

هينا لأك MENALAC

MEMBER TALK

JUNE 2021

“It is enough for you to believe in what you do, to become a pioneer in your field” – a belief that inspired the birth of, and continues to sustain the success of, The Al Hokair Group of Saudi Arabia.

A pioneer, and among the leading entertainment operators across the MENA with more than 95 operations and six entertainment and leisure brands, for the Al Hokair Group, its recent successes include the opening of new entertainment operations, the relaunch of existing centers, and forming strategic partnerships with the education, fitness and talent industry.

We are delighted to have a tete-a-tete with Mr. Mishal A. Al Hokair, Deputy CEO & General Manager - Entertainment, Al Hokair Group and President of MENALAC, to learn more about what continues to inspire and drive the group's robust plans while diversifying entertainment across various verticals.



1. Thank you for joining us. Please take our readers a little back in time on how the Al Hokair story began and how it has continued to grow across the region, elaborating on the countries you operate in today.

Our story started in 1975. Ever since our launch, we've been honored to have the Al Hokair Group name synonymous with all things entertainment and tourism in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East.

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The Group was founded by Sheikh Abdulmohsen Al Hokair who made great investments in the entertainment and hospitality industries.

The past five decades have been a marvelous journey for us - the Group has expanded to include 95 entertainment centers and amusement parks, 35 strategically-located hotels across Saudi Arabia and the GCC, and four commercial malls. Thanks to our diverse international experience, we have also helped in the development of tourism investments, specifically to do with entertainment and hospitality.

2. Congratulations on your new successes. Can you please enlighten our readers on your recent accomplishments and what has been behind your plans to collaborate entertainment with various verticals like education, fitness, and talent development in KSA?

Our strategic plan for the next five years (2021 to 2025) is called “Wujhat” (the Arabic word for destinations). This exciting plan is all about coping with market changes, strengthening the company’s position even more, and diversifying its sources of income. How do we plan to do this? Transformation and business growth is our starting point. We start doing this by repositioning our hospitality and entertainment brands and investing in and renewing the company’s main operations.

Also we started expanding into fields and sectors that complement our current business. Think event management, external catering, and cinemas.

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Beside diversifying our business and sources of income by entering new business fields like economic fitness clubs.

What we hope to achieve with our “Wujhat” strategy is to refine our services, diversify them so we’re tapping into all age groups with a unique offering, and delivering truly memorable entertainment experiences.

3. Beyond KSA, are there any new segments, new technologies, and countries that the Al Hokair Group is betting on in the immediate future?

We are excited to see the rise of new opportunities in the region. With this comes new avenues for all market players. We are now competing against players from outside the region which I see as a good thing. It sharpens our focus, makes us very aware of all aspects of our business, and boosts our appetite to stay ahead.

And this made the core direction of our plans which translated to many partnerships.

Also, the covid-19 pandemic led to challenges for businesses of all sizes, including those in the entertainment industry. We’ve taken a look at economic data from late 2017 to 2019, and under normal circumstances, we would have seen an uptick in our industry. However, with the “new normal” dictating our industry, recovery has become everyone’s priority. We still firmly believe that our region, in particular, will continue to grow.

Taking advantage of this potential for growth, and the increased pressure from our competition, we are on a mission to keep developing projects and stay industry leaders. Our regional audience can expect creative entertainment that’s state-of-the-art and truly unforgettable.



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4. Being daring and disruptive is how pioneers lead the way. Please share some golden words of wisdom for entertainment operators in the MENA to make our industry the best in the world.

Great service is more important than ever. Now is the right time for owners and management teams to adopt a strong retention strategy and training initiatives that lays a foundation for the future.

Our vast entertainment industry is a reflection of the society we live in. The secret to success is to always connect with customers and keep them engaged. This rings true especially during a crisis and will help power your strategy for a post-pandemic world.

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5. As a founding benefactor member of MENALAC, please share how the MENA Leisure & Entertainment industry operations can benefit by being a member of MENALAC

I believe that opportunities lie in challenges. So we at MENALAC were keen to gain valuable insights on the best practices adopted by the leaders of the Leisure and Entertainment industry.



And together with our fellow MENALAC members, we will continue developing the council to be a symbol of success in the industry while also being a source of knowledge. We aim to bring value to industry players of all sizes - from startups to large organizations. And I believe that with the wide experience and the resources we have, we will see a huge uplift in this council and its commitments in the next few months.