



## THE MIDDLE EAST PREFABRICATION AND MODULAR CONSTRUCTION SUMMIT 2016

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### INTERVIEW WITH **MICHEL DIB HANNA**

*Group General Manager, Speed House Group*

*Michel D Hanna, an MBA from Cass Business School, UK joined SPEED HOUSE GROUP, UAE in 2005. He has been working with clients and innovating client centric sales and marketing strategies ever since. Mr. Hanna, who is the main force behind turning the family business unit into a world class manufacturing company, has been leading the group from the front in the capacity of Group General Manager. In this interview, Mr. Hanna talks about the **Current And Future Trends Of Prefabrication And Modular Building Industry Across The Globe.***

#### **How has the construction projects evolved with the inclusion of prefabrication construction modules? How has the evolution been in the last two years?**

Michel D Hanna: The concept of off-site construction followed by on-site installation is very popular as it offers temporary as well as permanent solutions alike. This concept has rapidly evolved because of its dynamism and versatile applications. The prefab concept is so dynamic that it caters to the needs of Oil & Gas and Power & Energy sectors on the one hand and Real Estate and Health Care Sectors on the other, just to name a few. Given the advantages of factory fabrication and regular quality inspection by well-trained professionals are some of the top reasons that have given a fillip to its evolution.

Yes, it is true that architects and society equally deemed prefabricated building as an insignificant structure. However, what has been noticed in the last 2-3 years that the architects are experimenting modern designs and technical specifications in line with changing business scenario. As there is huge discussion about climate change taking place in every nook and corner across the globe, prefab industries have come up with green materials for eco-friendly finishes. The prefabricated buildings are much more flexible and user friendly because it can be customized as per requirements. You will be surprised to know that Mc Donald's started using prefabricated units as outlets which remain open for 13 hours at a stretch. The days are upon us to see the prefab concept entering all the industries cutting across their industrial profiles and requirements.

#### **How is prefab and modular construction as a method helping the developers in project delivery within the stipulated timelines?**

Michel D Hanna: Unlike conventional method of construction, prefab and modular construction requires more time in planning but less time in execution in better controlled working conditions. It allows the project managers to simultaneously monitor and get other activities executed at the project site for successful project delivery. If there is a systematic cooperation from the end-users, suppliers and material coordinators, project delivery can be ensured 15%-35% faster as compared to the conventional method of on-site construction.

#### **Prefabrication construction has seen a slow adaptation in the construction industry. What are drawbacks which deters a large scale absorption of this construction method?**

Michel D Hanna: It is true to say that the adaptation of prefabricated buildings have been slower in the Middle East and Africa.

Lets us talk about Asia Pacific, US and Europe where prefabricated houses play a very significant role. As per the industry report published in 2012, Asia Pacific tops the list with 49% of global market share valued US\$90.1 billion. The modular housing, as popularly known in the west; market in Europe pegged at US\$ 31.5 billion with Italy taking the lead with the market share 25.4%. The prefab market in North America stood at US\$ 10.2 billion with the US accounting for the largest share with 75% stake. The Middle East is one of the smallest markets and only accounts for 3.25% of the global market. However, the situation is fast turning around because of the construction boom in the region.

The major drawback deterring it to mainstream absorption is the perception. Till recently, people viewed it as a building structure with inferior quality which doesn't offer long-lasting solution.

Secondly, what the end users always want to see is concrete in their prospective structures. Today the construction industry is evolving and we believe people will be less dependent on concrete in the decades to come.

#### **How do you think cost overrun and time delays can be minimized through prefabrication and modular construction methodologies?**

Michel D Hanna: As the name itself suggests, on-site construction is carried out at the project site which can take six to ten months (as per the requirement) whereas off-site method of construction takes place in a controlled factory environment where delays and cost overruns are negligible. The construction cycle cannot be slowed by weather, contractors no-show, or even site logistics such as space, elevator or crane unavailability. Our skilled manpower with co-operation from the clients can build up a home in less than a third of the time consumed in traditional on-site construction.

*Share the challenges you faced in creating the World's Largest Mobile Caravan?*

Michel D Hanna: Challenges that we faced were related to size as everything had to be from larger to the largest, not to forget the rigidity to absorb the movement on the roads of the desert. Constant planning, meeting and open discussion with the stakeholders involved resulted in an iconic prefabricated structure that has held the record for being "The largest Mobile Caravan in the World" over the last 13 years.

*Your company Speed House Group is participating in the Middle East Prefabrication and Modular Construction Summit 2016 at Dubai. What are your expectations from the summit and how do you rate the topics of the discussion at the summit?*

Michel D Hanna: We are participating to highlight the advantages of using prefabricated elements in building. There are many industries taking advantage of the structures such as Oil & Gas, Infrastructure and Urban Planning, to name a few, as of now. However, there are many advantages to be grasped by other industries like Hospitality, Housing, Healthcare and Resort, as well. The prefabricated housing is the final resort to house the mass population mired in floods, earth-quacks and war zones.

It is also very important to emphasize that prefab structures made out of the combination of steel sections, plaster boards, insulated elements and other materials can act as efficiently as concrete structures in all construction perimeters and guidelines.



# The LARGEST

## Mobile Caravan in the World

