

# ACCELERATING THE CLOUD ECONOMY

Mindware's newly unveiled cloud marketplace is being built to enable a large network of partners and to address and grow traction of cloud adoption in the region

— By R. Narayan



The need for digital transformation has become a catalyst for change at organizations across. Likewise, cloud is seen as a key enabler of the journey towards scalable, resilient IT infrastructure that can enable companies leapfrog in terms of capabilities. Organizations are now seen as more confident in using cloud services as the concerns around data sovereignty and security have decreased. In addition, cloud enables the OPEX model of billing that is more customer friendly.

There is a need to ensure that cloud solutions are easily available and are reliable for customers looking to adopt the right set of cloud based solutions. As businesses trust their suppliers from the ICT channel, the larger number of channel partners in turn, need access to a marketplace that they can utilize as their own storefront to meet needs of their own customers.

Mindware, one of the leading regional distributor has unveiled a new marketplace, hosted on Microsoft Azure to

address this need from their large network of partners across the ME region and is undertaking ongoing efforts to make it feature and content rich in association with its vendors and other partners.

According to Philippe Jarre, CEO, Mindware, the marketplace will enable partners find more traction in their cloud based business as they equip the marketplace with solutions from the large number of leading technology vendors they are associated with.

Elaborating on the new cloud marketplace and the key driving factors that led to the launch, he says, "We really needed to catch up in the cloud business and the new cloud marketplace presents that opportunity. As part of enabling the marketplace, we had identified different vendors who are among the best to provide cloud solutions on Microsoft Azure, notified them and signed up contracts with them."

"Our previous marketplace wasn't very flexible and back office activities were more manual. That is not efficient in the cloud era. Our new marketplace is built on Azure and since we have a strong relationship with Microsoft, the pricing is very competitive. The platform is agile and flexible; partners will be able to use it for their own business."

Mindware, which had acquired the enterprise computing solutions business of Arrow earlier in the year, has also consolidated the teams across both entities, caressing out a solutions team that boasts of some outstanding credentials.

Philippe says, "After the acquisition of Arrow, we merged both technical and pre-sales teams into one single solutions team. We have produce three solution arrays - one is for infrastructure and networking solutions, one is for security solutions and one is for cloud."

The solutions team will build solutions that will be made available via the marketplace. Mindware is approaching and working with local players, global players, ISVs to enrich the marketplace with new content possibly every month. The VAD wants to ensure the marketplace is quite comprehensive in terms of the range of technology solutions available and over the next year, will be undertaking a massive expansion to this effect.

## PARTNER ENABLEMENT

There is a huge opportunity around cloud migration and together with its



**Philippe Jarre**

CEO, Mindware

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partners, Mindware intends to help businesses go with the right solutions and at the right prices in the OPEX model.

The marketplace will enable Mindware's partners who may not have the capacities for building their own marketplace, to use the white labeled solutions and position it as their own when selling to their customers, including billing capabilities.

Philippe says, "Our marketplace will enable them to have their storefronts to deliver hosted Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS) offerings via the platform. The partners can also list their capabilities on our marketplace and based on requirements from our clients, those services could be utilized. This broadens the utilization of the partner capabilities through our marketplace, in a way via white-labelling their capabilities. The new marketplace has a robust and customizable billing engine, which allows partners to easily automate ordering."

The enhanced capabilities include a robust and customizable billing engine, which allows partners to easily automate ordering and billing the en-

tire Microsoft portfolio including Office 365, Microsoft Azure and Microsoft ESD. Partners can monitor and control their customers' Microsoft Azure consumption with automated provisioning of cloud services and utilization-based billing.

The distributor has already got many partners listed with the marketplace across the region and is working towards having more added.

Philippe says, "We have on-boarded partners from almost all countries in the region. Our plan is to have one or two new partners added on the marketplace in a week. This model would be an exponential business model. This would be a new channel. The solutions team will provide technical capabilities to design solutions and help clients migrate to cloud."

While the cloud business in terms of sheer volumes and value is modest at the moment, Mindware expects the business to see great traction.

Philippe says, "Our cloud business is modest and I believe that is the general scenario in the market. But we expect an acceleration of the business by as much as 25% month on month."

Some concerns still exist as to where data is hosted and there are verticals where customers still go with on premise deployments. However, on the brighter side of things, the trend is clearly towards a shift in preferences as more customers look at cloud based deployments for more workloads.

Philippe says, "These issues remain to some extent. At the same time, a lot of people want to do backup and recovery deployments on the cloud. This is a transformation journey. At some point, matching the scale of investments in datacenters for availability and security in the regular datacenters with the capabilities that are there in the huge cloud would be not possible. The move to the cloud is inevitable in the longer run."

Growing the cloud business, moving into solutions and services business, and expansion into new geographies are the three priorities that Mindware is focused on. The distributor is eyeing to break the barrier of 1 billion USD in turnover across MEA over the next year and the definitive strategy it has taken with enabling the cloud marketplace, will be quite critical to realizing these ambitions.

## MINDWARE UNVEILS NEW TECHNICAL SALES AND SERVICE UNIT

Mindware, one of the leading regional IT Value-Added Distributors, launched its new 'Solutions Unit' comprising of Pre-sales and Services teams focusing on infrastructure, security and cloud solutions at this year's GITEX Technology Week, where it participated under the theme 'Embark on a Customer Journey'. The collective experience of the Solutions team covers all areas of IT such as strategic consulting, designing, planning, deploying, implementing and technical trainings.

The Pre-sales Unit comprises of technical engineers with the highest levels of training and certification in rele-

vant vendor technologies. There are two separate teams – one focused on datacenter & infrastructure solutions and the other on security. The teams will add value to partners by helping them qualify leads, conduct proof of concepts (PoC) and close projects.

The Solutions Unit will focus on three areas – professional services, cloud services and training. The professional services team will assist partners in designing and implementing the best possible solution, if required, at the customer's premises. The cloud offerings include areas such as Disaster Recovery-as-a-Service (DRaaS)

and Backup, cloud security, Desktop-as-a-Service (DaaS), Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) and Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS). Mindware training services reflect the latest practices and procedures which help in increasing the value to customer environments. The company is an Authorized Training Center (ATC) with fully certified and authorized trainers who offer specialist knowledge reinforced by extensive practical experience.

GITEX was also the launchpad for Mindware's new Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) bundle – an end-to-end solution stack comprising best of breed technologies including infrastructure-servers by Dell Technologies, security by RSA, virtualization software by Citrix and a choice of Wyse and OptiPlex client endpoints.