

From \$20 in his Pocket to Thriving Hotelier

Rushi Vaidya's Entrepreneurial Journey

When Rushi Vaidya stepped off a Greyhound bus in Baltimore in 2010 with just \$20 in his pocket, he had no idea he was beginning a journey that would take him from those humble beginnings to become a thriving hotelier. "I felt really alone and was scared — really scared," he recalls. What followed is a testament to Rushi's resilience, vision, and relentless entrepreneurial drive.

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Freshly arrived from India, Rushi took the first job he could find. "I was talking to a couple of hotel owners," he recalls. "I had to take whatever position [was] available at that point." That position was with housekeeping. "I remember my first week, going to rooms, picking up trash." But when the night auditor quit, Rushi seized the opportunity, quickly proving himself in that position and rising through the ranks to front desk manager and eventually assistant general manager.

By 2016, he was ready to take a leap and lease a hotel of his own. That leap came with challenges, but Rushi wasn't alone. "Don't worry, we'll make it," his wife told him — and they did. That first success gave him the confidence to go further. When he spotted a nearby property for sale — the [Quality Inn Waynesboro - Skyline Drive](#) in Waynesboro, Virginia — and saw untapped potential, he didn't hesitate. He bought it, and with hard work, guidance from his Choice Hotels area director, and an unyielding focus on what he describes as the "small, small things" that matter most to guests, Rushi dramatically improved the hotel's performance.

Rushi's entrepreneurial instincts continued to guide him. He made a bold decision for his next property, walking away from plans to convert a hotel in Verona, Virginia, to a non-Choice brand, despite having already paid the application and franchise fees. The decision paid off: revenue at that new property increased substantially after Rushi reopened it as the [Quality Inn Verona – Staunton North](#) in 2019, and the hotel went on to win multiple Choice Hotels Gold Awards, consistently placing it in the top 10% of all Quality Inn properties, based on guest satisfaction scores.

"As a hotelier, I always felt supported, and I know that they're there for me," Rushi says of Choice Hotels. "And following the process, I have always seen great results."

He didn't stop with his second Quality Inn. In 2023, Rushi added a [Suburban Studios](#) to the Verona site, making it a "dual-brand property." And later that same year, he took another bold step, adding the [Clarion Pointe Staunton East](#) in Staunton, Virginia, the latest addition to his growing portfolio. From the café and marketplace to the distinctive murals and interior decoration, he believes it's still those "small, small things" that make a big difference with customers. "The unique touch it has — guests love it," he says proudly.

Rushi's journey is a powerful reminder that entrepreneurship isn't about where you start — it's about how far you're willing to go. With determination, attention to detail, and a deep understanding of what guests value, he's built more than a business. He's built a legacy.