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CHANNEL DIRECTIONS

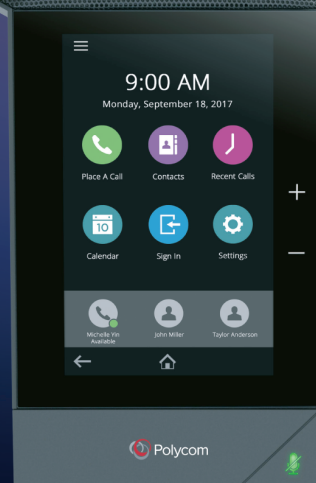Channel leaders of technology companies share their plans and priorities for 2019 to give channel partners a direction for this year in terms of new market opportunities

2019

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CHANNEL DIRECTIONS

Channel leaders of technology companies share their plans
and priorities for 2019 to give channel partners a
direction for this year in terms of new market opportunities

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IT'S TIME FOR PARTNERS TO MAKE THE RIGHT MOVE!

Nivedan Prakash
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We have seen more disruption in the channel ecosystem over the past 18 months than the industry witnessed in the last two decades. If we look back specifically at 2018, digital transformation was debated all round and channel partners left no stone unturned to capitalise on the opportunities created by the digital technologies.

Last year, the industry also saw cloud, IoT, AI, and automation starting to drive incremental business tech investments. In fact, after a decade of incredible growth, cloud's TCO is being felt by customers, and the channel is benefiting. As enterprises move to cloud, they will increasingly rely on their channel partners to support cloud integration and expand market share. And instead of betting on a single public cloud service, MSPs must look at offering multi-cloud management across both AWS and Microsoft Azure, and perhaps even Google Cloud Platform.

As we turn our attention to 2019 and beyond, we will see that beyond SaaS integrations, the solution partners will see sizable margin opportunities in the new year around serverless computing, managed containers, managed security, cloud consolidation, hybrid, multi-cloud, edge IoT, open source, and robotic process automation (RPA) as an onramp to AI.

Besides these, partners are also witnessing customer opportunities in augmented/virtual reality, 5G, and 3D printing as near-term, profitable areas that they can pursue in 2019. For example, one of the fastest-growing places in the channel is in RPA, where companies such as UiPath is growing significantly and adding tens of thousands of partners to their ecosystem.

With regards to the partner programs, this year we are also expecting the technology vendors to take more of an ecosystem approach rather than a linear, tiered approach. For instance, through its Elevate Partner Program, CrowdStrike is working with its partners to enable a 'whole-ecosystem' approach based on various paths to partner engagement and profitability.

CHANNEL DIRECTIONS 2019

Channel leaders of technology companies share their plans and priorities for 2019 to give channel partners a direction for this year in terms of new market opportunities

In 2018, digital transformation, artificial intelligence and hybrid IT became the top trending terms as most of the technology companies and their channel partners capitalised on the opportunities created by these emerging technologies. Besides, it was also a year of reality check for most of the traditional partners - simply because the industry witnessed the sudden rise of a new breed of channel partners superseding the traditional channel in many ways. All-in-all, 2018 was a remarkable year for the channel fraternity.

The prevailing industry trends of 2019 suggest that there will be a spurt in the demand of digital technologies. This will not only push solution partners shift their focus towards these technologies, but also make them invest on re-skilling and up-skilling themselves so that their business is aligned with the changing customers' requirements.

In this issue, team CRN spoke to channel leaders of technology companies about their plans and priorities for 2019. **Read more...**

Dell EMC India

ANIL SETHI,
VP, CHANNELS, DELL EMC INDIA

HYPER-CONVERGED INFRASTRUCTURE TO RULE TECH TRENDS IN 2019

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

IT spending in India saw a 9 per cent growth accounting to US$ 87.1 billion in revenue in 2018. Enterprise software and IT services companies led the growth. The year saw emergence of new businesses which leveraged digital mediums by creating new revenue models. I also observed that businesses moved to a more evolved thinking framework where technology was used as a tool to create elaborate and compelling user experiences.

The coming year brings in multiple trends for the channel industry to bet on. To start with, few of the top technologies that will shape the IT infrastructure are around multi-cloud and hybrid cloud infrastructure. Companies are now focusing on migrating their data and work to the combination of clouds which gives them a holistic experience. Another key focus will be on the consumption model. More companies, rather than procuring their equipment as an OpEX now, are looking at CapEX, and hence a consumption of the on-demand model. There is a proliferation of different types of services - platform as a service, application as a service, management services - all these are different variations of services in the consumption model. I believe that these will be the driving forces for the coming year.

Top tech trends for channel community

The biggest trend that I see is the cloud getting more mature as a technology and becoming a stable revenue stream for customers. I believe organisations are now moving towards technologies around multi-cloud and hybrid clouds and that is where Dell EMC's business focus would be for 2019. Companies are beginning to move their workload both across the different public clouds and from public to private, which is one of the biggest trend happening now. The other big trend happening in terms of technology is hyper-converged infrastructure (HCI) which continues to grow very rapidly. In fact, recently when Dell EMC announced its Q3 earning results, we shared that we shipped over a billion-dollars' worth of VXrail since we launched and it has grown triple digit last year.

Channel directions for partners

I really want our partners to make the transformation from just being a hardware reseller to reselling solutions that meet business objectives. They may not be able to move 100 per cent in quick time but they can at least start the journey. It will be a good start for partners to sell more lines of business at their customer end, for example, they can sell storage or networking products than just selling a server. We would like our partners to give us candid

feedback. While we are doing well in our results, we definitely do not want to be overconfident. We remain humble as we want to hear the feedback as there might be many things we still need to improve on.

Majority of the companies and organisations have recently been focused towards multi-cloud and hybrid cloud. They have realised that it's not just about keeping your data on-prem, but it's about the combination of both. In emerging countries like India, many channels tend to be more infrastructure focused. Hence, there is a dire need for partners to move from being a pure infra selling company to transform themselves to address new trends of multi-cloud, hybrid cloud and consumption model.

Microsoft India

RAJIV SODHI,
GENERAL MANAGER- PARTNER ECOSYSTEM, MICROSOFT INDIA

MICROSOFT HAS LARGEST ECOSYSTEM OF CLOUD PARTNERS IN INDIA

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

Year 2018 was significant for Microsoft as our newly constituted internal model, One Commercial Partner (OCP) organisation, completed a year. The OCP organisation has aligned Microsoft's teams into building solutions with partners as well as connecting our partners with customers. Today, we are working with over 9,500 partners which include ISVs (Independent Software Vendors), SIs (System Integrators) and MSPs (Managed Service Providers), and the OCP organisation is accelerating digital transformation journey of our customers across business and government organisations.

Nearly 3,000 of our partners offer cloud services, which makes the Microsoft cloud ecosystem the largest in India. We are also working with over 700 partners to infuse AI and cognitive services in the workings of organisations across verticals, including manufacturing, retail, healthcare, automotive, education, financial services and government services, among others.

With organisations increasingly looking at technology to drive their growth, these are exciting times for Microsoft and our partners. We have been working closely with our partners and are also assisting them with resources and trainings to build their capacity in not only creating unique solutions but also taking the solutions to customers.

Top tech trends for channel community

From a technology perspective, AI, IoT and data centre transformation are some of the noteworthy trends. Another technology trend is building of business app which address needs of CXOs. As an example, Ramco has developed an AI based chat interface using Microsoft Azure AI framework, the interface helps human resource personnel manage routine tasks such as addressing queries around an employee's employment history, timesheet, expense filing and approvals, among others. The user just needs to enter his/her email address and password, and can then have a human-like, natural conversation about the query, while the interface responds with relevant information.

I am also going to see more and more partners building unique Intellectual Property and managed services as customers transition to the cloud. We are working with our partners to help our customers not only seamlessly shift from legacy solutions to the cloud but also provide our customers with AI and IoT integrated cloud services.

Another noteworthy trend is that our conversations with customers are getting more industry focused. I, along with our partners, are creating Digital Transformation strategy which is not only tailor-made to specific industries, but also to specific organisations.

Channel directions for partners

We are focused on enabling partners build AI solutions. We are working with our partners to analyse market needs for new solutions, making available to our partners technical specialists and architects to help build the solution and training our partners on AI.

Working with our partners as solution providers and advisors, we need to demonstrate to our customers a true understanding of their business and ways in which digitisation can improve it.

One of the best reasons to use Microsoft Azure cloud for applications and services is its wide array of security tools and capabilities. These tools and capabilities help make it possible to create secure solutions, Microsoft Azure provides confidentiality, integrity, and availability of customer data, while also enabling transparent accountability.

There are several ways in which organisations can leverage digital services, and we need to empower our customers through information sharing and consulting, making sure that our customers have choices in their digital transformation journey.

IBM India

REKHA MURTHY,
DIRECTOR – ONE CHANNEL,
IBM INDIA/SOUTH ASIA

IBM WILL STRENGTHEN PARTNER-FIRST MODEL ACROSS ALL MARKETS

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

For the first time since the rise of the internet we are witnessing a shift in the epicentre of market disruption. Today, the world is progressing ahead on the digital transformation journey with new age technologies like artificial intelligence, cognitive, blockchain, IoT and more, delivered on the cloud. 2018 witnessed acceleration in the adoption of all these technologies with business partners skilling and upskilling themselves to align their business with client requirements.

We foresee a data-driven business strategy backed by cloud and AI will continue to bring in transformational and cultural change in 2019.

At IBM, we are focused on helping businesses with their digital transformation, working very closely with our ecosystem of partners across hybrid cloud, digital business automation, digital transformation, security and fraud detection, database management and analytics, customer experience and analytics solutions. In 2019, we see an opportunity in scaling growth in the IT Infrastructure space through our core offerings of SAP HANA on Power, High Performance Computing, PowerAI and Software Defined Storage as well as new industry and business solutions around blockchain, AI and cloud.

Top tech trends for channel community

Business partners need to look out for the following trends in 2019:

❱ **Hybrid multi-cloud architectures will replace the "one-cloud-fits-all" approach:** According to research from Ovum, while 20 per cent of business processes have already moved to the cloud, 80 per cent of mission-critical workloads and sensitive data are still running on-premises because of performance and regulatory requirements. As they enter the next phase of their cloud journey, many organisations will be moving away from "one cloud fits all".

Public cloud may be a key to cost effectively accelerating digital transformation, but many enterprise data centres aren't going anywhere, nor should they. Not every workload is a candidate for the public cloud. Businesses will increasingly drive value from the integration of public and private clouds as they seek to get the most out of their cloud investments by taking a hybrid multicloud approach. A hybrid multicloud environment uses a combination of on-premises, private cloud and public cloud architecture, with best-in-class resources from different cloud vendors. Business partners need to skill themselves and be prepared to help their clients navigate through their cloud journey.

❱ **Cognitive Security Operations Centre:** Cognitive computing, is an advanced type of artificial intelligences that leverages various forms of AI, including machine-learning algorithms and deep-learning networks, that get stronger and smarter over time. This essentially helps organisations respond to threats with greater confidence and speed. Therefore, the "cognitive SOC" is the necessary evolution of the industry to keep pace with increasing volume and sophistication of threats. Business partners have to infuse AI.

❱ **Trust and transparency will continue to drive the AI-conversation:** With companies applying new anti-bias techniques, in combination with guidance from in-house and industry ethics advisory groups, to make their products and platforms fairer. Partners also need to work with clients to build a fair and transparent AI models.

Channel directions for partners

IBM has been focused on helping businesses in their transformation journey. Through our partner outreach, we build, nurture and grow a thriving and effective ecosystem where our partners can provide solutions, services, and value-based skills to enable their client's success.

Our strategy is three pronged– building loyalty, extending capability and accelerating time to revenue. I will continue to strengthen our partner-first model across all markets, differentiating IBM's unique portfolio and creating value for IBM and partners. I will work with our partner community to accelerate development and delivery of cloud, AI and solutions to our clients and at the same time improve our partner end-to-end experience. I will work on increasing adoption of cloud and AI solutions, improving the partner experience and enhancing their skills on IBM platforms.

For example, IBM PartnerWorld the award-winning global programme, designed to help our partners increase demand, grow their business, and improve profitability, has been recently refreshed and enhanced with new

content and offerings for partners to leverage such as;

◗ Refreshed market and competitive intelligence site which partners can refer and take content from to up their game in the market

◗ Skills gateway: A university like programme for learning for BPs

◗ Third party marketplaces where BPs can do digital shopping of IT solution Partner to Partner Connect.

HPE India

JOYBRATA MUKHERJEE,
DIRECTOR - CHANNEL, SI, ALLIANCES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS, HPE INDIA

AI & ML WILL BE IN DEMAND FOR PREDICTIVE & PROACTIVE OPERATIONS

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

Our vision is to invest in high-growth areas of the market, where the biggest opportunities lie and further enable our partners to sell solutions and differentiate. In 2018 we further enhanced our partner ready program, thereby accelerating the partners profitable growth by rewarding them for investing in product lines aligned to these high-growth market areas, including composable infrastructure, hyper-converged solutions, storage, software and consumption services.

In 2019, a more edge-centric, cloud-enabled and data-driven enterprise approach, coupled with flexible, consumption-based IT, will ease the burden of administration. It will also enable organisations to focus on revenue-generating priorities and new capabilities to accelerate customer innovation and enterprise transformation. HPE has also built an innovative portfolio of products and services that enable customers to successfully take advantage of these trends. These solutions and services coupled with our partner ready ecosystem will continue to create new value opportunities and reduce time to market.

Top tech trends for channel community

In 2019, hybrid cloud will be the norm. The only way to respond to this uber hybrid world is to offer an open approach of building solutions and managing environments—an approach anchored by composability. This will provide organisations with the integration and flexibility to address any workload.

With increased cloud adoption, the pace of business has changed as well. In 2019, infrastructure automation, machine learning, and artificial intelligence for predictive and proactive operations will be required to achieve agility and keep pace with today 's data-driven businesses.

The new year will also mark the year of intelligent storage for businesses as IT decision-makers will utilise intelligence to address their always-on, always-fast requirements. Moreover, we will witness the adoption of storage class memory that extends the acceleration and consolidation value of all-flash arrays to even the most demanding workloads that require ultra-low and predictable latency.

Additionally, the explosion of connected things continues to create a wealth of new mobile and IoT-based services and capabilities from the edge to the cloud and across the enterprise. However, securing and managing IoT devices to support business requirements is a top concern for business and technology leaders, along with stopping advanced threats, as hackers continue to get more sophisticated. The challenges will lie in effectively adopting these innovative new technologies, without putting corporate data at risk or burdening IT teams.

Lastly, the pay-as-you-go economic model resonates broadly across the enterprise as the benefits are tangible with consumption-based IT on-premises and managing cloud consumption. It helps them to quickly deploy IT to support new projects, new businesses, and new customers. Consumption-based IT provides businesses with personalised attention, enables them to eliminate some of the 'heavy lifting' necessary to operate IT, and allows them to focus on growing their own enterprise. In 2019 and beyond, we believe you'll see more and more businesses adopt this intelligent IT solution that pays dividends across their organisation.

Channel directions for partners

HPE's vision is to invest in high-growth areas of the market, where the biggest opportunities lie for us and our partners. Through our Partner Ready Program we are rewarding partners with higher rebates and quicker access to higher membership tiers for their investment and sales of these high-growth products and services, including:

◗ Software-defined solutions such as HPE Synergy and HPE SimpliVity

◗ Storage solutions such as HPE Nimble Storage and HPE 3PAR

◗ Software solutions such as HPE OneView and HPE OneSphere

◗ Services led solutions such as HPE GreenLake and HPE Datacenter Care

HPE has an unwavering commitment to the channel, we think of our partners as an extension of our own team.

It is imperative for the channel community to adapt fast, identify these top big areas and customer needs and accordingly align their strategy to it.

Schneider Electric India

GURUDUTT M,
DIRECTOR, CHANNEL SALES MANAGEMENT & TRANSACTION BUSINESS, SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

'INDIAN IT CHANNEL BUSINESS HAS EMBRACED CONSOLIDATION'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

We can see three clear tech trends that will contribute to the growth of channel business:

◗ **Security and surveillance:** We see channel partners expanding verticals and stepping into the security area for better RoI and sustainable business in a big way.

◗ **Cloud computing:** With their minimum operating cost, the cloud has lured many small and mid-level, along with large businesses towards adoption. Various cloud environments offer vast opportunities for partners.

◗ **AI:** Although in it's at a nascent stage, AI has managed to disrupt the entire business ecosystem and is going to bolster the growth further in 2019. The enterprise channel has huge prospects in this flourishing business vertical, which is the near future of the industry.

Top tech trends for channel community

The IT channel industry faced a fair amount of volatility during 2018 owing to continued repercussions of the GST and growing influence of digitisation. However, the industry player continued to differentiate themselves through value addition while building on newer capability.

◗ The Indian IT channel business has embraced consolidation to find new business prospects and ensure better margins

◗ There has also been a shift of focus towards solutions that encompass the supply of a complete range of products and services

◗ The growing significance of the channel industry for consumers, corporates as well as the enterprise segment, along with the B2B segment has been one the major shift during the year.

Additionally, players across the industry are cross-selling their technical and commercial capabilities for ensuring continuous growth in a rapidly evolving business environment.

The channel business has evolved over the years and the hunger to improve the business has led both partners and vendors to try different business models to stay relevant in the market. We are hopeful to witness a similar trend during this year as well. The industry is transforming rapidly to keep up with the customer demands. Cross-selling and everyday innovation are what will take center-stage during this year.

'Value Add', will graduate into 'One Stop Solution' in 2019. We will see partners courageously exploring different permutations and combinations of different business models to fulfill their growth aspirations.

Channel directions for partners

Schneider Electric partners bring together an array of components to meet the needs of customers in a specific market segment. Whether our partner is from the electrical, IT, security, building automation, structured cabling systems or any other segment, we aim to support them in excelling in their business field and develop new areas of expertise.

We have a revamped online portal for our IT channel partners. Through the portal, Schneider Electric ensures significant updates have been made to partners' personal pages to help them track their requirements, allowing for sales, presales and owners to access what is most important to them. The Partner Portal for IT channel partners features a variety of online support tools and access to numerous training guides and practical solutions. It also serves as a network, which provides access to information on the latest data centre infrastructure products and solutions.

Schneider Electric is a channel-focused organisation, where we place great value on the mutually beneficial relationship we have with our partners. This Partner Portal fits perfectly with what we offer our partners and allows us to work closely with them as they move through the channel.

The easy-to-use platform includes essential training to maintain partner certification levels, marketing collateral and

sales tools, as well as opportunity registration, lead generation, networking opportunities, free training, and a Rewards Program.

Certifications forms a critical part of the development of our partners. Individual members within the partners can intuitively manage their certifications, allowing the partner to maintain and achieve higher partner status.

Oracle India

RITESH SYAL,
SENIOR DIRECTOR AND HEAD-ALLIANCES & CHANNELS, ORACLE INDIA

ORACLE UNLEASHES NEW LEVEL OF MARKET OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANNEL

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

2018 saw a number of technologies moving from hype to actual implementation. We saw strong adoption of cloud technologies by Indian businesses

and we expect this to pick up further pace in 2019. Given the IT spending in India is expected to grow to US$ 89.2 billion in 2019, we see a lot of opportunity for channel players to drive large scale business transformation of customers. 2019 will also see a lot many channel partners make the mind-set shift towards cloud and reinventing their business models. With cloud as the foundation, we expect more uptake for emerging tech paradigms such as AI/ML, blockchain and chatbots in the enterprise, thereby unleashing a new level of market opportunity for the channel ecosystem.

Top tech trends for channel community

With more and more Indian companies looking to transform into digital-first businesses, the move to cloud is becoming increasingly appealing. I have seen Indian businesses leapfrog some of their APAC peers when it comes to cloud adoption. Our partners understand this and are aligning themselves for a cloud-first world, where businesses are increasingly turning to emerging technologies like AI/ML, blockchain and chatbots to unlock new growth avenues, improve productivity, efficiencies and accelerate innovation. Another important generational innovation that the channel partners should bet on is autonomous cloud services, as automation is fast becoming table stakes.

Channel directions for partners

Clearly cloud will continue to be our focus for 2019 and beyond. There is an opportunity for every partner to choose an area in the cloud, be it IaaS/PaaS or SaaS and expand their specialisations. I believe in the 'partners for profit' philosophy of doing businesses and are highly focussed on enhancing the skill sets of our channel partners, enabling them to become more standardised, which can result in them winning more business

together with Oracle.

For 2019, two of our key growth objectives are: strengthening our SaaS leadership, with cloud ERP as the beachhead; and helping Indian businesses upgrade to the technology of tomorrow, today - with generational innovations like Oracle Gen 2 cloud and our autonomous database, the world's first and only 'self-driving, self-securing and self-repairing' database. Our partners are aligned to these focus areas and are committed to make this an even more mutually rewarding year.

Polycom India

ANKUR GOEL,
INDIA CHANNEL HEAD, POLYCOM

'AI WILL REVOLUTIONISE THE MODERN WORKPLACE'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

2018 was an exciting year for the industry – there was a massive shift in how technology was implemented and used in the workspace. Some of the key highlights include:

◗ **Interoperability went mainstream:** Interoperability i.e. the real-time data exchange between systems without middleware became mainstream for end

customers. In 2018, Microsoft and Skype for business became interoperable. Polycom launched Real Connect O365 service for native interoperation between Microsoft and Skype for business and teams with video-based endpoints. There was a concerted effort on the part of solution providers to have their systems and services interoperate with systems and services of other solution providers.

▶ **Adoption of technology-enabled huddle rooms:** There was a growth in the number of technology-enabled huddle rooms or small meeting spaces which helped a wider pool of employees collaborate with each other and with the outside world. This was driven by the fact that today's workers increasingly depend on technology to achieve high levels of productivity as they expect to connect instantly, work smarter, produce outcomes and drive results quicker. Technology-enabled huddle rooms satisfied this need for real-time, productive collaboration.

2019 would be a great opportunity for the IT channel industry to stitch together the collaboration cloud services with intuitive audio and video devices, seamless content sharing. And acoustics to provide best in class experience to the customers, thus making conference room and huddle room meetings richer in experience and thereby improving business productivity.

Top tech trends for channel community

Collaboration will move beyond calendar invites and go towards a culture of enabling collaboration everywhere. While the notion of working from 9-5 has long evaporated in a world where connectivity and productivity are possible from even the most remote locations, the calendar invites still rules where and when we get together. This will change in 2019 – we will advance collaboration as more enterprises adopt web-based collaboration tools, and device

technologies take advantage of advances in Wi-Fi connectivity and compute power to get more done, better, faster – together.

▶ **Artificial Intelligence (AI) will revolutionise the modern workplace:** Cameras are becoming more intelligent with technologies like speaker tracking, facial recognition (AI) and advanced analytics providing organisations with invaluable insights, helping them enhance the overall experience and the productivity of video conferences. This trend will grow in 2019 and facial recognition technology will prove to be instrumental in the modern workspace.

▶ **Cloud for SOHO; hybrid for enterprises:** While video cloud services are becoming the first choice for small/home offices (SOHOs), enterprise customers are still looking at on-prem and hybrid environments. The enterprise customers with investments in legacy hardware and software still face security concerns while adopting the pure cloud environment.

Channel directions for partners

We want our channel partners to:

▶ **Focus on experience:** Channel partners should invest in enhancing the overall 'Experience' of the end customers. "Video is the new voice" goes the thinking in many organisations today, where employees are increasingly working remotely from home offices, satellite offices, client sites, and the road.

▶ **Focus on customer service excellence:** The partners should invest in enhancing customer service excellence. They should focus on investing in technology infrastructure to handle deployments of all sizes and complexities, integration of technologies in the customer environment, and training users to improve adoption, and finally to maintain the deployment.

SUNIL SHARMA,
MANAGING DIRECTOR – SALES,
INDIA & SAARC, SOPHOS

SOPHOS LOOKS FORWARD TO EXPAND ITS CHANNEL DEPTH ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

The global IT security market is pegged at US$ 46 billion, growing at 7.9 per cent CAGR, while India's cybersecurity market is estimated to grow from US$ 4.5 billion currently to US$ 35 billion in 10 years. With augmented reality, automation, Internet of Things (IoT) and machine learning ruling 2018, the year 2019 seems all set to witness a technological revolution and growth in adoption of predictive cybersecurity technologies, powered by deep learning, artificial neural networks. All of these factors will have an impact on the IT channel industry, which will also see massive growth and expansion in 2019.

Just as last year, our business will see steady growth in 2019 as well. With hackers constantly on the lookout for vulnerabilities and weak entry points to

attack, cybersecurity solutions will continue to see increased adoption among organisations. From a channel perspective, we continue to expand our channel penetration across Tier 2 and Tier 3 markets while strengthening our top tier channel presence. In 2019 too, we look forward to expand our channel depth across the country to provide next-generation threat protection to businesses of all sizes.

Top tech trends for channel community

SophosLabs 2019 Threat report, gives insight into three key trends that will impact cybersecurity in 2019. Capitalist cybercriminals are turning to targeted ransomware, inspiring copycat attacks. In 2018, cybercriminals banked millions of dollars with hand-delivered, targeted ransomware attacks. We believe the financial success of targeted ransomware like SamSam, BitPaymer and Dharma will inspire copycat attacks and we expect more to happen in 2019.

Cybercriminals are using readily available Windows systems administration. This year's report uncovers a shift in threat execution, as more mainstream attackers have evolved their techniques to use readily available IT tools as their route to advance through a system and complete their mission – whether it's to steal sensitive information off the server or drop ransomware.

Mobile and IoT malware is not slowing down. With illegal Android apps inreasing, 2018 has seen an increased focus in malware being pushed to phones, tablets and other IoT devices. Attackers are finding novel ways to evade detection by Google and get malicious apps published on the Play Market and much more.

These trends will have a huge impact on partners as their customers will feel increased pressure to protect and secure company information. As cyber attacks today are both constant and changing, many organisations still don't understand what technologies

are needed to protect against exploits and ransomware. These organisations will rely on channel partners to recommend best protection against these ongoing and sophisticated attacks. We believe channel partners have a significant opportunity to improve their customers' protection with minimal impact and grow revenue opportunities.

Channel directions for partners

Being a channel first and channel-only organisation, our efforts are focused on empowering the channel ecosystem by providing the best-in-class pre and post-sales support, training and certification programs, access to world class marketing communications via our partner portal and competitive margins.

Sophos is turning the channel into trusted cybersecurity advisors whom customers can bank upon. We will continue to support our partners with the right tools, technologies and programs to help them deliver the best service to their customers. In tandem, our channel partners are focused on delivering the best service to their customers by continually investing in the training and certification required to make their teams masters in the field and well placed to provide the right cyber security guidance to their customers. The challenges evolve in our sector, so we need to continually invest and develop to ensure we stay one step ahead.

As the market gets increasingly complex, point solutions are no longer enough. Organisations of today need to think like security companies and need multi-layered cybersecurity solutions to detect and remediate threats. Partners have an opportunity to scale their business and move from solution providers to MSSPs to deliver these security solutions for their customers, who do not possess in-house skills to support such complex, multi-layered cybersecurity solutions.

SANJAY ZADOO,
COUNTRY HEAD – CHANNEL BUSINESS, VERTIV INDIA

EDGE COMPUTING WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE EPICENTRE OF INNOVATION IN THE DATA CENTRE SPACE

Key highlights of 2018 and opportunities for 2019

Emerging technologies are reshaping the future of businesses across the globe and 2018 witnessed a major uptake towards digital transformation. The latest technologies gaining momentum in the market have been AI, IoT, 5G, robotics and Edge Computing as businesses begin to recognise innovative deployments that can be used to enhance efficiency and make businesses operations simpler.

From a data centre standpoint, Edge Computing was one of the leading trends where we experienced some of the innovations taking place as companies began to understand the importance of it with increasing proliferation of Industrial IoT (IIoT) devices. This transition and adoption will be a big part of IT strategies even in 2019. As per recent a report by

Statistics, market opportunity for Edge Computing is expected to be at US$ 20,495.24 million by 2026.

Top technology trends for channel community

Edge Computing will continue to be the epicentre of innovation in the data centre space in 2019, with focus on advanced intelligence programs to simplify operations and bridge the skill gap. Some of the leading trends for this year would be – simplifying the edge, AI, workforce revolution.

For most of the businesses in India, Edge has become a critical part of their digital ecosystem. Intelligent infrastructure systems with machine learning capabilities working in tandem with cloud-based analytics are fundamentally changing the way we think about Edge Computing and Edge services. A smarter, simpler, more self-sufficient edge of the network is converging with broader industry and consumer trends, including IoT and the looming rollout of 5G networks, to drive powerful, low-latency computing closer to the end-user. This will result in a more robust, efficient edge of the network with enhanced visibility and self-healing capabilities requiring limited active management. We are seeing increasing use cases of Edge Computing in retail, warehousing, manufacturing and healthcare space. We at Vertiv are aligning and developing solutions to meet these expectations of customers and we expect our partners to be ready to take these developments to the customers.

A recent Gartner survey showed that 59 per cent of organisations are still gathering information to build their AI strategies, while the remainder have already made progress in piloting or adopting AI solutions. AI has become an inseparable part of most of the businesses across the globe, bringing in advanced technology, providing businesses a competitive edge and better results in terms of performance. Leading technology companies have already started to move their AI models into production, where they are running operations to enhance decision-making and provide forward-looking intelligence to people in every function. In 2019, several non-technology companies will also start building AI capabilities which will see the focus shift from "AI strategy" to "AI-driven" results for real business impact.

In 2019, organisations are expected to change the way they hire data centre personnel, moving away from traditional training programs, towards more agile, job-specific instruction with an eye toward the Edge. Businesses will turn to intelligent systems such as AI and machine learning to simplify operations, preserve institutional knowledge, and enable more predictive and efficient service as well as maintenance. With these changes, customers will expect the IT infrastructure products to have self-diagnosis and predictive service capabilities.

Channel direction for partners

Vertiv considers India as an important market as the region holds lot of opportunities with the ongoing digital transformation. The company looks forward to growing with its partner network as it plays a critical role in our go-to-market strategy. We invest in educating our partners on technology applications and set a direction for them to approach prospective or existing customers.

It's important for this group to have complete insight about its customers' businesses by spending more time with them to understand their business needs and challenges. This helps in building stronger alliances in the long term. The second direction is to build the right capabilities which are aligned to the newer technology developments in the ecosystem.

Customer today is more informative and expects OEM and the partner to recommend a solution which integrates it in heterogenous environment. This demands a lot of consultative skills and knowledge at the partner's end to anticipate future scope and suggest a comprehensive solution.

Hitachi Vantara India

ANUPAM NAGAR,
CHANNELS & ALLIANCE
DIRECTOR, HITACHI VANTARA, INDIA

'WE PLAN TO PROVIDE OUR PARTNERS ACCESS TO UNTAPPED SEGMENTS AND SOLUTIONS'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

Looking back, 2018 witnessed a wider acceptance of digital transformation in India, with enterprises actively taking charge of the ecosystem in laying out strategies that directly aligned to their transformation journey. The channel community across industries, including banking, telecom, manufacturing, ITeS, healthcare and government sectors, adopted differentiated ways to address market gaps by leveraging advanced tools and processes to better understand their customers.

While the traditional channel ecosystem will continue to evolve, 2019 will be an important year for companies looking to expand business horizons to sustain in the industry. We feel that companies will shift from becoming 'data generating' to 'data powered'

organisations. Data curation will be a big focus for channel partners looking to truly understand the meaning of data. Technologies like AI and ML will take control of unstructured data sources – such as text, video, audio, images, social media, clickstreams and log files – to allow leaders to drive business decisions through the power of data. Organisations will be looking for orchestration capabilities like Hitachi Vantara's Pentaho's data integration and machine learning orchestration tools, to streamline the machine learning workflow and enable smooth team collaboration.

Top tech trends for channel community

With increasing data requirements, the channel community will look at extending enterprise boundaries to the edge – where both data and users reside, and multiple clouds converge. Public cloud will provide the connection between edge and core data centres creating the need for a hybrid cloud approach based on open REST or S3 App integration. Edge computing is expected to be less of a trend and more of a necessity, as companies seek to cut costs and reduce network usage. The role of data centres will become more automated, with API-based architecture playing an important role to draw information in from various sources and create a more intelligent solution.

Channel directions for partners

As a company, we have a comprehensive portfolio of co-creation capabilities and proven methodologies with our established collaboration processes. We strongly believe that market transitions and opportunities can be delivered by companies that are focused on expanding channels to reach customers. With digital transformation playing such an integral role in today's industry, both partners and channel are ready to bring about significant changes to their go-to-market strategy to stay ahead of their market peers.

For 2019, Hitachi Vantara is working closely with its partners to help them provide our customers with industry's best solutions and tools for storing, curating and generating intelligence out of their data – both structured and unstructured. We plan to provide our partners access to untapped segments and solutions, leading to a good growth in their business and avenues to add tremendous value to their customers' digital transformation journeys.

Symantec India

GANESAN ARUMUGAM,
DIRECTOR - PARTNER SALES,
SYMANTEC INDIA

SYMANTEC WILL AGGRESSIVELY ONBOARD NEW PARTNERS, BUILD DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

For Symantec, 2018 was a great year, especially in terms of consolidation. We acquired Blue Coat Systems and consolidated channels – both distributor and consultant sides. We also put in efforts for enablement of partners in the area of technology. With this acquisition, we have merged Symantec's and Blue Coat's channel ecosystems. In terms of our India-specific channel efforts, we focused on our Global System Integrators (GSI) partners such as IBM and Wipro; alongside our engagements with traditional and local partners. A large part of our business share comes form GSI partners and local Tier 1 partners – we work with them very closely. We are also working in close co-ordination with top consultants.

Another major focus of ours is on the government side, because security is gaining prominence in government's digital initiatives. We have also got multiple deals in other segments as well, such as BFSI.

The opportunities in 2019 will be based on the momentum of 2018, from the customer perspective, across all segments. We expect the momentum to continue in 2019 as well. Be it the BFSI or telecom sector, the government's mandates is resulting in huge investments in security. This brings in many opportunities for partners. From the overall channel partner ecosystem standpoint, we are witnessing many new partners aligining with Symantec, due to our complete suite of security offerings – from Internet of Things (IoT), mobile devices, servers, security analytics, etc. For any oragnisation looking to build a holistic security platform, Symantec is well-positioned to cater to their needs. Partners are also building their sales on Symantec's offerings, and are selling more of our products to their customers.

Top tech trends for channel community

Security, being a matured market, nothing significant may happen in terms of technology. Basic things such as new products and features may hit the market, and partners will focus on these areas, depending on their focus segments. For 2019, partners need to focus on how they can offer solutions on top of customer's existing security infrastructure. In our observation, we have seen BFSI companies consolidating their muliple security solutions. Hence, partners need to focus on how they can integrate multiple solutions used by their customers.

Channel directions for partners

In 2019, we will continue to enable our partners in terms of new technologies. We will also focus on building the services portfolio among our partners, in order for them to build services around our technologies. Alongside, our focus will also be on working with GSI, SI and top tier national partners. Under our enterprise business, we are looking at introducing a bundle offering for the SMB customer base. We will aggressively onboard new partners, and build our distribution channel. Partners should also strengthen their efforts to build stickiness with customers. This will ensure repetitive business for them. Moreover, partners should also align their focus on building the services business.

VMware India

SUNDAR BALASUBRAMANIAN,
SENIOR DIRECTOR, GENERAL BUSINESS (COMMERCIAL SALES & PARTNERS), VMWARE INDIA

INDIAN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY WILL CONTINUE ITS UPWARD GRAPH

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

Three trends ruled the IT channel sector in 2018 – digital transformation, security and digital workspaces. I expect to see the same trends carrying forward to 2019, with the only difference being the intensity of the energy around them. Appetite for all three will grow larger and more focused in the coming years. The partner network is already abuzz with identifying and implementing new intrinsic strategies that help customers achieve a higher degree of security, for instance, helping the customers secure their infrastructure.

Digital workspaces too will remain the focus in 2019, with an added focus on device management. Partners are in tune with market demands and are involved in supplementing their skillsets to offer differentiated strategies for mobile workforces. There has also been a recalibration around on-premise and public cloud infrastructure and how partners can help customers implement hybrid and multi-cloud strategies seamlessly.

Top tech trends for channel community

The most important technology trend that they should be betting for is the shift to the public cloud. The shift to the cloud is the foundation for digital transformation and the first stepping stone for any organisation looking to make the transition.

The second trend the channel community is betting on is mobility. Anytime, anywhere, any device access is no longer good to have an option but a business necessity that is key to improved productivity and even morale. By 2022, there will be more than 700 million smartphone users in the country. The new Indian consumer is online, connected and accustomed to ease of use and instant access that traditional business models just cannot deliver. Partner network is well positioned to deliver innovative mobility solutions in the coming year.

The third trend that I feel will strengthen further in 2019 is the Internet of Things. Already some sectors like manufacturing are leveraging IoT solutions to improve efficiencies and ultimately profitability. As more organisations move to the cloud, mobility makes further inroads within the subcontinent and connectivity improves, we will see IoT coming into its own with more sectors and organisations tapping into it for newer and better ways of functioning.

Channel directions for partners

We have recently launched VMware Master Services Competencies in 2018 for our partner network and will continue to capitalise on it 2019. Master Services Competencies recognises outstanding services partners, for expertise in specific VMware solution areas. Attaining a Master Services Competency can help accelerate capabilities and grow their business, providing a pathway to greater profitability. Our partners can enroll for this program and stay aligned with vision and strategy for growth.

Fujitsu India

MEHUL DOSHI,
HEAD OF PRODUCT BUSINESS, INDIA, FUJITSU

'ENTERPRISE CUSTOMERS ARE OUR FOCUS AGAIN IN 2019'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

▸ We have introduced newer

technologies like LIC, AI for which we have engaged with our selected partners

◗ We did not evangelise, but had early successes

◗ Fujitsu once again stands committed to bring in breakthrough technology solutions in India through our esteemed partners.

Top technology trends for channel community

◗ **Converged and hyper converged:** An obvious reason for channel engagement here is the market growth of these solutions. The market has grown by a significant percentage as most of the vendors have solutions pertaining to these technologies.

◗ **ERP infra solutions:** This has been ever green vertical from IT selling perspective. The market has been dominated by SAP HANA, but there are a number of other ERP solutions, wherein partners play an important role.

◗ **AI based infra solutions:** There are a few customers, especially in energy, education and research sector, who were the early adopters of AI. These solutions need skilled sales and presales, wherein the channel community is getting geared to take their organisation to the next league.

Channel direction for partners

◗ Keep focusing on newer technologies

◗ Keep creating value, either through presales or post sales on newer technologies.

◗ Enterprise customers remains our focus again in CY 2019.

Cisco India

B RAGHAVENDRAN,
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
PARTNER ORGANISATION,
CISCO INDIA & SAARC

CISCO BETS ON SOFTWARE STRATEGY FOR PARTNERS IN 2019

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

Today digitalisation accounts for 23 per cent of the total IT budget in Indian IT organisations. For us and our partners to stay relevant with our customers, speaking this language and adopting this sales motion is important. In 2018, global spending on digital transformation technologies hit US\$ 1.3 trillion, an increase of 16.8 per cent from the previous year, as per an IDC forecast. While the individual state of evolution may differ in each sector, everyone is clear that digitisation is the way forward.

Another highlight of note is that 2018 has been a landmark year for the IT channel industry, as it marked a decided shift away from products to solutions, more so with an increase in services. The transition towards a more software and subscription-oriented strategy puts partners in an ideal position to capitalise on customers' desire to establish, expand and accelerate multi-cloud and hybrid-cloud-based digital transformation initiatives around intent-based networking, network analytics and security.

Channel partnerships are more important now than ever and battling complexity is a big challenge for partners. 2019 will be the year; customers get the simplicity they need from their IT architecture. Enabling multi-cloud, driving automation, integrated security, SD-WAN will all be a part of this whole architectural transition and 2019 is going to be the year for that.

Top tech trends for channel community

In this new digital economy, simply selling a product is no longer enough. Customers are looking for solutions to help them deliver business outcomes that enable growth and profitability. To capitalise on this opportunity, it is important that our partners build new skill sets to make themselves relevant to their customers. In 2019, gaining expertise in new areas like industry 4.0, automation, data analytics, cybersecurity, ML, etc., will help partners better understand and deliver powerful vertical market solutions.

Security will be part of every conversation with customers this year, with sophistication and persistence of attacks showing no signs of respite. With shared risks in cyberspace, the need to work side-by-side with partners on pressing cyber challenges will become increasingly important.

The emergence of software as a service (SaaS)–and its inherent subscription-based pricing model–has led to massive opportunities for the partner community. As customers do with any new technology or new way of doing business, they will need a

smooth path to transform how they buy and consume software. Channel partners who lead with software will see bigger deals and will have more access to expansion opportunities to sell more products.

Channel directions for partners

With rampant digitalisation, the market has grown more complex, therefore getting to the root of the customers problem is best done through partners, and hence we invest heavily in these relationships. The power of Cisco's partner ecosystem is grounded in our close working relationship with our partners. To keep pace with the changing technology landscape, we need to be in lockstep with our partners if they are to operate effectively.

The partners need a software strategy and Cisco is evolving its channel strategy to help partners capture new opportunities, refine software and service skills, and differentiate themselves in the markets they serve.

We also realise the importance of partners' ability to articulate the value proposition to potential customers, and hence have implemented the three-tiered Black Belt program to serve this purpose. Under the Black Belt initiative, Cisco invests with individuals within the partner through sales, post sales and support services sectors, providing them with in-depth training of state-of-the-art network and other solutions to enhance the ability to articulate these services and what such architecture could do for a customer.

The evolution of our partner programs is a reflection of our continued commitment to improving the overall partner experience, strengthening our joint go-to-market initiatives, and ultimately ensuring our partners succeed in owning the digital transformation space.

Avaya India

VIVEK SINGH,
DIRECTOR – SALES, ENTERPRISE AND GLOBAL, AVAYA

ENHANCING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, A KEY AREA FOR CHANNEL COMMUNITY

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

2018 was a positive year for us and our partners. Over the course of 2018, we have made significant investments in technology partnerships which have paid dividends, leading to fully formed solutions, that are now available on Avaya's platforms and, crucially, to our channel partners.

These products, developed through our DevConnect and AI Connect programs, provide partners with vertical-specific, readily integrated solutions that can be more easily deployed. These programs also helped us onboard new partners onto our ecosystem and also provide them with greater incentives and flexibility to grow.

In 2019, we are looking forward to further innovate, transform, and grow in value and relevance to our channel partners. This year, Avaya will be focused further on three major aspects

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to drive its channel strategy.

First, an intense focus on the cloud, making cloud services available to every partner – no matter their size/business models. In 2018, our cloud partner ecosystem has grown by 50 per cent year-over-year, with 144 partners in 48 countries offering Avaya cloud services.

Secondly, our prime focus is going to be on enabling the partner community to move from one value proposition to more advanced ones. Moving ahead, Avaya will be focused on inclusivity and open innovation. We aim to empower our channel partners to provide holistic solutions to their customers through our open platforms (APIs), creating opportunities for innovation-minded channel partners and "take the lead on innovation".

Thirdly, Avaya would also be launching a series of APIs on the Avaya Communication Platform as a service that customers and partners can accelerate their innovations and go to market more quickly.

For the channel industry at large, we have made significant investments in helping them better align with emerging technologies.

Top tech trends for channel community

Three technology trends that the channel community should be betting on are:

◗ **Adopt voice technologies:** Consumers love to communicate with the voice and the growth in the smart speaker market has proven that. Of those who own a smart speaker, 50 per cent say they'd like to use it to access an organisation's customer service team, according to research by SuperServe. Moreover, consumers want their voice-enabled technologies to make things more convenient; 71 per cent would like to bypass identification and verification questions by using voice biometrics.

So clearly, this is an opportunity for the partner community and a must do!

◗ **Phone and video are here to stay:** There's no substitute for a first-class phone interaction, and as per the SuperServe report, four in five

consumers say phone is the best way to connect with someone quickly. Similarly, 73 per cent say that the phone is the easiest way to explain a service problem, and almost the same number say they get the best answers over the phone. The other trend which is here to stay is video interactions. Video provides a richer customer experience, allowing consumers to more easily get their point across and customer service agents to better sense their customers' emotions.

◗ **Use AI to deliver intelligent experiences across all channels:** Consumers want the organisations they interact with to be smarter. 73 per cent would be happy for AI to 'notice' when they're having problems with a website and be proactively offered help. Similarly, 40 per cent consumers actively want AI to make better recommendations about new products and services. As we move forward, providing intelligent customer experience will become a norm, and this is a great opportunity for partners, to invest in AI and help businesses deliver exceptional customer experiences.

Channel directions for partners

As technology evolves, one critical aspect that every business and customer will be focusing on is experience. A recent global poll by Avaya found that 40 per cent of executives believe that their company's customer experience journey is "poor" or "average," with 93 per cent saying that they will be focusing more on improving the customer experience. So clearly, businesses are looking at enhancing customer experience and this will be a key area of focus for the channel community, as we move forward.

At Avaya, we are focused on helping businesses deliver exceptional customer experience. To make this happen, we believe, it is important to have an open and agile technology stack and embrace emerging technologies such as AI, ML and blockchain amongst others.

Few key focus areas for us in 2019 will be :

◗ Avaya cloud offerings
◗ Avaya vertical specific and readily integrated solution that can be more easily deployed
◗ Application specific within large accounts
◗ Further penetration and coverage in mid-market in 10 more cities
◗ Services led in key markets
◗ Low end SIP phones and other new products which we are launching will enable our growth further with partners

Lenovo India

ASHISH SIKKA,
DIRECTOR - SMB, LENOVO INDIA

FOR LENOVO, THE DIRECTION IS TO FOCUS ON SOLUTION SELLING APPROACH

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

The market has grown in 2018 with many factors like GST and the dynamic trends and preferences. In 2019 we are expecting more growth in MB and LE. Due to higher government focus on MSME, it will lead to higher growth in SMB. The future looks very bright, at least for the next five years. The speed of the transformation in channel varies but the transformation is visible and happening. I believe

that we will move more towards being a true business advisor instead of a just being the technology advisor.

For the channel, the voluminous market is expanding opportunity for vendor management. While seemingly obvious, a vendor manager acts as liaison between end customers and cloud-based vendors/service providers. The indirect channel is accustomed to this role, but today the task holds new meaning as customers navigate potential travails of the cloud world. For anyone operating in the channel it is essential to be looking at the horizon to ensure you remain relevant to your customers.

Top tech trends for channel community

The market is disrupted by many emerging technologies but a few to look out for are :

◗ Higher SSD adaption than tradition storage for faster data transfer: An SSD (solid-state drive) is a type of nonvolatile storage media that stores persistent data on solid-state flash memory. Two key components make up an SSD: a flash controller and NAND flash memory chips. The architectural configuration of the SSD controller is optimised to deliver high read and write performance for both sequential and random data requests. SSDs are sometimes referred to as flash drives or solid-state disks.

◗ Thin and light preference by more end users: T&L will be our major focus in India and most of our investment will be circled around the same. The entire retail front will be decked with Ultra-Slim products and customers will be able to experience the products in full glory. Also, a large sum of marketing investment (digital/TV) will be focused on T&L.

◗ Customer exploring device as a service to reduce CapEX and its management complexity: The device-as-a-service (DaaS) model in particular is finding a receptive audience among companies looking for a new way to manage device allocation and support.

DaaS combines state-of-the-art devices (such as mobile, PC and

powerful workstations) with value-added expertise in an all-inclusive managed solution under a single contract. By providing customers with a single point of contact, DaaS significantly reduces the complexity and costs, both hidden and visible, of device procurement and deployment.

Channel directions for partners

For Lenovo, the direction is to focus on solution selling approach with increase in coverage. The key components bundled with a solution sale generally consist of hardware, software, networking and storage technologies - along with associated services. Those services can include upfront business and technical advisory services, technology implementation services, and post-implementation managed services and hosting. The role of advisory services in helping customers identify the business problem has created strong parallels between solution selling and consultative sales.

Alibaba Cloud

ALEX LI,
GM, ALIBABA CLOUD SOUTH ASIA

ALIBABA CLOUD TO SCOUT FOR LOCAL CHANNEL PARTNERS

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

From an Alibaba Cloud perspective, 2018 was a great year for us in India. While business interests remain a driver for any company in a market, we're looking at ecosystem building. From an availability standpoint, we launched two availability zones for Alibaba Cloud where we offer products such as elastic computing, storage, database, network, application services and big data analytics to cater to the requirements of local governments and enterprises. We also launched our channel program in conjunction with HCL Infosystems and Ingram Micro. Additionally, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board to strengthen the state's digital transformation journey by using our ET City Brain solution. We also signed a partnership with DLF as a technology enabler to DLF Shopping Malls, providing data analytics and consumer insights to enable seamless integration of an online and offline shopping culture in the country.

Finally, we partnered with IT services provider, ONGO Framework, to on-board up to 100,000 MSMEs by the end of 2019. Finally, from a talent perspective, we conducted a NLP Hackathon in conjunction with Zhejiang Lab, an emerging scientific research platform co-established by Provincial Government of Zhejiang Province, Alibaba Group and Zhejiang University, and BML Munjal University (BMU).

As we move forward to a more digitised economy in 2019 and beyond, the channel industry will always play a key role in enabling digital transformation in a country with the technological, commercial, and innovation potential that India has.

Top tech trends for channel community

◗ Alibaba DAMO Academy recently published the top 10 technology trends for 2019. Among them, the key ones we believe will have significance in India are:
◗ Commercialisation of blockchain technology speeds up
◗ Data security technologies will multiply
◗ Real-time simulation of Smart City becomes possible

Be it from a government or private sector perspective, there is a lot of focus on the areas listed above. While the common understanding is cryptocurrency and blockchain are inherently intertwined, blockchain has several use cases in fields extending beyond finance that range from healthcare to real estate. More and more blockchain applications will be seen in our daily life, such as cross-border remittances, supply-chain financing, electronic invoices and tamper-proof judicial records. As the value of "chaining" becomes more recognised, layered architecture and cross-chain protocol will become the focus of technology to scale up blockchain infrastructure.

As an increasing number of businesses and consumers move online in the country, corporates will need to invest more in protecting individual data privacy. Though cyberattacks won't cease in the next few years, data-protection technologies will boom. Traceability technologies across systems, such as watermark, and data-asset protection technology, including advanced anti-crawlers against strong cyberattacks, will be more broadly adopted.

Finally, in the Smart City project being undertaken by the government, we believe dynamic and real-time urban infrastructure data, such as traffic, water, electricity and air quality data will be analysed by large-scale computing platforms. The development of computing power and algorithms will foster the merger of non-structural information such as video footages with structural information, making real-time modeling of urban simulation possible and holistic, intelligent decisions can be made. More resources will be allocated to technologies powering an intelligent "city brain" and its applications, while a city simulation model reflecting the real-time impulses and movements of a physical city can be built to facilitate the optimisation of city governance.

Channel directions for partners

Alibaba Cloud has spent a

significant amount of time to build the team, process, and the partner ecosystem in India, with the launch of our two availability zones in the country in 2018. Given the digital transformation wave India is undergoing, in 2018, Alibaba Cloud launched a local partner program in conjunction with HCL Infosystems and Ingram Micro. Under this program Alibaba Cloud would scout for local channel partners and work with them to offer cloud solutions to India's enterprises, SMEs and startups.

Given Alibaba's expertise in e-commerce, logistics, retail, and fintech; these are the main areas where we can offer and build solutions for existing and prospective customers in conjunction with channel partners and distributors.

Citrix India

RAGHURAM KRISHNAN,
DIRECTOR – PARTNER, CITRIX INDIA

'2019 WILL BE THE YEAR WHERE CITRIX WILL HAVE THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY EVER'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

The year 2018 was a year of establishing our strategy and

consolidating to enable rapid growth. We truly believe that 2019 will be the year where Citrix will have the biggest opportunity ever. The meaning of workplace has redefined itself. Workplace is no more restricted to one's office; workplace is now anywhere, anytime, on any device. This change is primarily being driven by two factors – the advent of millennials and the pace at which digital transformation is accelerating. This is also a cause of concern for the CIOs as they are now looking to provide employees with choice and a great experience while maintaining high levels of security. This has led to the proliferation of SaaS apps, and increasingly complex and expensive hybrid multi-cloud environments. Citrix is uniquely positioned to help customers address this complexity, and our partners have an incredible opportunity to move beyond virtualisation.

Digital transformation cannot be confined to the head office or to the data centre. For digital transformation to be effective in customer premises, real time access to data, information at any time, from anywhere and from any device will be of paramount importance. In my opinion, 2019 will be the year where customers realise the importance of digital transformation being experienced by everyone in their respective organisations irrespective of where they are, which device they use and when they use it. It's going to be a year of experience, in a secure manner; 2019 will be the best year for Citrix and our partners, and we look forward to working closely with them to change the industry together.

Top tech trends for channel community

The top three trends that will gain/have gained prominence are cloud, analytics and experience. The industry today is sitting on a plethora of data and there is more coming, that can be used to give valuable insights to benefit businesses. Analytics, as a

term, is quite large and cannot be confined or restricted to only one type of data. Today, relevant or critical data could come in from any corner, any individual or any machine. Customers have to be prepared to gain and give real time access to data in a secure manner and also make sense of this data.

For analytics to be effective, cloud – especially hybrid cloud – becomes imperative. It gives the required flexibility to the customer to be agile and available without putting any constraints on the experience factor of users.

Now with the availability of analytics and cloud at the core, the next step towards success is making the information available to people anywhere, anytime, without putting restrictions on devices. This provides absolute freedom to the user. But freedom without security and checks could prove to be a huge disaster for organisations. The solutions provided by Citrix offer more choice, experience and security to companies that are increasingly dealing with hybrid multi-clouds. With Citrix Intelligent Workspace, we can serve customers who don't need virtualisation – this includes 70 per cent of the companies in the market. We can give them the benefits of virtualisation for computing done through SaaS, mobile and web apps. With the acquisition of Sapho, we are now able to provide all our cloud customers with the same functionality that they get with their on-premise solutions.

Having said this, uncoupling and seamlessly securing their multi clouds isn't as easy as it sounds. Citrix networking solutions give partners the opportunity to deliver more customer value by enabling them to do just that. In short, we can say that, Citrix not only has the solutions that customers need, but is also playing a major role in helping the customers in their digital transformation journey.

Channel directions for partners

At Citrix, we believe that we have the right partners. I am extremely

proud of what our partners have accomplished in 2018, but we aren't done, and I'm excited about what we'll do together in 2019 – it will be a great year for Citrix and our partners. The opportunities that our partners will experience with us in growing their business are huge, as mentioned below:

- With Citrix Workspace, we can serve customers who don't need virtualisation. In other words we have increased our total addressable market with our intelligent workspace offering

- In the past, we have had failed attempts at addressing the SMB market. A market which has significant contributions to the GDP, but has limited access to funds. The SMB customer is perennially in a catch 22 situation where he has to take a tough call between investing money on IT or reinvesting the same in his business (where the RoI is instant and visible). Our CSP strategy clearly comes as a boon to all SMB customers

- There are a lot of small ISVs who would like to be SaaS providers, but their applications are Windows-based and they don't have a way to take their app into the cloud. Citrix technology and CSP Strategy are making this happen. The growth in that business has been tremendous with the CSP motion, and Microsoft has been a big help in this

- The acquisition of Sapho and its integration with our Workspace offering has now provided all cloud customers with the same functionality as on their on-premises solutions. Our partners now have one less barrier when working with customers that are hesitant to move to the cloud, thereby opening more doors and giving our partners an opportunity to enter new accounts and building their customer base while growing profitably.

NetApp India

KAUSHAL VELURI,
DIRECTOR - CHANNELS & ALLIANCES, NETAPP INDIA & SAARC

INDIAN IOT MARKET TO REACH 2 BILLION CONNECTIONS BY 2022

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

India is certainly the fastest-growing market and very important for us in Asia-Pacific. Throughout 2018, we grew faster than the market with the help of our partners and channel programs by ensuring that we regularly address the profitability of our partners and enable them to grow.

2019 will be an important year for the IT channel industry as customers become more data-driven and look for products and strategies that help them in their digital transformation. It is all about making sure that the customers understand where their data is, how to manage and analyse, and get insights from it. Our aim is to continue encouraging our partners to empower their customers with cloud, flash and hyper-converged infrastructure.

Top tech trends for channel community

In 2019, the top three technology trends that the channel community in India should look out for are:

- **Cloud will bolster AI development:** AI is still at an early stage of development which will see an explosion in 2019, the majority of which will be in the public cloud. Organisations will increasingly deploy cloud-based AI software and service tools in 2019, to ensure that AI applications deliver high performance and scalability, both on and off premises, and support multiple data access protocols and varied new data formats.

- **Edge devices will get smarter:** Internet of Things market in India is expected to reach 2 billion connections and unlock US$ 11.1 billion of revenue by 2022, according to an Assocham-EY Report. To take advantage of the resulting data deluge, IoT devices and applications will therefore increasingly come with built-in services such as data analysis and data reduction and this will enable the organisations to make better, faster and smarter decisions. The manufacturing sector will benefit the most from smarter edge devices as manufacturers can detect equipment failure much earlier than before.

- **Building hybrid and multi-cloud will be a choice:** Larger organisations will be able to flexibly and easily move workloads across environments while having full control over them, by using technologies like containers and data fabric. On the other hand, hybrid and multi-cloud will not be the default IT architecture for some smaller organisations. They will instead choose the simplicity and consistency of a single cloud provider.

Channel directions for partners

As a go-to-market strategy, our focus will be on flash storage, HCI and cloud data services. Channel partners are critical here. We will continue to enable their growth so that they can ally with our strategies and product lines. With the help of our partners, we plan to grow in the commercial segment; acquire new customers and expand growth in cities or markets where we are currently not present. In terms of new avenues, 2019 will be all

about AI. Investing in AI would be a good bet for our partners. Consequently, fast resilient and automated infrastructures can only be delivered by using hybrid flash solutions, due to the need for high performance and scalability across environments. Therefore, we predict increased investments in AI, flash, cloud and HCI this year.

Palo Alto Networks India

HARPREET BHATIA,
DIRECTOR, CHANNELS & STRATEGIC ALLIANCES – INDIA & SAARC, PALO ALTO NETWORKS

3.5 MILLION CYBERSECURITY JOBS NEED TO BE FILLED BY 2021

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

2018 was a volatile year for the channel industry in India. Repercussions of GST continued to affect the business throughout. The industry witnessed considerable transformation as well, by expanding its horizons to sustain itself.

With 2019, we expect various changes to take place within the channel partner ecosystem with more of them focusing on the services component of their business. Many of them will expand their services practices, adding new types of cybersecurity consultative

implementation, customisation and optimisation services.

There will be a rapid expansion into managed cloud and security services as well as an emergence of managed detection and response (MDR) services. 2019 promises vast services opportunities that offer significant profitability gains for channel partners.

Software-as-a-service (SaaS) shows the most significant growth among software segments projected at more than 22 per cent in 2019 compared to six per cent for all other forms of software. In 2018, the average enterprise used 16 SaaS applications in their daily business. This will continue to increase exponentially, and 73 per cent of organisations predict that nearly all their apps will be SaaS by 2020.

Top tech trends for channel community

This year expect to see the channel community betting big on cloud services and realigning its key partners for opportunities. Here are some technology trends that organisations should look forward to in 2019.

Expansion of security services led practices: 2019 will witness more channel partners focusing on the services component of the business. While some will strengthen existing services practices, others will expand upon their services practices, adding new types of cybersecurity consultative, implementation, customisation and optimisation services.

Offering more services translates to greater profitability for channel partners, and there is a higher demand for services than ever before. Several factors contribute to this growing need for cybersecurity services, including:

Cloud adoption: Simply put, cloud adoption increases the risk of cyber attacks. Within a cloud or hybrid cloud environment, data is distributed across many locations within the network. All too often, IT teams lose visibility into their assets and the

traffic flowing among them. This creates inconsistent security policies and unknown vulnerabilities, leaving many organisations prime targets for an attack. Organisations need help securing every access point across the entire network.

IT talent shortage: The shortage of IT talent compounds the challenges introduced by cloud adoption. More than half (51 per cent) of organisations face a cybersecurity skills shortage, and the demand has reached a new high. Globally, the projected demand will increase exponentially, with 3.5 million cybersecurity jobs needing to be filled by 2021. India is no different, our customers and our partners are facing a shortage of trained security manpower.

Compliance and regulations: Obtaining a good compliance posture can be difficult to achieve and undoubtedly complex when deciphering the various guidelines that differ based on local, national, or industry origin. Maintaining a good compliance posture becomes an even greater struggle as rules and regulations change and update quickly. Indian organisations, while doing business globally, have to make sure that they adhere to global as well as local transacting country compliance norms, hence they need to have visibility of their current status versus what is required to be fully compliant.

Increase in managed security services providers (MSSPs): Partners around the world are augmenting their businesses with managed services. There is a rapid expansion into managed cloud and security services plus an emergence of managed detection and response (MDR) services, an approach to identify a breach and manage an incident through remediation. According to Gartner, "By 2021, at least half of small and midsize enterprises will use managed services to secure their infrastructure, up from less than 20 per cent in 2018." Factors driving adoption for managed security services, a few already explained above, include the growing

complexity of enterprise IT infrastructure, IoT, cloud and multi-cloud, the shortage of security talent, continuously evolving, and the opex benefit. Organisations would need MSSPs to help them rapidly ramp up and scale their cloud environment while deploying security measures specifically designed to reduce the attack surface and secure critical applications and workloads. MSSPs that adapt to the new dynamics and offer a full cycle of security services have vast opportunities in front of them and stand to gain a significant competitive advantage.

Changing consumption habits: The prolific preference for cloud and SaaS has created a shift in customer consumption habits for 'everything-as-a-service'. Organisations have widely accepted the simple, easy-to-consume experience of SaaS and it has fundamentally changed their expectations for procuring and licensing software. Enterprises are shifting to pay-for-use models that offer flexibility and speed to add or reduce capacity.

SaaS cybersecurity offerings provide customers the ease and speed they have become accustomed to. And it allows vendors to automatically deploy updates and patches to protect against newly detected vulnerabilities.

Channel directions for partners

At Palo Alto Networks we believe in scaling the Indian channel ecosystem and help them become more profitable. Our channel program offers renewal protection, rebates and incentives especially for partners who are technically sound to support and service our customers as well.

The industry, once dominated by hardware products, is taken over by software offerings today. At Palo Alto Networks, subscriptions and services make up 60 per cent of our business, and it is growing twice as fast as our hardware business.

Software-as-a-service (SaaS) shows the most significant growth among software segments. This has

created a shift in customer consumption habits for everything-as-a-service. Organisations have easy-to-consume experience of SaaS and it has fundamentally changed their expectations for licensing and procuring software. Enterprises are shifting to pay-for-use models that offer flexibility.

Our mutual customers are increasingly comfortable consuming mission-critical, cybersecurity SaaS offerings. It meets their preferences and brings many advantages in maintaining a strong security posture. SaaS cybersecurity offerings give customers the ease and speed they have become accustomed to. And it allows vendors to automatically deploy updates and patches to protect against newly detected vulnerabilities.

As consumption habits change, our partners have a major role to play based on the expansion of security services and an increase in managed security services providers.

Our mutual customers have an ever-expanding need for partner services to successfully integrate cybersecurity offerings into a hybrid infrastructure, optimise security features, and secure the network from end-point to the cloud. Palo Alto Networks relies on our NextWave partners to serve this need and touch our more than 1100 customers in India.

With our cloud providers, we are building a new pool of born on cloud set of partners.

Channels are critical to us in terms of market coverage. Hence, we align with large loyal partners with a local presence through a two-tier model. The optimised channel strategy then spans across the ecosystem of distributors, systems integrators, service providers and small resellers. Partners should start embracing cloud security and understand the framework, as the network side of the business will not be seeing much of growth. But both endpoint and cloud will be the main run rate business for the channel.

Digisol Systems

MANDAR JOSHI,
VP – SALES,
DIGISOL SYSTEMS

5G WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE ON THE BUSINESS FRONT

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

2018 has been an eventful year as we completed 25 years of success in the IT networking industry. 2019 is a crucial year for our business as we also focused on enterprise product range along with our SOHO range of products. Our focus for the year will revolve around empowering our channel community. Like every year, 2019 will undertake various initiatives to engage with our partners. We plan to introduce new offers and schemes every quarter, along with loyalty and incentive schemes to motivate the channel partners.

Top tech trends for channel community

2019 will bring a host of technological upgrades that are aimed at simplifying various networking problems on both the fronts - enterprises and consumer. On the enterprise front, SD-WANs are now moving out from the early-adopter phase to mainstream adoption. As SD-WANs are agile, efficient, secure and offer better application performance

compared to legacy WAN, thus enterprises are looking forward to this upgrade.

While on the consumer front, Wi-Fi 6 or 802.11ax is expected to make its way into new installations in 2019. This Wi-Fi standard will offer faster data transfer speeds i.e. up to up to 40 per cent higher compared to Wi-Fi 5. Besides this, 5G is another trend that will rule in 2019. Yes, we have been talking about 5G for a while, however, telecom operators and other industry players are making big bets on next-generation services for 2019 with a renewed focus on making it accessible for the masses. Apart from enhancing end users experience, 5G will also play a key role on the business front. 5G will allow faster download and data transfer and will empower business applications through which we can experience better services than ever before. 5G is foreseen to bring numerous advantages to the large and small businesses, however it will take few more years for large scale expansion.

Channel directions for partners

We have always been a channel-driven company and our endeavour is to always improvise on our channel policies. This year our top direction is towards building a strong presence in passive networking market and also to introduce new products with newer applications to increase the scope of growth for the channels. These new products and solutions enable the channel to value add and hence can generate better margins from their customers. We feel that the profitability of the partners plays an important role in motivating them. Our solutions have the width; we have a wide range of products such as routers, switches, in addition to accessories like LAN extenders, media converters, SFP modules, etc, to meet the varying needs of the market segment we focus, whereas others are focusing on niche segments with limited products. Since our range is wide, our partners do not have to approach different vendors for different products and assemble them later.

CyberPower Systems

ARUN GHOSH,
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
CYBERPOWER SYSTEMS

TO AUGMENT CHANNEL PARTNERS AND CUSTOMERS, CYBERPOWER REINFORCES DIGITAL PRESENCE FOR TIER 3 & TIER 4 CHANNELS

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

Harbouring a worldwide presence across 60 countries, CyberPower Systems instituted the business in India in 2013 and expanded to over 125 cities through B2B and B2C product lines in just five years. Our associations with national distributors like Ingram Micro, Supertron and Redington, more than 1500 channel partners and regional distributors, eases the merchandising of our wide range of products carried out via the traditional way of distribution. To

further augment our channel partners and customers, we reinforce our online digital presence for Tier 3 and Tier 4 channels, conduct ATL/BTL activities, primary and secondary schemes and also regular extensive training and demos to edify them.

The excerpts from 'India UPS Market Overview, 2018-2023' report casts light on the surge in UPS solutions due to the proliferating demand for electricity as well as quality power amongst consumers and enterprises. Consumers, especially with the knack for technology in this market are clearly on the hunt for products that are enriched with high quality, reliability, green performance and many other attributes.

CyberPower Systems India, one of the industry's leading Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) manufacturer at the international space for designing an efficient GreenPower UPS energy-saving technology, meets the growing demands among customers for green IT products.

Pledging 'Green Commitment' throughout the manufacturing process, the firm incorporates a bevy of green practices into each of its operations to craft advanced energy solutions for the environment with high quality, reliability, durability and less cost. I'm enacting a crucial role in managing the businesses of the firm since its establishment by leveraging strategic planning, business strategy and project and sales management.

Top tech trends for channel community

Maintaining high quality, reliability and less cost (15-20 per cent less than competing brands) has always been the three primordial aspects that we embed in our services to delight customers and bolster long-term relationships with them. Besides silhouetting as

the first company in the UPS market to integrate LCD screens on UPS systems for user-friendly battery backup management, we devised Patented GreenPower UPS technology, one of the first solutions to attenuate the energy and cost savings up to 70 per cent annually over conventional UPS systems. We were also the first in the industry to offer a three-year warranty (including batteries) with our award-winning product line. To illustrate, we have grown to be one of the leading brands globally – No 3 brand in the world as power systems provider and lately been declared as No 2 brand among power solution providers in the US.

Channel directions for partners

With seamless innovations engraved in our DNA, we have recently unveiled highly innovative products under the brackets of UPS, solar and mobile power solutions. For instance, CyberPower Long Backup UPS (UPS + Inverter) deploys the state-of-the-art micro-controller technology for lighting, generator, heater, refrigerator, motor, computer and other sensitive equipment, while modular UPS Systems are embedded with hot swappable feature, scalability and flexibility in terms of redundancy.

On the other hand, CyberPower Power Banks are built from UL and BIS certified premium LiPo battery cells to present the fast charging technology with faster recharging at 2.5A and faster output charging at 2.1A, thereby saving time on recharging multiple devices. To become a true global leading UPS provider as well as power protection provider, we continuously make feature improvements in our UPS an d other products to bring maximum value to customers and also create win-win situation with our channel partners.

NTT Com-Netmagic

SHANTARAM SHINDE,
VP & NATIONAL HEAD - CHANNEL BUSINESS, NTT COM-NETMAGIC

'BORN IN CLOUD' PARTNERS TO CONTINUE GROWTH TRACK

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

In 2018, we saw good business in the public and private cloud space. SAP HANA migrations, hardware and technology refresh in government space, are the reasons to drive the growth for these products. Multi cloud strategy is working really well and contributing to managed services revenue. NTT-Netmagic introduced SD-WAN as a service this year and we saw really encouraging response for the same. We also saw some good growth with 'Born in the cloud' partner space as well as with Application Integration Partners. Our traditional SI partners brought in few big colocation and data centre deals on the table. In 2019 as well, we estimate to grow by 30 per cent to 35 per cent. Multi cloud, private cloud, SD-WAN and security services should drive this growth. The main contributors will be again 'born in the cloud' and application integration partners. Changing partner profiles is

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what we see as a positive outlook for 2019 as well.

Top tech trends for channel community

Due to digital trending, adapting to multi cloud strategy will work. We foresee customers migrating to third-party data centres or opt for private cloud as service for compliance and committed performance reasons. This can be attributed to technology refresh like SAP ECC to SAP HANA migrations and hardware refresh, say for instance, five to seven-year-old IT infrastructure. SD-WAN will slowly make inroads in MPLS connectivity space in 2019, just as cloud displaced traditional infra business to good extent. SD-WAN will remain the buzzword in 2019 as well. Security-as-a-service saw good deals in 2018 and will see business growth in 2019 too.

Channel directions for partners

NTT-Netmagic has a huge list of services, which are more horizontal - be it IaaS, network and connectivity, managed services or managed security. We would suggest partners to become more solution centric and problem solvers than reselling the available set of services. The advantage of doing this is that your engagement with the customer enters into a different horizon and becomes more in depth.

The customer would start looking at you as a solution or consulting partner as opposed to a reseller for particular OEM. NTT-Netmagic programs are so tailored that we not only have sales and solutioning support, but also offer complete marketing engagement programs for partners and customers. Such programs help retaining the partner revenue and also grow it for new set of services. In some of our mature partner organisations, they even bill and support to the end customers for NTT-Netmagic Services. Today, we not only have one of the best compensation policies for our partners but also incentivise and reward partner sales and presales teams.

SUDHINDRA HOLLA,
SALES DIRECTOR, AXIS
COMMUNICATIONS – INDIA & SAARC

2019 WILL BE POSITIVE FOR IT CHANNEL PARTNERS

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

As far as IT channels are concerned, 2018 has been an eventful year. A major highlight was the streamlining of GST, that addressed and solved all big and small challenges, thereby, making implementation seamless.

Another notable highlight was the growth in GDP, which was at 6.5 per cent and above. This implies that the overall spending in the industry is seeing an upward trend, which has led to the growth in business opportunities across sectors.

2018 also saw channel partners and system integrators going beyond the product by acting as the solution provider by means of differentiation. They experimented with several new ways to service their customers to delight the customers – either through external manpower services, cloud services or value-added services. Their efforts and focus are continued to create value for end customers and

differentiate themselves as solutions provider as opposed to a mere box seller in the market.

The security highlights are :

Making BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) approvals mandatory for all cameras promises quality equipment imported into the country. It has a lot to do with testing the cameras to make sure they conform to the safety standards. All cameras that come into the country now are BIS certified – against all the emissions, electrical hazards, etc.

Even though the average camera price has dropped, the security industry has continued to grow. For reasons such as safety awareness, technology migration from analog to network camera. Another major reason for the growth was that the customers were looking for a technology upgrade from low-cost investments they had made earlier.

2019 is the election year, the government might either expedite the activities or might have a temporary sluggishness. However, the year will be positive for IT channel partners, in terms of the value that most of the system integrators at Axis are creating in the marketplace. As they are all trying to build better relationships with their partners to keep them loyal – by educating about diverse solutions range and customise it as per end consumers requirements. It will help them to differentiate our products in the marketplace as compared to the others.

Top tech trends for channel community

◗ Cybersecurity has been the talk of the industry and will, therefore, be on the agenda for 2019. Earlier, it was just a big box somewhere and now it is at the core of the discussion on network security. When a camera is compromised, it is not just the camera that you are compromising, but the entire system that becomes. The cameras keep the IT systems that our customers deploy secure, which otherwise could be a threat to elements such as financial loss, depth of data, privacy issues and sensitive

data. With the rise in cyber-threats, this will reduce the chances of a weak window – keeping the system secure.
◗ Another trend we see is that video surveillance is evolving to make the overall system more intelligent. One feature is IP audio, wherein the system will be able to take proactive or reactive actions such as automated pre-recorded or real-time audio announcements.
◗ The surveillance system can also integrate with sensors through the network to automate the system further. With a motion sensor, the system will be able to trigger the required action – whether it is to set off an alarm or to close a door. This integrated system can be placed in buildings to make them more energy efficient, as the sensors can also play the role of environmental sensors, which natural calamities like floods, cyclones and the like, and take action henceforth.
◗ The use of analytics in the video is becoming prominent as it moves to edge on the cameras for deployment. As cameras begin to run on edge analytics, AI is a noticeable sub-trend which makes a camera more powerful and intelligent than it was before as a camera can now be trained on an incident and react accordingly.

Channel directions for partners

◗ One of the key directions that we are emphasising is on education for our channel partners, as we want them to be trained on Axis tools and technologies– both in terms of how it can benefit the customer and how to successfully deploy our solutions as per the requirements of our customers. This way the customer will really derive the benefits of Axis' solutions. To educate them, we are looking at holding webinars, training sessions and in-depth boot camps. This will impart the necessary knowledge onto the channel partners allowing them to better position and implement our solutions.
◗ As an organisation Axis' focus is to sell end-to-end solutions and integrate audio and thermal solutions. Our focus will be to align our channel partners

and support them during the deployment of solutions, and service, making the process seamless. Once our customers see the benefit of that, we see more of our end to end solutions being implemented.

◗ With the help of social media and offline campaigns, we are doing our bit to help our channel partners through demand creation. We are keen on doing more digital marketing and participating in more industry-focused events to help improve the business of our channel partners.

F-Secure India

RAHUL KUMAR,
COUNTRY MANAGER,
INDIA & SAARC, F-SECURE

'WE WANT PARTNERS TO DRIVE VALUE CONVERSATIONS WITH CUSTOMERS'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

One of the key events of 2018 has been the continuation of supply chain attacks. Soon after the NotPetya attack in 2017, such attacks started becoming more diverse and this is expected to continue in 2019. Also, last year witnessed significant progress on the automation front. This development is making cyber attacks more unfeasible for cyber criminals by increasing the cost of conducting them.

Another substantial development of 2018 was the global debate around privacy. Considering that every business has to collaborate with third-party vendors on multiple levels, the debate has increased the interest around Digital Rights Management (DRM) solutions. Digitisation is an ongoing process. More people are coming under the digital umbrella with every passing day. This is simultaneously enhancing the prospects for the IT channel industry as well as cybersecurity players. We are confident that 2019 is going to have some very positive developments in our battle against cybercrime.

Top tech trends for channel community

We are closely looking at Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a technology. This is because the threat landscape is transforming very rapidly. The increasing scale of attacks in the future will make remediation harder using the conventional approach. So, AI continues to remain a game-changer across cybersecurity applications.

The current trend in the field is shifting towards reinforcement learning which is advantageous in application fuzzing, password guessing, penetration testing, and so on. The global cybersecurity industry is also battling an acute talent shortage, which totals around three million according to the recent estimates. AI adoption is helping businesses to automate their detection and response with unparalleled precision, thereby enabling their talents to focus only on the critical areas and IT initiatives.

The Internet of Things (IoT) will continue its rapid pace of adoption. The technology is still in its relative infancy, so we are seeing solutions coming to market which are not considering security and privacy in the design stage. Until these become a priority feature, we can expect to see a slew of issues arising from these vulnerable products.

Channel directions for partners

Our channel strategy in India is value based and we are going after acquiring the right channel partners who can add value to the customer ecosystem and believe in services driven growth, which ties back in exceptionally well with our partner strategy. We would like to go ahead with this focus, as we are confident that it will lead to competence in the ecosystem, which will always drive revenue. We are committed to getting our partners to a level where they can drive value conversations in this market and be respected by the customer fraternity.

Juniper Networks India

HARSHAVARDHAN KATHALEY,
DIRECTOR – CHANNEL SALES (INDIA AND SAARC), JUNIPER NETWORKS

'WE WILL SEE A RISE IN AUTOMATION ACROSS THE MULTICLOUD ENVIRONMENT'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

The trend of enterprises moving their workloads into hybrid cloud platforms will accelerate further in 2019. Cloud has now become the backbone of IT strategy for CXOs. We

will see a rise in automation across the multi-cloud environment, and increase in adoption of AI technology, alongwith growth in the ongoing cyber security needs. At Juniper, our vision of 'Engineering Simplicity' will continue to drive all that we do, as we innovate future networking platforms with our switching, routing and security solutions in terms of scale, performance and automation. There is also a need for IT channels to keep upgrading themselves with capabilities to design, implement and support this new age IT infrastructure.

Top tech trends for channel community

With the rise of Internet of Things (IoT), there have been opportunities in big data analytics. We have also observed emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), and mobile-first architecture with 5G on the horizon. Cloud adoption is currently the major driver of the networking industry, which also brings an increase in cyber threats and soaring costs of fighting cyber crimes.

As these trends result into RFPs and PoCs, Juniper is committed to providing solutions that are driven by our technology agenda which is focused on two important dimensions – scale and performance and automation through software innovation. Our partners will continue to play an integral role in building these solutions with us as well as supporting our customers to achieve desired business outcomes throughout the lifecycle.

Channel directions for partners

Juniper's Enterprise and Commercial business has been growing in India over the years. Our channel base has also grown accordingly. BFSI, ITeS, governments, Web2.0, ISPs, manufacturing and education are the verticals where we see growth opportunities in driving data centre builds, cloud adoption, cyber security and cloud-enabled enterprise networks.

The new Juniper Partner Advantage (JPA) delivers programs, incentives, tools and training to make it easier for partners to capitalise on opportunities. Programs delivered under the JPA enable partners to grow expertise in high value technology markets, grow profitability, and simplify their business processes with Juniper.

SAS India

YUNUS MEMON,
DIRECTOR – ALLIANCE & CHANNELS, INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA, SAS

SAS AIMS 50% OF MID-MARKET REVENUE THROUGH CHANNEL SALES BY 2020 END

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

India has emerged as the fastest growing major economy in the world and is expected to be one of the top three economic powers over the next 10-15 years. Fall in automation costs and rise of digital in 2018 has led to higher spends by industry. Hence adoption of new technologies is expected to accelerate economic growth in 2019. Instead of merely focusing on reducing the operational costs, the need for mandatory investments in adoption of these technologies will be required to gain competitive advantage. The industry is experiencing a significant shift from a few large deals to multiple small ones. Companies are expanding their business to Tier 2, Tier 3 and Tier 4 cities by adopting hub-and-spoke model, with Tier 1 cities acting as hubs and the subsequent tiers as network of spokes. Most of the delivery and consumption models have undergone a complete transformation. This implies that key to success in new geographies is to focus on building credible local presence, a high degree of domain expertise at competitive costs and attaining operational excellence.

Although the IT sector is facing multiple headwinds, but the overall industry continues to grow in customer base by servicing domestic needs. The growth of the B2B startup industry also represents a unique opportunity for our country to build innovative solutions for India and rest of the world.

Organisations across sectors will try to increase their competitive edge by exploring the power of data and analytics. Hence there's a need to implement more sophisticated analytics – such as machine learning – to gain insights from data, understand customer preferences and drive marketing RoI.

Top tech trends for channel community

While the effects of digitisation, as well as GST, have their repercussions on the Indian market, traditional channel communities continue to realign their focus areas to improve business operations. The top three technology trends that the channel community should focus on should be AI, cloud adoption and IoT.

From predictions, recommendations, and advice to automated customer service agents and intelligent process automation, AI is changing the face of how we

interact with computer systems. IDC has estimated that by 2019, 40 per cent of digital transformation initiatives will use AI services and by 2021, 75 per cent of enterprise applications will use AI.

The number of mid-sized companies converting to the cloud will continue to grow as we head further into 2019. With minimum operating cost, cloud has emerged as the most cost-effective option to manage the workloads and processes. As enterprises move to cloud, they will increasingly rely on their channel partners to support cloud integration and to expand market share.

IoT is a vast domain, but it is one of the next big opportunity for partners for which they need to begin build a practice. A McKinsey study also reveals that IoT offers a potential economic impact of US$ 4 trillion to US$ 11 trillion a year in 2025. But it becomes important for a partner to understand which areas of opportunity are going to be most impactful to their business.

Channel directions for partners

The goal at SAS is to have 50 per cent of mid-market revenue through channel sales by the end of 2020. This essentially means shifting significant focus from direct sales in the mid-market segment to that on partners, which essentially translates in some realignment to make the SAS products more mid-market friendly. As part of the mid-market channel initiative, SAS will be focusing on partner enablement programs, to ensure they have the necessary sales, delivery and support skills that match the SAS products they are selling.

Given this scenario, SAS is at an advantageous position and we are constantly working closely with our partners to help them invest and adopt Two-In-A-Box model. The model helps partners to build on the core competencies and drive specific value proposition, thus helping them define the right market mix and prioritise investments in people and

technology.

With AI, cloud adoption and IoT as the key areas for partners to focus on, SAS continues to work closely with partners to leverage the huge momentum in these areas. SAS provides channel opportunities through its Managed Analytic Services Provider (MASP), reseller and OEM programs. All this, through a robust risk-reward revenue model, secures our partners and provides customers with a competitive edge. Moreover, increasing strategic alliances between domestic and international players to deliver solutions across the globe, is also a key area SAS focuses on.

Fortinet India

JITENDRA GHUGHAL,
DIRECTOR CHANNELS,
INDIA & SAARC, FORTINET

PARTNERS, A CRITICAL ELEMENT IN FORTINET'S GO-TO-MARKET STRATEGY

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

In 2018, we remained focused on helping partners solve their customer's pressing security needs and helping them drive their digital

transformation. As part of our partner programme we conducted in-depth training sessions for partners across cities in 2018 to hone their skills with Fortinet Security Fabric. The sessions conducted by Fortinet's technology experts trained partners to deploy products and solutions that talk to each other using a common language and OS, that can openly interact with third-party products and solutions.

We also added a new Silver Level tier to our MSSP programme to provide an entry path for VARs and MSSPs migrating to security services. With the new silver level Fortinet provided partners with enablement starter kits for multi-cloud, SD-WAN, automation, and secure access for IoT and OT (operational technology) to help MSSPs create new service offerings around these technologies.

Looking ahead in 2019, network security is becoming increasingly complex, especially as networks expand to include new cloud resources, and many organisations simply do not have the resources necessary to effectively deploy and manage the tools they need to protect their modern, distributed networks. Leveraging threat assessments, expertise, streamlined onboarding, and centralisation, partners can reduce the complexity of this process for their customers, enhancing the security of their customers while growing their own business.

Top tech trends for channel community

The digital transformation process requires an equivalent security transformation. This means transitioning to a new security architecture that can be applied ubiquitously in networks, computing infrastructure, information assets, users, and devices not formally capable of defending themselves. Security transformation is achieved when an organisation integrates security into all areas of digital technology. The resulting security architecture is integrated and automated, and provides continuous trust assessment to ensure that

devices or workloads running on the network are not malicious. Adoption of new security architecture has opened new business fronts for partners in areas like Network Access Control, SD-WAN and Security Incidence & Event Management (SIEM).

◗ **Network Access Control**

The use of IoT devices is growing at a tremendous rate as organisations embrace digital transformation to enable better operational efficiency. According to Gartner, "Internet of Things endpoints will grow at a 32 per cent CAGR from 2016 through 2021, reaching an installed base of 25.1 billion units. As connected devices continue to become more prolific across customers' networks, they need a modern Network Access Control (NAC) solution that can identify IoT assets, enforce access control rules, and automatically isolate and remediate threats posed by compromised devices." NAC's monitoring and response capabilities are especially critical since many IoT devices open networks to additional risk via compromised, poorly written and unpatchable software, unadvertised back doors hardwired into firmware, and more. Customers need a unified view into every IoT device to detect and act on threats. NAC solutions do just that by leveraging automation, contextual data, and integration for visibility across integrated IoT, operations, IT and cloud networks.

FortiNAC allows organisations to identify every single device on the network and enables segmentation, giving each device access only to approved items. This functionality is delivered all within a solution that works with multi-vendor environments and an unlimited number of devices. FortiNAC stengthens the Fortinet Security Fabric for IoT deployments, delivering broad, integrated and automated cybersecurity solutions across the entire attack surface. In the world of IoT, FortiNAC answers the question 'what's on your network' and then enables you to protect it. This is one important technology that partners

can look to grow their business with in 2019.

◗ **SD-WAN**

Another key technology for 2019 is SD-WAN, Gartner recently completed a survey that highlights key concerns organisations face as they implement an SD-WAN solution, and strategies for addressing those challenges. SD-WAN has been seeing rapid growth over the past two years according to IDC, with the total addressable market ballooning from US$ 225 million in 2015 to US$ 1.3 billion in 2018, with some experts predicting that it will jump to as much as US$ 4.6 billion in 2022. The driver behind this growth is digital transformation. Branch offices can no longer simply function as a satellite connected to a central network.

For a security solution to meet the demands of an SD-WAN architecture, security needs to be part of your original SD-WAN planning, so security can be thoroughly integrated into WAN functionality, as well as tie into and across other security tools to better detect and prevent today's advanced threats.

As our customers move toward direct internet access, they understand the growing need for next-generation firewall capabilities and high SSL inspection performance. To make sure customers realise the benefits of SD-WAN without compromising security, Fortinet has evolved our advanced SD-WAN features in the latest FortiOS releases. This focus on secure SD-WAN is clearly resonating with the hundreds of customers and partners who are taking advantage of Fortinet's unique combination of next-generation firewall and SD-WAN in the same offering, managed through a single centralised controller.

◗ **Security Incident and Events Management (SIEM)**

Lack of integration and automation hampers visibility, making life very complicated for IT and security departments. Most deployments today can be comprised of 30 plus point products, most from different security

vendors. These independent and often isolated solutions make integration and automation very difficult. Worse, each usually has its own security console, greatly increasing complexity for NOC and SOC personnel. Manually correlating data between consoles increases the time required to identify cyber threats and remediate them. And this challenge is compounded due to the added complexity of elastic hyperconnectivity, making it difficult to implement consistent, repeatable, and rapid responses to threats. Given the increasing sophistication of today's threats, modern defenses need repeatable, automated responses in the order of seconds or minutes to avoid propagation throughout the enterprise.

Even though a NOC or a SOC consolidates a variety of tools and measurements into a single management system, they are still too isolated. Rather than this siloed approach, what's needed is a new approach, with a system that can bring security visibility and control into the NOC, and provide operational requirements and network and workflow visibility to the SOC. By combining these systems into a single, holistic solution, organisations can focus on the bigger picture of "secure throughput" that can streamline operations while managing and even anticipating critical security events.

FortiSIEM – Fortinet's Multivendor Security Incident and Events Management solution brings it all together. Visibility, correlation, automated response and remediation in a single, scalable solution. Using a Business Services view, the complexity of managing network and security operations is reduced, freeing resources, improving breach detection. Worldwide 80 per cent of breaches go undetected because of skills shortage and event information 'noise'. FortiSIEM provides the cross correlation, applies machine learning and UEBA to improve response, to stop breaches before they occur.

Channel directions for partners

The role of a partner has undergone

a dramatic change from one of a technology seller to one of a network security solution expertise provider. Customers today with limited resources turn to solutions providers to effectively mitigate modern cyber threats while simultaneously remaining alert to new and evolving attack vectors and methods. To assist customer's partners, need to have the expertise and knowledge. As a result, we're actively evolving our partner programme, to encourage holistic technical certification for partners and aligning their sales cycle with the way customers are buying security both today and tomorrow.

Fortinet has designed The Network Security Expert (NSE) programme to help them gain the required expertise. By participating in Fortinet's NSE programme, partners are able to better assist their customers by expanding on their existing network security skills, as well as their knowledge of Fortinet technologies, while also staying up-to-date on the latest trends across the threat landscape. And for those partners who wish to demonstrate complete mastery of network security, they can complete the NSE 8 certification, an industry-recognised certification that certifies expert knowledge in the complexities of both modern cybersecurity as well as the industry-leading Fortinet security solutions.

Another area for partners to grow their business is cloud services. We have a MSSP programme that helps our partners deliver Fortinet cloud and support services, combined with technology like our virtual firewalls. This makes it much easier for their customers to adopt the benefits of the Fortinet Security Fabric with a predictable monthly pricing model, and benefits the partner with a consistent and recurring source of revenue.

Fortinet also works with our distributors to build options for partners to lease security solutions like our FortiGate Firewall on a monthly rental. This is especially helpful for partners who are new or in the early phases of their transition to managed services so they can build the cost of hardware into their business models and scale services as their business grows, with minimal initial investment.

Partners have always been a critical element of Fortinet's go-to-market strategy. Our goal is to help partners get aligned with our partner program to accelerate their business and drive unprecedented growth and profit by delivering superior security technology solutions to their customers. We arm partners with the right programs - like deal registration, renewal tracking, incentives for promoting our technologies, and trade promotions - to drive profits.

D-Link India

SANKET KULKARNI,
VP – CHANNEL SALES (INDIA & SAARC), D-LINK INDIA

D-LINK'S FORAY INTO CCTV SEGMENT ENABLES PARTNERS TO EXPAND THEIR BUSINESS OFFERINGS

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

I can certainly term 2018 as an action-packed year wherein we ventured into new territories and continued with our zeal to innovate. In 2018, D-Link expand its product portfolio by venturing into CCTV segment and positioning ourselves as a prominent solution player in the surveillance segment. Today, D-Link has an extensive CCTV solution ranging from 1MP to 8MP cameras, DVR, DVR Enclosures, power supply, and CCTV cables among other offerings. Our solution centric approach has enabled us to garner adequate market share and penetrate into deeper pockets of the country.

Furthermore, D-Link continued to lead the networking segment in India with its end-to-end networking solution. Our unmanaged and smart managed switches are one of the most preferred in the SMB segment and contributed significantly to our revenue. We are a trusted brand in WLAN segment with considerable market share. D-Link is also a prominent player in structured cabling segment. Overall, our growth in 2018 has been organic, and we look forward to continue with this momentum.

On the product front, our emphasis on innovation has led to introduction of many interesting products in the consumer space. At the recently concluded Consumer Electronic show (CES), D-Link announced a host of devices like new range of Smart Home series, 5G gateway, and mesh enabled EXO series router with McAfee protection.

With all these innovations in consumer space and our business approach, we have opened a plethora of opportunity for channel partners. Government's emphasis on digital economy with projects like Digital India, Smart City, digitisation of Railways, etc., has further broadened the spectrum for the networking segment. Hence, we are very enthusiastic about the opportunities ahead and look forward to engaging closely with our channel partners in reaching out to customers.

Top tech trends for channel community

Advent of new age content rich

media like Netflix, Amazon videos and other digital formats are driving demand for high-end routers. The present-day media hungry audience is constantly looking for high speed secure connectivity. As a result, new trend in wireless technology like whole home mesh Wi-Fi is gaining high precedence. Unlike traditional routers, mesh routers ensure there is strong wireless signal throughout the premise, resulting in uninterrupted work and entertainment. D-Link introduced COVR series of router based on mesh technology last year, and we are in the process of expanding our offerings in this segment.

Internet of Things is another flavour of the season, which is bound to change the outlook of Smart Homes in the days to come. Also, given the number of existing internet connected devices, IoT will act as an obvious extension for today's connected world. Last but not the least, with growing incidences of crime and untoward incidents, security remains a key concern for most of us. Customers today are keenly looking for economical home security solution. Devices likes Wi-Fi Home Camera (D-Link DCS-P6000LH) are being widely deployed and are in huge demand.

Channel directions for partners

With D-Link's foray into CCTV segment, we have diversified our product portfolio. Our partners now have the opportunity to tap into CCTV market segment and expand their business offering. CCTV as a segment holds immense potential, with reports suggesting CCTV market in India is likely to grow at a CAGR of more than 12 per cent from 2018-2023. We, at D-Link, are extremely focused on CCTV business and confident of tapping substantial market share in the next couple of years.

Overall, the ICT industry is buzzing with opportunities. Government and enterprise digitalisation initiatives are driving growth in networking segment. Also, the adoption of wireless technology is on a rise with more and more people getting connected digitally. All this presents

tremendous opportunities for ICT vendors and partners to grow. However, it is also crucial to note that technology is constantly evolving with new innovations coming-in at regular interval. Our team of engineers at D-Link thrive on innovation and are constantly working towards bringing out products that are future ready. It is imperative for everyone involved in ICT business to upgrade and adapt to the changing market dynamics.

Partners must update themselves on latest technology trends, enhance their skill set, and most importantly, focus on customer engagement. In my opinion, these are some of the key factors that will help drive business. As a channel-centric organisation, we do conduct training programs and webinars to help partners stay abreast with new trends in the networking segment.

SonicWall India

DEBASHISH MUKHERJEE,
COUNTRY DIRECTOR, INDIA & SAARC, SONICWALL

SONICWALL SEES 'CAPTURE CLOUD PLATFORM' AS KEY OFFERING FOR THE CHANNEL IN 2019

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

Last year resulted in a significant

year for both the industry and SonicWall, as new channel trends and industry shifts presente d areas of opportunity and growth. In 2018, we built upon our SMB leadership and announced our expansion into the enterprise space. In 2019, we look forward to bolstering our portfolio, equipping our SMB and enterprise customers with enhanced capabilities across our cloud-based platform. With more than 500,000 organisations deploying SonicWall in their networks, it's imperative for us to continue to ensure protection in more than one million networks we serve in over 215 countries and territories.

With a future-thinking mindset, 2019 will be a year of focus on the enterprise for SonicWall. We foresee that companies will become more aware of threats and revisit their compliance and security frameworks as the conscious requirement to be ahead of the curve becomes of increased importance across the industry. This shift will trigger a virtuous cycle of new realisations, inspiring new demands and industry solutions.

In the new year, we predict that organisations will be more inclined to adopt security measures as attacks affecting the threat landscape continue to increase across networks in the channel. With this realisation, businesses will need to consider allocating a financial scope for cyber security tactics as it becomes imperative to for organisations to allocate spending to awards security investments due to the uncertainty of an impending breach or massive attack. It's unfortunate, but it often takes a catastrophic event for CISOs to receive the necessary funds needed for adequate defences.

However, we predict companies will start dismantling traditional setups. To this point, SonicWall is working to replace patchwork systems that are deemed far outdated, often using obsolete software and hardware,

which are no longer supported. We're eager to deliver capabilities that will simplify deployment processes and unify security governance, compliance and risk management from a single pane of glass.

Top tech trends for channel community

Real-time capability will become critical. PortSmash is the latest example of how researchers are demonstrating cyber criminals' ability to use the very architecture of processor chips to gain access to sensitive and often highly valued information. Along with its predecessors – Meltdown, Spectre and Foreshadow – these attacks are leveraging side-channels to 'pick locks' within highly secured personal computers or even third-party clouds undetected.

Prior to these attacks being made public, we were already developing Real-Time Deep Memory Inspection (RTDMI) technology which proactively protects customers against processor-based exploits as well as PDF and Office exploits never seen before. Given the increase in the number of these attacks and the severity they pose, we will continue to work hard to stay ahead of these threats with our RTDMI technology to identify and mitigate threats through deep memory inspection, all in real time.

Another trend will be Unified Control. Patchwork Systems, for whatever reasons they are left in place – budget, changes within an IT department, operational risks of updates – legacy systems are something we anticipate customers will continue to struggle with. They continue to leave companies susceptible to attack when upgrades are available at low prices and zero-touch deployment. There will be concentrated focus on unifying command and control functions for risk management, governance and compliance from a single point.

Futhermore, selecting a vendor with a layered security approach helps lower the cost of servicing customers, freeing capital that can be reinvested into the business. This type of flexibility drives connectivity across the enterprise environment providing organisations with guaranteed protection.

Channel directions for partners

This year, we expect our Capture Cloud Platform to be key offering for the channel as it continues to aid organisations in mitigating malware, ransomware, phishing attacks and other threats with real-time cyber threat intelligence. In the cyber arms race, intelligence is key to not only knowing who your adversary is but, making a quick and educated decision in how to thwart their efforts. With over two decades of industry-leading innovation and expertise, this platform will ensure that organizations can defend themselves from whatever new attacks 2019 may have in store for them.

Our partners must focus on staying up-to-date and investing a lot of time and effort to really know their customers. In light of the rapidly changing industry, it's imperative for partners to remain on track with new offerings, product enhancement, and service updates. This in turn will bolster partners' ability to be thought leaders and game changers in the ever-evolving security landscape.

At SonicWall, we believe that understanding your customers' needs is vital to ensuring that they are, and will remain, fully protected. By staying at the forefront of today's industry, partners can better predict customer challenges, address needs and recommend investments to help support customer initiatives, sometimes before problems even arise.

RAJARSHI BHATTACHARYYA,
COUNTRY HEAD, SUSE INDIA

'CHANNEL PARTNERS SHOULD INVEST MORE ON TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

2018 was a good year for SUSE. As a company, we announced back in last July that SUSE will become a fully independent company from Micro Focus, as we partner EQT a growth investor to continue and even accelerate our momentum as a leading provider of enterprise-grade, open source software-defined infrastructure and application delivery solutions. In India, our growth was also evident. We continue to maintain our leadership in manufacturing while growing our presence in BFSI, and private enterprise as well as public sector business opportunities also keept us busy last year. On the channel front, we have recruited over 100 partners in India in 2018 and more than 14 partners have become accredited partners of SUSE.

In 2019, we will expect to see channel investing more on open source technologies to support the emergence of two new paradigms - software

defined infrastructure and application delivery platform - underpinned by customer's digital transformation journey. There will also be greater adoption of IoT devices and upsurge of big data.

Top tech trends for channel community

Software Defined Approach: In today's business environment, companies look for digital transformation as a key strategic priority to change organisational processes and capabilities in order to deliver values to customers. Adoption of OpenStack and Software-Defined Storage (SDS) will be the key component as industry moves toward Software Defined Everything (SDx). We see Ceph will help change the economics of cloud storage and containerised or cloud-native applications like Kubernetes and Cloud Foundry will become more mainstream than ever.

▶ **Internet of Things (IoT) and Edge Computing:** There will be 26 billion IoT devices by 2020, according to a Gartner report, with IoT spending reaching nearly US$ 1.4 trillion by 2021, based on a IDC report. What's interesting to know is that many IoT devices are using embedded Linux. This makes perfect sense when you are looking for a real-time OS that is simple, lightweight, lean on resources and low cost. OpenStack Cloud e.g. is a proven popular platform for a distributed cloud model when one is moving processing and compute to the edge of the IoT network.

▶ **Big data and analytics:** Big data analytics is another huge technology trend that can't be ignored. Big data and analytics are forcing organisations to think carefully about storage variety, volume and velocity. Interestingly a quarter of all OpenStack cloud deployments are being used to run big data or data mining workloads. Ceph is the open source software-defined storage solution that is helping to solve this problem.

Channel directions for partners

SUSE's new channel program is based on "Technology" certification. Partners need to get certified on SUSE products. Based on their certification, they will get "tier uplift" which will enable them to attain various channel benefits associated with their partner status. This will foster quicker adoption of technology and enhance the potential of cash in on the service revenue associated with product sales.

We believe channel partners should invest more on technology adoption in order stay relevant in the market. They must possess the relevant skillsets to partner businesses in their digital transformation initiatives.

Micro Focus India

SAURABH SAXENA,
COUNTRY DIRECTOR,
MICRO FOCUS, INDIA

'PARTNERS NEED A PROGRAM THAT DELIVERS HEALTHY, PREDICTABLE PROFITABILITY'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

We have been focused on powering digital transformation for our partners and customers alike - helping organisations run their business and transform it. Our software provides the critical tools they need to build, operate, secure, and analyse their enterprise. By design, these tools bridge the gap between existing and emerging technologies, enabling faster innovation, with less risk, in the race to digital transformation.

In 2019, we will introduce our flagship program, the new, combined Micro Focus Partner Program for Resellers, which covers all products across Micro Focus. In conjunction with the new program, we are upgrading our partner portal, wherein we are investing US$ 5 million into improving system capability to ensure we improve your experience of working with Micro Focus.

Top tech trends for channel community

Firstly, partners need organisations who make it easy for them to do business with. As we go forward, we are simplifying the program to a single Global Program with three partner tiers – Authorised, Gold and Platinum. This program is delivered on a single platform and set of processes – standardising and automating as far as possible to improve your experience.

We also want to help our partners take advantage of the significant cross-sell potential in adjacent solutions like Platespin and Hybrid Cloud Management or IAM and Data Security (Voltage). We will achieve this with the introduction of Portfolio Expert Accreditations.

Partners need a program that delivers healthy, predictable profitability, and benefits. All rebates as we go forward will be paid out as back end payments ensuring you keep the margin. Besides, we are introducing sourced benefits across the board; paying partners on initial support and have significantly improved our offering on SaaS – paying out on up to three years upfront.

Channel directions for partners

Our partners need to be prepared for the new Partner Portal which is going to deliver at a high level. This will include a completely new user interface, which will help in creating

quotes and placing orders. The new UX will work on Sales Force, which means that we will be able to build on the integrated Q2O capability.

We have got a very strong MDF program that is available to Gold and Platinum Partners. Once again, the principle is simple – we work with you to co-fund marketing activities to generate awareness and drive end user demand for Micro Focus products and solutions. You can also work with Micro Focus marketing and gain access to a wealth of campaigns and pre-packaged resources that can be leveraged to deliver multi-channel integrated campaigns.

Kaspersky Lab

SHRENIK BHAYANI,
GENERAL MANAGER,
KASPERSKY LAB (SOUTH ASIA)

BLOCKCHAIN AS CYBERSECURITY SERVICE IS A VIABLE WAY FOR TECHNOLOGY TO SCALE

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

The year 2018 has been really dynamic one for us. This year we entered new markets, achieved our set goals, introduced our security guardian- Midori Kuma to the consumers and channel partners. Our latest launch of cloud security solution protected and secured millions of consumers, and progressed together towards building a cyber-secure nation.

Our new distributor appointments in the Bangladesh and Sri Lanka market are the major highlights of 2018, followed by our drive to make everyone associated with us including our distributors and partners happy through our 'Kaspersky Sales Army' program. Our enterprise business has seen 100 per cent growth as aimed by us and we are positively looking forward to explore newer opportunities in 2019.

We keep coming up with incentive programs for our partners that not only promise them their deserved growth in the industry but also the extra perks of being a part of the Kaspersky Lab family. Our recent 'Sales Army' program is an example worth mentioning.

Top tech trends for channel community

The top technology trends that will be experiencing steady growth in 2019 are as follows:

▶ **Artificial Intelligence:** Artificial Intelligence is rapidly changing the environments of just about everything. AI is helping businesses across industries, to advance their threat detection and enhance the incident response time. It is interesting to see how will AI further enhance the cybersecurity industry.

▶ **Blockchain:** In today's world blockchain can be implemented in various industry sectors in order to speed up processes, guarantee security, trust and transparency and keep accurate records that can be accessed by stakeholders, no matter where they are in the world. Blockchain as a cybersecurity service is the most viable way for the technology to scale.

▶ **Machine Learning:** In cybersecurity, it is always said 'once bitten, twice shy', this being practiced by a smart machine which learns from previous experiences is exactly what the industry needs. Kaspersky Lab has already inculcated machine learning technology in Kaspersky's Threat Management and Defense solution.

Channel directions for partners

As we have always mentioned our channel partners have been a major support to us and they play an important part in the growth and expansion of Kaspersky Lab. Even in 2019, we have focused on developing various schemes and programs for our channel partners that will only make things better and beneficial for all. We have some very exciting plans in the pipeline for our channel partners in 2019.

R&M India

MURUGESAN R,
SENIOR DIRECTOR- SALES,
PRIVATE NETWORKS (INDIA &
SAARC), R&M

INFRA PROJECTS TO BOOST CHANNEL BUSINESS

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

The Indian infrastructure industry got a boost from the Government of India in the form of Smart Cities,

metro rail projects, city surveillance projects etc. Channels got additional revenue from these sectors in 2018. This will continue for many years.

The channel industry will boom further in the year 2019 from the proposed industrial corridor projects (Delhi-Mumbai, Chennai-Bangalore, and others), airport projects (new and modernisation of old airports), Digital India projects, healthcare projects (hospital), etc.

India being a large country, there is huge scope for IT Infrastructure development, the requirement for IT products is going up which will help the channel industry to grow further.

Top tech trends for channel community

Artificial Intelligence: AI industry is currently booming in India and hence organisations will definitely require catering their solutions across the country.

Internet of things (IOT): Companies dealing with IoT technology will witness a huge demand for their products and solutions in the near future, thus requiring multiple partners to maximise their product/solution reach.

Cyber security solutions: With the advent of digital practices in end customers such as digital wallets, online transactions, etc., organisations ensure to protect every single piece of data of their customer. Hence, they would look forward for strong security solutions.

Channel direction for partners

We are guiding our channel partners to identify new areas for business growth. It could be geographical expansion or product bundling/convergence, etc. Partners need to invest on quality manpower with proper training in order to provide the required services to the customers.

Nutanix India

AMARISH KARNIK,
DIRECTOR – GENERAL BUSINESS AND PARTNERS,
NUTANIX INDIA

NUTANIX URGES CHANNEL PARTNERS TO EVOLVE AS STRATEGIC ADVISORS

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

The year 2018 saw the IT channel industry constantly evolve to meet the market's rapidly changing requirements – witnessing three key highlights. Firstly, the large number of Indian enterprises replaced their three tier architecture systems with next generation, hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI), marking a shift from complex, time-consuming and inflexible systems to the one that ensures well-managed operations. Secondly, having seen the benefits and reliability of the single interface enterprise OS, companies began 'trusting the system' and shifting their mission critical workloads and big data applications to a single pane that ran across all applications.

Lastly, the reality of hybrid environments became more concrete in 2018, with more enterprises beginning to truly appreciate the adaptability, scalability and efficiency of hybrid IT.

The channel community should bet on HCI, Automation and Flexible Enterprises in 2019. Virtualisation is set to continue in 2019 as more companies see the process as inevitable, while enterprises already on their virtualisation journey will focus more of their efforts on applications supporting the business function.

Top tech trends for channel community

The industry no longer considers HCI a niche technology. Like many other major digital economies that are adopting best-of-breed solutions, Indian enterprises are realising and reaping the benefits of enterprise OS to re-define their businesses. The channel community should expect HCI to be the solution of choice for a greater number of customers as they seek to effectively modernise their data centres.

With enterprises continuing to move away from three tier legacy systems and traditional operations, companies will look at modernising solutions and automating infrastructure to focus on innovation and real business priorities. Mundane tasks like system upgrades, will be expected to run automatically without interruption by the system itself.

Application automation will continue to be a big opportunity for channel partners. Today, IT infrastructure is considered a commodity, with application automation deriving the true value for customers. While an application automation project is one that will have a positive impact on partner businesses, with it being outcome based, application automation will continue to be a big opportunity for channel partners.

Channel directions for partners

Partners can strengthen themselves by expanding into services. With the constant need for businesses to transform, the momentum to create end-to-end solutions along with the help of partners has never been greater. Business transformation, today, cannot be accomplished alone.

We believe that in order for our customers to build agile and scalable businesses, it is important for the channel partner ecosystem to work in collaboration with our teams to meet IT demands and achieve business objectives: engaging with customers, modernising and shrinking data centres, have all become realities. It's all part of redefining data centres and infrastructure and making cloud invisible. To align to this, channel partners will evolve from hardware and product vendors, to strategic advisors, by designing and building services around core hardware.

Like most enterprises, talent acquisition will be an investment area for channel partners. The combination of attracting the right kind of talent, both from a sales and pre-sales perspective, along with recruiting the right set of skillsets required by subject matter experts, will be a game changer for partners striving to stay ahead of their peers.Nutanix is part of a constantly evolving IT landscape, with several customers at the peak of traversing the paths of digital and business transformation. Finding the right kind of talent is definitely going to play a key role in differentiating players in what is a truly exciting time for the channel partner ecosystem in India.

Partners play the most important role for Nutanix, in India and globally. Our partner ecosystem is geared up for the foundation, deployment and building of services around HCI. The next challenge for us is to develop the DevOps, automation and subscription practices for them. We are addressing this through more expansion and engagements

CrowdStrike

GEOFF SWAINE,
DIRECTOR, CHANNEL & ALLIANCES
ASIA PACIFIC & JAPAN,
CROWDSTRIKE

CROWDSTRIKE SEES SUPPLY CHAIN ATTACKS AND CYBER ESPIONAGE AS TOP TRENDS

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

In 2018, CrowdStrike was focused on growing its global partner footprint with new channel resellers, major system integrators (SIs), and technology alliances. The company launched a new partner portal, and expanded enablement options to help partners develop their CrowdStrike practices and ensure world-class customer support.

CrowdStrike has expanded rapidly into the EMEA and APAC regions, heavily investing in its channel and partner ecosystem with key wins in the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Australia, India, and Singapore. Additionally, the company has forged critical alliances with the world's leading technology leaders, including Google, VMWare, Splunk, and others. I'm tasked to lead the APJ channel strategy and its rapidly growing partner program and drive joint go-to-market capabilities for CrowdStrike's robust partner ecosystem.

On January 28, 2019, CrowdStrike announced a new tiered program for reseller partners to further accelerate sales and offer partners additional revenue streams through partner-provided services, solutions, and other opportunities.

The Elevate Partner Program is a unified partner program that incorporates all security solutions, partners and their go-to-market models. It encompasses a "whole-ecosystem" approach based on six paths to partner engagement and profitability – channel, technology alliances, MSSPs, OEMs, CrowdStrike Platform, and cloud procurements.

The Elevate Program will now better enable new and existing partners to develop expertise around specific technology areas and industries, so they can expertly serve their customers and differentiate through their partnership with the industry leaders in endpoint protection.

Top tech trends for channel community

Supply chain attacks will continue to rise as attackers will leverage this route to carry out targeted intrusions. Over the last 18 months, supply chain attacks have become one of the biggest threat vectors as organisations struggled with vulnerabilities. Software supply chain attacks have grown in frequency because of the high number of organisations that depend on third-party software for business operations and this shows no sign of slowing down.

Channel organisations will need to maintain vigilance to ensure they are not adding risk to the supply chain, and those who are equipped to protect it can bring their customers and partners real value. Additionally, we expect to see organisations

perform a new level of due diligence to vet partners and their security practices in order to avoid unwarranted risks. Supply chain risks require a new security lens to move away from focusing on the perimeter to having the capabilities to behaviourally detect abnormalities in the system that traditional solutions may miss.

China will continue to ramp up commercial cyber espionage efforts. We saw an increase in espionage activity last year that will continue into 2019. China will ramp up efforts to steal intellectual property and trade secrets as geopolitical developments continue to jeopardise their economic objectives. Indian organisations, especially those engaged in trade with western nations, will need to ensure they are not vulnerable and be able to harden their security posture against sophisticated intrusion attempts. We will see greater compliance and risk requirements so that organisations investing in building security capabilities will have a competitive advantage.

Cyber insurance rates will go up because of the increased payouts and risk. This is the golden age of cyber insurance, and the market will continue to evolve. We have already seen insurance companies offering their customers discounts for having a proven security platform such as CrowdStrike Falcon in place. Channel partners who can prove their defensive capability to their cyber insurer will likely experience discounts. At the same time, as the threat landscape becomes more and more challenging to navigate, many insurance providers are likely to raise their rates to prepare for the new risk environment.

Channel directions for partners

At CrowdStrike, partners are a core part of our business, allowing us to reach more customers and meet the global demand for our technology. With today's announcement, we actively expand on opportunities and build on mutual successes, while delivering more benefits, enablement, and rewards for our ecosystem of partners. Through CrowdStrike's platform-first approach, partners receive an open framework for the development and deployment of next-generation antivirus (AV), endpoint detection and response (EDR), security hygiene, vulnerability management, managed hunting, all delivered from a native cloud architecture. CrowdStrike continues to expand its Elevate Partner Program to enable partners who are aligned with the CrowdStrike technology model and functional areas that meet customer needs.

Delta India

ROHIT DATTA,
DIRECTOR - CHANNEL BUSINESS, INDIA & SAARC, DELTA

INDIAN VIDEO SURVEILLANCE MARKET IS PROJECTED TO GROW BY 16.4%

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

The security and surveillance industry will continue to grow in 2019. The government initiatives like Smart City projects and GeM have triggered a huge demand for security hardware such as CCTV cameras, storage, and solutions. Indian video surveillance market is projected to grow at a CAGR of 16.4 per cent during 2018-2024. Security is the next growth destination.

There is also an increase in the use of online UPS systems in residential applications, as homeowners want to protect their sensitive electronic and entertainment equipment from power outages and power quality issues.Another new niche market for UPS systems are broadcast stations and casinos, as more and more TV affiliates and cable stations broadcast digitally, they must protect both the power to broadcast, the quality of that power and the sensitive digital broadcasting equipment.

Top tech trends for channel community

Our channel business has grown by more than 50 per cent, we have billed to more than 250 partners. We have done 77 per cent business through run rate partners and 23 per cent business through project partners, whom we called system integrators.

Channel directions for partners

Up to 40 KVA sales and service through channel partners only, market dynamics has changed from 20 KVA to 120 KVA for the organised sector so we have opened up to 120 KVA sales and installation for our loyal authorised certified partners.

We are a strong believer in channels, and we have tasted the success of the channel in our industrial automation business. The core message to our existing and new partners is that Delta is a very open and flexible power brand. We have a highly motivated channel team. We are getting more competition partners into our fold. Today every business is becoming critical and digitized. Hence, every organization needs to operate all the time which in turn demands a reliable and strong power back up a solution.

UiPath India

ASHUTOSH KAPOOR,
VICE PRESIDENT - CHANNELS AND
PARTNER ECOSYSTEM,
UIPATH INDIA

RPA IS A NEW AREA OF OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANNEL PARTNERS

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

The trend of digital transformation by enterprises has led to many new opportunities for channels. It has led to many channel partners gaining specialisation in one or more of the digital technologies such as cloud, analytics, security, data management, digital workplace, IoT, and mobility amongst others.

This trend will only intensify in 2019. The year would also see channel partners move deeper into some of these areas and provide managed services. There's also the emergence of SaaS-based application software in areas such as HR, supply chain, and customer experience management.

RPA is a new area where we see lot of opportunities for channel. Just in over a year we have identified and worked with over 60 boutique channel partners who are serving some of the largest Indian

enterprises. By its very nature, RPA has got applicability and scope across the enterprise and we work on annual licenses, which makes it for more licenses and renewal of existing licenses. RPA channel partners thus have a very strong growth driver as part of the business model.

Top tech trends for channel community

◗ RPA has high growth potential and high profit potential. Availability of RPA skills is on the rise and UiPath is a major force behind it.
◗ IT channel companies have to be aligned with one or more of the cloud ecosystems in the market. Critical opportunities would arise out of these relationships.
◗ Channel partners will have to seek deeper specialisation in one or more of the emerging areas such as IoT, AI, RPA, analytics, etc., along with handling infrastructure and security services to be able to completely own the client relationship.

Channel direction for partners

UiPath is 100 per cent focused on channel partners because we firmly believe in being a products and platform company, earning our revenues from product license fees alone. When a customer signs on for RPA, the channel partner is involved right from the start, from the proof-of-concept to implementation to running managed services or center of excellence. Some of our partners also specialise in training.

The RPA industry has been growing in multiples and UiPath is the fastest growing RPA company adding 8-10 customers per day globally. We expect the same growth rate to continue in India during 2019, which translates to huge opportunity for channels. Every UiPath customer opportunity is a channel opportunity. To capitalise on this, our partners should invest in hiring trained RPA resources and business process analysts.

Quick Heal Technologies

VIJAY MHASKAR,
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,
QUICK HEAL TECHNOLOGIES

AI-LED CYBERSECURITY WILL SEE HUGE TRACTION IN 2019

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for partners

From large-scale data breaches to devastating cyber attacks, the previous year witnessed some of the most high-profile security incidents in recent years, both in India and globally. These incidents have led enterprises and individual users to realise how important it is to ensure the safety and security of their critical information in the digital sphere.

That being said, there is a critical need for more awareness-related initiatives targeted at the SME/MSME sector. The awareness about cyber threats and their business impact is really low in this market segment, exposing small businesses across India to a huge risk factor. The sector also don't lacks resources – capital, technological, or talent-wise – to build robust in-house cybersecurity infrastructure. This leaves them extremely vulnerable to threats within the digital realm and makes them a lucrative target for

threat actors. Generating greater awareness about the latest cyber threats and cutting-edge cybersecurity solutions that can combat them can help address this disparity.

Top tech trends for channel community

◗ **Data Protection:** One of the biggest technology trends that the cybersecurity industry and the channel community should definitely bank on is that of data protection and encryption. Data and information have become the new gold in today's digitally-driven, tech-led era. Protecting this data is therefore of the highest importance, particularly since the launch of historic data protection policies such as GDPR. With the Indian government also currently in the process of formulating a comprehensive data privacy policy, there will be an accelerated demand for data-oriented security solutions amongst enterprises. IT channel vendors which integrate solutions like Data Loss Prevention (DLP) and Data Encryption into their value offerings will definitely reap significant returns on their investments.

◗ **AI/ML-based multi-defence security:** Another key area of focus will be AI-led security solutions, particularly from organisations working in sectors such as BFSI, government, IT/ITeS, manufacturing, healthcare and retail etc. Organisations operating in these industries are increasingly leveraging digital technologies and the connected infrastructure to power their operations. The sheer volume of data that these industries generate makes it near impossible for human-only teams to identify potential threats and attacks in real-time, and to mitigate them swiftly. Integrating AI-led cybersecurity can step into the picture here and help organisations bolster their security profiles through swifter and more effective threat detection, response, and mitigation enabled by solutions such as security automation and security analytics.

◗ **Securing BYOD and connected devices:** There will also be a shift towards implementing better mobile device management within the enterprise ecosystem. Organisations of all sizes are already adopting BYOD as an integral part of their operations, but struggle with implementing device usage and access policies and authorisations. Most such devices also do not have adequate security installed on them. This will drive a definitive shift towards security offerings providing seamless and robust mobile device management solutions to enterprises.

◗ **Securing the home network and smart devices:** Home network security is emerging as another important consideration for the cybersecurity industry, given the increasing use of devices like smart TVs, smart fridges, Wi-Fi connected ACs, CCTVs, and other such appliances in modern smart homes. Users need to protect these devices from threat actors who can breach home networks by exploiting the smallest vulnerabilities. Such threats need to be mitigated through robust solutions that protect home Wi-Fi network by adding an extra layer of security between smart devices and threats on the internet.

Channel directions for partners

Channel partners are the very foundation on which Quick Heal's success has been built over the last 25 years. We have consistently invested in strengthening our channel ecosystem through targeted partner on-boarding, specialised training programmes, and engaging industry events.

We are looking to launch more such initiatives in 2019 in order to help our channel partners understand the market, its dynamics and challenges, and future growth opportunities. As one of India's leading cybersecurity brands, we will also be focusing extensively on raising end-customer awareness in

both retail and enterprise verticals about various security trends, emerging threats, and the need for effective cybersecurity.

In order to align themselves to this vision, channel partners will have to conduct regular training to educate their employees about cybersecurity, threats, and market challenges. Such in-depth domain knowledge can help them make a more convincing case to prospective customers, which will lead to improved conversion rate and sales numbers. This, in turn, will maximise their revenue generation and profitability, as well as expand the scale of their business.

Eaton India

SHAILENDRA SHUKLA,
DIRECTOR – SALES, POWER QUALITY, ELECTRICAL SECTOR – INDIA, EATON

'IT CHANNEL WILL HAVE A BIGGER ROLE TO PLAY THIS YEAR'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

We saw a strong market traction in 2018. Demand generation was largely driven by edge computing, digitalisation drive of government, healthcare diagnostic equipment, security and surveillance, server room suites and retrofit upgrades. We

have also noticed an increased presence and adoption with the IT system integrators. During this period, Eaton has initiated several positive actions that included introduction of new solutions suited for IT application, training of the IT channel, backed up by comprehensive promotional schemes for the partners.

In the IT channel industry, we foresee continued demand for Power Management Solutions for 2019 by virtue of trends like edge computing, higher cloud adoption, especially hybrid cloud, increased digitisation in private and government space, Smart City drive and Internet of Things. With increasing penetration of smartphone and content consumed over the smart phone, we foresee an overall growth in IT applications and services, which is likely to translate into growth opportunities for the IT channel. I believe that this year IT channel will have a big role to play and this will also enable them to expand their horizon of solution offerings.

Top technology trends for channel community

The top technology trends, which may potentially impact the channel community are - edge computing, cloud adoption (especially hybrid cloud), IoT and analytics and adoption of Li ion batteries.

Channel direction for partners

Eaton has been working closely with partners for mutual growth and we would continue to do so. We are continuously investing on channel enablement backed up by appropriate products and solutions. Some of the key directions for the coming year include solving customer needs and problems together with IT channel partners, application based solutions developed with the help of channel, creating additional brand awareness along with the channel, reaching out to smaller cities and towns through appropriate network and local solutions.

Forcepoint India

AJAY DUBEY,
NATIONAL MANAGER - PARTNERS & ALLIANCES, FORCEPOINT

'WE HAVE ADDED NETWORK SECURITY SOLUTIONS TO OUR EXISTING PORTFOLIO'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

Forcepoint has been constantly innovating to provide integrated human-centric security solutions that help organisations to protect its employees and critical data. 2018 has been a great year for us and our success has been defined by our approach to help customers increase their security effectiveness while lowering risks as they accelerate digital transformation of their business. We have registered a double digit growth in India this year and have successfully increased our channel reach and capacity. Additionally, our strategic channel partners have also registered very impressive growth. We are excited for 2019 as we have now added network security solutions to our existing portfolio of security solutions. The secure SD-WAN market is a growing and an important segment due to

rapid expansion of distributed offices, and 2019 is the year where we aim to achieve a lot of growth in this market.

Top technology trends for channel community

As security threats are becoming complex and insider threat is becoming larger than before – behaviour analytics will be a major trend in 2019. Not only UEBA solutions will be attractive to customers – embedding behaviour-based decision-making will become cornerstone of all existing solutions as well like NGFW, DLP, web security and cloud security.

With cloud adoption at an all-time high – cloud security will become an important trend. Cloud security solutions like CASB will see an increasing demand which will help organisations enable critical visibility and control to erase the security blind spots and implement a level of normalcy. CASB features will also be embedded in other existing solutions like NGFW, email and web security to cater to the cloud security requirements.

Organisations are rapidly becoming more distributed. Connecting stores, branches and remote offices to the latest cloud applications, corporate systems, and data stored everywhere in between is more important – and more complicated – than ever before. Therefore, SD-WAN will be a significant trend that will reshape the way distributed networks will be secured and put to use.

Channel directions for partners

Forcepoint is a 100 per cent channel partner-driven organisation and our success is defined by our engagement with partners. Forcepoint partner ecosystem is evolving in size, partner types and roles to best deliver customer business outcomes and expand the partner's capabilities to address new market opportunities. Our strategic channel partners have grown significantly and they are able to leverage all of our product lines, cross-selling and up-selling them into the existing customer base. All our solutions provide recurring revenue

stream to our channels, so there is a huge opportunity for them to grow their business through services as well and increase stickiness with their customers.

IceWarp India

ANITA KUKREJA,
HEAD, MARKETING & CHANNEL SALES, ICEWARP

'THIS YEAR WE WANT TO INVEST HEAVILY IN OUR PARTNER ENGAGEMENTS'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

The year 2018 was on the cusp of a profound change. And yet, the closer a major leap forward seems, the more one is reminded of the last-mile challenges associated with next generation innovation. While there continues to be a sense of excitement for a future that is rapidly becoming reality, increasingly, questions and concerns are part of the mix as well. The trends unfolding will do so in an environment of higher expectations; namely, for business value, security, transparency, and equal access to opportunity.

Top tech trends for channel community

Companies around the world are expected to reinvest in new technological solutions to improve business outcomes and efficiency in 2019. According to me, artificial intelligence, blockchain and machine learning top the list.

AI has a broad application in different areas, including the banking sector. One of the leading banks has developed a system that uses AI and machine learning to analyse corporate clients' receivables and help them match the same automatically. In 2019, we would probably see some more interesting AI-based products coming from other parts of the world.

A blockchain stores information permanently across a network of personal computers. This technique decentralises the data and distributes it. Millions of users make it difficult for any one individual to take down the system or corrupt it. The word 'blockchain' often reminds people of the cryptocurrency. However, it is not just about cryptocurrencies anymore. Several financial institutions and healthcare companies have integrated blockchain technology in their infrastructure during the last two years. In 2019, governments, central banks, technology companies are expected to embrace the blockchain technology and offer more security, less cost, as well as better experiences for consumers. The demand for blockchain development would surely increase.

Machine learning can be termed as a technology that allows software programs to make decisions based on a large amount of data fed to the system. This technology is closely related to AI and has been around for several years. The automated Forex trading platform is the best example.

Automakers are set to use the technology in certain cars that would track the previous data and alert the users when the vehicle needs repair. The American Army has installed a similar system in some of their combat vehicles.So the demand definitely is on the increase.

Channel direction for partners

IceWarp believes in growing mutually with the partners, this year we want to invest heavily in our partner engagements and truly become a channel driven organisation. Channel partners are core to our DNA and are an integral part of our go-to-market strategy.

We look at partners to invest in the right kind of resources to be trained and certified on IceWarp and upgrade their team capabilities. We want the partners to focus on creating a recurring revenue model for themselves. We will continue to build newer features for the customers which aligns with the partner goals of offering the best in the industry.

MicroWorld (eScan)

SUNIL KRIPALANI,
SENIOR VP, GLOBAL SALES AND MARKETING, MICROWORLD (ESCAN)

'AI IS REQUIRED TO IMPROVE INFORMATION EXAMINATION AND MECHANISED CONTENTS'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

Small and medium businesses alike have been a target of ransomware, Trojans and phishing attacks. Furthermore, the IT security

budgetary constraints for these organisations have fueled the growth of cloud-based security solutions. Dependency on IT security specialists would increase, as judging from the increase in threats emanating from nation-state actors, government agencies/regulators would issue/strengthen the existing IT security compliance requirements.

In mid-2018 GDPR was enforced in EU and its repercussions were felt in India. Indian organisations in order to ensure business continuity and efficient trading with EU partners had to comply with GDPR regulations. Although enforcing GDPR guidelines is an ongoing process for every organisation, 2019 would be the year to look out for.

Top tech trends for channel community

Recent trends include automated cloud-based security solutions, scan based product or services, SAAS based IT security products, AI and ML-based IT security products, among others that will top 2019. Cyber security is becoming fundamental for regular day to day existence and business, yet it is progressively difficult to oversee. Cyber attacks have turned out to be very advanced and it is hard for the IT to keep up. Automation only can never get the job done and AI is required to improve information examination and mechanised contents. SAAS and PAAS models have made inroads into various aspects governing the functional working of an organisation, and in 2019 the security preparedness of these organisations would be tested, as in 2018 criminals have been shifting focus towards stealing of browsing data, user credentials for cloud services, etc.

Channel directions for partners

With the rapid digitisation of businesses, consumerisation of IT and forthcoming Smart City projects in India, cyber security becomes the cornerstone of IT deployment for all infrastructure projects. Cyber security is now becoming an integral part of all

business IT backbones and is crucial for sectors like the BFSI, Government, defense and education. Organisations today have moved away from traditional IT business to emerging technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), the block chain, especially around connected devices in the IoT space. It is very prudent for traditional styled IT partners to start focusing on the new opportunities and gear up to be part of this new wave.

Array Networks

SHIBU PAUL,
REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR – APAC, ARRAY NETWORKS

'WE WILL BE INVESTING IN TRAINING AND CERTIFYING OUR PARTNERS'

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

The year 2018 was a profitable year and Array has registered 35 per cent YoY growth. We have met all our financial goals set for last year and have witnessed maximum growth compared to all other global regions. This substantial growth is backed by the significant deals in the BFSI, Government, and enterprises.

Top tech trends for channel community

Array's focus is going to be advanced security, application acceleration, and performance based on our hyper-converged networking platform. The focal point will be to engage with highly skilled selected partners who can evangelise customers. To stay in the forefront, we have plans to maintain a development hub in India to cater for innovative products for global as well as local markets. With the help of our dedicated channel ecosystem, we are focused on developing a skilled pool of resources. Moreover, we will be investing in training and certifying our partners along with joining the customer engagement programs.

In order to ensure that channel partners are rewarded for all their efforts, we will be assuring maximum margins in all Array deals. Array has the potential to make a difference to the channel community by creating a highly trained channel ecosystem capable of propelling the company towards emerging trends such as hyper-convergence, artificial intelligence, blockchain and more.

Channel directions for partners

Array is focusing on utilising hyper-convergence in networking and application security and visibility. Enterprises are looking to embrace hyper-converged infrastructures as a go-to technology platform to address security and productivity concerns. We believe that hyper-converged systems will help enterprises achieve digital transformation all the while addressing the concerns of operational costs and enhanced customer experience so as to stay ahead of the competition.

Artificial intelligence and blockchain are also the next big game-changers that we are planning to tap into this year. Therefore we look forward to training and developing our channel eco-system to be the facilitators for this digital transformation.
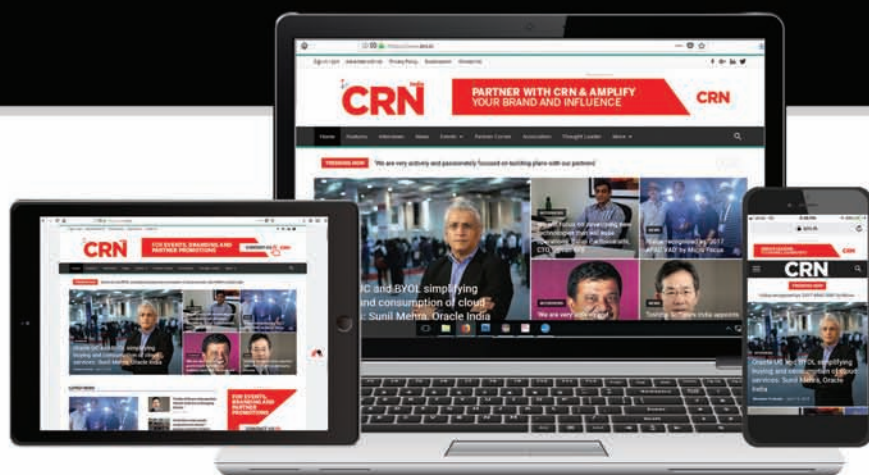
MURALI URS,
COUNTRY MANAGER – INDIA,
BARRACUDA NETWORKS

DATA PROTECTION, A TOP PRIORITY FOR ORGANISATIONS IN 2019

Key highlights 2018 and opportunities for 2019

▶ **Internet of Things:** With the growth of the Internet of Things (IoT) there has been a surge in the number and variety of devices being connected to the internet. And while IoT has tremendous benefits to users, it also gives cybercriminals a target-rich environment. According to Forbes report, the global IoT market will grow from US$ 157 billion in 2016 to US$ 457 billion by 2020, a compound annual growth rate of 28.5 per cent. This rapid growth makes managing and securing IoT devices a huge challenge to all organisations.

▶ **Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) has evolved as one of the most transformative technologies in past years. Gartner predicts that the global AI-derived business value will reach nearly US$3.9 trillion by 2022. However, the technology has its own merits and demerits where AI can be used by

businesses to identify and protect against threats, on the other hand, it can also be used by hackers to launch increasingly sophisticated and large-scale attacks.

▶ **Cloud-based security:** With a large portion of organisations migrating to cloud systems, cloud-based security might just be the biggest cybersecurity trend to watch in 2019. Apart from the security factor, cloud-based cybersecurity systems also offer faster deployment and scalable solutions that support various business needs.

Top tech trends for channel community

2018 has witnessed the adoption of the new technologies with AI, ML and IoT dominating the sector. AI represents both an opportunity and a threat to the industry, it helps by detecting signs of malicious intent and deception within every email with virtually no IT administration required. On the other hand, hackers can also leverage AI to launch increasingly sophisticated and large-scale attacks.

We have registered authorized, preferred and premier categories of channel partners – each one has to be a registered partner. Following registration, they decide on what kind of commitments both of us need to give each other, then we decide where the partner fits in. The premier is highest category of partners with a larger target and larger commitment from their side as well as from our side; whereas, the preferred have lesser target. The qualification criterion from a technical standpoint is lower than premier – the number of people need to be certified, sales officials and technical officers. We have close to around 70 partners, but focus-wise there are around 20 to 25 partners we engage with consistently.

They bring in opportunities, they open their account list, then we plan call out days with them. We also do EDM blasts with them. We put significant efforts to generate joint opportunities and leads for all these

partners. We do customer events, market development fund contribution for their marketing activities, which helps them have an event together and position our technologies for their customer base. The partners find a huge attached rate with Barracuda primarily because we have that sort of products. It's not that we give one technology and just walk away; Barracuda always gives an opportunity for them to sell more to the same customer.

With ransomware, phishing and zero-hour attacks are bound to increase, we expect email security, network and application, and data protection to be a top priority for organisations in 2019.

We strongly believe that in 2019, technology will take a significant leap forward, by taking a more advanced approach towards threats and vulnerabilities and the sector will continue to explore new ways to improve existing solutions while closing gaps exposed by the biggest vulnerabilities facing us today.

Channel directions for partners

The top directions for our channel partners are around the solutions for O365 and security solutions for the public cloud. This automatically opens doors for partners to work with customers for SD WAN solutions.

With increasing penetration of the cloud, partners will need to invest and align towards selling solutions around the cloud platforms.

Partners will have to either partner with the platform vendors or work with OEMs like Barracuda to sell solutions around the cloud usage. With Barracuda being one of the top security and data protection solution provider for O365 and the public cloud, partners should align with Barracuda and also invest in getting their sales and technically trained on our products, which will help them penetrate deeper into existing customers and open doors in newer customers and markets.