**The Dubai Expansion**

“We expanded our business to Dubai in early December 2012, and it’s really different from Egypt,” says Rania Abdalla, for [Aspire HR Consultants](http://www.aspire-hr.com) (Aspire HRC) Managing Director and Founder. The company was launched in March 2008, based in Egypt. Clients now include more than 100 multinational and local organizations, including Pepsi, Vodafone, MARS, Redbull, Nestle, Ulker, Orange, Lafarge, Orascom Telecom, Microsoft and GSK. The company has filled 100+ management vacancies, and led more than 30 HR consultancy projects. Rania comments that although the competition is fierce in Dubai, she has already met with more than 20 clients, and sees great potential. “At Aspire HRC, we provide a different kind of executive search service, along with complete solutions. I think Dubai will prove to be good for global executive search, as most of the business population is expats, so it’s more likely to offer global assignments rather than local ones.” Currently she spends a week a month in Dubai: “It’s a very structured week, with a lot of research and organization beforehand. Of course, my senior people in Egypt make sure everything continues to run very efficiently.” Rania believes the success of Aspire HRC’s offices in Egypt contributes to make the Dubai office an easier launch. In addition, Aspire HRC’s senior team provides more than 15 years’ combined multinational experience in Dubai. Rania considers that her international academic qualifications (MA in HR from Kingston Business School, ranked among the world's best masters and MBA programs), and her 11 years of international experience with Pepsico in London, Dubai and Cairo can also be “additional assets in a vibrant, international, and multi-cultural market such as the UAE.” She adds, with a smile: “Also, the IRC Board meeting is in Dubai in February, and we’ll be meeting more clients.”

**Developing Multi-National Talent and Clients**

“In our Egypt office, we’re also really busy right now, which is good especially in this current economic climate,” says Rania. Aspire HRC (Egypt) celebrates its five-year anniversary in March 2013, and has built up an enviable roster of local and multi-national clients in five years. Rania is passionate about developing the talent market in Egypt. “There are great opportunities here, and I would like to ensure everyone has a chance to seize them,” she says. That is the driving force behind her outplacement commitment, which involves one-on-one coaching sessions with candidates. “We help re-orientate them to the job market,” Rania explains. “That means we offer practical advice alongside career guidance.” It is a detailed, personalized approach. “Our clients appreciate this multiple approach,” she says. “There are very few providers of such services in Egypt, especially with the passion, team involvement and expertise that we offer.” Rania was recently selected by an Egypt-based NGO to provide mentorship to promising entrepreneurs, and advice to local companies on global expansion. This corporate social responsibility is also good for the community, especially in Egypt, as Rania explains: “In Egypt, word-of-mouth is critically important. When candidates experience our outplacement service, they quickly recognize our professionalism, and the sense of responsibility and ownership that we provide. And, of course, they tell other people about it.” She is passionate about guiding companies in their attainment of work/life balance, and she follows that in her home and family life: “I apply what I’m trying to preach, and specifically, number one focus is my family. It’s a major initiative that you cannot drop, so I ensure my family gets real quality time.”

**Passion for Success**

“Of course, we are all incredibly passionate about this business,” asserts Rania. “Our clients and candidates recognize us for being that bit different, and offering a complete, ‘one-stop’ solution. We make sure to maintain an ongoing relationship with them, instead of just completing the assignment and ticking the box.”  She adds that Aspire HRC is a ‘young-at-heart’ business: “All our senior management, while not necessarily all young in years, certainly all have the youthful attributes of passion, energy and drive. We are also flexible enough to recognize change and take advantage of new opportunities.” Rania says she also feels incredibly lucky in her team at Aspire HRC: “They all work with passion, and are open with information and knowledge. They are true givers and that is good for the whole team, the company, and the clients. They are smart and dedicated people – although we offer flexible working hours, and they often work from home, we’ve never had a problem. They always deliver on results!” She believes there are many executive search business opportunities in the Middle East, and she continually works on ways to discover new market opportunities, outside the tried and tested. “The formula for success is having passion,” she avers. That passion has resulted in several business awards, including the Emirates Business Woman Award (a prestigious award from HH Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoom); the Appreciation Award (given by the Director General of the UAE National Human Resource Development Authority); and PepsiCo’s Inclusion Award, Star Award and Chairman's Award. Rania admits the awards have helped open doors in Dubai. “Without them, I would have been able to knock on clients’ doors, but they wouldn’t necessarily have opened!” “No matter what happens, there are challenges,” she declares. “So, you have to be optimistic and have the confidence to reach your goal. It is passion that guides me wherever I go.”