

# Use social media to bring your business to life

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The emerging opportunities for Omani businesses in international markets are immense. To help existing and potential Omani exporters, as well as the wider business community, take advantage of everything the international market has to offer, Ithraa has organised Oman Export Week 2019 (OEW19) during October 27 - 31, at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre.

In the lead up to this event we are interviewing OEW19 workshop presenters, giving them the chance to preview their workshop themes.

**1. So, in no more than 30 seconds, tell us your elevator pitch. Who are you and what do you do?**

I'm Aisha Dadral (pictured), founder of London-based Brand & Marketing agency, CRAVE. We specialise in understanding audiences, and how to build and market brands that are relevant, both locally and globally.

We deep-dive on strategy in order to develop creative that does more than look good. Over six years, we've worked with some of the best known global brands, and some of the most



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**AAISHA DADRAL**



**these criticisms and what's the best way to develop a social media strategy that can be both actionable and provide a return?**

The exponential growth of social media, in itself validates the importance of its inclusion across any robust marketing strategy: as marketers, we go to where our audiences exist and engage. These platforms give us an opportunity to speak direct to our consumers, build rapport, sometimes provide support or customer care. In addition, they allow brands to convey purpose, beliefs and values at a time when, more than ever, consumers buying behaviour is based on more than price alone.

**3. Which would be your social**

**media platform of choice if you could only choose one and why?**

Instagram. Visual content dominates across social media in terms of engagement, and Instagram has evolved to offer multiple formats within one space.

With a billion people using it monthly, and average daily usage expected to be at 28 minutes per day in 2020, it's a great platform on which to tell your brand stories and bring your brand to life.

**4. Which social platform do you think is the most under-rated and under-used by businesses?**

Business-to-business, LinkedIn. A strong content strategy coupled with a premium account can go a long way. Direct-to-consumer, Instagram or YouTube. Whilst many businesses exist on one or both of these platforms, very few have mastered content strategy and community management to make the most out of direct access to their audience.

**5. What would you say is the most important thing to consider when using social media for your business?**

Consistency, tone of voice and creative content.

**6. Would you agree that social media isn't about making an instant return on investment but about building a brand?**

Absolutely, yes. Social media is where you bring your business to life, tell brand stories, convey values and beliefs, and establish credibility amongst your audience. To reap valuable return, you need to first establish your presence.

**7. What do you find most frustrating about the way businesses behave on social media?**

Businesses are still placing inflated value on follower numbers versus engagement.

**8. Which brand do you think has really nailed social media?**

Nike. Always engaging content that inevitably converts to sales without ever taking a hard sales approach. They use platforms like Instagram to tell their brand stories and convey their beliefs and values, beautifully.

**9. How can a small Omani business build an authentic voice and add value on social media when there's so much noise out there?**

Be brave. Have a strategy. Be creative with your content and be reactive!

## SME INITIATIVE

**Ominvest adopts 2 seats in Zubair SEC's Direct Support Programme 2020**



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For the third year in a row, Oman International Development and Investment Company (Ominvest), one of the largest investment companies in the Middle East, has renewed its support to Zubair Small Enterprises Centre's (Zubair SEC) flagship Direct Support Programme (DSP) by adopting two seats in the 2020 round.

The 'Support Partner' agreement was signed between Hani bin Muhammad al Zubair, Chairman of Zubair Automotive Group and Board Member of The Zubair Corporation and Abdulaziz bin Mohammed al Balushi, Group CEO, Ominvest during the official launch event of the sixth edition of the Direct Support Programme.

Strategic partners from public and private sectors, officials from SME-linked institutions, entrepreneurs, SME owners, members of previous programme editions were among those who attended the launch event of the popular initiative which has been providing support and guidance to high-potential young entrepreneurs and small-business owners over the last six years.

The winners of the sixth edition of Zubair SEC's Direct Support Programme will be announced in first quarter of 2020 during which the names of the two member companies chosen for the Ominvest adopted seats will be revealed.

## Shell Oman, Al Turki Enterprises sign pact

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Shell Oman Marketing Company SAOG and Al Turki Enterprises LLC signed a strategic agreement for the sale and supply of petroleum products, marking a new chapter of cooperation between the two companies.



The agreement was signed by Mohammed bin Abdullah al Kindi, National Sales Manager- Fleet Solutions and Commercial Fuels at Shell Oman Marketing, and Dhiren Khimji, the Director-Corporate Services, in the presence of top management officials from both companies.

Dhiren Khimji, Director - Corporate Services, said: "We are pleased to join hands with Shell Oman, and consolidate our partnership with them through the signing of this Agreement. We are confident that our extensive operational know-how and supply experience will contribute to sustainable value creation and growth for both parties."

Shell Oman Marketing Company is a publicly listed company on Muscat Securities Market. By capitalising on major investments in infrastructure projects and maturing industrial and logistical hubs in Muscat, Sohar, Duqm and Salalah, the company will remain focused on capturing business opportunities driven by increasing consumer demand.

## Sohar International announces 14.22 per cent rise in net profits

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Sohar International announced its net profit for the nine months ended September 30, 2019 of RO 25.059 million compared to RO 21.940 million during the same period in 2018, reflecting a growth of 14.22 per cent. Mohammed Mahfoudh al Ardhi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sohar International, stated, "Buoyed by government's economic diversification initiatives, Oman's banking sector is geared towards robust business growth and profitability. Despite the challenging economic and financial situation driven by volatile oil prices, the government's continued focus on key diversification sectors such as ports and logistics, manufacturing and tourism creates ample opportunities for the banking and finance sector in the country to contribute to the sustainable development of the national economy."

The Bank's total operating income increased by 6.27 per cent from RO 69.650 million in the first nine months of 2018 to RO 74.018 million for the same period in 2019. Operating profit increased by 1.32 per cent from RO 39.821

million in the first nine months of 2018 to RO 40.347 million for the same period in 2019. During the first nine months of 2019, operating expenses increased by 12.88 per cent to RO 33.671 million compared to RO 29.829 million in the first nine months of 2018, reflecting our continued investment in people and core infrastructure.

The Bank's gross loans and advances increased by 12.48 per cent from RO 2.297 billion as at 30 September 30, 2018 to RO 2.584 billion as at September 30, 2019. Total assets grew by 12.47 per cent from RO 2.968 billion as at September 30, 2018 to RO 3.338 billion as at September 30, 2019. Customer deposits increased by 16.19 per cent to RO 1.994 billion as at September 30, 2019 compared to RO 1.717 billion as at September 30, 2018.

Ahmed al Musalmi, CEO, remarked, "With our 5-year strategy in place and in full execution, Sohar International experienced another strong quarter from all segments of business; and I am particularly proud of our ability to complete the rights issue resulting in an increased shareholder's equity of RO 40 million."

## POINT of VIEW

**No organisation functions in a zero-risk environment but digital transformation is rapidly exposing weaknesses in the cyber security fabric of an organisation, prompting risk assessment and continuity planning**

**YASSER ZEINELDIN**  
CEO, eHosting DataFort



**Yasser Zeineldin**

## Building resilience to cyber weakness during digital transformation

**F**or regional businesses, it appears their exposure to risk is continuously moving upwards. In the past, risks were limited to acts of nature, macroeconomic volatility and depending on the geography of the country, possible hostilities with adjacent countries.

Today, there are additional variables that need to be brought into the assessment of risk for businesses. The exposure of an organisation to cyber threats and the added vulnerability of an organisation due to its embarking on a digital transformation journey, are recent variables whose risk impact needs to be added into the overall equation of resilience.

Booz Allen Hamilton estimates that the annual global losses from exposure to cybersecurity threats is \$600 billion, bringing the average loss per cybersecurity breach to an estimated \$3.86 million. Moreover, the intensity and frequency of cyberattacks are being amplified by the adoption of digital transformation technologies.

Digital transformation technologies are rapidly removing silos and barriers that used to exist due to legacy technologies and, analog industrial



control systems. This is making organisations more interconnected and can contribute to a domino-like cascading effect in the case of significant breaches into regional enterprises.

The rapid adoption of digital technologies is also throwing legislation into a catch-up game and bringing information technology departments, CIOs, CISOs, into the forefront in terms of interpretations and implementations of new guidelines and compliances. All put together, the working environments of both business and information technology are becoming more complex

to manage, raising the possibility of costly and unpredictable errors.

Booz Allen states that growing complexities stemming from rapid digitalisation and changes in legislation are having a dizzying effect on businesses. Organisation heads are still grappling with the speed of digital transformation and the impact of growing interconnectivity on their business landscape. They have had less time to factor in the additional challenge of their vastly exposed cybersecurity landscape, amongst all these numerous other challenges.

Lack of adequate risk management in the face of advanced cyber security threat attacks, growth of interconnected enterprises, and rapid adoption of digital technologies, are eroding 10.2 per cent of annual profits on an average of global organisations, through unplanned errors.

**So, what is the way forward now?**

Organisations adopting digital technologies such as Cloud, analytics and artificial intelligence, mobility, Internet of Things, must adopt a two-pronged approach towards building their future resilience.

No organisation can operate in a utopian climate of zero risk and hence as the first step an organisation should perform an objective assessment like a SWOT analysis (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunity-Threats) or equivalent to identify the organisation's strength and weaknesses including a rigorous cyber security related Threat and Vulnerability assessment. The second step is to build a recovery and continuity process through any disruption to keep the organisation functioning with minimum of loss and performance."

During the first stage of planning, as a process of risk management, it is important to identify all the risks that

can cause disruption in an organisation's capability to function. This includes weaknesses in an organisation's cyber security framework, and the probability of their exploitation. Following this, is the business impact analysis, to quantify the business loss from the impact of each of these possible cyber security disruptions.

This will lead to a matrix of incidents between most probable and most disruptive to an organisation's functioning and performance. Some of the numeric metrics used at this stage are the maximum tolerable period of disruption (MTPD), the recovery time objective (RTO) and recovery point objective (RPO).

The second stage, involves detailed planning on how critical processes within the organisation can continue to function and meet the expectations of MTPD, RTO and RPO objectives. However, this planning may not be of much use unless it is practiced and tested and improved, across the organisation. Feedback and open communication across the organisation, on improvement of such continuity process planning, are an important part of building resilience during adoption of digital transformation, amongst others.