




DESIGN CASE STUDY

	<h1>Ginger</h1> <p>Roots Corporation Limited - Indian Hotels Company Limited</p>
	<p>India's leading luxury hotel chain creates a unique entry-level model and redefines the value proposition within the sector</p>
	
<p>OVERVIEW</p>	
<p><i>Introduction</i></p>	
	<p>Launched in June 2004, the Smart Basics™ concept created a revolution in the world of Indian hospitality. A GenNext category of hotels, Ginger signifies simplicity, convenience, informality, style, warmth, modernity and affordability and addresses the needs of often-ignored and under-served segments. The concept was developed in association with renowned corporate strategy thinker, Dr C. K. Prahalad, and the hotels have been indigenously designed with Incubis Consultants and developed by the Indian Hotels Company Limited.</p>
<p><i>Key elements of GINGER's design strategy</i></p>	<p>To achieve its unique value proposition, Ginger hotels are closely designed around the needs of the smart traveller who seeks affordability without compromising style, comfort, hygiene and practicality. The core component of the design strategy is to constantly evaluate the aspirations of the emerging Indian and rapidly calibrate the design accordingly. The architecture for each new hotel follows principles of robust flexibility and modularity to achieve a very rapid time-to-market. The challenge is to achieve very aggressive cost targets without sacrificing sustainability, high durability and contextual response.</p>

<p><i>Innovation</i></p>	<p>Ginger hotels are built around a unique concept that provides facilities to meet the key needs of today's traveller, at surprisingly affordable rates. Ginger has created a new category in the domestic hospitality landscape, while giving a major fillip to Indian tourism and other ancillary industries. The primary objective behind the launch of these hotels is to provide a superior product offering and consistent experience to travellers, beyond the present offerings in the industry.</p>
<p><i>Meet the team</i></p>	<p>Incubis, is one of India's leading multi-disciplinary architecture and design firms with several Fortune 500 multinationals, small and medium enterprises as well as start-ups as clients. Some of the well-known Incubis' clients include, Whirlpool, WPP, Wal Mart-Bharti Retail, Unilever, Tata Group, Singer, Samsung, Nokia, Hero Honda, Hilton Hotels, GE, Essar, Emaar MGF, Bridgestone Tyres and Barista.</p> <p>Incubis clients value the unique 'Experience Design' process which brings together customer insight, local knowledge and innovative zeal to create a wide range of built-forms, spaces, products and service offerings.</p> <p>Incubis was founded in 1995 by graduates of NID, IIT and TVB and has grown to a strength of over 55 Architects, Designers and Engineers based out of studios in New Delhi and Bangalore.</p>
<p><i>Company's history</i></p>	<p>Roots Corporation Limited (RCL) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL). Incorporated on December 24, 2003. RCL operates the first-of-its-kind category of Ginger Smart Basics™ hotels across the country.</p> <p>The first of the Smart Basics hotel was launched in Bangalore and was called indiOne. Having completed the test marketing of the concept and subsequent refinement of the hotel facilities and services, the Smart Basics™ concept is now being rolled-out across India. These hotels have been launched with a new name – Ginger hotels – in sync with the fresh, simple-yet-stylish and warm world of Smart Basics™.</p> <p>IHCL operates Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces, one of South Asia's largest and finest group of hotels. The company was incorporated on 1902 by the founder of the Tata Group, Mr. Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata and opened India's first luxury hotel, The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, Mumbai in 1903.</p> <p>A part of the Tata Group of companies, India's premier business house, Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces comprises 57 hotels in 40 locations across India with an additional 18 international hotels in the Maldives, Mauritius, Malaysia, Australia, UK, USA, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Africa, and the Middle East. Over the years, Taj has won international acclaim for its quality hotels and its excellence in dining, business facilities, interiors, and world-class, personalized service.</p> <p>In India, Taj is recognized as the premier hospitality provider, spanning the length and breadth of the country, and gracing important industrial towns and cities, beautiful beaches, historical and pilgrim centres, and wildlife destinations.</p>

EVOLUTION OF DESIGN AT GINGER	
<p><i>Design process evolution</i></p>	<p>Incubis created the initial concept for Ginger through a process rooted in user-centric industrial design, product development and systems thinking. In close coordination with the Client’s in-house project teams, all components, guest-amenities, construction systems, engineering services as well as the spatial inter-relationships associated with classical hotel design were re-evaluated and turned-around to achieve unprecedented levels of efficiency and optimisation. A specialist hotel design firm based in Glasgow, Young & Gault, was also brought on board by IHCL to guide the design refinement and concept validation process at Incubis.</p> <p>Collaborative design, benchmarking international models across the value-spectrum as well as going-through several iterations of creating 3D models using CAD and translating them into full-scale functional mock-ups were done before finalising the concept direction. Many of these full-scale mock-ups of rooms and other hotel-spaces were taken through comprehensive focus-group studies and guest-trials to deliver ‘first-time-right’ innovation with a high potential for success.</p>
<p><i>Organizational position & influence of design in Ginger</i></p>	<p>Right from inception, RCL established a direct channel of communication between its senior management and the design consultants, Incubis, so as to ensure that the company’s vision and understanding of the rapidly evolving competitive scenario is seamlessly translated into conceptual directions for the Ginger brand and its offerings.</p> <p>All touch-points and design details are closely monitored and guest feedback and technological advances are rapidly brought into the mainstream.</p> <p>Though the success and scalability of the concept is highly dependent on standardization, giving design a direct link to management facilitates streamlined approvals and implementation of new ideas as a constant and matter-of-course process.</p>
<p><i>Design capability building</i></p>	<p>Incubis was primarily brought on board for its understanding of the Indian market, capability to innovate within a structured framework and ability to create systems that deliver scalability rather than its prior experience within the hotel sector. However, at each stage of the initial design process, the Incubis team was mentored by management thinkers such as Dr C. K. Prahalad Mr. Krishna Kumar along with Business Heads, technical and project specialists from RCL/ IHCL. This set the foundation for a long-term and mutually beneficial design and development partnership.</p> <p>Mr. Ratan Tata, the group Chairman (and a qualified architect) has been personally involved in every stage of the project.</p> <p>Incubis stays deeply involved in all aspects of the roll-out, encompassing activities spanning: site-selection, creation of project-management systems, statutory approvals, site-specific detailing as well as concept evolution ensuring a high level of conceptual integrity, consistency in the design language and a sustained learning curve.</p>

	<p>Incubis maintains a dedicated architecture, engineering and design group for Ginger based out of its New Delhi studio. In addition to providing comprehensive roll-out support to the project, Incubis releases regular design updates and conceptual refresh ideas that keeps Ginger relevant, stylish and flexible enough to address emerging opportunities and architectural possibilities.</p>
<i>Market</i>	<p>Ginger is the clear leader and fastest growing chain in its category, with 14 operational properties set-up in a short span of 4 years and another 6 slated for launch in the next few months.</p> <p>Ginger has been able to respond effectively to the changing dynamics and economics of the Indian real estate sector and has set-in-place partnerships with the Indian Railways to re-fit and re-launch select 'Rail Yatri Nivas' properties as Ginger as well as co-locate with malls, commercial buildings and software parks in a wide range of situations and configurations.</p>
<i>Status</i>	<p>Ginger properties across the country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agartala Bangalore Bhubhaneswar Durgapur Goa Pune Puducherry Pantnagar New Delhi Nashik Haridwar Thiruvananthapuram Mysore Vadodara <p>The above would total approx 8,40,000 sq. ft. in area</p>

<p>THE GINGER DESIGN PROCESS</p>	
	<p>The design process at Incubis for the creation of new Ginger properties is structured as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Understanding the site situation, climate, topographical features and local market dynamics (in terms of skew towards business, leisure / pilgrimage or a combination of these) >Define whether the design adaptation would be a green-field / stand-alone site or a part of an existing building >Checking the viability of the design adaptation based on locally applicable statutory norms and preparation of a few concept-alternatives for presentation to the RCL >Design approval – Any departure / transition from the standardized model based on guest feedback, learnings from other operational sites as well as due to local conditions is discussed and finalised at this stage >Architectural design including site-specific 3D simulations, detailed drawings on CAD, brand-identity / signage feature adaptation. Concurrent engineering (structure and MEP) >Release of consolidated site-specific, detailed-drawings for architectural and all interior / engineering components of the project in electronic and physical formats >Design coordination and periodic monitoring during implementation at the site <p>The above process is followed concurrently for the several sites that may be in various stages of design by the Incubis team. The process is closely monitored to ensure consistency. Robust detailing and thorough data sets ensure minimal information gaps and potential rework at site. The entire design and implementation process rarely exceeds a year.</p>
<p>GINGER CASE STUDY</p>	
<p><i>The business requirement</i></p>	<p>To create an internationally competitive, highly differentiated and value-driven limited-service hotel format that breaks all preconceived notions about the budget segment in the mind of the customer...a uniquely configured architectural statement that defines a clear niche of its own and ensures no comparison with other products in the segment.</p>

<p><i>Discover</i></p>	<p>The entire design was led by developing a clear understanding of the guest profile, mind space & expectations. These qualitative variables were initially mapped as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Aspirational Indian > Business traveller / Small family / Budget tourist > Probably flies Economy Class or travels 2T/AC rail > Familiar yet dissatisfied with existing 2-3 star value proposition > Seeking a warm, inviting place that refreshes in comfort > Not too lifestyle driven yet can discern ambience, style and service that connotes an international positioning > Superior hygiene standards, Crisp-clean bed sheets a spacious bathroom / toilet, Cable TV and space to work a Laptop in comfort are essential pre-requisites > Would like a complementary breakfast > Not very likely to have other meals within the hotel > Most likely to spend daylight hours out of the room / hotel
<p><i>Define</i></p>	<p>The broad contours of the envisaged offering were defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Elegant yet Accessible > Distinctive yet Understated > Contemporary in Style > Classy yet Inclusive > Simple – ‘More for Less’ > Compact yet Airy > Broad based appeal > Oneness with Nature <p>From a delivery-perspective the design would need to offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >A World class and future oriented experience >A fundamentally new and refreshing concept >Refined aesthetics fused with extreme affordability >Spaces that facilitate work and relaxation >Re-shape customer expectations >Seamless transition between public and private spaces >A new experience for the Indian traveller <p>At the initial design stage the following operational parameters we re also identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Facilitate smooth work-flows and rapid room turnarounds >Adaptability in layout to facilitate operational flexibility >Materials and processes that bring down life-cycle costs >Unique but scalable and encapsulating robust flexibility >High maintainability >Low environmental impact <p>Parameters such as, number, configuration and types of rooms, guest amenities (business/ internet areas, gym, Wi-Fi, LCD TV, etc.) as well as Back-Of-House spaces were also defined in detail in the form of area break-ups and accompanied with modular layout options and detailed time-cost targets for prototyping and expansion</p>

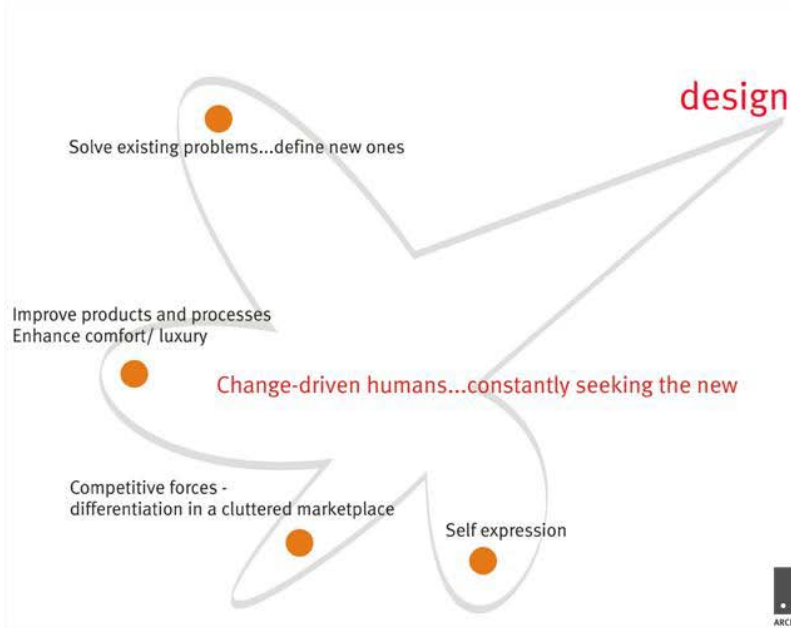
Deliver

The first Ginger/indiOne at Bangalore was in-effect a full-scale prototype created to test all design ideas within a live situation. This functional prototype became the launch pad for the concept from which all subsequent design iterations continue to evolve and improve. The rapid pace of Ginger's expansion across far-flung and diverse parts of India, the enthusiastic market response and high levels of occupancy validate RCLs commitment to design thinking and to creating a corporate DNA of 'learning to change' and 'changing with the customer'.

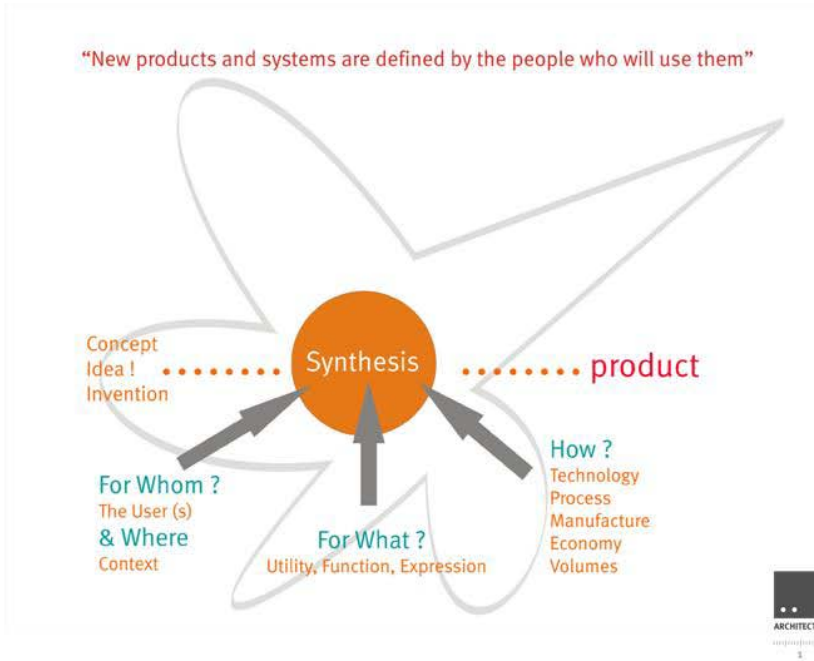
The constant evolution and improvement of Ginger is based on the following tenets:

- >Create a a brighter, fresher and more inviting place each time
- >Offer a sense of renewal within a familiar place
- >Provide compelling and memorable experiences
- >Reward regular guests with an upgraded experience
- >Integrate green-design principles to deliver consistent life-cycle savings
- >Explore innovative geometries to enhance perception of space without compromising efficiency and scalability
- >Use new technology to deliver comfort and savings wherever possible
- >Enhance public areas and amenities

Why create?



The design process



EVALUATION

The Indian market is in a very interesting phase with tremendous (yet often uneven and sometimes uncertain) growth happening at a breakneck pace. In this scenario, the guest profile is a moving-target and only through continually tracking changing-perceptions, changing-needs and changing-expectations can Ginger stay relevant and thrive. Keeping design thinking and (articulated as well as unarticulated) guest concerns at the centre of this challenging environment is what drives RCL in its endeavour to deliver consistent product excellence and stay the relentless innovator in the category its helped create.

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