



A Virtual World

VMware is helping its customers to become more agile, responsive, and profitable in business with its extensive and industry-leading offering of IT solutions such as cloud infrastructure, business mobility, and virtualisation software.

Images by Ian Pollen

From its headquarters in the US, multinational software company VMware simplifies the complex IT infrastructure for its 500,000 customers located all over the world. It has a global alliance network of 75,000 partners, and its operations are guided by its one cloud, any application, any device architecture, based on three pillars of modern technology: the software-defined data centre, which enables the unified hybrid cloud, and end-user computing.

Scott Dodds is VMware's vice president of channels and alliances in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA). Since his appointment in February this year, he has been responsible for developing and nurturing partner relationships as well as profitably growing and promoting the software-defined data centre,

end-user computing, and hybrid cloud services. Scott has over 30 years of experience in the IT industry, having previously worked for Microsoft Corporation, Acer, and Compaq, and brings ample knowledge to the role.

"I have a long history of working with partners; in fact, during most of my career I have worked with, worked for, or managed partner communities," Scott says. "Partnering has always been at the core—it is basically core to my DNA. I think it's fair to say that one of the reasons I am here now is the fact that partnering is also an absolutely critical part of the DNA of VMware. The business has been built on relationships with partners over the last 10 to 12 years and it continues to be the main focus, hence my interest and arrival here."

Since 1998, VMware has been successfully navigating the challenges and disruptions that

the IT sector has thrown its way. It has been instrumental in transforming the industry, by launching leading-edge software-defined technology which is highly innovative and has the ability to change the way customers think about, use, and gain value from their IT investments.

"We call it 'fearless innovation,'" Scott explains. "We did it firstly with the computer virtualisation layers. We have been moving the hardware to a more software-defined platform with consistent management across it, and we are moving that into networking, into storage, into security, and into the cloud. I think that transformation is kind of analogous to the way that we need to work with our partners and our alliances. We are having to constantly look forward and innovate, and I think our relationship with our partner community has the same task. We >



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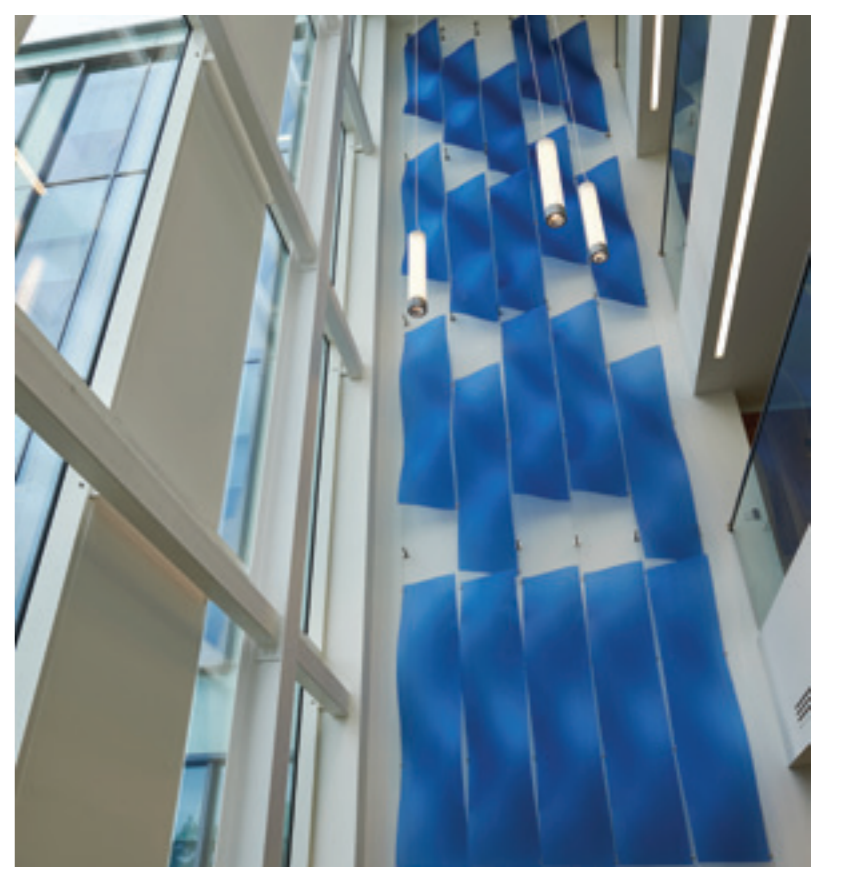
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have got to constantly move forward, help them to move into the new areas of the industry and support them in that. We are in this ‘liquid world’, as we call it. Things change very fast.”

This ever-evolving environment means that companies such as VMware have to deal with a new class of competitors appearing at every turn. “The world is changing and the scale of the threats for any person, any customer, and any industry continues to increase,” Scott says. He continues on to suggest that this also becomes a challenge when deciding who to align with as partners and how to keep those relationships strong. “How do we continue to innovate and support our partners as we change, as the industry changes and as the customer demand changes? We invest a huge amount of money and time into supporting our partners to come with us on that journey and work out how we should support them better.”

Evidently, VMware’s partners are critically important to its operations. The strategic relationships represent approximately 85 per cent of the company’s global revenue, and about 95 per cent in the EMEA region.

VMware collaborates with some of the most established and emerging technology, OEM, and service-provider partners across the world; for example, Comparex, one of VMware’s top solution providers and a premier partner in a number of regions, and OVH, a French-based service provider, now a major strategic partner within VMware’s vCloud air network ecosystem, offering world-class hybrid cloud solutions to customers. Atos is a global strategic partner, working to deliver customers more efficient, flexible, and reliable IT services. Dell is a global alliance partner delivering



end-to-end virtualisation and cloud solutions, and HP is a global partner of more than 14 years, delivering customers proven solutions from the desktop to the data centre, and into the cloud.

application level, right through to the data centre and application management level. “Somehow you have got to pull all of these things together,” Scott says.

Scott says it is all about collaborating for the greater good to provide customers with solutions from the hardware enterprise and client server

VMware’s answer is in its brave new IT model that is instant, fluid and more secure, called ‘One Cloud, Any Application, Any Device’. The architecture enables organisations to develop, deploy, >

*“VMware’s solution stack has allowed us to add value around our customers’ strategic infrastructure needs to deliver against business’s ever-changing needs. COMPAREX and VMware have forged a strong partnership where we work together to ensure their users have a complete experience.”
- Holger Pfister, Executive Vice President Partners, COMPAREX*

OVH and Businesses in a Time of “Digital as a Service”

Success stories involving digital are in the headlines every day. To benefit from the economic returns offered by this digital revolution, companies must rethink their business model, the way they operate and how they create value. They must also take another look at their IT resources. In this context, OVH, European leader of the Cloud and provider of digital services, plays a major role for many enterprises. Laurent Allard, CEO of the OVH Group provides some explanation.

How is OVH assisting enterprises in the digital revolution?

Cloud, IoT, mobile, Big Data, social networks... these new usages put digital service providers like OVH in a strategic position. Let's begin with some figures. In its fifteen years of existence, OVH has built 17 datacenters in France and Canada, has established itself in 16 countries and has 700,000 customers throughout the world. For the past several years our annual growth has been greater than 25 per cent. We are ranked among the top 3 worldwide for applications hosted

– 18 million – and for the number of registered domain names – 3.5 million. We are the number one provider, outside of the United States, for the most Microsoft Exchange professional email accounts. Our job consists of making available digital infrastructures (public and dedicated cloud, PaaS, bare-metal, VoIP solutions, ADSL...) “as a service” in a secure and reliable manner, at very competitive prices, allowing enterprises to focus on their true value, their business. In other words, OVH is a facilitator of success in this ongoing revolution!

Laurent Allard

Throughout his experiences, Laurent Allard has demonstrated strong leadership capabilities that bring major transformation to organisations and align information technology with business needs while creating value. In 2008, he was recognised as CIO of the year under the category of Transformation. Before becoming CEO at OVH, he held various senior management positions with several multinational companies (AXA group, CGI).

OVH is positioned as “leader of Digital as a Service”, what does this mean?

Being leader of Digital as a Service is to be a catalyst in the ecosystem, to be the benchmark of innovation and also be one who can carry and assist businesses with their projects for the long term. To achieve this, we have put in place a true industrialisation of innovation. All of the pieces of technology that we offer are based on technological standards that everyone uses and combines according to their business needs and size.

How do you differentiate yourself from the competition?

Three main points differentiate us from our competition. The first is our portfolio of products which includes exclusive and innovative offers like Dedicated Cloud that combines all the benefits of cloud with the advantages of dedicated resources. The second point is our prices are 30 to 40 per cent less expensive than our competitors. We can offer very attractive prices because we have developed a model of vertical integration that allows us to achieve significant savings. OVH designs and produces its own servers, builds and maintains its own datacenters and manages its own worldwide fiber optic network. This vertical integration is a major difference and the third point setting us apart from our competitors.

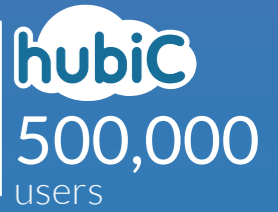
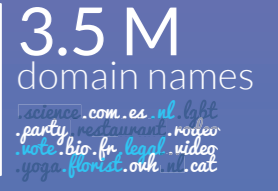
What is the OVH roadmap?

We are developing our product offerings with two objectives in mind. We'll continue to assist our customers in the digital economy with innovations especially surrounding IoT and Big Data. In parallel, we are working on structuring channels to assist all types of businesses, regardless of their size, in the transformation of traditional IT resources. This is to enable them to reduce their IT costs while helping them develop business innovation.



OVH.com

The OVH key figures





and consume all applications quickly and securely. It spans mobile, desktop, and infrastructure to support innovative business strategies while still protecting intellectual property, data, and business operations. VMware has also moved further into true enterprise mobility management with its acquisition of AirWatch, which is working to unlock new levels of workforce productivity and to introduce new ways of connecting and building relationships with customers, while helping them grow and transform their markets.

“We have got a full suite of products now, from the hardware compute level of virtualisation right the way up to devices,” Scott states. “That story is something that’s evolving very fast and we are bringing out new versions of the technology and new concepts of how to use these all the time. We have to because the world is moving so very fast and our clients want innovation. They want to be able to amaze their customers, empower their employees, and do it in a highly flexible and secure way.

“Really, what we are providing our partners with is this platform of technologies to be able to innovate with their customers. They actually bring huge amounts of intellectual property to this. We are providing a lot of it but they are providing huge amounts of consultancy services and other technology and integration skills.”

According to Scott, VMware has been making great investments in terms of networking, security storage, and product updates. This is proving to be a platform for further growth. He recently met with partners in Budapest to discuss the key focus points which will drive the business forward in the future. One element is the software-defined data centre, or software-defined enterprise; another is the hybrid cloud—VMware’s true public cloud offering—and the third is end-user computing. There is a vast array of products in each of these

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categories and they are being updated all the time. VMware’s partners have the opportunity to pick and choose products from this wide and specialised portfolio, to decide what will work best for them and their customer base.

“There is a very important flow, or continuum, between these products that we need to articulate to our customers,” Scott says. “Through our partners we can help them to understand where we are, where we are going and how we can engage the software-defined data centre in many different scenarios across the enterprise.

“This concept of a software-defined world, or enterprise, is critical because we make it possible for companies to simplify and manage that whole infrastructure—no matter what their operating systems are, no matter what their hardware choices are, and no matter what applications they are using or building, or how they are able to do it. You can introduce all of these different technologies but bringing it all together, making sense of it, making it secure and not making it a massive cost to manage is the critical element here.

“Everybody wants to do things in real time, they want to spin out applications and customer engagement models very fast and that comes back to that concept of innovation. We need to develop things in a way that companies don’t have to throw

millions of dollars at to get running, as well as to get support and management services. It has to be a continuous flow and that’s what we can provide within our one cloud, any application, any device architecture.”

Scott says that VMware is moving further into the software-defined networking world where it will work closely with partners to share the role it plays in particular areas and to show how its virtualisation solutions integrate and work with existing networking strategies. “It’s complementary in many ways,” he explains. “A lot of the ways that we are working with our partners is to augment their existing businesses, be it in networking, storage, or even security. Our networking play with NSX through a concept called micro segmentation is actually a security discussion with customers about how they protect the network and the network devices inside their business premises in a virtual way. To do that manually and to do it through an organisation is horrendously complex.

“But to do it virtually through a single pane of glass means that you could be much more secure. You can literally lock down individual switches and individual areas of your business that would be very, very difficult to do manually if it wasn’t software defined. That’s just one element of how we are expanding the offerings of our partners. We are not replacing



them; we are just expanding the offerings they already do in networking and storage and their existing virtualisation businesses.”

VMware is in an incredibly fortunate position in that 90 per cent of its customers are using its virtualisation, or vSphere, product in their organisations. This already strong relationship with clients means that the next step for VMware is to build on that with its partners to realise value from a monetary and an innovation perspective.

“One of the transitions that clearly we are making as a business is that we need to, with our partners, focus on business outcomes and real business issues with the technology rather than just fix how you can manage your hardware better and how you can software-

enable and save money on consolidation and utilisation of your hardware,” Scott says. “We are now extending that out to a much wider opportunity and that’s about realising real business value and real cost savings and customer engagement opportunities with all customers in all industries. So that’s a big step for us with our partners and that’s why we are constantly working with them and looking with them on what partners are going to work on which parts of our business, what their solution values and their consulting skills are.”

When working with partners, there are a few fundamental elements that go into creating and nurturing necessary stable relationships. “At the end of the day, alliance excellence really is about clarity of purpose,” Scott explains. “Let’s say



a shared purpose. It has to be a win for both parties and then a win for the customer because ultimately that’s what it’s all about. If those three things are not satisfied it will never work for anybody in those three phases. Therefore, I think being absolutely clear about what we are doing to support their business is crucial.

“Remember that alliances are about shared business goals, not just ours. So it’s about the clarity of making sure we understand what our role and responsibility is, how we jointly invest in that and how we measure that success jointly, again based on both sides and not just one. In many ways, it’s a bit like a friendship. It’s based on trust and clarity and everything else but you have to have robust conversations at times and make sure that everybody understands what they are getting out of a partnership. It’s something you have to work at; it’s not something that happens automatically. It’s actually a skill.

“I think many people just believe that you set up a partnership and it just runs as it is supposed to but it’s never like that. It’s based on trust and having equality in the relationship but also huge amounts of communication and sharing, and openness to make it work. It’s never perfect. That’s the point about dealing with anything to do with partnering. It’s never perfect and you always have to work through challenges but that ultimately is brought down to trust. It’s ultimately about shared >





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purpose; everybody agrees that they are going to benefit from it and ultimately the customer benefits from it and then everyone gets behind it.

“If there’s any doubt about that at any point in the relationship it just falls apart and becomes a waste of time. This also extends to the concept of co-selling with partners because they are an extension of our business. They get the same accreditation-level training that we provide our own people, they have all the same access to information that we have, and that’s part of dealing with a sophisticated partner channel.

“It’s not always perfect but that’s what we aim for. We try to keep our partners ahead of the curve. It’s about treating them in the same way as we treat our own internal people and making sure that where we are engaged with the customer directly, which we do through our enterprise and our global accounts business as well as through our general business that we have, we are in

synchronisation with all of that. Partnerships fall apart when we are saying one thing to a customer and the partner is saying another thing. That is a disaster so, as I said, being open and synchronised is critical.”

Scott adds that the concept of a ‘partner’ is developing into something it never was before. “I think as the world evolves, what a traditional partnership looked like has changed and is changing. Our partners have 50 or 60 different guises—they are all looking at different types of industries and different types of marketplaces. So they are not just reselling our product, they are consulting on it, they are also building their own applications where they are embedding our technology, and they are also building hardware in the case of our EVO:RAIL products. We have got a whole bunch of EVO:RAIL partners, or original equipment manufacturers, who are building our technology into a hardware offering around hyper-converged technology in the data centre.

“We are also working with technology partners who see our technology as a way of supporting their own strategies in networking and storage. Then, of course, we

can’t also forget that we are part of the EMC Federation where we are working with our federation partners to enhance their offerings and really bring our technologies together with theirs to make sense of this for our customers. So it’s very much a more complex world and our partner programs and our alliances have to be able to support that and manage that.

“That means we have to be a lot smarter in how we train and support them and feed them with the same information and the same data that we feed our own teams with. Essentially, they are an extension of the sales, marketing, and technical organisation, and that’s how we have to continue to support them. That’s how we get scale and how we get all the integration that we need to support our customers.”

VMware offers an array of IT outcomes for customers in a variety of different industries and the sector is constantly evolving and changing. Its ability to bring together all of the different business aspects it has on offer and then manage them in a secure way has been the key to its success over the years. Going forward, Scott says its greatest challenge will be to shake the perception of being simply a compute layer for virtualising hardware and virtualising machines.

“Our story is now way bigger than that,” he says. “It will extend across the whole enterprise and give companies the ability to think differently about how they operate and manage things. It will make their existing infrastructure more efficient as well as how they bring in new infrastructure such as public clouds or private clouds. The story is the same as it has always been but it is evolving. We are helping people to optimise and run their businesses in a much more agile way for the benefit of their customers. We are moving from where we have been to this whole next generation of virtualisation across absolutely everything. It truly is a one cloud, any application, any device story.”

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