



Retail<sup>ME</sup>  
**& VISION**  
**VIEWS**  
*of retail thought leaders*





**Retail**<sup>MAGE</sup>**ME**  
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# Foreword

We all have dreams. Some act to realise their dreams, some don't. This book tells the stories of the pioneers who came to the shores of a desert land whose ports were nothing more than fishing and pearling villages that "didn't figure in the world frame of territories back then," as one of our contributors puts it.

Today, this desert land is a lush oasis of dreams, a land of exotic architecture and locales – one of the key shopping destinations of the world, a getaway for millions of visitors from across the globe eager to explore its cornucopia of luxury, hospitality, entertainment, thrills, escapades – and world-class brands.

We tell the stories of some of the people who joined hands with the local populace to help build these unique destinations. There are many more such people whose stories need to be told. But we at Images RetailME chose to narrate these stories in the inaugural edition of our book that formed part of a series, 'Retail Thoughts', we began publishing towards the beginning of 2014.

Collated, these stories archive the history of the growth and development of trade and retail in this part of the world with their snapshots of the evolving times. Many of these pioneers come from business and trading families with a history of venturing into virgin territories,

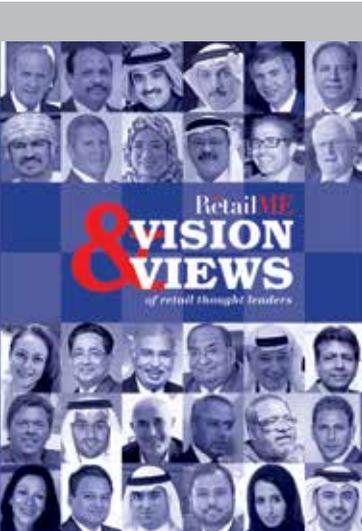
but there are also many local and regional stalwarts and first-generation entrepreneurs who chose to dream.

To many of the protagonists, the journey to where they stand today has been as exhilarating as arriving at their destination. But they see the journey as yet incomplete, with a long way still to go in the process of nation building.

Most of them started small, with a single store mostly in the souks, and went on to build trading empires. Their stories, supplemented by the constant infusion of new ideas and innovation in every succeeding generation, form an interesting and educative textbook for the retail trade, the common thread being: "If you have a dream, chase it till it becomes reality."

We really enjoyed the exercise of putting together this book because Images RetailME strongly believes in knowledge sharing and finding new ways to connect with the region's retail community. The stories in this volume could serve as case studies that reveal how important the Middle East is today as a crucible for retail entrepreneurship and innovation.

We hope you enjoy reading this book of retail dreams. And we promise many more such interesting reads for our valuable readers in the years to come.



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# Contents

**6**

*Foreword*

---



**10**

**Colm McLoughlin**

– Dubai Duty Free

---



**38**

**Wassim Daher**

– Azadea Group

---



**14**

**Laila Mohammad Suhail**

– Dubai Festivals & Retail Establishment

---



**42**

**Faisal Hassan Jawad**

– Jawad Business Group

---



**18**

**Yusuffali MA**

– Lulu Group International

---



**46**

**Lal Ganwani**

– Lals Group

---



**22**

**Patrick Chalhoub**

– Chalhoub Group

---



**50**

**Vasu Shroff**

– Regal Traders

---



**26**

**Abdul Majeed Alhokair**

– Fawaz A Alhokair & Co

---



**54**

**Ram Buxani**

– International Traders Ltd

---



**30**

**Mohammed Jassim K Al Marzouq**

– Tamdeen Group

---



**58**

**Abdul Jabbar Al Sayegh**

– Al Sayegh Group

---



**34**

**Tony Jashanmal**

– Jashanmal Group

---



**62**

**Nizar Choucair**

– Patchi

---



**66**

**Pankaj Khimji**

– Khimji Ramdas Group

---



**70**

**Amiruddin Ajmal**

– Ajmal Perfumes

---



**74**

**Thomas Lundgren**

– THE One

---



**78**

**Joy Alukkas**

– Joyalukkas

---



**82**

**Jacky Panjabi**

– Jacky's Group of Companies

---



**86**

**Kamal Osman Jamjoom**

– Kamal Osman Jamjoom Group

---



**90**

**Khurshid Wakil**

– Marina Home Interiors

---



**94**

**Fahad Al-Othaim**

– Al-Othaim Group

---



**98**

**Ronaldo Mouchawar**

– Souq.com

---



**102**

**Nisreen Shocair**

– Virgin Megastore Middle East

---



**106**

**Mohammed Khammas**

– Al Ahli Holding Group

---



**110**

**Mona Ataya**

– Mumzworld.com

---



**114**

**Avinash Bal**

– Hotbrands International

---



**118**

**Abdul Mohsen Behbehani**

– Morad Yousuf Behbehani Group

---



**122**

**Aysha Butti Al Muhairi**

– Wrapt

---



**126**

**Shamlal Ahamed MP**

– Malabar Gold & Diamonds

---

*“Be it starting my retail operation during the first Gulf war or going on a massive expansion during the global slowdown five years back, I’ve always enjoyed going against the tide”*

**– Yusuffali MA**

*“Retail is detail. It’s all about concentrating on the details if retail is to be profitable. That’s been a key learning in our journey in retail”*

**– Abdul Majeed Alhokair**

*“Our projects aren’t built for profitability alone. They are created to add value to Kuwait and benefit our people, while attracting more and more tourists to experience our offerings”*

**– Mohammed Jassim Khalid Al Marzouq**

*“We strongly believe that executing excellence on the shopfloor is what brings success to any business”*

**– Faisal Hassan Jawad**

*“To run a family business successfully, you have to go from ‘me’ to ‘we’. That’s the only way you can understand the needs of the business and the family”*

**– Wassim Daher**

*“Our success could be attributed to a combination of our entrepreneurial spirit and the goodwill exuded by the Omani people to foreign traders”*

**– Pankaj Khimji**

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