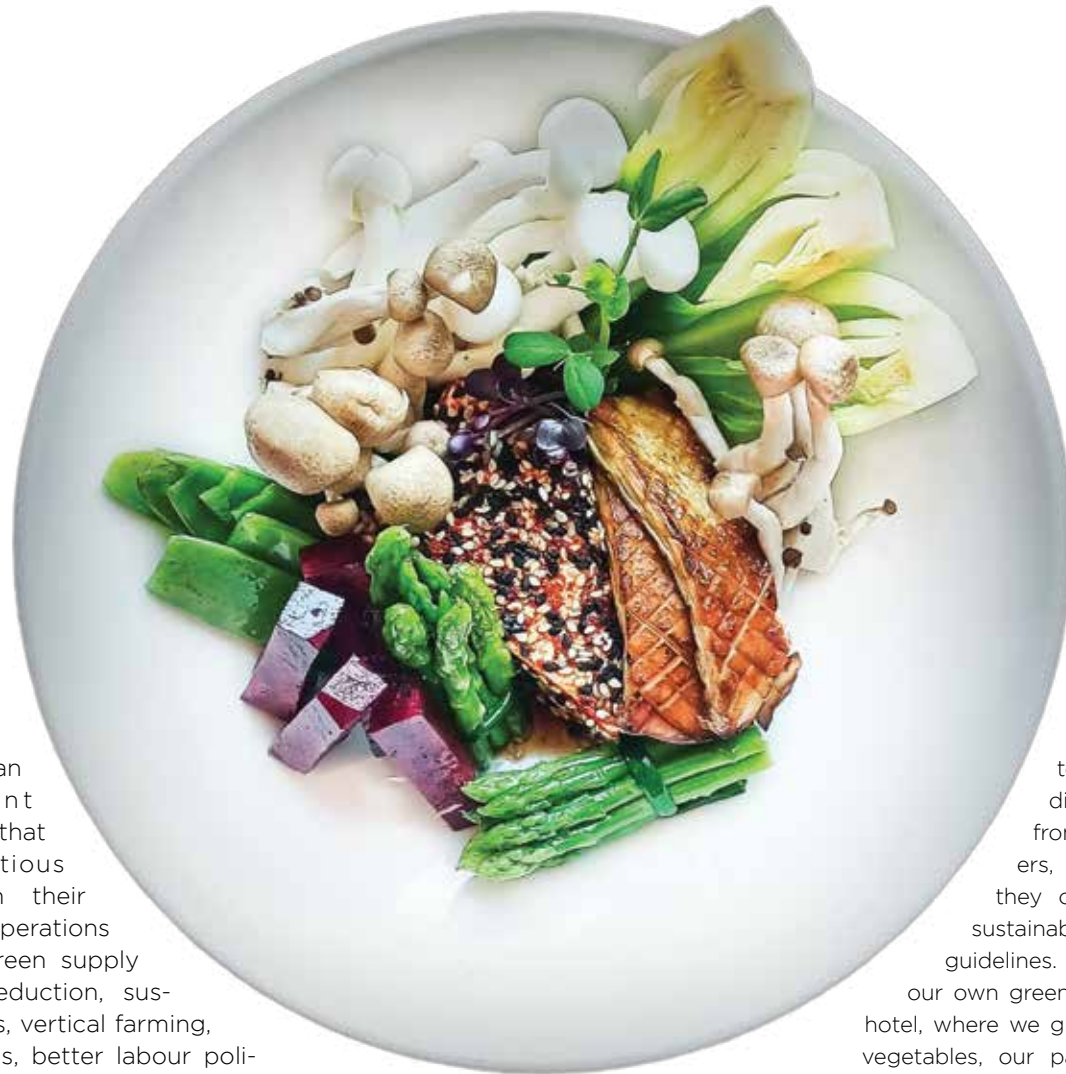


TECH EDGE TO ESG

Technology is helping hoteliers achieve their Environmental Social Governance (ESG) goals in the F&B space in several different ways.

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO



ESG is an important aspect that conscientious hoteliers design their hospitality operations around. From green supply chains, waste reduction, sustainable solutions, vertical farming, revamping menus, better labour policies and more, hospitality giants are doing many things differently in the food and beverage space. We speak to hoteliers who weigh in.

SUSTAINABLE SOURCING

Technology ensures transparency in the supply chain and reduces waste. In today's world, we have many software and apps, which connect the farmers with buyers directly, track the movement of ingredients and ensure transparency, reduce food waste by extending the shelf life of products and protecting them from damage during transportation by smart packaging technology and finally, give us an access of comprehensive report on current sustainable sourcing practices.

"We establish partnerships with selected suppliers of raw ma-

terials and ingredients, preferably from local producers, and ensure that they comply with the sustainability policy and guidelines. We also have our own greenhouse inside the hotel, where we grow some of our vegetables, our packaging is biodegradable, we prefer bio-charcoal, and our menu is around seasonal produce. We also believe in mantras like, 'farm-to-fork' and 'nose-to-tail' and 'take what you eat & eat what you take'," explains Sanjeev Ranjan, Director of Food & Beverage, JW Marriott Hotel Chandigarh.

Sustainable and regenerative sourcing is not the easiest step to take on keeping many factors in mind. But it is a long-term commitment for the biggest positive impact on nature.

REVERSING F&B CARBON FOOTPRINTS

Technology can help reverse carbon footprints in F&B operations through smart energy management systems, food waste management apps, farm-to-table traceability systems, and alternative protein sources. These solutions can reduce energy waste, minimize food waste, and promote sustainable practices, creating a more sustainable food system.

Asif Fazlani, Managing Director, Fazlani Nature's Nest, says, "We have implemented sustainable practices, including improving energy efficiency with energy-efficient lighting and renewable energy sources, conserving water with low-flow fixtures and rainwater harvesting, reducing waste with recycling and composting, sourcing locally to reduce transportation emissions, promoting sustainable transportation options, and educating guests and staff on sustainable practices. At Fazlani Nature's Nest, we have implemented a zero-waste policy in our kitchen and use organic produce from our on-site farm. We further encourage our guests to participate in eco-friendly activities such as tree planting."

By implementing these measures, resorts can reduce their carbon footprint and make a significant contribution to reversing climate change. Additionally, these sustainability measures can also help reduce costs and improve the resort's reputation, making it a win-win situation for everyone involved. It is important for a resort or hotel to work on reversing its carbon footprint because the tourism industry is a significant contributor to global carbon emissions. Guests are increasingly looking for eco-friendly accommodations, and resorts that prioritize sustainability may be more attractive to environmentally conscious travellers.



Sanjeev Ranjan, Director of Food & Beverage, JW Marriott Hotel Chandigarh



Asif Fazlani, Managing Director, Fazlani Nature's Nest

for your culinary offerings.

"Technology plays a crucial role in the development and maintenance of vertical gardens, also known as green walls or living walls. Vertical gardens are structures that allow plants to grow vertically on walls or other vertical surfaces. They provide numerous benefits, including improved air quality, noise reduction, aesthetic appeal, and even food production in urban environments. Technology plays a pivotal role in the development, maintenance, and optimization of vertical gardens. It enables precise control over environmental factors, automates essential tasks, provides real-time monitoring, and empowers gardeners with insights for efficient management. With further advancements, technology continues to enhance the sustainability and viability of vertical gardens as an innovative approach to urban greening," says Praveen Chavva, Food and Beverage Manager, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach.

VERTICAL GARDENING

Vertical gardening structures help create a more sustainable and visually appealing environment while providing fresh ingredients

GREEN SUPPLY CHAINS

Conscientious hoteliers believe that local communities and local ingredi-



Vertical gardening structures help create a more sustainable and visually appealing environment while providing fresh ingredients



➤ Cage-free eggs and locally sourced ingredients have lately been popular among hotels

ents are the best as it is not just about serving guests healthy and organic food but understanding food miles as well.

“We integrate the local community with every aspect of our supply chain management. To stop the use of single-use plastic bottles, the hotel has set up the city’s first automated water bottling plant that processes 2,000 bottles of IS 10500 2012 standard drinking water daily. We also started nurturing sustainable tourism in our hotel from the grassroots level by recycling collaterals like letterheads, using paper straws and wooden cutleries for takeaways, and using recyclable takeaway materials,” says Shana Ninan, Director of Marketing Communication, Kerala Hyatt hotels.

Likewise, using cage-free eggs and sustainably harvested seafood in food production are the main focal points at Grand Hyatt Kochi. “We are also on the verge of tying up with an organisation for collective action against climate change. This will be rolled out by June 2023. Environment-friendly packing methods and recycling of plastic bottles are top on the minds of the leadership team. Garbage segregation does not get discussed at such length and



➤ ESG practices in the F&B department ensure that hotels work effectively, saving both time and cost.



➤ Praveen Charva, Food and Beverage Manager, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach

we are ready to bring in experts for the same. Another important aspect is the use of smaller metal forks for pass around and removal of wooden toothpicks and forks. Paperless documentation process and digital signatures help keep things in perspective from a tech standpoint,” adds Ninan.



➤ Vikas Sood, General Manager, The Leela Gandhinagar and Mahatma Mandir Convention & Exhibition Centre managed by The Leela

WASTE REDUCTION

The Leela Gandhinagar, focusing on waste reduction, ensures that the programming standards and the recipes are aligned, and customization and systemization are done accordingly.

“Our software is developed in such a way that one cannot over order, which could cause waste. Our internal departments also work on a system-driven algorithm, so everything is in place, right from the kitchen to vegetables and raw materials. There are multiple checkpoints and balances where people do not over order, and there is no food wastage to ensure that the guests are well looked after, yet there is no or minimal wastage. In terms of our a la carte orders, we have looked at and done an extensive study on guest expectations, and accordingly, recipes and portion sizes are optimised. For the buffets, we optimise in such a way that in higher occupancy or busier moments, the buffet quantity of food



➤ Satish Kumar, General Manager, The St Regis Goa Resort



➔ Food waste from buffets is tracked back to have an essential record of procurement and recycling.



➔ Environment-friendly packing methods are top on the minds of the hospitality team

that is placed is altered accordingly to ensure minimal waste,” says Vikas Sood, General Manager, The Leela Gandhinagar and Mahatma Mandir Convention & Exhibition Centre managed by The Leela. The chefs are also working extensively on developing zero-wash dishes and dishes that have minimal waste, are more organic, and are more locally produced. The food waste is also tracked up to the last mile, where even the garbage that is going out and the subsequent recycling of the wet garbage towards composter manure or whatever is tracked back to have an essential record of procurement and recycling.

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

The St Regis Goa Resort has allowed for a harmonious blend of life to co-exist and thrive where sustainability is a way of life.

“Since we are a resort, we can get food preferences and plans of guests way before they land in the hotel, enabling culinary teams to plan and curate meals at least two to three days prior. Buffets



➔ Shana Ninan, Director of Marketing Communication, Kerala Hyatt



We also started nurturing sustainable tourism in our hotel from the grassroots level by recycling collaterals like letterheads, using paper straws and wooden cutleries for takeaways, and using recyclable takeaway materials.”

—Shana Ninan, Director of Marketing Communication, Kerala Hyatt hotels

are essentially mono portions with limited usage of chafing dishes. It helps that our guest base is mostly from the leisure segment and hence, they have time at hand when these portions are frequently replenished with food cooked a-la-minute. All eggs used are cage free, with significantly more vitamins A and E; more omega 3 and higher carotenoid levels. Being located close to the sea and ferry pier means that the fresh catch of the day comes straight to us and is all consumed within the day. Daily hauls consist of fresh grouper, sea bass, prawn, clams, crabs and even lobster,” says Satish Kumar, General Manager, The St Regis Goa Resort.

Production per day of their waste converter is approximately 300 to 350 kgs of wet garbage per day. This results in a huge saving as this bio waste is recyclable. Approximately 2,500 kilograms of compost is produced per month. Considering compost costs Rs 20 per kilogram, which would be Rs 50,000 worth of compost for the garden per month that they can save.

The benefits of technology in the hospitality F&B space is immense. As seen, these can be applied across several functions within the F&B ambit to ensure that hotels work effectively and efficiently as they save both time and cost. ■