

## Thomas Cook owned Sterling Holidays undergoes brand revamp to woo young travellers

New Delhi: Sterling Holiday Resorts Ltd, a leisure hospitality company, Thursday unveiled a new brand identity targeting young travellers as it tries to deliver experience-based holidays.

Created by advertising agency Law & Kenneth Saachi and Saachi, its new logo has company's name Sterling in royal purple written in a free flowing handwritten font against a white background. It is supported by a dynamic 'Swirl' mnemonic, accompanied by the new tagline 'Holiday Differently'. The older logo unveiled in 2011 was a bright yellow with graphics, depicting the elements of nature surrounding the resort with the tagline 'It's a wonderful world'.



"We have moved away from the typical greens and yellows associated with a travel firm to a more warm palette in our logo. The objective is to appeal to a young set of travellers who are looking for rich experiences while holidaying. We want Sterling Holidays to be seen as a younger brand therefore we have decided to place a lot of emphasis on digital and social media in brand marketing," said Ramesh Ramanathan, managing director, Sterling Holiday Resorts Ltd.

The Chennai-based company currently operates 33 resorts in destinations like Goa, Gangtok, Corbett and Darjeeling, among others.

"We are now going to focus on experience based holidays. Guests staying at our Darjeeling resort can experience our tea trail or those staying at Sariska can spend the night star gazing," said Ramanathan.

Sterling has also acquired an adventure holiday company called Nature Trails, with five nature-based locations in proximity to Mumbai and Pune.

Over the next two months, the company will be releasing over 100 small videos of various destinations promoting it across platforms like social media. The company will also unveil 'Raja Rex', a new mascot who will target young kids helping them discover new activities and experiences.

Sterling Holidays will be spending around Rs 50 crore in brand marketing to increase resort memberships.

The company has set a target of doubling its current room capacity from 2,200 to 4,500 in five years taking the property count to 50. The company is opening new properties at destinations like Mount Abu, Panchagni and Coorg. It will also start providing holiday insurance for all its customers and guests both for the travel and holiday period from the first quarter of 2018. Sterling, which was taken over by Thomas Cook in 2014, posted Rs 190 crore in revenues last year. Its target is to triple its revenues by 2022.

According to Sharvan Gupta, executive director—leisure business, FCM Travel Solutions, holidaying is becoming experience driven where travellers want to not just see the tourist spots but also want experiences which are unique. "It could be Northern lights, New Year fireworks or eating at a Michelin star restaurant which creates a memory. Social media has also led to travellers demanding experiences which are not only share worthy but also different from what their friends or neighbours have experienced. Therefore, for each hospitality player it has become essential to go beyond accommodations and provide experiences. I also feel that in India there's still a large section of travellers who prefer to stay in a hotel or resort instead of an Airbnb," he added.