



Jotun Protects Property

# Kaleidoscope

JOTUN POWDER COATINGS MIDDLE EAST MAGAZINE

2018

issue

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## Country Special - Bahrain

# CUSTOMER FEATURE

## Catering to Aluminium Fabricators and Fabrication

### East Aluminium, Bahrain



**Ahmed Mahdi**, General Manager, East Aluminium, Bahrain.

#### Shifting Focus, Inspiring Growth

Established in 1982, the untiring effort and pioneering spirit of the Chairman Mr. Saeed Radhi, has seen East Aluminium forge ahead on a path of steady progress.

While they did start off as an Aluminum Fabrication company, they began to respond to other market demands in the 90s. These activities gathered steam and in 2003, East Aluminium discontinued production. Today, their business encompasses activities like trading, accessories, powder coating and all things aluminium barring production.

“Latest machinery imported from U.K. & Italy, a highly skilled work force in every single department and a quality-comes-first ethos – these are the cornerstones of East Aluminium”, says Mr. Ahmed Mahdi, General Manager, East Aluminium, Bahrain.

#### The Go-Local Strategy

Over the years, Bahrain’s real estate & construction industries have been growing at a steady pace. 2017 economic indicators exhibit Bahrain’s economy picking up pace for a second consecutive year.



The growth of the Bahraini market has made it evident to East Aluminium that the local market provides abundant opportunities for them. So much so, that they do not feel the need to look beyond. They rank numero uno as the distributor of aluminium profiles in Bahrain. No wonder then, that East Aluminium does not feel the need to export, even to GCC.

## Opportunities & Challenges Go Hand-In-Hand

The volatility of the aluminium prices always poses a rather large challenge. Fluctuations and unpredictability are the very nature of the trade with global situations contributing to it... To take an instance, Ahmed points to the recent trade stand-offs between USA and China. Besides the direct impact on prices, East Aluminium also sees a secondary impact – their customers often slow down on their orders. Often, once the new reality sinks in, it's business as usual once again. For East Aluminium this becomes an opportunity to engage with customers and build upon their existing long term relations.

Where opportunities present themselves, competition is inevitable. Appreciably, East Aluminium sees an opportunity in this challenge too, an opportunity to reinforce their reputation for high quality.

## The Mantra Of Long Term Relationships

East Aluminium is known in the market for their strong associations and alliances with vendors. Supplier loyalty is quite underrated according to Ahmed. He says East Aluminium has benefitted tremendously from maintaining their long lasting relationships. Not only is there a sense of loyalty in return, there is a high level of mutual comfort and certainty from knowing the high expectations of each other. "We get approached by new suppliers a lot, but it's not in our work culture to change suppliers without a significant reason. It is a relationship we invest in." says Ahmed.

## Bahrain's Finishing Market

East Aluminium is quite involved in powder coating and wood finishes. Special color requests, or decoral systems from the Italy plant are taken on. However, standard bulk quantity coatings are executed through suppliers as part of the contract.

Ahmed is clear that they must invest their time in specialty solutions, "We work only 8 hours shift a day, 6 days a week and its busy enough for this small factory. We take pride in the fact that ours is a small production but high-quality work."

East Aluminium introduced the decoral system, a luxury color that has to go through two processes, the base coating followed by film lamination. This proves to be an expensive option which not every client prescribes to. For those who prefer a lower price position, they do offer a powder on powder solution too. This has of course turned out to be a hit with clients and East Aluminium stocks large quantities to fulfill market demand.

## Future Plans

Coatings are an important component of East Aluminium's business. Feasibility studies are on to see whether shifts and capacity need to be increased in-house or it is better to increase the output through suppliers.

Aluminium stocks, on the other hand, are core to the business so East Aluminium are setting up a huge warehouse in Hamala, and shifting some factories to accommodate more stock. One other growth strategy includes stocking almost all standard colors and almost all profile sections. Ahmed sums it up very simply, "Availability of all products is our main goal. And when quality meets availability, that keeps the company's growth curve healthy."

**“** We work only 8 hours shift a day, 6 days a week and its busy enough for this small factory. We take pride in the fact that ours is a small production but high-quality work. **”**



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