

EVENT PREVIEW

GREAT GM DEBATE 2014

A host of new speakers and sponsors are lined up to support this year's essential networking and education forum for hotel general managers

More than 200 hotel general managers are expected to attend the annual Hotelier Middle East Great GM Debate, now in its fifth edition and being held on September 2 at Jumeirah Beach Hotel in Dubai. The forum will feature five major panel discussions, plus live-on-stage interviews and 'Take 5' presentations from some of the most inspirational GMs we know. An exclusive data presentation from TRI Hospitality Consulting's senior consultant Christopher Hewett will provide delegates with an essential snapshot of the UAE's hotel performance in 2014, and Hewett will later be joined on stage by Philip Wooller, area director Middle East & Africa, STR Global to answer questions about how GMs can best use performance data.

Topics for the panel debates include: Beating Benchmarks; Healthy Competition; The OTA Dilemma; Social Media in Hospitality and the GM's Responsibility for Reputation; and The Evolution of the GM. Speakers will be finalised this month, but the stage will welcome many new names in 2014, with Laurent A. Voivenel, CEO, HMH Hotel Group; Margaret Paul, GM, Madinat Jumeirah – The Arabian Resort; Pep Lozano, GM, The Ritz-Carlton Grand Canal, Abu Dhabi; Jan Moenkedieck, GM, Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah; and Marko Janssen, GM, Meliá Dubai already confirmed to speak.

To enable more in-depth conversation and the informal sharing of challenges and best practice, the Hotelier Middle



➔ Hilton Worldwide president MEA Rudi Jagersbacher took part in a live Q&A last year.



➔ Riaz Khimani, managing director of Rikan General Trading LLC.

East Great GM Debate will also feature four workshops, with each GM choosing one to attend. These are focused on: The Difference between a Good Manager and a Great Leader; Employee Engagement and Staff Retention; Guest-centric Philosophies and Experiential Travel; and F&B Innovation, which will be led by

Robert Ancill, chief executive officer, The Next Idea.

As well as the conference sessions, the GM Debate, as always, will facilitate essential networking among colleagues, peers and industry suppliers. Sponsors this year include silver sponsor Rikan, associate sponsor Ronai, knowledge partner Glion, and presenting sponsor, Du. Farnek, ESP International, Unique Precise International, Restonic, Pulsar, TCL, Eurocoffee/Lavazza, Horeca Trade, Coffee Planet, Infoscape and Ruud Lighting Arabia are also

“ There will be changes and improvements in the levels of service and luxury offered, thus creating a super luxury segment”
Riaz Khimani, managing director of Rikan General Trading LLC

MEET THE SPONSORS





➤ The event format will include five major panel discussions.



➤ DTCM's Helal Al Marri will speak at the event.

supporting the event, with experts on hand to explain their products.

Riaz Khimani, managing director of Rikan General Trading, says the event is the perfect platform for hoteliers and suppliers to keep in touch with one another.

"This conference works both as a way to study and understand the trends of the industry from the leaders, and for us to

offer them new creations," says Khimani, who will be showcasing new F&B and banqueting suppliers as well as bespoke room accessories and the new 2015 catalogue, giving delegates an exclusive preview of the latest products.

Inside the conference room, Khimani expects evolving market segmentation in the UAE to be a significant of topic of discussion among the GMs.

"For the hotel industry we expect a major repositioning of the existing brands," he asserts. "There will be changes and improvements in the levels of service and luxury offered, thus creating a super luxury segment. At the same time we also expect emergence of a new budget brand segment and many internationally existing budget hotel brands to be launching in this region. This will require us to understand the trends of the industry over the next few years to come, and thus help us create a product line for room and F&B accessories

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Hotelier MIDDLE EAST

GREAT GM DEBATE 2014

Date: September 2, 2014

Venue: Jumeirah Beach Hotel

Format: One-day event with live interviews, panel debates, case studies, presentations, workshops, and networking opportunities

Attendance: By invitation only and is free to hotel general managers. Please register your interest with Amanda.eli-sha@itp.com

Speaker opportunities: Please contact louby.maktari@itp.com or call +971 4 444 3578

Sponsorship opportunities: Please contact charlotte.ringrose@itp.com or nick.clowes@itp.com

Details: www.hoteliermiddleeast.com/conferences

in leather, metal, resin etc., that will be suitable to the upcoming market segment of a number of luxury and budget hotels."

Managing director of ESP International, Rebecca Wilson, who offers a niche recruitment service to hotels with significant event space, agrees with Khimani that "there is much change and diversity in the market", but adds that she is seeing increased growth in refurbishments too.

"What I am noticing is that many of the stalwart properties that have been around for up to a decade are being refurbished and the restaurant scene in particular is really seeing a revival, with new modern offerings that feel fresh and help take the UAE even further up the stakes when it comes to world class hotels," says Wilson.

To stay ahead in such a competitive marketplace, Wilson says "General managers need to source, hire, and retain the best people".

"With so many global and local hotel chains all hiring, it's essential to create a value proposition to



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