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H. H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi with **H. E. Emmanuel Macron**, President of France

Guest Article

H.E. Jean-Christophe Paris

Consul General of France in Dubai and Northern Emirates

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Raju Menon

Chairman & Managing Partner
Kreston Menon

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Sangeetha Thomas

Director
Kreston ME Consulting

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Bhawana Sakhrani

Manager
Kreston ME Consulting

Decoding Business Valuation: Winning Strategic Negotiations

KRESTON GLOBAL | KRESTON MIDDLE EAST | In collaboration with DUBAI CHAMBER INTERNATIONAL

Kreston Asia Pacific - Dubai Chambers Meet

Organized by Kreston Middle East

EDITOR'S NOTE

RAJU MENON

The UAE is still reaping the benefits from the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPA), which has helped the country consolidate its position as a gateway for global trade.

According to the recent World Trade Outlook and Statistics report of the WTO, the United Arab Emirates recorded total foreign trade of AED 5.23 trillion in 2024 which is a 49% increase compared to 2021. The UAE enjoys regional dominance by recording AED 2.22 trillion which is 41.4% of the Middle East merchandise exports and is ranked 11th globally. UAE is also ranked 13th in service exports with AED 646.6 billion.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, emphasised that, "In a world of economic and trade challenges, the UAE has prioritised openness, connectivity, and the free flow of trade, capital, and people, establishing itself as a vital link between East and West and a global economic centre." He added that the commitment to openness, trade liberalisation, and global connectivity will ensure continued growth and leadership in global trade.

The 'Kreston Asia Pacific – Dubai Chambers Meet,' organized by Kreston Middle East in collaboration with Dubai Chambers, represents an exciting initiative to connect Kreston Global with Dubai Chambers. The first event was initiated by Kreston Menon bringing in 20 Kreston Global Asia Pacific member firms and 11 Dubai Chambers Asia Pacific offices, focusing on foreign direct investment, development of valuable partnerships, and pursuing expansion along the Asia Pacific-Dubai business corridor. I appreciate the efforts of Sudhir Kumar, Senior Partner and Head of Corporate Communications - Kreston Menon, Director-Kreston Global Board and Chair-Kreston Middle East, in conceptualizing and leading this strategic collaboration between Kreston Global and the Dubai Chambers.

In this edition's guest article, HE Jean-Christophe Paris, Consul General of France in Dubai and Northern Emirates talks about how the United Arab Emirates and France have built a remarkably strong and multifaceted partnership over the past 50 years. He expresses confidence in the booming bilateral partnerships in the fields of defense, culture, education, space, artificial intelligence, energy and environment. It is remarkable that more than 600 French subsidiaries operate across the Emirates, employing around 30,000 people— ranging from industry giants to SMEs and startups.

My colleague Sangeetha Thomas, Director at Kreston ME Consulting in her article titled, Cybersecurity: A CFO's Guide to Turning Risk into Opportunity explains the risks of cyber threats and why it is not just an IT problem, but a business problem that hits your organization. She rationalizes the need for cybersecurity assessment in organizations, not just to find vulnerable spots but also to identify opportunities to save money, avoid fines and to be prepared for any disastrous cyber-attack.

Bhawana Sakhrani, Manager – Consulting at Kreston ME Consulting illustrates a case study on a valuation assignment she led, where the client being a privately held technology company operating in an emerging market. Bhawana narrates how her team could support the client to balance future growth potential against current profitability while engaging in a critical negotiation with a knowledgeable buyer. She takes us through how the valuation methods - the Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) method and the EBITDA approach provide two distinct perspectives on the company's value, one focusing on future potential and the other on current earnings respectively. This is an interesting read!

The Dubai government has recently made a landmark resolution to open the vibrant domestic market of Dubai's mainland to free zone entities. In this newsletter, I have detailed how the free zone entities in Dubai can expand their business activities to mainland Dubai in line with the Dubai Executive Council Resolution No. (11) of 2025.

Kreston Menon remains committed to help clients navigate their business challenges and capitalize on the opportunities.

In collaboration with

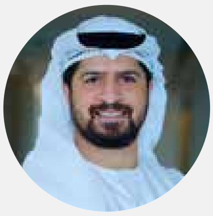
Kreston Asia Pacific - Dubai Chambers Meet

Organized by Kreston Middle East

10 Asia Pacific Countries

Liza Robbins
Chief Executive
Kreston Global

Sudhir Kumar
Senior Partner & Head-Corporate Communications - **Kreston Menon**
Director - Kreston Global Board
Chair - Kreston Middle East



Marwan Al Marri
Regional Director - Asia
Dubai Chambers

Tariq Alhashimi
Investment Manager - Asia Region
Dubai Chambers

Edmond Chan
Director
Kreston CAC, Hong Kong
Director - Kreston Global Board

Helmi Talib
Managing Partner
Kreston Helmi Talib, Singapore
Chair - Kreston Asia Pacific

The 'Kreston Asia Pacific–Dubai Chambers Meet', organized by Kreston Middle East in collaboration with Dubai Chambers, brought together 10 Asia Pacific countries, represented by 20 Kreston Asia Pacific member firms, along with 11 Dubai Chambers Asia Pacific offices in Australia, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The meetings between Sudhir Kumar, Senior Partner and Head of Corporate Communications - Kreston Menon, Director-Kreston Global Board and Chair-Kreston Middle East, and Marwan Al Marri, Regional Director - Asia at Dubai Chambers, led to a strategic collaboration between Kreston Global and the Dubai Chambers. This initiative marked the first step towards exploring new opportunities, building partnerships, and creating meaningful connections along the Kreston Asia Pacific–Dubai business corridor. The primary objective of the meet was to bring Kreston Global Firms in the Asia Pacific closer to Dubai and the UAE, and to encourage foreign direct investment into the region.

10	20	11	39
Asia Pacific Countries	**Kreston** Asia Pacific Firms	**Dubai Chambers** Asia Pacific Offices	**Speakers**

France–UAE: A longstanding partnership anchored in strategic and economic cooperation

H.E. Jean-Christophe Paris
Consul General of France in Dubai and Northern Emirates
consulat.dubai-fslt@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Over the last 50 years, the United Arab Emirates and France have built a remarkably strong and multifaceted partnership, and we are now looking at the future.

The bilateral relationship is booming in all fields including defense, culture, education, space, artificial intelligence, energy and environment. Bilateral trade between France and the UAE reached 8.5 billion euros in 2024, marking a significant 15% increase from the previous year. This upward trajectory highlights the strengthening economic ties and the growing role of both countries in each other's economic landscapes. The UAE stands as France's largest partner in the Near and Middle East, accounting for 42.3% of French exports to the region. On the other hand, it is France's second-largest supplier, representing 16% of French imports from the region. Furthermore, France remains a prime destination for Emirati investment, with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) reaching 2.3 billion euros in 2023. A notable testimony of this momentum is the long-standing and fruitful partnership between Mubadala and Bpifrance, the French public investment bank. This collaboration continues to play a pivotal role in facilitating joint ventures and driving cross-border investments, further deepening the ties between our two nations.

A strong French companies' presence in the UAE

French companies have played a pivotal role in supporting the UAE's development for decades, with some partnerships dating back over 50 years. Over time, France has become a key partner in a variety of sectors. From energy major players that have helped build critical infrastructure and support the country's sustainability goals, to their involvement in the creation of the Dubai metro and tramway, and to luxury and tourism brands that have shaped the UAE's global image as a premier destination, France's presence is both strategic and long-standing. Today, more than 600 French subsidiaries operate across the Emirates, employing around 30,000 people—making it the largest French business presence in the Middle East, ranging from industry giants to SMEs and startups.

Dubai: the gateway to GCC opportunities

Over the years, Dubai has solidified its status as the gateway to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) opportunities for French businesses. With nearly 80% of French companies in the UAE choosing to set up operations in the emirate, Dubai has become a central hub for French firms seeking to tap into the broader GCC market. French companies haven't just benefited from Dubai's rise as a strategic business and logistics hub—they have actively contributed to this transformation. Their presence is evident across key transport infrastructure, from aviation and airport development to maritime logistics at the major port of Jebel Ali. This dynamic is rooted in the strong mutual trust between French and local partners.

Moreover, Dubai serves as a global platform for regional events, hosting some of the world's largest trade shows, conferences, and international political events such as Expo 2020 and COP28. These high-profile events have further reinforced the strength of the France-UAE relationship, providing a stage for French companies to showcase their innovative solutions and engage in multilateral discussions that align with both countries' shared goals and aspirations.

Today, France's presence in the UAE is prominent and well-supported by a robust network of key institutions based in Dubai. They play a central role in offering comprehensive services to support French businesses in their efforts to succeed in the local market. Business France operates from its regional headquarters in Dubai, to promote the presence of French companies across the Near and Middle East. In 2024, it supported nearly 2,000 companies – over 800 of them in the UAE – through sectorial initiatives such as French Pavillons at major trade shows and tailor-made services. Bpifrance also maintains regional offices in Dubai, where they provide essential support in the form of financial backing for landmark projects. Additionally, the CCI France-UAE, which represents the largest community of French-speaking and Francophile business professionals in the Middle East, has over 800 members. Furthermore, the French Tech UAE community plays a key role in fostering collaboration, helping to drive innovation and facilitate partnerships between French and Emirati tech companies.

A shared vision for the future: tackling tomorrow's challenges together

As the world continues to face complex challenges, France and the UAE remain aligned on many key strategic issues, particularly in the fields of technology and sustainability. One area where both nations are making significant strides is artificial intelligence (AI). The UAE has been a pioneer in integrating AI into its forward-looking strategy, making both countries key strategic partners in this cutting-edge field. In February 2025, on the occasion of President Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed's visit to France, a major AI partnership agreement was signed, with up to 50 billion euros in Franco-Emirati investments committed to developing AI technologies in France.

In addition to technological collaboration, France and the UAE are also united in their efforts to tackle climate change, one of the most pressing challenges of our time. Both countries have set ambitious goals for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, and they are already working together on a range of transformative projects. These include the development of smart cities and the expansion of renewable energy sources. The collaborative efforts between France and the UAE in these areas demonstrate a mutual commitment to creating a sustainable, environmentally responsible future.

As both nations continue to work towards their shared vision, the UAE is advancing a series of high-profile and transformative projects, including the expansion of Al Maktoum Airport, the launch of a high-speed rail line, and the construction of new solar parks. With decades of experience in supporting such iconic projects, France stands ready to collaborate with UAE authorities and businesses, further strengthening the strategic partnership between the two nations.

We take great pride in our strong and trusted partnership with the UAE. This friendship is reflected in the many official visits between our two governments, particularly numerous in recent years, with the latest being that of Minister for Foreign Trade and French Nationals Abroad, Mr. Laurent Saint-Martin, in February. These visits underscore the shared commitment to advancing a thriving, dynamic partnership with far-reaching impact.

Vision Golfe: Powering a new era of strategic partnerships between France and the GCC

Vision Golfe emerges as a flagship platform driving high-impact economic cooperation between France and the GCC countries. This annual forum convenes Gulf and French ministers, and European officials, industry leaders, and tech pioneers to forge long-term alliances across the region's most transformative sectors. The 3rd edition, to be held on 17–18 June 2025 under the high patronage of President Emmanuel Macron, will feature a forward-thinking agenda focused on "Blueprints for 2030" and "Innovating for Sustainability". It will serve as a cross-sectoral launchpad for innovation-led collaboration and investment.

A dynamic French community

To bring this dynamic economic relationship to life and flourish, it takes men and women. 30,000 French citizens are registered with the consulate, but in reality, there are many more! The French community is estimated at around 50,000 people across the country and today, there are three newborns and one wedding every day. It is a long-established, well-structured and organized community that demonstrates remarkable dynamism, with all the characteristics of the French expatriates: business community (representatives of large Paris stock market groups, mid-sized and small businesses, entrepreneurs) and also the world of culture, who contribute all with their energy and creativity to the development of the longstanding partnership between France and the United Arab Emirates.

To learn more about our activities, follow us on Instagram, Facebook and X: @FranceEmirats (Embassy of France in UAE) @FranceDubai (General consulate of France in Dubai)

Business Gateway: Dubai opens door for Free Zone Entities to the Mainland

Raju Menon
Chairman & Managing Partner

In a landmark reform aimed at enhancing the business ecosystem and reinforcing Dubai's status as a global investment hub, Dubai Executive Council has passed a resolution permitting Free Zone companies to do business in the Dubai mainland. This change has the potential to open new markets, bring in new business synergies and facilitate more foreign direct investment into the Emirate. Let us do a deep dive into what the new resolution entails and how it could benefit businesses.

The Resolution No. (11) of 2025: A definite Step Forward

Dubai Executive Council Resolution No. (11) of 2025 permitting Dubai Free Zone entities to expand their business activities to mainland Dubai through the issuance of onshore licenses and activity permits.

The companies registered in Free Zones were restricted from engaging in commercial activities in the mainland which many considered to be regulatory and financial divide that restrained businesses in an increasingly interconnected environment.

The new resolution aims to bridge that gap. Free Zone companies can now engage with the mainland market directly, subject to compliance with Dubai's regulatory framework, licensing requirements, and sector-specific approvals. This initiative complements with D33 Agenda - the economic vision of Dubai which aims to double the size of economy, which will position Dubai as one of the three global cities for business and innovation.

The Mechanism

Free Zone entities who are looking to take advantage of the new resolution which will be integrating Free Zones and Mainland, may apply for one of the three new types of licenses/permits:

Mainland Options for Free Zone Entities

	Mainland Branch with Physical Office	Mainland Branch with Free Zone Office	Temporary Permit
Type	Branch	Branch	Permit
Office	Physical office in Dubai Mainland	Mainland branch + Free Zone office	No specific office requirement
Duration	Permanent	Permanent	6 months (renewable)
Fees	As per DET procedures	AED 10,000 annually	AED 5,000

Option-1 Branch with office in Dubai Mainland: Setting up a Branch of the Free Zone entity in accordance with the branch registration procedures with a physical office within Dubai proper.

Option-2 Continuing with Free Zone Office: Setting up a Branch of the Free Zone entity in accordance with the branch registration procedures while continuing with its Free Zone office.

Option-3 Temporary Permit for short term activities: Temporary permit for the Free Zone entity to operate some activities within Dubai for a period of six months with a provision of renewal for a similar period.

External Approval:
The branch entity, depending on the intended activities, shall be subject to relevant external department/ministry approval prior to obtaining DET license/Permission.

The Process
The first step for the business is to obtain necessary No-objection Certificate (NOC) from the Free Zone Authority they are currently operating from. The authorities have made the process easier.

Once the NOC is received, the documents certified by the Free Zone entity can be submitted for the license.

Visa and Work Permit
The branch is permitted to register with MOHRE and GDFRA for work permits and visas for their employees.

Financial Records
Free Zone entities licensed or permitted under the Resolution must maintain distinct financial records of its operations conducted in the Dubai mainland.

Corporate Taxation
Free Zone entities licensed or permitted under this Resolution shall be subject to 9% corporate tax, if the taxable income exceeds AED 375,000. Conditions for the Qualifying Free Zone Person (QFZP) regime may also be explored in certain cases.

List of Activities
The Resolution provides that the DET, in coordination with the relevant licensing authorities, will issue a list of economic activities that Free Zone businesses can conduct in Dubai.

Substance
DET further assesses substance of the Free Zone entity before issuing the permission to operate in Dubai Mainland.

Limited to Free Zone entities from Dubai
According to the new resolution, only entities registered in Free Zones located in Dubai are permitted to open the branch or apply for permission to operate in the Mainland.

5 Key Advantages of the New Resolution
1. Expanded Market Reach for Free Zone Entities

This resolution opens the vibrant domestic market of Dubai's Mainland giving Free Zone entities access to more businesses and consumers. This could benefit companies that are in retail, logistics, professional services and many more.

2. Simplified Regulatory Landscape

The initiative has a more streamlined approach compared to the earlier complex issue of setting up separate free Zone and Mainland entities and navigating two different legal frameworks of the jurisdictions. This is a stride forward to the ease of doing business initiatives of Dubai.

3. Attractive for FDIs

The new resolution cements Dubai's reputation as the most preferred global investment destination. The change sends a strong investor friendly message to global investors that Dubai is committed to remove any barriers that can hinder the growth of businesses in the emirate.

4. Drive Collaboration and Innovation

The resolution will drive greater integration between Free Zone and Mainland companies, and that will stimulate a more collaborative business culture. Companies operating in specialized Free Zones now have the opportunity to explore possibilities of strategic alliances and partnerships with businesses in the Mainland, by having cross sector collaboration avenues with the future technology companies in Fintech, Healthtech, Security, Artificial Intelligence and Green Energy.

5. Boost to Economic Resilience

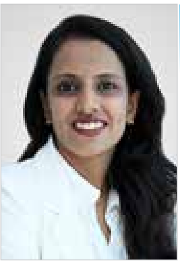
Allowing Free Zone entities to scale up by giving access to the Mainland, Dubai aims to solidify their efforts to diversify the economy. As businesses extend their reach and invest more in infrastructure and human capital, the ripple effects are bound to make the economy more resilient.

Final Words
Giving Free Zone companies access to the Mainland is not just a policy tweak — it's a strategic shift.

As the specifics of the resolution continue to roll out, Kreston Menon is interacting with the authorities to see how best we can equip our clients to leverage the new opportunities.

Case Study

Decoding Business Valuation: Winning Strategic Negotiations



Bhawana Sakhrani
Manager
Kreston ME Consulting

bhawana@krestonmeconsulting.com

Valuing a Tech Company in the Middle East

Imagine you have built a successful tech company in the Middle East, offering technology solutions in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Years of hard work have paid off, and now a big client, a multinational corporation, wants to buy your business.

But how do you decide the value of what you have achieved? This is the dilemma for the owners of this private tech company as they plan to sell the business they have built from scratch.

The Valuation Challenge

Valuing a private company in an emerging market is not easy. Without stock prices or market consensus, it's a mix of growth potential, regional factors, and market competition. To navigate this dilemma, the owners enlisted KMEC, a trusted advisor for advisory services, to guide them through two contrasting valuation methods: the forward-looking Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) approach, which looks at the company's future cash potential, and the EBITDA multiple method, which builds on current earnings strength.

With these valuations, the owners must negotiate with a savvy multinational buyer aiming to enhance its capabilities. Should they go with the optimistic DCF, the realistic EBITDA, or a mix of both? The multinational will examine every detail, but the tech company's strategic advantage might influence the final price.

This case study explores valuation and negotiation in an emerging market, where ambition meets opportunity, and every decision impacts the outcome—a story of strategy, risk, and seeking fair value in a fast-changing tech world.

Background

The technology company provided enterprise solutions focused on emerging sectors in the region. It had established a solid presence in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, benefiting from the region's increasing demand for technology solutions. The firm served a diverse client base, including several large multinational companies.

One of these clients, a multinational corporation, had been a significant customer for years. Impressed by the technology company's solutions and regional expertise, the multinational expressed interest in acquiring it to expand and build its own in-house capabilities. The owners considered this as a good opportunity to exit the business. However, they needed to establish a fair valuation of the business for negotiations.

The Challenge

Valuing a privately held technology company operating in an emerging market is complex. Unlike public companies with market-driven stock prices, these firms lack a clear benchmark. The valuation had to also take into account the organization's growth potential in a region undergoing digital transformation, while also factoring the risks of a competitive and fast-changing industry.

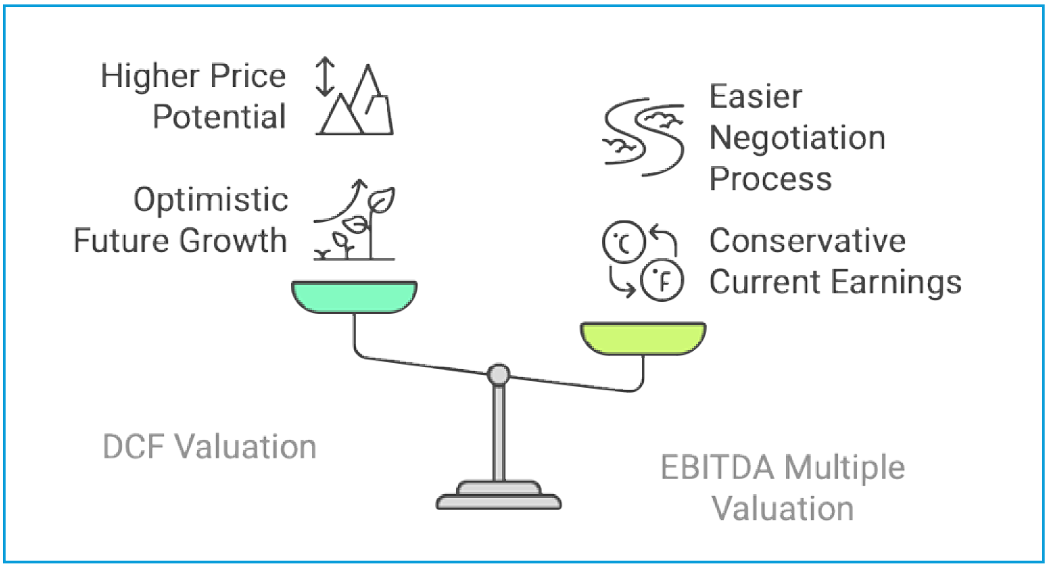
To address this, the owners approached KMEC, a business consulting firm specializing in business valuations for companies in the Middle East. The firm was engaged to provide a range of valuations to support the owners in the negotiations it could have with the potential buyer.

Valuation Methods

KMEC used two common valuation methods: the Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) method and the EBITDA multiple approach. These methods provide two distinct perspectives on the firm's value, one focusing on future potential and the other on current earnings respectively.

Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) Method

The DCF method calculates a company's value based on its projected future cash flows, adjusted to their present value. This approach is suited for companies with a positive growth potential, as it reflects future earnings. KMEC collaborated with the client's management to prepare credible financial projections. With an in-depth understanding of the market, KMEC was able to derive these forecasts on potential revenue growth that the company could have had from new clients and market expansion. Their understanding of the client's business helped forecast how improvement of operating margins would contribute to the organization's future revenue as the business operations scaled. Additionally, a discount rate reflecting the industry's risk in the region was applied to determine the DCF valuation.



EBITDA Multiple Approach

The EBITDA multiple approach values a business based on its current earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA), which is then multiplied by a factor from similar transactions or industry standards. KMEC applied this method to emphasize the company's value based on current performance. The firm examined acquisitions of comparable technology companies, identifying a typical EBITDA multiple for the technology sector. Using the company's recent EBITDA, KMEC calculated a valuation with this approach.

Strategic Negotiation

With valuations from both methods, KMEC provided the client with several strategies to negotiate with the potential buyer:

1. Lead with the DCF Valuation: The owners could lead the negotiations with this by highlighting the company's future growth and long-term value to the buyer, even if this approach presented an optimistic view to the buyer who might be focused on current earnings.

2. Anchor with the EBITDA Multiple Valuation: Another approach would be to present the buyer a conservative figure based on current financials, potentially easing negotiations but also possibly limiting the sale price.

3. Present a Valuation Range: The owners could also choose to present both valuations, proposing a price between the DCF (upper bound) and EBITDA multiple (lower bound), providing them the flexibility and justification for a higher price based on growth potential.

4. Combine the Methods: The owners could also adopt a blended valuation approach, such as taking an average or weighting them based on industry practices, to initiate a starting point for negotiation talks.

Decision Point

As the owners prepared to negotiate with the multinational corporation, they needed to make an informed strategic decision on which valuation approach to emphasize in their discussions. The multinational corporation, being a more sophisticated organization, could possibly scrutinize the assumptions behind the valuations. The owners had to also factor the strategic value that their firm offered the buyer, which could be used to support a higher price.

The key question was: Which valuation method should the owners prioritize in their negotiations with its potential buyer, and how should they justify it to maximize their sale price, while providing credible information to support the value of their business?

Conclusion

This case illustrates the difficulties a privately held technology company faces in valuing its business in an emerging market. The owners' need was to balance future growth potential against current profitability while engaging in a critical negotiation with a knowledgeable buyer. Their choice of valuation approach will shape the outcome of the sale.

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Cybersecurity: A CFO's Guide to Turning Risk into Opportunity

Sangeetha Thomas
Director – Security & Cyber Resilience
Kreston ME Consulting

sangeetha@krestonmeconsulting.com

Picture this: You are sitting at your desk, sipping your morning coffee, when an urgent email notification pops up in your inbox. Your customer's data is on sale, along with sensitive contracts and financial records. Customer information is exposed, and regulators step in asking accountability, while the cost of fixing this mess is increasing by the minute. This is the kind of scenario that keeps CFOs up at night-and in today's world, it's not just an impossibility. It happens more often than expected, and is a real threat that can materialize anytime.

As a CFO, you are no stranger to handling risk. But cybersecurity? That often feels like a different ballgame-technical, complex, and frankly, a bit overwhleming. You are not alone. Many CFOs struggle to wrap their heads around the digital risks tied to technology, not knowing whether they are meeting regulatory demands, adequately protecting customer data, or ensuring that their suppliers and operations are secure. The stakes are high: one misstep can lead to fines, loss of trust, and inflating costs.

But here is the good news: cybersecurity does not have to be a black box. In fact, it can be one of your most powerful tools for driving efficiency, cutting costs, and gaining a competitive edge as a business. This article will walk you through the common challenges, look at some myths, and give you a clear, actionable plan to make cybersecurity work for you-not against you.

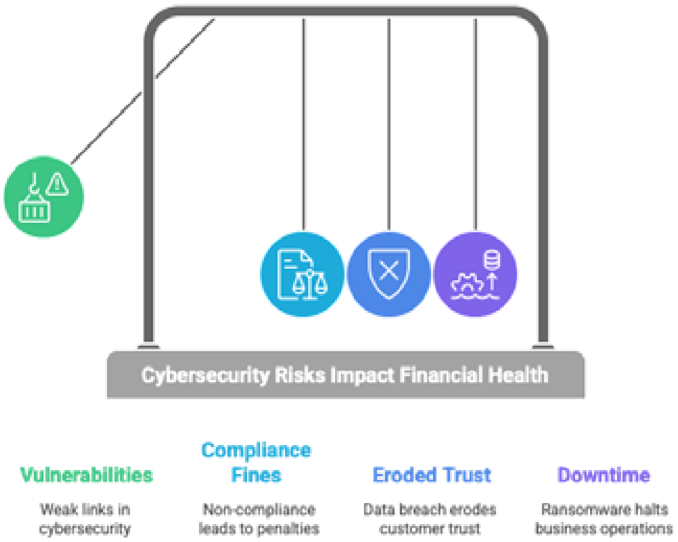
Why Cybersecurity Keeps CFOs Awake at Night

Let's be honest: cybersecurity is not just an IT problem. It is a business problem, and it hits your organization and the CFO's desk in ways that matter.

Regulations are a minefield: Federal regulations, emirate and sectoral-specific regulations-the list goes on. One wrong move, and you are facing fines that can take a heavy toll on your budget. Staying compliant is not just about checking boxes, signing policies or filling forms. It is about actionables that will protect your bottom line.

Customers expect a trust premium: People are more protective of their data than ever. A breach does not just cost you money-it costs you trust. And trust once broken, is hard to regain. Gaining a customer is hard enough, winning them back is expensive.

Suppliers can be weak links: You may not realize it often, but your suppliers' cybersecurity is your problem too. If their systems are vulnerable, your operations-and profits-can take the hit. The cascading effect is real and tangible on your financial health.

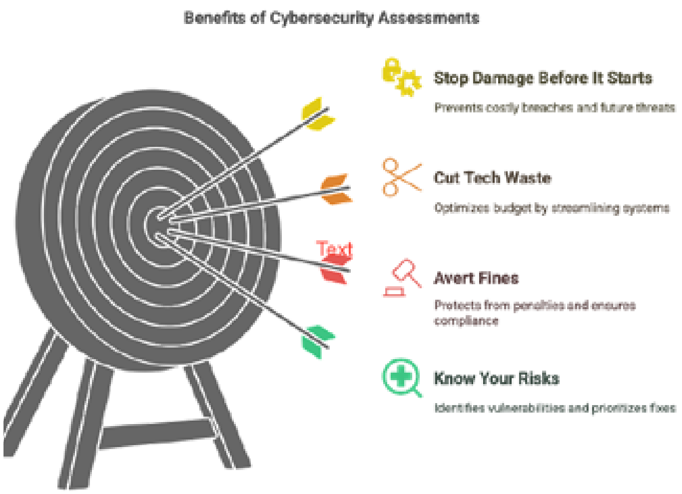


Operations can grind to a halt: Imagine a ransomware attack locking down your systems or a denial of service making your website inaccessible. Suddenly, your team cannot work, customers cannot buy, and revenue is turning downward. The recovery costs? They are brutal and much more than just opportunity cost.

These are not abstract risks. They are real, and they are growing. But here is where you can turn the tables.

Cybersecurity Assessments: Your Secret Weapon

Think of cybersecurity assessment as a financial audit for your digital world. It is not just about finding weak spots-it is about spotting opportunities to save money, avoid fines, and run a tighter ship - one where there is less of the unknown. Here is how you can do it.



Know your risks: Assessments show you exactly where you are vulnerable - whether it is customer data, supplier connections, or outdated systems. With that insight, you can prioritize fixes that matter the most to your bottom line.

Avert fines: Regulators want proof you are taking cybersecurity seriously. Assessments give you that proof, safeguards your company's interests, helping you avoid penalties and sleep better at night.

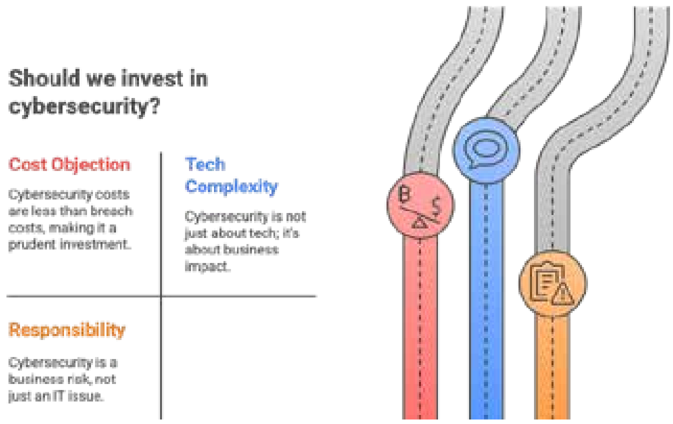
Cut tech waste: Ever feel like you are forever budgeting money for technology without seeing results? Assessments will help you identify where you can streamline or consolidate systems and cut bloated technology costs.

Stop damage before it starts: Fixing a breach after the fact is expensive. Assessments help you fix issues early on, before they can turn into nagging problems. This will save you from having to address costly cleanups.

In short, cybersecurity assessments are not just about defense-they are about making smarter, more profitable decisions.

So, What's Holding You Back?

Even with clear benefits, many CFOs hesitate. Here are the common reasons-and how you can push past it.



"It's too expensive": Cybersecurity can feel like a money drainer, especially when budgets are tight. But think of it this way-the cost of a breach is almost always higher. This is prudent investment that will save you a multiplier cost later.

"I don't speak tech": Cybersecurity terminology can be overwhelming. It's not about hackers alone and you do not need to be a tech genius. Focus on the business impact-ask your IT team to translate risks into Dirhams and assurance percentages.

"It's IT's job, not mine": Cybersecurity is not just an IT issue-it is a business risk. You would not leave financial decisions to someone else, so don't stay on the sidelines here. The effects reach your desk-positive or negative. What is the key? Shift your mindset. Cybersecurity is not a cost-it is an investment into your company's future.

Busting Cybersecurity Myths

Let us clear up some common misconceptions that might be clouding your judgment.

"It's too complicated for me": You do not need to understand every technical detail. Lean on your IT team, but make sure they are speaking your language-talk about costs, risks, TCO and ROI.

"We're too small to be a target": Cybercriminals love small and mid-sized companies-they are often easier to hit and can be used to hit another. Size does not make you invisible; it makes you vulnerable.

"We've never been attacked, so we are fine": Past luck does not guarantee future safety. You renew an insurance premium even if you never made any claims. Cyber threats evolve daily. Complacency is your enemy.

Once you let go of these myths, you'll see cybersecurity for what it is-a critical part of your financial strategy.

Your 6-Step Plan to get started

Ready to get in charge? Here is a straightforward, actionable guide to begin with.

1. Know your risks: Begin with a basic cybersecurity assessment that is specific to your business ecosystem. Determine your vulnerabilities-whether it is old software, supplier vulnerabilities, or compliance gaps.

2. Create a plan: Work with your IT staff to build a strategy that supports your business goals. Make it cover customer data, supplier risks, and operational security.

3. Implement smart automation: Focus on high-impact fixes like multi-factor authentication, encryption, and regular software updates. Make it simple-start with what is most important and which can give you the greater coverage.

4. Track your success: You cannot manage what you cannot measure. Create easy-to-measure metrics to track success. Get your staff into the habit of asking questions such as "How many threats did we stop this quarter?" or "How much money did we save by not experiencing a breach?"

5. Train your staff: People are generally the weakest link. Teach your staff on how to spot phishing email and how to use data securely. Teach them how to use privileged data.

6. Plan for the worst: Be prepared for when-not if-a breach happens. Have a plan in place for who to call, how to alert customers, and how to get business up and running as fast as possible.

This is definitely not a one-and-done proposition. Cybersecurity is ongoing, but with this map, you can set your journey in motion and be light-years ahead.

Stop Stalling—Your Company's Future Depends on It

Warren Buffett put it best: "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it." In the digital age, those five minutes could be the time it takes for a cyberattack to strike. You don't have to just wait for the worst to occur, however by adopting cybersecurity now, you are not only protecting your business-you are positioning it for success.

The benefits are real: fewer headaches, lower cost, and a stronger and more resilient business. So, take the step today. Your future and your bottom line will reward you.

GALADARI ADVOCATES & LEGAL CONSULTANTS محامون ومستشارون قانونيون كلداري | KRESTON ME CONSULTING | غرف دبي DUBAI CHAMBERS

Kreston ME Consulting, the advisory arm of Kreston Menon partnered with Dubai Chambers for workshops to create an awareness amongst the business community on the 'Regulatory Cybersecurity Requirements in the UAE.' Sangeetha Thomas who is an expert in Security & Cyber resilience explained how cyber threats and risks can cripple operations and expose businesses to legal penalties and reputation loss.

Raka Roy, Partner at Galadari Advocates and Legal Consultants explained the regulatory requirements and the business implications of UAE cyberlaws.

In an era where technology intertwines with every aspect of business operations, compliance with regulatory frameworks is not just a legal necessity but a strategic advantage in UAE. The session addressed how organizations can have a comprehensive approach, which goes beyond addressing mere regulatory compliance and looks at security initiatives strategically.