

HSMAI Profile: Mia Touzin Leffler

Mia Touzin Leffler Education Adviser HSMAI Region Europe

Mia Touzin Leffler is an international academic with a passion for professional development within hospitality and tourism.

As Senior Fellow, the Higher Education Academy in England, the organisation for quality assurance within British universities, Mia is External Examiner at Ulster University in Belfast. Her academic background includes being head of the hospitality and event management education at the large University of West London, academic lead of the BSc programme at the private Glion Hotel School in Switzerland and lecturer at Cornell University when they had a teaching centre at IMHI Essec in Paris. Her academic education includes a MSc with Merit in Tourism & Hospitality Management and Education from Surrey University together with earlier studies in human resources management in the UK and hotel management at Glion.

Mia Touzin Leffler's earlier career was in the industry, as head of management development and training with Sheraton EAME & South Asia and prior to that as Human Resources Manager, Holiday Inns Europe. This was followed by a period as independent with quite large, long term projects around work method changes, service concepts and sales training programmes for Disney Paris, the Europcar – Perot Systems partnership and Air Miles before landing in academia with three children tagging along. Mia grew up in Gothenburg, Sweden, is married to a Frenchman and has spent her adult life based in England, France, Switzerland, Germany and in Australia. Mia is not

working fulltime now but with projects instead to have the time to live as well!

Q: What does a day at work consist of for you?

A: A difficult question as the weeks now vary. Two weeks ago, I attended the HSMIAI Leadership Day in Frankfurt, presenting Winning for Customers, the Service Pledge programme and what has been done since last year. This week, I have been in the middle of France, north of Bordeaux, where the priorities were to preserve the harvest of tomatoes, peaches and apricots so that we can bring them with us. In between, emails to follow up on the Frankfurt talk and then out to work in the garden! Next, in the car and back to London.

Q: What's the best part of your job?

A: The flexibility, adapting to opportunities and all the engaging, enthusiastic people that I meet. Also, to watch the glittering eye of a youth who has discovered their passion.

Q: Do you have anyone you've looked up to?

A: Different managers that I have worked with over the years and these youngsters who have been through all sorts of experiences, coming through the stronger for it.

Q: Do you have any nice traditions at your office?

A: To get academics to be in one location at the same time to either socialize or work as a team can be a major undertaking but when it is achieved it has a very positive effect, reducing stress levels and on how they enjoy their work and the achievements of their students.

Q: How long have you been a member of HSMIAI?

A: Was involved with HSMIAI Region Europe in 2015 and much more since a year.

Q: What do you think is the best thing about HSMIAI?

A: The ability to get all these energetic, engaging people at varying stages of their careers and experiences together. The ability and sensitivity to pick up on trends and what really matters.

Q: Are there any activities or projects you think HSMIAI should start up?

A: Winning for Customers, the Service Pledge to help quality assure the experiences that the customers are promised. HSMIAI Region Europe are well underway with this.

Q: Describe your perfect weekend.

A: Either with my very young grandchildren, living in Rome. Intense, both physically and emotionally and fantastic. Or amongst my roses that I prune ending up with a back ache but then it is lovely to go for a swim.

Q: If you were trapped on a desert island, what would you take with you, if you could choose one thing?

A: Something that I could use to make tools for fishing and living. Think I would find it difficult to sit still.

Q: How will someone who knows you describe you?

A: A conceptual mind with a practical pair of hands. Or what a hotel manager in Liverpool once called me: 'a brick' (!!) He said it meant, dependable and trust worthy. I hope that they also say 'with a sense of humour and a big supply of patience'.

Q: What is your next travel destination?

A: The next private trip goes to Rome, to the grand children! 25th October I participate in a HSMIAI Advisory Board project meeting in London where I live and the 27th – 29th November I

will be in Oslo for the next Executive Coach workshop for Winning for Customers, the Service Pledge.

Q: Do you have any special hobbies?

A: Hobby? I used to ski a lot in Scandinavia and in the Alpes growing up, travelling by coach from Gothenburg on Friday night and back in education Monday morning, bleary eyed. Later, with my children finding new paths through the birch trees. Recently, it is gardening (whole heartedly!), swimming, the grandchildren and reading. At least, I manage to find time for some of this now as during many years, there was too little spare time.

Q: Thank you for your time. Do you have any personal comments?

A: I come back from every HSMIAI Region Europe event incredibly stimulated by your enthusiasm and how engaged and involved you all are. I look forward to many more meetings like that. You really are a great 'bunch'. Well done!!