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TECHNOLOGY
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of the biggest names in
the industry.

Al-Amthal Group created Optimum Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) which offers a suite of activities that aim to help a company manage different divisions within its structure.

The technology company describes it as the first Bahraini Microsoft-certified solution to a business headache experienced by many successful companies as they grow.



EXCLUSIVE

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The system allows companies to update their operations to help them make timely and informed decisions, increase efficiency and productivity and give them an edge over rivals.

The software was certified for Windows Server 2008R2 and is an online and real-time state-of-the-art system. It is made up of different parts; time and attendance, human resources, fixed assets, inventory, trading, accounts payable and general ledgers to help run the commercial and financial management of any firm automatically.

Over 160 different companies in Bahrain are

now using the software and Al-Amthal's offices have expanded to Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Libya and Zanzibar as well as a recently planned branch in Kuwait.

Hani Yousif Awachi, CEO of Al-Amthal Group, said: "We are very proud that we are the only one in the country that has a Microsoft-certified software solution. We have the only system that is developed and registered in Bahrain, as well as selling outside of the region in Libya and Zanzibar. Not to mention, the software is completely Bahraini.

"There are a few ERP systems on the market but when we were first certified, we were only one of five worldwide. We are still

the only software solution developed in the country.

"Bahrain can be proud because it is something that is useful in all businesses. An ERP system can run a whole organisation electronically."

The company was born in February 2000 when a handful of management, IT, education and accounting specialists came together from various backgrounds in the corporate world to form the idea of Optimum. The mastermind behind the concept and development of the software, Mr Awachi, used his past experience in senior positions to lead the group to success.

Working day-and-night from a small office on Exhibitions Avenue, the business started to slowly grow. And now, Al-Amthal Group is located in the emerging business district in Sanabis.

Once the company went through the demanding process of gaining Microsoft certification the business really took off. The Optimum ERP went through four phases in order to get its certification – programming, business functionalities, security and checking the programming based on Microsoft standards. Just over four months later, the software passed all stages and was certified.

General manager of internal operations and marketing at Al-Amthal Group, Beate Schoek-Awachi, said: "Optimum allows the country to show off and get recognised geographically. You wouldn't expect the smallest country in the Middle East to come up with something like Optimum, but in fact, Bahrain is filled with talent.

"Without software solutions it can be difficult to manage a company's customers. The standard setter is Microsoft, anything that isn't certified by them will probably not last."

In order to find a way into the market, Al-Amthal Group took on the big companies in Bahrain that were selling international products, proving that a Bahraini brainchild can be just as successful. They focused primarily on the clients' needs to provide a software solution that suits the requirements of the consumer. "It takes patience, lots of



THE MASTERMIND: Hani Yousif Awachi used his experience to lead the group to success

dedication and hard work. We have customers to satisfy and they depend on our system to benefit their business," Ms Schoek-Awachi said. "The fight is against the big international companies, however, through our Microsoft certification we have an advantage.

"We also have development teams, focusing on clients' needs and listening to their suggestions. Our latest development is customer vendor relationship management (CVRM) which builds a relationship between the client and company."

AbdelKarim Abu Jaber, partner account manager at Microsoft Bahrain, said: "At Microsoft, we set the bar high for a product to earn Windows Server 2008 R2 certification.

"This is crucial to maintain the quality of the experience that our customers around the world enjoy when opting for locally-developed applications.

"The certification identifies top-performing technologies that are ready to deploy in mission-critical environments. In order to receive the 'Certified for Windows Server R2' designation Optimum ERP had to pass a series of extensive tests that independently confirm an application's compliance with best practices for compatibility, security, reliability and availability on the Windows platform."

The software has a bilingual capability, attracting a

high number of medium to large organisations, where companies can log on in either Arabic or English, and sells for a five-figure sum.

Al-Amthal Group's Optimum owns above 65 per cent of the market share in the human resources and banking sector and almost 70 per cent of the market in semi-government sectors.

Mr Awachi added that although it is an ERP solution, many businesses can still buy singular modules from the suite.

"The beauty of the product is that it is modular-based, which means you can buy what you want from the package and you don't need to have the whole ERP. Some only buy time and attendance, others only buy human resources."

Optimum has proved to be a success and now the system is also fitted perfectly for Cloud computing, allowing their clients to access their accounts and information from any computer, anywhere.

Through its additional establishments, EC-Net and NC-Link, Al-Amthal also offers hardware products as well as media services.

Ms Schoek-Awachi said: "We are not shying away from expansion, that's our main future plan, as well as keeping up with the latest technology in real time, otherwise customers will go elsewhere. Our product is something the company is proud of and will continue to develop."

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