

Corporate Success Stories in the UAE

“The book provides trends in business, marketing, and management from 13 case studies in the UAE. Each case study provides the organization profile, the departments, success indicators, drivers of success, and areas of future study. The book provides a unique perspective on how businesses have evolved and become successful in the UAE. This can provide students, teachers, and practitioners with insights into businesses in a region seldom addressed in the business literature.”



Prof Rodrigo Lozano, University of Gavle, Kungsbacksvagen 47,
Gavleborg, Sweden

“The book, very well structured and readable, provides a significant deepening of the intellectual capital of scholars, practitioners and students on how companies can grow in a global market, following sustainability goals and values.

The case studies are very informative and support the reader to understand the main key drivers behind the success of companies.

The literature review contributes to linking the case studies’ results to a scholarly knowledge base.

The teaching notes are rich in content and are very valuable to support the lecturers in imparting knowledge to the students on the important drivers behind the growth of various case organizations and their sustainability values.

Practitioners can grab from the manuscript, exciting ideas to get a breadth of view from the best managerial practices.”



Prof Maria Francesca Renzi, Roma Tre University,
Via Silvio D’ Amico 77, Rome, Italy

“This is an excellent case-based research book in the context of the Middle East that combines the academic rigor with the nuances of the local business practices, leading to a superior business performance in the terms of quality, quantity and efficiency. It’s indeed beneficial to both professors and professionals.”



Dr Satyendra Singh, *Professor, Marketing & International Business, Executive Director, Academy of Business and Emerging Markets (ABEM), University of Winnipeg, Canada*

Corporate Success Stories in the UAE: The Key Drivers Behind Their Growth

EDITED BY

DR PRAKASH VEL

and

DR BOŠTJAN GOMIŠČEK



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2021

Copyright © 2021 Emerald Publishing Limited

Reprints and permissions service

Contact: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80043-579-7 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80043-578-0 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80043-580-3 (Epub)



ISOQAR certified
Management System,
awarded to Emerald
for adherence to
Environmental
standard
ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Contents

About the Editors	vii
Biographies of the Case Writers	ix
Preface	xiii
Acknowledgments	xv
Chapter-Wise Key Words	xix
Chapter 1 AJMAL PERFUMES – <i>The Inimitable Aroma of Success</i> <i>Priyanka Lalwani</i>	1
Chapter 2 ABDUL SAMAD AL-QURASHI (ASQ) – <i>An Admirable Growth Trajectory – Middle East to a Multinational Presence</i> <i>Rinad Zuhair A. AlQurashi</i>	19
Chapter 3 AL SEER GROUP – <i>Can a Distributor Build Brands?</i> <i>Samby Fready</i>	33
Chapter 4 DUBAI ASSOCIATION CENTRE – <i>The Silent Non-profit Contributor to the Economy of Dubai</i> <i>Latifa Jamal Ahli</i>	49
Chapter 5 DUBAI WORLD TRADE CENTRE – <i>Living the DWTC Way!</i> <i>Latifa Jamal Ahli</i>	63
Chapter 6 ECOCOAST – <i>Who is the Architect, the Customer or the Company?</i> <i>Chahd Ahmad Hani Nadaf</i>	79

Chapter 7 LIBERTY DENTAL CLINIC – <i>The Secret Behind the Most Expensive Smile Creators</i> <i>Sabreen Yousef Wahbeh and Eman Emadeddin Abuelrub</i>	93
Chapter 8 MAJID AL FUTTAIM RETAIL – <i>Carrefour’s Successful Big Transition to Online Presence</i> <i>Luma Subhi Yousef</i>	109
Chapter 9 NAFFCO – <i>The Oath of NAFFCO!</i> <i>Raida Rashid Nasser Al Lamki</i>	121
Chapter 10 STANLEY BLACK & DECKER, MIDDLE EAST – <i>An Exemplar of Corporate Agility</i> <i>Ismail Hasan Syed Farook</i>	135
Chapter 11 THMS – <i>Strategically Positioned to Serve Two Worlds in Health Care</i> <i>Qassim Mahmoud Ahmed Al-hayek and Rana Mohammad Ass’ad Alzaben</i>	151
Chapter 12 TPS – <i>Sans Internal Marketing, Sans External Marketing</i> <i>Saadia Danish and Danish Muneef Qureshi</i>	163
Chapter 13 TRISTAR – <i>Safety, Sustainability and Stewardship</i> <i>Mohamed Ali Abdul Hameed Maricar and Jamal Mohamed Kiyasudeen</i>	179
Index	197

About the Editors

Prakash Vel, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Marketing at the University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD). He is backed up with 28 years of teaching and corporate exposure in marketing with experience spread across Bahrain, India, Singapore, Malaysia, and the UAE. His areas of research, consulting, and training include Strategic marketing, Consumer behavior, Marketing communications, and Events marketing, and he has offered consultancy for more than 16 multinational corporate clients in different countries including Malaysia, Singapore, India, Finland, Belgium, Kuwait, and the UAE. He is a professionally trained case writer, having more than 50 international research publications to his credit and also serves in the editorial and review committee of international journals. He is also the recipient of the 2020 'EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD' at UOWD.



Boštjan Gomišček is a Professor of Quality Management who obtained his PhD from Vienna University of Technology (Austria). Prior affiliations of Professor Gomišček were the University of Wollongong in Dubai, University of Maribor and the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia; the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Vienna University of Technology in Austria. While holding different roles at the faculty and university level, teaching at the undergraduate, postgraduate and HDR level, his focus was on research, quality issues in higher education, interdisciplinary industry engagement and research projects in Quality Management, Sustainability, Air Quality, Quality of Healthcare, Maintenance Management, and Business Excellence.



This page intentionally left blank

Biographies of the Case Writers

Priyanka Lalwani has 15 years of professional experience in research and data analytics. She is a recipient of various highly commended professional and academic awards such as the ACFE (Association of Certified Fraud Examiners) award. Since 2011, she has been working in a managerial capacity at Dubai Airports. Her key skills include applied and academic research.

Rinad Zuhair A. Alqurashi is a Social Media Influencer and guides on leading a healthy life style, being a clinical dietitian, by education. She has a master degree in healthcare management and is currently pursuing a dual specialization in Finance and Marketing in her second post graduate qualification in business management.

Samby Fready is an aspiring PhD Candidate and is extremely passionate about academic research. He comes with seven years of varied industry experience and currently serves as an Adjunct Faculty teaching Consumer Behaviour and Marketing. He holds a master's degree in International Business from the University of Wollongong in Dubai.

Latifa Jamal Ahli started her career in Dubai World Trade Centre in the MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) industry. She is promoting DWTC to global event organizations and associations across the world. She is as well in charge of Dubai Association Centre, a joint venture between DTWC, Dubai Tourism and Commerce of Marketing and Dubai Chamber of Commerce, which currently has 68 licensed associations under its umbrella. Both roles contribute to the growth of Dubai's economy and its intellectual capital.

Chahd Ahmad Hani Nadaf is a freelance Graphic Designer that aspires to make a little bit of a difference. She has worked with a range of international clients from various industries over the past five years. Through her business degree, she aims to blend the two professions to offer the best solution for her clients.

Eman Emadeddin Abuelrub is a Post-graduate Student in Quality Management from University of Wollongong in Dubai. She has a bachelor's degree in Nursing from the University of Jordan. She is passionate in Quality Practices research in both organizations and corporate culture. She has participated in several conferences in Academic Integrity as well.

Sabreen Yousef Wahbeh is a Post-graduate Student in Quality Management from the University of Wollongong Dubai. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Medical Laboratories from the University of Jordan. She is passionate about research and has contributed to many research projects during her study journey. She has participated in several conferences in Academic Integrity.

Luma Subhi Yousef is a Digital Marketing Consultant and Trainer with nine years of experience with some of the biggest regional and international E-commerce businesses like Namshi.com, Clarins, Mama & Papas, Armani Exchange, and Victoria's Secret. She currently works with E-commerce startups to scale their digital marketing activities as well as being a certified Google Trainer and conducts regular training as part of the *Maharat Min Google* Program in the Middle East.

Raida Rashid Nasser Al Lamki is a Business Advisor and a Marketing Consultant with a passion for improving organization's business model using "out of the box" tools and approaches to unleash their latent power in an ever changing and dynamic world. Helping her to achieve this is her experience of nearly 20 years working with major global brands and various industries across Asia, North America, Africa, and Europe.

Ismail Hasan Syed Farook is a PhD Aspirant. He is currently working as an E-commerce Executive at Stanley Black & Decker, Dubai. He has co-authored a conference paper in the field of education that was presented at an international conference at Hong Kong. He has also received a research grant on education from the University of Wollongong in Dubai.

Qassim Mahmoud Ahmed Al-hayek is a Training Manager, Registered Nurse, American Heart Association and European Resuscitation Council Medical Training Instructor. He holds a BSC degree in Nursing from Jordan University of Science and Technology with more than 22 years' experience in clinical field, serving in a multitude of roles. His areas of interest are health care, marketing, and customer response.

Rana Mohammad Ass'ad Alzaben is a motivated Registered Nurse and a Lactation Consultant, she holds a BSC degree in Nursing from Jordanian University, with experience in the clinical field for more than 16 years. She served in a multitude of roles, currently is working in health awareness programs, aiming to enhance community health and quality of life.

Danish Muneef Qureshi has 14 years' experience of leading Regional Sales, Operations, and Supply Chain departments in Unilever and Reynolds consumer products based in the Middle East. He has extensive experience in large-scale reorganization and change management and has a keen interest in organizational behavior, change management, and E-commerce strategy building for startups.

Saadia Danish has an MPhil in Computer Science and is working with the University of Wollongong in Dubai, teaching at Foundation Studies Program and Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences. With a keen interest in research, her main areas of interest are applications of information systems in organizations, e-Health, and the Internet of Things.

Jamal Mohamed Kiyasudeen heads a media production company in the UAE. He is a Media Engineering Post-Graduate and a certified EFQM Professional contributing to DQA and SKEA in assessing organizations. He has 20 years of multi-fold experience working in Germany, UK, India, and UAE. His research interests include Business-Management, Digital-Marketing, and Startup Ecosystem.

Mohamed Ali Abdul Hameed Maricar has 20 years of experience in managing multiple businesses. He is certified in EFQM model and assesses Sheikh Khalifa Excellence Award and Dubai Quality Award. He facilitates SMEs in their strategy formulation. He is a Doctoral Candidate and his research interests include: Strategic Management and Operational excellence.

This page intentionally left blank

Preface

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is renowned globally for the towering list of superlatives associated with it – the tallest building, the world’s busiest airport, the fastest roller coaster, the largest 3D printed building, and other similar achievements. Flanked by the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf, this young country was founded in 1971 and from its humble beginnings of pearl trade and fishing, the UAE has since then evolved into an economic powerhouse for tourism and trade. As per *Gulf News* dated October 24, 2019, UAE leads in the Middle East at the 16th place for the World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business 2020 ranking among 190 countries. With this viable mix of demographics, geography, and pro-business environment, it is not surprising that UAE is the favored location for numerous organizations’ regional offices and 138 of the top 500 largest companies in the world have their Middle East and Africa (MEA) headquarters in the UAE according to *The National* dated March 21, 2017. UAE is further poised to shine on the world stage as it hosts the World Expo in 2021 with confirmed participation of 192 countries as reported by *Khaleej Times* on February 4, 2020.

The idea for this book was birthed as an outcome of the IAIC (Industry Academia Interface in Classroom) initiative, inducted by Dr K Prakash Vel, Associate Professor, at University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD), in 2015, to foster industry-academia collaboration. In the present contemporary market, business milieu has dramatically changed in different regions of the world, throwing greater levels of uncertainty, perceived risk, costs and decision-making implications for managers. It is therefore essential, that education for different levels of students, the managers of tomorrow, must be adapted as much as possible to give the learners an inner and contextualized view of the business environment they are meant to function in. Tools are required to facilitate such learning processes, and in this regard, cases pertaining to a region, used as interventions, become quintessential to enhance business acumen. This book is an endeavor to fill this very vacuum in terms of regional cases being available for understanding the corporate sector in this part of the world.

The authors have searched for the pearls of wisdom from successful organizations across multiple industries in the UAE and crystalized them into succinct learnings for the academic audience and industry practitioners. This case book comprises both companies that originated from the UAE and MNCs that have successful operations in the UAE. Based on interviews with junior, middle and senior management executives of these companies as the primary source, duly

supplanted by data from relevant secondary sources, insights have been gathered to identify the success indicators of these companies and their strategic drivers. A review of literature has then been carried out to analyze the extent to which the observations align or deviate from academic findings, with suggestions for future research.

This book comprises of 13 chapters, each being a full-fledged case chapter, shedding light on the distinct aspects of a specific company belonging to a particular industry. The chapters have been meticulously drafted to systematically take the reader from the history of the organization, to the indicators of success, to factors influencing the success, followed by the review of academic literature, ending with suggested areas of future research. All the case writers were provided intensive training on case writing methodologies by Dr K. Prakash Vel, who is a trained case writer and has many published cases to his credit. The industries in the UAE represented in this book include *Beauty, Cosmetics & Personal care, FMCG distribution, Online Retailing, Non-profit professional association, Events & Exhibitions, Marine sustainability, Dental care, Fire and safety, Retail industry, General tools & household appliances, Health care, Fintech and Energy Logistics (Oil & Gas)*.

The book is meant for two distinct audiences, one being the organizations, industry professionals, and firms that could leverage the content of this book as a training resource for value addition to their employees and the other being the academic fraternity that include university professors and students.

Acknowledgments

My sincere thanks to the Creator for his grace and blessings to take this book project to fruition. This work would not have been possible without the whole hearted and unwavering support of my wife, Mrs P. Raja Padma, my daughter, Dr Sankhya Prakash, my parents and my in-laws. Most importantly, my sincere gratitude goes to my grandfather, a mentor and guru for me, late Dr Dhanvanthri Velayutham, for the medical service he did for the community and that which inspired me to follow his footsteps, in aspiring to render a similar service for the academic community and society. My grandmother, late Mrs Jegathambal, was a pivotal force for me in learning ethics and social values from her, that greatly influence my thoughts and actions till date.

– Dr Prakash Vel

Thank you Dr Prakash Vel for every single passionate instant we spent during the preparation of this book – it was deeply inspiring and gratifying. I wish to thank my spouse, Tanja, for bearing with me and supporting every one of my crazy ideas during the last 40 years. Thank you for your endless loving encouragement.

– Dr Boštjan Gomišček

We take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to our colleagues and friends who supported this project both directly and indirectly. We are greatly indebted to the support and inspiration given by the President of the University of Wollongong in Dubai, Prof Dr Mohamed Salem and the Dean of the Faculty of Business, Prof Dr Payyazhi Jayashree. We also extend our thanks to Dr Munyaradzi Nyadzayo, Associate Dean (Research), for his constant motivation extended to successfully complete the book and Ms Anne-Marie Amato, Academic Advisor, UOWD College for her grammatical inputs on the book title.

Our special thanks to the Emerald team behind this book, Mr Andrew Peart – Publisher, Mr David Jack Mulvaney – Content Development Editor, Ms Aishwarya Mahatma Suritha – Book Project Editor, Ms Fiona Allison – Publisher and Ms Rajachitra, Senior Project Manager, KnowledgeWorks Global Ltd.

Our special token of thanks and appreciation are given herewith to the various case writers who have given their dedication and commitment to prepare their respective case chapters. They have been able to shoulder multiple responsibilities professionally and personally while preparing the cases with utmost involvement. A separate section is maintained in the book to present the biographies of each of the case writers.

xvi Acknowledgments

We place on records our deepest appreciation for the time, effort and involvement shown during the interview process, by the following executives of the contributing case organizations:

- **AJMAL PERFUME MANUFACTURING AND OUDH PROCESSING INDUSTRY (L.L.C)** – *Beauty, Cosmetic & Personal care*
 - Mr Abdulla Ajmal – Deputy COO
 - Mr Shapoor Bhathela – General Manager
 - Mr Evarist Rego – Deputy General Manager

- **ABDUL SAMAD AL QURASHI (ASQ)** – *Retail Industry*
 - Mr Zuhair Abdulsamad Alqurashi – Vice president/Co-owner
 - Mr Ahmad Zuhair Alqurashi – Vice president/Deputy CEO
 - Mr Rami Mostafa Boulad – CMO

- **AL SEER GROUP** – *FMCG distribution*
 - Mr Fouad Touckly – Chief Executive Officer
 - Mr R. Krishnamoorthy – General Manager, Corporate Services
 - Mr Joseph Abraham – General Manager, Fine Fair Division
 - Mr Aji Varghese – Trade Marketing Manager
 - Mr Beno Yohannan – Sales Manager
 - Ms Binu George – Head – Human Resources
 - Mr Denzil Netto – Supply Chain Manager
 - Mr Jude D’Silva – Consultant
 - Mr Kannappan Ramanathan – Head – Logistics
 - Mr Lal V R – IT Integration Manager
 - Ms Noella D’Souza – Finance Manager
 - Mr CB Shankar – Senior Divisional Manager

- **DUBAI ASSOCIATION CENTER** – *Non-profit professional association*
 - Ms Karen Smith – Ex-Senior Director – DAC
 - Ms Alaa Al Boali – Director of MEFMA
 - Mr Steen Jakobsen – Assistant Vice President

- **DUBAI WORLD TRADE CENTRE** – *Events & Exhibitions*
 - Mr James Elston – Ex-Director – Association and Conference
 - Mrs Olga Shults – Ex-Senior Manager – Association and Conference
 - Mr Kunji PV – Ex-Food and Beverage Manager – MICE

- **ECOCOAST HOLDINGS LIMITED** – *Marine sustainability*
 - Ms Dana Liparts – Director
 - Mr Lachlan Jackson – Director

- Ms Tamara Deprez – Head of Marketing
- Ms Maribellejoy Basilio – HR Coordinator

- LIBERY MEDICAL GROUP – *Dental care*
 - Dr Majd Naji – Chairman and Owner of Liberty Medical Group
 - Dr Mohamed Naji – Executive director of Liberty Dental Clinic
 - Dr Fatima Almousa – Clinic Manager
 - Ms Hala Alassi – Receptionist
 - Ms Noor Alhuda – Patient
 - Ms Liezel Glen – Head of Nurses
 - Mr Andres Bacani – Head of Auxiliaries

- MAJID AL FUTTAIM RETAIL Executives – *Online Retailing*

- NAFFCO – *Fire and safety*
 - Eng. Khalid Al Khatib – NAFFCO Group – CEO
 - Mr Imad Al Khatib – Executive Manager – CEO Representative
 - Mr Adnan Naveed – Customer Service Manager
 - Mr Syed Umar Ali – Business Analyst

- STANLEY BLACK & DECKER, MIDDLE EAST – Tools and Household Appliances
 - Mr Mark Woor - Marketing Manager, Professional/Industrial Channel
 - Mr Rahul Chandra – Commercial Product Manager, Consumer
 - Mr Ershad Abdul Gulam – Regional E-Commerce Manager

- THE HEALTH MEDICAL SERVICES – *Health care*
 - Dr Ahmed Al Haje – Chairman
 - Dr Mamoun Theyabat – CEO
 - Dr Mohammed Ehsan - Quality Manager
 - Mrs Safeena Kamal – HR Manager

- TPS – *Fintech*
 - Mr Ovais Habib Khan, COO, TPS
 - Mr Ali Abdullah Tariq, Regional Manager Business Development

- TRISTAR GROUP LLC – *Energy Logistics (Oil & Gas)*
 - Mr Eugene Mayne – Group Chief Executive Officer
 - Mr Balaji Nagabhushan – Group Chief Administrative Officer
 - Mr Mohan Dharmarajan – Business Excellence Manager
 - Mr Arthur Los Banos – Corporate Communications Manager
 - Ms Ashwatha Mahesh – Asst. Manager, CSR & Sustainability

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter-Wise Key Words

CHAPTER 1:

Transformational leadership; customer centricity; intrapreneurial behavior; total quality management; innovation success; absorptive capacity; corporate social responsibility

CHAPTER 2:

Brand image; customer satisfaction; product quality; training; unique market offerings; market research

CHAPTER 3:

Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), distributor, brand-building behavior, people strategy, data-driven culture, processes-based operations, strategic orientation

CHAPTER 4:

Managerial efficiency; inter-unit integration; intellectual capital; service orientation; social marketing efficiency; voluntary involvement

CHAPTER 5:

Customer-centric; participatory leadership; strategic partnership; holistic value proposition; training orientation; empowering leaders; dynamic planning and management

CHAPTER 6:

Customer centricity; transformational leadership; research orientation; adaptive culture; corporate transparency; cross-functional specialization; sustainable corporate thinking

CHAPTER 7:

Leadership; quality management; risk management; corporate social responsibility; sustainability; marketing strategy; technology; innovation; artificial intelligence

CHAPTER 8:

Data-driven; customer-obsessed; employees-centric; continuous innovation; digital transformation; e-commerce; online retail

CHAPTER 9:

Situational leadership; innovation; Kaizen; quality; R&D; knowledge spillover; esprit de corps; corporate citizenship

CHAPTER 10:

Agility; change management; innovation as corporate culture; customer engagement; effective channel management; brand leveraging

CHAPTER 11:

Customers relationship management (CRM); leadership style; employee engagement; market orientation; quality circles (QCs); patient-centric care; service innovation

CHAPTER 12:

Market orientation; customer relationship; innovation; digital payments; fintech; employee orientation; agility; customer orientation

CHAPTER 13:

Strategic agility; responsible leadership; safety thinking; integrative growth strategy; employee engagement; CSR and sustainability

Chapter 1

AJMAL PERFUMES – *The Inimitable Aroma of Success*

Priyanka Lalwani

Abstract

The origin of perfumery can be traced back to the true cradle of human civilization and culture in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt. The world's first referenced chemist was a perfumer named Tapputi-Belatekallim who lived in Babylon more than 3,000 years ago. She used her intimate knowledge of chemistry to develop various formulations and techniques to revolutionize the process of perfumery creation. Similarly, Ajmal is one of the first companies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to have pioneered the science and art of perfumery creation. This case study describes the inspiring journey of Ajmal Perfumes which began in the farms of a small village located in Hojai, Assam, to becoming a world-class perfumer with a global reach of over 45 countries. From "Farm to Flacon," (Flacon a.k.a. glass bottle) the company's perfect control over their seamless value chain has enabled them to sustainably grow their business while maintaining high standards of quality. Their performance across five major dimensions (finance, market, processes, people, and corporate social responsibility [CSR]) is used to gauge their success. In this case analysis, the strategic framework behind the success of Ajmal Perfumes is captured. Transformational Leadership (TL), Customer Centricity (CC), Intrapreneurial Behavior (IB), Total Quality Management (TQM), Innovation Success (IS), Absorptive Capacity (AC), and CSR are identified as their key drivers of success. A critical review of existing literature related to success drivers was also undertaken that brought forward knowledge gaps and future areas of research in the domain of TQM and AC.

Keywords: Transformational leadership; customer centricity; intrapreneurial behavior; total quality management; innovation success; absorptive capacity; corporate social responsibility

Introduction

Perfumes have become a conspicuous element in several cultures and have been associated with an ostentatious display of wealth and power. For centuries, France has been the authority in the world of perfumes industry. Grasse has been known as the “perfume capital of the world,” where some of the big names of the industry such as Dior, Hermes, and Chanel continue to grow flowers in protected fields. Rare flowers such as Centifolia rose, Jasmine, Orange Blossom are cultivated and harvested in Grasse, which serve as key ingredients in manufacturing timeless classics such as Chanel N°5, J’Adore, Miss Dior. To maintain the quality and consistency of their natural ingredients, brands such as Chanel and Guerlain have been among the few handful fragrance houses in the west to drive the massive supply chain transformation process, “from Field to Flacon.”

Nearly, 4,000 years ago, the first form of perfume; “incense,” was discovered by the Mesopotamians. The art of perfume preparation which was born in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, later travelled to the Romans and the Persians where it was further refined (Gadea, Vatca, & Vatca, 2017). There has been growing anecdotal evidences of the use of essences and perfumery for religious and aromatic purposes. While concentrated aromatic oils can be extracted from several plant species, Agarwood, particularly has been revered and cited in early seminal texts of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism (López-Sampson & Page, 2018). Agarwood is the fragrant resin-infused wood derived from the wounded trees of *Aquilaria* species which is grown only in parts of South East Asia. Agarwood fragrance has been described in Sanskrit texts as early as 1,400 BCE, and several of its medical applications were detailed as early as 65 BCE. Furthermore, on numerous occasions agarwood has been mentioned in the Quran and the Hadith. For instance, historically Agarwood was also highly valued for its medicinal properties and was recommended by prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in treatment of ailments (López-Sampson & Page, 2018).

Agarwood, also known as Oudh, has been one of the most recognized and revered fragrances in the Arab world. However, the popularity of Oudh and Oudh oil amongst western perfumery brands has risen exponentially only since the launch of Yves Saint Laurent’s M7 in 2002 under its then creative director Tom Ford. Currently, Oudh is one of the most expensive raw ingredients in the fragrance industry due to which it is often referred to as “black gold.” The price of a kilo of oudh is often similar and occasionally even more expensive than gold. Due to its high demand and limited supply, oudh is currently one of the most desirable ingredients of the world. Currently, the global agarwood market is valued over £5 billion annually (Clark & Johnston, 2020). In perfumery, oudh is either used in the form of oudh oil (dahn al oudh) or oudh wood (incense). Oudh oil, also referred to as liquid gold, is also one of the most expensive oils in the world.

This case analysis illustrates the successful journey of a farmer whose name has now become synonymous with quality and excellence in the perfumery industry. It is the success story of a perfumery brand which entered the oudh market nearly half a century before the international fragrance industry began to get

tinged with the hypnotic magic of oudh. Oudh, which is also the DNA of the brand, has changed the fortunes of Ajmal Perfumes. In the last seven decades, the organization has witnessed unparalleled exponential growth in the GCC perfumery market. It has surpassed majority of its regional business competitors to establish its strong presence in the international market. This case analysis lists down the ingredients of Ajmal's success story and the criteria by which they measure their success. Furthermore, a critical review of existing literature related to success drivers is also undertaken to analyze the extent to which key drivers and how they are practiced either align or deviate from existing literature and accordingly, areas of future research are suggested.

Ajmal Perfumes – An Overview

Founded in the year 1951, Ajmal Perfumes is one of the largest manufacturers of fragrances in the Middle East and around the globe. The company is also one of the first perfumery houses in the region to establish a Research & Development wing to create state-of-the-art fragrances. Furthermore, Ajmal Perfumes is also one of the first perfumery companies in the GCC to work closely with local and regional bodies such as the Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA) towards creating a viable and effective quality standards mechanism in the GCC region. Today, Ajmal Perfumes is renowned in the perfumery industry for the quality of its fragrances that it has been producing since 1951. From "Farm to Flacon," Ajmal Perfumes is one of the few perfumery houses in the world to have such a high degree of vertical integration. The company has access to its own raw materials and ingredients and has agarwood plantations across the North Eastern regions of India. Ajmal Perfumes has ownership of most of the aspects of its supply chain such as raw materials, fragrance development, manufacturing, design, retail, and distribution. Having control of nearly all stages of their value chain positively impacts their supply chain efficiency. Ajmal Perfumes has grown multifold since the inception of their first retail outlet in Dubai in 1976. Today the firm has more than 240 retail stores globally with presence in more than 45 countries of the world. It has a 150,000 sqft state-of-the-art factory which manufactures nearly 100,000 perfume bottles every day. Moreover, it also has over 1,000 dealerships and distributors across the world and has presence in more than 30 global duty-free outlets and international airlines. Ajmal Perfume also has a vast product portfolio of over 300 finest fragrances.

Know Their Roots – How it All Began?

The origins of brand Ajmal can be traced back to the early 1950s, when a young farmer from Hojai, ventured into the jungles of Assam, India, that grew Agarwood (*Aquilaria*) trees. A rice farmer by profession, the founder Late Haji Ajmal Ali was searching for liquid gold called "oudh" which was going to change the fortunes of his family and the face of the perfumery industry. After he learned the art of oudh extraction and procured oudh, he made a momentous move to Mumbai, India in 1950s. Mumbai was the marketplace for oudh and oudh oil

trade in India. With only INR 500 as capital, he opened his first shop at Nagdevi Street at Crawford Market in Mumbai, India. It wasn't long before he started creating various fragrant oils and cultivated a reputation as a prodigious perfumery supplier amongst Arab traders who visited India's western shores. With the orders flooding in from the exclusive markets in Middle East, the late Haji Ajmal Ali decided to brand its product ranges using his patronymic or family name "Ajmal." He realized the countless opportunities that existed on the other side of the Arabian Sea, and thus, in 1976, Ajmal opened its first outlet in Dubai, UAE.

In 1976, Ajmal launched its first fragrance "Mukhallat" (Arabic for "concoction"). The product was an instant success and prompted the company to launch several more products. Furthermore, in 1987, Ajmal Perfumes became the first company to introduce the magic of Dahn Al Oudh (Oil of the Oudh) in Eau de Parfum form for the wider global audience. Prior to this, Dahn Al Oudh was always available in the oil form as a traditional scent of the Arab culture. In 1987, Ajmal Perfumes also established its first factory in Dubai, UAE. Simultaneously, the company also set-up a high-tech R&D facility.

The Corporate Philosophy as Seen in Their Delivery

A fragrance is all that it takes to travel through time, such is the bond between memory and smell – Late Haji Ajmal Ali.

Ajmal Perfumes, the iconic perfumery brand, embodies its founder's philosophy of crafting memories which serves as a blueprint for its operations. The brand through its fragrances aims to recreate odor-induced nostalgic memories and emotions for its customers. It aims to enrich the lifestyle of its customers by encouraging innovation and continual improvement, by adopting ethically, socially and environmentally responsible practices, by attracting and retaining best talent, by establishing and maintaining relationships with its stakeholders based on trust and respect, and by maximizing stakeholder interests.

Over the last seven decades, Ajmal Perfumes has changed the landscape of fragrance creation and selling in the regional market. It has created groundbreaking innovations such as Dahn Al Oudh spray and Oudh Mubakhar which have changed the way how customers use oriental perfumery. Every year the company also allocates a sizeable R&D budget and introduces at least 8–10 new products in the market. Ajmal Perfumes has been one of the first perfumery companies in the region to make the shift from transactional selling to creating more relational experiences for its customers. It has raised the bar of the regional perfumery market and has brought the aroma of oudh to the west. The company through its adoption of the triple-bottom-line principles of people, planet, and profit has also created long-term value and success for its stakeholders. Today Ajmal Perfumes has become synonymous with trust and has one of the highest customer and employee retention rates in the regional fragrance market.

What We Display with Pride (Products)?

Ajmal Perfumes product portfolio can be broadly classified under the traditional and modern umbrella. Their traditional product line includes products like Agarwood, Oudh, Indian Attars, Dahn Al Oudh, and Mukhallat. On the other hand, their modern product line is segmented into seven product categories namely French male, French female, Oriental spray, Oriental concentrate, Dahn Al Oudh concentrate, Dahn Al Oudh spray and Signature series.

Their traditional product portfolio primarily caters to the affluent, more traditionally and culturally rooted male and female Khaleeji locals between 30 and 45 years of age. Alternatively, their modern product portfolio caters to the unique needs and wants of younger Khaleeji locals who constantly seek to differentiate themselves. Overall the company's product portfolio is largely used by their target segment for four primary uses namely Personal, Social, Religious, and Home ambience use.

Traditionally, nearly 70% of the company's revenues were attributable to their traditional product portfolio. Comparatively, today more than half of their business comes from their modern fragrances.

Can You Feel the Heat? (Competition)

Ajmal Perfumes' competitors can be broadly classified into the following three categories:

- Regional competitors such as Abdul Samad Al Quraishi, Arabian Oud, Rasasi, Haramain, Swiss Arabia, Junaid, and Asgar Ali.
- International competitors such as Tom Ford, Gucci, Armani, Creed, and other French brands which have oudh-based offerings.
- Local home-grown competitors such Mohamed Hilal Group (Hind Al Oud, Anafasic Dakhoon, Khaltat), Lootah, Dar Al Teeb, Al Jazeera, Atyab Al Sheekh, Saray, Amal Al Kuwait. These are local brands that are emerging from the regional market such as Kuwait and UAE.

Champions Play as One Team (“Team Ajmal”)

Ajmal Perfumes is headed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mr Amiruddin Ajmal. He is the second generation of his family to join the business and is the eldest son of late Haji Ajmal Ali. Since a very early age he was enamored by the perfumery business, and accordingly decided to join the family business at the age of 18. He assumed the leadership of the company in the 1980s. Under his astute stewardship, the business has seen a series of strategic expansions across the GCC and on the global front. He along with the other second generation Ajmal family members have transformed Ajmal Perfumes from its humble roots into what it is today; a thriving, multi-million-dollar family-owned business. The following departments directly report to him:

1. **Operations** – The Deputy Chief Operating Officer (COO) is Mr Abdulla Ajmal, who is the first of the third generation of his family to join Ajmal Perfumes. He is the son of Mr Amiruddin Ajmal, who joined the family business in 1996. He graduated from Huron University, UK with a degree in international relations, and has served the business over the last two decades in various aspects. Shortly after joining the business, he played an instrumental role in enhancing Ajmal's French/Western line of fragrances and succeeded to diversify Ajmal's clientele through an effective brand-positioning strategy. He brings with him a modern and vastly more international approach to running a business. His core responsibilities include managing the company and the strategic planning for expansion of the business in terms of both retail and distribution. Mr Abdulla Ajmal currently has three portfolios that are reporting directly into him; Perfumery, IT, and International Export 2 (USA).
2. **Group Finance** – Group Finance, which is headed by Mr Abid Hussain, is the pump which keeps the money in constant circulation ensuring that Ajmal Perfumes continues to thrive and grow. It primarily focuses on strategic functions such as business expansion, strategic planning, and on areas of high commercial importance. The team also manages the group's treasury function, implements budgetary control, oversees legal functions, and monitors the overall Finance & Accounting function. The heads of the accounts department report directly to the Group Finance head.
3. **UAE Sales** – UAE Sales is headed by Mr Mahbul Majumdar. He is responsible for the entire UAE sales, which is further broken down into two verticals; Ajmal Sales and Barqui. Barqui is an independent retailer of Ajmal Perfumes which operates in a multi-branded kiosk format to cater to an entry-level consumer segment. The lower-priced products of brand Ajmal, Maryaj, and Makkaj, which are sub-brands of Ajmal Perfumes are available at Barqui.
4. **Marketing** – Marketing, which is headed by Mr Evarist Rego, plays a pivotal role in the firm and is responsible for promoting brand Ajmal globally. The various functions of this department are broadly classified as advertising, social media, visual merchandizing, e-commerce, and Ajmal One loyalty program. Besides handling the marketing portfolio, Mr Evarist Rego is also the business head for Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.
5. **Perfumery R&D** – Perfumery R&D department, which is headed by Dr Kanwal Deep, is the heart of the company's knowledge. The R&D team is responsible for conducting relevant research work by using latest technology. A noteworthy example is their research in Agarwood plantations by artificial inoculation technique. The team is also responsible for developing allied products like Oudh Mubakhar (Bakhoor) and inhouse captive raw materials.
6. **Quality Assurance** – Quality Assurance department, which is headed by Ms Leena Anish, is the conscience of the organization. The Quality Assurance department at Ajmal is wholly engaged in ensuring reduction of inefficiencies, operational errors, and product defects thereby proactively improving capability and capacity of operations through standard methods, tools,

or skills. They are also responsible for the maintenance and evolution of International standards for namely ISO 9001, ISO 22716, ISO 22301 and Emirates Quality Mark requirements.

7. **Dahn Al Oudh & Agarwood** – Dahn Al Oudh & Agarwood is headed by Mr Abdur Rahim Ajmal, who is also a third-generation member of the Ajmal family. This team is responsible for the all the processes related to dahn al oudh and agarwood such as planning and budgeting, procurement, negotiation, processing, new product development (NPD), bulk production, packaging, and supply.
8. **Administration & Public Relation Coordination (PRC)** – The Administration & PRC department, which is headed by Ms Helen Rebello, plays a primary role in the organization's optimal functioning. This team is responsible for utilities management and control; dispatch control; event management and sponsorship; labor camp management; trademark renewals and registrations; Oman sales coordination; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) sales coordination, and other related functions.
9. **Public Relations (PR)** – The PR department is headed by Mr Yahya Azam. This team is responsible for trade and industrial license renewal; visa and labor card renewals; handling of permits for all Sales & Promotions; and other related functions.
10. **Human Resources (HR)** – The HR department, headed by Mr Anthony Sagaya, oversees employment-related functions. It plays a key role operationally and strategically to develop talent within the organization that enables Ajmal Perfumes to meet its strategic goals. Some of key functions of the HR department are Recruitment & Selection; Compensation & Benefits Management; Performance Management; Employee Relations & Engagement; Training & Development and Legal Compliance.
11. **Supply Chain** – The supply chain department, which is headed by Mr Shapoor Bhatthela, is a key department responsible for overall coordination and management of a complex network of activities involved in delivering a finished product to the end-user. The department is split into seven distinct functional areas which internally work together seamlessly, namely Materials Management Development (MMD) Planning, Design Development Primary (DDP), Design Development Secondary (DDS), MMD Purchase, MMD Logistics, MMD Warehouse, and Production Packaging. MMD Planning, DDP, and DDS departments are headed by Mr Asadullah Ajmal, who is also a third-generation Ajmal. Besides heading the supply chain department, Mr Shapoor Bhatthela is also the head for Travel Retail, Ajmal's entry-level masstige brand Maryaj, and International Export 1 & 3 departments.
12. **Travel Retail** – The Travel Retail is headed by Mr Oscar Menezes and reports directly to the General Manager, Mr Shapoor Bhatthela. The key functions of this department are business development, implementation of promotional strategies in duty-free outlets/airlines aimed at increasing brand visibility.
13. **International Export 1 & 3** – All international export markets excluding the United States are handled by the departments Export 1 and Export 3.

These include countries in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe. International Export 1 department is headed by Mr Farrukh Kidwai, and International Export 3 department is headed by Mr Oscar Menezes.

No Half Measures

*“If you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it.” – Peter Drucker
(1909–2005)*

Almost every entrepreneur in business strives to be successful. However, how organizations define success varies widely across companies, industries, and even across functional units. Peter Drucker, the father of modern management, strongly advocated the practice of performance measurement to modern businesses which enabled organizations to improve their business performance and provided them the necessary strategic focus. Nonetheless, the measurement of organizational success continues to be a subject of debate not only amongst managers but also amongst researchers. Accordingly, the senior executives at Ajmal Perfumes have established relative measures of their success which span across various dimensions. For instance, apart from their financial metrics of success such as increasing profit margins, growing revenues, and strong P&L, they also consider the success of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities as a key indicator of their sustainable success. They quantify how successful their community welfare, health and education, environment, employee welfare initiatives have been and establish long-term CSR goals through an integrative approach. For instance, they have measured how their manpower and material resources during floods and natural disasters have benefited more than 15 Million people till now, which they then use to gauge their success and expand their impact. Additionally, they also consider the number of years of history they have enjoyed and their brand growth as a key indicator of their success. For instance, despite the cutthroat competitive landscape, Ajmal Perfumes has enjoyed over 69 years of history and has expanded to over 240 crafting memories retail stores across the globe. From its first shop in Dubai in 1976, it has globally expanded its presence in over 45 countries and has secured over 1,000 dealerships and distributors worldwide. Ajmal Perfumes has also significantly expanded their product portfolio and manufacturing capability over the years, which is also considered a key indicator of their success. For instance, from their first fragrance launch in 1976, the company now stands strong with a vast portfolio of over 300 fragrances. They have diversified their product portfolio beyond oudh to include an extensive western fragrance line, and a skin care line which comprises body lotion and powder. Ajmal Perfumes is also currently one of the largest manufacturers of fragrances worldwide and produces nearly 100,000 perfume bottles daily. Furthermore, they consider their process metrics such as the high quality of its existing and new products also an important indicator of their success. Throughout the industry, Ajmal Perfumes is acclaimed for their stringent quality standards due to which several international perfumery houses are increasingly collaborating and procuring raw materials from them. Their rejection and