

CEO *Insights Asia* TOP 10
**LEADERS IN
MALAYSIA-2024**

Mohammad Taufik Othman

EXEMPLIFYING LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE FOR INDUSTRY TITANS

BY ANIMESH JENA

In the ever-evolving landscape of business world, the pivotal role of an effective leader cannot be overstated. Visionary leaders possess the remarkable ability to propel companies toward unparalleled success, seamlessly navigating challenges and seizing opportunities along the way. Mohammad Taufik Othman, the esteemed Group Managing Director of Altus Oil & Gas Malaysia Sdn Bhd proudly reflects such leadership prowess. Taufik's professional journey serves as a compelling testament to his entrepreneurial acumen, characterized by modest origins and remarkable progression. Under his exceptional guidance, Altus has emerged as a trailblazer in marine, logistics and oilfield supply, driven by a steadfast dedication to delivering tangible and enduring value to its diverse clientele.

Taufik's inspiring narrative, offering profound insights into his unique leadership philosophy, poised to resonate profoundly with discerning individuals and esteemed industry stalwarts alike. Through his strategic vision and unwavering commitment to excellence, Taufik continues to inspire and lead with unparalleled dedication and innovation. His story illustrates how a leader's vision, determination, and ability to embrace change can drive an organization to achieve remarkable heights and sustained success in a competitive and ever-changing industry. Let's hear more from him in this one on one interaction.



COVER STORY

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Altus provides
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**GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR,
ALTUS**



Mohammad Taufik Othman,
Group Managing Director,
ALTUS

Born in 1975 in Sungai Setar Kechil, Pulau Pinang, Mohammad Taufik Othman is the eldest of eight siblings. He holds a Certificate in Port Management from the prestigious World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden. Taufik's career began at Port Tanjung Pelepas, where he served for a decade, culminating in his role as Commercial Manager. He then advanced to Senai Airport Terminal Services as Commercial Manager for five years. In 2010, Taufik founded Altus Oil & Gas Malaysia Sdn Bhd, steering it towards significant growth and success.

Describe your leadership approach. What principles or methodologies do you adhere to as a leader?

My leadership approach centers on the principle of 'leading by example.' At Altus, our diverse team comprises individuals from various backgrounds, races, and cultures. Despite these differences, we are united by our vision, mission, and corporate values, which define our corporate identity and are embraced by all. These elements are fundamental

to Altus's identity and culture, binding us together and guiding us toward achieving our organizational mission and vision, while also fostering individual development among Altusians.

We prioritize open communication and a flexible work environment to encourage everyone, regardless of their position, to freely express their ideas and contribute to the company's improvement. To further promote this, we initiated a weekly town hall meeting called Thursday Talk almost a decade ago. During these sessions, Altusians from all branches, along with senior management and the Chairman, gather both physically and virtually to share updates on business operations, activities, and other relevant information. We particularly encourage our executives and junior members to lead these updates, providing them with a platform to voice their opinions and ideas. Over time, Thursday Talk has become a cherished tradition and a weekly event we eagerly anticipate.

This initiative not only enhances transparency but also empowers our employees, fostering a culture of inclusivity and continuous improvement. By valuing each team member's contributions, we create an environment where innovation thrives, and everyone feels a sense of ownership and commitment to our collective success. At Altus, leadership is about inspiring and enabling others to achieve their full potential, ensuring our growth and success as a cohesive and motivated team.

Can you share some of the toughest challenges you have faced in your journey so far? How did you overcome them, and what lessons did you learn from these experiences?

As an entrepreneurial startup, our primary challenge was securing funding for growth. There were numerous times when our financial resources were severely limited, and no financial institutions were willing to support us. During these challenging periods, we had to meticulously plan, organize, and prioritize our business activities to navigate these financial constraints effectively. Thankfully, through careful management and strategic decision-making, we have survived and grown without any external funding from financial institutions until recently. We are also deeply grateful to our stakeholders—our clients, vendors, and service partners—who supported us during these trying times, providing the essential support needed to sustain our operations.





Another significant challenge we faced was operating within the oil and gas industry, which is notoriously highly cyclical. Initially, our services and solutions were particularly vulnerable to these industry cycles because they focused solely on the upstream segment of the industry. When oil prices were high, business was good; however, when prices dropped, the market contracted, and our business suffered. Recognizing this challenge early on, we strategically diversified our service offerings to include segments that perform well even during low oil prices. This strategic diversification made our business portfolio counter-cyclical, providing stability and sustainability in an otherwise volatile market. Additionally, we adopted an unconventional approach by investing in business expansion during market downturns, ensuring we were well-positioned to capitalize when the market rebounded. Our resilience and strategic foresight have been critical to our sustained success, allowing us to not only weather financial storms but also to emerge stronger and more adaptable in the face of industry fluctuations, setting a solid foundation for future growth.

How do you stay informed about ongoing industry trends to guide your organization toward the future?

We believe that change is essential, especially during times of success, as waiting until bad times is often too late. To stay ahead, our company has embraced digitalization, the Internet of Things (IoT), and robotics across all business areas. Notable initiatives include the Versatile Amphibian Robot (VAR), which significantly improves safety and reduces costs for underwater and above-water tasks by replacing human divers and scaffoldings. In partnership with EX Robotics, we provide an Autonomous Inspection and Maintenance Robot with EX certifications for hazardous zones, ensuring safety and efficiency in challenging environments. Additionally, our Altus E-Logistics (AES) service ordering management system offers clients a comprehensive tracking dashboard, enhancing transparency and operational efficiency. These technological advancements have created significant value for our customers, shareholders, and stakeholders. By integrating cutting-edge technology into our operations, we have not only improved safety and reduced costs but also enhanced the overall



efficiency and reliability of our services, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of innovation in our industry. This proactive approach positions us as a leader in adopting new technologies, driving continuous improvement, and delivering exceptional value across all our business areas.

What is the future destination you are heading towards, and what advice would you give to budding leaders in the industry?

We plan to grow the company and double its size within the next two years by adding high-value solutions and moving up the value chain, alongside making significant investments in CAPEX for various business areas. Our long-term objective is to establish Altus as a leading Malaysian company with a strong regional presence. To budding leaders in the industry, my advice is to continually create value and not be afraid of failure. Embracing challenges and learning from setbacks are crucial for sustained growth and success. It is essential to remain innovative and proactive, seeking out new opportunities and leveraging them to drive the company forward. By maintaining a focus on delivering exceptional value and being resilient in the face of adversity, aspiring leaders can navigate the complexities of the business landscape and contribute significantly to the growth and success of their organizations. **C¹**