

ZAHER ABOUZAHR, M.A, H&T Mgmt.

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

A Hospitality Professional and subject matter expert (SME) with 20 years of experience catering to a global clientele via world-class events, hospitality organisations (restaurant, hotel, resort) and academia supported by a Masters degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management and professional development in areas such as hospitality technology, quality and safety, including ISO 22000:2005 Food Safety Management, TQM and HACCP. Highly skilled in tactical and strategic planning and management of BOH & FOH operations (F&B, inventory & cost control, SOPs, special events, etc.). Proficient in coordinating the workflow of team members and leveraging market intelligence to identify, develop and implement new service offerings, assets and value propositions. A proven record of building/leading high-performance teams to develop/grow revenue from both startup and existing operations to achieve profitability. Successfully coordinated and delivered a world-class experience to more than 2000 guests of diverse socio-economic and ethno-cultural backgrounds, and was formally awarded in national bartender's competition and as Manager of the Year.

A dedicated relationship builder and problem solver with strong analytical and communication and presentation skills together with the tact and diplomacy to establish and sustain interagency partnerships and relationships at all levels. Exceptional negotiation skills, able to influence and motivate multiple stakeholders while driving a culture of respect, collaboration and effectiveness by modeling corporate values and taking a servant-leader approach to management.

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

HOSPITALITY CONSULTANCY, Lebanon

Jan 2022 – Present

Hospitality Consultant - Principal

- Make an impact in hospitality sector businesses by creating positive change while driving efforts towards the achievement of performance improvement & operational excellence as a hospitality subject matter expert (SME) who is outgoing, social and passionate about the hospitality industry
- Conduct consultation and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis with business leaders/owners regarding their business operations and market position to facilitate informed decisions
- Encourage enhanced operations using analytics, process improvement methodology and problem-solving techniques, including ratio analysis and total quality management (TQM)
- Actively participate in engagements and work collaboratively with Catering companies client personnel from analysis through to implementation on a broad range of business specific initiatives
- Work with client teams through the engagement lifecycle leveraging project and change management expertise

Accomplishments

- Led several businesses to achieve optimal business performance and build a sustainable, competitive advantage by streamlining processes and discovering innovative ways to enhance efficiencies, and working as a trusted advisor with management and staff to empower them to drive positive change
- Created valuable resources and simplistic playbooks by developing and implementing the use of manuals and checklists relating to operation of the concept as well as the administration of the businesses following standard operating procedures (SOPs) and some of the industry's best practices

POTEL & CHABOT CATERING, FRANCE, Qatar

Jan 2024 – June 2024

Area Manager - Asia Cup 2024 Stadium Ahmad Bin Ali

- Strategic Planning and Flow of Service: Oversee the strategic planning and execution of service operations, ensuring seamless and efficient service delivery in VVIP sky boxes.
- Accurate Timing for Food Service: Implement precise timing for serving food, maintaining a high level of accuracy and adherence to quality standards.
- Quality Assurance: Ensure the highest quality of service by conducting regular assessments and implementing improvement initiatives.
- Communication with Kitchen Managers: Maintain open and effective communication with kitchen managers to streamline the flow of food to 38 sky boxes, ensuring timely and precise service.
- Logistics Flow Management: Implement and uphold high standards of logistics flow, ensuring accurate timing and operational efficiency

Lebanese International University, Lebanon Instructor

Sep 2017 - Present

Lebanese University for Hospitality & Tourism Management (H&TM) Instructor,

Jan 2021- Present

International Islamic University for Business and Hospitality Management

Jan 2017- Dec 2023

- Develop and implement the use of innovative educational programs to engage students and improve their performance while applying sound knowledge of adult learning concepts and training techniques

- Design curriculum in the hospitality industry environment and create an effective and compelling learning environment for students by designing and delivering curricula and lecture materials with an emphasis on real-world project-based assignments applicable to industry needs
- Teach the following courses: Banquet and Catering, Hotel Service Etiquette, Cost Control, Beverage Management, Travel and Tourism Industry Management, Food Safety and Hygiene, Restaurant Management, Cost Control, Revenue Management, Business Etiquette, Lodging Management and Opera

POTEL & CHABOT CATERING FRANCE, Qatar

May 2022 – Dec 2022

Area Manager - FIFA World Cup 2022 Stadium 974- Al Bayt

- Managed the hospitality task & deliverables (i.e. service implementation, quality assurance) by coordinating and overseeing the development & implementation of the Stadium Hospitality Concept aligned with FIFA's mission
- Acted as the central point of contact for the team and guests to ensure venue set-ups and required labour resources were in place based on the event pipeline while managing and implementing the MATCH Private Suite (MPS), MATCH Pavilion (MPA) and MATCH Club (MCL) programs
- Delivered onsite training sessions and daily briefing for all staff and volunteers working in the Lounge; and collaborated closely with all team members to align on all logistical requirements

Accomplishments

- Created and led a high-performance team to deliver a world-class experience with the highest level of customer service to more than 2000 guests of diverse socio-economic and ethno-cultural backgrounds
- Recognised as being a collaborative leader based on effective working relationships with volunteers, staff and vendors; used exceptional interpersonal & communication skills together with the level of organisational skills and resourcefulness to multitask in a fast paced, high energy, and evolving environment with diverse guests

KEMPINSKI SUMMERLAND HOTEL & RESORT, Lebanon

Nov 2017- Apr 2019

Restaurant Director OF Operation

- Developed short-term financial and operational plans supportive of the overall objectives of the company; and planned, coordinated and oversaw operations with a focus on F&B as well as training, motivating, and coaching the staff, monitoring expenses, and controlling labor costs to deliver outstanding guest experiences
- Communicated the vision to all team members and led by example in reinforcing the values daily by demonstrating high personal integrity, business ethics and taking every opportunity to promote the venue
- Coordinated special events with event planners and clients to align expectations and drive the success of the events in delivering results for clients and their guests
- Managed recruitment and selection and training and development initiatives as well as performance management and employee coaching; established key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Monitored and managed quality control system with a proactive approach to handling service and food quality issues while seeking a more efficient way of doing things

Accomplishments

- Increased sale by 22% YTD while boosting team performance and improving productivity and operational efficiency through staff training, introducing a daily training schedule and SOPs, and exemplifying a professional and efficient way to follow the SOPs
- Decreased expenses by 8% YTD by monitoring the P&L, applying costing and inventory control procedures and reengineering the menu
- Reduced employee turnover by 15% in an industry with high turnover rate by elevating staff morale; created a culture that revolved around the experience and enjoyment of food and wine and inspired the team with an exciting vision for the future
- Curtailed labor cost by 18% YTD with zero impact on customer service levels through effective staff scheduling to meet peak level demands while reducing the number of staff during other operational periods

INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS GROUP PLC, Mzaar, Lebanon

Aug 2016 - Jul 2017

Outlets Manager

- Managed all aspects of the food and beverage outlet daily and coordinated special events while ensuring compliance with standards of service and operating procedures, including regulations concerning quality control, health, safety and other compliance requirements
- Developed and implemented operational standards, conducted regular inspections to ensure high-quality food and food presentation, cleanliness and side work duties completed; and maintained open lines of communication with all employees and departments
- Presented a professional image through appearance and dress, followed company policies and procedures and effectively communicated them to staff

- Recruited and staffed department using behavioural questioning, reference checks, evaluations, and team interviews; onboarded, trained, scheduled and supported staff to deliver excellent work performance
- Monitored operations, analysed variances; initiated corrective actions to achieve sales and profitability targets

Accomplishments

- Elevated the customer experience, leading to increased positive feedback and a high volume of repeat business by developing and implementing the use of innovative customer satisfaction strategies with a strong focus on achieving operational excellence in service standards and overall customer satisfaction
- Successfully balanced financial constraints while delivering exceptional service quality and achieving profit margins by setting and managing budgets in collaboration with senior management
- Improved overall operational outcomes by providing effective leadership to the outlet team and fostering a collaborative and high-performance work culture
- Developed a more skilled and motivated team by initiating targeted training programs for staff
- Drove revenue growth through strategic planning and the introduction of promotions and offerings that attracted a broader customer base and an annual increase of 25%
- Improved profitability and attained better cost control by implementing cost-effective measures without compromising service quality

OSAKA RESTAURANT (High-End Japanese Restaurant owned by Kazami Company), Beirut Sep 2012 – Jul 2016

General Manager, Restaurant

- Drove restaurant profitability and maintained brand standards by reviewing and analysing operations, financial, and business information and working to improve overall results while ensuring the restaurant met business and operating standards and guidelines
- Led, energised and developed the team to improve overall restaurant performance and guest satisfaction, and implemented business development strategies to increase revenues and reach assigned targets
- Forecasted requirements, scheduled expenditures, analysed variances, and initiated corrective actions to meet restaurant financial objectives
- Achieved restaurant operational objectives through implementing strategic plans and reviews while applying marketing strategies and CRM

LE SUSHI BAR-JASMINE ROOM RESTAURANT, Beirut, Lebanon Apr 2010 – Aug 2012

Assistant Restaurant Manager

- Executed an audit continuously over the operation that included restaurants, room service and lounge bar within this high-end Japanese restaurant
- Developed entry level staff through constant training on service, food, and beverage knowledge
- Implemented corporate sales programs, and developed and implemented local sales promotions

RAMADA HOTEL, SOLIDIUER, Beirut, Lebanon Nov 2007 – Mar 2010

Food and Beverage Supervisor (Pre-Opening)

- Played a key leadership role in readying the restaurant for its Grand Opening to delight guests with amazing dining experiences

MOVENPICK HOTELS & RESORT, Beirut, Lebanon Nov 2005 – Oct 2007

Hurricane Bar & Grill Manager

- Oversaw and managed the daily operations of the shift to ensure excellent customer service and satisfaction while training and supervising staff members
- Monitored inventory levels and placed orders as needed and collaborated with other shift managers to ensure smooth transitions between shifts

MARRIOTT HOTEL, Beirut, Lebanon Apr 2003 – Sep 2005

Hospitality Intern

- Completed FOH and BOH internship in areas such as: Pastry, kitchen butchery –garde manger, housekeeping supervisor, and front office

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Masters Degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management - THE LEBANESE UNIVERSITY 2016

Bachelor degree in Hospitality Management+M1 (masters1) – THE LEBANESE UNIVERSITY 2008

High School Diploma - AMERICAN NATIONAL EVANGELICAL INSTITUTE 2002

MERITS AND ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS

- Micros hospitality information system, Fidelio software, CRM
- Customer Service Training - Certificate of accomplishment in
- Total Quality Management (TQM)- Certificate of accomplishment
- Managerial budget training and cost control in Food and Beverage
- Merit certificate Horace 2009 in Lebanese bartender's competition
- Ramada worldwide training session by WYNDHAM International Group
- ISO 22000:2005 Food Safety Management
- Manager of the year 2013 - Kazami Group S.A.R.L.
- Level 3 HACCP Certificate of Quality and Merit - Royal Society of Public Health
- Languages: Fluent in English and Arabic and basic skills in French and German

- REFERENCES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST -