

THE UAE'S

GULF NEWS 

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 2023

TOP BUSINESS LEADERS



DEFINING THE RULES
OF SUCCESS

 [GULFNEWS.COM/GN-FOCUS](https://gulfnews.com/gn-focus)

 @GNFOCUS

 @GULFNEWSFOCUS

 @GNFOCUS

IN PROFILE

The real estate visionary

Atif Rahman, Founder and Chairman, ORO24 Real Estate Developments, spotlights industry trends and the brand's success stories in the UAE's burgeoning real estate sector



AEON & TRISL
REAL ESTATE BROKERS LLC

PROVIDING

**EXCEPTIONAL
SERVICES**

AROUND THE GLOBE SINCE

2008



+971588305762 | www.aeontrisl.com

AEON & TRISL
REAL ESTATE
EMAAR

Contents



5

STERLING PERFUMES
How a Made in UAE perfumery projects the scent of success



6

AJMAL PERFUMES
Innovation the top note for Ajmal Perfumes



8

BUKHATIR GROUP
Committed to innovation and diversification



11

AL SAIF GRAPHICS
AI, VR to rule exhibition space, says Al Saif Graphics MD



12

CLOUD BOX
All about cybersecurity challenges, future and present



13

AEON & TRISL
Revolutionising real estate through innovation



14

VISION CATALYST
Embracing tech to advance the civil engineering sector



15

FURSA CONSULTING
Why business functionalities are evolving at a rapid rate



17

MY PERFUMES
Intoxicating scent trail of successes



18

ORO 24 DEVELOPMENTS
Why success is directly proportional to value and innovation for the brand



22

PROSPER REAL ESTATE
Making customer satisfaction key to growth



25

OMA EMIRATES
Helping lead change in the payments sector



26

BEING SHE
Exploring the next frontier for women empowerment



27

SANS INSTITUTE
Studying the threat landscape arising from cyberattacks



28

BLUE OCEAN
Setting benchmarks in management training



32

DFMC
Corporate benefits of implementing a result-oriented culture

A GULF NEWS PUBLICATION

Head of Content – Supplements & Contract Publishing Sankar Sri Pillai | **Senior Art Editors** John Catherall, Nicholas D'souza
Head of Sales – Supplements & Contract Publishing Sundar Ghosh | **Category Sales Manager** Tina Bhakthavalsalan
Relationship Manager Rameshwar Nepali | **Senior Account Group Manager** Maria Amalraj | **Account Group Manager** Suchita Dsouza
Pre-Press Superintendent Shaji Varughese | **Pre-Press Operators** Yousaf Naeem, Atul Paradkar

CEO & Editor-In-Chief Abdul Hamid Ahmad | **Director – Sales & Publishing** Anshuman Joshi | **Publisher** David George
Design Director S.M. Arshad | **Production Editor** Floyd Gonsalves

Dubai P. O. Box 6519 Editorial: 04 406 7688 | Advertising Sales: 04 406 7455 | Email: gnfocus@gulfnews.com | Abu Dhabi P. O. Box 7441 Tel: 02 634 5144

Printed & published by Al Nisr Publishing LLC | Distributed by Al Nisr Distribution LLC

UAE Inc. pushes for diversity and inclusion

UAE survey respondents envision more women at the helm

GN Focus Report

Up to eight in ten women in the UAE workforce highlight that the opportunity to progress to top leadership positions is key for them, with 73 per cent feeling they have opportunities to lead at their workplace. The findings were revealed in a survey conducted by leading management consulting firm, Kearney earlier this year in March, and that explores the sentiment around women in leadership positions, the path to progress and the challenges faced.

The survey reveals 61 per cent of the UAE workforce thought more women in leadership roles would positively impact their organisation, with 39 per cent seeing the future top leader of their current organisation as being a woman.

UAE A GLOBAL LEADER

The UAE is ranked as a leading country in gender equality in the region, according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2022, with women making up 66 per cent of public sector workers and 30 per cent in leadership roles (research by Government of Dubai and Dubai Women Establishment). The last decade has seen multiple policies that support inclusivity and diversity come into play, aimed at facilitating the role of women in the workforce. While there have been positive strides towards a more equitable work environment at a national level, the survey reveals that leaders in the private sector still have work to do to pave the way for female talent.

Up to 81 per cent of the women surveyed claimed that it was difficult for them to get the support they needed to take on leadership roles. When asked about the challenges faced in the workplace, a quarter of women stated their goals were too ambitious, 21 per cent felt the organisational culture at their current workplace did not encourage them



GN ARCHIVES



Isabel Neiva
Partner,
Kearney MEA



Chiara Riffaldi
Partner,
Kearney MEA

to lead, and 18 per cent stated they faced discrimination by their co-workers.

Talking about the UAE's resolve in achieving gender equality, Isabel Neiva, Partner at Kearney Middle East & Africa, says, "The UAE has a strong commitment to empowering women at work for the development of the local economy, as part of We the UAE 2031 Vision, as well as the realisation the UN SDG Goal 5 of achieving gender equality.

"To support ambitious women aiming to climb the career ladder, business leaders in the private sector have a major responsibility to provide women with the relevant support and training to progress in their careers and open up opportunities for them to take a seat at the leadership table."

When questioned on how their organisation supports career development, only 26 per cent claimed that they received regular training and development, while 22 per cent said they were offered opportunities for regular career reviews and/or promotions.

ALL FOR INCLUSION

Having a leadership team that is genuinely committed to diversity and inclusion was flagged as a key priority for 81

per cent of respondents (both men and women), emphasising the important role that current business leaders play in accelerating the achievement of a more diverse and equitable workplace. Up to 61 per cent revealed their current organisation had diversity, equity, and inclusion targets, including having more women at the board level. Up to 27 per cent believed the organisation did not have such targets.

In conclusion, Chiara Riffaldi, Partner at Kearney Middle East and Africa, believes diversity, equity, and inclusion to be the proven pillars of success, providing the basis for future growth of organisations. "To accelerate the pace of change, a forward-thinking approach must be instilled from the top of the hierarchy, from the senior leadership team, trickling downward into management teams and the workforce," she says. "Setting diversity targets and publicly stating them is an important step towards enforcing accountability in organisations, to ensure that the leadership team works towards hiring and nurturing female talent, and to provide them with the tools and opportunities needed to progress." ●

NUMBERS OF NOTE

61%

Percentage of women in the study feel more women at the top will positively impact the organisation

73%

Percentage of women who feel they have opportunities to lead at their workplace here in the UAE

81%

Percentage of respondents who felt having a leadership team genuinely committed to diversity at the workplace is critical

STERLING PERFUMES INDUSTRIES LLC

Blazing the scent trail

Ali Asgar Fakhruddin, Chairman & CEO, Sterling Perfumes Industries LLC, says why thinking out of the box in the UAE's highly dynamic and competitive fragrances sector smells of success

Please share a brief history of your brand and its product portfolio.

An esteemed Made in UAE brand, Sterling Perfumes has established itself as a trailblazer in the fragrances, beauty and cosmetics industry for 25 years. With one of the top award-winning brands – Armaf, a line of Luxury French Fragrances, Cosmo Cosmetics, a plethora of beauty, cosmetic, and wellness ranges, and Hamidi, an exquisite range of Orientals, Sterling has created an enviable reputation. Other brands in the portfolio include Oros, Estiara, Estiara Passion, Cornells, Revel, Bioluxe, Just Jack, Jenny Glow, Flavia, Salt & Soak, and Natural Escapes. Sterling has made its mark in over 120 countries, earning a solid reputation as a leading global brand.

In a competitive market such as the UAE how has Sterling Perfumes managed to provide meaningful change to the customer experience through its products?

All businesses and markets are competitive. In the UAE's highly competitive landscape, it is how you think out of the box and position yourself in the market that makes you successful. Sterling's differentiating factors lie in its commitment to uncompromised quality, premium fragrances at economical prices, and luxurious packaging. The meaningful change for the customer is that we design fragrances that are right for every moment and occasion. Our key success point is that we craft a fragrance that touches your soul. I have a strong team in marketing and sales and the entire management that makes every obstacle an opportunity. We have embraced the digital era and transitioned from traditional methods to a comprehensive online approach through dedicated e-commerce portals for each brand.

Heading your brand, what are the main challenges you foresee for the perfume sector in the UAE?

To be honest we don't see any challenges. We believe in hard work, we believe in honesty and make sure that we give a quality product, and the rest we leave to Allah as success and failure is in his hands. But, to be successful it is important to have market knowledge and develop the right



products as well as launch at the right time with the right pricing and right placement.

Are there any product launches you have planned for this year and the next?

Yes of course! We have some major launches lined up. I cannot disclose much as we want it to be a surprise for everyone. In our pursuit of constant innovation, we unveil our latest products during prominent global events such as Beauty World Middle East and Cosmoprof Bologna, held annually. For example, the resounding success of Armaf's Club De Nuit Intense and Sillage prompted us to expand the line with three new fragrances: Untold, Iconic & Imperial and we announced it during the BeautyWorld Middle East 2022. As we celebrate Sterling's 25th anniversary in 2023, we proudly inaugurated, The World's Largest

Perfume Wall, symbolising the organisation's illustrious journey.

What are the leadership qualities that help you steer your brand towards consistent growth?

Leadership is defined by how a team is managed. A good leader is one that leads his team efficiently and creates a happy work atmosphere. Sterling has good leaders. The system is managed and the freedom of working with their ideas and their thoughts is encouraged. We take calculated risks and have an open mind to accept their innovative ideas. We strongly believe that no business is without risk and a leader should have the guts to take it. Sterling is heavily inclined towards charitable missions too. Sterling is not a manufacturing Industry but a family where everyone comes to live a life and not work. ●

AJMAL PERFUMES

Pioneering the business of fragrances

Innovative marketing complements new product lines to present a heady mix for Ajmal Perfumes, says brand CEO, **Abdulla Ajmal**

How has the popularity of Ajmal as a brand helped to evolve the local and regional perfume industry?

Ajmal Perfumes has evolved and expanded significantly over the years from a traditional trading house to a global perfume brand. The brand has been renowned in the regional perfume industry as an innovator in perfume-making and a pioneer in marketing. The company is also involved in research and development and introduces new products in the market every year. We have also catered to the needs of the ever-evolving market trends and consumer habits through our e-commerce channels.

This is how the popularity of Ajmal as a brand has helped it evolve the local and regional perfume industry – by introducing new product lines, innovative marketing strategies, and investing in research and development to keep up with the changing market trends.

In this, as in everything else, we're guided by our vision – to be a global essence. We are a true farm-to-fragrance brand that's now available the world over – in over 50 countries, across more than 300 showrooms.

Are there any new products on the anvil for Ajmal, or new markets you wish to tap in the region and globally? What is the USP of your brand and how have you managed to retain this essence over so many decades?

The brand has recently launched several new collections of fragrances, including 'Song of Oud', in collaboration with regional renowned music artist SaudG & Ahmedoo Biggie. Ajmal is also planning to release new fragrances targeted towards the younger generation, who prefer lighter and fresher scents compared to the strong traditional ones.

Overall, Ajmal Perfumes is focusing on product innovation and expanding into new markets globally to strengthen its position as a leading player in the fragrance industry.

What is your secret mantra of leadership, how do you champion your team and brand through failure and success?

Leadership is a tricky thing. There are so many ways to lead, and everyone has their own unique style. But if you ask me, there are a few pillars of leadership that are crucial for every leader to uphold. My secret mantra of leadership may involve a commitment to quality, a balance between tradition and innovation, empowering employees, maintaining open communication, learning from failure, and celebrating success. I believe these principles are important because they allow me to stay true to myself as an individual while still ensuring that I'm running a successful business. When it comes down to it, I think that's what good leadership all is about: being yourself while also making sure your employees feel valued and heard by you—and then celebrating your collective successes!

With COP28 being held by the UAE this year-end, how critical is sustainability for the perfumes sector

at large and more specifically for your brand over the next decade of growth?

Ajmal Perfumes has been focusing on sustainability as a core value over the past few years. The company is committed to reducing its carbon footprint and using sustainable ingredients and packaging materials in its products. For instance, in 2021, Ajmal Perfumes announced the launch of 'Ajmal Sustainable Packaging' with Qafiya. As COP28 is being held by the UAE, it is likely that sustainability will be a critical topic discussed in many businesses, including those in the perfume industry. Therefore, it can be anticipated that Ajmal Perfumes will continue to prioritize sustainability and eco-friendly practices in its operations over the next decade, consistent with its values and initiatives.

In many respects Ajmal Perfumes was ahead of time. Back in 1979, before the concept of sustainability was even born, our founder and my grandfather, late Haji Ajmal Ali had launched a massive afforestation program of agarwood plantations in Assam, India. The movement continues to this day, with over 10 million agarwood trees being planted till date.

What do you believe will be your legacy for Ajmal Perfumes in the decades to come?

Ajmal Perfumes is a leading fragrance brand globally, and it's easy to see why. We've been around for more than seven decades, and we've been creating fragrances that are both authentic and high quality since the beginning. It's a company that has stayed true to its values throughout its history, and it shows in their products. In the decades to come, it is likely that Ajmal Perfumes will continue to reinforce its position as a leading fragrance brand globally while maintaining its reputation for authenticity and quality. The company is also committed to sustainability and eco-friendly practices, which could be a significant aspect of its legacy in the future.

This is a good place to reiterate our founder and my grandfather's vision. Haji Ajmal Ali's value system has been my north star and I carry forward his glorious legacy with pride and humility. ●





**Leadership
is about
ensuring
your
employees
feel valued
and heard by
you.”**

Abdulla Ajmal
CEO, Ajmal Perfumes

Championing the transformative journey of a Made in UAE brand

Excellent commitment to innovation, diversification, and a strategic investment plan have all helped the Bukhatir Group make their impact across diverse sectors including renewable energy, education and more, says **Ayman Ahmed**, CEO, Industries, Trading & Services Sectors, Bukhatir Group

The Bukhatir Group is among the UAE's most recognised brands. Share an overview on the group's transformative journey since you took over the reins.

Ever since taking on the helm of the Bukhatir Group, we have embarked on a remarkable transformative journey that has propelled us to the forefront of the UAE's business landscape. Our commitment to innovation, diversification, and strategic investments has allowed us to achieve significant milestones and establish ourselves as one of the most recognised brands in the region.

Some noteworthy milestones in our transformative journey involve our subsidiary, Conmix Limited, which recently made headlines by achieving a Guinness World Records title. Conmix, a renowned provider of ready-mix solutions, earned recognition for its extraordinary accomplishment in delivering the highest volume of concrete for a single project within a 24-hour time frame. Conmix had achieved this feat by harnessing advanced technology such as GPS tracking data combined with in-house software systems to make intelligent business decisions, as well as working closely with its R&D team to develop cutting-edge concrete admixtures, ensuring top performance and quality, while maintaining a high level of operational efficiency. The company was also awarded the Best Ready-mix Factories Award in Dubai, at the International Concrete Technology Forum in 2022. The award is a testament to the performance and quality standards

upheld at the plant.

Furthermore, Conmix has been at the forefront of implementing sustainable practices, and has emerged as a market leader in the construction materials industry for reducing its environmental impact by incorporating sustainable by-products such as GGBFS into the manufacturing process, thereby promoting greener construction practices.

German Gulf Enterprises Limited — also a subsidiary of the Bukhatir Group — highly prioritises its sustainability actions to reduce its carbon footprint, along with being committed to promoting the emergence of renewable technologies and has chosen to collaborate with TotalEnergies to use solar energy at its facility in Dubai. TotalEnergies installed a 535 kilowatt-peaks (kWp) solar PV rooftop, covering a surface area equivalent to over 10 tennis courts. The solar rooftop is expected to produce almost 800 megawatt-hours (MWh) in its first year of operation and can cover almost 100% of the facility's energy needs. As a result, the company will see

a reduction in its carbon emissions by over 300 tonnes of CO₂ annually, which is equivalent to approximately 9,000 trees planted per year.

The UAE continues to explore and open new frontiers in the global energy market and has shifted its focus from the traditional oil and gas industry to the growing renewable energy segment. To support this initiative, another one of our companies, ULO Systems, provides its unique services, focusing on a niche segment; foundation grouting, where it self-developed its

technology in the UAE, and has been growing ever since into a global leader in the provision of pipeline and platform grouting services and solutions for the offshore construction industry.

Moreover, we embarked on the journey of digital transformation as a part of the corporate vision for 2023, and initiated our Ru'ya Transformation Programme, partnering with reputable industry leaders, Oracle, Deloitte, and Nalsoft, as part of an ongoing effort to improve technological capabilities, and deliver higher levels of efficiency. The parameters of the programme involved upgrading the existing ERP system to focus on 4 key pillars: technology, process, people, and data.

These remarkable achievements, amongst others, serve as testaments to the Bukhatir Group's unwavering commitment to excellence, and our relentless pursuit of pushing boundaries. It showcases the spirit of innovation that permeates throughout our organisation and stands as a shining example of our transformative journey.

You have worked in management roles and steered the local fortunes of global brands during your professional career. What have been your main takeaways while working for these firms, and how do you implement your learnings at the Bukhatir Group?

During my professional career, I have had the privilege of working in management roles and steering the fortunes of global brands. One of the main takeaways from these experiences is the significance of adaptability and agility. The business landscape is constantly evolving, and it is crucial to anticipate and respond to market trends and customer demands. At the Bukhatir Group, we embrace a forward-thinking approach that encourages innovation and



We embrace a forward-thinking approach that encourages innovation & flexibility."

Ayman Ahmed
CEO, Bukhatir Group



programmes, including health and wellness initiatives, employee assistance programmes, and a strong emphasis on work-life balance. Additionally, we promote a culture of open communication, recognition, and professional development to ensure that our teams feel valued and motivated.

Furthermore, we host 2 awards ceremonies; Taqdeer, which acknowledges the triumphs of our driven team members, departments, and subsidiaries, and Nujoom, which highlight the accomplishments of our academic and non-academic faculty from the Creative Science Schools. The awards fall under various categories such as Company of the Year, Employee of the Year, Employer of Choice, and Most Sustainable Company, for Taqdeer, along with Educator of the Year, Lifetime Achievement Award, Mentor of the Year, Most Dynamic Principal, Team of the Year, and The Rising Star, for Nujoom, to name a few. By prioritising staff wellness, we aim to create a harmonious and fulfilling work experience for our employees.

As the CEO of an established regional corporate brand with global sectoral influence, what is your approach for success and your advice to young management professionals aspiring to be in your position, as well as young entrepreneurs hoping to impact their chosen fields of business?

As the CEO of a conglomerate with global sectoral influence, my approach for success revolves around several key principles. Firstly, maintaining a clear vision and setting ambitious yet achievable goals is crucial. Secondly, fostering a culture of innovation, continuous learning, and adaptability is essential to stay ahead in a rapidly changing business landscape. Thirdly, building strong relationships with stakeholders, customers, and partners is vital for long-term success. Lastly, embracing diversity and inclusivity within the organisation promotes creativity and innovation.

For young management professionals aspiring to be in a similar position, I would advise them to focus on building a solid foundation of knowledge and skills, seeking diverse experiences, and demonstrating a strong work ethic. It is also essential to cultivate a growth mindset, be open to learning from others, and seize opportunities to take on leadership roles.

For young entrepreneurs, I encourage them to identify a market gap or a unique value proposition, have a thorough understanding of their chosen industry, and develop a robust business plan. Surrounding oneself with a strong support network, including mentors and advisors, is invaluable. Above all, persistence, resilience, and the ability to learn from failures are key attributes that can drive entrepreneurial success. ●

flexibility. We actively seek opportunities to collaborate with international partners, adopt best practices from global industry leaders, and implement cutting-edge technologies that enhance our operational efficiency and customer experience.

The focus on education is very strong for the Bukhatir Group. How has the sector evolved in the UAE in the last decade, how has the group played a supportive role in this growth story, and what are its future forays in the sector?

The education sector in the UAE has witnessed significant growth and evolution over the past decade. As a responsible corporate entity, the Bukhatir Group has played a supportive role in this growth story. We have made substantial

investments in educational institutions and our goal is to provide quality education that nurtures young minds, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in a competitive global environment. Looking ahead, we will continue to explore opportunities to further expand our presence in the education sector, both domestically and internationally, and contribute to shaping the future of education.

How important is staff wellness for the Bukhatir Group, and how do you elevate this experience among your teams?

Staff wellness is a top priority for the Bukhatir Group. We believe that a healthy and happy workforce is crucial for driving productivity and fostering a positive work environment. We provide comprehensive wellness

Adopting cloud computing can be economically viable for the UAE

Public cloud's contribution to the UAE economy could reach \$181 billion by 2033, according to a report released by Amazon Web Services

GN Focus Report

There is immense potential for the UAE to unlock \$181 billion in additional economic value over the next decade (2023-2033), or 2.5 per cent of the UAE's cumulative GDP by accelerating adoption of cloud. The fact was revealed in a report recently published last week by Amazon Web Services (AWS), an Amazon company. The report also quantifies the relationship between public cloud computing adoption, national productivity, and economic growth in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

The study, performed by Telecom Advisory Services LLC, and directed by Raul Katz, Director of Business Strategy Research at the Columbia Institute for Tele-information (Columbia Business School), provides a cutting-edge econometrical method for calculating the aggregate productivity gains realised by economies that adopt cloud computing. It extends previous economic research focused on firm-level productivity by establishing cloud adoption as a driver of national productivity and economic growth.

ECONOMIC POWER

In 2021, public cloud adoption made a significant impact on the UAE economy. According to the report, it contributed 2.26 per cent to the country's GDP, generating an economic value of \$9.5 billion, the largest public cloud contribution to GDP in the region. This "productivity" effect is in addition to the "construction" effect of building and operating cloud infrastructures in the UAE, which, in the case of AWS UAE Region, are projected to contribute \$11.2 billion to the UAE economy by 2036 and support nearly 6,000 full-time equivalent jobs annually.

In the MENA, the UAE is where cloud adoption is driving the most economic growth in terms of spillovers. The report finds that a 1 per

cent increase in cloud adoption by UAE organisations will result in a 0.21 per cent (\$854.7 million) average GDP growth, which is three times the MENA average and the highest in the region. Over 91 per cent of this impact, can be attributed to the national productivity gains or so-called spillover effects on the economy, while the remainder (9 per cent) is driven by cloud spending from UAE public and private organisations. As an economic stimulant, cloud computing is 17 per cent more effective in the UAE than mobile broadband.

Yasser Hassan, Managing Director, Commercial Sector, MENAT at AWS, says: "The findings of our report highlight the tremendous opportunity for the UAE to accelerate economic growth and position the country as an attractive and influential economic hub, in line with the government's We the UAE 2031 vision launched by His Highness Shaikh Mohammad

Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. As cloud computing continues to gain momentum, it is imperative for the UAE to continue to support cloud adoption and develop a skilled workforce to enhance the country's competitiveness on a global scale. With the support of AWS, the UAE can accelerate its digital transformation and unlock new opportunities for economic growth and social development." The study demonstrates that the economic impact of cloud computing is guided by returns to scale, - greater adoption of cloud computing will lead to proportionally greater productivity gains and economic impact.

DIGITISE TO DIVERSIFY

The UAE has ambitious plans to diversify its economies through digitisation. In 2021, 43 per cent of organisations in the UAE region adopted cloud computing, versus 49 per cent in Western Europe and North America. With the government's focus on digital transformation, it is well-positioned to become a hub for cloud computing in the region.



"The findings of our report highlight the tremendous opportunity for the UAE to accelerate economic growth and position the country as an attractive and influential economic hub."



Yasser Hassan,
Managing Director, Commercial Sector, MENAT,
Amazon Web Services

The report identifies four key advantages of cloud computing: First, it enhances business efficiency and effectiveness, streamlining processes and improving outcomes; second, it offers access to a range of services, enabling businesses to leverage advanced technologies; third, it boosts productivity by facilitating collaboration, mobility, and agility within the workforce; fourth, cloud computing promotes environmental sustainability by reducing carbon emissions per unit of data transmitted. ●

BY THE NUMBERS

- 2.26%** Contribution of public cloud adoption to UAE GDP in 2021
- 43%** Percentage of UAE organisations that adopted cloud computing in 2021
- 6,000** Number of jobs that cloud computing build and operation can support by 2036
- \$11.2 billion** Estimated contribution of construction and productivity effects of cloud networks to UAE economy by 2036

AL SAIF GRAPHICS

Innovative and result-driven exhibition solutions

Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality will anchor innovation trends in various events and brand promotions in years to come, says **Hasan Chmatan**, Managing Director, Al Saif Graphics

Share a brief of your company and its product portfolio.

Al Saif Graphics LLC (ASG) was established in the year 2003, in Abu Dhabi. ASG specialises in turnkey and customer-driven services that cater to industry-leading companies in the Middle East and European markets. We offer a range of events services, exhibition solutions and branding solutions, including customised stand fabrication, interior fit-out, storage solutions, digital printing, vehicle wrapping solutions, and furniture rental. We take pride in our in-house carpentry, steel and acrylic, and in having one of the largest scale printing machines in the region. ASG ensures the delivery of cross-platform solutions to create cutting-edge experiences. From bespoke brand strategy planning to activation, we provide innovative and result-driven solutions which generate compelling moments and form deep and lasting relationships with the right audiences.

ASG has a successful track record of delivering the highest quality of services that can be traced to our processes; we have mastered the entire event and exhibition process and bringing-out our client's brand identity, mapped out the customer journey, and today offer our clients seamless and stress-free solutions that take care of their diverse requirements.



What were the pandemic challenges and how did you lead your team?

Like the world over, ASG faced unforeseen challenges when the event and exhibition industry was shut off completely owing to the pandemic. Taking on the challenge of remaining responsible while responding to the pandemic, I took a systematic approach by staying optimistic and focused on the production activities of our allied businesses such as Covid-19 safe guards, fabrication of porta cabins and interior fit out etc. to sustain our business in the market.

A methodical approach to responsible business, embedded through organisational purpose, values and trust that was built for decades amongst my employees at ASG, it came as a helping hand for me to lead the team through the tough times.

Discuss some of the current market trends and you can meet this demand.

Technology will continue to drive innovation

across business models in various industries, allowing new businesses to enter the market and disrupt incumbents in serious ways. In order to drive business growth, staying relevant in changing times, and to differentiate from the competition, we must be able to think creatively and embrace innovation to produce break-through value for our customers. Adapting new mindsets as technology-enabled transformation is imperative, Al Saif Graphics, is well equipped by incorporating advanced techniques such as AI, projection mapping (3D visual projection onto a 3D surface), virtual walls, interactive flooring, product demonstrations through Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality (three-dimensional experience of either a location or event), hologram, gamification etc. in its exhibition stand designs and our forte stands out in bringing the design to reality. Our employees are our core strength, we offer them the free hands to exhibit their strategies and their creative thoughts are nurtured and supported to produce exceptional designs to meet our customer demands.

This enables us to project ourselves as a unique designer and emerge successful in our business.

What is Al Saif Graphics' expansion strategy over the next decade?

The global events and exhibition market is expected to reach a humongous growth and the UAE is a driving force to be reckoned with in the world of exhibitions and events. Exhibitions are among the significant enablers of global trade and economic growth. Organisers and exhibitors are exploring the world of Geo-Cloning, for instance as a way to reach out to wider audiences regionally and globally to increase the brand awareness and sales. We focus to step into Private Sectors and to expand internationally by providing state of the art designs that integrates tailor-made customer solutions and 'smart-age' techniques like data intelligence, interaction and engagement tools to help both organisers and exhibitors measure the value and success of a show. ●



CLLOUD BOX TECHNOLOGIES

Embrace digital transformation

Ranjith Kaippada, Managing Director, Cloud Box Technologies, elaborates on cybersecurity challenges and how the brand is helping mitigate this

How is Cloud Box Technologies enabling businesses to embrace digital transformation?

Cloud Box Technologies empower businesses with comprehensive solutions in infrastructure, software, cloud and cybersecurity. Through strategic partnerships with top-tier brands, we provide cutting-edge technology solutions for digital transformation. Our tailored infrastructure solutions optimize performance and improve operational efficiency. We specialize in creating robust and secure network architectures, enabling seamless connectivity and collaboration. With our cloud solutions, organisations harness scalability and cost-efficiency. Our cybersecurity measures fortify defenses against evolving threats, ensuring uninterrupted operations. We

stay informed and competent in the ever-changing digital landscape, leveraging new technologies like AI and 5G. As a trusted partner, Cloud Box Technologies delivers end-to-end solutions for successful digital transformation.

What are the main challenges you foresee in the cloud enablement space and how is Cloud Box Technologies hoping to overcome them?

Cloud Box Technologies provides smart solutions to help businesses overcome challenges in cloud enablement. We address the complexity of migrating systems to the cloud by offering seamless cloud migration services. Our expertise in advanced cloud security ensures the protection

of valuable data stored in the cloud. We provide scalable cloud solutions to meet fluctuating demands and avoid vendor lock-in by offering vendor-agnostic architectures. Our cost management services optimize cloud spending and maximize value. With a focus on simplifying processes, ensuring data security, providing flexibility, preventing vendor restrictions, and managing costs effectively, Cloud Box Technologies empowers businesses to confidently embrace the cloud and achieve their digital transformation goals.

Theft of sensitive data is a matter of global concern for corporations. How is Cloud Box helping mitigate risk?

Cloud Box Technologies prioritises robust cybersecurity measures to protect organisations from increasing threats to sensitive data. Our solutions focus on safeguarding data, ensuring system integrity, and maintaining business continuity. By implementing comprehensive security measures, we help organisations mitigate risks, comply with regulations, and protect their reputation. Our cybersecurity solutions address challenges such as data protection, threat detection and incident response, network security, data integrity, vulnerability management, and compliance. With constantly evolving and comprehensive solutions, backed by partnerships with leading cybersecurity brands, we empower businesses to defend against emerging threats.

Our goal is to provide comprehensive cybersecurity measures that secure data, maintain operational resilience, and foster customer trust. With our expertise and cutting-edge technologies, organisations can confidently embrace digital transformation, knowing their valuable assets are protected from modern cyber threats.

An integrated SOC is critical to businesses looking to guard against advanced cyber threats. How well is Cloud Box addressing this need?

Cloud Box Technologies understands the critical importance of an integrated Security Operations Center (SOC) in safeguarding businesses against advanced cyber threats. A state-of-the-art SOC combines advanced technologies, expert analysts, and proactive monitoring for comprehensive threat detection and response. Leveraging advanced SIEM tools and threat intelligence feeds, any 24/7 SOC detects and analyses potential security incidents in real-time. Skilled cybersecurity professionals continuously investigate threats and vulnerabilities, ensuring proactive risk mitigation. It is important to prioritise collaboration with partners to tailor SOC services to their unique requirements, risk appetite, and compliance needs.

Cloud Box Technologies is committed to providing comprehensive threat detection and response capabilities through advanced technologies, skilled analysts, and proactive monitoring. ●

AEON & TRISL

A transformative force in real estate

Saleem Karsaz, Founder and Group CEO, Aeon & Trisl, is a real estate maestro whose visionary leadership has reshaped the industry. With a world of knowledge and an evident aptitude for innovation, Karsaz has revolutionised the way we generally perceive real estate, propelling Aeon & Trisl to exceptional heights. Excerpts from an interview

Please share a brief profile on your brand.

Aeon & Trisl is not just an average real estate company; it is a transformative force that revolutionises the whole property experience. With strategically located headquarters in Dubai and a global presence in London, Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore and Gujrat; we have become synonymous with trust, integrity and customer satisfaction. We have an impressive track record of two decades. We stand as a leading multinational agency, serving investors, developers and homebuyers in the UAE, UK and Pakistan.

What makes Aeon & Trisl's services unique from the competition?

What sets Aeon & Trisl apart from the competition is our commitment to creating extraordinary experiences. We believe that real estate is about more than transactions. It's more about helping people find their perfect home, dream investment or vision for a thriving business. Our passionate team genuinely cares about the dreams and goals of our clients. We take the time to listen, understand their needs and provide solutions that go beyond their expectations.

What are the main sectoral challenges you perceive for your brand, and how are you opting to overcome them?

As the prominent brand in the real-estate industry, Aeon & Trisl faces sectoral challenges that we view as opportunities for growth. The global pandemic accelerated the shift towards digitalisation and we embraced it. We invested heavily in advanced technological solutions, offering virtual property tours, digital transactions and online consultations. This digital transformation not only overcame pandemic challenges but also enhanced accessibility for clients across borders.



Please share Aeon & Trisl's recent recognitions and accolades.

Aeon & Trisl takes pride in its accolades. We secured the top position in the prestigious Emaar Annual Brokers Awards for the 6th consecutive year, maintaining the title of Emaar Diamond Brokers. We are proud members of Nakheel Diamond Club since 2021 and Damac Chairman Club for multiple years. Being recognised as one of Majid Al Futtaim's Top Tier Brokers further solidifies our position as a trusted real estate agency in Dubai. Moreover, I have been featured as the top broker by the Dubai Land Department on their esteemed REST Application for over 5 years. These recognitions have motivated us

to continue raising the bar and setting new benchmarks in the real estate industry.

Define leadership and your mantra for success.

For me, leadership is the art of inspiring others to unlock their full potential and achieve greatness. My mantra for success revolves around three pillars: vision, integrity and collaboration. A strong vision provides a clear direction. Integrity fosters trust and transparency with stakeholders. Collaboration fuels innovation and promotes a culture of continuous growth. As a leader, I personify integrity and honesty as my core approach to guiding my organisation. ●

Building a strong foundation for success

In conversation with **Vivek Sinha**, Founder, Vision Catalyst

Provide a brief overview of the Vision Catalyst Group and expand on its product portfolio.

Founded by me, and with its headquarters in Dubai, the Vision Catalyst Group (VCG) is an international conglomerate with interests in engineering, procurement and construction, with operations spread across the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Europe through a group of 14 companies. VCG is the umbrella organisation for Galaxy star, Maze Projects, and Atelier Construction and its subsidiaries.

I managed to put together the brand's extensive service portfolio thanks to my background in civil engineering. Today, as an unlimited EPC company, Vision Catalyst offers expertise in building construction, concrete restoration and electromechanical activities, and 15 years of consolidated experience in buildings, metro stations, industries, towers, infrastructure and high-end residential and commercial projects. Through its subsidiary, Maze Developments, VCG has also launched real estate development projects in the UAE and India.

In the past two years, the construction industry has faced significant challenges. Could you elaborate on the obstacles the industry encountered during this period and explain how your brand successfully overcame them?

The past two years have presented numerous challenges for the construction industry. Some of the key obstacles encountered during this period include:

1. Supply chain disruptions
2. Labour shortages
3. Financial constraints

To overcome these obstacles, Vision Catalyst adopted several strategies:

1. Diversification of supply chain
2. Talent development and retention
3. Financial planning and partnerships

Embracing Technology Through these strategies, Vision Catalyst effectively addressed the challenges faced by the construc-



tion industry, ensuring project continuity, timely delivery, and successful outcomes. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) holds great appeal for civil engineers as a dream destination.

In your opinion, how developed is the sector, and what are Vision Catalyst's insights on the industry's future trends in the coming decade?

The civil engineering sector in the UAE has reached a significant level of development and holds immense potential. As for Vision Catalyst's insights on the industry's future trends in the coming decade, we envision the following:

1. Sustainable and green infrastructure There will be a growing emphasis on sustainable and green infrastructure development.

The UAE has already demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainability, and this trend is expected to continue. Civil engineering projects will increasingly incorporate eco-friendly designs, renewable energy solutions, water conservation measures, and smart technologies to create sustainable cities and communities.

2. Digital transformation The industry will undergo a digital transformation, leveraging advanced technologies such as Building Information Modeling (BIM), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), and automation.

3. Smart cities and infrastructure The UAE is at the forefront of smart city initiatives, and the civil engineering sector will play a vital role in shaping smart infrastructure. Intelligent transportation systems, smart grids, digital connectivity, and integrated data platforms will be key focus areas, enhancing urban living experiences, optimizing resource utilisation, and improving overall quality of life.

4. Infrastructure resilience and climate adaptation Civil engineers will be involved in designing and retrofitting infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and other climate related challenges, ensuring the long-term sustainability and safety of built environments.

5. Collaboration and innovation The industry will witness increased collaboration and innovation. Cross-sector partnerships, public-private collaborations, and knowledge sharing platforms will drive innovation in project delivery methods, materials, and construction techniques.

6. Focus on infrastructure maintenance and asset management With the growth of existing infrastructure, there will be a greater emphasis on maintenance and asset management. Vision Catalyst recognises these industry trends and is committed to staying at the forefront of developments. We are dedicated to leveraging our expertise in sustainable infrastructure, digital solutions, and smart city initiatives to contribute to the growth and transformation of the civil engineering sector in the UAE and beyond. ●

FURSA CONSULTING

Setting benchmarks in corporate advisory services

Rapid evolution in corporate governance and financial reporting is making firms reposition business functionalities, says **Abdul Moiz Khan**, Co-Founder, CEO & Managing Partner, Fursa Consulting

Please share a brief on your brand and service portfolio.

Incorporated in 2014 under a professional banking and management consulting license issued by the Department of Economic Development, Government of Dubai, Fursa Consulting is a leading independent corporate advisory firm focusing on providing financial advice on structured debt, equity, mergers and acquisitions and strategy to corporates and institutional clients. Our firm fosters long-term relationships with clients as their independent adviser on corporate and strategic matters and transactions. Our team at Fursa comprises of experienced banking professionals with strong academic and corporate / risk management backgrounds. With extensive knowledge of local and international markets (GCC, Europe, Asia) and access to leading market players, our team is well positioned to facilitate and execute transactions.

As the lead for one of the most recognised business advisory firms in the region, what are the main trends you perceive in your business space in the UAE?

With current buzz and acceptability of artificial intelligence (AI), the cloud, the metaverse, new corporate governance & financial reporting, evolving at a fast pace, has pushed corporates to reposition their business functionalities to benefit from such advancements by improving in areas of financial reporting, credit controls, corporate governance, maximizing business efficiencies. We see a lot of automation/digitalisation happening not only in corporate business but in much advanced form in banking and FI space with the objective to bring in efficiency, transparency and risk elimination. All these good changes, open much wider business opportunities for us to facilitate our clients in assisting them to adapt these changes and integrate well into the new business ecosystem.

How are markets for structured debt evolving in a post-covid world?

The recent past witnessed a substantial hike in interest rate exceeding above 5 per cent mark, forcing businesses to rethink their debt needs and



significantly adjust their business cash flow to absorb the negative impact of higher interest rate.

However, there is now a general improvement in risk appetite based on the expectations of a less severe upward trajectory rates and slower inflation. We expect this trend to continue fostering corporate lending to grow on relatively reduced rates. This will create business opportunities for us to advise our client in identification of a suitable debt structure.

What does Fursa Consulting's specialised services arm offer clients?

Under our Strategy business vertical, we offer our clients various periodic monitoring services to prepare accurate, reliable financial reporting as required by their lenders, advise clients on good corporate governance, we also advise clients on a holistic business re-engineering exercise to optimize shareholders value etc.

How do you see client servicing evolving in your niche field of work here in the Middle East over the next decade, and how well placed is Fursa Consulting to be in step with change?

We are proud to have a vast pool of lender affiliations covering Asia, MENA and Europe. However, keeping pace with the ever evolving improved and efficient products/specialised funding needs of our clients, we are always expanding our lenders bandwidth (bank, FI, family offices, funds etc.) to provide suitable structures which meets the clients need. Noting client expectations are always unique and complex, yet it's critical and important to respond to them with an adequate structure in timely manner. The core fundamental of Fursa's business philosophy is of utmost importance to an active client relationship. ●

Organisations urged to improve risk culture

New report published jointly by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Association of Insurance and Risk Managers, and Professional Risk Managers International Association, gauges how financial leaders globally and in the region deal with risk

GN Focus Report

As corporate collapses make headlines this year the need for strong risk management is clear. This is why the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), The Association of Insurance and Risk Managers (Airmic), and the Professional Risk Managers' International Association (PRMIA) have collaborated on a new study that gauges how risk and financial leaders are dealing with risk culture and to what extent they understand its effect on the organisation's broader strategy.

The research is based on an online global survey complemented by a mix of interactive engagements with the three professional bodies' respective members, gathering views from thousands of risk and financial professionals around the world. The findings are published in a new report, Risk Culture: Building Resilience and Seizing Opportunities.

This first of its kind study found that while box ticking is prevalent there is growing interest in risk culture to cope with disconnected organisational cultures and hard-to-detect breadth of risks.

Key risk priorities for risk and finance professionals across all regions were regulatory, compliance and risk followed by technology, data, cybersecurity and economic inflation and recession.

Sector-specific results showed respondents in financial services were more likely to raise technology, data and cybersecurity and regulatory, compliance and legal as their two highest risk priorities, whereas those in the corporate sector ranked logistics and supply chain issues as one of their top three risk concerns. Interestingly, despite a rise in corporate fraud cases, the corporate sector ranked misconduct, fraud and reputational damage lower than any other sector.

Some of the overarching concerns coming out of the report are that risk conversations continue to happen in



SHUTTERSTOCK

a vacuum at the top of organisations, and that engagement not only between boards and senior management – but also across functions and roles – needs significant improving.

Rachael Johnson, Head, Risk Management and Corporate Governance, ACCA, and author of the report, says, "Recent corporate collapses remind us of how inadequate and siloed risk governance can be, regardless of what is said in their financial statements. As our research shows, it is not only the regulators who are asking questions. In today's highly interconnected, digital world, even a weak risk culture is better than none."

Julia Graham, CEO, Airmic, says, "The report addresses how risk culture can contribute towards managing these tensions as part of good governance and concludes that managing risk dynamically and building resilience collaboratively are changing risk culture for the better."

Justin McCarthy, CEO, PRMIA, believes that recent events, such as FTX and Silicon Valley Bank showed why

risk culture, more than ever needs to be front and centre for risk and accounting professionals. "This report shows how we need to help our respective members work and learn together more," she adds.

Fazeela Gopalani, Head, ACCA Middle East, believes the demand for risk governance and compliance professionals has skyrocketed in the region since the pandemic. "However, only 27 per cent of respondents in the Middle East and South Asia have conducted a risk maturity assessment," she says, adding, "the survey also found that technology and cybersecurity were ranked top risk priority by respondents in MESA, followed by regulatory, compliance, and legal, as well as misconduct, fraud and reputational damage respectively."

ACCA is expected to publish additional research on risk culture by industry throughout 2023. ●



Rachael Johnson
ACCA



Julia Graham
Airmic



Fazeela Gopalani
ACCA
Middle East

ABOUT THE STUDY

The Risk Culture: Building Resilience and Seizing Opportunities report incorporates insights from over 2,000 risk and financial professionals around the world. The online survey took place in October 2022 and attracted 1,823 individual responses from risk and financial professionals globally, across a range of industries. The majority of these individuals have accountancy backgrounds (93 per cent being ACCA members). Additional forums, roundtables and one-on-one interviews with more ACCA members contributed further qualitative data.

— GN Focus Report



MY PERFUMES

A contemporary ode to the ancient art of perfumery

In conversation with **Mustafa Firoz, MD,**
My Perfumes Group Of Companies

Share a brief corporate profile of your brand.

My Perfumes Select is a young new-age perfume brand, an avant-garde fusion of East and West. Our Global-Arab palette of scent signatures crafted from precious perfume absolutes, manifest as exotic and lavishly bold contemporary artistic odes to the ancient art of oriental perfumery. Each Select fragrance is a luxurious imprint that introduces the wearer and leaves an intoxicating scent trail. Rooted in a legacy of 30 years of My Perfumes Group, scent lovers across 90 countries are already in love with our proudly Made in UAE scent signatures. We are aggressively creating a retail presence across the major malls and prestigious high-street locations across GCC and India. We curate fine fragrances, incense – agarwood, bukhoors, oudh moattars, ambience sprays and body care and hair care products.

What kind of space does My Perfumes Select fulfill in the current perfume sector?

Much like the contemporary Middle East that is redefining creativity, ambition and achievement, the young generation is bold, confident, setting new benchmarks in uncharted fields, and sure of themselves as global citizens while being proud of their culture. Established in 2014, My Perfumes Select as the young Dubai and the UAE-born brand embodies and radiates this spirit. We felt there was a space for a young, confident avant-garde brand that owned its roots yet was bold enough to conquer the world.

We chose to conquer the world first. Now, it is time for a homecoming. We feel well poised to grow perfume retail in the UAE. Our new-age retail design is highly sophisticated, artistic, experimental and futuristic, and our stores in

Dalma Mall and Deerfields Mall in Abu Dhabi, Oman Avenues Mall in Muscat and high-street stores in Dubai Gold Souk, Iraq, and Colaba in Mumbai offer an elevated brand experience.

What is the inspiration behind My Perfumes Select and what different does it offer.

While planning the launch of My Perfumes Select, we realised that the market was full of brands, yet nobody cared to define an individual, though a fragrance is such an individualistic experience. The quest and realisation of self, expressed through My inspires a canvas of scent signatures that are symbolic of the arduous yet celebratory journey of an individual.

How big is the market for French and Oriental perfumes here in the UAE and how is My Perfumes Select as a new brand capitalising on their popularity?

The UAE fragrance market size was valued at \$913.7 million in 2021, with a predicted 6.6 per cent CAGR growth from 2021 to 2030 (Prescient & Strategic Intelligence Report). Fragrance is a way of life in the UAE and ingrained in the culture of the country. Each My Perfumes Select fragrance offers a delectable fusion of East & West, as precious perfume absolutes from across the world jostle together to manifest into rich fragrant journeys. My Perfumes Select scent signatures resonate with young, sophisticated, bold and well-travelled discerning clientele that loves to make every day, extraordinary.

What are the allied product lines and how important are these for your brand portfolio, how has the market responded to your products in this vertical?

Most of our perfume collections are extended into allied lines of body and home care products. Since layering is a huge concept across the GCC, this gives our consumers an opportunity to layer and extend the longevity of their signature scents.

Our customers like to mix and match between collections i.e. spray from one collection and lotion and hair mist from different ones. This opens an exciting journey to discover and create newer fragrance signatures. Our customers are loving the quality and lapping-up the adventure.

As the business lead of a premium UAE brand, what is your management mantra for success?

I live and breathe perfumes. My Perfumes Select is a labour of love and an attempt to create a legacy. Besides being a keen observer of people, fragrance markets and worldwide trends, I am quite a risk taker too. My philosophy is simple – integrity and commitment to deliver the best. A team of experts. Have to say, God has been kind. ●

Impacting business and beyond

Atif Rahman, Founder & Chairman, ORO24 Real Estate Developments talks about the brand's success stories, his views on real estate and more

In a competitive sector such as real estate, how different is ORO24's offerings from the competition here in Dubai?

I firmly believe that the landscape of Dubai real estate and the regulatory framework of the city either inspires or compels every developer to excel. There is absolutely no doubt that the underlying reason for success of every real estate firm is our city, Dubai, and the attractive value it offers to every resident and visitor. Beyond this, every organisation has its own niche that it caters to and so does ORO24. The industry today is driven by intense competition which is extremely good for the consumer. The probability of success is directly proportional to innovation and value, one can offer to customers. We take this seriously and hence we exert intense efforts on every project, staying committed to our customers. At ORO24, we believe in creatively exploiting every piece of land we touch, to deliver excellent asset coupled with lifestyle and value proposition. We are constantly engaging in research and development to create something new and innovative, not just in our product but also the service offered by the company. To make this possible, we are upgrading our knowledge bank and infrastructure regularly so that every project wears the latest and most updated features.

Please share details of some of the key projects that your team fronted in recent months.

We started the journey with TORINO By ORO24, which is a gated complex of six buildings offering 626 apartments. We introduced innovative storage solutions to unique modular design expanding the living spaces for the consumers. The community also featured green living with lifestyle amenities. Followed by that, we launched LEVANTO By ORO24, which comprises of 579 units with a mix of apartments, duplexes and retail facilities. This project brought some first-of-its-kind amenities like drive-in entrance, bowling, golf simulators, business centres, library, gaming zones, roof top cinema, separate

kids' cinema and pool. Progressing further, we launched ELANO By ORO24, which offers the most unique urban living with 10,500 sq. ft of health club and gaming facility with rain showers, a cinema by the pool and much more. We are now introducing our next marvel, which is an icon of architecture with the most unique facilities spread across over 700 units. In all our projects, what you see is consistent urban space and a luxury lifestyle for our customers.

As an industry leader in the real estate space, what are the main trends you see driving markets in the next couple of years here in Dubai and the rest of the UAE?

The real estate industry is driven by a belief system and credit goes to the government for progressing the country from an emerging to a developed economy. The trade liberalisation, immigration reforms, economic development, crisis management, infrastructure expansion and visionary leadership has helped the country jump every global index of growth and development. The country is blessed with a geographical advantage and powered by political leadership. Leading from the front are the offices of the President and the Prime Minister, followed by every government entity of the nation. In my opinion, the UAE is a unique country where the government is ahead of the private sector, while in most of the other developed countries, it is the opposite.

Inspired by the UAE leadership, the entire region is taking some big steps towards a progressive economy and greater stability. At the same time, the global economy is under a lot of stress with ever reducing opportunities. All of this will continue to drive increased attention and invest-

ment to the UAE, tapping not only local opportunities but also prospect regional gains. I expect the growth to spread across the bandwidth of real estate sector including commercial and industrial. The healthcare, education and production industries are also expected to see some unique opportunities. To summarise, the outlook is stunning and the forecast is shining bright.

What are the advantages you see from operating in a key real estate hub such as Dubai?

Unprecedented and incomparable, and let me explain why. It's an expansive industry and the most important role is played by the government. The government has created and continues to strengthen the regulatory framework, delivering unparalleled investment security which further attracts consumer confidence driving increased investment in the sector. The Dubai Government has historically invested heavily in infrastructure, making it the finest in the world, and it's now taking this to the next level. The city has some of the world's renowned attractions and is constantly adding new ones. The lifestyle and safety of the city are global benchmarks for most cities. So, from investor protection to infrastructure, a real estate catalyst and many such reasons make Dubai a unique and super attractive ecosystem for the Real Estate industry.

Now let me explain from a businessman's perspective. Above all of the aforementioned reasons, is the ease of doing business, which makes life easy and simple for any real estate business in Dubai. The rule book is defined in detail for the industry and it's fairly positioned for all the stakeholders. Secondly, the speed of approvals is faster than anywhere else and it is a big



Inspired by the UAE leadership, the region is taking big steps towards a progressive economy."

Atif Rahman



Developments
Facility management
Investments

Atif Rahman,
Founder & Chairman,
ORO24 Real Estate
Developments

Projects of ORO24



plus for any business. The industry has also been closely governed, keeping it free from all forms of corruption. So, it is as smooth as swimming in clean and tranquil water at beautiful temperature at all times.

Because of these reasons, if businesses focus on governance, risk management policies and innovation, success is inevitable. For me, Dubai through its immaculate government initiatives simplifies an otherwise complex industry.

Projects such as ELANO and LEVANTO set the bar in terms of architectural deliverables. How do you see living spaces evolving in Dubai and the region?

Rapidly developing cities come with their own set of real estate challenges like population outburst stressing the infrastructure, cost inflation etc. We carefully study and select the location to ensure ease of commute and availability of all

necessary infrastructure. Once the land is identified, we do our best to create innovative design. While trying to achieve many objectives on the drawing board, we must remain conscious of two things, the growing need of consumers due to ever evolving lifestyle and the need to deliver more space in less square feet. Hence, a careful study of demography to identify the target audience and attending their need through design excellence is the key to create the appropriate real estate solution. As a responsible developer, we also try to combine the right mix of sustainability, technology and durability in the project. We live in a different world today, where it's not just about the product and quality; it's equally important to match them with the latest lifestyle the consumer wants. In order for real estate to be successful and viable, it must deliver value and commercial advantage to the consumer.

To summarise, I see increased demand and momentum for innovative real estate that is

commercially attractive, delivers value to the consumer along with sustainability offering a great lifestyle.

Religious edifices and their shape and form are often limited by convention. In this regard the Mosque by ORO24 project creates a new space in terms of individuality, creativity and beauty through straight, geometric lines that are modern but also inspire fervour. How did the concept come about, and does ORO24 have plans to take on similar projects in the space in years going forward?

First of all, I must thank the Almighty for giving us the guidance and means to be able to participate in such a cause. Social impact through the business platform is an important part of my vision, which I gained living in Dubai. God

willing we shall surely continue to participate in such initiatives. ORO24 is built on Islamic values, which include benefit to society and the betterment of mankind through action.

We want to showcase our ability to create something unique at the Mosque projects too. This intention inspired us to create a modern architecture for the Mosque. It is also inspired from thoughts of minimalism and sustainability, which are essential rules for building any mosque.

How is ORO24 diversifying its service and sectoral portfolio?

I want to transform ORO24 into a forward thinking, forward looking and forward integrated real estate corporation. The diversity is key to survival and hence we have carefully crafted the divisions and verticals that operate within the organisation. At the centre of every venture and vertical remains our innovation, social impact and sustainability. This attracts a different quality of B2B and B2C traffic towards our business with immense brand loyalty. We are currently planning our facilities management business and we are also poised to enter into another vertical which remains undercover.

I truly believe that the UAE has taught me many great lessons in business and real estate, which we want to showcase to the world. We are carefully studying the expansion of our property development business to new horizons.

As the Founder and Chairman of

your brand, how would you define leadership?

Leadership for me is about people, a people-sensitive approach that delivers a people-centric ecosystem. I believe in the philosophy that ultimately, it's the people's growth that creates business growth, so we remain focussed on creating success stories within our business, which helps change people's lives. Growth is not just limited to financial gains but a comprehensive 360 degree growth of human personality. Successful leaders focus on achieving a measurable quantitative and qualitative development of every individual. In order to achieve this, a leader must be driven with clean intention, sustainable vision and courage to overcome failures. This helps create ventures that deliver impeccable product, service excellence and long lasting relationship. I take this as my responsibility at ORO24 to transform every member of the company into a change catalyst who will continue to create memorable business and social impact.

I want to transform ORO24 into a forward thinking, forward looking and integrated real estate corporation."
Atif Rahman

How important is staff training for ORO24, what are the initiative that ORO24 undertakes for the staff?

My father taught me time is irreversible, health is critical and knowledge is invaluable. I was fortunate to grow up in an environment that taught me the importance of education, so much so that I truly feel everyday how less I know and how much more I need to learn. At ORO24 we engage in several and regular programmes for learning, development and awareness, which I feel uniquely empowers the people of our company. These initiatives include not only sharpening core competency but also increasing awareness about social, environment, health and safety aspects. We have engaged in several programmes like breast cancer, blood donation camps, eye check-up camps, and ergonomics sessions to sustainability. We have our own staff nurse and a clinic under La Salute, which maintains a regular check up and record for all the staff. We conduct fortnightly town halls through which we educate all our staff on various topics. We have invested in top-end technology, which cuts down human errors and efforts. We have staff from 24 nationalities, and we encourage people to learn new cultures. In my opinion, an enriched workforce leads to an empowered organisation. These initiatives create an increased level of ownership in every member of the company, which transforms into a powerful loyalty towards the company and responsibility towards deliverables.



Executive Committee - (from left) Muneer Kuttu- GM-Administration & Operations; Aaliya Rahman- Managing Director; Pradeep Kumar- GM-Projects & Acquisitions; Viquaruddin Hussain Syed- GM- Audit & Structure

Making ethics and customer satisfaction key

Akram Kanso and **Louai Abou Khzam**, the Owners of Prosper Real Estate share the brand's service portfolio and a bird's eye perspective on market outlook and trends in the UAE

Prospcr Real Estate is a prominent real estate consultancy and brokerage firm in Dubai, that offers an extensive array of consultancy and brokerage services under one roof for real estate developers, investors, and end-users with the support of our closely knitted team of professionals.

Along with our commitment to ensuring high standards of business ethics and customer service, we have developed strategies that work beyond that of a real estate brokerage, to offer bespoke investment capability and ensure the highest investment growth for customers in terms of capital appreciation and assets.

We strive to assist home seekers in finding their dream space by considering their lifestyle and requirements. Our team work hand-in-hand with our partners, with an aim to understand and identify our clients' needs and objectives and provide them with personalized options that meet their expectations of living standards.

Our dedicated team at Prosper works as a reliable source of information on property market trends and current market prices, to assist our customers to make well-informed decisions. We ensure in-depth market research to provide you with the best deal for your investment.

UNIQUE BUSINESS APPROACH

Prosper Real Estate emphasises on working with investors over the long term, setting it apart from others in the industry, which may prioritise short-term gains or one-off transactions. By taking a more holistic approach, Prosper Real Estate is likely better able to build trust and rapport with its clients, which can lead to repeat business and positive referrals.

Secondly, the company's commitment to conducting full research and recommending the best projects suggests that it places a high value on expertise and knowledge.

This can be particularly important in a competitive market like the UAE, where investors and end users alike may be inundated with options and struggling to make informed decisions.

By providing a comprehensive assessment of the market and recommending specific projects, Prosper Real Estate may be able to set itself apart from other firms that offer more generic advice.

Thirdly, the company's focus on providing full consultancy services for end users, investors, and boutique developers suggests that it has a broad expertise in the real estate sector beyond simply buying and selling properties.

By preparing a full case study about the market and developing strategic planning, including business strategy, marketing strategy, and sales strategy, the company is likely better able to anticipate and respond to changes in the market and provide more personalized service to its clients.

MAJOR PROJECTS AND CHALLENGES

We have been involved in a wide range of deals and projects in recent months, working with developers of all sizes — from boutique developers to master developers — and providing services to investors and end-users alike.

Our portfolio of recent projects includes a mix of single-unit deals as well as bulk deals, where we work with developers to secure a large number of units for our clients.

Additionally, we offer consultancy services to both developers and investors, providing expert advice and market insights to help them make informed decisions.

While executing these projects, our team has faced several challenges. One of the most significant challenges we encounter is balancing the needs and requirements of our clients with the realities of the market.

This requires us to stay abreast of the latest market trends and changes, as well as maintaining close relationships with developers and other

industry stakeholders.

TRENDS TO WATCH

There are two major trends that could impact the property sales in 2023:

1. Increased demand for waterfront properties: This trend is particularly evident in coastal cities where people are drawn to the serene and relaxing atmosphere that water bodies such as the sea, rivers, or lakes impart.

2. Focus on high-quality finishing and luxury amenities: Developers have started placing more emphasis on the quality of finishing and

amenities such as high-end kitchens, state-of-the-art home entertainment systems, luxurious spas and private fitness centres. This trend is particularly relevant in luxury properties, where buyers are willing to pay a premium for added luxury and convenience.

ADDRESSES TO WATCH

Jumeirah Village Circle has overtaken Business Bay in off-plan sales in Q1 in 2023, with a total sales volume of 2,396, at a value of Dh1.8 billion, as rent rates are lower than the market average here.

Business Bay and Dubai Marina are neck and neck for ready property transactions. Business Bay is the close winner in terms of sales volume, but The Dubai Marina overtook Business Bay's total sales value by over Dh1 billion (Reference: <https://dxbinteract.com/news/q1-2023-dubai-real-estate-market-report>). While Dubai Marina offers a luxurious lifestyle, a vast range of amenities, and excellent social infrastructure, Business Bay has spacious units and you are living a short drive away from Downtown Dubai and all its marvellous amenities, including The Dubai Mall, Souk Al Bahar, Dubai Opera and the ever-trendy Downtown Dubai restaurants.

Taking a holistic approach allows the brand to build trust and rapport with clients.”
Akram Kanso
MD, Prosper Real Estate



Akram Kanso



Louai Abou Khzam

MARKET EVOLUTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the trend towards more flexible work arrangements, with an increasing number of people looking for homes that offer a better work-life balance. This has led to a rise in demand for properties with outdoor spaces, home offices and other amenities that cater to remote work. Due to its strategic location, world-class infrastructure, and attractive tax regime and now Golden visa rule, it's going to be a very attractive place to invest in the coming years too. Some of the most notable on going projects in the city include the Dubai Creek Harbour, the Dubai Hills Estate and the Dubai South development. With the launching of World's largest airport, Dubai south is expected to see a high rise in development in the coming years.

INVESTOR POINTERS

For first-time real estate investors in the UAE looking to make a purely investment-based purchase, there are several key considerations to keep in mind:

Location: The location of the property is a crucial factor to consider, as it can significantly impact both the property's resale value and potential rental income. Highly sought-after areas such as Mohamed Bin Rashid City can be particularly attractive for investors due to their high demand and potential for growth.

Building quality: The quality of the building

itself can also be a critical factor to consider. Investors should look for properties constructed by reputable developers with a proven track record of delivering high-quality buildings that can maintain their value over time.

Amenities and views: Properties that offer desirable amenities such as gyms, pools, and green spaces, as well as those with impressive views, can also be particularly attractive to potential tenants or buyers.

Competitive pricing: Investors should also pay attention to the price of the property relative to the market, as well as the potential for capital appreciation. A property that is priced competitively relative to its location and features may have a higher potential for long-term gains.

Return on investment: Lastly, investors should consider the potential return on investment. This can be influenced by factors such as rental yields, potential capital appreciation, and the costs associated with buying and maintaining the property.

For example, in Mohammed Bin Rashid City, Prosper Real Estate was able to create a successful sales strategy by selecting the right projects and advising clients on their investment decisions. By buying more than Dh100 million worth of inventory and reselling it within a six-month period, clients were able to achieve a profit of approximately 30 per cent on their investments.

As a leader in the real estate sector, Prosper Real Estate is keenly aware of the major challeng-

es that lie ahead in the coming months and years. One of the most significant challenges facing the market is the shortage of inventory in ready projects, as well as the delayed handover dates of newly launched projects. This has resulted in a highly competitive environment, making it challenging for investors and end-users to find suitable properties.

BEING FUTURE READY

To overcome this challenge, Prosper Real Estate has taken a proactive approach by having a large inventory of exclusive apartments that are either ready or near completion. This strategy allows us to offer our clients a wide range of options, making it easier for them to find a property that meets their needs.

In addition to our ready inventory, we also work with boutique developers to identify projects that will be ready for occupancy within the next one to two years. This long-term planning allows us to provide our clients with a diverse selection of off-plan properties that they can invest in with confidence.

Overall, we believe that our proactive approach to tackling the inventory shortage and delayed handover dates will position us well to meet the challenges of the real estate market in the coming months and years. We will continue to adapt and evolve our strategies to meet the changing needs of our clients and ensure that we remain a leader in the real estate industry. ●

From left: Muhammad Binghatti, CEO Binghatti, and Mate Rimac, CEO, Bugatti Rimac at the project launch in Dubai



World's first Bugatti Residences project unveiled in Dubai

Bugatti Residences by Binghatti to present homeowners style and opulence to the max in keeping with design aesthetics of the two premium luxury brands

Bugatti and Binghatti have unveiled their first collaboration - a ground-breaking real estate development in the heart of Dubai. The project plans were revealed at the Coca-Cola Arena in Dubai on May 24 by Mate Rimac, CEO, Bugatti Rimac, and Muhammad BinGhatti, CEO, Binghatti.

Bugatti Residences by Binghatti – the first-ever Bugatti Residences in the world – is located in Dubai's prime Business Bay neighbourhood. With design lines reflecting Bugatti's iconic brand elements and sense of luxury, Bugatti Residences merges these values cohesively with Binghatti's expertise in creating a masterpiece that is expected to be an architectural phenomenal. This is obviously in keeping with Dubai's stand as a platform for unique architectural marvels that have wowed the world.

Bugatti Residences will feature a collection of 171 Riviera Mansions and 11 Sky Mansion Penthouses, each being absolutely unique with bespoke curated layouts. The first Bugatti residence is also designed with peerless luxurious amenities, including a Riviera-inspired beach, private pool, Jacuzzi spa, fitness club, chef's table, private valet, private members club and two garage-to-penthouse car lifts. The residences also feature a host of high-end and tailored services dedicated to its residents, including bespoke chauffeur and concierge services.

The two brands are also integrating the distinctive flair of the French Riviera into every aspect of the development, hoping to transport residents to the inspiring region that has long captured the hearts of connoisseurs of refined living. In its organically sculpted design, Bugatti Residences by Binghatti looks to manifest the beauty of the Riviera's spirit and flair.

— GN Focus Report

High-end luxury properties on the up in Dubai

Well-crafted luxury real estate a great investment op, says **Saleem Karsaz**, Founder and Group CEO of UAE-based real estate brand, Aeon & Trisl. Excerpts from an interview

Have you noticed any interesting market trends so far this year?

Lately, I've observed fascinating real estate market trends. One notable trend is the increasing demand for well-crafted luxurious real estate.

Aeon and Trisl is fortunate to be working closely with leading developers who specialise in creating these breathtaking properties for buyers who love opulent real estate investments. Also, technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality are revolutionising property searches, transactions and management globally. These advancements are not only enhancing the customer experience but also creating opportunities for global investments and cross-border collaborations.



What are the main challenges you see, and how can/should the market respond?

In today's real estate sector, I have identified significant challenges that require a strategic market response. One such challenge is simplifying property ownership and enhancing accessibility to real estate investments. The complexity of mortgage applications, financing options and investment decisions can overwhelm our potential buyers. To address this, Aeon & Trisl has partnered with PRYPCO, an innovative online platform that revolutionises the mortgage application process. Additionally, we have collaborated with STAKE, an application that allows investors to participate in the Dubai real estate market with a minimum investment of Dh2,000. Through STAKE, individuals can invest in a diverse portfolio of properties and earn monthly rental returns, providing an opportunity to enter the market and grow their investments. So, with strategic partnerships, we can open doors to homeownership and rational investment decisions for a broader segment of society.

— GN Focus Report

OMA EMIRATES GROUP LLC

Leading innovation in the payments sector

In conversation with **Niranj Sangal**, Group CEO, OMA Emirates Group LLC

As a payment provider of choice for up to 39 software platforms, how comprehensive are OMA Emirates' solutions in the field?

Being the number one service provider for the payment industry in the MENA region, OMA Emirates is committed to providing personalised solutions to Banking, Financial and Retail sectors by bringing together technical and business expertise necessary to transform conventional payment solutions into digital payments. We offer new electronic payment methods focused on convenience, speed, reliability and seamless consumer experience.

Our solutions are developed considering how they can be scaled on a requirement basis by any client, thus understanding its growth over the coming year at the most affordable cost associated with it. The payment solutions are typically designed with the latest technologies in mind, providing options on either insourcing services that a client wants or outsourcing the services which OMA as a company can provide. Our solutions are proactively designed keeping future requirements of the market in mind and not only developing them based on a requirement that is provided at the moment. The solutions also cover the entire ecosystem of the payment world, simplifying the flow of business.

How is NanoSwitch helping optimise ATM transactions, what are the sectoral challenges?

NanoSwitch was one of the elite products designed with the latest technology using cloud-as-a-service and microservices inbuilt over a decade ago. Combining the latest security features, and compliances and updating them based on the microservices that are needed, can be provided to a customer of its client. Technology helps maintain transparency in transactions and manages the usage of a customers align with spend some across various sectors. This also gives a client the ability to use various products and services in addition to just doing a withdrawal or cash deposit as a service. AI-driven analytical tools help manage data and minimise fraud, enabling customers to be confident when using their cards over various channels, be



it card-present or card-not-present transactions.

What is the next frontier in biometric solutions and how is OMA Emirates helping address this?

We have been working on biometric solutions over the last 3 years. Currently, we have transaction authorisation done via various channels, be it POS (Point of Sale), ATM, mobiles, etc., allowing a client to pay even without a card in hand. In the future, the same will be available with facial recognition supporting biometric payment as a service. Analysts using AI are in the development phase and this shall be available in Q3 this year.

What is Robotic Process Automation all about and how is OMA Emirates addressing this need in the field of AI for its value partners?

We have been using Robotic Process Automation (RPA) over a lot of our solutions, whether it is in the issuance or acquiring product lines. Today, we have integrated various microservices, keeping inbuilt AI capabilities that will enable consumers in the future to leverage services such as chatbot on a personal front, be it medical, insurance, utilities payments, travel etc. These services will also be available as open APIs for anyone to integrate and use as services. ●

BEING SHE

Support through recognition

Aparna Bajpai, Founder and CEO, BeingShe talks about the next frontier for women empowerment and how her group hopes to provide backing

How has BeingShe supported women entrepreneurs and leaders on their growth journey?

BeingShe acknowledges that women in various industries face unique challenges, requiring tailored support to thrive. Through the BeingShe Empowered programme, we have assisted foreign brands in connecting with UAE customers. We have also facilitated media connections, speaking opportunities, and brand awareness activities for business owners aiming to establish themselves in the industry and gain mass exposure in the UAE market.

Recently, we held the annual BeingShe Excellence Business and Professional Awards ceremony, where over 40 women were recognised for their outstanding contributions across different sectors. Such recognition helps elevate women's credibility and secure career advancement opportunities.

Since our inception, we have empowered women through confidence building and self-awareness with the BeingShe Universe initiative. This annual fashion and talent show brings women from diverse nationalities together for a five-day training and coaching workshop focused on fashion and wellness.

Our participants have achieved remarkable success stories, becoming business owners, authors, actresses, radio presenters, and more. It is truly inspiring to witness the accomplishments of confident women.

As a platform, we strive to bring industry experts and thought leaders for interactive panel discussions on relevant issues impacting women's daily lives. In the first quarter of this year, we met with Gulf Women in Business as well as Gulf Women Bloggers and Influencers.

In your opinion, what is the next frontier for women's empowerment in the UAE corporate arena after a successful decade?

Encouraging women's entrepreneurship and providing them with access to capital and funding can, I believe significantly drive empowerment. Supporting the women in starting and scaling their businesses through business investor connections can also help unleash their potential and contribute to economic growth and innovation.

What initiatives has BeingShe spearheaded recently to champion women's empowerment, and how successful have they been in driving change?

On International Women's Day 2023, we launched the 1000 Women initiative, aiming to equip women with entrepreneurship skills, access to business investors, and government support.

BeingShe Cares, our newly launched digital platform, aims to provide assistance to those in need. It serves as an open portal where our members and the general public can refer cases requiring financial help for medical bills, education, and other essential needs.

Furthermore, we will soon open our doors to young leaders, offering them a platform to interact with industry experts for career guidance and access to internship programs.

How do you envision BeingShe evolving as an organisation in the next few years as an ecosystem for self-discovery and development?

Our future plans involve expanding the platform to other GCC countries, ensuring women have access to the appropriate networks and resources for their personal and professional development. ●



SANS INSTITUTE

Understanding cyberattacks and the threat landscape

In conversation with **Ned Baltagi**, Managing Director – Middle East, Africa and Turkey, SANS Institute

SANS Institute was established as early as 1989, during the nascent stages of information security globally. As a leading voice in the field, what in your view are the main concerns and challenges it faces?

The information security sector has seen drastic evolution since the late 80s when SANS Institute was first established. The threat landscape today is significantly more complex and sophisticated, featuring state-sponsored cyberattacks, advanced persistent threats, and cyber-terrorism.

Firstly, we're seeing an incredibly rapid evolution of cyber threats. Cybercriminals are becoming more innovative, using cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning to create and distribute malware, leading to more advanced threats such as polymorphic and metamorphic malware that can change its code as it spreads. We are also witnessing the rise of zero-day threats – threats that exploit unknown vulnerabilities for which there are no existing defenses.

Secondly, cyber attackers are increasingly sophisticated. They are often well-funded, highly skilled, and organised, with some even sponsored by nation-states. These actors deploy advanced persistent threats (APTs) - long-term targeted attacks that patiently infiltrate systems and remain undetected for extended periods. They can silently exfiltrate sensitive data, causing significant damage before they are detected.

The explosion of the Internet of Things (IoT) has also created new challenges. These devices significantly expand the attack surface as each connected device provides a potential entry point for attackers. Many IoT devices are not designed with security in mind and have known vulnerabilities that make them easy targets. As IoT continues to grow, so too does the complexity of managing and securing these devices.

Further compounding these issues is the global shortage of cybersecurity professionals. As the cyber threat landscape grows more complex,



there is a need for individuals with advanced technical skills to counter these threats.

All these challenges underline the importance of robust, adaptive, and proactive cybersecurity strategies. These must be underpinned by a comprehensive understanding of the threat landscape and the technical capabilities to respond effectively and quickly to evolving threats.

How are you empowering business professionals through your Cyber Security Roadmap programme?

Our Cyber Security Skills Roadmap is designed to equip professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the complex cybersecurity landscape. The key areas of training we focus on include incident handling and response, penetration testing, network defense, cyber threat intelligence, industrial control systems security, management, leadership, and audit. These skills are vital for every cybersecurity professional, regardless of their level or the sector they work in. Additionally, we provide specialized training tracks for different roles within the cybersecurity field.

The challenges for CEOs and business leads in the tech sector are unique in a world where change is the new currency. How are your leadership

initiatives enabling future tech leads?

Leadership programmes at SANS are designed to help tech leaders understand and navigate the unique challenges they face in today's fast-changing tech landscape. Apart from comprehensive courses that cover a range of topics, from creating and managing effective cybersecurity strategies, to understanding and implementing regulatory requirements, and handling security incidents, we have also introduced the Executive Cybersecurity Exercises (ECE).

The ECE is an immersive program that simulates a cyberattack and guides senior leaders through the crisis response process. During the exercise, leaders will face simulated crisis scenarios that challenge them to make quick decisions and manage the fallout of a cyberattack. The exercise tests their ability to stay composed under pressure, maintain clear communication within the organisation and with external stakeholders, and successfully navigate the complex dynamics of a cyber crisis.

We believe it is crucial for every leader in an organisation to be equipped to respond to a cyberattack swiftly and effectively. The increasing prevalence of ransomware attacks makes it imperative for all executives, board members, and organisational leaders to be prepared for a potential cyberattack. The insights gained from the exercise can be used to refine existing plans and develop stronger, more robust strategies to mitigate cyber risks.

Cyber awareness is a catchphrase that's gaining popularity. How is SANS Institute raising awareness?

Cybersecurity awareness is indeed crucial in today's digital landscape. At SANS, we understand that the human factor is often the weakest link in the security chain. That's why we have developed a comprehensive Security Awareness Training programme, which aims to foster a culture of cybersecurity awareness in organisations, teaching employees about various cyber threats, safe online habits, and what to do in case of a security incident. ●

BLUE OCEAN CORPORATION

Blue Ocean Corporation inculcates knowledge in today's workforce

Rising to become one of the leading training establishments in the Middle East by upskilling current workforce

Established 25 years ago in the UAE, The Blue Ocean Corporation today is among the leading knowledge enterprises in the Middle East, enjoying a presence in 16+ countries. The company has offices in Abu Dhabi and its headquarters in Dubai. It also has branches outside the UAE, in Delhi, Kochi and Pune in India, and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Under the leadership of Dr Sathya Menon, the Group CEO and a highly qualified professional, the Blue Ocean Corporation has expanded its operations across four verticals – Training, Consulting, Conferences, and Recruitment. The organisation provides professional training with certifications recognised internationally for those who are ambitious to enhance their knowledge and advance in their careers. Dr Menon says, “Over 130,000 students have benefited from these programmes in the last 2 decades. More than 1,200 corporates have also benefited from our services.”

Attributing the organisation's success to its excellent quality of training and customer service which helped in branding, Dr Menon says, “Blue Ocean believes in creating a market space for itself, and the strong brand value and pedigree established by our sustained excellence have created a niche position for Blue Ocean at both ends of the spectrum.”

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The workforce today places huge importance on career training as they understand how crucial it is to constantly upgrade one's skill set, which leads to a wider array of opportunities for career advancement. Corporates have recognized the importance of training the workforce to increase the efficiency in the operations. They provide training for a range of International Certification programmes from world renowned certification bodies from the US, UK and Canada in

the following domains:

- Procurement & Supply Chain
- Logistics & Warehousing (CILT, CIWIM)
- Logistics & Warehousing
- Quality Management
- Project Management
- Human Resources and Administration
- Financial Management and AML
- IATA

Blue Ocean also specialises in customised corporate trainings, right from conducting the Training Need Analysis, identifying the GAPS, customising the training solutions, and imparting a world-class training and post-assessment survey. With this proven methodology, Blue Ocean has helped many organisations across the region to become more profitable by improving efficiency and boosting productivity.

SHIFT TOWARDS AI

Seeing how the world is becoming more dependent on AI, Dr Menon, who himself is an alumnus of MIT Sloan School of Management in Artificial Intelligence, says, “At Blue Ocean, we are committed to creating versatile learning experiences for our students to help them build and nurture their innovative and leadership mindset. We have conducted numerous training programs on the effects of AI on the business landscape. Our courses are curated to offer a seamless combination of the industry fundamentals and digital that will leverage individual capabilities as per modern-day requirements and futuristic trends.” The Blue Ocean Corporation is driven by its motto to upskill and upgrade. Hence, as AI continues to

rise, new courses will be provided to keep up with the aspects of industries that require one to be proficient in using AI.

With Dubai as a central hub for trade, logistics and supply chain are key sectors, Blue Ocean has trained the largest chain of logistics and supply chain professionals in the region. Dr Menon adds, “We have partnered with some of the world's biggest procurement, logistics and supply chain training institutions like CIPS and CILT from the UK, and APICS

and IPSCMI from the US to offer a range of level-specific advanced training programmes to the workforce.” The organisation is known for conducting the region's biggest procurement and supply chain leadership event – the International Procurement and Supply Chain Conference (IPSC), and their sixth edition drew special appreciation from Shaikh Nahayan bin Mabarak Al Nahayan, UAE Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence. One of the Blue Ocean conferences recently held, was based on the convergence of Metaverse and AI and its impact on the business and workforce.



Winning the Dubai Quality Appreciation Award is a testament of our commitment to excellence.”

Dr Sathya Menon
Group CEO, Blue Ocean

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Blue Ocean Corporation has received numerous international awards over the years. More recently, at the 29th Business Excellence Awards, Blue Ocean won the prestigious Dubai Quality Appreciation Award 2023 (DQAA) in the education sector, which is recognised by the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism's (DET). Blue Ocean is the only organisation from the training domain in the Middle East to get the Super Brand status. It was also



notably recognised continuously over the years as a Great Place to Work, ranked 13 in the Middle East and 35 in Asia. Other awards include Logistics Consulting of the Year category – Best Employee Engagement Initiative Runner Up by CHSA Awards 2022, Regional Top Performing Accredited Training Centre by IATA 2020, Canada, Excellence in Training and Development -2019 by Middle East Training, and Development Leadership Awards. Last year Blue Ocean was ranked as world number 3 in Procurement and Supply Chain training from a survey done of all certification bodies.

Dr Menon himself is a recipient of many awards including Business Excellence Award at GMBF MahaBiz, Dubai, 2022, 'Top 100 Leaders in Education' Award by Global Forum for Education and Learning (GFEL), Dubai, 2019, CEO of the Year Award by the prestigious Middle East Training and Development Leadership Conference, Dubai, 2019, Outstanding Contribution to Global Learning, Dubai at the World HRD Congress, Dubai, 2018, Best Training Initiative in Logistics and Supply Chain Management in Asia, Malaysia, 2018, Global Training and Development Leadership Award, Mumbai, 2017.

EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT

As their brand value grows internationally, Blue Ocean is focused on expanding in MENA and the Indian sub-continent as well, with five new branch offices opening last year alone. The company is also working to venture their training operations into Europe. "We are also committed to fulfilling our objective of Mission 500 which aims to employ 500 professionals in the company by the end of 2025," says Dr Menon.

"This will add to the workforce and strengthen company operations as well as support employment and empowerment." The company's employees have doubled in the last one year which is the result of their positive work culture.

Blue Ocean strives for excellence and empowerment. Dr Menon says, "Our brand values lie in our SPIRIT – Service, Passion, Integrity, Respect, Innovation & Teamwork. We have excelled in quality, the hallmark of which is the Dubai Quality Appreciation Award. We are the number one workplace in the UAE for working parents (SME), as per a survey by Great Place to Work. We still have more milestones to achieve." We want to reach the World No. 1 position in Procurement and Supply Chain Training. We are very proud to evolve as a Multi National Company with headquarters in Dubai and UAE. We still have more milestone to achieve." At the core of its organisation, Blue Ocean believes in customer and employee satisfaction, and wants to inspire other home-grown brands to dream big. ●



UAE internal auditors told to embrace sustainability

Move can help sector align with UAE's environment vision 2050, says UAE Internal Auditors Association Chairman

GN Focus Report

Auditing professionals worldwide need to make environmental issues an essential part of their interests due to the absolute importance they bear, especially with the increasing risks of global warming and carbon footprint annually, and to work to keep pace with the efforts of the UAE and enhance its reputation as a country that cares for the environment and contributes effectively to achieving the goals of environmental sustainability globally. The call to action was made to internal audit professionals by Abdulqader Obaid Ali, Chairman of the Board of the UAE Internal Auditors Association (UAE IAA), and came at the conclusion of the 21st Annual Regional Audit Conference, held on May 16-18 in Dubai. The conference was held under the auspices

“Hosting of Great Audit Minds Conference in Abu Dhabi for the first time outside the US is a major achievement for governance in the UAE.”

Abdulqader Obaid Ali,
Board Chairman, UAE Internal Auditors Association

of the UAE Ministry of Economy, in the presence of more than 1,000 international specialists and experts in internal audit.

The conference was supported by strategic partners Beeah, EY, KPMG, PwC and Protiviti. experts who participated in the conference shed light on many important issues for internal auditors, including environmental, social and institutional governance, cyber security, digitisation and other issues related to the internal auditor's duties.

UAE'S ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL GROWTH

Talking about the UAE's role in promoting sustainable global growth while upholding environmental security and



Abdulqader Obaid Ali
UAE IAA



Benito Ybarra
IIA Global

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE ANNUAL REGIONAL AUDIT CONFERENCE IN DUBAI

- Citizens invited to turn to internal audit profession; number expected to increase to 44%
- Banking sector will gain more importance thanks to the development of Sharia-based standards
- Number of Emiratis working in the UAE's internal audit sector has improved thanks to HASSAD programme, launched by the Internal Auditors Association in 2015

protection, Ali said, “Our wise government places the environment at the top of its concerns and has allocated about Dh600 billion within its environmental vision 2050 to ensure meeting the demand for energy and sustaining growth in the UAE economy.”

Indicating how damages resulting from climate deterioration amounted to hundreds of billions of dollars annually at the global level, Ali suggested how internal auditors could play an active role in reducing damage to the environment in the UAE and the world in general. “This can be achieved through research and development work, identifying gaps, developing solutions and training in the field of clean energy and spreading the culture of environmental protection and the green economy and harmonising between the production and consumption sides among the employees of the institutions in which they work,” Ali said. He also emphasised upon how the proximity that auditing professionals enjoyed in their field of work with key to decision makers could be leveraged to possibly also provide advice to the latter on sparing the risks of environmental damage to their institutions financially and morally.

A GLOBAL FIRST

Hailing the UAE Government, Ali also revealed that the UAE IAA would be hosting the next General Audit Management (GAM) Conference in Abu Dhabi in October 2023 under the title, Great Audit Minds. “This is the first time that the GAM Conference is being hosted outside the US, and it is a form of international recognition and appreciation for the efforts of the UAE as a leading country in the field of good governance in all sectors,” Ali said at the conference.

Benito Ybarra, Chairman, Board of Directors, at the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA Global), who was invited to be the keynote speaker at the conference, also emphasised the achievements made by the UAE and the region in the field of good governance in line with international governance standards.

“We support and encourage networking within the Middle East region and beyond, because IIA Global is committed to supporting the exchange of best practices,” said Ybarra while addressing the gathering. “GAM conference caters for the chief audit executives, who are the leaders of the profession from around the world. For it to come for the first time from the US to the UAE, it means that they have seen that this region is practicing good governance and maintaining global standards.”

“GAM conference caters for the chief audit executives, who are the leaders of the profession from around the world. For it to come for the first time from the US to the UAE, means they have seen that this region is practicing good governance and maintaining global standards.”

Benito Ybarra, Chairman,
Board of Directors, Institute of
Internal Auditors Global

ENHANCING EMIRATISATION

During his speech, Ali also confirmed that the association has continued to achieve tangible successes in increasing the number of Emiratis working in the internal audit sector in the country through the HASAAD programme that it launched in 2015. He indicated that in light of the good turnout rates, it is possible to increase the number of employees working in the internal audit sector, and which is expected to increase to 44 per cent in the coming years.

Also stating how the number of citizens graduating from the HASAAD program had risen to 166 and included both male and female staff, Ali called on auditors in general to constantly improve their knowledge and performance and keep pace with the challenges of the profession in the coming period.

ACHIEVEMENT FOR BANKING

Ali stressed that the banking sector in the UAE has been receiving a strong push forward, revealing that the UAE IAA would, in cooperation with the Sharia Professionals Association, work on developing standards and practices for organisations and banks in the country who are working based on Sharia principles, through the establishment of a guide and certification programme for internal Sharia auditors in order to improve their skills in this regard. ●

Employee contribution as a barometer of success

Implementing a result-oriented culture by company heads across worker profiles yields not just long-term financial benefits but a positive work ethic among staff as well



SHUTTERSTOCK

By Sundar Rajan



Employee contribution is the sole factor that determines a company's success. Creating a conducive environment for everyone to perform, excel and achieve objectives is therefore important. However, who will create this environment - is it the employee, manager, or the CEO? I believe it has to come from the top.

A CEO, MD or company president sets long- and short-term plans in line with the company's vision and mission. It is the CEO's responsibility to ensure everyone in the company contributes, and therefore has to create an atmosphere where all employees, irrespective of their job titles, are given importance without any bias of colour, nationality, gender, language, religion or caste. Only performance and results should matter. And this commitment to a result-oriented culture needs to be sustained. Such a culture can be effectively enforced across a firm, irrespective of its size only when all management heads implement the same in spirit in their respective areas of work.

MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES

Clearly defining roles and KRAs with target dates upholds transparency in the system, with proper guidance, training, support and motivation for all employees helping accomplish their goals. Though the supervisor must ensure each team member achieves the assigned tasks on time, every employee must take necessary initiative and interest to exceed expectations by presenting total involvement and dedication, and implementing innovative approaches with the objective to excel. Such an atmosphere ensures the company stays ahead in the business in this competitive world. This could be an inherent culture in the organisation, or a well-designed strategic initiative for an employee engagement programme to achieve employee satisfaction, retention and productivity.

The below example illustrates the creation of an employee engagement culture and its impact.

A factory manager, hoping to recruit a janitor to clean the factory premises assembled 250 highly efficient workers of different nationalities to ascertain their interest for the job. The company CEO, coincidentally on the shop floor observed the recruitment exercise as well. The work involved cleaning the office and open area within the factory, apart from a dozen toilets, twice a day. However,

only one worker named Haridas stepped up to take on the task. Haridas reasoned that he was a cleaner in Nepal prior to taking up the job as a worker in Dubai and was therefore willing to take on the challenge. Being one among many workers in his previous job, Haridas also preferred taking on the work singlehandedly in hopes to create an impact. And he did.

Within a short span of time, managers started praising Haridas' work ethic, commenting on how the toilets were sparkling and the office area so clean it enhanced the company's image in front of visitors. The factory manager made a note of Haridas' commitment and enthusiasm for the job.

FROM THE HEART

The group, a consortium of 25 companies decided to select the best employee of the year from among the blue collar workers using a judging panel formed of members who were not connected with the group. Every company nominated their best - from tailors, carpenters and electricians to machine operators, painters and drivers. This company nominated Haridas.

Every nominated employee read out his contribution from the script. As luck would have it, Haridas' name card was the last to be drawn from the bowl and he started reading from the script as well. However, just a minute into his speech, Haridas folded his script and started to speak extempore. The CEO, factory manager and others present were surprised but Haridas continued. He said, "Everyone's performance is so impressive, I don't think I stand a chance to get any award. I am from Nepal and live near the foothills of Himalayas but never attempted to climb the mountain.

"I have two sons who are studying in school in Nepal and it is my ambition that they study well and become like my CEO, whom we all respect a lot, since he takes personal interest in every employee. My job is to clean the office, the open areas of the factory and the toilets. Some of my colleagues do not keep the toilet clean after using but I do my job. They even call me a toilet cleaner and look down on me but I don't care since this job was chosen by me. I project the image of the company by maintaining cleanliness and hygiene. One day when we had overseas visitors during

lunchtime, I closed my lunch box and rushed to clean the toilets in the office so that they carry a good impression about our company. Some of my colleagues think I am mad as I work extra hours of my own choosing, as my CEO and factory manager have confidence in me."

Looking in the direction of the CEO, he said with humility, "Sir, you had a lot of hope in me but there are better workers than me from other companies. You should have nominated any of our machine operators or workers from our factory who have saved a lot on cost to the company and would have certainly won the award. I thank you and the factory manager for giving me this opportunity, which itself is a big win for me." With tears rolling down his eyes, Haridas said, "Sir, today I have let you down but I give you the assurance that I shall always exceed your expectations in my work. Thank you." Haridas came off the stage to a standing ovation.

RECOGNITION AND ADULATION

The judging panel then came on stage to announce the winners. A painter and tailor claimed the 3rd and 2nd prizes. The panel then declared the winner of the Best Employee of the Year Award - a carpenter who skillfully created new designs that became successful brand products. The winners were hailed for their awards, but just as everyone thought the function to be at an end, a panel member called for their attention and remarked, "All participants spoke well about

their achievements from the script, but one employee spoke about his contribution from his heart, which was very impressive. We could feel the involvement and passion of this worker." The panel member then announced, "The Special Award for the Passionate Worker goes to Haridas, the cleaner, who won our hearts and brought us to tears through his dedication." There was jubilation all around as Haridas stepped forward to receive a large cash award. Looking overwhelmed with the surprise recognition, Haridas later remarked to friends, "I feel as if I have conquered Mount Everest."

A week later, as Haridas was readying for vacation, he required someone to take on the shift, and this time all the factory workers raised their hands. This is implementing change by example.

— The writer is Managing Director, DFMC - King Koil & Serta

Clearly defining roles and KRAs with target dates upholds transparency in the system."

Sundar Rajan
Managing Director,
DFMC, King Koil & Serta

Hi, I'm
Mohamed
Alabbar,
here's your
package

noon Founder,
Mohamed Alabbar sports
the brand's uniform
while riding the company
bike in Downtown Dubai



Mohamed Alabbar, seen with Ayman and noon Minutes staff at a Dark Store

It was a fun day out for the Founder of the UAE-based e-commerce platform, as he visited noon Minutes' Dark Stores with social media influencer, Ayman

GN Focus Report

In a first for the popular Made in UAE e-commerce platform, noon founder, Mohamed Alabbar rode a noon Minutes bike and visited the cutting-edge dark store in Downtown Dubai with renowned influencer, Ayman to firsthand experience the store's unique concept and operations.

The visit saw Alabbar tour the dark store, one of many situated across the UAE, with Ayman to learn more about the innovative technologies and operational strategies that are driving the success of noon Minutes. The dark store is a fully-equipped fulfillment centre in which orders are processed and delivered to customers in record-breaking time.

"noon Minutes is the future of online shopping. We serve thousands of customers daily, and we deliver everything in 10 to 15 minutes. [The dark store] is where the magic happens; everything is processed in under 2 minutes," Mohamed Alabbar, noon's founder, tells Ayman in the engaging Instagram video reel.



noon Minutes is now available in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, and Ajman and is rapidly expanding across the UAE, with delivery times as little as 15 minutes.

Customers can order everything from fresh groceries, household essentials, and beauty products to the latest tech brands, toys, and bath and body essentials. Anticipated major brand launches can also be found on the noon superapp's quick-commerce platform. ●



AMERICAN
SCHOOL OF
CREATIVE
SCIENCE



INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF
CREATIVE
SCIENCE

Creative Science Schools

Global Accreditations & Inspection Ratings



ISCS MUWAILEH

- Accredited by BSO
- Rated Good by SPEA.



ASCS MALIHA RD.

- Accredited by NEASC.
- Rated Good by SPEA.



ISCS NAD AL SHEBA

- Accredited by BSO for the second time
- Rated Good by KHDA.



ASCS NAD AL SHEBA

- Accredited by NEASC.
- Rated Good by KHDA.

 **800 2326**

 **Live Chat**

asc.sch.ae • iscs.sch.ae

Dubai - Nad Al Sheba | Sharjah - Muwaileh, Maliha Rd., Al Layyah




SINCE 1951



P R E S E N T I N G

Song of Oud

 /ajmalperfumes | www.ajmal.com

