

EHL – Siemens International Hotel Forum Meeting the Major Players

When the most famous Hotel School in the world meets a giant such as Siemens, something unique inevitably happens between the two: their meeting throws a bridge, of historic importance, across the gap dividing town (industry) and gown (the academic world). This is all to the good of hospitality professionals. Whether they are investors, or developers, or hoteliers or indeed clients of the hotel, all, without exception, will benefit from cooperation.

Since 2003 **Siemens** and **EHL** have created a strategic alliance designed, in a word, to improve the **quality of life in hotels**. The decision to unite their efforts allows engineers of the various companies which are part of the Siemens group, on one hand, and EHL students and faculty, on the other, to meet regularly – firstly, to identify the latest trends in the modern hospitality business and, secondly, to define the profile of the hotel of tomorrow.

A VALUABLE MARKETING TOOL: THE EHL STUDENT BUSINESS PROJECT

Market analysis and feasibility studies (Student Business Projects) commissioned by Siemens are carried out by final-year students as a component of the EHL degree-course curriculum. This research, which is much appreciated for its high quality and relatively low cost, may allow Siemens to target the research developed by its technical divisions more



accurately. These solutions can therefore be better evaluated for their marketing potential, both in terms of technology and sales.

«SIEMENS ONE» A UNIQUE OFFERING FOR HOTELIERS

Conversely, Siemens' know-how and experience in the technology of hotels becomes more easily transmissible to EHL faculty. "Siemens One" is the leitmotiv of a company which can provide a global, coordinated service for the hospitality industry through the technical management of a hotel property. See www.siemenshotel.com for further details.

The areas covered include IT and management IT, as well as telephone technology, telecommunications, inter-connecting room management, fire detection, alarm and fire-fighting systems, anti-false alarm systems, safety of goods and persons, security, customer relationship marketing (CRM) etc. A coherent flow of information regarding modern, innovative solutions thus passes regularly to EHL faculty, essentially through the EHL Institute for Technology and Entrepreneurship (EHLITE) of the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. This makes for the development of high-level synergies, all for the greater good of progress in hospitality.

Cooperation between EHL and Siemens along these lines has resulted in a major event of international importance:

THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL FORUM ORGANIZED BY SIEMENS AT EHL, 22 SEPTEMBER 2004

Over 200 invited guests, students, faculty members, architects, engineers, trade journalists, managers, hoteliers and executives of hotel chains gathered in EHL's magnificent Tschumi Auditorium to participate in this important event, in order to "meet the Major Players".

The Author



Jacques Lévy-Bonvin, a graduate of the Ecole d'Ingenieurs of Geneva, has led international seminars in technical hotel management and air quality in many countries, and has published numerous papers related to comfort control and building management systems. His works *Hotel Technical Management and Upgrade your Hotel!* show the importance of integrated hotel room management solutions. He conducted the building management of hundreds of hotels worldwide, including the Burj al Arab, Dubai, the Adlon Hotel, Berlin, the Noga Hilton, Geneva, the Baur au Lac Zurich, the Mecca Hotel, Saudi Arabia, Intercontinental Hotel in Sao Paulo etc. He is a member of the International Society of Hospitality Consultants, ISHC, and a worldwide hospitality lecturer at international hospitality congresses. Since 2001 he has opened his own hospitality consultancy: CONSEIL. He is Visiting Professor at several international hotel schools. For more information, see: www.jlevy.ch.

A very varied programme (see box), addressing several aspects of hotel technology, allowed the delegates, from over 20 countries, to learn about the latest state-of-the-art technology.

Many qualified speakers (see programme) gave the audience the benefit of their know-how and research in a series of short (15 mins), lively presentations.

In particular, in his opening speech, the General Director of EHL Ruud Reuland expressed his keen interest in developing cooperation between Siemens and EHL, which had his full support.

A BRAND NEW ROOMS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NEW HOTEL SOLUTION)

The forum also gave Dirk Hühne, Director of Siemens Bau Hotel, the opportunity to announce, for the first time, the official



launch of the new rooms' management system known as New Hotel Solution, which is controlled from the hotel Reception and has been specially developed by the Siemens Building Automation division. This offers a new, stable "intelligent" on-line management system adaptable to all types of hotels - an asset which can be worth an extra star!

With Léon Steinbauer, Michael Hartmann, Director of Siemens ICN Hospitality, underlined the importance of the relation between Brand Value and Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) in the development of future hotel management systems and in maintaining client satisfaction.

INTERNATIONAL HOTEL CHAINS HAVE THEIR WORD

For the Marriott group, Iris Riemann described the company's cooperation with Siemens as exemplary, particularly regarding the updating of information technology (IT) in all Marriott hotels around the world.

Using several examples of hotels of different categories, such as Sofitel, Mercure and IBIS, Gilles Honegger, for the Accor group showed - very convincingly - the advantages open to the hotelier thanks to Siemens Performance Contracting for financing necessary technical renovations, in an elegant fashion.

SAFETY AND SECURITY, THE KEY TO HOTEL OPERATION

Enrico Markun, of Siemens FIS, and Yannik Bientenholz, of Siemens SES, gave a presentation on the best way to protect oneself against risks, of whatever nature.

Ruud Jonkman of Secretaris FEU (=Fire) presented "a FEU idea and a European project", underlining in a very realistic manner the unsafe conditions unfortunately present in many hotels.

A new approach to managing energy use for hoteliers, with internet support, was convincingly presented by Thomas Baum, Head of e-Business with Siemens Building Technologies.

HOTEL ROOMS OF THE FUTURE AT EHL

Thanks to the presentation given by Ray Iunius, Director of EHLITE, delegates also learned about the creation on the EHL campus of hotel rooms designed by EHLITE and Siemens, and fully equipped with the latest New Hotel Solutions technology (including centralized, online management). During the evening, several participants also attended the demonstration of rooms management given from the School Reception, carried out in cooperation with Hogatex Property Management System.

Accompanied by students, delegates had an opportunity to visit one of the rooms, to appreciate its architectural and technical features. The rooms will in future be an integral component of the regularly updated, state-of-the-art didactic infrastructure which EHL maintains for the benefit of its students.

A film giving a futuristic vision of the hotel was shown, underscoring the ever-increasing role of technology in the user-friendly management of travel in general and hotels in particular.

The Question and Answer session which followed was notable for the highly pertinent points made by participants, faculty members, students and hospitality specialists.

At the end of this very instructive day, Jacques Levy-Bonvin, acting as MC for the occasion, invited delegates for the traditional cocktail, which was followed by an excellent Gala Dinner, prepared, of course, by EHL students.

Varied documentation regarding the Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne and EHLITE, together with many documents provided by Siemens, were distributed to the delegates, as was a press file to the many journalists present. All the speeches and presentation made during the forum will be sent to all the participants in the form of a CD-ROM in due course.

It as 11.00 p.m. before the delegates to the forum, delighted that they had taken part, took leave of their hosts.

This event, the first of its kind, admirably organized by EHLITE and Siemens, was exemplary in several respects.

This first Forum will undoubtedly have positive repercussions on the way the hotels of the future are equipped, and inspires confidence in the level of technical training of future hospitality managers,

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