

Al Adil expands in the Middle East

The spice trade has been very ancient indeed, and for centuries people in the Arab world and Asia acted as middlemen in the trade with the East. For them the location was most suitable. Since time immemorial, a thriving commerce between East and West flourished throughout Indian Ocean and Asia. The trend, however, continues to thrive in the Middle East, with the Dubai-based, Al Adil Trading Co. a division of Tulaja Exports (India) Pvt. Ltd. keeping the trade alive for the last quarter of a century by supplying quality spices throughout the GCC and Asian countries. Speaking to William Faria from The Gulf Today, the Managing Director of Al Adil Trading Dhananjay Datar, while throwing light of the Company's performance, journey and future plans, also disclosed that the economic downturn of had very little impact on the food industry and Al Adil Trading continues to expand, opening several major outlets in the UAE. Dhananjay however revealed that the company has witnessed a 40 percent increase in turnover ever since his wife, Vandana took over as the company's Finance Director.

Excerpts from the interview:

Q. How and when was Al Adil group established? What made you choose UAE as the centre Hub for selling the products?

A. The history of Al Adil Trading Co. LLC a division of Tulaja Exports (India) Pvt. Ltd. is similar to the spice traders of ancient years, who left India's shores for the distant markets of Africa, Gulf, USA, Canada, and Europe. The name Al Adil means 'Good Man' - a name which proved as an apt one for the company as sonality. Al Adil was established in 1984 in Bur Dubai, as a small Indian grocery store, today it has flourished into a large spice empire, serving the entire GCC and beyond. The main reason that attracted us to choose Dubai is due to its lucrative potential of having a duty free status & also its proximity to India, and other parts of the world that actually attracts investment to this country.

Q. Could you tell us about Al Adil Group's plans to canvass the entire UAE in the near future?

A. The Company is proud to have a monopoly in the sale of Indian spices & foodstuff in the UAE. We wish to open some more branches within the UAE like Al Adil and in the neighboring GCC countries like Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman in next few years.

Q. How many outlets do you have in the UAE and which other regions or countries do you also serve?

A. Today Al Adil Trading company owns 17 outlets Supermarkets, 2 flour mills and spice factories in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ajman and also a branch of Mumbai Export division in the name of Tulaja Exports & Masala King Exports in Mumbai. The company also had diversified into import and export under the special establishment with imports and exports in US, Canada, Tanzania, Kenya, Switzerland, Italy, Eritrea, Kuwait, Muscat and UAE.

Q. Can you throw some light on the major expansion plans in the other emirates, GCC countries & also globally?

A. Our focus is to first establish a strong presence in the UAE, to cater the large influx of expatriate community; however we also intend to expand our branches in Middle Eastern countries in the coming years.

Q. What are the various efforts being taken for fueling the company's aggressive expansion plan this year?

A. We have taken all efforts to fuel the company's growth in the market by giving various special offers and promos and giving customers' products at low cost and at the same time maintain high standard of quality.

Q. How does it feel to be known as the spice king of one of the leading chains of specialty supermarkets in the UAE?

A. It's really a great pleasure to be known as the Spice King and I feel really honoured for this recognition. We at Al Adil are very thankful to our customers for putting their trust in our brand and helping us achieve new mile stones in the business. I am also very thankful to Government authorities in Dubai which gave us all the support and made us what we are today.

Q. What are the various food stuffs & products sold herein the UAE by your group?

A. We sell more than 4500 food items. We produce masalas, spices, pickles, flours, pulses and other Indian foodstuffs items under the Peacock brand name. We are dealing specially with Indian food stuffs and our specialty is flour. We sell packed flour in each of our outlets, which also has attached grinding mill, and we largely cater to the Indian Expat community in the UAE. Our customers vary from domestic to 5 stars hotels catering, Hospitals, and many more.

Q. Does Al Adil Group have its own manufacturing and repacking plant in Dubai?

A. The company has set up a manufacturing unit in the Al Quoz Industrial Area of Dubai where it produces masalas, spices, pickles, flours, pilled and other Indian foodstuffs items under the Peacock brand name. It also has an Indian arm, Masala King Exports in Mumbai, which is one of the leading exporters of quality branded Indian pulses, spices and other grocery items as well as nonfood items in the Indian sub-continent.

Q. How has the company managed to retain its customers base for the last 25 years of operations, taking into consideration the stringent competition from others in similar trade?

A. Al Adil is like a honey away home for our customers. It is generally a challenge to retain the loyalty of customers for a long time, but at Al Adil we have managed to do that by maintaining the quality of our products and by selling them at total value for money. We have never and will never compromise on our quality at any cost.

Q. The recent recession has hit hard on big giant business establishments? How did this affected Al Adil Group? Can you also tell us what steps & measures did the group take to combat such a situation?

A. The food business in particular was not affected greatly by the downturn, but instead it contributed to the company's growth and positive outlook and hence, we were not much hit by the crisis, either was the food product industry affected. But, yes we had to meticulously plan out to face the unfavorable market situation. By maintaining high quality, low cost and by giving our regular customers total satisfaction, we were able to smoothly sail through the crisis without any loss. In fact, the turnover in 2009 reached Dhs. 148 million, up from Dhs. 50 million in 2008, thus fueling the company's aggressive expansion plan and this has buoyed by the solid growth results in 2010. The company had also increased its revenue target last year to Dhs. 200 million. The results showed that revenue had increased 40% in 2009 compared to 2008.