

Hotelier[★]

M A L D I V E S



HOTELIER.MV VOLUME 8 ISSUE 51

THE NAUTILUS MALDIVES : A WORLD OF YOUR OWN MAKING

HOTEL REVIEW

INNAHURA MALDIVES
TAKING IT EASY IN PARADISE

THE GM'S VIEW

SRIKANTH DEVARAPALLI
GM, EMERALD MALDIVES
RESORT & SPA

SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT

BUBBLES IN THE GLASS

PRODUCT REVIEW

MODIO
A QUIET REVOLUTION

PLANNING SUPPLYING AND BUILDING

ASIA'S RECREATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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Hospitality Beyond the Pandemic

Dear Readers,

I hope you will receive this issue in safety and in good health.

It is almost a year to date since we discontinued the print edition of Hotelier Maldives (in March 2020). The sudden way in which all of us had to adapt to the reality of COVID-19 and the ensuing chaos, fear, stress and eventually small steps towards a new normal where our lives were protected... it all seems behind us now although we are still very much in the throes of the pandemic, albeit with light at the end of the tunnel.

The frontline health workers and those in the hospitality industry, meeting, greeting and serving guests at the resorts, airports and transit points, are all to be saluted for their bravery and spirit of service which has seen us through what we will remember as a 'dark year' in time to come. On behalf of the management of Hotelier Maldives, we express our gratitude and sincere appreciation to the frontline health and hospitality workers.

As we relaunch the print edition with issue 51, we are going back to being a bi-monthly. While the country is open to travellers, logistically we are still challenged to move items from location to location, and this includes the distribution of magazines too. We will see how much this impacts our circulation and adjust as required. We will however amplify our digital presence and we hope to see you there.

In this issue we pay homage to an extraordinary entrepreneur and a 'favourite son' of the Maldives, Dr Ibrahim Umar Maniku.

An 'anesthesiologist by training and an entrepreneur by spirit', as David Keen puts it in his tribute to Dr Maniku which are grateful to feature in this issue. David worked with Dr Maniku for over twenty years in crafting some of the most iconic hospitality brands to emerge from the Maldives in the first five decades of the hospitality industry. A symbol of Dr Maniku's legacy and last great project, The Nautilus Maldives, we feature the resort on the cover of this issue along with a special feature highlighting the many accolades and awards garnered by the property since opening.

Our main feature for this issue has been to look at the somewhat uncertain realities gig workers had to face due to COVID-19, with special focus on those who cater to the tourism and hospitality industry. Our contributing editor Naufal Naeem takes a look at the numbers behind the story. According to data obtained from relevant authorities that we mention in the feature, 79% of the resorts work with freelancers; ranging from musicians, DJs to local vendors providing food supplies from the islands within close proximity. According to one study, over 500 freelancers were identified, providing their services to the surveyed resorts.

In our regular segments we look at the critical numbers from 2020. We also review Innahura Maldives in the hotel review segment and interview Srikanth Devarapalli, General Manager at Emerald Maldives Resort & Spa in the GM's View segment. In the Women in Hospitality segment we feature Aminath Maeysa, Sales Manager at Mirihi Island Resort. We also review some innovative products including MODIO, a sound masking device specifically built for hotel guest rooms. In Island Hoppers, we also talk to emerging Maldivian band Equatic Vibe. One of the busiest bands in the resort circuit, they have used the 'downtime' offered by the pandemic to record their second album.

I wishing you all happy reading and a safe and prosperous year ahead.

If you would like to comment or publish an opinion article, please email them to mamduh@hoteliermaldives.com or info@hoteliermaldives.com

Sincerely,



Mohamed Mamduh
Managing Editor

Hotelier[★] MALDIVES

Hotelier Maldives
Volume 8, Issue No: 51

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Maldives Begins Drive to Vaccinate Entire Population Within Six Months

The island nation of Maldives welcomed its first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines on 20th January 2021 from the Indian government. The 100,000 doses of the Oxford AstraZeneca's COVISHIELD vaccine produced by Serum Institute of India will be sufficient to inoculate 50,000 people; two-doses for each person which must be administered in between a gap of 4 to 12 weeks.

The COVISHIELD vaccines, which show an efficiency between 90% and 62%, was transported to Male' City, Addu City and Kulhudhuffushi City to begin vaccination across seven hospitals. Before the shipment, Health Protection Agency (HPA) announced that priority in vaccination will be given to health care personnel in the country and those individuals who are at high risk.

According to President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, the nation plans to vaccinate its entire population against the coronavirus within six months. The president inaugurated the COVID-19 vaccination drive on the 1st of February. On that day, 36 individuals, including the President, Speaker of Parliament, Chief Justice, frontline healthcare staff, state dignitaries and high-risk people received their initial dose of the two-dose vaccine.

Minister of Health Ahmed Naseem announced the vaccine doses provided under the World Health Organization (WHO)'s COVAX programme will arrive mid-February and the 700,000 doses purchased from AstraZeneca's Singaporean company will come in during March. He revealed that the government aims to vaccinate 10,000 people every day.



A New Era of Luxury – Waldorf Astoria Unveils “Ithaafushi – The Private Island”

Award-winning Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi unveiled their newest addition to their ultra-luxury portfolio – Ithaafushi – The Private Island. Spanning across 32,000 square meters, the property grabs the title of the largest private island in the Maldives at present.

“Ithaafushi – The Private Island is the crown jewel of our luxury portfolio in Asia Pacific, limitless in the level of privacy and unrivalled hospitality guests are promised,” said Nils-Arne Schroeder, vice president, Luxury & Lifestyle, Hilton, Asia Pacific. “Designed for the most discerning of travelers, Ithaafushi – The Private Island is the epitome of exclusivity, perfectly placed within one of the most inspirational destinations in the world where a dedicated team anticipates every need and delivers the brand's elegant and effortless

service at every turn.” Schroeder adds that the launch represents a momentous milestone for the Waldorf Astoria brand. The name, 'Ithaafushi' when translated means 'Pearl Island' in Dhivehi, and the name signifies the island's beauty and elegance. Like an expertly crafted piece of fine art, every aspect of this island has been carefully designed and refined while embracing the Maldivian island charm. This expansive estate can accommodate 24 guests across two luxuriously appointed villas and one jaw dropping four-bedroom residence, perfect for re-connecting with your friends and loved ones.

The two-bedroom overwater villa offers an unforgettable ocean experience with two commodious master bedrooms complete with double dressing rooms, both indoor and outdoor rain showers, a shared living room, an infinity pool and jacuzzi. The estate also features an independent three-bedroom beach villa, set within luxuriant tropical gardens with its very own beach access and two swimming pools. The four-bedroom residence features two king bedrooms, two queen bedrooms, jacuzzies and a massive living area, all steps away from the beach.

Bespoke menus in an array of extraordinary settings, guests can experience a world class culinary journey during their stay at Ithaafushi – The Private Island. For guests looking to explore further dining options, you have access to 10 unique specialty dining venues on the main island, which is just a short speed boat ride away. From island castaways on secluded sandbanks, expeditions on your very own private yacht or exploring the breathtaking underwater gardens, for those seeking adventure the island holds no boundaries. Relaxation and a wide range of entertainment awaits, just a 40-minute ride on one of the resort's six luxury Ithaafushi Princess yachts or a short 15-minute seaplane flight from Velana International Airport.



Visit Maldives Begins 2021 FAM Trips with Media Teams from Middle East

Visit Maldives kick-starts this year's FAM trips with a media team from the Middle East to promote Maldives to the region and showcase the unique experiences in the destination with a specific focus on family, safety and affordability.

The Media team that arrived on 25th January comes from leading publications in the Middle East, including Savoir Flair, The National, Millennium Millionaire & Fact Abu Dhabi. Their stay in the Maldives lasts for 6 days at Grand Park Kodhipparu and Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort and Spa, where they will experience family activities, wellness activities, sustainable initiatives implemented by the properties, tasting signature cuisines, snorkeling, water sports and many other unique experiences.

The publications would promote the Maldives through both print and online mediums, alongside supporting coverage on social media platforms. The combined coverage generated from this FAM trip would be circulated physically more than 95,000 times, with an online reach of more than 3.7 million.

This year for the Middle East market, Visit Maldives is focusing on innovative strategies and ultimate objectives to ensure the goals of achieving pre-pandemic arrival numbers. Several marketing activities have already been scheduled such as joint promotions with notable tour operators and prominent airlines, participation in key travel trade fairs in the Middle East and roadshows covering the GCC and KSA region. Further, digital and social media activities focused on Arabic are underway to promote and maintain destination presence in the region.

Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives earns 2021 Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star Award

Positioned as one of the travel world's most revered ratings, Forbes Travel Guide recently awarded Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives with four stars in its 2021 guide, with added appreciation of the idyllic resort having "myriad activities for the restless" traveller.

Lauded for being an independent, global rating system for luxury hotels, Forbes Travel Guide ratings are based on incognito inspector visits to every property to test up to 900 objective, stringent standards from the on-arrival greeting to customised turndown services and everything in between, rating the hotel on its service and the quality of its facilities.

Forbes Travel Guide 2021 has described Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives as a

"secluded private island with starched white sands, thatched-roof overwater villas, towering palm trees and impossibly blue waters." It elaborates the resort's many activities such as windsurfing, jet skiing, waterskiing, kayaking, wakeboarding, PADI courses, snorkeling as well as the traditional Indian therapies at the Jiva Spa, the unforgettable sunset cruise around Hembadhu Island and the resort's cornucopia of dining experiences such as Tree Top Dining, Dug-out Beach Dining and the romantic overwater feast atop the Ocean Pavilion.

The guide also mentions the luxurious indulgence and scenic views from the 64 villas of Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives, with special emphasis on its two-bedroom Rehendi Presidential Overwater Suite which it describes as "a tropical paradise."



Anticipated Maldives' Resort Openings 2021

- Siyam World
- Le Meridien Maldives Resort & Spa
- Avani Fares Maldives Resort
- Address Madivaru Resort + Spa
- Zazz Island Maldives
- Gran Melia' Maldives
- The Ritz Carlton Maldives
- Patina Maldives
- The Chedi Kudavillingi
- Maniya Faru Resort
- Cocogiri Island Resort
- Tolarno Maldives Kunaavashi Resort & Spa
- Madifushi Private Island

After a year of missed opportunities, 2021 looks like it's going to be "buzzy" as dozens of new resorts, including international chains are gearing to open their doors in the Maldives. The new year, still fresh off the press is looking promising so far, as we look back on a year we simply want to forget. The industry is slowly getting back on its feet and they are betting it will be back stronger than ever! Now. We've got a lot of holidays and getaways to catch up on. So where do you feel like jetting off to next?

AVANI FARES MALDIVES RESORT

Located in Baa Atoll, 45 minutes away by seaplane, this is going to be Avani's first property in the Maldives. Well known for its rich marine life and biodiversity, this would be a paradise for snorkelers and dive enthusiasts. The resort boasts a huge inventory of 200 rooms, from standard rooms to a selection of villas.

ADDRESS MADIVARU RESORT + SPA

20 minutes away from Velana International Airport by seaplane, The Address Madivaru Maldives Resort + Spa is located in North Ari Atoll, and is the first resort project in the Maldives by the prestigious Emaar Hospitality group from the Middle East. The property will feature 80 villas, comprising of both beach and over water, a dedicated spa island, floating restaurants, over water fitness facilities and a fully kitted kids club.

COCOGIRI ISLAND RESORT

Geared to open its doors this March, Cocogiri is a beautiful boutique property of just 20 beach villas and 20 over water villas. The island is located in Vaavu atoll, with spectacular surroundings and rich marine biodiversity. Cocogiri is just a 12 minute seaplane ride or a 1 hour speedboat ride from Velana International Airport.

THE CHEDI KUDAVILLINGI

Located on a 1 km island, this 99 villa development by GHM will feature a whopping 150 meter central pool, 08 over water spa treatment rooms, and an all-day dining buffet restaurant alongside hawker stalls that carry the essence of Asian street food. Well-known for their contemporary architectural designs from their past projects in Vietnam, Oman and Switzerland, the Chedi Kuda Villingili project is spearheaded by a team of global talent working closely with the GHM team. The resort is just a short 25 minutes away from Velana International Airport.

LE MERIDIEN MALDIVES RESORT & SPA

Located on the island of Thilamaafushi in Lhaviyani Atoll, Le Meridien Resort & Spa is an eco-conscious haven built harmoniously with the flora and fauna of the tropical island it resides upon. Boasting a total of 150 villas and 06 restaurants, Le Meridien Resort & Spa will be the 07th property by the Marriott group in the Maldives. The resort is scheduled to open in February 2021, and can be accessed via a 30 minute seaplane ride from Velana International Airport.

PATINA MALDIVES

Scheduled to open in Q2 2021, Patina Maldives is part of the new Fari Island archipelago in North male' Atoll. Patina Maldives is complimented by two other luxury properties connected by a communal heart: the Fari Marina Village and Fari Beach Club. The property features 90 luxuriously appointed villas and 20 studios, all embracing biophilic designs in their architecture, heavily inspired by the natural elements of the tropics.

THE RITZ CARLTON MALDIVES

This is one of the three resorts on the Fari Island Archipelago in North Male Atoll. The Ritz Carlton will feature 100 villas in a combination of both land and over water villas. Set to bring forth it's legendary service that defines the Ritz Carlton brand, the property is expected to offer a wide range of culinary experiences ranging from international to local cuisines.



Photo: Siyam World

ZAZZ ISLAND MALDIVES

Part of the ZAZZ Escapes Collection, this is the first property being launched in the Maldives by the Thai hospitality brand Unicorn Hospitality. Featuring a total of 101 over water and beach villas, the resort offers 05 different categories to choose from. The island also boasts 06 unique culinary outlets for guests to enjoy, from flavors of the Mediterranean to Thai and Japanese cuisines. Located in South Ari Atoll, the island is just a short 25-minute seaplane ride or a 90-minute speedboat journey from Velana International Airport.

MANIYA FARU RESORT

Located in South Male' Atoll, Maniya Faru will feature a total of 110 villas, and is being developed by Mahagony Pvt Ltd, which currently owns and operates the well-established Reethi Faru Resort in Raa Atoll.

GRAN MELIA' MALDIVES

Located on the island of Kalhudhiyafushi in Thaa Atoll, Gran Melia Maldives is 40 minutes away from Velana International Airport. The resort will feature 96 private villas, 02 presidential suites and 01 private island villa supported by a wide range of dining options available on the island. Melia Hotels is a Spanish luxury hotel chain with over 380 establishments across 40 countries over 04 continents.

TOLARNO MALDIVES KUNAAVASHI RESORT & SPA

Scheduled to open in the first quarter of 2021, this is the first property in the Maldives by La Vie Hotels & Resorts, a prominent hospitality chain from Australia. Located on the island of Kunaavashi in Vaavu Atoll, just 70 km away from Velana International Airport, the island is accessible by speedboat and seaplane. Tolarno Maldives features a total of 72 stylish villas, both beach and overwater alongside 02 luxuriously appointed presidential villas. Guests can experience a wide range of culinary options from 05 unique restaurants and bars on the island offering a range of cuisines from South Asia to South America. Vaavu atoll is well known for its underwater beauty and majestic shipwrecks and is considered to be the ultimate playground for those looking for aquatic adventure. The resort also features an amazing kids club offering both indoor and outdoor play areas making it a perfect getaway for family holidays as well.

MADIFUSHI PRIVATE ISLAND

Nestled on a 16-hectare island in Meemu Atoll, the resort is 35 minutes away from Velana International Airport via seaplane. Madifushi Private Island features both beach havens and over water havens designed to sit harmoniously with the natural environment. Set to target both families and small groups, each villa comes equipped with its very own private pool.

SIYAM WORLD

This is the newest addition to the Sun Siyam Resorts portfolio, one of the leading local hotel chains in the country. Siyam World is located on a jaw dropping 54-hectare island in Noonu Atoll, 45 minutes away by seaplane from Velana International Airport. This carefree playground with exciting, diverse and infinite collection of experiences is set to open in August 2021.

EVENT CALENDER



HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE - SOUTH ASIA (HICSA)

April 3 - 4, 2021

Grand Hyatt Mumbai
Mumbai, India

Hotel Investment Conference-South Asia (HICSA) is widely viewed by global industry leaders as the **premier hospitality event for the South Asian region**, valued for its networking opportunities and high-level contacts as much as for its content-rich sessions. Having rightfully created a niche for itself, HICSA brings together an impressive conglomeration of business leaders, think tanks and industry top brass, and has undoubtedly become one of the most coveted forums for all industry players in the region. Each year the conference brings together **more than 500 delegates from over 20 countries**, with overwhelming participation from hotel owners, investors, operators, bankers and industry specialists.

Hotel Investment Conference - South Asia (HICSA) is organized by Hotelivate Private Limited



CORNELL GENERAL MANAGERS PROGRAM (GMP)

May 10 - 20, 2021

Cornell University
Ithaca - NY, United States

The **General Managers Program** is a transformational learning experience for elite hotel general managers and their immediate successors. GMP elevates decision-makers with the power of strategic thinking through a rigorous face-to-face experience with renowned faculty and industry peers on the campus of the world's leading school for hospitality management. Over the past 36 years, the Cornell GMP has hosted more than 1,900 participants representing 120+ countries.

As an experienced hospitality professional, you know that the industry is constantly evolving. To be successful, you must lead your team with purpose, embrace the industry's evolutionary path, and seek opportunities to keep your organization at the forefront. Through GMP, you will hone strategic thinking skills, explore how to create value, and plan for future action to tackle business challenges and opportunities.



ITB INDIA 2021 (VIRTUAL EVENT)

April 7 - 9, 2021

Virtual Event

ITB India 2021 Virtual Event will take place digitally from 7 to 9 April 2021. It will be hosted on ITB Community in Asia (ITB Community). In its first year ITB India will be organised by the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce and supported by Messe Berlin (Singapore) Pte Ltd. The 3-day business-to-business travel trade show and convention will focus on the Indian travel market including MICE, corporate, and leisure travel sectors. Exhibitors from every sector of the industry, including travel agencies and operators, NTOs, business travel and MICE, travel technology, accommodation, and transport companies are all expected to attend.

ITB India 2021 (Virtual Event) is organized by **Messe Berlin GmbH**



HEALING SUMMIT 2021

May 11 - 12, 2021

Pine Cliffs Hotel, a Luxury Collection Resort
Pinhal do Concelho, Portugal

The **HEALING SUMMIT** is an initiative of Healing Hotels of the World which takes place annually and serves as a platform for professionals striving for a holistic approach to life and business, with the aim to create a global community of influencers who commit to doing good. An annual event since 2014, the **HEALING SUMMIT** embraces all topics that are inherent to the worldwide brand Healing Hotels of the World.

HEALING SUMMIT 2021 is organized by **HEALING HOTELS OF THE WORLD**

TOURISM INDICATORS:

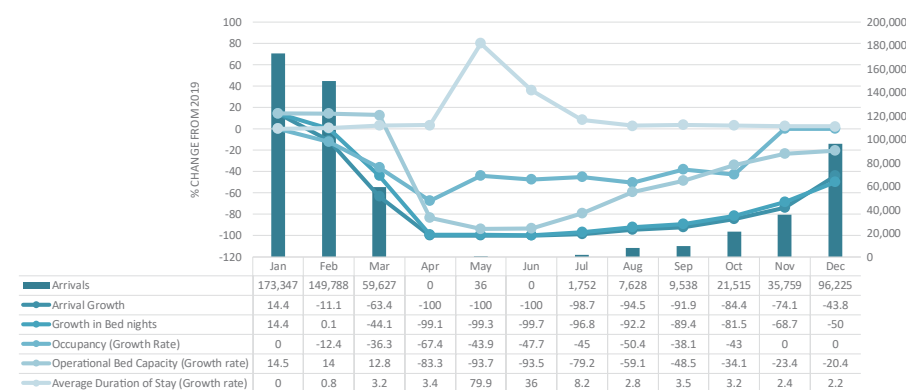
Hope and Recovery amid the Pandemic

The year 2020 began with hope and positive expectations for Maldivian tourism industry, achieving a monthly growth rate of 14% in international tourist arrival for the month of January compared to January 2019.

Yet, within just few weeks, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic led to an immense global health crisis, worldwide panic, uncertainty and extremely unprecedented economic shocks. With the exponential spread of the virus, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic situation on 11th March. Among the many industry sectors, the tourism sector is one of the most tragically hit, and the once thriving global travel and tourism operations came to a complete standstill. The repercussion of worldwide measures to contain the virus by closing of borders

and locking down of major cities around the world brought the travel sector and several related industries to a temporary halt. And, Maldives was one of the hardest hit economies due to its overdependency on tourism, and the economic shock was much deeper to the country.

Key Tourism Indicators 2020



ARRIVALS TRENDS

Amidst the global lockdowns, border closures and travel restrictions, UNWTO World Tourism Barometer December 2020 reported that the international tourist arrival plunged by 72% from January to October 2020 compared to the same period in the previous year. According to UNWTO, it was a decline of 900 million international tourists which had also resulted in a loss of export revenue from international tourism by US\$ 935 billion for the same period. UNWTO also forecasted an overall year-over-year reduction of 1 billion international tourists, and a loss of US\$1.1 trillion in

international tourism receipts for 2020. Further, the report stated that the Asia and the Pacific region experienced the sharpest decline (82%) in international tourist arrival, and the overall demand for travel is still shallow as the pandemic continues.

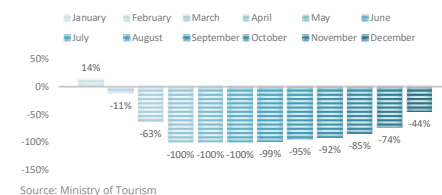
As the spread of Covid-19 advanced, Maldives took similar measures like many other countries, implementing travel restrictions, stopping the issue of on-arrival visa to international tourists, and subsequently closing the borders on 27th March. Those drastic but necessary strategies implemented to

control the pandemic by the Maldives and by several other countries across the globe crippled the key economic sector of the country. However, the Government of Maldives reopened the border in mid-July, with phased out opening of tourist facilities, along with testing and other precautionary requirements to ensure the health and safety for both visitors and locals. And, although the number of inbound international tourists were low at the beginning of the third quarter, the fourth quarter depicted impressive growth on tourist arrivals. A total of 555,215 international tourists visited Maldives in

2020, which yet, is a year-over-year decline of 67%.

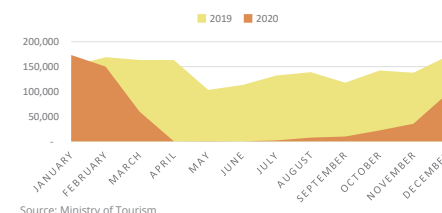
As for the rest of the key indicators, the occupancy rate and the bed nights followed a similar pattern with the arrival figures. The average duration of stay excluding the duration where the border was closed for international tourists stood at 7.8 days. The operational bed capacity also dipped along with the demand side indicators reflecting the closure of the majority of tourism operations and facilities.

Tourist Arrival Monthly Growth Rate (Jan-Dec 2020)



Source: Ministry of Tourism

Monthly Tourist Arrival



Source: Ministry of Tourism

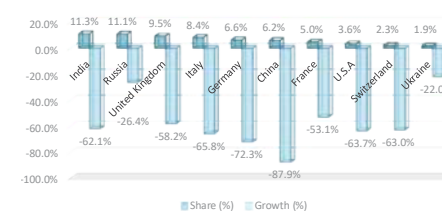
DEMAND TRENDS, DEMOGRAPHICS AND SOURCE MARKETS

Looking at the geodemographics, after the recommencement of the sector, from July to December 2020, some differences were identified. The two major source markets to the Maldives, China and Italy are not among the top 10 list, while Russia made it to

the number one, and India maintained its position as the second with an increased share after tourism recommenced. Additionally, UAE, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Spain moved up to the top 10 list for this period while the number of inbound tourists from Australia and

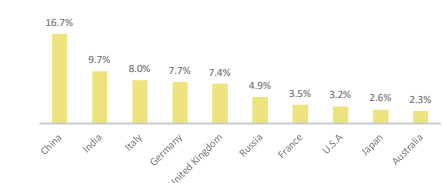
japan reduced. Observing the arrival patterns for the whole year, India is the top market for the Maldives, followed by Russia, and United Kingdom. China-the number one source market in 2019 moved down to 6th in 2020.

Top 10 Markets (Jan-Dec 2020)

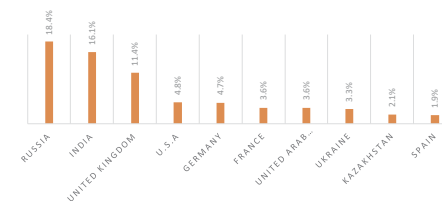


Source: Ministry of Tourism

Top 10 Tourist Source Markets 2019



Top 10 Tourist Source Markets (July-Dec 2020)

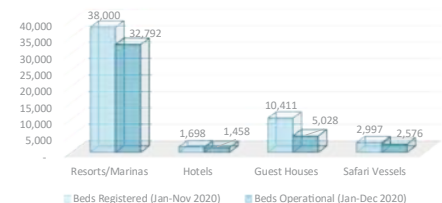


Source: Ministry of Tourism

Tourist Accommodation Facilities



Tourist Bed Capacity



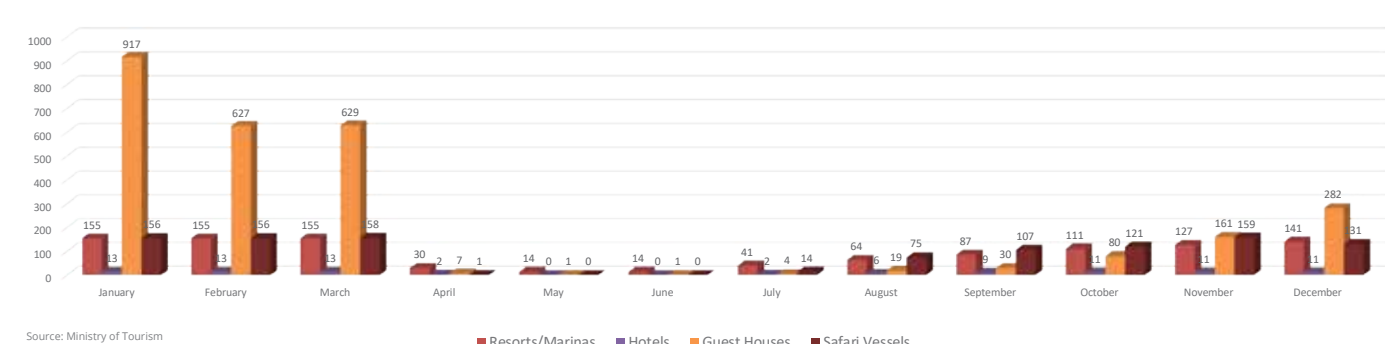
SUPPLY SIDE: TOURIST ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY

With the lockdown and closing of the border, almost all tourist accommodation facilities were closed down during the second quarter. However, since tourism resumed in July, the facilities reopened gradually. Amongst the registered facilities as of

December 2020, 142 (32792 beds) out of 167 tourist resorts were operational, 11 (1,458 beds) out of 13 hotels were operational, 257 (5,028 beds) out of 631 guest houses were operational, and 133 (2,576 beds) out of 159 safari vessels were operational. And a significant number of guest

houses are still closed as guest houses outside Male' region were only allowed to reopen on 15th October, due to the Government's approach to pace out the reopening of tourism facilities as a measures to contain the virus spread within the atolls and inhabited islands.

Operational Capacity-Tourist Accommodation Facilities (Jan-Dec 2020)



Source: Ministry of Tourism

Resorts/Marinas Hotels Guest Houses Safari Vessels

THE DEVASTATING RIPPLE EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY

As over 70% of the GDP flows from tourism and related industries in the previous year, a ripple effect was seen in the overall economic performance. GDP plunged sharply by 51.6% in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. With a moderate growth scenario, an overall decline of 29.3% in real GDP is projected for 2020, while a positive GDP growth of 13.5% is projected for 2021.

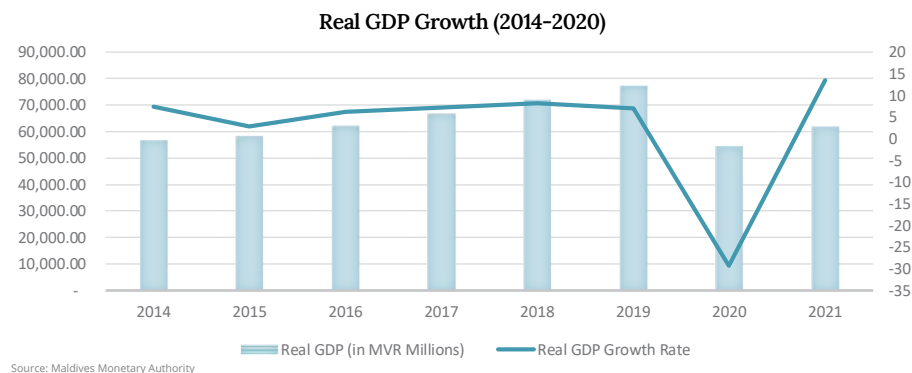
SUCCESS AMID THE CRISIS

Despite the grim situation and the various challenges faced due to pandemic, Maldives tourism sector achieved remarkable accomplishments in 2020. For the first time in history of the Maldives Tourism industry, the country won the most distinguished award- "The World's Leading Destination" at the Grand Final of the World Travel Awards 2020 held virtually on 27th November. Maldives also won several awards in several other categories.

- Indian Ocean's Leading Beach Destination 2020
- Indian Ocean's Leading Cruise Destination 2020
- Indian Ocean's Leading Destination 2020 (a title won for the 13th time)
- Indian Ocean's Leading Dive Destination 2020

In addition, the island nation was also nominated for 40 other categories at the Grand Final and several tourist properties won awards in these categories.

As several marketing activities to promote the tourism sector were undertaken during the year, these success indicates the immense effort undertaken by the government and other key stakeholders in reviving the sector.



THE AFTERMATH AND OUTLOOK

With the pandemic, some notable changes in the behavior and preferences of the travelers are being observed. The WTTC report- "The Future of Travel and Tourism in the wake of Covid-19", highlighted that travelers now opt for more familiar destinations which are in close proximity to their homes within the country or within the region. Also, that visitors give more preference to beach, nature and outdoor or rural areas, and now average duration of stay is longer than the pre-pandemic period, and they require more flexibility in travel bookings. In addition to such evolutions in demand, other new trends in the travel sector emphasized in the report include increased focus on health and hygiene, rise in adoption of innovation and digital technologies, and more concern on sustainability.

At the face of these new trends, the outlook seems positive for the Maldives as more tourists tend to prefer rural and beach destinations away from crowds. With the one-island-one resort concept established by the Maldives, there is a clear competitive advantage to the island nation as Maldives can offer a more safe and secluded vacation. This unique selling point with joint collaborations of the government and key industry players, is expected to bring a brighter future and a quick recovery to the hard-hit sector.

THE MOST ADVANCED CLINICAL LABORATORY IN MALDIVES

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Sense of Care

Taking it easy in paradise:

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Affordable adventure and laid-back experiences coexist in perfect harmony within a tropical island resort surrounded by natural luxury. Described as an 'unpretentious gem' this island has an emerald centre, fringed by pure white beaches and bright aqua lagoon plus charming Maldivian-style beach bungalows. Whether playing beach sports, gliding over the water on a tandem sea swing, diving with whale sharks and manta rays or dancing the night away to the beat of traditional Maldivian bands, many magical moments can be experienced at Innahura Maldives resort in south-east Lhaviyani atoll.

Four-star resort, Innahura offers 'affordable luxury' the chance to experience the inherent beauty of the Maldives and then bolt on extra excursions, activities, food, and beverages on a 'pay as you go' basis. Simplicity features in its all-inclusive easy packages allowing one to sample unlimited experiences on the island too.

Innahura is part of the Crown & Champa portfolio which brings 40 years-experience in the Maldives hotel industry with nine resorts. Innahura offers value as well as quality so its approach differs from its luxury sister resorts Hurawalhi- home of the world's largest underwater dining restaurant and Kudadoo Private Island with its 'anything, anytime, anywhere' concept. All three are in the Lhaviyani atoll, sharing incredible dive sites and trips are available to 'bolt on' for a special occasion. Other Crown & Champa resorts cater specifically for families and the boutique, adult only and romantic getaways.





Affordable laid-back luxury

Watch the sun set and rise from the patio of one of Innahura's 78 four-star Maldivian style bungalows. The sunset properties overlook the Indian Ocean's edge, while sunrise bungalows frame a picture postcard view of palm trees and the sandy beach and lagoon just beyond. All properties have a queen size bed, modern furnishings in the sitting area and wooden or tiled floors. Decorated in fresh greens, calming aqua and warm sunny tones internally its tranquil ambiance reflects the tropical scenes outside. All rooms are air-conditioned and have an overhead fan. Guests can pour themselves a tippie from the minibar and admire stunning views from the private porch. Friendly staff ensure towels are replenished regularly and provide a nightly turndown service. Four adjacent bungalows serve larger groups and are equipped with all the mod cons needed to meet the demands of families with a small entourage. This includes personal touches such as board games and free wi-fi.



Dining and entertainment

With one main restaurant and two bars one featuring a dancefloor where discos are held, entertainment is at the heart of this resort. For breakfast try tasty Maldivian 'mashuni roshi' or sample an array of international and local cuisine at Dhoni. Live cooking stations manned by flamboyant chefs provide extra flair to the central dining area. In both there is an emphasis on seafood and grills, although oven-baked pizza is also popular. Celebrate a special occasion with an intimate à la carte dinner on the beach as the sun goes down. Couples can enjoy the romantic ambiance of the moonlit beach gazing up at the inky sky filled with stars while sipping exotic cocktails. As the moon bathes the sea in light, the glory of the equatorial night sky envelops this tiny land where the sea is seemingly as expansive as the heavens above. Meanwhile, barbeques on the beach make for memorable family get togethers. At Sand Bar residents can serve themselves to a beer and play chess as they dig their heels into the beach floor. Olhu bar keeps sports fans hydrated while watching your choice of international sporting events. Decorated in a maritime style, it is a great place for recounting dive stories. This island has a lively entertainment scene from 'Bodu Beru' cultural dance shows, discos, and live bands for guests to strut their moves on the sandy dancefloor.



Family friendly sports

Families can engage in recreation along Innahura's 1.5km beach or splash together in the freshwater swimming pool and kids pool overlooking the beach. Children and their parents can play beach volleyball, badminton, tennis, or football. The resort also offers pétanque and other games popular with holiday makers. Meanwhile, teenagers will love the games room offering table tennis, billiards, football table and darts.

Diving and snorkelling

The island's scuba centre offers guided PADI diving courses and trips to Lhaviyani Atoll's top dive sites, including 'Anemone Thila', a magnificent example of the Maldives' underwater coral environment. Innahura guests can enjoy the same opportunities as guests staying in Crown and Champa's nearby luxury properties Hurawali and Kudadoo. Meanwhile, the warm waters surrounding the island are a snorkeler's paradise, with the lagoon teeming with tropical fish. On the edge of the atoll, nursing sharks and manta rays thrive, dolphins play and green turtles gracefully glide. The island's ocean water sport centre rents out catamarans and kayaks for adventures above the waves. There are also fishing trips, sunset cruises and island-hopping experiences to enjoy.

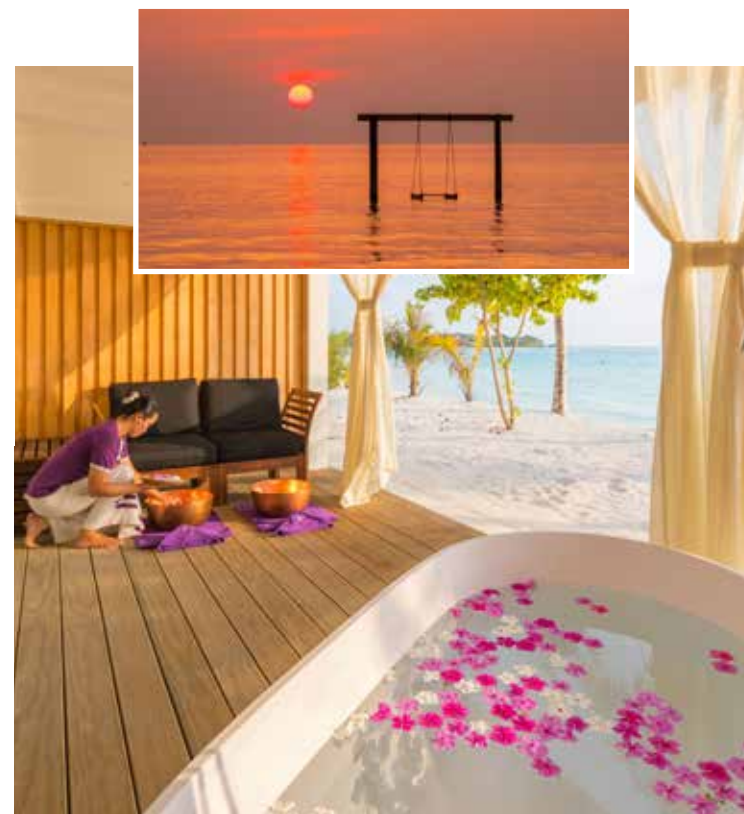


Spa time and sunsets

Such adventures require a balance with quiet moments. If 'me' time is what you crave then the resort's Duniye Spa helps rebalance and soothe the body and mind. Views of the beach and lagoon from the treatment rooms are relaxing enough, but spa-goers can experience 'heaven on earth', on the spa's menu. This is just one of its 'dreamtime journeys', alternatively you can sample a Balinese massage, Himalayan salt therapy or pampering facial, all using pure organic products.

There are many opportunities to lock away fun memories made on the island. The best way to reflect at the end of an adventurous day is by watching the sunset. A magical and mesmerising sight as the sun dips below the endless horizon. Yellow and orange reflect in the aqua waters that turn lavender as the night draws in, then indigo and finally inky black, with only the twinkling stars above distinguish the sky from the horizon.

With so many affordable experiences on offer, Innahura is a place where troubles are cast into the waves just like a message in a bottle, except castaways here prefer not to be found. Once they check in, they never want to leave.



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COVID-19 AND THE GIG ECONOMY

AN IMPOSSIBILITY TO A REALITY



Once thought to be an impossible economic sector, given the geographical limitations, isolation and lack of infrastructure, the Maldivian tourism industry will soon be marking its 50th anniversary in two years' time.

Unyielding to the viability assessment and opinion of the United Nations, the Maldives had entered a new dawn with the birth of its most powerful economic sector the country will ever see. Sparked by a chance meeting in Colombo between Ahmed Naseem, a staff of the Maldivian embassy in Sri Lanka back then and George Corbin, who was an Italian travel agent and a travel enthusiast himself, the beginnings of Maldivian tourism was a humble one, yet it took on fairly quick strides to find its place in the county's economy. On the 16th of February 1972, George Corbin and the first 22 tourists landed on the



	Registered	In Operation
Resorts	Nos: 166 Beds: 37,602 Growth in beds: +4.7%	Nos: 65 Beds: 16,214 Growth in beds: -51.5%
Guesthouses	Nos: 633 Beds: 10,133 Growth in beds: +8.8%	Nos: 17 Beds: 608 Growth in beds: -93.5%
Safaris	Nos: 160 Beds: 3,027 Growth in beds: +3.5%	Nos: 76 Beds: 1,439 Growth in beds: -50.5%
Hotels	Nos: 13 Beds: 1,698 Growth in beds: +8.2%	Nos: 6 Beds: 962 Growth in beds: -34.6%



lonely airstrip in Hulhule', now Velana International Airport. The small group, consisting of photographers and journalists were in awe to see an island paradise, so remote and untouched, making it the perfect beach holiday destination. Shortly after the first group's arrival, the first tourist resort Kurumba Maldives made its appearance in 1973, followed by Bandos, Velassaru, Baros, Vabbinfaru, Ihuru and Meerufenfushi. Although we had quite a number of guest houses at the beginning of the industry, it was brought to a halt soon after, to bring forth the iconic Maldivian tourism concept of "one island, one resort". Until

2010, this was pretty much how the tourism industry defined itself, at which point guest houses and small hotels were once again re-introduced to the product mix, opening the doors to a wider global audience.



AN ESSENTIAL ROLE FOR GIGGERS

What exactly is a gig economy? Most of us may have come across the phrase, but how well do we understand it? Although this may “sound” like a relatively new trend or a buzz word rattling our highly digitized society, it has actually been a significant aspect to the Maldivian tourism industry right from the beginning.



For those of you who are new to the term; a gig economy is a free market system, where the workforce majorly consists of freelancers and independent contractors in contrast to the traditional employment model of permanent positions. The skillsets in a gig economy can range from photographers to musicians, as well as the humbler jobs such as construction and labor work.

This “on-demand” short term professional employment method fit perfectly to the Maldivian tourism scene, where businesses have access to a talent pool of specialized skills that they can call upon whenever a need arises without the strings of employment rights and benefits such as overtime, sick leaves and health insurance. As some temporary jobs may not require any physical presence, company's often do reach out beyond the local talent pools for such short-term projects, which do put the locals head to head with the world in competing for such on-demand work.

Looking from the perspective of gig workers, the idea of being untethered to the typical corporate policies and regulations or simply being free from clocking that routine 9 to 5 workday is an appealing factor to this kind of work. The level of freedom and flexibility you find performing gigs is something that you would rarely find at a full-time permanent job, and for many, the ability to balance work and life is something that they highly prize.

The same qualities that made the gig economy possess such a powerful sense of appeal casted light on the same aspects having a darker side



DISRUPTION AND CHAOS FOR GIGGERS DURING COVID

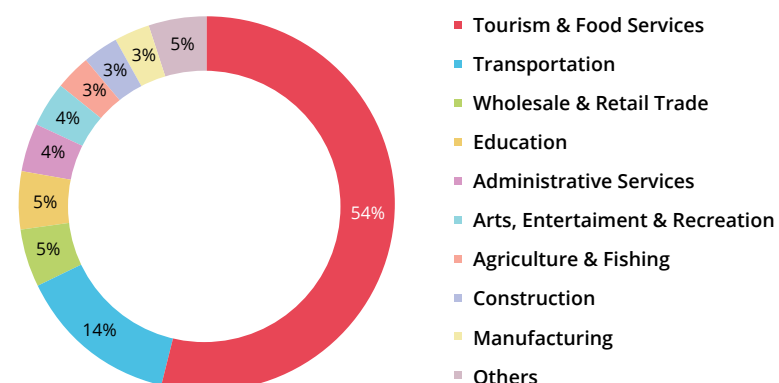
As the largest industry in the Maldives, the tourism sector was hit the hardest. A study done by UNDP across all industries found that a total of 54% of those impacted were from the tourism industry. This industry felt the immediate shocks of the pandemic as it swept across the world, bringing entire operations to a halt with the closure of borders.

Giggers and independent contractors have been a crucial component in the Maldivian tourism economy right from the beginning in the early 1970's. It was the musicians who originally formed this segment of the trade. Forming the first bands to perform at the resorts, they became an important element in delivering the complete Maldivian holiday experience. Like merchants, they travelled to and from the islands, sometimes staying overnight or doing a series of resorts over a week or a month. It certainly is no easy job, and it most definitely required a high level of commitment. Following the musicians and the DJ's, photographers, stylists and wedding planners entered the fold.

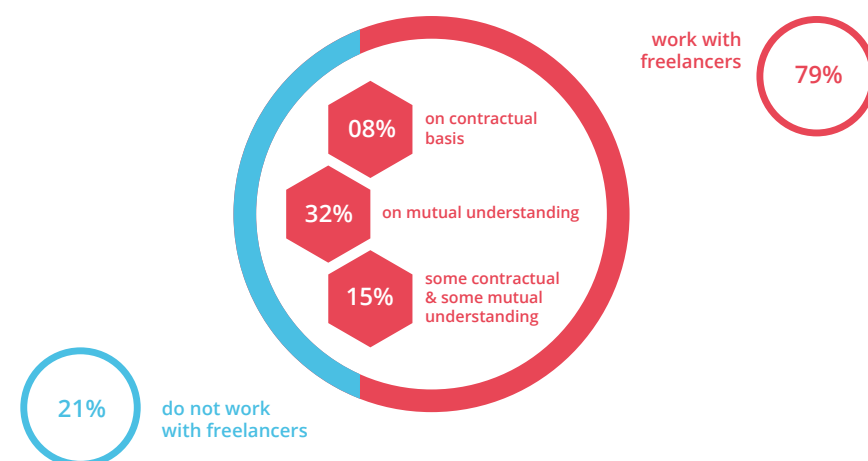
Giggers consist of a highly mixed pool of specializations and talents and is by no means an exhaustive list.

The same qualities that made the gig economy possess such a powerful sense of appeal casted light on the same aspects having a darker side. Like paper boats caught in the rain, there was little to nothing giggers could do when disaster struck, as there were no strings attached to any official organization that would or otherwise could extend resources for assistance at a time of crisis.

Based on the data collected by UNDP from a resort management survey



Resort Management Survey Data



conducted between April and June 2020, 79% of the resorts work with freelancers, ranging from musicians, DJ's, to local vendors providing food supplies from the islands within close proximity. In total, the study was able to identify over 500 freelancers providing their services to the surveyed resorts. This indicates the high number of individuals engaged in this sector who are heavily dependent on the tourism industry as their livelihood.

Another set of data that was analyzed was from JobCenter. Hosted by the Ministry of Economic Development, this is the government's online job portal, dedicated as the primary

platform for the public to report complaints on employment and wage reductions related to COVID-19. The study showed that every 02 out of 10 individuals who reported income loss were self-employed. It is important to note, that there was a serious gap identified while conducting this study. Again, this unravels an "Achilles heel" of the gig economy, and how the absence of formal contracts creates obstacles in situations such as these, when documentation was a key requirement in the reporting process to prove income losses.



REGION	GREATER MALE'	KAAFU	SEENU	GAAFU DHAALU	ALIFU DHAALU
APPROVED APPLICANTS	972	149	56	23	22
APPROVED AMOUNTS	183,452,8210	24,461,544	11,434,546	3,678,015	3,011,329



RELIEF LOAN SCHEME BY SDFC

Back in February 2019, a governmental organization under the name of SME Development Finance Corporation Pvt Ltd (SDFC) was formed. The core role of this institution was to enable easier access to financial support for micro, small and medium sized enterprises, both for startups and existing businesses.

At the beginning of April 2020, as the pandemic hit the country in full force and halted nearly all key economic activities, a relief loan scheme was introduced as a short-term financing facility to enable small businesses as well as independent workers to sustain their operations and support themselves during this period of hardship.

With a maximum cap of MVR 30,000 for freelancers, this loan product does not require equity nor security, and the interest rate is fixed at 6 percent per annum with a re-payment period of 3 years excluding 6 months of grace period. Data shown on the UNDP report indicated that a total of 1,356 applications were approved for the relief loan totaling up to MVR 245.7 million.

RETHINKING A NEW REALITY

Fezu from Detune, one of the most established music bands in the country explained how they had adapted to a new reality.

Somewhere around October or November last year, with a lot of talk about COVID-19 in the news by then, they had already started anticipating some form of a ripple effect that could possibly come this way. With an uneasy feeling that they may soon feel the brunt force of the virus, Fezu had warned all members of her band to be cautious of their expenses and to start saving up.

For Fezu and her band, they were in a better position than most when the pandemic came to Maldivian shores. They have been lucky to have had a great success with their events during the previous festive

period, allowing them to ride out a couple of months at the very least. Further to that, their intuitiveness and foresight also allowed them to anticipate an incoming storm that would have otherwise caught them off-guard like many of the freelancers.

How hard freelancers were hit due to the pandemic depends on their respective fields and specialization. Graphics designers, whose work is typically done online may not be affected as much as photographers who now would not have weddings, events or parties to cover. Bands unfortunately fall into the latter. Many have been forced to adapt and find new ways to getting back on their feet. It is no easy task, and many are still struggling to find their bearings. For Fezu, fishing had always been a passion of hers, and even has a boat of her own. During this time, Fezu and the band brought fishing to the forefront, and took to the seas as a means to support themselves through the pandemic.



Ahmed Shuau, also popularly known as “Obofili” is a self-taught photographer and a prominent member of the Maldivian photography community.

His experience through this ordeal reflects on how the pandemic spared some niche segments of the gig economy from its full force.

The majority of photographers in the Maldives are focused on covering weddings and events. There are only a handful of them have dared to venture into further specializations. Shuau is one of them. With a strong background of architecture and design, it had helped him to develop an excellent eye for details, allowing him see things just a little different to most photographers. Using this to his advantage, Shuau primarily focuses on

brand photography for numerous resorts in the country. In doing so, his business was not as affected as others, where he had continued to work on his ongoing projects. Interestingly enough, he also highlighted that with the closure of the borders, some resorts were actually taking this opportunity to do further developments within the property or do major renovations while they were under lockdown. This therefore opened up opportunities

for such brand photographers, where these resorts will be contracting parties for the development of a whole new set of brand collaterals which they would need for the new and upgraded facilities.

One of the most crucial elements to surviving massive economic disruptions and ensuring business continuity is the ability to adapt and diversify operations. The same principal applies to an individual freelancer

as well. In Shuau's case he also supplemented his core business with graphics designing services, which was an area relatively untouched during the entire ordeal. On the contrary, the virus had created a world where public messaging and awareness campaigns were crucial for public safety. Therefore, there was a need for such talent and skillset even at a global scale.





“It was just a simple phone call to inform me that from that day on, they were not going to have any outside contractors on the island until further notice. That was the end of it, I was on my own”

Umar Ziyad is one of the most prominent DJ's in the country. Stepping into the industry in the early 90's he is one of the most seasoned veterans in the local DJ scene. Umar, along with DJ Vifaq currently operates UBER, an event and talent management platform primarily catering to the resort sector.

For Umar, it was an awakening, a realization. “For the first time, I felt vulnerable, as almost overnight I had lost that the sense of security that I had taken for granted for the past 22 years as a DJ. But even after 22 years, at the end of the day I am still a freelancer. As a freelancer, I was not entitled to any staff benefits nor securities that a permanent staff would otherwise enjoy at the company. Therefore,

there was no contractual obligation for the company to provide any additional support apart from the gigs we have agreed to. It was just a simple phone call to inform me that from that day on, they were not going to be able to have any outside contractors on the island until further notice. That was the end of it, I was on my own.

This was something he had not foreseen. He was not ready for it. Today, instead of re-building their business and strengthening it to grow it bigger in the future, their thoughts are bent upon downsizing it. Umar and Vifaq believes that scaling down to a level where they personally could run the show is the way to go for now, especially amidst a world of uncertainty. Previously,

they had multiple staff on payroll along with an expansive warehouse for storage of all of their lighting and sound equipment that had grown in numbers dramatically over the past few years. All of these were factors that would bring them greater financial risk should things turn for the worse again.

Umar does believe that eventually things should improve, once the resort's start getting back on their feet again. “DJ's do have a bigger advantage over bands for instance, where resorts would only need to take in one person instead of five. This would make a big difference at a time such as this”



This is a tale of many varied experiences. Although we may all be in the same storm, we are not in the same boat. For some, the pandemic was a force multiplier that had intensified their already vulnerable states, while for others there was the luxury of taking a moment to re-think and calibrate to fit their skillsets to a new use.

As of 27th December 2020, 80,763,522 people have been infected globally and 1,765,629 people have died from the virus. The financial, psychological and social impacts on all societies across all cultures have been astronomical. In the case of the Maldives, it was no different to the rest of the world. The Maldives felt the biggest blow from the halt of tourism, which trickled down to numerous sub segments of the economy. Now as the economy restarts, we will be forced into adapting new ways of thinking and strategies that foster adaptability within chaos.

As companies start to shift their operations online and start seeing the practicality and economic benefits of enabling staff to work off-site, more and more businesses are starting to embrace this new work model. Businesses are now able to significantly downsize office space and retain a major portion of their earnings which would otherwise be spent on monthly rental. Another advantage to tapping into a giggers market would also be the ability for a business to connect with specialized talent when and as needed.

This shift in operations however may not carry a “one size fits all” solution and may only be applied to niche areas in hospitality and tourism operations as this is a service industry. Many travel companies are expected to scale up their online presence and scale down physical

retail outlets. At the same time, even within hotel operations, certain areas of work that could remain remotely serviced are now being considered as to be made permanently remote.

Legislative action and formalization of contracts to encourage a greater degree of financial security and safety for freelancers is definitely a crucial component to address, after witnessing the aftermath of the pandemic. However, an even greater point to address would be in developing a more resilient workforce at a national level that could potentially withstand major shocks and disruptions that could come our way in the future.

What we have seen evidently during this global pandemic is that it was the non-essential sectors that were hit the hardest, while a majority of the essential services experienced a steep increase in demand, which called for a huge shift in workforce from one area to another as some of the segments went into a complete shutdown. How well the workers can shift on demand and assimilate into new roles is going to determine the resilience of the national workforce at its entirety. Steps to be taken to develop a resilient workforce is not just a responsibility that needs to be taken up by the government. This is a model that needs to adopt at a corporate level within organizations down to the individual workers themselves embracing this system with open arms to make an effort to upskill themselves to allow him or herself to have the tools necessary to adapt as needed. This results in creating a workforce that is “sector-mobile”, with skillsets that are transferrable across the industry, and can ultimately contribute to making it relatively

resilient to global shocks, which could spare greater economic drawbacks that could otherwise potentially cripple the national economy due to high levels of unemployment.

The gig economy may very well be the new reality forged by the pandemic for many organizations across the world. Although many within the segment itself has felt a massive blow from the pandemic, industry pundits expect even more free lancers to enter the arena in the months and even years to come. However, it could also be argued that the shift is a “temporary” adaptation to fit the current climate. Another crucial question is, with a greater number of people moving into the gig economy with its appeal of flexible work hours and in the ultimate pursuit of a better work life balance, would the increased pool of talent reduce the share of opportunities available to each individual?

How the effects of the pandemic will ultimately shape the workplace of the future is still yet to be seen. As COVID-19 has unfolded to become one of the biggest transformative events of recent history that brought on disruptions at a global scale, it is of utmost importance for us to analyze and prepare ourselves better for any similar future events.

Developing a more resilient workforce at a national level that could potentially withstand major shocks and disruptions



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THE NAUTILUS MALDIVES: A WORLD OF YOUR OWN MAKING



Making its debut in February 2019, The Nautilus boldly opened its doors to the niche luxury market that was already at risk of becoming overly populated. With countless new openings boasting excessively glamorous stays, there was no question that it was time for hoteliers to inception fresh concepts to totally differentiate themselves from the ever-growing crowd. Fortunately, The Nautilus did just that.

The Nautilus is the only Relais & Châteaux affiliated resort in the Maldives, a prestigious designation representing the island's level of quality, excellence and authenticity. The Nautilus' ability to excel with its operationally ambitious concept 'Time Stands Still' is testament to this. Guests are encouraged to shape their stay, quite literally curating 'A World of [Their] Own Making' as they go without the confines of schedules, dress codes or opening and closing times. With the ability to do whatever they want, wherever they want at whatever time they want, The Nautilus' guests can realign, switch-off and experience the ability to simply be – the greatest luxury of all.

Forget what you think you know about luxury and then take a look at The Nautilus; the private island single-handedly redefining luxury's meaning. Discreetly nestled away in the ever-stunning Baa atoll, the heart of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve – just 15 minutes away from the world-renowned Hanifaru Bay, The Nautilus is an ultra-luxe bohemian hideaway with just 26 immensely private houses and residences. Wholly embracing the ability to feel and experience absolute liberation, The Nautilus offers hyper-bespoke experiences that are, as the island has dubbed, "unscripted" to cater to guests' every wish and whim. Bringing a whole new standard of prestige to the Maldivian tourism scene, The Nautilus should be on your radar as the fast-approaching leader of luxury innovation and fierce originality.





Inspired by the spiralling form of nautilus conch shells and the notion of modern bohemia, The Nautilus passionately abides by its brand hallmarks; time stands still, unscripted dining, free-spirited experiences, the comforts of home and, of course, the art of bohemia. These inspirations seamlessly saturate the property's every detail. With spiralling staircases resembling the inside of a nautilus shell and smooth flowing curves creating cocooned alcoves to distinct colour palettes and handcrafted macramé lighting, each house and residence is a paradise compendium of

rich architecture, design and consideration. But, it doesn't stop there – every house and residence also boasts its very own private temperature-controlled freshwater infinity pool as well as its very own dedicated House Master offering full butler services.

Rather uniquely, The Nautilus House Masters contact their guests even before their arrival, taking note of their every preference in order to individualise their guest journey and satisfy their every whim. The Nautilus House Masters are guests' first port of call for any activity, dining experience or query whilst on the

island.

The wow-factor continues with the dining experiences available on the island. With a total of four outlets, guests are totally spoilt for choice. Zeytoun, the island's signature fine-dining restaurant specialises in Mediterranean/Middle Eastern; Ocaso, the al-fresco grill serving up Japanese, Latin American specialties; Thyme, the all-day dining favourite serving gourmet bounty and Naiboli, the ultimate poolside beach lounge. In keeping with the island's 'unscripted' attitude, menus at all four locations are considered as mere



suggestions. Alongside the on-island chefs, guests curate bespoke dishes tailored exactly to them at any time. Breakfast in Ocaso at 3am? A picnic lunch in Zeytoun for one? No problem – The Nautilus is your haven of gastronomic exploration.

Designed for the new age of UHNW travellers looking for somewhere where they're able to totally switch off totally, The Nautilus is a place where guests can truly be themselves and re-connect with loved ones.

The property has already won the 'holy trinity' of travel awards, despite only

opening in February 2019. Named the "Best Private Island Retreat" at the 2021 Tatler Travel Awards, The Nautilus is already firmly cementing its position on the global stage of world-class luxury properties. In addition, The Nautilus is listed within Condé Nast Traveller's coveted 'The Gold List' 2021 – almost unheard of for a property so young to do. Finally, The Nautilus has already been recognised amongst the three best resorts in the world and has taken first place as the 'Best Resort in the Indian Ocean' in Condé Nast Traveller's prestigious Readers' Choice Awards 2020. These significant wins are testament to the

team's enthusiasm and vision – continually striving to enable our mantra of 'Create a World of Your Own Making' become a reality for all our guests.

Apart from the above accolades, The Nautilus was also ranked number one in Luxury Intelligence (LTI) as the 'World's Best New Luxury Hotel for 2019'. This award resulted from a comprehensive inspection of 35 new luxury hotel openings across the world from which just 15 properties made the final list. Amongst the 15, The Nautilus Maldives ranked number one.

A Tribute

Dr Ibrahim Umar Maniku

1952-2020

by David Keen

With the passing of Dr Ibrahim Umar Maniku, on 25 November 2020, Maldives has lost one of its favourite sons. Dr, as everyone knew him, was an anaesthesiologist by training and an entrepreneur in spirit. His contribution to Maldives is immeasurable. And his passion to serve his country and bring wealth, truth and a better lifestyle to the Maldivian people is without question.

“ We gained real courage from Huvafen’s success. We realised that we too could create a strong, international brand. ”



Dr Maniku (far right) with senior members of his team at The Nautilus



Photo: Baros Maldives

To many in Maldives, Dr was a mentor, a teacher, and a father figure. His loyalty to his team and his leaders could never be doubted. On the night of his passing, I talked to several of his leaders who spoke of losing a father. Dr Maniku was truly loved.

Ibrahim Umar Maniku was born in Malé on 18 June 1952 to Ameena Hussain Kaleyfan and “Kolige” Umar Maniku. He studied at Trinity College in Kandy, Sri Lanka where he excelled in academics and was known as a star rugby player.

In 1972, he received a scholarship to study medicine at the University of Leipzig in

what was then East Germany, where he first had to learn the language before completing his medical degree. He then worked at the Universitätsklinikum in Halle where he specialised in anaesthesiology. Dr met and married the mother of his two children, Karin, while at university. Sanjay was born in 1977 and Annika in 1980. The family returned to Maldives in 1982 and Dr became the first Maldivian anaesthesiologist at Male Central Hospital. He was integral to modernising the anaesthesiology department and through his connections in Germany he enabled modern equipment to be donated to the hospital.

While Dr’s passion for medicine prevailed throughout his life, he had a natural entrepreneurial spirit. It was not long after his return to Maldives that Dr combined his scientific knowledge with that commercial yearning and founded the Male Aerated Water Company. I recall Dr sharing the story of how he recognised the immense demand from tourists for carbonated

beverages and the expense of importing then Indian commercial labels.

Again, Dr leveraged his relationships in Germany and found a way to import the requisite machinery to create a small factory to produce carbonated beverages. He spent considerable time researching syrups, and shared the complexities and maintenance pitfalls of creating a factory on Icege in Male. Dr’s perseverance, immense knowledge of chemistry, and extraordinary attention to detail all came to the fore as the company became the franchise bottler for Coca-Cola in 1989.

Dr set up his first resort, Palm Tree Resort on Veligandhu Huraa in South Male Atoll in 1987. This island would eventually become the home of Naladhu and the neighboring islands became Anantara Dhigu and Veli.

It was not until the next decade that Dr was fully drawn to the family business and Universal Enterprises and Resorts became central to his future. He was asked to take

care of both Baros and Full Moon, and unquestionably Baros became his greatest passion and remained so throughout the remainder of his life.

I first met Dr on Baros in about 2004. The Universal board had made a shrewd investment in the development of Per AQUUM and its first two resorts; Huvafen Fushi and Dhoni Mighili. Huvafen had arguably changed the course of tourism in Maldives as the first independent island to achieve celebrity status and average room rates that previously were thought only obtainable by global management companies.

In inimitable style, Dr saw a similar opportunity for Baros. Until 2004, Baros was known predominantly as a dive resort. But Dr’s entrepreneurship, compulsive attention to detail, great sense of style and passionate management realised the new Baros, with its signature Lighthouse restaurant, entirely refurbished rooms and over-water villas. Today Baros is arguably



Photo: Milaidhoo Island Maldives

the most awarded resort in Maldives and will always be Dr's island.

It was at the 40th Anniversary dinner of Baros where Dr's true pride and love for his island came to the fore. Never have I seen him more proud than in front of his Universal family as well as the island's closest business associates and its family of staff. At that dinner, Dr gave a speech:

'Baros is a small island... it has its own character. It is about longevity.'

'We gained real courage from Huvafen's success. We realised that we too could create a strong, international brand. We could challenge all of the big brands and their considerable marketing armoury with our own small island resort.'

'And we have done that because we have stayed loyal to our brand – we have never wavered or tried to be something that we are not. We have remained absolutely loyal to our Maldivian roots. Maldives after all is our home and it is the market we at Universal know so well.'

Dr shied away from publicity throughout his career. He never sought the spotlight and always wanted his trusted 'family' to take the lead. The speech at this 40th anniversary dinner was pivotal. He spoke from his heart and it is one of the rare occasions where he shared his pride publicly.

The success of Baros empowered Dr and gave him the confidence to build more resorts. It was Dr, who after selling a minority stake in his resort in Khao Lak, Thailand to the Minor Group, invited its chairman, Bill Heinecke and his team, to Maldives. Together they created a joint venture enabling the Anantara brand and

other Minor concepts to proliferate in Maldives.

Dr's belief and love for Per AQUUM and its philosophy encouraged him to develop Niyama in 2011 and with it the world's first underwater club and bar. Along with the development of Niyama, Dr also invested in the domestic airport serving Niyama and later in Manta Air, a privately held seaplane operator and domestic carrier that began flying in February 2019

Dr's passion for ultimate luxury was always his driving force. And in 2016, he opened Milaidhoo as a Universal Resort. I have a very personal memory from Milaidhoo. Dr and I shared, among many things, a love for football. And his love (and constant frustration) with Manchester Utd were the topic of weekly conversations. One weekend on Milaidhoo, Tottenham Hotspur (my team) were playing Utd. Dr asked Shuhan, his trusted (cluster) general manager, to set up a large screen for us to watch. And there on a tiny island in the middle of the Indian Ocean, Dr, Shuhan and I cheered the game like supporters at Old Trafford.

In 2017, Dr and his beloved Sanjay opened Kandima, an island imagined for a younger audience and one that held equal pride in Dr's heart.

Dr often confided to me over countless dinners at The Lighthouse that he still believed, in spite of the growth in larger resort projects, that there was room in the Maldivian market for a quintessential private resort designed for ultra-high net worth individuals.

And late in 2016, over long strategy sessions both in Maldives and his favoured Grand Hyatt on Scotts Road in Singapore,

The Nautilus was born. A concept envisaged for years by Dr, The Nautilus was a resort with mansion-like villas and extraordinary space. Superbly designed. No detail overlooked. Experiences where time was to stand still for its occupants. Where no request was too much and any guest could ask for anything at any time of day and night.

In 2018, The Nautilus launched. And today it has been recognised and awarded globally. Dr confided that Nautilus would be his swansong. It was to be his final resort. We celebrated Dr's 66th birthday on the beach at The Nautilus. His smile and his pride were there for the privileged few to see.

Dr Maniku's legacy is that of a pioneer. A visionary who had the confidence and wherewithal to build where most would say is not possible. He never wavered from his vision and he would never settle for anything less than perfection.

Dr will always be remembered for the change he both imagined and realised in Maldives. But as I mentioned earlier, there are a few of his closest confidants that feel his loss in a much more personal way. To them, Dr was a father figure. He was their guiding light and he trusted them and they him with a familial love that cannot be replicated.

David Keen is founder of QUO, a global strategic branding consultancy. QUO's work in Maldives spans nearly 20 years, branding both independent islands and many of the country's tourism organisations. You can reach him on david.keen@quo-global.com

DESTINATION FOCUS LHAVIYANI ATOLL

Lhaviyani Atoll, also known as "Faadhippolhu" since the early 12th century, is a well-known executive division of Maldives. The atoll is formed of 52 islands including four inhabited islands; Hinnavaru, Naifaru, Olhuvelifushi and Kurendhoo with a total population of more than 12,000.

"FAADHIPPOLHU" YOUR NEXT TRAVEL DESTINATION

The past few years have brought in a lot of excitement to the atoll with an increase in new resort openings. Lhaviyani Atoll's latest highlight has been the Marriot's seventh property in the Maldives, Le Méridien Maldives in Thilamaafushi, which is scheduled to open during late 2021. This adds to the atoll's list of 10 resort properties, all with colorful reefs and white sandy beaches. Further, a new airport in LH. Madivaru in early 2021 signals a great sign for the tourism industry.

DESTINATION FOCUS: LHAVIYANI ATOLL



Photo: Innahuraa Maldives

Cocoon Maldives

One of the best Italian designed resorts is just 30 minutes by seaplane from Velana International Airport. Featuring long white sandy beaches and an all-inclusive concept that ensures a completely worry-free escape, Cocoon is popular among couples, families as well as solo travellers alike. With a selection of three Restaurants and two Bars, a sublime spa experience and villas with mesmerizing view of the crystal clear waters, this luxury resort leaves no stone unturned to offer a memorable stay.

Kanuhura Maldives

The five-star resort combines three private islands to offer the ultimate luxury retreat for free-spirited adventurers. Kanuhura has long been praised for its exceptional variety in dining, with 8 exquisite gastronomic experiences. It also has stunning 80 villas that are either scattered on the beach or situated over the azure lagoon.

Palm Beach Island Resort & Spa

Palm Beach Island Resort and Spa, named after the beautiful groves of coconut palms seen near the endless stretches of white beaches, is located on one of the largest islands in the Maldives. A total of 40 minutes from Male' to Madhiriguraidhoo by seaplane, the resort provides babysitting, airport transfer services, currency exchange services, laundry services, tours with a presidential suite, deluxe room, and a junior suite- all complemented by the amazing Indian Ocean scenery.

Komandoo

Often found on the very top of most romantic resorts lists, this adults-only resort has all-inclusive packages that allow couples to tailor their holidays to exactly what they want it to be. Komandoo is ideal for a romantic escape, surrounded by amazing marine life and stunning island scenery. The winner of Asia's Most Romantic Resort award, Komandoo features both overwater and beach villas with sunbeds, outdoor bathing, and private pools.

Hurawalhi Island Resort

Home to the largest all-glass underwater restaurant in the world, the five-star Hurawalhi resort allows guests above the age of 15 to experience luxury at its finest in mesmerizing views. The journey here takes 40 minutes by seaplane from the Velana international airport. Its underwater restaurant and luxurious villas has made it a favorite among celebrities as well. Having a world-class meal underwater while watching the beautiful marine life float by is on the bucket list of many travellers.

Atmosphere Kanifushi Maldives

Kanifushi is surrounded by a large coral reef that gives the best views of marine life for the marine lovers. Known as "The Heaven" for certain adventurous activities like snorkelling and diving with mantas and the friendly sharks, the resort offers a charitable all-inclusive package for every visitor. It includes choices for different types of excursions, sunset cruises, beautiful dolphin views and sunset fishing. This nirvana is only 35 minutes by the domestic seaplane from the Velana International Airport

Kuredu Island Resort & Spa, Maldives

One of the most top-rated resorts in the country, Kuredu Island Resort & Spa shows guests the true natural beauty of the destination while promoting tradition through various cultural nights. With accommodation ranging from Garden villas to Beach villas to overwater villas, guests choose their own perspective to wake up to. The resort offers an excellent choice of accommodation, all inclusive packages and facilities, as well as access to sister resort Hurawalhi's underwater restaurant.

Innahura Maldives

Innahura is synonymous with laid-back and affordable escapes. While a total of 78 vibrant bungalows line Innahura's sandy beach, on the island awaits delightful buffet dining and the Duniye Spa, for relaxation after a day at the beach. Innahura Maldives has outdoor swimming pools, evening entertainment, a fitness centre and 24-hour front desk with friendly staff.



Kudadoo Maldives

Offering an all-include experience in a small island, Kudadoo Maldives is the destination's only fully solar-powered private island. The resort has unlimited excursions available on an anytime anywhere approach. In the unique cheese and wine cellar, 80 luxury wine labels and 50 different cheeses make Kudadoo one of the best places for gastro-tourism.

Fushifaru Maldives

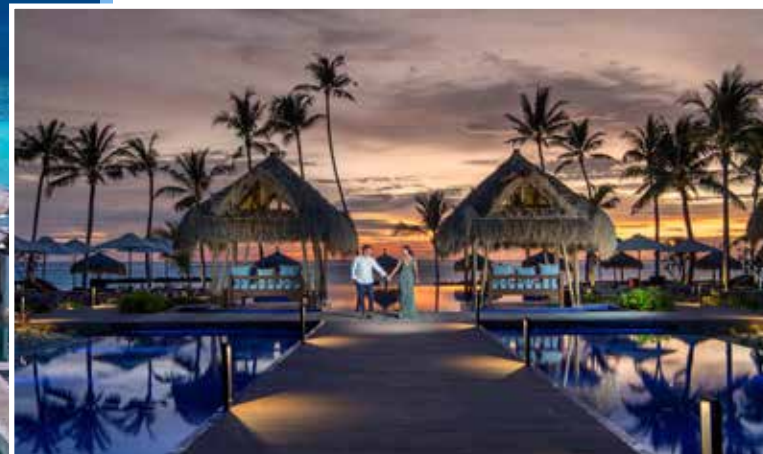
It takes only a 35-minute seaplane ride from Male' to get to this luxury boutique resort. A world-class resort with sunrise and sunset views that never fails to amaze, Fushifaru is rated five-star for best quality services and products. It features a water sports centre, swimming pool and a spa. The pristine white beaches are the heart of the resort with large sandbanks, ideal to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, or a wedding.

Le Méridien Maldives

Talking about the future of the tourism industry in Faadhippolhu, Thilamaafushi is hiring for the upcoming resort named "Le Méridien Maldives," with 150 rooms and water villas. Spanning nine hectares, this Marriott property consists of six restaurants, a bar, spa swimming pool, kid's club, fitness and dive and water sports centres.

Picture Postcard Reality

Srikanth Devarapalli,
General Manager,
Emerald Maldives
Resort & Spa



Emerald Maldives Resort & Spa is a natural lush island in the beautiful Raa Atoll, offering all-inclusive service that exceeds expectations without limitations. Within this newest addition to the prestigious Italian-owned Emerald Collection portfolio, unique design elements have been carefully chosen, resulting in a contemporary concept of accentuating the island's tropicality. The vision of the owners is to 'give back to the community' and position this resort as one of the best in the Maldives. Srikanth Devarapalli, with vast experience in the industry, has been at the forefront of Emerald Resort & Spa since its beginning. He spoke to Hotelier Maldives about his journey and experiences.



"Passion takes you a long way in everything you do. Be sincere and learn as much as you can. With growing technology, you do not need to depend on anyone to teach you. Keep your eyes open, be curious and keep learning at every stage, whether you are a GM or a CEO."

Hotelier Maldives: How has your tenure been in the hospitality industry and how did you land your current position at Emerald Maldives?

Srikanth Devarapalli: It has been an exciting 18-year journey within hospitality, which began at Oberoi Hotels in India in 2002. Oberoi Amarvilas was a good training school. I came across a picture of a resort from the Maldives. This was Taj Exotica resort, I applied for a position and was fortunate to get through. I did five-years continuous service, moving to Four Seasons for while in between and then back to India to work with two Hyatt properties, handling the pre-opening for one of them, before returning to the Maldives, with Constance Moofushi. The Maldives is an exciting place - most of my career growth happened here. I went on to work in Constance Ephelia in Seychelles before returning.

It has always been my dream to open a resort. I was fortunate to get the right opportunity to be part of the pre-opening team at Emerald Maldives. I joined in May 2019, our opening was set for the beginning of August, to get the initial team of 250 members on board, we had less than three months. From day one, when we welcomed our first guests, every facility in the resort was operational. So far, our guests have left great reviews.

HM: How does Emerald Maldives stand out from competitors?

SD: We are a deluxe all-inclusive resort, unique due to our design and offerings. We are part of the Leading Hotels of the World and both a family and romantic destination. In our all-inclusivity, we offer four restaurants, without limitations. The Teppanyaki at Le Asiatique is also all-inclusive a rarity in the Maldives. Amazonico the first of its kind here offering South American food. Product is one aspect, but we would like to differentiate the service. All 300 happy members of staff create unique experiences and do a lot in the background to reflect that.

HM: What can be done to improve the efficiency of teams while developing human resources?

SD: Since arriving in the Maldives in 2004, I have seen a lot of improvement in the skillset of the local people. At one point you hardly saw Maldivians in the top positions, but in the current generation, there are many ambitious people with a willingness to grow. This year we plan to do professional development programs for locals. We are currently working with Raa Maduvvari to take on four locals and train them in certain departments for six months. If this is successful, we will do this on a larger scale. At Emerald four heads of departments are local, many are assistant managers. I would like to see more Maldivians in top positions.

“A day in the life of Yuki Matsutori”

Assistant Guest Relations Manager

- Taj Exotica Resort & Spa

Yuki Matsutori began her hospitality career in 2009 at her home country Japan. She always had a strong passion to meet new people and experience the world outside Japan. In 2011, she moved to Maldives with an opportunity to work with Taj Exotica Resort & Spa. She started her international hospitality career with Taj Exotica Resort & Spa as a Guest Relations Officer almost 10 years back and with her dedicated efforts, today she is the Assistant Guest Relations Manager for the resort.

“Taj Exotica Resort & Spa Maldives gave wings to my dreams of working with colleagues from diverse cultures and serving so many guests from different parts of the world. My escapade about different cultures, their unique choices, likes and dislikes has been a truly enriching journey,” Yuki Matsutori.



As an Assistant Guest Relations Manager, her biggest encouragement to work daily in the hospitality industry is that guest relations itself is all about customization and personalization. It is about innovation and creativity, from planning special occasions for guests like birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, babymoon or simply celebrating a milestone or achievement. My work gives me several opportunities to touch many lives and give them the happiness and excitement that they are looking for. The smile on their face as they experience my unique plans and touch points for them is my biggest driving force.

In her free time, Yuki loves listening to music and watching movies. She also enjoys traveling herself and her dream travel destination is Greece, to explore it's exciting sightseeing, cuisine, history and heritage.



HM: What are Emerald Maldives' key consideration for sustainability?

SD: We do not use single-use plastic; paper straws are provided only upon request. The design itself is sustainable because of the bamboo and Langhi Langhi leaves. The roof will not need to be replaced for six years, reducing timber consumption. We have a resident marine biologist who offers snorkeling trips for them educate them. We are starting a coral propagation project this year where guests can to plant and sponsor coral frames. We will implement organic gardening on a larger scale, with a chef's table. The idea is to cut down on the import of vegetables by 50 per cent, therefore restoring our natural vegetation is an important step towards becoming more sustainable.

HM: With increased connectivity to the Maldives, how do you foresee our tourism industry developing?

SD: We were pleasantly surprised by the success since reopening and we owe this to our hard working and passionate team members, sales and marketing teams and the vision of the owners to create the best product in the segment and the vision of our Chief Operating Officer Aldo Scarapicchia. We are fortunate to have a good mix of nationalities from the key markets. What impressed me most is the tourism reopening plan by the Maldives Government, Tourism Ministry and HPA. It is interesting to see growing new markets, like the Indian market which was never a key market here. Regarding arrivals, at times we have had feedback from some guests that the immigration clearance times at the airport is lengthy. This could be something to improve on, given the influx of travellers to the country. I am positive about the business situation in Maldives.

HM: What challenges do you face as a GM working in the Maldives?

SD: For a foreigner it takes time to understand the culture and the people. For me, the Maldives is my second home. I learned from day one that if you, like in any country, respect the locals they will respect you back. I would say the logistics are a challenge, for example, with the seaplane schedules and so forth, but we are fortunate to have a domestic airport nearby in case of any hindrances. Another challenge is the retention of team members. With many new openings, good employees are sought from all over. The price reductions on room nights with new openings would be a challenge as well when resorts compete with one another for the lowest selling prices resulting in a no-win situation.

HM: What is your advice for aspiring and well-established hoteliers?

SD: Passion takes you a long way in everything you do. Be sincere and learn as much as you can. With growing technology, you do not need to depend on anyone to teach you. Keep your eyes open, be curious and keep learning at every stage, whether you are a GM or a CEO. I believe for the resort to be successful the team needs to be happy. Here, we place people based on their qualifications rather than geography. It is the Emerald way to foster good working relationships with like-minded individuals of different nationalities.

05:00 AM

I am an early riser. I prefer to start my day at Four O'clock in the morning. I get ready for work looking my best and head straight to the reception. Before I begin my work day, I usually take a round throughout the resort facilities and common areas to see they are well prepared for the guests. Then I check my work schedule and arrangements for all the arrivals and departures for the day, customize the special gifts for all the departing guests and send out all relevant guest information to all designated colleagues.

08:00 AM

On an ordinary work day, I get to wear many hats and the best part about my job is I get to multi-task. I handle the telephones, I drive the buggy to pick up the guests, I handle concierge queries, I plan itineraries as well as I manage customer grievances and complaints. What I enjoy most is meeting all my guests and wishing them a great start for the day as they head down for breakfast.

10:00 AM

I conduct the briefing for the team and set direction for them to achieve their tasks and goals for the day. I then attend to my emails and finish all the inter departmental coordination. The time after that is focused on receiving and welcoming all the arrival guests to the resort, with customized welcome experiences based on their profile, such as special occasions, repeaters and age groups etc.

13:00 PM

Most of the days I go for lunch during mid-day, this is the time I get to meet my colleagues working in other departments, to catch up on each other.

15:00 PM

The second half of the day is when I get to be more creative. I conduct kids' activities for young guests staying with us, plan special gifts and work on the touch points to impress our guests, make itineraries and activity planners for them. In short, working towards bringing a smile to their faces is one of the most important parts of being a Guest Relations Manager. After all, it is all about those little things which can make a memorable stay.

18:00 PM

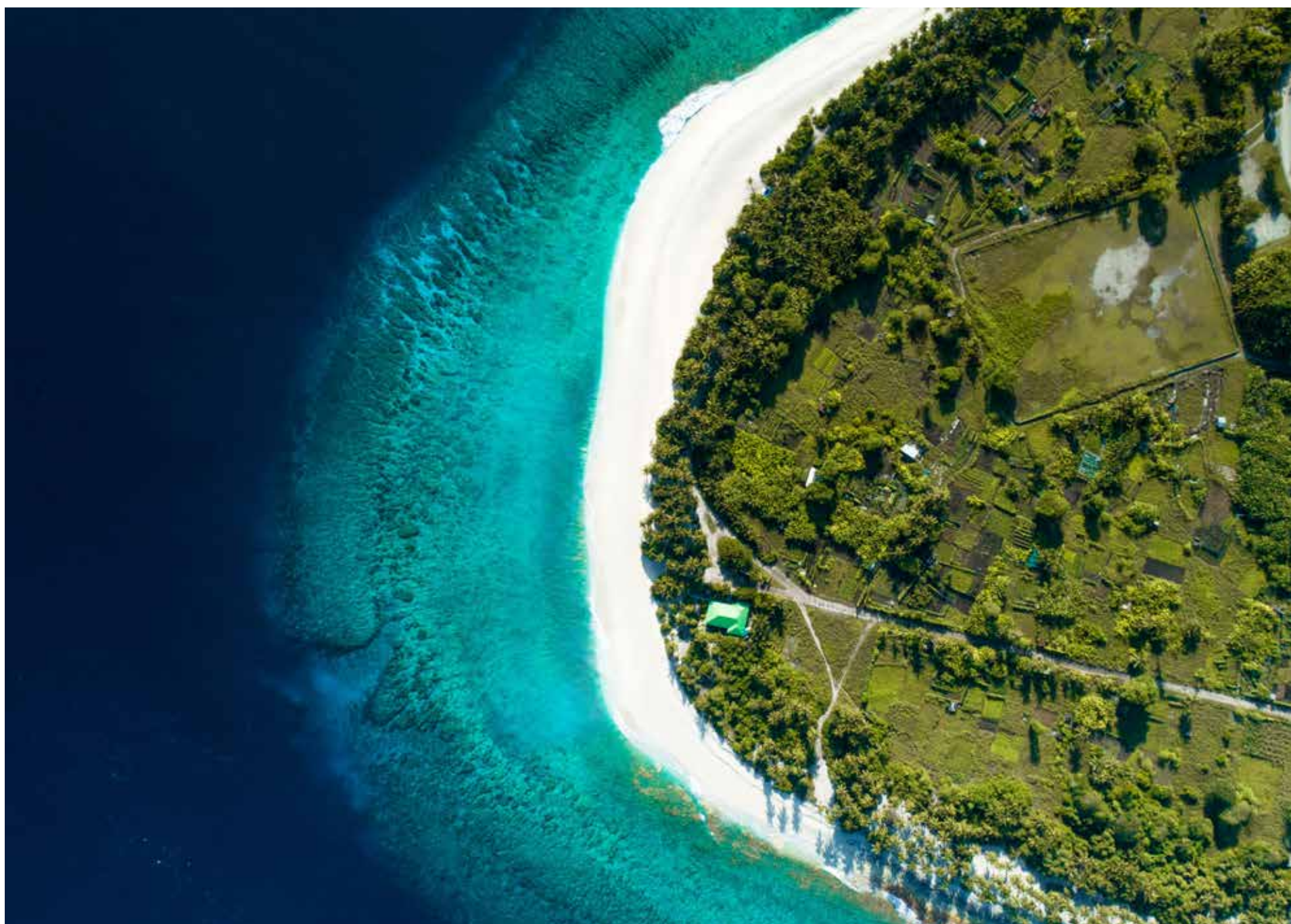
This time of the day is mostly dedicated to fond farewells for our departing guests and leaving them with a promise to return. It also marks an end to my day, however, before I sign off, I make my 'to do' list for the key points to complete on the following morning. After all, I am a very diligent girl from Japan who can be a bit of a workaholic at times.

A HOLIDAY AMONG TARO FIELDS

- AT ALAFEHI RETREAT, FUVAHMULAH

Alafehi Retreat is a modern holiday home built on Maadhandige (the home of the vast field) in Fuvahmulah island - the unique single island atoll located in the south of Maldives - home to an abundance of biodiversity made of freshwater lakes, mangrove species, endless taro fields, and the unique esoteric ways of life of its inhabitants.

“Ala-Fehi” means “taro-green”. Taro (ala) is the traditional staple food of Fuvahmulah, usually eaten with different varieties of coconut delicacies and fish. Ala is grown everywhere in the island - in every inch of muddy fertile soil, on the peripheries of freshwater lakes, and in the backyards of houses. The lives of the taro fields of Fuvahmulah are deeply intertwined with its people and their traditions.



The Alafehi Retreat is the ideal home from which to explore the allure of this mystical island. The modern three-bedroom holiday home is designed to provide a comfortable, restful experience - an intimate private holiday environment for small families or a group of friends. It houses two deluxe double rooms and a twin room - all designed with private veranda gardens and ensuite open air bathrooms. The living room and bedrooms are decorated with attention to detail using solid, grand structures and adorned with elegant, hand-carved timber furniture and

custom fittings, and pleasing white upholstery. The warmly lit living and dining areas are serviced to provide a quiet restful abode, while the outdoor family plunge pool with swim jet system sets the ideal layout for an active day. The grounds of the house are equipped with barbecue facilities, a garden seating area and an undholige (swing house) - a pavilion and lounge area with comfortable reclining seats and a suspended undholi bed - an essential item of comfort and convenience in most Fuvahmulan homes.

A step outside the main door of the house will welcome

you to the home's green, breezy surroundings and quiet neighbourhoods. Narugis Magu - the name of the alley where the house sits on - is the local name given after the white rain lily, a garden flower commonly seen on the sides of roads. The houses in the neighbourhood are tucked away beneath shading mango, breadfruit, jambul, and ambarella trees. A short walk among the back alleys of the house will lead you to the taro fields and damp peripheries of the Dhandimagi kilhi, teeming with minuscule insects and overgrown vegetation of the wild ecosystem. A minute's walk





eastward from the house will take you to dynamic eastern shore of the island, where huge oceanic waves break vigorously against the island's edge, blowing in a continuous salty breeze through the tall coconut tree groves, evoking a mesmerising, meditative effect on one who stops to observe the surroundings.

A stay at Alafehi Retreat is the perfect way to experience the unique characteristics of the enthralling biodiverse environment of Fuvahmulah as well as its rich history and



traditions. The Alafehi butler is prepared to organise the ideal holiday itinerary for each visitor. Local food tastings, guided forest walks and explorative bicycle trails through meandering green pathways leading to wetlands and natural mud baths along the island's two protected freshwater lakes named Dhandimagi Kilhi and Bandaara Kilhi, and visits to agricultural farms and local produce outlets, or to shops and seaside cafe venues enjoyed at sunset can all be arranged upon request.

Being situated among one of the richest natural ecosystems in all of Maldives, Alafehi Retreat is always ready to serve visitors the best varieties of local food sourced from the island's farms and



A stay at Alafehi Retreat is the perfect way to experience the unique characteristics of the enthralling biodiverse environment of Fuvahmulah as well as its rich history and traditions.

nutrient-rich marshlands. Mangoes, taro, guavas, pineapples, bananas, pomegranates, breadfruits, papayas, coconuts, brinjals, pumpkins, kan kun, moringa leaves, and many seasonal delicacies are sure to be served fresh for the nourishment of residing guests on a daily basis. For a more tantalizing experience, guests are catered in the old age tradition of celebrating a special feast at the island's large thoundu beach, amidst the vibe of the vibrant sea waves breaking on the shore to smoothen the thoundu



sand, with delicacies of homemade steamed coconut and jaggery patties, smoked fish, boiled taro and breadfruit, and pandan fragranced rice pudding, all prepared according to distinctive recipes passed on from generations.

The more thrill seeking holiday makers can choose to go diving or deep sea night fishing. Fuvahmulah's unique submerged reef topography and isolated location makes it one of the best diving destinations in the world. It's vibrant coral reefs of healthy porites and acropora fringing at its peripheries are continuously visited by trevallies, barracudas, large schools of fish and magnificent pelagic creatures such as thresher sharks, large numbers

of tiger sharks, silver tips, grey reefs, the occasional hammerheads, and gigantic whale sharks. The deep sea "kattelhi", a fish belonging to the snake mackerel species, too resides along the island's atoll slopes. Night fishing enthusiasts join Fuvahmulan fishermen, who have for hundreds of years gone out to learn the ways of the deep mystical seas and catch the kattelhi, which when brought home, is cooked in a broth and served with boiled taro, chilli and lime, and enjoyed fresh as an impromptu late night meal by the family. It is part



of the island's hospitable tradition for hosts to invite visitors to experience this exotic meal, accompanied by stories of the kattelhi and island folklores.

The people of Fuvahmulah, have for centuries, found ways of living harmoniously with nature, seeking refuge in the depths of this island oasis which sits in the middle of the vast blue ocean. Fuvahmulans have learned very specific ways of existing among it's thriving biodiversity and elements of wilderness. Alafehi Retreat is the ideal stay for travellers seeking to experience the environment, traditions and culture of this dynamic island and its inhabitants, from the comfort of a luxury island home.

NEW APPOINTMENTS



JOALI Resorts Appoints Melany Martinez as Director of Wellbeing

Joali Being, JOALI Resorts' second property is all set to take wellness experiences at this island retreat to the next level with its newly appointed and highly experienced Director of Wellbeing, Melany Martinez.

Her journey to success took off in Costa Rica in 2001 as an Integrated Balance and Yoga Instructor. A graduate from the Canadian College of Holistic Health in Toronto, Melanie holds Diplomas in Applied Kinesiology and Body Psychology from D.E.I. International School of Body Psychology, as well as an MBA in Leadership and Sustainability from the University of Cumbria, U.K.

Melany brings in 18 years of experience in luxury hospitality management to the resort. Her expertise is not only in managerial roles but also preopenings around the world. Specializing in creating and developing bespoke spa centers and wellness concepts, she has worked with international companies in top locations such as SLH hotels, Relais & Chateaux, Aman Resorts, Kempinski hotels and independent hotels in Thailand, Croatia, Costa Rica, Western and Central Europe.

Praised for her managerial skills combined with her knowledge in wellness to help people achieve their maximum health and wellness potential, Melany is expected to develop a sustainable wellness journey full of vitality and joy as the resort's Director of Wellbeing.



Enver Arslan Appointed General Manager of Joali Maldives

This January, Joali Maldives welcomed Enver Arslan as the resort's new General Manager. With over 7 years of experience in the travel and hospitality field around the world, Enver sets an example in working with new openings in the industry instead of going for already established hotels.

Joining the luxury resort as General Manager is not Enver's first experience in the destination, nor is it at Joali Maldives. For 4 years, Enver overlooked the operational departments as the Resort Director at Joali Maldives until he was appointed General Manager in January. He brings in valuable experience from several Four Seasons properties around the world, including Four Seasons Maldives.

Enver began his career at Four Seasons Jackson Hole and moved to Palm Beach Florida, Las Vegas, Riyadh, Egypt and Maldives. He believes in enjoying life to the fullest, as also proven by his professional career choices in locations ranging from the top of ski mountains of Grand Tetons to the Atlantic Ocean, followed by dazzling architecture and the sparkling lights of Las Vegas to the desert plateau of the Middle East, and finally to the tropical romance of Maldives.



Maazif Ahmed Appointed Executive Housekeeper at Constance Moofushi Maldives

Constance Hotels & Resorts announced the promotion of Maazif Ahmed to the position of Executive Housekeeper at Constance Moofushi, Maldives. He has taken up his new responsibilities on the 12th of January 2021.

With more than 20 years in the Tourism Sector, Maazif joined Constance Moofushi on 30th March 2011 as Housekeeping Supervisor. In January 2013, he was assigned the role of Senior Housekeeping Supervisor.

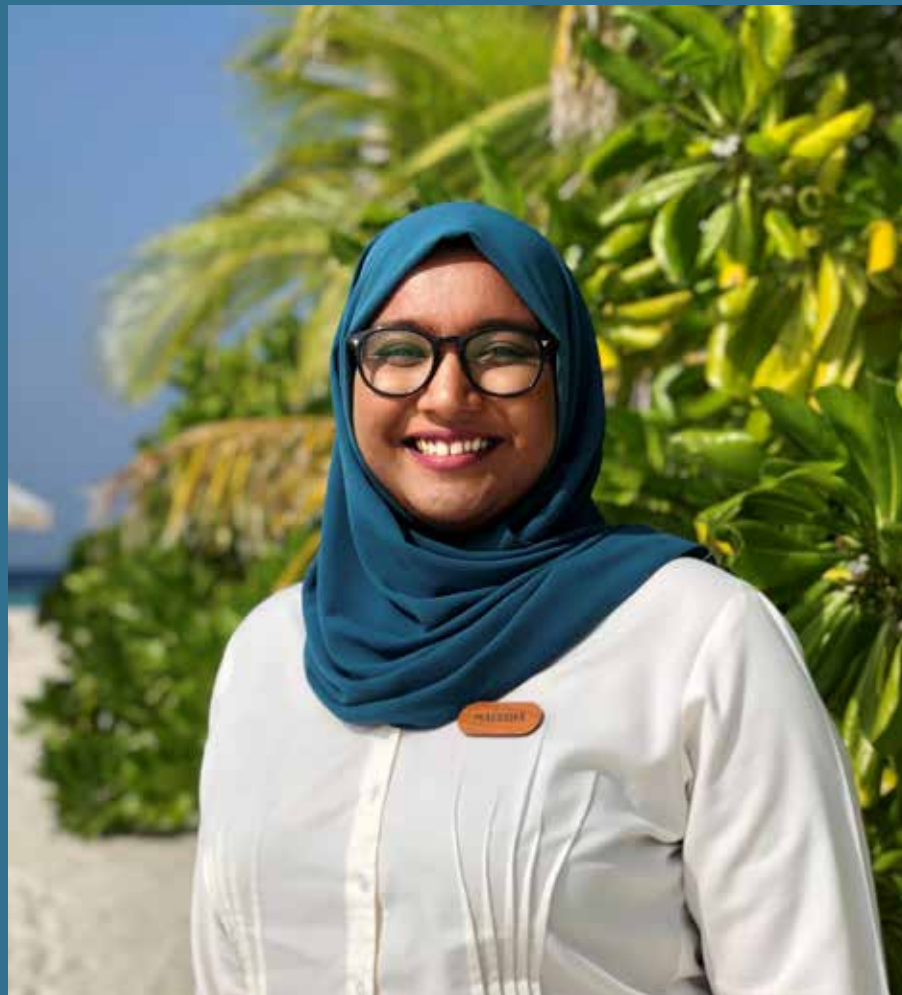
During his tenure, Maazif has led the housekeeping team very well and he kept moving up the ladder with more responsibilities and challenges.

According to the resort management, Maazif's promotion is a testament of his commitment to always provide prompt and quality services to both internal and external customers of the resort.

Aminath Maeysha

Sales Manager
at Mirihi Island Resort

As the recently appointed Sales Manager at Mirihi, Aminath Maeysha is a great example of how hotels can achieve great things when they invest in their staff. Having worked with Crown & Champa Resorts for eight years across four different properties in the Maldives, the former Front Office Manager has a wealth of experience in the hospitality industry and is currently loving her work at Mirihi in the South Ari atoll.



Since childhood, Maeysha always dreamed of working at a resort. This became a reality after studying in Male for eleven years, when she was invited to an interview at Meeru Island Resort in 2011. "It all happened so fast and there was not much time to think before I arrived at the island. I was welcomed to the team so supportively that I instantly felt empowered," she said.

Beginning her career as a receptionist, she was quickly promoted to guest services. The company saw potential in Maeysha and sponsored her Diploma in Hospitality Management at the Maldives National University.

"During my two-year sponsorship programme, I worked in the kitchens and entered one of the biggest culinary competitions in the region called Hotel Asia. I won the gold medal against incredibly talented chefs. In addition, I was deemed a promising young chef, which was a proud moment for me and my family. It

was a real passion; culinary gave me extra skills to aid my career development but I still felt that there was something missing. I wanted to work front of house."

That chance came after completing her studies, when she was appointed Assistant Front Office Manager at Champa Central Hotel in Male before moving to Innahura Maldives in Lhaviyani atoll in November 2019 for its preopening. Here, she covered the logistics of seaplane and boat transportation and managed the reception. A year later, she moved to Mirihi, where today as a sales manager, Maeysha finds sales exciting, working with existing and new partners, analysing their performance and planning new sales strategies along with the rest of the Team. "Keeping constant contact with all partners helps to understand what we can expect for our business, so sales calls are on my daily schedule. A huge part of this is revenue and sales analysis."

Working in such a strong leading position as a Front Office Manager at Innahura was a proud moment for Maeysha and her family. She states how challenging it was, being the only local female in the management team. "But the support, I got from the team was so incredible and

kept me moving forward. This is a strong motivator for me and the main reason that I can be successful. In the front office, I lead by example and take initiative. Nowadays with an advanced generation to manage, guiding them and becoming successful is one of the most rewarding aspects of the role. The new generation is clued-up on the latest trends and we can learn lots from them."

"My father always taught me to be a strong woman. I have proven that there is really nothing that a woman cannot do. Yet uncertainty and hesitation from leaders are very much visible when it comes to certain jobs given to women," says Maeysha, noting that she lost a lot of opportunities at an early age of her career. "However, determination and my commitment to the job helped me overcome the challenges in the industry. The external influence while living on an island is most challenging when working in a resort but it also depends on you. As we grow, we learn to overcome these challenges with a positive mindset and continue to inspire more women to join the industry."

"Throughout my career, I have had many influential industry mentors who have supported me and contributed to my

success. A huge part of my career growth and success goes with CCR management and owners for believing in me and providing me with opportunities to grow in the industry, regardless of being a local woman, as back then, some companies did not believe that a local woman could hold a long-term position in the industry."

Her words of advice to aspiring young female leaders: It is important to remember that there is no fast track to becoming a leader. Whether you have a degree or no degree at all, it takes substantial time to become a true leader and develop through the process of becoming one. Step by step, through hard work and dedication you will achieve your goals. To be a great leader one should constantly evolve and observe the team's skills. We need to give personal attention to everyone and monitor their strengths and weaknesses, according to this, we can customize the leadership style. It is important to listen to the team's ideas, encourage them and give suggestions.

About Mirihi

As one of the smallest island resorts in South Ari Atoll, Mirihi is surrounded by pristine natural beauty. From palm-fringed beaches with powdery sand encircled by a spectacular house reef with sea turtles, reef sharks, eagle rays and hundreds of varieties of rainbow-hued fish and a shipwreck. Mirihi offers delightful cuisine with exquisite international flavours and authentic Maldivian tastes. But most of all, it has wonderful hospitality and personalised service from the well-trained team who create an unforgettable Maldivian getaway for each guest.



EMERGING BAND, EQUATIC VIBE

TALKS ABOUT ITS EVOLUTION ON THE EQUATOR



In a country where music is not encouraged as a career path, many artists are breaking this social stigma through dedication and utter devotion to their craft. This describes local band 'Equatic Vibe', winning the hearts of fans in the Maldives' five-star resorts as well as overseas for their catchy music and cheerful charisma.

Equatic Vibe has performed at the world's largest travel fair ITB Berlin in Germany twice. They have also played at the Four Seasons, Crossroads, SAii lagoon, and Hurawalhi Maldives. However, Kuredu Island is still considered by the team as their second home and personal favourite. Lead singers Shammu and Ameen described the fond relationship between the staff members of the resort and love from guests as their mojo.

For this band born in the equator, their ultimate purpose is to create positive vibes and radiate happiness through their music. From jamming alongside school friends in 2004, and now their music is still full of the drive and ambition of those early years. Brothers Shammu and Ameen formed 'The Five', which gained popularity in Sri Lanka in 2010 before it evolved into 'Equatic Vibe'.

Shammu, the lead singer and the man behind the idyllic lyrics and sweet melodies while Ameen, bassist, Maby lead guitarist, Shinan drums and Husen, keyboards) collaboratively compose the songs.

The band's performance at the 'Sanam show' in 2015 brought recognition and an

overwhelming commendation from a mass audience in the company of international artists. During their first album recording, Equatic Vibe faced criticism at first, but once they had a local sponsor and were introduced to Chris Kling from Klangkantine studios in Berlin they recorded both albums and built a strong friendship.

This led to their first original album 'Kulathah' in 2016, featuring seven beautifully written and composed original songs performed in the native language of Dhivehi. The album was a gift to many music lovers waiting for original music from new age local artists.

Kulathah was their first album and curated and choreographed by the band from A-Z. These self-taught musicians set benchmark for the audience from sounds to lights and visuals. 'Dhiyavaa odi' is said to be a surprise to many who 'boxed this band into

a certain category' of music. Since then, they have received nothing but praise from local and foreign musicians.

These driven local musicians believe a band needs continuous nurturing and a mutual understanding. Punctuality is one of the main agreements among the team members. According to Shammu, the rule applies to a replacing artist. They have never missed a single gig and credit much of their success to their shared commitment, high morale and 'keeping a balance', it is performing or producing, personal or professional. Equatic Vibe is one of the busiest bands in the Maldives, available for weddings to supporting social causes and local

events. "We get the most fulfillment performing our own songs. The energy and the emotion mean guests feel the same and enjoy the music even if they don't understand a word," Shammu and Ameen added. Fans regularly sing along to their songs like 'Magey Raajje'. Another proud occasion was when Amir Ahmed school children's brass band covered their song 'Thithimaa'.

During the global pandemic, presented 'Quarantunes' with fellow musicians plus released their second album 'Magey EP' in 2020 with their first English song 'Paris' under the same record label. It is their dream to leave behind their lifelong work to contribute to future generations.

Recently, at Nouvelle, Equatic Vibe performed a two and half hour-gig to a massive audience craving feel-good music in uncertain times. Fans sang along to the lyrics, dancing and having a good time.



This is a gratifying experience say Equatic Vibe who believe that the industry tends to grow day by day. They also believe that love and appreciation for musicians will change the future of the music industry.

Not limited to one genre and experimenting throughout, Equatic Vibe implied that they have about 30 new songs 'in the oven', with touches of retro music taking fans back to the disco era. The band who always seeks to do 'something new' for their fans, shared about a dream project to 'hop and play' in different islands reaching out to their beloved audience in corners of Maldives and support local tourism.

CREATE YOUR MAGIC AND WIN BBM'S CHALLENGE 2021

In January 2021, BBM launched "BBM Chef's Challenge 2021". BBM team came up with an incredible opportunity for chefs in Maldives to participate and showcase their magical talents online via social media platforms.

According to BBM, the purpose of creating such a challenge is to showcase the talents of chefs all over the country. With Maldives being a world-class destination, tourists from all over the world visit Maldives and one of the most memorable parts of their holidays has always been exceptionally good food and dining experiences. It's the magical talents of the chefs working behind the scenes who we owe for these compliments from tourists.

One of the most key components of creating wonderful dishes is the use of good quality, world-class ingredients. So BMM presents with this challenge to chefs the opportunity to display their creativity, innovative ideas and magical presentation to the community creating brilliant, global dishes.

1ST PRIZE
USD 1000/-

2ND PRIZE
USD 750/-

3RD PRIZE
USD 500/-

The Challenge

BBM has handpicked twenty world-class brands and products for chefs to choose from and play around with which is readily available in Maldives. The chosen brands cover a wide range of Dairy, Rice, Spices, Pastry, Chocolate, Coffee, Puree, Coconut Milk Powder, Seasoning, Sauces, Processed Meat, Pasta, Soup, Pastes, Flour, Bread-Mixes, Spreads and Gastronomy, offering all main ingredients needed to create amazing dishes. The challenge is to choose any one or more brands from the chosen list and craft their own magic, get the appreciation from their peers, public and guests on Social Media and win the title of BBM Chef's Challenge 2021.

What to Do

The instructions for this challenge are very simple three steps.



Step One

Choose the ingredients from the selected brands, you can use as many products as you prefer to complete your dish. Remember to choose at least one brand from the list.



Step Two

Once you have completed creating the perfect dish you want, your next task is to take a picture of the dish which you came up with. Make sure that the logo of some of the brands which you may have selected from the list is visible on your picture. Be creative.



Step Three

Write the recipe and upload it as a post along with the picture on either Facebook or Instagram. Your post must be a public post, where people can access to admire as well as make sure it contains the Hashtag #BBMChef2021 to enter into the challenge. This step is all about getting your work out there.



The Prizes

The challenge began from the month of January onwards and will go on till the 31st of March 2021. For this challenge, winners are selected on a monthly basis as well as for the whole overall challenge. For every month between January 2021 thru March 2021, those who receive the three highest number of "Likes" on their posts will each receive one "Café Vergnano" coffee machine and one capsule box containing 30 capsules.

The Grand Prize is awarded at the end of the challenge. Participants need to keep checking the "Leader Board" on BBM Facebook page to see where they stand in terms of the number of "Likes" on their post. Based on overall "Likes", there will be 3 Grand Prize winners once the challenge closes on 31st March 2021, who will each be awarded the title BBM Chef's Challenge 2021 and also be able to win the challenge prize money. BBM offers USD 1000/- for the 1st Prize, USD 750/- for the 2nd Prize and USD 500/- for the 3rd Prize.

So with the new year, Chefs here is your amazing chance to have some fun, showcase your talent to the community as well as the opportunity of winning the title. But remember, if you want to get more likes, entering earlier the better. Now go and get creative.

Manta Air Talks Expansion



Manta Air has announced plans to add further capacity to its current seaplane fleet, to bring in five new twin DHC-6 Twin Otter seaplanes by the end of 2021 to serve their robust domestic expansion plans. The new aircrafts will bring Manta Air's fleet to a total of fifteen, including their ATR 72-600 turboprops that are currently in operation today.

Commencing operations in early 2019, Manta Air is the newest addition to the Maldivian flight scene, taking quick strides into establishing itself locally while at the same time breaking new grounds as a gamechanger in the industry.

There was a serious gap in the industry when it came to domestic transfers in the country. Especially when you consider its significant role in the total tourist experience of the destination. The local

flight experience is your first and the last impression, making it a major component in the machine at its entirety. From what had essentially been a crude "bus service" between the international airport and the domestic destinations, Manta Air has been instrumental in bringing in a whole new era to domestic air travel.

Focusing on delivering a highly organized and professionally managed flight service with

enhanced cabin comfort and elevated passenger experiences, Manta Air was the first to introduce pre-scheduled flights in the country, bringing in reliability and removing the fear of uncertainty for passengers flying in the Maldives. Advanced booking capabilities was unheard of, and a fixed schedule was thought to be impossible and economically unfeasible. However, the truth of it all is that it was never an impossibility. It's just



that it hasn't been done yet. Manta Air recognized this gap and successfully adapted its newly launched operations to fulfill this need. The same pre-published schedule of operations is applied across seaplane operations as well as the domestic ATR flights. The schedules are devised in full cooperation with the resorts, which allows the timings to be in sync with all major international flight arrivals and departures.

One of the primary goals of the carrier was in bringing on a massive change to how customers experience air travel in the country. In order to deliver this, comfort was a key factor. The brand-new ATR-72-600 aircrafts were modified with a reduced seat configuration to provide additional legroom for a more comfortable flying experience. Manta Air was also the first local carrier to offer two classes of travel,

where passengers can choose between "comfort class" offering a convenient 32" of leg room and the "Sapphire" class with an impressive seat pitch of 36" supported by enhanced cabin services and lounge facilities.

The Maldives receives over a million tourists annually, with that number growing significantly every year. The country currently has 132 resorts in operation, alongside over 700 guesthouses scattered across roughly 90,000 square kilometers, making domestic transportation and infrastructure crucial components in supporting this multi-billion-dollar industry in such a geographically dispersed destination.

Currently the airline operates flights to Kudahuvadhoo in Dhaalu Atoll and Dharavandhoo in Baa Atoll. Although the current focus is on fully maximizing their capacities at

these locations, the company ensures to keep its eye on the horizon to add further destinations to its ever-growing portfolio. This year, Manta Air is gearing up to start their first ever scheduled international flights between Maldives, India and Sri Lanka. Flights will be scheduled between Dhaalu Airport and several cities in India, covering Bangalore, Cochin and Trivandrum. Flights to Sri Lanka will be between Dhaalu Airport and Colombo. This will be a significant milestone to achieve within such a short period of operations for any local airline.

With an unwavering passion for innovation and a relentless attitude towards creating enjoyable and effortless flying experiences in the country, Manta Air has received an overwhelming support from the public as well as the tourism industry stakeholders.

The brand-new ATR-72-600 aircrafts were modified with a reduced seat configuration to provide additional legroom for a more comfortable flying experience.



SILVER SANDS BOAT YARD - BUILT TO PRECISION

From Silver Sands, Sea Gear to Pure Shores

More than two decades ago, Silver Sands began its journey as an inbound travel agency. As the business expanded, the company began to offer an innovative “total solution” service to resorts. Its concept of operating the dive & watersport centers, fishing activities and excursions by providing an all-inclusive package including equipment and vetted professionals, was well accepted and Silver Sands now operates in 14 luxury resorts. Among the equipment, the company provides whichever type of vessel is required by the resort, be it a yacht, speed boat or a dhoni.

For the maintenance of these operations, the company had to purchase and store a lot of extra equipment and gather spare parts over the years. Acknowledging that most resort operations around Maldives would be in need of similar high-performance products, Silver Sands decided to streamline the procurement and create a shop to cater to its own and other operations' needs. This was how Sea Gear was born.

The Sea Gear showroom was opened in 2013 and its concept of offering only high-quality products at affordable prices was quickly embraced by local fishermen, watersport operations and resorts. Having the experience of over a decade in the business, Silver Sands wanted to ensure that only the best brands would be used in its own operations and made available to others. Sea Gear offers the most renowned international brands of fenders, ropes, filters, hardware, watersport & dive equipment, safety gear and boat maintenance products. In recent years, Sea Gear has expanded its range into beach wear and other lifestyle items.

Eventually, the Silver Sands fleet grew to more than a hundred vessels spread across the atolls. As these vessels needed to be docked for maintenance or repair, the concept of starting its very own shipyard emerged.



Services Offered by Silver Sands Boat Yard

The use of high-quality products in combination with expertise is the recipe for success.

Silver Sands Boat Yard offers a range of services conducted by experienced professionals. It includes a safe boat lifting service with a remote-controlled 100-ton boat hoist (ASCOM). All types of repairs and maintenance solutions are available on request. Customers who want to use the boatyard facilities but bring along their own workforce can use the docking service and rent utilities and tools.

The shipyard has the capacity of catering between twelve to sixteen vessels up to 89 feet in length at any given time. Supply of equipment and

spare parts are provided in collaboration with Sea Gear. Silver Sands Boat Yard offers several workshop services; including carpentry, fiberglass work, welding, engineering and the marine electrical workshop.

Pure Shores offers all sorts of services, ranging from handing over fully equipped vessels including safety gear, engine and other accessories to merely repairing or servicing vessels. The company is very flexible in catering to its customers' requirements. Pure Shores Pvt. Ltd is looking forward to continue to service, repair and build many vessels in the future.

We hope to see you and your boat soon!

About Pure Shores

In 2010, the company acquired a commercial land on the island of Thilafushi, Kaafu Atoll and the “Silver Sands Boat Yard” was inaugurated and operated under the subsidiary company name Pure Shores Pvt. Ltd.. Initially for the first five years, the shipyard was utilized for the maintenance of their internal fleet as well as designing, experimenting and building new innovative boats for Silver Sands.

In comparison to similar service providers, Pure Shores began its shipyard operation with an incredible advantage as its parent company had a very strong background of knowledge. After a decade of experience in operating the vessels, working closely with guests and dealing with resort and maintenance requirements, Pure Shores could base its new boat designs on practicality, quality and knowledge.

Another advantage is that since the majority of the boats built by Pure Shores belongs to the Silver Sands fleet, it is

always easy to identify any flaws of their own production. Therefore, any weaknesses can quickly be perceived and corrected. Testing the vessels thoroughly is part of the process that the team of boat designers and builders' use to achieve precision and excellence. They constantly work on enhancing the overall design, quality, practicality and execution of their newly built vessels. Over the past years, Pure Shores has moved past mere traditional dhoni and has built masterful dive & fishing dhoni, para-sailing-boats as well as glass-bottom-boats constantly expanding into other practical designs.

Pure Shores Pvt. Ltd became a fully independent entity in the year 2020 and has fully opened its services to the general public. It is especially focused on providing excellent service to resorts and other hospitality & tourism related businesses in the Maldives who seek vessel repair and maintenance of the highest possible standard.



What Makes a Winning Team in the Hospitality Industry

Tips, tricks, and traits from teams that lead the industry

In their book “The Discipline of Teams,” Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith famously observed that “Groups do not become teams simply because that is what someone calls them.”

We couldn't agree more.

Bringing together a static group of individuals and expecting them to interact successfully and efficiently towards achieving any goals or business objectives is a fool's errand.

It takes time, effort, and a firmly distributed leadership and compelling direction to integrate their diverse backgrounds, knowledge base, expertise and to artfully leverage it to create a team that delivers results and delights customers.

Nowhere is this truer than in the hospitality industry where there is a hodgepodge of talents from various backgrounds and diverse cultures, and it is easy to see why there are so many dysfunctional teams out there.

However, despite these challenges, there are teams that somehow manage to embrace such inseparable differences and grow stronger because of it.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS, TRICKS, AND TRAITS FROM TEAMS THAT LEAD THE INDUSTRY.

THE MINDSET

They do not limit themselves with a fixed mindset.

Instead, they cultivate amongst themselves a growth mindset to overcome obstacles, see opportunity in uncertainty, and understand what influences their customers so they can intelligently pivot, innovate, and cater to their needs.

This enables them to embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks, see effort not as futile but as a path to mastery, and to learn from helpful criticism instead of outright ignoring them or playing the victim game.

Similarly, it also enables them to work towards a common, larger goal instead of bickering and trying to jeopardize each other because it helps them to find lessons and inspiration in the success of others.

At the same time, they also embrace a millennial mindset.

It enables them to understand millennials (born between 1981 and 1996, ages 24 to 39 in 2020) who tend to not only accumulate experiences but also have a strong

penchant to visit off-the-beaten-track destinations and enjoy off-the-beaten-track experiences.

This means that they have a proclivity to base their experiences on factors such as alternative accommodation, conscious luxury, sustainability, authenticity, carbon footprint, social impact, hyper-connectivity, and so on.

Being cognizant of such trends and innovating to meet those needs is what helps such teams understand the adventurous, FOMO-induced approach to memory-making that are preferred by the millennials, gauge their reservations, and keep up with the flux and the changes in technology.

And it is also why millennials devote a larger share of their wallets (millennials now represent half of all international luxury travel and it is estimated that it could be a \$2.5 trillion market by 2025) to those who understand that over the others.

Because for millennials, striking a balance between the experience and the impact it has on the larger ecosystem is incredibly important and non-negotiable.



It helps them to keep cool under pressure, have greater empathy towards oneself and others...

INTRA/INTER-PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE

They are socially, emotionally, and culturally intelligent.

For an individual to function as a creative and corporate member of a team, mastery over their brain's limbic system is key.

It is what makes them aware of their emotional states, feelings, and motivations and regulate them in a manner that's conducive to creative contributions to the team and foster a better working environment for all.

It helps them to keep cool under pressure, have greater empathy towards oneself and others, and speak out when they feel something is important instead of going into a cocoon and lamenting about it later.

But they also understand that a self-mastery of ones' emotional centers will not be enough. Along with the technical skills, they realize that it is also important to hone their interpersonal skills in the form of social and cultural intelligence.

Social intelligence helps them to be better team players, listeners, and persuaders who know when to make compromises in moments of discord and differences in opinion while cultural intelligence helps them to expertly interpret and tactfully navigate the differences in caste, color, creed, cuisine, culture, custom, and costume that's part and parcel of such a diverse talent pool.

This unique ability to decipher cultural values and variances is also what gives them their edge in tailoring culture-specific and culture-complementing services for their customers in a manner that's deceptively hard for others to objectively replicate.



THE CULTURE

They embrace those who disagree with them.

Having a culture that welcomes diversity of thought and novel ways of doing things has an inherent downside to it: It rouses emotions and kicks ones' empathetic nervous system into overdrive.

What happens next is that it makes going on the offensive the only logical—and deeply biological—response to ease the qualms that follow.

However, such teams understand that—with proper and clearly defined mechanisms to constructively manage conflicts—it is a risk worth taking because it helps them to guard against the collective hypnosis that is groupthink.

They also understand that encouraging authentic, productive dissent and empowering others to express their viewpoints and cultivating a culture where it is embraced wholeheartedly is the progenitor to radical as well as original ideas.

Such an understanding that no matter how often or how fiercely they disagree with one another, that at the end of the day they are trying to achieve the same thing is crucial.

On the one hand, it is what gives them the permission to come back the next day and be as passionate about the services and the deliverables as they were the day before.

At the same time, it is also what gives them the assurance that no matter their differences in how to serve their clients better, it will not destroy their relationships in the process.

THE WHY

They know why they do what they do—and know it well.

Simon Sinek, the author of Start With Why, explains it best: "People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it."

And it is precisely what the best teams out there understand on a visceral level: That there's a world of difference between teams who know what they do and those that not only know what they do but also, why they are doing it.

It is this deep-seated, genuine belief that they are in the business of creating memories and celebrating lives—and acting up on it on a daily basis—that makes all the difference and puts them in a league of their own than those whose only reason for being is to try and sell some room nights simply because that makes for a healthy bottom line.

In their misapprehension, they focus on all the wrong things while those who are cognizant of it focuses on benefits (sumptuous meals served by gracious and passionate hosts) instead of features (meals served with designer cutlery and silverwares.)

This alignment of what they do and why they are doing it also offers a unique side benefit: It emboldens them to play instead of work.

As a result, such teams register the highest degrees of joy and fulfilment in and out of work, are more productive, and display more mental resilience to discomfort, stress, and anxiety which can easily cripple the others.

CUSTOMER-OBSESSION

They obsess over ways to blow away their customer.

In an industry where the services provided are intrinsically homogeneous, how do you differentiate yourself from the others? For those teams that deliver results and delights customers, the answer is quite simple.

They differentiate themselves by continuously raising the bar in terms of the product offerings and the attendant service components in a manner that radically enhances the customer experience journey.

And because they know that the only way to gain that edge is to offer an experience that eclipse what they have done so far and what their competitors are doing now, they keep upping the ante of—and in a sense, redefine—what it's like to receive a truly next-level service.

But at the heart of their professionalism and the polish and the finesse lies something else altogether: The recognition and understanding that their colleagues are customers, too.

This is what compels them to "be there" for each other and help each other by going beyond the trappings of their roles and job descriptions.

But they don't stop there.

As much as they try to "be there" for each other, they also try to improve cohesion between each other.

And to do that, they adopt a common service language and outline their pillars of service and immerse everyone in it.

This is how they sing the same song and dance the same dance with each other and between departments while others are embroiled in dysfunction and infighting and overt rivalry between one another.

It is a continuous, lifelong journey made manifest by an ardent belief that in the race for excellence, there is no finish line.

ALWAYS HUNGRY

They are self-motivated, lifelong learners.

The tourism landscape is constantly changing.

- Competition is growing stronger with each passing day.
- The rate of change in technology is making skills go obsolete overnight.
- The heightened sense of cleanliness and hygiene is forever changing the arc of our business models and the expectations of our customers.

All these trends are bringing about a reckoning in the knowledge and skillsets that are expected of us—a reckoning that requires us to upskill and reskill ourselves to meet the shifting demands.

For some, this can be a little undignified, if not intimidating. But for the best teams out there, this is always a given and come as no surprise.

For them, the need for learning and development is not contingent upon the emergence of a crisis that threatens to uproot the lives and livelihoods of themselves and everyone they know: It is a continuous, lifelong journey made manifest by an ardent belief that in the race for excellence, there is no finish line.

This makes them more marketable, more innovative, and ever so nimbler to meet the shifting demands while those who treat the need for learning and development as an afterthought gradually lose their competence and fade into irrelevance.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The dynamics and diversity found in the make-up of any team in the hospitality industry is in and of itself a sight to behold. It is also why it's so hard to sculpt out of them a perfect team that is in attunement with one another and the customers they serve.

And yet, armed with a clear why and a growth mindset, creating a team that is socially, emotionally, and culturally intelligent is well within reach if they could but embrace those who disagree with them, realize that good enough never is, and commit to a journey of lifelong learning and development.

This is the secret behind the teams that are crushing it out there.

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MOPA

- A collaborative effort to reduce ocean plastics



White sandy beaches, crystal clear waters and pools of plastic are sadly becoming a common sight even in the most sought-after holiday destinations in the world. Ocean plastics is one of

the main causes of environmental degradation that we are facing today. In Maldives, the total plastic waste constitutes an estimated 43,134 tons per year; an enormous challenge for

a small island state dependent on its natural environment as the main source of economic stability.

The Maldives Plastic Alliance, MOPA, was founded in March 2020 by Former Environment Minister Thoriq Ibrahim, his wife and run by a committee made up of different stakeholders from various backgrounds. Having completed his term as the environment Minister from

2013 – 2018, Mr. Thoriq felt personally responsible to continue his work in the field of waste management and specially focus on ocean plastics. With the current government's release of the Single Use Plastic Phase Out Plan, he believes that it is the right time to use his resources and experience to create an alliance among different people, stakeholders, importers, manufacturers and the community to work together and find a solution to reduce, recycle and eliminate plastic pollution.

In order to tackle an insurmountable problem, one surely needs a clear

The local production of PET bottles, including water and soft drinks, is estimated at 143 million bottles (3300 tons) per year.

starting point. One of the most common forms of plastic waste is PET bottles. The local production of PET bottles, including water and soft drinks, is estimated at 143 million bottles (3300 tons) per year. Furthermore, most homes also rely on bottled water. As per the NIG Capital Household Survey conducted at national level, 57% of the households use plastic water bottles for daily consumption. While 87% of the households are aware of the recyclability of plastic bottles, 59% have identified lack of segregation by waste collectors to be the main challenge in recycling. The use of PET bottles is not just limited to households. Almost 60% of 500ml PET bottles are consumed in restaurants and cafes as well. As there is currently no proper segregation of waste, the percentage of mismanaged waste is significantly high at 66%. MOPA recognizes the role of extended producer responsibility and uses

a collaborative effort to address the issue in a sustainable manner. One of their most successful projects is the Plastic Reverse Logistics Project. This project encompasses working together with PET bottle producers, for example Maldives Aerated Water Company, Happy Market, Island Beverages Maldives and restaurants to segregate and collect PET

they hope to increase it to 200 – 300 restaurants within the coming months.

MOPA has also started to branch out to other islands across the country. The Islands Plastics Clean up Project is one of the most prominent programs run by MOPA. To kick start the program, they partnered with Kudahuvadhoo Island Council and nearby resorts,

dustbins that will be used to segregate plastic waste.

In addition to collecting and transporting plastic waste, MOPA also focuses their efforts on creating awareness to support behavioral change within the community. Furthermore, they also aim to use their programs as an opportunity to collect valuable data which can be used to



bottles for recycling.

From mid-December 2020, MOPA organized the daily collection of PET bottles from 120 restaurants using reverse logistics. The restaurants separate and collect the PET bottles in reusable net bags that are provided by MOPA. These used PET bottles are collected by the same vehicles used to deliver the bottles. It is then sent to Parley collection facility, where the bottles are cleaned, compacted and exported for recycling. Last December alone, MOPA collected 2991 kg (3 tons) of plastic. Following on from the success of this project,

namely RIU, Niyama and Kandima to segregate and collect PET bottles. The council ensures proper collection of the bottles within and around the island and places them in Jumbo Bags, that are then transported back to Male' on using the nearby resorts' supply boats. Once the boats reach Male', MOPA arranges the Jumbo bags to be sent to the Parley collection center. Moreover, the project is not limited just to the collection of PET bottles. MOPA also aims to assist the islands strengthen their waste management system by providing missing equipment, repair incinerators, and providing

formulate new policies.

Ocean plastics is becoming an increasingly alarming problem and the responsibility of tackling the issue falls not only on the island councils but all members of the community. Although the onset of the recent pandemic has dampened their efforts to create partnerships, MOPA aims to continue their programs. The support of resorts and various stakeholders is vital to the success of their programs.

Vaccinate your BusinessTM

A great slogan but what does it mean and why do you need it?

The why is easy – Covid-19, the global pandemic which has disrupted life as we know it has hit everyone and all organisations in the world, and emphasized just how much we took for granted. The Travel and Tourism has been one of the hardest hit industries, with restrictions, and uncertainty generating perceived danger, fear and anxiety for both workers and tourists alike. With the second and third waves of the virus sweeping over huge parts of the globe, the importance of hygiene and sanitation standards have never been greater. Specialised compliance standards minimise the fear of possible danger and give assurance of a commitment to providing a safe environment for all.

EIFEC which stands for the European Institute for Export Compliance, is an International standards organisation for compliance registered at the Commission of the European Union. EIFEC has the multidisciplinary knowledge and competence that allows it to define and develop, by innovation, standards, guidelines and certification mechanisms for emergency situations or critical areas of any nature.

In response to the public health pandemic COVID-19, EIFEC developed a set of new emergency international standards to restore the confidence of the general public and support businesses worldwide to be more effective in their fight against the COVID-19 virus. This new framework was developed through an emergency multi-stakeholder consultation process with the support of UNIFEC, HEALTHBY, and several international expert groups.



The goal of EIFEC was to take complex legislation, recommendations and guidelines and simplify them into an easy to understand, straightforward set of standards that could be implemented by any business sector, irrespective of size. Compliance to the standards is assessed via third party auditors and document submissions.

UNIFEC is a strategic alliance network of leading international Universities. (coordinated by EIFEC). It aims at promoting a widespread compliance culture by integrating the relevant best practice and operational procedures using a risk-based approach to establish courses and training sessions.

HEALTHBY is the collaboration arm of an international consortium of leading EU healthcare institutions, universities, professionals. It aims at delivering strategic advice and project expertise.

Having an archipelago of scattered islands and the “one resort - one island” concept makes the Maldives an ideal country for the program to have maximum effect. The EIFEC in collaboration with University of Turin (UNITO) signed a cooperation agreement with Maldives National University (MNU) in August 2020 to introduce and implement EIFEC standards in the Maldives.

Health Emergency Risk Compliance Management System (HER-CMS), series EIFEC ES2001.06:HBV.

A Compliance Management System is a set of written processes, procedures and standards of conduct. It also includes training of compliance officers and implementing a checking mechanism to prevent deviations and omissions. The process will then be verified and validated by a third-party auditor who provides a certificate.

All organizations should have a procedure for tracking sanitization activities; this is where the cleaning schedules, SOP's and cleaning checklists come into play and reinforce those procedures and certifies them as compliant. Once accreditation is achieved the establishment can display their certificate, complete with a QR code which can be tracked back to the EIFEC Compliance Register (ECR) to reassure the guests that the establishment is compliant. The completion of sanitization activities should be submitted to ECR on a weekly basis: upon each submission, a “Certificate of Sanitization” will be issued for internal records and public display.

The validity of each Certificate can be easily verified by scanning the included QR code or in the specific section of the ECR website. The Certificate also states that the sanitization process has been performed in compliance with all guidelines, regulations, best practices and technical specifications applicable.

“Vaccinate your business”

The EIFEC HER-CMS can be applied throughout the Maldives to help businesses to protect their workforce and clientele. It is a simple process of 3 steps:

Step 1 Choose your standard

Organizations and establishments can adopt two main standards:

1. **Health Emergency Risk Compliance Management System (HER-CMS)**, which can be adopted and implemented by all organizations

2. **Compliance Management Systems for Sanitization Service Providers (SSP-CMS)**, reserved for professional Sanitization Service providers

There are two levels of standards and audit:
a) Simplified for MSMEs (Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises)
b) High Level for more complex organisations

The standards are available in 13 languages.

Step 2 Implement your plan

Simplified emergency procedures and guidelines have been developed to implement your compliance program, irrespective of sector: Tourism, Transportation, Hospitality, Commercial, Offices, Schools, Factories etc.

Step 3 Get “Vaccinated” (Certified)

In response to the unprecedented circumstances, a simplified interim HER-CMS audit and certification process has been activated. This is a proper remote audit mode, to be carried out online using mobile or desktop applications with the same effectiveness as an onsite audit.

The process activation is available using dedicated Compliance Officers and third-party compliance auditors. Each establishment can have their own dedicated ‘Compliance Officer’ to manage the process and keep the certificate up to date.

EIFEC certification will not only allay fears of the workforce, but also offers assurance that the establishment is adhering to international standards and best practices. In addition, the certification can be used as a marketing tool to attract tourists by promoting the businesses as a trusted, compliant service provider. Furthermore, it can be used as due diligence defence to safeguard against any potential legal consequences or actions.

EIFEC is working together with UNITO and MNU, their two main counterparts, to assist all segments of the tourism industry of the Maldives to “vaccinate” their businesses.

EIFEC's first initiative in the Maldives was the conducting a complimentary Compliance Officers Training Programme for guest houses and local councils in November 2020. As the guest houses were one of hardest hit sectors this was one of EIFEC's early contributions to the Maldives' efforts in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic in a way that would ultimately be beneficial to the Maldivian economy. All participants who took advantage of this initiative, were awarded a certificate by EIFEC in association with MNU and UNITO.

EIFEC HER-CMS has now been endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism and the Health Protection Agency (HPA) as a tool to combat outbreaks of communicable diseases, and for businesses and organisations to take precautionary stand for the betterment of their business and wellbeing of the community.



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SUN, SAND, SEA AND CITY

HDC PROPOSES DEVELOPMENT OF A TOURISM ISLAND



HULHUMALÉ

From the blue waters across the coast of Male' rose a city like nothing we've ever seen before. A city that brought hope, and a promise of a bright future. The city of Hulhumalé was the answer to enable urban expansion and to bring some relief to the overcrowded city of Male', which had already become one of the most densely populated cities of the world.

An ingenious feat of engineering that has taken immense planning, this was a project of epic proportions. Millions of cubic meters of sand were pumped from the seabed, to raise an island from the blue. This is a city designed to cope with the rising sea levels and has incorporated a number of precautionary measures to mitigate flood risks from intense rainfall during storm surges. This was the first time urban planning had been brought to the forefront, with the vision of creating a sustainable city.

The first few hundred settlers arrived on the island back in 2004. Since then, the population has grown immensely, with phase I of the Hulhumalé project currently housing nearly 57,800 people with a maximum cap of 92,000. Phase II will have a capacity of 117,000 people, and the development has incorporated an impressive level of urban planning paving the way for a future of enhanced urban living.

THE PROJECT

The Housing Development Corporation plans to develop a multi-hotel tourism island, north of Hulhumalé phase two. The island itself will be detached from the mainland via waterways and linked with the population centers through two bridges. The island's connectivity with Male' city and the country's main international gateway Velana International Airport gives the project a strategic competitive advantage and adds great value for both residential and commercial investment opportunities.

THE CONCEPT

Situated in the heart of the Maldives, the proposed tourism island will take center stage in introducing urban tourism to the country and will complement the upcoming institutional developments in the city of Hulhumalé which include its Commercial and Financial districts. The tourism island itself will be supported by a wide range of additional facilities such as the cruise terminal, yacht marina and water theme park. All of these additional components will work together to take on a more integrated and holistic approach in creating a more diverse tourism ecosystem. Following a year of unprecedented economic disruption, creating diversity will be key to fostering a more resilient industry and establishing commercial stability. This ambitious project will also be a massive catalyst in creating hundreds of jobs opportunities for all.

THE ISLAND

Celebrating the very best of what the Maldives is known for, this will be a complex offering unrivalled resort and leisure experiences. An idyllic tropical getaway intertwined with Maldivian designs showcasing the essence of local culture and contemporary urban living, the vision for this project is to create a destination that is alluring for both tourists and investors alike.

The island will feature a wide range of hotels and resorts, each with its own distinct identity and refined amenities to take vacation experiences to the next level. When it comes to dining, the selection of culinary experiences will be limitless

and unparalleled. From barefoot casual to world class fine dining, the island will offer a plethora of culinary adventures like no other.

The proposed project will have a huge focus on sustainability, with numerous urban green spaces, parks and recreational areas that will nurture community wellbeing and enhance the overall livability of the island space. The island will also offer a park and ride facility as an intra-island public transportation system alongside electric vehicles in the tourist zone which will alleviate pollution and congestion.



Mohamed Jaish Ibrahim
HDC Chairman

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

As the country's population is shifting from rural to urban areas and we are now seeing significant clusters within the greater Male' region, this project is anticipated to serve as a crucial catalyst in creating massive number of jobs across a wide spectrum of specializations from construction, service fields to hospitality. With the potential for a massive spin-off effect across various industries on an unprecedented scale, this will be a project of transformational nature and is expected to bring forth immense socioeconomic benefits to the region.

Another important highlight of this project is its ability to cater to a huge diversity of travelers, from beach vacationers, digital nomads, city explorers to even global

residents looking for high end residential assets or holiday homes. This opens up a whole new set of opportunities for the communities and local businesses to explore.

HDC also believes that there is a great potential for the island city in an important transit hub in the region. As a highly integrated and complex urban ecosystem with a wide range of experiences and offerings interconnected, the tourism island will be a highly attractive destination where guests can experience nearly all that we have to offer in once place.

An ingenious feat of engineering that has taken immense planning, this was a project of epic proportions. Millions of cubic meters of sand were pumped from the seabed, to raise an island from the blue



“We are driving our smart city initiatives in a very holistic manner – as we believe that the true growth of a smart city would be guided firstly, by its residents followed by businesses, visitors and investors”

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

With a plethora of cosmopolitan projects in the pipeline to support the development of the greater Male' region, Hulhumalé remains in the forefront in realizing the vision of smart and sustainable waterfront cities in the region. There has been a great focus on the planning of this mega project. With thorough research and an in-depth understanding of both the local and global tourism market, the land use plan for the tourism island has now been finalized. Currently the HDC team is heavily invested in developing the Tourism Island website, 3D modeling and rendered walkthroughs for the benefit of the public and potential investors.

The projects which will be given greater priority are the commercial zones, Guesthouses, Serviced Apartments and Hotels. The commercial areas, Guesthouses and the Serviced apartments have a schedule of 24 months for completion, with the mid and upscale hotels expected to be completed within 5 years once the construction starts. HDC has established a simple and straightforward proposal method for parties interested to invest in Hotels, Guesthouses and Serviced Apartments whereby you can submit an expression of interest following the guidelines and format provided on the official HDC website.

The island will also be home to a wide variety of world class dining facilities, retail centers and branded shopping outlets. Allocation for these facilities will be done through dedicated agents. HDC will soon be announcing Requests for Proposals (RFP) for the allocated land spaces dedicated for commercial use and guesthouses.

THE VISION FOR HULHUMALÉ

“We envision Hulhumalé to become a city that creates novel economic opportunities in the Maldives, with our people in mind, while building global partners and international connections in the process who will collectively work with us in realizing this shared vision” explained Mohamed Jaish Ibrahim, the chairman of the HDC board of directors. “As a planned city and one of its kind in the country considering the scale and the unique developments it houses, we focus on maximizing the use of land that we have in Hulhumalé, in line with economic and environmental efficiency and a core strategy of building a quality standard of living for this generation and those to come”

BUILDING A CITY FOR THE FUTURE

The vision for the city carries strong themes of digitization and transformation, fostering an environment that nurtures and promotes innovation and economic evolution. Speaking about their smart city initiatives Jaish said “We are driving our smart city initiatives in a very holistic manner – as we believe that the true growth of a smart city would be guided firstly, by its residents followed by businesses, visitors and investors. In all aspects of our smart city planning, we actively engage with the public, for example with our ‘Mansa’ platform for discussions on smart city projects and building a smart population. Such discussions have provided us with the insight and backing into facilitating innovative plans such as the implementation of an Open Access Network and utilizing smart technology and data, paving way for economic evolution, digitalization of services, enabling e-commerce and the creation of solutions to transform a number of social, economic, environmental challenges in our society”. To further accelerate virtual connections, they have also introduced digital chatbots, Mithuru (meaning friend in Dhivehi) for contactless assistance and access to a wide range of information related to HDC's projects and initiatives.

“Achieving sustainability or successfully creating a smart city cannot possibly have a set deadline but will rather be an ongoing journey for us”, Jaish Ibrahim, said. “This journey continues for us, while we persist in seeking smart solutions to overcome the inevitable challenges of creating a megacity in a small island nation”



ABOUT HDC

Founded in 2001, the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) is a fully state-owned enterprise that has been assigned as the master developer, regulator and planner of Hulhumalé, the largest and most ambitious urban development project the country has ever seen.

Charged with piloting the design-build construction of all of the city's developments, HDC undertakes projects across multiple facets of industry, from hospitality, recreational, commercial to residential in nature. HDC is driven by a national vision in developing and fostering urban spaces that are safe, resilient, sustainable and most importantly that which embraces enhanced urban living.

PURCHASING POWER: ABDUL BAAREE ABDUL HAKEEM, PROCUREMENT OFFICER



“In this current competitive market, my first, and most priority is to ensure that the product meets the company's expectations in quality, sustainability and best price.”



1. How long have you been in purchasing?

I started my career as an Office Assistant in the Finance Department in Hulhule Island Hotel, then slowly built up my career from there onwards. On the way, I have worked in various positions; such as Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, General Cashier, Income Auditor, Storekeeper and moved to a dedicated position in Procurement from 2016.

2. What do you look for in a product?

In this current competitive market, my first, and most priority is to ensure that the product meets the company's expectations in quality, sustainability and best price. As I am looking into all the procurement for the Maldives Inflight Catering (MIC), it is extremely important that we meet all our partner airlines' requirements.

3. What area of the hotel are you most proud of?

I think in a hotel all areas work together as a team; so I am proud of all our departments and all the team members.

4. Tell us about one of your most successful deals.

One of my most recent milestones is working with the Group General Manager in meeting the procurement requirements for our upcoming resort, Madifushi Private Island located in Meemu atoll. I am very satisfied with how we successfully handled this project.

5. What does a supplier have to do to impress you?

Quality is very important for us; as 99.99% of products are imported goods from overseas, the goods provided by the vendors / suppliers must meet our requirements and deliver the goods on time or before the due date. Additionally, the products should be available without shortage, maintain consistency in supply and in case of shortage or delays, alternative options should be made available.

PANDEMIC AND THE 'NEW NORMAL'

The onslaught of Covid-19 has had a devastating effect on businesses around the world, affecting all sectors to some extent. No one and nowhere has been spared. The pandemic has reached all corners of the globe and united people in a collective fight against an unknown enemy. Social media and the ever-increasing web of rumour, misinformation and fear mongering has created a world of fright, confusion, and uncertainty, on what Covid-19 is and when it will go away. Covid-19 is a coronavirus, of which there are many variants, some of which cause disease such as the common cold or SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome). Covid-19 is a SARS variant, and, as with the common cold, is unlikely to be eradicated anytime soon, making it extremely important to be controlled.

The emerging 'New Normal' is a way to combat the spread of Covid-19, which is profoundly shaping the way everyone carries out their normal business operations and other everyday activities. It has created the need for cultural and social transformational change everywhere, which will themselves, require a robust mechanism for monitoring of both compliance and effectiveness.

Tourism has been one of the hardest hit sectors, with the tsunami of repercussions causing waves of fear and uncertainty around travel and all ancillary industries. As Tourism is the largest economic industry in the Maldives, finding ways to allay this fear and encourage tourists to return has been at the forefront of ministerial actions. The unique one-island, one-resort concept has enabled the Maldives to promote itself as a safe destination, resulting in over 555,000 tourists returning up to the end of December 2020, and more than 40,000 in the first 15 days of 2021. However, with the second and third waves of the virus sweeping over huge parts of the globe, the need for control measures and the importance of behavioural change in hygiene and sanitation have never been greater.

The need for 'Safe Tourism' has spawned a plethora of new standards and guidelines from WHO, and numerous worldwide agencies, resulting in initiatives such as WTTC Safe Travel, EIFEC, Clean & Care Certification, and the Clean Stay programs formulated by International brands. This has led to a confusing mix of documents, jargon and terminology to make the head of the average person spin.

The HPA / MOT / MFDA have created standards and guidelines that centre around the key global messages of Safe Tourism, cultural change and social awareness.

CORE REQUIREMENTS ARE:

- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection, (which you could argue should have been there anyway!)
- A suitably trained workforce. (The importance of training can no longer be overlooked)
- Mandatory wearing of masks on all public transport and in public places (including shops), for EVERYONE.
- Provision of hand wash facilities and / or hand sanitisers.
- Clinics in ALL Resorts, which must have a healthcare professional and equipment capable of dealing with emergencies and Covid-19 outbreaks.
- Use of the contact tracing app "TraceEkee"
- Physical distancing measures.

Compliance to these are key to changing and controlling the course of Covid-19. Some resorts have a hygiene manager / Covid task force / Covid Compliance Officer in place to make sure that the required measures are adhered to. Compliance is much harder to enforce within local islands and the Greater Male Area as many businesses do not have the depth of workforce or finances to have a dedicated Compliance Officer, leaving these areas vulnerable to future surges of infection.

In addition, adherence to guidelines has largely been ignored, whilst owners and operators focus on the more immediate issues of cash flow and staying IN business! Enforcement is further hampered by the lack of understanding of the long-term effects, confusion, uncertainty and often the added pressure of the fact compliance is perceived as too expensive or too difficult to achieve.

The focus on Covid-19 has pushed other illnesses and issues into the background of people's minds. Food Safety is one of them, however, several key components are intertwined such as personal hygiene and effective cleaning and disinfection. Since Covid-19 is not transmitted via food, the focus of contamination control has moved

away from the kitchen team and is now firmly on the guest facing team members.

This means that the previously overlooked housekeeping department has been well and truly thrust into the spotlight. Other ancillary areas such as front office and transport facilities have also had a wake up, with more people actively looking for places / ways to wash or sanitise their hands and clean their working environments.

Inherently, these guest focused functions were excluded from the food hygiene training schedule, being deemed unnecessary or too expensive, especially for those who work in guest houses, safari vessels, cafés and restaurants, leaving a void in understanding the importance of hygiene and sanitation.

Understanding what FTP contact surfaces are, the correct chemicals to use, why short contact time sanitisers are important, what infection control procedures actually are and etc., are key to controlling infection. Confusion leads to a chasm of uncertainty and the resulting inaction presents an open door for new waves of infection & clusters of infection. Consequently, effective training across ALL team members is extremely important.

Utilizing the expertise of external third-party consultants, auditors and trainers to help with the practical aspects of HOW to implement the standards and explaining the reasons WHY they are necessary is an effective way to achieve compliance to the 'new normal'.

Stallion Maldives has experienced consultants who can provide personalised support services to help businesses of all sizes with standard implementation, hygiene, safety and security measures, medical health emergencies and testing facilities, all component parts in adherence to the standards.

Courses are in both Dhivehi and English to help get the correct message across to the workforce. The workforce can in turn share this knowledge with friends and family, which helps raise awareness across the population so that everyone can contribute to creating a safer, Covid-19 controlled environment.

This further enforces the message being promoted by HPA that it is everyone's responsibility to take the appropriate action to control the spread of Covid-19 and minimise the risk of infection.

Janet Smiles is Chief Consultant and Director at Stallion Food Safety Pvt Ltd., Stallion Maldives Group.

Stallion Maldives was established in 2020 to provide a complete solution for maintaining the safety and security of any business and its clientele. All services are carefully designed for the requirements of the specific business entity.

Stallion Maldives provides security, fire and emergency management services, food safety consultancy, hygiene and health support, technology and sustainability solutions, cyber security and training services.

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INTRODUCING GF ENTERTAINMENT

– Exclusively for the Select

Established in 2014, GF Entertainment have carved a reputation as one of the most sought-after boutique entertainment companies within the industry and are renowned for providing clients with unforgettable experiences from all over the world. Headed by Founder & Managing Director, Emmanuel Akintunde, GF Entertainment are the go-to gurus when it comes to celebrity galas, VIP yacht parties, coveted-ticketed events and exclusive performances from A-List artists. In fact, there's nothing these guys can't arrange and it's their job (as well as their passion) to ensure their clients LiveInTheMoment™.

With a base in London, Akintunde uses his unrivalled experience as an actor, musician and entrepreneur to scout the globe for the most sensational acts and events. As experts in entertainment, Akintunde and his team have built close relationships with artists and their managers and as a result have access to some of the world's hottest acts and DJs on the events scene.

But it doesn't end there and lockdown hasn't stopped GF Entertainment from thriving either. In fact, with the introduction of their "Tiny Desk Concert" formats it has instead thrown them into the limelight. Their clients have been able to continue the party and enjoy live entertainment from the safety of lockdown, with performances being offered via online streaming services through GFE. "What some artists are doing now – artists like Alicia Keys and Diddy – they're performing from their location and then we would live stream it to the client's estate or

compound, wherever they may be." Akintunde explains, "In somewhere like Saudi Arabia a prince will have a live link to his compound. He will have a projector screen and a personal performance with 10 or 12 of his friends." Said live-streamed performances cost around half that of one "in the flesh" and it sounds like the clients are loving the personal touch. Akintunde tells us, "For example, for a birthday party you can have someone like Alicia Keys say, 'Happy Birthday Sandra, I'm sure you're having a great time, sorry I can't be there with you.'"

Their portfolio boasts securing Akon for the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix in 2019, two sold-out shows with the legendary Gabrielle at Boisdale Restaurants in London and Sophie Ellis-Bextor Performing at 2021's London New Year's Day Parade – to name just a few, as well as those acts that cannot be mentioned due to discretion.



GF Entertainment are not shy of being recognised in the press either with the likes of Forbes featuring their most recent work in, 'The World's Most Exclusive Entertainment' with a mention to The Phly Boyz. This epic superyacht party band are on GFE's books and offer the perfect entertainment for an intimate dinner on the top deck, a dance party under the stars or the chance for a sing-along. GF Entertainment have also been recognised in Forbes for managing Grammy-nominated pianist, Vincent Corver, who offers guests a "multi-sense, collective culinary experience", comprising of piano compositions and signature masterpieces. So, if you're after some of the world's leading entertainers for superyachts, GF Entertainment certainly know a thing or two.



Ever the innovative thinkers, GF Entertainment and Vincent Corver have together created an all-new culinary experience titled, 'Memories', designed for luxury hotels that seek to stand out from the crowd and the ultimate high-end private residences. A crowd-pleasing combination of live piano and high art cuisine, the program synergises a selection of dedicated composed piano pieces with small-bite culinary signature masterpieces. The aim is to deliver an unparalleled

type of "multi-senses, collective culinary experience" to guests, synchronising the music to the tasting events including seeing, smelling, pre-tasting and the after-tasting of the food. The musical masterpieces are named after milestone life events; 'first kiss', 'first teddy bear', 'first jump into the deep water', 'Mama's perfume' and more. GFE & Corver look forward to presenting and performing the event to a select number of VIP guests.

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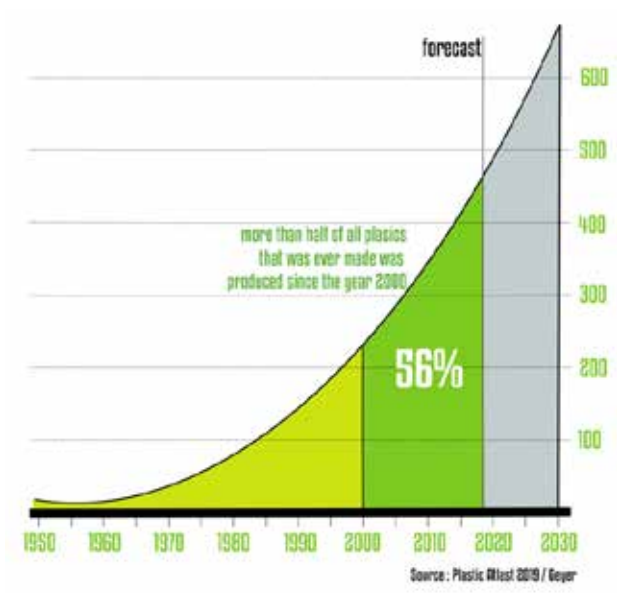
Socials: @gfeldt
on Instagram, Facebook & Twitter

Web: www.gf-entertainment.com

BUBBLES IN THE GLASS

On May 8, 1886, Dr. John Pemberton served the **world's first Coca-Cola** at Jacobs' Pharmacy in Atlanta, Georgia. From that one iconic drink, Coca-Cola has evolved into a total beverage company.

Global Plastic Production in Million Tonnes



One of the most famous shapes in the world is the iconic contour fluted lines of the Coca-Cola bottle. Renowned as a design classic and described by noted industrial designer, Raymond Loewy as the “perfect liquid wrapper,” the bottle has been celebrated in art, music and advertising. When Andy Warhol wanted a shape to represent mass culture, he drew the bottle and when Volkswagen wanted to celebrate the shape of the Beetle, they compared the car to the bottle.

How did the bottle become so iconic?

It began with the desire to protect brand Coca-Cola and was a cooperative project between The Coca-Cola Company and its bottlers.

The Coca-Cola Company is present in almost every beverage category, and produces more than 500 brands in 200 countries including the Maldives. Over 700,000 people work in their system to help deliver those brands to its customers and consumers every day.

Today, the world we live in is surrounded by plastic. Everywhere we look, from bottles, bags to wrappers, we have become a society addicted to disposable plastic. The beverage industry is now accused of being one of the biggest contributors to this global problem as the plastic PET bottles used by the industry leak into the natural environment.



Plastics, and especially PET, can be viewed as something that is of a paradoxical nature. It is versatile, can be molded into any shape and color, is resistant to moisture, is lightweight and cheap and doesn't corrode. These are qualities that make it particularly suitable for hygienic food packaging and drove an enormous appetite for its use globally. However, these are also the very qualities that make it nearly impossible for nature to fully decompose items made of these materials.

As the environmental consequences of unmanaged plastic waste dawned on the general public there was a turning point in 2019, when we saw a global revolution against plastic pollution. Voices were raised, and a growing resistance started to be felt across the world. In 2019, at the UN Environmental Assembly in Nairobi, more than 170 countries pledged to take action on reducing the production and consumption of single use plastics. The Maldives, being a country highly sensitive to environmental changes, and where the backbone of the tourism industry is its unique natural beauty, has now joined this list as well, recently announcing the enactment of banning the import of single use plastics to the country from June 2021.

With the increasing public awareness on environmental issues and the ever-growing desire from the public to do something about plastic pollution, major corporations are now taking significant steps in answering this call. Coca-Cola, as a major stakeholder in the chain, has been in the forefront of this movement. Sustainability has been a

fundamental component of the company's philosophies for many years, addressing a wide spectrum of issues, from water replenishment, gender equality, human and workplace ethics, environmental protection, sustainable agriculture and sustainable packaging.

When the company first introduced its iconic “contour” glass bottle design in 1915 this brought forth a distinct identity that set this bubbly black drink apart from its competitors and quickly became a design classic that is still with us today. A hundred years into the future, it is gaining even greater popularity in modern society as today's generation sees glass bottles as a means to addressing environmental concerns sustainably due to their reusability and recyclability.

Today, the Maldives Aerated Water Company (MAWC), the manufacturer of Coca-Cola in the Maldives, has expanded its glass bottle production facility and has launched all their products in glass bottles to address the problem of plastic pollution.

With an increased capacity for glass bottling, the company is now able to offer its glass range to all customers, including the resort segment, which is by far the biggest consumer in the market. They are also encouraging businesses to opt for glass over the PET bottles and have initiated an incentive scheme providing financial benefits for each bottle returned. The company has all its main brands - Coca-Cola, Sprite, Fanta, Schweppes Tonic, Bitter Lemon & Soda, and its Schweppes Premium Still

and Sparkling water available in 250ml glass bottles today, and will be re-launching its popular Bonaqua brand in both 1.5L and 330ml glass bottles in March.

At the same time the company has come together with other local manufactures and NGOs to create systems for collecting used PET bottles for recycling and generate awareness amongst the general public on the need to responsibly segregate their waste for sustainable disposal and recycling. Milind Derasari, the General Manager of Operations at MAWC emphasized the company's commitment to supporting the local communities and stakeholders in every way possible to embrace a more responsible and environmentally sustainable business model. “The problem is not with PET in its own right, it is with how we handle the bottles after we have finished using them. It is everyone's personal responsibility to ensure that their waste is taken care of in such a way that is not harmful to the environment. As a company we are committed to setting up infrastructure and educating people so that all our

PET bottles can be collected and recycled.”

One fundamental question still exists on whether the shift will be possible and that is society itself. How willing is the community as a whole to adapt and embrace change? Quite often, there is a premium in terms of cost and the matter of practicality for enhanced products that carry “eco-optimized” packaging. How many of us are willing to spend the extra dollar? And what would it take to narrow the gap between “intention” and “action”? Sure, a lot of us talk about doing our part by joining the green revolution and supporting brands that embrace sustainability. But how many of us are actually doing it? It will be a long and difficult road ahead. It will take strategies and tactics that would invoke consumer behavioral changes to bridge this gap. Through hyper tailored awareness campaigns to strengthened education systems, this is going to be a long game, but one that will certainly be worthwhile.



A QUIET REVOLUTION



Noise is by far the most common complaint you will hear from hotel guests. This is especially prevalent with city hotels, and less so with beach resorts. However, it is not that outlandish to receive a complaint or two about being deprived of sleep due to an unrelenting barrage of noise by an obnoxiously loud ocean. No matter how luxurious or opulent your hotel may be, this seemingly small matter may very well ruin an entire holiday for a guest, and even tarnish your hotel's reputation

through unfavorable online reviews. From shared hallways amplifying the sound of your neighbor's footsteps, to roaring beach parties and soirees that keeps sleep at bay, noise can be quite the troublemaker.

K.R. Moeller Associates Ltd., a global developer and manufacturer of sound masking technology has found an answer for this age-old problem. Say hello to MODIO, a sound masking device specifically built for hotel guest rooms.

So how do we measure the noise levels of our hotel rooms?

The amplitude of a sound wave is how much force or pressure the sound wave carries, and this measurement is expressed in decibels. Now although it may be debatable, it is commonly believed that acceptable noise levels for hotel rooms are between 30dBA and 45dBA. However, most guest rooms actually have even lower background sound levels. Somewhere between 28 to 32 dBA. In these ultra-quiet environments, occupants can be easily disturbed by any airborne or impact noises.

How does it work?

MODIO generates a continuous flow of background sound that fills up the room and allows its occupants to adjust and control the acoustic ambience of the space just as simple as adjusting the temperature and lighting. This acoustically-engineered sound is designed to cover a wide range of noise pollutants.

Although adding more sound to a noisy environment may very well seem to go against solving the matter, guests can actually be made more comfortable by increasing the background sound level of the room in a controlled way. The sound spectrum that the MODIO device generates is engineered to balance acoustic control and guest comfort. The sound can be calibrated and tailored to suit the individual needs of each room through a process called 'tuning,' which ensures the sound meets an optimum masking curve, regardless of furnishings and finishings which would otherwise cause limitations to performance with many alternative devices.. However, even the default setting is still sufficient enough to deliver an unapparelled noise masking solution to cater to most situations.

Quick and easy installation

Easily mounted to the back of any flat screen TV, a wall or furniture, the device seamlessly blends into the room and can be installed within mere minutes by in-house engineers.

MODIO is extremely user friendly, with an easy-to-use dial on a control pad that allows the guest to set the background sound level according to their personal preference or as needed depending on any external disturbances.

MODIO devices come with a 5-year warranty, and the technology is commercially certified and has been deployed for use in numerous regions around the world including the Americas, Europe and Asia. For more information about MODIO, visit www.modio.audio.

About K.R. Moeller Associates Ltd.

K.R. Moeller Associates Ltd. is a global developer and manufacturer of sound masking technology, including the first networked sound masking, paging and music system: LogiSon Acoustic Network. K.R. Moeller is committed to product innovation and high-quality customer service, as well as to providing sound masking education for customers and related professionals. K.R. Moeller is headquartered in Burlington, Ontario, Canada and is a privately-held company.



Lifebuoy Immunity Boosting Sanitizer for Hygienic Hands



With the outbreak of Covid-19 Global Pandemic, personal hygiene and safety became one of the most essential needs for everyone. When we step outside our home, we tend to touch many common surfaces such as staircase railings, door knobs, motorcycle handles, as well as unavoidable surfaces such as elevator buttons. All these common surfaces are breeding grounds for bacteria and viruses, which can be harmful to humans. The biggest challenge in our daily routine is that we don't always have access to water and soap to keep our hands clean.

The brand name "Lifebuoy" is a globally well recognized brand for their Anti-Bacterial handwash and body soap products. It is also widely used among households across the world.

Lifebuoy Immunity Boosting Sanitizer - Total 10 is now available in Maldives. It helps to keep your hands 99.99% germs free without water. The sanitizer helps in boosting the agents that give our hands the immunity to keep fighting germs for up to 10 hours. It not only kills 99.99% of germs instantly, it also boosts your immunity for up to 10 hours, without the use of water and soap, making it a very convenient choice as you go about your daily routine outside your home.

Just take a drop, apply on your palm. Rub the solution on both sides of your hands, in-between the fingers and fingertips, instantly giving you the quick solution for germs free hygienic hands. This mild, quick-drying, non-sticky sanitizer has a gentle mild odor as against strongly perfumed ones

available in the market, which can be intolerable especially for people sanitizing their hands before a meal.

When out of proper reach of hand wash facilities, use Lifebuoy Alcohol Based Immunity Boosting Sanitizer which has upto 95% Ethyl Alcohol. This is a sanitizer which can be used by both adults and children, making it a great hand hygiene combination for school or workplace.

The authorized distributor for Lifebuoy products in Maldives is Bestbuy Maldives Pvt. Ltd. Lifebuoy Immunity Boosting Hand Sanitizer comes in 50 ml tubes and 500 ml pump bottles and it is available for both wholesale and retail from BBM outlets.

About the Brand: Lifebuoy started with William Lever's goal to stop cholera in Victorian England. Over the past century, the brand has evolved into the world's #1 selling germs protection soap and a worldwide leader bringing better health and hygiene to billions.

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