



Where There is a Will:

Dalal Al Qubaisi

From a small typing centre back in 2010, Dalal Al Qubaisi has worked her way up to Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry's board of directors, a position which she aspires to use for the benefit of women entrepreneurs.

Six years ago, when most girls her age were still at university, Dalal, who was 22 at the time, was running a small typing centre within Abu Dhabi's Department of Economic Development. Day after day, she assisted UAE nationals and expatriates with applying for their commercial licenses and the centre was constantly busy.

"I helped people and formed many relationships, but I always wanted to run for the election for Abu Dhabi Chamber's board of directors. When the elections took place in 2010, I found out that I could enrol if I had a registered company," she recalls.



H.E. Dalal Al Qubaisi

It was a simple equation: this is what she longed for, and she had to make it happen within four years.

Strong relations

Voting for the elections finally opened in June 2014 and thousands showed up to select their preferred board members for ADCCI. Like karma at work, all the connections she had established over the years were paying off. Additionally, family members, relatives and friends made their way from her hometown in Al Gharbia to add their votes.

Not only did Dalal win her place among 12 other Emiratis and two

expatriates on the commercial consultative body, but she scored the highest number of votes at 4,202, notably higher than the second winner, who obtained 3409 votes.

‘When they held the elections, I decided to apply and had faith. I had a target to win, not necessarily the first but at least to win.’ As a board member, she is now working toward the vision of Abu Dhabi – to boost the emirate’s economy. This involves various aspects, one of which is to promote the emirate’s businessmen and businesswomen.

‘Our work includes enhancing the role of women. I have many friends

who want to obtain trade licenses but don’t know how to. They assume a huge capital required, in the range of millions.’

Guiding women

Women in particular need better guidance. According to her, many are running businesses on social media, underselling their designed abayas, home-cooked food and hand-woven crafts. This also means they cannot hire employees, pursue legal matters or participate in tenders – they can only work on very limited scale.

‘I tell them they can do everything with a trade license. My personal

ambition is to see women running successful entities, both nationals and expatriates," says Dalal.

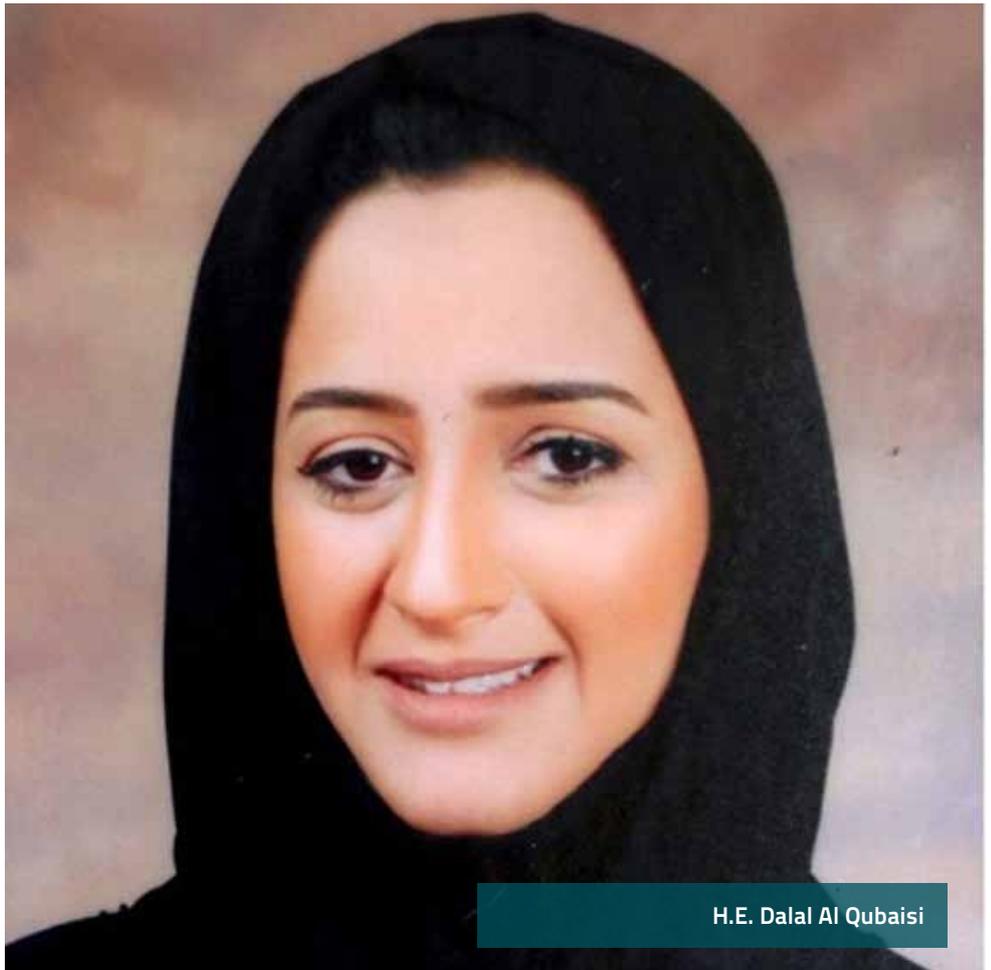
"Very soon, there will be an initiative from the chamber. We have proposed it and they're working on it. We see many women making traditional food and desserts but have no base to operate from, so why not establish a place for them."

By doing so, women entrepreneurs would be able to use their talents professionally and achieve better profit margins. A streamlined process would also help meet Abu Dhabi Municipality's health regulations in the case of food related businesses, whilst having an office would boost their marketing efforts and create a collaborative network.

"Women assume that the procedures are complicated, so we want to facilitate things for them. When a businesswoman sees a clear set of procedures ahead of her and dedicated facilities, she will feel comfortable and will be ready to work," explains Dalal.

She stresses that homemakers can also be more productive and contribute to the household income. "Many men have wives who are skilled in areas such as graphic designing and marketing. These women can work from home and excel."

Similarly, working mothers who complain of eight-hour jobs might be happier working from home, completing phone calls or doing administrative work. This, she says,



H.E. Dalal Al Qubaisi

would make them more productive than they would be 'working in an office reading newspaper and drinking coffee'.

Giving back

A graduate from the Higher Colleges of Technology in Abu Dhabi, Dalal, who is unmarried, has been running her own business, Follow-up Transaction Services, since 2008, through which she sponsored nearly 80 companies operating in a multitude of industries.

"I gathered a wealth of experience from dealing with different nationalities and industries. With each person, you get a new piece of information and it benefits me even on a personal level. You discover things you never knew. I'm constantly learning and forming new relations."

She also runs a business centre

where she offers advice free of charge and workstations for independent professionals.

"I rented a big hall and divided into offices for those who need to rent a workspace on a monthly basis. I made sure the interiors were comfortable and inviting, and we have staff to assist them with government approvals and public relations."

At the end of the day, Dalal owes her success to the wise leadership of the country. "If our government wasn't encouraging women, you wouldn't see me doing all this. It was thanks to the government's support, they encourage women's employment in all fields and without this support, I could have never done it".

- Heba Hashem