

Hospitality BIZ

FOR THE HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL

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'We are eyeing the GCC market as our next frontier'

Param Kannampilly, Executive Chairman,
Concept Hospitality Pvt Ltd., The Fern Hotels & Resorts

Suhail Kannampilly, Managing Director,
Concept Hospitality Pvt Ltd., The Fern Hotels & Resorts

FEATURE

**Contours of the Indian
hospitality education
landscape**

PG 16 ▶



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Hotel Federation organises conclave in Srinagar to revitalise Kashmir's tourism and investment landscape

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

The allure of Kashmir's picturesque landscapes and rich cultural heritage took center stage at the recent Hotel Federation conclave held in Srinagar. Organized by the All India Hoteliers Federation in collaboration with the Department of Tourism and the Restaurant Association of India, the event served as a rallying cry to promote tourism and investment in the region.

Raja Yaqoob, Director of Tourism Kashmir, underscored the region's inherent appeal, stating, "Kashmir is already branded. It is an attractive destination. We need more promotion here." Emphasizing the potential for investment, he added, "Today's conclave had many investors. It will go a long way in sending a message that Kashmir is open for investment and people are welcome here."

Highlighting the diverse offerings of Kashmir beyond its landscapes, Yaqoob noted the richness of its heritage, crafts, culture, and world-class cuisine. The conclave aimed to broaden horizons and dispel any



misconceptions about the region, positioning it as a vibrant and welcoming destination for tourists and investors alike.

The event featured a traditional cultural musical performance by prominent female artists, captivating delegates and visitors alike.

Discussions and presentations delved into strategies for infrastructure development, safety measures, marketing campaigns, and community engagement to ensure sustainable tourism growth.

With a focus on collaboration between government bodies, hospitality professionals, and stakeholders, the conclave sought to reposition Kashmir as a premier tourist destination. By fostering collective action and commitment to economic growth and cultural preservation, the event paved the way for revitalizing the tourism sector in the valley.

As the curtains closed on the conclave, actionable strategies and recommendations emerged, setting the stage for a brighter future for Kashmir's tourism industry. With continued initiatives and support, the region holds the promise of a prosperous and thriving future for both locals and visitors alike. ■

Robust infrastructure development & improved accessibility to provide impetus to 'Wed in India'

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

Along with cultural aspects of India, the rapid infrastructure development happening across the country, especially improvement in accessibility thanks to number of airports getting doubled in last few years and improvement in digital and physical connectivity are aiding destination weddings across the world, said Manisha Saxena, IAS, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

She was speaking during the inaugural of 1st 'Wed in India' expo at Rambagh Palace. The expo is being organised from 5th May to 7th May, 2024 at Jaipur Exhibition & Convention Centre (JECC) in Jaipur.

An initiative of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the 'Wed in India' expo is being organised jointly with Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) alongside the Great India Travel. It is also supported by Hotel and Restaurant Association of Rajasthan (HRAR), Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA) and Rajasthan Association of Tour Operators (RATO).

"With its unique blend of natural beauty and cultural traditions which can actually invoke magic in weddings, Rajasthan along with Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Haryana, Kerala, and Goa are favourite destination for Wed-in-India. The Northeast is also fast emerging as a preferred destination especially the tea gardens of Assam, Darjeeling, Siliguri, Mizoram, and Manipur," Manisha Saxena added.

Citing the experience of one of the G20 Tourism Group meetings held in Goa during India's G20 Presidency, Saxena said, "We catered



to all the ministerial delegates in a 500-years old house which keeps its 200 years old cutlery. India has several such kinds of assets. We, in the Ministry of Tourism, are in process of documenting this repository of assets both tangible and intangible."

Delivering her address during inaugural session, Gayatri Rathore, IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan said, "Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan is delighted to hold first ever 'Wed in India' expo. Rajasthan has long been a preferred destination for celebrity weddings due to its luxurious and opulent settings. ■



‘India is a huge market for Marriott International in APEC and MICE is an integral part of our strategy’

Marriott International recognises the importance of India as a key market in the Asia Pacific region, and considers the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) segment to be a vital part of its strategy. In a conversation with Asmita Mukherjee, **Ramesh Daryanani, Vice President, Global Sales, Loyalty Operations and Partnerships APEC**, Marriott International Inc highlights Marriott’s commitment to equipping its associates with the knowledge and tools necessary to ensure the success of customers’ meetings and events. With a focus on personalised experiences and exceptional service, Marriott aims to elevate the MICE experience through meticulous planning and attention to detail.

Q Can you provide insights into Marriott’s strategy for the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector in India?

India is a huge market for Marriott International in APEC and MICE is an integral part of our strategy. Apart from the locally relevant offerings, it is at the core of our MICE strategy to equip our associates with the knowledge and tools to ensure the success of our customers’ meetings and events. We offer outstanding experiences and services that are customised to meet the various demands of our MICE customers. To improve the MICE experience in India, we have been planning our strategies around a number of important pillars. Every Marriott resort has its own unique setup that helps ensure that visitors can fully enjoy the grandeur of each place. Not only do we meticulously organise large-scale events, but we also personalise gatherings for individuals. In addition, our hotel’s perfect location offers guests ease of access and convenience. What makes us truly unique is our team of devoted event coordinators and culinary specialists. Their vast experience, expertise, and creativity allow them to assist our guests with every step of the planning process. Our team works closely with our clients to achieve their goals, from creating custom catering menus to planning the theme of the event.

Q Apart from opening new hotels, what additional MICE / Sales-led initiatives or campaigns is Marriott launching in India?

We recently launched our 2024 regional B2B campaign, “Your Vision, Our Commitment”, which speaks to our assurance in delivering exceptional events and experiences, tailored to the individual needs of the organiser. Extending true hospitality, and attention to detail are hallmarks of all Marriott International brands, and we are committed to elevating guest events with customised experiences.

We’re zooming in on four areas where we stand out against others: Culinary, Customisation, Connections, and Experiences. We’ll work with clients to craft distinctive F&B offerings, anticipate their needs provide bespoke recommendations, and create spaces where guests can gather and connect for success. Ultimately, we assure the highest quality in every regard, from curated activities to our signature hospitality.

We’re also doing things slightly differently this year. APEC is a culturally diverse region, and we see diversity even in India. It is

therefore important that we empower our markets and individual properties to localise incentives to best attract organisers. Organisers have up to December 31, 2024, to book their packages, which have to be utilised by 31 March 2025.

Q Can you elaborate on Marriott’s ‘The Neu Project,’ and how does it align with Marriott’s broader corporate values and objectives?

Marriott International collaborated with ‘The Neu Project’, an initiative from Google’s Experience Institute (Xi) that aims to share resources such as quiet rooms, fidget toys, and noise-canceling earplugs designed to better accommodate and create a more inclusive experience during meetings and events for neurodivergent attendees. These practices were showcased at the earlier Marriott’s The Exchange series- India in March.

Aligned with our broader corporate values and objectives, ‘The Neu Project’ underscores our ongoing pursuit of innovation, sustainability, and guest satisfaction. By integrating new technologies and sustainable practices into our operations, we not only want to enhance the guest experience but also contribute to our long-term goals of environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

Q Could you provide more details about Marriott’s partnership with HDFC Bank for the launch of India’s first travel credit card? How does this collaboration benefit both Marriott and HDFC Bank customers, and what unique value does the Marriott Bonvoy x HDFC travel credit card bring to the market?

The Marriott Bonvoy HDFC Bank Credit Card is India’s first co-branded hotel credit card. The card runs on Diners Club, part of the Discover Global Network, and aims to be the most rewarding travel card in India. . . By leveraging the strengths of two brands, HDFC Bank’s robust banking services, and Marriott’s global hospitality expertise, we have crafted a card that brings unparalleled value to the market.

Designed with the new generation of travelers in mind, the Marriott Bonvoy HDFC Bank credit cardholders can earn Marriott Bonvoy points on eligible spending. These points can be redeemed at participating hotels across the Marriott Bonvoy portfolio – from free nights and upgrades within the unrivaled over 30 brand portfolio, once-in-a-lifetime experiences through Marriott Bonvoy Moments. ■

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'We see ourselves with 100+ outlets by 2028'

Asmita Mukherjee | Hyderabad

Soaring on the fourth floor of The Inorbit Mall Mindspace, Hyderabad with a flamboyant ambience, Café Delhi Heights is the new hotspot in town. Vibrant and well-lit interiors create a welcoming atmosphere, perfect for any occasion.

The interior immerses visitors in a sophisticated ambience. White curtains billow around cabana-style seating, while beautiful lanterns cast a warm glow overhead. This creates a perfect balance – a touch of romance intertwined with a relaxed and inviting atmosphere.

The restaurant boasts a globe-trotting menu, tempting one with an array of cuisines. From Indian specialities to continental classics and Chinese favourites, one will find a wide variety of dishes to satisfy any craving.

Vikrant batra cafe delhi heights The three-generational, all-day global comfort diner – Café Delhi Heights began as a single outlet in the capital in 2011, quickly capturing hearts with its vibrant ambience and diverse menu and is now led by Vikrant Batra. Today, it boasts 42 outlets across 13 Indian cities, with more on the horizon. The brand recently debuted in Hyderabad and Srinagar will soon be home to their newest venture. Batra reveals six more outlets are planned within the next six months. He explained, "Our next outlet is opening in the most beautiful city of India – Srinagar. Over the next six months, we are planning to open 6 new outlets."

With such widespread expansion, ensuring consistent quality is important, Batra said, "Consistency in quality and experience is paramount at Café Delhi Heights, and we achieve this through a blend of thorough training, rigorous quality control, and a steadfast commitment to our core values."

Café Delhi Heights has seen impressive revenue growth, driven by expansion, brand recognition, and customer loyalty. The company closely tracks key metrics like customer traffic and satisfaction to guide decision-making and optimise operations. "Our revenue has grown 3 times in the past three years. We have always been profitable both at the store and corporate level. As a corporate policy, we don't believe in the cash burn concept," said Batra.

Batra informed that Café Delhi Heights has achieved this impressive growth through bootstrapping by reinvesting profits from both stores and corporate levels. "We have been bootstrapped till date, with profits both at the store and the corporate level. We see ourselves with 100+ outlets by 2028. And with the demand the brand is experiencing, for opening new outlets we are now tapping the private equity route to fund this growth."

In the ever-evolving food and beverage industry, Café Delhi Heights prioritises staying attuned to customer preferences and industry trends. "We regularly engage with our customers, seeking feedback and actively listening to their evolving needs.

Additionally, we keep a close eye on industry trends, attending conferences, and networking with fellow entrepreneurs to stay informed," Batra stated.

As Café Delhi Heights has reached to 42 outlets across India, finalising the locations was a meticulous job for the team. Batra informed, "When deciding on new locations for expansion, Café Delhi Heights undertakes a comprehensive evaluation process. We analyse the demographic makeup and economic prospects of the area to gauge the demand for our cuisine and dining experience. This includes assessing factors like population density, income levels, and lifestyle trends."

Innovation and menu development are central to Café Delhi Heights' strategy for catering to evolving customer preferences. Their all-time in-demand items are Galouti kebab, Amritsari fish fry, Kerala fish fry, Chicken 65, and Chicken tikka among others. The cafe has also launched a new global menu which garnered immediate customer attention due to its inclusion of exotic delicacies like Chicken Fajita.

While speaking on the menu Batra said "We approach innovation and menu development with a customer-centric mindset to cater to changing tastes and preferences.

To begin with, we keep a close pulse on emerging food trends, consumer feedback, and market research. This helps us to identify shifting preferences and areas of opportunity. Our culinary team then collaborates to brainstorm and experiment with new dishes and concepts that reflect these insights which resonate with our customers while staying true



Vikrant Batra
Co-founder, Café Delhi Heights

to our brand identity."

The long-term vision for Café Delhi Heights is to revolutionise the food industry by setting a new standard for family-friendly dining. Batra emphasises continuous innovation while staying true to their roots to maintain relevance and appeal to families across the country. The ultimate goal is to take Café Delhi Heights global, establishing it as a successful international brand. "We strive to continuously innovate our menu and offerings, while staying true to our roots and heritage, to remain relevant and appealing to families across the country. We plan to take this legacy forward by making it a global venture and expanding the business on both national and international levels.

Café Delhi Heights isn't afraid to push boundaries. The launch of Café Delhi Heights 2.0 marks their foray into new concepts – Ikigai and Neighbours. "We have also launched Café Delhi Heights 2.0 in which our latest endeavours are called Ikigai and Neighbours. Ikigai and Neighbours are more than just restaurants; they are a sanctuary where passion, purpose, and culinary excellence converge to create an unparalleled dining experience," Batra concluded. ■

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Service with a smile

“Less than 11 percent of the entire hotel management population is employable.” There was a time about a decade back, when a research report (The Aspiring Minds National Employability Report) had claimed this. The report had provided some insightful data on the employability of hotel management graduates. This had raised many eyebrows and got a lot of policy makers, educationists and corporate bodies into action.

A decade later, when we look at the scenario, there seems to have been steps taken in the right direction, but a lot is still desired. Starting with the relevance and practicability of what is taught, to the employability and exploitation of the available workforce that enters the industry with high expectations.

While there are certain institutions that cater to only the select few from the affluent class who are taking their lessons to either be an entrepreneur or to employ what they learn at their family-run hospitality business, the others are meant for the masses, and that is where the bigger concern lies. Recently there was a viral social media post talking about a hospitality intern making a couple of thousand rupees per month. Once again there was an outcry about the dismay state of affairs, but then did it lead to anything positive? Was it something new that no one knew about? The entire industry – the educationists, hoteliers, restaurateurs, and high-flying leadership are all aware of the apathy of the new entrants into the industry. That in itself is alarming, given that these interns are made to work on long shifts and in many scenarios treated like they are bonded labour.

Not surprising then that over half of the students who start at hotel management institutions end up in the retail segment, call centres or some of the better ones get absorbed into the corporate environment. Going ahead, as the industry continues to prosper and more hotels and restaurants continue to create their niche in different parts of the country, there is express need to pay attention to this class, else we might get to a situation that will not be very good for the industry at large. Service is a human element and it does need well trained and an all-encompassing workforce to deliver it with a smile.

**Sumit Jha**

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‘We proudly stand as the premier wedding destination resort in the entire region’

Nestled amidst verdant hills and tea gardens, Mayfair Spring Valley Resort stands out among luxury resorts in the region by leveraging its sprawling 30-acre property. The resort’s strategic location, blending urban convenience with natural beauty, makes it an irresistible destination for travellers seeking tranquillity and indulgence. In an exclusive interview with **Asmita Mukherjee, Akash Gupta, General Manager of Mayfair Spring Valley Resort**, shares insights into how the resort seamlessly blends luxury with local traditions to offer guests a truly immersive experience.

Q How does the Mayfair Spring Valley Resort differentiate itself from other luxury resorts in the area? What specific aspects of the resort will attract travellers?

Mayfair Spring Valley Resort Guwahati is nestled in the lap of nature with lush green valleys and hills which makes it a perfect destination for all kinds of occasions and events. Spread across more than 30 acres of land which is a blend of hills and plains with spectacular views of tea gardens, lakes, and valleys.

The resort offers the ambience of a semi-urban area being close to the city with ultra-luxury amenities and facilities. Lush green gardens and valleys, the ambient temperature in place, and grand building structures and facilities have been successfully attracting travellers.

Q While offering a luxurious experience, how does the resort integrate or celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Northeast India?

A true representation of Northeast India, we showcase the heritage and culture of Assam through various local artefacts and statues which are visible in every corner of the hotel. Example – Elephants, Single-horn Rhinos, birds, various furniture, paintings etc. Promoting local cuisine and organizing various local food festivals position us as a diverse organization. A warm welcome with local Japi and traditional Gamosa takes one back to the era of traditional Assam to live a cultural experience,

Q Can you elaborate on the personalised service experiences that Mayfair Spring Valley Resort offers to elevate the guest experience?

Our luxury villas and cottages come with experienced butler services, dedicated heritage golf carts, a dedicated swimming pool, a Chef at your service, a giant TV screen and many more.

Special celebrations at the hilltop, poolside, canopy lounge etc create special memories for the guests who celebrate with us.

spaces and tree plantations, minimum wastage of food items etc.

Q Can you describe the specific meeting spaces and services offered to cater to MICE clientele?

Our resort offers a variety of venues for corporate events and meetings in combination with indoor and outdoor. Our banquet hall – Kaziranga meets the requirements of large-volume conferences by accommodating up to 500 pax in theatre style and 300 pax in round

table style. Mayfair board room is a perfect place to hold meetings up to 75 pax with an attached dedicated pre-function area. High-speed internet facility, modern audio and video technologies, and video conferencing technology make us a class apart from other resorts in the region.

Q What unique wedding packages or venues does Mayfair Spring Valley Resort offer to make a couple’s special day unforgettable?

We boast of being the most premium wedding destination resort in the entire region and have gained a massive reputation and positioned ourselves as a premier wedding destination. Start from staying in ultra-luxury Royal and Regent Villa with personalised heritage gold carts, a choice of 14 venues for the event including big lawns for grand events (35000 Sq. Feet and 25000 Sq. Feet) along with a modern greenhouse with 8500 Sq. Feet makes a wedding memorable forever. ■

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Q Sustainability is becoming increasingly important for luxury travellers. What specific eco-friendly practices has the resort incorporated into its design and operations?

Our Goal is “Stay with us and stay with nature”, we are highly committed to eco-friendly practices and are known as an ideal green hotel. We have our own water bottling plant, usage of electric vehicles inside the resort, a plastic-free environment inside the resort, water and electricity conservation through open-air

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EVENTS | MEDIA | ONLINE | PROMOTIONS

‘We are eyeing the GCC market as our next frontier’

In the ever-evolving world of Indian hospitality, Concept Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. has carved a distinct niche. Led by the inspiring father-son duo of **Param Kannampilly and Suhail Kannampilly**, the company is not just redefining guest experiences, but also pioneering sustainable practices. Through an exclusive conversation, **Asmita Mukherjee** delves into the inspiration that fuels their brand’s remarkable journey and explores their vision for the future.



Q Concept Hospitality has seen impressive expansion plans. What are your key growth drivers, and which segments (luxury, midscale etc.) are you focusing on?

Absolutely! Concept Hospitality has undergone a remarkable transformation, achieving substantial growth over the years with a cumulative brand turnover surpassing INR 900 Cr in the last financial year of 2023-24, representing a significant increase from INR 430 Cr in FY 2019-20. This milestone signifies a twofold growth within four years, highlighting the company's agility and strategic

pro prowess in the hospitality sector. The primary drivers of this growth have been our upscale and midscale hotels and resorts, underscoring our commitment to catering to a diverse range of travellers seeking premium accommodations and quality experiences.

Q Midscale and upper-midscale segments are witnessing significant growth. How is Concept Hospitality innovating within these segments to cater to evolving guest expectations?

As a brand deeply rooted in understanding

and adapting to evolving guest preferences, we take pride in our proactive approach to cater the burgeoning midscale and upper-midscale segments. While the industry has recently recognised the potential of branded hotels in tier 2-3 towns post-COVID, we have long been a pioneer in this arena. Leveraging our extensive experience in these regions, we have honed our strategies to meet the unique needs of guests in these areas. Our innovation lies not only in providing quality accommodations but also in creating holistic experiences that resonate with local cultures and preferences.

Q Could you provide more details about the regions or areas where Concept Hospitality plans to focus its recent investment expansion? Are there any new geographical areas or regions that Concept Hospitality is planning to prioritise for its future expansion efforts? What factors have influenced these investment decisions?

We have been strategically expanding our footprint beyond our strongholds in Western and Southern India, particularly in states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Goa, and Karnataka where we currently have over 6000 rooms. Now, we're focusing on the untapped potential of Eastern, North East, and North India for our growth trajectory. Recently, we've made significant strides in this direction, signing 5 properties in the picturesque Kashmir valley, adding over 300 rooms to our portfolio. This move holds immense potential to redefine our brand's presence and reach in the long run. Factors influencing these decisions include the growing tourism potential in these regions, evolving travel patterns, and the need to diversify our market presence for sustainable growth.

Q Can you provide more information about your greenfield and brownfield projects?

In the context of 35 properties currently in the pipeline across India, approximately 20% are designated as greenfield projects, while the remaining 80% fall under the brownfield category.

Q How many new properties has Concept Hospitality introduced in 2024?

What are your long-term plans for property expansion?

Last year, we launched 11 new properties, enriching our portfolio with over 600 rooms in total. This year too we are dedicated to expanding our footprint through revenue sharing and management models. By



Param Kannampilly
Executive Chairman,
Concept Hospitality Pvt Ltd.,
The Fern Hotels & Resorts

leveraging these models, we aim to forge mutually beneficial partnerships while ensuring sustained growth and delivering exceptional guest experiences

Q International expansion was on the cards for Concept Hospitality. Do you have plans to venture abroad, and if so, what are your target markets?

Yes, indeed, international expansion is a key focus for Concept Hospitality. Currently, we're eyeing the GCC market as our next frontier. Specifically, we're excited about initiating our expansion journey in the vibrant Dubai market. It presents an excellent opportunity for us to introduce our unique hospitality offerings and contribute to the thriving tourism landscape in the region. We believe that Dubai's dynamic environment aligns perfectly with our vision for growth and innovation in the hospitality sector.

Q How do you ensure each property has a unique identity while maintaining brand consistency?

We approach each market and property with a keen understanding of their individual propositions. Seasonality plays a pivotal role in our operational considerations, guiding our efforts to tailor experiences accordingly.

To maintain uniformity across all customer touchpoints, we adhere to stringent guidelines and processes. This commitment to consistency not only preserves our brand integrity but also ensures that regardless of location or time of year, guests can expect the same level of quality and service synonymous with our brand."

Q Could you please let us know what sustainability practices are followed by Concept Hospitality?

At Concept Hospitality, sustainability isn't just a buzzword; it's a way of life ingrained in our ethos. Through our brand, The Fern Hotels & Resorts, we've championed Hospitality with Responsibility, prioritizing eco-conscious practices across all our operations. Here are some of the key sustainability initiatives we diligently adhere to:

1. Eco-friendly Toiletries: We prioritize the use of biodegradable and eco-friendly toiletry products, minimizing our impact on the environment.

2. LED lighting: By implementing energy-efficient LED lighting systems, we significantly reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

3. Energy Efficient Air-Conditioning: Our hotels are equipped with state-of-the-art,



Suhail Kannampilly
Managing Director,
Concept Hospitality Pvt Ltd.,
The Fern Hotels & Resorts

energy-efficient air-conditioning systems, ensuring guest comfort while minimizing energy usage.

4. Renewable Energy: Embracing renewable energy sources such as solar power allows us to decrease our reliance on fossil fuels and move towards a greener future.

5. Green Time: We encourage and facilitate green practices among our staff and guests, promoting awareness and action towards sustainability.

6. Rainwater Harvesting: Through rainwater harvesting systems, we harness nature's bounty to fulfill our water needs while reducing strain on local water resources.

7. Garbage Segregation: Rigorous garbage segregation practices help us minimize waste generation and maximize recycling opportunities.

8. Sewage Treatment Plant: Investing in advanced sewage treatment plants ensures responsible wastewater management,

safeguarding local ecosystems.

9. Potted Plants: Incorporating potted plants into our decor not only enhances ambiance but also contributes to indoor air quality and biodiversity.

10. No Cut Flowers: We refrain from using cut flowers, reducing the environmental footprint associated with floral arrangements.

11. No Plastic: Single-use plastics have no place in our operations; we are committed to eliminating them entirely, opting for sustainable alternatives instead.

12. Community Programs: Engaging with local communities through various sustainability-focused programs fosters a sense of environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

13. Tree Plantation: Through tree plantation drives, we actively contribute to carbon sequestration efforts and biodiversity conservation.

These initiatives are just a glimpse into our

comprehensive approach towards sustainability. At Concept Hospitality, we believe that by embracing these practices, we not only fulfill our responsibility towards the planet but also enhance the guest experience with a stay that's not just luxurious but also environmentally conscious.

Q What technological advancements are you implementing to enhance guest experiences and operational efficiency?

In the Indian hospitality market, technology is becoming an essential tool to enhance guest experiences and streamline operations. One key innovation is the use of dynamic pricing algorithms. These algorithms analyze factors like demand, competitor pricing, and even weather patterns to adjust room rates in real-time. This ensures hotels can maximize revenue while remaining competitive.

Another development is the use of advanced guest feedback analysis. By employing natural language processing and sentiment analysis tools, hotels can glean valuable insights from guest feedback across various channels. This includes social media comments, online reviews, and even survey responses. By understanding guest sentiment, hotels can identify areas for improvement and address any issues promptly, ultimately

leading to a more enjoyable experience for future visitors.

Q What are your biggest challenges and opportunities as you see them in the current Indian hospitality market?

The Indian hospitality market presents a fascinating landscape of challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, finding and retaining skilled staff can be a hurdle, especially in a competitive environment. Rising operational costs due to essential supplies like food and linens further squeeze profit margins, demanding innovative cost-management strategies. Additionally, keeping pace with ever-evolving guest expectations, shaped by technology and globalization, requires constant adaptation and investment.

However, the outlook isn't all bleak. A growing focus on sustainability presents a significant opportunity. By adopting eco-friendly practices, hospitality businesses can not only cater to environmentally conscious guests but also see long-term cost reductions. Furthermore, India's diverse travel market offers exciting possibilities. By exploring and catering to untapped segments, from budget travelers to luxury seekers, hospitality businesses can unlock new revenue streams and build loyal customer bases. The key lies in

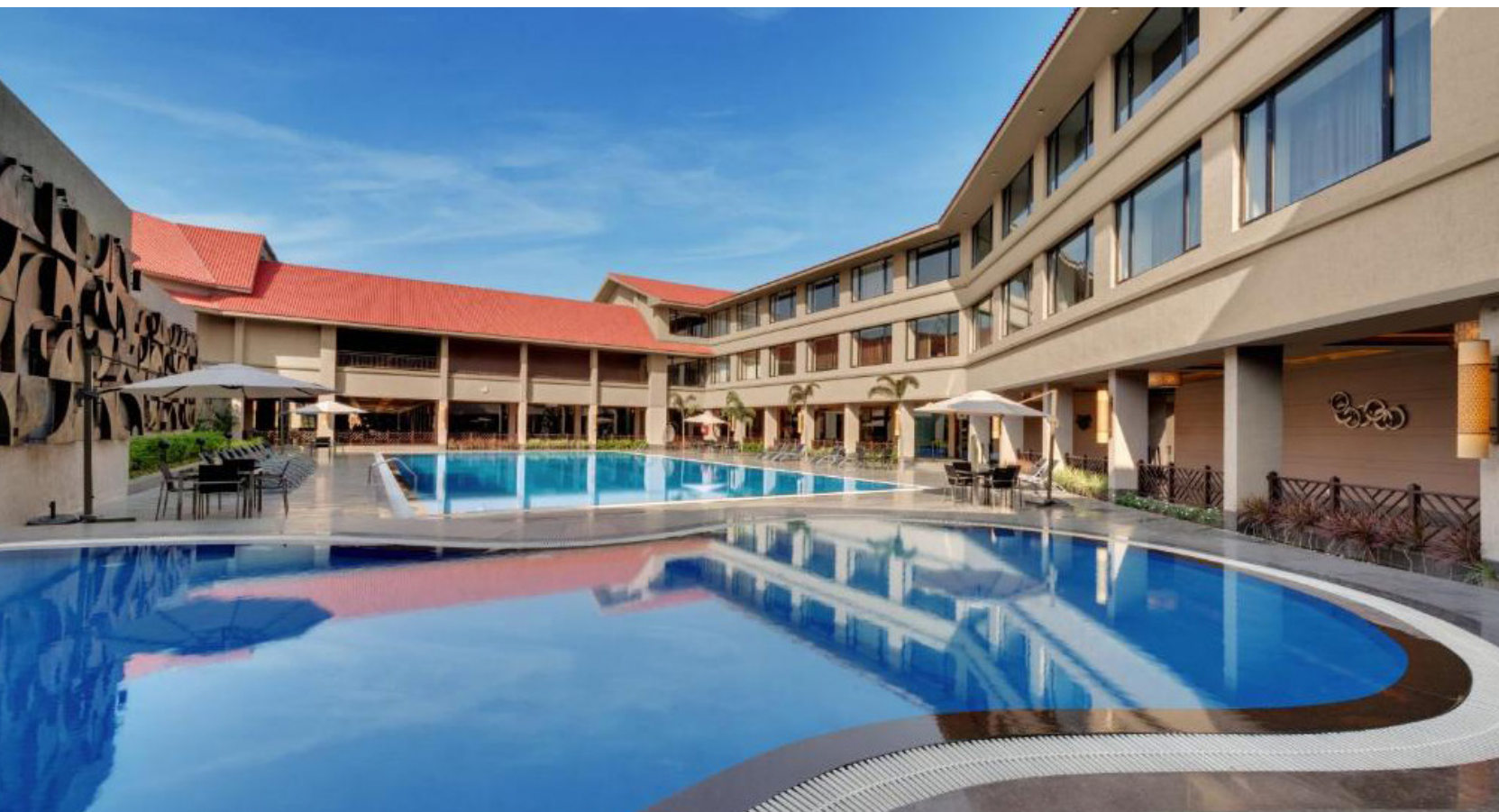
recognising these challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities to ensure a thriving future in the Indian hospitality market.

Q How do you see the company contributing to the future of Indian hospitality?

The Fern Hotels & Resorts stands tall as a cornerstone of the Indian hospitality scene. We are celebrated for our unwavering commitment to sustainability and guest contentment. With a vast portfolio spanning over 100+ hotels & resorts nationwide, our influence reverberates across the landscape, fundamentally shaping the future of Indian hospitality.

Central to this contribution is the establishment of an unparalleled standard for sustainability within the industry. Bolstered by our prestigious "Leading Environmentally Sensitive Hotels" certification, The Fern Hotels & Resorts epitomizes a steadfast dedication to reducing carbon footprint and safeguarding precious resources. Through pioneering initiatives like harnessing solar power, implementing rainwater harvesting systems, and embracing efficient waste management practices, we illuminate a path where hospitality and environmental harmony intersect seamlessly. ■

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Lone Wolf beer announces major growth strategy, bolsters production capacity to enter new markets



Lone Wolf is a new brand of premium beer that has rapidly gained popularity since its launch in 2022 by Onkara Beverages & Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. It stands out from the competition by focusing on providing exceptionally smooth beer, and by challenging traditional beer narratives. The brand has been gaining popularity and expanding its production capacity. Now, the company is focused on expanding nationally. **Atul Kumar Singh, Founder, Lone Wolf Beverages**, spoke to **Asmita Mukherjee** about the brand's strategy for maintaining its momentum and exceeding its ambitious revenue target of INR 45 crore.

According to the Founder, for Lone Wolf, beer isn't just about alcohol content; it's about fostering connections. "We wanted to break away from the ordinary," Singh stated, emphasising his desire to offer a beer that not only tasted exceptional but also challenged existing ideas about what beer could be.

Initially offering two distinct brews – Lone Wolf Strong, a strong lager boasting a smooth taste, and Lone Wolf Mild Lager, known for its crisp dryness – the brand expanded its portfolio in 2023 with the introduction of Lone Wolf Alpha, a Belgian Witbier, and Lone Wolf Mavricks, a 100% malt lager.

"There was a distinct lack of exceptionally smooth beers," he observed. "The market was saturated, but it lacked a brew that could stand out both for its taste and its commitment to pushing boundaries. Additionally, we wanted to challenge the notion that strong beers are inherently cheap. We aim to provide a premium drinking experience for all strong beer lovers and attract them from those who typically enjoy milder options or Witbiers."

Looking ahead, Lone Wolf plans to expand its capacity to meet growing customer demand. Singh also highlighted the upcoming launch of Lone Wolf beers in cans as a significant opportunity for the Hotels, Restaurants, and Caterings (HoReCa) sector. "Cans offer better light protection, preserving the beer's taste for longer and ensuring a premium experience at all times," he explained. "For customers, cans are easier to carry and chill compared to bottles."

The brand plans to leverage events, giveaways, and activations to build strong relationships with HoReCa establishments and boost brand awareness. "By engaging with these establishments, we not only create a symbiotic relationship but also forge memorable customer experiences, further solidifying the brand's premium image," Singh elaborated.

"Our vision remains constant – to offer a premium drinking experience and foster emotional investment in our brand ethos," Singh stated. He informed that their expansion plans are already underway for Kerala, Karnataka, and Rajasthan. The brewery has also doubled its production capacity to cater to rising demand in existing markets and new ones entering the fray this year. "Our focus this year isn't on new launches, but on expanding our product portfolio into more markets and deepening our presence in existing ones," Singh concluded. ■

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'FPG also plans to localise offerings to cater to the unique cultural & operational nuances in India'



Having recently forayed into the Indian market, Frontline Performance Group (FPG) is keen to offer hoteliers in Indian incremental revenue generation opportunities with its offerings. **Paul McLoughlin**, President, International Frontline Performance Group, spoke to **Disha Shah Ghosh** about the scope in India, and their expansion plans for India.

Q What made FPG foray into the Indian market this year?

Frontline Performance Group (FPG) ventured into the Indian market, attracted by India's booming hospitality industry and increasing demand for enhanced guest services. The rapid expansion of both domestic and international tourism, coupled with a burgeoning middle class, presented significant growth opportunities for tailored guest experience enhancements and revenue optimization services.

Q In terms of maximising revenue, what is the differentiating factor of FPG?

The differentiating factor of FPG in maximising revenue lies in its strategic focus on frontline performance and guest interaction. Unlike conventional revenue management services that primarily focus on pricing strategies, FPG's approach enhances the guest experience at every touchpoint, enabling frontline staff to effectively upsell and cross-sell services and amenities. This method not only increases immediate revenue but also boosts guest satisfaction and loyalty, which are crucial for long-term profitability.

Q How do your service offerings elevate the incremental revenue for a hotel platform?

FPG's service offerings elevate the incremental revenue for hotel platforms by implementing a combination of proprietary technology and personalised training programmes. These services empower hotel staff to understand customer needs better and to deliver personalised service offerings. By training staff in effective sales techniques and customer engagement, hotels can significantly increase their average revenue per guest, which translates to an overall increase in RevPar (Revenue per Available Room).

Q What offerings do you have for tour operators?

For tour operators, FPG offers specialised training programmes designed to enhance customer engagement and sales tactics. These programmes focus on optimising the customer journey by improving the touchpoints where additional services and experiences can be sold,



thus increasing the overall value of bookings and enhancing customer satisfaction.

Q Enumerate on your expansion plans for the Indian market.

Regarding expansion plans in the Indian market, FPG aims to deepen its penetration across major cities and tourist destinations. The focus will be on partnering with a wide array of hospitality businesses, including hotel chains, boutique hotels, and resort properties to implement its revenue optimisation programmes. FPG also plans to localise its offerings to cater to the unique cultural and operational nuances of the Indian market.

Q How are you engaging with stakeholders in the space to familiarise them with your offerings?

FPG is actively engaging with stakeholders in the Indian hospitality space to familiarise them with its offerings through targeted marketing campaigns, participation in industry conferences, and direct engagement with hotel management teams. Workshops and seminars are also part of the strategy, providing stakeholders with hands-on experiences of FPG's impact on revenue and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, FPG leverages case studies and success stories from global and local markets to demonstrate the effectiveness of its programmes and to build trust and credibility among potential clients.

Overall, FPG's strategic entry into the Indian market and its unique approach to maximizing revenue through frontline engagement and customer experience management are set to transform how hospitality businesses achieve growth and customer satisfaction. ■

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The Cart or the Horse?

By **Nathan Andrews**, Author & Hospitality Consultant

Within our industry as with other industries as well, we often hear of how important the particular industry is to the growth of the overall economy, be it infrastructure, pharma, banking, airlines, etc. In our case, it is hospitality and how many jobs are created by this sector; and how much in direct and indirect taxes we contribute to the exchequer, etc. etc. This is usually followed by some form of request for special recognition of this significant value creation in the form of tax relief or regulatory assistance, so that the industry can make an even greater contribution to the country as a whole.

While the ask is often very fair, implicit in the ask is the representation that 'we have reached thus far on our own and if our ask is acceded to, we could do much better with positive results for all stakeholders'. It is that unspoken premise that I would like to explore a bit deeper. Is the hospitality industry a creation of the environment or the creator of the ecosystem?

Recently I was reading of a very dark episode in the history of the people of Israel where a traveller, his concubine and servant on their way home, stop in a town square for the night where they ended up camping. A kind soul offered them a place in his home. The story however takes a dark turn when the residents of the town rape the woman and civil war breaks out as a result. How is this pertinent to this article? Simply to say that around 1400-1500 BC, inns, the origin of our industry, were as yet unknown. In a society where travel was very limited, clearly the need for purpose-driven traveller accommodation was not seen. The rare traveller simply hoped that they would find hospitality in some hospitable home.

Fast forward five hundred years and we meet the familiar but hapless innkeeper who has had to live down, for the past two thousand years the quite unfair reputation, in my opinion, of being the one who couldn't provide a place for Joseph and Mary and the birth of the baby Jesus. We are now in the Roman era, famous for the roads that connected the far-flung empire, the relative safety provided by their judicial system and military might, which in turn facilitated travel across the empire.

I don't think it is a coincidence that it is in the same time frame that we also get the equally famous 'Good Samaritan' who takes the unknown

traveller he finds in a ditch, beaten and bloody, and places him in the care of an innkeeper, and covers the costs of this stranger out of his own pocket. Obviously, the Samaritan knew the location of the inn (it is still marked today on the road heading down from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea); the innkeeper was familiar with the Samaritan as a 'regular guest', and was willing to extend him credit if needed. Aspects that should sound strangely familiar,

Clearly innkeeping had now arrived, though what such inns looked like would probably have been very different from what we imagine. Etymologists tell us that the word used for inn was also used for a place to stay or a guest room. Most inns at the time were probably extra rooms in a large house, and we should not equate Joseph and Mary's plight with a modern-day hotel not honouring our online reservation.

Further change was seen in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, across Europe and England with the advent of stage-coaches, and inn-keeping became both a recognized profession and industry. If you have the opportunity to visit Reading in the UK, please stay at the Mercure, a former stage-coach inn; only the horses are missing. The arrival of the steam-engine and railroads further propelled the growth of the industry across the globe, most notably the Americas.

Travel across Canada and all the great hotels in the country, today all Fairmont's, were built in conjunction with the Canadian Pacific Railway. Similarly, as sea travel expanded, hotels started to come up in and around the ports across the world; our own Taj Mahal in Mumbai being a prime example. Other notable examples being the Peninsular Hongkong, Raffles Singapore, and the Mena House in Cairo necessitated by the opening of the Suez Canal.

This further grew exponentially with the growth of air travel, with Pan Am not only flying you around the world but offering their InterContinental Hotels beginning in 1946 in the cities they flew to.

What is the point of this history lesson? Namely, that if we are honest, hospitality has always been a follower not an initiator. Hospitality follows where others lead. Undoubtedly, our industry has a huge and hugely positive impact on society and the economy, but we are generally not first movers. The nature of our business predicates that successful investments in any new asset are at least preexisted by some ready demand and the availability of reasonable infrastructure.

While hospitality undoubtedly plays a key role in changing, even creating a destination, creating economic opportunities, and changing lives both at the macro and micro level, if we are truly honest I would submit we are still the cart not the horse. ■

The views expressed within this column are the opinion of the author, and may not necessarily be endorsed by the publication.



Contours of the Indian hospitality education landscape

While there are challenges and issues that need to be addressed, Indian hospitality education is making significant strides in providing international exposure, adopting innovative practices, and ensuring that its degrees hold international value. **Hospitality Biz** talks to some industry leaders to understand the changing scenario.

Hospitality education landscape in India has been undergoing a sea change. Evolution has come in as they have been competing and partnering effectively with their international counterparts. While many international institutions have joined hands with the Indian institutions to set up an extension of their educational platform, there are some who have spread their wings into the Indian market on their own too.

Hospitality education in India has evolved significantly over the last two decades. Today, India boasts world-class hospitality institutions

with top-notch infrastructure, quality faculty members, and a well-designed curriculum. Decoding this further, Dr Bhuvan.G.M, Principal, Apeejay Institute of Hospitality, Navi Mumbai said, “Faculty members are actively engaged in research and publications, with many pursuing PhDs and holding doctorates. The teaching-learning process has undergone substantial changes, focusing on updated industry-centric curriculum. Assessment by accrediting bodies like NAAC has further enhanced the quality of hospitality education, leading to Indian hospitality graduates finding

employment globally.”

Delving further on the point, Dr Chef Saurabh Sharma, Professor, School of hospitality and tourism management Manipal University Jaipur added, “Hospitality education in India competes with international counterparts by offering a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical experience, often through collaborations with global hospitality brands, signing MoU’s with international universities and colleges for student exchange program or international internship opportunities to ensuring students are well-prepared for the industry’s demands worldwide and marking the food print on global market.”

While Indian hospitality education has made significant progress in aligning with international standards, there may still be areas for improvement, such as increasing the focus on practical training, enhancing industry exposure, and promoting research and innovation in the field. Overall, however, the quality of hospitality education in India is steadily improving and is increasingly being recognized on the international stage.

Highlighting the core difference between Indian and international institutions, A K Singh, Director, FHRAI Institute of Hospitality





Dr Bhuvan.G.M
Principal,
Apeejay Institute of Hospitality

Management said, “Indian hospitality education is focused on management of hotel operation whereas in international scenario specially U.S. and most part of Europe it functions as Business School and entirely focused on only managerial knowledge and skill that help in decision making. In Indian context the focus is on hotel operation and its management is correct, as being the large country, if we focus on only Managerial input then least number of graduates will get job opportunity, whereas in operation and management we train people and get them employed at entry, supervisory and management trainee level. Thus, our hospitality education is more inclusive but lacks the knowledge and skill needed for decision making including problem solving, business forecasting, etc.”

There has been considerable effort made towards bringing in the much-needed change in the hospitality education system in India. To make hospitality operation and management education more industry relevant there is a need to increase the experimental learning opportunities in close association with industry, and provide more exposure in the long-term or project-based experimental learning.

“This will not only help students in gaining knowledge and skill but will also add to their ability to give best output as a team comprising of people coming from different culture, educational/ social backgrounds. In addition, it will also give an opportunity to face real life problems and arrive at their best solutions with instant feedback from guests or management. Close association with industry will help in developing critical thinking, creativity and innovation,” added A K Singh.

One specific change being foreseen to create an industry-relevant education system is the integration of technology-driven learning



A K Singh
Director, FHRAI Institute of
Hospitality Management



Dr Chef Saurabh Sharma
Professor, School of hospitality
and tourism management Manipal
University Jaipur

tools and real-world industry experiences into the curriculum. “The curriculum must be an excellent blend of technology and our tradition. To ensure holistic development of students by practical skills and stay abreast of evolving trends and technologies within the hospitality sector,” reiterated Dr Chef Saurabh Sharma.

In the last decade, due to internet penetration and access to technology, teaching pedagogy has undergone rapid change. “One can specialize in any skill or knowledge domain through MOOCs (Massive Open and Online Courses). Also, hospitality faculty with industry experience have become very innovative in teaching and imparting industry-relevant skills and knowledge. The curriculum is updated periodically with inputs from hospitality industry experts. The objective to offer employability and entrepreneurship options is achieved fairly well,” informed Dr Bhuvan.G.M.

Taking about if the current hospitality curriculum is keeping pace with the evolving demands and expectations within the



Kunal Vasudeva
Co-founder & Managing Director,
Indian School of Hospitality

hospitality sector, Kunal Vasudeva, Co-founder & Managing Director, Indian School of Hospitality, said, “At the Indian School of Hospitality, we view the hospitality industry as our primary customer and use a forecasting model to anticipate future trends and innovations. This approach allows us to adapt our curriculum, teaching methods, and faculty expertise accordingly. By forecasting industry developments and backtracing them to our educational offerings, we cultivate problem-spotting and problem-solving as key skills. While forecasting can sometimes be a hit-or-miss process, our proactive methodology helps us address emerging challenges and ensures our relevance in a dynamic industry. By staying ahead of trends and focusing on innovation, we prepare our students.”

While the Indian hospitality education today is benchmarking itself with the best globally, but then there are many small and medium sized institutions that do need to be better regulated and there perhaps is a need to have a common criterion that ensures that the learnings at all these institutions, that offer a degree in hotel management, is the same. There is a need for uniformity in education, that would help in nurturing industry-ready students and ensure that they are welcomed into the exciting world of hospitality.

The effectiveness of hospitality education in India and its alignment with the industry has many challenges. Some of the challenges stem from the fact that the quality of institution is not at par when it comes to providing the infrastructure required for hospitality education. Competency to be able to produce thorough professionals is another aspect that needs a close view from the regulatory lens. Curriculum relevance that ensures that there is no industry academia gap is being looked at by many institutions. ■

Adminutiae #1 | Recognizing Innovation Barriers

By Prof. Satish Jayaram, PhD – Ideator | Innovator | Incubator

Adminutiae is a new word coined to signify the administrative minutiae that create barriers to innovation and change. Recognizing innovation and change barriers must help institutions take a dispassionate view of their level of preparedness for disruption. Over the past year, I have observed enthused change catalysts struggle with institutional variables, as they struggle to deploy new solutions. The purpose of this 3-column series is to enable change makers recognize the barriers that derail progress despite best intentions. In this first column, let us demystify internal variables, in the next – external variables and finally the organizational response mechanism to incubate change initiatives. Consider the use of digital learning as a means to empower growth of new talents under the National Educational Policy 2020, a progressive framework which can facilitate national change.

Recognize institutional variables that have developed and ensconced themselves deeply without realization. The need to bring in emergent influences is therefore wrought with multiple challenges. Change response also depend on power and weight of variables in motion. Some limitations of change initiatives may be staged, incremental, small changes or more strategic transformational changes sequenced for structured incubation. Yet internal process variables are invisible, powerful influencers, which lead to inconsequential delays as project applications demand commitment and support. While variables such as process consistency are touted for compliance, they need to be evaluated for effectiveness. Innovative solutions need agility in adoption and response, since external factors change rapidly - exposing the risk of instituting redundant change initiatives across timelines.

The alignment of institutional change drivers at multiple levels including leadership, administration, operations and support systems are moot. Potential traps and uncontrollable delays in execution have a domino effect by triggering off internal reactions. A lack of concerted effort, communication delays as well as requisite empowerment can dry out the validity of project applications uncontrollably. Knowledge deficits and inept execution is largely the cause of project delays as frustrations fester.

1. Routine Change: Development inertia - getting off the block - is due to lack of intent and transparent communication. Fledgeling initiatives may not seem substantial enough to create impact and be deferred for consideration. Re-work, repetition and recycling

information for multiple inferences create irrelevant delays. Parochial, divisive and myopic approaches only exacerbate routine change to progress slowly. Time and effort factors get affected by hidden administrative dormancies, which have sequential project ramifications without attribution.



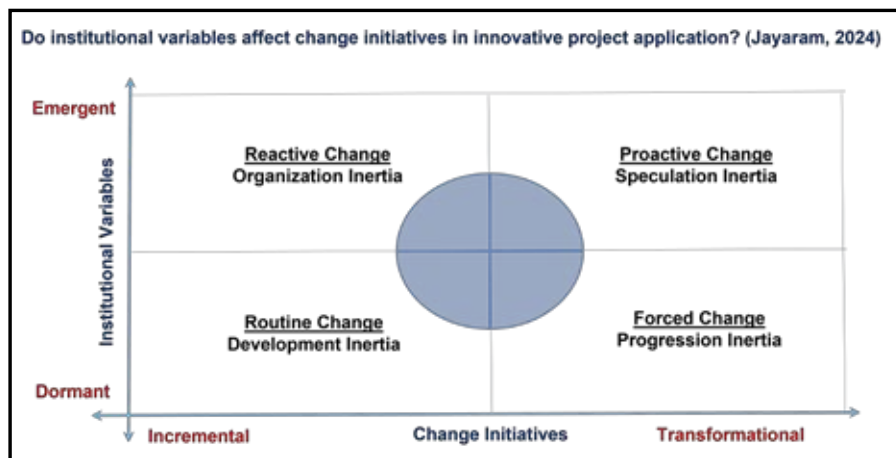
2. Forced Change: Progression inertia - reportable progress and comfortable execution are often disrupted by edicts which require the application of force to achieve unknown priorities. While leaders may want speed and agility, administrative systems continue to be restricted by their limited 'fish-bowl perspective'. The bigger challenge of forced execution is process inconsistency leading to obvious compromises. Speed trade-offs result in disparate, misaligned efforts, many of which likely fall short on account of a lack of concerted synergy.

3. Reactive Change: Organizational inertia - over communication, incorrect representations and misplaced anticipation creates an invisible force amongst actors involved. Repeated jargon, repetitive emails and selective briefs are some traps to watch out for. Each process kicks-in for an unknown organizational outcome. Report card criteria need to be known before committing to mindless experimentation. Doing what is trendy, popular and visible may not necessarily represent alignment with real priorities, by creating superficial progression charts.

4. Proactive Change: Speculation inertia - projections, estimates and impact numeracies are often required to unfreeze and release administrative tangles. Transformational change is a commitment over time, immediate execution without preparation and examination of long-term ramification renders the strategy ineffective. Visible change is slow and permanent if incubated in a structured manner. Administrative reporting pressures often showcase visible change which does not represent depth. Early steps and vision can be deterred by assumption.

Adminutiae represents repetitive, established expectations and responses to a set of embedded norms, processes and practices often accepted without rationale. Changing success criteria requires the strength to withstand a changing context, which cannot be measured with redundant measures. The challenge of renewing administrative processes to facilitate change is often rendered ineffective by established forms, formats and reports. Measures of compliance need renewal over time in line with changing technologies and consistency with larger, universal and sacrosanct values. A greater common institutional good cannot be left at risk of compromise, for lack of a mechanism that fails to meet established immediacies for change. ■

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Elevating the Guest Experience: Customized Perfume Bottles in Hotel Amenities Kits



In the world of hospitality, it's the little details that make a lasting impression. Hotels are constantly seeking innovative ways to enhance the guest experience, and a new trend has emerged to tantalize the senses – customized perfume bottles in the washroom amenities kit.

Imagine stepping into your hotel room, and instead of the usual generic toiletries, you are greeted by a beautifully crafted perfume bottle, exuding the essence of luxury. This new trend is revolutionizing the traditional amenities offered by hotels, creating a sensorial experience that goes beyond the ordinary.

These perfume bottles are not just any fragrance dispensers; they can be personalized to reflect the identity of the hotel. Hotels can proudly showcase their logo on these exquisite bottles, adding a touch of brand identity to every guest's stay. This branding not only reinforces the hotel's image but also creates a memorable and immersive experience for guests.

One of the unique features of these customized perfume bottles is the option to infuse them with the signature scent of the hotel. Hotels often invest time and effort in creating a distinct and memorable fragrance that defines their brand. By incorporating this signature scent into the washroom amenities, guests

are enveloped in the familiar and comforting ambiance of the hotel, even in the privacy of their own bathroom.

What sets this trend apart is its ability to evoke a sense of 'wow' and warmth. The simple act of using a personalized perfume bottle elevates the guest experience, creating a connection between the guest and the hotel

that goes beyond the physical space.

For higher-tier accommodations like presidential suites, customization reaches a whole new level. Hotels are now offering the option to print the guest's name or even their photo on the perfume bottle. This level of personalization not only adds a touch of exclusivity but also makes the guest feel truly valued and appreciated. It's a thoughtful gesture that turns a stay into a memorable and deeply personal experience.

To make this experience even more extraordinary, master perfumer at Vedique, Mr. Vishesh Vijayvergiya, is the go-to person for creating these signature scents. He can be contacted through Telegram @perfumer_v, Tel 95191-11233, or Whatsapp 88817-11233.

As hotels continue to innovate and prioritize guest satisfaction, the trend of customized perfume bottles in amenities kits is a testament to the industry's commitment to creating unique and unforgettable moments. These bottles transcend the ordinary, leaving an indelible mark on the guest's memory, making every stay a sensorial journey that lingers long after check-out. ■

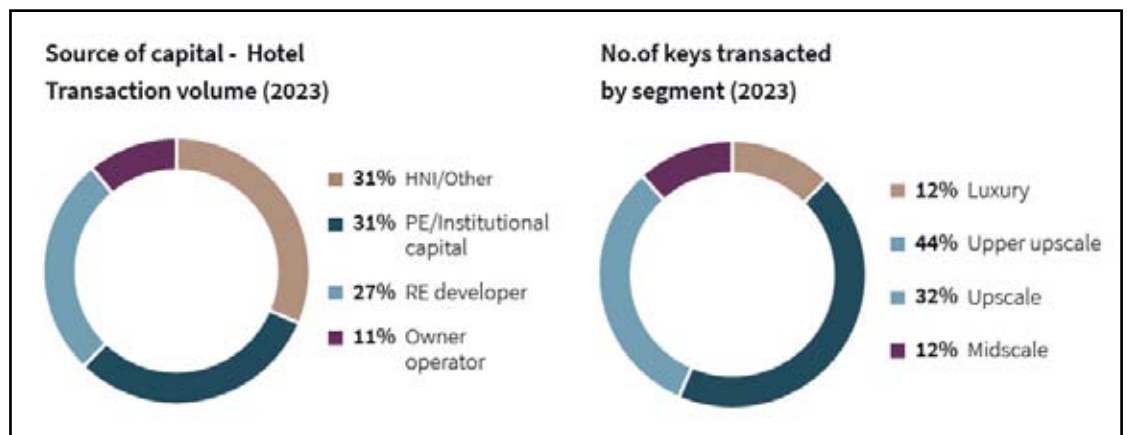
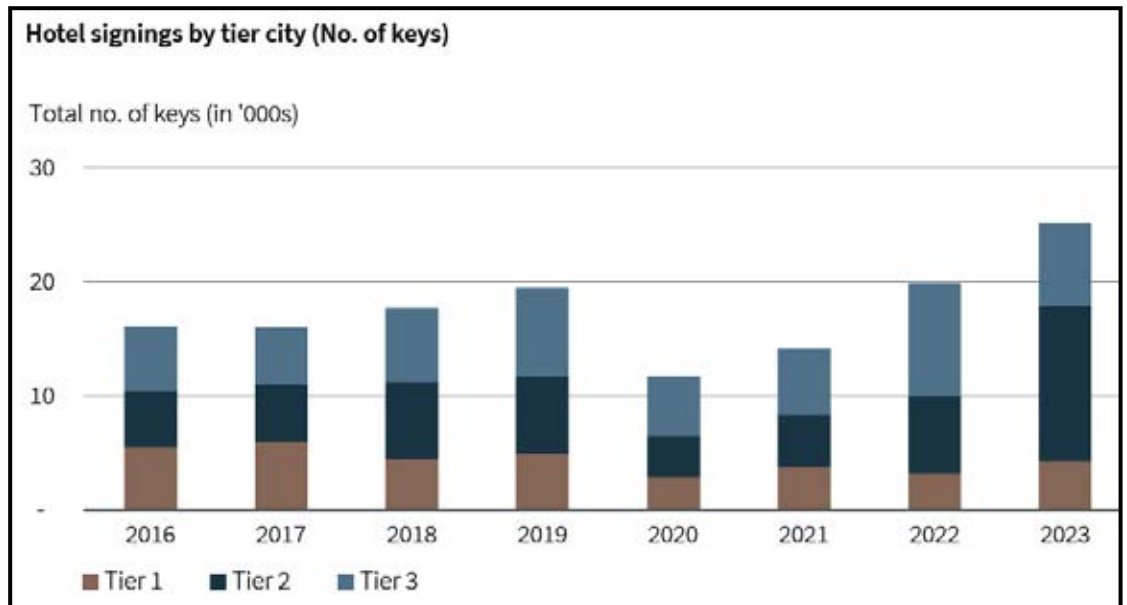
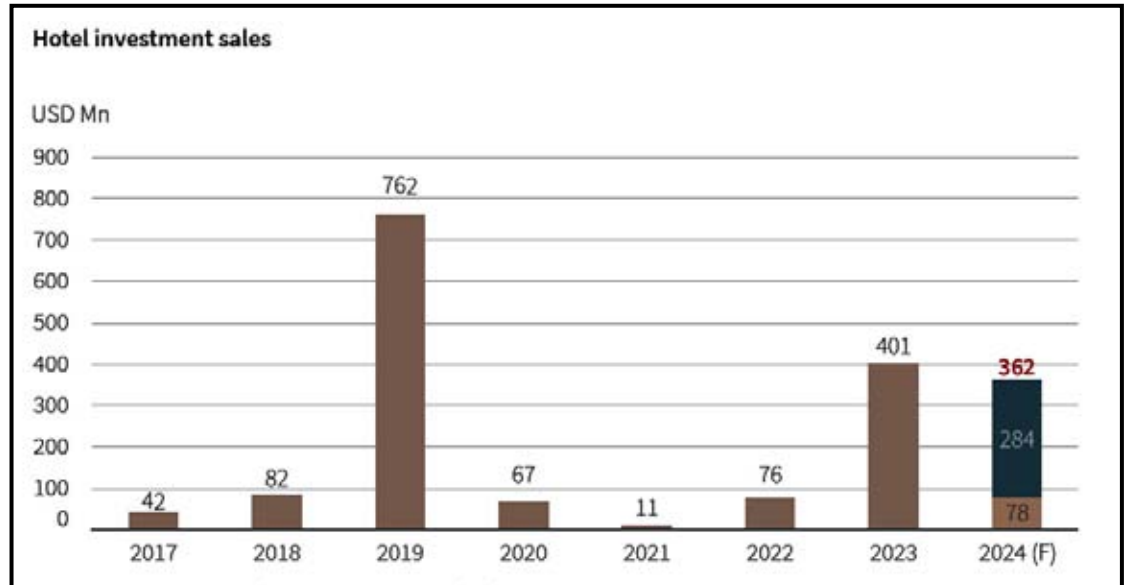


India's hospitality sector saw investments worth USD 401 mn in 2023: JLL

JLL India in its latest report titled 'Hotel Investment Trends - India 2023', highlighted the growth and positive start of the first quarter (Jan-March) of 2024 in the hospitality sector. The report mentions that the first quarter of 2024 witnessed a significant 80% Year-on-Year increase in hotel transaction volumes, reaching USD 78 million.

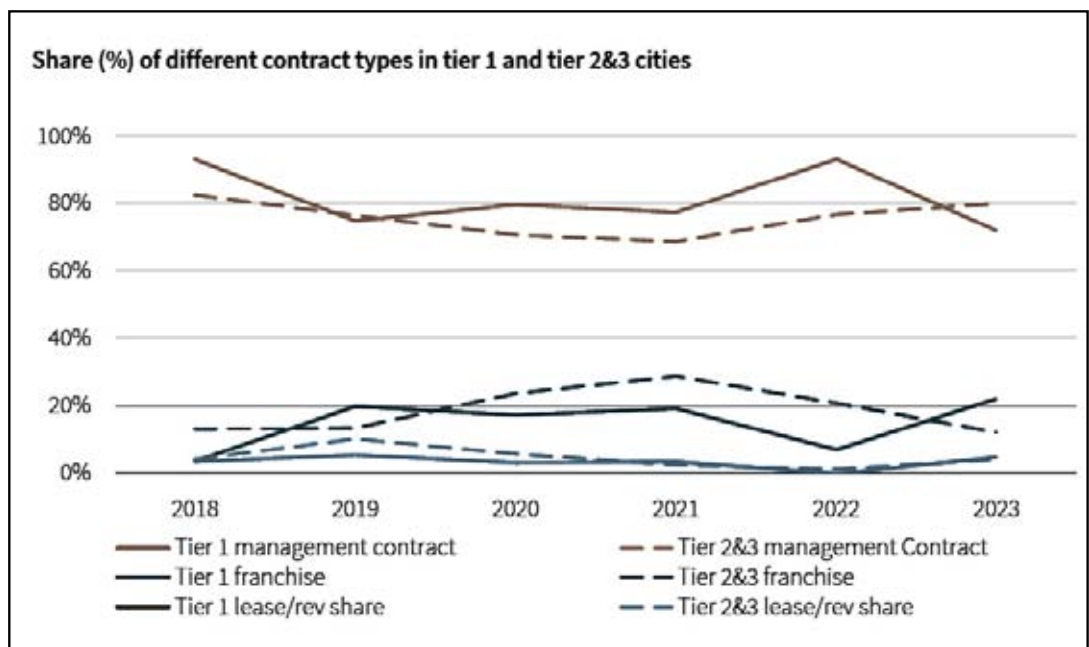
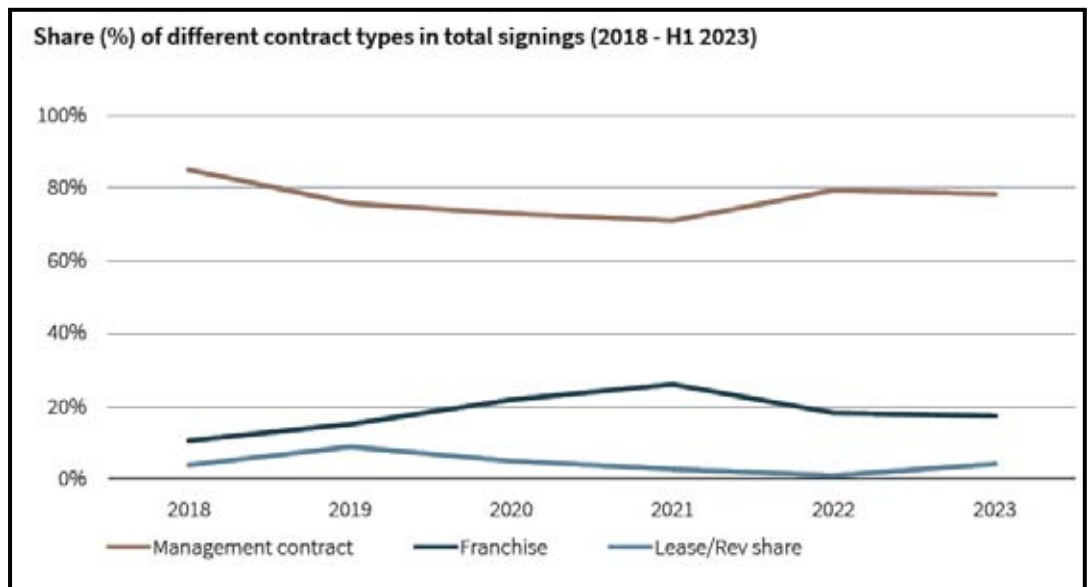
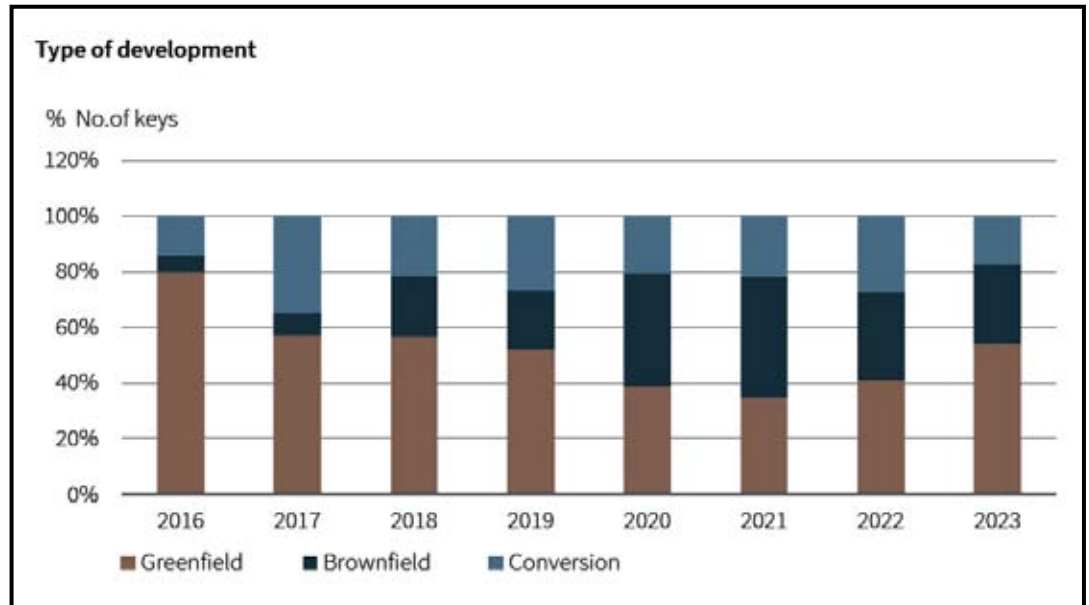
The sector has been witnessing good surge since last calendar year (2023). A record number of hotel signings and openings took place in 2023, with 25,176 keys signed and 12,647 keys opened. There is an increasing interest in hotel development activity in Tier-2 cities, with 54% of the total signings taking place in these locations.

In 2023, Hotel Investments in India touched USD 401 million which was nearly four-fold the volumes witnessed in 2022. 25% of the overall value of transactions involved under-construction hotels in both business and leisure destinations. 2023 also achieved a significant milestone of 22 hotel transactions, which is the largest number of assets traded in the last decade. It also saw three hotel companies successfully debuting on the stock



market through their Initial Public Offerings (IPOs). There were greenfield projects, totaling approximately 13,600 keys in 2023, surpassed the figure from the previous year (8,000 keys), showcasing the enduring confidence of hotel developers in the long-term growth potential of the sector. Furthermore, the report notes, the emergence of tourism and leisure destinations as centers for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) activities, with the signing of three large-format hotels with a total of approximately 900 keys.

“The year 2023 has been a record year not only in terms of hotel investments but also in terms of new branded hotel openings and signings. Furthermore, 2024 has started with strong tail winds as we saw prominent hotel deals early on in this year. The enthusiasm of the sector is further strengthened by performance of hotel stocks, which also gave confidence to a couple more hotel companies entering public markets and achieving strong valuations. We expect this story to continue in 2024 on back of diversified avenues of growth such as expanding commercial office markets and with development of infrastructure such as new airports, expressways, increasing pilgrimage travel leading to the emergence of new realty & tourism hotspots across the country”, stated Jaideep Dang, Managing Director, Hotels and Hospitality Group, India, JLL. ■





Vivanta Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

Vivanta Jamshedpur is strategically situated on Golmuri Road with each of the 95 well-appointed rooms offering picturesque hill views. Guests can indulge in a variety of culinary delights at Mynt, the signature all-day diner, Red Pearl, the Pan-Asian restaurant and poolside grills at The Grill. Wink, the chic bar, serves up exotic cocktails. The wellness facilities include a gymnasium and a rooftop swimming pool for relaxation. The hotel offers over 10,000 sq. ft. of indoor and outdoor banqueting space, ideal for corporate gatherings and social events.

Welcomhotel Hamsa, Manali

Located in the north of Manali town at a well-planned about four-acre apple orchard, Welcomhotel Manali offers an enriching stay experience with a 360-degree view of the snow-clad Himalayan peaks. Far from the hustle bustle, nestled in the lap of nature, Welcomhotel Manali offers a one-of-a-kind destination experience. This majestic resort rests at an elevation of 2255 metres offering breath-taking panoramic views of the Dhauladar ranges, Pir Panjal ranges and the Manali Valley.

Dining experiences at Welcomhotel Manali are equally enthralling. The Lighthouse; a multi-cuisine restaurant, located in The Conservatory, showcases breath-taking views of the snow-clad peaks, lush forests and apple orchards.

The well-appointed rooms with wooden ceilings are a reminder of the local architecture.



SKK The Fern-An Ecotel Hotel, Jaisalmer

The hotel features 104 well-appointed rooms and offers facilities such as an outdoor swimming pool, fitness center, multiple lawns, and an on-site restaurant. SKK The Fern, Jaisalmer is just a 10-minute drive from the majestic Jaisalmer Fort, making it an ideal stay option in this thriving tourist destination. With a beautiful central courtyard and multiple lawns, SKK The Fern shall be the ideal place to host dream weddings in this Golden City. All the rooms boast an exemplary balance of elegance, sophistication, royalty, and old-world charm blended with modern features and facilities.

Pramod Lands End Resort, a member of Radisson Individuals

Known for its colonial heritage and picturesque landscapes, Gopalpur is a coveted tourist, wedding, and spiritual destination. Pramod Lands End Resort, a member of Radisson Individuals is strategically located on the scenic Gopalpur Beach in southern Odisha and promises guests a tranquil escape. Staying true to Radisson Hotel Group's focus on establishing its presence at drivable distances, the hotel can be reached within a four-hour drive from religious hubs like Puri and Konark, making it an ideal base for exploration and discovery. It is conveniently accessible from major nearby cities via roads, railway, and Berhampur Airport.



MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL


**Sagar Kulkarni, F&B
Director, Sheraton Grand
Pune Bund Garden Hotel**

In his previous role at Hilton Mumbai International Airport, Kulkarni demonstrated exceptional proficiency in overseeing Food & Beverage operations, excelling in forecasting, budgeting, ownership handling, and successful relaunches of key outlets. However, it was during

his tenure at Sofitel Luxury Hotels Mumbai BKC where Sagar truly made his mark, spending nearly 7 years honing his skills and achieving remarkable milestones. His leadership was instrumental in earning prestigious awards and accolades, solidifying Sofitel Mumbai's reputation as a leading luxury destination. He led numerous initiatives that significantly enhanced guest satisfaction and revenue generation for Sofitel Mumbai.


**Shaiban Hassan, Hotel
Manager, St. Regis Mumbai**

Hassan brings a wealth of expertise, having previously served as the Hotel Manager at W Goa, where he showcased exemplary leadership and management skills. During his tenure, he successfully managed a luxury resort comprising 121 rooms, overseeing six food and beverage outlets and led a team of 335 employees.


**Deepraj Mukherjee, General
Manager, Westin Chennai
Velachery**

Mukherjee brings with him more than two decades of rich exposure in Hotel Management and expertise in handling a diverse range of operations.

Prior to this role, Mukherjee was the General Manager for Le Meridien Kochi, pivoting the 223 key legacy hotel to clock in resounding success with his

astute business acumen, heralding the golden years for the iconic hotel. He achieved this through a strategic positioning of the hotel and actively driving quality initiatives, playing upon the unique offerings and strengths of the Le Meridien Brand, helping turn around guest satisfaction while also ensuring employee and owner relations.

FOUR SEASONS HOTELS AND RESORTS


**Syed Tauseef Ahmed,
Director of Catering, Four
Seasons Hotel Bengaluru**

With a rich background in hospitality and a proven track record of excellence, Syed brings over 15 years of experience to the esteemed Four Seasons brand. Syed's appointment reflects the brand's commitment to delivering unparalleled guest experiences and maintaining its reputation for excellence. His expertise,

coupled with his passion for responsible luxury and environmental sustainability, align perfectly with Four Seasons' core values.

HYATT HOTELS


**Anish Kuttan, General
Manager, Alila Diwa Goa**

With over 20 plus years of experience in luxury hospitality, Kuttan brings with him a wealth of demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and a proven track record in the luxury hospitality sector, making him an excellent addition to the team.

Throughout his two-decade long journey in the industry, Kuttan has held various leadership roles

at acclaimed hotel brands including Hyatt Hotels, Kempinski Hotel, and Four Seasons, where he efficiently managed operational aspects including food and beverage, guest relations, sales and marketing, and performance management. An integral part of the Hyatt family since 2017.

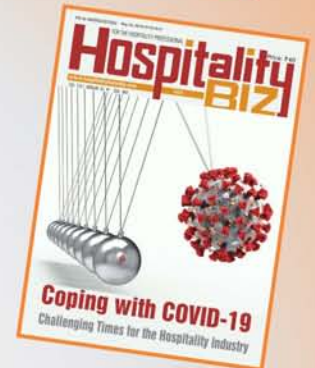

**Karan Singh Nagra,
Marketing and
Communications Manager,
Hyatt Regency Dehradun,
Resort & Spa**

With over nine years of experience in marketing, Karan brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the team. His core areas of expertise include luxury brand marketing, destination marketing, media planning, public relations, content creation, and

social media marketing. His key responsibility at the Hyatt Regency Dehradun, Resort & Spa will include the creation and supervision of a result-oriented multi-platform communications strategy. His knowledge of enhancing business positioning and augmenting brand value through successful social media and digital marketing strategies, as well as improving public and media relations to propagate brand legacy, makes him an asset to the organization.

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