

ICONIC

LEADER

ABDUL AZIZ AL GHURAIR

MAN BEHIND MASHREQ

The head of the eponymous Dubai-based conglomerate best known as founder and current owner of Mashreq, Abdullah Al Ghurair is amongst the most known names in the United Arab Emirates



Abdul Aziz Al-Ghurair joined Mashreq Bank in 1977 and till 1988 he had already held a number of eminent positions within the bank. He was responsible for assisting in opening branches in New York, London, Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt, India and Pakistan. He was also put in charge of the bank's international transactions.

At the time of his reign of more than three decades with Mashreq, Mr. Al-Ghurair has climbed up the success ladder in his employment hierarchy assuming various positions. It was said to be a result of wise upbringing and guidance which had placed him on a clear-cut path of success. He is an inspiring leader, who has taught us the true meaning of to realize one's goals. Lastly, we just cannot deny his long years of experience, which has sharpened the intelligence and wit that characterize Abdul Aziz Al-Ghurair.

MULTI-TASKING

Mr. Al-Ghurair is on the board of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Economic Council of Dubai and a member of the Governing Council of Dubai's Higher Colleges of Technology. In August of 2006, Mr. Al-Ghurair was appointed chairman of the Arab Business Angels Network. In February of 2007, Mr. Al-Ghurair was elected as the Speaker and President of the UAE Federal National Council (the UAE Parliament). Mr. Al-Ghurair, a native of the United Arab Emirates, holds a Bachelor's in Engineering from California State Polytechnic University in the United States.

Mashreq's branch portfolio has shrunk in turn. Al Ghurair will not give exact figures and insists that instead of closing hundreds of branches the bank has relocated them or made them smaller. Average branch size has gone from 5,000 sq ft to 2,500 sq ft since 2013, he says; there are fewer tellers, more automated machines and an increased focus on selling services.

ABDULLAH AL GHURAIR EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair unveiled the Abdullah Al Ghurair Education Foundation and pledged Dh4.2bn to fund its first 10 years.

A family statement issued by the Ghurair's stated that the foundation will equip Arab youth with the knowledge and skills they need to become the leaders of tomorrow, and drive the sustainable development of their communities.

It will invest in innovative high-impact programmes that improve the quality of education at the primary and secondary levels, while also helping a minimum of 15,000 promising Arab youth from underprivileged backgrounds pursue quality higher education.

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IMPRESSIVE LEADER

In line with Mr. Al-Ghurair's belief that employees play an important role in driving the bank forward and safeguarding its leading competitive position, Mashreq has adopted an employee-focused strategy. On one occasion, Mr. Al-Ghurair demonstrated that he supported this strategy when he stated, Mashreq believe that their employees are their partners. Over 40 years they have learned that partnership is the foundation for leadership, and so they constantly ensure that they provide them with all the means that enable them to rise in their career to the highest positions.

