

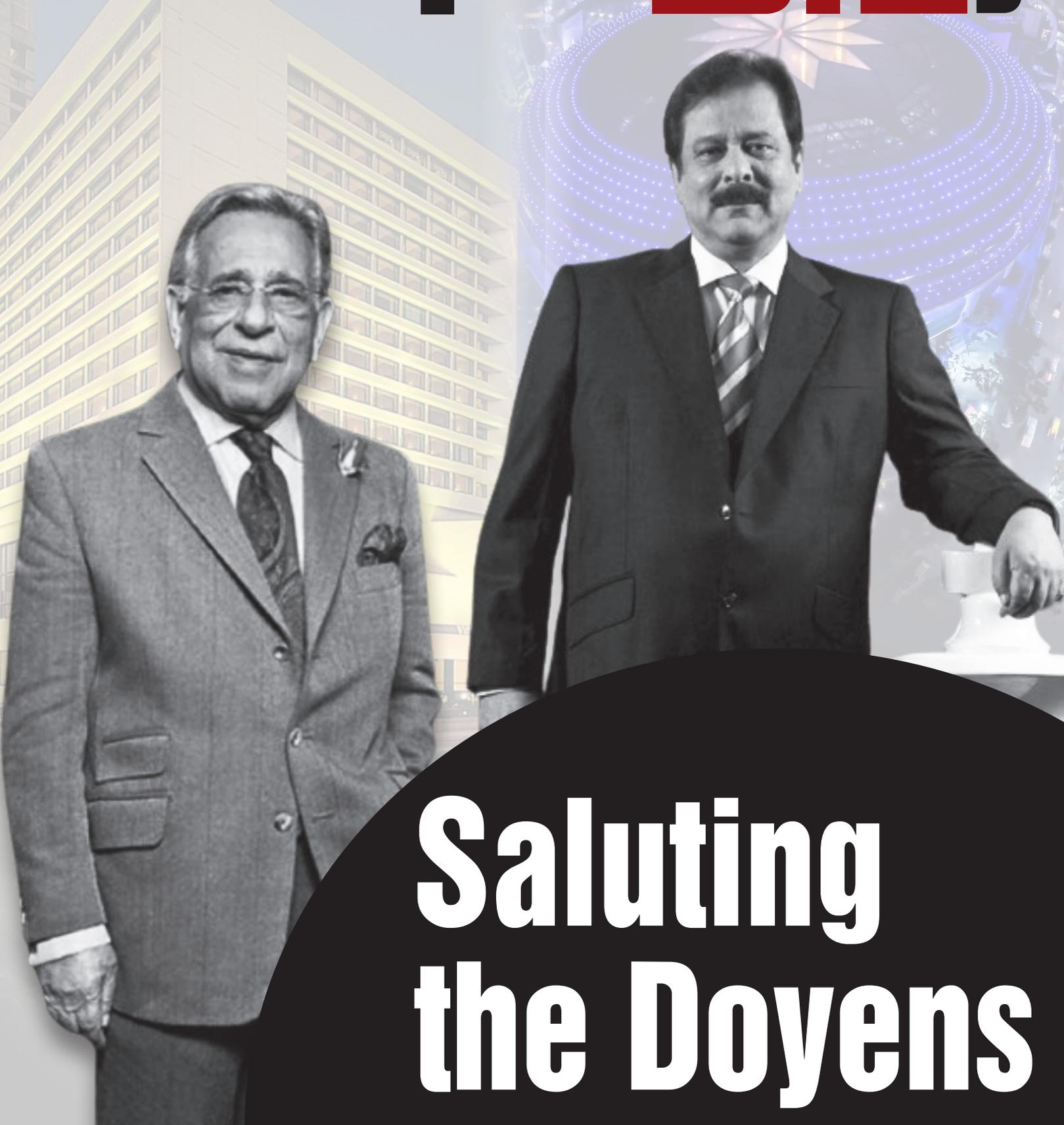
FOR THE HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL

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Saluting the Doyens

Accor inks deal for ibis Styles Mysuru, set to open in Q1, 2025



HBI Staff | Mumbai

Accor, a reputed hospitality Group, signs the first ibis Styles in Mysuru, the cultural capital of Karnataka. Nestled in a prime location, this addition to the ibis Styles family is set to redefine hospitality with its playful design, contemporary amenities and a comfortable stay.

Scheduled for opening in Q1 2025, ibis Styles Mysuru will offer 130 rooms, each

with a unique character. The food and drink offerings at the property will be designed to cater to diverse tastes, featuring an all-day dining restaurant, a speciality restaurant and a relaxing lounge bar. Besides this, the hotel will offer a comprehensive range of amenities, including a 450sqm banquet space, a well-equipped fitness centre and a relaxing swimming pool.

Commenting on this, Aniruddh Kumar, Vice President of Development, India &

South Asia, Accor, said, “Accor is pleased to continue to solidify its association with Brigade Group and presence in South India with the introduction of ibis Styles Mysuru. Upon its grand opening, guests exploring this culturally vibrant city can anticipate an authentic home-away-from-home experience within an innovative and welcoming environment.”

Vineet Verma, Director Hospitality, Brigade Group said, “Collaborating with Accor on ibis Styles Mysuru marks yet another milestone in our exciting journey together. This will be our second hotel in Mysuru with Accor, the first being Grand Mercure Mysuru. Mysuru has seen a turnaround post-pandemic and with the commute from Bengaluru to Mysuru being reduced to under two hours, we have witnessed a noticeable increase in hospitality business. This gives us the confidence that our second hotel in the city will do equally well, if not better. We aim to provide a welcoming haven that embraces the spirit of the city, offering a host of joyful experiences to our guests.” ■

Niraamaya Wellness Retreats expands to Munnar, Kerala

HBI Staff | Mumbai

Niraamaya Lifestyle Resorts has made its entry into Munnar by signing a management agreement with INKURE Real Estate Investment Company. This addition brings Niraamaya’s wellness retreat count in Kerala to a total of 6. The property offers an array of amenities including an all-day restaurant and bar, fitness center, swimming pool, and comprehensive spa facilities and conveniently located near Kochi airport.

Speaking on this, Allen Machado, CEO, Niraamaya Business Group, said, “Niraamaya has consistently pioneered identifying destinations with tremendous tourism potential and positioning them globally. With our steadfast dedication to offering locally immersive design and authentic experiences, we’re thrilled to unveil our newest luxury retreat in Munnar. This ideal sanctuary renowned for its natural allure and seamless accessibility, offers



a canvas to curate distinctive experiences for leisure and wellness escapes.”

Justin Mary Raphael, Group Chairman of INKURE Real Estate Investment and Hospitality Management Group, said, “We are thrilled to be teaming up with Niraamaya, a renowned luxury brand, to bring their celebrated opulence to Kanthalloor in Munnar, which is currently lacking high-end hotels. This exciting venture aims to unlock the true potential of this stunning yet undiscovered region, creating the perfect destination for discerning travellers. This partnership will bring significant positive changes that will benefit both Munnar and its surrounding areas.” ■

Hyatt to strengthen luxury portfolio with over 35 planned hotels and resorts across globe

HBI Staff | Mumbai

The Hyatt Hotels Corporation has unveiled an impressive development pipeline, showcasing over 35 upcoming high-end hotels and resorts worldwide set to open by 2025. These properties span across esteemed brands like Park Hyatt, Grand Hyatt, Miraval, Alila, Andaz, Thompson Hotels, and The Unbound Collection by Hyatt. Additionally, the expansion includes the Inclusive Collection brands Zoëtry Wellness & Spa Resorts and Dreams Resorts & Spas.

While maintaining its asset-light approach, the hotel has doubled the number of luxury rooms, tripled the number of resort rooms, and quadrupled the number of lifestyle rooms in only five years. With 70 per cent of its rooms categorized as luxury and upper upscale, the company portfolio has grown to meet increased demands for luxury and resort accommodations while upholding consistent, top-tier quality, personalised experiences.

According to a recent World Travel & Tourism Council report, travel and tourism are expected to increase by approximately 12 per cent of global GDP by 2033. In turn, Hyatt's luxury portfolio is expanding

to meet that demand in new international markets. This includes the debut of Park Hyatt hotels in the UK, Mexico, and Malaysia; the Thompson Hotel brand's expansion in Europe with the first properties in Austria and Italy; the Andaz brand's



growth in the Americas with its first hotel in the Caribbean; The Unbound Collection by Hyatt brand's first property in India; as well as Hyatt luxury growth in the trending destination of Portugal, with the planned openings of Andaz Lisbon and Dreams Madeira Resort, Spa & Marina.

Mark Vondrasek, Chief Commercial Officer, Hyatt, said, "The upcoming addition of these new hotels and resorts across our global luxury portfolio in sought-after destinations where travellers want to go most reinforces our leadership in this

space. Our continued, purposeful growth in the year ahead will follow an insightful approach, focused on listening to our guests, customers and World of Hyatt members and their evolving travel needs such as a growing desire for immersive and distinct experiences that prioritize well-being."

The company also continues to grow thoughtfully through acquisitions, expanding its portfolio for guests and members with the recently announced acquisition of Mr & Mrs Smith. The integration planned for the near future will unlock direct booking access to hundreds more boutique and luxury hotels including in 20 plus countries where there are currently no Hyatt hotels.

Heidi Kunkel, Senior Vice President Commercial Services, EAME, said, "Hyatt's luxury growth strategy is purposefully ambitious and in the coming years, we will continue to grow with intent through a focus on key leisure destinations, and top-tier brands' ability to personalize experiences for each guest, member and client, through care. We value our relationship with travel advisors and look to work together on finding new ways to advance care for them and their clients through the transformative growth of our luxury offerings and evolving World of Hyatt benefits." ■

Fairmont Jaipur appoints Shahnaaz Anjum as Director of Food & Beverage

HBI Staff | Mumbai

Fairmont Jaipur has appointed of Shahnaaz Anjum as the Director of Food & Beverage. Shahnaaz brings in an experience of over fourteen years in managing several aspects of luxury resort operations to her new position at Fairmont Jaipur.

She has a proven track record of success in overseeing high-volume restaurants as well as handling all aspects of catering

operations, including event detailing, menu creation, and supervision of food preparation.

Commenting on this, Rajiv Kapoor, General Manager, Fairmont Jaipur, said, "We are pleased to welcome Shahnaaz to the Fairmont Jaipur team. With her expertise and deep passion for the industry, we are confident that she will play a crucial role in ensuring the ongoing delivery of exceptional gastronomical experiences for our guests."

With experience of more than a decade in the hospitality industry, she is currently pursuing MBA from IIBM. She has contributed her culinary expertise and leadership abilities to properties like Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru Hotel Convention and Residences, The Leela Palace Chennai, The Westin and Le Meridien Bahrain to name a few. ■



CIABC welcomes Manipur's decision to lift alcohol ban

HBI Staff | Mumbai

The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC), the highest authority in the Indian alcohol industry, has praised the Manipur government's decision to lift the ban on alcohol. It has also urged the Bihar government to lift prohibition in order to strengthen the state's economy, put an end to the illegal trade in sub par alcohol, and prevent tragedies related to hooch.

Vinod Giri, Director General, CIABC, said, "By ending the over three-decade-long prohibition, the Manipur government has taken a positive step forward which would not only earn Rs 600-700 crore as annual tax revenues, but also help tackle the

menace of the sale of illegal liquor and the spread of drugs. It is going to give a major fillip to the state's economic growth."

According to CIABC, the government of Bihar should likewise follow suit and repeal the ban, which has hampered the state's progress and caused numerous fatalities from alcohol-related incidents.

"Bihar is paying a heavy price for the prohibition policy in the form of the proliferation of unlawful and spurious liquor, hooch tragedies, the rise of crime syndicates, and loss of legitimate Government revenues," said Giri. ■



Medusa Beverages launches new variant 'Medusa Air'

HBI Staff | Mumbai

Medusa Beverages has launched its latest variant, Medusa Air. The new product is a blend of imported two-row malted barley and carefully selected hops, resulting in a tantalizing brew with a 4.5 per cent alcohol content. The product will be soon introduced into Delhi's Beer market first and will be followed by Punjab, Chandigarh, Himachal, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Commenting on this, Avneet Singh, Founder and CEO, Medusa Beverages Pvt. Ltd., said, "As the visionary behind Medusa, witnessing the tremendous success of our Premium Strong beer was both humbling and exhilarating. Our patrons' resounding appreciation fuelled our drive to elevate their experience further. Responding to the enthusiastic demand for a milder counterpart, we proudly introduce Medusa Air. This launch is not just about



expanding our offerings; it's a testament to our commitment to listening and responding to the desires of our cherished audience. Medusa Air is the embodiment of their preferences, a testament to the dynamic relationship we share with our consumers. We look forward to delighting our audience once again and sharing the joy of Medusa Air, a brew that mirrors the evolving tastes of our ever-loyal community." ■

Ramada by Wyndham, Yelahanka appoints Dinesh Kesevalu as Resort Manager

HBI Staff | Mumbai

The Ramada By Wyndham, Yelahanka appoints Dinesh Kesevalu as Resort Manager for the hotel.

In his new role Kesevalu will be responsible for overseeing daily operations, ensuring guest satisfaction, managing staff, implementing policies, maximizing profitability, budgeting & marketing Strategies.

Commenting on this, N.R.Mahesh, Owner of the Ramada By Wyndham, Yelahanka, said, "Kesevalu is a talented and experienced hospitality professional and will play a key role in ensuring that the Ramada By Wyndham, Yelahanka continues providing guests with the same high-quality service and exceptional value that it has become known for in the Bengaluru community."

The Ramada By Wyndham Yelahanka, one of the premium resorts with 71 rooms in North Bengaluru, spread over 6 acres and the only quality choice for corporate stay and Banquets, situated along Doddaballapur-Yelahanka Highway near Kempegowda International Airport. It offers guests single, double and suite accommodation options.

The property boasts spacious rooms and a lobby, offering complimentary breakfast at B 64 International Restaurant. Guests can enjoy Alfresco Outdoor Dining, Onyx Open Air Bar serving both Domestic and International beverages, an outdoor pool, and a fitness center. The expansive meeting space accommodates up to 800 Pax, complemented by a Board Room and RYB- 24 Hrs Café Lounge. Additionally, the property features a vast lawn for outdoor events, a mini football ground, a basketball field, a fish pond, and ample parking. ■





‘We currently stand as the largest suppliers of tequila in India’

With the changing consumption patterns in the Indian market, distributor of premium wines and spirits, Monika Alcobev is keen to expand its portfolio. **Kunal Patel, MD, Monika Alcobev Ltd** spoke to **Disha Shah Ghosh** about their products and increasing demand across consumer groups.

Q Tell us about the growth of Monika Alcobev in the past five years.

Sales have grown at an astounding 120% CAGR in the past 5 years, with exceptional growth in tequila, where we currently stand as the largest suppliers in the country. Our portfolio has grown from 2 brands in 2018 to 92 brands in 2023, catering to almost all categories an outlet can demand with #Onlythebest quality from premium to high-end ultra-luxury.

Q Where does India rank as a source market for the consumption of alcohol compared to other countries in Asia?

The Indian alcoholic beverage industry is poised to expand to USD 64 billion in the next five years, driven by rising incomes, urbanisation, increased access, premiumisation, and a younger consumer base, as reported by the International Spirits and Wines Association of India (ISWAI). This sector already contributes 2% to India's nominal GDP and offers employment to over 8 million people across agriculture, food and beverage, retail, and hospitality. In addition to substantial tax contributions, the industry supports farmers' livelihoods. With India's changing demographics, a growing middle class,

and favourable government policies, the prospects for this sector are promising.

In 2021, the Alcobev sector had a market size of USDD 52.4 billion, and it is projected to reach USD 64 billion over the next five years, with an annual growth rate of 6.54% between 2023 and 2027. India is set to become the fifth-largest contributor to global market revenues in the near-medium term, and it currently constitutes 2% of the country's nominal GDP. The liquor sector is a significant source of employment, providing jobs to over 8 million people directly and indirectly, making up 1.5% of the total workforce in the country, with most employment opportunities found in related sectors like agriculture, food and beverages, retail, and hospitality.

Q What is your outreach strategy for the B2B segment in India?

Our approach to B2B outreach in India is focused on establishing long-term relationships with important Alcobev sector professionals. We think it is important to recognise each B2B partner's specific demands. To deliver specialised solutions, our committed account management and sales teams collaborate closely with each customer. To build relationships and keep up with market trends and requests, we regularly engage in industry events. We actively provide our partners with in-depth product information, tastings, and staff training so they are well-versed in the brands we import. Our company takes great pleasure in providing effective logistics and follow-up services to guarantee smooth transactions and satisfied customers. Our goal is to be a trusted and collaborative partner for our B2B clients in India, offering them a competitive edge in the Alcobev industry.

Q With changing consumption patterns of younger travellers in India, which Alcobev segment has the highest potential for growth?

Among younger Indian travellers, Tequila is the Alcobev sector that has the greatest potential for development. The shifting patterns of consumption show a rising need for exclusive and high-end experiences. Tequila is becoming more and more well-liked because of its unique flavour profiles and adaptability in mixed drinks. Younger generations with discriminating preferences find it appealing because of its connection to artisanal manufacturing and skill. Tequila is also the go-to drink for health-conscious youngsters since it has 0% carbs, 0% sugar and fewer calories compared to other categories. Additionally, the growing popularity of mixology and cocktail culture is driving up demand for tequila. Tequila is a promising growth area in the Alcobev market, positioned to catch the imagination of India's younger travellers with its rich legacy and the promise of various, high-quality options.

Q Tell us about your revenue growth in 2022 and plans for expansion by 2025

With a sales growth of 70% YoY in FY2023, we have successfully grown our presence to 18 states which altogether covers more than 90% of the premium spirits (MRP>1,000) market in India. In the next few years, while we have created a good width in our offerings as well as distribution, it is time for us to focus on bringing depth by covering more outlets and bringing our offerings to a greater number of doorsteps. Apart from that, we also have other major plans including factory setup and new product launches. ■

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MISSING BIKI AND ROY

They were different, yet two personalities, however different, hold their own distinct lessons for the future of the hospitality business in India.

Last month the passing away of two stalwarts of the Indian hospitality world was reason enough to take a moment for a brief pause. It's important to reflect and appreciate the opportunities, hard work, and dedication that build dreams in the industry. It is also time to take lessons from the pitfalls and stumbles that line the path of soaring ambitions that might be unregulated.

The Biki Oberoi story illustrates how training and background speed up growth, the Sahara narrative of Roy mirrors ambition and desire that might flounder without fiscal discipline.

Those close to Biki describe him as a fastidious and no-nonsense personality with a vision and who knew exactly what he wanted. Roy, on the other hand, was someone who raised himself from the dusty lanes of a small town. Building a huge organisation from the proverbial scratch does sound stuff of dreams. It almost is. However, there is always a thin line between romanticism and recklessness, and history can be partial and lean on the side of success stories.

From creating a distinct and much-valued niche of high-end properties in an already well-established chain to going ahead and buying off luxury hotels on foreign shores are milestones in themselves. Both stand out for sheer audacity of sorts in varying degrees and different contexts.

Be as it may, what filters through is the lesson that training and discipline are the more relevant parts of any enterprise. The present crop of entrepreneurs and managers in the hotel business understand this very well. However, a certain cynicism and foolhardiness is as significant a factor as any for growth. It needs a brave and adventurous spirit to create something new or blaze an unfurrowed path. These two personalities that influenced the hospitality scene in their unique ways hold out lessons for the future.

That some might balk at and even sound offended by comparisons, but experience gathers its manuals of skills from a variety of sources.

Anurag Yadav
Industry Expert

Anurag Yadav is a travel author and columnist, writing on hospitality and design. An avid traveller, he has published five books and divides his time equally between Delhi and London.

The views expressed in the column are of the author, and may or may not be endorsed by the publication.

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Classical To Digital Avatars | A Transformational Journey

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



Recent discussions last month at the 18th Annual Conference of Mystery Shoppers Professional Association Asia Pacific in Goa, provided the impetus to create this model. Challenges surrounding moving from classical to digital mode remain pressing. Yielding a part of established business activities to effective digital avatars today is obvious. The comfort of having mastered all known elements of a business in classical mode, will only remain an irrefutable insight. Creating tech-hybrid models suitable to market environments, target audiences etc. where they exist - rather than expecting them to materialize in your comfort zone, is now a critical priority. Instantaneous benefits from integrating modern technologies for quick-fixes are debatable. Businesses seek plug and play solutions to sort immediate concerns, while deferring strategic perspectives myopically, obscuring future necessities.

Classical human support systems, brick, mortar spaces and people in attendance, represent the comfort zone. How adequate are these in post-pandemic existence? This opportunity to question status-quo is now palpable. Tech-enabled models are harbingers of doing better and smarter, what we did deliberately in older contexts. Some core activities will always remain effective in classical mode. The debate is on the validity of other activities that immediately need revitalization. Adaptation to IT support systems to enhance processes, brings with it a new set of logjams. While post pandemic survival has driven most businesses into phygital (physical-digital) progression zones, the evolution of active neural networks, poses new urgencies for

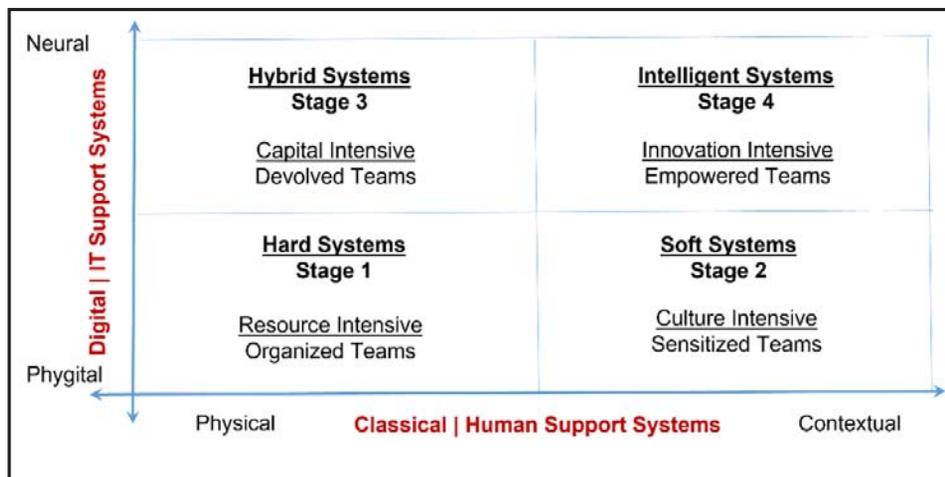
is the first priority. Develop robust platforms supporting integration of tech-enabled systems with renewed people routines. Rebooting is only Stage 1 to prepare for change towards relevance.

2. Soft Systems | Stage 2:

Factoring in post pandemic interplays between warm and cold cultures, as well as emergence of novel, hybrid, high-tech, high-touch practices are observed. The integration of high and low context routines, without geographical barriers, using digital mediums – represents opportunities to innovate. Sensitize people, soft systems and culture to accept, restart and optimally function in alternate realities. Revitalizing people practices, enabling higher efficiencies for effectiveness, needs reconditioned and replaced hard systems.

3. Hybrid Systems | Stage 3: Once businesses achieve flexibility and contextual capability, pre-requisites required will gain strength. This phase requires both strategic but staggered capital investment pipelines to be deployed. Devolution of team routines is factored in, to incubate transition to neural, tech-intelligent solutions, bringing clarity to the cut-over process. Devolved teams create micro-efficiencies, where leadership needs to strongly focus on integrating hard, soft and invested systems, to facilitate alignment with change imperatives.

4. Intelligent Systems | Stage 4: Reaching this stage of evolution with creativity, innovation and spontaneity will require high levels of accountability. Devolution must be reinforced with empowerment. Teams need to function at their best discretion, using ubiquitous technologies to energize processes. Empowered teams can then share their domain expertise to synergize and collectively provide aggregated solutions. This will ensure that duplication is avoided, even as individual business succeed to provide networked advantages for entire communities.



renewal. Patience is required to transition from one avatar to another, until an optimal mode of operation emerges, demanding disciplined commitment.

This model accounts for most addressable variables to form a broad framework. Mutual exclusivity and collective integrity of these four stages, requires re-alignments, based on unique business requirements. Significant moderating variables like culture, economy, geography, markets, people etc. will need tweaking and re-adjustment.

1. Hard Systems | Stage 1: Businesses were developed in resource intensive terms, infusing wealth to build solutions in former contexts. Teams, processes and talents were well- organized to deliver previously expected outcomes. There is a case to re-examine these for results expected now. Restructuring hard systems to support current realities

to digitally relevant models, could demand prolonged timelines, consistency and dedication to change. Proactive, progressive businesses, must initiate change activities concentrically and simultaneously in selective routines. Growth can then be organic, participative and integral to achieving small wins collectively. The most valuable components of digital transformation aside technology, are culture and people. Leaders need to take powerful decisions in this transition process. Ironically, the capability to renew, re-order, re-deploy people and technology for business benefit, must be diligently led by intelligent humans alone! Will we need to activate neural networks as new lifelines, when businesses struggle with hoary organizational variables? ■

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Tokyo tops Asian markets with highest Average Room Rates

HBI Staff | Mumbai

Most gateway markets show a return to standard occupancy growth worldwide. Across key Asian cities, there's been a substantial increase of 108-153% compared to 2022. This surge in demand is the driving force behind the rate hike this year.

Beijing is in the lead at 153%, followed by Shanghai at 139%, Tokyo at 137%, Hong Kong at 124%, Singapore at 113%, Delhi at 111%, and Mumbai at 108%.

TOKYO COMMANDS THE HIGHEST AVERAGE ROOM RATES IN ASIA

The Average Room Rates in Asia experienced a significant rise, climbing from USD 33 in 2022 to USD 173 in 2023. Consequently, the Q3-2023 saw only a slight 1% increase due to the substantial surge earlier in Q1-2023.

Tokyo stands out with the highest average room rate at USD 281 per night, followed by Seoul at USD 277, Singapore at USD 265, and Hong Kong at USD 246.

In India, Bengaluru recorded USD 143, Mumbai USD 148, Delhi USD 135, and Chennai USD 96.

In China, Hong Kong leads with an average of USD 246 per night, Beijing at USD 166, and Shanghai at USD 141.

FCM CONSULTING FORECASTS A 3-8% INCREASE IN AVERAGE HOTEL ROOM RATES

Worldwide hotel occupancy rates have maintained an average of 68% monthly throughout 2023. Corporate Average Room Rates (ARRs) have steadied over the past 6 months, indicating rate stability. Despite this, hotels are planning a 3-8% increase in 2024, driven by escalating operating expenses and investments in sustainability.

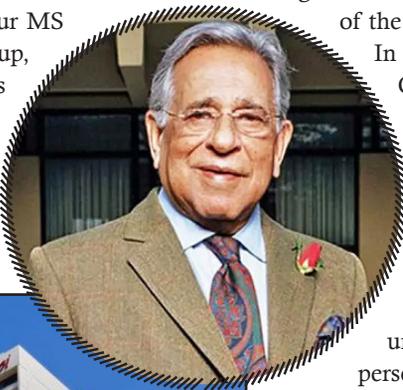
“To counter the increase in prices while managing reduced travel budgets, we have several solutions for our clients such as changing options to stay within budget, consolidating suppliers for leverage, and considering lower ‘star ratings’ expectations without compromising on service and quality, said Bertrand Sallet, Managing Director of FCM Travel Asia. ■



The Indian hospitality sector has suffered a significant loss with the demise of two dynamic, self-motivated, and visionary leaders who not only transformed the landscape of the Indian hospitality industry within the country but also on the global stage. The contributions of PRS Oberoi and Subrata Roy to the industry will endure for generations, leaving behind a historical legacy in the meticulous design of hotels and the pursuit of service excellence. **Hospitality Biz** extends its heartfelt tribute to these legendary figures.

Within the short window of November 14th, the nation mourned the passing of two prominent entrepreneurs, both leaving indelible legacies on the hospitality industry. Prithvi Raj Singh Oberoi, also known as 'Biki' Oberoi, is widely revered as a stalwart in the Indian hotel industry. His steadfast dedication has played a pivotal role in significantly enhancing the global standing of Indian hospitality. Concurrently, Subrata Roy, the driving force behind the Sahara Empire, encountered challenges in his later years, despite an impactful start to his career.

PRS Oberoi, heir to the legacy of Rai Bahadur MS Oberoi, the visionary behind The Oberoi Group, significantly propelled the renowned hotel chain's growth to encompass 32 establishments during his esteemed tenure. He was instrumental in not just expanding The Oberoi Group, but also in shaping the Trident chain of hotels, cementing his stature as a luminary in the industry.



Saluting the Legacy

Tribute to Visionary Icons, PRS Oberoi and Subrata Roy

Carrying forward his father's legacy, PRS Oberoi adeptly steered the hospitality chain through various challenges, fortifying its status as the epitome of opulence. Under his guidance, the Oberoi Empire, originating in 1934, burgeoned into a dominant force within the realm of Indian hospitality.

Born on February 3, 1929, in New Delhi, PRS Oberoi served as the company's Chairman from 1988 until May 2022, when he stepped down due to deteriorating health. His decision marked the end of an era for The Oberoi Group, concluding two generations of Oberoi family leadership.

Under PRS Oberoi's guidance, The Oberoi Group evolved from its inaugural hotel, 'The Trident Chennai,' in 1988, to become one of India's most reputable hotel companies. His contributions were recognised with the Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian honor, in 2008, and the 'Corporate Hotelier of the World' award by HOTELS magazine in 2010.

In reflecting on his lifetime achievements, PRS Oberoi's influence on luxury hotel design and his role in globalising The Oberoi Group have left an indelible mark on the industry. The legacy of this pioneering hospitality icon will be remembered for years to come.

In the 1970s and 1980s, 'Biki' Oberoi became renowned for his unwavering focus on detail and dedication to providing unparalleled comfort. Famously recognised for personally carrying towels and even arranging for chefs in cities where the Oberoi Group didn't yet have hotels, Oberoi's extensive travels granted him a keen understanding of world class-hotels.

One of the stories about his pursuit of perfection goes like this- he would wear an oversized ring on his index finger to gauge the exact gap between the door and its handle. This meticulous examination aimed to ensure that only those handles were in place that could prevent guests wearing elaborate rings from leaving scratches on the doors of the Oberoi chain of luxury hotels.

Paying tribute, Manav Thadani, Founder Chairman, Hotelivate, said, "PRS Oberoi's remarkable legacy is that he was a visionary well before his time. Oberoi Hotels &

Resorts has not only raised the bar for luxury, but has also contributed significantly to India's image as a global tourist destination. Essentially, Oberoi introduced luxury hotels to India and took Indian hospitality global. As the driving force behind the Oberoi Group, his visionary leadership has shaped the landscape of hospitality, setting new standards for excellence. Under his guidance, the Oberoi brand became synonymous with impeccable service, attention to detail, and a commitment to creating extraordinary guest experiences. We had the privilege of celebrating him and bestowing upon him the HICSA Lifetime Achievement award in 2008."

Thadani said that PRS Oberoi's eye for detail was unmatched as was his memory. Recounting an incident, Thadani said, "I realised this quite early on, during the pre-opening of the Raj Vilas, Jaipur when I was invited as his guest to stay. During the morning rounds, Mr Oberoi pointed out to everyone, including the young new GM, his son Vikram Oberoi, that the colour of the inside part of a canopy did not match the exact shade of the other canopies' colours. Sure enough, he was absolutely correct; he had identified from a distance of 100 metres what the rest of us could see only when we went under the canopy. During the same visit, I gave him feedback on the bathroom shower; that it made a gurgling sound when the tap was turned on. It amazed me when Mr. Oberoi brought up this long-forgotten detail almost 20 years later, during a conversation we had not long ago, explaining to me how he had resolved the problem."

"I remember him as one of the finest gentlemen I have had the privilege of getting to know. He also gave us our first few assignments at HVS India in consulting and executive search. Engaging in discussions about new opportunities with him was always enlightening; each meeting left you enriched in thought and knowledge. Mr. Oberoi's memories will be cherished by one and all for those who interacted with him. He was a mentor to so many and, as someone mentioned, a professional father to many more. We will miss him. May his soul rest in eternal peace," said Thadani.

Expressing his deep sorrow and sadness, Puneet Chhatwal, President, HAI and MD & CEO, IHCL said, "Oberoi - A legend, an icon and one of the greatest that Hospitality sector has seen. He will always be remembered by Indian businesses in general and global hospitality in particular."

"We are saddened by the passing of PRS Oberoi, a visionary leader who left an indelible mark on the hospitality industry. Having worked with him on few projects, I was able to witness his passion for work, creativity, focused approach, and dedication to do better every time. We are extremely grateful for all his contributions and believe that the legacy he has left behind will inspire each one of us to reach greater heights," said K B Kachru, Chairman Emeritus and Principal Advisor, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group and Vice President HAI.

Speaking on the void created by his passing away, MP Bezbaruah, Secretary General, HAI, said, "Oberoi was a visionary who transformed the Indian hospitality industry. He was the pioneering founding member of HAI and piloted it through the formative years. HAI was proud to have his guidance.



One of HAI's most significant milestones is Mr. Oberoi's Letter to the Hon'ble Prime Minister in July 2019 seeking 7 key reforms to energise tourism and hospitality sector as a growth engine for achieving USD 5 trillion economy envisaged for India, which were also reflected in the Economic Survey presented in July 2019 and the Union Budget 2019-2020."

Priya Paul, Chairperson, Apeejay Surrendra Park

Hotels Ltd., another founding member of HAI said, "

Truly a giant of our industry and such a wonderful man! May God bless his soul. I have such beautiful memories of him from the HAI foundation years."

On the other hand, Subrata Roy's life epitomises a genuine 'rags to riches' narrative, depicting the journey of a person who ascended from modest origins to lead a conglomerate of chit-fund companies that held sway over the non-banking financial sector in the country for nearly three decades. Roy went on to expand his business across various sectors ranging from finance, housing, hospitality, aviation and the media and became a household name.

Roy also showcased remarkable entrepreneurial acumen, extending his prowess beyond the financial sector into hospitality. His foray into this realm demonstrated a strategic vision that emphasised luxury and customer-centric experiences. His enterprise went on to own landmark global properties, including New York's Plaza Hotel and London's iconic Grosvenor House.

Take the example of Sahara Star Hotel in Mumbai, the hotel stands out due to its remarkable architecture, resembling a luxurious and contemporary design. Its distinctive glass facade and impressive structure have set new standards for hotel architecture in the country. Roy's attention to detail is also evident in Sahara Star's luxurious accommodations, diverse dining options, and overall guest experience.

Comparatively, PRS Oberoi's contributions in hospitality revolve around expanding an established legacy, setting high standards, and furthering innovation in luxury. Roy, while renowned primarily for financial services, entered the hospitality sector with a focus on innovation and luxury experiences, marking his foray with distinct strategies and investments. Both have left imprints on the hospitality sector, but with different emphasis and approaches based on their backgrounds and strengths. ■



Butlers' earnings hinge on diverse factors, including their experience, location, specialization, and the households they serve. This article not only explores income but also sheds light on various butler training schools worldwide and their respective course fees.

A Butler's Guide: Blueprint to Thrive in Hospitality

By Prem Anand

It is important to note that these are just averages, and the actual earnings of a butler can vary greatly. For example, a highly experienced butler working for a wealthy family may earn much more than the average household butler.

Additionally, butlers who work in high-cost areas, such as New York City or London, tend to earn more than those who work in lower-cost regions.

Here are some factors that can affect the earnings of a butler

Experience: More experienced butlers typically earn more than those with less experience.

Location: Butlers who work in high-cost areas tend to earn more than those who work in lower-cost areas.

Type of butler: Some types, such as corporate butlers, earn more than others.

Employer: Butlers who work for wealthy individuals or families tend to earn more than those who work for hotels, cruise lines, or other businesses. Among employers, they are more generous than

The average earnings of a butler can vary depending on the type of butler, the location, and the experience level. Here is a breakdown of the average earnings of different types of butlers:

Type of butler	Average earnings
Household butler	\$50,000-\$75,000 per year
Hotel butler	\$40,000-\$60,000 per year
Cruise butler	\$2,500-\$4,000 per month plus tips
Embassy butler	\$50,000-\$75,000 per year
Corporate butler	\$40,000-\$60,000 per year

others.

Tips: Butlers who work in hotels and cruise ships typically receive tips from their guests, which can significantly increase their earnings.

Ways to increase earning

Get experience: The more experience you have, the more valuable you will be to potential employers.

List of the course fees of various butler schools around the world as of September 23, 2023:

School	Location	Course Fee
The International Butler Academy	Maastricht, Netherlands	€15,500 (10-week program)
The British Butler Institute	London, UK	£11,500 (4-week program)
The American Butler Academy	Los Angeles, USA	\$19,995 (10-week program)
The Singapore Butler Institute	Singapore	SGD22,000 (10-week program)
The Australian Butler Academy	Melbourne, Australia	AUD30,000 (10-week program)

Please note that these are just base prices and may vary depending on the specific course and any additional fees that may apply. Contacting the school directly to get an accurate quote is always best.

Get certified: There are several butler certification programs available, which can make you more competitive in the job market.

Network: Get to know other butlers and industry professionals. Networking can help you learn about job opportunities and get your foot in the door.

Be professional: Be reliable, punctual, and courteous. Provide excellent customer service and go the extra mile for your employers and guests.

With hard work and dedication, you can build a successful career as a butler and earn a good living and a high-quality lifestyle.

Niche down - become a speciality in something- either in maintaining a wardrobe, knowledge diets or learning about different cultures based on your interest. If it is Hotels, it may be in pre-opening or knowing the guest history and their habits.

Learn deeply about things that are interesting to your employers. One of my employers was into horses, and I never knew anything about them. When I joined them, in six months, I started recognising the various breeds and their habits, etc.

The average salary of a butler in India

The salary range for butlers in India is between ₹3.6 lakhs and ₹10.8 lakhs per year.

Some Butlers earn 24 lakhs or over/ year.

Salary of a butler in India vary depending on several factors

Experience: Butlers with more experience typically earn more than those with less experience.

Location: Butlers working in major cities, such as Mumbai and Delhi, earn more than those working in smaller cities or towns.

Type of employer: Butlers who work for wealthy individuals or

families tend to earn more than those who work for hotels or other businesses: the employer profile and their values.

Tips: Butlers who work in hotels typically receive tips from their guests, which can significantly increase their earnings.

How to increase earning?

Get experience: The more experience you have, the more valuable you will be to potential employers.

Get certified: There are several butler certification programs available, which can make you more competitive in the job market.

Network: Get to know other butlers and industry professionals. Networking can help you learn about job opportunities and get your foot in the door.

Be professional: Be reliable, punctual, and courteous. Be proactive, ahead of the game, and go the extra mile for your employers and guests.

Why are the Butler School so expensive?

Small class sizes: Butler schools typically have petite classes, allowing personalised instruction and attention to detail. This is important because butlers need to be able to provide a high level of service to their employers and guests. Butler's service concerns grace, thoughtfulness, mind development, and an eye for detail.

Comprehensive curriculum: Butler schools offer a comprehensive curriculum that covers all aspects of being a butler, from etiquette and protocol to household management and security. This ensures that students are well-prepared for a successful career as a butler.

Hands-on training: Butler schools typically offer hands-on training so students can practice their learning. This is important because Butlers need to be able to perform their duties confidently and efficiently.

In addition to these factors, butler schools are expensive because they are a niche industry. Few butler schools are worldwide, typically attracting students from all over the globe. This means that they can charge a premium for their services. Also, the fact that someone attends a Butler school will put the students in a position to earn much more.

(In our next edition we will discuss ways to select Butlers' school) ■



Prem Anand, a renowned figure in hospitality, is acclaimed for his exceptional butler skills. His reputation comes from impeccable service, acute attention to detail, and deep understanding of hospitality. Spanning prestigious establishments with high-profile clients, Anand is celebrated for discretion, professionalism, and anticipating guest needs. He founded The London Butler Academy (R), empowering individuals and hospitality professionals to excel in their careers.

‘You have to create your own army, not borrow someone else’s’

Having pioneered South Indian food under the Kamats brand, **Dr. Vikram Kamat, Chairman and Founder of VITS Kamat group** talks to **Sumit Jha** about the growth and future plans for the Group, with growing number of hotels under the VITS Hotels brand and the Kamats Legacy.



Q In a short span of time, Kamats Legacy has created a niche for itself. What initiated this project? What makes this project unique and special?

Being the leaders in authentic South Indian food under our brands, we realised that there was so much more to offer in this cuisine that we were unable to do with our well-recognised brand, Kamats. And hence, we realised the need for a premium, authentic brand focused on pure vegetarian Indian food from five states.

Q Tell us about the future plans for the Kamats Legacy.

We are already growing with numerous outlets. Already using a network of hotels where Kamats are there, like Dwarka, Somnath, Surat, Silvassa, etc., where up-market Kamats have been there since before Legacy. We introduced those menus to the NFC and got amazing responses. Of course, being older outlets, we could not manage the full dining experience, but we will be planning that as well. Brand new legacies

are coming across Mumbai and Pune in the next 8 to 12 months.

Q What is the model right now - self-operated or franchise? How would this legacy go forward, and to which places in India? Are there plans to go international?

Presently, all these outlets are company-owned and operated. As the pioneers of franchising, we have already made the module for franchising, which we are using for some markets, especially international markets, where we have received tremendous responses. We are also looking at some sort of joint venture model for the USA, Canada, etc.

Q Given your inclination towards authenticity, tell us about the unique packaging that you have introduced.

We already spend a substantial amount on research and development with our own RND team, where we have come up with numerous manpower-saving and design improvements techniques to make South Indian food faster and easier with less skilled manpower. Similarly, in order to crack the delivery problems associated with South Indian, despite South Indian being one of the top items for eating at home, logistics and food not reaching in pristine condition were the major challenges that we solved with our design innovations like the Dosa box.

Q How has the hospitality business been for your organization? Tell us about the group in numbers.

Across the group, we have over 35 standalone restaurants.

21 hotels are operational, and 9 are yet to open.

Over 1200 rooms

And 2500 covers

Total employees across the chain: over 3000

How have you managed to keep your manpower requirements under control?

Q Is there a need for specialised institutions to ensure a quality workforce? What steps have you taken in this direction?

People keep complaining admi nahin milta, admi nahin milta. You have to create your own army, not borrow someone else's. Manpower is a critical function for our industry and our business in particular. What we have done is change our systems and processes so that we can make ordinary people extraordinary through small, simple trainings that add the X factor to them. We have also made our own skill academy, which is the KHAS-Kamats Hospitality Academy of Skill, which has India's only earn-and-learn program for hospitality, where you can complete your 12th or graduation while earning 7,000 and 16,000 per month, respectively. Then the students get the benefit of being able to join our management in any program and build careers from there.

What are the future plans for your hotel operations? What are the growth areas?

Hotels continue to grow for us, both in management and in lease functions. We continue to add at least six hotels per year, which we should increase in the coming years.

Q Kamats is a brand that has seen tremendous growth and is one of the most reliable names for those on the roads. How have you seen the brand evolve, and what is in store for the future?

Yes, as they say, changes are the only constant, and with time you would have seen it change in the Carmas Interiors service formats and, to some extent, additional products and services, but what has not changed at all is what Kama stands for, which is hot, healthy, and hygienic food that can be eaten for a healthy lifestyle.

Q Over the last couple of years, there has been unprecedented growth in the hospitality business and also in the number of hotels that are opening up or planned to be opened. Where do you see the Indian hospitality industry in the next 10 years? What must the industry and its players be cautious about?

The hotel industry will continue to grow because the market is so underserved, and the main challenges that will remain in India are the cost of capital and money. Of course, overregulation and compliance are subject to hotels and restaurants as a whole. ■

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Butlers, how do they decide where they want to work?

By Prem Anand

Butlers are one of the oldest professions on this earth. Butlers are derived from the French word “Bouteiller”, meaning someone who cares for the Bottles. Those days, Butlers fined and bottled the wines in the cellar and brought them to the dining room in the evenings. The first mention of the butlers was made in the eleventh century. Over the time, Butler’s responsibility expanded, and they became the head of the household.

Butlers in Hotels look after the guests who occupy the top-range penthouses and suites, resorts, Private yachts, cruise ships, private banks and corporate offices, embassies and consulates.

The philosophy of a butler is centred around the idea of selfless serving, professionalism, and discretion. A butler is responsible for managing

the household and attending to the needs of their employers and guests with the utmost attention to detail, courtesy, and respect.

In this first article, I will talk about one thing every seasoned Butler wants to know before he takes up work.

Is it a formal traditional household, informal, or “Nouveau Riche” household?

Experienced Butlers who work in Hotels and resorts can also relate to their experiences facing the guests.

Why do they want to establish if the household suits their personality?

One is not better than the other; it is just the difference in lifestyle of the employer or guests of the hotel. They have different demands. Hence, if a butler prefers a formal household, they might only last for a while in an informal household.

Elegance vs Excess

The traditional households prioritise elegance, simplicity, and understated luxury. The new rich often embrace luxury, which is often opulent and extravagant.

Formality vs Informality

A traditional household’s etiquette and social norms are generally fixed and communicated to the household staff, and there are few surprises. Everything is scheduled well ahead, including the visitors’ guest’s visits, except the family might give short notice on rare occasions.

In informal households, anybody could come and go to tea ceremonies or casual gatherings, and butlers are expected to adapt to these shifts.

Customary vs Trendy

Butlers in traditional households may stick to time-honoured traditions. For example, there are fixed times for meals on selected days the principals might dine out, while butlers serving the new rich could be updated through a text message just an hour before or less, and the chef might have to assemble things.

Respect for Hierarchy vs Personal Freedom: Serving Different Masters

Traditional butlers navigate the hierarchical structure of conventional households.

Or the more independent and self-made new wealthy individuals. They might have to navigate the emotional or relational priorities based on the family dynamics.

The Art of Discretion: Secrets and Privacy

Generally, Butlers in traditional households are often entrusted with family secrets and their challenges in maintaining privacy. Some celebrities and the younger rich will have the butlers sign a non-disclosure but might have it all in the media or social media.

A Butler’s Toolkit: Adapting to Changing Expectations

An excellent organisational, forward-thinking mind and knowledge of protocol and etiquette are some of the essential requirements to work in the traditional household.

Keeping calm, constantly prioritising, having the resilience to chase things, and dealing with various temperaments are some things to deal with in the informal environment.

Balancing Formal and Informal: A Butler’s Dilemma

Most butlers are emotionally intelligent, so they know what sort of client will suit them; hence, they want to see the kind of household and the employers they are taking up work.

The Role of Education: Training Butlers for the 21st Century

Butler training programs have evolved to meet the changing demands of clients. Teaching modern technology and how it is used in organising and administrating the

household.

In recent years, due to the increasing demand for Butlers, household recruitment agencies in London, Vienna, Paris, and cities in the United States have started offering Butler courses and house manager courses.

Community for Butlers in India to be launched

In January 2024, Prem Anand, an Indian-born British Butler with 18 years of experience in the UK, will launch a Community for Butlers in India. This community offers education, networking, accountability partners and an update on the job trends.

The education is a mentorship model full curriculum House Manager / Butler program—Serving hearts from hospitality will be chosen based on their sincerity of attitude toward serving. This is a unique Butler program. Has personal development and educates the pupils on handling their money and committed to being a partner in the pupil’s well-being.

The founder, Anand, has served Royalty, Prime ministers, and well-known families worldwide as Head Butler, House manager, and estate manager. Prem has a diploma in hospitality and catering from Glasgow, Professional butler training from the Netherlands and various academic accolades

Mission: Through The London Butler Academy, Prem aims to make the Butler training and education affordable and accessible to all.

Vision: To be the community where pupils can transform their lives by having the clarity to thrive. To be a top destination for employers to find leaders with values and integrity.

As India is his country of birth, Anand chose to launch and run the course in India for the first year before he took it to other parts of the world.

The Butler schools around the world charge from 6000\$- 30,000\$ for the in-house courses lasting anywhere between 2 to 12 weeks. The London Butler Academy® introductory course costs Rs 4991, and the 3-month program costs 49,991. The London Butler Academy® is a trademark of Aubrei Elite GmbH Switzerland.

Further information is available at www.butlercoachprem.com.

Linked in www.linkedin.com/in/butlerprem.

(In this series, you can explore various aspects of butler service, etiquette, and hospitality, providing readers with valuable tips, behind-the-scenes stories, and expert advice from a seasoned butler coach.) ■



Indian Culinary Forum: Leads the Charge in Sustainable Practices, Addresses Food Waste, and Explores the Dynamic Role of Chefs

The 11th Indian Culinary Forum (ICF) Knowledge Summit Offers a Platform for Industry Leaders, Emerging Chefs, and Hospitality Students to Engage in Discussions on Crucial Global Culinary Issues.

HBI Staff | Mumbai

The 11th Knowledge Summit was organised by the Indian Culinary Forum (ICF) on the occasion of India's biggest culinary awards, the 20th Annual Chef Awards. The celebrations were part of International Chefs Day held at The Ashok, New Delhi. This momentous summit brought together renowned luminaries and experts from the hospitality industry, to delve into the pressing issue of tackling global hunger through innovative culinary solutions.

With the overarching theme of "Culinary Professionals Tackling Global Hunger," the summit aimed to tackle critical concerns such as sustainable food practices, food waste reduction, and the evolving role and compensation of chefs in the culinary business. Ajay K. Bakaya, Managing Director of Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest for this day-long event. The 11th



Knowledge Summit also brought together established industry leaders, aspiring young chefs, and students from catering

and hotel management institutes.

Chef Davinder Kumar, President of the Indian Culinary Forum, expressed his enthusiasm for this year's summit, saying, "The 11th Knowledge Summit has once again provided a platform for culinary professionals to come together and discuss vital global issues. We believe that chefs can play a significant role in addressing global hunger and promoting responsible food consumption. By making informed food choices, sourcing food responsibly, and educating consumers, chefs can help to create a sustainable food system for the future consumers."

Adding his views, Chef Vivek Sagar, General Secretary of Indian Culinary Forum said, "The 11th Knowledge Summit marks a significant milestone in our relentless pursuit of combating global hunger through culinary ingenuity. Chefs, as culinary visionaries, bear a profound responsibility to champion sustainable food practices, spearhead the reduction of



food waste, and drive transformative changes in our industry. This summit serves as a powerful platform to unite our culinary community and pave the way for a more responsible and nourishing world, one delicious meal at a time.”

The summit featured three engaging panels, each addressing a different facet of the culinary world’s responsibilities in combating global hunger. The first session, ‘Sustainable Food Consumption: A Recipe for Combating Global Hunger,’ was moderated by Dr Nitin Nagrale, CEO of Quality NZ and Founder of the Hospitality Purchasing Managers Forum. Distinguished industry veterans, including Diwan Gautam Anand, A D Singh, Naveen Dhingra, and Jai Kumar Bhasin, served as speakers during this engaging discussion, highlighting the importance of sustainable food practices in addressing global hunger.

The second session, titled ‘Zero Waste Kitchens: Reinventing Menus, Procurement, and Guest Education,’ was moderated by Mamta Bist, Senior Faculty at IHM Pusa. This panel explored innovative approaches to reducing food waste in kitchens and the significance of educating guests about responsible consumption. Esteemed experts including Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi, Chef Sanjeeb Ghatak, Chef Vinod Bhati and Jinraj Adyanthaya shared their insights into creating eco-friendly culinary experiences.

The final session, ‘Evolving Chefs: An Asset to the Food Business? Decoding Their Role and Compensation’ was moderated by Deepak Behl, former Police Officer and Founder & CEO of Astra Protection Group & Astra Training Academy, included influential figures such as V S Datta, Chef Rajeev Janveja, Chef Gaurav Wadhwa, and Aagman Baur. This panel examined the evolving role of chefs in the food business and their compensation structures. It explored how chefs contribute as valuable assets in shaping the industry’s future. The Knowledge Summit was curated by Dr Chef Prem Ram, Joint Secretary Indian Culinary Forum. ■



ICF's 20th Annual Chef Awards Honoured Exceptional Culinary Artists

HBI Staff | Mumbai

The 20th Annual Chef Awards, organized by the Indian Culinary Forum (ICF), a prominent and oldest association of professional chefs in India, celebrated exceptional culinary talent as part of the International Chefs Day festivities. This grand event took place at Hotel Ashok in New Delhi, bringing together renowned master chefs and seasoned experts from the hospitality industry. The distinguished award recipients were honoured by the chief guest, Priya Paul, Chairperson of Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels.

The ICF's Annual Chef Awards serve as a tribute to culinary artists and their invaluable contributions to the hospitality sector. These awards serve as a driving force for elevating the recognition of Indian cuisine on the global stage and as an inspiration for chefs to aim for greater excellence.



Winners of Chef Awards-2023

Chef Davinder Kumar, President of the Indian Culinary Forum, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, stating, "Today, we are commemorating 20 years of the Chef Awards in India. These awards have provided a platform to recognize and applaud the incredible chefs in our country. We are genuinely delighted to offer these talented chefs an opportunity to shine and enhance their passion for cooking. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone in the food industry, including the judges and our partners, for supporting us throughout these years. Our mission is to continue inspiring chefs for many more years to come. These awards go beyond mere praise for chefs; they are about nurturing their growth and enhancing Indian cuisine's worldwide appeal."

The ceremony featured 18 culinary artists and four individuals who received special Presidium awards in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the hospitality industry. The top 7 Chef awards were exclusively for senior chefs through nomination and were selected by the grand jury members. Meanwhile, 11 MasterChef awards were determined through an intense four-day culinary competition involving over 150 chefs from various regions of India. These competitions were conducted at the Academy of Pastry and Culinary Arts in Gurugram and the Banarsidas Chandiwala Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology in Delhi. A distinguished panel of WACS-certified jury members from all over India evaluated the competitions. Renowned Chef Vijaya Baskaran chaired this year's competitions, with Chef Rajeev Chopra serving as the organizing secretary.

Chef Vivek Saggar, General Secretary of the Indian Culinary Forum, said, "Over the past two decades, hosting the Annual Chef Awards has been an incredible journey. Our aim is to showcase Indian culinary art globally, honour our chefs, and inspire young talents to join us. We hope these awards will continue to inspire chefs across the country. The ICF's mission is to nurture new talent with the latest culinary skills and share Indian cuisine worldwide. Our vision is to ignite careers and spread Indian flavours globally."

Chef Vinod Bhati, the Treasurer of the Indian Culinary Forum, extended his profound gratitude, saying, "We extend our heartfelt thanks to Maggi Professional, our title partner, for their pivotal role in ensuring the success of this magnificent ceremony. We also extend special appreciation to our valued associate partners." ■

List of winners in various categories for the 20th Annual Chef Awards

Title	Name
Life Time Achievement Award	Chef Shaju Zacharia
Golden Hat Awards	Chef Rajiv Malhotra
Silver Hat Awards	Chef Vaibhav Bhargava
Pastry Chef Of The Year (Academic)	Chef Balendra
Lady Chef Of The Year (Academic)	Chef Divya Bose
Anil Bhandari Memorial Chef Of The Year	Arshi Naeem
Master Chef International Cuisine	Chef Shubham Bisht
Master Chef Oriental Cuisine	Chef Karan Thapa
Master Chef North Indian Cuisine	Chef Kundan Singh Negi
Master Chef East/West/South Indian Cuisine	Chef Satyaveer Singh
Master Chef Kabab	Chef Govind Malhotra
Master Chef Indian Sweets	Chef Bablu Santra
Master Chef Baker	Chef Anish Khan
Master Chef Butcher	Chef Amir Qureshi
Master Chef International Confectionery	Heman Aswal
Mast Chef Fruit & Vegetable Carving	Carving Karthick
Student Chef Of The Year (Lady)	Disha Saluja
Student Chef Of The Year (Male)	Harsh Budhiraja

Recognition for Outstanding Contribution in

Title	Name
Hospitality Journalism	P. Krishna Kumar
Food Service Entrepreneurship	Punit Sikand
Hospitality Skill Competitions	Chef Vivek Saggar
Hospitality & Culinary Arts	Chef Rajiv Chopra

'Our primary focus lies in hosting weddings and MICE events'

With focus on Tea Tourism, MAYFAIR Tea Resort Siliguri welcomes leisure and wedding guests alike. **Sunil Panda, Resort Manager, MAYFAIR Tea Resort, Siliguri** spoke to **Disha Shah Ghosh** about their accommodation options, F&B offerings and meetings space.



Q How old is your property? Tell us about its accommodation and F&B facilities.

Year 2020 witnessed the grand inauguration of MAYFAIR Tea Resort, a beacon of luxury nestled amidst the lush tea gardens of Siliguri. The resort proudly wears the crown of India's First Tea Tourism Resort. Its heritage charm beckons travellers with 154 well-appointed rooms spanning nine unique categories. Among the myriad offerings are five delectable restaurants, eight spacious banquet halls, a rejuvenating wellness center, a sparkling swimming pool, a cozy movie theatre, and a plethora of modern amenities. It is a retreat that promises an unparalleled experience for both leisure and business travellers.

ACCOMMODATION

At MAYFAIR Tea Resort, we invite you to explore a variety of accommodations that cater to different preferences. The Jungle View Rooms offer serene vistas of Tea

Gardens and the Sukna Forest, while the Mountain View Rooms in the attic provide a panoramic backdrop of Tea Gardens against lush forests.

For those seeking classic charm with modern comfort, the Heritage Rooms evoke the nostalgia of the "Raj Era." The Sukna Suites pay tribute to the charming town of Sukna, offering well-appointed bedrooms and luxurious living areas.

From the Manager's Suites to the Colonial Suites, each accommodation promises a unique and memorable stay amidst Siliguri's enchanting landscapes.

F&B FACILITIES

MAYFAIR Tea Resort introduces a gastronomic voyage with five distinct dining options. The Tea Pot, a central hub, serves an array of global cuisines through lavish buffets and live cooking. For a unique alfresco experience, Bayleaf is cocooned within the New Chumta Tea Garden, where mouthwatering dishes await amid the fragrance of bay leaf trees. The Vintage Bar exudes an air of sophistication, while the Planter's Club is a tea lover's paradise. By the poolside, the Pool Bar boasts premium spirits and finger foods. These dining destinations promise more than just meals; they promise memorable experiences during your stay.

Q Which segment of travelers are your key areas of focus?

Our primary focus lies in hosting weddings and MICE events, a distinction that sets us apart. We also extend a warm welcome to leisure tourists and weekenders from the scenic surroundings of Siliguri.

Q What is your outreach strategy for the travel trade and consumers pan India?

Our reach extends across India through our network of hotels, sales offices, and GSA's. However, our engagement goes beyond mere presence. We leverage the power of

social media, where we share the essence of our hospitality and experiences. But what truly sets us apart is the impactful word-of-mouth recommendations from our delighted guests and groups who have immersed themselves in the world of Mayfair. Their authentic testimonials speak volumes about our commitment to delivering exceptional experiences, making us a trusted choice for travelers across the nation.

Q The North East has become an aspirational destination for travellers due to its sheer natural beauty. What does Mayfair Siliguri bring to the hospitality industry of West Bengal?

Mayfair Tea Resort offers more than a typical stay; it's an enriching experience celebrating the sheer natural beauty of the North East. As the region becomes an aspirational destination, we take pride in promoting tea tourism, allowing our guests to not just observe but be a part of the tea culture. With daily in-house tea tasting sessions, enlightening screenings of the Tea Story movie, and even the chance to pluck tea leaves, we provide a unique journey into the history and flavors of tea. Mayfair Siliguri isn't just a destination; it's an opportunity to connect with the beauty and heritage of the North East in an unforgettable way.

Q Which are the major ancillary revenue streams that you have witnessed significantly contributing to your balance sheet?

Our revenue landscape extends beyond traditional accommodations and dining. Notably, weddings, MICE events, and spa services have become significant contributors to our financial health. These diversified income streams strengthen our balance sheet while enriching the guest experience.

Q What are your biggest challenges? How do you plan to overcome them?

Our path is marked by distinctive challenges, primarily driven by the seasonal dynamics of this region, closely tied to the ebb and flow of hill station tourists. Despite this, we've skillfully transformed Mayfair Tea Resort into a versatile destination, catering not only to transit travellers but also establishing a reputation as a wedding and leisure hotspot. The promotion of tea tourism has been instrumental in addressing these challenges. In the face of adversity, we've found inventive solutions, ensuring our guests enjoy a year-round, fulfilling experience. ■

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ProWine Mumbai welcomes 5,059 attendees from 24 countries

HBI Staff | Mumbai

ProWine Mumbai wrapped up its third edition, held at the Jio World Convention Centre on November 24 and 25. ProWine Mumbai is a part of the globally iconic ProWein World, and is jointly organised by Messe Düsseldorf India and All Things Nice.

The event kick-started with the popping of Champagne Laurent Perrier and a ribbon-cutting ceremony, attended by the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, City of Düsseldorf Christian Zaum and his delegation, Nick Champion MP, Minister for Trade & Investment, South Australia. In addition, significant dignitaries present included Consul Generals and Trade Investment Commissioners from Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Peru, Portugal, South Africa, Turkey, and the United States.



wine and spirits industry. The exhibitors at ProWine Mumbai 2023 unanimously emphasised that they were impressed by the scale and quality of the event that provided a comprehensive professional platform for the wine and spirits sector and were overwhelmed by the high-quality footfalls and good business interactions.

“ProWine Mumbai 2023 has been essential for us to get a good sense about the Indian market and to establish contacts with potential distribution partners” said Arno Schmid-Egger, Managing Director - Perola GmbH.

ProWine Mumbai 2023 featured 164 companies showcasing over 1,000 brands across 21 countries and 5,059 attendees from 24 countries across a gross 5,000 sqm of exhibition space. The range of exhibitors and countries represented on the show floor reflected India’s strong appeal to the global wines and spirits industry, including its key role as a gateway to do business in the region as seen by the growing participation of even lesser-known wine and spirits producing countries.

Participating countries included Argentina, Australia, Austria, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Northern Ireland, Peru, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain and United States. The French Pavilion led by Business France as well as country pavilions from Argentina, Australia, Chile, Italy, Northern Ireland, Portugal and United States brought in their country wine makers to network with visitors throughout the day. In the Spirits section, visitors were able to taste and meet producers of gin, vodka, single malts, rum, tequila and mezcal.



ON POINT TARGET

It showed evidently that the interests of the market players are at the forefront of ProWine Mumbai. Trade visitors from relevant sectors ranging from large hoteliers, prominent restaurateurs and bar owners, importers, distributors, retailers, sommeliers, chefs, food & beverage teams and consumers were seen networking on the floor. Exhibitors expressed that they had the ideal opportunity to find the perfect buyer for their own portfolio, cementing the show’s efforts and making it the largest platform in India for the



Thomas Schlitt, Managing Director of Messe Düsseldorf Indi, said, “I am thrilled that ProWine Mumbai has created a comprehensive platform for the AlcoBev industry in just 3 years of its launch. The 2023 edition brought in more international flavour as well as diversity from Indian wine and spirits industry. The visitors enjoyed a diverse showcase of wines, spirits, craft beverages as well as learned about their taste, flavour, making procedure and more from experts at the Masterclasses. The show also gave recognition and a platform to talented bartenders and spirit brands through the newly launched ProWine Bartenders’ Competition and ProWine Spirits Challenge. The success of the show is reflected in the enthusiasm of the satisfied attendees who are already looking forward to the next edition of ProWine Mumbai.”

“Year on year, ProWine Mumbai exceeds our expectations. We are immensely proud of putting together this platform and humbled by the support of various governments and trade bodies and the eagerness to showcase their brands from importers and producers. We strongly believe that this is India’s moment and we look forward to organising elevated editions of ProWine Mumbai in the future. The goal has always been to promote wine, spirits and craft beverage businesses and help new brands enter the Indian market. This year, I’m particularly proud of the ProWine Bartenders’ Competition and the spotlight that it throws on bartenders who are an integral part of the beverage industry”, said Nikhil Agarwal, Founder – All Things Nice, and Co-organiser of ProWine Mumbai.

MORE THAN A TRADE SHOW

The **Masterclasses** that took place over the two days of ProWine Mumbai - alongside the exhibition - were well executed through interested tasting sessions and discussions led by industry experts. The sessions were well attended by visitors with a keen interest to



learn in-depth about wines and spirits.

The highlight for visitors seemed to be **The ProWine Spirits Challenge and The ProWine Bartenders’ Competition**. The blind-tasting and detailed scoring of spirits ranging from Whiskey, Vodka, Rum, Gin, Tequila and Liqueur led to an interesting revelation to the brands participating of what consumers actually like and look out for when making a purchase.

The ProWine Bartenders’ Competition presented a platform for talented bartenders in the country to showcase their skills.

THE CRAFTSMEN DISCUSSION

Trade visitors witnessed a vibrant and insightful panel discussion on ‘The future of international craft spirits in India and taking Indian craft spirits globally’. The panellists included Keshav Prakash - The Vault, Angad Gandhi - Glenfiddich, Shatbhi Basu - Bar & Beverage Consultant, Prithvi Matai – Aspri Spirits, Rakshay Dhariwal - Maya Pistola Agavepura, Bharat Bhagnani - Living Root Distilling

Company, Malay Rout – Wine & Spirits Club of India, Michael Hussey - Bord Bia and Rahul Mehra - Third Eye Distillery.

The **ProWine Mumbai Night** took place in the très élégant Lotus Ballroom and was a major networking event bringing together luminaries of the wine and spirits industry, leaders of hospitality, eminent media persons, and key exhibitors from across the world under one roof, making this the most prominent wine and spirit event of the year.

The **India Wine Awards** (the country’s most prestigious competition that sets the benchmark in excellence by rewarding the best wines, both domestic and international, available in the Indian market) was featured during the ProWine Mumbai Night and was put together by the Sonal Holland Wine Academy. The list of winners of the India Wine Awards can be found at www.indiawineawards.com. ■



Boosting a Convention Centre's Brand Requires Strategic Execution of Key Initiatives

By **Varun Mehrotra**, Director, Sales and Marketing, Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield and Convention Centre



HOLISTIC AUDIENCE-CENTRIC APPROACH

A foundational pillar of success involves embracing a comprehensive Audience-Centric Strategy. Initiate the journey by conducting exhaustive market research to unravel the intricacies of your target audience's demographics and preferences. This knowledge serves as the bedrock for a meticulous customisation of messaging, marketing initiatives, and guest experiences. The strategy revolves around tailoring every aspect to seamlessly align with the distinct needs of the audience. This bespoke approach transcends momentary attention, aiming to leave a lasting and profound impression. Consistently and precisely addressing the preferences of your audience fosters resonance and connection, ultimately cultivating a memorable and impactful relationship with potential clients.

STRATEGIC GLOBAL EXPOSURE THROUGH INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS

Position your convention centre as a global frontrunner by implementing a Strategic Global Exposure Initiative. Proactively utilise digital marketing channels to amplify visibility on international platforms. Actively engage with prominent global event listings and foster partnerships with international organisers. This multifaceted approach aims to significantly elevate your venue's exposure on a global scale, showcasing its offerings to a diverse international audience. By expanding your market reach, this strategy reinforces the international allure and prestige of your convention centre, attracting a broader spectrum of clients seeking a world-class event venue.

BALANCED REVENUE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Attain sustained success by striking a strategic balance in Revenue Management. Meticulously manage the interplay between selling convention centre space and conducting comprehensive revenue audits. Implement effective revenue management strategies designed to optimize profits and ensure the financial viability of the convention centre. Simultaneously, engage in strategic selling initiatives to maintain a consistent flow of business. This equilibrium is pivotal for securing both short-term financial gains and long-term sustainability in the fiercely competitive convention and event market. Fine-tune revenue management practices and adopt strategic selling approaches to navigate market dynamics and position the convention centre for enduring success.

CLIENT ENGAGEMENT EXCELLENCE THROUGH A DEDICATED TEAM

Elevate the convention centre's standing by instituting a Client

Engagement Excellence Strategy. Cultivate a dedicated team of experts well-versed in the intricacies of event management. This specialized team excels in addressing client queries with precision, adeptly managing the complexities of event logistics, and ensuring a seamless overall experience. The strategy revolves around creating a team that is not just proficient but passionately committed to delivering exceptional client engagement. By establishing this dedicated and knowledgeable team, you not only enhance your brand's reputation as an industry leader but also instil a sense of confidence in clients, positioning your convention centre as a reliable and expert choice. This client-centric approach becomes a defining factor in attracting and retaining clients, establishing your venue as a go-to destination for successful and seamlessly executed events.



OPTIMISED SPACE MANAGEMENT MASTERY FOR ENHANCED EXPERIENCES

The cornerstone of success for a convention centre lies in mastering Optimized Space Management. Conduct a comprehensive exploration of the nuances of space allocation, group ceilings, and optimal venue utilization. Delve into the intricacies of these elements to not only enhance the overall guest experience but also maximize revenue potential. The focus is on positioning your convention centre as the preferred choice for event planners and organizers by showcasing unparalleled proficiency in creating versatile and well-utilized spaces. This involves meticulous planning to cater to the diverse needs of various events, ensuring that each space within the venue is optimized for functionality and appeal. By demonstrating a mastery of space management, your convention centre becomes synonymous with adaptability and excellence, attracting a broad spectrum of events and solidifying its reputation as a premier destination for successful and seamlessly executed gatherings.

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

Varun Mehrotra has worked in the hospitality sector for over two decades. Throughout his career, he has received extensive knowledge and expertise in all the elements of hotel administration, as well as substantial experience in interacting with people from various cultural backgrounds while working across India. He is a strategic planner with ample expertise managing complex operations and working with brands such as Oberoi hotels, Kempinski hotels and Shangri La Hotels as well as 9 years in Accor Hotels.

Talent Management in India's Booming Hospitality Industry

By **Siddharth Savkur**, CEO, Kamaxi Group



According to research quoted by The People Network in their recent insightful survey *Hospitality From the Lens of 'Human Resources'*, the tourism sector in India currently accounts for 35 million jobs and is projected to employ 137 million people and contribute US\$ 250 billion to India's GDP by 2030. This is a staggering growth path, and warrants an honest assessment of the challenges ahead if these numbers are to be achieved.

However, enough has been said about the remarkable and mostly unexpected turnaround that the hospitality industry saw across India in the last two years. Hotels not only recovered from the lockdown-induced slump but achieved record business levels. The question is - how much did the workforce benefit from this surge? The unfortunate answer is that they did not. At least, not substantially.

The hospitality industry tends to be behind the curve in changing with the times, as compared to other sectors. Where others speak of work-life balance, mental health, fair compensation, global opportunities and digitisation, we (mostly) still proudly brag about the philosophy of hard work and long hours and romanticise how passion overcomes low compensation. When others talk of diversity, they are referring to having more LGBTQIA representation in their workforce; women were already integrated long ago. On the other hand, when the hospitality industry says 'diversity' we are still referring to having more women in the team, while there is an uneasy silence on LGBTQIA representation. Well, the Indian youth is not impressed. Every study indicates that today's youth do not consider a hospitality career as lucrative or aspirational.

The National Council for Hotel Management conducts the JEE for admissions to affiliated hotel management colleges. Before the pandemic, they received around 30,000 applicants annually. In 2021, this dropped to 12,400, leaving many seats unfilled. The shortage of trained hospitality professionals is a global challenge, affecting entry, supervisory, and specialized roles like chefs and technicians. Indian hoteliers are in demand globally.

Yet, all hotel chains are regularly announcing new signings and expansion plans. How will these projects be staffed and serviced?

THE TIME HAS COME FOR SOME LANDMARK CHANGES.

DEMOCRATISE THE REFORMS PROCESS

Let HR brainstorming sessions not be limited to boardroom leaders and senior executives, as is mostly the case now. Let all sections of the team be represented - rank and file, all departments and all backgrounds. Make sure all voices are heard respectfully and not filtered through the lens of the senior-most person in the room. Form a core panel with fair representation of the workforce to review all ideas and suggestions presented.

LOOSEN THE PURSE STRINGS

Industries like airlines, cruise liners, malls, and banks are recruiting hospitality professionals with superior salaries compared to hotels.

Hotels must move beyond traditional payroll structures. The adage "If you pay peanuts, you will get monkeys" rings truer now. A mere two-point increase in payroll percentage (relative to gross revenue) can significantly enhance HR budgets for hiring and better compensation. With time, a more efficient team will generate higher revenue, allowing payroll percentages to revert to previous levels.

NO NEED TO REINVENT THE WHEEL, JUST LEARN FROM OTHERS

Given that the hospitality industry is lagging behind other sectors in HR reforms, the good news is that we only have to borrow best practices from others. A five-day work week, continuous training and upskilling, global opportunities, ESOPs, family benefits, ergonomic workplace design, open work culture and more are already the norm in other industries. Borrow a leaf from their book. Of course, not every initiative would be easy to replicate in hospitality but let us at least make a start.

TECH + TOUCH

Though irreplaceable, human touch in guest experience can be complemented by smart hotel technology. Indian hoteliers' skepticism or misunderstanding of technology hinders its potential. Tech can efficiently assist in guest interactions, data analysis, inventory management, and more, boosting job satisfaction.

IT'S NOT ALWAYS ABOUT THE MONEY, HONEY

The simple truth is that there will always be someone paying more than you. Employers should then focus on creating a work environment where non-monetary benefits are prioritised. This could be through recognition programmes, perks, performance-based entitlements, experiential rewards, a mentorship programme and transparent career path planning.

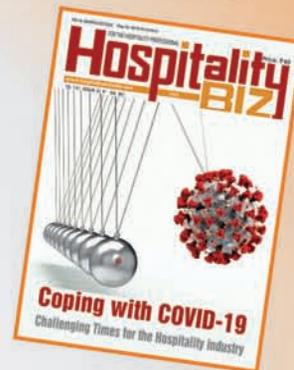
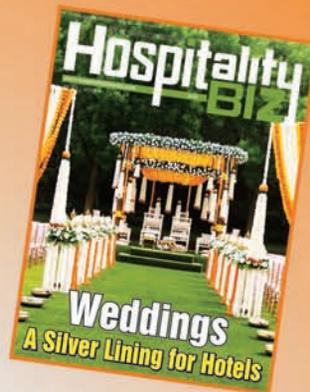
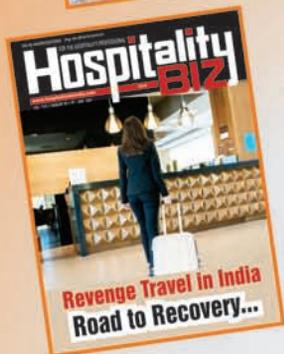
At Kamaxi, we prepare our culinary students to succeed in a professional kitchen environment anywhere in the world. They, like other graduates of hospitality institutes across India, have access to job opportunities globally. If they are to choose to build their career in India instead, employers here will have to acknowledge and compete with this ground reality. ■

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

Siddharth Savkur, CEO of Kamaxi Group. He is a hospitality expert with 20+ years of experience in hotel operations, asset management, strategic planning and business development with international hotel companies across different markets.

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