



NIGHT *of* STARS



DUBAI'S BURJ KHALIFA provided a fitting backdrop to the 2011 Arab Technology Awards last month, as over 300 of the Middle East's leading CIO and IT executives gathered to celebrate the achievements of their colleagues over the past 12 months.

Hosted on the second night of GITEX 2011, the awards saw figures from as far as Egypt and Kuwait, as well as the cream of the Arabian Peninsula, descend on Dubai.

This year has seen a change in the way that businesses approach their use of technology in the enterprise, and that was reflected in the type of organisations

and individuals that won. The quality and number of nominations received also embodied a change in the mood of the market, with more than 250 received, representing almost every country in the Middle East.

This meant the short listing process was harder than it has ever been. However, only five companies per category could make it to the next stage. Be under no illusion. Getting on to the shortlist this year was no easy task. Even though they may not have won, they can be proud of the fact that they were one of the top five in a year when some categories saw as many as 60 entries.

As with previous years, these awards are not necessarily about who has made the most in the past 12 months; instead, they are about who has not only shown initiative and foresight, but also acted upon it. If that means that they make the most money, then that's a benefit, but it isn't what the Arab Technology Awards are about.

The change in the types of projects being submitted, the range of organisations being nominated, and the sheer level of competition has meant that there can be no doubt that the winners of this year's awards are at the very top of the region's IT industry.



IT Service Provider of the Year

eHosting DataFort

eHosting DataFort walked away with the Arab Technology Award for IT service provider for the fourth year in a row, largely on the back of a year that has seen the company's heavy investment in new services mature.

The service provider has continued to set the standards for service provision in the region, and as a result, it has found itself being approached by companies

from across the Gulf. It has also helped provide the backbone to many users of public cloud services in the region.

SHORTLISTED

- eHosting DataFort
- HP Middle East
- LinkDotNet
- Orange Business Services
- Smartworld



SME Vendor of the Year

Kaspersky Lab

The recession saw many SMEs increasingly shy away from spending money on enterprise solutions. Stepping into the gap, many vendors began offering their SME solutions. However, Kaspersky has stood above and beyond many of their rivals in this space, helping to bring easy to implement and maintain solutions to a market that might not have a dedicated IT team. The

company has also backed that up with heavy investment into the local channel with the intention of building up a community of SME-focused experts.

SHORTLISTED

- Cyberoam
- Kaspersky Lab
- Microsoft
- Sage Software Middle East
- SAP



Enterprise Hardware Vendor of the Year

HP Middle East

That this category came down to a battle between Apple and eventual winner HP is telling. According to the judges, Apple's innovation and tight focus on a small product line put it far ahead of HP. However, its lack of direct local support and HP's strong channel helped put the veteran vendor ahead of a company which has, until recently,

had very little to do with the enterprise market outside of some specialised sectors.

SHORTLISTED

- Aastra Telecom
- Apple
- Cisco
- Avaya
- HP Middle East



Enterprise Infrastructure Vendor of the Year

EMC

Thanks to the shift towards cloud computing, and ever increasing data volumes, EMC has found itself in the right place, at the right time, with the right products, and the right know how. This has seen the vendor move from being an important player in the storage space, to the most important company in enterprise infrastructure today.

The lack of serious competition in the market isn't due to a lack of will, but rather the way EMC has cornered the market so well.

SHORTLISTED

- Cisco
- EMC
- Fujitsu
- HP Middle East
- Juniper Networks