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Business

**Changing Marketing Strategies:
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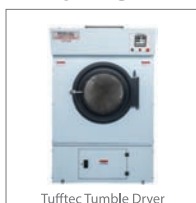
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The Pandemic drastically changed the travel and tourism segment, which largely affected the hotel industry adversely. The global hospitality industry has faced several challenges and losses in business during the last 2 years. It caused downfall in room night demand, triggering cancellations and wedding were deferred along with other events planned during the period.

The increasing relaxations in restrictions are expected to be game changers in shaping the future of the hospitality industry, particularly in India. With relaxation in Covid restrictions across the country, many industry experts predict that travel will return to pre-pandemic levels within first quarter of current financial year. The pent-up demand is going to lead to a strong recovery for the industry. The start of summer is already witnessing large bookings in certain market segments. Hotels have start receiving bookings for events like Wedding, Conference and Meetings.

With the resumption of international flights and corporate travel, there are further chances of the increased sales in various verticals of the hotel industry. All major cities have started showing upward growth, almost reaching post pandemic levels. Food & Beverage sector is also witnessing a steady growth, with the commencement of dine-in services by the hotels.

As there are still certain fears of pandemic, hotel industry has to understand the fears in the minds of the tourists and meet their demands to ensure safety and create confidence. The hospitality industry has undergone several changes in the facilities offered by them, keeping in view the fears in the minds of the clients due to the pandemic.

The hoteliers are incorporating several changes to encourage more guests to visit there places for business and leisure. They have introduced several new techniques to tackle the problems posed by the pandemic. Hoteliers are now fully prepared for a back-to-normal status of the industry and started opening and announcing new properties, across India.

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International Hospitality Expo (IHE)

August 3-6, 2022 at India Expo Mart & Centre, Greater Noida

One of the country's leading food service and hospitality industry B2B show, India International Hospitality Expo (IHE), will feature its fifth edition on August 3-6, 2022, at the India Expo Mart & Centre, Greater Noida, in Delhi-NCR.

At the last edition of IHE, which was the first 'physical show' for the food service and hospitality sectors post-Covid, held from September 24-27, 2021, 160 exhibitors representing the major industry-relevant verticals, from food ingredients and new-generation beverages to kitchen equipment, furniture and furnishings, and tableware, were present in strength.

The north-eastern states were well-represented at the show, giving them an opportunity to showcase a variety of products, from bamboo furniture to organic ginger and turmeric, to fruit wines from Arunachal Pradesh. The inaugural session was graced by Ms. Mercy Epao, Joint Secretary, Ministry of MSME on 03 August, 2021.

The 8000-plus visitors who thronged IHE2021 included members of the Purchasing Professionals Forum-India (PPFI) and Hospitality Purchasing Managers Forum (HPMF), the leading ladies of WICCI, chef-members of the Indian Culinary Forum (ICF), founders of the Professional Housekeepers Association (PHA), and other hospitality industry decision-makers. The presence of these industry professionals greatly enhanced the value proposition to the exhibitors, who got to interact directly with their existing and potential clients.

Commenting on the response to IHE2021, when the country was just recovering from the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, Dr Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, IEML, and Director-General,

Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) said, "The response to IHE2021 has far exceeded our expectations. With it, we were able to prove beyond any doubt that the IEML, which is a leader in the country's exhibitions and conferences sector, is ready and equipped to present physical shows. Our calendar is filling up fast for 2022 and 2023. And yes, we are returning with a much bigger and better edition of IHE during August 3-6, 2022."

Since its inception in 2018, IHE has been known for its concurrent programme. IHE2021 was no exception. The highlight of the programme was the Conclave, which saw animated conversations involving industry leaders such as Rajeev Menon, President (Asia Pacific excluding Greater China), Marriott International, Rattan Keswani (Lemon Tree Hotels), Samir MC (Fortune Park Hotels) and Anurag Katriar (Past President, National Restaurant Association of India).

Who's who roster of speakers included top educators and recruiters such as Kamal Kant Pant (IHM-Pusa) and Dr. Swarup Sinha (ITC Hotel Management Institute); renowned chefs, notably Chef Manjit Gill (Indian Federation of Culinary Associations) and Chef Devinder Kumar (President, Indian Culinary Forum, and Vice-President, F&B, Le Meridien New Delhi); and housekeeping decision-makers such as Dr. Madhu Chandhok and Ms. Meenu Tongatta.

Also seen speaking at the Conclave were the HPMF Founder, Dr. Nitin Nagrale, noted mixologists Yangdup Lama and Vaibhav Singh, top caterers Sanjay Khullar (Seasons Catering) and Varun Tuli (Food Inc. and Noshi), young restaurateur Amit Bagga of Daryaganj, and DLF's F&B Head, Udit Kukreja.

For IHE2022, the organisers have set their sights higher. As Dr. Sharma puts it, "IHE has established itself as a three-in-one event – showcase of new products and services; networking platform; and festival of ideas. We will build on this tradition to achieve our objective to make IHE2022 not-to-miss event on the calendar of every decision maker in the food service and hospitality sectors."

Special Attractions

During the show its highlight event will be a one-day conference dedicated to the Bakery and Confectionary and Mithai and Namkeen sectors.

This year an important new attraction at this conference will be a Franchise Forum, where businesses exploring franchising options for further growth can network with their potential partners. This activity will be a part of the special event planned for the fifth anniversary year of the show, which was first held in 2018 at the India Expo Mart & Centre (IHE), Greater Noida, in Delhi-NCR.

Other activities planned for the fifth anniversary edition include a focused activity with hotel and restaurant purchase managers around the food and hospitality products being developed by the MSME sector in the North-East. The North-East Mart will be accompanied by a forum to highlight the work being done by our exhibition partners in that region.

Another new addition to the eclectic mix of the show's offerings will be a Startup Pavilion, which will host startups that are either active or starting out in the food and food tech verticals. Their products will be of great interest to our key audience segments, namely, decision-makers in the hotel and restaurant sectors.

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Chalet Hotels Unveils Rebranded 'The Westin Mumbai Powai Lake'

Chalet Hotels Limited, owner, developer and asset manager of high-end hotels in key metro cities in India, announces the upgrade and rebranding of its iconic hotel at Powai Lake to 'The Westin Mumbai Powai Lake' from the erstwhile 'The Renaissance Mumbai Convention Center Hotel'.

The 600-room asset has undergone extensive upgradation over the past two years, to make it an aspirational choice for the new age traveler. The remodeled contemporary spaces include 'Mayouchi' a brand-new Japanese Tapas bar, 'Mumbai Express' a feel-good Deli, 'Nawab Saheb' a rejuvenated Indian restaurant, a relaxing spa, a state-of-the-art gym, a smart new lobby and stunning views of the lake front and the city skyline offering distinctive experiences. With sustainability at its core, the design philosophy takes inspiration from the concept of 'Biophilia', which suggests that humans have an innate tendency to seek connection with nature.

Embracing brand 'Westin's' foundational pillars of Eat Well, Move Well and Sleep Well, the Hotel features signature brand programs that empower guests to regain control and maintain their holistic well-being while they are on the road. This will be the second Westin in the Company's hospitality portfolio with a third in the offing.

"We are delighted to relaunch Mumbai's iconic hotel at the banks of Powai Lake in its new avatar of lifestyle and wellness, 'The Westin Mumbai Powai Lake' in partnership with Marriott International. The team at the hotel looks forward to welcoming guests – the old loyalists as well as new adventurers to this upgraded asset." said Sanjay Sethi, MD & CEO, Chalet Hotels Ltd.



Sanjay Sethi

Signum Hotels Signs Hotels in Punjab

Signum Hotels, a fast-growing hotel management company, today announced 4 new hotel signings in Punjab. Signum currently operates Signum Cityscapes Mohali with 24 keys and is inching towards further strengthening its presence in the state.

Signum Hotels has signed the properties with Punjab-based real estate service provider, Ambika Group. The new hotels are being developed across tricity and will be branded as Signum Cityscapes. These hotels are expected to be operational within this year, in 2022.

Commenting on the development, Mehul Sharma, Founder & CEO, Signum Hotels said, 'Punjab has witnessed an influx of tourists and businessmen in the last few years leading to increasing demand for quality hotels. Despite the global slowdown, the hospitality segment in Punjab has done well and this is attracting big developers.' He further added, 'This year, we aim to open one hotel every quarter in Punjab and will add an inventory of close to 350 keys in the next one year.'

Signum Hotels currently operates 280 keys in India across four hotels in Mohali, Bhiwadi, Bengaluru and Kodaikanal. Over the next two years, Signum aims to strengthen its portfolio with 30 hotels globally.



Mehul Sharma

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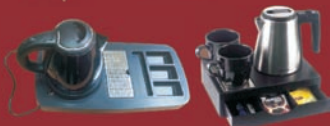
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Lemon Tree Hotels Signs a New Hotel in Uttarakhand

Lemon Tree Hotels Limited announced its latest hotel signing – Lemon Tree Hotel, Mukteshwar, in Uttarakhand. This hotel is expected to open in July 2022. The property is owned by M/s The Alpine Chalet Resort, and shall be managed by Carnation Hotels Private Limited, a subsidiary and management arm of Lemon Tree Hotels Ltd.

Nestled amidst the majestic hills and lush greenery, Mukteshwar is a hill station suburb of Nainital. It derives its name from the 350-year-old temple, Mukteshwar Dham, whose residing deity is Lord Shiva. Mukteshwar is also a wonderful trekking location with fruit orchards, coniferous forests, lush green pathways, and narrow lanes, it is a nature lover's paradise that attracts throngs of tourists all year round.

One side of the destination is covered by dense forests and the other side features a stunning view of the enchanting valleys. Located in the Nainital district, this property will feature 41 well-appointed rooms and suites, complemented by a multi-cuisine restaurant and a bar. It will also have a conference room, and a swimming pool, spa and fitness centre for recreation.

Speaking on the occasion, Vikramjit Singh, President – Lemon Tree Hotels Limited commented, "We are delighted to expand our reach in Uttarakhand with our valued partner M/s The Alpine Chalet Resort. This state holds immense business and tourism potential, and is a preferred destination for travellers. With our widespread reach, we feel that this hotel will add value to our customers."



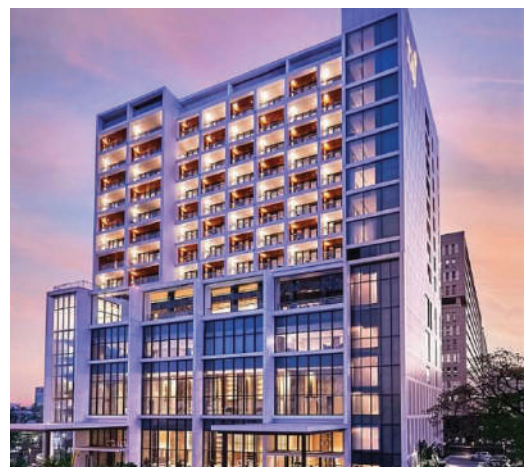
Taj Wellington Mews, Chennai Lauded

Taj Wellington Mews, Chennai, India's first all women-managed luxury residences, has been selected as an honouree in Travel + Leisure's Global Vision Awards 2022.

Speaking about this achievement, Gaurav Pokhariyal, Senior Vice President & Global Head – Human Resources, IHCL, said, "We are delighted to be recognized on a global platform for our efforts in creating an equitable workplace and ecosystem, while empowering women in the hospitality industry. This is a proud moment for all of us as women at IHCL have played a very vital role in the organisation with their contribution and by pushing boundaries."

Strategically located in the Old Mahabalipuram-IT corridor of Chennai, Taj Wellington Mews has 112 spaciouly and luxuriously appointed residences, led by a woman General Manager and a team of over 100 women across all operations and other departments. In addition to providing growth opportunities for women employees within the Company, the property will also generate employment locally.

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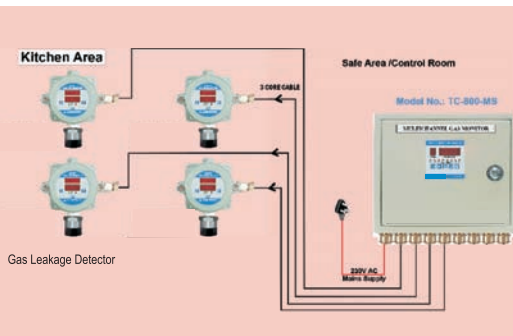
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HAI to Forge Stronger Ties and Collaborate with other Industry Bodies: Puneet Chhatwal



Hotel Association of India (HAI), the national apex body of the hotel industry and an integrated hospitality industry platform held its 25th Annual General Meeting on March 16 at New Delhi. In his presidential address at the meeting, Puneet Chhatwal emphasised the need to forge closer ties and collaborate with other industry bodies for a stronger and a more unified voice. While highlighting the pandemic related challenges confronting the Industry, he commended the tremendous resilience and enormous innovation shown by the sector.

While the industry is firmly on the road to recovery, supply chain disruptions, subdued employment growth, rising inflation, food insecurity, the setback to human capital accumulation, supply-demand mismatches, and climate change will continue to pose difficulties and would be some of the key issues of concern going forward. He said "International travel has gone back 30 years globally and the ripple effect of tourism is affecting the economy of countries. Indian hospitality sector has rebounded due to various components of domestic travel and a vigorous internal demand."

He saluted the tireless work done by the Association in its interaction and interventions with the governments at all levels to save and protect the industry through desired relief measures. He expressed his pride and joy at the good Samaritan work done by the industry and by the HAI Member hotels in providing relief and comfort of meals, sanitised accommodation and safety equipment to the healthcare fraternity, migrant labour, sanitation workers and stranded tourists. HAI Members stood united with the government in fighting the pandemic. Hotels served as quarantine centres and even augmented the hospital bed capacities.

Lauding the HAI State Chapters, he mentioned that the chapters played an instrumental role in the successes that the industry witnesses today. According of 'Industry' status to hotels by the states of Maharashtra Karnataka and Rajasthan, introduction of some positive and welcome changes in the State tourism policies by Punjab and Telangana, extension of financial support to hotels by the states of Odisha, Gujarat, and Rajasthan have been possible on account of efforts at the regional level.

The HAI President, thanked the hon'ble Prime Minister for urging Indians to see their country and visit tourist destinations to help revive local economies. Complimenting the announcement of the PM Gatishakti to strengthen the infrastructure of rail, roads, ports etc. he stated that it would support the growth and development of tourism in the long-term. The Ministry of Tourism's Campaign "Dekho Apna Desh" is helping the sector by promoting domestic tourism.

The industry needs to set newer benchmarks and attain fresh goals. He called for the continued support of the Members in playing a meaningful role in the growth and development of the Indian hospitality industry urging hoteliers to work together, responsibly and in a sustainable manner to take the industry to new heights in its contribution to national economy to build a stronger India - an Atma Nirbhar India. In the process, he cautioned, let us never forget the dictum that has been the industry's guiding mantra: Atithi Devo Bhava.

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HAI re-elect all Office Bearers

The executive committee of the Hotel Association of India (HAI) reposes its trust and confidence in the team to unanimously re-elect all office bearers for a consecutive term of two years at the Association's milestone 25th AGM held in New Delhi on the 16th of March. In addition to adopting and approving the financial results for the year 2020-2021 and appointing auditors for the financial year of 2021-2022, the AGM's agenda included elections of the Association's executive committee. Rupak Gupta, Managing Director U.P. Hotels Ltd., and Surinder Singh, Area Director, IHC Ltd. are the two newly elected committee members. While Mr. Gupta is the nominee for HAI's member hotels in the category of 5 star deluxe and 5 star, the hotels classified in the ministry's classification categories of 3 and 4 star would be represented by Mr. Singh.

The AGM was followed by the meeting of the executive committee to elect the four office-bearers. The committee, in recognition of the current team's efforts in the period of the last two extremely difficult pandemic-ridden years, decided unanimously to re-elect the management committee for another consecutive term of two years.

Led by the president, Puneet Chhatwal Managing Director & CEO The Indian Hotels Company Ltd. (Taj Hotels), the team comprises of K.B. Kachru (Vice President) Chairman Emeritus & Principal Advisor, South Asia Radisson Hotel Group, J. K. Mohanty (Hony. Secretary) Managing Director Swosti Premium Limited, Patu Keswani (Hony. Treasurer) Chairman & Managing Director Lemon Tree Hotels Ltd. and will continue to direct the Association throughout its term of office till 2023.

Vits Kamats Group Launches 'Vits White House Boutique Residences'

VITS Hotels have strengthened its presence in Gujarat with the launch of VITS White House Boutique Residences Vadodara. This unique luxurious property is situated on Vasna-Bhayli Road,



Vadodara's posh residential locality. It's in close proximity to the major highways, airport, and railway station and hence patrons can conveniently access the property through various modes of transport. Based on a European Architectural theme, the building's entrance facade replicates that of The White House.

Announcing the launch, Abhijit De, Vice President, Vitizen Hotels Limited said, "We are delighted to announce the launch of VITS White House Boutique Residences in Vadodara the cultural capital of Gujarat. This is our fifth VITS property in the State with other hotels located at Dwarka, Ankleshwar, Somnath and Morbi. Vadodara with its vibrant culture attracts a large slice of tourists for both business and leisure. VITS White House Boutique Residences with its strategic location, striking décor, and contemporary amenities is ideal for guests looking for comfort and extended stays in the city".

VITS White House Boutique Residences Vadodara houses 49 luxurious service apartments, a banquet hall with a capacity of 200 pax, a state-of-the-art business centre, a secured swimming pool, a dedicated car park, and 24-hour security. All the rooms are fully air-conditioned and equipped with free Wi-Fi, Tea/ Coffee maker, Refrigerator, LED TV, an Electronic safe, and complimentary toiletries. The services include breakfast in the room, a dedicated travel desk, daily housekeeping, and wheelchair facilities for the disabled. The popular multi-cuisine Kamats restaurant that serves delicious South Indian, Punjabi, Snacks, and Mughlai is located close to the property.

VITS Hotels is presently operational through 20 properties located in Ankleshwar, Aurangabad, Bhubaneswar, Dapoli, Dwarka, Goa, KalyanBhiwandi, Mumbai, Morbi, Nanded, Pune, Somnath, Silvassa, Thane, Bharuch, Jalandhar, Dwarka- NCR, Noida- NCR, Aurangabad (Purple Bed) and Daman (Purple Bed). The Hotel chain presently has an inventory of 1000+ rooms with a host of banqueting, conferencing, and restaurant facilities.

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Kunal Dewan

Hyatt Regency Delhi has appointed Kunal Dewan as the Director of Operations. Kunal have more than 15 years. Kunal had been heading the Sales and Marketing function for Hyatt Regency Delhi since October 2018. He post graduated in diploma in international hospitality from Les Roches, School of Hotel Management, Switzerland. He started his

career as a management trainee at Le Parker Meridien in New York later joined the sales function with Oberoi Hotels. He was the Director of Sales & Marketing at The Westin Pune Koregaon Park and with Marriott International.



Prisha Lamba

Fairmont Jaipur has appointed Prisha Lamba as the new Director of Marketing and Communications. With a rich experience spanning over 14 years, she joins Fairmont Jaipur with a wealth of knowledge and an extensive background in the hospitality and trade industry. Her last assignment was with Hyatt Regency Gurgaon where she served as a Marketing Communications Manager.

Prior to that, she has worked with the Four Seasons Hotel in Mumbai, Radisson Gurugram and 32nd Avenue serving various marketing roles.



Prasad Rao

Sayaji Hotel Indore has appointed Prasad Rao as Director of Operations. An alumnus of the Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology Goa he has excellent track record in Food and Beverage operations. He has over 16 years of robust experience in business and resort hotel operations leading large projects in all his stints. Prior to his new assignment with Sayaji

Hotel Indore, Prasad Rao was the Director of Food and Beverage with Radisson Blu - Indore. He has worked at Hilton Hotels and Resorts, Marriott International and Accor Hotels.



Karan Karanwal

Karan Karanwal has been appointed as the new Front Office Manager at JW Marriott Bengaluru. Bringing in a decade of work experience, Karan has a proven track record in achieving highest guest satisfaction scores and strategic approach towards delivering maximum rooms profitability. He has previously worked with eminent hospitality brands such as, Sheraton Grand Palace Indore

and Courtyard by Marriott Ahmedabad.



Shrikant Wakharkar

Hyatt Regency Delhi has appointment of Shrikant Wakharkar as the General Manager and Area Vice president of Hyatt Hotels - North. He brings with him over 30 years of experience. He was the General Manager at Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty. He also held leadership positions at Taj, Intercontinental, Starwood and Marriott Hotels. This would be his second innings with Hyatt

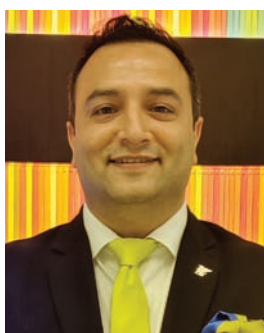
Regency Delhi. A graduate from Institute of Hotel Management, Bhubaneswar, he also attended three professional development programs at Cornell University.



Sonia Sharma

Sayaji Hotels Limited has announced the appointment of Sonia Sharma as Director of Human Resources. A seasoned hospitality professional, Sonia brings over 12 years of experience in the field of Human Resources in India and abroad. She has worked with hospitality brands like Hyatt Hotels, Hilton Worldwide, Accor Hotels and Atmosphere Maldives. Her career

highlights entail pre-openings of some of the most prestigious hotel projects like Andaz, New Delhi and Conrad, Bengaluru.



Varun Suden

JW Marriott Bengaluru appoints Varun Suden as its new Rooms Division Manager. With close to 16 years of experience and working with hotels across India, he started his career in 2006. He has been associated with Hyderabad Marriott Hotel & Convention Centre and Goa Marriott Resort and Spa, Courtyard by Marriott Gurgaon, Marriott Whitefield Hotel Bengaluru, JW Marriott

Aerocity and The Leela Palace Mumbai where he was responsible for Front Office, Salon and Health Club operations.



Sanjeev Advani

The Orchid Group has appointed Sanjeev Advani as the Vice President Sales. Sanjeev is a passionate hospitality professional with over 30 years of work experience in the industry. He was associated with Lemon Tree Hotels as "Area Director of Sales - Western Region". He has also worked with reputed brands such as The Leela, Grand Hyatt, Oberoi, Hyatt Regency,

Sofitel, Hilton Shillim and Lemon Tree Hotels.



Nimish Gadge

Nimish Gadge has been appointed as Executive Housekeeper at Courtyard and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru Outer Ring Road (ORR), has over a decade of experience in Housekeeping Operations. Nimish was with Hyderabad Marriott & Courtyard by Marriott Hyderabad as the Assistant Executive Housekeeper. Nimish began his journey with Marriott as Housekeeping Executive at Courtyard

by Marriott Bhopal and gradually moved up the ranks within the organization. Nimish holds a degree in hospitality from the Institute of Hotel Management, Bhopal.



Ashwini Kumar

The Westin Pushkar Resort & Spa appoints Chef Ashwini Kumar as the Executive Chef. He has experience of over 16 years. Before Ashwini was working with the Radisson, Kandla, Gandhidham, Gujarat as Executive Chef. He did his kitchen operational training from Hotel New Kenilworth, Kolkata and then joined Taj Bengal Kolkata as a supervisor in Food Production. He

has been associated with Hilton Hotel, New Delhi, Marriott Hotel Whitefield, Bengaluru and Hyatt Centric, Bengaluru. He is a graduate in B.Sc. in Hospitality & Hotel Administration from IHM Bhubaneswar.



Mir Hafizur Rahman

Sayaji Hotel Indore has appointed Mir Hafizur Rahman as the Executive Chef. He has over 18 years of experience. Chef Rahman has spent over a decade in the Republic of Maldives holding various Chefs' positions. Chef Rahman has a wealthy experience of working with some of the prestigious hotels namely Mayfair Hotels & Resorts ((Maldives), JA Manafaru Resorts (Maldives), Atmosphere

Kanifushi Resorts (Maldives), Constance Halaveli Resorts (Maldives), Eon Resorts (Maldives), Royal Orchid Resorts & Convention (Bangalore), Alila Hotels (India) and Justa Hotels & Resorts (India).



Deepak Dandge

The Orchid Hotel Mumbai has appointed Deepak Dandge as the 'Executive Chef'. His professional career spans over 20 years. He has previously worked with Starters & More, JW Marriot, Taj Lands End, Kangan, Sofitel, Raintree, Intercontinental, and Holiday Inn. His last assignment was with Holiday Inn as "Executive Chef". He has a proven track record of planning

& implementing effective control measures to reduce the Running cost of the entire unit.

Vikram Lalvani

Appointed MD & CEO of Sterling Holidays



Sterling Holiday Resorts Limited, one of India's leading leisure hospitality brands announced the appointment of Vikram Lalvani as the new Managing Director and CEO of the company with effect from 1st April, 2022.

After seven years of overseeing various strategic responsibilities at Sterling, Vikram Lalvani will be taking on the role of Managing Director of Sterling Holiday Resorts Ltd, a post which was effectively held by Ramesh Ramanathan since 2011, who will now continue as its Chairman.

Commenting on his new role, Vikram Lalvani, Managing Director & CEO, Sterling Holiday Resorts Ltd. said, "I am honored to be given this responsibility. We will continue on the growth path set for us and drive to double our inventory and footprint to over 5,000+ rooms by 2025."

As COO, of Sterling Holidays, Vikram has been responsible for successfully strengthening the preferred partners' network, launching new revenue focused projects, spearheading the expansion plans across the country which now includes 38 plus resorts in operation and many more in the pipe-line.

Vikram Lalvani has over 25 years of leadership experience in Hospitality, Leisure and ITes industries and has held crucial positions in companies such as The Indian Hotels Co. Ltd. and Sutherland Global Services.



Mani Mohan Pathak

Pilibhit House, part of the IHCL SeleQtions group has appointed Mani Mohan Pathak as their Executive Chef, to lead their multifaceted culinary operations. With an experience of over 22 years, Chef Mani has served Taj Residency Visakhapatnam, The Lalit Ashok Bangalore and other leading hotels and restaurants across the country. Most recently, Chef Mani was

leading the culinary operations at 'Fox in the Field' in Bangalore as their Executive Chef.



Tanay Shankar

Crowne Plaza Today New Delhi Okhla (IHG announced the appointment of Tanay Shankar as the Director of Sales and Marketing. Tanay is armed with an experience of more than 15 years across international brands and hotel chains. Prior to this assignment, Tanay has worked with Crowne Plaza Gurugram as a Director of Sales and overlooked the sales and revenue growth strategies. He has been associated with IHG Group for over 8 years now.

Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Showcases New Hopes and New Destinations

The 3-day OTM event, supported by Incredible India, was recently held in Mumbai and drew thousands of tourists, holidaymakers, travel trade buyers, and tour organizing professionals. The Jammu Kashmir Tourism department participated in the OTM in a big way, as part of its extensive winter tourism promotional campaigns across major cities of the country.

The Jammu Kashmir pavilion was the cynosure of all eyes at the gathering and offered the most-engaging experiences for the consumer and trade visitors as well as the participants of the various sessions. The interactions of the Jammu Kashmir Tourism Board with the event attendees consisted of detailed presentations, various short films on known and off-beat destinations of Jammu and Kashmir, and the floating luxury products of the grand Kashmiri Houseboats.

Dignitaries such as Dr. G.N. Itoo, Director Tourism Kashmir, Bakshi Javed Himayun, Director SKICC, and Manav Gupta, Secretary JTGC, Jammu & Kashmir represented the Jammu Kashmir Tourism Board at the event. Dr. G.N. Itoo, as the spokesperson, revealed that despite pandemic challenges, the tourist footfall in Kashmir had touched an impressive number of 6.65 lakhs and it was a similar scenario in Jammu as well. They had bumper seasons in the autumn and winter as well. As a result of the various measures initiated by the department for the revival of the tourism sector, throngs of domestic tourists had visited during winters and enjoyed snow in Gulmarg, Srinagar, Pahalgam, Patnitop, Sanasar, Natha Top, Sonmarg, and Doodhpathri. The good times have continued to roll for the UT, as the visitors' numbers in 2022 since January have been growing at a very encouraging pace.

Apart from the well-known and lesser-known destinations, the UT has a lot more to offer by way of pilgrimage and adventure tourism, visits centered on events and festivals, and regional locations for the famous Kashmiri art and craft.

As Dr. G.N. Itoo puts it forth, the Jammu and Kashmir government has again taken the lead by launching 'Mission Youth,' a new initiative aimed at bringing 80 villages to the forefront of tourism. The soul of each village, unique on its own, will serve as the USP to promote tourism. The energetic youth of the villages will not only get employment but also will project themselves as the native ambassadors of tourism. They will focus on ensuring the availability of good homestays and hotels for making the tourist experience most comfortable and memorable.

In addition, the government has carefully chosen 75 new destinations in Kashmir and extraordinary efforts are being put in to maintain the pristine environment. All of these 75 destinations have well-established connectivity to reach several sought-after destinations like Doodhpathri, Bangas, Doda, and many others where tourism has a strong footprint. In addition, the government is also in talks with cab aggregators to make their services available for the convenience that the tourists are used to in their own cities.



The Indian Tourism & Hospitality Performance Report 2021

Noesis, India's leading hotel investment advisory firm presents the Indian Tourism and Hospitality performance report 2021. With the year 2020 which saw many factors affecting various businesses, 2021 was a year of optimism, survival and revival. The relaxation of certain travel restrictions and Covid SOPs and an intensive vaccination drive, together with the execution of the right measures and strict Covid SOP followed by the hospitality industry has boosted the confidence of the traveller's community.



"Despite the fact that foreign travel restrictions have had an impact on enterprises, domestic travel is driving the recovery. Demand has surged in the leisure and homestay segments as travellers want to go a small distance to escape the congestion and immerse themselves in experiential stays. While hotels in metro areas across all categories are maintaining average rates and are predicted to return to normal by the end of 2022. The omicron crisis has significantly lowered previously improving business traveller attitude, resulting in a major drop in occupancy across the country in the final week of December", says Nandivardhan Jain, CEO, Noesis.

The impact of COVID-19 on the Indian hotel sector was such that India's average occupancy was at 65 per cent in 2019, but it plummeted to as low as a single digit in some months and locations throughout 2020 and 2021, greatly hurting the industry's overall performance.

The Indian hospitality industry is set to expand at a pace of 10.35% between the years 2019 to 2028. It is projected that the Indian travel market will be worth USD 125 Million by the year 2027. In 2020, foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) decreased by 75.5% YoY to 2.68 million and arrivals through e-Tourist Visa (Jan-Nov) decreased by 67.2% YoY to 0.84 million in India.

While the industry recovered significantly in 2021, the year was not without pandemic-related setbacks, as the appearance of a new COVID strain caused temporary hurdles in the sector's recovery. Travellers and hotel industry players, on the other hand, continued to adapt to the changing scenario and find new methods to move forward. Driven by a strong recovery in demand, average room rates began to improve after the second wave and gradually approached pre-COVID levels.

The ARR was in the range of Rs 4,300-4,600, while the ARR in the fourth quarter was in the range of Rs 5,300-5,500, reaching almost 90% of the pre-COVID level. India's top leisure and business destinations saw a surge in room rates during the third and fourth quarters of 2021. Wedding, workcations, and staycations fuelled the growth for these destinations in destinations such as Udaipur and Goa while in Jaipur and Agra the focus was on improving the room rates.

While the year saw 110 properties that have opened in various parts of the country while there were 161 hotels signed in the same year. The report also portrays the future trends would shape the hotel industry.

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The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts Expands Footprint in South India



The Leela Kovalam



The Leela Ashtamudi

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has signed a management agreement for two properties, The Leela Kovalam, a Raviz Hotel and The Leela Ashtamudi, a Raviz Hotel in Kerala, expanding its footprint in South India and fortifying the brand's resort portfolio. The Leela Kovalam, a Raviz Hotel returns to The Leela portfolio after three years while The Leela Ashtamudi, a Raviz Hotel will be a significant new addition to the brand portfolio to complete the much sought-after and serenely beautiful Kerala itinerary.

Commenting on the announcement, Anuraag Bhatnagar, Chief Operating Officer, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts said, "We are delighted to reintroduce The Leela brand into Kerala as we welcome The Leela Kovalam, a Raviz Hotel back into our fold and introduce The Leela Ashtamudi, a Raviz Hotel, a hidden gem into our portfolio. The two resorts complement each other and define two very distinctive and unique experiences that showcase the best of Kerala. This expansion is in lockstep with the growing demand from the discerning global leisure traveler to experience meaningful and transformative journeys that are an authentic expression of a region's beauty, heritage, cuisine and culture."

Speaking on the occasion, Ganesh Ravi Pillai, Vice Chairman RP Group said, "I am excited to partner with The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts to reintroduce The Leela brand in its new avatar to Kerala. Great projects are rarely built in isolation; and great ecosystems more so. The coming together of Raviz and Leela will create a synergy that can propel the State to the centre stage of the global tourism network. The partnership of the two great brands in the luxury travel and wellness sectors can be a force for good; not just for the State but for the entire southern region. Together, we can reimagine and transform the tourism sector in the region.

The Leela Kovalam, A Raviz Hotel

Spread across a 60-acre canvas of greenery, The Leela Kovalam, a Raviz Hotel is India's only cliff top beach resort offering scintillating views of the Kovalam shoreline and a pristine beachfront. A 20 minute-drive from Thiruvananthapuram Airport, half an hour from the railway station and merely a minute away from its own hotel Helipad, the resort provides a private passage to the Arabian Sea allowing travelers to soak in the tropical sun and encounter the deep azure waters.

A seamless blend of modern technology and traditional grandeur, the soothing décor of each of the 184 rooms and suites whispers warm aesthetics with each room opening out to a breath-taking view of either the sea or the lush green gardens. The resort also houses 4 suites at the Kovalam Palace, which was once the summer retreat of the Travancore royal family.

The resort offers a host of dining experiences that range from all-day dining at The Terrace that serves Asian, European, Indian, and authentic Kerala specialties, to The Café where one can lounge in utmost comfort, to The Tides that serves the best seafood in town to The Sky Bar, an open-air live tapas kitchen serving signature cocktails and The Bar an ideal place to unwind. It boasts of a 7,000 square feet Grand Ballroom and sprawling outdoor venues besides a 16,000 square feet beach providing a superlative venue for iconic celebrations, memorable weddings and bespoke events. Leisure facilities include a gymnasium, swimming pool and a spa that offers enriching ayurveda treatments.

The Leela Ashtamudi, A Raviz Hotel

An authentic backwater resort, The Leela Ashtamudi, a Raviz Hotel reflects traditional Nākettu architecture capturing

glimpses of Kerala's heritage. With Trivandrum International Airport about 71 kms away, the hotel is situated at Thevally, 10 minutes away from the historic Kollam town and just 15 minutes from the Kollam beach.

With 93 rooms, the resort is home to a bevy of accommodation that ranges from a heritage wing that offers a collection of rooms and suites with a contemporary ambience, to two quaint villas that overlook the lake and are complemented with traditional décor from the village and two cottages that were inspired from 300-year-old ancient heritage structure called 'Mana' – a home of Brahmins and a 200-year-old style cottage transposed from Eerattupetta. the resort also offers houseboats, also known as Kettuvallams that evoke the true heritage of local Kerala.

For a rich culinary escapade, there are four unique options - Keralayam, a multi-cuisine restaurant, Portico Café, serving comfort food, Ranthal, the floating restaurant, and Zirkon, the aqua-themed bar. From a stately convention centre to inspiring meeting rooms, the resort offers extensive choice and flexibility for bespoke events as well as iconic celebrations. The hotel also features a



Anuraag Bhatnagar COO The Leela and Ganesh Ravi Pillai Vice Chairman RP Group

holistic world-class spa, a state-of-the-art gymnasium, and an outdoor pool.

In 2021 The Leela opened 3 hotels, The Leela Palace Jaipur, The Leela Gandhinagar and The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru adding 799 keys. Venturing into the southern waters, The Leela has embraced the coastal state with authenticity to explore moments of tranquillity and provide unforgettable

experiences and stays to their guests to savour the true culture, art, wellness experiences and flavours of Kerala. Promising unparalleled luxury, this expansion is a testament to the company's strategy to grow in gateway cities and key leisure and resort destinations across the country.

Headquartered at Mumbai, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts is owned by a Brookfield Asset Management-sponsored private real estate fund and operates eleven award-winning properties in major cities and leisure destinations across India. These include the flagship hotel in the capital city of New Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Udaipur, Jaipur, Gurugram, East Delhi, Goa, Mumbai and Gandhinagar.

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JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa Debuts in India

JW Marriott, part of Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of 30 extraordinary hotel brands, announced the opening of JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa. The luxury resort is nestled within the tranquil Nandi Hills region of Bengaluru, once an ancient hill fortress and the summer retreat of Indian royalty. Within this idyllic setting, the new resort aims to fulfill the JW Marriott brand promise to allow guests to focus on feeling whole – present in mind, nourished in body and revitalized in spirit.

"We are excited to expand the 'JW Marriott' brand with the opening of JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa - the ninth JW Marriott property in India," said Rajeev Menon, President, Asia Pacific (excluding Greater China), Marriott International.

One of the leading real estate developers in the country, The Prestige Group has a legacy of over three decades in real estate development. It has diversified business models across the Residential, Office, Leisure, Retail, and Hospitality segments with operations across 8 key locations in India.

Commenting on the launch, Irfan Razack, Chairman & Managing Director of Prestige Group, said, "The launch of JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa marks the beginning of a very special journey for us. The Prestige Group is delighted to extend its hospitality portfolio along with JW Marriott to offer our guests a remarkable hospitality and luxury experience. This 301-room resort is one of a kind in South Asia with a Convention Center spread over 35,000 sq. ft. with a 24,000 sq. ft. of pillar less space that can host over 4000 guests, making it the perfect venue to organize grand weddings, corporate events, award nights, etc. This resort will be the best in South Asia, and it will definitely be a one-stop destination for celebrations and business meetings."

Inspired Design

The 301-room resort is nestled in the rolling greens of the 275-acre, award-winning Prestige Golfshire course and luxury residential development, and within a 20-minute drive from Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport. Conceptualized by Bengaluru-based architectural firm Thomas and Associates, its sleek, modern architecture is inspired by the beauty of the region's silk. The resort's exceptional interiors were led by world-



leading hospitality design firm Hirsch Bedner Associates of Singapore, and feature a lobby with panoramic views of Nandi Hills, stunning landscaping, as well as sophisticated guest rooms and villas with private swimming pools and lawns.

Immersive Culinary Experiences

Overlooking the golf course and with indoor and alfresco seating in the pleasant climate of Nandi Hills, JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa features six dining options for guests and locals.

'The Aviary' is the resort's all-day-dining restaurant with a chic, minimalist aesthetic and interactive live kitchens, serving Indian, Western and Asian cuisines in both buffet and a la carte styles.

'East', an Asian specialty restaurant with Japanese, Korean and Chinese menu items, features the finest nourishing produce.

'Aaleeshaan', meaning 'grandeur' in the local dialect, offers North and South Indian cuisine in a palatial interior with magnificent views of the nearby hills.

In the lobby, 'Vistathe' lounge showcases an extensive beverage list of handcrafted cocktails and a variety of specialty teas from around the world. 'Patisserie Truffle & Co' serves gourmet coffees to complement its array of freshly baked delicacies, sandwiches, savories and healthy, customized salads.

Set around the resort's azure swimming pool, 'Flamingo Bar & Pool' is an open-air dining space with a sunset terrace, featuring a swim-up bar serving delicious cocktails and fresh juices.

Replenished Spirits

The resort's 20,000-sq. ft. Spa by JW® is an exclusive private sanctuary that promises a complete revitalization of the mind, body and

spirit, and offers seven luxurious therapy rooms, including two couple rooms, an Ayurveda room as well as a manicure and pedicure suite. Skilled therapists present an indulgent menu of signature spa treatments featuring locally sourced herbs and oils to expertly soothe, relax and invigorate tired bodies and minds.

JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa also features a modern, fully equipped fitness center, two outdoor pools, a lap pool and a temperature-controlled lagoon pool with a relaxing jacuzzi. The resort's wide range of activities, including yoga and meditation sessions, cycling expeditions to explore the beautiful surroundings

of Nandi Hills, as well as pleasant morning walks through the hotel's JW Garden, encourage guests to be truly present and experience the destination to the fullest.

The JW Garden is a signature of the JW Marriott experience and features a calming space for guests to connect with nature, as well as fresh herbs and seasonal vegetables that guests can harvest and enjoy as part of their culinary journey on property. To further complement the resort's commitment to healthy, fresh dining, a starter packet of seeds housed in sustainable packaging is gifted to all guests.

Around the resort, guests can relax and unwind amidst acres of calm greenery and serene landscaped gardens. Private nooks and secluded spaces intuitively located around the grounds, invite quiet moments of contemplation and reflection. The banks of the resort's lake serve as an ideal spot to linger, while brief mindfulness rituals such as guided meditation sessions leave guests feeling deeply nourished and revitalized in body and soul.

Bespoke Events and Celebrations

JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa houses a fully equipped Convention Center, spread over 35,000 sq ft, accommodating up to 4,000 guests. The Convention Center is the first and largest of its kind in Bengaluru, with a 24,000 square foot, pillar-less ballroom, an ideal venue for large-scale events and lavish weddings. An additional 66,000 sq ft of open lawns and a range of smaller halls and breakout rooms provide the flexibility to accommodate transitional event set-ups, large-scale global conferences, exhibitions, outdoor music concerts and more.

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Pride Group of Hotels Expands

Pride Group of Hotels continues its rapid expansion. As part of its national expansion plans, Pride Hotels will have 50 properties and over 5000 keys by the end of 2022 in various geographic locations. The focus will be on an asset-light model for expansion with a major slice of the portfolio managed directly by Pride Hotels.

Gujarat

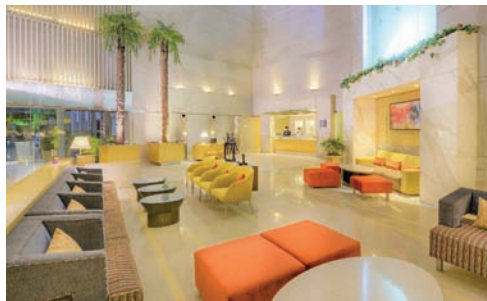
In the Gujarat market it has signed 2 new properties - Pride Biznotel Gir and Pride Divine Resort Somnath. Both these properties will come into operations in April 2022. Pride Biznotel Gir will be the group's 12th property in the State of Gujarat. Pride Biznotel brand is a moderately priced, upscale, full-service hotel that meets the discerning needs of a Business,

of Pride Hotels in this region have witnessed exceptional occupancy rates.

As part of expansion plans, the hotel chain will foray into Surendranagar, Baruch, and Aatapi in the coming months. The Pride Resort in Aatapi is an amusement park plus a resort located in between Vadodara and Kewadia (famous for the Statue of Unity, the world's tallest monument). Gujarat being an industrial hub the government has been inviting investments regularly and hence there will be a further increase in demand in the near future.

Bhopal

Pride Group of Hotels has also announced the signing of 'Pride Hotel Bhopal'. Conveniently located in the heart of the city, the hotel is easily accessible to prominent tourist & leisure



adventure and leisure traveler.

Recently Pride Hotels launched the Pride Biznotel in Manjusar and Alkapuri Vadodara. The hotel group currently operates 13 properties in the State of Gujarat with a host of banqueting and F&B facilities.

Announcing the development, SP Jain, Managing Director, Pride Group of Hotels said, "We are buoyant on the industrial growth of Gujarat that has fuelled demand for upscale mid-market hotels in this region. We have seen a good inflow of tourists in Gujarat from locals and also neighboring states like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. Religious tourism has seen an uptick as people from India and across the world visits various pilgrim destinations in Gujarat. Pride Hotels, with its strategic location, delectable food options, banqueting, and host of hospitality services will appeal to business and leisure travellers in Gujarat".

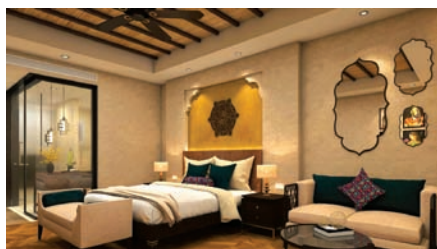
Post-pandemic, since the industry is in recovery mode there is good potential in tier 2 and tier 3 cities across Gujarat as these are the emerging markets. All the existing properties

destinations, marketplaces, and commercial establishments. Pride Hotel Bhopal will encompass 75 rooms, 2 banquets, a multi-cuisine restaurant Café Pride, and a board room. The hotel will welcome guests from April 2022.

Announcing the signing, Atul Upadhyay, Vice President, Pride Group of Hotels said, "We are extremely delighted to expand our footprints in Bhopal, the capital city of Madhya Pradesh. The land, popularly referred to as the city of lakes enjoys preeminence among tourists for its rich heritage, architectural marvels, historical museums, and numerous picturesque locations. Recognized as a Smart City, Bhopal has witnessed lots of urbanization and has become an attractive investment hub. It would our pleasure to offer the signature Pride Hotel hospitality to our esteemed guests in Bhopal".

To Unveil Newly Refurbished 'Pride Amber Vilas Resort & Convention Centre' Jaipur

The Pride Amber Vilas Resort & Convention Centre Jaipur, an exclusive resort hugely popular with domestic and international tourists has now been extensively refurbished



and is set to reopen in April 2022. Located away from the bustle of modern-day cities this upscale ethnic resort has been an expression of the spirit of Rajasthan and its royal elegance. It has now undergone a makeover to let guests discover the colourful nuances of rustic charm blended with luxury indulgences that they can fully immerse themselves in.

Announcing the development, Atul Upadhyay, Vice President, Pride Group of Hotels says, "Pride Amber Vilas has over the years enjoyed pre-eminence in attracting large section of leisure tourists from across the world. We are now delighted to unveil the refurbished resort that will allow us to cater to well-heeled travelers looking for opulence and local experiences. The resort is redesigned with a perfect amalgamation of modern interpretation and customary themes that

echoes the rich cultural heritage of Rajasthan now in name of Pride Amber Vilas Resort & Convention Centre".

Spread on a sprawling 70 acres, 'Pride Amber Vilas Resort & Convention Centre' now features 95 cottages & suites meticulously designed with tastefully adorned ethnic décor, contemporary amenities, and breathtaking views. Each of the rooms reflects an eclectic mix of style, glamour and all-out Rajasthani inspiration. It narrates stories of romance and chivalry, synonymous with this magical land set amidst the desolate desert beauty. All the guest rooms are fully air-conditioned and decorated with all contemporary elements equipped with wi-fi internet access, attached bath, minibars, wardrobes and LCD TVs.

The facilities include a multi-cuisine restaurant serving Rajasthani and international menu, a bar stocking refreshing beverage, a swimming pool, gym with latest fitness equipment's, games room, and a Spa/ Jacuzzi/ Sauna centre that will beacon guests with healing pleasures.

Pride Amber Vilas Resort & Convention Centre boasts of being one of the largest convention center with more than 26,000

square feet of convention centre in Jaipur. It offers a perfect venue for weddings, receptions, and events with 2 spacious lush green lawns and 3 banquets ready to accommodate 100 to 500 guests.

With its presence around 40 great locations, 4,000 rooms, 80 restaurants, 107 banquets, conference halls, thereby reinforcing itself as a one-stop destination for MICE. Currently, Pride Hotels operates and manages a chain of hotels under the brand name "Pride Plaza Hotel" an Indian Luxury Collection, "Pride Hotel" which are conveniently centrally located business hotels, "Pride Resort" at mesmerizing destinations and Mid-Market segment hotels for every business "Pride Biznotel". Locations are prominently at: New Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Pune, Nagpur, Bangalore, Chennai, Rajkot, Goa, Jaipur, Indore, Udaipur, Bharatpur, Mussoorie, Dapoli, Puri, Gangtok, Anand, Manjusar (Vadodara) Upcoming locations are: Alkapuri (Vadodara), Nainital, Jim Corbett, Jabalpur, Daman, Rishikesh, Aatapi, Surendranagar, Dwaraka, Bhavnagar, Bharuch, Agra, Somnath, Dehradun, Chandigarh, Neemrana, Rajkot, Bhopal & Haldwani.

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IHCL Expands its Presence

SeleQtions Resort in Uttarakhand

Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) has signed a new SeleQtions resort in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand. The formerly operating resort will be rebranded as Anand Kashi, an IHCL SeleQtions resort post renovation.

Commenting on the signing, Suma Venkatesh, Executive Vice President – Real Estate & Development, IHCL, said, “IHCL remains committed to the vast tourism potential of Uttarakhand. This will be our second hotel in Rishikesh, the Yoga Capital of the world. This exciting new addition to our portfolio will offer travellers yet another breath-taking location to explore the beauty and myriad experiences the state offers. We are delighted to partner with Mrs. Mira Kulkarni on this project.”

The 24-room resort is located at the foothills of the Himalayas in the Tehri Garhwal region of Uttarakhand. Nestled on the banks of the river Ganges, amidst lush green forests, the resort offers stunning scenic views. The hotel will have an all-day diner, bar, meeting rooms as well as banqueting facilities for social gatherings. It will also offer leisure experiences such as a swimming pool, gymnasium and wellness areas including a spa.

Mrs. Mira Kulkarni, Managing Director, Forest Essentials said, “We are pleased to partner with IHCL for this unique getaway in Rishikesh, where the Ganges flows along the length of the property, captivating every traveller. We believe that the company, with its expertise, will enhance the appeal of the destination.”

With the addition of this hotel, IHCL will have seven hotels across brands including three under development in Uttarakhand.

SeleQtions Resort in Kerala

IHCL also announced the signing of a new SeleQtions resort in Bekal, Kerala. Bekal is well known for its beach, backwaters, hill destinations and historic fort. This resort is a management contract with Gopalan Enterprises. It is a Brownfield project slated to open in 2024.

Commenting on the signing, Suma Venkatesh, Executive Vice President - Real Estate & Development, IHCL, said, “We are excited to bring an IHCL SeleQtions resort to expand our portfolio in the state. There

is a growing demand for travel to new and emerging leisure destinations, and this signing reinforces the company’s confidence in the tourism potential of the region. It will be our second hotel in Bekal. We are pleased to partner with Gopalan Enterprises for this project.”

The 159-room SeleQtions resort is strategically situated on the backwaters and is a short drive from Bekal beach and the historic Bekal Fort. Spread over about 30 acres, the resort’s design will draw inspiration from the local ethos of Kerala. The hotel will have an all-day diner, a specialty restaurant and bar, and banqueting facilities including picturesque open air spaces, ideal for social as well as business gatherings. The hotel will also have a large wellness facility.

C. Prabhakar, Director, Gopalan Enterprises, said, “We are delighted to partner with IHCL for this SeleQtions resort in Bekal. We believe that the company, with its expertise, will enhance Bekal’s position as an emerging leisure destination.”

With the addition of this hotel, IHCL will have 14 hotels across brands including four under development in Kerala.

Ginger at Kochi

IHCL has announced the opening of its first Ginger hotel in Kochi. Located at Kalamassery, the hotel is built around the brand’s design and service philosophy of

offering a vibrant, contemporary, and seamless hospitality experience to its guests.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, IHCL, said, “Ginger has been on a journey of rapid expansion. The opening of this hotel is in line with the brand’s strategy of being present in metros and key commercial hubs across India. We are proud to bring the Ginger brand to the multifaceted city of Kochi, which is Kerala’s leading financial and cultural destination.”

Ginger Kochi, Kalamassery is strategically located on the Kochi-Salem Highway, with convenient access to Cochin SEZ and economic centre with key IT companies and industries. The hotel features 73 rooms, Café et cetera – the all-day diner, meeting rooms, a rooftop swimming pool and fitness centre.

With the addition of this hotel, IHCL will have 13 hotels across brands in Kerala, including three under development.

Ginger Greater Noida Opens

Ginger expands its footprint with the launch of a new hotel in Greater Noida, National Capital Region (Delhi-NCR). Designed on the lean luxe philosophy, the hotel offers a co-existence of contrasts through dynamic spaces, seamlessly blending the lines of work and play.

Commenting on the opening, Ms. Deepika Rao, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Ginger Hotels, said, “We are very



Ginger at Kochi



Ginger Greater Noida

excited to launch Ginger Greater Noida. This is an important business location in the National Capital Region. With the opening of this hotel, Ginger now operates more than 650 keys in Delhi-NCR.”

Ginger Greater Noida is strategically located near Pari Chowk, with convenient access to the India Expo Mart, commercial centres, Greater Noida Sports Complex and the upcoming

Noida airport. The hotel offers 72 rooms, Café Etcetera – the all-day diner offering a mix of global and local cuisine, and two conference rooms with a capacity to accommodate over 100 guests.

With the addition of this hotel, Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) will have 16 hotels across brands in the Delhi-NCR region, including one under development.

Vivanta in Nashik

IHCL has also signed a Vivanta hotel in Nashik. Located near Dwarka Circle, the hotel, part of a mixed-use development, is a management contract with Deepak Builders and Developers.

The 144-rooms Vivanta hotel will be strategically located next to the Nashik Freeway and in close proximity to the city’s IT zone as well as the upcoming metro station at Dwarka Circle. The dining options will include Mynt, the all-day dining restaurant; a specialty restaurant and bar. Recreational facilities will include a pool, fitness center and spa. The hotel will also feature one of the city’s largest banqueting halls with meeting rooms and open areas for social and business gatherings. It is a Brownfield project slated to open in 2023.

Deepak Chande, Founder & Owner, Deepak Builders & Developers, said, “We are happy to collaborate with IHCL for this new hotel in Nashik. I am confident that the first Vivanta in the city will re-define the hospitality landscape with a new and refreshed spirit.”

With the addition of this hotel, IHCL will have four hotels in Nashik including two under development.

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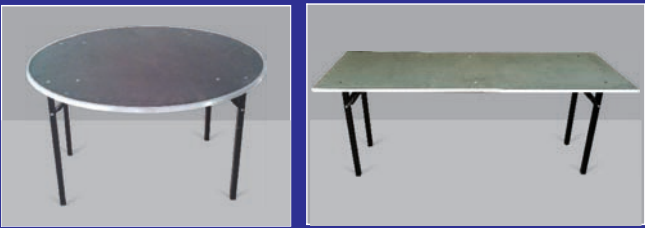
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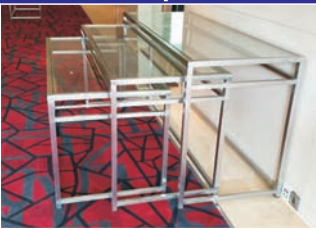
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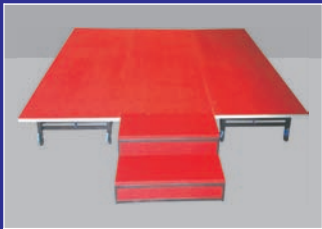
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Trends in Hospitality Industry Post Pandemic

The hospitality industry, with the lifting of lockdowns and opening up of borders, is entering a new era. However, as the shadow of pandemic still lurks large the hotel industry has to understand the fears that lurk in the minds of the tourists and meet their demands in order to decrease their fears. The hoteliers are incorporating several changes to encourage more guests to visit these places for business and leisure. They have introduced several new techniques to tackle the problems posed by the pandemic. Enabling the business travelers to amalgamate business with pleasure has also given a boost to the occupancy by bleisure tourists. Among other trends, **Ashok Malkani** finds, are introduction of smart rooms, providing healthy food, increased use of technology, et al. With the adoption of new trends, the industry believes that there will be stability in the near future.

The Pandemic dramatically changed the travel and tourism segment which affected the hotel industry adversely. Virtual conferencing and events led to remote working and personal meetings were completely off the list for people who believed that social distancing was best to avoid Corona virus.

With a complete blockade on travel to combat the pandemic, the hospitality business fell by 98 percent in tourists compared to May 2020 with 2019. Between January and May, the year-on-year drop in tourists fell by 56 percent. This represents a fall of \$300 million in income from international tourism. This is triple if we compare it with the crisis of 2009.

However, things have slowly changed in recent times. Events and meetings data indicates that more and more corporate events are happening in person. But hoteliers are still left pondering on the question: When will the corporate event business finally return to normal?

Over the past two years, due to changing values after the acute phase of the pandemic, there has been a shift in society. While in 2020 and 2021 the focus was on staycations and hygiene protocols as well as contactless technologies, there will have to be more changes undertaken by the hotels to entice the guests back. With this in mind new trends are being adopted by the industry to persuade



the guests back. Increased facilities would have to be provided by the industry.

According to Mandeep Singh Lamba, President (South Asia) HVS Anarock, the Indian hotel industry will continue its uphill journey on the long road to post-COVID recovery, during this year. He believes that new trends will pick up steam over the coming year.

Facilities for Guests

In order to entice more guests to visit their properties, what are the facilities now being offered by the hotels to the guests?

Sunil Narang, General Manager, Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai, states, “At the present moment, I am happy to inform the readers that, the guests have access to all facilities



Four Seasons Hotel, Mumbai

of the hotel as was present pre-pandemic. This includes leisure amenities such as the swimming pool, steam, sauna and spa facilities which were not accessible during most of the pandemic period."

Raof Dhanani, Managing Director, Sayaji Hotels Limited, revealed "The facilities that we are offering the guests at present, keeping in view the pandemic fear prevalent currently are:

- Careful dining and room experiences
- Highest standard of safety & hygiene
- Customized guest service & experience
- Comfort and safety security

Difference in Facilities

The hospitality industry has undergone several changes in the facilities offered by them, keeping in view the fears in the minds of the clients due to the pandemic. With hospitality venues being used as make-shift offices for bleisure travelers, a great opportunity is being provided to the hotels. There has been a rise in staycations.

The hospitality industry is changing faster than ever before and it's nearly impossible to keep up with all the changing hotel trends necessitated by the demands of the travel and tourism sector.

Dipti Mohan, Associate Vice President - Research, New Delhi, HVS is of the view that there would be increasing use of technology. Smart tech would, according to HVS play a greater role in future hotels, as it gives hoteliers endless possibilities to differentiate themselves from the competition and exceed the expectations of the guests of tomorrow. It will also help in reducing costs, streamlining processes, optimizing operational efficiency, and enhancing staff productivity, all of which will help in improving the sector's profitability.

The hotels are also paying attention to the health aspect of the guests.

Sunil Narang states, "With guest preferences evolving through the course of the pandemic, we are mirroring the market's enhanced focus on wellbeing by adding even more healthy food & beverage options, offering dedicated holistic wellness programs such as the Urban Wellness Clinic in partnership with Atmantan, allowing guests the option to continue to maintain physical distancing and also adding an additional layer of customization to ensure that each guest's preferences are met."

He adds, "The Four Seasons - 'Atmantan Urban Wellness Clinic' is a prime example of catering to the demand for holistic wellbeing in hospitality, where all aspects of the guest's stay are customized to offer a chance to detoxify, including but not limited to meals, spa therapies



Raof Dhanani

and activities such as yoga and tai chi.

"Apart from this we are also constantly evolving our menus to include the freshest local produce along with new culinary experiences in alignment with the goal of holistic wellbeing."

Raof Dhanani, reveals, "There are several changes that have taken place in the hotels' facilities as the needs of the customers have changed due to the pandemic. The changes that have occurred are:

- Hygiene maintenance was important but sanitization was not a part of the facilities. Now guests demand both.
- Guests have become more particular about their demands
- People have become more particular on the spends
- Customer consumption behavior has massively changed
- Trust concerns have become inevitable
- Consumer has become more dependent on Social Media for their choices and preferences

Usage of Technology

There are also new trends emerging in several other areas. One of them is accelerating the rate of technology. Smart capacities and services, which were considered as add-ons to the guest experience in the pre-pandemic times, have now become requirements. Hotels have now started investing in integrated online booking platforms. These help not only in supplementing staff efforts but also create a seamless, personalized experience.

The booking and check-in technology is also being used in several hotels, across all aspects of a guest's stay. Through the app platforms hoteliers can track spaces used by guests to ensure thorough sanitization before their next

use. Through these platforms guests can also receive notifications when their room has been cleaned, with specific details regarding sanitation practices available.

The integrated app platforms can also be used for several other functions like helping a guest order room service, use or communicate virtually with a staff member for instant assistance.

Smart technology can also help elevate the capacity of the staff. Cloud-based software can help behind-the-counter staff in streamlining the operations and co-ordinate with housekeeping

Technology is now also extensively being used in conferencing. Hotels have found that using technology can personalize an event to help it become unique and memorable. Steps that are taken to personalize an event are:

- Using a hashtag for the event
- Live streaming the conference via social media
- Organising online polls/voting systems to interact with the audience
- Live language translation of the speakers
- Creating an app specially for the event
- GPS localization of the event for in-and-outside the venue

Rise in Health Consciousness

Preventative medicine and self-care are undisputedly trending right now due to the COVID pandemic. Special eating habits are becoming the new standard. As far as conferencing is concerned, the attendees now expect an extensive culinary experience during coffee breaks, lunch and dinner. At the same time they expect the fare to be balanced. They desire that the food must be healthy. Some of the guests would also like the food to be ecological.

Besides the food, there are also several other aspects that the guests are careful about, to ensure that they stay healthy.

The hoteliers have taken all these aspects into consideration while re-opening their doors to welcome the guests.

Sunil Narang reveals, "At the Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai, the Atmantan Urban Wellness Clinic is a prime example of catering to the demand for holistic wellbeing in hospitality."

Raof Dhanani declares "Change is the only thing that is consistent in life and more in the sector of service that we are in. Hospitality sector is all about demand and supply. In the hotel industry, supply is inversely proportional to the demand of an item. We, at Sayaji Hotels, have customized our Menus in all restaurants along with the In-Room dining services. More

salads, health snacks, shakes, smoothies amongst other have been added to our menu to cater the guests' demands."

Bleisure Travel

Besides being health conscious and thus opting for healthy food, the guests also crave for pleasure. One may say that amidst the carnage, corona virus had some positive impact like encouraging a better work life balance. This desire for balance has encouraged more domestic trips, staycations and extension of business trips to have a couple leisure days.

The trend for bleisure travel is on the rise all over the globe. According to survey conducted by Hilton Hotels & Resorts the ages of seven out of 10 business travelers who want to extend the work trips for mini vacations are in the age group of 35-40. According to Expedia Group, the most common trips that morph into bleisure are conference travel.

Scott Solombrino, COO and executive director of the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) reveals, "Our research shows that an overwhelming majority of bleisure travelers stay at the same place for both the business and leisure portions of their trip."

He adds, "While companies still have a lot to work out when it comes to understanding



Sunil Narang

liability and duty of care implications around bleisure travel, this presents a great opportunity for property managers to provide a memorable experience or encourage travelers to join their loyalty program, both of which will drive returning customers."

So how do hotels fulfil the desire for leisure requirements of the guests?

Sunil Narang states, "Our hotel, Four Seasons Mumbai, located in the central district of Worli, Mumbai, has a well-trained concierge team which assists guests in customizing their stay to experience the very best that the city has to offer – from sightseeing tours to theatre performances, from renowned places of worship to shopping avenues. Additionally, our team takes great initiative in organizing in-house activities best suited to the guest, including cooking classes with our talented chefs, mixology sessions with our beverage team, and yoga classes or personal training sessions at the gym.

Raof Dhanani adds, "The demand of the leisure requirements has drastically gone up. People are now more health driven, conscious about sanitization, careful about their belongings. Hygiene maintenance for bleisure travelers has become the utmost priority."

He laments, "That's where, probably, the cost involved in maintenance has gone higher than revenue generation for sectors like ours."

Changes in the Rooms

The new trend in hotels, globally, is Smart Rooms. These rooms have several digitalized features. From access to streaming services



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to room key on your smartphone, the essential hotel amenities in the guest room are increasingly being digitalized. Now guests want concierge services or temperature controls at the push of a button (or tap of a finger). Voice-activated controls are also expanding beyond simply asking Alexa to play your favourite song.

Digital controls for temperature, light, and power, such as a Nest, that can be adjusted and programmed with the tap of a finger from a smartphone or other device, are also now the norm.

These smart rooms often, also have smart TVs which allow guests to watch their favourite Netflix show instead of cable. These TVs – either with an integrated internet connection or an add-on like Apple TV or Roku – allows viewers to select their favourite streaming service from a catalogue of apps.

So how far has the Indian hospitality industry adapted itself to have Smart Rooms?

Sunil Narang states, “A popular choice for guests for the last 14 years, Four Seasons Mumbai will shortly be enhancing its guestrooms in line with guest expectations and current trends.”

Raoof Dhanani reveals “At Sayaji Hotels rooms have not gone under any physical changes. The only changes are hygiene, cleanliness and sanitization changes done by the hotels including ours. Only the level of cleanliness maintained now is much higher than ever. The complete stock of amenities placed in the room is replaced with fresh stock and well sanitized to ensure the best guest experience.”

F&B Venues

With new trends in the hospitality industry has enveloped almost all segments of its

operation. It is believed that even in F&B venues there have been changes. So, what are the changes that have been incorporated in the Indian F&B outlets?

Raoof Dhanani states, “Changes post COVID definitely have come in all segments, primarily in F&B services, as that’s what the guest consumes. The F&B venues follow sacrosanct guidelines for cleanliness and hygiene, more maintenance, more protocols. Not only the seating arrangement but the entire premises is sanitized after every visit. Crockery cleanliness is taken care of very accurately. The maintenance cost of restaurants has gone up with all these changes, however hygiene maintenance is the only way to sustain in the market.”

Sunil Narang adds, “The focus on wellness is visible throughout the food & beverage offerings, including enhanced seasonal menus. At Four Seasons Mumbai, we look forward to revamping a few of our outlets and presenting new products to the discerning guests who choose us time and again.”

Effect of Relaxation

With relaxation in COVID restrictions across the country, many industry experts predict that travel will return to pre-pandemic levels. The pent-up demand is going to lead to a strong recovery for the industry.

What are the steps that the hotels have taken for the guests, who are expected to return to pre-pandemic period, not only to feel safe and secure but also to entertain them and make them feel relaxed?

Sunil Narang states, “The relaxation in travel restrictions has instilled a sense of normalcy that is well appreciated by every traveler as a respite from the long-standing uncertainties and hassles of travel, whether domestic

or international. As an industry, it is our responsibility to cater to the market’s rapidly multiplying demands to the best of our ability. Creating strong personal connections with guests is even more essential now, in order to understand their individual needs, perceptions and preferences, a process well-established in Four Seasons hotels around the world. This enables us to deal with each guest individually and curate the ideal stay experience for them, prioritizing their safety and comfort.”

Raoof Dhanani adds, “Relaxation in the Industry has brought a lot of impact in the travel and hospitality sector. The steps taken by brands to drive more guest attention are by enhancing the Social Media pages, offering exclusive deals and discounts, providing combined packages of the destination and vicinity around, making an extra effort to drive guest satisfaction along with enhancing their experience, ensuring to deliver quality and maintain the highest safety standards.”

Future of the Industry

The global hospitality industry has faced several challenges and losses in business during the last 2 years. However, the increasing relaxations in restrictions are expected to be game changers in shaping the future of the hospitality industry, particularly in India.

Raoof Dhanani declares, “The Industry in near future expects stability and guest behavioral change. More than expecting a consistent footfall and rotating revenues Hospitality sector is not looking for much from the market. The market acceptance and consistency is of utmost priority in these challenging times.”

Sunil Narang affirms, “At the core of hospitality lies the necessity to create personal connections, to understand our guests and to deliver to their expectations and beyond. At the current moment and in the near future, it is essential that we maintain a strong emphasis on the power of this connection, while capitalizing on the latest technological advances. The pandemic allowed us to take a step back in many ways and reevaluate our strategies as an industry. This allowed us to refocus ourselves on the human element of hospitality and align this with the innovation that the world has to offer today. Moving forward, we will also need to orient our development goals toward sustainability in order to have a minimal impact on the environment without compromising profitability. The future holds great success for hospitality once the aspects of human connection, technology and sustainability are all in synergy with business goals.” ■

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Changing Marketing Strategies

Promoting Hotels Post Pandemic

COVID-19 is not quite over but as vaccines' availability increases and there is relaxation in restrictions on travel and tourism, besides several other constraints there has been noticeable increase in the number of guests visiting hotels and F&B outlets. The occupancy rate of the hotels had also been on the rise. However, since there is still the pandemic fright imbedded in the minds of the people, the marketing strategies of the hospitality industry have changed. Emphasis is being laid on guest safety in all spheres. Hotels have also started employing direct methods of reaching out to prospective guests, in order to economize and offer its services at competitive prices. The industry is also aware that it has to revive all its services, including the F&B and banqueting segments to succeed in this post pandemic period. **Ashok Malkani** tries to examine the changes in the marketing strategies that the industry needs to make to revive and succeed in the new environment after the pandemic.

The last two years have witnessed how COVID-19, pandemic life and changes in the traditional workspaces brought about numerous changes in the marketing strategies of the hotel industry not only in India but all over the globe.

While working from home during the pandemic some people found that foregoing commute and sending emails from home was welcome, others – especially those sharing small spaces with loved ones – it was not such welcome change. They found it difficult to take a call when every room was occupied by some other member or when there was a racket in the home due to operation of mechanical devices in the kitchen.

The hotels, which were hard hit due to social distancing and travel restrictions, came up with a bright marketing strategy and began offering a possible solution by repositioning the rooms – in some instances by actually swapping out beds for luxurious desks and comfortable chairs – as picturesque offices in which you could work in peace. And this was offered at a lower rate than the normal room rent!

As weeks roll by and restrictions due to the pandemic are eased, several work places have opened their doors to the employees. However, several workers are reluctant to return to the usual office atmosphere and, it is found that money is being invested in spaces

that offer an attractive environment, a bite to eat, and perhaps a bit of socialization. The hotels have realized this and have adopted marketing strategies to promote their properties to this segment of clients.

As times change, post pandemic, marketing strategies of hotels have to keep changing continuously satisfy the shifting needs and whims of the people.

Domestic or International Tourists?

Since the restrictions over the past few months have relaxed, tourism – both domestic and international – has also received a boost. The marketing policies of hotels have now to take this into consideration and change, to

entice this segment, by meeting their needs.
So, how would they do this?

Digvijay Singh, Director of Sales & Marketing, Indore Marriott Hotel disclosed that Marriott hotel would “continue to do digital marketing while focusing aggressively on BTL activations like Tele-marketing, Sponsorships, etc. We will also focus on collaborating with top corporate accounts and institutions to host large scale events at the hotel. Increasing the visibility in high traffic public areas like airports will also be a major focal point in the months to come.”

Delving on whether the marketing efforts would concentrate on international or domestic tourists he stated, “In the last 2 years, we were able to see the potential of domestic tourism from a different angle. Currently all the marketing efforts are focused on domestic tourists and the focus should not be shifted as these restrictions do not impact the domestic travel. With the skies opening up, we will also focus on international tourists.”

Sunil Bhatia, Director, Sales & Marketing, The Mirador hotel, Mumbai stated, “With relaxation in tourism sector, we would try reaching out to Maximum Domestic Corporate



and Travel/MICE/Event Related Companies; even Airlines on a direct basis. Some amount of Social Media Marketing on Geographic and Interest Based Targeting would also help for local F&B Related Business.”

He added, “Our marketing efforts would initially be on the Domestic Travellers and on the International tourists thereafter.”

Meena Rewari, Director of Sales & Marketing Park Hyatt Chennai, revealed, “We would extensively concentrate on our Brand website and its promotions and packages since these offer guests always the best value. At the same time, we do have third

party partners who are important at this time of business revival. With the sentiment at a high, we will focus on communicating the product and services to a larger audience with emphasis on our Brand pillars, namely– Rooms, Food & Beverage (The Flying Elephant, Mr. Ong, The Dining Room, In Room Dining, Takeaway), Events, Wellness (Spa, Pool and Gym), Pet friendly accommodation, and personalized luxury and experiences.”

She added, “To encompass our marketing efforts holistically, we cannot make any distinction between domestic and international tourist. With the start of International flights,

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Meena Rewari



Digvijay Singh



Avadhoot Mahimkar



Sunil Bhatia

we have to reach out to our feeder countries and the domestic traveller for weekends and staycations. Our marketing campaigns will be targeted at different times towards different audiences as needed."

Avadhoot Mahimkar, Director of Sales and Marketing, The Resort, Mumbai declared, "With the relaxation given by the government, every hotel should have a plan on how to focus on their target markets. MICE segment was lying low for almost two years and now it will see an increase in requirement for the next one and a half year. Various marketing campaigns can be packaged to grab business which will include promotions on social networking sites, inflight magazines as airline travel increases globally with small ad spaces in nearby shopping malls which will work in having a brand recall value.

"As The Resort, Mumbai, is located on Aksa beach, which is in North Mumbai, we majorly focus on catchment area which would be from Borivali till Andheri. We have our regular guests who book the Resort for a quick getaway rather than travelling to other vacation destinations. Plus, we get many families and couples who prefer to stay at our place mainly due to the view they get from the room and the proximity to the beach."

Reliance on Intermediaries

With robust OTA (online Travel Agency) and growth of services like Airbnb and Vrbo, it has become a challenge for hotels to get past gatekeepers. It's crucial for hotel owners and managers everywhere to put in place comprehensive hotel marketing strategies that drive more direct engagement with guests. It may be mentioned that one of the main goals of every hotelier is to increase hotel direct bookings because they are not only more profitable but also because they offer relationship-building opportunities and can make it easier to earn repeat business.

So would they be relying more on direct channel to reduce dependency on intermediaries, and if so, how are they going to reach out to the clients?

Sunil asserts, "Reaching out directly is always preferred. However, as certain channels enable a better market penetration, one can also go selectively for the same, provided that Rate Parity is maintained."

Meena declared, "Our endeavour is to grow business from our Brand website, Hyatt.com, which is an established platform for best rate guarantee bookings for hotels across the globe. We enroll guests in the World of Hyatt

loyalty program to encourage them to earn and redeem points and avail offers that are exclusive to this program. Non-members are enrolled at hotels and the loyalty program is also promoted on social and digital channels. However we cannot discount the role that our third party partners play in our business success as their reach is often wider and on a larger scale."

Avadhoot states, "Any hotel would prefer a direct channel to close the bookings, whether online or offline. Direct bookings through calls, emails, brand website bookings, walk-ins, etc. should be given more focus. Hotels should invest in PPC campaigns which can produce direct bookings. Some investment can be done in the social networking sites, which could help in marketing the hotel /property. However, we should not neglect the online travel portals which are very much going aggressive to reach the b2c segment and it would help the hotel / property to fetch business."

Digvijay says, "Our focus has always been to drive more traffic to our brand website by redirecting them. Intermediaries play an equally important role for the hotels but the services cannot be substituted with direct channels. Both mediums give us a different type & volume of business which also depends on the location."

Voice Control Devices

Modernisation of services in hotels is of immense importance. This has made usage of latest voice devices like alexia and Google common in hotels. Would the hotels be focusing on promoting the hotels by publicizing that they use these devices?

Sunil says, "Moving ahead with Technology, it is becoming a search source to go through voice control devices. However many still prefer the old fashioned way of booking directly with the hotel. It took nearly 10 years for guests to get used to booking via the OTA's.

Digvijay declared, "Many hotels around the globe have started to use and promote voice assistance as a facility post the pandemic as it helps to reduce multiple touch points which also minimizes the risk. International travellers are now tech-savvy and such features entice them while looking for a hotel. We do not promote these devices but we do promote our mobile check-in facility through the Marriott Bonvoy app which helps the guest to check-in and check-out without any hassles."

Avadhoot revealed, "As of now we aren't much involved in this, but I guess going

forward this can be a good tool for any hotel to market itself. Going forward we would see many hotels using this technology.”

Meena iterated, “We are currently not using voice control devices for promotions in our market.”

Health & Safety

Though the hotels, with relaxations in restrictions imposed on them due to COVID-19, have spread the red carpet for guests, there is still fear in the hearts of the clients about their health and safety.

It is therefore necessary for the hospitality industry not only to identify and address the potential risks but also make the clients aware of the safety measures taken by the property.

Digvijay declares, “The wellbeing of guests and associates is of paramount importance for Marriott International. With the introduction of ‘Commitment to Clean’, we are committed to providing our guests with a safe environment that aligns with expert protocols to defeat COVID-19. Our staff members are fully vaccinated and are equipped with PPE kits at all times to ensure guest safety. Hand sanitizing stations are kept

at high traffic areas. Regular and thorough disinfection of public areas is another way to ensure that our guests and associates are in a safe environment.”

Meena stated, “Park Hyatt Chennai follows Hyatt’s multi-layered Global Care & Cleanliness Commitment which provides enhanced operational guidance and resources around colleague and guest safety and peace of mind.”

She added, “Ever since the pandemic started, we have been taking precautionary measures across all aspects of Park Hyatt Chennai in an effort to maintain a safe environment for our guests, customers and colleagues. We continue to insist on face masks, social distancing and hand sanitization at the property and our guests have faith in us. With double vaccination mandatory for travelers, colleagues and guests are even more confident in the brand.”

Suniil said, “The Mirador Mumbai assures the people about their health and safety concern by highlighting on its Hygiene standards, emphasizing the hotel’s Covid Protocols and SOPs”

Avadhoot declared, “Safety precautions

and guest health should be given utmost importance. Due to this, all the safety guidelines should be followed by every hotel. Sanitizing the rooms and the public areas, temperature checks of the guests and employees should be made mandatory, displaying of vaccination certificates can be made mandatory at hotels, maintaining the social distancing at the hotel public areas and using face guards or masks would help in assuring the safety of the guests. Whatever guidelines the hotel follows, should be made visible at the entry point and on the website, for the public to see that they are entering a safe zone.”

Personalised Marketing Techniques

As more people get vaccinated and travel restrictions ease around the world, there are clear indications that hotel demand will return almost as quickly as it disappeared. Pent-up demand for traveling and new experiences is real and the early numbers indicate that vaccinated people are quickly booking hotel stays. This presents a clear opportunity for hoteliers to win back guests. However, those who enter your doors have been dreaming

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about this experience for more than a year. They will have high expectations and the hospitality industry can't afford to let them down. They will remember their pre-COVID hotel experiences and expect new trips to meet or exceed those expectations. It is thus imperative for hotels to adopt personalized marketing methods. What would be the methods they would adopt to promote their hotels? Would they be using social media?

Meena maintains that Park Hyatt brand is known for personalized service and experiences. She continues, "For the diet conscious we offer tailor made dishes in our restaurants and in-room dining menus. Food preferences range from Jain, gluten-free, low fat, high protein etc. To woo families we have introduced a Kids program that includes an exclusive check in counter, registration card, gifts on arrival, kids menu, kids cookery class, in-room movie set up with popcorn, bathrobes and slippers, board games etc. For pet parents we have the Paws at the Park initiative where a dog bed, bowl and treats are placed in the guest room for the canine companion."

As far as usage of social media was concerned, she says, "We extensively use social media channels like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Google to promote the rooms, food & beverage, events, spa, home delivery, and luxury experiences. We have recently launched a new restaurant, Mr. Ong - The Flavours of Singapore and promote it heavily on Facebook and Instagram. Communication through these channels reaches faster to desired audience and is relatively cost effective. Moreover, the performance is measureable. We use organic as well as paid media. Being in the industry we follow sister hotels and competitor hotels so stay up to date on trends."

Avadhoot asserts, "Every hotel has to promote themselves on social media and the ones who aren't doing it yet are already missing a lot. With various social networking sites, a hotel needs to have their presence on the top 4-5 sites which can help them promote their rooms/banquets/hotel facilities in a better way and with minimal costing. By having some good photos taken of the property and some short videos of food preparations, garnishes, room amenities, etc. can work wonders on social media. Having videos on your hotel USP's should be a must for any hotel. Along with that, a hotel can have engagement activities planned online to keep their followers growing like giving some food vouchers for the winners or so."

Suniil disclosed, "Many Hotels, having their own apps, loyalty programs are able to reach out within their own data base of clients who can be reached out directly via mails and calls. Programmatic Advertising and SEO is also being leveraged to reach out to interested buyers, mostly in the leisure segment."

He further said, "Social media has become an important and cost effective way of reaching out to our Target Clientele. We use social media to reach out, especially during F&B Related Events."

Digvijay declared, "As far as our hotel is concerned, we send monthly upcoming promotions and initiatives to the Marriott Bonvoy members and our corporate clients. This helps them to stay updated with the hotel's offerings. WhatsApp has become a major medium for businesses. It is regularly used by hotels to reach out to their customers with exclusive deals and discounts. Geo-targeting & using look-alike audience is an effective strategy which helps in targeting people in a defined area."

He added, "Nowadays, every establishment from small to large is using social media as a platform to promote their offerings and facilities as it helps them to reach a wide chunk of people very easily. In the past years, more and more people have started to use social media in their free time which is driving the hotels to showcase & promote the offerings through these trending channels. We regularly use social media to promote the hotel. From ongoing & upcoming F&B promotions to stay packages, Instagram & Facebook are used on a daily basis to keep our followers updated with the hotel offerings. Targeted social media campaigns are also being done to reach out to people in other parts of India."

Promoting F&B Venues and Banqueting Facilities

It must be realized that besides revenue from rooms there is also sizeable earnings from F&B and events like weddings, MICE, etc. Given how many wedding and events plans were disrupted in 2020 and 2021, it is believed that, with relaxation in restrictions, these would pick up.

However, with people still worried about their welfare, food safety, from preparation to presentation, will continue to be a top priority and concern. The focus on safety has led to some innovative serving techniques

Digvijay declares, "For promoting F&B venues and banqueting facilities, the first step is to do a thorough competition analysis and

defining the target audience. Post that, we, at Indore Marriott Hotel, focuses on rolling out unique offerings and facilities to our guests that are not available at any of the other hotels in the city. On regular intervals, we come up with a new food promotion in our F&B venues for a short duration to offer something different to the people of Indore. Recently, Marriott announced the launch of The Time is now – Where Can We Take You? It is an offer curated for the guests to discover the joy of meeting face-to-face again. We have been promoting this and offering a host of enticing rewards to people booking an event or a meeting which is valid till the end of 2022."

Suniil succinctly puts promoting of F&B thus: "We would be promoting our F&B venues and banqueting facilities via Social Media, Tele Calling, WhatsApp and Emails."

Avadhoot avers, "Food quality, venue ambience and the F&B services are the ones which are responsible to make any banqueting facilities or F&B outlets a known and famous place. Once these are taken care, you need a strong marketing plan to promote your banqueting spaces. Your existing guests and their word of mouth go a long way in promoting a hotel. Plus, now the social marketing sites can help in displaying your spaces. With nice and attractive photos / small videos to back it, any person scrolling through his mobile would see what the hotel has to offer. Corporates in the local nearby areas can be targeted for their MICE requirements and now with a lot of relaxation in place, they need to be approached. Also, keeping attractive pricing for cocktail parties, wedding group, engagements gatherings, birthday parties and reunions will have a good amount of footfall coming to your hotel."

Meena maintains, "We continue to believe that digital is the way forward. For our rooms, restaurants and event spaces we invest in Google discover ads, banner ads, and digital ads in prominent lifestyle portals. This way we are able to reach the target audience in a short span of time.

"We have recently successfully launched Mr. Ong – The Flavours of Singapore, Chennai's only authentic Singaporean restaurant and are working towards the relaunch of our signature dining destination – The Flying Elephant which is undergoing refurbishment. Digital and social channels are being and will be used extensively.

"For events we also use our extensive local database and relationships with community specific influencers for leads." ■

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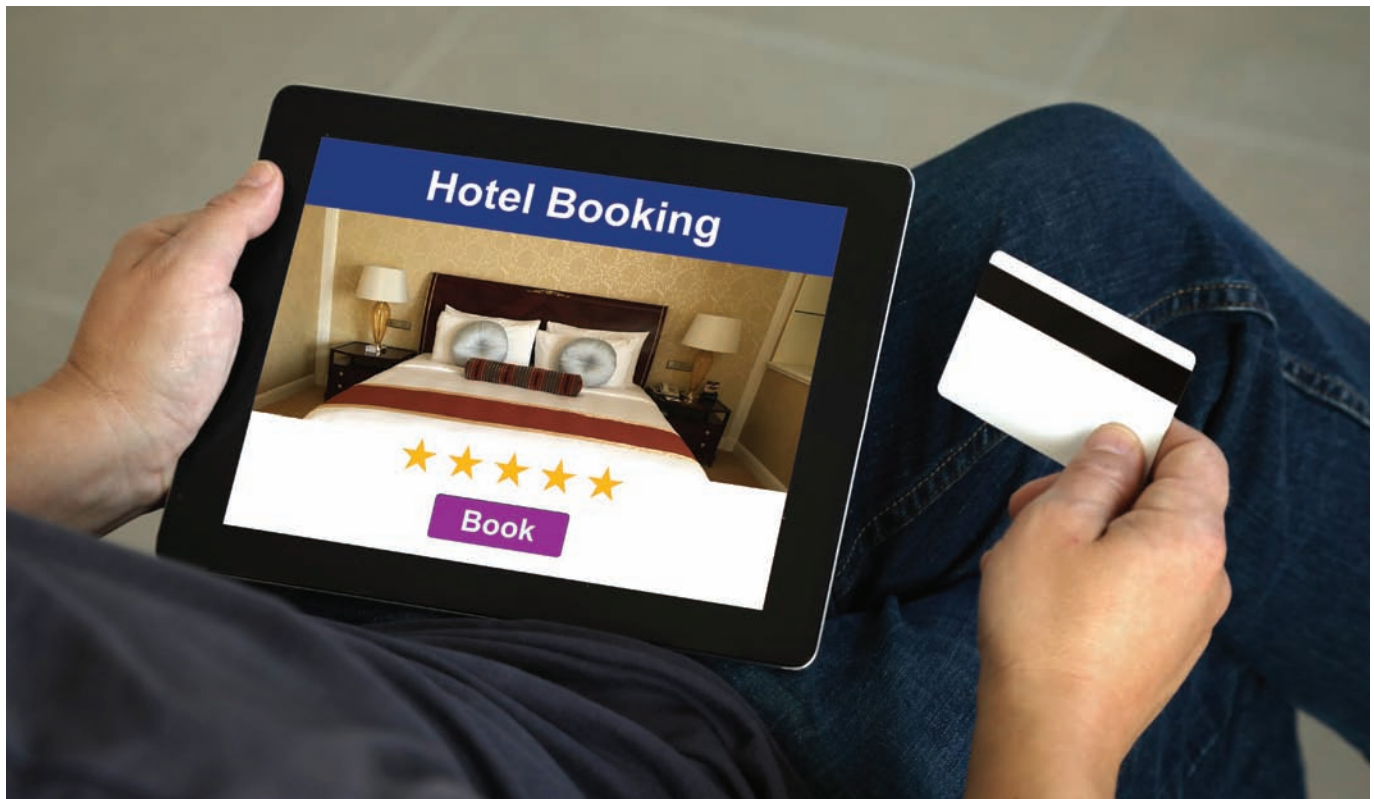
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Boosting Bookings

The pandemic has impacted travel globally. India along with many countries has lifted travel restrictions. It is now important for hotels to understand the future trends and business forecast to develop a recovery strategy to plan for the demand going to generate in coming days. Hotel's marketing need to adopt strategies those are extremely relevant in this current situation.

It must be realised that offering a discounted rate is not a wise option for attracting guests. Heavy discounting may affect the brand in the long run. Also the loyal customers may react adversely to this initiative. Fortunately, positioning your hotel for future success and accomplishing your short-term marketing goals are not mutually exclusive concepts. There are several ways to market your hotel for future success without compromising the pressing needs of today.

Marketing your hotel needs careful planning. One has to make and follow a marketing plan even if the fruits of your labour aren't immediately apparent. Hotel marketing strategies take time and effort. Running a profitable hotel requires knowledge of what's

come before and a special knack for what's next. It takes great attention to detail. There are some of the methods that have to be earnestly considered to make a success of your hotel. A look at the future trends will enable the hoteliers in India to adopt an effective marketing strategy.

However, marketing of a hotel is not difficult, even in this competitive world, if you have an understanding of how to make your hotel saleable to prospective buyers. Today when DoMs and Marketing Managers speak about hotel marketing, mention of internet inevitably creeps in. Everyone agrees that the days of marketing your hotel through the conventional media is now a thing of the past.

A comprehensive hotel marketing plan helps your hotel business reach its goals. It is the road map of how you'll focus your energy to achieve these goals. For this you have to follow five basic rules: Define yourself, Choose your target audience, Settle the digital question, Ramp up inbound and outbound marketing strategies and Track your return on investment.

The work you should do to define your hotel's unique identity will ultimately help you

solidify your brand. Your hotel brand is far more than the colours in your marketing materials and the shape of your logo. Your brand communicates your company's character and, accordingly, lets potential guests know what you offer better than anyone else.

And the best way to do this is through the net. Today, most hoteliers realise the importance of their webface to their customers and the extent to which customers interact with the brand through the social media. The Indian online industry has grown at a tremendous pace over the last few years. As Internet and credit card penetration has increased, more and more customers have started to adopt the e-commerce model. India has been the cynosure of Internet and mobile-based consumer business.

Effective Website

Preparing a website that is easily accessible and has attractive content is a point that needs to be seriously considered. Marketing has gone digital. No ifs, ands or buts about it—it's time to market your property online. You need a website. Your website needs to be

mobile compatible. Mobile engagement is the driving force behind almost every sector of the market and the same goes for the travel and hospitality sector.

Now more than ever, hotel websites play a central role in attracting guests. In fact, Google unveiled a study which shows that 96 percent of all travellers rely on search engines to find accommodations. This is great news for hotels that have beautiful, responsive websites. On the other hand, it's frightening data for any hotel with an outdated or poorly-designed web platform. The overwhelming majority of guests will judge your entire hotel based on the first impression they get from your hotel website. So you have to plan your website meticulously.

Most hoteliers realise the importance of their webface to their customers and the extent to which customers interact with the brand through that medium; therefore, we should always invest in the best possible experience for our visitors.

Experts suggest that you should give extensive details of the hotel. Details are what set you apart from the competition. Your website is the best tool available for showing off your property and convincing guests that they should book with you. The more

specialised you make your property the more likely you are to attract the kinds of guests you want. Your website content, thus, should be your top priority.

Need of the Hour

Your web content has to be extremely good. This is significant as the clients are more and more interested in reading details about your hotel.

So what should you outline in the content? You have to first gauge what the guests want from you. Are they looking for a quick, easy place to spend a night? A romantic getaway, family vacation, urban experience, trying adventure, needing solace, business, do they want a lot of attention or do they want to be left alone?

At times this would depend on the location of your property. Once you identify the types of guests your property attracts, think about whether your website serves them as well as your property does. Does your website show potential guests exactly what your property has to offer? The role of your content is to answer all their questions.

While making the content don't be under the erroneous impression that guests choose you. This way you may end up putting entirely

irrelevant material on your website. Your marketing plan will be far more successful if you choose your guests. Imagine the types of people who would get the most value from your accommodations.

Are they business people or leisure travellers? People travelling alone or with their families? This exercise will help you focus your marketing messages. How can your marketing speak to the solutions you offer each person? The answer to this question will help you create consistent, efficient hotel marketing materials. In the end, it's all about knowing your audience.

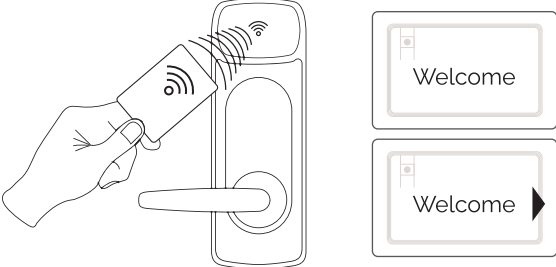
To effectively engage your visitors, you must present the most important information right away. This means strategically incorporating key details on your homepage, where visitors expect to see the things that interest them the most. To prevent bounces and encourage bookings, good hotel webdesign should have the following:

Prominent Reservation Button: Never make your guests hunt for a way to reserve a room. Feature your reservation button or availability calendar in a way that's impossible to miss.

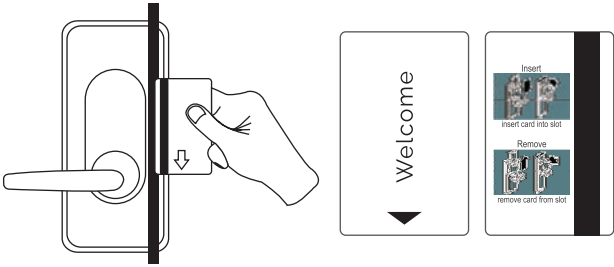
Many times, customer issues come down to, how many clicks do I have to make to get to the information I need? Reducing the number of clicks improves the experience.

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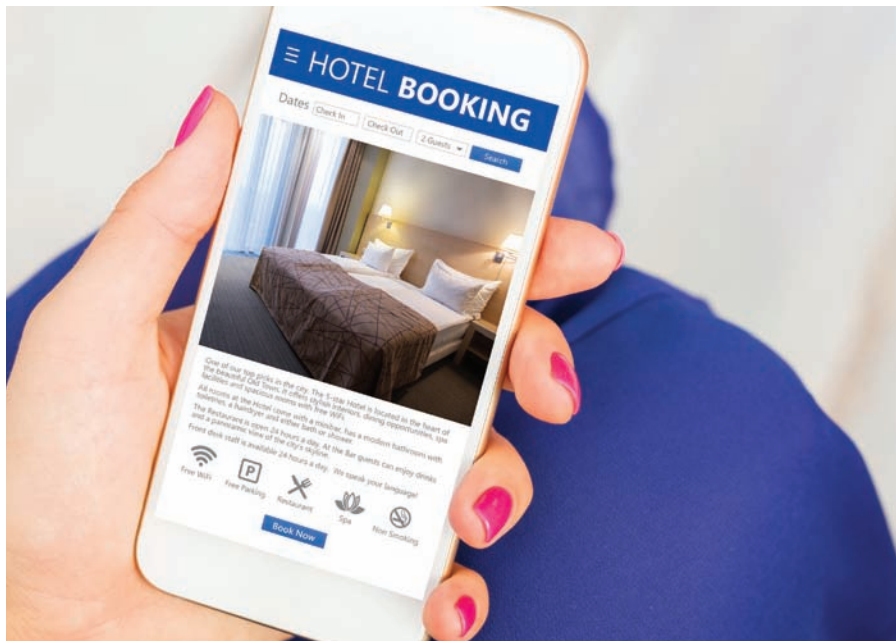


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Contact Info: Some guests would rather send email inquiries or book over the phone. Display your hotel's contact information prominently to make this easier.

Descriptive Content: Engage your visitors with compelling, descriptive content on your homepage. Focus on your location, especially if you're conveniently stationed near the area's top businesses or attractions. Continue with details that make your hotel sound attractive.

Photos: Select your hotel's best photography and feature it prominently in a slideshow gallery near the top of your homepage or as a dynamic website background.

New Developments

As technology changes, hotel websites must adapt. Modern devices and new search engine updates have made old design strategies obsolete. To see if your site is stuck in the Dark Ages, let's take a look at some key developments.

To reach the full spectrum of your potential guests, your site must have a responsive design that adapts to each and every device and browser your guest might use to explore your property online. This means a design that will automatically adjust itself to fit any resolution, device, or browser. Without this critical concept, your website will only be able to tap a limited pool of consumers—much to the delight of your key competitors.

Your online booking engine is fundamental when it comes to efficiently booking guests. It needs to be fast and easy to navigate. It needs an interactive availability calendar. It should also have a modern user interface that seamlessly blends with the look and style of

your website.

Since search engine algorithms are becoming more sophisticated, websites with quality content do the best. Have your hotel marketing plan include a website with relevant articles, rich photography, and video.

Looking at the Year Ahead

Updating your website at regular intervals is essential. As the hotel acquires new dimensions, you must focus on them. Every Marketing Manager must also know of the travel trends and the challenges and opportunities in the times to come. So what lies ahead in the coming year? The year ahead is full of challenges and opportunities.

It is predicted that benefit of loyalty programme will play an important role, particularly in the mid-market and budget-end of the market. As far as brands are concerned, they must focus on implementing consistently simpler but more compelling brand promises, and combine value with experience to entice consumers.

Social media frenzy has become truly integrated in the travel and hospitality decision-making process, representing both threats and opportunities for the industry. Mobile technology will increasingly be at the heart of the consumer-brand interaction and will offer a plethora of opportunities for customisation, communication, promotion and loyalty.

New Rules for the Success

Several changes will have to be made if one desires to succeed during the year ahead. Millennials have become the fastest growing customer segment. Exploration, interaction and

experience are the major focus of millennials. This customer segment besides looking for gourmet experience at reasonable price are interested in using technology to do things that many have become accustomed to doing manually; this includes checking in at hotels.

Here is what the industry will have to deal with successfully to make a success in the coming year:

Customer Service: This will make the list every year, but this year it has to be a combination of 'high tech, high touch'. Service must include enabling guests to be self-sufficient. The rise of the digital traveler requires the hotel industry to balance the expectation of personalization while enhancing the need to remain independent.

Technology: Consumers and not hotels will continue to drive in-room technological advances. We have already seen such technology that allows guests to charge multiple electronic devices and check-out from their room, but that is only the beginning. As guests rely more and more on their smart phones, hotels must make it easier for guests to get what they want and need through simple apps.

Hotels will need to continue to invest in technology to help improve the guest experience, but, they must also make smart investments. With limited budgets, hotels cannot afford to try every new technology. They must upgrade to technologies that have been proven to add to revenues and reduce costs. It may be great to give every guest a remote control that opens the windows and closes the shades in their room, but that may not be justified if it does not bring in more revenue than it costs.

Tracking Returns

What's a plan if you don't have a way to track its success? Make sure to follow through on all of your marketing efforts by including ways to monitor your return on investment (ROI). As you move forward with your plan, you'll need to make informed decisions for each of your marketing strategies.

Knowing how to market your hotel not just for short-term occupancy gains but for future growth is a hallmark of a successful hospitality organisation. It is always the laggards in an economy that sacrifice strategic goals for immediate returns, and in a recession it is those businesses that keep their eyes on the future that find themselves in the best position after the storm. These marketing steps are expected to put you on the right path for long-term success, without compromising your immediate objectives.

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Stone Hearth Ovens

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Food Presentation

An Artistic Story to Unfold!

By Sharmila Chand

Food presentation is a beautiful story that involves all five senses into the experience of eating. The cooking process, the ingredients, the texture, aroma, flavours – all capture the senses before the food is actually tasted. Haven't we heard very often – 'You eat first with your eyes'!

'The first sight of the dish should be such that the diner's spontaneous reaction is of Wow', say chefs. They add, 'Food presentation is the best way for us to bring our personality into a dish.' No wonder we see chefs working hard on plating, getting into the minor details of the right texture, colour combinations to create a masterpiece on the plate. Let's see how the story of presentation unfolds as they

share the significance and tips about food presentation.

Significance of Food Presentation

Chef Shyam Pandey, Executive Chef – URU Brewpark, Bangalore

Food presentation is not only important but is actually a necessity. It plays a crucial role in the culinary journey. Dining or eating is a multi sensory experience in itself and when it comes to food presentation it's a direct play on that. Every plate of food must tell a story & any dish can be treated differently by using the same ingredients. For example a dish like a simple salad – a mere plays on the cutting of the ingredients,

dressing the salad, arranging & plating it makes a big difference.

Chef Sombir Choudhary – Culinary Partner, Raahi Neo Kitchen& Bar, Bangalore

I like to play around with food presentation e.g. At Raahi we recently modified our Bhalla Papdi Chaat – it is a chaat at the end of the day, but it looks like a sunny side up egg, all we did was topped it with aerated sweet yogurt and added a mango sphere to make it look like an egg yolk and sprinkled it with black pepper.

Chef Suvaranjan Banerjee

As a culinarian, food presentation has always been primal to me. I believe that

creating a great visual palette sets a preamble to the first bite. A well-presented plate aids in creating an immersive dining experience where all senses are equally tantalized.

It's like picking a book. You know that you can't judge it by the cover, but its look and feel gives you a certain sense of faith to venture forward. The technique of deconstruction, where a chef decodes and dismantles the dish to create a unique interpretation of the same; is a classic example of how a dish with the same ingredients can be treated differently.

By altering the form and visual perception, the chef gives the diners a fresher perspective of the dish, allowing them to experience the same flavours in a different way.

Pradipt Sinha, Director of Food & Beverage, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla

Food presentation is an art- the plate being the canvas and the chef being the artist. A chef must play with ingredients, colours, garnishes, textures and cooking techniques to create culinary master pieces. A colourful, vibrant platter will evoke a sense of excitement for the palate.

Food plating speaks volumes about the story of the dish and its origin. In the age of social media and food influencers, food presentation has taken a centre stage to build conversations around the brand.

It is said, you eat with your eyes first. A perfectly plated dish would not only enhance the craving but would automatically hold a higher opinion for the meal.

Presentation is Vital for Culinary Success

Chef Shyam Pandey, Executive Chef – URU Brewpark, Bangalore

As I said eating is a multi sensory journey & we eat first with our eyes. A good presentation immediately elevates a diner's mood and makes him look forward to eating that dish. Also in the current scenario where social media rules, a well presented dish garners a lot of attention on social media which not only piques curiosity about that dish but also gets the required attention.

Chef Suvaranjan Banerjee

Presentation of the food aids a great deal in culinary storytelling. While the focus on plating and other aspects of presentation



"I believe that creating a great visual palette sets a preamble to the first bite. A well-presented plate aids in creating an immersive dining experience where all senses are equally tantalized"

Chef Suvaranjan Banerjee



"Food presentation is not only important but is actually a necessity. Every plate of food must tell a story & any dish can be treated differently by using the same ingredients.

Chef Shyam Pandey, Executive Chef – URU Brewpark, Bangalore

was always high, it is at its peak now in the era of social media. If you go back to the biggest F&B trends of the past few years you can see that most of these dishes were highly Instagram-able.

In simple terms, what is visually appealing gets captured and shared, becoming an additional marketing tool for your restaurant. The main purpose of the presentation should always be to ensure a seamless dining experience. Chefs should make sure that the dish is presented in a convenient way for consumption, avoiding any confusing moments for the guests.

With presentation we can also create a trail that can guide the guests on how the food should be consumed. The right presentation however doesn't stop with what goes into the plate. The choice of cutlery and crockery, the service culture and even the fragrance and lighting of the dining space plays a vital role in the perception of the dish itself."

Pradipt Sinha, Director of Food & Beverage, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla

Food presentation showcases the skills and knowledge of the chef preparing the dish and also helps creating strong brand connect value for the restaurant and the hotel. It offers an exciting opportunity to bring the culture of the food to the surface of the dish- you can choose to opt for traditional presentation or reinvent the dish with modern techniques. It sets the structural integrity, flavour dispersion and aesthetic tonality of the core dish.

How you arrange your food determines your meal's aesthetic tone, structural integrity, and flavour dispersion. For example, it is essential to plate the moist ingredients first in order to prevent them from running over other ingredients. One must create flavour bites and mix textures to create surprise elements. Adding height to your plate and building layers would definitely be super enthralling for the palates of the guests."

How Best to Focus on Presentation

Chef Shyam Pandey, Executive Chef – URU Brewpark, Bangalore

Presentation is extremely crucial not just for me but for any chef. Personally for me it is very important that food is not only beautifully plated but also succeeds in telling a story I want to say. I have always



“Presentation is very important to me; I give it equal importance as to the taste of food”

Chef Sombir Choudhary – Culinary Partner - Raahi Neo Kitchen & Bar, Bangalore

put my heart & soul not only in cooking the dish but in the entire journey of creating that perfect dish & it takes lots of effort and determination in collecting the right cutlery & crockery which not only matches with the brand's aesthetics but also does justice to the dish it is meant for.

Chef Sombir Choudhary – Culinary Partner – Raahi Neo Kitchen & Bar, Bangalore

Presentation is very important to me; I give it equal importance as to the taste of food. As young guests' and travellers these days have started appreciating the efforts that we put on the plate, it has become a necessity for me to focus on presentation. You eat with your eyes first, and I firmly believe in this.

I personally love going for crockery and cutlery hunting. I keep looking for new artisans and really appreciate the hard work that they put in designing the plates and crockery. I have explored various parts of India - from Khurja (Pottery town of India) to street vendors of Rajasthan to stone artists of Agra to bamboo prop manufacturers of Bangalore.

Chef Suvaranjan Banerjee

I feel that food presentation sets the right ambience for dining. My team and I keep ourselves constantly updated to global trends and actively pursue the sparks of creativity. I believe that good food is like art, and the crockery is the canvas. It

is extremely important to get it right. We at the hotel maintain a collection of cutlery, crockery, tableware designed for specific dining events.”

Pradipt Sinha, Director of Food & Beverage, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla

As a chef, the first priority is always on the quality of ingredients, authenticity of the recipe, taste of the dish and hygiene standards. However, food presentation is a differentiator between a good dish and a perfect dish. While there are classic rules of plating, I feel creativity should be free flowing. Plus, I believe that every element in the plate must be edible.

Selecting the right crockery is a very essential part of food presentation skills. A plate must be big enough to make the food stand out but must be petite enough to ensure that food portions don't look small. Colour of the plate is yet another interesting factor- a white plate is a beautiful canvas for bright coloured food while dark coloured plates lend a great appeal to light coloured dishes. In fact, the colours have an ability to reduce or stimulate appetite. For our thematic food festivals at Edesia, we always use copper utensils or traditional



“Food presentation is a differentiator between a good dish and a perfect dish. While there are classic rules of plating, I feel creativity should be free flowing”

Pradipt Sinha, Director of Food & Beverage, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla

thalis to ensure authentic experiences.

Tips for Ideal Food Presentation

Chef Shyam Pandey, Executive Chef – URU Brewpark, Bangalore

Play on the colour & texture of the dish
Choose right crockery
Keep it simple

Chef Sombir Choudhary – Culinary Partner – Raahi Neo Kitchen & Bar, Bangalore

Consistency of the sauce
Bunch of micro herbs
Flavoured Air bubbles
The temperature of the dish
Herb Oils
Freeze dried Powders

Chef Suvaranjan Banerjee

Through presentation you are not just talking about the food, you are talking about the space and what it stands for. It's extremely important that it matches the restaurant's ambience. For example, a sophisticated plate would clash terribly if served in a rustic cafe.

Plating should be to tantalize the diners and not to distract them. Having too many elements in plate can take the focus away from the main ingredient or concept, leaving the guests confused.

A hint of theatricality in the presentation can help a lot in the age of digital media. Create an unexpected wow factor that the diners can rave about later on their social media handles.

Pradipt Sinha, Director of Food & Beverage, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla

Sauce it up: The delicious sauces can add a lot of character and colour to the principal dish. Your squeeze bottle or spoon could be your paint brush, Smear, Swirl, put Accent dots, smear Accent dots- unleash your creativity. Make sure that you carefully wipe the edges so that the sauces don't start running.

Garnish it right: As you finish plating, ensure that garnish must be edible. Do not heap the garnish at one corner but disperse it thoughtfully. Do not clutter your plate. Avoid garnishes with strong odour.

Learn about plating tools: Play with decorating brushes for perfect strokes, use moulds to get the perfect shapes and sizes, make precision tongs your best friends to garnish delicate items, trust on shavers for a perfect cheese & chocolate drizzle and so on.



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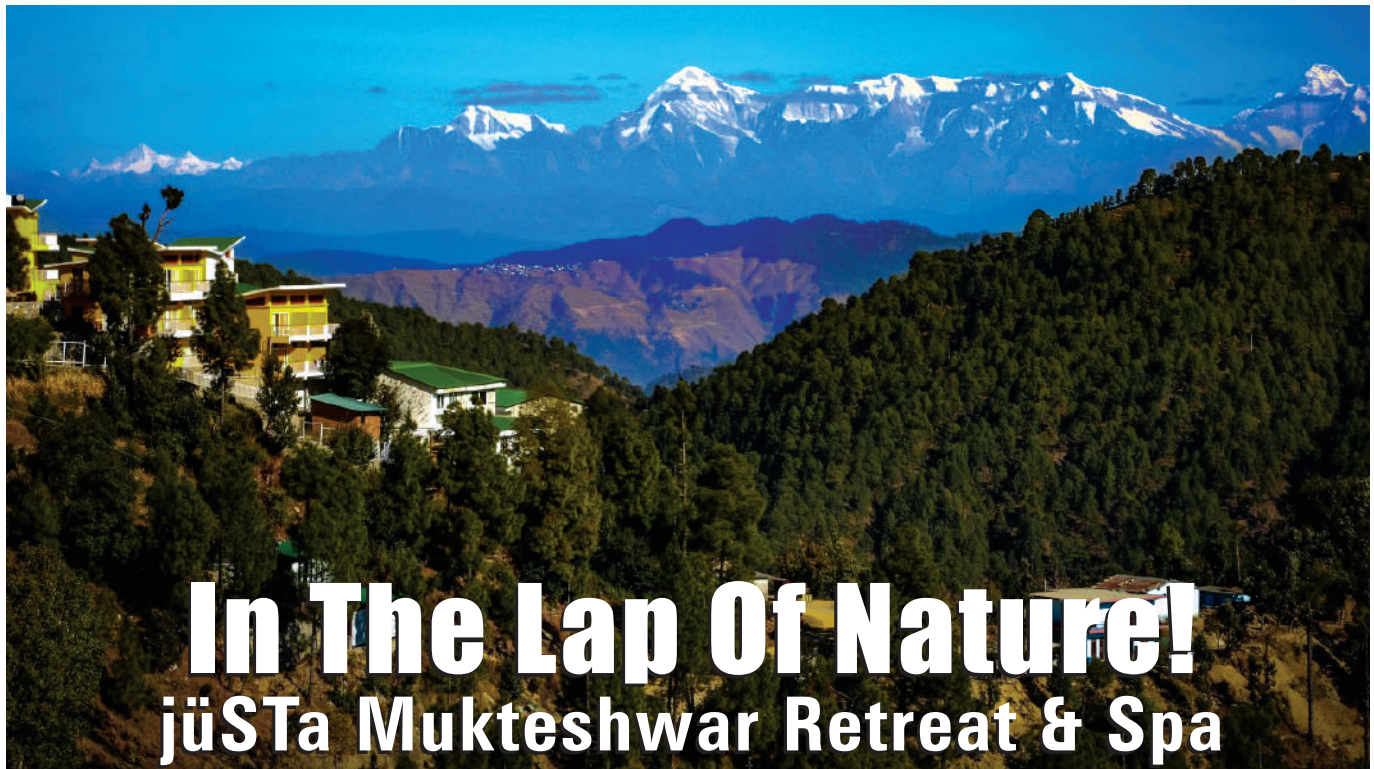
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By Sharmila Chand

Nestled in a quiet location of Mukteshwar in Kumaon hills, JüSta Mukteshwar Retreat and Spa is a complete luxurious and wellness destination. A perfect getaway for families and nature lovers, it is truly a gem tucked in the serene environs with spectacular views of the valley and the Himalayan range. On a clear day one can spot the snow clad peaks of Trishul, Nanda Devi and Panchachuli from many spots in the retreat. The clear night sky also affords great opportunities for star gazing.

Commitment to Sustainability Measures

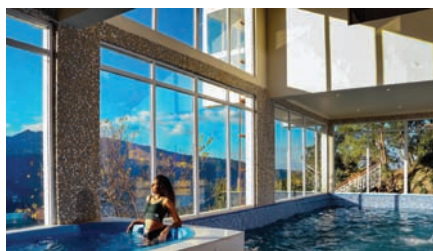
For me, the retreat holds a special place as it has undertaken a commitment to decrease its environmental footprint and increase the sustainability of the services it offers.

Design - Sunny Thakur, the principal architect informs that right from the design stage no trees were cut for construction purposes and the design was adjusted keeping the full grown trees in mind. A major wing of rooms and conference hall etc are built with lightweight construction material thus relieving stress on the hills.

Bottled Water Alternatives - In support of waste reduction and a higher-quality experience, the retreat has eliminated

mineral water bottles in the guest rooms and replaced them with glass refillable bottles.

Embracing Art - JuSta hotels emphasis on the design and art element is evident in all rooms and public areas, including the restaurants and the lounge. The interesting and eye-catching artwork throughout the hotel not only enhances the aesthetics and décor but also leads to Art Therapy for guests and their integration through free flowing conversations.



Embracing Local Cuisine - The guests can enjoy world cuisine at the all day dining restaurant, 'Sabor' as the Executive Chef, Manish Sharma is highly experienced in culinary skills. What is heartening to see is his commitment to integrate the local produce and offer local cuisine as well. He is passionate about sustainably sourced and healthier cuisine offering travelers experience a greater connection to the location they are visiting. Hence, one can relish the locally grown cereals, fresh vegetables, herbs and the unique food preparation, inspired by Kumaoni way of cooking.

Accommodation & Facilities

The retreat has 36 rooms and 1 duplex Presidential suite. The spacious rooms are well furnished with all modern amenities and balconies offering panoramic view of the hill and valley.

For an offsite meet, the Pillarless Conference Hall with a capacity for 100 pax, theatre style is ideal. For a more closed meeting, the Board Room is well equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and good for 18 pax. One would suggest the open air venue for meetings as the Amphitheatre at the property is simply outstanding for bonhomie over live performances, small



events and games.

Ekam Spa

Awaken all your senses at the nature inspired Ekam Spa offering a peaceful valley views. From relaxation therapies to curated spa treatments, body wraps, deep tissue therapies, there are ample of choices to get pampered by caring masseuse.

Activities & Engagements

The guests can engage themselves in several interesting things to do. It can be right in the heart of the property or outside in the lap of the majestic mountains. Unleash your free spirit and explore the region. Go for Treks and Nature Walks, village visits, cycling with packed lunch hampers to nearby stream and villages.

Mukteshwar is not just one of the most exciting trekking destinations; it also has interesting sightseeing locations. One can visit Mukteshwar Shiva Temple – this ancient temple gives the name Mukteshwar to the area. Bhalu Gaad is a popular trek in pristine area with a waterfall. Visit Mukteshwar town – buzzing with quaint restaurants, a private doll museum and organic packed local produce such as jams, juices and pickles etc. Chauli Ki Jaali – Great place for morning views of valleys and mountains ideal for photography.

If you wish to go for nearby day trips then Ramgarh and its quaint colonial bungalows sights and orchards are worth visiting. Or go to Nainital and complete your hill station holiday.

If not in a mood to go out, just lounge by the heated swimming pool and Jacuzzi offering amazing views. Or just take a stroll through the verdant landscaped greens. Those seeking ‘ME’ time, Lounge cum library, is perfect to give them a quiet corner. The fitness freaks can spend some time at the Fitness Centre and build up good appetite for a healthy Kumaoni meal. For tea and coffee breaks, ‘Alfresco Café’ and garden are delightful venues with open valley views.

To Conclude

So take a break, escape to the hills, unwind and feel at home in the soothing ambience, stunning location and an array of relaxing therapies with warm service and care.

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A Dedicated Leader!

Ashish Vohra, Founder & CEO Justa Hotels & Resorts



Ashish Vohra has had a long stint in sales and marketing as a part of the leadership team with Oberoi Hotels before venturing out on his own. During his term with the Oberoi as Director of marketing and brand development were launched Oberoi properties such as Uday Vilas , Amar Vilas and Vanya Vilas which are among the top rated hotels of the world.

He realized early on the Indian market need for branded luxury hotels in the 50-55 keys properties and thus juSTaHotels foundations were laid in 2005. juSTa is today a well recognized brand for its luxurious personalized care and emphasis on the art element in all its 12 properties providing unique guest experiences. Justa hotels chain has grown through a mix of owned

hotels, revenue share and management contracts.

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

What is the USP of your property?

juSTaMukteshwar Retreat and Spa is a unique offering due to its serene location in Mukteshwar region with spectacular valley and Himalayan views of Trishul , Nanda Devi and Panchchuli peaks. The dedicated spa and its trained staff is also a unique factor in the region and a first for the area. We have unique art installations spread around the retreat which also add to our unique guest experience offer.

Tell us about the green initiatives the hotel has taken?

Firstly, right from the construction stage the design has kept protection of trees in mind and no trees were cut for property development. Part of the hotel is built on a lightweight structure thus putting minimal pressure on the hill top construction. The other green initiatives related to operations are an ongoing process.

What is the marketing strategy you have adopted to promote your property?

Our marketing is mostly through guest feedback being shared by our true brand ambassadors. Besides we are aggressively marketing through our online and social media platforms. The travel trade media

and general interest publications are also covering the property favorably. We also are part of relevant trade fairs and industry events wherever possible.

What distinguishes your property from others in the same bracket?

Currently there is none other in the region to compare with juSTaMukteshwar Retreat and Spa.

What would you say is the 'Differentiating Factor' of your F&B outlets?

We offer world cuisine at 'SABOR', the all day restaurant besides the 'Alfresco Café' with superb valley views. Our Executive Chef, Manish Sharma fortunately has an interest in local cuisine and adds them to the sumptuous spread delighting our guests no end.

Future plans and new initiatives you wish to undertake in your property?

We are planning to hold some unique programs and events just like the Wellness Retreat recently held at the property. We will announce them at the appropriate time.

What is the most crucial issue

to tackle in the Hospitality industry today?

Obviously the covid situation and its implications for the industry are top of the mind.

What do you enjoy most about being at the helm of affairs at the hotel?

Interacting with guests and evaluating their feedback for further service improvements is what I enjoy the most besides meeting clients and property owners to discuss adding value to their bottom lines.

What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?

Launch of each property in the juSTa family and its impact on the region's hospitality scene is a reward I cherish.

How do you de-stress?

I am most happy when I'm working and adding new initiatives to enhance guest experience.

What is your working Mantra, your guiding philosophy in work?

Dedication and commitment is the key, the rest follows.



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HOTREMAI strives to safeguard and represent interest of its members in particular and of the industry in general by taking-up various issues adversely affecting the business of its members with the government bodies, hotels, restaurants and their associations.

Business Promotion

Through its programmes and events: HOTREMAI organizes in-house meets, like Purchase Managers Meet, Hotel Consultants & Architects Meet, F & B Managers Meet, Project & Engineers Meet and such other events, where the representatives of the hospitality industry interact with its members, know their products and services, discuss the problems faced by them and make collective efforts for their effective solutions besides establishing mutual understandings and workout fruitful business deals. This provides its members a platform to demonstrate their products and services and provides opportunity to know their customers' needs.

Special Discounts

For its members, HOTREMAI facilitates with special discounted rates for participating in business exhibitions, fairs, shows and events organized by government and non-government trade and industry promotion bodies

Informative to its Members

HOTREMAI publishes a periodical journal known as 'HOTREMAI REPORTS' in its effort to be more informative to its members and the industry. It carries information on activities, happenings and developments in the hospitality and allied sector and also covers the information on new projects, exhibitions and events. This creates opportunities for members to actively participate by sharing their views and also advertise their products and services at nominal costs. The 'HOTREMAI REPORTS' is circulated free of cost in the hospitality industry.

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The Scent of Hospitality in the New-Normal

By Vishesh Vijayvergiya

At the risk of being repetitive, everyone will admit that the coronavirus pandemic has affected every industry, across every touch point in all the markets around the world. Technology and Automation are paving way for the “New Normal” to fuel demands for unprecedented innovation in all aspects of our lives!

Growing digitalization and shrinking personalization goes against the central supply-and-demand tenets of the Hospitality industry – which is already suffering from over-regulation and hyper-sterility. The simplest thing that can be done to add to the comfort of the Guest is to present him with an ambience which has a pleasant & familiar aroma that reassures him of Hygiene and Safety.

At the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Guest’s hygiene and cleanliness expectations have sky-rocketed. Unprecedented increase in the role of disinfectants, cleaners and sanitizers to give a sense of being protected and safe! Also gaining importance in present times are thoughtfully chosen Aromas – when selected and implemented by experts – can enhance the overall Guest’s feeling of being safe and comfortable. This is the need of the hour and Hoteliers must look into this aspect diligently. Gone are the

days when any aroma will do the job – the Guests does not want a random fancy smell, he wants a functional aroma that conveys hygiene, sanitization and, relaxes and makes the guest feel relaxed and secured.

Just like airing out an old holiday home for the season, reopenings after the pandemic might need to, in effect, clear the air and infuse them with aromas that envelop the guest in a sense of Escape (and Safety!). There are specific aromas that convey a sense of ‘well being’ – Cleanliness, Health and Safety should be communicated via Sight, Touch, and Smell. The guest must perceive the efforts put into sanitization, which is invisible, and its here that Aromas come to your rescue.

Homo sapiens have long associated foul smell with illness. Even during the Bubonic Plague (aka Black Death), it was a common belief that foul odours were the root cause of the disease. Doctors and other health workers used to wear Beak-shaped masks, stuffed with aromatic herbs to protect themselves from infection. In our collective consciousness, we have some mental association with scents of Thyme, Lavender, Rosemary for imparting protection against illness.

Fragrance is of paramount importance in

the Hotel; since a good or a bad smell will decide how the guest is going to interpret the luxury, cleanliness, and credibility of the Hotel. The role of the fragrance starts straight away the moment they enter the Hotel through the gates, until the guests’ leave, through the gates! Haphazard selection and application of Aromas can have a daunting effect! Pleasant aromas a powerful way to evoke a sense of security; and Sanitation is the new security and good aromas are the best way to welcome your Guests back and comfort them! The sense of smell plays a significant role in the physiological effects of mood, stress and overall health.

A remarkably interesting trend that we will see is the usage of outdoor scents – fragrances reminiscent of Rain Forests, Mountains, Forests, Beaches etc for travellers emerging after months of being stuck at home due to Lockdowns! These scents can evoke a feeling and awaken the senses. We naturally feel relaxed when we smell good aroma in our surroundings. The perception of odours nearly always causes emotional reactions.

As value additions, Hoteliers may even stock “Smell Test Kits” as part of the amenities in the rooms. A lot of covid

patients have issues with smell and this could come in handy to gauge their sense of smell. A small but a very thoughtful addition. Furthermore, new level of Luxury can be very simply incorporated into the routine of the Hotel by giving the opportunity to the guests to select their own ambience fragrance. This information can be collected at the time of filling of the reservation form or as an extra question in the questionnaire of the membership form. An element of Surprise can be added for the guests by stocking a small Aroma Gift set in the drawer along with utility stuff like Stationary, Sewing Kit etc. A gift at the most unexpected place will add to their amazement – and happiness which is all the more important in these pandemic times!

Signature blends, especially keeping the pandemic in mind, may help in emphasizing the overall brand message while also creating a luxurious environment and feeling of healthfulness. These Signature Blends can be given away as memento to the Guests while checking out. It not only reminds them of the Hotel, it brings them back there! Scent experiences will evoke emotions.

Signature Aroma can be selected in many creative ways, such as:

- Season of the Year
- Name of the Hotel/Restaurant
- Interior Decoration/Colour Theme
- Locality/Region
- Festival/Events
- Application / Purpose
- Strategic Marketing

Aromas for Specific Areas

Some specific areas where Aromas can play an important role at uplifting the mood in the post-pandemic travel scene:

Laundry

People interpret fresh-smelling clothes as the sign of a well-done laundry job. Adding laundry fragrance at the time of final rinse ensures that the washed linen is not only clean, but also, smells fresh, free from off-notes of detergents; and also, deodorised so as to ensure that no smell of previous use reflects (i.e. smells related to food, sweat etc.) Suggested aromas: Orange, Lemon, Eucalyptus

Routine Housekeeping

Pour a few drops in the WC during routine housekeeping. When the guests will use the flush, a burst of fragrance from “nowhere” will delight and surprise in equal measure. Suggested aromas: Mandarin, Eucalyptus, Rosemary



Carpets

In all premium hotels, carpets adorn the floor, add to the visual appeal and enhance the entire décor of the hotels. But along with that, they add to the menace of their maintenance. Guests walk on them 24x7, making it all the more difficult to clean them. Carpets absorb dirt and dust from the shoes along with moisture and tend to smell foul, spoiling the whole atmosphere. What is the solution then, as frequent cleaning of carpets is not a viable option. Combat this problem by spraying specially formulated long lasting carpet fresheners which have diffusive accord of mossy, ambery, spicy-green notes that form a harmonious blend with the smell of carpets and thereby rendering it a clean and fresh smell. Suggested Aromas: Clove, Nutmeg, Iris, Musk, Vanilla

Lawn

First impression is the last impression; someone very truly said. Guests form an impression of the cleanliness and hygiene conditions inside the hotel by observing the outside. If the hotel has clean, lush green lawns, well-kept trees and colourful flowers then your guests will definitely feel good. Just imagine, if this splendid vista also oozes its characteristic green-leafy, floral aroma all over, then how would it make one feel? Delighted, for sure! Suggested aroma: Green Grass, Moist Leaves, Petrichor, Green Tea

Fountain

Fountains are such a great source of spreading aroma in the atmosphere yet least explored. Add a few drops of a highly diffusive, fruity fragrance blend in the water and create a soothing, fragrant ambience. Suggested Aromas: Lavender, Chamomile, Jasmine, Camphor

Odour Neutralizer

Use Odour Neutralizers based on natural actives to effectively counter a wide range of unpleasant and offensive odours including Cigarette Smoke, Waste Bins, Animal Odours etc. High standard Odour Neutralizers form a complex with constituents of foul odour and thereby pulling them down and combating foul smell, whereas the additional aroma which is usually added, supports the cleanliness and hygiene factor.

Gourmet Fragrances

An important aspect of cleanliness and freshness in eateries is not limited to just cleaning but also to creating an ambience which triggers the emotions of your guest and compel them to walk in and eat. Such tempting ambience can be created with the help of Gourmet Fragrances viz Coffee, Chocolate, Biryani, Masala etc which are available from leading perfumeries.

Signature Fragrances

Vedique® specializes in sensory communications – adding the scent dimension to reinforce a brand. Your Scent Identity. These corporate scents will be unique, tailored to your identity, contain high quality ingredients and will be created by in-house experienced Perfumers. Your customers will walk in your lobbies, your rooms, your halls, your reception areas anywhere in the world and feel at ease as they unconsciously recognize your unique scent identity. Vedique® is geared to give that extra sensory dimension.



The Author: Vishesh Vijayvergiya represents the 6th generation in the 160+ years family business of Fragrances at Sugandhco, Lucknow. He has an IFEAT Diploma in Perfumery, Certificate in Perfumery from Perfumers World and a Postgraduate in Naturopathy and Yoga from University of Lucknow. Student Member, British Society of Perfumers. He was awarded the coveted IFEAT Medal for Best International Student (Fragrance Studies) in 2006. Vishesh has written several papers for various Publications on Fragrance Applications and Scent Marketing. He is also a Scent Branding and Perfumery Consultant to leading brands in India and Middle East. ■

Intricacies of Ozone Washing

If addition of ozone in commercial laundry can help the entrepreneurs cut cost by saving on energy expenditure and water consumption, it also has beneficial effects on the environment and health of laundry workers

With disinfecting properties of ozone and its resource conservation benefits coming to light, the use of this gas in commercial and industrial laundries gained popularity. It has emerged that use of ozone can help save a lot of energy in laundry. With the addition of ozone to commercial laundries, it is possible to effectively wash clothes in cold water, thereby saving a lot of energy spent in heating water. The process can also curb the usage of washing detergent and water as ozone enhances the wash process and reduces wash cycles, leading to faster completion of wash loads. What is more, the gentler ozone water cycles can also help extend linen life by up to 25 percent. Cut in usage of chemicals harmful to clothes and reduction in rinse and dryer cycles also work to extend fabric life.

It has also been claimed that ozone-wash water has superior disinfecting properties, killing viruses in just 5-6 minutes.

These are some of the benefits that ozone washing provides the laundry entrepreneurs and helps them cut cost. Many even claim that ozone washing is beneficial to the environment and also the operators who are at risk of exposure to many hazardous chemicals in conventional laundry. Studies have concluded that ozone laundering reduces the amount of laundry chemicals discharged to waste and upon ozonisation soils become more biodegradable. And as it curbs the usage and storage of laundering chemicals, the laundry workers may feel safer. However, it deserves here a mention that too much exposure to ozone can also be bad for health, especially as it can affect the

respiratory system.

But because of its powerful disinfecting properties, ozone-washing could be ideal in hospital laundries as it can curb hospital-acquired infection in patients by killing or making inactive harmful microorganism found in many soiled textiles.

The concept of washing clothes with the aid of ozone (O₃) gas dissolved in ambient temperature water was first introduced to the American laundry industry in 1991. The system touted the capability of reducing energy use and traditional wash chemicals while recycling most of the wash water for reuse. Since that time, the number of laundries embracing this technology has grown dramatically.

What is Ozone?

Ozone is created when air is exposed to either: ultraviolet light, lightening or man-made high voltage electric arcs. This causes some of the oxygen (O₂) molecules to fracture into two Oxygen (O) atoms. These atoms then combine with other oxygen molecules, forming a molecule of ozone; consisting of a group of three oxygen atoms (O₃).

Ozone is very reactive and is nature's own way of destroying pollutants and cleaning up the atmosphere. It works best in cold water as hot water breaks ozone down before it can perform as intended.

Properties of Ozone

Ozone is a colorless gas that in low concentrations has a slight odor, most often described as the smell of fresh air after a thunderstorm. Extremely unstable, ozone cannot be stored and must be generated on

site. It is one and a half times as dense as oxygen and about 13 times more soluble in water. Ozone is second only to fluorine in its oxidizing potential and 150% more powerful in its disinfecting capabilities than chlorine.

Ozone is a gas with a pungent odour that is formed by the breakdown of elemental, diatomic Oxygen (O₂) and the recombination of a percentage of the oxygen atoms into a triatomic molecule (O₃). Although normal oxygen, a component of the atmosphere, is a powerful oxidizing agent in its own right, ozone has much stronger oxidizing properties and reacts more quickly, often in fractions of a second, with a wide range of substances.

In addition, it is one of the most effective biocides known to science, better even than chlorine, bromine and other commonly used disinfectants. It is capable of destroying bacterial and viral colonies. It is also effective against molds and fungi and as a deodorizer of air and water. Ozone works well as a disinfectant because upon disintegration it reverts to its original form, oxygen (O₂).

Unlike the latter substances, however, it does not form hazardous disinfectant by-products (DBP's) such as dioxin and nitrites that are harmful to the environment or are toxic to animals and humans. Once ozone has fully reacted with substances in water or air, excess gas decomposes quickly to normal oxygen and is reabsorbed into the atmosphere. Ozone can be generated from two sources: ambient air or pure oxygen. Because it reacts so easily with other elements and is inherently unstable, it exists for only a short time before combining with another substance

or reverting to normal oxygen.

Accordingly, it must be generated on-site at the point that it is to be used. Unlike chlorine and other dangerous disinfectants, it does not need to be handled, transported or stored, thereby posing little hazard to personnel at the facility. Finally, when used in proper concentrations, ozone is an effective corrosion inhibitor, and in the wash room context can reduce the need for substances like chlorine, which are very corrosive for equipment and fabrics.

Ozone Laundry Systems

Ozone Laundry Systems use an ozone generator which is usually integrated with existing equipment. Compressed air is forced through a high voltage electrical arc, which results in the conversion of oxygen molecules into ozone gas. The ozone is then dissolved in cold laundry wash water where it exerts its powerful cleaning action. Because it is so reactive, ozone readily attaches itself to fatty and other soils that bind dirt to clothing, destroying them rapidly.

As one of the strongest known oxidizing agents, ozone is capable of breaking down virtually any organic soil into innocuous compounds such as

carbon dioxide and water.

Ozone laundry boosts extract efficiency and lowers water retention. Less water in the linens going to the dryers means it takes less time to dry them. This adds up to a huge savings in labour and energy.

Ozone laundry wash cycles are measurably shorter than traditional wash cycles due to the fact that some of the old, necessary steps in the wash process have been eliminated. This reduction in wash cycle times accelerates the work flow and production rate

Does ozone laundry really work?

The potential of ozone in the laundry industry has led some manufacturers to build ozone-based washing systems and claimed them to be detergent-less laundry solution. A report based on the use of ozone laundry in a US hospital shows that ozone laundry really has the potential for cost savings from reduced hot water use. The hospital found that using ozonated water eliminates approximately 75 to 80 percent of hot water use, and the power bill declined by 25 to 30 percent. With such cost saving, it was estimated that the cost of ozone generators could be recovered

within approximately two years of their installation.

There are some more benefits when the system is installed and operated. For example, the laundry turns out much whiter, the report added. "You can set towels washed with ozonated water next to towels washed traditionally, and the superior whitening effect of ozone is immediately and dramatically obvious," the report based on interviews with the managers of Penacook Place Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Massachusetts added.

Besides helping to make the laundry more white and bright, ozone also makes the laundry more fluffy. The reason for this it facilitates to open the pores of the fabrics. The ozone laundry can be very much helpful in the hospitality industry too by contributing towards guest satisfaction. Ozone laundry can also help hotels to lower their environmental impact and can also lower their operational costs.

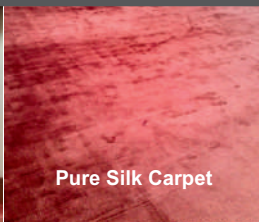
Moreover the ozone generators require very little maintenance. There are some small filters that have to be kept clean, but according to the above-mentioned report, overall they perform well without much routine maintenance.



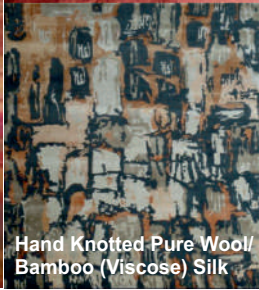
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A hotel's tableware gives indication of the image of the restaurant and reflects what it offers at a first glance. Furthermore, it creates a visual appeal which Chefs like to call 'visual synchronisation' with food. Food is not just about filling up your stomach. It has always been about the experience.

Presentation of the dish is as much important as its taste. The sensory perception of food begins with visual appeal and then moves on to aroma, flavour, taste, etc. If the first perception of food goes wrong, the rest of the experience also tends to go wrong. So tableware adds character and personality to the dish and thus can make the food more appealing.

Tableware is very important as it sets the mood for the dining experience. A presentable and attractive table enhances a guest's dining experience, as well as the feel and ambience of the restaurant. For a restaurant in a luxury hotel, the right selection and showcasing of tableware is no less important than having the right dish on the menu.

Customised crockery and tableware seem to be the trendsetters these days since they also give a personalised touch by embossing the logo of the restaurant. The customisation can further be tweaked to help enhance the overall look and feel of the restaurant.

Earlier, it was only chinaware that was commonly used, but restaurants across India nowadays have started to diversify into stoneware, clay crockery, granite slates and metal ware. The visual appearance of crockery and cutlery used in a restaurant plays a crucial role and helps improve the overall presentation

of the food served, which thus can lead to more customer satisfaction and can help generate more revenue.

Tableware should vary according to the cuisines. Different cuisines require different tableware. However, customisation of crockery helps a restaurant give cuisine-centric crockery, set a personalised twist or give a surprise element/innovation to different dishes. The selection of tableware depends on the kind of restaurant and the overall concept of the restaurant. For example, if a restaurant is more about fun dining then the crockery used should be quirky in design. On the other hand if the restaurant is more about fine dining then the crockery used should showcase luxury.

The type and design of tableware are integral to food presentation. Also we should keep in mind the colour of the dish, the texture of the dish, ease to serve the dish on the table, size of the table, how would the plate look on the table, ease of eating off the dish, cost of the tableware, durability of the tableware, its washing ease, its reaction to sharp objects like knives, etc., tableware's ease

of stacking/storage among other factors. When so many things are to be seen in tableware, it automatically becomes important or rather critical to the overall dining experience across food service outlets.

Choosing the Right Tableware

Tableware comprises the dishes or dishware, which are used for setting table, serving food & beverages and for dining. Its wide ambit includes cutlery, glassware, serving dishes and other useful items. Tableware has utilitarian and as well as cosmetic appeal for the guests.

There are several challenges for a hotel's restaurant to source the right kind of tableware. Tableware cannot be bought by only seeing its picture. You need to see it in real and feel it. However, getting a variety of samples is a big challenge. Moreover, repeat supply of tableware can be a challenge. Very often we do not buy a given tableware because we like the design, just because we know that if we reorder them after six months, stocks are not likely to be available.

Buying tableware for a foodservice establishment is always a crucial decision, often involving major investment. The right plates and cutlery can facilitate in bringing the right look to the restaurant's design. On the other hand, clumsily designed tableware or tableware which doesn't gel with the theme of the restaurant, can attract resentment among the discerning restaurant goers. We can say that procuring the appropriate crockery or cutlery can help in developing the image or branding of the restaurant.

Tableware is an important component of the overall look of the dining area of the restaurant.



The quality of tableware shows upon the efforts taken to leave an impression on guests that dine at the restaurant. Tableware has been playing an important role in dining experience since ages, but in this post-modern age, where presentation of the food in the restaurant business has become almost as crucial as the quality of food itself, the role of tableware has assumed immense significance for the food service business.

When selecting your tableware, be sure to take the time to choose the right options that fit in to your restaurant's concept. It is important that the first impression is a memorable one that leaves customers eager to come back to your outlet again and again.

Most of the food service establishments favour white crockery since it is believed that food looks better on these large, plain dishes. Also at the same time against the blank canvas of the plate, the food's colour and texture can easily pop up, making it look more appetising. And it is a general belief that if food looks good, it is more likely to taste good too.

Though many prefer white plates but they are not exactly unique. It may be the convention across the Indian food services industry, but it is not innovative. If the restaurant has a profusion of matte colours in its decor, then huge white plates would look odd. Play with patterns, colour and shape. Even with white dinnerware, you can experiment by adding colourful accents or shapes to the setting. Think how you can use your eclectic stash of crockery to reflect on your style of food, or on your specific ingredients. The right selection of the plates needs to be according to the dish being served. For example, risotto is apparently best served in a shallow, rimmed dish, so one can eat from the outside in.

To ensure that investment on the tableware works in a fruitful way, few aspects need to be kept in mind.

Budget

Most important aspect is to have a specific budget in mind and consider the value of your tableware purchases within that budget. But do not be too stingy on the pricing of tableware. While finalising the budget for tableware always remember that it is better to buy tableware with quality and durability even if they are a little more expensive as this could save you cash in the long-run. Great quality china will not scratch as much when stacked, as the bottom would tend to be smooth and more resistant to markings left behind by flatware.

Operators starting a new restaurant, or re-designing an existing one often forget

to budget for tableware at the beginning of a project. And when it is time to choose tableware, they often realise they have overspent, and this could result in curtailing of the tableware's budget. This irresponsible practice must be abhorred by the restaurateurs or would be restaurateurs.

The Stock

Another key consideration is to know how much stock you need to keep, based on the number of covers in the restaurant. Mostly 130 percent of the required stock is kept to replenish as and when required. It is also a good idea to have few extra pieces in case of breakage or unexpected guests.

No one wants to invest in a new tableware product line to find out six months later that it has been discontinued. Check that your choice of crockery has good long-term continuity or ask about continuity guarantees from the manufacturer concerned. Before committing to

take dishes out into the restaurant and see how they work from the diners' perspective.

Durability & Usage

Durability of tableware is important for business purpose but one shouldn't use the same crockery and cutlery for ages, which can give repetitive or boring look and feel to the dining experience. Nowadays diners may not like to dine in a restaurant where the crockery is older than the Chef of the restaurant and looks so too.

Also choose your tableware while taking into account of your kitchen operations. If your restaurant serves some dishes on hotplates, go for choosing dinnerware that can withstand the high heat, and invest in underliners. Also shop for plates and bowls that are microwave-safe or oven-safe, which will be more durable and long lasting. If your culinary focus is on sizzlers and steaks, don't forget about Sizzle Platters, which are a great way to serve steaks, sizzlers



a line, ask about lead times or local stocking dealers for delivery.

In Relation

The tableware of the restaurant must relate to the ambience, décor, theme and also to the food of the given restaurant. Mostly Chefs at the restaurant choose the tableware. They should ensure that the tableware matches the ambience, theme, décor, and style and content of their food. Nowadays diners are increasingly looking for an overall experience when they come to the restaurant, which includes how a dish is being presented.

Ambience, lighting and décor set the scene before the food arrives, so in order to impress diners, select tableware within this broader context; not just based on how a dish looks with a given tableware. It is a good idea to

and other piping hot cuisines.

Besides the longevity of the tableware, whether the design of the tableware can be sustained for a long period must be taken into account. The challenge involved in replenishing the tableware stock after breakage is another important factor to be taken into account while purchasing tableware.

There are other important factors to be considered while selecting tableware. For example, will the plates be cleaned manually or on dishwasher, the proper storage for the plates to make them last long, do the plates hold heat well so your meals don't cool down too quickly, are the plates too heavy, too wide, or too awkward to hold comfortably by servers are some of the factors to be taken into consideration while selecting tableware. ■



Water Damage Control

What appears to be a common water seepage problem can also structurally damage and weaken the property and the best damage control solution is to have the establishment in good repair at all times through a meticulous water damage mitigation programme

The sight of water damage is so ubiquitous that many assume it to be insignificant. However, the reality is completely different. Left unrepaired, even water seepage and leakage could spell major damage to a property, causing financial loss to owners not only in terms of incurring unnecessary maintenance cost but also by robbing them of their most valued customers.

What appears to be common water damage can also structurally damage and weaken the property -- wood rot, peeling paint, and facilitating mould growth -- significantly lowering its value in the real-estate market, damaging its reputation as a comfortable destination, and interrupting regular operations.

An unrepaired leak originating on the hotel's roof can put at stake the life of ceilings, walls and flooring underneath, besides electronics and the personal belongings of hotel guests. It can affect electrical wiring, creating a potential fire hazard.

In fact, as is the nature of water, a small undetected leak can quickly slide down through a building, charting its own routes in the course and travelling a great distance from the original source, making it difficult, if not impossible, for repairing

personnel to detect.

The loss that such a leak may cause is humungous. For example, if a corroded pipe on top floor of a multi-storey building goes undetected, the damage can extend to several floors and make a hole in the pocket of the owners.

Moreover, people are today aware that a damp room poses serious health risk and therefore not worth their money. It is likely that they would prefer a small neat accommodation with good indoor air quality than a damp luxurious suit with visible mould growth and invisible colonies of dust mites.

Sources of Hotel Water Damage

Sources of water damage are hardly any different for hotels from residential or even office building. However, certain buildings that are located in areas that receive high rainfall and flood are more vulnerable to water damage. The roof on a building collects a lot of water, and inferior designs and downpipes can result in leaks. Moreover, to prevent blockages and overflows, which can escape back into the building, adequate maintenance of roof rainwater services is considered a necessity.

Severe storms and flooding are powerful sources of water damage even in most

well-designed and well-maintained roofs and buildings.

Secondly, the sophisticated plumbing hook-ups that are required today in view of the multiple high-tech appliances such as washing machines, coffee machines, refrigerators, ice machines, etc., can also be a potential source of water damage as they can cause leaks when installed improperly.

Grey/foul waters tend to present intermittent leaks, which can slowly build up over time, as these types of appliances are not in constant use. Sprinkler piping and pump sets operate at high pressures, so any break in a line can give rise to rapid loss of large volumes of water. Sewage backup can also cause hotel water damage, contamination and potential health hazards.

Thirdly, facility systems in a hotel can also be major source of water damage.

Plant rooms, boiler rooms and HVAC installations bring additional large volumes of water into a building and any leak in these systems can result in extensive water flow throughout multiple floors, especially if these systems are located on the top floor or roof.

The water supplies in some areas contain certain minerals, which can increase the corrosion rate of the water and make pipes and appliances vulnerable to damage.

Fourthly, the basement can be major cause of concern because if equipment is stored in a humid hotel basement or the hotel has a damp crawl space; moisture problems may cause water damages throughout the facility.

In such cases, suggestions of professional basement waterproofing contractors can be sought.

How to Control Water Damage

At times, hotel water damage restoration can be very expensive and therefore the best damage control solution is to have the establishment in good repair at all times though a meticulous water damage mitigation programme.

Check Expensive Equipment: Such a programme can start with the check of critical and expensive equipment in the hotel as even spillage of water can damage that equipment. The next step is to identify the source of this leakage and fix it.

Roof Inspection: As already mentioned, a well-maintained roof plays a very important role in arresting water damage. Besides regular maintenance, roofs must be inspected after rains and windstorms for any damage and if identified get it promptly repaired. But make sure that the roof is closely inspected – the flashing, drains, downspouts and roof-mounted equipment such as antennas or satellite dishes.

Strict Maintenance: Excessive wear and tear can cause water damages and the key to avoid it is to have a strict maintenance schedule for the building and equipment and also follow it.

Eye on Nearby Construction: Besides your own building, preventing water damage also requires one to keep an eye on the new constructions and renovation projects nearby as debris from construction

projects and landscaping can also clog drains during heavy rains.

Emergency Response Plan: Having an emergency response plan can help deal with a real situation of water damage better, by limiting response time and also the extent of damage. This written plan should include details on what to do in the event of a leak or liquid damage, a repair vendor phone

list and the designation of one person in authority to oversee the process. Besides these, a more comprehensive plan may include determining an evacuation and shelter plan; training staff for emergency situations; investing in backup power and communication systems; protecting business data and carrying adequate business interruption insurance. ■

What Makes Your Property More Vulnerable to Water Damage?

Several factors make a property more vulnerable to water-related losses:

Age of structure: Like life, buildings may too lose their sheen with age unless carefully maintained. Buildings that have crossed 20 years are likely to have a higher risk profile because of significant wear and tear on exterior envelope and interior infrastructure. It is only natural that piping and other systems in older facilities are more prone to failure.

Building Height: High-rise apartment buildings or hotels may look very sleek, but they tend to have more water damage exposures.

Individual apartments or units can have their own combined pressurised hot water and heating systems, and a failure in just one can lead to a large escape of water. More high-tech installations such as steam showers, jacuzzi spas, soaking tubs and built-in water coolers can contribute to the potential for water leaks.

New Construction Materials: Use of new construction materials other than the traditional concrete and steel also raises the potential for significant water damage.

With changing requirements and evolution of new sense of aesthetics, new materials like concrete forms, modular assemblies and engineered timber are preferred for building construction. However, since many of these newer materials are not always installed to the highest standards, they may not always protect from water seepages.

Seasonal Storms: Where your property is located can also affect water damage. There is a higher potential for water leaks and infrastructure failure such as pipe breaks in places marked by intense seasonal storms.

Lack of Maintenance: Any building where regular maintenance of the roof, windows, plumbing and HVAC is being deferred faces the potential loss of structural integrity.

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Famous for its customised multi-utility wicker baskets, amenity aids for guest rooms and spa, trays, trolleys, caddies, and F&B service aids, the company is into cutomising a range of products. The new Housekeeping Trolleys and Mobile Caddies from Mehta Furnishers are set to raise the bar for mobile platforms in the corridors of boutique hotels, where aesthetic appeal is valued. The products are trendy, user-friendly, workably priced for the value they deliver and what's more, are environmental friendly. With this new range those huge service stations in the hotel corridors are set to become a thing of the past.

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“Nothing is impossible till you believe it is possible”

Saurabh Khanna, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Agra



Saurabh Khanna has embarked on an exciting journey as the General Manager of the Courtyard by Marriott Agra with over 15 years of experience and expertise in a myriad of skills and hospitality brands. Apart from adhering to the traditional hospitality methods that have proven to work, his commitment to encompass innovative technology, diverse marketing alliances, constant innovation and multi-cultural revenue stream generations, have gone a long way in creating successful business entities. He arrives at the Courtyard by Marriott Agra with a vision to sustain the hotel's existing strong positioning and take the stakes higher. In an exclusive interview with [Sharmila Chand](#) he talks about his working philosophy and more ...

What is the USP of your property?

The USPs of this stunning property can be summed up best basis:

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Multiple Celebration Venues – Multiple options of indoor and outdoor spaces totaling over 15,000 sqft

Green initiatives the hotel has taken?

We are always exploring and curating various green initiatives to help conserve the environment. Whether it is about implementing glass bottles for water consumption across all our dining outlets, to using paper straws in the property, and final now moving towards establishing an Electric Vehicle charging station within the premises of the hotel.

Sustainable processes in your property?

We have activated innovative practices like installing compost machines for biodegradable materials and moving on towards growing organic micro greens in our garden space and

making it a part of our offerings.

Your marketing strategy to promote the property?

Marketing for a destination like Agra and a leading property like the Courtyard by Marriott Agra is steadily shifting towards positioning itself as an experiential offering than a mundane space. Digital amplification, organic content creation and strategic promotional collaborations play a key role to substantiate the efforts of the property through its unique offerings, state of the art services.

What distinguishes your property from others in the same bracket?

Our service culture – we are consistently rated positively for our genuine and warm services across all genres of stay and dining experiences by our guests

Our suite room count – we have 18 spacious state of the art suites out of a total room inventory of 189 keys. Our suites offer space and comfort for the additional guests to have a comfortable stay

Our terrace rooms – one of a kind room category in the city that has an attached scenic terrace overlooking our luscious lawn space and spacious enough to host a small gathering of 10 people at ease.

Future plans and new initiatives you wish to undertake in your property?

The 3 foundation pillars of our way forward here at the property has to be building a considerable number of experiential offerings across all genres for guests from different

segments, exploring and implementing meaningful sustainability practices with long term impact and promoting intensive, structure and valuable cross training for our hospitality professionals.

What is the most crucial issue to tackle in the Hospitality industry today?

The most crucial issue in the industry is people and talent for taking the baton forward. The pandemic situation hassled to a mass exodus of skilled talent from the industry, some was induced while rest voluntary. Hence we need to work tirelessly on re-skilling and upskilling our current workforce. Despite all the automation and adoption of digital means, this is still a high people driven intensive industry.

What do you enjoy most about being at the helm of affairs at the hotel?

I thoroughly enjoy the liberty to make decisions that can impact (positively) a guest experience or the associate experience aligned with our vision to be the most favoured hotel in the city of Agra. They don't have to be life altering decisions, but just subtle changes that a discerning guest would appreciate and come back again to experience more with a wider audience.

What is your working Mantra, your guiding philosophy in work?

I am a strong believer in the saying that devil is in the details, success is never final and actions should speak louder than words in any role you want to excel in.

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