

INTERVIEW WITH

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HOSPITALITY

BUSINESS CONCLAVE



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According to you, how important is it for hotels in Saudi Arabia to reinvent their F&B options to keep up and stay ahead from the competition?

This is a high priority, menus at the least should be reinvented and or reviewed quarterly, especially if there are less funds for renovations etc. In terms of renovations, successful restaurants should be given a makeover every few years (housekeeping and engineering play a major part of the success), however if it is required to completely change the entirety of the restaurant, it should be every 7-10 years or so depending on the outlet / operations success.

Do you see a lot of push from the management to pay more attention to revenue from restaurants?

Absolutely, restaurant sales in Saudi Arabia should be at a par to room sales / revenue, depending on the size of the F&B offering.

Costs and overheads should be tightly monitored on a month to month basis. Food cost and beverage cost control (purchasing, together with annual tendering play a major role to ensure the units acquire the best possible rates) is the essence of success.

In any case, restaurants in the hotels should be targeted towards the city residents, and not occupancy driven from hotels guests and clientele.

How do you rate local produce vs European materials for your kitchens?

I try to use as much local produce as possible looking at quality first. It helps the local economy, and helps us to reduce costs by not purchasing expensive imported items. However, international brands sometimes are more suitable than local brands - quality first.

Is there a challenge meeting the talent and skill demands for your kitchens?

This is always a challenge, as the Kingdom is not on every ones priority list as a destination for employment / career development and or growth. I believe in looking for young motivated team members with great attitudes whom I can train and develop. If the attitude is correct, then it's easy for one to train and thereafter, develop a career path.

What kind of solutions and innovations would you like to see in then hotel F&B industry at such forums?

I have always felt that getting great team members has been a challenge, this is due to the visa's and government regulations by nationalizing positions and also as stated above, the Kingdom is not on every ones priority list to work. It would be beneficial to look at developing local hotel schools to teach the younger generation basics where they can then grow from. Having forums for the hotel schools / catering colleges wherein we can take classes and or seminars and help to motivate the younger ones to join / develop and grow within the hospitality

