



## PREPARING FOR GROWTH

As Enterasys Networks widens its channel business in the Middle East, the networking vendor is focusing on building a sustainable partner ecosystem. Asli Aktas, regional director, Enterasys Networks Middle East, examines the evolution the company is making, coverage model and plans to cement its channel stature in the region.

**W**hen Enterasys Networks established its Middle East regional headquarters in the UAE three years ago, the company knew it was entering the market during a difficult economic period. Enterasys says it knew its brand lacked market recognition and it needed to overcome those challenges if it was to make any progress in the Middle East channel sector.

Today, the networking solutions vendor has steadily grown its stature in the Middle East channel and the region as a whole, and the region is one of the fastest growing markets

in its emerging geographies. Enterasys attributes the steady growth that it has enjoyed in the short span it has been in the Middle East channel to the solid alliances it has formed with distributors and resellers.

Asli Aktas, regional director, Enterasys Networks Middle East, says the company set-up presence in the Middle East market during a difficult economic time, when organisations had financial constraints and were downsizing their operations. "Our market approach then was driven by open and honest communication with partners and customers which laid the right foundation for

our business to grow from in the Middle East region," she says.

Aktas adds that initially, the lack of market awareness around Enterasys solutions proved

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to be the biggest challenge, so the company focused on customers demanding solid technology and superior services. "This plan panned out to be successful for us and the Middle East is now one of our fastest growing markets globally," she says.

Having recently moved into a new office at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Enterasys has also added more members to the team in Saudi Arabia and has opened a service stock in Dubai. The company says it has further investment plans for the next fiscal year and believes these initiatives are helping it to take its business to new heights in the region.

Aktas says Enterasys is working with a two-tier distribution model focusing on quality rather than quantity, so over-distribution of products is not an issue. "We spend our attention and resources on committed partners who make Enterasys an integral part of their solution portfolio and services offering," she says.

In Avnet, said Aktas, Enterasys has a distribution partner with a wide geographical reach that includes major European markets and further reach into other territories such as Australasia.

"This existing relationship brings in-house experience and best practices we can leverage here. Avnet's focus and established presence in the Middle East and Africa region made it easy for us to align efforts in a market that both of our organisations are experiencing growth in," she says.

Aktas added that Avnet brings in a direct touch to resellers, providing assistance on the business development side. In addition, said Aktas, Avnet delivers logistics capabilities, additional stock out of its European hub, and various additional services beneficial to the channel in the Middle East and Africa market.

Aside from leveraging Avnet's global distribution expertise, Aktas says Enterasys has the ability to track and monitor the

success of its partner strategy in the Middle East under the umbrella of the Advantage Partner Programme. "This programme allows us to deliver the highest customer satisfaction ratings and in turn enables our partners to distinguish their business in the market, retaining profitability for their organisation," she says.

Christopher Green, sales manager, Avnet Technology Solutions Middle East, says the company enjoys a strong relationship with Enterasys in Germany and is looking to replicate this success in the Middle East. Green said the vendor has a great range of products and Avnet will be providing support to partners around enablement, marketing,

*“ Avnet Technology Solutions will be providing support to partners around enablement, marketing, business development and finance to channel partners ”*

business development and finance to ensure that together with partners the company successfully drives new business for channel partners and Enterasys.

Green said given what has transpired in the last three years in the Middle East, where the industry was impacted by the global financial shakedown, there has been improvement, but it is still unclear what impact, if any, the current economic climate in Europe and the US may have on the Middle East region. "The Middle East has some great opportunities and we remain committed to supporting our partners with the resources, tools, products and services to take advantage of these opportunities," he says.

With a focus on the GCC countries, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Pakistan, Aktas pointed out that Enterasys predominantly works with VARs and SIs but the company is expecting to

see the number of solutions providers increase in the short term as it opens new routes to the market through strategic channel alliances.

"All of our business is done through the talented channel community, with only occasional exceptions made for legacy global accounts primarily in the utilities and hospitality sectors," she says.

With the wireless, data centre, voice and video and cloud computing market gaining traction in the region, Aktas said the company is seeing enormous growth opportunities with the wireless portfolio and data centre solutions, not only in the Middle East but in other regions around the globe.

"We expect this will continue but could also be outpaced by cloud computing solutions beyond the virtualised data centre environment," she notes. "I believe dominant vendors will continue to bring decreased margins to the channel and resellers will more and more turn to alternative routes to stay profitable and provide end users with a distinct story that focuses on the customer experience. This is where we come in as Enterasys."

Green agrees and adds that the company is targeting the education, hospitality, government, healthcare, building services and media vertical markets to ensure that Enterasys' solutions are widely adopted in these segments. "Enterasys has done a great job in establishing its operations in the Middle East and is continuing to drive brand awareness through its marketing and channel activities," he says.

Looking ahead, Aktas is optimistic about Enterasys channel initiatives in the Middle East region: "Our partners can expect Enterasys' continuous commitment to the market, increased support from the expanded team and more awareness activities going forward. We will leverage the success we've had to date for future momentum." ■