

CITYSCAPE GLOBAL 2015

This year's *Cityscape Global* looks set to expand on its previous edition in a number of ways. *Construction Week* chats with some of the exhibitors ahead of the show to find out what visitors can expect.

WOUTER MOLMAN DIRECTOR, CITYSCAPE GROUP

How is Cityscape different this year?

First of all, the show has grown in size by 30% on last year's event. We had a very successful edition in 2014; good feedback from visitors and from exhibitors. On the back of that, we have generated significant growth. This year, the show is going to be 41,000 sqm, compared to 30,000 sqm in 2014. [In terms of exhibitors], we anticipate an increase of 10% or so, taking the total above 300.

Last year, the total number of people who engaged with the event was 47,000. We usually don't give out predictions in terms of visitor numbers; it's very difficult to predict. We have pre-registration numbers and they're up if you compare them year on year. But they're only a partial indicator; it's a good one but definitely does not offer a 100% guarantee.

Nevertheless, we are confident that there will be a good turnout. We are using Cityscape Global 2014 as a foundation for our expectations.

Is this growth reflective of the market on a wider scale?

I think it's been widely reported that the market is going through a correction at the moment; a healthy and much-needed correction, I believe. We've had three

years of double-digit growth, and I don't think any market globally can sustain this for a very long time. You just reduce your competitiveness as an investment destination, and as a place to live. This correction is a very healthy sign. It is not a traumatic drop, but it is a necessary one.

We need to see how the event plays out in order to know where the market stands. That's the barometer by which we can judge the situation; the number of visitors, what are people there to do – are they just looking for information, are they actually serious about investing, are new projects being launched, are they on hold or delayed? All those kinds of stories – you will see them coming out during this year's show.

So that's when we can make the real judgement about the industry. But like I said, I do believe that the growth of the show demonstrates the confidence in the long-term perspective of the market at the very least, because people are willing to continue investing in their marketing, their promotion, and their position in the market.

What are the primary focuses for Cityscape this year?

There are actually two major changes that we have implemented. Firstly, we



completely reconfigured the layout of the exhibition. We used to have a show that was laid out in an L-shape, and as you can imagine, to walk from one end all the way to the other was quite a long journey. That's not convenient for exhibitors because they are not easily found. It is not convenient for visitors either because walking around the exhibition takes a long time. This year, we have two rows of exhibitors with one central concourse down the middle. That means that any exhibitor is within a three-minute walk of any other, which makes it much easier for everybody to get around.

The other major change is that we have completely overhauled our conference programme. It used to be collocated with

the exhibition, taking place at the same time in the same venue at Dubai World Trade Centre's conference hall. The problem we faced for quite a few years was that people needed to make a choice between being at the conference and being in the exhibition halls.

To overcome this challenge, for the first time this year, we have decided not to hold the conferences at the same time as the exhibition, but to have them the day before. We are holding all the conferences on one day, rather than having them over two or three days.

The conferences will take place at the Conrad Hotel, located right across from Dubai World Trade Centre – a convenient, one-minute walk over the metro bridge. We have a morning session, purely focused on the Dubai market. In the afternoon, we will split the programme into two parallel sessions; one for real estate brokers that is repeated from last year, and the other focusing on facilities management.

Why have you chosen to increase Cityscape's focus on facilities management this year?

Facilities management – looking at how to sustainably and cost-effectively run a building throughout its operating lifecycle – that's never been focused on fully at Cityscape Global.

In a general sense, the market is becoming more and more mature. A number of buildings and communities have come up in the last couple of years. That increases the need for professional facilities management.

We also believe that as an investor, you ought to have interest in how your investment is being looked after. If you have two identical buildings – one properly maintained by a professional FM company and the other just not looked after at all – you'll see it over the course of the years dilapidating. That is what FM is all about.

It is also important for investors to ask developers about this: "How are you going to look after my building?" It becomes a competitive advantage for developers if they have done their homework in this area.

To what extent will public bodies be involved in this year's show?

Dubai Land Department – the main regulator of the real estate market – will participate to discuss regulations and to answer any questions that people may have. Dubai Municipality will also be present to discuss zoning and the allocation of land.

Affordable housing, for example, is a key topic for Dubai right now. There's been a lot of talk, and I hope that finally, this will trigger some developers to jump

in and actually start developing for [lower-income residents].

Lots of products designed for mid-income households have come online over the past two years, but not necessarily for those with less spending power.

We are certainly putting the spotlight on affordable housing at our conference. This is one of the main talking points on which we'll be focusing.

Why should people visit Cityscape Global?

There has been a lot of talk about market correction over the past couple of months. Some people go into panic mode straight away, and compare it with the crisis in 2009. We have a strong belief that there is no need for that; things are a lot more sustainable now and a lot healthier – the declines are much smaller.

Overall, it is a very good opportunity for the market to really promote and explain where it stands; to give that confidence in its long-term success. For visitors, it is an opportunity to update themselves on all the latest projects. And there will be some great investment opportunities for potential buyers to tap into.

So I guess people should visit for a combination of reasons. Investors want a clear idea of where the market stands, and I am confident that this is exactly what Cityscape Global 2015 will deliver.

DANIEL SMITH

ENTERPRISE ACCOUNT MANAGER, TRIMBLE

What do you have planned for Cityscape Global 2015?

Trimble will be focusing on facilities management. Buildings are buildings, wherever they are in the world, and they all go through the same sorts of cycle. It is just a question of nuancing how you go through that cycle.

We'll be outlining our design-build-operate (DBO) concept – from conception, all the way through operation. We can help owners and operators ensure that their buildings are safe and fit for purpose throughout their lifecycles.

This can indeed mean changing a building's function and changing its purpose during this period, so you have to have tools to help you plan how you are going adapt.

"[FM has] moved from reactive... to a strategy around long-term maintenance."

Will the Gulf market account for a higher proportion of Trimble's overall business in years to come?

It definitely will. The GCC region, especially the UAE, represents a big growth area for Trimble. All across the Gulf, buildings are still being built, so our suite of DBO technologies are performing very well in this area.

Given that there is this fairly marked change in the market – where the fields of facilities management and operation of buildings are becoming more important – we are seeing such products take off. In short, the GCC is an incredible growth area for Trimble at the moment, and definitely one on which we are focusing internally as well.

Facilities management is a broad subject. The concept has definitely moved from reactive maintenance to much more of a strategy around long-term maintenance. What's more, lots of buildings that were constructed five years ago are going through repurposing, which is another driver for us.

NIALL MCLOUGHLIN

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, DAMAC



What does Damac expect from Cityscape Global 2015?

This year, we expect an increasing presence of local and international investors, customers, and companies offering various services to the industry, which is invaluable for Damac. In terms of attention and focus

on our projects, we expect to witness – as we do every year – increased numbers of inquiries and greater demand.

Do you have any major announcements that we can look forward to in this event?

Indeed, there will be several announcements during this year's show, but we will communicate in due course.

How was business for Damac during the first six months of 2015?

Damac released its H1 results and the numbers show clearly the healthy operation of the company so far this year. The total revenues reached \$1.292bn (AED4.749bn), with a net profit of \$721m (AED2.65bn). These numbers indicate the healthy status of the company, and reflect a mature market in the UAE in general, and in Dubai in particular.

SAMEH MUHTADI

CEO, BLOOM HOLDING

What does Bloom Holding expect to get out of Cityscape Global 2015?

In previous years, Cityscape has acted as a platform to bring together buyers and sellers with the new projects launched at every edition. The show attracts international investors and buyers, and covers all asset classes within the real-estate spectrum, including: residential, commercial, industrial, hospitality, and retail. We believe that a quality development in a prime location, which offers customers good value for money and lifestyle amenities, are key considerations for future buyers.

Does Bloom have any major announcements planned for the event?

Bloom Properties is currently developing five projects: Bloom Gardens, Bloom Central, Park View, Abu Dhabi Marina, and Stella Maris. It plans to announce five new projects in the future. At Cityscape Global, we will be announcing and promoting: Stella Maris, our flagship Dubai project; Park View Hotel apartments on Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi; and a



new project on Saadiyat Island. Of course, we will also showcase our existing portfolio.

How was business for Bloom during the first six months of 2015?

It was a great success. At Cityscape Abu Dhabi, we announced Stella Maris and launched Park View, two projects that received an overwhelming response. The first phase of Park View is sold out, so we will launch the second phase during Cityscape Global.

MARTYN CROOK,

SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR, AL BARARI



What does Al Barari expect out of Cityscape Global 2015?

We aim to engage with visitors and evoke an experience of what it is like to live in Al Barari. We want visitors to remember the experience and differentiate us from other developers.

Do you have any major announcements planned for the event?

At this point, Al Barari has no plans to launch a specific project. We have two priorities. The first is constructing Seventh Heaven, Ashjar, and The Nest, delivering these residential developments on time without compromising on quality. Our second priority is to further develop our master plan for the development.

During the show, we are offering visitors the opportunity to truly experience Al Barari, using the latest technologies and actual examples from the development. Our goal is to demonstrate to visitors how living in Al Barari truly is unique and show them what the community has to offer.

How was business for Al Barari during the first six months of 2015?

The first half of the year has been positive. In April, we launched new residential development, The Nest, which is a collection of 99 four-bedroom villas ideally suited to families. The homes sold out within three weeks. We also relaunched Ashjar 2 due to our clients' demands for more diverse units in Al Barari, and devised a complete solution for buyers of The Reserve, which features: initial design and build by Al Barari's construction company, Sustainable Builders; interiors by Lesley Zaal of Etcetera Living, Al Barari's interior design firm; and landscaping by Green Works, the development's landscaping company.