

NO (GOOD) IDEA LEFT BEHIND *EVERYONE* IN AN ORGANIZATION HAS THE POTENTIAL TO INNOVATE

Entrepreneur®

MIDDLE EAST

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

GHASSAN ABOUD

The founder and Chairman of Ghassan Aboud Group on how he built his international business conglomerate

TALENT TAKES CENTER STAGE

Arabic karaoke app **Ghinwa** is enabling the MENA region's singers to unleash their full potential online

CREATIVE PURSUITS

SAMER ARZOUNI FROM FILMMAKER TO ENTREPRENEUR

SPOTLIFE FILM PRODUCTIONS
FOUNDER AND
MANAGING DIRECTOR



9 772311 541008 >



Transforming Great Thinkers into Great Leaders



In Collaboration with



Prince Mohammad Bin Salman College of Business & Entrepreneurship (MBSC) is the birthplace to the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders in Saudi. A private non-profit higher education institute for both men and women located in King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC). MBSC has been established to provide world-class education and deliver the next generation of transformative business leaders who can think creatively and act boldly.

MBSC Offers:

MBA program developed in collaboration with Babson Global

- Full-Time MBA: In-residence 1-year program
 - Part-Time MBA: 2-year program,
long weekend every 2 weeks (Thu - Sat)
- Learn more by sending us an email to:
admissions@mbsc.edu.sa

Executive Education (EXED) Programs:

- Open enrollment for individuals
 - Customized programs for organizations
- Learn more about EXED by sending an email to:
inquiry.eced@mbsc.edu.sa



MBSC is unique to the region. It applies Babson's Entrepreneurial Thought and Action (ETA) methodology to unlock entrepreneurial potential participant-centred learning giving students the competitive edge.

Learn more by visiting our website

www.mbsc.edu.sa

www.mbsc.edu.sa | [f](#) [o](#) [t](#) [@mbsckaec](#)



34

Ahmad Ashkar,
founder and
CEO, Hult Prize
Foundation

24

INNOVATOR:
ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Ghassan Aboud

The founder and Chairman of Ghassan Aboud Group on how he built his international business conglomerate.

**30**

INNOVATOR:
KEEPING IT REAL

H.E. Maryam Al Mheiri

The CEO of Media Zone Authority- Abu Dhabi and twofour54 believes persistence is important in becoming a leader in your field.

34

INNOVATOR:
IMPACTING THE FUTURE

Ahmad Ashkar

The Founder and CEO of Hult Prize Foundation on building a global startup movement centered on enabling social good.

46

INNOVATOR:
CREATIVE PURSUITS

From filmmaker to entrepreneur

Spotlife Film Productions founder and Managing Director Samer Arzouni.

52

CULTURE:
DESIGN

Room to breathe

Brooke Boyschau and Sophie Cooke, co-founders of Atteline, explain what characterizes the perfect work environment that does not feel like, well, work.

38

'TREPONOMICS:
PRO

Get the best to come to you

Bayt.com's VP of Employer Solutions Suhail Al Masri offers ways to overcome the fight for top talent with employer branding.

52 Brooke Boyschau and Sophie Cooke, co-founders, Atteline

Quattroporte - engine: V6 90° 2979 cm³ - max power: 350 HP at 6500 - 6800 rpm - max torque: 500 Nm at 1750 - 4500 rpm - max speed: 270 km/h - 0-100 km/h acceleration: 5.5 secs
fuel consumption (combined cycle): 9.1 l/100 km - CO₂ emissions (combined Cycle): 212 g/km. The data may not refer to the model represented.



Embrace traditions. Inspire memories.

PREMIER
MOTORS

Abu Dhabi, Khalidiya.
uae.maserati.com



الطلایر
motors للسيارات

Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Rd.
Sharjah, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Rd.
800 MOTORS (668677)



This Ramadan, begin your new journey.
Maserati range. Yours from AED 299,000*, including:

- 5% cash back
- 5-year unlimited warranty
- 5-year service package
- 5-year roadside assistance



MASERATI

*Terms and conditions apply. Prices are inclusive of 5% VAT. Price does not refer to the model represented.



Great Living

In The Heart Of Dubai

*Terms & Conditions Apply • Permit No. 16203



AZIZI DEVELOPMENTS
DEVELOPER ID: 1002

800 AZIZI
29494



Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum City - District 7



P. O. Box: 121385, Suite No. 904, API World Tower,
Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, UAE.

www.azizidevelopments.com

MASTER DEVELOPER

meydan

Get your business moving.

Business complete

Give your business all the tools it needs to reach its maximum potential with Business Complete Plan.

- High speed internet
- Business devices
- Free WiFi router
- Free national and international minutes

For more information, call **800 188**.

Business



d
®
add life to life

THE BOULEVARD *of* HIGH LIFE



FEATURES IN HARTLAND



SPA



WALK



PARKS



HOTELS



RETAIL



CAFES



MOSQUES



YOGA
CENTRE



SWIMMING
POOL



TENNIS
COURT



HARTLAND
BOULEVARD



INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOLS



HARTLAND
CLUB



CRICKET
PITCH



When every meal is served with waterfront views, every moment enhances into an event. It's a fusion of refined taste and indulgent sights, all enjoyed close to home. Discover the way life is supposed to be lived in a unique waterfront city side community with 30% green spaces right in the epicentre of Dubai. Exclusive studios, duplexes to one, two and three bedrooms with choice of park, pool or boulevard views flourishing with modernity and serenity.

Show apartment ready. Book your viewing today.

800 999 999

GREENS II SOBHA HARTLAND



ULTIMATE
INTELLIGENT
PERFORMANCE

HUAWEI

HUAWEI

* For smartphone with dedicated Neural Network Processing Unit.

Product color, shape, interface and functions are for reference only. The actual product may vary.



HUAWEI Mate10 Series

CO-ENGINEERED WITH



WORLD'S FIRST AI PROCESSOR* INSIDE

consumer.huawei.com



66 Hasan Haider, Partner, 500 Startups at Unbound Bahrain

66 **START IT UP: ECOSYSTEM**

Fostering growth
On the sidelines of Unbound Bahrain, key players in Bahrain's entrepreneurial ecosystem have their say on what it'll take to invigorate the startup space in the country.

58 **'TREPONOMICS: PRO**

No (good) idea left behind
Emirates Global Aluminium's Executive Vice President Salman Dawood Abdulla believes everyone in an organization has the potential to innovate.

60 **START IT UP: ECOSYSTEM**

New kids on the block
Silicon Valley-headquartered Plug and Play partners with Abu Dhabi Global Market to make a dent in the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

42 **TECH: SHINY**

#TamTalksTech
Gadgets and doodads that you might've missed out on, sourced by a tech aficionado. Yes, it's okay to want them all... and no, it's not our fault.

70 **START IT UP: Q&A**

Talent takes center stage
Arabic karaoke app Ghinwa is enabling the MENA region's singers to unleash their full potential online.

20 **EDITOR'S NOTE**

By Aby Sam Thomas

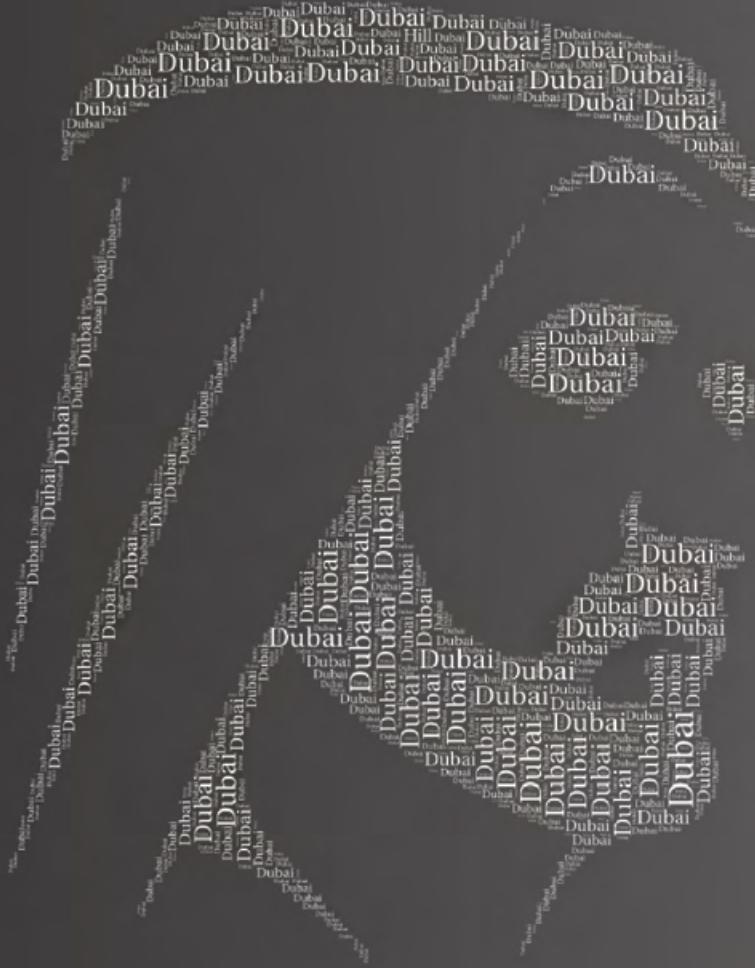


46

Samir Arzouni, founder and Managing Director, Spotlife Film Productions



Inspiring Innovative Leadership



Hill International

Leaders in Project Management

www.hillintl.com



54 Due for disruption: the changing face of the real estate industry

56 TECH: THE FIX

Change is coming
Artificial intelligence is all set to disrupt the UAE's healthcare system, writes Dr. Thumbay Moideen, founder and President of Thumbay Group.

50 CULTURE: LIFE

On top of the world
BizWorld UAE CEO Helen Al Uzaizi says confidence is a trait entrepreneurs need—and it should be instilled from a very young age.

44 CULTURE: TRAPPINGS

'Trep gear
The executive selection for the entrepreneur on your list that has everything. Okay, maybe for a little self-reward as well.

78 START IT UP: Q&A

Crisis control
UAE-based startup Geeks offers tech support at your doorstep (literally).

54 START IT UP: ECOSYSTEM

Due for disruption
Radicle co-founders Aman Merchant and Indy Johar on the changing face of the region's real estate industry.

76 START IT UP: Q&A

Beauty on demand
Haifa Adidas, founder of on-demand beauty services startup Instaglam, is dreaming big with respect to the reach of her enterprise.

45 Tissot
Chemin des Tourelles



60

Plug and Play with the Abu Dhabi Global Market team

24°C
Al Jabal Al Akhdar

38°C
Muscat / Dubai

#BeatTheHeat THIS SUMMER.

Cool off at the highest five star resort in the Middle East.
Only a short 4 ½ hours drive from Dubai or Abu Dhabi, enjoy a journey past date plantations and dramatic Omani mountain ranges to reach our majestic hideaway.
Choose your ideal haven – a spacious room with a captivating canyon view, a private pool villa with garden or cliff views. An abundance of Spa and Recreation activities from hiking to sunrise yoga.

GCC RESIDENTS PACKAGE*

Up to 15% off Best Flexible Rate for a room or villa
Daily buffet breakfast for two persons
Daily dinner for two persons
10% off Anantara Spa
10% off food & beverage in all outlets

LIFE IS A JOURNEY. Visit anantara.com

Book at anantara.com and get resort credit of up to OMR 20.
*terms and conditions apply.

ANANTARA
AL JABAL AL AKHDAR
RESORT

CAMBODIA ■ CHINA ■ INDONESIA ■ MALDIVES ■ MOZAMBIQUE ■ PORTUGAL ■ OMAN ■ QATAR ■
SRI LANKA ■ THAILAND ■ UNITED ARAB EMIRATES ■ VIETNAM ■ ZAMBIA

Entrepreneur®

MIDDLE EAST

EDITOR IN CHIEF Aby Sam Thomas editor@bncpublishing.net

CEO Wissam Younane wissam@bncpublishing.net

DIRECTOR Rabih Najm rabih@bncpublishing.net

CREATIVE LEAD Odette Kahwagi

MANAGING EDITOR Tamara Pupic

STARTUPS SECTION EDITOR Pamella de Leon

FEATURES EDITOR Sindhu Hariharan

COLUMNIST Tamara Clarke

EVENTS LIAISON Mark Anthony Monzon

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Suhail Al Masri Salman Dawood Abdulla
Helen Al Uzaizi Indy Johar
Brooke Boyschau Aman Merchant
Sophie Cooke Dr. Thumbay Moideen
Fida Chaaban

Images used in *Entrepreneur Middle East* are credited when necessary. Attributed use of copyrighted images with permission. All images not credited otherwise Shutterstock.

SUBSCRIBE

Contact subscriptions@bncpublishing.net to receive *Entrepreneur Middle East* every issue



PO Box 502511 Dubai, United Arab Emirates
P +971 4 4200 506 | F +971 4 4200 196

For all commercial enquiries related to *Entrepreneur Middle East*
contact sales@bncpublishing.net

All rights reserved 2018.

Opinions expressed are solely those of the contributors.

Entrepreneur Middle East and all subsidiary publications in the MENA region are officially licensed exclusively to BNC Publishing in the MENA region by Entrepreneur Media Inc.

No part of this magazine may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission of the publisher.

Printed by United Printing and Publishing
www.upp.ae

Entrepreneur®

MIDDLE EAST

ACCESS FRESH CONTENT DAILY ON OUR WEBSITE!
www.entrepreneur.com/me



LATEST



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
Five Ways Artificial Intelligence Is Disrupting Asset Management

The investment landscape is also being affected by AI—after all, AI can read and understand billions of pieces of data, which means one can spot trends better with its aid.

[Read Now!](#)



Samer Chouai 1 comment

Share + Add



FREELANCERS
The Fact That It Took Me 17 Years to Be Fairly Compensated Shows Freelancers Are Not Afraid to



WORKPLACE DIVERSITY
Achieving Diversity Demands Less Talk and More Action. And Good Intentions Alone Won't Do It.



NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK
Most Entrepreneurs Are Embracing the Hustle and on Track to Meet Their Goals Despite Challenges

In addition to our print edition, we're bringing you all sorts of industry news on our web mediums. Joining us online means getting relevant business and startup content in real-time, so you're hearing about the latest developments as soon as we do. We're looking forward to interacting with our readers on all of our social media and web platforms—like any thriving business, we're looking to give and take. #TrepTalkME is already happening on all of our digi platforms, and all good conversations go both ways. See you on the web!

- EntMagazineME
- @EntMagazineME
- Entrepreneur-me
- EntrepreneurMiddleEast
- EntMagazineME
- EntMagazineME
- EntMagazineME

Instagram

Search

Follow

entmagazinemee

467 posts 12.1k followers 296 following

Entrepreneur Middle East Inspiring, informing and celebrating entrepreneurs in the Middle East, and beyond.
www.entrepreneur.com/article/312189

e Great e You

Entrepreneur

Unlocking Potential

LEILA ALMAEENA

Huawei

#PowerfullyFemale #EntMagazine



TURNING

EXPERIENCE JEDDAH'S FINEST. THE NEW RADISSON BLU HOTEL JEDDAH AL SALAM IN THE HEART OF THE CITY'S BUSINESS DISTRICT. 142 MODERN ROOMS AND SUITES METICULOUSLY PLANNED WITH A TOUCH OF ICONIC, STYLISH AND SOPHISTICATED. CREATIVE MEETINGS & EVENTS CONCEPT. SUPERIOR HOSPITALITY. TOP-NOTCH AMENITIES. A DIFFERENT KIND OF SPA EXPERIENCE. CREATIVE FLAIR OF MULTI-CUISINE BUFFETS. %100 SATISFACTION GUARANTEE.

QUINTESSENTIALLY BLU. DESIGNED FOR YOU.

JEDDAH BLU

UP TO **20% OFF** ON ROOMS

BOOK NOW

radissonblu.com/hotel-jeddah-alsalam

RADISSON BLU HOTEL JEDDAH AL SALAM

Quraysh Street, Al Salamah District, P.O. Box 52782, Jeddah 21573, Saudi Arabia
T: +966 12 608 9900 F: +966 12 608 9911 info.salam@radissonblu.com

Reality Check

We're running a business, too

s it just me, or are all of you also seeing a spike in the number of initiatives that are being announced to support the MENA entrepreneurial ecosystem? New conferences, new innovation spaces, new mentorship programs- there seems to be a lot happening in the region right now that's apparently geared toward advancing startups and the people behind them.

Now, I remain steadfast in my belief that the flurry of activity in this sphere is essentially a good thing, as they do promote entrepreneurship in the region in some capacity, and you never know, someone out there might find some real benefit from them. Having said that, I also confess to having my misgivings about some of these initiatives, because I wonder: how are they *actually* supporting the region's entrepreneurs? For all of the importance that we in the entrepreneurial space give networking, knowledge-sharing, mentorship, and other such activities, it needs to be said that, at the end of the day, startups need business and revenue if they are to have the success trajectories that we see for them. So, how many of all the startup support initiatives out there are actually doing this?

I'll let all of you ponder over this question for yourselves, but here are my two cents on this, based on my experience working at a startup media entity in the MENA region. We, at *Entrepreneur Middle East*, have always maintained that our role is to inform and to inspire this ecosys-

tem, and we do this by sharing intel, putting the spotlight on deserving entrepreneurs, and making sure the best of the region's startups get the recognition they deserve on our global platform. And we work very hard to do this- we're a rather small team, and so, we definitely pile on the pressure on ourselves to make sure that we are doing a good job as participants in this ecosystem. When we say we'll support an effort, an entity, or an entrepreneur, we go all out in ensuring that we promote, publicize, and participate- that's what we are here to do, and that's what we are good at doing.

However, we are a business as well- and it's disconcerting to see people and entities alike sometimes take advantage of our good faith, and expect us to do everything we do for free. For instance: we often get requests for coverage of the aforementioned "we-support-startups" initiatives in the publication, and to that, our response almost always is that we need to assess the story from an editorial standpoint, and we'll get back to you. And when such queries come from large, established entities, I connect them with our business development team, so that they could potentially collaborate in terms of a marketing or advertising perspective. What I have found curious though is that when my team do go to them to make actual business partnerships or deals, they are often turned down, with the excuse being that they don't have a budget for marketing.



And this is where I cry foul. If you've got the resources to put on a glitzy PR blitz, I'm pretty certain you can manage our partnership prices as well. And so, when you offer to support entrepreneurs in the form of forums/spaces/mentorship -without putting any real value into the equation- then, I'm sorry, but I doubt the authenticity of your efforts in supporting startups. You want us to invest a good amount of time, resources, and effort in showcasing your apparent support for the ecosystem- but at the same time, you can't offer us any real business? Sorry, but no. That's not how it works.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aby Sam Thomas".

Aby Sam Thomas
Editor in Chief
 @thisisaby
aby@bncpublishing.net

The home of HEARTFELT EVENTS



With an exceptional setting as the backdrop for your next event, where place meets purpose. Host meetings that inspire big ideas in venues designed for success. Stage events for up to 5000 people that create tomorrow's stories. Merge business with sports, leisure and memorable experiences. Choose JA Resorts & Hotels for heartfelt events that deliver on your vision with heartfelt hospitality.

jaresortshotels.com
DUBAI | SEYCHELLES | MALDIVES

For bookings or more information, please call +971 4 315 4974
or email sales.mice@jaresorts.com

 /JAResortsHotels   @JAResorts

JA
RESORTS
& HOTELS

Getaways for the real you

Exporting innovation

Dubai-based startup Wrappup gets acquired by California-based Voicera

by ABY SAM THOMAS



Wrappup co-founders Ayush Chordia, Rami Salman, and Rishav Jalan

Dubai-based startup Wrappup has been acquired by the California-headquartered Voicera for an undisclosed sum, with the former's team joining the latter to work on platform growth, as well as cutting edge AI research and development.

As a mobile app that made use of AI to auto-summarize meetings, Wrappup fits in neatly with Voicera's own offering, which leverages a combination of voice recognition, natural language processing, and machine learning to provide attendees of a meeting with a full recording and transcription, as well as high accuracy meeting highlights.

"As of today, we have rebranded the Wrappup app under the Voicera name," said Rami Salman, co-founder and CEO, Wrappup, who will now take on the role of VP of Growth at Voicera. "This acquisition significantly accelerates our journey toward delivering amazingly productive meeting experiences for our users."

"Over the last few weeks, we have been hard at work integrating Voicera's Enterprise Virtual Assistant named Eva into the mobile app experience,

allowing Wrappup customers to use Eva in online meetings and conference calls," Salman explained. "In addition, Eva brings a whole new level of analytics to your conversations, using a Voicera-powered error correction engine that delivers more accurate summaries of meetings. By combining Wrappup's current prediction engines with Voicera's AI, we are providing even better predictive highlights for your meetings, allowing you to speak naturally and let the AI take the notes."

"When we first started Wrappup, our vision was to put back the focus on conversations itself, and let AI do the hard work," added Ayush Chordia, co-founder and CTO, Wrappup, who will now be Director of Engineering and Applied Research at Voicera. "Meetings today are very ineffective, and most times, outcomes and action items are not tracked, leading to inefficiencies. As we embarked on this journey, we realized we have a greater problem to solve, and the acquisition by Voicera will help us realize our full potential and achieve the goals that we set out to do when we first started the company. The value of surfacing important moments from conversations

are not just restricted to meetings; we think it is a launchpad for lot of future possibilities."

Along with Salman and Chordia, Wrappup's third co-founder Rishav Jalan will also join Voicera as Engineering Manager.

Commenting on the acquisition, Voicera founder and CEO Omar Tawakol noted the similarities between his and Salman's enterprise as being a key reason behind the acquisition. "Both companies approached the problems with meetings in synergistic ways," Tawakol said. "Wrappup's mobile-first, in-person meeting product complements and extends Voicera's initial focus on conference calls."

As for how Wrappup made the cut, Tawakol listed three main factors that drove Voicera's decision to acquire the company. "First was the team. Wrappup has a very young, smart hard-working team that works like a Silicon Valley startup. They shared our customer-focused ethic, and our drive for fast iteration to capture more customer feedback. Second, their understanding of the domain. What we are doing is very new. Building an interface that customers love is difficult. We saw their interface become simpler over time— which is a great sign. Finally, we were highly complementary. We didn't have an app, and we needed an in-person meeting solution, and that is exactly what they had."

Wrappup, which was founded at the Angelhack Hackathon in Dubai in 2015, had been incubated at in5 in Dubai Internet City, and had also raised a seed round of US\$800,000 from

investors like BECO Capital, 500 Startups, Arzan VC, Dubai Silicon Oasis, Womena, Dubai Angel Investors, Odin Financial Advisors, and Hala Fadel.

On the other hand, Voicera, which calls itself "a pioneer in the artificial intelligence and productivity space," has received \$20 million in venture funds from investors like Battery Ventures, Cisco Investments, e.ventures, GGV Capital, Greycroft, GV (formerly Google Ventures), Microsoft Ventures, Salesforce Ventures and Workday Ventures.

Commenting on his entrepreneurial journey with Wrappup, Salman said, "It's been a wild ride for sure, from a simple idea at a hackathon, to a working prototype in 24 hours, to the current state of the platform driven by predictive AI and voice commands— it's been an incredible experience. We don't view the acquisition as an arrival per say, but merely another milestone on our journey to revolutionize the way people meet."

"In our hackathon pitch, I remember saying, 'Speech is one of the most underutilized sources of information in the business world today,' and this fact still remains, but technological advances are now at the cusp of being unlocking this true potential," Salman added. "With the resources and experienced team at Voicera, we feel that the main objective we set out is still underway."

Salman also points to Wrappup's acquisition by Voicera as an especially significant moment for the MENA entrepreneurial ecosystem. "We've managed to export innovation out of a region that is used to importing innovation," he said. "This is not a copy-paste application, but a new way of doing things, from the ground up. I believe we are all very proud to be a part of that story, and the region has truly supported us in getting there." ■

FREE ZONE

Business Center

A development by



REDEFINING
YOUR FREEZONE
EXPERIENCE



- Easy access via key highways with no access gates
- Easy & efficient business set up
- Smart office solutions from shared facilities to permanent offices
- Variety of business licenses
- Turnkey business solutions and services
- On site licensing & visa authority

800-SOUTH (76884)
businesscenter@dubaisouth.ae
DUBAISOUTH.AE

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

GHASSAN ABOUD

The founder and Chairman of Ghassan Aboud Group on how he built his international business conglomerate

by ABY SAM THOMAS

Ah, this is a long story!" laughs Ghassan Aboud, when I cheekily ask him to tell me a succinct version of his 25-year-long entrepreneurial journey so far, which, at the moment, sees him at the helm of Ghassan Aboud Group (GAG), a Dubai-headquartered international business conglomerate of which he is founder and Chairman. The pre-eminent entrepreneur today leads a diversified multi-billion enterprise that has operations in everything from real estate to media to hospitality, but Aboud's flagship business was in the automotive domain, which he entered in Dubai, back in the early nineties. "In 1993, I was new to the UAE, and exploring opportunities to set up my own business," Aboud recalls. "The country was emerging as a strong trading hub with its location, infrastructure, and visionary leadership. Therefore, with a positive feeling, I started a small trading business that engaged in the sourcing and export of vehicles. Over the years, the business gained momentum with increased sales and margins, helped by the fact that UAE was attracted by visiting traders from Africa and other underserviced regions. As the volumes increased, our business invested into larger infrastructure, including warehouses, storage yards, showrooms, offices, logistics, transportation, etc. >>>

INNOVATOR



The extensive infrastructure that we developed in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, and later in Belgium and Jordan helped us establish into one of the world's leading players in the automotive supply chain. Today, we have a market reach of more than 100 countries worldwide, with excellent customer loyalty for a wide range of automotive products. Encouraged by the success, in due course we also promoted several other business verticals, including media, art production, real estate, catering, retail, pastoral, and hospitality. Therefore, we are a well-diversified group aiming for sustainable growth over the years."

A look at GAG's current business undertakings is enough to understand that Aboud has certainly got a long-term strategy in mind for his enterprise. In addition to the global hub in the UAE, the Group has offices in Jordan, Belgium, Australia and Turkey. "The Group seeks to have a balanced portfolio of businesses that are diversified by product or service, as well as by geography," Aboud explains. One of the first new sectors Aboud steered his company into following the success of his automotive supply chain business was in the realm of media, with the 2008 incorporation of Live Point and Orient, companies that engage in TV production, satellite channel, media training, and a range of audiovisual production needs. But that's not all—today, GAG is making inroads into the hospitality domain, with its current sights set on developments in Australia. "As a major expansion and diversification strategy, the Group is investing into five-star hospitality assets in Australia," Aboud explains. "With committed projects exceeding AU\$800 million,

"I ALWAYS EMPHASIZE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPIRIT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONGST THE BUSINESS LEADERS, FOR THEM TO THINK DIFFERENTLY, AND ACT AS GROWTH DRIVERS."

we have also established our in-house management company, Crystalbrook Collection. Crystalbrook will manage these assets, and grow the portfolio across the region, and internationally in due course." In addition to the hotel portfolio, the group has invested into a substantial pastoral business with land area of 35,000 hectares with a carrying capacity of 2,500 breeders. The vision is to achieve the highest standards in land and pasture management, environmental sustainability, and animal welfare. The UAE's real estate arena is another sector GAG is tapping into—Elements Properties is its single-source provider of construction, development and real estate services within the country. "Further, taking advantage of our internal competencies we have promoted a specialist logistics organization called Gallega Global Logistics that provides end-to-end services to discerning customers in the region," Aboud adds. He further highlights that the Ghassan Aboud Group has also moved into the retail domain—to keep an eye on its Grandiose brand, which refers to both a chain of exclusive supermarkets, as well as bespoke catering business, both located in the UAE. "Our retail business offers a premium supermarket experience to customers, delivering products of the highest quality at affordable prices,"

Aboud says. "Furthermore, our bespoke catering facility offers an eclectic range of nutritious mealtime solutions to prime customers. We aim to grow across the food value chain in the coming years."

The sheer variety in the industries that GAG has invested in makes it clear that Aboud has a particular eye for businesses (and locations) that are going to keep his enterprise growing and scaling up over the foreseeable future. Consider his investment into Australia, for instance—Aboud picked Queensland as his first destination for his hospitality developments, pastoral business, and super yacht marina operation with an eye toward its potential for being a magnet for tourists in the years to come." It's an untapped opportunity, according to Aboud, and his success in the business world so far makes one inclined to take him at his word. After all, when Aboud started out with his automotive business in 1994, he was, quite simply, a trailblazer in his own right—the enterprise he launched made use of a business model that was in its infancy within the region at that point in time. "We started this as a new model [of business]," he declares. "And, when you bring a new model of business, normally, you'll succeed very well. Because you are not making a copy [of something already existing]—copies can be good, but they'll never be

"TAKING ADVANTAGE OF OUR INTERNAL COMPETENCIES WE HAVE PROMOTED A SPECIALIST LOGISTICS ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES END-TO-END SERVICES TO DISCERNING CUSTOMERS IN THE REGION."

leaders in the market." This is thus the modus operandi that Aboud has put into place across all of the various sectors GAG has made inroads into—he makes sure that all of his enterprise's brands or businesses have their own particular USPs that will make the market sit up and take notice of them. With regard to the locations he chooses to invest in, Aboud explains that while Australia now (obviously) >>>

'TREP TALK'

GHASSAN ABOUD'S TIPS FOR ENTREPRENEURS IN THE MENA REGION

1. Tap into local opportunities

"For entrepreneurs in the region, there are opportunities in businesses that can contribute to the economies through local value addition. With plans of diversification away from oil, the countries are strongly pushing the industrialization agenda—this could be a major opportunity going forward. Also, the UAE has been leading the way on new technology, creating good business prospects in this segment."

2. Keep an eye on the big picture

"Personally, I believe proper planning, capable team, swift execution, and attention to detail are the key considerations any fresh entrepreneur should focus on."

3. Remember to give back

"It is also critical that the organization aligns itself firmly with its stated corporate social responsibility policies. I am a strong supporter of businesses sharing prosperity with the needy communities."

Ghassan Aboud,
founder and
Chairman,
Ghassan Aboud
Group





Ghassan Aboud,
founder and Chairman,
Ghassan Aboud Group

figures prominently in his current vision for the enterprise, he remains buoyant about the UAE as a place to (continue to) do business in. "The UAE is certainly unmatched in its strategic location to foster business," he explains. "With proximity to key emerging markets and with a time zone advantage the country had provided an ideal platform for businesses such as ours to prosper over the years. Certain large emerging markets, like Africa for example, have been impacted adversely by the current economic environment. However, this may not continue for long with the rising population and demand for products in the continent. With the region's advantages stated earlier, one would be in a strong position to increase their business prospects through Arab-African trade flows."

Given the years he has spent (and continues to

"[THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT] I CARE ABOUT THE DETAILS MORE. AND WHEN YOU CARE ABOUT THE DETAILS MORE, YOU'LL SUCCEED MORE. THIS IS THE DIFFERENCE- NOTHING ELSE."

spend) in the business arena, I ask Aboud to tell me what fuels his ambition and drive. In response, he points toward his personal background: he comes from a family boasting of generations of entrepreneurs, and Aboud is keen to keep the tradition of business going, so to speak, and push it to reach greater levels of success. But for his vision to be actually realized, Aboud says he needs to make sure that everyone at his enterprise is tuned into the goals and aspirations he has set for it- and that's where his leadership comes into play. "I strongly believe in

instilling the highest values across the organization—values based on integrity and ethics," Aboud says. "Other important factors include setting clear objectives and active management of performance. Today, the group is entirely professionally managed by a competent executive management team in a multi-cultural environment. I always emphasize on the development of a spirit of entrepreneurship amongst the business leaders, for them to think differently, and act as growth drivers." This last aspect, Aboud stresses, is critical for businesses to run and sustain themselves in the long run- one's employees need to feel empowered enough to innovate and do new things. "Long-running business models are being disrupted with innovation and technology," he notes. "It will be a costly mistake to make if one ignores the importance of innovation. As I

stated earlier, the key to growth and innovation will be to let senior management think like entrepreneurs." At this point, I ask Aboud what's his secret to success- how has he gone about ensuring his enterprise's growth until now and in the future as well? He replies by rubbishing my notion of there being a particular secret to success: "Everybody knows everything," he declares. "But between me and another, [the difference is that] I care about the details more. And when you care about the details more, you'll succeed more. This is the difference- nothing else, there's no secret! When you care more about the details than the other, then you'll be the leader." It may seem like a simple premise, sure, but it's one that has stood Aboud in good stead all these years- and that, by itself, makes it a principle the rest of us should take to heart as well. ■

IT'S TIME TO START YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Since 2009, we are the first, the largest and the fastest-growing Company Formation Specialist in the UAE. With 4 offices in prime locations across the UAE as well as over 100 dedicated staff members from over 27 nationalities, you can trust in us for a smooth and hassle-free business setup.

FREE ZONE

MAINLAND

OFFSHORE

For more information visit: www.vz.ae

800 VZAE
8923

VIRTUZONE
ESTABLISHING SINCE 2009

Because trust is priceless.

H.E. Maryam Al Mheiri,
CEO, Media Zone
Authority - Abu Dhabi
(MZA) and twofour54



“CUSTOMER CENTRICITY IS THE CORE OF ANY BUSINESS, AND THAT'S NOT DIFFERENT IN THE MEDIA INDUSTRY. WE ARE SUCCESSFUL IF OUR PARTNERS ARE SUCCESSFUL, WHICH IS WHY WE LOOK TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY.”

tension of someone in a high position, and making you want to trust and follow her simply by being authentic. And her on-stage persona is indiscernible from the one I meet after the panel, or even when working on this interview—here is someone who stays true to who she is at all times.

Al Mheiri oversees Abu Dhabi's Media Zone Authority and its commercial arm, twofour54, which were set up in 2008 to develop Abu Dhabi's nascent media and entertainment industry. In the intervening decade, much has changed. “Our vision at twofour54 is to become the capital for content creators and my role is to lead our dedicated team on this journey, and of course, there have been challenges along the way,” Al Mheiri says. “The two biggest were developing the talent pool and infrastructure. We recognized from the start that these were vital to creating a sustainable and thriving media industry. When twofour54 was first established in 2008, we didn't have the infrastructure in place that we do today that allows media firms to so easily do business, such as world-class studios, a backlot, and support services. We've had to develop this infrastruc-

Keeping it real

H.E. Maryam Al Mheiri, CEO, Media Zone Authority – Abu Dhabi and twofour54, believes persistence is important in becoming a leader in your field **by TAMARA PUPIC**

When I first met H.E. Maryam Al Mheiri, CEO of both Media Zone Authority – Abu Dhabi (MZA) and twofour54, at an event in Abu Dhabi, it was refreshing to see her avoid the clichéd and oft-repeated trope of talking about what a privilege her job has been, and instead be

warm and disarmingly honest in telling the audience about how she navigated her own fears and insecurities in the boardroom. Such instances happened at the very beginning of her rising high up in her career, she said, when she had to not only regularly take part in male-dominated meetings, but also to chair them. Her solution to these jitters

was to make sure everyone knew why she was there in the first place—she used to start these gatherings by making finance or technology-related remarks which was supposed to, as per her belief at the time, showcase confidence in her expertise, and thus establishing her credibility. As this story shows, Al Mheiri has the gift of betraying the heightened

ture, both hard and soft, piece by piece, with the support of our partners and the Abu Dhabi Government. Today, we have world-class facilities that not only attract top media firms to join us, but also enable the businesses of our existing partners to thrive. Similarly, the UAE is a young country with a young population, so we have had to work hard to develop a skillset that allows the sector to grow through initiatives such as creative lab, summer camp and our internship program. Developing local talent remains one of our top priorities today."

Abu Dhabi's current reputation as a media hub rests on factors such as offering diverse locations, appropriate facilities, talent pools, and the much talked about 30% rebate by the Abu Dhabi Film Commission. It is the Middle East's first international production incentive, providing access to a 30% cash back rebate on productions, which also includes travel and accommodation. The impact of the rebate is shown by some of the highest grossing Hollywood films of all time –*Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and *Fast and Furious 7*– being filmed

[REGULATORY NOTICE](#) [WHO WE ARE](#) [WHAT WE DO](#) [REGULATIONS](#) [LICENSING](#) [FEEDBACK](#)

الإماراتية للمنطقة الإعلامية
MEDIA ZONE AUTHORITY



in Abu Dhabi, as well as a number of Bollywood films and regional productions. Al Mheiri's success formula for achieving this is simple, she says: "Customer centricity is the core of any business, and that's not different in the media industry. We are successful if our partners are successful, which is why we look to do things differently. For example, 'The Briefing Room' is one of the many services that we provide for matching and connecting our partners with projects from around the region. It's another way in which we are able to encourage community collaboration on a daily basis. I've always believed persistence is im-

"WE HAVE HAD TO WORK HARD TO DEVELOP A SKILL-SET THAT ALLOWS THE SECTOR TO GROW THROUGH INITIATIVES SUCH AS CREATIVE LAB, SUMMER CAMP AND OUR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM."

portant in becoming a leader in your field – the process doesn't happen overnight, but persistence will always pay off. Equally, you need to empower those around you to take responsibility. I like to tell my employees to think about the big picture, but always remember that the devil is in the detail. Success is not about the individual, it's about the team."

Apart from attracting the finest talent from overseas, Al Mheiri's team is also focused on developing local potential. The 30% rebate helps with that as well, because one of its requirements is to have UAE nationals on set for the production. Changing the youth's perception of media as a viable career is further supported by various educational

initiatives and the types of setup that twofour54 media zone allows, including twofour54's entrepreneurship scheme and business center facility license, which is offered to content creation entrepreneurial startups. For Al Mheiri, however, entrepreneurship isn't just a recent trend. "It is something that has been at the heart of our business since the very beginning," she says. "One of the keys to building a sustainable media industry is ensuring the value chain is strong across all points. The media industry is one of the world's fastest-changing sectors, finding new ways for people to consume content, giving them the power not only to decide what they want to consume, but how they want to consume it. This is why startups are playing such an important role. They are the disruptors that are attuned to the changing demands of a relatively young audience, and they have the flexibility to adapt and innovate to meet these needs. And we have seen some incredible success stories, such as gaming firm Unnyhog, artificial intelligence data translator Narrativa, and online retailer Mumzworld." >>>

Female Leaders Forum



H.E. Maryam Al Mheiri, CEO of Media Zone Authority – Abu Dhabi (MZA) and twofour54, taking part in the Female Leaders Forum by Krypto Labs, Masdar City, Abu Dhabi

In achieving their goals, corporate leaders don't need to bother about looking authoritative, observes H.E. Al Mheiri, advising them to pursue values of wisdom, respect, sustainability, and human development heralded by the UAE's Father of the Nation, H.H. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. "A leader should inspire and empower those around them with their wisdom and vision, yet always be humble and approachable," she says. "They should ensure their team is built on tolerance and respect, not only for those with whom they work but everyone around them, regardless of their background or gender. And, of course, they should always be looking to the future, ensuring that their organization plays a positive role in society and helps to protect and preserve the world around them for generations to come."

Being inspired by the late

Sheikh Zayed seems to be Al Mheiri's solution to all kinds of complications a leader may encounter and informs a lot of her conversation. "My career has been driven by my passion to deliver for my community and my country," she says. "Hard work, self-improvement, and contributing to society are my guiding principles, and ones that I practice every day in my personal and professional life. Whenever I have a choice to make, I ask myself one simple question, 'What's best for Abu Dhabi and the UAE?' It's simple: lead by example. I would never ask someone in my team to do something I wasn't prepared to do myself. I want those around me to be part of our journey, not bystanders watching as we go by. I want them to understand what we are working towards, why and how they can contribute. This is a journey that we need to go on together, hand in hand."

H.E. Maryam Al Mheiri is a member of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council's Economic Development Committee, a board member of Abu Dhabi Media Company, and a member of the Abu Dhabi Investment Committee.



"OUR VISION AT TWOFOUR54 IS TO BECOME THE CAPITAL FOR CONTENT CREATORS AND MY ROLE IS TO LEAD OUR DEDICATED TEAM ON THIS JOURNEY, AND OF COURSE, THERE HAVE BEEN CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY."

And when it comes to women being leaders in their respective industries, Al Mheiri's approach is as practical and pragmatic as in all other areas of her career. She notes that women have always been supported in whatever they set out to do in the UAE. "I don't see having a successful career as a matter of gender, it is a question of attitude and how you approach your work," she says. "The UAE is a country that has always valued women as a key part of society, and nurtured and encouraged their development, both personally and professionally. But it is also a country that has always valued its human capital as a whole, so, my advice applies to everyone: male and female, young and old. Firstly, I believe to be successful, you need to listen and learn from those around you. Success is based on collaboration, not isolation. Also, think carefully about your reputation. After everything is said and done, this is the one thing you will be left with. It is vital that people understand the type of person you are, and know you will deliver. And never forget that we live in a country that believes in you, so it is up to us to seize the opportunities around us, and grow with our nation." ■



what we do

start your business today

media centre

twofour54 community



we are twofour54 Abu Dhabi – one of the fastest growing media free zones in the region.



The Home to Blockbuster Movies

30% cash back rebate combined with an ever-expanding production infrastructure of studios, crew & support companies are just some of the reasons why Abu Dhabi has been named one of the top international locations for film production.



ABU DHABI

30% cash rebate on productions



how to set up a business
Capitalise on opportunities in



our new onshore ded
branch licensing



companies registered at
twofour54



calling all
twofour54



Invest In A Career That Empowers Your Passion

Learning is a continuous process that nurtures the professional growth of every student.



📞 +971 6 5441155 | 📩 admissions@skylineuniversity.ac.ae

www.skylineuniversity.ac.ae



Ahmad Ashkar, founder and CEO, Hult Prize Foundation, at the Hult Prize Finals and Awards Dinner 2016, Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting

“OUR FOUNDATION HAS DEPLOYED OVER \$50 MILLION TO CREATE THE SECTOR OF FOR-GOOD, FOR-PROFIT STARTUPS EMERGING OUT OF UNIVERSITY. WE RUN WORKSHOPS, TRAININGS, INVEST, SCALE; ALL FOR THE PURPOSE OF CHANGING THE TRAJECTORY OF STUDENTS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES AROUND THE WORLD.”

world,” he declares. “Our foundation has deployed over \$50 million to create the sector of for-good, for-profit startups emerging out of university. We run workshops, trainings, invest, scale; all for the purpose of changing the trajectory of students on college campuses around the world. Our aim is to provide a risk-free opportunity, and then back it up with the support required to have change. We started out as a handful of kids organizing events in a few cities around the world, now we are a team of over 2,500 staff and volunteers, we run over 1,000 demo day events a year, tens of thousands of training seminars and workshops, run the world’s largest incubator in terms of size of cohort, investment dollars, real estate (it’s in a castle of 5,000 acres), and many other criteria. We have a student workforce of over 10,000 organizers, and we anticipate having nearly 150,000 students from over 100 countries participating this year (100,000 already applied in the first round). University staff and administrations are changing curriculum based on the Hult Prize model. We are distinguished in that we

IMPACTING THE FUTURE

Ahmad Ashkar, founder and CEO, Hult Prize Foundation on building a global startup movement centered on enabling social good

by ABY SAM THOMAS

One of the refreshing aspects of my interview with the Hult Prize Foundation founder and CEO Ahmad Ashkar is that he comes across as someone who doesn't believe in mincing words. Be it the conviction with which he talks about his enterprise and what it has achieved so

far, or his refusal to accept the status quo just because of a that's-the-way-it-has-always-been-done sort of mentality, this American entrepreneur seems to be charged up with a vision of a better future for the world at large. The Hult Prize Foundation started out in 2009 with its flagship contest that brings together students from across the globe to solve the world's most pressing issues through

pitching ideas and launching companies for a grand prize of US\$1 million. It has since grown into becoming “a global millennial startup movement for social good,” with Ashkar and his team essentially developing entrepreneurial pipelines around the world “that transform business minds into change agents for sustainable impact.” With this being the case, one should be able to see why former US President Bill Clinton would point to the Hult Prize as an example of how the world is being changed for the better in a *TIME* magazine cover story in 2012, and Ashkar, for his part, is happy to explain his 2009-founded enterprise’s impact further to me. “The Hult Prize has grown from a simple student competition where young people dream up a new kind of business, to a full-blown movement which is leading an entire generation to change the

are a pipeline creator, the most fundamental piece of the startup funnel. We turn ordinary students into impact entrepreneurs, because we start with people, not ideas. No other platform or organization in the world creates, from scratch, the intent of a startup to be impact centered, profit minded, and market driven."

As Ashkar rightly notes, the Hult Prize has transformed from what it was in its initial days- but it's a change that has been for the better. "The Hult Prize has moved beyond the one million dollars," he notes. "It's not even technically a prize, it's a seed stage and stage gated investment we make into the winning company. Annually, nearly \$10 million is invested into our startups every year... The objective of our foundation is to shortcut the entrepreneurial journey for young people, and get them to realize that you can build a billion-dollar business by creatively thinking about some of our world's toughest challenges. We pick an exciting area of impact that can be addressed by for-profit, for-good businesses,

and then we write a detailed opportunity map, outlining where billion dollar companies could be generated. By focusing all of our network on one topic, it changes the paradigm of a generation, and exposes market inefficiencies in the current development space, which can be solved through business approaches. This year's challenge is on rethinking how to harness the power of energy to transform 10 million lives. We used to focus on the bottom of the pyramid, but I have shifted our focus on empowering more people to reach the middle class. Tackling poverty is not enough; we must move the lower third into economic independence."

At a time when social enterprises still find it hard to be seen as sustainable businesses, Ashkar is powering through with negating this notion, and the Hult Prize

"THE BEST ENTREPRENEURS COME FROM THOSE PARTS OF THE WORLD WHERE INNOVATION IS A MEANS TO SURVIVAL."

has been an effective vehicle for drilling this concept in people's minds. "The idea of a 'social enterprise' is misunderstood in some markets, and more developed in others," he says. "From my perspective, there's no line drawn in the sand between a standard enterprise and a 'social' or 'impact' enterprise. The true definition of a social enterprise is simply an enterprise which operates to maximize shareholder value, and recognizes that in order to do so, that it must generate net impact as a byproduct of its existence. The world is capitalistic, this will never change. Money makes the world go round. What has changed today is simple- the levers to generate money and market cap. 80% of millennials prefer brands that they can assimilate impact to. \$1 out of every \$5 spent today is on impact. If you want to build a business that is relevant in the next decade, you have no other choice other than to build the kind of enterprise my team and I around the world promote. It's why we exist. It's why I created the Hult Prize, and continue to lead it." >>>



'TREP TALK'

AHMAD ASHKAR'S TIPS FOR ENTREPRENEURS IN THE MENA REGION

1. Pick the right problem worth solving- you get one, maybe two, shots at this, make it count.

2. Get your prototype ready as fast as you can, and get it to the market.

3. Iterate. Iterate. Iterate.

4. Once you collect enough market data, build your complete offering and business plan.

5. Hire fast. It doesn't have to be the perfect fit, just good enough. Keep hiring until you find that perfect employee.

6. Celebrate often. Small wins are as important as the big ones, make sure you find time to celebrate your accomplishments and show your team gratitude.

7. Find your tribe. Make sure your family is on board with your vision, and then find a team who all believe in your North Star.

8. Utilize the North Star metric. Find your way, and base all decisions off the North Star for your company.

9. Build the product or service that is designed for impact.

The image shows a street scene in a developing country. In the foreground, there's a dirt road with a few vehicles: a motorcycle, a car, and a yellow auto-rickshaw. To the left, there's a small shop with a red and white umbrella. The background shows multi-story buildings with various signs and utility poles. Overlaid on the image is the text "LEADING A GENERATION TO CHANGE THE WORLD" in large, white, sans-serif letters.

"UNIVERSITY STAFF AND ADMINISTRATIONS ARE CHANGING CURRICULUM BASED ON THE HULT PRIZE MODEL. WE ARE DISTINGUISHED IN THAT WE ARE A PIPELINE CREATOR, THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL PIECE OF THE STARTUP FUNNEL."



Ahmad Ashkar,
founder and CEO, Hult
Prize Foundation, at
TEDxGeorgetown

What about the investors though- have we reached a stage where their attention can be commanded by social entrepreneurs? Once again, Ashkar surprises me (in a good way) with his pragmatic take on the situation. "Investors invest in anything that produces a decent multiple return on their money. They are greedy, selfish, and have one goal- that will

not change. Our startups generate investment because they are real companies, with real revenues solving real problems, which will return a multiple investment to shareholders. Often times, there is a mix up of what the true meaning of a social enterprise is, but for us it is clear- maximize profits, and as a result, you will maximize impact and

vice versa; so, of course, the investors are excited. The issue in the sector is actually within its entirety when focused on investment in the early-stage category. This is where the challenge is, because most investment companies focus on low-risk placement of money, which is really stunting growth and innovation in the sector, and allowing for a handful of people and enterprises to monopolize the industry."

But Ashkar believes that the world's businesses are indeed sitting up and taking notice of the need to support impact initiatives. "I just saw an ad by Credit Suisse- it said, 'We will show you how to change the world,'" he says. "The banks have caught on; it's finally good business to have a soul. The Western markets and elite are ahead of the emerging markets in terms of realizing the value, while markets like Mexico (where I have relocated our corporate HQ) are ahead in the actual product and service innovation design, because they are closer to the need." In terms of markets, the Middle East also figures prominently in terms of Ashkar's assessment of regions where social enterprises stand to make a real difference- Ashkar himself is of Palestinian origins. "The best entrepreneurs come from those parts of the world where innovation is a means to survival," Ashkar notes. "Palestine, where the population lives under daily occupation, is one of those places. The current state of affairs in MENA is explosive, quite literally. With the majority of nations either at war or in conflict, there has never been a better time for programs like the Hult Prize to operate, because we teach the youth how to transform

themselves from job seeking students to game changing entrepreneurs. We guide governments and leading in-country institutions on how to best engage its youth for the mutually beneficial outcomes each desire. Our programs give the youth hope either through one of our over 1,600 on-campus programs, or 25 national level prize awarding programs, or our global demo days, which take place across 15 regions worldwide. One of the most influential and inspiring entrepreneurs I have come across is from Egypt- Mohammad Ashour, the founding CEO of Hult Prize-winning startup Aspire Food Group, which now has a market valuation of well over nine digits, and is revolutionizing the food and agriculture sector by introducing a less expensive and environmentally friendly protein alternative.”

The success the likes of Ashour have seen should be heartening for other social innovators in the Middle East region- but Ashkar is also emphatic about the fact that the Arab world needs to be more forthright in its support for such enterprises and the people behind them. “The region needs more risk-free capital and programs like the Hult Prize which focus on the ‘creation’ stage of the funnel, as opposed to the identification and later-stage,” Ashkar says. “I have spent a decade in the sector, and I continue to hear the same thing out of the Gulf and other parts of the Arab world: ‘start a fund,’ ‘open an accelerator,’ ‘create a youth program’- all noble in theory, but worthless if not parlayed with the most critical piece- inspiration and utilization. We need more companies and

investors that focus on the conversion of youth, and shifting their mindset from more traditional ‘do as told’ students who graduate with engineering and humanities degrees, to problem-solving entrepreneurs. We also need more ministers and government leaders who welcome the advice and council from on-the-ground Arab entrepreneurs, instead of solely relying on Western companies who utilize their global brands to provide on-paper advisory.” But Ashkar is keen to highlight one nation in the region, which is, in his opinion, taking the right steps needed for transformation. “One such shining light in the region is Lebanon. A country demonstrating pioneering approaches to entrepreneurship and youth through empowerment, localization and a strong focus on the ‘for-us, by-us’ model. I am personally so bought-in to the Lebanese government’s commitment that I have relocated our Middle East headquarters from Dubai to Beirut. In an effort to support the government and the local Arab backed entrepreneur ecosystem, we have launched our pioneering methodology nationwide. Our pioneering model of entrepreneurship and our approach, which starts at inspiration and ends with impact, has officially been made a part of the higher education system across Lebanon. Within the next year, our six-step approach of Inspire, Educate, Compete, Fund, Celebrate, and Connect, will be fully adopted.”

Now, despite all of what Ashkar has said so far, if you –and I’m looking mostly at you, investors and big businesses- still believe that you shouldn’t be paying

Leading a generation to change the world

The Hult Prize is the world’s foremost platform for the creation and launch of sustainable and impact centered startups emerging from university, offering a grand prize of \$1 million.



The Hult Prize Award, designed in 2013 by Yves Behar

“THE REGION NEEDS MORE RISK-FREE CAPITAL AND PROGRAMS LIKE THE HULT PRIZE WHICH FOCUS ON THE “CREATION” STAGE OF THE FUNNEL, AS OPPOSED TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND LATER-STAGE.”

closer attention to social enterprises, or at least making an effort of your own in terms of impact initiatives, here’s one last pointer that you should perhaps take

into consideration when you think about such things. “Follow the data,” Ashkar says. “The largest intergenerational wealth transfer is happening before your eyes. \$60 trillion will move to millennials by 2060, \$5 trillion in the next five years. This –my- generation make decisions differently than any other generation before them.” Suffice to say, as businesses, you should know that your future customers and clients care about social impact- and if you don’t wish to alienate them, so should you. Impact is important. ■

GET THE BEST TO COME TO YOU

Overcoming the fight for top talent with
employer branding by SUHAIL AL-MASRI

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges that businesses nowadays face is competing for top talent. Every company wants to hire bright, highly-skilled, and dedicated professionals. But the road to winning the hearts of top performers is rockier than ever.

While it is true that unemployment, especially among young job seekers, continues to be a big issue in the Middle East market, this does not make it easier for companies to attract and hire the right type of candidates. In fact, the bigger the pool of job seekers means that businesses need to dig deeper and be more innovative with their sourcing methods in order to secure their needs.

Competition for talent is a multifaceted issue. At Bayt.com, we've examined several elements that are contributing to a tougher competition for talent and a more challenging hiring process overall. Here is the drill-down:

1. INCREASING DEMANDS FOR AN IDEAL WORKPLACE

The idea that your job is a place where you feel challenged but also comfortable, motivated but also rewarded, engaged but also entertained is growing more than ever. At the macro level, the most attractive industries are increasingly defined by factors that include, but extend beyond salary, such as work-life balance, opportunities for career growth, and job security. Today, job seekers are looking for employment in industries that tick every box on their job hunt checklist.

The Bayt.com *Top Industries in the Middle East and North Africa Survey*, April 2018, showed that industries are becoming increasingly competitive amongst each other in terms of securing top talent

There is a demand for companies to brand themselves as ideal employers and to gather an online following that they can target to help them identify top talent and fulfill their hiring needs.

THROUGH A MARKETING-HR CROSSOVER, A BRANDING PLATFORM CAN BOLSTER A COMPANY'S BRAND AND REPUTATION, IT CAN GROW THE COMPANY'S AUDIENCE, AND IT CAN BUILD THE COMPANY'S FUTURE TALENT PIPELINE.

in the MENA. The difference in percentage points between the most and least appealing industries is generally small across the board, indicating that the regional workforce is quite diverse and multifaceted. But what is more important, is that the differences cascade down to the company level, which calls for each individual employer to become more attentive to their branding, workplace, and methods of securing top talent.

In an effort to find out what really makes a company an ideal workplace, Bayt.com, released a report in January 2018 entitled *The Ideal Workplace in the Middle East and North Africa*, in partnership with global online market research company, YouGov. According to this report, 83% of respondents believe that advanced technology in the workplace is of great importance, yet only 39% of workplaces reportedly use advanced technology.

Other elements that were considered important in the workplace include transparent communication (82% of employees say it is important) work-life balance (81%), fair evaluation (81%), innovation and creativity (81%) and challenging work (79%).

When asked about business values that make a company more attractive in the MENA region, 53% cited "good ethics and practices," 37% said "friendly company culture," 24% said "corporate social responsibility," and 12% said "green consciousness/efforts," indicating that the MENA professionals look at a variety of elements relating to companies' missions and impact on societies.

Not only do values and cultural elements matter to the region's professionals, physical elements have a significant role as well. In regards to office layout for example, the opinions vary. 27% of MENA professionals prefer "closed rooms," 22% prefer "open plan," 12% prefer "workstations," 12% prefer "cubicles," while 22% had no preference in this matter. When it comes to the interior design of an office, only 37% of respondents said that the interior design of their offices "reflects the company's brand and value."

What we can tell from these findings is that professionals nowadays expect much more from their employers than a pay check and a health insurance. There are various elements that professionals seek to know more about, which challenges companies looking to hire top talent to make that information available and position themselves as the ideal place to work at.

2. LACK OF INFORMATION

As we discussed earlier, there are many elements that job seekers are interested in learning about before making the decision to join one company over the other. For top talent in particular, it is much likely that they will want more details, more engagement, and more transparency from their potential workplace before they are able to give their commitment and their highly desired skills to one employer.

However, this type of information is often not available or not accessible in the right place and at the right time. For instance, only four in 10 job seekers find it easy to access information on company culture and environment when applying for a job.

Not knowing enough about what the company offers, what its culture is like, what type of workplace it boasts, and what a day at work will look like can be frustrating for job seekers and sometimes even a deterrent from applying for the company's vacancies. This kind of information extends beyond the job description, though it can hugely excite more professionals to join a particular company.

WHAT SHOULD EMPLOYERS AND MANAGERS KNOW?



While it is true that the job interview is often the chance to showcase the work environment, culture, and daily life, if this information is made available from the beginning of the hiring process, it can certainly enhance the quantity, quality, and relevancy of applicants. The more information that's made available, the

more relevant job applicants and potential employees become.

In addition to making more information available, companies are expected to engage more with job seekers. According to a Bayt.com poll titled *Communications at Work in the Middle East*, March 2017, Six in 10 respondents (59.6%) believe that companies should always communicate with job seekers, even if they are rejected from a particular job.

Now, although communicating with every single applicant might sound like a cumbersome and extremely time-consuming task, there are many tools that can aid with that. CV Search by Bayt.com, for instance, enables companies to sort CVs into folders and send out specific templates based on the applicant's stage in the hiring funnel.

Beyond applicant status updates, communicating and engaging with job seekers, or potential talent, can be a very rewarding process for identifying top candidates and maintaining an ongoing interest in your company amidst the tough competition of today.

3. DIFFICULTIES BUILDING A TALENT PIPELINE

In addition to the elements discussed above, strain on resources can make the hiring process even more difficult. Very often, companies deal with urgent hires; perhaps an employee had to take a long leave, a new position was created, or the workload of a certain department grew unexpectedly. When faced with this >>>

What Can Branding Your Company Do for You?

The Bayt.com Branding Platform allows employer to showcase their brand and culture, highlight projects, updates, workspace, and employees with a fully customizable template designed to engage viewers from multiple angles. Companies can also target custom audiences through tailor-made ads, as well as the ability to create custom mailers!

situation, the lack of time and resources to find a quick hire who is also of high caliber can be a major challenge.

This is why companies are advised to build a talent pipeline; a stock of great candidates that they can reach out to whenever they need to hire. Yet, building a talent pipeline is easier said than done. Companies can't rely on their social media audience for example, as many of them are not necessarily relevant as employees. Likewise, companies' websites or other online platforms often lack engagement and the right context to source some potential candidates for the company's vacancies.

This is why companies use job sites such as Bayt.com to post their vacancies, or to directly search CVs and find their next employees. But aside from that, companies have the potential to build a professional audience: a group of relevant followers who look up to the company, want to hear from it, engage with its content and employees, and eventually become part of the organization.

Based on these three challenges that are causing competition for top talent to become more strenuous, employer branding has become a hot topic and the solution for this dilemma. Companies that want to be perceived as an employer of choice are in dire need for a platform to target specific segments and attract the most suitable candidates, to construct a follower base that is easily transformed to a hiring pipeline, to highlight their mission and vision and values, to showcase their workplace and environment, to celebrate their unique culture, and to engage and build meaningful connections with potential employees.

There is an increasing demand from job-seekers for more information on potential employers and their company culture; and in the same vein, there is a demand for companies to brand themselves as ideal employers and to gather an online following that they can target to help them identify top talent and fulfill their hiring needs.

Earlier this month, Bayt.com announced the roll out of its new branding platform, which allows companies to target custom audiences through tailor-made ads

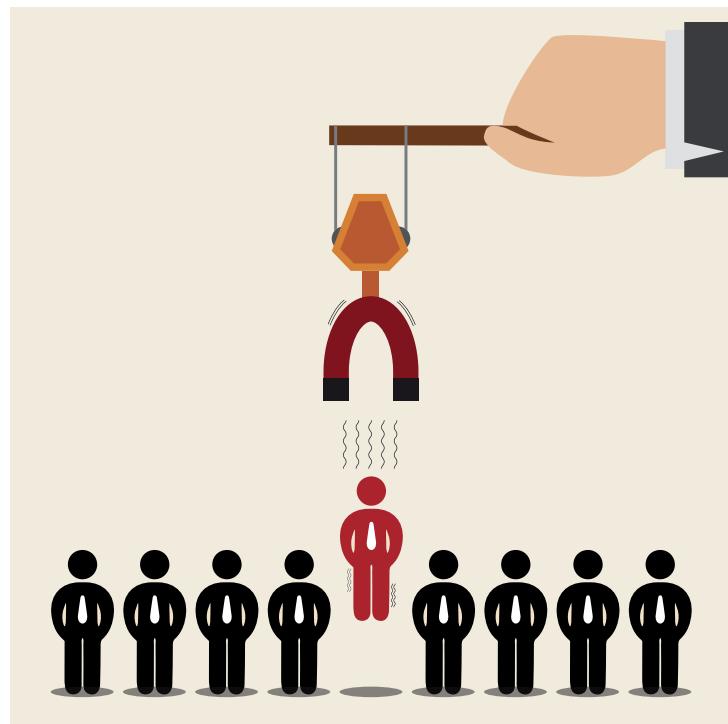
Not knowing enough about what the company offers, what its culture is like, what type of workplace it boasts, and what a day at work will look like can be frustrating for job seekers and sometimes even a deterrent from applying for the company's vacancies.

THE MORE INFORMATION THAT'S MADE AVAILABLE, THE MORE RELEVANT JOB APPLICANTS AND POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES BECOME.

with premium placement and homepage integration, as well as the ability to create custom mailers and set ad impressions, among many other features for employer branding.

As a path towards more effective talent attraction, employer branding through a dedicated platform can address all the challenges discussed earlier by, one, bringing to light all the unique elements that make up the company's culture and workplace, two, providing more information for job seekers and professionals who are interested in the company in the right context and the right time, and, three, securing a relevant follower base and a talent pipeline that can be accessed at any point.

In a way, employer branding through dedicated professional platforms has reinterpreted online hiring and how it can be done. Through a marketing-HR crossover, a branding platform can bolster a company's brand and reputation, it can grow the company's audience, it can secure more exposure to the company's news and updates, and it can build the company's future talent pipeline. ■



Suhail Al-Masri is the VP of Employer Solutions at Bayt.com, the #1 job site in the Middle East with more than 40,000 employers and over 30,600,000 registered job seekers from across the Middle East, North Africa and the globe, representing all industries, nationalities and career levels. Masri has more than 20 years of experience in sales leadership, consultative sales, account management, marketing management, and operations management. His mission at Bayt.com goes in line with the company's mission to empower people with the tools and knowledge to build their lifestyles of choice.



WE MADE THE FAST TRACK SERVICE SIMPLER AND FASTER GET AL NAMOOS CONNECTION IN 1 STEP & JUST 7 DAYS

We waived off the new connection charges for Commercial & Industrial categories, up to 150 kW. So go ahead, power your ambitions. Get an electricity connection in one step with Al Namoos.

For more information on Al Namoos, contact our dedicated Technical Enquiry Desk:

Tel: 04 322 9999

Email: dp.enquiries@dewa.gov.ae

"HADHREEN" AT YOUR SERVICE



#TAMTALKSTECH

GADGETS AND DOODADS THAT YOU MIGHT'VE MISSED OUT ON, SOURCED BY A TECH AFICIONADO.
YES, IT'S OKAY TO WANT THEM ALL... AND NO, IT'S NOT OUR FAULT.

FROM A TO Z

HP ZBOOK STUDIO X360 G5

HP ZBook Mobile Workstations are designed for creative and technical professionals who demand high performance in a premium device. The new line of laptops features cutting-edge design alongside collaboration and security tools that support every workflow. ZBook Studio x360 G5 is a versatile laptop that combines a convertible design with powerful performance to run multiple apps, without compromising speed or responsiveness. For example, NVIDIA graphics and Intel Xeon processors allow you to edit high resolution images, while seamlessly running word processing software in the background. HP's innovative 360-degree hinge delivers the comfort of a laptop, the convenience of a tablet, and a host of other work modes to help showcase

your work. ZBook Studio x360 G5 also features an anti-glare HP DreamColor display -one of the world's brightest, 4K laptop display- and supports up to 6TB of storage. Whether sketching or marking up documents, you can achieve remarkable inking precision with 4,000 levels of pressure sensitivity and tilt with the Wacom AES pen. This generation

of HP ZBooks are made from precisely crafted aluminum, which is both lightweight and durable, and thus enhance usability whether you're in the office or on the go.



HP ZBook Mobile Workstation

PICTURE PERFECT**CANON** IVY MINI PHOTO PRINTER

Set your photos free, and share memories in real life with Canon's IVY Mini Photo Printer. The compact device can go everywhere your smartphone goes, and uses ZINK Zero Ink Technology to print 2x3 full color photos without ink cartridges. Additionally, each pack of paper comes with one blue ZINK Smart Sheet, which keeps your IVY printer calibrated at all times. Using the Canon Mini Printer app, you have the option to not only print individual smudge-free, water-resistant prints or stickers, but you can also

create a tile print, use creative filters, augmented reality face distortion, as well as drawing tools to make your photos pop. The IVY Mini Photo Printer is available in rose gold, mint green and slate gray.



Canon IVY
Mini Photo
Printer

FULL STEAM AHEAD**PANASONIC** U SERIES IRONS

Technology and fashion intersect with Panasonic's new range of steam irons. The U Series steam iron models JU700, U550, U500 and U400 feature a large ceramic soleplate that allows you to cover a wider ironing area in fewer strokes, while their ergonomically-designed handle and low height assure maximum comfort. In addition to its wider width, the soleplate is curved and has a unique U-shape with 27 vents for even steam distribution, which is essential for softening fabric and removing wrinkles. Steam is the name of the game, and the irons also feature the power shot steam system, a Panasonic innovation that allows large quantities of concentrated steam to penetrate deeply into the fabric so that it never loses its texture. Power

shot is also ideal for removing odor caught in hard-to-wash garments, such as knitted items and suits. A micro spray blast feature also makes ironing more efficient, while the anti-drip function prevents leakage from the steam holes. The irons are built to last with a three-way self-cleaning system. Anti-calc prevents calcium build-up -you know, the substance that can ruin your clothes- in the water tank, while the self-cleaning button is for releasing excess water. To top it all off, the power shot aids in removing remaining water and calcium scale completely, preventing steam holes from getting clogged. The JU700, U550, U500 and U400 steam irons are perfect for keeping your professional pieces pressed and ready to go.



Panasonic
U Series irons



#TAMTALKSTECH

Tamara Clarke, a former software development professional, is the tech and lifestyle enthusiast behind *The Global Gazette*, one of the most active blogs in the Middle East. *The Global Gazette* has been welcomed and lauded by some of the most influential tech brands in the region. Clarke's goal is to inform about technology and how it supports our lifestyles. See her work both in print regional publications and online on her blog where she discusses everything from how a new gadget improves day-to-day life to how to coordinate your smartphone accessories. Visit www.theglobalgazette.com and talk to her on Twitter @TamaraClarke.

'TREP TRIMMINGS THE EXECUTIVE SELECTION

From better goods to better wardrobe bests, every issue, we choose a few items that make the approved executive selection list. In this issue, we present selections from the Suitsupply Summer/Spring 2018 range, a worthy new addition to your timepiece collection, and a new fragrance to go along with your everyday look.

THE RIGHT FIT

SUITSUPPLY SS18

If you haven't heard of the Netherlands-based tailoring brand Suitsupply yet, you're missing out. Best known for its finely tailored suits that make use of a wide variety of fabrics, Suitsupply's SS18 line embodies the casual silhouette apt for the season, while staying true to its signature structured looks. There's a return on darker summer shades across the collection such as olive green and azure blue, dialed down with neutral earth tones and off-whites. Our favorites from this range are the highlight pieces including the washed linen-cotton suit (available in cream, navy, and deep red), accented by wide peak collars and double-pleat trousers. Ignore your inclination to steer away from wool- trust us, it's all about choosing the right lightweight and breathable material such as wool silk linen, which this range boasts of, ideal for the summer, whether you're in or out of the boardroom. www.suitsupply.com



TO EACH THEIR OWN

TISSOT

As one of the pioneers in introducing pocket and pendant watches to the watchmaking scene, Tissot's been making its mark since the 1850s in crafting luxury watches that boast of both style and comfort. With the Chemin des Tourelles collection, the Swiss brand offers a wide range of variants for men and women, as well as unisex models too. Powered by the Powermatic 80 movement, its features include a power reserve of up to 80 hours, water resistance up to a pressure of 50 meters, and a leather strap with clasp and push buttons. Each model comes with its own distinctive features- be it the sunray dials that play with light in peculiar angles, or the date displays with its subtle aesthetic symmetry. Rest assured you'll find one that's suited to your taste.

www.tissotwatches.com



EDITOR'S PICK

HERMÈS

Crafted by Christine Nagel, the Eau de Citron Noir is a new scent in Hermès' unisex cologne collection. Inspired by the appeal around Eau d'Orange Verte, the original Hermès Cologne, Nagel sought a contemporary and vibrant note to the signature scent. The result is the use of an interesting touch- black lemon or loomi, as it's known in the Middle East as a commonly used ingredient in Arabic cuisine. Enclosed in a crisp dark blue bottle, the scent captures a combination of citrus fruits with smoky and woody black lime, an embodiment for a deep and smooth fragrance.

www.hermes.com

IMAGES COURTESY TISSOT/HERMÈS





Samer Arzouni checking the director's monitor with the company's DOP Walid Baaklini while shooting *I Am a Nat Geo Photographer*

Creative pursuits

From filmmaker to entrepreneur: Spotlife Film Productions founder and Managing Director **Samer Arzouni** by **TAMARA PUPIC**

Samer Arzouni, founder and Managing Director, Spotlife Film Productions, has shaped his entrepreneurial journey around the belief that poignant storytelling has the power to change perceptions. "I chose filmmaking as a career, because I believe in the power of film as a medium to influence and impact social behavior," he says. "To be able to tell powerful stories is empowering, and with this empowerment comes a responsibility and consciousness to tell balanced stories that are objective, and that have a purpose. Apart from understanding the potential of strong storytelling, I have also learnt how important dynamic characters are for telling a good story. As humans, we connect with other humans, based on emotions and common experiences. Interesting characters who are candid about their stories, allow us the opportunity to create compelling content that can engage audiences, which is the ultimate goal of all filmmakers."

Having worked with different news and general entertainment networks, producing a variety of current affairs pieces and social awareness segments, Arzouni moved

from his native Lebanon to the UAE in 2008 to take up a post at the National Geographic Channel. The ensuing years have seen him travelling between Seoul,

Washington, Hong Kong, and London, and producing over 25 films, some of which were aired in over 185 countries. Eventually, he climbed up the ladder to the position of

Head of Channel and Productions for the Middle East at the company. However, at that time, he was ready to take another plunge. "At an international network, everything revolved around big budgets, grand scales, and so on, and it was very much a network angle into the industry," he explains. "I was exposed to the crème de la crème of clients and topics. If you have worked in a network for long enough, then the channel's style is misconstrued as your

"INTERESTING CHARACTERS WHO ARE CANDID ABOUT THEIR STORIES, ALLOW US THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE COMPELLING CONTENT THAT CAN ENGAGE AUDIENCES, WHICH IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ALL FILMMAKERS."



personal style. The industry assumes that you only do a certain type of films, and that you have a limited imagination when exploring new areas of content. Shaking off this label and proving your versatility to new clients can be quite a difficult task."

In 2015, he co-founded ACT3 Productions, and in 2017, he went on to self-fund the establishment of Spotlife Film Productions with an aim to shake up the way people approach creating films. "The sentiment behind starting Spotlife Films was two-pronged," Arzouni explains. "After working in an executive role for several years, I started to miss the energy and thrill of being in the midst of all the action, and I wanted to return to that. Setting up my own company allowed me the freedom to choose how I wanted to be involved in a project. Secondly, being in an executive role enabled me to see local content in a very holistic manner, and I felt that content coming out of the region was not layered, but, rather two-dimensional. We have had some very experienced foreign directors come and work on projects here, but I find that many deliver films that have high production value, but grade low on editorial. So, being from the region, I felt that the insights I have of the Middle Eastern culture allow me to create content that is nuanced and culturally sensitive. For example, as a director on a documentary I did for the National Geographic Channel on a unit of the UAE army scaling the Mount Everest, I embedded myself with the soldiers that were featured in the film. Being from a similar cultural background, I under-

"WE STRONGLY BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF FACTUAL CONTENT AND ARE CONFIDENT THAT IT IS THE WAY FORWARD FOR BRAND COMMUNICATION. WE ARE STARTING TO SEE A SLOW CHANGE IN PEOPLE'S AND ORGANIZATIONS' MENTALITY AROUND THIS, AND FEEL THAT WE CAN BE A PART OF THIS INDUSTRY SHIFT."

stood the psyche and the driving forces that pushed these men forward, and I was able to engage and interview them accordingly."

Some of Arzouni's award-winning work includes *I am a National Geographic Photographer*, *Nissan Camel Power*, *Operation Almarai*, and other documentaries. He explains that his particular flair, when it comes to the art of filmmaking, is to create a space for change in the minds of audiences, and inspire them to take positive action. However, this is a concept that is not exactly understood by the industry at the moment, Arzouni admits. When asked what was the particular gap in the market he was trying to fill with his new company, Arzouni responds, "I would say that there wasn't a need for just any small, independent production company, but rather, a need for a production company that specialized in factual content, which is what we do. In the region, most companies still focus on commercials/ad films, and factual content is often dismissed as not being powerful enough, so the region is not ready as yet for the kind of content we are making. It is getting there, but the journey is slow. We see documentaries being developed locally, but the scope for producing reality TV content is still very limited. Talent show competitions are the most popular formats, and most companies are not willing to step out of the comfort zone, and explore newer

avenues of factual entertainment. Furthermore, we are incorporating newer technologies in our productions, such as 360° and VR, but find that we have to keep educating our clients about the relevance and benefits of these when we are negotiating projects. Nevertheless, we strongly believe in the power of factual content and are confident that it is the way forward for brand communication. We are starting to see a slow change in people's and organizations' mentality around this, and feel that we can be a part of this industry shift."

Remaining true to the ethos of his brand is one of Arzouni's pathways to success. However, the industry itself is under a constant change, he says, with social media influencers now playing a bigger role in content creation. Talking about the current misconceptions he notices in the market, Arzouni says, "The biggest one is that it costs less to produce content for digital platforms. People assume that digital content is low in quality, and, therefore, cost-efficient. This is not the case. Production costs don't change too much between producing for television, or producing for digital platforms, unless it is user-generated content using smartphones or gadget cameras. Another misconception is that people confuse influencers with thought leaders. Brands keep assuming that they need influencers in their communication in order to be successful. >>>

'TREP TALK'

SAMER ARZOUNI'S TIPS FOR ENTREPRENEURS

1. Find your niche "Only do something you are passionate about."

2. Be ready to roll with the punches

"Being an entrepreneur means that you should be ready to close a deal while riding a rollercoaster."

3. Surround yourself with smartness

"Only hire people who are better than you."

4. Treat yourself too "Opportunities will never stop coming, but if you burn out, you are done. So, give yourself a break. Most importantly, there is so much more to life than work."

I believe that brands should engage with thought leaders and authentic characters and experts, which will also help the audience on the receiving end make the right choices." At Spotlife, the team of in-house creatives, producers and directors works on projects from conception to execution- the core team defines the scope and needs of a project, after which a bespoke team is created for every assignment, based on its needs and demands. This hands-on approach is required in a market as ferociously competitive as the

"GETTING NEW CLIENTS TO TRUST YOU ENOUGH TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE IS A BIG CHALLENGE. AGENCIES AND CLIENTS HAVE PEOPLE THEY ARE ALREADY WORKING WITH, SO TO CONVINCE THEM TO CHANGE STATUS QUO AND TAKE A RISK IS A TALL ORDER."

UAE is, he says. "Competition in the region, especially in the UAE, is very fierce, even though the number of producers that do our type of work is limited," Arzouni adds. "Ultimately, we are all

vying for airtime on the same networks and looking at the same organizations for funding. Getting new clients to trust you enough to give you a chance is a big challenge. Agencies and clients have people they are already working with, so to convince them to change status quo and take a risk is a tall order."

In line with that, Arzouni's main task is to educate clients and agencies on the importance of factual content. However, the constant advancement of technology and wide spread use of digital devices are about to

change the traditional way of producing content to his benefit, Arzouni concludes and adds, "Consumers are much more knowledgeable and savvy now, and will not be advertised to overtly, so communication needs to be both emotional and factual, meaning we need to serve both the right and left sides of the brain. This is where factual content comes into play. Compelling factual content has the power to change behavior. Slowly, but surely, the industry will move towards increased uptake of such content." ■

Under the sea

KSA's Entertainment Authority and KBW Ventures bring Nat Geo's Ocean Odyssey to the Middle East

National Geographic Encounter: Ocean Odyssey, an immersive entertainment experience that transports you underwater to the oceans from the South Pacific to the coast of California, is coming to the Middle East. Sealing a partnership with HRH Prince Khaled bin Alwaleed's KBW Ventures and the General Entertainment Authority of Saudi Arabia, Ocean Odyssey is all set to launch up to 10 new locations in Saudi Arabia, with the first of such experiences to be situated in the city of Riyadh starting in 2019.

Fresh off its most recent successful launch in New York City's iconic Times Square, National Geographic Encounter will join hands with SPE Partners, the creators and developers of Encounter, and the Peterson Companies, along with a global team of Academy, Grammy and Emmy award-winning artists to

create this enthralling experience for Middle East audiences. According to a statement, the entertainment experience uses "groundbreaking technology and stunning photo-realistic animation," to transport guests to underwater destinations and thus "gain access to rarely witnessed moments in nature."

"When I first visited National Geographic Encounter and saw that the experience brings people around the globe into the natural world of wildlife, I knew that this was the future," HRH Prince Khaled bin Alwaleed, founder and CEO, KBW Ventures, said in a statement. "We also believe in Encounter's 'entertainment with purpose' ethos, especially with our current work with Future Oceans, an organization whose mission is to protect all marine wildlife," he added. Faisal Barafat, CEO of the General Entertainment Authority of Saudi Arabia, also

shared the sentiment, stating, "We are excited to bring this iconic brand and immersive experience into Saudi Arabia and provide premium entertainment in our country."

Created with the inputs of technologists and scientists, National Geographic Encounter says it is working with marine biologist, professor and National Geographic Emerging Explorer David Gruber to bring the underwater experience to the Middle East. Ocean Odyssey also helps support the National

Geographic Society's key exploration and conservation works around the globe, including the Pristine Seas Project. Visitors to the show get an opportunity to get up close with species including sea lions, sharks, a 50-foot Humpback whale, and others. The experience also includes an Exploration Hall session featuring tales from National Geographic photographers and explorers including Sylvia Earle, Bob Ballard and Enric Sala. www.natgeoencounter.com www.kbw-ventures.com



HRH Prince Khaled bin Alwaleed bin Talal, founder and CEO, KBW Ventures



COME TO THE BLU, STAY FOR THE VIEW

TAKE IN THE SPECTACULAR VISTAS OF THE DUBAI SKYLINE, THE DUBAI CANAL AND BURJ KHALIFA FROM THE NEW RADISSON BLU HOTEL, DUBAI WATERFRONT. THE PERFECT PLACE TO CAPTURE THAT ULTIMATE PICTURE MOMENT, WHETHER THAT'S FROM THE HOTEL'S PRIVATE ROOM BALCONIES, MEETING ROOMS, SPA OR RESTAURANT TERRACES. THE HOTEL IS IN THE HEART OF THE ACTION AND WALKING DISTANCE TO THE BEST SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT IN DUBAI.

NOW OPEN IN BUSINESS BAY

Radisson Blu Hotel, Dubai Waterfront, Business Bay, PO box 16021, Dubai
T: +971 4 249 7800 info.waterfront.dubai@radissonblu.com radissonblu.com/hotel-dubaiwaterfront

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Confidence is a trait entrepreneurs need— and it should be instilled from a very young age

by HELEN AL UZAIZI



A major factor in entrepreneurship is confidence. From the moment an entrepreneur decides to start a business, they will need to be confident enough in their idea to take that first step. Confidence is a determining factor in an entrepreneur's ability to successfully close deals, properly negotiate, and effectively lead their team. They will also need to be confident enough in their ability to handle all the overwhelming challenges of running a business.

Entrepreneurship takes courage, and courage requires a solid foundation of confidence. Just like any skill, confidence needs to be nurtured at an early age. It needs to be developed over years, so it can be tapped into, especially in difficult times when it is needed the most.

If you are saying to yourself, "I wish I had the confidence to follow through with this business idea," or "I wish I argued my point better, I knew I was right," then you know

how important it is to be confident. Thankfully, you can pass this trait to your child, and, in the process, learn from it as well. Here's how you can build up confidence:

1. POSITIVE FEEDBACK AND FACING REALITY

Positive feedback and reinforcement can work wonders for a child's sense of confidence. If your child excels at a particular task, they look to you for affirmation, and you should validate their achievements accordingly. On the other hand, your child may also fail something, even though they tried really hard. At this point, you should recognize their effort, but instead of offering praise, let them know that failure is common, and they may not succeed at everything. The important thing is to build a sense of resilience to these failures so that they can have the confidence to either try again or choose another path without losing morale. Every entrepreneur needs to understand this concept at an early age: there

will be good times, and there will be bad times; in either case, you will need to find a healthy way to cope with both in order to succeed.

2. CURIOSITY AND INDEPENDENCE

Encouraging curiosity and exploration can build a child's confidence by putting them in fresh situations, and receiving new information where they need to quickly adapt. Taking trips to new places, museums, or science experiments can help nurture new interests that your child can pursue, giving them the motivation to continue learning and seek out new experiences. While exploring and flexing their curious muscles, children should have the space to experiment on their own without fear of failure. This will help them to develop the independent mindset that will further reinforce confidence. This curious drive is the foundation of innovation. Future entrepreneurs will have to constantly ask questions, and figure out new ways of doing things to succeed in their industry.

3. EMPATHY AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

The best leaders are not the toughest ones, but instead the most empathetic; they have the emotional intelligence to understand what each individual in their team is experiencing, and know how to get the most out of them. They practice empathy on a regular basis to ensure things go smoothly with their team and with their customers. Children need to start learning early how to maintain strong relationships with their friends, which will feed into their confidence. Having friends that they listen to, understand, and support will

enable them to be good at making new friends and dealing with people throughout life. When they grow up, this will help them lead teams, network with peers, and deal with the many people it takes to make a business succeed.

4. CONVICTION AND DEBATE

You should encourage healthy debates at home, and start negotiating with your children on certain points to get them in the habit of defending their side of an argument. You should also give them the room to win some debates (within reason of course), so they can be proud of their negotiating skills and build up their confidence for the next round. If they believe strongly and rightly enough in their idea, they need to see it through, as this skill will serve them greatly throughout their lives. Whether it is negotiating a contract, or convincing a client of a new plan, it will take confidence to get the point across.

A word of caution here: confidence needs to be planted in self-awareness and a healthy respect for failure. Being overly-confident and without warrant can be detrimental to any entrepreneur, as their ego will get the better of their judgement. That's why it is important to nurture confidence based on experience and combined with a respect for failure. We need to let our children know that when they fail, they need to get back up and keep moving forward. This in itself creates the strongest confidence and teaches valuable lessons along the way. Coming back from a tough experience will fortify our children, and give them the confidence that they can face the next challenge—and still come out on top. ■



Helen Al Uzaizi is the CEO of BizWorld UAE, Jordan, and Egypt, and founder of the entrepreneurship education platform for the MENA region, Future Entrepreneurs. With a 15+ year career in the corporate and startup worlds, Helen directed her passion to the entrepreneurship education field, working to instill the entrepreneurial mindset in the next generation of leaders. www.bizworlduae.org



Salvatore Ferragamo

DUBAI MALL, DUBAI - MALL OF THE EMIRATES, DUBAI - ETIHAD TOWERS, ABU DHABI - CITY CENTER, MANAMA
KINGDOM CENTER, RIYADH - AL RASHID MALL, AL KHOBAR - RED SEA MALL, JEDDAH, VILLAGGIO MALL, DOHA OPENING SOON
360 MALL, KUWAIT CITY - AL HAMRA MALL, KUWAIT CITY - 52 BANKS' STREET, BEIRUT DOWN TOWN - ZARA CENTER, AMMAN - FERRAGAMO.COM

Room to breathe

The perfect work environment has to be one that does not feel like, well, work

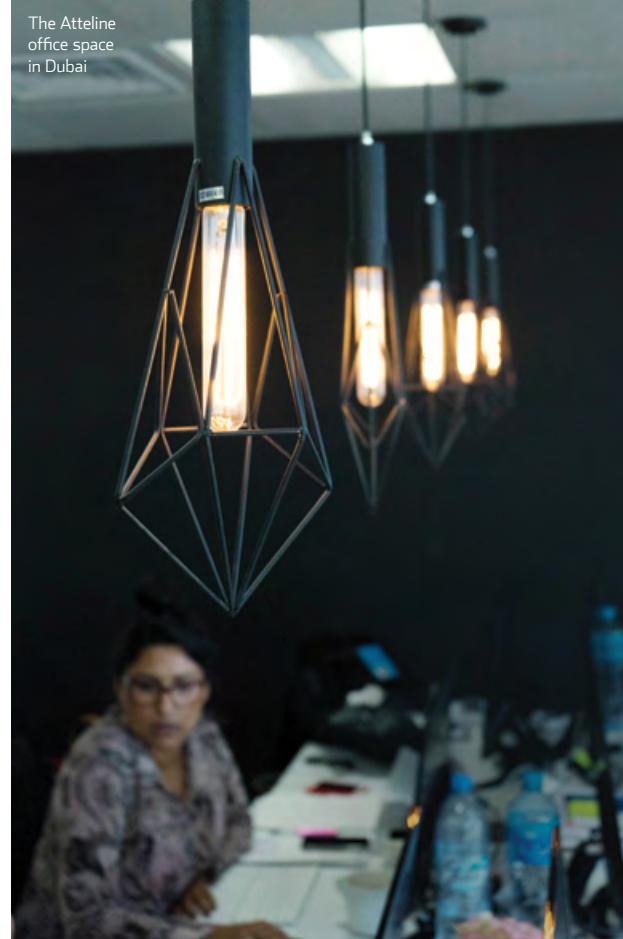
by BROOKE BOYSCHAU and SOPHIE COOKE

If Virginia Woolf was right that having “a room of one’s own” is vital to nurturing a woman’s creativity, then female business owners should certainly take note. Our own observations have cemented the inkling that there is a traditional mindset governing how offices look, feel, and perform, with many workplaces internationally designed by men, for men. Challenging these traditional norms, Silicon Valley has, in recent years, sold us on a futuristic and genderless ideal of the modern office, with open layouts, dynamic kitchens, removable walls, mini golf courses, standing desks, and privacy pods geared towards employee happiness and productivity. Despite the undeniable perks of these eccentric and forward-thinking spaces, we’re here to argue that what most employees want and need is a “feel good” space, conducive to focus, self-expression, privacy, collaboration, productivity, good health, and lifestyle convenience.

As female entrepreneurs with our own concerns for the wellbeing and productivity of our team, people often ask us: “What do you consider the perfect office for a happy workforce?” With years of experience between us working around the world in different companies, we can both attest that the perfect environment has to be one which does not feel like “work.” It is a place so well designed that it doesn’t actually look complete; it gives the final user an opportunity to add that final, personalized touch to their space. It is an environment filled with opportunities to become creative. A space that nurtures potential, and facilitates the expression of

unique skills and passions. A place where both ourselves and our team can both focus and get distracted. A place which sounds, smells, looks, and feels good.

Over the past decade, the dialogue surrounding design and its impact on productivity and creativity in the workplace has continued to gain momentum across the architecture, interior, and psychology landscape. From a psychological standpoint, such a discussion makes perfect sense; the unity between accomplishment and success goes hand in hand with feeling great. Further, from a design perspective, we know from designers and architects that there are



The Atteline office space in Dubai

indeed many aesthetic and practical elements that have a direct impact on the mood, mindset, and well-being of an individual or team.

As both business owners and PR professionals representing a wealth of creative clients, we have become fervent advocates of exploring new ways to create healthy, inspiring, and sustainable workplaces in which employees can feel good about where they are, and what they do. We are also fiercely passionate about supporting our fellow females in achieving the same.

People want to feel comfortable at work, not intimidated by aggressive impersonal environments. The Future

Laboratory released a report exploring how offices will evolve to meet the needs of an incredibly diverse workforce. The report presented contemporary working life as a monoculture created by and targeted at men between the ages of 25 and 40. Further, the report predicts a positive shift towards “sensitive workplaces,” that are more reflective of an individual’s needs, using smart technology to adapt everything from local temperature to lighting preferences.

We believe the limitations of the current approach to standard office design may essentially lie in its male driven approach. Spaces designed for men, by men. With this

in mind, before designing our office, we tried and tested many different working arrangements –cafes, home, co-working spaces – to see what we could take from and what we could improve.

The result was an office designed with our client Medy Navani, architect, interior designer, and founder of Design Haus Medy. It is a space with multifaceted functionality at its heart; there are areas for hosting client lunches, lounges for networking, work benches for collaboration, and a private room for confidential meetings. Proximate wellness and beauty facilities were also considered, including a Pilates studio in the building for easy access during and around the work day. The mix of ambience –light and dark, open and enclosed, formal and informal– promotes creativity in all its forms. Additionally, we looked out for easy access to supermarkets, green spaces, walking tracks and metro, to ensure individual lifestyle choices could be easily incorporated into the work day.

With newcomers always around the corner exposing the gap in the market for well-designed offices spaces, we are aiming to be a small rallying cry to ambitious women everywhere seeking to create the best possible environment for their team. We are not exploring radical changes here, just acknowledging the basic requirements of the modern worker, and the modern woman. That also includes flexibility in the return to work for new moth-

ers, with an open-door policy for all the little ones in our team to visit.

We have channeled our frustration with all the worst aspects of office life –its sedentary nature, culture of presentation, and sterile environments– into designing a space at Atteline that works with our natural instincts instead of against them. Desks are not segregated and allow for open conversation and easy brainstorming sessions (that don't need to be planned!), and everything from lighting and temperature to the background music can be controlled. We also have scents to evoke a particular mood (lemongrass for concentration, lavender for relaxation) and there is a spectacular view with floor to ceiling windows overlooking the transient Dubai city landscape.

Environmental psychologists have come to pour great amounts of focus over how design affects mood, and as recently concluded by *Harvard Business Review*, “via a chain of psychological reactions, mood influences worker engagement, with more positive moods linked to higher levels of engagement.” Therefore, we must focus on designing for engagement, to make those positive moods more likely. Thankfully, more and more companies are beginning to take notice of the real impact workplace design has on a company's bottom line. Recent research from Gensler, a global architect and design firm, revealed that poor workplace design

Brooke Boyschau and Sophie Cooke, co-founders, Atteline



“WE ARE AIMING TO BE A SMALL RALLYING CRY TO AMBITIOUS WOMEN EVERYWHERE SEEKING TO CREATE THE BEST POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENT FOR THEIR TEAM.”

was estimated to cost US businesses a whopping \$330 billion in lost productivity each year.

For those startup and SME owners reading in dismay, believing they must hit an annual forecasted turnover before they can invest in “productive design,” allow us to allay your disillusionment. Rest assured that successful design for increased productivity, happiness and creativity needn’t hinge on huge budgets making way for indoor putting greens, slippery slides, foosball tables or giant hammocks reminiscent of Google’s global offices. In fact, what we are beginning to see more of as consultants, are offices seeking to become more mature and the trend

of having the “coolest” office space being trumped by the desire to create more sophisticated work environments reflecting the brand, organizational ethos and company culture, as opposed to focusing on trendy yet potentially superfluous “bells and whistles” that are possibly best served as fodder for Instagram.

Fluid hospitable spaces suited to work, rest and play are key. Outdated practices such as hot desking will give way to a more thoughtful approach, like promoting skill sharing by seating an older employee next to a millennial colleague– something we strongly practice here at Atteline. Employers need to provide environments that bring people together– that’s when the best and most inspired ideas happen. And as a new generation of female founders seek to replace cloisters of male privilege with outward-looking, forward thinking businesses, Woolf’s call –which we referred to in the beginning of this piece– resonated more strongly than ever. ■

Brooke Boyschau and Sophie Cooke are the co-founders of Atteline, a fashion, beauty and luxury lifestyle PR agency leveraging global experience, regional insight and local expertise to package, protect and propel the brands we believe in across the pop-culture landscape. www.atteline.com
An Australian with Danish heritage, Brooke began her communications journey at the University of Queensland, Australia, with a Bachelor of Business Management (Marketing) and Master of Journalism. With a decade of PR experience, Brooke’s portfolio spans international consumer PR campaigns integrating media relations, influencer engagement, social media, guerrilla stunts and strategic partnerships. Ferrari, Quintessentially Lifestyle, Ella

Bache, Four Seasons, Hilton, QCCG, and VOSS are among the brands Brooke has represented across Australasia and the Middle East. Born in the UK and raised on the island of Bermuda, Sophie graduated from Central Saint Martins with a Bachelor of Fashion. An expert in fashion and luxury lifestyle, Sophie’s career has taken her from London to Milan to the Middle East, spanning both in-house and agency experience. Sophie has represented notable brands across the globe, leading regional and international campaigns for the likes of Ralph Lauren, La Perla, Stylebop.com, Matthew Williamson, Donna Karan, Henry Holland and Elemis to name but a few.

DUE FOR DISRUPTION

The changing face of the **real estate** industry

by AMAN MERCHANT & INDY JOHAR

Most countries in the MENA region are asset-based economies, rather than outcome-based ones, with real estate being a significant portion of their GDP. For many, this often illiquid asset is also seen as the safest one.

However, it is also a sector that is at a global tipping point of significant and fundamental change—driven by a confluence of innovations and disruptions. And as regional real estate plays gather steam, and exponential technologies become an inevitably increasing part of our physical and social infrastructure, entrepreneurs and investors would be hard pressed not to consider these as either opportunities for (or threats to) their businesses or sectors. Here are a few key trends to keep an eye on in the real estate space:

1/ New institutional infrastructures, such as the digitization of land registries, smart contracts, and ICOs—open up the effective trading of novel real estate assets, instruments and tools, in ways as yet unimagined, but also unleash new decentralized, distributed, and real-time models of value creation and pricing. For example, what if economic departments don't charge license fees based on a fixed square footage of area (as is the case in the UAE), but rather on the value generated by a tokenized real estate lease?

2/ Digital regulation and compliance, such as shifting planning policy from regulating use classes to regulating cross contamination of pollution and impact using distributed sensors—real-time planning based on impact, not use-class proxies. This fundamentally creates the capacity for unleashing the medieval organic city that transcends industrial zoning logics, and drives planning from focusing on likely outputs to outcomes, setting up new compliance mechanisms at all levels of the real estate value chain, changing the role of regulatory entities such as RERA from being regulators to enablers.

3/ Hybrid financial models & instruments, such as impact derivatives that seek to fuse place-based social

outcomes and liabilities to real estate acting as hybrids of social impact bonds with traditional real estate financing, or more novel synthetic financing instruments that seek to capture the value of investing in common goods through social smart contracts on adjacent private housing—all of this will redefine incentive structures for future builds. What if construction finance is linked to not just the project feasibilities, but to how well you build from a sustainability perspective? Or which areas in the city would you build, so as to enable better traffic and air quality?

4/ New typologies of space use, such as the rise of co-working and co-living from Impact Hubs, WeWork to Roam, are fundamentally giving rise to new constructs, and in many cases, these are just the beginning, and they are systematically shifting the business model of real estate from product and asset to service—driven by data, outcomes, and continuous optimization. This is an emerging future of real estate not focused on optimizing its mere utilization and mere efficiency of space, but directly aligned to the efficacy and outcome contribution of the built environment to the production of value. What if how well you build is construed not just for its aesthetic and architectural brilliance, but how well you impact specific desired outcomes in your community and/or economy? Also, we are seeing how technology continues to impact real estate. While e-commerce has slowed in-store shopping, resulting in retail store closures, at the same time, new technologies such as AR, VR, and AI could transform physical stores into experiential showrooms, highlighting the continued need for retail real estate. Finally, with many societies, particularly in the West but also in Japan and China, facing rapidly aging populations, their real estate preferences and needs will change.

5/ Race for talent With slowing population growth, the baby boomer retirement wave, and talent demands from competing industries—particularly



<https://wikihouse.cc>

ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS WIKIHOUSE ARE CHALLENGING THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION OF REAL ESTATE, BY BOTH DECENTRALIZING AND DISTRIBUTING THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION, AND ALSO DISTRIBUTING INNOVATION, CREATIVITY, AND CARE.

health care, community services, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics clusters- are likely to result in an even bigger race for talent in the next decade. That gives new meaning to workplace preferences of millennials and Gen X, who tend toward freedom and flexibility. Their work life barriers are porous, with many preferring to work from home or freelance. As such, the per employee office space requirement is likely to shrink from the

current 250 square feet per person to less than 80 square feet. The upshot may be a demand for mixed-use spaces that include office, residence, and recreation options with many tenants even demanding small offices in their apartments- the co-working and co-living movement referenced above.

6 / 3D printing, manufacturing and automation Organizations such as WikiHouse are challenging the means of production of real estate, by both decentralizing and distributing the means of production, and also distributing innovation, creativity, and care. This is a future that challenges not only the current capacity and capability of our construction industry, but also most fundamentally



Aman Merchant is the co-founder and Chief Provocateur of Radicle. A mission-driven serial parallel entrepreneur passionate about transforming industries, cities and lives through ideating and launching ambitious new platforms, Aman is widely hailed as the pioneer of business school executive education in the Middle East in the late 90s, through his partnerships with Stanford, Michigan and Columbia Business Schools. When he isn't cooking new ideas in his "disruption kitchen," his day job includes being the co-founder and CEO of Impact Hub Dubai, a global network of over 16,500 impact-driven entrepreneurs and innovators in over 100 locations. Talk to him on Twitter @AmanMerchant.

the nature of our workplace environments to respond to automation by unlocking the capacity to care, create, collaborate, and utilize the collective intelligence of their workforce. With Dubai having set the stage through the world's 1st 3D printed office in 2016, and promulgating regulation through its 3D Printing Strategy that would have every new building in Dubai 25% 3D printed by 2025, there would be no dearth of incentives to engage in new construction platforms- the more important question is how this new "hardware" will be backed up by new "software" in the ways individuals and organizations collaborate to co-create the future of work.

7 / The rebirth of universal policy, such as universal basic income, which sets up the capacity to challenge the existing and dominant economic geography of our current real estate model, or equality policy, which recognizes the impact of epigenetics and the effects of the environment on the issues of social and spatial justice. Individually, these trends and others such as place-based systems change, collective impact and data-driven environment and their directions of travel are already starting to disrupt real estate as we know it. Together, they form the basis of a new model of place making.

In sum, these drivers will challenge the orthodoxy of our current economic geography, spatial typologies, business models, design practices, models of ownership, and governance as we know them. And when amplified by the labor, value, and demand shocks likely to be delivered by the protectionist-centered political changes underway across the world, these disruptions are likely to fundamentally and dramatically change the future of real estate.

We know many major real estate organizations across the world are beginning a process of strategic review- recognizing the need to realign to a shifting market. These reviews have an urgency to address the disruptions hurtling towards the industry. They need to drive meaningful transformation of their capacities and capabilities- reimagining what functions can be outsourced, and what functions need to be in-sourced in this future, alongside driving a systematic transformation of their products as services and revising their current and future portfolios. With the UAE and Saudi Arabia being the centers of construction across the Gulf region, it remains to be seen how the vanguards of real estate –across the value chain- will respond to these cataclysmic changes. ■



Indy Johar is the co-founder and Chief Strategic Designer of Radicle. Indy is a trained and registered architect, and over the course of the last 15 years, he has co-founded and established multiple ventures from an award winning architectural practice (Architecture OO) to accelerators, multiple impact hubs in the UK, along with supporting the development of multiple open source manufacturing ventures in London, from Open Desk to WikiHouse, and most recently Dark Matter Laboratories. Indy has co-authored multiple publications, including the highly-acclaimed *Compendium of the Civic Economy*, and is currently working on a new book focused on case-studying new business models for public good. Talk to him on Twitter @indy_johar.

Change is coming

Artificial intelligence is all set to disrupt (in a good way) the UAE's healthcare system **by DR. THUMBAY MOIDEEN**



The UAE is all about innovation. So, it follows that the world is watching the Emirates when it comes to the future of healthcare—after all, it's hard to think of a sector that is growing more quickly with more technological advances, or a country that has taken more bold steps across so many industries.

The UAE is positioned to be the region leader on this, having already made huge strides in accumulating the knowledge, finances, and tools required to incorporate AI into daily healthcare practices.

Let's take one example: the Dubai Future Foundation has invested millions into AI development initiatives, such as the UAE AI and Robotics Award for Good,

which asks applicants from across the globe to develop and submit advanced uses for AI in healthcare. Furthermore, tech startups have soared in number in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region since 2010, and the UAE is leading the way—securing 50% of all MENA tech funding between 2014 and 2017. This makes one thing clear: the future of AI in the UAE's

One of the key areas of advancement in healthcare is, of course, artificial intelligence (AI), which refers to intelligent applications that assist with diagnosis of disease, treatment recommendations, as well as data management, improving online consultations, speeding up drug development, and improving doctor and medical student training.

healthcare system is bright. So, here's a look at what the future may hold when it comes to the use of AI in the nation's health industry.

1/UNDERSTANDING DATA

The move from paper to digitalized medical records over the last two decades has undoubtedly improved the efficiency of hospitals and clinics across the UAE. But in doing so, it

has generated enormous amounts of data—data that continues to grow at a rapid rate each year. In fact, reports estimate that the amount of data created and copied globally doubles in size every two years and will reach 44 trillion gigabytes by 2020. However, this data has limited benefit in healthcare unless it is thoroughly analyzed, and the findings are used to improve patient diagnosis, treatment and care pathways.

This is where AI comes into play. AI can be used to extract information from doctor's notes and medical journals, while machine learning procedures can be used to identify trends in the data that reveal risk factors for certain diseases, treatment responses, disease outcomes and many other variables. A case in point is the AI-focused project Google Deepmind Health, which is currently running in the UK. In this project, data is being mined from the medical records of patients. The aim? To ensure patients are diagnosed and treated more quickly and accurately than ever before.

2/DIAGNOSING DISEASE

AI-based disease diagnosis is already in progress. In 2017, US researchers published findings that showed that machine learning platforms can be taught to diagnose skin cancer after processing hundreds of thousands of images of different types of skin cancer. When pitted against human dermatologists, the machines demonstrated a comparable level of accuracy.

Overall there is more than 60 startups exploring AI projects only in healthcare. In the future, patient tissue samples can then be



cross-matched against databases to identify cancer at a very early stage, which will translate the AI application into a cancer screening tool. And in a worldwide first, in 2017, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved an AI-based medical imaging platform called Arterys for clinical use. The platform uses AI to understand how the heart works with each new case it examines. The ultimate goal is to automate heart disease diagnosis.

3/TELEMEDICINE

Treating patients remotely is already part of the UAE healthcare landscape, with online and app-based medical consultations growing increasingly common. While these consultations still take the format of a video call with a real-life physician, AI is now allowing machines to take the lead via chatbots. When the AI-based app is used, the patient tells the app the symptoms he or she is experiencing. These are then cross-referenced with a vast database of disease symptoms and signs to determine a diagnosis and whether a hospital visit is required. Solutions like this mean that patients can receive accurate medical care more quickly than in previous years, which in turn takes the pressure off healthcare systems.

Incorporating AI into practice

As mentioned, the UAE is developing the talent for tech specialists to work and establish companies in the UAE. The next steps to successfully incorporate AI into the UAE's healthcare system is the development of clearly-defined ethical standards for

TREATING PATIENTS REMOTELY IS ALREADY PART OF THE UAE HEALTHCARE LANDSCAPE, WITH ONLINE AND APP-BASED MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS GROWING INCREASINGLY COMMON.

the use of AI in healthcare. As we move into a new realm of healthcare, both clinicians and software companies will have to prioritize the safeguarding of patient data to ensure it is never used in non-health related capacities, that confidentiality is always maintained, and data is never passed to third parties without patients' consent. A regulatory framework will need to be developed to achieve this, and training on best practice will have to be provided for health professionals. Finally, patients themselves will also need to be educated about AI, its advantages, limitations, and applications, while being reassured about the protocols that have been put in place to keep their personal information safe. The gradual introduction of AI into daily living is already occurring through smartphone operating systems and apps. Healthcare providers can now build upon this by adopting user-friendly interfaces that are similar to those that members of the public are already used to. This should ensure they embrace, rather than fear, the increasing presence of AI in healthcare.

The recent appointment of the country's first Minister for Artificial Intelligence also suggests the UAE is

focused on tapping into the benefits offered by using AI in medical research. While AI will certainly impact research and training standards, it could also revolutionize drug development—speeding up a process that currently takes at least a decade and costs around US\$2.6 billion per successfully developed drug.

Another key healthcare area that stands to gain much from AI is the training of doctors and medical professionals. With AI, computer algorithms could make adjustments to the types of questions that are asked to take into account the differences between trainees. In fact, AI can take its cue from a large database of different medical scenarios, adapting to different trainees, and learning from previous responses. This allows it to meet the individual needs of medical students and could make exams reflect more accurately the types of situation that doctors would face in a real clinic.

The immediate future

With recent survey results suggesting that two-thirds of the Middle East's public are happy to see AI systems being used in healthcare, I am sure new doctors with the ability to use AI tools will replace the old doctors who don't use these AI techniques. It's a change that the UAE's consumers seem ready for—even though many may not realize the full potential of AI in healthcare. But with so many potential applications for AI on the horizon, what can we realistically expect to see in UAE hospitals and clinics in the near future? While only time can truly tell, the work of home-grown companies points towards AI-based screening of diseases like cancer as a fast-approaching change. And with the development of chatbots that permit quick at-home clinical assessments and diagnoses, it's likely that this service may also become more widely used in the UAE in the very near future.

Regardless of which applications are first to market, it is undeniable that change is coming—and that means it's a very exciting time for the healthcare industry. ■



Dr. Thumay Moideen is Founder and President of Thumay Group, which was established in 1998, and is headquartered in the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC). He is a third-generation businessman who inherited his business acumen and values from his family business—built by his father and grandfather before him—at the age of 21. Under his leadership, the Thumay Group has diversified across 20 sectors including education, healthcare, and research. Dr. Thumay holds an honorary doctorate and has been frequently ranked as one of the top Indian business leaders in the Arab world. You can reach Dr. Thumay on president@thumay.com.



No (good) idea left behind

Everyone in an organization has the potential to innovate **by SALMAN DAWOOD ABDULLA**

An nationwide focus on innovation has changed how we live and work. Since the National Innovation Strategy was launched in 2014, innovation in the UAE has facilitated everything from cleaner energy to better data management and easier, more convenient services. The results are palpable to everybody who lives in the UAE, and they earned the country a six-point jump on the Global Innovation Index from 2016 to 2017.

But has this innovation culture filtered into every part of the workplace?

In a survey of the national workforce, commissioned by Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA) last year, almost everybody recognizes that the UAE is making progress. Some 94% of respondents said that the UAE is more innovative than it was five years ago. This included 73% of senior management and 65% of junior staff who said that the UAE was "a lot more innovative" than it was in 2012. This should come as no sur-

prise. Since 2014 the government has unveiled a host of initiatives in line with UAE Vision 2021, many of them focused on transforming the way government departments and agencies serve the public. At the same time, encouraged by the government, the private sector made its own investments, doubling down on everything from new technologies to fresh techniques in corporate governance.

Collectively these efforts have catapulted the volume of research and development financed by businesses in the UAE to the fourth highest in the world according to the World Trade Organization. Additionally, they have raised the contributions of knowledge and innovation to the UAE's GDP to 3% in 2016, one of the highest global rates, the UAE Minister of Economy H.E. Sultan Al Mansoori said at the launch of the 2016 Global Innovation Index.

The survey results bear out this private sector commitment. 67% of respondents describe their companies as

"innovative," which indicates that they believe their companies do not just deliver the rhetoric of innovation; they actually make investments in it. Some 71% of all respondents believe that their companies spend adequately on innovation and are making good on their promises to advance toward a knowledge-based economy.

But there is a wrinkle in this fantastic story for the UAE, and here it is: even quicker innovative progress would be possible if everyone in the workforce is involved, but in too many organizations that does not seem to be happening.

Our survey revealed that more than half of respondents believe that senior staff and CEOs are more likely to produce innovative outcomes than junior staff. Only 30% of senior management and 39% of junior staff believe that all employees are able to design and implement innovative ideas.

At EGA, we strongly believe that everyone in an organization has the potential to innovate. In fact, we think that the people nearest a work process are best placed to identify an improvement, and have the ability to devise the simplest solution required.

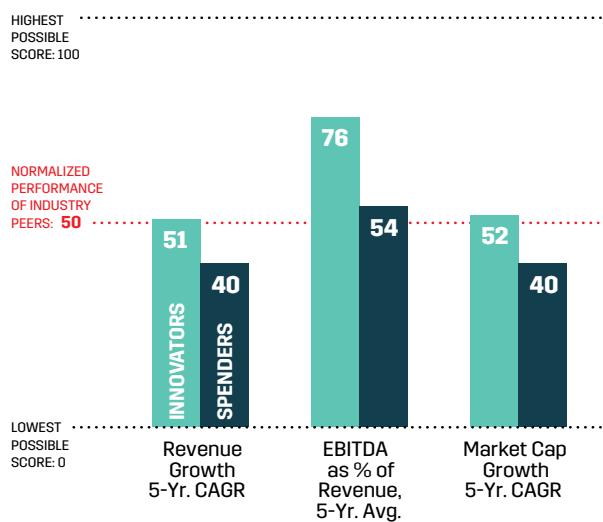
For us, the leadership of an organization has a critical role to play, but they are not the only innovators. Innovation is not just great leaps in technology; it is finding better ways to do anything, anywhere, any day.

Unfortunately, too many people in the UAE workforce do not agree, and that means the innovation potential of millions of people is left untapped.

A REPORT BY STRATEGY& AND PWC IN 2011 SAID IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT A CULTURE THAT SUPPORTS INNOVATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HOW MUCH THE COMPANY SPENDS ON R&D.

Top 10 Innovators vs. Top 10 R&D Spenders

Performance of Top 10 Innovators vs. Top 10 R&D Spenders compared to their industry peers in the Global Innovation 1000



Source: Booz & Company



Salman Dawood Abdulla is Executive Vice President, EHSSQ and Business Transformation, at Emirates Global Aluminium. He has served in this role since 2016, and has a wealth of experience designing, building, operating and maintaining large industrial plants. Since joining DUBAL (which merged with EMAL to form EGA) in 1984 as an engineering apprentice, he was promoted through the ranks to a number of senior positions, including General Manager of Power & Desalination at DUBAL, Chief Operations Officer and Vice President of Operations at EMAL and then Senior Vice President of Al Taweebah Operations before being promoted to his current role.

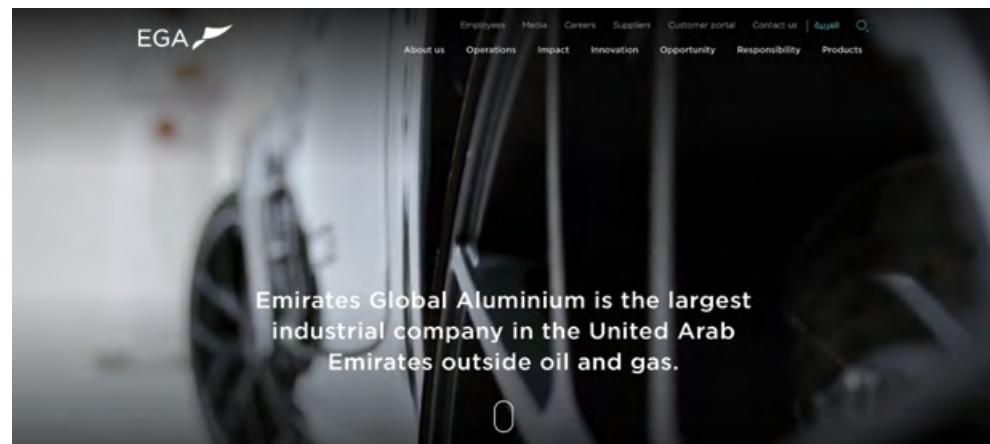
We believe that all of the UAE's workforce should be given the confidence and support they need to drive the country forward. And we think it is right to expect that employees should step up to this challenge.

Like many other leading companies in the UAE, EGA embraces the concept of continuous improvement, and we don't just limit it to a handful of those at the top. It is the job of every one of our 7,000 UAE-based employees to consider how we can do things better, and it is up to our most senior employees to ensure that every voice is heard.

In 2017, individual EGA employees submitted over 34,400 ideas through our suggestion scheme, generating some AED36 million in savings. Our staff share in the financial benefits of their ideas.

We also run a program for teams called Tamayaz, focused

www.ega.ae



on achieving business results by providing a platform for rewarding and recognizing supervisory and non-supervisory employees after successful completion of value-adding projects.

We are very proud of our continuous improvement program, but it is not revolutionary thinking in global terms. A report by Strategy& and PwC in

2011 said in no uncertain terms that a culture that supports innovation is more important than how much the company spends on R&D. In their *Global Innovation 1000* study, they found that organizations that behave, feel, think and believe in innovation outperform against their competitors with 30% higher enterprise value and 17% higher profit growth.

From a business perspective, a great idea is valuable, whether it comes from the C-suite or the factory floor. We stand to gain so much more if we give everyone a chance to participate. None of us have the luxury of leaving ideas unspoken. Let's surpass the innovation threshold, and reach even greater heights in the next five years. ■

TOWARD A (MORE) INCLUSIVE FUTURE

UAE PASSES EQUAL PAY LEGISLATION TO NARROW GENDER GAP

In a move that's certainly a boost for gender parity, the UAE Cabinet has approved the issuance of legislation ensuring men and women are paid equal pay wage and given equal opportunities, furthering the empowerment of the nation's women. H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai said via Twitter, "The Council of Ministers drafted the first legislation of its kind for equality in salaries and wages between the sexes. With the force of law, we do not want any exception in providing equal opportunities for both sexes." He added, "Our Constitution is of equal rights and duties of the sexes and we seek to elaborate, enforce and guarantee this constitutional right through the new law." In the World Economic Forum's 2017 *Global*

Gender Gap report, the UAE ranked 120 out of 144 countries globally, but it was still making small strides to close the gender gap, opposing the global trend in areas such as health, education, politics and the workplace for women. Dr. Hanif Hassan Ali Al Qassim, Chairman of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue, commented on its alignment to UAE government's belief in the significant role by women in the national development. It echoes the Strategy for the Empowerment of Emirati Women 2015–2021, launched by H.H. Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, Chairwoman of the General Women's Union (GWU), President of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, and Supreme Chairwoman of the Family Development Foundation (FDF).

To note, the UAE has also previously taken steps towards gender parity. The country has appointed eight women to its cabinet, eight women in the Federal National Council and other government entities, with women in leadership roles in the public and private sector. In 2017, the UAE launched the Gender Balance Guide for the workplace to lessen the gender

gap in the country's private and public institutions. Developed with the OECD, the guide touches on HR management tools, policy guidelines and performance structures, as well as tips for promoting work-life balance, and equal pay and job opportunities. In 2015, the UAE Gender Balance Council was launched, a federal entity working to "enhance the role of women in all fields."

It's worth watching as the nation takes steps for its aim to be one of the world's top 25 countries for gender equality by 2021. The bill would be presented to the country's advisory Federal National Council for final approval.



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Silicon Valley-headquartered **Plug and Play** partners with Abu Dhabi Global Market to make a dent in the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem

by ABY SAM THOMAS

For those of us who have been watching the Middle East entrepreneurial ecosystem for a while now, it wouldn't be a stretch to say that the region has seen a surge in the number of accelerators and incubators in the recent past. These have included homegrown concepts like Bahrain's FinTech Bay, Kuwait's Savour Ventures, and the UAE's Fikra Labs, to name a few, but there's also been an interest showcased in the region from international players in this space, such as 1776, 500 Startups, and Techstars. And now, there's new kids on the block to add to this latter group of entities: Silicon Valley-headquartered Plug and Play

has partnered with the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) in the UAE to set up its own signature fintech innovation program, which is set to go live in the third quarter of 2018.

At this moment, at least some of you may be wondering: what is Plug and Play anyway? Well, here's Plug and Play EMEA Managing Partner Omeed Mehrinfar with the answer to that. "Plug and Play is many things," he says. "We're the most active venture capital in the world. We're the largest startup accelerator in the world. And we're the largest corporate innovation platform in the world." Sure, there are a lot of superlatives in that response—but Operations/Communications Director Ashlene Ramadan has the figures to back those statements up. "To add on to Omeed's points; when some people ask us why we are defined as the biggest in the game, there are a few points," she explains. "Firstly, the order of magnitude of startups we source and accelerate globally every year. Just last year alone, we've accelerated 426 startups across 14 different industry verticals. This was a 33% growth from our 2016 numbers, because of the new sectors, corporate partners, and locations we've been adding to our operational roster. Secondly, as a venture capital, we're also the most active in the world for the past three years in a row. In 2017, we invested in a total of 262 investments internationally across our 28 different offices within that single year. As for being the largest corporate innovation platform in the world, from having serviced around 40-50 Fortune 500s about four years ago, today that number is just under 300 corporate partners, with a goal of reaching 400 by end of this year."

Plug and Play's growth into what it is today was led by its founder and CEO Saeed Amidi, who, interestingly enough, once owned a Persian rugs store in Palo Alto, California. His customers included some of the most influential people in the tech world, and that was how Amidi got interested in the venture capital space. He was soon funding start-

"WE'RE THE MOST ACTIVE VENTURE CAPITAL IN THE WORLD. WE'RE THE LARGEST STARTUP ACCELERATOR IN THE WORLD. AND WE'RE THE LARGEST CORPORATE INNOVATION PLATFORM IN THE WORLD."

ups in Silicon Valley— one of the companies he backed was PayPal. "Through his newly found passion in the tech scene, Saeed founded Plug and Play in early 2006," Mehrinfar explains. "Saeed created Plug and Play in the Silicon Valley initially as a massive co-working space, whereby startups would rent offices, and our founder would then keep close tabs on startups he saw potential in, and leverage his extensive network of venture capitalists and corporate executives to scale their businesses even further, while strategically deploying angel investor capital into them. This was the original thesis that led us to be a first-mover in the corporate innovation scene back in the day." And this corporate innovation platform remains one of the key features that sets Plug and Play apart from the others in this field. "With regards to our operations, Plug and Play has two primary constituents that we prioritize in our innovation platform; the startups and the corporates," Mehrinfar notes. "On the startup's side, our primary service is to scale their businesses leveraging our massive corporate network through our structured accelerator programs we run internationally. We operate across 14 different industry verticals, a few of which are fintech, retail, automotive and health 2.0, and in each vertical, we work with corporate partners who are industry leaders in their respective field. The startups work alongside corporations, such as Mercedes Benz, BNP Paribas, Deutsche Bank, and Carrefour, to land piloting or commercial opportunities. On the

corporate side, we're an augmented resource to work alongside their existing innovation KPIs, and to leverage our accelerator programs for three primary value offerings: one, business development/licensing opportunities with our global network of top-tier startups and entrepreneurs; two, investment opportunities, as many corporates and government agencies are beginning to structure venture arms, or invest more proactively off their balance sheets into startups and technology, and three, acquisition opportunities; although this is the least common, we still see this time-to-time. A recent example includes one of our portfolio companies, Tenor, that just announced their acquisition by Google 2-3 weeks ago; so, we're constantly striving for allowing

our startups reach a successful end game, whether it be a merger, acquisition, or IPO!" Mehrinfar and Ramadan say that the Middle East ecosystem has been in the eyes of Plug and Play for a few years now- the entity was just biding its time in terms of finding its right partner in the region, which ended up being ADGM. "When assessing a new location, it's important to find an innovative and global partner that shares the same vision and KPIs as we do," Ramadan notes. "And given ADGM's track record over the last couple of years with launching the first-in-the-region fintech regulatory regime, its regulatory laboratory, as well as it being recognized as the top fintech hub for MENA with an extensive list of value offerings tailored for startups, venture capitalists,

accelerators, and corporates, it was a natural choice for us to develop an innovation platform here in Abu Dhabi. That also being said, the UAE is ripe for innovation, especially in fintech. Governments, regulators and corporations know that fintech is here to stay, and don't want to be left behind." But Ramadan makes it clear that in the long-term, Plug and Play's outing in the Middle East isn't going to be restricted to fintech. "Over the next few years, we're looking to grow to other verticals that we are currently exploring," she says. "These could range from health 2.0, energy to even supply chain and logistics, which are already established verticals at our Plug and Play HQ in Silicon Valley. The opportunities for growth are huge, to enable us to empower

corporations and entrepreneurs." Mehrinfar adds, "As we look to gain more and more corporate partners in our fintech and additional platforms in the years to come, we will be drawing in foreign talent and know-how that will look to have a base in the region, if they gain the right business opportunities. By way of expanding their physical presence to our region, these entrepreneurs will hire, train, and educate local talent by way of their foreign knowledge and experience. On a macro level, even if the foreign startups eventually get acquired or liquidate, that leaves a pool of trained talent that will take their newly gained skill sets and apply them for future endeavors; whether they start their own startup after that, or go back into the corporate world." >>>



Plug and Play's Omeed Mehrinfar and Ashlene Ramadan, with Abu Dhabi Global Market's Christopher Kew-Smith, Waim Lum Kwok and Vishal Sacheedran



Plug and Play with the Abu Dhabi Global Market team

Mehrinfar doesn't hold back in his praise for ADGM and what its team—which includes Richard Teng, Wai Lum Kwok, Vishal Sacheendran, among others—are doing in the UAE. "The typical trend in the technology field is that the regulator tends to lag behind the innovator," he notes. "What is unique in the case of the GCC region, and specifically ADGM, is that the regulator is actually the one promoting and investing into the growth of the innovation sector, in our case for fintech. We've structured our partnership into phases. This initial phase will be to set up a multi-corporate fintech innovation platform, and to onboard leading and forward-thinking financial institutions that operate in or in regional proximity to Abu Dhabi, to act as corporate partners. We'll be sourcing startups based on these corporate partners' pain points and technology interest areas, shared by their respective business lines and innovation teams. Once the startups are sourced, go through our screening processes, and are voted in by the corporates, they'll enter an extensive accelerator program focused on matchmaking the solutions with potential opportunities to scale their products here in the region. We'll be sourcing for startups locally and out of our different international hubs, that have a proven

"FOR OUR ACCELERATOR PROGRAM, WE'RE LOOKING TO ATTRACT EARLY TO GROWTH STAGE STARTUPS, SINCE THEIR PRODUCT NEED TO BE ENTERPRISE READY FOR OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS HERE IN THE REGION."

track record of scaling with major enterprises, to help them scale even further, especially in the MENA region. More so than being a free program for our startups, where we don't take equity or charge them for any of our services, they also gain regulatory mentorship and support by ADGM's RegLabs. The regulatory resources and know-how the ADGM team have provided for fintechs can help secure them to be regionally compliant to expedite their business development cycles as they enter the GCC, and the larger MENA region."

It should become clear here that the Plug and Play team have big dreams ahead for their time in the Middle East—and a part of the reason for that can be attributed to the fact that while they are both American, Mehrinfar and Ramadan have strong personal

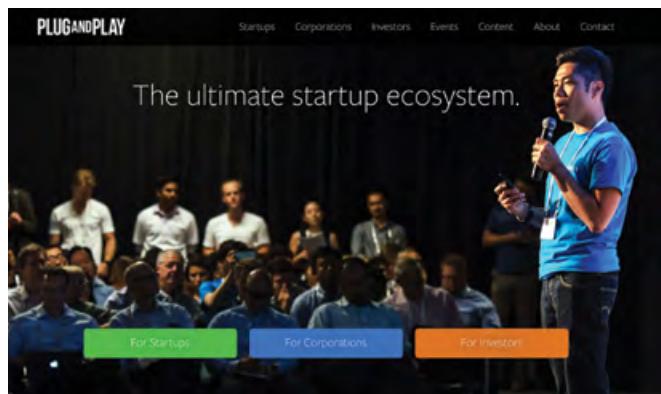
ties to the Arab world. Mehrinfar is half-Bahraini and was born in Manama, while Ramadan's parents are both originally from Lebanon. The Middle East is thus a region the two are, in a way, familiar with, but it also offers a load of opportunities for an entity like Plug and Play—though there are plenty of inherent challenges in the ecosystem as well. "The Middle East, for a very long time, was an environment where people were worried about the concept of failing," Mehrinfar says. "The typical conception was that if you entered into a business as an entrepreneur and failed, you were effectively perceived as a failure. This misconception was not just prevalent in the Middle East, but in countries such as Singapore and in regions going as far as South-East Asia. Today however, there's been a 180-degree flip. The new wave of the millennials in the region are so driven, and eager to develop and innovate. The hunger is there, we've already seen a few success stories such as Careem and Souq.com. The number of major league startups can increase in the region by way of, one-major players in the government and private sectors to provide resources for these entrepreneurs to gain exposure, especially to outside, and more developed ecosystems, we're already seeing this to a certain extent developing. Two, would be by decreasing the disparity between the number of startups and the amount of venture capital funding available to startups here in the region. In the US, venture capital funding accounts for 0.3% of the country's overall GDP. Here in the GCC, that number is just below 0.03% of the overall GDP. By having more funding available to local entrepreneurs, we would be able to empower them to gain the appropriate know-how and hire the needed talent from abroad (if needed), to be able to scale them to an international playing field."

According to Mehrinfar, the lack of funding options may be what's stunting the growth of the Middle East entrepreneurial ecosystem. "Although attitudes have shifted

with the population, and there are many prospective entrepreneurs (emphasis on the prospective), the lack of capital available for regional entrepreneurs has made the leap of jumping into an innovative endeavor limited to those who come from financially comfortable backgrounds (not that it's a bad thing), because even if they can't secure funding they know they have a cushion to fall back on. There is so much talent out here in the region right now that are going unnoticed, even from my own network of friends from my childhood, I've seen some of the most brilliant and ambitious people I've ever met, but by way of the fear of not having a fallback option, because funding is so scarce for entrepreneurs in the region, they end up more comfortable just staying within their comfort zone of a 9 to 5 job. Therefore, in short, attitudes in the region towards entrepreneurs has shifted for the better. There is a lot of hunger and talent, what is lacking (but improv-

ing) is the know-how and developing resources for entrepreneurs, as well as the funding. As the ecosystem continues developing, these issues will organically resolve themselves." Of course, Plug and Play's model could see it help resolving some of the inherent problems in the ecosystem, Ramadan notes. "In addition to bringing in foreign talent, we're also looking to source MENA region talent that we can train, educate and expose them to other markets, whereby they'll be exposed to fellow entrepreneurs that are competing at a global scale," she explains. "Being able to provide entrepreneurs the right exposure can motivate them and enlighten them to be able to tailor their prod-

"WE'RE CONSTANTLY STRIVING FOR ALLOWING OUR STARTUPS REACH A SUCCESSFUL END-GAME, WHETHER IT BE A MERGER, ACQUISITION, OR IPO."



ucts, based on the competitive landscapes abroad. This would augment the expectations of delivery of value for many local entrepreneurs. They'd be able to take advantage of this exposure, and take it back to the region to further enhance the competitive landscape."

At this stage, with the Plug and Play ADGM program set to launch later this year, are there any specific traits they are looking for in startups and entrepreneurs that will be a part of this initiative? "For our accelerator program, we're looking to attract early to growth stage

startups, since their product need to be enterprise ready for our corporate partners here in the region," Ramadan clarifies. "A few of the focus areas include wealthtech, insurtech, cybersecurity, AI, and chatbots to name a few. But in the end of the day, it all comes down to the interest areas of our clients whom we specifically source startups for." And in case you're wondering what's in it for the entrepreneurs, Mehrinfar is on hand to answer. "Startups that we accelerate or invest in will immediately become part of our international community of startups," he says. "The immediate value startups will derive out of our ADGM partnership include, free office space, software perks (Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services, Temenos, etc.), discounted professional service vendors, access to our investor and mentor network, to name a few key points. Keep in mind our primary value offering to these startups will be to support them finding champions within major enterprises that will look to partner and work with them. Even after the accelerator classes end, we usually follow the motto that, 'once you're a Plug and Play startup, you're always a Plug and Play startup.'" ■



QUICK TAKES

Advice for MENA startups from Plug and Play's Omeed Mehrinfar and Ashlene Ramadan

What are your tips for startups or entrepreneurs that are considering to join Plug and Play? What would your advice be to them- what are the kind of qualities that you'd be looking for in terms of enterprises that you'd want at Plug and Play?

Ashlene Ramadan:

My advice to our startups to join our program is: the more time you invest in the Plug and Play platform, the more you will get out of it. For example, in our Silicon Valley location, we highly advise our startups that join the three-month program to have a full-time employee at the Plug and Play office. There are a number of activities happening on a daily basis. This ranges from corporate visits to networking events to VC sessions. This gives startups a higher chance of ad hoc introductions and leveraging the Plug and Play ecosystem to grow their network.

Ashlene
Ramadan



The same philosophy applies for our co-working space at ADGM. For 2018, it will be a three-month program and we recommend taking complete advantage of the time you have with Plug and Play ADGM because you will

get the opportunity to meet many more valuable contacts than you would at a one time visit a month. Another tip I would advise to the startups is to know exactly who you're targeting when you enter our program and tell us why you want to meet with them. What are the specific problems you're able to solve for them and why is your solution the best fit? After understanding your goals for the program, we'll then focus on introducing you to the right people to engage with.

As for enterprises that become a corporate partner at Plug and Play ADGM, it's important for them to one, have an approval from upper management to deploy startup solutions and this provides 'more skin in the game,' two, work with business lines that allocated a budget for startup PoCs/pilots, and three, business lines that have an understanding of what they're looking for by providing us with specific use cases and technology interests for us to use and source startups accordingly. And once Plug and Play has the resources from the corporate partner, it's our job to make sure the startup implementation part moves forward and doesn't get blocked by the functions of the financial institution.

Omeed Mehrinfar:

For our startups, I'd advise targeting very detailed use-cases you'd like to work with corporates on when pitching to them. A typical fallacy we see is that the entrepreneurs go so in-depth discussing their IP and technology, that they leave a meeting with corporate execs and prospective clients, having not mentioned anything about how the target client

Omeed
Mehrinfar



can make money or save costs. In effect, that's all your target client cares about. During your pitch, focus on describing the problem you're tackling, then continue on to describe the solution you're creating (or have created). What is the market potential of your product? How can the potential B2B clients or investors see dollar signs out of partnering or investing in you?

If you're a fintech startup looking to work with banks, does anyone from your founding team have any senior expertise in the banking sector? If not, get an advisor who does. There are so many intricacies, that coming from a background with no knowledge of the sector can be more hurtful to you, than supportive. As the CEO of one of our corporate partners once told us, "the reason we avoid collaborating with some innovative solutions is because sometimes lack of efficiency is how we make our money." Don't be greedy on giving away equity to your founding team and during capital raising periods. That tends to turn off tier 1 VCs, as greed is perceived as one of the most distasteful characteristics a startup founder can have.

As for our buddies, the corporates, I'd have to say that everything Ashlene described

is a subset of one word we expect out of any major enterprise we look to work with... accountability. Currently, a lot of the innovation theater we see around us today is because incentive structures and KPIs internally have not been developed in a way whereby employees are rewarded based on the value they derive for their enterprise via pilots and commercial agreements they secure with startups and technologies. In the end of the day, it is your own operational leaders in business lines *and* back-office functions that will be collaborating and exploring the solution-sets. They need to be incentivized accordingly, or else all they'll see innovation as a waste of their time or an opportunity for someone more senior than them to take credit away from them.

Therefore, creating structures and corporate cultures where employees are rewarded (or taken action against) based on the delivery of value (or lack of) for the enterprise will reduce the amount of expensed business class tickets to Silicon Valley and innovation summit dinners, and increase the on-premise engagements with startups and entrepreneurs- local and international. This will create a focus on the betterment of the enterprise, versus individuals within the enterprise looking only towards the betterment of their own professional career (i.e. speaking slots, self-promotion, and no execution). Please keep in mind, the lack of accountability argument is not targeted towards all individuals within a corporate structure, but is a common and recurring theme we tend to see, especially with enterprises with a track record of not being able to execute past the finish line with startups and technology solutions.

Invest in the lifestyle destination of tomorrow!



3 min from University City

5 min from Sharjah International Airport

15 min from Dubai International Airport & Sharjah Corniche

Apartments available to all nationalities

1 bedroom apartments starting from AED 533,000*

Special prices and payment plans!

Located just minutes from Dubai, Aljada is Sharjah's largest and most exciting new residential address.

Developed by ARADA, under the chairmanship of HE Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi.

Adjacent to landscaped parks & the largest entertainment centre in the Northern Emirates.

Direct access to Al Dhaid Road, easy access to Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Road.



Aljada

Developed by



800-ARADA (27232)

www.aljada.com

*T&C apply

Unbound Bahrain 2018



Keeping the momentum

On the sidelines of Unbound Bahrain, key players in Bahrain's entrepreneurial ecosystem have their say on what it'll take to invigorate the startup space in the country **by PAMELLA DE LEON**

Held in early March of this year, Unbound Bahrain, the first of the global conference series to be hosted in the region, organized by Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) and supported by Startup Bahrain, saw a barrage of more than 1,500 participants and over 50 startups in the region heralding for discussions, startup competitions and hackathons to stir up Bahrain (and the MENA's) ecosystem. Though it bears similarities with its neighboring Gulf countries, it's unjust to generalize the whole region as one when each market and nation differs, and, as Bahrain does, rises on its own merit. One such example is the country's fintech scene- in 2017, the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) announced new regulations for a regulatory sandbox to allow fintech startups to test and experiment their

concepts, providing opportunities for fintech ideas globally to establish themselves and grow in Bahrain and the Gulf. According to Khalid Saad, CEO of Bahrain FinTech Bay (BFB), this move sends a message that the country is open to tech innovations. It goes in line with the role of BFB acting as a platform for the fintech scene, which was launched by a plethora of 30 founding partners, including Arab Financial Services, American Express, Cisco, National Bank of Bahrain, Gulf International Bank, and more, in February this year, as a dedicated fintech hub consisting of a co-working space and network. Another win is the launch of Amazon Web Services (AWS) in Bahrain, an indication of the country's ICT market growth rate. John Kilmartin, Executive Director of ICT at EDB, stressed its cost saving impact for SMEs as cloud tech would minimize the need for expensive data

center infrastructure. The government has also implemented a Cloud First Policy to encourage government entities and businesses to utilize cloud services for tech solutions.

A factor in the growing startup ecosystem is the changing mindset around the culture of entrepreneurship. Abdulaziz F. Aljouf, founder and CEO of PayTabs, which raised US\$20 million in funding last year, says that nine years ago, everyone was after a government job: "There wasn't even a word for [being an entrepreneur], we say we work for ourselves, we're self-employed," and often facing pessimistic feedback, whereas to the encouraging tone people now take when someone is keen to start a business. Areije Al Shakar, Senior VP and Head of Development Services Division at BDB, whose department supports entrepreneurs to request or raise

loans, and she also heads the Rowad Program platform which assists startups as early as idea stage through training, coaching, mentorship, incubation and funding, recalls the earlier days of trying to instill awareness. Now in her eighth year in her role, Al Shakar praises the amount of choices entrepreneurs have and their progress: Rowad has had more than 1,700 individual ideas that have gone through the program since it launched in 2015. They've also started the Seed Fuel program, which provides equity financing to innovative ideas of up to BHD250,000 (equivalent to US\$67,000), and a subsidiary called the Bahrain Business Incubator Center (BBIC), with various incubators under it, including women-focused incubator Riyadat (in partnership with the BDB, Supreme Council for Women, and BBIC), plus various entrepreneur-focused community events. Al Shakar claims that the change in mindset has become a natural choice as the global

"AS THE ECOSYSTEM CHANGES, ALL THE ELEMENTS ALSO CHANGE, [SO WE] MAKE SURE WE ARE ALSO IN SYNC AND IN LINE WITH THE STARTUPS."



Areije Al Shakar, Senior VP and Head of Development Services Division at BDB

"YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TO ASK THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF CASH THAT YOU ACTUALLY NEED WITHIN YOUR FIRST YEAR BEFORE YOU BURN OUT, AND BEFORE YOU BURN OUT, YOU NEED TO BE READY WITH RAISING OTHER ROUNDS OF FUNDING."

economy changes- commending Bahrain's progress as it stems from a grassroots level of starting with raising awareness in schools. To give an example, Al Shakar explains how back then, if you were in school and wanted to start a business, it might have been confusing, but now, there's a range of choices to make- from accelerators, to hackathons and gaming challenges. "As the ecosystem changes, all the elements also change, [so we] make sure we are also in sync and in line with the startups," says Al Shakar. This has also been a focus for UNIDO-ITPO Bahrain, according to Afif Barhoumi, Program Coordinator, Arab International Center for Entrepreneurship and Investment. Their entrepreneurship program originally started in Bahrain in 1999 and is now implemented in 52 countries, and Barhoumi stresses how they worked towards altering the attitude towards entrepreneurship among Arab nations and families. Particularly, they implemented programs in schools (and in Bahrain since 2005) to encourage the minds of young enterprising innovators, hosting programming competitions and events to foster entrepreneurial aspirations.

However, perhaps unsurprisingly, funding remains a constant issue. Esam Hammad, Acting Executive Director of Customer

Engagement at Tamkeen, whose department manages partnerships with local and international entities in the business community, says that part of their business support is easing the access to financing for SMEs in Bahrain. Hammad addresses the barriers early-stage startups face in acquiring commercial loans due to the risk factor of such enterprises. He explains Tamkeen's financing program which has "subsidized the interest on behalf of the startup, so they end up paying a lower interest on the loan and guarantee part of that loan. We give 50% of the collateral against the loan to the bank." This has proved to be a success as due to the finance scheme, their portfolio has been able to reach around \$1 billion in the last 10 years. As for startups' issues with funding, Al Shakar advises that a common mistake of young startups is not managing cash properly after receiving funding, which affects a funding, affecting a startup's burn out rate. "You need to know when to ask the right amount of cash that you actually need within your first year before you burn



Hasan Haider, Partner, 500 Startups

out, and before you burn out, you need to be ready with raising other rounds of funding." Hasan Haider, Partner at 500 Startups, adds that new 'treps should be mindful of wasting money, and not putting the right resources in the right place. From a startup founder's perspective, Aljouf, who's already had nine companies, advises, "You need to talk in the way that investors would understand you," meaning that they need to see your startup's growth and market viability.

It's worthy to note Bahrain's inclusiveness, not only to Bahrain-based startups, but also entrepreneurs who wish to have access to Bahrain's market, whether through expanding or starting a new

enterprise in the country. Indeed, Saad asserts that as part of FinTech Bay's mandate to push the industry ahead, besides Bahrain-based enterprises, they're open to startups who want to launch in Bahrain or expand to Bahrain, whether they're from the region or internationally. This also echoes the inclusiveness of Rowad Program, which Al Shakar says, as an online platform opens its resources to anyone. Haider says that besides the relatively low cost of operating a business in the Kingdom (compared to its GCC counterparts), Bahrain offers 100% foreign ownership, all the while acting as an interesting bridge to the Saudi Arabia market- a striking attractive opportunity for >>>



A panel discussion at Unbound Bahrain



Khaled Saad, CEO, Bahrain FinTech Bay

would-be entrepreneurs. As for the various challenges bubbling up in the scene, there are diverse opinions. For Saad, the biggest factor in growing the fintech scene is an opportunity and also a challenge- and that is, education and building awareness. With fintech innovations growing at a rate, and different institutions being open to supporting fintech startups at various stages, Saad says, the question becomes how they can further enable this growth, which is where education and awareness becomes a critical issue. He points out the importance of "building Bahrain's image as [SME] friendly and welcoming with a proper ecosystem" on a local, regional, and international front. For Al Shakar, as with any other ecosystem, the hurdle is "keeping the momentum going," and emphasizes that the solution is the ongoing collaboration of all the parties, from the government, to the private sector and startup community.

Hammad adds that the relatively small market size, while an issue, makes Bahrain well-positioned to be a local hub for companies that want to attract the region at large. He also adds that there's still a lack of expertise in certain areas, particularly technical

areas, which they at Tamkeen, are trying to address by supporting companies, which have established in the country, to train Bahrainis too. Barhoumi notes this as an advantage, as with Bahrain's small market and a mixture of various cultures, it serves as a good testing ground, and in fact, they test and implement programs in the country first, before sending it to other offices. As for legal issues, Haider brings up the need for convertible notes to be better understood by the ecosystem, as well as the challenges of VCs in protecting themselves in Bahrain and wider region. Haider points out how startups can't implement employee share options, and because of that gap, whenever a MENA startup exits, there's a lack of second or third-tier team members becoming active angel investors themselves, except for the founders, as the equity is still concentrated.

With the tech industry's growth, Hadyah Fathalla, Executive Director of Bahrain at C5 Accelerate, says that there remains a skills gap, with not enough supply on the island and the region to meet that demand. This presents an opportunity for universities to re-adjust their educational curricula, and create opportunities around partnering with

accelerators and innovators, which Fathalla says is one of C5's focus, along with creating a women-focused initiative around coding opportunities. And with that increase in tech innovation, the risk around cybersecurity rises too, says Fathalla, which is why her team has built a cyber security lab, and the Cloud10 Scaleroator program to encourage enterprises within the space. C5 Accelerate has also been active in encouraging young women through its Nurturing Nebula program for women to make use of co-working spaces, as well as access mentorship.



Esam Hammad, Acting Executive Director of the Customer Engagement, Tamkeen

"WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO DO IS TO SPARK THIS MOVEMENT, TO GIVE ROOM, TO MAKE SURE WE HAVE THE RIGHT POLICIES AND REGULATION, [AND] TO ALLOW INNOVATORS TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL FASTER AND EASIER WITHOUT ANY BARRIERS."

But how can this nation really go forward? With conversations around building up the ecosystem, what are the actionable ways that can get it one step closer to a more sustainable ecosystem?

Besides making regulations easier for companies to be set up, Saad says it's also a matter of "getting the right culture," wherein progress needs to come from both the top and bottom up, meeting somewhere in the middle.

"What we need is, more firms to start embracing this, not as a 'nice to have', but this is a 'must have', and we need to go down this path to sustain ourselves and deliver better value." As a semi-government entity, Hammad says that while many say Tamkeen's role is to stand back as enterprises grow, he reiterates "what we're trying to do is to spark this movement, to give room, to make sure we have the right policies and regulation, [and] to allow innovators to reach their potential faster and easier without any barriers." He also stresses on the significance of mentorship access for startups to help them in guiding and adapting their innovations to the local market. Wafa Al Obaidat, Creative Director of Obai & Hill, emphasizes on the need for a platform to connect entrepreneurs with mentors, as well as specific programs for women to scale companies. Taking a look at the academia surrounding Silicon Valley, Fathalla says, "If these big companies partner with different universities to create industry innovation, I think you'll see an ecosystem that's thriving."



John Kilmartin,
Executive Director of ICT
at EDB



Hadyah Fathalla,
Executive Director of
Bahrain at C5 Accelerate

"IF THESE BIG COMPANIES PARTNER WITH DIFFERENT UNIVERSITIES TO CREATE INDUSTRY INNOVATION, I THINK YOU'LL SEE AN ECOSYSTEM THAT'S THRIVING."

Though Bahrain's funding scene is bolstered by the government and private sector, Hammad, Kilmartin, and Al Shakar all agree that there's still more room to grow for more angel investors, VCs, and particularly, an active angel network in the country. With the recently launched \$100 million fund of funds for VC, Haider is optimistic about Bahrain's prospects, and says that the country's history of financial industries -from private equity to banking sector- could have a lot of positive impact in bringing that talent to the VC capital space. On the works is also a revision of the bankruptcy law to enable early startups with leeway for risk. Barhoumi says they're working with Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) and World Angel Business Forum to develop a network for Islamic angel

investors, as the opportunity for Islamic sharia financing rises.

If there's one remarkable aspect to note, it's the amount of collaboration within various entities and key players who are working towards building a sustainable and opportunity-filled ecosystem in Bahrain. From the government, to the private sector and the startup community, on more than one instances have the different establishments mentioned one another as partners in each other's initiative. Lana Al Attar, founder and CEO of Gud Juju and GDG Manama, comments on the vast opportunities available to startups, it's just "patching the information together" of available support and funding. It stretches to the investor's community side too, with Al Shakar commenting on how its investor community is now growing, with an example of how BDB worked with EDB to build an investor platform (which now has over 200 investors) to empower 'treps and encourage investors (particularly angel investors) to understand risk asset class investments such as startups. She commends that, as a relatively small country, Bahrain's startup scene is a lot nimbler, "Everybody knows each other, and we're very well easily connected." Commenting on the conference, Kilmartin asserts that it brings to light one of the traits of the Kingdom's ecosystem, "If you look around here, you're not coming to meet Bahrain startups, you can meet startups across the region. You're not just coming to Bahrain to meet investors, you can meet investors across the region, and vice versa. Bahrain can bring people [together] across the region. We want to build on that." ■



Abdulaziz F. Aljouf,
founder and CEO,
PayTabs

'TREP TALK'

Bahrain's entrepreneurs speak out

Abdulaziz F. Aljouf

Founder and CEO, PayTabs

"There's still a need to educate entrepreneurs, especially on the right way to pitch to investors," says Aljouf, giving an example of how BDB and EDB have launched events to connect startups with investors from non-tech industries such as oil and gas. "There's really no manual, you need to learn what not to do," on the need for patience, passion, and willingness to admit and learn from mistakes. "Do mistakes, fine, but quit fast. Ask yourself, is this business model really going to work? I ask myself every day, what problem am I going to have that might shut me down?"

to take advantage and put themselves out there and see things through even if it doesn't work to their advantage."



Lana Al Attar

Lana Al Attar

Founder and CEO, Gud Juju

"With the ecosystem here, you hit the ground running. It's open to anyone who has a license in Bahrain, so even if it's a foreign company that starts their business in Bahrain, they can avail of the same benefits. And you know what, it really brings us together."

Khalifa Almannai

Managing Director,
Mannai Tech

"Now, there are lots of opportunities from grants, exposure, to being part of conferences. People think they don't have what it takes, and this creates an issue. If you believe strongly in your idea, regardless of how much you explain it, no one can build what's in your head but yourself. They will never be able to create your model no matter how hard you try- I think this is an obstacle that we still need to challenge. People need

Mohammed Toraif

Founder and CEO, fish.me

"Having [conversations and] lots of events that [discuss] failure- how to overcome them and learn from mistakes will be good for the community. There is a night called 'Failure Night' that happens once or twice a year, which is a good idea, and something very beneficial that happens in the ecosystem."



The Ghinwa team

Talent takes center stage

Arabic karaoke app Ghinwa is enabling the MENA region's singers to unleash their full potential online **by SINDHU HARIHARAN**

The best ideas hit you at the most unlikely of places—that's how the trope goes, and that's exactly how Kuwaiti entrepreneur Mohammad Almunaikh describes the genesis of his startup, Ghinwa. While waiting for a table at Kuwait's Slider Station with his friend Bader Altahous one day, the two noted that for a region with such a large population, the Middle East had astonishingly few platforms for amateur music enthusiasts to create and share their work. Instead of going down the route of talent shows as often seen on television, the duo felt that a talent

discovery app focused solely on the quality of vocal talent would be an ideal way to plug this gap. As an employee of the National Fund For SMEs in Kuwait at that time, Almunaikh was also well placed to dig deeper about the market opportunity for such a solution in the GCC. These factors set in motion the duo's entrepreneurial journey: resigning from his job on his 30th birthday, Almunaikh, along with his co-founders Bader Altahous and Alfonso Fernandez, started Ghinwa, an Arabic karaoke and self-cast app. "A singer like Mohammad Abdu, or Umm Kalthom, or Fairuz will have zero chance to win a talent show that's influenced

by a singer's performance abilities and character, and not just the voice," Almunaikh says, explaining the need for a platform to discover hidden musical talents, and to make music creation an online social activity. "The main objective of Ghinwa is to discover new musical talent in the Arab world—talents that are not normally seen in the music industry; the banker, the teacher and the average person who is already occupied [with his/her] life, but the world is missing out on their vocal talents."

Experimenting with the product for the first 14 months (the app launched in 2015 in Kuwait), the team

tried out various features to land at what they consider as Ghinwa's USPs—using tech to help users pursue their passion for music, and creating a social platform where amateur singers can broadcast their way to internet stardom. "We started by offering karaoke-only services to [later] becoming a social network around music, until we reached this stage, where we have created Ghinwa as a self-broadcasting and karaoke app, allowing users to sing and promote their talent," says Almunaikh. Users can sing, record, play, access a vast karaoke library, and also socialize on the app, and additionally, premium users can create a karaoke night experience using the app at a US\$5.99 monthly fee. A factor that's worked in Ghinwa's appeal with the masses is the app's seamless interface and notification systems. "When someone listens to your recordings, a

user will receive a notification telling him/her about which countries he's being listened [from] now," says Almunaikh. Traction has been "encouraging," notes the founder, who sees opportunity in "the social behavior" within the Middle East societies. "Being very conservative, and at the same time having great taste to music [was an aspect that] was very interesting to explore," he says. However, he is quick to add that the same opportunity also proved to be challenge for the team, as they set out to look for investors, owing to the widespread regional belief that investing in music isn't Sharia compliant. This is in stark contrast to the international landscape, when global social media music platforms such as Smule and Musical.ly are being sought out by large investor houses such as Chinese tech giant Tencent Holdings, US-based GGV Capital, and others.

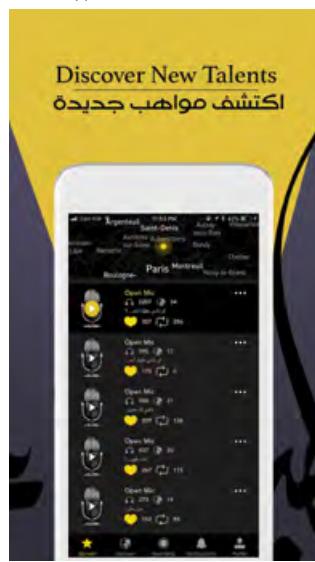
While tackling such a perception is a huge ask of any upstart, the Ghinwa team has managed to get past these hurdles quite successfully. Earlier this year in February, Ghinwa announced the successful close of \$3 million (AED11 million) in funding led by Faith Capital Managing Partner Abdulaziz Alloughani, which also saw participation by large investor groups such as 500 Startups, Rotana Audio Records, and others. In a statement, Alloughani noted: "There is enormous potential in Ghinwa, because it encourages creativity and talent in spite of cultural barriers. I believe that Ghinwa will become an important platform for talents in the Middle East to showcase their musical abilities." This is the startup's second fund-

raising, following a \$170,000 seed round earlier. Planning to utilize the money to take the app beyond its beta testing phase, and "position [it] as a platform for talented individuals to sing in the Middle East," Almunaikh is confident that their investors' "proven track record for building startups and scaling" is certain to add value to Ghinwa. "Our current focus is to structure the Ghinwa product in a way that will bring value to global ecosystem players not only our consumer users," he adds.

Given the resistance they had initially faced from the investor community, I couldn't help but ask Almunaikh how they broke through it. The entrepreneur credits his team's strength and diversity, and the

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF GHINWA IS TO DISCOVER NEW MUSICAL TALENT IN THE ARAB WORLD-TALENTS THAT ARE NOT NORMALLY SEEN IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY."

Ghinwa app



startup's victories in forums such as the 2016 MIT Enterprise Forum Arab Startup Competition (MITEF) as having contributed to their reputation early on. He also believes that their association with some of the early partners and investors who had complete faith in them helped open doors for subsequent funding. It's also not hard to believe that Ghinwa won over investors with its traction and growth as Almunaikh offers a peek into their performance. "In 2017, during our beta test we registered 30% month-on-month growth with zero marketing cost, purely based on word of mouth... That was another validation to the users' needs and to gauge interest," he says. As for the first quarter of 2018, in the very first month, Ghinwa claims to have recorded growth of "above 500%" in registered users, and says they have currently reached over 80,000 in downloads. With the region gradually acting as the breeding ground for many local apps on culture and social networking, Almunaikh believes that Ghinwa's differentiator lies in the anonymity it offers the reticent music lover. "By [allowing them to] post anonymously, and by also integrating a map into the music app, [we help give] our users visual insights into where are the talents are, and [it's] a way of discovering new talents as well." He adds that the platform has been seeing some of the most conservative areas in the Middle East producing the best musical talent.

Interestingly, though born out of Kuwait and having started operations there, the entrepreneurs saw UAE, and specifically, Dubai as a more suitable location to

set up their business, and moved their enterprise to the Emirate recently. Almunaikh is quick to offer the reasons for this business decision, explaining that with the region's media industry centered in Dubai, the startup felt it was a hub to connect with potential partners, and >>>



'TREP TALK'

Mohammad Almunaikh, co-founder and CEO, Ghinwa app

What are your top tips for the region's startups to pitch and clinch funding for their ventures?

"[Firstly], educate yourself about VCs. You have to go in with the mindset that it is a partnership, and you are not applying for a job, nor getting charity money. The mindset of partnership will make you and the VC look eye-to-eye.

[Second], be a great sales person; if you do not have a story to tell, then why would anyone join your journey? Be able to construct a good appealing story and memorize it like a song, which you can sing effortlessly.

[Finally], not having cash is a big challenge, but it also drives innovation high. So, work based on the cards that you have, [and] not based on what you wish to have."

credits the “great incubation opportunity” they received at in5 Dubai. “Talents were available in Dubai; it gave us this focus bubble that we needed away from social commitments, and Dubai also has the right legal licenses for our structure,” he adds. However, Almunaikh also comes back to the bumpy road that the team has had to cross, explaining the fundamental challenges they faced with investors. “Being in the music space, which has a different structure, some of the investors we met were not familiar with it... [For instance,] investors who were revenue-focused rather than traction or growth... And not focusing on making money early

“WE STARTED BY OFFERING KARAOKE-ONLY SERVICES TO [LATER] BECOMING A SOCIAL NETWORK AROUND MUSIC, UNTIL WE REACHED THIS STAGE, WHERE WE HAVE CREATED GHINWA AS A SELF-BROADCASTING AND KARAOKE APP.”

on in our growth stage and focusing on the user experience of the product [also] made it challenging [for us] to convince investors how Ghinwa could be sustainable at the beginning. Once the business model was cleared, it was easier conversation.”

Further, with over eight years of experience at Kuwait’s Investment Authority, Almunaikh believes

the stint helped him better understand the psyche of an investor, and, in fact, is quite candid in his opinions on the community. “I have seen investors preaching on stages what they don’t do in their business meetings,” he asserts. “I consider myself lucky to have [an] investment background to be able to differentiate the bad and ugly from the great ones.” Elaborating on his views on the region’s investor ecosystem, the entrepreneur adds, “I think the VCs are run by corporate mindsets, not venture-friendly mindsets, and I also think their cash is shaping their behavior the way it is right now. As some VCs work on a deal-by-deal basis, [it] means they have to like



Ghinwa app

the proposal, and then they fundraise for their funds—which is a good hack if you are a startup, but not a VC.” Admitting that his view isn’t a typical or a pleasant one, and adding that he does not wish to generalize about the region’s investors, Almunaikh says he’s seen many entrepreneurs’ ignorance being taken advantage of by VCs, and hence encourages his counterparts to closely study VC practices before meeting them, as “it is very rare to find a VC with startup/entrepreneurial mindset.” In fact, Almunaikh’s even managed to start a buzzing conversation on Twitter sharing his views on the investor-entrepreneur relation under the #FoundersPOV hashtag. All said and done, Almunaikh is clearly a regional entrepreneur with grand ambitions for his enterprise, who’s working on achieving them without mincing words and keeping it real. And so, I’m sure you’d agree with me when I say that the region’s business world needs more of these hustlers to keep the tribe going strong—carpe diem and seize the day! ■

Members of
the Ghinwa team



INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL, RIYADH

9-10 MAY 2018

COME AND VISIT MEFTECH PAYMENTS TO SEE THE FUTURE OF PAYMENTS IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA'S ONLY PAYMENT TECHNOLOGY EVENT!

MEFTECH Payments, in partnership with mada and SADAD will highlight and support the rapidly developing payments, e-commerce and retail industry in the Kingdom. MEFTECH Payments will bring together new ideas, and industry-changing technologies that will pave the way for the future methods used by banks, institutions and individuals to make and receive payments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

LISTEN TO OUR HIGH PROFILE FEATURED SPEAKERS:



Craig Ramsey
Director, Product Management,
ACI Universal Payments



John Hathaway
Commercial Director,
BeyondTrust



Omar Mohammed Hashem
Executive President, Head of Digital
Banking Division, The National
Commercial Bank



Dr. Husam Yaghi
President, Ateon



Michael Holmes
Vice President Middle East & Africa,
First Data



Simon Kirby
Director, SI Industry Solutions
Financial Services

Platinum Sponsor:



Official Bank Sponsor:



Gold Sponsors:



Ecosystem Partner:



Media Partners:





KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER

Dubai-based Twistar's IoT and AI-powered device offers consumer insights at your fingertips **by SINDHU HARIHARAN**

Remember the days when you were handed a piece of questionnaire at restaurants requesting you to rate your dining experience, or offer insights that could help improve service standards? At a time when we can't hear enough of the "data is the new oil" maxim, customer feedback (be it in any industry) is undoubtedly growing in importance, but the touch points for engaging with consumers have seen a complete overhaul. Thanks to contemporary digital technologies, there are now various means for businesses to really understand their customers, and tech-savvy upstarts working in this market are heralding the change.

Nick Marshall, founder and CEO of the Dubai-based Twistar, a startup developing a smart customer feedback device, believes that even with user experience being a supreme goal for most businesses today, there's still an "enormous disconnect" in understanding the customer. "80% of businesses believe that they are delivering great customer

experiences, and yet only 8% of customers feel that their experiences are just that," he says. The entrepreneur also feels that "[most] businesses have almost no understanding of who their customers are or what they feel," and this is why he decided to leverage on new age tech such as IoT and machine learning to develop Twistar- a sleek,

futuristic device that helps enterprises create "a deeper and more meaningful connection with their customers." Designed to work both as a product and a service, the connected device acts as a digital touch point helping businesses -be it restaurants, airport lounges, classrooms, hotels, waiting rooms, or public transport- ask important questions of their users to derive valuable insights. Customers can access surveys and campaigns via a sleek circular high-resolution screen with protective Gorilla glass 3, while on the client-side, the service portion of Twistar includes a business intelligence dashboard that helps enterprises "build, launch and analyze detailed surveys and user data in real-time."

Launched in May 2017, and having filed patents for the technology in the US and Europe, Twistar's development is characterized by what Marshall calls "moving parts," with its team spread across Dubai, London, Shenzhen, Delhi and San Francisco, thereby supporting their resale partners across six continents. Despite this sweeping operational structure, Twistar has managed to meet its targets smoothly with the founder noting that they have moved "from idea, to concept, to MVP, to product and now pilots," in the last 18-24 months. "We work with international resale partners who specialize in customer feedback and customer experience management solutions for clients like Marriott International," he says. "We are able to offer a new and unique solution to position with their own clients, and easily integrate our data feeds into their existing and client's platforms." Having succeeded in wooing their initial partners, Twistar also went on to sign more than 40 collaboration agreements over a three-month period, adds Marshall. "Since

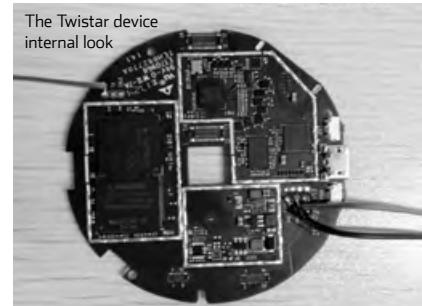


IMAGE CREDIT: TWISTAR

then we have worked with these partners to understand where, when, and how we can make Twistar work best for them; whether their focus is hospitality, education, public services, transportation, healthcare, etc.” Not just that, the founder’s own track record of having established and scaled startups across Europe and Asia, and experience as a technology consultant over the past decade lends Twistar a boost in achieving its development goals.

And as an entrepreneur hustling away with his hardware startup, Marshall also seems to have figured out the key ingredient needed to scale such ventures- the importance of testing the prototype in a real-world setting, through pilot projects. For Twistar, this opportunity presented itself in the form of Marriott Hotels’ TestBED accelerator, an initiative by the global hospitality giant to find cutting edge technologies that can transform guest experiences. The Middle East edition of the 10-week program gave selected startups an invaluable opportunity to test their products within a Marriott property in the region. In November 2017, out of almost 200 submissions received, six startups were shortlisted, and three out of these emerged as finalists, which included Twistar from Dubai. According to the program, Twistar’s proposition of “analyzing guest’s actions and voice for real-time insights, and using beautifully-animated and uniquely designed customer surveys,” played a role in making the cut. “The Marriott TestBED accelerator was an excellent experience and came at a great time for Twistar,” Marshall remembers. “We



Nick Marshall,
founder
and CEO,
Twistar

“WE ARE ABLE TO OFFER A NEW AND UNIQUE SOLUTION TO POSITION WITH THEIR OWN CLIENTS, AND EASILY INTEGRATE OUR DATA FEEDS INTO THEIR EXISTING AND CLIENT’S PLATFORMS.”

were able integrate learning from Marriott International to restructure our product, service and communications strategy.” Most importantly, he adds that the pilot with Dubai Marriott Harbour Hotel & Suites, done as part of the program, also helped them refine their product to suit a large-scale commercial entity. “We learnt quickly that a ‘one size fits all’ solution was never going to work, and that the individual hotel had immediate challenges,” he says. “We listened, and rebuilt the device and the Twistar app, to better align with hotel difficulties. We definitely consider TestBED a success [for us] as Marriott is continuing to work with Twistar beyond their program completion.”

Despite the association with the hospitality major, Marshall points out that customer service is not a virtue restricted to the sector, and Twistar is equally suited to any business that values user experience. However, he explains that, as the name suggests, customer experience is of utmost

significance in the world of hospitality, and as the industry goes through a transition, many new challenges have emerged- be it online bookings, Airbnb, or millennial consumer behaviors. “New technologies, and specifically IoT, offer an amazing opportunity for the hospitality and tourism sectors to better understand who their customers are, and to provide resulting products and services that are capable of exceeding expectations,” he says. And with its advanced specs such as an augmented AI-voice core, and being powered by IBM Watson, Marshall believes “Twistar is well-equipped to identify and understand user sentiment on an unparalleled level.”

Marshall’s confidence in his product is admirable, and is also perhaps a key trait every entrepreneur working on such technical products needs. It is this certainty that helps drive development, and helps get products off the drawing board. “With Twistar, we have been through a lot of 3D prototyping, testing and trials to receive as much client and partner feedback as possible, to align our product to their objectives,” Marshall says. Though self-funded for the first 12-18 months, Twistar also closed a pre-seed funding round (an oversubscribed round) of US\$230,000 against a convertible note from undisclosed American and European angel investors in October 2017, which helped them fast track product development. “Since this time, we have won a number awards including the 2017 Dubai Tourism Future Stars award for best startup in



The Twistar device

hospitality services, and currently we are preparing for a seed funding round in mid-2018,” says the entrepreneur.

Though fairly new to the region’s business scene, Marshall is no stranger to the region’s ecosystem, and that reflects in his views, as well. “The MENA startup investment landscape is still very young, and while there are some excellent VCs offering incredible support, they are small in number, and due to this, they hold a disproportionate amount of power and influence,” he says. “Until the MENA angel investor community becomes more mature and comfortable with the ‘risk-return’ associated with startups, early-stage fundraising in the region is going to continue to be difficult.” When asked to share his top tips for other aspiring entrepreneurs in the region, Marshall says, “Talk less so you can listen more, search out partnerships with like-minded companies and individuals, and the harder you work, the luckier you get.” Marshall practices what he preaches- which may explain why we think he’s on the right track with Twistar. Here’s to the future! ■

Beauty on demand

Haifa Addas, founder of the on-demand beauty service startup **Instaglam**, is dreaming big with respect to the reach of her enterprise **by TAMARA PUPIC**

It's often said that women have a *better* eye for beauty- Instaglam founder and CEO Haifa Addas might attest to that. But Addas also has an eye for gaps in the market that offer opportunities to establish businesses that can potentially thrive- and that is indeed how Addas, an experienced marketing and communications professional, discovered a convergence point between the UAE's thriving beauty and events sectors that proved a fertile ground for her enterprise. Based out of Dubai Technology Entrepreneurship Centre, Addas' company, Instaglam, is an on-demand beauty service startup that arranges for professional hairstylists and makeup artists to come to you and service you at your homes, at your convenience.

Beauty is an area that UAE consumers are not prepared to compromise on- just recently, Euromonitor International reported that UAE consumers spent US\$247 per capita on cosmetics and personal care, which is more than any other MENA country and ninth worldwide- this figure is expected to grow to \$294 in 2020. At the same time, the general attitude among the Emirate's residents shows a preference for frequent socializing and networking, for both professional and personal reasons. Therefore, a typical UAE-based woman, both expat or local, has plentiful events and functions to attend on a daily basis, and is voracious in her consumption of the newest and the best in order to be able to present her personal best to the public. And Instaglam promises to live up to these expectations, explains Addas, adding that beauty is traditionally at home among Middle Eastern women. "As a child, I was surrounded by women who were an inspiration to me in many ways," she says. "My mother was a makeup artist and hair stylist, and my grandmother, who was crowned Miss Lebanon in 1924, taught me that a woman can look good at any time and in any place. Growing up, I lived in many different countries -Saudi Arabia,



Lebanon, Syria, France, Switzerland, and Canada- and was exposed to a wide range of cultures. From those experiences, I discovered that the demand for beauty is universal, and that the desire to look good and feel good about oneself is essential for every woman."

On the other side of the spectrum, Instaglam is a platform for beauty professionals who, once vetted by the Instaglam team, receive a broader exposure to the UAE market and an easy-to-use tool for handling their bookings. Addas explains, "My career has taken me from working as a Marketing Manager for Lancôme and L'Oréal, to Communications Manager for luxury brands like Ralph Lauren, Giorgio Armani, and Helena Rubinstein, to working with celebrities for leading pan-Arab magazines, where I got to take care of the celebrities' beauty needs while they were in town. This was how I slowly grew my network of talented beauty professionals, each unique in her and his own way, and how I truly came to understand that these professionals have visions, skills, abilities and ambitions. Whether they were beginners or experts, one thing they all had in common was that they all have talents to share and grow."

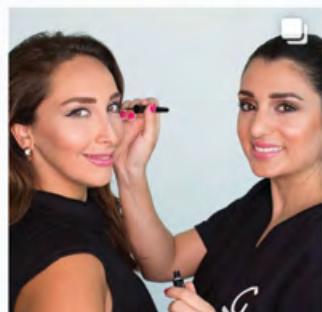
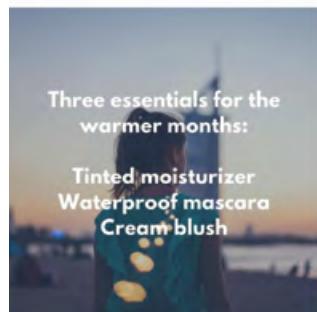
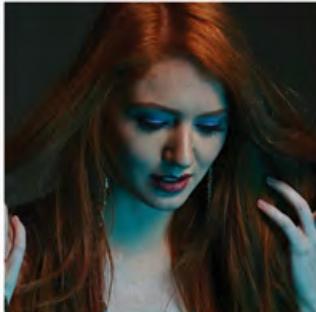
In 2016, she came up with an idea to combine function and beauty through Instaglam, spent a year researching the market, and finally launched the website towards the end of 2017, while the soft launch of the app is scheduled for May 2018. However, launching in the UAE is only just the beginning, and Addas is very clear that she considers her brand to be global. "As a woman who travels frequently for business functions, events and leisure, I know first-hand the difficulties of finding a suitable beauty professional in an unfamiliar city, sometimes even in Dubai, where I have lived for years," she says. "That was when I realized that there is a need in the market, here and abroad, for a consolidated platform that can connect beauty providers with customers looking for glamour services. Based on this realization, and equipped with an intimate understanding of the beauty industry from both the supply and demand sides, I decided to launch Instaglam. Its vision is to become a worldwide leader in the beauty and glamour industry, both in simplifying and revolutionizing the journey to on-demand beauty services, and in bridging the gap between conventional beauty standards and shifting perceptions of beauty across regions and people."

"ALTHOUGH THE UAE IS A GREAT PLACE FOR STARTUPS WITH A VIBRANT COMMUNITY THAT IS THIRSTY FOR KNOWLEDGE AND SUCCESS [...], THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE WE FACED WAS FINDING THE RIGHT APP DEVELOPER."

Typically, on-demand startups disrupt industries, but only if they prove able to meet very high customer expectations. For that reason, Addas opted to self-fund the business in order to preserve decision-making power needed to achieve service excellence she strives for. "At this stage, our priority has been to maintain creative license to build a solid foundation upon which we can grow the business," she says. "We have received interest from investors, and will certainly consider taking outside investment in the near future to help scale the business. For now, although the UAE is a great place for startups with a vibrant community that is thirsty for knowledge and success, and also many incubators and mentors willing to offer guidance and help, the biggest challenge we faced was finding the right app developer. Particularly for a concept like Instaglam, our app is the face of the brand, and its platform through which we will connect with the majority of our customers and beauty professionals. Finding a developer that would enhance the customer experience was quintessential to our goals."

Going forward, she sees Instaglam's growth potential in both expanding geographically and adding different service verticals. The aim is to grow both in parallel, while testing a variety of services and ideas with different customer

"THERE IS NO EXQUISITE BEAUTY... WITHOUT SOME STRANGENESS IN THE PROPORTION."
— EDGAR ALLAN POE



groups. "As with many service-oriented platforms, we anticipate challenges at the customer acquisition and retention stage," Addas says. "In 2018, we intend to roll out our platform of services based on ongoing feedback from customers and focus groups, with the flexibility to respond swiftly to changing user habits. Another challenge is managing the user experience for both the professionals and the customers using our platform. Balancing the needs of both in a single app has been no easy feat, but one we have been determined to achieve."

As our interview comes to an end, I notice that Addas' flawless makeup says

a lot about her style and personality, which makes me wonder how challenging she finds entrepreneurship to be. "I believe the biggest challenge of starting your own business is creating a divide between work and personal life," she says.

"The line that separates the two is much blurrier compared to when you work for someone else. I focus on the big picture and why we started, and I find myself enjoying every day with all its challenges. The Instaglam team is diverse, but what binds us is our shared vision for a platform that can transform how people, and women especially, view themselves and beauty in general." ■

'TREP TALK'

INSTAGLAM FOUNDER AND CEO HAIFA ADDAS' TIPS FOR ENTREPRENEURS

1. Plan first- but remember to put them into action too

"Outline your ideas, then act on them."

2. Be agile, and be ready to iterate

"Do your homework, but know that perfection is an ongoing process, and not a condition for launch."

3. Keep the right people around you

"Network, network, network! Seek guidance, and surround yourself with the right team."



Crisis control

UAE-based startup Geeks offers tech support at your doorstep (literally) **by PAMELLA DE LEON**

For those of you who have experienced the sheer panic that comes after your trusted mobile or laptop gets damaged, this UAE-based startup's offering may sound like a godsend. Launched in December 2014, Geeks offers on-demand tech services and support, with a simple but very appealing value proposition: when you find your favorite gadgets unusable, highly-skilled and trained technicians (i.e. "geeks") will be dispatched to your location, be it at your office, event, or home, at your doorstep, and wherever possible, they'd get the problem fixed on the spot.

The idea for the enterprise came to co-founders Mousa Yassin and Fathi Al Sharif after the latter once had to get his laptop repaired, and found the experience to be a costly and inefficient

affair— he either had to pay for an expensive replacement, or visit Bur Dubai to search through more affordable repair shops. The co-founders considered the long-term viability and scale of the problem, along with the growing trends of tech dependence and the need for quality tech support. The co-founders were also motivated with their desire to do something different after their years in corporate roles—Yassin, who's now the CEO, comes from a management, operations and automation services background, while Al Sharif, the startup's CTO, hails from an extensive IT background, which includes a stint at Microsoft. "At a certain point, [you have] an urge to do something different, more challenging and to create something meaningful to the world," says Yassin. "It starts off with that feeling, and then you act on it

when the time [comes], and [the] idea is just right."

They started off Geeks with a basic MVP to handle requests, and then ran a basic marketing campaign to assess the market's potential. When the duo saw positive results, Al Sharif worked on the startup full-time, while Yassin worked part-time to fund the business until they were ready to raise funding a year later. In January 2015, they served their first customer, and during those early days of the venture, the co-founders picked up and returned devices to customers themselves, gradually building their overall operations and their systems as they learnt from customers' feedback. They then started to onboard technicians to be paid on commission to deliver services to customers at their locations. The company now also offers a live online chat on its website, which responded in less than 15 minutes when I inquired about a service.

As for their funding, the startup raised US\$600,000 in a seed round in June 2016, led by Wamda Capital, with the round including invest-

"WE SEE GREAT POTENTIAL IN THE SOFTWARE WE BUILT TO RUN AND AUTOMATE OUR BUSINESS, AND ARE CURRENTLY TESTING THIS OPPORTUNITY."

ment group Equitrust and Bayt.com CEO Rabea Ataya. It was followed by a bridge round in November 2017, led by Wamda Capital again, and including Dubai Silicon Oasis, VentureSouq, Vision VC, and strategic Saudi angel investors. Next up, the startup is planning for a Series A round in Q4 2018, and more rounds in the future, as Yassin asserts their resolve to be "in this for the long run." And the startup is also honing their USP to strengthen their endurance. For businesses, Yassin says that their USP is being able to automate the IT support process through providing business clients with the startup's personalized platform for them to manage their IT assets and proactively monitor their network, firewall, and devices. Clients would also receive access to a dedicated and certified remote support team and on-demand workforce.

For consumers, Yassin asserts that their USP is being able to provide instant and reliable support at the customer's location, with an average time from inquiry to delivery in 90 minutes for an iPhone repair. According to the duo, compared to their competitors, their transparent and simple approach is their differentiating factor. They also automate their platform and offer a customer-centric approach while delivering as fast as possible with the best quality and reasonable prices. It's

certainly a novel business proposition to provide emergency phone/IT repairs—the duo says they incorporated the feature knowing how the average SME in the region may not be knowledgeable on cloud solutions and setting up and maintaining their IT environment, pointing out UAE as an ideal market to build a foundation. Scaling their door-to-door service is part of their strategy, with their early days spent on building the right tech to support the on-demand business model.

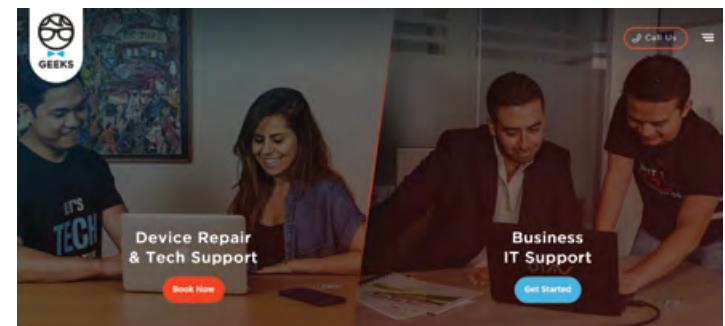
With the need to become cyber resilient more essential than ever, identifying cyber threats and vulnerabilities is also part of the startup's services. Chief Sales Officer Ala Majaj says, "Hacking is all about finding vulnerabilities within existing systems that are not updated. To protect themselves, companies need to automate cyber protection by using fully automated tools on every level." Some of Majaj's tips to being cyber resilient: protecting your workspace from antivirus/malware with updates, email protection, internet connectivity protection with a firewall, having periodic on and off premise backups, education and training employees to increase awareness on security threats, implementing solutions to cover vulnerable

channels (such as emails, web browsing, apps, etc.), and staying up to date on new technology to be aware of cyberattacks.

The co-founders are big believers of the potential and positive impact of the on-demand economy in the region. Though they note that the region is still segmented, with every country having its own set of rules and regulations, they assert how it's currently changing as governments acknowledge the problem on solving it and work on bringing international tech-driven companies into the market. On major hurdles they've faced, Yassin says, "It's constantly moving throughout the lifecycle of the business." Currently, they're working on finding and onboarding the right talent, but earlier on, their issues were around figuring out their business model to "control our unit economics," as well as figuring out the best approach to "designing and implementing the initial product with the right measures and controls."

"PROVIDING THIS SOFTWARE TO PHYSICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AROUND THE WORLD WILL HELP US FUEL THE ON-DEMAND ECONOMY, AND HELP OTHER BUSINESSES AUTOMATE THEIR OPERATION."

Geeks team, from left to right: Fathi Alsharif, Mousa Yassin, Aya Samaha, Omar Dimashki, and Ala Majaj



Two years in the business and getting closer to the bridge round, the duo says their concern included "building a positive culture driven by output, figuring out customer acquisition metrics and our sales funnel in the business segment and setting up our consumer and business products for scalability." Looking at their traction, the startup seems to be faring well despite its hurdles. The duo says 2017 ended with 100 active business members on their business IT support and automation platform, and 420 unique non-member businesses that used Geeks as an on-demand service, with 10,000 unique customers supported overall. They also have an extensive list of partners including Cisco, Microsoft, Lenovo, Dell, HP, VEEAM, VMare, Acronis and APC, with business clients complimenting the startup's automation, simplicity and visibility of its platform. In the coming months, the startup plans to expand their business segment into Saudi Arabia: "We see great potential in the software we built to run and automate our business, and are currently testing this opportunity. Providing this software to physical service providers around the world will help us fuel the on-demand economy, and help other businesses automate their operation." Here's wishing Geeks all the luck! ■

'TREP TALK'

Geeks co-founders, CEO Mousa Yassin and CTO Fathi Al Sharif

What's your advice to entrepreneurs starting a business in the UAE?

"Start with ensuring you have the right people on the bus and the wrong people off the bus. This comes before even figuring out what you're doing. Emotional and egotistic conflicts can really take you back a few years. The team needs to be fueled by trust, self-ownership and output."

Put enough thought into assessing the opportunity's market potential. UAE is a great place to start and will help prepare your business for the future, but the market size will not be enough especially with all the product development costs you're going to incur. So, take a holistic view of the global market and keep it in mind throughout your initial journey. Your startup is going to consume thousands of hours from you and your team, make sure you're inputting these hours somewhere that will generate enough output in the long run.

Follow a lean and data-driven approach. Drop your ego, no one knows anything. Keep testing and let the data dictate what you should do next. Stay flexible and don't be afraid to pivot, this fear can either help you focus on a single target and succeed or could hold you back from achieving a much larger opportunity."

IN PICTURES



IT'S A WRAP!

This year's edition of STEP Conference in Dubai closes with 6,000+ attendees visiting the two-day event in March

More than 6,000 visitors—which included professionals, startups, entrepreneurs, and students—came together at this year's edition of the annual STEP Conference, which was held as a partnership between STEP Group and Dubai Internet City in Dubai on March 28-29, 2018. Speaking at the launch of STEP 2018, Ammar Al Malik, Executive Director, DIC, said, "The collaboration between STEP and DIC is a natural fit for us, as we share the same vision: to bring together talent, agile entre-

preneurs, and seasoned technology experts to facilitate innovation and unleash the creativity of our vibrant communities. 18 years ago, H.H. Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum laid the foundations for what today is the biggest technology community in the Middle East. We are continuing our efforts to further support this growth, by creating a world-class talent hub and enabling the next generation of entrepreneurs to contribute to innovation globally." The two-day conference, which had four different streams—STEP Start,

STEP Money, STEP Digital and STEP X—run in parallel, brought to the stage over 300 speakers from across the MENA region and overseas, which included names like Elias Bou Saab, Executive Vice President, American University in Dubai, Mark D'Arcy, Vice President and Chief Creative Officer, Facebook, Ronaldo Mouchawar, founder and CEO, Souq.com, among many others.



Get your business moving.

Business complete

Give your business all the tools it needs to reach its maximum potential with Business Complete Plan.

- High speed internet
- Business devices
- Free WiFi router
- Free national and international minutes

For more information, call **800 188**.



Business

d
add life to life



ROLEX

THE DAY-DATE 40

The international symbol of performance and success, reinterpreted with
a modernised design and a new-generation mechanical movement.
It doesn't just tell time. It tells history.



OYSTER PERPETUAL DAY-DATE 40

أحمد سديقي وشركاه
AHMED SEDDIQI & SONS

The Dubai Mall, Mall of the Emirates, Wafi

seddiqi.com