

Habib Bank AG Zurich: A Bank that treats its clients like family

Habib Bank AG Zurich is an early adopter of digital technology and SME solutions

At a time when banks regionally, and in fact globally, are looking to cut exposure to small and medium sized businesses, Habib Bank AG Zurich is committed to support local businesses as it has been doing for more than four decades here in the UAE.

It works as a boutique SME institution, operating more like a personal banker to many of its SME/Commercial clients who have been with it for decades. It is a sign of trust in a name that is being run by the third generation of Habib family.

Most family-owned or family-run businesses struggle to engage the second generation into the fold and very few keep it running into the third generation. Habib Bank AG Zurich has not just managed to engage its third generation into banking business, but is also thriving with it and bringing changes that will connect with millennials and generation Z as well as the previous ones.

“It is a privilege to have family-owned busi-

nesses trust us with their business for so long. We have kept pace with the changes, which has helped us stay relevant to our customers’ businesses. Right now there is process reengineering happening at our end to enhance the experience of the customer,” said Jamal Alvi, Chief Executive Officer, Habib Bank AG Zurich, which is the only Swiss Bank with an on-shore licence dedicated to serving SME/commercial clients.

What makes the Bank connect with customers is its holistic approach to their businesses.

“We don’t just operate as a bank that is there to provide lines of credit, we offer support and services that allow ventures to thrive. Our branches have evolved as standalone business units. If our client needs commercial vehicle loan, we help them; if they want a Trade loan, we assist. It’s a one-stop shop. Besides, we also help businesses with effective cash management and guide them on how to maintain an independent finance function within the company, that has allowed us to build trust,” adds Alvi.

Looking at the last few years, SMEs have seen a series of challenges one after the other. It has been a rough ride since 2015. But the businesses that have been able to withstand all challenges

have one feature in common: their ability to stay true to their core competencies.

“SMEs that have stayed to their ‘core’ business models and did not cultivate side ‘hobbies’ have been able to set deeper roots to withstand crises. SMEs that diversified into unrelated areas are the ones that went under,” noted Alvi.

And now with COVID 19 disrupting life and businesses globally, the Bank is standing with its clients offering support through EMI/repayment deferrals options. The HBZ Group is also planning a CSR initiative across the countries that it operates in. This will help the communities and businesses rebuild as the countries open up and economic activity resumes.

On the technology front, Habib Bank AG Zurich was among the early adopters. It launched web/online banking for SMEs in 2000 well before many other institutions. “We too are working continuously to modify and improve our client’s digital experience – but there is a lot more still to be done. While digitization has its benefits we are over cautious when it comes to IT security and anything new we offer comes with more than adequate protection for the safety of clients and the Bank alike,” says the CEO.



Jamal Alvi
Chief Executive Officer
Habib Bank AG Zurich

But more than these services and financing, what a number of SMEs really need is the right advice and Habib Bank AG Zurich has been providing them with just that. It has not only helped clients make more informed decisions, but also thrive in their businesses. The Bank has earned the trust of thousands of its clients, and with this approach to small and medium businesses that is a built on the foundation of relationship, it would surely continue to serve many more in years to come.











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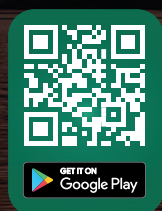
With banking tradition that spans several generations, **Habib Bank AG Zurich (HBZ)** is the only Swiss incorporated commercial bank in the UAE.

HBZ offers a personalized customer experience and complete range of Conventional and Islamic banking products to support SMEs and Commercial businesses.

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-  UAE
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