

Focus on future of construction

The 39th edition of the region's mega construction showcase The Big 5 is set to open in Dubai next month with new features, such as a start-up city for rising entrepreneurs that promise to disrupt the construction sector, as well as a focus on women that are pushing the gender boundaries.





A previous edition of The Big 5 ... this year's show will address tomorrow's challenges in the built environment.

MORE than 2,500 exhibitors from all around the world are expected to join the largest and most influential construction event in the Middle East in Dubai, UAE, next month (November 26 to 29).

The Big 5 2018, to be held at the Dubai World Trade Centre, will introduce never-seen-before technologies and innovative solutions under the theme "Shaping the future of construction" and will showcase



Technology is quickly reshaping the world of construction. Today, it offers unprecedented opportunities to work

moting state-of-the-art solutions across all stages of the construction lifecycle," says Josine Heijmans, portfolio director at dmg events.

She continues: "Technology is quickly reshaping the world of construction. Today, it offers unprecedented opportunities to work faster, more efficiently and more sustainably. Industry players who embrace innovation in a sector that is widely considered a late technology adopter can truly go a long

an impressive array of new features.

The event, in its 39th edition, will shed light on rising entrepreneurs that promise to disrupt the construction sector, as well as on the women that are pushing the industry forward, says a spokeswoman for dmg events, the organiser of The Big 5.

faster, more efficiently and more sustainably

“The Big 5 2018 is a must-attend edition that will address today and tomorrow’s challenges in the built environment pro-

way in building success, and staying on top in an extremely competitive market.”

The Big 5 2018 will be covering an area as large as 16 football fields one next to the other to showcase thousands of construction products and solutions from around



The Big 5

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the globe. The exhibitors have been clustered in five dedicated sectors: MEP services, Building Interiors & Finishes, Building Envelope & Special Construction, Construction Tools & Building Materials, and Construction Technology & Innovation.

This year, The Big 5 will create one mega event, covering all aspects of construction. For the first time, the show will feature the new Urban Design & Landscaping Expo



New Urban Design & Landscaping Expo, The Big 5 Solar, dedicated to solar solutions for construction, the launch HVACR Expo for heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and refrigeration solutions, the return of the Middle East Concrete, and The Big 5 Heavy, with its display of heavy machinery and vehicles – all under one roof.



Exhibitors will introduce never-seen-before technologies and innovative solutions.

SEGMENTS & FEATURES

At a dedicated Live Innovation Zone, visitors will be able to discover new products and solutions presented at interactive live demonstrations. A permanent display of all the most innovative products at The Big 5 will also offer a glimpse of what is shaking up the construction industry today.

Next to this zone, selected start-ups in the construction industry will display the technologies and solutions that will revolutionise tomorrow's built environment.

“The Big 5 Start-up City will gather the next construction tech disruptors, a selection of rising stars that will soon make an impact in the field. In order to support these innovative entrepreneurs, The Big 5

will offer a prize worth \$25,000 to the most innovative start-up, which will be selected by a panel of judges through an exciting competition,” Heijmans says.

The event will also feature the first FutureTech Construction Summit on November 26. The conference will be fully dedicated to exploring future trends and technologies through case studies, panel discussions and thought-provoking presentations.

Under the theme of ‘Empowering Innovation in the Construction Ecosystem’, the FutureTech Construction Summit will unveil how construction industry professionals can achieve higher productivity, greater sustainability and enhanced affordability in

their projects with the help of technology.

This year, The Big 5 will launch the Big 5's Women in Construction Seminar and Awards, which will offer strong, powerful and successful women an international stage where to share their experience on how they are changing the game and making an impact.

Addressing the need to reinvent gender diversity in the workspace, The Big 5's Women in Construction Seminar and Awards will pave the way to overcome today's challenges and advance the entire industry, together.

A wide education agenda including more than 100 seminar sessions will also come back this year at The Big 5. The popular CPD (Continuing Professional Development)-certified and free-to-attend



The popular CPD (Continuing Professional Development)-certified and free-to-attend workshops will run in four dedicated theatres.

workshops will run in four dedicated theatres as BIM Talks, Architecture Talks, Project Management Talks and Design Talks.

Moreover, beyond the FutureTech Construction Summit and the Women in Construction Seminar, the “How to Do Business in the UAE” seminar will provide value and business intelligence to exhibitors and visitors interested in navigating the burgeoning UAE construction market.

Taking place on November 28, ‘How to Do Business in The UAE’ will be presented with the support of Dubai South Business Park, hosting high-profile speakers such as Manal Al Bayat, senior vice-president - content and programming at Expo 2020, and Hussain Al Fardan, head of innovation centre, strategy and corporate excellence at Dubai Customs. ■

WOMEN IN SPOTLIGHT

DR Shetha Al Zubaidi* will be talking on key challenges faced by women in construction at the Women in Construction Seminar during The Big 5 Show in November. Here, she provides an insight on the female workforce in the building industry:

What are the main challenges faced by women in construction today?

The construction sector is typically a male-dominated industry and presents a major challenge for equal opportunities for women. The number of women in construction has grown over the last decade, but we are still far outnumbered. The major barriers to women in construction are discrimination, isolation, harassment, overall lack of work, image of the industry, career knowledge, culture and working environment, family commitments, male-dominated training

dren. But if the industry is to deliver the billions of essential infrastructure projects the country has lined up, it is essential to keep this workforce in place and attract them back into the industry after a career break. ■

** Dr Shetha Al Zubaidi is the CEO and partner of Brookson Project Management, one of Alfahim Avenue Investment Group companies. She has international experience*



Dr Shetha ... retention of female workforce is the biggest issue.

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How have things changed in Dubai?

The presence and status of women in engineering has improved dramatically over the last half century. However, the progression of professional women into positions of leadership has been slow. Women working in construction is on the increase: 37 per cent of new entrants into the industry that came from higher education are women, proving that this industry is quickly becoming one for the girls too! The UAE ranked Number One in the Arab world on empowerment of women in 2014, according to the Arab Women Foundation. In Dubai, the women have a lot of opportunities within the world of engineering, but I still think we have some way to go before both sexes are equally represented in construction leadership positions.

What actions do you encourage to empower women in the field?

There is clearly a pool of talented young women entering construction but keeping hold of this workforce appears to be an issue. Women seem to be dropping through the cracks of the career pipeline. Retention



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the cracks of the career pipeline. Retention of our female workforce is the biggest issue. The most significant reasons why you haven't got enough women in the senior side of the industry is the barriers they face re-entering the workplace after having chil-

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