

HUMANS OF GLOBE

Oct 2024

**MALDIVES'
MOST
ICONIC
BUSINESS
Leaders
to Watch in
2024**

Founder/Managing Director
and Shareholder
Lily International Pvt Ltd

| PG. NO. 26

Digital
Transformation:
E-commerce
Growth in the
Maldives

| PG. NO. 34

Environmental
Challenges and
Business
Resilience in the
Maldives:
Adapting to
Changes

**AMIR
MANSOOR**

Architect of Maldives' Culinary Renaissance and Global Impact



THE ONLY TECHNOLOGY CAPABLE OF OUTSMARTING CATS

PROBLEM

Every day, cats are robbed of their best lives by a common, yet often overlooked disease: osteoarthritis (OA) pain. Nearly 40% of cats suffer from it in silence, yet most of their owners don't know how to spot its signs. So we asked ourselves: what if there was a way to interpret what cats were feeling so they could get the help they need? The answer was Cat Pain IQ.

32 million

households in the US have cats

40%

of cat owners who
recognized OA pain signs

50%

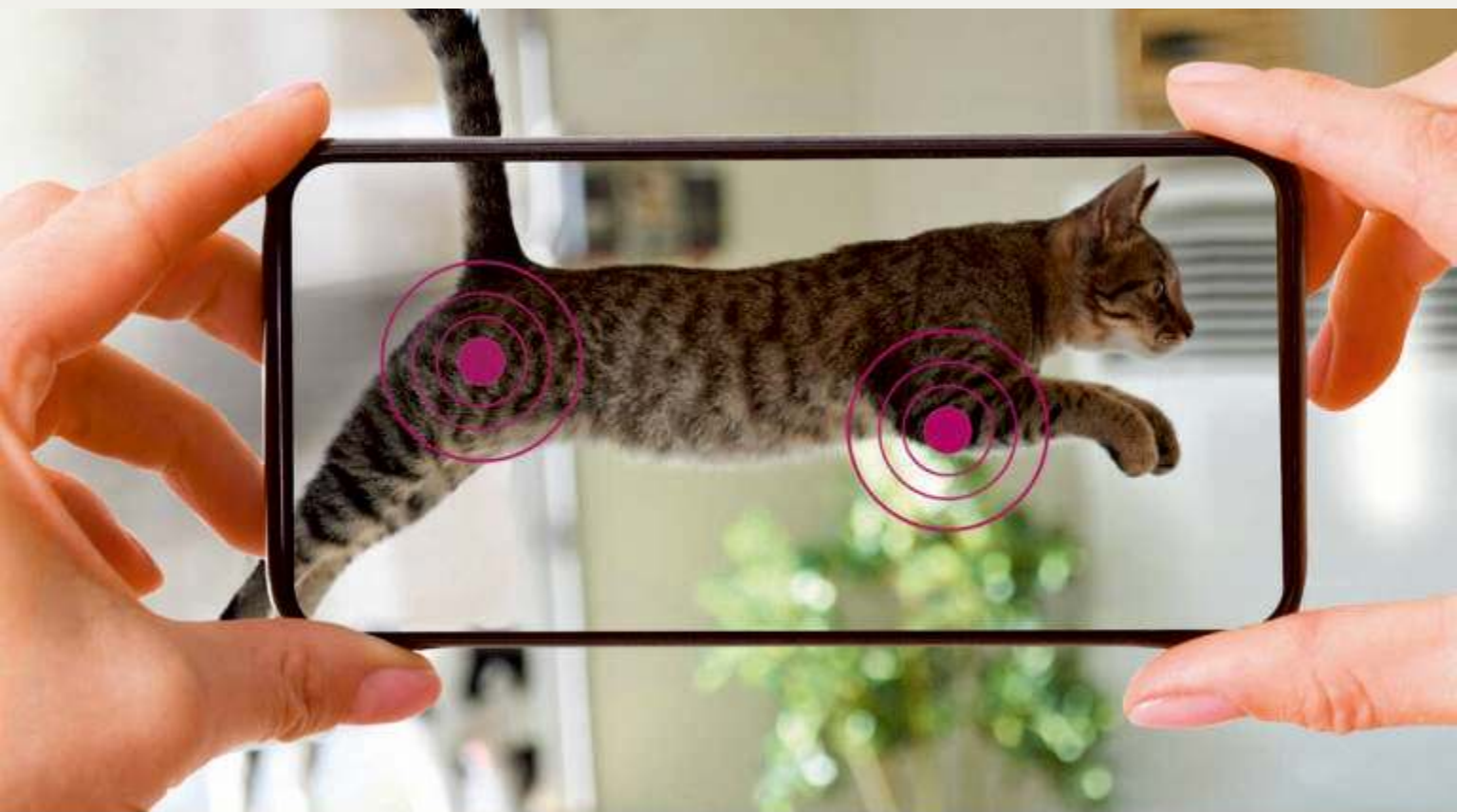
of cat owners who recognized OA pain signs
in their cat were motivated to visit their vets

SOLUTION

Cat Pain IQ uses the power of AI to analyze for signs of OA pain. While rigorous testing the technology, the result is simple. To use take a video of their cat. The AI analyzes it, automatically shared with them and their ve



Six 2-week sprints and
were performed



zoetis

a cat's movements
went into training
the app, owners simply
and the results are
ts.



500,000 analyses
to train the AI

RESULTS

This first-of-its kind app promises to change the way we care for cats by encouraging pet owners to partner more closely with their vets. Not only does this mean healthier, happier cats, but it means millions of cat owners' lives will be improved as well.



750,000 of pet owners
signed up to use CPIQ

400,000 of videos
submitted by pet owners

375,000 of screenings
results reports viewed



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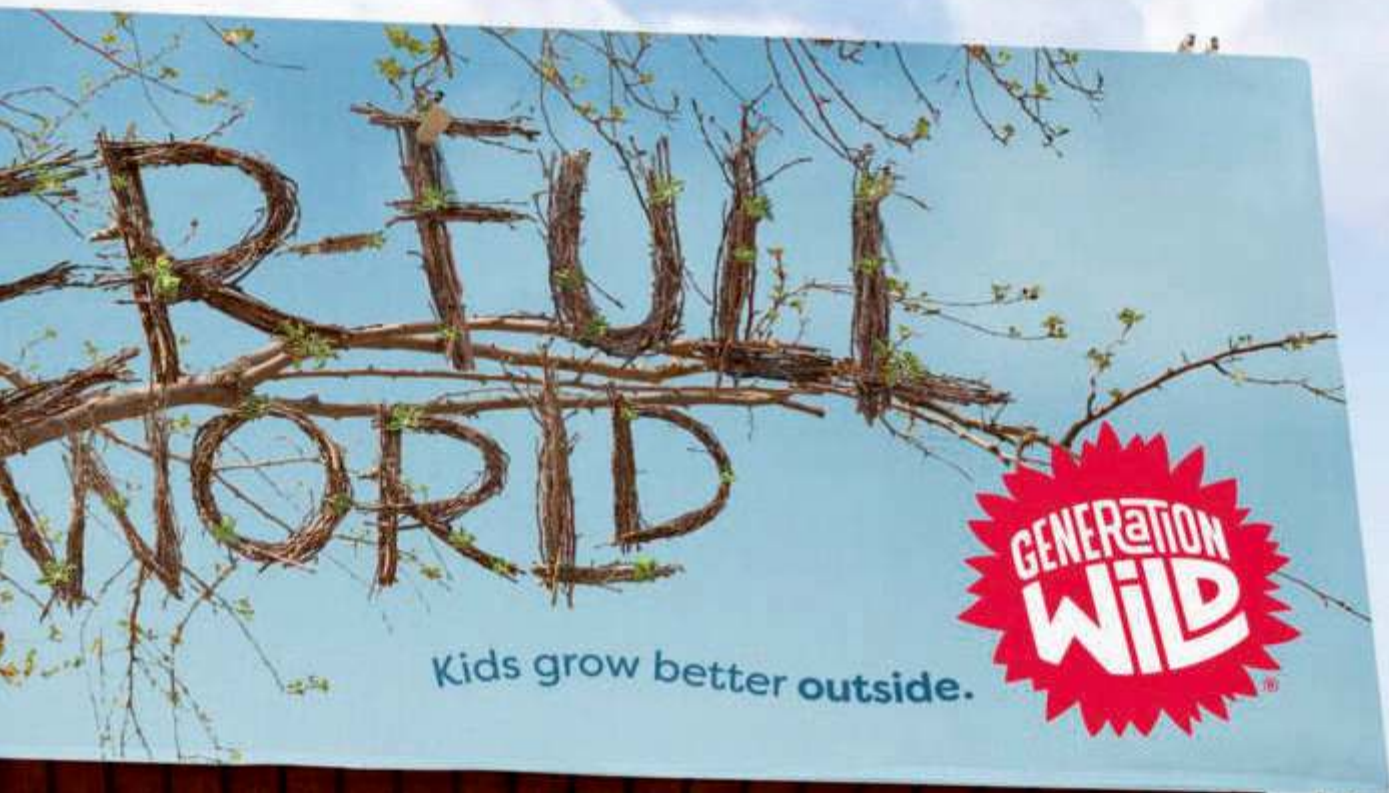
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Environmental
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ABOUT US



HUMANS to GLOBE

we recognize the passion and excellence of pioneering leaders making a difference worldwide.

Our vision?

A global community united by uplifting stories that spark positive change.

Through our digital platform and print magazine, we spotlight change makers impacting business, technology, sustainability, and beyond.

By showcasing diverse voices. we inform and inspire action towards progress.

The world needs more stories of possibility, happiness, and success and we cover them with our magazine!

A team united by purpose, we are building a publication to showcase incredible, under-told stories.

With experience in leadership, writing, research, photography and design, we are driven to uplift humanity by celebrating achievement.

Our editors, writers, and designers proudly produce stories that wave across cultures. We take great honor in showcasing the journeys, struggles, defining moments, and successes of innovators and change-makers of today!

While our backgrounds are diverse, we share a belief in storytelling to inspire!

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EDITORIAL

Amplifying Ambition That Echoes Beyond the Islands

The Maldives is not just a paradise of white sandy beaches and turquoise waters; it's a burgeoning hub of innovation and opportunity. Amidst its stunning landscapes, the nation is emerging as a dynamic center where creativity meets commerce. The economic pulse of the Maldives is beating stronger than ever, drawing global attention and positioning it as a beacon of growth in the region.

As the Maldivian economy flourishes, a new wave of businesses is taking shape, fueled by entrepreneurial

NOTE

spirit and a commitment to sustainability. Visionary leaders are stepping into the spotlight, leveraging technology and fresh ideas to revolutionize industries. This entrepreneurial renaissance is not just transforming local markets; it's crafting a narrative of resilience and ambition that resonates far beyond the islands.

In this edition, Humans of Globe unveils the "Most Iconic Business Leaders to Watch in 2024." These remarkable individuals are the trailblazers of this new era, embodying the courage and creativity that define the Maldivian business landscape. Their stories are not just about success; they are about breaking barriers, fostering innovation, and inspiring a collective vision for the future. Our aim in showcasing these leaders is to ignite a spark of inspiration throughout the Maldives and beyond. We believe that by highlighting their journeys, we can encourage a culture of collaboration and entrepreneurship that empowers the next generation. As we look ahead, we're committed to illuminating the paths of those who dare to dream big, ensuring that the future of the Maldives is filled with limitless possibilities for all.



Gopal Ingole
-Editor in Chief



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The background of the entire image is a dark, slightly blurred photograph of an industrial warehouse or factory interior. It shows high ceilings with exposed pipes, structural beams, and various industrial equipment. The lighting is somewhat dim, with some overhead lights visible. The overall tone is professional and industrial.

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COVER STORY

AMIR MANSOOR

Architect of Maldives' Culinary
Renaissance and Global Impact



Lily International Pvt Ltd
Founder/Managing Director
and Shareholder

As food and beverage industry trends shift towards health-conscious choices, sustainability, and technological advancements, businesses are not only keeping pace but also anticipating and leading these changes. This narrative explores the journey of a company that has effectively embraced these challenges and opportunities, demonstrating how strategic vision, commitment to quality, and a focus on corporate responsibility can drive significant growth and impact in the global market.

At the forefront of this journey is Amir Mansoor, whose vision and leadership have shaped the success of Lily International Pvt Ltd since its inception. Founded in 2000, Lily International Pvt

Ltd was established with a clear mission: to introduce high-quality food and beverage products to the Maldives and beyond. Drawing from a deep personal passion for culinary excellence, Mansoor identified a unique opportunity to fill a gap in the market for diverse and premium international brands.

Amir Mansoor's inspiration to enter the industry was driven by a personal passion for culinary excellence and a desire to introduce diverse flavors and premium products to the local market. Observing a gap in the availability of international brands, he saw an opportunity to establish a company capable of meeting the evolving tastes and preferences of consumers in the region.



My inspiration to enter the industry stemmed from a personal passion for culinary excellence and a desire to introduce diverse flavors and premium products to the local market.



Elevating Maldives' Food and Beverage Landscape

Founded on 10 October 2000, Lily International Pvt Ltd is a privately owned company specializing in the import and distribution of high-quality, internationally recognized brands in food and beverage, personal care, hygiene, and cosmetics.

Commonly known as Lily F&B Suppliers, the company is a subsidiary of the Lily Group, which has been a key player in wholesale, shipping, tourism, and various other sectors for the past 35 years.

Lily International Pvt Ltd was established with the goal of offering top-quality brands at affordable prices while ensuring personalized service and reliability. Over the past decade, the company has expanded its reach across the nation, setting up wholesale and retail outlets, the largest cold storage facility in the Maldives with a 500 MT capacity, dry warehouses, land and sea distribution vehicles, and a state-of-the-art IT infrastructure.

Lily International Pvt Ltd's mission is to become the most preferred and dependable food and beverage supplier in the Maldives. The company is committed to providing advanced supply solutions with world-class products and delivering exceptional customer service.

Looking ahead, Lily International Pvt Ltd envisions achieving this mission through a foundation of integrity and reliability. By embracing dynamic management practices, the company aims to serve its stakeholders and contribute positively to society.

Milestones and Values in Focus

The company collaborates with businesses in over 40 countries. The company launched “Grape Expectations Pvt Ltd” as a separate entity to enhance its marketing and sales of alcoholic beverages and cigars within the resort industry.

Notable international brands represented by Lily International Pvt Ltd include Fonterra, Nestlé, Evian, San Pellegrino, Perrier, Diversey, among others.

Lily International Pvt Ltd remains committed to its core mission of “Feeding the Nation” and places significant importance on corporate responsibility. The company actively supports charitable causes and social initiatives, reflecting its dedication to contributing to the socio-economic development of the nation.

From Hurdles to Horizons

In the early days, one of the biggest challenges for Lily International Pvt Ltd was establishing a reliable supply chain and building relationships with international brands. Navigating import regulations and logistical hurdles required perseverance and strategic planning. The company overcame these challenges by investing in robust infrastructure, forging strong partnerships, and maintaining a flexible approach to adapt to changing circumstances.

Since its inception, Lily International Pvt Ltd has evolved significantly, expanding its portfolio to include a diverse range of food and beverage brands. This growth is a testament to Lily International Pvt Ltd's commitment to quality and innovation.

Pinnacle of the Industry

Amir Mansoor's vision for Lily International Pvt Ltd is to continue leading the food and beverage industry by embracing innovation and sustainability. Over the next five to ten years, he aims for the company to further expand its global reach, introduce new and exciting brands, and enhance its product offerings. Lily International Pvt Ltd is committed to adapting to market trends and consumer preferences to ensure continued growth and success.

Under the leadership of Managing Director Mr. Amir Mansoor, Lily F&B Suppliers has established itself as a premier distributor of world-renowned brands in the Maldives. The company handles an extensive portfolio of over 1,000 SKUs, reflecting its commitment to exceptional service and quality.

Lily F&B Suppliers is built on core values of service, support, innovation, and customer respect. The company's adherence to high-quality and safety standards is exemplified by its certification in ISO 22000:2005 and the HACCP Codex Alimentarius (HACCP) Code, achieved in December 2008. These certifications ensure compliance with rigorous safety standards in the trading, storing, and transportation of frozen, chilled, and dry goods, meeting the demands of top-quality hotels and caterers worldwide.

Exclusive Agents of Global Excellence

The company proudly serves as the exclusive agent for several prestigious global brands in the Maldives, including:

- **Fonterra Brands:** A leading global dairy company, Fonterra offers top brands like Anchor, which includes milk, milk powder, butter, cheese, and creams, and is a significant player in the Maldivian dairy market.
- **Nestlé Professional:** As the world's largest food company, Nestlé is renowned for its brands such as Maggi, Nescafé, and Perrier. Their extensive culinary heritage supports the professional hospitality industry in the Maldives.



- **McCain Foods Limited:** Known for its frozen food products, McCain is a famous Canadian brand offering French fries, appetizers, pizzas, vegetables, desserts, juices, entrees, and oven meals.
- **Ceylon Cold Stores:** Known for its Elephant House brand ice creams, which come in various flavors and pack sizes, this brand has become a household name in the Maldives for its competitive pricing and high quality.
- **MasterBaker Marketing FZCO:** Established in 1992, MasterBaker specializes in supplying quality ingredients and customized services to the bakery industry and beyond.

Crafting Quality and Innovation

Amir Mansoor ensures that quality and personalized service are at the core of Lily International Pvt Ltd's business model by implementing rigorous quality control measures and investing in staff training. His approach involves training the team to understand and anticipate customer needs, which enables them to deliver tailored solutions and maintain high standards across all aspects of the company's operations.

When selecting brands and products, Lily International Pvt Ltd prioritizes quality, reputation, and alignment with market demands. The company conducts thorough research and engages with trusted suppliers to ensure that the products offered meet high standards. Their selection process also involves evaluating market trends and consumer preferences to introduce innovative and sought-after products to their customers.

Technology has revolutionized Lily International Pvt Ltd's operations by enhancing efficiency and accuracy in their distribution strategies. Advanced IT infrastructure allows the company to manage



inventory, track shipments, and analyze market data more effectively. It also enables streamlined communication with suppliers and customers, ultimately improving overall operational performance and responsiveness.

“Grape Expectations Pvt Ltd” was established as a strategic addition to Lily International Pvt Ltd's portfolio, focusing on offering premium wines and gourmet foods. Its role within the company is to cater to a niche market segment and enhance product diversity. Grape Expectations enables Lily International Pvt Ltd to offer a curated selection of high-quality products, further solidifying its position as a leading distributor in the region.



Over the past decade, Amir Mansoor has observed major trends in the food and beverage industry, including the rise of health-conscious eating, increased demand for sustainable products, and the growing influence of technology in food service. In response, Lily International Pvt Ltd is adapting by expanding its range of health-focused and eco-friendly products, investing in technology to streamline operations, and staying ahead of market trends to meet evolving consumer preferences.

Championing Community Impact

Corporate responsibility is a cornerstone of Lily International Pvt Ltd's business philosophy. The company is involved in various charitable initiatives, including supporting local community programs, contributing to environmental sustainability efforts, and partnering with organizations to

address social issues. Their goal is to make a positive impact beyond business operations and contribute to the well-being of the communities they serve.

One of the most rewarding experiences for Amir Mansoor has been witnessing the positive impact of Lily International Pvt Ltd's products and services on customers and communities. Seeing the company's brands become household names and knowing that they have contributed to the growth of local businesses and the satisfaction of customers brings him immense fulfillment. The success of the team and the positive feedback from partners and clients are truly gratifying for him.

Honoring Support and Sustaining Excellence

Amir Mansoor expresses his sincere appreciation to Lily International Pvt Ltd's valued customers,

principals, the Government of Maldives, and the media for their invaluable support and contribution, which has established the company as a reliable and consistent food and beverage supplier in the region. He is grateful for their unconditional support and hopes that the company's success will be a source of pride for the nation and its culinary industry. Mansoor also extends his thanks to the members of his team at Lily International Pvt Ltd for their dedication and effort in realizing the company's corporate mission, vision, and values.

Mansoor affirms that Lily International Pvt Ltd remains committed to its motto, "Feeding the Nation," and has established itself as a leading service provider by delivering quality global products at affordable prices to customers across the nation. He highlights the company's integrity and dedication in meeting the needs of valued clients, including HoReCa, institutions, wholesalers, retailers, corporate entities, and the general public.

Expanding Horizons – The Franchise Journey

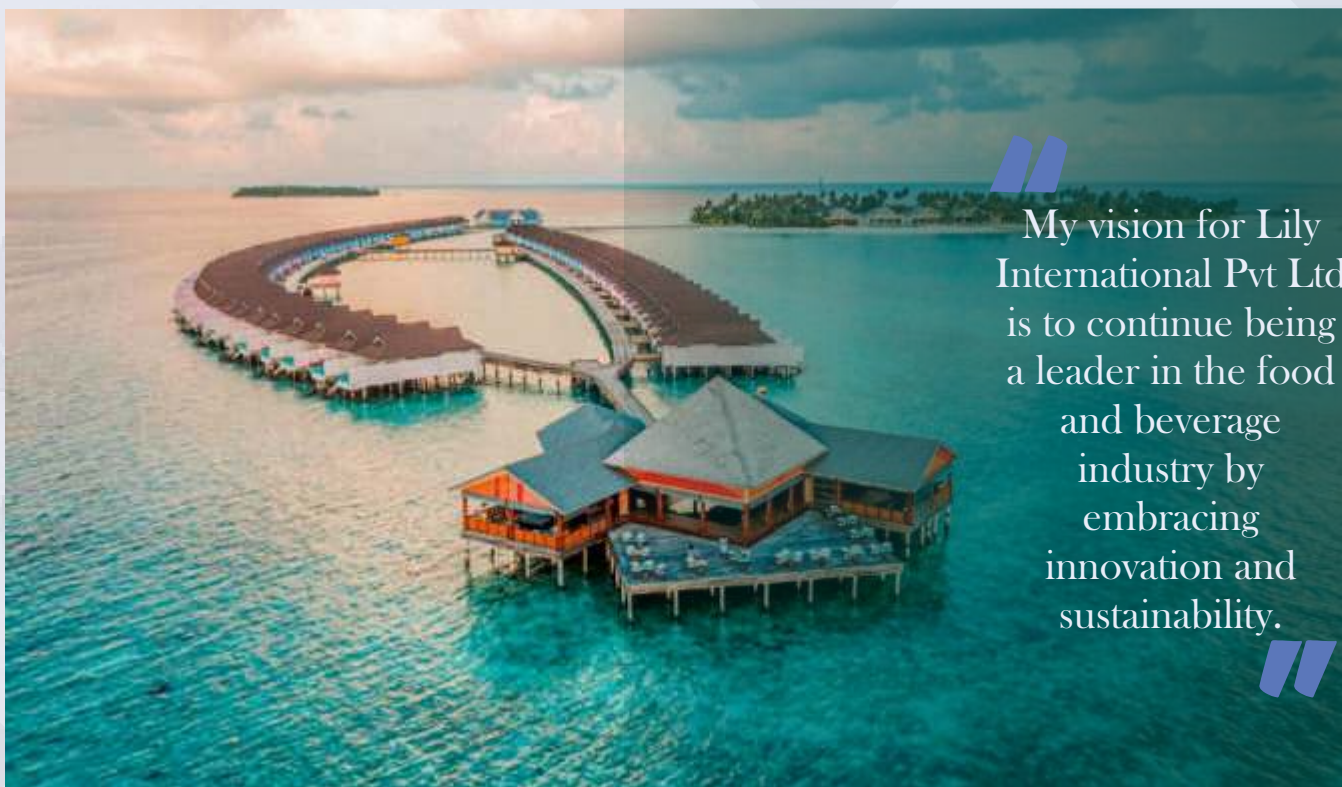
of Amir Mansoor

In the dynamic landscape of Maldivian business, Amir Mansoor has carved out a unique niche through his strategic expansion into the world of franchises. As the Managing Director of Lily International Pvt Ltd, Amir has been instrumental in introducing and establishing several internationally recognized brands in the Maldives, enhancing the culinary landscape and offering a diverse range of dining experiences to the Maldivian people and visitors alike.

Marrybrown: A Pioneering Venture

Amir's foray into the franchise business began in 2015 with the launch of Marrybrown, the first international fast-food chain in the Maldives. Known for its Halal-friendly menu and variety of offerings, Marrybrown quickly became a household name across the nation. The brand now boasts three outlets, strategically located in the capital city Malé, Hulhumalé, and Addu City.





“My vision for Lily International Pvt Ltd is to continue being a leader in the food and beverage industry by embracing innovation and sustainability.”

Under Amir's leadership, Marrybrown has not only met the demand for quality fast food but has also become a vital part of the community, catering to the tastes and preferences of a diverse customer base.

Secret Recipe: A Taste of International Delicacies

Continuing his successful franchise journey, Amir introduced Secret Recipe to the Maldives in 2016. This international chain, famous for its award-winning cakes and fusion food, filled a significant gap in the market for high-quality desserts and meals. With two outlets, one in Malé and another at Velana International Airport, Secret Recipe has quickly become a go-to destination for both locals and tourists seeking a blend of sweet and savory treats. Amir's vision to bring a brand like Secret Recipe to the Maldives aligns with his broader goal of elevating the local culinary scene by offering global flavors.

Coffee Republic: Brewing a New Experience

The latest addition to Amir's portfolio of franchise businesses is Coffee Republic, launched in 2023 by Carpe Diem Maldives Pvt Ltd. As a relatively new entrant to the market, Coffee Republic has already started making waves with its premium coffee offerings and modern café experience. Situated in a prime location, the café is a testament to Amir's keen eye for emerging trends and his commitment to providing quality, trendy, and accessible dining options.

Pizza Mia: A Homegrown Success Story

While Amir Mansoor has successfully introduced and managed international franchises, one of his proudest achievements is the creation and growth of Pizza Mia, a homegrown pizza brand he introduced to the Maldivian market in 2011. Pizza Mia stands out as a testament to Amir's entrepreneurial spirit and his deep understanding of local tastes and preferences.

Pizza Mia quickly became a favorite among Maldivians, offering a wide range of pizzas tailored to local palates, including unique flavors inspired by traditional Maldivian cuisine. Under Amir's leadership, Pizza Mia has grown into a beloved brand, known for its quality ingredients, innovative menu, and exceptional customer service. The brand's success also reflects Amir's ability to balance local relevance with international standards, ensuring that Pizza Mia competes effectively in a market filled with global giants.

The Vision Ahead

Amir Mansoor's venture into the franchise world is not just about bringing international brands to the Maldives; it's about curating experiences that resonate with the Maldivian way of life while also appealing to the global traveler. His ability to identify and partner with brands that align with his values and vision has been key to the success of these franchises.

Looking ahead, Amir is focused on expanding these brands further across the Maldives, ensuring that they continue to innovate and meet the evolving needs of the market. His journey with franchises like Marrybrown, Secret Recipe, Coffee Republic, and the homegrown Pizza Mia illustrates his commitment to diversifying the Maldivian dining scene, creating job opportunities, and contributing to the country's economic growth.

In a market that is as competitive and fast-paced as the Maldives, Amir Mansoor's franchise ventures stand as a testament to his strategic thinking, business acumen, and unwavering dedication to quality. Whether it's the familiar taste of Marry brown's chicken, the indulgent sweetness of a Secret Recipe cake, the aromatic brew from Coffee Republic, or the uniquely local flavors of Pizza Mia, Amir's influence is evident in every bite.



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Mr. Amir Mansoor Honored with National Award for Pioneering Contributions to Maldivian Economy and Trade

In a landmark moment for the Maldivian business community, Mr. Amir Mansoor, a trailblazing entrepreneur, has been awarded the prestigious National Award of Recognition for his outstanding contributions to the nation's economy. Renowned for his innovative efforts in diversifying and expanding the Maldivian trade landscape, Mr. Mansoor has consistently been at the forefront of entrepreneurial ventures that have transformed various industries in the country.

The award was presented to Mr. Mansoor by the President of the Maldives, Dr. Mohamed Muizzu, during the 2024 National Day celebrations. The National Award of Recognition is conferred on individuals who have made significant contributions to the country's development and economic progress, highlighting those who inspire change and drive growth across various sectors.

In accepting the award, Mr. Mansoor emphasized the importance of perseverance, vision, and collaboration in achieving economic success. His recognition is a testament to his lasting impact on the Maldives and his dedication to shaping the future of the nation's trade and industry.

A Visionary Milestone: Mr. Amir Mansoor's Journey to Developing The Standard Huruvalhi Maldives

In 2018, Mr. Amir Mansoor, achieved one of the greatest milestones of his career with the development of The Standard Huruvalhi Maldives. This 115-room luxury resort, situated on the private island of Raa Huruvalhi, stands as a testament to his innovative approach to hospitality and his commitment to elevating the Maldivian tourism experience to new heights.

The Standard Huruvalhi Maldives is more than just a resort; it is an embodiment of thoughtful design and unique architectural features that seamlessly blend modern sophistication with the natural beauty of the Maldives. From its distinctively styled overwater villas to its vibrant social spaces, the resort offers an unparalleled experience for travelers seeking both luxury and adventure. The Standard brand, known for its creativity and fun-loving spirit, was introduced to the Maldives by Mr. Mansoor, making it the first of its kind in the region.

This project was a culmination of years of experience and an ambition to transform the Maldivian hospitality industry by introducing bold concepts that cater to the evolving preferences of global travelers. The resort's design not only reflects the pristine beauty of its surroundings but also incorporates eco-friendly practices, furthering Mr. Mansoor's vision of sustainable tourism. The Standard Huruvalhi Maldives combines high-end hospitality with the warmth and culture of the Maldives, offering guests a truly immersive experience.

For Mr. Mansoor, the creation of this resort was a dream long in the making. It represented a critical step in his mission to diversify the Maldivian economy by expanding the scope of tourism and raising the bar for luxury travel in the country. His commitment to excellence is evident in every aspect of the resort, from the fine dining experiences to the state-of-the-art wellness facilities and the numerous activities designed to showcase the natural wonders of the Maldives.

The Standard Huruvalhi Maldives has since gained international acclaim, drawing in visitors from all over the world. It has contributed significantly to the local economy by providing employment opportunities and helping to position the Maldives as a top destination for experiential and luxury travel.

Reflecting on this achievement, Mr. Mansoor views the resort as not only a personal success but a symbol of the limitless potential within the Maldivian tourism sector. His dedication to the growth and sustainability of the industry continues to inspire others to think beyond traditional boundaries and seek innovative solutions for the future.

As Mr. Mansoor looks to the future, The Standard Huruvalhi Maldives remains a shining example of what is possible when vision, passion, and strategic thinking come together. It stands as a cornerstone of his legacy, one that continues to shape the trajectory of the Maldivian tourism landscape.



Digital Transformation: E-commerce Growth in the Maldives

The Maldives, known for its stunning beaches and vibrant marine life, has traditionally relied on tourism as the cornerstone of its economy. However, the rise of digital technology is reshaping the economic landscape, with e-commerce emerging as a significant player. This article explores the growth of e-commerce in the Maldives, its challenges, and the future potential it holds for businesses and consumers alike.

The Rise of E-Commerce in the Maldives

E-commerce in the Maldives has gained momentum over the past few years, driven by increasing internet penetration, a young population, and changing consumer behaviors. According to recent statistics, internet usage in the Maldives has surpassed 90%, providing a robust foundation for online shopping. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this trend, as lockdowns and social distancing measures forced consumers and businesses to adapt to digital platforms.

Local entrepreneurs have recognized the potential of e-commerce, leading to the emergence of various online marketplaces. Platforms like **MyNika**, **Soco**, and **Gulha** have sprung up, catering to the demand for a range of products—from electronics to fashion and groceries. These platforms not only offer convenience but also provide an opportunity for local artisans and small businesses to reach a broader audience.

Changing Consumer Behavior

The Maldivian consumer landscape is evolving, particularly among the younger demographic, which is more tech-savvy and open to online shopping. Traditional shopping methods are giving way to digital alternatives, driven by the convenience and variety that e-commerce offers. Consumers are increasingly looking for better

deals, easier access to products, and the ability to shop from the comfort of their homes.

Social media platforms, particularly Instagram and Facebook, play a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences. Many local businesses use these platforms to promote their products, connect with customers, and drive traffic to their e-commerce sites. The integration of social commerce—where shopping is conducted through social media—has further fueled this trend, allowing consumers to make purchases directly through their social feeds.

Challenges Facing E-Commerce Growth

Despite the positive outlook for e-commerce in the Maldives, several challenges hinder its growth:

1. Logistics and Infrastructure

One of the most significant hurdles for e-commerce businesses in the Maldives is the logistical challenge posed by its geographical layout. With over 1,000 islands spread across the Indian Ocean, delivering products can be complex and costly. Ensuring timely and efficient delivery remains a critical issue for many online retailers.

2. Payment Systems

While digital payment systems are becoming more prevalent, the Maldives still faces challenges in establishing a fully integrated digital payment infrastructure. Many consumers prefer cash transactions, and the lack of trust in online payment methods can deter potential buyers. Efforts are underway to improve digital payment options, including mobile wallets and bank partnerships, but further advancements are needed.

3. Regulatory Environment

The regulatory framework governing e-commerce in the Maldives is still developing. Businesses often encounter bureaucratic hurdles, including taxation issues and the need for compliance with various regulations. A more streamlined regulatory process

could encourage more entrepreneurs to venture into e-commerce.

4. Digital Literacy

While internet penetration is high, digital literacy varies among the population. Some consumers, particularly in rural areas, may lack the skills or knowledge to navigate e-commerce platforms effectively. Addressing this gap through education and training initiatives will be vital for increasing e-commerce adoption.

The Role of Government and Private Sector Initiatives

Recognizing the potential of e-commerce to boost economic growth, the Maldivian government has initiated several measures to support digital transformation. The **Maldives National Digital Strategy** aims to enhance digital infrastructure, promote e-commerce, and foster a conducive environment for startups and small businesses.

Private sector initiatives also play a crucial role in driving e-commerce growth. Collaborations between local businesses and international tech companies can bring valuable expertise and resources to the table. Training programs focused on digital skills and e-commerce best practices can empower entrepreneurs and employees, equipping them to thrive in the digital landscape.

The Future of E-Commerce in the Maldives

The future of e-commerce in the Maldives looks promising, with several trends expected to shape its growth:

1. Mobile Commerce

With the increasing use of smartphones, mobile commerce (m-commerce) is set to become a dominant force in the e-commerce sector. Businesses that optimize their platforms for mobile users will likely see higher engagement and sales

2. Social Commerce Growth

As social media continues to influence consumer behavior, businesses will increasingly leverage social commerce. Integrating shopping features into social media platforms will enhance customer engagement and streamline the purchasing process.

3. Sustainability and Local Products

There is a growing demand for sustainable and locally sourced products among consumers. E-commerce platforms that emphasize eco-friendly practices and promote local artisans can tap into this trend, attracting conscious consumers.

4. Technological Advancements

Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) will revolutionize the online shopping experience. These technologies can enhance product visualization, personalization, and customer service, creating a more engaging shopping environment.

Conclusion

The growth of e-commerce in the Maldives represents a significant shift in the country's business landscape. While challenges remain, the opportunities for innovation and economic development are immense. As the government and private sector work together to address logistical, regulatory, and educational barriers, e-commerce can become a vital component of the Maldivian economy.

By embracing digital transformation, the Maldives has the potential to diversify its economy, reduce reliance on tourism, and empower local businesses to thrive in a global marketplace. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, the Maldives is poised to emerge as a competitive player in the e-commerce arena, making it an exciting time for consumers and entrepreneurs alike.

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Qasim Ibrahim

A Leader in Maldivian Business and Philanthropy

Introduction

This case study delves into the life and accomplishments of Qasim Ibrahim, a prominent Maldivian entrepreneur, philanthropist, and politician. As the founder and chairman of the Villa Group, one of the largest and most diverse business conglomerates in the Maldives, Ibrahim has made substantial contributions to the nation's economy and society. His journey illustrates the complex interplay between entrepreneurship, philanthropy, and political engagement in a rapidly changing landscape.

Background

Qasim Ibrahim, affectionately known as Burumaa Qasim, was born on August 30, 1951. With an estimated net worth of around MVR 18 billion, he stands as one of the wealthiest individuals in the Maldives. His career began modestly, but his ambition and strategic vision led him to establish a multi-faceted business empire that spans several key industries, including tourism, transport, and construction.

Career Path

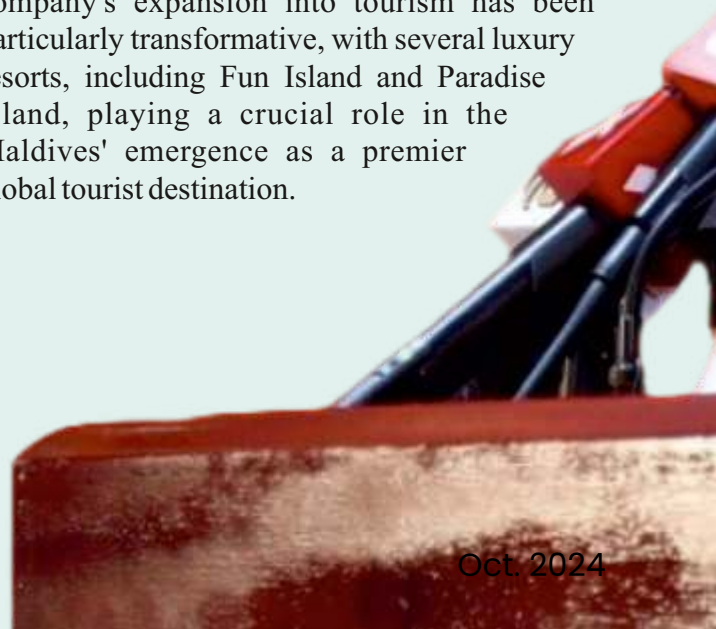
Ibrahim's professional journey began in 1969 as a clerk at a government hospital in Malé. This early experience in public service shaped his understanding of community needs and the importance of social responsibility. In 1973, he

transitioned to a managerial role at Alia Furniture Mart and briefly worked for the State Trading Organization. His entrepreneurial spirit ignited in 1976 when he founded his own trading company, specializing in commodities such as rice, diesel, and kerosene. This venture laid the groundwork for his future successes.

In 1986, he formalized his operations by establishing Villa Shipping and Trading Company. This pivotal move allowed him to expand his business into shipping, enabling oil imports crucial for the Maldivian economy. Under his leadership, Villa Group diversified into tourism, becoming synonymous with some of the country's most renowned resorts.

Business Achievements

Qasim Ibrahim's business acumen has driven Villa Group to become a leader in various sectors. The company's expansion into tourism has been particularly transformative, with several luxury resorts, including Fun Island and Paradise Island, playing a crucial role in the Maldives' emergence as a premier global tourist destination.



His commitment to sustainability is evident in the operational practices of Villa Group. By incorporating eco-friendly initiatives, such as waste management and coral reef restoration projects, Ibrahim not only preserves the natural beauty of the Maldives but also attracts environmentally conscious travelers. This approach has set a new standard in the industry, encouraging other businesses to follow suit.

Political Engagement

In addition to his business endeavors, Ibrahim has been actively involved in Maldivian politics. He was first elected to the Parliament in 1989 and has since held several key positions, including Minister of Home Affairs and Governor of the Central Bank. His political career reflects a commitment to national development and governance.

Ibrahim's presidential ambitions saw him running for office in both 2013 and 2023. While he did not secure the presidency, his candidacy signified the influence and respect he commands within the political arena. However, his political journey has been fraught with challenges, including controversies and arrests that underline the complexities of balancing business interests with political ambitions.

Philanthropy and Community Impact

A hallmark of Qasim Ibrahim's career is his dedication to philanthropy. He has invested significantly in community infrastructure across the Maldives, funding the construction of schools, mosques, and vital health facilities. His ambitious project to establish a general hospital in Maamigili Island, which will feature the first dedicated cancer treatment facility in the



country, is a testament to his commitment to improving healthcare access for all Maldivians.

Through these efforts, Ibrahim has not only enhanced the quality of life for many but has also fostered a sense of community and support among the Maldivian people.

Challenges and Controversies

Despite his successes, Qasim Ibrahim's career has not been without its share of controversies. Allegations regarding financial practices within the Villa Group and accusations of political maneuvering have surfaced throughout his career. Additionally, he has faced imprisonment for political reasons, reflecting the often tumultuous nature of Maldivian politics. These challenges have tested his resilience and adaptability in both business and political spheres.

Conclusion

Qasim Ibrahim is a multifaceted leader whose influence extends beyond business. His entrepreneurial spirit, philanthropic commitments, and political engagement exemplify a transformative figure in the Maldives. As he continues to navigate the complexities of both realms, his legacy is poised to inspire future generations of Maldivian entrepreneurs and leaders. Through his work, Ibrahim is not only shaping the business landscape but also contributing to a more sustainable and equitable society.



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Environmental Challenges and Business Resilience in the Maldives: Adapting to Changes

The Maldives, a picturesque archipelago in the Indian Ocean, is renowned for its stunning beaches, vibrant coral reefs, and rich biodiversity. However, this tropical paradise faces significant environmental challenges that threaten not only its natural beauty but also its economy and the livelihoods of its people. As climate change, rising sea levels, and other ecological issues intensify, businesses in the Maldives must adapt and build resilience to ensure their survival and contribute to sustainable development.

The Environmental Landscape

The Maldives is uniquely vulnerable to climate change due to its low-lying geography, with an average elevation of just 1.5 meters above sea level. This makes the country one of the most susceptible nations to rising sea levels, which pose a direct threat to coastal communities, infrastructure, and tourism, the backbone of the Maldivian economy. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),

sea levels are projected to rise by up to 1 meter by the end of the century, which could lead to the loss of many islands and displace thousands of residents.

Additionally, the Maldives faces challenges such as ocean acidification, which adversely affects coral reefs—critical ecosystems that support marine life and attract tourists. Overfishing, plastic pollution, and habitat destruction further exacerbate these issues, threatening the delicate balance of marine biodiversity that is vital for both the environment and the economy.

Impacts on Business

The environmental challenges in the Maldives have profound implications for various sectors, particularly tourism, agriculture, and fisheries:

1. Tourism

Tourism accounts for over 30% of the Maldives' GDP and is the primary source of income for many residents. However, the degradation of coral reefs and marine ecosystems due to climate change can deter tourists, leading to a decline in visitor numbers. Furthermore, rising sea levels threaten coastal resorts and infrastructure, necessitating costly adaptations or relocations.

2. Fisheries

Fishing is another critical sector in the Maldivian economy, providing sustenance and employment for many communities. However, overfishing and environmental degradation jeopardize fish stocks, leading to reduced catches and threatening food security. Climate change also affects fish migration patterns, impacting local livelihoods.

3. Agriculture

Though agriculture is a smaller part of the Maldivian economy, it plays an essential role in food security. Increased salinity in soil and water due to rising sea levels and climate change poses challenges for farming, affecting crop yields and the viability of agricultural practices.

Building Business Resilience

To navigate these environmental challenges, businesses in the Maldives must adopt strategies that enhance resilience and sustainability. Here are several approaches that can help:

1. Sustainable Practices

Businesses can implement sustainable practices to minimize their environmental impact. For example, resorts can adopt eco-friendly technologies, such as solar energy, water recycling systems, and waste management programs. By reducing their carbon footprint and reliance on non-renewable resources, businesses can contribute to environmental conservation while potentially reducing operational costs.

2. Investment in Infrastructure

Investing in resilient infrastructure is crucial for protecting businesses from environmental threats. This includes constructing sea walls, elevating buildings, and developing drainage systems to mitigate flooding risks. Collaborations between the government and private sector can enhance infrastructure resilience, benefiting both businesses and communities.

3. Diversification of Offerings

To reduce reliance on tourism, businesses can diversify their offerings by exploring opportunities in sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, and renewable energy. For instance, agribusinesses can promote organic farming and focus on high-value crops that are resilient to changing climatic conditions.

4. Community Engagement

Engaging local communities in environmental conservation efforts fosters resilience. Businesses can collaborate with communities to promote sustainable fishing practices, conservation of marine ecosystems, and awareness campaigns about environmental issues. Such initiatives not

only contribute to ecological preservation but also enhance the reputation of businesses as socially responsible entities.

5. Policy Advocacy and Collaboration

Businesses can advocate for policies that support environmental sustainability and climate resilience. Collaborating with government agencies, NGOs, and international organizations can amplify efforts to address environmental challenges. Participation in public-private partnerships can lead to more comprehensive strategies for environmental protection.

The Role of Technology and Innovation

Technology and innovation play a vital role in building resilience against environmental challenges. The adoption of digital tools for data collection and analysis can help businesses monitor environmental changes and adapt their strategies accordingly. For instance, using drones and satellite imagery can aid in assessing coral health, tracking fish populations, and managing agricultural practices.

Moreover, innovative solutions, such as climate-resilient crop varieties and eco-friendly materials, can empower businesses to adapt to changing

conditions while minimizing environmental harm. Investing in research and development can yield sustainable practices that benefit both businesses and the ecosystem.

Conclusion

The Maldives stands at a critical juncture where environmental challenges demand urgent attention and action. As a country heavily reliant on its natural resources and tourism, addressing climate change and ecological degradation is essential for ensuring long-term economic viability.

Businesses play a crucial role in this effort by adopting sustainable practices, investing in resilient infrastructure, and engaging with communities to promote environmental stewardship. By building resilience, Maldivian businesses can not only survive but thrive in the face of adversity, contributing to the country's sustainable development goals.

Ultimately, the path forward for the Maldives lies in the harmonious coexistence of economic growth and environmental preservation. By prioritizing sustainability and resilience, the Maldives can safeguard its natural beauty and ensure a prosperous future for generations to come.



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