Juan Pablo Salas

ASCON

“ I saw an opportunity to create a world-class shipyard. ”

COUNTRY	Chile
INDUSTRY	Industrials
YEAR SELECTED	2008
PARTNER	Manuel Aravena
WEBSITE	www.ascon.cl

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Lifelong veterans of the shipbuilding industry, Juan Pablo Salas and Manuel Aravena are showing that innovation and high-impact growth can come from anywhere — even a shipyard in a small corner of Southern Chile. Their shipbuilding and repair business, ASCON, has grown quickly from a small-scale local business in Puerto Montt to a major player in the national market. Having recently completed construction on a brand new shipyard facility and securing major contracts, ASCON is charting a course towards international success.

Raised and educated in Chile's Southern region, Manuel and Juan Pablo spent their lives surrounded by the maritime industries. Both were trained as naval engineers at the Universidad Austral de Chile and spent their early careers working for local shipyards. The two met in 1992 while both were working for Detroit, a local Chilean shipyard. Frustrated with the limitations of the bureaucratic, standardized models of existing shipyards and dissatisfied with the business environment and lack of innovation within the company, Manuel and Juan Pablo left and set out to realize their dreams of owning their own shipyard. Manuel's ambition and technical expertise combined with Juan Pablo's managerial skills and ability to execute made for a dynamic partnership. With the duo's life-savings and just 30 meters of rented beach as the initial production space, ASCON was born.

From day one ASCON has built a reputation for efficiency, quality, and ability to take on challenging projects. With this reputation, along with their technical expertise and understanding of the industry, Manuel and Juan Pablo quickly established ASCON as a competitor in the local market. ASCON first made its innovative mark with an original reinvention of traditional salmon boats to improve their overall performance (making them faster, able to hold more cargo, safer for dangerous passage of Corcovado Gulf, and multi-functional). This pioneering design was later copied by other local shipyards, establishing ASCON as the leader in innovation in the regional market.

Recognizing the great opportunity created by the expansion of the Chilean maritime industries in the 1990s, Manuel and Juan Pablo created ASCON to build and repair ships with the tailor-made designs and customized services necessary in these demanding and rapidly changing maritime industries. The company has grown from a small-scale local shipyard in Puerto Montt to a major player in the national market, with dozens of ships built to date, revenues of several million, and a team of highly trained workers. Having recently completed construction of a brand new 20,000 m2 shipyard facility and inked two major contracts valued at over millions of dollars, ASCON is proving it can effectively navigate and thrive in the industry.

ENDEAVOR AND ASCON

An Endeavor VC and board member helped renegotiate major contracts and secure capital, while helping to professionalize the company's management to sustain growth. Juan and Manuel have also benefited from the global eMBA program and series of local workshops.

Juan and Manuel demonstrate commitment to Endeavor by speaking at Endeavor events, participating in the selection process of candidates, and mentoring fellow Entrepreneurs.