

**Abdullah Al-Essa**  
**Healthy, Integrated, and Leading Foodstuff Industry Lofat.co**

Name	Abdullah Al-Essa
Date of birth	06/08/1980
Marital state:	Married and has 3 children
Major	Majored in industry engineering in Boston's University
Current occupation:	A founding partner in Foodna United.co and CEO in Lofat.co
Trade mark	Lofat

**When you look at Abdullah Al-Essa's experience, you will discover exactly three main points that you need to appreciate which distinguished his experience as an initiator. First, the year in which he founded the company was 2004, which we could say that it was an absolutely daring step. At that time, it was rare to hear about an initiator heading to seek the free business. In that time, the youth were attempting to seek significant jobs if you take the economic boom that the region was going through during that period into consideration, especially that it was heading towards the surge of the oil prices. Moreover, it was also a daring step for a young man who was only 24 years old. Second, he was able to make some achievements in the field that he chooses which healthy foodstuff. It was a leading idea, and it even started in the Western Societies; thus, his company achieved through this approach a leading of the role in the local market. In addition, there was no relation between his academic career and the field that he started his activities in. The third and last point to notice is his constant passion and his concentration to develop the framework in his company through his efforts to expand vertically and horizontally, until the healthy foodstuff field became an integrated industry for him. He made sure to increase the number of the restaurants specialized in this field and to provide his products in as many shops as he could; moreover, he entered the field of specialized healthy nutrition clinics. His products reached hospitals, gymnasiums, schools, and supermarkets.**

Abdullah Al-Essa Attributes his interest in heading towards free business to his desires for independence, which he sensed in himself since his

childhood. As he graduated from university, he went straight toward the private sector; however, he did not find him in a salary job, even though he did not spend more than two years in it. Then, he immediately decided to found a company called Fodna United.co in 2004 under which came Lofat.co for healthy light snacks, in a time when the term 'initiator' or 'healthy foodstuff' was not even a traditionally known. Al-Essa states concerning this, straying away from the horde and founding your own project is a challenge in itself. Plus, there was another factor which is the little experience and the insufficient knowledge of the phases of founding a company and specifying priorities, i.e., what to begin with? The product, the human element, the brand, or the financial cases. He states, "Among all of the other challenges, the scarcity of knowledge and absence of reference to refer when needed was the most difficult challenge, especially that there were not many people who were ahead of me in that field." This reality which Al-Essa had to face was an important factor in obtaining the needed skills handle any obstacle he faced: "Scratch your back yourself." He indicates that he handled the needed efforts for establishing by resorting to the people loyal to him. He entrusted these tasks for others while he handled the problem of developing the work frame to prepare to commence the operative activity.

When talking about this early experience, one must wonder how did he obtain the required funding to begin, and what parties did Abdullah Al-Essa resort to? You will realize that his decision in this was not any less daring than the way he handled the other phases of establishment; on the contrary, it reflected his complete belief and faith in success. He states, "I did not believe in resorting to funding parties. Thus, and in addition to the 4,000 KD I had, I asked some friends and received money from them in a scenario of selling shares in a company which has not been founded yet. As a result, a certain number of capital funds was collected, and that constituted the true commencement of the company."

Entering the field of healthy foodstuff teaches us an important lesson in this experience, especially that in that time this field was not as prospers as it is today; in addition, the academic background of the founder -a graduate from an engineering faculty- was completely unrelated to this sector. Al-Essa reminisce some of that phase, stating, "It was a chance in a field that we believed from the first place that it could provide a great chance for growth; thus, I had a conviction that it was the correct idea in the correct time." He continues, "In that period, I started noticing that asking about the health condition or about weight became attached to greetings among people, and the two terms 'fatter' and 'thinner' became mutual subject in

conversions. On the other hand, people who were looking for health snacks did find many choices before them.” These optimistic opinions were faced by discouraging opinions by specialists in the nutrition field. Nevertheless, Al-Essa decided to enter this experience, believing in the rule of: “Experience is the best teacher.”

### **Vertical and Horizontal Expansion**

These approaches manifested in reality by founding the first restaurant that serves healthy fast-food under the “Lofat” commercial trademark. And along with the high demand that exceeded all speculations, the journey to expand the number of restaurants began. After 3 years of founding the company, the number of restaurants was already 5. Soon, he started to think about expansion in the many choices that he had, for he could expand the number of restaurants or enter new businesses related to the healthy foodstuff field. In 2008, this expansion was indeed decided to head for clinics specialized in healthy food; thus, a new work frame was born under the Lofat trademark. Today, this sub-trademark of Fodna United.co includes 7 restaurants around Kuwait, distributed in many areas including Al-Shaab, Al-Salam, Abo-Halifa, Al-Jahar’a, and Al-Qureen’s Markets whereas the number of clinics has reached three clinics around Kuwait City in Al-Aqeela and Al-Jahar’a areas; in addition, Lofat’s products are present in about 49 markets spread in different areas in addition to the products in the gymnasiums also.

Despite all this success, his ambitions did not stop at this limit. He started since 4 years ago a research plan to enter the hospitals’ field. After steady study of the idea, the company signed a full-administration contract of Al-Moasa’at hospital’s kitchen. It is not limited to providing the hospital with patients’ food, but it extends to reach forming a workgroup and preparing the menu, etc...

### **Challenges are Intertwined with Free Business**

It is impressive that while reading Abdullah Al-Essa’s career, you can notice that he did not focus a lot on the idea of highlighting challenges he faced. If you ask him about the justifications of this, he would answer you with a realistic answer that could constitute a rule in every initiator’s life, “Entering the free business world is intertwined with the initiator facing challenges; therefore, the challenges for him are a natural result and a part of the initiator’s life that pushes him\her far further.” He continues, “When you enter the free business world, dealing with challenges becomes an obsession to the extent that if a long period passes without facing any

challenges, you would enter a state surprise, and you would go looking for a new challenge yourself.”