

# Healthy FUTURE

UAE-based pharmaceutical and medical supplies company GulfDrug has established itself as a major regional player during more than fifty years of trading. With that foundation, the family-owned company now looks to the future. We spoke to Joint Managing Director Rashad Al Moosa about the importance of balancing legacy with ambition.

## RASHAD AL MOOSA

Joint Managing Director @ GulfDrug

**W**hen GulfDrug was established in 1969, the UAE's healthcare system was rudimentary, to say the least. One in three women died during childbirth, for example. Beginning as a pharmaceutical importer, GulfDrug has therefore been intimately involved in the development of the UAE's health sector, building it into the thriving, modern service we see today. Since supply-

ing its first clinic in Dubai in 1970, GulfDrug's products have been supplied to hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics across the territory. By the '80s, the company had branched out into high-tech medical equipment, precipitating five decades of impressive growth and mirroring the economic boom enjoyed by its home region. Today, GulfDrug stands at the forefront of emerging medical technologies such as robotic surgery. →







**We are helping to deliver even better healthcare to the citizens of our home region.**

As a graduate in finance and banking, I knew I had much to offer, but at the same time, I was aware of the responsibility of filling our father's shoes. But it's been a great journey so far. The pharmaceutical market is a very dynamic market, and every year, you learn something new. That's been the standout feature for me. In this job, you never stop learning."

This dynamism has meant that there has been a great deal of executive-level activity in the 22 years since Mr Al Moosa took up his current position. A great number of decisions have shaped the company's fortunes, to the extent that the joint managing director chuckles when asked to think of specific examples.

"There have been so many things we have implemented," he says. "So many transitions and upgrades across the whole organisation. When it comes to operational efficiencies, procedures, warehousing, internal governance, and salesforce management, it is not easy to pick out one or two things. Digitisation is impacting everything lately. Warehouse management software is becoming very important, for example. It would be fair to say that my →

**All in the family**

Current Joint Managing Director Rashad Al Moosa began running the company with his brother, Dr Zeyad Al Moosa, in 2001, an opportunity he grasped readily.

"The company was established by my father, who really was something of a pioneer," Mr Al Moosa explains. "He completed his medical education in Germany, then brought that knowledge home to improve our situation here. The company was always a part of our lives, and even as children, we felt that we were part of the business. So after my father passed away in 1996, my brother and then I took over.



**Rooted in customer centricity, both Eppendorf and GulfDrug together strive to deliver the best to our scientific community. Together, our strong business partnership prioritizes customer satisfaction and retention, thereby fueling success.**

**AKSHAY KADALILAE**

Managing Director, Eppendorf Middle East & Africa FZ-LLC



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brother and I did not invent the wheel; we just updated it. But there has been a lot of updating. Perhaps if there was something to say in summary, it would be that serving our clients is always the priority. We remain the preferred partner of so many hospitals and clinics because of our quality service and products. Everything we do reinforces that.”

#### Expansion

Through this approach, GulfDrug has become one of the largest distributors of medical supplies in the region. Working with more than a hundred global suppliers, the company’s network spans the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Jordan and involves a great deal of communication and relationship-building. This is perhaps the central plank of the brothers’ success, that in inheriting an already functioning business from their father, they were able to sustain its upward trajectory by listening to and liaising with clients.

Nonetheless, the success enjoyed by GulfDrug throughout the first years of the twenty-first century has not led to a sense of



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complacency. While the company is now well established within its region and sector, Mr Al Moosa is keen to emphasise that continued progress remains the goal.

“We intend to improve operational efficiency even further and to continue to improve our service to customers and clients. Beneath that, of course, is the fact that as we do that, we are helping to deliver even better healthcare to the citizens of our home region. This is an extremely important point, be-

cause our business is not just about being financially successful. Ultimately, we are in the business of saving lives, and that is something that should never be forgotten.”

#### Future possibilities

There also remains the possibility of international expansion. It would perhaps make sense for a company as successful as GulfDrug to look beyond its traditional territories and implement its client-focused, communication-based approach elsewhere. The notion clearly appeals to the joint managing director, but it is not one he is prepared to pin his colours to, at this stage.

“That is something I cannot rule out,” he says. “But I would not be able to confirm it either. We are always looking at how the market may evolve and base our decisions on that. But what I would say is that we want the healthcare system here in the UAE to be comparable to that of first-world countries of a similar size. Sweden, for example, has a population of ten million, just like us, so I would like to think that we could compare our fa-

cilities favourably with a country like that. In fact, we are already experiencing some healthcare tourism. Patients from the UK, for example, are coming to the UAE for MRI scans because the waiting time in their home country is months. That’s something we can be proud of, and GulfDrug has been a part of that.”

#### Keeping the values alive

Mr Al Moosa recognises that company culture has had a large part to play in cementing GulfDrug’s status. While this was established by his father’s tenacity and talent in the first instance, the brothers have been sure to continue the work ethic and example set by the late founder. As one element, executives all work on site, every day, in order to provide a visible sense of leadership to employees.

“In that sense, we behave in the same way as our staff,” the joint MD explains. “We are always here, which shows our commitment to the company. Each of us does 50 hours a week. We see our competitors, some of whom maybe only attend the office once a week, or just come to board meetings, and we believe



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this style of leadership is what sets us apart. We live this company every day, running all of its day-to-day operations with our fingers on the pulse, just as our father did.”

It’s an approach which has yielded clear results. And one which stands GulfDrug in good stead as it looks toward tomorrow.

“Commitment. Hard work,” Mr Al Moosa re-emphasises. “This is what GulfDrug is all about.”

