



U.S.-Saudi Arabia Business Outlook Survey



U.S. Saudi Arabia Business Outlook Survey

Welcome

This first edition of the *U.S. Saudi Arabia Business Outlook Survey* is meant to be an indicator of the sentiment of U.S. businesses regarding the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's business climate. Our intention is to inform both U.S. and Saudi business leaders, as well as thought leaders and decision makers from government, non-governmental organizations and academia; we hope you will utilize this report to understand both the opportunities and the challenges facing American businesses in Saudi Arabia's growing and transforming market.

The *U.S. Saudi Arabia Business Outlook Survey* is a product of collaboration by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Business Group of Riyadh (ABGR), the American Business Group of Jeddah (ABJ), the American Business Association- Eastern Province, and EY (Ernst & Young). Select business leaders were interviewed and the overall report was informed by a survey of senior business executives of U.S. companies doing business in Saudi Arabia. Participants represent businesses of all sizes across a variety of sectors, including but not limited to finance, healthcare, energy, and defense.

The inaugural edition of the *U.S. Saudi Arabia Business Outlook Survey* is being released in conjunction with the second annual U.S.-Saudi Arabia CEO Summit. We believe U.S. companies should play a key role in helping Saudi Arabia achieve its ambitious goals as laid out in the Vision 2030 plan, and that taking advantage of its diversifying economy and growing market will help the Kingdom meet its own goals as well. We welcome your feedback on the *U.S. Saudi Arabia Business Outlook Survey* and encourage you to send comments and suggestions to Steve Lutes, Executive Director of Middle East Affairs, at slutes@uschamber.com.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Khush Choksy". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Khush Choksy
Senior Vice President, Middle East and Turkey Affairs
U.S. Chamber of Commerce



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Snapshot: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Economy

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a vibrant and thriving economy, which is the largest in the Gulf region and the 20th largest in the world. According to a World Bank estimate, Saudi Arabia has approximately 31.4 million people with an estimated GDP per capita of \$20,812. The total GDP was \$646.002 billion in 2015, with a growth rate of 3.5%.

Saudi Arabia is committed to enhancing its business climate to make it more attractive to foreign investment. Currently, it is ranked 29th out of 138 countries worldwide in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index, the most comprehensive assessment of national competitiveness worldwide. In addition, the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation's 2017 "Ease of Doing Business" report ranked Saudi Arabia 94th out of 190 countries; the Kingdom rose two spots from the 2016 report. A 2015 law lowered some barriers to starting a new business. Other recent reforms include removing a barrier to full foreign ownership of certain types of businesses; introducing a computerized system to make property transfers faster; and increasing corporate transparency requirements and strengthening control and ownership structures of companies to protect minority investors.

The Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) was created in 2000 to help attract inward investment to Saudi Arabia. This central investment authority works to regulate foreign investment in the country and foster opportunities, working with companies from the planning stage and continuing after they have been established in the Kingdom. In many respects, SAGIA works as an advocate of the private sector as it engages ministries and offices across the Saudi government. The U.S. Chamber has worked closely with SAGIA and has witnessed this vital authority in action promoting positive change and reform on numerous occasions.

Given its significant youth population with 49% of its citizens being under the age of 24, Saudi Arabia boasts a growing urban and sophisticated consumer market. Saudis are also increasingly interconnected with the number of wireless connections growing 53%, from 28.4 million to 53.0 million, between 2007 and 2012. Today, each Saudi resident has 1.9 wireless connections. With its more than 2.4 million Twitter users, the



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Kingdom also accounts for more than 40% of active users in the Arab region and also boasts the highest per capita use of YouTube in the world.

Saudi Arabia's "Vision 2030" Plan

In April 2016, the Deputy Crown Prince and Chairman of the Council of Economic and Development Affairs, His Royal Highness Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, unveiled "Saudi Arabia's Vision for 2030." This plan provides a detailed blueprint for building upon the country's strong economic foundation by diversifying its economy across a broad range of sectors, boosting private sector participation, and improving overall economic competitiveness. This highly ambitious reform agenda not only sets forth a roadmap for the country's economic growth, but also offers a framework for all future decisions to ensure that future projects are aligned with the Vision.

Through Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia looks to create a "vibrant society" whose foundation is the family unit. Members of this society take pride in their Muslim values, cultural heritage, and national identity. The pillars of this Vision are in line with these values. By achieving the goals of this plan, the country will ensure that citizens have the opportunity to achieve their goals and dreams as well.

Every aspect of this plan will have an impact on business and the economy. From supporting families by improving healthcare and facilitating homeownership through new regulations and better access to funding, to supporting SMEs and increasing their contribution to GDP, to improving government transparency and digitizing services, each goal within Vision 2030 will directly impact and improve the lives of the Saudi people.

By outlining a plan that draws on Saudi Arabia's existing strengths and capabilities while staying true to its national and cultural identity, Vision 2030 provides a framework through which the Kingdom can grow and achieve its goal of becoming a global leader. The U.S. private sector is encouraged by the economic reforms proposed in Vision 2030 and looks forward to taking advantage of the various commercial and investment opportunities that it offers, while partnering with the Kingdom to fulfill its goals.



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Pillars of Vision 2030

There are three main pillars that guide the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 plan:

- 1) The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is at the heart of the Arab and Islamic Worlds as it is the Land of the Two Holy Mosques and the direction of Kaaba.
- 2) The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a goal of becoming a global investment powerhouse.
- 3) The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia intends to use its unique strategic location as it is situated between three continents (Asia, Europe, and Africa) to transform the country into a global commerce hub.

The theme of the first pillar is to support a vibrant society. The Kingdom will continue to be guided by the principles of Islam and is currently improving its infrastructure and capacity in order to welcome more pilgrims. It is also focusing on developing cultural and entertainment spaces for visitors and citizens, reshaping the educational system, and corporatizing the healthcare sector to improve quality and services.

The theme of the second pillar is to create a thriving economy. The Kingdom will increase trade and investment with other countries. This will be done in part by privatizing some government assets to increase Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund and make it the largest in the world. Additionally, education and training will focus on meeting the need of the market and support will be given to SMEs to boost their contribution to GDP. The plan envisions that support for business overall will be improved as well, including review and reform of regulations to improve the business environment, allowing financial institutions to adapt their services to each sector, and facilitating licensing procedures.

The theme of the third pillar is to enable an ambitious nation. The Kingdom will improve government transparency, reorganize government agencies, and increase government efficiency in order to allow the country to follow through on its goals. Customs regulations will be simplified and the movement of people and goods enhanced in order to attract both local and foreign investors.



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Overview of the U.S.-Saudi Arabia Economic Relationship

The United States and Saudi Arabia enjoy a strong and robust bilateral economic relationship today. Saudi Arabia is one of the United States' largest trading partners in the Middle East region. In 2016, U.S. goods exports to Saudi Arabia were \$18.0 billion and U.S. imports from Saudi Arabia were \$16.9 billion. Both nations also benefit from a Trade Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), signed in 2003.

American companies have a long and productive history of operating in Saudi Arabia and contributing to its economy and development. They represent a broad range of sectors from finance and defense to healthcare and energy. Vision 2030 and its reforms present exciting opportunities for the American business community to build upon and expand their presence in the country. Utilizing their experiences of operating in many countries around the world, American businesses can share best practices, enable knowledge transfer, and provide skills training to reach mutually beneficial goals.

It is also important to note that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has made significant investments in the United States. Investments in American companies have included Uber, Lyft, Apple, eBay, Twitter, Motorola, Citigroup, News Corporation, and Time Warner. In 2015, Saudi Arabia invested a total of \$11.5 billion in the United States; U.S. affiliates of Saudi-owned firms employed 10,400 U.S. workers in 2014. Additionally, several U.S. companies have been closely involved in the government's plans for the planned initial public offering (IPO) of Saudi Aramco, the country's national petroleum and national gas company, which is projected to be the world's largest IPO.

The U.S. Chamber and our member companies and partner organizations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia look forward to working with both governments to deepen and diversify our mutually beneficial economic relationship. We share common goals for our nations and our peoples; by working together to reach these goals we can create jobs, grow our economies, and help our citizens realize new opportunities and enter a new era of shared prosperity.



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Demographics of American Businesses in Saudi Arabia

A diverse range of both American- and Saudi-owned companies responded to our survey, with respondents from agribusiness/food; automotive/consumer products; defense/security; energy/utilities; financial services; healthcare; and various other subsectors. 45% of the respondents are American-owned companies, while 44% of responding Saudi-owned firms have a U.S. partner.

Out of the 109 companies surveyed, 30% of the companies fall between the defense/security (16%), and the energy/utilities (14%) sectors. At the lower end, consumer products (1%) and transportation/logistics (1%) make up 2% of the total companies surveyed. 34% of respondents have more than 500 employees, while 32% work in companies with a workforce ranging between 51-250 people. The high representation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) demonstrates the important role that this sector plays in the Saudi Arabian business culture, with 34% of the respondents surveyed employing 1-50 personnel. From a geographical perspective, most companies operate in two or more regions in Saudi Arabia, with a presence in the capital Riyadh totaling 60% of the total respondent companies.

Companies of various sizes were represented in this survey. In terms of overall revenue in 2015, the largest percentage of respondents (43%) placed their firms within the U.S. \$10-500 million bracket. 5% of the companies generated between U.S. \$500 million – 1 billion, and 14% generated in excess of US \$1 billion. On the other end of the spectrum, 12% of the firms generated less than U.S. \$500,000 during the year, again revealing a strong SME presence.

70% of the survey respondents believe the Saudi market is important to their company's worldwide revenues. Two-thirds believe it will become more important to their global profits over the next two years.



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Importance of the Saudi Arabian Market

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to play a significant role for many U.S. companies in their international growth strategy. 70% of the survey respondents categorized that the Saudi market as “**important**” to their company’s worldwide revenues over the past two years. Two-thirds of the respondents expressed confidence and assurance in the future of the Saudi market, believing that over the next two years the Saudi Arabian market will become “**more important**” to their global profits. These results underscore that many U.S. companies shared similar feelings and experiences regarding Saudi Arabia’s sustained importance to their earnings.

64% of companies plan to extend their operations in Saudi Arabia.

It is clear that respondents continue to remain positive about the Saudi market’s increasing significance to their companies’ future plans. 44% of respondents attributed a change in business strategy to this outlook, while other reasons were Saudi Arabia’s economic recovery (40%), limited growth opportunities in other regions (38%), and an improvement in infrastructure (18%).

Just over half (55%) of the respondents expressed the view that over the past two years, an overall increase in the level of trade and investment was evident in Saudi Arabia. In addition, more than two-thirds (68%) of the respondents see an upward shift in their level of trade and investment to Saudi Arabia over the coming five years. While 22% of the respondents plan on keeping their level of trade and investment over the next five years steady, a small percentage indicated they anticipate decreasing trade volume.

The major reason respondents cited for their increased trade and investment with Saudi Arabia was the expectation for new “growth opportunities.” Other top factors include the “diversification of customer base” throughout the Kingdom (mentioned by 36%) and “stable government and political system” (20%), which will all contribute to future trade and investment plans. Clearly these responses are indicative of the

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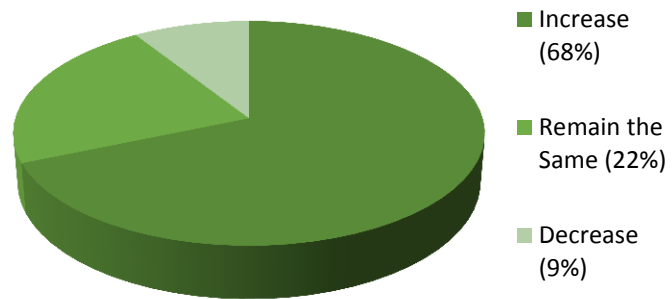
positive sentiment U.S. companies share regarding the future of Saudi Arabia, and reflect well on the nation’s leadership plans to expand and diversify the economy.

Expansion in Saudi Arabia

U.S. companies are eager to take advantage of the business opportunities available in Saudi Arabia. In terms of future profit outlook, a majority (52%) of respondents forecast that their profits will “marginally increase.” Moreover, 14% of respondents were even more optimistic and expect profits to “significantly increase.”

Roughly 64% of the companies operating in Saudi Arabia plan to extend their operations over the coming years, while 31% plan to remain the same. 60% of the respondents indicated “growth opportunities” in Saudi Arabia as being the driving force behind why the companies plan to expand in the future. When asked about whether their company would be restricting operations, two-thirds of respondents expressed strong confidence that they “will not scale back.” Not surprising, the forecast for the labor pool was consistent with the expansion as 85% expect their labor force in Saudi Arabia will increase or remain the same, while the remaining 15% believe their number of employees will decrease.

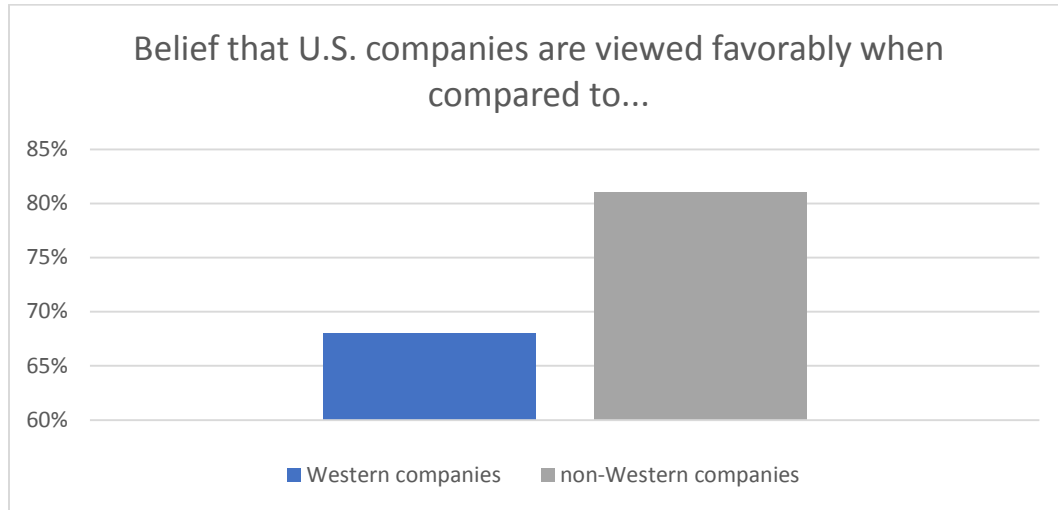
Level of Trade/Investment in the Next 5 Years



Perception of U.S. Companies

The overall perception of U.S. companies operating in Saudi Arabia is a positive one. Most notably, 81% of respondents said U.S. companies are viewed more favorably than non-Western companies. Additionally, based on their experiences, 64% believe they are viewed favorably compared to local companies and 68% indicated they are viewed favorably in comparison to other Western companies in the Kingdom.

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Financing

Financing constraints are not a “significant” issue for nearly three out of four (74%) U.S. companies in Saudi Arabia polled by this survey. The 26% who report facing some kind of constraints gave reasons such as difficulty accessing long-term financing, difficulty for SMEs to get financing, and low oil prices affecting the financial environment. The reforms of Vision 2030 may resolve some of these issues in the coming years.

Government-to-Business Consultation

One area the survey identified for potential room for improvement that would be mutually beneficial is consultation between the Government of Saudi Arabia and the private sector. A total 45% of respondents stated that the Government “sometimes” (30%) or “often” (15%) considered input from the private sector. U.S. companies are eager to establish a consistent dialogue and engage key stakeholders in the Saudi Government to ensure that their input is considered in the process of crafting laws and regulations that will impact their businesses. Improvement in this area will help create a better business climate and will be advantageous to attracting more foreign investment.

The U.S. Chamber and our partners stand ready to create a platform to enable consistent, substantive dialogue between the private sector and Saudi officials in key



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ministries and regulatory agencies. In such a dialogue, American companies operating across the world can bring to the table and share their experiences and best practices with Saudi Arabia. As Saudi decision-makers and regulators in government draw upon this global private sector expertise and information, they will build capacity and knowledge that better positions the Kingdom in the region and internationally.

When searching for governance and compliance information with respect to doing business or starting a company in Saudi Arabia, 52% of respondents do not have trouble finding reliable, useful commercial and legal information. While a plurality finds this information accessible, there remains an opportunity for the Kingdom to enhance the availability of information while also more widely disseminating information critical for those business people considering the market for the first time.

Potential of Economy

U.S. companies are and will remain committed to working in Saudi Arabia. 20% of respondents explicitly believe the brightest part of Saudi Arabia's future can be achieved by realizing the ambitious long-term goals of Vision 2030, which will draw upon and develop other strengths and capabilities of the country. Many other respondents named individual elements of the plan, such as growth of the private sector and diversifying the economy, as bright spots for the future, signaling their alignment with the principles of Vision 2030.

When asked which sectors of the economy have the greatest growth potential in Saudi Arabia, answers were equally distributed between a number of sectors such as finance, construction, information and communication technology, retail, tourism, health, and others.

Interestingly, more than half of the respondents (58%) believe that healthcare was the most appealing sector for potential growth. Oil/gas (36%) and manufacturing (34%) were also sectors where companies saw strong growth opportunities. The responses indicate that there is robust optimism about the potential for growth across the Saudi economy.



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Taxation

Respondents were asked about the effect of U.S. tax laws on their businesses in Saudi Arabia. A large percentage (50%) believe that the IRS taxation of income earned abroad by U.S. citizens has a “negative” or “significant negative effect” on the recruitment of Americans. 40% of respondents report that the IRS taxation seems to have no tangible effect on recruiting Americans to work in Saudi Arabia. This leaves only 10% who see a positive effect of taxation. In addition, there are not many expat workers who are eligible for the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion, as 64% of respondents stated only 1-10 of their expat employees fall into this category.

Other tax-related issues such as FATCA (Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act) generated varied responses regarding companies’ ability to conduct business. Responses were divided almost equally, with 32% believing it affects their operations, 33% believing it does not, and 35% who were “not sure” of its impact on their ability to conduct business.

Quality of Life

There is a general sense of satisfaction among U.S. companies with regard to the quality of life standard in Saudi Arabia. A compelling 89% of respondents believe their expatriate employees to be “satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with their assignments in Saudi Arabia and the overall quality of life in the country. In addition, a majority (56%) of respondents believe that finding reasonably-priced housing in Saudi Arabia is easy.

89% of respondents believe their expatriate employees are “satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” in Saudi Arabia.

It is important to note that 56% of the respondents believe that in the next 1-3 years, finding adequate space at international educational institutions in Saudi Arabia for employees’ children will be a problem. With only 18% of respondents indicating that the Government is actively engaging with this issue, this is an area needing the attention of interested stakeholders in government and the



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business community to find solutions that address the constraints of international educational institutions, which impacts companies and their workforces.

Saudization

With regard to the policy of Saudization, U.S. companies feel that there is room for improvement. While complying with Saudization quotas does not seem to be a large hurdle for some businesses, it can be challenging for other firms to comply.

According to many respondents, the biggest challenge for companies to fulfill their Saudization requirements is a lack of skilled workforce. While finding highly educated employees is generally not difficult, positions that require significant experience can sometimes be hard to fill and the process of locating and recruiting qualified Saudi workers can be expensive.

Furthermore, 51% of respondents believe that Saudization requirements are one of the biggest hurdles to investing in Saudi Arabia. Other oft-cited answers included: lack of transparency (52%), regulatory environment (49%), and lack of skilled workforce (35%).

The U.S. Chamber and other collaborators in this survey want to work closely with the Saudi government to discuss areas of collaboration for addressing Saudization and enhancing the business climate. One idea would be to examine more in-depth barriers to investment and then commit to work in close cooperation with SAGIA and others in government to find mutually acceptable solutions designed to resolve these issues.

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SPOTLIGHT: U.S. COMPANIES DOING BUSINESS IN SAUDI ARABIA

BECHTEL CORPORATION



PROFILE: Interview with Brendan Bechtel, Chief Executive Officer of Bechtel Group Inc.

Brendan P. Bechtel, Chief Executive Officer, Bechtel Group, Inc., sat down with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to discuss his impressions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as, Bechtel's vision for business there in 2017 and beyond.

USCC: Can you provide a brief overview of Bechtel?

Brendan Bechtel: Bechtel is one of the most respected global engineering, construction, and project management companies. Together with our customers, we deliver landmark projects that foster long term progress and economic growth. Since 1898, we've completed more than 25,000 extraordinary projects across 160 countries on all seven continents. We operate through four global businesses: Infrastructure; Nuclear, Security & Environmental; Oil, Gas & Chemicals; and Mining & Metals. Our company and our culture are built on more than a century of leadership and a relentless adherence to our values, the core of which are safety, quality, ethics, and integrity. These values are what we believe, what we expect, what we deliver, and what we live.

USCC: Please give a short background on Bechtel's history/footprint in Saudi Arabia.

Brendan Bechtel: Bechtel is privileged to have worked in Saudi Arabia for 70 years developing megaprojects from oil and gas facilities to airports and critical infrastructure. Our experience includes assisting the Royal commission of Jubail and Yanbu in the development and expansion of Jubail and Ras Al Khair Industrial cities. Bechtel has worked on significant infrastructure projects in Saudi Arabia, including King Fahd and King Khalid airports, and Ras Al Khair aluminum smelter. Currently, Bechtel is working on Lines 1 and 2 of the Riyadh Metro project.

USCC: What kind of business growth opportunities does Vision 2030 provide Bechtel, and how Bechtel is helping the Saudi government implement plans through the National Project Management Organization?

Brendan Bechtel: Bechtel has been awarded a National Project Management Office (NPMO) contract in Saudi Arabia. NPMO, known as "Mashroat" in Arabic, will support infrastructure delivery as part of the kingdom's Vision 2030 Plan. It will support Saudi government agencies to effectively deliver complex infrastructure projects, in line with the Vision 2030 Plan to modernize the kingdom's administration. The NPMO is being established with the aim of improving the government's capital expenditure program, to enable government entities project management

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offices to develop and improve related policies and create a dynamic ecosystem to deliver efficient and effective projects with the greatest impact.

USCC: What are Bechtel's future plans in the Kingdom?

Brendan Bechtel: Bechtel as a company has been instrumental in developing Saudi talent over the last 70 years and we take pride in seeing young engineers grow in successful managers on projects like Jubail and soon on Mashroaf too. Bechtel will train Saudi nationals while implementing a knowledge management system. We will mobilize experts from across the company to develop the best systems and processes for the NPMO, and we will share these tools across Saudi government ministries and entities.

This month sees the beginning of a major new graduate recruitment program with the Riyadh College of Technology (RCT). We will train and then hire 75 RCT students who are pursuing careers in civil engineering, architecture, or survey technology. The training includes work experience at a Bechtel project in country. I want to see Bechtel's trainees contributing towards Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision.

DOW SAUDI ARABIA



PROFILE: Charles Swartz, President of Dow Saudi Arabia

Charles Swartz, President of Dow Saudi Arabia, sat down with the U.S. Chamber to discuss his views on the Saudi market in 2017, as well as, Dow's vision for business there in 2017 and beyond.

The Dow Chemical Company has had a presence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for more than 40 years. Currently, the Company is the largest foreign investor in the Kingdom's chemical sector and the first foreign company to receive a trading license, which advances Dow's ability to deliver high value, innovative products that will benefit KSA in the areas of sustainable development, energy efficiency, oil and gas, alternative energy and water, to name just a few.

"There has never been a greater time for growth in Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf region. With the Saudi Government's launch of Vision 2030, which is designed to drive economic diversification, foreign investors have unprecedented opportunities to participate in various sectors to support the national priorities, upskill the Saudi workforce, and provide technology solutions that help solve local challenges in the Kingdom," commented Charles Swartz, President of Dow Saudi Arabia.

Dow is living up to that commitment with a number of strategic investments including:

- Sadara Chemical Company is a \$20 billion joint venture developed by Dow and Saudi Aramco. As the world's largest chemical complex ever built in a single phase located in Jubail Industrial City in the Eastern Province, Sadara continues to make steady progress on



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its startup and commercialization activities. Sadara's mixed feed cracker – the largest single unit at the facility – began operations in August 2016. The first three polyethylene units came online in December 2015, April 2016 and September 2016, and each are reactor qualified and have met their license warranty runs. The complex's remaining units are on schedule for a sequenced startup throughout 2017. The adjacent PlasChem Park, with the reliable supply of differentiated products from Sadara, will attract third party investment for downstream applications and create unprecedented advanced manufacturing opportunities and new jobs, contributing to the diversification of the Kingdom's economy.

- The new Dow Middle East Innovation Center (MEIC) is now under construction at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) in Thuwal, Western Province, and will be complete in 2018. With a floor space of 13,500 m², the MEIC will be the second largest building in KAUST when completed. Dow currently has an R&D Center at the KAUST Innovation Cluster, focusing on themes such as water, energy efficiency, and reducing environmental footprints that address critical needs in KSA and the broader Middle East region.
- Dow's first and only Reverse Osmosis (RO) element production facility outside of the US resides in Jubail within the Sadara Chemical Complex. Started up in December, 2015, the plant manufactures high-tech RO elements for demineralizing brackish water or desalinating seawater for a variety of sectors and industrial applications including water treatment, power generation, food and beverage processing, municipal desalination and water reuse. It serves customers around the world, especially growth regions such as Middle East and Africa, Eastern Europe, India, China and Southeast Asia. The plant recently celebrated its first anniversary with outstanding operational excellence, reliability and safety performance.

“There is a lot of common ground between Dow's global sustainability journey and Saudi Vision 2030, particularly in terms of achieving environmental sustainability, addressing urban infrastructural challenges, innovation in advanced technologies and entrepreneurship and equipping young men and women for the jobs of the future,” said Swartz. “Our vision is to be the partner of choice for sustainable growth and innovation in KSA. With Dow's global and regional experience and expertise, we are uniquely qualified and positioned to support KSA's national agenda and priorities.”

Dow's commitment extends to training opportunities and people. In December, 2016, for the second year in a row, Dow was recognized as one of the best workplaces in KSA by Great Place to Work®. In February, 2017, Dow in KSA was certified as one of the Top Employers for Middle East 2017 and Saudi Arabia 2017 by the Top Employers Institute.

With Dow's strategic focus on KSA, the company is poised to become a partner of choice for sustainable growth and innovation in the Kingdom.

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GE



PROFILE: Hisham Bahkali, President and CEO of GE Saudi Arabia and Bahrain

Hisham Bahkali, President & CEO of GE Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, sat down with the U.S. Chamber to discuss his views on the Saudi market in 2017, as well as, GE's vision for business there in 2017 and beyond.

GE has been in the Kingdom for over 80 years, having been an integral part of the early stages of national development in the Kingdom. Today GE employs around 2,000 people across its primary businesses: Aviation, Digital, Healthcare, Oil & Gas and Power with a human capital base that is more than 70% Saudi. GE's operations exports to 70+ customers in 40+ countries around the world.

Over the years, GE has built an advanced, localized ecosystem where our dedicated workforce creates a positive impact and powers local growth and transformation. From maintenance and repairs to advanced manufacturing of gas turbines and pressure control equipment; from 'Hot & Harsh' research to digital solutions; and from building new business service industries, such as the All-Female Business Process Center in Riyadh, to increasing exports; GE continues to look for the best Saudi talent, both male and female, offering challenging and professional growth opportunities enabling them to contribute to their country's economy.

GE takes a long term view of its business in the Kingdom and aims to continue to grow to serve the needs of the economy and society. The 2016 launch of Saudi Vision 2030 presented a clear opportunity for GE to fully align its investments, both human and economic, with the national priorities of the Saudi leadership.

CISCO



PROFILE: Haytham Al Ohali, Acting Managing Director for Cisco Saudi Arabia

Haytham Al Ohali, Acting Managing Director for Cisco Saudi Arabia sat down with the U.S. Chamber to discuss his views on the Saudi market in 2017, as well as, Cisco's vision for business there in 2017 and beyond.

Cisco has been operating in Saudi Arabia for nearly 20 years with 3 offices in the major urban centers of Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam, and a total of 250 employees. Cisco Saudi Arabia has over 90 active Networking Academies operating across the kingdom, with around 70,000 graduates from the program since its inception and an average female student participation rate of 33%.



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We believe that Saudi Vision 2030, designed and promoted by His Royal Highness Mohammed Bin Salman, the Deputy Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia and Minister of Defense, is the most comprehensive economic reform package in Saudi Arabia's history. It represents a blueprint for privatizing entire sectors, raising non-oil revenues, creating jobs, cutting subsidies, courting investors at home and abroad, streamlining government services, and going public with the national oil company (Saudi Aramco), among hundreds of other initiatives.

Whether it's partly a response to low oil prices or not, it's a great step to ensure sustainability and economic growth for the long term. At Cisco, we are very optimistic about the opportunities Saudi Vision 2030 is creating for Saudi nationals and the whole economy.

In June 2016, HRH Mohammed Bin Salman visited Cisco's headquarters in San Jose and met with both John Chambers, Cisco's Executive Chairman of the Board, and Chuck Robbins, Cisco's CEO. They signed an MOU to partner with the Saudi government to accelerate Saudi's digitization plan as well as achieve the objectives of Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Plan.

As a partner in Saudi Arabia's aspirations for the future, Cisco is working closely with the Saudi government to jointly develop a number of initiatives across priority areas that include education, healthcare, security, smart cities, innovation and SMEs, amongst others. This collaboration includes sharing knowledge and global best practices, accelerating innovation, stimulating startups, and supporting the development of a nation-wide digital ecosystem and infrastructure to strengthen the Kingdom's global competitiveness, create local jobs and develop a strong digital economy while positively impacting GDP growth.

As part of our Saudi country digitization program, we created a new partnership with MiSK, a foundation devoted to cultivating learning and leadership for the Saudi Arabia of tomorrow and which is chaired by Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Our goal is to build on the momentum NetAcademy has achieved by extending our reach and impact, as well as preparing the workforce by training even more Saudi nationals and students and enabling them with skills suited for the jobs of the future. The MoU signed with MiSK goes beyond training to encompass the empowerment of Saudi youth by encouraging entrepreneurship, stimulating business innovation and enhancing research and education to unlock their potential.

Cisco plays and will continue to play a key role in building out the Internet of Things network of networks – intelligent, manageable, secure infrastructure that can scale to support billions of context aware devices. Technology trends such as cloud, mobile and data analytics all fit with the broader ecosystem and we are deeply engaged in developing both the vision and business opportunities in the Saudi market. We strongly believe Saudi Arabia is well positioned to take full advantage of the digital era and to reap its many economic, social and sustainability benefits.



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ABOUT U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business organization representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions. Our members range from mom-and-pop shops and local chambers to leading industry associations and large corporations. They all share one thing--they count on the Chamber to be their voice in Washington, D.C. and capitals around the globe. We advocate for pro-business policies that create jobs and grow our economy. The fundamental activity of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is to develop and implement policy on major issues affecting business. Key issues range from smart tax policy and regulatory relief to legal reform and trade promotion.

The U.S. Chamber's International Division leads the business community's efforts to shape global policy by advocating for free enterprise, competitive markets and rules-based trade and investment as the path to opportunity and prosperity for all. The U.S. Chamber's Middle East Department focuses on strengthening and expanding the economic relationship between the United States and the countries across the Middle East region, including Saudi Arabia.



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ABOUT EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

The MENA practice of EY has been operating in the region since 1923. For over 90 years, we have evolved to meet the legal and commercial developments of the region. Across MENA, we have over 5,000 people united across 18 offices and 14 countries, sharing the same values and an unwavering commitment to quality.



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ABOUT AMERICAN BUSINESS GROUP OF RIYADH (ABGR)

More than 40 years ago, the leaders of the American business community in Riyadh established the American Business Group of Riyadh (ABGR) to serve as a platform for American businesses to network, socialize, and align their engagement efforts to have a more significant impact on relevant policy issues in the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Today, the ABGR has over 475 members representing American companies across all industry sectors, as well as Saudi companies with American affiliations actively promoting the importation of American goods and services to the Kingdom. Our membership comprises both large and small businesses, and individual memberships of professional men and women. The ABGR is a guiding force in the business community in Riyadh. It is a catalyst through which businesses and professional people work together for the common good.



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ABOUT AMERICAN BUSINESS GROUP OF JEDDAH (ABJ)

The American Business Group of Jeddah (ABJ) was formed over 30 years ago and operates as a not-for-profit association and is affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and managed by a volunteer Executive Committee selected from active members of the organization.

The declared ABJ purpose is to advance the development and growth of commercial activity between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with focus on the City of Jeddah; to promote dialogue, friendship and understanding among the U.S. business community in the Kingdom, its diverse expatriate community-at-large and business leaders and peoples of Saudi Arabia.

At present there are over 100 diverse members doing business or providing services in Jeddah. Through a balanced mix of business, friendly sports and community functions, the ABJ seeks to meet the many interests of its membership and provide access to information and activities not otherwise readily available in the Kingdom.



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ABOUT AMERICAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION- EASTERN PROVINCE

The American Business Association – Eastern Province (ABA-EP), located in Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia, was founded in 1976 by leading U.S. businesses and the U.S. Consulate. Over the past 35 years the organization has continued to grow and expand its activities for the American business community and its membership. ABA-EP has been working to identify and promote the common interests of Americans and American businesses in the Eastern Province for over 35 years. ABA-EP plans events, dinner meetings, trade forums, and other activities in an effort to encourage business developments for its members and other U.S. companies.



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