

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In comparison to rest of the world it is fair to say that bakery industry in Qatar has significant room for improvement. Qatar's bakery segment is small and fragmented with too many small players who had not invested in sophisticated technology to provide quality and innovative products to local consumers. Arabic bread is the first choice staple food of Arabs and sliced bread and buns form part of the expatriates' staple food.

The brand Qbake launched in 2009 became the market leader by 2012 and is one of the sought after brands with 49% of the total market share in the bakery industry of Qatar as of 2018 (Company Data). It has 135 sales routes (Company Data) to distribute the products to all retail outlets and groceries covering the entire geographical area of Qatar. In 2017 Qbake spread its wings to Dubai by setting up a production and distribution facility in UAE and is carrying out a feasibility study to setup a bakery business in India.

The objective of the management case study was to understand the recipe behind Qbake's sustainable business growth. Authors conducted twelve in-depth interviews with key management personnel and three focus group discussions to collect Primary data. Secondary data was gathered by means of publications, scholar articles, web resources and company data. The case study is primarily narrated by highlighting the key events and milestones that has taken place from 2008 to 2017 put in the form of a timeline.

Initial round of data collection provided insights into General Manager's Strategic Leadership, ZAD's parenting, and Teamwork, Continuous Innovation combined with external forces such as Qatar's population growth, economic growth and Gulf blockade that have played crucial roles in Qbake's success. However, further analysis went on to establish that Leadership also had a key role to play in Team formation and Team Work has reached an advanced stage in Cross Functional Cooperation.

Key findings of the study involves the role and dimensions of strategic leadership in terms of special traits of GM's leadership such as reachability, democracy, robust decision making, visioning, and team building etc.

As for ZAD's parenting strategy the greatest contributions came in the form of selecting the right leader for Qbake, providing him with autonomy to run the business and equipping the group with required shared services.

The core team, its different building blocks and the team's long terms bond has played a critical role in the company's success. There appears to be a very positive team spirit and cross functional cooperation within the company which helps Qbake in various ways from fostering a team culture to continuous innovation through brainstorming etc.

Though the company is a producer of staple it has been smart enough to bring continuous innovation to the table in terms products, packaging and delivery etc. In the meantime, Qbake is cautious in its expansions with fit for the purpose in mind as they understand that they are playing within an economic bubble which can easily blast after 2022.

Recommendations from an internal process perspective include scenario planning to face the spontaneous increase in demand for FIFA for a period of one month and the aftermath of the world cup where Qatar can be expected to see a decline of people and economic activities for the first time in its recent history.

From a customer perspective it is recommended to obtain an independent market share report similar to 2015 so that it will give an up-to-date picture of the market standing. Further, given the possible dip in economic activities after the FIFA 2022 it would be advisable for Qbake to focus on expanding its product ranges through product development strategies covering a broader range of staples.

From a learning and growth perspective it is important that Qbake develop a second line in all business areas similar to a mirror core team covering Production, Sales, Inventory and Finance etc. Further, it is also important that the company develops an internal talent pipeline to manage succession planning in the better interest of motivating lower and middle level staff as well as retain talent and tacit knowledge within the company.

From a financial perspective the company can consider options on minimizing the percentage of sales returns to improve profitability. Similarly, the company can consider acquiring a number two or three player to improve its financial health and sustainability.

Qbake's success story has many managerial, social as well as industry learning for a reader. Focusing on the recommendation areas could ensure a balanced performance to Qbake in the years to come.