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TRANSFORMING HOSPITALITY: FROM A TRADITIONAL ECOSYSTEM TO THE MODERN ERA OF TODAY

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As a Saudi national, business leader and investor in our shared future; with a passion for fine dining, flawless service and generous hospitality, and a career that transcends both new and established businesses across a variety of sectors; from property development, project management and finance, I've entered the next chapter in my personal journey, with my sights now set firmly on satisfying my passion, to deliver uncompromised and world class hospitality.

My experience in real estate and manufacturing have given me a clear understanding of the Saudi market's rich and extraordinary history and the profound opportunities it presents. One of the last remaining bastions of civilized exploration on earth, we're brimming with possibilities and ready to become one of the greatest and most remarkable destinations in the world. We're a giant among opportunities, built in the tradition of our often-forgotten history as the region's primary trade hub; the central crossroads connecting Eastern and Western civilizations dating back to the 6th Century BC.

Today, our traditional ecosystem is being redefined and painted by the unlimited imagination of our own visionaries and dreamers. We're one nation united in our mission to draft the next chapter of our history; a time of learning and reflection of our cultural and societal traditions whilst shaping the Saudi Arabia of tomorrow.

As investors and stakeholders in Saudi's hospitality landscape, our greatest challenge will be to elevate and develop our service industries to a global standard; to identify, brand and present our nation's signature characteristics and channel them professionally and commercially. We strive to invigorate both our local population and international markets alike, as we transition from oil to tourism.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the Kingdom is expected to reach 22.1 million international arrivals by 2025. We should all work to help make this happen. We should all contribute to enhancing the growth and transformation of the Kingdom's hospitality, leisure, tourism and infrastructure landscape to strengthen our position as a global tourist destination and nurture the next generation of transformative industry experts.

Saudi hospitality traditions are deeply rooted in our homes, with generosity being a great source of pride for us. People from all over the world have come to expect these characteristics and recognize that hospitality is woven into our societal DNA. First-time

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visitors are often surprised by the warmth of hospitality they're shown. A tradition of hospitality dating back to our ancestors, we are renowned for offering lost and weary travelers a roof over their heads, a hearty feast and water to help them continue their journey forward through the harsh desert environments. A reputation has been built for providing a refreshing oasis to those in need where hospitality was a duty of care,

instinct and without bias.

In this tradition, Saudis welcome guests into their homes and provide them with an unparalleled hospitality and comfort. However, this strong home-bound tradition has not translated into our domestic hotel operations. The country's long-term vision endorses tourism to a large extent, giving Saudi the opportunity to unleash its unlimited potential. The question now starts with how will we further develop this flourishing industry? How can we build on the innate hospitality characteristics of our people? How can we support their transition to becoming world class hosts and ambassadors of our burgeoning tourism economy?

It's vital that we identify the tangible and intangible components that make up this 'Saudi Heart' and remove the emotional disparity between our traditional home-bound hospitality customs and the prevailing industry-wide service offering. It's imperative that we provide the emotional connection people value most with world-class standard. It must be our priority to deliver the profound warmth and generosity of our ancestral customs, instinctively, without compromise and at scale.

We need to transform the Kingdom into a beacon of hope and inspiration for global and local tastemakers and trendsetters. We need to provide a global promise with local wonder that enlightens and inspires. We should recognize the value of different perspectives and align our business goals with the ambition of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. We must scour the world to bring the very best in luxury and lifestyle experiences to the Kingdom and create a more vibrant environment for us all. We must redefine the industry to charm the innovators of tomorrow, become a pioneering and thriving model of excellence and spark an inclusive future, ripe with investment opportunities for all.