THE NEW ERA OF DISTRIBUTION: 2.0 AND BEYOND

WITH A CAREER SPANNING OVER 25 YEARS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA'S DYNAMIC TECHNOLOGY SECTOR, ASIF KHAN HAS EMERGED AS A VISIONARY LEADER AND A TRUSTED EXPERT IN CHANNEL AND DISTRIBUTION MANAGEMENT.

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Reseller MIDDLE EAST
THE VOICE OF THE CHANNEL

UAE ASCENDS AS GLOBAL TECH HUB

Sandhya DMello
Editor

A s we turn the page to 2025, it's thrilling to witness the UAE continuing to cement its status as a global hub of technology distribution. This transformation is not just a matter of infrastructure and investment but a testament to visionary leadership and strategic collaborations that push the boundaries of innovation.

In this issue, we spotlight Asif Khan of Quantum Edge Distribution, who exemplifies this dynamic shift with over a decade of steering his company through the fast-evolving tech landscape. Under his leadership, Quantum Edge has grown from its strong service delivery roots to a vanguard in value-added distribution, making significant strides across the Middle East and Africa.

This month, we also explore transformative partnerships and achievements across the sector—from ServiceNow's expanded global partner program to the pioneering collaborations between TechBridge Distribution MEA and RUCKUS Networks, and Cloud Box Technologies' milestone FortiSASE certification. These stories underline the vibrant ecosystem that thrives within our region, driven by innovation and a steadfast commitment to excellence.

Furthermore, the launch of Huawei and IEEE's 'Imagine Wi-Fi 7 to Reality' program in the UAE is set to revolutionize connectivity standards, promising new heights of speed and efficiency and showcasing the UAE's leadership in embracing and shaping future technologies.

As we look ahead, let's celebrate the formidable progress and anticipate the next wave of technological transformations set to redefine the industry. Join us in navigating the evolving landscapes of AI, digital strategy, and secure cloud solutions, all while keeping an eye on how these advancements will impact our daily lives and businesses.

Here's to a year of new beginnings, relentless innovation, and unparalleled growth in the Middle East's technology distribution sector.

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS BOOST TECHNOLOGY DISTRIBUTION

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SERVICENOW ENHANCES GLOBAL PARTNER PROGRAM, UNLOCKING NEW REVENUE AND MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR AI SOLUTIONS

ServiceNow , the AI platform for business transformation, announced, at ServiceNow Partner Kickoff, a major expansion to its global partner program, including it has nearly quadrupled its investment in new incentives and specializations to help partners capitalize on the rapid growth of ServiceNow AI solutions and deliver value to customers. Infosys and Cognizant have also been elevated to Global Elite partners, the highest level of partnership within the ServiceNow Partner Program.

This year, ServiceNow is offering substantial opportunities for partners to boost revenue and profitability through eligible discounts, rebates, and valuable credits that can be applied to training, professional services, and other practice building resources. It is expanding its program offerings to introduce more opportunities for partners to elevate and differentiate AI offerings in the market. This includes:

- Additional Product Line Achievements (PLA) for Now Assist to bolster credibility and support market positioning as a validated and trusted advisor with expertise in ServiceNow AI solutions.
- Expanded Specializations for partners to showcase their sales, product, and customer success across GenAI and industries including Customer Experience GenAI, Employee Experience GenAI, ServiceOps GenAI, Cybersecurity, and Tech Risk.
- New GenAI Customer Value Partner of the Year award will honor partners who have successfully leveraged GenAI to drive customer value.

ServiceNow is committed to supporting partners with additional tools and resources as they build thriving ServiceNow practices and help customers accelerate their business transformation.

"Over the past two years, we have completely transformed our Partner Program, cultivating an ecosystem of specialized, industry leading capabilities and services for our customers," said Erica Volini, executive vice president, worldwide industries, partners, and go to market at ServiceNow. "Our continued investment is focused on empowering our partners with the resources they need to grow their business, expand their AI expertise, and deliver incredible outcomes for our shared customers."

Elevating Cognizant and Infosys to Global Elite partners

The ServiceNow Partner Program, with more than 2,200 partners, is among the most comprehensive in the industry with rigorous training and certification requirements, and performance benchmarks to help ensure competency, capabilities, and customer success. Global Elite is the highest designation and represents companies that demonstrate the maximum level of global reach and expertise. Infosys and Cognizant join this exclusive group of strategic partners, which also includes Accenture, Deloitte, EY, and KPMG.

Building on more than a decade of collaboration, Infosys and ServiceNow are working together to transform customer experiences with GenAI powered industry solutions. Announced at Knowledge 2024, the company is combining Infosys Cobalt with ServiceNow's Now Assist capabilities to deliver managed services that increase productivity, enhance efficiency, and improve user experiences.

"The future of cloud and AI innovation requires strong partnerships," said Anant Adya, executive vice president and service offering head, Infosys. "Our recognition as Global Elite by ServiceNow reaffirms our commitment to enterprise collaboration while ensuring our customers have the solutions and support they need to successfully implement AI."

Cognizant, which has been a longstanding partner of ServiceNow, is on a path to drive $1 billion in combined business. The establishment of Cognizant's ServiceNow Business Group has helped customers accelerate the deployment of AI solutions and address critical IT challenges, including technical debt, operational effectiveness, and siloed systems. The company has also played a critical role in the go to market of ServiceNow's Workflow Data Fabric as the first global systems integrator, helping customers quickly implement these innovative data solutions.

"Our Global Elite standing signifies the true power of enterprise collaboration," said Jason Wojahn, chief executive officer at Thirdera, a Cognizant Company. "With the rise of autonomous Agents, we look forward to continuing our work with ServiceNow to enhance how we innovate and advise on AI driven transformations for customers globally."

RUCKUS NETWORKS APPOINTS TECHBRIDGE AS MEA CHANNEL DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

TechBridge Distribution MEA, a leading technology distributor in the Middle East and Africa (MEA), announced its new collaboration with RUCKUS Networks, a business unit of CommScope.

The MEA market has witnessed an explosive demand for advanced networking solutions, driven by rapid urbanization, the rise of smart cities, and the growing reliance on high-speed, secure internet access across sectors such as education, healthcare, hospitality, and government.

As more businesses and institutions turn to digital solutions, the need for robust, scalable, and seamless connectivity has never been greater.

RUCKUS Networks is uniquely positioned to address these needs with its comprehensive portfolio of Wi-Fi 7 access points, ICX switches, and cloud-managed solutions. Known for their reliability, scalability, and simplicity, solutions from RUCKUS are ideally suited for the MEA region's evolving landscape.

TechBridge, with a deep understanding of the MEA market and an extensive network of partners, is ideally suited to expand the footprint of RUCKUS in the region. Together, both companies aim to provide the market with the latest in secure, scalable networking technology to meet the growing demand for high-performance, always-on connectivity.

Meeting the MEA Region's Growing Connectivity Needs

Rated highly on Gartner Peer Insights for their exceptional user experience and innovation, the solutions of RUCKUS Networks are already recognized as a key player in global markets. Their cloud-managed network services and top class Wi-Fi technology have made them a preferred choice for businesses looking for reliable and scalable network infrastructure.

TechBridge's engagement as a Channel Development Partner will boost the availability of RUCKUS solutions across key markets in the MEA region, supporting businesses and governments in their digital transformation efforts.

Steve Lockie, Managing Director of TechBridge, said: "We are incredibly proud to partner with RUCKUS Networks in delivering advanced, scalable network solutions to the MEA market. RUCKUS technology is second to none, and we believe it is perfectly suited for this region's unique challenges and opportunities."

Both companies, Tech Bridge and RUCKUS Networks, are focused on long-term growth, with plans to expand offerings and drive digital transformation across the MEA region. By combining TechBridge's regional know-how with RUCKUS cutting-edge solutions, the cooperation is set to redefine the networking landscape for businesses and organizations across the Middle East and Africa.

Gary Newbold, VP, Regional Sales EMEA, RUCKUS Networks, added: "We're delighted to be working together with TechBride to deliver our network solutions across the MEA region. This collaboration will allow us to extend robust integrated solutions to an important market."

CLOUD BOX TECHNOLOGIES FORTISASE CERTIFICATION TO BOOST CYBER DEFENSES

Cloud Box Technologies (CBT), a premier systems integrator and IT services specialist in the Middle East, has received the prestigious FortiSASE certification after successfully navigating Fortinet's rigorous certification process. The FortiSASE certification aligns with CBT's vision to address the growing demand for secure, scalable, and flexible cloud-based solutions.

The certification process was a rigorous combination of comprehensive technical training, real-world implementation exercises, and extensive workshops designed to provide an in-depth understanding of FortiSASE's architecture, features, and benefits. The CBT team successfully underwent the challenging assessments, upgrading their expertise and aligning the training to suit Fortinet's global requirements.

Ranjith Kaippada, Managing Director, Cloud Box Technologies, said: "The FortiSASE certification reflects Cloud Box Technologies' unwavering commitment to upholding the highest industry standards in cybersecurity. It demonstrates our ability to adopt cutting-edge technologies that protect businesses while ensuring operational resilience. Moreover, it promises that our customers receive solutions that are reliable, and future-ready."

As organizations increasingly adopt hybrid and remote work models, cybersecurity risks have grown exponentially. Attaining this certification enables CBT to address these evolving challenges and support businesses in securing their operations without compromising productivity and ensuring business continuity.

As an Advanced Partner, CBT is now positioned to provide cutting-edge solutions tailored to customers across industries such as transportation, education, and finance. It also places the company as one of the early adopters, fully equipped with the technical expertise to deliver advanced SD-WAN and SASE solutions that seamlessly secure applications, networks, and data for enterprises operating in dynamic and hybrid environments.

"For CBT, the FortiSASE certification enhances our service portfolio, allowing us to deliver secure, cloud-based solutions that align with global security standards. For our customers, this certification also translates to enhanced cybersecurity measures and ensures that organizations maintain trust, safeguard critical data, and mitigate risks posed by increasingly sophisticated cyber threats," Kaippada added.

As a cybersecurity leader in the UAE, CBT operates a robust Security Operations Center (SOC) that monitors and protects networks around the clock. The certification expands the company's ability to address modern security challenges, particularly for organizations transitioning to hybrid and remote work models. With only a handful of certified providers, CBT stands out as a trusted and capable partner for businesses navigating digital transformation.

SARIYA BOOSTS DISTRIBUTION NETWORK IN MEA WITH STRATEGIC DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH NANITOR

Sariya information technology company a leading value-added distributor (VAD) in the Middle East and Africa, has recently announced the signing of a strategic distribution partnership agreement with Nanitor. As an authorized distributor for the Middle East and Africa market, Sariya information technology company will help the channel partners and clients to Elevate defense with a Cyber Asset Attack Surface Management (CAASM) platform that focuses on identifying, managing, and reducing the exposure of an organization's cyber assets to potential threats. Nanitor also supports Gartner's recommended Continuous Threat Exposure Management (CTEM) methodology that is predicted to reduce greatly each organizations likelihood to suffer a breach.

Nirmal Menon, BU Manager- ME, Sariya information technology company, said: "Nanitor's platform focuses on Asset-Centric Issue

Prioritization and Comprehensive Security Management. Sariya information technology company's strong presence across the MEA market as a leader in establishing mutually beneficial partnerships with vendors and channel organizations aims to enhance customer experience and value from the adoption of CTEM based platform from Nanitor."

Nanitor together with Sariya-IT will announce future activities together by last week of January 2025.

Heimir Fannar Gunnlaugsson is the CEO of Nanitor "We are proud of our partnership with Sariya information

technology as their reputation and success secures Nanitor's reach in the MEA market. We are very confident that our partnership will help customer's and partners gain value from Nanitor's offering, both as a comprehensive CAASM platform and also our Cyber governance, risk and compliance (Cyber GRC) offering. Nanitor's is fully aligned with Gartner's CTEM methodology and we are confident that IT managers are looking for a CTEM based Cybersecurity platform to support their extensive work to secure their organizations."

CORELIGHT LAUNCHES AI-POWERED NDR SAAS PLATFORM ON AWS MIDDLE EAST

Corelight, the leading network detection and response (NDR) company, announced the availability of its Investigator SaaS NDR platform on the AWS Middle East (me-central-1) region. Security Operations Center (SOC) teams in the Middle East can take advantage of NDR powered by advanced AI providing real-time visibility, advanced detections, and response, in combination with the inherent security of AWS Cloud.

By hosting the platform on AWS Middle East, Corelight enables organizations to benefit from local data sovereignty and reduced operational costs while increasing NDR performance and scalability.

Corelight has seen strong customer demand for its Open NDR Platform, driven by its features combining alerts with network evidence across hybrid and multi-cloud environments. Corelight's most recent cloud sensor product releases now include detections for data exfiltration and command and control traffic for the cloud, enriching network analytics with cloud service information, and enhanced visibility for encrypted traffic, which accounts for the majority of cloud traffic today.

Corelight's on-premise and cloud sensors allow customers to
• Extend visibility with

uniform telemetry across hybrid environments

- Identify stealthy cloud attacks masquerading as legitimate traffic with custom detections
- Accelerate incident response with rich evidence
- Provide an additional layer of security and monitoring on top of the secure AWS Cloud

"At Corelight, we are dedicated to proactively assisting our clients stay at the forefront of cloud security," said Vijit Nair, VP of product management at Corelight. "As organizations around the world face acute cybersecurity workforce shortages and skill gaps, our technology holds real potential to help security teams meaningfully address these challenges through workflow acceleration. Corelight's SaaS capabilities have the potential to be a force multiplier for resource constrained SOCs and quickly uplevel analysts by generating clear and direct alert explanations and investigative guidance."

The company in its latest fiscal year ended Jan. 31, 2024 posted 40% year-on-year revenue growth and recently released a new set of capabilities called Guided Triage in its SaaS solution, Corelight Investigator.

Guided Triage utilizes artificial intelligence (AI) to deliver fast, expert-level data insights in plain language, which expedites triage, reduces SIEM ingest requirements and associated costs, and bridges analyst skill gaps. According to a 2023 report by Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG), 62% of security operations center (SOC) teams are seeking cost-effective solutions due to the escalating expenses related to storing and managing large volumes of log data within SIEM systems. In addition, the increasing complexity and volume of cyber threats are pushing SOC teams to leverage AI to ensure that security analysts at all levels can better understand both the severity and priority of alerts using plain language for faster decision-making. Corelight applies industry-first large language models (LLMs) to summarize network activity and attack payloads, and innovative packet capture and single-screen triage technology to both reduce costs, and significantly accelerate incident response.

Corelight also recently released static file analysis capabilities powered by the integration of YARA, an open-source tool used to scan files and data streams for patterns associated with malware. With YARA rules now available in Corelight sensors, security teams are able to add static file analysis as a critical element of their network monitoring capabilities. Integrating YARA rules into Corelight Open NDR increases the overall efficiency of the security operations center (SOC) by eliminating the need for manual processes or additional tools to extract and analyze files, detect malware, and create an alert when malware is detected.

SANDBOXAQ AND GOOGLE CLOUD PARTNER TO ACCELERATE QUANTITATIVE AI FOR ENTERPRISE

SandboxAQ has announced a partnership with Google Cloud to integrate and optimize its platform of Large Quantitative Models (LQMs) on Google Cloud while enabling seamless procurement and deployment of SandboxAQ's solution through Google Cloud Marketplace. SandboxAQ's cutting-edge quantitative AI technologies, which are driving innovation in drug discovery, chemical and materials science, advanced sensing, and cybersecurity across diverse industries and applications, will leverage Google Cloud as its preferred cloud provider.

Jack D. Hidary, CEO of SandboxAQ, said, "Partnering with Google Cloud enables us to deliver enhanced value to customers by leveraging their industry-leading cloud computing and AI infrastructure with our groundbreaking Large Quantitative Models (LQMs). This collaboration accelerates our efforts to develop Quantitative AI technologies and applications that address critical challenges—such as breakthroughs in Alzheimer's research and other key areas of biopharma work. Together, we're positioned to empower businesses and governments with transformative solutions on Google Cloud, reaching a broader range of organizations through its robust marketplace."

SandboxAQ's, Large Quantitative Models (LQMs) deliver critical advances in life sciences, financial services, navigation, and other sectors.

"SandboxAQ's partnership with Google Cloud will help support the development of new models and solutions and bring them to enterprise customers more quickly and seamlessly," said Thomas Kurian, CEO, Google Cloud. "Google Cloud's AI-optimized infrastructure will underpin the development of SandboxAQ's quantitative models and solutions, while Google Cloud Marketplace will provide SandboxAQ with an accelerated, simplified route to market."

THE NEW ERA OF DISTRIBUTION: 2.0 AND BEYOND

*With a career spanning over 25 years in the Middle East and Africa's dynamic technology sector, **Asif Khan** has emerged as a visionary leader and a trusted expert in channel and distribution management.*

Quantum Edge Distribution is at the forefront of shaping the future of IT distribution in alignment with the UAE's vision to become a global hub for digital transformation. With a strategic focus on integrating cutting-edge technologies such as Unified Communication & Collaboration, Contact Center, Networking, Artificial Intelligence and CyberSecurity into its comprehensive solution offerings, Quantum Edge is poised to propel the region's IT distribution to new heights.

The company's roadmap includes deepening partnerships with tech innovators and enhancing value-added services that drive efficiency and innovation. This interview will explore how Quantum Edge's visionary approach not only supports the UAE's technological ambitions but also sets a benchmark for global IT distribution excellence.

Quantum Edge Distribution stands out as a transformative player in the Middle East and Africa's technology landscape, emerging from a strong foundation in services deliveries for more than a decade and evolved into a trusted leader in value-added distribution.

The decade-old company has built a reputation for excellence, innovation, and reliability to expand its scope. The brand specializes in delivering cutting-edge IT solutions tailored to meet the specific needs of businesses across a diverse range of industry verticals.

Under the leadership of Asif Khan, Managing Director, Quantum Edge Distribution, the brand is committed to bridge the gap between global technology vendors and regional partners.

Asif—Ph.D. in Business Administration — has successfully spearheaded large-scale channel networks and distribution operations, driving growth, profitability, and operational excellence across complex and diverse markets.

Asif's hallmark lies in his ability to turn around struggling businesses. He has a proven track record of revitalizing underperforming vendors, transforming them from entities with negative revenue trajectories into highly profitable and sustainable business units. His work extends across the Middle East, Africa, Turkey, and South Asia, regions known for their unique market challenges and diverse partner landscapes.

By fostering robust partnerships and leveraging his deep understanding of these markets, Asif has unlocked new revenue streams and set new benchmarks for success.

One of Asif's key achievements is his pioneering approach to market expansion. He has been instrumental in exploring and establishing a foothold in untapped territories, where his implementation of comprehensive go-to-market strategies has resulted in exponential growth for multiple organizations. His ability to navigate complex market dynamics and cultural nuances has earned him widespread recognition from leading vendors, who commend him for his strategic foresight and ability to drive tangible results.

Asif Khan, Managing Director, Quantum Edge Distribution, spoke to Sandhya D'Mello, Technology Editor, CPI Media Group on the brand's roadmap for 2025 and to offer its customers latest innovations to remain at forefront of ever growing digital space.

What is Quantum Edge Distribution's vision for its role in the Middle East and Africa in 2025, and how does its Marketplace platform support this vision?

In 2025, Quantum Edge Distribution is not just a technology distributor—it is

a visionary leader shaping the future of the Middle East and Africa. With its commitment to innovation, partner-centric values, and a bold leadership vision, Quantum Edge is set to redefine what it means to be a true distribution partner in digital transformation. By empowering channels to embrace the future, the company is playing a vital role in building a connected, competitive, and sustainable regional economy.

Marketplace is also in line with this vision, offering businesses a dynamic platform to access cutting-edge technologies and solutions tailored to their evolving needs. By providing a seamless and efficient ecosystem, Quantum Edge enables its partners to stay ahead of market trends and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Quantum Edge Distribution's journey is far from over—it is just beginning. As it continues to break new ground, the company is committed to leading the charge in transforming industries, empowering communities, and creating a brighter future for all.

What is Quantum Edge Distribution's mission and how does the company aim to achieve it?
At the heart of Quantum Edge Distribution's mission is its unwavering commitment to becoming the leading distributor of vertical IT solutions in the Middle East region. Guided by this vision, the company has not only expanded its reach but has also become a trusted

Power up reseller journey

partner for Value-Added Resellers (VARs) and global technology vendors alike. By fostering strong partnerships, Quantum Edge ensures that the latest technological advancements are seamlessly integrated into the regional ecosystem, creating value and driving sustainable growth. The leadership's focus on innovation and impact positions Quantum Edge as a pivotal player in the region's digital transformation. The company's ultimate goal is to empower channel partners with the tools, expertise, and support necessary to thrive in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

How does Quantum Edge Distribution contribute to the development of a competitive, digitally driven regional economy?
Quantum Edge Distribution's efforts extend beyond business success; they aim to create meaningful impact. By enabling small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) alongside major corporations, the company is fostering a competitive, digitally driven regional economy. Through initiatives focused on sustainability and smart solutions, Quantum Edge is helping businesses align with global standards while addressing local challenges.

What is your secret to build robust network of partnerships?
Acting as a critical conduit, the company fosters seamless connections and ensures that the latest innovations in technology are made accessible and relevant to the unique demands of local markets. By combining its expertise with a partner-first approach, Quantum Edge has successfully cultivated a robust network of partnerships that are characterized by trust, collaboration, and mutual growth. The company's impressive achievements speak volumes about its capabilities and dedication. With over 100+ successfully completed projects, Quantum Edge has consistently delivered solutions that drive measurable results for its partners. It's more than 10 years of service delivery highlight its ability to adapt to evolving market trends while maintaining a steadfast commitment to quality and

reliability. Quantum Edge's unwavering focus on technical excellence is evident in its team's impressive portfolio of 150 technical certifications, ensuring an excellent channel support model.

What key features distinguish Quantum Edge's support and services for its business partners?
Recognizing that businesses operate around the clock, Quantum Edge has established a comprehensive 24/7 technical support framework. This ensures that its partners receive uninterrupted support and guidance, minimizing downtime and enhancing operational efficiency. The company's value-added services extend beyond mere product distribution; they encompass strategic consulting, implementation, and ongoing maintenance to deliver end-to-end solutions tailored to specific business challenges.

How does Quantum Edge Distribution approach channel partnerships, and what specific support do they offer to enable partner success?
At Quantum Edge Distribution, our approach to channel partners is rooted in collaboration, empowerment, and mutual growth. We act as a seamless extension of our partners' businesses, providing them with access to cutting-edge technologies, tailored training programs, and robust marketing support. By understanding the unique needs of each partner, we deliver

> **QUANTUM EDGE IS SET TO REDEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A TRUE DISTRIBUTION PARTNER IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION. BY EMPOWERING CHANNELS TO EMBRACE THE FUTURE, THE COMPANY IS PLAYING A VITAL ROLE IN BUILDING A CONNECTED, COMPETITIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL ECONOMY**

> **BY ENABLING SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES) ALONGSIDE MAJOR CORPORATIONS, THE COMPANY IS FOSTERING A COMPETITIVE, DIGITALLY DRIVEN REGIONAL ECONOMY**

customized solutions that enhance their ability to address diverse partner demands. Our value lies in enabling channel partners to achieve greater efficiency, profitability, and market penetration through our extensive expertise, 24/7 technical support, and strategic guidance. Together, we foster innovation, drive digital transformation, and create sustainable success in an ever-evolving technology landscape.

What are the three main pillars of Quantum Edge's product strategy, and how do they contribute to the company's overall vision?
Our product strategy is intricately designed to align with our broader business objectives and corporate vision, ensuring that we not only meet the immediate needs of our partners but also anticipate future trends in technology and business. We have built a comprehensive, three-fold product strategy that maximizes coverage and provides tailored solutions for a wide range of industries and sectors.

Quantum Edge's product strategy is built on three pillars. The first focuses on leading technology segments like UC & CC, Networking, Infrastructure, AI, and Cybersecurity Solutions. The second centers on industry-specific solutions tailored for sectors like healthcare, finance, education, hospitality, and the public sector. The third pillar provides comprehensive technical services, including pre-sales consulting, implementation, maintenance, and 24/7 technical support from certified engineers and technicians. Together, these three pillars—Technology Segments, Vertical Solutions, and Technical Services—form a cohesive, forward-thinking product strategy that delivers maximum coverage, drives partner satisfaction, and supports our long-term corporate vision. By focusing on these areas, Quantum Edge Distribution is poised to remain a leader in driving digital transformation and enabling channels across the Middle East and Africa to achieve their full potential.

What are Quantum Edge Distribution's key goals for 2025, as outlined in their vision for the future?
The leadership at Quantum Edge Distribution envisions a future where the company not only leads in market share but also serves as a cornerstone of regional progress. Their goals for 2025 include:

· Becoming the most trusted distributor of IT solutions in the Middle East & Africa.
· Being recognized as the preferred partner by value added resellers and technology vendors, known

for delivering mutual success and growth.
- Playing a pivotal role in shaping the region's digital economy by driving innovation and fostering technological adoption across industries.

What are the trategic focus areas for Quantum Edge in 2025, and how do they contribute to driving regional innovation and digital transformation?

Quantum Edge Distribution has become a leading vertical IT distributor by specializing in tailored IT solutions for industries such as healthcare, finance, education, hospitality, and the public sector, aligning its offerings to meet specific sector needs and enhancing partner success. As a trusted intermediary between global technology vendors and regional partners, Quantum Edge builds enduring partnerships by providing comprehensive services that range from market entry strategies for vendors to robust support for VARs. Additionally, the company is driving digital transformation in the Middle East and Africa by incorporating advanced technologies like UC & CC, AI, networking, and cybersecurity into its solutions, enabling businesses to increase operational efficiency, reduce costs, and explore new revenue opportunities.

What role does Quantum Edge Distribution play in the Middle East and Africa's technology landscape in 2025?

In the year 2025, Quantum Edge Distribution stands as a symbol of innovation, leadership, and transformation in the Middle East and Africa's technology landscape. With its roots firmly planted in a legacy of services delivery and value-added distribution, the company has grown into a trailblazer, shaping the region's digital transformation journey while redefining the standards of excellence in IT solutions.

What are the primary factors contributing to the rapid expansion of the IT market in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) region?

The Middle East and Africa (MEA) region has witnessed remarkable growth and transformation in the IT sector in recent years. The IT distribution ecosystem in this region comprises several key elements, including market dynamics, major players, distribution channels, and emerging trends. Below is a comprehensive overview of the IT distribution landscape in the Middle East and Africa. The IT market in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) is rapidly expanding, fuelled by population growth, economic development, and government initiatives promoting digital transformation. Both public and private sectors are escalating their investments in technology infrastructure, software solutions, and digital services, leading to increased IT spending. The region's young, tech-savvy demographic is driving demand for IT products and services. Additionally, a significant shift towards cloud computing, mobile devices, and digital services is opening up new opportunities for IT distribution across the MEA region.

Who are the key players in the IT distribution ecosystem in the MEA region, and what roles do they play?

In the MEA region, the IT distribution ecosystem comprises three main types of key players: distributors, resellers, and system integrators. Distributors include a mix of global enterprises and regional firms, with the former offering broad technology solutions and the latter specializing in services tailored to specific local demands. Resellers act as intermediaries between distributors and end customers, providing valuable local market insights, sales expertise, and technical support. System integrators offer end-to-end IT solutions that include consulting, design, implementation, and maintenance services. They often work in close collaboration with both distributors and resellers to provide comprehensive, customized solutions to meet the specific needs of customers.

What are the main distribution channels for IT products in the MEA region, and how do they differ in their approach to serving customers?

In the MEA region, IT products are distributed through three main channels: traditional brick-and-mortar retailers, online retail, and value-added distribution. Traditional channels include electronics stores and IT resellers that cater to both individual consumers and businesses, offering the benefits of personalized service and immediate product availability. Online retail has expanded rapidly, with e-commerce platforms providing a broad selection of IT products and the convenience of online purchasing. Value-added distributors (VADs) enhance these services by offering additional support such as technical assistance, pre-sales help, and training. VADs typically concentrate on specific technology sectors like networking,

150 technical certifications ensuring an excellent channel support model

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QUANTUM EDGE DISTRIBUTION IS POISED TO REMAIN A LEADER IN DRIVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ENABLING CHANNELS ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

security, and software solutions, enabling businesses to maximize their IT investments.

What are the emerging trends in the IT distribution ecosystem in the MEA region, and how are they influencing market dynamics?

Several key trends are shaping the IT distribution ecosystem in the Middle East and Africa (MEA). First, digital transformation is a major driver, with governments and businesses increasingly adopting technologies like cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and cybersecurity. Secondly, there is a trend towards localized solutions that address the region's unique linguistic, cultural, and industry-specific needs. The MEA region is also witnessing a surge in its startup ecosystem, with many new technology startups emerging and often partnering with established distributors to expand their market reach and scale operations effectively. Additionally, government initiatives aimed at promoting technology adoption, including smart city projects, e-government services, and digital literacy programs, are creating substantial opportunities for technology distributors and solution providers. These trends collectively contribute to the dynamic expansion and increased IT spending within the region's IT distribution sector.

Excellent Regional Coverage in 6 locations

How are IT distribution companies adapting their business models in response to technological advancements and the increased demand for cloud services post-pandemic?

IT distribution companies are undergoing significant transformations in their business models due to the rapid emergence of new technologies and the accelerated digital transformation catalyzed by the pandemic. These companies are reimagining their organizations for the digital age by integrating advanced technologies like cloud computing and artificial intelligence (AI) to optimize operations, enhance customer engagement, and increase operational trust through improved security and data privacy. This shift includes not only transitioning to demand-driven service models, exemplified by changes like video consultations in healthcare, but also focusing on extensive upskilling and training in digital competencies to boost workforce capability. Additionally, IT distributors, who account for 71% of channel resale revenue, are expanding their services to include marketplace services, technical support, migration services, and more. These adaptations are critical as they help maintain competitive edges, provide value-added opportunities, and support the efficiency of the supply chain in a market increasingly leaning towards cloud services. **RME**

ABU DHABI GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES DIGITAL STRATEGY 2025-2027

Abu Dhabi to be the world's first fully AI-native government across all digital services by 2027

Ahmed Hisham Al Kuttab, Chairman of the Department of Government Enablement – Abu Dhabi (DGE).

The Abu Dhabi Government has announced the "Abu Dhabi Government Digital Strategy 2025-2027," advancing the emirate's transformation towards an AI-powered government. Implemented by the Department of Government Enablement – Abu Dhabi (DGE) in collaboration with Abu Dhabi government entities, the strategy aims to position the emirate as a global leader in AI-driven government and will allocate Dh13 billion through 2025-2027 to foster innovation and technology adoption in the emirate.

The strategy aims to establish a robust digital infrastructure, creating a flexible and scalable foundation to achieve 100% adoption of sovereign cloud computing for government operations and digitising and automating 100% of processes.

It also includes the development of a unified digital enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform, streamlining processes and enhancing productivity and efficiency.

As part of the AI for All programme under the strategy, the Abu Dhabi government is investing in training and empowering its citizens in AI applications. Additionally, over 200 innovative AI solutions will be implemented across government services, solidifying Abu Dhabi's position as a global hub for AI-driven innovation. The strategy also promotes the development of robust digital guidelines and frameworks to ensure the highest cybersecurity standards to anticipate and address future challenges efficiently.

Ahmed Hisham Al Kuttab, Chairman of the Department of Government Enablement – Abu Dhabi (DGE), said: "The Abu Dhabi Government Digital Strategy 2025-2027 reflects our leadership's vision of being an AI-native government, seamlessly integrating AI across all government systems for a future that is proactive, agile and fully technology-enabled. By incorporating AI, cloud technologies, and data-driven insights into our government's DNA, we will transform public service delivery, optimise government operations, and drive sustainable economic growth."

The Abu Dhabi Government Digital Strategy builds on over a decade of digital evolution, progressing from e-government to smart and now to AI-powered services for citizens, residents, and businesses across sectors.

Recent initiatives such as the third evolution of the TAMM platform, TAMM 3.0 and the Abu Dhabi Program for Effortless Customer Experience, pave the way for next-generation digital solutions and technologies rooted in AI, sustainability, cloud computing, and data analytics.

The strategy is anticipated to contribute over Dh24 billion to Abu Dhabi's GDP by 2027 and create more than 5,000 employment opportunities supporting Emiratisation efforts.

Through key initiatives, including partnerships with the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence for upskilling, the Advanced Technology Research Council (ATRC) for large language models, and G42 for AI infrastructure development, and other global partners, Abu Dhabi is cementing its status as a global hub for digital governance and sustainable development. 🄍

BY INCORPORATING AI, CLOUD TECHNOLOGIES, AND DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS INTO OUR GOVERNMENT'S DNA, WE WILL TRANSFORM PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY, OPTIMISE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, AND DRIVE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH.

REMOTE WORK IS HERE TO STAY; LET US EMBRACE IT TOGETHER, SAYS MINISTER AL OLAMA

Pioneering a future-ready workforce with UAE's strategic shift to enhanced remote work systems and cybersecurity safeguards

The UAE has consistently demonstrated leadership in innovation and possesses the ability to anticipate future trends impacting sustainable economic development. With the beginning of 2025, the nation, recognized for its supportive employment environment, is poised to adopt remote working as a practical approach to increase workforce productivity.

The UAE's Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, and Remote Work Applications Office, on Tuesday, released a whitepaper on the best practices and future policies developed and implemented by the UAE government in activating the remote work system.

The paper, created in collaboration with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), aims to enhance remote work systems by leveraging global trends and the expertise developed by the UAE government during the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to design a future of flexible and hybrid work that relies on emerging technologies to shape advanced remote work systems.

Omar Sultan Al Olama, UAE Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, and Remote Work Applications emphasised the importance of focusing on scientific research to drive sustainable development efforts in the government work system in general, and remote work in particular. He pointed out that the UAE government utilises research and studies to shape the future of work supported by technology and digital transformation, reflecting the vision of the leadership to enhance the UAE's position in various future fields globally.

Further, Al Olama stated that the UAE seeks the sustainability of development and the advancement of future infrastructure, enhanced by artificial intelligence and digital technology solutions. This aims to improve the readiness of government work to anticipate and keep up with the rapid global changes and developments in the digital field, requiring the intensification of studies and the expansion of scientific research aimed at developing the best digital practices.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, when everyone started working from home, I was tasked to lead the Remote Work Applications ministerial mandate. This was a critical time. It demonstrated the UAE leadership's determination to not only ensure business continuity during the pandemic, but also to leverage the crisis as a catalyst for monumental economic growth. Our journey since has been marked by strategic milestones, with the government enacting pivotal legislations to foster remote work across the UAE. These efforts have cemented our nation's status as a haven for people who want to work from anywhere, enabled by a digital and legislative infrastructure unparalleled in its support for the modern workforce," added Al Olama.

"The Remote forum is a touchpoint in this journey for us to reflect, learn and explore. I would like to thank everyone who took part in the Remote forum. This white paper captures the collective wisdom and innovative ideas that were presented at the forum and serves as a roadmap for public and private sector on enabling remote work for their teams. Remote Work is here to stay, let us embrace it together," added Al Olama.

The whitepaper titled "Remote Working in the UAE" addressed the comprehensive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UAE, primarily focusing on the increased emphasis on collecting and analysing data related to non-traditional work methods. It also covered approaches to improving productivity and enhancing the community's wellbeing, along with the remote work experience based on practical practices. Additionally, it discussed the outcomes of the remote work forum organised by the Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, and Remote Work Applications Office last year, which included proactive policies, methods adopted by the UAE, global policies, best practices, key challenges, and recommendations for developing policies in this field.

Remote work systems is increasing overall productivity by 4.6% after the pandemic, due to the reduction in commuting to and from work, as well as other positive rates and impacts of implementing remote work systems across various sectors, including skills, work environment, and more.

New Regulation
Various media outlets today widely quoted that the Registration Authority of ADGM, Abu Dhabi's international financial center, recently published the new Employment Regulations 2024 which reflect global changes in workplace practices.

"We are pleased to announce the publication of the New Employment Regulations, which reflect our strong commitment to enhancing our ecosystem and ensuring the best regulatory frameworks and favorable conditions for both companies and employees alike," stated Hamad Sayah Al Mazrouei, CEO of ADGM Registration Authority.

Repealing the existing Employment Regulations 2019, the new employment regulations will become effective on April 1, 2025, granting employers sufficient time to align their internal policies, employment contracts and other employment-related matters with the requirements provided under the new regulations.

Some of the key amendments ADGM made in the new employment regulations include amending the definition of 'employee' to enable employers to hire remote employees and allow for more flexible working arrangements.

The new regulations also clarify ambiguities related to employee entitlements, including part-time employees, and certain requirements regarding obtaining and canceling an employee's work permit and visa.

The trend towards remote working is largely influenced by a global skills shortage, with many workers and companies favoring flexible work arrangements. The UAE government, recognizing the long-term value of remote work, has actively developed policies to support this modern work arrangement. However, as remote work eliminates geographical barriers, it also introduces significant cybersecurity challenges.

Cybersecurity imperative as UAE embraces remote work
With the transition to remote working, the vulnerability to cyber threats increases substantially. Research indicates that the Middle East faces higher cybersecurity breach costs compared to other regions, with averages reaching US$6.9 million per incident. This elevated risk underscores the importance of stringent cybersecurity measures to safeguard sensitive information and maintain business operations. In response to these challenges, the UAE has proactively established a robust digital infrastructure, supported by comprehensive cybersecurity policies and practices.

To fortify its remote work framework against cyber threats, the UAE has implemented a series of cybersecurity measures. These include stringent protocols for home internet security, comprehensive bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policies, formal cybersecurity training for all employees, and the use of encrypted communication tools. Such measures are crucial for preventing unauthorized access and ensuring the privacy and integrity of corporate data.

Remote working introduces significant cybersecurity risks, particularly relevant in the Middle East where data breach costs are notably high. According to Proxyrack, the average cost of a data breach in this region is US$6.9 million, surpassed only by the US. As remote work increases, so does the potential financial impact of these breaches.

Accordingly, many national security agencies and cybersecurity specialists have evolved specific cybersecurity and privacy recommendations for organisations with employees who work remotely. For example, the cybersecurity specialist Kaspersky has issued a list of key security requirements for organisations using any form of remote working. They include developing a documented home security policy for securing home internet access and Wi-Fi, having a documented bring-your-own-device policy, providing formal cybersecurity training to employees, only using video-conferencing services with end-to-end encryption, updating password policies and using two-factor identification, and preferring centralised data storage.

The UAE is already rated highly against global peers for cybersecurity policy, ranked as fifth in the world for cybersecurity infrastructure in the latest Global Cybersecurity Index40 prepared by the International Telecommunications Union. In 2022, the UAE implemented an overarching legal framework41 designed to regulate online technologies including those used in remote working contexts. The UAE has also created a number of cybersecurity resources designed to provide practical assistance and advice for organisations and individuals using any technologies that may have cybersecurity or personal safety and privacy dimensions. ●

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340+
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70%
OF INVESTORS PLAN TO INVEST IN STARTUPS

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AL-FUTTAIM UNVEILS 'BLUE AI', A SMART LIFESTYLE ADVISOR MADE IN THE UAE

Blue AI, a groundbreaking feature, will reach more than five million Blue Rewards customers in the first year.

Dany Karam, Chief Marketing & Partnerships Officer, Al Futtaim Group.

Al-Futtaim announced the launch of Blue AI, a groundbreaking feature within the Blue Rewards app that empowers customers to interact with all their favourite brands in new and dynamic ways.

The feature will reach more than five million Blue Rewards customers in the first year. The announcement was made at Al-Futtaim's AI Summit, showcasing the group's ongoing focus on integrating cutting edge technologies to improve customer experiences.

The first AI platform of its kind in the Middle East, Blue AI developed by Al-Futtaim in the UAE, is a smart lifestyle advisor and customer engagement platform that offers seamless guidance and tailored insights across the Blue ecosystem of products and services, setting a new standard in personalised customer engagement.

Blue AI offers several core features designed to enhance the customer journey; users can browse fashion essentials tailored to their unique tastes, get instant access to beauty products with expert guidance, enjoy automated product recommendations, access test drive bookings at their fingertips and also seamlessly integrates a streamlined one-click multi-brand checkout experience that simplifies shopping like never before. Designed with customers at its core, this innovative platform enriches the user journey by offering experiences uniquely suited to every individual's preference.

Moza Al Futtaim, Chief AI Officer at Al-Futtaim, shared: "At Al-Futtaim,

we are dedicated to driving innovation across our ecosystem, inspiring meaningful change and making everyday life better. AI has emerged as a powerful tool for personalisation, and we are harnessing it to better understand what truly matters to our customers. Blue AI helps us turn deep insights into meaningful actions, making every minute on the app smarter, smoother, and more in tune with your needs. The launch of Blue AI goes beyond technology – it's about using innovation to spark genuine connections and transform the way we serve each individual user."

Future of Shopping

The launch of Blue AI aligns with the UAE's overarching vision to become a global leader in innovation, where advanced technologies such as AI are harnessed to enhance everyday life. It also comes as part of Al-Futtaim's broader commitment to adopting data-driven technology in the quest to enhance customer experience and provide diverse avenues to navigate the digital shopping landscape.

Himanshu Shrivastava, Group Chief Technology Officer at Al Futtaim, added, "Human centred approach is at the heart of how we design our platforms, and Blue AI exemplifies our dedication to continuous innovation in the retail space. With this new feature, we are transforming how customers shop, learning from their preferences while elevating the experience to new
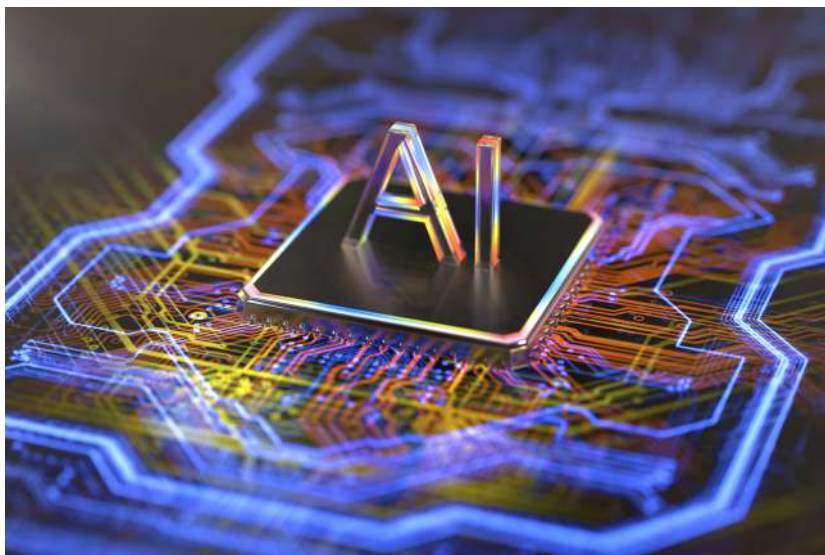
levels. By fostering deeper connections between customers and the brands and products they love, Blue AI delivers a faster, more intuitive, and ultimately more enjoyable shopping journey."

Blue AI is initially launching in the UAE, before expanding to eight markets across the region in its first year, bringing its groundbreaking capabilities to an even broader audience. This launch underscores Al-Futtaim's dedication to customer-centric innovation, empowering individuals to make smarter, more convenient choices through tailored, intuitive solutions.

Dany Karam, Chief Marketing & Partnerships Officer, Al Futtaim Group, said: "The platform and ecosystem that Blue AI integrates with is our long-established Al-Futtaim loyalty and rewards programme Blue today has users in the millions spanning across nine countries. As a smart lifestyle advisor Blue AI elevates

our signature shopping experiences even further by offering personalised product recommendations tailored to individual preferences across fashion, beauty, automotive and more."

Blue AI helps brands to plan marketing strategies

A combination of complex algorithms, deep learning models and large language models allows Blue AI to provide valuable insights derived from harmonized customer data from over 80 sources.

"With the additional AI layer, it allows brands to understand customer preferences and behaviours at a granular level, enabling highly targeted and personalised marketing campaigns. At the same time, data governance protection protocols remain very stringent. By analysing engagement metrics and purchase patterns within the Blue ecosystem, brands can identify trending products and services, optimise pricing strategies, and tailor offers to specific customer segments," said Karam.

The platform's focus on delivering the right product to the right customer at the right time empowers brands to maximise conversion rates and improve return on marketing investment. Furthermore, the feedback loop within Blue AI allows brands to continuously refine their strategies based on real-time customer interactions and preferences, ensuring campaigns remain relevant and effective.

> **BY ANALYSING ENGAGEMENT METRICS AND PURCHASE PATTERNS WITHIN THE BLUE ECOSYSTEM, BRANDS CAN IDENTIFY TRENDING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, OPTIMISE PRICING STRATEGIES, AND TAILOR OFFERS TO SPECIFIC CUSTOMER SEGMENTS**
> *DANY KARAM, CHIEF MARKETING & PARTNERSHIPS OFFICER, AL FUTTAIM GROUP*

ZOHO ACHIEVES 50% REVENUE GROWTH IN UAE, PARTNERS WITH UAQ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Zoho is set to help over 8,600 businesses in Umm Al Quwain leverage its cloud technology to catapult their growth.

Zoho Corp., a leading global technology company, has announced 50% growth in its revenue in the UAE and 40% increase in channel partner network in 2024. The company also recorded a remarkable 64% upmarket momentum as large UAE enterprises migrate to its solutions, further reinforcing the nation as a key regional hub for the company.

As part of its ongoing commitment to support digital transformation of businesses in the country, Zoho has signed a strategic agreement with the Umm Al Quwain Chamber of Commerce. The announcements were made on the sidelines of Zoholics Dubai 2025, the company's annual user conference.

Khalfan Ahmed Mesfer, Chairman at UAQ Chamber of Commerce said: "This partnership with Zoho is a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to foster innovation and growth within the UAE's business community. We are excited about the opportunities this collaboration will bring to our members and the wider business ecosystem."

The signing ceremony took place in the presence of Ammar Rashid Al Aleeli, Director General at UAQ Chamber of Commerce and Hyther Nizam, President Middle East and Africa, Zoho and Prem Anand Velumani, Associate Director, Strategic Growth (MEA) at Zoho.

With an investment of up to Dh17 million in wallet credits value and Dh43 million in value dedicated to digital upskilling, Zoho is set to help over 8,600 businesses in Umm Al Quwain leverage its cloud technology to catapult their growth. As part of this partnership, eligible businesses in UAQ can register to receive up to Dh2,000 wallet credits and Dh5000 in training value for one year. These can be utilised for access to and workshops for Zoho's suite of over 55 business applications, including Zoho One, the operating system for business, enabling them to automate and streamline all aspects of their operations.

"Our growth in the UAE reflects the growing confidence of local businesses in Zoho's solutions, and

our partnership with the Umm Al Quwain Chamber of Commerce is an exciting step towards empowering more businesses with the tools they need to gain competitiveness in today's digital economy," said Hyther Nizam, President Middle East and Africa (MEA), Zoho.

"As one of the UAE's emerging business hubs, Umm Al Quwain is rapidly establishing itself as a thriving ecosystem for trade and manufacturing. With its strategic location, modern port facilities, and growing industrial base, the emirate offers a unique environment for businesses to expand and innovate," added Nizam.

The strategic collaboration with UAQ Chamber of Commerce is a testament to Zoho's transnational localism strategy — rooting its efforts in local communities while leveraging its global resources to make a meaningful impact. Zoho's suite of over 55 applications, all built from ground up on the same technology stack, is set to empower businesses in UAQ to enhance operational efficiency, foster innovation, and contribute to the growth of the emirate's economy.

"Zoho's commitment to the UAE's digital vision is underscored by our expanding network of alliances with government entities, helping businesses across the region modernise and innovate. Through our partnership with the Umm Al Quwain Chamber of Commerce, we are excited to help local businesses leverage digital tools to further enhance their operations and tap into new opportunities in the global market," said Prem Anand Velumani, Associate Director, Strategic Growth (MEA), Zoho.

This partnership marks another significant milestone in Zoho's strategy of expanding its network of public-private collaborations in the UAE. Al Aleeli, said:

"Our collaboration with Zoho marks a new era of technological advancement and support for businesses in Umm Al Quwain. We look forward to leveraging Zoho's expertise to enhance our services and drive economic development in the Emirate."

Zoho has been at the forefront of supporting the nation's ambitious digital transformation agenda, with similar previous initiatives involving key government bodies such as the Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), the International Free Zone Authority (IFZA), Dubai Culture, and the Ministry of Economy, among others.

Zoho has been gaining increasing momentum amongst large enterprises in UAE. In 2024, Zoho's suite of products continued to dominate the UAE market, with Zoho One, Zoho Books, Zoho CRM, and Zoho People maintaining their positions as the top-selling solutions, along with Zoho Desk that has become popular with the local businesses. ⓇⓂⒺ

Dh2,000 wallet credits and **Dh5000** in training value for one year

"

THIS PARTNERSHIP WITH ZOHO IS A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE IN OUR ONGOING EFFORTS TO FOSTER INNOVATION AND GROWTH WITHIN THE UAE'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY
KHALFAN AHMED MESFER, CHAIRMAN AT UAQ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VERSATILE INTERNATIONAL LAUNCHES GCC'S FIRST CONSTRUCTION PULSE SURVEY: AI SET TO REVOLUTIONISE GULF CONSTRUCTION IN 2025

53% of construction professionals focused on regional market expansion as the top priority.

Marco Fahd, Chairman and CEO of Versatile International.

The construction industry in the UAE and Saudi Arabia is on the verge of a technological and sustainability-driven transformation, according to The Construction Pulse, a new survey conducted by Versatile International – the region's first natural stone project management consultancy. The survey, in collaboration with Ipsos in UAE, captured insights from 168 senior level professionals at all stages of the construction process – ranging from developers, architects and designers – to project management consultants - revealed that 57% of respondents view Artificial Intelligence (AI) as the most prominent trend shaping the sector in 2025.

At the same time, 55% of respondents in the survey emphasised sustainability as a key driver of innovation, with development projects increasingly incorporating renewable energy and green building certifications. However, the findings reveal challenges ahead, with 56% of respondents citing labour shortages as a substantial issue over the next 5 to 10 years, and 46% identifying the need for more specialized skilled employees. In the short term, 51% of respondents pointed to rising costs and project complexity as the most significant

obstacles currently affecting the industry.

Key Findings

The survey revealed major trends that will define the Gulf construction landscape:

- AI's Impact: 57% of respondents believe AI will revolutionize workflows and decision-making in 2025.
- Sustainability Surge: 55% of professionals highlight sustainability as the top priority across construction initiatives.
- Labour Shortages: 56% of respondents identify labour shortages as a substantial challenge over the next 5 to 10 years, affecting the industry's ability to deliver projects on time and maintain quality standards, with 46% also pointing to the need for more specialised skilled employees as a secondary challenge.
- Growth Focus: 53% of construction industry leaders in the UAE and KSA cited regional market expansion when asked about their primary focus for growth in 2025.

While there is optimism about the potential of AI and sustainability in revolutionising the industry, the survey also identified some concerns for respondents. When asked about the biggest challenges that are currently facing the sector, respondents cited rising costs (51%) as the primary challenge facing construction professionals across both the UAE and KSA, highlighting the need for smarter budgeting strategies and minimizing wasted resource due to rework.

A Sector in Transition

"These findings highlight a construction industry at a crossroads," said Marco Fahd, Chairman and CEO of Versatile International. "AI and sustainability are reshaping how projects are planned and delivered and continue to create opportunities in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. On the other hand - challenges like labor shortages and rising costs require practical solutions, such as better workforce development and efficiency. This survey is not just a snapshot — it is

55% highlight sustainability as a key factor shaping the industry, with Saudi Vision 2030 accelerating green building initiatives.

57% of Gulf construction professionals surveyed cite AI as the most transformative trend shaping the industry in 2025.

part of a long-term effort to establish an industry benchmark, helping to identify key areas of challenge and opportunity. Accessing specialist consultants like Versatile International can play a critical role in avoiding costly delays and supply chain issues that risk project deadlines."

The Regulatory Environment Across the region, in recent years, updated policy frameworks seek to guide the industry towards achieving sustainable goals. In the UAE, 64% of respondents pointed to regulatory changes as a challenge, reflecting the ongoing evolution of the industry as it redefines sustainability benchmarks in order to reach decarbonization goals.

Opportunities for 2025

It is clear that construction professionals across the Gulf are establishing robust plans for 2025. When asked about their biggest focus areas for growth in 2025, 53% of construction professionals across the UAE and the Kingdom identified entering new regional markets as the top priority. Industry leaders emphasize the importance of collaboration, workforce development, and innovation to meet increasing demands while maintaining cost efficiency and quality. •

HUAWEI AND IEEE UAE SECTION LAUNCH GROUNDBREAKING WI-FI 7 INNOVATION PROGRAM TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY

The 'Imagine Wi-Fi 7 to Reality' program features contests catering to different segments of the technology ecosystem.

Huawei and the UAE section of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) have launched a futuristic initiative, the 'Imagine Wi-Fi 7 to Reality' program, aimed at propelling innovation in wireless technology.

The initiative — running from January 20 to April 20, 2025 — aims to explore new requirements based on Wi-Fi 7 scenarios, cultivate high-end talent in the connectivity field, and accelerate intelligent industry transformation across Middle East and Central Asia (ME&CA).

Abdulaziz AlNuaimi, Chief Security Officer, Huawei UAE, delivered a speech highlighting the successful partnership between Huawei, the IEEE UAE section, and the University of Dubai. He emphasized how the new season aims to promote industry development and trigger multi-dimensional thinking on user experience and data security.

"Our longstanding collaboration with IEEE and the University of Dubai has consistently delivered remarkable results in ICT talent development and innovation. This continued partnership strengthens both our industry's growth and the UAE's position as a technology leader. Together, we're creating a robust ecosystem that fosters innovation and develops the next generation of ICT talent," AlNuaimi added.

The program emerges at a crucial time in wireless technology evolution, as Wi-Fi 7 promises unprecedented advancements in speed, reliability, and user experience. With data transmission rates approximately three times faster than its predecessor, Wi-Fi 7 is poised to transform everything from 8K video streaming to immersive virtual reality experiences and mission-critical enterprise applications.

The launch ceremony in Dubai was attended by Huawei executives and key stakeholders from the University of Dubai, IEEE UAE section, and industry partners. In his opening keynote, Dr. Eesa Bastaki, President of the University of Dubai and IEEE Honorary Chair, commended the program's achievements.

Bastaki, said: "The outstanding progress of Imagine Wi-Fi 7 over the past year has been remarkable. The Wi-Fi 7 standard has sparked thoughtful discussions and extensive idea-sharing across the industry. Looking ahead, we eagerly anticipate even more comprehensive and insightful dialogues in the upcoming season."

The Imagine Wi-Fi 7 to Reality initiative features two contests catering to different segments of the technology ecosystem. The Wi-Fi 7 Pioneers track engages industry practitioners who have implemented Wi-Fi 7 solutions, offering them platforms to share deployment experiences through live presentations at Huawei IP Club events and video submissions. Participants can earn up to 1,500 IP Club points

> **OUR LONGSTANDING COLLABORATION WITH IEEE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBAI HAS CONSISTENTLY DELIVERED REMARKABLE RESULTS IN ICT TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION**
> **ABDULAZIZ ALNUAIMI, CHIEF SECURITY OFFICER, HUAWEI UAE**

Left to right: Dr. Hussam Al Hamadi, Vice-Chair of the IEEE UAE Section; Prof. Hussain Al-Ahmad, Chair of the IEEE UAE section; Abdulaziz AlNuaimi, Chief Security Officer, Huawei UAE; Jason Li, Director of Enterprise Network Marketing & Solution Sales, Huawei Middle East & Central Asia Region; and Mohammad Haneef, Chief Information Officer, University of Dubai.

through combined participation methods.

Ryan Pan, IP Product & Solutions Manager, Huawei Middle East & Central Asia, presented a comprehensive review of Imagine Wi-Fi 7's achievements in 2024 and outlined Huawei's wireless strategy for 2025. "Huawei has an abundance of industry know-how and considerable experience in Wi-Fi technologies, making remarkable contributions to Wi-Fi industry standards," said Pan, highlighting several successful Wi-Fi 7 deployments across the Middle East and Central Asia region.

The Innovation Pioneer track opens the field to a broader audience of technology enthusiasts, researchers, and visionaries. Participants will explore cutting-edge applications of Wi-Fi 7's advanced features, including Wi-Fi Shield technology, VIP Experience Assurance, and Dynamic Zoom Smart antenna implementations, through compelling video presentations.

Mohammad Haneef, Chief Information Officer, University of Dubai, shared insights from their Wi-Fi 7 implementation. "Our tests demonstrate significant advancements in speed and user experience. Huawei's Wi-Fi 7 technology effectively meets the demanding requirements for bandwidth, security, and network operations in digital education within higher education institutions," said Haneef.

The program offers substantial recognition for outstanding contributions. Elite achievers will experience the Huawei HQ IP Club Explorer Tour to Huawei headquarters and receive the prestigious Pioneer Trophy, jointly presented by IEEE and Huawei. Additional honors include participation in the Huawei Tech Carnival 2025 in Uzbekistan and the latest Huawei FreeClip devices for top social media engagement.

The adoption of Wi-Fi 7 has seen remarkable traction across the Middle East and Central Asia region. Huawei has deployed over 30,000 Wi-Fi 7 access points, and over 180 enterprises have chosen Wi-Fi 7 as their technical standard. This widespread implementation demonstrates the industry's confidence in Wi-Fi 7's capabilities and readiness for enterprise-grade applications.

As the world's first vendor to launch an enterprise Wi-Fi solution, Huawei's commitment to advancing WLAN standards is unmatched. Ranked No. 1 in cumulative contributions to both WLAN standards and Wi-Fi 7 standards, Huawei has solidified its position as the world's Wi-Fi 7 leader. Notably, Huawei received the prestigious "Best Enterprise Wi-Fi Network 2024" Award at the Wireless Broadband Alliance (WBA) Industry Awards 2024.

DELL TECHNOLOGIES, ARAMCO AND NATIONAL IT ACADEMY CELEBRATE GRADUATION OF SAUDI STUDENTS FROM "ITXCELERATE" PROGRAM

Dell Technologies, Aramco and National IT Academy (NITA) celebrated the graduation of talented Saudi students from the 18-weeks "ITXcelerate" program.

These graduates have earned globally recognized Dell Proven Professional Certifications in Information & Storage Management and Data Science & Big Data Analytics, equipping them with advanced technical expertise and positioning them as future leaders in the tech industry. They also gained invaluable real-world experience through on-site job shadowing at Dell Technologies' Riyadh premises and tackled industry-relevant challenges in a collaborative Dell-Aramco use case project.

For this year's cohort, the use case projects were categorized by four groups:

- **Group one:** Multi-Cloud & Deployment: Focused on modernizing Aramco's data centers by integrating multi-cloud environments and advanced technologies like AI. The adoption of the solution could lead to potential enhancement on the scalability, flexibility, and innovation in IT infrastructure while aligning with global best practices.

- **Group two:** Cybersecurity: Prioritized safeguarding Aramco's data and operations by implementing advanced cybersecurity solutions from Dell Technologies. The group strengthened defences against evolving cyber threats, ensuring robust data protection and business resilience.

- **Group three:** HPC/AI: Leveraged high-performance computing and AI to transform seismic data analysis, improving speed, accuracy, and efficiency. This supported better decision-making in exploration and production, enhancing operational efficiency and reducing costs.

- **Group Four:** Data Lakehouse: Addressed data management challenges by developing a unified data architecture combining the benefits of data lakes and warehouses. This approach streamlined data storage, retrieval, and analysis, accelerating decision-making and supporting future growth.

Dell Technologies, Aramco and NITA remain committed to nurturing local talent and fostering a vibrant, innovation-driven technology ecosystem, that is aligned with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 to foster economic diversification and digital transformation.

This milestone underscores the success of the "ITXcelerate" program in bridging the gap between academic learning and professional readiness, empowering Saudi youth to drive the future of the Kingdom's digital economy.

The ceremony was attended by the students and their families as well as officials from Dell Technologies, Aramco and NITA. ◉
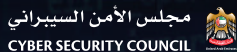
AI WON'T REPLACE TEACHERS, BUT IT WILL TRANSFORM EDUCATION

Jeff Maggioncalda, CEO of Coursera.

A global debate on the future of education and the role of educators is unfolding as artificial intelligence (AI) reshapes every aspect of our lives. PwC estimates that the Middle East is expected to accrue 2% of the total global benefits of AI in 2030, equivalent to $320 billion, with the UAE projected to see the largest impact, contributing close to 14% of its 2030 GDP. The UAE, in particular, is positioned for significant AI-driven growth, which is rapidly transforming key sectors, including education, by revolutionizing personalized learning experiences.

As AI permeates classrooms — from universities to corporate learning programs — many are left wondering: Will AI replace teachers? The short answer is no, but the longer explanation is more nuanced — and more optimistic.

Imagine a classroom filled with students, each with different skill levels and career goals, striving to compete in the workforce. Educators are doing their best to reach every learner, but with full classrooms and limited time, it's a daunting task. This is where AI can help, not as a replacement for educators but as a powerful tool to enhance their capabilities and reshape the way we approach learning at scale. While teachers have always been at the heart of education, the tools and methods they use will evolve, driven by AI's potential to enrich — not replace — the human interactions that define education.

Preserve the Human Touch in Education

Education is more than the transfer of knowledge from one mind to another; it is a deeply human endeavor. We've seen firsthand how AI can help identify student needs and tailor resources to support their learning journey, yet the emotional intelligence, empathy, and mentorship that teachers provide remain irreplaceable. Instructors can now leverage GenAI to scale their presence in online settings, reaching more students — while maintaining the personal connection that is vital to effective education. The synergy between AI's capabilities and the human touch ensures that education remains both efficient and deeply impactful, fostering not just academic success but also holistic personal growth.

Personalize Education with AI

According to a study by McKinsey & Company, technology can enable teachers to reallocate 20-30% of their time spent on tasks like planning, administration, and grading to activities that support student learning. When AI takes over such tasks, teachers can focus on what truly matters: teaching, mentoring, and ensuring quality and ethical standards are upheld. By analyzing a student's goals and performance data, AI can identify areas where a student is struggling and provide tailored resources and support. Learners can now access AI-powered virtual coaches that extend the impact of faculty by facilitating Socratic dialogues, role-plays, simulations, interactive quizzes, and countless other pedagogical approaches at scale. By leveraging these advanced AI-driven tools, educators can offer more dynamic and interactive learning experiences, complementing their teaching efforts and providing real-time support and personalized feedback.

Empower Teachers to Prepare Students for the Real World

AI can also enhance teachers' capabilities by providing them with insights and resources that would otherwise be out of reach. Imagine a professor in a remote university having access to the latest educational content from around the world, all curated and enhanced by GenAI to fit their curriculum needs and job-specific requirements. AI tools can help stimulate the classroom with job scenarios completely programmed by teachers, offering students a virtual and safe environment to practice and hone their skills. This democratization of resources can level the playing field, giving learners in under-resourced areas access to the same quality of education as those in more affluent regions.

While GenAI presents challenges like student misconduct, it also offers opportunities to scale and enhance learning assessments, allowing for more robust and secure evaluations of student progress. Innovations in academic integrity tools are increasingly important to ensure that the online learning environment remains credible and trustworthy, providing educators with the resources they need to uphold stringent standards in the age of AI.

Unleash a Reimagined Future of Education

The future of education lies in the partnership between teachers and AI, not in replacing one with the other. As AI becomes more integrated, it's essential to ensure that human authenticity, expertise, oversight, and judgment remain central. Just as the shift from in-person classrooms and printed materials to online learning and digital content required time to adapt, so will the integration of AI into teaching practices. The teacher-student relationship will continue to be the cornerstone of education, even as AI helps unleash the full impact of educators.

AS AI PERMEATES CLASSROOMS — FROM UNIVERSITIES TO CORPORATE LEARNING PROGRAMS — MANY ARE LEFT WONDERING: WILL AI REPLACE TEACHERS? THE SHORT ANSWER IS NO, BUT THE LONGER EXPLANATION IS MORE NUANCED — AND MORE OPTIMISTIC.

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OUR COMMITMENT TO QUALITY AND
CLIENT SATISFACTION REMAINS THE
CORNERSTONE OF OUR APPROACH.

EVAD'S STRATEGIC MASTERY ENHANCES CUSTOMER SUPPORT FOR GLOBAL IMPACT AND LONG-TERM GROWTH

*EVAD is pioneering transformative customer support strategies, extending its global reach, and securing pivotal long-term contracts, reshaping industry benchmarks. Under the leadership of **Abdullah A. Qaisi**, CEO and General Manager of EVAD. The brand is redefining industry standards with innovative customer support strategies, pivotal global expansions, and impactful long-term contracts.*

EVAD's emphasis on customer support has evidently been a game-changer, Could you elaborate on the specific strategies and practices EVAD has employed to attain such impressive levels of customer satisfaction?

Our customer satisfaction strategy goes beyond business; it's about building genuine trust and lasting partnerships. We center our approach on continuous follow-ups, fostering close relationships, and proactive engagement, with the goal of making our customers feel truly valued. For us, customer satisfaction isn't a metric—it's the goal, prioritized above company profit.

AS WE SCALE GLOBALLY, OUR TOP PRIORITY REMAINS THE TOP-QUALITY SERVICE THAT OUR CLIENTS HAVE COME TO EXPECT FROM US.

We empower our teams to think like our customers, anticipating their needs and addressing them before they arise. Active listening and deep understanding form the backbone of our service, with every team member trained and certified to provide tailored support and seamless solutions. Our approach ensures flexibility without bureaucracy, so responses are swift and effective.

Through clearly communicating our vision at EVAD, continuous training, and a commitment to local support, we've cultivated an environment where customers feel supported and appreciated, knowing they have a partner who genuinely cares about their success.

Recently, EVAD secured a five-year contract with a major telecom company in the Middle East. What do you believe were the key factors that convinced this major client to commit long-term, and how do you see this influencing EVAD's approach to customer relationships moving forward?

This may not be our first customer in the telecom industry, but it certainly marks the longest contract we've secured to date. In a rapidly evolving technology market, long-term contracts are uncommon, making this agreement particularly significant. Securing a five-year contract with a leading telecom company is a major success, one that reflects our strong track record of successful projects and the high-quality local support we provide, which has earned us the trust of industry peers. This project was executed in collaboration with Emircom in Saudi Arabia, a key partner whose invaluable contributions were instrumental in its success. Additionally, the unwavering support from EfficientIP was critical in ensuring the seamless delivery and implementation of their solutions. At the heart of this achievement is our steadfast commitment to reliability, technical excellence, and unmatched local support on two levels. This approach has not only strengthened our reputation but also demonstrated our dedication to fostering long-term, value-driven partnerships. This trust

in our services and teams is clearly reflected in both the customer's name and the contract duration. A trend I am especially proud of at EVAD is the organic growth we're seeing through word-of-mouth from satisfied clients. Many of our existing clients are now seeking to expand their product portfolios with us, which further demonstrates the value we bring through our comprehensive support.

With EVAD's recent expansion into Kenya and the formalization of your presence in Saudi Arabia, what challenges and opportunities do you anticipate in these new markets?
We see opportunities, but it's the challenges that truly drive us. Each market has its own characteristics — Kenya's fast-growing tech sector demands adaptable solutions, while Saudi Arabia's landscape requires strict regulatory alignment. EVAD has been present in Saudi Arabia since 2019, building a strong customer base and an outstanding reputation that continues to impress clients and attract new ones. Formalizing our presence there is a natural step to better serve our clients, addressing smaller issues that require local presence and ensuring their peace of mind.

Our new Kenya office is designed to cover the entire African market. With sectors like finance, healthcare, and e-commerce rapidly digitizing, the opportunities are immense, but so are the cybersecurity challenges. Being present as the market matures allows us to understand local needs and offer tailored solutions, collaborating with local and regional experts, and

integrating seamlessly with local cultures. Our core values—quality service and reliability—are the foundation of our success. Having excelled in mature markets like Saudi Arabia, we're confident our customer first approach will lead us to success in Africa. We have full confidence in our team and the exceptional level of support we provide, ready to lead and conquer the African market.

As EVAD continues to evolve its product offerings, sometimes even outside of your existing portfolio at the request of clients, how does your team manage these shifts while ensuring the quality of support remains consistent?
We view the evolution of our product offerings as a natural progression of our growth and our commitment to meeting the dynamic needs of our clients. Whether driven by direct client requests or anticipated industry trends, this evolution is closely aligned with our global scaling and expansion plans. To support this, we've developed a comprehensive Vendor Success Strategy, which plays a vital role in onboarding new products that not only address our clients' needs but also fit seamlessly into our broader global growth framework.

This strategy enables us to carefully assess whether a new product or technology is the right fit for our portfolio—ensuring it delivers the expected value, aligns with our core values of technical excellence and exceptional local support, and integrates effectively into our service model. When evaluating an addition to our portfolio, we ask ourselves, "Can we make this work? Can we provide the level of service our clients expect?" If the answer is yes, we proceed with confidence, ensuring that the new solution supports both our immediate

goals and long-term global vision.

I also want to acknowledge the important role our vendors and their teams, both locally and globally, play in this process. Their support and resources enable us to maintain a seamless, consistent service, always responding to our needs no matter how much we evolve.

Now, turning our focus back to our clients: with all these factors in mind, our commitment to quality and client satisfaction remains the cornerstone of our approach. We add products that align with our clients' needs and requests, or we provide better and safer solutions that also align with our strategic goals. . This approach not only allows us to adapt and grow but also ensures we continue to deliver exceptional support without compromise, In this way, it's a win-win situation for everyone. This strategy is how we manage our evolution while maintaining the trust and satisfaction of our clients.

What are the next steps for EVAD in terms of both product innovation and customer service?
The name EVAD comes from "Evolving VAD," which has always captured our commitment to continuous growth and transformation. So from the very beginning, we've set evolution as our guiding principle, and it's been at the heart of everything we do. While growth is important, we're just as focused on scalability—because smart scaling is much more sustainable than simply growing for the sake of growth.

Now as we scale globally, our top priority remains the top-quality service that our clients have come to expect from us. Balancing global expansion with exceptional local service means building strong, lasting relationships with our vendors and partners, and ensuring our teams are equipped with the right tools, training, and resources to support our growth, all while maintaining the level of care and attention that defines EVAD. At the end of the day, we're committed to staying true to our essence as the "Evolved VAD"—constantly evolving, and always delivering the exceptional service and innovation our clients' trust. RME

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WEBLIB UNVEILS 2025 STRATEGY TO ACCELERATE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Emphasizing innovation and partnership to drive technological advancements

Weblib, a pioneering French technology firm, specializes in providing cutting-edge digital solutions to businesses worldwide. Known for its robust cloud-based platforms, Weblib enhances operational efficiencies through innovative cloud technologies, data analytics, and secure authentication systems.

Sebastien Bloch, Vice-President of Sales, Weblib, outlines how company equips its customers with the tools necessary for success in an evolving marketplace. The company is dedicated to driving growth by focusing on customer-centric innovations and strategic expansions, particularly in the Middle East.

The landscape of business is evolving faster than ever due to acceleration in digital transformation. How is Weblib helping customers stay ahead and take advantage of the latest technological advancements?
Weblib helps businesses stay ahead by leveraging the latest in cloud

technologies, data analytics, and secure authentication solutions. Our cloud-based platforms offer scalability and flexibility, while advanced analytics help businesses extract actionable insights. In addition, we prioritize security with robust authentication mechanisms, ensuring safe and seamless access to systems and data. This approach enables our customers to protect sensitive information while staying competitive in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

One of the biggest challenges for any technology company today is to meet the evolving consumer expectations. What are some of the efforts Weblib has taken to stay close to its customers and partners?
We understand that consumer expectations are constantly evolving, and staying close to our customers and partners is essential to meeting these demands. Our dedicated R&D and product teams work tirelessly to develop new features and innovations, ensuring our solutions remain at the forefront of technology. For example, over the past year, we've rolled out more than 1,000 new features across our product portfolio. Through regular feedback loops and close collaboration with customers, we continuously adapt and refine our offerings to meet their changing needs. By staying agile and responsive, we ensure our products evolve in line with market demands and help our customers maintain a competitive edge. Weblib emphasizes on personalized partner onboarding

and enablement along with dedicated customer support, ensuring customers feel supported at every stage of their journey.

Can you tell us about the Smart Wifi solution and what makes it so unique?
Weblib's Smart WiFi solution stands out by combining high-performance connectivity with intelligent management tools to offer seamless, reliable WiFi experiences. What makes our solution unique is its ability to automatically optimize network performance based on real-time data, ensuring users always have fast and uninterrupted access. Beyond connectivity, our Smart WiFi includes powerful marketing tools that enable businesses to engage customers directly. These tools allow for customized splash pages, targeted promotions, and real-time analytics, helping businesses not only improve the user experience but also drive customer engagement and loyalty.

Additionally, Weblib's Smart WiFi is compatible with most WiFi vendors, offering seamless integration into existing infrastructures. On top of that, we've developed Ucopia Apps Connect, which allows customers to connect directly to the network through their own application, further enhancing ease of use and personalization. Scalable and adaptable, Weblib's Smart WiFi provides businesses with a future-proof solution that grows with their needs.

What are your top priorities and strategic plans for 2025?
In 2025, Weblib's strategic priorities will focus on innovation, growth, and regional expansion. As a French company and a European leader, our goal is to build on our success and expand our footprint in the Middle East, where we see significant

potential to raise our profile as a leading software publisher. To support this growth, we will be rolling out a new partner program that will provide additional expertise and strengthen our product offerings across regions. We're also committed to developing our local resources to better serve our customers and partners, ensuring we continue to deliver tailored solutions that meet evolving market needs. With these initiatives, we aim to maintain our leadership position and achieve strong, sustainable growth in 2025 and beyond. Our solution is not only technically, but also commercially viable, having multiple flavours catering to different needs of customers.

What are some of the channel development initiatives that you are planning to launch along with Westcon-Comstor during this year?
The Middle East is rapidly evolving into a global hub for technological innovation, and 2025 is set to be a pivotal year in the region's digital landscape. At Weblib, we're excited to build on our already successful partnership with Westcon-Comstor, a key partner in Europe, to drive channel development in this dynamic region.

Our partnership with Westcon-Comstor is central to our channel-first sales philosophy, and we're confident that it will play a crucial role in expanding our presence across the Middle East. In 2025, we plan to implement joint marketing initiatives aimed at strengthening and growing our partner network. These initiatives will focus on providing partners with the support, expertise, and tools they need to effectively promote and integrate Weblib's solutions.

By empowering our partners with comprehensive training, co-branded marketing materials, and tailored support, we'll ensure they have everything necessary to fuel our growth in the region. This approach will not only enhance the partner ecosystem but also solidify Weblib's position as a trusted software publisher in the Middle East. ⓇⓂⓔ

WE'RE NOT JUST EVOLVING; WE'RE LEADING THE WAY IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION TO MEET THE RISING CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEMANDS.

RAQMIYAT REIMAGINES TALENT MANAGEMENT WITH INDUSTRY-WIDE SOLUTIONS

Raqmiyat Manpower LLC broadens its scope from IT staffing to full-spectrum talent management solutions, aiming for sustainable growth and wider industry impact.

Raqmiyat Manpower LLC is transitioning from IT staffing to comprehensive talent management solutions across various industries, addressing evolving market demands and capitalizing on growth opportunities. This strategic shift aims to diversify revenue streams and expand Raqmiyat's client base by entering high-demand sectors such as healthcare, engineering, and finance.

Vishnu Bandaru, Vice President – Technology Support Services, Raqmiyat Manpower LLC spoke to Sandhya D'Mello, Technology Editor, CPI Media Group on how leveraging advanced AI technologies, Raqmiyat enhances service efficiency and scalability.

The company focuses on client satisfaction through tailored solutions and robust feedback systems. With these changes, Raqmiyat intends to establish itself as a leader in talent management, ensuring financial growth and expanding both nationally and internationally over the next five years.

What motivated Raqmiyat's strategic shift from IT staffing to talent management solutions across all industries?

Raqmiyat is expanding its focus from IT staffing to offering talent management solutions across various industries. This strategic shift aims to meet evolving market demands and capitalize on growth opportunities in the current landscape. Customers increasingly prefer comprehensive workforce solutions, and Raqmiyat is well-positioned to support them with talent beyond the traditional IT function. Diversifying beyond IT enables the company to reduce reliance on a single industry, enter new markets, and drive faster growth. With digital transformation fueling demand for skilled workers across multiple industries, Raqmiyat's expertise and presence in multiple countries allow it to address clients' talent needs effectively. By forming strategic partnerships and leveraging advanced recruitment technologies, the company is enhancing its services. This transformation enables Raqmiyat to meet a broader range of client requirements, achieve sustainable growth, and establish itself as a leader in talent management solutions.

What impact is this strategic shift expected to have on Raqmiyat's growth?

Raqmiyat's shift to talent management solutions is set to boost growth by diversifying revenue streams and expanding its client base. This strategic move enables the company to secure larger contracts and establish lasting partnerships. By moving beyond IT staffing and entering high-demand sectors such as healthcare,

engineering, and finance, Raqmiyat enhances its resilience. Leveraging AI tools increases efficiency, scalability, and client satisfaction. Adopting the latest digital technologies attracts modern clients, strengthens market presence, drives innovation, and ensures sustainable growth in the competitive talent solutions market.

How does Raqmiyat intend to address the unique challenges presented by transitioning from an IT-centric approach to encompassing various industries?

Raqmiyat has been collaborating with customers across various industry segments, delivering high-end technologies and niche tech talent. Expanding our services to support these customers with other critical knowledge-based professionals in functions like engineering and finance will strengthen our relationships with existing clients and enable us to offer solutions to a broader potential customer base. We will leverage our IT expertise to develop flexible talent management solutions. The company establishes partnerships to provide advanced recruitment tools for diverse sectors and invests in training its workforce to meet specific industry demands. By including non-IT professionals and conducting market research, Raqmiyat ensures its services remain relevant. A client-focused approach allows us to deliver tailored solutions, ensuring a seamless transition without compromising quality or customer satisfaction.

Given your extensive background in technology support, how do you foresee

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WITH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FUELING DEMAND FOR SKILLED WORKERS ACROSS MULTIPLE INDUSTRIES, RAQMIYAT'S EXPERTISE AND PRESENCE IN MULTIPLE COUNTRIES ALLOW IT TO ADDRESS CLIENTS' TALENT NEEDS EFFECTIVELY.

technology enhancing Raqmiyat's new talent management solutions?

Digitization, driven by GenAI, is revolutionizing industries across the board. Raqmiyat's talent management solutions will leverage the latest technologies, including AI, to enhance speed, consistency, and efficiency. AI tools such as predictive analytics and machine learning enable better candidate sourcing, matching, and retention. Automated platforms streamline onboarding, training, and performance tracking, while cloud-based systems ensure scalability and secure data management. HR analytics provide actionable insights into workforce trends, and digital collaboration tools support flexible work models. By adopting these advanced technologies, Raqmiyat delivers efficient, personalized, and data-driven solutions, meeting diverse client needs and positioning itself as a leader in talent management innovation.

As Raqmiyat expands, how will client relationship strategies be adapted to ensure consistently high satisfaction across different industries?

Client satisfaction has been at the core of Raqmiyat's strategy since its inception. As the company expands into new industries, it remains committed to ensuring client satisfaction through tailored approaches. Dedicated account managers with industry expertise will deliver customized solutions, while digital tools facilitate clear communication and regular updates, ensuring transparency and effective governance. Robust feedback systems will enable the collection and implementation of client input, driving continuous improvement. Proactive support—such as insights, training, and technology recommendations—will help anticipate and address client needs.

Furthermore, scalable solutions will ensure that Raqmiyat's services evolve alongside clients' growing demands, maintaining high-quality service and fostering strong, lasting relationships.

How will your expertise in remote management shape the strategies for national and international expansion of Raqmiyat's staffing services?

Raqmiyat's expertise in remote management will support its growth both nationally and internationally. Cloud platforms and digital tools facilitate seamless collaboration, while global applicant tracking systems streamline hiring processes. Remote training ensures consistent quality, and virtual hubs help reduce costs. Cultural adaptability and compliance with labor laws ensure the delivery of efficient, scalable, and client-focused services.

What new measures are being implemented to ensure the financial success of Raqmiyat's expansion into new markets?

Raqmiyat ensures financial success in new markets by conducting market research to identify growth opportunities and adapt to local needs. Diversifying services beyond IT enhances resilience, while digital tools improve cost efficiency. Partnerships with tech providers increase value, and targeted marketing strengthens branding. Performance analytics guide decision-making for profitable growth.

Where do you see Raqmiyat Manpower Services in the next five years, particularly with the new divisions in place?

In the next five years, Raqmiyat Manpower Services aims to become a leading provider of talent management solutions across various industries. The company will expand both nationally and internationally, offering a wide range of tech-enabled services. Raqmiyat will play a key role in helping companies digitize their operations by providing functional talent with digital tech expertise. By combining Raqmiyat's traditional tech expertise with AI- and cloud-powered talent solutions, the company will ensure financial growth and establish itself as a leading, comprehensive provider of tech solutions and talent in all the markets where it operates. 🌐

UIPATH HIGHLIGHTS 2025 AI AND AUTOMATION TRENDS SET TO TRANSFORM ENTERPRISES

2025 will be the year of AI maturity in the enterprise. The evolution of AI has reached a point where increasingly, AI-powered agents will have the capabilities that make them indispensable to knowledge workers.

UiPath, a leading agentic automation and AI company, sheds light on what to expect in the coming year in its AI and Automation Trends 2025 report. UiPath's predictions are based on extensive market analysis, current developments in AI research and experience from working with over 10,000 companies worldwide.

"AI has long since left the status of a trend behind. 2025 will be the year in which it establishes itself as an indispensable work tool in many industries through agent-based automation," said Zakaria Haltout, Area Vice-President MEA at UiPath.

"The latest Astra Tech study reveals that in the MEA region, 65% of organizations are prioritizing AI-driven strategies, particularly in finance, government, and healthcare. As companies focus on addressing scalability and integration challenges, Agentic AI is poised to accelerate digital transformation and redefine operational efficiency," added Haltout

Autonomy within orchestration
The trends that lie ahead are undoubtedly linked to the development of technology. It is therefore a good place to start when analyzing the expected direction its use will take.

Trend I. The rapid development of AI

agents that autonomously understand, plan and operate within complex workflows.

Prediction: Agent-based AI will allow companies to automate complex processes with minimal supervision, increasing productivity and opening new opportunities for industry-specific automation solutions.

Preparation: Subject at least one process to agent automation. Passivity stifles innovation, so it is worth joining the pioneers in agentic AI or at least keeping a close eye on their activities.

Trend II. With the development of agent-based artificial intelligence, orchestration is becoming increasingly important.

Prediction: To realize the full potential of agentic AI, businesses will need a dynamic infrastructure that enables humans and robots to collaborate with agents. Additionally, it will need to enable their creation, deployment, as well as monitoring of their activities with transparency and compliance.

Preparation: Create a plan for the introduction and scaling of an agentic AI environment, considering the need for human oversight and the role of RPA robots as the 'hands and feet' of new agents.

New business strategies

Next year's changes will not only affect the technology behind AI itself, but also the ways in which it can be used in a business context. Organizations will be rethinking how they approach problems such as technology debt or the lack of a concrete strategy when implementing AI.

Trend III. Executives are disillusioned with spending millions on AI without the expected results. Companies that implement AI without clear strategies to measure and demonstrate ROI will struggle to justify the costs.

Predicion: Companies need to develop procedures to track and measure the impact of AI on key business outcomes such as productivity, cost savings and revenue growth. The role of business technology providers will also increase. One of the most widespread uses of AI are 'copilots', which help employees with various office tasks. These are being developed by major enterprise technology providers such as Microsoft, GitHub and Google and are yielding excellent results. For example, UiPath has created Autopilot for Developers, which reduces automation development time by 75%.

Preparation: A greater focus on AI ROI measurement tools and strategies, a thorough analysis of the company's use of the technology and training in the use of embedded tools such as copilots.

Trend IV. Heads of technical departments are turning to AIOps (Artificial Intelligence for IT Operations) tools to streamline operations, automate routine tasks and improve system reliability.

Prediction: As organisations increasingly rely on complex digital infrastructures, many are struggling with technology debt - accumulated inefficient processes and outdated systems that can slow down innovation or increase the cost of operations.

Preparation: Investing in AIOps can prove invaluable for managing technology ecosystems more effectively. This will reduce short- and long-term technology debt, while freeing up resources to drive innovation.

Regulatory landscape

Trend V. Escalating regulation: global lawmakers are working to control the power of AI.

Prediction: The AI Act introduced by the European Union could result in the first fine related to artificial intelligence. The EU is spearheading the introduction of increasingly restrictive regulations on the technology. This could discourage investment in AI within the EU and stifle growth, or alternatively become a model for legislation in the US, UK and Asia-Pacific, which the AI research communities are still waiting for.

Preparation: Implement robust data governance and adequate security measures, prioritise transparency as well as comprehensibility of AI algorithms and establish clear accountability structures for AI-related decisions. 🔴

2025 PLAYBOOK: TRANSFORMATIVE STRATEGIES FOR MIDDLE EAST CHANNEL ORGANISATIONS

Abdul Rehman Tariq Butt, Regional Director - Middle East at SolarWinds

The IT channel landscape in the Middle East has been marked by significant shifts in 2024. While economic pressures have eased, competition has intensified as new players have entered the market, pushing incumbents to consider expansion into new geographies as a means of growing their revenues. Simultaneously, the growing emphasis on advanced technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), has heightened the need for the channel to demonstrate exceptional technical capabilities. Success is found in serving as the bridge between business and IT, and moving up the value chain is essentially a mandate.

Against this backdrop, channel organisations must now carefully craft their strategies if they are to be successful in 2025. It will be another year of change, presenting both challenges and opportunities. While unknowns will undoubtedly require agility, there are many factors we can already anticipate. Understanding these will give partners a decisive edge.

Focus, Specialise, Succeed

While the MENA region's year-on-year spend across the tech spectrum is projected to rise at an appreciable 7.4%, crossing US$230 billion, partners that hone their focus will fare better than those that spread themselves too thin. And of the many areas they could specialise in, an obvious choice is cyber security. The region is witnessing a rise in cyber threats. Combined with increasingly stringent data protection regulations in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, cybersecurity is now at the forefront of organisational priorities. Businesses are urgently seeking advanced network security solutions, including Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) and Zero Trust architectures, to protect hybrid and remote work environments. For channel partners, this demand represents a significant opportunity. Those with the expertise to deploy and manage robust security frameworks will not only meet a critical market need, but also position themselves as trusted advisors in safeguarding their clients' operations.

While it goes without saying that AI should be on every channel organisation's agenda, here too, a

more narrow focus will help. As enterprise networks grow more complex, the role of AI in network management, in particular, has become indispensable. AI-powered analytics are proving critical for proactive oversight, enabling predictive maintenance and the swift detection of anomalies. By integrating AI-driven tools, organisations can optimise network performance and reduce costly downtime. Channel partners who specialise in AI-enabled network management platforms are uniquely placed to help enterprises navigate this complexity, offering solutions that improve reliability and efficiency on a large scale.

Beyond these immediate needs, the Middle East's evolving cloud ecosystem is shaping the future of network management. The widespread adoption of hybrid and multi-cloud architectures has sparked a growing preference for cloud-based solutions that ensure seamless integration and scalability. Managed service providers offering cloud-native monitoring, security, and management services are particularly well-suited to support enterprises and government entities in this transition. By embracing these advancements, partners can align their organisation with the region's cloud-first ambitions, while expanding market reach.

Evolving Business Models
Once partners have identified tech areas of focus, they must then decide on the best way to deliver the offerings to customers for maximum impact (and bottom line). Just as box moving has been all but phased out, today, even higher value integration is now becoming infeasible as a long-term business model. A transformative shift is underway, placing channel partners under pressure to now evolve into strategic MSPs. This model reduces tool sprawl for customers, enabling them to outsource deployment, management, and optimisation responsibilities to trusted partners. In turn, MSPs must elevate their expertise in service delivery, customer support, and solution-oriented sales.

Furthermore, as an MSP, partners will have an opportunity to become the consulting arms for clients, offering end-to-end solutions that enable customer teams to focus on

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CHANNEL PARTNERS WHO SPECIALISE IN AI-ENABLED NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLATFORMS ARE UNIQUELY PLACED TO HELP ENTERPRISES NAVIGATE THIS COMPLEXITY, OFFERING SOLUTIONS THAT IMPROVE RELIABILITY AND EFFICIENCY ON A LARGE SCALE.

value creation. This approach requires breaking down silos, collaborating across IT teams, and building long-term relationships rooted in trust and innovation. By doing so, channel players can deliver tailored solutions that align with their client's objectives while positioning the organisation as an indispensable partner.

Effectively Addressing the Inevitability of AI
AI is reshaping the channel ecosystem, but enablement remains a critical challenge — particularly for MSPs managing sprawling toolsets across multiple vendors and solutions. While empowering customers to implement impactful use cases should be the north star, at present, an arguably greater and easier route to realise opportunity lies in using AI to streamline integration between solutions in the partners' own environment to enhance the organisation's operational efficiencies.

For instance, leveraging AI-driven tools that consolidate data from disparate systems into a unified dashboard can empower channel partners to optimise resource allocation and improve decision-making. Furthermore, partners that develop generative AI models tailored to their operations can simplify tool usage through natural language queries, reducing the learning curve for employees and driving faster results. This capability will not only enhance service delivery but also create new revenue opportunities, reinforcing the channel's role as a strategic technology enabler.

Changes in Licensing
The evolution of licensing models is another critical consideration. The traditional model of selling solutions outright has given way to annual, quarterly, and even monthly billing cycles. Now, under pressure from end customers, the industry is moving towards per-user licensing — even at the infrastructure level. Companies like SolarWinds are already pioneering this shift, transitioning from IP-based models to node-based licensing that captures user activity.

For channel partners, this evolution necessitates new profit-and-loss models that accommodate user-based billing. Observability tools will be essential in enabling granular insights into per-user utilisation, ensuring accurate billing and optimised resource allocation. To succeed, channel partners must align with vendors offering flexible as-a-service models and innovative licensing structures, keeping pace with customer preferences for scalability and cost transparency.

Channelling Success
As the Middle East's IT landscape evolves, success for channel organisations in 2025 will hinge on focus, agility, and a willingness to embrace transformation. By specialising in high-demand areas like cybersecurity, AI, and cloud management, while evolving into strategic MSPs, partners can secure their role as indispensable advisors. The time to act is now — seize the opportunities ahead and partners can position their organisation to lead in this dynamic market. 🔴

RISE OF LLM AGENTS: HOW AUTONOMOUS AI TRANSFORMS BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Zeeshan Mehdi, *Engineering Director – Middle East at SoftServe*

Artificial intelligence passed several significant milestones in recent decades that transformed organizations worldwide. Advances in processing power made it possible to host models that were once technically impossible. Further advancements introduced transformer-like models, such as large language models (LLMs). LLMs demonstrated remarkable effectiveness in various industries, and by using their capabilities as intelligent agents, another significant leap forward was made.

Modern AI systems automate routine processes, such as document analysis, validation and data extraction, and information propagation. Still, an AI agent automates an entire role and adapts to the various circumstances of this role. This advancement is transformative for modern business because it presents an opportunity to delegate and facilitate operations, enhance business processes, and improve decision-making without the need to hire professionals. With recent advancements, anyone is capable of learning these systems using natural language.

Agent-Based Systems: A Business Look

Despite the wide adoption of AI technologies, many small and large organizations struggle with rule-based systems. While such systems are relatively inexpensive for initial development and, in some cases, more interpretable, they still have flaws. Some of these flaws are a lack of adaptability for new cases, high complexity of maintenance over time, and involvement of human teams and subject matter experts (SMEs) who place an added toll on the solution.

On the other hand, agent-based systems address these downsides mentioned below

- Allow for a more flexible and adaptable approach for processing standard and corner-case situations.
- Better control and maintain implemented logic, and, as a result, reduce human involvement.
- Orchestrate complex processes, emulate decision-making, and conduct error check-and-fix analysis, without writing complex business rules.

However, your business doesn't always need to implement a high level of automation with the capabilities AI agents offer. Let's dive deeper into the concept of AI agents and how they are implemented in business practices.

CONCEPT OF LLM AGENTS

An agent system consists of several components. The core is the model — the LLM. Other components are typically reasoning (logical engine of the model), memory (ability to store, recall, and update temporary context), and external tools (search,

cloud functions, and APIs). The agent may also have an internal or external knowledge base.

While a single agent automates a role or orchestrates several processes and tools, it still lacks adaptability to a broader area of tasks. Moreover, a single agent that's presented with various tools may be prone to hallucinations. Therefore, more organizations lean toward orchestrating several agents in the pipeline, resulting in a multi-agent system.

Using the advanced capabilities of modern LLMs, this agent interprets and responds to user queries with fast, targeted responses. It offers valuable insights and support for a variety of business functions. It engages in natural, human-like conversations by analyzing input questions and supplied context, making it a versatile tool for many applications, such as customer service, sales, and employee assistance.

The agent's ability to retain and apply relevant information from earlier interactions or knowledge bases tailors the agent to the user's needs and requests. For business communication, it adapts tone, format, and style to meet brand guidelines. This ensures all generated content is on-brand and professional. The process of shaping the agent to meet specific needs is called prompt engineering.

Over time, the AI agent learns and improves from feedback or stored interactions, increasing its accuracy and performance. This "artificial evolution" enables you to handle more specific and complex inputs, adapt to specific organizational needs, and enhance productivity.

With capabilities covering structured and unstructured data, the AI agent is positioned to be a transformative asset, driving efficiency, reducing operational costs, and enabling your business to effectively scale customer and employee interactions.

Real-world application of an AI Agent

Real estate is strongly associated with automation, particularly document processing. Within this industry, many processes are tied to the lease or sale of property, each requiring the involvement of a specific set of professionals.

A core professional in property leasing and selling is the appraisal coordinator (AC). The AC plays a vital role in this process, handling document retrieval, validation, data checks, and reporting issues when they arise. With a general understanding of this role, the following is a practical case.

Recently, SoftServe designed, implemented, and delivered an agent-like system for a real estate client. This system allows for the emulation of the AC, and subsequently, many other roles. The developed system specifically mimics the efficient handling of incoming client requests, selecting the right tools from an available toolset, and processing data. Additionally, it offers the flexibility to pause and resume the process at any stage, enabling the restart of workflow or continuing seamlessly from the last completed step.

A single-agent AI system is equipped with specialized tools to effectively replicate the AC. The agent autonomously gathers required documents from various sources using document retrieval tools, making sure all mandatory documents are present. The agent then applies validation and sense check tools to verify the accuracy of the data entries and flag any inconsistencies. The agent, powered by an LLM and a set of microservice tools, halts and continues the process at any point, sends notifications, and offers more insights about the data.

Finally, the agent reports alerts to the stakeholders when issues are detected, providing a seamless, automated workflow that reduces human error and enhances efficiency across the appraisal pipeline. Humans are involved in only 20%-30% of cases, instead of, previously, 100% of cases. The steady growth of AI-driven agent systems induces a new era of automation, promising to streamline operations, improve efficiency, and reduce costs across industries. With the adaptability and stored internal memory of LLMs, these agents autonomously handle complex, repetitive tasks, reducing the need for constant human intervention.

While the initial setup may require a relatively larger investment in customization and integration compared to classical, business rule-based approaches, the long-term benefits are substantial. These benefits include improved process control, greater scalability and flexibility, and enhanced engagement for both customers and employees. With advancements in AI technologies, agent systems are set to drive transformative changes, making business operations more agile and resilient.

Start transforming your business today by harnessing the power of modern AI agent systems. RME

4 PREDICTIONS TO FOCUS MIDDLE EAST CHANNEL LEADERS' STRATEGIES IN 2025

Geoff Greenlaw - Vice President, EMEA & LATAM Channel Sales at Pure Storage

The regional IT channel once more finds itself riding a wave of change in 2025. Adoption of AI and other technologies will lead to other trends amid budget pressures. From prolonged procurement cycles to service-dominated customer relationships, the challenges will require steady hands and level heads. We will see customers prioritize business continuity, cyber resiliency, and sustainability, so partners must be prepared to be conversant in the relevant products and services.

We can also expect to see businesses steer their budgets away from individual products and solutions, giving the channel an opportunity to take a holistic view of customers' pain points, and deliver solutions with more interoperability. As we steer the course, we should be aware of likely wind changes. What follows are four changes that every Middle East channel professional should look out for in the coming year.

The demand for true subscription services will increase in 2025

Beyond the simple transition from Capex to Opex, we will see the increased adoption of real services. In the wake of 'everything as-a-service,' organisations have discovered that there is a major difference between opex billing, and a true, value-added service. Challenging economic conditions mean that budgets are tight, and waste is unacceptable. It's great to have subscription billing, but if the service itself isn't flexible, or supported with robust guarantees from the vendor, business outcomes will not be met, and precious time and resources will be wasted. Ultimately, customers are going to vote with their dollars if vendors continue to offer substandard 'services' which don't put the customer's needs front and centre, with meaningful SLAs, ensuring ROI for the customer.

Don't let procurement cycles cripple your business in 2025

There's no doubt that amid cautious spending, and inefficient processes within businesses, procurement cycles are lengthening. Technology decisions are being made in the same time frame as before, but execution is slowing down in the wake of prolonged procurement decisions. In 2025 we will see a focus from the channel on rearchitecting processes in an effort to improve the efficiency of deals. This includes a much tighter qualification of opportunities, and a stronger understanding of key stakeholders — who are the people signing the paper. A shorter and better qualified sales process will result in more deals, closing in the correct quarters, which will drive real revenue growth for the channel next year.

The partners who win in 2025 will solve for business outcomes

In 2025 businesses need to be efficient with their technology purchasing decisions, this means adopting technology to solve a holistic business outcome. This could be business continuity, cybersecurity, sustainability, or a number of other goals. Conversely, businesses will avoid individual products and solutions to solve isolated problems and pain points, as this leads to technology sprawl, a lack of interoperability, wasted resources as well as skills and knowledge silos across the business. The partners who will succeed in 2025 are those that can bring a complete solution to a customer to solve for a business outcome. This might mean bringing together technologies from multiple vendors, therefore the importance of working with alliances and partnerships cannot be overstated. Lastly, it will be critical for these partners to present a comprehensive and clear ROI for said business outcome.

2025 will see further consolidation in the channel

I predicted that we'd see consolidation in the MSP and VAR spaces in 2024, and this proved to be accurate. In fact, the acquisitions were on an even larger scale than expected. I think we will see further consolidation in the channel in 2025, as businesses look to acquire not just individual talent in a market with a skills shortage, but entire specialist divisions. This will help them break into new markets, and serve a wider customer base which will drive increased revenue next year. I believe it's a positive development which will result in partners being able to land bigger, better deals.

Adapt to thrive

Shrinking budgets and changing customer attitudes are not new. The regional channel has been through these travails before and has emerged stronger than ever. We adapt each time by realising that opportunities are not gone. They have merely changed shape. We can all prosper together and ink the big deals if we stay focused on the customer and see the changing business environment through their eyes.

" IN 2025 WE WILL SEE A FOCUS FROM THE CHANNEL ON REARCHITECTING PROCESSES IN AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF DEALS.

AVANADE APPOINTS ADEL DAIRA AS UAE COUNTRY MANAGER

Avanade, the world's leading Microsoft expert, announced the appointment of Adel Daira as the new UAE Country Manager, effective immediately. Adel succeeds Adriano Neves, who will transition to the role of General Manager for Brazil.

Adel brings over 13 years of experience at Avanade, where he has built a strong reputation for driving growth and fostering robust client relationships. His decade-long tenure in Switzerland as the Client Lead for large accounts was marked by impressive results, and since relocating to the UAE in 2021, he has significantly enhanced Avanade's regional presence as the Regional Sales Lead.

Anna Di Silverio, President for Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EME), Avanade, said: "Adel has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership and a deep understanding of our clients' needs. His strategic vision and commitment to excellence make him the ideal leader to drive our growth in the UAE. We are confident that under his leadership, Avanade UAE will continue to thrive and innovate in this dynamic market."

The UAE is rapidly becoming a global hub for artificial intelligence (AI) and digital transformation. With a market size valued at $3.47 billion in 2023 and projected to grow at a CAGR of 43.9% between 2024 and 2030, the opportunities for AI in the UAE are immense. The government's commitment to integrating AI across various sectors, including healthcare, finance, and defence, is driving significant advancements and creating a fertile ground for innovation.

Adel's appointment comes at a pivotal time as AI trends in the UAE continue to evolve. The region is witnessing a surge in AI applications, from smart traffic control systems to AI-powered healthcare solutions. These advancements are not only enhancing operational efficiencies but also transforming the way businesses and governments operate.

"I am honoured to take on the role of UAE Country Manager at such an exciting time for Avanade and the region. The UAE is at the forefront of technological innovation, and I am eager to lead our talented team in driving significant growth and delivering exceptional value to our clients. Together, we will continue to push the boundaries of what is possible with digital transformation and AI," said Adel Daira, Country Manager – UAE, Avanade.

"The UAE's vision for AI aligns perfectly with Avanade's mission to leverage technology for positive change. I am excited to explore new opportunities and collaborate with our clients to harness the full potential of AI, driving sustainable growth and innovation," added Daira.

I AM EXCITED TO EXPLORE NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND COLLABORATE WITH OUR CLIENTS TO HARNESS THE FULL POTENTIAL OF AI, DRIVING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND INNOVATION.
ADEL DAIRA, COUNTRY MANAGER – UAE, AVANADE

Ai EVERYTHING GLOBAL

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4 FEB 2025
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5 – 6 FEB 2025
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