



“My father’s entrepreneurial legacy is present in all the businesses at Sayegh.”

**Michael Sayegh,**  
Chairman, Sayegh Group

Europe  
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South America  
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## Michael Sayegh

Sayegh Group

Sayegh Group has established itself as one of the Middle East’s best known and respected family businesses. Its main business, National Paints, is one of the most recognizable brands in the region. Three generations of the Sayegh family are connected to the business. With leadership transitioning to the third generation, the business has been under the watchful eye of its chairman Michael Sayegh for more than 40 years.



Michael joined the family business fulltime in the early 1970s



Michael is now Chairman of one of the Middle East's best known family businesses

Family businesses are often born out of adversity. Jordan-based Sayegh Group is a good case in point. Its founder, Faeq Ibrahim Sayegh, was forced to leave his home town of Jaffa, then part of Palestine in the late 1940s, and move to Jordan because of rising political tensions.

### The group comprises 35 companies

Nearly 70 years later, the Sayegh Group is now one of the Middle East's most successful businesses, proving that entrepreneurship can thrive regardless of the prevailing conditions. Now managed by the second generation, the Sayegh Group is perhaps best known for its National Paints business, which today is the biggest paints company in the Middle East and one of the biggest in the world.

But the group is also involved in a host of other sectors, including chemicals, real estate, engineering, mining, banking

and even media and broadcasting. In fact, the group comprises 35 companies, employing more than 5,000 people, and has a presence across the Middle East and beyond.

Michael Sayegh is Chairman of the group. Michael, and his brothers Saleem and Ibrahim, have been instrumental in taking the business founded by their father more than 80 years ago to where it is today. Faeq Ibrahim's legacy still sits importantly within the family and the business, as Michael often acknowledges.

### Michael's father established the company in 1932

"My father's entrepreneurial legacy is present in all the businesses at Sayegh," says Michael. "Being forced to leave everything behind and settle in Jordan was the main driver to finding new opportunities and eventually investing in the paint trade. This signified the first transitional phase for the first generation."



The company moved to its new home in Amman, Jordan, in 1949

He adds: "The main driving force behind Sayegh Group's longstanding success is building a family business on the foundation of family solidarity and kindness, something our father ingrained in us when we were growing up. His guidance to his children has forged an unshakeable bond among us."

Faeq Ibrahim, born in 1904, established Al Taqadum. In 1932, the company became known as the Sayegh Group. It originally assembled bus chassis in Jaffa.

Michael joined the business fulltime in the early 1970s, after completing his degree at the University of Jordan. But his involvement in the business started much earlier. Indeed, he recalls working at Sayegh when he was nine. And in the 1960s, along with his uncle and eldest brother, he helped set up National Paints.

Michael's father died in 1976. Building on their father's legacy, the two eldest brothers decided to expand the business into other countries and sectors. The business expanded rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s, fueled by the construction boom in much of the Middle East and the rise of a consumer culture in the region. Michael's youngest brother Ibrahim joined the business in the early 1990s.

### Sayegh is establishing a family constitution

In 1977, National Paints opened in Sharjah, in the United Arab Emirates. The plant set up there is now one of the biggest paint factories in the Middle East. The expansion into chemicals and engineering followed. Growth into real estate, TV and banking developed soon afterward.



Production facilities at the group's headquarters in Jordan



The Sayegh family: four members of the third generation are currently working at Sayegh



Michael together with his two brothers Ibrahim and Saleem

Michael says the third generation is gradually being brought into the business – and with their integration there is also the desire to create better family governance. “The tragic death of my brother Saleem has accelerated the process of bringing the next generation into the business,” says Michael. He adds: “In order to ensure that the third generation work with a governance structure in place, we have begun, under the leadership of my eldest son Fa’eq, working on establishing a family constitution and a board of directors’ charter.”

#### Instill a sense of responsibility in the succeeding generation

Currently, four members of the third generation are working at Sayegh, two of Michael’s sons and two of Saleem’s sons. “One of the key aspects to growing the family business is to involve the third generation fully, and instill in them a sense of responsibility and a desire to continue the legacy,” says Michael.

All members of the family are strong believers in the importance of commitment and hard work. Michael makes this clear when asked about the success of the business over the generations. “You always need to be willing to try harder to overcome any obstacles that stand between you and the success of your business. Once you get the company on its feet, you need to be looking for new ways to develop it and separate yourself from your competitors. Hard work, commitment and patience will ultimately lead to achievement.”

#### Grow the business in even more sectors

One of the core tenets of the family business, says Michael, is the social impact of the business on the communities in which it works. He says the business pays considerable attention to training its staff and, when it can, reducing unemployment in the countries in which it operates.

Michael believes strongly that the success of a company is not only measured by its material achievements; but also by the role

it plays in its community to help reduce unemployment, improve the economic situation and better the social environment for its citizens.

What about the future for the Sayegh Group? When it comes to the business directly, Michael hopes the group will double the size of National Paints within the next five years. The plan is also to grow the business in even more sectors. But central to all these plans is the importance of the family business.

As Michael says: “Sayegh Group’s future plans revolve around several pillars. These include implementing the family charter through sound family governance and further management structuring. That’s central to the success of the business.”

### Michael Sayegh

Chairman

Company name: **Sayegh Group**

Generation(s): **2nd and 3rd**

Founded: **1932 in Jaffa, Palestine**

Industries: **Chemicals, engineering, media, IT, banking, real estate**

Employees (2013): **More than 5,500**