



A BEACON FOR OMANI ENTREPRENEURS

Featuring success stories

مركز الزبير
ZUBAIR SEC



مركز الزبير للمؤسسات الصغيرة
ZUBAIR SMALL ENTERPRISES CENTRE



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In line with the directives of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, supporting budding entrepreneurs in the development and advancement of small and medium enterprises remains of the highest significance within the private sector. Their contribution is vital towards achieving the long term goals and sustainability of the national economy.

We at The Zubair Corporation strongly believe in the importance of building key partnerships between the public and private sector in order to ensure the sustainability of small businesses, and augmenting the role they play in the continuing economic renaissance of the country under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said. In line with this ideology, we have established Zubair Small Enterprises Centre (Zubair SEC) that currently houses over 200 such young Omani pioneers and entrepreneurs operating a variety of different projects and businesses.

Since December 2013, we started a direct support programme in the form of a competition based on specific criteria and conditions that will provide members with an opportunity to win several benefits, including intensive counseling, potential opportunities for the development of projects, and financial support. These benefits are in addition to the free services received by all members based on their membership status. The personal initiative of the entrepreneurs, commitment towards achieving their goal, active participation in the services and programmes of the Centre, and their seriousness in implementing their project idea, are some of the key factors that contribute towards winning this direct support.

The project has since achieved its aim and has become an additional motivation for the winning members to achieve their ambition; it helped them to pass several obstacles they may have encountered during the development of their projects. The financial support also helped them shorten the time the projects would normally take to launch or pass the establishment phase.

Within this book you will find a number of young Omani entrepreneurs with promising futures in the field of small enterprises. They have done their best in order to achieve success and see their ambitious projects bear fruit. I am sure all of them are proud of their business. In turn we, as their mentors and supporters, are also proud of the success they have achieved in their projects.

We consider each and every member that enters the competition a winner in their own right. The experience they gain through this competition will further develop their entrepreneurship skills and help them speed up the progress and development of their ideas. Also, it will serve as motivation for those who will be taking part in future contests, thereby encouraging a creative yet competitive environment in which to develop their ideas.

Going forward, Zubair SEC renews its commitment towards supporting the development of small enterprises and entrepreneurs and implementing the directives of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, for the empowerment of the youth of Oman and the future of our most beloved country.

Khalid Muhammad Al Zubair

Our message



Zubair SEC...

A new vision with a Long term perspective.

Corporate social responsibility or 'CSR' strategies within the private sector vary between institutions. A few may believe that donating a portion of their profit is an ideal method to contribute to the community, while others believe that infrastructural support can result with more

effective and sustainable impact. However, only a few institutions embed the philosophy of "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime". This proverb perfectly encompasses the strategy of building resilience while nurturing self-reliance,

enhancing the economy and strengthening human capacity in a constructive and meaningful manner. The Zubair Corporation is one such institution that has been playing a central role in the development of the economy and human capacity in Oman for more than four decades.

One of the most important initiatives of this legacy corporation is Zubair Small Enterprises Centre (Zubair SEC); a Centre that was established following the royal directives of HM Sultan Qaboos bin Said after the Seih Al-Shamikhat Symposium. During the symposium, HM urged the private sector to take a more active and key role in providing the necessary tools to Omani entrepreneurs, enhancing their capacity to build a brighter future for themselves.

The Zubair Corporation convened quickly in February 2013, and worked diligently to implement the directives of HM Sultan Qaboos. The Corporation quickly put in place a strategic plan for a new Centre that will provide an inspiring, supportive and professional environment for young aspiring Omani entrepreneurs wanting to establish and accelerate sustainable businesses. Zubair SEC is a place where young entrepreneurs

can now take their first steps on the journey towards economic independence, and along the way gain the required skills that enables them to play a more active role in Omani society.

The main goal of the Centre is to provide opportunities and tools for owners of innovative ideas and aspiring entrepreneurs to establish themselves in the SME sector. The emergence of so many new small businesses in the Sultanate reflects positively on the national economy, not only in terms of creating new job opportunities and attracting more Omani youth to the private sector, but also reducing the burden of employment within the public sector.

The Centre's vision is to be an entrepreneurship beacon in Oman providing full support for its members. Since its establishment, the Centre has embarked on nurturing successful and socially responsible entrepreneurs who will contribute to the sustainable development of the Sultanate and recognize more and more that they are key pillars and custodians of the nation's future economy.

Zubair SEC Services

For being successful in any business, one needs to be equipped with a number of skills which are gained from experience and practice.

At Zubair SEC, we work hand in hand with each and every entrepreneur equipping them with the necessary skills and tools in a relatively short period of time.

In order to achieve that, Zubair SEC offers Omani entrepreneurs a number of much needed services.



BUSINESS ADVISORY

We offer a range of business advisory services tailored to meet the business growth needs of our member small enterprises. Much of our work involves advising our members on startup and business acceleration strategies, benchmarking their business delivery, mapping both demand for and supply of their business concepts, developing practical training curriculum and development tools for their use across a wide range of business environments.

One of our unique propositions is that we can be called upon to deliver business advisory services for entrepreneurs on a regular basis. We put in place monitoring programs to ensure that the targets discussed and agreed upon are continuously being

met. The range of work tasks that we undertake is varied, the most popular of which are centred on business planning:

- Incorporation Plan: setting up a company in compliance with all legal and regulatory aspects.
- Marketing Plan: identifying the target customer base and competitors and developing a strategy to make the business stand out.
- Financial Plan: spelling out the detailed financial workings for the business for the next 2 to 5 years; projecting the performance of the business potential while focusing on startup expenses and any short to medium term sales forecasts.

- Corporate Structure Strategy: defining the Management Structure in addition to the applicable responsibility matrix.

- Manpower Plan: identifying the manpower requirement and respective budget.

- Investment Plan: calculating any additional funding required for startup or acceleration of the business, the potential sources of funding, etc.

- Operational Plan: outlining how the entrepreneur's selected team will contribute to the achievement of the organisation's strategic goals.

We strategically seek and recruit credible counsellors and advisors who graciously volunteer their time to carry out advisory duties for our entrepreneur members. Our specialised advisors validate our entrepreneurs' dreams and ensure that they follow sound business plans. They are there to share their experience and any lessons learned attained throughout their careers. These advisors and counsellors act as sounding boards for entrepreneurs in all facets of the business. They provide coaching to the various levels of management based on specific requirements and relevant topics of interest.

We are proud to have on board a lineup of experienced high-calibre counsellors and advisors who are willing to bring in their diverse expertise to Zubair SEC members.

SPECIALISED ADVISORY SERVICES

We offer a wide range of training courses and workshops focused on assisting entrepreneurs in gaining knowledge, both theoretical and practical, that they can adopt quickly into their businesses once they leave the workshop.

TRAINING

We provide serviced offices from which our members can work in an environment made ready with all the tools in hand to carry their business affairs effectively and efficiently while being supported by advisors.

SERVICED OFFICES

NETWORKING

With our growing number of members, the Centre becomes a solid hub for entrepreneurs to meet and discuss their ventures with one another; learn from one another; and explore various opportunities for cooperation.

FUNDING

Through our financial institution affiliates, we provide our members with various funding schemes and facilities made available to our members to benefit from as they start their businesses or are at a stage of acceleration and expansion.

Moreover, every year we select, according to pre-set criteria, a number of winning projects to be part of the Direct Support Programme who will be provided direct financial and advisory support from the Centre. In doing so, we encourage our members to put their best foot forward from the moment they join Zubair SEC to showcase their dedication, passion, and strong will to succeed and grow with their businesses.

ZUBAIR SEC'S DIRECT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Zubair SEC's Direct Support Programme rewards members who prove throughout their work with the Centre their commitment towards success and their dedication in applying the consultancy provided to them by the Zubair SEC team and its network of specialised counsellors and advisors. These members' projects and businesses should also reflect proper strategic, operational and financial planning that reflect their entrepreneurs' eagerness to apply best business administration practices with the assistance of Zubair SEC.

Accordingly, selected members for the Direct Support Programme receive additional one-on-one advisory and consultancy services as well as a financial grant to support their business at whatever stage they are in. Although all members of Zubair SEC benefit from advisory and training services, financial facilitation, and support that the Centre and its network of cooperative partners provide, only a specific number of members get selected every year for the Direct Support Programme, an approach created to foster positive competitiveness amongst members.

Shumookh Engineering Consulting... Borderless ambition

When you sit with her for the first time, you feel you are in the presence of a distinguished person. Jokha Nasser Al Husaini is an optimistic young woman, an entrepreneur with a special character, and a high-achiever who intends to work as hard as possible to achieve her goals. She is not shy to disclose her future ambition to hold highest designations at the Ministry of Transport and Communications or the Muscat Municipality.

Jokha has named her company 'Shumoukh' meaning heights, pride and grandness in Arabic, and she is one of those individuals who feels a true sense of satisfaction at every milestone that she achieves. Jokha is confident that she has a lot to offer to her country, especially after she started achieving remarkable results in her business within a relatively short period of time, and benefiting from her membership at Zubair SEC.

With a Bachelor degree of Science in Built Environment (Quantity Surveying), she started her career even before completing her higher education. She moved into the world of engineering to work in an engineering consulting company, overseeing road construction projects in the Sultanate.



**Jokha Naser
Al Husaini**



“I aspire to become the minister of Transport and Communications or Head of Muscat Municipality one day.”

It was not until October 2011 that her interest in engineering truly became a passion, and she decided to launch her very own company ‘Shumoukh’ Engineering Consulting’ where she specialised in the field of quantity surveying and contract management, later adding multiple services in collaboration with a number of local and international companies.

After Jokha joined Zubair SEC, she quickly grew her ability to refine her administrative, financial and marketing skills to make her business a success. A series of specialised local and international workshops held by the Centre helped her in the development of the marketing mechanisms and ways to continually develop the corporate identity.

She also sharpened her communication skills, developed presentation skills and learnt ways to prepare and present commercial proposals. Al Husaini’s business was also selected for the Direct Support Programme of the Centre, which had a significant impact on its rapid expansion, building a solid foundation for future growth opportunities.

One of the major benefits for ‘Shumoukh’ as a member company of Zubair SEC was the Centre’s ability to play an advisory role in the field of strategic management and evaluation of opportunities assisting in accelerating

her growth potential. What helped Jokha in her growth aspirations was her deep knowledge of the competition in the local market. This enabled Jokha to quickly build capacity within the business, adding 9 new employees, 5 of whom are Omanis. While Jokha is the only Omani female who owns and manages an entire Omani company in the field, she is also the only Omani woman contracted as a consultant and engineering specialist by the Ministry of Justice.

In the past year, ‘Shumoukh’ was successful in winning 30% of the projects and tenders applied for. The company has also signed a number of contracts of cooperation with global specialised companies in the engineering field.

While talking about the future, Jokha remains confident and knows no limitations to her ambition. She is aware of what she has accomplished and is mindful of the challenges ahead. Jokha says, “The reputation of my company and the quality of our services is my unique selling proposition. Therefore, I am continuously working around the clock on enhancing my service portfolio while maintaining high quality. My ambition is to develop the field of engineering consultancy in the Sultanate, and hopefully venture into the neighbouring countries.”

Motorsports Solutions...

A powerful enterprise

Professional driver and an expert on all things automotive, this is Ali Moussa Al Moussa, the owner of Muscat based 'Motorsports Solutions', an automotive workshop and performance tuner powerhouse. Ali's passion for everything related to high performance cars is what led him to create the business of 'Motorsports Solutions', bringing his obsessive attention to detail to the customisation and performance enhancement of sports cars, right here in Oman.

Ali and his partner Fahad Mohammed Al Balushi established the specialised automotive workshop in Muscat in 2013, and since then they have clearly demonstrated their car tuning and customisation prowess to hundreds of loyal customers in the Sultanate. 'Motorsports Solutions' differs from other car workshops that may only provide maintenance services for vehicles, as Ali and his team completely transform standard family sedans into high performance racing machines, suitable for competition in rallies, drifting competitions and many other motorsport competitions.



Ali Moussa Al Moussa



“The journey was full of challenges but I thank the whole team at Zubair SEC who helped me to pass many of these challenges successfully. I strongly believe that the future is promising, and the performance of ‘Motorsports Solutions’ Company will receive a loud echo on the race tracks of Oman, God willing.”

One of the more well-known projects Ali and his partner Fahad worked on was to transform a basic Mitsubishi Lancer, which was originally equipped with a four-cylinder 220 horsepower engine, into a race ready competitive vehicle, generating a staggering 628 horsepower. To complete this performance makeover, Ali used the original Lancer engine, and applied his own unique tuning and performance modification talents to produce a hugely powerful road racing machine, complete with extensive modifications to the chassis, suspension, braking system as well as the major engine enhancements. This iconic vehicle has successfully competed in various rally events over the past 5 years, and today is still one of the most competitive rally cars in the Sultanate.

While Ali was clearly able to demonstrate courage in producing top-line race cars, his business was suffering from a weak brand awareness in the market, and he was keen to grow his automotive enterprise taking it to the next level. Ali joined the membership of Zubair SEC in the second quarter of 2013, where he succeeded in entering the Direct Support Programme of the Centre. The programme allowed him to gain the knowledge he needed to enhance his administrative and marketing skills in addition to acquiring financial support that he qualified for as a result of his sound business plan. All together Ali was able to quickly open a brand new workshop in Al Maabela industrial area and provide equipment and tools to complete his work with greater precision and over shorter timeframes.

After the qualitative leap in the level of services provided by ‘Motorsports Solutions’, and the newly found administration and marketing skills that Ali gained from the Zubair SEC team, his business quickly grew by leaps and bounds. ‘Motorsports Solutions’ now has a comprehensive agreement in place with the Oman Automobile Association providing them with spare parts for racing go-karts, while the business has also succeeded in signing contracts with a number of rally sport teams in the Sultanate, providing technical support, maintenance and engine upgrades. ‘Motorsports Solutions’ is also increasingly working with regional rally teams to provide pit crew support.

As his business has expanded and flourished, Ali has added a new area of expertise to his growing enterprise; motorsport events and functions management in collaboration with the Oman Automobile Association. Ali has now succeeded in conducting many events for the Association, with the appreciation of all involved. Ali says, “Like many young men in the prime of their life, I dreamt of fame and fortune with everyone talking about me in every place. Perhaps this is what prompted me to break into the field of auto modification, as it’s a field that enjoys a wide audience. However, the dream is a lot different from the reality, and it has taken hard work and dedication to get our business to the level it is at today.”

Meshan...

A date with success

Wafa, Shatha, Ahed and Waed Al Jabri are four Omani sisters who decided to launch a business in providing exquisitely hand-crafted date-based sweets innovatively presented and celebrated with traditional flavours. So began 'Meshan', a smart new enterprise which is taking the art and science of making sweets to an entirely new level, using only Omani dates. In spite of their academic achievements and secure jobs at the time, the four sisters shared a burning desire to join the growing number of young Omanis who are charting their own path to success by starting and managing their own business.

As you talk to them, you quickly spot their determination and drive to challenge the impossible. The sisters desire to start their own enterprise was only the beginning. The idea existed, but only on paper, and they lacked the practical experience of how to start and manage their new business. So they started at the very beginning, with Wafaa and Shatha joining a training course in preparing sweets and chocolate. Furthering their skills at home, they increasingly started to experiment with greater volumes and different types of date-based sweets, using their own creativity to come up with new variations and flavours, giving each batch a distinctive packaging.



**Wafa, Shatha, Ahed
& Waed Al Jabri**



“We realized through our experience with Zubair SEC that entrepreneurs are people who have very clear goals and a stubborn ambition, and who are able to draw a roadmap to reach each of these goals. Today, we feel that we have the skills, capabilities and capacity that allow us to continue to grow our business and achieve our ambitions.”

However, for ‘Meshan’, the challenges of running a business emerged early, including limited administrative and marketing experience, slow production abilities, as well as a lack of sufficient capital in order to be able to quickly grow their business and hire additional staff. During this time, the sisters heard about Zubair SEC and the services offered for aspiring young entrepreneurs. They knew this was just what they needed.

Commenting on their experience with Zubair SEC, Wafaa recalls, “We felt that we had reached the right place. The objectives of the Centre were clear and the team understood our needs accurately. During the following months, the Centre offered ‘Meshan’ much needed technical and advisory support and guidance, as well as the financial support that helped a lot.”

After the four sisters were selected to join Zubair SEC Direct Support Programme, they placed themselves on the path to success, equipping themselves with the skills every entrepreneur needs in order to achieve their goals and objectives. They understood better their points of strengths to capitalize on and the weaknesses they need to overcome and grow from.

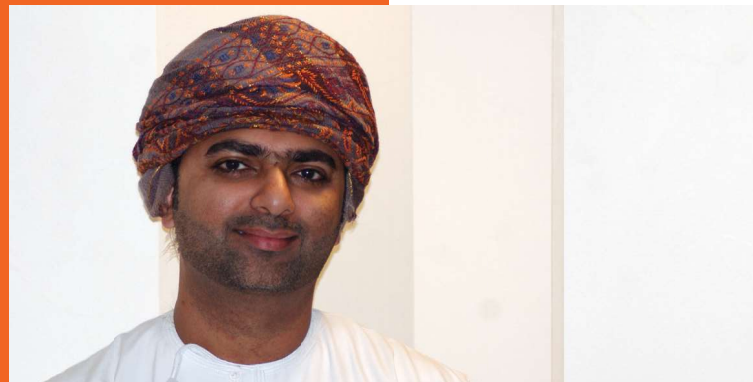
Today, the sisters are satisfied with what they have achieved in the past year, as the guidance they received from Zubair SEC enabled them to clearly identify their goals and develop clear expansion plans for the future. The Direct Support Programme has enabled them to achieve in just one year what would normally take many years of hard work; this includes doubling their production, raising their sales volume by 150 per cent, as well as developing plans to open their very own coffee shop where customers can enjoy their dates alongside a cup of coffee.

About the future, Shatha says, “We realized through our experience with Zubair SEC that entrepreneurs are people who have very clear goals and a stubborn ambition, and who are able to draw a roadmap to reach each of these goals. Today, we feel that we have the skills, capabilities and capacity that allow us to continue to grow our business and achieve our ambitions. We believe that ‘Meshan’ will soon become a leading brand in the Sultanate of Oman and then, God willing, internationally. Our message to all is this, Stay tuned to many new offerings from ‘Meshan’, the pioneer in date-based sweets!”

Memories Studios...

Going global

Holding an MBA from the University of Newcastle in Australia, Yasir Abdullah Shaban sets an ideal example of self-confidence, shining with ambition and determination. Yasir presents himself simply as a young Omani man with a great aspiration to go global, as he looks forward to sharing his talent and creativity with the world, focusing on photography, marketing and advertising.



Yasir Abdullah Shaban

Self-confidence might be the most common attribute the Zubair SEC members have in common, and it might be a key factor that qualified them to join the Direct Support Programme of the centre. It is said that confident people are those who have ambitions, determination and the will to achieve their goals.



When asked about his journey towards business success, without a second thought Yasir says: "It will be one of the best memories for Memories Studio."

Yasir's new business, 'Memories Studio' specialises in photography and videography, in addition to graphic design and digital printing. Photography had been a passion for Yasir since childhood, and being surrounded by a circle of friends who specialised in the media field, Yasir made a decision to turn his passion into a fully-fledged business.

Although he was still a full time employee at the time, Yasir started his business in 2013, and stayed employed to avoid the potential risks that face any newly launched business initiative, and that was exactly what happened. The new enterprise was slammed by the fierce competition from established businesses already in the market, in addition to unplanned financial pressures that soon reared their progress.

Five months following the establishment of his business, and while struggling with numerous challenges, the whole picture turned around as Yasir saw the light at the end of the tunnel. It was Zubair SEC that restored his hope, as the Centre provided essential support to his promising new business. Zubair SEC business advisors helped Yasir see the great potential of his new enterprise, and how it should be professorially managed. Despite the great talent and creativity that Yasir possessed, to succeed in business he had to boost his administrative, financial and marketing skills, and

become equipped with the necessary skills to move towards a brighter future for his business. All of this was made possible after Yasir joined Zubair SEC's Direct Support Programme.

Today, Yasir has dedicated himself to becoming a full-time business owner. He believes he has the potential to persevere and succeed. Yasir has taken part in a number of specialised workshops organised by the Centre in the administrative and marketing fields, contract management, brand building, consultancy services along with financial support that allowed him to increase his turnover, leading to an encouraging hike in profits over a very short time period. The studio was able to secure long-term business contracts with many major clients, leading to a closer step towards the sort of business security that Yasir was hoping to achieve.

His ambitions have no limits, and he stands today on solid ground. Yasir is considering expanding his business across the Sultanate, as well as establishing a new business unit that specialises in the production of radio ads.

Mazayen... Authenticity in its new shape

Born with talent and individuality in her genes, Nadia Al Shamsi grew up with a passion for arts. Despite majoring in business management where she earned her bachelor degree at Sultan Qaboos University, Nadia has always been passionate about arts and design. In 2009 she decided to venture into the arts world fulltime, proving that she has the talent and a willingness to grow and learn.

Nadia started with designing accessories, then shifted to authentic jewellery following a course she completed in silversmithing. Her tender taste allowed her to discover the treasure of beauty in traditional silver jewellery. However, she realised that this old design might not appeal to modern girls. Like any other small business, she started at home. Her first brand name followed the typical Omani style, using her own name as the company's name: Nadia Al Shamsi Enterprise. She was encouraged to pursue her dream by her family and friends, and inspired by His Majesty's call to the public and private sector organisations to support SMEs.



**Nadia Said
Al Shamsiyah**



“I knew from the beginning that I was in the right place, so I worked very hard to earn the confidence of Zubair SEC team and to prove that I was born to be an entrepreneur.”

Nadia has a unique taste for the beauty of Omani culture and heritage, realising that it is a rich resource that can never get drained. Her love and pride of the rich cultural heritage was the source of her inspiration, and she was slowly moving towards it. Her home-based business did not grow much though, despite being named “the best home-based business by an Omani woman”, an award that was presented to Nadia by the Al-Roya Al-Iktisadiya Newspaper. Her business did not leave home and her customer base was limited to relatives and friends. Even the brand name, Nadia Al Shamsi Enterprises, was lost in the crowd of similar names leading her to take the extra step and contact Zubair SEC.

The team of consultants at Zubair SEC quickly saw the great potential that Nadia’s business would have if she complemented her talent and creativity with the business management skills and marketing needed to make her business a real success. The first step towards this transformation was her brand name. Zubair SEC advised Nadia that the brand name should be unique, and that this project needs a brand name that reflects the nature of the business and presents it in the most relevant way, while distinguishing it from the rest in the market. Hence, ‘Mazayen’ was created to showcase the beauty of the products and to reflect the originality and the rich heritage by which Nadia

is inspired by. Her business has since leaped from strength to strength, while receiving close and ongoing support from the team at Zubair SEC. Nadia has also evolved her technical skills, and was supported by the Centre to complete a diploma course in the United Kingdom, with a focus on jewellery design. In fact, she came back with a special diploma in design with a distinctive grade.

She says: “As a result of my devotion and commitment, I earned membership in the Direct Support Programme of the Centre for 2014 and that has turned to be of great value to me and my business ever since. ‘Mazayen’ today is an independent brand that proudly and with all confidence achieves continued success. I participated in the ‘Wonders of the Orient’ exhibition in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, and it was a great success. I also showcased my products at the ‘Creative Jewellery’ exhibition in London, United Kingdom, and received very positive feedback.”

Nadia today has a rapidly growing customer base, and she also runs training courses to teach others the principles of jewellery design. Nadia has passed the tough stage and is now emerging towards greater success while proudly engraving her name in the list of successful and aspiring Omani women entrepreneurs.

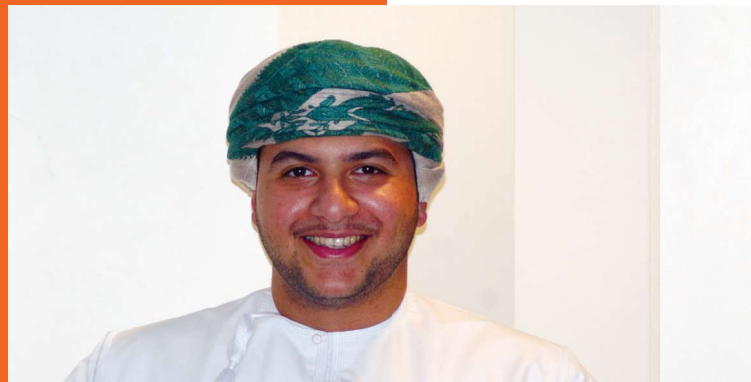
Mathaq...

Tea reinvented

So what is this brilliant idea? Mohammed has transformed the traditional tea bag so that it combines with a spoon, allowing the process of stirring and infusing flavoured tea to be all the more enjoyable. Mohammed calls it the fast tea spoon, a combination of tea bag in the shape of a stirring spoon, which contains tea, flavours and sugar if requested. Mohammed offers a range of traditional Omani flavours inspired by the old English culture of drinking different types of tea depending on the time of the day.

The idea might appear to be a little unusual at first, but in business innovation terms, it could be worth millions. This business idea is so creative it could literally take on the world, becoming a truly global product and generating a very successful business along the way.

The simple tea bag has been commercially sold for over 100 years, and while the concept has evolved and been refined over time, the design remains fundamentally unchanged; dried tea contained within a porous paper enclosure, ready to be dipped into boiling water for a refreshing cup of tea. Introduced commercially for the first time by Thomas Sullivan, the first prototype tea bags were developed by William Hermanson, who sold his patent to the Salada Tea Company in 1930. Will Mohammed Wahid Al Lawati and his partner be the next ones to add a touch of genius to the simple tea bag?



**Mohammed Wahid
Al Lawati**



“My project hasn’t been implemented in reality yet, but we are getting closer every day. The period working with the team at Zubair SEC was very important to me in order to accomplish my goals on the path to success.”

In 2012, Mohammed and his partner established the new company ‘Mathaq’, which specialises in producing and marketing the fast tea spoon. The company already achieved some success at the concept stage, winning the ‘Best Student Company’ award in Oman in 2012, and the ‘Most Innovative Product in the Arab Region’ award in the same year. However, despite the success achieved, Mohammed was not able to easily turn his innovative idea into a commercial reality. There were a number of obstacles which he first needed to overcome, including management and product development, financing, as well as creating a brand identity which could take his product to global markets.

In 2013, Mohammed joined Zubair SEC, and he quickly won over the Centre with his innovative approach, and his commitment to succeed, gaining him membership in the Direct Support Programme at Zubair SEC. From that point on, 2014 became the year of transformation for ‘Mathaq’, as Mohammed discovered through his engagement with the advisors in the Center the strengths and weaknesses of his project, and how he could overcome them.

Mohammed enrolled himself in a number of specialised workshops related to discovering the secrets of successfully managing a business and the techniques

of smart marketing. He learned how to deliver his concept in a professional way, as ‘Mathaq’ was no longer a student enterprise, but a business that is ready to spread its wings locally and globally.

Mohammed notes, “My project hasn’t been implemented in reality yet, but we are getting closer every day. The period working with the team at Zubair SEC was very important to me in order to accomplish my goals on the path to success. Others might not see the benefits I gained from Zubair SEC, but personally I believe they are very important to me. With the support and supervision of Zubair SEC, I have developed a strategic plan and set the vision of my company and it is ready to move forward. I am confident that 2015 will be the start of the implementation work and I will establish the first Omani factory for producing my innovative Omani tea bags, which will enable the project to reach beyond the boundaries of Oman and the Gulf region, God willing”.

‘Mathaq’ is now in the final stages of commercial prototyping. As with any new idea, it struggled at the beginning, but after overcoming those obstacles the company is ready to move ahead. Let’s see if preparing our traditional cup of tea will change in the years ahead with ‘Mathaq’!

Hurouf...

A golden will to succeed

Women in our societies sometimes experience pressure juggling the many priorities of being a mother, a wife and an employee, and sometimes the pressure can become too much for some. However, Iman Mohammed Al Farsiya is a role model to many in how she is able to successfully manage a healthy home life, while forging her way towards a blossoming career in business. A loving wife and generous mother of two wonderful kids, Iman was able to carve her presence in the entrepreneurial community in Oman, propelled by her ambitious drive to succeed, her commitment towards excellence in business, and her positive outlook toward future success.

The seed for her jewelry accessories business started from Iman's deep love of traditional Arabic script and calligraphy; a love which originated since the days of her early childhood. Her passion for drawing Arabic calligraphy of different types and styles, and her sense of composition and beauty, both came together to generate a genius idea that was set to succeed. Iman set out to launch a range of gold jewelry accessories in Arabic script, characterised by Iman's very own personal touch.



**Iman Mohammed
Al Farsiya**



Talking of the next exciting phase of her business journey, Iman notes, “My next goal is to build my own workshop here in the Sultanate, so the jewelry accessories will be designed and made here, making ‘Hurouf’ a truly %100 Omani product, hopefully in the very near future.”

Iman’s business for jewelry accessory design was launched four years ago. However, she needed a reliable production house that could execute and produce her designs to the highest quality, while still being able to compete in the competitive market for jewelry accessories, one which is subjected to a flood of low quality accessories from Asia. Travelling outside the Sultanate to find the ideal production house, Iman soon found what she was looking for in Lebanon, a country of both remarkable art and respective artists. She returned to the Sultanate shortly thereafter, armed with production samples of her original jewelry designs that quickly caught the eye of the Omani market. Then, she knew that the hard journey to prove herself in the world of complex jewelry business had only just begun. Iman continued to bring in her designs from Lebanon, but roadblocks soon appeared in her way as she encountered Asian products flooding the market with multiple designs of inexpensive prices and poor workmanship, competition that threatened to swamp her new enterprise. “How could I fight this flood of inexpensive jewelry accessories”, she asked herself. Iman set out to prove that her products cannot be compared next to those of the Asian market, both in terms of creative execution and highest levels of quality workmanship.

“Zubair SEC was a lifeline”, says Iman. During this period, she was about to surrender to the challenges of intense competition in the market, and even thought of

closing her business for good. Zubair SEC stood beside her, encouraged her, and gave her all the professional consulting support that she needed during this crucial period; this in addition to the material and moral support to continue her enterprise after gaining acceptance into the Zubair SEC Direct Support Programme. With the added skills and direct support provided by the team at Zubair SEC, Iman’s business quickly turned a corner, and the enterprise evolved dramatically over the next few months. Her skills in business management and effective marketing have been greatly strengthened, while her newly formed brand ‘Hurouf’ was another factor that helped Iman’s business reach the next level of success over a short period.

Taking stock, Iman is fully satisfied with the performance of ‘Hurouf’ over the last 18 months, but like any ambitious entrepreneur, she is not fully satisfied and is looking towards market expansion outside the Sultanate. What began years ago as a hobby, has become a successful business with all the ingredients to expand onto the global stage. Today, ‘Hurouf’ is an increasingly well-known jewelry accessories brand which is popular with customers who appreciate authentic Omani calligraphic styles, and who demand quality workmanship. Iman’s ambition to succeed has led her into the competitive world of entrepreneurs and the SME sector in Oman, establishing many friendships and collaborations along the way.

Areej Al Hemly Decoration...

The secret to success is not so secret after all

Adi Khamis Al Dahmani from Al Rustaq did not originally consider entering the business world. He has very deep artistic abilities with an affinity towards beautiful artworks and environments, but he always considered these talents more of a hobby than a path to business success.

2009 proved to be a turning point in Dahmani's life; one which came about almost by chance. After showing friends and family through his newly self-decorated home, he received a large number of positive comments and requests from others to transform their houses in a similar manner. After a thoughtful period, Adi decided to invest in his talents and turn them into a sustainable business, one that would over time grow to become his primary source of income, as well as a source of immense pride for him. Having made his decision, Adi requested an early retirement from his daytime job in order to fully focus on the setup and launch of his new business, one that would specialise in residential and commercial interior decorations that he named 'Areej Al Hemly Decoration'.



**Adi Khamis
Al Dahmani**



Today, 'Areej Al Hemly Decoration' can be easily described as one of the true success stories, and a testament to the hard work and perseverance by Adi. He has real ambition and the will to succeed, so maybe the secret to success is not so secret after all!

As in the case of any new business start-up, success is not guaranteed merely by possessing talent, as planning, sound business knowledge and perseverance are required in order to truly succeed. In fact there are a multitude of factors that make an enterprise successful, with wise management, smart marketing, as well as being able to accept and learn from knock-backs and disappointments in order to move ahead. Adi quickly learned these valuable skills after gaining membership with Zubair SEC in mid-2013.

Before joining Zubair SEC, Adi's new business suffered from stiff competition within the Sultanate, with factors like brand recognition, sound pricing strategy, and a limited customer base. Therefore, his immediate priorities turned to developing a unique brand identity and putting in place a professional marketing programme in order to differentiate his business in the crowded market. In addition, professional project management could draw the line between success and failure and Adi was very well aware of the magnitude of details needed to manage his projects professionally. But, this was all before he joined the Centre, and now the outlook is bright for 'Areej Al Hemly Decoration'. Adi as an aspiring Omani entrepreneur was selected to join the Zubair SEC Direct Support Programme, where he has gained the necessary support and consultancy to grow his new business, placing it on the best footing for the years ahead.

Zubair SEC provided Adi the necessary support to establish a fully furnished office to manage his project. The management skills he gained also played a key role in reducing fixed costs by 15%, which reflected positively in the capability of the project to move forward.

Zubair SEC...

Committed to development, permanence and continuity

As we celebrate the first anniversary since the announcement of the first batch of entrepreneurs who joined the Direct Support Programme in December 2013, we can confidently say that we are proud of the achievements of our talented entrepreneurs and we are committed to moving forward by delivering effective contributions towards building the future of our country through the development of entrepreneurs in the Sultanate. Our nation is made stronger by the efforts of these aspiring citizens who have high motivation and a strong determination to achieve their goals. Not everyone discovers the secrets of starting and running a successful enterprise, however, the entrepreneurs of Zubair Small Enterprises Centre (Zubair SEC) are among those who are taking their aspirations to new heights.

For all young Omanis, the future is ahead of you. This is the time and place to take solid steps towards a better future. This blessed country is looking forward to your contributions to help build a future for all coming generations. We urge all entrepreneurs to move confidently on the road of success and capitalize on the distinguished supporting environment in the Sultanate. Believe in yourself, take the decision to mark your future as you desire, move forward with determination, and be confident that we are here to support you as part of our national responsibility, removing stumbling blocks and opening doors for you to explore better and more fruitful opportunities.

Driven by love for Oman