

ceo

The magazine for decision makers

Near and Middle East





Light and shade

Shining and glittering, colourful lights evoke a sense of the Orient. A great deal of craftsmanship and skill goes into their making. The cover photo was taken in the Fanafillah Turkish shop in Zurich (Switzerland).

In this issue of ceo Magazine, we tell the tales of Fanafillah and eleven other businesses and individuals – just twelve of the many other remarkable entrepreneurs in and from the Near and Middle East.

And while we're on the subject of light, have you noticed how the cover page shines in the dark? Like something out of "One Thousand and One Nights"?

Arabic, Turkish, Farsi... a huge variety of languages and dialects are spoken in the Middle East. And you'll get a taste of that from the title of each article, which is phrased in the language endemic to the place where the interviewee either works or actually lives.

Hummus, fishcakes or tripe? In the online edition of ceo Magazine, you'll find our interviewees' favourite recipes. Why not try them out yourself?

Also included in the online version are further interview questions, photos and even several videos. You can enjoy them while relaxing on the sofa, on the train or in the restaurant, using your smartphone or tablet – wherever you might be.

Off we go!

**magazine.
pwc.ch/en**



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395 million people, a surface area of 69 million square miles, 26 countries, three world religions – these key figures give only a rough impression of the sprawling, multifarious corner of the world we generally refer to as the Near and Middle East. As diverse and contrastive as this region might be, it is all the more homogenous in one respect: its economic, social and geopolitical dynamism.



Urs Honegger
CEO PwC Switzerland

This is why we have devoted the current issue of *ceo Magazine* to the stretch of land extending from western North Africa to the western border of Pakistan. The kaleidoscope of differing characteristics throughout this region lends uniqueness to each and every country within its bounds. Here, millions of people within the space of just several generations have shed their traditional lifestyles to become exemplars of innovation and creators of one of the world's most modern mega-hubs.

The magazine you hold in your hands gives voice to personalities who have recognised this potential and are helping to shape the future of the Near and Middle East or one of its constituent countries. They relate the history of their origins and thoughts about what lies ahead. And our interviewers delve deeper into the question of what we in Western cultures can learn from our Eastern neighbours. Ultimately, we want to know what drives the people on the crest of this new wave of entrepreneurial creativity and where they get the energy to make things happen.

And speaking of energy: classical markets such as those for crude oil, natural gas and tourism play a pivotal geostrategic role in the greater Mideast region – after all, the Persian Gulf area and Arabian Peninsula are home to roughly two-thirds of the world's oil deposits and some 44 per cent of the natural gas reserves. But also new branches of commerce are taking advantage of the Mideast's privileged location between Europe, Africa and Asia and releasing new kinds of energy, for example in the pharmaceutical, food and luxury goods sectors. Other key areas include medtech and cleantech themes like construction technology, recycling and water treatment. Many decision-makers in the region have come to the realisation that their economy must become less reliant on oil and instead diversify into new fields.

So what role does Switzerland play in the Near and Middle East? On 11 March 2011, the Federal Council codified the strategic focal points of Switzerland's engagement in this region. Since then, the authorities in Bern have expanded their activities markedly to include democratisation efforts, economic development assistance, migration management and the protection of especially endangered ethnic groups.

The economic potency and ongoing transformation in the Near and Middle East offer unique chances for individuals and companies alike. With this, the latest issue of *ceo Magazine*, we wish to give you some food for thought and perhaps the one or the other idea as to how your company can catch the wave of dynamism that is sweeping this vast region.

We wish you inspiring, growth-Oriented reading!

Urs Honegger

Current PwC and Strategy& studies on the topic Near and Middle East



Care Anywhere:
Moving health and wellness out of the hospital into the hands of the consumer



Adjusting the Lens on Economic Crime in the Arab World



Developing renewable energy projects:
A guide to achieving success in MENA



Managing tax:
What companies and Governments can do to make tax less taxing in the Middle East



A false sense of security:
Cybersecurity in the Middle East

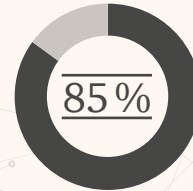
The above studies can be accessed at pwc.com/m1



Generations A:
Differences and similarities across the Arab generations

The study can be accessed at strategyand.pwc.com

Megatrends transforming the region



85 % of CEO's in the Middle East found technological change the most transformative of the global megatrends over the next five years.

Source: PwC Global CEO Survey



40 % under 25

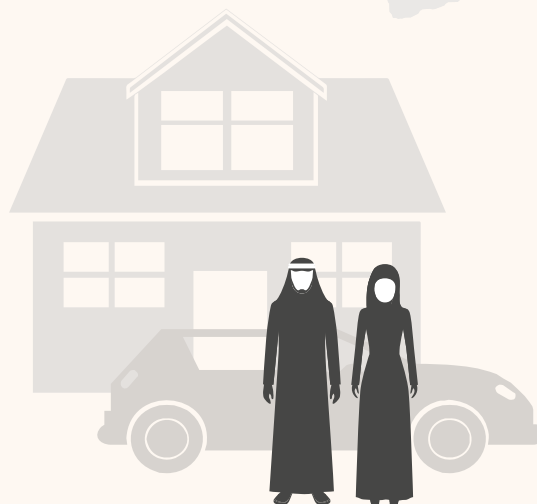
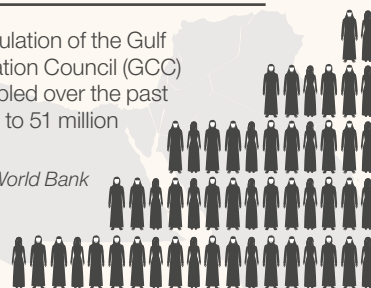
The region is young, with over 40 % of people under 25.

Source: UN

51 million

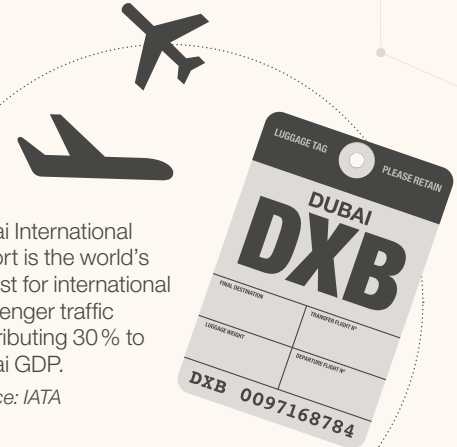
The population of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has doubled over the past 20 years to 51 million in 2015.

Source: World Bank



Middle East middle classes are forecast to grow by 51 % to 165.5 million by 2020.

Source: OECD, European Environment Agency



Dubai International Airport is the world's largest for international passenger traffic contributing 30 % to Dubai GDP.

Source: IATA

\$4 trillion

There are over US\$4 trillion worth of projects planned or under construction in the Middle East and North Africa.

Source: MEED

Read more

Middle East Megatrends: Transforming our region

Understanding the impact of global trends on the Middle East, and how governments and businesses succeed in a very different world

The study can be accessed at pwc.com/m1





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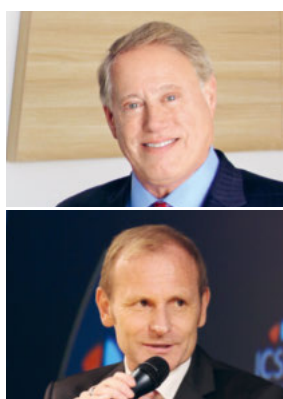
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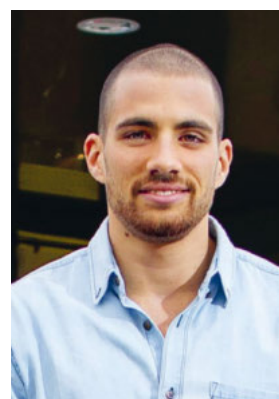
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בונד, ג'יינ בונד

Bond, Jane Bond

Shira Kaplan: elite military service, a degree from Harvard, Mandarin studies in Beijing, and a stint in private banking – how do you top all that? Try starting up a company that specialises in cyber security from Israel.

Text: Eric Johnson

Images: Markus Bertschi





You have a very diverse background. Still, how did you get into cyber security?

As an Israeli citizen, at 18 I was drafted into the military, and I was assigned to Unit 8200. This is the crème de la crème of intelligence (comparable to the United States' National Security Agency or the UK's Government Communications Headquarters). There you see technologies and ideas that only years later are adopted in the civilian world. 8200 also serves as a sort of "tech incubator". Among others, IT security companies such as Checkpoint and Palo Alto Networks have their roots here. Just as in Switzerland, military friendships and networks in Israel run deep, so after a decade of studying and working, I decided to return to my military/security connections.

Presumably, Israel is more advanced in cyber security than most countries?

Not just presumably! Israel is exposed to millions of cyberattacks every day: on the national electric grid, on the water supply, on the banking system, everywhere. To keep up, the country has no choice but to be innovative.

“Israel is exposed to millions of cyberattacks every day.”

Cyverse, your company, what role does it play?

First, we are a cyber security consultant. We leverage talent and know-how in Israel and deliver it to corporations and governments in Europe, and, in due course, to the rest of world. So we go to, say, pharmaceutical firms and big banks, help them identify security problems, and open up our Israeli toolbox to find solutions. These can be services such as penetration testing or security assessments, and they can be technical solutions such as software that detects cyber-security events in your IT network. Second, we are a broker. We help Israeli security companies to find customers and funding, and we help investors to find those companies as investments.

“Both Swiss and Israelis are innovative, just in very different ways.”

So you have one foot in Israel. Why is the other in Switzerland?

This country is the global hub for so many multinational corporations. In a small geography, you have a lot of multi-billion dollar/franc companies: in pharma, banking, insurance, food and beverages. In Israel, cyber security has been a mainstream issue for at least five years, but here it has become truly big only in the past 12–18 months. Switzerland is looking for cyber solutions. So, why not start here? If we can make it here, we can make it anywhere.

“Switzerland is a global hub. If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere.”

What is the single largest threat in cyber security today?

In the private sector, it is an “inside job”. Either an employee turns against you, or, more often, an external attacker takes over an employee’s credentials, and uses them to access your crown jewels. So this attacker is crawling through your system, stealing business information, intellectual property, sensitive data about clients – and money, of course. There is a whole dark economy out there where these can be sold: everything has its black market price. At the national level, the biggest threat is cyber terrorism. Recently, there was an assault on the Ukraine’s electricity grid; there was a breach at a Belgian nuclear plant. The biggest nightmare is that terrorists could hack their way into these networks – even, say, into the train network – and manipulate them in a harmful way.

You travel regularly between Israel and Switzerland – how do you contrast the two?

Israel and Switzerland are the negative and the positive of the same photograph. They couldn’t be more different. Israelis are innovative, spontaneous, aggressive, non-traditional, non-hierarchical, informal – they are in your face! Swiss are also innovative, but in a very reserved manner, much more conservative and formal. So a big part of our work at Cyverse is to act as cultural translators. The Swiss expect what I call the two ‘Ts’: trust and track record. We help the Israelis establish these with them. Israelis also like to move very fast – we help them to slow down.

Welcome to Cyverse

Shira Kaplan has packed more into 33 years than most do in twice as many. After military service, studies in the USA and China, and several jobs, in 2014 the Israeli national founded a cyber security firm called Cyverse, based in Küsnacht on Zurich’s Gold Coast. Kaplan lives nearby with her husband and their two young daughters.

www.cyverse.ch

“مهمتنا هي مدّ الجسور”

“Our mission is to build bridges”

Chris Watts heads the Swiss Business Hub of Switzerland Global Enterprise in Dubai. As a business promoter and trade envoy, he shows Swiss companies the ropes in the region and champions the innovative capabilities of his homeland. Building up viable business relationships takes patience, trust and respect on both sides, so says Watts.

Text: editorial staff “ceo”
Images: Markus Bertschi

Mr Watts, you’ve been travelling regularly to and from the Middle East since 16 years. Today, as Swiss Consul General in Dubai, you’re also in charge of the local Swiss Business Hub (SBH). What makes the region so interesting?

It’s a patchwork of many factors – a place where various cultures intermingle and tradition meets modernity. The populace is young and motivated. People are open and warm-hearted in the way they treat you. New vistas are opening up. The atmosphere is energy-packed, intense. Many states are still young and burn with the desire to make progress.

What are the tasks of the Swiss Business Hub Middle East?

Our lean structure is embedded in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and we have the technical assistance of Switzerland Global Enterprise at our disposal. On the ground in the United Arab Emirates, we work very closely with the Swiss embassy. The Swiss Business Hub in the World Trade Center Dubai, with its satellite offices in Riyadh and Doha, has been in existence for ten years. We

cover a large area that extends from Egypt to the Pakistan border. Our people here in Dubai and at the Swiss embassies in neighbouring countries, in collaboration with a broader network of experts, bring Swiss companies together with firms in the region and vice versa. We also offer support in legal matters and help in the search for qualified personnel.

What are your main focal points?

Our mission is to build bridges between markets. We accompany businesses, espe-

cially SMEs, in their efforts to cross these bridges. Luxury goods is one of the most active sectors in the region – roughly 60 per cent of those Swiss companies’ exports go to this region – but the Pharmaceuticals and Food industries are also heavily engaged here. The Cleantech sector is definitely growing in importance: sustainability, building technology, recycling and water treatment are of particular significance in the region and Swiss companies have tremendous know-how in those areas. I’d also make special note of the Medtech and Healthcare sectors. Switzerland’s public health system is highly regarded here. Good chances exist for Swiss clinics and specialists who focus on patients from this region. And in anticipation of Expo 2020, which will be held in Dubai, we’re keying on the tourism aspect. Here, too, Switzerland can score points with its renowned hotel management schools.

You were involved in the commercial aviation business for quite a few years. What role does aviation play here?

It holds a special place in the region, not just due to the major airlines that hail from here. In some of the Mideast countries, the industry and its ancillary businesses account for up

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“One of my most enjoyable tasks is to foster awareness of Switzerland as a centre of innovation and research.”
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“When I mention how many Nobel Prize winners come from our country and that the Internet was effectively ‘invented’ in Switzerland, lots of participants are surprised.”

to one-third of the gross domestic product. In Dubai, that figure currently stands at 28 per cent, and the trend is on the rise. Even in Switzerland, quite a number of companies are active in this growth market. For that reason, we’ve teamed up with Swiss Aerospace Cluster to redouble our on-site efforts, particularly in terms of enabling Swiss technologies and know-how in the area of flight training and education to take part in the local growth.

What is the image of Switzerland in the UAE?

A positive one. Naturally, the usual stereotypes come first: fine watches, chocolate, banks, the breathtaking mountains and lakes. But it will still take quite a bit of doing to enhance local awareness of Switzerland as a centre of innovation and research, as well as the technological advances it has achieved in the fields of digitisation and Life Sciences. One of my most enjoyable tasks is to convey those facts.

How do you accomplish that?

For example by making presentations at companies. When I mention how many

Nobel Prize winners come from our country and that the Internet was effectively “invented” in Switzerland, lots of participants are surprised. Our education system also meets with great interest. 75 per cent of Dubai’s population is under the age of 25 and the economy needs well-educated special-

ists. Switzerland’s dual-track model – with its vocational basic training and parallel textbook schooling with the possibility after the apprenticeship to pursue higher professional education – is viewed as an exemplar here. Rightly so, in my opinion.

What chances do you give the region for the future?

The region’s privileged location between Europe, Africa and Asia gives it the chance to develop into a global hub. Dubai is predestined to become a finance and logistics centre. Already today, major conventions and trade fairs are held here. The leaders of the Gulf states have realised how important it is for their economies to be weaned from oil dependency. So they’re now actively diversifying into new fields.

Can you offer an example?

Water – a theme that’s of increasing importance in all countries of the region. The supply of potable H₂O is limited and valuable, yet essential for survival. The usual means of obtaining it, i.e. through the desalination of seawater, is considered a

“If you show up personally as the boss and perhaps bring along a small gift, you demonstrate to your potential partner that he’s important to you.”

cumbersome, expensive stop-gap technology. Finding a sustainable solution will require innovative approaches. For Swiss companies that have a lot to offer in this area, the opportunities abound.

Establishing sound business relationships takes endurance. What advice do you give to Swiss entrepreneurs?

First you have to build up a personal relationship and a bond of trust with the given counterparty – only then can you even start to talk business. Time plays a different role here: you need to ask twice, discuss three times. Constancy is the key to success. If you give up too early, there’s no hope for you. And there’s no use in sending a deputy. But if you come by personally as the boss and perhaps bring along a small gift, you demonstrate to your potential partner that he’s important to you.

What rules of behaviour have to be observed?

You should show respect for the culture of the host country wherever you might go – but you don’t have to overdo it. Dubai is a very cosmopolitan city; foreigners account for 93 per cent of the population, so there’s a lively interplay between cultural peculiarities. Being considerate of traditional customs, like the observance of Ramadan or when it comes to personal attire, is a natural thing for a foreigner to do, at least the way I see it.

How important are language skills?

In the Emirates, English is the business language – and generally the urbanites have a good command of it. Many managers graduated from schools in Britain or the USA. It should not be forgotten just how competitive the markets here actually are. The entire world is courting the Mideast in hopes of doing business, and language is a

crucial element in accomplishing that. However, outside the major cities, English is far less prevalent.

When you take a look back on the time you’ve spent in Dubai until now, is there any special highlight that stands out?

That would have to be my encounter with Bertrand Piccard, the adventurer and initiator of the Solar Impulse. The circumnavigation of the world with a solar-powered aeroplane started in March 2015 in Abu Dhabi and ended back here just a few months ago. Already in 2011, Switzerland organised a high-profile event in Abu Dhabi with Bertrand Piccard, and I had the honour of acting as moderator. I was very impressed by the aura and visionary vibes he radiated. Bertrand Piccard personifies in a unique way Switzerland’s values and ability to think and deal on a global scale.

What fascinates you about the culture and lifestyle of the people?

I like their candour and warm-heartedness. The hybrid culture, steeped in tradition but infused from the outside with new cosmopolitan traits, is very multifaceted. The people take their time – they like to sit together and chat. At the same time, though, their attitude towards life, especially that of the younger generation, is charged with an almost infectious dynamism.

How often do you get to come home?

On average, I spend 2 – 5 days in Switzerland every three months or so; but my home base is now Dubai where my family lives. In summer, when it’s very hot here, we mostly take our long holidays in Switzerland.

What do you miss by being in Dubai?

To say it’s the Swiss cheese would be perhaps a bit too banal. But what I do miss is some-

thing that I frequently realise only once I’m back: the lushness of nature, the colour green, the mountain landscapes, a walk in the forest. And at times I miss certain smells; ones that don’t even exist in a major city like Dubai.

Chris Watts heads the Swiss Business Hub in Dubai, one of Switzerland Global Enterprise’s 21 worldwide representative offices. At the behest of the Swiss government, this organisation promotes the import/export activities of domestic SMEs as well as direct foreign investments in Switzerland. Chris Watts (51), also serves as Swiss Consul General in Dubai. He grew up in Canton Zurich and subsequently studied political science, economics and constitutional law in Bern and Geneva. Following foreign sojourns to Cairo and Australia, he worked for the Federal Civil Aviation Department, Swissair and today’s Swiss International Air Lines. He lives together with his family in Dubai.

s-ge.com



**“I don’t desire
to use my mov-
ies merely as
an instrument
for making a
political state-
ment. Film-
making is also
an art form.”**



Türkiye: Görmezlikten gelmek yerine gözlemlemek

Turkey: Take a look instead of looking away

Text: Corin Ballhaus

Images: Markus Bertschi

Prize-winning film director and scriptwriter **Esen Işık** lives by this credo. Her films unveil the injustices, disadvantages and violence that are part of everyday life in her former homeland, Turkey. But in their making, she wants to preserve the artistic aspects of her otherwise realistic view of that world.

Ms Işık, you came to Switzerland from Turkey more than a quarter-century ago. What do you appreciate most about this country?

The culture of dialogue – the freedom to debate topics of concern openly and controversially. History shows that this is not the case in Turkey, especially in today's volatile environment. There, you learn to keep your own counsel. Practically every ten years, a military putsch erupts. In the aftermath, the government each time spawns tremendous fear by imposing martial law and carrying out arrests and executions. That fear has shaped Turkish society.

But do you nevertheless see commonalities between the two cultures?

In my mind, commonalities are not limited to two cultures. Through social media, the world as a whole has become smaller. Today, people who embrace universal values such as mutual respect and kindness can interact no matter what their nationality might be.

So to put it another way, in which respects can the two cultures learn from each other?

We can always learn from other people, regardless of where they come from. That also applies to the Turks. What's important is that we get away from the panoptic negative view of an entire culture. And especially so when it is represented officially, as is the case in Turkey, by a minority – albeit a very powerful one that has sway over

Esen Işık is a scriptwriter, film-maker and also a caretaker in a regional women's shelter. "Köpek", her first full-length feature film, was awarded the 2016 Swiss Film Prize. Through the use of three real-life examples, the movie deals with the socially passed-down tendency towards violence in Turkey. Esen Işık, a Turkish woman with Kurdish roots, discovered her fascination with the big screen already in her youth by attending film festivals and the many open-air cinemas in Istanbul. She came to Switzerland in 1990 in order to study cinematography at the Zurich University of the Arts. Today, she lives together with her daughter in Zurich.



“If forced changes are made to the system, they rarely come about peacefully. As far as I can see, it would take several generations to correct this tendency in Turkey.”

the military, police, justice, education, healthcare and other ministries. The majority of Turks simply want to live in peace and quiet but don't trust themselves to express their feelings.

What does it take to shape our relationships in a more positive way?

Mainly it takes international solidarity with the Turkish people as well as pressure on the state apparatchiks from outside, this on the part of politicians, the media and the business community – here in Switzerland as well.

What impressed you most in the collaboration between the Swiss and Turkish film teams?

The hospitality the Turks showed the Swiss. And the Swiss crew really enjoyed the Turkish meals after long, strenuous days of filming. Generally, the joint effort was marked by humour and the shared desire to come up with solutions to the challenges that arose during the shootings, regardless of the individual roles those people had on the set and the language barriers that existed.

To what extent do you want to and are actually able to make a political statement with your films?

I don't desire to use my movies merely as an instrument; in other words, not make propaganda films out of them. Film-making is also an art form. If I want to make a political statement, there are other means to do so: for example, via Facebook or in general by putting my thoughts in writing.

In “Köpek” you highlight the cleft in Turkish society between tradition and modernity. In real life, is there a way that the two can be brought into balance with each other?

Theoretically, yes. Laws and regulations can be changed. But meanwhile, there's hardly any value left in a person's life. The kind of harmony between believers and non-believers I experienced as a child was followed by a radicalisation. If forced changes are made to the system, they rarely come about peacefully. As far as I can see, it would take several generations to correct this tendency.

Injustice and violence are dominant themes in your films. Where do you get the ideas for your scripts?

For me, it's a matter of taking a closer look rather than looking away. So the subject matter has to move me. For “Köpek”, the murder of the Italian performance artist Pippa Bacca in Turkey gave me the inspiration. I had great respect for her having hitchhiked in a bridal gown from Italy to the Near East as a way of campaigning for world peace. “Köpek” is in certain ways a sequel to Pippa's journey and shows how she perhaps would have experienced and described Istanbul.

You not only direct but also write the screenplays for your films. Why is this combination important to you?

Screenwriting takes a different kind of energy than what you need for film-making. Getting a movie off the ground is a challenging, time-consuming management undertaking. Once the producers and financiers have been found and the Film Commission convinced, you have to arrange for a distributor and convince cinema operators to show the film.

The flyway to the mall

On behalf of an investor from Dubai, the Swiss Bartholet Group is constructing an aerial tramway – of all places, in Iran. That this family enterprise from Flums, Canton St. Gallen, even had the chance to win such a project has to do with the company's existing installations and, not least of all, retaining the right local partners. The latter are essential in the Near East if you want to be successful. "Finding them, though, is not exactly easy," says **Martin Benkler**.

Martin Benkler (57) has held the post of CEO of Bartholet Maschinenbau (BMF Group AG) since December 2014. Prior to joining the company, he was COO Rhomberg Sersa Rail Group, which specialises in railway technology and came into existence upon the merger of Rhomberg Bahntechnik in Bregenz and Sersa Group in Zurich. From 1986 to 2000, he was general manager and proprietor of Benkler AG in Villmergen until its own merger with Sersa Group. Martin Benkler holds a degree in jurisprudence from the University of Berne.

Text: editorial staff "ceo"

Images: Marc Wetli

The aerial tramway on Kish, a holiday island in the Persian Gulf, will certainly be an eye-opener. Starting at the main promenade, it will offer passengers a breathtaking view of the turquoise blue sea as they soar above the edge of the beach all the way to the Mica Mall shopping centre. The amenities in the gondolas should also leave no wish unfulfilled: outfitted with plush carpeting and crystal-bespeckled ceilings, they will virtually glitter. The entire project is being financed out of Dubai, with Flums-based Bartholet Group in charge of building the 8 million dollar tramway.

Intuition is called for

"An Iranian who lives in Europe and whom we've known personally for quite some time brought us the deal," says Martin Benkler, CEO of Bartholet Group. In the meantime, the broker has started working for this Swiss cable-car engineering company. He speaks Farsi, knows the cultural dos and don'ts, and is more than familiar with the ins and outs of doing business in Iran. Those skills are essential for success in the Near East; otherwise, conflicts are as good as pre-programmed. Benkler offers an example: "When a prospective customer keeps me waiting for an hour before showing up for a meeting, that's 'Swiss punctuality' to his way of thinking. Normally in this region, the wait lasts several hours." Anyone who has difficulty coping



 **BARTHOLET**
+ Seilbahnen



On the shop floor in Flums, cable cars and steel structures are assembled.



“There’s a certain formality to daily business life here; alone the Arabian easygoingness makes it difficult to get things in gear.”

with situations like that should not even think of trying to set up shop in the Near East. Intuition is also a must – namely since it is no rarity that supposed brokers and partners pursue just their own interests. As credit checks frequently provide no reliable insights, it helps to seek information from the embassy or the local chamber of commerce. “In the end, though, it’s like getting married – you have to go with your gut feeling,” admits Benkler.

A country in transition

Bartholet manufactures most of the cable car system components in Switzerland. Afterwards, the company supervises the on-site assembly and performs the acceptance trials. “Selling an aerial tramway is a matter of connections – not just in the Near East,” Benkler says. Owing to the long operating lifespan of the equipment, the seller and buyer interact with each other for years. What’s more, every installation is a showpiece for the company. So for the customer, a visit to Bartholet’s production facilities in idyllic Flums is a highlight of the partnership between the two. In a replicated alpine chalet on the company grounds, the entire Bartholet family joins in to thrill guests with “real” Swiss cheese and folk music. And thus mutual trust is spawned – an elemental prerequisite for establishing a business relationship.

Now that the economic sanctions against Iran have been lifted, it has become easier for Bartholet to conduct activities in the Persian

nation. The locals once again have the courage to invest in new projects. The country is in a phase of transition. Moreover, Bartholet is benefitting from the fine reputation Switzerland acquired as mediator in the Iran conflict. That, and also thanks to the high, albeit not exactly inexpensive quality and reliability of its output. The company sees huge potential for its products especially in the amusement and adventure park niche, but also in the sustainable development of nature preserves or urban areas where heavy traffic poses a problem. However, in many places people would first have to get used to the idea that cable cars are in fact a viable means of public transportation. Here in the Alps, mountain climbers need courage to scale high peaks; but in other countries already the first step into a gondola causes the jitters. “The sceptics need to be convinced – and that takes time,” confesses the Bartholet CEO.

Upbeat future

Benkler is actually rather optimistic about the region’s future. He is impressed by how advanced certain cities are in many respects. The most conspicuous example of this can be seen in the construction industry, where huge skyscrapers are being completed within the time it would take in Switzerland just to get through the planning phase. But there is also no lack of challenges. “Given the low price of oil these days, there is tremendous pressure to identify and invest in alternative commercial opportunities,” Martin Benkler notes. In some cases, clear visions already exist. But a number of countries in the region are still seeking direction and need to do their homework first. “There’s a certain formality to daily business life here; alone the Arabian easygoingness makes it difficult to get things in gear,” Benkler points out. But on the assumption that no external influences crimp the regional renaissance, the Bartholet CEO predicts a quite sunny future for the Near East.



In the Heidiland region, aerial tramways are manufactured for use throughout the world.

The company

Bartholet Maschinenbau (BMF Group AG), headquartered in Flums, Canton St. Gallen, has a global workforce of more than 350 employees. Bartholet is Number 3 in the cable-car/chairlift market, as well as a leading provider in the fields of amusement park facilities, mechanical engineering and sheet metal processing. The family owned enterprise has been in business for more than half a century. In the person of Roland Bartholet, Chairman of the Board, a family member is still actively involved in the company.

www.bmf-ag.ch

“When a prospective customer keeps me waiting for an hour before showing up for a meeting, that’s not impolite as far as he’s concerned – because in this region, the wait is usually several hours.”

İki dünyanın en iyisi

The best of both worlds

She's a Swiss, he's a Turk – and both share a keen sense for people and their talents. As well as a cheerful world of pretty things. For all of 24 years now, **Christina Ochsner Çanak** and **Necati Çanak** have been tending their shop, Fanafillah, in Zurich's Seefeld quarter. Here, visitors can marvel to an almost hallucinogenic potpourri of artisan handicrafts from Istanbul and Anatolia – while enjoying a healthy dose of Turkish-Swiss bonhomie.

Text: Sara Meier

Images: Marc Wetli

Switzerland and Turkey: two countries, two different worlds – or one should think. Not so for the Ochsner Çanaks. They feel totally at home in both places and magically blend the two cultures within the space of their 50-square-metre shop in Kreis 8. In this micro-universe, customers are treated as guests and shopping becomes an adventure. A glass of tea if desired, the warm-hearted candour of the proprietors: you immediately get the feeling of being welcome.

There are good reasons for that. In Turkey, it matters little what one possesses or does for a living; more important is what kind of person you are and how you feel. Rarely does a transaction start with a shopping list or an agenda. First of all, thoughts are exchanged, friendships nurtured, tea or coffee sipped. Life in Turkey flows from hour to hour, not minute to minute – yet always in the here and now. And with an all-pervasive air, almost certainly of Ottoman origin: hospitality.

For decades, the Çanaks have combined and perfected the spontaneity and dynamism of the Turkish business world with the thoroughness, precision and organisational talent that characterises Switzerland. The result: a gladly visited and revisited miniature bazar chock full of curios and objets d'art of Turkish-Ottoman provenance, all inspired by the people whose hands created, presented and traded them.

The shop's countless shelves, vitrines and tiny tables display just about everything that makes Turkey Turkish and the Orient oriental: superb decorative items for the home and bathroom such as lamps, tray tables and hammam towels, not to mention belly-dancing accessories, shishas, babouche slippers, dainty jewellery, blue amulet discs (to protect you against the "Evil Eye") plus much, much more. Twice a year, the Çanaks buy their products directly at the bazars of Istanbul and Konya. This way, each piece tells its own tale – some longer, some shorter. But all of them bear witness to the personal experiences, relationships and fondnesses of this married couple, as well as to the origin, artisanship and everyday life of their makers.



For the Çanakas, precisely those stories are the key: through their telling, the trinkets come to life – one full of valour, vigour and inquisitiveness. A life in which craftsmanship often means everything yet all too often brings nothing, or at least not enough to live on. For that reason, the Fanafillah proprietors engage in lending a bit more perspective through small donations, by tackling special assignments or bringing together the right business people.

According to the Çanakas, trust in one's business partner represents the very heart and soul of Ottoman commerce. If and when that trust has been won, new partners seem to spring up spontaneously; in turn, they know or recommend other people. So ensues a latticework of relationships, business proposals and opportunities. If a foreign company in Turkey offers fair wages and good working conditions, it can count on having a willing and able workforce – and achieving a lot.

By the way, those who wish to win the hearts of Turks are well advised to learn a few snippets of the local language. Even though many merchants speak English, they greatly appreciate efforts like that. Also useful is a healthy portion of humour. Turks are a jovial lot and are pleased when others laugh with them. Their wit is actually quite similar to the Helvetic sort: frequently recondite, but always amiable.

Also at the top of the tip list for doing successful business in Turkey: cultural tolerance, interest in your counterparty and his/her family as well as their religious conventions, personal concerns and challenges. That of course takes time, a good deal of patience, and – in contrast to Switzerland – the willingness and ability not to come straight to the point. You can achieve many business goals that way in Turkey – and perhaps win some new friends.



From hammam towels and olive oil soaps, to hand-painted ceramic bowls, to lamps reminiscent of “A Thousand and One Nights” – on the shelves and tiny tables at Fanafillah, you can find everything that makes Turkey and the Orient oriental.



Fanafillah and the Çanak couple

The thread that bonds Christina Ochsner Çanak and Necati Çanak was originally spun in 1988 when they met in Konya, Anatolia. On behalf of Swiss primary school and handicraft teachers, Necati was organising on-site workshops with Turkish quilters, cotton pounders, felt makers, rug knotters and dyers. Christina accompanied her mother on one of these occasions and took a liking to the unusual trades. Back in Switzerland, she learned Turkish. More visits followed, as did lengthy discussions in Necati's Derviş Brothers oriental carpet store. In 1990, the couple decided to tie the knot. Necati was willing to follow Christina back to Zurich – on the condition that he could continue to run a shop. So in 1992 the Çanaks opened their mini-bazar, Fanafillah, where, thanks to their fervent enthusiasm for high-quality Turkish/Ottoman arts and crafts, the sparks still arc between the makers, the customers and friends.

www.fanafillah.ch



كل الامور تسير وفقاً للمقولات المصرية
إن شاء الله - بكرة - معلش

“Everything runs according to our Egyptian apothegm I – B – M”

Internationally active Egyptian entrepreneur **Samih Sawiris** talks about why in his homeland everything is a bit more complicated, as well as how he invests in the education of his fellow citizens with the hope that this will ultimately reshape the Pearl of the Nile.

Text: Sandra Willmeroth

Images: Marc Wetli, The Chedi Andermatt

You grew up in Egypt, attended a German school in Cairo as a youth, studied later in Berlin, and today live alternately in Switzerland, Egypt and England. Where do you feel most at home?

I divvy up my time. Roughly one week a month I'm travelling; another 25 per cent of the time I'm in Egypt, as it really is my home

and a very important hub of my business activities; then comes a week or so in Switzerland, where my company is headquartered and naturally because of the project here in Andermatt. The rest of the time I'm in England, where my wife and children live.

How did you end up studying in Germany rather than in Switzerland or the USA?

Originally, I actually wanted to study in Zurich, like my brother. But Germany's "Abitur" secondary school diploma wasn't officially recognised here and I would have had to take a special university entrance exam that covered subjects I'd never been taught before – like descriptive geometry. I learned numerical mathematics, period; geometry was Greek to me. Catching up with all that stuff in three months' time was practically impossible, and I also didn't want to run the risk of failing the test; after all, I had an Abitur in my pocket with an average grade of 1.3, and I was proud of it. So it would really have looked dumb if I went and flunked an entrance exam like that.

Samih Onsi Sawiris is Chairman and the majority shareholder of Orascom Development Group. He is also either chairman or a board member of several of the Group's subsidiary companies. After graduating in 1980 with a degree in engineering from the Berlin Institute of Technology, he started his first company. In 1996, he founded Orascom Hotel Holding and in 1997 Orascom Projects for Touristic Development, both of which were subsequently merged into Orascom Development Holding AG in 2008. Samih Sawiris is a scion of one of Egypt's wealthiest families. He is in his second marriage and is father to five children.



Orascom Development Holding AG, headquartered in Altdorf, Switzerland, is an urban development group enterprise. The company is primarily involved in the development of entire cities, this through the purchase of land parcels and the construction of buildings for residential and business purposes, whereas Orascom retains ownership of all the commercial properties. Its portfolio includes developments in eight countries: Egypt, Great Britain, Jordan, Morocco, Montenegro, Oman, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates. In all, the group operates 33 hotels with 7,815 rooms and employs close to 15,000 individuals. Orascom's shares have been listed on SIX Swiss Exchange since May 2008. Its total revenues in 2015 increased by 22 per cent to CHF 306.1 million; however, due to the difficult tourism situation in Egypt at the moment, the company recorded a CHF 19 million loss for the year after minority interests.

www.orascomdh.com

Onsi Sawiris Scholarship Program

The Onsi Sawiris Scholarship is a private merit-based scholarship program established in 2000 by Orascom Construction as part of the company's commitment to promoting excellence and achievement. OC launched the Onsi Sawiris Program in the year 2000 to invest company resources in educational programs to improve the communities in which it operates.

www.onsisawirisscholarship.org

So why Berlin?

Berlin at the time was of course the city with the greatest entertainment value in all of Germany. And because I've always believed that life is not just here for work, but should also be fun, well, I opted for Berlin.

What moved you to establish the Onsi Sawiris Scholarship Program for university students?

When life gives one as much as it has us, it's only right that you give some of it back. And in terms of making an investment that will accrue to the benefit of real people, there aren't as many alternatives as you might think. An old Chinese proverb says: Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. So with these scholarships, we're giving young people the chance to get ahead later in life – on their own behalf and on behalf of their country.

You mean academic training?

Education is the best investment you can make in a person and in a country. That's the difference between Switzerland and Egypt: here, things are much more advanced because more educated people constitute the base – and precisely that is what's missing in Egypt. There, inefficiency is all-pervasive and the true potential of the country is being absurdly mismanaged, simply because the people lack sufficient education.

What does Egypt get out of it?

Qualified managers! There aren't any in Egypt. And unfortunately, the Egyptian universities are truly miserable these days. The advanced skill sets a student acquires by studying abroad, by developing further personally and getting to know the ways of life in a foreign country – those are things that bring so much to young people; insights that allow them to take their homeland to a new level. And the country is the ultimate



beneficiary. Just imagine you had spent your entire life until now within the confines of your village – there's a big difference in the person you would be today if at some point you'd spent time in a foreign city.

Admittedly, I too would have difficulty resettling in my old home town. I couldn't live there anymore – after having experienced all the things I have in my lifetime, it's become too small for me.

So I hope that you can understand how difficult it is for me to return to Egypt after



having spent so much of my life abroad. It takes a little while until I'm acclimatised again.

But a strict proviso of an OSSP scholarship is that the student must return to Egypt. Why?

If after graduation a student doesn't return to Egypt, he or she is obligated to finance a scholarship for a new student. In other words, they're welcome to remain abroad, but then they have to put the money they originally received towards the higher education of someone else.

Does OSSP observe a women's quota?

No, that's not an issue. Scholarships are granted solely on the basis of merit and not according to gender.

But women are eligible for a scholarship?

Yes, and we have many! These days, women are always better at school than men are.

Why does the programme bear the name Onsi Sawiris?

It's my father's name. We decided within the Sawiris Foundation that the scholarships should be named after him.

As a businessman, you have projects under way in many different countries. In your opinion, what is the key determining factor for doing business successfully in any given country?

Legal certainty – and with that, I mean in a ranking from first to at least sixth place.

And what comes after that?

Little bureaucracy or simple, flexible bureaucracy. When I think for instance of how things run in England, with the countless approvals that need to be obtained – it's a nightmare! In Switzerland, sure, there are a 1,000 different rules that have to be com-

Ten questions, ten answers, ten sentences.

What's the craziest idea you've ever considered, but not followed through on?

I can't think of a single example.

When do you reject a project?

Pretty much at the beginning, as soon as I get the feeling that it's unfeasible.

Is it your gut or the hard numbers that seal the final decision?

Always my gut. I don't believe in numbers.

By which credo do you lead and live your life?

I live for today because today is more important than tomorrow – life consists of many experiences in the present and not of those which you save for another day.

What was your first wish as a budding businessman?

To earn money! No matter how.

Who was your role model in younger years?

My godfather, who was a very successful physician: he showed me how important it is to be recognised. True recognition makes success come easier – and it feels good, too.

What's your favourite Swiss dish?

Tripe – especially the kind you get from Ferdi Muheim's butcher shop here in Andermatt.

And in Egypt? England?

In Egypt, it's kaware³ (that's kind of a veal knuckle soup with the marrow), and in England I really like fried liver.

What's your favourite music?

Wagner – just a few weeks ago I went to a performance of "Tannhäuser".

Which three characteristics would you ascribe to Switzerland?

Reliable, extremely self-critical, but with a fantastic result.

plied with, but they're all well known, you can deal with them one step at a time, and there's practically no confusion.

But the processes go on forever ...

Yes, but at least they're known. I much prefer someone telling me what I'm faced with – as was the case at the time with the Andermatt project. But in England, nobody will give you a straight answer, nobody knows exactly how things go, yet everyone finds it necessary to put in their tuppence worth. There are authorities who don't communicate with each other, so it can happen that you can get an approval from the one, but a rejection from the other. It's pretty bad.

Was there anything about the Andermatt project that caught you off guard – something you hadn't reckoned with?

No.

Who helped you wade your way through the Swiss processes?

Canton Uri had a study done in order to bring us up to speed on the logistics and bureaucracy that lay ahead of us. That impressed me greatly. They admitted that it's a bit bureaucratic, but at least there are no surprises involved. For a businessman, that's the most important thing; it allows you to calculate reliably.

Is that different in Egypt?

In Egypt, you maybe get an approval now and then by phone – and sometimes not at all, with no explanation whatsoever. And it even can happen that you've already started a project and then someone drops by and says, "You can't do this." Nowhere else do you experience surprises like that. So it's really hard to appreciate the significantly lesser degree of bureaucracy in Egypt than is the case in Switzerland. There, everything takes place according to our Egyptian apothegm I – B – M: the "I" stands for "inshallah", meaning "God willing"; the "B" for

“bukra”, which means “tomorrow”, but can also be interpreted as “sometime between now and next summer”; and the “M” for “malesh”, which is roughly equivalent to “and if not, who cares?”

What advice would you give a Swiss entrepreneur who wants to build up a business in Egypt?

He should rather stay home! If a Swiss fancies the idea of starting a business in Egypt, he needs to make absolutely sure that he has the right Egyptian partner. Doing it alone really doesn't work.

So what you're saying is that if someone from Switzerland wants to go to Egypt and realise a project on the shores of the Red Sea, similar to what you're building here in Andermatt, that's a no-go right from the start?

No, not at all. He simply has to establish a relationship with a totally reliable local partner. The difference is: here in Switzerland, everything is crystal clear; in Egypt, everything is opaque. Because the general

situation there is so muddled, people simply don't know for sure how things are going to proceed and you end up groping in the dark.

Does corruption play a role?

Not in the upper echelons – and that's actually rather astounding. Normally you'd think that corruption is rather to be found at the higher levels.

In most countries, it's the exact opposite. Why is Egypt different in this way?

Because basically Egypt has always been ruled by the military. Those people tend to be somewhat more disciplined and orderly than the normal civilian, and perhaps they also adhere to a kind of codex.

Do you have any ambitions to get into politics yourself?

No, none whatsoever. That doesn't work: a moneyed individual shouldn't also strive for political prowess and power. That's bodes ill – for the people and the country.

Luxury hotel The Chedi, nestled in the Alpine valley of Andermatt.



“سينظر العالم إلى قطر بنظرة مختلفة”

“The world will see Qatar through a different pair of glasses”

Major events and successful national teams: Qatar is well on its way to becoming a world-class sport megalopolis. An independent organisation with offices in Europe and America is seeing to it that events around the globe are safer for spectators and that the organisers conduct their activities with safety, security and integrity. **Michael Hershman** and **Heinz Palme** head the International Centre for Sport Security, a global organisation created in Doha, Qatar, that works to benefit and safeguard sport.

Text: editorial staff “ceo”

Images: ICSS

When in six years’ time, the football world looks to Qatar as the best teams on the planet go nose-to-nose and toes-to-toes at the 2022 Fifa World Cup Championship, Michael Hershman and Heinz Palme will be able to look back at an enormous amount of advance work. The CEO and the Vice Director General, respectively, of the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS) in Doha work tirelessly with their team of specialists to help organisations in sport ensure that major sporting events, wherever they might be held, fulfil

the highest standards of safety, security and integrity for the benefit of the athletes and the spectators.

They investigate and advise, define standards and publish recommendations which are applied across the globe and in all types of sport. Their work has of course gained added importance in recent years due to a series of security and integrity breaches, hooliganism and instances of doping. Corruption scandals in sport federations and the gambling mafia’s manipulation of matches have also severely affected sport recently.

“For us at the International Centre for Sport Security, it’s a matter of preserving the original spirit of sport – ethics and honour.”

Apart from the security dimension, the transparency and integrity of athletes, functionaries and organisations are additional aspects that the new ICSS Group CEO keeps a close eye on, “For us, it’s a matter of preserving the original spirit of sport – ethics, values and honour,” says Hershman. The 71-year-old American, a co-founder of the nongovernmental organisation Transparency International (TI), recently joined the ICSS in June 2016. Today the ICSS provides support to both the Organising Committee for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar – where the related construction work is well under way – and the country’s Olympic Committee, which oversees more than 80 sporting events each year. “Save the dream” – a foundation established by ICSS – uses its explicit appeal to help protect and empower young generation of fans and active athletes through the power of sport.

Hershman says in his own words that he’s been a “great sports fan” ever since he could walk. Among the job qualifications this anticorruption specialist brings to the table are his activities as a high-ranking govern-



ment official in Washington, his pioneering effort establishing TI and risk-mitigation work for Virginia-based Fairfax Group. Before being named CEO of ICSS, he had already spent several years on its Advisory Board. Hershman is also highly familiar with the Middle East from the countless assignments that have taken him there in the past 30 years.

Multinational companies as role models

There’s a good reason why ICSS is headquartered in Qatar: “The country has set its sights extraordinarily high in terms of sports,” says Heinz Palme, an Austrian citizen. The Vice Director General has been with ICSS for five years now. Previously, he was the general coordinator of the Fifa World Cup Championships in Germany and South Africa and Austria’s Chief Governmental Coordinator for the 2008 UEFA EURO. The current Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani – himself an avid sports fan – wants “the world to see Qatar through a different pair of glasses,” the Vice Director adds.

A considerable portion of ICSS’s annual budget of ca. USD 35 million is currently

funded by the Qatari government, with the remainder coming from third parties and corporate contributions. “We’re in the process of building a broad-based coalition with experts from the business, scientific and sport communities,” notes Michael Hershman in a discussion. According to him, multinational enterprises can take up a role-model function, “They have experience in adapting to new rules and regulations, adhering to the principles of sustainability, and working in accordance with internationally recognised ethical standards.”

Going to the limits of feasibility

Heinz Palme is clear on one point: anybody who wants to be successful in the Middle East needs to have tremendous patience and an understanding of the local ways. He confesses to having had to learn this rather the hard way in the early days of his activities in the Emirates. “I thought that, with precise planning, you could achieve your goals straightaway.” A lot of things take a bit longer, but once they get rolling they’re accomplished with all the more enthusiasm. What fascinates him to this very day is how visions are becoming reality in the region and attempts are being made to extend the boundaries of what’s possible. Now – together with his CEO – he’s part of a vision that aims to put a tiny country like Qatar on the global map of mega sporting events.

International Centre for Sports Security

The ICSS is a globally renowned and respected leader in sport safety, security and integrity. The ICSS is an independent and non-profit organisation and at the forefront of efforts to safeguard sport. They play an increasingly integral role in addressing critical issues in sport such as corruption, betting fraud and transparency, as well as major event safety and venue security.

www.theicss.org



“The current Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani – himself an avid sports fan – wants the world to see Qatar in a different light. The country has set its sights extraordinarily high in terms of sports.”



وصفة نجاح شرقية لكرم الضيافة

Oriental recipe for success in hospitality

Hardly a company in the hospitality industry is growing as rapidly as Rotana Hotel Management Group. Founded in 1992, the company is headquartered in Abu Dhabi and today operates some 60 hotels in 26 countries; 40 more are scheduled to be opened in the next several years. CEO **Omer Kaddouri** knows the secret of success in hospitality: treating people with respect and devoting one's full attention to them and their needs.

Text: editorial staff "ceo"

Images: Rotana Group

Mr Kaddouri, as director of a major hotel chain, you can stay the night in the noblest of suites anywhere in the world. So where did you spend last night?

Fortunately, in my own bed – although I always enjoy staying at our establishments and, yes, at other hotels as well. Business commitments make it necessary for me to travel very frequently, so I really enjoy the luxury of simply being able to come home and spend the evening with my wife.

Rotana Group has very lofty growth ambitions – by 2020, you want to have a portfolio of 100 hotels with varying formats. Is there a secret recipe for your burgeoning success?

Rotana only operates the hotels, as opposed to owning them. They are actually the property of 25 different private owners with whom we have very close relationships. We do everything to make them feel welcome and comfortable – as we do with our other hotel guests. The Rotana brand holds a strong position in the broader region here. Our guests can see that we care for their well-being, that we are innovative, and that we offer outstanding value for money – our 15,000 team members make sure of that each and every day. Perhaps this is one of the

reasons for the many repeat guests we have the pleasure of welcoming on a regular basis.

You're one of the first companies to gain a foothold in Iran since the lifting of international sanctions. What have been your experiences so far, and what can other companies learn from them?

Rotana was the first hotel management company to announce its expansion plans in the Iranian market, after signing the management agreement in March 2013 for four properties currently under development, all of which will be opened under the company's alcohol-free brand "Rayhaan Hotels & Resorts" by Rotana. The first two hotels are set to open in the city of Mashhad in 2017 and 2018. In Tehran, Rotana will launch two further Rayhaan properties by 2018 – a 5- and a 4-star hotel. With the lifting of sanctions, we are sure that all developers and operators will be racing to secure their position in one of the world's largest untapped markets. This country is in a state of transition. Especially the young generation are thrilled that it is opening up to the outside world. There are very friendly and look forward to an economic upswing. But a lot still needs to be done, above all when it comes to tourism: there is a tremendous need to catch up in terms of training and service quality. So we will invest considerably in the training of our future team members.

Omer Kaddouri has been with Rotana since 1998 and was appointed in 2010. In early 2014, he took over from Selim El Zyr as President and CEO. Born to an Iraqi father and a British mother, Omer Kaddouri attended Les Roches International School of Hotel Management near Crans-Montana from 1984 to 1986. He lives in Abu Dhabi.

Host in 26 countries

Rotana Hotel Management Group is one of the leading hospitality companies in the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe. Under the banner of various brands, it currently operates in a total of 26 countries more than 50 hotels and resorts in the 3- to 5-star range. Founded in 1992 by Nasser Al Nowais and Selim El Zyr, this Abu-Dhabi-based privately held company aims to have a total of 100 properties under its management by 2020 and be present globally.

www.rotana.com

“In the Arab culture, special value has always been placed on hospitableness.”

Where else is Rotana expanding?

Europe in general is of great interest to us, and we are also very active in Africa. Currently, we have projects under way in cities like Dar es Salaam, Lagos, Luanda and Marrakesh.

Why is Asia missing on your map?

Rotana receives many offers to manage hotels, Asia included, and we are in negotiations with several developers. Ask me again in one or two years and I will be able to give you some tangible facts. At the moment, a move into the region is not ripe for discussion – but I have several dossiers on my desk, including enquiries from Thailand, Vietnam and Australia.

What criteria do you apply when assessing a particular opportunity?

We carefully conduct due diligence: market potential, competitive landscape, and supply and demand analysis. We then ask ourselves: Can we run the hotel the way the owners want us to? Can we make them happy in terms of return on capital?

Back to your main market, the Middle East: what makes the region so attractive for tourists, especially places like Dubai and Abu Dhabi?

In the Arab culture, special value has always been placed on hospitableness – you get the feeling of being heartily welcome wherever you go. It's very safe in our particular area. The political circumstances are stable and the infrastructure is highly developed. There are many things for tourists to discover, as well as countless attractions and shopping opportunities. And of course the weather is great! You can relax on the beach, have a fine meal, and enjoy offers designed for every budget. Those are plenty of reasons to come here.

And a reason why you're constantly opening new hotels?

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in this part of the world; it's no surprise that astute investors are looking to this sector for new and lucrative opportunities. In the past 25 years, we managed to establish a good reputation and to position the company as the dominant player in the region's hospitality scene. Our proximity, our availability and our personal touch, the fact that we treat our owners' properties as our own despite being



“I try to get to know other people a bit better by listening, taking a closer look and having more than just a trivial conversation with them.”

a management company, gives us that edge. Besides, our owners are our best salesmen; they advertise our products and services for us. A lot of our owners are from the royal family, high-net-worth individuals, prominent businessmen, and a lot of the hotels we have signed today have come as referrals from current owners.

Today, average room prices are on the decline. How do you deal with that?

The hotel business has forever been a cyclical one. The decisive factor for us is what sticks to the bottom line at the end of the day; in other words, our effort has to make economic sense. We are very optimistic about the outlook in 2016. Although the market environment continues to remain challenging, we see many positive trends and developments that could yet propel hospitality growth in the region in the year ahead.

In the wider Mideast region, instability has reigned for quite some time. Do the conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Yemen have an impact on the local hotel industry?

In the Emirates, you can feel absolutely safe. But I certainly can't deny that the instability in the countries you mention have a negative effect on tourism. On the other hand, though, we have benefited when large conferences and exhibitions were relocated to the Gulf. I hope that peace returns to those countries. The region as a whole has tremendous potential.

You, yourself, have family roots in both Britain and Iraq. To what extent has this heritage qualified you for your current post as CEO?

The fact that I speak Arabic is most definitely a plus. My education and experience in the hotel industry are the major factors that qualified me for the job.

Thirty years ago, you were studying hotel management at Ecole Les Roches in Bluche, Valais. What effect did that have on you and your ties with Switzerland?

I cherish the memories of my three years at Les Roches – I love Switzerland! Each winter, we go there to ski. Crans-Montana, Zermatt and Saas-Fee are enchanting places. As to



The 5-star Al Murooj Rotana hotel in Dubai is situated directly on the shores of the Persian Gulf. It is just one of the 60 hotels operated by the Rotana Group.

the school itself, the education it offers in our line of business is considered one of the top three in the world. It helped me to get my foot in the door of this fascinating industry.

Which hotel in Switzerland do you like to go to most?

The Lucerne Palace. The hotel's unique location and high standards are one reason. But there's another: it's where, as a waiter, I gained my first practical experience. The job was tough, but I learned a lot. I still like to go back there when I can.

Can you name three things that describe Switzerland best in your opinion?

Switzerland is beautiful, well organised, and hospitable.

And Dubai?

Very optimistic, geared to the future, with excellent infrastructure.

What advice do you have for Swiss companies looking to expand in the Emirates or other countries in the Middle East?

They should come here, take a look around and make new contacts. The Emirates offer great opportunities for building a successful business. The prerequisites are in place: a

well-structured environment and a reliable legal system. Many companies from Switzerland are already here. The Swiss embassy is situated in the same building as my office in Abu Dhabi, just a few floors down. I regularly meet Swiss businesspeople as they come and go.

What do you keep an eye out for personally when it comes to business matters?

You render good services when you are interested in people and their needs, and pay them the respect they deserve. I try to get to know other people a bit better by listening, taking a closer look and having more than just a trivial conversation with them. That's also something I expect from others and especially from our employees. It's part of a business ethic that is very important to me. I want to work together with my business partners for the long term, not just here and now.

What does a CEO like you wish for most after a long day's work?

Being able to relax at home with my wife, sit on the sofa and watch a little TV or listen to music.



بالأحلام والانضباط نتجاوز الحواجز

Mastering the hurdles thanks to dreams and discipline

Kariem Hussein is one of Switzerland's most successful track and field athletes. That he's an achiever is due in no small part to his Swiss-Egyptian roots, as he explains.

Text: Tina Fassbind

Images: Christoph Köstlin, Klinik Hirslanden, Opel Suisse

The motto you live by is: "Be realistic and believe in the impossible." Why the paradox?

Because I dream of goals that may seem unrealistic at first glance – but ones that I really think I can achieve. In a certain way, this inner attitude also reflects the two sides of my heritage: the dreamful disposition is typical for the Egyptian culture; the discipline and perseverance is rather somewhat Swiss.

Apart from world-class athletics, you devote your time to studying for a Master's degree in medicine. Both undertakings require tremendous discipline. Is the Swiss side of you in fact more pronounced?

I'd be more inclined to say that I benefit from both cultures. The fact that I'm willing to take some major risks in order to reach my goals is clearly attributable to my southern temperament.

Emotions ran high when you won gold at the 2014 European Championships and the Swiss national anthem was played. On some other occasion, would you also step into the starting blocks for Egypt?

Of course. It would be an honour for me to appear in the name of Egypt. But I have a closer relationship with Switzerland and am more deeply rooted here. I love this country and it fills me with pride to represent Switzerland at international competitions.

Your father was a professional volleyball player in Egypt and since his arrival in Switzerland has practised osteopathy and physiotherapy. Is he your role model?

Yes, my father has had a strong influence on me. As both of us chose the same path in life, we're practically joined at the hip. I especially admire him for his having come here and built a livelihood out of nothing. My mother and I are also very close – I always feel firmly grounded with my family.



Apart from his competitive sports activities, Kariem Hussein is studying medicine at the University of Zurich.



“In Switzerland, sometimes I miss the nonchalance of Egyptians.”

Your family still lives in Tägerwilen on Lake Constance where you grew up. But you also regularly visit your relatives in Cairo. What impresses you most about Egypt?

The contrasts. On one hand, there's always something going on; it's loud and hectic. But otherwise the people are very relaxed; their life style is laid-back and non-committal. That's fascinating, but in the long run it would be nothing for me. The Orient is magnificent – the food, the sea, the zest for life. I feel very connected with this region, but I really like living in Switzerland.

What do you appreciate most about Switzerland?

Everything here is more orderly and organised. I value reliability and am a very punctual person. But in Switzerland, sometimes I miss the nonchalance of Egyptians – and I think it would do the Swiss well to occasionally show a little more emotion.

The Near East is currently undergoing a dramatic change. What are your feelings about that?

Egypt is situated in an unbelievably diverse region. The country has great potential if it can just develop without pressures from outside. Egypt today is undergoing tremendous changes that are hardly noticed here. One example is the expansion of the Suez Canal. The project, which was completed last year, is a landmark achievement for the country and is comparable to Switzerland's new Gotthard base tunnel. Both nations can be proud of these successes.

Kariem Hussein and his two sisters grew up in the Thurgau hamlet of Tägerwilen, his mother's home town. His father was born and raised in Cairo before he came to Switzerland almost 40 years ago. A specialist in the 400m hurdles, this 27-year-old athlete has won five Swiss Championship titles as well as European Championship gold in 2014 and bronze in 2016. Aside from track and field athletics, medicine is Hussein's second passion: in 2012 he earned his Bachelor degree and is now enrolled for Master's studies at the University of Zurich.

www.kariem.ch

“We strive to achieve the highest standards of ethical behaviour, and do so by fighting and countering bribery in all countries where we do business.”

“من المدهش أن نرى تغييرات في المنطقة”

“It’s fascinating to see how the region is changing”

ABB Group Executive Committee member **Frank Duggan** heads ABB’s activities in Asia, the Middle East and Africa (AMEA). The native Irishman and his corporate colleagues are helping the hitherto petroleum-driven Gulf States transform into high-tech centres.

Text: editorial staff “ceo”

Images: ABB

ABB has been present in the Middle East for 85 years now. What makes the region so attractive to the company?

There are three main reasons. Firstly, it is one of the world’s most important regions for the extraction and processing of natural resources, primarily oil and gas. Then comes the fact that the Middle East has been experiencing a torrid pace of economic growth for several decades, and that of course goes hand in hand with electrification and industrialisation. And thirdly, it is the central geographic transit hub between Europe, Africa and Asia.

What are the key focal points of your business activities?

The products and services of ABB are put to use in a wide array of industrial sectors and specialised business lines. It starts with power generation and distribution as well as all of the related aspects. Our current focus is on renewable energy sources, like wind and solar power. But it doesn’t stop there: we’re also engaged in activities that range from raw material production, to the construction industry and its multitude of necessary installations, to fields as diverse as tourism, the agri-business, water treatment and data processing, just to name a few.

How are you experiencing the transformation that so clearly characterises the region these days?

It’s fascinating to see how the local economies have changed over the past 20 years. They are being progressively weaned from their dependency on oil and the mere export of natural resources. At its heart, ABB is a pioneering technology leader and we’re accompanying this



Frank Duggan, Irish citizen, is President, Region Asia, Middle East and Africa (AMEA) and member of the Group Executive Committee of ABB Ltd, Switzerland. Born in 1959, Duggan holds a Diploma in Electrical Engineering from Dublin Institute of Technology. He joined ABB in 1986 as a Commissioning Engineer, and became the company’s General Manager and Managing Director in countries like Ireland, Thailand, Poland and the Czech Republic. In 2000, he was appointed Head of ABB’s global Oil, Gas and Chemicals business. From 2008 on, Duggan was Region Manager for India, Middle East and Africa, before being named Head of Global Markets in 2011. He took over his current position in 2015. Duggan and his family live in Dubai.

new.abb.com/middle-east



Image above: ABB's turbocharging service station at dry dock in Dubai.

Image below: ABB built this gas-isolated substation in Ras Laffan, Qatar.

“Working with other people and in different environments is something I’ve always viewed as a great opportunity.”

transition intensively as the countries start to key on the processing industry. For instance, we’re participating in major petrochemical projects like the joint venture between Dow Chemical and Saudi Aramco, where ABB was selected as the main supplier. We provide components and know-how for the construction of aluminium processing plants, are active in the steel industry and cement production, and also are involved in power transmission and other large infrastructure projects such as the airport here in Dubai. Also at the heart of ABB’s Next Level strategy is the shifting of our centre of gravity toward higher growth, greater competitiveness and lower risk. With these actions, we address the rapidly changing market conditions.

But what fascinates me as well is the cultural melting pot you find here, with people from all four corners of the world living together amicably and in safety. Amazingly, 90 per cent of the people living in Dubai were born in another country.

Many prominent names show up in the list of projects ABB has worked on. Does that make you proud?

A lot of what ABB does isn’t even visible at first glance. For example, in the world’s tallest building – the Burj Khalifa in Dubai – we installed a one-of-a-kind distribution substation solution on the 155th floor. We’re currently taking part in the construction of the Grand Egyptian Museum near the pyramids of Giza. We also have been or are engaged in Mecca, Qatar and many other places in the Middle East – I’d have difficulty listing them all. But yes, that ABB has played or is playing a role in so many architectural landmarks in the region does in fact fill me with pride.

Which factors make mega-projects like that successful?

A solid contractual framework which defines precisely the scope and expected performance, a good team for realising the various aspects, and intensive collaboration between the contractor and us during all phases of the project. We’re committed to standing by the customer throughout the entire lifecycle of a product – and that can mean bearing responsibility for up to 50 long years of service and maintenance work.

You’ve worked in many countries and now live in Dubai. Is there a difference in the way you go about doing business here?

Naturally there are certain cultural differences, but also many commonalities. To be successful here, you need to take a long-term view of your engagement; be ready, willing and able to build mutually trusting, reliable relationships with business partners; as well as to forge solution-oriented compromises. I perceive the Arabian culture as very open and friendly. In their business dealings, the people are quite receptive of Western culture – many of the managers have attended universities in America and Europe and are familiar with both worlds.

Is corruption still an issue?

ABB pursues a zero-tolerance policy in terms of corruption. We strive to achieve the highest standards of ethical behaviour, and do so by fighting and countering bribery in all countries where we do business.

New laws and regulations have been implemented and internationally compatible compliance practises have largely become the norm today in the region.

Which management style do you apply personally?

I make every effort to be consistent in my decisions and fair to everyone. Building a team in which mutual trust prevails and the same goals are strived for is something I view as the most important prerequisite for good work.

How would you describe in just a few words Dubai and Zurich, where you also lived for several years?

Dubai is ultra-modern, a mixture of Disneyland and Bollywood, with sharp cultural contrasts. Zurich is a vibrant city, with wonderful natural surroundings where you can do an incredible amount of things.

You can look back on an impressive career. What set it in motion?

Perhaps I was just always at the right place at the right time. I have a strong bond with the company and take pride in being part of the ABB family. Working with other people and in different environments is something I’ve come to view as a great opportunity, and I never gave up even in difficult moments. Basically, I’m an optimistic person.

A country, a sector, a woman

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has big plans to grow and diversify, which spell a big future for the country's financial services. In that sector, **Hala Kudwah**, PwC Middle East Consulting Partner and Financial Services leader in Saudi Arabia, has been and is playing a big part.

Text: Eric Johnson

Images: PwC Saudi Arabia

Has the drop in oil prices affected the Saudi economy?

There has been some challenges, yes, but more so there has been opportunities and broad acceptance that the Kingdom needs to embrace industries beyond oil. This is at the heart of the government's "Saudi Vision 2030" that rests on three pillars: a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation. The Vision covers many targets and initiatives, with some of the key economic ones being:

- increasing private output from 40 per cent to 65 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP);
- raising non-oil products and services from 16 per cent to 50 per cent of exports;
- and hiking foreign direct investment (FDI) from 3.8 per cent to 5.7 per cent of GDP. In construction, manufacturing, mining, health, metals and more, there are opportunities galore for foreign direct investment.

Privatisation is also on its way, right?

Top of the list here is state-owned Saudi Aramco, reportedly the world's most valuable company. Current plans are to float 5 per cent of its ownership on Riyadh's Saudi Stock Exchange, and to transfer the remaining 95 per cent to the Kingdom's sovereign wealth vehicle, the Public Investment Fund (PIF). That infusion should bring the PIF's net assets up to around \$2 billion – two-and-one-half times the size of the next-largest sovereign endowment, the Government Pension Fund of Norway. In finance, there is a lot going on here.

Speaking of which, how would you characterise KSA's financial sector?

Well capitalised, very efficient, very profitable and well-poised for further growth. Under the latest Basel III rules (for banks' equity), KSA banks have a capitalisation of nearly 18 per cent, well above the minimum requirement. They generate over 40 per cent

“There are opportunities galore for foreign direct investment in Saudi Arabia.”



of the total income of KSA's listed companies. Saudi Banks profitability (and thus resilience) remain the highest among G20 economies despite the low interest environment, with banking sector recording ROE and ROA at 18.5 per cent and 2.5 per cent respectively in 2014. And this is a nascent market that can only grow! For example, private credit to GDP in the Kingdom has settled around 44 per cent in 2014, lower than most G20 and other regional economies.

Are you one of the only women working in finance?

No. But when I started, it was unusual for a female to be involved and competitive in business. To succeed, I knew I had to put in twice as much as the others, yet still show respect to my (Islamic/Saudi) roots and traditions. Over my career, things have changed. Today, employees of KSA's banks are about 12–13 per cent female. And in some sectors – say, retail and public education – the percentage of women in the workforce is even higher.

“PwC is at the heart of a Saudi Arabia that is transforming.”

After all that personal and financial success, why did you come to PwC?

I've been blessed with a good upbringing and education, a husband who supports my career and a series of exciting high-profile assignments. Now it's time for me to pay back my local community and to serve my home country. PwC is committed to investing in local talent and working on the Kingdom's most important issues – we're at the heart of a nation that is transforming. I couldn't bear to miss out on being a part of that.

Arise in Arabia – Hala Kudwah's ascent

The Saudi national underwent primary education in her home country, then at 16 entered the Royal Holloway College in London, where in 1982 she earned an honours degree in computer science and maths. She returned to KSA and in 1985 joined a spin-off of Citibank, then named Saudi American Bank, which eventually morphed into today's Samba Financial Group. Now independent and publicly held with year-end 2015 assets of \$63 billion and net income of \$1.4 billion, Samba is one of KSA's five largest banks. Over the years, Kudwah rose through the ranks at Samba and held several posts, including stints as head of internet banking and technology, ultimately becoming the Chief Operating Officer, part of the first executive management team in 2003 and one of the bank's general managers. In 2015, she joined PwC as Financial Services Consulting Leader for KSA.

www.pwc.com/m1

معاشة تجارب حياة جديدة في منطقة الخليج

Adventure worlds in the Gulf region

Swiss event producer Habegger AG has been on the ground in Qatar for a decade – today with its own subsidiary in Doha. For company CEO **Simon Ackermann**, the country offers myriad opportunities thanks to its long-term vision. But to tap them, Habegger needs to invest more than just money.

Text: editorial staff “ceo”

Images: Marc Wetli

Habegger opened a branch office in Qatar in 2014. Are you getting into position for the 2022 FIFA World Cup?

No, it's much too early for that. The event business is very transitory. What really sealed our decision was Qatar's “Vision 2030”, in which the 2022 World Cup is just one of the milestones. The country wants to become a nexus for international sporting events. It has already hosted the 2015 Handball World Championships, the 2016 UCI Road Cycling World Championships and the IAAF World Athletics Championships will be held here in 2019. All of these events are interesting projects for us. Our first mandate from Qatar was for the “2006 Summer Asia Games”, where we were responsible for illuminating the city of Doha.

How did you come by that one?

There were no local providers capable of tackling such a major project. So it was put up for tender internationally and we won a piece of the overall mandate. Today, Qatar is our base for the entire Middle East. We're realising projects in Dubai, Oman and Saudi Arabia as well.

What goals are you pursuing in the region?

We want to act as general contractor for as many projects as possible. As the number of events up for tender is very volatile, it's hard to come up with concrete revenue targets. On any given day you can have several million dollars in the pipeline, and on the next day a sheikh's single wave of the hand can mean there's zero.

So why is the region nevertheless of interest to you?

It's a region with visions and tremendous dynamism. You can get a lot of things moving and, for me as an entrepreneur, that's very motivating. Try asking someone in Switzerland for a vision of the next 10 or 20 years – you'll get hardly an answer. Qatar, on the other hand, has a clear conception: by 2030, it wants to have garnered a leading position in the fields of sports, international conferences, education and culture. Here, the call is for adventure worlds. That's what we offer. And besides this “spirit of adventure”, the region is attractive to us because the market is not yet saturated.

“Companies should establish an outpost in the country. The ‘fly-in, fly-out’ approach doesn't work.”



“Swissness is highly regarded. But it has its price, and the expectations are correspondingly high.”

How does the business differ from that in Europe?

The way you land a project. In other words, the way decisions are arrived at and influence is swayed – they’re worlds apart. When you start a project in Switzerland, it’s more or less certain that it will be realised as planned. In the Middle East, there’s more – how should I say? – dynamism to the process. Frequently, the project ends up entirely different than what was originally planned, but is successful anyway. This has to do with the financial clout and cultural attitude in Qatar. In the sheikhdom, it’s common that decisions by important people are suddenly changed without forewarning. However, the costs are no issue.

And you’re okay with that?

I pass no judgment. It’s a different culture, I accept it, and in certain respects I appreciate it: you really sense the hunger and will to move things ahead.

How binding are the contracts?

Until now, our experience has been that the people uphold their side of a contract. But you shouldn’t fool yourself – as a Swiss SME, you wouldn’t have a chance in front of a court. Lodge a complaint and you’re out of the game, even if it ultimately turns out that you were right.

How do you make sure that business relationships evolve favourably?

Success doesn’t just come from having a good relationship with the project manager; equally important are the connections you have at the highest levels – you really need to build personal relationships with the Qatari decision-makers.

To what extent is corruption part of the game?

With us, there’s no corruption. But to establish a company in Qatar, we had to involve a Qatari majority shareholder. We found our partner with the help of Swiss Global Enterprise (S-GE). My business partner holds a 51 per cent interest in Habegger Productions and receives a fixed fee in the form of a profit share. That’s comparable to a tax, but it doesn’t go to the state; instead it lands in the pocket of a private person. What that so-called sponsor does with the money is up to him. Some of them apply it towards the acquisition of new mandates. I trust my business partner completely in this regard.

Your business partner has the right to close down your subsidiary if it suits him to do so. Do you have the feeling of being at his mercy?

That is in fact a special aspect. But a wind up would not be in his own best interest. After all, he’s the majority shareholder and would have to make good on all the liabilities associated with a liquidation of the company. What’s more, he could lose face as many of our customers are also acquainted with him.

So the risks for foreign companies desirous of doing business in Qatar should not be underestimated?

There are details that you need to be aware of. We have a scenario for each kind of risk. And anyway, large investments are not necessary in our business. So if we actually had to withdraw from the country, we wouldn’t be losing billions’ worth of assets. For manufacturing companies, the risk is clearly higher.

“The Qataris want to talk to the principal, communicate eye to eye.”

Is it advantageous when a company hails from Europe?

We have a trust bonus: Swissness is highly regarded. But it has its price, and the expectations are correspondingly high.

When it comes to price, how can you hold your own against foreign competition?

We’re only active in the premium segment. We cannot and don’t want to bid for standard events. Weddings, for instance, would be a huge market, but there are plenty of providers in that segment. We come into play when an event has international reach.

Do you have any tips for Swiss companies that want to become active in Qatar?

They should establish an outpost in the country. The “fly-in, fly-out” approach doesn’t work. They also need to be capable of surviving a lean period. After its negative experience with the Asian Games, where many firms simply packed up and fled, Qatar developed a system that tests the commitment of a company: first, they invite the people to make a

presentation; then they let them wait. At the same time, you have to obtain a licence to participate in the RFOs, a process that can take up to a year. You need sufficient financial wherewithal to get through that stretch of time.

How frequently are you, yourself, physically present in Qatar?

Early on, it was once a month. The Qataris want to talk to the principal, communicate eye to eye. The sponsor handles a part of this work – without him, the invaluable political access goes missing.

What fascinates you about the lifestyle, the culture in the Middle East?

The people are very hospitable and highly educated. Many Qataris have studied abroad and are often better educated and well-travelled than many of us. The women in Qatar are also very fashion-conscious. For them, Qatar is anyway a liberal Arabian state. They, too, are very well-educated, seeing as how the Sheikha, meaning the wife of the former Emir, is responsible for the country's entire schooling system and wants to make Qatar the academic hub of the Middle East.

What can we learn from the Qataris?

I admire how they have defined a strategy and are now resolutely pursuing it. We lack that type of mettle and I think we can learn something from it – focusing intently on a goal and not letting it get watered-down in the implementation process.

How could the region be even more successful?

If people were to place more trust in foreign companies and deal with them more fairly. Today, the locals frequently try to squeeze the maximum out of their business partners. That's not a sustainable tactic.

Where do the greatest challenges lie for the region, in your opinion?

Other than the energy resources, there's not much to be had there. Qatar is highly dependent on its oil reserves, and the country is also faced with the challenge of attracting foreign manufacturing companies. As a result, Qatar needs to import everything – even workers. If the country manages to leverage its geographic location by establishing Qatar as a hub, I also see opportunities in commercial areas that have hardly been touched until now – the healthcare sector, for example.

Simon Ackermann (43) has chaired the board of directors of Habegger Group since 2009. Previously, he was the proprietor of various companies in the media production, show/TV direction and event management areas. As a solution for the succession of company founder Peter Habegger, Simon Ackermann acquired the rapidly growing company and has played a dual role as its CEO since 2015. He is the father of three children and lives with his wife in Dielsdorf.

Habegger

Habegger AG, headquartered in Regensdorf on the outskirts of Zurich, is a full-service provider in the fields of scenography/content production, event technology and temporary structures. Founded in 1982, the company stages events and installs fixed media infrastructure across the globe. Habegger, with its 160 full-time employees, each year tackles close to 2,200 projects for more than 520 customers. The company has subsidiaries in Vienna and Doha. In the current year, Habegger aims to generate CHF 65 million in revenues. The company itself is today a wholly owned subsidiary of Simon Ackermann's Parkgroup Holding.

www.habegger-group.com



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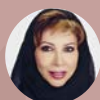
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