DICOTA'S market strategy? How have you managed to consolidate your market presence especially, particularly post pandemic, when everything's changing and market demands are shifting?**

We were on the sunny side when the pandemic started, so when it hit, there was a huge demand and a huge need for all our customers, to get themselves equipped with mobile & home office equipment. On the other hand, the pandemic also showed us our potential weaknesses and forced us to speed up the process, invest in IT infrastructure and get a better grip on our data. You can well imagine, how during the 30 years, you collect so much customer data and information; you sell millions of notebook bags, so behind every

notebook bag, there are customers and demands. So, we started to invest in that segment after the pandemic, to tap into new markets and also develop our existing markets further. For us at DICOTA, the pandemic situation was an opportunity, rather than a challenge.

Tell us about the Middle East and India markets for DICOTA-how important are they for your overall growth?

They're absolutely important in terms of growth, when you just count the population in those markets, we see an extremely fast-moving area and territory, a lot of new industries in that segment and also immense potential. So, that's one of the reasons why within one year, we tripled our sales force. The region even got a dedicated access to our product development. So, it's not only acting on

our observations, it's also bringing and executing that on a local level. We strive to understand what our market needs are in that region and how to generate more of a pull going forward. Partnerships also present strong growth prospects in this region, so the team is working on new and existing partnership to strengthen our presence in the region.

What is DICOTA's USP that makes it stand out from the rest of competition?

In principle, it's the people. We're an owner-based company of 65 people who are very dedicated and passionate. We don't have any huge financial investors in our back who put us under pressure, so we are free to take important decisions on a daily basis that favour our customers. Our size makes us



extremely agile, so we're super-fast in adapting to the situations, both before and after the pandemic. This makes us take decisions quickly and execute those decisions at great speed. I think "Time to Market" is a crucial aspect in such a dynamic market environment.

With digital transformation accelerating post the pandemic and market dynamics constantly changing, have you had to reassess your sales and marketing strategies and approach your operations from a different perspective?

Yes, of course, we were forced to. We all know that during the pandemic, most of the retail stores and touch points were closed. So, we needed to find ways to reach out to our clients and customers. Coming, historically, from an indirect sales model, always depending on distributors and

partners, one needs to redefine one's strategy, and that's exactly what we did.



WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT CREATING ADDITIONAL VALUE BRINGS US ANOTHER STEP CLOSER TO OUR CLIENTS.

Not only that, the market has also changed dramatically. Distributors are becoming retailers and online is becoming a distribution arena, so we figured that we need to focus on the next layer. So, we now focus on addressing our clients, no matter whether they're consumers or B2B clients. Therefore, we put a lot of effort on social media and use new tools and techniques to resonate better with them. We firmly believe that creating additional value brings us another step closer to our clients.

With regard to our resellers, we initiated six months ago, a loyalty program whereby they get special training, promotions and offers and also a chance to earn points which they can exchange these points for whatever they like. So, at the end of the day, we want to be a friend and partner to the channel and that's exactly what we're focused on, going forward. DM

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INNOVATION AT HEART

Sakkeer Hussain, Director - Sales & Marketing, D-Link Middle East & Africa, on how the company has consistently been leading the market in terms of offering unique, cutting-edge products and solutions that equip partners and customers to confidently build their operations in the digital era.

D-Link is at the forefront of innovation and technological excellence. Tell us how its products and solutions line have evolved over the years.

At D-Link, we passionately embrace innovation and strive towards continuous and constant technological excellence to create relevant and reliable products and solutions. We ensure our products are designed, keeping the customer needs at the heart of everything we do. Over the years, we have been

in sync with market requirements and have accordingly launched new offerings. The networking and cloud business have evolved and seen a significant uptake and increased receptiveness in the market, leading us to create solutions and products that are not only aesthetic in design but also cloud-based and cutting-edge. We have incorporated the latest technologies in our entire line of offerings, from 5G and Wi-Fi 6 to cloud, AI and Automation. D-Link products and solutions are equipping our partners and customers to confidently build their operations in the digital era.

How would you describe the Middle East market for D-Link's products?

The Middle East continues to be a high growth market for D-Link. The potential of the region is at its peak as increasingly customers are looking to adopt cloud strategies and implement cloud-first models. The Middle East market contributes significantly to our overall revenues. We have been consistently growing year-on-year in this region and even recorded a growth during the pandemic, thanks to our timely and relevant solutions. We are confident this year too we will close on high double digits.



**WE ARE EXCITED
FOR WHAT THE
FUTURE HOLDS IN THE
NETWORKING, CLOUD
AND SECURITY SPACE.**

Digital transformation is on the fast track now. How is D-Link helping customers and partners seamlessly transition to the digital realm?

Organisations across sectors are focusing on digitalisation and increasingly understanding that being a digital-led business is directly related to the continuity and growth of its operations. At D-Link, we make it a point to understand customers' challenges and how our solutions can be the answer to help them attain their business objectives. Over the past several years, we have made this a priority and trained our partner network to be customers' trusted advisors as they navigate the digital era. Our networking, cloud-based and security offerings are created based on what customers need today to speed up their digital transformation. We also do many training sessions and workshops for our partners to enable and help them position our solutions effectively for customers' challenges. We also educate our partners on how it is important for them too to transition to the digital era in their operations so that they can be capable advisors to customers and grow their businesses efficiently.

Can we expect new product launches from D-Link this year?

We have just launched our brand-new AQUILA PRO AI Series Wi-Fi 6/6E mesh routers and extenders, designed to enhance connectivity and reliability of smart home networks. This cutting-edge mesh Wi-Fi system will be compliant with the latest Matter standard and features a built-in AI algorithm to ensure a superior Wi-Fi experience.



WE HAVE INCORPORATED THE LATEST TECHNOLOGIES IN OUR ENTIRE LINE OF OFFERINGS, FROM 5G AND WI-FI 6 TO CLOUD, AI AND AUTOMATION.





WE HAVE JUST LAUNCHED OUR BRAND-NEW AQUILA PRO AI SERIES WI-FI 6/6E MESH ROUTERS AND EXTENDERS, DESIGNED TO ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY AND RELIABILITY OF SMART HOME NETWORKS.

The new Wi-Fi 6/6E mesh router boasts a unique design that balances aesthetics and functionality. With the D-Link mesh Wi-Fi system, users can enjoy up to 7,800 Mbps of lightning-fast tri-band speeds, enhanced coverage, and a smarter, more reliable whole home Wi-Fi network. The router is equipped with one 2.5 Gbps WAN port and four 1Gbps LAN ports, making it the ideal choice for providing uninterrupted connectivity to gaming consoles, 4K/8K TV streaming, PCs, and other network devices.

D-Link's latest AQUILA PRO AI series includes six models: the MS78, MS60, MS30, M60, M30, and E30. The AQUILA PRO AI Series Wi-Fi 6/6E Mesh system will be available starting in Q2, 2023.

We are committed to product innovation at D-Link. AI, IoT, analytics,



5G, and so on are the foundation of all our new products and solutions. We always ensure to be ahead of market demands and introduce relevant products and solutions that help in fast-tracking digital transformation and build smart and connected environments.

What are D-Link's plans for the region, going forward? What will the key focus areas be?

We have a lot planned for this year. Building on our smart 4G AI-enabled

routers, Eagle PRO AI series of Wi-Fi solutions and the latest AQUILA PRO AI Series Wi-Fi 6/6E mesh routers and extenders, we will have even more line-ups centered around AI, 5G, IoT, and wireless all integrated with robust cybersecurity. Our first and foremost priority is supporting customers in their digital journeys and assisting them in achieving their digital and cloud-first goals. Another huge focus area for D-Link is empowering our partners to be consultants for customers' digital businesses and help them successfully expand their operations. We are excited for what the future holds in the networking, cloud and security space and looking forward to seeing how we can continue to play a relevant role in accelerating digital transformation across the region. 



WITH THE D-LINK MESH WI-FI SYSTEM, USERS CAN ENJOY UP TO 7,800 MBPS OF LIGHTNING-FAST TRI-BAND SPEEDS, ENHANCED COVERAGE, AND A SMARTER, MORE RELIABLE WHOLE HOME WI-FI NETWORK.

KNOWN VULNERABILITIES POSE GREATEST THREAT TO ORGANISATIONAL SECURITY: TENABLE

Tenable, the Exposure Management company, has released its annual 2022 Threat Landscape Report, which validates the persistent threat posed by known vulnerabilities – those for which patches have already been made available – as the primary vehicle for cyberattacks. The findings are based on the Tenable Research team's analysis of cybersecurity events, vulnerabilities and trends throughout 2022, including an analysis of 1,335 data breach incidents publicly


disclosed between November 2021 and October 2022.

The Tenable Threat Landscape Report categorises important vulnerability data and analyses attacker behavior to help organisations inform their security programs and prioritise security efforts to focus on areas of greatest risk and disrupt attack paths, ultimately reducing exposure to cyber incidents. Of the events analysed, more than 2.29 billion records were exposed, which accounted for 257 Terabytes of data. More than 3% of all data breaches

identified were caused by unsecured databases, accounting for leaks of over 800 million records.

According to the Tenable report, the number one group of most-frequently exploited vulnerabilities represents a large pool of known vulnerabilities, some of which were originally disclosed as far back as 2017. Organisations that failed to apply vendor patches for these vulnerabilities were at increased risk of attacks throughout 2022.

The top exploited vulnerabilities within this group include several high-severity flaws in Microsoft Exchange, Zoho ManageEngine products and virtual private network solutions from Fortinet, Citrix and Pulse Secure. For the other four most commonly exploited vulnerabilities – including Log4Shell; Follina; an Atlassian Confluence Server and Data Center flaw; and ProxyShell – patches and mitigations were highly publicised and readily available. In fact, four of the first five zero-day vulnerabilities exploited in the wild in 2022 were disclosed to the public on the same day the vendor released patches and actionable mitigation guidance.

In addition to vulnerability and misconfiguration analysis, the report examines prolific attack groups and their tactics. Ransomware remained the most common attack method used in successful breaches. The LockBit ransomware group, a known user of double and triple extortion tactics, dominated the ransomware sphere, accounting for 10% of analyzed ransomware incidents, followed by the Hive ransomware group (7.5%), Vice Society (6.3%) and BlackCat/ALPHV (5.1%). 



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Wi-Fi
6



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AI Mesh Optimizer



AI Wi-Fi Optimizer



AI Parental Controls



AI Traffic Optimizer



AI Assistant



Celebrating **WOMEN POWER IN TECHNOLOGY**



Women currently make up over 25% of the global technology workforce and according to official estimates, this number is growing fast. The varied experiences of women in this field, the diversity in their roles with their experience demonstrating a range of skills such as people management, team building, communications and technology consulting, was the focus of the Women in Tech (Pride of Tech) conference and awards.

While the awards aimed to enhance the visibility of women in the technology space, recognise their outstanding contributions and enable the next generation of women to aspire for it, the forum and panel highlighted the exceptional efforts made by women to break digital boundaries and create a more inclusive global workforce. This year, the focus was on growth, continuity and results driven by women— particularly how they've emerged stronger despite the socio-economic challenges over the past two years.

INFLUENTIAL SALES PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR



NIGINA BENDER

JABRA

TRAILBLAZER OF THE YEAR



SELINA BIEBER

GODADDY

TECHNOLOGY EXECUTIVE LEADER OF THE YEAR



HAIIDI NOSSAIR

DELL TECHNOLOGIES

TECHNOLOGY VISIONARY OF THE YEAR



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Women
in
TECHNOLOGY
FORUM AND AWARDS
2023



LOUBNA IMENCHAL

LOGITECH

TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS LEADER
OF THE YEAR - GOVERNMENT



SHEEBA HASNAIN

SHARJAH DOCUMENT DEPARTMENT

MARKETING INNOVATION LEADER
OF THE YEAR



MARY KOKAIA

DU BUSINESS

CHANNEL CHIEF OF THE YEAR



EKTA PUTHRAN

BARCO

MARKETING EXECUTIVE
OF THE YEAR



SOUSSANE CHARTOUNY

PALO ALTO NETWORKS

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MARKETING EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR



LANIA HANNOUSH

DELL TECHNOLOGIES

MARKETING EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR



YASMIN KHALIQ

EQUINIX

BRAND STRATEGIST OF THE YEAR



SHAED KHADER

LOGICOM DISTRIBUTION

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BRAND STRATEGIST OF THE YEAR



USHA GOOLAPPA

IFS

BRAND STRATEGIST OF THE YEAR



AMRITA GHANTY

GULF IT NETWORK DISTRIBUTION

WOMAN EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR



MAYA ZAKHOUR

NETAPP

MARKETING TRANSFORMATION PIONEER OF THE YEAR



NAGHAM HALABI

VEEAM SOFTWARE

CHANNEL MARKETING STRATEGIST OF THE YEAR



TARANNUM SAQIB

INGRAM MICRO

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STRATEGIC SALES LEADER
OF THE YEAR



KONICA KHANDELWAL DHAWAN

BEST TECHNICAL CONSULTANT
PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR



ANAM IQBAL

MARKETING RISING STAR
OF THE YEAR



ASHA PRAKASH

SEIDOR MENA

MALCO TECHNOLOGIES

MARKETING RISING STAR
OF THE YEAR

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GHADAH HUMADI

ALTERYX

MARKETING RISING STAR
OF THE YEAR



SIRIN AKROUK

PURE STORAGE

INFLUENTIAL MARKETING
PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR



SANDY ISSA

INTELLIGENT SECURITY SYSTEMS

TECHNOLOGY BUSINESSWOMAN
OF THE YEAR



SHERIFA HADY

HPE ARUBA NETWORKING

SENIOR MARKETING LEADER
OF THE YEAR



CHANTELLE TAVID

NVIDIA

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**SENIOR MARKETING LEADER
OF THE YEAR**

**TECHNOLOGY INNOVATOR
OF THE YEAR**

**CHANNEL SALES LEADER
OF THE YEAR**



RAJI JOY JOHN



REENA ALEX JOHN



SEEMA WADHWA

STARLINK

FINESSE

EXCLUSIVE NETWORKS



MARKETING PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR



NICHOLA BANERJEE

BARRACUDA NETWORKS

MARKETING PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR



WIDAD ABDALHADI

CISCO

SENIOR MARKETING LEADER OF THE YEAR



VARUNA SHAH

MINDWARE

SENIOR SALES LEADER OF THE YEAR



ANITA QUADROS

ANIXTER

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Women in TECHNOLOGY FORUM AND AWARDS 2023



INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY MARKETING PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR



YARA MILBES

CEQUENS

BRAND AWARENESS MARKETEER OF THE YEAR



ZAHRA HANIF

THALES GROUP

BRAND AWARENESS MARKETEER OF THE YEAR



KIARA ISRANI

SECUREWORKS

MARKETING TRENDSETTER OF THE YEAR



BINDHYA RAMADASA

FORESCOUT TECHNOLOGIES

MARKETING TRENDSETTER OF THE YEAR



APARNA CHATURVEDI

NEWCOM COMPUTER SYSTEMS LLC

BRAND AWARENESS MARKETEER OF THE YEAR



GUNIKA ARORA

QUEST SOFTWARE



MARKETING TRENDSETTER OF THE YEAR

INSPIRATIONAL WOMAN LEADER 2023

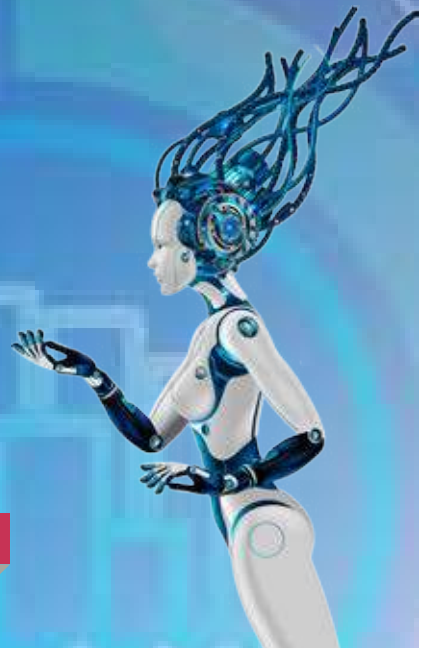


RIDDHI ANILKUMAR

ACRONIS



FAZEELA GOPALANI



INSPIRATIONAL WOMAN
LEADER 2023**MAREVA KOULAMALLAH**INSPIRATIONAL WOMAN
LEADER 2023**NADINE CHAMMAS**INSPIRATIONAL WOMAN
LEADER 2023**FATIMA AL QUBAISI**

MARKETING EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR
MANAL ABI RAFEH FORTINET

BRAND STRATEGIST OF THE YEAR
NOURA SHIHABI TREND MICRO

SENIOR MARKETING LEADER OF THE YEAR
NILU KAMKARFAR RACKSPACE TECHNOLOGY

BRAND STRATEGIST OF THE YEAR
RASHA ISLIM EMITAC ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS

MARKETING PIONEER OF THE YEAR
LENA HALBOURIAN COMMVAULT

MARKETING PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR
RANIA AL KHATIB JUNIPER NETWORKS

MARKETING PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR
RASHMI PURSWANI BENQ

GOVERNMENT PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR - STRATEGY AND GROWTH
MARIAM S. MUBARAK ABU DHABI PORTS GROUP

TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR
SIMRAN BAGGA OMNIX INTERNATIONAL

BRAND AWARENESS MARKETEEER OF THE YEAR
SHAFIYA SAMREEN RAQMIYAT

SENIOR MARKETING LEADER OF THE YEAR
MALLIKA SHARMA HPE ARUBA NETWORKING

MARKETING TRENDSETTER OF THE YEAR
SUMAIYA MUHAMMAD MITEL

MARKETING TRENDSETTER OF THE YEAR
ANKITA JAVERI GBM

BRAND AWARENESS MARKETEEER OF THE YEAR
SANCHARI ROY BARCO

INSPIRATIONAL WOMAN LEADER 2023
LEILA SERHAN



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CRESTAN



CybelAngel

Crestan and CybelAngel announce a strategic partnership to further protect enterprises across the Middle East and North Africa with external attack surface management (EASM).

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CybelAngel: Stand 40 | Crestan: Stand A1, Hall 8

THE YEAR AHEAD: HOW INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY WILL EVOLVE IN 2023

Kerry Grimes, Head of Global Partners, AVEVA, offers his expert insight on incoming digital transformation trends.



Kerry, what trends will influence industrial technology channels this year?

Mobility will be a big theme in 2023. Post-pandemic, we are finding that companies are definitely working differently, and allowing employees to stay home. It's going to be possible to run plants with fewer people onsite.

Site managers and workers will be able to progressively remotely monitor what's happening, and even have access to offsite advanced HMI (human machine interface) to control plant operations.

As a case in point, AVEVA's Edge applications now work from nearly any device. With web publishing and runtimes for Windows and Linux, it's possible to monitor and control richly-illustrated SCADA or HMI applications from smartphones, tablets, panel PCs and more.

In another salient trend, tough economic conditions such as regional political instabilities, inflationary spikes and FX fluctuations will continue to pose challenges for plant owners and channel partners. But, in these straitened times, organisations are set to turn to ultra-efficient processes and technology to ensure



operations are optimized for cost, agility and sustainability.

In the coming years, forward-looking plants will look to invest in end-to-end flexible digital operations, and deliver value, innovation and cost-savings in a fluctuating and competitive market.

In the same vein, companies will look to purchase cost-effective software bundle subscriptions or software-as-a-service (SaaS) packages to ensure access to the latest technology as it happens, and within budget.

What will be the greatest opportunity areas for industrial technology channel partners in 2023?

Today's economic conditions mean that successful supply chains will be powered by agile, efficient and sustainable operations. This trend opens up a growing market for subscription models which promote organisational resilience, while also enabling channel partners to transist to recurring revenue models.

This new and evolving sales model

will require increased customer intimacy in the form of continuous Customer Success Management (CSM), meaning industrial channel partners will need to improve their engagement capabilities and selling motions.

The new sales model will disrupt cash flows and require investment in the short term. However, in the long term, partners and customer will see increased sustained revenue growth and increased valuation of the partner business.

Why is demand for industrial technology subscription growing at such a fast pace?

Via subscription models, such as AVEVA Flex, customers can acquire and scale over a whole range of emerging technology solutions as their business evolves over time.


This means customers can reduce their upfront investment in industrial technologies, decrease the time-to-value of deployments, and increase the total return over time by reacting more quickly to market opportunities.

Flexibility in spending and reallocation of investment is then constantly aligned to changes in a customers' business and production environment.

What will set winning channel partners apart in 2023?

Successful partners will lead with ability to successfully match customers and commercial offers with their organisational vision.

Winning channel partners will understand that a clients' needs will be constantly evolving over time – now and in the future. In today's fluctuating and competitive landscape, the most successful partners will grow with their customers, anticipating and meeting their needs in a world of constantly changing innovation.

The new economy requires a fundamentally different approach to the sales cycle, and positions the partner as a collaborative member of a team that can address immediate challenges and help customers get the most from their technology deployments. 

TOP 5 TRENDS DRIVING NETWORK INNOVATION IN 2023

Azz-Eddine Mansouri, General Manager, Ciena Middle East



In 2023, it's likely that we will witness a massive growth in the number of 5G users, humans and machines. But the increase in bandwidth demand this will bring will put enormous pressure on networks, fuelling the growth of 5G analytics-driven automation and software control.

Ciena forecasts the following top trends will dominate network innovation in 2023, enabling customers to adapt within ever-changing environments.

1. Heightened spotlight on 5G networks with exciting new use cases

In 2023, 5G network slicing will steal the limelight as several mobile network operators enter the design and early-deployment phases to deliver differentiated services that are tuned to specific end-user and application requirements. We will also see operators becoming increasingly active in rolling out managed Private 5G services offering higher speeds, ultra-low latency and greater network reliability and security. Private 5G will enable exciting new use cases to help enterprises advance their competitive position and allow network operators to better monetize their substantial 5G investments.

One real-life example is the deployment of 5G network slicing technology by the UAE to support the country's Smart Dubai initiative. The initiative aims to make Dubai the world's smartest and most sustainable city, and 5G network slicing is being used to support various



THE FUTURE OF NETWORK INNOVATION WILL SEE OPERATORS ADOPTING NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO ENABLE PROVIDERS TO MEET OR EXCEED THEIR BUSINESS GOALS.

smart city applications such as smart transportation, smart buildings, and smart energy management. Etisalat by e& is using 5G network slicing to create a dedicated network for the Dubai Electric Vehicle (EV) Experience Center, which allows EV drivers to charge their vehicles more quickly and efficiently - creating more efficient, sustainable, and connected cities.

2. Growing popularity of RAN

Since the dawn of mobile networking, the Radio Access Network (RAN) has been closed and proprietary. It remains one of the last parts of the global network infrastructure yet to be opened. Opening the RAN, via a broad adoption of open specifications, will yield benefits, like a broader and more secure supply chain, as well as expected price reductions driven by increased competition. There are many proofs of concept and field trials getting started, as well as controlled roll-out announcements taking place around the globe. For example, telecom operator du deployed a private 5G network using Open RAN which will enable enterprises in the UAE to harness the power of 5G.

3. Investment in sub-marine infrastructure

More than 95 percent of the world's intercontinental electronic communications traffic travels over submarine networks. As data traffic demand is increasing exponentially, submarine networks have become critical infrastructure, and operators are looking across all their network assets, subsea included, to gain competitive advantage. Looking ahead, many will want to speed up service innovation, accelerate time to market, and meet the demands of web-scale content players that consume a large and growing share of transoceanic bandwidth growth.

4. Proliferation of edge computing

Edge cloud computing is expected to grow rapidly as it improves response times and drives more efficient use of bandwidth. The Middle East and Africa edge computing market is expected to reach USD 1.46 Bn by 2023. This surge will enable service providers to participate in the value chain beyond pure connectivity. In addition, 2023 will see the increased adoption of marketplaces, driving key elements of connectivity to multi-cloud platforms. This will enable newer business models and consumption models to evolve, including Network-as-a-Service, which will help ensure cost efficiencies for business users.

5. Increased focus on sustainable networks

Sustainability has become a key theme for the entire telecom industry. As 2023 gets underway, there will be continued focus around making networks more energy efficient and sustainable. Looking ahead, service providers will be very focused on decreasing carbon emissions while also meeting surging demands for high-bandwidth services and broadband connectivity. Ciena's engineering team is making this a top priority by constantly innovating products with power and energy use in mind. Amid exploding traffic and service expansion, service providers will look for ways to deliver similar energy-efficient networking solutions, enabling operators to do more with less and reduce their environmental footprint.

The future of network innovation will see operators adopting new technologies to enable providers to meet or exceed their business goals. As 2023 gets underway, innovation is expected to become even more critical as services are launched alongside evolving architectures. In tandem with the GCC's rapid digitalisation, robust, reliable and sustainable network infrastructure is mission critical for prosperity, growth and equity. Investing in network innovations will deliver a greener, more connected future. 

EQUINIX FABRIC LAUNCHES IN THE UAE TO PROVIDE FLEXIBLE, ON-DEMAND GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY

In collaboration with datamena, the fastest growing carrier neutral digital ecosystem from du, Equinix Fabric enables businesses to connect to distributed infrastructure and digital ecosystems directly, securely, and dynamically on platform Equinix.

Equinix, Inc., the world's digital infrastructure company, in collaboration with datamena, the fastest growing carrier neutral digital ecosystem from du, announced the launch of Equinix Fabric, an advanced software-defined interconnection solution in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Equinix Fabric enables businesses to connect to distributed infrastructure and digital ecosystems directly, securely, and dynamically on platform Equinix.

Built on top of datamena network, Equinix Fabric provides a seamless, reliable, and flexible connectivity solution for businesses and customers looking to optimise their WAN or access to a variety of digital ecosystems and service providers remotely to connect their own infrastructure in the region.

Kamel Al-Tawil, Managing Director, Equinix MENA said: "The launch of Equinix Fabric in the UAE sets the stage for Equinix to further expand its offering in the Middle East and North Africa region and opens this amazing part of the world up to companies looking to connect their own infrastructure as well as connect with businesses in the region. Dubai has come a long way when it comes to global connectivity, and with Equinix Fabric as a key enabler for digital transformation, offers a solution that simplifies the complexity of networking




and helps businesses connect to digital ecosystems on our global platform in a more secure and cost-effective manner, accelerate innovation, and improve their customer experience."

Equinix Fabric simplifies remote connectivity in just a few quick clicks, customers can use Equinix Fabric just like they are already doing in other Equinix Fabric locations. Using virtual connectivity delivered on a shared platform and in a way that consumes fewer physical resources, is a more sustainable option.

Karim Benkirane, Chief Commercial Officer, du said: "The UAE has established itself as a hub for innovation, with a thriving digital ecosystem and investments in advanced technology. Equinix Fabric's launch in the UAE allows for greater

interconnectivity within the region, making it easier for businesses to access the resources they need. du's partnership with Equinix is part of a larger plan to continue supporting businesses by offering them an opportunity to connect to multiple cloud service providers and network service providers. Combined with the capabilities of datamena and Equinix Fabric, enterprises can take advantage of a unique opportunity to enter the MENA market and unlock new growth opportunities."

Equinix Fabric creates a network of services that are interconnected around the world, supporting companies that are at the forefront of digital transformation to connect to everything and everyone that are important to their business. 

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.



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THE WINNING FORMULA

Simran Bagga, Vice-President, Omnix Engineering and Foundation Technologies at Omnix International, tells Anita Joseph in an exclusive interview how with a focused expertise in digital strategy, the company facilitates business growth and success in the region and beyond.

How is Omnix helping companies in their digital transformation journey?

Omnix is committed to help and support companies in the Middle East on their digital transformation journey by offering a wide range of relevant and relatable solutions and services to the dynamic environment. The company offers cloud adoption, data management and analytics services, digital workplace solutions, cybersecurity solutions and insights on emerging technologies.

Tell us about your multi-cloud offerings?

Omnix multi-cloud offerings enables



AS A VALUE-ADDED DISTRIBUTOR, OMNIX PROVIDES MUCH NEEDED SERVICES WHICH INCLUDE TECHNICAL SUPPORT, TRAINING, CONSULTING, AND CUSTOMISATION.

clients to use multiple cloud platforms simultaneously, including public, private, and hybrid clouds and is focused on helping customers to choose solutions that match their needs. This helps them to increase profitability and scalability and allows for better performance while also enhancing security. Omnix works closely with customers to create customised solutions and partners with global Cloud providers such as Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud Platform to deliver best-of-breed services.

Give us an overview of your partner ecosystem

Omnix has a robust partner ecosystem that includes some global leading technology vendors. As a Value-Added Distributor, Omnix provides much needed services which include technical support, training, consulting, and customisation. Omnix also partners with leading software vendors such as Autodesk, Adobe, Unity,

Bluebeam, TeamViewer, FARO, Vuzix, VARJO, Lumion, Prokon, SAFEUEM, IMSCAD, Oracle, viAct and more.

Partner enablement and engagement programs are more relevant now than ever before. How is Omnix stepping in here to drive greater engagement among its partner community?

As a VAD, Omnix is very focused on the strong relationships it builds with its partners and lays a heavy emphasis on partner enablement and engagement program. It has implemented several initiatives to strengthen its relationships with its partners through partner training and certification, partner events and webinars, joint marketing initiatives, lead generation programs, and feedback collaboration.

What are your growth plans for the ME region?

Omnix has been a leading technology solutions provider in the Middle East for over three decades, and has a clear growth path for the region. Omnix continues to invest in emerging technologies and in talent development. The company has expertise across several business sectors including oil and gas, manufacturing, healthcare, construction and many more. 



FIVE TIPS FOR USING AI IN DISTRIBUTION

Khaled AlShami, Vice-President Solution Consulting, Infor Middle East & Africa



Across most industries, the buzz is about finding use cases that promote the value of artificial intelligence. But how will the distribution industry specifically benefit? And where can AI create value for your business and workers?

First, there was robotic process automation (RPA), and then chatbots. They started dumb, handling menial tasks. But, infused with AI, they got smarter and added more value to their output, moving into all types of business and operation. Now almost any digital office or production application comes with AI features baked in, and they are learning fast.

For distribution leaders and IT teams, there is plenty to focus on already without getting distracted by possibilities that haven't quite materialised yet (think self-driving vehicles, augmented reality glasses, drone deliveries, etc.). But the rise of AI will not fade away because it's making so many tasks quicker and easier. Here's what you need to know.

What is Artificial Intelligence?

In short, AI is software, linked to data, or sensors, and capable of processing it, learning from it, and providing a valuable output. That might be an insight based on complex data, predicting supply variations, or performing big data tasks (facial



MANY DISTRIBUTORS ARE RIGHTLY PROUD OF THEIR SUPPLIER RELATIONS, BUT AI & ML CAN INSPECT THE DATA BEHIND THEIR SERVICE AND SUGGEST WAYS TO DELIVER IMPROVED SUPPLIER PERFORMANCE.

recognition, medical scans, voice chat, and more) incredibly quickly.

AI use has grown dramatically thanks to the massive scale of the cloud, with powerful processors crunching complex math and accessing huge data sets, often in real-time.

To the end user, AI is just another service, that might be called "predictive analytics" or "smart learning" to give it a more business-friendly name. Whatever the descriptor, AI is tasked with performing a process, with all the magic working underneath.

Using AI in distribution

For today's distributors looking to be ready for tomorrow, AI can:

1 Manage suppliers

Many distributors are rightly proud of their supplier relations, but AI and machine learning can inspect the data behind their service and suggest ways to deliver improved supplier performance, ironing out process inefficiencies or product weaknesses that might only be visible in easily neglected returns logs.

2 Improve the sales experience

AI can constantly tweak prices or display dynamic recommended buying options to increase the chance of completing a sale. Based on customer history and market conditions, AI-powered sales applications can suggest volume discounts using both sales data and sentiment analysis.

3 Optimize your inventory

Most distributors already run inventory

applications to keep the right amount of stock ordered for today, but AI can monitor sales patterns and ensure that the right stock is in the right warehouse constantly as seasons, markets, and products or supplies change.

AI can also monitor transport costs and supplier charges, finding the most cost-effective ways to purchase, deliver, and distribute goods to-and-from your warehouse operations. It can provide buyers with recommendations, and update routings, ensuring the fastest service for customers.


4 Maximize sales and buying efforts

With AI making an increasingly powerful appearance in business processes and management tools, it can take over many of the dull and time-consuming tasks that workers used to put up with. The extra time can be spent building relationships with customers up and down the supply chain, providing them with data-driven insights, and highlighting your company as one on the cutting edge.

5 Make it easy for everyone to use

Everyone from a new warehouse staffer to the CIO will get maximum value from their AI tools if you choose a platform with preconfigured AI models. This makes machine learning more accessible through low-code and no-code implementations. And the automated retraining means hands-off maintenance. Infor's Coleman AI offers these capabilities.

In summary

In just a few short years, AI solutions have crossed from science fiction into business reality, delivering on their potential to save time, cut costs and deliver value through smart insights. Fear of AI has largely been left in the rearview mirror, and this is only the beginning of AI's place in technology. 

THE LEADING LIGHTS

ON THE OCCASION OF WOMEN'S DAY, WE'VE PROFILED SOME OF THE WOMEN ACHIEVERS OF THE CHANNEL INDUSTRY.

BURCU CANSEVER EZER, INFOBLOX

Burcu began her professional career as an Inside Sales and Marketing Representative for Turkey at a leading user and data security company "Forcepoint" (previously known as Websense).

In 2017, I joined another top cybersecurity company "Infoblox" that specializes in DNS, DHCP, and IPAM, as a Business Development Representative. After one year, I was promoted to the role of Territory Account Manager for Turkey, with the responsibility of driving direct sales to customers. And recently I took over the role of Channel Account Manager, where I collaborate with partners to deliver innovative solutions and support our customers' digital transformation efforts. I have been with Infoblox ever since, continuously improving my skills and capabilities to help our customers navigate the evolving cybersecurity landscape.

"I'd say there are still relatively few women working in the IT and telecom industries, particularly in technical roles such as software engineering, network architecture, and cybersecurity. The tech industry has historically been male-dominated. While progress has been made in recent years to address this imbalance, there is still a long way to go. I think this is due to a variety of factors, including gender-based bias and discrimination, lack of female role models and mentors in the field, and systemic barriers to entry.

However, many organisations and individuals are working to change this situation. Many companies are actively working to hire and retain more women in technical roles. There is also a growing recognition of the value that diversity brings to the tech industry.

The tech industry is constantly evolving, making it a thrilling and dynamic field to work in. Keeping up-to-date with the latest technological advancements can enhance your confidence in professional discussions. As a woman at the beginning of my career, I acknowledge that I have much to learn. Nonetheless, the progress made by female leaders and women in tech so far is inspiring. I believe that mutual support among women has been instrumental in this progress. It's important to seek out a mentor



who can offer guidance and a safe space to ask questions. Lastly, don't be shy to celebrate your successes and be proud of your achievements. Sharing your accomplishments can inspire and motivate others in the industry."



CHANTELLE TAVID, NVIDIA MENAT

Chantelle manages the NVIDIA consumer business marketing in the MENAT region. She oversees retail and consumer marketing as well as working with manufacturers on GPUs and laptops such as ASUS, ZOTAC, MSI, Lenovo, Acer, and GIGABYTE, to name a few.

I truly love and appreciate NVIDIA in terms of our innovation and company culture. Our technologies impact the visual experience in video game development, film production, space exploration, medicine, computational finance and automotive design. In a nutshell, this is what our work is all about, that is, to amplify human imagination and intelligence.

Rather than dwelling on a particular challenge, I focus on finding a solution and how I can turn it into an opportunity. This involves evaluating the situation, reviewing the information available and having a solution-focused mind which includes keeping my emotions in check and maintaining professionalism. And of course, once I solve a challenge, I use the information I learn so that I can be prepared for the future.

Believe that you are enough of everything you need to be to achieve what your heart desires, so dream big and work hard to achieve it. Always push yourself to learn as much as you possibly can and never settle for the status quo."



EKTA PUTHRAN, BARCO

Ekta is responsible for Middle East and Africa Distribution, Channel, Enduser and Alliance partner network for Barco Collaboration Business.



Work at Barco is always evolving into something better than what it was. Every day is different and is a constant adventure. The variability of my job is what gets me up in the morning and the reachability in terms of countries I handle in Middle East, gets me going during the day.

One of the core building blocks of Barco is "Together We Rise". This adequately embodies my fundamental goal of increasing the channel coverage and empowering them with the right tools and trainings.

Step one of resolving any issue, is to identify that there is one. Handling a high volume of channel partners cross MEA has its own repercussions as there will always be unforeseen intricate challenges that come up at the last juncture. Be it communication, commercial support or technical assistance, for me, it all boils down to having transparency from the start.

My advice to women reading this would be to look outside the conventional box of marketing, PR and HR as Technology is the future and will always be in demand in developed countries. You don't need an IT degree to find work here as there are different verticals within a technology company that you can easily get in if you have the skill set and right work ethic."

JOUMANA KARAM, ACER EMEA

Joumana currently has a dual role at Acer: Head of Marketing for Acer MEA and E-Mobility Marketing Manager for Acer EMEA.



Although I came from an engineering background, I was surprised to see myself enjoying the marketing side of the business. My passion for technology is a significant advantage in marketing for Acer, it enables me to speak about the exciting new innovations that touch our everyday life in a very knowledgeable way. Additionally, my thirst for data and numbers enables me to interpret trends and make informed decisions about how to reach and engage with our target audience.

I see the challenges I face in my career as opportunities for growth. Whenever my voice was not heard or I was accused of being aggressive, I let my work and analysis of data do the talking. Whenever I was faced with negativity, I projected my positive problem-solving approach. I'm a firm believer that every challenge will trigger wonderful growth opportunities.

Technology is an interesting and creative field. The challenges that women face in the industry are no different than those faced by anyone else in other industries. Listen and learn from every situation, be flexible, and focus on the job at hand. And above all, fight the low self-esteem and speak up. Trust your own voice!"

LARISSA CRANDALL, VEEAM SOFTWARE

Larissa is Vice President Global Channel & Alliances at Veeam Software

I've been fortunate to work with some incredible men and women leaders throughout my career, challenging my growth and supporting me. We've come a long way in empowering women since I first began my career in the tech space, be it through the growing demand for women of all backgrounds, races, and ethnicities to be acknowledged for their contributions leading to greater efforts in implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs across enterprises and industries. This year, we speak of embracing equity. #EmbraceEquity validates and reinforces the idea that women must be given the same opportunity to succeed as men, and it provokes internal reflection for women in power to seek the same equitability and working to drive this for future generations.

In the world of tech, I have spent more than twenty years successfully growing my teams and transforming global ecosystems. While the effort involves creativity and strategy, the end goal is quite simple: We grow together. We help each other. No one is an island. #EmbraceEquity is about pushing for a global ecosystem of interconnected humans to work and grow with each other's support and skillset. As a woman in the tech space, especially a female leader, I feel it's my responsibility to give back by mentoring women sharing my learnings from my career to help women grow. I would urge young women to continue pushing the norms and know they deserve to succeed. Also, to be an ally themselves with other women of different backgrounds to help support each other. Create your network, expand your inner



circles to foster a more diverse and inclusive cohort of powerful women who can support each other and grow together." Grateful to work at incredible organisations in my career including Veeam, where the culture strong is strong and supportive."

LENA HALBOURIAN, COMMVAULT

Lena is senior Regional Head of Marketing for Switzerland, Austria, SEE and MEA region, at Commvault.

I am motivated by many aspects of my job, I love the challenging part of it, the daily knowledge that I gain and the people that I meet, not only in the tech industry but from all walks of life. What inspires me is compassion, kindness and when I see women supporting each other and rooting for each other's successes and achievements.

Many years of experience in this industry has thought me to be patient and resilient and that challenges can only be overcome when we take a minute to consider the pros and cons which would save us the risk of taking hasty decisions we might regret in the future.

I would advise women who aspire to be in this industry, to be passionate about what they do, resilient and determined, stay always up to date on the latest market trends and directions and never stop learning. Always be self-confident and ensure their voices are heard but most importantly leave a legacy that they are proud of and that the coming generations can learn from."



LOUBNA IMENCHAL, LOGITECH AMECA

Loubna is Head of Video Collaboration at Logitech AMECA. She oversees all aspects of sales, operations, and business development pertaining to Logitech's video collaboration solutions.



Enabling customers and partners in achieving operational excellence in today's demanding hybrid workplace is highly motivating. Witnessing the success of our customers as a result of our extensive range of solutions can be gratifying.

We continue to keep the customer and the partner experience at the core of our efforts. We are focused on enabling partners to help businesses accelerate growth through workplace and collaboration solutions that meet the evolving needs of customers. Helping partners accelerate their Logitech growth trajectory is a top priority, and we are excited for what remains ahead as we enhance our partner program.

Since I consider myself a problem-solver, whenever I identify a challenge, I break it down into smaller, manageable parts, evaluate the options, and implement the best solution.

Given the numerous opportunities for career growth in the IT channel ecosystem, my advice would be to be persistent and motivated. However, with technology advancing at such a rapid speed, it is critical to constantly expand skills and knowledge through education and training, as well as remaining up-to-date on the latest trends and breakthroughs."

MAYA ZAKHOUR, NETAPP

Maya is Director Channel Sales - Eastern Europe, META, Iberia & Latin America, at NetApp



In my role as director for channel sales in Eastern Europe, META, Iberia & Latin America, I work to build a strong partner ecosystem in the region and focus on developing NetApp's services business through our partners, while overseeing the commercial and velocity business.

Managing such a large and diverse territory exciting on a daily basis. No two markets are the same and I get to acquire a different perspective on how the channel functions in different parts of the world. I meet so many interesting people from different cultures, am exposed to new ideas and have the opportunity to share our learnings and experiences. Leading and being part of a large team is exhilarating.

Communication is the key-being open and transparent, and having honest conversations with partners is important. The most common issues can be managed with a well-thought-out plan.

Being in the channel is all about building relationships and the opportunity to develop strong networks. The IT channel business is so much more than just technical jargon and selling. It gives women opportunities to bring in different competencies. Not only do you get to work closely with vendors, partners and end-users, but you also get a broader view of the industry and businesses and how they all come together to form, what is today, the backbone of global economies. Women can contribute at a strategic, tactical and operation level, so they must capitalise on every opportunity they have to make a successful career in IT and channel."

MERIAM EL OUZZANI, SENTINELONE

Meriam is Senior Channel Manager at SentinelOne, responsible for driving sales and revenue growth by expanding and accelerating the company's reach through distributors and value-added resellers (VARs).

Through my role, I'm committed to driving innovation and creating value for the company and our partners, all while delivering value to our customers and prospects within our ever-evolving cybersecurity industry.

"It is a true privilege for me to work alongside an exceptional team, and to have the support of some of the most distinguished leaders in the industry. Moreover, working with our incredible partners, who help us expand the market in the META region, is a genuine pleasure. While our SentinelOne cybersecurity technology is undoubtedly unique, it is not the sole reason for our success with customers. Our partners play a critical role in driving the company's success, and SentinelOne acknowledges the value that our channels bring. I take great pride in transforming the partnerships we have in the region, and I find inspiration in driving innovation and making a meaningful impact by developing and executing effective channel strategies that help our distributors and channel partners grow their businesses while contributing to the overall success of our company.

The only challenge is the one you have in mind, and not really the one you face. I believe in my skills and capabilities, and I don't shy out from asking questions or sharing my ideas. It's also important to seek mentorship and find true mentors who believe in you, this support goes a long way in light of any challenge.

Make sure you are heard, and don't hold back from sharing your ideas and opinions. Remember, there is power in diversity. You have a voice, and it's vital to use it as every time you stand up for yourself, you



are standing up for women across the industry, and breaking down the barriers for someone else. Be an example to both men and women around you.

Most importantly – believe in yourself and never take no for answer, you know you can do it."

NIGINA BENDER, JABRA

Before joining Jabra, Nigina worked with EnGenius Networks (a brand of Senao Networks, Inc., a networking expert in wireless communications and radio (RF) technology with headquarters based in Taiwan).

Jabra is part of the GN group. From the first telegraph cables linking West to East, to the first wireless Bluetooth headsets, we've been transforming how people experience sound for over 150 years. Today, our research and engineering keep us one step ahead of the ever-changing audio-visual needs of the modern world.

My first business goal was to create new distribution channel, grow team in the region and think of out of box to achieve business goals and growth. Which led to nontraditional for IT industry approach which led to opening of our first "Worlds First Hybrid Work Experience Center" in Dubai Design District where Office Furniture Brand BENE comes together with leading technology brands like Microsoft, Jabra, Lenovo Jupiter to offer one complete solution for Hybrid working starting with integration of office furniture, Office lighting, Technology and IOT solutions in one place. This led to the opening of same Hybrid Working Experience Centers across EMEA.

Every problem has a solution, every challenge has a solution – Just have open mind, be creative."



NURCAN BICAKCI ARCAN, SAS

Nurcan is Regional Marketing Director at SAS and leads the marketing team, develops and executes a regional marketing strategy aligned with the company's objectives, analyze market trends, and develop targeted campaigns and content strategy.



At a time when disruption is happening faster than ever before, working for SAS exposes you to a universe of inspiration. We turn times of uncertainty into times of growth and innovation by empowering businesses to make decisions with confidence; based on data, analytics and AI, which is fascinating.

We invest and develop solutions for nearly every industry and are moving them to our cloud-native SAS Viya platform. We rely on our channel partners to guide customers through the deployment and help them optimise the benefits and impact of their investment in SAS solutions for their analytics needs.

"When dealing with an issue at work, I always find myself taking an analytical, logical approach. But I can say that critical thinking and open-minded collaboration with people around you are the right ways to solve any challenge.

Technology is ubiquitous and influences everyone. Therefore, women must participate more in the conception and development of technology, not just in its usage. And they should always keep in mind that there is nothing that they cannot accomplish."

PAMELA AUDEH, MICRO FOCUS

Pamela manages the channel and alliance sales in Microfocus, an Opentext company, for UAE and Oman.



My role is focused on extending our sales and market reach through our partners, this would include building strategic relationships with the partners, promoting our products through their network, enable them to become our product ambassadors and creating a framework that would help in the continuous improvement of the partners sales, enablement and ultimately their and our business results.

"I love how technology can introduce massive opportunities of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of our customers, and this the key driver of what I do, it inspires me when I see how our products are helping our customers achieving their strategic objectives and sometimes it can even change the way they are conducting their business and I'm very proud to be able to help customers through our network of partners

I always think of myself as a problem solver and a positive thinker and this will always help me in overcoming the challenges I face and in many cases I step in to help challenges for colleagues and partners as well, being a people person who believe in team work, continuous learning, empathy and positivity are my secret recipe for addressing any challenge.

I have many in mind and I can always be reached to help and support women in our industry and I genuinely believe that women can do great things and can always show their value, but in short I believe that the most important advice I have for women in our industry is to believe in themselves and the value they can bring and to believe that nothing can stop them from carving their path other than themselves. I wish that the women population and value will continue to grow in our industry."

RAJI JOY JOHN, STARLINK, AN INFINIGATE GROUP COMPANY

Raji is Marketing lead at StarLink, an Infinigate Group company

My role comprises strategic marketing planning and operations to accelerate business growth for StarLink and our vendor community in the MENA region.

Marketing is all about making meaningful connections, nurturing business relationships, being creative, and effective storytelling. The fact that I can associate myself at different levels on the above, in every project that I accomplish is what I love most about my job. Gaining a fresh perspective motivates me. Having the power to influence change with a creative approach that can impact the entire line of business is inspiring.

Challenges in my job have helped me become resilient and gain greater levels of perseverance. It has taught me valuable lessons on how to grow and succeed. The approach I prefer is to look upon a demanding situation as an opportunity to learn and prove myself. Though at times, it can get the better of me. However, we know that growth happens only when we are willing to venture out of our comfort zone.

Don't aim to be a perfectionist. Aim to be a better version of you. This is more realistic."



SAMAR AL HILO, FORTINET

Samar joined Fortinet 7 years ago, as inside sales representative through the years I grew up as a person overcoming the experiences and challenges that made me today the manager who works with great team of women building their skills and capabilities to empower them professionally and socially.

Interacting with people, knowledge, and experience exchange. The environment of our organisation is very supportive and women empowering that allows creating a climate of trust.

Regarding challenges, Sara says she tackles the various challenges in her job by "continuing learning and taking every challenge as an opportunity to grow. Set your standards high, maintain self-confidence, build knowledge and leadership skills."



SARA VERRI, NOZOMI NETWORKS

Sara is responsible for driving EMEA marketing strategy and execution for Nozomi for the past two and a half years.



By successfully leveraging partners wherever possible to help us meet and exceed our goals, we have built a strong partner ecosystem that last year contributed to around 95% of our revenue.

More recently, I have moved to a global role as Global Partner Marketing Director at Nozomi Networks, where I will develop and promote strategies to enhance our overall go-to-market engine via partners worldwide.

"I started my career in IT almost 16 years ago and since then travelled consistently and lived in different countries, thanks to the flexibility this industry gives you.

I love the diversity, working with so many cultures, helping colleagues and partners feel a part of the same mission and in turn working together towards one goal. Nozomi Networks and the people here inspire me to go above and beyond: seeing our founders (with whom I share Italian roots) continuously innovating and disrupting this market without losing a sense of humbleness as well as my colleagues, who are always going the extra mile to support our customers, motivates me.

Challenges will come and go, so I tend to focus on the end goal and continually remind myself of the larger vision, including what we're building as a company and ultimately a team. Once I have all the working pieces of the challenge ahead, I align the steps I need to get the job done. The purpose and people provide meaning to what we do and motivation too, so it's always a worthwhile reminder when I face challenges.

To always believe they are a peer, worthy and equal and in charge of their own success. To not focus on numbers (more men than women in IT), to continue building brick after brick, to bring into the business their vision and values, and their sensitivity too. To always trust their gut."

SONALI BASU ROY, BULWARK

Over the last 12 years, I have faced unique opportunities in the form of either creating brand awareness for new cybersecurity technology players in the regional market or helped in creation of brand equity of the organisation as a Thought Leader in the cybersecurity domain.



There are many moments of pride & accolades. However, the one thing that most satisfies me is the ability to successfully devise marketing strategies having measurable mix of direct, Indirect and Digital channels creating positive impact to the business goals & objectives. We are successfully developing, directing & implementing various strategies across the region to promote our products and services through the channel, which includes formulating and implementing marketing plans and budgets along with vendors for their partners, working with advertising and media agencies, monitoring and reporting the success of all marketing campaigns, devising go to market strategies, analysing market trends and delivering marketing communications for the organisation.

Women should believe in their capabilities and should be quick learners and acquire different skills. Market trends and mentalities are changing and there is plenty of opportunity for those who are dedicated and motivated. I strongly believe that success and passion towards your job & responsibilities are correlated and would enable in achieving the desired level of success and at a shorter timeframe."

SPANDANA GUDAPATI, HUAWEI

Spandana is responsible for distribution marketing, channel programs & incentive management, partner marketing funds and partner operations across 19 countries in the Middle East & Central Asia region.

I'm a people's person, so I love the collaboration opportunities that my job provides across the region to collaborate with various channel stakeholders. Understanding the industry trends, and driving market growth through the channel is something I truly enjoy.

The vast portfolio of Huawei products & solutions and the fact that Huawei is a leading global, fast growing and dynamic provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices provides a great platform to create an impact as well as take up new challenges, and that is the driving factor that keeps me going.

I'm grateful that throughout my career, I had the trust, flexibility and empowerment that I needed to be able to have the right balance between my work and family. I hope all women in our region can benefit from similar opportunities.

Women bring unique skills to the workplace, they are generally known for being patient, multitasking, perseverant, dedicated, hardworking, and objective driven as these are necessary to allow them to fulfil both, their professional and family responsibilities. My advice to women in the industry is: Go with your gut, believe in yourself and be brave. Sending more power to all the ladies in the tech industry."



BASIC PRINCIPLES NEEDED TO SECURE KUBERNETES' FUTURE

Michael Cade, Senior Global Technologist, Veem Software

As organisations increasingly adopt a cloud-native approach to develop and scale up applications, containers and Kubernetes are playing a critical role in managing growing complexities and enabling workloads to be deployed in multi-cloud environments.

But a survey of DevOps professionals found that 94% had experienced at least one Kubernetes security incident in the past year, and 59% consider security to be their biggest concern when it comes to using Kubernetes and containers. While more and more DevOps teams turn to Kubernetes to keep up with their organisation's scalability demands, basic principles like security and data protection mustn't be overlooked.

Deploying Kubernetes

Developers are being asked to build bigger and more scalable applications across more dynamic environments. So, for the operations or infrastructure team, it can seem like a full-time job keeping up with changing software development practices. Kubernetes is just the latest (and arguably more complex) challenge, but their objective stays the same: how can we reduce risk, minimise costs and provide an overall better business outcome?

Development teams are the 'pioneers' - they explore new ground and build something where nothing existed before. Operations and infrastructure teams on the other hand are the 'settlers' - coming in a second wave to consolidate

new developments and make sure it survives long-term. This is exactly the case with Kubernetes. By the time Kubernetes is at the virtualisation or adoption stage, it's normally up to the operations teams - the responsibility of the real business outcome lands with them.

But it's a big ask to expect these teams to understand the intricacies of Kubernetes and containers. Even with new technology, basic principles need to be adhered to - security, backup and recovery are all still needed. But it's the unique technical requirements that can present challenges.

Security in Kubernetes & zero-trust

As a cloud-native programme, many of the security challenges for Kubernetes come from the dispersed nature of cloud architecture. Different workloads can be running across several different locations, including multiple clouds as well as both off and on-premises servers. Not only does this vastly increase the 'threat scape' where an attack or mistake can occur, but it can also mean visibility challenges, making monitoring containers and detecting issues more difficult.

While Kubernetes is designed to be secure, only responding to requests that it can authenticate and authorise, it also gives developers bespoke configuration options, meaning it is only really as secure as the RBAC (Role-based access control) policies that developers configure. Kubernetes also uses what's known as a 'flat network' that enables groups of containers (or pods) to communicate with other containers by default. This raises security concerns as in theory attackers who compromise a pod can

access other resources in the same cluster.

Despite this complexity, the solution to mitigate this risk is fairly straightforward - a zero-trust strategy. With such a large attack surface, a fairly open network design and workloads sitting across different environments, a zero-trust architecture, one that never trusts and always verifies, is crucial when building with Kubernetes.

The principle of zero-trust architecture is to move the focus of security away from the perimeter of an application while applying those principles throughout. All internal requests are considered suspicious and authentication is required from top to bottom. This strategy helps mitigate risk by assuming threats exist on the network at all times and so constantly maintains strict security procedures around every user, device and connection. For the fluid and decentralised architecture of Kubernetes, this is a must.

Backup and recovery

Another basic principle that is needed to mitigate risks for Kubernetes applications is backup and recovery. This is a well-known concept but there are lots of unique considerations when backing up Kubernetes and containers. These different requirements for data backup are because Kubernetes is fundamentally different from other architectures, for example, it doesn't have mapping applications to servers or virtual machines.

Kubernetes backup systems also need to be application-centric rather than focused on infrastructure. This is due to DevOps philosophy and 'shift left' principles which essentially mean

the developer has more control over infrastructure and deployments. Other unique requirements for Kubernetes backup are the application's scale, protection gaps and ecosystem integration.

When recovering Kubernetes environments, a detailed execution plan is needed that identifies cluster dependencies, updates applications to reflect new storage components and translates the plan into relevant Kubernetes application programming interfaces (APIs). While backup does require a more bespoke Kubernetes native solution, such recovery processes remain critical to the long-term health of the business. Efficient restoration and disaster recovery are non-negotiable in today's environment.


Beyond this, however, backup has huge value in terms of testing and development purposes and enabling application mobility. Application mobility refers to the ability to migrate an application to a different environment - across on-premises, clouds, clusters, or Kubernetes distributions. This is increasingly important as IT environments become more complex and businesses need to respond to new business requirements, adopt new technology platforms or optimise costs.

Preparing for change

Despite Kubernetes presenting new technical challenges, ultimately the more things change the more they stay the same. Operations and infrastructure teams are well-accustomed to incorporating new tools into the ever-expanding tech stack and core principles like risk mitigation via modern data protection still serve their purpose.

Once these capabilities have been established, ops teams can begin to look further afield and explore leveraging the value of their data

through activities like testing and optimisation. Through a robust backup that supports app mobility, teams can also go a long way to future-proofing applications by ensuring services can

more easily ride the next wave of change. While Kubernetes is the current tool that is changing the dev landscape, it most certainly will not be the last. 



AS A CLOUD-NATIVE PROGRAMME, MANY OF THE SECURITY CHALLENGES FOR KUBERNETES COME FROM THE DISPERSED NATURE OF CLOUD ARCHITECTURE.



LENOVO ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF THINKSTATION PX, P7 & P5



Lenovo has announced the launch of the ThinkStation PX, P7 and P5, delivering a new trio of the most technologically advanced desktop workstations the company has ever built. Redesigned from the ground up to exceed today's most extreme, high-computing workloads across industries, these new workstations feature the latest processor technology from Intel® ranging up to 120 cores and support for high-end NVIDIA RTX professional GPUs. Additionally, the new workstations boast all-new groundbreaking chassis designs and



advanced thermals, as well as BMC capabilities for streamlined remote system monitoring. From virtual reality and mixed reality experiences and virtual production, to machine learning, data science, computer aided engineering (CAE), reality capture and AI, these next-generation workstations meet the ever-increasing demands for more power, performance, and speed in a scalable and future-proofed way for this new hybrid-work world.


"These new desktop workstations have been meticulously designed with a customer-centric lens in order to meet desired business outcomes and deliver innovative new solutions that our customers can enjoy well into the future as workloads increase in complexity," said Rob Herman, vice president of Lenovo's Workstation and Client AI Business Unit. "We partnered closely with Intel, NVIDIA and Aston Martin to ensure these new systems offer the best of form and functionality by combining a premium chassis with ultra high-end graphics, memory and processing power."

To bring this trio of workstations to life, Lenovo partnered with its customer Aston Martin, a renowned high-performance automotive manufacturer and leader in the ultra-luxury vehicle market, to co-design the new ThinkStation chassis.

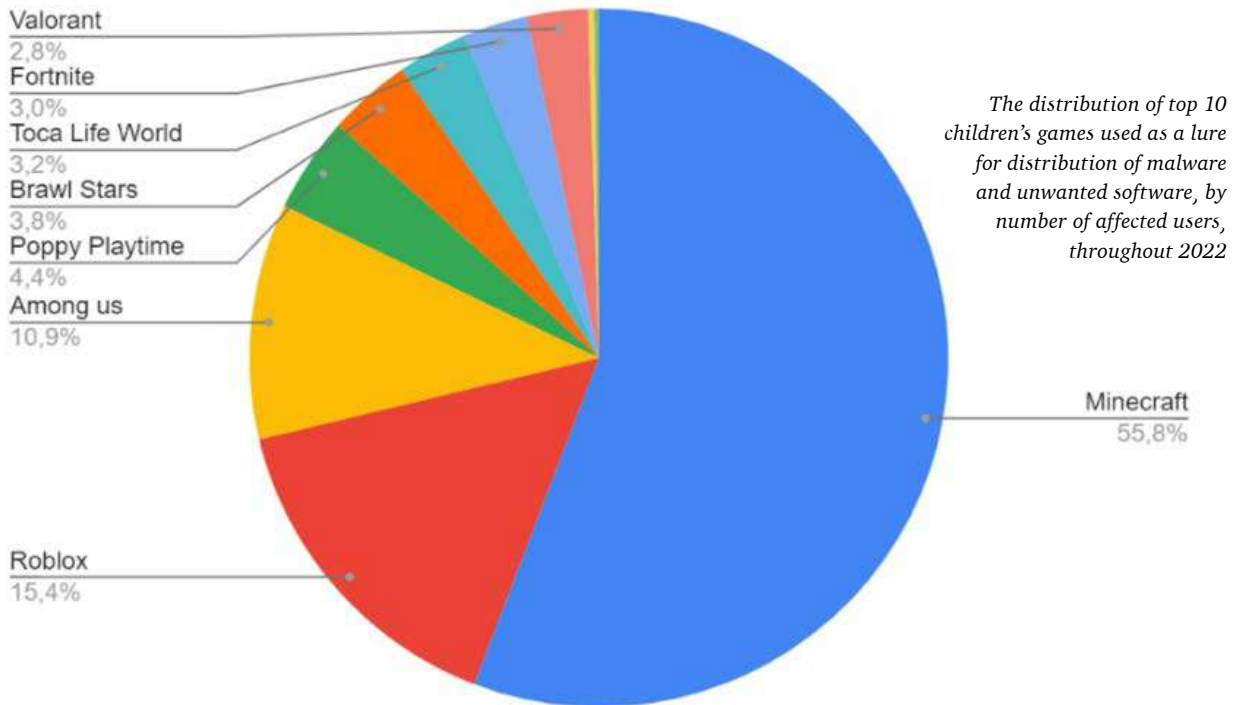
In line with Aston Martin's design philosophy, the collaboration sought to reflect Lenovo's iconic red design language, provide the highest possible performance, and enable enhanced levels of customisation. Designers from Lenovo and Aston Martin worked collaboratively to craft the ultimate performance machines, allowing workstation users to amplify every single stage of their complex workflows.

"The design collaboration of Lenovo's new ThinkStation chassis has been an amazing three-year journey," said Cathal Loughnane, director of Aston Martin Partnerships. "As Lenovo workstation customers ourselves this project was a unique opportunity to craft a high-performance system that we will use to design and develop our high-performance vehicles."

The ThinkStation PX, P7 and P5 workstations are designed to work within some of the most demanding professionally managed IT workplace environments and provide essential enterprise-grade features and security. Lenovo's rigorous standards and testing, ThinkStation Diagnostics 2.0, ThinkShield support, upgrades to Premier Support and three-year warranty, deliver the peace of mind needed to work confidently and more securely.

The three new workstations will be available from May 2023 onwards. 

CYBERATTACKS ON YOUNG GAMERS UP 57% IN 2022




Kaspersky experts have discovered cybercriminals launched more than 7 million attacks on children exploiting popular game titles in 2022, a 57% increase compared to 2021. Kaspersky's latest report *The Dark Side of Kids' Virtual Gaming Worlds* explores the risks for young players in online gaming and analyses threats related to the most popular online games for 3-16-year-old kids. Phishing pages used by cybercriminals to target young players mostly mimicked global titles including Roblox, Minecraft, Fortnite, and Apex Legends games. To reach parents' devices, cybercriminals purposely create fake game sites evoking children's interest to follow phishing

pages and download malicious files.

In 2022, over 230,000 gamers globally encountered malware and potentially unwanted applications that were disguised as popular children's games. Since children of this age often do not have their own computers and play from their parents' devices, the threats spread by cybercriminals are most likely aimed at obtaining credit card data and credentials of parents.

According to Kaspersky statistics, phishing pages used by cybercriminals to target young players primarily mimicked Roblox, Minecraft, Fortnite, and Apex Legends games. In total, over 878,000 phishing pages were created for these four games in 2022.

"In 2022, cybercriminals even exploited games designed for 3-8-year-

old children. This highlights that cybercriminals do not filter their targets by age and attack even the youngest gamers, with the likely target of reaching their parents' devices. When focusing on young players, cybercriminals don't even bother to make deception schemes less obvious. They hope children and teenagers have little or no experience or knowledge of cybercriminal traps and will easily fall for even the most primitive scams. Therefore, parents need to be especially careful about what apps their children download, whether their devices have trusted security solutions installed and should teach their children about how to behave online," comments Vasily M. Kolesnikov, a security expert at Kaspersky. 

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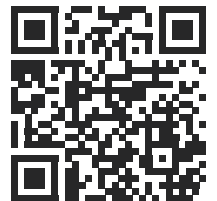
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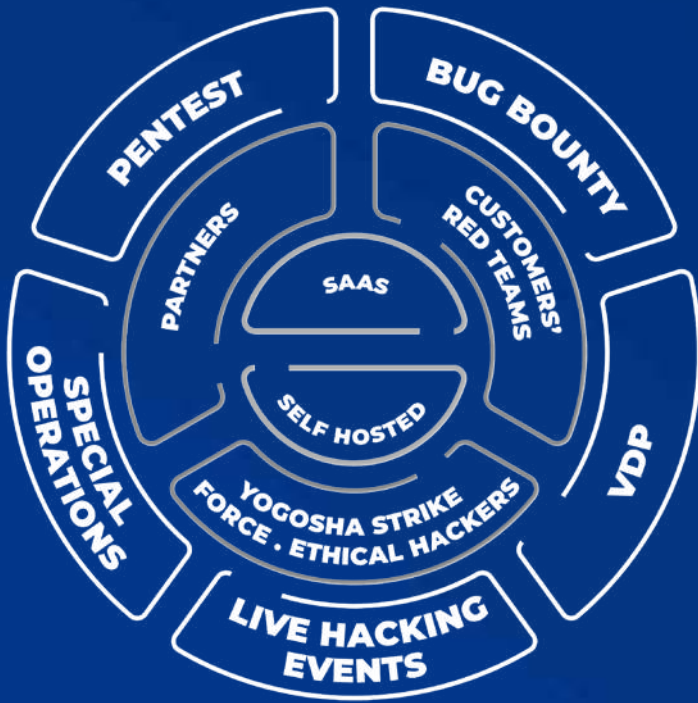
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