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NEWS

VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 01 | OCTOBER 2021

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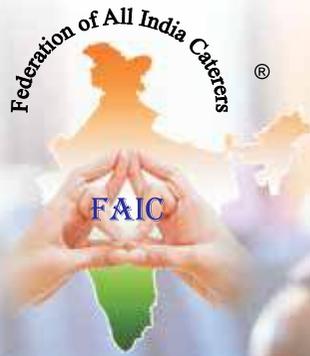
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VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 01 | OCTOBER 2021



PARTYING *after the*
PANDEMIC

After witnessing one of the most terrifying pandemic of our times,
we are now slowly rolling back to normal.

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2021: A revival is round the corner

As we are nearing the end of 2021, we can see the world is taking a sigh of relief, after the success of the vaccination drive across many continents. India too has surfaced back to normal after drowning in a COVID hell. And with the new gained confidence due to the vaccination, Indians are more than willing to travel and party again.

But we must not forget that the hospitality and tourism industries need to be more responsible with their functions. The pandemic has changed the consumer mindset and now they are more conscious of:

- ✦ Sustainability and environmental health
- ✦ Personal hygiene and sanitation
- ✦ Hidden costs

The hospitality and tourism industries can sustain better than before if they are ready to focus on the changed consumer mindset and the lessons learnt.

I'm proud of our fraternity that has not only survived a global pandemic without any government aid but has also made a dynamic comeback.

Finally, we are hopeful for a golden 2022.

All the best to our fraternity!

Narendra Somani
President, FAIC



2021 DOORS ARE OPENING UP



After fighting the worst of the pandemic, Indians showed their enthusiasm when they made a beeline for tourist destinations. This gave the much needed boost to the hospitality industry. Most of the people from our fraternity reported decent profits. Unfortunately, news of overpricing and heavy hidden costs by the hotels from some corners of the country worried me.

“

I understand that the hospitality industry has endured the worst of the pandemic. But instead of reaping quick profits, the industry should try to build a more sustainable business model.”

I understand that the hospitality industry has endured the worst of the pandemic. But instead of reaping quick profits, the industry should try to build a more sustainable business model.

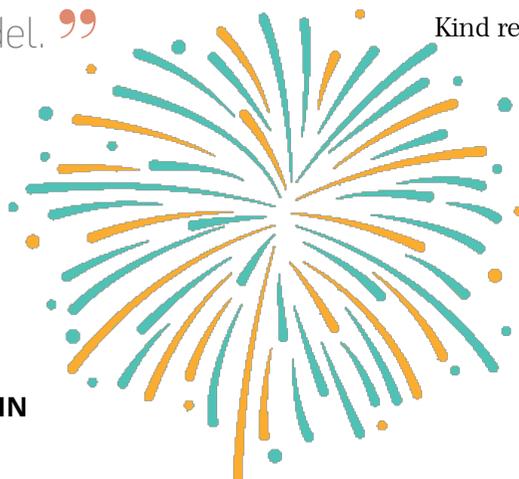
We want more and more visitors to enjoy our hospitality and services. And we must not forget that for any business:

Honesty is the best policy.

On that note, I would like to appreciate my fraternity for their endurance, diligence, and patience.

Let's hope for a brighter festive season ahead!

Kind regards,



Kirit Budhdev
Secretary, FAIC

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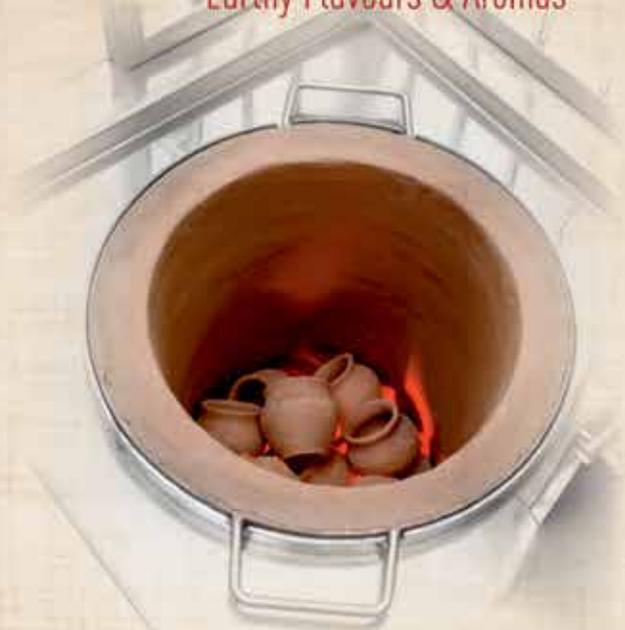
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All Gujarat Caterers Association (AGCA) 15th Annual General Meeting 2020-21 held at Surat

The 15th Annual General Meeting for the year 2020-21 of All Gujarat Caterers Association was held on Monday 4th October, 2021 at Surat International Exhibition & Convention Centre (SIECC), Surat. The meeting was sponsored by South Gujarat Catering Association (SGCA).

More than 600 members remained present at the meeting from all over Gujarat.

The office bearers, committee members and the trustees of AGCA were invited on the dais to

President Mr. Dipak Sanghvi thanked and congratulated the SGCA for their willingness and committed efforts in arranging this AGM and seemed optimistic about the upcoming year

commence the meeting as per the agenda. Persons that were on the dais are the President & Trustee of AGCA Mr. Dipak Sanghvi (Fivestar Caterers, Rajkot), the Founder President & Trustee Mr. Narendra Somani (TGB, Ahmedabad), Founder Secretary &

Trustee Mr. Kirit Buddhev (Rachit Caterers, Rajkot), Trustee Mr. Manish Thakker (Varsha Exotics, Vadodara), Trustee Mr. Naresh Purohit (Om Caterers, Ahmedabad), Vice President Mr. Bhavani Purohit (Bhavani Caterers, Ahmedabad),



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Treasurer Mr. Chandresh Mehta presented the Annual Financial Reports for the year 2019-20 and 2020-21. The Annual financial reports presented by Mr. Mehta was unanimously passed and approved by the members



Secretary & Trustee Mr. Paresh Desai (Flavours, Ahmedabad), Joint Secretary Mr. Rajesh Ajmera (Shukan EventCare Pvt. Ltd., Surat), Treasurer & Trustee Mr. Chandresh Mehta (Western Caterers, Rajkot), Coordinate Secretary Mr. Nandlal Goel (Balaji Caterers, Gandhidham) and Coordinate Secretary Mr. Sagar Patel (Sweetu Caterers, Vadodara). Many eminent committee members also graced the dais.

All the dignitaries on dais participated in the opening ceremony by lighting Diya. The meeting proceeded with a welcome speech from Joint Secretary Mr. Rajesh Ajmera. Then, Secretary Mr. Paresh Desai read the minutes of the last AGM held on 18th July, 2019 at Ambaji and was approved by the delegates.

Treasurer Mr. Chandresh Mehta presented the Annual Financial Reports for the year 2019-20 and 2020-21. The Annual financial reports presented by Mr. Mehta was unanimously passed and approved by the members.

President Mr. Dipak Sanghvi

thanked and congratulated the SGCA for their willingness and committed efforts in arranging this AGM and seemed optimistic about the upcoming year.

He acknowledged a declaration that next year's AGM would be at Ashapura Mata Dham in Kutchh.

Next, presenting his views, the Founder President & Trustee Mr. Narendra Somani praised everyone for devotion and dedication. He suggested and insisted the current AGCA President and Office Bearers to extend their term for an year more. The suggestion was accepted by all the AGCA members.

Followed by it, Vice President Mr. Bhavani Purohit made a beautiful presentation and said that everyone should follow the necessary security and vigilance to prevent the recurrence of the Corona pandemic.

Lastly, Trustee Mr. Kirit Buddhadev spoke on increasing the membership. He also talked about sending a proposal to the Central Government for the catering industry to be categorised in SMSE, and said

that necessary efforts have been started for this.

The meeting was then adjourned with the consent of the President as there were no other issues.

After concluding the meeting, the President convened a special meeting of the OB & Committee, and discussed whether to extend the tenure of the existing office-bearers, or to declare it complete. On confirmation of the extension unanimously by all the members of the committee, President Mr. Deepak Sanghvi made an official announcement of extension of the tenure of the existing OB and Committee.

The SGCA also organised an exhibition at the same venue for 4th and 5th October. More than 70 stalls were there from diversified business owners related to the Food & Beverages industries. A Blood Donation camp was held at the venue for both days. Many people from AGCA as well as the visitors of the exhibition donated blood for the noble cause. ●



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PANDEMIC

After witnessing one of the most terrifying pandemic of our times, we are now slowly rolling back to normal.

After witnessing one of the most terrifying pandemic of our times, we are now slowly rolling back to normal. But everyone is still doubtful of the possibility of another wave. But vaccination has given Indians a new found confidence to socialize again. 2022 is going to be a very busy calendar for all of us. But what will the social events look like after the pandemic and especially when people are still sceptical of another wave?

Of course, there will be some subtle and massive changes. Right from the body language to the venues, everything will undergo a phenomenal change.

So, how are we going to celebrate after we have completely subdued the pandemic?

Here's a tableaux for you to prepare your get-togethers if you are fully vaccinated.

BODY LANGUAGE AND GREETINGS

Handshakes may be a thing of the past. Even the western culture is ditching the handshake for personal hygiene and fear of contracting any germs or viruses. Namaste, blow kisses, waves, or a simple hello will be the standard greeting.

FURNITURE AND INTERIORS

People are now making furniture a center stage instead of tapestries. Furniture is easy to clean and can be cleaned frequently.

Individual pieces of furniture are in demand as compact seating

arrangements are not welcomed. Let your homies cherish moments on separate sofas, pouffes, or chairs. Although couples can sit together, most of the guests may not be happy to sit compactly.

IMMUNITY ON THE MENU

With the growing consciousness about health and wellness, people are now embracing healthier party snacks. Ditch the potato as the stuffing for your samosas or gol gappe. Try high protein options like rajma or chickpeas.

Focus on more healthy options than usual greasy snacks.

SUSTAINABLE CUTLERY

People are becoming more conscious about the environment and its relationship with human wellness. After the pandemic, people want to

bring some permanent changes in their lifestyle to help the planet sustain.

So, people are now picking more sustainable options for cutlery. And here are some sustainable cutlery ideas:

- ✦ Use fabric napkins instead of paper napkins even if it is made of recycled paper.
- ✦ Use stainless steel utensils or glass utensils instead of thermocol.
- ✦ Minimize the food wastage by cooking measured quantities.

THEMED PARTY

Add a new flavour to your party by adding a theme or twinning. In fact, twinning is the newest trend in Indian weddings. You can use this trend to spice your own party.

Even Bollywood themed parties are a fantastic idea to get rid of the boredoms and bring in more fun into your get-togethers.





“People are becoming more conscious about the environment and its relationship with human wellness. After the pandemic, people want to bring some permanent changes in their lifestyle to help the planet sustain. So, people are now picking more sustainable options for cutlery.”

MOUTHWATERING MENU WITH A TWIST

Food is still a major attraction for all the guests. But the buffet is not welcomed anymore. Uncovered food is raising more eyebrows than ever.

So, food packets, or packed thalis are becoming a new norm now. People are also experimenting with food trucks or food delivery apps.

SERVING NOSTALGIA

The age old, ethnic recipes are becoming a new attraction on

the spread. Remember, how your grandma cooked pumpkin as a yoghurt dressing? This is the right time to serve that amazing yoghurt mix to your guests.

Old forgotten recipes that are healthy and add variety are in huge demand. So, go through all those old cookbooks before hitting Google to find an authentic, ethnic recipe that is also easy.

DIY

As the economy slows down, DIY hacks are becoming super popular.

You can add a DIY item in your decor to give it that personal feel.

Repurposed items are great decor hacks. Here's one for you.

- ✦ Take your old dupatta.
- ✦ Take used fruit/veggie peels to manufacture natural dyes.
- ✦ Dye your dupatta.
- ✦ Use it for the curtains or as a table runner.

MOVE “BACKYARD”

Corona has instilled a fear of confinement. Most of the people are now turning away from stuffy spaces. So, it's prudent to use your garden/backyard/rooftop as an open air event.

After all, everyone needs a sigh of relief!

But always remember, a good host is one who makes people valued and welcomed. We all know, actions speak louder than words. Abiding by the COVID protocol will definitely impress your guests and friends alike.

After all they will know that you truly care for them. ●



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HOSPITALITY SECTOR GETS AN UNPRECEDENTED BOOST

Hospitality sector has not only revived but is flourishing, surpassing the expectations of the industry experts. In fact, the experts point out if this trend goes then maybe next year the revenue will be greater than the pre-pandemic times.

What is triggering people to beeline at the tourist destinations?

People have a number of reasons to break the lockdown AKA the house arrest. Some of the reasons triggering tourism especially the domestic tourism are:

- ✦ **No-visa:** A lack of visa availability is boosting domestic tourism.
- ✦ **Bleisure:** Business+leisure is the latest dad to wash off the quarantine.
- ✦ **Revenge travel:** A trip to avenge the quarantine time.
- ✦ **Money:** People saved enough to travel
- ✦ **Staycation:** Stay at home+vacation is becoming popular too

So, it's the right time for the hospitality industry to reap huge profits.



DISTRESS SALES BRINGS JOY IN REAL ESTATE

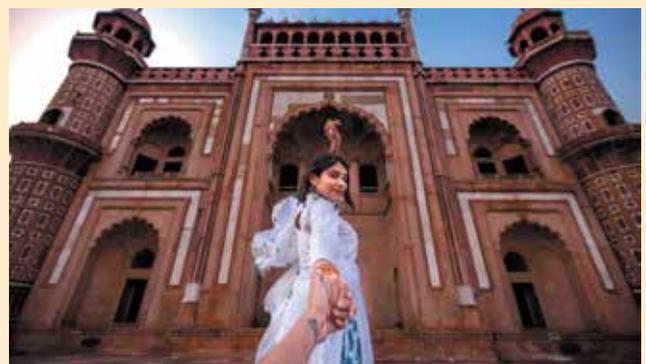
Real Estate phones cannot stop buzzing as distress sale among the hotel owners is keeping them busy around the clock.

Interestingly, the megastars of the hotel industry are more willing to sell off their property.

The reason is clear:

- ✦ Maintenance costs are huge for the majestic structures
- ✦ Some of the staff is definitely needed to maintain the hotels. This brings most costs.
- ✦ Lack of guests has blocked the income
- ✦ Even the wedding industry is now looking for intimate and small scale celebrations instead of pomp and show parties. So, they're also overlooking 5 star properties.

But this distress sale is becoming a lifetime opportunity for umbrella platforms to grow their own franchises.



DESI TRAVEL: LATEST BUZZWORD OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

As the lockdown is slowly relaxing its limits. Indians are hovering around the tourist attractions and local getaways.

Yes, as many Indians are looking homewards due to lack of international vacation. Domestic travel is seeing one of the best seasons as more and more visitors are willing to explore local as well as popular getaways.

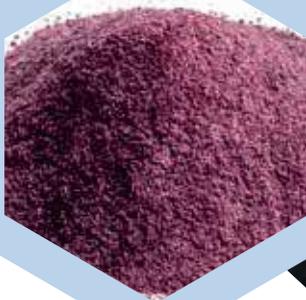
The work from home-away from home trend is boosting long stays too. Additionally, nomadic lifestyle enthusiasts, vloggers are adding to the revenue too.



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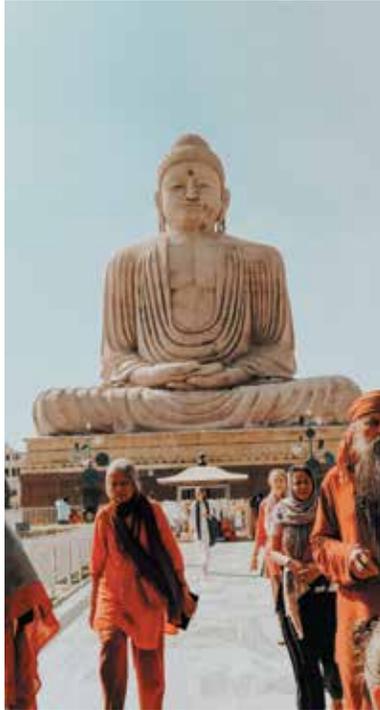
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INDIA LIFTS QUARANTINE FOR SELECTIVE INTERNATIONAL GUESTS

Fully vaccinated guests traveling from a country with which India has reciprocal arrangements for mutual acceptance of WHO approved COVID-19 vaccines shall be allowed to leave the airport after only security checks. They don't need to undergo home quarantine and/or testing from October 25.

The revised guidelines for international arrivals was released on Wednesday. This has breathed a sigh of relief amongst the giants of the hospitality industry who survive mainly on foreign visitors.

People are hopeful that foreign tourists will help the industry to recover the losses sooner than expected.



WEDDINGS : IN THE POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

The big fat Indian wedding has birthed an industry worth a whopping 50 billion USD. Yes, you read that right, billions!

But the lockdown brought the mammoth industry to a standstill. However, the industry is operating again but there are way too many changes.

Here are the newest trends to follow in your upcoming wedding:

Sustainability: Sustainability rules the roost as people are now more aware about it

Intimate gatherings: Forget the huge crowds, Indians are now looking for smaller but intimate weddings.

Light makeup: The brides are ditching expensive beauty packages and going for a "normal" makeup look.

Destination weddings

Destination weddings are the new buzzword. Smaller gatherings are giving them enough savings to go for a destination wedding.

WHAT'S COOKING IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY?

Food is one of the chief attractions for all the gatherings, especially weddings. But the pandemic has made a dynamic change in the catering etiquette. Here's the list

❖ No buffet:

Uncovered food is a strict no, no. People are now looking for packed plates or other covered options.

❖ Desi feast:

Long forgotten traditional recipes are making a huge comeback.

❖ Sustainability is paramount

Sustainable cutlery, reusable napkins are going to be the next big thing.



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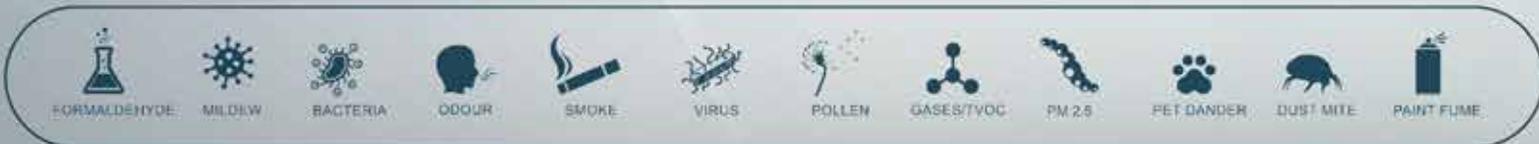


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The internet has created millions of jobs. But the kind of freedom it gave to people to work from home (WFH) whilst the global pandemic of coronavirus was pretty commendable.

The internet has created millions of jobs. But the kind of freedom it gave to people to work from home (WFH) whilst the global pandemic of coronavirus was pretty commendable.

Initially, WFH jobs were considered a privilege but the Corona pandemic proved that remote jobs are the real future. And this created a tribe of WFH professionals as well as digital nomads.

Although co-living spaces were initially introduced as cheaper but safer living spaces in crowded cities, they are now not confined to just bustling metros. People, with the new found freedom of remote or WFH jobs are looking to make the most of their time.

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WHAT ARE CO-LIVING SPACES?

Co-living spaces are large villas or flats that provide a tenant a separate bedroom but shared living space.

WHY ARE THEY BECOMING POPULAR?

There are a number of reasons they are becoming popular and believe it or not that WFH is surfacing as the chief reason that is fueling the trend of co-living spaces.

In addition to that, several other reasons became instrumental in facilitating the growth of the co-living spaces.

WHY ARE PEOPLE LOOKING FOR CO-LIVING SPACES?

There are a number of reasons behind the intentions of co-living enthusiasts. Some of them are discussed here:

WFH is not what you think

As the globe entered the most tumultuous times of the decade, possibly the century, work from home

(WFH) became a norm. Despite, publicised as a cheaper and time-saving option, WFH soon started to scare people with its negative impact.

Most of the people complained of

- ❖ Decreased productivity
- ❖ Loneliness
- ❖ Detrimental effects on mental health
- ❖ Claustrophobic environ
- ❖ Lack of communication

Like-minded company

Many people who are working as digital nomads don't want to stay isolated from society. Instead of socializing with everyone they like to socialize with selective individuals.

Co-living spaces are a great way to find like-minded individuals at slashed prices.

Majority of the people want

- ❖ Escape from loneliness
- ❖ Accommodation at slashed rates
- ❖ Safety in an unknown city

No red tapes

Many urban nomads, vloggers prefer co-living because it is free from the red tape and other hassles like mortgages. The inhabitants can pay for their share and move out without much paperwork.

This may look unsafe for some people but it actually helps in

- ❖ Saving time
- ❖ Moving out swiftly
- ❖ Extend the stay
- ❖ Stay wherever

Unconventional stays are the new normal

Although co-living was invented as a cheaper option for crowded metros, they are now becoming popular as romantic getaways like hills, vintage villas, and more.

Such destinations are in huge demand because:

- ❖ People especially couples want quality time without asking for a leave
- ❖ Most of the people want to move out of the stuffy cities
- ❖ People are becoming more conscious about health and wellness

Apart from the above listed reasons, there's more to the popularity of co-living spaces. Some people are opting to explore unknown spots while others want to write about a different lifestyle.

No matter what is the reason, co-living lifestyle is here to stay and may also surface as a competition for the regular hotels or motels. ●



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“Our intention has always been to make sustainability interesting, fun, bright and mainstream.”

– **GARIMA CAPOOR**
Co-founder of Plantables



How did it all start?

Plantables was born out of our search for a beautiful yet sustainable and economical wedding invitation for our own wedding 5 years back in 2016. Sumat (my partner and husband) and I were quite determined to make our wedding invitation from plantable paper. A kind of paper made from cotton scrap with seeds embedded in it.

We ended up making our invitations using a purple colored seed paper embedded with the seeds of tomatoes and chillies. This concept was novel at that time. Our friends and family gave an amazing response to it. The whole idea of sending out a message of letting love ‘grow’ while inviting guests to our new beginnings was surreal and really caught our fancy.

Our love for design, experimentation and sustainable practices lead to an official launch for Plantables in December of 2018 with Seed Paper Calendars and a modest range of wedding invitations.

The intention has always been to make sustainability interesting, fun, bright and mainstream. Thus, the constant need to bring in new designs, patterns, elements, and



structure are always high. We are working for the contemporary brides and grooms who are aware and conscious of their choices. We know that they would love to make the

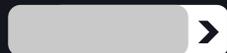
switch if they have ideal options.

Why did you pick this name?

‘Plantables’ was a word that came very naturally to us to be honest. It

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The pandemic has been tough on everyone. It has been especially hard on small businesses. We were barely standing up in 2020. When the pandemic started, we were forced into a lockdown.

We sustained ourselves by some strict cost-cutting, and scaling down. We worked with a bare minimum in-house team for extended periods of time while retaining the entire staff remotely. We are grateful that we were able to make it through this period of 2 years without having to let go of any of our team members.

We have also been working on new products and offerings to diversify our range of offerings to meet the rising demands.

What are your vision/plans for the brand?

We want to make Plantables a brand people can love and relate with. The idea is to make sustainability fun and mainstream.

A message for our readers?

Never give up on your ideas. Embrace eco-ethical products for a greener tomorrow. ●

kind of just stuck. We were thinking about plantable cards and seed paper products at the time of our wedding as well as at the time of the brand name launch. It is a very clear, straight-forward self-explanatory word with an element of a proper noun to it which lends itself to being a brand name per se.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I co-founded Plantables with my husband Sumat Nanda. We are both science graduates from Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra. Sumat is

a BSc. with Physics (Hons.) and I'm a graduate with Zoology (Hons.) I did an MBA in Marketing as well.

As for Plantables, we both have our own roles.

Strategy, planning, marketing, technology, and innovation are some of Sumat's forté.

Whereas I manage the brand communications, customer relationships along with other day-to-day activities.

How did you deal with the pandemic woes?



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GREENS

FROM *REAL* TO *DIGITAL*

We are in the era of digitalization. Each and every sector is employing digital tools or processes to keep pace with the ever changing market demands or to adapt to sustainable development.

Green digital is a not-for-profit endeavour by Microsoft that employs technology to empower small scale farmers.

THE ROOTS

In 2007, Rikin Gandhi, a young aeronautical engineer came to India to join Microsoft Research Lab to undertake technology based research.

During his tenure with Microsoft Research, he started testing the role of technology in improving agricultural systems with small holder farmers. He teamed up with an NGO called Green Foundation to dig further. This partnership later led to the formation of Digital Green in 2008 in India. The name is an amalgamation of Green Foundation and digitalization.



WHAT DO THEY DO?

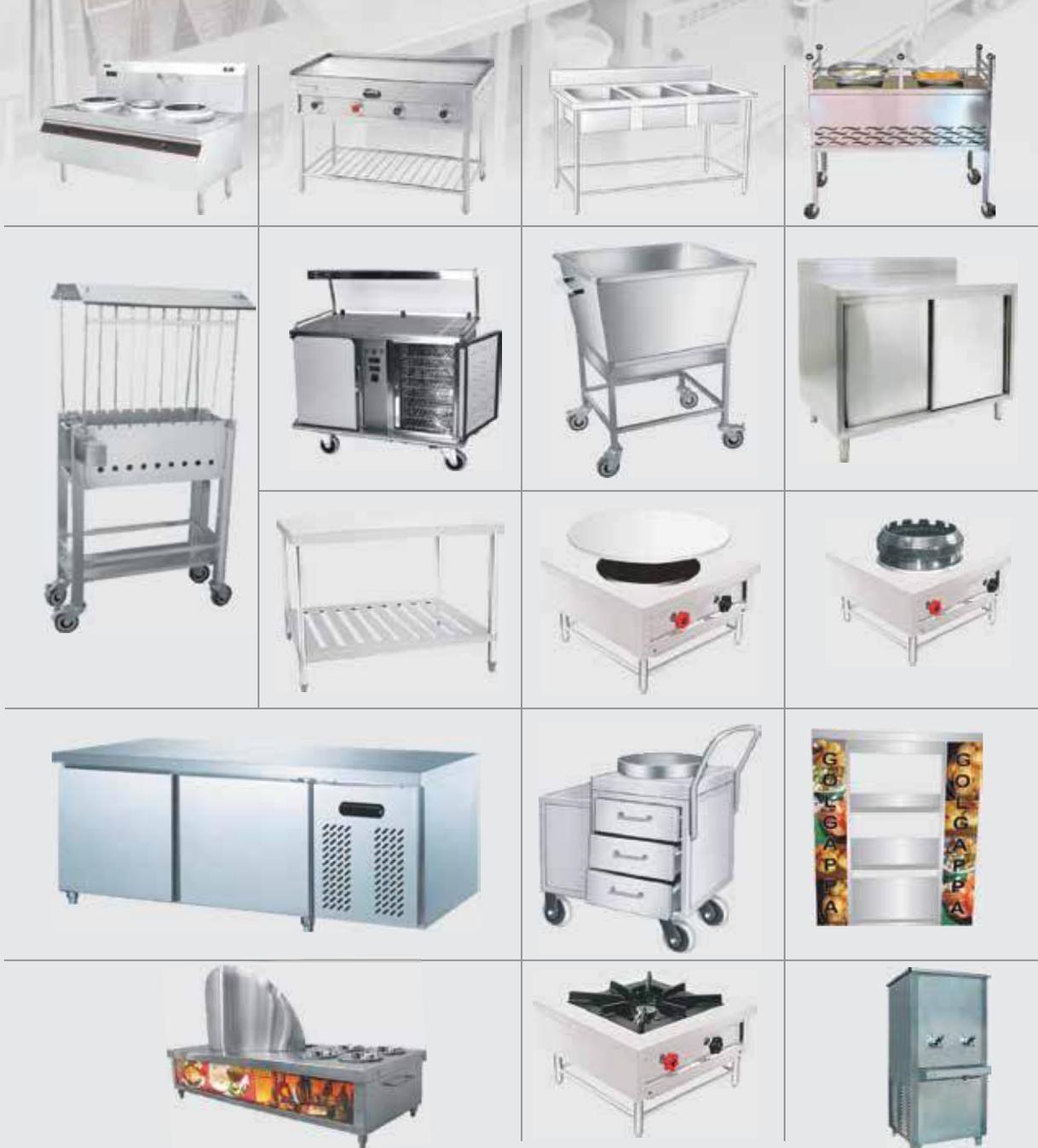
Digital Green is the first not for profit to spin out of Microsoft Research. Kicking off with a boot camp in 2008/2009, Digital Green started with using simple digital video technology to inform and provide advisories to farmers, with an aim of ensuring that farmers have improved access to information to enhance their productivity.

The work that started with 1000 odd farmers soon spread to hundreds of thousands of farmers across India, aligning closely with the National Rural Livelihood Mission.

In 2013, Digital Green got the opportunity to expand this work to Ethiopia. Soon, Digital Green Foundation was set up as a charity in the US to fulfill their global ambitions.



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Over the years, Digital Green has evolved as and has developed a number of technology tools and services to support smallholder farmers. They have reached over 3 million farmers in more than 9 countries and have trained over 40000 front line agriculture extension workers.

Today, Digital Green is leveraging the power of technology and power of partnership to support smallholder farmers to become more resilient, improve productivity, enhance income and contribute to sustainable development.

HEADING TOWARDS GREENER PLANET

Under the able guidance of Mr. Krishnan Pallasana, Digital Green helped the farmers to beat the pandemic woes.



Mr. Krishnan Pallasana

Krishnan P, a recipient of fellowship grants from Winrock and Prevention Consortium, is a graduate in Physics and an MBA. Under his leadership, Green Digital undertook surveys with small holder farmers to understand their pain points of dealing with pandemic. They shared their findings with the government and other stakeholders.

They are supporting close to 1000 smallholder farmers who were deeply affected by Covid. They have partnered with other alliances like Rapid Rural Community Response (RCRC), an alliance of over 200 NGOs, and ACT alliance to provide right information to front line workers and rural masses. They

“ Digital Green is the first not for profit to spin out of Microsoft Research. Kicking off with a boot camp in 2008/2009, Digital Green started with using simple digital video technology to inform and provide advisories to farmers ”

produced small videos to break myths, support vaccination and build morale. The information reached more than 10000 WA groups locally through the NGO partners

TOWARDS GREENER PASTURES

Digital Green has become an impactful agtech catalyst, respected and recognized for its outstanding work to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of extension systems. Digital Green uses technology to demonstrate impact and scale to accelerate sustainable development outcomes.

Digital Green will continue to strengthen its work with and for small holder farmers as they hold the key for sustainable development.

They're focused to work on climate smart agriculture practices to help farmers mitigate risks and enhance productivity and income. ●

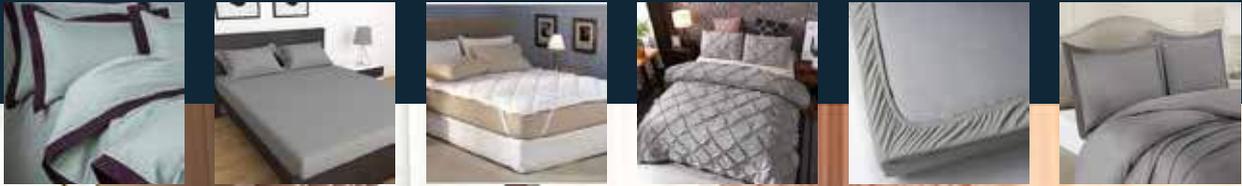


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KAMAL CATERER launches special range of fruit-based chocolates

After the success of “Immunity Booster Rasgullas” and “Immunity Booster Chocolates”, now Kamal Caterer has launched special fruit-based chocolates, offering various flavors such as Kiwi, Orange, Strawberry, Pineapple, Tamarind, etc. One of the most loved flavors is the Guava Chilly Chocolate because of its sour and spicy taste.

Kamal Caterer is well renowned for its rigorous experimentation in the food industry. Last year, in the COVID-19 pandemic era, Tulsi, Amla, Turmeric, Green Chilly, and Strawberry Rasgullas were prepared to boost our immunity. The Immunity Booster Rasgullas, which came last year was loved and welcomed by the people and got much appreciation. After that, in the past few months, Kamal Caterer has been making Immunity Booster Chocolates, which are made up of Mulethi, Tulsi, Kali Mirch, Haldi, Amla, Anjeer, and Dry Fruits. He says that when he got information from newspapers and TV channels that the third wave of COVID-19 could also come and this can prove to be dangerous for children, only then did he get this idea of making Immunity Booster Chocolates as children are reluctant to drink kadha due to its bitter taste.

The launch of fruit-based chocolates was welcomed and appreciated by the people. Mr. Kamal Kr. Agarwal says that the chocolates are made up of original fruit pulp and no artificial flavoring and/or colors are used in making the chocolates which maintain the natural



aroma, and taste of the fruits. It is the use of original content which brings such a delicious taste to the chocolates.

The inventor of these Immunity Booster Rasgullas and Chocolates, Mr. Kamal Kr. Agarwal who also happens to be the owner of Kamal Caterer and the President of Jharkhand Caterers Association (JCA), also represents Jharkhand at the Federation of All India Caterers (FAIC).

Acknowledging the efforts recently, “Global Triumph Foundation, Bangalore” has included Mr. Kamal Kr. Agarwal in its magazine - “Famous Top-50 Inspiring Icons of the Country”.

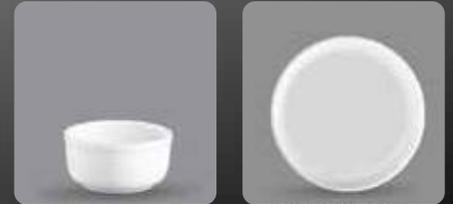
Mr. Kamal Kr. Agarwal adds that people can get in touch with his team to buy these special ranges of chocolates as Kamal Caterer is getting these delivered all over India. At last, he says that he prays that this pandemic will be soon a thing of the past and our country will get rid of it, and everything will be back to normal as it was before. ●



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“Business is not only about earning profits rather it is also about earning blessings”

– HITENDRA BHALARIA

MD, Bhalaria Metal Craft Pvt. Ltd.

- Vice president of All India Stainless Steel Industry Association.
- Vice President of Indian Stainless Steel Development Organisation (ISDO)
- Advisor to Steel Market Info & Vibrant India
- Board member of All India Working Committee of EEPC.
- Leader of EEPC led Business Delegations to Russia, Ukraine, Romania in 2002, Mexico in 2006 & China 2007 under AISSIA.
- Serving as Committee Member for more than 30 years in All India Stainless Steel Industries Association & Stainless Steel Merchants Association

Is Bhalaria Metal Craft Business a family-owned and operated business? How did it all get started? How has your business changed over the years?

Yes, it is a family business. It was started by my forefathers in Mumbai when Mumbai was not very developed. Our family had settled in Mumbai when the city was developing. I am the seventh generation and proudly running this business.

In earlier times, people used thick sheet utensils in weddings, so we used to prepare items accordingly, and today our business is running globally. Earlier, we used to work only in brass and copper, but today we are dealing mainly in stainless steel considering the market need and demand. The priority in earlier days was given to the quality, and then price and the same trend continues today.

Tell us the secret of the success of your business.

The credit for my success goes to God. I am his servant; I do whatever he wants. I believe in working for poor workers of my factory, with their help, both my and their families get benefitted.

I started at the early age of 18 years; I started work without money or even any accounting knowledge. I kept giving work to those who came for work, and I never saw what I got. For 18 long years, I didn't earn anything. Thanks to my father, his earnings kept our family expenses flowing.

In the initial phase, our family did not agree to the stainless steel ware business. It was only then that I started my own stainless-steel business by moving away from the family.

Bhalaria Metal Craft is a market leader in professional kitchenware for the food and beverage, hospitality, and catering industries. Tell us how these industries have reacted to your products over time and what new products you've introduced that have received a lot of positive feedback.

You won't believe it; Our first order started with a spoon and bowl in the initial phase. In today's time, we have bar-shakers, cocktail-



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(Points marked with (*) are compulsory to be filled on the basis of which membership is allotted by the association)

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shakers, ice cream cups, deep boxes, and many other trending products. We quickly gained popularity with our bar accessories and then gradually started kitchenware.

In today's time, we are working on 9000+ products. We also provide customized service to the restaurant owners, where we try to blend their ideas and needs into our products.

How has the sheet metal forming industry changed recently? Is the cookware sector competitive?

We can survive in the market if we maintain good quality material and service to the customer.

Regarding the sheet metal forming industry, we are working on stainless steel very well in today's time.

Earlier, we used to work on copper and brass, but it is only 5% in today's time, whereas 95% is stainless steel.

Tell us about your company's manufacturing capabilities and the technological advancements you've made over time. What innovations have you made in the manufacturing area?

Regarding innovations, we try to do innovations in everything that we do today. Every month there are 200-300 new products.

For example, we offer a lot of product customization services these days. Every customized product is an illustration of our excellence. Ideas are regularly in the pipeline from which we keep innovating in the market.

At the same time, whenever I go, I meet chefs and ask about their problems with the product. I also try to change our products as per the feedback received.

Tell us about your international business. How is the global market and demand for Indian products structured?

Regarding the international market, I deal with 525 brands. India is a highly price-sensitive market. We aim to keep the profit margin low and try to deliver the best quality in that range. It is our market formula.

“ In earlier times, people used thick sheet utensils in weddings, so we used to prepare items accordingly, and today our business is running globally. Earlier, we used to work only in brass and copper, but today we are dealing mainly in stainless steel ”

We maintain the same procedures for the international market as well.

Which B2B user category has been the most profitable for your company out of all the others?

As far as profitable business is concerned, anything with a quick turnaround time is beneficial for a business enterprise. There is no point in waiting for six months to get your cash.

What impact has Covid had on your business and the sector as a whole?

However, there are many businesses with ups and downs in this corona period. But fortunately, I doubled my business during that time. I spent all my time focusing on how to utilize my workers. They must keep earning, and their families must survive during these difficult times.

Whatever products I used to supply to international partners, I tried to strengthen the business relationship further. As a result of this, I am getting regular orders in today's time, and you won't believe I have booking orders for the next 4 to 5 months.

Of course, the pandemic phase gave new business learnings too.

What are your future goals and objectives for this business?

In the coming future, the business of stainless steel and kitchenware will grow a lot. Presently, India is at number two position.

Because in today's time, the leading companies are China or Japan, and they have their internal problems. So Indians can take advantage and grow at a world level. ●



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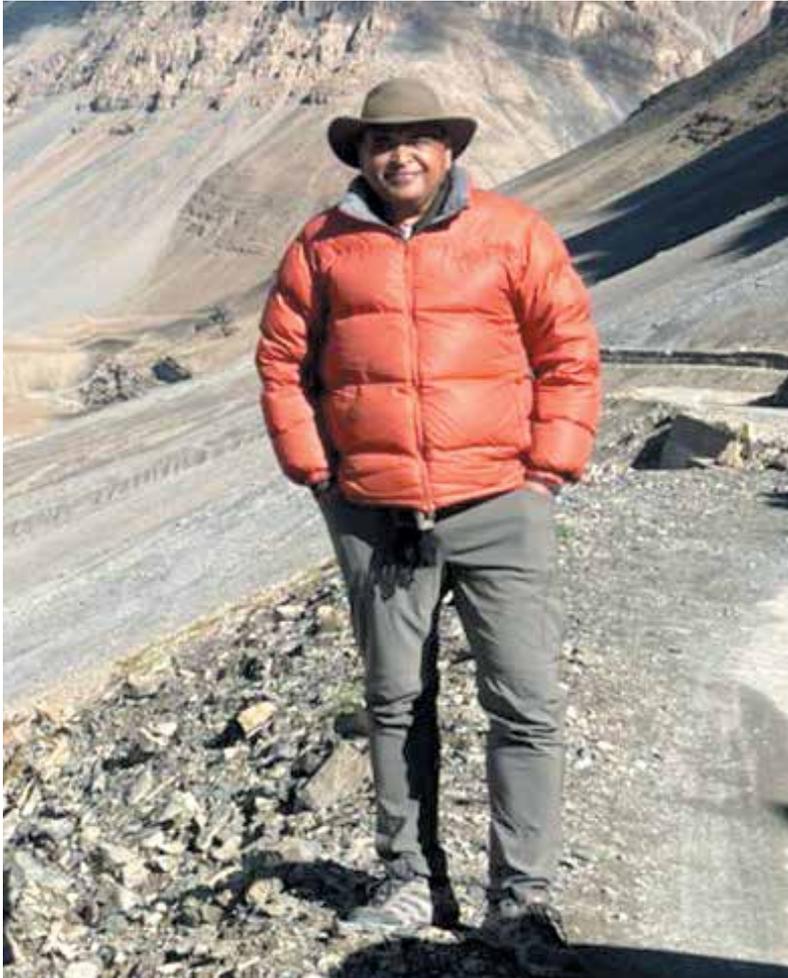
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“I extended our brand and brought a few more Himalayan properties under our umbrella in 2020”

– RAJESH OJHA

Tell me a brief about your background.

I have deep roots in the field of Indian adventure travel. Way back in 1993, as the co-founder of Banjara Camps, I opened Kinnaur’s first dwelling for travelers: a campsite with Swiss Cottage Tents in Sangla Valley; and thus pioneered the concept of luxury camping in the inner reaches of Himachal Pradesh.

In the following years, I identified other pristine locales in Himachal like Tabo & Kaza in Spiti, Thanedar, Sojha, Sonaugi, and opened mountain lodges in them. Over the years these places have become sought after off-beat destinations.

Today, Banjara has a pan Himalayan footprint. It operates mountain lodges in nine pristine locales in Himachal & Uttarakhand apart from running journeys (road trips & treks) across the Himalayas in India, Bhutan, and Nepal as well as the Trans Himalayan plateau of Tibet.

Apart from managing Banjara Camps & Retreats and discharging my responsibilities at ATOAI, I also run a food company that attempts to bring together, celebrate, and serve some of the most delectable, hard to find home cuisine from the kitchens across the country.

The pandemic hit the hospitality sector really badly, how did you/your brand coped with it?

As all bolts from the blue do, this one also made us go numb for a while. We as a company took a major financial hit but we were pained by the loss caused to our staff.

In our case the pain was less as all our staff came majorly from rural/mountain, joint family settings that could take the knock better.

Personally, to begin with, as the ATOAI person, I sat down with my colleagues to write a safety protocol for opening up of the lodges and activities.

As an adventure travel person I realised that ours will be the first sector that will open once the Corona pestilence settles down.

Our company is in boutique, stand alone properties, and organising customised

Rwellness Aromatherapy Brand Creation by Wellness Ambassador



adventure activities in the higher Himalayas. The very nature of our work ensures that people will gravitate to us as they would be the most safe offerings.

Keeping that in mind, I extended our brand and brought a few more Himalayan properties under our umbrella.

And now we're slowly operating as well.

What, according to you, has been the biggest lesson learnt by the hospitality sector during COVID?

A black swan event like this does not allow you much choices. But we can summarise that

- ✧ Companies with deeper pockets could survive better than others. Companies which were unleveraged and were leaner, fared better. So, keeping some financial resources aside can help the companies to cope with the pandemic.
- ✧ The pandemic galvanised the giants like ITC to get into the boutique/small hotel segment. So boutique/small hotels can be more dominant in future

“ Today, Banjara has a pan Himalayan footprint. It operates mountain lodges in nine pristine locales in Himachal & Uttarakhand ”



- ✧ Companies which had better loyalty quotients, amongst the staff, and with the clients, tend to be doing better than others. Invest in your staff and growth to build loyal clients. So my takeaway for the hospitality sector in a post-pandemic world would be:
 1. The age old adage of being good to others.
 2. Refrain from spreading yourself thin

How has Corona changed the hospitality (especially your) industry?

Our boutique segment has got a shot in its arm. Active, nature based tourism is doing well.

As I already said, small hotels and eco-friendly tourism will be dominant in future.

What are the upcoming trends in the hospitality industry in a post pandemic world?

This is a good time to spread the message of sustainability and responsible tourism.

Any message for our readers?

My message for the travellers amongst tour readers are:

- ✧ Be good and don't ask for discounts.
- ✧ Help the industry which creates and spreads joy for your recovery. ●





“If the customers cannot reach out to you, you must reach out to them”

– **MOHAMMAD MINHAJUDDIN**

Proprietor, Arsalan Biryani



Tell us about your story

The story is simple. Mughals brought Biryani to India and we decided to bring Biryani to every Indian. And we have been doing it since 2002.

You are known as the “Biryani Baron” so did the pandemic hit you as hard as it hit others in the hospitality industry?

Well of course. No matter how big or small, every business survives on the sales. So, the pandemic hit us as badly as it did to everyone else.

We had to reach out to our savings to keep the business going. Our loyal clients and family support kept us going but we were barely surviving.

And we are so grateful to our landlord who gave us heavy discounts on rentals for our shop.

What was the greatest lesson that the hospitality industry has learnt from the COVID 19 pandemic?

Every catastrophe definitely leaves behind a message. IMO, the total lockdown was the worst phase and I think it impacted the sellers and consumers (of the hospitality industry) alike. There are many clients who are unable to cook and they regularly order food from us.

So, a complete lockdown poised a humongous problem in front of both the parties. And I think the government should provide aid to the hospitality sector, if such a catastrophe is repeated.

The second lesson that the pandemic taught us, that size doesn't matter, every business must create an online presence. We survived the second phase of lockdown because of our transition into the digital arena.

So, we can say that digitalization is the key.

Yes. If the customers cannot reach you then you must reach out to them. Storing the data of your regular customers can help you to setup a home delivery system and we did that.

In fact, our sales shot up after we revamped our servicing procedure.

What changes did you implement in your business to survive the pandemic?

We realised that most of the people were wary of touching regular things that may have many hands on them.

So, we started a barcode menu that can be scanned. We sanitize our workers, kitchen, and packaging materials to ensure total safety.

What lesson would you like to share with our readers?

My only advice for my fraternity is never put all eggs in one basket.

Always keep an emergency fund to face the unexpected. ●

We all like sending gifts to our loved ones. A bundle of goodies with lots of love, wishes, and hopes, tugs on their heartstrings too. But the gifts become more precious if they have a personal touch to them. It makes the receiver feel more special and showered with love and care.

Although sending a gift to a loved one can be done with a click now, still the choices are few. In fact, most of the time, the buyers are shown a fixed number of “packages” and customization is limited.

But people are looking to hand pick the goodies, customize the gift hamper, and get it delivered on their doorstep.

And that’s why “the box story” comes into our story.

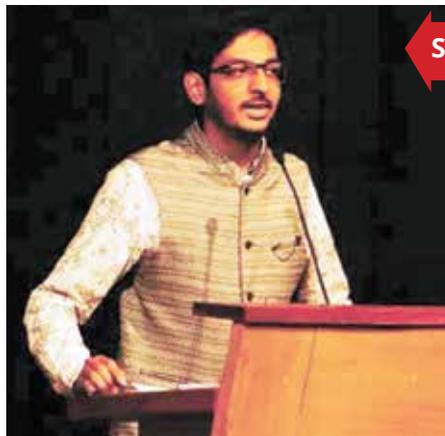
THE BACKSTORY

When the entire world was confined to their homes, the Agarwal family too was struggling with the lockdown woes. A traditional joint family that comprises 33 members was facing hurdles in their businesses as well. To make the most of the lockdown, they started looking for new business ideas that could work in a post-pandemic world.

Sagar Agarwal, like the rest of his family, wanted to try his hands at something new. So near Diwali 2020, he thought of starting a “gifting business”.

BEGINNING OF A NEW STORY

Sagar Agarwal, armed with a diploma in civil engineering, always had a penchant for exploring people and their stories. He worked as a communication master and public speaker for 6 years. Then he ventured into life coaching. He began his academy named ExpressIt Academy. He aimed to help people to express, be confident, and take action



Sagar Agarwal, Owner - The Box Story

A BOX OF STORIES

After setting out on his new career path he realized that people are looking for personalized and creative gifts more than ever. He soon realised that this field has a huge untapped potential.

People from all walks of life want personalized and heart touching gifts for their near and dear ones. Sagar was pleasantly surprised to discover that every box he prepares for someone has a story to it. And his boxes too, become a part of others’ stories.

So, he founded *The Box Story* as every gift connects two or more people and their stories. He wanted to create an experience between the senders and the receivers.

THE MISSION

The Box Story began with an aim to bring stories alive, add happiness to the people’s lives via gifting, and to have gifting as a medium to express their feelings, be it between couples, friends, brothers, cousins, family, colleagues, companies, and more.

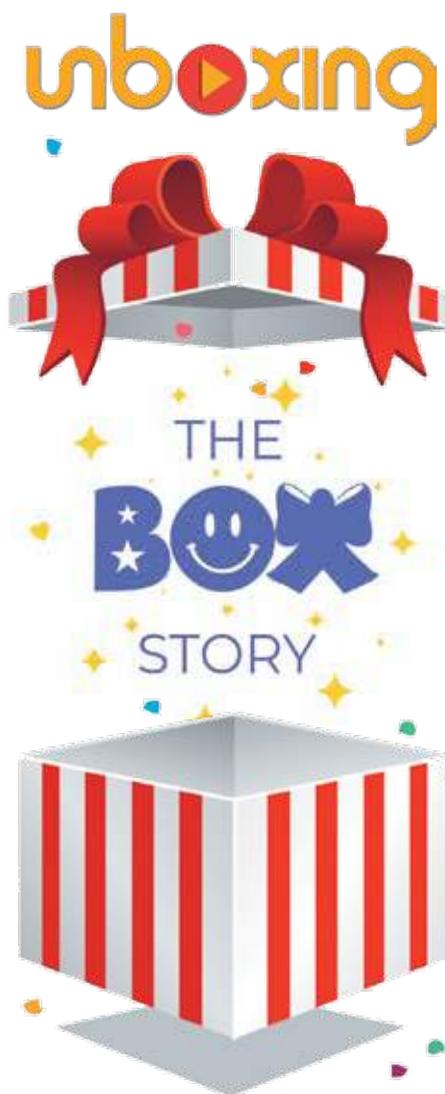
WHAT’S AHEAD IN THE STORY?

Sagar Agarwal says - “(we’ve) realized our dream of bringing people closer. Almost everyone in India knows about and cherishes our boxes.”

And, around another 2 years, “The Box Story” aspires to be a part of people’s stories across the globe.

Sagar Agarwal further adds- “gifting is no more a part of something casual, it’s an essential element of life. We’re turning the concept of gifting to be an Essential Factor.”

So, we can conclude that The Box Story aims to stand out as a unique way of spreading happiness and bringing people closer, be it between individuals or businesses, and companies. ●



in life and business.

However, lockdown halted his career as people were struggling in all the spheres of their lives.

“In many parts of the world, tea is a very young culture”

– **SUNIL CHANDRA SAHA**

Co-founder, Blue Tea

How did it all start?

Actually, I switched my corporate career and entered the lecturership in 2014. Then I wanted to do more so I planned a startup with a couple of my friends.

Unfortunately, our tech-startup didn't work even after nurturing for several months. We all lost our money.

And we were looking for something cheaper to start with and we switched to tea.

Blue tea is already popular in Malaysia but Indians hardly know about it. So we decided to introduce Indians with blue tea.

Why did you pick this name?

We didn't name it. It's already called blue because of its fascinating blue colour.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I was born and brought up in Chittaranjan in WB. I was a good student and topped my school. I graduated in chemistry and microbiology from Delhi. Then I did my MBA from Pune.



How did the pandemic treat you?

Pandemic was a boon in disguise for us. We saw beautiful organic growth because more and more people were buying stuff online.

And pandemic also helped us create a client base that was looking for something to boost the immunity. They bought our tea and now they are our loyal clients.

But there were operational issues. Keeping the team motivated was another challenge. And we actually ended up expanding our brand. Now we are working in 11 countries.

What are your plans for your brand?

We want to expand and reach out to more international consumers. We want people to know that India can also be a global leader in the flower tea industry. ●





“We need enough backup resources to tackle such pandemics in future”

– SANDEEP PEREIRA

Sous-chef de cuisine, Disney Cruise Line

Tell me a brief about your background.

I'm Sandeep Pereira, from Vasai, Mumbai. Kitchens, cuisine and travel always fascinated me. And with God's grace, I've been working as a sous-chef de cuisine with Disney cruise line for the past 15 years. I'm currently in Florida.

The pandemic hit the hospitality sector really badly, how did you/your brand coped with it?

It was very difficult to start any operation for the past 18 months. There were no guests to sail with, crew were laid off, more had to be put in order to sustain the company.

“

The biggest lesson learnt by the hospitality sector is that we need enough backup resources to tackle such abrupt catastrophes in future.”

What, according to you, has been the biggest lesson learnt by the hospitality sector during COVID?

The biggest lesson learnt by the hospitality sector is that we need enough backup resources to tackle such abrupt catastrophes in future.

How has Corona changed the hospitality (especially your) industry?

Now very strict measures are being taken regarding sanitation, hand washing, and personal hygiene. The authorities have introduced different covid portocal to be followed by the sundry.

What are the upcoming trends in the hospitality industry in a post pandemic world?

Immunity and hygiene are going to rule the roost.

Any message for our readers?

My message to readers is to be brave and strong to fight covid 19.

Take care of yourself, your guests and family ●