

What's On

NBK Academy celebrates graduation of 22nd batch of newly hired trainees



National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) celebrated the graduation of the 22nd batch of newly hired employees from "NBK Academy" program. NBK Academy aims to train and develop young graduates through providing professional skills as part of NBK's strategy to develop the national human resources and attract them to work in the banking industry.

The graduation ceremony was attended by Salah Al Fulaij, NBK CEO - Kuwait, Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Emad Al-Ablani,

General Manager, Human Resources Group, National Bank of Kuwait, as well as a number of NBK officials. The ceremony included honoring the outstanding graduates who demonstrated their best efforts throughout the program and its various components including attending lectures and participating in practical training as well as field training in the branches and various departments.

Graduates concluded NBK Academy program in four months (the duration of the program) covering various banking aspects including: Banking principles, risk management, teamwork, financial accounting, marketing, negotiation, and consumer and commercial lending, in addition to providing hands-on-training to all program participants at various departments in the bank through engaging international accredited trainers to enable trainees to gain top banking skills. NBK Academy program is designed in accordance with the highest international training techniques with the aim to provide participants with both theoretical and technical skills that cover key areas of the banking sector. Participants also receive

a wealth of knowledge about NBK work structure and culture in order to further enhance their career development opportunities in the future. In 2008, NBK launched "NBK Academy", the first initiative of its kind in the private sector in Kuwait aimed at developing highly qualified national banking leaders with the highest international skill set and experience level in all banking disciplines. The initiative aims at fulfilling the bank's aspirations to continuously improve its services and expand its activities and growth plans, both locally and regionally.

Safir Hotels & Resorts partners with KU's bright young minds

Safir Hotels & Resorts (SHR) has reached out to the students of Kuwait University (KU) College of Architecture and asked them to dream up innovative new ways to provide a modern hospitality experience. The grass-roots method to product development is a unique approach to sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility rarely seen in the region. Safir Hotels & Resorts was established in 1993 by the Middle East's first Arabian hospitality management company, the Kuwait Hotels Company (KHC). Kuwait-based and a subsidiary of KIPCO, the brand manages nine hotels across six countries.

In 2018, a flurry of internal activity took place within the 26-year-old brand as it took measures to refresh its identity. Paying tribute to its name "Safir" and the role it plays in serving as an ambassador of each community that houses its hotels, part of its refreshed brand identity involves finding ways to include and give back to society. Safir is currently in the process of developing new hospitality brands, one of which is to be positioned in the midscale hospitality market segment and aims to appeal predominantly to Generation Z and Millennials.

Wanting the project to be truly home-grown, SHR has reached out to KU College of Architecture in an initiative that will unfold the university's young local talent into the design process. Brimming with diversity and creativity, the Kuwait-based College of Architecture is a hotbed of inspiration that Safir Hotels & Resorts recognizes as an untapped source of raw potential. "The youth are our future. They



see things differently than we do, as their minds are still fresh, exploding with creativity, and unburdened by the restrictions and limitations that we sometimes impose on ourselves with the experience that comes with age," said Safir's CEO Fawzi Al Musallam.

"We can learn from them just as much as they can learn from us. It is an opportunity to involve the youth of Kuwait whilst giving back - to provide them with a creative outlet and a chance to leave their mark on the world." The students of Interior Architecture Studio III - led by KU Professor Dr Muhammad Al Bagshi and TA Interior Designer Noor Abdal-are focusing on developing concepts for two key areas of any hospitality experience: the hotel guest room and hotel lobby. For Safir, a key element of the students' deliverables is finding modern and innovative ways to deliver a hospitality experience that uses space cleverly and efficiently, while still reflecting the local culture and the wishes and expectations of young hotel guests.

Abdal comments: "Our program is constantly seeking to stretch the boundaries of design, and this educational experience with SHR allows our students to fully grasp the evolving and expanding nature of interior architecture, as well as reinforcing the importance of collaboration on such projects, offering our students the opportunity to integrate their local roots

with the evolving technology and the highly tailored design choices of the hospitality industry." KU's architecture students are being provided with guidance from KHC's resident architect and Corporate Director of Design and Technical Services Lidia Janakievsk, who is enriching the youth of Kuwait by sharing her vast expertise with them in the form of insight into hotel operation standards and parameters.

"The overarching design ethos for this project is simple: it is rooted in tradition and innovation," Janakievsk comments. "Millennials and Generation Z are a huge influence on hospitality developments these days. They are connected, curious, and hungry for new experiences, while still yearning for the familiarity and comfort of their culture. In a hospitality setting, they expect design essentials as well as those they haven't seen before. With so many midscale brands emerging around the world, we would like to make a difference. What better way than by involving the audience?"

The initiative with KU is part of SHR's broader Corporate Social Responsibility strategy, which in-turn aligns with KIPCO's. KIPCO believes in the importance of contributing to the development of Kuwait's youth and helping them reach their full potential, which is why it and its subsidiaries have sponsored the like of LOYAC and its Protege Program for over eight years, with no end in sight.

Mabrook Co. to join Horeca Kuwait 2020

Preparations for the Horeca Kuwait 2020 exhibition are steadily progressing and attracting companies to take part in it as an event providing a golden opportunity to scientifically exchange expertise that would match the local market needs and future expansion plans. The exhibition is due to be organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Co. at Mishref International Fair Grounds in the period of January 20-22, 2020.

A statement issued by Leaders Group stressed that Mabrook Hotel Supplies Co.'s diamond sponsorship, which is due to include the daily cooking competitions, has become a fixed element in achieving Horeca's success, especially in view of the previous works it had done in preparing major projects in both Kuwait and GCC states depending on a 60 years long career in the business during which it became the agent of many international commercial brands and was recently awarded in two international fairs in China and Oman.

On his part, Mabrook's board chairman, Ali Farhat said that taking part in previous Horeca versions proved the significance of effective participation in Horeca Kuwait as a unique specialized phenomenal gathering of all hospitality manufacturers including hotels and restaurants. "Horeca has been our success partner since its inception in 2012", he stressed.

"Horeca Kuwait has major economic



Ali Farhat

impact in view of the constant development in hospitality, building new hotels and restaurants to cover the urban expansion Kuwait is currently witnessing". Farhat added noting that Mabrook company provides staff uniforms, heavy kitchen machinery, smallwares for hotels, restaurants, cafes, catering companies, villas and various establishments providing similar services.

In addition, Farhat explained that the total number of product Mabrook provides in Kuwait and GCC states is over 3,690 of the world's most prestigious brands and trademarks. "We have also expanded our factory in Sabhan to add new production lines", he elaborated pointing that Mabrook stainless steel products had been greatly admired at the Canton Fair in China and in Oman. Further, Farhat stressed that Mabrook has a strategic tendency towards expanding its markets to include ones in the Middle East and Africa in addition to the current ones in Kuwait, GCC states, Iraq and Jordan. "This includes participation in other international fairs this year", Farhat concluded.

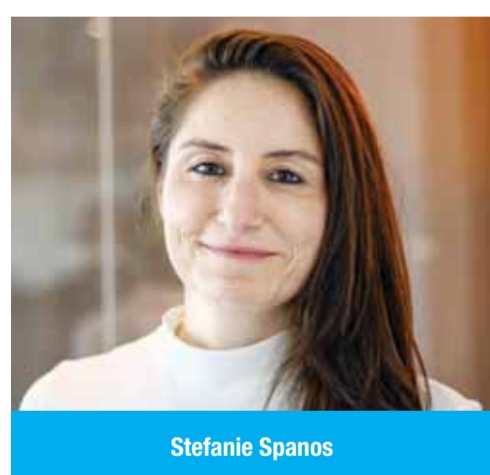
ASDA'A BCW makes hires for subsidiary companies

Leading Middle East PR agency ASDA'A BCW has increased its expertise with two new strategic hires for its subsidiary companies Proof Communications, the digital, data and design specialist, and PSB, its dedicated research company. The move comes as its Power of Three strategy continues to reap dividends by delivering a full service, integrated communications offering to clients throughout the Middle East and North Africa region.

Stefanie Spanos joins Proof Communication as Associate Director - Digital, bringing with her 12 years of experience from Canada, UK, and the UAE. Spanos was instrumental in launching the world's largest blockchain festival in Dubai and taking the Mohammed Bin Rashid Innovation Fund to market. She has previously worked with Edelman and is an expert in digital analytics and data in the communications and PR industry.

Michael Hodgkinson, who joins as Senior Consultant with PSB Middle East, is experienced in international communications and strategy research with high-profile firms in the Middle East and Europe. A graduate in Politics, Philosophy and Economics from the University of Oxford, Michael has led the GSK global delivery team at PSB as well as delivering numerous corporate and government projects in the Middle East.

Sunil John, Founder of ASDA'A BCW and President of BCW Middle East noted, "Public relations in MENA has always required a more nuanced approach than most other regions. We're situated in one of the fastest advancing economies in the world, where digital communication and data are increasingly in demand. ASDA'A BCW extended its operation a few years ago to embrace a Power of Three strate-



Stefanie Spanos



Michael Hodgkinson

gy, including digital and data expertise through its wholly-owned subsidiaries Proof Communications and research through PSB. We are fortunate to have brought Stefanie and Michael aboard to strengthen our offering in these important sectors."

Proof Communications began as the digital and branding division of ASDA'A BCW and grew into a fully-fledged digital and design agency that caters to clients across the Middle East. Proof's most memorable campaigns in recent years include "We See Genius in Every Child" for GEMS Education as well as the multiple-award-winning Welcome to the Driver's

Seat Campaign by Ford Middle East, which marked the historic move to allow Saudi women to drive for the first time.

PSB specialises in custom research and analytics worldwide that uses a deep understanding of people, science and business to create human insights that inspire leaders to make more informed decisions with confidence. It has provided strategic guidance in sectors such as healthcare, technology, blue-chip corporate, financial, entertainment and public sectors in more than 100 countries. It is also a member of the BCW Group of companies, which is part of WPP, a creative transformation company.



Adeb Ahamed, Managing Director, Twenty14 Holdings was hosted by Graham Stuart, Minister of Investment UK as a part of a high level business delegation, to discuss on promoting investments in UK.

X-cite opens 29th showroom at Kuwait Int'l Airport

Not long after the recent opening of its store in City Center Shuwaikh, X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, Kuwait's largest electronic retailer, opened its 29th showroom in September 2019, located in Kuwait International Airport Mall - Terminal 1. Open 24 hours a day, X-cite's express store provides hundreds of travelers with the chance to stop and choose from a wide selection of essentials including a vast range of accessories, mobiles, lap-

tops, personal care items and travel essentials. Strategically located on the top floor of the Kuwait International Airport Mall, right before the Departure Gates entrance, the showroom conveniently services both traveling customers and airport employees.

X-cite offers its visitors a truly pleasurable shopping experience with easy access to state-of-the-art electronics and devices, which can be tested in the most practical ways for customers to learn more about their features and advantages. Through its customer-centric concept, X-cite offers customers competitive quality and prices to serve every segment, providing them with the highest level of service, engaging with them, and earning their trust through supporting services and offerings. X-cite also enables customers to shop from the comfort of their homes through its free mobile app and shopping website.

