

Two decades and beyond: Sumit Kumar's journey with Hyatt Hotels Corporation

In hospitality, longevity may be counted in postings — but true endurance is measured in trust, adaptability, and the ability to evolve alongside an organisation across brands, markets and economic cycles.

For Sumit Kumar, General Manager of Hyatt Regency Dehradun Resort and Spa, completing 22 years with Hyatt Hotels Corporation represents more than a tenure milestone. It reflects a career shaped by early responsibility, global exposure and a steadfast people-first philosophy.

From his formative years at Grand Hyatt Dubai to leading complex hotel operations across India, Kumar's journey mirrors the evolution of modern hospitality leadership — from hands-on operational rigour to strategic mentorship. With over 12 years as a General Manager, including brand launches and destination resorts, he embodies a generation of leaders who combine commercial discipline with emotional intelligence.

“Over time, a long journey offers clarity,” he reflects. “What shaped me most were not individual titles, but the responsibilities entrusted to me early on, the diversity of challenges across geographies, and the consistent support system Hyatt provides.”

Managing properties from remote destinations to high-energy metro markets taught him adaptability and resilience — traits increasingly essential in today's dynamic hospitality landscape.

Global Exposure, Local Sensibility

International and domestic exposure played a defining role in sharpening Kumar's leadership perspective. “Each transition — from resorts to business hotels — reinforced the importance of emotional intelligence alongside operational excellence,” he notes. Hyatt's culture, he adds, consistently encourages decisions rooted in empathy and integrity.

“Leadership is less about authority and more about influence, accountability and service — to both guests and teams.”

Kumar began his Hyatt journey in 2003 at Grand Hyatt Dubai, an experience that continues to inform his understanding of luxury in India today. Working within a global ecosystem of multicultural teams and exacting service standards offered lessons that remain relevant two decades later.

“True luxury lies not in opulence but in thoughtful personalisation,” he says.

As Indian travellers increasingly prioritise authenticity, warmth and emotional resonance, Kumar believes leadership must strike a careful balance. “International benchmarks matter, but so do local traditions and sensibilities. The goal is to deliver experiences that feel globally refined yet deeply personal.”

Those early years also instilled process discipline and openness to innovation — foundations that continue to guide him as the industry evolves.

From Operator to Culture Builder

As Kumar progressed from F&B leadership into General Manager roles, his focus naturally shifted. While operational detail once defined success, culture and people now sit at the core of his leadership philosophy.

“My role today is collaborative and inclusive,” he explains. “I provide a clear vision, empower teams with autonomy, and offer constant mentorship.”

Strategic decision-making now extends beyond revenue metrics to encompass sustainability, culture and long-term asset positioning.

Listening, he believes, remains one of leadership’s most underestimated skills. “When you genuinely listen — to guests, colleagues or owners — outcomes improve consistently. Leadership is about creating an environment where people feel trusted, valued and inspired.”

Launching a Brand, Shaping a Market

A defining chapter in Kumar's career was introducing Hyatt Place to India. Positioning a select-service brand in a market traditionally aligned with full-service luxury required clarity and conviction.

“The challenge was aligning owner expectations and educating stakeholders about the brand promise,” he recalls. “Hyatt Place succeeded because it delivered exactly what it promised — comfort, efficiency and consistency without unnecessary complexity.”

The experience reinforced a simple truth: brands endure when they remain authentic, clearly communicated and consistently executed.

Building the Next Generation

Mentorship remains central to Kumar's leadership framework. For him, nurturing talent is about empowerment rather than instruction.

“Open communication, continuous learning and creating a culture where failure becomes a learning opportunity are vital to developing future leaders,” he says.

More than two decades into his career, his motivation remains anchored in Hyatt's enduring philosophy: We care for people so they can be their best.

“Hyatt has shaped me not just professionally, but personally — instilling humility, cultural sensitivity and the importance of balance.”

In an industry where change is constant, Kumar's journey illustrates that sustained leadership is not built on titles alone — but on trust, adaptability and a commitment to people at every stage of growth.