

GULF NEWS 

BUSINESS LEADERS

OF THE UAE



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2021



EXCLUSIVE

**“IN ORDER TO SUCCEED, WE MUST
HAVE THE ABILITY TO PREDICT AND THE
AGILITY TO FLEX AND EVOLVE”**

INTERVIEW WITH PRASHANT GOENKA, DIRECTOR, EMAMI



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Study reveals the UAE is future-ready

Nation's residents ready to embrace dynamic, experimental and sustainable future with support from key sectors, says FedEx study, offering valuable insight to UAE business leaders

GN Focus Report

The UAE is at the cusp of change, with the pandemic accelerating the country's digital transformation. From healthcare to education, banking to manufacturing, technology is transforming every sector, giving rise to a future full of possibilities. Up to 96 per cent of 750 respondents across the UAE believe the country is prioritising technology like Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and Blockchain to deliver a future-ready world. Approximately 96 per cent also believed technology seen in science fiction movies is either already a part of their daily lives, or likely to be in the next few years. The findings are part of the Future is Now study conducted by FedEx Express, a subsidiary of FedEx Corp. one of the world's most influential brands in the logistics business.

With the trend of technology-led change likely to continue, future-forward industries were identified as major drivers in shaping the cities of the future. Again, roughly 96 per cent of respondents believe e-commerce will need to be more technologically driven to meet their needs better in the future, while 93 per cent consider tech-enabled logistics as being critical in a futuristic world.

Jack Muhs, Regional President, FedEx Express Middle East, Indian Subcontinent and Africa, says, "With digital transformation accelerating rapidly, technologies and innovative services with a focus on sustainability are expected to drive the future of business. Technologies like blockchain, IoT, robotics, and automation are emerging as crucial elements in helping to future-proof prominent economic sectors and helping ensure business success."

The Future is Now study focused on three main views: being dynamic, how the UAE is open to experimentation and innovation, and to what degree the



country is sustainability conscious. The findings indicated that future success will likely rely on businesses structuring their approach around these three outlooks.

Future is dynamic

Regardless of the industry, companies must monitor the pulse of their consumers, anticipate their needs, and stay one step ahead of their rapidly evolving expectations. The pandemic accelerated change in almost every aspect of life, from how we live and work, to how businesses interact with their customers, and how customers purchase products and services.

The FedEx study shows that businesses are already working to keep pace with this change. Approximately 90 per cent of respondents stated that over the past year, companies demonstrated their ability to understand 'What's next?' and present possible solutions.

Experimentation indispensable to a future-ready mindset

The UAE ranked first in the Gulf and

33rd globally in the Global Innovation Index, and is considered as one of the top innovative economies. In an increasingly dynamic environment, success for businesses hinges upon pushing the envelope and fostering a culture of experiment-led innovation. A majority of 95 per cent of those polled in the FedEx survey believe that organisations, communities, or even individuals who experiment and adopt change are better equipped to navigate through future challenges.

Sustainable mindset a business imperative

Consumers today are growing more conscious of the impact their choices have on the world around them - whether it pertains to the environment or their communities. Even their purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by their perception of an organisation being sustainable and responsible. According to the FedEx study, over 88 per cent of respondents agreed that individuals, communities, etc. that have a futuristic outlook are more environmentally conscious. In fact, 93 per cent claimed that as decision-makers in a futuristic business, sustainability would be crucial and their top priority.

The response from the study participants is clear: organisations must continue to reevaluate and revamp their sustainability strategies to ensure relevance to their customers and resilience for the long term.

As the world keeps evolving, technology and trends will likely drive changes in lifestyle, behaviours, and attitude. For both businesses and individuals, embracing a future that offers endless possibilities and having a mindset that is dynamic, experimental, and sustainable will be imperative to staying one step ahead of the curve. ●

“The UAE has created a benchmark that inspires the world”

The UAE is a land of opportunity and entrepreneurship that affords consumers more choice, says **Pankaj Agarwal**, Director, Bikanervala

Please share a brief of your brand and why you decided to set up base in the UAE?

The brand Bikanervala is well known among all Indian and vegetarian food lovers for over a century now. We originated from Bikaner City, in the royal state of Rajasthan, India, and then paved our journey to cities all over India, and abroad as well. We serve our customers with an umbrella range of Indian sweets and vegetarian Indian cuisines. Our strength and focus lies in the traditional taste that we have been serving for years. While establishing in the UAE our vision was to bring the authentic Indian flavour to global audiences.

Please share a special message to the Nation as it celebrates the 50th year of its founding during the National Day celebrations this December 2nd.

Bikanervala is here in the UAE over the last two decades now, and the journey from day one has been full of beautiful experiences. The people here have shared their immense love and for this we are grateful. On the occasion of UAE National Day we wish the whole nation prosperity, happiness, and a wonderful future. We feel proud to be part of this beautiful country.

In your capacity as the head of the brand, how has your firm contributed towards the sector, and the growth of the UAE.

Our operations in the UAE are conducted in Dubai through our central production facility, which serves our 14 outlets, and retail markets. Through our brand we have generated employment at various folds over the decades, as well as



contributed in customer choice. We are sourcing raw materials as well from the local suppliers. Thus, we have invested in the local economy.

What are the challenges you foresee for your brand going forward?

The UAE has always been a land of opportunity and over the years various new setups have entered the market, offering consumers more choices. Consumers are also more focused these days on options such as vegan, allergen-free food etc. The good news is that Bikanervala has a robust R&D centre that allows the brand to predict and stay abreast of market needs, allowing space for significant developments within Bikanervala and that are industry game changers as well.

How are events such as Expo 2020 helping your brand make an impact on regional and global markets?

Events like Expo 2020 are a great opportunity for the global economy as well as each business house. The platform has given participating brands an opportunity to showcase their presence to a global audience. In any business, networking is the key to growth, along with the right strategy and efforts, and an event like Expo 2020 is the global web of networking. Currently we are exploring the opportunity and conversations are in line for the same.

In keeping with its remarkable achievements over the last five decades, how do you visualise the progress of the UAE over the next 50 years, and what is your personal message to the UAE entrepreneurial community?

For the UAE it's said that the country has something new every day and it is true in every sense. Since the past 50 years the whole outlook of the country in terms of economic, social, technological, geographical, infrastructural and every possible sphere has grown exponentially. The country has created a benchmark that inspires the world, made possible thanks to the nation's radical entrepreneurial community. As a part of this community I always wish us all luck, and reinstate the fact that only right decisions taken at the right time can help us stay a step ahead. Together we can make a change by helping our community and by being there for each other. Right decisions require making a correct analysis of what the world wants and how we can possibly offer them the same in the best possible manner. ●

“Encouraging a culture of agility and continuous transformation is the core for value creation”

In conversation with **Prashant Goenka**, Director, Emami

Please share a brief of your brand and why you decided to set up base in the UAE?

Emami has a proud legacy built on the strong values of trust, integrity, and respect for our valued consumers. Today, Emami group enjoys the patronage of billions of consumers globally, across different businesses. Emami's vision is “Making people healthy and beautiful, naturally” and with a distinctive ayurveda and herbal focus, which has gained popularity in the Middle East, the company has established a reputation for creating product categories from scratch and carving out a disproportionate share of those categories in the personal care and healthcare segments.

The UAE lies at the heart of a strategic, geographic crossroads where trade, commerce and diverse cultures have co-existed and interacted for hundreds of years. Emami validated this leap of faith in the late 90s, and we started our business in this open and dynamic country. Initially, we were marketing and communicating to the expats from the Indian subcontinent but soon enough we found compatibility with Arab speaking consumers who yearn for progress and modernity and yet embraced the power of ayurvedic, natural and herbal products. From a small store in Deira's hustling wholesale market, we soon invested in Emami's expansion making UAE our central hub for servicing the entire Middle East. All our acquisition efforts in the region focused on international brands with higher equity among the Arab consumers leading us to acquire Creme21, a German manufactured brand, in 2019. It's always the small wins

that pave the path to big wins.

On the 50th year of its founding, please share your message to the Nation and the UAE Leadership.

The UAE is home, and this December 2nd we pay tribute to the past 50 glorious years of the Nation. Emami has been a part of this journey and we are filled with pride and gratitude that the Nation has supported us to pursue our ambition with optimism and persistent determination. On behalf of Emami, I wish His Highness, all the royal leaders, visionaries and each fellow resident calling the UAE home, a very Happy National Day! We look forward to and shall strive towards the transformative glory that lies ahead.

In your capacity as the head of the brand, how has your firm contributed towards the sector, and the growth of the UAE?

The UAE has one of the most liberal trade regimes in the Gulf and attracts

strong capital flows from across the region. The UAE provides economic diversification in trade, efficient logistics and a strong banking system. The country welcomes people from across the world leading to diversified investments. Emami has immense faith in the country's leadership and their vision. We have built strong brands in the region and thereafter moved their manufacturing from India to the UAE thereby making UAE the hub for our international activity. Being a cosmopolitan country, we hire the best talent here in the UAE. Time and again, we engage with the blue collared work force through our consumer engagement programmes, entertaining and uplifting them and helping them call this country their home. Most importantly, we are constantly exploring and investing in new businesses, startups and categories, thereby recognising avenues for growth.

How are events such as Expo 2020 helping your brand to make an impact on regional and global markets?

Expo 2020 was in itself a brand in the making since its announcement in 2013. Having been in the UAE for many years, an exposure to at least 1 signboard daily about the Expo and the share of voice it created was a treat to every marketer.

Expo 2020 through its tagline “Connecting Minds, Creating the Future” has highlighted two important elements of a brand — sustainability and opportunity. And Emami, through its tagline “Making people healthy and beautiful, naturally” as well as through its diverse portfolio has managed to create a sustainable mind space within

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The UAE welcomes people from across the world, leading to diversified investments. Emami has immense faith in the UAE Leadership”



In keeping with its remarkable achievements over the last five decades, how do you visualise the progress of the UAE over the next 50 years, and what is your personal message to the UAE entrepreneurial community?

Personally, I see the UAE as the country of the future. Today, it is referred to as the Global Country. Individuals, small entities or big corporations all wish to be here. Why? Because they see a future for themselves here.

Similarly, be it me or my organisation, we are here because we see ourselves aligning to the vision of this amazing nation. I see the UAE become the torch bearer of opportunity, inclusion, tolerance, technology happiness and overall standard of living.

At the core, we are all aiming for a safe, sustainable, peaceful, content life personally or professionally and that is what the UAE offers.

As a business leader, the one thing I would like to share is strive to be the best. The UAE has created an open environment for businesses to operate, hence healthy competition is seen in the market place. Mediocrity does not find any place in this environment. Do the best and be the best!

What are the challenges you foresee for your brand going forward?

Emami has responded to unforeseen and unprecedented challenges with a combination of passion, team-work and agility. We are an organisation that is constantly innovating and challenging the status quo.

Data is the new oil in today's environment. With data being available to everyone everywhere, we get to see a new champion with an innovative product every now and then. So established organisations like ours have to be on our toes as newer generations are fast paced and they do not want to wait for anyone. Also, adapting technology to manage the fast paced environment is another challenge. Many markets also pose a regulatory challenge, which needs to be tackled smartly and does not affect the business commercially.

In line with the UAE, Emami as a brand is ready to tackle any challenge with one aim which is to be sustainable. We shall evolve and adapt as per the market demands. I came across a beautiful line which I keep reminding myself daily — Don't limit your challenges. Challenge your limits. We must embrace constant and never ending improvement. ●

the Indian diaspora and the Arabic speaking population. Just like this glorious Nation, Emami too would be utilising this opportunity to reach out to each and every household. Today, our products are available in 90 per cent of UAE outlets across UAE. But we constantly ask ourselves, "How many hearts have we not touched yet?" and

that is where our strategy lies in.

Access and creating a difference in every individual's life is the kind of impact we want to create. The journey is arduous; The UAE 50 years ago was a desert, but is today the epitome of opportunity, vision and of making the impossible possible. Emami strives to inculcate the same traits in its growth.



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Is the new normal tweaking mentor roles?

Global realignment in mentoring roles is a given with remote access

There is a lot that mentors can do to galvanise morale among the troops when the cards are down, and distance can never be an impediment, not in a pro-digital world. That said, the main challenge mentors face on their job is the ability to build a staffer's commitment towards organisational goals. Mentors play pivotal roles in safeguarding retention and building organisational commitment, particularly in times of crisis.

In fact, research published by the *Harvard Business Review* also leads us to believe that mentors when actively engaged with mentees get the latter to form stronger emotional bonds with their firms. Mentees have also come on

board to reveal a greater sense of job satisfaction while perceiving greater support from the organisation in broad terms. To retain high-potential junior talent and ensure strong post-pandemic succession planning, consistent and committed mentoring relationships are vital.

Life-altering relationships

It also needs to be mentioned that all said and done, mentorships are akin to life-altering relationships, helping promote and inspire a sense of mutual learning and development. Every growth-fostering interaction in a strong mentorship bolsters a mentee's professional and personal growth, identity, self-worth, and self-efficacy. During this pandemic crisis, more

than ever before, therefore, mentees facing an uncertain future will leverage connections with mentors in their quest to lower anxiety, overcome imposter syndrome, all the while hopefully grasping hold of their mentor's vision on how they can not only weather the storm but continue to thrive in their careers as well.

Inspiring loyalty

Finally, let it be said that moments of adversity offer opportunities to create indelible mental maps of what excellent mentoring looks like. In this regard, mentors must have the ability to own the power of modelling loyalty and commitment. Just as good leaders

Continued on page 10

Efficient business set-up a promise

In conversation with **Victoria Mercadante**, Founder and CEO of business set-up consultants, Victoria's Luxury Services

How do you help prospective entrepreneurs set up their business here in the UAE, what is your brand's USP?

I've established and developed my brand as a personalised service provision where every customer is treated not as VIP, but as a VVIP. My work ethic is based on the principle of quality being more important than quantity. And as an individual who is incredibly target-oriented and result-driven, my priority is efficiency and productivity, ensuring every registration process is smooth, well planned and structured. It is important for me to make my clients feel special and taken care of in the best possible way over the entirety of their journey with me. Exceeding their expectations is a special bonus for me and I genuinely care for their needs.

An expat new to the country would be at odds settling in. What are the services your brand provides to

ease the process for new residents here in the UAE?

We offer a broad range of personalised services that help even a newbie to settle in quickly, and without stress. We provide full assistance to our clients, from the moment they arrive till they feel fully settled. This includes the provision of airports transfers, accommodation, transportation, tours around Dubai and neighbouring Emirates, as well as assistance in the choosing of property for lease or purchase. We will guide our clients during the entirety of the business set-up process which entails company registration, receiving of the Emirates ID, the opening of bank accounts, receiving medical insurance, driving licenses, and helping out with schools for children. We also assist Russian speaking moms and their children to improve their English language communication skills so that they may adapt quickly within the local community.

The UAE has always supported women empowerment across sectors. As a woman entrepreneur, what are the personal challenges you faced setting up business?

I always say that specifically in the UAE, the amount of respect that goes to women in general is truly fascinating. As a womenpreneur I am always well received by every government official, at any government authority in the UAE and it is indeed a real pleasure to conduct business in this country. There is no need to even mention how safe and comfortable I have felt over the past 15 years of living here. As part of my personalised services, I introduce foreigners who relocate here for living or business to the local culture by explaining to them that as long as you are well mannered, culturally sensitive and properly dressed in respect to the local culture, you will always be well received, helped and respected in this region.

The company formation consultancy business is a very competitive one here in the UAE. How do you see your brand growing in the coming months and years, what is your growth strategy for the brand?

I believe that every business will find its loyal clients if it is conducted in a professional manner with a high level of efficiency. The process should be enjoyable, stress-free and the results should be achieved in a very efficient way as Time is the most precious asset of all. In our fast-paced world, clients should be receiving their value for money and feel happy and satisfied with the results. Personalised service is the key, and majority of my clients are being referred by people who are familiar with my standards of performance. Reputation and competence are important factors in any field of business. At the moment, I am at a stage of rapid expansion due to the increased number of customers in connection to Expo 2020, as well as the exciting expansion of our local crypto community. ●





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Continued from page 8

care for their people first, so too should mentors demonstrate commitment to their mentees through ongoing communication and expressions of care. If mentors manage to accomplish this in the long term, they are aligned towards equipping their mentees to chart the growth path.

Pillar of support

In ordinary circumstances, many mentors focus on the career functions of mentoring. Although those remain important, the psychosocial functions — acceptance, affirmation, friendship, emotional support and reassurance — are especially valuable in uncertain times. Psychosocial functions tap into empathy and compassion and involve deliberate expressions of care.

Demonstrating emotional and social support might begin with generous listening to understand a mentee's concerns overall. Mentors acknowledge and validate the challenges mentees face and the distress they are coping with, or not. In this regard, mentors become role models while also showing that they can be vulnerable too by sharing authentic experiences when affected by the shutdown of normal work routines during the pandemic. Mentors can discuss how the break in physical routines, the restricted access to others, and the bombardment of information feel overwhelming and isolating at times. Being supportive, affirming and clear about what's known or not is therefore of paramount importance.

The approach for mentorship itself can be relative to the task at hand. An article published by Bloomberg Law states that

if mentors happen to be in a direct management role with their mentees, it offers a window of opportunity to be candid and transparent regarding areas of improvement that may sometimes go unsaid. Therefore, having courageous conversations on ways to improve should remain a constant, even in these times. It's an area that is often a hurdle to professional advancement, particularly for under-represented groups. Mentors also need to be upfront and ask questions to those being mentored on how they are coping, especially since research shows that female colleagues often bear the lion's share of family and household responsibilities.

Taking the time to open the door to these conversations and better understand the new stressors being currently experienced by humans helps mentors up their game. ●

The voice of financial inclusion and awareness

In conversation with
Abishek Jajoo, Founder &
Group CEO, AJMS Global

Please share a brief history of your brand and why you decided to set up base in the UAE?

AJMS Global Consulting (AJMS) is a Super Brand specialising in providing niche consulting propositions to clients in the service verticals of GRC, Technology, Tax and Management Consulting with a number of sub-service lines (Anti Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT), IFRS, Risk, Internal Audit, Fin/Reg/InsureTech, VAT, ESG, Strategy, HR, etc). As its Founder and Group CEO, I can firmly attest to the fact that AJMS Network presents some of the best brains in the fields of banking, regulation, auditing and legal advisory. Headquartered here in the UAE, we operate full-member firms in Bahrain, Oman, Jordan and India, with affiliates in Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, and UK. AJMS Global has MOUs and working relationships with regulators and national level industry associations in the UAE, Oman, Bahrain and other GCC countries. The brand takes pride in being a world-class GRC Advisory.

The reason for setting up headquarters in the UAE is that this country offers the most congenial environment to do business in the region. It is convenient to bring the intelligentsia of the world due to the nation's supportive policies.

Please share a message to the Nation as it celebrates the 50th year of its founding during the National Day celebrations on December 2.

Being part of such a progressive and futuristic society such as the UAE, we reiterate upon the collective vision of changing the world around us in such a manner that everyone feels empowered. We also emphasise on the spirit of global citizenship and refer to the famous UAE slogan: Everyone is responsible.

As a country, we have reached the outer rims of Mars. But as global citizens representing the UAE, it is of eminent importance that our voyage to a more sociable, greener and sustainable Earth meets its destiny.

In your capacity as the head of the brand, how has your firm contributed towards the sector, and the growth of the UAE?

AJMS Global has raised awareness on a massive scale in the areas of AML/CFT, sustainability and financial inclusion, and has been recognised in the region for its efforts through awards and accolades.

We have raised awareness through our RegTech subsidiary (Digi) and also created resonance on the far reaching implications of IFRS 17 through our InsureTech subsidiary (AInsurTech), which has been well received by policy making echelons.

One of the most appreciated contributions, we have made to the UAE financial landscape, is mass-scale awareness raising for Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions, or DNFBPs, which include real estate, precious commodities, corporate service providers, independent accountants, etc, which was done in a closely knit working relationship with the regulators. The efforts of AJMS Global brought about a cultural change in the financial market to curb financial crime and instill enhanced governance and transparency. In fact, we have received multiple awards, accolades, and letters of felicitation issued to the credit of AJMS Global.

AJMS Global has also effected a number of awareness campaigns on financial inclusion, digital transformation and sustainability. In collaboration with partners we have also launched a tool to enable organizations to undertake sustainability analysis and reporting, and thus positioned ourselves as a flagbearer in the UAE of these much talked about global initiatives.



We could not have done it by ourselves. We are thankful to the various stakeholders, including our human capital, customers and supervisory bodies, who have facilitated and supported us in these corporate social responsibility initiatives, especially InfiniTech (our FinTech subsidiary) which is promoting financial literacy for the unbanked.

In keeping with its remarkable achievements over the last five decades, how do you visualise the progress of the UAE over the next 50 years, and what is your personal message to the UAE entrepreneurial community?

Thanks to the vision and commitment of the nation's founding fathers and the UAE leadership, over the last five decades, the UAE has transformed, beyond a doubt, into a leading economy of and a benchmark society for the world. Dubai and Abu Dhabi have achieved the undisputed status of being considered amongst the world's top business capitals long ago. At this pace, we would not be surprised if this country becomes one of the most powerful influencers on global geopolitical dynamics in the next 50 years. My advice, therefore, to our thriving entrepreneurial community is to stay on board the success wagon as it journeys to new realms of grandeur. ●

Challenging security, ethics and compliance models



Abdul Moiz Khan

lending to support stalled economic growth. Thus, there is growing demand for new debt by companies for reasons such as forced borrowing by businesses to keep operations running as large parts of the economy slowed or shut down; technology investment to mobilise and support remote access, as well as help several corporates reconfigure workplaces to ensure social distancing in jobs requiring in-person work.

At large, the way forward looks exciting as the business environment looks upbeat, returning to normalcy and reflecting a growth trajectory. While consulting is never a 9-to-5 job, as we are always on and expected to be on the move at all times, it can be exhausting. However, the motivating factor in our role is the significant freedom and flexibility — in terms of when we work, where we work, and what we do. So, we can craft your job to a large degree. Further, in consulting, we need to create your own work structures and be accountable for your impact. We generally embrace long-term perspectives and carefully plan our own path, while remaining flexible enough to challenge our own thinking every once a while. And that's why we love our job.

— The writer is a senior UAE based Corporate / Risk Management Banker, Co – Founder, CEO & Managing Partner of Fursa Consulting – DED licensed Corporate Advisory Firm engaged in Debt Advisory, PE, M&A & Strategy



The takeaways from the pandemic are helping corporates regroup while helping them rethink conventional business models and adapt quicker to risk

By Abdul Moiz Khan

As is and to be are two terms consultants use to describe what is being done now, and what needs to be done once the job is completed.

Covid-19 has had a profound impact on the global economy. Disruption in economic activity, coupled with high debt levels made borrowers vulnerable to the risks of default and bankruptcy. The key takeaways from the pandemic turmoil can be the following:

1. The crisis only accelerated the fall for companies that were already in trouble
2. Supply chain disruption in business activity led to a rise in defaults and bankruptcies
3. Debt levels, already at an all-time

high prior to the pandemic, surged primarily due to low interest rates

4. Uneven global recovery

5. Changes in business models

These prime factors are redefining the culture of organisations and putting additional pressures on businesses when it comes to security, ethics and compliance.

Although the pandemic has negatively impacted many industries, it has also led to the sudden and substantial demand for restructuring and debt advisory services, presenting consulting firms with opportunities.

Corporate clients are seeking the guidance and expertise of consultants to map out future strategies and business scenarios. There is an urgent need among clients for corporate consulting services to present pragmatic and

sustainable restructuring structures for their operations, as well as business continuity and building resiliency for future disruptions. Entities with good corporate governance have a critical opportunity now to challenge their past assumptions about risk, re-evaluate their processes and procedures, and optimise their programmes for risk management.

Fursa Consulting, incorporated in 2014 under a license issued by the Department of Economic Development, Government of Dubai, is a leading independent advisory firm focused on providing financial advice on structured debt, equity and mergers and acquisitions to corporates and institutional clients. Our firm fosters long-term relationships with clients as their independent adviser on strategic matters and transactions. The team at Fursa comprises of experienced professionals with strong academic and corporate backgrounds. With extensive knowledge of local and international markets and ready access to key decision makers, our team is well positioned to

facilitate and execute transactions.

At Fursa Consulting, we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our clients, providing on-ground insight, sharing lessons learned from others and helping them see around corners. Assisting

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Although the pandemic has negatively impacted many industries, it has also led to substantial demand for restructuring and debt advisory services.”

companies across sectors to manage a new set of dynamic risks and seize fast moving opportunities, we are committed to helping our clients fully capitalise on the rebound.

Our experts are assisting corporates in building capabilities to monitor, assess, mitigate and respond to the multifaceted risks and respond to challenges such as the following:

- How does a company know when there is a shift in risk in the organisation?
- How can the companies assess and mitigate the risk of fraud or compliance breaches in the current environment?
- What is the new regulatory environment going to mean from a risk perspective?
- What measures need to be in place to manage the cultural change that will be put in place post-pandemic due to remote work, return-to-office, or business restructuring?

Our Debt Advisory vertical is active again as banks have accelerated their

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3 Made in UAE start-ups to watch

Launched this year, these UAE entrepreneurial businesses are as diverse in their areas of business as they are similar in providing innovative business models to court success

GN Focus Report



Stay Flawless Beauty Lounge

The latest address for one's beauty and wellness needs, the Stay Flawless Beauty Lounge is located in Town Square, Dubai. Officially launched in October this year by Hadeel Ismail, a pharmacist-turned-entrepreneur with the goal to empower women through bespoke beauty treatments that are created for friends and by friends, the beauty lounge redefines beauty standards by promising a unique salon experience with flawless and high-quality beauty treatments on tap. Hosting a safe space for culturally diverse women, the lounge indulges patrons with the best pampering experience they could dream of. From first class hair styling, nail art, facial and skin care treatments, to mindful massages, Stay Flawless highlights the importance of looking and feeling your best through exceptional beauty services.



AHS Properties

Emirati entrepreneur, Abbas Sajwani launched his uber-luxury real estate company, AHS Properties earlier this month with a total asset value of more than \$100 million. The launch was timely, conducted just ahead of Cityscape — the region's leading property exhibition and hosted annually in Dubai.

Spotting an opportunity to meet rising demand for ultra-luxury properties, Abbas, son of Hussain Sajwani, founder of the Damac Group, will oversee his brand operations as it explores sales options for premium estates in Emirates Hills, as well as beachfront villas on Dubai's exclusive Palm Jumeirah. The company currently has four luxury villas in its portfolio, of which three are being valued at Dh80 million each and the fourth valued at more than Dh150 million.



Zofeur

The Dubai-based tech start-up claims to offer the world's first on-demand pay-per-minute chauffeur services platform with no minimum usage commitment – be it 10 minutes, 10 hours or 10 days. Founded by entrepreneurial colleagues, Bunt Monani and Ishrath Hasmin, the two friends, who come with strong backgrounds in finance, raised seed funding of \$500,000 in May this year, and accumulated more than 50,000 users in Dubai alone. Users get to instantly hire personal chauffeurs for a variety of activities through the Zofeur mobile app, reiterating the brand's emphasis on saving time and money while providing much-needed comfort for a busy lifestyle. With ambitious plans to expand, the tech start-up hopes to consistently offer top-notch convenience to those looking for safe and predictable options to hiring a driver without breaking the bank. ●

Helping entrepreneurs thrive in the UAE

The Capital International Group has played pivotal roles as business setup consultants to drive the entrepreneurial narrative for the UAE, says its CEO and Director, **Ayub Ahmed Sait**

Please share a brief about your brand and why you decided to set up base in the UAE?

CIG Business services (CIG) is a subsidiary of Capital International group of Enterprises LLC and is diversified into multiple businesses. With a legacy of over 15 years, CIG assists aspiring entrepreneurs in realising their dreams. We take pride in being one of the pioneers in the industry in providing startup advisory, business solutions, serviced offices, accounting and tax advisory, assistance for corporate bank account opening, marketing solutions, information technology services and corporate government liaison.

The leadership of the UAE has always believed in challenging the status quo, being innovative and providing state-of-the-art infrastructure, and an ecosystem that makes it the business hub of the world. We decided to have our headquarters in the UAE because of the forward-thinking leadership, strategic location, growing market and flexible taxation systems.

Do share a special message to the Nation as it celebrates the 50th year of its founding during the National Day celebrations this December 2nd.

As the UAE celebrates its 50th National Day, on behalf of Capital International Group, I would like to congratulate the citizens and residents of this great nation. We should continue to stay united and support the society to make life more meaningful.

In your capacity as the head of the brand, how has your firm contributed towards the sector, and the growth of the UAE?

Being in the industry for over 15 years and working closely with investors and liaising with government entities associated with foreign direct investment, we have played a pivotal role in promoting economic development by



assisting over 25,000+ foreign firms, corporate and retail investors to set up their businesses in the UAE, injecting over \$200 million since inception.

What are the challenges you foresee for your brand going forward?

The challenges are many, a few of which include staying abreast with constant changes in rules and regulations for investors; being able to adapt to market changes and alter and execute the plans just in time to ensure business does not incur losses. Meeting investor expectations of setting up a company with operational bank accounts to help run their business has become a challenge as banks are taking time to complete KYC and approve bank accounts for new investors.

In keeping with its remarkable achievements over the last five decades, how do you visualise the

progress of the UAE over the next 50 years, and what is your personal message to the UAE entrepreneurial community?

Under the able UAE Leadership, the nation has always challenged status quo and ensured innovation in every possible sector. The trajectory of growth has been trending upwards over the last five decades now, and is still positive, which provides a stable, secured and conducive atmosphere for investors to set up their business and make Dubai a second home by investing in properties. State-of-the-art infrastructure creates a bubble and in order to be successful, I would advise aspiring entrepreneurs to ensure that they have a plan crafted towards with vision and execution of the plan. Given the cut-throat competition it is imperative to come up with an innovative idea that solves a problem that exists in the market, else it will be just another company providing service. ●

Notthern Corridor Economic Region opens doors for business at Malaysia Pavilion, Expo 2020

Malaysian government body officially launches busines programme at Malaysia Pavilion at Expo 2020 to attract regional investors and businesses

The Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA), a government body in Malaysia, yesterday officially launched its business programme at the Malaysia Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, for Week 8 of the pavilion's 26-week programme. Launched by the Ambassador of Malaysia to the UAE, Mohammad Tarid Sufian, the week was held this month between November 21 to 27 and showcased trade and investment opportunities in the NCER as well as key government initiatives.

The Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) covers the four northern states of Peninsular Malaysia: Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak and has a prominent position within the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle, making it an important gateway in Southeast Asia for investment in businesses and commercial expansion for various industries. It is an ideal investment and trade destination complete with a sustainable economic ecosystem to support investors looking to expand or establish their business and operations across southeast Asia.

Hasri Hasan, Chief Operating Officer of NCIA, says, "The NCER boasts excellent infrastructure such as road connectivity, airports, seaports and inland ports. The region also possesses an established ecosystem, with existing public-private partnerships and attractive fiscal incentives that continue to attract strategic investment partners, globally. NCER's highest value investors come from the US, China and Japan respectively."

Between 2009 and 2020, the region has attracted \$31.22 billion of committed investment and already realised \$26.65. It is also home to 28,074 entrepreneurs, resulting in a record 188,618 cumulative



From left: Fajaffri Mohamed Fadzil, Senior Director of Investment NCIA, Ammar Bin Dato' Shaikh Mahmood Naim, State Secretary of Kedah, Muhammad Tarid Sufian, Ambassador of Malaysia to the UAE, Hasri Hassan, Chief Operating Officer of NCIA, and Tuan Muhammad Hasril Abdul Hamid, Consul General of Malaysia in Dubai at the event launch at Malaysia Pavilion

approved job creations and 161,929 cumulative realised job creations for the region.

For investors, the two key hotspots are Kedah Rubber City (KRC) in Kedah and the Chuping Valley Industrial Area (CVIA) in Perlis. These areas offer an established and efficient supply chain, integrated logistics solutions and numerous opportunities to local and foreign investors. These industrial parks are also poised to play pivotal roles in strengthening regional cooperation within the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle.

Despite the onset of the pandemic and a drop in production of around 60 per cent, NCER has retained its socioeconomic resilience and is currently focused on talent development in strategic, high impact industries. This was achieved by implementing strategic

high-impact projects, expanding the region's job sectors, strengthening the overall talent ecosystem, and increasing economic activities to hasten the region's socioeconomic recovery.

To ensure the socio-economic recovery of the NCER post-pandemic, NCIA has designed holistic and integrated people-centric human capital programmes. These programmes are designed to benefit those who lost their jobs, unemployed graduates, and businesses looking to expand their operations.

NCER, through its human capital programmes, also facilitates the development of local entrepreneurs to become international players. The business week at the Malaysia Pavilion features ten entrepreneurs from the region who will showcase their innovative and high-quality products, which are export-ready. ●

Recognise opportunity when you see it

The founding of Al Adil is as interesting as the growth trajectory of the Indian food retail brand, says **Dr Dhananjay Datar**, CMD, Al Adil Group

Please share a brief overview of your brand and why you decided to set up base in the UAE?

Al Adil is our Business brand and we have another product brand titled Peacock. The words Al Adil in Arabic mean a good soul or a person who always thinks of the well-being of others. The story behind selecting these words as the title of the business is also interesting to note. My father, the late Mahadevrao Datar, who was working in Dubai, pioneered this corporate brand in 1984. He always wished himself to be an amiable person and a philanthropist. While working in Dubai he saw the opportunity in serving various communities that migrated to the UAE for jobs by supplying them with pure, clean and authentic food products. That was the reason he started a small business called Al Adil Trading in Dubai. Initially it was just a tiny grocery shop established in a rented space. Eventually the number of shops as well as the volume of business increased and the brand was transformed into a company and today it is a multinational group comprising a chain of 50 super stores across the GCC, two state-of-the-art spice factories, 2 modern flour mills and an import-export company.

Please share a special message to the Nation as it celebrates the 50th year of its founding during the National Day celebrations this December 2nd.

I have been witnessing the progress of the UAE for the last 36 years. When I first landed in this great nation in 1984, it was in a developing stage, but I saw

visionary infrastructural development everywhere. It has since prospered tremendously and is proudly recognised as one of the world's important business hubs. Recently, the inauguration of our 50th store took place in the Golden Jubilee Year of UAE. This year has been declared as the 'Year of the Fiftieth.' So this is a pleasant coincidence for us. I have always loved and respected this country and its visionary rulers, who encouraged us and created myriad opportunities of development for many small entrepreneurs like me to grow globally. I wish and pray that this great nation take even bigger leaps forward and become the most sought after destination for the global business ecosystem.

In your capacity as CMD, how has Al Adil contributed towards the sector, and the growth of UAE?

Al Adil Trading group has performed a key role in bringing more than 9,000 Indian products to the UAE. The group also produces more than 700 products within categories like ready-made flours, spices, pickles, jams, namkeen and instant, under its own brand, Peacock. Al Adil Group is in active expansion mode and increasing its outlets in other Gulf countries. It has established special trade routes in the US, Canada, Kenya, Switzerland, Italy, Eritria, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. We have a chain of 50 super stores, of which more than 40 are in the UAE. Millions of customers in the Gulf share a strong bond of trust with this brand. I only hope we have contributed towards the nation's economic growth in our small way.

How are events such as Expo 2020 helping your brand to make an impact on regional and global markets?

Events such as Expo 2020 are crucial for any business to explore global opportunities. Even my brand has been



transformed by one such international exhibition. I remember, before the start of this millennium, we would run our business in traditional style. But I felt a need to supply my products in a more safe and hygienic way and saw the advanced packaging technology in one such global exhibition in Dubai. The automation process solved my problem and we adopted new technology. Exhibitions provide us with new opportunities for growth.

In keeping with its remarkable achievements over the last five decades, how do you visualise the progress of the UAE over the next 50 years?

What I like most about the UAE is that this great nation is really growth-oriented and business-friendly. The encouraging business policies and ever-supporting and visionary rulers have made this country a land of opportunities and prosperity. I think the next 50 years will see the UAE become the centre of global business, being the a gateway to prominent trade regions such as Asia, Europe, GCC and Africa. I appeal to the UAE entrepreneurial community to take advantage of the encouraging policies and infrastructure to grow further and contribute even more to the economic progress of this land. ●

Sustainable UAE desert farming tech harvests incredible results in China

UAE-based firm Dake Rechsand helps turn barren mountains in China into high-yield rice fields

GN Focus Report

Dake Rechsand, a Dubai-based company offering sustainable solutions in water conservation and desert farming, has unveiled a success story that illustrates an ideal, integrated use of its Breathable Sand and IDer honeycomb water harvesting technologies. This unique combination, in tandem with sensor-oriented intelligent irrigation systems, has transformed an “unproductive” barren mountain in the Fuyang district of Zhejiang Province, East China, into a high-yield rice field.

Locally dubbed the Ecological Sponge Paddy Fields, the mountains redefine possibilities in desert farming. Previously deemed non-arable and unfit for agriculture, the barren mountains were subject to multi-level technology application. The soil was enhanced with the Breathable Sand medium, inducing air permeability and water retention (anti-seepage) properties. Typically, this action enables crops to retain water for extended periods after one-time irrigation, leading to a total reduction in water usage by 80% compared to conventional farming.

Secondly, the excessive irrigation run-offs and rainwater are captured through IDer honeycomb water harvesting systems, which perform filtration and store potable water in underground reservoirs. Using efficient redirection mechanisms, the stored water is reused



Barren land - Fuyang district - Zhejiang Province, East China turned into a high-yield rice field with breathable sand

for irrigation, creating “circularity” in farming systems. In addition, the rice fields are fitted with irrigation-monitoring smart sensors, which enable operators to automate several functions and further optimize resource usage.

Chandra Dake, CEO and Founder of Dake Rechsand, says, “Ecological Sponge Paddy Fields challenge the conventional notions about land “arability. Barren mountains, originally deemed unproductive, are now teeming with life, with golden-coloured rice fields terraced on them. But their aesthetic appeal is only part of the story; their real value lies in significantly lower resource usage, high yield, and total ecological improvement,

“The integrated use of Dake Rechsand’s proprietary solutions, and its feasibility with smart sensors, has led to an exemplary prototype in the Fuyang District of China, inspiring a generation of sustainability-focused farmers and entrepreneurs across the world. This development is consistent with the growing emphasis on sustainable farming and climate actions, on which the recently concluded COP26 and increasing net-zero pledges are predicated. To that end, the mere existence of barren-mountains-turned-rice-fields is a beacon of hope — for the carbon-intensive

agricultural sector and the water-stressed MENA region.”

The multi-fold value of breathable sand and IDer harvesting can be summarized as follows:

Water-saving: The anti-seepage, water retention property of Breathable Sand minimises irrigation requirements, enabling agricultural activities in water-stressed regions such as MENA.

Emission reduction: Agriculture sector is a leading cause of climate change due to its embodied and operational carbon footprint. Tech-driven optimisation and efficiency enhancements help farmers keep emissions in check.

Fertiliser preservation: Anti-seepage properties also help the soil medium preserve fertilizers, thereby mitigating leakages and non-point source (NPS) pollution.

High yield: The air permeability function of Breathable Sand enables an effective supply of nutrients to the roots, leading to high yield and the possibility of growing a variety of crops.

Ecological improvement: Integrated application of Breathable Sand and IDer harvesting is a tested-and-proven method to achieve land remediation and induce ecological balance. ●



Chandra Dake, CEO & Founder, Dake Rechsand

Inspiration for women to realise their dreams

In conversation with **Aparna Bajpai**, Founder of BeingShe, a group that provides an ecosystem for women entrepreneurs to thrive

How is BeingShe a driving force in supporting women empowerment, what are the core values that helped you found this unique brand?

BeingShe as a concept was developed by me to create an ecosystem for women to guide, support, and create opportunities for them through various initiatives. Having won the Mrs India Globe pageant in 2018, the win did not just give me the confidence to pursue my dreams but also offered a window into the challenges women faced in reaching their treasured goals. BeingShe, I hope will be seen as a ladder to support women in achieving their dreams. There are thousands of inspirational stories waiting to be told about women who yearn for a more fulfilling life. BeingShe brings you these true stories of struggle and stories of success, to inspire more women to take action and work towards fulfilling their lifetime goals.

What are the main challenges women face in the corporate world and how is Being She hoping to address these issues through its initiatives?

Women in general face the biggest issue of identifying their own strengths and living their passion due to various reasons throughout their lives. In corporate culture they may gain success on the professional front but to keep the balance between living their passion and purpose sometimes fades. Through a variety of initiatives under the BeingShe umbrella we encourage women to be creative and lead a life full of passion.

What has the response been to the BeingShe Club since its founding, how do you see it expanding its scope of activity in the coming years?

It has been truly amazing to see how women were actually looking out for a membership plan like this where they can feel the sense of belonging and are



encouraged to experience personal and professional growth through various interesting, engaging and call-to-action driven programmes.

The UAE has always been supportive of women empowerment. Now, as a Nation readies to celebrate its 50th commemorative year, what is your personal message to the women of the UAE and the UAE Leadership on this momentous occasion?

I always say Dubai and the UAE are magical places. After living and experiencing so many other countries, my favourite is definitely the UAE. Its excellent progress and success in just 50 years is exceptional. On the occasion of this wonderful milestone I wish each and every woman in this nation congratulations as they are in the best and most safest place in the world. The exceptional UAE Leadership adds to their success and growth opportunities. ●

UAE government initiative to help rev up industrial sector

Deal signed this month between Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology and Dubai Industrial City a catalyst for Make in Emirates campaign

GN Focus Report

The Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology (MoIAT) and Dubai Industrial City (DI), one of the largest industrial hubs in the region, signed a deal designed to further enhance the UAE's industrial sector while facilitating decarbonisation efforts.

Held under the patronage of His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the Memorandum of Understanding was signed on the first day of the Global Manufacturing and Industrialisation Summit at Expo 2020.

It focused on three core elements, including enabling the UAE's Industry 4.0 programme, attracting foreign investors as part of the Make It In The Emirates campaign, and facilitating decarbonisation across the industrial sector. The partnership's objectives are in line with the UAE's industrial strategy, which aims to develop the nation's industrial sector and raise its contribution to the GDP.

The deal was witnessed by Dr Sultan Al Jaber, Minister of Industry & Advanced Technology, Sarah Al Amiri, UAE Minister of State for Advanced Technology, and Malek Sultan Al Malek, Director General of Dubai Development Authority and Group Chief Executive Officer of Dubai Holding Asset Management (DHAM). The MOU was signed by Omar Suwaina Al Suwaidi, Undersecretary at MoIAT, and Abdulla Belhou, Chief Commercial Officer at Dubai Holding Asset Management (DHAM).



Speaking about the signing, Omar Suwaina Al Suwaidi says, "Public sector collaborations are a key part of the various programmes the Ministry is leading to elevate the UAE's industrial sector. This latest partnership focuses on areas that will be crucial to enhancing the competitiveness of the country and turning the UAE into a sustainable and attractive global industrial hub. We look forward to a fruitful and productive relationship with our partners at Dubai Industrial City."

Sharing his thoughts about the deal, Belhou of DHAM feels the UAE is continuing to reinforce its status as a global leader and innovator with several ambitious initiatives such as Operation 300bn. "By boosting the local manufacturing and distribution ecosystem, we will not only cement our sustainable and diverse economy, but

will be better prepared for the future, and enhance the UAE's competitiveness and attractiveness as a global manufacturing and trade hub," he says.

"Dubai Industrial City, on its part is at the forefront of economic development over nearly two decades, and we are constantly raising the bar for best-in-class business ecosystems that attract both companies and talent from all over the world. The industrial sector plays a critical role in our portfolio, and we are committed to cementing the reputation of products made in the UAE and support the export of quality products."

Saud Abu Alshawareb, Managing Director, Dubai Industrial City, is justifiably buoyant about the deal and the critical role his organisation is playing in this important initiative. "We are proud to partner with the Ministry to facilitate the UAE's agenda boosting the industrial sector," says Saud. "By pooling together our expertise, resources and extensive networks, we hope to realise our visionary leadership's proactive strategy to put the UAE at the forefront of global manufacturing and distribution, while securing a diversified, sustainable economy."

"As one of the largest industrial hubs in the region, Dubai Industrial City plays a pivotal role in driving national industrial strategies. Our community is home to more than 750 business partners, including the world's leading corporations, regional SMEs and disruptive start-ups. Our state-of-the-art infrastructure and comprehensive community enable collaboration and innovation, critical values to equip us for the future." ●

Building on a vision

Vision Catalyst is one of the premium Made in UAE brands in the fields of engineering, procurement and construction. In conversation with its Founder, **Vivek Sinha**

Please share a brief profile of the Vision Catalyst Group while elaborating on its service portfolio.

Vision Catalyst Group is an international engineering, procurement and construction conglomerate founded by me and is headquartered in Dubai and operates across the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Europe through a group of 14 companies. The Vision Catalyst Group (VCG) owns Fazah Prefab, Maze Projects, Atelier Construction and its subsidiaries. My background in civil engineering helped me formulate the brand's comprehensive service portfolio. As an unlimited EPC company, Vision Catalyst today offers vast experience in the fields of building construction, concrete restoration and electromechanical activities, with 15 years of experience in buildings, metro stations, industries, towers, infrastructures and high-end residential and commercial projects. VCG has launched its real estate development projects in the UAE and India through Maze, a company that is part of VCG and led by architect, Apurva Mitkar.

How challenging have the last 2 years been for the construction industry and how did your brand triumph against the odds?

Being one of the most diversified engineering groups allows us to offer more than 200 construction services, all under one roof. We build, we maintain, we sustain, we restore. Our menu has everything you expect in the construction and engineering industry and hence for the last two years we were preparing for Expo 2020 infrastructure with the Dubai government and many essential projects. By the grace of the almighty, we faced no challenges during these two years and have been working harder than ever to achieve Dubai's goals.

The UAE is a dream destination for civil engineers. How mature is the sector in your view and where do you see industry trends heading in the coming decade?

Dubai is a dream come true and Vision



Catalyst is a catalyst to help realise the vision of the Leadership of the Emirate. We follow the vision of His Highness Shaikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. Everything is possible in our dictionary. We dare, we share, we care, we deliver, and the UAE gives us unlimited construction opportunities. Everything is well planned for the next 50 years and we will surely build bigger and better than ever.

What is the future for Vision Catalyst, what is the growth strategy for the brand?

The word unlimited and the term, why not, define Vision Catalyst's ethos as a brand. Dubai's future is the future of Vision Catalyst. We focus on our Leader's words and statements with the feeling of delivering it as a belief. We will build and they will come, and we will make sure every plan of our Leader comes true.

Vision Catalyst's future aims at providing highly professional engineering solutions and the growth will follow based on our efforts.

Expansion into all countries and cities of operations by triple-fold year by year is our target. Our history encourages us to dream big and build with confidence.

As a proud, Made in the UAE brand, please share a personal message to the UAE Leadership, as the nation readies to celebrate its 50th year of founding this UAE National Day.

We are thankful to the UAE and Dubai Leaders for providing the best platform in the world to conduct business from. The UAE is not just a country, it is the world in a country.

We love passion, progress and productivity, and are thankful to the Vision Catalyst team as well for making the company among the most technically qualified Dubai brands. We continue to serve the nation with full commitment and honesty.

VCG is not only expanding in the field of business, as our prime goal is to serve society and the world through our humanitarian initiatives, fronted by our non-profit foundation, Vindhyaachal Trust, which is operating for the welfare of society at the grassroots level. ●



Ayshwarya Chari
and Shraddha
Barot, co-founders
of 1115inc.com

Making headlines in the e-commerce space

In conversation with **Ayshwarya Chari** and **Shraddha Barot Amariei**, co-founders of UAE's first e-commerce consulting company for SMEs and family businesses

What is the USP for 1115inc.com in a market that demands quality e-commerce offerings?

Setting up an e-commerce/ digital business can be a daunting process. 1115inc is a commerce advisory and we can support businesses in every phase of their set up and scale journey - from ideation and branding to financial/ business planning and optimising their operational efficiency.

Of course, the base of every digital business is the technology and we are able to offer unbiased advice on the technology and project manage the build from start to finish.

Is e-commerce just a trend or is it here to stay, how do you see e-commerce shaping up over the next couple of years?

e-commerce is a rapidly growing industry showing double digit growth year-on-year and we are proud to see regional e-commerce brands receiving funding and takeover from some of the

largest e-commerce players in the world. e-commerce is very much here to stay; with mainland and free zones offering specialised support and business set-up services to e-commerce business we foresee the industry getting stronger each year as well, with a growing millennial and Gen Z population who prefer buying online.

What are the challenges you faced while setting up the platform?

We can speak on behalf of our clients here. Setting up the platform is equivalent to setting up your storefront in retail. That platform will only be able to perform to its potential when all the operational bits from supply chain to the financial model and resource planning are in place.

We have often seen that businesses mould their operational processes to their technology while we are firm believers that your technology should work to your business requirements. Not every platform is right for every business

and this critical choice should be made based on the business needs, SOPs and available resources.

How expansive is your service portfolio and what are your expansion plans in the next 2 years?

Our capabilities include everything from branding and financial modelling to optimisation of operational processes. Our key competency is of course the technology — we lend our expertise to business owners to find the right platform and partners such as last mile providers and payment gateways to keep the technology in sync with the business needs and growth.

Having launched in November '20 in a fortunate position of being at capacity since day 1, we have aggressive growth plans. 2022 will see us grow aggressively, more than doubling our 2021 numbers.

We will also expand geographically with a presence in both Qatar and Bahrain. ●

11 15

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