

# foodService

VOLUME FOUR • ISSUE FOUR

www.indiaretailing.com

Trade Journal for the Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Industry

JULY-AUGUST 2014 • ₹100 India Edition



Page 18

## Odds of Success

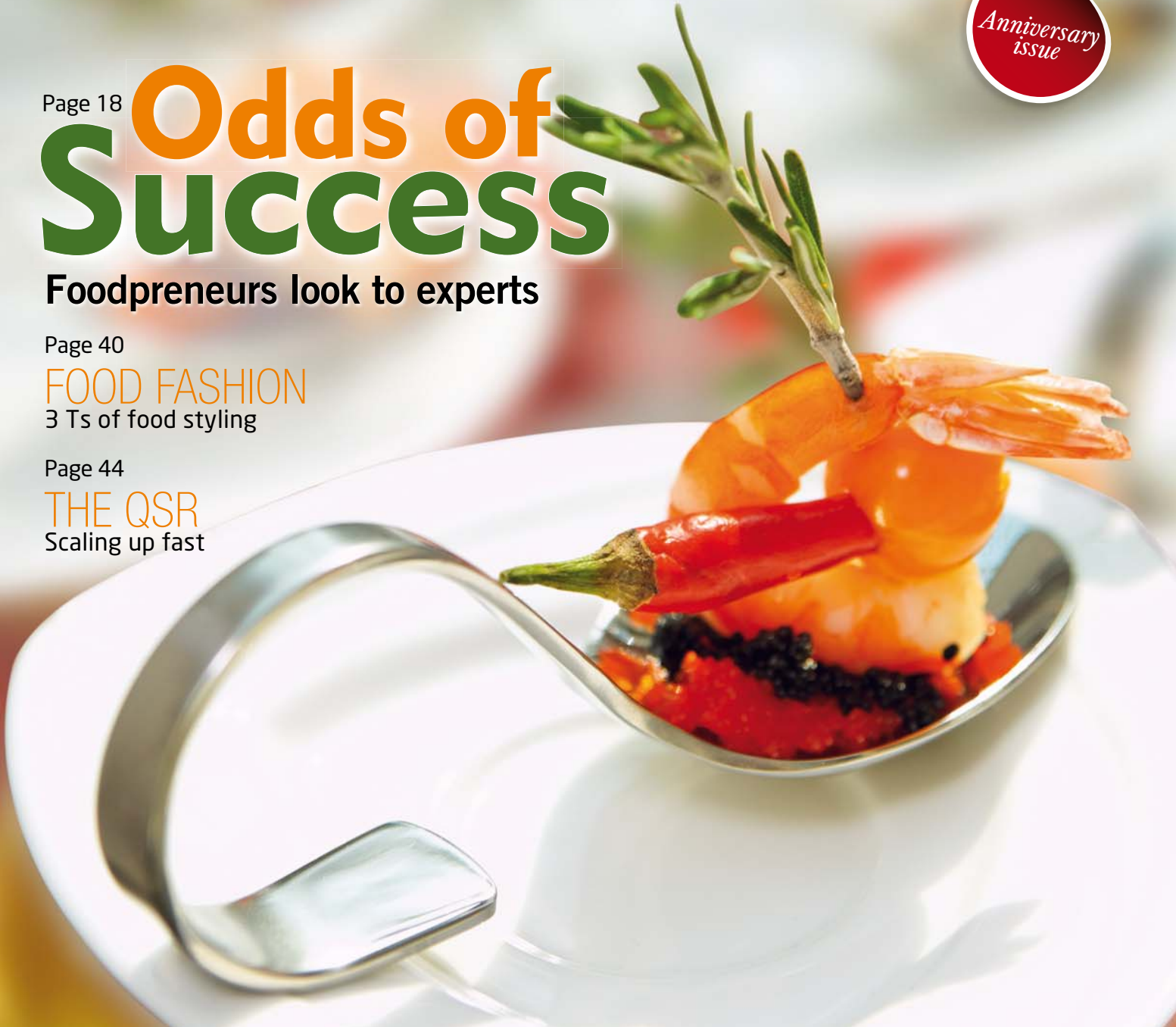
Foodpreneurs look to experts

Page 40

FOOD FASHION  
3 Ts of food styling

Page 44

THE QSR  
Scaling up fast



Featured inside: Pinaki Banerjee, Vineet Minocha, Deepak Agarwal, Michael Winkelmann, Unnikrishnan KR



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VOLUME FOUR • ISSUE FOUR

July-August 2014 • PAGES 88

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#### Risk Averse

All businesses are confident of their concept, format and model, yet seek support and guidance from market experts. The food service business being more varied, complex and competitive, has necessitated the need for expert advice from experienced F&B consultants to help foodpreneurs set up a new business, or for established brands to perk up their existing one.

India's F&B space is seeing a slew of homegrown and international brands that are offering various F&B formats and concepts. Though an academic background and/or work experience in the hospitality industry is an asset for the foodpreneur, even an experienced restaurateur may need consultation in some aspect of his business; it could be for reviving a sick unit, seeking an image makeover, scaling up his business, or expanding to a new region. Though consultants bring a lot to the table, a business may flounder or fail. Foodpreneurs must accept that consultancy is only one variable, and he must have realistic expectations and understanding of the marketplace.

This issue also celebrates the Anniversary of our FoodService India edition. It is heartening to see our reach extending to all parts of the country and appreciation coming from all quarters of the F&B sector: from restaurateurs, chefs, kitchen, food ingredients, tableware and other suppliers, to F&B consultants and other industry experts and bodies.



Amitabh Taneja

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Printed & published by S P Taneja on behalf of Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. Printed at: Modest Print Pack (P) Ltd., C-52, DDA Sheds, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase 1, New Delhi - 110020 and published by S P Taneja from S-21 Okhla Industrial Area Phase 2, New Delhi - 110020  
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FoodService Europe & Middle East is the parent publication of FoodService published by Deutscher Fachverlag GmbH, Mainzer Landstrasse 251, 60326 Frankfurt am Main, Germany.  
Phone: +49 69 759501; fax: +49 69 75951510 | Editor-in-Chief: Gretel Weiss (gretel.weiss@dfv.de)  
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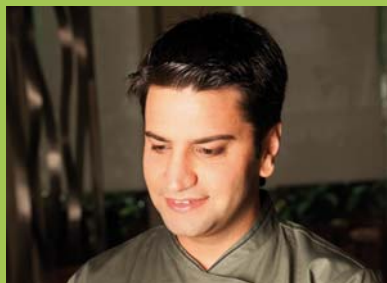
## 18 COVER STORY

# Odds of SUCCESS

In today's highly competitive market, building a successful food service business means looking beyond passion, money, and business acumen. Foodpreneurs are increasingly turning to food and hospitality consultants to help them lessen the risk of failure – and increase the odds of success

## FOOD & BEVERAGE

- 26 Summit**  
At the 14th European Foodservice Summit, discussions ranged from international chain development and brand revival to hot new concepts and future eating trends
- 32 Brand Management**  
Participants from countries around Europe reveal major lessons they learnt in 2013
- 34 Management**  
Foodservice operators from Germany, Great Britain, Poland, Portugal, and Saudi Arabia share their knowledge and strategies for counteracting difficult economic environments
- 38 Cuisine Watch: Arabic**  
Arabic cuisine's great tastes and aromas have transcended borders, writes Kunal Kapur, Executive Sous Chef at Diya, Leela Kempinski, Gurgaon



## IN CONVERSATION

- 08 Interface**  
"India is really flying now" says Michael Winkelmann, Global Culinary Contact, Chili's Grill & Bar, on the brand's performance
- 10 Tête-à-Tête**  
Prasoon Gupta, Director, Sattviko, shares expansion plans for the current fiscal
- 12 One-On-One**  
Vineet Manocha, VP - Culinary, Lite Bite Foods, discusses their various brands and formats at Mumbai's 'Intl Airport and Metro Station
- 14 Interface**  
Unnikrishnan KR, CEO, Puresouth Hospitality, shares plans to expand in Cochin and Trivandrum this fiscal, and outside Kerala by 2015
- 16 Tête-à-Tête**  
Francesco's Pizzeria is keen to expand in all the metros and tier 1 cities, informs CEO Mikhel Rajani



- 40 Chef Talk: Food Fashion**  
Chefs share their knowledge of the 3 Ts of food styling and presentation: tools, techniques and trends



## THE QSR



- 44 The Informal Eating Out (IEO) industry is growing and offering opportunities for QSR players to expand



- 48 Nila Group to open 10 fried chicken outlets across Kerala inform P. P. Musthafa, MD, and M. Unnikrishnan Group Chairman

## TRENDS & CONCEPTS

### 50 Double Edged Sword

Social media offers restaurateurs a cost-effective medium for instant promotion, but a single tweet can damage the brand value



### 54 Social Media

Experts share basics of social networks and give tips on promising strategies, and how things are likely to develop in future

### 56 New Age of Eating

An exploration of today's consumers' 'new food mindset' derived from the GDI's newly released 2013 European Food Trends Report

### 58 Restaurant Gardens

A professionally run restaurant in a garden centre provides additional value for both customers and operators - a pan-European survey



## IN FOCUS

### 84 Design: The Irish House

Designed from an original gaming zone, The Irish House in Mumbai, retains its industrial look, and the ambiance is warm and inviting



## EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

### 68 Kitchen Equipment

Pinaki Banerjee, Director, Rational India, discusses the new SelfCookingCenter 5 Senses, and the company's strengths



### 70 Crockery

Deepak Agarwal, Director, Clay Craft India, on the company's growing clientele in the HoReCa and Retail sectors



### 72 Gourmet Food

Sagarica Sawhney, importer and distributor of processed foods, is set to launch own range under Sagarika Exim Pvt Ltd



### 74 Flavoured Teas

Jay Tea director Sumit Shah, on the company's strengths and plans to increase distribution



### 76 Wholesaler

Metro Cash & Carry India has strategised its focus on the growth of its own customers

### 78 Gourmet

Délicrance offers a range of innovative gourmet products

### 80 Coffee Filters

Melitta System Service is an international supplier of both speciality and filter machines



### 82 Top Trend Products

### 86 Cooling Systems

Ranjan Jain, MD, Elanpro, discusses plans for increasing product range and brand's reach





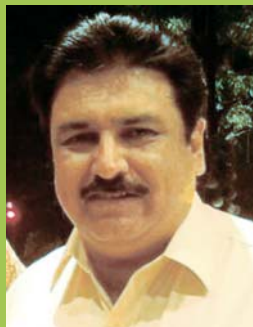
# Odds of SUCCESS

by Namita Bhagat

**In today's highly competitive market, building a successful food service business means looking beyond passion, money, and business acumen. Foodpreneurs are increasingly turning to food and hospitality consultants to help them lessen the risk of failure – and increase the odds of success**

**M**ost of the aspirants venturing into the F&B business are driven by their love for food and/or because it's their preferred career option, while others are allured by its (perceived) glamour and lucrative prospects. According to Baqar Naqvi, Business Director at Wazir Advisors, "The F&B industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in India, with a current size of about Rs 55,000 crore and growing at about 12 percent per annum. The share of organised players is 23 to 25 percent. Organised QSRs (including cafes) contribute nearly 45 percent to the overall market, and have a growth rate of 24 to 27 percent, which is more than double that of the overall market. The Café market is about Rs 1,500 to 1,600 crore and growing at a rate of 15 to 18 percent per annum.

Undoubtedly, the industry is experiencing good times, but on the flip side, it has become hyper competitive. As such, each food service outlet, whether new or existing, invariably faces the risk of the 'here today, gone tomorrow' syndrome. Samir Kuckreja, President, NRAI, and CEO, Tasanaya Hospitality Pvt Ltd, states, "Nowadays, a lot many QSRs and other food formats are opening, hence, the penetration levels of food service businesses have notably increased. But the fallout of such growth is the process of 'cannibalisation' whereby restaurants and cafes located in close vicinity adversely impact each other's sales. Hence, even as the consumer base is growing, the businesses have to deal with numerous challenges, including the risk of failure."



### Why hire a consultant?

In today's competitive scenario, it takes more than a great idea or money to set up a successful bistro, restaurant, café, or patisserie. Whilst start-ups require proper planning, execution, and differentiation at every step of the business, an existing business may need a makeover. In both the cases, it can be a very daunting task. Hence, for foodpreneurs, soliciting an expert's advice has become increasingly essential.

In fact, the consultant brings a lot to the table: he/she helps create a winning business by advising on concept, format selection and design, to menu planning, operations, marketing and expansion, and a lot of hand holding along the way.

Underscoring the significance of F&B consultants, Sanjeev Sareen, CEO & Principal Consultant, Trident F&B Consultants, says, "The role of restaurant set-up experts is quite crucial. Apart from ensuring smooth and hassle-free opening, their expertise and counsel is directed at improving profitability of the venture, and also trimming down the possibility of business owners making wrong decisions. A consultant can make a project more cost effective, resolve complex issues related to ownership, lending, franchising, management, foreclosure, and bankruptcy."

Trident F&B Consultants has executed more than 450 hospitality projects throughout India with clients like Haldiram's, Rockman's Beer Island, ISKCON, Om Sweets, Gulab, Satiram's BTW, Comesum, Gopal's, Jassons Sheesh Mahal, L S Caterers, Bikaji, to name a few.

Sanjiv Raj, CEO & Principal Consultant at The Chef Masters (TCM), says, "An F&B consultant provides all technical, culinary and aesthetic information to entrepreneurs from start to finish.

Experts have hands-on operational experience and are abreast with recent industry developments. Since they are better equipped to visualise present and future requirements of the project, they can help owners to achieve the required operational efficiency, which is of utmost importance."

TCM has executed over 175 hospitality projects pan India with clients like Yo! China, Café Coffee Day Lounges, Picadilly Punjab, Tabula Rasa, Chi Kitchen and Bar, Embassy Restaurants (AAHO), Surajgarh Palace (Shekhawati), Bowl O China, Chicago Pizza, etc. Additionally, Raj is director at Kings Motels Pvt Ltd that owns and operates four fine dining restaurants in Delhi under the brand name Urban Degchi - Kitchen & Bar.

Besides start-ups, consultants also counsel existing operating units. Notes Raj, "Small eateries are also approaching us. They are inexperienced and mostly first time entrepreneurs. Established ventures mostly require re-positioning, re-engineering, revamping, and an image makeover in their menu, décor, aesthetics, or appointing a new chef."

Agrees Sareen, "Today, there is greater awareness about the importance of F&B consultants and benefits of the services offered. We are also involved in areas like standardisation, quality control, sick unit handling, and can help with expansions also."

### Services and fees

A consultant may deliver end-to-end project, offer selective services or provide turnkey solutions pertaining to varied aspects of food service business, for instance, conceptualisation, market study, site selection, menu and kitchen planning, supplies and equipment, decor and interiors,

### Left to right

**Samir Kuckreja**  
President, NRAI, and CEO  
Tasanaya Hospitality

**Sanjeev Sareen**  
CEO & Principal Consultant  
Trident F&B Consultants

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**Sanjiv Raj**  
CEO & Principal Consultant  
at The Chef Masters (TCM)

**Aneeta Myint**  
Professor at IHM (Pusa  
New Delhi), Development  
Chef and F&B Consultant



# Food Fashion

Food styling and presentation is much like doing a makeover of the dish to make it look trendy, attractive, and tempting. Juhi Sharma talks with several chefs to learn about the 3 Ts of styling: tools, techniques and trends

It is generally held that people eat first through their eyes and nose because the food's visual appeal and aroma attracts them to the food first. So, chefs give prime importance to decorating, garnishing, and styling dishes to induce customers, who are sometimes even tempted to eat the edible decorations! According to food experts and chefs,

there are no fixed rules for styling a dish, but one must have a basic understanding of the flavour and texture of the food(s) on the plate, so that the dish can be garnished with complementing ingredients. Here, plating is also important as the colour, shape and size of the plate would define the final look and appeal of the dish.



**RISHI VERMA**  
Executive Chef, Sattviko

**A**void a monochromatic colour scheme as a plate of food looks most appealing when there's a high level of contrasting colours. A bowl of plain oatmeal or a pasta served without any sauce or garnishing will never induce customers to eat. Even if you decide to dress the two dishes with flavourful ingredients such as butter and spices, it will still look bland and like a plain dish of starch. On the other hand, when the same bowl of oatmeal is topped with fresh red berries and a swirl of amber maple syrup, it will make the simple dish look very attractive. Similarly, a plate of pasta with a drizzle of green pesto and chopped cherry tomatoes on the top, will create a wholly different dining experience.

The way one cooks vegetables also has a lot of bearing on the overall visual effect. Veggies that are a tad overcooked, lose their color and tend to look less appetising than those that are cooked to the optimum point of softness. To avoid mushy, pallid vegetables, aim to cook them until they're bright and with a bit of crunch.

Many meat dishes look most appetising when the meat has been seared. The sight of a steak or piece of grilled salmon with a brown, crispy sear will make the guests' mouths water. In addition to searing meat, one should let it rest for several minutes before cutting it. This allows the juices to be absorbed back into the meat so that they don't end up running all over the plate.

Underdone or overcooked fried foods are difficult to present in an appealing way. Cook fried foods until they're golden brown, then let them drain on a plate lined with paper towels to absorb the extra oil. If the food looks too oily, dry, mushy, tough, or difficult to chew and swallow, it won't matter how perfectly colourful it looks, if the texture is not right.

Latest styling trends include use of nitrogen to freeze desserts upto -60 degree celsius and then breaking them and using them as a powder to enhance the flavours. Many restaurants use foams instead of sauces, such as lemon foam, mint chutney foam, etc. There are varieties of edible flowers and micro greens available in the market, which are used for garnishing various dishes.

Italian cuisine is my best styled cuisine, as I like to keep the plate simple, clean and fresh. Italian cuisine is all about freshness as the dishes have a lot of fresh herbs, tomatoes, bell peppers, olives, etc. The ingredients are so colourful and vibrant that I enjoy plating and playing around with the dishes.

I believe that Indian cuisine is the most difficult to style, as everything is prepared in a pot at once, and food loses the colour and the texture for presentation. Here, I want to mention that modern day Indian chefs such as Chef Vineet Bhatia and Chef Vikas Khanna (both Michelin chefs) have taken Indian food to a very different level; the way they present Indian food is worth capturing on camera.



## MANU CHANDRA

Executive Chef and Partner, Monkey Bar, and Executive Chef at Olive Beach, Bangalore



Styling is largely reliant on the concept and caliber of the foodservice establishment or brand. A good coastal fine dine restaurant may opt for copper serving vessels and fresh curry leaves on dishes, while a Western style restaurant may want a more elaborate presentation with multiple components and colors. A gastro-pub, for instance, might bring in quirkier, youthful elements into its food presentation to go with its image.

Whatever the styling technique, it must ensure that it says something about the nature of the dish and gives an instant 'pick-me-up' feeling. For instance, we put a fun tag or flag on our burgers at Monkey Bar, and serve fries in a paper cone, which liven up the dish.

The current food styling rule says, 'there are no rules!' We use jam and Nutella jars to serve cocktails in; our Butterfly Chicken is a crisp wonton shell in the shape of a Butterfly; and our Sundae sandwich is actually a Sundae ice cream styled in sandwich layers. At Monkey Bar outlets, we use mismatched crockery to lend an informal feel. Our very popular Copper Monkey cocktail is served in copper tumblers.

Freshness and colour are two sides of a coin in styling, for instance, in Greek salad, an abundance of bell peppers, cucumbers, dill and olives give it a vibrant, fresh and healthy look. The theme of the place should match the food, and it should always look good enough to eat! In fact, I would suggest make your own styling. I personally enjoy styling contemporary European cuisine because of the ingredients and techniques, which allow a lot of creativity.

There is no cuisine which is difficult to style, though, sometimes, Indian dishes can be challenging. Asian cuisine on the other hand is very easy as it has a lot of layers. There are herbs and sauces which can be used to give an overall fresh look to the dish when you plate it.



## VICKY RATNANI

Chef Consultant, Gourmand, and Food Connoisseur

I portray food styling as dressing up and getting ready to look good. The beauty of presenting various dishes is dependent on different wares for plating or serving such as plain white plates, coloured platters, bone china crockery, textured glassware, wooden boards, granite slabs, stoneware or earthenware. Needless to say, colourful toppings and texture of food is essential.

Cost of food production, which includes presentation, needs to be kept in mind, as based on the budget set for a dish, the chef would decide and source ingredients and tableware for styling food.

My book, 'Vicky Goes Veg' showcases some interesting ways of styling various vegetarian dishes and ruling out the perception of veg food as being boring. In terms of my favourite food for styling, I like presenting Chickpea croquettes. The styling of this dish requires ingredients and wares such as chickpeas, garlic, herbs, and red chilli paste on a wooden crate and the croquettes served on inverted spoons.





# Double Edged Sword

by Annie Johnny



**Social media offers restaurateurs a cost-effective medium for instant marketing and promotion through campaigns that engage customers directly and meaningfully. The downside is that a single tweet can damage the brand value in an instant**

According to Ernst and Young's report Social Media Marketing – India Trends Study 2013, almost 89.6 percent of all tech savvy organisations surveyed, placed Facebook as the most important social media platform, followed by Twitter, YouTube and blogging. There is also a growing interest in emerging platforms like Pinterest, Google Plus, and Foursquare. Various Ad agencies have started developing YouTube specific ads, and companies are using blogging to share information about trends, etc. According to the report, almost 95.7 percent of companies are keen on building communities, thereby, shifting away from a one-way track to a platform where they can interact and get feedback from their target audience.

For restaurants and QSR owners, social media offers a huge opportunity for marketing their business, provided they use the medium innovatively to their advantage. "Social media helps us stay connected with our patrons real time; gives them a voice that can be directly addressed to the brand and helps in driving conversation. Brands can understand customer sentiments and connect with them," says Subroto Mukherjee, CEO of Burgs.

## What's trending

Companies now have planned social media campaigns with a separate social media team to ideate and manage the campaigns. They also put up generic information such as brand values, festive greetings, etc, that are away from direct promotions, as a way of bonding with customers. Since many popular bloggers are also great influencers of public opinion, blogs have become a good channel for customer interaction. The report shows that around 47.9 percent of the social

media-savvy organisations regularly engaged with bloggers and other online influencers, while 37.5 percent engaged less frequently. A popular method of attracting bloggers is by organising a 'bloggers meet' which can range from a simple high-tea event to a more elaborate contest.

Other trend is the increase in deals and exclusive promotions only for online fans (64.6%); and frequency of posting an update on their pages (25% of organisations surveyed said that they post one update daily on their Facebook pages).

## Turning tweets into profit

Food service players use social media to leverage their brand, display new schemes, and create a buzz beyond the restaurant. Some very interesting campaigns were launched in 2013, for instance, KFC's 'Komic Krushers', a digital only campaign aimed at tech savvy teenagers, allowed its followers on Facebook to input their pictures, names, and a couple of favourite catchphrases into a storyline and create a 'User Generated Graphic Novel'. This personalised graphic novel could be shared with friends on Facebook. Everyday, the best male and female entries would get a print version of their novels as memorabilia, and weekly winners an opportunity to win an Xbox 360. KFC had previously launched campaigns like 'Currycature', 'KFC Wow' and 'Design Your Own Bucket'.

QSR chain Burgs went social in 2012, and already has over 16,000 followers on Facebook and around 875 on Twitter. "We are constantly innovating and our campaigns are not just based on seasons and events but also based on consumer behaviour. Social media gives us the liberty to be constantly in touch with our target group, get their feedback and plan activities that are for the people, by the people and of the people.

Social media can be termed as the 4th pillar of democracy!" says Mukherjee.

Ahmed Naqvi, MD and co-Founder of Gozooop that manages social media for Burgs, says, "Our core strategy for Burgs is to humanise the brand using social media as a platform for customer service, feedback, fan love, influencer and loyalist alignment, along with innovative campaigns. We aim to sync the offline and online activities through strategic inputs, leading to valuable digital communication for Burgs. This will play a meaningful role in building a lasting relationship between the brand and its customers."

Burgs invited food bloggers and tweeples to one of its outlets where they were asked to create their own burger. During the event, over 24 burgers were created! The winning burger was available in Burgs outlets for a week, and was promoted through Hashtag #ForFreeFoodIWill, which trended in Mumbai, Thane, Ahmedabad and Surat over several weeks.

"The primary objective is to get footfalls at the outlets. Diverting people from our online community in various ways is what we aim for while strategising for Burgs. We like to connect, build conversational topics around burgers," says Mukherjee, and informs that Burgs is also planning to become active in Pinterest and Foursquare.

Bangalore-based Avant Garde Hospitality, which runs fine dine restaurants like Caperberry (it specialises in European cuisine and molecular gastronomy), and Fava (Mediterranean restaurant), is present on Facebook and Twitter and plans to join Pinterest. "Having an online presence is critical for a restaurant's success in today's world. Both good and bad news can travel very fast through social media, so one has to be careful about the communication being sent out and one should also track negative messages to contain any damage as soon as possible," says Abhijit Saha, Founder, Director and Chef at Avant Garde.

"Our pages are very interactive and we monitor them actively. We plan on uploading some of our popular recipes soon and also run some fun contests. There has definitely been an increase in brand awareness. We also promote specific events and have observed footfalls go up by 10 to 50 percent during promotions," adds Saha.

As regards other advantages, he says, "Social media marketing is definitely more cost-effective, however, it's most important aspect is the endorsements you receive on a public platform, which create a lot of word-of-mouth publicity."

Pune-based Malaka Spice has been active on Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr since 2008. The brand has around 9,676 Facebook fans and around 911 Twitter followers (as of October 2013). Managing Director Praful Chandwarkar feels that social media has become a quintessential part of marketing for restaurateurs. "The age group between 16-25 is constantly online, and with smartphones they are always accessing Facebook, Twitter, etc. Once you get an access to them your reach increases."

The brand is very proactive in converting their online activities into offline events. "We invite Tweeples and food bloggers to taste and review the new offers on our menu. We did a photo contest where customers had to take a photo inside the autorickshaw installed in our restaurants and upload it on Facebook/Twitter. The winners got a free meal, and we joined them at the table. Such activities have helped increase footfalls by 8 to 10 percent," says Chandwarkar.

While initially they started with an in-house team to handle their social media campaigns, early this year they switched to a digital agency. The restaurateur has invested Rs 3 to 4 lakh for marketing (this includes setting up both offline and online activities, design work for campaigns, menu, etc). "With an in-house team there is always the problem of ideas becoming stale. With a digital agency, we get access to more talent and more fresh ideas," says Chandwarkar who also plans to develop a customised phone App for their restaurant.

#### Interactive Apps

Customised phone apps are also becoming quite popular. A phone application makes it easier for restaurateurs to disseminate information to customers at the click of a button, and makes it easier to share details about new offers, photos and promotions, as once downloaded, they will be with the customer 24x7.

Says Ashim Jolly, Senior VP, Incubation and Business, Snaplion - an IT company developing phone Apps for the Food Service industry, "In this melting economy, if you decide not to adopt any traditional advertising strategy such as billboards, TV commercials, print ads, etc, there are meager chances that diners will know or talk about your restaurant. In such a fiercely competitive retail space, you need a lot of word-of-mouth from your existing customer base to drive in new ones. Social media marketing comes in handy as it helps establish your brand and deepen the relationship with your guests, and stay on top of their minds as a dining destination."

SnapLion's interactive phone App has features like In-App Ordering for delivery or pick-up, One-



**“ Prompt action needs to be taken if customers report some operational problem in social media. But it becomes difficult if the person is not cooperative from the other end. Since it is an open medium, sometimes people use it more to harm than give genuine, constructive criticism ”**

– Subroto Mukherjee  
CEO of Burgs





# This is for you

## Olives

Pitted Olives | Black Sliced  
Green Sliced | Garlic Stuffed  
Red Paprika Stuffed | Jalapeño Stuffed  
Hot Chilli | Lemony | Mediterranean Classic

## Peppers

Sliced Jalapeños  
Red Paprika  
Mixed Peppers



## Sauces & Dips

Pizza Pasta | Salsa | Relish  
Mayonnaise | Snack Dressing

## Gherkins

Sweet Slice | Premium Dill  
Zesty Slice | French Cornichon

## Tomato

Ketchup | Paste  
Puree

## Fruits & Vegetables

Cherries | Litchi  
Sweet Corn | Baby Corn | Carrots

## Herbs, Spices & Seasonings



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