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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



UAE remains the definitive gateway in the Gulf

Just 36 years after its formation, the United Arab Emirates, once dependent on fishing and pearling, has grown into an immensely wealthy country. Today, this federation of seven states leads its neighbors in development and quality of life, and is considered the foremost economic gateway to the Arab world.

With access to 1 billion consumers stretching from the Middle East all the way to the Commonwealth of Independent States and sub-Saharan Africa, the UAE has become an economic power in so short a time.

The sharp rise in oil prices in 1973 may have created more wealth than the country ever expected. But the growth and

the establishment of free-trade zones, which offer a full range of incentives to investors — from total foreign ownership, full repatriation of profits, 50-year corporate tax holidays, and zero import and re-export duties, among others.

The effectiveness and viability of this model has seen the establishment of dozens of free-trade zones in each of the emirates, with a diverse range of sectors represented — from automakers to flower dealers.

These zones have allowed the UAE to become not only a regional center but a global hub for goods and services.

"If you talk about globalization, there is no better example than Dubai. We represent over 100 countries here with almost every language in the world heard on a daily basis," says Sultan Saeed Al Mansoori, the UAE minister of development for the government sector.

"When conferences come up that talk of the challenges of globalizing, I tell them that in Dubai, we do not talk about globalization as an idea. We live and breathe globalization every day. We are a successful example of how globalization can be beneficial to countries providing that they know how to manage it," he adds.

Managing a diverse local economy, where 80 percent of the 2.6 million residents are expatriates, requires not only openness but the proper physical infrastructure.

The UAE, through Abu Dhabi and Dubai, is leading the way through an assortment of megaprojects. The Dubai World Central International Airport, when completed, will be the world's largest passenger and cargo hub.

Meanwhile, Abu Dhabi is positioning itself as the cultural hub of the Middle East with the opening of the Guggenheim Museum on Saadiyat Island.

Through these projects, one of the country's oldest trade partners — Japan — has found the impetus for new activities.

Although economic relations between the two nations have been dominated traditionally by oil (the UAE is Japan's largest oil customer, accounting for more than 50 percent of its exports), several Japanese firms have looked to the UAE for large-scale infrastructure projects.

A consortium composed of Marubeni, Hitachi and Obayashi is building the monorail system of Nakheel's offshore Palm Jumeirah project while Mitsubi-

shi Corp., Obayashi and Kajima have secured the contract to build the Dubai metro rail system.

Takuma Hatano, Japan's ambassador to the UAE, believes that the future holds success for both countries.

"Oil, financial investment and logistics are the three pillars of

the UAE's future. Japan understands this and is excited to take part. The core element of Japan-UAE relations is trust. For Japan to build further on that trust, we must respond to the needs of the UAE in human capital development and transfers of technology," says Hatano. ◆

UAE Minister of Economy Shiekha Lubna bint Khalid Al Qasimi leads her country's delegation to the UAE-Japan Business Forum held in Tokyo in April.



Takuma Hatano, ambassador of Japan to the UAE

development of the UAE could not have happened without the strong leadership of its late leader, His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and his prudent management of the nation's oil reserves.

Today, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the prime minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai, has provided the same kind of leadership and clear vision that has united all seven emirates.

While economic growth has been centered in Dubai, the six other emirates have stepped up efforts to catch up. Abu Dhabi, the nation's capital and largest emirate, is exploring sectors beyond oil and gas while Ras al Khaimah, the northernmost emirate, is venturing beyond its traditional industries of cement and ceramics.

All other emirates are increasing transparency in governance, minimizing bureaucratic procedures and reducing barriers to foreign investment.

"If you look at our GDP growth last year, 62.5 percent was from the nonhydrocarbon sector. This is tremendous when you take into account the oil assets that the UAE has. It not only reflects the sustainable nature of the economy but its diversification," points out Shiekha Lubna bint Khalid Al Qasimi, the UAE minister of economy.

The catalyst of economic growth in the country has been

The real deal in Dubai

Dubai's property market has continued to heat up with demand for real estate and foreign investment in the region growing sharply. Amid all the record-setting developments, radical marketing and soaring prices, not many developers have made the cut.

Diamond Investments General Manager Faris Saeed, a civil engineer by profession, set up the company together with five partners when the government of Dubai started opening a series of freehold, leasing and free-zone areas in 2003. And in those four years, business has been very successful.

In the first three years, the company launched six residential buildings with 1,300 apartments in the Dubai Marina due for completion this year.

"We were the first company in Dubai, in fact, to deliver on time," boasts Saeed.



Diamond Investments General Manager Faris Saeed

The company's original clients, mainly investors who each bought several apartments to rent out, have seen property values appreciate between 100 percent and 120 percent. To his credit, Saeed spotted the property boom three years ago and took advantage.

"We were planning to do only one building — Marina I. But, we sold the building in three months. So, we went to Marina II. For Marina II, we sold the 270 apartments in 40 days, the full building in 40 days. After I sold Marina II in 40 days, I got



encouraged to do Marina III, IV, V and VI together," says Saeed.

Diamond is starting several new developments, including a new residential project in the Jumeirah Village area with 1,500 apartments and 150 town houses, a 108,000-sq.-meter commercial development in Arjan and a luxury building in the Lagoons area facing the opera house.

As of February, Diamond has sold 1,300 apartments in the Marina Diamond projects and 350 apartments in Jumeirah Village without any grand advertising campaigns.

"We can afford to sell at those prices because we are contractors ourselves. Our background is contracting management. We can get better prices for construction than others without compromising quality. When we go into the breakdown of the building, we go into detail and discuss the price for every part," Saeed explains.

But it is client care that has distinguished Diamond from other companies.

"I like to meet my clients so I can get feedback from the market. This is part of our success because we design our buildings according to the needs of the people. We are always updating our designs to the needs of the market," says Saeed.

Diamond has clients from 60 countries around the world and many of them have brought in referrals.

Most of its customers are from the United Kingdom, but the company hopes to reach more into the Asian market as it plans to be Dubai's No. 1 private-sector company. ◆

The Marina I development of Diamond Investments www.diamond-investments.ae

Capturing the Gulf market

In 1976, Michel Ayat started his career in the automobile industry working out of Kuwait. Fifteen years later, he moved to Dubai, where he took over as general manager of Arabian Automobiles Co. (AAC), the flagship operation of today's AW Rostamani Group.

Since making that move, Ayat has witnessed the evolution of the Gulf's auto industry and has identified four stages leading to its current position as the most vibrant in the Middle East.

First came the seller's era between the 1950s and 1960s, when oil had just been discovered. At this time, cash was abundant, but consumer commodities were not as available.

In the mid-'60s, at the start of what Ayat dubbed the buyer's era, the Japanese entered the Gulf auto market, studying consumer conditions (from road terrain to climate conditions) and subsequently introducing models that satisfied these preferences.

According to Ayat, Dubai leader H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum ushered in the process era in the early 1990s, when he urged industry to seek the world's best practices and innovations, and have companies implement them.

Today is the people era, Ayat says. With the population growing and per capita GDP rising, consumers have so many more choices, and there are several tried and tested processes for companies to adopt.

From the 1960s to today, through these four stages, Japanese automakers increased market share from zero to 70 percent in the UAE.

One model example is AAC and its distributorship of Nissan vehicles in Dubai and the Northern Emirates since 1968, when it sold 3,000 vehicles. Since then, the figure has jumped to 35,000 units, making Nissan the second most popular brand in the UAE.

"I am proud to say that AAC is recognized as a model distributor for Nissan in the Middle East. If you compare the number of cars sold per capita in the region, the UAE is a clear No. 1. This is partially due to our understanding of the four stages and where our business fits in," says Ayat.

In 2010, AAC's goal is to sell 40,000 units, equivalent to 25 percent of total market share.

Ayat has been very impressed with Nissan's leadership under CEO Carlos Ghosn.

"Leadership is everything. Carlos Ghosn understood that traditional auto markets were saturated and there was a need to re-strategize toward emerging markets, such as the GCC. Since Ghosn's arrival in

The jack of the electronics trade

"We don't aim to be the biggest but to be the best at what we do," says Jacky Panjabi, managing director of the family-run Jacky's Group of Companies, headquartered in Dubai.

Established in Hong Kong in 1970 as a small mail-order company, Jacky's has grown to become one of the most celebrated brands for electronics, IT and home appliance retailing. The company has also launched its own brand of home appliances called "Venus," which is sold all over the Middle East and Africa.

Jacky's opened its office in Dubai in 1985, first as an extension of the group's mail-order business. Today, it is recognized as one of the top electronics retailers in the UAE with nine multibrand outlets. In 1987, the group opened an office in Singapore.

"It's a very good combination of having them (the offices) in three duty-free places, where the goods are freely available and the governments are really supporting business," says Panjabi, whose business has worked with top Japanese companies like Sony, Panasonic, Toshiba, JVC, Sanyo, Fuji Film, Yamaha and Canon in many global markets, including Africa.

In 1994, the group made its first foray into Africa, opening a duty-free outlet in Kenya. It has 11 retail outlets spread across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, where a strong distribution network has been established.

"We are the exclusive distributor of Sony in Kenya. We have got a very prestigious showroom for Sony in Nairobi, which is the No. 1 showroom in the whole of Africa," he emphasizes.

At present, Jacky's has branches in Tanzania, which represents Kodak and other global brands, and an office in Uganda, which distributes Sony, Toshiba, JVC and Canon. It also recently became Fuji Film's distributor in East Africa.

Jacky Panjabi, managing director of Jacky's Electronics www.dubiotech.com

1999, our Nissan lineup has gone from between 10 to 11 models to 18. By putting Nissan in every product category, we are able to get customers from early on, say 20 years of age, and maintain them through their 60s and 70s," he points out.

Ayat is particularly proud of Nissan's luxury Infiniti line, which was relaunched in 2004. In this market, where Japanese luxury cars have mostly been associated with Toyota's Lexus, quarterly sales of Infiniti outnumbered those of Lexus recently.

"We are investing in the brand and will be building a flagship showroom on Sheikh Zayed Road exclusive to Infiniti products. In 2008, with the new showroom and the lineup change to 10 models, you will see the re-emergence of the Infiniti line on behalf of AAC. After all, the Infiniti line is a sign of Nissan's success in our jurisdiction," says Ayat.

"We are committed

Michel Ayat, general manager of Arabian Automobiles Co.

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Growing with their clients, wherever they may go

By the entrance of Gulf Agency Co.'s headquarters in the Jebel Ali Free Zone, visitors are greeted by a glass floor-to-ceiling world map dotted with dozens of lights, which represent GAC's offices worldwide.

"There is not one port that we cannot operate out of," GAC Group President Capt. Lars Säfverström says proudly. From the beginning, GAC was a global company — founded by Scandinavians with local partners in the Middle East that represented international shipping companies such as NYK of Japan. Providing total solutions is GAC's strength as it adeptly combines three main areas of shipping, logistics and marine services to come up with a tailor-made product for all its customers. But, the company attributes its success more to its fundamental values: Do business in a straightforward manner; be a good listener; come up with ideas; and don't promise more than you can deliver. Half a century later, GAC epitomizes the term global leader. "Today, we have 260 offices in 40 countries, but we have clients in each and every country around the world, and we have 7,500 clients," says Säfverström. A review of the company's five-year plan, called Vision X-Global Reach, launched in 2003, highlights GAC's fantastic performance over the years. One of the company's strategic moves was repositioning its global headquarters to Dubai.



GAC Group President Capt. Lars Säfverström

"We have been here for five years and I think it is a wonderful opportunity for people to realize what globalization is all about. Every day, you are reminded that the world is changing. That has helped our head office staff and the group management to be prepared for globalization even more as they face it concretely," explains Säfverström. Meanwhile, the company has grown with its clients. "There is nothing more gratifying than when a client you have been with for many years wants you to offer services in areas where you do not exist," he says. GAC's Hub Agency Service, a result of half a century's experience in providing port services especially to shipping companies and oil corporations, is a prime example of this. Chevron, for instance, once had 600 agents around the world and it rationalized that to only one agency, which was GAC.

During the next few years, GAC will continue expanding its global presence, finding more principals and diversifying its range of services. A fourth business segment, GAC Solutions, is on the way. GAC Solutions focuses on forging strategic partnerships with first-class manufacturers and service providers to create value-added services for the international maritime community. Amid all this growth, GAC is making sure that it does not "lose its soul." The company understands that growth must come from within. So, earlier this year, the company launched the GAC Corporate Academy, which provides extensive e-learning programs for employees around the world so they can develop skills critical to their personal and professional growth. ◆ www.gacworld.com

Nissan has a good plan

Living up to Nissan's global strategy is no easy task. Under a four-pronged plan dubbed "Value-Up," the Japanese automaker will widen its geographical presence, expand its light commercial vehicle (LCV) business, consolidate the Infiniti line as a tier-one luxury brand and maximize its competitiveness in so-called low-cost leading competitive countries.

Within the 26 countries under Nissan Middle East FZE's jurisdiction, which extends from the Gulf Cooperation Council to the Maghreb and the Levant, Managing Director Toru Hasegawa has focused his attention on the first three of those four priorities. Just last year, responsibility for the Maghreb was shifted from Japan to Dubai while in 2007, Nissan Middle East plans to add countries like Libya and Iraq to its territory. With much of the region undergoing a construction boom, close to 30 percent of sales have come from LCVs like pickups and minibuses.

With regards to the Infiniti, 2007 will see a re-focusing of the brand, with several national sales companies unveiling new showrooms dedicated solely to the luxury line. "We need to establish a clear face for the Infiniti. Our Infiniti SUVs (the FX-35 and QX-56) are well established and popular. We need to communicate the same level of trust and attraction the customer has for our SUVs into our Infiniti sedan lines. What is certain is that we cannot establish a totally new tier-one luxury brand image if our Infiniti products are sold in the same showrooms as Nissan products. The Infiniti needs a dedicated showroom, dedicated workshop, and dedicated salespeople and mechanics," Hasegawa says.

To increase the competency of its workforce, Nissan Middle East opened a regional training center in July next to its Jebel Ali headquarters. Instruction will be imported from Japan, and training will be in English, Arabic and French for technical staff and nontechnical support staff, such as receptionists and sales advisers. "Due to our 50-year history in the Middle East and our full lineup of 21 vehicles, we have established a solid brand image in the region. That is why now is the time to focus on after sales. This is my mission," Hasegawa says. "For example, our national sales agent in Abu Dhabi agreed completely with this message. Six months ago, a customer had to wait four weeks to set a service appointment in Abu Dhabi. Now, it is less than two days. Sometimes customers can come and receive



Nissan Middle East FZE Managing Director Toru Hasegawa

service on the same day!" he adds. In the UAE, Nissan vehicles are distributed through Al Masaood in Abu Dhabi, and Arabian Automobiles in Dubai and the Northern Emirates. "Many ask why Nissan has two national sales companies in the UAE. Al Masaood is focused on the Abu Dhabi market, where sales are generated mainly from the government, whereas Arabian Automobiles is geared toward the booming commercial market in Dubai. I think it is a very good balance we have," he explains. In 2006, Nissan's distributors' sales in the UAE grew by 14 percent to 15 percent, totaling close to 40,000 vehicles by year-end. In market share terms, that equaled 21 percent of the domestic market. Within the greater GCC, however, Nissan in 2006 controlled 15 percent of the auto market. According to Hasegawa, the target is to raise this regional share to 20 percent. Hasegawa is convinced that Nissan's decision in 1994 to become the first auto company to establish a regional headquarters in Dubai continues to bear fruit. "What makes Nissan unique is that we employ a multiproduction source strategy, whereby our vehicles are imported from our manufacturing plants in Japan, the U.S., South Korea, and soon from Thailand and the United Kingdom. Such coordination and logistics operation is very complicated and without our company in Dubai, each of the 26 countries would have to directly communicate with the manufacturing nation it sources vehicles from," he says. "Being here we can collect and integrate all information, and coordinate business between our territories and our manufacturing. I don't think if we had stayed in Tokyo we would have been able to give the Middle East the attention it deserves," he also says. ◆ www.nissan-me.com



Nissan Middle East FZE Managing Director Toru Hasegawa (upper left) and the company's regional headquarters in the Jebel Ali Free Zone (above)

Service you can depend on

2008 will mark the centennial of a company that prides itself with being "at your side." Whether at home or at work, this Japanese firm has provided professionals around the globe with equipment to make their lives easier.

Brother Industries began selling home sewing machines at the turn of the 20th century, and later expanded to industrial sewing machines and business machines. It has since grown to become a leader in all of its business segments, with operations in over 30 countries and sales in more than 100.

Last year, Brother International Gulf marked its 10th anniversary in the region, but its presence went beyond that. It operates from the Jebel Ali Free Zone area in Dubai, and acts as the regional headquarters for the Middle East and Africa, and is responsible for 19 territories. "Before we even established our subsidiary company, we were trading with some distributors from each country. Our business history with some distributors began more than 20 to 25 years ago," recalls Managing Director Yoshihisa Tsuji. With demand for business machines in the Middle East growing continuously, the company enjoys a high market share of the multifunction machines and facsimiles sold in the region. "For example, in Turkey we have almost 65 percent of the unit base for our fax minichannel," says Tsuji. In the UAE, it has a market share of between 60 percent and 65 percent.



Brother International Gulf Managing Director Yoshihisa Tsuji (above) and the company's popular multifunction fax machine (right)



Its long presence in the region has given Brother a clear understanding of the nuances of each market, whether they are about work culture, preferences or market demand. So, each distributor exercises autonomy over its sales, marketing and after-sales services. CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Bangash builds the dream home

The Bangash Group of Companies started out in automobiles in 1990. Since then, it has diversified into other businesses as the country experienced continuing growth in all of its economic sectors — from tourism to real estate.

Active in the hospitality business for over a decade, the Bangash Group forged a partnership with Canadian firm Best Homes Emirates in 2002 and entered real estate development. "Real estate in all of the emirates, especially in Dubai, is booming and in the next five years, you will see new townships and new environments appearing. Our priority is to bring more good projects to Dubai, and it is our intention to deliver our projects in time and with good quality to prove to our clients and the markets that we are trustworthy, and capable of delivering what we promise," says Chairman Abdul Nabi Bangash.

Its maiden project, the 230-unit Global Green View, has sold out and been turned over to clients. Its second project called Global Lake View in Jumeirah Lake Towers is scheduled for completion in mid-2008. The entrepreneur established Bangash Properties in 2005 and independently launched Royal Residence I and II in the highly publicized Dubai Sports City, which will contain the Manchester United Football Academy, ICC Global Cricket Academy, David Lloyd Tennis Academy and the Butch Harmon School of Golf, among others. "I decided to enter Sports City because it is truly a unique project, especially as our projects are at a very prime location," explains Bangash. The residences, which will have an unrestricted view of a 1.8-million-sq.-meter 18-hole golf course, will be located in a complex that will feature easy access to schools, a five-star hotel and a world-class shopping mall. It will also be only a few subway stops from the Jebel Ali International Airport due to open in 2009. The company opened a sales office in the United Kingdom earlier this year to attract customers from Europe. "I want to give the message to our brothers in Japan and all East Asian nations that they should come and see Dubai. In the next 10 years, Dubai will be the No. 1 city in the world!" exclaims Bangash. ◆ www.bangash.ae



Bangash Properties Chairman Abdul Nabi Bangash (above left) and his flagship projects — Royal Residence I and II (above)

Servicing the region from Dubai

Chaired by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, deputy ruler of Dubai and minister of finance and industry of the United Arab Emirates, Oilfields Supply Center set up original operations in Dubai in 1962, and has grown to become the Middle East's largest oil and gas logistics company.

The company relocated to Jebel Ali in early 1994 and has performed impressively despite a decline in actual upstream activities in Dubai. "Using the analogy of a shopping mall, OSC is really a one-stop service center for the region's upstream oil and gas activities. In fact, OSC has materials and equipment movement through its facilities of over \$3 billion per annum, notwithstanding the fact that Dubai has for some years been a one-rig operation. This clearly points to the regional importance of OSC in the oil and gas industry," says I. M. Abdullah Abedin, director and general manager of corporate affairs. "OSC is a very strong regional service company and its facilities in Jebel Ali, described as a common-user supply base, clearly support upstream activities extensively. In addition, the company has expanded its geographic presence in Iran and Libya, where infrastructure development, logistic services, waste management, customs clearance, HSE management and inventory management are important competencies in these operational environments," adds General Manager John R. Ellis.

After receiving its ISO 9001 accreditation in 1996 and ISO 14001 in 2000, OSC attained the prestigious OHSAS 18001 in April 2007. Much of OSC's success since its inception in 1962 is due to its long-standing presence in the region. OSC General Manager John R. Ellis (right) and I.M. Abdullah Abedin, director and general manager of corporate affairs



OSC General Manager John R. Ellis (right) and I.M. Abdullah Abedin, director and general manager of corporate affairs

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Built to last the distance

The region's rough terrain, tough weather conditions and blistering hot pavements create severe operating conditions for tires, speeding up their wear and tear. The demand for safety, prompt delivery of products and cost-efficiency in this challenging situation have boosted the demand for high-quality tires.

Present in the Middle East more than 50 years, Bridgestone has established a strong network of distributors who have raised the brand's profile to the top. "We have a good trusting relationship with our distributors and we will always respect them since they are representing Bridgestone in this market," says Bridgestone President Yujiro Kanahara.

In 2000, Bridgestone initiated supporting its distributors by shouldering stock operations in the Jebel Ali Free Zone. "One of the advantages of starting such stock operations here is to facilitate our distributors in the market to spend more money on their sales activities such as setting up a retail network increasing their number of outlets," explains Kanahara. Under Chairman, CEO and President Shoshi Arakawa, Bridgestone Corp. in Japan underwent major reorganization in 2006 to generate more business and profit. The plan, which created eight strategic business units, transformed the Dubai operations into a regional head office responsible for the entire Middle East and Africa. In line with this strategy, the company will increase market share through a qualitative approach instead of just a quantitative one. "Instead of selling just a new tire, we will sell a business solution," explains Makoto Ono, director for sales administration and general affairs. Bridgestone provides a product maintenance service, which prolongs the life of the tire by about 10 percent to 15 percent. "We would like our customers to benefit from the total life of the tire not just the initial life, where everyone tends to focus," Ono continues. As markets split with the increased demand for high-end products amid an influx of low-cost, entry-level products, Bridgestone will be more selective about the types of products it will sell in the region, giving it a more focused market approach. "Our corporate objective is to be the No. 1 tire manufacturer in name and in reality, and we would like to take the right steps. We need to set up a firm base to achieve such a goal," Kanahara says. ◆ www.bridgestone.com



Bridgestone Middle East & Africa President Yujiro Kanahara (right) with Makoto Ono, director for sales administration and general affairs

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Bringing new blood to Abu Dhabi

Dr. B. R. Shetty, managing director and CEO of New Medical Centre Group, became the first Asian to receive the Order of Abu Dhabi from His Highness Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, in 2006.

The recognition came 34 years after Shetty arrived in the United Arab Emirates in search of better business opportunities. Since that day, he has established six hospitals and founded Abu Dhabi's only pharmaceutical company, Neopharma.

Only three years after it opened, Neopharma garnered the illustrious Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum business award for manufacturing.

Hard work simply pays off. "In 1973, I was the first outdoor salesman in the UAE. As an outdoor salesman, you find plenty of opportunities. I thought there was a scarcity in medical facilities, and a dearth in diagnostic centers and doctors services, which is why we started NMC," Shetty recalls.

Today, Neopharma has partnerships with the world's top pharmaceutical companies, including Ranbaxy Global, Biocon, Parke-Davis Pfizer, Apotex, SM Pharmaceuticals and Lagap.

"Three years ago I wanted to diversify. I wanted to contribute even more to the UAE. Nobody had encouraged Abu Dhabi to set up a pharmaceutical industry, but I took the risk. Today, we produce 83 products, specializing in antibiotics, even bird flu medica-

tion!" he says.

Shetty grows excited at the prospect of working with the Japanese. "There are so many good pharmaceutical companies in Japan. Any company that has a good product and wants to come to the region is welcome. What I am interested in is brand equity. After all, Neopharma products stand for quality health care not only in the UAE, but all throughout the Middle East," he says.

"We have signed an agreement with Biocon of India so we have biotechnology. We have partnered with Arkansas University in the United States in nanotechnology. If the Japanese want an efficient, product-oriented partner in the UAE that will instantly be accepted by the government, they need to look no further," he adds. ♦

www.neopharma.ae



Neopharma Managing Director and CEO Dr. B.R. Shetty (right) receives the Order of Abu Dhabi Award from H.H. Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi.

Watch out, their time is now

Oil, one of today's most important commodities, has been powering Middle Eastern economies for the past three decades by attracting the world's richest countries, including Japan, to set up businesses here related to oil and its consumption.

But, a Japanese watchmaker saw beyond that and instead focused on a consumer market, growing in size and prosperity. Popularity among expatriates, mainly Indian and Pakistanis, prompted the establishment of Citizen Watches Gulf Co. nearly 20 years ago.

"In the 1980s, we sold more than 3 million pieces a year," says General Manager Hiroaki Marukawa.

Citizen is using tax-exemption benefits that the United Arab Emirates offers in its free-zone areas by importing products and re-exporting them to dedicated agents around the region. Today, one of its largest markets in the region is Saudi Arabia.

Tough competition from low-cost watches made in China and the demand for Swiss-made luxury brands prompted Citizen to change its strategy four years ago. While the competition may choose to focus on one market segment, be it mass or premium, Citizen aims to cover the spectrum.

"Our policy was changed to lifting up the brand image itself," says



Citizen Watches Gulf Co. General Manager Hiroaki Marukawa (above). Finding a balance between commercial needs and the impact on the environment, the Japanese watchmaker offers the solar-powered Eco-Drive (inset).

Marukawa. "We have a very strong weapon — the Eco-Drive," says Marukawa, referring to the technologically acclaimed solar-powered watch collection. "We are using the Eco-Drive and the Promaster (collections), which are professional sports watches, to increase reach in the middle- and high-end markets."

Citizen aims to boost Eco-Drive sales to 80 percent of the company's global sales. Though the regional market has been challenging, it can foresee at least a 40 percent growth in sales of the Eco-Drive and Promaster. In markets like the United States, Europe and Japan, the Eco-Drive accounts for half of Citizen's sales. ♦

www.citizen-me.com



Growing with the nation's capital

Based out of Abu Dhabi, Al Mazroui Trading & General Services (MTGS) has played a major role in infrastructure development across the United Arab Emirates.

The company has facilitated joint-venture projects and consultancy agreements while providing expert services across various industries, building for itself a strong foundation for growth and a promising future.

"We have been a part of Abu Dhabi since Abu Dhabi started and we would love to be part of Abu Dhabi all the way through," points out M. S. Al Hudhud, director of MTGS, a subsidiary of MAPCO.

Meanwhile, Chairman Rashid M. Al Mazroui recently shared his thoughts on the company's past and prospects.

On MTGS's success and vision for the future:

Our success in all activities has been achieved through a dedicated team of experienced, professional and highly educated personnel. We look forward to the future, and all challenges and opportunities to achieve our unlimited targets. This is our vision for the future, which we have been applying for a long time.

On major projects and future expansion:

There are many projects executed by all sister companies of MTGS. For example, the electromechanical contracting under MAPCO, the Etisalat Buildings, Rotana Beach Hotel, Dubai Mall and Abu Dhabi Airport were completed. Micco, which provides total logistics solutions, has many oil and gas clients like ADNOC, GASCO, ZAD-



CO and NPCC.

Other sister companies engaged in construction, engineering, IT solutions, oil and gas, and many other activities are achieving the same level of success, which is very noticeable by business communities in the UAE and surrounding markets.

In the past 10 years, we recognized the importance of the industrial sector in which we had established and entered into partnerships in medium-size industries. We are looking at heavier industries in the very near future.

On its relationship with Asian markets:

MTGS always considered the Asian market as a major supplier of high technology with global standards and competitive prices.

Our continuous attempts to build strong relationships with the Asian market resulted in the representation of Chinese and Japanese manufacturers and suppliers of different products and services. The most important Japanese company represented by MTGS is Nikkiso Cryogenic Pumps. Since signing a representation agreement with Nikkiso, we have been working to its full satisfaction and introduced the services of this Japanese company to all of our clients in the Middle East.

I have made a few trips to China, Japan and other Asian countries in the past few years to explore business opportunities and strengthen our relationship with the Asian market. I am planning other trips in the future. ♦

www.mazroui.com



Al Mazroui Trading & General Services Chairman Rashid M. Al Mazroui (above left) and a scale model of the flagship Dubai Mall

Service you can depend on

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

"They know what activity is best for their market. We consider such kind of differences from each country and we support our distributor's activities," says Tsuji.

The company's technologically advanced R&D center in Japan allows it to launch new products and innovations nearly every three months, which gives Brother an added edge over competitors.

But for Tsuji, what really separates Brother from its rivals is the service. "The most important thing is to provide good service after selling and even before selling," he says.

Brother has started an aggressive marketing plan in the Middle East whose goal is to increase its service networks and maintain its strong sales in the coming years.

"For the past seven years, the economies in the Middle East have been growing. So our business also has been expanding and I believe that the Middle East economies will be expanding for the next three to five years," says Tsuji. ♦

www.brother.ae

Capturing the Gulf market

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

to provide Nissan, as our principals, with the right dealership, quality services and representation. We are also committed to our customers and our people. We will strive to have the right offerings to ensure that our customers have an enjoyable driving experience throughout their lives. We want to make Nissan proud of having AAC as a model national sales company in its overseas network. We want to add value to the Nissan brand worldwide," he adds. ♦

www.arabianautomobiles.com



The Nissan Infiniti FX

Servicing the region from Dubai

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

relationships with more than 70 companies in the oil and gas industry, including Smith International, M.I./Swaco and Baker Hughes. Recently, OSC agreed to invest almost \$44 million in new composite facilities for Baker Hughes, currently under construction at Dubai TechnoPark.

In the future, OSC looks to new ventures that will employ its strengths to the fullest, either in Dubai or in other geographic locations.

"With our established presence in the Middle East, Iran and Libya, through either our direct operations or joint ventures, we are ready to 'partner' with Japanese companies," adds Abedin. ♦

www.oscdubai.com

www.oscdubai.com

The jack of the electronics trade

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

played a vital role in the company's growth and development.

"We are a very young business and we also see that the UAE is a very young country. So, we see a lot of potential from this market and we are growing together. I would like to thank the UAE government and I would like to salute all our leaders here because they have a good vision," Panjabi says.

"I am proud to say that I have been associated with many Japanese companies and I wish them good luck. I wish that our friendship and our business relationship will continue and grow together," he adds. ♦

www.jackys.com

www.jackys.com

Logical logistics in a growing region

A combination of world-class know-how and local contacts are the elements that fuel the success of Hitachi Transport Systems Ltd. in the Middle East.

It started back in 1992, when HTS sent supervisors to the UAE to oversee the handling of cargo for some Japanese clients working on a number of power plant substation projects. It didn't take long for those supervisors to see the great potential for growth in the region — and the need for a solid local partner.

That's where Al Moherbie International Freight came in. "Al Moherbie is a company with a good reputation for handling the kind of cargo we handle. So we decided to make a partnership with it," explains Satoshi Kurihara, head of the HTS Representative Office in Abu Dhabi.

HTS handles a full suite of services revolving around the logistics, and transport of a wide range of large and abnormally shaped cargo primarily used for the construction and maintenance of power plants. In conjunction with Al Moherbie, it has taken on projects across the emirates as well as regionally, including other GCC and surrounding countries.

"We are proud because we are the leading company for this kind of project in Japan and we have been expanding our business around the world. And we are the only Japanese transport and logistics company with an office in Abu Dhabi. So I have a big

advantage being here," says Kurihara.

HTS is expanding its service to other active markets in the region, such as Dubai.

It just opened a new office in the Jebel Ali Free Zone for warehousing jobs and third-party logistics, and has been providing logistic services for some of the remarkable projects in the UAE, including the substation plant of the Palm Jumeirah development.

"We've been here for 14 years and we have a lot of knowledge about the region and about the type of jobs done here. In addition, we have various kinds of logistics experience that we are ready to extend in the region. So, we can support our clients from the very beginning. We will be able to keep their cargo in the Jebel Ali Free Zone and ship it out to GCC countries or to Africa, or to CIS countries." ♦

www.hitachi-hb.co.jp



Satoshi Kurihara, head of Hitachi Transport Systems Representative Office in Abu Dhabi

Spreading the culture of music

Having spent 25 years of his career with Yamaha Music away from Japan, Toshiaki Yamashita is not a stranger to multiculturalism. In fact, he points out that the 22 employees in Yamaha Music Gulf come originally from 12 countries.

That international exposure should prove helpful as Yamaha Music Gulf was assigned to oversee a territory of 70 countries.

"Around five or six years ago, we were put in charge of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), with Ukraine and Moldova added earlier this year. These countries have strong musical cultures from their Soviet roots. The question is how do we, as Yamaha Music Gulf, expand the musical culture through our products and methods," says the managing director.

In many of these countries, Yamaha Music enjoys a strong, if not dominant, market share. In the Gulf Cooperation Council, it controls between 50 percent and 60 percent of the musical instrument market.

The next step is not to acquire the remaining 40 percent to 50 percent, but to attract new customers that can widen the pot. "Our challenge is to create new markets and new customers; people who did not used to be interested in music. Our goal is to teach these individuals how to enjoy

music," claims Yamashita.

Yamaha Music Gulf has been actively pursuing this through a multitiered strategy involving concerts, musical instrument exhibitions, hotel ballroom functions and Yamaha Music schools.

In the UAE, Yamaha's distributor opened its second music school last year in the Ibn Battuta mall, which took in 400 students in the first three months.

Apart from traditional instruments, Yamashita sees big potential in Yamaha's professional audio line for use in discos, ballrooms, hotels and restaurants. The company is No. 1 in the UAE in digital mixers.

Yamaha has also recognized the need to localize its products. In the Middle East, Yamaha has released a new Arabic keyboard. "We consulted Arab musicians and asked them what real Arabic notes and styles are, and incorporated them into our keyboard. A school in Oman recently purchased 300 of these keyboards. This shows that Yamaha is on the right track in supporting Arabic musical culture," recalls Yamashita.

Underlying all his pursuits, Yamashita enjoys spreading the Yamaha vision of "kando," or an inspired state of mind.

"Although Yamaha sells musical instruments, professional audio equipment, motorcycles, marine vehicles and even golf clubs, our real mission is to spread the enjoyment of life, whether it be through music or sport," he says.

"Most businesses calculate success by profit. With Yamaha Music, success is calculated by how many people enjoy music. If we were purely profit-driven, we would not have lasted 120 years. We have lasted because we have made people fans of music," he adds. ♦

www.global.yamaha.com



Yamaha Music Gulf Managing Director Toshiaki Yamashita (above) and the company's Disklavier player piano (right)



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