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■ Hotel Connect

Lemon Tree Hotels aims to lead across multiple segments by 2030

Harleen Mehta, Senior Vice President - Sales, Lemon Tree Hotels, shares her perspective on the hotel group's broad vision while providing insightful glimpses of its brand commitments and ambitious expansion plans.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

Lemon Tree Hotels is one of India's fastest-growing hotel chains and is a leader in tapping mid-scale demand. However, over the past two decades, the company has now diversified and caters to every segment, from economy to upscale.

Exploring the Potential of Spiritual Tourism

One segment that has grown consistently and was impacted less by economic downturns than other segments during and after the pandemic is spiritual tourism. Harleen feels that spiritual tourism, particularly in a country like India, is a key segment for both Indian and international travellers. She conveys, "We already have operating hotels in key locations like Dwarka, Katra, Haridwar, Rishikesh, etc., and have signed hotels in Tirupati, Somnath, Badrinath, and more. With a relatively small number of branded hotels in some of these locations, we see great potential for the growth of branded rooms and are actively discussing and pursuing potential

partnerships to establish and expand our footprint in these destinations."

Price Points and Brand Evolution

Lemon Tree Hotels' primary business comes from the domestic market. It could be the family visiting Srinagar, the entry-level executive looking for a clean and comfortable place to sleep in, or the globetrotter who is searching for something refreshingly different—all are their guests. On this, Harleen highlights, "The different price points and offerings across different brands that we have are our biggest plus points, and that enables us to cover a plethora of segments."

The evolution of Aurika Hotels and Resorts, the upscale brand from Lemon Tree Hotels, reflects the changing landscape of the hotel industry towards 'premiumisation.' "Many of our initial customers, who were looking to stay at midscale hotels, have now moved up in life and are looking at upscale experiential travel. And that is primarily what our resort properties—Aurika, Udaipur, and Coorg—offer," points out Harleen. Lemon Tree Hotels recently launched the magnificent Aurika, Mumbai Skycity, India's largest hotel by number of rooms, located close to Mumbai International Airport.

Social and Environmental Responsibility

What sets Lemon Tree Hotels apart from competitors in the market is that while running hotels for the past 20 years, the company has also focused on offering opportunities to Indians with disabilities and people from the economically and socially weak segment. Presently, around 13 per cent of Lemon Tree employees are from this disadvantaged segment of the population. The other practice that makes Lemon Tree Hotels different is their pooch policy. In this, each of the units adopts a stray and looks after it. The K9s are not just given a name but even a designation and role in the system.

Lemon Tree Hotels proactively adapts to evolving trends like guest experiences,

staycations, digital nomads, tech upgrades, sustainability, CSR, wellness, and social media. Harleen mentions, "We have consistently kept track of all aspects at all times. At a host of properties that are within the city with facilities, we have adapted to the increasing trend of staycations, and at any given time, we have different attractive packages for guests opting for them. Lemon Tree believes that the brand should stand for more than 'just profit'. We have focused our efforts on creating a socially inclusive work environment that seeks to bring in people of different backgrounds, abilities, and ethnicities and offer them work as a unified team with a common goal."

Lemon Tree Hotels prioritises eco-friendly practices, ensuring energy and water conservation, responsible waste management, and pollution control. Committed to a healthy planet, Harleen shared, "Our existing and upcoming owned hotels are designed and constructed to qualify for the L.E.E.D Gold Standard, which is recognised globally for energy efficiency, water conservation, CO2 reduction, and enhanced environmental quality by the USGBC and IGBC."

Brand Vision 2030

Lemon Tree Hotels aspires to establish itself as the foremost and most preferred Indian chain across various hotel categories, encompassing upscale, upper-midscale, midscale, and economy segments. Their vision 2030 extends towards ensuring a presence in every Tier II and III city, not merely limited to singular establishments but encompassing multiple options across their diverse portfolio of brands. Harleen concludes, "We are expanding nationwide across all segments, from Chirang, Assam, to Erode, Tamil Nadu, to Sankhwas Garh, Rajasthan. With three hotels opened this fiscal year, plans for at least 20 more are underway, demonstrating our commitment to extensive growth and presence. Moreover, in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), we are targeting 100 per cent green-owned hotels by 2026."



Harleen Mehta