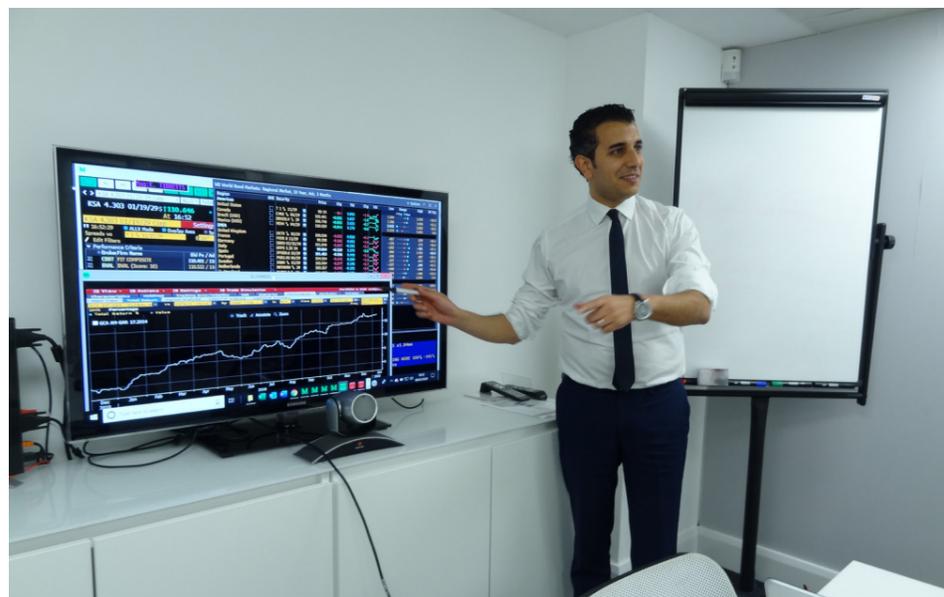




Gulf Central Merchant Bank: Challenging The Old Guards

Gulf Central Merchant Bank Ltd (GCMB) is a UK registered independent, privately owned, financial services firm which is authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority. The Company's core business includes investment management and investment banking services. Headquartered in London and through its multinational team, GCMB offers exceptional services to clients and outstanding access to global financial services.

The Gulf Central Agency brand goes back to 1976 when Ahmed Chedly Azaiez first setup a commodity trading company, incorporated in Tunisia, operating out of Switzerland and with offices in Tunisia and Kuwait. Growing up in an entrepreneurial family, current Gulf Central Merchant Bank CEO and founder Hakim Azaiez, was never far away from launching his own business. In 2011 the twenty-six-year-old entrepreneur launched his business using the inherited brand and Gulf Central Agency Asset Management was born in London. Since its inception the company has grown organically from a £200k start up to achieving a £45 million turnover in 2019.



Having previously worked in several multinational financial institutions in London, CEO Hakim Azaiez launched GCA Asset Management (GCA AM), initially focusing on Asset & Wealth Management. During the following years the firm expanded to include Investment Banking Services, which led to the launch of Gulf Central Merchant Bank Ltd and eventually to the current organisational structure of the company in which GCA Asset Management has become the investment management arm of the bank.

"What sets us apart from other institutions is that our philosophy

is a 3-way win-win relationship: clients, team members and the company" says Hakim Azaiez.

"Post the 2008 financial crisis it was evident to me that there should be an alternative to the traditional structure of a company. We treat our clients as the most valuable assets of the company and, as such, take personal pride in looking after them actively and assisting them in their growth." This indeed seems to be a winning formula, demonstrated by GCA asset management (GCMB's Investment Management

offering) consistently generating double-digit returns in their bond portfolios and thereby outperforming peers.

GCMB's team members are considered the pivotal part of their structure hence the company has created a platform where they can benefit from a share of the profits that they help build.

Mr Azaiez emphasizes the importance of their "active investment management, which, when coupled with the discipline and the intellectual integrity of the investment process, is the best philosophy to achieve superior

returns for GCMB's clients". He elaborates to say that "for us, the words 'management' and 'active' cannot be separated when it comes to investment management. Static strategies, where the manager buys and watches, are no longer effective. We aim to be ahead of the curve and anticipate the volatility and act fast accordingly".

2020 will see the Bank moving from a managed portfolio structure to a fund structure and this will give access to a broader base of investors who wish to benefit from the strategy.

