



**Joseph Daher**  
Almabani

Having joined Almabani General Contractors in 1979 as site Engineer, in 1986 Joseph became Site Manager in the Aircraft Shelters project in Taif. Then, from 1990 to 1997, he was Project Manager, in Charge of the execution of many projects inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, (mostly military).

From 1998 to 2006, Joseph was Projects Director in charge of all the on-going projects in the Kingdom, and since 2006, has been Executive Vice President – Operations, in charge of running the entire company's operations, overseeing the proper execution and progress of all the projects, as well as controlling the estimation and proposal department.

JOSEPH  
DAHER

Airports are ever more focusing on the shopping experience of travelers; airlines are trying to differentiate the travel experience itself. How do you see both evolving?

Airlines and airports have recently shifted the aviation industry from solely being a means of transportation to an advanced and more modern experience by itself. Focusing on the comfort and ease of access of passengers, both airlines and airports offer more services. Most terminals have been built or refurbished to add more amenities that make the traveling experience a profitable one. Airports and airlines win over travelers by adding shopping and dining options, ease of check-in, online boarding, security and of course friendliness and good hospitality.

In addition, collaboration between airlines and airports is the key to a pleasant traveling experience. Advanced coordination and integration between both airlines and airports ensure efficient provision of services.

This requires discipline, investment and a deeper understanding of passengers' demographics, behaviors, attitudes and needs. Deeper collaboration among airlines and airports could create a stronger, more complete value proposition for passengers, spanning the entire journey rather than being confined to an airport's boundaries. This kind of collaboration depends on sharing of passenger data by the airlines with airports. While this appears to be an anathema, it will give both entities greater insight into passenger needs and help them design and deliver new services and products for which passengers will be willing to pay. This will create a significant opportunity for revenue, growth, and competitive positioning.

What would your ideal airport look like?

My ideal airport will look like "smart airports" that fully exploit the power of emerging and maturing technologies, with advanced and widely deployed abilities to sense, analyze and respond.

Smart airports will usher in a new age for both airport operations and passenger experience. Airports, airlines, and partners will use Web 2.0 and 3.0 technologies, sensors, processors, and always-on communications to produce a new foundational framework, enabling real-time sense-analyze-respond capabilities.



Contact with passengers will no longer simply be at check-in, security check, or boarding. Instead, a pervasive and persistent connection to the passenger will permit continuous, real-time communications anytime, anywhere. Such capabilities will enable all airport stakeholders - airlines, security, operations, concessionaires, and other service providers - to engage the passenger with relevant and compelling information and offers.

As capabilities evolve, these conversations will be personalized, media-rich, and value-laden.

Airports may also reach beyond their physical boundaries to enhance the experience for passengers at all stages of their trip. For example, airports should offer information on the status of roads and parking, based on predefined parameters, to help passengers plan their departure time and make choices about parking and other services.

Airlines should provide travelers with enough guidance and information as much as possible. Weather conditions a few days before the trip, status of parking lots, car rentals, or even hotel reservations would be of great value.

**What will be the big change we will see happening between now and 2020 when we think of the aviation industry more specifically around the airport and airfield?**

Growing concerns over climate change and anticipated rise in carbon prices and increased cost of compliance are major drivers for a green aviation industry.

In the years ahead, the aviation industry will turn to green technologies in order to develop business-led solutions to address climate change.

Tightening regulations on the aviation industry to curb its emissions will mainly drive a green aviation technology market in general and the aviation biofuels and fuel cells market in particular.

Alternative fuels should become a major driver in reaching this objective. The industry must aim at replacing some of the current fossil fuel with biofuel. Beyond the complex issue of life cycle assessment, the challenge will be to ensure that biofuels are supplied in a reliable and cost-effective manner to air operators.

**How will your company evolve with regards to airports (construction), do you see a move of your company to the operational side of things like TAV, Vinci etc?**

Today after three decades of remarkable achievements and accomplishments, Altabani has become the leading name in the Middle East that is setting new standards of excellence in airports projects.

We are certainly planning to expand our services and move to the operational side in the industry by opening up to maintenance services.

This will eventually add value for our clients from one side and to our operations team from the other side.

**Airports need to become ever more efficient, higher throughput, reduced costs and guaranteed safety. How does your company contribute in helping the client find this balance?**

Creating value for the Client by helping in optimizing the client's costs and prioritizing the client's needs through:

- Continuous support for the client due to our everlasting geographical presence in the countries we operate in
- Strategic relationships with key suppliers
- Strategic partnerships/cooperations with world class consultancy firms ensures very high quality and reduces costs

Our provisions about the future of the industry helps us cater in our planning/execution for future developments/improvements without having to rebuild everything from scratch but rather allowing for gradual improvements and introductions of new technologies.

The company's culture towards the strict compliance with the specifications and safety measures is vital.

Long-term investment in human resources and equipment increases the efficiency of the company and certainly generates value for the client.

The knowhow and the wide and strong experience in this industry gives an edge for our company over others in the industry. ■