

Women Leadership: Marriott International Appoints Two Filipinas as General Managers to Take the Lead of Two New Hotels

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MANILA, Philippines, July 10, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Marriott International (NASDAQ: MAR) has a long-standing history of valuing diversity and inclusion in its organization. As the first hospitality company making these key values central to its growth as a business, the Women Leadership Development Initiative, first introduced in 1999, has paved the way to encourage more women to assume leadership roles within the company and achieve their career aspirations.





In the Philippines, the global hospitality brand has named two Filipinas as their newest General Managers to head two of its latest additions. Anna Vergara will lead the much-awaited Sheraton Manila, a 393-room hotel that is part of the dynamic and exciting mixed-use development of Resorts World Manila, expected to open this year. Cleofe Albiso takes the lead in the first Courtyard by Marriott brand in the country, located in Mandurriao Iloilo City, a 326-room hotel that just opened this May.

Adding on to the growth story of Marriott International's portfolio, the company will add nine properties to its existing Manila Marriott Hotel. The openings are spread across six brands and various regions in the Philippines, including Boracay, Cebu, Clark, Iloilo and Manila, increasing the room inventory by 2,668 rooms.

Confidence builds excellence

Anna Vergara joined Marriott International more than 24 years ago, working her way up the ranks to become Manila Marriott Hotel's Resident Manager in 2009, before taking on the position of General Manager for the soon to open Sheraton property.

"When I started working in the hospitality industry, I never dreamt of becoming a GM. I started by just working with the aim to be the best that I can be in everything I do. I take my new role as a product of sheer hard work and determination," Anna shares. "I wanted to grow in my career, but from my experience, the top role in the hotels was traditionally held by foreigners who are male."

It may be challenging to be married and raising a family while working in a key position in the hospitality industry, but Anna is an outstanding example that career and family can go together. Despite her duties, she is able to make time to be with her family, accompanying them to sporting events and taking on the role of a classic "soccer mom".

She adds that she is fortunate to be working in an organization that has a big focus on developing women leadership. "I am lucky to be with a company that wants to strengthen that culture and values our contributions. Being a GM of the biggest hotel company in the world, and introducing a new brand in the Philippines, makes me proud and gives you a sense of what this company is all about."

Anna believes that women can and should reach for their highest potentials and believe in themselves. Having mentors along the way also helps to gain the trust and confidence needed to reach those goals.

A heart for service

Cleo likewise did not pin the General Manager title as her career goal when she moved to the hospitality industry. After leaving her post as Head of Marketing for the Visayas region at a telecommunications company, she started out as the Director of Sales and Marketing for what was then Marriott Cebu. Before taking the lead of the first internationally branded hotel in Iloilo, all she ever wanted in her Sales and Marketing role was to create stellar numbers for her and her team.

She gives credit to Marriott International for the programs in place that develop women leaders, further encouraging them to take on broader responsibilities within the company. Cleo believes that women leaders are successful because they are nurturers by nature, able to work with their hearts while balancing it with practical thinking. As a mother who has raised children that are supportive of her career, she demonstrates that hard work and dedication open doors to many more opportunities.

"I am happy with my larger role, as I believe that I will be able to touch more lives," she says. "We were able to hire around 140 locals for the pre-opening positions at the Iloilo property, and it is a great privilege and honor to be able to touch lives and create a culture of excellence that we embody at our workplace."

Inspiring more women leaders

The appointment of Anna and Cleo to the top positions has given the two new Marriott properties a distinction of being the first and only international branded hotels in the Philippines with local women as General Managers. It further represents the company's culture of inclusion, focusing on providing a world of opportunity to grow and develop for everyone, a trait which recently earned Marriott International the Aon Hewitt title of Best Employer in Asia Pacific.

"Championing women and empowering their leadership isn't just good business, it's smart business."

Diversity makes us more capable, competitive and strategic," shares Victor Clavell, Area Vice-President, the Philippines, Marriott International. "Ever since the days of our co-founder, Alice S. Marriott, women have powered our growth and I am personally committed to ensuring their continued success."

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