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AND IT DECISION MAKING

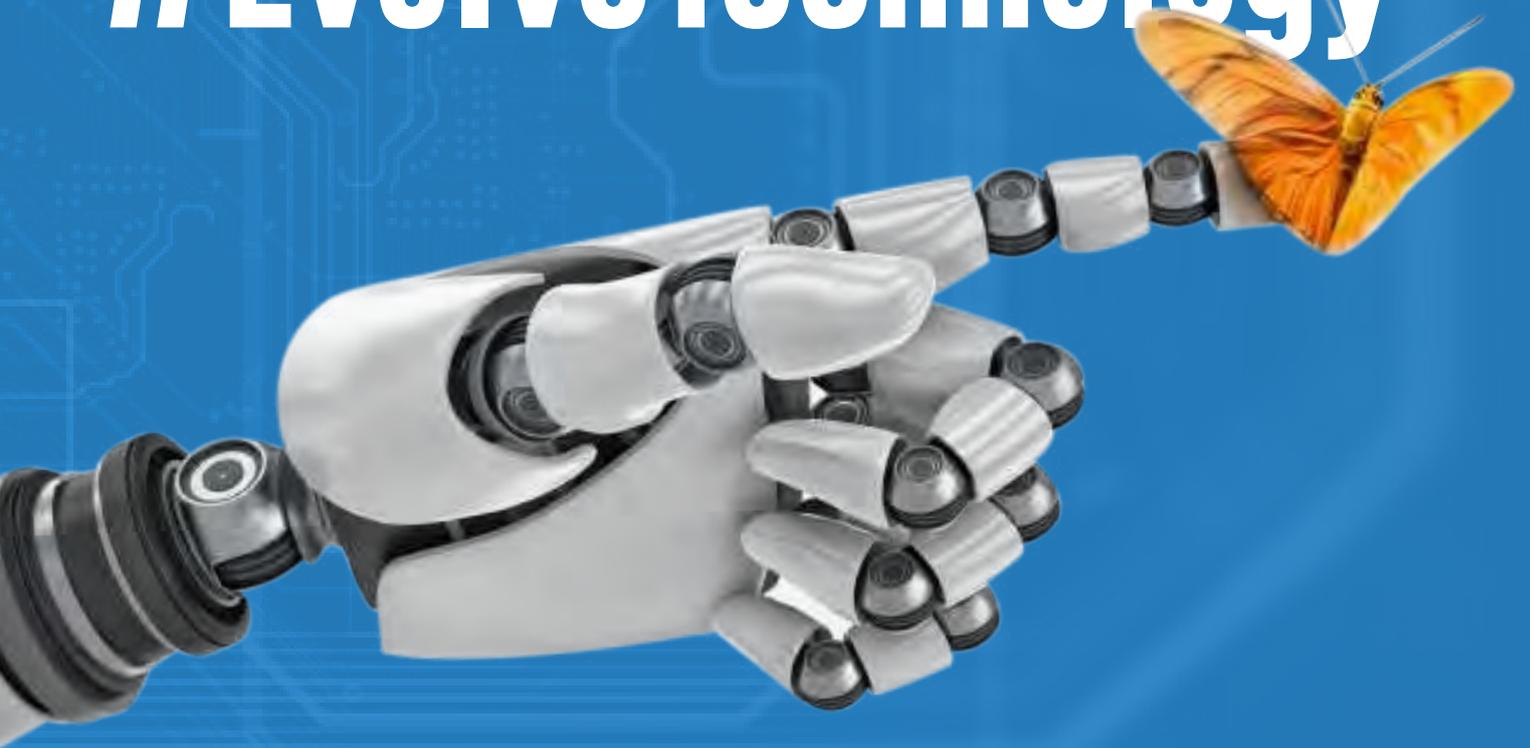


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## TECHNOLOGY DECISION MAKING

The IT organisation keeps the lights on, but to drive innovation and transformation, IT must partner with business. CIOs must engage with their peers in business and with the C-suite. If the C-suite does not understand and commit to the business transformation journey in full, that journey is going nowhere. Objectives and targets will keep changing and the CIO will appear rudderless. In

this edition, industry executives revisit the technology and IT decision making process that drives transformation.

Morey Haber from BeyondTrust points out that complying with the requirements of future legislation may impede the progression of innovation. Many great ideas that can power a business to new heights, may not be feasible due to global technology limitations and the restrictions of regional data privacy laws.

Liferay's Moussalam Dalati advises that the IT function should be restructured every two to three years. With a strategic outlook of two-three years, organisations should identify milestones that map successes and corrections, restructuring the way IT functions. IT and business leaders must have a clear vision on the mission of the business and maintain open lines of communication to drive better business outcomes.

Pete Hall from Ciena asks whether technology decision makers are really prepared for the next Black Swan event? Hall says, industry professionals need to lead the companies' strategic transformation initiatives, be more disruptive and ready for Black Swan events to emerge. Also, CIOs and CTOs need to communicate the benefits of technology implementations more effectively across the organisation.

Phil Le-Brun from Amazon Web Services does not believe that the approach of business and IT as two separate functions can be effective anymore and points out that technology is now part of business.

Philip Andrews from Red Hat correlates enterprise objectives with maturity in digital transformation. Organisational priorities shift between the different stages of digital transformation initiatives. Decision makers in organisations in earlier stages are more likely to focus on cost reduction and simplification. Decision makers in later stages choose innovation as their priority.

Boston Consulting Group's Rami Riad Mourtada, advises on the benefits of having a central, digital and design authority that encompasses IT, business, digital functions, acting for governance, while facilitating strategic choices. BCG has also coined a new term: Bionic, for organisations that are overboard on automation and AI.

And in the end, refreshingly, the regional Software AG team shares their passion of competitive sports and how it boost their ability to perform at work, with customers, and deliver holistic business outcomes. A nice piece indeed.

We look at diversity at its best through Jen Blandos, CEO, Female Fusion; Catherina Ballout, Director of edukaan; and Reham Kilano, Clinical Operations Manager, Eon Dental.

Turn these 100+ pages to immerse yourself in our transformative content.  
Wish you the best and Eid Mubarak.

Arun Shankar  
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# CLOUD, MEET LIGHTNING

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# GENDER, ETHNICITY ARE NOT THE ONLY DIVERSITY METRICS

Business moves beyond these aspects, and it is now about inclusion of diverse cultures, belief systems, morals and values, and socioeconomic backgrounds.



**NAIF AL OTAIBI**  
Managing Director  
Proven Arabia.

**I**n the post pandemic era, one of the key priorities of businesses is to contribute to economic growth and strength. We are living in times where globalisation, technological advances, sociocultural dynamics and the societal ideals are directly reflected within workplaces.

Diversity and inclusion are not just practices being put into place, but assets for businesses and employees as well, as it helps to foster innovation and creativity.

Today, gender and ethnicity are not the only diversity metrics to be checked off. The business environment moves beyond and across these two aspects, and it is now more about the inclusion of diverse cultures, belief systems, morals and values, and socioeconomic backgrounds, too.

Businesses in the region are fast realising their own power to bring about a transformative change with inclusion and the benefits of hiring and supporting diverse groups. Thus, the case for establishing a truly diverse workforce, at all organisational levels, grows more compelling each year, and is more of a necessity given that every individual should be offered the same opportunities, regardless of their identities.

It is important that every society recognizes the value of individuals with special abilities. For a thriving and inclusive economy, organisations must implement services that meet the needs of the specially-abled to integrate them into the system. Their contribution cements the foundation for change and strengthens our social and moral fibre.

However, it takes careful consideration and conscious orchestration to create this dynamic and incorporate deliberate measures that protect vulnerable members of society, be that in the workplace or in our daily lives.

In Saudi Arabia, more than half a million citizens live with a form

of disability, as per the National and Regional Prevalence Rated of Disability report of 2016.

There is substantial research-based evidence to show that diversity and inclusion result in increased profitability and creativity in an organisation which in turn leads to a stronger

and more efficient culture. Employees with different capabilities from varied backgrounds bring their own perspectives, ideas and experiences which helps to nurture a more resilient organisation.

According to a 2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey, 74% of respondents are of the view that an organisation becomes more innovative when it has a culture of inclusion. The future workforce will primarily consist of

millennials, so it is crucial to hire accordingly and ensure that diversity remains a key part of the company culture.

The UAE has already passed a resolution in 2018 requiring employers to accommodate individuals with disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce and to engage in active and productive employment on an equal basis with their colleagues. The resolution applies to all governmental entities, private-sector employers, and non-profit organisations. ■

“  
In Saudi Arabia, more than half a million citizens live with a form of disability  
”

# METaverse IS THE NEXT VERSION OF INTERNET

Metaverse will allow people to replicate physical activities and could happen by extending physical activities to a virtual world or transforming the physical one.

The Metaverse is a collective virtual open space, created by the convergence of virtually enhanced physical and digital reality. It is physically persistent and provides enhanced immersive experiences. It is device-independent and is not owned by a single vendor. It is an independent virtual economy, enabled by digital currencies and nonfungible tokens (NFTs).

Metaverse will allow people to replicate or enhance their physical activities. This could happen by transporting or extending physical activities to a virtual world or by

transforming the physical one. Although the goal of a Metaverse is to combine many of these activities, there are currently many individual Metaverses with limited functionality.

Gartner expects that by 2026, 25% of people will spend at least one hour a day in the Metaverse for work, shopping, education, social media and entertainment.

A Metaverse represents a combinatorial innovation, as it requires multiple technologies and trends to function. Contributing technology

capabilities include augmented reality, flexible work styles, head-mounted displays, an AR cloud, the Internet of Things, 5G, artificial intelligence and spatial technologies.

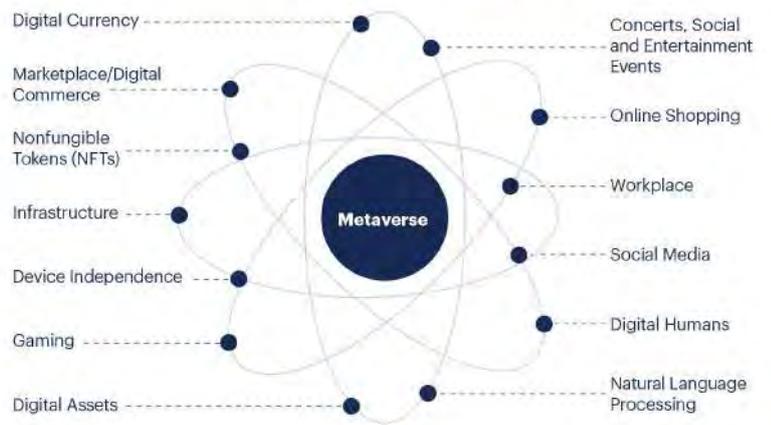
To understand the concepts of a Metaverse, think of it as the next version of the Internet, which started as individual bulletin boards and independent online destinations. Eventually these destinations became sites on a virtual shared space — similar to how a Metaverse will develop.

Activities that take place

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION LEADERS

- Develop digital business strategies that leverage the built-in infrastructure and participants of the Metaverse.
- Lead idea and innovation management that focuses on new opportunities and business models with the Metaverse.
- Identify the unique technology risk, privacy and security implications in this new persistent and decentralised environment.
- List the outcomes, opportunities and obstacles the Metaverse entails in the form of an emerging-technology wheel.

## Elements of a Metaverse



gartner.com

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Gartner



**MARTY RESNICK**  
VP Analyst, Gartner.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- The goal of a Metaverse is to combine many activities, however there are currently many individual Metaverses with limited functionality.
- Adoption of Metaverse technologies is still at early stage, so business leaders should limit their investments.
- There is a lot of excitement around Metaverse, much of it driven by technology companies.

in isolated environments buying digital land and constructing virtual homes, participating in a virtual social experience, will eventually take place in the Metaverse. The adoption of Metaverse technologies is still at an early stage, so business leaders should limit their investments there.

Technology innovation leaders need to identify, examine and track emerging technologies to help business leaders develop new products, transform the business or mitigate risks. The Metaverse is one such technology whose impact on driving strategic business innovations you need to proactively consider.

There is a lot of excitement around Metaverse, much of it driven by technology companies pre-emptively claiming to be Metaverse companies or creating Metaverses to enhance or augment the digital and physical realities of people. Moreover, activities that currently take place in siloed environments will eventually take place in a single Metaverse.

**THESE ARE:**

- Purchasing outfits and accessories for online avatars
- Buying digital land and constructing virtual homes
- Participating in a virtual social experience
- Shopping in virtual malls via immersive commerce
- Using virtual classrooms to experience immersive learning
- Buying digital art, collectibles and assets NFTs
- Interacting with digital humans for onboarding employees, customer service, sales and other business interactions

It is expected that a Metaverse will provide persistent, decentralised, collaborative and interoperable opportunities and

business models that will enable organisations to extend digital business.

Today there are many individual use cases and products, all creating their own versions of a Metaverse. Opportunities across multiple industries include:

- Higher education, medical, military and other types of trades can deliver a more immersive learning experience. They do not need to create their own infrastructure, as the Metaverse will provide the framework.
- Virtual events, having gained popularity over the last two years, can now present more integrated offerings.
- Retail can extend its reach to an immersive shopping experience that allows for more complex products.
- Enterprises can achieve better engagement, collaboration and connection with their employees through virtually augmented workspaces.
- Social media can move to the Metaverse, where users can interact through three-dimensional avatars.

The adoption of Metaverse technologies is still nascent and fragmented, and we recommend refraining from heavy investments in a specific Metaverse. It is still too early to determine which investments will be viable in the long term, and the priority should be to learn, explore and prepare for a Metaverse without going overboard with implementation, based on a few use cases. ■

# HOW CIOs CAN KEEP STALLED DX PROJECTS MOVING FORWARD

Any organisational change will face opposition and CIOs must realise that successful digital transformation requires non-technical skills as well.

**T**he global pandemic brought businesses and industries to the brink of collapse and drove digital transformation into the spotlight as a necessary saviour. And while organisations are to be applauded for taking the first necessary steps, most face challenges, which may stem from non-technical reasons as well.

The results generated from global research have concluded that digital transformation initiatives may stall from a myriad of non-technical

reasons. CIOs need to be aware of the multiple non-technical reasons that can ground digital transformation initiatives, often for no fault of theirs, and plan to find ways to work around the points of failure described below.

## LIMITED FUNDING

Many finance heads continue to look at technology and IT spending as an operational expense rather than one driving innovation and longer-term strategic benefit. Hence, when a digital transformation initiative

is proposed it may be hard for the CIO to gather the total funding to complete the project.

Inability to gather sufficient funds to drive a digital transformation project also arises when financial decision making is siloed and fails to see and apportion the benefits of digital transformation across the organisation. With such an approach, it may be difficult to justify sufficient funds and may require alternative routes for results.

The way forward is to justify expenditure for digital transformation with the business outcomes delivered. Many times,





**RANJITH KAIPPADA**  
Managing Director,  
Cloud Box Technologies.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- The way forward is to justify expenditure for digital transformation with business outcomes delivered.
- Budgets are available with business heads and may require realignment and reprioritisation of the digital transformation initiative.
- Delivery of timely business results and delivery of political benefits if well-articulated, can help to trigger investment.

budgets are available with business heads and may require realignment and reprioritisation of the digital transformation initiative, along the business objectives related to that funding.

Delivery of timely business results and delivery of political benefits if well-articulated, can also help to trigger sufficient levels of investment to mobilise the digital transformation initiative. Finally, CIOs need to be flexible in identifying and realigning with multiple funding opportunities that may exist across the organisation.

**BREADTH OF SKILLS**

The successful roll out of digital transformation initiatives requires having multiple types of digital skill sets across the organisation. Some of these core skill sets include cloud migration and orchestration, digital architecture and platforms, data analytics, user experience and design, amongst others. Other than technical skills, teams also need to prepare themselves to become agile and flexible, often referred to as digital nimbleness.

The way forward is to build multiple types of digital training programs across the organisation. In addition to training employees with digital skills along their functional job roles, they can also be offered digital skills training outside their functional roles. This will help them to understand the multifunctional and cross siloed approach of digital transformation.

Another important initiative is to build skills in business areas that are the most impacted by digital transformation. Since digital transformation impacts existing job roles and helps to create new ones, communicating new career paths and skills progression based on experience, are another important part of the internal initiatives.



Finance heads continue to look at technology and IT spending as an operational expense rather than one driving innovation



**TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

Post pandemic, all industries, and all organisations, have experienced an increase in the usage of digital technologies. On the flip side, shortage of IT and technology talent can dampen the enthusiasm of most digital transformation initiatives. The reasons for shortage of technology and business subject matter experts in an organisation can range from cultural to siloed thinking of the management.

A short-term approach of building skilled resources in low code type of digital transformation solutions can only go so far. The real benefits for an organisation are gained by developing the complete gamut of skills required to manage digital transformation initiatives of any complexity and scope.

The way forward is to build a continuous program of developing digital skills and culture across the organisation that helps in positive roll out of a digital transformation initiative. Such a continuous program of skills development and enhancement requires management support and a medium to long term vision for improvement and transformation. ■

# BUILDING ZERO TRUST FRAMEWORK IN AN OT-IOT ENVIRONMENT

A Zero Trust architecture, prior to allowing a machine or user to connect to the network, should verify whether that connection can be made safely.



**Z**ero Trust is not a clearly defined standard. Each vendor seems to take liberties to match their focus. This makes it a very fluid conversation.

What should it do? What problems should it solve?

Zero Trust somehow switches the mentality of the network from allowing access by default, to blocking access by default unless required.

A lofty goal, but what does it really imply?

Context is very important for Zero Trust policies. A Zero Trust architecture, prior to allowing a machine or user to connect to the network, should verify whether that connection can be made safely. The connection should be established to be the minimum number of resources that it needs. These checks should be done on a per-session basis

instead of once-off at the start.

Incorporating context into Zero Trust policy decisions stands in stark contrast to the usual allow-list approach of Zero Trust implementations. Obviously, identity is important to verify but it still does not really help assess whether the connection can be made safely and should be allowed, especially if the device has been compromised.

Zero Trust is a framework that disallows connectivity by assuming there is risk unless proven otherwise. Rather than simply defining a minimalist access policy, security posture and context can play a role in improving Zero Trust security. This helps significantly reduce risk by making more informed decisions about connectivity.



**KHALID ALJAMED**

Regional Director for Middle East and Africa, Nozomi Networks.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Context is very important for Zero Trust policies.
- Incorporating context into Zero Trust policy decisions stands in contrast to the usual allow-list approach.
- Zero Trust is a framework that disallows connectivity by assuming there is risk unless proven otherwise.
- Security posture and context can play a role in improving Zero Trust security.

Now how do you do this in an OT-IoT infrastructure?

**ZERO TRUST FOR OT-IOT**

Here is a basic check list:

- Does micro-segmentation make sense for OT?
- What about user agents?
- Where do you start?
- What if traffic is blocked?
- What impact will that have on the process?

It is totally normal in IT to block traffic, but in OT-IoT, this is risky. Simply blocking it might just impact production more than allowing traffic. Many OT-IoT devices such as controllers, sensors, robots, and so forth are headless. Very often, security was not a consideration when these products were developed.

To make better-quality decisions about connectivity, you need better information. Understanding what you are trying to protect is where it all starts. It is identical to IT, but the method of getting there differs.

It is about knowing the type of devices, what hardware and software is used and what the expected behaviour of those devices is. It is also about knowing how the entire OT-IoT environment behaves, which machine speaks to another machine? With what protocol? What payload is exchanged? At what frequency?

If you understand this in real-time, you are well on your way towards an optimal Zero Trust for OT-IoT environments.

**DECISION MAKING FOR OT-IOT**

Gathering information must lead somewhere – it should be converted into actionable intelligence and, ultimately, actions. Knowing hardware and software versions will lead to knowing what vulnerabilities apply to those monitored devices, whether those devices are still



It is totally normal in IT to block traffic, but in OT-IoT, this is risky



supported by their vendors, and how they should act on the network.

Knowing the behaviour of entire OT-IoT networks also implies the ability to detect and alert upon anomalies.

If, suddenly, devices that never communicated with one another start doing so or if there were communications before, but it is now displaying entirely different behaviour, it justifies investigation into the legitimacy of it. It is very possible that this is the start of a breach.

Data gathered towards Zero Trust should not just be an observation or a statement on what the likely issue is. It should help determine what impact it has on the entire OT-IoT network.

With regards to enforcement of a Zero Trust policy, even in OT-IoT, sometimes it is justified to automate interventions by blocking traffic. The suite of tools that form the cyber defence mechanism should play nice and exchange information to act as fast as possible, so that each function can be fulfilled effectively.

Pair all of this with digital transformation in OT-IoT and we have the perfect storm on our hands, which a Zero-Trust approach can help to mitigate. ■

# INNOVATION GALLERY



# ABU DHABI AND DUBAI CONNECTED THROUGH RAILWAY

HH Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and HH Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court and Chairman of Etihad Rail witnessed the connection of Abu Dhabi and Dubai through a railway track.

The UAE National Rail Network is the largest infrastructure project in the UAE. The completion of the railway track between Abu Dhabi and Dubai comes within the framework of The UAE Railway Programme, with an investment worth of AED 50 billion. The UAE Railway Programme includes a national network of railway projects that would link the seven emirates. The programme is expected to create economic opportunities amounting to AED 200 billion.

The length of the track is 256 km and includes 29 bridges, 60 crossings and 137 drainage channels. The total excavation and backfill work required participation of 13,300 workers, recording more than 47 million working hours.





## SUSTAINABILITY, PASSENGER EXPERIENCE TOP IN ETIHAD'S A350

Etihad Airways has received its new Airbus A350-1000, the first of five A350s set to join Etihad's fleet over the coming months. Remarketed Tony Douglas, Group Chief Executive Officer: The Airbus A350 is an absolutely incredible aircraft. The aircraft, named Sustainability50, carries a livery in recognition of 50th anniversary of UAE.

The aircraft features Etihad's newest cabin interior. The cabin lighting emulates natural ambient light and is designed to enhance the guest experience. The Airbus A350 also offers the quietest cabin experience for a wide-body aircraft. Another feature to help reduce light pollution, and jetlag, is the new dark-mode interface on the inflight entertainment system.

The elevated Business class is home to 44 Business Studios with sliding doors that provide a high level of privacy to each suite. Noise-cancelling headphones and an 18.5" screen provide a cinematic experience.



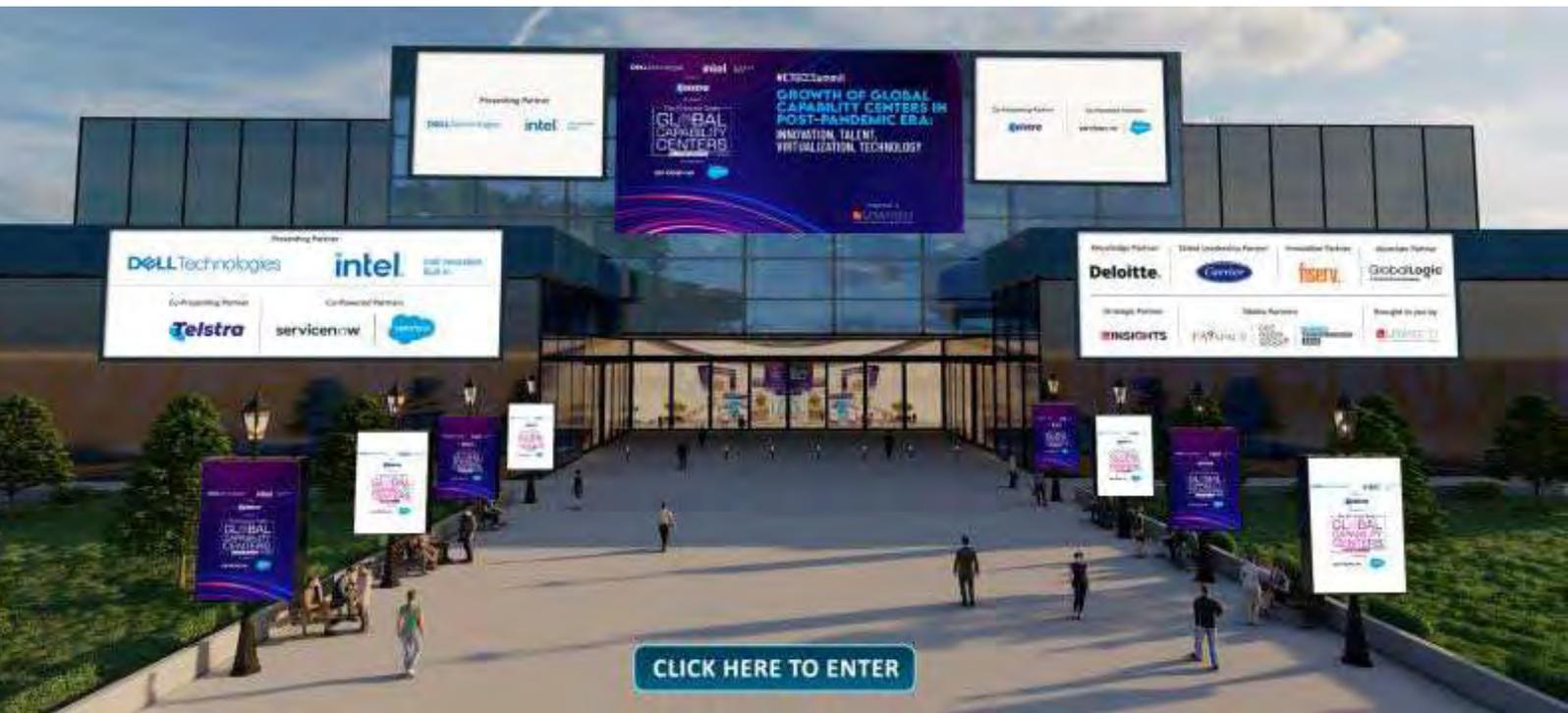




## ARIEL NANO AND SUSTAINABILITY IN UAE

Almost 50% women living in UAE plan to take on more sustainable initiatives, according to a study that canvassed how environmentally conscious UAE residents are. The survey was conducted by Censuswide on behalf of Ariel Middle East. The survey which canvassed 1,004 people revealed that 83% are aware of the impact purchasing choices have on the planet. The age group 35–44-years in UAE, aspire to be more sustainable.

The survey coincided with launch of Ariel NANO Pods. These contribute to reduction of water and electricity wastage as it removes stains without residues eliminating the need to rewash clothes. Studies proved that most underdose by 40% versus the recommended dosage per load. Upon dissolving in water, the sachet releases fine, concentrated detergent particles that penetrate deep into fabrics to give stain removal without powder residues.



# Speakers at Economic Times conclave discuss Global Capability Centres' maturity curve

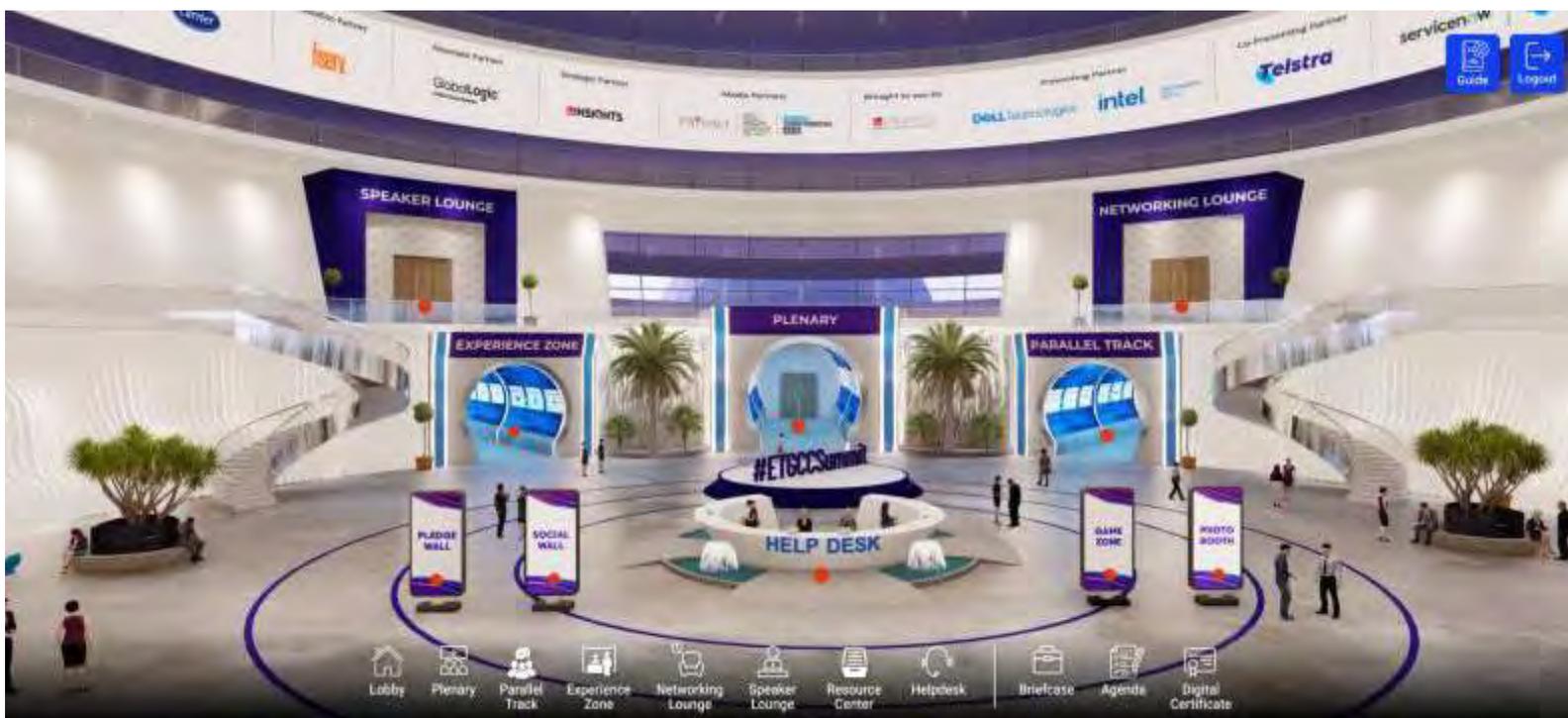
The 2nd Edition of The Economic Times GCC Conclave 2022 was successfully held on 22nd March 2022, virtually. The event brought together industry leaders to discuss and deliberate on key trends, best practices, and the future of the industry. Business Transformation Asia was the official event partner.

As Global Capability Centres move ahead in the maturity curve by driving complex transformations and bringing in new age capabilities, it has become important for organizations to adapt to the rapidly changing business and market environment. Talent, technology, new ways of working and revamped operating models are some of the key elements that are driving this transformation in the industry.

The Global Capability Centres sector can potentially scale up to \$60-85 Billion in the next five-six years, according to a recent report.

The 2nd edition of the ET GCC Summit was joined by 30 leading leaders including:

- Vimi Grewal-Carr, Global Clients and Industries Leader, UK Vice Chair, Deloitte
- Siva Kumar Padmanabhan, Managing Director and Head of Global Technology Centre, AstraZeneca
- Sudiip K Goswami, Director, and GM – South India and Start-Ups, Dell Technologies
- Punit Sood, Head of International Hubs, Natwest Group



- Vishal Parekh, Regional Head – India, Southeast Asia, Middle east and Russia, Thomson Reuters
- Deepak Mangla, Chief Executive Officer, Corporate Centres – India and Philippines, Member Asia Management Committee, JP Morgan
- Sanjay Dora, Country Operations Executive – Innovation and Capability Centres in India, Telstra
- Suhas Pingat, Product Evangelist for Dell Precision Workstation, Dell Technologies
- Gaurav Gupta, Partner and Global Capability Centre Leader, Deloitte India
- Dean Salters, Group Executive, Global Business Services, Telstra
- Sangita Sharma, Head of Operations, Centre Director, GSC Bangalore and Head, Global Payments COE, HSBC
- Gopakumar Subramonian, Senior Vice President, Delivery, Fiserv Global Services
- Ravi Mehta, Partner, Deloitte India
- Kamal Kanth, Regional Vice President, Salesforce India
- Deshant Kalia, Managing Director GBS, PepsiCo
- Chulanga Perera, Chief Transformation Officer and Head of Strategy, Daimler India Commercial Vehicles
- Sajid Ahmed, Executive Vice President Head of Technology, Wells Fargo India and Philippines
- Aswin Lakshmanan, Director, Strategy and Planning, Verizon India
- Padmanabhan, Senior Vice President – Engineering, GlobalLogic
- Monojit Mazumdar, Partner, Deloitte India
- Rubal Sahni, Regional Director, ServiceNow
- Joseph Alexander, Global Employee Experience Director, Unilever
- Nafisa Ojha, Managing Director and Country Manager, Colt
- Keerthi Kumar, Partner, Deloitte India
- Prakash Bodla, Managing Director, Carrier Technologies India
- Vikramjeet Singh, President and Chief Human Resource Officer, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance
- Gautam Gulati, Director, Schlumberger
- Dimple Kaloya, Head of Human Resources, Global Service Centres India and Group Functions GSC HTCs, HSBC
- Bimaljeet Singh Bhasin, President- Skills and Careers Business, NIIT
- Anandrup Ghose, Partner, Deloitte India, Harish Soni, Resiliency and Security Practice Leader, Kyndryl

The Economic Times GCC Conclave 2021 was concluded with the closing note by Balaji Nuthalapadi, Managing Director and Head of Operations and Technology, Citi South Asia at Citi.



## IGOAI, Council of Representatives Bahrain, organise virtual summit on Data 'Future of Everything'

International Group of Artificial Intelligence in association with the Council of Representatives Kingdom of Bahrain, organised a virtual summit of the Second International Conference of Data 'Future of Everything' on 30 March 2022. The conference focused on how data has captured the entire world.

**THE EVENT WAS JOINED BY TOP INDUSTRY LEADERS INCLUDING:**

- Her Excellency Fawzia bint Abdullah Zainal, Speaker of House Representatives, Kingdom of Bahrain
- Dr Jassim Haji, President, IGOAI
- May Li, Marketing VP, Huawei ME
- Eva-Marie Muller-Stuler, Partner, Consulting Ernst & Young Middle East
- Dr Sawsan Hilal, Assistant Professor, Coordinator of MSc in Big Data Science and Analytics, University of Bahrain
- Dr Eman Mohamed Khorsheed, Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics, University of Bahrain
- Dr Idoia Salazar, Co-Founder and President, OdiseIA
- Dalal Buhumeida, Event MC

The event was started with a welcome note by Her Excellency Fawzia bint Abdullah Zainal, Speaker of House Representatives, Kingdom of Bahrain and Dr Jassim Haji, President, IGOAI where they offered a warm welcome to all the guests and speakers. The event was moderated by Dalal Buhumeida.



**DATA AND AI IN 5G ENABLED DIGITAL VERTICALS**

May Li, Marketing Vice-President, Huawei ME spoke on 'Data and AI in 5G enabled digital verticals.' Speaking on the current situation of 5G deployment and how it is going to impact different verticals sectors and their challenges, May Li said, "5G is truly accelerating and has become mainstream in leading markets. So, if we look at it as a consumer market, with the technical capability it is also accelerating the digital transformation in verticals sectors."



#### **BUILDING TRUSTED AI**

Dr Eva-Marie Muller-Stuler, Partner, Consulting Ernst & Young Middle East discussed the building of trusted artificial intelligence and described the five pillars of trustworthy artificial intelligence including Transparency, Fairness, Explainability, Privacy Protection, and Robustness.

#### **BIG DATA – TODAY'S WORLD BIG-GAME CHANGER**

Dr Sawsan Hilal, Assistant Professor, Coordinator of MSc in Big Data Science and Analytics, University of Bahrain spoke on 'Big Data – Today's World Big-Game Changer' and talked about the big data sources and said from all the activities of our daily life we are generating big data. She also took all the attendees on a journey concerning big data as a hot term for the current era to mention its domain of applications and highlight its potential besides the challenges.



#### **A NEW HYBRID METHODOLOGY FOR TIME-SERIES DATA ANALYTICS WITH AN APPLICATION ON LONG-TERM ENERGY LOAD FORECASTING FOR THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN**

Dr Eman Mohamed Khorsheed, Assistant Professor and Department of Mathematics, University of Bahrain explained the classification of load forecasting in terms of planning horizon's duration – short term forecast, medium-term forecast, long term forecast.

#### **DATA AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION**

Dr Idoia Salazar, Co-founder and President, OdiseIA spoke over 'Data and Artificial Intelligence: Challenges for Education' and said these days everything is moving at a fast pace and we have many impacts of different technologies. Idoia also talked about the ongoing cyber-attacks and fake news and described how it is confusing for people by collecting data.

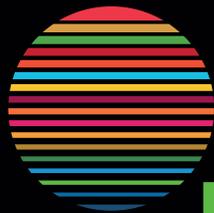


The conference was concluded with an interesting fire chat session with all the speakers and was moderated by Dalal Buhumeida.

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## Powered by solar, wind, hydrogen, 36-metre 100-tonne PORRIMA arrives at Dubai Harbour

Dubai Harbour, an extraordinary seafront district, welcomed the Swiss experimental vessel powered solely by renewables, PORRIMA, to its marinas, as part of its worldwide journey across five continents called the Blue Odyssey. Choosing Dubai Harbour for its second world destination, the first-of-its-kind solar, wind and hydrogen-powered ship has travelled more than 11,000 kilometres without stopping since departing Osaka, Japan, on December 18, 2021.

Upon arrival at Dubai Harbour, the PORRIMA berthed at Harbour Marina in front of the Yacht Club building before unveiling a suite of renewable technologies that have been proven on board. It will invite the youth to join the 'Blue Campus' to learn the skills and build the talent around the showcased next-generation solutions to sustainable ocean industries and resource preservation.

The journey, which aims to arrive at its destination after a refit with 12 novel technologies in time for the opening of the Expo 2025 Osaka, will see the vessel dock at ports around the world to demonstrate how to tackle problems such as pollution and climate change through the use of commercially viable renewable technologies. The project comes in response to a call to action from the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition, which invites initiatives geared towards realising 'an ideal future society.'

## Bottled water industry's adoption of green strategy is pivotal to government's efforts

In the midst of the growing global sustainability initiatives, the bottled water industry has taken steps of its own to align its supply chain processes with the green movement. Such a strategy will not only make the industry in step with the Sustainability Development Goals of the United Nations but also lead to innovation, higher operational efficiency, better consumer trust, and significant cost benefits.

In the UAE, the bottled water industry's adoption of a green strategy is pivotal to the government's environmental efforts, which include carbon footprint reduction, and renewable energy strategy. This direction has resulted not only in programs reducing the environmental impact of industry players but also the optimised use of their resources, whether it be water or packaging materials, among others.



**ALEXANDER VAN 'T RIET,**  
CEO, Mai Dubai.



## UAE's Barq EV releases smart mobility and logistics solutions including scooter, cycle, drone

The UAE company, Barq EV, specialised in the field of smart mobility and logistics solutions, announced the official launch to start its business in the UAE. The start-up is scheduled to provide its customers with an integrated package of products and services that contribute to enhancing the last-mile delivery experience. This initiative comes in line with the UAE's efforts to support the growth of the logistics, transport, and e-commerce sectors in the UAE.

During the ceremony that was organised at the Emirates Palace Hotel in the capital, Abu Dhabi, the company indicated that it aims to address the delivery challenges of several industries such as e-commerce, logistics, and transportation of medical supplies through its environmentally friendly electric vehicles.

Ahmed Suhail Faris Al Mazroui, the company's co-founder, mentioned that the UAE has a proven track record, unmatched in the Middle East, in incubating innovative ideas and projects. This comes as a result of the government's support for start-ups and emerging companies by providing the ideal business environment and technology incubators, as well as providing the appropriate infrastructure to operate.

Meanwhile, Abdullah Abu Sheikh, Co-founder and CEO of the company, said "the UAE, in order to achieve its vision and directives of its wise leadership in preserving the environment and implementing the concepts of sustainable development, supports all global efforts to promote the transformation towards an environmentally friendly mobility system. The UAE continues its efforts to tackle environmental

*The company aims to address delivery challenges of e-commerce, logistics, and transportation of medical supplies*



challenges and improve the quality of life of people around the world, which is evident today in its success in significantly reducing emissions related to the transport sector through pioneering plans and initiatives that cover all related areas."

Abu Sheikh added that under the wise leadership and its guidance, Barq looks forward to continuing to work side by side with their partners to make Abu Dhabi the first city in the Middle East and North Africa region that adopts this pioneering system and deploys the most important modern technologies, promoting the sustainable, environmentally friendly transport sector, and positions the Emirate as a world leader in this field.

## Greek delegation visits Evogreen Alternative Raw Material facility for hazardous waste in Sharjah



A Greek delegation of journalists visited the Evogreen Alternative Raw Material facility in Sharjah, where maritime and marine-related hazardous waste is being transformed into industrial-grade alternative materials for circular economy.

The facility is the first project of Evogreen, a joint venture between Polygreen and BEEAH. The 11 Greek journalists learned about the Evogreen facility, located within BEEAH Recycling's award-winning waste management complex, and its importance in helping realise a zero-waste future and the larger circular economy.

The journalists were briefed about BEEAH's vision for a circular economy across the UAE and the wider region, which has driven the organisation's growth into a leader in waste management and pioneer for sustainability in the Middle East.

The delegation also went on a tour of the waste management complex and visited the Evogreen Alternative Raw Material facility, where they saw, the unique methods being used to treat contaminated metals and hazardous industrial waste. Recovered materials are then used to produce alternative materials for industrial use, promoting a circular economy and helping keep oceans clean.

## Wayout can eliminate 6.5M plastic bottles, release of 536 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually

Wayout International is bringing the latest in digitised eco-friendly water systems. A single Wayout system can supply 3,000 people with clean and safe daily drinking and cooking water with zero by-product, while helping to eliminate the use of approximately 6.5 million plastic bottles and prevent the release of 536 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions yearly.

The 'smart' system stores data on water purity in a digital chip and communicates essential information and consumption data to the user and operator, allowing users to monitor their water drinking habits and the purity of the water consumed.

By installing Wayout's digitised eco-friendly water systems, including its Smart Pods and Kegs, consumers will transform the area's water



supply and provide a more eco-friendly, smart, and healthier offering for residents in a city that pioneers in sustainable urban development.

Wayout provides innovative, minimal eco-footprint water systems that distribute scientifically perfected, safe drinking water locally across many markets. The company works to challenge water scarcity through affordable sustain-tech solutions that provide access to 100% locally sourced, pure and safe drinking water for schools, corporations, home use, hotels and restaurants.

## Al-Futtaim Automotive launches Polestar, Swedish electric car brand, in the UAE



(Left to right) Paul Willis, President, Al-Futtaim Automotive and Nils Mösko, Head of Strategy and Business Development at Polestar.

In line with its customer-centric approach and commitment to enriching the lives of its customers every day, Al-Futtaim Automotive marked the official arrival of Polestar, the Swedish electric performance car brand, to the UAE in a special signing ceremony. Guests included Omar Al Futtaim, Vice Chairman of the Al-Futtaim Group, Paul Willis, President, Al-Futtaim Automotive, Jeremy Pollock, Regional Managing Director of Emerging Brands, Al-Futtaim Automotive and Nils Mösko, Head of Strategy and Business Development at Polestar, as well as other VIP dignitaries and government officials.

Taking place at the Intercontinental Hotel in Dubai Festival City, guests were treated to an introduction of the Polestar brand, which represents pure, progressive

performance, and an unveiling of the market-leading premium electric Polestar 2.

Polestar 2 brings avant-garde design and a unique ownership experience to the premium compact electric segment, with a 100% vegan interior as standard, segment-leading technology and impressive performance. The Polestar 2 delivers minimalist design, powerful electric performance, and a completely new driving experience.

The Polestar 2 can be purchased through a new customer buying experience that is online through a simplified, 100% digital process, making it omnichannel and customer friendly. The first Polestar Destination – a large-scale Polestar retail format – in the UAE is planned to open to the public in Dubai later in 2022.



## Marine propulsion provider, Al Masaood Power recertified for management systems, processes

Al Masaood Power Division, a leading expert in marine propulsion systems and power generation in the UAE, has been recertified for ISO 9001:2015, ISO 45001:2018 and ISO 14001:2015. The Bureau Veritas, which conducted the recertification audit, awarded the certificates to Al Masaood Power Division for consistent efforts to enhance its management system, increase the efficiency of its organisational and operational processes and implement internationally recognised practices to promote a safe and secure work environment.

ISO 9001:2015 is the global standard focusing on Quality Management systems whilst ISO 45001:2018 pertains to requirements designed to improve

occupational health and safety, eliminate hazards, and minimise OHS-related risks. Additionally, ISO 14001:2015 lays out the requirements for a company's environmental management system to improve its environmental performance.

Retaining ISO 9001:2015 also demonstrates the company's commitment to meet customer and regulatory requirements, especially in terms of providing the highest standards of sales and aftersales solutions specific to its product range. The division is the exclusive distributor of MTU, Leroy Somer, and Volvo Penta products and integrated power systems in the UAE and Bahrain.



## Alfa Laval proactively leading reduction in carbon emissions in Middle East

The rapid pace of development in the region provides excellent opportunities to support clean energy from the outset with Alfa Laval promoting innovative solutions for the bold visionaries driving change. Alfa Laval is strengthening its business relationships in the Middle East, collaborating as an industry leader to drive a sustainable energy-efficient future.

Energy efficiency, clean energy, and the circular economy are the core of Alfa Laval's sustainability offering in the Middle East, and the heart of what the company can help its customers achieve. Alfa Laval's heat transfer and separation technologies have an immediate and sustained effect on the need to meet increasing energy demands and dramatically reduce carbon emissions.

The transition to natural refrigerants with a lower

climate impact is a major current trend in the global heating and cooling industry, and Alfa Laval is leading the way with heat exchangers that are adapted to the new requirements its customers face. Alfa Laval is also home to the latest thinking about the value of material and resource-efficient processes, which may be the smartest way to boost profits, cut costs, and improve sustainability.

Alfa Laval is proactively leading a reduction in carbon emissions for Middle Eastern governments, supporting the ambitious net-zero targets in the region. With the UAE pledging net-zero by 2050 and Saudi Arabia by 2060, Alfa Laval reduces carbon emissions in sectors that are difficult to decarbonise, reducing costs for businesses with industry-leading energy-efficiency.

### Tadweer to develop engineered landfill with capacity of 4.5M m3 for hazardous waste

The Abu Dhabi Waste Management Centre, Tadweer launched a tender inviting qualified developers to submit their bids for developing a new engineered landfill for hazardous waste with a capacity of 4.5 million cubic metres.

The project seeks to support Abu Dhabi's efforts in waste treatment and management, through the implementation of the latest international technologies. It also supports the emirate in implementing the right methods for the treatment of hazardous waste generated from the project for cleaning and disinfecting the Mussafah Channel, which is being carried out by the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi.

The scope of the project involves designing and building an engineered landfill in line with the environmental standards and health and safety criteria, with a capacity of 4.5 million cubic metres, as well as operating the new landfill for one year, and covering the cells of the new landfill once they reach their designated capacity.

The landfill will be built on a land measuring 805,200 square metres next to Hameem Road in Abu Dhabi. The site will be developed by the winning bidder to include an electronic scale for incoming waste, and an environmental monitoring and evaluation station.



*By 2024, the facility will treat approximately 5,666 tonnes of solid waste across five burning lines daily, with 12,480 air filters to treat all emissions*

## Dubai Waste Management Centre in Warsan, world's largest energy project reaches 62% completion

Dubai Municipality announced that the construction of the Dubai Waste Management Centre in Warsan, the world's largest and most efficient energy project of its kind, is now 62% complete.

The Municipality pointed that more than 3.8 million working hours were spent to date by 30 companies tapped to carry out contracting, supply, and consulting services. By 2024, the facility will treat approximately 5,666 tonnes of solid waste across five burning lines daily, with 12,480 air filters to treat all emissions. The waste will be converted into energy, which will then be utilised to feed the local electricity grid with about 200 MW/h of clean energy.

The Municipality said that the installation of the facility's generators, which will provide electricity produced from waste treatment, and the turbine engines are completed. Once operational, the centre will treat 45% of the current municipal waste volume

in Dubai. The plant is designed to accommodate 1,000 trucks per day, approximately 88 trucks per hour. The recycled bottom ash from generated by the process will be used in infrastructure projects. The project will also use recycled water from the Warsan sewage treatment plant, which will promote circular economy and sustainability.

The Dubai Municipality has implemented its action plans under the Dubai Integrated Waste Management Strategy, which aims to reduce and divert waste from landfills by 2030 and address the power needs of Dubai's growing population and economy. The Municipality also plays a central role in the implementation of Dubai Integrated Waste Management Strategy 2021-2041, which aims to promote innovation in the management, recycling, and conversion of waste into energy to achieve almost zero hazardous waste by 2041.



*Hydraulic Injection Desalination is considered as an environmentally friendly option in desalination as chemical treatment of water is not required and the brine released is entirely green*



## ACWA Power, Water Global Access announce partnership in green water desalination

ACWA Power, a leading Saudi developer, investor, and operator of power generation, water desalination and green hydrogen plants, and Water Global Access announced a strategic partnership to develop further WGA’s disruptive, green water desalination technology, at the side-lines of the Saudi Water Forum.

This partnership agreement represents a key element within ACWA Power’s ambitious technology innovation roadmap that aims to deliver exceptional value to future projects and to Saudi Arabia as it will involve the integration of WGA’s Hydraulic Injection Desalination into ACWA Power projects.

This technology represents a breakthrough

desalination innovation. Classified as green technology, HID is considered as an environmentally friendly option in desalination as chemical treatment of water is not required and the brine released is entirely green. Additionally, the HID energy consumption is substantially lower than that required by existing desalination technologies and its thermodynamic principles have been proven in a prototype unit. Recent computational fluid dynamics modelling has successfully confirmed that WGA’s technology allows for the desalination of 40,000-ppm seawater with a Specific Energy Consumption of less than 1.9 kWh/m<sup>3</sup>—nearly a third lower than existing SWRO projects.

## stc, e&, Zain, Batelco, du, Omantel cooperate for reduction of carbon footprint from operations



stc Group, e& formerly known as Etisalat Group, Zain Group, Batelco, du, and Omantel signed an MOU at the Mobile World Congress 2022, aiming to accelerate and tighten cooperation to preserve and protect the environment and enhance climate change challenges as well as reduce the carbon footprint through operations. This memorandum comes within the cooperation of major telecom operators in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries to improve the ICT industry and activate their roles in facing environmental challenges, focusing on climate change and advancing the regional sustainability agenda.

The MOU aims to accelerate cooperation on climate change and highlight the importance of collaboration to preserve and protect the environment as well as to maintain a sustainable economy. The actions involved include a better understanding of the carbon footprint across operations. The memorandum also seeks to strengthen work across strategic partners and policy makers around necessary measures that contribute to avoiding the climate crisis and achieving sustainable growth.



### Abu Dhabi Waste Management using IoT at Al Dhafra recycling plant for asset management

Abu Dhabi Waste Management Centre, Tadweer announced the application of Internet of Things technology at the construction and demolition waste recycling station in the Al Dhafra region of Abu Dhabi. This step, which is the first of its kind in the Middle East, was implemented in cooperation with Al Dhafra Recycling Industries and the UK's Synthotech.

The IoT technology will enable the C&D Waste Recycling Station to increase operating time to the maximum limit, while also improving energy efficiency through the use of smart remote movement sensors which will monitor the station's assets and machinery. This technology will connect every device using a cloud-based platform that can produce a detailed analysis of every device's status.

The technology enables remote monitoring systems at the station to measure the health and status of devices, such as temperature and vibration per minute, providing data that reduces the likelihood of devices going offline and increasing their lifespan, thereby improving the station's overall efficiency.

In 2020, Abu Dhabi Waste Management Centre – Tadweer inaugurated Phase two of the solar power plant project at the C&D Waste Recycling Station in the Al Dhafra region of Abu Dhabi, making it the first station of its kind in the world to have 90% of its operations powered with solar energy. The station produces 5000-7000 tons of recycled materials per day, which are reused in construction projects.



**ABDUL MOHSEN  
MUBARAK AL KATHEERI,**  
Director of Projects and Facilities,  
Tadweer.

*The IoT technology will enable the C&D Waste Recycling Station to increase operating time to the maximum limit*





## Dubai Chamber of Commerce presents 54 companies with CSR label for efforts in H2 2021

Dubai Chamber of Commerce has presented 54 companies with the Dubai Chamber CSR Label for their outstanding CSR efforts in the second half of 2021.

The Chamber recently hosted a virtual ceremony showcasing the companies' achievements in corporate social responsibility, which was attended by representatives from the recognised organisations. Seventeen companies were awarded Dubai Chamber CSR Label, 7 companies received the Dubai Chamber Advanced CSR Label, and 30 companies were presented with SMART labels. In total, the Chamber has awarded 573 labels to companies since the programme was launched in 2010.

Among the honourees, Emirates Gas and Mashreq Bank received the Label for the 11th time, while Emirates Gas was honoured in the Advanced category for the third time. Emrill Services received the Label for the 10th time, while Apparel Group, Chalhoub Group, Enova, Information Fort, and Zulekha Hospital earned it for the ninth time. Zulekha Hospital was honoured in the Advanced category for the fourth time, Apparel Group and Chalhoub Group were awarded in the Advanced category for the second time, while Information Fort received the Advanced category for the first time.

AF Construction, Ducab, and Empower received the Label for the eighth time, while Empower was honoured in the Advanced category for the fourth time. Centena Group, School Transport Services, and Tristar Group were recognised for the sixth time; Dar Al Tawreeq Forfaiting and Factoring Services, Future Pipe Industries, and National Bank of Fujairah for the fifth time; ABB and Dubai World Trade Centre for the fourth time.

Himatrix Group received the Label for the third time and the Advanced category label for the second time. Al Tamimi & Company and Procter and Gamble Middle East were recognised for the second time, while Aramex and Precision Plastic Products were recognised for the first time.

*Emirates Gas and Mashreq Bank received the Label for the 11th time, while Emirates Gas was honoured in the Advanced category for the third time*



**ITHAI STERN,**  
INSEAD Professor of Strategy and Academic  
Director of VR Immersive Learning Initiative.

## Virtual reality to be applied to INSEAD'S Global Executive MBA programme

INSEAD, the Business School for the World with a campus in Abu Dhabi, announced virtual reality will be applied to enhance the learning experience for those enrolled in the school's Global Executive Master of Business Administration programme. An immersive learning masterclass of Mission to Mars was introduced at the briefing to showcase the technology and highlight how it redefines the management and executive learning at INSEAD.

In this experience, participants ventured out to the red planet using VR headsets. They moved between the immersive journey and the classroom where they

analysed and discussed the different events. This interactive, hands-on session offered the participants a deep learning experience on effective decision making in complex and ambiguous situations.

INSEAD launched its VR Immersive Learning Initiative pre-pandemic in 2019 to boost engagement, retention of knowledge and personalisation of learning. Today, more than 4,500 MBA and executive education participants have experienced VR as part of INSEAD programmes around the world, both remotely and in classrooms at its campuses in France, Singapore, and Abu Dhabi.

## Telecom Digital Regulatory Authority registers 15,000 new names under (.ae) in 2021

The Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority announced the registration of 15,000 new names under the national domain (.ae) in 2021, bringing the total number of registered names to 237,000 as of the beginning of 2022.

This increase confirms the confidence of companies, entrepreneurs and investors in the advantages provided by the national domain, drawing its strength from the reputation of the UAE as an active economic hub, with its global and regional standing.

al-Marzooqi confirmed that the team at TDRA is constantly working on managing the national domain name and facilitating its access to all who wish to make use of it saying, "The .ae Domain Administration is constantly working to provide the best user experience and the necessary support services through authorised agents, where registration is fully automated and processed without human intervention in just a few minutes, which positively reflected on the .ae turnout, as shown by the figures today."



**ENG ABDULRAHMAN  
AL-MARZOOQI,**  
Director Policies and Programmes  
Department, TDRA.



## Metaverse experience Everdome, announced its first phase with trading of DOME coin on Gate.io

Everdome, the new metaverse experience, announced the listing and commencement of trading of its DOME coin on leading exchange Gate.io. Following the recent announcement of its three-phase product launch, the listing widens the availability and accessibility of DOME in the US and increases awareness of the project and its benefits to Gate.io's considerable community of investors. Founded in 2013, Gate.io has strived to provide its users with the best trading experience in the last 8 years. In terms of trading volume, Gate.io is one of the top 10 crypto exchanges in the world listing crypto assets that are great in quality and have a high rate of return.

Launched on February 8th of this year, Dome has ranked top 10 gainers on Binance Chain Ecosystem as well #1 on CoinGecko's top trending coins list. The coin has been listed on reputable exchanges including OKX, Gate.io and Pancakeswap, with the aim to get listed on other major exchanges in 2022.

Set to launch in three phases throughout 2022, Everdome will take users on a journey from planet Earth to Mars. Phase 1 includes the pre-launch phase, set in Hatta UAE, during which users can explore the launch room and learn more about space exploration and the journey to come. Phases 2 and 3 continue

*Set to launch in three phases throughout*

**2022,**  
*Everdome will take users on a journey from planet Earth to Mars*

the Everdome journey, from mission launch and life aboard the vessel, through to landing and settling on Mars.

Built on Unreal Engine 5, Everdome will deliver a slick real-world-extended experience – pulling on the talents and vision of renowned concept artists, game creators, 3D designers, Hollywood VFX specialists, urban planning professionals, a development team that has been delivering graphics and effects for more than a decade, and a marketing team that has already found bounds of success in numerous industries.



**OLA LIND,**  
CEO and Director,  
FTFT Capital.

*The global NFT market's recent trend indicates that interest in digital artworks in the virtual world has been progressively declining*



## FTFT Capital, DAS Team will partner on Metaverse-type NFT art museum platform project

FTFT Capital Investments, a blockchain investment company, and the DAS Team, which operates a Metaverse NFT art platform, announced on March 10 that they signed an agreement to partner on a Metaverse-type NFT art museum platform project. The project aims to integrate the high-quality art market with digital art.

Both organisations declared plans to supply an ultra-high-definition digital art streaming service and publish world-famous paintings and works by renowned artists as ultra-high-definition NFTs.

The global NFT market's recent trend indicates that interest in digital artworks in the virtual world has been progressively declining. On the contrary, globally renowned NFT collectors collecting NFT artworks also obtainable as real-life paintings have grown tremendously.

Following the significant expansion of the art-tech market in the form of financial technology based on high-priced artworks by prominent artists, both organisations are harnessing NFT to expand and collaborate on NFT art-tech solutions.

The organisations are set to expand the reach of the Metaverse-style NFT art museum platform from Dubai, the global art market's epicentre and the MENA region.

## Blending AI, augmented reality and beauty solutions, Perfect Corp expands into Gulf

Perfect Corp, the artificial intelligence and augmented reality beauty and fashion tech solutions provider is increasing its global presence by expanding its operations across the Gulf region. Perfect Corp, which is already working with hundreds of high-profile brands in over 80 countries, has started more regionalised partnerships across the GCC, offering beauty and fashion brands in the region powerful AR-enhanced solutions that are poised to redefine consumer shopping journeys.

Founded in 2015, Perfect Corp quickly became the world's leading provider of artificial intelligence and AR solutions within the beauty and fashion industries. Perfect Corp's comprehensive SaaS solutions, which include artificial intelligence-powered skin diagnostics, AR-powered video consultations, real time product try-ons for makeup, jewellery, eyewear, hair dye and watches, foundation shade finder, and facial attribute detection with personalised product recommendation, are revolutionising the customer buying experience across these industries.

It recently released the first-ever virtual try-on NFT collection for makeup and accessories, giving customers new experiences and allowing them to interact with digital assets virtually. The innovation creates next-generation NFTs using augmented reality technology, which distinguishes it from currently accessible image, video, and audio formats. The technology also allows beauty and fashion firms to provide this new NFT experience to their customers via their own digital channels, such as their website or apps.



*It recently released the first-ever virtual try-on NFT collection for makeup and accessories*





## Silicon Valley's Tower 27 issues asset-backed Ethereum ERC-20 token using standard blockchain

Tower 27 is a 24-story, 374-unit, Class A multi-family residential project that includes 35,597 sq ft of leasable commercial space. The property is fully entitled. The construction of Tower 27, with a total development cost of \$237 Million, is scheduled to start in the first quarter of 2022 and expected to be completed within 32 months. On October 19, 2021, the San Jose City Council unanimously approved a waiver providing a 50% reduction in commercial fees for qualifying developments. The waiver provides an estimated total of \$6.3 Million discount in construction taxes and Affordable Housing Impact fees for the development.

The developer, Alterra Worldwide, has been involved with commercial real estate development projects worldwide for more than 20 years. The company emphasised the start of construction and ongoing development are not dependent on the course of the offering. The funds necessary to develop Tower 27 are being sourced simultaneously through traditional financing methods. Alterra Worldwide CEO Mike Sarimsakci clearly stated his stance on this issue by saying, "No matter the success of the T27 Silicoin offering the building of Tower 27 will move forward".

Competing tech firms make San Jose one of the most attractive real estate markets in the US. San Jose

*While cryptocurrencies are perhaps the best-known applications of blockchain technology at the moment, from a financial perspective, security tokens are much more attractive*

is Northern California's largest city, home to nearly one Million people, and is known as the Capital of Silicon Valley. It is in constant need of quality living spaces for thousands of high-paid employees joining a variety of industries every year. The city's real estate is considered one of the best long-term investments in the country.

Tower 27 sits within blocks of Adobe Headquarters and current construction of Google's 80-acre mega campus deemed Downtown West. It is expected these two projects alone will bring approximately 30,000 new employees to downtown San Jose in the coming years.



## Valuation of Hub71 start-ups soars to AED 5.87B with 1,000 jobs created since 2019

Hub71, Abu Dhabi's global tech ecosystem, announced that its start-up community ramped up approximately AED 1.5 billion of investments since inception and secured AED 30 million in 2021 through over 20 corporate deals during the year. The aggregate valuation of Hub71 start-ups soared to AED 5.87 billion, with close to 1,000 jobs created since its inception in 2019, demonstrating impact of a thriving technology community in the UAE's capital city.

Backed by Mubadala, Hub71 is accelerating Abu Dhabi's digital transformation and the UAE's progress to becoming an Entrepreneurial Nation by 2031. The tech ecosystem has expanded its strategic partnerships and value-creation programs to enable

disruptive start-ups to grow and accelerate their journeys to becoming multibillion dollar companies.

Hub71 published its 2021 Impact Report, highlighting growth and success stories emerging from its community of more than 100 start-ups over the past year, available to download here.

To solidify its impact in 2022, Hub71 will intensify its efforts to strengthen Abu Dhabi's position globally as an attractive innovation hub for entrepreneurial talent. The tech ecosystem aims to reinforce its capital community of VC funds and continue growing its strategic partnerships that facilitate cross-border market access, funding and knowledge exchange to help fulfil the growth aspirations of founders in its community.

## UAE-based Medad Technology to invest \$150M in advances in healthcare, biotech, fintech

A privately owned and funded UAE company is investing more than \$150 Million in the research and development of new technologies that could pave the way for radical advances in healthcare, biotech, fintech and even sustainable mobility.

Mohammed Alshaiba Almazrouei, Chief Executive Officer of Dubai-based Medad Technology, said the company has already patented several innovations in ultrasound technology, with potentially ground-breaking applications in smoking cessation, medicine delivery and diagnostics.

The tech company is now introducing its patented ultrasound nicotine delivery system to the UAE and will invest a further \$100 Million over the next three years in clinical trials, smoking cessation research and product development across sectors.



**MOHAMMED  
ALSHAIBA ALMAZROUEI,**  
Chief Executive Officer, Medad  
Technology.



## Minister of Energy and Infrastructure inspects progress of Stage Two of UAE National Rail Network

His Excellency Suhail bin Mohammed Faraj Faris Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, inspected the progress of construction works of Stage Two of the UAE National Rail Network, which is being developed by Etihad Rail. His Excellency boarded the inspection train, designated for site inspection and supervision, to review the various constructions sites in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

During their visit, Al Mazrouei and Al Mansouri inspected the main O&M facility, which is the nerve of the network responsible for controlling the operations of the whole network. Al Mazrouei was briefed on the train operating systems, and toured the centre and its facilities, which are seeing exceptional progress in construction works and are being developed according to the highest international standards and criteria, and as per the company's set timeline.

His Excellency viewed the operational model and examined the freight train facilities, in addition to Stage One achievements and the progress of Stage Two of the project, including the recent 256-km railway link between Abu Dhabi and Dubai, bringing the company one step closer towards connecting the rest of the emirates, and aligning with the UAE Railways Programme.

## Alpha Dubai, investment company targeting disruptive companies, declares AED5.2B profit in 2021

Alpha Dhabi Holding PJSC, one of the fastest-growing investment holding companies in the UAE, listed on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange, has announced its financial results for the full year of 2021.

Alpha Dhabi's robust performance and substantial investment activity in 2021 led to record net profit performance of AED 5.2 billion for the financial year ending December 31, 2021, up significantly from AED 218 million in 2020. Moreover, revenues rose materially to AED 18.8 billion, representing an increase of 400% from AED 3.8 billion in 2020, driven by the Company's investment activity, the strength of its operating subsidiaries and portfolio as well as the bolstered UAE market environment which saw cross-sector growth in 2021.

Alpha Dhabi's continued execution on its growth ambitions saw the Company continue to build scale and enhance diversification across its sizeable portfolio with the Company reaching AED 47.3 billion in assets under management as at the end of 2021.



**ENG HAMAD  
AL AMERI,**  
CEO, Alpha Dhabi Holding.



# Audi Middle East partners with Museum of the Future to display electrification, sustainability

Audi Middle East officially announced a unique collaboration with Museum of the Future, the first-of-its-kind state-of-the-art museum in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, with the brand being welcomed as the museum's official automotive partner. Visitors to the museum will have the opportunity to explore two of Audi's renowned concept cars for the first time in the Middle East, while experiencing a regular stream of other Audi innovations as they are launched.

One of the two concept cars on show at the museum is the Audi AI:ME, the first car with a vision of an automated driving compact car. The small, but spacious car's very name refers to the new, two-letter abbreviation under which Audi is bundling an entire cluster of innovative mobility technologies. Shortly after the AI:ME, the Audi Skysphere, known as the spectacular roadster, will also be displayed at the museum.

The Skysphere is a sedan that features two different driving experiences: a grand touring experience and a sports experience. The brand is illustrating its vision for the progressive luxury segment of the future, in which the interior becomes an interactive space and the vehicle a platform for captivating experiences. Both models align the brand with a future forward theme positioning Audi as a leader in the future of mobility.

Audi AI is the cipher for a variety of electronic systems that relieve strain on drivers and simultaneously offer them new possibilities to use the time spent in the car. To this end, Audi AI also uses strategies and technologies from the field of artificial intelligence and machine learning. Thanks to Audi AI,

*One of the two concept cars on show at the museum is the Audi AI:ME, the first car with a vision of an automated driving compact car*



models bearing the four rings will be both intelligent and empathetic in the future.

They will be able to continually interact with their surroundings and passengers, and thus adapt themselves in a better way than ever before to the requirements of those on board. Both models align with the brand's future forward theme, positioning Audi as a leader in the future of mobility, and making the partnership with Museum of The Future the perfect pairing.

As part of the brand partnership, Audi will be installing a robust system of charging infrastructure within the museum's parking facilities to support the future vision of electric mobility.



*Dubai Chamber of Commerce members' exports and re-exports in 2021 amounted to*

**AED 227 billion**

## Dubai Chamber of Commerce announces 27,000+ new companies joined in 2021

Dubai Chamber of Commerce recently organised its first roundtable meeting of 2022, which gathered representatives of various business councils and groups operating under its umbrella. Participants examined key economic developments, growth prospects and investment opportunities in Dubai, while they were briefed on Dubai Chamber of Commerce's milestones and achievements and activities in 2021, as well as the new structure and strategy of Dubai Chambers.

The meeting provided a platform for Dubai Chamber of Commerce to engage with the business community, identify existing challenges faced by the private sector, exploring investment opportunities and seek recommendations for improving ease of doing business in Dubai.

The roundtable meeting was attended by HE Marwan Lutfi, CEO of Al Etihad Credit Bureau, who gave an overview of AECB's ChequeScore App, as well as its functions and features.

Addressing participants, Hassan Al Hashemi, Vice President of International Relations at Dubai Chamber of Commerce, stressed the importance of organising such roundtables, which he described as an ideal platform for open and constructive dialogue and a prime example of close public-private sector cooperation that continues to drive Dubai's progress and development. Al Hashemi revealed that Dubai Chamber of Commerce members' exports and re-exports in 2021 amounted to AED 227 billion, a growth rate of 22.7% compared to 2020, reflecting the resilience of Dubai traders and their global reach.

## Al-Futtaim Group launches Emiratisation SINYAR management trainee programme

In line with the pillars of its Emiratisation strategy, Al-Futtaim Group inaugurated the fifth edition of its Management Trainee programme from SINYAR, its Emiratisation platform. The inauguration, the first this year, took place in the presence of the head of the Al-Futtaim Emiratisation Council, the Acting Chief Human Capital Officer, all directors of the divisions within the group, along with the 42 Emirati employees who were selected to participate in the SINYAR Management Trainee programme.

This programme provides the opportunity for recent Emirati graduates who aspire to work within the Al-Futtaim Group to build their career paths, as well as benefiting from a comprehensive and systematic 18-month educational programme, including a special track designed to enhance and develop the performance of its participants, enriching communication, problem-solving and teamwork skills.





**HH SHEIKH AHMED BIN HUMAID AL NUAIMI,**  
Chairman of the Board of Ajman Free Zones Authority.

*Ajman China Mall recorded an average of 342,000 monthly visitors with total daily sales valued at more than AED 1.7 million in 2021*



## Ajman Free Zone records 12% growth in number of new companies in Ajman China Mall

Ajman Free Zone has announced the 2021 operational performance of Ajman China Mall, which recorded a significant growth of 12% in the number of registered companies compared to 2020. Out of 1,000 enterprises operating in the mall, the retail sector topped the list followed by the fashion and textile sector.

The growing number of companies in the fashion and textile sector proves that it is one of the country's largest industries, driven by consumer trends, high supply capacity, and robust e-commerce in Arab countries. Enterprises operating within Ajman China Mall benefit from Ajman Free Zone's strategic location for importing and exporting products.

As of 2021, diverse enterprises in Ajman China Mall registered over 2,600 members of the Chinese business community, significantly contributing to the economic growth and employment market for Ajman.

The strong operational performance reflects the importance of Ajman China Mall in boosting economic growth in the emirate. Its yearly import value reaches an average of AED 3.65 billion, with export products valued at AED 2.1 billion. Leveraging its strategic location and facilities, Ajman China Mall is an ideal investment destination. It has recorded AED 600 million of total investment and is projected to reach double as the emirate continues to diversify its economy and venture into more trade agreements.

Further, Ajman China Mall recorded an average of 342,000 monthly visitors with total daily sales valued at more than AED 1.7 million in 2021. These numbers are projected to a sustainable growth as Ajman China Mall further enhances its facilities to attract more shoppers and businesses alike.

## 2022 will see largest number of aircraft delivered to Flydubai in any year since launch



The airline's strategy for the year ahead is to contribute to the rebuilding of the travel sector following the pandemic. From March 2022, flydubai will take delivery of 20 Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft, which will see further deployment of its onboard product and support the airline's future growth. These aircraft will be deployed across the network to provide customers with the opportunity to travel to more places, more often.



## **Best Government Outsourced Call Centre awarded to Cupola Teleservices and Dubai Chamber**

Dubai Chamber of Commerce, a public non-profit organisation that supports the business community in Dubai and promotes Dubai as an international business hub, was recently recognised as ‘Best Government Outsourced Call Centre’ at the 2021 Middle East Call Centre Awards. The call centre is managed and operated by Dubai Chamber’s outsourcing partner Cupola Teleservices, the region’s leading provider of business process outsourcing and contact centre services.

Going forward, Dubai Chamber of Commerce will be tasked with strengthening its role in developing sectors like digital economy and international trade and devising trade policies to further enhance the emirate’s global status as an attractive economic hub. Cupola will continue to support Dubai Chamber of Commerce in this mission and will ensure the highest standards for customer experience management are provided.

## **Cashee joins Visa Fintech Fast Track to roll out Cashee teen digital payment solution**

Cashee, the MENA region’s teen banking and ed-tech platform, announced that it has joined Visa’s Fintech Fast Track programme to roll out the Cashee teen digital payment solution to youth in the MENA region. Through its partnership with Visa, Cashee is committed to improving financial literacy and increasing financial inclusion for the youth in the MENA region.

Cashee provides teens in the MENA region with a unique banking mobile app and personalised Visa prepaid card which enables them to track their earnings, spending and savings. Through its EdTech platform, Cashee promotes and teaches money management with the aim of creating money-smart teens. Cashee is a safe and secure platform with parental controls and oversight which provides parents with the confidence of allowing their children to participate in a digital and cashless world.



**SMEETHA GHOSH,**  
Co-founder and CEO,  
Cashee.



## UAE's Al Fardan Exchange partners with Thunes for cross border payments to 87 countries

Al Fardan Exchange, one of the largest money transfer and currency exchange firms in the United Arab Emirates, announced a partnership with Thunes, a global leader in cross-border payments, enabling Al Fardan Exchange customers to make seamless payments to 87 countries.

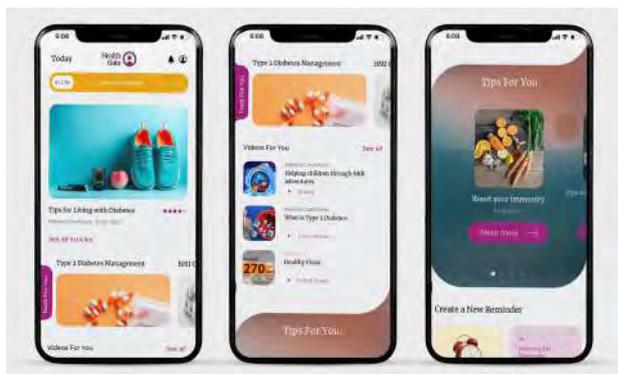
Through this partnership, Al Fardan Exchange's business and retail customers can make instant payments directly not just to bank accounts, but also mobile wallets and cash pickup points in their home countries, enabling recipients to receive money in their local currency. Aside from speed and convenience, businesses and individuals will benefit from enhanced transparency of the service, they will know exactly what they're paying upfront, and will be able to track the status of their transactions in real time.

UAE residents will now be able to send money directly through Al Fardan Exchange's 75+ physical branches across the UAE. They will be able to make pay-outs to bank accounts, mobile wallets and cash pick-up points across 87 countries in Europe, Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America. These new services tap into growing customer demand for alternative payments and positions Al Fardan Exchange at the

*According to World Bank data, UAE was the second most significant source country for remittances in 2020, after United States*

forefront of UAE's rapidly evolving financial services space.

In 2021, the total population in UAE was 9.99 million, and of that, 8.84 million were expatriates. According to World Bank data, UAE was the second most significant source country for remittances in 2020, after the United States. The top five remittance recipients were India, China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt.



*In collaboration with Gendius, Health Gate uses artificial intelligence powered Intellin platform to monitor patients' diabetes vitals and management of their condition*

## AstraZeneca launches Health Gate app for supporting patients with chronic conditions

AstraZeneca has launched its all-in-one health and wellbeing patient support app, Health Gate, aimed at supporting patients with chronic conditions, such as cancer, heart failure, kidney disease and diabetes. To coincide with the launch of the mobile app, AstraZeneca has shared results from a recent UAE survey which reveals the opportunity for new innovations, like Health Gate, to support people with diabetes, and their caregivers, during the pandemic.

As part of AstraZeneca's commitment to empower patients to lead healthier lives in the UAE, the company has designed Health Gate to help making chronic health conditions easier to manage. The mobile application – available in Arabic and English – will support patients in managing telehealth appointments, carrying out routine tests at home, send and track dose reminders, and calculate body

mass index in an easily manageable way. It also provides health and lifestyle advice and a library of meal recipes written by health and medical experts.

In collaboration with Gendius, a UK MedTech company which specialises in artificial intelligence technology for diabetes management, Health Gate uniquely uses Gendius' artificial intelligence powered Intellin platform to monitor patients' diabetes vitals and management of their condition. It highlights their risk for developing diabetes-related complications, such as cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, amputation and blindness.

Its algorithms analyse users' health and wellbeing data to provide individually tailored, validated educational content and guidance, to help people with diabetes manage their condition more effectively.

## Cardo Health launches telemedicine application from Kena Health in South Africa

For the early detection and treatment of health conditions, easy access to primary healthcare is crucial. However, Africa has the lowest patient-to-doctor ratio in the world with 0.23 doctors for every 10,000 people, compared to 84.2 doctors in the most developed countries. Digital solutions offer a great opportunity to bridge this gap, offering affordable and high-quality care to millions of people.

With single-digit health insurance coverage in sub-Saharan Africa, Kena Health targets the millions of uninsured citizens who are dependent on stressed public health systems using a B2C freemium business model. The platform offers on-demand and scheduled consultations with nurses, general practitioners, and mental health professionals.

Kena Health takes a giant leap forward in offering a complete digital primary care platform. The app has first launched in South Africa, for further roll-out in several other African countries in the



**TOBIAS STRALIN,**  
Founder and CEO,  
Cardo Health.

near future.

The popularity of telemedicine spiked during the Covid-19 pandemic, growing 78 times in April 2020 according to McKinsey and Co. With many of the fastest-growing economies in the world and a rapidly increasing smartphone and internet penetration, investors are turning to Africa as a major growth opportunity for such high-demand services. Kena Health aims to become the leading digital health player in the Sub-Saharan African region.



More than  
**150,000**  
online classrooms  
were conducted  
for different school  
grades and subjects



## Ministry of Education of Oman to continue using Google Workspace for Education in 2021-22

Following the successful use of the Google Workspace for Education platform during the former academic year, The Ministry of Education in Oman has renewed its agreement to continue using the platform as the primary educational tool for learning and collaboration within Oman's public schools' network for the current academic year of 2021-2022.

The Google Workspace for Education platform has provided Oman's educational community with a suite of productivity and collaboration solutions that can flex and adapt to their unique needs and mimic a physical classroom setting. Through the use of tools such as Google Classroom, Gmail, Docs, Sheets, Slides, as well as Google Meet and Chat and other Education support applications, teachers were able to integrate all the tools in their teaching methodologies.

More than 600,00 students and 40,000 teachers in Oman were able to benefit from the Google Workspace for Education platform educational and collaboration tools since its deployment in early 2020, which has empowered them with new methods of teaching and

learning that support distance and hybrid learning.

Recent figures from 2021 reflecting the usage and interaction of students and teachers on the platform in Oman public schools revealed that; more than 150,000 online classrooms were conducted for different school grades and subjects, with the highest levels of organisation in line with the data guidelines of the educational gate.

In addition, more than 100 nationwide live streams were delivered to students in the span of one month during the lockdown period, in light of a project to broadcast educational lessons via the Google Workspace for Education platform from Muscat based schools, that occurred in partnership with the Oman Telecommunications Company, Omantel, showcasing the widespread usage of the platform among the country's public schools.

In addition to that, more than 250 terabytes of educational data were used on the platform, and Google Meet was widely activated for simultaneous lessons across the network of schools.

## Etihad Airways to use Jeppesen FliteDeck Advisor digital solution for 787 Dreamliner



Boeing has been selected to provide Etihad Airways with the Jeppesen FliteDeck Advisor digital solution for the carrier's 787 Dreamliner fleet to optimise operational efficiency and reduce fuel consumption. Etihad has already found benefits from the use of FliteDeck Advisor. During a trial on several of its 787 Dreamliners, the airline found that the digital solution delivered cruise fuel savings of 1.4%, saving an average of 350 kilograms of fuel and 1,100 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> per flight.

Since 2019, Boeing and Etihad have collaborated on sustainability efforts centred on the airline's 787 Dreamliner fleet, including on Etihad's participation in Boeing's ecoDemonstrator program, where the FliteDeck Advisor solution was initially trialled. In 2021, the two companies renewed and expanded their sustainability alliance to focus on enhancing the efficiency of navigation and flight operations, airframe technologies and sustainable practices to

reduce emissions.

Jeppesen FliteDeck Advisor analyses airplane-specific performance metrics for all Boeing aircraft, including changes over time with aircraft age and maintenance action. The tool enables flight crews to make small, real-time adjustments to their course, altitude, and speed to optimise fuel use and minimise the carbon footprint of each flight.

Boeing provides several other digital solutions and services to Etihad's 787 fleet including Jeppesen FliteDeck Pro, Jeppesen Crew Rostering and Boeing Wind Updates, which provide crew scheduling, charting, navigation, and flight efficiency capabilities.

With 39 Boeing Dreamliner airplanes currently in operation, Etihad is the largest operator in the Middle East of the 787, a family of airplanes designed with superior efficiency which allows airlines to profitably open new routes to fly people directly where they'd like to go in exceptional comfort.

## Yahsat to provide Comms On-The-Move solutions for EDGE NIMR vehicle systems

Al Yah Satellite Communications Company listed on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange under, the UAE's flagship satellite solutions provider, announced that its government division, Yahsat Government Solutions, agreed with EDGE Group entity, NIMR, a leading manufacturer of combat-proven wheeled military vehicles, to line-fit pre-qualified Comms-On-The-Move solutions on NIMR's vehicular systems.

The agreement was announced at the World Defence Show in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and builds on the two entities' pre-existing partnership, which was formed recently at the International Defence



(Left to right): Eisa Al Shamsi, General Manager, YGS and Abri du Plessis, CEO, NIMR.

Exhibition and Conference 2021 in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

The MoU that was signed in 2021 allowed both entities to develop a concept design demonstrating how NIMR's military vehicles can be equipped with Yahsat's COTM solutions. During the show, Yahsat and NIMR are showcasing one of Yahsat's terminals fitted onto NIMR's AJBAN 442A vehicle.

By pre-testing and integrating Yahsat's COTM solutions on various connected vehicular systems, Yahsat has been able to effectively remove risks and unwanted costs associated with system integration for its customers.



# Ooredoo Qatar, Ericsson, achieve 1.5 Gbps during implementation of 5G indoor solution

Ooredoo Qatar and Ericsson have announced the successful implementation of the world's first 5G Indoor shareable solution in Qatar, achieving speeds of 1.5 gigabits per second. The solution, which is called Ericsson Indoor Connect 8855, has been commercially deployed in stadiums across the country to enhance the immersive experiences of international tournaments.

Part of the Ericsson Radio Dot System, Indoor Connect 8855 is a multi-operator, multi-vendor, solution with full band support and 4x4 MIMO capability. With this unique solution, several communications service providers can deliver a superior indoor 5G experience to their subscribers with speeds beyond 1 Gbps.

This unique system also helps service providers address aesthetical challenges, while enabling more efficient and cost-effective solutions. By leveraging shared indoor radio infrastructure, service providers can generate total cost of ownership savings of up to 50 percent compared to other solutions on the market.

The solution also ensures reliable gigabit performance to end users and seamlessly caters to high-demanding users at massive events that have high traffic like the anticipated major global football tournament taking place from November to December

2022.

The solution was also showcased at a regional football tournament held in Qatar in 2021 catering for the high requirements of network subscribers during the event and tackling and delivering high capacity per user, reaching peak rates of up to 1.5 Gbps. The flexibility and quick time-to-market of this solution allowed Ooredoo Qatar and Ericsson to deploy within weeks ahead of the tournament.

Ericsson's 5G indoor solutions deliver the high per-user capacity and rate coverage required to meet the challenges of digitally urbanised environments. With Ericsson Indoor Connect 8855, Ooredoo is able to upgrade their existing non-shareable 5G indoor sites easily and quickly.

Offering exceptional indoor gigabit 5G speeds at event venues and stadiums, where capacity is a key requirement and great performance is a must, Ericsson's shareable 5G solution ensures seamless real-time and immersive experiences for users across the country.

With the Ericsson Radio Dot System being 5G- and Internet of Things – ready, it is set to enable service providers across the nation to seize the business potential of indoor connectivity and deliver seamless 5G experiences.

## Honeywell partners with Egypt's Misr Italia Properties for smart community living



Honeywell signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Egypt's Misr Italia Properties, to support its digital transformation journey through the creation of sustainable, smart community living in both existing and new projects in development. This includes the Cairo Business Park and Il Bosco City projects.

In the first collaboration with Misr Italia Properties, Honeywell will deploy pilot projects that enable smart living through its latest advanced solutions including Honeywell City Suite and Honeywell Forge enterprise performance management software. The MoU will focus on integrating the solutions across Misr Italia Properties' developments into a single command and control platform, for enhanced visibility and control.

Honeywell will deploy advanced city surveillance systems for improved emergency response and access control; sustainable and energy-efficient technologies for energy optimisation as well as smart irrigation, smart street lighting, water management and smart parking.

The MoU with Honeywell will strengthen Misr

Italia Properties' strategic position as a growing business, with a unique vision for smart and sustainable solutions in Egypt's real estate market. It also enhances Honeywell's established tracked record of delivering smart city solutions in Egypt and the wider Middle East and North Africa region.

Egypt's Vision 2030 places significant importance on urban expansion, including creating smarter cities to help accommodate a growing population and improve quality of life for all citizens.

Honeywell is collaborating with the Administrative Capital of Urban Development to provide advanced internet of things software and hardware solutions in the leading smart city living project of the New Administrative Capital.

Additionally, Honeywell recently signed a MoU with Etisalat Misr to develop advanced solutions for smart buildings, communities and cities across the country. Honeywell has been present in Egypt for more than 50 years and is committed to providing the best talent and technologies to support development across the nation's major industries.

## Mayo Clinic develops RENEW automated system to track global genetic announcements

Mayo Clinic researchers are working to accelerate the diagnoses of rare diseases and renew hope for patients whose symptoms have defied an explanation sometimes for years or even decades.

The team of genomics experts has developed an automated system called RENEW for tracking new scientific knowledge from around the world of pathogenic genetic variants and applying it to Mayo Clinic patients with rare and undiagnosed diseases. RENEW stands for reanalysis of negative whole-exome, genome data

An estimated 300 million people worldwide have a rare disease, research has found. Rare diseases can be chronic, debilitating and even deadly. Many rare diseases are caused by mutations in genes or chromosomes either passed from a parent or occurring randomly in a single person. In some instances, patients with rare diseases search for answers for 10 years or longer, propelled through a marathon of health care provider visits and tests.

The launch of RENEW comes at a pivotal time when advancements in genomic sequencing technologies and bioinformatics tools are



**ERIC KLEE,**  
Director of  
Bioinformatics, Mayo  
Clinic, Centre for  
Individualised Medicine.

leading to a greater understanding of the links between genes and disease. Last year alone, researchers within Mayo Clinic and across the globe documented nearly twice as many newly discovered gene-disease variants, compared to five years ago.

Similarly, over just three months, approximately 8,400 new genetic variants were described in one public database alone, and more than 260,000 previously known variants were updated with new information.



# UAE's new marketplace Katmeer launches after two years lead time to offer services at discount

The Middle East's newest marketplace, Katmeer, has officially launched to provide residents with access to unique and unbeatable discounts offered by premium merchants. Designed as a robust and visionary platform, Katmeer has brought together some of the best market service offerings and deals across several categories including, fashion, beauty, well-being, cleaning, and more. In addition to the e-commerce website, residents can access the brand's newest mobile application via Google Play or the AppStore.

In the first phase of the launch, the platform will specialise in home maintenance and cleaning service providers, where at the click of a button, users can browse from over 50 certified suppliers. In addition, have access to industry-specific filters or casually browse categories, including hair care products,

professional photography sessions, meditation sessions, cleaning, beauty, and more.

The second phase will see a wide variety of hospitality and food and beverages service providers, which is in line with Katmeer's mission is to create a central marketplace tailored to serve individuals across the UAE whilst saving valuable time.

Founded in 2019, by UAE resident Leen Sayed Ahmed, Katmeer is a true testament to her passion for assisting friends and family in sourcing the best deals and discounts. Leen began her research to confirm the demand and then designed and developed the unique marketplace over two years to meticulously ensure the correct blend of both a user-friendly platform, and quality suppliers were both implemented successfully.

# REVISITING TECHNOLOGY AND IT DECISION MAKING

Other than the IT organization, budgets for business and digital transformation journeys are also available through partnering with business.



**MOREY  
HABER**



**MOUSSALAM  
DALATI**



**WALID ISSA**



**STEPHEN  
GILL**



**PHILIP  
ANDREWS**



**PETE HALL**



**PHIL  
LE-BRUN**



**RAMI RIAD  
MOURTADA**



**SANDRINE  
MOUSTAFA EL  
KHODRY**

BEYONDTRUST

# FUTURE LEGISLATIONS MAY AFFECT INNOVATION

Many great ideas that can power a business to new heights, may not be feasible due to global technology limitations and regional data privacy laws.



**MOREY HABER**  
Chief Security Officer,  
BeyondTrust.

**I**nnovation and adoption of digital transformation technologies has been proved to be a competitive advantage for businesses. As we begin to move into the middle of the decade, information technology and business decision makers need to work together to determine the future direction of the business.

Many great ideas that can affect a business may not be feasible due to global technology limitations and regional data privacy laws. In fact, we recently have seen some businesses exit geolocations for exactly these reasons. The business had a great idea, but the technology, security, and legal teams could not continue to meet the business objectives due to regional regulatory governance.

Therefore, in order for a digital transformation initiative to continue to be a business advantage, technology staff and business decision makers need

to work together, from the beginning, in order to ensure that any initiative can be deployed legally and sustained in the future.

The net collaborative effect will benefit the business without the unnecessary pressure on one group or another to produce something that could be a future liability.

Information technology and business decision makers can give back to the community simply by engaging in non-profit and free educational services. If professionals gave a small portion of their time to educating new team members or engaging in mentorship programmes, then their ultimate replacements will be more suited to assume roles as older generations retire.

In the last 24 months, organisations have embraced digital transformation strategies to accommodate a work from anywhere world and modern attack vectors that can be an unprecedented disruption to a business. While this trend has enabled IT and technology decision makers to be flexible with solutions, the risks, cost, and maintenance have caused some concern for organisations.

If you consider that technology is no longer solely on-premises; may be based on a subscription pricing model; and follows an agile development and release process that may not be compatible with your change control methodology; adoption may require changes in your overall business and is not just reserved to the selection of a product.

In addition, cyber security concerns for the new solution and the privileges and access required to make it operate, can violate existing security and data privacy controls. All of these need to be considered by IT and technology decision makers before selecting the next solution to meet the evolution of the business.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Collaborative effects will benefit the business without the unnecessary pressure on one group or another to produce that could be a future liability.
- Decision makers can give back to the community by engaging in non-profit and free educational services.
- If professionals gave a small portion of their time to new team members or mentorship then their replacements will be more suited to assume roles.
- Adoption of technology may require changes in overall business and is not just reserved to the selection of a product.
- Modern technology is changing the IT landscape.
- With the rapid evolution of automation, and cloud, there is a need to revisit traditional organisational structure of information technology and information security teams.

Businesses now have an opportunity to expand operations and manage work from anywhere, overhead, business complexity, and automation in 2022.

Modern technology is changing the IT landscape. With the rapid evolution of AI, automation, and the cloud, there is a need to revisit the traditional organisational structure of information technology and information security teams.

A preferred organisational structure compartmentalises disciplines to on-premises, cloud, solution, and technology but leverages the same solution with role-based

## PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES FOR DECISION MAKERS



- How to manage office space that may be vacant as the work from anywhere workforce continues post pandemic
- How to simplify the end user experience by leveraging the cloud for applications and services while working from anywhere
- What a zero-trust architecture could mean for a common office environment as organisations become less dependent on traditional firewalls and office-based intrusion prevention solutions
- What technology can help mitigate the risks and bandwidth restrictions of users working from anywhere including local ISP outages
- What do traditional IT services like backup and recovery look like and cost while users operate outside of the office environment
- What sensitive assets need to have additional security controls when data, including personally identifiable information PII, is available outside of the traditional office network
- What are the costs of supplying mobile hardware to all employees versus allowing Bring Your Own Device for non-sensitive work

access data sets for each team. This requires using the same solutions as a SEIM for the entire company and standardising on tools like MDR, Vulnerability Management, Log Management, that correlates data from every source for a holistic perspective.

Each team therefore has visibility into their area of concern but can draw from related information in order to look for indicators of compromise or performance metrics. When new technology like AI is applied on top, all the teams' benefit, and the results are more accurate because data is inspected from the entire enterprise and not just one departmental perspective. This change needs to occur not only in people but technology too in order to be effective. ■

LIFERAY

# RESTRUCTURE THE WAY IT FUNCTIONS EVERY 2-3 YEARS

With a strategic outlook of 2-3 years, organisations should identify milestones that map successes and corrections, restructuring the way IT functions.



**MOUSSALAM DALATI**  
General Manager, Liferay Middle East.

**T**he 2022 hurdles are no newer ones but have been around for some time now: securing top talent, bolstering security, seamless hybrid employee experiences and robust work environments. Moreover, there has been immense pandemic driven burnout that resulted in challenges that technology leaders are still having to deal with and plan to aggressively address in this year.

The pandemic has clearly accelerated customer engagement trends. CIOs have to focus on business transformation, given the increasingly significant role that IT plays across the entire business function, operations and the production of higher revenues from additional customer services.

Moreover, the widespread acceleration of digital transformation initiatives has led to increased technology adoption. IT leaders certainly need to re-arrange the organisational structure and

work across cross functional teams that use data and technology to collaboratively make effective decisions and achieve positive business outcomes.

With a strategic outlook of 2-3 years horizon, every organisation should identify milestones that map successes and course corrections, restructuring the way IT needs to function.

In today's complex and disrupted business environments, businesses must be collaborative connected, contextual and seamless to drive promising outcomes. The right systems and communication tools will enable effective cross-communication and collaboration.

IT and business leaders must have a clear vision on the mission of the business, maintain open lines of communication and extensive cross-team bonding to drive better business outcomes. Speaking of this, digital experiences platforms provide entities with an integrated suite of tools needed to enable effective and seamless communication resulting in successful business ecosystems.

Organisations and companies with a strong vision and ethics have the chance to contribute and provide value to customers, communities and employees through technology.

The market is competitive, consumer preferences continue to shift, technology continues to evolve, and markets continue to move. The market dynamics are constantly changing with many new opportunities arising in the digital experience space. Clients, across the public and private sector who strongly believe in elevated digital experiences are making significant investments in rich authenticated and seamless experiences. They are looking to drive superior, personalised and memorable in-person and digital experiences across all touchpoints.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Over and above, customer experiences, clients are also investing significantly in rich and engaging employee experiences.
- 77% organisations consider digital workplaces extremely important in terms of priorities.
- With an outlook of 2-3 years, every organisation should identify milestones that map successes and course corrections.
- IT and business leaders must have a clear vision on the mission of the business, maintain open lines of communication to drive better business outcomes.
- Digital experience platforms provide entities with an integrated suite of tools needed to enable communication resulting in successful ecosystems.
- Organisations with a strong vision and ethics have the chance to contribute and provide value to customers.

Over and above, customer experiences, clients are also investing significantly in rich and engaging employee experiences. According to a report published by CMS Wire, 77% of organisations consider digital workplaces extremely important in terms of organisation's priorities.

In companies such as Liferay, we have the opportunity to create working environments where diversity, inclusion and career opportunities are a key part of successful business while giving back to the communities through EVP programs Employee Volunteering Programme.

Additionally, employees have an open-door

## PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES FOR DECISION MAKERS



### ● Talent and skills game

This is an area that remains critical to the technology leaders' agenda as roles continue to evolve in the diverse, fast changing and increasingly digital economy. A deep understanding of where the gaps lie and how they need to be sewed up will help tackle this issue. Not having the right people in place puts pressure on how fast any company can move regardless of if you have the budget. If you don't have the talent, you can't move.

### ● Hybrid work environments

While 'flexibility' is an advantage, longer work hours burnout is a bigger disadvantage. Moreover, striking a balance between in-office and remote employees is another area that needs to be addressed.

### ● Increased personalisation

Hyper-personalised experiences continue to take centre stage and entities need to gather a much more accurate understanding of their customers, anticipate customer behaviour and constantly learn, improve and deliver to stay abreast of customer expectations. Moreover, entities cannot keep experiences purely digital or physical; long gone are those time. Organisations also need to embrace augmented experiences.

### ● Driving and guiding change

The challenge of managing, mobilising, understanding, and leading change means that being a successful change leader isn't easy. It requires knowing how to mitigate consequences, overcome resistance to change, and deal with team members' reactions to change.

policy that encourages learning and growth within the company based on individual interests as well industry transformations.

Technologies such as Liferay's Digital Experience Platform, are witnessing increased adoption as a foundation to customer centric approaches. Scaling experiences on cloud is another area where we see immense opportunities as it enables organisations to reduce the complexity of managing infrastructure and empowers them to create experiences with enhanced benefits of cloud, further enriching capabilities and scaling digital experiences. ■



CIENA

# ARE YOU READY FOR THE BLACK SWAN EVENT?

Industry professionals need to lead the companies' strategic transformation initiatives, be more disruptive and ready for Black Swan events to emerge.

**I**n 2022, to stay competitive, businesses will be looking at the cloud for its benefits beyond enabling collaboration. This includes automation, security, and disaster recovery. Businesses that are familiar with using different cloud applications will make possible quick adaptation to these new technologies. Early adopters will give companies a good understanding of the business problems that can be addressed using the technologies, providing a competitive edge.

According to the latest forecast by Gartner, the IT spending in MENA will return to pre-pandemic levels and even surpass the costs by 2022. It's either adapt and transform to a fast-moving digital world or get left behind. CIOs and CTOs need to not only ensure they have the leadership's buy-in, but also communicate the benefits of technology implementations across the organisation to enable an efficient roll-out.

Career progression and contribution to the

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- CIOs and CTOs need to communicate the benefits of technology implementations across the organisation.
- Career progression and contribution to the community on a larger scale is an ongoing conversation in the IT industry.
- Organisations compete for the best talent that helps companies to achieve a competitive advantage.
- Network providers will have to keep pace by getting closer to the end-users and delivering exceptional customer experience.
- There is a need for synced efforts between network providers.
- Majority of the networks are ahead of the curve and providers are displaying increased efforts to prepare their domain.



### PETE HALL

Managing Director, Middle East and Africa, Israel, Russia and Subsea, Ciena.



## PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES FOR DECISION MAKERS

One of the main challenges faced by IT decision-makers in the region is the ability to meet consumer demands by investing in new infrastructure while maintaining similar or lower costs of service. The number of unique mobile subscribers in MENA reached 400 million during 2020, representing around 65% of the population according to GSMA The Mobile Economy report.

community on a larger scale is an ongoing conversation in the IT industry. In the ICT sector, organisations compete for the best talent that brings innovation, new ideas and helps companies to achieve a competitive advantage. Industry professionals need to lead when it comes to companies' strategic transformation initiatives, be more agile and disruptive to be ready for Black Swan events to emerge more often in this fast-moving sector.

A Black Swan event is an unpredictable event that is beyond what is normally expected of a situation and has potentially severe consequences. Black swan events are characterized by their extreme rarity, severe impact, and the widespread

insistence they were obvious in hindsight.

Additionally, the remote work trend will continue encouraging end-users to seek new ways in which digitalisation can ease their lives. In this new era, network providers will have to keep pace by getting closer to the end-users and swiftly delivering an exceptional customer experience.

There is also a need for synced efforts between network providers. A majority of the networks are ahead of the curve and providers are displaying increased efforts to prepare their domain to adapt and meet demand, such as boosting Internet speed and transferring traffic from wired to wireless networks where data is utilised extensively. ■



AMAZON WEB SERVICES

# NO MORE BUSINESS AND IT, TECHNOLOGY IS PART OF BUSINESS

Find more ways to say yes in businesses rather than allowing inertia and complacency of past successes to dominate, is the key here.

**I**t is exciting to see thousands of progressive companies reimagining their industries. For example, they use data to gain deep insights into market and customer opportunities, appealing at a more personal level to customers through real-time personalisation, and creating new channels through which customers can engage.

Prior to the on-demand power of the cloud, this level of speed and insight was out of reach for most companies. Technology is no longer the barrier. It's now a case of whether companies will

think big about the opportunities, and quickly and iteratively bring these to life with their customers.

Firstly, let us be clear that technology is part of the business. No more the business and IT!

Technology permeates every function and understanding how to use technology and data wisely for business outcomes should be a priority for all leaders. Business-focused technology leaders invest time demystifying technology for their peers, and ensuring a

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The old school technology departments of the past that sought to control and manage all technology will not work
- It is not particularly motivating to feel like an order taker in your own business.
- Relevancy to me means helping create awareness of how to use technology for competitive advantage
- How your own organisation needs to remove barriers to faster, iterative experimentation.
- Evolving organisational structures to become more agile stretches beyond IT.
- Most organisations are designed for efficiency, not the ability to quickly understand and adapt to customer needs.



**PHIL LE-BRUN**

Enterprise Strategist,  
Amazon Web Services.

## PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES FOR DECISION MAKERS



- Simply stay relevant!
- The old school technology departments of the past that sought to control and manage all technology will not work, nor is it particularly motivating to feel like an order taker in your own business.
- Relevancy to me means helping create awareness of how to use technology for competitive advantage, how newer technologies such as the cloud are creating business agility, and how your own organisation needs to remove barriers to faster, iterative experimentation.
- Finding more ways to say yes in businesses rather than allowing inertia and complacency of past successes to dominate is key here.

focus is placed not just on the technology but also the people and process changes needed to deliver business outcomes.

Breaking down barriers to collaboration including setting up the small cross-functional teams, what we call two-pizza teams, and giving them business problems to focus on.

Evolving organisational structures to become more agile stretches beyond IT. Most organisations are designed for efficiency, not the ability to quickly understand and adapt to customer needs. Progressive organisations create cross-functional teams and empower them to deliver business value to customers. It increases accountability, focus and motivation while reducing

unnecessary overhead.

These organisations relentlessly drive efficiencies in areas that are not competitively advantageous and thus focus more time and money on those areas of true differentiation. The cloud is an engine for this. For example, using Machine Learning to automate processes to free employees to experiment on behalf of their customers.

Technology has the power to improve many societal issues whether sustainability, poverty, hunger, or health. This potential will only truly be unleashed if we educate broadly on how to use technology and data. Inspiring the next generation and equipping everyone with these skills is one way we as leaders can help here. ■



RED HAT

## ACCELERATING ENTERPRISES PREFER HYBRID CLOUD

Transformation leaders take advantage of the flexibility of open, hybrid cloud platforms because they do not want to be dependent on a single cloud.

**E**merging technologies including AI, ML, edge and serverless computing present a variety of new opportunities whilst skill gaps are identified as the top barrier to digital transformation initiatives. Another significant factor is that digital transformation leaders are increasingly planning a hybrid cloud strategy, instead of remaining solely dependent on either private or public clouds.

Organisational priorities shift between the different stages of digital transformation initiatives. Decision makers in organisations in earlier stages are more likely to focus on cost reduction and simplification. But those in the emerging and other later stages most often chose innovation as their top priority, according to data in Red Hat's Global Technology Outlook 2022.

Last year, many organisations were forced to



**PHILIP ANDREWS**  
Vice President and  
General Manager CEMEA,  
Red Hat.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Organisational priorities shift between the different stages of digital transformation initiatives.
- Decision makers in organisations in earlier stages are more likely to focus on cost reduction and simplification.
- Decision makers in later stages choose innovation as their priority.
- Digital transformation projects start as IT efficiency or remote customer or employee engagement efforts.
- Later, digital transformation projects come to be seen as improving competitiveness, revenue growth, and customer experience.
- People are an important part of digital transformation.

## PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES FOR DECISION MAKERS



- Talent gaps is the top barrier to digital transformation.
- Other challenges that regional IT and technology companies face are integration issues and organisational resistance to change.
- Digital transformation is the progressive accumulation of new approaches to people, process, technology to create better business outcomes.
- Closing talent gaps, accelerating cloud-ready applications, establishing a hybrid cloud platform, are part of effective digital transformation.

rethink their day-to-day operations as workforces across the globe went remote. Industry buzzwords like digital transformation that may have been five-year plans became overnight priorities for organisations across the board.

Many digital transformation projects start as IT efficiency or remote customer or employee engagement efforts but, later, come to be seen as crucial for improving competitiveness, revenue growth, and customer experience. People are an important part of digital transformation.

When it comes to cloud strategy, organisations that consider themselves to be in the leading or accelerating stages of their digital transformation

have a strong preference for hybrid cloud.

This is in contrast to organisations that are in the earlier stages of their digital transformation, who tend towards a private cloud-first approach. This suggests that digital transformation leaders understand and are able to take advantage of the flexibility and consistent experience of an open hybrid cloud platform because they do not want to be dependent on a single cloud.

While Red Hat as a company has experienced significant change in the past two years, it remains committed to open source, both as a technology and a philosophy of leadership, management and employee relationships. ■

BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP

# PLACE NEW DIGITAL CAPABILITIES IN NEUTRAL CENTRAL FUNCTION

Introduction of a digital and design authority that encompasses IT, business, digital functions should act as governance to facilitate strategic choices.



**RAMI RIAD MOURTADA**  
Partner and Associate Director,  
Boston Consulting Group.

**T**he acceleration of digitisation is forecast to enhance customer experiences, inspire wider enterprise growth and induce long-term productivity. The ensuing opportunities for the GCC are twofold as the region progresses towards digital maturity.

IT and technology decision-makers must engage in collaborative endeavours with business leaders to re-imagine services and products from the ground-up, so as to facilitate smart solutions for digital user-driven journeys. With shorter-term pilots for digitally enabled use cases, leaders in IT and technology can create rapid impact and build momentum for an accelerated digital transformation truly agile delivery.

A key to that comes from a dual track approach, one that combines core technology operations and

new digital efforts through an updated operating model, such as is the case with Bionic companies.

BCG research shows that a Bionic orientation results from increased automation and AI adoption across internal and customer-facing processes, and includes new organisation capabilities such as agile delivery, advanced analytics and a human-centred design. A Bionic company also uses a refreshed digital-oriented technology governance to make decisions around foundational solutions, user-facing products and services, investments, and long-term innovation.

A successful digital model drives collaboration by reducing boundaries between IT and business teams, accelerating joint decision-making, and creating common ownership and accountability of digital transformation efforts.

BCG's first-hand experience with organisations ramping-up digital maturity, posits the following: IT and technology decision-makers should place most new digital capabilities in a neutral central function, at least temporarily.

To maintain close collaboration, the introduction of a strategic digital and design authority that encompasses IT, business and a new digital function should act as a governance forum to facilitate strategic choices relating to both customer-facing products and services, and internal digital efforts.

As IT and technology leaders help drive organisations' digital journey, they naturally build new management skills and functional capabilities, through operational exposure to a new digital model. This in turn increases their career capital and widens opportunities, internally or externally.

For long-term viability, IT and technology decision-makers should complement core operational competencies with track record

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- BCG research shows that a Bionic orientation results from increased automation and AI adoption.
- A Bionic company uses a digital-oriented governance to make decisions around user-facing products and services, investments, innovation.
- Successful digital model drives collaboration by reducing boundaries between IT and business teams.
- Successful digital model accelerates joint decision-making, common ownership, accountability of digital transformation efforts.
- IT and technology decision-makers face a perfect storm in the region with hybrid work trends taking centre stage while digital transition is ongoing.
- GCC technology and IT leaders need to navigate around core operational complexities.

of impact in newer digital transformation business metrics. Ultimately, this presents core opportunities to give back to the community, with organisational secondment of fresh graduates, or through personal mentoring and coaching for high-potential professionals. ■



## PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES FOR DECISION MAKERS

- IT and technology decision-makers face a perfect storm in the region with hybrid work trends taking centre stage while digital transition is ongoing.
- This is impacting all sectors and industries with a broader set of challenges.
- GCC technology and IT leaders need to navigate around core operational complexities as they maintain their business-as-usual outputs.
- The need to maintain momentum and bridge to new digital approaches marks a big challenge too.
- The next steps must be grounded with focus on greater development and retention, scale-up of modern capabilities to succeed the latest digital efforts.

ALCATEL-LUCENT ENTERPRISE

# ROLE OF CIO IS EVOLVING, SAME AS TECHNOLOGY

IT decision makers must look at their career progression as a means to evolve and develop based on their skills, experience and desire to grow.



**SANDRINE MOUSTAFA EL KHODRY**  
Vice President Middle East and Africa,  
Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise.

**T**he hybrid work environment has now become the new norm in our emerging digital-first ecosystem. However, over the longer term, companies need to consider how to address continued collaboration and teamwork as employees move toward a model where, even when they are working together, they will not always be located in the same physical space.

That means people within the remote working landscape will not have the same impromptu interactions they used to have around the water cooler. Businesses will need to create more bonding opportunities for staff.

It is also worth thinking about managers' accountability as they interact with employees, from onboarding new staff and understanding training requirements, to managing productivity

and providing guidance, all from a distance.

On the business process side, companies will need to think about business operations workflows, and how to digitise them. Digital transformation is only going to continue. Businesses need to ensure they have the right digital platform to enable the right hybrid landscape to ensure ongoing growth.

Digital transformation is now a key driver for business success and often results in the lines blurring between technology and business. It also means that the role of the CIO, CTO expands, and they take on a more strategic role to identify new growth areas to drive profitability.

As CIOs are expected to lead both, business and digital transformation initiatives and their outcomes, we can see IT leaders restructuring to adapt and respond to the shift in business needs. However, there must be an emphasis on getting the customer experience right, implementing a security strategy to support the hybrid-work model, driving innovation and ensuring overall employee wellbeing and satisfaction.

Decision making is a key component of every IT leader's day to day functioning. These decisions have a direct impact on the business, and it must be a collaborative effort from the team. Bringing people into the decision-making process enhances creativity and lends a fresh perspective to the task or challenge at hand.

Involving counterparts in the decision-making process fosters collaboration and helps break down organisational silos. However, what is really critical is including the right people who will be implementing strategies and agreed solutions, in the decision-making process.

It is key to think about creating a specific role of a change manager into IT organisations to follow change and to ensure right technology

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Digital transformation is a key driver for business success and often results in the lines blurring between technology and business.
- The role of CIO, CTO will expand, as they take on a more strategic role to identify new growth areas to drive profitability.
- We can see IT leaders restructuring to adapt and respond to the shift in business needs.
- Decision making is a key component of every IT leader's day to day functioning.
- Decision making has a direct impact on business and it must be a collaborative effort from the team.
- Bringing people into the decision-making process enhances creativity and lends a fresh perspective to the task or challenge at hand.

implementation and also anticipate and work on resolving all roadblocks.

The principal opportunity from digital platforms is to optimise costs as well as to improve efficiency through innovative network digital services. It allows the atomisation of processes and make consumers, customers and staffs day to day more productive and optimised. This opportunity lies in all sectors from healthcare to education and governments.

It is not anymore about only finding the right technical solution to answer a specific need; it is

more about what technical solution will have a direct impact on productivity and efficiency of the employees that will directly impact the business growth.

Technologies involved in digital transformation largely include AI and ML, cloud, data analytics and management, IoT, communication, robotics and a number of emerging technologies like 5G. Although DX initiatives may not implement all these technologies together, it brings together multiple technologies where data and secured networks play a critical role in enabling workflow automation. ■



## PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES FOR DECISION MAKERS

- The role of a CIO is evolving, the same way as technology.
- IT decision makers must look at their career progression as a means to evolve and develop based on their skills, experience and desire to grow.
- They need to enhance their business skills to enable their career growth.
- The new era which started two years ago at the onset of the pandemic, has mostly changed all the usual positions as we know it.
- Nowadays, it is all about business; all support functions including IT are here to support business growth.
- This should encourage CIOs and IT leaders to reinforce their business skills to continue being a part of the game and having the right added value.



HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY DUBAI

# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IS NOT AN IT PROJECT

Organisations must acknowledge the business side of digital transformation rather than addressing it as a purely technological issue and communicate this effectively.

**A**ccording to Deloitte, while 85% of CEOs accelerated digital initiatives during the pandemic, most cannot articulate their overall strategy and track their progress. This necessitates a restructuring of IT decision organisation whereby different technological functions are integrated within core IT.

While many organisations have a digital strategy, they lack the ability to strategize across functions, making it challenging to address opportunities and risks. This is because a single technology will not address the organisations' needs, rather a complex set of technological solutions are needed.

Most importantly, organisations must

acknowledge the business side of digital transformation rather than addressing it as a purely technological issue. Finally, when making technology decisions, communicating effectively across different IT functions is essential for the smooth functioning of digital technology.

The role of technology decision-makers has become more critical than ever as the digital business transformation evolves. Technology leaders are taking on additional responsibilities to ensure their organisation's digital focus comes to fruition. The most important point is that departments can no longer afford to remain siloed.

As business models change and technology



### STEPHEN GILL

Academic Head of the School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences, Heriot-Watt University Dubai.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- According to Deloitte, while 85% CEOs accelerated digital initiatives during the pandemic, most cannot articulate their overall strategy.
- Restructuring of IT decision organisation is necessitated whereby different technological functions are integrated within core IT.
- While many organisations have a digital strategy, they lack ability to strategize across functions, making it challenging to address opportunities and risks.
- This is because a single technology will not address the organisations' needs, rather a complex set of technological solutions are needed.

## PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES FOR DECISION MAKERS



- Most challenges that IT leaders may face in 2022 are related to the integration of AI and Intelligent Automation systems within organisational culture. Although the Middle East is expected to receive 2% of total global AI benefits in 2030, equating to \$320 billion, AI comes with a unique set of challenges.
- AI and Intelligence Automation systems often face issues with maintainability, scalability and governance, which makes them a challenge for most organisations.
- A strong business plan and a deep understanding of the objectives behind implementation is necessary for success. Additionally, despite companies making investments in digital technologies, legacy infrastructure impedes the ability to fully unlock digital opportunities.
- Organisations must work to consolidate technology environments with core IT to reap the benefits of cost reduction and seamless integration that digital transformation can bring about.

advances, rolling out collaboration tools for effective communication becomes necessary. IT and technology leaders must consider what tools and processes would boost cross-departmental collaboration. Supporting teams during shared projects, monitoring workflows and forming a framework where multiple business counterparts are involved in decision making is sure to boost inter-organisational collaboration.

According to Gartner in 2021, \$170 billion is forecast to be

spent on IT in 2022 within the region. As GCC countries continue their efforts to migrate from oil-exporting economies to a knowledge-based economy, IT growth will be one of the main opportunities this coming year.

The UAE's ICT Information Communication Technology strategy involves the deployment of secure cloud infrastructure and data storage across all industries. Additionally, investments in AI will continue to grow as the region explores opportunities for innovation. ■

NETAPP

# COLLABORATION ESSENTIAL AT EVERY LEVEL OF ORGANISATION

This collaborative effort inside the organisation, from C-suite to business units and into applications, will determine how IT can best support their business.



**WALID ISSA**  
Senior Manager, Presales and Solutions  
Engineering, Middle East Region, NetApp.

**T**he pandemic forced IT to deliver services outside of the traditional way. It has contributed to expediting cloud adoption but at the same time raised concerns about security in the enterprises with ransomware attacks increasing across the globe.

Regional IT and technology decision makers around the world operate their businesses in hybrid cloud environments in order to meet growing business demands for faster

innovation, while optimising operations and lowering infrastructure costs.

They will need the flexibility and agility of a hybrid cloud architecture to manage massive amounts of data being generated daily and use it effectively to accelerate time to insights and better inform decision making.

Protecting valuable information is key in this environment and therefore should strengthen their security posture by establishing a secure foundation across the organization, hybrid cloud.

This is a time of both significant disruption and opportunity for IT organisations. IT technology decision makers are in a position to play a strategic role in advancing their businesses through innovation and adoption of digital technologies.

Partnership is key to success here. Collaboration is essential at every level of the organisation, from the C-suite across to the business units and deep into the datacentre, application, cloud and operation teams. This collaborative effort inside the organisation will help determine how IT can best support their business.

They would have to sit together and map out strategies that look at both the benefits and the risks. They need to acknowledge the things that they have to overcome, simplify their operational guidelines, processes, and architectures, and get that delta between how they run it before and how they want to run more effectively in the future.

While technology keeps evolving at rapid pace, there will be a skills shortage in the market for new technologies like AI, ML Security and Cloud. This is going to be a good career progression opportunity for IT professional to transform their career.

In the meantime, there will be a gap. And therefore, organisations should have a plan and strategy on how to fill this gap by running

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Protecting valuable information is key in this environment and therefore strengthen security posture by establishing a secure foundation across hybrid cloud.
- This is a time of both significant disruption and opportunity for IT organisations.
- IT technology decision makers are in a position to play a strategic role in advancing their businesses through innovation.
- Partnership is key to success here.
- Collaboration is essential at every level of the organisation, from the C-suite across to the business units and deep into datacentre, application, cloud teams.
- This collaborative effort inside the organisation will help determine how IT can best support their business.
- They would have to sit together and map out strategies that look at both the benefits and the risks.
- Need to acknowledge things they have to overcome, simplify operational guidelines, processes, architectures.
- Get the delta between how they run it before and how they want to run more effectively in the future.



## PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES FOR DECISION MAKERS

- Regional IT decision makers are overwhelmed by the rate of change and trying to align themselves to understand that this pace of change is actually the new normal.
- Regional IT and technology decision makers will have to deal with exponential growth and movement of data across hybrid cloud.
- Data is expected to significantly grow with AI, ML, big data, analytics, video surveillance driving this growth.
- IT decision makers would need the right strategy to incorporate and manage data in a complex, hybrid world.
- NetApp data fabric solutions will help enable regional technology decision makers to synchronise and secure their data between clouds and on-premises solutions.

specialised training to address the pace of change, innovation and adoption of digital technologies in the region.

In my opinion, one of the most important give backs to the community that the industry and vendors can do is to work with local governments and educational institutes to fill the demand for properly trained IT professionals in early stages.

This can be achieved by introducing AI, analytics, cloud education as part of universities and colleges curriculum. This type of education can evolve to provide the next generation of professionals with the skills they need to support digital transformation and business growth. ■



It does not matter what stage your business is at



**JEN BLANDOS**  
CEO, Female Fusion.



**FEMALE FUSION**

# WOMEN ARE COLLABORATIVE IN NATURE

There are people who are more skilled in certain fields, but everybody needs to know how to do things so Female Fusion can run as a collaborative, smooth machine.

**F**emale Fusion is UAE's largest community for women entrepreneurs and as an entrepreneur, you need to have a community. Female Fusion has created a premium membership called the Fusion Circle, which provides women with access to an online business library filled with everything that you need to know to run your business in the UAE. Fusion Circle runs regular workshops, masterclasses and networking events.

Fusion Circle provides members with a premium listing in a fully searchable, verified business directory covering over 1,500 categories. The membership is helping women at all stages of business grow, prosper and find their community.

"There are other business networking groups, but nothing like Female Fusion exists in the region in terms of the resources Female Fusion offers," points out Jen Blandos, CEO, Female Fusion.

"When I created Fusion Circle membership,

< LIBRARY

## Fusion Circle

◆ My Favourites

◆ Member Support & FAQs

- Start Here
- New This Month!
- 1. Stages Of Your Business
- 2. Systems & Processes
- 3. People
- 4. Money & Finance
- 5. Mindset
- 6. Marketing & PR
- 7. Legal
- 8. Sales
- 9. Industry Focused Courses



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FUSION CIRCLE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FUSION CIRCLE MEMBER'S DIRECTORY

FEMALE FUSION BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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## Fusion Circle

Shaloo Rehan

◆ My Favourites

◆ Member Support & FAQs

- Start Here
- New This Month!
- 1. Stages Of Your Business
- 2. Systems & Processes
- 3. People
- Masterclass: UAE Labour Law Updates
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- 4. Money & Finance
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When Female Fusion brings members together, they collaborate, form partnerships, come up with ideas and support each other



the initial question was, what exclusive content and resources can Female Fusion provide,” reflects Jen. But then Female Fusion is merely the connector. The team at Female Fusion provides the framework and support and the Fusion Circle members do the rest.

This includes an online library for everything that an individual needs to know on running a business in the UAE; networking events, online and face to face; workshops and masterclasses hosted by our own members, plus the support each woman receives from community members. It is a one-of-a-kind community to

help you build your business.

When Female Fusion brings members together, they collaborate, form partnerships, come up with ideas and support each other. They are trading services and working together on projects. It does not matter what stage your business is at.

### OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

There is a big market here and different people want different things. What Female Fusion found is that women are collaborative in nature. Female Fusion provides a support network for women, whether they have been running a business for 20 years or are just starting out.

One of the biggest supporters for Female Fusion is MasterCard. We worked with them during Expo2020 Dubai and on a campaign called Go and Grow Digital. This campaign highlighted that it was in every person’s interest to support women-owned businesses’ growth. The focus of what Female Fusion has been doing with MasterCard is helping people feel confident with going digital and having digital skills, whether it is being online or accepting digital payments.

The biggest challenge is getting non-members to understand the value of the Fusion Circle. At just Dh158 a month, the return on investment is significant. Once someone signs up to be part of the Fusion Circle, they never leave! The challenge is showcasing its value to those who are not part of it.

Many members scale their businesses as a result of Fusion Circle. This is from contacts they have made, business partners or clients that they have met, tools that they have learned to run their business more efficiently or discounts through one of our many partnerships that saves them money.

### ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

Fusion Circle operates on a platform called Kajabi, which is an online membership and course creators’ platform. Being on Kajabi allows everything to be in one place, whether it is emails, creating funnels, sales pages, booking people for networking meetups or taking payments. The only hardware Female Fusion members need are laptops, while Fusion Circle members only need to log in.

Female Fusion hires people who are technology-savvy and are on top of the established systems because it helps be more efficient. Team members are expected to have the capability to handle multiple responsibilities.

Female Fusion has not received any technology mentoring. With all the technology that Female Fusion uses in its business, they have learnt how to operate it themselves.

For any entrepreneur, technology plays a key role in how you run your business because it saves time and money. It can be slow to get set up and might even be a little bit scary, but if you can automate your systems, running your business will be significantly easier.

“The key strength is that everybody is an all-rounder, a hiring decision that I am glad I made, and everyone has the opportunity to get help if they need it internally,” says Jen.

There are people who are more skilled in certain fields, but everybody needs to know how to do things so Female Fusion can run as a collaborative, smooth machine. ■

*In collaboration with*



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# CATALYSTS AWARDS 2022 **ASIA**

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# METaverse IS BLENDING AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY

The vision of metaverse is to build an immersive virtual world in which digital denizens can interact with entertainment, brands and one another.

**A**nyone with even a passing interest in innovation will know that virtual reality and augmented reality have been touted as game-changing technologies for years and, in some cases, decades.

Even so, their ability to cut through into people's everyday lives always seems to lie just out of grasp, like a shimmering digital mirage on the horizon. One has lost count of the number of

times; deflated commentators have explained that widespread adoption of virtual reality and augmented reality is probably just one more iteration away.

But as technological advances, consumer interest and industry investment collide, we may be about to see these nascent industries boom.

One is not suggesting this convergence has appeared out of the blue. There has been an unmistakable creep during recent years, driven



**ALI SAJWANI**  
General Manager Operations,  
DAMAC Properties.

in no small part by increased adoption of virtual reality and augmented reality in the face of the pandemic.

Consequently, companies that previously seemed somewhat reluctant to wholeheartedly embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution are now incorporating these technologies into their short- and medium-term business plans.

So, does this mean virtual reality and augmented reality are finally ready to break through into the mainstream?

The much-discussed metaverse is as good a place as any to consider the potential ramifications of these technologies. The vision of metaverse proponents is to build a truly immersive virtual world in which digital denizens can interact with entertainment, brands and importantly – one another.

There are plenty of metaverse sceptics out there and one can understand why. After all, it is difficult to get excited about technologies based on second-hand accounts and explanations at the best of times, but especially when extended to first-hand, subjective experiences. This is like trying to advertise colour television in black and white; it just does not make sense.

Similarly, the use of virtual reality and augmented reality technologies in conjunction with the metaverse needs to be experienced first-hand to be believed.

We should also keep in mind the potential of these technologies to enhance people's quality of life through improved accessibility. Just consider how the metaverse, powered by virtual reality and augmented reality, could bring new experiences to a wider audience, enabling people of determination, for instance, to enjoy life in ways that would not previously have been possible.

Another reason for optimism when it comes to virtual reality and augmented reality going mainstream is the constantly growing landscape of compatible platforms.

The latest iteration of the web is all about decentralisation, wresting the power from huge corporations such as Meta, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft and Google, and redistributing it among more diverse online communities.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Companies that previously seemed somewhat reluctant to embrace Fourth Industrial Revolution are now incorporating these technologies.
- Does this mean virtual reality and augmented reality are finally ready to break through into the mainstream?
- Metaverse is as good a place as any to consider potential ramifications of these technologies.
- The vision of metaverse is to build a truly immersive virtual world in which digital denizens can interact.
- There are plenty of metaverse sceptics out there and one can understand why.

That is not to say these technology giants will become an endangered species. On the contrary, the biggest players are busy eyeing opportunities related to decentralisation, but their roles are likely to evolve significantly during the coming decade.

The point is that our digital future will be more social and more user centric. We all stand to benefit from this shift, and as smaller, more agile companies continue to develop their own platforms, we will no doubt see virtual reality and augmented reality environments springing up across the web.

Many of us already engage with augmented reality on a daily basis, using our smartphones' ever-growing capabilities to add effects to our images and videos via social media overlays. But this is just the beginning.

As many of you will know, a range of gaming-centric augmented reality and virtual reality offerings have come to market during recent years, with everything from the more casual Pokémon and Harry Potter games to hardware such as PS virtual reality and Oculus Quest.

Sport is another area in which virtual reality and augmented reality will become the norm, enhancing experiences for both spectators and participants. Imagine cycling through a beautiful scenic route from the comfort of your exercise bike, or perhaps exercising in a sci-fi-inspired futurescape.

While nothing quite beats meeting in person, virtual reality has the ability to bring people together in meaningful,



Sport is another area in which virtual reality and augmented reality will become the norm



connected ways across continents. The potential advantages for business meetings, family time and socialising are therefore easy to envisage.

There are, of course, indirect benefits of this shift to virtual connectivity. Remote meetings can help save travel time as well as the planet, since there is no need to jump on a flight when you can interact with your colleagues, family and friends regardless of your respective locations.

Augmented reality, on the other hand, will allow for a shift in the way inanimate objects are viewed in the world – not to mention how we interact with them. There will be greater adoption of this technology in advertising, experiential entertainment and even the food and beverage sector.

Put simply, virtual reality and augmented reality stand to change our lives by enhancing our physical reality and introducing richer experiences to the time we spend online. But will this be the year when these technologies finally hit mainstream?

Perhaps we will need to wait for just one more iteration. ■



## BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY INTO A BRAND BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

To understand what underpins a consumer's perception of brand value, Bain & Company has identified 30 Elements of Value in four categories.

**M**any consumer goods companies have made solid gains to promote sustainability through such moves as reducing their carbon footprint and water usage. However, relatively few have made sustainability a big part of their brands. To understand the obstacles keeping them from developing sustainable brands, Bain & Company interviewed senior executives at 20 of the largest consumer goods companies. In those interviews, 100% of participants said they made sustainability a priority and are devoting more time to it.

But only 5% said they had successfully embedded sustainability in their brands. The

multiple rewards of building sustainable brands are well documented. When we surveyed 8,000 consumers on their views, nearly 75% said they are willing to pay more for sustainable products. Sustainable incumbent brands are growing two times faster than non-sustainable brands, according to our research, with sustainable insurgent brands growing ten times faster. Incumbent brands can use sustainability to reignite their relevance.

If the message is so clear, why are so many traditional brands late to the game? Executives cited three main barriers:

### PRICING AND CONSUMERS

On the one hand, consumers want sustainable



### CYRILLE FABRE

Partner, Bain & Company  
Middle East and Jenny Davis-  
Peccoud, Partner, Bain &  
Company Amsterdam.

“

Only

5%

said they had  
successfully  
embedded  
sustainability in  
their brands.

”

products. Yet consumers also demonstrate an unwillingness to compromise on taste, convenience, quality, or price for sustainability, and often perceive a trade-off. Consumer goods companies can overcome this obstacle by authentically making sustainability one of the reasons consumers love their brand.

That starts by establishing a sustainability ambition and asking a fundamental question: How strongly do we want to tie our brand purpose and proposition to sustainability?

There is a science that can help brands address this choice. To understand what underpins a consumer's perception of brand value, we identified 30 Elements of Value in four categories: functional, emotional, life-changing, and global impact.

When making sustainability part of the value proposition, a common route is to start at the bottom of the Elements of Value pyramid with threshold-level sustainability elements. However, brands that achieve the most from sustainability climb the pyramid to the top delivering elements at all four levels.

#### BUILDING THE PYRAMID

After determining how ambitiously to embed sustainability into their DNA, winning brands decide which specific sustainability topics they want to use to actively engage with consumers—which they want them to care about and love their brand for call them swords and which they want to be important to their broad stakeholders, where the brands want to set objectives and achieve a range of benefits call them shields.

Based on their ambition and chosen swords and shields,

brands need to make well-thought-out changes within and beyond their product offerings. The moves within an offering include portfolio adaptations to deliver more sustainable products, such as renovations to best-selling SKUs, core extensions, adjacencies, and even new business models.

Changes inside the offering should represent the bulk of the effort as much as 90%. Any remaining energy may be devoted to additional community or philanthropic activities to reinforce the brand's contributions to the global sustainability agenda.

To bring sustainability messages authentically to consumers, the best brands develop a sensitive consumer-engagement strategy.

Our research found that brands must devote a higher share of voice to sustainability in both the volume and percentage of their messages if they want to change consumer perception. Markets test and learn to identify the best way of bringing sustainability messages to life for their target consumers, and how to balance this with core performance messages.

#### DELIVERING THE MESSAGE

Despite the need to thoughtfully communicate, many companies have so far failed to embed sustainability in a large share of their top brands' communications, according to our research. In fact, about 90% of incumbent brands do not embed sustainability frequently in their communications.

Finally, there is the issue of pricing. Some brands have overcome the tough situation in which consumers will not pay more for what they perceive as

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Sustainable incumbent brands are growing two times faster than non-sustainable brands.
- Incumbent brands can use sustainability to reignite their relevance.
- Existing operating models hold back embedding sustainability into brands and managers cling to a financial value mindset.
- Sustainability feels like the private domain of a separate team.
- Time horizons and incentives are not in line with sustainability targets.
- The best brands take a cross-functional approach, embedding sustainability within divisions and business units.

the same product and retailers will not readily accept price increases, even for sustainable goods. Some winning brands price below the elasticity barrier, but with modest increases as they make continuous improvements.

Others have found that retailers and consumers are more willing to accept higher prices if, say, the proceeds go directly to farmers or help fund sustainability causes. Other brands have raised prices with major product changes, including sustainability, or with the introduction of new sustainable product lines. Of course, not all the value will result from increased prices; greater volume growth, market share gain, and repeat purchases, even at the same price, are all benefits sustainable brands can garner.

**IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABILITY**

The second hurdle involves the difficulty of finding the right solutions at the right cost. Half of the executives interviewed said solutions are not available, and 75% said that added costs hurt the business case for sustainability.

The reality is that companies can position themselves to overcome these issues. For example, to mitigate the cost impact from sustainability, the best companies explore three areas. First, they manage costs within the company. One company used better packaging—thinner containers and improved shapes that are more efficient to produce and easier to stack—to cut costs as much as 11% while substantially reducing materials requirements, including the use of plastic.

Second, leaders manage costs throughout the industry, by defining higher industrywide minimum standards or forming associations to support activities



Top leadership inspires a culture that fosters sustainability in brands



such as bottle collection and recycling. And third, they manage costs with innovative approaches along the value chain through such moves as pooling volumes.

**RESISTANCE TO CHANGE**

Executive interviews underscored a final major hurdle to embedding sustainability into brands: existing operating models hold them back. Managers cling to a financial value mindset, or sustainability feels like the private domain of a separate team. Moreover, time horizons and incentives are not in line with sustainability targets.

The best brands take a cross-functional approach, embedding sustainability within divisions and business units while linking incentives to sustainability targets. These companies treat sustainability as if it were any other business process. Perhaps most important, top leadership inspires a culture that fosters sustainability in brands.

It all may sound daunting, but when consumer products executives work to overcome sustainability's three biggest hurdles, they typically watch the benefits multiply. Their brands outpace competitors in growth, older brands gain new relevance in consumers' eyes, and their passion reignites employee engagement. Helping the planet helps these companies thrive. ■

# TALENT PROBLEM LIES IN FAILURE TO UPSKILL EMPLOYEES

UAE firms have difficulty in hiring AI talent because it is in demand and scarce, while part of the problem lies in failure to upskill existing employees.



**SID BHATIA**  
Regional Vice President and  
General Manager, Middle East  
and Turkey, Dataiku.

**A** \$320 billion GDP boost by 2030, according to PwC. That is the potential economic impact of artificial intelligence in the Middle East. The United Arab Emirates can look forward to the largest relative impact as part of this technological boom. A projected 14% of 2030 GDP will be attributable to AI in the Emirates.

Nobody wants to be left out of a boom. AI adoption has been gathering pace for years in the UAE, but in the wake of one of the worst economic downturns on record, companies looking to become AI-powered still face talent gaps. This remains the number-one barrier to effective AI adoption.

UAE firms have notorious difficulty in hiring the right AI talent because it is both in demand and scarce, and therefore prohibitively expensive. But

part of the talent problem also lies in a failure to upskill existing employees in AI.

Assuming the will to build an AI culture, here are some dos and don'ts as you embark on your talent hunt.

## DO: WRITE CLEAR JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Data scientist is not the only role that will make AI a success. AI, like any adopted technology, has a lifecycle, and many roles are needed to make it work. The trick is knowing what you want to do and who you need to make it happen. So, write job descriptions based on your organisation's needs.

Data scientists, for example, work with data to build algorithms and models that solve business needs. A ready-made data scientist will be someone with expertise in machine learning and other AI



Data scientist is not the only role that will make AI a success



areas, a working knowledge of statistics, and a sound business head. But a statistician could be trained to become one if time and budget allowed.

A data engineer could be described as being a more technical resource, responsible for infrastructure and connectivity to data sources. But today's visual data tools have all but negated the need for them.

**DO: STRIKE A BALANCE**

Hire too many data scientists and not enough data architects, and you may, for example, have problems with connecting to data sources. This could lead to a breakdown in the project-delivery pipeline, which in turn could lead to attrition in both talent areas. Also carefully consider the appointment of managers and data leaders. They should be clear-headed not only on technologies but on a range of business and interpersonal matters.

**DO: INVEST IN REMOTE-WORKING TOOLS**

While the home-based AI professional is traditionally more productive, their employers need to be ready for the challenges of system access, security,

collaboration, and the effective reuse of past successes.

**DO: HIRE A DIVERSE TEAM**

Responsible AI emanates from diversity and inclusion. Restricting data and AI operations to highly specialised, agile teams can lead to quicker times to market, but at the expense of long-term benefits such as scalability, sustainability, and the democratisation of data processes. Collaboration between people of different strengths, backgrounds and educational profiles can identify issues within AI designs that may prevent the finished product from delivering an equitable performance.

**DO: CREATE UPSKILLING PATHS**

Retaining talent means taking responsibility for its development. Upskilling needs to be individualised, while still serving business needs.

**DON'T: WING IT**

While writing job descriptions, it helps to consider what projects the employee will be delivering. As long as the skills fit the deliverables, you will have taken



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Hire too many data scientists and not enough data architects, and you may have problems connecting to data sources.
- In the wake of one of the worst economic downturns, companies looking to become AI-powered still face talent gaps.
- A data engineer could be described as being a more technical resource, responsible for infrastructure and connectivity to data sources. But
- Today's visual data tools have all but negated the need for data engineer.
- Retaining talent means taking responsibility for its development.

an important step in building an AI culture, but it is important not to go after a job role data scientist, data architect, analyst in isolation of clear business objectives.

### DON'T: LOOK FOR UNICORNS

A highly skilled data scientist with a PhD and an encyclopedic knowledge of all things AI is likely outside your catchment abilities, unless you are Google, Microsoft, Facebook, or a similar titan. The good news is that most of the skills you need to succeed are found in many non-unicorns. A good data scientist is a good communicator, both verbal and visual, through presentation tools both basic and exotic.

They are business-oriented and have a basic understanding of finance. They are excellent with statistics – grasping the difference between correlation and causation and recognising representative datasets from ones that are skewed. And they are comfortable with any scale of data, from the modest to the vast.

### DON'T: NEGLECT YOUR CULTURE

There is a temptation to let technology take over and forget who you are. Always remember that data teams are driven by knowledge, so investment on training is always going to yield dividends, both in terms of productivity and talent retention. Data professionals obsess over efficiency, so investing in productivity tools, and adopting the right methodologies will be useful. In addition, data teams are driven by seeing their work actualised, so take care not to initiate a project that you are not confident will be deployed across the organisation.



AI has a lifecycle, and many roles are needed to make it work



### DON'T: NEGLECT EXISTING TALENT

Many companies do not realise they can already staff for an inclusive and sustainable AI strategy through upskilling. They have within their ranks eligible employees that can be trained to fulfil many data-driven roles but are not.

Addressing this neglect will also address talent retention, because if you show faith in an existing employee and empower them to become a key resource, the likelihood of them looking elsewhere for opportunities is that much less than for an AI professional you hired from a sparse market.

### AGILE AND READY FOR ANYTHING

A regional business that is looking to AI is doing so for one broad purpose. Knowledge is power; and knowledge in a crisis is survival. The lessons of crisis are still ringing in our ears following two years of harsh education by the pandemic. AI paves the way to a more agile and futureproof business model. And the good news is we can have it. The talent is there. All we need to do is find it and keep it. ■

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# SETTING THE PACE AT WORK WITH CYCLING

A team of avid cyclists at Software AG positively transfer their shared learnings, experiences, wellness from pedalling together, into their workplace.

**O**ver the last few years, Software AG has taken on a heightened role in encouraging sporting endeavours for its employees, global and regionally and at the team and department level. Sanjay Brahmawar, CEO of Software AG is also an avid

cyclist and runner, so the passion starts at the top of the company.

At Software AG, there are as many different affinity groups for sports and social activities as there are career paths. Choices are running, cycling, hiking, scuba diving, wakeboarding to name a few.



# “LIFE CAN BE COMPARED TO CYCLING, IT WILL ONLY STOP IF YOU STOP CYCLING”



**NASRI NASSEREDDINE**  
Regional Sales Director  
for Gulf and Levant,  
Software AG.

An active lifestyle and sports is important because the rationale is out of belief and not only through practice. While its applicable for all sports, this is explained through the riding experience here. There are two points for everyone to learn.

Staying active not only impact the body but also impacts overall mental health and well-being. A healthy body leads to a healthy mind. Science has proven this multitude of times, but the ones engaged in these activities will truly understand and feel its benefits first.

Therefore, one must really choose an activity of their choice and pursue it with full earnestness and trust in it. Problem-solving and facing challenges at work and home become so much easier, alleviating stress, and increasing self-confidence and productivity during the day.

Life can be compared to a cycle, and it will only stop if you stop cycling. Continuity is important and indicates progress. The ride is a journey similar to the journey at work with milestones and obstacles that come one’s way – customer interactions, roadblocks, challenges, starting point and ending point.

True failure is only when one stops. If one #keeps pedalling, success is bound to happen. One can achieve more when collaborating with others and therefore cycling teaches and inculcates the spirit of working together with those who lead, those following and adapting to unanticipated changes from the members of the team.

Simply explained, it is about working together towards a collective goal to succeed! How to self-compete, achieving personal targets, overcoming challenges, and working as a team are aspects from team sports that have positive impact.



(Left to right)  
Nasri Nassereddine,  
Maysara Orabi,  
Trygve Slette,  
Rami Kichli,  
Vlad Postelnicu,  
all from Software AG.



It is a mixed bag and there is no focus on one.

Cycling is just one avenue that employees of Software AG follow to stay in shape and have fun. Inside UAE, Nasri Nassereddine, Regional Sales Director for Gulf and Levant, Software AG, has created a team of professional cyclists. This activity started five years ago and the team follows a regular schedule of cycling together.

The core team of 6+ members, including Rami Kichli, Senior Vice President Middle East and Turkey, and meet every Thursday and Friday morning for a ride together spanning 40-50kms of rigorous cycling. It is a recurring meeting in their work calendar and is as important for all as much as any official meeting. It is a unifying sport that brings the team together!

This team of professional cyclists' ride on hi-end

long distance bikes, Software AG branded gear with sacrosanct schedules. In fact, soon, they are expected to participate in the upcoming cycling events in the country and the region in 2022.

Starting as amateurs and now professional riders, the team strongly believes in their ethos to #keppeddalling to reach their goals. This is a connection point with co-workers across regions and boundaries bonding with colleagues in Germany, UK, Netherlands and more who share passion for the sport through virtual rides using VR apps, simulating actual rides on world renowned cycling tracks.

Sports is a vital element of Software AG's presence, and it is more than just a sport. It is about working and communicating in the right ways and blurs the personal-professional divide and fosters a strong bond among teams. ■

## “A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY THAT ENCOURAGES WORK LIFE BALANCE GETS ADDITIONAL TRUST AND RESPECT”



**RAMI KICHLI**  
Senior Vice President,  
Middle East and Turkey,  
Software AG.

A company is made up of people and as a technology company and there is ongoing customers engagement. Customers prefer working with people who they relate to and those who have a similar approach to life. Sports is a common interest that cuts through race, nationalities, and any boundaries. This may be an advantage to Software AG's business objectives but the bigger aspect here is the benefit it lends to teams and individual employees to lead a better life.

While it has not been a conscious effort to build this association, a technology company that encourages work life balance gets additional trust and respect. It is easier to relate to as it is perceived embodying humane and down to earth traits among its stakeholders.

After family and work, sports is the third most important element of daily life. It is fundamental in the routine even with a very hectic and travelling work schedule.

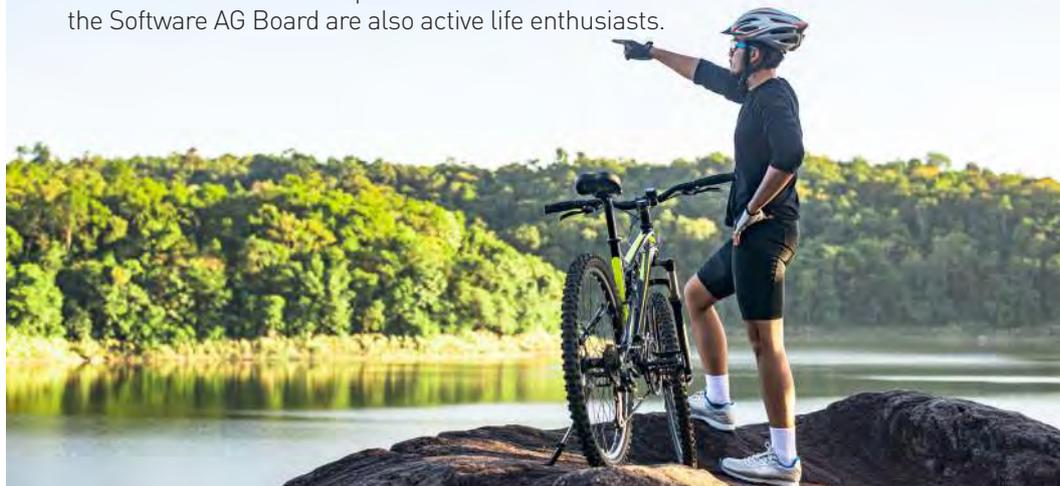
Sports brings an experience of high energy which helps in a fast paced and productive work role. Sports has the ability to decouple different aspects of one's life. Furthermore, at work, ironically and magically, it provides solutions to work life hurdles and challenges with ease.

Sports broadens horizons and provides the ability to handle situations and decision making in a calm and composed manner with the mind opening up and analyzing situations objectively.

It is vital to connect with your co-workers outside of the office. Engaging in sporting activities as a team brings them closer and their understanding of each other is deeper with a human connection with heightened trust resulting into collective wins.

Sports is contagious in a positive way. Over a period of time, active sports gets embedded into the fabric of the company's culture. Some of the joint activities have been the EXPO run, cycling on pro tracks, wakeboarding and running. Early morning gym sessions together is very common and with friendly competitions going amongst each other.

Globally, across the last few years, wellbeing, health and sports has been a focus for Software AG. It is also a sponsor of the SV Dharmstadt 98 football team. Members of the Software AG Board are also active life enthusiasts.





**CATHERINA BALLOUT**  
Director of edukaan.

# FAILING FAST AND LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

Catherina is currently the Director of edukaan by Tradeling, building the largest B2B digital ecosystem in MENA with a focus on micro-businesses. Although there is a global diversity problem, some countries across MENA have been progressive and are leading the change toward gender parity.

In the last few years, I have noticed the efforts of closing pay gaps, and appreciation of women as much as men who are leading the same roles and responsibilities. This has impacted us positively, fostering creativity and innovation and supporting personal and professional growth.

Another area of improvement is the increase in benefits for women including increased maternity leave, dedicated break rooms for new mothers, and shorter working hours after giving birth to name but a few. This does not mean our work here is done. We still have a long way to go, but I am positive that we are on the right path to ensure gender equality in the workplace.



## DREAM ENVIRONMENT

I think initially being in the same office space is important to help build a good culture but ultimately the work environment should support a hybrid model.

An environment that supports failing fast and learning from your mistakes. A company with an aspiring vision where its people believe in the vision and are committed to company values.



## MOST ENGAGING

Building something so great that it will have a long-term impact on the way micro-businesses conduct their business. Being comfortable with the unknown for the potential and positive outcomes it can bring. The unknown is another synonym for sky is the limit in my world.



## MOST CHALLENGING

Racing against time. No matter how much you think you are moving fast, you should always keep in mind that someone is already ahead of you.

Trying to shift the behaviour of a customer segment is a challenge due to language barriers and being less digitally savvy. Attracting female product and technology talents.

# FEELING APPRECIATED, RESPECTED AND HEARD

Reham's role focuses on delivery of reliable and consistent high-quality digital orthodontic treatment for clients. And making sure we are always there to help, support and provide attention to their needs to guarantee that the journey is a pleasant and successful one

Diversity is an integral and essential part of creating a positive workplace. Awareness has definitely increased in the past few years about the importance of having an inclusive environment that provides equal opportunities and support for staff members irrespective of their genders, ethnicities, religious beliefs and so on. A diverse workplace that recognises people from various backgrounds and values the differences they bring, brings about multiple advantages. It broadens and expands the skill sets within the workplace leading to an increase in productivity and innovation along with better adaptability, and decision making.



## DREAM ENVIRONMENT

My definition of an ideal workplace is one that is centred around effective communication and collaboration to achieve a common and unified goal. It is one where all employees feel appreciated, respected and heard.

And lastly it is a place that allows for innovation and creativity and encourages employees to think outside the box, creating a hub where ideas and talents flourish



## MOST ENGAGING

Working at Eon dental is anything but monotonous. This is one of the things that I love and find most satisfying, it is waking up every day to a new challenge and a new opportunity, to be as creative and innovative as you can. It is simply an agile environment where you would constantly thrive and shine.



## MOST CHALLENGING

Being in an environment where we all strive for perfection comes with its own perks and does seem challenging sometimes. However, being surrounded with great teams and departments who work collaboratively and tirelessly to make sure we achieve great heights makes all the difference.



**REHAM KILANO**  
Clinical Operations Manager,  
Eon Dental.





## MERCEDES-MAYBACH FULLY ELECTRIC MODEL FOR RETAIL IN 2023

Mercedes-Maybach revealed the final chapter of Project MAYBACH, its cooperation with trusted partner, Virgil Abloh. The Project is in partnership with Mercedes-Benz Chief Design Officer Gorden Wagener. Inspired by the great outdoors and a distinctly off-road environment, the 2-seater, battery-electric off-road coupé combines large off-road wheels. Key for both Abloh and Wagener was a responsible vision of future design. Creative freedom enabled the design teams to conceptualize what the future of electric travel could look like. Under the transparent surface of the front hood are solar cells that increase the range and breath-taking size - almost six meters long.

Looking to the future, Mercedes-Maybach will launch its first fully electric model for retail in 2023. Sustainability is not only associated with the drive technology, but also with the materials the vehicle is fitted with. During the development process, Mercedes-Benz prepares a recycling concept for each model in which all of its components and materials are examined with a view to their suitability for the various stages of the recycling process. The ultimate goal is to reduce the environmental effects of materials used in the production of every Mercedes-Benz vehicle.

# EXECUTIVE CORNER



The image shows the interior of a car, likely a Lamborghini Huracán Tecnica, with a focus on the dashboard and center console. The dashboard is dark with two air vents and a digital display. The center console has a gear shifter and several buttons. The steering wheel is partially visible on the left. The overall lighting is warm and golden, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text is overlaid on a dark green background at the bottom of the image.

## REAR-WHEEL DRIVE, REAR-WHEEL STEERING, AERODYNAMIC DESIGN

Automobili Lamborghini presents the Huracán Tecnica, with rear-wheel drive V10, developed for pilots seeking perfection on both road and track. The powertrain delivers 6,500 rpm and acceleration of 0-100 km/h in 3.2 seconds. The recalibrated system with driving modes and suspension set-up, includes rear-wheel direct steering, and innovative brake cooling improvements. The Tecnica ensures that the pilot enjoys the strongest connection to the car and asphalt.

Performance comes with new brake cooling management, inspired by track-based Lamborghini experience, delivering consistently better braking performance on both road and track. The Tecnica's carbon ceramic brakes adopt specifically designed cooling deflectors and ducts, directing the airflow into the discs to maximise heat dissipation and reduce brake fluid temperatures and brake pedal elongation. Aerodynamic efficiency and lightweight engineering are included in every element. A new bumper featuring an air curtain is included for the first time. A new front splitter, with lower, open slats directing air through the wheels, contributes to improved downforce and cooling.



## Marina Krasnobrizhaya moves to Marriott's St Regis Riyadh as General Manager

Marriott International announced it has appointed Marina Krasnobrizhaya as General Manager of the anticipated St. Regis Riyadh Hotel, slated to open Summer 2022. In her new role, Krasnobrizhaya will lead the hotel's pre-opening efforts and spearhead a new era of luxury in the Kingdom by introducing the style, innovation, and cherished traditions of St. Regis to the country.

Krasnobrizhaya is the first woman to be General Manager at Marriott International in Saudi Arabia and the country's first woman to lead a luxury hotel.

Krasnobrizhaya brings almost 17 years of international experience in the hotel industry. A Marriott International stalwart, she joins The St. Regis Riyadh following her recent position as Director of Operations at The Park Tower Knightsbridge, a Luxury Collection Hotel in London.



## Software intelligence vendor Dynatrace appoints Jawad Toukna as Regional Director ME

Software intelligence company Dynatrace announced the appointment of Jawad Toukna as the new Regional Director for Middle East. The Dubai-based executive brings 20 years of IT experience to the role where he'll focus on propelling Dynatrace's expansion in the region, while building a scalable, collaborative work environment.

Jawad's extensive background in sales and driving strategic business growth will be highly valuable to Dynatrace as it continues to scale business operations globally. In his previous role, Jawad helped drive strategic go-to-market programs and alliances partnerships for the MENA region of Forcepoint.

Aside from his years of industry experience working across the Middle East, Africa, and European markets, Jawad holds an Executive MBA from Harvard Business School and Executive Program for Technology Chief Operation Officer from Stanford University.



(Left to Right) Ruslan Sultanov, Director of Sales, Rixos Bab Al Bahr; Senol Sarisen, Hotel Manager, Rixos Bab Al Bahr; Resat Dalay, Director of Engineering of Sales Rixos Bab Al Bahr; and Ipek Dem, Assistant Director of Sales for MICE.

## Rixos Bab Al Bahr appoints Senol Sarisen, Ruslan Sultanov, Resat Dalay, Ipek Dem

Rixos Bab Al Bahr announced the appointment of four new heads of departments to carry out the new vision and continued success of the resort. The five-star resort in Ras Al Khaimah appointed Senol Sarisen as Hotel Manager, Ruslan Sultanov as Director of Sales, Resat Dalay as Director of Engineering and Ipek Dem, Assistant Director of Sales for MICE.

Rixos Bab Al Bahr is shifting its focus from not only being a family-friendly resort, but also the go-to fitness and wellness

destination within the emirates. The hotel recently launched its outdoor Exclusive Sports Club facility and jungle gym, allowing visitors to exercise with scheduled fitness classes throughout the day. The new heads of departments will help drive the repositioning of Rixos Bab Al Bahr and build on the resort's continued success.

All four heads of departments will report directly to Horst Walther-Jones, the General Manager of Rixos Bab Al Bahr.



**ANDRÉ DAOUD,**  
CEO of Medcare Hospitals and  
Medical Centre.

## Medica Group elects Elias Chabtini as Chairman of Board, appoints André Daoud as new CEO

Medica Group, a Gulf Capital portfolio company and one of the leaders in the distribution of medical aesthetic equipment and products in the GCC and the Middle East, announced that its founder and shareholder Elias Chabtini was elected as Chairman of the Board, providing counsel and guidance to Medica's leadership team and supporting the ongoing expansion plans across the Middle East and Africa. Moreover, Medica has appointed André Daoud as its new Chief Executive Officer, succeeding Elias Chabtini who has served as CEO of the company since he launched the business.



(Left to right)  
Joe Mazloum, Sabri  
Hamade and Ziad  
Moukarzel.

## Booz Allen Hamilton promotes Joe Mazloum, Sabri Hamade, Ziad Moukarzel in MENA

Joe Mazloum has been promoted to Senior Vice President overseeing the Investments, Real Estate and Finance practice. Joe serves a range of clients that include sovereign wealth funds, and public and private financial institutions across the GCC. His work focuses on designing strategies for large-scale developments, such as new cities and business hubs that will spearhead economic growth and diversification and enhance populations' socio-economic conditions. Joe also has extensive experience supporting

financial institutions design and execute growth and efficiency strategies.

Ziad Moukarzel has been promoted to Senior Vice President within the firm's Energy and Environment practice. He will leverage nearly a decade of experience in leading large energy projects across Europe and Oceania in addition to a decade of experience in consulting engagements where he brings strong expertise in strategy development and transformation programs, institution setting design, regulatory framework design, and operating model design to the environment, utilities, and oil and gas sectors.



(Left to right) Giordano Albertazzi  
has been appointed President,  
Americas and Karsten Winther, is  
currently Vice President of Sales  
in EMEA.

## Vertiv's Giordano Albertazzi moves from President EMEA to President Americas

Vertiv, a global provider of critical digital infrastructure and continuity solutions, announced that Giordano Albertazzi has been appointed President, Americas. Albertazzi most recently served as President, Europe, Middle East and Africa, a role that will be assumed by Karsten Winther, currently vice president of sales in EMEA. As President Americas, Albertazzi will have responsibility for the America's business, leveraging

his experience and successes in EMEA to elevate the strategic and financial performance of the Americas region.

Albertazzi has been with the company for 24 years, the last six leading Vertiv in EMEA. In 2021 EMEA delivered organic sales growth over 18% and improved adjusted operating profit margin by over 700 basis points.

Albertazzi and Winther have worked together for four years, driving meaningful results while building a successful culture based on accountability and speed. In his new position, Winther's strong leadership qualities will allow him to continue the high levels of success in EMEA.

## The 'Future is Now' survey captures Gen Z's\* readiness for the future



**35%** believe technology advances in business, healthcare, education, and transport form the essence of the future



**33%** associated 'Future is Now' with sustainable development



**8%** expect personalized services



**20%** related the future with rise in use of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics



**4%** associated the future with living on Mars

## HOW IS UAE'S GEN Z COHORT EQUIPPING FOR THE FUTURE?

### Adopting a DYNAMIC mindset



changed their lifestyle to transition to the new normal



have incorporated more technology and reduced their environmental impact over the last year



**UAE's Gen Z is future-ready**

Source: Future is Now study by FedEx Express.

# WHAT DOES FUTURE IS NOW, MEAN FOR UAE'S 18-24-YEAR POPULATION

The UAE is home to a vibrant young population, and a FedEx study offers insights into the priorities of the younger generation in the country. With the future becoming more dynamic than ever, there is a substantial shift in the way generations are embracing what's next.

According to the Future is Now study, 35% of Gen Z respondents associated the phrase with technology advances in business, healthcare, education, and transportation, sustainable development, use of robotics, artificial intelligence, everything to be personalized, and living on Mars.

## Willingness to EXPERIMENT



agreed that those who experiment and adopt change are better equipped to navigate future challenges



are constantly experimenting with their daily routines and experiences

## SUSTAINABILITY is indispensable



agreed that sustainability would be an indispensable part of their business in the future



believe that being 'planet-conscious' is integral to a futuristic outlook

Source: Future is Now study by FedEx Express.



**UAE's Gen Z is future-ready**

# LAMBORGHINI DELIVERS BEST EVER RESULTS, DONATES TO UKRAINE, HYBRID IN 2023

## THREE RECORDS IN 2023

**SALES**

**+13%**

8,405 vehicles delivered globally

**TURNOVER**

**+19%**

1.95 billion € all-time high

**EMEA +12%**  
**America +14%**  
**Asia Pacific +14%**

Double-digit growth in all three of the macro-regions, balanced split

### DIREZIONE COR TAURI

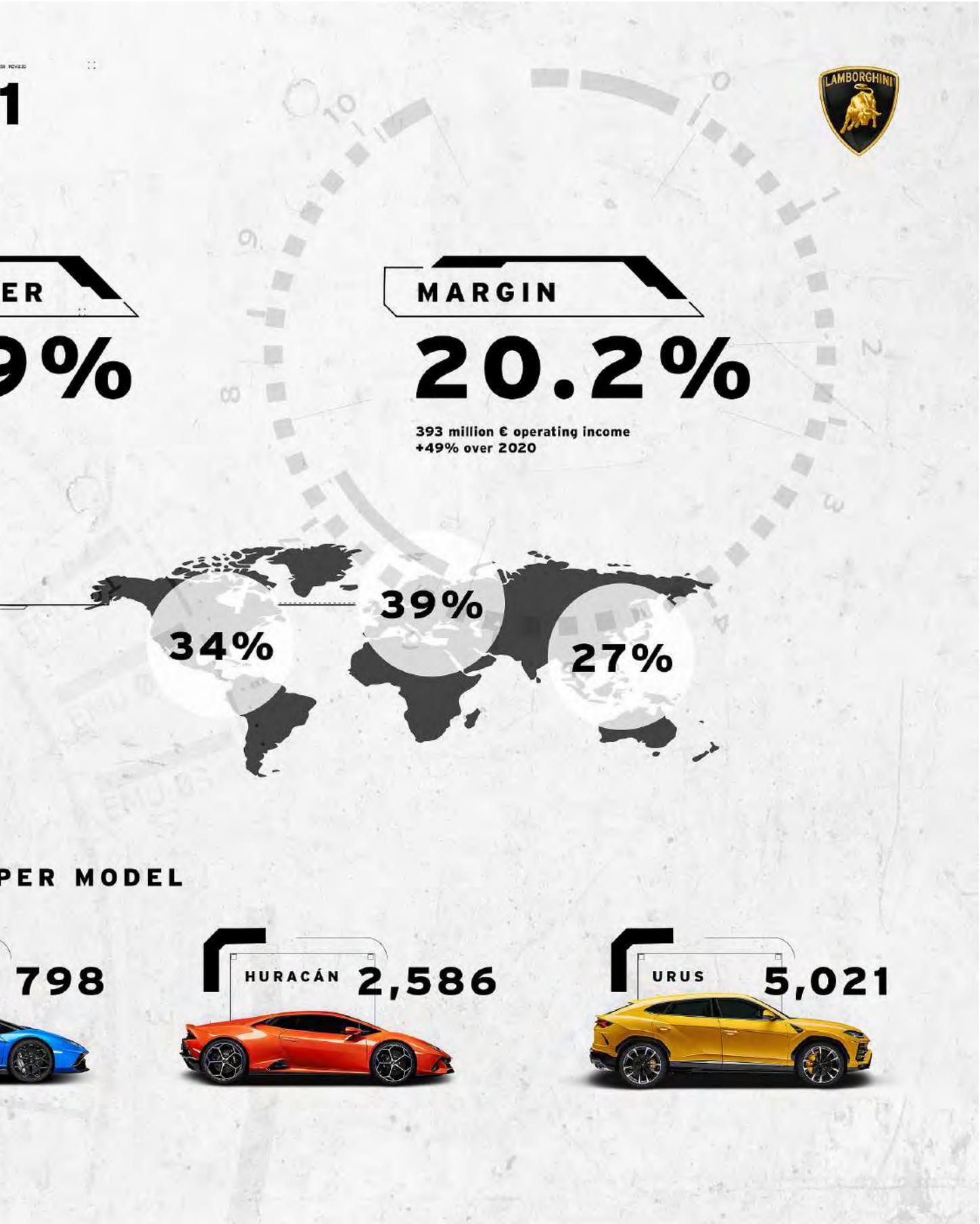
- 1.8 billion € investment over the next five years
- First model with hybrid technology in 2023
- Hybridization of the entire range by 2024
- 50% cut in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2025

### DELIVERIES

**AVENTADOR**



Lamborghini's turnover reached all-time high of €1.95 billion, a 19% increase over 2020. Efficient management supported by the launch of new models drove operating profit to a level never previously seen. The operating margin more than doubled compared to 2018 and reached 20.2%.





THE  
WORLD  
CIO 200  
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2022 ROADSHOW

JULY-NOVEMBER 2022

# #LeadX

WHERE TECHNOLOGY IS BORDERLESS, AMBITIONS ARE  
FEARLESS, AND LEADERSHIP IS LIMITLESS

40  
COUNTRIES

4000  
C-LEVEL EXECs

300+  
SESSIONS

200+  
EXHIBITORS

BROUGHT  
TO YOU BY

GLOBAL  
**CIO**  
FORUM