



Brand Icons 2015

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Dr Siddeek Ahmed

Chairman and Managing Director,
Eram Group

As a globe-trotting leader, heading diversified enterprises, it is not just the bottomline that drives Dr Siddeek Ahmed, the leading light of the business conglomerate, Eram Group. While steering more than 40 entities, spread across 12 countries, he is equally passionate about his social commitments and drives them with great fervour, to make the earth a better place for all.



Eram Group is the controlling entity of a number of leading businesses in industrial contracting, project management, automotive, healthcare, travel, IT, manufacturing, trading, product representation and other service sectors.

THE CONSCIOUS LEADER

Priya C Nair

Eram Group, a leading business conglomerate with a well entrenched business presence across continents, was founded in the mid-80s. Headquartered in Al-Khobar in Saudi Arabia, the group employs more than 9,000 people. Over the years, Eram has achieved an enviable position of market leadership across multiple business lines. The Group is backed by highly specialised infrastructure and enviable talent, as it conducts viable business activities in the vibrant global market.

Today, Eram Group is the controlling entity of a

number of leading businesses in industrial contracting, project management, automotive, healthcare, travel, IT, manufacturing, trading, product representation and other service sectors. The Group has presence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, India, Kingdom of Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, United Kingdom, Italy, Korea, Malaysia and Turkey.

Eram Group invests in businesses that have high growth potential and scalability in terms of technology and manpower and have direct bearing on transforming the social realities to impact the common man's life.

Learning the basics



Dr Siddeek Ahmed, the visionary leader of the Eram Group, has over 25 years of experience in business and contractual activities and has always encouraged excellence in varied enterprises like services, research and development, manufacturing, trading and industrial contracting. His local and global experience gives him a multifold perspective that lends prudence and pragmatism to everything he undertakes.

Hailing from a small village in the Palakkad district of Kerala, Siddeek was passionate about entrepreneurship, from a young age. It took him to Mumbai

where he learned the nuances of business. "I received my first lessons in business from my elder brother who was in Mumbai. He taught me the basics of marketing, people management and networking," says Siddeek.

"My time in Mumbai taught me that a simple smile can heal and nourish everything it touches. I could spread joy by just listening to people. I also realised that if we give a smile we would get it back in multiples. These learnings helped a lot in grooming the businessman in me," explains Siddeek about his early years.

Capital moves



Siddeek is an expert in directing, managing and dealing with complex business models and initiatives.



Equipped with such knowledge, he left for Saudi Arabia and joined an organisation as their marketing manager. Though Siddeek had tried his hand at several businesses in Kerala, his real stint as a businessman started in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. Dammam is known for oil and gas related industries, where many multinational oil companies have strong presence. He started an organisation that offers complete project management solutions including handling human resources for oil and gas industries in Dammam. "My initial challenge was to get registered and to conduct business with these multinational companies. They were focused on quality of work, workmanship, safety, project schedule and timely completion. It was equally challenging to identify the right partner and management team," Siddeek details the initial hiccups.

However, he could find a way out and Siddeek strongly believes that it was by the grace of god he was able to engage in business associations with the right partners. "With the support of my family I was

able to source initial capital for my first business and I invested the profit from this in other businesses. Thus, the organisation started expanding. I had also invested in human capital; in fact I would say it was my first capital," he shares.

Siddeek believes in team work. "In my business, major contributing factors are my team members. I am surrounded by dedicated, trustworthy and competent people who can take up any assignment and are proficient enough to accomplish them in the way the company desires. For any business development activities, I always discuss with the core team and analyse positive and negative aspects," he shares his strategies. "Dedication and hardwork to achieve desired goals, transparency in the work we do, are our strengths. Whether it is worth US\$ 100 million or one million, it will be executed on time with total commitment and quality. Also, I learned that utilising the right human resources at the right place is the key to the success of any organisation," Siddeek shares his key learnings from his experiences.

My favourites

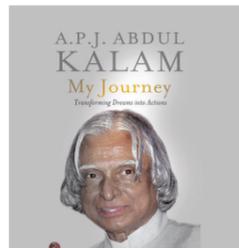


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My Journey: Transforming Dreams into Actions by Dr A P J Abdul Kalam. The warmth of love and affection are my learnings from it.

favourite book



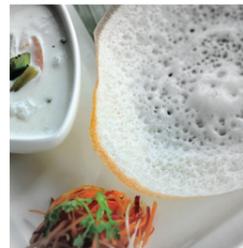
My trip to Switzerland. It is an awesome land and I would like to visit it again.

favourite trip



I relish traditional Kerala preparations.

favourite dish



I am comfortable in casual wear, preferably Jeans and a T-shirt.

favourite attire



Creating a paradise



Though he is heading several ventures which are headquartered outside India, he is passionate about his homeland, Kerala. He is actively involved in several projects and initiatives in the state.

After finding success in his initial venture, Siddeek adopted a different strategy in business. "My focus was to expand my business horizontally rather than giving primary focus on vertical growth. Later, in the second phase, I took the route of vertical growth. The strategy worked and now all my business units are profit-making centres," he narrates. "I used to take care to invest in human capital and evaluated growth not just in terms of turnover, but also in the number of employees and their dependents," he adds.

As a business leader handling diverse portfolios, Siddeek believes in team work. He is an expert in directing, managing and dealing with complex business models and initiatives. He possesses a strong and tangible set of skills which have not only enabled him to sustain the company he runs today, but also drive his teams to mirror the same qualities in their performance. "Whether it is small or big, simple or complicated, every work undertaken by us is performed, with total commitment," this, he believes, makes the Group stand out from the clutter.

Siddeek meets with customers and articulates customer needs, challenges and business goals. The way he pitches and closes a deal is a learning for others to emulate. He constantly reinvents himself and is always tuned to the ever evolving market scenario.

Though he is heading several ventures which are headquartered outside India, he is passionate about his homeland, Kerala. He is actively involved in several projects and initiatives in the state. He is the director of Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC), Infrastructure Kerala Ltd. (INKEL), Cheraman Financial Services Ltd. (CFSL) and so on and plays an active role in taking these organisations to newer heights.

Along with steering his business empire, Siddeek is passionate about his social and philanthropic activities. He supports several charities in partnership with governments, trusts, NGOs and individuals, besides running his own projects. "Serving the needy and contributing to society is

something I have imbibed from my parents. They were very generous and kind towards the needy. I grew up seeing their passionate service. So commitment to the society is an important part of my life," he shares.

Siddeek is associated with the AH Foundation, a charitable trust established in Kerala with the objective of empowering those who are socially and financially destitute. He is also the chief patron of We Care Association, a charitable initiative started to help the needy in the Middle East and in India. The Eram Group also offers financial assistance to several institutions including the Regional Cancer Centre, Thiruvananthapuram, for its charity initiatives, and Daya Rehabilitation Trust, Vadakara, for providing food and medicine for cancer patients. Eram Group also offers financial support to organisations such as Lions Club, Rotary Club and to blood donation camps undertaken in association with King Fahd Specialist Hospital, Dammam, KSA, and many others.

Eram Scientific Solutions Pvt. Ltd., a technology research and development firm under the leadership of Siddeek, has been recognised for its work in the field of community hygiene and sanitation. The firm aims to redefine the public sanitation landscape through e-toilets. Recently, the company received the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grant worth ₹ 3 crore for its 'Reinvent the Toilet Challenge' campaign. This grant will be utilised for conducting research on maintaining toilet hygiene, ensuring non-depletion of water resources and energy conservation solutions.

For Siddeek, charity does not end with funding of social initiatives. He also supports businesses and entrepreneurs who can make a positive impact on people's lives and selflessly cater to the needs of the society at large. Recognising his social and philanthropic activities and business excellence, he was conferred with honorary doctorates from both, regional and foreign universities. This has inspired and motivated him to keep the momentum going and aim for bigger deeds.

Person par excellence



Siddeek has won several awards and accolades for his stellar performance as a business leader. These include 'NRI Businessman of the Year Award' for outstanding contributions from *Dhanam* business magazine; Bravery & Entrepreneur Award for the most diversified conglomerate and Top Entrepreneur of India 2015; Kesari Smaraka Journalist Trust Award 2015; Global Business Excellence Award 2015; Keraleeyam Business Excellence Award, by Global Kerala Initiative; Malabar Fest Award in 2013 for excellence in Business and Social commitment instituted by Malabar Cultural Centre; International Human Rights Award; SION Award in 2012 by SION Media, Kuwait, for Excellence in the Field of Business and Charitable Services; Business Excellence Award in 2012, from WMC in Dallas, Texas and many more. He was ranked 16th in the Top Indian Business Leader in Arab World 2015, by Forbes Middle East.

He is also a member of the World Economic Forum (WEF) and an honorary member of Gandhi Square Trust, Florida, USA. He is also the chairman of Palakkad Business Group (PBG) in UAE.

Siddeek is deeply inspired by his father. "He was a true humanitarian,

more than a businessman. I have learned business ethics and values from my *uppa* and *umma*. The great industrialist Ratan Tata is also one of my role models in business," he informs. His family is actively involved in the business. "My wife Nushaiba looks after my personal investments and monitors and comments on my business decisions. My son Rizwan Ahmed and daughter Rizana Mariyam and even my younger child Rizwi Mariyam engage in healthy criticism which, in fact, helps me make appropriate changes in my decisions. Nushaiba and Rizwan are on the boards of many firms of Eram Group," he adds.

For Siddeek, family is the biggest support and a space to relax and rejuvenate in, when under tremendous work pressure. "Whenever I wish to relax, I will keep myself away from all electronic devices, including television, and spend time with my family. After some time, I feel recharged and energised," he concludes.

As a conscious leader Siddeek makes a positive impact on the culture of his organisation by establishing the right fundamentals and values. He is also able to influence and inspire his team and several others to bring about drastic transformation in society.



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