



HEC Paris addresses the needs of Family Owned Businesses in the region

Doha, Qatar – September 5, 2015: Recognizing the dominance of Family Owned Businesses (FOB) and their key contribution to economies across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, HEC Paris, ranked number two worldwide in Executive Education by the Financial Times in 2015 and a member of Qatar Foundation, is offering bespoke executive management programs that are individually tailored for each company. These globally acclaimed custom programs are designed to meet the specific needs of each client and are aimed at key decision makers, from Board level to middle management.

While meeting the needs and requirements of FOBs in the region, the custom-designed executive management programs strike a delicate balance between preserving deeply-rooted family values and traditions with contemporary models of management, innovation and market dynamics.

“Family Owned Businesses have long been economic powerhouses that contribute significantly to non-oil GDP throughout the region,” said Raja Assili, Chief Operating Officer of HEC Paris in Qatar, who himself worked for 20 years in GCC based FOBs. “Many of these conglomerates operate franchises of well-known international brands. They are also responsible for the creation and development of home grown brands locally.”

“Because of their active participation in a wide range of business sectors, it is therefore imperative that the owners and management of FOBs are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills to enable them to face the challenges and issues that are unique to their businesses,” he added.

Prof. Laoucine Kerbache, Dean & CEO of HEC Paris in Qatar then highlighted the role that HEC Paris can play towards this end.

“As a result of our geographical presence in the GCC region for over five years, we have a wealth of international and regional knowledge and experience to create distinct programs for FOBs,” Prof. Kerbache said. “We recognize that there are many complex factors which make every FOB unique and therefore no two programs are the same. Our aim is to help FOBs understand their respective strengths and weaknesses, motivate innovation and navigate safely towards sustainable growth and stable secure future, while respecting the overarching aspect of family privacy.”

According to Prof. Serge Besanger, Head of Family Business Programs at HEC Paris, the continued success of Family Owned Businesses in the GCC can be attributed to several factors. Among them are the involvement of family members to protect the FOB’s reputation and survival, their long term view on performance and a cautious approach to debt and finance. In addition, he also cited their ability to instill loyalty amongst employees, strict controls on operating and capital expenditures and expanding international operations.

However, he cautioned that FOBs in the GCC are also faced with a growing array of threats which could affect their resilience and preparedness for future generations.

“Today’s Family Owned Businesses in the GCC need to be alert and address certain issues in order to meet the family’s short and long term objectives,” Prof. Besanger said. “Among them is the fact that a majority of these FOBs have inadequate corporate governance procedures in place. More often than not, these companies also have unclear and risky relationships between the private family office and the corporate structure. It is also not unusual for family members to frequently switch between being owners and managers, which at times poses an unnecessary risk to value creation. Many FOBs are also paying too little attention to cyber-security. ”

“Our programs are therefore designed to provide FOBs with the essential tools that will allow them to implement sustainable solutions to these issues,” he added. “The historic and continued success of FOBs depends on the involvement of family members who possess an unparalleled knowledge of the intricacies of their businesses. This key factor, combined with the globally renowned expertise of our faculty will help co-create bespoke programs that will support the continued success and resilience of FOBs.”

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Notes to Editors

HEC Paris

A leader in Europe, HEC Paris specializes in management education and research. Founded in 1881, HEC Paris offers a full, unique range of courses to the leaders of tomorrow, including: Masters Degrees, MBA, PhD, Executive MBA and TRIUM Global Executive MBA. In June 2010, HEC Paris joined Qatar Foundation and brought world-class Executive Education programs and research activity to Doha and the region. By February 2011, HEC Paris launched Qatar's first international EMBA. The HEC Executive MBA (EMBA) is a part-time program which provides executives with a set of fundamental skills to expand their knowledge and leadership capabilities. In addition to the EMBA, HEC Paris provides in Qatar a Specialized Master Degree in Strategic Business Unit Management. The institution also offers non-degree management programs for executives, in the form of open enrolment programs as well as custom-designed programs for individual companies. The programs and research activities of HEC Paris in Qatar build corporate competitiveness within the global economy and are fully aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030 to support the transformation of Qatar into an advanced, competitive and knowledge-based economy. In 2015, HEC Paris was ranked number two worldwide in Executive Education by the influential UK-based Financial Times media group. <http://www.exed.hec.edu/hec-qatar>

Qatar Foundation

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