

CISCO MIDDLE EAST APPOINTS ZIAD SALAMEH MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR ITS WEST REGION



Ziad Salameh, Managing Director - West Region, Cisco Middle East

DUBAI: Cisco Middle East has announced the appointment of Ziad Salameh as Managing Director of its West Region. In his new position, Ziad is responsible for leading Cisco's business and operations in Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, the Levant and Iraq to capitalize on the opportunities created by digitization.

New role will focus on leading the way in digital transformation across multiple markets and driving business outcomes for customers and industries.

A Cisco veteran in the region, Ziad will extend efforts to secure engagements across various industry sectors, while working closely with channel partners to provide Cisco's customer centric solutions to the public and private sectors.

Possessing over 24 years of diversified industry experience and a wealth of industry knowledge, Ziad has an impressive track record of success in people development, innovation and business transformation. Since his appointment into Cisco

in 2009, he has leveraged his success in leading the Services business in Saudi Arabia to later drive operational efficiencies and innovation for Cisco Middle East's Services and achieve exceptional growth across multiple markets.

"At Cisco, we are playing a leading role in helping countries, industries and businesses develop and implement digital roadmaps and transformations that deliver tangible outcomes. This is a time of great change and growing opportunities and the appointment of Ziad to lead our West Region reflects our ambitions and strategic direction in these markets," said Mike Weston, Vice President for Cisco Middle East. "As a seasoned leader and technology executive, Ziad's proven ability to deliver customer success and depth of expertise in working closely with governments and enterprises will accelerate the momentum on digitization in the region."

Leading an experienced team in the West region, Ziad will develop stronger partner associ-

ations with strategic initiatives for skill set development and build on Cisco's public and private sector engagements to attain Cisco's strategic goals and elevate business performance.

"It is a truly exciting time to be a part of Cisco's vision where digitization is making dramatic changes in the way organizations approach their business operations. I am honoured to lead the way into new digital business transformation initiatives with Cisco's leading solutions portfolio to help our customers and partners reap the benefits of a digital ecosystem that delivers tangible and sustainable growth, and which helps them become more competitive," said Ziad Salameh, Managing Director - West Region, Cisco Middle East.

Ziad's past diversified experience in the ICT domain includes several key sales and leadership positions at technology companies that include Hewlett Packard and Compaq, and has led Corporate Banking Operations at Standard Chartered Bank.

SOPHOS TO FOCUS ON 'SYNCHRONIZED SECURITY' STRATEGY AT GITEX 2016

DUBAI: Sophos will be participating in GITEX Technology Week 2016, which is being held in Dubai from October 16-20, 2016. The company will focus on its 'synchronized security' strategy, showcasing its extensive portfolio of next-gen endpoint, network and encryption security solutions at the region's premier ICT event.

"With the increase in sophisticated attacks across the region, companies are looking for smarter and simpler IT security solutions. As the region's largest ICT exhibition, GITEX is a perfect platform for Sophos to reach out to these companies and communicate our 'synchronized security' strategy. We're excited to be able to share our recently announced Sophos Intercept X, a next-generation endpoint security product that stops zero-day malware, unknown exploit variants and stealth attacks, and includes an advanced anti-ransomware feature that can detect previously unknown ransomware within seconds. We will also be highlighting our innovative Security Heartbeat(tm) technology, which is at the heart of synchronized security and for the first time allows the

endpoint and network security to actively and continuously share threat intelligence to effectively protect against sophisticated threats in a manageable way," said Harish Chib, Vice President - Middle East and Africa, Sophos.

"GITEX 2016 is also a great opportunity to meet existing and potential customers and partners and share our highly innovative and simple-to-use and manage security solutions with them. And we will strengthen our channel network further by meeting and appointing new results-oriented partners in countries where we would like to increase our market share and reach. Our security experts will hold presentations on the importance of implementing synchronized security and address security concerns customers and partners may have at the event," Mr. Chib added.

As part of its GITEX 2016 presence, Sophos will showcase its broad portfolio of security solutions including the newly launched SophosIntercept X, as well as Sophos Clean and SG UTM, and its recently launched synchronized encryption solution - SafeGuard Encryption8, which can automatically respond to threat incidents from connected endpoint protection. Since enterprise mobility management is now a growing priority, the company will also showcase Sophos Mobile Control 6.0, a container solution with Sophos Secure Email that enhances data protection.

Sophos will promote its newly launched partner program for the Middle East and Africa region, which has been designed to address the needs of different types of partner and their engagement levels with Sophos.

Senior global executives and security experts from the company will be available at the Sophos stand D1-10, Hall 1 to meet with customers and partners, address the challenges they face and share the latest security trends and global success stories with them.



Harish Chib, Vice President, Middle East & Africa, Sophos

TECH GIANTS RACE FOR EDGE IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

SAN FRANCISCO: Major technology firms are racing to infuse smartphones and other internet-linked devices with software smarts that help them think like people.

The effort is seen as an evolution in computing that allows users to interact with machines in natural conversation style, telling devices to tend to tasks such as ordering goods, checking traffic, making restaurant reservations or searching for information.

The artificial intelligence (AI) component in these programs aims to make create a world in which everyone can have a virtual aide that gets to know them better with each interaction. Here are some of the offerings available:

Google

Google is making a high-profile push into AI, with the internet titan's chief referring to it as a force for change as powerful as smartphones. Google Assistant software is being built into new Pixel handsets-aiming to outdo Apple's Siri-enabling users to organize and use information on the devices and in the cloud-to check emails, stay up to date on calendar appointments, news or ask for traffic and weather data.

Google also offers AI through its Allo messaging application which can be

installed on smartphones, and its Google Home hub, a standalone device similar to Amazon's Echo which responds to voice commands to manage tasks and fetch information where people live.

Samsung

The South Korean electronics giant moved to jumpstart its AI efforts by purchasing the US startup Viv Labs, launched by the creators of Apple's Siri.

Samsung says the acquisition announced this month is part of its effort to provide AI-based voice assistance services its customers can use across all Samsung devices and products, from smartphones to televisions to washing machines. Samsung is world's leading maker of smartphones powered by Google's free Android software, but also has its own Tizen mobile operating system, so how it may field its own virtual assistant technology remains to be seen.

Apple

Apple was the first to offer its personal assistant, introducing Siri for the iPhone in 2011, and has been working to improve it over the years. Recently, Siri was upgraded to interact with non-Apple applications, so users can book a ride with Lyft or make payments using Square Cash. — AFP



MADAGASCAR: In this July 27, 2016, file frame from video provided by Vayu, Inc., residents from Ranomafana, watch before a drone containing medical samples takes off on a test flight from their remote village, which can only be reached on foot. — AP

DRONES CARRYING MEDICINES, BLOOD FACE TOP CHALLENGE

ANXIOUS VILLAGERS BUZZED WITH RUMORS

JOHANNESBURG: At first, the drone took some explaining. Anxious villagers buzzed with rumors of a new blood-sucking thing that would fly above their homes. Witchcraft, some said.

The truth was more practical: A United Nations project would explore whether a small unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV, could deliver HIV test samples more efficiently than land transport in rural Malawi.

Once understanding dawned and work began, young students and their teachers would spill out of the nearby school, cheering, each time they heard the drone approaching. "It was very exciting," UNICEF official Judith Sherman said.

As drones quickly pick up momentum around the world in everything from military strikes to pizza delivery, Africa, the continent with some of the most entrenched humanitarian crises, hopes the technology will bring progress.

Worst infrastructure

This second-largest continent, with harsh landscapes of desert and rain forest and extremes of rainy seasons and drought, is burdened with what the World Bank has called "the worst infrastructure endowment of any developing region today." Rural highways, often unpaved, disintegrate. In many countries, access to electricity has actually declined. Taking to the air to soar over such challenges, much as Africa embraced mobile phones to bypass often dismal landline service, is a tempting goal.

Those trying out drones for humanitarian uses in Africa warn that the technology is no quick fix, but several new projects are exploring what can be achieved.

The highest-profile one yet begins this week in Rwanda, as the government and U.S. company Zipline launch a drone network to deliver blood supplies and medicines to remote hospitals and clinics. Even in one of Africa's smallest countries, such deliveries can take weeks by land. With drones, it will take hours.

The speed and limited space of drones have focused aid groups and businesses on how to deliver small, sensitive and potentially life-saving cargo. Earlier this year, a partnership was announced between Zipline and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization.

Off Africa's eastern coast in Madagascar, another U.S. company, Vayu, has completed drone flights to deliver blood and stool samples from rural villages with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Africa has certain benefits for such projects, said Sid Rupani, who from his South Africa office studies how drones could be used effectively in supply chains. His U.S.-based employer, Llamasoft, has run a virtual pilot for Zipline in Tanzania. "It's not crowded airspace. Not many urban areas to deal with," Rupani said. Already, drones are being used in parts of the continent as visual aids in mapping and anti-poaching.

Drones also face multiple challenges. Some models are limited in range or need frequent

recharging. If they crash, retrieval in remote areas can be difficult. Some governments are wary of the technology as a possible invasion of their sovereignty, or they have no regulations in place. Even aid workers have reservations. In a survey of workers in 61 countries released last month by the Humanitarian UAV Network and other groups, the majority saw drones as positive, but 22 percent did not.

Under attack?

A top concern was that people on the ground would think they were under attack. "Whether we like it or not, UAVs are confused with weaponized drones," one Congo aid worker told the survey, pointing out the use of drones by the U.N. peacekeeping mission there.

Cost is another issue. The United Nations' test early this year in Malawi with the help of U.S. company Matternet found that using motorcycles was cheaper as they could carry other cargo, said Sherman, UNICEF's HIV and AIDS chief there. But she still sees drones as "a leapfrog technology that has great potential, some we might not have thought of yet."

Aid organizations are pushing for new breakthroughs. The Netherlands-based Wings for Aid is working on a drone prototype to carry more and go farther: Up to 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of cargo could be delivered to several points within 500 kilometers (310 miles), said Wesley Krefit, director of business development and innovation. — AP

SMARTPHONES DISTRACT US AND MAKE US LESS EFFICIENT AT WORK

DUBAI: While smartphones help us stay in touch with colleagues, keep on top of our inbox, and complete urgent tasks on the move, they actually make us less productive when we are working at our desks, according to a new psychological experiment by the Universities of Wurzburg and Nottingham Trent, commissioned by Kaspersky Lab.

The experiment unearthed a correlation between productivity levels and the distance between participants and their smartphone. When their smartphone was taken away, participant performance improved by 26 per cent. The experiment tested the behavior of 95 persons between 19 and 56 years of age in laboratories at the universities of Wurzburg and Nottingham-Trent. Care was taken to balance experimental conditions and gender across laboratory sites.

Researchers asked participants to perform a concentration test under four different circumstances: with their smartphone in their pocket, at their desk, locked in a drawer and removed from the room completely. The results are significant - test results were lowest when the smartphone was on the desk, but with every additional layer of distance between participants and their smartphones, test performance increased. Overall, test results were 26% higher when phones were removed from the room.

Contrary to expectations, the absence of the smartphone didn't make participants nervous. Anxiety levels were consistent across all experi-

ments. However, in general, women were more anxious than their male counterparts, leading researchers to conclude that anxiety levels at work are not affected by smartphones (or the absence of smartphones), but can be impacted by gender.

"Previous studies have shown that on the one hand, separation from one's smartphone has negative emotional effects, such as increased anxiety, but, on the other hand, studies have

also demonstrated that one's smartphone may act as a distractor when present. In other words, both the absence and presence of a smartphone could impair concentration," says Jens Binder from the University of Nottingham Trent. "In summary, our findings from this study indicate that it is the absence, rather than the presence, of a smartphone that improves concentration," adds Astrid Carolus from the University of Wurzburg.



WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: This file photo taken on September 16, 2016 shows a woman walking past Batu Adamis from Turkey, sleeping outside the Apple store to buy the new Apple iPhone 7. — AP