

Keenwash Case Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEENWASH

- Consumer Services
- Jordan
- Two founders, plus franchisors

CHALLENGE

- Transforming a good idea and service offering into a business
- Need to more quickly grow customer base and geographical reach
- Gaining business expertise to establish a scalable, profitable model

SOLUTION

- Attended Cisco Entrepreneur Institute
- Participated in “Starting a Business” course
- Created a plan based on franchising

RESULTS

- Signed up two new franchisors in Saudi Arabia and Yemen
- More partners in the pipeline
- Treated 2,800 cars in the first five months
- End of year forecast after franchising: 28,000 cars

The Challenge: Going From a Big Idea To a Big Business

A worker with a neon-green shirt and red baseball cap kneels to the asphalt and sprays droplets of liquid onto the surface of one of the dirtiest cars imaginable. He wipes it gently away with a cotton towel moments later. With each stroke, the brown swirls of grime are slowly replaced with something entirely different as the car’s original color begins to return, brighter than ever. The worker buffs away frantically until his own image forms on the surface. Within 15 minutes, the car is gone and in its place, the asphalt is dry. No streams of soapy water puddle on the street. No sounds of high-powered pumps spraying gallons of water against the body of a car. Even the car’s owner is nowhere to be found; lost somewhere in a shopping mall while his vehicle is polished to a shiny finish.

This simple solution to a lingering problem was the beginning of a business. The company, Keenwash, planned to deliver a fairly simple service: a waterless car wash and wax. For Jordan, one of the most water-deprived countries in the world, this idea seems imaginative and yet, it also has the transformational power that all good businesses need. For while a dirty car wouldn’t seem to be an insurmountable challenge, in Jordan, washing one can be. On average, washing a car at home consumes roughly 400 liters of precious water, while conventional car washes consume around half that much.

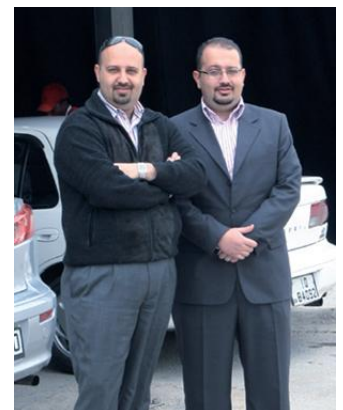
While Keenwash clearly had an intriguing solution to a widespread problem—wasting valuable water on dirty cars—this alone did not equate to a successful business. For founders Nader and Hassan Atmeh, finding a model that would be scalable, manageable, and profitable was the challenge. The two founders had extensive backgrounds in science, but neither had the business savvy to build a business that would allow them to leverage the benefits of their innovation.

Solution: The Cisco Entrepreneur Institute at the Queen Rania Center.

In June 2008, the Keenwash founders were amongst the few lucky entrepreneurs to participate in the first training courses organized by the Cisco Entrepreneur Institute in Jordan, held at the Queen Rania Center for Entrepreneurship. They participated in coursework that included collaboration, access to resources, and mentoring that helped them understand how their business could succeed.

The founders had personalized experience at the Institute, enabled by Web 2.0 technologies that included chat, video, conferencing, and webcasting. They also had access to specific information about franchising and interacted with experts who offered advice about their particular operation.

Leveraging collaboration tools like WebEx Connect, this blended way of learning offers a virtual space for students to participate in topic specific discussions, collaborate on documents, and share tips and best practices. Such tools offered a



new experience to the founders, who had come from a more structured learning background.

“Entrepreneurship education was very traditional for us before we joined the first Cisco Entrepreneur Institute course, *Starting a Business*. Technologies used helped us to better learn, understand, and apply,” stated Hassan Atmeh, COO, Keenwash.

The founders learned how to develop a business plan that would help them reach their goals, and gain valuable skills on how to run their business effectively.

Results: A Franchise Model Reaching Thousands of Customers.

Keenwash team gained valuable insights on how to grow their business through alternative business models, such as franchising. “For example, [the Institute] course opened our minds to consider franchising as an effective way of expanding rather than waiting for years until we could expand our resources to other untapped markets,” said Atmeh. “I proudly can say that 2008 has concluded with two franchising agreements signed with two partners in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. And, there are more partners from other countries in the pipeline to become our franchisees as well.”

Since it began operations in May 2008, Keenwash has treated approximately 2,800 cars in the first five months of business, saving approximately 564,000 liters of water. By the end of its first year, the company targets washing just under 28,000 cars—an accomplishment that will save a staggering 5,559,600 liters of water. This figure is even more impressive figure when put in context with the cities overall water consumption: Amman’s 2.1 million residents consume during the summer months anywhere between 140,000 and 180,000 liters of water a day.



“The technologies offered by Cisco allowed us to engage participants from different parts of the world in very powerful interactive sessions where they can work in groups, share their work results easily and enjoy the clear audio-visual communication. I can say how much this helps us in reducing the cost in terms of time and logistics while keeping the same expected quality of training,” said Mohamad M. Khawaja, Deputy Director, Queen Rania Center for Entrepreneurship.



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