

Ali Kamal Daoud



DOB: January 15, 1966

Marital status: Married, has two children

Education:
Aiglon College, Switzerland

1988 - Bachelor of Arts, New York University, USA

Spoken Languages: Arabic, English & Hindi

Sector: Diversified, Holding, Food & Beverage, Services, Retail, Education, Construction, Oil & Gas

Ownership: Private

Contacts:

CEO, Daud Group of Companies

A complex businessman with vast experience in a diverse list of industries and markets, Ali Daoud is a strong, determined leader and a committed supporter of the startup ecosystem in Oman. While collaboration with others—including people, organizations, and governments—is at the heart of his leadership approach, Ali Daoud is a man of action who isn't satisfied with just talking about possibilities.

When first making his start after completing his studies in the United States, Mr. Daoud was exposed to a variety of business environments in different subsidiaries of the Daud Group in London, Oman, and Taiwan, providing him with invaluable experience upon which to build. But even though he came from a well-established business family, Ali Daoud has since created what is very much his own identity, having earned the respect of the business community due his many achievements.

For example, in 1994 he bought the exclusive franchise for bringing McDonald's restaurants to Oman. In order to be able to run the restaurants according to international standards, Mr. Daoud first had to go through a one-year training program at various McDonald's locations around the world. Today, he is still in charge as CEO of the subsidiary called Al Daoud Restaurants LLC that he founded 25 years ago. In 2019, McDonald's Oman has 22 restaurants and over 300 employees, with the most recent location opened at the newly built Muscat International Airport.

Ali Daoud is also CEO of the Daud Group, first established by his father more than 60 years ago. The group has a long history of strategic partnerships with some of the leading international brands from a wide range of sectors. It started as a trading business for building materials and food, but over the years, as Oman kept developing as a country, the group diversified its operations into more and more sectors, taking advantage of every new opportunity as it came along.

Now there are three main branches of the group, one operating in Oman, and two that are based in the United Arab Emirates focusing on the food and non-food retail sectors across the GCC. In Oman, the

group does business in construction, facilities management, logistics, real estate, and oil and gas, along with the McDonald's restaurant chain. Meanwhile, the UAE food retail branch includes brands such as Panda Express, Azkadenya, California Pizza Kitchen, Yo Sushi, and Texas de Brazil, managing locations in various countries throughout the GCC region. The other UAE branch includes retail brands that are not food-related, like Hamleys, Oscar de la Renta, and House of Fraser. In addition to the GCC locations, the group also operates a Hamleys store in Turkey.

The food and beverage sector in Oman is one of the fastest growing in the country, and according to Mr. Daoud, the same situation applies across whole region. Indeed, he believes there are plenty of opportunities for expansion for McDonald's throughout Oman, and for the other brands throughout the GCC and beyond. Although expansion is ongoing, none of the group's brands operated from Dubai have been brought to Oman just yet.

The most recent project of the Daud Group was the launch of the Majan brand, a perfume collection that includes six unisex fragrances. According to Mr. Daoud, the scent was inspired by Middle Eastern and Omani culture, but the perfume is manufactured in France and Italy and is available for sale exclusively in the UK market in Selfridge's stores, and online. In the near future though, Majan will also be launched on an online international platform, but Mr. Daoud doesn't want to disclose which one, preferring to make it a nice surprise customers. He says the next step will be to sell it in exclusive stores around Europe, after which it will be brought to the Gulf region as well.

Outside of the group's businesses, Ali Daoud has strong links at an official level with both the U.S. and Canada. With the former, he serves as president of Oman American Business Center, an organization that aims to promote commerce and investment between the U.S. and Oman by building strong relationships between businesses in both nations. And with the latter, Ali Daoud was appointed in 2014 as the honorary consul in Oman for Canada, working on strengthening relationships between the two countries. As honorary consul, he can provide basic consular services for Canadians in Oman, and also act as a mediator in any issue they might have with the government.

When he's not working on international relations, Mr. Daoud is busy rolling up his sleeves to work on matters of importance to Oman and its economic future. Diversification is one of the country's major long-

My message to youth:

Never give up. There will always be failures, and you will fall down many times, but get back up and work hard to achieve what you want to achieve.

My message about Oman:

Oman is a beautiful and soulful place, with real and genuine people. It's an amazing country to come and visit for a holiday, to come and live in when you retire, or to come and establish a business in. So come to Oman, because there is so much to enjoy here.

term goals, but Mr. Daoud believes strongly that a prerequisite for that is to create an environment that supports and encourages small businesses and investors. In his view, there is still a long way to go in making the process of starting a business easy enough and accessible for everyone.

In 2014, he did his part by founding Startup Oman in partnership with Sherry Colbourne, a Canadian entrepreneur based in Oman. An online platform that connects entrepreneurs and SMEs with information on all the opportunities and programs available to them, Startup Oman was the only entrepreneurial program from Oman nominated for the Startup Program of the Year award at the 2017 Arabian Business Startup Awards, being selected as a finalist. In Mr. Daoud's opinion, for the SME sector to evolve and thrive, it's important for entrepreneurs to build relationships, support each other, and learn from each other's challenges, and that's why he co-founded the organization back in 2014.

Hard working and laser-focused on his goals, Ali Daoud has achieved great success in his career, but he still has a lot going on and he won't stop here. He believes that Oman and the next generation have extraordinary potential, and that much more that can be done for the development of the nation. True to character, he is ready to do his part to contribute to a better future for everyone. In his words, *"less talk and more action."*

Credits John Marcus

