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The Alchemist of Culinary Desire

*Young and prodigiously talented, chef **Ranveer Brar** shares his secrets of creating a menu that pleases and amuses*

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Benefits of the B2B2C Format

Low costs, big market, minimal wastage and healthy profits

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F&B and the Holy Grail of Service Excellence

Benchmarks and processes to elevate customer experience from good to great

Featured inside: Pankaj Mathur, Roger Wright, Himanshu Taneja, Anurag Katriar, Silvio Zaccareo



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Seismic shifts are currently underway in the restaurant industry. New players – be it the foreign QSR chains, independent restaurants, bars and lounges, tea and coffee chains as well as the new breed of food tech startups – all are scrambling for a luscious pie of the growing food business in India. The Indian F&B sector, which is currently growing at 23 to 24 per cent annually, is likely to touch Rs. 3.80 trillion by 2017. The Indian total annual household consumption is expected to triple in the next decade, which offers a huge potential for growth in food retailing on the back of galloping consumer demand.

At the same time, consumers are becoming more demanding with the growing purchasing power and a massive information flow, which helps them to be up to date with the latest trends across the globe. Income is not the only factor affecting the change in trends anymore. Technology, over the last decade, has made it possible for consumers to share, post and even communicate directly with the retailers to get an immediate feedback. Another impact of technology is playing out in the market for food ordering apps, which has already registered a 10-fold increase in the number of tech-savvy consumers, who take the tech route to satiate their hunger pangs.

In line with the trend, we are now seeing a pronounced tilt towards customer engagement. Dining spaces and lounges, cafés and bars are being tricked up to resonate more closely with the clientele. More of these establishments now offer live music or games, and other forms of entertainment as part of the package. To widen their reach and be in step with the consumer pulse, restaurants now have their own websites; some of them have even set up blogs and put up interesting content from time to time. As far as social media presence goes, interaction on Twitter and Facebook is now a de rigueur and they are doing a pretty good job of it.

Going forward, these trends are set to pick up greater speed and steam. Players who succeed in harnessing these trends to the hilt will stand to gain by enhancing and broadening their connect with the end consumer.

Amitabh Taneja

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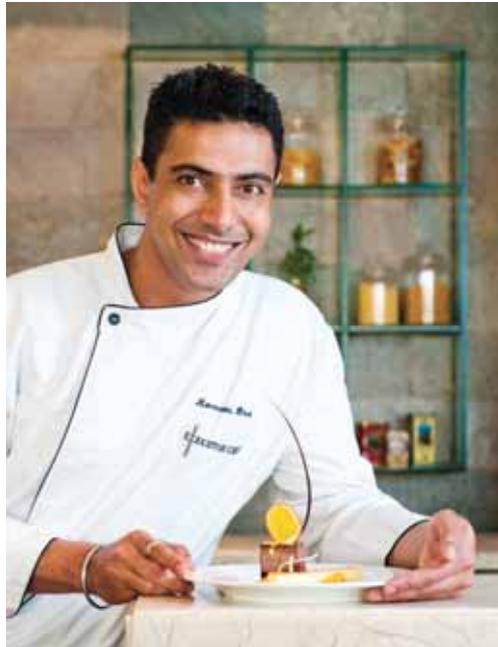
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(Left to Right: Rajesh Singh, COO, Dr. Sunandini Sharma, Chief Health Officer & Co-founder and Jayas Jayas Damodaran, MD at Jiyo Natural Pvt Ltd.)

“Our B2B2C model offers advantages of low costs”

Jayas Damodara, Managing Director, Jiyo Natural Pvt Ltd, which provides wholesome nutritionally balanced meal packs to corporates, speaks to FoodService India about the unique differentiators of its business model over other formats and how the company’s distinct positioning is helping it to grow and consolidate its business



What was the seminal idea behind the formation of your company? What is your concept uniqueness?

The concept was seeded when the three of us – the founder-investors – were at a recuperation session at Jindal Naturecure Institute. Looking at how the health situation of Indians was deteriorating rapidly – abetted by the influx of Western fast food companies – we decided to contribute to building a “Healthy India”. The concept at Jiyo Natural is that each individual is unique and needs attention differently. Similarly, each corporate organisation is unique in the profile of its employees and plans its own ways to take care of their employees. Jiyo Natural is positioned to take care of personalising the requirements of both individuals as well as companies.

With so many food start-ups delivery services vying for a piece of the action and with many of them folding up lately, what will make Jiyo click?

There are some important differences that Jiyo Natural has when you compare us with the other food tech start-ups. First of all, Jiyo is primarily a health and wellness company – with a doctor as one of its founders. It is, in fact, a “Nutraceutical” company offering the nutritional benefits of food, both to prevent and to manage health problems.

Second, the target market of Jiyo Natural is the corporate workplaces where the employees are the consumers – a clear B2B2C model. We reach out to employees by signing up with companies – who see our services as a great way to keep their workforce healthy and, therefore, more productive. The B2B2C model comes with low customer acquisition costs along with relatively lower delivery and logistics costs. The market that Jiyo address is

huge – estimated to be over 10 million customers in the five top cities of India.

Thirdly, our business model is based around subscription – on a monthly or quarterly basis. This model offers revenue and profitability that is predictable with minimal wastage and inefficiencies. About 85 per cent of our revenues are subscription-based today.

The advantages of this model are what has helped Jiyo to grow 25 per cent month on month – with volumes growing over 10 times in 10 months.

Which are your products and their selling features?

We address two segments of people from a nutraceutical perspective. One, the health-conscious segment – a growing population of people in their late 20s, 30s and 40s. What they need is a balanced nutritious meal, which can help them prevent health issues like diabetes, cardiac problems, etc. The “Jiyo Health” range of products addresses this segment by providing daily food, which is nutritionally balanced and calorie counted.

The second segment is the set of people who already have a health issue – be it diabetes, obesity, hypertension, heart or thyroid-related problems, etc. The “Jiyo Manage” range of products and services offers a nutraceutical means to this segment to manage their health condition.

Today, both Jiyo Health and Jiyo Manage range come in a “ready to eat” format and are delivered as breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner. Soon, the products will also be available in a “ready to cook” format. Our focus is to reach out to these segments at their workplaces or through specialty health / wellness centres.



The market of Jiyo Natural is the corporate workplaces. We reach out to employees by signing up with companies. The B2B2C model comes with low customer acquisition costs along with relatively lower delivery and logistics costs. The market that Jiyo address is huge – estimated to be over 10 million customers in the five top cities of India

What is your current scope of operations?

We are currently operational in Bangalore – and are able to cover practically all parts of the city. We deliver over 2,000 meals a day – as breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner. We have tie-ups with over 25 corporate organisations in Bangalore.

Tell us about your menu mix and spread, the offerings, and your signature recipes?

A key requirement for good food is variety. Our chef – who comes from a five star hotel background – along with our doctor and nutritionist, design menus of healthy food across north and south Indian, Continental and Oriental cuisines. The menus are changed every day – and are repeated once in four weeks or so. A large repository of recipes helps in providing sufficient variety to the customers.

Besides ensuring variety, it is equally important for customers to feel “good” from a health perspective after every meal – and that is also a key focus for us. The SOPs for each of the recipes are established and a lot of planning and detail have gone into making the recipes healthy as well.

There are several dishes, which are appreciated by our regular subscription customers – salads, desserts, some main courses and special brown rice preparations. Some snacks like baked vada pavs are all time hits.

What are the price points for a standard meal?

Our model is subscription-based. Customers are quite conscious of costs when it comes to paying for food on a daily basis. Pricing for a full meal with eight or more items costs in the range of Rs.100-130. For a personalised meal, the price ranges from Rs. 150 to Rs. 200.

Can you offer us examples of some innovative F&B ideas that you have implemented in your menu?

We have built a large repository of recipes. Each recipe has not only a clear SOP but are ranked for acceptability to disease types. For example, a certain dish may be ranked No. 1 if it is not acceptable for a person with high levels of cholesterol while a rank of 5 indicates the recipe to be highly recommended. This process has been automated with the technology.

In terms of production, we use ovens and steamers – using them to either bake or steam rather than going for deep frying, etc.

One initiative we have taken is to grow the awareness of many traditional grains like millets. The food made out of them are not only low in glycaemic index but high in fibre as well. We have done a good amount of R&D to devise great tasting dishes made out of several types of millets.

What is your kitchen model, how you manage the staff preparing the food, the processes and benchmarks you have put in place for monitoring food preparation and their packaging?

In order to prepare a healthy meal, there are some fundamental principles we follow in order to guarantee that the end product is healthy. In designing the menu (or more precisely, the contents of the meal), we ensure that the final product is wholesome and nutritionally balanced – having the right levels of carbs, proteins, minerals and fibre. We also ensure that the ingredients that go into the food are “healthy” – which means we avoid all processed ingredients like maida, dalda, refined sugar etc. – and instead, use whole grains, millets, sweeteners like jaggery, honey, date syrup, etc. We also ensure that no chemicals are used whatsoever in the cooking process – be it for preserving, enhancing taste or for colours.

We have a central kitchen – and will have some satellite kitchens to cover most parts of the city. The menus, processes, procurement of ingredients are all done centrally.

Food safety being a critical concern for us, we are in the process of obtaining the HACCP and later ISO22000 certifications. We have trained consultants who are advising us to get us ready for the audits, which we hope will be done in the next three months. HACCP covers all the elements of the process from receiving of ingredients to preparation to production and packing.

How do you manage orders, does your ordering mechanism have room for flexibility, etc?

We have standardised on vendors for vegetable and groceries – based on a long process of trials and due diligence. The vegetables we get are chemical free and are delivered to us within 12 hours of their



“Regional cuisines are the food of the future”

Chef Ranveer Brar has found success at a very young age. At 25 years, he became an Executive Chef, and one of the youngest to reach that coveted position. He has gone on to work with some of the most well-known hospitality brands in the country, besides being involved in establishing several landmark F&B outlets. He speaks to FoodService India about the most fascinating changes he has come across in food and cuisine and the culinary concepts that will shape the future of the industry



Tell us briefly about your culinary journey so far.

I began my culinary journey with a catering management college in Lucknow. Thereafter, I worked at several places in India – Hotel Taj Mahal in Delhi and Radisson Blu MBD Hotel Noida to name a few. Over the years, I have also been involved in opening several restaurants. At 25, I became one of the youngest Executive Chefs and then I opened a Pastry Shop called Chocolate Box – a unique pastry shop with live chocolate making and customised chocolate designs. Later, I moved to Boston where I opened the restaurant Banq, which won numerous awards. After I returned to India, I have been very lucky to work with many food shows on TV and get associated with some very exciting brands. A personal highlight for me was MasterChef India and I hope to keep learning and growing along the way.

In the course of your career as a chef, you must have seen many changes in this vocation. Which has been the most fascinating ones?

The emergence of regional Indian food has been the most fascinating change that I have come across. The striking thing about it is that it never before had the space and attention that it is getting now. It's amazing to see how simple food can be modernised and made so delicious.

Which regional cuisines do you think have a great future ahead and why?

The food of Coorg, Surat, Kathiyawad, Mysore, Uttaranchal, Malwan and Nagpur is the food of the future. These regions have seen a lot of ups and downs, conquerors and conquests and that's what has made their food interesting and varied.



What is your cooking style and what have been the changes you have made to it over the years?

My cooking style is expressive and experiential. I try and put my travels and experiences onto a plate. As my travels increase and my relationship with food matures, my menus evolve.

Which are some of the emerging and interesting foodservice concepts that will likely shape and impact our foodservice industry going forward?

Concepts based on culinary evolution of societies, 'do it yourself' (with critical minimum intervention) concepts and local and regional culinary concepts will shape the future of our industry. Intimidating and fancy aspirational concepts are a thing of the past as the consumer today is looking for connect and 'reliability'.

Which are your favourite cuisines and what has been your method of giving these cuisines your personalised touch?

My favourite cuisine is Lucknowi and Italian and my interactions with them makes me more passionate about what I do. I try and make Awadhi food current and exciting for the new generation.

How do you envisage the evolving role of chefs in a changing food scenario?

Chefs today drive the food and beverage business way more than yesterday. It's becoming a very product-oriented business and chefs are becoming important as they are the product torchbearers. Also, chefs are now becoming better businessmen, making it conducive for chef-owned restaurants.

As a chef, how do you see the scope for a sharper positioning of dining and restaurant formats, especially in the categories of concept, fine and casual dining?

In my mind, in the times to come, farm to fork, seasonal and regional will become the underlying needs of all formats; hence positioning a restaurant purely for this will not really create waves. This will be a basic requirement and the consumer expectation of a more secure and aware society.

The focus of chefs is moving more to the role of marketing than making good food? What do you think of this trend?

I think it is great that chefs are getting more involved in the business. Since they are the ones who create the meals, they understand the food in the best way possible. They also know the audience and can have great insights when it comes to changing preferences. That being said, the food has to always be the focal point. If the food doesn't taste good, no matter how much you market, it simply will not be a sustainable business.

In your opinion, what is that one thing that is going to change the way food will be promoted in the future?

Technology is the one thing that will change the way we promote food. The way technology is moving towards the F&B world, it's making food more hi-tech and accessible. Social media is flooded with food already and I can't wait to see all the new apps, podcasts, etc., that will further lend impetus to this trend. Technology will definitely be the game-changer for food.

Should the trends in food be driven by consumers or chefs?

The trends in food should always be driven by consumers as the real measure of success is always the consumer. However, I believe in chefs driving subtle consumer education of new trends and ideas. The key is to keep that communication understated and respectful.

What is your opinion about the future trends in Indian cuisine. Will we go back in time to discover lost recipes or become more experimental with the rapid rise and influence of fast food chains?

I think it will be a mix of both. The good thing here is that the modern Indian feels the need to rediscover the character and variety of Indian cuisine, which makes the future of our food bright. At the same time, both capital and technology are backing food, making it affordable and innovative.

My cooking style is expressive and experiential. I try and put my travels and experiences onto a plate. As my travels increase and my relationship with food matures, my menus evolve





Roger Wright

Creating Energising Experiences for guests

Roger Wright, General Manager, Hyatt Regency Gurgaon, speaks to FoodService India about how to be a differentiator in a crowded and increasingly cookie-cutter industry and the systems and processes that help to build deep interpersonal connections with the customers

At Hyatt Regency Gurgaon and the restaurants under its wing, where does service ends and hospitality begins?

At Hyatt Regency Gurgaon, we make sure that both service and hospitality are taken care of with utmost importance as they go together hand in hand. Our restaurants promise unparalleled service and genuine warmth that will make you want to revisit time and again. Both complement each other at various facets.

Hyatt Regency has a distinct brand promise and a framework of guiding principles offering unique and differentiated experiences to our guests. We are an experienced hospitality player with a well-designed infrastructure offering customised accommodation and meeting solutions for corporate and individual business travellers. Our convention halls are usually the preferred choice for large events. Spread over 40,000 sq.ft., they seamlessly blend impeccable hospitality and services.

Which are the typical services and standards that are the core components of service and hospitality at your outlets?

We, at Hyatt Regency Gurgaon, believe in creating energising experiences for our guests by developing significant connections with them keeping their desires and preferences in consideration. We earn loyalty by fostering personal relationships and creating emotional connections that makes Hyatt one of the most preferred hotels. We strongly believe that true loyalty is built due to deep interpersonal connections, authenticity, care and trust.

In your opinion, which is a better foodservice approach: Good food and great service or great food and good service?

We believe in providing a world-class experience to our guests as it's the experience that matters the most. The time spent should be memorable and



Which are these new systems and processes you have put in place for amping up your service and hospitality standards further?

There are quite a few examples: For infusing work ethics, we have created a workshop on Purpose & Brand Activation, introduced an Pictorial task breakdown for various processes to ease understanding, and offer a minimum of three hours on-the-job training to all associates in a month by departmental trainers & situation handling trainings.

Similarly, we have quite a few examples by which we seek to sharpen our service focus. These include Express Airport Check-Ins by our airport



We believe that encouraging innovation and the use of technology helps in creating productive workplace cultures. We are currently using ‘Reserve Out’ as technology tool where we have guest records of their dining, preferences etc. So every time they call us we explore the opportunity for a unique experience

both food and service are of prime importance to make it special. Our chefs personally cater to the guests in case of any problem that they face with the food. We also provide fresh and natural ingredients in appropriately sized portions, prepared with the best cooking techniques in our hotels for a holistic food and beverage experience.

What are your processes and SOPs for making your staff good ambassadors of service and hospitality?

As our brand has a single purpose – to care for people so they can be their best. This singular focus allows us to do business and reap ardent loyalty – driving preference and propelling thoughtful growth. It is our differentiator in a crowded and increasingly cookie-cutter industry.

With our purpose as our foundation, we’ve begun to align how we do business and what we’re focused on. We’ve always been centered around people and now momentum is in full swing on helping them be their best. A new learning strategy and system has been launched to achieve this goal.

representative for our repeat guests, In-room check-ins by the guest relations team, personalising rooms for guests celebrating special occasions (Birthday, Honeymoon & Anniversary) with the hotel, In-car internet facility in hotel cars, weekend kids activity (water zorbing, mini-golf, trampoline etc) by the kids pool & special kids amenities for guests travelling with kids.

Do you have a manual and a standard operating procedure for dealing with ticklish situations at your F&B outlets?

Our personnel are trained to first calmly take stock of the situation and then find an appropriate solution to it. We understand and resolve all guests problems by listening empathetically to them. We have plenty of kids activities at the property to keep them engaged through out the stay. In case of hyper-active children, we do not come across unpleasant experiences very often. On some rare instances, a polite request to the parents works well. Our chefs also personally speak to such children and cater to their demands.

Industry's take on how Budget will impact the restaurant business this year

The announcement on allowing 100% FDI in marketing of food products produced and manufactured in India is a great move by the government. This would allow more capital to flow for manufacturing purposes and help in developing world class products. It will also generate a large pool of employment in the country. Every new startup in the restaurant industry has a learning curve and a long payback period. Hence the decision to provide a tax holiday does help in promoting entrepreneurship.

Our industry is one of the largest employer in the country, conferring tax incentives for employment generation sector is a progressive effort by the government. Recently a cess of 0.5% was implemented. And this new one makes the service tax go up, which will make eating out more expensive for consumers at large. The service tax is now 15% which is a central levy, and the VAT which is state levy is 12.5-20% range, making India the most taxed country for a restaurant bill, which may result in glooming India's image in front of inbound tourists as they end up comparing India with what's prevalent in the world and find us cheating them.

Surge in infrastructure cess will eventually lead in increased cost of restaurant operations as LPG is a large portion of the fuel bill for cooking and petrol is used for delivery vehicles. Excise duty on water including mineral & aerated waters etc. increased by 3%. Aerated water increase can be justified as these are sugary drinks which have no health benefit. But, mineral water is a basic commodity. We don't get potable water in our taps, and customers drink mineral/bottled water to be on the safe side.



Rahul Singh, Hony. Secretary, NRAI and Founder & CEO, The Beer Cafe



Riyaaz Amlani, President NRAI and CEO & MD Impresario Entertainment & Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.

The Union Budget 2016 was largely agrarian in nature and the restaurant and F&B sector was looking forward to some impetus. While we had also hoped for some announcement on implementation of GST, the industry will be impacted to a limited degree by the increase of service tax, through the introduction of 0.5% agri cess. However, the decision to circulate the Model Shops & Establishments bill to state governments for voluntary adoption is a welcome move and we hope to see some traction on it.

Delhi govt. also earmarked Rs 30 crores for organizing the 'Delhi festival' under the Brand Delhi initiative focusing on development of tourism infrastructure while announcing Delhi Budget 2016. This is something we have been lobbying for and such initiatives will allow us to showcase what Delhi has to offer in terms of food to the world and would also attract more domestic and international tourists to the capital city. However, we were also expecting announcements on issues related to lowering of the drinking age, extension of timings, use of open spaces amongst others. We are hopeful that these pain points would be addressed by the Delhi government for giving the required impetus to the restaurant industry soon.



National Restaurant Association of India
Voice of the Indian Restaurant Industry

Make every meal a
masterpiece.



Organising meals and cooking for a large gathering is no easy task you have to be very peculiar of the quality and taste. At Mother's Recipe Food Services, we understand the dilemma of such occasions and which is why we source the best ingredients and bring them to you. Our products include a delectable range of pickles, papad, pastes, condiments and gravy mixes. Each of our offerings is met with stringent quality check so that you get authentic traditional taste and impeccable aroma of spices.



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