

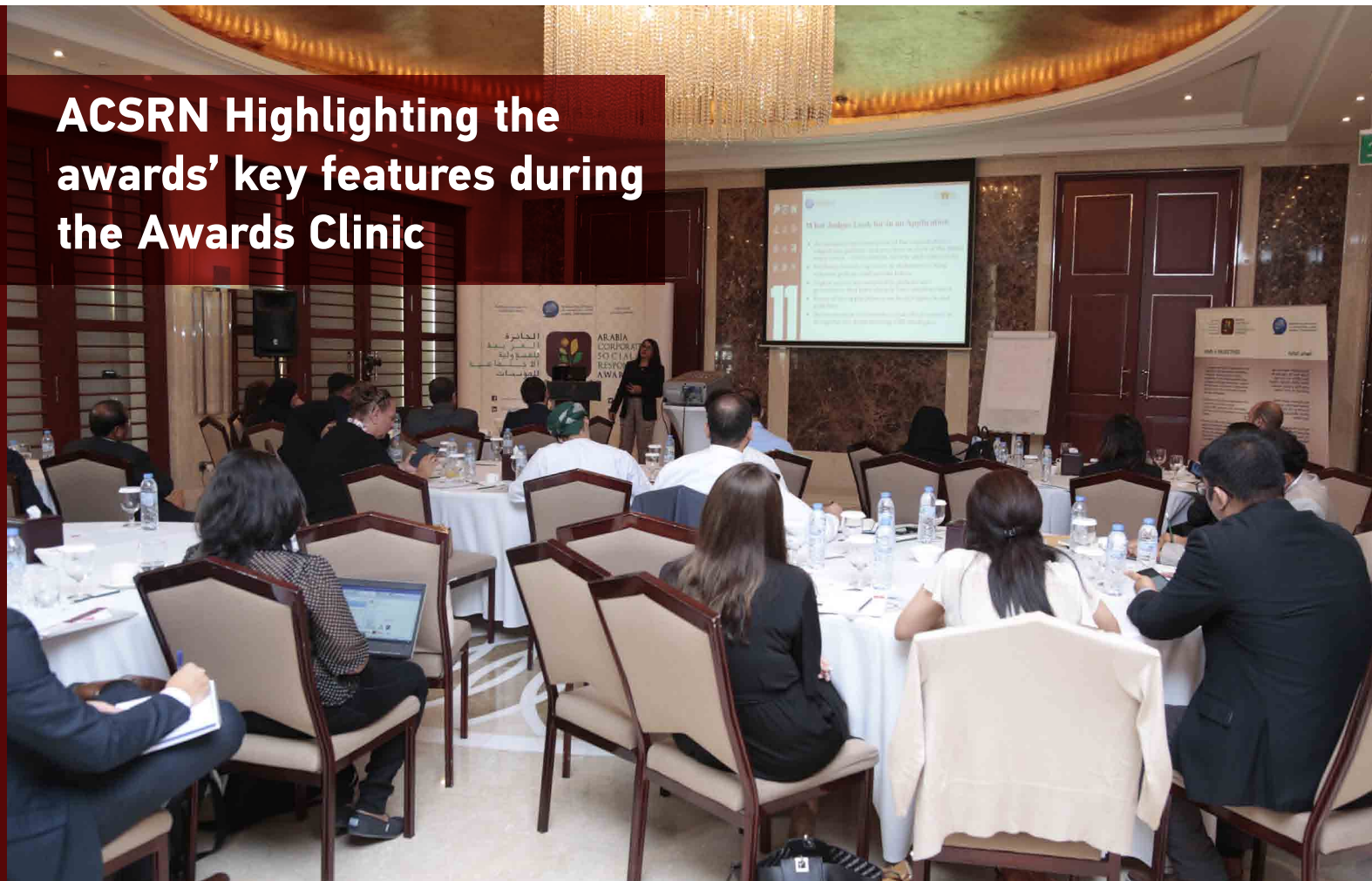
الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية
الإجتماعية للمؤسسات
Arabia CSR Network®

Arabia CSR Network

newsletter

May 2018
Volume 7 | Issue 81

ACSRN Highlighting the awards' key features during the Awards Clinic



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Note from the President & CEO Arabia CSR Network

In April the world commemorated the World Earth Day through various events and activities. However, we action many different convening occasions throughout the year to show our support to the planet and its inhabitants. In May falls three such very important occasions.

The International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW, 6th-12th May) is the largest and most comprehensive education initiative of the compost industry. The theme for this year is Compost! Building a Better Future. The goal of the programme is to raise the awareness of the public regarding the benefits of using compost to improve or maintain high quality soil, to grow healthy plants, reduce the use of fertilizer and pesticides, improve water quality and protect the environment. All types of composting – from backyard to large-scale are

promoted. On the 10th of May (2018 happens to be the Year of the Bird), World Migratory Birds Day (WMBD) will be celebrated worldwide under the theme “Unifying our Voices for Bird Conservation” Migrant birds are likely to be more susceptible to environmental change than resident ones, as their complex annual cycle exposes them to multiple threats. Birds of Prey, commonly called raptors, - vultures, eagles, hawks and falcons are top of the food chain species and act as “sentinel species” to indicate prey populations’ and overall ecosystem health. Many species are currently at high risk from human-induced threats such as habitat loss and degradation, illegal shooting and poisoning, and collisions with man-made structures and electrocution by power lines. On the 22nd of May the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) will mark its 25th anniversary; this year’s theme being: “Celebrating 25 Years of Action for Biodiversity”. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat encourages all Parties to the Convention and all organisations to organise activities and events and raise public awareness and to showcase relevant work on Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism.

All the three occasions draw our attention to critical local issues that require our immediate focus and commitment. According to experts, habitat loss of native species in MENA region is increasing at a sensational rate as a consequence of natural and human causes. MENA has diverse ecosystems that are home to Arabian Gazelle, Arabian Tahr, Arabian Oryx, Bunn’s Short Tailed Bandicoot Rat, Buxton’s Jird, Dahl’s Jird, Durcas Gazelle, Euphrate Jerboa, Four toed Jebora, Golden Hamster, Nubian Ibex, Persian Fallow Deer, Slender Horn Gazelle, which are few of its unique threatened species. Experts also say that MENA experiences ecological changes due to water scarcity, climate fluctuation and human activities. Native species as well as nomadic, migrant and vagrant species face multiple threats resulting to global drop of species. The increasing amount of food waste in the Middle East makes a strong food waste management strategy an urgency. Food Waste during Ramadan in Middle East nations is acknowledged as being the world’s highest. Latest waste management technologies, such as Thermophilic composting offer a promising innovation to address a wide range of organic waste that can be processed into organic fertilizer to be used for growing food and cash crops in the Middle East.

With so much happening and so many opportunities, organisations in the Arab world need to demonstrate effectively that they are not failing to keep pace with global developments surrounding sustainability. Leaderships in many countries in the Region are clearly showing a positive and growing bias towards sustainability, green growth and social wellbeing. So make an effort to follow this trajectory and join the cohorts of responsible business.

Register Now for the Arabia CSR Network Upcoming Trainings



CSR Strategy and Leadership
Training (Arabic)
7th - 9th May 2018



GRI Standards (English)
13th - 15th May 2018



Closing of the Arabia CSR Awards 2018
registrations and applications
15th June 2018



“Driving Innovation Through the SDGs”

8th Arabia Corporate Social
Responsibility Forum

How does the nexus of innovation and
development talk to social change, inclusive
growth and planetary sustainability?
Join the discussion. Hear from experts.
Learn through examples.

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ACSRN News and Events

Arabia CSR Awards regional launches and clinic

The Arabia CSR Awards, the region's leading benchmark in sustainability has recorded 70 applications so far since its launch on January 17th. The registration is ongoing and interested organisations can apply to the awards through this link <http://arabiacsrawards.com>. Registration is open to organisations irrespective of size, sector or country of operations, who can choose from 12 categories including sector specific categories such as construction, hospitality, social enterprise, energy, financial services and healthcare. The awards provide organisations with the opportunity to gain recognition for their sustainability achievements, and acquire skills and competencies

As part of a set of regional roadshows with support of the Awards' country partners, the Awards was launched on April 3rd in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in a bid to further expand outreach and participation. It was organised with the support of Wasm CSR, the awards' country partner in KSA. The President of Arabia CSR Awards Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi addressed a group of business leaders and government representatives, disseminating key messages and sharing requisite know how. On the 29th of April, another launch was organised in Muscat, Oman, in partnership with Destination Sustainability. Here too, leaders from public and private organisations were present in the launch and Mrs. Al Mar'ashi introduced the 11th cycle of the Arabia CSR Awards.

The Arabia CSR Network hosted the Awards Clinic on April 9th in Dubai to further support current and prospect applicants. The workshop was aimed at highlighting the awards' key features, such as the CSR and sustainability aspects on which information has to be provided along with supporting evidence, how to answer the questions and fulfill the criteria, and what kind of evidence to be provided, and so on. The event started with an opening presentation. The attendees were given an overview of the Arabia CSR Network and the Arabia CSR Awards with a brief on the key features of the 11th Cycle. Mrs. Sudipa Bose, a senior member of the Awards Secretariat, provided elaborations on the application process, including evaluation methodology. She offered a detailed explanation of the Awards application questionnaire, different categories, statements, self-assessment mechanism as well as the Judge's Evaluation Methodology. The applicants were advised to provide balanced responses, refrain from providing information without proper grounds or evidences and review and validate their statements. She spoke about what the jury sought to find and focused on, in particular evidence of continuous improvement from returning. Among other highlights of the event was a session with the 2017 award winners who shared with the audience their positive experiences and the improvements made by their respective organisations as a result of participating in the awards. The winners of the ACSRA described their challenges, their method of converting those challenges to opportunities and the value derived from the application process.

After the panel discussions, a Q&A session was held wherein the audience directed their queries to the speakers. Lastly, a technical walk through of the newly developed fully online award portal was given.





Members News

Chalhoub Group's sixth white paper offers insights on ME luxury market

Patrick Chalhoub, co-CEO of the Chalhoub group, a luxury goods distribution specialist in the Middle East, presented the group's sixth white paper, which was this year focused on the beauty sector. The report throws light on the luxury goods market in the Middle East; a sector worth an estimated €13 billion, according to consultancy firm Bain & Co. Speaking to reporters about the trend of the luxury goods market in the Arab Gulf region, Mr. Chalhoub said that the group's sales shortfalls in the past two years ranged between 1% and 2%. Several factors have contributed to this decrease, beginning with declining oil prices. This caused a decrease in subsidies on raw materials and consequently fuelled inflation. In 2017, GDP in the region grew by only 1%. The market was also affected by the strength of the US dollar. In addition, consumer confidence has lessened due to local geopolitical tensions, especially with the wars in Yemen and Syria. He also mentioned that the region's main market is in the United Arab Emirates although Saudi consumers buy the most luxury goods in the Arab Gulf. The luxury goods market in the Middle East will continue to stagnate for the next two years. The introduction of VAT in some Gulf Cooperation Council countries will not make things easier. Nevertheless, the market is about to be radically transformed, as increasingly younger consumers acquire more and more influence, and as digital tools become ubiquitous. These factors are game-changers explained the CEO.

Source: <http://us.fashionnetwork.com/>

DEWA organises Earth Day 2018 activities

Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) has organised several activities to mark Earth Day, which is observed on 22 April every year. This year's event is under the theme 'Ending Plastic Pollution'. HE Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, MD & CEO of DEWA, and other senior staff took part in the activities, which included planting palm trees at DEWA's head office. This was inspired by the values of The Year of Zayed and the principles established by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Internal activities also included a documentary about the dangers that face the environment and a stand showing activities of DEWA's climate change ambassadors, in addition to raising awareness about the importance of recycling plastic bottles.



DEWA also organised a voluntary day to clean the beaches of the Jebel Ali Marine Sanctuary from plastic waste, in cooperation with Dubai Municipality and the Emirates Marine Environment Group (EMEG). A large number of DEWA staff and the public took part in the activity. This is part of DEWA's strategy to protect the environment and limit climate change, emphasised the MD. DEWA organises Earth Day 2018 activities as part of its corporate social responsibility and its role in promoting awareness about the importance of protecting the environment. This year, DEWA focused on reducing plastic waste, in line with the UAE Vision 2021 and the Dubai Plan 2021 to make Dubai a smart and sustainable city whose elements are clean, healthy, and sustainable. It is also in-line with DEWA's vision to become a sustainable innovative world-class utility and our efforts to make sustainability a lifestyle, to ensure a brighter and more sustainable future for generations to come.

Source: www.dewa.gov.ae

DUTCO engineers undergo Water Treatment pump training

A total of 20 participants took part in the training event, which focused primarily on the market-leading Grundfos CR and Grundfos BMS pump ranges, and associated Oxypem PRO Chlorine Dioxide water disinfection system, for which interest has grown rapidly following Dubai's recent Legionnaire's Disease outbreak. The objective of the event was to bring the engineers up to speed on Grundfos' world-leading range of high-efficiency pumping and digital dosing systems for use throughout the water treatment industry, and outline the benefits offered by the recent move to local pump assembly. With an emphasis on high pressure systems, the Grundfos team stressed the versatility, ease of installation and low maintenance benefits of the CR Vertical Centrifugal pumps, designed specifically for water and waste treatment, which are capable of continuous operation at flow rates of up to 180m³ per hour at pressures of 50bar. The team explained how establishment of a local assembly line at the company's Dubai plant in early 2017 has significantly reduced delivery times for this popular range and increased availability for custom designed 'mix and match' systems, giving DUTCO engineers greater flexibility to meet their customers individual demands. The event went on to cover high pressure booster systems, including Grundfos BMS pumps, which are widely used in demanding ultra-filtration and reverse-osmosis disinfection systems where the pumps are often called on to generate pressures of up to 60 bar.

Source: <https://ae.grundfos.com>





EGA named Global Aluminium Supplier of the Year by Maxion Wheels

Emirates Global Aluminium, the largest industrial company in the United Arab Emirates outside oil and gas, has been named Global Aluminium Supplier of the Year by Maxion Wheels, the world's largest manufacturer of wheels for cars, trucks and other vehicles. EGA has been supplying Maxion Wheels with aluminium since 1995. Maxion wheels are used by almost every major vehicle brand in the world. EGA was recognised by Maxion Wheels for its commitment to service and strong partner performance, including an unwavering reliability in the delivery of high quality metal to Maxion's plants around the world. About a quarter of EGA's production is foundry alloys, which are mainly used in the automotive industry to cast vehicle parts including wheels. EGA is the market leader outside China in foundry alloys. If all EGA's annual production of foundry alloys was used for wheels, it would be enough to make 70 million. EGA is one of only a few primary aluminium producers that is accredited to ISO/TS16949, the quality management system for the automotive supply chain. EGA works on innovative projects with customers and academics to develop new alloys and enable better understanding of the mechanical properties of existing alloys. EGA's technical experts also advise customers, at their request, on the best and most cost-effective alloys to meet their mechanical requirements.

Source: <https://www.ega.ae>



ENOC Group brings biodiesel project to Dubai Municipality

ENOC Group, in collaboration with Dubai Municipality recently launched a pilot project using Biodiesel5 to fuel Dubai Municipality's fleet of trucks at its Umm Ramool facility. Biodiesel5 is an advanced alternative green fuel launched by ENOC in the UAE to reduce carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions. Biodiesel5 is mainly used by companies for trucks and heavy construction equipment without the need to upgrade the engines and fuel storage facility. The introduction of Biodiesel has been a pioneering move across many countries around the world, especially in Europe where the product has been mandated to meet national greenhouse reduction targets.



His Excellency Saif Humaid Al Falasi, Group CEO, ENOC, said: "The launch of Biodiesel 5 is aligned with the UAE Energy Plan for 2050 which targets an energy mix that combines renewable, nuclear and clean energy sources. Our partnership with Dubai Municipality is testament to our ability to tailor our services to customers' requirements while continuing to contribute to our nation's progress."

"We partnered with ENOC to receive Biodiesel5 supply to the Municipality's truck fleet to enhance our operations and services. This move is in line with Dubai Municipality's vision of building a happy and sustainable city, by implementing pioneering sustainable practices to achieve its strategic objectives of conserving the environment, and achieving the Dubai Integrated Energy Strategy to produce 75% of Dubai's total energy production from clean energy sources by 2050, reducing the city's CO2 emissions." stated Ahmed Abdul Kareem, Assistant Director General of Dubai Municipality for General Support Sector.

Source: <https://www.enoc.com>

Emirates Transport Excellence Awards 2018 to be announced

Organisers of the Emirates Transport Excellence Awards 2018 have assessed 200 entries received this year for the coveted awards. The manager of the Department of Strategic Planning & Organizational Excellence at Emirates Transport (ET), said at the commencement of the assessment of the entries; - the awards aim to raise the level of quality of work at the corporation, and elevate the performance level of organizational units. He added that the awards also constitute one of the approved programmes to stimulate and assess the human resources efforts and reward outstanding and creative work of the various administrative units of the corporation. He reiterated the Corporation's keenness to honour and recognise the outstanding work of employees and administrative units, with the aim of motivating and encouraging further excellence and improving the levels of performance. The manager of the Department of Strategic Planning & Organizational Excellence said the award aims to encourage the widest possible participation through various means of internal communication. In addition, the department organized a number of introductory workshops to familiarize employees with the mechanisms and criteria of the award. The judging committee for the Emirates Transport Excellence Award 2018 will announce the winning candidates at an award ceremony scheduled to take place in early May. The award has four main categories which are: administrative excellence, excellence in a specialist field, best results category, and the occupational excellence category.

Source: <https://www.et.gov.ae>



wasl Asset Management Group wins 'Dubai Chamber CSR Label' for third time

wasl Asset Management Group, one of the largest real estate development and management companies in Dubai, has won the 'Dubai Chamber CSR Label' for the third time in recognition of its outstanding efforts in corporate social responsibility and sustainability. wasl has previously won the award in 2013 and 2015. The award was presented by the Chairman of Dubai Chamber, to Abdulla Ishaq, wasl's Head of Leasing & Customer Service Department, during a ceremony held at the Dubai Chamber office. wasl is committed to supporting the community in line with the government's vision to make Dubai the happiest city in the world. CSR is an integral part of wasl's corporate philosophy and the company has a programme of ongoing initiatives that run throughout the year and encompass all segments of society, including people of determination and those in need.

Source: <https://www.wasl.ae>



General News

AUS joins international sustainability rating system

The American University of Sharjah (AUS) says that it has joined the Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) programme administered by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).

To date, more than 850 higher education institutions from around the world have registered as STARS participants and AUS is proud to be one of them. AUS' core values relate directly towards being a leader in sustainability, said the institute in a statement. In 2010 AUS created a dedicated team, AUS Sustainability, to promote those values through supporting activities that accrue positive social, economic and environmental benefits. AASHE's STARS programme is the most widely recognised framework in the world for publicly reporting comprehensive information related to a college or university's sustainability performance. Participants report achievements in four overall areas: 1) academics, 2) campus and public engagement, 3) operations and 3) planning and administration. The programme is open to all institutions of higher education globally. The STARS program is based on credits earned, it allows for both internal comparisons as well as comparisons with similar institutions.

Source: <http://meconstructionnews.com>



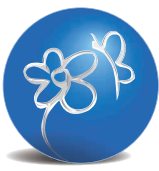
World Bank sees growth rebounding in Middle East and North Africa

The World Bank Group's latest Middle East and North Africa Economic Monitor projects that regional growth is set to increase to 3.1% in 2018, up from 2% in 2017. The increase in growth is expected to be broad based, driven by a favorable global economic environment, stability in the oil market at slightly higher prices, and the resumption of post-conflict reconstruction. On the back of a good performance by Gulf Cooperation Council countries, oil exporters could see growth reach 3% in 2018, double the rate in 2017.



Growth among oil importers is expected to increase to 4% on average from 2018 to 2020, driven by a sharp rebound in Egypt and a rise in remittances, tourism and exports. Almost all countries in the region have embarked on major reforms to reduce or eliminate energy subsidies, identify new sources of non-oil revenues, and expand social safety nets to shield the poor from adverse effects of change. Adopting new technologies will require significant investments in infrastructure, which will require greater leveraging of private finance. This can be achieved through public-private partnerships, which have the added advantage of drawing on the innovation and efficiency of the private sector and are a step toward changing the role of the state from the main provider of employment to an enabler of private sector activity.

<http://www.worldbank.org/mena>



Feature, Blogs, White papers, Articles...

Dissecting artificial intelligence to better understand the human brain



for illustration purposes only
Source: www.shutterstock.com

In the natural world, intelligence takes many forms. It could be a bat using echolocation to expertly navigate in the dark, or an octopus quickly adapting its behavior to survive in the deep ocean. Likewise, in the computer science world, multiple forms of artificial intelligence are emerging -- different networks each trained to excel in a different task. And as it was presented at the 25th annual meeting of the Cognitive Neuroscience Society (CNS), cognitive neuroscientists increasingly are using those emerging artificial networks to enhance their understanding of one of the most elusive intelligence systems, the human brain.

"The fundamental questions cognitive neuroscientists and computer scientists seek to answer are similar," says Aude Oliva of MIT. "They have a complex system made of components -- for one, it's called neurons and for the other, it's called units -- and we are doing experiments to try to determine what those components calculate."

In Oliva's work, which she is presenting at the CNS symposium, neuroscientists are learning much about the role of contextual clues in human image recognition. By using "artificial neurons" -- essentially lines of code, software -- with neural network models, they can parse out the various elements that go into recognizing a specific place or object.

"The brain is a deep and complex neural network," says Nikolaus Kriegeskorte of Columbia University, who is chairing the symposium. "Neural network models are brain-inspired models that are now state-of-the-art in many artificial intelligence applications, such as computer vision."

In one recent study of more than 10 million images, Oliva and colleagues taught an artificial network to recognize 350 different

places, such as a kitchen, bedroom, park, living room, etc. They expected the network to learn objects such as a bed associated with a bedroom. What they didn't expect was that the network would learn to recognize people and animals, for example dogs at parks and cats in living rooms.

The machine intelligence programs learn very quickly when given lots of data, which is what enables them to parse contextual learning at such a fine level, Oliva says. While it is not possible to dissect human neurons at such a level, the computer model performing a similar task is entirely transparent. The artificial neural networks serve as "mini-brains that can be studied, changed, evaluated, compared against responses given by human neural networks, so the cognitive neuroscientists have some sort of sketch of how a real brain may function."

Indeed, Kriegeskorte says that these models have helped neuroscientists understand how people can recognize the objects around them in the blink of an eye. "This involves millions of signals emanating from the retina, that sweep through a sequence of layers of neurons, extracting semantic information, for example that we're looking at a street scene with several people and a dog," he says. "Current neural network models can perform this kind of task using only computations that biological neurons can perform. Moreover, these neural network models can predict to some extent how a neuron deep in the brain will respond to any image."

Using computer science to understand the human brain is a relatively new field that is expanding rapidly thanks to advancements in computing speed and power, along with neuroscience imaging tools. The artificial networks cannot yet replicate human visual abilities, Kriegeskorte says, but by modeling the human brain, they are furthering understanding of both cognition and artificial intelligence. "It's a uniquely exciting time to be working at the intersection of neuroscience, cognitive science, and AI," he says.

Indeed, Oliva says; "Human cognitive and computational neuroscience is a fast-growing area of research, and knowledge about how the human brain is able to see, hear, feel, think, remember, and predict is mandatory to develop better diagnostic tools, to repair the brain, and to make sure it develops well."

Story Source:

Materials provided by Cognitive Neuroscience Society



Case Study from the Archive - Al Jazeera International Catering

Abstract

Al Jazeera International Catering Company (JIC) is an award winning hospitality brand. Based out of Abu Dhabi, JIC offers its exemplary services across all catering and hospitality related allied services. The partnership between Force 10 Group and Gulf Catering LLC resulted in the formation of JIC in 2008. Its key line of services includes: Catering, Housekeeping & Laundry Services. Sustainability and corporate responsibility is embedded in core operation of JIC with the company showing adherence to both institutional factors and embracing international best practices and norms for their specific sector and encouraging and enforcing the same standards of social and environmental performance on their entire supply chain. JIC, one of the winners of the Arabia CSR Awards 2017, is committed to business excellence and through a sustainability maturity assessment, consults and identifies key material issues to key stakeholder and the organisation that will be translated to goals and quantifiable KPIs to fulfill.

JIC has also been successful in upholding human and labor rights in its areas of operation. It has a thorough environmental management system in place and a very commendable structure of sustainability governance. JIC has developed a clear strategy plan 2020 for the organisation. The core aspect of the strategic plan is its link to sustainable development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are relevant to them have been mapped, linked to their activities and impacts and incorporated into specific objectives with performance indicators.



Conclusion

Sustainability has been embedded as an organisational culture as part of JIC's operation, through structured strategic approaches adopted over the years. JIC demonstrates its keen desire to be an industry leader, incorporating innovation and partnership into its approach. JIC's Innovative approach has enabled the development of a unique custom made methodology like SPEARS, 4E strategy and projects like Our Planet – Our Responsibility etc. These approaches have not only led to various international accolades but have enabled JIC to set industry benchmarks in global forums. Sustainability is not perceived as a separate element of the business. Instead, they have established and embedded a sustainability process in operations to elevate the financial status and social value.

