

Sterling to align people with corporate image

Sterling Holiday Resorts, the wholly-owned subsidiary of Thomas Cook, has embarked on a huge employee training exercise, as the destination provider feels the culture and ethos of the company have changed drastically after it went through a comprehensive brand restructuring recently.

Peshwa Acharya, chief marketing officer at Sterling Holiday Resorts said, the company is training its entire employee base of over 3000 on various aspects including soft skills required in guest handling.

“It is not just the resort manager, but all employees across the board, irrespective of the rank, are under training. The new branding has changed the culture of our company. The training is aimed at educating our employees about the impact of the new logo, new mascot and new communication on brand Sterling and how each employee can align into this new culture. We truly believe that, employees and customers are the most powerful brand ambassadors of any enterprise and no media blitz can undermine it.”

Apparently, the company has spent over Rs 50 crore in rebranding. The company has also chalked out a foot print expansion plan with a view to double its room capacity to close to 5000 and destinations to 50, from the current 33.

“Our footprint expansion will include a combination of things such as a bunch of smaller buyouts and green-field projects. We are currently in the process of identifying and cherry picking the right destinations in the South and West of the country. People today want to take multiple holidays in a year and they prefer destinations in the 2 to 3 hour driving distance. So all destinations will be in drivable distances from a main city,” he added.

Sterling’s new additions will include Mount Abu, Panchagni, Coorg, few locations in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Port Blair, Srinagar, Assam and Meghalaya.

Sterling had acquired an adventure holiday company called Nature Trails, with five nature-based locations in Maharashtra, close to Mumbai and Pune.

Sterling Holiday Resorts has refurbished its properties at a cost of Rs 300 crore in the last three years. Recently, it has changed its business model from vacation ownership to a mixed use model and also added new destinations like Dindi, Anaikatti and Wynad. Sterling believes that its new logo, new tagline – Holiday Differently – also new mascot, Raja Rex (an Indian dinosaur) will help the company attract millennial travellers who want to experience local folk, tribes, culture, cuisine, art, history, nature, and adventure.

“We have internally gone through a transformation and we have decided to offer experienced-led, curated experiences and discoveries to our customers. Everyone who holidays with us will carry home something new,” added Acharya.

Sterling Holiday Resorts has recently partnered with the local administration of Kodaikanal to clean up the Konaikanal lake. The company has plans to enter into similar arrangements in other parts of the country.