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JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2018 • ₹100 India Edition

## INDIA FOOD FORUM 2018: FETTING THE WINNERS OF FOOD RETAIL EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Featured inside: Mihir Desai | Chef Michael Swamy | Chef Amrita Raichand | Jaswinder Narang | Bhavik Rathod





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The 11th edition of India Food Forum was held from 17th-19th Jan. at the Bombay Exhibition centre and brought together once again key decision makers from every part of the food supply chain.

For over a decade now, the Forum has served as India's pre-eminent knowledge and business networking platform for food retail. Over 1,000 C-Level executives from India and overseas, policy makers (ministers, bureaucrats and senior government officials) have been attending India Food Forum over the years, making it the largest assembly of business captains from every part of the food supply chain – processors, producers, distributors, marketers, service providers, restaurant and hospitality companies and retailers.

When we look at the foodservice landscape today, we find a number of changes – socio-economic, cultural, technological – shaping the industry. Companies are undergoing disruptions in their business models, and also in terms of their interaction with consumers and responsiveness to their needs. As the shape, size and construct of food industry is changing fast, this evolution needs to be supported by continuous improvements in the food supply chain, inclusive of product development, production, processing, distribution and marketing.

Encapsulating these themes, the agenda of the Forum this year was to focus and reframe our understanding of the trends shaking up modern food retailing.

In the next issue of the magazine, we will bring you the key takeaways and the solutions from the Forum's high octane panel discussions, workshops and master-classes. Coming from the most influential foodservice practitioners, their recommendations are like silver bullets that can help to address major food retail-system challenges and boost the odds of success in a hypercompetitive market.



**Amitabh Taneja**

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## INDIA FOOD FORUM 2018 concludes with a crescendo

**T**he 2018 chapter of India Food Forum, held from 17-19 January at Bombay Exhibition Centre, was a landmark milestone for India's food retail industry. Powered by Sri Sri Tattva, the 11th annual mega congregation of India Food Forum – India's most comprehensive platform for ideas and innovations in the food, FMCG and HoReCa sector – was power-packed with interactive and focused panel discussions, workshops, exhibition, master-classes, product launch pads, awards and an array of other activities.

Delivering his keynote address, Krish Iyer, Chairman, India Food Forum 2018 and President & CEO, Walmart India said, "We are seeing a transformation unfolding before us – be it FDI reforms in food retail or the implementation of path breaking initiatives like GST. All these make the country a unique and priority investment destination." Expressing his excitement at being part of this eventful journey that will enable India to move ahead on the path of higher rural income, improved farm infrastructure, world class last mile distribution and retail infrastructure in the country, Iyer said, "Today's tech-savvy generation and the rapid increase in internet and smart phone penetration is driving the evolution of the food segment. Their preference to engage with grocers and retailers on their own terms has brought a

tectonic shift in the consumption patterns and has made technology a necessary tool to offer the most relevant value propositions such as experience, convenience, price and choice."

Sharing his thoughts, Arvind Varchaswi, Managing Director, Sri Sri Tattva and Trustee, Sri Sri Ayurveda Trust, and Group Advisor - International Affairs, AYUSH Advisory Group, said: "Food is undergoing a lifestyle change and is getting more personalized. There is a need for education about food on what is good for you and when it is good for you." As an Ayurveda & FMCG brand, Sri Sri Tattva promotes health and wellness and has a portfolio of over 350 products across multiple categories. At India Food Forum 2018 it showcased a comprehensive range of cooking products – cow's pure ghee, organic virgin cold pressed coconut oil, whole wheat atta, basmati rice, 100 per cent natural honey, brown sugar, rock salt, a range of masalas and spices along with a range of staples and pickles. The brand has plans to open 1,000 new stores in India and launch its products in 30 new countries with a focus on Latin America, including Brazil and Argentina. Speaking on Sri Sri Tattva's vision, Varchaswi said: "We have earned the trust of our customers through our products with excellent quality and purity. We are positive in inspiring the modern world towards healthy and happy living through our consistent innovation in food and Ayurveda."



### All-round industry presence

The three-day Conclave was curated and designed into five structured zones – Food & Grocery Forum India, India Food Service Forum, India Food Retail Tech, Food Start-ups Innovation Convention, and the Golden Spoon Awards for excellence in Food and Grocery, Foodservice and for demonstrating innovation in the Food Start-up category. As in the past, the Forum this year brought together key decision makers from every part of the food supply chain, apart from the country's finest talent in food research, creation, distribution and retailing. Over 200 Speakers, 140 Exhibitors, 500+ Brands, 10,000+ Visitors, 400+ International Visitors and 30 International Exhibitors made their presence felt at the Forum this year.

Among the overseas representatives was a delegation from UK's Department for International Trade comprising top brands in the food & beverage sector who took the opportunity at the Forum to partner with Indian players for expanding their geographical footprint and products' expanse. The delegation includes representatives of the most iconic and trusted British brands as well as the latest food innovation and niche products. The participants include Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board, Arbikie Distillery, Amber Glen Scotch Whisky, B Healthy Ltd, Croom Cuisine Ltd, Delamere Dairy, Devine Distillates Group, DT&G, English Cheesecake Co., Green Box Drinks Ltd,

Green King Brewing & Brands, Iceland Foods Ltd, Society of Independent Brewers, St James Smokehouse Ltd, The English Whisky Co., The Hop Studio, Trading World Ltd, Provenance Brands like Cornish Sea Salt – Simply Cornish & the Great British Crisp Co.

To keep the delegates connected with the next big innovations in food retailing, HoReCa and food technology, and to ensure that they are empowered with the products and insights to maximize the opportunities offered by India's vast



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**“ Food is undergoing a lifestyle change and is getting more personalized. There is a need for education about food on what is good for you and when it is good for you ”**

– Arvind Varchaswi  
MD, Sri Sri Tattva and Trustee, Sri Sri Ayurveda Trust, and Group Advisor - International Affairs, AYUSH Advisory Group

consumer universe, the forum featured a line-up of powerful conferences and eminent industry experts as speakers. Among the impressive star-studded roster of speakers at the Forum were Hari Menon (Founder & CEO, Bigbasket), Jamshed Daboo (MD, Trent Hypermarkets), Damodar Mall (CEO, Grocery, Reliance Retail), Piruz Khambatta (CMD, Rasna), Saugata Gupta (MD & CEO, Marico) A. Mahendran (CMD & Co-Founder, Global Consumer Products) and top honchos from Amazon, Patanjali, HUL, Abbott Nutrition, Godrej, Modern Foods, Dr. Oetker, Hypercity, Tata Chemicals, Emami Foods and Field Fresh Foods to name a few, all of whom shared valuable insights on building the overall pie of modern food retail through innovation, ideas and technology and how the food industry will evolve in the next decade.

**Food for thought**

Industry stalwarts and eminent speakers at the 11th edition of Indian Food Forum were of the view that food retailers must take Indian gourmet to the world to help achieve quality and scale in addressing the demand of Indian retail market. Echoing this view when speaking at the inaugural session of the Forum, Piruz Khambatta, CMD, Rasna said, “We must not cater to India, but cater to the world and possibly then look at India. We will subsequently have quality and scale that will drive. If pasta can be sold across the world, we can also sell khakra across the world.” Pointing out that 75% of India still wants pickles or soft-drink at Rs.2, which despite a huge opportunity does not grow beyond a nascent stage, Khambatta said, “We must Make in India for the World.” Concurring with his view, Jamshed Daboo, MD, Trent Hypermarkets, pointed out that India food retail is currently going with the power of brand without understanding what the palate is giving. Moreover, food access to consumers, which was dependent upon distribution, is set to change. “It is not a game of scale any more, but of skill. New innovation in supply chain management will help in product cycle end-to-end and give consumer something different than they were otherwise getting in their catchment area,” Daboo said.

**Top honours for retailing excellence**

A major highlight of the Forum and the latest addition to the prestigious platform this year was the launch of India’s 1st Food Startups & Innovation Convention and Awards supported by FSSAI. The initiative – to support and bring path-breaking entrepreneurs to the platform to share their ideas, business models and help them find solutions to the challenges they face – saw 16 start-ups present their ideas, execution strategies, implementation stages and payoff to an eminent jury panel of 16 members. Of the whole lot, three start-ups – Inner Being Wellness, 4700BC Popcorn and Earthy Tales – stood out as they clinched honours to be a part of the prestigious



Amazon Launchpad Program. Out of 184 entries received for the competition, 16 start-ups were shortlisted and the winning start-ups will now have an opportunity to access millions of Amazon customers nationally and internationally.

Congratulating the three winners – Aman Deep Lohan, Head, Amazon Launchpad India said: “We are very excited to have these start-ups be a part of Amazon Launchpad. We look forward to working with them and assist them through various tools and mechanisms that will help them launch products, get them discovered, build their brand, and help sell on the Amazon marketplace. These start-ups will also get access to the curated Amazon Launchpad store, the one-stop destination to find products from entrepreneurial companies. Additionally, they will get support in account management and customized recommendations on product launches and enhanced quality content with unique product page experience.”

Amazon Launchpad was launched in India in 2016 as a dedicated program showcasing unique and exciting products from startups across India, making it easy for them to launch new products to millions of Amazon customers. The Amazon Launchpad storefront offers customers a one-stop shop to discover a curated selection of cool and innovative products from entrepreneurial companies in the country. In addition to this, start-ups under the program also get Sponsored Products and AWS credits to further boost their business. Current Amazon Launchpad marketplaces include: US, UK, Germany, France, Mexico, Canada, China, Japan and India.

Apart from the Amazon awards, the eminent jury also selected five more start-ups for the Coca Cola Golden Spoon Awards and Images Food Start-ups & Innovation Awards. These include Frshly (Food Service Aggregator), The Thick Shake Factory (Food Service), Jarlie (Food service), Earthy Tales (Organic Farm to Fork) and Numbermall (B2B platform for food and grocery suppliers and retailers). Another three sets of awards were presented to honour India’s most exciting and innovative food retailers, foodservice formats and food retail professionals. •







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# TOP HONOURS FOR THE CRÈME DE LA CRÈME OF INDIA'S FOOD RETAIL

The 11th Edition of India Food Forum once again shone the spotlight on the most outstanding and creative achievers in food retail, the most progressive, exciting and game-changing food retailing and restaurant categories, and the most innovative food startups in the country. Three sets of awards were presented on January 18, 2018 on Day 2 of India Food Forum 2018. The three categories of awards were: Coca-Cola Golden Spoon Awards 2018 powered by Dukes – Images Awards for Excellence in Food and Grocery Retail; IMAGES Food Service Awards; and IMAGES Food Startups and Innovation Awards.

Recognized as India's most prestigious honour for food and food service retailers, the Awards are presented to brands, personalities and concepts for exceptional initiative, outstanding/focussed performance, setting efficiency benchmarks, innovation, and broader impact to industry. The selection process for the Awards involved inviting entries from the nation's leading food service and food & grocery retailers across multiple categories.

Awardees were selected by an eminent jury that comprised some of the most eminent names in the food industry. Jury members analysed key performance metrics such as growth in top line sales and retail presence, sales per square foot, same store sale growth, average transaction values and profitability and other key benchmarks. The Jury also studied the impact of IT application, innovation, marketing, supplier relations and employee practices.

## THE JURY

- ▶ **Amitabh Taneja**, Chief Convener, India Food Forum
- ▶ **Ajay Macaden**, Executive Director, Nielsen India
- ▶ **Ankur Shiv Bhandari**, Founder & CEO, Asbicon Group
- ▶ **B. S. Nagesh**, Founder, TRRAIN
- ▶ **Harminder Sahni**, Founder & Md, Wazir Advisors
- ▶ **Sunil Kumar Alagh**, Founder & Chairman, SKA Advisors
- ▶ **Professor Ravi Dhar**, Yale School of Management
- ▶ **Harish Bijoor**, Founder, Harish Bijoor Consults
- ▶ **Saloni Nangia**, President, Technopak India
- ▶ **Lara Balsara Vajifdar**, Executive Director, Madison World
- ▶ **Abheek Singhi**, Sr. Partner & Director, BCG
- ▶ **Ajay Kaul**, Senior Director, Everstone Group
- ▶ **Debashish Mukherjee**, Partner & Co Head, AT Kearney
- ▶ **Amit Lohani**, Convener, FIFI
- ▶ **Rama Bijapurkar**, Expert Marketing Strategy & Consumer Behaviour
- ▶ **Anand Ramanathan**, Partner, Strategy & Operations Consulting, Deloitte India
- ▶ **Sreedhar Prasad**, Partner & Head Consumer, Retail & Internet KPMG
- ▶ **Samir Kuckreja**, Founder & CEO, Tasanaya Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.
- ▶ **Nitin Puri**, Senior President & Country Head Food & Agri Strategic Advisory & Research, Yes Bank
- ▶ **Pankaj Karna**, Managing Director, MAPLE CAPITAL ADVISORS
- ▶ **Dr. Prabodh Halde**, President – (AFSTI), Head – Regulatory, Marico Ltd.







Images Awards for Excellence  
in Food & Grocery Retail



## COCA-COLA GOLDEN SPOON AWARDS

- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year:  
Large Format: **Big Bazaar**  
Specialty Store: **Nuts & Spices**  
National Supermarket: **Easyday**  
Human Resource Policies & Initiatives: **HyperCity**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Category Performer of the Year:
  - **Nitin Bhujbale**, Category Manager, Beverages, Trent Hypermarket
  - **Saif Kohari**, Category Manager, Processed Food, Savories & Confectionery, Trent Hypermarket
- ▶ IMAGES Excellence Award: Regional Chains:  
**Modern Bazaar & Ratnadeep Supermarkets**

- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Retailer of the Year: Technology Implementation in Store Operations & Loyalty Programs:  
**SPAR – 3D virtual show room**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Brand Retailer Partnership:  
**Winner: Star Bazaar & Ferrero**  
**1st Runners up: Big Basket & Ayush**  
**2nd Runners up: Spencer's & Kissan**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Innovation in Food Ingredients, Products & Processes:  
**Winner: Future Consumer – Desi Atta**  
**Runners up: HUL – Knorr Croutons**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Innovation in Retail Offering, Formats & Services:  
**Winner: Wow! Momo – Innovative Formats**  
**Runners up: HyperCity – India's First Self-Checkout Store**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Marketing & Promotions:  
**Winner: HUL – Kissan Engagement Platform**  
**1st Runners up: HUL – Knorr Confused Bhook**  
**2nd Runners up: Travel Food Services – Indonesian Food Festival**

## FIFI HONOURS

- ▶ **Himanshu Taneja**  
Executive Chef, The St. Regis (Hotel, Mumbai)
- ▶ **Vikrant Batra**  
MD, Café Delhi Heights (Café/Restaurant, Delhi)
- ▶ **Shefali Gandhi**  
Chef-cum-Partner, KOI – Asia Dining (Asian Restaurant, Goa)
- ▶ **Shabeer Ali**  
Executive Director, Loyal World (F&G Store, Bangalore)
- ▶ **Dinesh Kumar**  
MD, Brown Tree (F&G Store, Chennai)



## IMAGES FOOD SERVICE AWARDS 2018

- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Foodservice Chain of the Year: Cafes and Juice Bars – **Starbucks**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Foodservice Chain of the Year: QSR Indian Origin – **Wow! Momo**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Foodservice Chain of the Year: Pubs & Bars – **The Beer Café**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Foodservice Chain of the Year: Ice Cream & Dessert Parlours – **The Chocolate Room**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Foodservice Chain of the Year: Dine-in – **Paradise (Casual Dine in)**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Foodservice Chain of the Year: Dine-in – **Copper Chimney (Fine Dine in)**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Foodservice Retailer of the Year: **One Specific Outlet – A Reverie**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Food Court of the year:
  - **North: Food Quest, Elante Chandigarh**
  - **South: GVK One, Hyderabad**
  - **East: Q Court, Quest Mall, Kolkata**
  - **West: Phoenix Marketcity, Pune**
- ▶ IMAGES Excellence Award: **Burger King**
- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Group of the Year: **Impresario Entertainment & Hospitality**



## IMAGES FOOD STARTUPS & INNOVATION AWARDS

- ▶ IMAGES Most Admired Food Startups of the Year:
  - **Frshly**
  - **The Thickshake Factory**
  - **Jarlie**
  - **Earthy Tales**
  - **NumberMall**

# Study: Mass Individuality Shapes the Future

'Restaurant 2025: Seven Foodservice Trend Statements': this is the title of an exclusive study commissioned by Internorga on the occasion of its 90th birthday to take a wellfounded look into the future. The study was conducted by the GDI Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute in Zurich, Switzerland, and is meant as a long-term outline of the new competitive structures brought about by the individualization of the masses. Central statement: food is lifestyle.

*The study includes a breathtaking word: mass individuality – instead of homogeneity. The term is actually a contradiction: mass and individuality. However, this is exactly what the mainstream consumer wants today and even more so tomorrow. He asks to be considered a very special individual among the millions and hence be served accordingly. A phenomenon of affluent societies! The demands on employees in the service industries, which result from this attitude, are all but small.*



## **TREND 1: Digitalisation creates completely new competitive conditions**

More and more consumers, retailers and career changers from the technical sector are joining the competition. Individual players are leaving their traditional role within the value chain. Especially the line between retail and restaurants is blurring. However, fact is: the fight for the last mile will decide over who prevails. It is becoming increasingly important for foodservice providers to clearly position themselves and bring out their individual strengths – before a start-up or big player will implement their business model better, cheaper and faster. The field within which offers can be positioned is big.

## **TREND 2: Convenience – we are becoming ever more comfortable, but not necessarily happier**

We want technology to take arduous and lengthy work off our hands and automate it. Thus, convenience food will evolve into 'easy' food. Our eating behaviour is ever more influenced by a zeitgeisty definition of convenience (developments: fast, good and fresh / no human interaction / comfortable / on-demand).

However, convenience has two major problems. First: convenience food demands blind trust and loss of control from the customer, because everything is highly technologized. Second: convenience does not make happy. Though it provides more comfort, it hardly satisfies the senses or the craving for experiences. Since convenience does not deliver lasting experiences, we are in a permanent state of search. Paradoxical as it may sound: lasting experiences are inconvenient, and hence uncomfortable.

## **TREND 3: Homing instead of cocooning – the fight for the last mile is intensifying**

The more successful people are, the more they are on the move. Being on the road is becoming the normal condition; hence arriving and being at home have a higher value. Technology and delivery services support this trend: home office is becoming normal, home entertainment is getting better and better, home shopping ever easier. Instead of going to a restaurant, especially adolescents have diverse food products and drinks delivered from retailers. Thus, social life returns to the home. The more varied and convenient the order options, the more likely are people to make use of them. Against this background, traditional foodservice formats will have to reposition themselves in the future.

## **TREND 4: Social food beats flavour – people are more important**

People want to spend time with their friends, chat, laugh, and have a good time. For this purpose, food is ideal and much stronger than other forms of consumption. While it used to be common to get together at a concert, people now meet up at street food festivals. Food is cool, food is lifestyle. Food has become a means of identification and a status symbol. Food is one of our society's media of expression.

If people eat always and everywhere, a pleasant atmosphere is becoming increasingly important as a counter trend. Thus restaurants get a new chance, they take on a new role and can assume additional tasks.

## **TREND 5: Migration food – food creates identity**

The early 21st century was a time of global







## VISION 2025

- The customer of the future does not differentiate between channels, but wants the ideal offer for every situation. Therefore, media presence in all channels will be decisive for future restaurateurs.
- Spreading convenience dissolves the line between restaurants, retail, take-away and vending machines. Convenience and indulgence go hand in hand, great service has to re-define itself.
- The restaurant is becoming a living room, and the living room a restaurant. It makes public space intimate and turns it into home. Apart from that, it also simplifies home cooking – delivery food that includes recipes and ingredients, or even a restaurant chef, who will cook at your home.
- The restaurant is – place of inspiration and knowledge – resort for body and soul – place of sociable get-togethers and of lifestyles – place of adventure and curiosity – centre of people's social life.
- Due to migration there is great demand for culturally specific offers. This becomes evident when large chains devise culturally specific offers, but especially in the growth of individual family-style restaurants.
- The restaurant of the future connects high-tech and organic romanticism: in the background, high-tech supports our longing for romanticism, overview and stories, for transparency and sustainability. Online complements offline. The food of the future is as fast as fast food and as high-quality as organic food.
- Employees, service staff, chef and owner are the most important objects for the restaurant of the future. Their personal expertise pertaining to products, their production and processing, is the prerequisite for success.

migration. Of course, immigrants also bring along their specific foods, dishes and eating culture. We will hence experience a multitude of new trends in the years to come. In a pluralistic society, belonging to a minority is no longer considered a stigma, but normality.

Global marketing messages reach these members of minority groups only to a limited extent. A liberal multi-ethnic state therefore opens up interesting new opportunities for gastronomic investments with a culturally specific focus.

### TREND 6: Polarized eating – balancing high-tech and organic romanticism

Consumers have two conflicting needs: high-tech and the romanticism of organic food. The beginning digital revolution in the food industry is a chance for bridging the gap between both poles.

When services and products are taken to pieces and newly assembled, there is great opportunity for approximation or even amalgamation. Here lies the great potential of the digital world: it helps people get to know and manage their analogous

**Consumers have two conflicting needs: high-tech and the romanticism of organic food. The beginning digital revolution in the food industry is a chance for bridging the gap between both poles.**



needs. Science and technology increasingly shape the entire food value chain.

### TREND 7: Brand ambassadors instead of anonymous brands – the future belongs to personalized marketing

The more we have, the more personalized we want our consumption to be. Mass individuality replaces homogeneity. Interacting guests, not the provider's advertising, decide over the value of a meal.

Therefore, direct interaction with consumers is becoming ever more important. The desire to understand where food comes from inevitably leads to the producers. Their faces and stories are increasingly gaining in importance. Where the focus used to be on TV chefs, farmers will become the stars of tomorrow. Trust will then no longer lie with big brands and labels, but with the producers. They personally vouch for the product quality. Thus products are being personified. •

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# Kitchen Incubator:

## A Unique Platform for Culinary Innovations

by Gaurav Mehta

The concept of kitchen incubators is new to the Indian foodservice market but they can be an exceptional way to sustain the rise of specialty products and a simple and affordable platform for entrepreneurs and aspiring chefs to enter the market and introduce new flavors, work on refreshing food ideas and bring a personalized touch to the food menu besides creating unique ways of cooking and conceptualizing food.



**T**hanks to the growth in wages, increasing urbanization and spread of technology, India is one of the most dynamic consumer markets globally for the foodservice industry. Eating out is a popular form of socializing, contributing to the growth of multiple segments within the expanding market. The Indian restaurant industry, which is worth Rs.75,000 crore currently, is growing at an annual rate of 7% today. However, despite the growth of the industry, about 60% of all restaurants close down within the primary year of operations, and up to 80% shut down in the initial five years. Regardless of how lucrative the restaurant business appears to be, maintaining such a business is a risky undertaking without a doubt.

Considering the country's giant patchwork of cultures and cuisines, there is certainly a need to organize the sector and welcome fresh food concepts. Young chefs today need to discover new and exciting food concepts and empower consumers with more information that helps them in making the right decisions about their food choices, rather than just the convenient local choices. People just go for what they know, but it's the industry's responsibility to help create fresh recipes, which should be a priority of our youthful culinary specialists.

How do we train and create a crop of talented chefs with the ability and the vision to carry out innovative and inspiring work in the food domain? Where does one go to if he/she wants to start a food business? Kitchen incubators as a concept is new to the Indian market but it undoubtedly can help to sustain the rise of specialty products. Kitchen incubators make it significantly simple and affordable for entrepreneurs and aspiring chefs to enter the market and dish up success stories in the food business.



Kitchen incubators can be turned into fully equipped commercial kitchens that food visionaries can lease on a monthly basis and make use of facility to deliver their product. These hatcheries can enable entrepreneurs to become ready to go to the market without the hassles of having to secure and pay for their own commercial kitchen space – a cost that is restrictive for most. Not only this, kitchen incubators can also offer business support and technical assistance – like branding, sales and distribution – to help foodpreneurs get off the ground. Whether you're a home chef, a budding chef, an amateur or an entrepreneur, a hatchery works as the launch pad



and facilitates your entry into the market and helps you make a mark.

### Key ingredients of a kitchen incubator business model

What are the most widely recognized attributes that make up a kitchen incubator business model? It needs to be a “move-in ready” production space with the fundamental infrastructure in place, a dedicated team to provide a support system, exposure to the kind of customers it serves, with the evaluating/pricing model factored in and profitable offerings.

Chefs & entrepreneurs with new concepts, skill sets and ideas get various kitchens and bar formats to bring live a sparkling new spread. This space will help their food and beverage business to flourish, where food lovers can bite into heavenly goodness as new chefs and food entrepreneurs work on refreshing food concepts.

Beyond the essential kitchen facilities, specialty equipment needs can vary greatly. But nowadays move-in ready infrastructure is a must for better delivery. A kitchen should offer contract manufacturing and packaging services to support tenants who are outgrowing the kitchen model and establish a new and diversified revenue stream.

Involvement of industry expertise can prove to be the best support for aspiring chefs to curate one-of-a-kind menu that complements their school of thought in the culinary space. Such mentorship will be a guiding stick at every step of the trial and test. It's all about experimenting with the food experience and winning loyal customers.

That dum biryani from your great grandmother's recipe is indeed the first step but that's not the only thing you need. If you really want to make it, there is long agenda to consider: What about the food handler's license? How are you going to discover customers/ target market? What about business insurance, work spreadsheet or a plan to distribute your food?

The demand of specialty and artisanal foods is on the rise but getting started as a foodpreneur is tricky. The failure rate of the food business is enormous. With the vision to lower the barriers to enter the market, incubators can help hungry entrepreneurs get started in a licensed kitchen at a fraction of the price of leasing and exposure to the best market for their product and brand building. A kitchen incubator is more than just a launching space; it's cultivating the kind of food businesses the community wants. •



The writer is Director, The Trial, a delivery cum sit-in kitchen concept in Gurgaon.



With a keen insight into restaurants and their trends, restaurateur Mihir Desai's 7,000-square foot outlet – The Bar Stock Exchange at Kamala Mills, Mumbai – has proved to be a roaring hit with the city's eating-out crowd.

In just over two years of operation, the TBSE app has been downloaded over five lakh times so far and the brand has expanded to 10 outlets across popular dining hotspots in the city. In deference to the brand's soaring popularity, Desai and his partner have decided to take the brand to more new places in the city and beyond. "We are working on new bar models and concepts, which will launch soon," shares Desai, in a chat with FoodService India.

## Bringing tech to a bar concept with amazing results

### What is unique about the format and concept of The Bar Stock Exchange?

The Bar Stock Exchange (TBSE) allows trading in alcohol whilst making sure you have a great exchange [of conversation, of course!]. Starting with a base price for 30 ml / 60 ml / full bottle, the price of your favorite drink rises in direct proportion to its consumption over a period of time at the bar. Every increase in the number of pegs/ pints ordered by a patron also increases its value margin. On the other hand, the price comes down if time is on your side and if orders for the same drink decrease over a period of time. But before you gasp in worry, our circuit breaker system will ensure that you get the best bang out of your buck always (whether your favorite stock be high or low).

Our company, Corum Hospitality, believes in constantly trying harder and doing better than what we have done before. Our aim is to give a better service and great experience to our customers. In our other restaurants, apart from The Bar Stock Exchange, we strive to give our customers a good value for money for we believe that if the food is worth every penny spent, then the other factors, in case we lack in them, can be worked upon and improved. But a customer will always come back, for sure, for the food. To explain it further, our other brand Desi Culture is a restaurant that defines fusion food and we make sure that there is value for money for our customers.





Mihir Desai

## TBSE: QUICK LOOK

**Parent company:** Corum Hospitality

**F & B brands:** The Bar Stock Exchange, Desi Culture, Mr. Baozi

**Number of outlets and locations:**

a) **The Bar Stock Exchange:** 11 as on 26th Dec. 2017 (Mumbai – BKC, Bandra West, Oshiwara, Sakinaka, Malad West, Dadar West, Lower Parel, Juhu, Colaba, Chembur; Pune – Koregaon Park); On 25th Feb. a new bar format TBSE outlets to be launched at Viviana Mall, Thane; One outlet in Bangalore; One in New Mumbai and Hyderabad each.

b) **Desi Culture:** 1, at Lower Parel, Mumbai

c) **Mr. Baozi:** 1 at Juhu, Mumbai

**Headquarters:** Bandra West, Mumbai

**Total retail area under operation:** 60,000 sq.ft.

**Average ticket sizes:** INR 1,000

**Average footfalls per day:** 7,000 at TBSE outlets

**Food/ beverage specialty:** Bar food and drinks

**Total number of employees:** 2000



## BAR TRENDS TO WATCH OUT FOR IN 2018

The market opportunity is huge as there are lot of opportunities and acceptance and a pool of talent to choose from. However, my strong suggestion to every restaurant is to examine the right rental – that is the biggest effect on your balance sheet! Looking forward, the coming months and years will spell growth for the F&B industry in India. What we are seeing is just the beginning of an evolutionary process that will take its course to realize the full potential and reach the peak. We haven't even scratched the surface yet. It has bewildered me at times to see so much potential in terms of talent and passion in our country – from mixologists to chefs, they can effortlessly compete and emulate with the best in the world. The level of innovation and divergent thinking in this industry is amazing.

Packing a punch in 2018 will be concepts like Dark Kitchen – On target, Off premises. Technology is allowing operators to move beyond customization to an even more detailed level of service. Data shall virtually drive marketing appeals to making hyper-customized menu suggestions to reduce congestion and for speed ordering. Access to street and regional food will be a predominant trend in resto-bars and will drive customer choices. Use of gluten-free cocktails and anti-inflammatory ingredients such turmeric, aloe, flaxseed and skyr are set to gain ascendance. More chefs and bartenders will take to pairing hot peppers with sweet, savory, smokey and tangy ingredients to deliver more flavor, complexity, and the warmth of mellow heat.



### What has been the response of the guests to this somewhat quirky bar concept?

We are indeed grateful to our patrons. The responses have been deeply fulfilling. Our numbers cross an average of 700 people per outlet per day! Especially during the period of offers, the number of people nearly double and we run full all the time. It's overwhelming, challenging and satisfying. The TBSE app has been downloaded five lakh times so far; in fact, we are working on new bar models and concepts, which will launch soon. We have won awards for our brand in each year of our operations and have expanded to over 10 outlets under 2/ 2.5 years.

### Which of your brands has been most successful in terms of sales and customer traction?

The Bar Stock Exchange has been the most successful brand out of the other brands. The footfall, as mentioned earlier, is 7,000 a day at any given point. We have evolved and grown over the years. After carefully taking customer feedback and analyzing the places of improvement, we have worked on our TBSE app and have come up with better deals and offers. Also, in terms of food as





**We are indeed grateful to our patrons. The responses have been deeply fulfilling. Our numbers cross an average of 700 people per outlet per day!**

**PASSIONATE RESTAURATEUR**

Mihir Desai set out on his entrepreneurial journey immediately after completing a bartending course from the London Bar School. He started his own hospitality company Corum Hospitality in his early 20's and persevered despite many ups and downs. Corum Hospitality runs over 12 successful restaurant properties across Mumbai and Pune today and is set to add to its store count in February this year with the addition of its popular TBSE brand to more places in Mumbai and other cities. He expanded TBSE to a 12 pub chain in a little over two years since launching the brand at Saki-Naka, Mumbai, in 2014. By end of this year, his aim is to take the store count to 20 and bring the brand to cities like Hyderabad, Bangalore and Delhi.

well, we have strived to make the food better. Sometimes we have guests who come in just to dine in and love our food. Teetotalers, foodies, cocktail lovers, TBSE is a place for all.

**What is the market positioning that your brands are looking to create?**

Our brands are approachable and affable. We are looking to create brands that stand for VFM (value for money). We want to be a company totally focused on customers.

**How and in what forms are you deploying technology to make your business more efficient and customer friendly?**

We are already using technology to give dynamic pricing experience at our bar but we do aim to go further. In hospitality, one expects to get a personalized experience. So we have to maintain the balance and not go overboard. But to enhance

the service experience for our consumers, we plan to explore how AI (artificial intelligence) can help us add value to the overall experience. We do see a future there.

**What is your marketing and sales strategy and which tools you are using to promote the brand?**

We are organic and consumer driven in our marketing approach. We intelligently use our application to push out notifications besides making use of PR, social media, a small part of ATL, and offers on alcohol to communicate new openings, offerings, etc. We have learnt that location is the key in our business. Also, innovation is as important as the core product, so one must keep upgrading and changing menu from time to time, experimenting with offers and maintain a keen eye on market trends to cash in on the wave. As customer is king, you must be open to listening what he has to say each time and be willing to learn from his/ her opinions and behavior patterns.

**What are your plans and targets for the future?**

At TBSE, we aim to revolutionize the whole trend of going to the bar. We believe in engaging our consumers with the use of technology and in attracting visitors everyday and not just over the weekend. We have been quite successful in doing it in our TBSE outlets in Mumbai and Pune. Our aim is to replicate the same experience in other cities of India. We are immediately looking to expand in the tier 1 cities but we also see a huge opportunity in tier2 cities like Indore, Nagpur, and others where the trend of eating out has been picking up rapidly. Outside India, we are looking at Dubai, London and Singapore, and will focus on expanding to these places by end of 2018. •



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# “India is the fastest growing market for UberEATS in the APAC region”



“The fact that we have expanded to seven cities in just six months reflects our commitment to increasing our footprint in India”

– Bhavik Rathod  
Head of Uber Eats India

Since making its India debut in Mumbai in May 2017, UberEATS has gradually expanded across eight cities, including Delhi, Gurgaon, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Chandigarh and Pune. Bhavik Rathod - Head of Uber Eats India, spoke to FoodService India about the company’s plan for the India market and how he expects the food delivery business to grow in the future.

## What is the uniqueness of UberEATS concept and how does it differentiate itself from other food delivery service apps?

UberEATS aims to provide consumers with food at the tap of a button anytime, anywhere. The service is backed by technological innovations and the power of data and analytics. UberEATS uses the power of technology to connect restaurants, consumers and delivery partners to create a seamless food delivery experience.

Through our ride-sharing business, we have gained immense experience in understanding and mapping consumer behavior across cities. We believe this is our strength. UberEATS focuses on speed, reliability, and ease of use and the service is characterized by multiple unique features. The UberEATS app is optimized to function in times of low connectivity, orders can be scheduled to be delivered at a particular time and also be delivered to external locations, not just one’s home or office.

The app also offers smart curation and customization of interface based on every

customer’s food ordering needs. For our restaurant partners, the app provides consistent insights-based feedback from consumers, bridging the gap between the two.

## How would you describe your run in the Indian market been since you launched in India?

Since Uber Eats made its India debut in Mumbai in May 2017, we have gradually expanded across 8 cities in India including Delhi, Gurgaon, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Chandigarh and Pune. We have witnessed positive week-on-week growth in India, continuously extending our network of restaurant and delivery partners. With a growing acceptance of food delivery apps in the country, we are positive about our growth in the Indian market. We are confident that 2018 will see more growth and expansion opportunities for us.

## How will partnering with UberEATS help restaurants to grow the business in terms of sales and profitability?

UberEATS is a platform that helps small and big businesses alike. With exclusive restaurant partnerships, we bring consumers diverse food options. With the insights gained from our rides business in India, we have gained a fair share of knowledge about the Indian market. What we have observed is that it is often difficult for restaurants to figure out what customers think about their meals and service due to their indirect relationship.

UberEATS’ Restaurant Manager Tool helps restaurant partners bridge this gap by enabling them to make data-driven decisions. They now have access to insights about their service quality, customer satisfaction, sales and types of cuisine that work, allowing them to make specific adjustments to improve their business. UberEATS also enables restaurant partners to streamline their business by controlling the availability of dishes on the menu, monitor the number of





orders and earnings as well as by outsourcing their delivery instead of hiring, which brings cost efficiencies.

Within a short span of time, we have on-boarded over 6,000 restaurant partners who have benefitted by being able to reach out to a wider customer base through our efficient and reliable delivery.

**What are your targets for UberEATS orders going ahead? How many orders are you currently servicing in Mumbai and what has been your growth rate in this market so far?**

We do not disclose order value and delivery numbers. However, we have received positive feedback/ traction from both customers and restaurant partners in Mumbai and Gurgaon respectively. Both cities have a popular 'ordering in' culture. Through our exclusive restaurant partnerships, unique features and cost proposition, we will continue to strengthen our presence in these markets.

**What are your growth and expansion plans for the India market?**

India is the fastest growing market for UberEATS in the APAC region and we have witnessed strong growth in the seven cities that we are present in today. The fact that we have expanded to seven cities in just six months reflects our commitment to increasing our footprint in India.



**UBEREATS APP FOR FOODIES**

UberEATS was started in 2014 as a small delivery pilot in Los Angeles and launched as a separate application in Toronto in December 2015. In the past 18 months, it has grown incredibly fast, and is now a stand-alone app available in 27 countries and in 97 cities around the globe, including India.

The UberEATS app is separate to the Uber app people use to request a ride and has been built specifically to make food delivery as seamless as possible. Consumers can download the UberEATS app on iOS and Android from the iTunes/Google play store or go online at [ubereats.com](http://ubereats.com).

Getting started with UberEATS is easy.

- Download the app
- Pick delivery location - Input your address where you'd like your meal delivered
- Find the perfect meal - Browse local restaurants or search by cuisine type, and sort according to price, dietary needs, and speed to find exactly what your taste buds are asking for
- Place your order - Pick the items you want right now or schedule your order to arrive whenever is most convenient for you
- Pay through PayTM - Our launch partners, PayTM will make it easy for you to pay for your meals
- Track the progress of the delivery - Get updates as your order is prepared and watch in real time as the meals is delivered to your destination



**How do you look at the evolving role of technology in the food delivery space?**

We believe that innovation in technology will play a critical role in the success of the food tech industry as well as in shaping the future of food. Technology and data are the backbone of our organization, which works to the advantage of both Uber and UberEATS. With the backing of technology, we aim to empower restaurant and delivery partners with the tools to grow their business as well as enhance the customer experience.

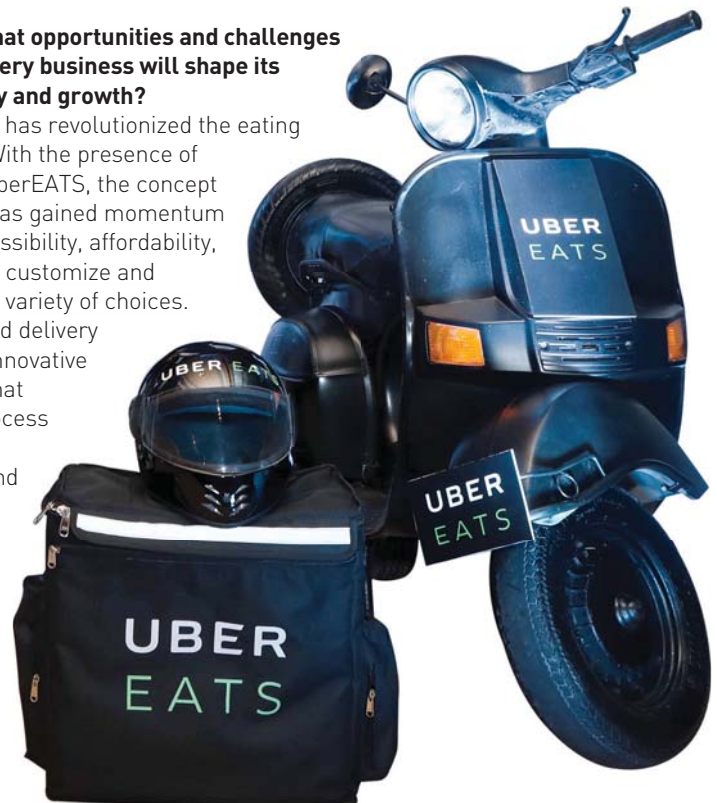
At UberEATS, we have invested considerable time and effort to develop technology that enables a quick, easy and intuitive browsing experience on the app. Features like machine learning help surface recommendations every time a customer opens the app, a 30-minute delivery time based on

past orders as well as customization of the app for every customer depending on the individual's preference.

**Going ahead, what opportunities and challenges in the food delivery business will shape its future trajectory and growth?**

Food technology has revolutionized the eating habits in India. With the presence of platforms like UberEATS, the concept of 'ordering in' has gained momentum due to easy accessibility, affordability, and the ability to customize and pick from a wide variety of choices.

The future of food delivery will depend on innovative collaborations that can unify the process for even greater customization and enable higher efficiencies and ease of ordering. ●●





## To endorse a product, chefs must believe in it

FoodService India spoke to four celebrity chefs on the ethics or otherwise of endorsing a food product or restaurant and the considerations that should be weighed carefully by chefs before they agree to become brand ambassadors.



**“It’s a chef’s responsibility to look after everything that goes out of the kitchen. So if there’s something that’s not on point, then one needs to have a strong team to manage it”**

– Saransh Goila

**One of the biggest growth areas for chefs has been in restaurant licensing and lending their name to food products and brands. Does it actually help the restaurants and brands to pull in more revenue by having chefs as endorsers?**

**Michael Swamy:** It certainly does, especially if the chef is a specialty in the area of the product. Chefs are well equipped to support products as they use them on a daily basis and can talk sensibly about them. But just because a chef may be a TV chef doesn’t make him an authority on a subject.

**Saransh Goila:** It definitely helps restaurants and brands to pull in more revenue by having chefs as endorsers because people place their faith in a person when they feel that the person is creative and understands food from the perspective of a food professional. People feel confident about buying a product endorsed by a chef or eating at his/her restaurant. Chef-driven products or outlets pull in more traffic. Chefs command a following of their own and people following a particular chef are more inclined to try the products or visit the restaurant endorsed by the chef.

**Amrita Raichand:** The real question for a chef licensing his/ her name to a restaurant or endorsing a product is whether the chef is creating value in the market? If the chef is creating value

for the brand and for the customer using the product, then the restaurant or the product being endorsed definitely stands to gain a lot.

**Eric Khoo Thiam Haut (Royal China, Delhi):** In my opinion, restaurants can be run in the name of a chef or on the reputation of its inherent brand power. In the latter case, it is the brand power of the restaurant and the quality of food that counts. One such example is Royal China – a reputed restaurant chain known for the quality of food it serves and its heritage value – that does not have to bank on the star power of any chef. So for a restaurant like Royal China, it’s the quality of food that helps it to earn more and it’s the quality of food that reinforces the brand value of the restaurant.

**What do you think makes for a good circumstance for chefs to lend or license their name to a product or brand and what are the reasons for accepting or declining such offers?**

**Michael Swamy:** It is the day of the chef. Chefs are revered in the Western world. The concept of chef-owned restaurants is relatively new in India. It is good for the brand as long as the chef is good at his work. If a chef’s specialty is Indian food and he endorses French food then certainly something would be amiss. To create a brand, the chef needs to specialize and be good at his work.



**Saransh Goila:** Chefs licensing their brands in the food business can be a little tricky because if the product or the brand is great then it works for the chef but if the product or the brand does not do well then it can also work against the chef. Also, it depends on how deeply the chef is integrated with the product. Is it just an association or are you really propagating people to use the product or to eat it? One has to be very careful about the products or the brands that chefs choose. The reason for not accepting such an offer would ideally be if there is not enough clarity on the brand's part to let the chef know how are they involving him and how deeply. In such a circumstance, the reason for a chef to accept the



endorsement would be when he genuinely believes in the product. That's when one should go ahead with the licensing.

**Amrita Raichand:** If the chef believes emphatically in the product, then it is right for the chef to associate with the product/ service.

**Eric Khoo Thiam Haut:** If it's a good concept that helps the chef, then endorsing the product should not be an issue. On the other hand, a chef may not be completely loyal to the restaurant because he is not the owner. Also, it is advisable for chefs and restaurants to not enter into licensing deals if the reputation of one or the other totally depends on the licensing. Such arrangements can be too risky.

**What are the upsides and downsides for chefs becoming brand endorsers or is this whole thing just an opportunistic gamble?**

**Michael Swamy:** The upside is that people identify the food with a chef's specialty. The chef's creations are a projection of his own identity. So when he endorses his products, they need to be creative and not be run-of-the-mill kind. The ideas and recipes need to be unique and the quality of food at another level altogether. When the food

is run of the mill and mundane, it is tough for a chef to establish himself. Then, the whole thing becomes an opportunistic gamble for chefs.

In my view, it takes time and years to get established and for a restaurant to make its hold felt. And for this to happen, owners and co-owners need to be on the same page. People have to trust the chef and the food and success takes time and patience. The chef's PR skills need to be great too. He needs to be seen and do things outside the realm of the restaurant for people to notice him and his craft.

**Saransh Goila:** I don't think that a chef endorsing a product is an opportunistic gamble. Such an opportunity comes only after one has gained a certain kind of recognition for something that they are good with. I think it's a natural progression for any industry to be doing this. Why should only Bollywood celebrities or cricketers be endorsing products? Chefs get to endorse the products they do because they have earned the recognition for their excellence.

**Amrita Raichand:** Chefs or any other category of celebrities endorsing brands is a double-edged sword. The responsibility of thoroughly researching the brand before lending one's name to it should lie with the celebrity as their followers/fans buy the product based on the word of the celebrity.

**Eric Khoo Thiam Haut:** There's an upside and there's a downside as well. The advantage is that endorsements make the chef the centre of attraction. But it is a disadvantage if the chef's goals are not fully aligned to the interests of the restaurant and there is a conflict of interest. Then, it becomes a lose-lose proposition for both the chef and restaurant or any product endorsed by the chef.

**How does the trend of name licensing on the part of chefs square up with their responsibility towards adherence to product quality, etc?**

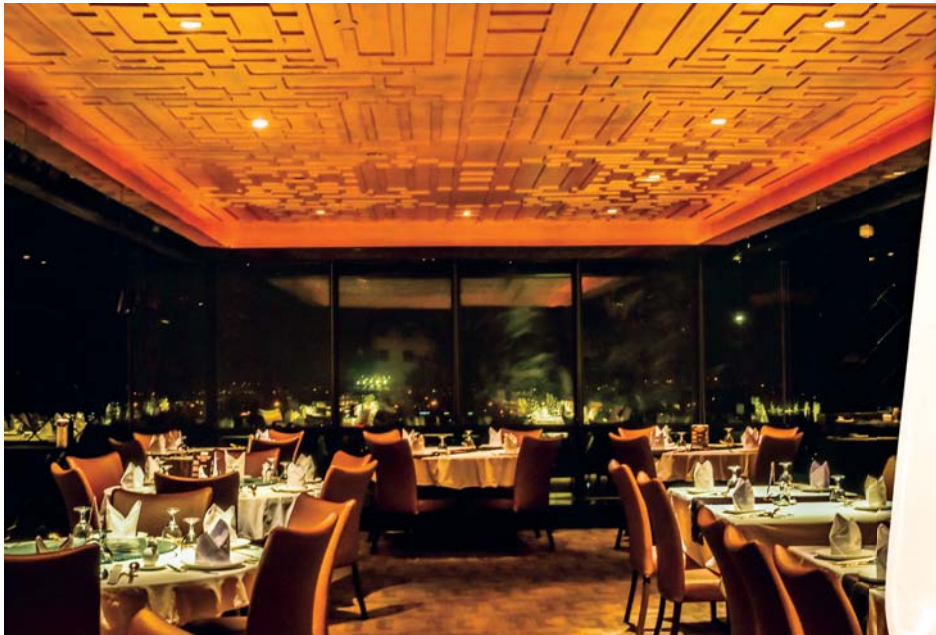
**Michael Swamy:** Most just want to endorse anything and everything. But there are also the



**“It's not that if a chef is well-known in social media or has a very visible profile in public, then his product will be better. Rather, it's the quality of food that speaks”**

– Eric Khoo Thiam Haut





**“When a film star appears in an advertisement for a clothing brand or a mobile phone, does he or she manufacture the product? The same applies to chefs as well. But the onus is on the chef to thoroughly research the product.”**

– Amrita Raichand

people who have their values and won't endorse certain products. For example, I won't ever endorse something that will affect the environment and the health of our planet. Plastics, aluminium, foods with pesticides that kill bees are the things I would not endorse. It's about knowing yourself and the product and what each stands for.

**Saransh Goila:** I think that any chef that lends his name to a product should absolutely be responsible and make sure that they are associating with a brand that is genuinely good product quality. Even if the chef is not directly producing the product but he is still responsible for the fact that he has guided people to buy something or show their faith in a brand or a product. It is ideally great if the chef is well



connected to the management and to the product team so as to ensure that the quality of product is always consistent.

**Amrita Raichand:** When a film star appears in an advertisement for a clothing brand or a mobile phone, does he or she manufacture the product? The same applies to chefs as well. But the onus is on the chef to thoroughly research the product. Personally, I hold multiple meetings, eat, taste,

and spend time with the products that I endorse. I also conduct the rounds of the manufacturing facilities before attaching my name with a product.

**Eric Khoo Thiam Haut:** The chef is responsible for the quality of product he is endorsing. Otherwise, it just becomes a marketing gimmick.

**Is it ethical for chefs to lend their name to products with which they have no involvement in its production or preparation?**

**Michael Swamy:** It is unethical if the chef hasn't done any research on the product. At the end of the day, it's his name on the line.

**Saransh Goila:** There's a thin line to work here. A chef could provide a recipe and somebody else could produce or prepare it. But that does not mean that the recipe does not belong to the chef. If the chef is the creator and has given the recipe to somebody else, then, of course, he will lend his name to the product because he is the creator of the recipe. Steve Jobs himself never made iPhones but he was at the helm of creating a great brand and so to him goes the credit for the success of iPhones.

**Amrita Raichand:** We live in a world that is public. Social media has made sharing one's life easy and immediate. I look at it as an opportunity to interact and genuinely connect with my fans and followers. I see nothing wrong with it so far it's done in a genuine interactive manner.

**Eric Khoo Thiam Haut:** No, it is not ethical for chefs to lend their names to products with which they have no involvement in its production or preparation.



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**“ If a chef’s specialty is Indian food and he endorses French food then certainly something would be amiss. To create a brand, the chef needs to specialize and be good at his work ”**

– Michael Swamy



**Do chefs feel the pressure to raise their public profile because no matter how versatile a chef you are, people won’t buy your endorsed products if you are not well-known?**

**Michael Swamy:** Many advertisements are done by relatively unknown faces and the products still sell well. So it’s not that chefs need to raise their profile for their endorsed products to sell. The product will sell depending on its quality. It does help to a certain extent if the chef behind the product has a well-known public profile.

**Saransh Goila:** I don’t think that chefs are under pressure to raise their public profile for their endorsed products to sell well. And even if there is any degree of pressure, I don’t think there is anything wrong with it. One should be proud of being a chef and if the public knows about it then they will want to ask for the chef and thank him for the meal when they go to a restaurant. It doesn’t matter how well-known the chef is for him to be able to convince the audience to buy the product. If the product is good then the audience is going to buy it. Not all food products are endorsed by chefs but, at the end of the day, it’s the quality and product value that makes a difference.

**Eric Khoo Thiam Haut:** No, it’s not that if a chef is well-known in social media or has a very visible profile in public, then his product will be better. Rather, it’s the quality of food that speaks. When the quality of food is superior, it automatically gets reflected in the customer’s preference through repeat buys and visits. So it’s not that a well-known chef can provide better tasting and quality food.

**Delivered meal kits are another emerging hot area for chefs to lend their names. In this context, how much control do chefs have over ingredients as well as the recipe?**

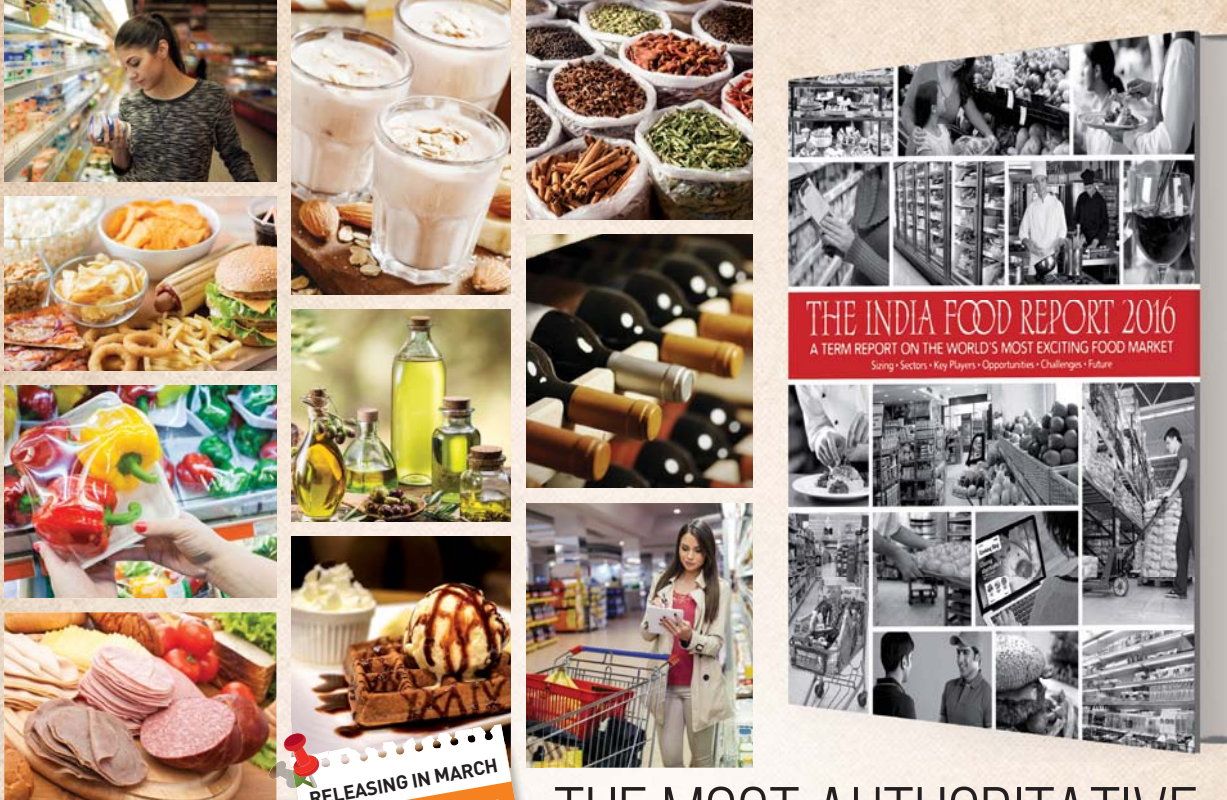
**Michael Swamy:** This is an area where I don’t think chefs should lend their names. It’s different for a branded product like a sauce or pickle. But when it comes to food being cooked and processed not under his supervision, then anything can happen. More often than not, there is a real risk that a chef might lose face for the food that invariably arrives through a process which might not really be the same as that being advertised.

**Saransh Goila:** If one understands how a kitchen works, the meal kit also works in the same way. Even in a restaurant setting, the chef does not have control over everything. It will be incorrect to say that meal kits delivery is very different from the food preparation process in a restaurant. A chef cannot prepare every meal personally. No matter what the scale, if the food is going out from a chef’s kitchen, he is responsible for the final product. The portion size does not matter. It shouldn’t be a criterion to judge a product. It’s a chef’s responsibility to be able to look after everything that goes out of the kitchen. So if there’s something that’s not on point, then one needs to have a strong team to manage it. Just like any other industry, you have to make sure that your vision is met.

**Amrita Raichand:** It has to do with the way we look at chefs. One has many facets to one’s personality. I started out as a model and then got into television. Even now I decline the opportunity to act in TV shows every week because I enjoy being a chef so much. The point is that chefs nowadays are experimenting with things outside the purview of their restaurant or hotel kitchens and that’s perfectly all right. Any chef worth his salt knows to do his/ her checks thoroughly before lending his/ her name to any deal because all of us have our fans and followers who are very dear to our hearts!

**Eric Khoo Thiam Haut:** At Royal China, there is a transparency in providing delivery meal kits. And we do not differentiate with a meal served in the restaurant and a meal delivered home. We provide equal and better quality food to everyone. When it comes to control over the ingredients and recipe, it is as per our quality and the choice of our customers. We run our restaurant as a customer-centric operation. ●●





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*(L-R): Shiladitya Chaudhary & Debaditya Chaudhary*

## “We have taken the themed restaurant concept to another level”

By opening Kolkata’s first period dining restaurant Oudh 1590 in 2013, brothers Debaditya Chaudhary and Shiladitya Chaudhary brought to the city its first ever destination for Awadhi cuisine and a go-to restaurant for enjoying authentic royal delicacies from the time of the Nawabs. FoodService India spoke to elder sibling Shiladitya about the uniqueness of their theme restaurants, its value proposition for the guests and how the duo is innovating to further build the brand equity of their brand.

### **Tell us of the growth and evolution of your company and its F&B brands over the years?**

My younger brother Debaditya and I are foodies and have travelled across the world to taste the known and unknown delicacies served globally. With the Kolkatan’s fetish for biryanis and kebabs, we thought of providing them with a five-star dining experience at a much affordable cost as there were no such brands offering a well-researched Awadhi cuisine in the city. This was the reason for us to start Platter Hospitality with our first brand Oudh 1590 in 2013. Though there is Dum Pukht at ITC Sonar on one end and Shiraz, Arsalan, and a host of other restaurants offering Awadhi delicacies on the other end, the premium cuisine that we started to offer at a reasonable price was unbelievable. Oudh 1590 took off well

and we have national and international travelers making it a point to drop in at Oudh 1590 for a period dining experience if they are in Kolkata.

Then came Chapter 2, the newest culinary destination of Kolkata. The idea was to present the city with its first retro dining restaurant. We have recreated the Anglo Indian Food & Live Music culture, for which Blue Fox and Skyroom at Park Street were globally famous, with its décor, ambiance and, of course, food. With the closure of the renowned restaurants like Skyroom and Blue Fox, something went amiss from the platter of the food connoisseurs. So, our motto was to giving back the lost glory that Kolkata was once proud of. Our brands have created something more than just the gastronomic experience – they offer a fine dining experience at an affordable price.



**What is unique about the format and concept of your F&B brands and what are their distinct specialties?**

Nowadays, a restaurant is not just about the food but equally important are the architecture, ambiance, music, service and the overall comfort level it provides to its patrons. Theme restaurants are now in vogue and people are now more experimental about it than before. From getting a fashion designer on board to design the stewards' costume to a celebrity architect to design the restaurant, we took themed restaurants to another level.

**How would you describe the unique selling points of your restaurant brands? What is the customer and value proposition of your brands for the guests?**

We believe in creating destinations rather than restaurants. Back in 2013, when Oudh 1590 started its journey with a 74 seat outlet in Deshapriya Park, we were initially doubtful about the response. But Kolkata being the food capital of the country welcomed Oudh 1590 with open arms. The same goes for Chapter 2. Today we have 5 branches of Oudh 1590 and the second edition of Chapter 2 will commence next year. The USP of Platter Hospitality lies in every detail that we put in our work, be it décor, food, ambiance or service.

**Which are the attributes and hallmarks that differentiate your restaurant brands from their competitors?**

We have gone to the depths and, with elaborate research, reached the roots of Awadhi cuisine. We wanted to showcase galawti kebab and kakori kebab the way it has been served in Lucknow (formerly Awadh) for ages. The twist is when it comes to kebab or, for that purpose, any Awadhi food, people think that this offering can be made only either in chicken or mutton. But that's a

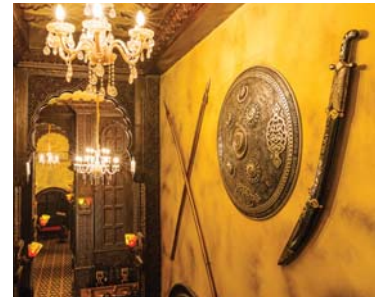
mistaken perception. With the Gomti river flowing in the city of Lucknow, fish play an important role in the cuisine; even the ancient logo of Awadh is represented by two fish. So, we have introduced a lot of fish preparations like mahi chaap, jhinga biryani, mahi kofta, etc, in our menu. Bengalis love fish and thus it made sense for us to introduce these delicacies in our menu. With regards to Chapter 2 menu, we have tried to be as authentic as possible by offering Old Calcutta Continental food, which hardly any restaurants of the city serve.

**What successful F&B innovations have been introduced by your brands that have proved popular?**

Oudh 1590 oozes with "Nawabiana". As you enter the restaurant, history grapples you altogether. There is classical thumri and ghazals playing incessantly in the background, combined with mystique lights, impeccable wall paintings, impressive chandeliers, touch of silky silhouettes enriched with royal colors, enticing work of embroidery on wooden facade, brass plates and cutlery and what not! It seems like each and every accessory creates an ambience to bring forth the "Royal Mughlai" essence. We believe that the royal feel in the ambience along with lip-smacking Awadhi cuisine attract the patrons most. We try to explore and create a platform for the MIG gastronomes wanting to satisfy their taste buds at an affordable price in a setting that offers a five-star dining experience.

**What is the business potential for your restaurant format in a city like Kolkata?**

We see Kolkata as the most evolving market for F&B trade. Over the past three-four years, it has seen growth in terms of people exploring and expanding their palate for a wide range of international cuisines. With the changing cosmopolitan scenario,



**Today we have 5 branches of Oudh 1590 and the second edition of Chapter 2 will commence next year. The USP of Platter Hospitality lies in every detail that we put in our work, be it décor, food, ambiance or service.**



working couples mostly don't get the time to cook for themselves. And Bengalis being foodie from the core are now even more keen on ordering food from outside or dine out. So, Kolkata, for us, is a market with lots of potential.

**What is your marketing and sales strategy and which are the tools you are using to promote the brands?**

We maintain a strong database of all our patrons. Our DCP (Direct Contact Program) module of work helps us a lot in making the database articulate. Comments Card, filled by the guests, is verified every day and the data is updated accordingly. We minutely take care of every detailing related to the holistic growth of the restaurant.

**Which parts of your business operations incur the highest cost/expense and what are you doing to enhance business efficiency?**

Manpower & raw material – these are the areas that incur the highest cost and expense. To enhance the business efficiency, we follow stringent standards of recruitment. Also, we scrutinize the entire operational procedure on a daily basis.

**What is a decent profit margin/ returns for your business and what is the scope for increasing it?**

We see 15% as a decent profit margin and we strongly feel that there is no scope for increasing the same as we deal with authentic Indian cuisine where the cost of preparing the food is much high.

**Tell us about the challenges of your business and how you manage them?**

**We thought of providing Kolkatans with a five-star dining experience at a much affordable cost as there were no such brands offering a well-researched Awadhi cuisine in the city.**



<b>Parent company:</b> Platter Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.
<b>Headquarters:</b> Kolkata
<b>Brand/s Name:</b> Oudh 1590 & Chapter 2
<b>Retail Format:</b> Period Dining & Retro Dining Restaurant
<b>Number of Outlets and Location:</b> Five outlets of Oudh 1590 (Three flagship stores at Kolkata's Deshapriya Park, Southern Avenue and Salt Lake and presence in two prestigious clubs – Calcutta Club and Tollygunge Club); One Chapter 2 at Mani Square Mall in Salt Lake
<b>Launch Dates:</b> Oudh 1590 Deshapriya Park - 17.05.2013, Salt Lake - 22.06.2015 & Vivekanand Park - 1.08.2017; Chapter 2: 3.03.2016
<b>Total Retail Area:</b> 14,000 sq. ft.
<b>Average Ticket Size:</b> Rs. 700
<b>Average Footfall per day:</b> 1500 at all outlets
<b>Food/Beverage Specialty:</b> Awadhi cuisine at Oudh 1590 outlets and Continental, Chinese & Indian Cuisine at Chapter 2
<b>Cover Size:</b> Oudh 1590 at Deshapriya Park: 80; at Vivekanad Park: 120; at Salt Lake: 100; Chapter 2: 70
<b>Total Number of Employees:</b> 300



**FINE DINING TRENDS IN 2018**  
 India is going through a sea change in F&B trade. With the opening of of Hard Rock Café in Kolkata, the F&B scene is experiencing a boom at present. "We are very confident that all the Metro cities in India will add to their food destinations in a major way. We, at Platter Hospitality, too, have major expansion plans for the next fiscal year, both in the QSR & Fine Dining format. We believe that going ahead, we will see constant changes in the format structure and more of innovative inputs related to food, logistics and the overall branding of restaurants. On our part, we will try to keep things simple even while innovating on our palate offerings."

The most defining challenge that we have faced is in filling the market gap by democratizing fine dining and offering our customers a magnificent experience where they can get the best food & service in a five-star ambience but by paying relatively less. But within a short period of time, we were able to establish three outlets and food counters at two famous clubs of the city and made Oudh 1590 a reputed brand after overcoming the initial challenges. Our target base is the middle income group and we want to make ourselves stronger by maintaining the right product, and positioning and pricing at the right level.

**What are your plans and targets for the future?**

We have an expansion plan in place. Oudh 1590 will next open its door in North Kolkata and in Howrah by the next fiscal. The brand will also make its presence felt in Delhi and Mumbai in the coming years. Simultaneously, we are speaking to many investors from Singapore and Germany, who are extremely keen to have a high-end Indian restaurant operating in their country. We hope that things will fall in place very soon. Also, we are working on the plan of implementing our chain of QSR services. ●●



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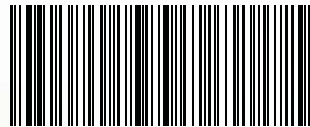
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# Pasta Perfect

Let's be honest: nothing can compare to the texture and taste of fresh pasta. But what if restaurant resources don't allow in-house production? Ebrofrost – the joint venture between German pasta producer Keck Spezialitäten and Danish rice and grains specialist Danrice – holds the answer: Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) pasta. It has all the benefits of fresh pasta combined with the advantage of reliable calculation and speed of service.

**W**hether or not pasta is your concept's core product, you are likely to resort to convenience solutions in order to keep kitchen processes running smoothly and serve customers promptly.

"Up until today, it is a habit for restaurants in many parts of the world to pre-cook large batches of dry pasta and reheat the required portions shortly before serving," observes Amalie Schmidt, Key Account Manager Foodservice at Ebrofrost.

The result on the plate is hardly noteworthy. However, customers expect exceptional experiences when visiting a restaurant – in terms of service and food! "With our premium range of cooked and frozen pasta solutions, which come in more than 100 different shapes and can be tailored to the particular needs of individual foodservice operations, we can help our customers serve the dishes their guests truly crave," assures Schmidt.

#### Keck: the frozen pasta expert

She speaks on behalf of the Keck company, which has brought nearly 30 years of experience in freshly made, fully cooked and Individually Quick

Frozen (IQF) pasta production into the Ebrofrost joint venture: originally, the Keck family, owner of a regional butcher's chain, had started making fresh Spaetzle (a Swabian pasta specialty) for their central kitchen, which produced meals for all company shops as well as regional cafeterias. The focus shifted to frozen pasta when notable producers like Iglo expressed their interest in the product. Over the years, the company has profited from the remarkable rate of development of the ready meal market, broadening its pasta range to also include Italian pasta varieties and Asian noodles. Today, business with the food industry accounts for 75% of Keck sales.

The main share of Ebrofrost pasta production happens in Offingen (DE). All products are shipped in an unbroken cool chain to customers in 25 European countries. Stephan Keck, entrepreneur and founder of Keck, explains the continuous production process devised by his family: "In our highly automated facilities, the pasta dough is prepared from scratch, shaped with bronze dies, and cooked to the desired cooking point. Subsequently, the pasta is cooled down in water at 2°C and shock-frozen at -30°C before being packaged and stored in our high-bay warehouse." Thanks to this process the full aroma, texture and colour of fresh pasta is preserved.

## EBROFROST HOLDING

**Established** June 2013

**Joint venture** between Keck Spezialitäten (DE) and Danrice (DK)

**Partners** Stephan Keck (MD) & Ebro Foods (ES)

**Share of sales** Keck: food industry 75%, foodservice 25%; Danrice: almost 100% food industry business

**Sales mix** Keck: 75% short pasta, 15% pasta and noodle nests, 10% portion packs; Danrice: 87% rice, 10% grains, 3% pasta nests

**Main markets** Keck & Danrice: DE, France, UK, Belgium, Italy, Austria

**Production facilities** Offingen, DE (Keck); Nyborg, DK (Danrice); Beckley, GB (fresh pasta for pasta salads/food industry only); Memphis, TN, USA

**Production volume** 100,000 t pasta, rice & grains

**Employees** 120 worldwide

[www.ebrofrost.com](http://www.ebrofrost.com)





### Maximum variety, quality & safety

Most short- and long-cut pasta varieties available through Ebrofrost are made from durum wheat semolina and mainly differ in their cooking point, salt content and of course shape. Depending on customer preferences, recipes may contain eggs. "Beyond that, we can add turmeric, spinach or other colouring ingredients," says Keck. Organic or whole grain IQF pasta is also available as are gluten free varieties and pasta from alternative raw materials like lentils or chick peas.

With the emergence of Asian concepts on the European foodservice market, Keck also added Asian noodle varieties to its range: "Unlike classic Italian pasta, Asian noodles are made from flour," explains Keck. "We produce Udon, Soba, Ramen and Chinese Egg Noodles and package them if requested in individual nests thus helping to facilitate operations while giving consumers the matchless taste of fresh noodles."

### Single portion solutions

In foodservice today, product requirements centre around three key factors. They should:

- ease operations (e.g. long life periods, easy storage, pre-portioned)
- allow high process flexibility
- guarantee top results with various equipment and restricted know-how.

"Add the fact that guest expectations for quality have been continuously rising over the past decade, and you'll see that there is a lot of potential for our products in foodservice," says Amalie Schmidt. "Especially restaurant chains with a highly structured workflow can profit from our product solutions."

Schmidt is specifically referring to the company's single portion packs (30-300 g) and noodle nests (IQF long-cut pasta; 50-300 g) that allow restaurants to calculate precisely, manage their food cost without loss, and optimise the hygiene in their restaurants. "They are also very helpful for keeping gluten-free products strictly separate from conventional ones," remarks Schmidt.

Preparation is as easy as it is quick: wrapped in microwavable bags, noodle nests, Penne,



Fusilli, Farfalle & co. are ready to be served within approx. 2.5 minutes, depending on the portion size. Preparation in hot water is equally possible (approx. 30 sec. for a 50 g noodlenest). Larger amounts of pasta (available in foodservice packages, e.g. 2.5 kg bags) are ready within four minutes when prepared in a combi-steam oven, but also lend themselves to wok cooking. Regardless of the means of preparation, the frozen pasta is always heated directly without thawing, thus helping to increase speed of service. The minimum shelf-life of 18-24 months allows for maximum flexibility and planning reliability.

### Strong distribution partners

"We want our customers to find in our products the ideal solution for their purposes," stresses Schmidt. "For established as well as aspiring foodservice chains, we therefore offer customised products that fit individual operational processes and taste preferences." Businesses with regular pasta demand can purchase a wide selection of standard Keck pasta and noodle products as well as rice and grains through Ebrofrost's exclusive distribution partners Hilcona and The Smiling Cook (D'lis Food).

"Our contract with Hilcona comprises the distribution of our products under the Hilcona Foodservice brand in all German-speaking countries and France," Schmidt explains the cooperation with one of Europe's leading suppliers of fresh convenience for both the foodservice and consumer markets. The Smiling Cook specializes in the distribution of IQF pasta products and sauces for Ho-ReCa businesses and is currently developing the European market.

Now, Ebrofrost is also making its frozen products available to food producers and restaurants in North America: the holding recently opened a 5,200 sq m production plant for cooked IQF pasta, rice and grains in Memphis, Tennessee. Overall, future business development will focus on increasing the foodservice share of sales. Efforts will especially centre around tailor-made solutions for the chain restaurant industry. The prospects for success are good, believes Amalie Schmidt: "After all, our products meet both present day customer and operational requirements. It's a win-winsituation." •

Apart from Keck's pre-cooked IQF pasta and noodle specialties, Ebrofrost also offers a wide range of IQF rice and trendy grain products such as buck wheat, sorghum, or quinoa, produced by joint venture partner Danrice.

## 2 SPECIALISTS JOIN FORCES

In June 2013, Keck Spezialitäten entered into a joint-venture with Danrice (Denmark), since 2004 part of the Spanish Ebro Foods Group. The Ebrofrost Holding unites the expertise of two internationally leading manufacturers for the food and foodservice industry: while Keck focuses mainly on precooked IQF (short-cut) pasta and noodle nests, Danrice specializes in pre-cooked IQF rice and grains for the international B2B sector, with a particular focus on the ready meal market.

Ebrofrost also has a high care production facility in Beckley, GB, which produces and markets fresh pasta products for further processing by the food industry. With Ebrofrost North America, the holding recently added production facilities for its IQF products on the already existing factory premises of Ebro Foods in Memphis, TN, USA.

Article source:  
FS Europe & Middle East





# “With four decades in operation, we are a cult name in sizzlers category”

FoodService India spoke to Kailash Seth, Managing Partner, Kobe Sizzlers, about the restaurant chain's brand value proposition, its most popular offerings and what he considers to be the brand's most distinguishing achievements.



## Tell us about your restaurant brand and what they are known for.

Kobe Sizzlers is a family style restaurant brand established in 1975 and known for sizzlers (dishes served on hot iron plates). The restaurant is enjoying success for the past 35 years. We have three restaurants running in Mumbai, which is run by our management. Another 18 Kobe Sizzlers are franchisees in India and abroad.

## Which are your key customer segments and what is your customer value proposition?

Our customers are families with a high spending power – upwardly mobile professionals, MNC executives, corporate honchos, businessman, to mention a few are our key customer categories. We keep developing the brand and its value







Kailash Seth

## HOUSTON IS KOBE SIZZLERS LATEST OUTPOST

Houston will soon host and serve the lip-smacking menu of Kobe Sizzlers – the world’s largest independent sizzler joint established in 1975. Expanding through the franchisee route Kobe Sizzlers has plans to take its store count to 20 in collaboration with El Bar, a leading international food chain famous for an extensive range of mouth watering sizzlers, cosy environment and courteous service.

The first of Kobe Sizzlers Houston outlet will be spread over 2,000 sq.ft.. Apart from serving Kobe Sizzlers’ signature menu, the restaurant will also offer the delicacies popular among the native people in preference to the local food palates. The new outlet is expected to become operational from April onwards. The key attractions at the Houston’s outlet will include chicken shashlik, cottage cheese shashlik, and steak sizzlers along with lots of other local offerings. Complementing the menu will be a range of thirst-quenching beverages and sweet delights such as home-made ice tea and caramel custard. “After delighting food connoisseurs in different parts of the world, our next mission is to make a sizzling start in the US. We have divided the whole of the US into four zones, and each zone will have 5-6 outlets. Our first destination in the US is Houston city, and we are quite sure that food mavens of America will warmly welcome our sizzlers,” says Kailash Seth, Managing Partner, Kobe Sizzlers.



proposition for our customers as a result of which our customer base is always growing.

### Which are your best-selling products and specialties?

Pepper steak, chicken shashlik, and our famous iced-tea are the all-time favourites with customers.

### How would you describe your brand’s key achievements so far?

We have been operating for almost four decades now and are a cult name in the sizzlers category.

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

We have firmly stuck to the basics of making mouth-watering sizzlers, which has found a growing base of loyal customers.

### What are your plans for investment and expansion?

Our priority is to serve people a good meal, for which we strive to partner with investors around the globe.

### How do you look at the potential of your chain in a market that is becoming more competitive and crowded?

The market is created by the same people that we serve and our focus is to always serve our patrons well. The patrons of Kobe Sizzlers have transformed us from a brand to an icon. The love and appreciation of our guests is what keeps us going ahead. ●●

## KOBE SIZZLERS – AT A GLANCE

**Parent company:** Kobe Sizzlers & Co., Mumbai

**Brand name:** Kobe Sizzlers

**Parent Company and Headquarters:** Kobe Sizzlers & Co., Mumbai

**Food Retail Format:** Family Restaurant

**Number of Outlets and their location:** 21 running outlets at the moment. Present in Dubai, Mumbai, Amritsar, Muscat, Chennai, New Zealand, among other places

**Main offerings:** Sizzlers

**Price Range:** Average price of a sizzler at Kobe is Rs. 800/-

**Number of Employees:** On an average, 20 employees per outlet. Total employee strength is 450+

**Average ticket size:** Average ticket size covers a pack of four

**Seats/ Cover:** Average 100 seats per outlet

# Tools to grow the restaurant business

The F&B industry is witnessing tremendous growth assisted by technology in areas such as customer engagement, data analysis, quick service, and others.

by Nilesh Shah

**An ERP and POS software lets restaurant owners collect data with ease and provides them with the tools to organize and analyze that data to understand the customer's preferences and tastes.**



The writer is Co-founder, RanceLab FusionERP, an on-premise, fully functional retail and point of sale solution for billing, inventory control, finances and accounting, payroll and employee management, and customer management and loyalty program.

In today's scenario, we can rightly say that technology is the growth booster for restaurant business. It's changing the face of the F&B industry and with such expedition. The F&B industry has grown tremendously and a lot of it is owing to technology. We talk about customer engagement, data analysis, quick service, etc. but how has technology contributed to it and how is it beneficial to a restaurant business?

**Technology Infrastructure:** Let's start with restaurant technology. This doesn't always mean new gadgets or cooking devices. Take your POS system or internet network for example. Any hitch there could lead to frustration and negatively impact your operations. A business-standard infrastructure can ensure that everything – right from your reservation to settlement of bills – is always undisturbed. Offering free WiFi services to your customers also helps in increasing footfalls and impacts revenue.

**Data Analysis:** Data is the most important asset for any business. And it is through this data that one can make the way to growth and success. An ERP and POS software lets restaurant owners collect data with ease and provides them with the tools to organize and analyze that data to understand the customer's preferences and tastes, which in turn helps in bringing in more business. The insights collected assist you in creating special campaigns and loyalty programs. Collecting and harnessing details like the daily sales, inventory cost, most selling items, etc. contribute to a successful restaurant business.

**Customer Engagement:** Today, if you ask any restaurateur about their priority, after food quality, it will be customer engagement. After all, customers determine the success of a business. They are paramount (read: God) for any business. It's crucial for a restaurant business to ensure that the customers bring repeat business. There are many ways in which technology can help achieve this. You could want to make your website or app

more interactive and easy. When a customer visits the restaurant, the focus of the staff should be on communicating with customers, to which restaurants are adopting handheld order taking tabs and digital menus. Not only is it more engaging, it simplifies the ordering process, resulting in faster and error-free service. In addition, one can even collect the feedback and settle bills at the table itself.

**Quick Service or Pick up:** In this fast-paced world, food has to be fast too, hence the demand for quick service or takeaway outlets. This means your orders need to be processed fast and a POS software lets you do just that in a zap. It lets you process orders faster, also keeping your inventory and menu updated. The transfer of order to the kitchen and timely preparation results in better service. On the whole, it ensures you save time while preventing any breach in service.

**Increasing Delivery Options:** With people having access to technology in their pockets, more and more people are diving in for home deliveries. Who says no to comfort, after all. Restaurants are taking advantage of online ordering platforms where customers can mention their preferences. POS software picks up the orders in the system and transfers this information to the restaurant, thus providing efficiency and accuracy throughout the process. Hence, it helps save on time, provide faster deliveries and better customer service. Thus, if you are a restaurant owner, then by using technology you can combat competition and ease out operations at the same time. Are you game for technology? •





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# “Good food and great service get noticed always”

Jaswinder Narang, Complex General Manager, Sheraton Grand Pune Bund Garden Hotel and Le Méridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa, spoke to FoodService India about how good service standards add to the food and beverage reputation of a hotel and create an impact on its overall business proposition.



“Our training processes ensure that everyone who comes to dine at our F&B outlets leaves with an unforgettable experience. We ensure that our staff prove to be good ambassadors of service and hospitality and deliver warm hospitality”

– Jaswinder Narang  
Complex GM,  
Sheraton Grand Pune  
Bund Garden Hotel  
and Le Méridien  
Mahabaleshwar  
Resort & Spa

**As a hospitality professional, what is your philosophy of service and hospitality? Where does service ends and hospitality begins or vice versa?**

I would say service and hospitality are synonymous. Service is something that has to be genuine, unobtrusive and timely. Hospitality is about the warmth and caring attitude that reflects in the day-to-day service. Service begins when you ask for help at the concierge and hospitality starts with the warmth of the personnel to guide you accordingly.

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

The key elements of our services and standards are mainly the genuine warm welcome that we accord to our guests, the recognition of guests, meeting and exceeding their expectations and creating memories through unique experiences. Our F&B outlets stand out for their delectable platter and the warm service of our crew.

**What role does F&B play in the overall business proposition of the hotel?**

F&B plays a very important role. Many of your loyal guests come and stay with you because they like your F&B venues. If the F&B venues are promoted properly, they can become a significant profit center for the hotel. Food always speaks for itself and F&B outlets are one of the key components that can create an impact on the overall business proposition of the hotel.

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

Both the components are equally crucial for the success of F&B areas. If we fall short in either of the two, it spells a bad experience for our guests. So good food and good service go hand in hand and complement each other. Good food and great service get noticed always and they speak for themselves.



**How do you apply the elements of service and hospitality in your F&B regimen at your outlets?**

We make sure that we are consistent with the quality and taste of our food and continue to cater impeccable service in our F&B outlets.

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

We have introduced a few new systems comprising continuous trainings, which equip you in the real world to deal with the problems. These new processes make the associates aware of all the latest trends in the industry as the hospitality industry is ever evolving and it is very necessary to keep up with the pace to be at the top of the game.

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

Our training processes ensure that everyone who comes to dine at our F&B outlets leaves with an unforgettable experience. We ensure that our staff prove to be good ambassadors of service and hospitality and deliver warm hospitality.

**What are the technology tools you are employing for ensuring higher F&B standards and customer service at your outlets?**

We have the tools and systems in place that gives us the client's history and menu analysis. Also, the business intelligence software tells us the average checks on slow and fast moving items, both popular and unpopular. It also gives a daily update on food cost.

**What are your plans for the New Year for attracting customers to your food outlets?**

We have planned various food and beverage promotions, wine festivals and, of course, entertainment at various venues. We also have exciting and unique weekly themed dinners, monthly food festivals and dinners in place. •





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# Multiplexes and Food Business

In-cinema dining is turning out to be serious business as F&B contributes around 30% of the total revenue that any multiplex chain earns. The amount which people spend on tickets is similar to the one they spend on food and that's how the business becomes sustainable.

by Dina Mukherjee

It is rightly said that films and food go hand in hand today. With consumers spending more at cinema halls and with online ticketing gaining prominence, multiplex operators are increasingly focusing on improving their revenues from the food and beverages segment. From setting up own F&B division to offering curated menu to enabling online offers like the Movie ticket + Food combo offer, multiplex operators are doing different things to shore up revenues.

In Carnival Cinemas, consumer spends on F&B ranges anywhere between Rs. 50 and 80 per head compared to an average cost of movie ticket at Rs. 150-160. We are hoping that the food and beverage revenue would grow by another 10 per cent.

Indian multiplexes have been havens of tempting and delicious food & food is actually one of the first things which come to our mind when we think about watching a film at a multiplex. But going to the movies can be quite an expensive affair; after all you always get tempted and order extra butter on your popcorn. Then there's the smooth waft of warm caramel that lures your taste buds every single time and you thoughtlessly order another box of caramel and cheese popcorn. By the time you know it, you've downed lots of calories without even realizing. If you're a movie buff who never misses a single flick, you'll know exactly what we're talking about.





There was a time when people used to stop for grabbing a quick bite before or after the show while going out for a movie. But in the last few years, multiplexes have modified their menus to the extent that they are now at par with restaurants in terms of quality as well as variety. In the age of mobile devices, streaming, and on-demand movies, cinemas are not only competing with one another but also battling smartphones, home entertainment, and the Internet. The only solution in such a scenario left for them is to lure customers with better food and transform the traditional concession visit into something more upscale and restaurant-esque. Multiplex chains are therefore, designing and offering a menu that has an entire section dedicated to dishes that are prepared in a healthy way.

In-cinema dining is turning out to be serious business as F&B contributes around 30% of the total revenue that any multiplex chain earns. The amount which people spend on tickets is similar to the one they spend on food and that's how the business becomes sustainable. So even if a movie doesn't do too well at the box office, multiplexes in any case manage to do decent business and earn a turnover bigger than many quick-service restaurants. While too much attention on the delish eats may distract from the basic agenda of watching a film, the idea of digging into a bite sized burger and washing that down with a frothy red velvet shake served at your seat by a butler, taps into everyone's inner royal. And exactly, for that feeling, a few bucks extra seems like a small and fair bargain for movie-goers.

Multiplexes now provide a menu with about 100-120 food items, including dim sum and kathi rolls. They offer food into sections like 'with finger', 'with fork' and since the food is served inside the theatre, they ensure that it doesn't have a pungent aroma. The whole idea is to provide the facilities of a restaurant in the cinema hall, and to also ensure that the food is convenient to eat while watching a movie. This way, the guests don't need to eat at food courts before or after the movie.

Nowadays, food and beverages in cinemas have gone to a level where wraps, rolls and pesto sandwiches have replaced the typical paneer, chutney or cheese sandwiches. In fact, there is a bevy of options available in the fresh food category. Even healthy food like steamed momos and corn, besides pizzas, pastas and tortillas, are quite popular.

Cinemas are more than just movie watching today. These are experience centres, an extended



arm of an enterprise's digital touch-points. Multiplex chains are ensuring that customers are able to order food from specialized mobile apps while watching the movie so that they can pick up their food directly from the counter without standing in a queue, thereby saving time or they can also opt to get the food delivered to their seats.

Committed to putting customers at the heart of everything, multiplexes are also rolling out digital self-ordering food kiosks. This strategically launched service enables customers to order and pay easily and get their orders delivered to their seats. It gives guests the convenience and personalization through the use of these kiosks to place their order. Guests can place their order and skip the front counter entirely, with their food brought right to their seats.

As opposed to the notion that food items in cinemas are expensive, it is actually not. The average price of any food item at a cinema hall is actually lesser than a popular coffee chain or a restaurant. Multiplex food menus are not only fairly priced but also are at par with any good restaurant. A lower F&B spend per head to average ticket price ratio at the Indian multiplexes as compared to their global peers leave room for Indian multiplexes to further capitalise on this segment. Further, advertisement revenues have also witnessed a steady growth in the last three years and provide support to the multiplexes in times of volatile occupancy levels.

In a nutshell, with the finest in luxury, the best of technology and a delightful gourmet experience, multiplexes, today have created a destination for the discerning cinema-goer to frequent them very often. They have done a tremendous job in introducing a seven star movie experience in India for die-hard movie buffs to head to cinema halls frequently for an exciting movie outing. So, trust us when we say that this is better than your best stay-in movie plans you'll ever make! •

**A lower F&B spend per head to average ticket price ratio at the Indian multiplexes as compared to their global peers leave room for Indian multiplexes to further capitalise on this segment.**



The writer is CEO & Director, MovieCard Sales Pvt. Ltd.

## Every F&B operator, small or big, from anywhere in India, should take up the membership of NRAI and add to its muscle: Anurag Katriar

He continues to be excited about being in the food industry as he believes that eating out will never go out of style. Anurag Katriar, Executive Director & CEO, deGustibus Hospitality, shares his insights.



### Please take us through your journey. Tell us about your restaurants and their expansion plans.

The journey of deGustibus started with Indigo. Somewhere towards the end of 2004, we started contemplating creating a product which was more casual and could cater to a larger mass. Indigo Delicatessen, or Indigo Deli as it is popularly known was a product of this thought process. Launched in June-2005, Indigo Deli was the first delicatessen to come up in the stand-alone category.

In 2005, we also won the right to operate a large integrated F&B facility within the precincts of the Royal Western India Turf Club Ltd. Spread over 30,000 sq ft and comprising of a Fine dine restaurant, a lounge Bar and a banqueting facility, this place was launched in 2009. We called it Tote on the Turf. Almost simultaneously, we also launched an outdoor catering division called The Moveable Feast, which caters to events of any size, across any cuisine and at any location.

The success & popularity of our Indian food in the catering sector, kindled the idea of our next venture called Neel. Neel launched as an Indian fine dine and we subsequently also launched its casual dining version in 2016.

After making our presence felt in the Fine dining, casual dining & bulk-dining categories, we took subtle steps to penetrate the next segment. Positioned somewhere between a casual dining and a QSR, we call this segment the Affordable Casual Diner and launched a brand called D:OH! in February this year. It is driven by the philosophy of food which is "Easy on the Wallet & Easy on the Palate".

We are also contemplating making an entry into the QSR segment soon in Mumbai. We however plan to limit our geographical growth within the above three cities in the immediate term. We also intend to get into Asian diners at some stage, to complete our cycle across all major cuisines and segments.



Anurag Katriar

### Your recent venture D:OH! is a limited service all day space and has a grab-tray concept. What prompted you to introduce such a concept?

It was a case of natural progression. Post Indigo Deli & Neel, we wanted to reach the masses without compromising on our basic ethos of serving good food, and therefore a 'No-frill' diner came across as the best fit. It captures the basic essence of a casual diner like good wholesome food and a comfortable upmarket ambience, but it also uses the prime aspects of a QSR operation like quick disposal of product and limited service on the tables.

### How do you keep yourself ahead in this competitive time?

Some factors like low entry barrier, easy access to international culinary trends and advent of some very creative chefs has significantly changed the contours of this trade. There is a lot of innovation, fierce competition and consumers are spoilt for choice. We therefore adapted a two-pronged strategy, i.e., make sure that our existing brands remain consistent with their food and service delivery and secondly, continue to innovate to remain current with the changing trends. We invest heavily in training and skill enhancement of our employees to achieve these objectives.

### You are an industry stalwart. Can you brief us on your major learnings as a restaurateur?

My biggest learning is that it is a very difficult trade to be in despite all the glamour and hype attached to it! The failure rate is frighteningly high, shelf life of a restaurant is very short and therefore one has to spend a considerable amount of time creating right (read low-risk) business models.

You have to continuously innovate and therefore talent retention & nurturing is extremely critical. I also reckon that food that is high on the style quotient and low on substance is likely to have a shorter shelf life as against a good product, which may not be very high on glamour. Both are important and therefore, it's critical to create the right balance between style and substance.

### What do you do to unwind yourself? How do you keep a balance between your personal and professional life?

I read a lot to unwind and I read about almost every subject. I travel a bit to recharge. I eat out quite a bit; it's almost therapeutic. Most importantly, I spend lots of quality family time as I find it is the biggest stress-buster. Playing with numbers can be fun but playing with your child is bliss!!



National Restaurant Association of India  
Voice of the Indian Restaurant Industry





**How have you been involved with NRAI? What more can be done through the association for strengthening the restaurant sector?**

We have been members of NRAI for quite some time. While I am not involved with NRAI activities on a day-to-

day basis or in any official capacity, I do try to participate in any initiatives or discussions that the NRAI leadership team might like me to be a part of. They know I am available whenever they need me.

I am a firm believer that the restaurant sector needs a sharper representation in policy-making for the F&B trade, independent of larger Hotel & Tourism bodies. This is where NRAI comes in; it has to become the most important voice of the F&B sector and I firmly believe that it is heading in that direction. I urge every F&B operator, small or big, from anywhere in India, to take up the membership of NRAI and add to its muscle.

**One tip you would like to offer to youngsters aspiring to enter the restaurant business?**

I urge all budding restaurateurs to spend as much time in developing the right business model as they spend on product development and space design. You may believe in your product but if it doesn't make business sense, tweak it if not abandon it entirely. I also advise every aspiring restaurateur to go Asset-light and low-risk when they start. Once you have found your footings in the trade, you can take bigger risks and experiment more.

**Rahul Singh takes over as the New President of the National Restaurant Association of India**

**Pratik Pota, CEO, Jubilant Food Works Ltd appointed as the Honorary Joint Secretary**

**R**ahul Singh, Founder & CEO, The Beer Café, took over as the new President of the National Restaurant Association of India at its managing committee meeting held in New Delhi yesterday. The appointment was made unanimously after Riyaaz Amlani, CEO & MD, Impresario Entertainment & Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. resigned from his duties due to health reasons.

Rahul Singh, who was recently appointed as the Vice President at NRAI's 35th AGM in September this year is the recipient of the TiECON 2014 Entrepreneurial award for excellence, Entrepreneur India 2015 award in F&B service and recently bestowed as among the 25 most influential entrepreneur in Delhi. Expressing gratitude to the managing committee, Rahul said, "While Riyaaz needs to rest and heal, and we pray for his speedy recovery, I would personally like to assure him of my relentless quest in accomplishing the tasks at hand to make our industry vibrant and proud. Would also like to thank the managing committee members in bestowing the trust in me to carry forward the 35 year legacy of our Association. I will strive to lead the Indian Restaurant Industry into a new era of prosperity, participation and positive perception which advances and safeguards the entrepreneurial spirit. Our collective passion and shared spirit of hospitality will enhance the quality of life that we serve."

Rahul's restaurant chain 'The Beer Café', within a short span of few years, has already become the largest, fastest and most profitable Alco-beverage service brand in India. Rahul was associated as the Joint Secretary with the NRAI since 2014.

While signing off from duties, Riyaaz Amlani said, "I am convalescing from a spinal surgery and been advised bed rest for three months at least rendering me unable to fulfil my duties. The Restaurant Industry has an extremely complex business environment. What this association needs is a highly passionate and motivated President to lead from the front at this crucial juncture for the cause." He further mentioned, "I am really proud to announce appointment of Rahul Singh as the new President of the NRAI. With fresh ideas, new enthusiasm and excellent business acumen, Rahul will undoubtedly take the association and its endeavors to new heights."

Amlani completed a three year term as the President of NRAI this September. He will continue serving on the managing committee.

Pratik Pota, CEO, Jubilant Food Works Ltd which runs Domino's Pizza India was appointed as an Office Bearer of the restaurant association filling the position of Honorary Joint Secretary. His nomination will bring more finesse to the day to day operations and activities of the Association.



Rahul Singh





## I firmly believe in the message that NRAI has been sending out of late – united we stand: Aseem Grover

An ex-Army Officer, he decided to leave his job in order to embark upon the adventure of setting up The Big Chill Café along with his wife, Fawzia. Aseem Grover, Owner, The Big Chill Café, shares his journey until now.



Aseem Grover

### Please take us through The Big Chill's journey. How did the concept emerge?

The Big Chill started out as a specialty Ice-cream and Dessert Café serving hand-made, artisanal Ice-cream and premium Desserts. The inspiration for The Big Chill was rooted in our desire to set up a friendly neighbourhood café, which had a cool, young vibe and reminded us of some of the places we frequented whilst in college abroad. It was envisaged as an informal meeting place for friends. Our love for cinema and films influenced us in developing the look and the feel of the place and we were keen to share our collection of whacky and cult film posters with other like minded people. We had

little idea of consciously building a brand when we started The Big Chill. It seems to have evolved into something that we could not have imagined in our wildest dreams! We had modestly thought of a stand-alone single outlet but the overwhelming response we received led us to develop the concept that we have today. Our growth and development has been very organic and closely connected to our customer base.

### What set your restaurants apart from others?

The distinctive look and feel, the friendly vibe and the consistency in the quality of food is what we hear our customers talking about!

### The Big Chill hardly has any social media presence. In this insanely digitally obsessed world, how have you managed to be a favourite without being online?

When we set out, we made a conscious decision not to advertise and let the custom build with word-of-mouth publicity. We were in remote East of Kailash, off a main road, but, luckily for us, word-of-mouth publicity worked wonders. Although spreading information in this way takes longer than with an advertising blitz, it results in a more loyal and solid customer base in the long run.

We set up The Big Chill only seventeen years ago but now it seems like a different era altogether! One would probably have to approach it differently if one was setting up a new brand in this day and age. In a way, social media plays the role of word-of-mouth publicity in a much more direct and instant manner. Whilst we may not have an online presence, fans and customers have made sure that information is disseminated very quickly about developments such as the opening of new outlets. Fortunately for us this has resulted in phenomenal turnouts and queues within the first few days of the opening itself! The opening of The Cakery in Khan Market is a case in point.

In terms of our lack of online presence, let's just say that I really ain't proud of our inability to even have a website! This is something for us to learn about - and work on! We would, of course, do so much better if we did manage our social media and had an online presence. There is a great, untapped potential in this field but whenever we decide to do this, it will have to be done in-house - with our personal touch rather than outsourcing it to a PR agency.

### Not just savoury, your desserts are becoming a rage as well – especially with the launch of The Big Chill Cakery. What is the way forward?

Desserts have always been a cherished and beloved part of The Big Chill. Our desserts have always ignited passions in our customers. We felt that they needed to be showcased further and that they deserved an outlet of their own! Fawzia not only outdid herself with new creations, but also dictated very clearly her vision of a vintage English Cake Shop - all Amith and I had to do was follow instructions, and voila! - We had The Big Chill Cakery!! Way forward? Oh, I don't know just yet - we will probably open a few more outlets soon.

### What have been your major learnings during your journey as a restaurateur?

Be honest about what you do - what finally matters is the food on the plate. Also, look after your staff, a cared-for and motivated staff team will do wonders for you.

### How is your association with the NRAI working out?

It has truly been wonderful. The NRAI leadership team has always been there when one needed help and guidance. The team has been tackling every issue head on, be it the liquor licences in Delhi, the 500m highway issue or the transition to GST, to name a few. I firmly believe in the message that NRAI has been sending out of late - United we stand!



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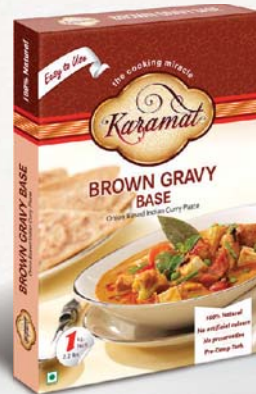
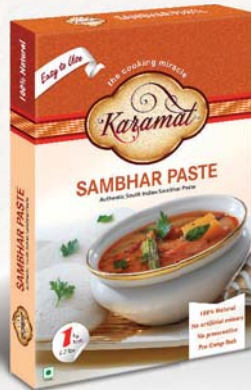


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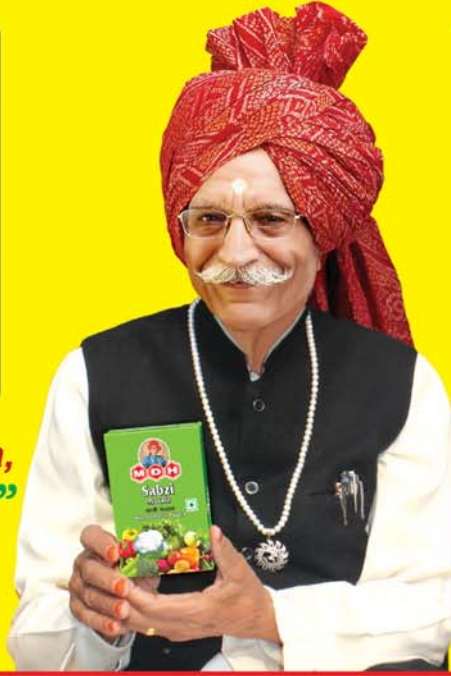
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