

# Our People

**The commitment of our staff to show exceptional resilience and strength in the face of a challenging operating environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has been invaluable. Their ability to adapt to these ever-changing circumstances has been admirable, and it is thanks to their wholehearted support and dedication that we have maintained and strengthened our position as the leader of the dairy and beverage sector in Qatar.**

## A caring employer

It has always been our highest priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our people, providing them with the support they need and acting as a fair and just employer. This has never been more important than during the last two years, as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the lives and routines of every member of our team.

Our outstanding workforce of more than 1,750 people has rewarded this commitment. The standard to which they performed has been a source of great pride for Baladna, and our retention and recruitment a testament to their satisfaction and engagement.

During 2021, we ensured that our staff was as protected as it could be through a comprehensive immunisation

programme. Working on a structured campaign with the Qatari Government, we were able to achieve a 99% fully-vaccinated workforce. It was an outstanding result which showed the company's ability to act swiftly and the employees' trust in Baladna as their chosen vaccination site.

As well as the effects of the pandemic itself, many organisations found the restraints of adapting to a 'new normal' were some of the greatest challenges they had faced in generations. Inevitably, no companies escaped the ravages of COVID-19 but thanks in large to the employees at Baladna, we were able to overcome the most potentially damaging obstacles and kept the production and distribution activities moving efficiently and effectively all year long.

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### **New opportunities**

As Baladna continues its expansion in new products, new territories and new markets, there will obviously be a need for greater human resources, in terms of both numbers of employees and expertise. The Memorandums of Understanding with partners outside Qatar may well accelerate the need to restructure other business divisions and, by its very nature, our own. The imminent arrival of large-scale events such as the Qatar FIFA World Cup 2022 will also create a number of HR openings.

It is a direction we are enormously excited about and will provide us with the opportunity to provide new innovations and solutions to major new developments.

Our responsibility to ensure the smooth running of staff procedures already covers all aspects of the company's operations. From farming, manufacturing and sales to distribution, customer service and research, all services must be standardised and provide the greatest benefits to our teams. Our remit also caters to non-production employees, including health and safety, sustainability and CSR.

### **A culture of common goals**

We have always believed that the most effective way to retain our workforce is to make our environment a place where every employee, regardless of their status or rank, feels included in Baladna's operations, ambitions and philosophy. Our values are consistently incorporated in everyday activities and our people appreciate that they work in a culture of respect, reward and recognition.

This common ground has the effect of collectively working towards the same goals and the desire to achieve our objectives. With regards to productivity, those values directly affect our employees' performance as their productivity rises and business goals are supported.

Throughout 2021, Baladna continued its policy of recognition of our staff's efforts and attainments and regularly showed its gratitude to those team members who went above and beyond expectations. Awards and certificates were not only a sign of our appreciation of an individual's achievements, but they were also a great incentive for their colleagues to reach new heights.

To help employees realise their full potential, we provided an extraordinary +20,000 training hours throughout the year. It was an ambitious target for 2021 but our mission to upskill our workforce in terms of productivity, management and technical capabilities proved a huge success. Our ethos of learning, development and engagement has been fundamental to the progression of Baladna as a company and our workers as a whole.

As well as a holistic approach to our staff in terms of Baladna as a single entity, our individual departments also played a part in taking on a more individual approach. Monthly activities were organised in order to facilitate team-building as well as informal lunch gatherings and non-work related events to encourage bonding.

Among these, national holidays and special occasions were celebrated, including Ramadan, Diwali, Christmas and New Year's and for employees staying in company accommodation other events such as Eid sports were also provided.

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We do not make assumptions that these activities or any other measures we introduce are beneficial to our employees; we have a very special relationship with our workforce and we constantly listen to their opinions and proposals. Baladna has an active open-door policy where team members can voice their concerns or express their views as it is vital to us that we have stable and content workers and that they feel they can trust us and will be heard.

Regular feedback, satisfaction surveys and suggestions boxes are among the many ways we can measure the success of our strategies and implement new initiatives.

## Our contributions to the nation

Many of Baladna's strategies will continue to be driven by the Qatar Vision 2030. Our growth and commitment to enriching the nation's economy is paramount. Likewise, our ongoing activities to serve as a champion of diversity and sustainability will have a profound effect on our commercial direction.

We strive to be an employer of choice for our existing and future workforce and will maintain our efforts to recruit and mentor more local talent to support the company's targets and contribute to Qatar Vision 2030 themselves.

## Future ambitions and actions

For the coming year, we will be focusing on talent management in accordance with the expansion and diversification of Baladna's strategy for 2022. We are not looking to merely maintain a strong status quo, we will be playing a pivotal role in helping the company to achieve its growth targets.

With this development comes the need to prioritise succession management and develop our own department to face the new opportunities and challenges we will encounter. The company's employees are a linchpin in achieving its ambitions and we will build on even more expertise and experience to support that role.

We are confident that our exceptional employees will once again adapt to new changes in new markets and increase efficiency and quality delivery.

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