

Gebr. Heinemann appoints Bernard Schlafstein as CEO Heinemann Middle East Africa



Bernard Schlafstein takes on the role of Heinemann Middle East Africa CEO

Gebr. Heinemann is further expanding its global footprint with a clear focus on the Middle East Africa region (MEA).

The company has officially elevated its Dubai office - operational since September 2023 - to the status of a regional headquarter and Bernard Schlafstein has been appointed CEO of Heinemann Middle East Africa.

This strategic step underlines Gebr. Heinemann's long-term commitment to a region that spans over more than 60 countries and plays a key role in the global travel retail landscape. The Dubai hub now joins the company's existing regional structures in Miami (Heinemann Americas) and Singapore (Heinemann Asia Pacific).

"With this upgrade to a regional headquarter and the appointment of Bernard Schlafstein as CEO, we are sending a strong signal to the MEA region," said Florian Seidel, Chief Sales Officer at Gebr. Heinemann. "Bernard brings extensive expertise and deep knowledge of the market. As Director Sales MEA, he has already been a driving force in shaping our regional success."

Dubai as a regional gateway

Dubai was chosen as the regional base for good reason. Approximately 70% of Gebr. Heinemann's current and potential partners in Africa are headquartered there, and the city is widely regarded as the commercial and logistical hub of the wider MEA region.

"Dubai is our gateway to a diverse and fast-growing part of the world," added Schlafstein. "Having a strong presence here allows us to better understand local market dynamics, respond more quickly to customer needs, and deepen our partnerships on the ground."

Regional logistics for speed and flexibility

In parallel with the new headquarters, Gebr. Heinemann is also enhancing its supply chain in the region. A transit warehouse in Dubai already supports direct delivery to the Saudi Arabian market, bypassing the company's distribution centers in Germany. A further step will follow in 2026 with the establishment of a MEA Logistics Hub in Istanbul, designed to serve the entire region more efficiently.

According to Schlafstein, regional logistics are key to faster delivery times, greater flexibility, and a more curated product range for travelers.

The Dubai headquarter completes Gebr. Heinemann's trio of global hubs, alongside Heinemann Americas in Miami and Heinemann Asia Pacific in Singapore. This regionalization approach reflects the company's broader strategy: combining global expertise with local insight to ensure sustainable growth.

"As a family-owned business, we believe long-term relationships and trust are the foundation of success. Having a physical presence in the region allows us to build and nurture those partnerships," Schlafstein concluded.