

In-Conversation with **Manish Pratik**

*Managing Director
Orchard Resort*



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Rajesh Tiwari

Q. Give us a short background of Orchard Resort? How has been the growth in last couple of years?

A. Idea behind Orchard was to build a tented eco resort run with the support of local community in complete harmony with nature. It came up almost ten years back when there were very few quality resorts in Pushkar which is in the heart of Rajasthan known for its temples and annual cattle fair. The concept of tented accommodations was thought to be more amiable to nature with minimum carbon foot print. We wanted to build a truly eco resort both from the perspective of surrounding local flora, fauna and experience to guests. There are already plenty of usual resorts, heritage properties in Rajasthan with Orchard the idea was to provide a completely different experience to guests with the help of local community. We also wanted to make sure that the benefits of tourism should reach to the local community.

Q. Do you have any expansion plan in development pipeline?

A. We are working towards expansion in the mid-term but not yet decided on locations. Reason being we do not want to move away from tented concept which needs right climatic conditions to be successful.

Q. What changes did you initiate at the resort recently?

A. We changed all our tents few years back and also added new activities like bar-be-cue, culinary experience for guests who can participate as well. Additionally, we have focused in enhancing the outdoor options like cycling tours, walking tours and archery etc. in the vicinity of Orchard.

Q. What revenue-enhancing strategies have you adopted at the property?

A. Unfortunately revenue enhancement has been a challenge due to many resorts which have opened in recent years. Having

said so, Orchard has been able to create a niche for itself. We have enjoyed first mover advantage particularly in the nature lover segment, clients who are looking for different kind of experience do recommend us to their friends / families which has been rewarding.

Q. How do you keep the morale of your team running high especially during high pressure moments?

A. Right from the beginning we have been able to develop a sense of belongingness in our staff members which are mostly locals. They are always motivated irrespective of workload due to the fact that they consider it to be their own place. If you are able to develop such sense in your team members you don't need particularly formal motivation training sessions. Whenever I am there I make sure to spend quality time personally with the team to understand their challenges and convey our expectations to make sure all our guests go back thrilled with Orchard experience.

Q. What are some positive changes that you have witnessed in the industry in the recent years?

A. The biggest positive change has been the growth of domestic market which has been increasing manifold for the last few years. More importantly now there are mature Indian travellers who appreciate such concept resorts like Orchard. To start with, almost all our guests were from inbound segment but in recent years the numbers of Indian traveller have increased, as a result we have 30% Indian guest. OTAs, internet direct sales are other areas where we have seen consistent growth in recent years.