



Steelfab is the Most Important Show for the Steel Fabrication Industry in the Middle East Region

- Saif Mohammed Al Midfa
CEO,
Expo Centre Sharjah

Saif Mohamed Al Midfa, a seasoned finance and marketing professional, is the Chief Executive Officer of Expo Centre Sharjah, the exhibition wing of the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Al Midfa is responsible for managing a business with Dhs. 60 million (US\$ 16.3 million) annual turnover and leading a team of more than 120 employees belonging to multicultural backgrounds.

Ever since he joined the company in 2004, Al Midfa, an effective thinker with practical hands-on approach to solving problems, has been instrumental in expanding the business horizon and profitability of the company.

Al Midfa has played a significant role in marketing and promoting Expo Centre Sharjah and its shows regionally and internationally. In this process, he also helped in placing the Emirate of Sharjah prominently on the global exhibitions map.

Under his leadership, the number of shows organised and hosted by Expo Centre Sharjah has gone up considerably, with several of them being launched since 2011. During this period, Expo Centre has also become a member of several prestigious international associations, including:

- IAEE - International Association of Exhibitions & Events (Arabian Gulf Chapter) – Chairman.

- Federation of Chamber of Commerce (UAE) – Committee Board Member for International Exhibitions.

- UFI - The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (France) – Chairman for the Middle East & Africa.

- AIPMA - The All India Plastics Manufacturers Association (India) – Member of the National Advisory Board, 2013.

- UAE Stamps Association – Member.

- Al Shaab sports club (Sharjah) – Ex-Board Member.

Expo Centre has also struck co-operation deals with a number of regional and world countries to co-host shows and share expertise.

Prior to joining Expo Centre Sharjah, Al Midfa was the Regional Business Manager (Middle East region) at ENOC - Emirates National Oil Company, Dubai, from 2001 to 2004. At ENOC, Al Midfa was highly successful in marketing a relatively new and unknown brand then, which has now grown to compete with firms globally.

From 2000 to 2001, Al Midfa was the Head of International Department (Worldwide) at Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sharjah. At SCCI, Al Midfa played an important role in establishing the permanent Chinese products exhibition - CHINAMEX - and developing the Sharjah Ramadan Festival, now a pan-Arab event.

Before this, Al Midfa had short but productive stints at National Bank of Dubai as Branch Officer; Mohammed Bin Jasim Al Midfa Contracting & Trading Est. Sharjah as Business Development Manager and at Standard Chartered Bank, Sharjah and Dubai branches.

Al Midfa, has earned a Master's Degree in International Management – University of Phoenix, USA (2008); a Bachelor's Degree with Honours, International Business Administration, from University of Bournemouth, UK

(2000); and a Higher National Diploma Degree, Banking and Finance – Higher Colleges of Technology, Dubai (1999).

Al Midfa is currently doing a PHD Degree in Management – Swiss Management University, Switzerland.

Al Midfa has to his credit several Diplomas and Training Programmes from local, regional and international institutions.

“ We have official pavilions from Germany and Taiwan. Italy has a large participation. Taiwan, China and India also are major exhibiting countries. We have around 350 exhibitors showcasing over 1000 global manufacturers, a truly International show. ”

Can you give a brief about SteelFab Exhibition since its inception?

SteelFab was started in the year 2004 as an exhibition for the then nascent Steel fabrication industry in the UAE. Since then the show has completed 13 editions and grown into the recognised show in the Middle East region for the metal-working, metal manufacturing & steel fabrication industries.

How important is this event to the steel fabrication industry in the UAE and the GCC countries?

SteelFab is the most important show for the steel fabrication industry in the Middle East region. It is the strongest show in terms of size (number of exhibitors) as well as content, providing the complete requirements of Steel fabricators. SteelFab has greatly decreased the requirement of regional fabricators to travel to global shows, as the show provides anything they need at much closer proximity.

Can you give some details about the profile of exhibitors taking part

in the event?

The exhibitors at SteelFab can largely be divided into Surface preparation (Blasting & Painting), Grinding & Cutting (Abrasives), Sheet metal Machinery (Press Brakes, Shears, Punching, Rolling), Structural Sheet Metal Fabrication (Plate Rolling, Profile Bending, Beam Processing), Metal Cutting machines (Machining, Grinding, Boring, Lathe), CNC cutting Systems (Oxyfuel, Plasma, Laser, Waterjet), Material Handling & all related accessories.

Which are the major countries taking part in the exhibition?

We have official pavilions from Germany and Taiwan. Italy has a large participation. Taiwan, China and India also are major exhibiting countries. We have around 350 exhibitors showcasing over 1000 global manufacturers, a truly International show.

How big is the steel fabrication industry in the UAE and the neighbouring GULF countries in terms of turnover?

It is difficult to put an exact figure on the turnover of the steel fabrication industry. But you can assume it is very high as the basic material cost (steel) is globally high and any fabrication/value addition is a further incremental cost on the price of steel used. Given the high tonnage that goes into Steel fabrication it is a very big industry.

Sharjah Expo is becoming a major exhibition centre in the Middle East? Your comment on this important development?

Expo Centre Sharjah is the exhibition arm of the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce & Industry and is the oldest exhibition centre in the UAE. Our focus is on creating niche shows which can serve particular needs of the region. With this outlook, we have been successful in creating shows like Plastivision Arabia, International Education Show, National Career, Watch & Jewellery Middle East & SteelFab.