

DESTINATION INDIA

TRAVEL & TOURISM

THE VISITOR ECONOMY

INDIAN TOURISM'S BRAND AMBASSADOR



City Specific
THE VISITOR ECONOMY: HOW IT WORKS FOR DELHI?



Connectivity
WHAT DO WE EXPECT TO SEE?



Tourism
A BIGGER NAME OR A BIGGER RECOGNITION!

Looking for comfort and convenience for your clients' visa submission process?

Choose VFS Global's

VISA AT YOUR DOORSTEP service

With **Visa At Your Doorstep**, as an optional service, the VFS Global team will visit your clients' location to complete the entire visa submission including the biometric process, as per their convenience and flexibility. Your clients do not need to visit our Visa Application Centre, as VFS Global's team will visit their location.

Available on weekdays, weekends, and public holidays.

Service includes:

- ✓ Visa submission process
- ✓ Biometric information (fingerprint & digital photograph)
- ✓ Passport collection & delivery

The 'Visa At Your Doorstep' service is offered for 18 destination countries in India:

Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (On Demand Mobile Visa).



Book 'Visa At Your Doorstep' for your clients now

Visit: www.vfsglobal.com/visa-at-your-doorstep/

For exclusive deals and incentives, write to us on:

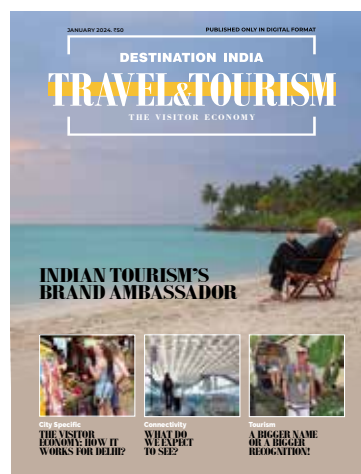
b2bsales@vfsglobal.com

IN THIS ISSUE

People.....	4
Developments	6
A Bigger Name or a Bigger Recognition! It is the Visitor Economy, or just Travel and Tourism Connect.....	8
The Visitor Economy: How it Works for Delhi?	12
Indian Tourism's Brand Ambassador.....	16
A Year Like No Other! 2023 for Travel, Tourism and Hospitality	18
Some Out of the Box Solutions; Small Steps to Incremental Success.....	20
India needs an Independent Tourism Board. With Teeth	22
Letter from Toronto. Effective Marketing Mix with Value Propositions!	24
Traffic Rights: Then and Now! Will Indian Carriers Pick Traffic over Dubai?	26
Indian Aviation in 2024: What do we Expect to See?	28
A Protégé Remembers his Mentor. Rajiv Kaul on PRS Oberoi on his 90th birthday!.....	30
Driving Positive Change through Sustainable and Responsible Tourism Needs Collective Collaboration.....	32
ECOTOURISM is One Big Word; A Tool for Achieving SDG'S	33
Skilling changes Course; Stakeholders are being Involved from Start to Finish!.....	34
Made in India VFS gets UK's Global Visa Account over 142 Countries.....	35
Mementos: the New ITC Luxury Brand!.....	36
EbixCash Travel Reports Robust Business.....	37
Qmin, unprecedented Success Story through Innovation.....	38

Destination India is a monthly magazine edited and printed by Navin Berry on behalf of Cross Section Media Pvt. Ltd, 401, Surya Kiran Building, New Delhi-110001. It is printed at Advantage Offset, Naraina, New Delhi-110028. Registered with RNI under reference 28908/1976.

All enquiries can be addressed to connect@dicversations.com



Welcome to this new vertical, an additional relaunch for India's oldest tourism publication, as a specific industry centric monthly digital only magazine.

We started one other vertical, earlier last year in April, under the sub-title of Conversations, centring around the bigger picture, the current affairs that take centre-stage in our country.

We now have two verticals – Conversations, and another Travel & Tourism: The Visitor Economy. Both will exist separately and together, one giving the bigger national picture, the other a specific travel and tourism canvas.

Why this name and sub-title? Why this relaunch, in the first place? Our times demand more from our industry. We have never had a better time than this, with such potential to grow, prosper and contribute to our national effort. Good times are the best to look ahead, in fact to course correct and get ready for even better times. We have the capacity to engage, converse and grow a larger consensus around the future of our industry. In times of stress, it is survival that is the focus. To create a common cause around us, grow the business. These times will not last forever. How many years ahead from now, one cannot tell. But our present efforts to reorganize ourselves, can ensure these times last longer, perhaps for ever.

Inbound Promotions are Missing!

One central issue before India's tourism industry is that inbound inflows are around 60% of the pre covid period. This is unnerving for those segments that depend almost exclusively upon inbound traffic. These are primarily the inbound tour operators. A few have recovered, not the segment as a whole. Hotel tariffs is a concern, for inbound, as competing destinations are providing more value for money. Promotion in overseas markets is the big worry; in the absence of our tourist offices, which were closed last March, this has become a double whammy. In the last few weeks, more and more countries have announced visa free entry. Looks like small token promotion in itself but it does add up costs for a family holiday. It also sends out a positive message of welcome. India would do well to consider such a move, at least for the next six to eight months, say till October this year.

Navin Berry
Editor

by NAVIN BERRY

Puneet Chhatwal takes over as head of FAITH; Industry Expects a Fresh Renewal



Puneet Chhatwal, MD and CEO, IHCL has been named president of FAITH, the apex body that represents the eleven front organizations in the travel and tourism sector. As Nakul Anand completed his tenure at ITC, he demitted this position automatically. Puneet's assuming charge assumes extra significance in that he is already the chairman of the tourism and hospitality vertical at CII, which is not one of the eleven members within FAITH. Puneet is also the president of Hotel Association of India (HAI), which is one of the eleven members. It does enhance the Puneet's position within the industry, giving him an extra front to work from; it brings the possibility of a bigger single voice for the industry even more. If you want a unified voice, the lesser the individuals on the top, the easier it is!

What will FAITH move forward? Somewhere, since its inception it has driven an agenda for the industry, with a mixed feeling. If it was to become a CII like body, representing travel and tourism interests, did it achieve this goal? CII is a body to envy. It has a strong secretariat, and that decides most of the agenda. FAITH has little to show in terms of its own core team, it still appears to have a part time CEO, notwithstanding his capabilities. FAITH needs to become a strong organization in itself, empowered by its eleven members. Will Puneet push towards these objectives. To

have a strong secretary general, like CII has? To build a FAITH house, like CII has one of its own on Lodhi Road in the capital? Our industry needs more research, more studies to back what we are pursuing. Undeniably, FAITH did sterling work engaging with government, but much of this is not in public domain. It has not been advertised like other industry associations do. Like the automobile association, for itself.

What would be Nakul's legacy as head of FAITH? He kept the ship intact, that is first and foremost to his credit. It is not easy to steer a ship with eleven disparate members all wanting to have their say. But they all rallied behind him. There are some voices who believe the efforts were more hotel-centric. Perhaps, some of this is true. Nakul, with the able support of his team at ITC, was able to provide resources to present a strong case for hospitality (and tourism) to the powers that be.

Puneet's assuming charge assumes extra significance in that he is already the chairman of the tourism and hospitality verticals at CII.

There was some traction for a while in government, but only with a mixed bag of successes; especially through the covid days, when industry was looking for relief. It did course correct, but much more needs to be done.

For any industry body, it is always work in progress. And, herein, lies the future opportunity. That India needs a new narrative for driving its

travel and tourism industry. And Puneet has a challenge ahead of him.

Nakul Anand hangs up his boots at ITC, a most cherished and exemplary career!



Nakul Anand has hung his boots at ITC after a long and most distinguished career; he is one of the few who stuck with one company, one goal, started at the bottom of the ladder, reached the very top. He is in this sense, in the league with legends like Ajit Kerkar of the Taj Group, Habib

Rehman of ITC – no job hopping, no seeking opportunities to grow elsewhere. I first met Nakul when he was at Windsor Manor in Bengaluru; later in ITC Maurya as the rooms division manager(?), but certainly later in 1993 and around as the General Manager at ITC Maurya. That was also the time I was instrumental in setting up the New Delhi Hoteliers Forum that comprised 18 general managers of 5-star hotels in the capital. Nakul was a big source of strength, ever the supporter of the collaborative principle. In our formative days with SATTE, where

Nakul's legacy is huge. One big area is that of the responsible hotelier, of responsible tourism. He was truly amongst the first to believe in sustainability

hosting the foreign buyers was the central concern, Nakul was always a force behind whatever we did. In one year, 1999, it was SATTE in Agra, and ITC Mughal hosted a dinner for a thousand delegates, a most memorable event that our industry will never forget. Much loved by one and all, the video going around of his farewell at ITC Green Centre is a testimony to both his class and also his leadership. It was a most moving send-off to the man who guided the destiny of an iconic hospitality company, innovating on how best to provide guests their desired comfort and conveniences.

Nakul's legacy is huge. One big area is that of the responsible hotelier, of responsible tourism. He was truly amongst the first to believe in sustainability, much before the industry woke up to its challenge. He was uncompromising on this first principle, making ITC Hotels the first such LEED complaint hotel company in the world. He set the Indian benchmark, which the industry is only now waking up to.

His has been the suave, moderated voice of reason. Embody the best examples of the core ITC doctrine, Nakul has been the first in making erudite presentations, for his company, their beliefs and for the industry as a whole.

In a recent conversation, he said he will pursue his interests, provide content wherever called for, find time to read some more and write. He has plans to publish and share his learning, which we all can look forward to. It is a challenge, somewhere, for the industry to not lose out on him; his experience needs to be harnessed for the greater good. Not associated with any single company, vertical or discipline but for travel and tourism in India and our region.

We wish Nakul Anand the very best in his future endeavours.

Zubin Saxena moves to head Hilton Hotels in India



Zubin Saxena is a relatively young face in Indian hospitality. He surfaced as MD of Radisson Hotels and over the last few years steered the company to greater levels of excellence. There, under the watchful guidance of his mentor, K B Kachru, Zubin made his mark as the young hotelier, overseeing

the operations of his 150 odd hotels. The Radisson portfolio expanded significantly during his tenure, but equally importantly the standards went a few notches higher.

Then all too suddenly, one evening, we were told he was leaving the Radisson fold, moving onto greener pastures. A sad loss for one, a big gain for another. As the head of the Hilton hotels family in India, his new assignment, he has a formidable task ahead of him. A most enviable brand globally, Hilton has yet to find its true measure in our region. In fact, it has been noteworthy for making big ticket entries, not one or two, but three, and falling off its promise, for reasons that remain largely unfortunate, none to its


Zubin has a big task ahead of him. To grow in numbers with all its brands. Hilton is a big name globally with a massive potential to grow in our region.

discredit. It tied up with Morepan Industries, with Lalit Suri Bharat Hotels and also with The Oberoi, when it branded all the Trident Hotels in their portfolio. More recently, it has been on a steady course, growing its different brands. It has a presence with its Garden Inn brand, Double Tree, Hilton and also Conrad – the last with a strong presence in Pune and Bengaluru.

So, Zubin has a big task ahead of him. To grow in numbers with all its brands. Hilton is a big name globally with a massive potential to grow in our region. Here's hoping the group has found its match in Zubin, and a fruitful and long innings awaits the two together.

Anil Chadha takes charge of the hospitality and travel vertical at ITC!



Meanwhile, as Nakul Anand retired from his ITC assignment, the baton has passed on automatically to Anil Chadha, the present CEO, the designated successor; Anil now assumes charge of all the verticals within the ITC portfolio, including Fortune Hotels and International Travel House, among others. Anil is another old school boy, having grown out of the ITC Hotel Management Institute. He is equally grass root, growing up the ladder, under the watchful eye of his mentor Nakul Anand. Much the same way that Nakul grew up closely watching his mentor, Habib Rehman. Anil has his task clearly defined, to grow the unique properties and values espoused by ITC. His affable, unassuming demeanour, well tuned to the ITC ethos, has won him friends across the industry. At 54 years of age, he has a long innings ahead of him, including the much heralded move to demerge the hotels business and hive it to a separate company, ITC Hotels of which he is tipped to take over as Managing Director. Here's wishing him even greater success in his career going forward. 

IHG Signs for 4 properties in Nepal with Shangri-La Hospitality

Nepal's leading hotel group, Shangri-La Hospitality Group, owned by Prasadha Panday (chairman) and Prabin Panday (managing director) has signed with InterContinental Hotel Group (IHG) for managing their four upcoming properties Nepal. The group has legacy of over four decades in hospitality, trading and real estate. These premium hotels are set to become operational between the end of 2023 and 2026 on three major popular tourist destinations of the country; Kathmandu,



Pokhara and Chitwan. While three of them will have InterContinental brand, one of them will be Indigo. With the signing of HMA with IHG Hotel and Resort, Shangri-La Hospitality will own and develop InterContinental Kathmandu at Lazimpat, Hotel Indigo at Pokhara, InterContinental Resort in Pokhara, Begnas Lake, and InterContinental Resort in Chitwan, Meghauri. The signing will see IHG add close to 500 rooms to its portfolio in Nepal, and debut two of its global brands, InterContinental and Hotel Indigo in the Nepalese market. Each of this will have unique interiors, USP's, brand identity and positioning and an upscale luxury clientele. These destinations are well connected by air and national highways, Shangri-La Hospitality is looking forward to opening a new chapter in Nepal's hospitality industry.



Good news for Indian Aviation as SpiceJet gets an Infusion of Rs. 2500 crores

Domestic carrier SpiceJet has received additional finance, bringing a new lease of life to the beleaguered carrier, beset with losses and bulging liabilities. This infusion will also help the airline look at buying into GoAir, which has some 50 aircrafts on its fleet. At a time when we were staring at a two airlines duopoly in the market, with only Indigo and Air India up there, news of a new life for SpiceJet is most welcome. Added to this is the reports that Akasa Air may place a new order for an additional 150 aircraft. We need growth, more planes in the sky and also more competition to ensuring a healthy aviation market.



Gift City in Gujarat Breaks through the Prohibition Ceiling

In what would be unprecedented for Gujarat, La state that has been vehemently a dry state, the state government announced it is making GIFT city break through the barriers. Alcohol will be allowed, though not to be sold in bottles, to guests of the local constituents. GIFT city is

about half hour drive from Ahmedabad – this has been done in keep with expectations of guests visiting the city, in anticipation of giving them a lifestyle that they are used to. This is most welcome news for the state, especially as a government spokesperson said it is up to the chief minister to decide if other business zones in the state would get a similar exemption. This could be the first baby step to consider exemption for other tourist centric areas in the state, and will strengthen the overall appeal of destination Gujarat.



BWH Hotels Strengthens its Partnership with Sorrel Hospitality

BWH Hotels has announced a significant milestone in its journey by strategically focusing on enhancing the presence of World Hotels in India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka through Sorrel Hospitality, its master franchise in the region. This move comes as part of a broader initiative to expand BWH Hotels' footprint in the vibrant South Asian market, leveraging the strength of Sorrel Hospitality.

BWH Hotels made a landmark acquisition of World Hotels in 2019, reaffirming the group's steadfast commitment to hospitality across diverse destinations within the South Asian region.

Sri Lanka, we are committed to elevating the standards of luxury accommodation and guest satisfaction. This move, fueled by the landmark acquisition of World Hotels in 2019, underscores BWH Hotels' unwavering dedication to delivering exceptional service and creating unparalleled guest experiences throughout the diverse landscapes of South Asia." said - Larry Cuculic, President and Chief Executive Officer, BWH Hotels.

"I am delighted to announce a strategic leap that signifies a remarkable chapter in our journey. Partnering with Sorrel Hospitality, our esteemed master franchisee, we are poised to extend our influence in the dynamic South Asian market"- Ron Pohl, President of International Operations and of World Hotels.

"We are thrilled to embark on this exciting journey of expansion of World Hotels in India, Bangladesh & Sri Lanka. These countries hold immense potential in the luxury hospitality sector and this strategic move is a testament to our dedication to enhancing the presence of World Hotels in this region." said Atul Jain, COO - India, Bangladesh & Sri Lanka, BWH Hotels.

As BWH Hotels embarks on this exciting new chapter, it invites guests, partners, and stakeholders to join in the anticipation of a transformative era in hospitality. With a legacy built on trust, innovation, and a commitment to excellence, it is set to elevate the bar of luxury hospitality and create lasting memories and unforgettable experiences for guests across India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

BWH Hotels is a leading, global hospitality network comprised of three hotel companies, including WorldHotels, Best Western® Hotels & Resorts and SureStay Hotels® BWH Hotels serves as the umbrella parent organization to each hotel company, bringing a full-suite of options to travelers and developers, while also protecting the unique identity of each brand. This creates a global network of approximately 4,300 hotels across every chain scale segment, in over 100 countries and territories worldwide.



Ayodhya on India's Map, a Destination Like No Other!

In just about three years, we have a temple town becoming a world class destination for global tourists to experience the legend of Lord Ram. From almost obscurity to many splended attractions, with an international airport and a world class rail-ways station, fast track roads connecting with national highways, Ayodhya is just a few weeks away from a new dawn. Sarovar is the first branded hotel to open while IHCL has signed for two of its brands. Other chains are not far behind.

The temple itself, the centre of all attraction, is majestic in every sense, no stone has been left unturned to make it truly a global experience. On the cards are numerous attractions that would assume giving the city a Disneyland like experience, built around Hindu mythology and traditions. **Di**

A BIGGER NAME OR A BIGGER RECOGNITION!

IT IS THE VISITOR ECONOMY, OR JUST TRAVEL AND TOURISM CONNECT



The time for disruption is here! That what we call 'tourism' can acquire a bigger picture, wherein the travel manifestations of all hues can get absorbed. Not just leisure, but the entire gamut! This will mean a new narrative for an industry that is increasingly becoming broader based, for all reasons and all seasons.

From where tourism has emerged, in the last few decades, tourism was indeed a five-star activity, and pilgrimages for example were not associated with tourism. These were different activities. Hotels were essentially a five-star phenomenon and meant for the foreigner! Tourism in evolved economies is accepted, where it is a state of development wherein travel economies and local economies have merged to acquire the same standard. Not so in the developing world, where locals are still unable to cherish this same standard of living. There is a glaring gap between the two, where islands of affluence can

Hotels are fast being accepted as important and essential components of business and commerce travel, becoming more and more critical now, witness the recent successes of G20 summit!

by NAVIN BERRY

The Contradiction between Travel and Tourism

UNWTO's definition of tourism is travelling for all reasons, regardless of purpose. Most countries, especially in the developing world, are yet unable to distinguish between travel and tourism. In India, we believe the big picture is travel, while tourism is leisure and *sair sapatta*, tourism is still not an accepted word for serious economic discourse. Travel has the bigger acceptance.

Hotels have a stigma attached to them as possible dens of the good life, where liquor flows and western culture is propagated. This, too, is changing at least within India. Hotels are fast being accepted as important and essential components of business and commerce travel, becoming more and more critical now, witness the recent successes of G20 summit!

be seen amidst relative poverty. Much is changing, fortunately, as locals realise the buying power of these 'islands' which give them new opportunities for jobs and growth.

Travel is still the bigger discourse. It is the bigger picture that encompasses the entire gamut of the visitor economy. It is not just air travel, but all transport, connectivity is the big business. Organisations like the WTTC saw through this enigma, between travel and tourism, preferred to take the names of both travel and tourism to its title. In India, an event like SATTE took the same route almost 30 years ago, taking South Asia Travel and Tourism Exchange as its name.



▲ Events like G20 bring additional heft to our destination

So, while travel is important as it opens up the economy, tourism is still a less important subject, so it would appear. But in a manner of speaking, every traveller becomes a tourist. But in India we have known senior leaders like the late PRS Oberoi and others like in a recent CAPA report, mention that out of India's inbound 10 million plus, only half or one third or even one fourth is tourists, the rest are 'others'.

This 'others' is interesting and can vary from country to country. In China's case, their inbound is possibly half of their own origin incoming from as close as Hong Kong or for that matter from the US. In India's case, 'others' considering our relatively smaller incoming number, could be VFR who do not use any of our basic infrastructure as they have a home in India. They just come home. It is important to know how many are which category. A large component could be foreign delegations, and in recent times, there have been many. Last year, with over 200 meetings scheduled under G20, this number grew phenomenally. One reason we must know is to understand the productivity of our promotional programmes. If we are spending millions in promotions and getting only a larger subset of VFRs, or government delegations, we don't need to spend any money at all.

To get to the bottom of the picture, or to embrace the bigger picture, should we adopt 'Travel and Tourism', or T&T, as the new nomenclature for our industry?

We have not been Accepted as an Important Economic Activity. Do we Need to have a Second Look at our Narrative?

The industry's data that is shared to express the importance of tourism



Experiential is the new 'in' thing!

Our Present Day Story. A New Narrative under a New Name! A New Research that Gives us Fresh Clout as an Industry

Are the present-day summing statements on relevance and importance of tourism getting outdated? Are they losing steam? Are they in need to be refreshed? Tourism 2.0, to begin with, gets a new name in T&T or as VE. Therefore, we need a new assessment on how this larger narrative is transforming our cities, why it needs a holding hand, to grow this business in a structured and holistic manner.

Possibly, we pick up 50/100 cities, ranging from top 6 metro cities, to numerous tier 2 and tier 3. Some that have been around for ages on the tourism map, others coming up now as our infrastructure expands, and new airports and connectivity bring them into new focus. We pick a mix of heritage cities, pilgrim towns (Varanasi and Ujjain), education (Mangalore and Pune), medical, pure business or industrial, and of course, some with pure leisure appeal (Goa is prime).

Under each city or town, we look at how its entry points (air, rail, road, others) have impacted employment, investments and growth. We look at every other element of the city VE – its monuments, its industrial hubs, gaming centres, nightclubs, etc. The emphasis is upon how by giving further sharp focus on the demands of VE, we will help locals live more happily and in harmony with the world around them.



Literary festivals have become big city attractions in India

While travel is important as it opens up the economy, tourism is still a less important subject, so it would appear. But in a manner of speaking, every traveller becomes a tourist. But in India we have known senior leaders like the late PRS Oberoi and others like in a recent CAPA report, mention that out of India's inbound 10 million plus, only half or one third or even one fourth is tourists, the rest are 'others'.

This could Eliminate Thinking in 'Silos' Mode!

Right across our national perspective, at the national or the state levels, government and industry work in silos, ensuring the importance of their turf. In many cases, these turf wars can get serious, with zealous guarding of their territories. To say tourism can take care of our heritage or that it is national highways is encroaching upon other ministries. T&T is a multi-sectoral activity, but much of it has been outside of its purview. 'Tourism', in its present-day avatar, has been viewed as a toothless tiger. By adopting T&T, we can deliver on much of this. Our turf, as VE, becomes a much wider gamut which it actually is. But not recognised.

T&T or TE must capture the present priority is pride in all



things Indian, our heritage, our folklore, our sense of uniqueness as a civilisation. It must capture it by first accepting it, embracing it and promoting it.

For instance, new experiential travel into the hinterland for great discoveries of our flora and fauna, our small little pockets of tucked away heritage, across the length and breadth of the country – there are hidden nuggets almost everywhere. Slowly we are bringing them alive with homestays and road and airline connectivity. This in itself needs to be captured in terms of both employment, national rejuvenation and heritage building and preservation.

This endeavour can take a look of an extensive programme, more in a mission mode. This is story telling about cities, their lure for visitors, how these grew, how facilities came up, how TE got into its own – its impact on the city. Its future growth as India has more

than a few 1000 cities that are attracting visitors. Imagine a look at Muradabad and Firozabad as TE cities. Or, Vizag, Tirupati, Katra and then assessing what can happen to Murshidabad in Bengal.

It is a narrative that brings credibility to tourism and travel, in its present sweep.

How airports, clusters like the more recent invention of Aerocity, new road connectivity are transforming the lives of our people, giving new opportunities for locals to thrive. Arresting migrant movements, among others, becomes also a talking point.

We Have Seen Disruption Elsewhere, Not Yet In Our Thinking Of Tourism

Has the time come? That tourism will get disrupted, in terms of its overall perspective. That it would embrace the bigger

How airports, clusters like the more recent invention of Aerocity, giving new opportunities for locals to thrive.

Arresting migrant movements, among others, becomes also a talking point.

picture, as either Travel & Tourism, or as Visitor Economy? Call it what you do, the name does count. There is so much in a name, after all. Under this new ambit, it would get its new recognition, where air transport, other modes of commuting, hospitality across its emerging spectrum – from luxury, mid-market, experiential, senior living, shared living spaces, whatever – inbound, domestic: all get interwoven into a single fabric. With heritage, culture, all things Indian, get packaged into a single mosaic called the 'Pride of India', or 'Made in India'.



Sports is providing a new momentum for travel and tourism



The demand will come from Business Travel, MICE, Weddings, Experiential Travel, Leisure, Education, Medical, and so many others. The Supply side will essentially be the infrastructure and include roads, airlines and airports, hotels of all categories. Facilities will span out as per needs of destinations.

are severely doubted. Possibly, there may be a feeling that sair sapatta cannot be all that important, so we don't even want to evaluate them seriously. Is it a coincidence that most of our Ministers, when in office in tourism, express such overwhelming solidarity with tourism, but rarely speak of its importance when they have moved to other assignments within the same government?

Either way, whether T&T or as VE, each city has its own verticals. So, Mangalore and Pune have educational institutes, Udaipur has pure leisure, honeymooners, weddings and events, Goa has pure leisure as a way of life.


If we adopt T&T as the Big Picture, then its verticals will flow automatically. Each, a very important pillar of the whole. There would be demand side and a supply side. The demand will come from Business Travel, MICE, Weddings, Experiential Travel, Leisure, Education, Medical, and so many others. The Supply side will essentially be the infrastructure and include roads,

airlines and airports, hotels of all categories. Facilities will span out as per needs of destinations. Highway amenities will then get prioritised.

Airlines and Hotels may well go across ministries, as they are then part of the Travel and Tourism spectrum, not just Tourism (of which MoT is the custodian). In this perspective, airlines are not civil aviation but essential air transport. Hotels should be viewed as essential infra just as much as hospitals, or medical care.

We could then look at cities and less at states. Globally, cities and not states have become the centre of activity. We then look at 100 cities across India. We look at the entire gamut of reasons of travel, on the demand side, and evaluate what the Travel & Tourism perspective holds for each, its demands and what it has to offer, wherein it is lacking.

Even more than T&T is an expression 'Travel Economy', which

might be a still better expression of what this industry does. And possibly more appropriate too. It serves a double function. TE captures the entire gamut of travel, tourism, hospitality, transport of all types, and overrides any purpose of travel. Either way, whether T&T or as VE, each city has its own verticals. So, Mangalore and Pune have educational institutes, Udaipur has pure leisure, honeymooners, weddings and events, Goa has pure leisure as a way of life. Some have been touted as leisure but have a pronounced business profile – like Agra and Jaipur. How people travel and reach the destination, what do they do, where they spend, where they stay – all these encompass TE. Each city can nurture this economy best as it can. Each city already focuses upon developing what its TE demands. If captured in its full scope, in a structured response, in a bigger role play, it can give better returns for that city's economy and its local people. 



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Navin Berry, Editor, Destination India, over five decades has edited publications like CityScan, India

Debates and Travel Trends Today. He is the founder of SATTE, India's first inbound tourism mart, biggest in Asia.

THE VISITOR ECONOMY HOW IT WORKS FOR DELHI?

The assumption here is that all the big global cities are built around the visitor economy. Like London, Paris and New York, our own Mumbai and New Delhi too, have similar economies in place, but not adequately recognised and therefore remain untapped. In this pilot study that was compiled in 2016, and therefore the data is that of 2015, CAPA India put together these steps to make the city a more pronounced global hub. Kapil Kaul, country head, CAPA believes this is the way forward. An updated version will only strengthen this position and strategy.



6 STEP Approach for this deliberation begins with an understanding and recognition of the 'visitor economy'...

STEP 1: Understanding the 'visitor economy'

■ 'Visitor economy' defined and explained:

Refers to overall demand and supply in all the sectors within which visitor activity and its direct and indirect consequences upon the economy take place.

The term is wider than the definition of tourism industries, which it includes, and it encompasses all staying and non-staying visitors (including categories such as business day visits and leisure day visits not currently measured as part of tourism industries).

It embraces the activities and expenditure involved in supplying products and services for visitors by both the private and public sectors. It also includes the primarily public sector activities and substantial expenditure on the creation, maintenance and development of the public realm and the infrastructure within which, and through which, visitor activities take place.

It can be used in relation to international, national and sub-national geographical destinations or areas and need not necessarily be confined by existing historical boundaries.

Various 'tourism industries' are a sub-set of the visitor economy.

■ As evident from London's example, in the earlier section, the direct and indirect benefits of 'visitor economy' are substantial.

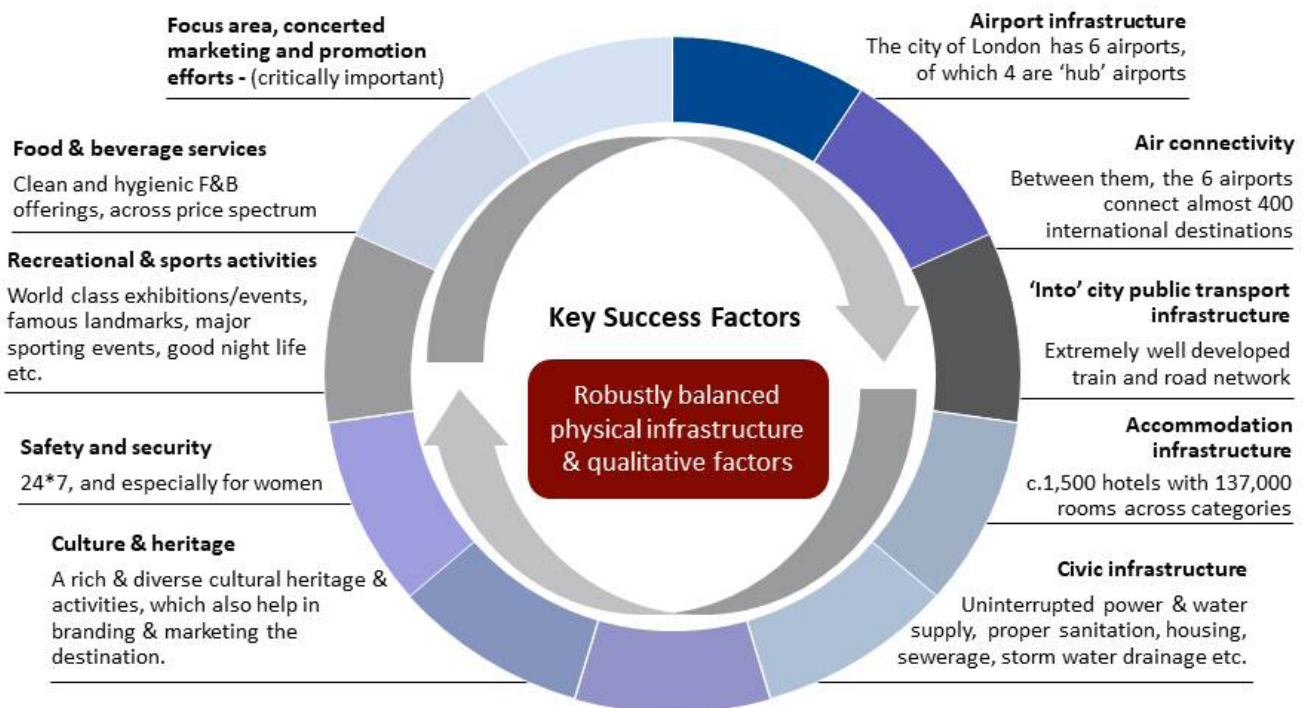
...followed by a critical due diligence to identify the framework for a global city...

STEP 2: A critical due diligence of what constitutes a framework which helps create a city like London (or NY)

Airport infrastructure; 'Into city' connectivity and public transport (multi-modal, primarily rail and road); Hotels/accommodation infrastructure, across room categories; F&B services and activities, with appropriate oversight and regulatory mechanism; Safety and security; Women & disable friendly; Cleanliness and hygiene; Civic infrastructure – including uninterrupted power and water supply, quality of infrastructure, solid waste management, sanitation, sewerage, storm water drainage, housing, transport & traffic congestions; Culture and heritage; Retail infrastructure (shopping malls, markets, and related destinations); Recreational facilities and activities – including sporting events; Health and well-being; Environment friendly (sustainable, carbon neutrality, pollution levels - air, noise, water etc.); Ability to communicate, market, and promote the destina-



Through the ‘London Eye’ – What makes an international tourist destination popular and successful...



...translating into immense economic benefits and a multiplier effect.

During 2015, London attracted 18.6 mn international visits (overnight stays), and 12.9 mn domestic visits (from UK residents). Additionally, the city witnessed 274 mn day visits (2014).

2015 visitor spends on hotels, restaurants, shopping, & attractions amounted to GBP15 bn (c.USD22.5 bn).

Overall, the tourism sector is expected to have contributed more than GBP36 bn (c.USD54 bn) and supported 700,000 jobs.

The contribution of the travel and tourism industry to UK’s economy is encapsulated hereunder. For context, in 2015, the GDP size of the UK was USD2.8

tn (nominal), it had a population of 65.2 mn, and it attracted 33.9 mn international visitors (overnight stays).

GDP:

Direct contribution to GDP – 3.7%

Total contribution to GDP – 11.2%

Employment:

Direct contribution to employment – 5.3%

Total contribution to employment – 12.7%

Tourism spends:

Business tourism – GBP65.3 bn

Leisure tourism – GBP100.2 bn

Visitor exports (foreign spends) – GBP32.0 bn

Domestic tourism – GBP133.4 bn

Investments:

Capital investment – GBP14.2 bn



tion – including leveraging digital and social media; Ownership, goals setting, performance measurement, and accountability.

...which are drilled down to identify the 'critical' elements and capacity constraints...

STEP 3

■ **Critical elements of the framework include:**

Airport infrastructure; Public transport (multi-modal, primarily rail and road); Civic infrastructure – including uninterrupted power and water supply, quality of infrastructure, solid waste management, sanitation, sewerage, storm water drainage, housing, transport & traffic congestions; Safety and security; Cleanliness and hygiene, health and well-being; Recreational facilities and activities, night life; Retail infrastructure (shopping malls, markets, and related destinations); Governance.

■ **Key questions to ask and answer include:**

Are we maxing out on any of these – either already reached capacity constraint or expected to reach capacity constraints in the near future (say 1-3 years); Do we have sufficient resources to build capacities where required; What are our constraints.

...followed by a high level strategic perception study about Delhi, along with developing a strategic tourism development framework...

STEP 4

■ **What is Delhi's brand, its positioning, perception, recall, and rankings.**

Cities are increasingly being associated with a particular spirit – e.g. Religion in Jerusalem, Learning in Oxford, Ambition in New York. What is the spirit of Delhi !! Cities are also building and developing brands around themselves – Hong Kong (Asia's World City), Paris (The

City of Love), Rome (Eternal City), even Las Vegas (Sin City). What is the brand of Delhi !!

■ **Such perception study needs to be done by visitor economy classification, including business, and should be targeted at NCT, India, international visitors.**

STEP 5: Develop a strategic tourism development framework which includes:

The Tourism Minister of the Delhi government to don the role of the cultural ambassador; Governance standards and requirements; Investments – public and private sector; Public-private-partnership model; Inter and intra government coordination – especially between the state and centre. Delhi's case is unique since it does not have control Market and promote the destination; High level strategic plan with clearly defined ownership, goals, and accountability.

...and outcomes staggered over two stages. on some elements like police etc.;

STEP 6

■ **Stage 1** – Lasts for the remaining 6-7 months of FY2017. Identify and deliver on some quick-wins during this stage, which could include:

Setting up a Visit Delhi Council, similar to a Visit London Council; A government funded promotion company, similar to London & Partners; Set-up a Delhi Tourism Marketing Board, and an official visitor guide (similar to visitlondon.com);

■ **Stage 2** – From 2017 to 2019, which structures the larger framework that includes:

How will the Delhi Government take ownership of making Delhi a hub for international tourists; How will the Delhi Government take ownership of making Delhi airport a hub; Setting up of a trained 'Tourism Police'; Metro connectivity, double decker buses, traffic and transportation; Safety and security; Night life, sound and light shows etc. **[D]**




Indian
National Trust
for Art and
Cultural Heritage
INTACH
HERITAGE ACADEMY

MAKE IT HAPPEN

ESTD 2011
YOUR DISCOVERY
COMPANION

8-DAY CERTIFICATE COURSE

STORYTELLING IN HERITAGE TOURISM

For registrations and queries:
adm.n.iha@gmail.com
Phone: 011 24627371



JANUARY - MARCH 2024

This course is designed to impart knowledge and skills for appreciating and responsibly promoting cultural heritage sites, fostering sustainable tourism practices and community engagement through the art of storytelling.

REGISTRATION FEE

Regular: Rs. 8,000 + 18% GST
Early Bird (till 15th Dec): Rs. 5,000 + 18% GST

INDIAN TOURISM'S BRAND AMBASSADOR



It is a relatively less talked about destination, discovered some decades back, ironically also made popular at that time by the then prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi. Unfortunately, his visit sparked some controversies, with reference to sustainability laws, with media decrying his idea of a holiday.

This time, released photographs promote the pristine quality of this eco-friendly destination. PM Modi is visibly relaxed and enjoying a quiet and reflective vacation. His visit has coincided with the inauguration or

granting of numerous schemes that would improve both the quality of life of the average inhabitant and also improve the visitor experience to the islands.

That these islands are in the deep south, neighbouring the ever-popular Maldives, is also a call for strengthening our defence capabilities in the Indian Ocean. This is a destination of unparalleled raw beauty, nature at its most charming best. Given this new spotlight, it might even be the right time to determine the carrying capacity of the islands, and ensuring that we adhere to the limited numbers that Lakshadweep can handle. **DI**

– Editor





A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER!

2023 for Travel, Tourism and Hospitality

by AATREYI DHIR *and* MANAV THADANI

The Manufacturing Story

India's ascension as a manufacturing powerhouse has been instrumental in reshaping its hospitality landscape. The symbiotic relationship between manufacturing and hospitality has witnessed a surge in demand for accommodation, particularly in burgeoning industrial hubs. As India solidifies its position as a global manufacturing hub, cities like Pune, Chennai, and Ahmedabad are witnessing an influx of business travellers, necessitating a transformation in the hospitality offerings. Even tech manufacturing is up – for example, Apple phones. Therefore, cities like Hyderabad and Bengaluru are also currently way up. From luxury business hotels to boutique stays tailored for the modern entrepreneur, the sector is embracing diversity to cater to varied demands.

The Infrastructure Story

The Indian government's commitment to infrastructure development is transforming the country's connectivity. Initiatives like UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) are making air travel more accessible and affordable, leading to a surge in domestic tourism. The rapid increase in the number of airports and improved road and rail networks are further facilitating travel and opening up new tourism destinations. The mushrooming of airports across tier-2 and tier-3 cities has not only facilitated seamless travel but has also spurred the growth of quaint boutique hotels and experiential stays catering to the wanderlust of the discerning traveller. Improved connectivity has unlocked the doors to lesser-explored destinations, presenting a vast canvas for hospitality expansion. Infrastructural metamorphosis has been the bedrock of this transformative period.

In the ever-evolving tapestry of India's hospitality sector, 2023 stands as a pivotal year marked by transformative trends and remarkable developments. A convergence of factors, from burgeoning manufacturing prowess to infrastructural leaps and the surge in mega-events, has orchestrated an unprecedented year for the hospitality.

The MICE Story

The MICE industry is booming in India, driven by factors like the rising disposable income, growing corporate culture, and a shift towards experiential events. The recent opening of convention centres such as JIO World Centre and India International Convention & Expo Centre (IICC) has further fuelled this growth. These state-of-the-art facilities are attracting large-scale events, boosting demand for hotel rooms and ancillary services. The rise of MICE events has been a game-change as India has become a preferred destination for "big fat weddings," drawing global attention and, in turn, propelling the hospitality sector. These extravagant celebrations have not only bolstered the luxury segment but have also catalysed innovative event-centric hospitality concepts. In our opinion the full impact of these new convention



Hospitality Enters a Purple Patch

From the remarkable recovery in 2022, Indian hotel industry has entered a purple patch. We are witnessing performance levels which were last seen before the global financial crisis (2006, 2007 and 2008). The hotels have seen an all-round development across Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 markets. This has been further ameliorated by large-scale events such as the G20 summit, and 2023 ICC Cricket World Cup, among others.

Estimated Performance (2022 and 2023)

Year	2022	2023	% Change
Occupancy	60-62%	64-65%	2-5 pp
Average Rate	₹6,100	₹7,200-₹7,300	20%
RevPAR	₹3,700	₹4,700	25%

Source: Hotelivate Research

This robust performance has led to an increase in interest for existing and potential investors to enter the industry. This heightened curiosity stems from the industry's robust growth, showcasing promising potential for fruitful investments. There has been a healthy growth in new hotel openings and hotel signings, both of which exemplify a collective confidence in the industry's resilience and capacity for sustained success. The interest has continued to lean towards leisure and getaway destinations (majorly Tier 3 markets). This strategic move draws attention to the evolving preferences of consumers seeking unique and immersive experiences. Investors recognize the latent prospects within these markets and are eager to capitalize on their growing appeal.

Estimated Signings and Openings (2023)

Year	Openings	Signing
Hotels	150	250
Inventory	11,000	25,600

Source: Hotelivate Research

Even though, we are likely to witness a moderation of growth levels in 2024 and 2025. The industry will sustain the healthy financial metrics. The Indian hotel industry has entered the "Goldilocks" zone of stability and predictability. This phase signifies an equilibrium achieved through a delicate balance—neither too hot nor too cold but just right, allowing for sustainable growth and long-term viability.

spaces will only be seen in the next 3-4 years as the journey has just begun.

The Mega Events Story

The grandeur of the G20 Summit, a global confluence of leaders, served as a showcase of India's hospitality finesse. From meticulously curated experiences for world leaders to the influx of accompanying delegations, the summit was a testament to India's hospitality prowess on the global stage. Simultaneously, the much-anticipated Cricket World Cup captivated the nation, significantly amplifying hospitality demand. Hotels, homestays, and various accommodations experienced a surge in bookings, transforming cricket fervour into a hospitality windfall.

The Bleisure Story

As the lines between work and leisure continue to blur, "bleisure" travel became a growing trend in 2023. Hotels catered to this trend by offering flexible workspaces, incorporating co-working areas, and providing amenities that cater to both business and leisure needs.

The Talent Story: Troubles Ahead

If there is one area where we need to flag a red flag in 2023 then it is this. In the face of a severe labour shortage, retaining talent became crucial for the hospitality industry in 2023. Hotels invested in employee well-being by offering competitive compensation and benefits, promoting work-life balance, and providing opportunities for growth and development for a more engaged workforce. However, a lot more needs to be done. Many people who were part of the industry have left forever and that void is now being felt more and more.

As the curtains draw on this extraordinary year, the echoes of these narratives resonate as guiding stars illuminating the trajectory ahead. India's hospitality sector stands poised at the precipice of innovation and inclusivity, ready to script new tales of excellence and redefine the benchmarks of guest experience. The year 2023 indeed stands as a testament to resilience, adaptation, and unwavering commitment, setting the stage for a future where hospitality isn't just an industry but a harmonious symphony of experiences. **DI**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aatreyi Dhir is Associate Director-Special Projects and Manav Thadani, Founder Chairman, Hotelivate.

SOME OUT OF THE BOX SOLUTIONS

Small steps to Incremental Success



by RAJEEV KOHLI

Since India reopened its borders for international travellers in March of 2022, much has been said and written about the segment's recovery. The arrivals for the last financial year were slow but not unexpected as we were a late opening in the tourism world. Then came the next cycle, which we are almost done with now in December 2023. Almost every major tourism destination, West or East has not only rebounded back to its 2019 levels, but most have far exceeded international arrival figures.

India has not. Industry discussions estimate that our 2023-24 inbound arrival figures will be at 60-70% of pre-pandemic levels. We will consider only of real value tourists and not the absolute figures of bodies entering, for we all know when you dig deeper into statistics, they are revealing.

Tourism in India is multi-faced. Inbound, outbound, domestic, weddings, celebrations, religious etc etc etc. Hotels and airlines have rejoiced in their success with the belligerent domestic traveller. But it is short-sighted and somewhat cruel for the industry to not work together to ensure each tentacle of this gigantic octopus is equally healthy. You are only as strong as your weakest link.

Inbound tourism is suffering. But we have seen this before and we will never be despondent. This segment has fought battle after battle and will crawl back from the deepest depths to regain its glory.

We do need some action though. From the gov-

Out of the box, innovative, structured support to Indian inbound industry is critical at this stage to improve incomes from our services sector. Look upon this support as investments, and not expenses, even as perhaps the equivalent of PLIs for the inbound tourism sector. Especially now with infrastructure matching the requirements of foreign tourists, this is but a natural extension. Its time has come: support the private sector as these are your sure-footed selling arms.

ernment, central and state. And from within ourselves. The most obvious starting point is to think and start doing things differently. Doing what we have done in the past and expecting different results will not work. This is a fundamental business principle.

Start with taxes, as that seems to be the easiest horse to flog for our industry. I do not agree that India is necessarily an expensive product. Most credible tourism destinations have seen significant price increases caused by demand & supply imbalances. That will gradually come back to equilibrium as is the rule of economics. But there are some short-term actions governments can take to spur demand. One is to give a GST tax break on at least the Tour Operators and hotel accommodation portion in the shoulder period of April to September only on receipts linked to foreign exchange earnings. This will give the industry the ability to launch short-term promotions to fill lower seasons. Also, it

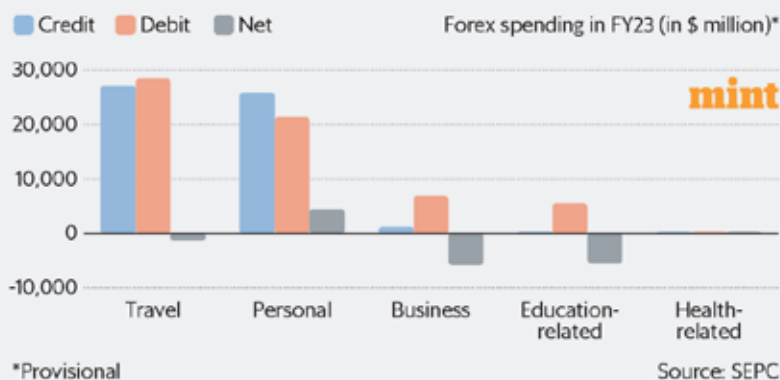
leads to great PR value in the global press. But this has to be done now to allow it to permeate the system in the next few months. The exchequer can only gain by increased numbers and is a zero-risk strategy. There is precedence to go by with states like Goa and Rajasthan have used such initiatives in the past.

Let's talk about marketing, positioning and

Industry discussions estimate that our 2023-24 inbound arrival figures will be at 60-70% of pre-pandemic levels. We will consider only of real value tourists and not the absolute figures of bodies entering, for we all know when you dig deeper into statistics, they are revealing.

Big draw

Inflow of dollars spent on travel has seen a significant rise in India in FY23.



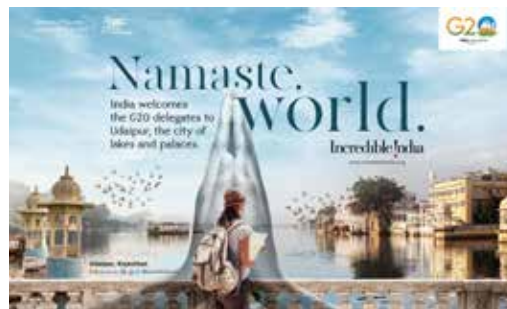
promotion. Our industry needs to come to terms that the Target Audience has been evolving over the years. All traditional marketing tools are no longer relevant. We are very old-fashioned and are somewhat stuck to the old vision of India which doesn't contest well in a hyper-competitive environment. We need to recognise who our competition is, do a deep SWOT analysis, and go from there. Gracefully retire 'Incredible India' and restart afresh. We have for a very long time desperately needed a new brand. Incredible India no longer carries the charm or credibility it once had. The world has changed. Let's start afresh with something that captures the imagination of the world.

A third aspect to look at is empowerment. Tourism administrations need to recognise that Indian tourism's biggest and most faithful Sales Force is our Inbound Tour Operators and DMCs. This is a group of people who spend months of the year travelling around the world selling India. We are knocking on doors, pounding pavements, spending our own money in the national interest. We are fighting, begging and convincing people to sell and promote India. India will not have a stronger sales team than this. And the government will never have the market penetration as the scale we do. Yet, this is a most ignored and unsupported lot. What can be done?

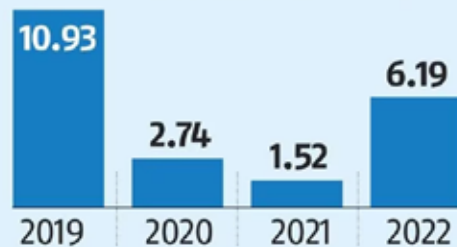
One, for the next 12 years give every MoT recognised inbound operator unrestricted air tickets to invite 4 international travel agents per year to India to experience the destination. At an average allowance of ₹1,00,000 per ticket (some will be cheaper, some more so this is a fair cap) x 4 per year x 800 recognized tour operators that is just about ₹32 crores a year, and the scheme falls within the passages scheme the ministry currently has. No event we will ever do in India can generate this number of buyers. The money spent is small peanuts in the scheme of things.

Two, support all inbound agencies with a scaling marketing support system. The current MDA scheme is unfair and penalises those who are more successful in selling India. Open it to all companies. Bigger companies are bigger because they have invested more. We all need some support, no matter how much it is. Look at this as an investment, not an expense.

And three, create on a war footing a world-class online India Specialist training program and collateral tool kits (images, media, designs etc.) that we as inbound players can offer our partners. Outsource this in a global tender to get the best in class. Give us tools to excite our customers. But do it fast.



FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS IN INDIA (IN MN)



Source: Ministry of Tourism

Sometimes the solutions are just in front of us. We just need to open our eyes & ears and listen. Think differently. Act differently. Be inclusive. Be ready to experiment. Be ready to take risks. This will make all the difference.

Lastly, the private sector needs to do their own thing. Our key associations are cash-rich and they need to use some of those reserves to create collateral the private sector can use to promote India. There is a lot that can be done very cost-effectively very fast that will go a long way in creating interest. It is not fair that the private sector depends only on the government for action. We have power in our own hands to move forward.

Sometimes the solutions are just in front of us. We just need to open our eyes & ears and listen. Think differently. Act differently. Be inclusive. Be ready to experiment. Be ready to take risks. This will make all the difference. **DI**

Happy to get feedback and thoughts on this issue. rajeevkohli@creative.travel



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rajeev Kohli is Joint Managing Director, Creative Travel, a leading inbound DMC, specialising

in high end tourism.

INDIA NEEDS AN INDEPENDENT TOURISM BOARD. WITH TEETH

Throughout my career in travel and tourism I have heard the argument that India has not reached its potential on Tourism. Early on, it was about flight seats into the country, the condition of our roads and railways, and the lack of minimum infrastructure and inane visa policies.



by PRASHANTH RAO AROOR

In the last decade, however, India has made great strides in these areas. Domestic trips have exploded 10 times since 2020. Yet, the foreign tourist arrivals remain a dismal 10 million or just 5% of our domestic trip numbers, languishing at 34th rank worldwide and growing much slower than competing destinations. In fact, there are several tiny countries out there and city states that receive and manage way more foreign tourists than India.

On every ranking, India is one of the top-rated destinations by quality of monuments, natural biospheres, local culture and arts. In fact, India cannot be covered in one trip. One needs several to cover even the minimum wonders the country offers.

So what's missing? The answer could be in the way tourism is structured in our country. Our constitution does not provide for tourism except as pilgrimage and this is in the state list. We have a union tourism ministry operated by bureaucrats, who routinely come and go, as and when posted between assignments, and the same goes for the ministers as well.

States have more powers on tourism and each is following their own policy.

Even the various associations are several and narrowly focused on

nature of business rather than the experience of the users. The result is a fully fragmented tourism oversight for the country and the complete lack of both power and responsibility with any single organization.

Currently tourism is 5% of GDP and 15% of jobs. It is reasonably one of the least polluting industries and adept at getting this exceptional amount of employment per rupee invested. It can single handedly lift a large chunk of India's poor from poverty and give them dignity of a career. It can allow people to earn from gigs and make a second income. Most of all, it can give people across the world an insight into India's mindset and vision for the world and grow our soft power.

It's a whole new world out there post the pandemic and if India has to reach its potential to be one of the highest recipients of international tourism arrivals, then it may be high time to constitute an independent Tourism Board much like how Invest India was created to promote investment and help businesses navigate the lacunae in our notoriously intertwined system of approvals and local laws.

With blessings from the PMO, such a board would need teeth and revenue to remain independent and able to meet its objectives without pandering for funds. It could have an

It (tourism) is the lowest hanging fruit available to this country to leverage on its journey towards a developed economy if one is willing to go through the pains of structuring it in a way that it works.

advisory board from union ministries, state ministries and various associations like hotels, travel agents, airlines, railways and eminent citizens. But it would have to be run CEO style with a Chief Executive with a clear mandate and a team of technocrats who can get the work done.

This Independent Tourism Board would, among other things, be responsible for:

- A common national tourism mission where the states have to sign up in order to receive their share of promotions.
- Accreditation and affiliation to operators of various spokes of tourism from hotels to



Currently tourism is 5% of GDP and 15% of jobs. It is reasonably one of the least polluting industries and adept at getting this exceptional amount of employment per rupee invested. It can single handedly lift a large chunk of India's poor from poverty and give them dignity of a career.



guides and home stays to transport operators.


- Mapping the country into 10 major and 30 minor circuits and capturing unique experiences available in each.
- Identifying infrastructure gaps and highlighting them to various ministries to complete the user experience.
- Plan, design and execute the international marketing strategy and to pitch relevant products to each source market as per their traveller dynamics and to keep refreshing products from India's multiple options to keep content and products fresh.
- Creating a platform for part timers to sign up for gigs including harnessing the power of the huge hobby travel influencer community and giving them opportunity to emerge as curators and guides.
- Ensuring basic standards of service, sustainability, and hygiene for users and to provide a platform for bad experience escalation that can be enforced by accreditation.
- Identifying a panel of experts from industry, local governments, architects etc. to be custodians of each circuit identified.
- Seeking corporate sponsorship of sites that need refurbishment as part of their CSR.
- Providing an online platform where the whole tourism landscape can be made available on one site and assist potential visitors with the whole travel experience from itinerary planning to actual booking. Artificial Intelligence has a massive role to create efficient itineraries based on

It may be high time to constitute an independent Tourism Board much like how Invest India was created to promote investment and help businesses navigate the lacunae in our notoriously intertwined system of approvals and local laws.

Interests, budgets and duration of travel.

- Retain and earn from all the IPs belonging to the India Tourism mission and offer fee-based accreditation and listing of service providers across the tourism landscape.

The list of possibilities is long and perhaps beyond the word count limit I have, but the point is that it needs to be done and the time is ripe.

India can be a tourism powerhouse and pull a whole generation from overtly poorer sections into the middle class with better standards of living. It can also quite easily generate 10 percent of our GDP and 20-25% of gross national employment and add to the GDP growth rate. It is the lowest hanging fruit available to this country to leverage on its journey towards a developed economy if one is willing to go through the pains of structuring it in a way that it works. 



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author is former hotel chain CEO, founder - The Avatar Hotel and co-founder of AltDRX.com

LETTER FROM TORONTO

EFFECTIVE MARKETING MIX WITH VALUE PROPOSITIONS!

by JEY DHARMARAJ

USA, UK and Canada are some of the bigger markets in the global pecking order for generating tourism traffic and India with its amazing and breathtaking sweep of experiences, most certainly has the potential for a much larger piece of the total global tourism pie.

Looking at Guides like the 300 best hotels in the world, Forbes Travel Guide Star Rated Hotels, Leading Hotels Guide, Michelin, In World Guide, Official Hotel Guide, Luxury Hotels Guide, India is not mentioned as much as its national product deserves. There are some hotels in India that have been listed but these latter Guides are by no means comprehensive or current.

Most of these Guides have some type of objective, incognito and a non-commercial process to evaluate these hotels. Renee Lecler, after visiting 3,000 hotels and travelling to 102 countries has said it simply, “caring for quality in all aspects of the total hotel experience, gives me what I want with genuine friendliness and a touch of panache, that hotel will make it.”

Looking beyond to 2024 and forward, an honest in-depth internal look at an organization’s business strategy is critical for improved performance, profitability and sustainability. This needs to embrace all elements of the tourism product. With specific reference to India, the destination has to be marketed in conjunction with different levels of government, the carriers, tour and travel operators, media (local and international) with hotels, ground operators.

And, most of all, tourist sites all playing their part to enhance the buyer’s experience at all touch points of the purchase cycle.

A new Pew Research Center survey finds that views of India are generally positive across 23 countries and here we see an opportunity for improvement with a clear and simple coordinated strategy.



A new Pew Research Center survey finds that views of India are generally positive across 23 countries and here we see an opportunity for improvement with a clear and simple coordinated strategy.

As a friend of Bill Marriott records, “to know Bill Marriott and realize his immense success makes the average person feel he could have done as well under similar circumstances.” It is hoped that this will inspire the new generation of tourism professionals to go to higher ground with unstinting quality that stands out, superior easy to use technology, safety and cleanliness with green initiatives to make the whole business sustainable. Going over leaves from Bill Marriott’s life, he believed he could do it, worked morning noon and night and did in-depth market research to understand the market and the consumer. He believed in timeless values of teamwork, a positive “I love my job” attitude, integrity and pride in his entire organization and service offering.

Looking at the top global destinations featured in travel magazines and publications, Srinagar and Rajasthan are mentioned, however, the vast sub products like culture, big cities, on the water, nature and wildlife, snow and winter sports are overlooked and remain missing. There is a big gap here that needs to be addressed to create a more accurate and comprehensive awareness of the total Indian tourism experience.

The world is suffering from creeping mediocrity and it is important that travellers keep experiencing a product that offers distinctive quality without these service providers basking on past glories and traditions that might have been great at that time. Innovation and




A concerted approach covering all elements of the marketing mix will enhance the total customer experience. Some other factors include a strategic value price relationship, well trained teams to offer caring service excellence, correct inaccurate market perceptions, with creative consistent destination advertising.

constant quality assessment are necessary to stand out.

A Deloitte travel Industry outlook says, “as travelers consider the price vs. value proposition of travel, a looming concern of hoteliers and airlines is their ability to deliver the experiences travelers expect. Like the service industry broadly, travel suppliers have struggled to sufficiently staff frontline roles.” A recent JD Power study recorded a drop in

customer satisfaction and that they were not getting the value for their money. It looks like all airline and food and beverage prices are rising above customer expectations and they are holding on to their wallets.

In conclusion, solutions might be complex. However, a concerted approach covering all elements of the marketing mix will enhance the total customer experience. Some other factors include a strategic value price relationship, well trained teams to offer caring service excellence, correct inaccurate market perceptions, with creative consistent destination advertising. 



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jey Dharmaraj, is a marketing strategy advisor, based in Toronto. Having worked with ITC Hotels, in their

hotels and the corporate office, he relocated to Toronto and has several clients in various sectors. He has many articles published in local and international publications. He may be contacted at jey.dharmaraj@gmail.com

TRAFFIC RIGHTS: THEN AND NOW!

Will Indian Carriers Pick Traffic over Dubai?

News on airline bilateral rights between nations always attracts attention. Given the ever-growing interest in travelling international, India remains one of the fastest growing originating markets globally. This is where the world's single biggest aircraft orders are coming from, it is a most lucrative place to be. Why are bilateral rights important? They determine how many seats you can offer on any country-to-country basis. This determines finally the price of each ticket. Connectivity plays an important part in business and economy and commercial global play.



by NAVIN BERRY

The background: Indian carriers were not growing two decades back, our national carrier was limping, especially after the failed merger of Air India and Indian Airlines; its inability to service the purchase of newly ordered planes added to its woes. How would an Indian travel? European carriers did not have the appetite and it was the Middle Eastern airlines that looked for markets, they found one big one in their own backyard. They had the money, the appetite to buy more planes, wanted to develop tourism as an industry, creating hubs was a big growth strategy. Our planners were not growing airports, there was little understanding of aviation as a big business. It is the Middle East carriers that found a win-win situation, regardless of all conversations, regarding methodology and

deals that made their business possible. These brought India to connect with the world.

The present times: Granting bilateral rights has ceased to be a matter of lobbying, there has been a uniform suspension by and large. Especially since 2014, when the present government took charge. It was their understanding that this was a grave area where traffic rights were being traded, they put to a stop on them, a big clamp down. Air India's woes continued, and in between there was the covid lockdown, the zero-travel period, the subsequent revival; not to mention the long-awaited sale of Air India, and that too, to a deep pocket buyer like TATA. Indian carriers were not exactly growing, except for Indigo adding competitive capacity, we saw the fall of the mighty Kingfisher and Jet Airways. Spicejet did not live to its promise. And, now Go First also went down. Dismal scene, overall, with only two airlines coming through.

Newer destinations are being added significantly, especially Indigo is bringing new city pairs on its global network. Vistara and Air India are connecting globally, we are witnessing a resurgence, with these two carriers.

Our airports are adding adequate muscle. Mumbai and New Delhi will soon have a second airport each. Airport capacity is now for the first time in a position to provide hub traffic; in fact, multiple hubs, to rival each its own. Like Chennai can become an alternative to Colombo, Delhi and Mumbai to Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Indian travellers have emerged among the world's best bet. There is demand for more flights. The government says they will calibrate the growth in seats offered, giving our Indian carriers a chance to add capacity before we allow more flights to foreign airlines.

So, we have the aircrafts, the airports, the travel demand and a government willing to understand, support and grow the sector and the eco-system that it needs around it.

Going forward: So, where do we go from



here? Given the steady market growth, do we wait for a few years more till our own capacity is closer to the foreign capacity? Some kind of calibrated opening would be desirable to keep India well connected to ensure airfares can come down, as price is a bigger deferent at present. Airlines are happy but the customer is not.

Specifically, with regard to the Middle East, which is the single biggest foreign carrier for India, in its combined strength, media reports have suggested that India could be seeking 4 seats for every 1 seat given in any new bilateral negotiation with the UAE, Give the fact that only some 25% of the traffic going from India to the Gulf is destination bound, the rest is going beyond, what we call the fifth and sixth freedom rights, given that every 1 seat we get will be UAE bound, are we saying we will build a hub over Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the next few years? That is an ambitious target, to say that we will muscle around our travelling numbers and also pick up traffic ex-Dubai? That indeed will be a new chapter for Indian air transport industry.

On the flip side, this could be just a conjecture. Or, an exaggerated positioning to ask for more, in terms of what we give. The bigger consensus is that we build our own hubs, Indian travellers want direct, non-stop flights. Presently UAE traffic rights are negotiated separately with Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khima and Sharjah. If these had been consolidated, say sources, this might have released

Indian travellers have emerged among the world's best bet. There is demand for more flights. The government says they will calibrate the growth in seats offered, giving our Indian carriers a chance to add capacity before we allow more flights to foreign airlines.



With regard to the Middle East, which is the single biggest foreign carrier for India, in its combined strength, media reports have suggested that India could be seeking 4 seats for every 1 seat given in any new bilateral negotiation with the UAE.

some unused capacity for EK. But presently it is learnt that Etihad is increasing flights, both directly and through Air Arabia JV, leaving no room for enhancement at present.

What about the European carriers? In the last few years, numerous new entities have taken flight, like the Polish Airlines, and doing well, from what we gather. The Indo-US route has an open sky policy and does not need any rights. But open we must, liberal as we need to be! **DI**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Navin Berry, Editor, Destination India, over five decades has edited publications like CityScan, India Debates and Travel Trends Today. He is the founder of SATTE, India's first inbound tourism mart, biggest in Asia.

Indian Aviation in 2024 WHAT DO WE EXPECT TO SEE?



A CAPA INDIA REPORT

After a long time, possibly for the first time since deregulation, India has a stable airline system led by two principal players – IndiGo and Air India Group. Both of which have aggressive expansion plans, which they will support by continuing to invest in management capital, digitalisation, corporate image, employee training, product upgrades and the development of gateways on key corridors. This is a new era for the market, which we will see unfolding from 2024. Competition between the two key airlines will be intense, across routes, regions and products, in a manner previously not seen in India. Importantly, both carriers have the balance sheets to support the anticipated growth and competitive intensity.

Complemented by the coming of age of Air India Express with its significant fleet inductions, the continued growth of Akasa Air, and the revival of SpiceJet, we will see new competitive dynamics in the domestic market. Similarly, both Air India and IndiGo will increasingly focus on international operations and will compete on short, medium and long haul routes, with key strategic developments expected in long haul markets from 2024. Akasa Air will also launch international services in 2024.

Both Air India and IndiGo are expected to take strategic positions for competitive reasons e.g. we expect Air India Express to concentrate on non-metro markets to compete with IndiGo, while full service Air India/Vistara will compete with IndiGo on metros.

IndiGo's decision to introduce a business class on domestic routes, even though it will account for less than 1% of their total traffic carried,

is to ensure that the Air India does not have exclusivity in the premium segment. The 232-seater A321neo allows them to introduce the two-class configuration without compromising aircraft economics and the business model in a significant manner.

Likewise, IndiGo's speculated widebody order, if it materialises, may be to ensure both that IndiGo participates in the large international long haul market, and that Air India does not have exclusivity in the long haul market. This could be a trigger for the induction of widebodies by Air India Express for long haul operations in the near-term. This strategic repositioning may commence from 2024.

Key themes in the domestic market: Profitability will be more uncertain

DOMESTIC ISSUES

■ **CRITICAL** The revival of SpiceJet as a result of securing new funding (although more is required) will result in the emergence of a very aggressive airline that will seek to make up for 3-4 years of lost growth.

Although the market for procuring aircraft in 2024 is exceptionally tight, we expect that SpiceJet will bring stored aircraft back into operations, and will wet or dry lease as much capacity as possible, in order to be competitively relevant. This will have a

material impact on the industry structure, and possibly on domestic profitability.

SpiceJet may be the most appropriate bidder for Go First if it can raise the funding. If successful, it would provide access to 50+ aircraft on the ground in India and an order book for 72 aircraft. In contracts, to expand

organically through OEM orders would take 2-3 years. Although contemplating such a scenario may be premature at present, if they are successful it may lead to SpiceJet transitioning to an all-Airbus fleet in the near-term.

The risk of over-capacity in the market is likely to be deferred until 2025 given that it will take time to restore grounded aircraft back to service. However, sufficient capacity will be available in the market, especially given the heightened level of competition that is expected.

The resurgence of SpiceJet (with or without acquiring Go First), once new funding is in place, may be the most watched development in the industry in 2024, given that it has the potential to disrupt the market. Though we believe that the tranche structure of the funding may be a possible downside.

■ **Air India Express, which had plateaued at around 20-25 aircraft for some 15 years, is expected to have a fleet of more than 100 aircraft in 2024.**

The carrier will expand significantly on domestic routes, where its network is currently not competitive. Rapid growth, combined with its brand overhaul, induction of new aircraft, modernisation of its inflight and ground services, and aggressive marketing, will see the carrier become increasingly relevant as a domestic LCC from 2024. Most of their fleet inductions will be for domestic operations given the need to have a competitive domestic network.

■ **Vistara's transition to the Air India brand will need to be carefully managed.**

The transition will need to be managed to minimise the impact on consumers, especially in the domestic market, given Vistara's strong premium positioning. This transition will be a key theme to watch and could have a major impact in the full service segment

IndiGo will continue its dominance of the domestic market, despite capacity challenges

Supply chain and other issues will be mitigated by securing alternative capacity, to ensure that expansion plans, capacity guidance and strategic targets are met. The carrier's ability to secure replacement capacity on a timely basis will be a key issue to track. The debut of the carrier's business class will be another important strategic development in 2024, especially its product features.

Supply chain risks for the industry will extend into 2024

Most of the aircraft currently on the ground are expected to remain there, and will be joined by more. There will be a critical shortage of shop capacity during the year due to the increased number of engine inspections. After-market issues are likely for older as well as recently-inducted aircraft, as OEMs are focused on new engine deliveries. This relates not only to aircraft and engine deliveries, but also to seats, IFE etc. for both narrowbodies and widebodies. A key point to watch will be whether quality control and engine durability issues are appropriately managed, and ensuring that no new risks emerge.

Key themes in the international market

- 1) New competitive intensity will begin from 2024
- 2) Air India's premium long and ultra-long haul product will become visible from 2024

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

■ Air India

Air India's first six A350s are expected to be deployed on international routes from Summer 2024, joining five 777s already leased from Delta, and other 777s leased and yet to come from Etihad and Singapore Airlines, which will result in a significantly upgraded long and ultra-long haul product and customer experience. Product standardisation across the fleet will take at least a couple of years, but service standardisation will start to become visible from 2024. Air India is expected to do whatever is required to secure market leadership in the long and ultra-long haul segment, which is key to its business case. A key aspect to watch is the extent to which Air India will be able to recapture premium traffic and strengthen yields as a result of offering an upgraded product with non-stop, multi-frequency service, as we

believe that normalisation in the international market is expected from 2024.

■ Indigo

IndiGo, which has established dominance in the domestic market by a mile, is now seeking to achieve a leadership market share in the international segment as well. In 2024 IndiGo will increasingly focus on international expansion using A320neos/A321neos and by extending the wet leases for its four

777s. The carrier may even wet lease additional widebody capacity, as an interim measure to maintain its international growth momentum. A key point to watch will be to see whether IndiGo places a widebody order, as speculated, as this will have a significant impact on the international market. If this was to happen, we believe that it will serve as a natural trigger for Air India Express to induct widebodies for long haul expansion. This would be inevitable from a strategic and competitive perspective.



Indian airlines will have a very busy 2024 on the international front, but we expect that the impact on financials may also be visible.

■ Bilateral Policy

Bilateral policy is likely to be relaxed with effect from H2 of 2024, as extending the freeze beyond that will possibly exacerbate aero-political and trade tensions. We estimate that foreign carriers are seeking an additional 150,000 seats per week in the near-term, but we expect that liberalisation will be gradual to begin with. The extent of opening up will be the key theme to watch.

■ Foreign carriers responding to a resurgent Air India

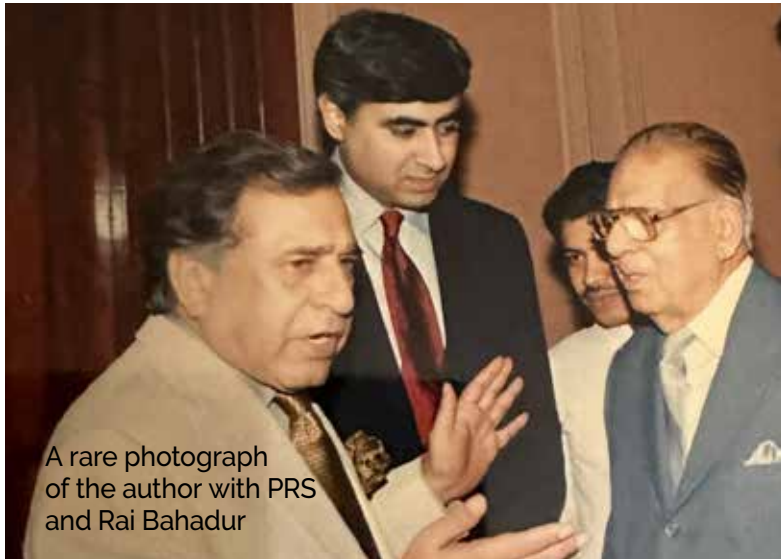
Western European airlines are expected to both upgauge and launch new services to India. This will be to compete with Air India's expansion and enhanced proposition, as well as to take advantage of North America traffic given that US and Canadian carriers continue to be impacted by Russian airspace closures. As a result, Gulf carriers are expected to allocate a greater share of their India capacity for North American and European traffic, despite their seat constraints at an overall level.

■ Airfares

Airfares on international routes are expected to normalise to a significant extent towards pre-COVID levels from January 2024, in economy class and especially in premium classes. Historical season variations will remain. The extent of normalisation in premium cabins will be closely watched. **Di**

A Protégé Remembers his Mentor

Rajiv Kaul on PRS Oberoi on his 90th birthday!



A rare photograph of the author with PRS and Rai Bahadur

This was just four years ago. In a chat with Marzban Patel's Mediascope channel, **Rajiv Kaul**, who worked extensively at The Oberoi, and later was with The Taj and The Leela, all in the luxury segment, recalled his association with the Great Master of Indian Luxury. With over four decades in the hospitality industry, hotelier Rajiv Kaul has been a very important part of this close-knit fraternity. We bring extracts of this conversation with Priya Pathiyan, Deputy Editor, TravelDine. With the passing on of PRS, earlier in November this year, this interview becomes even more of a fond memory of a senior colleague.

You started your career with the Oberoi School of Hotel Management. Did you meet PRS Oberoi at that time? And what were your initial impressions of him?

The first time we met Mr. Oberoi was at our final interview because he would personally select all the management trainees. It's a tradition that continues to this day, and I think we started with 9,000 and came down to some 300 people through a series of filters, and then he interviewed us and selected a batch of 16. So, I remember the first time we saw him, he was sitting, but, you know, he was rather Napoleonic, but his, it's a voice that booms in. He has an aura that you cannot dismiss. Of course, then on the job, when we saw him in the hotel, et cetera, one could clearly see that there was a special aura about him that inspired a lot of strong feelings in the staff.

And what would you recall of that interview then?

There is one standard question, which everybody's asked, as to why do you want to join hotels? And I think my reply to that was perhaps a little different. I said, I want to join hotels because I want to work in an air-conditioned environment. He smiled and I thought that that was it. And to my surprise, some 20-25 years later we were having dinner and he was in one of his expansive moods, and he told the story to my wife. He asked her, can you imagine his reason for joining hotels with this? I was really flattered that he remembered it even after 25 years and interviewing, you know, thousands of people. But that's Mr. Oberoi. He has a memory of an elephant.

Please share some anecdotes about him that reveal his true character?

Yes, so I asked him once, I said, Mr. Oberoi, in our batch of 16 people, we couldn't help noticing that nearly a dozen of us have a common thread of going to public schools, and then coming from a services background

or government service background. So that could hardly be a coincidence. He said that, you know, I can train anyone to be a hotelier, but I can't train someone to be a gentleman. And I thought that was a tremendous insight that he wanted gentleman hoteliers, and that's where Oberoi Hotels stood apart from others. He has always emphasized on the quality of people. One of the things that a general manager cannot delegate, is that he must sign off on every new employee that is hired because it is a people's business.

I remember once we had a very important industrialist staying with us in the hotel. Mr. Oberoi happened to be in the lobby. So, I walked across and introduced the two of them. And Mr. Oberoi then later took me aside and said, what were you speaking to him? I said, I was just asking him that I trust he is having a comfortable stay. And so, he says, what did he say? He said, yes. He asks, what did you expect him to say? He says, what kind of a stupid question was that? He said, you should be asking him, what can we do better? There's no point in asking him if he's having a comfortable stay. And you know, come to think of it, that's really what distinguishes Oberoi Hotels because the question that we need to ask of ourselves is, how can we find new ways and better ways to delight our guests? You know, how can you



PRS with the Oberoi alumni

better the guest experience? And you can only better it if you focus on perhaps where there is an area for improvement rather than 10 things that are going right.

You worked with three of the biggest hospitality companies in India. In your experience, what, according to you sets Mr. Oberoi apart as a hotelier? What are the qualities that he has and how do you feel about how he's influenced the entire world of hospitality?

See, Mr. Oberoi is a hotelier's hotelier. He is really the oracle, where the bedrock of excellence is service. And Mr. Oberoi has always emphasized on service. Now, service, it starts with warmth, and then it is promptness, and then it goes on to courtesy and then personalized, and finally, it should be anticipatory. So, service is everything. That is something which Mr. Oberoi, you'll hear him say it number of times a day and his attention to detail is legendary. There are so many stories about how he wants the chicken to be cut into four pieces. He wants French-fries to be blanched before they're fried. The toast is best made from bread which is one day old, so these are some of his pet peeves that we were raised on.

But he's absolutely right. If you want the best for your guest, then you've got to do it right. And there's only one way of doing it, right? So that's something that Mr. Oberoi always emphasized on. In the late 80s as a youngster, some of us were sent to on a trip to see the best hotels in the world. We actually visited these hotels and spent time there to see what is it that makes them what they are, and then bring and incorporate those best practices into Oberoi hotels. I was very fortunate, Mr. Oberoi approved my going to Cornell for my Masters at Cornell in Paris, and I was there for two years. So, when I finished my graduation, I wanted to come back when Mr. Oberoi suggested, no, stay back for another six months and work at the legendary hotels like the Ritz, because that's the experience that he felt we needed.

Because at that particular time the brand, the Oberoi was being launched, this is 1987. His investment in people is something which is amazing. I mean, you have today, leaders in the hospitality industry across all multiple chains who actually have come from the Oberoi stable. Mr. Oberoi would always say that, I don't want to be the biggest, I want to be the best. And he was true to that. I remember when I joined the group, 1978, they had some 28 or 30 hotels, and even today, they do not have more than 35 hotels. It was always about quality and being benchmarked with the best. And I think he raised the bar for luxury. It was a matter of great pride for everybody in the industry when Oberoi hotels in 2008 were rated as the number one brand in the world. I must

“Mr. Oberoi would always say that, I don't want to be the biggest, I want to be the best. And he was true to that. It was always about quality and being benchmarked with the best. And I think he raised the bar for luxury.”

say we were very delighted that we could emulate that, you know, in 2020 and 2021 with Leela being the best. But the inspiration has always been Mr. Oberoi and the Oberoi Hotels because he has always pursued perfection. And perfection is a journey. It's not a destination. I think there is a passion which clearly you gets indoctrinated into you. And there is a sense of responsibility towards excellence. You know, it is not something to be trifled with. You can do anything, but you must do it well, and it's not about doing it well, but do it the best possible way that you can do it, because every act of yours is a signature. You know, these are simple things, but Mr Oberoi teaches it to you through personal example, so it stays with you.

So now tell us something about him that possibly nobody knows.

I once asked Mr. Oberoi that what if your father Rai Bahadur was not a hotelier? What profession would you have chosen? And without batting an eye, Mr. Oberoi said, I would've been an architect. And people who know him would not be surprised because his knowledge of architecture is amazing. Most of us will struggle when it comes to sections, but he will draw it. He'll say, this is the way it should be and sometimes it frustrates the architects on the job because he's telling them exactly those things which they sometimes don't want to hear.

Is there something that you'd like to say to Mr. Oberoi via this video?

Mr. Oberoi, our grateful thanks. You have been an inspiration to generations of hoteliers, and we can't thank you enough for the way that you have moulded so many of us. We wish you wonderful years ahead. Please take good care of yourself. You're really precious to us all. We hope to celebrate your hundredth birthday. We are looking forward to that. God bless. 🙏



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A luxury hospitality curator, Rajiv Kaul, with over four decades of experience, has helmed the operations at some of

the most iconic properties of Oberoi, Taj, and Leela groups.

DRIVING POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM NEEDS COLLECTIVE COLLABORATION

by SUDEEP JAIN

The evolution of travellers: Driving change through conscious choices

A global study commissioned by IHG Hotels & Resorts revealed that 83% of consumers noted the importance of choosing a hotel brand that operates responsibly, with guests willing to spend on average 31% more on accommodation that meets this need. With the growing appetite for more eco-friendly stays, search engines and OTAs are now highlighting a hotel's credentials, with Google labelling hotels meeting its sustainability criteria as Eco-certified, while Booking.com applies its Travel Sustainable badge.

Our efforts to create a sustainable future

In 2019, IHG Hotels & Resorts became the first hotel company to commit to replacing bathroom miniatures with full-size amenities across all brands – and we took this further in 2021 with a commitment to eliminate single-use items or move to reusable or recyclable alternatives across the guest stay by 2030.

IHG Hotels & Resorts embraces the responsibility and opportunity to make a positive difference and help shape the future of responsible travel. At the core of our culture and business is to operate responsibly and sustainably. Our dedication to making a positive change led us to launch 'Journey to Tomorrow' in 2021, a 10-year action plan of clear commitments to drive change for our people, communities and planet, aligned with our purpose of 'True Hospitality for Good' and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

To help our hotels achieve our sustainability goals, we deploy IHG Green Engage, an online environmental management platform. The platform is a global standard and helps our properties across the globe measure, report and manage their use of energy, water and manage waste, while simultaneously minimising their utility costs and environmental impact. More than 200 Green Solutions are available to help our hotels make greener choices and we recognize their progress through four levels of certification.

At IHG, we are implementing initiatives such as introducing bulk amenities as a part of our goal to eliminate single-use plastic items and introducing AI-based technology to reduce food waste, and collaborating with local stakeholders to tackle water sustainability issues in areas of greatest risk. Additionally, we continue to work with the hotels to reduce carbon emissions in line with climate science. There is a big focus on improving energy efficiency across our properties by introducing an Energy Reduction Metric in 2022, which remains a key



“The rise of sustainable and responsible tourism has emerged as a catalyst for change in the hospitality industry, ushering in a new era of conscientious travel.”

Sudeep Jain



area of focus this year as well.

Future outlook: Advancing sustainable and responsible tourism

Embracing sustainability is not just a trend but a necessary step towards a resilient and thriving hospitality sector. We should envision a future where travelers are drawn to India not only for its rich cultural experiences but also for the authentic and eco-friendly adventures it offers. To achieve this vision, we must work collectively and prioritise sustainability in all aspects of our operations. Government bodies, hoteliers, suppliers, and travellers must work hand in hand to create a more sustainable and responsible tourism ecosystem.

The rise of sustainable and responsible tourism has emerged as a catalyst for change in

the hospitality industry, ushering in a new era of conscientious travel. As travellers increasingly prioritize eco-friendly experiences, it is incumbent upon us, as industry leaders, to respond with an unwavering commitment to sustainability. Through collective collaboration, we can forge a future where travel gives a new impetus to positive impact, leaving behind a legacy of conservation, cultural preservation, and community advancement. **DI**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sudeep Jain is Managing Director, SWA, IHG Hotels & Resorts

ECOTOURISM IS ONE BIG WORD; A TOOL FOR ACHIEVING SDG'S

We as responsible humans have to think in terms of PERPETUAL SUSTAINABILITY. Not just long term if we are concerned about our future generations.

By RAKESH MATHUR

Tourism is a high consumer of energy and resources and a high producer of pollutants and waste. The higher the experience the higher the environmental cost. Uncontrolled tourism and human intervention shall contribute to climate change. The difference between a 2 degree to 4 degree centigrade rise in temperature implies extinction of humans, animals and plants from planet earth.

There are several important actions needed to counter the negative impacts and contribute to achieving the SDGs of sustaining life on land and below water, good health and wellbeing, sustainable communities, clean water and sanitation, responsible consumption and production, decent work and economic growth, and prevention of climate change. These are some of the SDGs that tourism can directly impact through our actions as below:

1. There has to be a transition in the tourism industry to renewable energy and reduction of carbon emission through innovation and technology. This includes hotels, travel and the transportation sector.
2. There has to be a redefinition of luxury vs comfort to discourage conspicuous consumption which borders on human greed to consume more and more. "Experience" has to replace luxury. Local consumption has to be encouraged and imports with a high carbon footprint have to be discouraged.
3. Hotels must innovate and change service designs and introduce environment charters and guidelines for employees to follow.
4. Architects must plan and design buildings and use materials that are environment friendly.
5. Plastics are the worst enemy of mankind and single use plastic must be banned at the production stage. Processed drinking water in glass bottles, as in earlier days, must replace the plastic water bottle and the RO Plant.
6. It is devastating to see the plastic water bottle consumption



“There are several important actions needed to counter the negative impacts and contribute to achieving the SDGs of sustaining life on land and below water.”

Rakesh Mathur



specially in banquets and large gatherings. It can be easily replaced with large dispensers

7. Waste management is key to creating good destinations. To achieve this, a major movement is required to bring to shame dirty destinations and change the mindsets of both tourism service providers and tourists who are worse offenders. This can be done only through sensitization and education.

Implementation is the key to achieving the above objectives and I strongly feel it is now time to take decisive strong actions against violators. However the following steps are recommended:

1. Since this requires a change of mindset, education in schools on all aspects of being a good responsible citizen and learning hygiene, sanitation, energy conservation, road rules, garbage segregation etc. is a must. Not as a separate subject but an interactive discussion held for half an hour session from class 4 to 10 in every school in India.
2. 'Do's and Don'ts' should be displayed at all tourism sites and violators fined heavily. A system of tourism wardens combined with guides can be created.
3. Workshops must be conducted for stakeholders by high tourism density states to sensitize tourism service providers. This would also lead to exchange of best practices.
4. The unorganized sector, which constitutes about 70% of our tourism service providers must be brought under control.
5. Energy and environmental audits must become mandatory for classification.
6. Carrying capacity studies must be conducted and new destinations must be developed.

Above are some thoughts that can start the journey forward. If we are to GO GREEN and SAVE MOTHER EARTH there has to be zero tolerance on environmental matters. **Di**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rakesh Mathur is an eminent hotelier and presently, President of the Responsible Tourism Society.

SKILLING CHANGES COURSE; STAKEHOLDERS ARE BEING INVOLVED FROM START TO FINISH!

This is a game changer for the industry. Leading chains are benefiting from direct recruitment, there is more to follow.

by RAJAN BAHADUR

Traditionally the skill development program since its beginning relied heavily on government sponsored schemes such as PMKVY, DDUGKY, NULM and State Govt. These schemes focused majorly on 2 stakeholders – trainees and training institutions and one of the major stakeholder industry partners had only last role to play by providing employment opportunities to candidates at the end of the scheme.

The new initiative taken by Industry and Awarding Bodies (AB) to work under the Recruit Train Deploy model is making changes in the traditional skilling methods. Industry partners are involved from the very beginning of the program. Mobilization, screening, training, monitoring and placement all are being done in consultation with the industry stakeholders and they play a pivotal role in the entire training lifecycle.

After Covid-19 pandemic, it become very challenging for the tourism & hospitality industry to hire skilled workers as existing staff got displaced from their jobs and work location. In scenarios such as this, it was very evident that Industry, Awarding Bodies, Training Partners had to think out of the box. The new skilling model helped all stakeholders in reaching out to potential aspirants who despite all challenges wishes to build a successful career in ever growing industry.

The model is very lucrative for Industry Partners, Learners & Institutional Partners. Employers can hire multiple job role candidates from their preferred geographical location only after screening and selecting the right candidate before the start of training. Traditionally students didn't had visibility on jobs post completion of training. At times they had to appear for multiple of job interviews even after completion of the program and each employer had different expectations from the students.




“In scenarios such as this, it was very evident that Industry, Awarding Bodies, Training Partners had to think out of the box. The new skilling model helped all stakeholders in reaching out to potential aspirants who despite all challenges wishes to build a successful career in ever growing industry.”

Rajan Bahadur



Now students from day zero are prepared to join one specific employer at a particular location. Partners who were completely dependent on Govt sponsored schemes now could build privately sponsored businesses which they can run throughout the year. With this model, full capacity utilization of any institutes can be achieved and can also run other businesses under Govt. or CSR sponsorship.

Through this program Industry in association with Training Partners and Awarding Body has trained, skilled and deployed over 500+ students. With the industry growing at a rapid pace there is a need of more than 1 lakh+ skilled workers only within the hotel industry which is going to increase by 100% in next 5 years. Models like RTD (Recruit, Train, Deploy) will be a game changer benefitting thousands of youths if not lakhs. The current trend shows over 96% candidates completed the program successfully and joined with 91% + candidates retaining in jobs leading to lower attrition. Brands such as The Leela, The Oberoi, Marriott and others are seeing good attraction and hence they are coming with repeat demand of skilled workers. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rajan Bahadur is Chief Executive Officer, Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council

MADE IN INDIA VFS GETS UK'S GLOBAL VISA ACCOUNT OVER 142 COUNTRIES

During 2024, VFS Global will deploy 240 Visa and Citizenship Application Service (VCAS) Centres for the UK in 142 countries across Africa & Middle East, Americas, Australasia & Europe, China & Taiwan, and Asia & Asia Pacific regions. These centres will accept all categories of visa applications as well as UK passport applications in some locations. Combined, these new centres are estimated to process 3.8 million applicants every year.

During the year, VFS signed with five other countries – namely, Sweden Global, Australia Global, Latvia Global, Iceland Global and Austria Global; creditable achievements on the global pecking order.

Beyond the scale of the deployment, VFS Global will invest to improve the customer journey and increase accessibility - including through new customer websites, and through updated in-person experiences. And VFS Global will deploy its latest technologies to maintain robust identity checks and ensure the integrity of the visa and passport application process. The new contract is expected to deliver savings to the UK Government.

Zubin Karkaria, Founder and CEO, VFS Global, said, “We are



Mumbai grown, ‘Made in India’, now a global gold standard in visa outsourcing, VFS Global, which has been a trusted partner for the UK Government since 2003, has won the global contract for overseas UK visa and Citizenship services. This award is the latest in a long line of wins for the world’s leading visa, passport and citizen services provider.

This win comes soon after VFS Global being awarded the global biometric collection service mandate with Australia and renewal of the global visa service contract with Sweden.

VFS Global is the world’s largest outsourcing and technology services specialist for governments and diplomatic missions, at present the trusted partner of 70 client governments, operating a global network with more than 3,300 Application Centres in 147 countries. The company has processed over 270 million applications since its inception in 2001. The company manages non-judgmental and administrative tasks related to applications for visa, passport, and consular services for its client governments, enabling them to focus entirely on the critical assessment task. The company headquarters are in Zurich/Switzerland and Dubai/United Arab Emirates. **Di**



- VFS Global becomes the service provider for all UK Visa and Citizenship Application Centres overseas – operating across 142 countries.
- Estimated to manage 3.8 million applicants every year, VFS Global is now opening UK application centres in 84 new countries during 2024.
- New contract will also see significant investment in technology to improve the customer experience, accessibility and security.
- The UK contract is the sixth global contract won by VFS Global during 2023.

delighted to win this contract and expand our partnership with the Home Office to become their service provider for all UK visa customers overseas. We are excited to begin operations in new locations, and to take the next step towards providing customers with a seamless, simple and secure visa and passport application experience. This win is a testament to our dedicated efforts to provide all our client governments with best-in-class services.

The UK is a popular destination for travellers from across the globe with India, China, Nigeria and Turkey being the top four application locations.

In addition to the VCAS Centres, VFS Global will expand its network of additional paid application centres bringing the visa application process closer to home for customers through partnerships with popular hotels and resorts. VFS Global currently offers these in India, UAE and the USA through hotel partners in those countries.

ABOUT VFS

VFS Global is majority-owned by funds managed by Blackstone, the world’s leading alternative asset manager. The Swiss-based Kuoni and Huentobler Foundation and EQT, a global investment organisation, headquartered in Stockholm/Sweden, hold minority stakes in VFS Global.

MEMENTOS: THE NEW ITC LUXURY BRAND!

ITC Hotels is looking to set a new benchmark in hospitality with its new brand called Mementos by ITC Hotels, and as a part of this new brand, the luxury hotel chain has opened its first Mementos property in Udaipur.

With inputs from TEAM ITC

Mementos by ITC Hotels is a collection of luxury hotels and resorts that offer the rarest of luxuries: great memories. Every detail of the Mementos experience is designed to create exquisite moments, unique to each destination and transform them into something truly unforgettable. So that from the time you arrive, till well after you depart, every moment stays with you.

ITC Hotels launched Mementos by ITC Hotels, Ekaaya, Udaipur, as part of its new brand, Mementos in March 2023. Through this new umbrella brand, ITC Hotels will offer bespoke experiences at atypical hotels and resorts characterised by the luxury hospitality chain's distinctive design, heritage or character, while simultaneously also emphasising on coexisting with the environment and local community.



Located near Udaipur, the stunning Mementos by ITC Hotels, Ekaaya Udaipur is spread over approximately 50 acres, making it perfect for a tranquil and intimate retreat. The resort merges classical elegance with a distinct regional charm that's reflected in its service, cuisine, and rituals that offer a genuinely immersive experience. The resort has cluster villas with 117 keys, each providing a breath-taking view of the panoramic Aravali range. These villas exude a modern heritage feel and are nestled in an uninterrupted landscape, making them ideal for a rejuvenating or intimate getaway. Additionally, the clusters also feature a private pool and a personal deck.

The dining options here are Royal Vega, which serves a variety of luxurious vegetarian dishes with a fusion of flavors from India; Udai Pavilion, an all-day dining and à la carte restaurant-inspired by Udaipur—that offers a diverse selection of Indian and international cuisine; Aravali Lounge, a boutique tea lounge that boasts of breathtaking



After the successful launch of Mementos first property, the brand is all set to launch its second property in Jaipur in March this year. The brand aims to open more properties in destinations ideal for a leisure holiday or an intimate getaway.

views of the Aravali hills; and The Rock Bar, a high-end bar that offers a range of captivating cocktails and more.

Such immense choices also extend to the meeting, banquets, and event spaces. Mementos by ITC Hotels, Ekaaya Udaipur offers a flexible space which spans over one lakh square feet. This includes a magnificent pillarless Stateroom, vast pre-function areas, and expansive lawns. The resort also prioritises sustainability, in sync with the ITC Hotels' commitment to Responsible Luxury. To ensure this, the resort has rolled out a series of initiatives including an emphasis on energy efficiency, water efficiency, sustainable site development, utilisation of sustainable materials, and maintaining indoor environmental quality.

After the successful launch of Mementos first property, the brand is all set to launch its second property in Jaipur in March this year. The brand aims to open more properties in destinations ideal for a leisure holiday or an intimate getaway, providing immersive experiences and a chance for their guests to create unforgettable memories. **D**

EBIXCASH TRAVEL REPORTS ROBUST BUSINESS

With data from **TEAM EBIX**

EbixCash Limited has reported exceptional performance across all travel business verticals. Its Corporate Travel business grew year-over-year (YOY) by 60% on an overall basis in 2023, adding approximately 57 new clients in the prestigious large and mid-cap segment in during the year. The group reported growth of approximately 40% in its business with LCC carriers while its GDS segments YOY grew by 37%. It reported YOY growth of 33% in its business with the top line LCC carrier Indigo. EbixCash's international passenger YOY growth was 52% across its India airline business.

In MICE & Event based travel businesses, EbixCash Travel continued to maintain its leadership position across India with a YOY revenue growth of approximately 25%. Passenger growth in the international MICE segment was approx. 150% YOY while it was 47% YOY across the combined domestic and international segment business. This growth was primarily driven by an approximate 80% increase in new client acquisitions in 2023. These have been shared by a release by the company, followed with an interview with its India head, Naveen Kundu.

EbixCash also reported that its overall inbound business grew YOY by 287% in terms of incoming passenger growth & 264% YOY in terms of overall revenue growth.

It may be recalled that EbixCash took over the business of Mercury Travels and VIA.com, and has used these bases to grow its businesses further, both on online and in business travel, predominantly.

EbixCash Travel MD, Naveen Kundu, said "We are excited to have outperformed the travel industry trends in 2023 in almost all segments that we operate in. All our business verticals across EbixCash Travel have performed exceptionally well while allowing us to retain a leadership position in many domestic and international markets. We look forward to 2024 with stated goal of registering a record performance in the year."

Kundu added "Ebix Travels has entered into a PPP joint venture with MTDC (Maharashtra State Tourism Development Corporation) to operate and manage the Deccan Odyssey Luxury train. The train has received good response from foreign tour operators and is running at over 75% occupancy at present. With most departures sold out on peak dates, this will be the only luxury train in India which will have a profitable run in its very first season itself."

In the Luxury trains business, EbixCash Travels has the largest market share of approximately 69% in India while promoting various trains like the Palace on Wheels, Maharaja's Express, besides The Deccan Odyssey.

EbixCash Travel's sports division, Ebix Sports, served as the official Travel agent (OTA) for ICC Cricket World cup 2023 that was held in In-

dia & remained amongst the top contributors for ICC travel packages.


The Company's Financial exchange portfolio of software and services encompasses domestic and international money remittance, foreign exchange (Forex), pre-paid gift cards, utility payments, travel services and technologies for insurance, bus information systems, lending and wealth

management across 75+ countries including India. EbixCash has Forex operations in approximately 16 international airports, including Delhi, Mumbai, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata. Through Via.com and EbixCash.com, it caters to India and Southeast Asian markets, with over 517,000 agents and approximately 17,900 registered corporate clients.

EbixCash Limited has emphasized that its operations in India will not be affected, by the strategic US- only Chapter 11 process undertaken in the United States by Ebix, Inc. It has reiterated that the Chapter 11 proceedings apply to Ebix entities in the United States only and Ebix's approximately 200 affiliates outside the

United States are not included in the U.S. - only Chapter 11 filing and will continue to operate normally. All worldwide operations of the Company will continue to operate in the ordinary course and without any interruption.

MD Naveen Kundu says "EbixCash has strong stand-alone financials and governance, with its cash flows solely available for its own needs. Chapter 11 process mandates insulation between the international companies and the US company in terms of any intercompany dealings. EbixCash owns all intellectual property, assets, India brands, trademarks and the EbixCash brand.

In fact, he says "EbixCash future is bright - with strong operating fundamentals, a robust business model, world-class products, and healthy operating cash flows. With an independent Board and a strong governance structure, EbixCash has been continually profitable over the years and is committed to the growth of its businesses and helping take the industry forward. 



“All our business verticals across EbixCash Travel have performed exceptionally well while allowing us to retain a leadership position in many domestic and international markets. We look forward to 2024.”

Naveen Kundu, *Managing Director, EbixCash Travel*

QMIN, UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS STORY THROUGH INNOVATION



With inputs from **TEAM IHCL**

Qmin – the gourmet culinary and food delivery platform by IHCL, India’s largest hospitality company, was launched in June 2020 with the aim to address a growing consumer demand for online gourmet food delivery services. Qmin app delivers dishes from the group’s signature restaurants to the comfort of guests’ homes across 25 cities from over 100 IHCL restaurants. Introduction of the innovative concept during the peak of pandemic underscores IHCL’s commitment to innovation and the strategic shift it made in the business model.

Keeping up with changing market requirements, Qmin now offers Qmin Comfort, a range of comfort food options; Qmin Subscription meals bringing wholesome home-style meals available on subscription; as well as its latest offer of immunity enhancing menus curated using superfoods – INNERgise. The brand had broadened its scope with new innovations like Qmin Celebrations offering customised menus for virtual weddings and conferences, as well as its lifestyle gourmet stores and food truck.

Qmin Journey

In a recent move Qmin’s offering was introduced in Ginger hotels. Ginger, the reimagined lean luxe brand of IHCL is a true representation of the millennial mindset blending in work and play. Qmin’s vibrant and refreshing experience complements Ginger and is all set to scale with the growing footprint of 87 Ginger hotels across the country. Currently, the 32 Qmin restaurants offer guests a renewed dining experience with vibrant, colourful spaces, comforting bites, global street food and refreshing beverages. An “On the Run” counter is available with ready to pick snacks, for those with a packed schedule.

The pandemic brought the industry to innovate up first to stay competitive and alive, literally. IHCL was in the forefront of this endeavour. Qmin was a smart move that stayed on, prospered and has become a strong revenue stream.

Yet another format of Qmin, its lifestyle gourmet store Qmin Shop across Mumbai, Delhi & Goa serve a variety of artisanal products, handpicked delicacies, high end retail products and a selection of tea & coffees.

Taking the Qmin experience even closer to the consumers, the brand has launched Qmin food truck - Qmin on Wheels. With an aim to serve local communities such as large neighbourhoods and business districts, the Qmin Food Truck offers comfort foods and delicious small bites all created and dispensed with the highest standards of safety and hygiene. The first of its kind, is operational at Carter Road, Bandra in Mumbai.

Large Scale Catering

Among its multiple formats is - Qmin Celebrations an online and offline offering is one of its kind. Qmin Celebrations is the only offering by a hospitality brand, which has successfully served the same curated menu to over 2000 guests across Indian cities simultaneously,

Qmin now offers Qmin Comfort, a range of comfort food options; Qmin Subscription meals bringing wholesome home-style meals available on subscription; as well as its latest offer of immunity enhancing menus curated using superfoods – INNERgise. Another format of Qmin, its lifestyle gourmet store Qmin Shop across Mumbai, Delhi & Goa serve a variety of artisanal products, handpicked delicacies, high end retail products and a selection of tea & coffees.



leveraging IHCL's extensive network of hotels. Qmin is also the only food delivery app where you can organise a complete celebration across the country and features a call back from an expert who will aid in organising menu planning and delivery. The specially curated meals for bulk orders across the country is most popular with both corporate and social clients.

With the introduction of the Qmin Hampers, the app has broadened its scope and reach. Available for delivery Pan India, the hampers are meticulously curated as per the occasion and offer a variety of edible and gifting solutions.

Partnerships

Qmin also forayed into sporting events with the first partnership with Indian Navy for its marquee marathon event, WNC Marathon in Mumbai, catering 16,000 breakfast boxes for the runners. Taking a leap from this partnership, Qmin has partnered with WNC for their second edition this year, Tata Mumbai Marathon, Tata Ultra Marathon, 5 marathons under the TCS Fit for Life banner & Bajaj Allianz Pune Marathon. It continues to grow these partnerships for multiple sporting events pan India.

In the future Qmin will see scale driven by QSR in high footfall areas through franchises at airports, Qmin shops largely at SeleQtions hotels as well as institutional catering through TajSATS kitchens.

Key Differentiators

The strategic move to introduce a culinary platform across online as well as offline formats enabled a tradition food and beverage enterprise to bring enhanced value to its customers by evolving with the market. Shedding its dependency, the company developed alternate sources



of revenue in the F&B and created a business vertical distinct from the existing models thereby building in efficiencies. It maintains a dedicated team of delivery riders, guaranteeing comprehensive end-to-end management of both the product and platform. This approach ensures meticulous control over food quality, standardisation, as well as safety and hygiene standards for each order.

Qmin blends convenience, personalisation, and culinary excellence. It resonates with the modern, fast-paced lifestyle of discerning travellers by offering an elevated experience at the intersection of technology and gastronomy. **DI**



19TH HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE SOUTH ASIA

JW MARRIOTT BENGALURU PRESTIGE GOLFSHIRE RESORT & SPA

2-4 APRIL

SAVOURING SOUTH ASIA: INNOVATION IN FOOD, TECH AND DESIGN



2024 AWARDS

Presented By **make my trip**

HICSA HOTELS OF THE YEAR

make my trip

GENERAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

NOTABLE SPEAKERS

Abhishek Logani, Chief Business Officer – Hotels, MakeMyTrip
Anuraag Bhatnagar, Chief Executive Officer, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts
Arshdeep Sethi MRICS, President - Real Estate, RMZ Corp
Binu Mathews, Chief Executive Officer, IDS Next
Carlton Ervin, Global Development Officer International, Marriott International
Clint Nagata, Founder and Creative Partner, BLINK Design Group
Cyril Jacob, Founder & MD, Ascentis
Deepika Rao, Executive VP, New Businesses, Hotel Openings & Corporate Communications, IHCL
Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO, Minor International
John Gerondelis AIA, IIDA, LEED AP, Principal, Smallwood
Mark Hoplamazian, President & CEO, Hyatt Hotels Corporation

Omar Romero, Chief Development Officer, Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas
Peter Joehnk, Founding Partner, JOI Design
Pieter Elbers, Chief Executive Officer, IndiGo Airlines
Raghu Sapra, Head Hospitality, Embassy REIT
Samir MC, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels
Sébastien Bazin, Chairman & CEO, Accor
Snehdeep Aggarwal, Founder and Chairman, Bhartiya Group
Suma Venkatesh, Executive VP, Real Estate and Development, IHCL
Tim Harlech-Jones, Executive Director, Bentel Associates
Vikram Cotah, Chief Executive Officer, GRT Hotels & Resorts
Zoravar Kalra, Founder and MD, Massive Restaurants

OUR PARTNERS

— HOSTED BY —



— HOST HOTEL —



DIAMOND PARTNERS



PLATINUM PARTNERS



GOLD PARTNERS



For more information, please visit www.hicsaconference.com