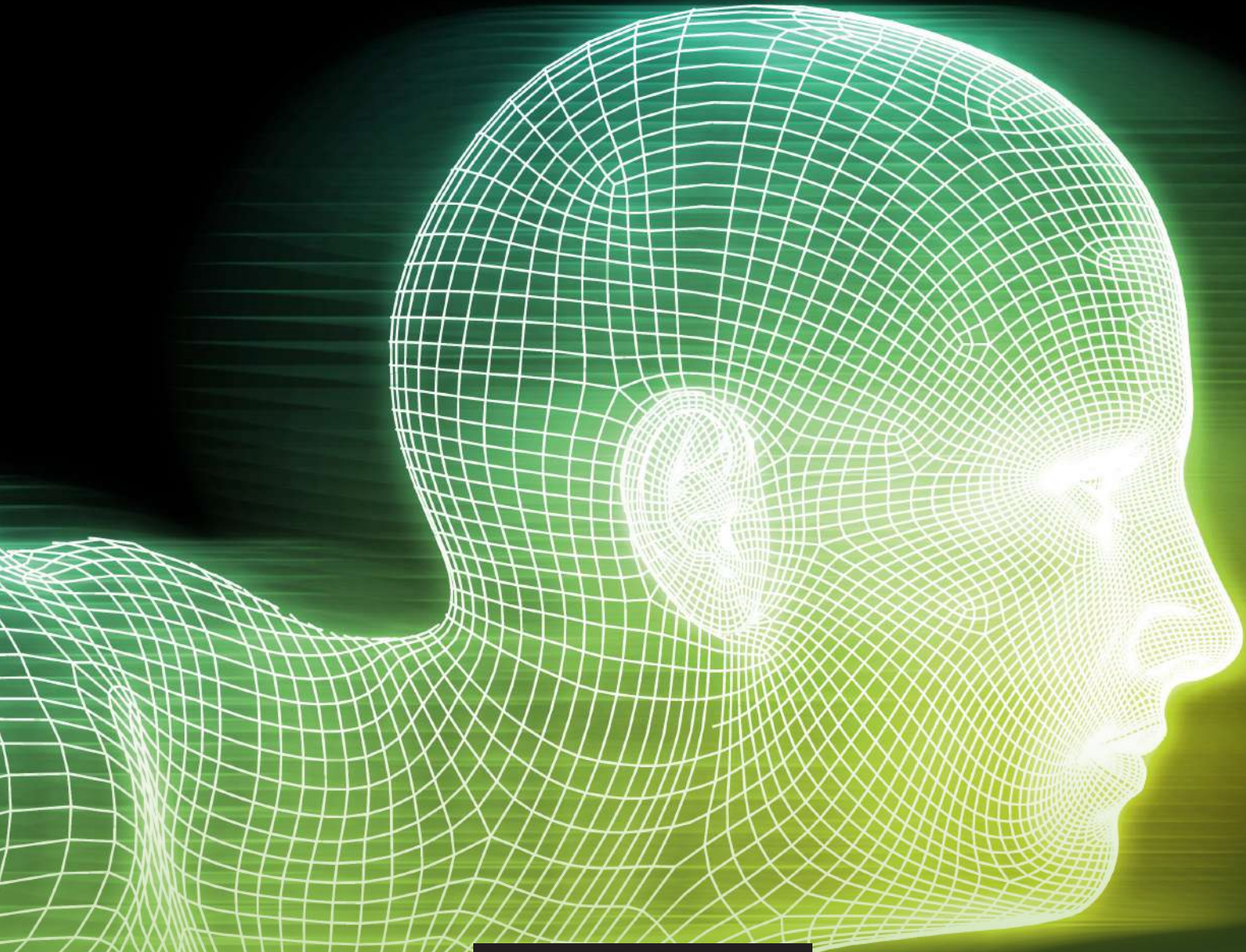


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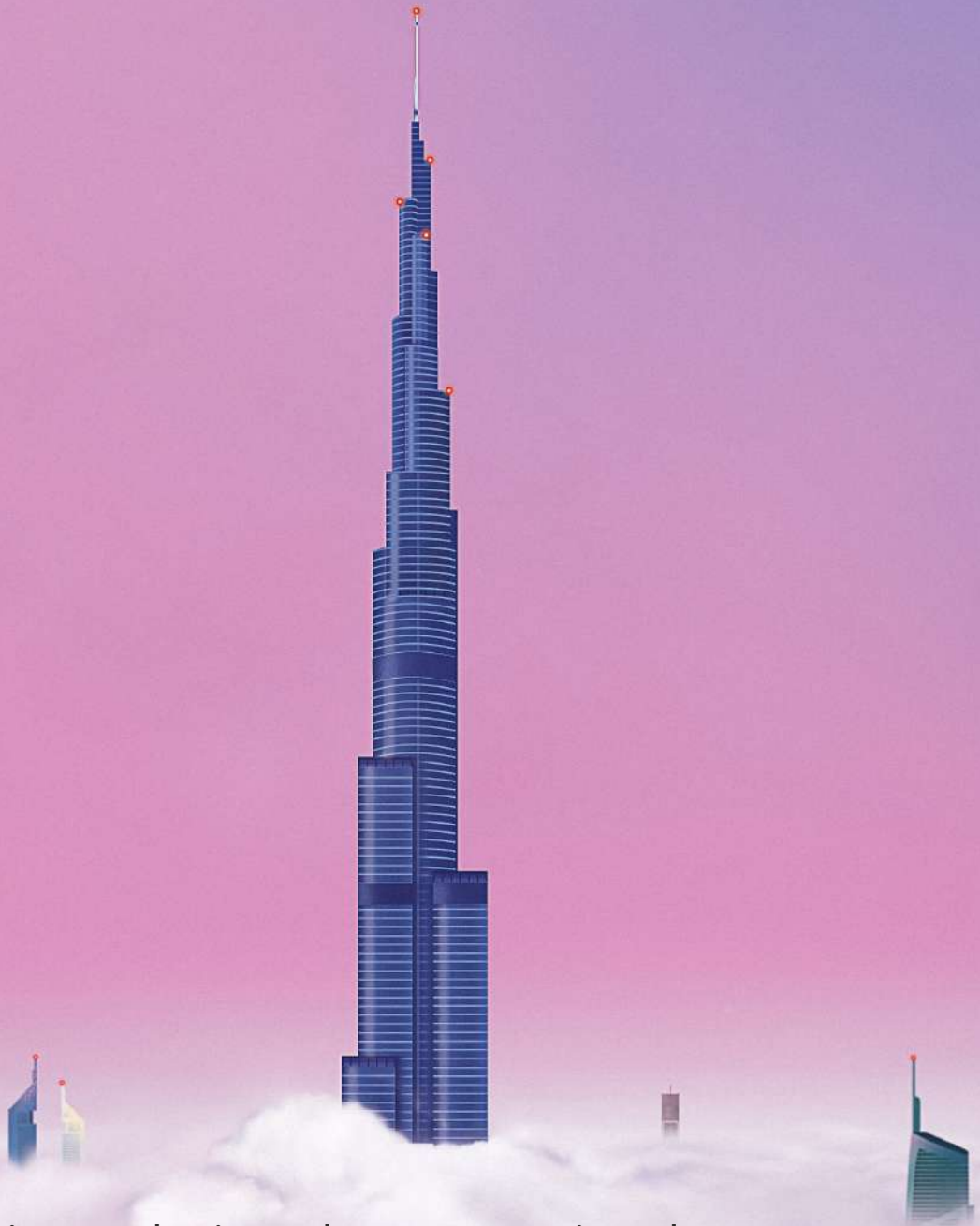
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# CONTENTS

28-29  
SPECIAL REPORT

## LEADERSHIP: REBUILDING TEAMS, BUSINESS, ORGANISATIONS

Moussalam Dalati, Liferay: Rapid digitalisation is the new business landscape

Morey J Haber, BeyondTrust: Executive focus on communication, empathy, positive intent

Pattabhiraman Ganesh, Emerson Automations Solutions: Can a top-down approach to digital transformation work?

Prem Rodrigues, Siemon: CISO's role in hybrid organisations

Rami Kichli, Software AG: Software is the value driver for digital disruption

Sam Tayan, Zoom: Technology leaders are the ship's captain of future

Talal Bayaa, Bayzat: Employee experience now dependent on technology

Thierry Nicault, Salesforce: Transforming business and customer experiences

Toni El Inati, Barracuda Networks: Is the CFO more relevant than the CEO?

05  
EDITOR'S PREFACE

08-09  
OPINION

10-17  
EVENTS

20  
COVER STORY  
Making AI deliver in  
service of good

40-45  
INDUSTRY  
COMMENTS

46  
EXECUTIVE  
CORNER

06-07  
TRANSFORMATION  
CHAMPIONS

Energy: Legacy to sustainable  
digital technologies

Why is the shift to renewable energy delayed

Smart grid technology evolves to  
make greener future

Sustainable AC can lead to  
energy savings





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Printed by  
Al Ghurair Printing & Publishing LLC.  
Masafi Compound, Satwa, PO Box: 5613,  
Dubai, UAE

Published by  
Accent Infomedia MEA FZ-LLC  
# 203 , 2nd Floor G2 Circular Building,  
Dubai Production City (IMPZ)  
Phone : +971 4 564 8684

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International Media Production Zone, Dubai, UAE  
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errors therein.



## MACHINE INTELLIGENCE IN SERVICE OF GOOD

Most science fiction fans would have read Arthur C Clark's Odyssey trilogy that captures encounters with an extraterrestrial civilization in the orbit of Jupiter and its satellites. Many of them may have missed the first in the series that was published as early as 1968 and made into a classic movie by Stanley Kubrick. But what's the takeaway here?

Way back in the sixties, Clarke in his forward-looking vision imagined that cognitive and hyper intelligent super computers would be here by the Millennium. 2001 has come and gone, and cognitive hyper intelligent super computer are still many levels of innovation away. Clarke over estimated innovation in software programming, and maybe underestimated on the hardware side. But what he did anticipate pretty well were the dangers of hyper intelligence in machines becoming a threat, especially in self-learning cognitive machines.

In this edition of BT, we dwell into the concept of responsible artificial intelligence or RAI. According to Elias Baltassis at BCG GAMMA, an RAI programme embodies structures that ensure AI systems transform businesses while serving as a force for good. To make an RAI programme operational, organisations must take two more additional steps – design specific policies and operationalise these policies by developing the processes.

The greater RAI maturity a company has, the more opportunities the company will enjoy. Companies that have been proactive to ensure ethical usage of AI have experienced success as part of their transformation journeys. However, a large number of organisations perceive their RAI maturity is higher than it is. Typically, companies underestimate the effort necessary for implementing an effective RAI.

Some of the reasons, why responsible AI does not gain momentum are policies were not comprehensive, processes related to policies were not implemented, or tools have not been built. Often employees and leaders have not been made aware and trained on RAI. Leadership willingness and sensitivity to RAI issues are key.

On the flip side and importantly, high IT spend and business dominance, do not guarantee leadership principles. Research does show that RAI is not an IT issue, even if IT will have the responsibility of implementing tools developed. RAI is a leadership and managerial issue and managerial practices are not always correlated to other specifics.

Continuing further, we wrap up our coverage of the challenges faced by executive leadership in this edition. Contributing here are Moussalam Dalati, Liferay; Morey J Haber, BeyondTrust; Pattabhiraman Ganesh, Emerson Automations Solutions; Prem Rodrigues, Siemon; Rami Kichli, Software AG; Sam Tayan, Zoom; Talal Bayaa, Bayzat; Thierry Nicault, Salesforce; and Toni El Inati, Barracuda Networks.

As we race into the last quarter of this year, the upcoming in-person mega-events, Gitex Technology Week and Dubai Expo 2021 are expected to take the local economy to the next level of business performance.

Wishing you success in the last quarter and expecting to see you at Gitex 2021.

Arun Shankar  
arun@gecmmediagroup.com

# EXTENDED REALITY IS TRANSFORMING INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

The single biggest game-changer for virtual training will be extended reality created with artificial intelligence powered by the cloud.



MAURIZIO GALARDO,  
Chief Technologist Extended Reality,  
AVEVA.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The global success of Pokémon Go demonstrated how users are far more engaged when immersed in contextual gameplay
- Gamification techniques are now being applied to real-world industrial learning use cases.
- When AI is fused into the gamified training process, it is possible to leverage principles of gamification in real time.

The concept of gamification – the principles and theories behind playing games – has been central to the swift progression of virtual training. Gamification techniques are now being applied to real-world industrial learning use cases. One of the most notable international gamification successes was the smash-hit Pokémon Go in 2016.

In the last five years, augmented reality has been adapted to industries

as varied as oil plants and marine yards, alongside other gamification technologies such as virtual reality. Within these industrial environments, gamification helps simplify the transfer of complex knowledge for field and plant operators or to general staff.

In the future, the single biggest game-changer for virtual training will be an extended reality experience created with a potent and realistic combination of artificial intelligence, virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality, powered by the cloud.

Extended reality is a catchall term referring to all real-and-virtual combined environments and human-machine interactions generated by computer technology and wearables.

The global success of Pokémon Go demonstrated how users are far more engaged when immersed in contextual gameplay. In the industrial world, the very same principles apply for improving trainee interactivity, retention and engagement.

When artificial intelligence is fused into the gamified training process, it is possible to leverage the principles of gamification in real time. However, it is still vital that the learning system is closely mapped to the company's actual processes.

In an industrial learning sense, it is now possible to familiarise yourself with the digital asset and see the real-time outcomes of your actions as-you-go in case of malfunction or failure. This type of training will only become more immersive as nascent virtual reality and augmented reality technologies become further actualised by developments in artificial intelligence.

What's more, entire teams are

learning simultaneously – as well as learning how to communicate with each other on the job. This type of collaboration will only accelerate as extended reality technology advances.

By leveraging extended reality, organisations can simultaneously run employee-training programmes while the plant is being constructed. This way, the plant is up-and-running as soon as it is opened, saving on valuable and costly downtime. Entire teams can be trained up during the construction process, while also learning to work together in a replicated virtual environment.

Augmented reality can help guide new hires through step-by-step procedures while the plant operates normally – again, saving on idle plant time. Extended reality makes it possible to simulate several tasks and processes overlaid over real data.

Most 3D visualisation takes place by using overlay apps over tablets or monitors. In the future, the human machine interface HMI will be formed of wearable devices. This means there will be no time lag and the user will be able to place multiple data streams in context.

Trainees will be able to use their normal vision to see live complex data streams in 3D vision, as well as connect with others in the same domain. In the coming years, we will be able to view multiple complex data sets through new and exciting lenses.

Most global extended reality adoption will take place in the next five to ten years. ■





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### Questions?

Reach out to your account team.



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# THREE WAYS TO BOOST SECURITY AWARENESS PROGRAMMES

Most security awareness programmes, lack resources to fully engage the enterprise and are also undermined when they do not have executive sponsorship.



RICHARD ADDISCOTT,  
Senior Director Analyst, Gartner.

Security awareness training plays a vital role in helping employees learn how to identify and prevent attacks.

A good training programme is a cost-effective way to reduce cybersecurity risk, but it needs executive support to succeed. A senior employee at one of Australia's top universities received a seemingly innocuous email. He did not click on or download anything he was not meant to — simply previewing an email attachment was enough for hackers to steal a password, gain access to the network and swipe an unknown quantity of data.

Security awareness training plays a

vital role in helping employees learn how to identify and prevent this type of attack. It is often seen as a nice to have, but a good training programme is a cost-effective way of improving information security risk.

Most security awareness programmes, however, lack the necessary people and capital resources required to fully engage the enterprise. They are also undermined when they don't have executive sponsorship.

Lack of leadership support for your security awareness training programme can have a significant impact on the security team's ability to get the key messages across throughout the organisation.

If the CEO announces a series of data protection workshops, employees are more likely to see the meetings as vital. Without the CEO's endorsement, the sessions hold less urgency and may become just more messaging to ignore or another set of meetings to endure.

## #1 CONNECT TO BUSINESS

Position a security awareness programme as a cornerstone of any effort intended to achieve strategic business outcomes. Demonstrate how the programme is an enabler or a complementary initiative for other strategic programmes.

Suppose a key focus for your organisation is a high degree of service availability. This can be adversely affected by the introduction of malware, and a common vector for intrusion is a USB memory device. Educating your staff around good habits with these devices, in conjunction with

other controls, can help you avoid this potential scenario.

Articulate the inherent value, benefit and time savings in a language that will resonate with executives. This demonstrates that you understand their world and what's in it for them if the programme is successful.

## #2 SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

The most effective way to connect programme outcomes to achieving business goals is to use specific, relevant examples — whether about your company, competitors, recent events or other industry reports.

Cautionary tales are often also effective in making an impression on an audience. With cyber intrusions now commonplace, most leaders can easily demonstrate how a business objective could have benefited from additional security or how an event could have been prevented by heightened awareness.

## #3 MEASURABLE DATA

Show the need for a security awareness programme by using measurable, contextualised data. Having defensible qualitative or quantitative data points helps to articulate the effectiveness of your programme in the language the audience understands. This presents security as the management of business risks, rather than as a confrontation of cyberthreats.

Give executives a reason to care about security. Find meaningful triggers for stakeholders that help them realise that effective security is good for all — the organisation, its executive, clients, shareholders and other external stakeholders, too. ■



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## BTX Roadshow 2021 completes Asia Edition with keynotes and panel discussions

GEC Media Group, publishers of Business Transformation, Enterprise Channels MEA, The Titans, Cyber Sentinels, completed the second leg of the BTX Road Show 2021, Asia Edition. The road show is focused on digital and business transformation with the overlying theme – The Change.

The half-day event on 2nd September was hosted at the GEC Media Virtual Arena. The title sponsors of BTX Roadshow were Aruba HPE, Riverbed, Pure Storage, Veeam, Logicom, Netapp, Western Digital, Arcon, Veritas, SilverPeak, Alcatel-Lucent enterprise, SecureNet, Synology, Finesse, CORK information technology, International Group of Artificial



# #TheChange

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Intelligence – IGOAI, Global CISO Forum, Business Transformation and Enterprise Channels MEA.

The pandemic of 2020 disrupted virtually every industry and every nation. Citizens, social fabrics, businesses, supply chains, trade, communication, value systems, workplaces, leisure, entertainment, decision making, almost everything conceivable had to adapt and change and survive. Information technology and business applications and strategic decision making around how to support everyday life through technology, has also had to adapt.

This has prompted the need to relook at business and the IT organisation, the executives, operations, survival mantras, decision making, and finally outlook and forward-looking vision. The meaning of business continuity, disaster recovery, collaboration, virtual meetings, remote workforce, cloud, security, have overnight changed from esoteric into everyday work life meanings.

BTX Road Show 2021 Asia edition was opened by CEO Ronak Samantaray, Global Head, Content and Strategic Alliances,



Anushree Dixit, and President, GEC Media Group, Malavika Shanker, through their welcome notes.

There were four speaker keynote presentations, three technology keynote presentations, and two panel discussions. The event was followed by the BTX Awards. Close to 100 attendees participated virtually for the event. The event was streamed live from the virtual arena and on Vimeo also.

Here are the highlights of the various speaker keynote presentations.

#### FROM ANALOG TO DIGITAL TO SPACE, A PILOT'S PERSPECTIVE

In the opening keynote address Captain Nivedita Bhasin, B787 Training Captain, superannuated after 37 years as executive director and chief of flight safety, Air India talked about her journey and explained the present digital era and said, "We are at the digital world, we are surrounded by technology whether it is social media, instruments, flying reporting, training, and weather reporting everything has turned digital."

Regional trends in business and digital transformation

Manoj Saxena, Chairman RosettaNet Singapore GS1 digital standards, Senior Director Data and Digital transformation, Maxeon Solar Technologies and Advisory board Global CIO Forum made his presentation on partnership between government, industry and education

system and said, "It is important that the government, the industry, and the education system come together. Always to solve the industry's problem and challenges which we constantly go through."

#### ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION LEVERAGING SUSTAINABILITY AND LEADERSHIP

In the first panel discussion on Millie Gillon, Global Head Client Experience, Senior Managing Director, Standard Chartered Bank explained from a leadership perspective it is going top down and bottom's up so hopefully we can somewhere in the middle and make some change and it's really shifting from its no longer just some side project, its more over cultural shift having dedicated people, resources and its extremely difficult so we are still trying to maintain our business.

Panelist, Vinay Awasthi, Worldwide Head of Print Supply Chain, HP said, "Now I think most important thing is what are we doing and how intentional are we as we work on our sustainable goals."

Manoj Saxena, Chairman RosettaNet Singapore GS1 digital standards, Senior Director Data and Digital transformation, Maxeon Solar Technologies, and Advisory board Global CIO Forum highlighted the way of changing consumer behaviour and said, "Today most





consumers are cultured with lot of intimations, they have cultured with information they see in the social media they see environmental issues; they are also conscious about environmental issues.”

### TRANSFORMING THE SUPPLY CHAIN

In her presentation titled Transforming the Supply Chain, Nicole Tretwer, Head of Logistics Services, APAC, Swarovski talked about her company’s omni channel capabilities and said, “In our case we are focusing on giving the consumers the option on where they wish their items to be delivered to whether it be an in-store order and a to store order.”

### MANUFACTURING AND CUSTOMER CENTRICITY

Saket Gore, CEO Asia Pacific, The Himalaya Drug Company highlighted the evolving customer behaviour and said, “Today most consumers are cluttered with lot of information on social media. There is a lot of lack of trust because of overdose of information.”

Regional technology and innovation trends in industrial and consumer robotics

Prof Tadhg O’Donovan, Head of the School of Engineering and Physical Sciences Heriot-Watt University Dubai made his presentation on innovation trends and intelligence and explained “Robotics can be classified into many different areas. One way of classifying them is intelligence. Robotics

is not just a typical robot. It is about autonomous systems and interactive systems and how they can all work together.”

Panel Discussion on Artificial Intelligence, powered by the IGOAI Forum

In the second panel discussion on “Panel Discussion on artificial intelligence, powered by the IGOAI Forum”, Moderator Ahmed Buhazza started the session with the introduction of panelists and briefed about artificial intelligence and its role in present era.

Dr Chiranjiv Roy, Senior Vice-President Data Science and Analytics, SG Analytics, Member Forbes Technology Council talked about where artificial intelligence stands in the last few years and said, “Initially artificial intelligence started with an automation and today artificial intelligence is called as the new oil or the new soil whatever that you want to call it.”

Carrying forward the discussion, Ms Divya Dwivedi, Advocate, Supreme Court of India, Founder and Director, JND Charitable Trust highlighted legal laws and ethics for digital transformation said, “Human brain cannot be surpassed by artificial intelligence. I see artificial intelligence as a baby like we feed baby with all the information and they grow and they tell us that we are beyond you, it is similar with artificial intelligence.”

Mr Abhivardhan, Managing Partner, Indic Pacific Legal Research, Chairperson and Managing Trustee, Indian Society of Artificial Intelligence and Law discussed what is the prediction for artificial intelligence and how mature it is and how fast it is growing every day.

Sriram Bhargav Madhav, Head of Artificial Intelligence and Intelligent Automation, Provenio.ai, Member Forbes Technology Council briefed what should be the key focus an enterprise should take to build artificial intelligence and said, “Every enterprise today is struggling with multiple challenges if I may say that, and I often try to simplify explaining what priorities organisation and enterprise should take.”

With the successful completion of the BTX Road Show 2021, Asia edition, the next BTX South Gulf edition will take place on 8th September in-person at Grand Ballroom, Conrad Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Road in Dubai and BTX Africa on 27 September.



# BTX TOP EXECUTIVE AWARDS



# BTX ENTERP AWARDS

## BTX Roadshow 2021 announces 35+ winners for prestigious transformation awards

GEC Media Group, publishers of Business Transformation, Enterprise Channels MEA, The Titans, Cyber Sentinels, announced the winners of the BTX Top Executive Awards, BTX Enterprise Awards, BTX Solution Awards at BTX Road Show Asia edition on 2nd September 2021.

The half-day event was hosted at the GEC Media Virtual Arena. The title sponsors of BTX Roadshow were Aruba HPE, Riverbed, Pure Storage, Veeam, Logicom, Netapp, Western Digital, Arcon, Veritas, SilverPeak, Alcatel-Lucent enterprise, SecureNet, Synology, Finesse, CORK information technology, International Group of Artificial Intelligence – IGOAI, Global CISO Forum, Business Transformation and Enterprise Channels MEA.

GEC Media Group extended warm wishes to all the champions for their win.

There were three sets of awards as described below.

### BTX TOP EXECUTIVE AWARDS

Recognising leadership driving transformation

This award recognises top executive who have accelerated digital and business transformation through the pandemic





# BTX SOLUTION AWARDS

and created a better future for their business. They have empowered remote teams, managed change, flattened organisational structure, made it agile and secure, managed customer satisfaction, and implemented digital tools like cloud, analytics, data integration, amongst others.

## BTX ENTERPRISE AWARDS

Recognising success stories in transformation

This award recognises enterprise that have embraced digital transformation and digital tools through the pandemic and achieved success in various areas. Such enterprises would have rebuilt customer experiences, managed customer expectations, leveraged online sales models, built forecasting models, have in-depth and ready analysis of market and demand trends, built close collaboration and data sharing amongst teams, amongst others.

## BTX SOLUTION AWARDS

Recognising solutions for transformation

This award recognises the leading, exemplary, heroic efforts by vendors, channel partners, integrators, consultants, to manage the challenges of the end user community through the lockdowns of the pandemic. This part of the IT industry helped the end user community to successfully pivot their business models by using digital technologies and create a sustainable business through the pandemic and ahead, amongst others.

## BTX TOP EXECUTIVE AWARDS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Key Verticals</b>
<i>Agi Agung Galuh Purwa</i>	<i>West Java Digital Service, Jabar Digital Service</i>	<i>Non-Profit or Government Organisations</i>
<i>Alex Ustaris</i>	<i>Hijo Group of Companies</i>	<i>Diversified Services</i>
<i>Amit Phadke</i>	<i>Toll Group</i>	<i>Transportation, Storage and Logistics</i>
<i>Anil Menon</i>	<i>LULU Group India</i>	<i>Retail</i>
<i>Captain Nivedita Bhasin</i>	<i>B787 Captain, superannuated after 37 years as Executive Director and Chief of Flight Safety, Air India</i>	<i>Consultancy</i>
<i>Christopher James Martin</i>	<i>CIMB Bank Berhad</i>	<i>Accounting, Banking and Financial Services</i>
<i>Dr Mukesh Mehta</i>	<i>Batlivala and Karani Securities</i>	<i>Financial Services and Banking</i>
<i>Iftikhar Arif</i>	<i>Muller and Phipps Pakistan</i>	<i>Wholesale and Distribution</i>
<i>Manish Kishore</i>	<i>AMTZ</i>	<i>Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals and Biotech</i>
<i>Muhammad Lukman</i>	<i>National Clearing Company of Pakistan</i>	<i>Financial Services and Banking</i>
<i>Nicole Tretwer</i>	<i>SWAROVSKI</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>
<i>Professor Tadhg O'Donovan</i>	<i>Heriot-Watt University Dubai</i>	
<i>Rajiv Arora</i>	<i>Siemens Global IT Hub</i>	<i>Information Technology Services</i>
<i>Ramanamurthy H Pentakota</i>	<i>ADIENT</i>	<i>Automotive and Related Equipment</i>
<i>Sajith Chakkingal</i>	<i>TMF Group</i>	<i>Financial Services and Banking</i>
<i>Saket Gore</i>	<i>The Himalaya Drug Company</i>	<i>Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals and Biotech</i>
<i>Saravanan Kumar</i>	<i>Incofin Investment Management</i>	<i>Financial Services and Banking</i>
<i>Shekher Kumar Agrawal</i>	<i>Indorama Ventures</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>
<i>Subhash Singh Punjabi</i>	<i>Alicon Castalloy</i>	<i>Automotive and Related Equipment</i>
<i>Syed Aun M. Bukhari</i>	<i>Apollo Telecom Pvt. Ltd.</i>	<i>Information Technology Services</i>
<i>Vijoy Basu</i>	<i>Cognizant</i>	<i>Information Technology Services</i>



## BTX ENTERPRISE AWARDS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Key Verticals</b>
<i>Anil Kamble</i>	<i>Sushil Financial Services</i>	<i>Financial Services and Banking</i>
<i>Anshul Srivastava</i>	<i>Seniority</i>	<i>Retail</i>
<i>Anuroop Sundd</i>	<i>Siemens Industry Software India</i>	<i>Information Technology Software</i>
<i>Ashish Desai</i>	<i>Grasim Industries</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>
<i>Bijender Mishra</i>	<i>Alkem Laboratories</i>	<i>Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals and Biotech</i>
<i>CA Navratan Bohra</i>	<i>Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers</i>	<i>Financial Services and Banking</i>
<i>Chandran R</i>	<i>Bahwan Cybertek</i>	<i>Information Technology Services</i>
<i>Dr Deepak Kalambkar</i>	<i>SafexPay</i>	<i>Financial Services and Banking</i>
<i>Pragnesh Mistry</i>	<i>RPG Enterprises</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>
<i>Shankar Sunnathi</i>	<i>Omega Healthcare Management Services</i>	<i>Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals and Biotech</i>
<i>Srinivasan Mahalingam</i>	<i>Fusion BPO Services</i>	<i>Information Technology Services</i>
<i>Ts Saiful Bakhtiar Osman</i>	<i>ASCENT Fund Services Singapore</i>	<i>Financial Services and Banking</i>
<i>Vikas Gupta</i>	<i>H-ENERGY</i>	<i>Energy and Utilities</i>
<i>Viren Popatbhai Italiya</i>	<i>GSC Bank</i>	<i>Financial Services and Banking</i>

## BTX SOLUTION PROVIDER AWARDS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Key Verticals</b>
<i>Biswajit Mohapatra</i>	<i>IBM</i>	<i>Information Technology Services</i>
<i>Jaydeep Ruparelia</i>	<i>Infopercept Consulting</i>	<i>Information Technology Services</i>

With the successful completion of the BTX Road Show 2021, Asia edition, the next BTX South Gulf edition will take place on 8th September in-person at Grand Ballroom, Conrad Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Road in Dubai followed by BTX Africa on 27 September.



**NASER DARWAZEH,**  
General Manager,  
GCG Enterprise Solutions.

# FAMILIAR FACE IN ENTERPRISING TIMES

Speaking to GCG Enterprise Solutions' General Manager Naser Darwazeh, a UAE-based business leader who has overseen the growth of the Ghobash Group's technology cluster to meet the needs of an ever-changing business world while driving the market's thirst for innovation.

**NASER, DURING YOUR TENURE, GHOBASH GROUP'S BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY CLUSTER HAS EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT CHANGES OVER THE YEARS. CAN YOU OFFER A LITTLE HISTORY BEHIND THE JOURNEY TO TODAY'S GCG ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS AND HOW YOUR VISION FOR THE BUSINESS HAS TAKEN SHAPE?**

Well, many significant changes have taken place in just recently, but as the result of decades of preparation and industry research, experience and foresight. Back in 1982 our enterprise was simply a supplier of printers to local companies. The rapidly growing economy in the region exponentially increased the need for printed documents, as did the expense and stress. I saw an opportunity to move from a box mover (as we were called back then) to a business solutions provider. The idea to turn print, document and imaging management into a paid service worked and our clients responded well. They were paying someone to save them money!

Gulf Commercial Group – Digital Imaging & Office Services Solutions became well-known in the office services market, and growth was organic. We updated our products before the need required and sought out new ways to make printing easier with better results, faster, and cheaper with the help of improving technologies—always learning.

As digitalization trended, I was excited about its potential for business connectivity, and we researched technologies that would bring the workplace together. Consolidated printing systems were a boon, using integrated software to centralize an entire workforce's printed output on one state-of-the-art multi-function printer... we were changing the face of enterprise daily.

**A PRINTING SPECIALIST IN A PAPERLESS WORLD?**

Document management took yet another turn with environmentalism. People started to print less and email more. Large volumes of valuable financial and



legal documentation were bouncing from workstation to workstation with little or no control. Businesses needed solutions that would consolidate non-paper documents into a central, accessible and secure environment, while dealing with tons of legacy documentation taking up valuable storage space. For this, our software solutions would turn printer scanners into massive data collection machines, capable of collecting an image of a document and extracting information from that image then processing it according to set rules defined by the user.

At this point, I realized that if we were going to support our clients successfully with the best service, we'd need to split our focus. I decided we'd form two companies with different value propositions. One would continue with managed print services, which we called MPS (Managed Print Services), and another bold new venture called GCG Enterprise Solutions could specialize in new technologies to shake up the business world!

The pandemic was an unexpected driver of change as we introduced our clients to many business technologies that would otherwise have taken years to adopt. We now offer our clients everything from cardless access systems to digital signatures, which is amusing because we remove physical contact while bringing everything together virtually.

### TELL US MORE ABOUT THE WORK THAT GCG ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS DOES NOW?

For me, Enterprise Solutions refers to all aspects of technology that enhance business management. Our solutions make business easier, from technology that improves the way we talk to clients across popular platforms (while gathering business-useful information) to emerging technologies that maximize a company's operational efficiency.

*We help our clients harness the power of their commercial data to make more profitable decisions.*

Our automation solutions use bots

and artificial intelligence to perform any number of repetitive tasks, which reduce personnel overheads. It allows a client to re-direct capital into core business functions and internal innovations. It also means instantaneous analysis of data, presented on accessible platforms for the benefit of users at every level. The result – more involved and inspired employees.

Our value-added digital transformation service starts with an in-depth study of a business's needs and pain points. We then draw from an ever-growing pool of cutting-edge technologies from the world's leading innovators (Microsoft, Kyocera and ViewSonic, to name a few) to find the simplest solution to meet those needs to our client's satisfaction. Study-solution-satisfaction! I rely on the expertise of my team to help our clients understand the benefits of every solution to guide them on their digitalization journey and realize their business goals.

### YOU SPEAK ABOUT MAKING BUSINESS PROCESSES MORE EFFICIENT AND FASTER. CAN YOU GIVE OUR READERS A REAL CASE SCENARIO?

A case study? OK. I'm not at liberty to mention which client; suffice it to say it's one of the more prominent names in the energy sector. They already had a five-year managed-print-services agreement with our print division, and since we had established a first-class reputation for quality and service excellence we were asked to bid and won.

The challenge was a decades-long legacy documentation backlog, with an archaic records and information management system limited to physical retrieval. There was no standardized digitization process or ECM in place.

We were tasked to implement a long-term digital transformation and green initiative that would convert an estimated 280 million paper documents into 600 terabytes of indexed images. The two-year-long project is still underway, and we have a production line of about 85 personnel who receive and process

between 200 and 300 boxes of paper documents a day. Documents range in size from A5 to A0 and pertain to all parts of the business from HR to accounts payable and even engineering projects' blueprints.

With accurate and high-quality information capture at their fingertips, our team constantly updates the intelligent scanning software to identify specific types of documents, analyze captured metadata, and archive it all into a centralized Intelligent Information Management.

The project will create a digital backup of the entire archive—a perfect disaster recovery option—and the benefits for our client will be numerous:

- Online and controlled access of documents to authorized staff across the entire enterprise.
- All the risks related to physical retrievals such as document loss, leakage, and damage, will be mitigated.
- Digitalization means complete control over information and the availability of documents can be restricted, monitored and audited.
- Document restoration – the software automatically manages old and critical documents that have deteriorated and damaged
- Lessons learned throughout the process will enable AI to process all future documentation.

### IMPRESSIVE INDEED. AND WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE GROUP?

We constantly re-invigorate our portfolio, so the next big step is increasing our footprint. The Group has formally established its in-country value in KSA with a new company called GBS (Gulf Business Solutions), which we will support with enterprise management solutions. We plan on being the leading information and technology solutions provider in the Kingdom and will offer an extended portfolio of products and services ranging from printing systems to end-to-end digital transformation solutions. ■

*This content has been sponsored by the vendor.*



An RAI programme embodies structures that ensure AI systems transform businesses while serving as a force for good.

**ELIAS BALTASSIS,**  
BCG GAMMA  
*Lead for Middle East.*

## RESPONSIBLE AI

# MAKING AI DELIVER IN SERVICE OF GOOD

Responsible AI ensures outcomes are unbiased, fair, explainable, robust, safe, preserve privacy, and follow best practices in data governance.

Responsible Artificial Intelligence, RAI is a governance framework that consists of developing artificial intelligence systems that integrate human empathy and care, and therefore ensure that they work in the service of good while achieving transformative business impact.

As the technology continues to evolve while making notable impacts in many industries, organisations are proactively measuring their RAI capabilities to deliver on their commitments ethically and within reason, as well as drive positive and mature business outcomes, and ensure they are mature.

The practice of implementing RAI means to ensure that the outcomes of AI systems are unbiased, fair, and explainable; that AI systems are robust and safe; that they preserve user privacy by following best practices

in data governance; that they minimise environmental impact; and finally on the fact that they do not replace human capacity but rather augment it.

## CREATING AN RAI PROGRAMME

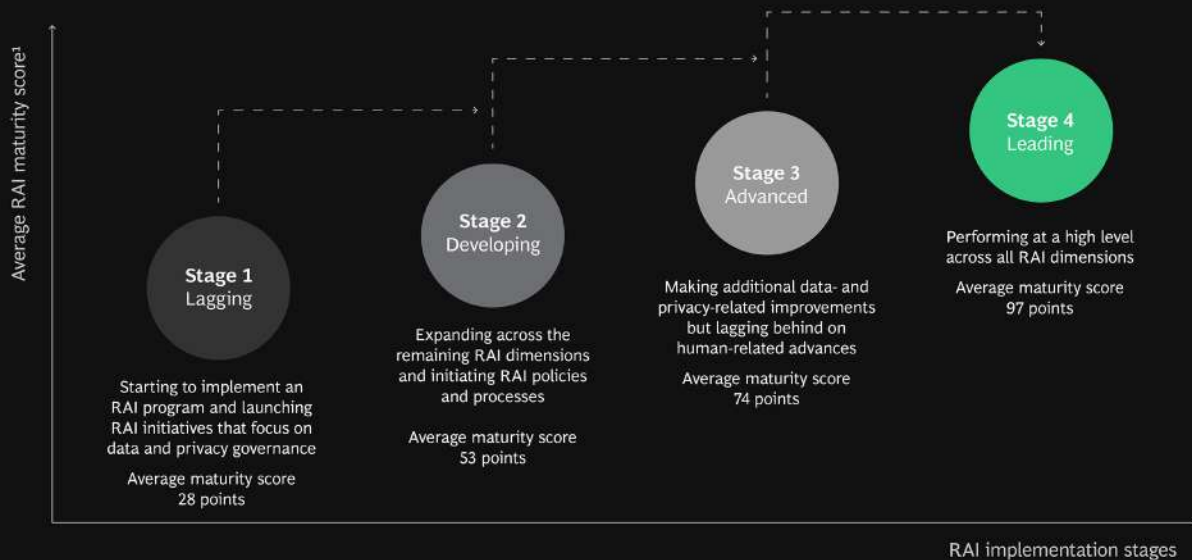
In simple terms, an RAI programme embodies the structures, processes, and tools that help organisations ensure that their AI systems transform businesses in their entirety while serving as a force for good. To do this, a company needs to start from its purpose and values and translate them into concrete RAI principles.

Companies, public organisations, and associations, have reached this point and published high-level principles of RAI, however, and unfortunately, most of them have stopped there.

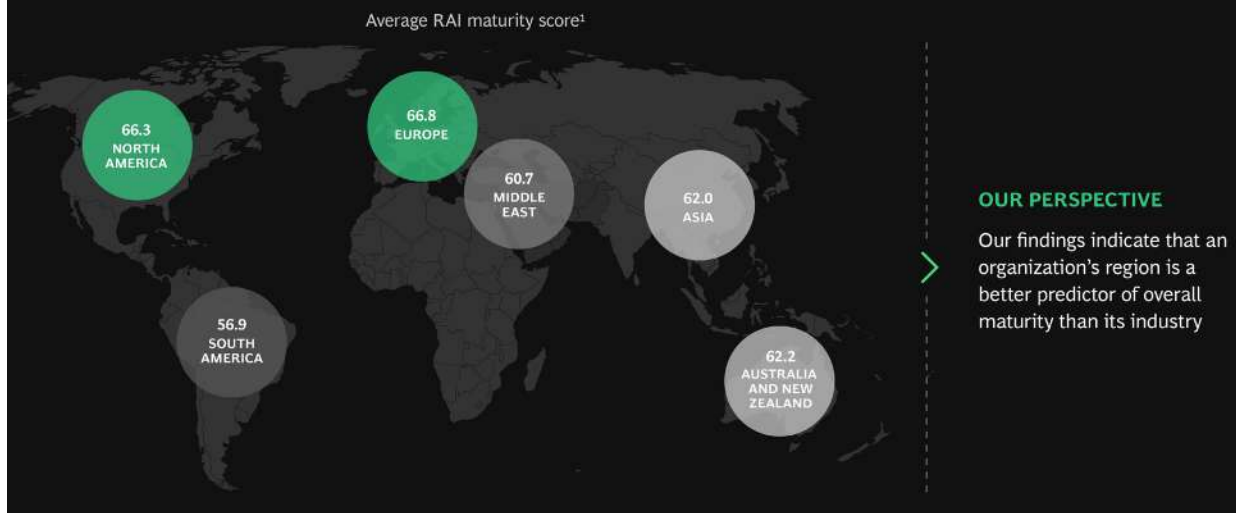
To operationalise and make an RAI programme



## Four distinct RAI stages define an organization's path to maturity



## Organizations in Europe and North America have the highest RAI maturity



operational, associations and organisations today must take two more additional steps, which are to design specific policies corresponding to each of these principles and operationalise these policies by developing the processes, delivery models, employee training, and the necessary tools.

### BENEFITS FOR SHAREHOLDERS

RAI directly affects every executive and shareholder because the greater RAI maturity their company has, the more opportunities the company will enjoy, due to the robustness of each RAI dimension. For executives, RAI should mean a small number of new constraints that bring a large number of benefits in terms of brand differentiation, stronger customer relationships, improved employee recruitment and retention especially for younger people and, it goes without saying, lower

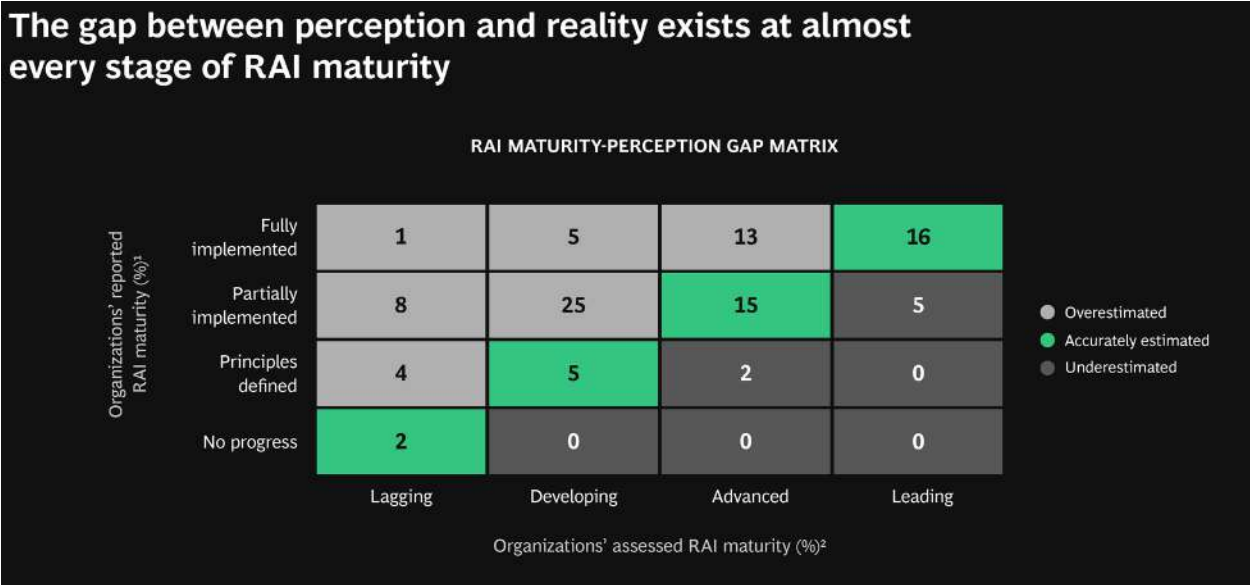
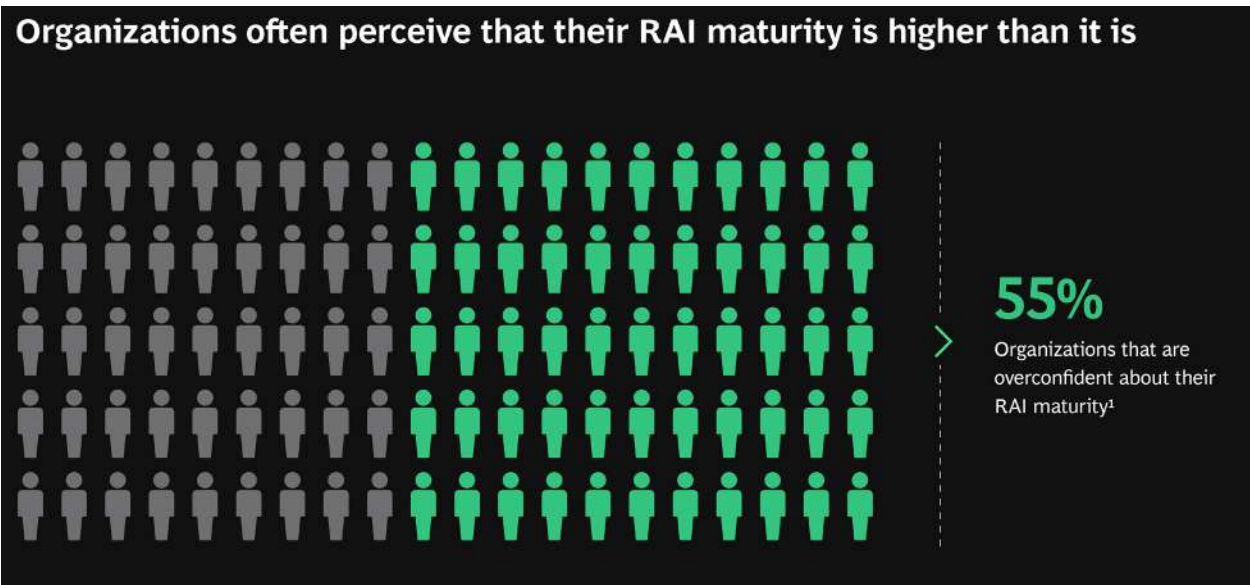
reputational risk.

And for shareholders, RAI materialises the alignment between their values and interest in a better world and the practices of the company of which they possess.

### DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND RAI

The relationship between successful digital transformation and a positive RAI score is especially relevant. A digital transformation cannot anymore be considered complete and fully successful without taking into account and acting effectively upon the RAI prerogative. And a high RAI score measures how successful a company is in doing so.

Companies that have been proactive in their efforts to ensure ethical, transparent, and accountable usage of AI technologies have experienced success as part of their transformation journeys and improved their RAI scores



in the process.

AI has emerged as a vital technology for all companies. Those that appreciate its vitality have worked to develop a comprehensive understanding of their RAI maturity, avoid restricted investments in this field, and ensure they realise the transformative potential of AI to boost RAI scores and harness the power of digital.

#### REAL-LIFE MANIFESTATIONS OF RAI

A recent survey that was conducted shed light on real-life manifestations of high and low RAI in organisations. In fact, news in the press everyday report about companies that are sued because their algorithms are proved to be racist, or sexist, or, more generally, biased.

There are also news stories on public administrations sued because discriminatory rules were implemented in their AI systems and whistleblowers who question the AI practices of their companies, which happens quite often.

The financial services and healthcare industries, for example, have reported higher RAI scores and maturity. Both these areas are heavily regulated and have a history of strong compliance and risk management, boosting

overall performance. At the same time, industrial goods and automotive were also more mature than anticipated, with business-focused AI applications a driving force because they are simpler to implement.

In terms of low RAI, organisations in the consumer industry have lower scores and maturity, primarily because of complex customer-centric use cases that transpire.

#### PERCEIVED AND REAL RAI

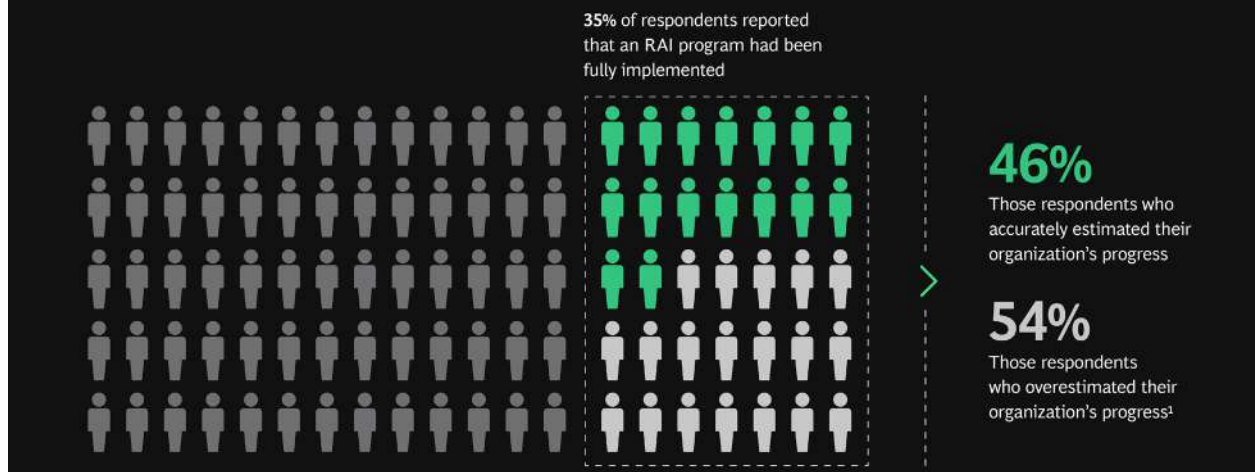
Today, a large number of organisations do perceive that their RAI maturity is higher than it is. This occurs since companies underestimate the effort necessary for implementing an effective RAI, a conclusion that was substantiated by the survey.

Many of them consider that the issue has been addressed when they publish a series of high-level principles and, as we discussed earlier, this is not enough.

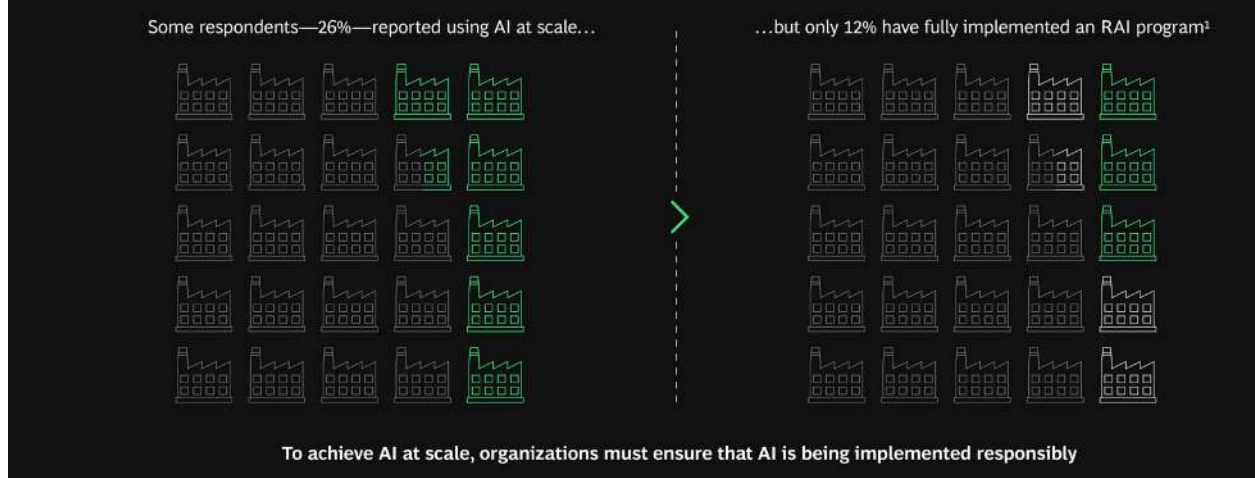
However, even companies that went beyond the principles have failed in some other of the key points. Results from our survey show that their list of policies



## Even organizations that think they have fully implemented an RAI program often have not



## More than half of the organizations that reported achieving AI at scale have not fully implemented an RAI program



## Each industry varies in terms of RAI maturity.

was not comprehensive, the processes related to these policies were not fully implemented, tools have not been built and, importantly, the company employees and leaders have not been made aware of, and trained on, RAI.

This also applies to the region, where similar findings were recorded amongst other parts of the world. Ethical, transparent, and accountable use of AI technologies, and companies behind in their AI maturity development should expand their efforts to boost performance in these areas and realise the business benefits they envisaged when initially engaging in RAI.

There is some correlation in the sense that larger and more successful companies have the human and

material means allowing them to easily develop a successful RAI programme. But, of course, the human and material means are a necessary condition, not a sufficient one. Leadership willingness and sensitivity to RAI issues are key. And high IT spend, or business dominance, do not guarantee these leadership principles.

### GEOGRAPHY AND IT SPENDING

Research does show that RAI is not an IT issue, even if, of course, IT will have the responsibility of implementing some of the tools developed. RAI is a leadership and managerial issue and managerial practices are often albeit not always more correlated to specific geographies a country, or a region than a sector, spread across multiple geographies with different practices.

It is important to note that each industry – whether it be automotive, consumer, energy, finance, healthcare, industrial goods, or technology, media, and communications – varies in terms of RAI maturity. Moreover, industries that lead in some regions lag in others, which helps explain the lack of differences between them from a statistical standpoint. ■

**ENERGY**

# LEGACY TO SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Leading executives explain why migrating from legacy to sustainable digital technologies in the energy sector is taking long and remains challenging.





# WHY IS THE SHIFT TO RENEWABLE ENERGY DELAYED

There is a dearth of policies and regulations that encourage renewable energy adoption and attract investors to the renewable energy market.



DR ITYONA AMBER,  
Assistant Professor, School of  
Engineering and Physical Sciences,  
Heriot-Watt University, Dubai

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The adoption and innovation of disruptive technologies has been the catalyst for the proliferation of renewable energy.
- Low-cost and flexible energy storage systems enable effective integration of renewable energy in the global energy mix.
- Utilities adopt sustainable and digital transformation systems to drive, maintain and improve their operations.
- IoT, AI and edge computing reshape the future of the utilities industry.
- 5G, AI, robotics and IoT reduce the world's carbon footprint, GHG, emissions by 4% in 2030.

The adoption and continuous innovation of disruptive technologies has been an important catalyst for the proliferation of renewable energy, including solar and wind energy, within the global energy generation mix.

The advancement of low-cost and flexible energy storage systems is enabling the effective integration of renewable energy in the global energy mix. Additionally, innovative technologies brought about by automation and robotics example, smart metres, are also playing a key role in green energy production.

Utilities are increasingly adopting more sustainable and digital transformation systems to drive, maintain and improve their operations. Renewable energy, combined with smart infrastructure systems, are positively impacting areas such as operations and maintenance, and cost savings. Disruptive technologies such as industrial IoT, Artificial Intelligence and edge computing are further reshaping the future of the utilities industry.

In terms of conservation and energy efficiency, heat pumps and thermal energy storage are examples of low carbon technologies that can facilitate the recycling of energy, that would otherwise be inaccessible due to low operational temperature, or improve reliability due to the time lag between when the energy is available and when it is required.

The gradual transition to a low-carbon economy among many industrial sectors is driving the growth of cutting-edge solutions and

Gradual transition to a low-carbon economy drives the growth of cutting-edge solutions and systems that can significantly reduce carbon footprint.

systems that can significantly reduce their carbon footprint. A combination of 5G, Artificial Intelligence, AI, robotics and the Internet of Things, IoT, could reduce the world's carbon footprint, GHG, emissions by 4% in 2030, an amount equal to 2.4 Gigaton equivalent carbon dioxide, GTCO<sub>2e</sub>, emissions.

Artificial Intelligence-enabled distributed energy grids, distributed generation, distributed storage, industrial IoT, electric vehicle charging, and smart metres in the energy sector could have the biggest impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

Technology limitations are not the main barrier preventing the switch to renewable energy. Unfavourable policies and regulatory-related barriers are slowing the transition to a green and low carbon economy.

Further, there is a dearth of policies and regulations that encourage the advancement of renewable energy adoption and attract investors to the renewable energy market. For example, in developing countries, lack of finance translates into lack of infrastructure needed for the transmission and distribution of renewable energy. ■

# SMART GRID TECHNOLOGY EVOLVES TO MAKE GREENER FUTURE

Smart meter and IoT gain insight on grid reliability and network operations, enabling optimised asset management approaches and better capacity planning.



RUI DE SOUSA,  
Principal, Industry Advisor,  
Energy and Natural Resources,  
SAP MENA.

Artificial intelligence and machine language are being used for a more predictive approach to asset management in generation. Tailoring inspection and maintenance based on health and criticality of assets reduces costs and prolongs asset life, while reducing outages. Innovation is bringing battery storage costs down; excess power generation can be converted into hydrogen for storage; Vehicle-to-Grid, V2G, could enable Electric Vehicles to help balancing the system.

The virtual power plant, enabled through a continuous real-time energy operation and monitoring platform, can permit more precise energy operation planning with a single operational planning truth.

Energy firms can better operate and optimize their energy assets and energy services portfolios, especially in volatile markets.

Predictive approaches to asset management are also relevant in grids, spread over vast territories and often underground, offering massive cost savings and environment benefits such as, less driving.

Additional start-ups use smart meter data and Internet of Things data from substations to gain insights on grid reliability and network operations, enabling optimised asset management approaches and better capacity planning.

Smart meter data, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Language are used to derive patterns consumption including disaggregation of energy consumption categories, delivering insights that increase customer engagement, reduce costs, and enable new data-driven business models, such as Time of Use tariffs and Electric Vehicle smart charging.

Locally, Etihad Water and Electricity has become the first entity to install a two-tier Advanced Metering Infrastructure system, radically simplifying infrastructure needed for smart metering and improving flows of communication.

In addition, existing solutions can store data from certification bodies and then add CO2 footprint as green hydrogen or blue, green and grey blends, and are then transported until end-user markets.

The limitations towards moving to a green and sustainable ecosystem are not technological, rather the

AI and ML are being used for a more predictive approach to asset management in generation

challenges are in existing business processes. Solar is now officially the cheapest electricity source. However, commitments to thermal plants exist often under Power Purchase Agreements.

As fossil fuel plants get decommissioned, renewables will naturally take their place. More traditional green technologies, such as nuclear, may continue being used to ensure security of supply, which storage may address at least partially.

Balancing the system facing more variability of supply, with wind and solar against consumers and prosumers, can be incentivised to sell excess production to the grid and this is more complex than before. But the smart grid technology exists today, and its adoption is evolving rapidly as markets switch to a greener and sustainable future.

SAP vision for the energy and utilities sectors is to support standardized metrics and operations across business processes, analysis, and reporting to enable companies to embrace sustainability in all business functions. ■

# SUSTAINABLE AC CAN LEAD TO ENERGY SAVINGS

Budgetary constraints, area design and misconceptions prevent the switch over from legacy air conditioning technology to green sustainable technology.



TARIQ AL GHUSSEINI,  
CEO, TAQEEF

With smart technology, energy savings increase 10-12%.

The future of cooling must be driven by sustainability. It is a central theme for both the UAE government, with sustainable environment and infrastructure highlighted as a core part the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and for the UN's sustainable development goals.

Energy efficiency is the core business objective: from sourcing and supplying to championing cooling solutions that are not only powerful and effective, but also limit environmental impact. The cooling technology is constantly improving in this area with inverters revolutionising the Residential Air Conditioners, RAC, space.

Smart systems and Internet of

Things is making huge strides in the efficiency of commercial cooling. And awareness and education campaigns are leading to building owners and consultants looking to specify some of the new breed of greener chiller, Variable Refrigerant Flow, VRF, and Direct Expansion, DX, technology.

The benefits of this approach are significant. More efficient Air Conditioner, AC, systems lead to lower the maintenance costs, Indoor Air Quality, IAQ, improvements, lower noise and more bespoke user comfort. And when optimised with smart technology, such as learning thermostats, energy savings can increase by an additional 10 to 12%. These are measurable and meaningful savings.

More than 50% of the energy consumption of a building can be attributed to air conditioning systems, which is why it is essential to adopt sustainable AC technology and solutions.

A study showed that in the GCC, air conditioning accounts for around 70% of the annual peak electrical consumption, and it is anticipated that the demand for cooling is set to triple by 2030. Sustainability in air conditioning is therefore the need of the hour.

According to a recent study, the VRF market in the Middle East and Africa region is expected to grow the fastest amongst all other Heating, Ventilation, and Air conditioning, HVAC, categories. Industry data proves how flexible, cost-effective, safe and energy efficient this technology is, and this is widely evidenced that VRF is leading the

way in terms of operating expenses with reduced electrical consumption.

Aside from its capacity to provide cost and energy efficiency, VRF also has the upfront benefit of being an Internet of Things-enabled HVAC technology, which, for building facilities managers, and building owners, offers huge advantages in preventative maintenance.

This smart equipment provides critical fault detection allowing equipment repairs to take place even before failures occur. When VRF technology can be integrated into building automation systems for a more centralised oversight of heating and cooling, it means HVAC is easier to manage, maintain and measure.

The main limitations that are preventing the switch over from legacy AC technology to green sustainable technology are budgetary constraints, area design and misconceptions. Sustainable AC technologies such as VRFs can be more expensive to install and maintain; specialist technology that needs specialist technical support.

However, when the long-term Operating Expense, OPEX, savings is measured, reduced electrical consumption, property valuation increases alongside the user comfort and the return on investment on such systems being impressive.

Developers are sometimes put off by higher upfront costs or technology they are not familiar with, and instead settle for cheaper, less efficient systems. There is work being done to rectify this thinking with awareness and education campaigns to promote long-term thinking over quick wins. ■



# REBUILDING TEAMS, BUSINESS, ORGANISATIONS

Having navigated the last 18 months of pandemic-infused challenges, top executives are building consensus that the way forward depends on change from the past.



**Morey J Haber, BeyondTrust**



**Moussalam Dalati, Liferay**



**Pattabhiraman Ganesh,  
Emerson Automations Solutions**



**Prem Rodrigues, Siemon**



**Rami Kichli, Software AG**



**Sam Tayan, Zoom**



**Talal Bayaa, Bayzat**



**Thierry Nicault, Salesforce**



**Toni El Inati, Barracuda Networks**



MOUSSALAM DALATI,  
General Manager Middle East,  
Liferay.

## RAPID DIGITALISATION IS THE NEW BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

With CIOs pushing senior business leaders to take full advantage of technology, organisations are increasingly prioritising digital initiatives.

**R**apid digitalisation coupled with changing customer experiences in the new business landscape means that companies have had to rethink their strategy for the post-pandemic world. CIOs have pushed senior business leaders to take full advantage of technology. Now, many obstacles have been removed and organisations are increasingly prioritising digital initiatives.

Additionally, as a result of the global pandemic, the workplace has changed drastically. As businesses grapple with new pressures to embrace remote and hybrid work, the challenge is to continue fostering a sense of collaboration and camaraderie between employees, even when separated geographically.

Businesses have to work towards enhancing employee productivity and engagement levels, as this will ultimately affect the quality of work and impact customer experiences.

As we approach recovery,

Business leaders must collaborate with their teams and think strategically to approach digital business acceleration.

organisations and employees alike have experienced the benefits of a hybrid approach which seems to be here for the long haul. With this mode, employees benefit from

Hybrid approach benefits business organisations and their employees.

flexibility, autonomy, and a better work-life balance while also being productive and responsible. Thus, it is a win-win situation for business organisations and their employees.

To prepare their organisations for the near future, business leaders must foster a culture of collaboration in their organisations to enhance communication and cooperation within the workforce. This is particularly important in remote and hybrid working arrangements.

The current pandemic also taught organisations the importance of responsiveness and adaptability. Therefore, leaders must encourage executives to imbibe agility and flexibility to be prepared for any situations and challenges moving forward.

Moreover, to thrive in the competitive landscape, organisations should prioritise digital innovation and invest in customer facing technologies. Business leaders must collaborate with their teams and think strategically about how to better allocate existing resources and approach digital business acceleration. ■



# EXECUTIVE FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION, EMPATHY, POSITIVE INTENT

There are new skills that top executives need to build in order to manage the business with a hybrid workforce and these traits need to be refined.



MOREY J. HABER,  
CTO and CISO, BeyondTrust.

Everyone's personal life is different and having empathy for their situation is critical.

The principal challenges facing executives during the digital transformation and post pandemic recovery are rooted in the unexpected changes that both have had on organisations.

These include:

- A rise in cyber-attacks, leveraging the supply chain and critical infrastructure.
- The unexpected desire for employees to continue working from home post pandemic.
- Unexpected rise in labor costs due to remote resources able to command salaries similar to higher priced geolocations.
- The evolution of attack vectors to include weakness in digital transformation initiatives.
- Workers operating outside of the confines of the office environment.

The realisation that no matter how much you spend or attempt to protect against a breach, it can and probably will still occur. The best recourse for executives is to have a sound plan for breach disclosure and clean-up versus focusing solely on protection.

Considering that there is a labor shortage and employees are choosing to leave their jobs versus returning to the office, executives should adapt to having a hybrid workforce. With this model, there are pros and cons:

## PROS

- Lower cost due to the decrease in office space square footage costs
- Employee geolocation flexibility

and obtaining the best talent possible

- Improved employee satisfaction when balancing work and home requirements

## CONS

- Decrease in physical interactions which can lead to unexpected employee friction mainly through media like email
- Video conferencing fatigue
- Inability to monitor the security of home networks

There are a few organisations and cultural changes that are likely to succeed while supporting a hybrid workforce:

- Hosting frequent departmental meetings to provide interaction, and provide a feeling of inclusion.
- Providing easy to use resources that are cloud native to support a work from anywhere approach.
- Providing flexible hours and removing the burden of a 9am to 5pm, if the job role allows.
- Becoming task oriented in employee workstyles versus mandating that employees sit behind a desk.
- For some roles, other metrics like the number of support calls per day should be considered.

Going forward, there are a few new skills that top executives need to build in order to manage the business with a hybrid workforce. Look at these as all long-term traits that constantly need to be refined.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The realisation that no matter how much you spend or attempt to protect against a breach, it can and probably will still occur.
- With the lack of physical contact, over communication from the executive team to all employees is critical.
- Top executives are experiencing burn out from working from home for the same reasons as employees.
- Being mindful and empathetic to these conditions helps build trust and ultimately a better employee.

## COMMUNICATIONS

With the lack of physical contact, over communication from the executive team to all employees is critical to establish a sense of inclusion and ensure the mission of the business stays on track.

## EMPATHY

Everyone's personal life is different and having empathy for their situation is critical. Being mindful and empathetic to these conditions helps build trust and ultimately a better employee.

### *Positive intent*

It is very important to assume that all employees have a positive intent in their communications, work

ethics, and responsibilities. It is a cultural change to assume employees are doing their best versus assuming that are abusing the time and work resources.

In my opinion, top executives are experiencing burn out from working from home for the same reasons as employees, too many hours spent on video calls, lack of physical interaction with colleagues, having to balance work and personal personas, plus the additional stress of being responsible for the business.

From a management perspective, however, there are a few lessons that can help mitigate the threat of burnout, both for employees and the executives themselves.

### *Set clear boundaries*

Consider establishing simple rules of engagement for remote employees. This can include: Establishing acceptable hours for videoconference calls. Requesting that all employees' cameras are enabled for videoconferencing. Requesting emails be sent only during business hours and make after-hour emails for emergencies only.

Providing flexibility for homeschooling or other personal requirements that do not burn into employee vacation.

## GIVE EMPLOYEES TECHNOLOGY THEY NEED

If your budget allows, you can also accelerate their laptop refreshment cycle to ensure all your employees have the best technology possible when working from home. Employees with good equipment generally are less frustrated and feel more valued when given the best equipment their companies can offer.

## BREAK UP THE WORKWEEK

Breaking up the work-from-home monotony is essential without water cooler chitchat or upcoming travel on the calendar to break up the routine. Determine one day a week for employees to catch up on work. For example, establish No Meeting

Thursdays.

Schedule virtual events to replicate normal office celebrations, such as work anniversaries, retirement, birthdays and holiday-themed events, like Halloween costume parties and gift exchanges. Switch to a flexible four-day workweek of 10 hours each day. Odds are, many remote employees are already putting in 10 hours a day at home anyway.

If funds are available, periodically reward employees using home delivery services for food or swag. Employees who would frequently go out to lunch are feeling social distress by not having this activity as a part of their work routine. Do not forget to ask or require employees to take vacation time. It may be a staycation, but everyone needs some downtime from the endless cycle.

## REVAMP HUMAN RESOURCES

An effective human resources department is vital to fighting burnout. They can embrace the health care plans for employees and send reminders to make sure everyone is aware and feel comfortable contacting any mental health services you provide. New employees can be especially overwhelmed by the lack of person-to-person contact when onboarding in a remote setting, and self-doubt can set in.

Some successful organisations have established the following additional onboarding operating procedures to ensure the process is productive: Establish a regular cadence of peer communications via email and videoconferencing to establish a comfort level and inclusion with their new team.

Establish a mentorship program for the new hire outside of their hiring manager to provide inclusion within the larger organisation. Ensure HR, IT and key personnel establish regular touchpoints with the new hire to gauge whether there are any issues. Create and maintain an ombudsman deck for new hires to help answer business questions that would normally be handled by in-person office staff. ■



PATTABHIRAMAN GANESH,  
Vice President, Digital Transformation and  
Lifecycle Services, Middle East and Africa,  
Emerson Automations Solutions.

## CAN A TOP-DOWN APPROACH TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WORK?

Digital transformation can be approached from anywhere in the organisation and everyone has a vital role in its success.

Emerson has always understood the value of digital transformation in providing and sustaining seamless service to our customers. Senior executives have been challenged to deliver on Emerson's digital promise with a road map and return on investment that aligns with the company's business goals.

The pandemic has presented opportunities using virtual and remote approaches to be productive, highlighting the need to accelerate digital transformation. Although highly skilled IT teams guide enterprise-wide digital transformation initiatives, operations leaders are also empowered to find digital solutions that solve day-to-day issues to optimise work processes.

The focus is more towards integrated operations rather than just remote operations. We see the opportunity to start with a hybrid workforce while we build a more sustainable digital infrastructure that enables effective automation of

remote operations, optimising the right mix of remote and onsite work according to industries affected

Collaboration and transparency are key in building a strong culture of openness and trust that can be sustained over time. As the world moves digital, and to keep up with the changing times, it is important to establish a platform that enables machines to adapt to business transformations and acquire knowledge transfers from decades-long experiences of experts.

Willingness to accept change that automation and machines are now vital parts of the process, is needed to produce innovations and improvements while staying relevant and adding value to the business.

Digital transformation can be approached from anywhere in the organisation and what is not usually acknowledged is the vital role everyone has in making the transformation happen. The top-down approach or any other approach will not work well without the rest of the organisation aligned

The focus is more towards integrated operations rather than just remote operations.

to deliver.

Senior executives must have the skill to manage and effectively communicate the change to employees by highlighting the long-term benefits of the transformation to them as part of the workforce and to the organisation.

Taking from the experiences of those who have successfully overcome this challenge, top executives can do well to manage by engaging and collaborating with the staff to recognise shared challenges and get their support in the decision-making process. They need to understand that changes are made to help the company in the long term.

In digital transformation, a clearly defined road map and ROI at each step is key to help them focus on what is important and not linger with pilots and proof of concepts. Adapt quickly to changes and pick the ones that give the highest ROI first.

Visualising the ideal organisational structure relevant to the roles of CIO, CTO, and CISO is challenging. The overall objective is to execute projects and operations involving all streams seamlessly.

With this, it is critical for functional departments from supply chain, production, and maintenance, through marketing to develop skills in cybersecurity, IT, data management, analytics, and above all instill a mindset of using modern tools and technology.

An ideal structure would be to funnel all relevant expertise under a common set of goals to each department with an option for deeper integration with a central pool of experts in each discipline when needed. ■



PREM RODRIGUES,  
Director for Middle East, Africa,  
India, SAARC, Siemon.

## CISO'S ROLE IN HYBRID ORGANISATIONS

CISO's may now be reporting to CFOs, Chief Risk Officers, Chief Data Officers and it is important to pay attention to how the digital landscape is evolving.

**R**emote and hybrid working environments are here to stay for the longer term with many leading organisations already announcing lifetime work from home for a large percentage of their workforce. Notable pros include a better work-life balance, increased productivity as well as time and money savings both for employees and employer.

Cons include less employee engagement and collaboration which may lead to limited employee advancement. Cyber security and employer's confidential information sharing is a critical concern for most businesses.

Successful organisations will be those who are quick to change their business models to adapt to the current environment with digital transformation being the key factor. Businesses that already used cloud computing for example did not come under the pressure of this pandemic.

Developing training and programs to allow employees to learn new skills will boost organisations to redeploy employees depending on business

needs and employee interests.

Also, strategic actions that rebuild resilience faster must be considered. Automation and artificial intelligence for example will enhance the resilience of supply chains. Successful businesses will always need a combination of resilience and agility.

CEO's and top executives will need to be very effective as clear communicators and their key skills must include adaptability, flexibility, empathy and emotional understanding. They will also need to adapt to managing hybrid teams.

Constant feedback both from employees and customers may help steer the organisation's business model and strategy in the right direction.

Strategies that are important in order to deal with stressful situations include positive thinking and always reflecting on the purpose. Practicing self-care and paying attention to your physical and emotional well-being is just as important as taking the time to reflect upon achievements. Creating open and transparent communication with the team helps alleviate stress as

Cyber security and employer's confidential information sharing is a critical concern for most businesses.

does a strong support system around you.

Changes in the reporting structure, largely depends on the organisation and their business model and there is certainly no one-size fits all solution. CIO's are still the foremost leaders in many organisations so far. They have been responsible for taking strategic IT decisions, investments and CISO's were usually reporting to CIO's. However, we have witnessed many reporting roles change.

CISO's may now be reporting to CFOs, and sometimes Chief Risk Officers or a newer designation like Chief Data Officer. It is important however that organisations pay attention to how the digital landscape is evolving and what reporting structure they can implement to maximise internal collaboration, cooperation and performance.

Key challenges include maintaining employee morale due to limited opportunities to interact with the team, as well as workspace concerns and uncertainty with regard to future business growth due to this unprecedented situation.

A key to sustaining business in the longer term and excel further will be the swift adaption to digital transformation. Organisations have to focus on modifying business models, improve innovation all in line with managing costs and cash flow.

Any decision must be made quickly and decisively. Human capital management will be a key factor to an organisation's success. Creative new ideas are needed to maintain visibility and influence in an organisation considering the limited opportunity for interaction. ■



# SOFTWARE IS THE VALUE DRIVER FOR DIGITAL DISRUPTION

Organisations that understand software have an ethos of investing in transformational initiatives and make quick changes, and business decisions.



RAMI KICHLI,  
Vice President Gulf and Levant,  
Software AG.

Digital transformation is a matter of corporate survival and a top priority for boards.

The post pandemic are uncommon times for top executives and will continue in the near future. Moreover, the pressure for long-term transformation is higher than ever before and is constantly increasing.

Therefore, a key challenge faced by leadership across companies and sectors is the decision towards reinvestment in technologies and upgrading businesses to equip the organisation for pre-pandemic economic rebound – in terms of business strategy and right timing for reinvestment.

While businesses are struggling to stay afloat and operate on the conservative optimism approach currently, it is vital to factor in readiness for accelerated opportunities expected to arise with economic recovery. Technology with governance is the only ally that will help in bridging this gap.

Regardless of the industry of operations, all CXOs are dealing with this dilemma but it is advisable to invest reasonably and progressively to avoid missing the curve when it is time to capitalise on incoming opportunities.

Hybrid is a complex framework compared to 100% remote or 100% office which is simple to implement. There is no doubt that the future belongs to a hybrid business model.

Leaders have a classic post pandemic challenge of creating the perfect balance between remote

and office working environments by factoring benefits and pitfalls of each, as every organisation will have their unique version of this remote model.

However, organisations are struggling because their strategies are split between IT and business. Focus on becoming a fully connected enterprise is the only way to achieve this to overcome several challenges that arise in the form of technological and software hurdles, social barriers, governance difficulties and mindset challenges of the employees and employers.

Data is the only currency that will conquer these challenges if arranged correctly. Therefore, technology executives must create the optimum hybrid model that factors the future of working too in addition to the present times.

To succeed today, entities need to add value quickly by using data to increase operational excellence, include innovative business models to the market quickly to entice the customer and disrupt competition. Disparate, disorganised operations lose the ability to innovate and are left behind, while disruptors forge ahead.

This is precisely what a fractured enterprise is and is the reason for only 5% of companies reaching the digital disruption phase. Therefore, a connected customer experience, digital business excellence and an ecosystem-driven economy

## Executives in any organisation need to be a digitally savvy and have the capacity and profile for a discussion on the digital future

are the ultimate requirements for an organisation to instil a culture of change, innovate relentlessly and succeed via a truly connected enterprise.

From macro to micro, every aspect of people's lives is made better by an enterprise that is truly connected; relying on a fluid flow of data across people, processes, business models and technology. There is enough proof that software has become the ultimate value driver and so organisations that understand this have an ethos of investing in transformational initiatives. This is brought about by agility – the mantra for organisations in present times.

The pandemic has taught this virtue to businesses who have managed to thrive despite unexpected circumstances by staying flexible and adaptive and make quick changes and business decisions. Ideations requiring transformation has risks and therefore rational leaders may find it counter intuitive.

However, foresighted leaders believe that newer ideas tend to succeed and gain with agility as the underlying fabric in business operations. In order to bring together business users and IT, it is important to orchestrate data, align business technology and IT to innovate faster together under a single governance model linking all perspectives, taking the right actions at the right moment, allowing one to monetise your insights. When innovation is the name of the game, risk taking is a primary ingredient for such organisations.

Digital affinity, among other skills, is the most important of all today

as priority for any executive at the helm. Executives in any organisation need to be a digitally savvy and have the capacity and profile for a discussion on the digital future.

While financial literacy is a baseline qualification for any top executive, technological and digital literacy needs to be considered at the same level. Leaders today, must have the skill to manoeuvre their organisation with agility.

It is important to be aware that technology adoption has moved three to four years forward in just a matter of few months. Digital transformation is a matter of corporate survival and a top priority for boards. Success in the future for organisations will be dependent on their ability to react and adapt faster.

More than a change in reporting relationship, the digital executive has an increasingly important strategic role to play to secure a board voice to gain strategic influence and vote within the organisations.

These executives, who are influential in shaping business strategy and business models across industries and several organisations, now include information technology integral to their business strategies. A few years back, they could have been enablers, but today they are at the core and helm of an entity's strategy – shaping and enabling.

The pandemic may have exacerbated burnout among many workforces. It is a strong belief that fostering a positive and politically free environment at workplace will automatically reduce exhaustion levels, negativity, energy depletion or cynicism.

By being open, honest, appreciative and, at the same time, encouraging of activities that rejuvenate employees to unwind and have fun, reduces stress on leadership. In a nutshell, exercise, time management and work-life balance are all steps to alleviate burnout and stress. ■

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A key challenge faced by leadership is the reinvestment in technologies and upgrading businesses to equip for pre-pandemic economic rebound.
- Leaders have a post pandemic challenge of creating a balance between remote and office working environment by factoring benefits and pitfalls.
- Data is the only currency that will conquer technological and software hurdles, and mindset challenges.
- Disparate, disorganised operations lose the ability to innovate and are left behind, while disruptors forge ahead.
- From macro to micro, every aspect of people's lives is made better by an enterprise that is truly connected.
- When innovation is the name of the game, risk taking is a primary ingredient for such organisations.



SAM TAYAN,  
Head of Middle East and Africa,  
Zoom.

## TECHNOLOGY LEADERS ARE THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN OF FUTURE

With digitalisation becoming a priority, the role of technology leaders has increased as they steer the ship's strategy towards the future workplace.

**T**he pandemic challenged top executives greatly. However, this will not stop anytime soon as the post-pandemic landscape has not eased down the organisational transformation worldwide; it has only propelled it forward.

Organisations are currently trying to navigate the world of hybrid work, which has faced them with the challenge of adapting to a stretched and spread-out workforce, whether within the same country or globally. The most significant obstacle is ensuring that the employees are only divided in physical distance yet unified in their communication and collaboration.

As to minimise the cons and maximise the pros of having a remote workforce, companies need to maintain a constant connection with their teams and create a robust resource library. They must create an infrastructure for organisation-wide communication and provide consistent solutions that give all

employees the same capabilities.

Organisations that have accepted the realities of remote and hybrid work over the past year and embrace it moving forward are the ones who will benefit most.

This is due to their head start in investing in the needed resources and organisational changes to accommodate the needs of the remote workforce, putting in place the required infrastructure, and digitalising all of their assets. These cultures which have thrived on empowering the workforce will continue to do so as they move towards a hybrid work landscape.

Top executives have needed to re-evaluate their approach to work, as the modern workplace is no longer what it used to be. With a new workforce dynamic comes a need for a new business model which accommodates it.

Top executives must prioritise the need for adaptability and flexibility within the remote, hybrid

The most significant obstacle is ensuring employees are only divided in distance yet unified in collaboration.

environment, including technologies that enhance it. With remote work proving to be a long-term trend rather than a fad that the pandemic has brought on, top executives need to embrace this to survive it.

Top executives are expected to deal with challenges in a more composed manner. However, it is vital to keep in mind that, while they are to set an example for others, they are only human. The stresses of the shift towards constant online communication rather than face-to-face interactions have affected everyone.

This can be done by ensuring that their day is not spent on back-to-back meetings, incorporating in-person interactions, and taking breaks from a long day of accumulating responsibilities.

With digitalisation becoming the top priority for businesses everywhere, the role of technology leaders has exponentially increased in value. They are the captains steering the ship's strategy towards the future structure of the workplace.

As they become increasingly more central to the operation of the global professional landscape, technology leaders must work closely with and report directly to the top executive to streamline processes and simplify the move towards a small structure. This is likely to persist on a long-term basis as the world gravitates towards technological advancement. ■





TALAL BAYAA,  
Co-founder and CEO, Bayzat.

## EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE NOW DEPENDENT ON TECHNOLOGY

Too many companies have unstructured and uncoordinated approach to purchasing technology, leading to fragmented and disjointed experience for employees.

A common challenge facing most organisations is the need to redefine the employee experience. Pre-pandemic, the employee experience was heavily based on the office setting and in-person interactions. The employee experience has now shifted to being more reliant on technology and digital solutions.

From a digital transformation perspective, that means choosing the right platforms and partners, as well as moving fast to implement changes in the way companies engage with and manage their people. Too many companies have an unstructured and uncoordinated approach to assessing and purchasing technology solutions. This leads to a fragmented and disjointed experience for employees. It is not just about providing your people with features; executives need to create a holistic digital experience to make it meaningful and engaging for their employees.

Based on data from the Bayzat

platform, companies are adopting a more flexible environment where employees work from home and from the office. We have also seen an increase in the hiring of remote employees. The data is still not clear as to what model companies should adopt.

A recent study showed that employees are working 30% more hours from home versus when they were at the office, but productivity was 20% lower. Other studies show the exact opposite, as researchers observed an increase in productivity when employees work from home.

Younger employees will likely be impacted the most as companies allow remote working. The office is a great setting for employees to learn and share experiences, which is a critical aspect of a junior employee's development. Younger employees will also miss out on networking opportunities to progress their careers. At the end of the day, employees will be vocal about their

Employees will be vocal about their preferences, and will search for employers that fit their needs.

preferences, and will search for employers that fit their needs.

Cultures that prioritise collaboration, speed, and experimentation will be more successful in the medium term. Company structures that result in silos between departments will continue to suffer. While the ingredients for success are not new, their effects have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

The foundation of a high-performing team is relationship building. Remote working means that we need to reassess how executives build trust within their teams. Less frequent in-person interactions and online meetings can be a real barrier to building trust.

In a recent interview, Jim Collins recalled a life lesson from his mentor, Bill Lazier. Bill said there are two ways to approach a relationship, is your opening bid to trust or does somebody have to earn your trust? Executives must now learn to trust employees at the outset of the relationship to be effective.

Executives are not immune to burn out and stress. That means every executive needs to take care of themselves first before they can take care of their people. Taking care of your physical and mental health is not only an investment in oneself, but also an investment that yields positive returns for the entire organisation. That means setting aside time for adequate sleep, disciplined exercise habits, meditation, spending time with family and socialising with other executives, to share experiences.



THIERRY NICHAULT,  
Area Vice President, Middle East  
and North Africa, Salesforce.

# TRANSFORMING BUSINESS AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

The reality is that if companies do not transform digitally, and empower customers to adapt with them, they will be left behind.

**T**he pandemic has transformed the way we live and do business forever. In response, Middle East organisations have rewritten their strategies and implemented new technology within weeks which previously would have taken years. This shift to digital is not slowing down.

According to our recent survey of business leaders across five European countries, 82% say that they have digitally transformed their business as a result of the pandemic. Nearly 60%, however, also say they believe these innovations are only temporary.

At the same time, their top concerns include ensuring security, serving customers effectively, and engaging their workforce. Each of these areas will only become more complex as the digital economy evolves.

With this in mind, here are three top digital transformation priorities businesses must consider to succeed

in the post-COVID 19 economy.

## #1 PLAN FOR SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM

At the onset of the crisis, in addition to taking care of their employees, a key focus for business leaders was to stabilise their operations: to appear online, communicate effectively with customers, and redeploy teams where necessary. As we look beyond the reopen and recovery phase of the crisis, company-wide transformations are required to build resilience and approach the future with confidence.

The vast majority of businesses, 87%, state that they are struggling to plan for both the short-term and long-term. In addition to wanting new business, businesses say they need trusted advice to address challenges around leading teams and managing employee morale. Transforming how businesses appear and operate online is one

thing. Conducting business securely, effectively leveraging revenue streams, and investing in resilience is another.

## #2 EMPOWER CUSTOMERS WITH CONSISTENT SERVICE

The pace at which Middle East customer expectations have transformed during the pandemic will have long-term implications for businesses of all sizes. It is fair to say that many customers have embarked on their own digital transformation journeys in recent months, adopting new technologies to stay connected with loved ones and problems fast.

Although for most businesses improving their online customer experience is a priority, almost half, 47%, of businesses told us they are concerned by overwhelming customers with changing technology processes. The reality is that if companies do not transform digitally, and empower customers to adapt with them, they will be left behind.

## #3 PREPARE EMPLOYEES FOR JOBS OF THE FUTURE

In contrast to the speed at which customers have adapted to new realities, Middle East companies need to get beyond the coping stage of this crisis. This is particularly true around how they engage and retain employees.

Over one in two businesses agree that remote working will become a permanent fixture. However, 68% experience challenges with leading and managing dispersed teams; 63% with maintaining employee morale. When it comes to skills, 61% of business leaders say they will permanently require new skills of their employees, but less than half, 49%, have identified means to increase investment in digital tools.

Given the pace at which organisations and services must transform, the future of work has arrived. Cultivating a culture of lifelong learning will help companies plug their skills gaps and reinvent entirely how they upskill employees. ■



TONI EL INATI,  
RVP Sales, META and CEE,  
Barracuda Networks.

## IS THE CFO MORE RELEVANT THAN THE CEO

ROI takes precedence in discussions and IT leaders must be able to correlate IT investments to economic benefits, given aversion to large capital costs.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A key challenge, especially in our region, is that business is highly relationship oriented.
- The most valued skill for executives is the ability to think outside of the box.
- CIOs, CTOs and CISOs are increasingly finding themselves reporting into CFOs.
- With the present levels of uncertainty, it is essential to mitigate risk and maintain healthy cash reserves.

One of the biggest changes we have witnessed in recent years has been the growing prominence of the CFO, who in many cases has a more pronounced say in decision making than the CEO. This of course relates to the greater need for businesses to streamline operational costs.

CIOs, CTOs and CISOs are increasingly finding themselves reporting into CFOs which then requires them to reconsider how they position IT initiatives.

ROI takes precedence in these discussions and IT leaders must be able to correlate IT investments to tangible economic benefit. Similarly, given the growing aversion to encountering large upfront capital costs, technology heads will also increasingly have to evaluate and propose cloud-based solutions and managed services as a way to shift to the more attractive OpEx models.

It is not a question of whether or not businesses must embrace remote working as the pandemic only accelerated this trend which

was already underway. Through the last year, organisations realised that they can maintain continuity with people working from anywhere while realising the added benefits of reducing office space and operational overheads.

A key challenge, especially in our region, is that business is highly relationship oriented and the disruption to how we engage and interact has had its impact. Even internally, formulating relationships and building trust between teams has been more challenging without the ability for teams to meet in person. Hiring has become more complicated as correctly evaluating a candidate is more challenging without ability to interpret the subtle nuances of a face-to-face engagement.

Business leaders need to take this soft element into account when rolling out remote work policies. Ultimately, it is outcomes that are important and so long as an employee is able to meet their defined objectives, where they work from is irrelevant.

The most valued skill for executives is the ability to think outside of the box as organisations must now look to new markets, new verticals, and new opportunities in order to counteract the impact of current economic climate. Given present volatility, in doing so, is equally important that they adopt a risk averse mindset and always look to longer term horizons with their decision making.

Stress is an inevitability, but the levels of stress can be reduced by rational decision making. The adage cash is king is especially relevant today and having a strong positive cashflow goes a long way in preventing sleepless nights.

Business leaders are under pressure to protect the bottom-line and must therefore ensure that their grasp does not exceed their reach. With the present levels of uncertainty, it is essential to mitigate risk and maintain healthy cash reserves. ■



# DOES THE EU LEGISLATION CREATE ETHICAL AI?

The EU's anticipated regulation, which may become global standard, appears to be surprisingly smart and only prohibits certain uses of AI.



SYLVAIN DURANTON,  
Managing Director and Senior  
Partner at BCG, Global Head of  
BCG GAMMA.

It prohibits  
artificial  
intelligence  
from  
providing  
social  
scoring to  
assist public  
authorities.

A wave of technology regulation is sweeping the world. Legislators and regulators from the European Union, the US, India, and other countries have been working on new laws and regulation that will soon shape how organisations – and through them, all of us as citizens and consumers – can use artificial intelligence.

Just as artificial intelligence itself, these regulations mostly work under the radar – but they will soon affect almost every aspect of our lives. Because whether you know it or not, artificial intelligence is everywhere: it can help you discover new music, park your car, or play you in a video game.

In a recent survey of senior executives at more than 1,000 large organisations, the business community is already in favor of ethical artificial intelligence: 86% of respondents say their companies were taking active steps to use artificial intelligence responsibly.

This shows that companies are intrinsically motivated to behave responsibly. The challenge many executives report is the lack of clear standards – which leaves many of them no choice but to create their own.

Good regulation establishes common standards and reinforces transparency requirements, so customers can make up their own minds and reward companies for using responsible artificial intelligence. This will help to

build public trust and show that responsible artificial intelligence is in line with our fundamental rights and values.

The EU's anticipated regulation, which may become the de facto global standard, appears to be surprisingly smart. It only prohibits certain uses of artificial intelligence, not the technology itself. Think facial recognition, which can be used for mass surveillance – or to unlock your phone.

It is a thoughtful approach that activists have criticised for not being rigorous enough, but it has the benefit of leaving the door open for further research and new beneficial uses.

The legislation is also unusually tech-savvy. It requires artificial intelligence systems to be trained on high-quality data sets, transparent and subject to human oversight, and robust and accurate. These requirements will have to be more clearly defined – but it's good to see regulators who know the ingredients for good artificial intelligence.

On the whole, however, the EU regulation could benefit from a more balanced view on artificial intelligence's potential. The proposed regulation talks about high-risk artificial intelligence systems that are likely to cause physical or psychological harm through the use of subliminal techniques or by exploiting vulnerabilities of a specific group of persons due to their age, physical or mental disability.

Adding to that fear is the vague language of the draft, which includes a wobbly definition of artificial intelligence itself.



STEVEN MILLS,  
Managing Director and Partner  
at BCG, Chief AI Ethics Officer of  
BCG GAMMA.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The imprecision is likely to lead to constant updating and creates loopholes for those wanting to exploit the law.
- Companies will do a better job of proving that AI can be used more responsibly than legislation ever could.
- The new laws will set legal requirements, but clearing those will not be enough to gain society's approval.
- If you want the social license to operate artificial intelligence at scale, you will have to gain people's trust.

It also prohibits artificial intelligence from providing social scoring to assist public authorities.

Every powerful technology has the potential for abuse, so we understand why the EU wants to implement democratic safeguards. But the language of the regulation risks amplifying concerns citizens already have about the technology. Let's remember that most artificial intelligence use cases are entirely innocuous – just ask Siri or Alexa or look into your Discover Weekly playlist on Spotify. Regulators should strive for a balanced tone that encourages citizens to remain vigilant yet leaves room for all the positive impacts that artificial intelligence can deliver.

At heart, artificial intelligence is a computer-based method for reducing waste: for cutting back unnecessary time, effort, materials and energy. BCG studies show that applying artificial intelligence to corporate sustainability could reduce global emissions by 10%.

So artificial intelligence can do a lot of good. Lawmakers should focus on the relatively few applications that are associated with risk – and give the others space to develop.

EU regulators would likely argue that this is exactly why they differentiate between Unacceptable, High Risk and Moderate, Low Risk use cases. But the regulation encourages voluntary compliance even if you are in the Low-Risk category.

This puts companies in a tough spot: They will either have to deal with great cost and complexity, or answer to their customers who will ask them why they do not. Regulators should instead focus on a middle ground for the Moderate, Low Risk category that encourages transparency and accountability without the full set of onerous requirements.

Otherwise, the EU artificial intelligence regulation could end up stifling innovation, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, while large platforms with their armies of lawyers and lobbyists could go unscathed.

Adding to that fear is the vague language of the draft, which includes a wobbly definition of artificial intelligence itself. This imprecision is likely to lead to constant updating – and creates loopholes for those wanting to exploit the law.

This lack of precision could lead businesses into a no man's land of legal uncertainty where they could face fines of up to 6% of their global turnover if they do not use complete data sets. But who will tell them what a complete data set is? Nobody. And that is just one of many unclear standards.

We would much prefer it if regulators worked in phases and required extensive transparency first – and from there, we could work out clear standards together.

We believe that in the end, companies will do a better job of proving that artificial intelligence can be used responsibly than legislation ever could. The new laws will set legal requirements – but clearing those will not be enough to gain society's approval.

If you want the social license to operate artificial intelligence at scale, you will have to gain people's trust. We advise businesses to take proactive steps towards using responsible artificial intelligence and be open and transparent about the steps they are taking. The best companies are already moving in that direction – and they will be greatly rewarded for doing so. ■

# AS EXECUTIVES, DO WE KNOW THE MEANING OF LIFE?

Tension between work and influence, family and enjoyment, settle into equilibrium that is suited to each individual, no one can or has ever had it all.



NIRANJAN GIDWANI,  
Consultant Director,  
Member UAE Superbrands  
Council, Former CEO Eros Group.

It is this path  
to happiness  
that  
motivates  
human  
beings to  
seek a life  
of virtue.

It is natural for each individual to be driven by ambition. Yet each of us must also aspire to lead a whole life in perfect contentment. There is a natural, rubber-band like stretch between ambition and contentment. Sometimes the balance tips towards ambition, especially when one is younger. At other times, especially when one is older, the balance needs to start tipping towards contentment.

It is the deep desire of every individual to die peacefully, having lived a life of fulfilment and contentment. But to judge whether our lives have been fulfilling creates their own dilemmas of judgment. Does one need to be well-known, or even famous? Can a famous person and an ordinary person both be able to lead a fulfilled life?

In Indian mythology, one can always dig deep to pull out pearls of wisdom. The story of Bhishma is one of the most celebrated. During the battle of Kurukshetra, Bhishma is struck down by the arrows of Arjuna, who is his grandnephew. The arrows pierce his body and when Bhishma falls down from his chariot, the arrows form a bed so that Bhishma's body does not lie on Mother Earth.

With his body resting on the bed of arrows, Bhishma's head hangs loose with no support. Bhishma asks Arjuna to provide some support. Arjuna does so by piercing three arrows in the ground in a manner that Bhishma's head can rest on

those arrows. A satisfied Bhishma says, 'What a fitting pillow for a warrior like me.' He then asks for water. Arjuna again pierces his arrows into the earth and cool water springs out of the hole and goes directly into Bhishma's mouth. Bhishma drinks some water.

Bhishma then asks Lord Krishna, who is near-by, as to why he is dying with such suffering in spite of his track record of good karmas. Lord Krishna reminds him that in one birth he had sinned by inflicting pain on insects when he stuck needles and thorns into their bodies. This deed, coupled with his unjust support of the Kauravas, caused him that painful death.

It is a great gain to feel fulfilled with life. Thankful for all the good things that have happened, no regrets for all the bad things that have happened. Bitterness and fulfilment do not go hand in hand.

Each person has to learn life lessons for himself or herself as he or she goes through a personal odyssey of discovery about work, life, friendship and relationships.

The availability of loads of knowledge, of being able to quote from religious books is not of any great value as compared to internalising that knowledge. The lessons of experience in life and in management work in the same way. We know the lessons, but are unable to always practice them.

According to a famous and



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- According to a management guru, each person's personality has two elements, a base layer and a layer on top.
- Temperament plus human quality equals the personality.
- To become good, one needs to constantly practice being good.
- We chase wealth and success throughout our life.
- Acquisition of power leads us to the question of what exactly to do with that power.
- Truly powerful leaders have used power to contain their power.
- The journey of career and life has some purpose, to give all one has, to take all one can, and to keep both in balance.

successful management guru and successful business head, each person's personality has two elements, a base layer and a layer on top. The base layer is about temperament, which is more or less fixed by a person's genes and circumstances of birth. The layer on top is the human quality, which is shaped by the person's life experiences.

Temperament plus human quality equals the personality.

To become good, one needs to constantly practice being good.

The tension between work and influence, on the one hand, and family and enjoyment, on the other, settle into a sort of equilibrium that is uniquely suited to each individual. No one can or has ever had it all. And no one formula fits all.

The same happens with life. We chase wealth and success throughout our life. But as soon as we have acquired it, we have to think about what to do with it. Likewise, the acquisition of power leads us to the question of what exactly to do with that power. Truly powerful leaders have always used power to contain their power.

The journey of career and life has

When we refer to happiness, what we truly mean is a complex phenomenon called emotional well-being.

some purpose. It is to be happy: to give all one has, to take all one can, and to keep both in balance. When we refer to happiness, what we truly mean is a complex phenomenon called emotional well-being. To be happy is to possess a favorable emotional state. It is this path to happiness that motivates human beings to seek a life of virtue.

Life's biggest lessons are learnt from the smallest of creatures.

One Sunday morning, a contented man sat in his balcony. A little ant caught his eye. It was travelling from one end of the balcony to the other, carrying a leaf several times bigger than itself. He saw that the ant, when faced with impediments during its journey, paused, took a diversion and then continued towards its destination.

At one point the tiny creature comes across a crack in the floor. It stops for a while and then lays the huge leaf over the crack, walks over the leaf and picks it up on the other side. The man watches this for about two hours, until the creature has reached its destination—a tiny hole in the floor. Now how could the ant carry this large leaf into the tiny hole? It simply could not.

So, the minuscule thing, after all the painstaking work and the exercising of wonderful skill, after overcoming all the difficulties along the way, leaves behind the large leaf and goes home empty-handed. It is a day on which the ant learns a great lesson. Is not that the truth about our lives as well?

For most people, a good life is one that leads to a circle of virtue. Aristotle had said that virtue and human happiness are synonymous. He had argued that we all try to develop inner strength and virtues. Without those strengths and virtue, we cannot be human.

For sure most of us wish to lead a good life. But what is the good life? Who decides it for each of us? ■

# TOP 5 QUESTIONS THE BOARD CAN ASK THEIR CISOs

How secure are we? Why do we need more money for security? Chances are, most CISOs have heard these questions, from their boards of directors.



SAM OLYAEI,  
Director Analyst, Gartner.

Security leaders need to be able to give the board something they care about and that is meaningful to them.

Recently, boards have been asking security and risk leaders for guidance on how to navigate a global pandemic, increased phishing threats and, potentially, a workforce unaccustomed to working from home.

The problem is, these questions are unanswerable. They are driven by exaggerated, incomplete or contradictory public information and are a distraction from more relevant questions.

Additionally, security leaders need to be able to give the board something that they care about and that is meaningful to them. Beyond individual passions and concerns, boards collectively generally care about three things:

Revenue, mission: Operating or nonoperating income and enhancing non-revenue mission objectives

Cost: Future cost avoidance and immediate decrease in operating expenses

Risk: Financial, market, regulatory compliance and security, innovation, brand, and reputation

As board members realise how critical security and risk management is, they are asking leaders more complex and nuanced questions. Boards today are becoming more informed and more prepared to challenge the effectiveness of their companies' programs.

Most board questions can be categorised into five areas.

## #1 THE INCIDENT QUESTION

What it sounds like: How did this happen? I thought you had this under control? What went wrong?

Why it is asked: These questions are asked when an incident or event has occurred and the board either already knows or the CISO is informing them of it. This is particularly relevant for CISOs during the Covid-19 pandemic, when boards may be asking questions specific to securing the organisation while large portions of employees are working from home under unusual conditions. This could also be in reference to any other incident, including data breaches that may have impacted the organisation in general.

How to respond: An incident regardless of category is inevitable, so be factual. Share what you know and what you are doing to find out anything you do not currently know. In short, acknowledge the incident, provide details on business impact, outline weaknesses or gaps that need to be worked out, and provide a mitigation plan.

Be cautious not to endorse one option as the ultimate choice when in front of the board. The responsibility for oversight of security and risk remains with the security leader, but the accountability has to always be defined at the board, executive level.

## #2 THE TRADE-OFF QUESTION

What it sounds like: Are we 100% secure? Are you sure?

Why it is asked: Questions like this are often asked by board members who do not truly understand security

and the impact to the business. It is impossible to be 100% secure or protected. The CISO's role is to identify the highest-risk areas and allocate finite resources toward managing them based on business appetite.

How to respond: Considering the ever-evolving nature of the threat landscape, it is impossible to eliminate all sources of information risk. My role is to implement controls to manage the risk. As our business grows, we have to continually reassess how much risk is appropriate. Our goal is to build a sustainable program that balances the need to protect against the need to run our business.

### #3 THE LANDSCAPE QUESTION

What it sounds like: How bad is it out there? What about what happened at X company? How are we compared to others?

Why it is asked: Board members will come across threat reports, articles, blogs and regulatory pressure to understand risks. They will always ask about what others are doing, especially peer organisations. They want to know what the weather looks like and how they compare to others.

How to respond: Avoid guessing at the root cause of a security issue at a different company by saying, I do not want to speculate on the incident at Company XYZ until more information is available, but I will be happy to follow up with you when I know more. Consider discussing a series of broader security responses such as identifying a similar weakness and how it is being fixed or updating business continuity plans.

### #4 THE RISK QUESTION

What it sounds like: Do we know what our risks are? What keeps you up at night?

Why it is asked: The board knows accepting risk is a choice, if they do not, that is a challenge you need

to solve. They want to know that the company's risks are being handled. CISOs should be prepared to explain the organisation's risk tolerance to defend risk management decisions.

How to respond: Explain the business impact of risk management decisions and ensure that your positions are supported by evidence. The second part is vital because boards are making decisions based on the risk tolerance. Any risks outside the tolerance level requires a remedy to bring them within tolerance. This does not necessarily require dramatic changes in short periods of time; beware of overreacting.

The board will be seeking assurances that material risks are being adequately managed, and that subtle, long-term approaches may be appropriate in some instances. Remember, the board is accountable for enterprise risk, of which cyber risk makes up a small, albeit important, component of the organisation. Challenge yourself to be brief and to the point. A lack of a control is not a risk, and neither is the next big threat. Focus on the big-ticket items that you control – Loss of IP? Regulation? Third-party risk?

### #5 THE PERFORMANCE QUESTION

What it sounds like: Are we appropriately allocating resources? Are we spending enough? Why are we spending so much?

Why it is asked: The board will want reassurance that security and risk management leaders are not standing still. Board members will want to know about metrics and ROI.

How to respond: Use a balanced scorecard approach in which the top layer expresses business aspirations and the performance of the organisation against those aspirations is illustrated using a simple traffic-light mechanism. As much as possible, explain aspirations in terms of business performance, not technology. Performance is underpinned by a series of security measurements that are evaluated using a set of objective criteria. ■

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Beyond individual passions and concerns, boards collectively generally care about three things – revenue, cost, risk.
- An incident regardless of category is inevitable, so be factual.
- Share what you know and what you are doing to find out anything you do not currently know.
- Be cautious not to endorse one option as the ultimate choice when in front of the board.
- Responsibility for oversight of security remains with the security leader, but accountability has to be defined at the board level.
- CISO's role is to identify highest-risk areas and allocate finite resources toward managing them.





# WALK AND SWIM WITH SHARKS

Diving enthusiasts can experience the thrill of scuba diving in the Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo. Following a quick theory lesson, the dive instructor will inform guests of the basic safety guidelines and skills in the confines of a cage before they venture out for their dive. The diving experience allows guests to share the water with sand tiger sharks, reef sharks, leopard sharks, tawny nurse sharks, giant groupers, and stingrays. The shark walking experience allows guests to witness their beauty while wearing an oxygenated helmet.



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