



**48<sup>th</sup> EHMA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
OPENING SPEECH PRESIDENT EZIO A. INDIANI 18 MARCH 2022**

Dear Friends & Colleagues, Buongiorno!

Welcome to Lugano, welcome to Ticino, welcome to Switzerland.

A big thank you to Mr. Rossi and all the members of the Organizing Committee for hosting us and having put together with great passion our AGM.

Well, it is so special for me to be back in Switzerland. 25 years ago, I was offered to take the position of General Manager of one of the most iconic hotels of Geneva. I accepted the offer and that was the best decision I made in my professional life. During my 7 years in Switzerland, I worked closely with many of the most charismatic Swiss Hoteliers.

I learned many of the secrets of the famous and well renowned Swiss Hotellerie. I learned to be diplomatic, focused and always find a solution in the most complex situations making sure that all parties succeeded.

That period forged my style of management and many of the learnings I got in those years are still helping me today to manage my property.

To come to our more straightforward business, after two difficult years during which Covid-19 has left the travel and tourism industries in a very vulnerable economic state, now we must brace ourselves for another even harder and unpredictable set of challenges.

It seems impossible what is going on right now in Europe, in Ukraine, and we cannot predict what will be the impact on travel and tourism industry. But resilience is in our DNA. Therefore, we will stay motivated, focused and alert and try to cope as best as we can.

There is a huge desire worldwide to travel, to forget Zoom and start face-to-face meetings again. Tourism showed timid signs of recovery as soon as countries began to remove protocols that did not allow free movement between countries.

“Should we stay, or should we go?” It is not only the famous hit of the Clash, but it is the question that anxious travelers ask themselves. The fear of getting sick has decreased, but there is still the concern of being stuck in a foreign country for days or weeks.

During these past two years, we have seen major changes. Technology, for example, moved faster than usual. Increased virtual communication with the customer has led us to improve analytics, which allow us to personalize their stay and align services and experiences to their preferences. This is a big competitive factor especially in luxury travel.

On the other hand, we have witnessed and experienced firsthand the psychological impact that has affected every role in hospitality. To motivate our employees is a major challenge. During the pandemic, many of us were close to their employees, helping them both psychologically and economically to overcome the crisis.

I believe that the success of any hotel lies in the capacity of the management of creating a motivated and passionate team of employees ready to deliver an extraordinary service at all time to all its guests. Consistency of quality service is the challenge that we have ahead of us. The shortage of staff that we are experiencing puts extra pressure on our hotels. This tells me that if we listen to our people and understand their needs, we will be able to reduce considerably our staff turnover and improve our service delivery. I believe we will win our battle by investing in developing and caring of our people and their wellbeing. Our employees are our strength and I do everything possible to make sure that in my hotel everybody works toward creating the positive atmosphere in which everybody is respected and can professionally grow.

I remember that when I was a kid living in a small village in northern Italy, a couple of local waiters working at the Excelsior lido in Venice used to come, on their days off to the village and tell the stories of their work...they told of the people they were meeting, industry leaders, show business people, heads of state, the sparkle of the Murano chandeliers, the bright marble, the white gloves service, delicious meals and champagne everywhere. These stories were fuel for my imagination and dreams... they were the ignition of my career and it was thank those two waiters and theirs passionate stories that I am here today.

Passion is the theme of our meeting, probably none of us would be here if we were not passionate about our job.

We are lucky to have found the profession of our dreams and we live this dream every day. Our passion is the engine of our professional life, the fuel of our success. Passion gives a sense to our life, is the energy that we do not know we have, but that is there any time we need it!

During the Educational Day, we will hear guest speakers and panelists presenting and sharing with us how passion has guided their personal and professional success.

To mention Steve Jobs: “The only way to do a great job is to love what you are doing”. I am sure that all of us share this great truth. To conclude I say ...It’s all about passion...and motivated teams led by passionate General Managers!

THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING HERE!