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Monday, June 1, 2015

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW | CHRISTOPH K. FRANZEN; General Manager; Grand Hyatt Doha



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Editor: Tell us about your journey. How did it all start?

I grew up in a hotelier family and my parents were running a hotel in the Swiss Alps; a fantastic mountain resort called Zermatt on the foot of the famed Mount Matterhorn. I am also an Ambassador of Tourism of this beautiful Alpine village. It was always clear to me that I will be in the hotel business as I always had a passion for it. I first did my apprenticeships to become a Chef and then Sommelier; both in Switzerland.

Afterwards I joined a few smaller operators and free standing hotels before I started to work for Hilton in Switzerland. I went to hotel school relatively late, aged 26, but the benefit was that I had a comprehensive understanding of what was taught.

After hotel school I joined Hyatt Hotels and first started our at the Hyatt Regency Dubai in 1999. At the time, this was the biggest operation of Hyatt in the division. From Dubai I moved to Muscat and became the Front Office Manager at the Grand Hyatt Muscat in the countries capital. I moved on in 2006 from Oman to become the Director of Rooms at the Park Hyatt in Moscow before I returned again as EAM Room to the Grand Hyatt Dubai in 2007.

In 2009 I was appointed General Manager of the Grand Hyatt Muscat and moved back to the Sultanate of Oman again before I was transferred in January 2013 as General Manager to the Grand Hyatt Doha in Qatar

Editor: What do you think it takes to succeed in this industry?

Persistence. Passion for the job. Willingness to exceed. The more senior the position becomes, the more compassionate you have to be. At the end of the day, it all boils down to taking care of your associates so they in turn are motivated to take care of our guests.

Editor: What are the attributes you look for while selecting or hiring?

Depending on the position, we would look for relevant experience and education. However for all the jobs I look for the person with the right attitude and the willingness to succeed. We can train tasks, but the attitude and character have to be right; otherwise all else fails.

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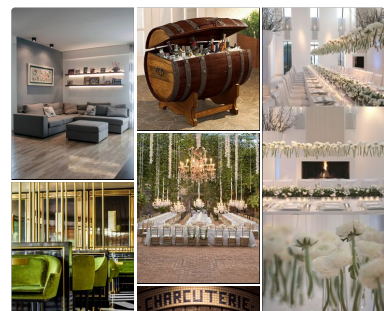
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See On

Editor: What according to you can trainees do while they are training at hotels to make it a win-win for them & the hotel/unit?

I was always lucky enough to have passionate mentors who took care of me and ensured I have a structured training plan. If a trainee feels he is merely a cheap replacement for a fully paid staff and no relevant training is given he or she must raise this concern. [Trainees](#) are usually highly motivated and well educated; as a [company](#) we must look at them as future employees and if they are not happy with their 'brand experience' as trainees, they will never work for us if they have the chance to choose.

Editor: Tell us a little about your average day.

I start early, usually around 5.30 am with [reading](#) the various newspapers and then distributing the relevant information to the respective team members. Then I usually handle my emails as this is still a relatively quiet part of the day without interruption. This is followed by a walk through the operation and then the daily briefings and meetings. I then try to take a little bit of time off to go to the gym to get a little bit of recreation into my day. After that it is again correspondence, meeting guests and colleagues, handling VIP events and then take care of the evening operation. If there is no special event, I am usually home by around 21.00 hours.

Editor: How do keep abreast of all that is happening in hospitality?

Relevant [online](#) forums, hotel related [publications](#), e-newsletters and by exchanging views and comments with my peers from within the industry and Hyatt.

Editor: Two reasons why this industry is awesome!

Working in international [locations](#) as well as interesting guests!

Editor: Two things you would like to [change](#) about the industry.

Those guests I call the "2-percenters". The odd guest who is an almost professional complainer and it becomes very challenging to make everything right.

Less paperwork, more guest interaction.



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