



**4**  
ACHIEVERS  
OF THE  
NORTH

01-06



**KARAN DHILLON,**  
**PRINCIPAL,**  
THE DHILLON GROUP,  
CHANDIGARH



## AIMING FOR THE SKY

*He might be young, but with his unparalleled business acumen and vision, Karan Dhillon, principal, Dhillon Group, is surely a force to reckon with. He aims to diversify into real estate, hospitality and healthcare while consolidating his PepsiCo beverages business*







**A** national-level shooter and the scion of one of the biggest business groups of the region, the Dhillon Group, young and vivacious Karan Dhillon has now set the target of multiplying the business conglomerate's turnover by over four times in the next five to seven years. The Rs 600-crore Dhillon Group is already a well-established name in the field of beverages, liquor, entertainment, real estate, construction, IT, etc. It also has the distinction of achieving the many firsts in the country. The Group is responsible for bringing PepsiCo into India and as a result was the first and largest franchisee of PepsiCola Beverages International, USA, in the country, engaged in the manufacturing and bottling of soft drinks. The Group was awarded the PepsiCo Worldwide Bottler of the Year award by former US President George Bush and former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The Group also has the distinction of being the only joint venture partner with Seagram's in the entire world, a global alcohol and entertainment giant.

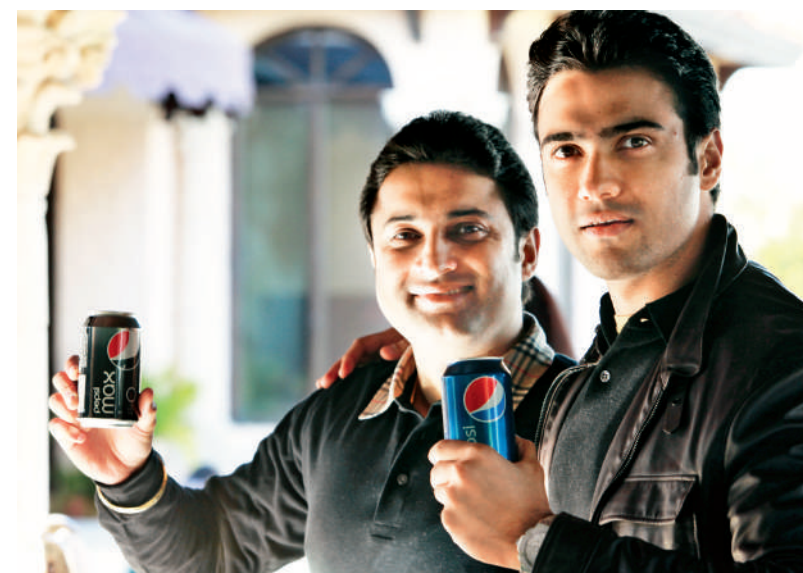
The 31-year-old tall and handsome youth of friendly disposition, Karan now sees the

future growth in the real estate sector while also consolidating the beverages business.

### Following his father's footsteps

Born on September 1, 1982, Karan passed his matriculation from St John's School, Chandigarh, in 1998. He then went to the US where he completed his high school education from St Stephens Episcopal School in Austin, Texas, and later went on to get a degree in business administration from the University of Texas in 2003. Keen to take advantage of the highly optimistic business environment that existed back home in India at that time, Karan completed the 4-year-degree course in just two-and-a-half years and dived headlong into the family business. Before joining the family business, he did his internship with Dell Computers in Texas and then worked as a sales trainee with PepsiCo in Mumbai. Along with his elder brother Kanwar, they established the first multiplex of the region, Dhillon Complex-Fun Republic at Manimajra.

"We were the first in the northern region to start a fully functional mall and multiplex. Though people expressed apprehensions at that time, it proved a right decision because we got the first-mover advantage. To run a



*"We empower our staff. This gives them a sense of ownership and brings the best out of them. We recognise that the strength of our organisation lies around the people, who are our most valuable asset."*





business it’s imperative to have the entrepreneurial skills, vision for future, positive outlook and the right approach to execution, which we have learnt from our father, Kewal Dhillon,” stresses Karan.

### Realty growth

Karan says the Dhillon Group is now setting up Silicon Square, an integrated commercial-residential development project located in Zirakpur on the New Delhi-Chandigarh national highway, next to the upcoming international airport. The various components of Silicon Square include India’s largest multiplex-shopping mall, a 5-star luxury hotel, super-specialty hospital, a convention centre, an exhibition hall, office towers, banqueting facilities, luxury residences, etc. “The vision behind the project is to create a complete entertainment destination under one roof for the whole family. What Fun Republic did for the development and transformation of Manimajra, Silicon Square will do the same for Zirakpur by making it the next Gurgaon,” says Karan.

Coming up with another first, the Group is building a luxury housing project, Burj One, in Zirakpur. “Demand for luxury housing is

driven by affluent well-travelled Indians and NRIs who aspire for the cosmopolitan lifestyles they have seen abroad and live in stylish and aesthetically done interiors, which cater to their sensibilities. Burj One is designed with the finest attention to detail to fulfill the needs of a modern lifestyle,” says Karan.

The Group has also acquired land on Patiala highway at Banur and will set up a retail and housing project there. “We wanted to have our presence on all entry-exit corridors of the Tricity region. We had our presence on Chandigarh-Shimla road through Dhillon Complex-Fun Republic and later we established Silicon Square on Chandigarh-Delhi Highway. We were missing our presence on Chandigarh-Punjab link, which we have fulfilled with the Banur project,” notes Karan.

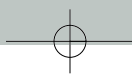
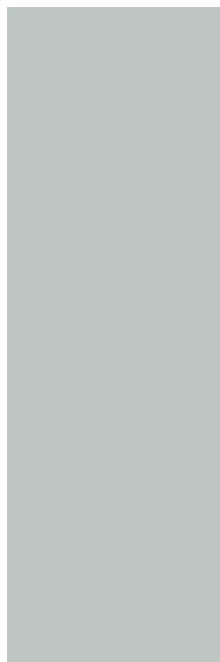
### Success mantra

Sharing the secret of his success, Karan says, “It’s the five keys of success which our father shared with us by writing it on our bedrooms’ wall when we were growing up—hard work, dedication, honesty, will power and sincerity. This is engraved in our DNA as we used to

## DHILLON GROUP

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- The State of Utah, USA, had appointed the Chairman of Dhillon Group, as its first Trade Counselor to India in 1999. This is the first time that an American state has appointed a trade representative to India to directly promote bilateral trade.
- The Chairman, Kewal Dhillon, is among the seven PepsiCo bottlers worldwide, who were honoured with the prestigious 'Donald M Kendall Bottler of the Year' award for the year 1997 by former President of the United States of America, George Bush, and former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.
- The Group also had the distinction of being the only joint venture partner with Seagram's, a global alcohol and entertainment giant.





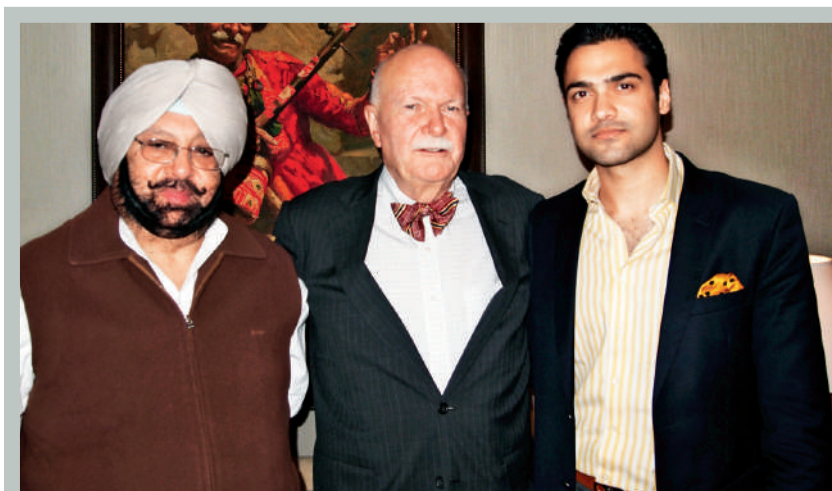
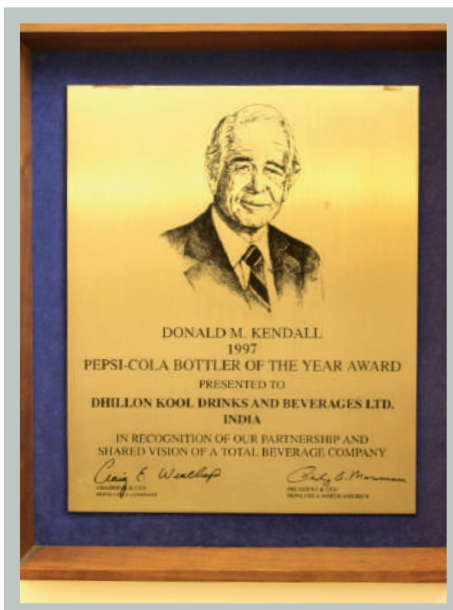




## Private moments

In his spare time, Karan hits the gym, goes out to see a movie, or spends time with his family. "I'm a big movie buff and take time out, whenever possible, to watch the latest movie," he says. And what works as the best stress-buster for Karan are the smiles of his little niece Jannat (4-and-a-half-year old) and nephew Kaaraj (9-month old). "These are my little bundles of joy. I forget all my work stresses once I see their faces. They are the little angels who have brought loads of happiness in my life," says Karan.

Travel and skeet sport shooting are his favourite activities, but he doesn't get much time. So, he does the next best thing. He clubs his sports and business tours. "My shooting coaches are in Italy and Cyprus. So during my business trips to Europe, I do take out some time to practice with my coaches there," he reveals.







wake up and read this message every morning.”

He also gives the credit of his success to his employees. “Our people are our biggest assets. We have people who have been working for the Dhillon Group even before Kanwar and I joined the company. We empower our staff. This gives them a sense of ownership and brings the best out of them. We recognise that the strength of our organisation lies around the people, who are our most valuable asset,” says Karan. He says they have developed a well-mechanised system in the company, which does not require their day-to-day interference. Further, the Group is debt free, which helps it grow on a solid foundation. The best example of Karan empowering his people comes from his visiting card, which mentions him ‘Principal’. When prodded about it, Karan discloses that he see himself as the principal promoter of the company rather than the owner. “Rather than a family-run business, we operate as a streamlined organisation, professionally run and managed by a competent team. This has been learnt from our partnerships with Fortune 50 companies such as PepsiCo and Seagram’s over the last 25 years,” shares Karan.

### Rich tradition

Karan’s father Kewal Dhillon, chairman, Dhillon Group, is among the seven PepsiCo bottlers

Smart, savvy and intelligent, Karan Dhillon, the young scion of the Dhillon Group, has a vision for future, a positive outlook and the right approach to achieve his aim. While his father’s grand vision guides him, he considers his staff his biggest asset.



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Karan’s mother Manjit Dhillon has a royal lineage. Her grandfather was the prime minister of the erstwhile State of Patiala during the regime of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh.

With Karan sharing the business responsibilities with his elder brother Kanwar Dhillon, Kewal Dhillon has now fully engaged himself in his social and political commitments. A second-time MLA from Barnala and PPCC vice-president, Dhillon Sr is given the credit for getting the district status for his hometown of Barnala. He is also carrying on several philanthropic activities in Barnala. Karan’s sister-in-law Nasheyn Dhillon and mother Manjit Dhillon oversee the charitable and philanthropic activities. Their Phillaur-based Dhillon Kool Drinks & Beverages Private Ltd was also given the highest tax payer award among the large scale manufacturers for the year 2012-2013 with an amount of Rs 15.96 crore paid by it to the excise & taxation department, Punjab.