



AI Analysis

Rethinking Hospitality Schools: Education, Experience & Environment

Dr. Fabien Fresnel

Chief Executive Officer, The Riyadh School of Tourism and Hospitality

Glenn Mandziuk

Chief Executive Officer, World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance

Muin Serhan

Chief Executive Officer, Amsa Hospitality

Moderator: Arjun Singh

Founding Director, Hospitality and Tourism Management Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship

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Summary

The panel discussion on Rethinking Hospitality Schools: Education, Experience & Environment focused on the challenges and solutions related to attracting, training, and retaining talent in the rapidly growing hospitality industry in Saudi Arabia. Muin Serhan emphasized the importance of creating a sense of belonging and a positive culture within companies to retain employees. He highlighted that new recruits often leave due to a lack of fit with the company culture, stressing the need for accountability, respect, development, and growth within organizations. Serhan also noted that high turnover rates lead to instability and financial losses, underlining the importance of building a stable, supportive environment for employees.

Fabien Fresnel discussed the challenges of scaling hospitality education to meet the massive demand for skilled workers. He pointed out that traditional education formats are insufficient and proposed innovative approaches, including technology-enabled training and shorter, more impactful courses. Fresnel stressed the need for vocational and professional education to upskill and reskill employees quickly. He also mentioned the importance of bringing glamour back to the industry to attract young talent and the necessity of guaranteed employment and subsidies to retain students. Fresnel highlighted the need for collaboration between educators, operators, and policymakers to create effective training programs and career paths for hospitality professionals.

Glenn Mandziuk addressed the importance of sustainability in attracting and retaining talent. He noted that younger generations are increasingly motivated by working for companies that prioritize sustainability and have a clear sense of purpose. Mandziuk highlighted that the hospitality industry has been slow to integrate sustainability into its training and operations, and emphasized the need for educational institutions to update their curricula to reflect modern sustainability practices. He shared success stories from other countries where sustainability-focused programs have led to high retention rates among employees, particularly women. Mandziuk called for a greater focus on sustainability to make the industry more attractive to potential recruits and ensure long-term growth and success.





Key Takeaways

Creating a Positive Company Culture

Muin Serhan highlighted the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and a supportive environment within hospitality companies to retain employees. High turnover rates lead to instability and financial losses, making it crucial to build a culture of accountability, respect, development, and growth. Employees are more likely to stay when they feel they fit well with the company's culture and vision.

Innovative Approaches to Hospitality Education

Fabien Fresnel emphasized the need for innovative education formats to meet the massive demand for skilled workers in the hospitality industry. Traditional education formats are insufficient, and shorter, technology-enabled courses are necessary to upskill and reskill employees quickly. Collaboration between educators, operators, and policymakers is essential to create effective training programs and career paths for hospitality professionals.

Sustainability as a Key Attraction Factor

Glenn Mandziuk stressed the importance of sustainability in attracting and retaining younger generations in the hospitality industry. Companies that prioritize sustainability and have a clear sense of purpose are more appealing to potential recruits. Integrating modern sustainability practices into educational curricula and operations can lead to higher retention rates and long-term success for the industry.



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