



# **A Cup of Coffee: A Westerner's Guide to Business Culture in the Gulf States**

*Salem Ben Nasser Al Ismaily, Richard Tzudiker*

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John Wilkinson, a successful American entrepreneur, doesn't know why his first attempt to branch out to the Middle East failed so miserably. Heading home in defeat, John meets Sultan, a chance encounter that changes everything. After hearing John's story, Sultan recognizes John's failure didn't result from a bad business model. Rather, John made the fatal mistake of not understanding and accepting how business is conducted in the Middle East. Sultan invites John back to Oman to try again, this time with guidance, instruction, and proper introductions. With Sultan as his mentor, John quickly learns his hardcharging Western style must surrender to very different values rooted in ancient tribal customs and traditions. Dr. Salem Ben Nasser Al-Ismaily is the Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Omani Centre for Investment Promotion and Export Development (OCIPED). Before joining OCIPED in 1996, he was the Managing Director of Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (PEIE) for twelve years, establishing the first industrial estates in Oman. He also serves as a chairman and director in several oil, financial services, and research companies. He has received degrees in Liberal Arts, Telecommunications, Industrial Engineering, Business Administration, Management, and Philosophy from universities in the United Kingdom and USA. Dr. Al-Ismaily is instrumental in promoting trade relations between Oman and USA. His book, *Inside the Omani Corporate Culture - A Research in Management Styles*, co-authored with Professor Peter McKiernan of the University of St. Andrews, is the academic foundation of this story. Richard Tzudiker is a freelance writer with a Bachelor's Degree in English from Colgate University and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Denver. He spent half his childhood in Europe and most of his professional career with multinational minerals companies. He is currently an investment and trust account administrator at a community bank in Colorado.

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