

Sukhdev Toor,
President and CEO
of Manga Hotels



Manga Hotels

Celebrating 20 Years of Perseverance and Innovation

Sukhdev Toor has never let anything stand in the way of progress. The president and CEO of Manga Hotels is the personification of how perseverance, good judgment and a keen eye for upcoming trends can translate into a multi-million dollar hotel property empire. Over the past 20 years, Toor has purchased, owned and/or sold 30 properties totaling 4,000 rooms.

It all started with a calculated business risk that many met with skepticism. In 1987 Toor, a new immigrant to Canada from India with a degree in civil engineering, decided to invest \$500,000 in a 26-unit motel property in St. Catharines, Ontario. It was a bold move for someone who came to Canada in 1983 with little money and no job prospects. While studying to upgrade his qualifications, Toor tried to make ends meet by working odd jobs he had taken on farms and factories and driving taxis.



With a desire for success, Toor gathered his savings and went looking for opportunity in the hospitality business, an intrepid venture for someone with no prior experience with hotels. "I'd never been in the hotel business or even stayed in a hotel," he says. "But I was very determined to be successful in Canada and decided to take the equity I had built up and invest in a business."

Within a year, he sold the thriving motel

property at a profit and cast his eyes westward. "I could see it would be harder to find investment opportunities in Ontario and barriers to entry were very high at the time, so I decided to look elsewhere," he explains.

Intent to find new opportunities, he bought a ticket to British Columbia and found the Royal Victorian Inn, an 80-unit waterfront property. It proved to be the right move the minute he put in his offer he says. "Before we closed the owner offered me an extra \$200,000 to back out. I knew right then that my instinct had paid off."

Toor quickly followed suit with three additional property acquisitions on Vancouver Island in Nanaimo, Courtenay and Comox. "At the time franchising was not common and a majority of properties were independently owned. That of course has changed a lot since then."

With four properties in his portfolio, Toor realized he had maximized his investment opportunities in the region. So he was faced with two choices: Vancouver or elsewhere in Canada.

Keeping ahead of the curve and realizing that franchising would be the appropriate next move for the business Toor started looking at Ontario again, which in 1993 provided better prospects than in 1987. He and his family moved back east and by 1997 he had acquired 10 hotels in the southwestern Ontario region: three Howard Johnson's, six Comfort Inns and a Travelodge.

Never one to settle for the status quo, Toor's next strategic move was to undertake hotel construction. He combined his management

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expertise and engineering skills to build hotels, rather than just buy and run existing properties. Manga's mark was made in the construction of the first Hampton Inn by Hilton property in Canada and Toor is now known as one of the country's top hotel developers.

Since then Manga's portfolio has expanded to nine hotels with five under construction under the Hilton Hotel Corp., Marriot Hotels and Resorts, InterContinental Hotel Group and Starwood brands. While a majority of projects are in Ontario, he has also secured a foothold in Buffalo, New York and in Atlantic Canada with a new Hilton Garden Inn and a Holiday Inn Express at the Halifax airport. "I wanted to diversify," he explains. "I also saw that Halifax was an under-served market and there had been no new builds for a long time. It seemed the perfect place to expand."

Moving beyond the simple science of building hotels, Toor is also concerned about the art of hospitality and is now entering the upscale hotel segment. Manga continues to be a versatile company that will now accommodate the select service niche with trendy, urban hotels. "There's a growing demand for quality hotel experiences. People are willing to pay for quality."

New projects on the Manga drawing board include Canada's first Aloft by Starwood and Element by Westin properties in Toronto. Plans are also in place for another Aloft property in Buffalo, as well as a new Courtyard by Marriot, a new Hampton Inn and Suites in Toronto, a Hilton Garden Inn at Pearson International Airport and a Holiday Inn and Suites in Halifax. He estimates

the company has 1,000 new rooms in the pipeline at the moment, with more to come.

Toor continues to push the envelope in quality hotel development in Canada and will be introducing the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified hotels in Canada, a Hilton Garden Inn property at Toronto Pearson Airport, and Aloft and Element by Westin on Front Street in Toronto. "This is the way of the future in the hotel business," he says. "As an industry that serves the public, it's our corporate duty to provide energy-efficient, sustainable and environmentally sound properties. While LEED certification does demand a premium from a cost standpoint, the payback is very strong"

With two decades of experience, Toor has noticed that "people are following us. That's when you know you've succeeded in the eyes of your peers." He has been recognized as the recipient of countless industry awards for his innovation and business success, including InterContinental Hotel Group Newcomer of the Year and Canadian Developer of the Year; as well as Hilton Hotels Builder of the Year awards.

But it's not all about business. Toor is actively involved in the community as well. He has volunteered both his and Manga's services to a vast array of national, provincial and local charities. He has supported the Heart & Stroke Foundation and Goodwill Industries International. He's also one of the main sponsors at events for the William Osler Health Centre, which operates hospitals in Mississauga, Brampton and Toronto.

A man with a passion for motivating younger generations, Toor has served as "Principal for a day" at a high school in the Peel Region. He also demonstrates his commitment to the community by regularly sponsoring sports teams and various sports events in the Greater Toronto Area.

At the age of 49, Toor has come a long way from scraping together savings to building the best quality hotels in Canada building a reputation as an astute businessman. He still finds time to get in a few rounds of golf and travel to various destinations around the world with his family.

When asked how he has prevailed in a highly competitive business that has seen as many failures as it has successes, Toor says it boils down to the ability to adapt to changing times.

"You need desire to succeed, a good instinct for new market opportunities, the ability to make and execute a plan and staying focused despite any hurdles that come your way. It's not rocket science – it's about knowing how to work with markets – and more importantly – how to work with people."

Toor is far from finished his work in the industry and is planning the next 20 years. If Manga is able to continue its path of growth and innovation, it would not be surprising to see the company's assets at \$1 billion in the next five to seven years. "There's more room to grow and I'm certainly not ready to retire yet. There's so much more that can be done." ■



LEED Certified Hilton Garden Inn, Toronto Airport. Opening Nov. '08

1987	1988	1989	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Kirkwood Motel. St. Catharines, Ontario	Royal Victorian. Victoria, B.C.	Highlander Motor Inn. Nanaimo, B.C.	Sleepy Hollow Inn. Courtney, B.C. Port-o-Call. Nanaimo, B.C.	Port Augusta Motel. Comex, B.C.	Howard Johnson Hotel. St. Catharines, Ont.	Howard Johnson Hotel. Kitchener, Ont.	Comfort Inn. Scarborough, Ont.	Travelodge. Owen Sound, Ont. Comfort Inn (3) Fort Erie, Ont. St. Thomas, Ont. Welland, Ont.	Hampton Inn. Mississauga, Ont. (New Construction)	Holiday Inn. Buffalo, N.Y. Comfort Inn, Buffalo, N.Y. Hampton Inn QEW. Mississauga, Ont. (New Construction)	Hampton Inn Toronto Airport (New Construction)	Holiday Inn & Suites. London, Ont. (New Construction)	Residence Inn. Whitby, Ont. (New Construction)	Hilton Garden Inn. Halifax Airport, Nova Scotia (New Construction)	Homewood Suites. London, Ont. (New Construction)	Holiday Inn Express. Halifax, Nova Scotia (New Construction)	Aloft by W. Downtown Toronto. (New Construction)	Courtyard by Marriott. Mississauga, Ont. (New Construction)	Hampton Inn & Suites. Downtown Toronto. (New Construction)
					Rodeway Inn. Niagara Falls, Ont. Super 8 Motel. Cambridge, Ont.	Howard Johnson Inn. Mississauga, Ont.										Hilton Garden Inn. Toronto Airport (New Construction)	Element by Westin. Downtown Toronto. (New Construction)	Aloft by W. Buffalo Airport, N.Y. (New Construction)	