



Vendor Profile

Lava Protocols: Empowering and Leading Digital Transformation in Enterprises Through Cloud Technology

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IDC OPINION

The software-as-a-service (SaaS) market is experiencing renewed growth as customer experience takes center stage due to digital transformation (DX). This shift in business priority and focus is bringing a new perspective on applications development. With the growing need to compete regionally, enterprises in Malaysia are spending on application modernization, extending the capabilities of their core applications or substituting their applications with a cloud-based SaaS model. Furthermore, enterprises are investing in empowering employees with the collaborative tools that enable them to gain competitive advantage by meeting the expectations of customers, partners, and suppliers.

IN THIS VENDOR PROFILE

This IDC Vendor Profile analyzes the Lava Group, a regional vendor that has been playing in the field of cloud solutions by providing advisory, implementation, and integration services in the last decade. This report assesses the key success factors — including company strategy, product strategy, partnerships, business strategy, and opportunities — for Lava's cloud offerings.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Company Overview

As the global SaaS market was growing rapidly, Gopi Ganesalingam and Andrew Thomas, two senior executives, saw a real opportunity to implement SaaS in enterprises both in and around Malaysia. With that in mind, in 2007 the duo began the journey of enhancing the digital experience of companies from various industries and sizes using cloud technology by Lava Protocols, a digital architect.

Well-known for its consultation and implementation of cloud services under the "Active Info Flow" portfolio, Lava Protocols established itself as the first Reseller Cloud Alliance Gold Partner of Salesforce in Malaysia and is also a Google Maps and G Suite Partner.

The vendor's core focus is on implementing and extending cloud services such as Salesforce.com, Google Maps and G Suite (formerly known as Google Apps for Work), and other cloud applications and platforms. To date, Lava Protocols has implemented its solutions in Malaysia as well as Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Brunei, and Switzerland. The vendors' client base is currently made up of over 180 clients within the Asia/Pacific (AP) region. Some of the clients Lava Protocols has had the opportunity to work with in the last decade include Petronas, Maxis, WWF Malaysia, Malaysian Airlines, Man Truck & Bus, Honeywell, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), GD Express Tourism Malaysia, Sime Darby, and Ranhill.

Founders

Gopi Ganesalingam

With over 27 years of extensive experience in board representation, finance, commercial, and business strategy, Gopi Ganesalingam, a finance professional, has a strong and widespread understanding of the AP region. Prior to establishing Lava Protocols, Gopi has worked with companies such as American Express, Lucent Technologies, Telstra Australia, and Deutsche Telecoms.

Andrew Thomas

Andrew Thomas is an engineer by profession with expertise in areas such as technical solutions, strategy, business processes, and operations. He began his 21 years in engineering with AT&T and moved on to Lucent Technologies before taking on the role of Country Manager with Alan Dick & Company (Malaysia). His next venture was acquiring Alan Dick & Company (Malaysia) and setting up Lava Protocols together with Gopi.

Company Strategy

Subsidiaries

Lava Group

The Lava ecosystem is comprised of three companies that are focused on providing cloud-based solutions: Lava Protocols (the parent company), Lava Labs, and Lava Media. The structure of the Lava group is built in a way that the right type of cloud solution required by the client, whether technical or creative, is available within the group. In other words, the customer need not partner with multiple service providers for different front-end solution requirements.

Lava Protocols

Lava Protocols is the main division of the group and is an MSC Malaysia status certified cloud solutions architect that mainly implements Salesforce.com, Google Maps, and G Suite solutions and integrates them with other systems. The company supports corporations of any size by reducing their cost and helping them achieve a competitive edge via cloud computing technology and applications. The company is focused on building its brand recognition in the cloud industry with continued strength in executing Salesforce.com-related projects.

Lava Labs

Focused on providing customized mobile and web development, Lava Labs is the innovative extension of the group. Having recently acquired itself an MSC status, the company has created its own SaaS product, which is in the final stages of production — Tealbox, a mobile assistant that helps business professionals and the mobile workforce by taking care of tasks such as planning, scheduling, and even route planning.

Recently, Lava Labs created an umbrella product called Custella that consists of white-label applications that are in development and built with cutting-edge technology and deep industrial insights. The convenience that these applications presents is that customers can select modules that fit their business requirements through customized solutions or opt to use industry-specific white labels. The apps featured include Content Management System, Trip Calculator, Support Portal, Ad Engine modules and Customer Portal, Loyalty Management, and Fleet Management.

Lava Media

The group's digital media arm provides digital marketing strategies for enterprises to engage with their customers through insights, technology, and creativity. The team focuses on marketing automation and predictive analytics using Salesforce Marketing Cloud and Adobe Marketing Cloud and also works independently on mobile and web marketing, website development, and campaign management.

Business Strategy

Prior to the inception of Lava Protocols, both Gopi and Andrew envisioned a corporate structure that was built to accommodate customers using the many facets of cloud technology. The golden thread that would unite these companies is that all three provide solutions and services that enhance their customers' front-end solutions.

On the day-to-day front, Lava Protocols has been making a concerted effort to strengthen the branding of its cloud services by running country- and region-specific marketing programs to increase visibility. In addition, the company has been building its presence in the region through marketing activities such as industry events that focus on reaching out to clients through context-related videos and case studies.

Partnerships

Apart from being a Salesforce Reseller Cloud Alliance Gold Partner in Malaysia and a partner of G Suite and Google Maps, the Lava Group also has a long history of strategic partnership with Amazon Web Services (AWS), Concur, Carto, Adobe Marketing Cloud, and Salesforce Marketing Cloud.

Employees

As a whole, the group has a diverse workforce that comprises of Malaysians and non-Malaysians with resources shared within the group to maximize efficiency. This includes consultants, developers, business analysts, account managers, sales engineers, graphic designers, quality assurance managers, content producers, and more.

The technical and development teams — apart from being certified experts in Salesforce.com and Google — are experienced in implementing projects related to Carto, Google Cloud, Amazon Web Services as well. They are also well-versed in program languages such as HTML5, CSS3, Java, PHP, jQuery, AJAX, Javascript and frameworks such as Jhipster, AngularJS, and Spring. Other skills include augmented reality and machine learning. In addition, the vendor also provides services related to integration with back-office applications, system testing, configuration and deployment, coding, usability, and UI and UX services.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Challenges and Opportunities

IDC forecasts the public cloud applications market in Malaysia to grow from US\$68.6 million in 2015 to US\$101.4 million in 2020 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.1%; meanwhile, While the public cloud applications market in ASEAN is forecast to grow from US\$340.4 million in 2015 to US\$826.6 million in 2020 at a CAGR of 19.4%. This growth is driven by the manufacturing, BFSI, communications and media, government, and retail verticals.

The cloud applications software market will significantly outpace the traditional software delivery model, growing nearly five times faster than the traditional software market and becoming a significant growth driver of the total applications market. SaaS represents both a tremendous challenge to Lava Protocols in terms of changing the mindset of end users and a huge opportunity to realign with partners, create new capabilities, and move into new markets.

ESSENTIAL GUIDANCE

Advice for Lava Protocols

The Lava Group is currently competing with not just regional players but also global vendors in the cloud applications market. Although its primary target markets are businesses in Malaysia, moving forward, the vendor needs to identify and start focusing on crucial industries within the ASEAN region and other high-income countries.

Although Lava Group's portfolio is broad in terms of the variety of cloud offerings, it needs to become a thought leader with in-depth knowledge and expertise in selected industry verticals. At present, the Lava Group is moving in the right direction by packaging itself as an all-in-one customer front-end solution vendor. This eases the customer's experience as they do not have to engage with different vendors for different solutions. However, Lava Protocols needs to further leverage on this by making its presence more apparent.

LEARN MORE

Related Research

- *IDC Malaysia Reveals Top ICT Predictions That Will Redefine Malaysian ICT Industry in 2017 and Beyond* (#prAP42347217, March 2017)
- *1H16 Country Report on IT Services – Malaysia* (#AP41922716, November 2016)
- *IDC 2016 IT Services End-User Survey Results: How Digital Transformation (DX) Is Reshaping the IT Services Market in Malaysia* (IDC #AP40352416, May 2016)
- *Asia/Pacific (Excluding Japan) Public Cloud Services Forecast 2015-2020* (IDC #AP41608916, August 2016)
- *Worldwide Software as a Service and Cloud Software Forecast, 2016-2020* (IDC #US40852116, August 2016)

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