

OBMU Backs Oxford Business Report

Muscat - When it comes to economic development, everyone talks about flight connectivity, ports, broadband, hospitals, schools and the civil service. But no one talks about marketing, communications and PR, which is odd. "In my view," comments His Highness Sayyid Faisal Al Said, CEO, Oman Brand Management Unit (OBMU) at the recent launch of the Oxford Business Group's Oman Report 2009: "marketing, communications and PR are at the heart of what makes rich countries rich. Indeed, the launch of OBG's annual Oman Report will undoubtedly go a long way in helping us promote Oman and all that it has to offer."

Many in the public and private sector believe that developing and communicating a strong national brand identity can only help speed up Oman's development by attracting foreign investors and tourists. That, in turn, will build familiarity with, and loyalty to, Oman's unique products and services, helping local companies grow and create jobs and thereby increasing the sultanate's global influence.

But it's important to put Oman's branding efforts into historical context, suggests Sayyid Faisal, "it's something we've been doing, in many ways, since the 15th century when Ahmed ibn Majid – probably Oman's greatest navigator and first brand ambassador - helped Vasco da Gama sail from Africa to India."

Oman was the first Arab nation to establish diplomatic ties with the US, points out the OBMU CEO: "and by all accounts, the 1840 crew of the Sultanah took New York by storm. So as a nation, we've been out talking to people about who we are, what we stand for and what we offer the world for quite some time. Nation branding isn't a new idea for us."

Over the past 18 months the OBMU has run a series of discussions, workshops and brainstorming sessions with groups of people representing all parts of Omani society, business, the arts, sport and government. Specific discussions with leaders in tourism, higher education, ICT and those responsible for inward investment were also held.

In response to research and feedback, the OBMU's campaign is beginning with a variety of domestic initiatives ranging from a Brand Ambassador Program; a nationwide Brand-awareness Roadshow; a Youth Summit; quarterly networking evenings; Frontline Oman – created to promote both customer care in the public sector which we will begin with ROP at ports of entry to Oman; through to its work on Shanghai World Expo 2010. "It's through these important activities, and in partnership with others, that we will begin to build a coherent and dynamic national brand," smiles the OBMU CEO.

For further information on the Oman Brand Management Unit contact:

Taleb Al Makhmari
Oman Brand Management Unit
PO Box 25
Wadi Kabir, 117
Sultanate of Oman
Email: taleb@brandoman.om
Tel: (00968) 24 81 23 44
Fax: (00968) 24 81 08 90
Web: www.brandoman.om