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## A RECIPE *for* SUCCESS



DOYENS OF THE F&B BUSINESS DISCUSS THE NEED TO KEEP PACE WITH CHANGING CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS WHILE ACHIEVING GROWTH OBJECTIVES

Sumesh Menon  
Riyaz Amlani  
Chef Manjit Gill  
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Zorawar Kalra

Networking Partner



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F&B  
CONCLAVE  
2017



# A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Doyens of the F&B business discuss the need to keep pace with changing customer perceptions while achieving growth objectives at the Hotelier India F&B Conclave 2017

BY VINITA BHATIA

The food and beverage (F&B) domain is clearly enjoying its moment in the sun. Kitchens are no longer shadowy places located deep in hotels and restaurants. Instead, they have transformed – some even having entire establishments built around them – where chefs do not labour behind counters, but have emerged as culinary maestros who captivate guests with their theatrics.

And F&B's rising popularity does not seem to show signs of abating; on the contrary it is set to peak. A report by Grant Thornton India and FICCI predicts that India's F&B industry will expand at an average annual pace of 24% to reach INR 3.8 trillion in sales by March 2017. Of these fast-food joints, which have the largest market share at 45%, will grow by 16.6% annually, followed by casual dining (32% share) expand-

I. Harman's Ankush Agarwal and Ashish Bajaj felicitate the panelists of the discussion on 'F&B Trends, strategies and opportunities'.

ing at 10.1% annually. The report also pointed out that standalone restaurants, which comprise 22% of the market, are the fastest-growing. Interestingly though fine dining constitutes only 3% of the market, this segment is seeing a renewed interest, especially from multinational chains.

So, when did this shift towards investing more into food gradually occur from every stakeholder in the industry – guests, chefs, restaurateurs, hoteliers, and other F&B professionals in the foodchain? And how is the industry dealing with it? It is precisely to understand this disruptive sizzle in the saucepan that Hotelier India conceptualised the country's first F&B Conclave 2017 on 12th May at The St Regis Mumbai, which was also the host partner for the event.

The day-long conference saw the participation of top-ranking chefs, restaurateurs, hoteliers, caterers,



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hospitality designers, procurement heads and F&B professionals, as they dwelled on various facets on what is driving the premiumization of food experiences in India and how everyone in the hospitality industry plays their intrinsic roles in orchestrating this.

The partners for F&B Conclave 2017 were Kohinoor Specialty Foods, Harman Professional Solutions, Pro-

2. Padma Shri Master Chef Sanjeev Kapoor, founder & owner, FoodFood TV Channel gave the keynote address.

3. Anuraag Bhatnagar, multi-property VP-Luxury, India, Marriott International welcomed the audience.

logic First, Cornitos and Munnilal Tandoors. Industry associations who lent their support included Hospitality Purchasing Managers Forum (HPMF), Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA), National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), while FoodFood was the television partner.

**SUNNY SIDE UP**

S Saikumar, deputy MD of ITP Publishing India introduced the Hotelier India F&B Conclave 2017, informing the audience about the ideology that shaped the conference. In his welcome address Anuraag Bhatnagar, multi-property VP-luxury (India), Marriott International reminisced how this domain has evolved and how he sometimes felt irrelevant because earlier the ABC of F&B used to be 'Always be cooking', which later changed to 'Always be conceptualising' and



now it has become 'Always be commercial'. "This is because there is no point conceptualising and cooking innovative fare if its commercial value is not unlocked," he stated, which is why all stakeholders in the food industry are getting smarter about how they run their business today.

Padma Shri Masterchef Sanjeev Kapoor, founder and CEO of FoodFood TV channel spoke about the importance of media and how it can be aptly leveraged for the F&B industry. "We could either create our own media channels or leverage those present. We should also craft our individual communities and

then evaluate the efficiency of those that is most relevant to the business we are in and the cost of reach for each medium. If we can reach more people, then more often than not it is directly proportional to the cost of conversion," Kapoor said.

**ON A PLATTER**

A highlight of the Hotelier India F&B Conclave 2017 was the tête-à-tête between Zorawar Kalra, founder and MD of Massive Restaurants, and Bibhor Srivastava, group publishing director of ITP Publishing India, where they had a freewheeling discussion on topics like banning alcohol sale in establishments on national highways, portion control, beef ban, etc. Kalra rued the fact that though the hospitality industry is the second largest employer in the country - creating over 8 million jobs and valued at \$78 billion - it is beleaguered by draconian rules. "The government should make things easier for us; by making licensing simpler and having a single-window policy, so entrepreneurs can grow further - hopefully GST will do that - so that the industry's high failure rate of 90% comes down," he said.

Kalra was also a part of another panel discussion titled 'F&B Trends, strategies and opportunities' where his co-panelists were Anurag Katriar, CEO and ED of deGustibus Hospitality, Ranjit Batra, president-hospitality of Panchshil Realty, Sumesh Menon, founder and interior designer of Sumesh Menon Associates, Harinder Jeet Singh, COO of Foodlink Restaurants and Rajeev Matta, CEO of SKRPL. Nitin Motwani, former CEO and ED of KA Hospitality and Badasaab Group moderated the session. Batra felt that F&B outlets in 5-star hotels are easier to operate than standalone restaurants because the former have HR and finance teams to help them and they do not have to worry about rent. Agreeing with Batra, Singh added that as long as restaurateurs concentrate on two things - the quality of their basic offerings and their people - they have nothing on to worry about.

**SPILLING THE BEANS**

In a room filled with chefs and culinary professionals, the discussion on 'A chef's take on evolving F&B trends and innovation' saw a full house. That the panel comprised Anupam Banerjee, executive chef of The Ritz-Carlton Bangalore, Celebrity chef Ajay Chopra,

4. Massive Restaurants' Zorawar Kalra in a dialogue with ITP Publishing India's Bibhor Srivastava.

5. The discussion on 'A chef's take on evolving F&B trends and innovation' saw a full house.

6. The audience actively participated in the talk on 'Analysis needed to succeed in contemporary times'.



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Satbir Bakshi, executive chef, The Oberoi Mumbai, Salil Fadnis, senior executive chef of Hotel Sahara Star & Aamby Valley City, Ashish Bhasin, executive chef of Trident BKC, Vikramjit Roy, head - New Culinary Initiatives, Speciality Restaurants and Hemant Oberoi, Partner, Yantra by Hemant Oberoi, definitely helped!

Chopra said that chefs need to take ownership not just for the cooking but the entire kitchen, including the design and how it affects the overall functionality of their operations. Bhasin agreed with him and gave the example of Pastry Chef Avijit Ghosh of The Leela Palaces, Hotels & Resorts seated in the audience, who rarely accepts any kitchen handed over to him unless it fulfilled all requirements to his specifications. Replying to Chef Oberoi's question about culinary trends, Chef Banerjee opined that Indian food is returning to

7. In the 'Quick Review of Restaurant Design Trends' sessions, designers spoke about their challenges in creating concepts for restaurants and hotels.

8. ITP Publishing India's S Saikumar outlined the ideology of the F&B Conclave.

9. Padma Shri Masterchef Sanjeev Kapoor is applauded as he steps up to make a speech.

10. Peers ask Chef Soundararajan of Mahindra Holidays about food related queries.

basics but with a creative twist. Stating why these concepts work better globally than in India, Roy felt that it had many dimensions, especially culture, and that our country had many amazing restaurants but perhaps the denizens are not yet ready to accept their ideology.

Taking the conversation about F&B operations ahead was the next panel discussion, which focused on 'Analysis needed to succeed in contemporary times', where Surjan Singh Jolly, F&B director of JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar, Elroy Tulkar, F&B director, Grand Hyatt Mumbai, Ritesh Choudhary, F&B director, The Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai, Nitin Shankar Nagrale, VP-Materials, Food Link Restaurants and Ashish Bhasin, executive chef of Trident BKC participated. Hospitality consultant Jaideep Gupta moderated the talk.

Chef Jolly pointed out that he has seen the trend tilting more towards beverages in F&B in recent times. He also felt that socialising predominates dining when guests are in an outlet. Choudhary spoke about how even 5-star hotels are changing their rigid stance and changing their menus keeping their customer segments in perspective. "We have a lot of vegetarians so we need to cater to them. Gone are the days when hotels could say to guests this is what we have, because that is the perfect recipe to shut shop," he added.

Thakur stated about the need to get great produce to craft great culinary experiences, giving the example of Peking duck where his hotel sent someone to China to understand how to raise them and he is now raising them in India successfully and supplying them to Grand Hyatt Mumbai. Nagrale added that procurement professionals today work closely with chefs and culinary heads to make the supply chain more efficient and viable, as compared to some years ago.



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11. People listened with rapt attention to the freewheeling discussion about 'F&B Trends, strategies and opportunities'.

12. Anjan Dasgupta, director-marketing & industrial business, Kohinoor Speciality Foods India felicitates panelists of 'A chef's take on evolving F&B trends and innovation' discussion.

13. ITC Hotels' Habib Rehman and Gautam Anand with ITP Publishing India's Bibhor Srivastava.

14. The audience listens with rapt attention.

15. Amlan Ghose, MD of Prologic First catches up with people from the industry.

Seeing this exchange of ideas, Chef Manjit Gill, corporate chef of ITC Hotels was delighted with the F&B Conclave 2017, especially as he got an opportunity to interact and share his immense knowledge with a lot of upcoming talent. He was also happy to meet and catch up with his peers from the industry under a single roof.

**ICING ON THE CAKE**

After Karan Tanna, founder and CEO of Yellow Tie Hospitality took the assembled participants through

the direction that the QSR trade is taking, the conference shifted to a 'Quick Review of Restaurant Design Trends.' The panel comprised Riyaz Amlani, CEO and MD of Impressario Entertainment and Hospitality, Shantanu Poredi, principal architect of MO-OF Architects, Ayaz Basrai, principal architect of The Busride Design Studio, Pronit Nath, principal architect of Urban Studio, Vami Koticha, senior associate and designer lead of Sameep Padora and Associates, An-kush Agarwal, director-marketing and business development of Harman International India, while Kalhan Mattoo, director of Planet 3 Studios Architecture moderated the session.

Talking about the challenges they face in designing for the hospitality industry, Nath said that it is when clients are unclear and not descriptive about what they want. "They want fine dine, high-energy dining - they want to do everything, which is tough," he said. Basrai jokingly recalled an instance of a client who wanted to create a project that would be a spa in the morning and a bar in the night; which was conceptually at odds! Koticha agreed with him and added that the success of a project is when a client comes with a prescriptive brief and the designer enhances that, especially if the client is open to suggestions.

Talking about choosing designers for his projects, Amlani said he knows that it is usually those who will abandon the drawings quickly. Poredi added that it is important for architects to collaborate with restaurateurs because whilst they might get excited about how to design the space, they might not know much about restaurant operations and they need to talk to their client every step of the way. That is where companies like Harman can also be a part of the collaboration, because their solutions can be integrated at the design stage rather than later, noted Agarwal.

While delivering his closing remarks, Srivastava of ITP Publishing India said that he was elated with feedback that the maiden F&B Conclave had elicited from the industry at large. In fact, this response has enthused the organisation to return with the Conclave with a fresher format soon. Keep watching this space for more... we have some surprises in store for you! **H**