

Optimiza thrives in Jordan's booming IT industry

Jordan's IT industry is experiencing rapid growth, and one of the companies capitalizing on this wave is Optimiza, an Amman-based technology solutions and business consulting services firm. AME Info recently got an update on the company and on Jordan's IT industry in general from Optimiza's Chief Technology Officer Kamal Hazboun.

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Optimiza's CTO says that Jordan is well on its way to becoming an IT hub

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The future looks very bright for the kingdom's IT industry, Hazboun says.

He credits this to its advanced technological infrastructure, its young, capable workforce, and a supportive government.

'Jordan is well on its way to becoming an IT hub in the region, having created a climate for success for local companies and foreign investors,' Hazboun notes.

'It is also a key regional IT player, providing an ideal business environment with an advanced technological infrastructure, flexible government participation, and capable and skilled resources.'

Political stability boosts IT sector

Jordan's political stability has also played a key role in its ability to attract attention from major international IT companies such as Microsoft, Intel, Cisco Systems, and Oracle.

To highlight the rapid growth of Jordan's IT industry, Hazboun cites figures showing that the kingdom's IT gross revenues reached \$440m in 2004, up from \$170m in 2001.

Looking ahead, the fastest growing areas in Jordan's IT sector are telecommunications, banking IT solutions, e-government, internet applications, e-business solutions, multimedia and animation solutions, and call centers.

A publicly-listed company with a paid up capital of \$35m, Optimiza's history goes back to 1980 when the Computer & Engineering Bureau was established.

In 2006, Optimiza acquired CEB as well as eight other local and regional companies.

The new completely merged organization was launched in Jordan in January 2007, and was officially unveiled to the region at Gitex Technology Week in the same year in Dubai.

Furthermore, at the end of 2007, Optimiza acquired MenalTech, a leading company specialized in human resources development systems.

Sales rise 91% in 2007

The whole of 2007 was a strong year financially for the newly formed company. Its net profit for the year rose by 24%, reaching JD289,002 (\$407,580), compared to 232,665 in 2006.

In addition, the company's sales grew by 91% to reach JD13, 054,615 compared with JD6, 826,660 during 2006.

With offices in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Libya and the UAE, Optimiza now has a wide-ranging Middle East network of professionals.

The company hopes to achieve JD25m in sales and more than JD2.5m in profits in 2008, with the Gulf expected to play a larger role in its revenue, generating more than 55% of total sales this year, compared to 49.4% in 2007.

Optimiza also plans to acquire new companies in 2008, particularly in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Earlier this week the company announced that it had acquired 70% of Royah, a Saudi firm which is one of the largest Oracle Certified Advantage Partners in the kingdom.

Under the terms of the agreement, Al Malaz Group, previously the sole owner of Royah, will continue to hold 30% of the company's shares, and the operations of Al Malaz and Optimiza in the kingdom will be merged to form a single entity.

The merger brings Optimiza's total professional workforce to 550 engineers and consultants, 200 of which will be located in Saudi Arabia.

Hazboun says the biggest obstacle that Optimiza faces is Jordan's increasingly challenging and competitive environment, as well as the fact that its talent is being poached by the Gulf market.

But he is clearly upbeat about the company's future. 'We are facing exciting times ahead with the incredible, fast pace of growth and expansion of the private and public sectors in the MENA region,' he said.

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