



A CONVERSATION WITH SATISH SANPAL: VISION, STRATEGY, AND THE ART OF WEALTH

BY ARNIE S HIRA, FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN, SIMPLY ABU DHABI

As the driving force behind ANAX Holding, Satish Sanpal has earned a reputation as one of the UAE’s most influential and forward-thinking businessmen. With a keen eye for opportunity and a deep understanding of the region’s evolving real estate landscape, he has built an empire rooted in bold decisions and long-term vision. In this exclusive conversation, Satish shares with Simply Abu Dhabi readers his approach to business leadership, his views on investment and real estate, and the principles he believes are essential to lasting wealth. We’re honoured he took the time to speak with us – we think you’ll agree that his insights are both strategic and inspiring.

Business Philosophy & Leadership

You’ve emphasized that liquidity, longevity, and legacy are cornerstones of building a resilient business. How have these principles specifically shaped your decision-making at ANAX Holding?

These three principles are not abstract ideas for me—they are the foundation of every decision I make. Liquidity allows us to act when others hesitate. Longevity ensures we evaluate every opportunity based on its potential to hold value a decade from now. Legacy pushes us to think beyond financial returns. Is this something worth being remembered for? At ANAX Holding, no initiative moves forward without passing through those three lenses. These are not just principles; they are the foundation for every venture we pursue.

Your entrepreneurial journey has been defined by identifying emerging market trends. Can you share an instance where you saw an opportunity that others missed, and how you capitalized on it?

Thankfully, most of the decisions I have made so far have turned into opportunities. A good example is during the pandemic, while many were pulling back, I leaned in. I recognized early on that the dip in the market was not a collapse, but rather a correction. I acquired premium properties across Dubai at prices below their future value. I consider this as a calculated move based on where the market was headed. That strategy has since paid off, both in returns and positioning.

You’ve mentioned that discipline in business begins with discipline in life. Could you walk us through your typical day and how your personal habits contribute to your business success?

I believe how you start your day shapes everything that follows. I start my day early. Movement—whether it is a workout, yoga, or even just quiet reflection—is non-negotiable. That space allows me to clear my mind and set priorities before the business of the day begins. I do not believe in rushing through the day; I believe in controlling its pace. That routine is what keeps me focused and in control, especially when the day gets complex.

How has your approach to leadership evolved since founding ANAX Holding? What has been your most significant leadership challenge?

If there is one thing I have learned, it is that leadership is never static. It evolves with every step of the journey. In the early days, I was very hands-on and involved in every detail. But as the company grew, I realized that real leadership is about influence - about inspiring and empowering people to grow, take ownership and align their ambitions with the goals of the company.

One of the most challenging, yet most rewarding,



aspects of leadership has been fostering individual growth. Supporting people in their development, while continuing to drive the business forward, requires a careful balance and a great deal of patience.

Real Estate & Market Insights

ANAX Developments is preparing to unveil three pioneering projects in Dubai Islands, Meydan, and Al Warsan. What unique features will these developments offer?

Our earlier developments set the tone; they introduced the standards we hold ourselves to. With the upcoming projects in Dubai Islands, Meydan and Al Warsan, we are taking that vision even further. Each project undergoes thorough planning before it is launched in the market, ensuring that it meets our benchmarks for quality, efficiency, and long-term value. At ANAX, we never compromise on the lifestyle our clients expect and deserve. With these new launches, buyers can expect high construction standards, timely delivery, and, above all, smart investments in areas with strong future potential.

You’ve acquired significant properties during the pandemic when prices were reduced. What indicators gave you confidence to invest during such uncertain times?

Patterns tell stories. When I saw luxury properties in prime locations becoming undervalued, I did not see risk—I saw a window of opportunity. I paid close attention to capital flight, infrastructure investments, and how high-net-worth individuals were moving. I focused on the fundamentals beneath the uncertainty, and they were stronger than they appeared.

Dubai’s real estate market has shown remarkable resilience. Which segments do you believe offer the strongest long-term potential?

Dubai’s real estate story is no longer just about momentum—it is about maturity. What I see gaining the most traction is thoughtful luxury. Buyers today are seeking lasting value—developments that reflect credibility, strong design, and long-term relevance. Projects tied to branded experiences or anchored by location-driven scarcity—like select plots with marina access or proximity to cultural landmarks—hold lasting demand. We are building not for market cycles, but for a decade from now. That is where the real strength lies.

Your under-construction mansion in Dubai Hills has appreciated to approximately \$100 million. What insights from luxury residential development have you applied to ANAX Developments’ projects?

The biggest insight is this: size alone does not equal value—identity does. The mansion taught me the importance of timeless design, smart layout, and emotionally resonant architecture. We carry that into every project. Buyers today do not just want square footage—they want something that feels lasting and personal. That is what we are building.

Wealth Creation & Personal Philosophy

You’ve stated, “I want to be among the top 10 billionaires globally within a decade.” What strategic steps are you taking to achieve this ambitious goal?

Ambition is not enough. It has to be supported by velocity, insight, and calculated diversification. My strategy is threefold: expanding ANAX Holding’s footprint across real estate, hospitality, and private investment; deepening our involvement in ultra-luxury and underdeveloped niches; and continuously compounding assets that appreciate while retaining liquidity to stay agile. I know exactly what the runway looks like.

You mention that you don’t keep money in banks but invest quickly in assets. Could you elaborate on your investment philosophy and asset allocation strategy?

My strategy has always focused on diversifying across real estate, gold, and other solid asset classes that preserve and grow value over time. At the same time, I ensure sufficient liquidity is available to act quickly when the right opportunity arises. For me, it is about maintaining a balance between consistent growth and financial flexibility.

In your experience, how does financial success impact the way you’re perceived in business—and how has that shaped your relationships?

In business, people take you more seriously when you’ve proven your ability to create value. It opens doors, but it also sets expectations. Financial success builds credibility, but it’s how you use that credibility that matters. I focus on partnerships with people who deliver results and think long-term. This creates alignment and allows us to move at the same pace, with a shared vision.

Beyond luxury possessions, what do you consider your most valuable non-financial assets?

My family. My time. My instincts. These three determine how I navigate everything else. I protect them carefully.

Social Impact & Future Vision

Through the Sanpal Foundation, you’ve invested in clean water initiatives in Uganda and programs for widows in India. What motivated these specific causes, and how do you measure their impact?

The purpose behind these initiatives—and many others we support—is to make a difference, even if that difference can’t always be measured. I believe true success is incomplete without giving back to the society we are part of. That’s why I am drawn to causes that are often overlooked, yet carry a deep and lasting impact on the lives they touch. Through the Sanpal Foundation, we aim to support communities where hardship runs deep, and where even small interventions can bring back hope.



How do you balance the pursuit of wealth with creating social value through your business ventures and philanthropic efforts?

The pursuit of wealth, on its own, has never been the goal. Without creating lasting social value, success feels incomplete—both personally and in the legacy one leaves behind. True satisfaction comes from knowing that what you build carries meaning, now and in the future. At the end of the day, it’s the impact you make that truly endures.

Looking ahead, what emerging markets or sectors do you believe will present the greatest opportunities for ANAX Holding in the next five years?

Experiential hospitality and exclusive lifestyle infrastructure are about to transform. People are looking for spaces that reflect identity, not just comfort. That is where we are doubling down—hospitality meets heritage, real estate meets experience. Private investment vehicles with personalized returns are also on our radar. The world is moving from public display to private confidence. We intend to lead in that shift.

You’ve mentioned that “nearly 50 percent of startups fail within five years.” What advice would you give to entrepreneurs in Dubai who want to build sustainable businesses?

Do not confuse momentum with validation. Just because something is moving does not mean it is working. Focus on staying funded, staying focused, and staying disciplined. Build what solves a long-term problem, not just what fits a short-term trend. The runway in Dubai is long, but only if you prepare for the turns.

Our signature final question: What do you think about Simply Abu Dhabi, our coffee table book publication?

Simply Abu Dhabi stands out as a platform that captures both elegance and depth; it is an impressive archive of influence and vision. I respect any publication that elevates the conversation around success, creativity, and legacy—and Simply Abu Dhabi continues to do so with distinction.

Thank you so much for your time and insights, Satish.