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INKED MALDIVES: A JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND RESILIENCE



Founder of Inked Maldives
Mr. Amhar Mahran Mohamed
(standing, right)

Since its inception in 2017, Inked Maldives has come a long way from a humble beginning in a small room, with minimal equipment, to one of the best-known printing companies in the Maldives. Specializing in various forms of printing services, including large-format printing, flex banners, and fabric printing, the company has established itself in the industry. But the journey was far from smooth.

"We faced a lot of challenges during the early days," says the founder of Inked Maldives Mr. Amhar Mahran Mohamed. *"We didn't have the capacity to fulfill most of the orders we received, but we managed to procure the required machinery through self-financing within a few months."* Starting with on-demand T-shirt printing, they quickly expanded their service offerings to include phone covers, bumper stickers, and more.



Products offered by Inked Maldives

Today, Inked Maldives is recognized for its capacity and speed in large-format printing, something the company takes great pride in. However, with growth comes the responsibility of preparing for unexpected disruptions.



PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES IN AN UNPREDICTABLE WORLD

When it comes to dealing with unexpected events or emergencies, Inked Maldives is still evolving. The company has a few standard

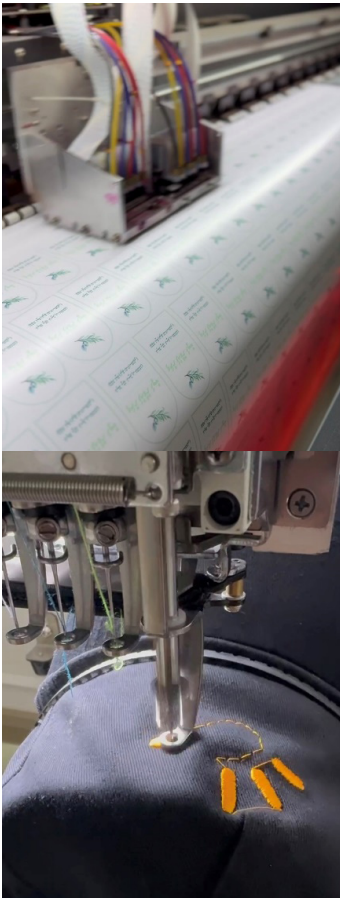
operating procedures, mostly technical, which include guidelines for reporting emergencies and machine malfunctions. But when asked if the company had a business continuity plan (BCP), the founder admits, *"We do not have a BCP for disasters, but we do have collaborating printing partners in the country who assist during emergencies."*

One major challenge the company faces is transportation disruptions, especially during the rainy season. Rainy days and floods make it very difficult for the staff to reach the studio which leads to one or two people running the entire operation on chosen days. Despite these challenges, the team remains resilient, and external support from the government—such as water drainage and ground floor flood protections—helps alleviate the worst of the situation.

Like many businesses around the world, Inked Maldives faced unprecedented difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic. *"It was one of the toughest times we've seen,"* recalls the founder. With the studio closed for two months and no way to reach customers, the company had to relocate during the lockdown and continue paying staff salaries and rent.



Main products offered by Inked Maldives



Main products offered by Inked Maldives

But the business's survival was thanks to a well-thought-out rainy-day fund. *"We learned that adapting to change is very important for small businesses in such events. Having a backup fund for emergencies is crucial,"* the founder emphasizes. They also received government-issued permissions to operate under strict guidelines, allowing them to resume delivery services.

Inked Maldives also faced a data security scare early in its journey. *"Our Telegram account was hacked,"* shares the founder. Fortunately, they had backed up all their data on an offline server and did not lose anything. Since then, they've implemented two-factor authentication (2FA) for all accounts and regularly back up data to the cloud. *"It was a good lesson for us,"* says the founder, *"and it pushed us to prioritize data security."*



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Currently, the business is expanding its studio and relocating some of its larger equipment. *"We are thoroughly prepared for any emergencies during the move,"* says the founder. The company has taken extensive precautions, including hiring professionals to move equipment, dividing the team between the old and new studios, and even designing waterproof covers for the machines during transportation.

"We're confident that the moving process will go smoothly," they add. Such confidence comes from experience—the company has already completed one such move and is drawing from those lessons to ensure that business operations continue uninterrupted.

Inked Maldives stands as a testament to the importance of adaptability and resilience. Whether it's navigating the hurdles of starting a business, dealing with unforeseen challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, or planning complex relocations, Inked Maldives has shown that success is about learning and evolving. Their journey provides valuable lessons for small businesses facing similar challenges, showing that with the right mindset and preparation, growth and success are achievable.

The Strengthening Preparedness and Resilience through Inclusive Community Governance (SPRING) program in the Maldives is a collaborative effort between the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), the Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC), the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). The program duration is from September 2022 until September 2024.

Its primary objective is to enhance community preparedness and resilience by promoting inclusive community governance and engaging key stakeholders. The project focuses on locally-led actions to mitigate and prepare for disasters through capacity development, partnerships, awareness campaigns, and knowledge sharing. By strengthening the capacity of stakeholders such as MRC, local councils, community-based organizations, as well as the private sector, SPRING aims to foster self-reliance at the community level.

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