

مينالأك MENALAC

MEMBER TALK

APRIL 2021

Abdullah Al Othaim Leisure & Tourism Co. is one of Saudi's largest entertainment companies with more than 30 entertainment centres and cities in GCC visited by more than 6 million throughout the year, with strong plans to grow its entertainment experiences and thrills across the MENA and beyond.

MENALAC is happy to have a one-to-one with Mr. Kareem Fayed, Head of Business Development, Abdullah Al Othaim Leisure & Tourism Co. on how the brand has grown, on how it remains robust in the current pandemic times and in their exciting future plans to grow their footprint far & wide.



**MEMBER TALK WITH
MR. KAREEM FAYED,
OF ABDULLAH
AL OTHAIM LEISURE
& TOURISM CO.**

1. Please help our readers to know you better, when was Abdullah Al Othaim Leisure & Tourism Co. established, which brands do they currently offer and in which countries are you established?

Abdullah Al Othaim Leisure & Tourism Co. is an integral part of the Othaim Real Estate Investment & Development Co. Since 1998, the group has been involved in creating benchmark family entertainment destinations across many cities in the MENA region that provide unforgettable family experiences for everyone. Our family entertainment centres are equipped with state of the art games with the latest technology and enthralling rides that provide fun for everyone. The brands which the Group operates are Faby Land, Xtreme Land, Saffori Land, Xtreme Zone, Snow City, MyTown and Splash Water Park across Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar & Egypt. In total, we have 31 indoor and outdoor family entertainment centers that are currently operational with many more projects to come in the near future.

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2. Where is Abdullah Al Othaim Leisure & Tourism Co. concentrating their efforts for the future, which country do you believe is worth keeping an eye on when it comes to the Leisure & Attractions Industry?



At Abdullah Al Othaim Leisure & Tourism Co.; the future strategy is to achieve the break-even for any project as early as possible and to have our business plans devised in such a way that our operations get the least affected in case there are any macro-economic challenges faced in any country. We are making our business locations more flexible in terms of mobility of assets, flexible commercial terms; which enable us to adapt to any unforeseen situations; if they may arise.

Saudi Arabia is certainly worth keeping an eye upon when it comes to the Leisure and Attractions industry as the government has launched multi-billion dollar projects which will take the entertainment offering in the region to multiple levels high.

3. What does the future look like for you, are you planning any new operations or considering entering any new markets within the MENA region in the next 2-3 years?

The future looks very promising as we are venturing out into new markets and territories. In the MENA region; we will be extending our footprints into Kuwait and Bahrain and outside the MENA region; we have aggressive expansion plans in India. We are constantly looking for new developments in the regions we are already operating in while at the same time we are exploring opportunities in Kuwait. The Group is also looking into joint ventures and/or franchise partnerships for operations in the United States and Canada.

4. With the impact of Covid-19 felt by our industry globally, please share with us how you have handled the new operating requirements, in addition have you implemented any new technology or procedures that have helped to ease your business back into trading?

Post COVID-19; we at Abdullah Al Othaim Leisure & Tourism Co. have taken a number of our own precautionary measures in addition to the mandatory measures required by the authorities. We have implemented monitoring of our staff and customer temperatures, introduced additional sanitization of all our operations including front of house customer areas such as rides, games, play areas etc and back of house areas such as offices, stores etc; social distancing of our machines, installation of sanitizing stations, in-store communication on social distancing and safety, reduction customer physical touch-points and operating facilities with reduced capacities.

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In-terms of technology; we have introduced self-recharge kiosks so that our customers can load/re-load cards at the entertainment centres; and online bookings have been introduced for day pass at Snow City. We are currently analysing heat-maps of our customers at different times of the day on different days in order to ensure our assets are placed accordingly in our locations, this is to ensure that our customer flow is scattered safely across each operation, in addition all of our merchandise are sanitized or given to customers in sanitised bags.



5. For any new investor considering to open a leisure and attractions operation in the Middle East, what would be your one golden nugget piece of advice?

For a new investor considering to open a leisure and attractions operation in Middle East we would highlight that they should primarily study the market and understand the concepts which work well throughout the year they should invest properly in a feasibility study; once they have reviewed and understood their feasibility study, they should have a long-term business plan with less initial CAPEX; which has the best possible commercial terms from the developer in the current situation; as well as from the assets

supplier and the business assets to be more mobile in case of any uncertainties. The business plan should be made in such a way that the break-even for the operation should be at par or better than the industry standard.

6. Finally, please share with our readers your thoughts on MENALAC and the benefits of being part of this council as an operator within the MENA region.

MENALAC is an institution which connects different business segments of the leisure and entertainment industry and counsels them with best practices within the industry, they are also a liaison between these business segments and local authorities. The benefits of being a member of MENALAC as an operator is to get connected with different suppliers who can add more value to the business. In addition they assist their members in getting to know what the current best practices in the industry are and how these can be adopted by an operator to serve their business in more pragmatic ways.