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RESOURCE

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In the **THICK** of the **ACTION**

Like many young graduates, Nan Yusri Nan Rahimy was attracted to the excitement that the oil and gas industry offered. Two recessions later and having weathered record highs and lows in oil prices, he remains enthusiastic about the industry and the company whose growth mirrors his own.

BY SREEREMA BANOO



No one can accuse 42-year-old Nan Yusri Nan Rahimy of lacking drive, but even he reckons that being the head of a growing oilfield services company listed on Bursa Malaysia has surpassed his ambitions. The Group Managing Director of Deleum Bhd says that though his goal was to head a respectably-sized company before his 40th birthday, his current appointment is icing on the cake after a nearly 20-year career in the oil and gas industry.

"It never crossed my mind that I would be in this position at such an early part of my career and, undoubtedly, the challenges have also exceeded my expectations," he quips. Nan Yusri, however, is not one to shy away from challenges. Strategising, planning and coming up with a game plan to address challenges and propel the company forward are what keep him going. "I am someone who likes being in the thick of the action...building the company together with a dynamic team is what I thrive on."

Over the years, Nan Yusri has experienced the many highs and lows of the industry. In 1996 when he joined Deleum, the industry was still growing and though the national oil corporation, PETRONAS, was still very much focused on the domestic market. During the Asian financial crisis in 1997, he witnessed the impact of the recession on the industry. "Oil prices dipped to below US\$10 a barrel and many left the industry, and when it started to gain momentum again in 2002-2003, we saw a new batch of young personnel entering the industry." Likewise, the years running up to the 2008 global financial crisis also saw many industry players join the oil and gas sector in the Middle East. "I was one of the few (who joined the industry in the 1990s) and stuck with it."

More than just stick with the industry, Nan Yusri was right in the thick of action as the growth sector blossomed, as did the group that nurtured him. As Deleum grew from strength to strength, so did Nan Yusri as he made his way steadily up the corporate ladder.

His success story

Born in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Nan Yusri spent most of his growing years in Ipoh, completing his secondary school studies at the renowned St Michael's Institution. He then secured a scholarship to take the South Australian Matriculation programme and later pursued his undergraduate degree in Australia. He holds a Bachelor of Engineering Degree (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering from the RMIT University (formerly known as Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) and is also a member of the Society of Petroleum Engineers.

Upon his return to Malaysia, Nan Yusri worked for a short spell at a manufacturing company but it wasn't the right fit. "I knew it was not what I was looking for," he says. Shortly thereafter, he was offered a position at Delcom Services Sdn Bhd (now Deleum Services Sdn Bhd or DSSB). That was in 1996, and Nan Yusri was part of a small and young team. He recalls that he was one of the very few engineers hired by the company. "There were only probably less than 100 of us then and the company was involved in a lot of trading-related business," he says.

As a young engineer, he was excited at the prospects the industry offered. "I had been looking for an opportunity to join the industry. Even before I went to university, my aim was to work in oil and gas. The fast pace, the technology involved and the fact that it was an industry that was looking at new ways of doing things – these were aspects that appealed to me," he tells.

Deleum, at that juncture, was a group that was just starting to diversify its business and Nan Yusri found a home where he could sow the seeds of his ambition. He started his career as a marketing executive supporting the turbo-machinery business and was later re-designated as application engineer in November 1996. In 2001, he was given the opportunity to lead the group's vehicle speed monitoring automotive project. In the same year, he was also made vice president of business development.

His rise up the corporate ladder continued when in 2003, he was appointed Vice President of exploration and production (E&P) at DSSB where his responsibilities included the sales and marketing of the E&P division and growing the group's E&P business.

In 2008, Nan Yusri was appointed as the Chief Operating Officer of the Oilfield Division. His responsibilities included managing and supervising all sales, marketing and operational activities of the division and the daily optimisation of its various operations. In addition, the role also entailed planning activities and setting operational goals for the outfit.

In August 2009, he was promoted to CEO of Deleum Oilfield Services Sdn Bhd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Deleum Bhd. A year later, he was promoted to CEO of DSSB before being appointed to his current position as Group Managing Director on 1 March 2011.

Over the years, Nan Yusri has seen first-hand the growth and successes of the group whose three core businesses include Power and Machinery, Oilfield Services, and Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO). The first milestone was in 1997

when the group secured an industrial power generation (cogeneration) project with Malaysian Mosaic. “It was the first time we came out of the trading related business and provided a turnkey solution for the customer,” he says. This success led to other projects such as the district cooling project for the Kuala Lumpur City Centre and Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS.

Other notable successes include the group’s involvement in the country’s first deepwater project. Together with Single Buoy Moorings Inc, it fabricated the first Fluid Transfer Line (FTL) system in the world in Bintulu Sarawak, installing it successfully for the Kikeh Deepwater Field Development Project. (FTL is used for the near surface transfer of hydrocarbon fluids suspended between two floaters).

Rebranding and the way forward

Since these milestones, Deleum has grown from strength to strength. In conjunction with its 30th anniversary in 2012, Nan Yusri led the group in a corporate rebranding exercise which saw several subsidiaries that were formerly operating under the ‘Delcom’ name being renamed ‘Deleum’. Explaining the rationale of this move, Nan Yusri says that since he took over the helm in 2011, he was concerned about the absence of a single corporate identity.

“We were not being seen as one entity...when we talked to our offshore personnel and operators, they didn’t know the Deleum name. So I went to the Board and told them that we needed to have a single brand name.”

Part of the rebranding exercise also involved brainstorming sessions with the management team to come up with a new corporate direction. Going forward, Nan Yusri and his team are very much governed by this corporate statement.



“We say we want to be a market leader in our operating segment domestically and to establish regional presence by 2015. We conducted surveys on areas we want to be in, including specific areas where we are ready to export our technology and know-how, for example in MRO, slickline services, integrated wellhead maintenance and specialised chemicals. Locally we are already active players in these areas.”

While he’s confident of the group’s prospects – it already has an order book of RM1.2 billion and is bidding for another RM1.7 billion worth of contracts – Nan Yusri is ever cognisant of the challenges facing the industry, in particular the manpower crunch.





PIONEERS

In a bid to address this problem, Deleum has set up a training facility in Labuan. Completed in January at a cost of approximately RM2 million, the facility will, among others, offer training for slickline and well personnel. "We are also lucky that we have a team that's dedicated, loyal and energetic, and as a relatively young team we have more risk takers....calculated risks that is," he says.

To maintain its edge, Deleum is also working on getting the appropriate recognition and certification to boost its chances of winning contracts. In January 2012, it obtained its OPITO-Competence Management System Certification (OPITO-CMS), the first wireline company in Asia to receive the recognition.

Having put in place Deleum's game plan for the future, what then is in store for Nan Yusri?

"I always had the ambition of retiring at 45, and then only working for pleasure," he says, adding that putting this plan in action means ensuring financial independence for himself and his family. "I want to see my three children go to college, as well as be able to afford to travel and enjoy life.... and hopefully play golf more often."

