

foodService

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TRANSPLANTING TRADITIONAL EXPERIENCES INTO THE MODERN FOODSCAPE

— Manjit Singh Gill
Corporate Chef, ITC Hotels

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The food services industry is transforming rapidly with the advent of a whole range of food tech concepts for food exploration, discovery, reservations, delivery, feedback, and internet restaurants, among others. For example, mobile app-based food ordering has made the ordering process extremely convenient – it can be done using just a smartphone and the whole process can be accomplished sitting at home with little or no effort. Thanks to the growing penetration and access of the internet and smartphones, we are seeing an increasing all-round efficiency of the delivery business in India in terms of the order-taking process, the packaging, the delivery time, coverage, value offers, and the growth of online channels. Dining in and food delivery, which accounts for 18-22% of the market now, has the potential to reach 35-40% in the next few years, presenting a big business opportunity for restaurants – provided they extend the comfortable experience of a restaurant to delivery, packaging or any tech interface they may have with the consumer.

With people becoming more health conscious and with healthy eating increasingly on the consumer's agenda, cloud kitchens that have come in are also focusing on healthy food options. Restaurants are transparent about their ingredients and product claims and serve healthy and nutritious food to create an impression as there are enough choices available to the consumer now. The speed of change that is happening in terms of the consumption market is really high with some industries growing at a dramatic pace. One needs to understand the speed of change that is happening in some businesses and see what the game changers are doing, how the market is going to evolve, how it could influence the future and thus, act accordingly.



Amitabh Taneja

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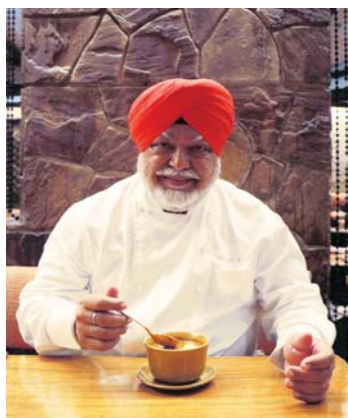
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"Transplanting traditional experiences into the modern foodscape is how I work"



Manjit Singh Gill

A highly acclaimed chef with over four decades of excellence in the culinary profession, Manjit Singh Gill works on the foundation of discovery and constant innovation. Passionate about applying the mantras of ancient Indian cuisine to his cooking, he is known for being a great believer in the sustainable philosophy of Indian Vedic knowledge and the concept of slow food. Serving as Corporate Chef, ITC Hotels, Chef Gill is held in the highest esteem by his peers in the industry. While speaking to Nimisha Gautam from Food Service India, he shares his views on the importance of a central concept in the restaurant business and the definition of fine dining.



What do you consider the most distinguishing feature of your work as a chef? What do you regard as your best achievements?

Working with iconic restaurant brands, conceptualizing and managing national cuisines while showcasing Indian pride to the world through means of food has been a humbling experience for me as a chef. Amongst the many accolades, what comes to the top of my mind is an overwhelming sense of satisfaction with the tasks I've performed each day of my life.

Which culinary styles have influenced your career?

My kitchen is a mystical place. It is my temple. It is where the learnings of the past translate into the future. I don't create, I discover. Transplanting traditional experiences into the modern foodscape is how I work. I believe in embroidering our core values and beliefs into the food I make.

Who are the chefs you admire the most and why?

There are three experts I look up to and have drawn learnings from. Unfortunately, none of them are a part of this world anymore. They include Paul Bocuse from France, Bill Gallagher from South Africa and Anthony Bourdain of the USA.

Amongst younger professionals who have earned my respect and admiration is Chef Andoni Luis Aduriz of Spain, the founder of Mugaritz restaurant.

How would you describe your approach to cooking and the foodservice business?

Cooking is an experience of creating a tasty, flavourful dish and foodservice is the grand finale of this experience. For me, both cooking and foodservice complement each other in an important manner.

Which are your signature recipes and favourite cuisines?

It is difficult to point one out. Something that may look ordinary to the common eye can rise to the occasion to qualify as a signature recipe depending on who it is cooked for. I believe that cooking is always inspired by the diner.

What constitutes foodservice innovation in your opinion?

Foodservice has to be in tandem with the cuisine and the dish that is being served. It must be implemented in such a way that it takes the enhanced dining experience forward.





FAST FOOD FLURRY

The foodservices industry in India is on a strong growth curve, riding on the back of a growing culture of eating out. According to a report by National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), the Indian restaurant market was valued at INR 20,400 crore in 2016 and is expected to grow to INR 51,000 crore by 2021. Home-grown quick service restaurants are making the most of this expanding market and scrambling for a bigger share of the pie despite intensifying competition from their international counterparts. FoodService India spoke to leading home-grown QSRs to learn about their game-plans for leveraging the current and future market opportunities.

— by **Nimisha Gautam**

A front-runner in terms of attracting investments, the Indian food services sector is one of the most vibrant and rapidly growing industries. India's quick service restaurant (QSR) market, estimated to be at INR 8,500 crore currently, is growing at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 25 per cent. The QSR sector in India is likely to grow three-fold to INR 25,000 crore within five years. These numbers take into account not only the overall growth of home-grown QSRs but also that of the international giants like McDonald's, KFC and Domino's.

Indian QSR Operations

Paninara, originally conceptualised as a chain of food trucks, started with one food truck in 2010 and is now a chain of 10 eateries spread across almost all commercial hubs in Mumbai. "In the coming years, we hope to take that number to 25 within Mumbai and start expanding to Pune and



Bangalore,” says **Aditya Parikh, Director, R&A Foods Private Ltd.**

The vegetarian food market makes up about 45 per cent of the total fast food market in India, and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 18 per cent by 2020. Understanding this shift in the market, Indian players like Falafel by Gritty Foods has a number of special vegetarian outlets. “A major segment of our consumers are young couples, families, and also vegetarian customers. Due to this fact, some of our outlets serve only vegetarian food. We do serve non-vegetarian in Vashi, Thane, Kurla, Mahalaxmi, Seawoods and Bangalore. Our future vision is to target corporate areas and provide healthier options to working professionals,” says **Shaival Chandra, Founder, Gritty Foods - Falafel.** The brand has a total of 15 outlets and has also opened a delivery outlet from a central kitchen in Mahalaxmi, Mumbai. It also operates two outlets in Bangalore.

“Goli Vadapav currently operates 300 stores in 20 states and 100 cities. We are now entering the second phase of our growth trajectory where the focus will deepen on driving efficiency, process and people excellence in the business. The store opening will continue at a moderate pace. We don’t plan to go for fast growth and end up with loss-making stores. For every store opened, there will be a stringent and standardized process behind it – right from franchise filtration, training of store staff to continuous support needed for smooth functioning. It will be right to say that we are upgrading ourselves and getting ready for the rebirth of brand Goli Vadapav,” says **Venkatesh Iyer, Founder and CEO, Goli Vadapav.**

Home-grown QSRs have a basic advantage of understanding local palates and preferences better than their international counterparts.

Dheeraj Gupta, Managing Director, Jumboking Foods Pvt. Ltd is of the opinion that Indian QSRs understand what works here and have a head start in aspects related to local tastes. What they need to do is modernise their processes and delivery mechanisms to compete with international brands. He adds, “Indian QSRs are faster and more efficient in adapting to the changing needs of the local customer.”

A young and vibrant quick service chain, Wow! Momo took off as a kiosk in Kolkata with an initial investment of only Rs. 30,000 and is now an established name in food service with more than 168 outlets in 11 cities. The brand operates out of formats such as kiosks, food court quick service outlets, ‘momo-on-wheels’ food trucks, shop-in-shop models and high street quick service restaurants that are largely company owned and company operated. The brand has managed to build an operating structure that has not only ensured rapid growth but has also achieved their profitability targets by successfully serving and satisfying regular customers and patrons across the country. **Sagar Daryani and Binod Homagai, Founders, Wow! Momo,** are of the opinion that they have not only been trend setters in the momo

industry but have also created a new line in the fast growing QSR segment and hope to expand into international markets.

In the current scenario, there is a perceptible shift towards home-grown concepts and businesses across various industries. It is safe to say that the QSR space is going through a similar shift. Apart from this, indigenous players enjoy a deeper understanding and goodwill within the local market, both in terms of customers as well as suppliers and vendors.

“Wai Wai City is the extension of our popular FMCG brand Wai Wai, which has been a market leader for over three decades. With a market share of 27 per cent, Wai Wai is more than just a household name. Our products cut across regional, social and economic barriers. These factors have made it easy for us to introduce our bold, vibrant and yet approachable QSR format. We feel this will help us break into Tier II cities as well. We’ve taken it a step further and created a unique dining experience with live kitchens to appeal to a wider audience. There are more than 30 outlets in operation as of now,” says **Varun Chaudhary, Executive Director CG Corp Global Wai Wai.**

New Marketing Strategies

Paninaro targets consumers who appreciate food that focuses on freshness, not only of the final product but also of the ingredients. The brand



“Indigenous players enjoy a deeper understanding and goodwill within the local market, both in terms of customers as well as suppliers and vendors.”

– **Varun Chaudhary**
Executive Director CG Corp Global Wai Wai





The Business of Well-Made Waffles

A domestic start-up that stemmed from Mumbai, The Belgian Waffle Company (BWC) has paved quite an impressive path for itself. With over 120 outlets, the brand has an expansive presence in 29+ cities of India. From 'Almond Cocoa Butter' to 'Charcoal Banana Caramel', the menu has more varied choices for waffles than any other restaurant or food brand in the country. Shrey Aggarwal, Founder, BWC, speaks to Food Service India about the art of waffle making and how he has turned it into a thriving business.

Give us a brief description of your company and the values it functions on.

Owned and operated by Bloombay Enterprises LLP, The Belgian Waffle Co. was an idea born out of passion and with a mission to spread taste and delight. Founded in 2015, the company strives to constantly innovate while staying true to its values of excellence, simplicity and affordability. The Belgian Waffle Co. is one of the first waffle specialty stations in India that offers a unique, on-the-go waffle sandwich created fresh at our waffle stations with our specially formulated egg-less batter and premium fillings.



Shrey Aggarwal

What is the range of products available at your outlets?

We serve 16 different types of waffles, 3 types of Waff Wich (waffle sandwiches), 7 shakes, a lemonade and cold coffee along with 16 types of mini pancakes and much more.

Which are your best-selling products?

They include waffles in the flavours of naked nutella, red velvet, triple chocolate, and chocolate overload. The ice cream Waff Wich and mini pancakes are also popular choices.

Tell us about your product's competitive USP and differentiators.

The Belgian Waffle Co. offers a unique on-the-go waffle sandwich made with specially formulated egg-less batter and premium fillings.

What are some product features that consumers strongly identify with?

Innovative flavours, premium fillings and the batter we use sets us apart.

What is your value-for-money proposition for your customers and which are your key customer segments?

We've tried to find a good balance between price and quality. The Belgian chocolate waffle appeals to the widest spectrum of customers, so we've priced it a little lower than the nutella waffles because that's an important product. We target young people between the ages of 6 to 21. However, it's interesting to see grandparents also enjoying our products.



Mantras of a Modern Chef

Chef Glyston Gracias believes in the ability of a well-designed dish to inspire nostalgia and evoke strong emotions among diners. As Head Chef at Smoke House Deli and Social (Mumbai), and City Chef at Impresario Entertainment & Hospitality Pvt. Ltd., he is known for his simple yet modern cooking style. The celebrated chef speaks to FoodService India about his 15-year-old culinary career and some key learnings.



Chef Glyston Gracias

How would you describe your outlook on cooking and what makes a good chef?

Simplicity and comfort food have always worked for me. While cooking, I keep five basic characteristics in mind and they include local flavors, acidity, sweetness, spice and salt levels. For me, great cooks are those who have the confidence to cook simple meals and deliver results.

What do you regard as your best achievement as a chef?

As a musician or painter, one can only listen to or frame their creativity. However, when you look at a dish that is presented beautifully and is creative, it brings out emotions. The enveloping aroma, the gratifying sizzle and the taste have the power to make you nostalgic. Customer satisfaction has always been my biggest achievement.

Which culinary cuisines have played a part in your cooking?

Simple and delicious interpretations of French, Mediterranean and Nicoise cuisines have been my muses. My North East Indian catholic community has also had a major influence.

Who are the chefs you admire the most and why?

I admire Alain Ducasse for his work in haute cuisine and Thomas Keller for his culinary expertise that has helped me set high standards for myself. I also carry a torch for pastry chef Dominique Ansel for inventing the cronut (croissant-doughnut). In addition to that, I also look up to Marco Pierre White for being the god father of modern cooking and the youngest chef ever to win three Michelin stars.

Which are some of your signature recipes?

For Smoke House Deli, the list of staples include the beetroot-asparagus salad with tangerine and lemon barley, jowar fettuccine with tomato braised vegetables, chilli crusted John Dory, smoked lamb shanks and smoked duck with strawberry gin and scheswan pepper. For Social, some of my signature dishes are the truffle nachos with beer cheese sauce, crosspoint parantha with mutton vindaloo and crosspoint ka meetha.

What constitutes foodservice innovation in your opinion?

Innovation in foodservice involves research



A hotelier's guide to managing F&B

With the need for innovative food experiences on the rise, it is up to hoteliers to integrate modern dining into a traveller's itinerary. An integral part of a hotel business, F&B plays an important role in creating strong brand recall and must be managed to ensure positive customer review. General Secretary, Wizcraft, Priya Malhotra spoke to Food Service India about the different elements involved in running an F&B outlet inside a hotel and recent trends in the segment.

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

F&B plays an indispensable role in the hotel business. The quality of food and beverage serves as the basis of decision when it comes to travel for any individual and family. In line with the changing dynamics and growing competition in the hospitality industry, hoteliers are not leaving any stone unturned to grow businesses. People are becoming increasingly curious and concerned about where their food comes from and how it arrives on their plate.

Due to social media and food applications, it has become easy to attract customers and generate their reviews. Social media has a major influence. While it's always important for food to look tempting, social broadcasting makes it even more imperative. 62% of Chinese customers say that they post about their food experiences on social media at least once a month. The same figure is 42% in Korea, 40% in Singapore, and 29% in Australia. The better your food looks, the more marketing you will get when consumers post photos and tag your business. According to me, F&B is of utmost importance to grow your hotel business.



Priya Malhotra

General Secretary, Wizcraft

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

Changing demographics, increase in income, urbanization and growth in organized retail is driving India's F&B sector. Customers are at the heart of the hospitality industry. No matter what service you provide, you need to have a clear group of individuals who see a value added from your product or service. Focus on your product, employees and the target market, and you will see success.

Almost as important as the product, is the quality of the service you are providing. This makes well trained employees essential. As hospitality businesses are customer facing, you must ensure that you greet customers with your best foot forward. Focus on creating a dream team of polite and friendly staff, and your customers will be sure to recommend your business to others and come back again.

There is an evident shortage of manpower in the F&B sector which is leading to poor customer service and also rising salary costs. To enable better standards in the service industry, manpower needs to be trained effectively.



How do you evaluate the current trends in food service in the premium hospitality segment?

The food and beverage industry is subject to numerous trends and they have a major impact on a business' success or decline. These are some current trends in food service every hotelier should consider.

Open Kitchens: Modern diners want to know what they're getting when they eat out. More restaurants will be breaking down the walls between their front-and back-of-house areas to show off their kitchens. This includes fine dining as well as quick service/casual restaurants.

Ghost Restaurants: A departure from the traditional sit-down dining experience, ghost restaurants are establishments that only offer take-out or delivery service. Because there is no dining space, virtual restaurants can focus on customizing their kitchen and offering a more diverse menu.

Experiential Events: Instead of the traditional dining experience, customers in 2018 are looking for a meal that doubles as an experience. This can include eating in the dark, eating in a space where you can see the chef preparing the food, or enjoying a meal that has a story attached to it. Customers are also willing to pay premium for these types of experiences.

Pop-up restaurants: They are establishments that open for a limited time only, and they're a way for chefs and restaurateurs to gauge interest before opening a new restaurant.

Nostalgic Eating Experiences: One of the fastest growing demographics for restaurants is baby boomers, who are retiring and have more disposable income to use on dining. Unlike millennials who want new experiences when eating out, baby boomers want nostalgia. As a result, many major chains are bringing back old favorites to capitalize on that feeling.

What special elements are needed to make F&B outlets of a hotel successful?

Strategy is the key to success for any hotel or restaurant firm, but developing and implementing a strategy is sometimes an elusive goal. The key indicators of excellence are attention to detail (tangible items), hospitality (how the task is completed), revenue generation (salesmanship), and service (completing the task).

I have often observed that many restaurants miss the following opportunities to foster guest loyalty. When the guest



telephones for a reservation, barely half of the staff in charge address the guest by name once it's given, and only half request e-mail addresses for confirmation. At reception, the best restaurants invite the guest to return, and the host uses the guest's name and makes pleasant conversation while accompanying the guests to the table (rather than sprinting ahead). These are simple but very crucial elements of successful customer experience in restaurants inside hotels.

The specific behavior that distinguishes excellent restaurants is neither complicated nor costly. It mostly involves heads-up service: captains who greet guests at the podium with a smile and welcome them; servers who greet the guest within two minutes of being seated, develop rapport, are forthcoming with menu details, invite the guest to return, offer dessert with specific recommendations, serve beverages within five minutes of being seated, and offer refills proactively; and managers who engage with staff and guests at the door or on the floor.

In today's scenario, is it easy to maintain a low operating cost for restaurants? What are the steps necessary to keep it as low as possible?

As per my understanding, there are 7 golden rules to maintain a low operating cost for restaurants. It is essential to track and manage inventory to control food costs while also purchasing raw materials on credit. Controlling labour costs by reducing employee turnover is also recommended. Restaurant cost control can also be done by means of yield management and by reducing wastage through portion control. To ensure maximum cost control, restaurant owners must check internal thefts and pilferage and also conduct daily/weekly reports to keep track of overall costs. Being organized helps picking out anomalies and mistakes.

Do you think technology can augment the quality of personal touch in offering quality service to make guests feel at home ?

In today's scenario, technology is playing a vital role in keeping in touch with customers and tracking their visits and previous experiences. Nowadays, customers read reviews about a restaurant before choosing to dine in it. We, as service providers, can wish them on their anniversaries and birthdays using customer data. We can also keep a record of their favourite dishes or preferred add-ons and toppings. Everything is possible because of technology and apps specially designed for the hospitality industry.

Which are the technological tools that can be employed for ensuring higher F&B standards at F&B outlets?

Over the years, technology has become the key ingredient for success in the modern food service industry. Simply having good food is not enough to keep a restaurant in business as it is newer innovations that give restaurants the much-needed edge over competition. Some tools include Bluetooth temperate sensors, optimized scheduling software, virtual reality onboarding, digital inventory tracking, automated purchasing tools and a digital table/reservation manager.

With constant changes in food trends, how do you go about keeping the food offerings of a hotel alluring for customers and relevant with the times?

Over the past couple of years, we have witnessed Indian consumers develop a taste for various new entrants like Belgian chocolates, Mexican flavours, Italian food, Thai and Chinese cuisines etc., and contribute to the rising demand for similar cuisines across the country. The quick adoption of such cuisines among the Indian population has created opportunities for many international QSR players to enter the Indian market and explore the vast potential of this market for possible growth in the future.

HPMF revamps North Zone Steering Committee

Hospitality Purchasing Managers' Forum (HPMF), an association of hotel procurement managers in India, has announced the remodeling of its Northern India chapter here in Delhi. The newly restructured team consists of seasoned professionals from the hospitality industry. It includes Sanjay Verghese – President (The Imperial), Arvind Mathur – VP (Radisson India), Priya Malhotra – General Secretary (Wizcraft), Amit Aggarwal – Joint Secretary (Radisson Greater Noida) and Tarun Chaturvedi – Joint Secretary (Fraser Suites). To further expansion and a shared vision, HPMF also made a number of additions

to the team of office bearers to inculcate new energy into the northern zone. It was also decided that the inclusion of varied professionals from diverse fields will provide vital industry expertise to the HPMF advisory board.

To take the forum to the next level, plans to launch chapters in Nepal and Bangladesh in the near future were also unveiled along with the launch of the HPMF Sri Lanka Chapter on 4th July at Colombo during the International Housekeepers' Summit 2018. With a newly established steering committee, HPMF seems to be paving a road to promising endeavors in the future with much to look forward to.

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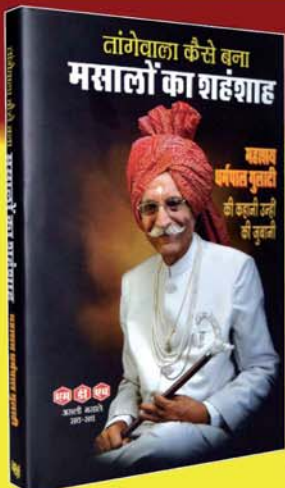
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