HAMMER

Food & Beverage Business Review

Dec-Jan 2022 • Volume XIX Number 2 ₹ 100

Business magazine for food service & food retail professionals



Business
Innovations in F&B Industry During Pandemic

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Organic Farming

Meat
The World of Sausages

Dairy
Probiotic Products: An Untapped Potential

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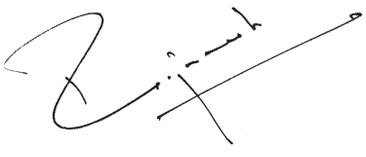
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The hospitality industry has been hit hard in the last two years of the pandemic. Hotel companies are facing weak performances due to either lockdowns, or low occupancies (no international guest), or worst, facing large-scale cancellations across the corporate, MICE and leisure segments. It also has large scale rolling effect on the foodservice industry. What is most disturbing is the uncertain future of large manpower, an integral part of the hospitality industry. The impact could render a majority of the people in hospitality industry jobless and resulting in mass unemployment. The pandemic has introduced a disruptive level of emotional stress on the workforce. Workers cannot carry out their jobs which effects on income. They are absolutely confused and lost about their future prospects in the current business environment of uncertainty and fear. Most of them are looking for alternative options for sustaining their households. This may lead to a large number of people changing their industry to go where they can restart their career. This exodus could have asevere impact on the talent pool and may not recover until confidence is reinforced by employers. The question is what is the solution? What hospitality organisations should do? If they retain people on compassionate ground, they are also uncertain for how long they can sustain this manpower. Otherwise, if companies let go their manpower, where will they get the experience people later on, to restart the operations. The hospitality associations are constantly asking government to help them in at least on this issue by providing salaries for the people and reduce some burden on the industry. Its high time government should look into this matter more seriously and provide a package to the industry to help retain its workforce.



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ANUTEC - International FoodTec India

The largest and most comprehensive exhibition for the food and beverage technology finally took place after a hiatus of nearly two years caused by the pandemic. The 15th edition of ANUTEC - International FoodTec India, held from 2-4 December 2021 at IECC, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, coincided with PackEx India and Food Logistics India. "The success of ANUTEC – International FoodTec India and PackEx India signals a turning point for the Indian food and beverage technology providers industry. We are pleased to have been able to deliver a physical exhibition of this magnitude and are immensely grateful for the overwhelming response," said Milind Dixit, Managing Director of Koelnmesse YA Tradefair Pvt Ltd.

The exhibition received 6,102 visitors from 13 countries and 268 exhibitors from 20 nations. As a result of the successful conclusion of the exhibition, the food and beverage business will take off, which has been eagerly anticipating new technologies and serving customised consumer demands.

Viki Khakhrawala, founder- Shanta G Technofoods LLP, shared his delightful experience and stated, "We have been participating in ANUTEC – International FoodTec India for the last 2-3 times and always participate with high hopes. This time we are happier because we got what we expected and got the bonus business. We are thrilled to see the footfalls and responses we are getting here. "Vineta Singh of Fresh-O-Veg, said, "We are into food processing end-to-end consulting services. ANUTEC – International FoodTec India is a good platform for companies like us. After a gap of two years, we are quite relieved to interact with people and get back to the market." Sunita Chaudhary, co-founder, EcoCosmos, shared her experience, "We deal in imported food processing machines. Essentially, we import from Taiwan, Turkey, and South Korea. We participated in this exhibition with some expectations, and those have been met. We were looking for responsive and mature clientele and are getting that on this platform." Several premium industry associations supported the event this year, including the All India Food Processors' Association (AIFPA), Indian Flexible Packaging and Folding Carton Manufacturers Association (IFCA), and Health Food and Dietary Supplements Association (HADSA). With industry support, the event reached new heights and attracted top buyers.

Under the umbrella of ANUTEC – International FoodTec India Knowledge Forum, a series of powerful side events were organised. "India Food Supply Chain Summit" was co-organised by Logistics Insider and Food Logistics India. IFCA and PackEx India organised a seminar on "Packaging - Continuous Enabler for Creation of Value" followed by IFCA Star Awards, a National Seminar on "Technology Foresight to Modernise the Indian Food Industry for a Significant Global Role" was organised by AIFPA and Koelnmesse YA Tradefair Pvt Ltd. The event attracted who's who from the industry, senior representatives from the Government of India and influential buyers from the neighbouring countries.

The next ANUTEC - International FoodTec India, PackEx India, and Food Logistics India will be organised from 14-16 September 2022 in Bombay Exhibition Center, Mumbai. The event will be co-located with the flagship Annapoorna - ANUFOOD India.

Koelnmesse – industry trade fairs for the food technology sector: Koelnmesse is an international leader in organising trade fairs in the field of food and beverage processing. Anuga FoodTec and ProSweets Cologne are established, world-leading trade fairs, hosted in Cologne/Germany.

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Qmin Announced the Opening of 11 New Outlets



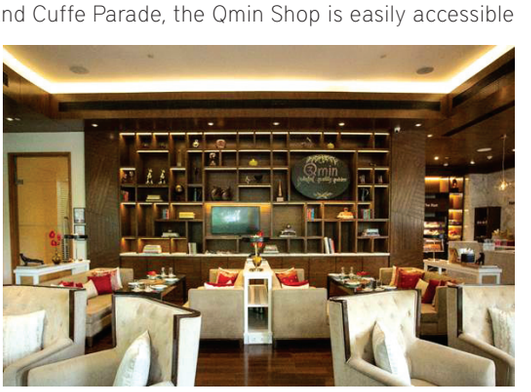
Qmin, the culinary and food delivery platform from Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), announced the opening of 11 new outlets across the city of Bengaluru. Qmin's footprint continues to expand across virtual and physical formats. Speaking on the occasion, Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, IHCL, said, "We are excited to bring the new Qmin outlets to the garden city of Bengaluru. Qmin's expansion is in line with its strategy of growing its Food and Beverage portfolio across multiple market segments. The new outlets will also broaden the brand's reach and cater to a diverse audience."

Strategically located in residential and commercial areas including at the airport in Bengaluru, Qmin will offer an array of bakery and confectionery products, in addition to a wide selection of teas and coffees. From quaint outdoor spaces to cozy nooks, these vibrant outlets with free Wi-Fi are the perfect place for a quick meeting or catch-up. Guests can relish light-bites on the go or get a quick takeaway from a selection of snacks including cookies, croissants, pretzels, samosas and pizzas.

Since its launch in mid-2020,Qmin has rapidly expanded to 20 cities, delivering comfort food as well as signature favourites from IHCL restaurants. The brand is available on its proprietary Qmin app, catering to the consumer demand for online food delivery. It broadened its scope to include Qmin stores offering a variety of gourmet products, and a café. Qmin - On The Move, the food truck, caters to the need of on-the-go meals.

Qmin comes to Taj Wellington Mews, Mumbai

Taj Wellington Mews, Mumbai unveiled Qmin, a one-stop-shop for gourmands offering a variety of artisanal products, handpicked delicacies and a café. Perfectly located at the cusp of Colaba and Cuffe Parade, the Qmin Shop is easily accessible to resident and non-resident guests alike.



Commenting on the launch, Ms. Meena Bhatnagar – General Manager, Taj Wellington Mews, Mumbai "Qmin at the Mews will offer high quality products, global flavours and a creatively designed space, guests can now look forward to a differentiated epicurean experiences in an easy walking distance from their homes. This coupled with the signature warmth and service synonymous of the Taj, makes it the perfect choice for South Mumbai residents."

The Qmin Shop at Taj Wellington Mews will feature an array of breads, handcrafted cheeses, meats, patisserie items and many culinary delights. For those looking to catch up with friends and family over coffee and conversations, the in-store high energy café is the ideal destination. With its elegant design and spacious interiors, the Café offers guests a choice of both outdoor and indoor seating to suit their moods. Combined with efficient and warm service, guests can relish wholesome meals, grab a quick take-out or order for specially curated hampers and goodies.

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APPOINTMENT

Diwas Wadhera



Eros Hotel New Delhi Nehru Place announced the appointment of Diwas Wadhera as Executive Chef who will spearhead the hotel's culinary operations across all restaurants, bar, in-room dining as well as banquets. He will also focus on continuously improving guests' dining experiences through innovative culinary art and by maintaining highest quality of food standards.

Chef Diwas, who is a native of Delhi has over 19 years of experience and has worked with many luxury hotels. He found his interest in cooking at the age of 14 which later turned into a hobby and finally an inspiring profession in the later years.

He specializes in progressive Indian as well as Continental cuisine and has a strong forte in regional culinary treasures. He is a master of creative buffet set ups, fine dining presentations, as well as high volume catering for banquets and conventions.

Clint Rodrigues



The Resort Hotel Mumbai has announced the appointment of Clint Rodrigues, as the new Food & Beverage Manager. He started his journey in the hospitality industry with JW Marriot Mumbai. During his association with the JW Marriot, he handled various posts which include, Food & Beverage Supervisor, Lead Food & Beverage Associate, Food & Beverage Associate and Food & Beverage Apprentice. Working at one of India's finest restaurants, the Lotus Café, he was responsible for managing its finances including revenue, profit, budget, and accounting. Clint Rodrigues's experience also includes working at the Holiday Inn at the Mumbai International Airport.

Lavazza Available on Tata CLiQ Luxury

Lavazza, the Italian brand that is among the world's leading coffee roasters, has announced its partnership with Tata CLiQ Luxury, India's premier luxury lifestyle platform, to expand its presence and reach in the Indian home segment. A range of Lavazza products are available on the platform which includes its most popular retail coffee variants (ground coffee, coffee beans and coffee capsules), coffee machines and coffee-related accessories to provide consumers with all the right tools to brew that barista-style cup of coffee from scratch, at the comfort of their homes.

Commenting on the partnership, Jai Ganesh Ramnath, Managing Director, Lavazza India said, "Coffee has helped establish connections for centuries now - at work, at home and with oneself. The idea behind this partnership with Tata CLiQ Luxury is to enable consumers to continue experiencing coffee, and not just consume it. For us at Lavazza, coffee is more than just a beverage; it is a habit that helps you look within yourself while you are brewing that perfect cup of coffee from scratch, where it's just you and your coffee for those 5 minutes. With this as the premise and to help bring this experience to life, a curated collection of coffee, accessories and machines are available on Tata CLiQ Luxury. We are certain that, with this partnership, we will be part of households that share a strong relationship with coffee as a connector and motivate coffee enthusiasts to experiment with some of our most premium products and accessories."

In order to bridge the gap between coffee lovers and the absence of readily available freshly brewed coffee, brewed barista-style from scratch, Lavazza was quick to adapt to the needs of its consumers and directed its efforts towards increasing its online retail presence in India. So far, the company has seen an exponential increase in demand for its products including capsule machines and coffee equipment like French press, imported coffee grinders and moka pots.

Grover Zampa Launches Handcrafted Wine



Indian pioneer and the most awarded wine producer, Grover Zampa Vineyards is adding more glitter to this festive season with its brand-new wine range, SIGNET and its five varietals of red. Signet is India's first wine range to be aged in foudres, amphoras, and concrete tanks and is one of the most premium wines of the country.

Gracefully made from hand-picked grapes grown at their vineyard, the Grover Signet epitomises their dedication to making wines that express their terroir. Sparingly made, hand-crafted, and overseen by master winemakers, very few have the privilege to take home a bottle of this exquisite wine.

Signet reveals the most delicate aromas of single-vineyards hand-picked Shiraz, estate bottled and their variation with different ageing techniques. All wines are unfiltered to retain their natural mouth feel and represent the five maturation processes used to create the range which are the expression of their finest craftsmanship.

Speaking on introducing the Signet wine range to India, Vivek Chandramohan, CEO, says, "Coming from a long heritage of passionate wine makers, it is significant for us to elevate the rich wine drinking experience with each launch. As it is a single vineyard wine, we were able to retain the natural texture and phenolics. Grover Zampa has always been known for pushing the boundaries through innovation and Signet is, in many ways, the manifestation of that creative vision."

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Andrea's Bistro Opens in Delhi

Andrea Pauro, the restauranteur behind Amici, Andrea's Eatery, Andrea's Bar & Brasserie opens a global themed Andrea's Bistro in Delhi's Vasant Kunt at DLF Promenade Mall.

Restauranteur Andrea, brings his universal experience to Delhi with Andrea's Bistro–a true reflection of his love for travels and many global food adventures. Curated with his signature philosophy of authenticity, the menu includes amalgamation of prominent cuisines such as Thai, Italian & Japanese dishes





prepared with fresh and high-quality ingredients. The bistro also boasts of a bar for guests to pair their food with crafted drinks, cocktails and wines.

Andrea Pauro said, "The Bistro is the culmination of many experiences with food on my travels. And the new Andrea's bistro is an epitome of my love for fine cuisine."

Chef Mohit Jaggi has curated the menu along with Andrea's. He brings to the table his long time loyalty to the faith of food and diverse culinary experience. He has worked in Oberoi Raj Vilas prior to his present position.

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Berry Blue Hospitality Launches Rasotsav

Amidst the pandemic, Berry Blue Hospitality group comprising of experts in hospitality under the stewardship of Aji Nair, a veteran in the HORECA space, launched Rasotsav, its first restaurant at Andheri Mumbai, which presents the heirloom Indian traditions of pure vegetarian Gujarati-Rajasthani cuisine, on a quiet note. As the name suggests, Rasotsav is conceptualised as a festival of flavours, relished with a touch of royalty.

Talking about making the audacious move to establish a new business venture, Aji Nair says, "We launched Rasotsav with a vision to become a pan-India offering within three years. The market, which is seeing a steady revival in demand as customers return to the joy of "experiencing" things after being at home for long periods of time, is ready to support such growth. The reviews for Rasotsav have been most favourable and we are already looking at some interesting opportunities to expand. We are extremely happy that our customers have recognised the value of our offering and rewarded it handsomely."

Orika Launches 'Winter Specials'

Orika is a leading premium gourmet spice brand from the house of Paras Spices, crafted with an aim to transform everyday meals with extraordinary flavours. Adding to their wide variety of Spices, Seasonings and Marinades, Spice Mixes, Immunity and Wellness Drinks and Flavoured Lemonades, Orika has launched their 'Winter Specials' products - Grilling Sessions Box and Shahi Kahwa.

Orika's Grilling Sessions Box includes best selling multipurpose seasonings and marinades along with a range of herbs; all packed in a box specially curated for you to enjoy your barbeque sessions this winter season.

Shahi Kahwa brings the warmth and comforting flavours of this Kashmiri staple right to the home. The combination of herbs and spices used in the Shahi Kahwa boost immunity, makes the skin glow, aids digestion and helps detox the natural way.

The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru Launches Lotus Oriental

The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru, which was launched in October 2021, opened the doors to yet another restaurant, The Lotus Oriental, specializing in Asian cuisine. It was launched on the auspicious day of Loy Krathong, the ancient Thai festival of paying tribute to Lord Buddha and the Goddess of water, by floating lotus-shaped lanterns made from banana leaves.

Promising an authentic dining experience with an outdoor seating adjacent to the infinity pool, The Lotus Oriental brings home flavours from across Asia with the quiet calmness of the orient. Designed in a modern minimalist style, the décor blends beautifully with the overall theme. The textured wall reminds one of the serene Japanese Zen gardens with the sand representing the water.



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Taki Taki Now in Mumbai



Launched by Bengaluru-headquartered VRO Hospitality, Taki Taki is all set to satiate the palate of food lovers by delivering some of the finest Pan-Asian cuisine and the best of Japanese flavours with the most premium quality ingredients. Food connoisseurs will also enjoy a well-stocked bar of Oriental spirits. Mumbai outlet happens to be the second outlet of Taki Taki after Bengaluru and also VRO's second destination in Mumbai after French cafe Cafe Noir that was launched also here at the same place in October.

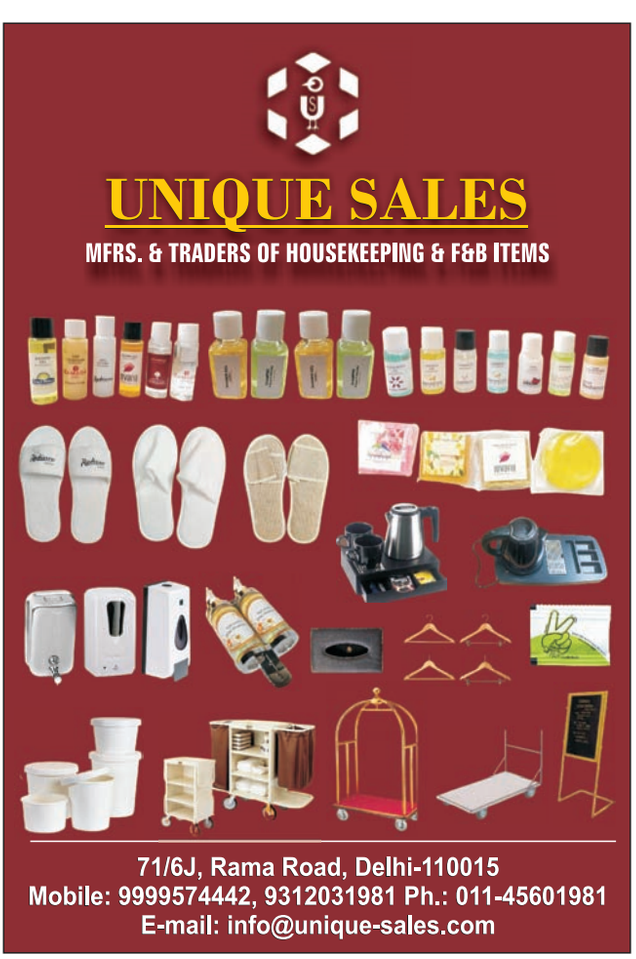
The spirit of Taki Taki lies in the journey that the company has gone through, taking the bold step of moving away from their home ground and establishing itself in newer territories with the guiding light of sheer determination.

Commenting on the launch of the restaurant, Sharath Rice, Co-Founder, VRO Hospitality, said: "We are extremely delighted to bring to Mumbai some of the finest Pan-Asian delicacies with the launch of Taki Taki. Being the country's most vibrant cosmopolitan, it was all but natural for VRO to come to Mumbai with a brand that celebrates the diversity of Pan-Asian and Japanese cuisine."

An excited Dawn Thomas, Co-Founder, VRO Hospitality, said: "The ambience of the restaurant has complementary tones of earthy colours and palettes that accentuate a wholesome and welcoming vibe all throughout the day. The electrifying ambience accentuates the expansive menu of the finest Oriental flavours that will highlight the freshest ingredients. The sushi bar takes centre stage and serves nothing but the best; well-seasoned rice served at the right temperature, high-quality sourcing of not just the fish but of all ingredients used innovative bites that combine those top-quality ingredients along with efficient service."

TakiTaki boasts of an expansive menu that includes butter Spiced Shimeji Mushroom, Crispy Fried Lotus Stem, Prawn & Shitake Dimsum, Teriyaki Glazed Chicken Skewers and Wok Tossed String Greens. Talking about the eclectic mix of course, an excited Daniel Koshy, Director of Culinary, VRO Hospitality, said: "We are excited to satiate the palate of Mumbaikars with an eclectic range of diverse pan-Asian and Japanese cuisine. Taki Taki will offer something for everyone. It has already created an impression on Bangalore's foodies and will continue to wow the food connoisseurs of Mumbai as well. We are continuing to diversify our offering of food and are excited to offer a new cuisine that is unmatched in quality and value."

Doubling as a transitional bar, the Taki Taki experience would never be complete without a priced mention of their extensive collection of the finest wines, white spirits and exuberant cocktail bar. The comprehensive eye for detail from execution to the plating of these spectacular meals is nothing short of brilliance, paired with the zeal that team VRO has shined on the city of Bengaluru and their maiden voyage to Mumbai.



Global Fast Food Launches its First QSR in Bengaluru



Charlie Chaplin has launched its F&B vertical in India through its exclusive licensing partner UnitedVegan Pvt. Ltd. The first flagship Quick Service Restaurant (QSR), 'Charlie Chaplin LaVegano', was unveiled in Bengaluru at New Bel Road. The restaurant offers various categories like All day breakfast, Salads, Appetisers, Burgers, Pizzas, Wraps, Rice bowls, Beverages and Desserts. Apart from the wide range of categories, the menu offers food from various countries that is customised for the taste buds of Indians.

Announcing the launch, Vandana Bhardwaj, Director of UnitedVegan Pvt. Ltd. said, "We are excited to launch the first flagship Charlie Chaplin LaVegano – Global Fast Food QSR in India at Bengaluru. Charlie Chaplin was a Legend and his movies have inspired all of us. We are extremely privileged to partner the brand 'Chaplin' that has spread its wings across the globe through many business verticals and now entered India in the Food & Beverage category. The restaurant aims to embrace wholesome food for a healthy planet and a healthy body. We intend to extend our footprints nationally to over 100 outlets primarily through franchising. We will also distribute ready to eat and drink food & beverage products through online and offline channel partners across SAARC region".

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Bikano Launches Mexican Crunch and Fun Sticks

Snacks major Bikano has announced the launch of three new lip-smacking products to increase their market share and revenue stream in the western snacks category. The new products which include Mexican Crunch and Fun Sticks will aim to solidify Bikano's presence in the western snacks market of INR 16000 crore

Consumers of the present day want easy-to-carry, price-effective snacks that do not compromise on nutrition and taste. With Gen-Z being more focused on their health and wellness, unsurprisingly they look for healthier products and they also have an attraction for new products. Adults look for the brand and price and they want their money spent well; hence the quantity aspect too forms a key consideration in their choice making.

Speaking about the launch of the new products, Mr. Manish Aggarwal, Director, Bikano said "The launch of new products provides a means to target new markets, new customers, increase market share, sell more and eventually increase our revenue streams. A wide range of products portfolio gives confidence to the retailer & provides an opportunity to infuse new energy into the channel which would eventually help in increasing sales revenue. Treatos Mexican Crunch and Chatax Fun sticks is definitely going to work as fuel for growth.



Gen-Z and Millennial population are considered a big market by FMCG companies for its snacks segment. With snacking brands focusing more on products with low-calorie count and less oil, they are able to encourage the younger generation towards healthier snacking choices.

"Indians are experimenting, seeking variety and are open to trying new products and experiences. Businesses need to be quick to tap into the fast-growing and profitable categories. Diversifying the portfolio makes sense as it helps mitigate risk and is not necessarily a costly affair. Most product changes are consumer-led, and this is to cater to their explicit and implicit needs" said Mr.Dawinder Pal, Head of Marketing at Bikano.

"In Mexican Crunch, periperi flavour is the most popular flavour. Also, it is 100% corn-based which gives a crunchy bite. On the other hand, the USP of Chatax Fun Stick is the taste and flavour which differentiates it from competitors. The product is very tasty and light to eat. For the Treatos Mexican Crunch, we are targeting the age group of 10-30 years, while for the Chatax Fun Sticks, our target group is 5 years to 18 years" he added.

To enhance the success of these products, Bikano will be marketing these products across various channels like digital, retail and print media. The products are available at different price points starting from Rs 5 to Rs 10.

Friction Between HoReCa Operators and Food Aggregators Intensify

Indian food service operators and food aggregators have been at loggerheads for years over the latter's commissions, lack of data sharing and policy changes. Even as online food orders have surged, the rift between the two continues to widen over a new clutch of issues including a new cancellation policy, and the recent Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms. Rather than realizing the significance of the synergies through strategic collaboration, HoReCa operators and food aggregators are further escalating their friction, much to the loss of consumers, says GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company.

Bobby Verghese, Consumer Analyst at GlobalData, comments: "Owing to multiple and prolonged pandemic-related lockdowns, and the partial/complete restrictions of HoReCa outlets, consumers began ordering - food deliveries and takeaways in greater numbers, or more often, for convenience and safety. Despite the lockdowns being lifted, a sizable chunk of consumers is still ordering food online as revealed by GlobalData's Q3 2021 consumer survey*."

While both restauranteurs and food aggregators are benefitting from the surge in online orders, HoReCa players argue that a chunk of their profits are eroded by the high (30%–40%) commissions charged by food aggregators. Moreover, HoReCa operators resent the lack of access to the rich consumer database that food aggregators have accumulated from the food purchased through their venues.

A fresh conflict arose in mid-2021 as Zomato unveiled a new cancellation policy, restaurants that cancel customer orders frequently will be charged a penalty or be temporary delisted from the Zomato app/website. The National Restaurant Association of India's (NRAI), an association of over 500,000 restaurants filed a complaint with the Competition Commission of India against the purported anti-competitive policies of food aggregators.

Furthermore, the central finance ministry amended tax laws, requiring food aggregators to pay 5% GST on behalf of restaurants for all online orders, beginning from January 1, 2022. While this will have no impact on food ordered through GST-registered restaurants, prices of food from unregistered eateries will escalate, rendering them less competitive in the digital landscape. While the latest GST amendments intend to bring the unorganized foodservice sector under the tax radar, it can inadvertently alienate small-scale eateries from the online food delivery space.

Mr. Verghese concludes: "The uneasy alliance between restaurateurs and food aggregators will continue as each party has its own domain of expertise that the other cannot compete with. Apart from multinational chains such as Dominos and KFC, most restaurants lack the deep pockets to commence an independent online delivery service. Moreover, HoReCa operators will find it difficult to match the rich customer experience offered by aggregators."

*Data taken from GlobalData Q3 2021 Consumer Survey – India with 567 respondents, published in September 2021



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F&B Outlets & The Pandemic

F&B outlets – whether they be fine dine, QSRs or bars – have all been adversely affected by the pandemic and have taken various steps to induce the customers to return to their hospitality properties. Adopting measures to maintain hygiene and cleanliness, not only in the outhouse but also in the kitchen, have been a priority in these outlets. Efforts of the management have not only been to assure diners' health and wellbeing but also that of their employees. Ashok Malkani tries to fathom the efforts of the industry towards this end and also if these trends would continue in the New Normal, that is likely to set in the future.

Restaurant industry has been adversely affected more than any other industry, due to the pandemic. According to a report by the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) the India food services market shrank by 53 per cent during the FY 2021 compared to the previous fiscal year. This, the report adds, led to a closure of 25 per cent of food business operators.

However, organized sector is recovering at a rapid pace and, according to Covid-19 Impact Assessment Report, is expected to increase its share in the food services pie to 54 per cent by 2025, up from 27 per cent in FY 2021. But all this can be achieved only if precautions are taken to ensure safety of the dine-in as well as online customers. And having a clean and safe business is one of the top priorities for this!

The customers have become extra conscious about the hygiene being maintained in the F&B outlets. Restaurants' cleanliness expectations, today, are higher than ever, at every stage.

Though there have been some relaxations in restrictions imposed on food & beverage outlets the restaurateurs are conscious about the hesitancy of the diners to visit restaurants like they did in the pre-pandemic days. It has become important for the F&B outlets to maintain hygiene and cleanliness at every stage.

Hygiene in Outhouse

Pandemic has created an enigma for the restaurateurs who have to make it obvious to the clients about maintenance of hygiene and cleanliness in the premises as soon as they enter it.

Yaman Rai, Director of Food & Beverage, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach and The Bheemili Resort managed by Accor, states "There is a daily cleaning schedule in place along with regular sanitization of restaurant tables before every guest is seated. We ensure areas are properly disinfected and necessary checks are

made."

Sagar Kulkarni, Director of Food & Beverage, Hotel Royal Orchid Bangalore, claims, "Cleaning and sanitizing restaurants regularly is essential for building trust with your customers in this post-COVID era. Your guests need to know their safety is your top priority. Keeping your restaurant clean and germ-free, helps create an atmosphere where they can relax, enjoy themselves without having to worry about the public health crisis, because they know you've got their health covered.

"Outlets maintain their Daily, Weekly & Monthly checklist for cleaning which sort of help them to track the cleaning. The checklist comprises of following precautionary measures to be observed:

Keep Linens Clean

Sanitize the Refrigerator and Freezer

Clean Cooking Surfaces and Utensils

Wash Hands Correctly

Schedule Time for Cleaning

Clean Restrooms round the clock"

Vicky Bachani - Co-Founder of Shiv Sagar Restaurant, Vimananagr Pune disclosed, "As far as our restaurant is concerned, we have instructed our staff to follow these steps religiously to maintain sanitization:

Wipe down the walls if necessary, sanitize the tables before and after guests finish dining.

Inspect and wipe down the condiments and salt and pepper shakers. These are only placed if asked by the guest, to minimize touch.

Wipe down all the counters, clean the seats and benches and other frequently touched spaces.

Run cloth napkins, tablecloths, and wait staff aprons through dry cleaners frequently.



Hand wash and wash room areas are checked regularly.

Eshieta Deoskar, Co-Founder of Kynd Cafe and Bar, Pune, disclosed that her F&B outlet observed the following techniques to maintain hygiene in the out house:

Wash every surface (bar, table tops, chairs, booths) with clean, sanitized rags

Clean and sanitize restrooms (check them multiple times per shift and clean as necessary)

Sweep and mop floors.

Wipe down condiment dispensers.

Check menus for cleanliness.

Sandeepraj Salian, Co-Founder of Farmaaish Lounge and Rooftop Bar, Vimanagar Pune, avers, "Our service staff is dedicated to providing guests with the most hygienic and safe setup for people to dine with us. All common areas are disinfected before the start of the day. All tables and chairs are sanitized after use. Door handles and high touch zones are sanitized frequently."



Kitchen Cleanliness

While maintaining cleanliness is important in the outhouse, as it helps in reassuring the customers about the F&B outlet's intent to help maintain the diners' wellbeing, it is equally important to preserve hygiene in the kitchen.

Sagar states, "Kitchen hygiene is not just for ensuring health and safety of the staff and guests, it plays a major role in defining the perception of a restaurant. Guests are now very specific in terms of the outlets they choose for dining out. From great food to ambiance, they want a place which is clean and serves hygienic food.

"We always follow 5 important best practices to maintain hygiene and cleanliness standards at our kitchens at Hotel Royal Orchid Bangalore. They are:

Chefs maintaining personal hygiene

Sanitizer for kitchen equipment

Proper Ventilation

Regular inspection of all the areas in the kitchen

Developing kitchen hygiene checklist"

He continues, "In case of food preparations, universally every kitchen follows 4 unique steps to maintain the hygiene in kitchen: Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill

"Apart from the above steps, kitchen staff is mandated to maintain strict Personnel hygiene, sanitizing the surface before and after use, wearing Gloves and

masks."

Sandeepraj avers, "We follow FASSAI guidelines for food preparation and storage at our restaurant.

"Our kitchen staff is instructed to wear masks at all times. Counter tops are frequently disinfected. Staff is instructed to wash hands frequently. Any staff with fever or symptoms is instructed to see a doctor immediately. Gloves are compulsory while cooking and preparation."

Eshieta opines, "For safe handling of the customers, the employees should be provided with clean clothing, proper gloves, hairnets and other safety, and hygienic tools that are necessary for overall hygiene maintenance. Good personal hygiene, including proper and frequent hand-washing, is one the best ways to prevent food-borne illness."

She adds, "one should adopt the following practices:

Clean – keep yourself and work areas clean.

Separate – keep raw meat and other raw animal products away from other foods.

Cook – always properly cook and prepare foods.

Chill – store foods appropriately, both before and after cooking."

Vicky declares, "For food preparation we follow all standard food safety guidelines as mentioned by the Food and health departments, in addition to this we make sure that all our kitchen staff is checked for temperature on a regular basis every day. Also:

Masks are mandatory for the entire kitchen staff at all times.

Gloves are compulsory while cooking and preparation.

Staff is instructed to wash hands frequently.

Any staff with fever or symptoms is instructed to see a doctor immediately

Yaman claims, "In the kitchen, all storage areas are thoroughly cleaned & disinfected at regular intervals. The culinary and the kitchen team are in a mandatory food safety attire at all times: clean uniform, covered head and a mask. We also focus on maintaining a minimum of 1 meter's distance between the chefs during all phases of food production."

Health Guidelines and Cleaning Products

Since maintaining hygiene and cleanliness is essential in F&B outlets to ensure wellbeing of the people, the question arises whether there are any health organizations guiding the restaurateurs on various aspects of cleanliness. One is also keen to know about the products used by the restaurateurs in achieving the targets set for cleanliness and hygiene.



Eshieta Deoskar

Eshieta Disclosed, "The WHO academy is the world health organization's state-of-the-art lifelong learning center, bringing the very latest innovations in adult learning to global health. Now under development with the support of France, the academy will scale up learning for impact through online, in-person and blended learning programmes, reaching millions of health workers and others all over the world. Using the latest technologies, it will enable all learners to tailor their learning experiences to meet their own needs and award them digital credentials they can use to verify their competencies and advance their careers."

Regarding products used for maintaining cleanliness, she says she adheres to the following guidelines:

Always follow the directions on the label of cleaning and disinfection products to ensure safe and effective use. You may need to wear personal protective equipment, such as gloves, goggles, or glasses, depending on the directions on the product label.

Ensure adequate ventilation (for example, open windows and run fans).

Use only the amount recommended on the label.

If diluting with water is indicated for use, use water at room temperature (unless stated otherwise on the label).

Label diluted cleaning or disinfectant solutions.

Do not mix products or chemicals.

Do not eat, drink, breathe, or inject cleaning and disinfection products into your body or apply directly to your skin as they can cause serious harm.



Sagar Kulkarni

Yaman reveals, "Andhra Pradesh government has issued a guideline in the wake of the pandemic on 9th December, 2021. A penalty will be imposed to all the Establishments/shops/firms, should there be any violation of guidelines. A penalty of Rs. 10,000/- to Rs. 25,000/- will be imposed depending upon the gravity of the offence. A Whatsapp number has been provided to notify any such violation."

He added, "A chemical disinfectant, such as chlorine or alcohol, should be applied after cleaning to kill any remaining microorganisms. Disinfectant solutions must be prepared and used according to the manufacturer's recommendations for volume and contact time. A good amount of disinfectant solution should be applied to allow surfaces to remain wet and untouched long enough for the disinfectant to inactivate pathogens, as recommended by the manufacturer."

Vicky said, "We, at Shiv Sagar Vimananagr Pune, follow the guidelines issues by local authorities like PMC and PMC Health Department. The most updated guidelines are passed on to us via Whatsapp Groups of Restaurant associations.

"Currently we have been instructed to follow strict sanitization and distancing protocols.

We are operating with 50% capacity for dine-in with empty tables to maintain distance between 2 groups.

Temperature checks are mandatory for all guests and we deny entry without masks.

All guests need to sanitize hands before entering the restaurant.

"At our restaurants we use Covid 19 effective products, which also comply with

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Food safety guidelines and do not risk our guests while dining."

Sandeepraj stated, "Restaurant associations provide us with time to time updates from authorities. We, at Farmaaish Lounge and Rooftop Bar, Vimanagar Pune, follow all Covid guidelines provided by PMC. The safety rules followed by us are:

Maintaining 50% capacity for dine-in at all times

Installing partitions between tables for safety of our guests.

Temperature checks of all guests

Mandatory use of masks

Sanitizing of hands by guests before entering the premises

Clear signage reminding guests to maintain distance and protocols

As far as cleaning products were concerned, he said that they used Sodium Hypochlorite, diluted with cold water, for disinfection of surfaces. "The right dilution ratio has been instructed to the staff. Whenever possible we use disposable cleaning materials and avoid cleaning systems that employ fabrics or absorbent materials such fabric wiping or cleaning cloths," he said.

Managing Employee Health

While ensuring the diners' safety is necessary for their visiting the F&B outlet again, it is equally important to look after the welfare and health of the employees as they are solely responsible for the success of the restaurant. It may be mentioned that food service industry – with or without the present pandemic fear – is a tough industry. In a quick and competitive market place, maximizing a restaurant or bar's efficiency and productivity is essential for survival. And a big part of the business efficiency depends on the employees. Thus it is necessary not only to look after their welfare but also – in these times of the pandemic – their health. It must be remembered that their ill-health could also affect the health of the customers.

During the pandemic the employees have the added responsibilities to safeguard the diner's health.

Sagar says "In this Covid era a few simple guidelines are followed by the employees to ensure customer safety. They are:

Making sure the Restaurants, banquets, Bars are clean and hygienic

Tables, Chairs etc are always wiped through disinfectant regularly

Regular & thorough hand washing



Yaman Rai

frequently

Disinfecting the area post operational hours

Promoting the best practice for guests to use masks when at the buffet area

Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds immediately after handling waste.

He adds, "For the safety of the employees, the employers should take the following steps:

Establish, where possible, physical barriers between workers, and between workers and guests.

Close or limit access to common areas where associates are likely to congregate and interact, such as break rooms, parking lots, and in entrance/exit areas.

Consider making foot-traffic single direction in narrow or confined areas, such as aisles and stairwells, to encourage single-file movement at a 6-foot distance.

All Associates should have a basic understanding of COVID-19, how the disease is thought to spread, what the symptoms of the disease are, and what measures can be taken to prevent or minimize the



Sandeepraj Salian

transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19."

Vicky cites one of the safety measures adopted for of his employees is that they are 100% Vaccinated with 2 doses.

He adds, "We are trying to educate staff to ensure all guidelines are followed. Employees are the face of the brand. They help us boost the confidence of guests dining with us. We expect them to follow all safety protocols and guide guest on following Covid appropriate behavior.

"To ensure that they remain healthy we adopt the following measures:

Conducting temperature checks 3 times during a day

Mask is compulsory at all times.

Instructing staff to wash hands frequently.

Any staff with fever or symptoms is instructed to see a doctor immediately

Yaman states, "Some of the COVID-19 safety guidelines for employees during the pandemic are:

Compulsory wearing of mask, gloves & hair net

Changing mask in every 4 hours

Regular sanitization

"Apart from ensuring proper safety gear (hair net, mask & gloves) the employees are supposed to undergo health checks to ensure they are not showing any symptoms. They are supposed to ensure all high touch areas in the restaurants/bar are cleaned and sanitized at increased & regular intervals /after each use.

"For the welfare of the employees, we take the following steps:

All associates are given comprehensive safety & hygiene training

New routines & processes for cleaning, social distancing are undertaken

Course of action for dealing with unwell guests and colleagues

COVID 19 preventive measures, symptoms and containment

Associates are provided with appropriate masks and sanitizer solution

A regular health check of all associates is conducted and recorded

Eshieta disclosed that they have instructed their employees to follow, and maintain a plan to perform regular cleanings of surfaces to reduce the risk of people's exposure to the virus that causes covid-19.

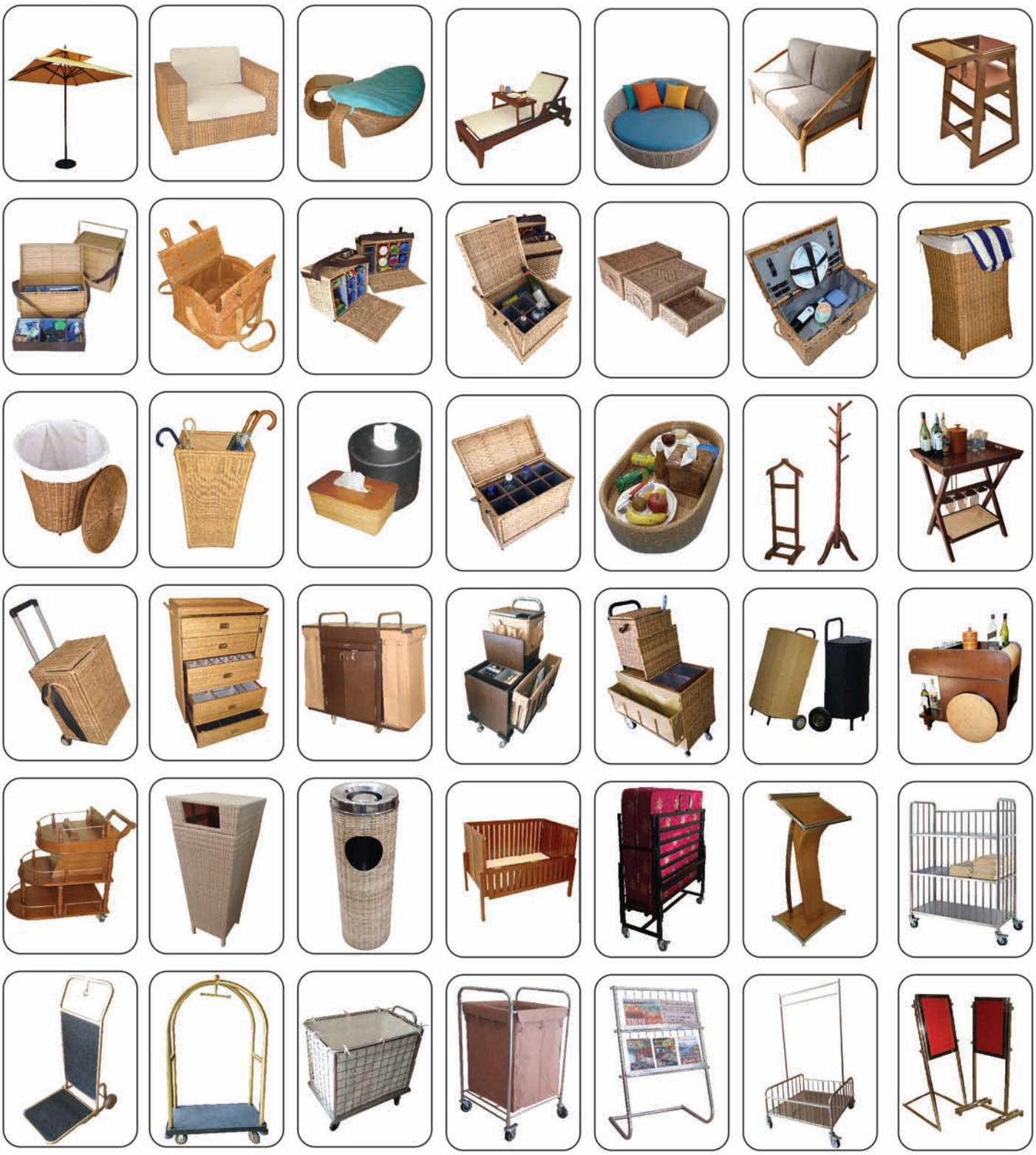
"For the safety of employees, we, at Kynd Café and Bar, Pune, have following 10 measures in place:

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to return to work aligned with risk and exposure levels.

Sanitize – before employees return, disinfect the workplace and make any physical alterations needed for physical distancing.

Screenings – develop a health status screening process for all employees.

Hygiene – create a plan to handle sick employees and encourage safe behaviour for good hygiene and infection control.

Tracing – follow proper contact tracing steps, if workers get sick, to curb the spread of covid-19.

Mental health – commit to supporting the mental and emotional health of your workers by sharing support resources and policies.

Training – train leaders and supervisors not only on the fundamentals of safety such as risk assessment and hazard recognition, but also on the impacts of covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing, as employees will feel the effects of the pandemic long after it is over.

Engagement plan – notify employees in advance of the return to work and consider categorizing workers into different groups based on job roles – bringing groups back one at a time.

Communication – develop a communications plan to be open and transparent with workers on your return to work process.

Assessment – outline the main factors your organization is using as guidance to provide a simplistic structure to the extremely complex return to work decision.

Sandeepraj stated, "Some of the COVID-19 safety guidelines followed by us, for employees, during the pandemic are:

Our entire staff is vaccinated with 2 doses of Covishield.



Vicky Bachani

Temperature check of the staff is conducted and noted at the start of the day.

Waiting staff is instructed to just place the dishes on the table to minimize contact. Mask is compulsory at all times.

Staff is instructed to wash hands frequently and avoid touching unwanted spaces.

Team members with symptoms are asked to get tested immediately for the safety of all."

He continued, "For the safety of our employees, we have not only ensured that they are vaccinated but any staff with fever or symptoms is instructed to see a doctor immediately."

Restaurants in the Next Normal

It is believed that the devastating effects of the corona virus pandemic could have a permanent effect on the way that the customers dine at restaurants – whether it is the local burger joint or a Michelin-starred establishment.

Eshieta states, "Covid-19 has not only been a devastating public-health crisis; it has also been the restaurant industry's greatest challenge to date. Never have so many restaurants been forced to cease operations; some will never reopen. Early indications–from china and other countries where the pandemic seemed to be under control–suggest that consumer demand won't immediately rebound when restrictions are lifted. However, restaurants that plan to adapt and refine their restaurant model for the "next normal" will be better positioned to bring sales back to precise levels.

"We recommend a set of concrete actions for restaurants to return to stability and help shape the next normal."

Sagar asserts, "Trust will play a pivotal role in enabling organizations to recover and rebuild in the near term, and thrive in the long term. Each and every restaurant will need to actively engage with guest and their database and communicate the steps they're taking to keep guests and employees safe–and demonstrate how they're living up to those commitments at every point of interaction."

Yaman iterates, "A few changes are already in existence now (like a new normal). All menus have gone digital, contactless payment has now become a fortifying element. Moreover, the pandemic has uplifted the parameter of health awareness in our day to day life. So a lot of emphasis on healthy eating, calorie count and innovative food look out is expected."

Sandeepraj says, "I believe that the current situation has brought some drastic changes in the way people dine out and the way we serve our guests, who are now becoming more well-versed with technology and touchless payment. We have seen guests adapt to QR based menu which changes everything about the experience. People see the menu differently, and restaurants now have the option to present the items in a better and lucrative way.

"Covid 19 has introduced the restaurant industry technologies to manage bookings, deliveries, dining and payments in a more integrated way. This could, possibly cause a permanent change in the working of restaurants."

Vicky states, "We see this as an opportunity for India to improve the overall hygiene standards for dining. The entire restaurant industry and the staff is now automatically trained to follow strict hygiene guidelines, which is great for our industry." ■





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Innovations in F&B Industry During Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic which has continued, in some form or the other, over the last two years, has affected the food & beverage industry so hard that many of the outlets which closed doors during the lockouts, have not reopened – and are unlikely to do so. Restaurant owners who have survived have evolved over time and even grown during these unprecedented times due to several techniques and technologies adopted by them to keep their customers fed – in spite of their doors being closed – and to welcome them amid an aura that would satisfy them about their safety and well being. Ashok Malkani takes a look at the present scenario and how the industry, with the aid of technology and other elements, would fare in 2022.

The world has, over the past two decades encountered various virus related epidemics. Some of them have been: acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) 2002–03, H1N1 influenza (2009), Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) 2012 and severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) 2019–20. A new pneumonic outbreak which originated in Wuhan, China, in late December 2019, was given the name COVID-19 by WHO in February 2020.

COVID-19, with its deadly ill-effects on people's health, created a panicky effect on the populace, establishing new social, environmental and economic landscapes which have affected a variety of businesses adversely, including the global food & beverage industry.

The restaurateurs in India too have faced several challenges, created by the pandemic, which include supply chain operations, safety, training, disaster management and responses, awareness, re-forming business models, digitalization and advancement of technology.

The consumer behavior has also changed, which makes it imperative for the industry to precisely examine the adverse effects of the pandemic on the industry and not only successfully tackle the same but also climb up the recovery path rapidly.

Reformation of Supply Chain

From an operations perspective, there is a high risk of emergency in food and beverage industry due to unanticipated events. In spite of various food safety and monitoring boards, there is a high necessity in the food and beverage industry to institute health and safety protocols on an individual level. In addition, there is a high scope of reformation in the supply chain operations to produce risk-free food and beverage products in a safe, financial, and environmentally sustainable manner.

The contamination in the food industry

is at various levels as shown in figure 1.

The transmission of the virus via food can take place during the handling in production, processing, packaging, and transportation. Cross-contamination from infected food handlers is one of the major routes of transmission.

The EU Commission has highlighted the risk of spread of COVID-19 infection via food packaging – through infected staff – to the consumers. Fig. 1 describes the various possible routes for transmission of COVID-19 via food. It has, therefore, became necessary for food operators and workers to maintain good manufacturing practices (GMP) and good hygiene practices (GHP). Although there is no report of transmission of COVID-19 through food and food packaging, importance of following good manufacturing practices GMPs to avoid the cross contamination and transmission of SARS COV -2 still holds good. An individual could get infected if he touched the surface of an object, including packaging. It may be mentioned that the persistence of corona virus on different materials varies. On plastic it is 72 hours, while on cardboard it is 24 hours.

Food borne viruses are one of the major causative agents for food borne outbreaks. Though only a few packaging materials have been developed which have antiviral activity, many of them were found to change the physicochemical properties of the food products. This can be controlled using edible films or coating. It is an emerging technology with controlled release of antimicrobial compounds by using various techniques like nanotechnology, encapsulation, and immobilization of antimicrobial agents from the matrix.

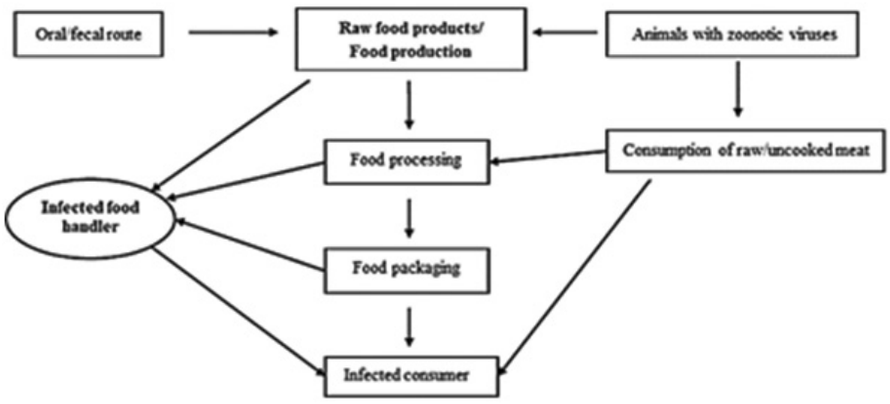


Figure 1

New trends in F&B outlets

The pandemic has, amidst all the negatives, taught the food and beverage industry to expedite many positive changes that it had undertaken at an extremely slow pace. The industry has accelerated certain trends like digitalization. Technology has, and will, continue to become more important over the next few years.

With frequent lockdowns and restrictions on F&B outlets for in-person dining, coupled with reluctance from consumers to dine-in, food services and drinking places have shifted to contactless delivery and take-out and made investments to expand their online sales capabilities. Several food services and drinking places have shut down and several others have expressed a desire to permanently adopt contactless delivery or pickup options.





Besides affecting their income it is also going to have an adverse effect on the employment potential of the industry.

Food and beverage outlets have adjusted their business operations keeping in line with government regulations and recommendations. They have increased expenditure on personal protective equipment and on implementing measures to keep customers and employees safe.

The consumers' reluctance to dine indoors and the changing government restrictions have increased uncertainty for food and beverage outlets. There have also been countless small, pragmatic changes made, from the obvious elements such as masks, sanitising gel, physical distancing, etc, through to a steep increase in the use of digital menus, in-app ordering and contactless payment.

As we step into the New Year the challenge now for the F&B industry is to improve and optimise these systems and to shift their business model towards the growth channels of their income streams and the latest F&B trends.

The key for F&B operators is flexibility and adaptability to a food and beverage sector situation which is also rapidly changing.

Consumers' Choice

With the industry's motto that the customer is always right there is, undeniably, need to study the diners' changing tastes and adapt to their transforming choice on several aspects. Today, what consumers are looking for, from the food and beverage industry, is very different from pre-pandemic times.

The emerging trends in India, as also around the globe, are:

Plant based food

Experiential dining

Ghost kitchens

Restaurants serving foods with reduced sodium and sugar

Drive through

Plant based food: There is an increased preference for vegetarian, or plant- based, food as the general concept seems to be that the virus has spread from a seafood market.

Foods that have immune-boosting claims are becoming popular. Foods rich in all nine essential amino acids to enhance immune system function and nutrients such as vitamins A, C and D, protein, et al. are gaining popularity with the diners.

Experiential dining: Dining outdoor – or in open spaces – is becoming more popular than in-door. Also, takeout and food delivery is becoming increasingly popular. This is expected to become more prevalent in 2022. Restaurants that had the foresight to allow these options to the patrons prior to the onset of the pandemic have had an upper hand.

Ghost Kitchens: This is a concept where the restaurant has no public location for patrons to dine or pick up orders. These operators rent kitchen facilities to prepare their meals, establish a brand and menu, then promote their openings on social media and elsewhere. They register with popular delivery apps for getting orders.

Foods with reduced sodium and sugar: While salt and sugar are recognizable and generally considered all-natural, excessive amounts of these two ingredients are a red flag for consumers

Take away F&B innovations: With social distancing norms restaurants are rethinking their business operations techniques. Drive-through restaurant, which allows consumers to purchase their products without getting out of their cars are becoming popular with investors. Over the last several months, brands such as Tata Starbucks, KFC, and Pizza Hut have launched drive-through or kerb-side delivery services at their restaurants to catch consumers nervous about dining in.

The pandemic has forced many restaurants to shift their business model dramatically to stay afloat. Many of them shifted to take out services. Current technologies have enabled even restaurants with barely a digital presence to instantaneously adopt to the new techniques.

Technology Innovations

Due to the changing attitudes of the clients, food & beverage outlets now are of the opinion that digitalization is the new



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way forward. Restaurants are now opting for digital menus, which can be easily accessed using QR codes or smartphones, to reduce chances of physical contact thus ensuring safety of their customers. Many restaurants have made provision of directly ordering from the digital menu, and making the payment online to safeguard their customers completely.

According to food & beverage stalwarts of the industry, the year ahead – i.e. 2022 – is going to see introduction of advanced technology in almost all restaurants. They predict that SaaS-based technology solutions are going to be adopted by an increasing number of food & beverage outlets. This will enable the restaurateurs to easily manage their inventory. Going through past inventories, making comparisons, monitoring consumption, and accessing analytics, becomes a lot easier with SaaS (Software as a Service) technology. This will help restaurateurs save money on wasted food and eliminate under-stocking ingredients and other inventory throughout the day. Also, they can use the data for more accurate forecasting to improve restaurant operations.

Another task that is going to become easier for the restaurateurs, by new technology available today, is to help them procure products digitally.

Another technological advancement for the restaurateurs has been that of touchless pay. There are now various modes of payment including payment through the mobile.

Restaurant operators need to think about how they can use technology to give the guests the experience they want, especially as customers will expect or demand personalized experiences from restaurants in the future.

Restaurants' convergence with technology is definitely set to spark more creativity in the industry. Technology will prove to be more cost-efficient and will prove an incentive for more investors to start small smart F & B outlets.

Changes in 2022

Over the last couple of years, customers' restaurant operations have changed dramatically due to the pandemic. Ordering online has become the order of the day. However, as time elapses, one finds that the craving for returning to the restaurant for dining is returning – as can be seen by the recent customers' influx in the F&B outlets. However, for the influx to continue, the restaurants will have to go through another industry wide transition.

While consumers crave the return to an in-dining restaurant experience, they will also expect a variety of convenient service options. The brands that maintain safety measures and digitally enabled experiences will be favoured by customers and will garner deeper loyalty.

Consumers' desire to re-enter restaurants and embrace the onsite dining experience can be encouraged by adopting contactless experiences, which will provide added degree of health safety and sanitization to ease the customers' concerns of their well being.

In the New Year the restaurants, with the corona virus still an enigma, will need to incorporate solutions across channels – from in-dining to mobile order. This will need omnichannel integration driven through data architecture. For brands to differentiate themselves, they will need to invest in digital platforms that will support each avenue of business.

Sanjay Vazirani, CMD of Foodlink F&B Holdings Pvt Ltd., believes that with increasing disposable income and consumer spending on eating out and changing family dynamics, it was essential to invest in creating an infrastructure that is open to innovation and facilitates the rapidly evolving environment. He has stated, "It's imperative to provide your teams with the support, direction and tools they need to be successful and thrive amid change."

Karan Kabu, owner, Light House Café, Mumbai, advises that it is necessary to keep an eye on cloud kitchen business in case of a possibility of a lockdown.

He is optimistic about the future. He has gone on record, saying, "The new year is only going to be an excellent one. The year 2020 was the lowest rock-bottom that the F&B industry could have faced. The good thing about being at the lowest of lows is that you can only rise up from there."

Conclusion

The Food & Beverage industry has had a tough time due to the pandemic. The frequent lockdowns and restriction that have been imposed over the last two years have had a debilitating effect on the industry but a large segment has been able to survive due to several technological innovations adopted by them. One of the most underrated among them, end-to-end inventory management, has been quite successful in running a restaurant. Often, inventory is not as gratifying as perfecting a dish in a dine-in. Still, it is critical in restaurant operations and plays a pivotal role in the growth of a restaurant.

A modern-day cloud Point of Sale (POS) technology has evolved where the interconnection of POS with other technologies used in restaurants, like online ordering platforms, guest-facing technology, and kitchen display systems (KDS), can record stock counts, share real-time analytics, and auto-update item prices. By automatically collecting relevant data in one place, the restaurateurs can speed up tracking and make decisions that directly impact the bottom-line efficiency.

All-in-all, the restaurant industry could expect a better 2022. ■

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Organic Farming

Organic farming aims to create a soil that is balanced in nutrients, has good structure, high biological activity and substantial levels of organic matter. This ensures that plants produced on such soils are naturally resistant to disease and infestation.

'We become what we eat.' Ayurveda
The living body has the ability to convert all that we eat into living tissue. It is an abiding though subtle miracle of life that no matter what the form of the food that we eat, it still gets created into "us".

Human food was meant to be living, non-toxic, light and easy to digest and assimilate, alkaline and rich in a variety of nutrients and food factors in their utilizable form.

It is impossible to create food of this nature if the pathway to its creation at the farm is paved with hybrid seeds, synthetic fertilizers, toxic pesticides, herbicides and fungicides, artificial preservatives and additives. These form the major implements of modern agriculture and their use at various levels at the farm is reflected in their increasing presence of their complex remnants on our dinner tables, in our bodies and throughout our environment.

Organic farming sees little use for all of these necessary factors of modern agricultural systems. It rests on a set of simple defining principles that open the way for a robust, healthy and sustainable environment.

Feed the Soil

Modern and conventional agriculture lays heavy emphasis on feeding the plant. The belief is that providing nutrients are necessary as soil fertility is an imported phenomenon and that all inputs to the plant have to be processed externally and then "applied" to it.

Organic farmers see soil fertility as a biological process. The view is that it is the soil that needs to be "fed" and that this can be sustainably and easily ensured by simply returning to the soil only those nutrients that have been removed from it in the form of harvested crops.

In this context, often, the root of the conflict is nitrogen. Modern farmers believe that nitrogen is a crucial purchased input in the practice of agriculture. Hence hundreds of thousands of tonnes of various forms of nitrogen are manufactured and applied to crops. This has ensured the escalating and dangerous presence of nitrates in our food. These nitrates can be converted into





nitrosamines, which are known carcinogens.

There is enough evidence to show the clear connection between the existence of excessive quantities of nitrates in food and the incidence of the most complicated forms of cancers. One finds that in the more advanced countries like the US, where a majority of the farmers do not use organic systems of agriculture, the incidence, range and complexity of cancers are much more than in simpler agricultural economies like India.

Organic farmers rely, on the other hand, on symbiotic and non-symbiotic processes for the supply of nitrogen and see no utility in an external application of the element in various forms. This has ensured that the levels of soluble nitrogen compounds in organic systems is much lower ensuring that water systems are not polluted with these poisons.

There are no Pests

Organic farming aims to create a soil that is balanced in nutrients, has good structure, high biological activity and substantial levels of organic matter. This ensures that plants produced on such soils are naturally resistant to disease and infestation.

The underlying principle is also that there are no intrinsic "pests" in nature and that all infestation is a bio-indicator that the system as a whole has weakened. Thus attacking the predating creature is not a solution to, but a compounding of the original error.

Modern agriculture, with its factory-like emphasis on output quantities alone, treats various predating creatures with venomous disdain. The most toxic pesticides are used liberally in order to bring under immediate control any present infestation. The result is food chain that has at every critical point absorbed levels of toxins well above the level of human and environmental tolerance.

The Problem of Scale

The high dependence on external inputs escalates costs of running a modern agricultural enterprise. This ensures that farms need to be typically large and based on the principles of mass-

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production in order to achieve "economic viability".

Mass production is sustainable only when large quantities of uniform produce are produced repeatedly. This means thousands of hectares of the same crop need to be produced through the year, year after year, for the economics of the operation to turn out profitable.

The result is food that is nutritionally deficient, visually unnatural and discernibly unpalatable.

Food was never meant to be produced under such factory-like conditions. Nature thrives on diversity and variety. The key to producing rich organic food is the introduction of as much of such biological and botanical variety as possible throughout the farm area.

This ensures that the food is rich in natural nutrients, tasteful and balanced in its overall composition. Food of this nature is as close to the ideal of food as embodied in the Ayurveda. Economic considerations deny modern agricultural systems the liberty of pursuing such 'ideals'. The consumer and the environment are palpable victims.

The Myth of Productivity

One of the biggest myths that have been perpetuated in support of modern agriculture has been the claim that this method of farming is far more productive than organic farming. Such myths have been used to increase acreage under modern agriculture, build markets for their products and to dissolve any consumer and regulatory resistance.

The truth is that is calculating productivity of modern and conventional farms, only tonnages of produce per hectare are considered. Three key costs, one recurring, one capital and one global social cost, are never factored.

Firstly as organic systems stabilize, input costs rapidly reduce year after year. If simple precautions are exercised they can reach negligible levels. Input costs on modern farms continue to escalate progressively, and worse, the farmer has little control over them.

Overlooked also is the infinite cost of replacing the farm land which becomes dead and sterile due to the repeated use of large quantities of synthetic compounds in the form of fertilizers, additives, herbicides, etc. in the presence of excessive application of irrigated water. This is in the nature of a rapidly depreciating capital, which will in time be unavailable for any agriculture, even habitation.

Several examples of such tracts of land in the Punjab, and in the rich sugarcane belts of Maharashtra, point to the truth of this situation.

The third critical cost that is not considered is the inevitable social cost of healthcare that comes from illnesses that result from mass consumption of unhealthy food that comes from modern farms.

There is a growing body of evidence to point to connections between consumption of un-natural food and the growing incidence of complex, life-threatening conditions like cancer, arthritis, asthma, heart-disease, neonatal diseases, etc. Even so while the lobbyists of the modern agriculture split analytical hairs over the causal relationships between consumption of food grown through modern methods and serious illnesses, consumers and society continue to bear the brunt of the social cost.

If all of these costs were added to the cost of running a sophisticated factory-like farm, it would be very difficult to achieve any measure of economic and financial viability.

The Clear Choice

The truth is that as humans we are simple, live and natural and as far away as can be in our nature from the elements of commercial production, which are complex, mechanical and artificial.

The choice before us is clear. Either we shall continue to consume such products and as the wisdom of the Ayurveda teaches, begin to resemble them. Or we shall demand and get food that is closer to our real nature and live the abundant, healthful and joyous life that was meant for us. ■

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Stone Hearth Ovens



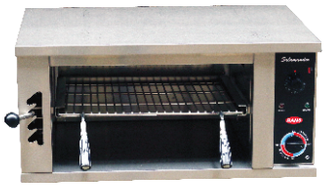
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The World of Sausages

The word sausage originally comes from the Latin word salsus, which means salted or preserved. In the good old days when people did not have refrigeration facilities to preserve the meat, the process of making sausage was evolved.

Dry sausage was born as a result of the discovery of new spices, which helped to enhance, flavour and preserve the meat. Different countries and different cities within those countries started producing their own distinctive types of sausage, both fresh and dry. These different types of sausage were mostly influenced by the availability of ingredients as well as the climate.

Some parts of the world with longer periods of cold climate, such as northern Europe were able to keep their fresh sausage without refrigeration, during the cold months. They also developed a process of smoking the sausage to help preserve the meat during the warmer months. The hotter climates in the south of Europe developed dry sausage, which did not need refrigeration at all.



Type of Sausage

Basically people living in particular areas developed their own types of sausage and that sausage became associated with the area. For example Bologna originated in the town of Bologna in Northern Italy, Lyons sausage from Lyons in France and Berliner sausage from Berlin in Germany.

A sausage is a prepared food, consists of ground meat that's combined with fat, flavourings and preservatives, and then stuffed into a casing and twisted





at intervals to make links. Sausage is made from all types of meat products like chicken, pork, fish, beef etc. They come in variety of shapes, sizes, flavours & forms. Some of the common forms are:

Cooked Sausages

Made with fresh meats and then fully cooked. They are either eaten immediately after cooking or must be refrigerated.

Cooked smoked Sausages

Cooked and then smoked or smoke-cooked. They are eaten hot or cold, but need to be refrigerated.

Fresh Sausages

These are made from meats that have not been previously cured. They must be refrigerated and thoroughly cooked before eating.

Fresh smoked Sausages

Fresh sausages that are smoked and they should be refrigerated and cooked thoroughly before eating.

Dry Sausages

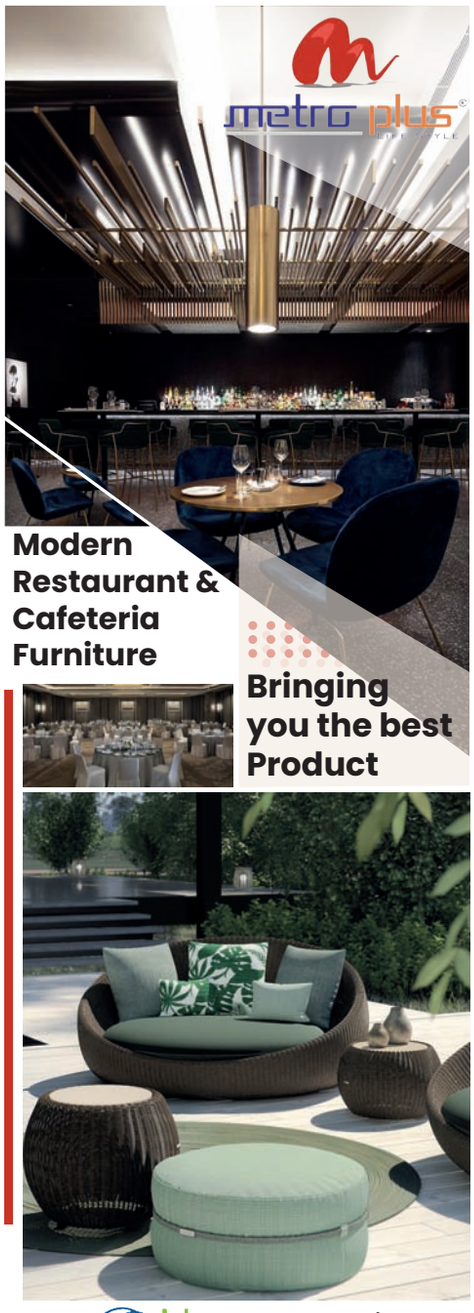
Cured sausages are fermented and dried. They are generally eaten cold and will keep for a long time.

Breakfast Sausage

Apart from flavoured and multiple types of Sausages there are Breakfast sausage, which is not cured or smoked. It is made of essentially highly seasoned ground meat, and cannot be kept for long rather should be stored and handled appropriately. Variations made from pork and beef mixtures as well as poultry are now available. Some breakfast sausage is flavoured with ham. Most commonly they are served as patties or slices from a large roll. Breakfast sausages are also available in various lengths and diameters. It is normally fried or grilled. Some people like to pour ketchup or other condiments like maple syrup onto their breakfast sausages. Cooked breakfast sausage is also commonly mixed into egg casseroles before baking.

Bratwurst

Apart from the regular sausages there are other types of sausages known as Bratwurst. During the middle ages over thousand years ago Bratwurst type sausages were well known and relished by the knights and kings men. Even the great poet Goethe, reformer Martin Luther and the famous German painter Albreeth



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Durer were so impressed by the spicy taste that they ate Bratwurst by dozens. Today Bratwurst is a well-accepted delicacy worldwide.

Bockwurst is a kind of German sausage invented in 1889. Bockwurst is flavoured with salt, white pepper and paprika. Other spices, such as chives and parsley, are often added. In Germany Bockwurst is often smoked as well. Bockwurst was originally eaten with bock beer and it is usually served with mustard.

Frankfurters

Frankfurters are another type of sausages which are highly seasoned sausage, traditionally of mixed pork and beef. Frankfurters are named after Frankfurt city in Germany. The city of their origin, where they were sold and eaten at beer gardens are sold ready-cooked and lightly smoked, either loose, vacuum-packed, or canned, to be heated by grilling, steaming, or gentle, brief boiling (frying makes them tough). The German and Austrian frankfurter is also known as a würstchen, or "little sausage".

Many varieties of these sausages are available. In Germany and Austria, frankfurters are eaten warm with sauerkraut and cold, if lightly smoked, with potato salad.

Market in India

Sausage consumption in India is catching up rapidly with the increasing cosmopolitan lifestyles and consumers preference for ready to eat products. With the growing purchasing capacity and high frequency of out of home consumptions, consumers exposure to the continental cousins like sausages bacons hams etc, has increased.

With vast variety of sausages ranging from skinless to skin on sausages, from flavoured to special occasion sausages and from frankfurters, bratwurst to Bockwurst, it's a treat for the consumer's taste buds.

Some international brands in the frozen processed meat category, has entered Indian market with wide variety of sausages in different flavours and types. These sausages are pre-cooked, requiring only heating or shallow frying before serving. The range includes chicken and pork sausages in flavoured variants like garlic, cheese onion, cocktail, chicken Bockwurst, chicken sausage and pork breakfast sausages. All the products are currently getting imported in India.

Internationally sausage is a culture, more of European eating habit, which forms a part of continental cuisines, where sausages are essential constituent of daily diets. The same is now caching up in India as well.

There are variety of other brands which offer sausages in India made from chicken, pork, beef & fish. Venky's for instant has skinless range of sausages as well as flavoured range, other brands like Yummiez and Al Kabeer also has the similar range in sausages.

Even few entrepreneurs in India have also started manufacturing wide variety of sausages both in terms of flavours and also in term of types of sausages. There is demand for cheese & onion chicken sausage, garlic chicken sausages, cocktail sausages are flavoured sausages which offer consumers unique taste and experience.

Botulism

Botulism is a serious form of food poisoning caused by eating food contaminated with the deadly toxin botulin. Food borne botulism was first identified in Europe during the 1800s as a problem in - sausage. Then name botulin even comes from the Latin word for sausage, botulus. Botulin is particularly insidious because it can exist without a foul odour or other sign of contamination. This is probably going to be more than you care to read about botulism but it is very serious form of poisoning and precautions must be taken to prevent it.

Symptoms of botulism poisoning usually appear suddenly within 18 to 36 hours after eating contaminated food. These symptoms include blurred or double vision, droopy eyelids, dry mouth, slurred speech, swallowing difficulty, vomiting, diarrhoea and muscle weakness. Botulism can lead to death without the proper medical treatment.

The toxin is usually found in contaminated or improperly prepared canned foods. If you ever see a bulging can of food, do not open it – throw it away. It may very well be contaminated. Botulin can also exist in sausage and that is what we are discussing here.

The conditions that are necessary to produce foods contaminated with botulin include lack of oxygen, low acidity, the presence of moisture, and temperatures between 40 degrees and 140 degrees Fahrenheit. All of these conditions can be present when smoking sausage: lack of oxygen from the smoking, low acidity and moisture in the meat and smoking temperatures in the above range. Cures containing sodium nitrite must be used to prevent the occurrence of botulin contamination in smoked sausage.

The food industry in its endeavour to offer tasty, convenient and high quality products also is focusing on quantity standards which are controlled under variety of food safety regulations and certifications, of which the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points or HACCP is the more sort after one. ■



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Probiotic Products: An Untapped Potential

People around the world are now paying closer attention to the nutritional profile of foods, including the composition of their ingredients. This has put additional pressure on regional, national and even international level food and beverage manufacturers, as they have to respond to the renewed market forces by reducing or cutting out fat, salt and sugar, as well as preservatives, additives and colourings. This is resulting in vigorous market research, and the launching of a slew of healthy foods.

People's rising consciousness about healthy foods is reflected in the growing popularity of probiotic foods, which are nowadays emerging as an important category of food supplement in India. Probiotic elements in dairy products have become part of our diet. Their presence is there in milk, yogurt and ice cream products. Probiotic products are being launched after extensive research and these are made available in India by Amul, Mother Dairy, Nestle and breakfast buffets of five star hotels.

What are Probiotics?

Probiotics, also known as 'friendly bacteria' in lay terms, are live, non-pathogenic micro-organisms that benefit the consumers' digestive system. We can say probiotics are "live micro-organisms which, when ingested in adequate amounts as a single strain or as a combination of strains, confer one or more specified health benefits to the consumers."

According to the adopted definition by FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) and WHO (World Health Organization), probiotics are "Live microorganisms which when administered in adequate amounts confer a health benefit on the host." All the bacteria are not bad and there are actually strains of 'good' bacteria that do battle with the 'bad' bacteria and help promote a healthy digestive system.

It is hard to believe, but antibiotics apparently kill the good bacteria as well as the bad, which explains why many experience digestive difficulties while taking antibiotics. To restore the balance, or the ratio of good bacteria to bad bacteria in the body, many folks who are on antibiotics take probiotic products that comes in a variety of forms.

Our digestive systems have around four hundred different types of probiotic bacteria, and the best known is Lactobacillus acidophilus. There are others including Bifidobacterium and Streptococcus thermophilus, and these are the strains most often found in probiotic products. In today's health conscious society, probiotics are becoming fashionable as a means of promoting all kinds of digestive improvements.

Probiotic foods can also be unhealthy sometimes. For example, if the addition of probiotics is not done properly, the results could be disastrous. The probiotic bacteria can confer health benefits only if they are consumed in right quantities. In India, probiotics have mostly found their way into curd and ice-creams. Probiotic curds in India are marketed by Amul, Nestle and Mother Dairy.

Probiotics have potential health benefits for conditions such as gastrointestinal infections, genitourinary infections, allergies and certain bowel disorders, all of which afflict a considerable proportion of the global population.

Caution

Probiotic curd has gradually risen in popularity, as a health food, but a research paper published in The Lancet, a renowned British medical journal, says that the "good bacteria" commonly found in probiotic yogurt (commonly known as curd in India) and drinks, can be fatal for people suffering from severe pancreatitis. People have to be careful because probiotics can not only be harmful in cases of pancreatitis but also in liver infections and general infections like gastroenteritis.

Furthermore, according to the International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP), consulting a physician before administering probiotics to infants or to people with compromised

immune systems or other major underlying illnesses is of great importance. Also one should go through the 'Warning' and 'Other Information' on the product package and be aware of any expected symptoms or side effects.

Moreover, just because a product claims itself to be probiotic, doesn't mean it is probiotic. Some products labeled probiotic do not have clinically validated strains or levels in the product. The consumers of probiotic products should be aware of those products, and should refrain from using them.

Probiotics are measured in CFU. CFU stands for colony forming units, which is the measure of live microbes in a probiotic. According to the association (ISSAP), CFU amount should be the same as that shown to be effective in clinical studies. More CFUs does not necessarily mean better. Moreover, ISSP advises that it should be borne in mind that different probiotics have been shown to be effective at different levels. It is not possible to provide one count for all types of probiotics.

ISSP also states that it is always better, safer and wiser to pick up a probiotic product from a trusted manufacturer. The common sense also dictates that. A trusted manufacturer with an impressive track record is more likely to ensure that its probiotic product has the same strain(s) and is as potent through the end of shelf life, as what was used in clinical studies.

Regulation

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the apex body for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research in India, along with the Department of Biotechnology of the Ministry of Science and Technology, have proposed guidelines for evaluation of probiotics in food in India, which articulates the base for the law to govern probiotics. India's small but growing probiotics market is dominated by strains from non-Indian companies and there are differences in Indian gut flora. So the mooted guidelines suggest probiotics should be tested on local populations before they receive safety approval.

Probiotic food is an emerging category in India and with the number of probiotic foods making a foray into Indian market, it becomes imperative to establish guidelines to regulate them. The guidelines would cover efficiency, safety and health claims and define probiotic parameters. Stringent labelling of the probiotic product, shelf life and storage conditions would prevent companies from misleading the consumer.

Labeling of the probiotic products are indeed, of great importance. Besides telling what probiotic is being offered, the label can also throw light on how many live microorganisms are approximately there in each serving, and when does the product expire. The serving size, the possible health benefits, the proper storage conditions, and corporate contact information can also be elicited through a proper, comprehensive labeling.

Probiotics has emerged as a commercially viable option for the food processing sector. However, the knowledge, techniques and the use of probiotics is still in its nascent stage. In India, especially in the hospitality sector, the uses of probiotics are expected to grow in the times to come. However, the consumers must be fully aware of the contents and effects of a probiotic product before purchasing it, and any health claims made in relation to a product must be substantiated by clinical trial data. ■





The Charms of Wheat Beer

The world of beer is as complex, and possibly as rewarding as fine wines or exemplary malts, yet beer is often enjoyed for its taste without being talked about in fancy ways. However, that is somewhat changing as beers with complex characters are being brewed, which can be aged like fine wines for decades. Food pairings are being done by Michelin Star Chefs which speak of perfect aromas and body of beer pairing with certain style of cuisine.

Technicality of Wheat Beer

The taste and aromas of a typical wheat beer are totally individualistic. Most brewers who make this have a traditional recipe, and in Germany, it should be in strict accordance with the Bavarian Purity Law. Wheat beer is fermented and brewed from wheat and barley malt, using top-fermenting yeast. During the fermentation, the yeast cells rise to the surface, where they form a thick white layer.

Due to the lower proportion of hops and higher proportion of carbon dioxide, wheat beer definitely results in being exceptionally refreshing. Germany has a great legacy in wheat beer. Weissbier is a Bavarian specialty beer where a significant proportion of malted barley is replaced with malted wheat. There are several varieties of this wheat beer. The term hefeweizen refers to wheat beer in its traditional, unfiltered form. The term kristallweizen (crystal wheat), or kristall weiss (crystal white beer), refers to a wheat beer that is filtered to remove the yeast from suspension.

Additionally, the filtration process removes wheat proteins \ically have much higher alcohol content than their lighter cousins.

A Shining Example of Wheat Beer

Schneider Weisse has been brewed since 1872, and in a way the history of wheat beer is also the history of the Schneider brewing family. The original recipe is still used today and revered by the wheat beer connoisseurs. Before the Schneider family got the exclusive rights to brew wheat beer, it was only brewed by the Bavarian royal family in their breweries.

Today Georg VI Schneider is running the brewery in Kelheim, which the family acquired in 1927, and it is the oldest wheat beer brewery in Bavaria. Wheat beer has been brewed there without interruption since its founding in 1607 – a tradition that still flows uninterrupted despite the march of modernity.

Each of the beer brewed here has its unique aroma and speciality. It may be fruity, hoppy or typically traditional. The secret remains in manoeuvring the four ingredients – water, malt, hops and yeast. The fermentation is in open vessels and during the last three weeks of bottle fermentation, they develop their unique taste. A journey through the taste of the beers brewed here is a truly rewarding experience.

While technical sheets speak of chemical breakdowns and alcohol contents, nothing can beat the experience of tasting the beers yourself. It is especially true, if your guide is the master brewer, Christian Seidl, which was in my case. No wonder my experience was that much more enriching.

The current facilities for facilitating the brewing are totally mechanised and

impressive in their capacity. Everything is controllable with a button or two, right from mixing to cleaning the tanks, but the actual process of brewing– well that has to take its own natural course– involves yeast mixing with air naturally to produce great results.

While the Indian market has only a couple of labels, but in this beer brewery in Germany, the choices extend to eight options. A brief and no way exhaustive, but illustrative summation is given below:

Pouring and drinking of wheat beer should be done with care. Cool the beer to 8-12 degrees. Store them upright and if you wish to enjoy the yeast, pour slowly. No need to tilt or touch the glass to the beer bottle. Let the handsome head form completely.

The Brauhaus Experience

The culture of a Brauhaus is typical to Germany. This is where the beers are enjoyed with food. Open from early in the morning, they begin with breakfast options, and go on well beyond the dinner time. Special discounted offers are made for mornings. The Schneider Weisse Brauhaus in Kelheim is smaller and more in tune for the local population, but the one in Munich



is the dramatic flagship.

The Brauhaus in Munich is spread over three floors and is just about always well attended. Beer is delivered thrice a week and the service is handled by women, who serve in traditional Bavarian dresses, easily carrying large mugs and glasses on a tray with a smile. The kitchens are managed professionally with cold rooms and freezers keeping the stocks. It is all computerised, and thus the commotion at kitchen and the delivery point is minimal, almost silent.

The ground floor of the Brauhaus in Munich was restored to its original glory after it suffered WWII devastation, and the upper floors have plenty of style quotients with old style artefacts and family portraits, which can help one to take a flight back in time.

Today, the place has an international presence with Munich drawing sizeable numbers of tourists but the locals are regulars as well. Menu is available in German, and mercifully in English too. Typical Bavarian sausages, international and local cheeses, and the delightful meats are all on offer. It is a difficult choice and there is no special degustation menu to make it simpler.

In a typical German fashion, you are allowed to bring in children and even your dogs. Special menus exist for kids (under eight years), but the dogs have to be adjusted under your table! The two typical dishes that Munich is well known for includes the white sausage and the skirt steak; the latter is diaphragm of cow, calf or pig, cooked with greens and served with chives and horseradish.

The Schneider Weisse beer of your choice comes just the way it should – chilled, with the right head crowning the glass, and served with a smile. A great summer option is to have the beer mixed with equal amount of lemonade – a total thirst quencher indeed. ■

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Flavouring Essence of Soy

Soy sauce has a long and labour-intensive manufacturing process and requires several months for aging. An inexpensive condiment that has set a special place in almost every fast food preparation unit in the world, soy sauce is an Asian seasoning agent primarily made from fermented soybeans, wheat, salt and water.

It is mainly used to flavour soups, sauces, marinades, meat, fish and vegetables and often offered as a table condiment while serving Asian cuisines. Produced for thousands of years, soy sauce came to be a favourite flavouring item in Southeast Asian cuisines.

Amalgam

Traditionally, soy sauce has a long and labour-intensive manufacturing process. It require several months for aging, which is procured in the form of a salty, brown liquid made from fermented soybeans mixed with some type of roasted grains such as wheat, barley, or rice and then injected with a special yeast mold and finally liberally flavoured with salt. The mixture requires at least three months to mature, so it is strained in sterilized glass bottles and left for aging.

Soy sauce is available in various varieties and forms. The consistency of soy sauce varies from thin to very thick. However, soy being the basic ingredient in the preparation can differ in flavour or has subtle differences in its taste depending on its type.

Several Asian cuisines are seasoned and flavoured with soy sauce. Although there is essentially one main type of soy sauce widely made in China and Japan, but they produce a number of varieties ranging in its colour from light to dark and its consistency differs from thin to viscous respectively.



In general, light soy sauce is thinner and saltier than its dark counterpart. Its flavour and colour is also lighter. This sauce is used in many dishes without darkening them. Dark soy sauce is slightly thicker than light soy sauce but generally not as salty. It has rich flavour and colour, since it is darkened with caramel. However, Chinese made black soy sauce is extremely dark, thick and strong flavoured, this result is obtained when molasses are added in the preparation. Another popular range of dark soy sauce is the Japanese *tamari* it is very similar thick, rich and extremely dark but do not contain any strong smell.

Manufacturing soy sauce is labour intensive and takes several months to complete the fermentation process. Although the product has considerable long shelf life but once the bottle is opened, soy sauce reacts with oxygen in the air and can lose some of its flavour in one month. So, to avoid this problem it is suggested to keep soy sauce refrigerated in order to maintain its taste and flavour. It should stay tasteful for at least 3 months.

Soy sauce has a pH of about 4.8 and contains about 18 percent salt, which is



quite high and acts as a preservative. Yet, some sensitive soy sauces do not stay for longer duration, so one must check the label, which specifies its manufacturing and expiry date before purchase.

Varieties

Some of the common varieties can be picked up from any local market. For instance, light soy sauce is fairly thin in consistency and light in flavor, generally used for making salads, steamed, baked and sautéed food. It is used when a darker sauce can ruin the appearance of a dish, or when a lighter flavour is sought, especially in seafood preparations.

Dark soy sauce often contains caramel and thus darker in colour, sweeter in flavour and thicker in consistency than its lighter version that gives strong flavour and completely change the colour of food. It tends to have a chocolate brown colour and has a pungent taste rather than overly salted flavour.

Mushroom soy sauce is a dark soy sauce from China made by adding mushroom straw essence to the sauce's brew, which results with a deep and rich flavour. It can be used in place of normal soy sauce in most recipes. It can be served as a nice table condiment where it's incredible flavour enhances the taste of the dish taken along with.

Japanese soy sauces are mild, sweet and less salty in taste as compared to Chinese sauces. But, *tamari* is a deeply coloured Japanese soy sauce, which has a rich texture and has intense flavour. It can be used as a regular soy sauce as well as used as a table condiment and dipping sauce.

Indonesian sweet dark soy sauce, which is also popular as *ketjap manis*, has darker and sweeter taste commonly used in Indonesian cooking. Though, its preparation process is quiet different but one can procure an identical sauce by adding molasses and dark brown sugar in the regular soy sauce.

Another variety of low-sodium soy sauce is also available in market, which is perfect for daily use and does not cause any health problems.

Soy sauce is meant to be made only with proper fermentation of soybeans. But this practice is not usually adhered by most of the manufacturers in India, It is due to its time consuming and relatively expensive process compared to the one using soybean extract to which molasses and other ingredients are added to it.

Process

The naturally brewed soy sauce is made with soybeans, salt and wheat. The soybeans are soaked in water for 16 hours and then the beans are de-hulled and cooked for several hours. The beans mixed with wheat flour or grit are inoculated with fungi *Aspergillus orzyae* and incubated for three days with occasional stirring. This stage is known as *Koji*.

The resulting material is mixed with brine. A ferment dominated by yeast and lactic acid bacteria develops this stage known as *Mormi*. After an incubation of one month to three years, a dark salty liquid with a pleasant savory aroma is drained from the fermentation vessel and then it is clarified, pasteurized and packaged for sale.

Often, the growth of yeast is vigorous during the incubation period, which emits carbon dioxide. This indicates that fermentation is taking place simultaneously. Ideally, a full brewed soy sauce should contain between 1 to 2 percent of ethanol. Mostly, in traditionally prepared soy sauce about 2 percent of alcohol is found.

An Imitation

Today, soy sauce is not only made in traditional manner, but is also available in synthesized form. It can be said to be an imitation of authentic soy sauce, which is chemically flavoured and is offered as an extremely inexpensive product.

As a matter of fact, the traditional soy sauce requires longer and tedious process, in which soy beans and other key ingredients are fermented or brewed, which can take minimum three months, depending on the flavor and consistency that manufacturer wants to achieve.

As a result, many manufacturers have derived an artificially synthesized form of so-called 'soy sauce' product that drastically cuts the manufacturing cost as well as saves preparation time. Many companies produce this product through a quicker process by using ingredients such as hydrolyzed vegetable protein (HVP), caramel colouring, corn syrup, and various other additives.

However, according to health experts, many manufacturers tend to ignore an underlying fact that HVP consists of vegetable protein that are chemically degraded to amino acids, which can cause some heath implications if used on regular basis.

Considering the fact in many countries, food authorities have proposed a Codex Standard that accurately reflects the distinction by adopting certain descriptive terms on the use of such chemicals, for instance 'naturally brewed', 'short-term brewed', 'non brewed', or 'mixed', in conjunction with the term "soy sauce." It should be the responsibility of manufacturers of non-traditional products to inform consumers through labelling that the product is made in a non-traditional manner.

Distinction

With the popularity of the Chinese and Japanese cuisines, many countries have gradually switched over to soy sauce use. As a result, soy sauce has landed almost in every part of the world. Today it has become an important ingredient in the East-Asian countries. It is not only used for seasoning, dipping, marinating, tenderizing but also as a purifying agent.

However, the main concern lies on the purpose soy sauce serves while cooking that has enormous effect on the quality of food prepared. According to chefs, who care about quality foremost, the use of soy sauce that is made by traditional method is considered best because, they are naturally fermented and aged. Short-cut un-naturally fermented soy sauces do not come in the same league, which is why despite being one of the most demanded products, soy sauce is still untouched by big players who lead the condiment market.

To say the least, there are no definite parameters and standardized hydrolyzed protein products to control the quality of synthesized soy sauce. Therefore, there is clearly a need for a standard in this area that would boost the sale of imitated soy sauces. Development of a standard in soy sauce market should be consistent and checked by the food regulatory authorities to ensure fair practices are followed within the food trade. ■



Buff your Buffets

The buffet is emerging as one of the essential elements in food service operations. What was earlier a service style meant for function (mass) catering is increasing being accepted in restaurants as well. So much so, that the buffet has become an indispensable part of most coffee shops or 24 hour eateries. Many a time a buffet defines the character of the coffee shop. The following are some essential elements in a buffet, which, if cared for, can make the buffet the USP of an outlet and be a cost effective yet stylish style of food service.

Composition: In India, buffets are generally multi-cuisine and have a mix of Indian, Continental, and Chinese cuisine with a salad bar and a dessert counter. The key to a successful buffet is to have something for everyone, i.e. acceptability to a maximum number of people. In a hotel, guests usually fall into two categories - in house guests and local guest. The buffet must appeal to both clienteles.

In house guests: As a lot of in-house guests, especially who are on meal plans, depend on the coffee shop buffets, one has to provide a basic continental fare, like popular salads, breads, Classical dishes and accompaniments like steamed vegetables. For these guests, one has to have a complete salad counter with essentials like lettuce, relishes like olives, gherkins etc. A balance between composite salads and simple salads (just one ingredient) must be maintained.

Local guests: For local clientele the buffet should hold some good Indian food and Continental dishes, which are suitable to Indian tastes. These guests look for quantity in the buffet (as well as quality) as far as the number of dishes are concerned. The salad and cold buffets are becoming increasingly popular with locals, too, for dietary reasons. Consequently the decision of whether to order Ala Carte or choose the buffet often rests with the kind of salad/ cold display the buffet boasts of. Indian guests prefer to eat some simple home food like a pulao and dal with vegetables, which is why many buffets devote a counter for "ghar ka khana."

The following are guidelines for composition of each section of the buffet with respect to quantity and static dishes, which should always be there:

Salads

• Lettuce is the most basic and important part of a salad. Make sure more than one variety of lettuce is displayed of excellent quality. Lettuce should be washed very well and should always be fresh. Otherwise this



can lead to a very poor beginning of a meal.

• Composite salads: Always have one or two (not more than that) popular composite salads like Russian, Waldorf or Nicoise etc. For others, let the chef experiment with unique (but not disastrous) combinations which appeal to the eye and the palette.

• Other than composite salads, simple salads (single ingredient) should also be available.

• Fresh ingredients may also be part of the buffet for guests to create their own salads.

• Relishes and pickles are also important elements of the salad buffet. Pickled olives, gherkins onions or other root vegetables like carrots and radishes are deemed to be excellent appetizers.

• Dressings: Different variants of vinaigrette (herbs, garlic, etc.) and mayonnaise (thousand island, cocktail) based dressings along with innovative combinations like honey lemon, minted yoghurt etc. must be part of the salad counter.

• Cold Cuts: Depending on the pricing level, one should decide how many cold cuts are displayed. Salmon and imported ham (like Parma, Bayonne etc.) though very much liked can be expensive. In the absence of the above one or two homemade pates, terrines or galantines should be made with attractive garnishes. For Indians, who do not consume a lot of pork or beef, chicken salami/ mortadella is a likable option.

• Cheese: Imported cheeses are a common sight in many five star hotel buffets. To increase variety and keep costs bearable, one should combine imported cheeses with Indian made Foreign Cheese from leading local cheese producers. At least one of each, soft, semi hard and blue cheese, should always be displayed. For attractive presentation a whole block of cheese (especially Parmesan) is often showcased.

• Presentation: As this section is the face of the buffet it becomes imperative for it to look fresh, classy and attractive. One can use coloured glass bowls or plates of different shapes and sizes for salads. Elevations should be used to break monotony and make the whole presentation multi-dimensional. Other than the food one may display kitchen artifacts like oil and vinegar bottles, jars with pulses and pickled vegetables.

• Temperature: Most salads are served cold. Therefore they should be placed on an inbuilt bed of ice or in absence of this on glass bowls or acrylic ice baths filled with ice. Whatever method is used the temperature

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must be maintained throughout the service period. Cheese should be served at room temperature and not chilled.

Main Course

• As discussed earlier restaurant buffets in coffee shops are multi-cuisine. As far as possible, different kinds of cuisines should be visibly separated into counters or windows.

• The continental section must have non-vegetarian and vegetarian choices. Too much classical cuisine can be boring and unappealing. Nouvelle cuisine should be encouraged with a touch of Italian cuisine and Lebanese cuisine both of which are increasingly popular nowadays.

• Continental food is generically not made with the distinction of being vegetarian or non-vegetarian, but keeping in mind the Indian culture provisions to distinguish the two should be made. Innovative combinations of vegetarian foodstuffs in international flavours should be included.

• Many buffets showcase a "roast of the day" section whereby a roast is carved in front of the guest and served. Care should be taken that the roast is not dry and is served tender and hot with an appropriate sauce.

• When selecting the dishes for the menu, one should choose dishes that have enough moisture and do not become dry after being on the buffet for some time. For example grilled pork chops with caramalised onions cannot go on a buffet, as the chops would become tough in no time. Dishes that have natural moisture in them like lasagna or baked vegetables, keep very well on the buffet.

• As far as Indian food goes, one should have gravy as well as dry dishes accompanied with a rice preparation. DO NOT KEEP BREADS ON THE BUFFET.

• If pasta is to be included in the buffet, the sauce and the pasta should be displayed separately.

• It is preferable if kebabs are made on site, if part of the buffet.]

Desserts

• A balance should be made between the number of Indian and Continental desserts that are part of the buffet. Generally buffets tend to have more western desserts as they allow the chef to be more creative in presentation.

• All the western desserts should be of different base i.e. no two should have the same, mousse or sponge base.

• Incorporate as many fresh fruits as possible in the dessert display.

• Chocolate mousse, caramel custard



and fresh fruits are static buffet items. Efforts to make variations in their presentation must be made.

• All desserts should be displayed portion wise. All gateaux should be pre-sliced for ease of service and maintenance of presentation. Imagine a beautifully decorated chocolate gateaux and just one spoon put into it by someone for serving can ruin the whole cake. Instead it can be neatly cut, individually decorated and put in small plates!

Themed/Specialty Buffets

Buffets can also become monotonous if the same pattern is repeated often. Adding a theme to part of the buffet, or having something other than the usual fare available can maintain novelty in the buffet.

Food promotions can also be sold through the buffet. If there is an Ala Carte promotion of a particular specialty food, a few of the dishes can be incorporated in the buffet as well. Or at times the whole promotion is on the buffet. For example various micro cuisines of India like Rajasthani, Karawali, Hyderabadi etc. can be served in the Indian section. This should be highlighted through proper props on the buffet.

Having specialty items on a particular day of the week can be incorporated in the buffet matrix to break the monotony, for example a seafood special every Friday or pasta for lunch on Monday and so on. All this helps the guest to remember the buffet for something special.

Buffet Maintainance

• Temperature: The most frequent guest dissonance regarding buffets is that the food is not served hot. Modern restaurants have inbuilt induction heating but most still depend on solid fuel at some point in the display. Proper monitoring of the fuel during the operation is of utmost importance. Food should be placed in smaller portions and replenished frequently; this maintains the temperature as well as freshness of the food.

• Cleanliness: During operations the staff often neglects the cleanliness of the buffet. This destroys the aesthetic appeal of the buffet counter and leaves a poor impression of the establishment on the guest. Spillages around the buffet counters and edges of food pans with dried gravies etc. are common areas that should be monitored. An eye for detail on the part of the person responsible for maintainance/replenishment of the buffet can make a difference.

• Dish tags: The tags that label each dish in the buffet assist the dishes in up selling themselves. Care should be taken to ensure that the names of dishes are spelt correctly and any descriptions given are self-explanatory. Additionally, a colour code on the tag can help in identifying a dish as vegetarian or non-vegetarian.

The whole idea behind the buffet is ease of service, getting more variety and showcasing a chef's skill. As all the above work well for both the restaurant as well as the guest, one needs to pay a lot of attention to the buffets composition, presentation and maintenance. A good buffet should look as fresh as it has just been laid and each guest who approaches it should feel it is fresh and appealing. ■





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Bar-ing Perfection

Bar Design is as much about efficiency at the work place as is welcoming ambience. Depending on the size of operation, the facilities should be planned to incorporate the most profiting and productive bar-system that can confirm to the requirements of the bar.

A bar should definitely have a bar store allocated. When designing the bar the interior designer should keep in mind about the shapes other than the round, having standard depths. The bar should be designed either in consultation with a "bar-company" or by understanding that equipment are manufactured in 6" increments and 24" deep, and the angles should confirm to 15, 30, 45, 60, 75, and 90. To have it designed to another specification would render the bar non-functional and lose all its capacity of productivity and objectivity.

If remote systems are being used as Soda, Draft beer, liquor etc, there should be enough depth under floor as the insulated tubing are hard to bend and require a turning radius of 2'. A correct bar depth is seven and half feet, with two feet for equipment, two feet of backbar cooler, six inch for modular bar die, and three feet for bartender movement.

For a pub bar, a walk-in cooler or an area for a utility cooler can be allocated to keep multiple kegs as many as six, twelve, twenty four, or more that are online and operational.

Budgeting

The budget is determined by the value and volume of operation required and by the number of stations, systems, automation, controls applicable. Thus based on the revenues an operator wants to generate, the equipment is used involving such values.

For example, a restaurant with a capacity of 150 patrons would require a two station bar with automatic glass washing, an under counter draft beer system, soda system for two stations, two back bar coolers, a mug froster, and one or two dry storage cabinets. The bar would be built on Modular Bar Die. This bar's peak capacity would be 1080 drinks per shift, and designed and manufactured to provide every aspect informed, discussed for profitable and productive operation.

A single station bar with hand washing, draft beer, bottle cooler, and mug froster with single station soda system offers a peak capacity of 540 drinks per shift or 180 drinks per hour.

For a high volume operation with a club capacity of over 800 patrons, the club requires a bar to provide a system to effectively have a peak capacity of 2400 drinks per shift, thus the bar system designed would have four stations with a capacity of 2160 drinks, providing the guests with unobtrusive fast service ensuring consistency, standards, peak performance, hygiene, product quality that shall retain the guests allowing repeat business.

The Design

Through careful planning, an inspired vision and thorough knowledge is what makes a bar work, the designer should use every inch to its best advantage, to make a small spaces seem graceful, energetic and open. The large spaces can be subdivided into a variety of zones to create interest and intimacy. All the design elements must work together to create a unified image.

Meticulous detailing of the interior shell and spaces, tastefully designed furniture with ergonomic contours for appropriate usage, effect lighting in harmony with audio visuals and acoustics, a perfect blend of selected materials and finishes is what makes to establish a luxurious and a refined



atmosphere steeped in with intimation of elegance.

The focal point of all spaces in the Bar should be the counter, the main feature crowning the décor; it should be designed with a flash of fantasy with suitable elements, finishes and lighting. Along with the visual aspect the operating part of the bar should be perfectly engineered for the smooth and efficient function of the bar tender.

In the overall, the design above its functional aspects must entertain and therefore to achieve the same, it is necessary to consult experts in marketing operations hi-tech systems.



Once the design team establishes and commits to a theme all efforts are focussed to lead to a single destination to make the same happen to its last detail and that's what brings the project to blossom its fragrance which then is there to stay for long.

Bar Equipments

To create a profiting and productive operation these equipments are used in a bar-service.

Cocktail Station

Constructed in SS 304 which is food grade and anti magnetic, the cocktail station has components to store and easily access cocktail ingredients such as glasses, ice cubes, mix ingredients, garnish, juices, liquors, and flavours within the bartenders arm's length. The station is constructed at a height, location and size which allows for maximum reach without the bartender taking too many steps, while fitting into any floor space allocated.

System includes, drain board glass rack (glasses), combo ice bins (ice cubes and cocktail mixes), blender station (bar blender and ice crusher), single or double speed rails (fast moving liquor bottles), dry waste bin (empty bottle dump, dry waste from glasses), liquor display (other slower liquor brands, mix bottles), and condiment dispenser (garnishes).

Glass Washing Station

The glass washing station is located in accordance to the drain board glass rack of a cocktail station. It is also allocated prior to a cocktail station. The glass washing station has a drain board glass rack, rotary glass washer, a dry waste bhuteand a wet waste sink with chemical cabinet that contains the chemical containers (detergent, rinse aid, sanitizer) for feeding into the glass washer.

Mug Froster

Mug Frosters chill glasses that serve draft beers and frozen cocktails. They are available in slide top versions and back bar versions. The best place to keep a mug froster is at the back bar between two cocktail stations, with back bar coolers at the back of each station.

Back Bar Bottle Coolers

Back Bar Coolers refrigerate all the bottled and canned beverages, condiments, and mix ingredients. Their best location is behind the cocktail station. The doors should be hinged to let bartender have access to the interior instantly on turning, instead of facing the glass.

Modular Bar Die

The Modular Bar Die is essential from the point of hygiene and service access to the bar equipment. It also eliminates the underbars legs on which the stations stand. It has pre-fabricated chase ways for organisation of beer, soda, electrical, liquor, plumb, and drain lines that feed into the equipment from the back.

Soda Beverage System

Soda beverage systems are available to dispense carbonated flavours, water, soda and optionally non-carbonated drinks such as juices, and even wines from a single gun. Cocktail Stations are provided with a Soda Gun Dispenser installed between the drain board glass rack and ice bin.



Remote Wine System

Wine systems allow dispensing of wines that are stored in nitrogen pressure to avoid air contamination while dispensing at areas where wines are served a lot with food.

Liquor Gun System

The system has a Liquor Gun system with dedicated buttons per Cocktail station installed to the right of the ice bin between it and the blender station. For multiple stations the system is teed to connect to the Gun Dispenser at the next cocktail station. The system is for dispensing fast moving cocktails and liquors. This is a computerized system that provides detailed reports and interfaces into the Point of Sale system for each drink dispensed.

Under Counter Liquor System

This system is a compact console that is attached under the counter, has a cord and ring reader attached and controls infinite brands. The liquor bottles are assigned with individual magnetic spouts inserted at the bottle mouth.

Under Counter Draft Beer System

A draft beer system where kegs are kept inside a refrigerated cabinet that keeps the beer at 4°C and pressure is supplied by a carbon dioxide line to drive out beer to a beer tower. The beer tower is installed on ceiling of the refrigerated cabinet. Thus the beer is chilled, pressured and dispensed directly from the system, so it is also called Direct Draw System.

Remote Draft Beer System

This exclusive draft beer system is best used if the bar space is limited or if the operations are extremely large requiring unlimited flow of draft beer through multiple faucets. The system is space efficient as only a tower is installed on top of the bar counter at the cocktail station.

Pass Through Bottle Coolers

In Island bars mostly bottle coolers are kept back to back. Instead pass through coolers can be used to provide a lower depth, and access from either side by both bartenders, thereby increasing productivity by less floor allocation, and maximized design efficiency.

Stainless Inserts

The SS 304 inserts are installed between the cocktail station's equipment to give the bar curves according to interior plan. The inserts have a perforated top and drain underneath so they can be productively used for storage of glassware.

Dry Storage Cabinets

The cabinets have insulated construction as that of a bottle cooler body, shelves, and SS or laminated exterior. They are kept for keeping dry bar properties such as cigarette packs, bills or to store liquors under lock and key after hours.

Smooth Operation

The equipment manufactured for application in bars locally are not designed with the purview of confirming to bar required operations. Hence it is wise to confirm quality before making a purchase decision.

Bottle coolers are required to be designed considering aspects as insulation, energy consumption, number of times the cooler door would open in operations, uniformity of cooling of the complete stock inside refrigerator, service requirement, maximum capacity per square foot inside cooler, and other features that are built-in to provide smooth, productive, and profiting operations. Most bar-cooler manufactures do not confirm to these standards at all, while the cooling comes from the compressor compartment. This in turn chills down the nearest stock of bottles whereas the stock in the middle and away from the compartment does not cool to a correct temperature. With the cooler opening up many times the stock does not cool down and thus only a partial stock is available for sale.

Most restaurants use flash chillers provided by beer companies. In common experience, the keg is kept at room temperature and supplied by CO2 to feed into a flash chiller with an ice bank. The chiller instantly chills down the beer and sends it to dispense at the beer tower.



The problem here is the beer does not carbonate correctly thus it is flat within minutes. Furthermore the flash chillers mostly can not chill the beer from room temperature down to 3°C instantly, which may dispense at temperatures between 7°C to 12°C. Therefore neither do they taste good or stay cold for longer periods.

Glasswasher is needed to operate to the requirements of bar service. The bartender does not need to bend down to load and unload, the door opening is non intrusive to bartender path, the racks are smaller and the operating cycles are smaller. They also do not create noise in the bar, or let out heavy steam at cycle finish.

Mug Frosters are usually not used in many Indian bars. These machines keep glassware between −18°C to −23°C temperature. This is important since draft beers and frozen cocktails need to be served in frosted glasses for effect and for keeping drinks colder and maintaining their texture for longer duration.

The Drainboards on which glasses are kept have two level planes with top having perforations and one inch gap underneath. This allows fresh air circulation inside humid glassware fresh out of a glasswasher to avoid stale air and odour formation, which would affect drink taste and quality. ■



The Perils of too much Education

Customer service goes beyond high grades and theories of management.

Catering institutes in India vie with each other to offer the latest in education to students, even if courses are dated in the late vestiges of the last century. The mushrooming of institutes has led a piquant situation in which there are a number of catering personnel coming out of the institutes and marching straight into the arms of recruitment agencies who promise the skies to the bright-eyed aspirants.

Most training and education programs miss out on some important factors of the business. The trainee could have the right info about the right way to serve wine and lay the table but it is important to develop his attitude to the job that will determine whether the training is put to practice if at all. This lack of awareness is confined not only to the innocent students and trainees but also to the owners and managers of food outlets. Burdened with the practical aspects of building sales and marketing inputs, the nitty-gritty of running the restaurant business is often taken for granted.

Ask the average restaurateur how important customer service is to business, and one usually gets a strong positive response. However on probing further the response to the question- "Do you objectively measure customer your service in any way?" normally elicits a negative response. For example on asking if they have put into place any special recruitment or training systems to ensure customer service delivery the puzzled and quizzical response explains it all.

What exactly is the key? Customer service can be understood as a positive perception of human interaction. Research and experience reveals that it is worth at least 40 percent of your customers' perception of the business with the rest made up of product and environment. Customers vote for a hospitality business with their wallets and purses, and form the decision to return according to their own, unique perception of what they experience while they're there.

Creation of really good customer service requires the management of quite a complex set of variables, and is very unlikely to happen by accident. If you go into any restaurant or hotel and receive consistent good service right across their staff, it means the organisation is a very special one indeed.

It all starts with a clear vision of what the establishment is trying to create, together with the evolution of what constitutes service performance targets. How long should a customer stand in a restaurant entrance before he is greeted? How long should a guest have to wait for a drink in a dining area or a bar? All eating joints' owners and managers probably want cheerful, helpful service, but how many specify these as targets within their business?

How often it is seen that there is really good service from one or two staff and pretty average service from the rest? This usually happens where the recruitment process applied within the business is not thorough enough to identify and reject the applicants who are not naturally service oriented. The end result is a mixture of staff whose service delivery is okay when a manager or supervisor is watching and inconsistent when there is no supervision. Most non-service oriented staff drops the pretence that got them the job when there is nobody in authority watching.

Here lurks a trap, wherein it is easy for the manager or supervisor to get an inaccurate picture of the service standard they are delivering because the service is good whenever they are watching. Another downside is that only constant supervision ensures customer service standards.

The real foundation of good service is good recruitment. If you get the right people they will run your business for you, and they will preserve a consistent standard of service whether you are there or not – because they want to, not because you want them to. Good recruiting should concentrate on finding people with the right attitudes rather than the right skills. Skills can be taught quite easily, while it is very difficult to change peoples' attitudes. A lot of managers try to find experienced staff, only to find that they have inherited the recruiting mistakes of other businesses.

Of course, good recruitment must be followed up with good training or it can't capitalise on those good attitudes. The right people are quite easy to train – they want to learn; they want to get it right. A structured training program over a week or two, applied to the right people, can produce wonders. The important thing is to train all staff into the same system – and not let supervisors or senior staff train them the way they want lest you get wildly inconsistent performance across the team.

Catering institutes need to incorporate this into their education systems so that their students emerge as better employee material for the fast growing food business. ■

Result Oriented & Passionate

Bhanwar Singh Rathore,
Executive Chef, WelcomHeritage
Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa,
Bera, Rajasthan



Bhanwar Singh holds rich experience of nearly two decades in the hospitality industry. He thoroughly enjoys his responsibilities and opportunities and loves to interact with guests. His expertise in Indian & Tandoor background gives him an extra edge in offering wholesome and delicious selection of dishes, which are appealing to the eye and the palate.

He says, "I have been appreciated for my adaptable nature and problem-solving abilities. I have also been recognized for facing challenging situations and working well in environments with limited resources."

In an exclusive interview with Sharmila Chand, he talks about his work philosophy and more.....

How do you define yourself?

I am ambitious and I thrive on taking fresh challenges and constantly set goals for myself, so I have something to strive towards. I'm not comfortable with settling, and I'm always looking for an opportunity to do better and achieve better results.

What is your philosophy of cooking?

My food philosophy is all about balance: love what you eat and be what you eat to live a long, healthy life.

What is your area of expertise?

Indian Food & Regional Rajasthani Food.

Had you not been doing this then what?

Then I would have opened my own restaurant and would be working there.

What is your source of inspiration?

My mother is my first inspiration, how to keep everybody happy and satisfied while remaining calm and working hard, I have learnt from her.

The first chef who taught me cooking has been my Uncle Chef Chandra Rathore. Also ITC Grand Executive Chef Akshraj Jodha –he is expert of regional foods and has hugely inspired me.

What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?

To get Certificate of appreciation for handling and conducting Rajasthani food festival.

How has the journey been so far?

Journey so far is good. There were some phases where things didn't go as per the plan but I came out from those difficult situations even stronger.

What skills are necessary to be a good chef?

It takes a variety of both hard and soft skills to be a great chef who can effectively command a kitchen. If you're passionate about creating new recipes, are detail-oriented, and want to lead a successful kitchen, then becoming a chef could be the perfect fit for you.

How do you de-stress yourself?

Just why cooking is so soothing may be because it encourages creativity. "Cooking is a great distressed because it serves as a creative outlet," says Debbie Mandel, author of "Addicted to Stress." And while stress can numb your senses, cooking activates them.

Favourites Ingredient?

It's the very secret to all the deliciousness that comes with Indian food: the spices! Coriander, cumin, turmeric, black mustard, and cayenne pepper are the primary Indian spices, and in varying ratios, they can create some of the most heightened and delectable flavours known to man.

Fav Cuisine?

Indian

Fav Spice?

5 spices

Fav Equipment?

Clay oven. Safe and healthy too! Clay pots are amazing to cook in. They can be used to prepare delicious curries, stews and even biriyani! Not only do they give the dish a smoky flavour, but also restore the pH value of the food.

Fav Restaurant/food joint, anywhere in the world.

The RockYard restaurant Jodhpur. I like this place because of their authentic food, serving style and the ambience.

Your Fav Diner?

Every foodies who is curious to try new dishes and is vocal about feedback of my food.

You favourite Culinary Destination?

Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan food offers a vivid array of flavour combinations: sweet caramelized onion relishes, bitter melon, spicy scraped coconut, and the burn of curry tamed by mild rice, and palm sugar sweetened desserts.

The Best Compliment You Have Received?

I am happy to share that guests always appreciate my passion about food and cooking. One day Mr. Abjani & Family visited for their special occasion. Since his wife wanted to prepare his favourite food so I gave cooking class to her. She enjoyed the whole process of procuring, preparing, cooking and serving food. They really appreciated my effort to make their day.

What is Your philosophy of work?

My Philosophy is to approach toward goals and expectations in the workplace.

Lessons learnt in the kitchen?

Importance of making right food and serving on time.

Last meal on earth: What would you choose?

Chocolate Brownie

10 years from now?

Corporate Chef

What are your future plans?

I want to become Celebrity Chef

What is the best career advice you would like to give to youngsters aspiring to be chefs?

A chef is responsible for preparing and cooking food and provides leadership for the kitchen staff. Chefs need to maintain relationships with vendors and guests. They create new menu items and work with the general manager to set business goals.

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A Highly Motivated Team Leader

Rafi Ansari, F&B Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal



Rafi Ansari has been a part of the hospitality industry for over 14 years where he worked with some of the established and prestigious properties. He began his career in the year 2006 with JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu as the F&B associate after completing hotel management studies from St. Andrews IHM, Mumbai. Prior to joining Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal, he performed his duties at Fairfield by Marriott, Lucknow in the capacity of Food and Beverage Manager.

He believes in imparting knowledge to the team to ensure everyone performs to his or her full potential at the highest level. A believer in building a team that works together stays together and comes together in creating some of the finest F&B experiences for the guests.

In an exclusive interview with Sharmila Chand, he highlights his working philosophy and more .....

What do you enjoy most about being F&B Manager?

F&B is a hands-on job that requires one to be on their toes. No matter how much you are aware, there is always scope to learn a thing or two. Challenge yourself to sharpen your knowledge. And, as you learn and gain more knowledge, it opens up new opportunities.

Is your job challenging?

Well, no work place is complete without challenging tasks, however I'm listing my top five below:

Hiring right talent

The increasing complications of inventory management

An Optimized Supply Chain

Waste Reduction

Transparency and Sustainability

If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

Our jobs come in different flair. I'm someone who thrives in challenging situations, and always look forward to converting them into opportunities. I will not change anything about my work. I enjoy what I do here and continue to do what I love.

What kind of pressure have you encountered at work?

When I was promoted to the position of the manager for the first time it required me to present the reports and forecasts in front of the management, which was stressful to say the least. At that time, I had to meet tight deadlines of submitting all the reports after completion of busy F&B operations.

Tips or insights you exercise to strengthen your team?

Following is what I stand by that I also expect out of my team.

Get inspired

Team work

Push away the negative

Be transparent

Report problem

Don't give up!

Finally, how is your experience at the present job?

It's a fantastic hotel, which is run by a pool of talented hospitality professionals encompassing all the departments at the property. I am glad to be a part of this team. As far as challenges are concerned, it's not just our hotel, all the hospitality brands are facing a challenge like never before in the form of the global pandemic. But the best thing is, the team here is handling the situation with precision.

What is the USP of your F&B outlets / brand?

We have 4 beautiful F&B outlets in the hotel:

Nazaara is our rooftop restaurant that serves North-West Frontier cuisine with a lounge bar and alfresco seating.

The Hebbal Café, a contemporary dining outlet with its locally inspired cuisine .The emphasis here is on fresh indigenous ingredients, carefully balanced flavors and simple culinary techniques.

Bangalore45 is our in house bar residing at the 1st floor of the hotel.

Glazed is based on the concept of GRAB & GO. It provides you with food on the go to supplement your versatile lifestyle, be it your morning croissant or a mid-day sandwich.

What is your working philosophy?

My philosophy is simple, to try my best each and every day. Not just that, I feel better that way if I am somewhere, whether at office or at an outlet or any other workplace for that matter. I am not the kind of person who prefers to sit idle, I like to be active that boosts my energy levels and keeps me going day in day out. On top of that, I realize that results we achieve are always in direct proportion to the effort we put in. It has worked that way for me so far, and I see no reason to change that.

What is your take on how best to cope with challenges of the present pandemic times?

Continue putting efforts to build up your immunity and healthy lifestyle. Be positive and grateful for what you have.

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