

THE BIG INTERVIEW



Most HVAC&R work, such as that seen here on the Doha Festival City project in 2012, abides by ASHRAE's standards to ensure the highest level of quality is achieved.

Positive discussions between Sultan and his colleagues very quickly turned into decisive action with a steering committee set up to plan for the chapter's establishment, of which Sultan was the vice president. Eventually, in January 2008, the ASHRAE Oryx Chapter came into being and set about building its influence in Qatar's mechanical engineering community.

Not long after the chapter was up and running, Sultan was cajoled into becoming president by his ASHRAE brethren in 2010. "I did not look for it," he says, "and I did not decide to do it [on my own], but everyone was asking me and pushing me to do it."

Having accepted the position, one of Sultan's first acts in his new role was to bring the chapter into the twenty-first century with the creation of a website – one which has gone on to win an award from ASHRAE for the best regional site among 26 chapters. This proactive approach to digital media was furthered with the publication of a regular chapter newsletter, also aimed at keeping members engaged and involved in the chapter's development. Yet another initiative of Sultan's saw the maximisation of the chapter's activity up to and beyond ASHRAE's basic recommendations for each of its 186 branches.

Together these moves helped build the momentum which has seen the chapter thrive in

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recent years and become a genuine society of engineers. Orchestrated by the committee's which meets once every two weeks to plan events, the chapter now sees members meeting for technical seminars every month, as well as attending regular workshops.

Among its many achievements in its short existence, Sultan says the Oryx chapter has managed to host 15 distinguished lecturers from the region and the U.S. over the last two years – around 12 or 13 more than ASHRAE's recommended minimum amount for a branch. The chapter also represents around 30% of the entire region's contribution to ASHRAE's promotion, a statistic for which it has twice received the society's annual

186

Number of ASHRAE chapters worldwide

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ASHRAE was founded in 1894 at a meeting of engineers in New York City, holding its first annual get-together the following year and continuing this tradition ever since.

Until 1954 it was known as the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers (ASHVE), but that year changed its name to the American Society of Heating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHAE). It took on its current designation in 1959 following a merger with the American Society of Refrigeration Engineers (ASRE).

Apart from the publication of its internationally-recognised series of standards, ASHRAE's also publishes a four-volume resource for heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVAC&R). One of these four volumes is updated each year.

In 2006, ASHRAE adopted sustainability as the core theme for the organisation's Strategic Plan. As part of this, the institution decided to renovate its headquarters building to become LEED Platinum-rated in honour of these values.

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“Everybody saw that I was working with a team and that there was seven or eight active ASHRAE members working together, like a dynamo, for the same cause.”

award for work in this area. Furthermore, its innate social impulse has led it to look to wider Qatari society and establish relationships with such bodies as Qatar Foundation, KAH-RAHMAA, Qatar University, and Qatar Green Building Council – propelling it into the Qatari construction industry's circles of power and influence.

Such successes were almost certainly behind the sustained support Sultan received in his position as president from 2010 to 2012, given the usual length of an ASHRAE president's term is one year without re-election. He is, however, quick to highlight the contribution of others in the transformation of

the chapter from a small but eager platoon of mechanical engineers to a marching battalion which is one of the region's biggest ASHRAE success stories.

“I could not do everything by myself and I did not have to do everything by myself,” says Sultan. “It was done by a team. I had to



2010

Year Sultan became chapter president

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