



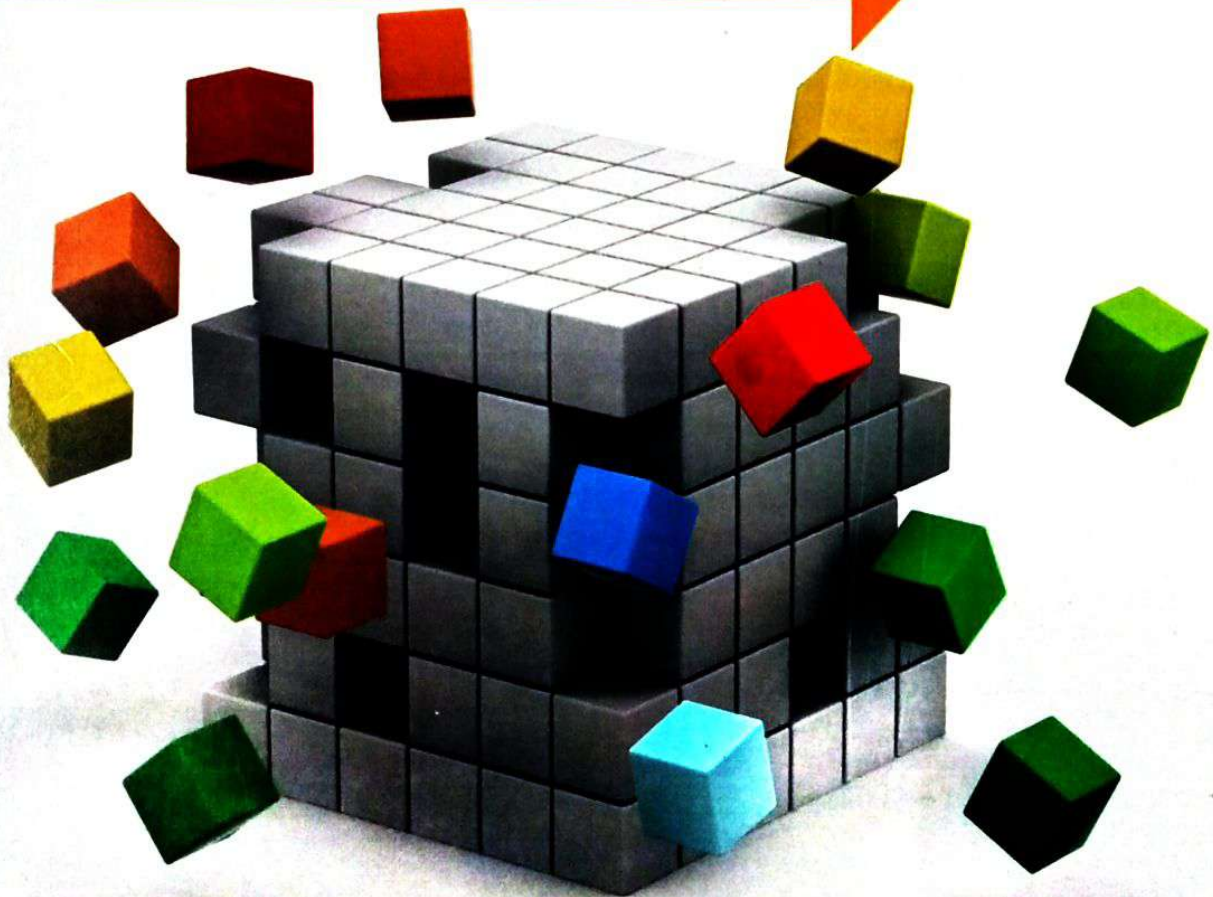
**SADHU VASWANI INSTITUTE
OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES
FOR GIRLS**

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The Director

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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Title of the Paper	Name of the Author	Page No.
1	A Study of Environment Degradation Owing to Business Apathy	Chaudhari Chandrakant Bhagvat	1 to 8
2	A Study of Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements in accordance with Indian Accounting Standards	Dr CA Smita Deshpande	9 to 17
3	Agricultural Marketing Reforms in India	Dr. Ghuge Sunil Balu	18 to 25
4	An Entrepreneur's Vision For Inclusive Growth Through Non Formal Education (NFE) – A Case Study of Dr. B.V. Rao Institute of Poultry Management and Technology	Mrs. Marcelle Samuel	26 to 34
5	Business Concerns: Environment First and Resource Sustainability - A Case Study of Orchid Group of Hotel Operations as Ecotel	Mahesh Randhave	35 to 40
6	Business Expansions: From Organic to Inorganic	Ms. Alka Chanana	41 to 49
7	Critical Study of Government and Academia as key Facilitators in Transforming the Skilling Landscape in India	Dr. Neelofar Raina	50 to 60
8	CSR: A Commitment of Private Banks in India	Dr. Manisha Saxena & Prof. A S Kohli (Retd.)	61 to 70
9	Importance of Rural Entrepreneurship for the Development of India	Dr. Jagdeesh Ramchandra Lanjekar	71 to 79
10	Internet Marketing	Dr. Mrs. Srilatha T Palekar	80 to 83
11	Is E –Commerce Business Sustainable in India? - A Case Study	Ashok Kukrati	84 to 89
12	Overview of Unethical Marketing Practices with special reference to Pharmaceutical Sales	Ms. Archana Patil	90 to 98
13	Public-Private Partnership (PPP)-A Tool For Economic Development	Manoj W. Meghrajani & Dr. Priyanka D. Bhamare	99 to 105

14	Retail –Offering CRM at the POS	Ms. Ruma Agwekar	106 to 113
15	Rivalry-Recontoured!	Gautam Pherwani	114 to 119
16	Women participation to Women Initiatives: Perspective to Prospect	Ms. Anshika Asthaa, Prof. Dr. P S Rao & Ms. Shruti M Mangaonkar	121 to 127

Business Concerns: Environment First and Resource Sustainability - A Case Study of Orchid Group of Hotel Operations as Ecotel

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Abstract

Business sustainability is becoming a very important issue - reducing our global footprint to sustainable levels is the defining issue in today's world, and it is one that can only be addressed with the active participation of the private sector. Concerns about pollution and climate change have become more central in public discourse; many firms have joined policy makers in resource sustainability. Orchid Hotel is an ecologically sustainable hotel (Ecotel), i.e. an environmentally responsible lodging that follows the practices of green living. Each hotel in the group has its own program, creating awareness among employees and internal conversation through energy-saving gadgets and environment-friendly material. Orchid group of hotel have taken a major initiative at the time of construction like natural lighting in the atrium, air conditioning, fluorescent tubes, energy saving by using solar light etc. Guest participation program like newspaper on request, linen reuse, Eco Button, giving away cards with seeds inside at customers departure, etc.

Keywords

Hotel business, Orchid Group of Hotel, Ecotel, Resource sustainability, Environment friendly.

Introduction

Nothing is wasted in nature because nature knows how to reuse and recycle. Ecotels are earth friendly or eco sensitive hotels that feature innovative and imaginative programmes for conserving natural resources, reducing waste, minimizing pollution, and maximizing sustainability (also called "Green Hotels"). Some ecotels occupy recycled or renovated buildings with upgrades to conserve energy and water, minimize waste, incorporate natural landscaping, or utilize recovered building materials. Other properties support local environmental efforts or groups and offer environmental education.

Ecotel Certification follows three 'R's of environmental conservation - reducing, reusing, and recycling. Ecotel certification requires these properties to strictly adhere to certain criteria, which may be called the 'five globes' that are the cornerstones of environmental responsibility. These five criteria are as follows:

1. Energy efficiency
2. Water conservation
3. Solid waste management
4. Environmental commitment
5. Employee education and community development

Popular ecotels in India include The Orchid, Mumbai; RODAS, Mumbai; and The Raintree Chennai. Orchid hotel is one of the verticals of Kamat Hotels India limited. Orchid hotel pioneered the concept of ecoteling in India (ecologically sustainable hotels). The Orchid group of hotels has set itself apart from the competitive luxury hotel segment.

In 1986, Kamat Hotels (India) Ltd. became a publicly listed company. Kamat Plaza was the first 4 star hotel started by Kamat Hotels (India) Ltd. In September 1995, Kamat Plaza upgraded and reopened as a 5-star hotel, The Orchid and 3 hotels under the Orchid Brand; Mumbai, Pune and Jalandar. Adding value by providing eco-friendly and organic food and service is the core competency of Orchid Hotels. It has collaboration with international firm, HVS Eco services.

Green Initiatives at The Orchid Hotel, Mumbai

More and more people today are concerned about the environment and making spaces eco friendly. The Orchid hotel has been designed, built and is maintained keeping environment issues in mind. Starting from the construction and design to allow for the play of light and shade, wind and air to the use of water, The Orchid Hotel, Mumbai takes pride in this and invite their guests to also be eco-sensitive.

At the Orchid Hotel, Mumbai 72 rooms are facing the atrium to ensure that the scorching Mumbai heat stays out; due to which the load on cooling the living spaces is drastically reduced. In addition, with the swimming pool on the roof top, a natural coolant is in operation. Whether it is the water treatment or the materials used, inside and out, serious thought has gone into

making the hotel truly eco friendly. It is for this that the hotel got the distinction of being the first five star hotel in Asia, to win the Ecotel certification and to date has received over a hundred awards in recognition of Orchid hotels commitment to be a truly world class eco friendly hotel. The Orchid remains one of only six hotels worldwide to maintain this certification. The management and staff have put in great efforts to maintain a strong Environment Program, The Orchid has various initiatives in the areas of

- Solid Waste Management
- Energy Efficiency
- Water Conservation and Preservation
- Environmental Commitment
- Employee Environmental Education and Community Involvement

There are other hotels in India which, though not Ecotel – certified, have been following eco-friendly practices. Some of these include the ITC Welcomegroup properties and CGH Earth Group properties.

Scope and Objectives

1. To study the operational practices followed at Orchid group of Hotel.
2. To find out the role of innovative practices in resource sustainability at Orchid group of Hotel to make it Ecotel.

Data Collection

This is a thematic paper and all the data has been collected from previously printed and Internet based information.

Orchid Hotel – Design and Construction

As an ecotel, Orchid has a “Green Building” concept, also known as ‘ecologically sustainable building’. The structure should be designed, build, renovated, operated, or reused in an eco-friendly and resource-efficient manner. By promoting resource conservation, “Green Building” design creates healthy and comfortable environments, reduces operation and

maintenance costs, regulates the environmental impact of the building construction to ensure retrofit, and emphasizes waste minimization. In addition, "Green Building" design also addresses such issues as historical preservation and access to public transportation and other community infrastructure system. The entire life-cycle of the building and components is considered, as well as the building's immediate economic and environmental impact and performance. Following factors have been considered at Orchid Hotels while designing and constructing,

1. Cost

To develop a "Green Building" Orchid Hotels have incurred more cost (which is about 15 percent more), but it saves in the long run through lower operating costs over the life of the building. The cost saving can only be fully realized when they are incorporated at the conceptual phase of the project's design.

2. Materials

One of the best ways to minimize the use of raw materials, for instance, is to select a site that already has a building on it and remodel the same as necessary for e.g. Fort Jadhavgad at Saswad and Seasons – An Apartment Hotel at Aundh Pune. The building's orientation should be such that there is a minimization of heat gain in summer and maximization during winters. The location of cooling towers should be away from boilers, generator units, kitchen, and laundry exhausts. Also, the builders should select sustainable construction materials and products by evaluating several characteristics such as reused and recycled content, zero or low harmful emissions, zero or low toxicity, sustainably harvested materials, high recyclability, durability and longevity and local production.

3. Recycle and Reuse

Use of products with a significant proportion of recycled content for construction of "Green Building" such as Fly ash-based cement and blocks for construction are ideal option for a "Green Building". Similarly, by using certified wood, the unnecessary felling of trees is avoided.

4. Check Emission

Choose construction material and interior-finish products with zero or low emission to improve indoor air quality. Many building materials as well as cleaning and maintenance products emit toxic gases. These gases have detrimental impact on occupants health and productivity.

5. Regulate interior environment

Provide adequate ventilation and a high efficiency in-duct filtration system. Heating and cooling systems that ensure adequate ventilation and proper filtration can have a dramatic positive impact on indoor air quality.

6. Fight Germs

Prevent microbial contamination indoors with a selection of materials resistant to microbial growth.

Energy Conservation and Monitoring at Orchid Hotels

Major initiatives taken by Orchid Hotels at the time of construction are plan configuration, natural lighting in the atrium, aerators/flow restrictors, rubber wood, compact fluorescent lamps (CFL), air-conditioning etc.

Environmental programs for lower operational cost, increased revenue and evaluate environmental performance. Training workshops for its employees are regularly organized in Orchid Hotels for creating more responsible working practices

towards environment initiatives taken by the hotel. Each and every member of the hotel's staff is made aware of the organization's concern regarding the consumption of energy. All the departments work together to formulate the guidelines for conserving energy in hotel. These guidelines have clearly mentioned the dos and donts in order to maintain strict control over the consumption of energy. The following areas are important in this case:

1. **Guestrooms** – account for a major portion of a hotel's total energy consumption. Energy used for air conditioning, ventilation and heating changes with weather conditions, but lighting is directly proportional to the occupancy.
2. **Laundry** – this facility utilizes a large amount of energy for washing as well as finishing process. The amount of energy consumption within the department depends largely on the type of equipment in use and the lesser extent, the type of fabrics.
3. **Lighting** - "Initial high cost always pays off" is proven at Orchid –
 - i. Replaced 55W light with 36W tube light: 4993.2kW saved p.a.
 - ii. Replacing 18W lamps with 10W CFL lamps: 22608.10 kWh saved p.a.
 - iii. Using a dimmer: INR. 31, 53,600 saved p.a.
 - iv. Energy saving by using solar light: INR. 9,194.4 p.a.

Water Conservation and Preservation

With only 3% of the world's water being fresh water, the Orchid Hotels have employed various techniques to preserve this vital resource.

- In the bathrooms the hotel have installed aerators in taps and special flushes which reduce water consumption by nearly 50% when compared to conventional ones.

- A Sewage Treatment Plant runs 24 hours and 7 days a week to ensure that waste water is treated so that it can be reused for gardening - thereby reducing the consumption of fresh water.
- The Save Our Planet Program encourages guests to reuse their linen and save water.

Environmental Commitment

- The Orchid proves its sincere commitment to the environment by using potted plants instead of cut flowers and using paper that has at least 25% recycled content.
- Guest Room amenities include herbal toiletries and stationery made from environmentally friendly material.
- Swimming pool water and Drinking Water is treated using Ozone instead of carcinogenic Chlorine.

Employee Environmental Education and Community Involvement

Environmental awareness amongst the hotel team members is vital for Orchid Hotels to maintain commitment to the environment. Orchid Hotels regularly conduct training programs and activities for team members in a fun manner. For example, Orchid Hotels have organized photography and banner competitions with the theme of 'Environment Preservation'. Orchid Hotels have a three day training program that includes a session from the Environment Officer who briefs the new team members of the hotel's environmental systems. During the training a documentary called 'Cutting Carbon Footprints' is shown to the team members. The team is informed about pressing issues that pertain to the environment and are motivated to bring about change not only in the workplace but also in their homes.

Activities which involve the community are also conducted on a bi-monthly basis where

team members go on rallies, visit schools; perform plantation drives etc. to spread the message of environmental preservation. These activities are organized by The Orchid's Green Team. The team comprises of two members from each department of the hotel. Over four hundred thousand students from various schools and colleges over the last decade have been educated on environmental issues by the team. Past activities also include composting of *nirmalya* generated during the festival of Ganesh, 'Say no to fire crackers' Rally, distribution of vermicompost and seeds to guests, employees and community, etc.

Solid Waste Management

Solid Waste Management is an important aspect of environmental responsibility given the amount of waste that is sent to landfills all over the world. Orchid follow the 3R theory - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle to manage waste efficiently.

The hotel segregates its solid waste in all the kitchens of the hotel. Four separate colour coded bins are used for storing the separated waste.

- Black Bin - for the wet garbage like food waste
- Green Bin - for Paper waste like newspaper, cardboard cartons, paper napkin etc.
- White Bin - for the Recyclable waste like empty mineral water bottles, tin cans, thick plastic bags, parcel packets, stirrers, soft drink cans/tins, etc.
- Red Bin - Used for non-recyclable garbage like oil packets, soiled aluminium foil, cling wrap etc.

The food waste or wet waste is decomposed in the hotel premises. A Vermiculture area has been set up for converting this food waste into organic manure or 'vermicompost'. This rich and

fertile vermicompost is then used as a fertilizer for the gardens.

Guest participation program at Orchid Hotel-

- i. Newspapers are provided to guests in their rooms on request only.
- ii. The Master Control Panel in the Guest rooms is incorporated with an Ecobutton, which when pressed increases the AC temperature of the room by 2 degrees Celsius thus conserving energy.
- iii. Linen reuse program is encouraged.
- iv. The hotel gives away cards with seeds inside during the customer's departure: 60 lakhs trees have so far been planted.

Marketing strategy at Orchid Hotels –

- i. Positioning and marketing the brand of the Orchid into Green Hotel.
- ii. 87% of the international travelers patronized green hotels.
- iii. Made people aware of environmental initiatives.

Environment-friendly Housekeeping

- i. Linen reuse (laundering bed linen only once in 2-3 days unless perceptibly soiled). A tent card states the purpose behind the same i. e. water conservation and is always placed in guest rooms.
- ii. Employees immediately report on any leaking faucets and pipes.
- iii. Employees switch off the lights and fans that are not in use.
- iv. Employees ensure that only correct wattage bulbs are used.
- v. Usages of cold water detergent reduces need for hot water.
- vi. Use of biodegradable and eco friendly chemicals in cleaning and laundry operations.
- vii. Preventive maintenance of laundry equipment.

- viii. Purchase of linen made from organically grown produce.
6. <http://www.hvs.com/>
7. <http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/topics/Pages/business-and-environment.aspx>.

Eco-friendly guest supplies and stationery

1. All guest supplies are biodegradable.
2. For guest stationery the products used have recycled content.
3. Guest products that contain recycled material are purchased.
4. While morning news papers are provided in public areas in the rooms it is only on request basis.
5. Replace paper hand towels with air dryers in rest rooms.
6. Donate left over guest amenities, mattresses, old furniture and so on to charity.

Conclusion

At Orchid as an Ecotel, the value of business improved due to increased exposure in the market place, higher staff morale and better control of operating expenses. The hotel caters to a variety of groups including traditional eco-tourists, discerning business travelers and Fortune 500 companies with advanced environmental programs as part of their own corporate cultures. 'An idea can save the planet'; this line may seem like any other hackneyed environmental slogan, until you chance upon an idea that compels you to think differently.

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