TECHNOLOGY

Spaces rapidly trains and upskills incoming employees

Avaya launches platform to support Emiratization

By Marlon Aquino Malinao
Arab Times Staff

Avaya today launched its participation at GITEX Global with a next-generation learning platform aimed at accelerating the UAE's Emiratization strategy.

Powered by Avaya Spaces, the workstream collaboration platform for the digital workplace, the solution enables UAE private sector companies to rapidly train and upskill incoming Emirati employees as they work towards the Emiratization targets set by the Nafis scheme, which aims to integrate 75,000 Emiratis into the private sector over the next five years.

According to an Avaya poll conducted by YouGov, 93% of Emiratis believe that training and development is needed when they join a new company. And 92% believe that, for Emiratization to succeed, employees need a fast way to develop their skills and knowledge within the private sector.

The learning platform launched by Avaya at GITEX addresses these needs perfectly, providing Emirati employees with a secure, scalable platform that will help them develop the skills they need quickly as they advance their private sector careers. The platform also enables continuous learning and training beyond onboarding, helping Emiratis to further their professional development at a pace that suits them.

In addition, it will enable UAE organizations to comply with the Fourth Principle set out by the UAE's leadership in the country's 10 Principles for the Next 50 Years. The Fourth Principle identifies human capital as

His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum visits the Avaya stand during GITEX Technology Week.

the main driver for future growth, with a focus on developing education, attracting talent, and retaining specialists.

"We are extremely supportive of the UAE's strategic developmental plans. Not only are we moving forward with our own Emiratization efforts, but we are proudly developing the technology that local companies need to quickly onboard Emirati talent. The UAE has a proud history of enabling local talent with advanced tools and platforms, and we are delighted to be adding to that legacy," said Nidal Abou-Ltaif - President, Avaya International.

The learning platform built on Avaya Spaces creates an always-on learning ecosystem. It combines workstream collaboration, task management and unified communications to create a digital training environment in which users can:

■ Consume video training sessions – both live and recorded.
■ Engage with mentors and peers.
■ Track progress and earn points through a gamified learning system.
■ Discover new skills and take courses across a range of subjects.

The platform serves as a further example of Avaya's leadership in developing regional technology talent.

At GITEX this year, Avaya is a strategic partner for the GITEX High Flyer initiative, one of the largest and most ambitious technology internship programs to be launched in the region. And the Avaya Academy, launched over three years ago, helps to provide a direct progression for new graduates and IT industry newcomers to begin their technology careers.

The solution was on display on Avaya's stand at GITEX Global 2021. Avaya's presence at GITEX comes in partnership with Future Technology, Gulf Applications, RayCom Technologies, Sestek, Summit Technology Solutions, Toolwire, TOPAZ, and Verint Systems.

AVAYA

LEAVE THE PAIN BEHIND

By Marlon Aquino Malinao
Arab Times Staff

Tech, talent graced with a human touch

Nidal Abou Ltaif, President – Avaya International, is one of the region's most respected and celebrated ICT and business leaders, known for his unmatched track record of success, enormous love of people, fierce passion for winning, and desire to help governments and businesses use technology to make a real difference in people's lives. In his 30 years as a business leader, Nidal has transformed businesses for the 3 companies he worked for: NCR/ATT and Avaya.

At Avaya, his team members have been often described as "a pocket of brilliance" within the corporation and the associates Nidal recruits and coaches are widely recognized as some of the highest of calibers across functions.

Nidal has always been driven by a passion and commitment to build and develop leaders. He fostered a culture of self-motivation, agility and integrity. In this exclusive interview with the Arab Times, Nidal talks about COVID-19 impact on the approach to technology, diversity in the tech industry, his business acumen, mentoring and Avaya's role in Kuwait's rapid digital transformation.

Arab Times: How has COVID-19 impacted the approach to technology?

Nidal Abou Ltaif: If there's one thing positive that came out of COVID-19 is that it accelerated the transformation of technology and has forced people to adapt and use it, which usually would take years to do that. It also gave us an opportunity to expedite and develop new technology and keep up with the pace of transformation.

AT: Are people and businesses got closer now with just a click of a button compared to pre-Covid?

Nidal: It made life easier I should say. We kept the business going and some businesses improved. But I won't say they got closer now. If I say 'closer' it's like undermining human relations or face-to-face interaction. I personally believe that we can't do business totally without these human interactions. But definitely it made life easier in terms of keeping the business afloat.

AT: Please tell us about the notion of technology for good. You have worked on empowering people with special needs by providing equality of digital experience.

Nidal: When people get sick or they are in pain they just take a medicine or painkillers to ease the suffering. So technology, in this case, we use it not only as a 'pain-killer', we want to remove the pain… the difficulties. We developed our technology not only to provide services and make the lives of everybody less difficult but we want to remove the obstacles in order to attain transactions with ease. It's the same technology but it's focusing on people with special needs to ease their burden when doing transactions like going to school among others. We modified our system and of course with the personal effort of our Avaya team to make sure that we understand their concerns and address it.

On top of that, 3 other groups deal with this dear segment of our society. The parents – we provide them updates, live streaming and communications while their kids with special needs are in school. Another is the teachers – we help them in communicating faster in order to reach more people. And third is dealing with the outside world. So our technology pays great attention to people with special needs. Avaya's solutions provide equality of digital experience.

AT: You promote diversity in the technology industry – almost half of your leadership team are women. How has the role of women in tech changed? In Kuwait, we can see closer and more meaningful engagements.

Nidal: We are all human. Thus, we are all equal. We are not hiring just to fill gaps or to make it an even team like 50% men and 50% women. We recruit people based on their qualifications and know-how. I treat all our employees equally. Coincidentally I have 2 boys and 2 girls and that doesn't mean I had plans to have this so called "equality". I salute all women working in our industry as engineers, those who are in marketing, in sales and those who take on arduous tasks and don't say no and without excuses.

AT: Kuwait launched Sahel app hailing it as a step towards a digital era where paper-based transactions are rendered obsolete. What is Avaya's role in Kuwait's rapid digital transformation?

Nidal: Avaya has a long history with Kuwait. Almost every bank in Kuwait is Avaya-driven, most of the government bodies, the oil industry use Avaya technology. We are a major player. Kuwait is making headway in an ambitious vision that is seeing major government entities digitally transform as it moves towards its Vision 2035. We're proud to support the government as it adopts digital solutions to drive economic development, increase efficiency, and ultimately create better citizen experiences for Kuwait's residents. Through Sahel, citizens and residents can access government services and complete transactions easily, quickly, and securely. And by integrating Avaya OneCloudTM CCaaStechnology, it provides a digital window with which citizens and residents can receive notifications and announcements from any government agency, improving the provision of digital services.

The contact center technology also contributes to the government's digital transformation ambitions by enabling communication with citizens and residents across entirely digital channels. Transaction receipts are electronically generated and sent through the platform to app users, contributing to the government's

Nidal Abou Ltaif, President — Avaya International

paperless ambitions, while improving the overall user experience.

Kuwait is definitely on the right track in digitizing the whole country.

AT: How important is the role of Avaya academy in that journey towards innovation leadership?

Nidal: I will not divulge how many years, but I am a product of this similar program. A lot of managers in Avaya started with that program 12-13 years ago. A student some 14 years ago is now the vice president of Asia-Pacific. We may extra attention to fresh graduates to hone them to become future leaders. This program is difficult to manage because this young generation easily gets bored. So you have to keep them on their toes. We treat them like how I want my kids to be treated when they graduate. And if every company has the same mindset, I think this generation will have a brighter future.

AT: What is your 2022 outlook with regards to technology?

Nidal: I am not the company's strategist. But personally, I see people will be geared more towards subscribing.

They don't want to buy the technology, so there will be more subscriptions. I see Artificial Intelligence (AI) in every thing we do. We will see Sahel and other similar applications being used more.

editor's choice