

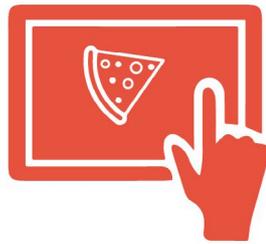


akeed

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SEARCH



ORDER



PAY



DELIVER

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Making of Oman's First Food Delivery Application

Moosa Al Lawati

Life was fun and exciting in Dubai. I was working in PwC at a reputed position and a visit to Muscat, Oman would happen only to meet family or spend a lazy weekend at home.

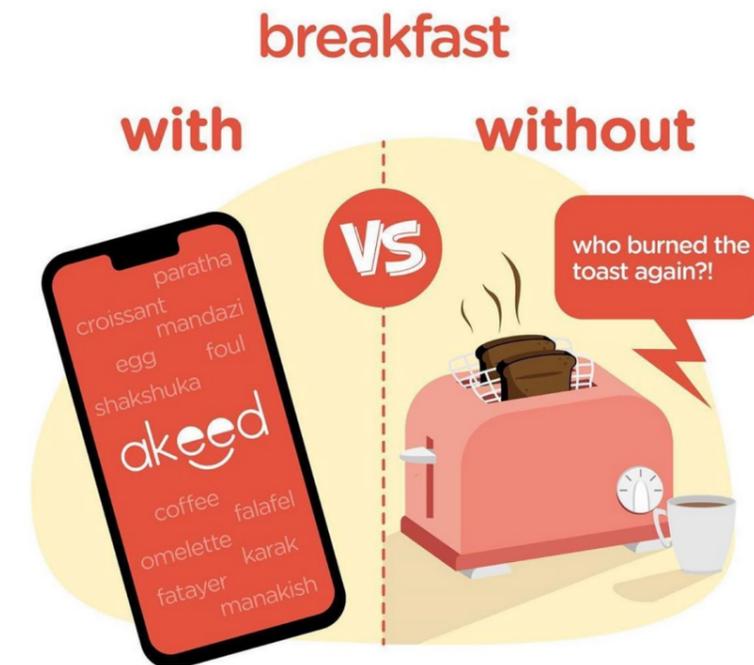
However in 2017, when I visited Oman, an incident happened that led to the germination of 'akeed' in my mind. It was Friday night and I was badly craving some 'Chicken Tikka Biryani' while playing a game of Fifa with my friend, PwC colleague, and co-founder of akeed, Gaurav Nahar. I still remember asking my family why they want to go and pick up the food when they can simply use any food delivery app to order it. I was shocked when they told me that a delivery app doesn't exist in Muscat, you either do a take-out or you order from a restaurant that has a delivery service.

It was also during this phase of my life that I used to have these random conversations with Gaurav during work breaks about doing something of our own. But whenever these conversations would start taking shape, some family members would always advise us to not leave a flourishing career and risk it to start something new, especially when a person has just hit their 30's. They would say, 'Experiments in career are for college life not when you have a family'.



Soon the conversation around doing something of our own started to take shape around establishing a food delivery app. What followed were endless cups of coffee surrounded by heaps of research papers. Luckily Gaurav also grew up in Oman and relocation to the country to start something of our own wasn't a challenge. We both shifted back and decided to spend all our energy on it.

I decided to take up a job in Oman and help with the paperwork, Gaurav decided to quit his job and do all the legwork. After a year of intense labour, team hunt, a crash course in technology and logistics, we were ready to launch the app. We decided to name it 'Areed' but then due to some technicalities the name had to be changed to 'akeed' which means 'sure' in Arabic.



The features of akeed were inspired by the problems I had seen people around me face when trying to order food. It is for this reason, we pegged our application on 'no minimum order', 'largest delivery radius (15kms)', a 'fixed delivery fee' and 'auto-detect location'. Extreme importance was also given to the application interface, as we knew the Oman market didn't have much exposure to applications. We wanted to make something that is simple, easy to understand, and use.

With a delivery app made to impress, we then set sail to find the right investor for it. As someone had rightly said, 'Ideas are cheap, execution is expensive'. Finding partners who believed in the idea and sourcing initial investment was no easy

task. We met 40 investors who told us this will fail, some advised us to try this in another country, while some told us to get into logistics.

But just when we had lost all hope, we were lucky to meet Mr. Abdullah Shaksy, from Phaze Ventures. Not only did he agree to be our first angel investor, his able guidance and understanding of the market was crucial in molding akeed to suit people from all age groups, economic class, and nationalities living in Oman.

On May 10, 2018 'akeed delivery' was finally launched. We were the first and the only Omani food delivery company. Our journey began from a 2bhk apartment with ten working staff including drivers and only 15 restaurant partners. I still remember when we completed our first month of operations and got our first



social media shout out, it felt as if we had just won a war and proved to everyone who thought this startup won't survive.



Today, akeed has over 300 employees and is available in five cities of Oman with over 1100 restaurants to choose from. We also offer services in Grocery delivery, pre-paid telecom cards, and flowers.

The last two years for akeed have been full of highs and lows but what has remained constant is the spirit of our staff to prove that we are the best delivery service and the generous love we continue to receive from the Omani community.

The recent outbreak of COVID-19 also reinstated the important role akeed is playing in the market as the government labelled us as an essential service provider. While changes in consumer behavior are recorded across the country, a mushroom growth of delivery service providers can be witnessed. It is not only a proud moment for me but also a moment when I realize that one should have the courage to take risks and follow their heart. If I had listened to what people around me were asking me to do, akeed would have still been a dream.

Lastly, as Robert Frost said, "The woods are lovely dark and deep, But I have miles to go before I sleep." The unimaginable leaps 'akeed delivery' has taken ever since it was born does make us satisfied, but I feel every day is a challenge, a box of unopened opportunities. My aim for akeed is to conquer those challenges and capture these opportunities to become the first unicorn of Oman.



Learn more at <https://www.akeedapp>.

