

MAY-JUNE '25 VOL.20 No.2 ₹ 100

**HAMMER**

# HOTEL

**Business Review**

An Exclusive Business Magazine for the Hotel Industry



**Business**  
Game-Changing Promotion Strategies of GMs

**Feature**  
Leveraging Art to Strengthen Hotel Branding

**Industry**  
Champions of Luxurious Ecological Hospitality

**Diversity Drives Hotels Forward**

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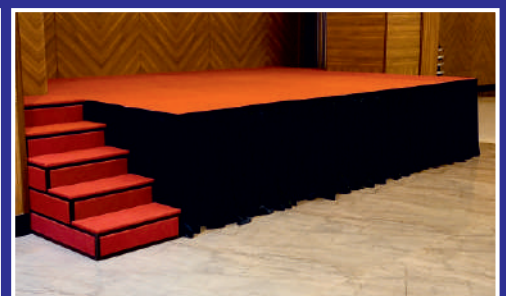
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Every year, we celebrate Women's Day on March 8, but this year, the inspiring stories we discovered deserve to be shared with our readers beyond a single issue. From our previous issue (March-April), to this concluding chapter of our series spotlighting women's leadership in hospitality and the transformative power of diverse leadership. This cover story highlights how women in leadership bring innovation, empathy, and strategic excellence, proving that gender diversity is not just equitable but vital for long-term business growth and elevated guest experiences.

A hotel's success comes down to the strength of its General Manager and their ability to lead and steer the entire team towards success. In this issue's business story, we explore how innovative GMs drive performance, enhance guest experience, and craft winning promotion strategies that set their properties apart.

The feature story explores the engaging role of art in hotel décor, where art is no longer just ornamental but a powerful branding tool. Hospitality leaders share how curated art reflects brand identity, enhances guest experiences, and creates emotional connections, transforming hotels into culturally rich, memorable destinations.

As we mark World Environment Day this month, it's a reminder to recognize not just one day of green action, but the ongoing, year-round sustainability efforts led by hotels. Across India, hospitality leaders are championing responsible tourism by offering immersive, community-driven, and eco-positive guest experiences. In this feature, we spotlight some of the country's most environmentally conscious hotels, particularly those recognized with Ecotel and Green Key certifications.

Complementing the above-mentioned engaging topics, the issue also shares the latest news, updates, new appointments, and industry buzz to keep you informed, inspired, and connected.

Rajat Taneja

**HAMMER**  
**HOTEL**  
**Business Review**  
*An Essential Business Magazine for the Hotel Industry*

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HAMMER

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# Explore the Pulse of the Hospitality World – Only at IHE

3rd – 6th August 2025 | India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida



The 8th edition of the India International Hospitality Expo (IHE 2025) is set to open its doors from 3rd to 6th August 2025 at the prestigious India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida. As India's largest hospitality-focused trade show, IHE has emerged as the go-to platform for professionals, innovators, and business leaders from across the globe to connect, explore, and shape the future of the hospitality industry.

With over 1,000 leading brands, 25,000+ B2B visitors, and representation from more than 16 countries, IHE 2025 promises an immersive experience for attendees looking to engage with the latest trends, technologies, and solutions in Food & Beverage, HoReCa, Hospitality Tech, Housekeeping, Furniture, Facility Management, and more.

Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, India Exposition Mart Limited, while speaking about IHE 2025, said, "It is a strategic platform that positions India as a global hub for hospitality excellence. With its international scale and inclusive vision, the show reflects our commitment to driving innovation, partnerships, and growth within the dynamic HoReCa and hospitality sectors."

Hari Dadoo, President, India International Hospitality Expo (IHE) claims, "Each year,

IHE sets new benchmarks by bringing together global brands, thought leaders, and changemakers of the hospitality world. IHE 2025 is poised to deliver unmatched value to visitors through transformative experiences, curated networking, and industry-first showcases."

Visitors can look forward to a dynamic mix of product showcases, live demonstrations, and knowledge-sharing sessions. Highlights of the expo include exciting culinary competitions such as Pastry Queen India, Master Bakers Challenge, and the Culinary League as well as impactful conferences and networking opportunities with key industry leaders. The coveted IHE Excellence Awards will



Dr. Rakesh Kumar

also return to recognise innovation and achievement across hospitality verticals.

Building on the resounding success of IHE 2024, which generated business inquiries worth ₹12,000 crore and featured four co-located hospitality events, the 2025 edition is poised to elevate both scale and substance. This year's focus aligns with India's growing global stature in hospitality, merging traditional warmth with modern excellence.

For visiting professionals, IHE 2025 offers unmatched convenience, including free shuttle services, ample parking, on-site dining options, and comfortable accommodations in the vicinity, ensuring a seamless and enriching experience throughout the event.

Whether you are a hotelier, restaurateur, chef, procurement expert, architect, educator, or hospitality enthusiast, IHE 2025 is your gateway to connect with top brands, discover innovations, and explore new partnerships in a vibrant business setting.

Visitor registrations are now open. Mark your calendars and be part of this transformative journey that celebrates India's spirit of hospitality and global ambition.

For more information and registration, please visit: [www.ihexpo.com](http://www.ihexpo.com)

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## IHCL Expands Portfolio with New Signings

### Mysuru

As part of its ongoing sustainability journey, Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), India's largest hospitality company, announced the signing of a new hotel in Mysuru. This greenfield project will be branded as a Vivanta.

Suma Venkatesh, Executive Vice President – Real Estate & Development, IHCL said, "Mysuru, with its rich cultural heritage and a diverse economy spanning manufacturing, education, and tourism, continues to evolve as a key urban centre. Enhanced connectivity through recent infrastructure developments like the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway is further boosting travel and tourism in the region. This signing is in line with our strategy to expanding in fast-growing economic and cultural destinations. We are delighted to partner with the Farah Group on this project."

Strategically located near the Hebbal Industrial Area, the 115-key Vivanta, Mysuru will feature an all-day dining restaurant, and a bar. Guests can also explore the fully equipped gym and swimming pool. The hotel will also offer meeting and event spaces, ideal for business conferences and social events.

Liaquath Ali Khan, MD, Farah Builders, "We are proud to partner with IHCL to bring the Vivanta brand to Mysuru. This hotel will serve as a contemporary hub for the city's growing hospitality needs."



### McLeodganj

IHCL further announced the signing of a Gateway hotel in McLeodganj, Himachal Pradesh, a brownfield project.

Suma Venkatesh, Executive Vice President – Real Estate & Development, IHCL, said, "This signing is in line with IHCL's strategy of strengthening its presence in Himachal Pradesh across key leisure destinations like Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala, Naldhera, and Sirmour among others. McLeodganj with its cultural richness is attracting both domestic and international tourists. We are delighted to partner with Mcleo Times Square for this project."

The 65-key Gateway McLeodganj, Himachal Pradesh is strategically located just a short walk from the Dalai Lama Temple, the official residence of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and Namgyal Monastery. Close to the heart of the town, it is also steps away from the bustling McLeodganj market. Perched on a cliff, it offers sweeping views of surrounding valleys and snow-capped peaks. The hotel will feature an all-day dining restaurant, a bar, meeting rooms, a fitness centre and spa.

Rahul Pathania, Mcleo Times Square, said, "We are excited to partner with IHCL to bring the Gateway brand to McLeodganj. This collaboration will offer guests an authentic yet contemporary hospitality experience in this vibrant destination."

Nestled in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, McLeodganj with its blend of monasteries, scenic landscapes, and vibrant local markets, attracts spiritual seekers, trekkers, and cultural enthusiasts alike.

With this addition, IHCL will have 13 hotels in Himachal Pradesh with 8 under development.



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## From Heritage to Progress: CM Dr Mohan Yadav Launches Pachmarhi Projects



Nestled in the emerald folds of the Satpura ranges, Pachmarhi, Madhya Pradesh's iconic hill station and ecological treasure, has received a transformative facelift. Guided by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of "Virasat Se Vikas" (From Heritage to Development), Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav inaugurated and laid the foundation for a host of tourism development works amounting to over ₹33.88 crore. The initiative is a part of the state's larger push to elevate heritage-rich destinations into hubs of sustainable and experiential travel.

Speaking at the event, Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said, "Under the leadership

of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Madhya Pradesh is consistently advancing towards transforming its legacy into a developmental force. Pachmarhi, known not only for its unmatched natural beauty but also for its deep historical significance, is being developed into one of the most popular tourist destinations by removing infrastructural barriers and creating global-standard facilities."

Adding to the vision, Principal Secretary, Tourism and Culture, and Managing Director of Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla remarked, "Pachmarhi has always been a top choice

for travellers. With consistent upgradation of amenities, we are committed to making every visitor's experience comfortable, memorable, and meaningful."

Pachmarhi is undergoing a major facelift with upgraded tourist amenities like potable water, scenic pathways, 'Pink Toilets' managed by SHGs, and beautified attractions including Dhoopgarh. Additionally, the heritage Hilltop Bungalow is being transformed into an elegant Heritage Homestay, featuring four luxury rooms, a library, swimming pool, kitchen, restaurant, and tasteful landscaping.. A new fleet of 11 safari vehicles has also been introduced to boost wildlife tourism. With over 2.87 lakh visitors in 2024, these eco-friendly and community-driven upgrades are set to further enhance Pachmarhi's appeal.

With these sweeping initiatives, Pachmarhi is not only reaffirming its place as Madhya Pradesh's crown jewel of hill tourism but also setting new standards in environmentally responsible, community-driven tourism development.

## Technogym Opens First-Ever Indian Boutique in Bangalore

Technogym, an Italian brand, has set the global benchmark in fitness and wellness since its inception in 1983. The brand is the preferred choice for elite athletes, world-class fitness centres, and discerning wellness enthusiasts worldwide, renowned for its exceptional craftsmanship, cutting-edge technology, and unmatched quality.

Marking a significant milestone, Technogym has made its grand entry into the Indian market, offering cutting-edge fitness solutions to a rapidly growing health-conscious audience. With a core philosophy of "exercise as medicine," the brand combines artificial intelligence, biomechanics, and ergonomic design to create a

comprehensive wellness experience.

The launch of Technogym's first boutique in Bangalore is more than just a retail expansion, it's a gateway to next-level fitness. This state-of-the-art space offers an immersive experience where visitors can

explore the brand's most advanced training solutions, featuring some of its most iconic products, all manufactured in Italy. Among the highlights is the Technogym Run, a high-performance, silent treadmill designed for multisurface training, combining running and strength workouts.

With its strategic expansion into India, Technogym is introducing a new paradigm in fitness, one that seamlessly combines design excellence, cutting-edge technology, and a deep understanding of human movement. The Bangalore boutique is just the beginning, setting the stage for Technogym's vision to become the preferred fitness and wellness solution across the country.



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## Agoda Partners with IHCL to Expand Access to India's Iconic Hospitality

Digital travel platform Agoda announces a strategic partnership with the Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), one of India's largest hospitality companies. This collaboration expands Agoda's premium offerings across the globe enabling travelers internationally to access IHCL's world-class portfolio of properties through Agoda's platform.



The partnership brings 250 of IHCL's operating properties, including iconic brands such as Taj, SeleQtions, Vivanta, Ginger, and the newly launched Claridges Collection, to Agoda's global customer base. As Agoda celebrates its 20th birthday this year, the collaboration underscores the organization's continued focus on enhancing customer choice, value, experience and industry partnerships in key travel markets.

"IHCL is an iconic name, and that says something in a market like India where hospitality is in a league of its own," said Omri Morgenshtern, Chief Executive Officer at Agoda. "Under the leadership of MD & CEO Puneet Chhatwal, IHCL continues to set benchmarks in the industry. One of Agoda's strengths is working together with the best wherever we operate, and with this partnership, we're doing exactly that. I'm thrilled to combine IHCL's portfolio of heritage palaces, luxury city hotels, and more with Agoda's tech-driven solutions and global reach."

Through this alliance, Agoda connects IHCL to its growing user base of international and intra-regional travelers, particularly from Asia Pacific and the Middle East, two regions where demand for culturally rich, luxury travel is rising fast. The collaboration is also aligned with IHCL's strategy to grow its portfolio to over 700 hotels by 2030 and build deeper connections with the digitally savvy traveler.

"This partnership with Agoda supports our ambition of driving global awareness for IHCL's diverse brands," said Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, IHCL. "As travel demand continues to grow, we are confident that Agoda's strong presence in key international source markets and its cutting-edge technology will help accelerate our growth and deepen our customer reach."

With the Indian hospitality industry projected to grow to USD 542 billion by 2030<sup>[1]</sup>, this partnership places both Agoda and IHCL in a strong position to meet the evolving expectations of global travelers.

## A Sustainable Milestone for Courtyard by Marriott Aravali

Courtyard by Marriott Aravali proudly announces a significant leap in its sustainability journey with the successful installation of a 368 kilowatt peak (KWp) solar power plant. This landmark initiative reinforces the property's deep-rooted commitment to environmentally responsible hospitality while paving the way for a cleaner, greener future.

Nestled amid the scenic Aravali Hills, the hotel is now harnessing the abundant solar potential of its surroundings to generate over 1,272 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of clean energy every day. The solar plant substantially reduces the hotel's reliance on conventional energy sources, bringing down its carbon footprint and operational emissions. Over the course of a year, this renewable energy system is expected to offset a considerable amount of greenhouse gases, equivalent to planting thousands of mature trees or removing hundreds of cars from the road.



"At Courtyard by Marriott Aravali, we believe that the future of hospitality lies in responsible innovation," said Anuj Chaudhry, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Aravali. "The installation of this solar plant reflects our unwavering dedication to sustainability, not just as a concept, but as a continuous commitment to action. We want to offer our guests an experience where luxury meets mindfulness, and where their stay contributes to something larger, something greener."

Anuj added, "Our vision is to transform Courtyard by Marriott Aravali into a benchmark for eco conscious hospitality. This solar initiative is just the beginning. We are working toward implementing a range of environmentally friendly practices, from water conservation and rainwater harvesting to waste segregation and local sourcing of produce. Sustainability, for us, is not a checkbox, it's our culture."

"The Courtyard by Marriott Aravali's solar installation is a powerful demonstration of how premium hospitality and sustainability can – and must – coexist," said Dr. Sanjay Sethi, MD & CEO of Chalet Hotels Ltd. "We view every green milestone not just as an operational win, but as a step toward a more resilient and responsible future. This project reflects our commitment to Net Zero 2040 and our investment in innovation that serves both our guests and the planet."

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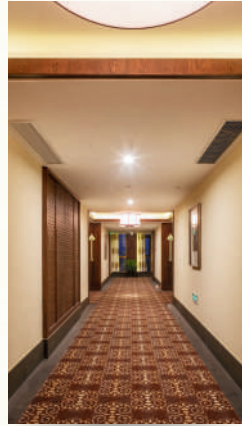
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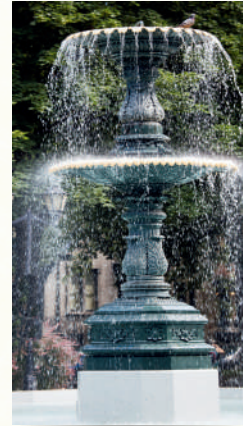
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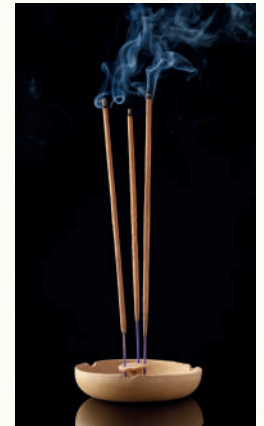
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## The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa Celebrates 25 Years of Hospitality Excellence

The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa recently marked a significant milestone as it celebrated 25 successful years of operations. Since opening its doors to guests in 2000, the hotel has earned a distinguished reputation for delivering exceptional hospitality and service.

During these years, the hotel has successfully managed to undergo a journey of transformation. Nick-named as *THE MET*, this luxury 5-star deluxe property is a perfect amalgamation of panache with substance. It welcomes guests to a fresh atmosphere with vivid, minimalist, urban, stylish designs, and let them slip into the smoothest place with warm and thoughtful service. Appreciation from guests along with various honors, awards, and accolades at international platforms like Haute Grandeur Global Awards, World Luxury Hotel Awards, International Hotel Awards, Tripadvisor, Booking.Com, Expedia, goibibo, Make My Trip, and many more encapsulate THE MET's eventful journey.



**Vipul Gupta**



and hotel staff. He thrived and worked hard towards making The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa what it is today, a leading Standalone Independent Hotel in India, known for its luxury, quality, innovation, and sustainability.

Recalling his father's envision and the wonderful journey of the hotel, Director, Vipul Gupta congratulates all on achieving this milestone. He says, "This is an exciting year and a momentous occasion for THE MET as it celebrates a historic past and looks forward to the future. This special milestone will not go unnoticed, and we will kick-off our anniversary year along with a series of celebratory offers and packages." He gives all the credit for this success to his staff for their undying spirit and impeccable services, and shows gratitude towards his customers for their loyalty and support.

In order to commemorate this huge success, THE MET invites you to a luxurious stay, interesting food, rejuvenating and relaxing spa treatments, a great time, and more to explore.

Future plans of THE MET aim to take all its outlets to new heights. Be it a signature fine-dining outlet, Sakura, a luxury lifestyle store, Craft House, or a lavish wellness spa, neoVeda Spa, the hotel plans expansion with an aim to reach more and more people with better services and world-class products.

## SeaHorse Consulting Facilitates Hotel Solitaire's Rebranding to Pride Premier, Dehradun

SeaHorse Hospitality Consulting, a leading hotel consultant company, has announced the successful signing and rebranding of Hotel Solitaire, an existing 65-room resort-style property in Dehradun, under the Pride Premier banner by Pride Group of Hotels. With operations set to begin in June 2025, this partnership marks another strategic win in SeaHorse's expanding portfolio of hotel brand partnerships across India.

Strategically located on the Haridwar Bypass Highway, the two-acre property offers a resort-style ambience with 65 rooms, event spaces, a pool, spa, and multiple dining options. With proximity to the airport, railway station, and the soon-to-open Delhi-Dehradun Expressway, it ensures excellent connectivity, and ideal choice for weekend getaways, destination weddings, and MICE travel.

This successful rebranding reflects SeaHorse's core focus: enabling hospitality partnerships that balance brand value with operational integrity. The firm has consistently delivered commercial and strategic results for asset owners through its hands-on, tailored approach to



hotel consulting and advisory for brand partnerships.

"Rebranding an operating hotel demands more than a new sign; it requires aligning purpose, people, and place for tomorrow's traveller," said Sandeep Roy, Founder & CEO of SeaHorse Hospitality Consulting. "At SeaHorse, our mission is to make every partnership future-ready and performance-driven."

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## Sarovar Hotels Announces Sarovar Premiere Ayodhya



**Rajesh Ranjan**

Sarovar Hotels, in partnership with Ramay LLP has announced the signing of Sarovar Premiere Ayodhya, a 129-key upscale hotel. Scheduled to open in 2026, this landmark addition strengthens Sarovar Hotels' growing

footprint in North India and underscores its commitment to delivering premium hospitality experiences across key markets.

This year, 2025, marks a significant phase for Sarovar Hotels with a total of 20 new signings nationally, reflecting strong momentum in expanding the brand's portfolio. The Uttar Pradesh portfolio now includes 15 properties, strategically located to support the state's growing tourism, pilgrimage, and business travel demand.

Located in the historic city of Ayodhya, one of India's most iconic pilgrimage and cultural destinations, Sarovar Premiere Ayodhya will offer guests stays rooted in rich heritage combined with comfortable, thoughtful service.

Rajesh Ranjan, Senior Vice President – Development, Sarovar Hotels said, "We are excited to bring Sarovar's trusted hospitality to Ayodhya, a city that holds deep spiritual and cultural significance. This property is a part of our broader vision to expand thoughtfully in pilgrimage and heritage destinations, offering guests warm and welcoming stays that honor the local traditions. With multiple signings this year, including several in Uttar Pradesh, we are committed to supporting the region's tourism growth and providing travelers with authentic experiences. We look forward to welcoming guests to Sarovar Premiere Ayodhya in 2026."

Sarovar Hotels continues to grow through strategic partnerships and a focus on authentic hospitality that resonates with both domestic and international travellers.

## Marriott India's Green Milestone on Environment Day 2025

Marriott India proudly achieved its ambitious goal for World Environment Day 2025, a commitment to plant 100,000 trees across its extensive portfolio of over 150 hotels nationwide. This significant undertaking marked a powerful escalation of Marriott India's dedication to sustainability and ecological restoration, building upon the success of its previous environmental initiatives.

This landmark endeavor was built upon the successful foundation of last year's "Two Trees per Room" initiative, launched on World Environment Day 2024. That program, a cornerstone of Marriott India's environmental stewardship, saw over 32,600 trees planted by more than 4,900 volunteers. This year, Marriott India scaled its impact exponentially, reinforcing its commitment to tangible environmental action and a healthier planet by setting and achieving this monumental new target.

To achieve this ambitious goal, each Marriott India property actively participated in localized tree-planting initiatives. This collective effort, in



collaboration with reputable reforestation organizations, was designed to dramatically expand our collective green footprint. Trees were strategically planted in areas optimized for ecosystem restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and climate change mitigation, while also providing vital support to local communities.

"Marriott India is incredibly proud to have successfully achieved our goal of planting 100,000 trees, a testament to our profound dedication to environmental responsibility," said Sanjay Gupta – Chairman of the Marriott India Business Council. "This ambitious goal truly underscores our belief that sustainability is not just a passing trend, but a fundamental pillar of responsible hospitality. We are committed to making a lasting, positive impact on our environment for generations to come."

The luxury properties of Marriott India - The St. Regis Goa, JW Marriott Goa and W Goa - actively contributed to World Environment Day by planting 1564 trees, reaffirming our commitment to a greener future.

Marriott India's dedication extends beyond this signature initiative. We continue to implement a wide array of innovative practices aimed at minimizing our ecological impact, including energy-efficient operations, robust waste reduction programs, and responsible sourcing. By leading through example, Marriott India is committed to setting new benchmarks for sustainable hospitality within the industry.

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## Hilton Bengaluru Manyata Marks 3rd Anniversary with Green Commitment

Hilton Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park celebrates three transformative years of hospitality by planting roots—literally. In partnership with environmental NGO SayTrees Environmental Trust, the hotel has launched a meaningful green initiative: for every room booked in May 2025, a tree will be planted in the guest's name, creating a living legacy of sustainability and community impact.

Each tree will be geotagged, cared for by a dedicated local farmer, which will further support their livelihoods, and visible to the guest via a digital dashboard. Part of a farmer-managed program, these trees will have a survival rate exceeding 90%. This initiative represents more than carbon offset—they represent continuity, care, and contribution.

“Our third anniversary is not just a celebration—it’s a reaffirmation of our values,” said Manish Garg, General Manager, Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park. “This year, we wanted to create something lasting. Planting a tree for every booking is our way of saying thank you—to our guests, to our community, and to the planet we all share.”

This milestone initiative aligns with the hotel’s broader sustainability ethos. Hilton Bengaluru Manyata is already home to a range of eco-forward practices: a solar-powered hot water system heating 15,000 liters daily, an in-house glass bottling plant eliminating 2,500 plastic bottles each day, and the complete removal of single-use plastics from guest rooms. From eco-mugs to refillable amenities, every detail reflects thoughtful hospitality that treads lightly on the earth.



Since opening in 2022, Hilton Bengaluru Embassy Manyata has redefined premium business travel in North Bengaluru. With nearly 60,000 sq. ft. of versatile event space across 22 cutting-edge venues, the hotel is a preferred destination for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions).

The dual-brand complex, housing both Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn under one roof, is among the largest of its kind in South India.

In an industry driven by moments, Hilton Bengaluru Manyata is choosing to make a mark. With every guest contributing to a greener India, the anniversary campaign serves as a powerful reminder that hospitality can go hand-in-hand with healing the planet.

## ibis India Marks World Ocean Day with Beach Clean-Up

In celebration of World Ocean Day 2025, ibis India reaffirmed its commitment to sustainability through a nationwide coastal clean-up initiative. As part of the campaign, ten ibis hotels across Mumbai, Chennai, Goa, and Kochi partnered with local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to conduct large-scale beach clean-ups. The initiative successfully mobilised over 600 volunteers and resulted in the collection of more than 500 kilograms of waste in a single day.

Reflecting this year’s global theme, “Wonder: Sustaining



What Sustains Us”, the campaign highlighted the importance of protecting marine ecosystems and preserving the natural environments that support life on Earth.

With several ibis hotels located near beaches and waterfronts, the brand sees first hand the effects of ocean pollution. The clean-



up not only removed harmful waste, but also raised awareness within local communities and supported wider efforts to restore ocean health.

“At ibis, sustainability is not just an initiative; it is part of our brand DNA,” said Tejus Jose, Director of Operations, ibis and ibis Styles India. “This clean-up drive was about more than removing waste; it was a meaningful step towards preserving marine life and inspiring conversations that lead to lasting change. We believe hospitality can and should make a difference.”

In addition to the clean-up, ibis hotels facilitated public awareness sessions on marine pollution and hosted interactive activities with school children, fishermen and tourists to encourage long-term behavioural change and collective environmental responsibility.

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## Vishvapreet Singh Cheema



Lemon Tree Hotels has announced the appointment of Vishvapreet Singh Cheema as the President of the company. A seasoned hospitality professional, Cheema brings with him over 30 years of industry experience, having worked with leading global brands such as InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), Marriott,

Radisson, and Oberoi Hotels & Resorts.

Prior to joining Lemon Tree, he led operations for IHG Hotels in South West Asia, overseeing key markets including India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Over the course of his career, he has held diverse leadership roles across functions and geographies, establishing a strong track record in hotel operations and brand management.

His appointment is set to strengthen Lemon Tree's leadership team and play a key role in advancing the group's ongoing growth and expansion across India and beyond. His vast experience across multiple geographies, combined with a deep understanding of the hospitality industry, makes him a significant asset to the Lemon

## Cyrus Madan



Accor has appointed Cyrus Madan as Director of Development for India & South Asia, a move aimed at strengthening the group's leadership capabilities across the region. Bringing close to three decades of experience in hospitality management and hotel business development, he is set to play a pivotal role in advancing the group's

regional growth.

Cyrus has held leadership roles with esteemed brands such as Lemon Tree Hotels and Atmosphere Hospitality, and began his professional journey with the Taj in New Delhi. A graduate of the Welcome Group Graduate School of Hotel Administration, he brings strong expertise in strategy, business development, and client engagement. His ability to navigate complex market landscapes and deliver scalable growth makes him an ideal choice to lead Accor's development initiatives.

This appointment highlights Accor's strategic focus on India and South Asia. With his proven track record, Cyrus Madan is set to drive growth, build partnerships, and accelerate the brand's expansion across key destinations in the evolving hospitality landscape.

## Vikas Sharma



Encalm Hospitality, the pioneering force in redefining airport hospitality in India, announces the elevation of Vikas Sharma as its Group Chief Executive Officer.

With over 25 years of leadership across globally renowned hospitality brands, Vikas brings a legacy of innovation, strategic vision, and people-first leadership.

Since joining Encalm, he has played a pivotal role in expanding its footprint, launching new verticals, and elevating service benchmarks.

Under his leadership, Encalm has rapidly expanded across major Indian airports, with acclaimed lounges in Delhi, Hyderabad, and Goa. The brand is now extending its signature hospitality to new destinations nationwide. Its service portfolio reflects a 360-degree approach, including meet and assist, wellness zones, transit services, and more, signalling horizontal and vertical expansion. Several new verticals are currently in development, poised to further redefine travel.

An alumnus of INSEAD and IHM Gwalior, Vikas illustrious career includes leadership roles at The Ritz-Carlton, Four Seasons, and Sheraton Hotels & Resorts.

## Raghavendra Kollipara



Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre & HICC has appointed Raghavendra Kollipara as the Financial Controller. With an extensive background in finance and strategic management, he brings a wealth of experience to his new role, further strengthening the financial stewardship of the property.

As Financial Controller, Raghavendra will be responsible for overseeing financial planning, risk management, budgeting, and compliance to drive operational excellence and sustainable growth.

Raghavendra joins Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre & Hyderabad International Convention with a proven track record of success in financial strategy and corporate governance. His expertise in financial analytics, cost optimisation, and regulatory compliance aligns with the organisation's commitment to operational excellence and fiscal responsibility.

Raghavendra holds a bachelor's degree in law (LLB) along with an MBA in finance and is a certified Cost & Management Accountant (CMA).

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## Dimple Bhatt



The Ritz-Carlton, Pune has appointed Dimple Bhatt as Director of Spa, overseeing all wellness, spa, and athletic club operations at the iconic luxury property. With a decade of progressive experience in wellness hospitality and an unwavering commitment to guest satisfaction, Dimple brings with her a wealth of industry knowledge and a strong track

record in luxury spa management.

Her career has spanned some of the most esteemed hospitality brands including JW Marriott Mussoorie, Holiday Inn Mumbai, and Radisson Blu Pune.

In her new role at The Ritz-Carlton, Pune, Dimple will lead the Spa and The Athletic Club, focusing on elevating wellness experiences through innovation, sustainability, and exceptional service standards. She will be responsible for developing holistic wellness journeys that reflect The Ritz-Carlton brand's commitment to luxury, mindfulness, and transformative hospitality.

Her appointment marks an inspiring new chapter for wellness at The Ritz-Carlton, Pune, one defined by passion, innovation, and a vision for nurturing the mind, body, and spirit.

## Nitin Gohri



Courtyard by Marriott Navi Mumbai has appointed Nitin Gohri as its new Director of Sales and Marketing. Nitin's exceptional track record in driving revenue growth and delivering unparalleled customer experiences positions him as a valuable asset to the hotel's innovative team

In his capacity as the Director of Sales and Marketing, Nitin will spearhead the hotel's strategic marketing initiatives, brand development, sales and customer engagement strategies to further promote the commercial interests of the award-winning property and strengthen its position as a premier destination in the Navi Mumbai market.

Eager to embark on a new journey at Courtyard by Marriott Navi Mumbai, the new appointee joins a dynamic team at a strategically located property. The focus will be on contributing to the brand's legacy of exceptional hospitality while creating new streams of revenue. The aim is to cultivate memorable experiences for guests and achieve new milestones of excellence.

Nitin's remarkable career includes successful stints with prestigious hotel brands, where he played pivotal roles with Westin Goa, Taj Land's End, Park Hyatt Hyderabad, Taj Palace New Delhi.

## Ojas A. Vagal



Ojas A. Vagal has been appointed as the Multi-Property Director of Human Resources at Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center, Marriott Executive Apartments UB City, and The Artiste, Kochi – a Tribute Portfolio Hotel.

With over 19 years of extensive experience in human resources management, learning & development, and hotel operations, Ojas brings a rich blend of strategic insight and people-centric leadership to his new role. He will be responsible for steering the full spectrum of HR and talent development functions across the three hotels, playing a pivotal role in shaping a highly engaged, motivated, and future-ready workforce.

Prior to this appointment, Ojas served at The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, and at Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru at Embassy ONE, where he successfully led initiatives in recruitment, performance management, succession planning, employee engagement, training, and policy development.

Prior to this, Ojas held HR leadership roles at The Ritz-Carlton Bangalore and Four Seasons Bengaluru, driving key initiatives across talent, engagement, and policy.

## Deepak Verma



Andaz Delhi, by Hyatt has announced the appointment of Deepak Verma as the new Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing (Andaz Delhi, by Hyatt and Hyatt Delhi Residences). With a distinguished career spanning over two decades in luxury hospitality, Deepak brings with him a wealth of experience and a proven record of success in

driving strategic growth and delivering excellence in commercial performance.

Deepak brings rich leadership experience from top hotel brands like The Leela, Westin, Pullman & Novotel, and Hyatt. His expertise spans RFPs, global sales, digital marketing, and team building. Known for driving growth across segments, he aligns perfectly with Andaz Delhi's focus on innovation, strategy, and exceptional guest engagement.

In his new role, he will be responsible for leading the hotel's overall sales and marketing strategy, with a focus on enhancing guest experiences, expanding market reach, and reinforcing Andaz Delhi's position as a leading lifestyle hotel in the capital.



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## Uttaran Acharya



ibis Styles Mysuru has announced the appointment of Uttaran Acharya as the Front Office Manager. With a career spanning over a decade in the hospitality industry, Uttaran brings with him a wealth of experience in front office operations, guest relations, and team leadership.

Prior to joining ibis Styles Mysuru, he served as Assistant Front Office Manager (Operational Head) at The Leela Bhartiya City, Bengaluru, where he was responsible for streamlining front office operations, enhancing guest satisfaction, and leading strategic initiatives that improved overall service quality.

Uttaran has also held key positions at reputed hospitality brands including Radisson Bengaluru City Center, Royal Orchid Central, The Lalit Great Eastern Kolkata, and Le Meridien Kochi.

In his new role at ibis Styles Mysuru, Uttaran will lead the front office team with a focus on guest experience, service excellence, and operational efficiency. His deep understanding of customer service, team development, and process optimization is expected to further strengthen the hotel's commitment to providing exceptional hospitality.

## Bhakti Kalsekar



Taj Cidade de Goa, Goa has appointed Bhakti Kalsekar as its new Spa Manager, steering the in-house J Wellness Circle. Holding a post-graduation diploma in cosmetology and certified as a yoga instructor, she brings over 20 years of extensive experience, combining wellness expertise with strong leadership acumen. Her exceptional ability

to multitask and meticulous attention to detail distinguish her while consistently upholding the highest standards of service. This appointment significantly enhances the hotel's wellness offerings, delivering a sophisticated and holistic spa experience tailored to meet evolving lifestyle demands and international wellness benchmarks, while promoting a culture of wellbeing among guests and staff alike.

In her capacity as Spa Manager, Bhakti will focus on developing and curating comprehensive wellness experiences that nurture the body, mind, and soul. Her vision is closely aligned with the property's commitment to providing transformative journeys of relaxation and rejuvenation, ensuring every guest receives personalized, exemplary care and attention.

## Eranna Neelur



JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru has announced the appointment of Eranna Neelur as Assistant Director of Engineering. With over 15 years of experience in engineering and operations within the hospitality industry, Eranna brings a wealth of expertise to his new role. His previous leadership roles include serving as the Chief Engineer at Coorg Marriott Resort and Spa Madikeri,

where he was responsible for overseeing engineering operations and ensuring the smooth functioning of the property's infrastructure.

Besides managing mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems his expertise also extends to implementing preventative maintenance programs and managing engineering budgets. With a focus on operational efficiency and system optimization, Eranna has successfully improved engineering operations and contributed to enhancing overall guest satisfaction.

In his new role, Eranna will be responsible for managing the engineering operations at JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru

His career includes significant tenures at properties such as Courtyard and Fairfield by Marriott, where he played a key role in improving operational standards and ensuring seamless infrastructure management.

## Shivansh Dixit

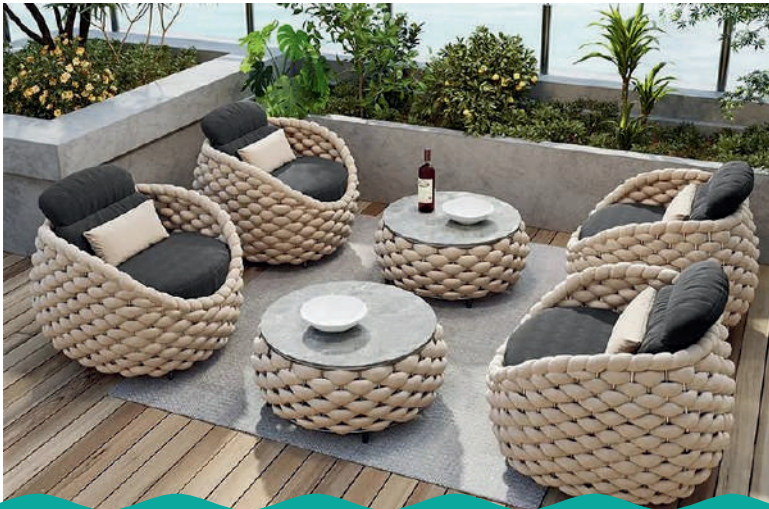


Le Méridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa has announced the appointment of Shivansh Dixit as the Assistant Marketing and Communication Manager. With a strong foundation in digital marketing, and brand communication, Shivansh brings a fresh perspective and strategic vision to the resort's marketing initiatives.

A passionate and results-oriented marketing specialist, Shivansh holds a Bachelor's degree in Hotel Management from the Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad. He has honed his skills through immersive training and work experiences, including a comprehensive stint with Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort as part of the prestigious Marriott Voyage Program.

In his new role, Shivansh will be responsible for supporting the planning and execution of the resort's marketing and communication strategies, including media relations, digital marketing, social media management, content creation, and brand positioning. He will also assist in driving guest engagement through storytelling, campaign development, and strategic collaborations to enhance the visibility and reputation of Le Méridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa.

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# Diversity Drives Hotels Forward

Having women in leadership positions in the hospitality industry has numerous advantages. The first and foremost is that diversity can help the hotels to understand and serve the mixed needs of the guests better. Women bring unique insights into problem-solving approaches enriching the decision-making process. In this second and concluding part of the story on success of women in hospitality industry, to commemorate International Women's Day, **Ashok Malkani** delves on how diversity helps in the progress of the industry and the future role of women in the industry.

**H**ospitality, an industry that was dominated by males in leading roles about a decade ago is, today witnessing several senior positions being occupied by women, who are proving their ability in successfully leading the properties to the peak of their success. For several decades, women were largely confined to roles as receptionists and front desk staff. Today, they are occupying prestigious positions like GMs, HR Managers, heads of marketing depts, et al. Women have proved their mettle and taken the industry forward at an unimaginative pace.

The hospitality industry has realized that diversity offers numerous advantages in the workplace. It can foster innovation, improve problem-solving, and enhance employee engagement. It has been proved that having diversity, as far as employment in all departments and designations of an industry are concerned is imperative for the progress of the organisations, as well as the industry.

*Scientific research consistently highlights one undeniable truth: women demonstrate greater attention to detail than their male counterparts.*

In the hospitality industry this is an important aspect for the progress of the property. Diversity is thus an important trait that needs to be adopted and followed by the hotel industry.

Sushma Khichar, General Manager, Sheraton Grand Bangalore at Brigade



**Sushma Khichar**

Gateway says, "Diversity isn't just about representation—it's a business advantage. Companies with diverse leadership make better decisions, foster innovation and enhance guest experiences. At Marriott, women hold 47.3% of global executive position. Properties that embrace inclusivity see higher employee engagement, stronger financial performance, and a workplace culture that attracts top talent. Simply put, diversity drives success."

She adds, "The hospitality industry has made room for women to rise, but real empowerment comes from action—mentorship, leadership programs, and a culture that fosters growth. At Marriott, initiatives like the Women's Associate

Resource Group ensure that women aren't just included, they're empowered to lead.

Radhika Changoiwala, Marketing & Communications Manager at The Westin Mumbai Garden City affirms, "Gender diversity plays a vital role in driving innovation, inclusivity, and excellence in the hospitality industry. It enhances teamwork, decision-making, and operational efficiency, leading to long-term growth. At The Westin Mumbai Garden City, women in senior leadership have been instrumental in the hotel's success. With a female Director of Operations and Director of Finance, along with 67% female associates in Sales & Marketing, our hotel has achieved remarkable growth."

She believes, "Gender representation in hospitality is improving, but women remain underrepresented in top executive roles. To improve this, companies must strengthen diversity initiatives, offer leadership training, and create mentorship programs to support career growth. Flexible work policies and equal opportunities in promotions can help retain and advance female talent. I believe it is necessary to close the gender gap for fostering innovation, inclusivity, and business growth. Diverse leadership enhances creativity, drives operational excellence, and strengthens brand reputation. Gender equality also attracts top talent, increases employee satisfaction, and enriches workplace culture."

She avers, "Closing the gender gap in hospitality requires stronger diversity policies, leadership training, and mentorship programs to support women's career growth. Equal opportunities in promotions, pay equity, and flexible work arrangements can help retain and advance female talent. Encouraging inclusive hiring practices, recognizing female leadership, and fostering a supportive workplace culture will further drive equality."

Sukhbir Singh, General Manager of Novotel Hyderabad Airport agrees. He says, "Gender diversity is essential for the progress of the hospitality industry, fostering innovation, enhancing guest experiences, and driving operational





**Vaneeta Arora**

excellence. At Novotel Hyderabad Airport (NHA), a diverse and inclusive workforce has played a pivotal role in shaping a dynamic and guest-centric environment.”

He disclosed, “Women at NHA have been instrumental in redefining service excellence, bringing creativity, empathy, and strategic thinking to key areas. Their leadership has strengthened guest engagement, improved service personalization, and contributed to a more collaborative and inclusive workplace culture. This balance has not only enhanced operational efficiency but has also reinforced NHA’s reputation as a forward-thinking, people-driven property.

“By actively promoting gender diversity, NHA has created a work environment where different perspectives drive innovation and adaptability. The hotel’s ability to deliver high-quality, experience-

driven hospitality reflects the strength of an empowered and diverse team, proving that inclusivity is not just a value but a key driver of long-term success.”

He believes that closing the gender gap in hospitality is essential for innovation, growth and long term industry success. He affirms, “A diverse leadership team brings varied perspectives, leading to better decision-making, stronger guest experiences, and higher financial performance. Gender balance fosters a more inclusive workplace, attracting and retaining top talent while driving employee satisfaction. Moreover, hospitality thrives on emotional intelligence and service excellence—qualities that a diverse workforce enhances. Beyond business benefits, closing the gap ensures fairness, empowers future female leaders, and positions the industry as a progressive, forward-thinking space where talent, not gender, defines success.”

He adds, “At Novotel Hyderabad Airport, we believe that fostering an inclusive workplace starts with equal opportunities for growth, structured mentorship, and transparent career progression. Encouraging more women in leadership requires fair hiring practices, pay equity, and supportive policies like flexible work arrangements and professional development programs. Beyond policies, cultivating a workplace culture that values diverse perspectives and actively removes biases ensures

that talent is recognized based on merit. By embedding these principles into our operations, we contribute to a hospitality industry where leadership is defined by capability, not gender.”

Shrishti Salian, Managing Director, Bharat Excellence, atates, “A diverse leadership team, comprising of both genders, brings varied strengths; whether in customer engagement, service innovation, or kitchen operations.

At Bharat Excellence, gender diversity has played a crucial role in our growth. My mother’s expertise in kitchen management and my experience in the business side complement each other, allowing us to maintain high standards while also evolving with modern dining trends. This synergy is what helps a hospitality business succeed in the long run.”

She believes that at present there are still some barriers to women achieving their target of reaching top positions. “Some of the major barriers include gender biases, safety concerns, and the perception that leadership roles in hospitality; especially in areas like kitchen management, require a strong physical presence. Additionally, the lack of mentorship and networking opportunities for women can slow career growth. To overcome these challenges, we need to create safer work environments, implement fair promotion policies, and encourage mentorship programs to support women’s career advancement.”

She cites some of the ways in which gender gap can be closed thus:

- \* Providing mentorship and leadership training for women
- \* Implementing fair hiring and promotion policies.
  - Ensuring equal pay for equal work.
  - Creating safer and more flexible work environments.
  - Encouraging more women to pursue careers in hospitality through education and awareness campaign.

Sunil Kumar, General Manager, JW Marriott Kolkata affirms, “In the hospitality industry, as in any other industry, diversity isn’t just a buzzword, it’s a necessity. A balanced workforce comprising of both sexes brings different perspectives, better



decision-making and ultimately stronger business outcomes. We've seen this firsthand at JW Marriott Kolkata where a diverse leadership team has led to better guest experiences, a more engaged workforce and a stronger brand presence. When employees feel represented they perform better and that directly reflects on guest satisfaction. But there are still biases against female trying to climb the corporate ladder. A major concern is work life balance in an industry that operates 24/7. We need to continue breaking these barriers by providing flexible work arrangements, creating more leadership pathways and fostering a culture where women are encouraged and supported to aim higher."

He continues, "We need to close the gender gap because companies with diverse leadership teams perform better financially, retain talent longer and create more meaningful guest experiences. More importantly, it's simply the right thing to do, women deserve equal opportunities to grow and succeed just like their male counterparts."



**Sukhbir Singh**

He emphasised, "By being intentional about change. Organizations must set clear diversity goals, actively mentor and promote women and create workplace policies that support career progression. Encouraging women to take leadership roles isn't enough, we need to give them the right tools, training and platforms to succeed."

Radhika Tata, General Manager, Grand Mercure Mysore, avers, "Gender diversity is vital for the hospitality industry as

it brings fresh perspectives, enhances decision-making, and elevates guest experiences. Properties that prioritize a balanced female-to-male ratio often see stronger team dynamics and improved business outcomes. Encouragingly, the industry is making steady progress, with 18% gender diversity overall and 30% of women holding supervisory positions, reflecting growing opportunities for women to advance.

"At Grand Mercure Mysore, continuous efforts to promote gender diversity have fostered a more inclusive and dynamic work environment. Many of the women in our team have been with Accor for over five years, reflecting strong retention and professional growth. Women in key roles have introduced innovative guest-centric initiatives and strengthened sustainability practices, contributing to overall growth and success. This commitment to diversity has not only enhanced employee satisfaction but also positioned the property for long-term excellence."

She reveals, "While gender



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**Nikita Poojari**

representation in the hospitality industry has improved, women are still underrepresented in senior leadership roles. Although more women are taking on operational and managerial positions, the gap at the top remains noticeable.”

Rajani Nair Deb, GM, Double tree by Hilton, Agra, believes “Diversity in hospitality industry, as in all industries, brings new energy, fresh thinking, and empathy, all of which are essential in hospitality. At DoubleTree by Hilton Agra,

our diverse team, especially the growing number of women in key roles, has positively impacted everything from team culture to guest satisfaction. It’s simple: when everyone feels seen and heard, they give their best. And that directly reflects in the success of the property.”

She continues, “However, balancing personal and professional responsibilities can be tough, and often, women hesitate to aim higher because of societal expectations or self-doubt. I’ve been there too. But what makes the difference is having leaders who believe in you, flexible work environments, and real role models to look up to. The barriers exist, but with the right support, they can absolutely be overcome.”

Nikita Poojari, Director of Shiv Sagar Foods & Resorts Pvt Ltd., feels “Gender diversity is important in hospitality industry as it fosters a balanced and progressive work culture leading to increased creativity, better decision-making and improved financial performance. A diverse team brings varied perspectives making a property more adaptable to guest



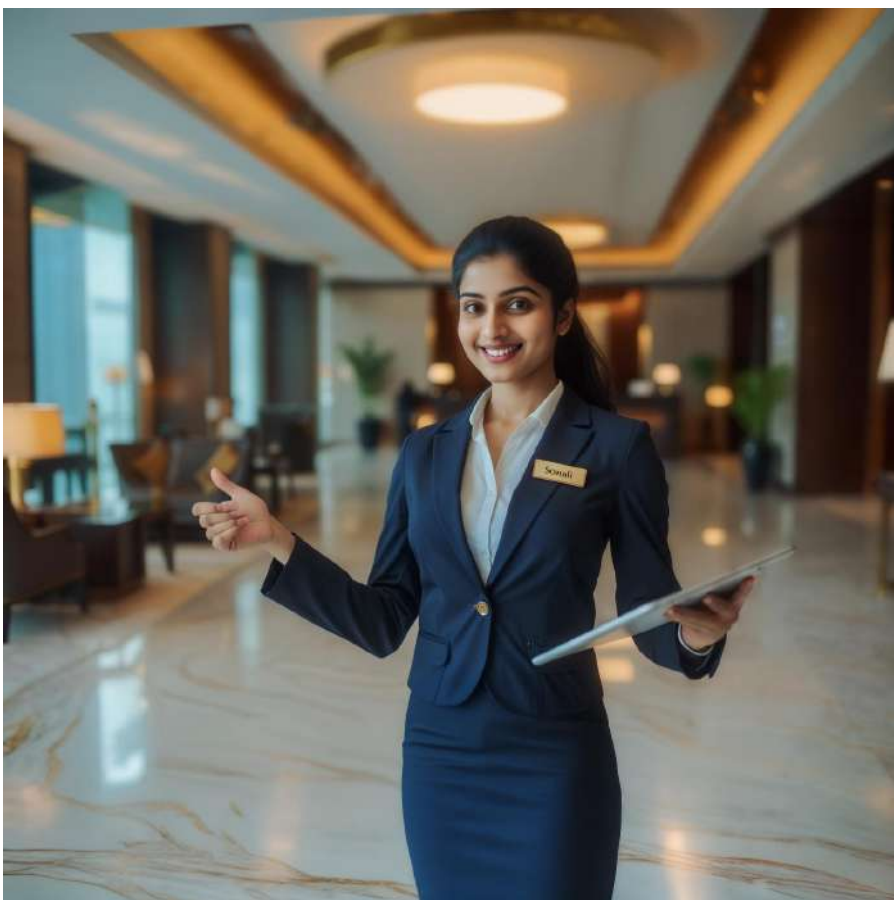
**Radhika Changoiwala**

needs. At Shiv Sagar Foods & Resorts we’ve witnessed how having women in leadership has positively impacted guest engagement and operational efficiency. It has also helped us create an inclusive and welcoming work culture ultimately benefiting our brand and guests alike.”

She adds, “Despite progress, challenges such as unconscious bias, lack of mentorship, work-life balance expectations and the need to prove oneself more than male counterparts still exist. While there has been significant improvement in gender representation, leadership roles particularly in areas such as F&B, operations and general management still see fewer women. To bridge this gap, companies must actively implement policies that promote gender parity, ensure equal pay and encourage more women to pursue hospitality as a long-term career. The gender gap can be closed through structured mentorship programs, leadership development initiatives, flexible work policies and equal pay policies.”

She stressed “Closing the gender gap is not just about equality—it’s about unlocking the full potential of the hospitality industry. A balanced workforce leads to increased productivity, improved guest experiences and a healthier workplace culture.”

Vaneeta Arora, Corporate Director, Housekeeping, Park Hotels, New Delhi, states, “Women are integral to the growth and evolution of the Indian hospitality industry. With their innate sense of empathy, attention to detail, and ability to multitask, they naturally excel in creating





memorable guest experiences. Whether it's in operations, culinary arts, guest relations, or human resources, women have consistently raised service standards and brought a people-first approach to the forefront. Their leadership style tends to be collaborative and inclusive, fostering strong team dynamics and enhancing workplace culture."

She laments, "Despite their significant presence at entry and mid-management levels, women in the Indian hospitality sector face multiple hurdles when aspiring to leadership roles. One major barrier is the industry's demanding work hours, which often clash with societal expectations around caregiving and family responsibilities. Gender bias—both overt and subtle—continues to influence hiring and promotion decisions. In some cases, women are not offered the same growth opportunities, strategic projects, or mentorship as their male counterparts."

She adds, "Though women form a significant part of the Indian hospitality industry their representation thins considerably as one moves up the corporate ladder. Senior leadership positions across hotels, restaurant chains, and tourism bodies are still predominantly male-dominated. This imbalance is not due to a lack of talent but a lack of sustained institutional support. Yes, gender representation urgently needs improvement. The first step is acknowledging the gap and committing to long-term solutions—not just token hires. Companies must set measurable diversity goals, ensure pay parity, and actively promote women into decision-making roles. Encouraging women to lead departments beyond traditional roles (like HR and guest relations) and into finance, operations, and general management will also help diversify the leadership pool."

**Future prospects**

Hospitality industry, though known for its vibrant and dynamic nature has, historically, been male dominated, specially in leadership roles. However, today, that narrative is shifting and more women are stepping into managerial and executive positions. With mentorship programs, leadership opportunities and increased awareness of workplace diversity, the hospitality world is evolving and many female leaders are now finding and would, according to experts, find



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**Rajani Nair Deb**

a place in important executive positions.

Radhika Changoiwala disclosed, “The future of women in hospitality is evolving, with increasing prospects for leadership and transformation. As organizations champion equity and representation, more women are stepping into influential roles, redefining industry standards. Strengthening mentorship networks, executive development, and adaptable work structures will further propel their success. With a growing emphasis on experiential hospitality, responsible tourism, and strategic innovation, women will continue to drive meaningful change with ingenuity, foresight, and adaptability.”

Sushma Khichar is exuberant. She affirms, “The future isn’t just bright—it’s powerful. Women are no longer waiting for a seat at the table; they’re leading the conversation. With opportunities expanding and barriers breaking, they will continue to shape the industry,

redefine leadership, and inspire the next generation. My advice to every woman in hospitality is: Keep challenging, keep leading, and keep paving the way. The future belongs to those who dare to make a difference.”

Radhika Tata avows, “The future for women in the hospitality industry is progressing steadily, with growing support through mentorship, leadership programs, and flexible work policies. As the industry continues to address barriers and promote inclusivity, more women are advancing into senior roles. This positive momentum is paving the way for a more balanced and dynamic leadership landscape, ensuring sustained growth and innovation.”

Sukhbir Singh believes, “The future of women in hospitality is one of leadership, innovation, and impact. At Novotel Hyderabad Airport, we recognize that a diverse and inclusive workforce drives excellence. As the industry evolves, women will play a key role in enhancing guest experiences, leading business strategy, and driving operational efficiency. With growing opportunities in leadership, technology, and strategic decision-making, the path forward is more inclusive than ever. By fostering equal growth opportunities, mentorship, and recognition, we are committed to empowering women to excel and redefine industry standards. The future is not just about representation—it is about creating a hospitality landscape where talent, vision, and leadership know no gender.”

Sunil Kumar declares, “The future of women in hospitality industry is incredibly bright. With the right support, I see more women stepping into leadership roles, driving innovation and shaping the future of hospitality. The industry is evolving and as we continue fostering diversity and inclusivity, we’re not just opening doors for women—we’re building a stronger, more progressive hospitality landscape for everyone.”

Shrishti Salian stated, “More women are entering the industry with the confidence to take on leadership roles makes it promising. The hospitality industry can become a space where



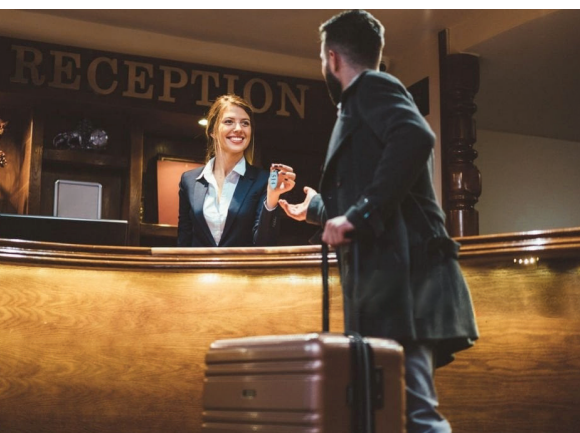
**Sunil Kumar**

gender is no longer a barrier but an asset.”

Nikita Poojari says, “The future of women in hospitality industry is bright. With increasing awareness and proactive efforts towards inclusion, women will continue to break barriers and take on more leadership positions. As the industry evolves, we will see more women entrepreneurs, general managers and decision-makers shaping the future of hospitality. The key is to sustain this momentum through continuous learning, mentorship and an unwavering commitment to equality.”

## Conclusion

Diversity is important in hospitality due to several reasons. It fosters innovation and enhances customer experiences. According to a study by Deloitte, women make up approximately 60% of hospitality employees but only 8% hold executive roles. A diverse work force with more females holding executive positions would have diverse perspectives and ideas which can lead to more innovative solutions and better problem-solving, benefiting the entire organization. This gender gap isn’t just a matter of inequality, it’s also a missed opportunity for the industry. However, today, with an increasing number of women stepping into leadership roles in hospitality, from GMs to directors of operations and CEOs of major hospitality brands the future looks bright for them. ■



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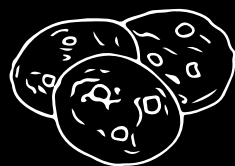


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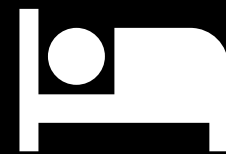
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# Game-Changing Promotion Strategies of GMs



**The success of a hotel depends entirely on the ability of the General Manager, who must be both innovative and adept at managing all aspects of the property. The entire hotel management team depends on the innovative and ground breaking abilities of the GM to steer them across path-breaking ways to make the hotel achieve success and earn a reputation that outshines competitors.**

**In other words, it's about making the guests feel that the hotel provides superlative hospitality! Yes, it is a known fact that an able, skilled and visionary GM can make or break a hotel. **Ashok Malkani** explores how a hotel's depends on its GM for being the talk of the town.**

The vital role of the general manager in the promotion, performance and publicity of the hotel is often not realized by the layman. The GM is important for setting the overall direction of the hotel by ensuring operational excellence and fostering a positive guest experience, all of which directly impacts the hotel’s reputation and ability to attract and retain guests. He is the persona who steers his entire team to succeed in the hotel achieving triumph in becoming one of the leading properties.

Sunil Kumar - General Manager, JW Marriott Kolkata, declares, “A General Manager plays a pivotal role in positioning the hotel not just as a place to stay, but as an immersive experience. At JW Marriott Kolkata, we focus on curating bespoke guest experiences, building strong community relationships, and partnering with like-minded brands to create buzz and visibility. Additionally, strategic marketing, participation in global travel and trade platforms, and targeted digital campaigns help us promote the



Sunil Kumar

property and drive revenue growth.”

He believes, “Balancing brand consistency with local adaptability can be a challenge. While promoting the hotel’s image, it is crucial to align with Marriott International’s global standards while also ensuring the hotel remains locally relevant. Another key challenge is navigating dynamic market trends, economic fluctuations, and increasing competition, which demand continuous

innovation and agility”

Ashwini Kumar Goela, Vice President Operations of Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport & Area GM of RHG, South Asia shares, “One of the key challenges in promoting the image of a hotel lies in maintaining brand consistency across guest touchpoints while balancing stakeholder expectations and ever-evolving market trends is a major challenge. Every guest interaction must reflect the hotel’s ethos, even amid staff turnover, shifting guest demographics, and rapid tech changes. In today’s digital age, a single negative review can impact perception, managing that with authenticity and agility is vital. Equally important is how a GM is perceived internally. Building trust, inspiring pride, and setting the tone for professionalism among employees is crucial, as a motivated and aligned team directly shapes the hotel’s external image.

Neil James, General Manager, Sheraton Grand Palace Indore, informs, “Promoting a hotel goes beyond advertising—it involves curating experiences. I focus on

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creating immersive events, strategic brand partnerships and leveraging Marriott Bonvoy's vast network. For instance, hosting Shaadi by Marriott Bonvoy during Indore Times Fashion Week positioned us as a premier wedding destination. Collaborations with local influencers and national platforms help maintain top-of-mind recall. Targeted corporate outreach, curated F&B promotions and an active digital footprint ensure our visibility translates into bookings."

Sheetal Singh, General Manager, Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Goa states, "One of our primary challenges is seamlessly blending the legacy of Taj Exotica with the evolving expectations of modern travellers. As the first 'Exotica' resort under the IHCL umbrella, we've set benchmarks that now require exceptionally high standards of intuitive service. Today's guests are looking for more than just luxury—they seek immersive experiences that are both culturally rooted and refreshingly innovative. Promoting this unique identity, especially within Goa's highly competitive hospitality landscape, calls for strategic and thoughtful positioning."

Rubin Cherian, General Manager of Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and HICC, reveals, "Promoting the hotel and driving sales begins with understanding what today's guest and client truly value. We lead with innovation, personalization, and purpose. Our strategy blends digital and on-ground presence, whether it's targeted campaigns, SEO, or showcasing at global MICE trade shows. We offer tailor-made solutions for diverse segments, from flexible hybrid event formats for corporates to immersive dining experiences curated with locally sourced ingredients. Sustainability is a strong pillar—we're Green Key certified, run on solar energy, and eliminate plastic through atmospheric water. These aren't just initiatives, they're stories we share proudly. Ultimately, it's about building trust, delivering value, and staying agile in a dynamic market. Sales follow when the experience speaks for itself."

Sushma Khichar, General Manager, Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway, declares, "Promoting



**Ashwni Kumar Goela**

the hotel and accelerating revenue growth is not merely about achieving numbers, it's about how we are remembered. At Sheraton Grand, each initiative is driven by a commitment to lasting value, delivered through outstanding service, thoughtful guest engagement, and unwavering consistency at every touchpoint. We don't see ourselves as selling rooms or transactions. We design experiences that resonate, relationships that endure, and a brand presence that reflects both warmth and excellence. Whether it's through an intuitive arrival experience, a thoughtfully curated dining moment, or a simple gesture remembered long after checkout, our goal is to leave behind more than just impressions; we aim to build emotional equity."

Kadambari Sabharwal Talwar, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal, states, "The General Manager plays a pivotal role in overseeing total hotel revenues while also managing a



**Neil James**

range of other key deliverables. Building strong relationships with key stakeholders is a critical part of the GM responsibility, enabling the hotel to attract and secure important new business. As the face of the hotel and a representative of the brand, the General Manager ensures the property's success through leadership, relationship-building, and revenue management."

Manas Madaan, General Manager, Delhi Operations – ELIVAAS, disclosed, "A General Manager ensures that every property portrays its true and authentic charm, creating a connection with guests even before they arrive. At our properties we create moments that inspire word-of-mouth, the most genuine and effective marketing. With a blend of authentic experiences and strategic foresight, a GM turns guest stays into lasting memories and drives sustainable growth."

Ganeshram Iyer, Hotel Manager, ibis Styles Mysuru, avers, "To promote new hotel and increase sales, multi-faceted approach combining strategy, marketing and operation excellence are needed. Since our hotel is close to Ranganathittu, the largest bird sanctuary in Mandya District of Karnataka, we made the theme, Ranganathittu, as a USP of the hotel, on all online channels. We focused on more LNR contracting, knowing it's purely a weekend destination for leisure and weekday occupancy will be soft. We collaborate with influencers from various parts of the country. Many FAM trips are also arranged for travel agents."

### **Innovative & Unconventional GM Strategies**

In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving business landscape, it is crucial for the hospitality industry, like any other, to stay ahead of the competition. Achieving this requires hotel General Managers to embrace innovative and unconventional approaches that drive the property's success. From creative strategies to outside-the-box tactics, staying relevant means connecting with guests in ways that truly resonate with their evolving expectations.

Sheetal Singh, disclosed that her hotel had taken for generating a buzz

and attracting guests. She states, "We've elevated the dining experience at Taj Exotica by transforming our F&B spaces into powerful storytelling and revenue-boosting platforms. Adegá Camoens, our Retro Hollywood lounge bar, now features an impressive new wine cellar and the exclusive Legacy Menu. This menu offers signature beverages that honor IHCL's rich 121-year heritage.

Miguel Arcanjo, our iconic Goan Portuguese restaurant, invites guests on a culinary voyage. It highlights local traditions through an interactive kitchen and thoughtfully curated heritage menus.

Lobster Village at Taj Exotica Goa has evolved into a premier dining destination that seamlessly blends refined dining with relaxed beachside comfort, offering unparalleled flavors in a stunning seaside setting. A unique aspect of Lobster Village is its dedicated all-women service team, led by a talented lady chef, ensuring warm, personalized service that truly elevates the dining experience. Together, these



Sheetal Singh

distinctive concepts not only deepen engagement and draw new audiences but also reinforce Taj Exotica as a true destination within Goa."

Ashwini Kumar Goela said, "To attract new customers and boost revenue we transformed from a busy airport hotel into a destination in itself by launching curated experiential stays—blending wellness, regional culture, and culinary storytelling.

Hyper-international cuisine pop-ups and influencer collaborations generated strong social media buzz and guest engagement. These immersive experiences drove repeat business and positioned us as more than just a transit stop. The focus was on creating memorable narratives guests could live, feel, and share—organically building brand presence while boosting revenue."

Davinder Juj, General Manager, Eros Hotel, New Delhi, Nehru Place, states, "As part of the industry, we always have to think out of the box, because everybody is competing and it is sometimes difficult for us also to think differently always and win every time. However, we take it as a challenge and bring out new every time. The major part of our Revenue is Food and beverage and Rooms. We always serve on the plate as per the palette of our customer, as per their need. Like, during the scorching summer, we have come up with Pool membership and there is a deal going on for rooms also. In F&B, if you see

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you will find multiple options for everyone's taste."

Sushma Khichar states that sales strategies differ from hotel to hotel. "Sales, at my level, is not about chasing leads—it's about architecting demand ecosystems. At Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel, our commercial strategy is built around one defining ambition: sustained market leadership. Driving RGI is not a quarterly objective—it is a long-game discipline, shaped by layered intelligence, lateral thinking, and cross-functional orchestration. Our growth narrative is deeply anchored in intentional segmentation. For groups—particularly high-value MICE and social events, we don't approach with generic decks. Each account is dissected at the back end: historic patterns, pricing elasticity, stakeholder psychology, even decision timelines. Every proposal is a precision-crafted asset, designed not just to win business, but to win trust, repeatedly."

She adds, "We've moved beyond templated selling into experience-led persuasion. Our hyperlocal activations aren't just about footfall—they are strategic brand-building tools. From city-specific weddings to regional long-stay solutions, we create occasions that convert. But these activations are never impulsive—they are derived from rigorous demand mapping and event intelligence. Strategy, not spontaneity, drives our creativity. What sets us apart is our obsession with context. We study our comp set not with rivalry, but with academic discipline—tracking their movements to decode microshifts in behaviour, which we often translate into macro-opportunities. Whether it's recalibrating rate architecture, crafting exclusion-based campaigns, or rebalancing distribution across OTA and direct, we move decisively and dynamically."

Sunil Kumar disclosed, "Our sales strategies are multifaceted, ranging from leveraging data analytics to personalising offerings to hosting curated events that attract specific clientele. We focus on both B2B and B2C segments, targeting key verticals like weddings, MICE, and leisure travel. Loyalty programs such as Marriott Bonvoy also play a significant role



**Manas Madaan**

in driving repeat business and long-term relationships."

Neil James stated, "Our sales strategy is multi-pronged:

- Segmentation-focused targeting (corporates, weddings, leisure groups)

- Loyalty integration via Marriott Bonvoy
- Event marketing, such as hosting literature festivals or fashion events

- B2B partnerships with planners, travel agents, and influencers

- Content storytelling via digital platforms

We also run tactical offers—for example, "Monsoon Escapes" targeting weekend travelers with bundled dining and spa experiences."

Rubin Cherian revealed, "our sales strategy is sharply focused, insight-driven, and future-forward. We've moved from broad-based outreach to precision targeting, aligning closely with Hyderabad's growth sectors, especially pharma, IT, manufacturing, and academia. Our dedicated account managers specialize



**Sushma Khichar**

in industry verticals, allowing us to curate hyper-personalized proposals that address the unique goals of each client.

"A major thrust of our strategy is on the MICE and International Association business, where we continue to lead with India's only purpose-built convention centre, HICC. Collaborating with HCVB (Hyderabad Convention Visitors Bureau) to jointly position the City of Pearls and our venue, as a premier destination for large-scale events, exhibitions, and global forums. We actively engage with global associations and professional congress organizers to position Hyderabad, and our venue, as the hub for international conferences and exhibitions. Leveraging our strong relationships with ICCA and other global bodies, we are focused on bringing large-scale association meetings to the city.

"Our outreach is also strategically mapped to high-growth markets like Delhi NCR, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra, regions that are seeing increased corporate activity and a rising appetite for integrated event destinations.

Ganeshram Iyer informs, "For any hotel to perform it needs to focus and target on various segments. A healthy mix of segments like MICE, Corporates, Leisure, Social and Retail are the key factor for hotel success."

### Handling Guest Relations

Succeeding in the hospitality industry needs constant endeavour to keep the guests satisfied. Following the unprecedented supply and demand fluctuations caused due to the pandemic the industry has become aware of the negative impact that disruptions can have on their properties. It has become extremely essential to handle guest issues by focusing on proactive solutions and ensuring that guests' complaints are solved immediately. So, what are the issues face by the guests and how does the GM motivate his team to deliver exceptional service?

Kadambari Sabharwal Talwar declares, "Today's world is high-touch, fast-paced, and driven by personalization. To remain competitive, every hotel and General Manager must adopt a Total Hotel Loyalty

mindset while consistently delivering tailored experiences to guests. Many issues typically arise from a failure to anticipate guest needs or from product-related concerns that are not effectively managed by front-facing teams. Proactive engagement and a guest-centric approach are key to ensuring satisfaction and long-term loyalty."

He adds, "It is essential to inculcate and actively embody the culture of the brand and the company upon the team from the outset. Once associates are aligned with and well-informed about the vision and strategies set for the year, a significant part of the journey is already accomplished. With today's savvy, energetic, and talented workforce, high levels of engagement, continuous learning opportunities, clear growth strategies, and relevant HR practices serve as powerful motivators that drive performance and commitment."

Sheetal Singh disclosed, "At Taj Exotica, guests in our luxury setting, anticipate nothing less than highly personalized attention and seamless service. In the current business landscape, guests are increasingly seeking experiential stays—expectations we view as valuable opportunities to elevate our offerings. I personally ensure that our interactions with guests are always rooted in care and empathy, fostering a genuine connection. Our team is not only well-equipped but also fully empowered to take ownership and resolve matters instantly. From crafting bespoke surprise touches to anticipating individual needs, personalization is fundamental to our service philosophy. Through continuous refinement and proactive engagement, we ensure every guest departs with an unforgettable memory."

She adds, "Leadership at Taj Exotica is firmly built on empathy, ownership, and recognition. I believe in nurturing a culture where every associate feels a profound sense of pride in their role in delivering excellence. Regular engagement, targeted training, and cross-functional collaboration help align everyone with our larger purpose—ensuring unwavering guest loyalty. We celebrate small wins, spotlight



**Kadambari Sabharwal Talwar**

innovation, and actively encourage our team to co-create unforgettable experiences. Sales is not a separate function here; it's deeply embedded in every guest touchpoint. Whether it's upselling a rejuvenating spa ritual or personalizing a floating breakfast, our team understands that emotional connection is the true driver of revenue. By leading from the front and consistently remaining guest-focused, I foster a passionate, empowered workforce."

Ashwni Kumar Goela informs, "Common issues include delayed service, miscommunication, or technical glitches. As a GM, I personally engage with guests—either during breakfast hours or evening interactions—to get real-time feedback. I believe in immediate redressal through empowerment: every team member is trained to resolve issues on the spot and take decisions that a GM can take. Consistent training, empathy-driven service, and follow-up calls ensure we turn



**Davinder Juj**

complaints into opportunities for delight."

He asserts, "I believe in leading by example—being visible on the floor, celebrating wins, and addressing service gaps constructively. We hold weekly storytelling sessions where team members share guest success moments, which boosts morale and service pride. I firmly believe that sales are a by-product of guest experience and employee well-being. When we get these two right, sales performance follows naturally and consistently. We align service excellence with sales goals, so every associate sees themselves as a brand ambassador. Recognition, open communication, and mentorship keep the team motivated, engaged, and focused on delivering excellence."

Davinder Juj, declared, "Hospitality looks easy but it comes with a cost. On a daily and ongoing job we have to understand that any guest entering the hotel is not coming to complain, we all are human and we understand that glitches happen and it happens in all industries, but our industry is one such dynamic industry where the brand image is always on the hot seat. However, majorly we get complaints in hotels are for Service Quality, Room Cleanliness, amenities, or maintenance issues, Billing and payment errors, discrepancies, or unexpected charges, Special Requests: Unmet requests for special occasions, dietary needs, or accessibility requirements etc.

To solve these issues, we should:

- Train our staff to resolve issues promptly and efficiently.
- Understand the root cause and identify the underlying causes of issues to prevent recurrence.
- We should Collect and act on guest feedback to identify areas for improvement.
- Offer personalized solutions and gestures to show guests that their concerns are valued.
- Regularly review and refine processes to enhance guest satisfaction."

He adds, "As a GM you should inspire the team to excel in service delivery and drive sales.

Service Delivery demonstrates exceptional service standards and behaviours and we should communicate expectations, goals,

and feedback. One such problem of not getting the business is also because we don't give the team members the authority to make decisions, so empower them with the decision-making. And time to time recognize and reward staff for excellent service delivery."

Sushma Khichar states, "With nearly a year-and-a-half of consistency and excellence in service we have gained insight and have understood the rhythm of guest expectations. Today's guests are discerning and deeply aware of their choices. The issues they face are often not operational lapses, but moments of disconnect, delayed responses, misaligned expectations, or a lack of personalization. What differentiates a mature hotel operation is not just its ability to resolve these concerns swiftly, but to anticipate and mitigate them before they surface.

"We leverage a suite of intelligent tools—from "GuestVoice and GXP" to integrated platforms like "SevenRooms" for seamless dining reservations and Club Marriott for enriched loyalty experiences. These systems give us real-time insight, but it is our team's training, intuition, and empowerment that translate those insights into action."

Ganeshram Iyer states, "In our industry learning is never ending process, there are few concerns which guests share. They are:

- Slow internet and key getting often deactivated
- Slow room service, delayed check-in/checkout, calls not answered. (All these can be rectified by cross training for team members to handle multiple responsibilities)

He adds, "A few measures which a GM can take for solving the guests complaints are:

- Being approachable, interacting with guests. (help team members during busy hours and showing commitment.
- Acknowledge achievements in daily briefings, weekly meetings, and by recognising in town hall meeting.

Rubin Cherian avers, "At our property, guest feedback is a vital driver of continuous improvement. Common concerns, such as peak-time delays or special service



**Rubin Cherian**

requests, are addressed with agility, empathy, and care. As General Manager, I focus on proactive communication, swift resolution, and empowering teams to take ownership. We actively listen, respond promptly, and equip our staff with training and tools to resolve issues on the spot."

He adds, "I believe the only constant is change, a belief I've embraced throughout my 20+ years in hospitality. We focus on continual learning, with regular training and well-being initiatives that build a motivated, agile workforce."

Neil James says, "Most common concerns include check-in delays during weddings, F&B customization requests, or minor tech glitches in rooms. I make it a point to personally interact with high-profile guests or wedding families. For example, during a 400-guest residential wedding last winter, we arranged for early check-ins, live counters, and a dedicated butler desk, resolving concerns proactively."

He adds, "For motivating and inspiring



**Ganeshram Iyer**

the team recognition is the key. We have regular appreciation huddles, monthly awards, and storytelling sessions where exceptional service moments are shared. I also spend time with teams on the floor where targets are aligned with team aspirations, and workshops on upselling and guest relations. We recently invited successful alumni from the hotel to share stories, sparking genuine inspiration."

Sunil Kumar concedes, "Guests may occasionally face concerns related to wait times, service gaps, or technological issues. A GM must lead with empathy and responsiveness, ensuring prompt resolution. At JW Marriott Kolkata, we empower our team to listen actively and take ownership, while I personally monitor guest feedback, engage regularly with guests, and ensure service recovery protocols are swift and sincere."

He informs "I make it a point to acknowledge achievements across all departments, foster a collaborative culture, and provide platforms for team members to grow and share ideas. Regular training, open communication, and celebrating milestones together keep the team inspired and aligned toward a shared vision of excellence."

Manas Madaan avers, "Our focus is on more than just resolving issues; it's about valuing emotions over transactions. By understanding individual needs and crafting personalized experiences, we ensure every guest feels at home and well taken care of.

He adds, "Guests today demand personalization, not cookie-cutter experiences. Through Guest Preference Records (GPRs), learning from data, and conducting pre-welcome calls, we ensure that personalization is met, making each stay truly unique."

## Conclusion

A GM is more than a manager, they are the driving force behind a hotel's identity and success. Their ability to innovate, lead with purpose, and uphold brand values shapes not only guest experiences but also team morale. As seen throughout, it's the GM's vision and adaptability that often determine whether a hotel simply operates, or truly excels. ■

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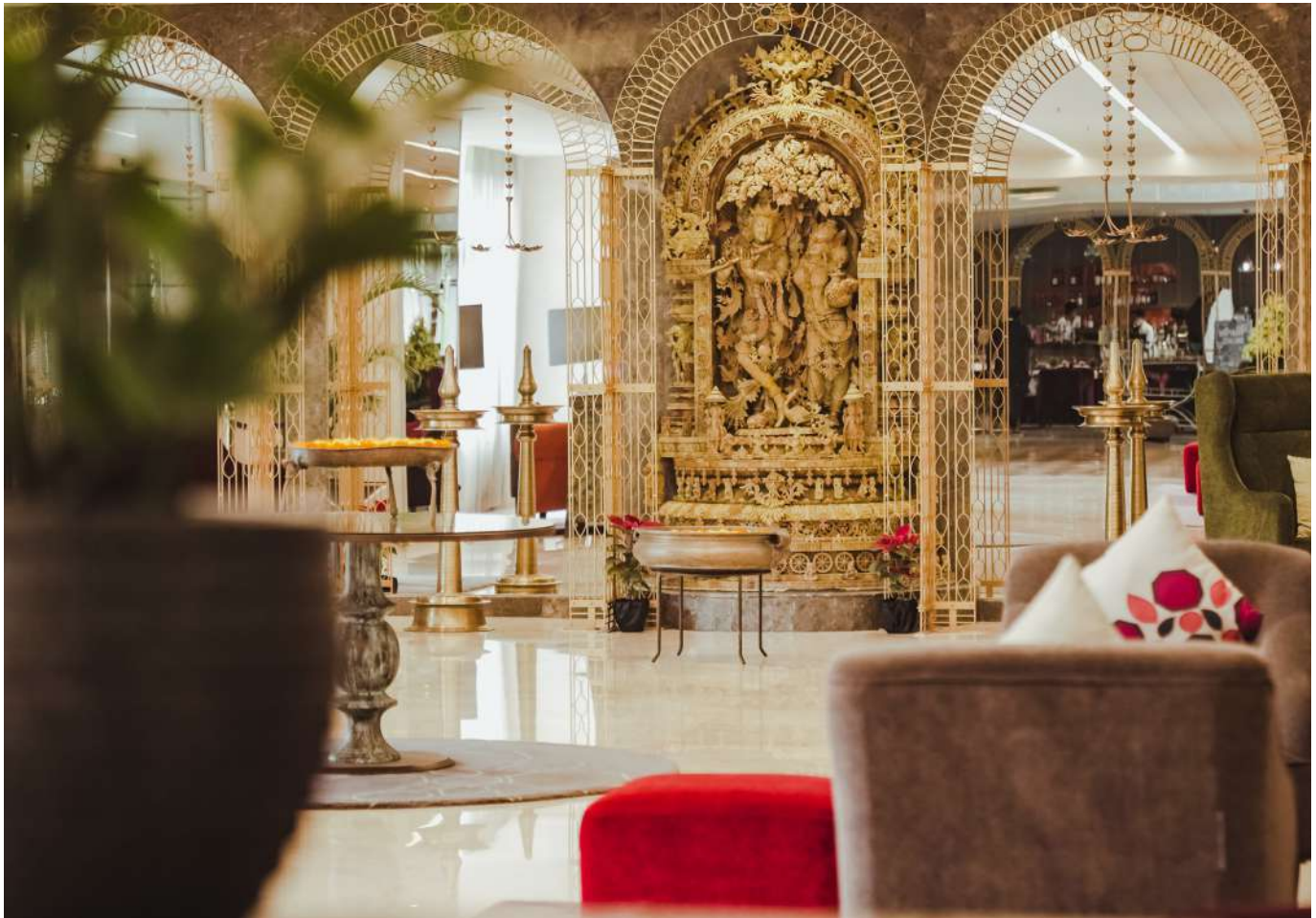
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Pic Courtesy: Grand Mercure Bengaluru



# Leveraging Art to Strengthen Hotel Branding

By Sharmila Chand

In the hospitality industry, art plays a crucial role in establishing a brand's identity and competitive edge. Whether it's a Business hotel or a Luxury Resort, integrating the well chosen artwork is key to making a difference. It not only makes a lasting impression for the guests but also sets a narrative for the concept, vision and USP of the brand.

Let's explore how art plays its role as an effective strategy for developing a competitive hotel brand. We share the opinion of some of the well known

hospitality players on the subject.

## Artwork in Hotel Decor and Design is Crucial

**Mamta Yadav, Director of Rooms, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore**

"We believe integrating art into the hotel's design represents a transformative evolution in hospitality, moving beyond mere decoration to creating immersive cultural experiences. With over 1,200 original pieces of art spread across 16

levels of our property, each area has its own story to tell. However, it's not just about looking good; art creates an emotional bond, encouraging guests to slow down and enjoy a more thoughtful kind of luxury. Art here does more than enhance our environment; it transforms it, making every corner of the hotel not just seen, but truly felt."

**Ram Shetty, General Manager, Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall**

"At Gopalan Group, we have always

believed in creating spaces that go beyond mere function, spaces that embody the soul of the region and reflect its rich cultural and architectural heritage. This hotel was envisioned as a passion project, and when Accor joined us as our trusted partner, the collaboration brought depth, global expertise, and alignment to our shared vision."

"Incorporating art into hotel décor is not just a design choice; it is a deliberate, strategic approach that enriches the guest experience. At Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall, our philosophy is rooted in what we call the "Culture Compass", a concept that ensures every design element, every ritual, and every interaction pays homage to Karnataka's living traditions.

Art serves as a powerful storytelling medium. It transforms spaces from being purely functional to being immersive and evocative spaces that engage, inspire, and emotionally connect with guests. This approach not only enhances visual appeal but also creates meaningful experiences that linger in memory, making every stay truly distinctive."

**Radhika Changoiwala Marketing & Communications Manager, The Westin Mumbai Garden City**

"Beyond decoration, art strengthens a hotel's brand identity by communicating its story, values, and unique character. Luxury travelers today are seeking more authentic, culturally rich experiences, and art helps fulfill that demand by connecting the property with the local community and showcasing its personality. Thoughtfully curated or rotating artwork not only enriches the visual landscape but also positions the hotel as a sophisticated destination, driving both guest satisfaction and revenue."

**Art Plays it's Key Role as a Marketing Strategy**

**Mamta Yadav, Director of Rooms, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore**

"From a business standpoint, art shapes our identity, establishing us as a sanctuary of culture and creativity. It draws in discerning travellers, art



**"At The Westin Mumbai Garden City, we have seamlessly integrated art and decor to reflect our wellness ethos and the natural beauty of our lush, green location"**

**Radhika Changoiwala  
Marketing & Communications  
Manager, The Westin Mumbai  
Garden City**

enthusiasts and creatives who are looking for more than just a place to stay—they want meaning, exploration, and inspiration. Our visually stunning spaces naturally encourage organic storytelling on social media and attract



**"At ITC Grand Goa Resort & Spa, art is deeply interwoven with the essence of place, helping us celebrate the Goan heritage while elevating the guest experience. It isn't just about décor—it's about setting the narrative for brand ethos."**

**Bhanu Ahluwalia  
Resident Manager, ITC Grand Goa  
Resort & Spa**

influencer attention, making art a valuable marketing tool."

**Ram Shetty, General Manager, Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall**

"Art allows us to create unique touchpoints, from curated lobby exhibitions to seasonal showcases that position the hotel as a cultural destination. These experiences generate visibility, attract art enthusiasts, and foster guest loyalty. Collaborations with local artists also open up new revenue streams through events and partnerships, reinforcing our presence in the luxury and lifestyle space.

In today's market, art is not just décor; it's a powerful business tool that deepens engagement and drives long-term value."

**Bhanu Ahluwalia, Resident Manager, ITC Grand Goa Resort & Spa**

"Art elevates perception. For luxury properties, unique and thoughtfully curated artwork instantly conveys sophistication, authenticity, and character. It sets the tone for brand storytelling—making social media more visual, press stories more layered, and guest experiences more personal. Art not only appeals to the discerning traveler but also becomes a silent brand ambassador—guests photograph it, talk about it, and take the brand home through memories."

**Integration of Art as a Narrative**

**Mamta Yadav, Director of Rooms, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore**

"The Art Walk and Art-Inspired High Tea at our property shows how hotels can become cultural ambassadors, offering guests authentic connections to local traditions while maintaining global sophistication. This integration creates memorable experiences that resonate emotionally, transforming spaces into living galleries where guests don't just observe art, they inhabit it, fostering deeper cultural appreciation and connection."

She adds "At The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, art isn't just an add-on; it's a fundamental part of who we are and how we connect with our guests. In a

city celebrated for its rich culture and cosmopolitan people, we use art to elevate the hospitality experience into something truly personal and memorable.”

“This artistic approach also influences our dining experiences. Our afternoon high tea in the lobby features a menu inspired by the artwork on our walls. For instance, the Crab and Melon Salad on Croissant Crisp is inspired by Revati Sharma Singh’s painting, creating a delightful connection between visual and culinary art. These cross-sensory experiences set us apart, turning every visit into a captivating story.”

**Ram Shetty, General Manager, Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall**

“At our hotel, a striking Hoysala-style wooden sculpture in the lobby, narrating a local legend, immediately draws guests into Karnataka’s cultural narrative. The lobby itself doubles as an evolving art gallery, offering a platform for local artists and transforming the space into a dynamic cultural showcase.

Design details extend to our staff attire, inspired by Hoysala temple architecture and featuring intricate mandala patterns;



“At the Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, art is the soul of the journey of the guests, weaving storytelling into every touchpoint. Art is not just something you see; it’s something you feel, taste, remember and share. This makes it a key differentiator for both our business and our brand.”

**Mamta Yadav**  
Director of Rooms, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore



“At Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall, art is a strategic differentiator that elevates both our brand identity and guest experience. By showcasing local art and architecture inspired by Karnataka’s rich heritage, we embody the Grand Mercure ethos of being “universally local”, appealing to global travellers and local audiences alike.”

**Ram Shetty**  
General Manager, Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall

subtle yet powerful nods to heritage. Guests are welcomed with the traditional sounds of the Nadaswaram, offering a warm and ceremonial first impression, while the signature sandalwood fragrance subtly immerses them in the essence of the region.

These thoughtful integrations enrich the guest experience, inspire organic social media engagement, and position the hotel as a true curator of local culture, not just a place to stay, but a place to connect.”

**Bhanu Ahluwalia, Resident Manager, ITC Grand Goa Resort & Spa**

“The entire resort draws inspiration from an Indo-Portuguese village aesthetic, paying tribute to the heritage architecture of Old Goa. There are tiled murals, arched colonnades, and locally sourced artefacts that reflect the legacy of Portuguese Colonial Art fused with Indian Craftsmanship.

Our Goan restaurant Tempero is a living art gallery—featuring handpicked decor, period furniture, and pottery that

mirrors an old Goan home. Even our guest rooms, though designed with modern comforts, maintain the Goan soul through color palettes, wooden accents, and locally inspired motifs. This architectural and artistic commitment helps set us apart as a destination, not just a hotel.”

**Radhika Changoiwala Marketing & Communications Manager, The Westin Mumbai Garden City**

“The Westin Heaven Lounge in the lobby feels like an art piece itself, calming, wellness-focused, and beautifully curated to invite relaxation. We have also prioritized sustainability in our art choices, using nature inspired artwork that support our commitment to wellness and the environment. These elements create a unique, photo-worthy atmosphere that guests love to capture and share, strengthening our brand as a wellness sanctuary and a sophisticated urban escape.”

**Guidelines on How Best to Integrate Art in Hotels**

**Ram Shetty, General Manager, Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall**

- Art in hotels should go beyond decoration; it should tell a story. When curated thoughtfully, it becomes a powerful medium to reflect local heritage and evoke a sense of place.
- A multi-sensory approach enhances this impact: visual art complemented by traditional music, evocative scents, and regional cuisine creates an immersive



cultural experience for guests.

- Interactive elements such as guided tours, cultural workshops, or storytelling booklets placed in rooms deepen engagement and bring the narrative to life.
- Finally, rotating exhibitions and seasonal artist collaborations keep the experience dynamic, while souvenirs that reflect the same story help guests carry a piece of that journey home."

**Bhanu Ahluwalia, Resident Manager, ITC Grand Goa Resort & Spa**

- Be Authentic, Not Ornamental- Choose art that reflects local culture, heritage, or values—don't just decorate, narrate.
- Blend Art with Function - Let artwork be part of the utility—furniture, lighting, and signage can all be artistic expressions.
- Curate with Intent - Avoid visual noise. Less can be more if chosen with storytelling and design continuity in mind.
- Engage Local Artists - Collaborate with artisans, students, and local curators to bring in fresh and rooted perspectives.

**Significance of Art in Hotels at a Glance!**

**Art establishes a unique identity for the brand** - Art is the symbolic of a brand's personality and style; each piece of art is an extension of the hotel's ethos and aesthetic.

**Art tells the story** - Whether the art reflects a specific culture, theme or location, it helps the hotel tell its unique story and stand out in a competitive market.

**Building the right ambience** - Different styles, colors, and forms of Art can be used to convey moods aligned with specific space in the hotel, right from the lobby to rooms and dining areas.

**Reflecting Local Culture and Heritage** - Art plays the role of a bridge to connect guests with the local culture. Incorporating locally sourced art and design elements fosters a sense of place, enhancing the immersive experience of the guests.

**Supporting Local Artists** - Many hotels partner with local artists to create unique works that reflect the surrounding culture and history.

**Adding Value through Social Media** - Art enhances the visual appeal and contributes significantly to their online presence and reputation.

**Building a Lasting Impression** - The aesthetic appeal becomes a defining feature that distinguishes the hotel in the guest's memory.

**Supporting Sustainability and Ethical Practices** - Selecting art that aligns with eco-friendly and ethical values helps to create a niche and make a powerful statement.

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# Champions of Luxurious Ecological Hospitality

**Use of environment-friendly technologies not only translate as responsible luxury in hotels but also reduce operational costs and increase profitability**

**By Gita Hari**

**E**co-friendliness and sustainability are not just catchwords in the realm of hospitality. The metamorphosis of luxury travel segment is discernible. The quest of green tourists and Gen Z goes beyond social media engagement and views—they appreciate values. Setting aside superfluities, they prefer affiliation and alignment. Premium hotels that adopt energy-saving technologies, eco-compliant materials, methods to reduce waste, and promote sustainability are earning allegiance and loyalty. And in due course they cut down on operational costs, gain increased profitability and even get incentives like tax-breaks and

subsidies. The uber luxe resorts and upscale corporate hotels have dealt with their overindulgence for responsibility and have mostly been hinged on ethical and conscious luxury.

Even boutique, small-scale and rental properties who operate luxury rental vacations strive to continue their research on sustainable practices, explore methods to make them viable, and stay transparent and traceable in operational decisions, culminating in long-term boost in profitability.

This World Environment Month, we bring to the fore the eco-conscious operational strategies of some of the

Ecotel and Green Key Certification-acquired prominent 5-Star category hotels, operating across India.

## **The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts (EDGE, GHAGC, etc)**

Environmental responsibility has long been a part of The Leela's operational ethos. Several of their palace properties including The Leela Palace New Delhi, Udaipur, Jaipur, Bengaluru, and Chennai, have been awarded the EDGE Advanced certification a globally recognised green building certification.

They have also integrated EV charging stations across 58% of their properties

to encourage low-emission mobility. From HVAC systems to water-saving fixtures, their efforts reflect a designed approach to reduce environmental impact without compromising the guest experience. As per the spokesperson, "These integrated measures have helped reduce utility dependence and optimise operational spend, while delivering on our sustainability commitments. Meanwhile, 75% of our properties have on-site Organic Waste Composters, and we successfully diverted 98.9% of generated waste away from landfills through comprehensive recycling partnerships." Water conservation efforts, including low-flow fixtures, smart irrigation systems, drought-resistant landscaping, and rainwater harvesting have contributed to more responsible resource use.

The Leela's focus on energy transition, plastic reduction, and circular economy initiatives, such as the partnership with *Phool* to upcycle floral waste, has resonated deeply with guests. This



initiative earned them a Global Vision Honoree title in the Travel + Leisure Global Vision Awards 2025.

"As part of our broader sustainability journey, The Leela Palace Bengaluru and The Leela Palace Udaipur are proud members of Beyond Green, Preferred Hotel's global portfolio of sustainable hotels. Additionally, all our palace properties are part of the Global Hotel

Alliance's Green Collection, reinforcing our alignment with global best practices in sustainable hospitality," reveals the hotel representative.

According to hotel sources, while current training programmes are centered on operational excellence, safety, and guest experience, sustainability is becoming an increasingly important focus across their properties. The drive toward

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sustainability is rooted in a long-term commitment to environmental stewardship and responsible growth. The group continues to explore opportunities for sustainable financing and operational efficiency, though its green initiatives are not yet linked to direct fiscal incentives.

### Sofitel Mumbai BKC (Green Key)

At Sofitel Mumbai BKC, sustainability is not just a commitment—it's an integral part of the operations and the luxury experience they deliver. Manish Daya, General Manager, Sofitel Mumbai BKC, underscores, "Our Corporate Social Responsibility goals are focussed across three core pillars of hospitality. Stay – We strive for certified green standards, eliminate single-use plastics, and continuously work to reduce water and energy consumption, cut carbon emissions, and actively measure waste. Eat – We are committed to minimizing food waste and promoting responsible sourcing of sustainable, locally-sourced ingredients. Explore & People – We foster a culture of awareness by implementing structured sustainability training for our teams and encouraging environmentally conscious engagement with our surroundings."

Their commitment extends to responsible options as they have installed energy-efficient chillers, which play a



**Manish Daya**

crucial role in maintaining a comfortable environment throughout the hotel. To encourage greener travel, the property engages electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and provides EVs for guest transfers.

Talking about reduced operational costs, Manish Daya says, "While our sustainability efforts are primarily driven by our commitment to responsible luxury and environmental governance, they naturally lead to increased operational efficiency. On the energy front, we've adopted a multi-pronged approach—drawing energy from wind power, employing energy-efficient lighting, and using sub-metering systems to monitor and regulate room temperatures more precisely. Because of these combined initiatives, annual energy spend has

dropped in line with the targets set by the teams."

Recycling, bio-waste composting, and water conservation initiatives, including rainwater harvesting and greywater reuse has led to operational efficiency. Collectively, these measures reflect how their commitment to sustainability not only supports the planet but also translates into measurable operational gains.

Their deep-rooted sustainability ethos has undoubtedly elevated the brand perception and appeal of this iconic hotel. "As the first hotel in India to receive the Green Key certification, we have implemented several environmentally responsible initiatives that resonate strongly with today's eco-conscious segment. For many global organizations, choosing a hotel that upholds verifiable green standards—such as ours—has become a non-negotiable requirement, especially for MICE bookings and long-stay arrangement," avers Manish Daya, adding, "By aligning with the values of responsible tourism we attract like-minded brands and corporates, ultimately strengthening our long-term market positioning as a leader in sustainable hospitality."

Sofitel Mumbai BKC provides extensive training on all key initiatives which not only ensures consistent execution but also enables its team to communicate their environmental commitments to guests, enhancing the overall guest experience. "The result is a strong internal culture of responsibility, which improves operational efficiency and reflects our brand promise of responsible luxury," observes the GM.

### Novotel Goa Panjim (Green Key)

Novotel Goa Panjim incorporates eco-friendly construction materials, wooden materials for toiletries, maintaining a zero-waste kitchen, and harnessing solar energy in their operations. The lobby of this exquisite hotel is thoughtfully designed to maximize natural light, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere while minimizing reliance on artificial lighting. Furthermore, their on-site



EV Charging Station at Sofitel Mumbai BKC

bottling plants eliminate the use of plastic entirely, significantly reducing the environmental footprint.

Speaking on reduced operational costs, Surajit Chatterjee, General Manager, Novotel Goa Panjim, elaborates, "Our sustainability initiatives have led to a noticeable reduction in operational costs. By harnessing solar energy and maximizing natural light, we've significantly lowered electricity usage. Eco-friendly fittings and guest awareness programs have helped conserve water, reducing utility expenses. Our zero-waste kitchen and in-house bottling plant have minimized food waste and eliminated plastic bottle costs. Additionally, using wooden toiletries and eco-conscious building elements have reduced long-term maintenance expenses while enhancing durability."

Novotel Goa Panjim offers a way for guests to enjoy the destination while contributing to its preservation. They encourage their guests to engage



Naturally Lit Lobby at Novotel Goa Panjim

actively in their sustainability mission, making eco-conscious living an integral part of their experience with them. "We have seen a rise in eco-tourism-related bookings, including partnerships, events, and group stays from organizations and individuals seeking eco-friendly venues," informs Surajit Chatterjee, reinforcing,

"Training is central to our sustainability journey, and Typsy, a leading hospitality training platform, whose engaging modules cover key topics such as energy and water conservation, waste reduction, and eco-friendly service standards, ensure consistent implementation across all departments."

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**Surajit Chatterjee**

As a newly launched hotel, this remarkable property has not yet explored tax breaks or government subsidies related to the implementation of sustainable practices. However, they are actively evaluating this area as part of their future planning.

### **Kamat Hotels (Ecotel Certification)**

The Orchid Hotel in Mumbai, the first hotel in Asia to win the Ecotel Certification remains one of only six hotels worldwide to maintain this certification. In celebration of World Environment Day, their properties in Odisha – IRA by Orchid, Bhubaneswar and Eco Beach Resort, Konark (Lotus Resort) – spearheaded a series of meaningful environmental initiatives that brought together staff, tourists, local dignitaries, and the community at large.



**Bharat Bhusan Biswal**

From a plantation and cleanup drive at the historic Dhauli Shanti Stupa to an awareness rally and sustainability-themed competition, the events reflected their enduring commitment to eco-conscious hospitality and responsible tourism.

Meanwhile, at Eco Beach Resort, Konark (Lotus Resort), the Kamat Group continued its commitment to environmental responsibility with a series of impactful activities. Under the guidance of Dr. Vithal Venkatesh Kamat, Chairman of Kamat Hotels India Limited, and Vishal Kamat, Director of the Group, around 50 Green Team members from the resort took out an awareness rally carrying placards with environmental safety messages.

Vishal Kamat, Executive Director at Kamat Hotels India Limited, added, "Environmental consciousness has always been at the heart of our brand



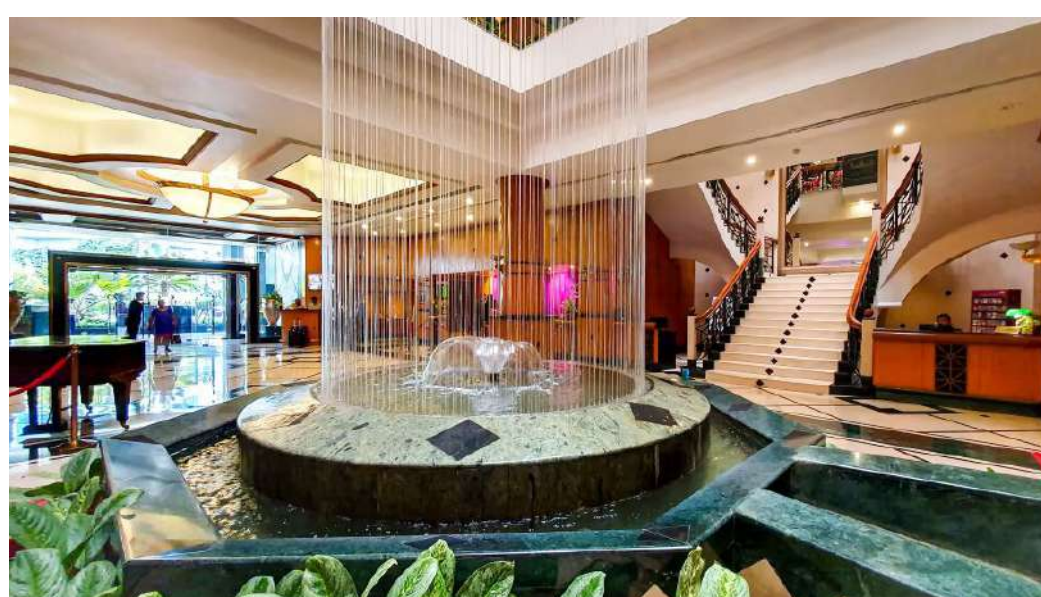
**Vishal Kamat**

ethos. Through initiatives like these at IRA by Orchid and Eco Beach Resort, Konark, we are not only nurturing green practices but also encouraging communities to take responsibility for the planet."

Bharat Bhusan Biswal, RGM of Kamat Group Odisha revealed, "Implementing sustainable practices has significantly reduced our operational costs. For instance, installing low-flow fixtures and using treated water for landscaping has cut our water bills considerably. Switching to LED lighting and automating HVAC systems has brought down our energy consumption. We've also reduced waste sent to landfills by increasing segregation and composting, which has lowered disposal costs."

Training from their corporate office has empowered their team to adopt sustainability as a daily habit. Led by their Green Team, staff actively participate in beach clean-ups, year-round plantations, eco-tourism initiatives, and collaborate with the Forest Department on seed ball drives. This shift has not only improved operations but also enriched guest experiences, as their team confidently communicates their green efforts.

Regarding tax breaks and subsidies due to the implementation of green technology and practices, Bharat Bhusan Biswal concludes by saying, "Yes, we have benefited from government incentives. Odisha supports solar adoption and EV purchases. We are actively transforming our property from fuel-based to electric vehicles, making our operations more sustainable and future-ready." ■



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Team Format	2 Contestants + 1 Mentor	Individual	Team of 2 Home Cooks
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Judging Criteria	700 Points Across Multiple Metrics	Taste, Creativity, Hygiene, Time, Cleanliness	180 Points (Taste, Innovation, Besan use, etc.)
Pre-Briefing	2 Aug, 2:30 PM	2 Aug, 3 - 4 PM	2 Aug, 3 - 4 PM
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Since its inception in 1988, Lords Wear Private Limited has been a name synonymous with quality, innovation, and reliability in the manufacturing of premium uniforms and linens for the hospitality industry. Over the past three decades, the company has revolutionized the landscape of hospitality attire, earning the trust of chefs, restaurant managers, hoteliers, and professionals across the food and beverage sector, including cloud kitchens, bars, and caterers.

Lords Wear has two factories, one in Nagpur and the other in Delhi, from where it takes care of the massive production via a cutting-edge 20,000 sq. ft. facility equipped with world-class machinery, which ensures that every product meets stringent standards of durability, craftsmanship, and design excellence. From chef coats and aprons to bed linens and steward uniforms, each item reflects a commitment to blending practicality with aesthetics, catering to the

unique demands of the hospitality industry.

What sets Lords Wear apart is its expansive product range, designed to serve diverse needs across the sector. Its offerings include premium chef wear, utility uniforms, bed and bath linens, steward



uniforms, and aprons, as well as bespoke solutions for specific requirements. The company's attention to detail and use of high-quality materials have established its products as the preferred choice for professionals who seek performance, comfort, and style.

The company boasts an impressive

clientele, including renowned brands like Taj Hotels, Radisson Group, and Mahindra Holidays. Beyond the hospitality giants, Lords Wear caters to institutions such as the Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and Kerala Tourism, further solidifying its credibility.

Its ability to deliver customized solutions on time and with precision has made it a trusted partner across the hospitality and service sectors.

By delivering consistent quality and adapting to the ever-changing demands of the industry, Lords Wear Private Limited remains an unwavering pillar in the hospitality domain. It is not just a supplier but an ally, empowering professionals with attire that reflects their excellence and ambition. For those who value quality and reliability, Lords Wear continues to set the gold standard in hospitality wear.

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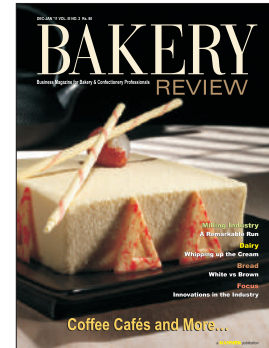
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# “The balance of heart and hustle keeps my role meaningful and exciting”

**Saumitra Chaturvedi, General Manager, Novotel New Delhi City Centre**

By Sharmila Chand



Saumitra Chaturvedi, General Manager of Novotel New Delhi City Centre, leads with a deep passion for hospitality, operational excellence and guest satisfaction. With over two decades of experience, he has worked with leading hospitality brands, such as The Leela, Hyatt, Taj Hotels, and Radisson Hotel Group (RHG), gaining expertise across diverse facets of hotel operations.

Saumitra joined Accor in 2015 as the Director of Food & Beverage and grew through various leadership roles, gaining expertise in hotel operations, F&B innovation, revenue management and team leadership.

With a keen understanding of market dynamics and a forward-thinking approach, Saumitra has successfully implemented innovative service strategies, sustainability-focused initiatives, optimized operational efficiencies and built high-performing teams. His leadership ensures that Novotel New Delhi City Centre sets new benchmarks in service excellence and guest satisfaction.

An avid cricket enthusiast, he embraces the sport's core values of teamwork, strategy and perseverance — principles that also define his leadership philosophy.

In an exclusive interview he talks about his work philosophy, strategy for growth and more .....

## How has your journey been in the hospitality industry?

My journey in the hospitality industry has been dynamic, enriching and transformative. Over the years, I've had the privilege of working with some of the most respected hotel chains in the sector, gaining invaluable experience across diverse roles and functions. These experiences, complemented by a global leadership development program, have shaped my approach to operational excellence, guest-centricity and team development.

## How do you ensure high levels of guest satisfaction?

Guest satisfaction begins with a culture of genuine care. Consistent training, real-time feedback tools, and a sharp focus on the guest journey from arrival to departure, enabling the teams to address concerns swiftly and exceed expectations. For us, satisfaction isn't a metric, it's a reflection of how well we've delivered on our promise of heartfelt hospitality.

## Where do you see yourself taking the hotel in the next two years?

Over the next two years, my vision is to shape Novotel New Delhi City Centre into a benchmark for contemporary city hospitality—

where comfort, culture, and connectivity seamlessly converge. We are focusing on deeper digital integration to streamline guest experiences, expanding our sustainability efforts in line with global best practices, and designing hyper-local journeys that celebrate the soul of Delhi. On the business front, we're enhancing our positioning as an urban events destination by elevating our banqueting offerings and launching a rooftop venue that blends leisure with lifestyle. The idea is to move beyond just service and create a sense of place that resonates with both global travellers and local guests.

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

What I enjoy most is the unique blend of purpose and performance that this role brings. Being at the helm means I get to influence how we show up for our guests and for our people, i.e., creating memorable stays, but also building a culture where the team feels empowered and motivated. On the business front, I find immense satisfaction in steering strategy that drives top line growth, whether through building stronger commercial partnerships, tapping into new market segments or refining the guest journey to encourage loyalty and repeat business.

## What has been the most rewarding moment in your career so far?

While there have been many fulfilling milestones, seeing teams I've mentored grow in confidence, take ownership and deliver beyond expectations is incredibly gratifying. At Novotel New Delhi City Centre, driving change through thoughtful service enhancements, embedding a strong sustainability mindset, and shaping a culture of collaboration has led to a real shift, not just in guest satisfaction scores but in everyday team energy.

## What is your working mantra or guiding philosophy?

I've always believed in empowering my team, to not just follow directions, but to take meaningful decisions, grow through experience, and feel proud of the impact they make.

When teams feel empowered, supported and trusted, they pass that same care on to guests.

## Lastly, how would you define yourself?

I lead with empathy, discipline, and the belief that good leadership is about clarity, care and consistency.

A lifelong cricket enthusiast, I carry with me the same values the game taught me, i.e., team spirit, resilience and playing with heart.



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