Press release

2 July 2019

**FCSI and Electrolux Professional announce the judging line-up for the 2019 Start Me Up Innovation Awards**

* **Judges include five Professional Members of Foodservice Consultants Society International (FCSI), plus Michele Cadamuro, Design Director, Electrolux Professional**
* **The awards will showcase new products or concepts launched since 1 January 2018 by independent start-up companies**
* **Judging will take place in September 2019. On Sunday 20 October at HostMilano 2019 shortlisted entrants will present their products to judges in a *Dragons’ Den*-style pitch**
* **Entry is free of charge. Winners will receive extensive media coverage and access to experts from FCSI and Electrolux Professional**

The judging panel has been confirmed for FCSI’s 2019 Start Me Up Innovation Awards, supported by Electrolux Professional.

The FCSI Professional Member judges on the panel are: Ken Schwartz FCSI of SSA Restaurant Design + Foodservice Consulting in Tampa, Florida; Joseph Schumaker FCSI of SCG FoodSpace in San Jose, California; Bettina von Massenbach FCSI of Oyster Hospitality Management in Munich, Germany; Thomas Mertens FCSI of S.A:M GmbH in Kolbermoor, Germany; and Brandon Kua FCSI of Citrus Consult in Selangor, Malaysia. Michele Cadamuro, Design Director of Electrolux Professional, based in Pordenone, Italy, completes the line-up.

**Game-changing impact**

The inaugural 2019 Start Me Up Innovation Awards were created by international member body Foodservice Consultants Society International (FCSI) and Electrolux Professional to give a platform to new products, services, systems or concepts from global start-up businesses with the potential to have a game-changing impact on the commercial foodservice, beverage and laundry industry.

The awards are open to any independent, start-up business that has launched a new product or concept for the sector since 1 January 2018. It is free to enter and it takes approximately 10 minutes to complete the application form on the FCSI website, [**here**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RTDBX9M). The final date of entry is 1 September 2019.

The judges will decide on a shortlist of entrants based on how innovative and impactful they believe the entries could be for the industry. The shortlisted products or concepts selected for the final stage will have the chance to make a *Dragons’ Den*-style ‘pitch’ to the judges in person at an event at the

FCSI booth on the morning of Sunday 20 October at the HostMilano 2019 show in Milan, Italy. Representatives from each start-up business will get 10 minutes to demonstrate to judges why their entry is worthy of first place. The winner will be announced at the FCSI show party later that evening.

**A catalyst for creativity**

“Innovation is essential for creating solutions to overcome new or existing challenges. It is vital in the development of efficiency at all levels, which impact the operators’ bottom line as well as the guest experience,” says Schwartz.

“These awards and the recognition they provide are a catalyst to entice people to be creative and to think outside of the norm. Start-ups typically take on a new approach.”

This is echoed by Schumaker. “We must push innovation forward and recognise those that are driving the industry. Start-ups are lean, agile and bring new ideas and perspective to an old and slow-moving industry,” he says. “Start-ups innovate, speculate and bring new life as well as passion to what is a very traditional and big business-based industry.”

According to Mertens, the need to embrace innovation in this sector is abundantly clear. “We have to look much more at what new people can bring to our concepts and plans. If we do this from the first impulse of innovation, we have the chance to realise great things.”

For Cadamuro, the awards represent “a great networking opportunity for all the players involved”, particularly for emerging creative companies to gain “new visibility and moreover to get closer to the commercial foodservice, beverage and laundry sectors.” The hospitality industry, he says, has a key role to play in our society. “I’m sure it will play an even bigger and stronger role in the future. We are reaching a tipping point in our industry at which innovation will be the only sustainable way to face new challenges.”

Cadamuro believes starts-up “have the power to bring a new mind-set” to society because “they are based on a strong willingness to change for the better; to improve life and work-life for people,” he says. “They have the potential to create new business models and jobs, thus contributing to economic growth. Ultimately, starts-up are the most dynamic organisations in the market: they are usually run by new generations with a worthy purpose to have a say in making the world a better place to live in.”

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**Further details:**

The 2019 Start Me Up Innovation awards can be entered **[here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RTDBX9M%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**.

Keep up to date with the awards campaign on the [FCSI website](https://www.fcsi.org/) and via FCSI and Electrolux Professional’s social media channels by following the hashtag **#SMUAwards19**.

For more information on the 2019 Start Me Up Innovation Awards please contact Michael Jones, editorial director, FCSI’s *Foodservice Consultant* magazine: michael.jones@progressivecontent.com

**Notes to the editor:**

**About Foodservice Consultants Society International (FCSI)**

Foodservice Consultants Society International (FCSI) is the member body for professionals offering design and management consulting services, specialised in the foodservice and hospitality industry, across the world. For more information, visit <https://www.fcsi.org/>.

**About Electrolux Professional**
Electrolux Professional is a leading provider and trusted partner for unit and full solutions, with a comprehensive and integrated offer for food, beverage and laundry. Electrolux Professional’s innovative and efficient solutions help to make our customers’ work-life easier, more profitable - and truly sustainable every day. With 10,000 service technicians in over 140 countries, Electrolux Professional offers customers a worldwide service network. In 2018, Electrolux Professional had global sales of SEK 9 bn and 3,000 employees. For more information, visit [www.professional.electrolux.com](http://www.professional.electrolux.com).