

“I found motivation and opportunity in the biggest defeat my company ever had.” That statement is a great example of why Mr. Anas Al Sulaimani, the CEO of Nektel, has experienced so much success since beginning his Sohar-based company in 2013. Success which has led Nektel to becoming the leading rubber products manufacturer in Oman and to winning a \$500,000 (almost OMR 200,000) contract with Exxon Mobil, the 3rd largest oil company in the world.

We sat down with Anas recently to explore the secrets of his and his company’s success; his entrepreneurial determination when faced with defeat is just one of them. Many years ago,



Anas did not want to be an employee. He wanted to create work. He wanted to create jobs for others.

Anas and his team spent weeks preparing and submitting a bid for a very large tender. The Nektel team was qualified in every respect but one. As a new company, they lacked past experience. And because of this they lost the bid. This made Anas think about how to gain experience for his startup. Anas sat and thought.

And this quiet reflection led to Anas reaching out to the CEO of the company which had issued the tender they lost. Using LinkedIn, Anas met with the CEO to discuss gaining experience in the market- the rest, as

A rubber products company, Nektel “bounced back” from a huge defeat to achieve a major victory

we say, is history. Nektel was awarded a series of smaller projects (LPOs), which over the following two years demonstrated Nektel’s quality, commitment, and ingenuity.

Nektel is now a significant contractor with this company, carrying out multi-year contracts. These contracts, this relationship, has validated Nektel’s reputation in the region and has been a key driver to attracting business from local and international companies. There is a popular saying in America: “Snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.” This is Anas Al Sulaimani.

We have known Anas since his formative years when he participated in Inspired Solutions’ SME accelerators: the OMIFCO-funded CELL SME accelerator and the be’ah-funded Eco Innovate Oman accelerator, which supports SMEs commercializing waste streams. Indeed, it was Anas’ interest in recycling which drove him to become an entrepreneur. Anas was about to graduate in mechanical engineering. Then he attended a seminar on recycling used rubber tires. And his curiosity and creativity were engaged. Anas asked, “What if?” And on that day, he began his entrepreneurial journey. He no longer wanted to interview or take exams to become an employee with one of the local companies. Anas wanted to create work. He wanted to create jobs. He wanted to be a self-made business man.

Hi journey to entrepreneurial success led him to find support and resources such as the local SME accelerators. He also met with potential investors to gain feedback and expertise. It was during this period that Anas realized the need to “get your hands dirty.” Anas worked in a UAE rubber manufacturing plant for 3 months, learning the business from the production floor to the sales office. Here he gained invaluable industry experience which he has steadily built upon over the years. During this time, he also began

researching the properties of rubber, the properties of polymers, and the entire value and production chain of the rubber market. When he was ready, when he had completed the research, when he had written down the plan, he pitched for investment. And then he pitched again. And again. After months of determined, focused work, Anas secured financing from private investors to begin Nektel in Sohar. He broke ground for the new factory and personally oversaw the construction, using his research-based expertise.

Today Nektel is a significant source of In Country Value (ICV). They create manufacturing jobs for Omanis, supply numerous industrial products and services throughout Oman, and export Omani made industrial products. One of these products is the “Pig” (see picture). Designed in-house at Nektel, Pigs are pipeline cleaning devices manufactured in Sohar and which were purchased (along with Nektel’s technical support) by Exxon Mobil to clean oil pipelines in Iraq. The Exxon Mobil contract was the result of the Nektel team’s reputation for quality safety and technical expertise, in addition to the networking Anas began so many years ago.

Anas is now a self-made successful business man who puts strong emphasis on continuing education, networking, and using the available support for SMEs in Oman and the region. Anas believes in “paying it forward;” he routinely coaches other SMEs and reviews their business and investment plans from an investor perspective. But it took 4 years of hard work, of stress and struggle for Anas to feel like he had truly become successful. A journey and a timeframe not uncommon with entrepreneurs.



When asked what advice he has for new entrepreneurs, Anas shares his secret recipe, which is really no secret at all: (1) Get your hands dirty doing your own research and documenting the opportunities; (2) Do not move forward until you have the plan, policies, and procedures written down; (3) Realize that you can not do this alone and select the right partners and the right team-hire for experience and, (4) Understand that as the owner, you set the tone for a positive corporate culture.

Most importantly, however, may be Anas’ focus on his clients and market. Anas listens to the voice of the market. Constantly. He meets with his clients yearly to gather feedback and suggestions as to the existing products and service and ideas for future ones. “We must maintain our competitive advantage in this market”, Anas explained. “To quit listening to the market, to our clients means we lose touch, and disappear from the market.” With this positive market mind set it would appear that Anas is prepared to keep the (made in Oman) rubber products bouncing off the production line for many years to come.

Nektel can be reached through: www.nektel.om

Inspired Solutions’ SME accelerators can be viewed here: www.inspired.om