

**Mohammed Abdullah Al-Anjari**  
**Deer & Dear**

Name	<b>Mohammed Abdullah Al-Anjari</b>
Date of birth	12.10.1971
Education	BA in Civil Engineering from the Arab Academy in Alexandria, Egypt, 2001
Family	Married, with 4 daughters
Present position	Chairman, Mohammed Abdullah Al-Anjari General Trading & Contracting Co.
Brands	Deer & Dear, Fries Up, POPX LOOP, Porch Café, SMITHY'S England

**The importance of entrepreneur Mohammed Abdullah Al-Anjari's experience lies in the fact that he was one of the first entrepreneurs and small and medium projects owners who have succeeded in launching their own brands, a step that was vital element in the success story behind the Deer & Dear retail project in the ready-made clothes sector. From its inception in 2009 the brand concept promptly developed into a prestigious Kuwaiti trade mark. This success is underscored by the fact that Mohammed Al-Anjari, the owner and founder of Deer & Dear is preparing to embark on a fresh revolutionary step of embarking on an ambitious regional expansion plan which is expected to start in Saudi Arabia by the end of 2016.**

**Indeed, new and young entrepreneurs who wish to launch new and medium size projects will find valuable lesson and down-to-earth examples to learn from Mohammed Al-Anjari's experience which was not without challenges and difficulties that Mohammed overcame first with a firm resolve and determination, then through undaunted perseverance and the making of conscious efforts to gain customer trust and loyalty that formed the cornerstone of his success story. How did the story of Deer and Dear start? And what lessons and examples can be learned from the experience of this successful enterprise?**

When he was a student, Mohammed Abdullah Al-Anjari had business tendencies, but those remained within a narrow limit. In those days, he tried his hand at trading in a few items of goods. Mohammed describes his activities during that phase as "adventures of youth". He then had another experience that lasted not more than a year. During that phase he acquired new business skills through his work which focused on the installation of TV reception dishes and equipment. His focus during that phase was on his education. After graduation, his first job was at the Experts Department of the Ministry of Justice. This lasted

for nine years and was followed by work at the Environment Public Authority where he worked for a similar period. He then took a decision to start an all-new phase of his life and work. He resigned his position and started his own business. About this career shift Mohammed says: “ In 2008, in cooperation with an associate from Hong Kong, I established a small factory located in a province located between Hong Kong and China. The plant produced everything that major European and US fashion brands needed. Soon after the plant started production, the global financial crisis broke out and was followed by a deep economic melt-down, and the plant ended up with large inventories of unsold products. By that time, customers had not paid more than 30% of the total cost, at best, of the value of the ordered, and now produced, goods according to trade custom. Business costs, including rents, wages and payables to our suppliers built up, and we had to suffer heavy losses”.

That was Al-Anjari's second unfortunate business venture, although the first venture was less painful and costly.

### **The Deer and Dear Story**

The good thing was that adversities increased Al-Anjari's determination to keep going and strive to achieve his coveted success in business. The idea for the next business venture was born, of all places, in the fairy-tale lands of Austria. This time, it was about launching his own new brand. Mohammed spoke about it to his wife, who had her own experience with business, for she used to buy goods from abroad and sell them in Kuwait. At that time, it was a wild idea, not without tremendous difficulties, to launch your own local brand if you do not have the product for that brand in the first place. Faced with this truth, the couple discussed what ought to be done, what the nature of the product should be, what the logo should look like, and many other points of relevance to the idea. The inspiration came from the charming land of Austria where they were vacationing. It so happened that they saw a deer herd grazing nearby. Sitting, enjoying the scenery and watching the herd, Mohammed got the idea: those charming deer will represent his new trade mark ... and so it came to be. Now what about the name of the brand? Looking at the grazing herd, so beautiful, so close “dear” to the heart, according to Mohammed ... He decided upon the name “Deer & Dear”. With this “dear” brand name he created, Mohammed felt a deep motivation, a strong urge, to carry it one, ultimate, step forward. He commissioned a professional artist to design the brand that would reflect his ideas and plans for it. Once this was ready, he promptly had the trade mark registered. Three to four months later “Deer & Dear” was a registered trade mark in the USA. Asked about the importance and meaning of the brand for entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium projects, Al-Anjari said: “Everything! But most importantly, the moral value and inspiration which are the driving force behind any project regardless of its nature or size. Equally important, I would say that your brand is your identity.

There are millions of people around, but there is only one “you”. It’s the way your trade mark says that you are unique”.

### **How it Turned into a Project**

Inevitably, specific steps had to be taken in order to launch the product under the newly created trade mark. With this in mind, Al-Anjari went back to the province where his old factory was located. He renewed contacts with the producers and agreed with them on the details of his production lines for the goods he intended to produce. This involved form, quality and other elements. Shortly afterward, the first shipment of goods arrived in Kuwait. “At that time”, he recollects, “I had no warehouse or a separate place to prepare the products. I decided to use our home basement for the purpose.” A moment of deep remembrance later, he adds “We had to think of ways to find suitable outlets for selling the goods”. He decided upon using SMS mobile phone messages. He was surprised, pleasantly of course, at the substantial response and interest the messages created. In no time, the area around his house became a traffic congestion spot, thanks to the interest those messages brought about. This also created an embarrassing situation with the neighbors, of course.

At this stage, too, Al-Anjari confronted a problem that continues to challenge and frustrate many entrepreneurs, namely: how to provide sales outlets for their products? And how to have their own business space? He tried, in vain, to find a solution by renting shops in a number of commercial shopping compounds. Yet, as things so often do, it was by chance, during his participation in a specialized exhibition, that he spoke of the hardship and challenges that confronted young entrepreneurs, to His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah, then the prime minister, who apparently took note of those hardships and expressed the wish to do something about them. Al-Anjari added: “Later in the evening of that day, I received a phone call from an associate of Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed, who told me to expect a call from the administration of The Avenues shopping mall.” Shortly afterward, in April 2010, Al-Anjari signed the first lease contract of a shop at the Avenues. The shop was opened in August of the same year. This encouraged other shopping malls to facilitate the signing of similar leases. When Phase 3 of The Avenues opened, the mall administration offered Al-Anjari additional space to rent, and he got four additional shops.

While those developments rolled on, Dear & Dear became a real success story, and its brilliant success opened new, wider horizons to the brand owner, particularly in terms of expansion, for the brand now had four retail branches. More importantly, the brand owner now had an even stronger faith in the concept of small and medium projects. This belief has been growing in both the public

and government sectors, although the concept still has a number of hurdles to contend with.

### **Diversifying Risks**

During that phase, Al-Anjari's project attained an obvious level of stability, based on sound operating rules. A shrewd businessman, Al-Anjari started thinking of ways to diversify his investments, thereby diversifying risks. At a stage of critical importance in the progress of any entrepreneur or owner of a small or medium-sized project, Al-Anjari considered venturing into the restaurants sector. This time, he obtained several foreign commercial agencies for several hospitality brands, including Fries Up, POPX LOOP, Porch Café. The retail trade mark, SMITHY'S England will join the Deer & Dear trade mark which belongs to the same sector.

### **The First Step: Home Business**

As we talk about Mohammed Al-Anjari's experience, in its various stages, we have to allude to a remarkable stage of his progress which started in 1996. Its importance stems from the fact that it reflects his inclination toward having his own business. He achieved success in that early experience although it did not last long, for it so happened that Mohammed undertook to install a TV reception dish and device for a friend. Having done a good job, he was profusely thanked and encouraged on a job well done. This gave him the enthusiasm, that magical ingredient of success in everything. Soon thereafter, he contacted a friend and proposed the establishment of a project in the "home business" style. Steps were taken by both of them through the publishing of advertisements in a specialized newspaper. The response was overwhelmingly positive. At that time, TV reception dishes and equipment were selling like hot cakes. In fact, demand was high that delivery of the purchased product would, in many cases, take place three to four weeks later, and in a few cases even three months later. The project achieved considerable success and activities grew both horizontally and vertically. The customer base grew and new segments of customers were attracted. The project started to receive orders from residential compounds, not merely individual customers. This experience, despite its remarkable success, could not continue for several reasons, foremost among which was that Al-Anjari himself had to travel to Egypt to continue his education. He had to leave the business to be managed by these technicians. As a result of poor management and tougher competition, the project incurred huge financial burdens and tremendous losses which had to be borne by Al-Anjari, being the owner of the business. He had to discharge the obligations to suppliers, as well. Although this experience was unsuccessful, it gave Al-Anjari a valuable lesson, and strengthened his belief that business enterprises have every chance to succeed if they had the right elements of success and a strong foundation.