
UNIT 01: INTRODUCTION TO HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Structure

- 1.1 Objective
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Hospitality Industry
- 1.4 Classification of Hotels
 - 1.4.1 Star
 - 1.4.2 Location
 - 1.4.3 Clientele
 - 1.4.4 Length of Stay
 - 1.4.5 Size
 - 1.4.6 Plan
 - 1.4.7 Classification
 - 1.4.8 Others
- 1.5 Summary
- 1.6 Check your progress

1.1 Objective

Learner should be able to convey the feelings of welcome to the guest by following traditional and conventional practices and identify the various traditional ways of hospitality done in Hospitality market and Accommodations sector, and find out the origin for the growth and development. And also find out the needs of the guest and accordingly offer them to achieve guest satisfaction in a professional and efficient ways of service.

1.2 Introduction

For many, the hospitality industry holds a certain glamour and sophistication. This is partly due to the image most hotels choose, refine, and project to the public. Much of this image is created through architecture and design. Yet a building is really only bricks, mortar, steel, glass and furnishing. The property's architecture and style may be important in setting the theme, but other factors are also important in differentiating one hotel from another. These factors can include the property location, variety and quality of food service, special features and amenities, and perhaps most important, a staff that puts all of this together with service to create the overall image and competitive position.

Front office personnel are literally on the front line in creating that image. Reservations agents are often the first to have contact with the guest, while front desk agents, Concierges, bell attendants, and door attendants are among the first needed to satisfy guest needs make front office work interesting and

rewarding. And since no two guest, two hotels, or – for that matter – two days are even the same, front office work can't help but be exciting and challenging.

This chapter will outline some basics about the hospitality industry, as well as show how hotels can be classified by size, market, level of service, and ownership.

1.3 Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry is part of a larger enterprise known as the travel and tourism industry. The travel and tourism industry is vast group of businesses with one goal in common: providing necessary or desired products and services to travelers.

Hospitality can be termed as a deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and the public i.e., the business of making and keeping friends, and promoting an atmosphere of better understanding. As per the Oxford Dictionary Hospitality is defined as: 'Reception and entertainment of guest, visitors or strangers with liberality and goodwill.' The word hospitality is derived from the Latin word "Hospitalitas"

The travel and tourism industry can be segregated into five main parts and further it shows the various sub components of each part. The hospitality industry consist of lodging and food and beverage operations – plus institutional food and beverage services which do not cater to the traveling public. Lodging operations stand apart from other travel and tourism businesses since they offer overnight accommodations to their guests. Many lodging properties provide food and beverage service, recreational activities and more.

1.4 Classification of Hotels

Hotel can be classified in various ways depending upon its size, location, clientele, length of stay, characteristics, etc. The reason for classifying the hotels is more than one. A person while making a booking must know from the name of the hotel about its location, rate, amenities, etc. offered by the hotel A hotel may fall in one or more then one of the categories mentioned below. The hotels can be classified in the following ways.

- 1.Star Classification
- 2.Classification on the basis of location of hotel
- 3.Classification on the basis of clientele
- 4.Classification on the basis of length of guest stay
- 5.Classification on the basis of size
- 6.Classification on the basis of plan
7. Classification on the basis of ownership & affiliation
- 8.Other types of hotels.

1.4.1Star Classification

This is a customary **Akk** days for hotels to get themselves graded. The star

grading is given depending upon the amenities, the hotel is providing or will be providing. Just by knowing the grading of the hotel the guest can come to know about the facilities, comforts, etc. the hotel is offering and can even have a rough idea that how much will be the tariff. In India hotels are classified by HRACC and are graded from one to five-star and five-star deluxe and heritage hotels. Like this in other countries also hotels are graded but these are not awarded stars. In Europe the Automobile Association inspects the hotels and offer AA grade to the best of the hotel 'AA Rosette' is offered to the restaurant owners or to the restaurant/food of the hotels. If three Rosettes are awarded to the restaurant that means the food served is of the best standard. Two Rosettes and one Rosette is allotted to the restaurant/food of the less standard comparatively.

In some European countries the hotels are also graded as deluxe, first class, second class, third class, fourth class also and yet some other countries grade as deluxe, first class, middle class, moderate class and fifth grade hotels.

No matter what ever system of grading a country may adopt but the motive is that a prospective guest or travel agent should understand, without seeing the hotel, that what standard of amenities hotel will be providing and approximately what will be the tariff. Hotels are an Integral part of a tourists visit to a place and the services offered by them make or mar a visit completely. With the aim of providing standardized, world class services to the tourists, the Department of Tourism, Government of India has a voluntary scheme for classification of full operational hotels in the following categories.

1.STAR HOTELS:

- a.FIVE-STAR DELUXE,**
- b.FIVE-STAR,**
- c.FOUR STAR,**
- d.THREE-STAR,**
- e.TWO STAR AND**
- f.ONE-STAR.**

2.HERITAGE HOTELS: HERITAGE GRAND, HERITAGE CLASSIC AND HERITAGE.

The Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC) inspect and assess the hotels based on facilities (amenities) and services offered. Project approvals are also given in all the above mentioned categories at the project implementation stage as well. Classified hotels/approved projects are eligible for various concessions and facilities that are announced by the Government from time to time besides, getting worldwide publicity through the India tourism Offices located in India and abroad.

For the classification and project approvals in the five star deluxe, five star, four star, and all the three heritage categories the application in a prescribed format with requisite fees should be send to

Member Secretary (HRACC) and Restaurants Division,
Department of Tourism, Government of India,
C- 1, Hutments, Dalhousie Road, New Delhi 110001

Whereas for the project approvals in the three star, two star and one star category the application in a prescribed format with requisite fees should be send to the Regional Director, India – tourism Office.

The general features facilities and services expected of hotels in the different star Categories are broadly described below.

Features, Facilities and Services of Five-Star Categories

Generally, the locality, including the immediate approach and environs should be suitable for a luxury hotel of this category, and there should be adequate parking space for cars. The front elevation, architectural features and general construction of the hotel building should have the distinctive qualities of a luxury hotel of this category. The hotels should have at least 25 lettable rooms, all with attached bathrooms with long baths or the most modern shower chambers. All public rooms and private rooms should be fully Air-conditioned and should be well equipped with superior quality carpets, curtains, furniture, fittings, etc. in good taste. There should be an adequate number of efficient lifts in the building of more than two stories (including the ground floor) with 24 hour service. It would be advisable to employ the services of professionally qualified and experienced interior designers of repute for this purpose. There should be a well-appointed lobby and ladies and gentlemen's cloakroom equipped with fittings and furniture of the highest standard.

The facilities provided in the five star hotels should be of high standard for example, a reception, cash and information counter should be attended by highly qualified, trained and professional personnel and conference facilities in the form of one or more of the conference rooms, banquet halls and private dining rooms. There should be a telephone in each room and telephone for the use of guests and visitors and provision for a radio or relayed music in each room. There should be a well equipped and well furnished dining room/restaurant on the premises and wherever permissible by law, there should be an elegant, well equipped bar/permit room. There should be book stall, a beauty parlor; a barber shop, recognized travel agency, money changing and safe deposit facilities, left luggage room, a florist and a shop for toilet requisites and medicines on the premises. The pantry and cold storage should be professionally designed to ensure efficiency of operation and should be well equipped.

Apart from the facilities the service offered should be of international level. The availability of Multi cuisine with their specialty restaurant should be of high quality standard. There should be professionally qualified, extremely trained, experienced, efficient and well-mannered staff in smart, with clean uniforms and the staff who is in direct contact with the guest should be well versed with English and local language. The supervisory and senior staff should be fluent with English language and at any moment of duty at least one person should be present with knowledge of foreign language. The services of the reception, information and telephones should be rounds o'clock. The hotel should also provide a valet service for laundering and dry cleaning of the guest cloths. The standard of Housekeeping department should of highest possible standard with sufficient supply of linen, blankets, towels, etc. which should be of the highest quality available at the hotel. Each guest room should be provided with a good

vacuum jug/thermos flask with ice cold, boiled drinking water except where centrally chilled purified drinking water is provided. Facilities for dancing, orchestra should be provided at the restaurant/dining room.

Features, Facilities and Services of Four-Star Categories

Generally the frontage, architectural features and general construction of the building should be distinctive and the locality including the immediate approach and the environment should be suitable for a hotel of this category. The hotels should have at least 25 lettable rooms all with attached bathrooms, and at least 50% of the bathrooms should have long baths or the most modern shower chambers, with 24 hours service of hot and cold running water. There should be adequate parking facilities for cars. All public rooms and private rooms should be fully air-conditioned and should be well furnished with carpets, curtains, furniture, fittings etc. in good taste. It would be advisable to employ the services of professionally qualified and experienced interior designer of repute for this purpose. There should be an adequate number of high-quality lifts in buildings of more than two stories (including the ground floor). There should be a well-furnished lobby and ladies and gentlemen cloak equipped with fittings of a standard befitting a hotel of this category.

The facilities such as reception, cash and information counter should be attended by skilled and experienced personnel. There should be a book stall, recognized travel agency, money changing and safe-deposit facilities and a left luggage room on the premises. There should be telephone in each room and telephone for the use of guest and visitors and provision for a radio or relayed music in each room. There should be a well-equipped, well-furnished and well-maintained dining room / restaurant on the premises and wherever permissible by law, there should be an elegant, well equipped bar / permit room. The kitchen, pantry, cold storage should be professionally designed to ensure efficiency of operation and should be well equipped.

A hotel should offer services of both international and Indian cuisine and food and beverage service should be of the highest standards. There should be professionally qualified, highly trained, experienced, efficient and courteous staff in smart, clean uniform and the staff coming in contact with the guest should possess good knowledge of English. The supervisory and senior staff should be fluent with English language and at any moment of duty at least one person should be present with knowledge of foreign language. There should be 24 hour service for reception, information and telephones. The hotel should also provide a valet service for laundering and dry cleaning of the guest cloths. Housekeeping at the hotel should be of the highest possible standard and there should be plentiful supply of linen, blankets, towels etc. which should be of the highest quality available. Similarly, the crockery, cutlery and glassware should be of the highest quality available. Each bedroom should be provided with a vacuum jug / flask with ice cold, boiled drinking water. There should be a special restaurant / dining room where facilities for dancing, orchestra are provided.

Features, Facilities and Services of Three - Star Categories

The architectural features and general construction of the building should be of a very good standard and the locality, including the immediate approach and

environment should be suitable for a very good hotel and there should be adequate parking facilities for cars. The hotel should have at least 20 lettable rooms, all with attached bath rooms with bath tubs and / or showers and should be modern in design and equipped with fittings of a good standard with hot and cold running water. At least 50% of the rooms should be Air-conditioned and the furniture and furnishings such as carpets, curtains, etc. should be of a very good standard and design. There should be adequate number of lifts in buildings with more than two stories (including the ground floor). There should be a well-furnished lounge and separate ladies and gentlemen's cloak rooms equipped with fittings of a good standard.

Facilities such as round o'clock reception and information counter attended by qualified and experienced staff and a bookstall, recognized travel agency, money changing and safe deposit facilities on the premises. There should be a telephone in each room (except in seasonal hotels where there should be a call bell in each room and a telephone on each floor for the use of hotel guest's) and a telephone for the use of guests and visitors to the hotel. There should be a well-equipped and well-maintained air-conditioned dining room/restaurant and wherever permissible by law, there should be a bar / permit room. The kitchen, pantry and cold storage should be clean and hygienic.

A hotel should offer services of both international and Indian cuisine and food and beverage service should be of the highest standards. There should be professionally qualified, highly trained, experienced, efficient and courteous staff in smart, clean uniform and the staff coming in contact with the guest should possess good knowledge of English. The supervisory and senior staff should be fluent with English language and at any moment of duty at least one person should be present with knowledge of foreign language. There should be 24 hour service for reception, information and telephones. The hotel should also provide a valet service for laundering and dry cleaning of the guest cloths. Housekeeping at the hotel should be of the highest possible standard and there should be plentiful supply of linen, blankets, towels etc. which should be of the highest quality available. Similarly, the crockery, cutlery and glassware should be of the highest quality available. Each bedroom should be provided with a vacuum jug / flask with ice cold, boiled drinking water. There should be a special restaurant / dining room where facilities for dancing, orchestra are provided.

Features, Facilities and Services of Two - Star Categories

Generally the building should be well constructed and the locality and environments including the approach should be suitable for a good hotel. The hotel should have at least 10 lettable rooms of which at least 75% should have attached bathrooms with showers and a bathroom for every four of the remaining rooms with modern sanitation and running cold water with adequate supply of hot water, soap and toilet paper. 25% of the rooms should be air-conditioned (except where there should be heating arrangement in all the rooms) and all rooms must be properly ventilated clean and comfortable with all the necessary items of furniture. The lounge should be well furnished.

There should be facilities of reception counter with a telephone. There should be a telephone or call bell in each room and there should be a telephone on each

floor unless each room has a separate telephone. There should be a well-maintained and well equipped dining room / restaurant servicing good clean wholesome food and a clean, hygienic and well-equipped kitchen and pantry. There should be service of an experience, courteous and efficient staff in smart and clean uniforms. The supervisory staff coming in contact with guest should understand English. The hotel should provide provision for laundry and dry cleaning services. Housekeeping at the hotel should be of a good standard and clean and good quality linen, blankets towels etc. should be provided. Similarly, crockery, cutlery and glassware should be of good quality.

Features, Facilities and Services of One - Star Categories

The general construction of the building should be good and locality and environs, including immediate approach should be suitable. The hotel should have at least 10 lettable rooms of which at least 25% should have attached bathrooms with a bathroom for every four of the remaining rooms. At least 25% of the bathrooms should have western style W.C.s. All bathrooms should have modern sanitation and running cold water with adequate supply of hot water, soap and toilet paper. The rooms should be properly ventilated and should have clean and comfortable bed and furniture.

There should be a facility of reception counter with a telephone and a telephone for the use of guests and visitors. There should be a clean and moderately well equipped dining room/restaurant servicing clean wholesome food, and there should be clean, well equipped kitchen and pantry.

The service of an experience, courteous and efficient staff in smart and clean uniforms and the senior staff coming in contact with guests should possess a working knowledge of English. Housekeeping at the hotel should be of a good standard and clean and good quality linen, blankets, towel, etc. should be supplied. Similarly crockery, cutlery and glassware should be of good quality.

1.4.2 Classification on the Basis of Location of Hotel

On the basis of location hotels can be classified as under:

- Commercial hotels
- Suburban hotels
- Resort
- Motels
- Rotels
- Floatels
- Boatel
- Transient hotels

COMMERCIAL HOTELS

These hotels are situated in the heart of the city i.e. downtown busy commercial areas and urban areas. Mainly businessmen and commercial executives patronize these hotels. Generally duration of stay is a few days only and weekend business is slack. Best possible of high standard are provided in commercial hotels. These days business centre in a commercial hotel is a must. They must have services like facilities to meet the basic business demands,

swimming pool, specialty restaurant, bar, disco, 24 hours room service, health club etc. Commercial hotels are sometimes also called downtown hotels. In addition to businessmen these hotels also accommodate tour groups, small conference groups, and individual guest.

SUBURBAN HOTELS

Suburban hotels are situated in suburbs, with quiet surroundings. They have moderate to low tariff and are generally patronized by budget guests.

RESORT HOTELS

Resort hotels are located at resort places such as islands, exotic locations, hill-stations, beaches and health resorts and spas i.e. Summer - resorts, winter sports resorts and all season resorts etc. with breathtaking beauty and typical scenery. People go to these places for relaxation, to enjoy them, and to get away from hectic city or for health reasons away from hectic city life or to pursue a specific interest/activity. Depending upon the location specially designed activity programmes is made. In order to get close to or communicate better with guests the Resort Hotel Manager must "Throw off the uniform and join in the fun", for example eating in the same dining room is one way of making sure that management and guests are likely to meet, share food and appreciate the old hotel cliché of 'being there' for the guest. This should be reinterpreted as 'being with' as opposed to simply there. In Resort hotels guests develop patterns of behavior and it is for the management to organize the staffing schedule to concede with those patterns. The manager who is sitting with guest in lobby for say half an hour is in fact not wasting his time but is also working as hard as another manager who is sitting in office and doing other organizational job. A resort manager should along with other office job should focus upon meeting and greeting guests Getting close to the guest can be achieved by arranging formal get together parties may be once a week with all managers in attendance. The focus should be on practical communication methods to enhance the guest stay in the hope that they will become a much appreciated 'Repeat Guest'. Creativity is critical to the success of the hotel. An entertainment menu that is sensitive to the needs of various market segments coupled with ideas to reinforce the status of a repeater e.g. the planting of small trees with the guest name and address printed on a plaque beside it can provide final touch.

Generally a guest stay is long such as a week or more and normally holidaymakers, sportsmen and patients who have been advised by doctors etc. go to the resort hotels. In resort hotels such as hill resort hotel, business is dependent on season and they have off season and full season tariff. Resort hotels have homely and informal atmosphere. No dress code is required; more social contact with guests, lot of entertainment items such as housie, beauty contest, floor shows, cabarets, fancy dress parties and stage shows etc. are popular. In addition recreational facilities like table tennis, badminton, golf, water games etc. can be there. Growth of resort hotel in U.S. took place due to vast highway construction programmes, as more people started traveling by cars. Many resort properties are at Florida, California, Arizona, Michigan, Wisconsin and Carolina etc. Resort hotels are not very popular in India because of various causes, the main reason being highways are not very well developed in India. Fuel for cars are very costly, automobile industry is not as developed as in

Europe and America and, most important, people are not so rich and don't have as much spare and leisure time to enjoy.

Resort hotels have facilities like

1. Extensive entertainment program
2. Tennis court, golf course with trainer
3. Saddled horses with trainer
4. Car parking and garaging and service facilities
5. Mini golf course, squash, billiards, etc.

MOTELS

Motels, motor hotels and motor courts are designed to serve the needs of motorists. They must provide car parking, garage, accommodation, rest facilities and recreational facilities and hence motels are generally equipped with filling stations, motor garage, service stations, accessories, elevator service to automobile entrants, restaurants etc. The tariff is very low as compared to city hotels. They have easy access from highways, being located on highways or at road junctions. Motel accommodation is ranked with hotels in general in many countries.

Specific legislations laid down in some countries like France, Norway, Ireland, Iraq, Portugal and Turkey are regarding approval of plans, easy access for cars, minimum capacity, provision of restaurant, minimum standard of facilities and in Turkey provision of a petrol pump or service station.

In U.S.A. (original concept) motels/motor hotels/motor lodges originally provided simple accommodation with minimum service and formalities. Evolution of motor hotel stemmed from the need for more elaborate facilities. Rising Cost of land in an around urban areas caused the development of motor hotels by substituting horizontal building with multi storey car parking centre, sophisticated restaurants, banqueting and convention facility like that of a hotel. In general motel classification standards are similar to hotels.

ROTELS

The hotels which rotate on wheels are called Rotets. It is also called Motel on Wheels. The best example of Rotel in India is Palace on Wheels. It is a luxurious train, fully air-conditioned, well- furnished, with attached restaurant and bar; the fare is inclusive of train ticket, food, alcoholic beverages and sightseeing. This train starts from Delhi and covers the tourist interest places of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh including Taj Mahal, Agra and Mathura. Earlier one was required to pay only in foreign currency and for the entire journey but now the Government accepts fare in Indian Rupees and one can also buy one or two days ticket to enjoy the ride of Palace on Wheel. The Government has a plan to start many more trains, in the country, on the similar terms and conditions.

In Japan the Rotel hotels are parked in the specifically marked parking slot in the late evening and during day the Rotel hotel is towed away. The guests can occupy these Rotel hotels. These are air conditioned and have very small but luxury bed rooms with television set, refrigerator, etc. These hotels may or may not have attached bathroom. These are more economical. Guest vacates the

room in the morning and if he wants to rent on the next day as well then can leave his luggage and other belongings in the room itself.

FLOATELS

This type of hotels are located on the surface of water such as sea, lake etc. Such hotels provide exclusive and exotic atmosphere. All the facilities of a first class hotel are there in this category of hotels. In many countries old luxury ships have been converted in to floating hotels. In India in Kashmir valley, houseboats are used as first class luxury hotels. They provide wonderful experience to a tourist. The First Floating Hotel of India, was Rs. 31 crore hotel with four storey's will be operational in Kolkata very soon. The hotel with a coffee shop and 73 rooms and three suites can be called as the First Floating Hotel of India.

BOATEL

These are luxury boats/yachts which can ferry you from one place to other. The best examples of yachts are in Mediterranean or Caribbean, they can ferry guest through to canal-based narrow boat or Broad-based cabin cruiser. In Srinagar and, Punjab, there is a restaurant, in water, which looks like floating. One can have normal meals, snacks etc. and is called boatel.

TRANSIENT / TRANSIT HOTELS

Hotel guests who fall under the category of transient guests are those who are en route guest i.e. who are in the process of moving from one destination to another and stop at the hotel for a short period of time as against a terminal guest who has reached his final destination. Hence hotels, which cater to a Transient / Transit guest, are called transient hotels. They find their origin in olden days inns. Examples of transient hotels are motels, motor hotels, airport hotels etc. The rates of rooms are fixed on "per diem" basis. Transient hotels such as airport hotels attract its clientele from layover passengers and crew members of the airlines. Such hotels are situated generally near port of entry i.e. airport or seaport, or international bus terminal etc. Generally the length of stay is short i.e. few hours to few days.

1.4.3 Classification on the basis of type of clientele

The hotels can also be classified depending upon the type of clientele it caters for as under:

- YMCA/YWCA Hostels
- Old Homes
- Hostels
- Hospital Homes/Hotels

YMCA/YWCA HOSTELS

Cater for Christian travelers, but in case rooms are available then they are also offered to non Christians. Usually these hotels offer accommodation to ladies/girls only but at times if gentlemen are accompanying the ladies than accommodation is offered to gentlemen as well.

OLD HOMES

In the modern days the need for old homes is being felt by all walks of life. In India also one can see old homes almost in all the major cities. These homes offer accommodation, on residential basis, to old people, who do not want to stay with their children or who do not have any one to look after them. These homes provide various facilities like recreational room, room service, elegantly decorated restaurant, nutritive food, a doctor and nurse on call or a permanently stationed doctor in the home, a regular medical checkup, telephone in the room, a beautiful garden for walk and exercise and may be a small work for the residents so that they can pass their time and also earn for their living. Usually these homes charge either on monthly basis or on yearly basis. They arrange for the trip of children to the home so children can give some company to the residents. This not only gives grand children to the guests but children also get grandparents.

HOSTELS

The student hostels are very common both in schools and colleges. As the name says, these can only be patronized by the students of a particular school or college. The hostels can also be attached to offices, banks, etc. These are also called residential hotels as they charge on monthly, half yearly or yearly basis. These hostels provide nutritive food keeping in view the needs of the residents.

HOSPITAL HOMES / HOTELS

These days hospital tourism is picking up throughout the world. India is also not lacking behind in this business. Good Hospitals have mushroomed throughout the country and people from all over the world come with their patients for medical checkup and/or treatment at these hospitals. Good hospitals have got hotels attached to the hospitals which only cater for the relatives/friends of the patients admitted in their hospitals. Usually they charge on European Plan or they offer a package for the treatment as well as for the stay at the hotel.

1.4.4 Classification on the basis of length of stay

Some hotels cater for a specific length of stay. These hotels can be classified in the following ways:

- Residential Hotels
- Transit Hotels
- Transient Hotels
- Semi-Residential Hotels

RESIDENTIAL HOTELS

These hotels offer rooms/apartments on monthly basis and even if a guest stays for a part of the month, is normally charged for the full month. The best examples for these hotels are hostels, paying guest houses for students, trainees, working people, etc. Some big companies also hire them for months/years for their company executives for pleasure, business, training, etc. These can be located in any part of the country, it may be a hill station, beach, etc. for pleasure or a big city or an industrial town for business.

TRANSIT HOTELS

Motels and Airport Hotels are the best example of these hotels. These hotels are patronized by those guests who are in transit and will be travelling further to their destination. Sometimes these hotels also charge room rent for half a day as guests would like to stay just for a few hours. At times these hotels have much more than 100% occupancy. In India the motels have not become very popular as people do not travel very long distances by their own vehicles. But in U.S.A. and Europe the motels are very popular as due to comfortable high ways and vehicles the long distance traveling is not only convenient but very economical as well.

TRANSIENT HOTELS

Public Works Department (P.W.D.) Rest Houses, Bank Homes, Government Guest Houses, etc. are the best examples of transient hotels. In these hotels one is not allowed to stay for a very long time as these hotels are very economical and are usually patronized by the employees either on transfer (till they arrange their accommodation) or on tour or on vacations.

SEMI RESIDENTIAL HOTELS

Most of the hotels in present days are Semi Residential Hotels and are located throughout the country. The guests, staying in these hotels, are required to pay room rent on daily basis. He may hire the accommodation for months or years together but the rent charged will be on daily basis. The hotel may offer a special allowance on room rent to these guests. Usually these hotels operate on European-Plan but other plans are offered to groups.

1.4.5 Classification on the basis of size

The hotels are divided into five categories depending upon the number of lettable rooms.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|-------|------|------|-----|----------------|
| SMALL HOTELS | : | From | 1 | To | 25 | Lettable Rooms |
| MEDIUM HOTELS | : | From | 26 | To | 100 | Lettable Rooms |
| LARGE HOTELS | : | From | 101 | To | 300 | Lettable Rooms |
| EXTRA LARGE HOTELS | : | From | 301 | To | 999 | Lettable Rooms |
| MEGA HOTELS | : | Above | 1000 | | | Lettable Rooms |
| | | | | FROM | 26 | TO 100 |

In India, there is no Mega Hotel, as on today. Las Vegas, the U.S.A. has the maximum number of Mega Hotels.

1.4.6 Classification on the basis of plan

Here plan means Meal Plan. The hotels offer various types of plan depending upon the guests' requirements. Most of the hotels offer more than one plan to the guests. The City Hotels offer usually European-Plan (E.P.) to Free individual Travelers (F.I.T.) but offer all the plans to Groups, Air lines crews and lay-over passengers who are staying on airlines account. The resort hotels, motels, etc.

offer Modified American Plan or American Plan to its guests as they must know in advance as to for how many guests the food has to be cooked. In peak season or during weekends, especially when rooms are in scarcity in resort hotels, they offer accommodation only on American-Plan. To encourage the family business, the hotels especially the resort hotels, offer complementary stay to two children, under the age of twelve, in the parents room without extra bed on European Plan, but if the guests are staying on any plan other than the European plan than either the nominal price for the meals is charged or a special discount is offered on normal a la carte or fixed meals. The following are the plans offered to guests.

EUROPEAN PLAN (E.P.)
CONTINENTAL PLAN (C.P.)
MODIFIED AMERICAN PLAN (M.A.P.)
AMERICAN PLAN (A.P.)
BERMUDA PLAN
INCLUSIVE PLAN

1.4.7 Classification on the basis of Ownership & Affiliation

On the basis of ownership and affiliation hotels are classified as under:

- Time share
- Condominium
- Apartotel

TIME SHARE

This is a new concept in India but is picking up very fast. This is also known as vacation ownership or 'holiday ownership' concept. These properties are mushrooming up in resort areas like hills, beaches, forests, etc. Time-share properties typically involve individuals who purchase the ownership of accommodation for a specific week or weeks. The price of the property will depend on the week, one intends to buy. The guest can choose a peak season, semi peak season or a lean season. The owner pays a fixed price for certain number of years say 20 to 30 years and has a right to stay at the hotel during the rented week, he is also required to pay an annual contribution towards the maintenance of apartment and public areas, electricity, gas, water, safety, insurance, etc. The owner has to pay a nominal per day rent for the services like telephone, kitchenette, cable, etc. The owner can also rent out the unit through management. Time Share concept started as early as 1960 by Alexander Nelte, a German who was the manager of a hotel in Switzerland. The most common Times Share in India are Mahindra and Mahindra, Nanda Tourist Corporation, Sterling Holiday Resorts, Avelot Resort, etc. The owners can also exchange their resort with any other resort either directly owned by your company or through exchange contract signed with any other company! Management by paying, a nominal fee. The owners are also allowed to exchange the week for which they are booked any other subject to availability and off-course for some nominal price.

CONDOMINIUM HOTELS

Condominium development involves a joint ownership of a complex. Each owner purchases and has full benefit of an unit such as a guestroom, suite, apartment

or a villa and shares the cost common to the whole complex such as taxes, maintenance and upkeep of buildings and grounds, parks, tennis court, swimming pools, provision of services such as security, letting and management, etc. Each owner can occupy or sell his unit independently but is obliged under the terms of contract to contribute towards the pool of common facilities and services. Condominiums have many advantages over simply leased property. In a condominium the capital appreciates with rising value particularly on coast or lake sides. It relieves the owner of maintenance and upkeep worries. The owner can enjoy extensive recreational facilities exclusive to the complex. Condominium management looks after the unit in the absence of the owner and if required, let it to provide income. In some instances letting or lease-back conditions may be written into the contract, particularly where the condominium unit in a complex may be used as a back up to a hotel operation, for example, to provide additional accommodation for conventions.

APARTOTEL

It is an apartment building also used as a residential hotel. Purchase of the apartment entitles full services of the hotel and during the period it is not occupied it can be added to the hotel pool for getting income. The concept was initially developed by Melia Coy of Spain in 1970

1.4.8 Other Hotels

There are still some types of hotels which cannot be classified under any one of the above categories. These hotels are listed below.

- Heritage hotels
- Boutique hotels
- Auberge, gasthof, herberge
- Casion hhotels
- Bed and Breakfast Hotels
- Convention hotels

HERITAGE HOTELS

India is known as a country of Palaces, Castles, Forts, Havelies, etc. During pre-partition days India had many princely states. Each state had its own king and kings had made various palaces for their and their family members' residence. These were not only built in the state capital but also at various tourist resorts and business hubs. Both domestic and foreign tourists have inclination to visit these old palaces, forts, etc. The Government of India, to boost up tourism and to preserve the Indian heritage, has started a scheme, where these old buildings can be converted in to hotels and are christened as Heritage Hotels. The only condition was that the building has been built prior to 1950 and there should be no exterior change in the original building plan. The rooms, bathrooms, interior, etc. can be modified to make it comfortable for the guests. Now the Government of India has modified this rule and now only the building built prior to 1935 can be converted to heritage hotel. Hotels, which have been classified / re-classified under Heritage categories, prior to issue of these Guidelines, will continue under Heritage categories even if they were built between the years 1935-50. Heritage Hotels can be further classified into three categories: and these are

a)Heritage Grand The buildings which were built prior to 1920 and converted into hotels are termed as Heritage Grand

b)Heritage Classic: The buildings which were built prior to 1935 and converted into hotels are termed as Heritage Classic.

c)C)Heritage: The buildings which were built prior to 1950 and converted into hotels are termed as Heritage.

ALL SUITES

The all-suites concept, a new addition to the hotel industry, developed in the 1980s as a separate marketing concept, offers guests a wide range of services. These suites provide living room, bedroom, kitchenette, etc. The guests can cook their own food, but if they so desire they can also order from room service or can dine at public dining room. They also provide cable television, channel music, pick up and drop from and to airport/railway station.

BOUTIQUE HOTELS

These are very small and very expensive hotels and mainly cater for elite class. The staff of these hotels is well qualified, experienced and is specialized in courteous service. Though the hotel is small but still it has more number of restaurants. Each restaurant is decorated keeping in view a theme and the food served, the uniform of the staff, the menu, even the way of welcoming the guest commemorates with the theme.

AUBERGE, GASTHOF, HERBERGE

These are the counterpart of inn in various countries. They represent a smaller unit which may have complimentary bar, restaurant and bedrooms for travelers. Here emphasis is given to eating and drinking facilities.

CASINO HOTELS

Casinos mean gambling houses. These hotels are mainly patronized by those guests who would like to spend most of their time at gambling - casinos. Since the gambling in India is not allowed so the casino hotels or casinos do not exist here. Normally tourists go to Kathmandu, Nepal to get the feeling of casinos. Las Vegas-Nevada, in U.S.A. is the most known city in the world for casino hotels. In these hotels, the guests are entertained by the best artistes of the world and one can enjoy the best of the food and drinks but of-course at a price.

BED AND BREAKFAST HOTEL

These hotels are more common in Europe. Practically all the hotels offer accommodation on bed and breakfast basis, The breakfast served may be from a simple continental breakfast to elaborate inclusive of eggs to order, fresh fruits, fresh juices, cereals, cold cuts, yoghurt, breakfast rolls, cheese platter, preserves, butter, tea, coffee, chocolate, etc. Usually an elaborate buffet is spread and the guest is free to eat as much as he desires.

CONVENTION HOTELS

These years, very large conventions are organized to promote business or to

educate the general public or a special type of people regarding your industry. These conventions are attended by as many as 1,000 to 5,000 persons. In India when a convention is held then the guests have to be accommodated in various hotels. A convention hotel should have a minimum of 2000 rooms with a very large convention hall to accommodate 3,000 to 5,000 persons. The convention hall must have around 50,000 square feet or more of exhibit halls along with ball rooms, meeting rooms. The banquet hall should be large enough to arrange a buffet for large number of guests. For conventions rooms as well as convention hall, exhibition halls. Etc. is booked two to ten years in advance. These conventions can be organized by private sector, public sector or by Government.

1.5 Summary

The hotel industry is part of a larger enterprise known as the travel and tourism industry. The travel and tourism industry, one of the world's largest industries, is composed of a vast group of business oriented toward providing necessary or desired products and services to travelers. While a hotel property's architecture and style may be important in setting it's them, front office personnel play an integral role in defining its image. The variety of talents and skills needed to satisfy guest needs makes front office work interesting and rewarding.

1.6 Check your progress

- Q1. Write in brief the history on Indian Hotel industry.
- Q2. Hotel is a "Home away from home" justify this statement.
- Q3. What are the basic facilities necessary for a five star hotel?
- Q4. What do you understand by Condominium hotels?
- Q5. Write short note on the following:
 - a. HRACC
 - b. RESORT HOTELS
 - c. ROTELS
 - d. FLOATELS
 - e. TRANSIENT
 - f. CONTINENTAL PLAN (C.P.)
 - g. MODIFIED AMERICAN PLAN (M.A.P.)
 - h. AMERICAN PLAN (A.P.)
 - i. TIME SHARE
 - j. BED AND BREAKFAST HOTEL
 - k. CASINO HOTELS
 - l. HERITAGE HOTELS
 - m. CONDOMINIUM HOTELS

UNIT 02: STAFFING AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF HOTEL

Structure

- 2.1 Objective
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 Organizational Mission
- 2.4 Organizational Goals
- 2.5 Hotel Organization
- 2.6 Classifying functional Areas
- 2.7 Room Division
- 2.8 Front Office
 - 2.8.1 Reservation
 - 2.8.2 Uniformed service
 - 2.8.3 Door Attendants
 - 2.8.4 Valet Parking Attendants
 - 2.8.5 Concierges
- 2.9 Housekeeping
- 2.10 Food and Beverage Division
- 2.11 Sales and Marketing Division
- 2.12 Accounting Division
- 2.13 Engineering and Maintenance Division
- 2.14 Security Division
- 2.15 Human Resource Division
- 2.16 Other Division
- 2.17 Front Office Operations
- 2.18 Work shifts
- 2.19 Job Description
- 2.20 Meal Plan
- 2.21 Summary
- 2.22 Check your progress

2.1 Objective

After reading this chapter you will be able to understand:

- Mission
 - Mission Statement
 - Objective
 - Goals
 - Strategy
- Hotel Organization
- Departments of hotel
- Co-ordination between departments
- Organization chart of hotel

- Meal Plans

2.2 Introduction

A person entering a hotel lobby for the first time might never guess the complexities underlying the day-to-day operation of the property. He or she might not recognize that the courtesy of the door attendant, the competent and friendly manner of the front desk agent, and the tidiness of the guestroom reflects hours of planning, extensive communications, and a coordinated effort to create the workings of an efficient organization. The actual network of a hotel's divisions departments, and personnel in a smoothly operating hotel should be invisible to the casual observer. But the services that result from a hotel's smooth operations are highly visible and present the hotel with a unique challenge.

For a hotel to run effectively, every employee must understand, and work to achieve, the property's mission. Every employee must ensure that guests are so impressed by the property's facilities and services that they will want to come back and will enthusiastically recommend the property to others.

Teamwork is the key to success. All employees must have a spirit of cooperation both within and between their departmental areas. While every department and division should strive to offer and improve quality guest services, it is especially important that good service be emphasized in high profile locations, coordinate services, offer choices, and satisfy guest request is critical to the hotel's mission.

2.3 Organizational Mission

Every organization has a reason or purpose to exist. Its purpose forms the basis for the organization's mission. An organization's mission can be expressed in a mission statement, which defines the unique purpose that sets one hotel or hotel company apart from others. It expresses the underlying philosophy that gives meaning and direction to hotel policies. While employees learn the task involved in their jobs-or what to do of the job-the mission statement is a vehicle to communicate the why we are doing it of the job. Hotel employees may derive a sense of purpose from a well-conceived mission statement. For example, a hotel's mission may be to provide the finest facilities and services in the market while providing a good place to work for its employees and a reasonable return on investment to the owners.

A hotel's mission statement often addresses the interest of its three main constituent groups: guest, management, and employees. First, a hotel's mission statement⁶ can address the basic needs and expectations of the hotel's guests. Regardless of a hotel's size or service level, it is safe to assume all guest have the following basic expectations:

- a) Safe, secure accommodations,
- b) A clean, comfortable guestroom,
- c) Well-maintained facilities and equipment

Hotel guest generally anticipate a particular level of service at a given property type. If a hotel clearly defines its markets and consistently delivers the level of service those markets expect, it can successfully satisfy its guests, encourage repeat business, and improve its reputation.

Second, a hotel's mission statement can reflect its management philosophy. Since styles of operation differ, mission statements often vary from property to property. In fact, a hotel's mission is one of the principal means it uses to distinguish itself from other hotels. A mission statement guides managers in their jobs by identifying the property's basic values.

Third, the mission statement can help the hotel's employees meet or exceed the expectations of both guest and management. A mission statement can also serve as a basis for job descriptions and performance standards and as an introduction to the property for new employees. The property's mission statement should appear in employee handbooks and training manuals, and should accompany job description.

2.4 Organizational Goals

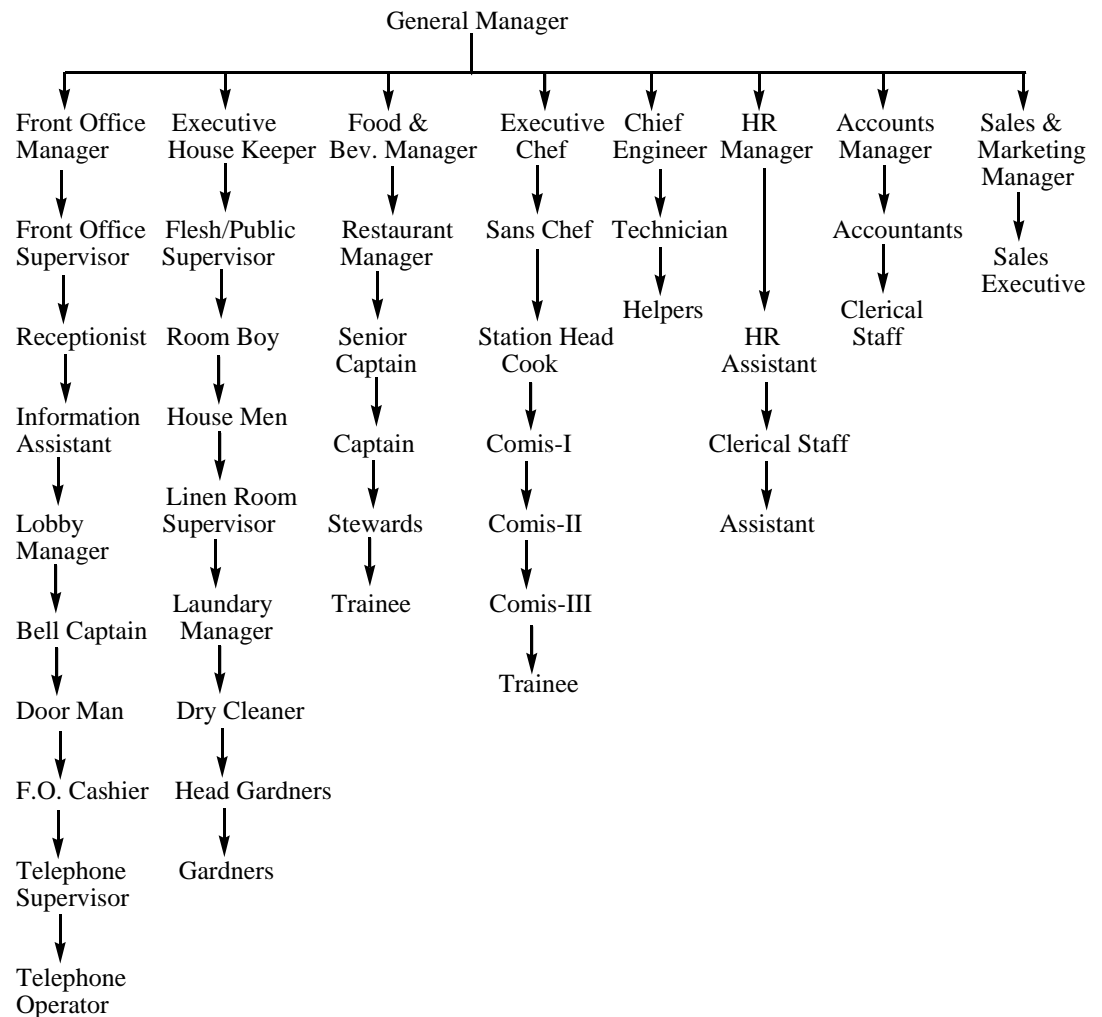
Once the hotel has defined and formulated its mission statement, the next step is to set goals. Goals are those activities and standards an organization must successfully perform or achieve to effectively carry out its mission. A goal is more specific than a mission; it requires a certain level of achievement that can be observed and measured. Measurable goals encourage hotel employees to perform effectively while enabling management to monitor employee progress. Many organizations evaluate their goals frequently. Yearly goal planning is common, and sometimes these goals are broken down by month or quarter. Even more important, goals often become part of the management team's evaluation process. Salary increases, bonuses, and other forms of recognition are often linked to specific goals. Management and staff should be periodically evaluated on their progress toward meeting the goals. Managements can determine whether goals are being achieved or verb followed by a specific form of measurement such as a time interval or a level of quality, quantity, or cost.

2.5 Hotel Organization

The people authorized by a hotel's owner to represent his or her interests are called hotel management. In small properties, hotel management may be represented by one person. Management guides the operation of the hotel and regularly reports the general state of the hotel's financial health to its owner. The major duties of a hotel management team include planning, organizing, coordinating, staffing, directing, controlling, and evaluating hotel activities and /or personnel. Management performs its duties to reach specific objectives and goals. These duties involve the activities of various hotel division and departments. The top executive of a property is usually called the managing director, general manger or innkeeper. For discussion purpose, the top executive is referred to as the general manager in this text. The general manager of an independent hotel manager supervises all hotel divisions, either through a resident or assistant manager, or through division heads. Chain organizations

usually have a district, area, or regional executive supervising the general managers located at the properties within his or her jurisdiction. An organization requires a formal structure to carry out its mission and goals. A common way to represent that structure is the organization chart. As organization chart is a schematic representation of the relationship between positions within an organization. It shows where each position fits in the overall organization, as well as where division of responsibility and lines of authority lie. Solid lines on the chart indicate direct-line accountability. Dotted lines indicate relationships that involve a high degree of cooperation and communication, but not a direct reporting relationship.

An organization chart should be flexible. It should be reviewed and revised yearly or more often if business conditions significantly change. Employee responsibilities may change as individuals assume more duties, depending on their qualifications and strengths. Some organizations list each employee's name on the chart along with his or her title. A copy of the property's organization chart should be included in the employee handbook distributed to all employees.



A full-service property that offers both lodging and food and beverage service will probably have an extensive organizational structure. Figure 1.1 shows an organization chart outlining the management-level positions in a large full-service property. All but two of the lines on the chart are solid, indicating reporting relationships. The dotted lines connecting the sales director to the catering director and the reservations manager represent the close working relationship needed among these positions.

Some hotels may lease food and beverage outlets to another company. This means that the food and beverage operations and guestroom operations are separately owned and managed. When another company operates food and beverage, it is essential the both companies communicate closely, as their goals may not be shared at all times. Figure 1.2 shows a typical organization chart for a hotel with leased food and beverage operations. In this example, informal consulting relations exist between the managers and owners of the two businesses. The restaurant manager and the hotel's sales department manager must also work closely together. These relationships are indicated by dotted lines.

Figure 1.3 present a possible organizational structure for a hotel without a restaurant. These organization charts illustrate some of the many organizational variations that are possible among lodging properties.

2.6 Classifying Functional Areas

A hotel's divisions and departments (its functional areas) can be classified in almost as many ways as the hotel itself. One method involves classifying an operating division or department as either a revenue center or support center. A revenue center sells goods or services to guests, thereby generating revenue for the hotel. Typical revenue centers include the front office, food and beverage outlets (including room service), and telephone. Even if a revenue center is not operated by the hotel itself (as is often the case with retail stores), the money the revenue center pays to lease the hotel space contributes to the hotel's income.

Support centers, also referred to as cost centers; include the housekeeping, accounting, engineering and maintenance, and human resources divisions. These divisions do not generate direct revenue, but provide important support for the hotel's revenue centers. Designers of accounting and information system often find it useful to segment a hotel by revenue and support centers.

The terms front of the house and back of the house may also be used to classify hotel departments, divisions and personnel. Front-of-the-house areas are areas where guest interact with employees. Such areas include the front office, restaurants, and lounges. In back-of-the-house areas, interaction between guests and employees is less common. Such areas include housekeeping staffs do occasionally interact with guest, but it is not part of their primary duties as it is for front desk and bell staff. Although back-of-the-house employees may not directly serve guestroom, the employee indirectly serves the guest by cleaning the guestroom, repairing a leaky faucet, or correcting an error in a guest account.

2.7 Room Division

The room division comprises departments and personnel essential to providing the services guest expect during a hotel stay. In most hotels, the rooms division generates more revenue than all other divisions combined. The front office is one department within the rooms division. Others are housekeeping, uniformed services, and the concierge. In some properties, the reservations and switchboard or telephone functions are separate departments within the rooms division. Figure at previous page shows a sample organization chart for the rooms division of a large hotel.

2.8 The Front Office

This is the most visible department in a hotel. Front office personnel have more contact with guest than do staff in most other departments. The front desk is usually the focal point of activity for the front desk to register; to receive room assignments, to inquire about available services, facilities, and the control center for guest requests concerning housekeeping or engineering issues. Foreign guest use the front desk to exchange currency, find a translator, or request other special assistance. In addition, it may also be base of operations during an emergency, such as a fire or a guest injury. The functions of the front office are to:

1. Sell guestrooms, register guests, and assign guestrooms.
2. Process future room reservations, when there is no reservation department or when the reservation department is closed.
3. Coordinate guest services.
4. Provide information about the hotel, the surrounding community, and any attractions or events of interest to guest.
5. Maintain accurate room status information. Maintain guest and monitor credit limits.
6. Produce guest account statements and complete proper financial settlement.

2.8.1 Reservations

More than half of all hotel guests make reservations. These individuals arrange for hotel accommodations through such means as toll-free telephone numbers; direct telephone lines; hotel sales representatives; travel agencies; property-to-property networks, postal delivery; telex and fax; e-mail; internet; and other communications services.

Every lodging property has its own way of monitoring and managing its reservations function. The reservations department is responsible for receiving and processing reservation requests for future overnight accommodations. Although procedures may differ from hotel with regard to reservations handling, maintenance, processing, and confirmation, the purpose is still the same to accommodate guest request in a manner that maximizes hotel occupancy and room revenue.

In the past, the reservations department basically captured reservations data. Potential guests contacted the hotel, and reservations were accepted or denied based upon room availability.

Reservation systems can be programmed to provide reservations agent with information on the types of rooms available (including room rate, view, furnishings, amenities, and bed size) for a given day. Some computer systems can even provide agents with the exact room number if necessary. Such technology shift responsibility for room sale from desk to reservation department. More recently technology even alerts the reservation agents automatically when the caller is a returning guest. Reservation system provides agents with a great deal of information on the hotel, some of which should be provided to the guest on request.

It is essential for reservation department personnel to work closely with the hotel's sales and marketing division when group reservations are being solicited or processed. In fact, some hotel companies now place the reservations functions in the sales department instead of the front office. In any case, sales department representatives must be kept informed of room availability to ensure they know how many rooms are available in the reservation system report and room availabilities in order to avoid overbooking. Overbooking can create bad feelings and contribute to lost business in the future. The management of reservations is further complicated by the fact that several states have enacted legislation prohibiting overbooking.

2.8.2 Uniformed Service

Employees who work in the uniformed service department of the hotel generally provide the most personalized guest service. Given the high degree of attention awarded guest by this department, some properties refer to uniformed service simply as guest service. Among the primary positions within the uniformed service department are:

1. Bell attendant – persons who provide baggage service between the lobby area and the guestroom.
2. Door attendants – persons who provide curb-side baggage service and traffic control at the hotel entrance.
3. Valet parking attendants – persons who provide parking service for guest's vehicles.
4. Transportation personnel – persons who provide transportation service for guests.
5. Concierges – person who assist guest by making restaurant reservations, arranging for transportation, and getting for tickets for theater, sporting, or other special events, and so on.

Bell Attendants: many guests arrive at a hotel with heavy baggage or several pieces of luggage. Guest receives help handling this luggage from probably the best-known employee among the uniformed service staff: the bell attendant. Bell attendant should be clearly selected. Since most hotels have carts for transporting baggage, the physical ability to actually carry the baggage is not a

critical job qualification. More important, bell attendants should have strong oral communication skills and display genuine interest in each guest. Depending on the size and complexity of the hotel, bell attendants may be counted on to:

1. Transport guest luggage to and from guestrooms.
2. Familiarize guest with the hotel's facilities and services, safety features, as well as the guestroom and any in-room amenities.
3. Provide a secure area for guest requiring temporary luggage storage.
4. Provide information on hotel services and facilities, as well as group functions.
5. Deliver mail, packages, messages, and special amenities to guestrooms.
6. Pick up and deliver guest laundry and dry cleaning.
7. Perform light housekeeping services in lobby and entry areas.
8. Help guest load and unload their luggage in the absence of a door attendant.
9. Notify other departments of guest needs, such as housekeeping for a crib or extra towels.

While many of these tasks appear simple, they all require a degree of professionalism. For example to assist a guest with his or her luggage, the bell attendant must know how to properly load a luggage cart. Fragile items must not be placed below heavy items. The cart must also be properly balanced so that it does not tip over or become difficult to steer. It is through informal conversation that bell attendants become key players in the hotel's guest's names. This makes guests feel more welcome and allows the bell attendant to provide more personal service.

2.8.3 Door Attendants

Door attendants play a role similar to bell attendants; they are dedicated to welcoming the guest to the hotel. These employees are generally found in hotels offering world-class or luxury service of the duties door attendants perform include:

1. Opening hotel doors and assisting guest upon arrival.
2. Helping guest load and unload luggage from vehicles.
3. Escorting guests to the hotel registration area.
4. Controlling vehicle traffic flow and safety at the hotel entrance.
5. Hailing taxis, upon request.
6. Performing light housekeeping services in the lobby and entry areas.

Experienced door attendants are capable of handling all these tasks with aplomb. A skilled and experienced door attendant learns the names of the frequent guest. When these guest returns to the hotel, the door attendant is able to greet them by name and can introduce them to other front office staff. Such personal service enhances the reputation of the hotel and provides the guest with as unique experience.

2.8.4 Valet parking attendants

Valet parking is generally available at hotels offering world-class or luxury service. Specially trained employees park guest and visitor automobiles. The

personal attention and security of valet parking service is considered both a luxury and a convenience. Guest does not have to worry about finding a parking space, walking to the hotel in inclement weather, or finding their vehicles in the parking lot. Hotels generally charge a higher fee for valet parking, guest are also likely to tip the valet parking attendant.

The uniformed service department is responsible for all vehicles under its care and reports information to the front desk each night so that parking charges can be posted to guest accounts. In addition, when the vehicle entrance to the hotel is busy, valet parking attendants should help keep the area running smoothly by providing traffic control assistance.

2.8.5 Concierges

Even though this guest service position has existed for quite some time, the concierge is perhaps the concierge was the castle doorkeeper. A concierge's job was to ensure that all the castle occupants were secure in their rooms at night. Traveling royalty was often accompanied by a concierge who provided security and traveled ahead of the royal party to finalize food and lodging arrangements. As hotels became more common in Europe, the concierge eventually became apart of the staff that provided personalized guest services. It is not uncommon to find a concierge at a world-class or luxury hotel.

Concierges may provide custom services to hotel guest. Duties include making reservations for dining securing tickets for theater and sporting events; arranging for transportation, and providing information on cultural events and local attractions. Concierges are known for their resourcefulness. Getting tickets to sold out concerts or making last-minute dinner reservations at a crowded restaurant are part of a concierge's responsibility and reputation. Most successful concierges have developed an extensive network of local, regional, and national contacts the concierge has established at restaurants, box office, car rentals offices,, airlines , printers, and other businesses. Some hotels actually encourage concierges to visit appropriate businesses and organizations to establish and strengthen such relationships. Finally, a highly successful concierge should speak several languages.

2.8.6 Housekeeping

Housekeeping is perhaps the most important support department for the front office. Like the front office, housekeeping usually is part of the rooms division of the hotel. In some hotels, however, the housekeeping function is considered an independent hotel division. Effective communication among housekeeping and front office personnel can contribute to guest satisfaction while helping the front office to effectively monitor guestroom status. Housekeeping employees inspect rooms before they are available for sale, clean occupied and vacated rooms, and communicate the status of guestroom until the room has been cleaned, inspected and released by the housekeeping department.

The housekeeping department often employs larger staff than other departments i.e. the rooms division. Normally, an executive housekeeper is in charge of the

department, aided by an assistant housekeeper. In larger hotels there can be several assistant housekeepers, each responsible for specific floors, sections, or, in room attendants, lobby and general cleaners, and laundry personnel. Room attendant are assigned to specific sections of the hotel. Depending on the hotel's service level, average guestroom size, and cleaning tasks, room attendants may clean from 8 to 18 rooms per shift. If the hotel has its own laundry, housekeeping department staff may be charged with cleaning and pressing the property's linens, towels, uniforms, and guest clothing. Housekeeping personnel (usually executive housekeepers) are responsible for maintaining two types of inventories: recycled and non-recycled. Recycled inventories are those items that have a relatively limited useful life but are used repeatedly in housekeeping operations. These inventories include such items as linens, uniforms, and guest amenities like irons and hair dryers. Non-recycled inventories are those items that are consumed or worn out during the course of routine housekeeping operations. Non-recycled inventories include cleaning supplies, small equipment items, and guest supplies and personnel grooming items. Guest amenities and linens are among the items and conveniences most often requested by guests.

To ensure the speedy, efficient rooming of guest in vacant and inspected room, the housekeeping and front office departments must promptly inform each other of any change in a room's status or availability. Team work between housekeeping and the front office is essential to effective hotel operations. To more familiar housekeeping and front office personnel are with each other's departmental procedures, the smoother the relationships.

2.9 Food and Beverage Division

The hotel's food and beverage division generally ranks second to the rooms division in terms of total revenue. Many hotels support more than one food and beverage outlet. There are almost as many varieties of hotel food and beverage operations as there are hotels. Possible outlets include quick service, table service, and specialty restaurants, coffee shops, bars, lounges, and clubs. The food and beverage division also typically supports other hotel functions such as room service, catering, and banquet planning. Banquets, normally held in the hotel's function room, may represent tremendous sales and profit opportunities for the food and beverage division. Hotels that appeal to group and convention business typically generate large amount of banquet and catering revenues. In group hotels, catering opportunities may extend to the guest rooms, where suites often serve as locations for special hospitality parties given by companies. These are often upscale events, with good opportunities for creativity on the part of the catering department. Catered functions, such as weddings and anniversaries, and also provide significant revenue opportunities for the food and beverage division.

2.10 Sales and Marketing Division

The size of a hotel's sales and marketing staff can vary from one part time person to more than a dozen full-time employees. In smaller properties, the general manager often serves in all the sales and marketing roles. In larger

hotels, the sales and marketing responsibilities are typically divided into four functions: sales, convention services, advertising, and public relations. The primary goal of the division is to promote the sale of hotel products and services. To this end, sales and marketing staff need to coordinate their efforts with the front office and other hotel divisions to effectively access and communicate guest needs.

Marketing employees strive to attract guest to the hotel. Marketing staff research the market place, competing products, guest needs and expectations, and future demand. These employees then develop advertising and public relations programs for the hotel based on their findings. Sales staff, on the other hand, strives to create revenue through the sale of hotel products to guest and groups. Front desk agents also may act as salespersons, especially when negotiating with and registering walk-in guests. In many hotels, the reservation office works very closely with the sales department, and serves a sales role when guest calling the hotel to make reservations.

2.11 Accounting Division

A hotel's accounting division monitors the financial activities of the property. Some hotels use premises accounting services to complement the work of their internal accounting division. In this case, the hotel's staff collects and transmits data to a service bureau or chain headquarters. A hotel that performs its accounting work on the premises will employ a larger accounting staff with a higher level of responsibilities. Which include paying outstanding invoices, distributing unpaid statements, collecting amounts owed, processing payroll, accumulating operating data, and compiling financial reports. In addition, the accounting staff may be responsible for making bank deposits, securing cash loans, and performing other control and processing functions as required by hotel management.

2.12 Engineering and Maintenance Division

A hotel's engineering and maintenance division is responsible for maintaining the property's structure and grounds, as well as electrical and mechanical equipment. This division may also be charged with swimming pool sanitation, parking safety equipment comes under this division as well. The front office must efficiently exchange information with a representative of the engineering and maintenance division to ensure guest satisfaction. A guest complaint about a leaky faucet, malfunctioning lamp, or sticking lock should not rest with a front desk agent but should be written up and quickly relayed to engineering and maintenance staff for corrective action. Conversely, front desk staff must be informed quickly about maintenance problems that render a room unsuitable for sale. They also must be informed when the room becomes ready for sale again.

2.13 Security Division

A hotel's security program is strongest when employees outside the security division participate in security efforts. For example, front desk agents play a critical part in key control by issuing room keys to registered guests only. Room attendants practice security when they verify a guest's room key before allowing

that guest to enter a room they are cleaning. All employees should be wary of suspicious activities anywhere on the premises, and report such activities to a member of the security staff. A key role of the security division is to maintain a strong awareness in the hotel's staff of safety issues through training and enforcement of standards.

2.14 Human Resources Division

Hotels have increased their investment in and dependence on human resources management. The size and budget of human resources divisions have grown steadily, along with their responsibility and influence. Recently, the scope of the human resources division has changed in response to new government legislation, a shrinking labor pool, and growing pressures from competition. Although techniques have changed, the basic functions of the human resources division remain the same: employment (including external recruiting and internal reassignment), training, employee relations (including quality assurance), compensation, benefits, administration (including employee policies), labor relations and safety.

2.15 Other Divisions

Many hotels staff a variety of other divisions to serve the need of their guests. The range of possibilities reflects the diversity of hotels.

Retail Outlets: Lodging properties often establish gift shops, newsstand, or other retail outlets in their lobbies or public areas.

Recreation: Some hotels – primarily resort – staff a division dedicated to providing group and individual recreational activities for guests. Some recreation divisions also undertake landscaping, the grounds and maintaining the pool., golf, tennis, bowling, snorkeling, sailing, walking tours, bicycle trips, horseback riding, hikes, and other activities may be arrange by recreation division staff.

Casino: Casino will have a casino division that operates games of chance for guest and protects the property's gambling interests. The casino division may offer various forms of entertainment and other attractions to draw customers into the property and its gambling facilities.

2.16 Front Office Operations

Traditionally front office functions include reservations, registration, room and rate assignment, guest services, room status, maintenance and settlement of guest accounts, and creation of guest history records. The front office develops and maintains a comprehensive data base of guest information, coordinates guest services, and ensures guest satisfaction. These functions are accomplished by personnel diverse areas of the front office department.

Organization

Large hotels often organize the front office according, with different employees handling separate areas. This division of duties can enhance the control the front office has over its own operations. Front office personnel can provide more specialized attention if each area is responsible for only one segment of the guest stay. Such a separation of duties may not be practical in small hotel, where

it is common for one or two individuals to handle all front desk operations. The front office in a large hotel supports many positions with a considerable separation of duties. These positions typically include, but are not limited to the following:

1. A front desk agent who registers guests and maintains room availability information.
2. A cashier who handles money, post charges, and oversees guest account settlement.
3. A mail and information clerk who takes messages, provides directions to guests, and maintains mail.
4. A telephone operator who manages the switchboard and coordinates wake-up calls.
5. A reservations agent who responds to reservation requests and creates reservation records.
6. A uniformed service agent who handles guest luggage and escorts guests to their rooms.

If a hotel property is computerized, each employee may be restricted to accessing only those computer records pertinent to his or her function.

The front office of a mid-size hotel performs the same functions, but with fewer employees. Staffs are often cross-trained and job duties are typically combined. For example, a front desk agent may also serve as a cashier and mail and information clerk. He or she may also be trained to assume the duties of a switchboard operator and reservations agent in their absence. During busy period, several desk agents may be working at the same time. Although each staff member may be assigned identical duties, the desk agents may informally divide the functions among themselves. For example, one person may decide to register guest and handle the switchboard, another may function as a cashier, and a third may handle reservations and information requests.

Small hotels may have a single front desk agent who performs neatly all the functions with little assistance. If the front desk agent becomes overwhelmed by the workload, the general manager or accountant, if properly trained, may help relieve the burden. In a small property, the generally manager and accountant often become more directly involved with front office operations.

2.17 Work shifts

Front office work shift may vary with guest business patterns. A program of flexible work hours, or flextime, allows employees to vary the time they start and end work. Certain busy hours during a work shift, however, may require the presence of a majority of the staff. For example, one front desk agent may work from 6 A.M to 2 P.M. so that wake-up calls and check-outs can be handled more efficiently throughout the 7 A.M. shift change. On the other hand, scheduling a front desk agent to work from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. may allow for smooth processing of guest arrivals during the time evening shift personnel are scheduled for a meal break.

Part-time employees are an increasingly important source of labor for the hospitality industry. Many potential workers, such as students, parents of young children, and retirees, may not be available to work full time. Part-time workers give the front office the flexibility to respond to fluctuating guest demands while reducing overall labor cost. Alternative scheduling programs, however, require careful planning and evaluation before implementation.

2.18 Job description

A job description lists all the tasks that compose a work position. A job description may also outline reporting relationships, Responsibilities, working conditions, equipment and materials to be used, and other important information specific to the place of employment. To be most effective, job description should be customized to the operational procedures of a specific lodging property. Job descriptions should be task-oriented; they should be written for a position, not for a particular employee. Some of which are listed below:

2.19 Meal Plan

Meal plan is the basis of charging rooms rent which includes food in room rent. A variety of meal plan is offered by the hotel suiting to their requirement of their establishment. Following are the different meal plans offered by hotels.

- European plan
- Continental plan
- American plan
- Modified American plan
- Bed & Breakfast or Bermuda Plan

European plan

The tariff consists of room rate only. This is generally preferred in a commercial hotel.

Continental plan

The room tariff includes continental breakfast along with room rent.

American plan

It is also known as **en-pension** (Full Board). The tariff includes all meals (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner) along with room rent. This tariff plan is popular in resort hotels located at remote places where guest do not have a choice or place to enjoy food outside the hotel premises.

Modified American plan

It is also known **Demi- pension** (half board). The tariff consists of breakfast and one major meal (Lunch or Dinner) along with room rent. This tariff plan is popular in hotels located at tourist destination, where the guest can visit the places of their interest and have a choice and place to enjoy food outside the hotel premises.

Bed & Breakfast or Bermuda Plan

The room tariff includes American breakfast along with room rent.

2.20 Summary

The services that result from a hotel's smooth operation are highly visible and appreciated. Guests are more likely to return to or recommended a lodging property if they had an enjoyable stay. For a hotel to run effectively and efficiently, every employee must understand and work to achieve the property's mission.

The front office is typically responsible for developing and maintaining a comprehensive data base of guest information, coordinating guest services, and ensuring guest satisfaction.

A job description lists a majority of the tasks composing a position. A job description may also outline reporting relationships, working conditions, equipment and materials to be used, and other important information specific to the property. To be most effective, job description should be customized to the operational procedures of a specific lodging property. Job specification lists the personal qualities, skills, and traits a person needs to successfully perform the tasks outlined in a job description.

2.21 Check your Progress

1. Draw the organization chart of front office of five star hotels with 500 rooms.
2. Draw the organization chart of front office of five star hotels with 150 rooms.
3. Give the duties of Bell Boy and Bell Captain.
4. Briefly explain the duties and responsibilities of Front Office Manager and Reservation Manager.
5. What do you mean by Organization Chart? Explain.

UNIT 03: FRONT OFFICE ORGANIZATION

Structure

- 3.1 Objective
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 The front office
- 3.4 Sections of front office
 - 3.4.1 Reservation
 - 3.4.2 Reception
 - 3.4.3 Information
 - 3.4.4 Cash & bills
 - 3.4.5 Travel desk
 - 3.4.6 Communication
 - 3.4.7 Bell Desk
 - 3.4.8 Concierges
- 3.5 Front Office staff Organization
- 3.6 Chapter Summary
- 3.7 Terminal Questions

3.1 Objectives

After reading this chapter you will be able to understand:

- Sections of front office
- Organization chart of front office

3.2 Introduction

Front office is the first department of hotel which comes in guest contact, at the time of guest arrival and the last department when they depart from the hotel. This department performs the various functions like reservation, reception, registration, room assignment and bills settlement of a resident guest. The guest remains in contact of front desk for information and any kind of help. Thus we can say that the Front Office is the hub of hotel operations.

This chapter is aimed to provide a good understanding on the part of the organization of the front office department. In this chapter we will study the functional organization of the front office department, sections of front office, front office staff organisation, qualities and attributes of front office staff, and job description & job specification of few front office personnel.

3.3 The Front Office Department

Front office is the department of a hotel where the guest interacts with the hotel staff first time and develops the first impression about the level of services, standard, facilities and hospitality. The front office department is also known as front of the house. This is the department whose employees are frequently in

direct contact with the guest. The front desk should be located at a prominent point in the lobby. The hotel guests come to the front desk for registration; rate and room assignments; inquire about hotel services, facilities, and the city or surrounding area; and to check out. Apart from these services the front desk also provides the services like handling guests mail, message, maintaining guest accounts, paging (locating the guest within hotel), arranging the travel services, and various other services as per guests requirement. Thus the front office department performs following functions:

- Selling of the hotel rooms to guests
- Accepts advance booking of the rooms
- Receiving and registering the guests when they arrive at the hotel and assign them room
- Coordinate guest services
 - Provide information about the facilities and services provided by the hotel, the City etc.
- Maintaining accurate room status information
- Maintaining guest accounts and monitor credit
- Preparation of guest account statements
- Settlement of guest account at the time of departure

3.4 Sections of Front Office

Division of labor is the guiding principle for dividing the entire unit into small section on the basis of tasks performed by the employees of the department. The front office department can be divided in to following sections for effective and efficient discharge of the duties of its employees:

- Reservation
- Reception
- Information
- Cash & bills
- Travel desk
- Communication
- Uniformed services
 - Bell Desk
 - Concierges

Lobby

According to Oxford dictionary, 'lobby is an area just inside a large building, where people can meet and wait'. The hotel lobby is an area furnished with seating arrangements and is used as common place for meeting and waiting by the hotel guests. Lobby is located immediately upon entry into the hotel building. The front office is located within the premises of the lobby. The lobby is an important place in the hotel as it is the first and last point of guest contact with hotel. Hence, a considerable amount of fund is invested by the owner to make the lobby aesthetically appealing to the guest. A well appointed lobby creates the impression about the overall standard of the hotel in the eyes of the guest. The lobby is managed by the lobby manager.

3.4.1 Reservations

Traveling to a place other than home town urge the need of a safe and comfortable place to stay. Now-a -days peoples are traveling too frequently due to advent of safer and faster modes of transport. Peoples while planning their trips to other places prefer to be sure that they will have a suitable accommodation when they reach at destination. This can be achieved by making an advance booking of the hotel room.

Reservation section of front office department of the hotel is responsible for receiving and processing the reservation queries. Depending upon the level of automation, volume of business, and house customs the procedure of processing reservation queries may differ from hotel to hotel in terms reservations handling, maintenance of reservation records, confirmation, amendments, and cancellation of reservation.

Layout of reservation section

The location of the reservation section depends upon the size of hotel and volume of business. In a very small hotel the same function can be performed by the front desk. In a large hotel a separate section is needed. If a separate section of reservation is needed then it should be located preferably behind the reception counter and should have a communication door between reception and reservation section.

Function of reservation section

The reservation section of front office department of hotel performs the function of processing reservation request of the future guest. This section is headed by a Reservation Manager, who is assisted by reservation supervisor and a team of reservation clerks/ assistants. Following are the functions performed by the reservation section:

- Receiving the reservation request
- Processing the reservation request
- Depending upon the availability of desired room type reservation request may be confirmed, waitlisted or denied.
- Updating the room availability status after each reservation transaction like confirmation, amendments and cancellation.
- Maintaining and updating the reservation records
- Preparing reservation reports

3.4.2 Reception

According to oxford dictionary, “reception is a place inside the entrance of a hotel or office building where guests or visitors go when they first arrive”. This section of front office receives and welcomes the guests at their arrival in the hotel. The personnel of this section receive all necessary information about the guest to complete the registration formality. After completing the registration formalities, room is assigned to the guest and bell boy carries the guest luggage and escorts the guest to his room. The entire process should be carried out in professional way in a warmth and friendly atmosphere to create a positive guest impression.

Layout of reception section

The reception section of the front office of a hotel is located in close proximity of entrance gate of the hotel. The layout of the reception section depends upon the size of hotel and volume of business. The front desk assistant carries out many tasks; hence, the front desk should be designed in a way to assist them in performing those tasks. The front desk may be circular, L-shape, curved or straight depending upon the requirement.

Function of reception section

The reception section of front office department of hotel performs the function of welcoming the hotel guest. This section is headed by a supervisor and a team of receptionists/ front desk assistants. Following are the functions performed by the reception section:

- Receiving the guests
- Completing the registration formalities
- Assigning the room.
- Sending Arrival notification slips to concerned departments

3.4.3 Information

As the name suggests this section of the front office provides information to guests. This section is manned by information assistant. In a small hotel the same function may be provided by the receptionist. The need of a separate information desk is felt in hotels having large number of rooms and the traffic of guest is higher.

Function of Information section

The information section of front office department performs a variety of functions. Some of them are as under:

- Maintaining resident guest rack
- Handling guest room keys
- Handling guest mails, telegrams, fax, courier, parcels etc.
- Provide information to guest regarding hotel facilities, services, city information etc.
- Handling guests messages
- Handling paging

3.4.4 Cash & bills

Cash and bills section of front office department records all guests' monetary transactions. This section maintains guest's folios and prepares the guest bills at the time of departure of the guest. This section is headed by cashier. This section performs the following tasks:

- Opening and maintaining guest folios
- Posting room charges in the guest folio
- Posting all credit charges in the guest folio
- Posting all cash received from the guest
- Preparing bills at the time of check-out

-
- Receives the cash, travelers cheques, demand draft for account settlement
 - Handles credit cards for settlement of guest account
 - Foreign currency exchange
-

3.4.5 Travel desk

The travel desk deals with the guest's needs of transportation, air-ticketing, railway reservations etcetera. The hotel may operate the travel desk or it may be outsourced to a external travel agency. The travel desk performs the following tasks:

- Air-port/ railway station pick-up and drop
- Providing vehicles to guest if demanded on the basis of pre-determined charges
- Making railway reservations/cancellations and amendments for guest
- Purchasing air-tickets for the guest
- Arranging the sightseeing tours

3.4.6 Communication

The communication section maintains a complex communications network. The hotel may have its own privet branch exchange along with Post &Telegraph lines. In olden days all out going calls were routed through operator. This was done to make proper accounting of the outgoing calls. Switchboard operators may also place wake-up calls and coordinate emergency communications. Now-a-days due to advancement in technology the guest are able to make out going calls without routing the operator. There is computerized call accounting system which charges the guest account if he makes an outgoing calls. The wake-up calls may also be registered on the system which dials the guest extension at registered time and plays pre-recorded message when answered. The telephone operators may also protect guests' privacy-and thereby contribute to the hotel's security program-by not revealing guestroom numbers to any other person. Many hotels also provide guest paging services over the public address system. These systems generally operate through communications section. Recent technological advancement in equipment have considerably decreased the responsibilities and workload of telephone operators

3.4.7 Bell Desk

Bell desk is located in a very close proximity of the entrance gate of the hotel. This section is headed by a bell captain. Bell boys and page boys are the team member of the bell desk. They handle the guest luggage from their entry in hotel porch to their rooms at the time of arrival and from their rooms to lobby and then to the guest vehicle at the time of their departure. The bell desk person is the last front desk employee who comes in guest contact at the time of departure of guest. The bell desk performs the following tasks:

- Handling guest luggage
- Locating guest in a specified area of the hotel (paging)
- Posting guest mails.
- Making sundry purchase for the guest

- Keeping guest luggage in left luggage room
- Escorting guest to their rooms
- Educating guest about functions of weather control, using in-house telephone directory.
- Providing information to guest about hotel facilities and services when asked by guest

3.4.8 Concierges

The concept of concierges came from the European royalty days; the concierge was the castle doorkeeper. His duty was to ensure that all castle occupants are safely locked in their rooms at night. When the royal families were traveling they often took their concierges with them for security and food and lodging arrangements. As hotel industry grew they became a part of the hotel staff to provide personalized services to the hotel guest. The concierge provides following services to hotel guest:

- Making reservations for dining in famous restaurants
- Obtaining tickets for theater and sporting events
- Arranging for transportation by limousine, car, couches, busses, airplane, or train
- Providing information on cultural and social events and local points of tourist interest

3.5 Front Office staff Organization

The front office staff organization is deliberately designed to achieve objectives of the organization. It refers to the structure of well defined jobs, each bearing a definite authority, responsibility, and accountability. The organization structure is built upon the following pillars:

- Division of labor
- Span of control

The front office staff organization will depend upon the size of the hotel. A medium size/small hotel may have the organization structure as depicted in figure 3.1a and 3.1b.

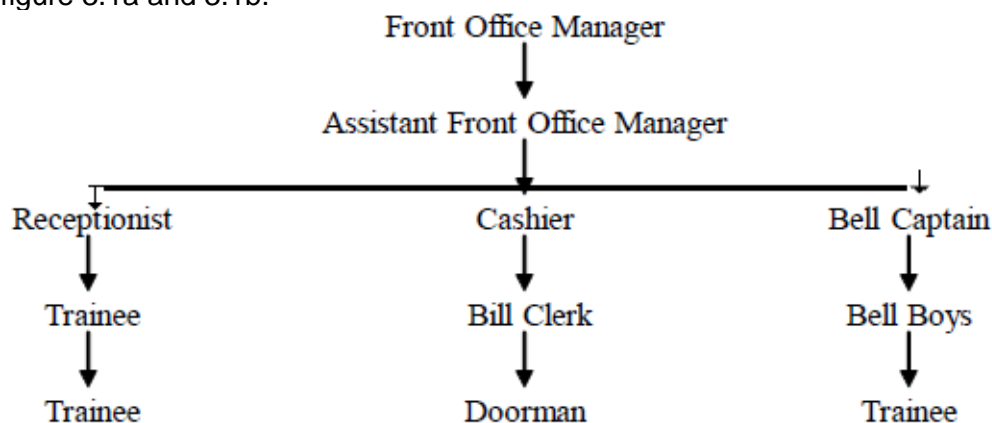


Figure 3.1a Organization structure of front office department of a small hotel

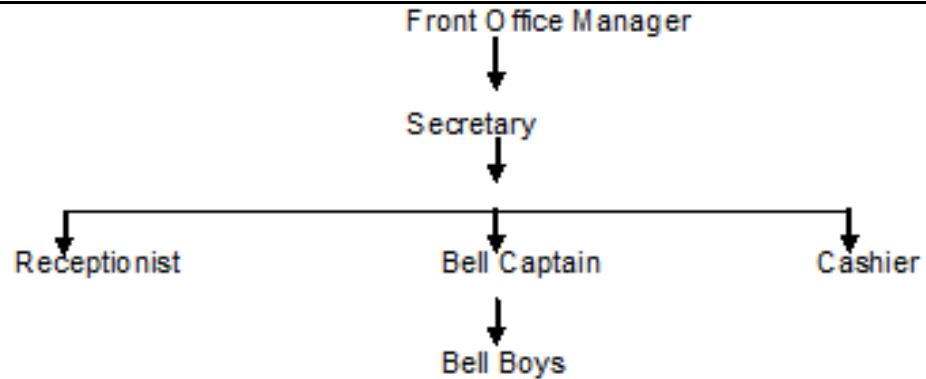


Figure 3.1b Organization structure of front office department of a small hotel

The staff organization of a large hotel will feature more complex hierarchy. For efficient operation of the department it may have more section. The organization chart will have more lateral and vertical positions. The staff organization chart of a large hotel is illustrated in figure 3.2.

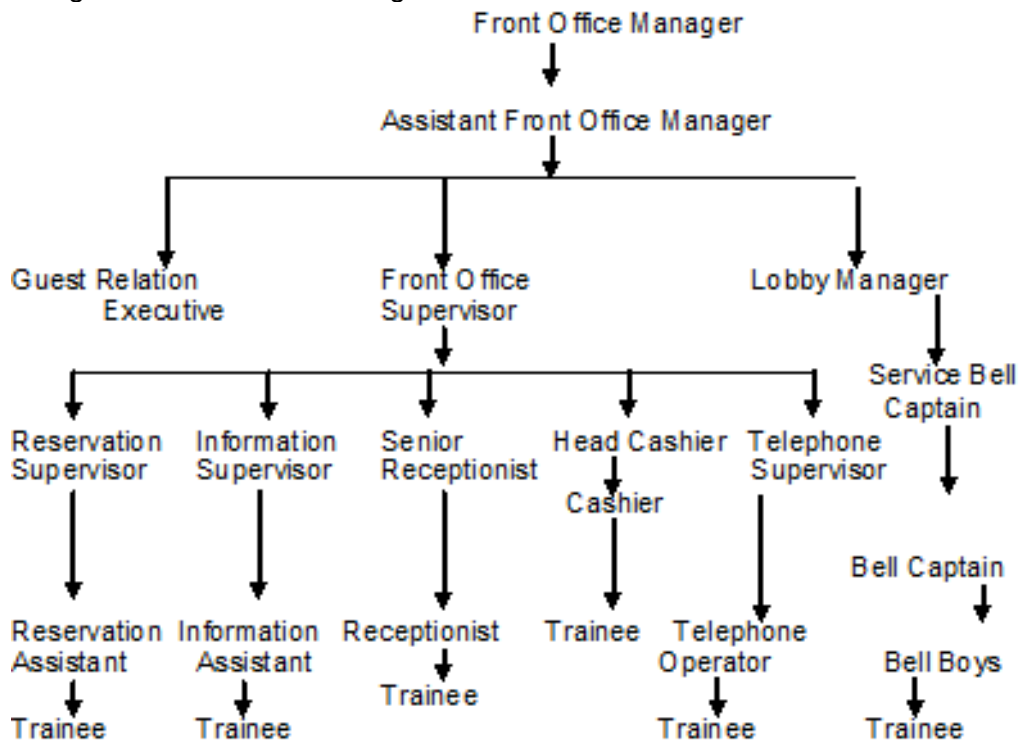


Figure 3.2 Front Office Organization of a Large Hotel

3.6 Chapter Summary

Front office is the department is the hub of activities that takes between guest and hotel. The employees of front office department are probably the first person to interact with the guest. This interaction starts with the processing reservation request and continues from stages of arrival, stay, departure, and even after

departure when hotel has to send mails received for the guest. The department is organized in to sections on the basis of task performed by the employees of each section. The sections like reception, information, cash and Bills, Bell Desk, Travel desk etc. are located in the lobby within the close proximity of the entrance gate. The department is organized on the principle of division of labor.

The major sections of front office department are reservation, reception, information, cash & bills, travel desk, bell desk, concierge, telephone exchange are located as per requirement. The department which requires immediate access of the guest like reception, information, cash and bills etc. are located in front of the house and which does not requires the direct access of the guest are located at the back of the house.

3.7 Terminal Questions

1. Discuss the role of front office in a hotel.
2. Discuss the different section of front office department.
3. What role does reservation plays in maximizing revenue of the hotel?
4. What are the functions performed at information desk?
5. What role a cashier plays in front office department?
6. Concierge provides personalized guest services. Comment.
7. Bell boys are the protector of the hotel properties. Comment.
8. Explain the duties and responsibilities of front office manager?
9. What are the duties and responsibilities of Reservation Manager?

UNIT 04: FRONT OFFICE LAYOUT AND EQUIPMENTS

Structure

- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Front Office Department
- 4.4 Layout of Front Office
 - 4.4.1 Lobby
 - 4.4.2 Reservation
 - 4.4.3 Reception
 - 4.4.4 Information
 - 4.4.5 Cash & bills
 - 4.4.6 Travel desk
 - 4.4.7 Communication
 - 4.4.8 Bell Desk
 - 4.4.9 Concierge
- 4.5 Equipments Used in Front Office
 - 4.5.1 Manual equipments used in front office
 - 4.5.2 Semi-automated equipments used in front office
 - 4.5.3 Automated equipments used in front office
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Check your progress
- 4.8 Suggested readings

4.1 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to understand following:

- Different sections of front office department
- Layout of front office department
- Equipments used in front office department

4.2 Introduction

Front office is the first department of hotel which comes in guest contact, at the time of guest arrival and the last department when they depart from the hotel. This department performs the various functions like reservation, reception, registration, room assignment and bills settlement of a resident guest. The guest remains in contact of front desk for information and any kind of help. Thus we can say that the Front Office is the hub of hotel operations.

This chapter is aimed to provide a good understanding on the part of the organization of the front office department. In this chapter we will study the functional organization of the front office department, sections of front office, front

office staff organization, qualities and attributes of front office staff, and job description & job specification of few front office personnel.

4.3 The Front Office Department

Front office is the department of a hotel where the guest interacts with the hotel staff first time and develops the first impression about the level of services, standard, facilities and hospitality. The front office department is also known as front of the house. This is the department whose employees are frequently in direct contact with the guest. The front desk should be located at a prominent point in the lobby. The hotel guests come to the front desk for registration; rate and room assignments; inquire about hotel services, facilities, and the city or surrounding area; and to check out. Apart from these services the front desk also provides the services like handling guests mail, message, maintaining guest accounts, paging (locating the guest within hotel), arranging the travel services, and various other services as per guests requirement. Thus the front office department performs following functions:

- Selling of the hotel rooms to guests
- Accepts advance booking of the rooms
- Receiving and registering the guests when they arrive at the hotel and assign them room
- Coordinate guest services
 - Mail and message handling
 - Locating guest within hotel premises(paging)
 - Connecting guest telephone calls
 - Keeping valuables in safety deposit lockers
 - Room keys handling
 - Sundry payments on behalf of guest
- Provide information about:
 - The facilities and services provided by the hotel
 - The City
 - Happening of any events or attractions of interest to guests
 - Places of tourist interest
- Maintaining accurate room status information
- Maintaining guest accounts and monitor credit
- Preparation of guest account statements
- Settlement of guest account at the time of departure

4.4 Layout of front office department

Layout is the physical demarcation of the sections of the department. The layout of the front office department should be carefully done to improve the efficiency and control of the front office personnel. A properly designed layout of the department results in proper space utilization. The front office layout includes the area of the department like Lobby, Reservation, Reception, Information, Cash & bills, Travel desk, Communication , and Uniformed services

The figure 4.1 illustrates the layout of the front office department of hotel.

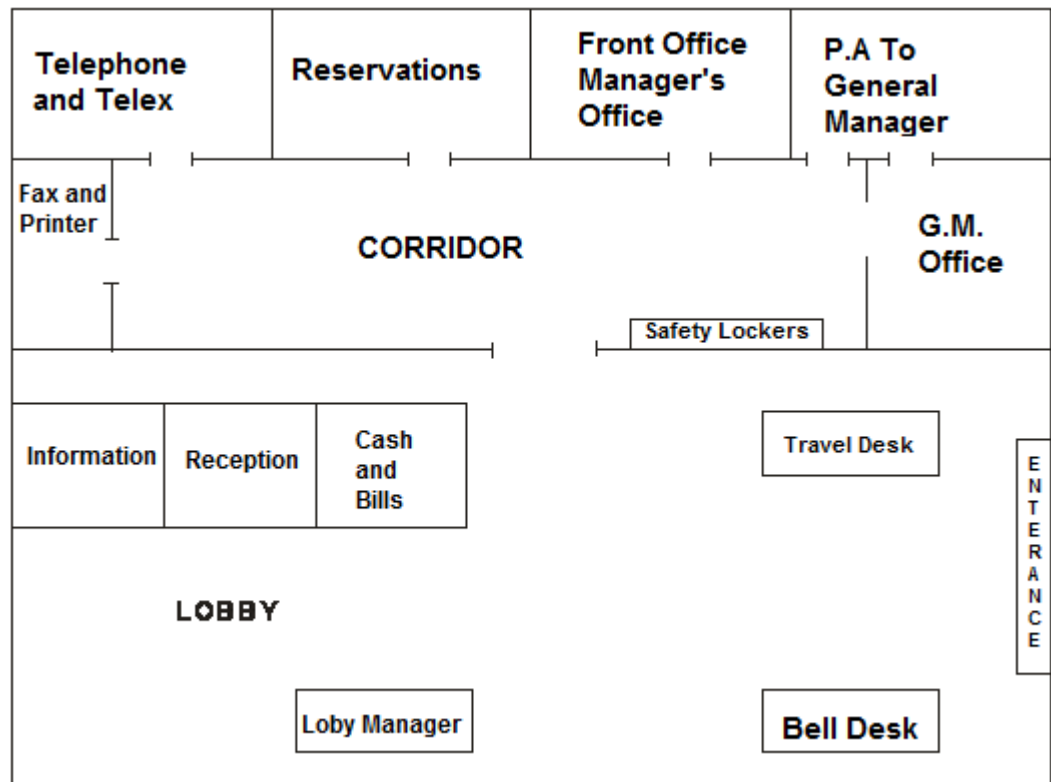


Figure 4.1 layout of the front office department of hotel

4.4.1 Lobby

According to oxford advanced learners dictionary 'lobby is an area just inside a large building, where people can meet and wait'. The hotel lobby is an area furnished with seating arrangements and is used as common place for meeting and waiting by the hotel guests. Lobby is located immediately upon entry into the hotel building. The front office is located within the premises of the lobby. The lobby is an important place in the hotel as it is the first and last point of guest contact with hotel. Hence, a considerable amount of fund is invested by the owner to make the lobby aesthetically appealing to the guest. A well-appointed lobby creates the impression about the overall standard of the hotel in the eyes of the guest. The lobby is managed by the lobby manager.

4.4.2 Reservations

Traveling to a place other than home town urge the need of a safe and comfortable place to stay. Now-a -days peoples are traveling too frequently due to advent of safer and faster modes of transport. Peoples while planning their trips to other places prefer to be sure that they will have a suitable accommodation when they reach at destination. This can be achieved by making an advance booking of the hotel room.

Reservation section of front office department of the hotel is responsible for receiving and processing the reservation queries. Depending upon the level of automation, volume of business, and house customs the procedure of processing

reservation queries may differ from hotel to hotel in terms reservations handling, maintenance of reservation records, confirmation, amendments, and cancellation of reservation.

4.4.3 Reception

According to oxford dictionary “reception is a place inside the entrance of a hotel or office building where guests or visitors go when they first arrive”. This section of front office receives and welcomes the guests at their arrival in the hotel. The personnel of this section receive all necessary information about the guest to complete the registration formality. After completing the registration formalities, room is assigned to the guest and bell boy carries the guest luggage and escorts the guest to his room. . The entire process should be carried out in professional way in a warm and friendly atmosphere to create a positive guest impression.

4.4.4 Information

As the name suggests this section of the front office provides information to guests. This section is manned by information assistant. In a small hotel the same function may be provided by the receptionist. The need of a separate information desk is felt in hotels having large number of rooms and the traffic of guest is higher.

4.4.5 Cash & bills

Cash and bills section of front office department records all guests’ monetary transitions. This section maintains guest’s folios and prepares the guest bills at the time of departure of the guest. This section is headed by cashier. This section performs the following tasks:

- Opening and maintaining guest folios
- Posting room charges in the guest folio
- Posting all credit charges in the guest folio
- Posting all cash received from the guest
- Preparing bills at the time of check-out
- Receives the cash, travelers cheques, demand draft for account settlement
- Handles credit cards for settlement of guest account
- Foreign currency exchange

4.4.6 Travel desk

The travel desk deals with the guest’s needs of transportation, air-ticketing, railway reservations et cetera. The hotel may operate the travel desk or it may be outsourced to a external travel agency. The travel desk performs the following tasks:

- Air-port/ railway station pick-up and drop
- Providing vehicles to guest if demanded on the basis of pre-determined charges
- Making railway reservations/cancellations and amendments for guest
- Purchasing air-tickets for the guest
- Arranging the sight-seeing tours

4.4.7 Communication

The communication section maintains a complex communications network. The hotel may have its own private branch exchange along with Post & Telegraph lines. In earlier days all outgoing calls were routed through operator. This was done to make proper accounting of the outgoing calls. Switchboard operators may also place wake-up calls and coordinate emergency communications. Now-a-days due to advancement in technology the guest are able to make outgoing calls without routing the operator. There is computerized call accounting system which charges the guest account if he makes an outgoing calls. The wake-up calls may also be registered on the system which dials the guest extension at registered time and plays pre-recorded message when answered. The telephone operators may also protect guests' privacy-and thereby contribute to the hotel's security program-by not revealing guestroom numbers to any other person. Many hotels also provide guest paging services over the public address system. These systems generally operate through communications section. Recent technological advancement in equipment have considerably decreased the responsibilities and workload of telephone operators.

4.4.8 Bell Desk

Bell desk is located in a very close proximity of the entrance gate of the hotel. This section is headed by a bell captain. Bell boys and page boys are the team member of the bell desk. They handle the guest luggage from their entry in hotel porch to their rooms at the time of arrival and from their rooms to lobby and then to the guest vehicle at the time of their departure. The bell desk person is the last front desk employee who comes in guest contact at the time of departure of guest. The bell desk performs the following tasks:

- Handling guest luggage
 - Locating guest in a specified area of the hotel (paging)
 - Posting guest mails.
 - Making sundry purchase for the guest
 - Keeping guest luggage in left luggage room
 - Escorting guest to their rooms
 - Educating guest about functions of weather control, using in-house telephone directory.
 - Providing information to guest about hotel facilities and services when asked by guest
-

4.4.9 Concierge

The concept of concierges came from the European royalty days; the concierge was the castle doorkeeper. His duty was to ensure that all castle occupants are safely locked in their rooms at night. When the royal families were traveling they often took their concierges with them for security and food and lodging arrangements. As hotel industry grew they became a part of the hotel staff to provide personalized services to the hotel guest. The concierge provides following services to hotel guest:

- Making reservations for dining in famous restaurants
 - Obtaining tickets for theater and sporting events
-

- Arranging for transportation by limousine, car, couches, busses, airplane, or train
- Providing information on cultural and social events and local points of tourist interest

4.5 Equipments Used in Front Office

For carrying out all day to day work many types of equipment are used in front office department. They can be grouped in to following broad categories:

- Manual equipments
- Semi-automated equipments
- Automated equipments

4.5.1 Manual Equipments Used in Front Office

ROOM RACK

- The room rack is large front office equipment located just behind the front desk.
- The room rack is a wooden framework designed and contains a metallic array of pockets which contain a large number of room rack slips for showing the reservation and housekeeping status of each guestroom of a property.
- The room rack slip contained in the metallic pockets shows the type of room (Double, Twin, King, Suite), the occupancy status of the guestroom (occupied, Vacant, not cleared) and the name of the guest registered in the guestroom.
- The current occupancy status of the guestrooms is indicated by the coloured strips inserted in the pockets of the room rack.
- It is the joint effort of the front desk and housekeeping to timely update the room rack in order to have an accurate room status position.

INFORMATION RACK

- The information rack is another important device positioned in the front desk and is used by the front desk agent to track the various in-house guests of the hotel.
- The Information is a revolving device that contains information about the various guests presently registered in the hotel with the name of the guests alphabetically arranged in the rack and the information taken from the upper portion of the folios of the guests.
- The Information contained in the information rack are name of the guest, number and type of room occupied, rate of the guestroom, date of arrival and departure and the billing instructions.

MAIL AND MESSAGE RACK

- The mail and message rack is a wooden framework containing an array of pigeonholes with each pigeonhole used to store the various mails and messages received for an in-house guest.
- Previously, the mail and message rack used to contain the keys of the guestrooms in the pigeonholes and was thus called the mail, message and key rack
- But nowadays, the mail rack has been isolated from the key rack and has been moved behind scenes to present a more professional appearance and at the same time ensuring the security of the mails and message of the guests of the hotel.

KEY RACK OR KEY DRAWER

- The key rack or the key drawer is important front office equipment located underneath the counter of the front desk.
- The key rack as the name suggests, is a wooden or metallic framework containing an array of slots used for keeping the keys of the guestrooms in sequential order of the guestrooms present in the hotel.
- This rack is maintained by the front desk in hotels where metal or hard keys are used and is thus essential front desk equipment for such hotels.

FOLIO WELL OR FOLIO BUCKET

- A folio well or folio bucket is also an important equipment used in the front desk cash section.
- This equipment contains a large number of slots where the folios are arranged sequentially according to the room number.
- The folio well is used by the front office cashier to store and tack the folios of the various registered guests of the hotel and is used to maintain the folios safely for future use and reference.

4.5.2 Semi-Automated Equipments Use in Front Office

POSTING MACHINE

- The accounting posting machine is very essential equipment used in the semi-automated front office system for posting the various charges in the accounts of the guests.
- The posting machine is generally used to calculate the totals of the guest accounts, departments and transactions.
- The mechanical features of the accounting posting machine are arranged in such a logical sequence the job of posting the charges into the various guest accounts becomes very easy.
- The line pick-up keys ensures that the posting machine is not over printing a line as the operator indicates where the accounting posting machine should start the calculation and should start printing.

- There is a key pad in the account posting machine which is used by the cashier or the operator to enter the room numbers of the guests, department key (e.g. room, tax, food) and also the type of transaction (e.g. debit, credit, transfer)

CASH REGISTER

- The cash register is semi-automated equipment used optionally by the front desk.
- The cash register is generally used by the front desk to record the various sales of sundries at the front desk such as stamps, newspapers, candy etc.
- The various required mechanical features present in the cash register include a key pad, category key (stamps, newspapers, candy) and amount entering key.

WAKE UP DEVICES

- The wake up device is a very important device used by the front desk or the telephone exchange of non-automated hotels to remind the staffs of awakening the guests at requested times.
- The most famous and common wake- up device is known as the James Remindo timer which is an alarm clock with pull out pins.
- Many hotels also use a simple alarm clock for awakening the guests. The guests' requests for wake up calls are recorded in a wake-up sheet with the information of time, room number and name of the guest.
- In fully automated systems, the telephone exchange automatically places the various requests of the guests for wake –up calls by automatic- voice-recorded wake- up messages. This feature is of great help when many guests have to woken up at the same time on the hotel.

CREDIT CARD IMPRINTER

- The credit card imprinter is very important equipment used for the purpose of front office accounting.
- The equipment is used especially when the guests present credit cards at the time of their arrival or departure to settle their bill.
- The credit card imprinter makes an imprint of the credit card used by the guest as a method of payment.

TYPEWRITER

- The typewriter is very important semi-automated equipment used for preparing various documents related to the front office operations and also related to the guests.
- The front office employees use typewriters to prepare guest reservations confirmation letter, to prepare the registration card of the guest and also to conduct the other word processing jobs of the department.

4.5.3 Automated Equipments Used in Front Office

CREDIT CARD VALIDATOR

Computerized telephone system which allows the proper billings of the outgoing calls of the guests. The credit card validator is automated front office equipment used by the front office cashier to check the validity of the credit card presented by the guest as mode of payment at the time of arrival or departure of the guest.

- This equipment is a computer terminal linked to a credit card data bank, which holds information concerning the validity of the credit card of the guest.
- The credit card equipment assures the hotel management that the guest has credit balance high enough to cover the projected charges and it also verifies that the card presented by the guest is not a stolen property.

TIME STAMPING MACHINE

- The time stamping is a mechanical or an electronic device which is used extensively by the front office of a hotel, records the check-in check-out time of the guests, delivery time of any mail or message for the in-house guests.
- This device imprints the date and time on a piece of paper either electronically or mechanically and is thus important equipment for carrying out the operations of the front office leading to guest satisfaction.

FAX MACHINES

- The full form of FAX machines is Facsimile Automates Xerox machine and is important electronic equipment used in the front desk for communication purposes.
- This a facsimile reproduction equipment that operates through telephone lines and are used extensively by the front office to receive and send official documents important from point of view of the guest or the hotel management at large.
- While sending a fax message, the operator dials the destination fax machine number and then sends the fax message by inserting the message page in the machine.
- It is important that the destination fax machine should be switched on when the fax message is sent from the hotel.

CALL ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

- A call accounting system is a fully
- This type of automated telephone system has been introduced in a large number of hotels nowadays due to the reason for providing improved services to the guest.
- The call accounting system is called APBX or Automated Private Branch Exchange and is used in the hotel telephone exchange

section of the front office department to automatically trace and bill the outgoing calls made by the guests during their stay at the hotel.

COMPUTER

- All the automated hotels around the world are excessively using computers for the day to day operations, administrations and management.
- Computers are also widely used in the front office departments of the hotels for the purpose of reservations, registration, accounting and auditing.
- Computers are efficient to operate and are extremely user friendly and thus help the employees to store and retrieve important data of the guest from time to time to carry out the various guest services.

4.6 Summary

This unit described the different types of equipments and machines used in the front Office department of a hotel. The factors considered while selecting these machines and the location of these equipments and machines in the front office department is also discussed.

4.7 Check your progress

Fill in the blanks

- 1)The room rack is large front office equipment located just behind the _____.
- 2)All the automated hotels around the world are excessively using _____ for the day to day operations.
- 3)The full form of FAX machines is _____ machine.
- 4)_____ device records the check-in check-out time of the guests
- 5)The most famous and common wake- up device is known as the _____.

True/false

- 1)NCR and credit card imprinter is an automated device.[T/F]
- 2)Key rack is maintained by the front desk in hotels where Electronic keys are used. .[T/F]
- 3)The room rack slip contained in the metallic pockets shows the type of room, the occupancy status of the guestroom and the name of the guest registered in the guestroom. .[T/F]
- 4)The cash register is generally used by the front desk to record the various sales of sundries at the front desk. .[T/F]
- 5)The size of the hotel and the level of automation play an important role in the choice of equipments for a hotel. .[T/F]

Question

- 1) Explain the factors to be kept in mind while selecting the various equipments and machines in a hotel.
- 2) List and explain the different types of racks found in hotels.

ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**Fill in the blanks**

- 1) Front desk, 2) computers, 3) Facsimile Automated Xerox, 4) The time stamping, 5) James Remindo timer

True/false

- 1) [F], 2) [F], 3) [T], 4) [T], 5) [T]

4.8 Suggested Readings

1. Tewari Jatashankar R., 2009. "Front Office Operations and Management" Oxford University Press, New Delhi
2. Bhatnagar, S.K. 2002. Front Office Management, Frank Bros. & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.

UNIT 05: JOB DESCRIPTION OF FRONT OFFICE PERSONNEL

Structure

- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Duties and Responsibilities of Front Office Staff
- 5.4 Job Description & Specification of Front Office Staff
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Answers to check your progress
- 5.7 Suggested reading
- 5.8 Review questions

5.1 Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- Discuss the role of key personnel in front office
- Explain job description and specification of main positions
- Describe the duties and responsibilities of front office staff

5.2 Introduction

A job description is a journal document that stipulates the duties and responsibilities of a job holder and certain aspects that are expected of him to be able to perform one's duties. Every establishment has its own policies to what it wants to document in a job description. The job description could include working hours, workplace limits, equipment handled and salary grade. Job description statements are essential and useful in the regular functioning of all organizations.

5.3 Duties and Responsibilities of Front Office Staff

Front Office Manager

He is the in charge of the front office department and allocates the available resources of the department to achieve the required goals of the department and the organization. His main function is to supervise all the front office staff and to ensure proper and smooth functioning.

Assistant Manager

He reports to front office manager. He organize supervise and train all front office staff, so that they can provide quick and personalized services to the guests, which help the establishment in maximizing the revenue.

Front Office Supervisor

He reports to Assistant front Office manager the is responsible for organizing and supervising a shift and providing fast and efficient front desk service.

Receptionist

The main function of a receptionist is to receive guests and answer their queries.

Reservation Assistant

He process the reservation requests that reach the hotel by any mode i.e. written, telephone, online; depending on the availability of desired room type, they confirm, wait list or deny the reservation request of the quest.

Information Assistant

Provide information to guest about the hotel. They also handle guests mails and messages and provide other services.

Cashier

He posts guest jobs accurately and promptly from reservation outlet. Settle guests account either by cash or credit when they departure.

Bell Boy

He transport guest's luggage at the time of check in and check out. Escort guests to their rooms and tell them about room facilities and other hotel services.

Night Auditor

He audit daily income from hotel operation and prepare reports for readers.

Door Attendant

He opens the door of the guest's vehicles on their arrival. Also opens the hotel's main entrance for him.

Check Your Progress – I

Answer the following questions:

Q. 1What is the duty of Front Office Manager?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Q. 2Write a short note on Reservation Assistant?

.....

.....

.....

5.4 Job description & Job Specification of Front office Staff

Job description is a written description of the duties and responsibilities performed by employees. The job description could include working hours, work place limits, equipment handling and salary grade etc. This is essential and useful in the regular functioning of all organization

Benefits of Job Description:

- The employee knows what his job entails and can perform to those requirements.
- It acts as an important part of orientation performs.
- It acts as a legal document journey disputes.
- It protects employee from unreasonable superior wanting to victimize his subordinate by overburdening.
- It is the basis of expectations of the organization from the individual.
- Acts a basic foundation to set standards of performance for staff.

Job Specification

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Job Title | : | Indicates Job by Name |
| 2 | Category | : | Entry should be Management or Non-management |
| 3 | Educational Qualification | : | Tell about Educational Requirement |
| 4 | Physical Qualification | : | Indicate if job requires special physical traits |
| 5 | Age Limits | : | Give a range of age, taking into consideration minimum age permissible. |
| 6 | Equipment Skill | : | Illustrate if job requires equipment handling |
| 7 | Mental Qualification | : | Indicate any mental requirement as simple accounting etc. |
| 8 | Language Skills | : | Note the language that the potential candidate must know. |
| 9 | Previous Experience Required | : | Illustrate minimum experience required. |

FRONT OFFICE MANAGER: He directs and coordinates the activities of the front office department; which includes room reservations, mail and information etc. He directly supervises all the front office staff and insure proper and smoother functioning.

Job Description

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|------------------------|
| Title of Position | : | Front Office Manager |
| Reports to | : | General Manager |
| Supervises | : | All Front Office Staff |
-

| | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Coordinates with | : | Executive Housekeeper, Food and Beverage Manager, Night Manager, Chief Engineer, Human Resource Manager, Sales and Marketing Manager, Accounts Manager, Banquet Manager |
| Housekeeping | : | for cleaning of rooms |
| Accounts | : | for budgets and depositing daily sales |
| security and safety | : | for Security |
| Marketing | : | for room sales and promotions |

Supervisor: Assistant Manager, Front Office Supervisor, Reservation Agents, Lobby Manager, Guests Relation Executives.

Authority Limits: Discipline of Staff, Can Provide complimentary rooms

Job Responsibilities

1. Directs and coordinates the activities of the front office department.
2. Maintain discipline and conduct staff appraisals regularly or as per policy.
3. Conduct daily department meetings to ensure two way communication, training and policy information.
4. Must understand the functions of and be able to cooperate with closely related departments such as housekeeping, sales, food and beverage service etc.
5. Ensure the safety and hygiene of the front office and its staff.
6. Resolve guest and staff complaints as smoothly as possible.
7. Prepare the budget for the front office department.
8. Coordinate with housekeeping and engineering to ensure room availability for sale.
9. Evaluate the job / performance of each front office employee.
10. Responsible for hiring, training, supervising and disciplinary all front desk reservation and guest services staff members in order to maintain the desired standards of service.

Job Specification

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Job Title | : | Front Office Manager |
| Category | : | Management |
| Age Limit | : | 30 to 45 years. Higher age will be considered on individual merits |
| Physical Qualifications | : | Healthy and Sturdy |
| Mental Qualifications | : | Able to prepare budget |
| Personality | : | Must display leadership skills |
| Consideration | | |
| Language Skill | : | Written and Spoken English and Hindi and the local language |
| Special Requirement | : | Should be good at managing resources of money, materials, space, time, me and equipment. |
| Minimum Educational Qualification | : | Diploma in Hotel Management |

Experience : Minimum 10 years experience

ASSISTANT FRONT OFFICE MANAGER: He is responsible for organizing, supervising and training all front office staff, to provide quick and personalized guest service which help establishment in maximizing room service.

Job Description

Title of Position : Assistant Front Office Manager
Reports to : Front Office Manager
Supervises : Front Office Supervisors, reservation agents and concierge.

Coordinates with
Housekeeping : for preparation of rooms for sale
Engineering : for maintenance of front office
Lobby Bell Desk : for quest baggage movement
Accounts : for depositing room sales
Telecommunications : for services to the department and guest's rooms

Information : On all front office hardware, software etc.
Technology

Supervisor: Front Office Supervisor, Front Office Agents, Reservation Agents and Concierge

Authority Limits: Initiates the performance appraisals of staff for the final approval of the manager

Job Responsibilities

- 1.He assists front office manager in supervising and coordinating front office operations.
- 2.Perform responsibilities of front office manager in his absence.
- 3.Conduct daily briefing using it as a vehicle for a two way communication, training.
- 4.Allot daily duties to subordinate staff to meet work exigencies.
- 5.Motivate Staff.
- 6.Ensure proper coordination with other department for effective functioning.
- 7.Organize the training of staff for meeting the standards of service.
- 8.Represent management in the important area of guest relation.
- 9.May correspond with guest concerning special reservations.
- 10.Must be thoroughly familiar with hotel procedures and policy.
- 11.Check the daily arrivals and departures at the hotel and tally with room position.
- 12.Control costs of supplies.
- 13.Motivate staff.
- 14.Attend guest's complaints and ensure guest satisfaction through immediate and correct action.
- 15.Develop room sales through up selling.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Job Title | : Assistant Manager |
| Category | : Management |
| Physical Qualifications | : Healthy and Sturdy |
| Educational Qualification | : Diploma in Hotel Management |
| Personality | : Should display leadership skills |
| Consideration | : |
| Language Skill | : Written and Spoken English and Hindi and the local language |
| Special Requirement | : Thorough knowledge of front office system and procedure. |
| Experience | : Minimum 3 years experience |

FRONT OFFICE SUPERVISOR: He organizes and supervises the shift, in such a manner so that can provide fast and efficient front desk service.

Job Description

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Title of Position | : Front Office Supervisor |
| Reports to | : Front Office Manager/Assistant FO Manager |
| Supervises | : Front Office agents |

Coordinates with

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Housekeeping | : for preparation of rooms for sale |
| Engineering | : for front desk fittings and equipment maintenance |
| Lobby Bell Desk | : for quest baggage movement |
| Store | : for requisition of supplies |
| Telephones | : for rooms updates |

Supervisor: Front Office Agents

Authority Limits: Only advisory to Assistant Manager

Job Responsibilities

- 1.Ensure that all staff report on time in proper uniform and well groomed.
- 2.Check arrivals and departures.
- 3.Check statistical data such as occupancy, Room report, Guest Folios, Daily room revenue, VIP list etc.
- 4.Assist in registering guests during busy periods.
- 5.Take over the previous shift and check the log book for follow up actions.
- 6.Check all equipments, whether working correctly or not.
- 7.Check guest mail and packages.
- 8.Assign duties ensuring equal distribution of work load during a shift.
- 9.Ensure staff meets hygiene and discipline standards.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Job Title | : Front Office Supervisor |
| Educational Qualification | : Diploma in Hotel Management |
| Physical Qualifications | : Healthy and Sturdy |
| Experience | : Direct recruit from IHM with 6 month orientation |
| Language Skill | : Written and Spoken English and Hindi and the local language |

Special Requirement : Thorough knowledge of front office system and procedure, Guest Complaint Handling Skills.

RECEPTIONIST: The basis function of receptionist is to receive guests and answer guests queries.

Job Description

Title of Position : Receptionist
Reports to : Front Office Supervisor

Job Responsibilities

1. Greet guests on their arrival.
2. Confirm guest's details with confirmed reservation.
3. Complete guest's registration formalities.
4. Check room availability for walk in guest.
5. Assign rooms and call the bell boy to escort guests to their rooms.
6. Post all the credit charges to the guests folio.
7. Notify housekeeping department of all check-outs, late check out, early check in and special requests.
8. Process reservation requests of guests if directed by the reservation section.

Job Specification

Job Title : Receptionist
Educational Qualification : Diploma in Hotel Management
Category : Non-Management
Physical Qualifications : Sturdy
Experience : One month training
Language Skill : Hindi, English and local language

RESERVATION ASSISTANT: He receives room reservation requests and records them accurately for future reference, as per the procedures laid down by management.

Job Description

Title of Position : Reservation Assistant
Reports to : Assistant FO Manager
Supervises : Trainee assigned

Coordinates with

Travel Agencies : Travel agents, airlines etc. for room bookings
Housekeeping : For cleaning reservation area
Store : for requisition of supplies

Job Responsibilities: Handle reservation requests from various media and sources as per standards procedures.

1. Attend briefings at the beginning of the shift.
2. Maintain guest history sheets.
3. Up sell rooms to generate revenue.
4. Keep room status board and database update at all times.

5. Carry out amendments and cancellations of reservations accurately.
6. Keep availability status chart updated.

Limit of Authority: Can take reservation and confirm bookings as per procedures.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Job Title | : Receptionist |
| Educational Qualification | : Diploma in Hotel Management |
| Category | : Non-Management |
| Physical Qualifications | : Sturdy |
| Experience | : One month training |
| Language Skill | : Hindi, English and local language |

FRONT OFFICE CASHIER: He prepares bills and present the same for settlement at the time of departure. He posts guest charges into guest folios accurately from various revenue outlets.

Job Description

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Title of Position | : Front Office Cashier |
| Reports to | : General Cashier |
| Supervises | : None |

Coordinates with

| | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| Lobby | : For clearance of Baggage from lobby |
| FO Agent | For guest arrival to open guest folio |
| F&B Out-lets | : for receive cash & credit sales |

Limit of Authority: Can refuse to accept credit cards not accepted by the hotel. Give final clearance to bell boys to remove guest's baggage for departure guests.

Job Responsibilities

1. Handle paid out vouchers of guests.
2. Balance the cash and close the shift.
3. Open guest folio accurately for new arrivals.
4. Prepare front office cashier's report and other reports.
5. Coordinate with night auditor for the day audit.
6. Take over a shift and note any special instructions for a shift.
7. Issue safely deposits lockers to guest according to procedures.
8. Maintain guest's weekly bills.
9. Check the cash bank at the beginning of each shift.
10. Settle guest bills ensuring that accurate cash is received.
11. Handle credit card payments through proper procedures.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Job Title | : Front Office Cashier |
| Physical Qualifications | : Sturdy |
| Experience | : Six month departmental training |
| Educational Qualification | : Bachelor of Commerce |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Language Skill | :Hindi, English |
| Special requirement | :Good at accounting, socially confident. |

NIGHT AUDITOR: He audit daily income from hotel corporations and prepare reports for review and discussion making.

Job Description

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Title of Position | : Night Auditor |
| Reports to | : Financial Controller |
| Supervises | : None |

Coordinates with

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Front Office Cashier | : For all transactions at the front office cash desk |
| Revenue Outlet | : For all financial transactions during their watch |
| Cashier | |
| F&B Out-lets | : for receive cash & credit sales |

Limit of Authority: May clarify with revenue outlet cashiers any discrepancies and ensure they are tallied.

Job Responsibilities

1. Verify and validate front office cashiers vouchers.
2. Prepare daily transcript
3. Tally all sales summaries of revenue outlets with bills.
4. Prepare account statements.
5. Audit night receptionist room report
6. Verify front office cashiers report.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Job Title | :Night Auditor |
| Educational Qualification | :Bachelor of Commerce |
| Physical Qualifications | :Sturdy |
| Language Skill | :Hindi, English |
| Experience | :Five years in Front Office audit |
| Special requirement | :Good at hotel accounting processes. |

LOBBY MANAGER: He represents the hotel management in the lobby and organizes; supervise all uniformed services in a shift.

Job Description

Title of Position:Lobby Manager

Reports to:Front Office Manager

Supervises:All uniformed Service Staff

Coordination with:

Front Office :support on all arrivals and departures

Cashier:guests billing matters

Authority Limits: Can make policy, decision on behalf of the management may converse with guest for proper coordination between them and hotel.

Job Responsibilities

1. Manage the discipline of the uniformed services.
2. Manage all guest complaints.
3. Train uniformed service staff.
4. Manage scanty baggage procedures.
5. Take staff briefing and ensure the lobby in clean and tidy.
6. Oversee the left luggage procedures and the safety of the left luggage room.
7. Take over shift from previous lobby manager.
8. Ensure the group and clean arrival and baggage movement is conducted efficiently.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Job Title | :Lobby Manager |
| Educational Qualification | :Diploma in Hotel Management |
| Experience | :Two years as management trainee |
| Physical Qualifications | :Sturdy |
| Language Skill | :Hindi, English, Local Language |
| Special requirement | :knowledge of FO systems & processes. |

SENIOR BELL CAPTAIN: Organize, supervise and control all uniformed services in the lobby.

Job Description

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Title of Position | : Senior Bell Captain |
| Reports to | : Lobby Manager |
| Supervises | : Bell Captain, Bell Boys, Doormen, Parking Attendants, Transport In charge |

Coordinates with

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Front Office | : Luggage transfer while arrival and departure |
| Lobby Manager | : For management instruction |
| Security | : Protect hotel properly |

Authority Limits: Can communicate with guests for the purpose of uniformed services. Maintain discipline and recommends any change in behaviour.

Job Responsibilities

1. Supervise bell captains.
2. Ensure that bell captains follow system procedures.
3. Train bell captain and bell boys.
4. Ensure lobby premises are kept clean at all times.

5. Ensure guest baggage is kept at appropriate designated places and is secure.
6. Assist Lobby Manager in the coordination of wake up calls.
7. Prepare staff schedules to meet the work requirement.
8. Assist bell captains with guest requests within policy.
9. Set daily briefing standards.
10. Attend guest complaints and take corrective actions.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Job Title | : Senior Bell Captain |
| Educational Qualification | : High School with preferably a Craft Course in Front Office |
| Physical Qualifications | : Healthy |
| Language Skill | : Hindi, English, Local Language |
| Experience | : Three years as a bell boy and one year as bell captain |
| Special requirement | : Thorough knowledge of lobby procedures. |

BELL CAPTAIN: He organizes, supervise and control all uniformed services in a shift.

Job Description

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Title of Position | : Bell Captain |
| Reports to | : Senior Bell Captain |
| Supervises | : Bell Boys |
| Coordinates with | |
| Front Office | : Luggage transfer while arrival and departure |
| Cashier | : For authorization to move guest baggage during departure |
| Housekeeping | : For cleanliness in lobby |

Authority Limits: Can communicate with a guest directly on matters of baggage movement etc.

Job Responsibilities

1. Conduct daily briefings of bell boys.
2. Handle left luggage formalities.
3. Supervise bell boys movement and make a record in lobby control sheet.
4. Attend guest complaints.
5. Arrange luggage neatly and safely in their assigned places.
6. Receive telephone calls at the bell desk.
7. Supervise paging services.
8. Coordinate
9. and control the distribution of daily newspapers.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Job Title | : Bell Captain |
| Educational Qualification | : High School |
| Physical Qualifications | : Healthy |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Language Skill | :Hindi, English, Local Language |
| Experience | :Three years as a bell boy |
| Special requirement | :Knowledge of lobby system & procedures. |

BELL BOYS: Bell boy carry guest luggage at the time of guest arrivals and departures and perform errands for them. Bell boy have to be well groomed, physically sturdy, courtesan and willing to help. Execute the movement of baggage of guests and also perform any other errands of guests.

Job Description

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Title of Position | : Bell Boy |
| Reports to | : Bell Captain |
| Supervises | : None |

Coordinates with

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Front Office Agent | : For authorization of room to a guest |
| Cashier | : For authorization to move guest baggage during departure |
| Housekeeping | : For exchange of personal uniforms |

Job Responsibilities

1. Handle guest arrival by receiving the guest baggage from the porch, escorting the guest with baggage and placing the baggage in rook rack.
2. Store and Handle lobby trolleys etc. carefully.
3. Distribution of daily newspapers to guest rooms.
4. Handle guest departure by bringing down the guest luggage from room and then from lobby to transport vehicle.
5. Report scanty baggage guests to bell captain.
6. Account for postage stamps sold to the guest.
7. Execute errands within and outside the hotel as directed by bell captain.
8. Complete left luggage formalities.

Authority Limits: He has the authority to enter guest rooms when directed, can communicate with guests can matters of guest baggage movement.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Job Title | :Bell Boys |
| Educational Qualification | :High School |
| Physical Qualifications | :Healthy |
| Language Skill | :Hindi, English, Local Language |
| Experience | :One Month on the job training. |
| Special requirement | :Team player, physically sturdy for duties. |

DOORMAN: He provides welcome, arrival and departure services to the guest at the front entrance.

Job Description

Title of Position: Doorman

Reports to: Bell Captain

Supervises: None

Coordination with

Bell Desk: to inform about guest arrival

Security: for porch surveillance

Authority Limits: Direct traffic at the hotel porch. May keep guest car keys

Job Responsibilities

1. Welcomes guest at the time of arrival.
2. Assist guest to unload baggage.
3. Escort guests to the registration desk.
4. Control traffic to avoid congestion.
5. Provide valet parking services.
6. Provide information on hotel facilities.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Job Title | : Doorman |
| Physical Qualifications | : Healthy and Sturdy |
| Language Skill | : Hindi, English & Local Language |
| Experience | : One week training. |
| Educational Qualification | : High School |

VALET PARKING ATTENDANT: He provides valet parking services to guests in a courteous manner ensuring car safety.

Job Description

Title of Position: Valet Parking Attendant

Reports to: Bell Captain

Supervises: None

Coordination with:

Doorman: for guest parking request

Authority Limits: May take possession of guest car keys for safe keeping.

Job Responsibilities

1. Should have knowledge about various cars and their driving features.
2. Keep car keys in safe custody.
3. Prepare car parking tickets.
4. Hand over keys against valid tickets.
5. Assist doorman in controlling traffic.

Job Specification

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Job Title | :Valet Parking Attendant |
| Education Qualification | :High School |
| Physical Qualifications | :Sturdy |
| Language Skill | :Hindi, English |
| Experience | :One year driving experience. |
| Special Requirement | :Good knowledge about various cars. |

CONCIERGE: He provides information services and other help to guests as per the standards of the establishment.

Job Description

Title of Position:Concierge
 Reports to:Lobby Manager
 Supervises:In some hotels supervise uniformed service staff
 Coordination with:
 Bell Desk:for errands on behalf of the guests.

Job Responsibilities

1. Provide personal services of guests.
2. Provide confirm airline, bus or train ticket.
3. Receive incoming calls and record messages for guests.
4. Handling guest's mails, courriers etc.
5. Develop contact with city services to facilitate guests.
6. Coordinate with bell boys to page guests in hotel.

Authority Limit: Develop contacts with essential city services to get their cooperation when needed.

Job Specification

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Job Title | Concierge |
| Education Qualification | Graduate |
| Physical Qualifications | Healthy |
| Language Skill | Hindi, English, Local language and also other foreign languages |
| Experience | Three months departmental training |
| Special Requirement | Physically sturdy for active week |

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – II

Answer the following questions:

Q. 1 What is job description of Front Office Manager?

2. What is the job specification of Bell boy?

5.5 Summary

The organization of a large hotel with a large number of employees, guests and rooms is very difficult task, it is very important to do a proper planning. Division of work is done on the basis of the size of the organization. Front Office manage to bell boys everyone should be aware of their jobs and their limitations. For the efficient and smooth functioning of the front office department it is important to list out the individual duties and responsibilities of the staff.

5.6 Answer to check your progress

Check your progress – I

- See section 5.2
- See section 5.2

Check your progress – II

- See section 5.3
- See section 5.3

5.7 Suggested Readings

- S.K. Bhatnagar, Front Office Management
- Jatashankar R. Tewali, Hotel Front Office Operations and Management.
- Front Office Manual 1 years, IHM Bhopal

5.8 Review Questions

- 1.Explain the duties and responsibilities of Assistant Front Office Manager.
- 2.Distinguish between the duties of receptionist and reservation assistant.
- 3.Discuss about the role of Front Office Cashier.

UNIT 06: ATTRIBUTES OF FRONT OFFICE STAFF

Structure

- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Introduction
- 6.3 Smile
- 6.4 Etiquette
- 6.5 Team work
 - 6.5.1 Team
 - 6.5.2 Need for Teams
 - 6.5.3 Team in front Office Operation
 - 6.5.4 Team Leader's Role
 - 6.5.5 Qualities of Team Members
 - 6.5.5.1 Attitude
 - 6.5.5.2 Self Discipline
- 6.6 Listening
- 6.7 Patience
- 6.8 Personal Hygiene & Grooming
 - 6.8.1 Hair
 - 6.8.1.1 Grooming Standards for hair for Male
 - 6.8.1.2 Grooming Standards for hair for Female
 - 6.8.2 Nails
 - 6.8.3 Ornaments
 - 6.8.4 Footwear
 - 6.8.5 Makeup
 - 6.8.6 Uniform
 - 6.8.6.1 Uniform Male
 - 6.8.6.2 Uniform Female
- 6.9 Physical Fitness
- 6.10 Pleasant Personality
- 6.11 Summary
- 6.12 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 6.13 Suggested Readings

6.1 Objective

The unit comprises of the following objective.

- Different attributes required by front office personal.
- Certain do's and don'ts for the front office personal.

6.2 Introduction

It has been rightly said that a smiling face always catches the attention of its on lookers. The smiling faces help others in refreshing their agony and attention. In

this competitive era, it becomes more important to retain the guest for a long time and hence the man power requirement in hospitality sector is much emphasized. In this competitive era, a guest has a lot of similar options available for stay. Here a basic question arises that what are the things which attract a guest towards a particular hotel? Why does a hotel get a good business at a particular destination besides tough competition? The answers to such questions are, it is the dedicated employees and the environment of the hotel which make some difference and attract the guests. Front office department of a hotel, being the first and last point of interaction for every guest has certain additional responsibility. Apart from their specific set of knowledge and skills related to their core job, they are also required to possess a certain set of behavioral skills that complete their professional profile. These behavioral skills include smile, etiquette, team work, listening, patience, grooming & personal hygiene, physical fitness etc. which will be discussed in this unit one by one.

6.3 Smile

As discussed in the introduction that in this competitive era a guest who is coming for stay to a particular hotel, though he is having lot of other options available because of the following reasons:



- Want to get maximum Satisfaction from the money which he is spending for his stay.
- Want to be treated in a good Manner.
- Want to give a feel that how much Important he is for the hotel.
- Want to be Listened properly for any requirement or for any complaint.
- Want to get something Extra from others.

The front office being the first interaction point can provide him all these things with a SMILE.

Meaning thereby, if a front office personal treats the guest with a SMILE the guest will feel **S**atisfied, he will feel that he is treated in a good **M**anner and how much **I**important his business is for the hotel, he is **L**istened to properly and get something **E**xtra from others. Therefore, SMILE is an important attribute for the front office personal.

We don't realize this but a smile does make us look far more pleasant than when we do not. Besides, it does not cost us anything! The service industry considers this competency perhaps the most important one, throughout all levels of hierarchy. A smile is thus the most enduring competency required of a front office professional. As simple as it may seem, it is the most effective way of dealing with guests. A smile almost always gets a smile back in response. It immediately breaks down several barriers of the guest including fatigue, low spirits, doubt, anxiety and dissatisfaction. Recruitment personnel see it as the first sign of front office professionalism at the time of interview. It is recommended that professionals smile in front of the mirror and assess their competency in it. It is recommended to smile while speaking on the telephone

because it is a powerful way to convey tone and intention to the customer who judges the caller by his/her voice.

6.4 Etiquette

The first interaction of a guest in the hotel is with front office personal, and on the basis of this interaction he makes an image of the hotel in his mind, now this image may be good or bad and this depends upon how the front office person has interacted and behaved with the guest. To make a positive image in the mind of the guest the front office personal must behave with the guest in good manner and this behaving in good manner is called as Etiquette. The Etiquette may be defined as code of behavior among people within an organization, group or society. The basic etiquettes that a front office staff should exhibit with the guests are as follows.



1. Welcome the guest, wishing a customer the time of the day and saying 'Thank You' is the basic etiquettes that must be shown by the front office personal
2. Smile and attend to guests as soon as they approach the front desk. If busy, acknowledge their presence in words assuring them that they will be attended to shortly.
3. Talk softly and politely.
4. Recognize guests, recognition is a powerful tool that plays a great role in retaining regular guests. The use of their name gives them importance and a feeling of belonging.
5. Stand erect at all the times.
6. The special needs of the guest like choice of room like smoking room or non smoking room must be taken due attention.
7. Help the guest in filling the registration form or by providing them information as requested by them.
8. Don't argue with the guest also don't argue with your colleagues in front of the other guests.
9. Anticipate the guest needs for example hand him a pen, light his cigarette, reach out for the bag he is carrying.
10. Do not get familiar with the guest even if he treats you like a friend remember your relationship with the guest is professional.
11. Be aware about offensive habits you have like biting nails, picking hair, nose, ear, yawning, Sneezing/coughing without covering your mouth. Refrain at least, when you are in guest's view.
12. Do not speak poorly about other guests, staff or departments.

13. Speak softly and politely and do not use much of slang and frequently use the terms such as 'thank you', 'May I help you', 'Excuse me', 'Pardon me' etc.
14. Carry pencils in the trouser pockets and not behind ears or clipped in front of the jacket.
15. Do not chew gum.
16. Present the bill to the host discretely so as to avoid embarrassing him/her and give sufficient time to check him his or her bill.
17. Use service doors only for entering and exit at the front office.
18. If you are on phone beware of your conversation on the telephone guest may be watching or hearing you so avoid things like shouting on the telephone, long conversation, personal calls at work etc.
19. Never shouts on the telephone

6.5 Team Work

Another attribute which a front office personal must have is team work. Without proper teamwork nothing can be done successfully in this world especially in the service industry. Teams play a very prominent role in hospitality industry. A poor team performance surely damages the reputation of an establishment, while a superior team performance directly increases its reputation. Teamwork can be seen only once the person has been recruited, though it is an essential attribute. Team dynamics have changed over the years. Let us discuss the dynamics of teamwork.



6.5.1 Team

A Team comprises a group of people linked in common purpose, a team is a small inter-dependent group of people with complementary skills who work committed towards a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. The key works are interdependence (depending on each other), complementary skills (essential yet different skills that are needed to complete a given task well) and accountability (ownership of results). No one person can deliver any goals on his own. It takes a team to deliver results with complementary specializations with the desire to accomplish objectives and hold themselves responsible for a success or failure.

6.5.2 Need for Team

Teams can meet significant performance challenges together. They have a common purpose and move together towards it. Team members understand each other's strengths and drawbacks well and are able to assist or motivate a

weaker team member. They harness complementary skills of other team members and trust their own competency at the same time. They can be a positive influence on each other with regard to be ethics and discipline.

6.5.3 Team in Front Office Operation

Being the centre department of the hotel, front office needs to coordinate with almost each and every department of the hotel but still in the direct teams of front office operation are the telecommunications, the people working at guest relation desk, lobby staff, cashier. Each has distinct skills to make a guest's stay comfortable. The indirect teams in the front office operations are purchase, stores, IT, food and beverages, and engineering who work towards making the operations system strong enough to deliver good service. The respond to guest needs expressed to the front office as also keep the front desk functional.

6.5.4 Team Leader's Role

The team leader's role is to build commitment to the common purpose by example. He uses leadership as a means to an end and not as a weapon to show superiority. The leaders fills in gaps in competencies, delegates work, is hands-on performers with the team, makes key decisions, manage external relationships including the management, guests, and the government and lends support in a crisis.

6.5.5 Team Member's Quality

Team members are performers who take joy in working together. They take responsibility for the job and understand its objectives in a larger perspective. They hold themselves accountable together, for success or failure. They have a sense of urgency with youthful enthusiasm and energy. They are result-oriented and respect each other. Below are few of the qualities of team members.

6.5.5.1 Attitude

An attitude can be defined as an outlook towards life. In other words, attitude is something that we own and are responsible for. It comes from within and can be positive or negative, based on one's experiences as well as the environment in which one lives. Few of the attitudes of front office personal are as follows:

1. In hospitality industry people give business to those who give better service so the front office personal must feel **joy in serving the people**. A good service not only gets better pay cheques and tips but also promotes customer loyalty.
2. Every single employee must have an **attitude of ownership** of the hotel. Only then he will show commitment, maintain the quality of service and take pride in the hotels appearance.
3. **Co-operation** is vital in team performances. It brings about positivity in work.

4. **Initiative** is a valuable competency in today's world. The only way to beat competition is to innovate and bring in new ideas. The front office professional must always look for new ideas and introduce them.
5. **Honesty** is a precious attribute. There are opportunities for theft of property and guest belongings, misleading guests with information, giving secrets to competition etc. Organizations value and reward employees who have shown uprightness and honesty in situations where they could have been otherwise.

6.5.5.2 Self- Discipline

The front office professional is the face of the organization and thus has to be disciplined in order to project a professional image. Some tips to ensure discipline are as follows.

1. Keep updated with the house rules and regulations
2. Amend mistakes immediately
3. Be an example to others
4. Improve skill by training
5. Avoid mistakes that may be viewed as indiscipline

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I

Fill in the blanks

1. A customer wants to get maximum _____ from the money which he is spending for his stay.
2. Do not chew _____
3. In Listening L stands for Look, I stand for Inquiry, S Stands for _____.
4. In Smile S Stands for Satisfaction M stands for _____, I stands for Important.
5. Males must wear black or brown shoes which should be _____ style.

True/false

1. Argue with your colleagues in front of the guests.
2. While talking on the phone you should shout.
3. Look at the guest while you are listening to the guest.
4. Shout on the guest if he is shouting on you.
5. Hairs should fall on your forehead.

Question

1. How Smile is an important attribute of Front Office Staff?
2. What do you understand by Listening?
3. What are the various etiquettes and manners that front office staff must follow?
4. Who are the members of front office team?
5. What are the uniform standards for male as well as for female?

6.6 Listening

"We were given two ears but only one mouth, because listening is twice as hard as talking." Especially for front office personal, as the guests hates having to repeat a request or instruction. While the guest is talking about his problem or giving any information the front office person must use the LISTEN meaning thereby is.

- L — Look
- I — Inquire
- S — Summarize
- T — Take Notes
- E — Encourage
- N — Neutralize



Look: look at the guest you are speaking to, with a good eye contact and the eyes must stand quiet.

Inquire: ask good questions to clarify like what, which, who, why, when, how etc. all this reflects that you are interested in listening to the guest and ask him to tell you more.

Summarize: frequently summarize your understanding about what the guest is saying, use the worlds like "Let me just summarize my understanding".

Take Note: take notes of important point on a piece of paper because human memory is limited and can not remember all the things.

Encourage: stay calm and smile, and encourage the guest to say more.

Neutralize: neutralize your feeling, what you think on this complaint or on suggestion avoid biasness at this stage.

Front office personal must show the effective listening skills to make the guest satisfied. Don't avoid the guest just because he is having a slow or monotonous voice or he is not very good in expressing himself.

6.7 Patience

Patience is another attribute which is required in front office personal. Sometimes because of the systems and procedures of the hotel the guest become frustrated and start shouting on the front office executive or because of certain break down his work get hampered and he is annoyed. Front office must handle these situations with patience; means he need to remain cool and calm. The following things can be taken care off if these kind of situations arise:

Listen: Listen the guest carefully it is important for the front office staff to divorce himself from the emotions expressed and understand the nature of the problem thoroughly.

Apologize: Apologize to the guest. An apology is the least that a guest expects

Give directions: Give directions if it seems a problem that can be handled by the guest. For example the guest may complain that the television not working. It could be simple thing that the main electrical socket is switched off or the cord to the television is not connected. These directions must be given politely but clearly.

Exact Action: Tell the guest the exact action that will be taken. For example the front office personal can say “I inform the maintenance immediately, who will be in touch with you shortly.”

Follow-up: Follow up with the servicing department and the guest if action has been taken Even if action is not taken, guests like to know that someone is following up the matter.

The front office personal should not lose temper, which can create a big problem. If the executive at the front office is unable to handle the customer immediately, he must call his supervisor to handle the guest.

6.8 Personal Hygiene and Grooming

In personal hygiene & grooming we will discuss the following things which the front office personal must take care of.

- Hair
- Nails
- Ornaments
- Footwear
- Make Up
- Uniform



6.8.1 Hair

Well kept hairs are indicator of proper grooming. It makes front desk personnel presentable to the guest and enhances the first impression of the hotel in view of guest.

6.8.1.1 Grooming standards for Hair for male

- The hairs should not fall on the forehead and should not touch either ear or collars.
- Must be neatly combed and should not be oily.
- Conservative and well maintained hair style must be used.
- The hair should be clean, odder free and must be free from dandruff.



- The hair should not extend more than the nape of the neck
- The hair should be trimmed above the collar.
- Moustaches should be neatly trimmed and should not cover upper lips.
- The face must be clean shaved.
- The sideburns must be well trimmed and cut straight at the tip and should not exceed half the length of ear.
- Beards are only permitted for religious reasons and must be suitably maintained.



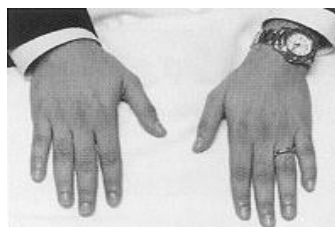
6.8.1.2 Grooming Standards for hair for female

- The hair should be trimmed regularly and must be styled away from the face.
- Black accessories like black pin can be used if required to keep hair neat and in place.
- French knot can be used to keep the hair away from the face.
- The colored or plastic bands should not be used.
- Ponytail can be made but should not be longer than 9"
- Like man the hair should be clean, odor free and must be free from dandruff.



6.8.2 Nails

- In case of both male and female the nails should be well maintained neatly cut, clean and must be dirt free
- There should not be any stains of nicotine or carbon or any ink stains.
- In case of female the nails should not be excessively long.
- Only prescribed nail polish should be used which must cover the entire nail with no gaps or cracks.
- In case of female the toe nail polish should match the finger nail polish



6.8.3 Ornaments

- For male, only one single ring on any of the one hand can be used and for female one ring on each hand can be used but that must be of conservative and sober.



- The males should not use any bracelets or bands in any of the hands only for religious reasons the bracelets can be used while female can use two thin bangles either of gold or silver in any of the hand or one in each hand.
- The females can also wear one thing gold chain either of gold or silver and they can also wear a small nose stud.
- The watches if used should be of conservative in style should not be too large and flashy.
- If leather strap is used it must be in black or in brown color and if metallic strap is used it must be either in gold or in silver color.
- The females can wear one set of earrings but those should not be flashy or too large.



6.8.4 Footwear

- Males must wear black or brown shoes which should be of oxford styles and must be polished and in good repair, females must wear closed shoes or sandals which should be polished and must be in good repair.
- Females shoes should not be flat and minimum heel should be $\frac{1}{2}$ "
- The socks should be clear and odorless, should not have any patterns and there elastic must be intact.



6.8.5 Makeup

Makeup is used by female personal in the hotel and they should take care of the following things.

- The foundation must be used to avoid the oily look.
- The color of lipstick should be of matte finish, sober, and must match with the uniform and matching lip liner must be used.
- For eye shadow darker shade over the eyelids and lighter shades below the eyebrow can be used.
- Start by applying the mascara to the upper eyelashes brush downward and then upward.
- The bindis should be small, round or tear shaped and single shade of sober color the matches the uniform must be used.



6.8.6 Uniform

Uniform plays many role like identification of department of hotel employee, protective covering for employee and many more. It enhance confidence in the employee.



6.8.6.1 Uniform male

- The uniform must be immaculate, spotless well ironed and should not have unnecessary creases.
- The uniform should be of perfect fit, should not be faded and must appear fresh
- There should not be loose threads or broken buttons.
- The cuffs and collars must be clean and stain free.
- A simple belt can be wearred but the buckle should not be too flashy and should not be wide more than 1.5"
- The name tag should be shining and must be visible



6.8.6.2 Uniform female

The sarees are being wearred by the female personal in the hotel and the following things should be considered while wearing a saree.

- The saree should be pinned neatly and the pins should not be visible
- The saree must be immaculate, smooth, clean no creases or stains.
- The high neck blouse must be wearred and the sleeves of the blouse must be till elbows.
- The name tag should be shining and must be prominently displayed.

6.9 Physical Fitness

For serving the guests the front office person have to stand on his feet with a smiling face for the entire day and the guests also want to see person who is physically fit and well dressed. This is also rightly said 'a health body makes a health mind'. If a person is physically fit it translates into energy, enthusiasm, ability to cope with stress, lightness, youthfulness and joy. Front office personal must bring in physical fitness regimes into their personal lives. It may be just an hour's walk in the neighborhood or a workout in a gymnasium.

6.10 Pleasant Personality

Most often, a front desk employee is the first person with whom a guest comes in contact. The guest starts building the image of the hotel from the physical appearance and personality of the front office personal. The gestures, grooming, and personal presentation of a front desk employee are very important in leaving a good impression in the mind of the guest. The front desk personnel should be well turned out; they should have a pleasant personality, greeting guests with a smiling face and showing interest in their concerns.

Check your progress II

Fill in the blanks

1. In Listening E stands for Encourage and N stands for _____
2. In Smile L stands for _____ & E stands Extra.
3. The hairs should not fall on the _____ and should not touch either ear or collars.
4. The males should not use any _____ or bands in any of the hands.
5. The females shoes should not be flat and minimum heel should be _____

True/false

1. The nails should be neatly cut, clean and must be free from dirt.
2. You should not use the service doors for entering and exit at the front office
3. The special requests of the guest should not be taken care off like smoking room or non smoking room.
4. Take notes while listening to the guest.
5. Don't take action on guest complaint or suggestions.

Question

1. How pleasant personality & physical fitness are the important attribute of Front office personal?
2. What are things female should take care off while applying make up?
3. What kind of ornaments & Footwear males & female front office staff should wear?
4. What are the things male & female should take care off as far as hairs are concern?
5. How team work is an important attribute of Front office personal?

6.11 Summary

In this unit we have studied about the various attributes which are essential for a front office personal. Being the first and last point of contact they carry and additional responsibility of image building so they need to have some additional qualities which we discussed such as SMILE, Etiquette, Team Work, Listening, Patience, Personal Hygiene & Grooming, Physical Fitness, Pleasant Personality etc. In this competitive era if someone want to be different from others and want to be in the business for longer period of time need to have the above mentioned attributes. A hotel can survive if he get the repeat business and a customer will

come again and again to the same hotel, he will do so if he will be delighted and guest remain in direct contact with front office staff throughout their stay at the hotel, and hence should carry themselves and behave in a way befitting the vision of the organization.

ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress I

Fill in the Blanks

1. Refer to section 6.3
2. Refer to section 6.4
3. Refer to section 6.6
4. Refer to section 6.3
5. Refer to section 6.8.4

True/False

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. False

Question

1. Refer to section 6.3
2. Refer to section 6.6
3. Refer to section 6.4
4. Refer to section 6.5.3
5. Refer to section 6.8.6

Check your progress II

Fill in the Blanks

1. Refer to section 6.6
2. Refer to section 6.3
3. Refer to section 6.8.1
4. Refer to section 6.8.3
5. Refer to section 6.8.4

True/False

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. True
5. False

Question

1. Refer to section 6.9 & 6.10
2. Refer to section 6.8.5
3. Refer to section 6.8.3 & 6.8.4
4. Refer to section 6.8.1
5. Refer to section 6.5

6.12 Suggested readings and references

- Sudhir Andrews-“Hotel Front Office A Training Mannual”- Tata McGraw-Hill
- Jatashankar R. Tewari-“ Hotel Front Office Operations & Management”- Oxford University Press

UNIT 07: GRE AND LOBBY MANAGER

Structure

- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 Introduction
- 7.3 Qualities of Front Office Staff
- 7.4 Guest Relation Executives
- 7.5 Lobby Manager
- 7.6 Communication
- 7.7 Summary

7.1 Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- Describe the qualities of front office staff.
- Describe the duties and responsibilities of guest relation executive and Lobby Manager.

7.2 Introduction

The hotel is a 'Home away from Home'. The guest relation executive assumes the role of host in a hotel and extends the same attention and warmth to the guest. The GRE is the hotel's representative for guest comfort and convenience. She welcomes the guest and makes him feel at home in a new environment.

Lobby manager is a problem solver and holds the authority to make decisions regarding guest affairs. He is the head of all uniformed services and coordinates with the guest relation executive, front office reception and front office cashier closely.

7.3 Qualities of Front Office Staff

Qualities of front desk employees are summarized in figure 7.1 below.

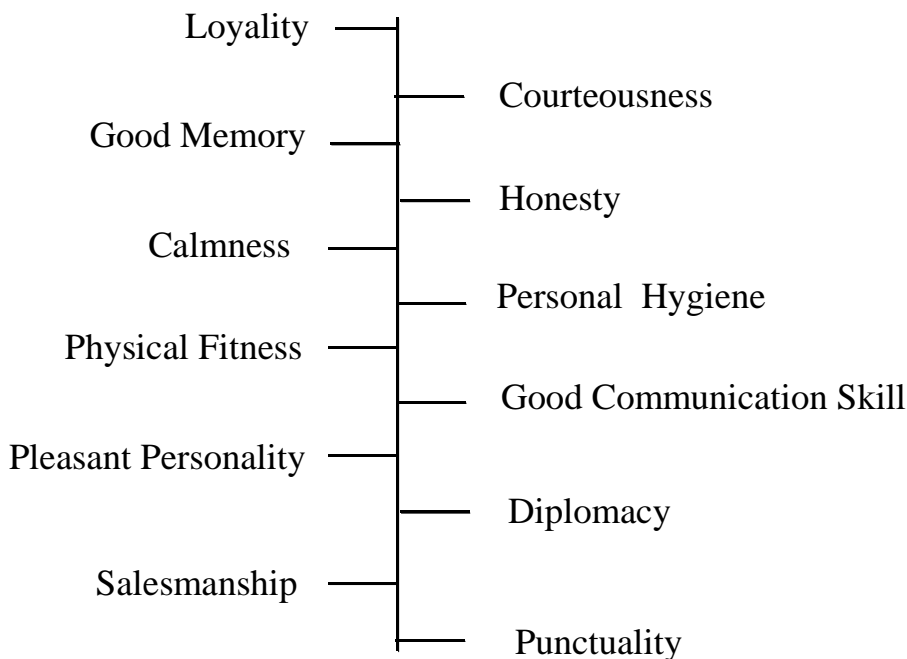
QUALITIES OF STAFF

Figure 7.1 qualities of front office personnel

Physical Fitness: A front office employee must be physically fit to manage long hours on his feet. During peak business time or shortage of staff they may have to work at long stretches. Front office professionals must bring in physical fitness regimes into their personal lives.

Personal Hygiene: Front office employees should follow the highest standards of personal hygiene. The front office staff is the first point of physical contact to a guest with the hotel. A good sense of hygiene is very important for them as their appearance influences the image of the hotel. The staff need to look their best at all the times.

Pleasant Personality: A front desk employee is the first person whom a guest comes in contact. The gesture, grooming and personal presentation are very important for front office staff for leaving a good impression on guest.

Diplomacy: It is a very important characteristic for front office staff. They should be very diplomatic in attending the guest's complaints for hotel or hotel services. If front office employee has to reject a room booking request, he should do that work diplomatically, without upsetting or offending the guest.

Calmness: The front office should be able to remain calm in high pressure situations. In some situations it happens that guests become unsatisfied or angry because of some problem in the services or products offered by the hotel to the guest at that time it is required that the front office staff deal calmly with the guest. The calmness of the front office staff in such situations will help to diffuse the tension and resolve the problem of guest.

Loyalty: The front office staff should be loyal to their job, as well as for the hotel and the management loyalty develops a sense of belongingness among the staff, which reflect in their behaviors with guest.

Good Communication Skill: The front office staff must possess good communication skill because they have to interact with guests at the time of their arrival, during their stay and also at the time of departure. They should be polite, confident and clear in their communication. They should be good in English, if they know a foreign language then that will be an advantage for them.

Salesmanship: They should possess salesmanship quality. They can motivate guest to increase their length of stay. They should be equipped with complete knowledge about hotel.

Good Memory: The front office staff must possess good memory because guests like to be recognized by the hotel staff and addressed by their names. A good memory will help the front office staff to remember and respond to the reservation requests and special preferences of guests. This gives a personalized touch and establishes a lasting relationship with the guest.

Honesty: They should be honest and trustworthy. Honest employees are an asset to an organization and build a good impression of hotel in guest's mind.

Courteousness: During interaction with guest it is important that a front office staff should be courteous and polite. They should never agree with the guest. A smooth resolution of problems teamed with the courteous behaviour of the hotel staff will develop a good will among guest.

Check Your Progress – I

Answer the following questions:

1. Write a short note on qualities of front office staff.

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7.4 Guest Relation Executive

The guest relation executive assumes the role of a hostess in a hotel and gives attention and warmth to the guest. The GRE is the hotel's representative for guest comfort and convenience. The GRE is generally in-charge of attending VIPs and regular guests.

Organization: The GRE is the independent incharge in the lobby and reports to the front office manager. She welcomes guests and coordinates with hotel lobby manger on policy matters. GRE plays on important role in enhancing brand loyalty of existing customers as well as creating a positive impression on new ones.

Job Description

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Title of Position | :Guest Relations Executive |
| Reports to | :Front Office Manager |
| Supervises | :None |
| Coordinates with | : |
| Front Office | :for latest arrival and departure |
| Housekeeping | :for room clearances |
| Flouriest | :for flower arrangements |
| Concierge | :for baggage movement |
| F&B | :for guest parties, table reservation |
| Business Centre | :for booking meeting room etc. |

Supervisor: None.

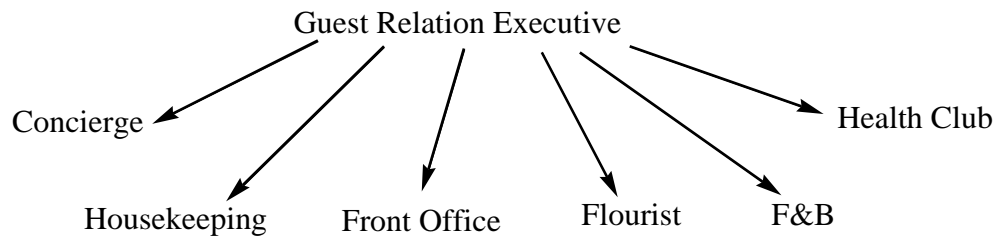
Authority Limits: May communicate with guests directly for proper coordination between the hotel and guest.

Job Responsibilities

1. Welcome guests as per procedures made by the management.
2. Resolve guest needs by coordinating with concerned departments.
3. GRE notes any special instructions left in the lobby managers by book.
4. Maintain guest history cards of regular guests and VIPs.
5. Coordinate with group leaders at the time of arrivals and departures.
6. Check arrival and departures on the day.
7. Offer assistance for any services required by guests.
8. Assist the security in lobby surveillance.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Job Title | :Guest Relation Executive |
| Educational Qualification | :Graduate |
| Physical Qualifications | :Sturdy |
| Language Skill | :English, Hindi |
| Special Requirement | :Knowledge of front office systems and procedures. |

**Front Office**

1. Final bill preparation
2. Safety deposit lockers
3. Provide wakeup call services
4. Do future reservation
5. Room up gradation

Housekeeping

1. Provide babysitting services
2. Does guest room clearance
3. Lost & found services
4. For maintenance requirements in guest rooms.
5. Provide extra beds, guest supplies etc.

Flouriest

1. Provide special flower arrangements for rooms and parties.
2. Provide bouquets services.

Concierge

1. Assistance in moving luggage.
2. Provide city map.
3. Arrange confirmed airline, railway tickets.
4. Make table reservations for guests.
5. Procurement of city tour tickets.
6. Left luggage information.

Food and Beverage

1. Menu planning for parties.
2. Room service for try removal from rooms.
3. Banquet booking.
4. Private party arrangement
5. Making table reservations.

Business Centre

1. Arrange photocopy and fax services.
2. Book meeting rooms.
3. Escorting VIPs to board room.

Health Club

1. Make massage service bookings.
2. Booking for personal physical trainees.
3. Booking for yoga, aerobic classes etc.
4. Gymnasium booking.

GENERAL PROCEDURES**Shift Starting**

1. Check log book for instructions, instructions may include special requests by guests.
2. Check for any VIP arrival.
3. Check any expected arrival and departure of VIP guests.
4. Prepare welcome formalities for VIPs arrival and group arrivals.

Welcome Services

1. Welcome each guest at registration time and provide telephone extension numbers for any assistance.
2. Follow hotel welcome procedure for VIP guests and group arrival.

Pre-Registration

It is the process of filling registration card and receiving room before guest arrives.

1. Escort guest to reception counter help the guest in filling registration form.
2. Arrange pre-registration formalities for VIPs.
3. Escort guest to his room.
4. Arrange group or crew pre-registration.

Guest History System

One of the main and important activity of GRE is to develop and maintain guest history system. Guest history system tracks the guests movements, preferences and habits with the objectives of providing better and more personalized services. All this is done on computer system. The information that guest history provides are –

1. Name and Address of guests
2. Arrival date
3. Departure date
4. Visits frequency

- 5.Source of booking
- 6.Room rate
- 7.Type of room
- 8.Room service usage
- 9.In house restaurant visited
- 10.Type of food and beverage ordered
- 11.Complaints lodged against the guest by hotel staff and other guests.
- 12.Extra room facilities requested.

The main purpose of guest history is to improve the services to a degree that the guest feels at the home.

GRE Log Book

The GRE log book has the following information:

- 1.Special requests like airline confirmation etc.
- 2.VIPs in hotel
- 3.Groups or crew in hotel
- 4.Guests complaints.

Hotel would greatly benefit from the presence of GRE. GRE reports directly to the front office manager.

7.5 Lobby Manager

Lobby Manager is a problem solver and has the authority to make decisions regarding guests affairs. He must have knowledge about the operational procedures of all departments. He will be able to deal guest problems effectively. He is the head of all uniformed services. He coordinates with the guest relations executive, of reception and cashier.

Job Description

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Title of Position | :Lobby Manager |
| Reports to | :Front Office Manager |
| Supervises | :All personal of the uniformed service. |
| Coordinates with | : |
| Front Office | :gives support on all arrivals and departures |
| Cashier | :on guest billing matters. |

Supervisor: All personnel of uniformed service.

Authority Limits: May have dialogue with guests directly for proper coordination between the hotel and guest.

Job Responsibilities

- 1.Brief uniformed services staff and maintain clean lobby.
- 2.Maintain discipline in uniformed service staff.
- 3.Train uniformed service staff.
- 4.Manage all guest complaints and take corrective action appropriately.

5. Manage scanty baggage procedure.
6. Ensure efficient group crew arrived baggage movement efficiently.
7. Coordinate all guest request with all departments of the hotel.
8. Takeover shift from previous lobby manager.

Job Specification

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Job Title | :Lobby Manager |
| Educational Qualification | :Diploma in Hotel Management |
| Physical Qualifications | :Sturdy |
| Language Skill | :English, Hindi |
| Experience | :Two years as management trainee |
| Special Requirement | :Knowledge of front office systems & procedures. |

7.6 Communication

Communication is the process of sharing views and knowledge between two or more individuals. It is the process of conveying information from a sender to a receiver with the use of medium. Through which the information is understood by both the sender and the receiver.

The information is conveyed through transmission of written, verbal or symbolic messages. The entire communication process broken into various stages of communication, sender, message, encoding, channel, receiver. The communication process is depicted in figure 7.2

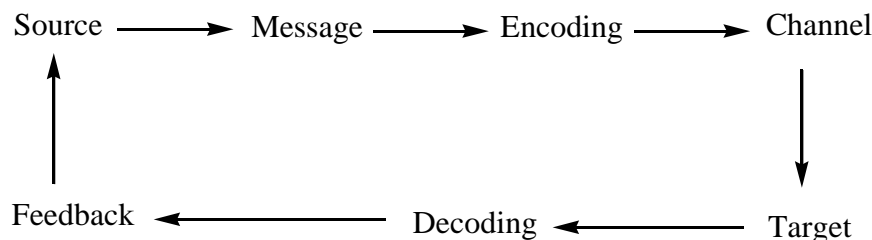


Figure 7.2 Communication Process

Source: Sender or source is the person who wants to share the information or feeling with another individual. A good communication depends on the skills of the source, who should provide complete information in a proper manner.

Message: It is the matter which is to be communicating, it is passed from the sender to the target person, it may be views, feelings, orders, ideas etc.

Encoding: The sender must translate the message in such a form which can be easily understood by others. This translation could be in the form of telephonic message, letter, email etc.

Channel: The channel is the medium through which the message is passed between the sender and the receiver. This may be in the form of letter, telephone, email etc.

Target: The receiver is the person who receives the message sent by the sender. The extent to which the receiver comprehends the message will depend on a number of factors such as message receptivity, receivers knowledge about topic, relationship between the sender and the receiver.

Decoding: The process of interpretation of message can statutes decoding communication is successful if the receiver correctly interprets the senders message.

Feedback: It is the final link in this chain of communication process. After receiving a message the receiver responds in same way and signals that response to the sender.

Type of communication

- 1.Oral
- 2.Written
- 3.Non-verbal

ORAL COMMUNICATION: It describes any type of interaction that makes the use of spoken words. It is very important part of modern business world. In this type of communication both the sender and the receiver exchange their ideas through words, it is easy, effective and provides constant feedback from other side. It is time consuming and has a limitation like lack of proof.

Listening and speaking are most often used in the organizations, community etc. speaking skills are universally recognized as a primary indicator of persons knowledge. Listening and speaking plays a very important role in the development of an individual. Some letters sound alike when spoken and also over a telephone line especially when people have different accents. In these case the message might not be clear and the people have a hard time to understand each other. In that case verify the exact spelling by repeating it phonetically, this avoids confusion at the time of registration. The use of phonetic alphabet are very useful in situations when the telephone lines have some disturbance or in case of international calls.

Phonetic Alphabets

Letter Code Word

- A-Alpha
- B-Bravo
- C-Charlie
- D-Delta
- E-Echo
- F-Foxtrot
- G-Golf
- H-Hotel

I- India
J- Juliet
K- Kilo
L- Lima
M- Mike
N- November
O- Oscar
P- Peter
Q- Queen
R- Romeo
S- Sierra
T- Tango
U- Uniform
V- Victor
W- Whiskey
X- X-ray
Y- Yellow
Z- Zebra

Numbers

- 0 to be pronounced as OH with a long D
- 1 to be pronounced as WUN with a long N
- 2 to be pronounced as TOO with a strong T and long O
- 3 to be pronounced as THR-EE with rolled R and long E
- 4 to be pronounced as FO-WER with a long O
- 5 to be pronounced as FIVE with a long I and strong V
- 6 to be pronounced as SIX with a strong X
- 7 to be pronounced as SE-VEN with a strong V
- 8 to be pronounced as ATE with a strong T
- 9 to be pronounced as NI-YEN with a strong N at the end
- 10 to be pronounced as TEN with a sharp T and strong N.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: It is the communication by means of written symbols. It may be in the form of letters, emails, reports, manuals etc. Written communication has several advantages like authenticity, transparency, legal defense, permanent record etc. It also have some disadvantages like high cost factor, unnecessary paper work, no immediate response, limited reach etc. There are many modern communication methods available these days. The traditional business letters still retain their importance in the business world for the following reasons –

- 1.They assist in sustaining business relationships with other business and customers.
- 2.When information form of communication.
- 3.The serve as permanent record and are a valuable repository of information.

Many hotels promote the use of email for guest correspondence and also for other external and inhouse correspondence. Email is fast, inexpensive and convenient.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION: Non-verbal communication refers to the message we give and receive through body language and facial expression. Usually non verbal communication occurs unconsciously body language determines the meaning of communication to a large extent. It is important to that body language has different meanings in different cultures. Body language is also interlinked with spoken language and a whole pattern of behaviour.

Factors that play important role in non-verbal communication include personal appearance, posture, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, voice and personal space.

Personal Appearance

This plays very important role in the hotel industry. As the front office staff has to interact with guests throughout the day, they should be clean and well groomed according to the hotel.

The front office staff should pay attention to the following points with regard to appearance –

- 1.Be well groomed, ensure a neat hairstyle, body hygiene, polished shoes and clean nails.
- 2.Avoid flashy garments, clunky jewellery, strong and over powering perfumes.

Posture: A person's body posture is strong indication of the power equation in a one to one relationship. As a rule, the person in authority would be relaxed, while the supplicant would be watchful and on guard.

Facial Expression: Our faces display a myriad of expressions and feelings. Facial expressions are a better indicator of the meaning behind the message. Than the words facial expression serve as a source of positive or negative feedback from the person.

Gestures: Gestures is the use of action to communicate something. By moving the part of your body you can express both specific and general messages, some voluntary and some spontaneous. Some of the gestures that people use to convey messages –

- 1.Folding Hands-Welcome
- 2.Making A Fit-You are angry
- 3.Thumbs Up-All the best
- 4.Pointing-Showing something

If the gestures do not agree with the vocal message, they can lead to confusion and misunderstanding. The hotel staff should make proper use of gestures to communicate effectively with guests.

Eye Contact: It is a direct and powerful form of non-verbal communication. It conveys wide range of emotions, signal messages and indicate interest. Eye contacts during communication strengthen credibility, while averting eye contact is detrimental to credibility. It is important for front office employees to maintain eye contact with guests while communicating

Personal Space: In organizations, most people use space and distance to communicate important information about themselves. Behavioural studies indicate that people set individual distance limits for different types of interaction. They have a comfortable distance zone for personal interaction and non verbally define this as their personal space.

Voice: Voice can communicate many important messages. Word mean many different things depending on the way they are said. The written word does not have that immediacy because it lacks emotion.

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION: Good communication is very important for establishing good image of hotel between guests.

Internal communication is very important for proper coordination among various departments. For proper planning and execution of tasks every department of the hotel needs to share information with the other departments. Front Office communicate with other departments for all kinds of information e.g. with housekeeping for the room status and same time the housekeeping require information about the arrival and departure details from the front office.

Managers need information from all departments for planning and distributing work. They gather relevant information from each department by written or oral means of communication. Therefore, good communication is very important for effective planning.

Sometimes managers are required to make important decisions on the basis of available information. Effective communication generates all the necessary information and thus plays a very important role in decision making.

Proper inter and intra department coordination is achieved through proper communication.

Good communication is very necessary for effective leadership and for better understanding.

All these benefits of good communication lead to increased productivity and revenue with improved services.

Check Your Progress – II**Answer the following questions:**

1. What are the job responsibilities of GRE?

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2. Job description of Lobby Manager.

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3. What are the various types of communication?

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7.7 Summary

The Guest Relation Executive plays the role of holsters in the hotel. GRE provides personalized service to all guests. GRE alone cannot perform all required task requested by guests and therefore need of other members of hotel team to assist her. She reports to Front Office Manager. GRE operates in shifts that cover the peak hours when guests leave the hotel and return. GRE coordination with various departments like housekeeping, front office, florist, business centre, F&B, concierge etc. for providing personalized services to the guest. Lobby manager represent the hotel management in the lobby and organize, supervise and control all informed services in a shift. He must have through knowledge of front office system and procedures, good knowledge of English language. Both the internal and external communication is very important for smooth hotel operations. Here we understood the meaning of communication, the communication process between the sender and the receiver, the importance of communication and the types of communication.

7.8 Answer to check your progress

Check your progress – I

1. See section 7.2

Check your progress – II

1. See section 7.3
2. See section 7.4
3. See section 7.5

7.9 Suggested Readings

1. S.K. Bhatnagar, Front Office Management
2. **Jatashankar R. Tewari**, Hotel Front Office Operations and Management
3. Front Office Manual 1 years, IHM Bhopal

7.10 Review Questions

1. Explain the qualities of Front Office Staff?
2. What do you understand by GRE?
3. What is Guest History System?
4. Explain GRE log work.
5. What are the responsibilities of Lobby Manager?
6. Define communication and explain it?
7. Communication is essential for inter departmental coordination. Explain.
8. The proper functioning of front office department depends on effective communication with housekeeping and food and beverage departments. Explain.

UNIT 08: GUEST CYCLE

Structure

- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Introduction
- 8.3 Guest Cycle
 - 8.3.1 Pre-arrival
 - 8.3.2 Arrival
 - 8.3.3 Stay
 - 8.3.4 Departure
 - 8.3.5 After Departure
- 8.4 Summary
- 8.5 Answer to check your progress
- 8.6 Suggested readings
- 8.7 Review Questions

8.1 Objectives

After reading this unit learner will be able to understand:

- Meaning of guest cycle
- Activities at each stage of guest cycle

8.2 Introduction

The term guest cycle represents various stages of activities when a hotel provides services or keeps contact or maintains record during the various stages of its contact with guest, such as before arrival, at the time of arrival, during stay, at departure and after departure. Out of these five stages the first and last stage i.e., during the stages of before arrival (when the guest shows his intentions to come to the hotel) and after departure (i.e. when the guest after staying in the hotel has already left) are those where there is no personal contact with the guest of the hotel and it is only through the effective record keeping and communication network such as telephone, telex, fax, computer, letter, telegram and internet etc. the efficient and satisfactory services can be given to the guest. The Guest interacts with certain external agencies to make the cycle complete. These external players include the agencies that make bookings, like the travel agent, tour operator, etc.; the surface transporters such as taxis, coaches, trains, etc. that bring the guest to the hotel; and the entertainment centers who give the guest pleasure in terms of sightseeing, shopping, restaurants, bars etc. A Hotel has to work closely with the external players to give that value added experience to the guest.

8.3 The Guest Cycle

The hotel guests pass through a definite path from reservation to arrival, stay, and departure. They pass from reservation, arrival, registration, allotment of rooms, stay and use of hotel facilities, and finally departure from the hotel. These

phases remain the same in case of every guest and constitute the guest cycle. The four stages of the guest cycle are shown in figure 8.1.

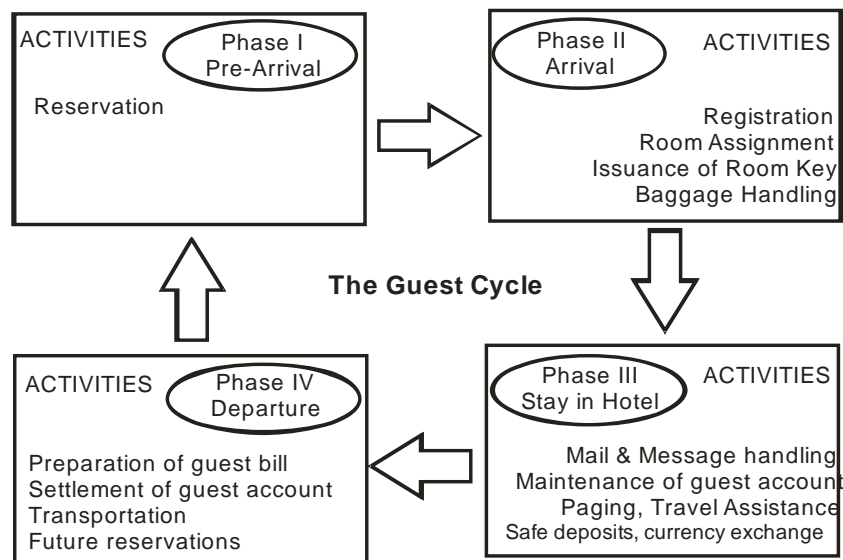


Figure 8.1 Guest Cycle

The four distinct phases of guest cycle are as under:

- Pre-arrival
- Arrival
- Stay
- Departure
- After departure

8.3.1 Pre-arrival

The activities that are carried out before the arrival of the guest forms the pre-arrival phase of the guest cycle. This is the first stage of interaction with the guest. Reservation is the most important pre-arrival activity. The probable guest contacts hotel for reserving a room for their proposed stay in the town. During this phase guest chooses a hotel for stay. The guest choice about a particular hotel is affected by factors like advertisement, recommendations from friends, previous experience with the hotel, reputation, location etc. The prompt reply and tactful handling of a call for reservation request by the reservation assistant can create the good first impression of the hotel in the eye of the future guest. During the reservation process the hotel may ask for advance deposit from the guest. Following activities are carried out in this phase:

- Processing reservation request of the guest.
- Creation of guest folio in case hotel has received any advance payment.
- Blocking the room for the guest.
- Making special arrangements for the guest (if required).

The data collected during the process of reservation can be utilized in future front office and sales activities. A well managed reservation system can maximize the room sales by monitoring room availability and forecasting room revenue.

8.3.2 Arrival

The guest arrival at the front desk is probably the first instant when hotel may have a face to face interaction with the guest. This is a very critical stage as guests develop their perception regarding standard and services that the hotel can provide to them. During this phase the guest is received and registration process begins. The guest is asked to verify their details already printed in registration card. The registration activity is an agreement between the hotel and the guest. The hotel offers the accommodation product and services to the guest. The guest signifies their assent to pay for the services received. The following activities take place in arrival phase of the guest cycle:

- Reception and welcome of the guest (aarti, tilak and garlanding/ offering welcome drink as per the policy of the hotel)
- Registration of the guest
- Room rate and room assignment
- Dispensing key to the guest
- Luggage handling of the guest by bell desk
- Delivering mails if hotel has received mails on behalf of guest.

8.3.3 Stay

This is the stage of the guest cycle during which the guest actually experiences the facilities and services offered by the hotel. The guest services and facilities which are offered during the stay of the guest are discussed in chapter 9 in detail. Hotel must take care for safe and comfortable stay of the guest. The courteous and helpful behavior of the staff may mask little lack in services. The services and facilities offered during this stage are critically important in attracting repeat business from the same guest. The activities that are carried out during the stay of guest are as under:

- Creation and maintenance of guest accounts
- Message handling
- Key handling
- Handling guest- mail
- Guest paging
- Safety deposit locker
- Procedures for guest room change
- Left Luggage Procedure

8.3.4 Departure

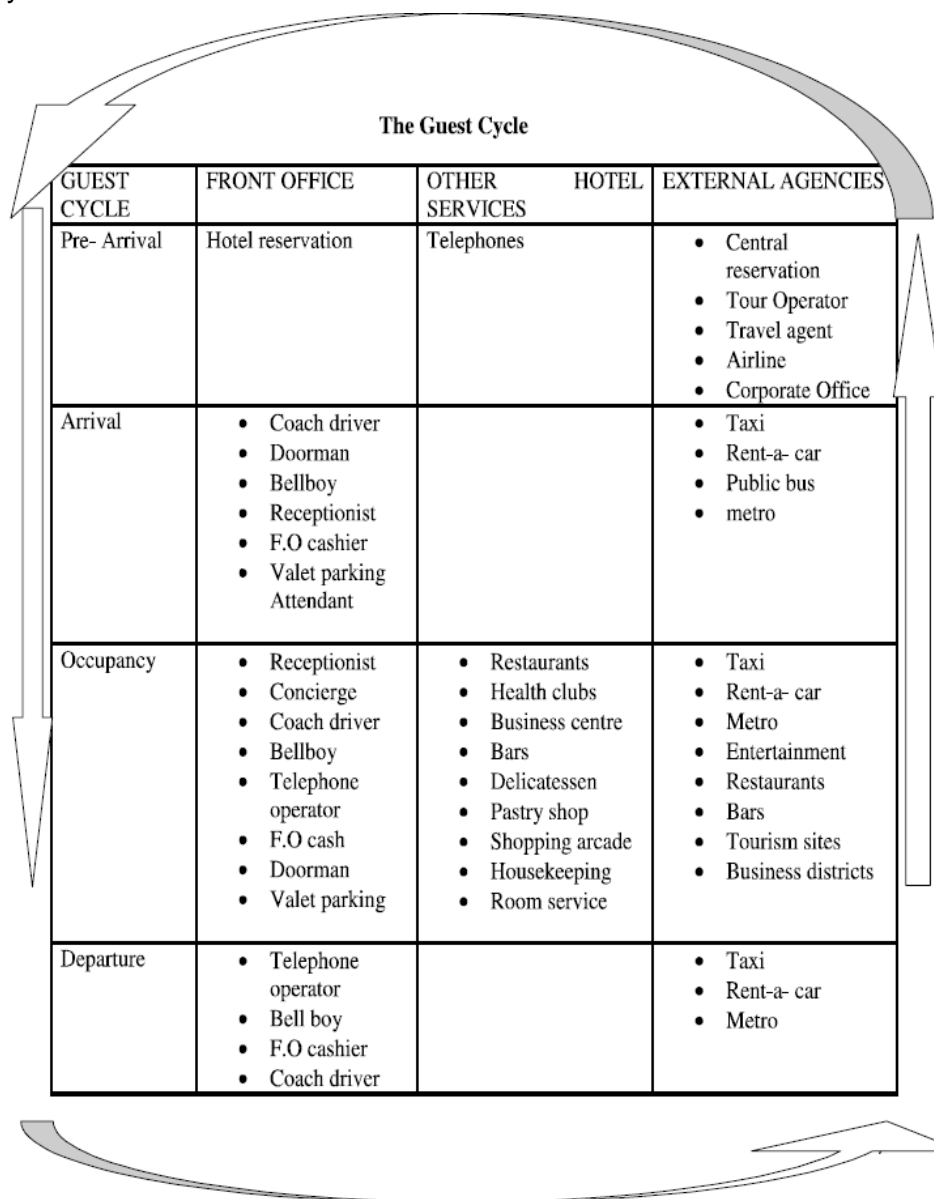
As the maxim goes that all well that ends well. Same is the case with the guest departure. All the drawbacks can be marks by efficient and hassle free check-out procedure. During the departure stage the guest settles their account by making payment to throughpre established mode for the services received from the hotel. A great care should be taken during the departure stage, as it is the last point of guest contact to receive any unpaid bills and to develop loyalty in the guest to patronize the property over and over again. Following transactions take place in departure stage:

- Preparation and presentation of guest bills
- Settlement of guest account
- Luggage handling by the bell desk

- Left luggage handling in case guest wishes to keep their luggage with the hotel for a short duration of time
- Sales and marketing activity (future reservation)
- Bon voyage to guest

8.3.5 After Departure

This stage of guest cycle is a real challenge to the hotel. It is during this stage that the activities of the hotel will bring back the guest to the hotel. For this it is important that the hotel management creates occasions of contacting guests and keep reminding him about the hotel from time to time. This can be done by sending letters, mailers, and feelers to the guest on his Birthday, His marriage anniversary and other such occasions which may be important for him and his family.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS III**Fill in the blanks**

- 1)The first person in contact with a guest in the lobby is the_____.
- 2)One of the critical competencies required by all hotel personnel is _____.
- 3)The last hotel staff member in contact with a guest is the_____.
- 4)The external agencies that complete the guest cycle include_____, _____ etc.
- 5)The guest Registration is done in _____ phase of the guest cycle.

True False

- 1)The guest experience starts before s/he arrives at the hotel.[T/F]
- 2)External agencies play a part in influencing guest to stay at a hotel. [T/F]
- 3)Hotels can influence sty decisions at the airport. [T/F]
- 4)The first person in contact with a guest upon arrival at the hotel is the bell boy. [T/F]
- 5)The city transport has an influence on the ultimate guest experience. [T/F]

Question

- 1)What do you mean by, 'first impression'? How it helps in improving the hotel's sale?
- 2)What do you mean by, 'Handling of a Guest' by Front Office. In how many parts the job of guest handling can be divided?
- 3)Explain the Guest Cycle with special emphasis on guest accounting in each stage of the guest cycle.

8.4 Summary

This unit described in detail the handling of a guest by the front office department which can be divided into the various stages of the guest cycle. They are namely. Pre-Arrival, Arrival, During the Stay, Departure and After Departure. The role of every front office personnel in each of these stages of guest cycle is enumerated. To enhance and complete the guest experience the importance and role of the external agencies is also integral to the study of the Guest Cycle.

8.5 Answer to Check your progress

Fill in the blanks

- 1)Guest Relation executive, 2) Teamwork, 3) Front Office Cashier, 4) Travel Agents, Tour Operators, 5) Arrival

True False

- [T], 2) [T], 3) [T], 4) [F], 5) [T]

8.6 Suggested Readings

1. Andrews, Sudhir .2008. Textbook of Front Office Management & Operations: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited.
2. Puri, Rakesh.2006. Front Office Operations and Management: Manju Publishers
3. Bardi, James A.2007. Hotel Front Office Management: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

8.7 Review Questions

- 1) What are the various stages of guest contact with the hotel? Discuss in detail.

UNIT 09: TYPES OF HOTEL GUESTS

Structure

- 9.1 Objective
- 9.2 Introduction
- 9.3 Market Segmentation
- 9.4 Group Market
 - 9.4.1 Corporate market
 - 9.4.2 Tour Operators
 - 9.4.3 Meeting / Conferences / Seminars
 - 9.4.4 Exposition
 - 9.4.5 Incentive Travel
 - 9.4.6 Extended stay market
- 9.5 Transient Market
- 9.6 Profiling of Hotel Guest
- 9.7 Summary
- 9.8 Review Questions

9.1 Objectives

After reading this unit the learner will be able:

- To discuss the motives behind guests choosing a hotel.
- To discuss the role of hotel to improve the relationship with guest.
- To identify different kinds of guests by hotels to provide necessary services for maximum guest satisfaction.
- To identify those potential guests important to improve sales of hotels.

9.2 Introduction

Hotels have traditionally relied on three segmentation strategies – demographics, product and combination of frequency, and monetary value – to gain customer insight. These are no longer sufficient metrics to today's guests. What matters now are guest's income, trip frequency and degree to which they do, or don't hotel facilities and services? These new metrics produce different types of guests which help understand managers guests appetite for price or loyalty offers, preferred marketing communication channel, and likely channel and point of sale they'll use to research and buy a room. Hotels implement customer service strategies and technologies that are tailored for each guest type.

9.3 Market Segmentation

A marketing segment is a meaningful grouping of prospective buyers having similar wants. Segmentation is a consumer oriented marketing strategy. Market segmentation give formal recognition of the fact that wants and desires of the consumers are diverse and we can formulate a specific market offering to

specific category or segment of the market so that the supply will have the best correlation with demand. Varied and complex buyer behavior is the root cause of market segmentation. The hospitality market has two broad market segments:

- ▶ Group market Segment
- ▶ Transient market segment

9.4 Group Market Segment

The group market constitutes the segment that provides the bulk business to the hotel. The group market segment includes:

- Corporate market
- Tour Operators
- Meeting / Conferences / Seminars
- Exposition
- Incentive Travel
- Extended stay market

9.4.1 Corporate market

The corporate market is among the bulk business providers as the executives of the business houses are moving out of the town on official trips. A contractual agreement is generally made with the business house to attract the business from the corporate sector.

9.4.2 Tour Operators

Tour operators generally purchase the rooms in bulk at high discounted price because they provide bulk business. After making purchase they may prepare the tour packages for their clients.

9.4.3 Meeting / Conferences Seminars

According to Oxford dictionary a meeting is an assembly of people. For as long as there have been people there have been meetings. This fact is also been attested by archeological investigations of old civilizations as there were ruins of some place of common gathering. Meetings may be one of the major markets for the hotel industry. The meetings are generally organized by the corporate sectors, institutions, and other organizations for one or more of the following reasons:

- To evaluate the performance of the company, department of the company or the employees of the organization.
- To discuss the introduction of the new product/service by the company.
- To introduce new methods of operation

The reason what so ever may be but it result in to requirement of the venue and other support services required to hold the meetings. Hotels having well appointed meeting halls, board rooms can capture the market. A conference center is a specialized hospitality operation dedicated to facilitating and supporting conferences. A conference center provides a venue for the conference, ministerial services required by attendee as well as organizer, telecommunication facility, public address system, audio-visual aids, flip charts, white boards, projectors, screens etc. in the case of residential conference and meeting the

hotel or conference center should have adequate number of the guest rooms to accommodate the attendee of the conference.

9.4.4 Exposition

The trade shows and exhibitions are designated to bring together individuals associated with a common business or activity for the purpose of reviewing, demonstrating, marketing and selling materials and product related to their common interest. The basic function of a trade fair is to facilitate the exchange of information between the companies and the prospective buyers. A trade show may be of following types in the basis of the purpose:

- Industrial shows
- Trade shows
- Road shows
- Professional/ scientific exhibitions

The trade fairs and exhibition may or may not be open for common public. It caters to all those who have a specific demonstrative relationship to the event. The trade fairs attract a large number of attendee domestic as well as foreigner. The hotel may contact the officials arranging the trade show to become a co-sponsor or the official host of the show to gain more room sale. Trade shows lasts for several days thus have scope of increased room sales.

9.4.5 Incentive Travel

Incentive travel may be broadly defined as a lure of a travel trip to motivate employees at work. This is a popular mode of motivating the employees to outperform in their work and align their productivity to achieve organizations objectives. The organizations that offer incentive tours to their employees for one or more of the following reasons:

- Increasing sales volume or increased employee productivity
- Selling new accounts or selling slow moving items, introducing new products, pushing low season sales or overtaking competition
- Doing something profitable to the company, improving employee morale and goodwill, improving attendance
- Getting de-motivated employees to perform better

The hotels can capture this market by approaching to the companies who are giving incentive travel to their employees. The chain hotels having properties at many locations can attract the prospective company by offering suitable package of incentive tour. The individual or small chain hotel may exercise the same by developing coalition among them.

9.4.6 Extended Stay Market

In today's climate of downsizing, outsourcing, and mobility, businessmen are often away from their homes for extended duration of time and require more than a hotel room. The hospitality industry has responded to the growing demand for the extended-stay rooms. To capture this new segment the hotel should feature rooms with full kitchen, safes, larger closets and other amenities in the rooms.

9.5 Transient Market Segments

The transient market includes that segment which provides comparatively low number of room sales than group market. It includes business and leisure travelers.

9.6 Profiling of hotel guest

The sustained growth of any business/service, including tourism, invariably involves product development according to market needs. A primary requirement in this regard is to **understand the distinctive features of consumers and their preferences**. It is also important in the context of tourism to establish effective communication with potential visitors for attracting them to the destination. The achievement of the same, however, involves the identification of specific segments of such visitors, their preferences and needs, effective communication means to reach them and to know the geographical areas of their concentration. **The statistical analysis of these factors in relation to any destination is known as profiling of tourists.** Tourists profile also facilitates improvements in:

- Planning and deciding on development priorities,
- marketing strategies of tourism products, and
- services.

Today, the profiling is also helpful for **understanding guest-host relationships**. Regular visitor surveys are always necessary to obtain tourist profiles. Periodical surveys are also conducted with specific objectives.

The specific characteristics usually analysed in profiling, of hotel guest include the following:

- Age and Sex
- Educational status,
- Economic activity status,
- Occupation
- Place of residence

Market segmentation, put simply, is the process of dividing up a total market into smaller parts that share common characteristics, in order to deliver services to those people most likely to be interested in the products that you offer. Markets can be divided in a number of different ways; purpose of travel (business, leisure), geography (by country), buyer needs & motivations, buyer or user characteristics, demography (age, gender, lifecycle), economy (income, education, occupation), psychography (psychocentric [inward looking], allocentric [outward looking]), geo-demography, price.

9.6.1 Demographic Profile

It depends on income, age, sex, family size, life-style, family life cycle, education, religion, race and nationality and so on. If we look at demographic characteristic of the European market :

- **Age** : Between 25-29 years
- **Sex** : Majority of males, alone females very few.
- **Family size** : 2-4 members
- **Income** : Euro 7000 and above

- **Occupation** : Professionals, executives, teachers and professors.
- **Education** : Higher secondary and above.
- **Nationality** : German, French, Italia, Swiss, Dutch, Spanish.

Based on this data, hotels can develop, rejuvenate or alter his or her tourism products.

9.6.2 Psychographic Profile

Based on social status, life-styles and personal traits i.e. some are

- i. **Allocentric** : for those money is not a constraint but they want to enjoy a new and adventurous stay every time. They don't want monotony.
- ii. **Psychometrics** : Who are satisfied with existing facilities of basic needs of food and accommodation.

For eg. Guests in the age group of 18-26, want to have a stay full of leisure and thrill.

9.6.3 Behavioral Profile

In psychological terms the whole range of generation of wants and their transformation in to buying or using decisions can be explained as behaviour.

- a) **Occasion for travel** : guests can be classified as business guest, leisure guest, VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives), adventure guests, honeymoons and heritage tourists.
- b) **Benefit \derivation** : these are 3 'core benefit segments" i.e.
 - i. **Quality buyers** – more concerned with hotels ambience and facilities than cost.
 - ii. **Service buyers** – presses upon value for money i.e. image of hotel than cost.
 - iii. **Economy buyers** – who are concerned with cost and therefore would like to keep it low.

9.7 Summary

Hotels have traditionally relied on three segmentation strategies – demographics, product and combination of recency, frequency, and monetary value – to gain customer insight. These are no longer sufficient metrics to today's guests. What matters now are guest's income, trip frequency and degree to which they do, or don't hotel facilities and services? These new metrics produce different types of guests which help understand managers guests appetite for price or loyalty offers, preferred marketing communication channel, and likely channel and point of sale they'll use to research and buy a room. Hotels implement customer service strategies and technologies that are tailored for each guest type

9.7Review Questions

1. What is market segmentation?
- 2 What is the need of segmentation?
- 3Write a note on sources group market?

4What do you mean by profiling of hotel guest?

5Write a note on guest profile?

UNIT 10: RESERVATION

Structure

- 10.1 Objective
- 10.2 Introduction
- 10.3 Defining Reservation
- 10.4 Importance of reservation
- 10.5 Types of reservation
 - 10.5.1 Guaranteed
 - 10.5.2 Non-guaranteed reservation
 - 10.5.3 On the basis of confirmation
- 10.6 Mode of reservation inquiry
 - 10.6.1 Verbal
 - 10.6.2 Written
- 10.7 Sources of Reservation
 - 10.7.1 Direct
 - 10.7.2 Central reservation system
 - 10.7.3 Intersell agencies
 - 10.7.4 Global distribution Network
 - 10.7.5 Agencies
 - 10.7.6 Corporate bodies
 - 10.7.7 Government sector
 - 10.7.8 Hotel website
- 10.8 Systems of Reservation
 - 10.8.1 Manual system
 - 10.8.2 Automatic system
- 10.9 Processing reservation request
 - 10.9.1 Receiving reservation inquiries
 - 10.9.2 Determining room availability
 - 10.9.3 Accepting or denying request for reservation
- 10.10 Chapter Summary
- 10.11 Review Questions

10.1 Objectives

After reading this chapter you will be able to understand:

- Definition of reservation
- Types of reservation
- Mode of reservation inquiry
- Systems of reservations
- Processing a reservation request

10.2 Introduction

The people who are traveling to various destinations very often use food and lodging facility for their stay at remote town. These facilities are catered by hotel industry. As hotel industry is the part of hospitality industry, it should take utmost

care that the guest who is arriving at the hotel must not face any kind of problem during their entire stay. The first step at which the guest and hotel interaction starts is when the guest inquires about room availability. This step is known as reservation. The reservation process is very important as it will give certainty that the room will be available for the guest and ensures comfortable stay at the hotel. The hotel also keeps him aware all the time about the current status of the rooms such as how many rooms are expecting check in for the day and how many rooms are available for sell to walk-in. As the room is perishable property and produces a considerable sum of revenue for the hotel so handling reservation demands a great deal of attentiveness and sincerity.

This Unit will make aware about the various processes carried during reservation process. The various methods and modes applied for making guest reservations. As well as how to handle, process and utilize the reservation inquiries of the guests.

10.3 Defining Reservation

Reservation in context of hotel industry is “blocking a particular type of guest room (e.g. Single room, Double room, deluxe room, Executive room, suite etc.), for definite duration of time (i.e. number of days of stay), for a particular guest”.

10.4 Importance of Reservation

The reservation activity plays a very important role in planning sales and marketing efforts of a hotel and at the same time the person making the reservation assures a comfortable stay during the trip. Reservation is important for both hotel as well as the guest. The importance of reservation can be studied in following two headings:

- For the hotel
- For the guest

Importance of reservation for Hotel

Reservation is very important for the hotel. The data generated during the reservation process can be utilized to accelerate the facilitation of guest services and increasing the efficiency of the sales and marketing department. Following are the major advantages of reservation for the hotel:

- Update room availability record
- Preparation for arrivals
- Can entertain guests' personal preferences like choice of view, floor, colour scheme etc.
- Staffing at front desk
- Forecasting volume of business
- Generate customer for the hotel
- Planning for :
 - Changing room rate
 - Increasing number of rooms in the property (expansion)
 - Having a new unit in the city

- Manpower requirement

Importance of reservation for Guest

Pre- booking of room in the city of visit is advantageous for the traveler planning to stay in the city during their trip. If one reaches to a city without reservation he may face a problem in securing a place for comfortable stay. The reservation has following advantages for the guest:

- Assurance about accommodation
- Choice in type of accommodation
 - Type of room
 - As per his budget
 - Preference of floor , view and personal choice
 - Can use the address of hotel as personal address for the duration of stay in hotel

10.5 Types of Reservation

Hotels accept reservation for the rooms. Many a times we come across the words like confirmed reservation, guaranteed reservation, waitlisted reservation, tentative reservation etc. Each terminology has its own meaning. One might get confused with these terms. The reservation can be classified on the following two grounds:

- On the basis of guarantee
- On the basis of confirmation

10.5.1 On the basis of guarantee

On the basis of guarantee; reservation can be of following two types:

- Guaranteed reservation
- Non-guaranteed reservation

Guaranteed Reservation: A guaranteed reservation is that for which hotel has received the payment in full irrespective whether the guest will turn up or not and at the same time the hotel does not release the room to any other guest. In such reservations hotel is indemnified from the no-show and hold the room for the guest. The guaranteed reservation helps the guest to be sure of getting a room in the hotel in spite of their late arrival without any prior information to hotel.

Obtaining Guaranteed Reservation

The guaranteed reservation requires the payment to be made in advance. The guaranteed reservation can be obtained by one of the following ways:

- Pre- payment
- Credit card
- Contractual agreement

Pre-Payment: A guaranteed reservation requires payment of the room rent in advance as an assurance to protect the hotel from the loss of the revenue in case of no show because hotel will hold the room for the guest even after the cancellation hours. The payment in advance is known as pre-payment. The pre-payment can be made by sending demand draft, or depositing cash at the hotel.

The cash deposit is the most preferred mode of accepting guaranteed reservation by most of the hotels.

Credit Card: The guest can alternatively choose to pay the full amount in advance through their credit/charge cards. The guest should send a letter authorizing the hotel to charge payment to their credit card account for obtaining guaranteed reservation. This is the most preferred method of getting guaranteed reservation these days.

Contractual Agreement: The hotel may enter into contract of providing guaranteed reservation with any person or company. In such case hotel accepts the guaranteed reservation for that person or the person referred from the company and the person or company agrees to pay for the same even in case of no show. The hotel may have contractual agreement with following:

- Travel agencies / Tour operator
- Corporate houses

Travel Agencies / Tour Operator: Travel agencies or tour operator makes a bulk purchase of rooms at relatively very low price. They guarantee the hotel a minimum number of room nights and agrees to pay even if they are unable to occupy.

Corporate Houses: In this case a company/corporate body may enter in to a contract with the hotel, whereby the company guarantees payment for its sponsored guest and accepts the financial responsibilities for no show guest and hotel agrees to provide the mutually agreed number of room night to the clients of the corporate house.

Cut-off Date: - Date by which if payment is not made in full the guaranteed reservation will turn into a non-guaranteed reservation.

10.5.2 Non-Guaranteed Reservation

A non- guaranteed reservation is a reservation in which guest has agreed and confirmed that they will arrive at the hotel on a particular day. Per-payment is not mandatory in such type of reservation. In this type of reservation hotel agrees to hold the room for the guest till the cancellation hours (generally 06:00PM) unless guest has informed the hotel about their late arrival. Hotel is free to release the room after the cancellation hours if guest does not turns up without any prior information. This enables the hotel to cover the probable loss due to no show by the guest.

Cancellation hour is time decided by hotel after which a non-guaranteed reservation stands cancelled and room is released to walk-in guest. (Generally 6:00 P.M.)

10.5.3 On the basis of confirmation

On the basis of confirmation reservation can be of following two types:

- Confirmed reservation
- Waitlisted reservation

Confirmed reservation: a confirmed reservation is an acknowledgement from the hotel that the person will be assigned a room in the hotel if they will reach on the date of arrival before cancellation hours. Confirmation of reservation is sent through letter or e-mail containing the following information:

- Name of the guest
- Date and time of arrival
- Room rate and type
- Duration of stay
- Number of persons in the party
- Reservation classification (guaranteed or non-guaranteed)
- Reservation confirmation number
- Special request made by the guest like airport pick-up, wheel chair, baby sitter etc.

Wait listed reservation: A wait listed reservation is the hotels attempt to sell the rooms which may remain vacant in case of cancellation. A wait listed reservation is not confirmed. The guest will be assigned the room in case of cancellation or no show. The hotel informs the guest that the reservation request of the guest is put on wait list and may be confirmed if some a room is vacant due to cancellation.

10.6 Mode of Reservation Inquiry

The process of reservation begins with an enquiry. There are following two ways through which a guest may contact hotel for reservation:

- **Written Mode**
- **Verbal Mode**

10.6.1 Written Mode

When a reservation request reaches to the hotel in writing it is classified as a written mode of reservation. Following are the written mode of reservation request:

- Letter
- Fax
- Telex
- e-mail
- Telegram

Letter: Letter is the best mode of making reservation request if guest send reservation request in several months advance. This is commonly used by the travel agent, tour operators, and corporate houses. Nowadays, letter writing has gone out of fashion, even though a considerable number of holiday bookings are still made in this way. Letters are advantageous as are clear, unambiguous and permanent. Letter generates a written record for the hotel, which helps to eliminate subsequent argument. Letters are also useful evidence that a contract was agreed.

Fax (Facsimile Transmission): Fax uses electronic scanning technique to send copies of documents over ordinary telephone line to a special machine which prints out an identical copy at another end. It can be used to send memos, graphics, sketch, and letters. The machine can be run in auto mode; making is

useful even if there is no one to answer the call. The fax makes it possible to send the written request instantaneously to a hotel on the other side of the world and receive back the return confirmation within short span of time.

Telex (Tele Printer Exchange): This method involves use of specialized telephone lines in which message is received in written form. This is a written mode of reservation request hence information is clear and agreeable to guest, as well. Nowadays this method is not used rather less used because of fax & computerized messaging or mailing system.

E-mail: E-mail is the electronic version of the regular mails. The guest may send the reservation request on the hotels e-mail ID. The hotel will process the reservation request and send the confirmation through e-mail. This mode of reservation request is in fashion now a day. It provides a written record and is fastest.

Telegram: Telegram was the fastest method of sending the information when the fax and e-mail were not invented. This is a written mode of reservation hence the information are clear and agreeable to both hotel and the guest.

10.6.2 Verbal Mode

The reservation request may be made through words of mouth. The most popular ways of this mode of reservation request is as under:

- In person
- Telephone

In Person: If a would-be guest or their representative reaches to hotel to book the rooms for their future stay in that property is the in-person mode of reservation request. This is the best modes of reservation enquiry as the person is available to consider the suggestion in case room is not available for the duration requested. The best thing is that the decision maker for the reservation request is available to the hotel personnel.

Telephone

Reservation request are more likely to land in hotel through telephonic calls. The telephone is fast and convenient, but it suffers from the major disadvantages that it does not provide a permanent record. This is among most frequently used mode of reservation request.

No single means of communicating reservation request is ideal in terms of speed, convenience, and economy. This means that we are likely to see a combination of above mentioned mode for reservation request/enquiry.

10.7 Sources of Reservation

Hotel receives reservation request from different sources. Some of them are as under:

- Direct

-
- Central reservation system
 - Inter-sell agencies
 - Global distribution System
 - Agencies
 - Corporate bodies
 - Government sector
 - Hotels Website

10.7.1 Direct

A reservation request to hotel from individual or group without mediator is known as direct reservation source. The processing of direct reservation request is taken care by the reservation section of front office department of a hotel. The staffing, equipment, location, and layout of the reservation section will depend upon the volume of the reservation request received directly.

10.7.2 Central Reservation System

Central reservation system is a computer based reservation system which enables the guest to make a reservation in any of the participating lodging property at any destination. The central reservation office typically deals directly with the public by means of a toll free telephone number. The central reservation offices operate 24 hour a day and almost round the year. These centers typically exchange the room availability information with the member properties and communicate the reservation transactions as they occur through the computer. The hotel and central reservation office have accurate, up-to-date information on room availability. Central reservation office is equipped with necessary communication equipment like computer, a telephone, FAX machine etc. Hotel may pay a flat fee for obtaining the services of a CRS and additional fee for each reservation received through central reservation office. In turn, each property provides accurate and current room availability data to central reservation office. The central reservation system is of two types:

- Affiliated system
- Non-affiliated system

Affiliated System: Inaffiliated reservation system all the participating hotel units belongs to same chain or group. E.g. Welcome net (Welcome group), Holidex (Holiday Inn), Image (Hyatt), ITT (Sheraton).

Non-Affiliated System: Non-affiliated system is a subscription based system, designed to connect independent or non chain property. This enables non-chain properties to enjoy the same benefits of affiliated system.

10.7.3 Intersell Agencies

An Intersell agency is an agency which deals with many products such as hotel reservation, car rental, travel arrangements, tour operation, airline reservations, railway bookings etc. Such agencies are among rich source of reservation.

10.7.4 Global distribution System

A Global Distribution System (GDS) provides the bundle of products and services to the prospective user across the geographical boundaries. The GDS provides a link between the producers of the products and services; and its end users. The hotel gets reservation from the GDS. SABRE, Amadeus, Galileo, Worldspan, SMART etc. are the examples of Global distribution system.

10.7.5 Agencies

There are several other agencies like Tour operators, Travel agencies and Air Lines from where hotel receives the bulk booking.

10.7.6 Corporate Bodies

The hotel also receives bookings from companies (Pharmaceutical, FMCG's), NGO's such as Care, Oxfam, Red cross, WHO etc), and institutions (Educational, Financial, Banking). They are the source of bulk reservation.

10.7.7 Government Sector

Hotel receives booking from government segment such as Public Sector Undertaking, Embassies and Consulate. The officials of these departments are moving from place to place on official work; hence they need accommodation at the place of visit constituting a major source of reservation.

10.7.8 Hotels Website

Hotel's web site is potential source of receiving reservation. The website contains the link for reservation request by clicking the same a techno-savvy guest can make reservation while enjoying the comforts of their own house.

10.8 Systems of Reservation

Depending upon the needs and volume of business a hotel may adopt one of the following systems of reservation:

- Manual system
- Automatic system

10.8.1 Manual System of Reservation

In this system all reservation records are maintained manually. This is oldest system of recording reservations. This system of reservation is suitable for the small property where the number of rooms is less and the volume of reservation request is fewer. A hotel operating on manual system of reservation can follow one of the following two types:

- Diary system of reservation
- Whitney system of reservation

Diary System of Reservation: This is a manual system of reservation. This is just what the name suggests: a daily diary in which the reservation assistant lists all arrivals due on a particular day. It is usually kept on loose-leaf basis. The top page represents the current date of arrival and is removed and sent to front desk for receiving the guest. A new blank sheet is added at the back of the diary. The hotel booking diary may be hard bound also. The format of a hotel diary is shown in figure 10.1. Diary system of reservation is suitable for very small properties.

BOOKING REGISTER / DIARY

[illegible]

Figure 10.1 Sample Hotel booking diary

Tools Used in Diary System of Reservation: The tools used in diary system of reservation are as under:

- Booking diary
- Room status board/ reservation journal
- Expected arrival list/ Movement list
- Cancellation Register (if required, for taking cancellation)
- Black list (if required to refuse the reservation to undesirable guest)

Whitney System of Reservation: This system can be used in small and medium property having up to 150 rooms. This system for room reservation of hotel was developed by the American **Whitney Duplicating and Check Company**. This system is based on use of standard size slips, known as Whitney slips or Shannon slips, which can be held on metallic carrier on Whitney racks. A sample of Whitney slip is shown in figure 10.2. The Shannon slips may be colour coded to identify the status of guest like FIT, group, crew, VIPs, Commercially Important Person etc. the top line of the slip contains the essential information as this part remains visible after placing slip in the metallic carrier. The Whitney system uses the racks vertically mounted over the walls. Thirty one

racks are kept for the current month (one for each day) and eleven for the next months and last one for the next year. The thirty one racks are arranged as per the date of the months. As soon as reservation request is received the reservation request is processed and Whitney slips are made in duplicate and original is placed in the Whitney rack. The Whitney slips can be arranged in alphabetical order on Whitney rack. The advantages of using Whitney system is as under:

- Booking can be kept in order of date of arrival
- Booking records may be arranged in alphabetical order
- The racks and carriers can be used over and over again. The running expense is of the slips.
- The Whitney racks are placed vertically saving the storage space.

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|----|---------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Date arrival | of | Name guest | of | Room type | Rate | Date of Departure |
| | | | | | | |
| Mode of reservation | | | Reserved by | | Date received | |
| | | | | | | |
| Agency if any | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Billing instruction | | | | Confirmation date | | |

Figure 10.2 Whitney slip

Room Availability Records used in Manual System: The processing a reservation request requires a tool which can assist to ascertain the availability of room for the desired duration. The following room availability records are used in manual system:

- Bed room journal
- Conventional chart/ Advance Letting Chart
- Standard density chart

Bed room journal: it very similar to the reservation diary. Each page of the journal contains room no. and type of room in a property. The page is titled according to the date of arrival. The format of bed room journal is shown in figure 10.3. The name of guest is entered in each date of their stay against the room number. The major disadvantage in using this availability record is requirement of clerical labour.

[illegible]

Figure 10.3 Bed Room Journal

Conventional chart: Conventional chart is a development of the bedroom journal. It is also known as Advance letting chart. It is simple to understand. The format of conventional chart is shown in figure 10.4. The chart is prepared for each month. Thus only 12 such charts are required for the one year. The room number and type of room is mentioned in one columns and it consists of another 28 to 31 column depending upon the number of days in the month. The name of guest is written between the days of their stay. The name is written between the < and > sign. Sign < represent the date of arrival and sign > represent the date of departure. The major disadvantages associated in use of conventional charts are:

- Long name short stay problem
- Chart becomes untidy with cancellation and amendments
- Limited to use with medium size hotel
- Counting of available room is difficult
- No over booking can be taken
- Room is pre assigned to guest (Creates problem in case of overstay)

Standard density chart: In an attempt to overcome the problems and drawback of conventional chart development of standard density chart came into existence. The density chart is prepared for each category of rooms for the duration of one month. The vertical column indicates the date and horizontal column represent individual rooms. An indicative mark (/) is put in the appropriate boxes for indicating the reservation. The minus sign indicates that one can take overbooking using the density chart. The format of standard density chart is shown in figure 10.5. The following advantages associated with the density chart:

- Long name short stay problem is solved as one does not have to enter name.
- Chart will remain tidy even in case of cancellation and amendments
- The large hotels may also use this system
- Counting of available room is easy
- Over booking can be taken

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Month : April, 2007 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date Type of Room | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Double | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Double | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Double | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Double | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Double | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Single | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Single | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Single | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Single | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Deluxe | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Deluxe | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Deluxe | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Deluxe | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 10.4 Conventional Chart

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|--|
| Month : Jan, 2008 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Type of Room : Single | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date No. Of Rooms | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |
| 10 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | | | | | |
| 09 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | / | / | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 08 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | / | / | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 07 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | / | / | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 06 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | / | / | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 05 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | / | / | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 04 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | / | / | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 03 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | / | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 02 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 01 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| -1 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| -2 | / | | | | / | / | | | | / | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| -3 | / | | | | / | / | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 10.5 Standard Density Chart

10.8.2 Automatic System

Automated reservation system is based on computer software. The information gathered is the same as in manual system. The processing of reservation request does not require manual turning the pages of bed room journals, looking in density charts or conventional chart. One can see the availability by clicking the link to display the same at the visual display units. The reservation information is keyed-in through the keyboard to the electronic format of the reservation form. The system automatically blocks the room for the desired duration of time and removes the room from the availability records. Using the automated system one does not have to manually update the records as the same is carried out by the system itself. Central reservation system and global distribution system are the examples of automated system.

10.9 Processing Reservation Request

Every hotel has its own standard operating procedure to deal with a reservation request from the guest. The standard procedure of responding to a guest with reservation request is as under:

- Receiving reservation inquiries
- Determining room availability
- Accepting or denying request for reservation

10.9.1 Receiving reservation inquiries

The request for reservation of room may reach to hotel from any mode as discussed earlier. The reservation assistant will receive the reservation request and greet the guest according to the time of the day. The reservation assistant should gather only that information which will help to speed up the processing of the reservation request. The following information will help to determine the availability of the room for the guest:

- Date of arrival
- Date of departure
- Number and Type of room required
- Number of persons in the party

10.9.2 Determining room availability

The above information gathered while receiving the reservation request will help in determining the availability of room for the guest. Using this information the reservation assistant will find whether the requested type of room is available in desired number for the requested duration. The reservation assistant will use one of following records for determining the availability of the room:

- Bed room journal
- Forecast board
- Conventional / Advance letting Chart
- Standard density chart
- Computerized system

10.9.3 Accepting or denying request for reservation

Once reservation assistant has ascertained the availability of the room for the guest he will either accept or deny the reservation request and conclude the processing of reservation request. Generally if rooms are available the reservation request is accepted. When the request for reservation is accepted then following details are gathered from the guest:

1. Name of the guest
2. Designation and company
3. Address of the guest
4. Time of arrival
5. Reservation classification (advance, confirmed, guaranteed)
6. Confirmation number
7. Caller data (in case of third party reservation)
8. Special requirements (baby sitter, no smoking zone, garden facing, sea facing, barrier free rooms etc.)

After gathering this information the booking is confirmed and a note for the same is send to the guest's mailing address. The reservation department uses a form, specially designed to record reservation transaction to prevent any ambiguity in information generated during reservation process. The reservation form contains information like personal data of guest, stay dates, expected mode and time of arrival and departure, number and type of rooms, mode of bill settlement etc. The format of reservation form is shown in figure 10.6

| <u>RESERVATION FORM</u> | | No. _____ |
|--|--|--|
| Name of the Guest _____ | | |
| Company _____ | | Designation _____ |
| Address of the guest _____ | | |
| | | Tel. _____ |
| Date of Arrival _____ | | Time of Arrival _____ |
| Date of Departure _____ | | Expected time of departure _____ |
| Time of Room S [] D [] T [] Others _____ | | Category _____ |
| No. of Pax _____ | | Room Rate _____ |
| Mode of Arrival _____ | | Discount _____ |
| Flight No. _____ | | |
| Mode of Payment / Settlement of bills _____ | | |
| Credit Card No. _____ | | Date of Expiry _____ |
| Personal details of the person / agency making the reservation _____ | | |
| Special request _____ | | |
| Remarks: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px; width: 100%;"></div> | | Reservation Assistant Name _____ Signature _____ |

Figure 10.6 Reservation Form

Use of reservation form has following importance:

- Provides a permanent record.
- Helps to summarize data generated while processing reservation request
- Enables the management to ascertain the person handled reservation request

The reservation department may choose to turn down a reservation request in following cases:

- When room of desired type is not available for the duration requested
- Rooms of any category is not available i.e. hotel is fully booked
- The guest is black listed (a guest whom hotel does not want to accommodate for various reason. Blacklisting of guest are now-a-days out of fashion)

10.10 Summary

This chapter will provide a complete view of the reservation process. The chapter starts with the guest cycle followed by the importance of reservation in context to guest as well as to hotel. This chapter proceeds with the various modes and methods applicable for making and handling various reservations. Such as how to make confirm reservation and what are the grounds on which a reservation can be denied. This chapter also deals with the process of changing or amending the reservation status of the guest. The chapter also provide specimen of various forms used during the reservation process.

10.11 Review Questions

1. What do you understand by guest cycle? Explain in detail.
2. What are the various modes of making a reservation?
3. Explain Whitney system of reservation and diary system of reservation.
4. What is density chart? Give the importance of using this chart for reservation.
5. On what conditions reservation can be denied?
6. What do you understand by centralized reservation system?
7. Differentiate between guaranteed and non- guaranteed reservation.
8. Describe the four phases of guest cycle.
9. Draw a neat diagram of guest reservation form.
10. What are the various sources of reservation?

UNIT 11: GROUP RESERVATION AND CANCELLATIONS

Structure

- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 Introduction
- 11.3 Group Reservation
 - 11.3.1 Sources of Group Booking
 - 11.3.2 Group Market
 - 11.3.3 Amendment
 - 11.3.4 Cancellation
- 11.4 Cancellation
 - 11.4.1 Cancellation Code
 - 11.4.2 Cancellation Procedure in Diary System
 - 11.4.3 Cancellation Procedure in Whitney System
 - 11.4.4 Cancellation Procedure in Computer system
 - 11.4.5 Cancelling a Non- Guaranteed Reservation
 - 11.4.6 Cancelling a Credit card Guaranteed Reservation
 - 11.4.7 Cancelling an Advance Deposit Guaranteed Reservation
 - 11.4.8 Cancelling other Guaranteed Reservation
- 11.5 Amendment
 - 11.5.1 Amendment in Diary System
 - 11.5.2 Amendment in Whitney System
- 11.6 Summary
- 11.7 Answer to check your progress
- 11.8 Suggested Readings
- 11.9 Review Questions

11.1 Objectives

After reading this unit learner will be able:

- To understand Group reservation request
- To differentiate the method of cancellation and amendment for different types of reservations

11.2 Introduction

The reservations department in the front office of a hotel is not only responsible to simply accept the bookings, but also handle the bookings differently for different categories of guests such as VIPs, VVIPs, FITs, Groups etc. The reservation process involves taking a guest's request for a particular room if any, at an agreed price and recording such requests precisely before confirming the reservation. The reservation agent, therefore, plays a more proactive role than just a booking clerk. Hotel managements released that the reservation agent can

go a long way in promoting the image of the property and support their efforts in being efficient with better automation. The reservations department is therefore the nerve centre for room revenues and profitability.

11.3 Group Reservation

These days, hotels get a large percentage of business from groups. A hotel usually divides its reservation business into two categories-

1. Individuals, and
2. Groups

A group as the name suggests, is a number of people travelling together and booking a number of rooms in advance. Group bookings constitute a great responsibility on the hotel and needs a great deal of planning and organization.

11.3.1 Sources of Group Bookings

- Travel agents
- Tour operators
- Housing or convention bureaus
- Meeting planners
- Embassies, and
- Other business organizations

11.3.2 Group Market

Generally group market comprises of the following:

1. Holiday Makers
2. Conference delegates and convention participants
3. Sports team
4. Businessmen attending trade fairs
5. Doctors attending doctors meetings, etc.
6. Sales persons attending sales meetings, etc.

For their convenience hotels classify groups as follows:

1. **Series group:** Group in this category arrive in series and follow the same itinerary one after another for a specified period of time, say one year. Similar packages and arrangements- such as type of room and food-are given to groups. Generally the numbers of persons in the group are also same. Series groups are booked through a travel agent on a discounted tariff.
2. **Ad-hoc group:** These are one time groups and are booked through a travel agent to avail special rates. They don't make part of series. For every group under this category the packages may be different.
3. **Incentive Group:** This category consists of groups sent to the hotel by various multinational companies and national corporations, etc. the staff are given incentives and are paid by the company or organization to which they belong. They are sent by their companies, etc. as incentives

for meeting the production or sales target, etc. These are very lucrative groups for the hotel. Hotel gives special rates to them.

4.Fam groups: they are also called familiarization groups. This type of group is composed of travel agents, tour operators and travel writers, etc., who come to familiarize them with the destination and its tourism product. They are important because they are people who would be sending groups in future. They are generally provided complimentary rooms.

5.Usually sales manager or reservation manager is contacted by the travel agent and is requested to set aside an agreed number of rooms called 'BLOCK' for group members, and as request from individual members come, they are reserved from the 'Block' and the process is called 'BLOCK BOOKING'.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|------|------|----------------|-------|--------|
| Group No..... | | | | Tour | | |
| Operator..... | | | | | | |
| Group Leader..... | | | | Telephone | | |
| No..... | | | | | | |
| Number in the Group..... | | | | Telex | | |
| No..... | | | | | | |
| Arrival date..... | | | | Arrival | | |
| Time..... | | | | | | |
| Departure Date..... | | | | Departure | | |
| Time..... | | | | | | |
| Accommodation | | | | Meals Break Up | | |
| Rooms | No. | Rate | Days | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner |
| Single | | | | Mon 3.4 | | |
| Double | | | | Tue 4.4 | | |
| Triple | | | | Wed 5.4 | | |
| | | | | Thurs 6.4 | | |
| Special Requirements | | | | | | |
| Date..... | | | | | | |
| Signature..... | | | | | | |

Figure 11.1 bulk reservation form

The Group is given a Code Number. The Group coordinator should give special care to the following documents:

- 1.Group File: A file that contains all details of group, with name of the group on top.
- 2.Register for confirmed groups
- 3.Group Materialization sheet: Also called 'Group Production report'. It shows materialization of booked groups from various travel agents and other sources. This report guides the management in deciding their future policy for each travel agent in terms of commission percentage.

4. Group Information sheet: This sheet is circulated to all the coordinating departments at least a week in advance of the arrival date to prepare themselves for group arrival.

The acceptance or refusal of request for booking for a group by the hotel will depend upon the management's policy which should be formed on the basis of business pattern. For example, more groups can be booked during off season and at a lower or discounted rate so as to achieve a higher percentage of occupancy during off season, while during season a lower percentage of groups may be taken at discounted rate. A very clever balancing is necessary while formulating the policy.

Once the booking is received from the travel agent or other source, the booking is shown on chart, diary, racks or computer (whichever system is used). A 'Cutoff Date' is given to the source of booking (generally 30 days before the arrival of group). If certain number of rooms are not picked up by the agreed deadline, they are made available to the other guests.

A Cancellation deadline is also fixed to safeguard against the cancellation of large number of room bookings at the last minute. Before the deadline date, a reminder is sent to the source of booking of group about the number of rooms, date of booking, date of departure, etc. and the source of booking is requested to reconfirm the booking before the deadline. After the deadline date if the travel agent (or any other source of booking) wants to reduce the number of rooms booked, the management may charge for the same. After the confirmation the travel agent is required to send the following details:

1. Name of the Group, and names of all the group members.
2. Details about the number of rooms and sharing rooms.
3. Passport details/
4. Nationality of the members, etc.
5. Billing Instructions
6. Meal plan
7. Date and time of arrival/departure
8. Special Instructions
9. A rooming list is sent by the travel agent in advance

The Hotel sends a 'Group Meal information Format' to the travel agent to be completed and sent back.

Along with the rooming list the travel agent will also send 'Travel Agent Voucher'. These vouchers must be handled by the reservation department to avoid any confusion. The voucher gives details about facilities and services included in the package. This travel voucher will be kept ready on the day of arrival given by the travel agent of the group. A duplicate copy of the same will be brought by the group leader on the day of arrival. The two will be tallied by the front desk agent. Management offers special discounted rates for group bookings. The discount depends upon size of the group and number of room nights, and meal plans such

as American or Modified American. Generally following discounted rates are given:

- 1.Ten to fourteen full paying PAX----- 50% on one PAX
- 2.Fifteen to Thirty full Paying PAX----- Complimentary one PAX
- 3.Thirty One to Forty five full paying PAX----- Complimentary two PAX

The rates and discounts are always negotiable.

11.3.3 Amendments

An amendment of groups is a continuous process till the group finally checks in. these amendments are made through Local travel agents. After receiving the amendment request the group coordinator confirms whether the request for amendment can be met with or not. In case it can be accepted, proper entries are made on reservation charts or computer and the group folder and the same is intimated to all concerned including the travel agent.

11.3.4 Cancellation

Cancellation Policy for group depends from hotel to hotel and on the size of the group. Generally the cancellation should be received 30 days in advance. The relationship between the hotel and the travel agent is also important. Also the inconvenience caused to hotel and possible loss of revenue is also considered while considering the cancellation policy. Depending upon the management policy retention charges may or may not be charged.

Amendment/Cancellation Form

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|-------|---|-----------|-------|------------------|---|------|---|-------|-------|
| Original Booking | | | | | | Amended Booking | | | | | |
| Surname: | | | | | | Surname: | | | | | |
| Company address: | | | | | | Company address: | | | | | |
| Title: | | | | | | Title: | | | | | |
| Arrival: | | Flt: | | Time: | | Arrival: | | Flt: | | Time: | |
| Departure: | | Flt: | | Time: | | Departure: | | Flt: | | Time: | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Rates | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Rates |
| Single | | | | | | Single | | | | | |
| Twin | | | | | | Twin | | | | | |
| Triple | | | | | | Triple | | | | | |
| Suites | | | | | | Suites | | | | | |
| Form of Payment | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Contact | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Remarks | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account No. | | Date: | | Taken by: | | | | | | | |

Figure 11.2 Amendment/Cancellation form

11.4 Cancellation

Cancellation is obliterating a reservation that had been done by a guest with a hotel, while amendment is a change in the reservation. The change can be regarding any one or all of the following:

- Date of arrival
- Date of Departure
- Duration of stay
- Type of room
- Number of rooms
- Number of person
- Food Plan, etc.

For any cancellation of reservation, a minimum of three days notice is required for FIT guests. This is known as 'Cut-off Date' or 'Cut out Date'. If this condition is not fulfilled, then a retention charge is taken from the guest. The Cutoff date for a group reservation is normally thirty days.

11.4.1 Cancellation Code

When a cancellation is accepted, a cancellation code is developed and given to the guest, which can be used as a reference in future. A Cancellation code is as under

0981010AS154

- The first three digits 098 represent the day of a particular year. Here, 098 stand for the 98th day of the year, i.e. 8th of April.
- The following two digits 10 stand for the year, i.e. 2010.
- The sixth and the seventh digits 10 together stand for the property code, which is applicable for the chain hotels only. The reason being, in chain hotels booking and cancellation of rooms of one hotel can be done from another hotel of the same chain.
- Next two characters AS are the initials of the reservation assistant who takes the cancellation.
- The last three digits 154 is the serial number of the cancellation which is maintained in the cancellation register, kept in the reservation section.

11.4.2 Cancellation Procedure in Diary System

- 1)As soon as a cancellation request is received, a cancellation code is developed and informed to the guest.
- 2)The cancellation form is then filled up, if in use, and is stapled with the room reservation form.
- 3)The Cancellation code is written clearly on the cancellation form and kept in the cancellation file together with the room reservation form.
- 4)The entry in the hotel diary is cancelled by drawing a line across, and is marked as cancelled.
- 5)ALC is updated and room status Board if required.
- 6)The cancellation code is noted down in the remarks column of the hotel diary along with the signature of the Reservation assistant.

7)The Cancellation register is then filled in.

11.4.3 Cancellation Procedure in Whitney System

- 1)As soon as a cancellation request is received, a cancellation code is developed and informed to the guest.
- 2)The Cancellation form is then filled in and the cancellation code is mentioned on it.
- 3)The original Whitney Slip is taken out and marked as cancelled.
- 4)Cancellation form, room reservation form and the original copy of the Whitney slip along with the duplicate copy are stapled together, and kept in the cancellation file.
- 5)Cancellation register is then filled in.
- 6)Density control chart is updated and subsequently room status Board if required.

11.4.4 Cancellation Procedure in Computer system

- 1)In this case the reservation modules which include the types of rooms etc. which have been booked are updated.
- 2)It is important to note that once the cancellation record is updated the room is now available for future booking.

11.4.5 Cancelling a Non- Guaranteed Reservation

- ❖To Cancel a Non-Guaranteed Reservation, the reservation agent should obtain the name and address of the guest, number of rooms reserved by the guest, schedule date of arrival and departure.
- ❖This information will make sure that the correct reservation record is found out and cancelled.
- ❖After recording the cancellation, the reservations agent should assign the cancellation number to the guest.

11.4.6 Cancelling a Credit card Guaranteed Reservation

- ❖To cancel a credit card guaranteed reservation, obtain the total information about the guest reservation related to the guest stay such as date of arrival and departure, name and address of the guest and reservation number.
- ❖Mark the reservation as cancelled and add the cancellation number to the reservation record. If someone other than the guest makes the cancellation, the reservation's agent should add the caller's name to the cancelled reservation record.

11.4.7 Cancelling an Advance Deposit Guaranteed Reservation

- ❖Cancelling an advance Deposit Reservation vary according to the policy of the hotel.
 - ❖The Reservations agent should take extreme care while cancelling the advance deposit guaranteed reservation as this cancellation deals with cash deposit.
 - ❖Deposits are normally returned to guests who properly cancel the reservation.
-

11.4.8 Cancelling other Guaranteed Reservation

- ❖ Generally it is the representative of the company or the travel agency who contacts the hotel to cancel a corporate account or travel agency guaranteed Reservation.
- ❖ It is important to enter the name of the person cancelling the reservation on the reservation record.
- ❖ A reservation cancellation number should be issued in both the cases and should be recorded.

11.5 Amendment

The hotel on receiving an amendment request shall first cancel the previous booking and then make a new booking as per guest request and the process will involve updating records in Diary/ Whitney slips and racks/Computers/ density Charts/Conventional booking charts or any other records whichever is being used by the hotel for showing reservations. The complete sets of documents are also updated.

11.5.1 Amendment Procedure in Diary System

- 1) As soon as the amendment request is received, the room availability position is checked by referring Room status board and subsequently Advance letting chart.
- 2) If the amendment request can be accepted, then an amendment form is filled in, if in use, and then kept in the room reservation file after being stapled with RR form, generated at the time of reservation. ALC is updated followed by RSB, if required.
- 3) The previous entry in the diary is cancelled by drawing a line across and marked as 'AMENDED'. The reservation assistant signs on it.
- 4) A fresh entry is made in the diary as per the date of arrival.

11.5.2 Amendment Procedure in Whitney System

- 1) As soon as an amendment request is received, the room availability position is checked by referring RSB and subsequently DCC.
- 2) If the amendment request can be accepted, then an amendment form is filled in.
- 3) DCC is then updated followed by RSB if required.
- 4) A new Whitney slip is made as per the amendment in duplicate.
- 5) Old original Whitney slip and the RR form are then stapled together.
- 6) Original Whitney slip is placed on the Whitney rack after mounting on a carrier, in an alphabetical order.
- 7) The duplicate Whitney slip is stapled with the amendment form and the RR form and then placed in the proper RR form file in an alphabetical order.

Check your progress**Fill in the blanks**

- 1) The cancellation request for a Group should be received _____ in advance.
- 2) _____ arrive in series and follow the same itinerary one after another for a specified period of time, say one year.
- 3) After recording the cancellation, the reservations agent should assign the _____ to the guest.
- 4) Along with the rooming list the travel agent will also send _____.
- 5) A three days notice required for FIT guests is known as _____.

True/false

- 1) The discount depends upon size of the group and number of room nights, and meal plans. [T/F]
- 2) The previous entry in the diary is cancelled by drawing a line across. [T/F]
- 3) Group Information sheet shows materialization of booked groups from various travel agents and other sources. [T/F]
- 4) Generally group market comprises of the FIT's. [T/F]
- 5) The first three digits in a cancellation code represent the day of a particular year. [T/F]

Question

- 1) What do you mean by Group Reservation? Explain its Importance for a hotel and the procedure to be followed while processing group reservation.
- 2) Draw a neat format of the amendment and cancellation form.

11.6 Summary

This unit addresses the methods through which any reservation cancellation or amendment request needs to be handled. The different categories of hotels depending upon the degree of automation adopted by them follow different procedures of doing so. It highlighted the methods of cancellation for both Guaranteed and non guaranteed reservation, specifically when the advance deposit has been accepted by Cash, Credit card, travel agents voucher etc. The process of group reservation, group markets, sources of group bookings and their amendment and cancellation is also discussed.

11.7 Answer to Check your progress**Fill in the blanks**

- 1) 30 days, 2) Series Group, 3) cancellation number, 4) Travel Agent Voucher, 5) Cut-off Date or Cut out Date

True/false

[T], 2) [T], 3) [F], 4 [F], 5) [T]

11.8 Suggested Readings

Puri, Rakesh.2006. Front Office Operations and Management: Manju Publishers
Bardi, James A.2007. Hotel Front Office Management: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
Ghosh, S.G. Check-In Check-Out 2006.Aman Publications, New Delhi.
Bhatnagar, S.K.2002.Front Office Management, Frank Bros. & Co. (Publishers)
Ltd

11.9 Review Questions

- 1) Explain the Cancellation procedure for a Group Booking.
- 2) Explain the different types of Group Markets.

UNIT 12: REGISTRATION

Structure

- 12.1 Objective
- 12.2 Introduction
- 12.3 Pre-registration Activity
- 12.4 Reception
- 12.5 Registration
- 12.6 Registration Records
 - 12.6.1 Hard bound register
 - 12.6.2 Loose leaf register
 - 12.6.3 Guest Registration Card
- 12.7 The flow of registration process
- 12.8 Check-in procedure
 - 12.8.1 Guest with confirm reservation
 - 12.8.2 Walk in guest
 - 12.8.3 VIP
 - 12.8.4 Group-domestic & international
 - 12.8.5 Scanty baggage guest
 - 12.8.6 Foreigner
- 12.9 Self Check-in Terminals
- 12.10 Chapter Summary
- 12.11 Review Questions

12.1 Objectives

After reading this chapter you will be able to understand:

- Reception
- Registration
- Registration record
- Check-in check-out procedure
- Form C

12.2 Introduction

The process of registration starts in the second phase of guest cycle in case of a guest with confirmed reservation. The process begins with the arrival of the guest at the front desk. In the present chapter we will study the activities that speed up the registration of the guest to avoid queuing at the front desk during the peak hours of guest arrivals. The activity that supports the speedy check-in of the guest is termed as Pre-registration activity.

The registration of a guest at the front desk involves legal implications on the both hotel as well as the guest. This is a valid contract between guest and the hotel. A registration activity takes place at front desk. The check-in procedure of the guest varies with their status. In this chapter we will study the steps involved

in check-in of the guest with confirmed reservation, walk-in, VIPs, Group, Crews and Scanty baggage guest in detail.

12.3 Pre-Registration Activity

The activities that are carried out before arrival of guest to accelerate the guest registration are termed as pre-registration activity. The necessary information to fill the registration form can be gathered mainly from the two sources namely:

- Reservation Form
- Guest History Card

The information contained in these forms are utilized to complete the registration form and guest can experience a quick check-in when they arrive at the registration desk as they only have to verify the information already entered in the registration card by putting their signatures whereas the walking guest's check-in activity may take little more time in completing the formalities of registration. The pre-registration activity may also include activities like room and rate assignment and creation of the guest folios. Most of the front office managers prefer the room and rate assignments at the time of arrival of the guest to adjust any changes. The pre-registration activity is carried out manually in manual and semi-automated system whereas in case of fully automated front office system the same task is carried out by the system which transforms the guest's data from reservation form and guest history card on registration card. A sample registration card is shown in figure 12.1

| GUEST REGISTRATION CARD | | | | No. _____ | | |
|---|----------------|---|-----------|--|-----------|-----------------|
| Surname _____ | | First Name / Initials _____ | | Date of Birth _____ | | |
| Company Name _____ | | Passport No. _____ | | | | |
| Designation _____ | | Date of Issue _____ | | | | |
| Nationality _____ | | Place of Issue _____ | | | | |
| Permanent Address _____ | | Date of Arrival in India _____ | | | | |
| | | Proposed duration of stay in India _____ | | | | |
| Date of Arrival in Hotel _____ Time _____ | | Whether employed in India | | [] Yes [] No | | |
| Arrived From _____ | | Registration Certificate No. _____ | | | | |
| Proceeding To _____ | | Date of Issue _____ | | | | |
| Purpose of visit _____ | | Place of Issue _____ | | | | |
| Date of Departure from Hotel _____ Time _____ | | | | | | |
| Credit Card No. _____ | | <i>I agree to abide by the Hotel Rules & Regulations.</i> | | | | |
| # Check In / Check Out Time : 12 Noon # All valuables & cash should be deposited with the cashier. | | | | | | |
| | | | | Guest's Signature _____ | | |
| | | | | Manager's Signature _____ | | |
| FOR OFFICE USE ONLY | | | | | | |
| Nationality Code _____ | | Payment Code _____ | | Resv. No. _____ | | |
| Room No. | No. of Persons | | Room Rate | Billing Instructions Cash Voucher Cred. Card Company | Booked by | Initials of FOA |
| | Adult | Children | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Figure 12.1 Sample Guest Registration Card

12.4 Reception

According to oxford dictionary reception is the place inside the entrance of a hotel or office building where guests or visitors go when they first arrive. Reception is the area manned by a receptionist who welcomes the hotel guest at their arrival. The guest queries are taken care. This is probably the first opportunity for face to face contact with the guest. The reception is the focal point of the guest contact. The registration activity takes place at the same desk. The guest has to fill their required details on registration card or may have to make entries in a hotel register.

12.5 Registration

Registration is the process of gathering information from the guest that is mandatory the law prevailing in the country. According to the Foreigner's Act 1946 and The Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1992 the innkeeper is responsible to keep the records of the guest who are staying in their premises. The innkeeper should keep the records as contained in form F of The Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1992. Registration activity is also a proof of a valid contract between the guest and the hotel in which hotel offers safe and secure boarding and lodging facility to the guest and the acceptance of the guest to pay for the services and facilities received.

The registration is carried at front desk. The first step in guest registration process begins with capturing the data of the guest like name, address, purpose of visit, duration of stay etc.

12.6 Registration Records

The information gathered during the process of registration is known as registration records. The registration record contains the information required in form F of The registration of Foreigners' rule 1992. The same information may be gathered on a register known as Hotel register or Red book. The hotel may collect this information on following type of registration record.

12.6.1 Hard bound register

Hard bound register are normally used by small hotel. All the pages of the register are bound into a thick book. It can be used for a long time. The major advantages of using hard bound register are:

- All the records for the duration are available in a single book.
- Wastage of paper is minimal.
- No filing is required.

There are certain disadvantages associated with usage of hard bound register for registering guests. Some of the major disadvantages are:

- If the book is misplaced, all the records for that entire duration is lost forever.
- It can lead to create a queue at front desk during peak hours of registration.

- Privacy of guest can not be maintained.
 - Only one guest can register at a time.
 - Pre registration is not possible.
 - Registration of group/ crew will take more time.
 - Being very bulky and used for longer duration of time the register look shabby at the counter.
-

12.6.2 Loose leaf register

A loose leaf register contains the same data as contained in hard bound register with a difference that pages are not bound. One page is used everyday. Following are the major advantages using loose leaf register.

- To some extent privacy of the guest can be maintained.
- If sheet is lost only one day record is lost.
- It's easy to hand over to the guest to fill their details.

The major disadvantages associated with the use of loose leaf register are:

- It may be lost easily.
 - The space in the sheet goes waste, if enough number of guests is not register on a particular day.
 - Only one guest can register at a time.
 - Pre registration is not possible.
 - Filing of the sheets becomes an additional job.
-

12.6.3 Guest Registration Card

Individual guest registration card are now a days used by most of the hotels. The format of guest registration card is shown in figure 8.1. The guest registration card may be used in duplicate or triplicate as per the policy of the hotel. They are given to the guest at the time of arrival to complete the registration formality. There are following advantages associated with the use of individual guest registration card.

- The efficiency of front desk can be increased as many guests can register themselves at a time.
- Privacy of each guest can be maintained.
- The guest can be pre registered.

The major disadvantages of using individual guest registration for registration activity are as follows.

- It is quite expensive.
 - If not stored properly, may be lost or misplaced.
-

12.7 THE FLOW OF REGISTRATION PROCESS

The flow of the transactions in registration process can be studied in following phases;

- Identification of guests
 - Formation of registration records
 - Room and rate assignments
-

- Establishment of credits
- Completion of check in procedure and issuance of room keys
- Generation of documents during registration

Identification of guests: The identification of guest's transient status is important as the hotel process the registration of guest with confirm reservation and walk-in in a slight different way. The front desk agent refers to the today's arrival list for guest with confirm reservation and for walk in they refer to the room availability status. The guest with confirmed reservation may be FIT (Free individual traveler) or group/ crew. The identification of the guest status leads in speedy check in of the guest.

Formation of registration records: The guest's signature to verify the records in the registration form results in formation of permanent and complete registration record. On the basis of this record hotel may process to develop other hotel records like guest folio, visitor's tabular ledger, arrival notification slip, guest history card etc. The completion of registration record is a legal requirement and this should be stored for a minimum period of three years or as required by the law prevailing in the state. The same record can be accessed by a competent local authority as and when required.

Room and rate assignment: After completing the registration formality the next step is to allocate and assign an available room in specific category as requested by the guest during reservation. In case of a chance guest (walk in) the hotel may exercise the option of up-selling. The details regarding the type of room and rate helps receptionist in deciding which room to be assigned to the guest. While assigning a room guest's preferences like floor level, near to the elevator, view, color scheme etc. are entertained if they can be satisfied.

Establishment of credits: The determination of guest's creditability and the mode by which they will be settling their account is very important for the hotel. A cash and cash equivalent mode (traveler's cheque, demand draft and credit/ charge card) of account settlement is preferred. The determination of creditability of guest can be established by:

- Asking the guest to produce their credit card at the time of arrival and by swiping the same for the authorization from the credit card company.
- The guest may be asked to produce Travel Agent voucher/ authorization letter from the company in case if the bills are settled by the company.
- Advance deposit may also be asked at the time of check in.

Completion of check in procedure and issuance of room keys: After the guest has registered, room is assigned and credit is established, the next step is to issue the room keys to the guest. The bell boy is called to escort the guest and install the guest luggage in their assigned room. The front desk employee carries out following activity after every check in:

- Update of room status.
- Preparation of arrival notification slips and sending them to concern department.
- Creation of guest folio

- Filling of form C in case of foreigners and sending the same to the concern authority.

Generation of documents during registration: During the registration following records are generated:

- Registration card
- Room rack slip
- Arrival notification slip
- VIP or Group/ Crew arrival notification
- Entries in AD register (Arrival/ departure register)
- Form C, in case of registration of a foreigner
- Creation of guest folio

12.8 Check-In Procedure

The different steps involved from arrival of the guest, to issuance of the room key to the guest is known as check in procedure. In case of manual or semi automated operation system the process starts from the welcoming and greeting the guest at the reception counter, the completion of registration formalities and issuance of the room key is done manually where as in fully automated system the same activity is performed automatically by self check in terminals located in the hotel lobby.

The check in procedure may vary in case of guest having confirmed reservation/ walk in. the reservation activity may take a specialised form in case of VIP's, group, crew, scanty baggage guest and foreigners. The check in procedure of the various guest are discussed as under:

- Guest with confirm reservation:
- Walk in guest
- VIP
- Check-in procedure Groups/Crew (domestic & international)
- Scanty baggage guest
- Foreigner

12.8.1 Check-in procedure guest with confirm reservation

The check in procedure for the guest with confirmed reservation involves following steps:

- Welcome the guest with smile and greet them according to the time of the day.
- Ask them if they have confirmed reservation.
- Check with the today's arrival list as shown in figure 12.2
- Pre filled registration card is given to guest to verify the registration record.
- Check the registration card completed by the guest for completeness of the registration card including even billing instructions.
- Allot the room and authorize the bell desk personnel to install the guest luggage into the room. The bell captain will fill the information in the

arrival errand card and Lobby control sheet as shown in figure 12.3 and 12.4

| Hotel WXY | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Date :30 January 2008 | | | | | | |
| Name | No. of Guest | | Type of Room | No. of Room Night | Arrival time | Remarks |
| | Adult | Child | | | | |
| Mr. S Ramola | 2 | 2 | Duplex | 3 | 10:15 AM | Baby Sitter Required |
| Mr. Z A Ahmed | 1 | | Single | 2 | 12:15 PM | Garden Facing |
| Mr. A Gangotia | 2 | | Double | 5 | 09:00 AM | Honeymoon couple |
| Mr.Lalit Badbolia | 2 | 1 | 1 dbl 1 sgl | 2 | 11:25 AM | Interconnecting room |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Figure: 12.2 Today's Arrival List

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Hotel ABC | | | | |
| Arrival Errand Card | | | | |
| Bell Boy Name: | | | | Call Time: |
| Name of Guest: | | | | Room No.: |
| Articles | | | | |
| Suitcase | Hand Bag | Package | Briefcase | Overcoat |
| Others | | | | |
| Signature (Bell Captain) | | Signature (Receptionist) | | |

Figure 12.3 Arrival Errand Card

| Hotel ABC Bell Captain _____ Sheet No. _____ Shift _____ Date _____ | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|----|---------|
| Room No. | Bell Boy Name | Arr. Time | Dep. Time | Service Call Time | | Remarks |
| | | | | From | To | |
| | | | | | | |

Bell Boy's Sign.: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

 Bell Captain Sign. _____

Figure 12.4 Sample Lobby Control Sheet

- Issue the room keys to the guest, and ask the bell boy to escort the guest and install guest luggage into room.
- Wish the guest an enjoyable stay at your property.

12.8.2 Check-in procedure Walk- in guest

The check in procedure for the walk- in guest involves following steps:

- Welcome the guest with smile and greet them according to the time of the day.
- Ask them if they have confirmed reservation.
- If the guest is not having reservation, then check room availability status for the requested duration of stay by the guest.
- If rooms are available for the requested duration, then you can proceed for the check in activity of the walk- in guest. (It is essential to ascertain the creditability of a walk- in guest.)
- Assist the guest to fill the registration card and sign.
- Check the registration card completed by the guest for completeness of the registration card.
- In case of an unknown guest, ask for the advance or take the imprint of credit card.

- Allot the room and authorize the bell desk personnel to install the guest luggage into the room. The bell captain will fill the information in the arrival errand card and Lobby control sheet.
- Issue the room keys to the guest, and ask the bell boy to escort the guest and install guest luggage into room.
- Wish the guest an enjoyable stay at your property.

12.8.3 Check-in procedure for VIP

The VIP guest gets a special treatment and attention from the hotel employee due to their status. The guest can be treated as VIP if they are heads of states, ministers, senior media personnel, sports personnel, film and rock stars, travel writers, top executives of corporate houses, CEOs of large business houses, senior defense personnel, famous public figures etc. The VIPs check-in process may start with their arrival at the airport. The role of hotel in welcoming the political VIPs at airport is minimal due to security reasons. In case of corporate heads of business houses, the hotel person may receive them at the airport and escort the guest to the hotel room. The registration process may be carried out during the transfer from airport to hotel or in the hotel room.

The check in procedure of VIP guest involves following steps:

- Limousine facility may be offered to pick up the guest from airport.
- At the arrival of the guest at the hotel they may be welcomed by putting a tilak, garlanding followed by Aarti. The General Manager/ Front office manager are also present to welcome the VIP as per their status.
- The registration formality is carried out by the authorized representative of VIP in advance.
- The VIP is escorted to their room by the General Manager/ Front office manager.
- The arrival notification and any special instruction of VIPs are sent to all concerned department.

12.8.4 Check-in procedure Groups/Crew (domestic & international)

The check in procedure for group/crew requires specialised pre registration activity as group contains large number of people to be registered at the same time. The front desk assistant should be in constant touch with the group leader/ airport representative. Following pre registration activity is required in check in procedure of group/ crew:

- A group list containing details of each guest in the group is required. The list should contain the details like name, address, purpose of visit, duration of stay, meal preference (vegetarian/ non vegetarian), passport details (for foreigners) and any special instruction regarding the location of room.
- Number of required rooms for the group is preferably allocated at the same floor.

- Rooming list is prepared which contains the name and room number allotted to each member of group/crew.

[illegible]

Figure 12.5 Rooming List

- Keys are arranged according to room number and placed in an envelope to be handed over to the group leader.
- Registration cards are pre filled from the information received from the group leader/ airport representative and arranged alphabetically.
- Appropriate numbers of bell boys are retained for installing the guest luggage in their room.
- Food and beverage service department is coordinated for arrangement of welcome drink.

Check- in procedure:

The following steps are involved in the check in of group and crew at the hotel.

- When the vehicle arrives at the portico the guest luggage is handled by the Bell boys. They put the guest luggage tag on each luggage of

individual guest as per the rooming list and luggage is transferred to the respective room using luggage trolley.

- The group leader is escorted to the reception desk where he completes the formalities of registration. The room keys and the registration form of all the members handed over to him for getting the signatures of every group member and dispersal of room keys.
- Meanwhile the group members are offered welcome drink in a pre scheduled area.
- The group leader handovers the signed registration card at the front desk, and guests may proceed to their respective rooms after having their welcome drinks.
- Meal schedule, wake call and pick up time may also be enquired from the group leader.

12.8.5 Check-In Procedure Scanty Baggage Guest

A guest who arrives at front desk requesting for accommodation carrying very little or no baggage is known as a scanty baggage guest. The Bell boy carrying the guest luggage should report at front desk regarding the same. Following steps are involved in check in procedure of scanty baggage guests:

- The Bell boy informs the front desk regarding the scanty baggage.
- For registering a scanty baggage guest the front desk assistant takes the authorization from Duty manager.
- The registration formalities are completed as per the walk in.
- A full advance for the duration of stay may be asked from the guest.
- Scanty baggage Stamp should be imprinted on the guest registration card.
- APC (all payment cash) slip is prepared and sent to all point of sales.
- Room keys are allotted.

12.8.6 Check-in procedure Foreigner

The check in procedure for foreigners is same as of a domestic guest with an exception that we have to fill form 'C' for registering a foreigner guest. Form 'C' is filled in duplicate, the top copy is sent to foreigner regional registration office (FRRO) or to the local intelligence unit (LIU) with in 24 hours of arrival of a foreign national. In case of Pakistan and Bangladesh, the same information should also be sent to local police station. The format of form 'C' is shown in figure number 12.6

Form C

According to 'The Registration of Foreigners' Rules 1992'; rule 14 makes it obligatory on the part of innkeeper to send information about foreigners registered at their hotel. Any person who is not an Indian national (person having the passport of country other than India except Nepal and Bhutan) is known as foreigner. The hotel is liable to send information contained in form C to the nearest FRRO or LIU within twenty four hours of arrival of a foreign national, in case of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese nationals this information should reach with in 12 hours to FRRO or LIU and local police station. The C form is

prepared in duplicate and it should be serial numbered, the top copy is sent to competent authority and the second copy is kept for permanent record for the duration as specified in law related to the same.

| |
|---|
| Hotel ABC Form C (Rule 14) Hotel Arrival Report (To be completed in duplicate) |
| Sr. No:..... Date:..... Name of the Hotel:_____ Name of the Foreign Visitor:_____ (In full in block capitals, Surname first) Nationality:_____ Passport No.:_____ Date of Issue:_____ Place of Issue:_____ Address in India:_____ Date of Arrival in India:_____ Arrived From:_____ Whether employed in India : Yes/No Proposed Duration of Stay in India:_____ Proposed Duration of Stay at Hotel:_____ Proceeding to:_____ Registration Certificate No. _____ Date of Issue: _____ Place of Issue: _____ <div style="text-align: right;">Manager's Signature</div> |

Figure 12.6 Format of form C

12.9 Self Check-In Terminals

Self check in terminal is an outcome of advancement of technology and “do it yourself” competent guest. A self check in terminal is like an interactive ATM machine. These terminals may be located at the airport and at convenient place in the lobby. The use of such machines reduces the manpower requirement. The guest by using their credit card can check in without any assistance. The room is assigned and keys are also dispensed by the machine. Such self check- in terminals is more common in smart hotels. The efficiency of front desk is increased when such terminals are used. Apart from dispensing the room keys the arrival notification to other department is sent instantaneously. Use of self check- in terminal lacks the personalized human touch from the hotel.

12.10 Summary

In the present chapter we have studied the second phase of guest cycle i.e. Arrival. The present chapter has introduced the process of registration. The registration process starts with the identification of guest status, formation of registration records, room and rate assignments, establishment of credits, completion of check in procedure and issuance of room keys and generation of documents during registration process. The registration records are made according to Foreigner's Act 1946 and The Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1992 on the format F provided in the law. The later part of the chapter contains the registration and check-in activity of guest with confirm reservation, walk in guest, VIPs, check-in procedure groups/crew (domestic & international), scanty baggage guest and foreigner

12.11 Review Questions

1. Define reception.
2. What do you understand by pre-registration activity? Explain the importance of pre-arrival activity.
3. What is registration? Explain the legal implication of registration.
4. Explain the flow of registration process.
5. Explain the form F and Form C.
6. Explain the Check-in procedure of Guest with confirm reservation
7. Explain the Check-in procedure of Walk in guest
8. Explain the Check-in procedure of VIPs
9. Explain the Check-in procedure of Group-domestic & international
10. Explain the Check-in procedure of Scanty baggage guest
11. Explain the Check-in procedure of Foreigner
12. What is self check-in terminal? What are advantages and disadvantages of having the same?

UNIT 13: SECURITY DEPARTMENT

Structure

- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Introduction
- 13.3 Importance of security department
- 13.4 Organization of security department
- 13.5 Room key security
- 13.6 Fire Safety
- 13.7 Accident
- 13.8 First Aid
 - 13.8.1 First Aid Equipments
 - 13.8.2 First-aid for some common problems
- 13.9 Handling Unusual Events
 - 13.9.1 Terrorist activities and Bomb threat
 - 13.9.2 Robbery
- 13.10 Summary
- 13.11 Review Question

13.1 Objectives

After reading this unit the learner will understand:

- Security department
- Importance of security department
- Fire safety
- Room key safety
- Dealing with unusual situation

13.2 Introduction

The act of delivering hospitality is thought to occur naturally. However, throughout this text, delivering hospitality has been discussed as a planned concept, complete with research on guests' needs, policy and program development, establishment and delivery of training programs, and follow-up information systems. Hospitality also includes providing a safe environment for guests, which requires a well-organized department to oversee and implement safety programs. The security department of a hotel is vital to delivering hospitality to guests. This department is responsible for establishing the details of the following systems:

- Guest and employee safety
- Room key security
- Fire safety systems
- Bomb threat action
- Emergency evacuation plans
- Employee safety training plans
- Emergency communication plans

13.3 Importance of a Security Department

The front office is a hotel's communication centre; it is the vital link between the hotel management and the guest. When a guest calls for assistance because of fire, illness, theft, or any other emergency, it is usually the front office that must respond. The staff on duty at the front office cannot leave and resolve the emergency because they must continue to provide communication services and process financial transactions. The security department staff must react with speed and efficiency to serve the guest.

The security department is often regarded as a passive department, reacting only when called on. In reality, it is a very active department, setting policies, organizing programs, and delivering training programs to promote guest and employee safety. The director of security is a trained professional who must ensure that a busy hotel filled with guests, employees, and equipment stays safe. One of the department's goals is to prevent emergencies through planning. Another goal, however, is to train all hotel employees to respond to emergencies.

13.4 Organization of A Security Department

The security department of a hotel is organized like any other department. At the head of the department is the director of security, who is responsible for maintaining a safe environment for guests and employees. The security director needs personnel, technology, and a budget to operate a 24-hour control system for the hotel. Depending on the size of the hotel, there may be an assistant director of security, who would act in the absence of the director and assist in the administrative and supervisory functions of the department.

The director of security reports to and works with the general manager and interacts with each department director. Each of the shifts (7 a.m. to 3 p.m., 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., and 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.) is staffed with shift supervisors and security guards who are responsible for patrolling the grounds to watch the activities of the guests and employees and check on safety and security equipment. The number of people required to staff this department depends on the size of the hotel.



Figure 13.1 Organization chart of security department

13.5 Room Key Security

The access to the room is controlled by placing lock at the door. Hotel has a strict control over the room keys. People who possess the key can access the room. Hotel may have hard key system or electronic key system. If hotel is using hard key system following security measures can be followed:

- Ask the guest to deposit room keys at reception while moving out of the hotel premises.
- Discourage guest to carry room key along with them while going out of the hotel premises. This is mostly done by putting heavy and large key tags which is inconvenient to carry.
- In an event of loss of keys the lock should be replaced immediately.

The electronic key system is an investment in guest safety and security. As each new guest registers, a fresh plastic, metallic or hard-pressed paper key is produced. The room door lock combination can be changed as and when required by option available through master computer, hence if a guest carries away the electronic key with them will not pose any security threat.

Types of Room Keys: Hotel, for security reason may use three types of room keys:

- Emergency / Grand Master Key
- Master Key
- Guestroom Key

Emergency Key / Grand Master Key: An emergency/grand master key opens all guest room door lock even if they are double locked (Double lock is an internal safety locking device, if locked from inside the room, it cannot be opened from outside by its own keys and master key). Emergency key should be highly protected and should only be used in an event of emergency. A strict key control is maintained for the same. It should not be taken out of the premises. Generally emergency key is under control of the head of the property.

Master Key: A master key opens all guest room lock which is not double locked. This key may be such that it can unlock all guest room lock or may open only specific floor's guest room locks. The master key is under control of executive housekeeper of the hotel. There may be several floor master keys used by room attendant for cleaning guest room. These keys are strictly controlled and issued only to the staff on duty. They have to sign before taking the key and at the time of submitting.

Guestroom Key: These are individual room keys for each room. A guestroom key opens the lock of the individual guestrooms. These keys are under control of front desk. These are issued to guest who has registered and collected back when they depart from the hotel.

13.6 Fire Safety

Fire is among the potential hazards associated with the hotel. Hotel must be equipped to safeguard guest and its property from the fire. All the employees must be aware of any specific procedure laid down for the establishment and be ready to comply with them at all the time.

The three basic elements if present at a place will result in outbreak of fire. They are:

- Fuel (a combustible substance)
- Oxygen (necessary as fire is an oxidation reaction)
- Heat (ignition temperature)

If any one of them is absent the fire cannot outbreak. Therefore fire can be extinguished by following three principles:

- Starving
- Smothering
- Cooling

Starving: Starving is the removal of the fuel from the vicinity of fire so that there is nothing to burn. Suppose fire outbreaks in the area where wood is stored, it can be extinguished by removing all the wood from that area. This will lead to elimination of one major element necessary for fire.

Smothering: Fire can be extinguished by cutting off supply of air (oxygen) which is necessary for existence of fire. Removal of air is known as smothering.

Cooling: Heat (ignition temperature) is another essential for the existence of fire. Cooling can be achieved by putting water.

13.6.1 Classification of Fire

Depending upon combustible material that caught fire, it is classified in to following five groups:

Class A: Wood, paper, textile, grass, garbage, and materials composed of cellulose

Class B: Oils, petroleum products, varnishes, paints, non-ionic solvents

Class C: Fire of electrical origin involving electrical short-circuits

Class D: Fire caused in metals e.g. Magnesium, Aluminum, Zinc, Potassium etc.

Class E: Outbreak of fire in gases e.g. Liquefied Petroleum Gases (LPG), Methane, Compressed Natural Gases (CNG) etc.

13.6.2 Procedure in the Event of Fire

Most of the hotels follow the following procedure in an event of fire:

- The person concerned must be informed immediately on detection of fire.
- Do not panic
- Warn other people on the vicinity and sound the fire alarm
- Do not jeopardize your own safety or that of others
- Follow the procedure laid down by your establishment
- Fire brigade must be informed immediately
- Do not try to extinguish fire if you are not trained for the same otherwise your faulty procedure may lead to spread of fire.

- If you are trained for fire fighting, use appropriate fire extinguisher to extinguish fire, if the fire is small.
- Close doors and windows; turn off supply of electricity and gas.
- Do not wait for the fire to get out of control before calling fire brigade.

It is important that all the passageways are kept clear and doors should open outwards. Fire exits are marked properly and should remain visible in darkness too. The fire extinguishers should be placed at proper places and should be in working conditions. Periodic fire drills should occur and should be taken sincerely since lives may be endangered if fire outbreaks. Fire detecting systems, sprinkling system, smoke detecting system, fire fighting equipments, fire houses etcetera should be inspected and tested at regular intervals to ensure that they remain functional in the event of fire.

13.7 Accidents

According to oxford dictionary, “an unpleasant event that happens unexpectedly and causes damage, injury or death”. The accident may occur due to one of the following reasons:

- Excessive haste
- Carelessness
- Anxiety
- Lack of interest
- Lack of concentration
- Failure to apply safety rules

Excessive haste: Excessive haste is one of the prime cause of accident because person in haste may overlook the safety rules or obstacles in the way. Therefore the golden rule should be never run to avoid an accident.

Carelessness: Carelessness is another root cause of accidents. A careless handling of the equipments may eventually lead to accidents.

Anxiety: Anxiety is a feeling of worry or fear. An anxious person will not be able to concentrate on the task that is carried out by them and will lead to accidents.

Lack of interest: Lack of interest in the work leads to carelessness in the person and ultimately the person will not be able to follow the correct procedure for carrying out the task and accidents may occur.

Lack of concentration: there may be several reasons why an employee may not be able to concentrate on their work. The possible reason for lack in concentration are personal worries, lack of interest, distractions etc. When someone is not able to concentrate on their work may eventually meet with accidents.

Failure to apply safety rules: Safety rules, if followed will prevent the occurrence of accidents. Operating procedures of any equipment that are mentioned in the manuals of equipments should be followed to eliminate the chances of accidents. A failure in applying safety rule will cause accident.

Accident Report: The organizations take all possible precautions to avoid accident but in spite of all care the accidents may occur. An accident occurring on the premises where the employee works must be reported to the employer and a record of the accident must be entered in the accident book as shown in figure 13.01.

| HOTEL ABC Accident Report | | | |
|--|------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Sr. #: 0123786 | | | |
| Name of the injured Person:..... | | | |
| Occupation:..... | | | |
| Supervisor:..... | | | |
| Time of Accident | Date of Accident | Time of Report | Date of Report |
| Nature of Injury or Condition:..... | | | |
| Extent of Injury (after medical attention):..... | | | |
| Place of Accident or Dangerous Occurrence:..... | | | |
| Injured Person's evidence of what happened:..... (Use separate sheet if required):..... | | | |
| Witness of evidence (I) | | Witness of evidence (II) | |
| Supervisor's Recommendations:----- ----- | | | |
| Date:..... | | Authorized Signatory | |

Figure 13.01 Accident Report Form

Proper reporting of accidents may help the management in following ways:

- Identification and spotting the accident prone area so that appropriate signals may be place to avoid any future accidents.
- Assessment of loss due to accident
- Requirement of ambulance
- First aid to be given

13.8 First Aid

According to oxford dictionary, first aid is the medical help that one gives to somebody who is hurt or ill before the doctor arrives. It is mandatory for the establishment that they should have adequate first aid equipment, facilities, and

trained personal to provide first aid at the work area. If the injury is serious, the injured person should be treated by a doctor or qualified nurse as soon as possible.

13.8.1 First Aid Equipments

There should be a first aid box in the work area. First-aid box should be easily identifiable and accessible in the work area. It should be in the charge of a responsible person. A regular replenishment of the first-aid box is necessary so that first-aid may be given in case of requirement. A first aid box must contain at a least following things:

- A card giving general first-aid guidance
- 20 individually wrapped, sterile, adhesive, waterproof dressings of various sizes
- An antiseptic lotion and antiseptic cream
- 4 X 25 g. cotton wool packets
- 1 dozen safety pins
- 2 triangular bandages
- 2 sterile eye pads, with attachment
- 4 medium-sized sterile un-medicated dressings
- 2 large size sterile un-medicated dressings
- 2 extra large size sterile un-medicated dressings
- Scissors
- A report book to record all injuries.

13.8.2 First-aid for some common problems

Shock: the signs of shock are faintness, sickness, clammy skin and pale face. Shock should be treated by keeping the person comfortable, lying down and warm. Cover the person with blanket or clothing, but do not apply hot water bottles.

Cuts: All cuts should be washed with the antiseptic lotion and should be covered with waterproof dressing. When there is considerable bleeding it should be stopped as soon as possible. If bleeding persists it may be stopped by bandaging firmly or pressing the artery with the thumbs and immediate medical assistance is necessary.

Nose Bleeding: In case of nose bleeding, sit the person down with the head forward, and loosen clothing round the neck and chest. Warn the person not to blow the nose for several hours. If bleeding persists seek the medical assistance.

Fainting: Fainting may occur after a long period of standing in a hot, badly ventilated area. The signs of an impending faint are whiteness, giddiness and sweating. A faint should be treated by raising the legs slightly above the level of the head and, when the person recovers the consciousness, putting in the fresh air for a while and making sure that the person has not incurred any injury in fainting.

Fractures: The best treatment for fracture is to make the affected part immobile before doing anything. Immediately seek the assistance of doctor.

Burns and Scalds: Burn is caused by dry heat source like flame or hot articles whereas scalds are caused by wet heat source like steam or boiling liquids. The burnt part should be placed under running cold water or immerse in cold water till pain ceases. Seek the assistance of doctor if required.

13.9 Handling Unusual Events

Hotel employee may face following unusual event:

- ▶ Terrorist activities and Bomb threat
- ▶ Robbery

13.9.1 Terrorist activities and Bomb threat

A lodging property that caters the VIPs may face the possible threat of terrorist activity and bomb threat. The hotel should take these threats seriously. The hotel in such situation should liaise with the local police authority and follow the instruction from them. The bomb threat may come by telephone. The person receiving such call should follow the below mentioned points:

- Do not interrupt the caller
- Write the exact words of the caller
- If possible find out :
 - Time due to explode
 - Where the device is placed
 - Description of device
 - Why he has done it
 - Whom they represents
- Write everything as soon as call is disconnected (a bomb threat form may be used for the same if used in hotel. A sample format is shown in figure 13.02) such as:
 - Callers voice
 - Mannerism
 - Determination
 - Age and sex
 - Accent
 - Any background noise etc.
- Do not alter the exact talk that has occurred between you and caller while re-telling to the authorities.
- Inform the competent authority immediately.
- Do not spread the rumors.
- Do not attempt to diffuse device if you are able to locate the same.

| HOTEL ABC Bomb Threat Form | |
|--|------------------------|
| Sr. #:..... | |
| Date:..... | |
| Time of Call started:..... | Time Call ended:..... |
| Caller's exact words:..... | |
| | |
| Questions that may be asked: | |
| When is bomb due to explode?----- | |
| Where the device is placed?----- | |
| How does device look like?----- | |
| What is the type of device? Time bomb / remote operated bomb | |
| Why you have placed the device?----- | |
| Whom you represent?----- | |
| Details of caller (Fill as soon as call ends) | |
| Age:----- | |
| Sex:----- | |
| Voice :----- | |
| Accent: local/foreigner/ educated/ other (specify) | |
| Language used:----- | |
| Manner:----- | |
| Any background sounds:----- | |
| Type of call: Local/ Long distance | |
| Telephone/ Mobile No. from which call was received :----- | |
| Action Taken | |
| Information to management:..... | Time..... |
| Information to local Police station:..... | Time:..... |
| Date | & |
| Time: | Signature |

Figure 13.02 Bomb Threat Form

13.9.2 Robbery

Robbery is a possibility in hotel as there may be a large sum at the front desk cash and bills sections and also at the point of sales. In an event of armed robbery hotel employees should normally follow the below mentioned procedures:

- Comply with the robbers demand
- Do not make sudden movement to provoke the robbers to use weapons or fire arms.
- Remain quiet unless directed to talk by robbers
- Do not attempt to disarm the robber, as this may jeopardize the life of person doing the act and other people in the vicinity.

- The cashier may switch the secret alarm that might be installed in the cash drawer while following the direction of robbers without being suspicious to be noticed by them.
- Observe the person carefully noting the physical characteristics like height, built, eye colour, hair colour, mannerism, complexion, clothing, scar marks or any thing that can be helpful to identification of the robbers.
- The employees may also note the direction of escape, type and registration number of vehicle used by the robbers.
- The employees should refrain themselves for touching any objects that might be touched by the robbers and restrict the movement of the people in the area so that the possible evidences are saved till the policemen comes to the premises.
- The hotel may have a format to record the details of the robber that is gathered from the people who have witnessed the event. The format of crime report form is shown in figure 13.03

| HOTEL ABC | |
|---|---|
| Crime Report Form | |
| Sr. #:..... | |
| Area of the incident: | |
| Number of People involved in robbery: | |
| Weapons used: Knife/Fire arms (type) Gun/Revolver/Pistol/others Description of the arms | |
| Description of robbers: | |
| Age:..... Height:..... Built:..... Complexion:..... Identification mark:..... Name (If used):..... Colour of eyes:..... Colour of Cloths:..... Mannerism :..... Language used:..... Modes opperendi:..... | Age:..... Height:..... Built:..... Complexion:..... Identification mark:..... Name (If used):..... Colour of eyes:..... Colour of Cloths:..... Mannerism :..... Language used:..... Modes opperendi:..... |
| Description of vehicle(s) used: Type and make:.....Registration No.:.....Colour of Vehicle..... | |
| Any other relevant thing:..... | |
| Authorised Signatory | |

Figure 13.03 Format of crime report Form

13.10 Summary

The safety and security of resident guest, non-resident guests, and hotel employees is the major responsibility of the hotel. Hotel is opened to the public yet it is a private property. The hotel employees must have an eye on suspicious peoples and should take necessary action to remove the trespassers.

The hotel uses various types of room keys like emergency/grand master key, master key, and guestroom key for security reasons. Each type of keys is controlled for safety and security of guest.

All the care is taken to minimize accidents and fire outbreak. The fire alarm system is installed in the hotel so that it is detected at earliest and controlled before it spread and goes out of control.

There are pre-determined standard operating procedure for handling events like terrorist activity, robbery, vandalism, theft so on and so forth.

13.11 Review Questions

1. What is the reason for having different types of room keys?
2. Explain the various types of room keys you may find in a hotel.
3. What are the causes of fire? Explain the basic elements of fire.
4. Classify fire? Explain the principals involved in extinguishing fire.
5. What do you understand by accident? What are the root causes of occurrence of accident? Explain.
6. What are the advantages of reporting accidents? Explain the accident report form with format of the same.
7. What is first-aid? What equipment and articles one can find in a first-aid box?
8. As a front desk employee how you will deal with terrorist activity of bomb threat?
9. Suppose you are a cashier at front desk and a group of people comes with fire arms to rob the cash. How you will handle the situation?

UNIT 14: FRONT OFFICE COMMUNICATIONS

Structure

- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 Introduction
- 14.3 Definition
- 14.4 Communication process
- 14.5 Importance of communication
- 14.6 Oral and written communication
- 14.7 Barriers of communication
- 14.8 Inter-department communication
- 14.9 Chapter Summary
- 14.10 Review Questions

14.1 Objectives

After reading this chapter you will be able to understand:

- Define communication
- Communication process
- Barriers of communications
- Importance of communication
- Communication of front office communication with other department

14.2 Introduction

Peoples are sharing ideas, views, feelings, information, knowledge, facts, and values with each other from the beginning of civilization. Ancient men were communicating with each other by use of symbols, actions, and gestures before they have established languages for oral and written modes of communication. With the development in civilization process different languages came in to existence. Use of common language makes communication easier and clearer.

The communication plays a vital role in proper co-ordination of each section, divisions of the hotel to perform as a separate entity. Each department of the hotel needs to share lots of information among themselves to carry out their day to day functions. An ambiguous communication may lead to a miserable situation; therefore, communication should be precise and clear.

The present chapter discusses the types of communication, barriers of communication, importance of communication, and the interdepartmental communication of the front office department.

14.3 Definition

The process of sharing the views, ideas, and knowledge excreta between two or more individuals or between groups is known as communication. The word communication is seems to be derived from Latin root “communis” meaning

common. The common thing in communication is the 'message' that a sender sends to the receiver. According to oxford dictionary, communication means, **"the act of sharing or exchanging information, ideas, feelings etc. between two or more peoples"**. Newstrom and Davis define communication as, **"Communication is the transfer of information from one person to another person. It is a way of reaching others by transmitting ideas, facts, thoughts, feelings, and values"**. Thus from these definitions of communication we can infer following aspects of communication:

- There is something to transfer (ideas, feelings, knowledge, information etc.)
- There must be two parties for completing the communication (sender and receiver)
- The correct interpretation and understanding of the message.

The important part in communication is the interpretation of the message. The receiver of the message should in the same sense in which the sender of the message wants him to understand.

14.4 Communication Process

Communication is defined as process by which people seek to share meaning through the transmission of the symbolic messages. Term process refers to identifiable flow of information through interrelated stages of analysis directed towards the achievement of an objective. The entire communication process may be broken into various elements of communication like sender, message, encoding, channel, receiver, decoding, and feedback.

Source (the sender of the message): Source of the message is the person who wishes to share the information, facts or feelings with another person or group of peoples (the target audience of the message). In context to hospitality industry, the sender of the message may be subordinate, peer, and superior who wishes to pass information to one or more target audience of the message.

Message: Message is the subject matter of the communication that is passed from sender to target audience. It may be a views, ideas, feelings, orders, recommendations, facts, data, request, etc.

Encoding: The subject matter of communication is nonfigurative and intangible, its transmission requires use of symbols like words, gestures, photo etc. the process of converting the abstract ideas into communication symbols is called encoding.

Channel: The way through which the encoded message passes is known as channels of communication. It may use any channel like written form, telephonic conversation, personal contact etc. the channel of communication depends upon the situation of the sender and the receiver.

Target (the receiver of the message): Target is the person to whom the message is sent by the sender. The receiver of the message may be the peer, senior or subordinate.

Decoding: Decoding is the converting the encoded symbols into abstract ideas. It is a reversal of the encoding. By doing so the target receives the original message.

Feedback: Feedback ensures that the target has received the message and understands the message in the same sense as it was intended by the sender. The communication process is illustrated in the figure 14.1

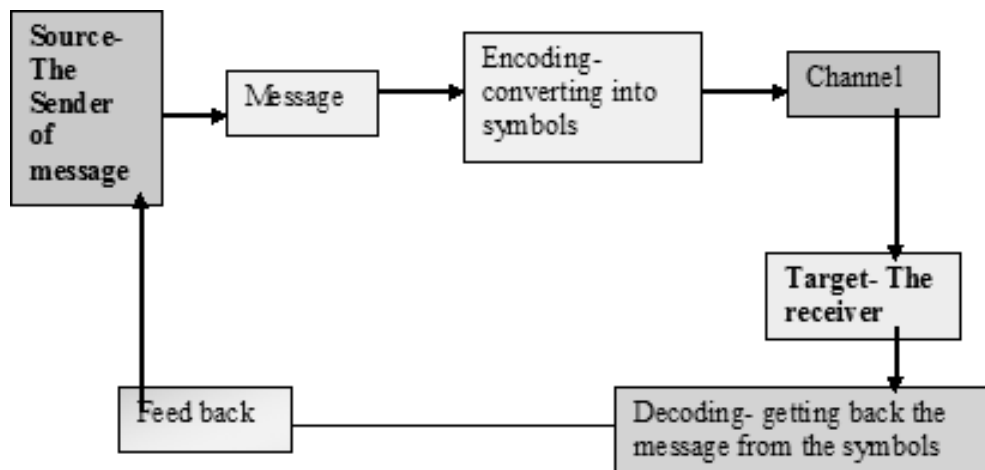


Figure 14.1 The Communication Process

14.5 Importance of communication

Communication is very important for proper co-ordination among the various department of the organisation. Every department of the hotel shares information from each other for proper planning and execution of the task performed by them. The front office department of the hotel communicates with the other department like housekeeping for status of rooms and at the same time housekeeping will require the information about the day's arrival, expected VIP, group; to schedule the requirement of the employees for smooth operation of the department. The importance of communication is as under:

- Essential for planning
- Essential for decision making
- Essential for effective co-ordination

Essential for planning: A good planning requires lots of information. The organisation gathers information from each sections or department through the communication. The planning will be sound if we are able to gather quality and relevant information. The better communication helps to generate the required information for planning.

Essential for decision making: Decision making is an indispensable component of management process. Decision making is choosing the best alternative from the available options. One requires studying all available options before choosing the most suitable alternatives. The managers are getting all necessary information from organisation through communication. Hence effective communication plays a vital role in decision making process.

Essential for effective co-ordination: Co-ordination among the departments is the key factor in providing flawless services to hotel guests. The effective co-ordination is achieved through proper communication among the departments of the hotel.

14.6 Oral and written communication

Words are the most common symbols of communication. In oral communication, both the parties to the communication exchange their ideas through oral words either in face-to-face communication or through electronic devices like telephone etc. the oral communication is easy, effective, and produces instant feedback from the other party to communication. Oral communication has limitations like lack of proof, lack of authenticity, and time consuming even though employees are spending a substantial part of their time in oral communication. Written communication is in the form of letters, circulars, notes, manuals, house magazines etc. The written communication has its own merits like authenticity and proof for future reference and suffers demerits like over formalization, cost, and lack secrecy.

14.7 Barriers of communication

Communication breakdown is cited as major problem by the managers. The problem of communication arises because there are various obstacles which may entirely prevent a communication, filter a part of it out, or give an incorrect meaning. These obstacles are known as barriers of communication. The barriers of communication may be grouped as semantic barriers, psychological barriers, organizational barriers, and personal barriers.

14.8 Interdepartmental communication

Front office department plays a pivotal role in delivering quality services to the guest. The front office manager must take an active role in gathering information of interest to guests and in developing procedures for the front office to use in disbursing this information. The efficient functioning of an organisation requires a close coordination and cooperation between the departments or sub-sections. The effective coordination is attained by proper and accurate communication. In order to attain to effective coordination front office department communicates with following departments of the hotel as shown in figure number 14.2.

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sales & Marketing | Housekeeping | Engineering & Maintenance |
| Security | FRONT OFFICE | Controller |
| Human Resource | Food & Beverage Service | Banquets |

Figure No. 14.2

Housekeeping: Front office and Housekeeping department communicates with each other for the information as under:

- Room Status
- Security Concerns
- Special Arrangements

Room Status: Room is the most perishable commodity sold by the hotel. Hence a tight control over the room status is mandatory to run a profitable hotel business. The Front office department and Housekeeping must closely coordinate on the Room status. Housekeeping department prepares an Occupancy report which is sent to front office department where is tallied with room status records of front desk to find any discrepancy. This helps to:

- Update room status
- Find sleepers (A room from which guest has already checked out but it is shown occupied in front office room status records)
- Know the exact house count.
- Charge guest if extra person has occupied the room.
- Coordinates in guest room change.

Security Concerns: The front desk needs information from housekeeping personnel regarding any unusual circumstances which may indicate a violation of security for the hotel guests. For example, if a house keeping person notices obviously non registered guest on a floor, sounds of domestic disturbances in a guest room, a fire exit that has been propped open or any other unusual events. The front desk personnel after receiving such information will inform in house or civil authorities so that guest security concern is not harmed.

Special Arrangements: The guest may request for additional or special amenities during their stay like extra blanket, towel, soap, shampoo, iron, oil etc. When such requests are received at front desk, it should be immediately relayed to the housekeeping department. Some time front office may also request housekeeping department to put extra amenities in the guest room like flower

arrangement, bath robe etc. The front desk also informs housekeeping department to make special arrangements for:

- VIP's in house.
- Groups in house
- Crew in house.

Food and Beverage Department: The front office department coordinates with food and beverage department for smooth functioning of hotel. The front office department sends information to food and beverage department which helps them to plan their work schedule and staff requirement to carry out day to day function of the department. The front desk sends information like:

- Arrival and departure notification of guest.
- Bar set up in VIP room
- Special arrangement like cookies, fruit basket and assorted dry fruits
- VIP and corporate guest in house
- Groups expected and Groups in house
- Crew in house
- All payment cash notification at point of sales for scanty baggage in-house guest.
- Arrangement for food and beverages for the groups and guests staying on meal plan.

Sales and marketing department: The front office department coordinates with sales and marketing department for information like:

- Guest histories
- Room reservation records
- Current room availability status
- Group, corporate and crew bookings
- Setting the transient and bulk room sales

This information helps both the department to sell the highly perishable hospitality product- The hotel room. The front office staff must take every effort to keep the data base like room availability status, guest histories etc. current and accurate. The marketing and sales executives may have to check the list of available rooms three; six or even twelve months in future to be sure that hotel can accommodate the expected number of guest. This information helps sales and marketing department to sell hotel products by bundling more than two hospitality products like rooms with meals, rooms with meals and entertainment leading to hospitality sales in totality. Therefore a close cooperation and coordination between the two departments is important.

Engineering and Maintenance: The front office communicates with engineering and maintenance department for proper upkeep of equipments and systems installed in the department as well as in the rooms. The front office informs any maintenance require in the department. In case if maintenance activity require in a room already occupied by a guest, the two departments work out a time frame so that maintenance should be carried out off sight of the guest or room may be changed. The request from guest to repair equipments and

systems installed in room may also be routed through front desk. In case such request is received at front desk it is transferred to maintenance department and a feedback should also be taken from maintenance as guest may want to be informed when the repair may be made.

Security: The front office in a hotel is a vital link between management of the hotel and the guest. When a guest calls for assistance because of security concerns like fire, illness, and theft other emergency, it is usually the front desk that must respond. The front desk personnel cannot leave the station to resolve the guest problem as they must continue to provide communication services and process financial transactions. In that case front desk sends the security personnel on duty to resolve the guest problems.

Controller: The front desk communicates with controller to provide a daily summary of financial transactions after night auditing. The information provided by the front desk helps the controller to make budgets and allocate finance for the current financial period. The front desk provides the controller the financial data for billing and maintenance of credit card ledgers, high balance reports etc. enables the controller to formulate policy guidelines and strategies to recover the money from the guests and companies.

Human Resource: A close coordination and communication between front desk and human resource division is a secret of successful functioning of the front office department. The front desk informs:

- About the requirement of staff.
- Training requirement for the staff.
- Refresher training for the staff.
- Cross training requirement.
- Multi skilling.

These information help human resource department to develop guidelines for initial screening of candidates to get the quality personnel for front desk. The guidelines may include concerns about personal hygiene, completion of application, education requirement, citizenship status, and experience.

Banquets: The front office department coordinates with banquets for putting information on bulletin board and placing directional signals for particular function area. The guest attending the function who is unfamiliar with the hotel may ask for directions at front desk. The banquet department sends function prospectus to front desk so that if any communication from the parties to function lands at front desk may be transferred or replied promptly. The preparation of marquee with congratulatory, welcome, sales promotion or important messages is handled by the front desk employee if such activity is required by the host of the party should be informed to the front desk through the banquet manager, so that it should be handled efficiently.

14.9 Chapter Summary

Front office department plays a pivotal role in delivering quality services to the hotel guests. Coordination among the various departments of the hotel is utmost important to provide all the services and facilities needed by the guest. Communication is the way how the information are gathered and transferred where it is needed. Communication is the backbone of coordination.

The present chapter starts with the definition of communication and progress with communication process and reveals the importance of communication for the organisation. The later part of the chapter deals with the communication of front office with the other departments of the hotel.

14.10 Review Questions

1. Define communication and explain the communication process.
2. Communication is essential for interdepartmental coordination. Discuss.
3. Discuss the importance of communication for hotel.
4. List the departments of the hotel with which the front office communicates.
5. "Communication between front desk and sales and marketing is essential for total hospitality sales". Comment.