Nominee: Dan Kwach, East Africa Data Centre

Nomination title: General Manager, East Africa Data Centre

Background

Launched in 2013, the East Africa Data Centre in Nairobi is the largest and most sophisticated DC in sub-Saharan Africa housing 2,000 square metres of secured space for data servers.

It is the only tier III DC in East Africa and has set the standard for DCs across Africa. It was the first purpose built, Carrier Neutral Data Centre in Africa – and broke the monopoly of the incumbent Government-owned operator.

Today the EADC is home to domestic and international operators including Airtel, BT, Vodafone etc. as well as Huawei, Microsoft etc. and a multitude of financial service companies.

EADC hosts the Kenyan exchange point - KIXP, local banking association – KBA – Kenya Bankers Association and primary domain registration servers by KENIC.

It is also home to Kenya's first Analytics Data Centre through a partnership with Strathmore Business School, Nairobi.

Key to the past and ongoing success of the EADC is Dan Kwach who led the EADC's $7.5 million build, its subsequent expansion – and heads the EADC as the General Manager responsible for implementation of commercial and technical strategy – positioning the business unit as premium hosting services provider in the region, influencing key policy issues as an industry thought leader in the field of Data Centre services. This also includes management of a dedicated technical and commercial team and a host of suppliers to the Data Centre business assets

What are the Individual's key distinguishing features and/or USP?

1.   Dan is an inspiration for young Africans across the continent showing that it is possible to break through the glass ceiling often found in technology businesses. He is a thought leader, Government advisor, mentor – and credited for the ongoing success of EADC.

2.   Dan is a pioneer. He was one of the first people to articulate that quality data centres are an important element in the creation of an independent African telecoms infrastructure – and that African Data must be kept in Africa. This belief has been supported by the subsequent rush by other companies to build hubs and POPs.

3.   Dan has been involved with the EADC since its inception; He was client representative as project manager spearheading the design and development of EADC through a consortium of consulting experts including an Architect, Electrical and Mechanical, Civil and Structural Engineering during EADC's rollout and expansion, developed the business case and worked with a variety of stakeholders to get the project comply and meet expectations of various stakeholders who included the Investors, potential Customers and a cohort of regulators.

His unrivalled knowledge of the history of the EADC is invaluable in Africa, where rules and regulations are subject to unexpected changes by Governments.

4.   Dan was always determined that the EADC would be the best. EADC would meet International Data Centre Standards TIA-942 and worked closely with the Uptime Institute from the outset.

He was the first Accredited Tier Specialist by Uptime Institute in East Africa.

What tangible impact has the Individual had on your company, the market and your customers?

Dan ensured that phase 1 of the EADC was delivered on-time and on-budget. He then led the expansion.

Thanks to Dan's foresight and ongoing hard work, since 2013 the EADC:

- Offers 100% availability

- With no security incidents

- Offering the highest SLAs in the region

- Constantly expanded its customer base.

- Remains the most connected site in East Africa offering the widest breadth of carriers for its customers through its carrier hotel.

The benefits to the region and to EADC customers aligned to the performance above can be illustrated through:

- Increased Reliability of services run and hosted at EADC

- Customer focusing their budgets to core functions as EADC takes away unnecessary expenditure in build and maintenance of in-house Data Centre facilities

- Compliance to regulatory and governance requirements as EADC has ensured to comply with critical standards around build and operations of Data Centre infrastructure such as the Uptime Institute and ISO 27001 certification respectively

- Incentivized local peering through offer of free connection to local exchange platform – KIXP – this translates to network resource performance and optimization through reduction in latency and elimination of unnecessary costs to get connectivity to the exchange point

- Opening of East Africa as a Data Centre hub with EADC having had the first mover advantage in a field earlier on not thought of or seen as having potential

Last year Dan decided that it would be right to build EADC's own solar power substation to complement the grid supply – a project started off in February this year with installation of solar panels on the data centre's rooftop, pathways and the car parking bay, utilising all available space to maximise solar power output.

The decision is meant to ensure 72.6% of the electricity EADC uses is drawn from renewable power and boosting EADC energy credentials as part of efforts in improving the facilities energy efficiency

and yet another project that falls in place with the foresight he had to ensure EADC complies with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) guidelines

What levels of customer service differentiate the Individual from others?

Dan always aims to surpass people's expectations: customers, investors and colleagues.

Dan is continuously thinking of ways and means of improving customer experience. He introduced the NPS - Net Promoter Score survey - at the end of the last year to monitor customer satisfaction. EADC's got the highest customer satisfaction index at an average of 50!

He has created a supportive work environment setting the standard for discipline and hard work. He empowers his team members to use their strengths positively and manage their weaknesses as they execute their tasks at the workplace.

He challenges everyone to always go the extra mile, be diligent, excel in what they do and have spare time for their families as well!

Dan worked with the Kenyan Ministry of ICT to ensure that local regulations on the subject of Data Protection and sovereignty are based on global best practice so as to protect Data Center assets and investments locally.

Dan leads training and conduct tours to academic institutions to help motivate young and upcoming technology enthusiasts. He is a coach for the Presidential Digital Talent Program, a prestigious mentoring initiative in Kenya.

Why nominee should win

•   Advisor to Kenyan Ministry of ICT on Data Centre Infrastructure standards and emerging issues such as Data Protection and Sovereignty, cybercrime, Financial technologies, IOT, Big Data etc.

- **Still does his share of night duties. Keeps his phone on whilst in church to ensure he is always available to his team.**

- **Currently taking EADC through its Digital transformation journey**

- **Passionate about using renewables**

- **An inspirational figure for the youth of Africa.**