Navneet Mandhani: Building Across Borders

From technology and global business to real estate and venture investing, Navneet Mandhani has built his career around one recurring idea: spotting opportunity early and scaling it across markets.

Navneet Mandhani · Founder and CEO, Karma Developers · Founder, Sophonos Investments
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Some business leaders build depth in one industry.

Navneet Mandhani has built his career across several.

Technology, telecom, global trade, real estate and venture investing have all shaped his journey. Today, as Founder and CEO of Karma Developers, he leads a Dubai-based real estate business with operations spanning the UAE, the UK, Cyprus, Romania and Australia. He also founded Sophonos Investments, extending his entrepreneurial interests into technology, AI and early-stage ventures.

That combination makes Mandhani an interesting emerging-leader story for the UAE.

He is not approaching real estate purely as a property developer. His perspective is increasingly shaped by technology, investment, international diversification and changing expectations around how people live.

From Technology to Real Estate

Mandhani's professional journey did not begin in property.

He has a background in engineering and worked in the United States in enterprise technology before moving into entrepreneurship. His experience across telecom, trading and other sectors eventually led him toward real estate, where he co-founded Karma's platform in 2013.

That cross-industry experience appears to have influenced the way he approaches development.

Rather than treating property as a purely construction-led business, Mandhani has increasingly spoken about the importance of building communities around wellness, lifestyle and long-term value. In a recent Forbes Business Council contribution, he argued that the role of developers is evolving beyond buildings toward designing better ways of living.

That is a useful lens through which to understand Karma Developers.

The company is positioning itself at the intersection of design, affordability, sustainability and international growth.

Scaling the Platform

Karma's growth has accelerated significantly.

Forbes Middle East reported that, as of February 2026, Karma Group's projects were valued at more than $1.3 billion. By July 2025, the company had completed more than 25 projects across markets including the UAE, UK and Cyprus.

Gulf Business later reported that under Mandhani's leadership, Karma had delivered more than 2,000 homes, with another 2,000 units under development and a multi-billion-dirham pipeline across several international markets.

The company has also widened its ambitions inside Dubai.

In 2025, Karma consolidated around 186,000 square metres of land in Dubai Investments Park and entered commercial development through the Liwan project, signalling a move beyond residential development alone.

The scale is becoming meaningful.

But Mandhani's larger challenge is to ensure that scale does not come at the expense of differentiation.

Real Estate Meets Technology

One of the most interesting dimensions of Mandhani's profile is the way he combines property with technology.

Through Sophonos Investments, he has backed companies in areas including AI, proptech and deep technology. That investment perspective gives him a view of innovation that extends beyond real estate itself.

It also aligns with how the development industry is changing.

AI, data, digital sales, building technology, sustainability and customer intelligence are becoming increasingly important to developers in Dubai and other global markets.

For a leader with Mandhani's technology background, that shift presents an opportunity.

The next generation of real estate companies may not be judged only by what they construct, but by how intelligently they design, sell, manage and operate those assets.

Recognition and Rising Visibility

Mandhani's profile has risen sharply in 2026.

He and Karma's chairman were named among Forbes Middle East's Most Impactful Real Estate Leaders 2026, while Gulf Business included Mandhani in its Top 50 Leaders and CEOs of 2026. He was also recognised at the Gulf Business Real Estate Summit & Awards as Cross-Border Real Estate Leader, reflecting his international expansion strategy.

These recognitions are secondary to the business itself, but they point to a broader trend: Mandhani is becoming a more visible voice in the UAE's rapidly evolving development sector.

The Cover Story View

Navneet Mandhani represents a new kind of UAE entrepreneur.

He is global in outlook, technology-oriented in thinking and increasingly focused on building across markets rather than remaining tied to a single geography.

His real estate story is still evolving, but the direction is clear.

The ambition is not simply to build more properties.

It is to build a platform that connects real estate, capital, technology and international opportunity.

If Mandhani can maintain that balance while scaling, Karma Developers may become one of the more interesting cross-border growth stories emerging from Dubai.

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