



BUILDING THE FUTURE

Award-winning CEO Amer Bin Ahmed has embraced the innovative spirit of the Knauf Group to drive the Dubai branch and its employees to the next level – achieving a world record in the process

AMER BIN AHMED / CEO KNAUF DUBAI

When the Knauf brothers founded their eponymous building materials company in 1932 they had no idea that one day the family name would become internationally synonymous with the best. However, thanks to an entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to innovation, Knauf has developed from a family business to a globally active group of companies owned by a family. With a pioneering spirit and readiness to accept change, the German brand has evolved and expanded its horizons across international borders, taking with it a concept of comfortable and sustainable living environments.

With 220 production facilities and sales organizations in more than 86 countries, 27,500 employees worldwide, and sales of 6.5 billion Euro (in 2016), the Dubai arm is a Knauf success story. Here, a new digital era for the building industry has been embraced and Knauf is the leader of the United Arab Emirates' plaster, gypsum board and drywall systems industry. The vision is to be the customer preferred solutions provider with an umbrella of "Knauf Haus" product offerings comprising the likes of Integral Raised Flooring Systems and Aquapanel.

At the very heart of Knauf's philosophy is the vision set out by CEO Amer Bin Ahmed: that it is a German company that manufactures in the UAE. This means that Knauf combines the history, quality and knowledge of one of the largest manufacturing regions globally, with a commitment to position the UAE as an export hub of quality. By creating strong, reliable and high-performance materials in the local area, Knauf works in partnership with the UAE's commitment to sustainability as well as quality that can be exported throughout the world, all with the seal of 'Made in UAE'.

FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

Knauf firmly believes that only a company based on values provides the guarantee to be able to grow sustainably and find solutions to the challenges of the future. The core values are Partnership, Menschlichkeit, Commitment and Entrepreneurship, with a mantra that advises to 'Never Give Up'. These are the principles on which the company is based and according to which the employees still act today. Amer Bin Ahmed has been →

guiding the Dubai office to this position with quality at the very heart of his philosophy. Not solely extended to the equipment, materials and suppliers that he uses, quality is equally cultivated in his workforce.

Amer says: "We invest back into our employees. We prioritise their training and education so that they are equipped with the specialised skills necessary to their respective departments. It's a constant process, showing them how to manage tools, how to manage safety, and how to look for quality."

HOMEGROWN LEADERS

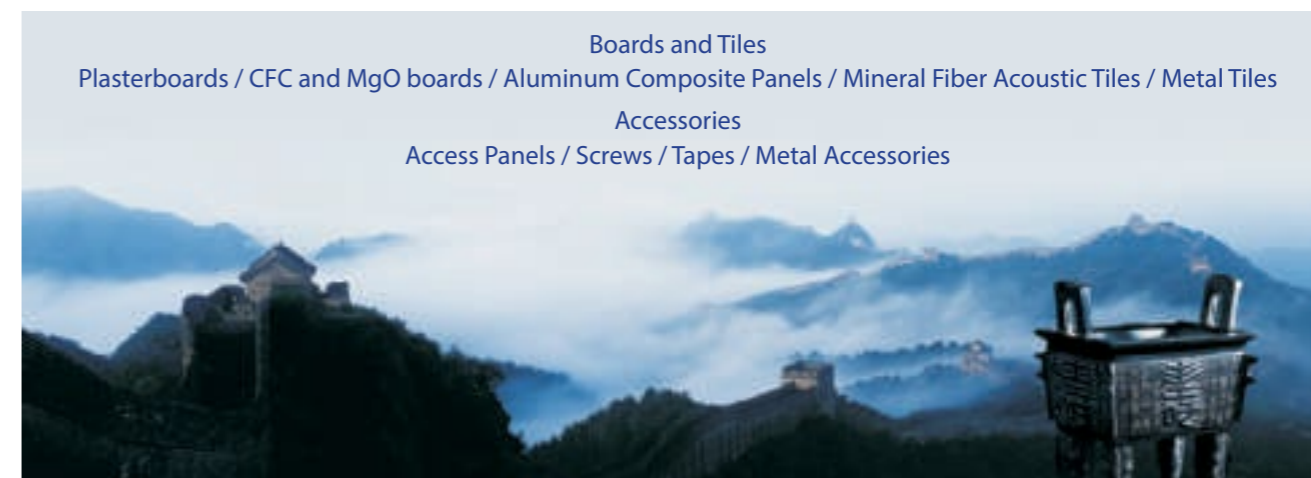
Indeed, this investment has proven a success with customers as well as the working team themselves – the average employee retention rate is 8 years. Amer says: "We aim to grow our future leaders within the company. Through passing on our knowledge we are able to let our employees develop their skills and see themselves as leaders. This fosters a mutual sense of respect and loyalty."

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workforce, the Knauf group has accustomed its many teams to a performance culture where each individual is monitored on their progress. According to Amer, this creates a sense of value and integrity within the business. Each employee has respect for the work they do and takes pride in the quality of product and service they are providing.

Bridging the gap between the top management and his workforce, Amer demonstrated his dedication to his employees by getting them together for what could be the ultimate team building activity – to win a Guinness World Record in a water moving exercise. A fantastic example of Knauf’s inspired innovation, this is another example of Amer’s dedication to unity within his teams across all the departments.

Over the past 10 years the company has blossomed in success and size. Now proudly 100 per cent ASTM (American Society of Testing Materials) approved and one of the top companies in its field, the sustainability of the business has been put at the forefront



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of the agenda. This begins with suppliers. Amer says: “We have invested in a sustainable supply chain and in sustainable practices through developing a mine and quarry of our own. Here we only use local suppliers with whom we have a long-standing relationship.”

INTEGRATION

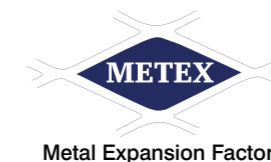
This loyal relationship between Knauf and its suppliers has become so closely linked that Amer considers them as partners in the business. “Our suppliers are integrated into our business. We share our knowledge with them, from the product and packaging to storage, transportations, and costs. We educate them on every aspect of the supply chain, so they can adhere to our same high-quality standards.”

Dubai’s booming economy has also played its part in driving the company to rapid growth. However, as contradictory as it may sound, a drastic increase in sales has not come without its challenges. The factories now situated across the globe come →

with an extensive range of customers, whose needs are exponentially different.

“Over the past three years we have become a solutions company alongside our already existing building material production identity,” says Amer. We have had to adapt in order to meet the different habits and tastes of our individual consumers. We need to understand each country’s local market needs, from India to Saudi Arabia. Offering a solutions service has proven very successful.”

Amer is well aware of the huge potential in the digital market to expand his business even further afield. “We are working towards using the latest digital technology trends at the innermost part of our research and development,” he says. This will create innovative products that use renewable energy and further a sustainable future. At present, our industry is disconnected from the digital world and we want to spearhead this move and see the market open up to exporting our services.”



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Dubai, UAE
www.alwaseefind.com

info@alwaseefind.ae TEL No: +97143474348 Fax +97143474394

