

MARK FANCOURT

JOINS THE 2018–2019

HFTP GLOBAL BOARD



Mark Fancourt's impressive 30-year career in hospitality has taken him all over the world; more specifically, to 45 countries on five different continents. His journey began in his hometown of Brisbane in Queensland, Australia, where his father was involved in the tourism industry; to Griffith University, where he earned his Master of Hospitality Management — and it has most recently brought him to Las Vegas, where he co-founded Testbed.Vegas.

This nonprofit organization focuses on dialogue, education and the exhibition of travel and hospitality technology in the robust Las Vegas market.

Fancourt understands these concepts of dialogue and education in hospitality very well. He has held executive leadership roles with global and regional oversight at a host of prestigious companies — including MGM, Fidelio, Micros, Pan Pacific, PPHG, and operational roles with Qantas, Sheraton and Hyatt — along with independent hotels, resorts and startup tech companies.

Having developed and managed bright minds in the hospitality technology sphere for the past two decades with teams from Dhaka all the way to San Francisco, Fancourt has gained great insight into the state of industry workers globally and the challenges they face. Throughout his career, he has steadfastly held to this valuable lesson: The role of technology is the key to ensuring both the survival of the art of hospitality, and the return of true guest service to the industry.

It is in technology, and in the creation of competitive advantage through technology, where Fancourt's passion lies.

He recalls a specific memory from the mid-1990s. At the time he was working in Phnom Penh, Cambodia for Fidelio and Intercontinental, who were opening the first international hotel in the city. Cambodia had just completed a United Nations peacekeeping mission to stabilize the country following the carnage of Pol Pot, and security was of great concern.

“It was a pivotal moment in my career, where I realized my place was out in the world, using my experience to grow young hoteliers in places where it was really going to have an impact.”

Enter the hospitality industry — one of the first to emerge on the chaotic scene.

“Even today, as I revisit this experience, I become emotional,” Fancourt says. “Cambodians had lost multiple members, generations, of their families. Here I was teaching these young Cambodians, and new hoteliers, the most advanced technologies the industry had ever seen — and yet, even in a mild storm, their homes would wash away. It was a pivotal point in my career, where I realized my place was out in the world, using my experience to grow young hoteliers in places where it was really going to have an impact.”

He sees where the industry can improve for these young hoteliers, as well. “In today's industry, technology workers are still not afforded the opportunities for leadership and organizational steerage that I believe are absolutely necessary in a world and industry that runs on technology,” says Fancourt. “Part of the challenge is in the nature and percep-

tion of technologists themselves. In reality, technologists are some of the more broadly capable and highly-taxed roles in the industry. I want to improve that perception and recognition of the discipline.”

Fancourt believes HFTP plays a major role in amplifying this effort on a much wider scale. “To me, HFTP is a people organization in an industry that is all about great people. The idea of fraternity amongst a group of people who are my peers, in terms of a role vertical within the industry, is appealing. Beyond that core value, I see that this organization plays a pivotal role in the development of people and serves as a voice of representation around two key functional areas of the industry that need a voice.”

Following an official vote at the HFTP 2018 Annual Convention, Fancourt joined the 2018–2019 HFTP Global board, adding his unique professional experiences to the future direction of HFTP. He most looks forward to improving the role of finance and technology personnel within the hospitality industry.

Beyond that core goal,” Fancourt says, “as an international hotelier, the growth of HFTP internationally — both its presence and its membership — is a priority.”

