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THE CHANGE TO FUTURISTIC BUSINESS

PARAMITA DAS,
General Manager,
Global Marketing and
Development, Rio Tinto.

Rio Tinto

ADDING SUSTAINABILITY TO MINING

Metals and minerals are part of world's largest supply chains and reducing their carbon footprint begins at the origin.

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BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION
THE CHANGE TO FUTURISTIC BUSINESS

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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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GOING GREEN ADDING MORE METALS

While the move to green energy production is warranted, each device in the component supply chain needs more, heavier and rarer metals. This implies that going green will require radical changes to sustainability initiatives at the mining, metals, and mineral production stage.

Climate change has moved carbon footprints, emissions and sustainability into mainstream focus. Every seasonal year we see growing evidence of the challenges of climate change, ahead. Urban municipalities and governments are yet to jump start their focus towards managing climate change on a seasonal basis. Many governments and organizations continue to announce zero carbon emission targets, well past 2030, into the 2050-year range. All this is much too late and will not be enough to prevent a runaway greenhouse warming of more than 2C.

A healthy initiative is taking place in the metals, mining and minerals industry. Rio Tinto recently brought forward its 2030 target of reducing scope 1 and 2 emissions by 15% to 2025 and trebling its 2030 target of increasing it to a 50% reduction of scope 1 and 2 emissions. Says Paramita Das at Rio Tinto, we are committing direct investments of $7.5 billion in decarbonisation from 2022 to 2030 inclusive.

Studies by IDC indicate, 28% of mining and metals organizations see improving brand equity as a top driver for sustainability, compared with the overall industry average of 18%. Sustainability strategy improvement is the number one driver for the future of mining organizations. Read more about this industry and its initiatives in this month's cover feature.

Innovation, research, talent, skills, intellectual property, are all part of UAE's transition from an oil and trading economy into a knowledge based one. Says Dr Ray O Johnson at Technology Innovation Institute, the institute is focused on becoming a global research centre that is pushing boundaries of scientific knowledge and discovery.

It is working to attract global talent and incubate national STEM researchers and engineers. The Institute is developing UAE's first National Crypto Library, Arab region's first quantum computer, Post Quantum Crypto Software Library. Points out Johnson, it is not difficult to imagine IP creation and knowledge capital being core commodities of value for the UAE.

As we move into 2022, and the recovery phase of the post pandemic, Maxim Sytch at Stephen M Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, emphasises that top executives need to influence and inspire. Influence and inspiration will become even more important in a world of highly mobile, remote workers who are unlikely to tie themselves to one organisation.

For more on these exciting topics turn the pages ahead.

As we near the end of the year, happy planning, and happy breaks.

Arun Shankar
arun@gecmediagroup.com

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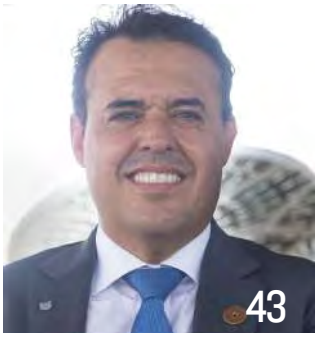

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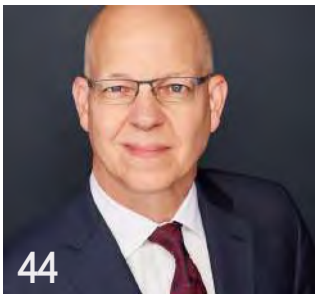

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IMPROVING THE PLANT-TO-SUPPLY CHAIN LINKAGE

To respond effectively to supply chain disruptions, capabilities like advanced planning and scheduling can align the plant with supply chain planning.

SREE HAMEED, Consumer Products Industry Strategist, AVEVA.

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

The focus for manufacturing operations in the consumer-packaged goods, CPG sector is changing. Where before plant efficiency was the top priority, this has now expanded to include agility, both of the plant and the wider supply chain.

In the past, the goal of digital investments was to improve cost efficiencies, with overall equipment effectiveness, considered the main key performance indicator. Even when supply chains became global, further increasing the risk of disruptions, manufacturers protected plants from variability with inventory so they could continue to focus on efficiency. However, the pandemic fundamentally challenged this way of working.

The speed at which it was able to disrupt global supply chains has been an unprecedented stress test, and one we are still in the midst of. Almost every day there's a new story about shortages caused by supply chain disruptions.

Covid's effect on the manufacturing world simply amplified existing vulnerabilities, and as much as we might want to go back to how things were, this appears unlikely to happen.

Last year, a World Economic Forum report identified shifts of focus that have come from businesses dealing with demand uncertainty and disruptions.

At the top of that list is agility and customer centricity, closely followed by supply chain resilience. These are now core topics in the post-pandemic recovery discussion, and manufacturing plants play a critical role in responding to today's rapidly changing market conditions.

Built with real-time operational data, digital twins can help understand what the plant is capable-to-promise, by providing real-time situational awareness via edge-to-enterprise visibility. Furthermore, the digital twin provides the foundation for AI and predictive analytics to provide powerful insights that empower workers to optimise processes and throughput.

To respond effectively to supply chain disruptions that are occurring on almost a daily basis, capabilities like advanced planning and scheduling can align the plant with supply chain planning to quickly adapt to fast-changing situations. Improving the plant-to-supply chain linkage gives the business more options to respond by looking holistically across the source-make-deliver processes.

Coupled with knowledgeable and empowered workers, who are the ultimate drivers of continuous improvement and resilience, businesses can really push the boundaries of their agility. Indeed, a key factor for future manufacturing operations improvements is collaboration of people and systems.

Digital transformation makes information more accessible to employees, connecting them to plant processes, data and systems as well as other workers across functional domains and functions, developing a living repository of staff knowledge and experience.

Businesses cannot control incidents that occur across the wider supply chain, but having agility and resilience allows them to adapt quickly. ■

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INVESTMENTS IN RENEWABLE ENERGY DELIVERING GREAT RETURNS

Advanced financing structures have allowed capital access to the clean energy industry to help drive its growth and amplify renewable technologies' deployment.

ZOLTAN RENDES,
CMO and Partner,
SunMoney Solar Group.

Majority of the world's emissions can be reduced through renewable energy supply

Renewables provide long-term benefits for the environment, climate change, human health, energy availability and its reach, along with a growing wave of global job creation. The understanding around this has grown tremendously in the past couple of years, leading to higher investments and adoption in the renewable energy space.

Renewables have entered the mainstream due to innovations in the technological and financial space aimed to drive transformations resulting in lower carbon emissions, reduced energy costs, increased employment opportunities, and enhanced energy diversification.

In the past few years, advanced and innovative financing structures have allowed more extensive capital access to the clean energy industry to help drive its growth and amplify renewable technologies' deployment. For instance, raising money by issuing equity or what may be referred to as stock, or using market tools like bonds involving debt, has started increasing investments in this space.

As a result, renewable energy investments have been delivering great returns in major economies like the US, the UK and the EU nations. However, the total investment being made towards planet-saving renewable energy still needs to grow exponentially to mitigate climate change successfully.

Green energy stocks have proven to be much less volatile and more secure, especially during uncertain and turbulent times such as the COVID-19 crises when oil and gas prices have been going berserk. This has led to an increase in the market share of clean energy stocks as several countries, including the USA, India, Italy, and Germany saw a record rise in renewable energy consumption.

New programmes and initiatives are acting as catalysts to incentivise individuals. Examples include allowing homeowners to lease solar panels with a negligible upfront cost, paying out investors monthly when they buy into solar units that generate electricity for public utilities, benefits on purchasing an electronic vehicle, and many more.

Renewable energy plants are easier and cheaper to maintain in the long run, thus attracting several medium and large-sized investors into this space. Renewables have the potential to offer a much higher return on the initial investment considering the cost of construction and maintenance of their infrastructures and the electricity and costs saved year after year on a long-term basis.

Investors have also begun to recognise the more significant risks associated with carbon-intensive investments. The scope of renewables is massive, and the effects far-reaching – a majority of the world's emissions can be reduced through renewable energy supply, increased electrification, and energy efficiency.

Government organisations worldwide, especially across the Middle East, have recognised the importance of clean and renewable energy sources and have taken several initiatives to boost the market. The United Arab Emirates is leading by example in the solar power plant development space. The pro-active government's strategy is to boost the contribution of renewable energy investment in the total energy mix. ■

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PANDEMIC DEMONSTRATED NO ONE HAS CONTROL OVER THE FUTURE

Businesses can only stay competitive with the right talent, and the good news is digital transformation and technology have created new opportunities.

SARANJIT SANGAR, CEO-EMEA, upGrad.

Globally,

75 mn

jobs are expected to be displaced in the coming years

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the job market. Disruption is the order of the day, across people, processes, and functions. It is expected that 28% of the UAE workforce will require upskilling over the next two years. As technology disrupts industries and job functions, globally more than one billion people will require to be reskilled by 2030.

According to the World Economic Forum's, Future of Jobs report, by 2022 more than half of global talent 54% will require upskilling or reskilling. The accelerated digitalisation of the post-pandemic era may swell those numbers even further. For professionals to keep pace, it is imperative that they stay abreast with the skill requirements of the digital age.

The most important skill they can have is the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn. This is true for professionals at all stages of their career, across sectors, industries, and geographies.

Globally, 75 million jobs are expected to be displaced in the coming years, with digitalisation predicted to create 133 million unique jobs – further widening the skills gap. According to WEF, the UAE could generate an additional 43,000 jobs by 2030 by closing the skills gap, which can lead to a gain of $4.3 billion, AED 15.8 billion for the country, or 0.6% of the GDP.

For those looking to take charge of their careers, these numbers give cause for optimism. The pandemic demonstrated that no one has control over the future — the markets, individuals, or the economy. In the midst of uncertainty, businesses can only stay competitive with the right talent, right now.

In such a scenario, how can professionals' future proof their careers? What skillsets give job seekers a competitive advantage in an increasingly tech-driven world?

Employees focused on future proofing their careers need to develop and enhance in-demand skill sets. Upskilling programmes help fast-track skills development, in turn increasing employability.

The good news is that technology and digital transformation have created a myriad of new career opportunities. Two fields are gaining significant momentum in the post-pandemic careers landscape: data and communication.

In data, demand in data science, cybersecurity, machine learning and AI is expected to grow. In communication, digital marketing, the use of AI in communications, and design are gaining momentum. The UAE government has also identified similar patterns and is supporting with the right initiatives, such as The National Programme for Artificial Intelligence.

Lifelong learning is the only pathway to ensure people continue to have opportunities for work and career growth. However, not all upskilling programmes are equal, nor do they make candidates job ready.

Professionals should choose upskilling programmes that are reverse engineered to meet current job demands across in-demand fields such as data sciences, blockchain, machine learning, AI and emerging technologies. A rigorous programme in collaboration with university and industry partners will ensure true upskilling. High completion rates and successful recruitment outcomes testify to the success of this approach. ■

ELEVATED RAIL TRANSPORT SYSTEM TESTED IN UAE

Unitsky String Technologies, the Belarusian-based eco-friendly, safe and comfortable transport solutions, has completed the first stage of the elevated string rail transport system at its test facility in Sharjah, UAE. Marking uSky's first commercial project launch, the company has set plans to increase its portfolio to 10 projects by the end of 2022.

Tailored to support both cargo and passenger logistics, uSky delivers high speeds and performance of transportation, up to 150 kmh and up to 50,000 passengers per hour. It can be established at a fraction of the cost to other solutions with a minimal ecological impact. Investment in the design, construction, and certification of uSky's urban transport and freight facilities in the UAE has already totalled more than $14 million.

USING A ROBOTIC SURGEON FOR MINIMALLY INVASIVE OPERATIONS

With over 30 years of experience, Dr Girish Juneja is an experienced laparoscopic and general surgeon in the UAE. One leap in this field has been the introduction of the surgical robotic system, Versius. The Versius system has been introduced to offer benefits to patients undergoing minimally invasive surgeries. Dr Girish Juneja, performed his first case on the Versius Robot after weeks of training.

When he first saw the Versius Robot, he knew the transition from laparoscopy to robotic surgery is going to be effortless. The entire design of the Versius system came across as ergonomic and the arms of the system felt just like that of a surgeon. The surgeon console is very well designed. With the open console the surgeon can observe their team, the patient, and the arms at all times. This improves communication and makes for a safe surgery.

GEC Media Group extends global presence with Business Transformation Asia edition

On 8th November 2021, GEC Media Group unveiled the Asia edition of Business Transformation Asia edition at Hotel Leela Palace, New Delhi amidst renowned luminaries and subject experts. Packed with solutions for the digital age businesses, GEC Media Group's Business Transformation Asia justifies its name and brings forth all that is needed to be sustainable and competitive simultaneously.

With yet another initiative to boost the digitisation of businesses and make them at par with their international competitors, the launch ceremony took place in the presence of guest of honour Vinit Goenka, who is also a Member of the Governing Council at CRIS; Dr Sandeep Marwah, Founder Noida Film City, President Marwah Studios, and Chancellor AAFT University; Manoj Kohli, Country Head of SoftBank India; Ronak Samantaray, CEO of GEC Media Group; Arun Sharkar, Chief Editor of GEC Media Group; Shubendhu Parth, Group Editor, GEC Media Group; Sundip Sibal, Executive Director and President of International Affairs, GEC Media Group.

They unveiled a replica of Business Transformation Asia cover during the in-person event. The launch event was also attended by the top CIOs of the country. As a repository of content, Business Transformation Asia is focused on showcasing the full stack of milestones along the road of organisational transformation.

Speaking at the event, Ronak Samantaray, CEO, GEC Media Group said, "As the fastest growing media, events and research company, GEC Media Group has always adopted the mantra of being innovative, transformative, and steadfast to the market. Our efforts, services, and offerings are aligned towards being the singular voice for the IT and business ecosystem. Today, we are extremely proud to be unveiling BT Asia during the World CIO 200 India edition, in a country that goes above and beyond when it comes to 'Transformation' from not only a technology but varied industry point of view as well. This is a crucial step towards further establishing our commitment to the region in terms of bringing the best of content and success stories of the continent."

Shubhendu Parth, Group Editor, GEC Media Group, "Transformation has taken the world by storm and left no sectors untouched. The pandemic was an eye-opener for this. Businesses realised that it is a do-or-die situation for them and those that do not shed legacy infrastructure will see doom. We are extremely happy to be launching the much-awaited 'Business Transformation- Asia magazine that will put forth the continent's success stories and strides in digital and business transformation use cases from a government, public and private sector point of view. Business Transformation Asia will take the lead in bridging the gap between the business and their technological needs in all the manners required. All our keynote speakers at the event today have highlighted this fact and emphasised how business, technology, and customers walk hand-in-hand in this transformation."

The event was organised with all the safety guidelines announced by the Government of India.

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CAN TECHNOLOGY DRIVE ASIA'S SUSTAINABILITY

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THE WORLD CIO 200 SUMMIT

Toshiba, Kioxia, GEC Tech+ Olympics salute the spirit of sportsmanship

GEC Media Group successfully completed a month-long Tech+ Corporate Championship with the best teams and players. The first-ever corporate championship in Dubai has witnessed great passion and enthusiasm for sports at Gems Modern Academy. This championship has proved that age is no barrier, it is just a limitation you put on your mind. The zeal for sports made this first-ever corporate championship more memorable. The motive of the championship is to focus on fitness and meet new individuals from different companies and build relationships.

Speaking at the grand finale, Ronak Samantaray, CEO, GEC Media Group congratulated all the winners and thanked all the players who have participated in various sports and showed their passion and great sportsmanship. He also announced that GEC Media Group will have a comeback next year with more sports and fun activities for corporates.

The first-ever corporate championship supported businesses and employees to achieve a better work-life balance, boost productivity and company performance, foster health, fitness and happiness in the workplace, increase brand engagement and loyalty, raise company morale through team building, promote brands, and network with like-minded professionals.

However, all the participated teams and players appreciated the effort made by GEC Media Group for breaking all the odds and give a platform where they can participate with their colleagues.

Tech+ Corporate Championship was built with multiple games including Badminton Men Doubles, Badminton Mixed Doubles, Tennis-Doubles, Bowling – Individual, Bowling – Team, Table Tennis – Singles, Table Tennis – Mixed Double, Basketball, Volleyball, Football, Cricket, Tug of war, Athletic, Team Building, Fitness Challenge, and Golf.

The sponsors included Toshiba, KIOXIA, Dubai Eye 103.8, Prime Healthcare Group, Al Ain Farms, Brand Voize, ESM – East Sports Management, Business Transformation, Enterprise Channels MEA, International Group of Artificial Intelligence, Global CISO Forum, Global CIO Forum, Thapos, SportsPlus, and xtra sports.

The proud winners included Belhasa Group, Launch TECH, Wavelogix, Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group, Kantar Middle East, Toshiba, A5 Advertising, Prompt Elevators, Marine Costa FC, Reckitt, SAP, Benny Sjoborg, Giles Crowther, Dental Studio, Randy Livingston, StorIT, RakBank, Zak Dubai, Gears Apparel, Saudi German Hospital – Dubai, Commerce Connect, GEMS Education, Green Method Enterprises, Exclusive Networks, Fortuna, BK Gulf, Pure Storage, ESM, and Swiftline.

The Tech+ Corporate Championship was organised as per the safety guidelines announced by the Emirates of Dubai.

THE WINNERS

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FITNESS CHALLENGE
BOWLING
VOLLEY
BASKET

TEAM BUILDING TASK
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FITNESS CHALLENGE
BOWLING

ATHLETIC
FITNESS CHALLENGE
BOWLING
VOLLEY
BASKET

TABLE TENNIS
GOLF
TEAM BUILDING TASK
TUG OF WAR
ATHLETIC
FITNESS CHALLENGE

FITNESS CHALLENGE
DUBAI

FITNESS CHALLENGE
BOWLING
VOLLEY
BASKET

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VOLLEY BALL
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VOLLEY BALL
BASKET BALL

Secure Systems Research Centre at Technology Innovation Institute collaborates for secure mesh research

DR SHREEKANT THAKKAR,
Chief Researcher, SSRC.

Technology Innovation Institute, the applied research pillar of Abu Dhabi's Advanced Technology Research Council, announced that its Secure Systems Research Centre has partnered with three prestigious universities on secure mesh communications research projects.

Mesh Network is a network topology in which the infrastructure nodes connect directly, dynamically, and non-hierarchically to as many other nodes as possible and cooperate with one another to efficiently route data to and from third parties. The project is set to strengthen the security of the Mesh network technology that TII is currently developing for machine to machine and human to human communications.

The three partner universities include the UAE's Khalifa University of Science and Technology, a world-class research institution that nurtures critical thinkers in applied science and engineering, University of Turku in Turku, Finland, and Graz University of Technology in Styria, Austria. The Khalifa University project is titled A Secure and Resilient Chat or VoIP Application over Private Mesh Networks. Meanwhile, the University of Turku project focuses on R3Swarms: Robust, Resilient and Reconfigurable Swarms, and the project with TU Graz is titled SPiDR: Secure, Performant, Dependable, and Resilient Wireless Mesh Networks.

One of seven initial dedicated research centres at TII, SSRC was established to create a global centre of excellence in the development of end-to-end security and resilience to protect cyber-physical and autonomous systems.

Proven Robotics launches Kettybot, Bellabot, Pudubot from Pudu Robotics in Saudi Arabia

Proven Robotics and Pudu Robotics Unveil Next-generation Robots in Saudi Arabia.

Proven Robotics, a state-of-the-art venture by Proven Solution, and Pudu Robotics, an international high-tech enterprise dedicated to the design, research and development, production and sales of commercial service robots, held a launch event to unveil Pudu's signature robots – Kettybot, Bellabot and Pudubot – for the first time in Saudi Arabia.

The live event presented an opportunity for both the companies to showcase the brilliance of these robots in improving efficiencies through artificial intelligence technology, reducing operating costs and simplifying processes. Representatives from Proven Robotics and Pudu Robotics discussed the growth of robotics in the region, and the role of artificial intelligence and robots in Saudi Arabia's ambitious drive towards making automation and artificial intelligence a core pillar in the nation's economic development strategy.

Visitors attending the Riyadh Season 2021-22 were able to watch demos for Kettybot, Bellabot and Pudubot, robots that were developed to transform the operational landscape and improve efficiency. Bellabot robot was designed to revolutionise the human-robot interactive system, helping make manual tasks in customer-servicing obsolete; while Kettybot and Pudubot are service delivery robots and can act as utility assistants in several industries.

With a vision of becoming the leading robotics solutions provider in the Middle East, Proven Robotics has been providing cutting edge robotic solutions and a robotics management system that can be customised to fit business needs, enabling local and regional organisations to take full advantage of emerging applications and solutions. Through its partnership with Pudu Robotics, the company aims to offer fully scalable robotic automation solutions for customers in a wide range of industries and several customer-facing sectors.

Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University now using Healthy Buildings solution from Honeywell

Honeywell announced the Middle East's first proof of concept project for its integrated Healthy Buildings solutions portfolio at Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. These advanced technologies will support HBMSU's strategic goal of creating a healthier and safer environment for building occupants through the deployment of integrated air quality, safety and security solutions along with advanced analytics that monitor both the building environment and building occupants' behaviours.

Honeywell's solutions help support business continuity and minimise the risk of disease transmission and the spread of other pathogens. The solution installed at HBMSU enhances indoor air quality and also integrates security systems that analyse facility usage with thermal screening, social distancing and mask detection analytics.

The deployment contributed to the International WELL Being Institute accrediting HBMSU with its WELL Health Safety Rating. It is the first university in the UAE and Middle East to achieve this milestone. HBMSU met all requirements for criteria including cleaning and sanitisation procedures, emergency preparedness programmes, health service resources, air and water quality management, and innovation.

Honeywell's Healthy Buildings Solutions focus on two main elements: facilitating safety and security and improving indoor air quality.

Savoye introduces autonomous robotics in Middle East supply chain through HAIPICK solution.

Savoye partners with HAI Robotics for autonomous case-handling robotics system in Middle East

Savoye, a leading global player in the design, manufacture, and integration of automated and robotics system in logistics and supply chains, has become a partner and integrator of HAI Robotics, world leader in Autonomous Case-handling Robotics system. The partnership is poised to bring HAIPICK solution in the Middle East, where there is a notable demand for autonomous technology solutions in the supply chain and logistics sectors.

The HAIPICK system features autonomous and intelligent functions such as robots that pick and place boxes or bins on storage shelves up to five to seven meters high and are able to carry up to eight loads to continuously feed goods-to-person picking stations. Further, the solution is flexible and works well even in extreme weather environments.

According to industry experts, the majority of supply chain organisations will invest in artificial intelligence and digital software by 2024. Robotics solutions such as HAIPICK will help companies in the digital transformation across their supply chains, increasing productivity, automating processes, and improving their total operation.

Another prominent feature of the HAIPICK solution is that it can be customised to suit different application scenarios, allowing Savoye to integrate it ideally in their own range of solutions for goods-to-person order preparation.

In addition, the HAIPICK solution will further support Savoye's X-PTS technology, a high-speed shuttle system for stocking and de-stocking lightweight load to enhance the processing of meet repetitive, time-consuming, and large volumes of orders.

Acme enables warehouses with Pick-To-Light technology to improve efficiency.

Acme Intralog partners with Kardex Remstar for pick-to-light technology for warehouse efficiency

In its continued efforts to help e-commerce, wholesale and retail companies improve their warehouse efficiency, Acme Intralog, has introduced pick-to-light technology in partnership with Kardex Remstar.

Growing order demand and limited storage capacity combined with fluctuating demand leave e-commerce companies struggling to meet customer delivery times. Using Kardex Remstar's 'Color Picking' pick-to-light solution, Acme offers a scalable solution to its clients, enabling e-commerce facilities to flex labour to meet spikes in order demand.

Color Picking ensures higher throughput and maximum labour efficiency in the warehouse with up to 70% space, doubled picking throughput and a ROI of less than 18 months. Based on the principles of pick-to-light technology, Color Pick guides multiple operators through the picking process using coloured pick-and put-lights allowing you to add or reduce labour resources to meet current order demand.

Color Picking pick-to-light technology combines several orders into a batch that can be simultaneously processed. The unique Color Picking concept adds coloured lights into the batch picking process allowing multiple operators to pick from one work zone. The Color Picking process can achieve up to 300 order lines per hour per operator to achieve higher throughput. It is a team picking philosophy with high throughput and dynamic workflows. Using multiple workers in one zone, multiple batches of orders can be filled at one time to achieve higher throughput.

Foodics UAE partners with Adyen global payments platform to reduce time at POS terminals

Adyen, the global payments platform of choice for many of the world's leading companies, announced the partnership with Foodics UAE, a FoodTech and FinTech company based in the Middle East.

Through this strategic partnership, Adyen will power Foodics PAY UAE with its smart POS terminals, which guarantee speed in every transaction and provide guest insights so restaurants can better understand their guests and enhance the dining experience. This end-to-end integration will remove friction for restaurant owners, such as avoiding manual entry mistakes and decreasing reconciliation time.

As Adyen seeks to provide businesses of all sizes with its technology, partnering with platforms such as Foodics allows Adyen to instantly reach their large and growing client base. Foodics caters to every segment of the food and beverage sector from traditional dine-in restaurants, cafes, fast food outlets, bakeries, food trucks through to cloud kitchens.

SANDER MAERTENS,
Head of Middle East, Adyen.

Bahrain Electricity Water Authority signs $28.7M contract with GE Digital for grid software solutions

GE Digital announced that the Bahrain Electricity and Water Authority signed a contract worth $28.7 Million for software and services to modernise the Kingdom of Bahrain's electricity and water networks. A variety of GE Digital's industry-leading Grid Software will be installed in a state-of-the-art control centre that will digitise operations for increased efficiency and operations redundancy.

This remarkable end-to-end software solution spans the breadth of operations from the transmission to distribution across the company's essential electricity and water services. Its implementation will be integral to the country's economic vision and strategy for the future.

Grid Software to be utilised in this solution include:

- Distribution Management: GE Digital's industry-leading Advanced Distribution Management Solutions- ADMS provide for the safe and secure management of the electric grid. The software provides EWA with next-generation control and optimisation capabilities that will help them with outage restoration and the overall performance of the grid.
- Transmission Management: The Advanced Energy Management System- AEMS provides a better framework for the authority to optimise the energy and electric transmission in a more innovative way with improved efficiency by integrating multiple monitoring, control, and analytics systems into a modular solution.
- Grid Resilience: AEMS Wide Area Management can monitor and locate system oscillations in real-time reducing the risk of unnecessary power disruptions and accelerate system restoration in case of an outage.
- Water Transmission and Water Distribution Management: The GE Digital team will be integrating EWA's existing geospatial asset management system with the distribution network to model and manage the water operation.

AD Ports Group, NYU Abu Dhabi announce creation of a research study on coral relocation

Building upon the highly successful Khalifa Port Coral Relocation project announced at the start of 2021, AD Ports Group, has made public its partnership with NYU Abu Dhabi for the creation of a research study on coral relocation.

Spearheaded by Professor John A Burt, Programme Head of Environmental Studies and Associate Professor of Biology at NYUAD, and sponsored by AD Ports Group's Innovation Team, the research study will examine global best-practices for coral relocation, while also providing region-specific expertise and insights that will enhance future coral reef relocation efforts across the Arabian Gulf.

Scheduled for completion by December 2023, the project will also assist AD Ports Group in developing its expertise in leading such initiatives by equipping its staff with the most pioneering and innovative methods and techniques in the field.

AD Ports Group and NYU Abu Dhabi Advance Coral Relocation Research Efforts.

AD Ports Group's staff will also have the opportunity to participate in several training workshops and field training exercises to gain invaluable first-hand experience of coral relocation practices.

Unveiled in February 2021, the Khalifa Port Coral Relocation project, facilitated in close collaboration with the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, saw the transfer of hundreds of corals from the northern revetment to the eastern breakwater of Khalifa Port.

Vodafone in Oman's new 5G network to be powered by Ericsson through core, radio, transport, and managed services.

Vodafone Oman signs with Ericsson to deploy, operate, 4G-5G core and radio greenfield network

Vodafone in Oman recently signed an agreement with Ericsson to deploy, operate and maintain a new 4G and 5G core and radio access greenfield network.

Ericsson will supply a complete core network solution based on Ericsson Cloud Core, NFVI and Cloud VoLTE as well as an end-to-end transport network solution. The greenfield network includes other Ericsson Radio System products and solutions such as the antenna-integrated radio and Ericsson Spectrum Sharing.

The end-to-end solution range will deliver a cost-efficient, energy-efficient, and flexible layered architecture design to support 5G from network launch. Vodafone customers will also benefit from Ericsson Voice over LTE- VoLTE services.

A five-year managed services agreement has also been signed. This will result in an artificial intelligence-powered data-driven network and IT operations and optimisation, enabling Vodafone to enrich its customer experience, drive efficiency and facilitate innovation.

Vodafone will benefit from Ericsson's artificial intelligence tools and data-driven model to drive efficiencies and a shift from reactive to proactive IT and network operations. In turn, Vodafone customers will get an enhanced user experience with improved network quality and performance.

Ericsson will take responsibility for the design, rollout, operations, management, optimisation, and maintenance of Vodafone's network. The move will support the service provider's goal to offer a wide range of new and differentiating services to its customers in Oman.

Airbus, Air Liquide, ispace Europe launch EURO2MOON, to explore usage of natural lunar resources

In a context of increased momentum around space exploration, Airbus Defence and Space, Air Liquide and ispace Europe have announced the joint creation of EURO2MOON. This non-profit organisation will be dedicated to promoting better use of lunar natural resources while accelerating the cis-lunar economy and federating industrial efforts across Europe.

Bringing in complementary expertise from public and private partners, EURO2MOON will focus on topics related to the exploration of the lunar surface and the utilisation of its resources in a commercial and sustainable way. Topics to be addressed will also include long-duration transport, life support, energy needs for scientific and commercial applications.

EURO2MOON aims to position the European industry as a leader of the rising cis-lunar economy, creating a strong industrial ecosystem based on an ambitious - In Situ Resources Utilisation vision.

The objective is to create a platform of exchange in order to build a common industrial vision and promote it among the European industrial and institutional ecosystems, including recommendations on global roadmaps, demonstration concepts and commercial programs.

The association is based in Luxembourg and is open to industrial partners as well as research organisations interested in the development of technologies or services that can benefit lunar resources management. Any company which has their headquarters or key activities in the European Union, or a member state of the European Space Agency is eligible to join.

The European Space Resources Innovation Centre has become the first non-founding member of the EURO2MOON organisation, and Jean Jacques Dordain, former ESA Director General - 2003-2015, has become the first honorary member.

Godrej deploys Infor LN across Metito, provider of water management solutions, taking six months to complete

Infor, the industry cloud company, has deployed Infor LN, its enterprise resource planning solution, at Metito, the global leader in sustainable water management and alternative energy solutions, to enhance its business processes. The turnkey solution simplifies and automates discrete operations providing manufacturers with increased visibility to enable more efficient response times to customers, suppliers, and regulatory needs.

Boosted by population growth and investment in megaprojects, water demand is set to rise by 62% by 2025 in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries alone, and about $80 Billion worth of water and wastewater projects are currently planned or underway across the GCC, according to Research and Markets. Metito has operations covering all facets of water management including design and build, specialty chemicals, and utilities. The company has expanded rapidly in recent years and has operations in countries across Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Metito has established many industry firsts over its 60 plus years of operations, including the development of some iconic projects in recent years such as the first bulk surface water supply Public-Private Partnership project in Sub-Saharan Africa; El Hammam agricultural drainage, recycling, and reuse plant in Egypt, which is the largest plant of its kind in the world; and the largest wastewater treatment plant in terms of capacity in Serbia.

Infor LN provides flexibility and suitability for the specialised needs of engineering in the water industry. Metito has customised several external applications and integrated them into the Infor suite, delivering projects with unique key performance indicators. The advantages are felt across the business, with buying cycles reduced, improved customer forecasting, and sales teams able to securely capture customer visit details on their smartphones. In addition, inventory can be tracked throughout the supply chain, which enhances project planning. Technology partner Godrej deployed Infor LN across Metito's operations with the project taking about six months to complete.

Ooredoo selects Ericsson for digital transformation of its Business Support Systems

The Ooredoo Group, a major multinational communications service provider with operations spanning the Middle East, Africa and Asia, has selected Ericsson as its next-generation digital transformation partner for Business Support Systems solutions.

The companies have signed a five-year group frame agreement spanning the deployment of the latest Ericsson BSS solutions across several Ooredoo Group operating companies. The deployment will give Ooredoo a new set of capabilities across its business operations in the customer, product, revenue and service management domains. The solutions will serve any type of customer or partner, network technology or chargeable event.

Ericsson BSS solutions will help Ooredoo to drive innovation and boost customer satisfaction through shortened time-to-market, more flexibility and increased efficiency.

Under the partnership, Ericsson Digital Monetisation

Platform will be the strategic target solution for the most evolved operating companies of the Ooredoo Group. Ericsson Digital Monetisation Platform is a convergent charging and billing solution to monetise all network technologies, all business models and all customer types.

It is designed to meet communications service providers' increasing demand for end-to-end best-in-suite solutions that combine powerful business performance with cost-efficient operations, management, and deployment.

With Covid-19 disruption, education professionals now have high levels of confidence in using edtech

New research from Renaissance, a global provider of leading edtech solutions to improve outcomes and accelerate learning, has revealed that over 20% of teachers believe addressing the attainment gap arising from Covid-19 related disruption will be the biggest challenge this school term.

The research asked over 300 senior school leaders, department heads, and teachers about their thoughts and concerns as the new school term got underway. Respondents cited sequential disruptions caused by school closures or isolation bubbles 14% as among the largest expected challenges.

The majority 44% of teachers believe that the remote learning environment has had a greater impact on pupil attainment, while 26% of them said it has not affected the attainment, and 32% of them recorded a small impact. The literacy attainment gap was of particular concern to teachers with 57% reporting they felt it would be the hardest gap of all the core skills to close this current school term. In comparison, only 25% of teachers said that the mathematics attainment gap would be a challenge.

Regular feedback from teachers 27% and tailored work programmes for each child 22% were seen as top solutions to close the attainment gap. Teachers also said that more mental health support for pupils and engagement with peers may improve their performance.

But there is a silver lining to the past 18 months as education professionals indicated high levels of confidence in using edtech since Covid-19 disruption. Around 71% of teachers said their confidence in using edtech had increased. Edtech and digital learning platforms were appreciated for offering quick access to key resources 24% and providing interactive learning methods that motivate students to learn 21% along with the freedom to learn at one's own pace 14%.

With such a variety of online tools available, experts at Renaissance are encouraging schools to take advantage of teachers' improved edtech confidence and expand their digital offering, whilst also leveraging resources such as Focus Skills Teacher Workbooks, to help tackle the attainment gap caused by Covid-19 school closures.

Renaissance believes that teachers can use their complete literacy solution to address the literacy attainment gap. The solution consists of a range of offerings such as Star Reading assessment, myON, and Accelerated Reader to engage students, motivate reading practice and improve reading progress. Working with over 120 regional and local schools, Renaissance is actively promoting literacy and numeracy development to combat the challenges faced by schools as they provide distance learning to young students. The products and solutions also support differentiated instruction and personalised learning to optimise overall student development.

SAMIR IMRAN,
Principal of Healthcare and Life Sciences Practice, Arthur D Little Middle East.

By 2025, Dubai likely to see 2 Million+ emergency cases annually, Arthur D Little report

Delivering emergency care is an integral part of the health sector and related systems are using technology to increase efficiency and provide faster access to treatment. With the quality of emergency care being vital for driving positive patient outcomes and fast emerging capabilities in care orchestration, a more integrated system is critical to serve future needs in an evolving healthcare ecosystem.

Arthur D Little, ADL, highlights this view in their latest report entitled building the next generation of emergency care systems: Ensuring health systems have the right building blocks to develop effective emergency care systems for the future. The report sheds light on notable emergency care use cases and best practices, providing industry players with recommendations for building such a system while highlighting key enablers.

Over the last two decades alone, the Middle East has experienced epidemics and outbreaks – such as SARS, Ebola, MERS, and Covid-19 – that have become increasingly global in terms of impact. In addition, the diversity in Dubai's population, along with a high number of visitors, further increases the burden on the wider emergency system. Already, Dubai welcomes over 15 million international tourists, equalling close to 4.8 visitors per resident – the highest statistic worldwide. Moreover, the number of injuries is 50% higher than the EU and US average, while the impact of Dubai Expo 2020 is still to come.

The expected influx of tourists and visitors will increase the likelihood of emergency scenarios, putting a further strain on current healthcare resources. In the longer term, this scenario is inevitable should the emergency care system not be enhanced. By 2025, forecasts indicate that Dubai is likely to see over two million emergency cases annually, a statistic that equates to more than 5,500 emergency department visits per day nationwide.

By 2025, forecasts indicate that Dubai is likely to see over two million emergency cases annually, a statistic that equates to more than 5,500 emergency department visits per day nationwide

With urgent treatment, crisis management, and life-threatening cases falling under the emergency care remit, several emerging insights and innovations are currently transforming ecosystems and the wider landscape. These include empowering bystanders, treating ambulances as first emergency rooms, using AI for dispatch support, and integrating systems across the emergency care chain – all of which are reshaping key emergency care building blocks, including in the Middle East.

Recent years have witnessed the Dubai Health Authority provide next-generation smart systems and expand the Emergency and Trauma Centre at Rashid Hospital. The Salama Project linked DHA's electronic medical records system with ambulances from the Dubai Corporation for Ambulance Service.

Dubai welcomes over 15 million international tourists, equalling close to 4.8 visitors per resident, the highest statistic worldwide

UAE at cusp of change with pandemic accelerating digital transformation finds FedEx study

FedEx Express, a subsidiary of FedEx Corporation and the world's largest express transportation company, revealed the findings of its Future is Now study that offers insights into the UAE's readiness to embrace the future.

The UAE is at the cusp of change, with the pandemic accelerating the country's digital transformation. From healthcare to education, banking to manufacturing, technology is transforming every sector, giving rise to a future full of possibilities. According to the study, which surveyed more than 750 respondents across the UAE, 96% stated that they believe the country is prioritising technology like Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, and Blockchain to deliver a future-ready world. Approximately 96% also believed technology they'd seen in science fiction movies is either already a part of their daily lives, or likely to be in the next few years.

With the trend of technology-led change likely to continue, future-forward industries were identified as major drivers in shaping the cities of the future. Roughly 96% of respondents believe that the e-commerce sector will need to be more technologically driven to meet their needs better in the future, and 93% consider tech-enabled logistics important in a futuristic world.

The Future is Now study focused on three main views: being dynamic, how the UAE is open to experimentation and innovation, and to what degree the country is sustainability conscious. The findings indicated that future success will likely rely on businesses structuring their approach around these three outlooks.

The Future is Dynamic

Regardless of the industry, companies must monitor the pulse of their consumers, anticipate their needs, and stay one step ahead of their rapidly evolving expectations. The pandemic accelerated change in almost every aspect of life, from how we live and work, to how businesses interact with their customers, and how customers purchase products and services.

The FedEx study shows that businesses are already working to keep pace with this change. Approximately 90% of respondents stated that over the past year, companies demonstrated their ability to understand 'What's next?' and present possible solutions.

Openness to experimentation is indispensable to a future-ready mindset

The UAE ranked first in the Gulf region and 33rd globally in the Global Innovation Index and is considered as one of the top innovative economies. In an increasingly dynamic environment, success for businesses hinges upon pushing the envelope and fostering a culture of experiment-led innovation. A majority of 95% of those polled in the FedEx survey believe that organisations, communities, or even individuals who experiment and adopt change are better equipped to navigate through future challenges.

45% Gulf data workers unable to upskill as they continue with day-to-day tasks finds Alteryx

Alteryx, the analytics automation company, highlights a core discrepancy between the accelerated pace of digital transformation and the provision of the foundational skills needed to deliver it. Despite workers' confidence in providing business value through their data skills, the research calls future digital competitiveness into question due to stalled digital upskilling in recent months.

Almost half 40% of these business leaders recognise that driving upskilling initiatives is the responsibility of top management, but the research shows that day-to-day challenges continue to take priority over critically important data training. 45% of data workers are unable to upskill as they continue to be pulled into day-to-day tasks, while one in four 24% does not know where to start.

40% of Gulf C-Suites, VPs and business unit leaders responsible for driving upskilling strategies see little difference between the skills needed today and those needed in five years' time. Despite this lack of forward-thinking from business leadership, 86% of data workers see a clear benefit to enhancing the value they can deliver through data. Interestingly, 28% have already begun this upskilling journey, and 18% say they have already completed it.

ALAN JACOBSON,
Chief Data and Analytics Officer, Alteryx.

OPPO's Reno6 Pro 5G, Reno6 5G, Reno6 Z 5G undergo close to ten stress tests

It is incontrovertible that smartphone technology has become an essential part of life. At OPPO, ensuring that every device delivers an all-around, optimal user experience is at the heart of the global technology company's philosophy. Stability and reliability are among the main factors that define whether a device passes the test – and OPPO takes no shortcuts when it comes to quality.

A cornerstone of its sustainable, long-term development, quality is at the forefront of the OPPO brand. In 2008, the company founded the OPPO QE Reliability Lab with the aim of maintaining high, standardised product quality across the board. From product development to mass production, the Lab is tasked with testing products against the strictest quality standards. An OPPO device reaches consumers after a journey of 150 tests – including stress, durability, performance and more.OPPO's new Reno6 Series was no exception. The hero Reno6 Pro 5G, Reno6 5G, and Reno6 Z 5G have undergone rigorous testing to deliver the most reliable experience you can expect.

DROP TEST

Dropping smartphone is perhaps the most common accident consumers may encounter. To make sure Reno6 can survive most drops and falls, the Lab has tested the phone in a variety of simulated drop scenarios. From higher than industry standards 1-1.5m free-fall heights, to the considerable 28,000 times of micro drops that is more than the industry typically adopted, and even more rigorous test conditions like sandpaper or tumble machine, the final device is made sure to be resilient against most everyday drops.

WATER RESISTANCE

Dropping your phone on the ground is one thing but dropping it into water presents a whole new set of problems. The great news is, OPPO's Reno6 Series smartphones have also undergone strict water and rainproof testing – and recorded a failure rate that is much lower than the industry average.

Environmental Adaptability

While humans possess high levels of adaptability to different climates, temperatures, and environments around the world, the same can't always be assumed with technology. Ensuring that Reno6 Series devices would maintain consistently reliable no matter the environment, the phones were stored at specific temperatures and humidity levels for a set number of days, after which the phone is expected to function as normal. In addition, Reno6 phones have undergone Sweat and Cosmetics Tests.

Not only did the phones pass the tests, but all functions were also preserved and components intact, with no signs of damage detected on the device's surface.

TWISTING AND PRESSING

Another common stress the smartphones usually encounter is physical pressure and torsion, as a result of keeping the phones in a pocket or bag along with other objects. OPPO conducted its Twisting Test by twisting Reno6 devices 1,000 times with a level of torque calculated based on the width and thickness of the phone, in addition to testing tolerance to weight load. After both the Press and Twist Tests, no functionality failures or structural damages were detected.

Only 14% Middle East organisations have set targets to be net-zero compliant by 2050, ACCA survey

Research among 117 accountants and finance professionals across the Middle East reveals that just 14% say their organisations have set targets to be net-zero compliant by 2050. However, looking ahead, a significant 69% say their organisation will be willing to invest much more than today in addressing climate change over the next three to five years.

These results are included in ACCA's report Climate action and the accountancy profession: building a sustainable future, published ahead of the COP26 summit which begins on 31 October in Glasgow, Scotland.

The key findings and the opinions from participants from both the public and private sectors, in organisations large and small, reveal the gap between the good intentions of organisations, and the urgent and speedy need for climate action.

The report highlights that accountancy and finance professionals can bring an integrated approach that places sustainability at the heart of organisational decision making, rather than it being an additional consideration. This approach links strategy and governance to data-driven decision making and rigorous measurement of performance using science-based targets, coherent reporting and trustworthy assurance of information used by stakeholders.

Other findings for the Middle East show that:

- Only 24% integrate climate key performance indicators into their business strategy or risk frameworks.
- 40% say that climate change considerations play a significant role in financial decision-making in their organisation.
- 49% say the impact will come through physical effects of climate change such as changing weather patterns, extreme heat or flooding.
- 52% believe climate change regulation - in the form of climate pricing or new reporting requirements - will impact their organisation over the next five years.

KPMG survey finds 60% UAE residents have flown out of country in 12 months to meet family

Six in ten residents in the UAE have flown out of the country in the past 12 months to meet their family or relatives, a new KPMG survey has revealed. The first KPMG UAE Aviation Survey 2021 captures the impact of Covid-19 on passengers' sentiment, assessing their outlook on consumer travel.

According to the survey, only four out of ten residents in the UAE 40% flew out for leisure, while 13% constituted business travel and 5% for medical reasons. Reflecting the country's demographics, the KPMG survey revealed that South Asia was the most common destination for travellers from the UAE, followed by the GCC states 30% and Europe 27%. South Asia 39% and Europe 38% are also among the regions that UAE residents would like to visit in the coming six months.

While nearly three-quarters of residents are fearful of contracting Covid-19 through air travel, almost the same proportion of respondents nevertheless plan to travel within the next six months. This is contingent on airports and aircraft maintaining stringent health and safety protocols, full vaccination for passengers and crew, and social distancing, as well as better end-to-end customer service.

The survey also found out that an overwhelming 71% of respondents believed that, despite the generally adopted online platforms, corporate travel will be necessary for meetings in the future. An even higher percentage 81% of respondents believe corporate travel will be justifiable for events like exhibitions and conferences.

AVTAR JALIF, *Partner, Head of Transport and Logistics at KPMG Lower Gulf.*

Survey by Poly reveals 37% UAE workers feel working remotely could impact career progression

Poly released a new report outlining the evolution of the workplace and changing employee attitudes to the 9-5. The Poly- Evolution of the Workplace report provides analysis on the findings of a survey of 7,261 hybrid workers from the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Poland and the UAE.

The report noted working from home made employees more productive with lesser concerns for noise and distractions. The survey found that 37% of workers in the UAE are worried that working remotely could impact their development and career progression. The survey revealed that 39% of females are expected to feel that way as compared to 35% of their male counterparts in the nation.

The report also examines how attitudes and behaviours have evolved – factoring in key variables such as working patterns and culture, frustration and noise, including what we wear.

From a UAE perspective, the trend was almost similar with only 45% of the hybrid or home workers agreeing that they could be discriminated against, or treated differently, to employees that choose to be in the office while 34% felt that they would be affected by the noise rage if their colleagues were too loud with 21% of the men strongly agreeing compared to 18% of the women surveyed by the report.

The report also revealed that better equipment and technology- 44%, attending meetings- 34%, brainstorming and collaboration- 31% were the main drivers for coming to the office in the future giving the impression that the traditional office setup was still a viable option for almost half of the country's workforce.

The report, which surveyed hybrid and office workers who mostly use technology as part of their day-to-day official duties in the UAE, also found out that only 36% would spend two days working from home and three days going to the office. 23% of the workers surveyed said that they would work from home for just three days and only two days in the office.

Global Economic Conditions Survey finds improved confidence in Middle East across Q2, Q3 2021

The latest Global Economic Conditions Survey by ACCA - the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and IMA - Institute of Management Accountants found that economic growth connected to pandemic recovery weakened in Q3 2021. Confidence jumped in the Asia Pacific +11 and South Asia +20, after falls in the previous survey. The Middle East emerged as the only region to record improved confidence across six straight months spanning Q2 and Q3 of 2021.

For the South Asia region, confidence recovered in Q3 and is now at its highest level in over six years. Moreover, the region also showed a rise in orders after a fall in the previous survey.

In contrast, global confidence fell by nine points in Q3, with the largest fall in North America -41 followed by Western Europe -24 pulling down the score. However, both regions are still at relatively high levels of confidence, as is the case globally.

GECS is the largest regular economic survey of accountants and finance professionals around the world jointly carried out quarterly by IMA and ACCA.

The report found that when looking at orders—which is a useful benchmark to measure real economic activity—there was a split between advanced regions and emerging markets. There were falls in orders affecting North America and Western Europe contrasted with modest improvements in emerging markets.

LOREAL JILES,
Vice President of Research and Thought Leadership, IMA.

Logicom

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Rio Tinto

ADDING TRUST AND SUSTAINABILITY TO MINING

The world's second largest metals and mining group is using blockchain to label its products providing trust to its customers around sustainable data.

Mines and metal products are all around us. Our homes, cars, cell phones, planes, everything we have, have some link or origination from commodities. The pandemic created economic and social disruptions, but the demand and expectation for sustainability from customers and consumers has remained the same.

While industry fragmentation can slow down the cycles of innovation, a well-connected value chain, positions commodities better versus high carbon alternatives.

"Today, consumers want to know where products are coming from; what they use; what are the ingredients and whether they are responsibly sourced; and more than ever, they are prepared to vote with their wallets," explains Paramita Das, General Manager, Global Marketing and Development, Rio Tinto. In response, global companies have been setting ambitious targets to cut global emissions and enhance their sustainability credentials.

The Rio Tinto Group is an Anglo-Australian multinational and the world's second-largest metals and mining corporation, producing iron ore, copper, diamonds, gold and uranium.

Rio Tinto has announced it will bring forward its 2030 target of reducing Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 15% to 2025, and trebling its 2030 target, increasing it to a 50% reduction of Scope 1 and 2 emissions. Rio Tinto is also committing direct investments of $7.5 billion in decarbonisation from 2022 to 2030.

"Rio Tinto's efforts to decarbonise are unique as we are not in fossil fuel extraction and we have extensive hydropower for energy intensive businesses such as aluminium smelters," continues Paramita.

Rio Tinto will accelerate decarbonisation by switching to renewable power, electrifying processing and running electric mobile fleets. Secondly, it will increase investment in research to speed up the development of technologies that will enable customers to decarbonise. Thirdly, it will prioritise growth capital in commodities that are essential for the drive to net zero, such as copper, battery materials and high-quality iron ore.

As an indication of the importance of sustainability, ESG funds, have captured approximately $50+ billion of net new money from investors in 2020, which has more than doubled from 2019 efforts.

TRENDS WITHIN INDUSTRIES

There is also sustainability reporting by industrial players, which is now mandatory for large companies in many countries, as well as the list of regulations deployed by governments.

The automotive sector has also been under the sustainability spotlight and the industry is playing its role in an effort to reduce global emissions. This industry is major customer for almost all commodities.

"As upstream and midstream suppliers, we must

PARAMITA DAS,
General Manager,
Global Marketing and
Development, Rio Tinto.

do our part to contribute to the sector's sustainability journey. We are working on recycling and we are working with and evaluating solar, wind, hydrogen and cutting-edge technologies to help us decarbonise our own operations, and we are taking it to our customers," explains Paramita.

However, OEMS are adopting sustainability initiatives much faster than their suppliers and also moving to high priority areas, including sustainable manufacturing and supporting and promoting a circular economy. Rio Tinto is working towards becoming part of the solution.

Paramita indicates each player needs to work on their Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, "and sustainability is a team sport," she says. "Multi-commodity partnerships are absolutely required to solve for ESG especially if we want to meet those stated zero emissions targets. We say, our Scope 3 could be your Scope 1 or 2, and vice versa."

BLOCKCHAIN LABELLING

Rio Tinto uses numerous IT applications to manage business and data processes. To provide rigorous transparency to its global aluminium customers, Rio Tinto uses digital solutions like blockchain to provide provenance tracking, helping demonstrate to authorities that its supply chain has met regulatory requirements and has satisfied conditions to attain incentives or industrial certification.

Usage of digital sustainability labels provides key information about the site where the aluminium was responsibly produced, covering multiple ESG criteria

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Consumers want to know where products are coming from; what they use; what are the ingredients and whether they are responsibly sourced.
- Rio Tinto will accelerate decarbonisation by switching to renewable power, electrifying processing and running electric mobile fleets.
- OEMS are adopting sustainability initiatives much faster than their suppliers and also moving to high priority areas.
- Each player needs to work on their Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions and sustainability is a team sport.
- Multi-commodity partnerships are absolutely required to solve for ESG especially if we want to meet those stated zero emissions targets.
- To provide rigorous transparency to its global aluminium customers, Rio Tinto uses digital solutions like blockchain.
- Rio Tinto has launched its data driven digital solutions to helps its ecosystem stay on track with traceability and tracking of progress.
- Rio Tinto's launch of START is meant to play the same role as labels on packaging.
- START will help Rio Tinto's customers meet the demand from its consumers for transparency.

Rio Tinto has announced it will bring forward its 2030 target of reducing Scope 1 and 2 emissions by

15%

to 2025

including:

- carbon footprint
- water use
- recycled content
- energy sources
- community investment
- safety performance
- diversity in leadership
- business integrity
- regulatory compliance
- transparency

This is especially critical in the world of United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, rules of origin or Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms.

Recently, Rio Tinto and Schneider Electric signed an MoU for collaboration to develop a circular, sustainable marketing ecosystem for both companies and its customers.

CREATION OF START

Rio Tinto has launched its data driven digital solutions to helps its ecosystem and community stay on track with traceability and tracking of progress. One of the initiatives is START, which is the short form for sustainability, traceability assurance, and uses a blockchain platform.

"It is our role to bring radical transparency to our supply chain efforts around ESG progress. And all of this is brought to the market on blockchain technology," says Paramita. The usage of blockchain is meant to instil trust in supply chain data provided by Rio Tinto and to boost its usage.

Rio Tinto's launch of START is meant to play the same role as labels on packaging. "Think about the nutrition label on the back of almost all food products. START does exactly the same for the aluminium industry," she explains. It is giving choice and thus building a more sustainable supply chain.

START will help Rio Tinto's customers meet the demand from its consumers for transparency on how and where the products they purchase are made. Data can then be used to make material choices and supplier choice.

"Digital solutions allow us to communicate to consumers who are the ultimate decision makers in simple and sustainable form and digital allows us to tell our narrative in a much more powerful manner," adds Paramita.

Using the information provide by START, customers can measure and track the carbon footprint they have generated across their supply chain all the way to the end products. The usage of digital solutions like blockchain helps with problem tracking and helps to demonstrate to authorities that a supply chain has met regulatory requirements.

"The high level of interest in START corroborates that sustainability is a team sport. We need like-minded partners to come together and work together. As they say the whole is greater than the sum of its parts," sums up Paramita. ■

MARTIN PROVENCHER, INDUSTRY PRINCIPAL, MINING, METALS AND MATERIALS, AVEVA.

Mining and metal companies are under lots of pressure. They have to take into consideration the sustainability aspect of their business the same way as the aspect of safety in the past ten years. Sustainability refers to the execution of business activities in a way that minimises the utilisation and consumption of resources and also minimises the impact on the natural environment.

According to IDC, companies with an ongoing sustainability strategy combined with a long-term digital transformation agenda, outperform their competitors in terms of revenue growth and profitability. Also, 27% of mining and metal organisations, identify the need to improve brand equity as a top driver for sustainability, compared with the overall industry average of 18%.

"Industrial operators need to balance safety, on-time performance, compliance and capacity in an ever-changing landscape. And to do this knowledge workers need better tools to gain insights. That is what we call operational excellence," says Martin Provencher, Industry Principal, Mining, Metals and Materials, AVEVA.

According to Provencher, AVEVA's three-step approach is an important piece of the technology roadmap and should be the first step towards successful digital transformation journey for sustainable mining.

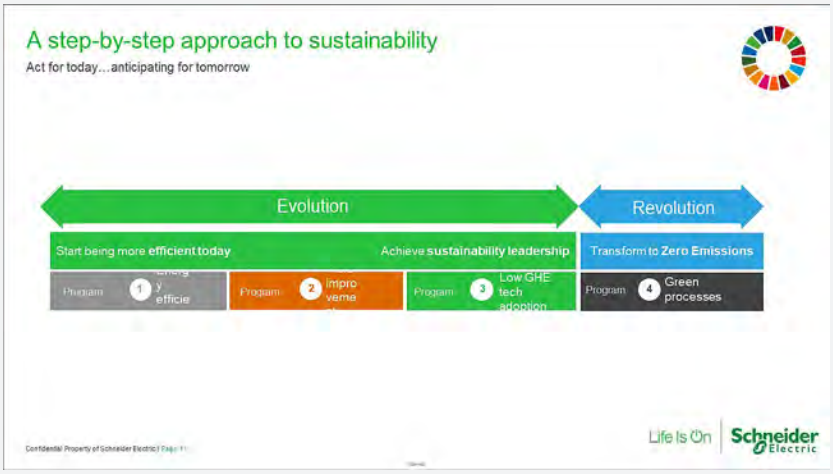
AVEVA's three-step approach to sustainable mining includes:

#1 Usage of optimising technologies such as smart engineering solutions, IoT, cloud, asset performance, analytics, AI, to meet production targets.

#2 Identifying sustainable goals and building a strategic corporate plan leading to meaningful delivery.

#3 Management of tools through a single integrated platform capable of digesting, interpreting and reporting operational data.

DAVID WILLICK, VICE PRESIDENT NORTH AMERICA, MINING, MINERALS AND METALS SEGMENT, SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC.



When you look at electric vehicles, they require about six times more mined elements than internal combustion engines. There is three times more copper used in an electric vehicle than a traditional vehicle, 14 times more Nickel, nine times more Lithium. When you look at renewable energy, wind turbines and solar panels, all require more mined elements. 40 mined elements are part of every single one of our smartphones.

When you look at a decarbonised world, it needs more mining. A recent statistic is, in the next 25 years, the global copper production has to equal about the same amount as what was mined in the last 5,000 years. A significant increase in mine elements is required for all of them.

Responsible material transition has to be scaled up just as ambitiously as the renewable energy transition. And there are two ways of doing this. The evolution approach is a step wise approach towards improvement, while the revolution approach is a change from traditional methods to green methods.

BEN KIRKWOOD, SENIOR RESEARCH MANAGER, IDC ENERGY INSIGHTS - WW MINING.

IDC findings show that 71% of mining, metals and mineral organisations have formal, executive sponsored sustainable initiatives in place. This shows that support for sustainability comes from the top. Another finding by IDC is that the top focus for mining organisations throughout 2021 has also been sustainability.

Such organisations are rapidly understanding that having sustainable initiatives in place, improves brand equity and helps them with compliance regulations. The bonus structures of executives from major mining, metals and mineral organisations, are also tied to sustainable key performance indicators. Organisations are also rapidly turning to technology to assist them.

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PROTECTING AND SECURING ACCREDITATIONS AT EXPO 2020

Expo 2020 Dubai boasts more than 200 participants, with half a million accreditations, covering staff, suppliers, internal and outsourced support.

SHADI BAKHOUR, B2B Business Unit Director, Canon Middle East.

In today's digitally connected and tech-reliant world, maintaining high levels of document and data security is critical, because both can be exploited by malicious parties with ill intent. Can you imagine if a stranger gained access to your personal data, your passwords or your company documents?

Most people have heard of cyberattacks – an attempt to disrupt the victim's network and seek some type of benefit or ransom. With a cyberattack occurring once every 39 seconds, data and documents need to be secured from cyberattacks that may result in security breaches, unsecured files and unauthorised access, with far-reaching ramifications.

It is estimated that 71% of breaches are financially motivated, and with an average breach exposing 25,575 records many of them personal, the reputational damage to a company can be catastrophic. Additionally, the cost of damage control after a data breach can be severe – for example, the case of financial company Capital One, whose data breach cost them more than $100 million in damages.

Expo 2020 Dubai is the largest event ever held in the Arab world, having secured millions of visits in the first month alone. It boasts more than 200 participants, for whom approximately half a million accreditations are being issued by Expo 2020, covering all staff, suppliers, support staff and outsourced support.

Each accreditation acts like a personal passport, determining which areas the holder can and cannot access and all accreditations are being printed on Canon devices.

Recognising the need to protect all visitors, participants and member's data and documents, Canon has deployed globally recognised protocols, data-management software and secure hardware to ensure maximum data and printing security, to minimise the risk of any passport being copied, duplicated or unlawfully accessed.

To safeguard documents and ensure authentication, Canon is utilising its flagship tool, UniFLOW, in managing the printing and scanning workflows including the devices. This solution will be supported and enhanced by a module called IWSAM, imageWARE Secure Audit Manager, which captures, archives and audits the document-related activities occurring within the connected Canon devices.

This safe system automatically logs and distributes the documents to the designated parties or entities at the Expo. This will make printing seamless at the site, while also securing documents and user authentication.

One of the most common types of cyberattacks is via malware, spyware, ransomware, viruses, and worms and Canon has partnered with McAfee to equip all Canon devices with anti-virus protection against such malware.

This embedded protection guards all Canon printing and imaging devices against threats from malware and tampering with firmware, to protect against any unauthorised party obtaining private information or rendering a system inoperable.

Canon has implemented safeguards at potentially vulnerable touchpoints, so that any user who wants to access a document for printing or use any print function must be authenticated via their passport or personalised code. No printed document can be retrieved without authentication because all printed documents are stored on a secure server, with dual encryption of the hard disk, thereby removing the possibility of extracting them directly from the hard disk.

With cyber-security being of paramount importance at Expo 2020 Dubai, Canon's participation is ensuring that accredited participants feel safe, secure and confident that they can operate freely, and rest assured that their information is protected throughout the printing and imaging process. ■

TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION INSTITUTE

BUILDING AND SHAPING UAE's RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

While the UAE government has led from the front and always pioneered innovation, building an advanced technology ecosystem cannot be done without ensuring an integrated mindset.

Technology Innovation Institute, TII is the applied research pillar of Abu Dhabi's Advanced Technology Research Council, ATRC. It is a global research centre – with seven initial research centres prioritising breakthrough research in areas such as advanced materials, autonomous robotics, cryptography, digital security, directed energy, quantum, and secure systems.

TII's fundamental purpose is to enable its expert researchers to see beyond the horizon and research without fear to pioneer tomorrow's advanced technologies. TII hopes to ensure global impact and help position Abu Dhabi, and the wider UAE, as a preferred research hub in the advanced technology space.

As the overarching entity mandated to shape an advanced technology research hub in Abu Dhabi and drive the research priorities of the UAE, ATRC is committed to contributing to Abu Dhabi and the UAE's knowledge economy through commercialisation of R&D outputs locally and globally.

As part of this priority, TII's seven research centres, all focused on breakthrough applied science, are engaged in cutting-edge projects to find solutions to key challenges. Once developed, the prototype solution is fast-tracked from lab to market with the support of TII's business partners and stakeholders across industry and academia. We forge long-term global synergies that amplify the social and economic impact of our efforts.

TII's specialised applied research fields have been precisely selected after feasibility studies to ensure their viability in contributing to the UAE's nationally determined priorities. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that TII is a global centre.

From this point of view, the commercialisation of the technology we create is crucial, and we leverage our partnerships with industry and academia to fast track their transition to market. As far as adding value to national innovation is concerned, we develop intellectual property at TII.

TII enjoys the autonomy to fund TII-led research projects as well as collaborative research projects with academia

Additionally, through ATRC's NexTech programme, we provide UAE national STEM talent with an opportunity to pursue promising careers and collaborative research in this space across our centres – thereby, enhancing the UAE's talent pool.

As a core differentiator from other research entities, TII enables researchers to pursue their areas of interest, free of bureaucratic hurdles often involved in securing research funding. With the flexibility to rapidly progress research as part of a defined research roadmap, TII offers committed long-term funding and the agility to make high-impact, effective decisions in a fast-paced environment.

As an entity established by the Abu Dhabi leadership, TII enjoys the autonomy to fund TII-led research projects as well as collaborative research

DR RAY O JOHNSON,
CEO, Technology Innovation Institute.

TII's Board of Advisors are all renowned subject matter experts in their chosen fields of expertise

projects with academia and research centres from around the world – tying in neatly with the overarching mission of the Council to shape a deep tech and research ecosystem in the country, while attracting the most brilliant scientific minds.

TII's Board of Advisors are all renowned subject matter experts in their chosen fields of expertise, and they are affiliated with some of the world's foremost scientific and research-focused universities. They help guide the team of researchers at each of TII's seven specialised research centres, and they provide the necessary insight in conveying our efforts in Abu Dhabi around the world.

They facilitate TII's efforts to shape a diversified advanced tech research ecosystem in the UAE capital, and they support ATRC's NexTech programme to identify and induct young UAE nationals keenly interested in STEM.

Shaping a knowledge economy is more than facilitating individual building blocks – we need to establish a research ecosystem – the products, the people, and the process, to instil an all-pervasive research mindset.

While the UAE government has led from the front and always pioneered innovation, building an advanced technology ecosystem cannot be done without ensuring an integrated mindset – where everyone is thinking of how best to advance their area of expertise. While all this may still be new to this young nation, it is not difficult to now imagine IP creation and knowledge capital being the core commodities of value for the UAE in the not-too-distant future.

We are focused on becoming a global research centre that is pushing the boundaries of scientific knowledge and discovery, and we are working to attract global talent and incubate national STEM researchers and engineers who can take their rightful place in steering these pivotal sectors of the economy.

We are also developing national critical infrastructure such as building the UAE's first National Crypto Library, the Arab region's first quantum computer, shaping the Post Quantum Crypto Software Library, and launching the region's first electromagnetic compatibility laboratory.

TII has, in its first year of operation, added greater in-country value than several established entities achieved in several years. Over time, we hope to expand and accelerate this momentum vertically and laterally through new centres of excellence. ■

SNAPSHOT OF SEVEN RESEARCH AREAS

#1 Quantum computing

We are working in the space of quantum physics studying quantum matter for quantum technologies, quantum computing a UAE-built-full-stack quantum computer, quantum algorithms proprietary quantum solutions to real world problems, quantum communications connecting quantum devices and future-proofing security, quantum middleware Qibo, an open-source operating system for quantum devices, and quantum sensing high-precision sensors.

#2 Digital security

We are focusing on automated vulnerability discovery, assessment, and mitigation at scale and speed, competing in cyber challenges, and advancing beyond state-of-the-art commercial security, testing tools, and building talent. We have in place a highly scalable platform to detect vulnerabilities in an automated manner and hold the ability to benchmark state-of-the-art solutions. We partner with international stakeholders on hardening and patching projects and on testing vulnerabilities.

#3 Autonomous robotics

We are currently focusing on autonomous nano-drones, swarm robotics, unmanned ground vehicles and robotics, autonomous standard size drones and indoor navigation, surface and underwater marine ground robotics, among others. We launched 10 autonomous start-up and product ideas over the past year and have participated in several international conferences and events, including the just concluded Indy Autonomous Challenge, where we partnered with Team EURORACING, one of the front-runners, in line with TII's sponsorship.

#4 Cryptography

We are focused on post-quantum cryptography, hardware cryptography, light-weight cryptography, quantum technologies, neuromorphic computing, disposable crypto schemes, cloud encryption schemes and cryptanalysis. We launched a Cryptography Law and Policies draft this year and also three start-up ideas, one with an on-going client project. We have also launched 30 scientific papers, published one book, and brought to market nine products.

#5 Directed energy

Our core domains of expertise include electromagnetics, lasers, plasma physics, remote-sensing and acoustics. We have 32 projects in the pipeline and have completed 6. We have published 56 research papers, won five awards, and have four patents in the preparation phase. Work is also underway on our state-of-the-art labs that are slated for launch in Q4 2021.

#6 Advanced materials

We hold expertise in energy absorbing materials and structures, nanomaterials, additive manufacturing, 3D printing, high temperature thermoplastics, energy storage, self-healing materials, smart materials and structure, and meta materials. We have published 28 papers and have a patent in the preparation stage. We have 16 projects in progress and are in the process of establishing five state-of-the-art labs. We are also building a strong simulation team to help other researchers and centre.

#7 Secure systems

We are currently engaged in reinforcing our credentials in the zero-trust secure and resilient cyber-physical and autonomous systems domains. Our areas of expertise include secure platforms, secure systems, autonomous UAV hardening, security in power-constrained autonomous UAV, and secure and resilient communication, among other areas.

We counted 17 university collaborations in our first year of operations and have successfully published 11 research papers and registered three patents. We are also members of Linux Foundation's Dronecode and RISC-V, enabling us to offer greater technological autonomy to the UAE.

MAXIM SYTCH,
Professor of Management and Organisations at Stephen M Ross School of Business, University of Michigan.

TOP EXECUTIVES NEED TO INFLUENCE AND INSPIRE

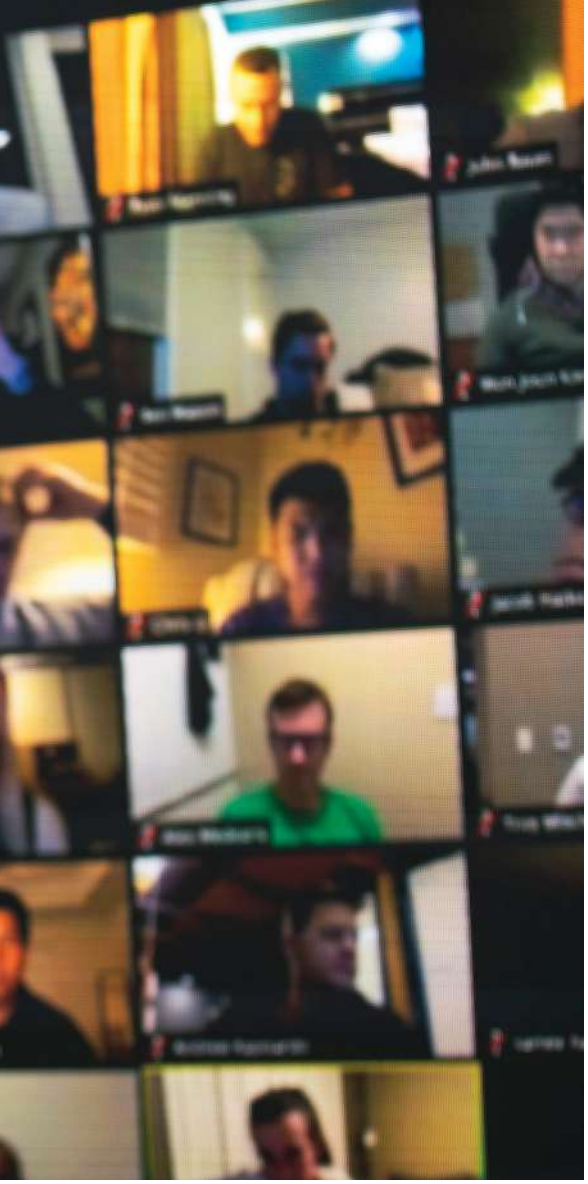
Influence and inspiration will become even more important in a world of highly mobile, remote workers who are unlikely to tie themselves to one organisation.

In the short run, one of the major challenges is restoring people's sense of belonging and connectedness to others at work. Although many have learned to be productive remotely, they are miserable. The number of our close social connections, including those at work, has declined by 20 to 25 percent.

We recommend that organisations create space and opportunities for immensely human interactions to help their workers with the transition back to the office. In the long run, maintaining and building organisational cultures with a remote workforce will prove to be a monumental challenge.

It is useful to start by acknowledging that companies will have a difficult time competing for talent unless they make the remote option available to their employees, at least for part of the week. It is also useful to acknowledge that the decision to offer remote work or not is not always up to the company; it can be influenced by business partners or clients which could be remote.

With this in mind, we do not focus on recreating or replacing legacy jobs, roles, and the talent pool using a remote workforce. Instead, we should take full advantage of gaining



Think of organisational culture as principal tool to support execution of organisational strategy

understand how to best structure the organisation, what kind of culture to develop, and what types of people they need to recruit, all with an eye on most effectively carrying out the intended strategy.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they need to influence and inspire people to follow their lead. Influence and inspiration will become even more important in a world of highly mobile, remote workers who are unlikely to tie themselves to one or two organisations for their entire career.

This said, it is important to recognise that the environment around us is changing at lightning speed and becoming more complex. So, the cornerstone of being a successful executive now and in the future is a growth mindset and continuous learning.

Executives need to create a climate in which it is acceptable and encouraged to acknowledge the prevalence of these issues and how they can affect our mental state. It is often difficult for top executives to admit to having such struggles and seek help; indeed, we expect leaders to be infallible.

Strangely enough, one of the silver linings of Covid and the prolonged social isolation it caused is that we all have become more attuned and empathetic to the issues of burnout, stress, and mental health. It is hoped we do not lose this quality and that we continue to make the full spectrum of behavioural health solutions available to executives and other employees.

Few organisations will have the massive CIO, CTO-siloed empires that large organisations had decades ago. Instead, technology, information, and security will permeate nearly every facet of organisational activity.

As a result, CIO, CTO, CISO organisations will rely increasingly on matrixed and cross-functional design, which will be key to interfacing with numerous and diverse pockets of organisational activity. They will continue to grow their level of engagement with external partners due to the unparalleled dynamism and complexity of the technology space.

In such structures, agile teams that effectively leverage informal influence and persuasion rather than formal authority will be the key to a successful operating model. ■

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- We recommend that organisations create space and opportunities for immensely human interactions.
- Companies will have a difficult time competing for talent unless they make the remote option available to employees.
- We do not focus on recreating or replacing legacy jobs, roles, talent pool using a remote workforce.
- We should take full advantage of gaining access to the best talent pool, no matter the location.
- This could mean, fusing multiple legacy roles to develop one superstar remote worker.
- Top executives need to be strategic thinkers to develop a sound strategy.

access to the best talent pool, no matter the location, to leverage this advantage and take our organisation to new heights. This could mean, for example, fusing multiple legacy roles into one to develop one superstar remote worker.

We should not chase the next fad just because other companies are doing so. Instead, think of organisational structure and culture as the principal tools to support the execution of organisational strategy. So, executives need to take a closer look at whether the Covid-19 pandemic and economic changes that followed will necessitate changes in their organisation's strategy. If that is the case, both the formal structure and the culture of the organisation need to be revised accordingly.

Top executives need to be strategic thinkers to develop a sound strategy, which often entails a hard set of choices about what their organisation is not going to be doing. Second, they need to be thoughtful organisational architects to

CEO APPOINTMENTS REACH RECORD LEVELS IN IH 2021

The findings from this year's report show that trends in UAE are in line with global standards, however when it comes to non-national CEOs, UAE stands out.

Companies in the first half of 2021 appointed a record number of CEOs, making up for a significant slowdown in the second half of 2020, according to the 2021 Route to the Top report from Heidrick & Struggles.

The global report also shows that compared to their predecessors, new CEOs are more likely to be women 11%, to be from countries other than where the company is headquartered 30% and to have cross-border experience 46%.

The annual study of CEO placements provides an analysis of the profiles of the 1,095 CEOs at the largest publicly listed companies in 24 markets as of July 5, 2021.

Included in the report's data are companies from Australia and New Zealand, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The United Arab Emirates report also shows that 42% of the new CEOs have advanced degrees, and 16% have cross-border experience, while 23% have less than one year of experience as CEOs.

The findings from this year's report show that trends in UAE are in line with global standards in most areas, however when it comes to non-national CEOs, UAE stands out with 42% compared to 24% globally. It's also worth mentioning that the first half of 2021 shows a record number of CEO appointments globally, the highest since 2018.

Additional findings from the UAE Route to the Top 2021 report include:

- Profile of CEOs in the UAE in 2021 shows they were 49 years old at the time of appointment, and 42% were appointed before the age of 45; Hold 5.9 years of average tenure; Average age now is 55.
- Over one-third of CEOs with previous C-suite experience appointed in the UAE in the first half of 2021 35% came from a previous CEO role; 30% of the CEOs appointed were formerly heads of divisions; Only 2% had previous COO experience, compared to 14% globally
- Diversity in the corner office; Women make up 5% of CEOs in the UAE today, almost on par with 6% globally; Sweden has the highest percentage of CEOs with cross-sector experience 45% while CEOs in the United Arab Emirates have the lowest share 12%
- 56% of CEOs in the UAE were internally appointed in 2021; Compared to 65% of internal CEO hires globally.

Looking ahead, COVID 19 has raised expectations on the role of businesses in addressing concerns such as climate, equality, cybersecurity and other external realities; boards are rethinking the process of the CEO succession to cope with these changes. This means that companies will open up to new perspectives and ideas. In addition, we expect more attention to shift towards leadership skills rather than specific skills. ■

Route to the Top 2021

Source: 2021 Route to the Top report from Heidrick & Struggles.

CAN LAGGING IT CULTURE JEOPARDISE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

If you allow misaligned behaviors to become normalised, the way work gets done becomes less and less fit for delivering now and in the future.

DANIEL SANCHEZ-REINA, VP Analyst, Gartner.

As business models change, so do the behaviors and actions that are most relevant

Covid-19 and its effects accelerated digital business at an unprecedented pace, and CEOs continue to invest in digital capabilities as they look to take advantage of what many expect to be a fast, sharp recovery. CIOs and their IT teams are key to this digital strategy and execution, but is the IT organisational culture up to the task?

Many CIOs recognise that the way IT employees get work done today is not what the enterprise needs to meet its digital ambitions, but few know how to get rid of stubborn, unproductive behavior. They need a rigorous way to gauge what needs to change.

What is organisational culture?

Culture is not an academic construct. Culture is what drives the priorities of individuals within the organisation. It comprises the behaviors and actions that have become normalised over time to dictate how work gets done and prioritised.

The question for CIOs is what behaviors and actions are needed to ensure that the IT organisational culture is aligned to drive digital transformation and acceleration.

As business models change, so do the behaviors and actions that are most relevant. It is not surprising, then, that the IT organisational culture can increasingly lag behind what is needed to drive digital ambitions. But CIOs must intentionally and actively diagnose and address these culture gaps.

If you allow misaligned behaviors and actions to become normalised, the way work gets done becomes less and less fit for delivering on priorities, now and in the future. Worse still, your IT organisational culture can actually jeopardise digital ambitions.

In short, an IT organisational culture fit for your digital ambitions must get and stay aligned to the stated objectives of the business model. But how do CIOs do that?

Is your IT culture in step?

To develop a digitally mature IT organisational culture, CIOs should first level-set on how responsive IT teams are to the four key components of the business model and its corresponding business strategy today:

EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS, CITIZENS

How knowledgeable and responsive the IT organisation is to external customers, citizens, constituents, their industry, sector environment and the external factors affecting them

VALUE PROPOSITION

How knowledgeable and responsive the IT organisation is to the external product, service environment

CAPABILITIES

How the IT organisation prepares, orchestrates and measures its capabilities information, technology,

people, skills, assets, ecosystem stakeholders to accomplish its mission

FINANCE

The IT organisation's knowledge of and responsiveness to overall enterprise finances revenue sources, costs, risks, funding model, financial KPIs

It is also valuable to gauge the intensity of the IT organisation in terms of its intentions awareness and understanding of influential factors and environment and actions the team's dedication to making things happen.

How fit is your IT organisational culture to drive digital ambitions?

Having assessed the degree of alignment with the business model, CIOs need to plot an improvement path for the IT organisational culture based on its current level of maturity.

The Gartner assessment tool measures maturity on the following scale:

#1 UNALIGNED

Our IT culture is not aligned and is not aware that it is not.

#2 AWAKENING

Our IT culture is not aligned but is somewhat aware that it is not.

#3 SETTLING

Our IT culture is performing on digital business needs but is far from fully aligned.

#4 ALIGNED

Our IT culture is aligned with today's digital business needs.

#5 FORWARD-LOOKING

Our IT culture is aligned with today's digital business needs and ready for the future.

The objective is to get to level 5. You might choose to stop at a lower level if you think you've already done the heavy lifting, but that will mean there is still room for improvement. So even if you pause, continue escalating the cultural alignment when you see fit, knowing that lack of alignment threatens to hamper your progress in the interim.

Sample actions to shift the IT organisational culture for digital

Once your IT teams have completed the cultural assessment to gauge their digital fitness, you will need to act to close whatever gaps are critical to your digital success.

Here are some examples of actions you might need to take.

EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS, CITIZENS

Share specific information about how your enterprise segments external customers, citizens and why, and the different channels to reach them. Also, give them a clear picture of the industry and competitive landscape.

Value proposition

Organise a hackathon or quiz game among your team members, with specific questions about segmentations of products, services and their expected growth, the various channels your enterprise uses to deliver them, the main competitors in each segment and their competitive levers. Make it a quarterly ritual.

CAPABILITIES

Share the IT strategy with team members and talk about strengths and weaknesses in organisational structure, technological resources, people's skills and competencies, and interactions with the rest of the enterprise and external parties. Highlight what's missing for the IT organisation to drive the organisation toward its digital goals.

FINANCE

Appoint tiger teams to assess how robust and flexible your IT budget is in both its structure and content to face foreseeable future needs. Share the conclusions with the entire department and devise a rationale to present to the CFO and CEO. ■

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- It is not surprising, that the IT organisational culture can increasingly lag behind what is needed to drive digital ambitions.
- CIOs must intentionally and actively diagnose and address these culture gaps.
- IT organisational culture can actually jeopardise digital ambitions.
- An IT culture fit for digital ambitions must stay aligned to the objectives of the business model.

START-UP ECOSYSTEMS ARE BUILT OVER DECADES

The best start-up ecosystems are not built-in years, they are built over decades, which is why Silicon Valley's start-up ecosystem is as big as it is.

NIRANJAN GIDWANI, Consultant Director, Charter Member Tie Dubai, Member Superbrands Council.

If we learn lessons from Silicon Valley, it prides itself on failure as a badge of honour

Start-up ecosystems are popping up all across the country and the world, with varying levels of success. Let us focus on the mix of ingredients that are needed to make a good start up ecosystem thrive over time. These are not any hard and fast rules, but rather good guiding principles which one can observe in great and successful start-up destinations in the world.

Some of the key ingredients of a truly good start-up ecosystem are as follows.

IT ALWAYS STARTS WITH GREAT IDEAS WHICH TURN INTO GREAT BUSINESSES

Start-up ecosystems must have access to great ideas. Going forward, and into the future, we would seriously need to think building super platforms over features and loads of wisdom over just interesting widgets. The ratio of successes is very small. Therefore, working on really big ideas would be of immense help.

ACCESS TO TALENT, AND OVER TIME, BUILDING UP OF STRONG BENCH-STRENGTH OF BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS

Also, entrepreneurs who have learned from prior mistakes, are ultimately going to dictate the success of their businesses, and in turn, the success of the ecosystem.

THE BEST IDEAS AND THE BEST TALENT ARE USELESS WITHOUT THE CAPITAL TO FUND THEIR VISION

It is critical that the capital is available to embrace each stage of development, from seed to early to growth stages of businesses. Having seed stage, but not Series A or Series B stage, is a recipe for a likely flame-out of that start-up when they hit the wall in that level of their growth.

ACCESS TO CUSTOMERS

To me, this is the most important piece. Customers drive revenues. Revenues impress investors. Investors fund growth. Growth leads to big exits. Big exits lead to a robust ecosystem. This often means that there need to be tight partnerships between early-stage ideas with later stage companies to buy those services. Especially those who are supportive to helping the local start-up community.

Some of the key stakeholders of a robust ecosystem are:

ENTREPRENEURS

A good ecosystem would need experienced teams running start-up businesses. With a good balance of needed skill sets from planning, strategizing, use of technology and understanding a fair amount of financing.

MENTORS

First time entrepreneurs need to be able to ask questions from experienced leaders, to help get

them up the learning curve, without making the same mistakes of their predecessors. A good pool of mentors who are willing to give back in some form to build up a strong legacy.

INVESTORS

These could be small individual angels, organised angel networks, venture capital firms, private equity firms, family offices, corporations or other funding sources. A steady and well understood money flow begins to build confidence in the ecosystem.

INCUBATORS

They could facilitate everything from shared office spaces for start-ups, going to formal start-up accelerator programs with formal educational curriculum. The breed of entrepreneurs tends to learn from each other when they are in close proximity to each other.

UNIVERSITIES

A lot of the super business ideas are born from the research and ideas inside of universities. Having a healthy technology transfer process for these ideas to be monetised by business leaders is key.

CORPORATIONS

Big companies can help in many ways. They invest through corporate venture capital funds. They become potential customers of new local start-ups. They have pain points of their own, that a local start-up can build and solve for them. They are often the exit for start-ups that have gotten large in size.

EVENTS

There are many groups in town that help organise and propel the ecosystem. This could be industry trade associations, venture capital associations, entrepreneur networking groups and chambers of commerce.

GOVERNMENT

Whether it is at the city, county or state level, the local government can and does play a very important role. That could include providing tax incentives for start-ups to launch in their city, tax free profits on any capital gains in a start-up to help stimulate investment, passing ecosystem friendly laws like free access to the internet, or establishing venture capital funds with a portion of their treasury, granting of long-term residency visas to lock in potential talent.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

The lawyers, accountants, bankers, recruiters, agencies, advisors, and consultants in the community, all play a role. The more experienced they are with start-ups, the better advice they will bring to the ecosystem.

Once a start-up is successful, money that simply goes into the bank account, or into safe real estate investments, does not help the ecosystem. The money needs to round trip back into the community.

If we learn lessons from Silicon Valley, it prides itself on failure as a badge of honour, as the lessons learned in one bad start-up, will apply to the next good start-up. It takes a couple cheerleaders at the top that are going to plant the flag and have everyone rally around those goals for the community.

Preferably, somebody that can put their money where their mouth is and can lean on their deep reservoir of key relationships in our region.

It is generally harder to build a robust community in smaller towns. There simply isn't enough activity, breadth of industries or depth of expertise in any one industry to be effective. Better to be in a town big enough to support an ecosystem or prepare for a fair amount of travel between a bunch of smaller regions that have been aggregated into one community.

The best start-up ecosystems feed off each other. Ecosystems are not built-in years; they are built over decades. That is why Silicon Valley's start-up ecosystem is as big as it is; they have literally been working on it since the 1970's, a fine-tuned machine after 40 years of optimisation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The lessons learned in one bad start-up, will apply to the next good start-up.
- It takes a couple cheerleaders at the top that are going to plant the flag and have everyone rally around those goals.
- A lot of the super business ideas are born from the research and ideas inside of universities.
- Start-up ecosystems must have access to great ideas.
- A good ecosystem would need experienced teams running start-up businesses.

EITC's Board of Directors elects Malek Sultan Al Malek as the company's new Chairman

EITC's Board of Directors has unanimously elected current Board Member Malek Sultan Al Malek as the company's new Chairman of the Board of Directors with immediate effect to replace outgoing Chairman HE Mohamed Bin Hadi Al Hussaini. Abdulla Khalifa Abdulla Humaid Belhoul was also appointed as Director.

Malek Sultan Al Malek is one of the leading business figures in the UAE and holds key economic and cultural positions in the UAE, CEO of Dubai Holding Asset Management, which includes the most prominent business parks in Dubai in addition to many important destinations and residential complexes under their portfolio.

Al Malek also holds the position of Director-General of the Dubai Development Authority, affiliated to the Government of Dubai, which contributes to enhancing the Emirate's competitiveness and consolidating its position as a global hub for talent and business.

Al Malek also serves on the boards of several institutions in the UAE, including the Dubai Institute of Design and Innovation, the Higher Colleges of Technology, and the Mohammed bin Rashid Library.

Nader Haffar elevated to Chairman of KPMG's Middle East and South Asia region

The KPMG Middle East and South Asia region's Board has announced the appointment of Nader Haffar as its Chairman, effective 1st October 2021. In this capacity, he will represent MESA on the KPMG Global Council and the KPMG Europe, Middle East and Africa Board.

Nader Haffar is presently the Chairman and CEO of KPMG Lower Gulf, a role he has held since 2018. Prior to this, he led the management consulting practices of the KPMG member firms in the Lower Gulf and Saudi Arabia.

As Chairman and CEO of KPMG Lower Gulf, Nader Haffar was instrumental in transforming the practice through several initiatives including a laser focus on quality, ramping up of Advisory and Tax capabilities, and hiring top talent. As a MESA Board member over the past three years, Nader brought his drive and resilience to the MESA region helping to strengthen the region's professional services capabilities.

The KPMG MESA region is one of the largest and fastest-growing sub-regions within the KPMG network of member firms. The KPMG MESA region covers more than 25 office locations across 15 countries and territories, including Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Maldives, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates.

Xylem appoints Naji Skaf as Managing Director for Middle East and Turkey

Xylem announced the appointment of Naji Skaf as Managing Director for the Middle East and Turkey. Naji will be stepping into his new role as managing director with a track record of 23 years in the energy sector and 17 years of experience working in the region. Previously, he served as President of Middle East and Turkey at Air Products, as well as CEO of Air Products Qudra – a regional development and investment joint venture between Air Products and Qudra Energy, a subsidiary of Vision Invest.

Throughout his career, Naji has served on, and chaired boards of multiple organisations such as the Middle East Gas Association, AJWAA, and the Egyptian Industrial Gas Company, and brings with him a wealth of expertise in the energy sector.

Based in Dubai, Naji will be leading the business by expanding and developing internal operations and maintaining strong relationships with stakeholders and clients, ensuring continued business growth across the Middle East and Turkey.

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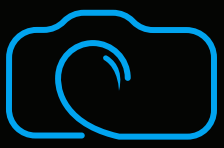

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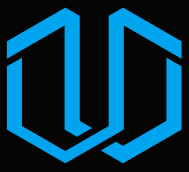

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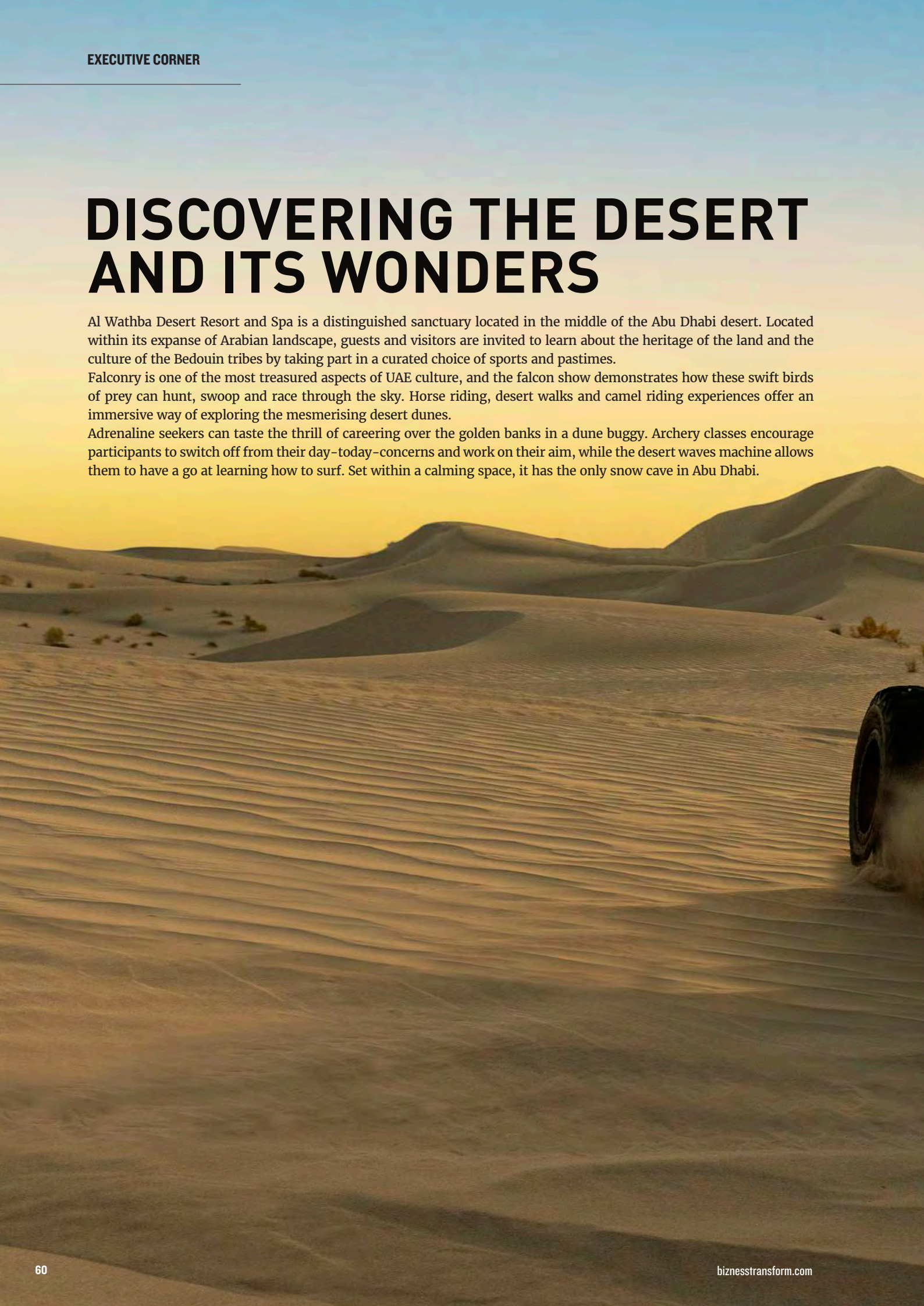
DISCOVERING THE DESERT AND ITS WONDERS

Al Wathba Desert Resort and Spa is a distinguished sanctuary located in the middle of the Abu Dhabi desert. Located within its expanse of Arabian landscape, guests and visitors are invited to learn about the heritage of the land and the culture of the Bedouin tribes by taking part in a curated choice of sports and pastimes.

Falconry is one of the most treasured aspects of UAE culture, and the falcon show demonstrates how these swift birds of prey can hunt, swoop and race through the sky. Horse riding, desert walks and camel riding experiences offer an immersive way of exploring the mesmerising desert dunes.

Adrenaline seekers can taste the thrill of careering over the golden banks in a dune buggy. Archery classes encourage participants to switch off from their day-today-concerns and work on their aim, while the desert waves machine allows them to have a go at learning how to surf. Set within a calming space, it has the only snow cave in Abu Dhabi.



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GETAWAY RETREATS TO THE BOLIFUSHI ISLANDS

The Ozen Reserve experience begins when guests reach Velana International Airport in Malé. A personal butler welcomes guests and assists them to the lounge, located a few steps away from the arrival gate. While guests' recharge in the lounge their butler completes the transfer formalities.

A scenic 20-minute catamaran ride brings guests to Bolifushi island. This journey is experience with spacious interiors, catamaran amenities and service of tea, coffee and chilled water. Transfers are kept private. The Reserve experience allows getaways in 15 reserves.

The Reserve experience allows guests to dine anywhere, anytime at Bolifushi island, including all-day dining at speciality restaurants. Guests are also treated to an array of personalised culinary experiences. As the getaway ends, a farewell experience is curated with personal touches.

14th Annual Global Shopper Study

The Next Wave of Retail Fulfillment

Shoppers' new habits—likely here to stay—propel technology-enabled fulfillment.

Market disruption has triggered significant changes to the retail sector, accelerating shifts already underway while inspiring a new era of retail innovation. These trends translate into new priorities for retailers wanting to keep up with amplified shopper expectations.

Shoppers need speed.

Technology provides the convenience consumers crave as they increasingly use their smartphones and in-store devices to shop.

77% have used mobile ordering, +5pp since 2019

60% have used a mobile app for grocery delivery, +6pp since 2019

73% expect the latest technology in stores

47% use self-checkout, +7pp since 2019

34% use cashless payments, +12pp since 2019

+pp denotes the percentage point increase

Will robots replace or help me? Associates are torn.

Concerns about being replaced by automation grew nearly 70% since 2019, but associates also increasingly believe technology will help augment their work.

54% are concerned about being replaced by a robot, +10pp since 2019

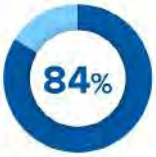
58% say the use of robots would help augment their work, +16pp since 2019

70% view employers more positively if they are provided with devices and technology, +19pp since 2019

Retail decision-makers look to technology for new solutions.

They see the potential for technology to address core challenges they face as the retail landscape evolves.

believe it's highly important to use technology to improve stock availability and ordering



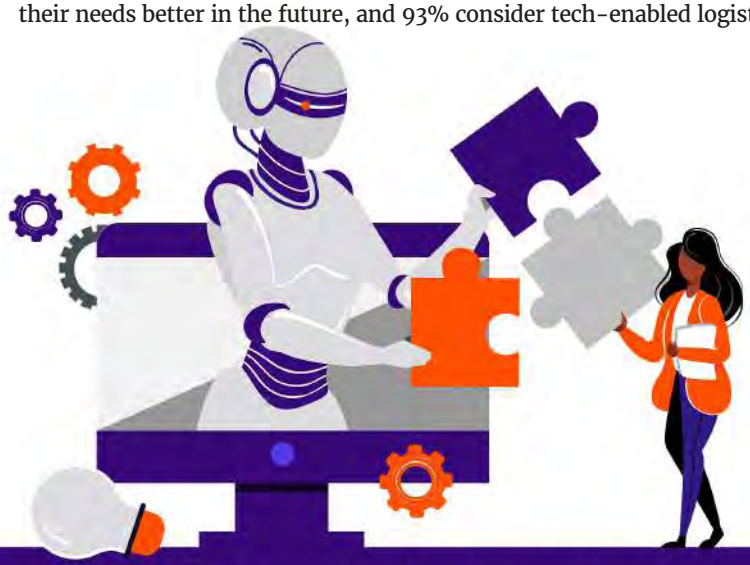
believe it's highly important to use technology to improve loss prevention

see distribution order management and advanced order fulfillment as top emerging technologies over the next five years

UAE'S READINESS TO EMBRACE THE FUTURE

The UAE is at the cusp of change, with the pandemic accelerating the country's digital transformation. According to the study, which surveyed more than 750 respondents across the UAE, 96% stated that they believe the country is prioritizing technology like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Blockchain to deliver a future-ready world.

Approximately 96% also believed technology they had seen in science fiction movies is either already a part of their daily lives, or likely to be in the next few years. Roughly 96% respondents believe that the e-commerce sector will need to be more technologically driven to meet their needs better in the future, and 93% consider tech-enabled logistics important in a futuristic world.



UAE ready to embrace the future... now

FedEx commissioned a survey in the UAE based on the idea that the 'Future is Now', asking the general public about their expectations from the 'future'.

believe the country is prioritizing technology like AI, IoT, and Blockchain to deliver a future-ready world

SECTORS DRIVING AND SHAPING THE FUTURE

28% Technology

21% Infrastructure and Logistics

19% Healthcare

15% Public Service

14% E-commerce

Source: FedEx Future is Now study

WHAT DOES 'FUTURE-READY' MEAN IN THE UAE?

Being DYNAMIC, and constantly evolving

90% believe companies are demonstrating their ability to understand 'What's next?' and present possible solutions

In the past year, **86%** have altered a large part of their lifestyle to anticipate the future

An openness to EXPERIMENT and innovate

95% believe that those who experiment and adopt change are better equipped to navigate future challenges

82% stated that they are open to trying new experiences and changing their daily routines

Adopting a SUSTAINABLE outlook

93% said that, as decision-makers in a futuristic business, sustainability would be crucial and their top priority

88% agreed that individuals and communities with a 'futuristic' outlook are more environmentally conscious

Source: FedEx Future is Now study

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