

# DIGITAL ENHANCEMENT DRIVES GROWTH FOR PREFERRED HOTELS & RESORTS

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Arpit Pant, Regional Director - South Asia & Middle East, Preferred Hotels and Resorts, shares optimistic developments on the group's expansion front.



Preferred Hotels & Resorts generated \$1.11 billion in reservations revenue on behalf of its member properties worldwide in 2016, welcomed 82 new properties last year and also enriched its points-based iPrefer hotel rewards programme. "One of the major drivers behind this success can be attributed to the enhancement of iPrefer in early 2016, wherein

the program was simplified to include a two-tier structure Insider & Elite Membership Tiers offering the member with more enhanced benefits," said Arpit Pant, Regional Director - South Asia & Middle East, Preferred Hotels and Resorts.

#### iPrefer mobile app

The iPrefer app is a tool that helps enhance the on-property experience for members - whether it is to order amenities to personalize their experience, enhance their stay by chatting directly with a hotel representative 24/7, or redeem a Reward Certificate towards their folio upon check out. "Our short-term goal is for more than 25% of iPrefer members with travel plans slated for 2017 to install and use the app during their stay. Our long-term goal is that participating hotels embrace this app as their own and

take advantage of all the consumer touch points we have built to better service iPrefer members, which would include offering an additional value add for guests in the form of points or experiences. We also project the redemption of 37 million iPrefer points to occur through the app within the first six months."

#### Indian hospitality industry

The hospitality scenario in India has evolved tremendously in the last decade with improved infrastructure, relaxed visa facilities and more government initiatives that have made India a world class destination. The hotel industry has seen a huge influx of international brands trying to establish themselves to reap the benefits of this positive trend. Of late, Indian hotel companies are being recognised for their exceptional product and service delivery by

consumers and making waves in the global hospitality industry.

#### Expected growth for 2017

"2017 has been a great year for us, we globally launched the iPrefer mobile app in April and exclusive member rate program as major enhancements to its points-based hotel rewards program, iPrefer. We have more than 1.8 million travellers enrolled in iPrefer and we expect the numbers to globally increase even further during the course of this year. In India, we are working with best in class hotels in different market segments. 2017 has seen us add hotels in our portfolio in Maldives and in India. We continue to look at some great opportunities in the near future with our existing partners as well as new member hotels."