

Imad Kamal Abdul Redha Sultan



DOB: September 19, 1970

Marital status: Married to Shatha Abbas ; they have 4 children – Dana, Faris, Ayman & Maya.

Education: 1995 - Bachelor's degree, Marketing, American University, Washington DC, USA

Spoken Languages: Arabic, English & Hindi

Interests & Hobbies: Table tennis, Movies, Fine dining, Reading, Traveling

Sector: Conglomerate

Ownership: Private

Established in: 1866

Vice Chairman & Deputy Managing Director , WJ Towell

Imad Sultan is a busy man, but that's not surprising. He is the Vice Chairman & Deputy Managing Director of an organization that runs 29 managed entities, with operations in four countries and seven different industrial/service sectors. It would keep even the most efficient executive on his toes.

WJ Towell was established back in 1866 by William Jack Towell, who started his business in shipping and trading goods with different countries. Later on, Mohammed Fadhil, the great grandfather of the Sultan family, took over the ownership of the company, making it a 100% owned family business which is till today owned by the same family.

While at first it was focused on trade, WJ Towell is now one of the largest family groups of companies in Oman. By 2009, having grown to about 40 different business units, Imad Sultan pioneered the idea of restructuring the organization and grouping all the similar businesses into a few clusters, to increase efficiency. With the help of professional global consultants, the process took about a year to finish, and WJ Towell ended up with seven business clusters: Enhance, Engineering, Construction, Property, Services and Trade, Consumer Products, and Automotive. Each cluster, according to Mr. Sultan, has its own board of directors and its own CEO or general manager. Subsequently, the Construction Cluster was merged with the Engineering cluster.

The real estate cluster is the largest, with its subsidiaries building residential and commercial spaces, warehouses, and staff camps, all primarily for rent, not for sale. In 2018, it won the Retail Development award at Arabian Property Awards for Souq Al Madina, a new commercial center that will provide a unique and traditional shopping experience featuring traditional souq-style architecture alongside modern conveniences. When completed, the development will offer more than 13,000 square meters of leasable area across two floors of retail and penthouse offices.

Under its Engineering cluster, the WJ Towell group's lines of business include projects in infrastructure, (waste, water, electrical), steel fabrication, oil and gas projects and power projects. Other clusters include automotive—where WJ Towell is the sole distributor

for Mazda vehicles in Oman and also sells brands like Geely vehicles, Bridgestone tyres, and Total lubricants. Under the Services and Trade cluster, WJT runs a printing press, a telecom business (METCO), building materials, mattresses, etc.

Another Important cluster is the FMCG cluster, with companies like Enhance and Consumer Products Division, who distribute many international brands like Reckitt Benckiser, Colgate, Palmolive, Kraft, Heinz, Johnson & Johnson, British American Tobacco, Mars, etc.

WJ Towell is also a partner in a series of global joint ventures, which are managed by its international partners like Nestle, Unilever and Jotun. In some cases these relationships have truly historic dimensions: Unilever has been a partner for over 90 years.

Having developed business interests in so many different sectors, it makes sense that WJ Towell has also expanded into a number of different countries over its long history. It's been in Kuwait since the 1940s, UAE since the 1970s, and more recently, it established a business presence in India. It made sense to expand there, according to Imad Sultan, because of the fact that a lot of Indians live in Oman, and indeed a significant number of executives and managers at the group are from India, making it relatively easy for the board to understand the Indian market and culture. So far, it has launched an Indian subsidiary in the engineering sector. But Mr. Sultan believes strongly that if oil prices were to go down, India would be a safer place to do more business, because lower oil prices would be a sweet spot for India's fisc.

With a keen eye on Oman's own economy back home, Mr. Sultan acknowledges the challenges and believes there's much room for improvement. Since oil prices have gone down, the property market has also suffered in terms of both property prices and occupancy rates. However, the downturn had less of an impact on WJ Towell than others in the sector because of its strategy of broad diversification.

Beyond its commercial strategies in development and trade, the group also works to give back to local community. WJ Towell has supported all sorts of charitable events, educational programs and activities, awareness campaigns, and sporting events. In one such initiative, it provided medical equipment for hospitals. In another, it sponsored local competitiveness and social leadership initiatives. In 2018, WJ Towell collaborated with Injaz Oman to design smart phone applications for social responsibility. The group also works closely with Dar Al Atta'a, one of the largest

My message to youth:

Don't be afraid to start at the bottom. Focus on your education and training and continue to develop yourself. Don't be afraid of failure.

My message about Oman:

Oman is the jewel of the region. It's a very peaceful country because its foreign policy is based on building good relationships with all countries. Doing business in Oman has great potential, and the foreign investment in feasible projects could really help develop the economy further.



charitable organizations in Oman, in which Mr. Sultan's wife, Shatha Abbas, is one of the founders and an active board member.

Imad Sultan is also active outside of his role at WJ Towell, where he is responsible for the overall strategy and finances of the group, serving on boards and in voluntary organizations. He is a member of the board and the credit committee of Oman Arab Bank, the Vice Chairman of National Hospitality Institute of Oman, which trains Omanis to become professionals in the hospitality sector, and a member of the Young Presidents Organization, which is a global platform for chief executives to engage and learn from each other. As a result of his extensive responsibilities across all of these organizations plus his own group, where he regularly meets with all of its CEOs and Group CFO, Mr. Sultan's schedule is booked well in advance.

Having been run by generation after generation, Imad Sultan is part of the fifth generation of successful entrepreneurs who have managed to keep WJ Towell running profitably for more than a century and a half. The group's longevity is unusual, since global statistics show that family businesses have a small chance of surviving beyond the third generation. But today, it is still thriving in its fifth generation, which bodes well for the future. Indeed, Imad Sultan would like nothing more than for the world to see the Group grow and evolve for many generations to come.

Affiliations, Awards & Honors

Member of the Young President's Organization (YPO)
Tharawat Family Business Forum and Unicef Oman