

A HOSPITALITY COMPANY WITH A DIFFERENCE



It's never easy to take forward a legacy, especially when the stakes are high, as in Nepal's first and only Forbes listed company, CG Corp | Global

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In an insightful interview, Rahul Chaudhary, Managing Director of CG Corp | Global speaks of the rapport he shares with his father Binod Chaudhary. Today's Traveller explores how the father-son camaraderie is taking the company to another level and bringing the world back to Nepal with each passing year.

Talk to me about your plans? What moves you to do such a lot in such a short period of time?

After graduating, my father asked me what I wanted to do in life, to which I replied, "I want to be a soccer player," as I was proficient in sports through school and college. My father's advice was: "Be whatever you want to be, but make sure you are the best at what you do." Destiny, however, had other plans. I entered the hospitality world and have been deeply immersed in the business along with my father, who has been my guiding force throughout. His unending passion, foresight and astute business sense have placed our company on the global map through the

Forbes listing in 2013, making us the only Nepalese family in that list ever since. Our vision is to be innovative, grow the company and expand the business worldwide. Our goal is to be a hospitality company with a difference, which we hope to achieve with our target of establishing 200 hotels by 2021-22, with investments and assets across the world – from America to China.

So how did this journey start for the Group?

We began our sojourn in 2001 joining hands with Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), South Asia's largest and most iconic hospitality company which owns the Taj Brand; it included three assets – Taj Samudra in Sri Lanka, Taj Exotica Resort & Spa and Taj Coral Reef in the Maldives. It is a tribute to my father's sagacity and grit. Even when the Sri Lankans and Maldivians were sceptical to invest in these assets at the time, he seized the opportunity and realised it to its full potential. When I joined the business in 2006, we had three hotels, today we're at 127 hotels within a span of 12 years and we continue to grow. This year, we hope to reach the 150 mark.

What clicks with you when you decide that this is a good partner to have? Or this is a good asset to partner with?

Every single deal starts with strategy. Partnerships are not easy and managing them is even more difficult. You have to consider the area of expertise, the experience and the strategic fit with that partner, without any conflict of interests. I expect my local partner to be someone with developmental expertise, strong local presence, ability to deal with the local authority, have local knowledge and most importantly, someone who is well-intentioned. If all these qualities are in place, the rest is all about execution.

Does judgement play an important role in selecting a partner?

Judgement has a lot to do with your gut feel. I always believe that for an entrepreneur, gut feel and hunch lets you take a leap of faith. It's very important for an entrepreneur to have the right judgement to make a partnership successful.

Looking into the future, have you thought about 200 hotels and the kind of ethos that would string along all of them without any kind of break, because they would be in different classifications?

I'm not worried about getting the numbers, but all along our strategy has been to be in all the segments of hospitality. I work with different brands in different segments of the Hospitality Industry, but the only connection is that it is part of the company based out of Nepal and has a reach to different parts of the world.

Your partners have been one of your abiding strengths and that might be something that could endure across all classifications?

Absolutely! We are extremely proud of our partnership with IHCL. We would have never been where we are today, if it wasn't for our first partnership with IHCL. We have learned about hotels, luxury and partnerships through IHCL and other alliances that we have forged over the years. We continue to work through our partnership to make our growth strategy a reality.



- Rahul Chaudhary