

# climate control MIDDLE EAST

## KEY PERSPECTIVES ON THE REGION'S HVACR INDUSTRY

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## The Gouda principle

How can the MEP community be supported?

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| Nov 26, 2017 | 1:15 pm

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Technical seminars and workshops aimed at addressing the Low Delta T Syndrome, hydraulic balancing or the proper brazing of pipes, as part of the installation process of VRF systems, are of unquestionable importance, but so are courses related to the drafting of contracts and the financing of building-retrofit projects.

In September, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) and Eurovent announced a series of training programmes and workshops, as part of an initiative to enhance the level of technical expertise in the GCC region. ASHRAE made the announcement during the launch of a global training centre in Dubai, the first of its kind outside the United States.

The launch ceremony provided an opportunity to interact with ASHRAE President, Bjarne Olesen, and on behalf of the HVACR industry in the region, I used it to suggest that the Society could also consider including courses that would help MEP consultants and contractors navigate their way through legal channels in the drafting of contracts. Equally, I pointed out to the possibility of conducting courses on how to persuade banks to release funds for retrofit opportunities, or to convince end-users to undertake them, in the first place. He took the suggestions well and said he would discuss with his colleagues, which was very heartening to hear.

The genesis of the suggestion on the need for finance-related training for retrofit projects came from Sam Gouda, to whom *Climate Control Middle East* magazine spoke in early 2016. Gouda is President and Lead Expert of US-based Creara International. Speaking from experience, he

said banks often don't have a clear understanding of energy efficiency, with many not sure how to perform due diligence for an energy-efficiency project. In that context, Gouda said it was upon the engineering community to help bridge the knowledge gap, even going to the extent of training banks on how to read energy audits and develop an understanding of the risks involved. In short, Gouda recommended that engineers must highlight the business angle of energy efficiency, as opposed to merely sharing technology-related information, to encourage investment in retrofit projects.

For that, of course, they would first need to align themselves to think on finance in a structured manner, and that is where training workshops by ASHRAE and Eurovent could help.

Likewise, Gouda recommended that engineers ought to more profoundly connect with end-users. Taking the example of the healthcare sector, he said hospital managers were obsessed with controlling the infection rate, while saving energy – and rightly so. If engineers, instead of merely talking in terms of kilowatt hours, could show to them that a retrofit initiative would eventually reduce energy use – and, thus, save money – and also bring down the infection rate, the managers would warm to the idea of an intervention.

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