

# LICENSEE LEADERS



**MAR 2024**

**RAVINDER SINGH**

# Community

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission's (TLC) Licensee Leaders is a media program that highlights the stories and voices of TLC's community of drivers and other licensees, amplifying leadership in accessibility, customer service, and safe driving.



Licensee Leaders' monthly program engages the TLC community through long and short-form features. The series also recognizes citywide and national awareness months while celebrating the viewpoints of our licensees as they relate to culture and heritage, industry, and safety.

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TAXI



## Industry Spotlight

# Ravinder Singh

In a city as innovative as its inhabitants, New Delhi native Ravinder Singh is a seasoned taxi driver—licensed since 2006—turned e-hail provider. Leveraging industry experience to form e-hail app GYTA Technologies, Singh aims to help bridge the gap between the iconic yellow and green taxis and modern app technology.

**TLC: Where are you from and what brought you to New York?**

**RS:** I'm originally from New Delhi, India. I moved to New York in November of 2005. My mother and family were here since 1996. I had visited a few times before, and finally decided to move here in 1997, which was a year after my mother passed. Everyone in the world likes New York.

And I like how people come here from all over. You can meet people from Europe, Japan, everywhere. When I used to pick up passengers from the airport, they would ask, "How can I stay here? How can I apply for my green card?" I really think there's a lot of opportunity here. And there is a lot for the next generation. I thank God for sending me here.

**TLC: When did you become licensed by the TLC and what led to that choice?**

**RS:** I got licensed not long after I moved here. I passed the test and received my license around the end of 2006. To be a part of the taxi industry is a very good thing when you're starting out here. You can earn well, and it's good work. I initially started to lease a medallion

in 2007. Eventually, I asked the garage that I was leasing from how I could buy the medallion. I bought it in 2008 at a purchase price of \$430,000. From there, my medallion mortgage was less than the lease, around \$2,500.

**TLC: Have you had memorable passengers over the years?**

**RS:** I had a good time as a driver in the taxi business. I've picked up hails that include a Supreme Court justice, veterans, and Jim Carrey. Jim Carrey was very nice and gave me an autograph. Another passenger was a World War II veteran who used to fly a fighter jet.

He told me about how some of his fellow soldiers did not return home from the war and how that inspires him to live each day to the fullest.



**NEW YORKERS STILL LIKE METERED CABS, SO IT'S IMPORTANT TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO THEM.**

**[THEY] LIKE CONSISTENT PRICES AND CLEAR FARES.**





*Singh demonstrates how his E-Hail app works for drivers and passengers*

**TLC: Why did you create your own e-hail app?**

**RS:** I am inspired by what changed in the industry. Many people prefer using apps now, and that's because they prefer to book their trips in advance. They want to be able to walk right out and directly into a taxi. And if the weather is rainy or windy, people might feel more comfortable booking the trip in advance.

GYTA stands for "Green Yellow Taxi App." Around the taxi and for-hire vehicle stands, I would see that for-hire vehicles were constantly receiving passengers, whereas the taxi lines would be moving more slowly. I also saw passengers come right out of buildings and rather than getting directly into a taxi, they'd walk straight into a for-hire vehicle. This made me want to create something similar for taxi drivers.

I knew that launching the app would be a great challenge. I had to overcome a number of hurdles. I made sure to follow all technical and legal requirements. Whereas before we were focused on fully developing the app, now we are focused on promoting it.

Some promotion so far is conducted in-person. I go to the airports and speak with drivers and passengers about the app. I'll explain how to use it, what the pick-up process looks like, and so far, we've received great feedback.

**TLC: What are your goals for the app?**

**RS:** New Yorkers still like metered cabs, so it's important to provide access to them. New Yorkers like consistent prices and clear fares that aren't confusing to them. In a way, it's still a growing industry.

There are no surge prices and no cancellation fees. Participating in the app, by signing up as a driver or passenger, gives directly to the industry because the app is free and does not charge any fees.

I think that once people see how easy it is for them to use this app, it will increase demand. I want to provide excellent service to passengers and to expand on that service. Step by step, we are going to go forward.

*This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.*

# ¡EN ESPAÑOL!



## Ravinder Singh

**Introducción:** En una ciudad tan innovadora como sus habitantes, Ravinder Singh, nativo de Nueva Delhi y taxista amarillo experto, se convirtió en proveedor de E-Hail. Singh ha aprovechado su experiencia en la industria para crear la aplicación de E-Hail, GYTA Technologies, y desea unir la brecha entre la iconicidad de los taxis amarillos y verdes de la ciudad de Nueva York y la tecnología moderna de las aplicaciones. Al reunirse con la TLC en Manhattan, Singh nos cuenta lo que le encanta de la ciudad de Nueva York, lo que se necesita para lanzar una aplicación de E-Hail y lo que opina sobre el futuro de la industria de taxis.

### Destacado de la Industria

## Operador-Propietario de E-Hail, GYTA Technologies

**TLC: Explíquenos un poco más sobre el proceso. ¿Qué hace falta para ser un proveedor autorizado de E-Hail?**

**RS:** La primera meta fue obtener la licencia de la TLC. Tuve la idea por primera vez en el 2016, pero comencé a considerarla más seriamente en el 2017. A partir de ahí, envié un correo electrónico al Comisionado de la TLC en ese entonces para entender los requisitos para iniciar una aplicación y licenciarla. Rápidamente me di cuenta de que había muchas restricciones. Una de ellas estaba relacionada con el diseño y la interfaz de la app. En el 2018, me puse en contacto con otra persona de la TLC que podía asesorarme sobre los requisitos tecnológicos. Me enteré de que había más requisitos relacionados con la interfaz. Estaba trabajando con una empresa en Nueva York para empezar a desarrollar la app, y luego con otra en la India con quien completé el proceso.

Me aseguré de cumplir todos los requisitos técnicos y legales. En general, poner en marcha una aplicación de E-hail conlleva retos. Antes nos centrábamos en el desarrollo total de la aplicación, pero ahora el enfoque es

promocionarla. Hasta ahora, parte de la promoción se hace en persona. Voy a los aeropuertos y hablo con conductores y pasajeros sobre la aplicación. Les explico cómo usarla, cómo es el proceso de recogida, y hasta ahora hemos recibido excelentes comentarios.

Quería crear algo para que los taxis amarillos y verdes conecten con los pasajeros. El pasajero sólo paga la tarifa de taxímetro. No hay otras tarifas ni cargos. Tanto los taxis amarillos como los verdes trabajan con GYTA.

**TLC: ¿Cómo ve el futuro de la aplicación y de la industria de taxis en la ciudad de Nueva York?**

**RS:** Creo que cuando la gente vea lo fácil que es utilizar esta aplicación, la demanda aumentará. También me gustaría ver más medallones en la calle. El taxi amarillo es un ícono de la ciudad de Nueva York.

Quiero ofrecer un excelente servicio a los pasajeros y ampliar ese servicio. Por ejemplo, veo que en ciertas épocas del año, como los festivales, hay mayor demanda de vehículos más grandes con mayor capacidad de personas. Me gustaría ver taxis amarillos que puedan satisfacer esa demanda. Ha habido una gran respuesta a los vehículos de siete asientos. Si la TLC aprueba vehículos aún más grandes, los añadiríamos.

Paso a paso, iremos avanzando.

THANK YOU

WONDER WHEEL

FREE FIREWORKS!  
RIGHT ON THE BOARDWALK

WELCOME  
TO  
DENO'S  
THRILLS CHILLS  
TIME FOR FUN!

POOK-A-RAMA

RIDES

Weekends April, May,  
Open 7 days a week Memorial Day thru Labor Day