

Lemon Tree hotels eye customer loyalty

To reach out to travellers, the group is offering transferable, redeemable vouchers

One of the rooms at the upscale Lemon Tree Premier Hotel



By Ashlin Mathew

The growth story is just 10 years old. They are there in 15 cities with over 2,800 rooms in 23 hotels. Lemon Tree has been doing some things right for they have grown from ₹20 crore company to a ₹300 crore one.

This summer season as travellers head to cooler pastures, Lemon Tree Hotels has come up with a loyalty programme designed to get them more than their usual share of repeat clientele. Lemon Tree Hotels has begun a 100 per cent money-back offer, which allows guests to avail full money back on their stays at all Lemon Tree properties across India. This has been designed in line with the "value for money" philosophy. While guests can get vouchers until September 31, it gives them the flexibility of reclaiming or using this offer until December 31.

To qualify for this offer, all a guest needs to do is book a stay with any Lemon Tree Premier, Lemon Tree Hotel or Red Fox Hotel in India from any source, within the validity period of the offer and they shall receive vouchers equivalent to the billing amount at the time of check-out.

The guests can then redeem these vouchers on all their future stays on all hotel services – meals, liquor, laundry, WiFi, spa and salon services – by booking directly through the hotel website. Importantly, these vouchers are transferable. This means any of your friends can avail the offer.

"At least 32 per cent of our customers are repeats. With this offer, we hope to increase our repeat clientele to 50 per cent. Even though the vouchers are transferable, it is well worth the effort as it helps us reach a referral market," says Rahul Pandit, president, Lemon Tree Hotels.

With value-for-money being their mainstay, Pandit says price is just the tip of it. "Our rates at different hotels are elastic. But what doesn't change is the security and hygiene. Cleanliness and the support staff being extremely helpful are our USP," adds Pandit.

He has reasons to smile because Trip Advisor customer surveys have stamped 16 of their hotels as excellent. And it's no wonder their hotels run at almost full capacity. "Our Goa and Chandigarh properties see an occupancy of 80 per cent. Aurangabad also sees high occupancy," adds Pandit.

But, it's not all cakewalk for them. "To affirm customer faith in us, we take care of little things. We have made our breakfast menu until 12 noon, knowing that no traveller wants to wake up early, our rooms have blackout curtains, allowing you to sleep at any hour of the day. Interestingly, in our Lemon Tree Premier Hotel in AeroCity, the least noise is in the rooms facing the runway. This is because of the different windows we have installed," says Pandit. That's not all. All the doors in their rooms have rubber beading to prevent unnecessary noise from slipping in.

"Being a budget hotel, we also have to keep in mind the rates. So, in our hotels there are no landscape gardens, no large lobby areas as the customer ends up paying for all this. In our rooms, we don't use teak for furniture; we use a high quality laminate. This is the unsexy part of the business. As customer preferences change soon, we refurbish our rooms every five years. The furniture is then recycled. It helps us," adds Pandit.

With an aim to triple their inventory by 2017-18, those at Lemon Tree Hotels sure know customer-ism is king.



President
Rahul Pandit