

Schneider Electric
PRESENTS
INNOVATION DAY
Building Smart Hotels
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The inauguration of Schneider Electric's kiosk showcasing its latest technological solutions for the hospitality industry.



Deepak Murali, Hospitality Segment Leader – Greater India, Schneider Electric

BUILDING SMART HOTELS

Experts delve into how sustainability has become an essential aspect of the hospitality sector in recent times as it offers multi-pronged advantages

Sustainability and digitisation come together in Schneider Electric's Innovation Day forum held in Jaipur last month, where the focus was on 'Building smart hotels'. With legacy and history built into every fibre of the city, Jaipur has been hailed as one of India's most premium and sought-after tourist destinations across the world. From the enigma of its structures to its local handicrafts -- Jaipur is a city that has aced every aspect of its hospitality. And driving the vivacity of this sector and the city's hospitality spirit are industry veterans and individuals, who Hotelier India delightedly felicitated and saluted as the "Pride of Jaipur".

GOING GREEN

The forum held at Jaipur Marriott Jaipur, was moderated by Bibhor Srivastava, MD, ITP Media India. The esteemed panel included Anupam Bhardwaj, Senior GM - OEM Sales, Schneider Electric; Chandrashekhar Joshi, GM, The Leela Palace Jaipur; Rajiv Kapoor, GM, Fairmont Jaipur; Rishi Mattu, GM, ITC Rajputana Jaipur; Saji Joseph, GM, Alila Fort Bishangarh; and Sanjay Kaushik, Senior Regional Director, Operations, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group.

The most important reason why sustainability is the trump card for hoteliers is that it leads to significant cost savings in the long run, coupled with resource efficiency. Moreover, when eco-travel has become a way of life, it is a great way to attract and retain guests. While hotel companies



Bibhor Srivastava, MD, ITP Media India, delivering the welcome address.

have been concentrating on the operational aspects of sustainability, in this edition of 'Building Smart Hotels', the panel discussed how to incorporate green technologies and resources right from the design stage. "Technology has been the biggest enabler in the post-COVID world, but people are still around to add the personal touch when required.

The consciousness of sustainability must go to the last mile, and hoteliers are making this happen by having leaders who believe in this concept. All stakeholders are listening, watching, collaborating and ideating to make this possible," says Srivatsava.

TECH TALK

COVID has accelerated digitisation and has helped operations become more efficient. "COVID gave us time to do things we had not done before, and digitisation came first. We went into the hotel's 360-degree virtual tours, and apps got upgraded to booking table reservations and takeaways. Going paperless took off as reception used iPad, scanners and QR codes and televisions became smart,



The panel comprised of some of the most eminent members in the industry: (L to R) Bibhor Srivastava, MD, ITP Media India; Anupam Bhardwaj, Senior GM, Schneider Electric; Rajiv Kapoor, GM, Fairmont Jaipur; Chandrashekhar Joshi, GM, The Leela Palace Jaipur; Rishi Mattu, GM, ITC Rajputana Jaipur; Sanjay Kaushik, Senior Regional Director, Operations, South Asia, Radisson Hotels Group; and Saji Joseph, GM, Alila Fort Bishangarh.

and mobiles became smarter. We saved on paper by moving processing and legal compliances, guest services, and administration procedure online. And yet, the human touch was always present," says Mattu.

Hotel operators are using technology to upgrade for an unforgettable guest experience. Kapoor explains, "We are using OTT channels linked to phones and televisions, and the hotel is becoming like a home as they continue watching from where they left. We measure how guests use the Internet, and we are also using electric vehicles and making many changes in terms of sustainability. We do not use hot water and

Felicitating the 'Pride of Jaipur'



Veto Group



Alila Fort Bishangarh a Hyatt Hotels Property



Kanha Hotels & Spa



Goyal Fashions



Leela Palace Jaipur



Taj Amer, Kanha Hotels & Spa



Dangayach Group



Fairmont Jaipur, Le Meridien & Raffles Udaipur

harsh chemicals in our laundry and use electric technology. We will be single-use plastic-free before 15th August this year."

ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY

One of the important aspects of growing green is being energy efficient. Joshi explains, "ESG drives our business, and we generate a yearly report around this. We are using technologies provided by Schneider Electric for building management systems and all aspects of our operations."

Being a leader in energy-efficient technologies, Schneider Electric offers many digital solutions to hoteliers for operating efficiency. Bhardwaj says, "Comfort embedded in safety is the premise of hotels and we understand this well. We provide advanced solutions like EcoStruxure that can connect and digitise systems and subsystems such as electric distribution networks and lighting automation. It connects multiple hotels across the geography on a single platform at the enterprise level. This helps operation teams to fetch and use the data for smart decisions through AI-based analytics. It also helps reduce carbon footprint, and specifically for hotels, we have integrated building management systems, guest room management and usage-based automation that helps in energy management." Schneider Electric has also committed that its plants will be carbon neutral by 2025, and by 2030 there will be net-zero emissions.

CHANGING VISTAS

As hotels resume normal operations, there have been changes from the pre-COVID era. Kaushik avers, "We use technology to change how we work across hotels, and there has been a complete change of working from the pre-COVID days. We have seen a big change in customer behaviour as personal interaction is no longer an expectation from guests. They do not want people to enter their rooms, and technology has taken over the role people played and has risen from 40 to 45%."

New trends are here to stay, and hoteliers have adapted to these wholeheartedly. Joseph states, "COVID has changed everything and levelled the playing field between operating and new hotels, as upgrading technology became a norm rather than an option. Today everything is on your phone, and that is how the world will move forward. As general managers are extensions of the business, we look at what needs to be done first and what can wait. Fixed costs are down in terms of manpower, and technology is helping make a big difference." Going green is no longer being seen as an option, and technology is becoming a key enabler of the solution. ■