



Alpen Capital

– Connecting you with the right opportunities!

Ask anyone to name an investment bank, and the chances are low that they might immediately name Alpen Capital. But this growing company is a benchmark within Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), and operates in a unique approach with Swiss private bank, Bank Sarasin-Alpen; where Alpen Capital's investment banking complements Sarasin-Alpen's private banking activities.

This Dubai-born entity has put together some of the biggest deals in regional corporate history, (see below) and has been quietly 'empire building' over the last seven years, against a backdrop of one of the worst economic meltdowns the world has ever seen.

So what's the secret of success for this DIFC-headquartered operation?

"People", says charismatic helmsman, Rohit Walia, who as executive vice chairman and CEO, leads with a relaxed management style you immediately warm to.

"We have a fabulous team, most of whom have worked together elsewhere," he explained, "so they work together very well now, and we also have a lot of fun together."

The CEO exudes pride in Alpen Capital, which works tirelessly for a number of local families on what he describes as 'medium ticket' deals – deals valued from US\$25 to \$200 million.

The last deal involved a record sum of US\$800 million, where Alpen Capital advised on a partnership deal between Indian fertiliser conglomerate Zuari Agro Chemicals Limited, and Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) Maritime City to set up a fertiliser factory in the UAE.

In fact, Alpen is seeing a lot more cross border trade between the Middle East and India,

the CEO said, especially in the 'GCC - India corridor', where Alpen helps Indian entities wanting to gain a foothold here in the Middle East, and vice versa.

Most of the bank's staff are long-term Dubai residents, and have been with Alpen Capital since its outset, when it started to operate from the DIFC, the newly-created financial freezone.

Backed by a loyal team that has grown from four people to close to 50, Alpen Capital's staff share an organisation-wide passion for commitment to the environment, sustainability and the arts.

Alpen Capital, along with its associate Bank Sarasin-Alpen, was honoured with the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Patrons of the Arts award every year since 2010, for its ongoing patronage of the arts. It has also received the prestigious 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR) Label from the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The company started in Dubai, UAE, just eight years ago, but now has offices across the region in Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and in India – in New Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru. The organic growth continues with the envisaged entry into Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Alpen

Capital's expansion emerged as a result of the realisation that "suitcase banking was dead," Walia said.

Acquisitions are not part of Walia's style, despite buying and selling entities on behalf of his clients. The CEO prefers slow, measured, organic growth: "when you grow naturally you acquire people, not companies," he said, adding that Investment banking is all about people, and he sees no other asset worth gaining from another investment bank.

His challenges? The lengthy time it can take to complete transactions.

Also keeping up with demand for Alpen's raft of expert services. "Business is good, and spreads by word of mouth," he said, with a hint of pride.

"In terms of HR, hiring has never been a problem and we always have a long pipeline of candidates who are interested in working with us," according to Walia.

Alpen Capital's services cover advisory work on debt, mergers and acquisitions, and raising equity. The team also keeps a close eye on the markets and produces regular research reports for its client base and interested parties, on industry sectors such as healthcare, retail, hospitality and education and construction. ●



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