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Sustainable Solutions: An Interview with Peter Vine ^[1]

Peter Vine is Project Director for the UAE Pavilion at the 2015 Milan Expo. He was previously the Coordinator of the UAE Pavilion in Shanghai, 2010 and Yeosu, South Korea in 2012. Vine is Chairman and CEO of FQC Media FZ LLC in Dubai. This interview took place at the Milan Expo in Summer 2015.

CPD: What is the overarching goal of UAE's participation in the Milan Expo?

Peter Vine: Our goal in the UAE Pavilion is to explore the Expo Milano theme, "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life," in the context of the UAE's experience as a dynamic young country with a rapidly increasing population, a shortage of arable land, and where the scarcity of water ensures that this commodity is now more important to the UAE than oil. We set out to reveal how the UAE is actively engaged in finding solutions to the challenges inherent in the land, water, and energy nexus, examining how these elements can be balanced in various ways in order to produce food in a more sustainable manner. We also explore the extensive efforts that we are making to share our knowledge and to provide practical assistance to others in these areas, ultimately helping to employ tried and tested technologies to increase their food supply.

Our task has been to look at this "problem" from many different angles, hoping to find a sustainable solution that will not just benefit the UAE but will also be of global significance as burgeoning demand and the effects of climate change limit resources worldwide.

CPD: What is the overall message the UAE Pavilion tries to convey to visitors? Why is this message important?

PV: We can shape a better future by learning from the past and making the best use of resources, but ultimately the solution lies in individual responsibility for our actions. Everyone needs to make a commitment to change in their daily lives.

Solutions to global issues such as this require support of citizens and this can only be achieved through innovative education and communications programs such as the Expo.

CPD: How is the UAE Pavilion's central message communicated through architectural design, exhibits, and other platforms?

PV: Will desalination using solar energy prove viable on a large scale? Is it going to be feasible to use plant biomass to power commercial aircraft? How can we optimize use of fresh water in farming? These and many other questions are tackled in the pavilion, firstly in interactive cube installations on the "ramp" and later in our engaging film, *Family Tree*, and in

the intriguing 4D experience, *Future Talk*.

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The stunning architecture of the pavilion is designed to create the feeling of being in the UAE, among the desert dunes or narrow streets of traditional neighborhoods. The building heightens cultural awareness and stimulates interest in the UAE's message. It is the elegant wrapping of our overall "parcel," creating anticipation and inviting further exploration of what is inside.

CPD: What is the UAE Pavilion's digital strategy?

PV: The UAE Pavilion runs a lively communications program directed at potential visitors, seeking to inform them about our pavilion and to prepare them to gain the most from their experience with us. Prior to leaving home, visitors can access a wide range of supporting content on the Expo theme online, on the web and on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Our main website in English, Italian, and Arabic, contains sections on the pavilion itself, on food, *Future Business UAE*, Dubai 2020, and general information on the UAE. The food section features recipes and background information on a selection of favorite Emirati dishes.

Our Facebook page has attracted an online community of followers and is updated daily with news and information about the UAE pavilion and its theme.

CPD: What are the main challenges in organizing the pavilion for the Milan Expo?

PV: It was challenging to deal with a highly regulated and controlled business environment and an organization that was itself dependent on complying with a complex set of rules. Delays at all levels added greatly to stress. We were fortunate to have a team that was able to meet the multiple challenges and to produce a stunning visitor experience. Yes, there were many challenges. But we think we met them and are greatly appreciative of all the efforts of the organizers to create a successful World Expo.
