

The power of mentorship



L-R: Ali Borhani, Founder, Incubeemea; Alex Azzi, Co-Founder, SCAS Partner; Salim Akil, Founder, SearchInMENA; Tia Kansara, Director, Kansara Hackney; Ramzi Ghurani, Assistant General Manager, Petra Insurance Brokers.

The Mowgli Foundation recently held an event on the power of mentorship in business. Over 65 people from the Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Bahrain attended the event, many of them entrepreneurs and others with an interest in starting their own businesses. Regarding the topic of mentoring, 25% of the audience said they had personally benefited from a mentor, 15% considered themselves to be a mentor to someone else and 10% believed that they had a comprehensive understanding of mentoring.

The evening provided plenty of scope for interactive engagement, participation and learning. Mowgli Founder Tony Bury initiated proceedings, explaining the importance of entrepreneurship and the significance of mentoring to entrepreneurs. He then engaged the audience in a comprehensive introduction to the Mowgli Foundation, the impact that the Mowgli mentoring programmes have had to date and the programmes that we plan to run over the next few months within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Each member of the audience was then given the opportunity to personally experience the impact of mentoring. Attendees also

heard from a number of Mowgli mentors and entrepreneurs about their businesses, journeys and thoughts regarding the mentoring programme, the benefits they have experienced and the challenges they typically face as entrepreneurs.

Mowgli Mentor Ali Borhani then took the stage to provide a further dose of excitement and food for thought regarding the importance and far reaching impact that mentoring can have on one's life whether on a personal or business level.

"As a young entrepreneur, I don't have all the experience necessary to manage my business in the right way. So, through the Mowgli programme, I found the mentorship very professional and useful. I set my short and long term visions, and milestones to achieve them," says Salim Akil, Mowgli Mentee and Founder of SearchInMENA. Adding some perspective as a mentor, Ali Borhani, Founder, Incubeemea, shared his advice for young entrepreneurs looking for the right mentor. "A right mentor needs to have passion, a beaming energy and complimented with an unconventional thinking model. A solid dose of real world business experience is a must and a good sense of humour is a plus," he says.

Understanding angel investing

Over 50 women entrepreneurs and SME-owners gathered for a seminar on angel investing, hosted by Heels And Deals. Edward Roderick, Managing Partner, Envestors MENA, presented insights and advice in this area of funding. Roderick shared insights life lessons as an entrepreneur and investor and highlighted the basic criteria that angel investors and venture capitalists look for in a startup or small business. He also advised entrepreneurs to first seek funding from family and friends, in order to build up their businesses before seeking funding from banks or investors.

Investors is currently the only active Business Angel Network in the region, connecting entrepreneurs with investors. Our expertise lies in determining how best to present a company to investors to give it the best chance of raising investment. The network has advised over 1,000 companies in the last three years, and has selected about 20 to take forward and present to our investors, of which approximately 50% have been funded.

Heels and Deals members who registered early for the event presented two-minute elevator pitches, educating attendees about their businesses. A wide variety of professionals from various industries attended the event, including business owners, managing directors of SMEs, as well as aspiring entrepreneurs.

Launched in Dubai during the challenging economy of 2009, Heels & Deals has hosted nearly 3,000 women at their events. In October 2011, Heels & Deals expanded its local events to Hong Kong. In addition to hosting events, the group also has a virtual community in which members can exchange ideas and advice through its online portal.

To learn more about Heels and Deals and the group's events, please visit: www.heelsanddeals.org.

Best management practices

The role of management and its related change, project and risk programmes were under spotlight at the inaugural *APMG-International Showcase* which made its debut in Dubai on 9th September. The event featured case studies and programmes, as experts debated the importance of continuous learning as the answer to sustainable growth, both within individuals and in the corporate market place.

Speaking at the conference, Alan Harpham, Chairman, APMG-International, a global examination institute, said that leaders are urged to consider the role that effective management plays at many levels, including the organisation and industry as well as on a nation's economic development. "We believe that organisations must be change and be ready to implement new methods and practices, as well as

support professional education at all levels, if management teams are to be in the best shape to navigate the varied market conditions."

Delegates were offered insights to the use of management programmes by leading providers of business training and consulting across change, project and risk management. Further insights were provided during the keynote presentations by Ivano Iannelli of

Dubai Carbon Centre of Excellence and Carl Pitts of Etihad Airways. "Ensuring that management best practices and processes are well-oiled is key to continued growth. We must recognise that our ability to manage our resources is vital for survival," Harpham concluded. Senior management delegates from diverse business sectors were also present at the event by The British University in Dubai (BUiD).