

DEEPAK DHAWAN

Chairman

FOOD SPECIALITIES LIMITED



Deepak Dhawan (‘DD’, as he is known to his colleagues and in the industry) has been an entrepreneur in the Middle East since 1986. Deepak was born in Shimla, India on 21st May 1950. After finishing schooling in Shimla, he went on to study and obtain his Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) at the Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani, and graduated in May 1971. Post-Pilani, he immediately joined the Oberoi School of Hotel Management and passed through in May 1973. He was part of the team that was posted to Mumbai in May 1973 for the opening of the Oberoi Sheraton. However, very soon he realized that the hotel business was not his calling and moved on to Oberoi Exports, which led to his leadership of the organisation, before he left them in January 1980.

In March of 1980, Deepak moved to Dubai with his wife and young son with the desire to explore new horizons. He worked for Beatrice Foods Company running their Middle East office until May 1986. He always had high ambitions and a burning desire to do something on his own. When Beatrice Foods Company shut down its Dubai office, he founded his own business under the name of Food Specialities Limited (FSL). And this is how FSL was born: out of a leap of faith on the 8th of May 1986. With a humble beginning of just 2 employees in 1986, FSL has grown steadily over the past 30 years and today, handles a business of over US\$ 220 million.

FSL’s core business is sales and marketing of food and beverage ingredients in the Middle East region. FSL, being a market leader, is associated with several multinational companies, each of which is a world leader in its specific product category. FSL also has several other businesses which handle trading of agro and dairy commodities, branded goods and supplies to the HoReCa industry. With a strong base in the Middle East region, FSL then proceeded to start operations in Mumbai, India in 2007.

TEAMWORK

Some of the important milestones in FSL’s history is as follows: 1988, setting up of the first sales office in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; 1998, expansion of business by starting distribution operations; 2004, setting up of the sales office in Amman; 2005, opening of Food Specialities LLC for servicing of the HoReCa segment; 2006, expansion of distribution operations in Jeddah Saudi Arabia; 2007, FSL Foods India Pvt. Ltd. became operational in Mumbai, India; 2009, diversified into Plant & Machinery sales with FSL Engineering FZE; 2013, inauguration of FSL FZE in National Industries Complex, Dubai – FSL’s new home for foodservices; 2014, launching of FSL branded flavours and created an in-house Application Lab; and in 2015, created a special Application Lab for the meat sector.

Deepak serves as a member of the Board and is the Executive Chairman of the company.

There are some unique qualities of Deepak that distinguish him as a cherished leader. His efforts have been to maintain a familial atmosphere at work place. He makes it a point to personally welcome every new member of the FSL family. Employees look forward to being wished by Deepak on their birthdays and receive presents. How often does one come across an organization where individual opinion is asked for, given a hearing and taken into consideration? It sure happens at FSL!

As one of the old timers at FSL says: FSL also stands for “Friendly Solid Long-lasting” where employee loyalty is recognized and well rewarded.

FSL is home to employees of 13 nationalities and currently employs a strong multicultural team of 120 staff in their various offices spanning 5 countries. FSL invests a considerable amount of time and capital each year in developing the management,

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Established Food Specialities Limited (FSL) in May 1986

Shifted focus to food ingredients and FSL is today the market leader in this field in the Middle East Region

Entered the HoReCa segment with Food Specialities LLC in 2005



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communication and technical skills of its most valued assets – its people. Being a sales and marketing organization, having an attractive and aggressive reward system is certainly a strong way to increase the staff's productivity and so the company's bottom line. This has helped the company to be more competitive, retain key employees and reduce employee turnover. It has also enhanced employee motivation and has reinforced the image of FSL as a preferred partner among key stakeholders and as an employer of choice among prospective/future employees.

FSL is proud to have an excellent team under the leadership of Deepak Dhawan and this is what distinguishes FSL from competition and helps it to be one step ahead. With long-term growth in mind, FSL is in the midst of developing its "Vision 2020" strategic and operational plans and its people are very much an integral part of it. FSL's philosophy is to build long-term partnerships with all its stakeholders be it suppliers, customers or its employees. FSL values are integrity, people care, responsibility, accountability, creative team work and trusting leadership. For Deepak, FSL is a people's company: an organization that believes in its people. Deepak's vision for FSL is "to be a world class organization inspired by a joyful team of leader-owners".

On a personal note, Deepak has been married to Manjula for 38 years and they have 2 sons, Dhruv and Dashrath. Dhruv lives in Vancouver where he runs his own business in film-making and photography. Dashrath joined FSL 10 years ago and has just recently been appointed as its CEO. Deepak's passions include travel, golf, reading and good single malt whisky!

"ENTREPRENEUR IS SOMEONE WHO HAS A VISION
FOR SOMETHING AND A WANT TO CREATE."

– David Karp
Founder and CEO Tumblr