The speakers were interviewed by Boni Sones during the Cambridge Service Week Industry Conference, **'Bridging to New Service Technology'** on 11 October 2017

CHRISTOPH: My name is Christoph Mueller and I'm Executive Vice President with the Emirates Group, responsible for digital transformation innovation.

BONI: And we just heard today from people from Alibaba, from IBM, Thales, that must be exciting too, to listen to other people and how they are structuring their businesses.

CHRISTOPH: Yeah, that is basically, the borders will fall down, we will share ultimately if the digital maturity has reached the last stage, we will share more data, collaboration will not be within one company but between companies. And I believe customer satisfaction will reunite us around that campfire.

YE MENG: My name is Meng Ye, I work for the Alabama Group, and I'm a senior expert. We need to foster the innovation, especially applying big data in the whole society, to light all of the ecosystem partners to involve in, so we can get the real change that big data can bring us.

MARTIN: Martin Fleming, IBM's Chief Economist and Chief Analytics Officer.

BONI: In terms of the Cambridge Service Alliance Industry Conference, Bridging to New Service Technology, have you found other presentations useful? We've heard from Thales, we've also heard from Alibaba and Emirates Airline, it's been fascinating.

MARTIN: Absolutely, Alibaba in fact I would go so far as to assert, laid out an entirely new business model for the Chinese business sector, China's industry, given all of the challenges and issues faced by the Chinese economy. We've heard a view of the future. Likewise with Emirates, really fundamentally rethinking the business that they are in and the nature of the value that they are delivering.

SEAN: My name is Sean Perry-Evans, and I'm the Director of Services Development for Thales UK.

BONI: We were sat here today, we've already listened to various other keynote speakers, Emirates Airline, Alibaba, IBM. Do you see common themes emerging, they seem to me to be very similar in what they say. Big beasts of industry plotting the future, but really doing it very strategically.

SEAN: Yes, there's huge commonality. The difference really was between the business structures of the different businesses and the offering that they have into this particular environment. IBM clearly have a real interest in where digital transformation goes as a supplier of a lot of the capabilities to enable digital transformation. The Emirates Airline are a single tier type of organization, who obviously have a different type of approach. We are massively more complex in the way that we approach, because we have so many

moving parts and we come from a long way back. But the commonality is there, the purpose, the direction of travel is exactly the same. We are all looking to end up almost in the same place.

What I can see in the future, what today has made me think about really I suppose, is the collaborative nature of industry moving forward. Perhaps we will be partnering with people we never thought we would partner with in the past. It's simply because the nature of what we're trying to achieve will change.

BONI: It's more power to the Cambridge Service Alliance.

SEAN: More power to the Cambridge Service Alliance, yes I look forward to coming back next year.

MOHAMED: Mohammed Zaki, Deputy Director of Cambridge Service Alliance.

BONI: Mohammed thank you very much indeed for talking to the Cambridge Service Alliance Industry Conference, Bridging to New Service Technology. Your keynote speakers were Christoph Mueller from Emirates Airline, Dr Ye Meng from Alibaba, Martin Fleming from IBM and Sean Perry-Evans from Thales. If we have a look at each of those presentations, there's been a commonality in all of them, they are all talking about customer, customer, customer and focusing on customer services. Customers have come through haven't they, in their business models?

MOHAMED: Yes, however it's quite trivial, so every business knows that the customer is the focus, because that's someone that you actually contribute to your monetary transactions inside your firm. However, I think the strategy now comes through from the customer demands, which is quite unique. Given the digital space that we are living at the moment, customer needs more and push firms to do things for him better, which has allowed firms, they have to develop strategies centric for them.

One way they are doing this, and you can see that the cross all the speakers, is how we can build the next generation of platforms to allow us to capture all the data that we need from assets, from customers, from ecosystem partners, to allow us to understand how we can re-innovate our business model with our customers by building a lot of service business portfolio, which is good generator of revenues in the future.

BONI: Let's take one thing from each of those speakers, Christoph from Emirates, he basically says trust the data, turn off your small brain, trust the data, and to sell what your customer wants, not what you're producing.

MOHAMED: Yes, I agree about that point, and I liked when Christopher mentioned that, because I think couple of years ago we had a problem about firms were saying that our data is not in the right order, have a problem about the quality, and basically that makes some firms doesn't experiment a lot with the data analytics. But at the moment if you hear from the Chief Digital Officer of Emirates, "Let's work with the data, let's come up with new opportunities from it, let's understand our customers in different terminals." I think

this is the right thing to do because all these firms have access to all these data, but they are not capitalizing on it.

BONI: And Dr Ye Meng, he also said on behalf Alibaba, he gave seven case studies, they were very diverse case studies from the Theo factory to Smart Living to GCL Solar Panels plus Smart Devices Incubator. But actually sharing that was this Trinity he speaks of, of the sharing, the micro and the platforms.

MOHAMED: I liked that as well, it's like it's really innovative, if you think about one of these case studies, which is related to manufacturing, it changes a normal traditional manufacturers we know about. It's moving that to a platform which makes the supplier and the manufacturer meet together, but not only enable established firms, it's getting new SMEs inside the business platform. Build the ecosystem that could work together efficiently to allow this business model to work.

It's really innovative, it's really interesting to see one of these big firms is already pioneering in this new platform. The structures that Ye Meng was mentioning are really interesting, and that could go to a different level, our economy will change or at least the way China sees their economy is going to change is quite obvious, it's going to that circular economy platform economy, data driven economy, which allows them to capitalize about artificial intelligence and this platform, the different technology they are using inside to enable that happening.

BONI: And a completely different vision of the factory, because you no longer have a factory that produces something and the sales force that optimistically goes out to sell it. Whether you're an SME operating on your smart phone, or you've got a big factory manufacturing solar panels, you actually supply when the orders come in.

MOHAMED: Yeah, and I think that's an advantage in China, because basically most of the big firms already own the brands, when they produce new phones or new sensors or some of these electrical devices, they go to these big factories to produce that chunk of orders. But if you bring that all inside the platform, controllable, have a quality and traceability, best service, best quality, the system guarantee to match between the supplier and the manufacturer, and do the order quicker, and penetrate the market quicker than anybody else. I think this is valuable for all the stakeholders that are going to be in that platform. I think that's really innovative.

BONI: And IBM in the way shared that vision, because we heard Martin speaking about the architecture, the big data, the structure, the unstructured data, the fact that they get 30,000 user items, not from Google, and they analyse it and see what or how it can inform the business model of their customers. And transforming into a premier cognitive enterprise simply through mining the data and making that data mining specific to the customer.

MOHAMED: I think that comes back from the notion of actually we are having a lot of data, even he said that even in IBM we have a lot of different systems, we need ourselves to capitalize on this data, which is going to help us to run our business, to recruit more

customers, to advise our salespeople about the best way to introduce your service to different customers, and get all the intelligence which allows you to close the deal.

The first step he was saying is actually, OK, we follow the structured data, which is numbers and comes from different systems like ERP's, ERM etc. but also you have all the documents that have been held for a while, it's been digitalized, why are we not running some of the machine learning models which could combine both together, which will give the insights to the human and augment their decision making in the future, and allowed them to achieve some of their objectives and running their business smoothly.

BONI: And then we heard from Sean, Thales, I mean big defence in the manufacturing industry, but also other things like signalling on the underground, we take all these unseen things for granted, because they work. But also how big globally the company is, Thales, and how they employ lots of engineers, and those engineers don't particularly like change, so you've got to make the internal change to drive the external customer experience.

MOHAMED: I think one of the things that Sean mentioned, and I think that's true for every firm that wants to transform to a digital space, there is a cultural resistance internally, there is sometimes, not in Thales per se, but there is no buy-in from the top management. That means that things are not going to work out, because basically the product mind-set will prevail in the firm, and culturally they are not going to be fast enough to be in that digital space, right?

If you want to do that right, Thales example was really great, they've got the top management buy-in, which has put a lot of investment inside the firm. You've got a commitment from different business units, and he explicitly said we are running business in civil 50 per cent and in defence 50 per cent, and basically we are trying to build a lot of business cases, cyber security in digital rail and etc. which has allowed us to come up with new service opportunities and business model.

Again, there is an emphasis here how that is going to change our business model opportunities, to generate some revenues in the future, which is another statement that came from Thales.

BONI: In the Sean of Thales also talked about the values underpinning Thales and a digital culture manifesto, people wouldn't have heard of that before. And then we also heard from Dr Ye Meng at Alibaba about health and happiness underpinning their business model. There are values, there are ethics, again, IBM spoke of ethics too.

MOHAMED: There is a role for these big firms to talk about the ethics. They are leading this type of transition, and partly that's why we are normally inviting these leader firms in such thought leadership forum to see how they are not tackling the technology aspect, how they are not just only tackling internal conflicts, how they are going to the digital transformation, but also think about the whole society and economy. And partly it's the ethical value and the well-being inside their strategy and agenda, which is a really great thing to see with these big firms, they are not as selfish, they are just being driven by the

revenues. But actually they are behind it, it's a good and green type of agenda which has allowed the society to be better in the future. Innovating for better world.

BONI: And your takeaways from your own conference today?

MOHAMED: It was really a great conference, I've learned a lot from our speakers, I had a lot of discussions from the networking. Like I said in one of the sessions, there are a lot of key terms here that we are hearing in the digital transformation. If you think about digital transformation, there is a strategy level you need to have a commitment from your top management, and commitment internally to enable you to bridge that evolution/revolution like Christoph was saying.

Secondly you need a lot of investment to digital capabilities, which is related to artificial intelligence. We heard Martin talking about cognitive enterprise, this really has to happen because internally you have a lot of data, you need to dig, dig, dig until you know what thing is better for you. And then there is the platform kind of keyword that we heard a lot, and basically how you put that one side that platform to allow this happening, come up with innovative idea and do it quickly, like what Alibaba does in China. Basically innovative firms changed the whole business experiment and get a lot of people inside that ecosystem. The last thing, I think is actually related to rewriting our business model. How are we going to rewrite our business model? To meet all the digital, as will see in the future.

BONI: And don't pull down the hatch and bury yourself, it's all happening too fast, we can't cope.

MOHAMED: Actually that is really good, we as researchers here at the Cambridge Service Alliance, we're happy to have challenges, and that's why we are helping our industry partners in that space. All these challenges they are facing, and some of it, to be honest, we are already now addressing some of our research, and there is a lot coming along, which we are happy to take them basically challenge ourselves to think about new thinking and come up with new tools that help our partners in the future to address these challenges.

BONI: Well today you've certainly done that. Congratulations Dr Mohamed Zaki, Deputy Director of the Cambridge Service Alliance, thank you very much indeed for talking to the Industry Conference podcast series, Bridging to New Service Technology, your Cambridge Service Week one-day conference here at the Moller Centre. Thank you.

MOHAMED: Thank you, that was great, thank you.