

# Bespoke success plans for SMEs

Dubai-based SME Shuraa Management & Consultancy has so far assisted nearly 20,000 small to medium businesses to set up their base on the UAE soil

ALKESH SHARMA / EMIRATES BUSINESS

He is known for his judicious business sense, dependability to deliver positive results and ability to predict future market trends at very early stages. Saeed Khalifa Mohammed Al Fuqaei, a UAE national, has established a reputation for himself as a prominent business figure in the region at a young age of 36. Saeed Khalifa is dynamic and self-driven individual whose career has been forged by identifying opportunities that others have missed and exploiting them for commercial success.

In 2001, he founded 'Shuraa Management & Consultancy' along with his business partner, Yasmeen Siddiqui and it has since blossomed into a premier business set-up service provider in the UAE. Establishing a busi-



ness could always be a challenging process but by assisting firms to make the right decision at the right time, Shuraa has flourished and has successfully established more than 20,000 companies till date.

Since its inception, Shuraa has enjoyed continuous growth under Saeed's and his business partner's stewardship. Both partners maintain a hands-on approach to all matters pertaining to the business and take pride in Shuraa's ability to offer complete services specifically tailored to the needs of each individual client.

As the leading business set up service provider in UAE, Shuraa offers a wide range of services right from establishment all the way through to the necessary post formation activities. Services include business licen-

ing and registration all over the UAE, business centres, sourcing office space, PRO services, all types of visas and opening of corporate bank accounts.

*Excerpts from the interview*

**Owing to their ability to thwart even major meltdowns, SMEs are rightly considered the backbone of UAE economy? Which factors are responsible for attracting SME entrepreneurs towards the UAE?**

The UAE economy has shown tremendous growth when compared to many other global economies. I would attribute this to the visionary approach of our leaders. The

tries, the SME sector is still lacking in competitiveness. Moreover, there is a strong need to enhance the corporate governance as well as the transparency aspect, since these are the vital factors which the SMEs want to operate on a global platform. It is also important to embrace innovation, since the dynamics are changing on a daily basis.

**What is the role of UAE government in ensuring a robust growth of SME sector?**

The UAE government places very strong emphasis on the growth of SME sector. It is showing a keen interest in ensuring an enhanced contribution as



Saeed Khalifa Mohammed Al Fuqaei

**What was the motivation behind establishing Shuraa Management & Consultancy?**

Since a very young age, I have always had a keen interest in the global and local business environment. While exploring the difficulties that companies face in establishing themselves in Dubai, I was shocked both by the obstacles that firms must overcome and also by the lack of professional support available to them.

Rather than seeing this as a problem, I took it as an opportunity. For me it was an obvious move to offer a more thorough and professional service to companies wishing to do business in the UAE than was previously available. This not only eases the transition of international enterprises but also creates jobs and boosts the local economy. So is beneficial for all concerned. Our priority has always been to assist our clients to save their time, money and effort by providing expert advice gained through years of experience.

**How is Shuraa Management & Consultancy helping businessmen, who want to set up their base in UAE?**

Many investors find the task of setting up their business to be quite daunting. They may have a brilliant concept but feel overwhelmed with the actual task of setting up the business. Most of them get confused over not knowing what to do and how to do. We help these people to navigate the various stages.

We even help them to take decisions on whether they want to base their venture in a free zone or not, the licence procedure and the documentation process. We offer a customised experience that is tailored to

meet the needs of a particular entrepreneur.

We have seen that despite a slowdown in global economy, there has been an increase in business entities' registration in Dubai. So which factors are responsible behind overcoming the sluggishness in the market?

It goes without saying that a very robust foreign trade performance has played an immensely vital role in UAE's rapid economic growth as well as in the country's transformation into a modern economy. Strategic location, most modern and state-of-the-art infrastructure and above all well defined pro-business policies have played vital roles in helping to overcome the market sluggishness. In addition, the UAE provides the right platform for investors to enter the global market in a much easier manner.

**Many investors find the task of setting up their business to be quite daunting. We offer them complete solutions to all their problems while helping in establishing the business**

**How could you help a foreign investor, who intends to start a SME in the Emirates?**

We provide a one-stop solution for all those who intend to set up their business in the UAE. Our service range is quite comprehensive.

We offer a wide range of services and complete business set-up packages, right from establishment all the way through to the necessary post business set-up activities. The services include business setup in Dubai, business licensing and registration, sourcing office space, PRO services in

Dubai, visas for the investor as well as the employees, Company formation in Dubai, and opening of corporate bank accounts.

We also provide the required guidance and assistance for setting up companies in the various Free Zones, across the UAE. In order to operate a business in UAE, every company must first be issued a Business (Trade) Licence. We also assist in this process - be it a Professional, Commercial or Industrial Trade Licence. After the business setup, every organisation requires additional services, whether it be applying for document clearance, immigration cards, visas, licenses, insurance etc.

Shuraa offers quality PRO services to allow organisations to concentrate on their core competencies. Shuraa also offers monthly or yearly services for companies seeking to develop and maintain links with government and non-government agencies all over the UAE.

**According to you, your clients lack the most in which areas?**

Our clients are from diversified industries. While most of them come with high enthusiasm, some of them lack the will to meet the challenges that they face.

**Your clients constitute mainly locals or foreigners?**

Most of my clients are expatriates.

**Your consultancy firm works in which capacity while helping any company to establish its base in the UAE?**

Our relationship varies based on the needs of our clients. On the whole, we work as an extension of our client and we believe that we are their partners.

**What are your expansion plans for Shuraa Management & Consultancy? Also, how would you like to sum up its last 15-year journey?**

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN HIS DNA

Saeed Khalifa's success did not come as a surprise considering his background as a member of the esteemed Al Fuqaei family in Dubai. His father, Khalifa Mohammed Al Fuqaei was often referred to as "King of the Sea" and was a highly respected business leader in UAE.

Khalifa Mohammed Al Fuqaei started his career decades ago and had the foresight and resourcefulness to develop shipping trade with numerous countries long before the UAE was the recognised economy it is today.

This drive and determination was passed down to his son who is a successful self-made entrepreneur in his own right. As well as Shuraa Management, Saeed Khalifa owns several other businesses and properties in Dubai.

The journey so far has been very good and highly productive. When I started this venture, I never thought that my journey will be this interesting. The UAE has grown manifold over the years and I am lucky to be part of this wonderful country. I am happy to state that I have established a very strong base that will help me to meet the growing needs of the market in a proactive manner.

**A piece of advice for young entrepreneurs who wish to set up business in UAE?**

It is important for anybody who wants to set up business in UAE to have a clear idea of what he or she is getting into. It is important to analyse if the business idea fits with the personal vision or not.

## About Shuraa

Established in 2001, Shuraa is a professional organisation which encompasses a complete range of business setup services including licensing, PRO, Management and Business Centres. The company's aim is to amplify their business in Dubai and across UAE.

well as the performance of the SME sector in the nation's economy. They are viewed as the cornerstone for economic growth and are considered as a vital contributor to the overall GDP (gross domestic product).

The government believes that the SME sector leads to job creation as well as the development of new business models. Driven by high levels of business opportunities particularly in the trading and services sector, the UAE SME sector continues to boost the economy. It is a well known fact that SME's role in the overall growth is highly influenced by governmental policy interventions.

The UAE government has ensured that various aspects of the legal environment are clear and in place strategically in order to facilitate the business growth and development of SME owners.