

'Indian hotel companies want good technology to ensure customer satisfaction'

Hotel groups in India are now looking at centralising their technology for providing a similar customised experience across all their properties believes **Sanjay Verma**, country manager, India, Xn Hotel Systems . By **Sudipta Dev**

What has been the growth of Xn Hotel Systems in India?

Xn Hotel Systems is a UK-headquartered company with its operations in US, Australia, APAC and the Indo-China region. Its Indian operations are based out of Delhi, supporting pan-India customer locations, and we are contemplating about opening offices in west and south India. Currently, it offers remote, on-site and 24X7 support to its customers.

What significant milestones have you achieved in the Indian market ?

When we launched, Lemon Tree Hotels were evaluating their PMS strategies, and after a multi-bid process they choose Protel Multi-property Edition as the right fit for their requirements. Protel has now adapted to the requirements of the Indian market, and in the initial stages, having focused on just this, we now have 13 properties on a centralised model for Lemon Tree, and three properties of Red Fox hotels. We have provided tremendous cost savings to them and with a strong foundation of a stable PMS, they can focus on expansion and other core areas of operations.

Protel was also installed during the Commonwealth Games at the alternate games village for delegates and successfully won the global tender process for the flagship hotels of Ashoka, Janpath and Samrat.

In south India, we have implemented our solutions at the two Raintree Hotels in Chennai owned by the Ceebros group. In the west, we have signed with Cirtus group of hotels and installed our solutions at their Kerala and Goa properties. Citrus has five major properties and plans to add 2000 rooms.

Our initial acceptance by the first Moevenpick Hotels property in India will see our solutions being

installed at their upcoming property in Bengaluru.

What are your suite of products?

Xn has a strong portfolio of products to offer its customers - ie Property Management System Protel PMS/Protel Single Property Edition for a single property/Protel Multi-Property Edition for hotel chains, and Protel Smart for small hotels. Protel is a product running at more than 6000 locations in 60 countries and adapts to 16 different languages. The product is very strong and well-proven globally that it requires minimal on-site support. The strength of any company lies in a strong and stable product, rather than number of staff, and that is the reason our products do not require too many support staff on either side.

We have the Xn Global RES for seamlessly integrated reservations with connectivity to all four Major Global Distribution Systems (GDS) via the Pegasus distribution switch connectivity option to selected Internet Distribution System (IDS) channels, and a fully customisable, private label Web Booking System (WBS). Distribution and management of all connected electronic channels can be managed from one portal console.

What is the USP of your products?

As a central property management system Protel MPE can transform even a global hotel chain into a single unit. All connected hotels access the same guest information from a central database. Data and functions are available in real time at every property. And you can reap enormous benefits of having clean data stocks and lean business processes. The Protel Multi Property Edition offers reservation, marketing and reporting in one package so that you can monitor and control all the activities, revenues and



Sanjay Verma

reports across the organisation. We have proven cost-effective solutions for hotel chains that are looking at centralised operations. Managing multiple sites from one central location by experts is proving advantageous to them and empowers them to watch enterprise-wide performance on a real time basis from the head office.

Centralised solutions push hotel groups to use and implement their centralised call-centre operations, cross-property reservations, loyalty programme, rate strategies and centralised reports effectively. With centralised controls at the head-office level, reaction time to change their strategy across all hotels pan-India, or for a specific property, would be almost instant.

In India, we feel that there is a huge gap as this market has been dominated by select global players that restrict the choice of selection for hotel chains. On the other hand there are local players that cater to a specific segment, which is governed by price rather than features.

Is there anything new in the pipeline?

There are no particular plans as most of our products suited to the India market are already being promoted. We do not add

products to our kitty frequently and only offer proven products to our customers. The existing products are so strong and essential that they form the foundation for any strong IT platform at any hotel. However, we do want to put more emphasis on our loyalty programme module, Leisure Point.

How open are India's hotel companies in adopting the latest technologies vis-a-vis international hotels? Has there been any change over the years?

As mentioned earlier our success with fast emerging groups such as Lemon Tree, Citrus Hotels and even ITDC are a clear indication that Indian hotel companies want as good, if not better, technology to ensure customer satisfaction and a fully integrated PMS and CRM module. This has definitely changed over the years, and even more so with products like ours where as against the traditional per property database management, groups are looking at centralising their technology in order to provide a similar customised experience across all their properties.

What will be the key technology differentiators in the future?

I think it would definitely be the fact that a guest gets his preferred services across any property of a hotel chain he stays in. With our products this works just right. So, if a guest prefers four pillows and this is fed into the CRM system whether he is in Coorg or Bengaluru or Mumbai or Delhi, if he is staying in the same chain of hotels, the hotel would have already made the necessary arrangements.

Further, what is going to be important is complete real-time booking and confirmation processes and a transparency in pricing across various categories of rooms at all properties of a hotel chain. ■



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