

HOTEL FRONT OFFICE
A Training Manual

Third Edition

About the Author

Sudhir Andrews graduated with honours in English Literature from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University. Thereafter, he completed his post-graduation in management from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. He was one of the first MBAs to join the hotel industry in 1971. He earned two Hotel Management Diplomas with distinction—one from the International Hotel Association, Paris, France and the other from the American Hotel and Lodging Association, US. He did a fellowship with CERT, an apex body of Irish hospitality education.

His experience of over 30 years includes his work the following organisations and institutes of international repute:

- The Oberois—where he created the Oberoi Hotel School and was the General Manager of two Oberoi properties.
- ITC Welcomgroup—where he rose to be Member Personnel on the Divisional Board. He created the Welcomgroup hotel training centre in New Delhi and commissioned the Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration at Manipal, Karnataka.
- Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology—he was the Principal of the Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Pusa, New Delhi under the Ministry of Tourism. At this time he was also on the Board of many IHMs and the National Council of Hotel Management and Catering Technology. During this period he was involved in several ILO and UNDP programmes as faculty, in India and abroad. He was also the member of the National Classification Committee and gave star ratings to many properties.

In 1994, he moved to Dubai as Director-Human Resources for the Metropolitan chain. Here he set up the Metropolitan Institute of Hotel Management in collaboration with HIM, Montreaux, Switzerland. He also became Group Vice President-HR with a sister concern of the Metropolitan Group which have businesses in automobiles, airlines, hotels, travel agencies, etc.

He immigrated of Canada in 2000 where he worked with a Property Management Company. He returned to Dubai again in 2002. In his second sojourn in Dubai, he joined the “Executive Office”—a consulting wing to the ruling Sheikh of Dubai. He also acted as an advisor to the Merit Hotel School which opened two hotel school campuses in Dubai and Sharjah. He was also engaged as a consultant with “The Peoples Partnership”—a British HR consultancy firm doing some noteworthy consultancy projects for several banks, oil companies, and Dot.com companies.

At this juncture of his life, he also worked as a career counsellor and had his own programme on FM Radio 89.1 in Dubai. He brought out his own column on Career Counselling with *Khaleej Times*, a Dubai newspaper for a year as well as taught at Eikon Academy which brought in the Herriot-Watt University.

Sudhir Andrews is now Dean—Academics of Ecole Hoteliere Lavasa in collaboration with Ecole hoteliere de Lausanne, Switzerland. He is also an author of 10 hospitality books.

HOTEL FRONT OFFICE

A Training Manual

Third Edition

Sudhir Andrews

Dean—Ecole Hoteliere Lavasa



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*Dedicated to
my mother
(Late) Amrutha Andrews
Who has been my source of inspiration*

Letter from the Author

Dear Reader,

Congratulations on joining the hotel industry. It is the part of the tourism sector that leads other industries in revenues and employment worldwide. Your decision to join this industry is most appropriate as it provides you ample opportunities to join global careers. By opting to study Front Office operations, you have chosen the part of hotel operations that contributes substantially to a hotel's revenues. In order to become a perfect front office professional of tomorrow, it is important for you to adopt international practices, attitudes and behaviours presented in this book during the course of your study.

My first book—*Hotel Front Office: A Training Manual*—was released over two decades back. Past readers of this book have encouraged me by showing their faith in the book. I thank my readers for their trust and support, which has inspired me to bring out a second edition and a third edition of the same book. The basic processes of front office operations, shown in my first book, remain the same worldwide and shall continue to do so in the future. However, the application of these processes has changed over the time due to the impact of the information revolution. The attempt of the third edition of this book is to equip front office professionals with the knowledge of these new changes so that they can meet the challenges of the future.

Let us examine some of the changes in travel and hotelkeeping that have emerged over the last decade.

Today's traveller wants to make his or her room reservation from the comfort of the home or office by taking recourse to the web. He/She not only wants instant confirmation of the reservation of room but also the assurance from the hotel that the promise of a room will be honoured upon his/her arrival and he/she would not have to wait to get a room. He/She also expects a high level of service during his/her stay in the hotel. The traveller's loyalty comes at a premium because



of the many choices brought to him/her by the innovative reservation distribution systems. Websites take a traveller through virtual tours of hotels, showing what rooms and other facilities look like. The sites give pricing options that suit every budget. A traveller can customise his or her requirements on user-friendly options on the web, which selects those hotels that meet the traveller's specifications. A woman traveller may want a hairdryer and ironing board in her room while a businessman may want teleconferencing facilities and secretarial services during his stay. There are no limits to the needs of guests and the computer accesses the sources which meet a traveller's needs, at the click of a button. Hence, it becomes important that the front office personnel respond to the expectations already created in traveller's mind by the website of the establishment on the internet.

With the onslaught of the information age, guests have become knowledgeable about what to expect from the hotels. Since quicker and convenient modes of transportation have made travel to all parts of the globe possible, the traveller has become "international" and is aware of global standards of service. Hence, Front Office professionals will have to assume international practices and standards to serve the global traveller to his satisfaction. This book will guide you in your pursuit of this objective.

Future professional will have to multitask and look at their job in the context of the complete operation. A front office agent will be required to make bookings, register guests, provide communications, do the front office cash duties and generate reports. It is recommended that readers learn all aspects of the front office operation given in this book.

Youth will form the chunk of future workforces. It is quite possible to see a workforce of below thirty-five years. Hotels prefer youth for various reasons:

- They are better informed through advancement in education.
- They bring the latest technologies and ideas.
- They keep the workforce fresh.
- Multiple roles of the job today require high energy and longer hours.
- They are ambitious to earn more.
- They are hungry for success.
- They enjoy working and are open to new ideas.
- They come with better competencies.

In spite of the whirlwind of change, the front office specialist will continue to be there to faithfully receive the guests. Gone are the days when a service professional

went to a hotel, did his job in an eight-hour shift and returned home. Now the front office professional has to think like the owner and is empowered to respond to changing business situations and customers constantly (See the section of Introduction titled “The Future Guest”).

This book has been carefully written to serve several segments of the hotel industry and therefore, is ideal for:

- Front Office professionals
- Hotel Management students
- Craft course students of Reception services
- Lecturers of Hotel Management and Craft services
- Apprentices in front office
- Front office professionals like the Front Office Agent, Bell Desk personnel and telecommunications staff
- New entrants who have no formal training or education in front office but are entering the industry raw
- Supervisors and staff of leisure activities like theme parks, cruiseliners, etc.
- Entrepreneurs who wish to set up their own lodging facility
- Training centres of hotels
- Independent hotel owners and staff
- Hospitality trainers



The book is divided into parts and lessons, each with a definite Learning Objective and Review Quizzes. Training involves the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes. While most lessons have knowledge inputs, some lessons incorporate skills in the form of procedures. Lesson 18, “Understanding Guest Service,” is an input on attitudes. All lessons provide instructions to trainers with the Training Methodology given at the end of the lesson.

In recognition of women as an emerging workforce, I have addressed them also throughout the book.

Readers, it is time to shed the old coat and wear the new one of this exciting new millennium. I wish all of you the best of luck in your pursuit of becoming the new front office professional. I hope this edition will be your able companion throughout your career.

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1



HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

1 History of Travel and Tourism

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



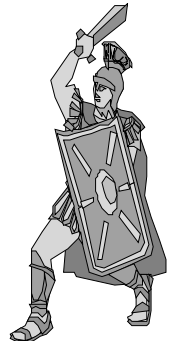
To help the reader trace the origins of travel and learn its significance to the hospitality industry.

INTRODUCTION

Since the earliest stages of human evolution, man has had the desire to travel spurred by the need for survival. People lived by hunting, fishing and gathering wild plants. People travelled on foot and carried their infants and belongings strapped to their heads and backs. Loads too heavy for one person was strapped on a pole and carried by two people. Soon people learnt the value of dragging things on poles and sledges made of poles and raw hide.

EARLY HISTORIC TIMES

By 10,000 B.C. people lived as tribes and migrated to the proverbial 'greener pastures' where they settled. Middle-Eastern tribes developed agriculture. They also domesticated wild animals like horse, donkey, ox, cow and dog for farm work. Trade between settlements helped access other goods not found in their settlement, which needed better transportation. By developing harnesses, animals could now pull sledges for trade. While trade was one of the reasons to travel, so was military travel to vanquish other tribes to have influence over larger lands. Military travel was made possible by horses, which were suitable for long-distance travel.



Invention of the Wheel

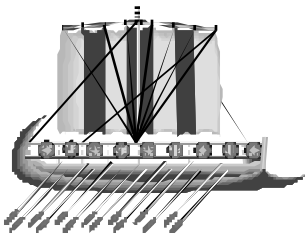
The invention of wheel around 3000 B.C. in Mesopotamia provided a major impetus to transportation when oxen and other animals pulled carts to carry people and goods across distances. Evidence show that wheeled vehicles reached other civilisations much later—to India by 2500 B.C., Europe by 1400 B.C. and to China by about 1300 B.C. The first spoke wheels were developed, mainly for chariots of war, pulled by horses, around 2000 B.C. and 1500 B.C.

Vehicles and Roadways

By 1000 B.C. the Chinese and the Persians around 500 B.C. had constructed roadways between cities. These 'paved the way' so to speak, for greater wheeled travel. Wagons, carriages and chariots made their way as essential modes of transportation for regular trade and war. Alexander the Great in 300 B.C. propagated trade in his conquered territories from Persia to Egypt and from Macedonia to India. From 100 B.C. to A.D. 400 the Romans ruled a mighty empire spread between the Mediterranean in the West to the Persian Gulf in the East and between the British Isles in the North to Egypt in the South. Naturally they needed an efficient system of communication to administer their empire. They had beaten mud roads that helped in military travel and administrative chores in all their provinces. Europe saw paved roads only after A.D. 1700 in England and France since the Romans. By A.D. 1600, horse drawn wagons hauled people and goods locally with the development of the whiffletree (that enabled horses to pull wagons in teams) and better suspension systems for wagons. The first intercity stagecoach travel was between London, England and Edinburgh, Scotland, (a distance of 631 kilometres) solely for the purpose of paid passenger traffic in A.D. 1640. They completed journeys in stages giving the wagon the name.

Sailing Vessels

By 5000 B.C. people began to develop water transportation. They built canoes, dugouts and rafts and propelled them by paddle or poles used in rivers, streams and lakes. It was not until 3200 B.C. that Egyptians developed sailboats leading to trade between civilisations. By 3000 B.C. the Egyptians developed sturdier sailing vessels able to sail further to Arab and Mediterranean states for conquest and exploration. The Phoenicians in 1000 B.C. were the first to have merchant fleets trading with Spain. Navigation was difficult so they sailed along coastlines only. The ships were driven by sails or oars. By 400 B.C. the Greeks became a major power in the Mediterranean and expanded the trade

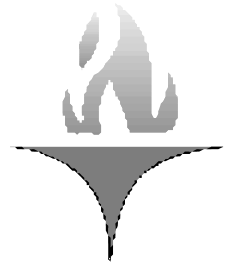


started by Phoenicians. They developed two-masted vessels and increased the sails from one to four, enabling trade all along the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Caspian Sea. By 400 B.C. three hundred ports lay across the Mediterranean and brisk trade was established. Barges were developed for long haulage inland water travel, sometimes pulled by horses along the river banks.

During the late A.D. 1400 and the A.D. 1500, the development of the rudder, triangular sails and the mariners compass helped navigation and distant travel. These enabled European explorers such as Christopher Columbus, Ferdinand Magellan and Sir Francis Drake make great ocean voyages to discover North and South America (A.D. 1492) Australia and New Zealand. Overseas trade and travel due to mass emigration increased rapidly during the 1600s with bigger ships.

Travel for Sports

Another reason for early travel was the Olympic Games in 776 B.C.. in Olympia, Greece. The games, held every four years, brought athletes from the vast Greek Empire to compete in various sports disciplines.



Religious Travel

Evidence show that in India religious travel prospered during the Vedic times (around 2000 B.C.) when scholars visited temples to study Vedic scriptures. After the crucifixion of Christ, Christianity spread in Europe and so did religious travel. In the first century A.D., one of the important providers of lodging places was the church for pilgrims to the Holy Land. The Roman Catholic Church maintained hospices, monasteries and hostels for pilgrims during the middle ages. The Knights of Saint John of Jerusalem (founded in 1048) established such lodgings to protect pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem. In effect, the church operated the first 'hotel chain' for religious travel. The quality of inns kept improving over the years as travel became more frequent due to conquests, religious travel and commerce as empires expanded.

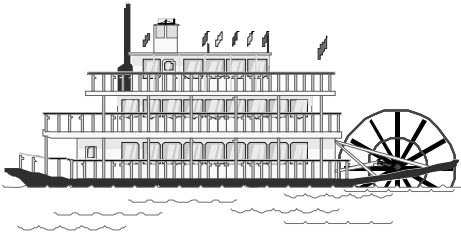
The Mongol Influence

We are well aware that from late A.D. 1100 Mongol hordes under Chenghis Khan created the mightiest empire in history. With the use of vast numbers of horsemen they established an empire from Eastern Europe, Asia Minor, Persia, China, Russia, to India. These conquests enabled contact between nations. They built roads to connect Russia with Persia and Asia Minor. It is with their efforts that European travellers like Marco Polo ventured eastwards in later years. Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan developed modern cities in China and introduced printing, paper, gunpowder and

the compass to the West. The Mongols under Kublai Khan discovered that the earth was round while the Europeans believed it was flat. He accepted Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Taoists to his court. There was thus a huge exchange of knowledge and trade between the East and the West.

The Industrial Revolution

The industrial revolution in the eighteenth century gave a giant leap to travel. Steam engines were developed by English inventors in A.d. 1700 that not only powered steamships but helped in creating other modes of transportation such as the locomotive, motor car and the aeroplane in later years. The first commercially viable railroad began its service in England in 1825; steamboat in the US in 1807 and steam ships in 1800. Steam transportation lowered costs of travel bringing commerce, trade and travel to the common man. During the 1800s saw the first diesel engine by Rudolf Diesel making way for automobiles becoming a household possession.



AVIATION

17 December 1903 marked a major leap for mankind in travel. Orville and Wilbur Wright, bicycle manufacturers, flew the first engine driven aeroplane near Kitty Hawk N.C. USA. Earlier, attempts were made by the Chinese using kites and hot air balloons to put objects into the sky. This started a new race for supremacy of the air.



Aviation Landmarks

- **1909:** Louis Blériot a French inventor made the first international aeroplane flight across the English Channel from France to England, a distance of 23 ½ miles.
- **1911:** Calbraith P. Rogers made the first aeroplane flight across the United States from Sheepsbay N.Y. to Long Beach California. He made 70 stops en route.
- **1914:** Tony Janus may be credited to be the first pilot of the world's first airline. He flew a seaplane for passengers and freight across the Tampa Bay between St. Petersburg and Tampa Florida, USA. He had one passenger who paid him \$5 for the 22 mile flight.

- **1914 to 1919:** Attention shifted to war planes in World War I. Germany, France, England and the United States produced many war planes increasing the speed from 70 mph to 130 mph. Emboldened with these developments during the War, the stage was set for commercial travel after the War.
- **1918:** The US Post Office used planes to carry mail between few large cities, but gave up operations by 1926 due to air casualties.
- **1919:** Small airlines flew in Europe converting World War I war planes for passenger and mail use.
- **1924:** German engineers invented a more durable and powerful plane made of steel the tri-motor transport plane called Junker 23. It started a series of transport planes throughout Europe.
- **1925:** William B. Stout brought the technology to the US and Henry Ford financed the planes of Stout in the US. The Ford tri-motor carried 10 passengers and flew at 100 mph.
- **1927:** Lockheed Company produced a single engine plane for passenger and freight travel called Vega. It could carry six passengers and flew at 135 mph for a distance of 500 miles without refuelling. The Ford and Vega was the mainstay of commercial travel during the 1920s and 1930s in the US.

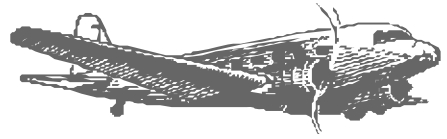
HIGHER, FASTER, SAFER

Aeroplane races encouraged the development of aircraft and instilled confidence in the people who still were averse to air travel. Some notable landmarks were:

- **1927:** Richard E. Byrd and Floyd Bennett flew a Dutch tri-motor over the North Pole and later the South Pole.
- **1927:** Charles A. Lindbergh made the first solo non-stop flight across the Atlantic Ocean a distance of 3610 miles from Garden City New York to Paris in 33 ½ hours.
- **1931:** Hugh Herndon and Clyde Pangborn made the first non-stop flight across the Pacific Ocean.
- **1932:** Amelia Earhart flying an improved Lockheed Vega became the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean.
- **1933:** Wiley Post flew the first solo flight around the world. This set the trend for commercial air travel as never before.



- **1934:** Planes flew faster and higher. Pressurised cabins were introduced to enable passengers to breathe easier.
- **1935:** The autopilot and gyro pilots were invented for better navigation and less pilot fatigue to fly the long distances.
- **1936:** The Douglas DC-3 was the first modern passenger plane that could carry 21 passengers and fly at 120 mph. It soon became the main transport plane of the world.
- **1939:** World War II broke out. Germany made the first jet plane. The Messerschmitt Me 262 was the first to fly combat missions.
- **1942:** The Bell Aircraft Company (now Bell Aerospace Textron) developed the jet engine in the US.
- **1942:** The Douglas DC-4 and the Lockheed Constellation were four engine planes invented for transatlantic flights.



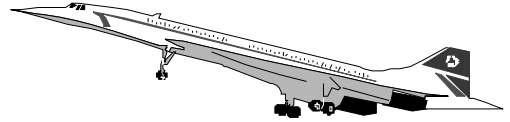
Soon the world saw advances in engine innovation that created the Douglas DC-7, Lockheed Super Constellation and by now the Boeing Stratocruiser that could carry up to 100 passengers at speeds of up to 300 mph across the Atlantic.

Commercial Flights

After World War II, the Soviet Union and the United States raced for supremacy in air travel. They both worked on the crude jet engines of World War II developed by the Germans for military purposes. Some notable landmarks in commercial travel are:

- **1952:** Great Britain produced the world's first large commercial jet airliner the De Havilland Comet. It flew at 500 mph. Britain also developed Vickers Viscount a turboprop (propellers driven by jet engines), for passenger flights.
- **1958:** The US Boeing Company developed the famous Boeing 707 which began passenger service between the US and Europe.
- **1960:** Two other jet transport planes the McDonnell Douglas DC-8 and the Convair 880 began passenger service to rival the Boeing.
- **1969:** The Boeing Company developed the Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet carrying up to 500 passengers.
- **1968:** The Soviet Union developed the first supersonic transport plane, the Tupolev TU-144.

- **1976:** Great Britain and France collaborated to develop the supersonic passenger jet the Concorde under great environmental criticism for its noise pollution.



AIRLINES AND TOURISM

In the 1960s many airlines asked themselves the question, 'What business are we in?' They responded with, 'We are a total service industry for growth lies in providing a total package of services'. From here it was a short step to get into tourism in a big way. Many airlines created their own hotel chains on the belief that since they carried the passengers they had the control of where they stayed. Airlines also experienced a shortage of beds in certain destinations. They were able to get passengers on the strength of providing accommodation at certain destinations. The airline industry therefore built some of the finest chains known today in keeping with the image of the airline. Therefore, Air France created the Le Meridien, Pan Am launched the Intercontinental Hotels chain, etc. They were able to provide the following types of tour packages:

1. **Destination package:** Where the ultimate destination was the unique selling point, for example, three nights and four days in Cyprus. The package included the air fare, hotel, surface transportation and meals.
2. **Stopover package:** Where a passenger had the benefit of stopping at other destination en route at no additional cost in their fares.
3. **Special interest packages:** Where travel was centred round a special interest like sport, history, archaeology, etc.
4. **Brand name packages:** Where packages were built around famous attractions for example, Tour to the Niagara Falls; Everest Tours, etc.

These packages guaranteed value for money backed by the airline's name and reputation.

THE FUTURE

Man will explore new frontiers. Already credible attempts have been made to go to the depths of the sea or land and into space. The Atlantis in Dubai has rooms facing giant aquariums. Virgin Galactic is not very far away from promoting space travel. Maybe we shall see space communities in the moon and mars. We cannot forget the miracle of cyberspace where mankind travel virtually everywhere in the world thus bringing communities much closer.



Key Terms

Airlines	a commercial air carrier of a country
Charter Airlines	aircraft hired for specific purposes
Commuter Airlines	airlines that connect small communities
Domestic Airlines	commercial carriers commuting within a country
International Airlines	commercial air carriers commuting to foreign destinations
Packages	all-inclusive tour proposals
Regional Airlines	airlines that connect regions within a country
Trunk Airlines	airlines that connect principal cities within a country



Review Quiz

Fill in the Blanks

1. By _____ B.C. people lived in tribes and migrated from place to place.
2. Domesticated animals could pull sledges due to the development of _____.
3. Travel in early times was for trade and _____ purposes.
4. The wheel was invented in the state of _____.
5. The first sailboats were developed by the _____.
6. The route from London and Edinburgh was travelled by _____ for the first time.
7. The discovery of new lands brought travel due to _____.
8. Other modes of travel were developed due to the invention of the _____ during the industrial revolution.
9. Commercial air travel was first introduced in A.D. _____.
10. A peculiar mode of river travel introduced in 1807 was the _____.

True or False

1. European tribes introduced agriculture.
2. Trade created the need for better transportation.

3. Military travel over long distances was made possible due to the domestication of horses.
4. Water transportation was developed in 10,000 B.C.
5. The wheel was developed around 3000 B.C.
6. Roads contributed to greater wheeled travel.
7. A great reason for travel in ancient times was the Olympic Games.
8. The Romans developed the largest network of paved roads for their military and administration travel.
9. The railroad was developed in A.D. 1900.
10. The Mongols made the first merchant ships.



Training Methodology

This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations.

2 History of Lodging

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



“To help the reader trace the origins of lodging development and learn the important landmarks that made it into a significant industry”

EARLY DEVELOPMENTS



The lodging industry grew with travel, as people needed places for shelter and food along the routes they travelled, whether by land, water or air. The Hotel Industry is, therefore, one of the oldest lodging endeavours in the world. The first mention of Inns goes back to 3000 B.C. spurred by the urge to travel. The earliest Inns were private homes of husband and wife teams who provided large halls, often unclean, for travellers to roll out their own beds and sleep on the floor in a dormitory style. The innkeepers also provided modest wholesome food like cheese, vegetables, cakes and buns and meat when available, along with wine and ale. The host's wife or his wench provided entertainment by singing folk songs and

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Source: The World Book

“An Introduction to Hospitality” by Dennis L. foster

“Historic Hotels in Britain” The Web

performing dances. An essential part of early inns was to provide stabling facilities as people travelled by horses and stage coaches. These conditions prevailed for several hundred years. By 320 B.C., during the Roman Empire, inns were commonplace, because of political, administrative and military travel. The Romans introduced inns to Britain, along roads and in main towns for officials on state business. The Bible (referred to as a historical document here) gives an account of Joseph (Father of Jesus Christ) who found all the inns full because of a census called by King Herod, in Bethlehem before he took Mary to a cowshed to give birth to Jesus. This was well into the days of the Roman Empire.

Religious travel grew strongly after the crucifixion of Christ as Christianity spread in Europe. In the first century A.D. the Roman Catholic Church (notably the Knights of Saint John in 1048) provided hospices, monasteries and hostels with doles of bread and ale, for pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem especially during the Crusades. In effect, the church operated the first 'hotel chain' for religious travel. Private inns also grew along pilgrimage routes. In 1189, England's oldest private inn—the Trip to Jerusalem at Nottingham came up where the knights of Richard, the Lionhearted, met in their call for the Crusades.



Private inns in Britain grew in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries including the Tabard Inn at Southwark made famous by Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and The George Hotel in Oxfordshire a testimony of the fifteenth century. Between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, inns developed into coach inns in main towns because of the advent of coach travel. The White Horse in Chichester is one such example dating from 1795.

The advent of Industrial Revolution in England in the mid-eighteenth century introduced steam railways and steamships. The lead in professional hotel keeping was taken by Switzerland in the shape of chalets and small hotels, mainly patronised by the aristocrats of the day especially the Grand Tours through Europe for education which lasted for three to six months. During this century, inns which provided food and drink broke into independent hotels, pubs and restaurant business. Modern hotels in Europe, began the Napoleonic wars, for officers on leave. The nineteenth century hotels, restaurants and pubs became distinctive like the Red Lion, Ritz, Claridges and Browns in London. Rail travel spurred bigger hotels like The Pancreas, Victoria, Charing Cross and the Great Eastern in England reflecting Victorian architecture. The standard of inns kept improving over the years as travel became more frequent especially due to business.

In 1634, Samuel Cole opened the first inn in Boston (America) called Cole's Ordinary offering beer and rum and plentiful cheap food. Taverns and Inns modelled themselves in the European style.

The real growth of the modern hotel industry took place in the US, with the opening of City Hotel in New York in 1794 especially erected for the purpose. New York then was a busy seaport with a population of 30,000 people. The success of City Hotel led to frenzied hotel building activities. The Exchange Coffee House in Boston came first followed by the second City Hotel in Baltimore, the Mansion House in Philadelphia and the Adelphi Hotel in New York. These soon became the centres for social activity in their respective cities. At best these were ordinary lodgings for the middle class. In 1829, The Tremont House in Boston became the first luxury hotel in America. It was the first to offer private rooms with locks, a washbasin, pitcher and soap. It had a French restaurant and uniformed service personnel. This signalled the development of luxury hotels in the US during the 1800s which included The Grand Pacific in Chicago, The Palmer House and Sherman House in St Louis the Paxton in Omaha and the super-luxury Palace Hotel in California with 800 rooms.

In 1908, Ellsworth M Statler built the first business hotel called the Statler Hotel in Buffalo, New York, with big investments, big profits and trained professionals. The Statler Hotel provided private baths and full-length mirrors in each room. His engineering, architecture and service ideas became the standard for future commercial hotels. The Statler went into chain operations and can be credited to be the first hotel chain. In 1927, the Stevens Hotel, a 3,000 room hotel (later renamed the Conrad Hilton) became the largest hotel in the world.

The depression in 1930 had a disastrous effect on the hotel industry. Eighty-five per cent of the hotels went bankrupt. It was felt that the industry would never recover. One hotelier who kept afloat was Conrad Hilton who made the Mobley, Cisco, Texas a profitable venture. The outbreak of World War II brought a tremendous upsurge. This prosperity continued through the war years into the fifties when two new concepts emerged: (a) Motels and (b) International chain operations which are explained in subsequent chapters.

Motels

The development of the automobile and its mass production in America encouraged long distance travel. In 1900, the first motels called tourist cabins were established in Western United States to give shelter to drivers who could not travel the long distances between towns in one day. They were renamed Motor Inns and served fishermen, hunters besides vacationers in remote areas. The great increase in automobile travel in the 1940s and 1950s led to the development of motels (short form of Motor and Hotel)

situated at busy interchanges and on highways. Motels are also called motor hotels, motor inns or motor lodges. The United States alone has over 20,000 motels. Motels provide free parking facilities from which the guests can reach their rooms directly. Some motels have garaging facilities, restaurants and swimming pools. Over the years motels became chain operations, and in 1970 came up the budget motel with rates half that of regular motels. Budget motels have small rooms and provide fewer services. While most motels were 'mom and pop' shows with 50 to 100 rooms, a Memphis businessman Kemmons Wilson thought of standardising motels into a chain operation. He created the first Holiday Inn on the outskirts of Memphis, Tennessee, which remains as the headquarters of the Holiday Inn chain. It had 126 rooms, swimming pool, free ice, free parking and dog kennels. It became a standard for all Holiday Inn motels. Holiday Inns today has 315,000 guest rooms and is expanding at the rate of one every two and a half days. The Holiday Inns in 1982 onwards built Embassy Suites, Crowne Plazas and Hampton Inns which are segmented chains within a chain. The Holiday Inn is now a subsidiary of a British Hotel group, the Bass Company.

Another innovator was Cecil B Day, who in 1970, opened budget motels and saw an opportunity with the construction of Disney World and Epcot Centre in Orlando, Florida. By establishing a chain of motels around the modern wonder, he created one of the world's largest motel chain the Days Inns.

A modern motel would have the following standard features:

Rooms: The rooms are reasonably furnished with twin beds. Quality motels may have two queen-sized beds recognising that families travel together and need more bedding space. The room would have an attached bathroom with hot and cold water. The room is centrally heated or cooled. Facilities in the room would include an electric kettle with satchels of coffee, tea, creamer and sugar. The ensemble would have cups and saucers to serve two and also be equipped with a microwave.

Services: A contracted housekeeper would come in the morning to clean the rooms and may not provide turn down services in the evening. The floor pantry is equipped with an ice dispensing machine; snack dispenser of chips and candies and perhaps a shoeshine buffer machine. There are no bellhops. Guests would have to carry the luggage themselves. Most travellers leave heavy luggage in the car taking only carry cases into the room. We must remember that motels are not meant for long stay but are stops on long journeys to some final destination.

Recreation and Food: Most motels are equipped with a swimming pool. A bar is an essential feature and may have an optional contracted diner on premises. This may be essential in remote locations. In locations besides a town or city, the motel

may have a tie-up with local restaurants that provide a home-delivery service. The reception may keep a range of menus of local restaurants and permit food delivery to the rooms. Those with a captive food facility may have an all-purpose diner that closes by 8 p.m. Motels recognise that travellers, especially families would bring their own food which they would re-heat in the room microwave.

Check-in: Most motels have an independent access to the room. The guest would have to pay for the room in advance at the reception and an access key is provided to the floor where the room is located, and the room. The reception normally charge room bills to the guest credit card. Very few people in North America pay by cash. The process for check-in is simple with least fuss. There are ample parking facilities most often opposite the room itself in single storied structures. Initially motels provided garaging facilities because of breakdowns of old cars. Modern/new cars are more dependable and may have a petrol station down the road.

Summary

Hotels have come a long way from the early inns. Hotels have become more luxurious with private rooms and baths, uniformed services, restaurants and many other conveniences to the traveller. The hotels also moved from serving the general public to segmented markets like businessmen, groups and airline travellers. They spawned the concepts of the motel and chain operations as viable commercial ventures.



Review Quiz

Fill in the Blanks

1. The first inns go back to _____ B.C..
2. Earliest lodging places were called _____ .
3. The _____ operated the first rudimentary 'hotel chain'.
4. The first inn in America was established by _____ .
5. The first modern hotel in the US was the _____ .
6. The first luxury hotel in Boston, USA was the _____ .
7. The first business hotel in the US was the _____ .
8. Swiss inns are called _____ .

9. The Industrial Revolution brought in two new modes of travel—the railways and _____ .
10. In 1927, the largest hotel in the world was the _____ .

True or False

1. The hotel industry is closely linked to travel.
 2. Early travel was mostly by horses.
 3. The lead in organised hotel keeping was taken in Europe.
 4. Taverns and inns in the US modelled themselves in the European style.
 5. The real growth of the model hotel industry took place in Europe.
 6. The Hilton can be credited to be the first modern hotel chain.
 7. The depression in the US in 1930 had a profitable impact on the hotel industry.
 8. Two new concepts after World War II were motels and international chains.
 9. The Statler Hotel first introduced sprinkler systems and air conditioning.
 10. The Conrad Hilton introduced full length mirrors in rooms and private baths.
-

3 History of International Chain Associations

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To help the reader to understand the concepts of hotel chain operations and their unique features. The reader will also trace the origins of international chains and their associations.



INTERNATIONAL CHAINS

While the growth of motels was restricted to the North American continent, international chain operations spread across continents. Individual entrepreneurs were crushed in the race of this multidimensional, multinational industry. A hotel chain is a series of hotels under a common brand name, spread both nationally and internationally. International chain brands provide the expertise, technology, and marketing thrust that individual hotels do not have. In 1925, Howard Johnson created the first soda pop fountain in Quincy, Massachusetts expanding into the first restaurant chain of 400 restaurants through franchise.

Another famous hotelier, Willard Marriott, started as a restaurateur with A&W fast food restaurant chain in 1928. He entered into the hotel industry in the 1940s expanding it into a \$5.3 billion Marriott Corporation with segmented hotel chains such as Marriot Hotels, Residence Inns and Courtyard by Marriotts hotels.

Source: The World Book

“An introduction to Hospitality” by Dennis L. Foster

“Principles of Grading and Classifications of Hotels, Tourism Resorts & Restaurants” by Dr. Jagmohan Nagi

A new concept emerged in the late 1950s—budget hotels. The budget hotel bought cheap land and offered lodging only. Budget hotels stripped all services like food and beverage, laundry, housekeeping, uniformed services to be able to give a cheap rate. The rooms had no televisions and telephones. Guests sometimes had to rent the bed, linen and blankets for their rooms. The first budget hotel was the Travelodge, Tacoma Washington and grew into a successful chain throughout North America. Travelodge now has added amenities such as TV, telephones and bed linen as essential in this extremely competitive business.

Relationships

Individual owners could not compete with large hotel chains and therefore, merged with chains such as Sheraton, Hilton, Hyatt, Holiday Inn, Ramada Inn, etc. The international chains provided the following relationships to individual owners:

- (a) Partnership—sharing equity and profits.
- (b) Franchise—providing name and association against a fee.
- (c) Management contract—providing professional managers, technicians, operational manuals, systems, etc., on the basis of management fees and a share of profits as incentive payment.

Partnership

A partnership occurs when a chain and an independent investor jointly finance a hotel project. In such cases both become owners of the property and bring to the table their individual expertise and talents. They share in the profits and liabilities on an equal basis.

Another arrangement that is popular nowadays is the straight lease agreement. A hotel chain reviews a property built by an investor who then leases the property to the chain on an annual lease basis. The owner becomes a landlord and does not interfere in the operations of the property. The chain becomes the tenant and is responsible for all taxes and recurring municipal fees paid from the operations.

Another arrangement is the sale of a property by a chain and leases it back from the new owner under a lease basis, management contract or franchise arrangement. Chains opt for this when they want capital funds for other projects or when they want to reduce their direct funds in a property.

Franchise

A franchise is a licence to use a brand name given by a franchisor to a franchisee who can be an individual, partner, a small corporation or group of investors.

Benefits to a Franchisee

There are three basic benefits:

1. A franchise is given by an organisation that has over the years developed a worldwide brand name of consistent quality. A guest knows exactly what to expect from a brand name especially in foreign countries where standards are unknown. A known brand name immediately gives comfort to the guest who can expect a certain minimum standard of service.
2. A franchise generates large revenues through referral business. For example, all Holiday Inns in the world become 'sales points' for any franchisee in different locations. They recommend a fellow franchised property when making onward bookings.
3. Franchisors have their established central reservation systems to give leads to travellers worldwide about a franchised hotel. A central reservation system is a 'one-stop shop' for hotel bookings anywhere in the world. The central reservation is an office at a suitable location that is powered with advanced computer networks that gives instant room bookings and confirmations. This they can do by having an updated room rates and availability statuses of all hotels in the chain with their product features.
4. The Franchisor provides operating manuals (Standard Operating Procedures) to ensure international quality and services of the brand.

Benefits to the Franchisor

The Franchisor benefits too, as follows:

1. A franchise arrangement is the fastest way to expand overseas. Captive investments are expensive for any individual corporation to finance.
2. Any new franchisee becomes a new salesperson in a location for other franchised properties.
3. Franchise fees are a source of big sums of revenue without direct investments. They are also the returns earned for owning a well-developed brand. It becomes what is valued nowadays as intellectual property.

The franchisee is given a licence to use the franchisors concept of business, methods of operations and name. Both parties sign a franchise agreement which is a contract that spells out the obligations of both parties. One important aspect of the agreement is that the franchisee is required to maintain the quality standards of the franchisor.

Management Contract

A hotel chain and individual hotel owner enters into a management contract. An owner of an individual property opts for a management contract for the following reasons:

1. To get international recognition
2. To get hotel expertise. Sometimes the owner is not fully proficient in the art of running the hotel and prefers to hire experts who can bring their operations to international standards. They may opt for international chain management because they cannot get such expertise locally.
3. To get a profitable operation
4. To get a marketing reach worldwide, which can only be achieved individually at a prohibitive price.

The chain sends specialists like the General Manager, Food and Beverage Manager, Executive Chef and Rooms Division Manager. These positions are supported by operational manuals. All sub-staff will be hired locally and trained by the chain's corporate trainer into the standard operating procedures.

The owner becomes the dormant partner in operational matters and only intercedes when operational expenditures are exceeding budget. All operational expenses are borne by the owner. The General Manager provides the owner with periodic reports and statistics of performance. He also gets the operational and capital budgets approved by the owner.

The management fees under a contract can be as follows:

1. A fixed percentage of net income. The amount would be from 3 per cent to 8 per cent of revenues.
2. A fixed percentage on gross operating profit that allows the owner to charge operating expenses at will, especially local advertising costs, but has to run the operation profitably. This could range from 15 per cent to 25 per cent.
3. A combination of both can be from 3 per cent to 5 per cent of income and from 5 per cent to 10 per cent of gross operating profit.



Key Terms

Brand name	a patented name registered by a sponsor that cannot be used by another without a fee for the use of the name
Budget hotel	cheaper hotels made possible with reduced services
Central Reservation	a central point which reserves rooms for all hotels in a chain
Franchise	a business association where a brand name is used against a fee
Franchisee	a company that adopts a brand name against a fee

Franchisor	a company that owns a brand name
Funds	money to do business
Gross Operating Profit	profit when variable expenditures are deducted from net income
International chain	hotels with the same brand name across the globe
Leased property	property taken on rent
Management contract	a business association when a chain provides professional expertise
Net Income	income after direct costs of sales is deducted from revenue
Net profit	profit when variable and fixed expenditures are deducted from net revenues
Partnership	a business association in which equity and profits are shared
System	worldwide



Review Quiz

True and False

1. International chains provide expertise, technology and marketing.
2. Budget hotels provide laundry services.
3. Partnerships provide name and association against a fee.
4. A management contract includes operational manuals.
5. In a partnership, both the hotel chain and investor become joint owners.
6. Chains sell and lease back a property to raise capital funds.
7. A franchisor develops a worldwide brand name of consistent quality.
8. A franchise generates large revenues through referral business.
9. The owner has an active role in a management contract.
10. An owner opts for a management contract to get international recognition.

Fill in the blanks

1. The first hotel chain was created by _____.
2. The Travelodge is an example of _____.
3. A business relationship where equity and profits are shared is called a _____.

4. An arrangement where the investor is just an landlord is called a _____.
5. The fastest way for a hotel chain to expand is through _____.
6. The document that spells out the obligations of both the franchisor and franchisee is called the _____.
7. In a management contract, the owner is a _____ partner.
8. In a management contract, the operational expenses are borne by the _____.
9. In a management contract, any litigation is the responsibility of the _____.
10. Reports and statistics of performance in a management contract is provided by the _____.



Training Methodology

This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use pre-prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations as training aids.

2



ASPECTS OF TOURISM

4 Purpose of Travel

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the reader understand why people travel so as to develop a service mindset for various travel market segments.

INTRODUCTION _____

The tourism industry gets its inspiration from man's motivation to travel. We have seen in Lesson 1 History of Travel and Tourism that travel is natural to human nature. In earlier times man travelled to survive and later, to establish trade link with each other. As man evolved and became more informed, he started travelling to explore the world. Domestication of animals and the invention of the wheel made travel easier and faster. People then travelled mostly for trading, military campaigns, religious reasons and in some pockets for sport. With the evolution of transportation like rail, automobiles, air and now space flights, the purpose of travelling has changed dramatically.

PURPOSE OF TRAVEL _____

With disposable income, faster transport and greater time for leisure, people have ventured into new horizons which seemed only dreams till yesterday. Some of the new reasons for travelling are as follows:

Sightseeing

This is a strong reason to travel. Sightseeing is visiting places of interest. What do people go to see?

1. International cultures lure a man and their exploration always attracts man. Culture includes the way people live, history and folklore, cuisines, arts and handicrafts, languages, etc. Tour operators have organised economic tour packages to suit practically every part of the world now.
2. Historical monuments have always fascinated people. They are the testimony of the past. Being very popular, these become a major reason to travel. People now can see and experience the pyramids of Egypt, Taj Mahal of India, the Great Wall of China, or the Hanging Gardens of Babylon that they only read about in history books.
3. Way of life for adoption into their own cultures. Globalisation has made people adventurous. They are willing to try new cuisines, spiritual methods, costumes and amalgamate these into their own. No wonder we see Indian samosas and chicken Tikkas in traditional English pubs; Mongolian barbeque in upmarket food courts; Mexican nachos in cinema halls; and Thai sarongs as formal evening wear in Hollywood. We have seen the impact of eastern spiritualism on western ways of life. It started in the 1960s with the popularity of transcendental meditation and now yoga.



Sightseers have busy schedules during the day. Sightseeing tours are booked well in advance. The challenge to a front-office professional is to provide group check-in as they travel in groups. Naturally rooms have to be ready in advance and in volume to accommodate large groups. Sightseers are usually middle-aged or retired people who have the time and lifelong saving to visit places. They would need ready medical attention and some unusual food requests.

Leisure

This comes as a strong motivation in a highly stressed work life. Leisure is a passive recreation where people just want to put up their feet and relax. There are many sources of leisure:

1. Resorts have been developed at seashores, hill locations, ski slopes, etc. At these resorts people can get away from mundane chores and let the tourism infrastructure take care of the rest.



2. Weather: This is a major attraction in leisure travel. Some like cold weather found in the mountains while others find the warmth of sea beaches attractive. Arabs of desert kingdoms visit India just to see the rain, while others may find the desert fascinating.
3. Spas are creation of a new age of health-conscious people practice and enjoy health rejuvenation plans. It is also a place for the diet conscious to adopt a new lifestyle for total balance of the body, soul and mind.

Leisure travellers are unhurried and like to sleep late. They may prefer meals at odd times like brunches or high tea. They like entertainment in the evenings. They like the staff to be casual and fun to take care of all the stress.

Sport

This has become a huge industry where travel is common for sportspersons with their tremendous fan following. Sports travel is reflected in three ways:

1. Huge championships, World Cups and Olympic Games are well organised to make a traveller enjoy the sport of his or her choice. Television has brought these mega events to the bedrooms making viewers knowledgeable and frenzied, spurring them to travel in support of their favourite teams.
2. Hobby sport is the other aspect of travel for those who wish to pursue their own sport of interest such as fishing, sailing, skiing, gliding, etc.
3. Adventure sport is a billion dollar industry that includes White river rafting in Himalayan rapids or Falcon hunting in Khandahar. There are many who get recreation with active pursuits. Amateur climbers can fulfil their ambition of climbing the Mount Everest just as trekkers who find challenge and excitement in exploring the Amazon or the Antarctic. Desert safaris are popular in the Middle East where enthusiasts roll down dunes and camp under the stars.
4. Game parks are new man-made attractions that attract people by the hundreds. The Wild Wadi water sports, bungee jumping, canoeing down rapids, or paragliding from the top of a cliff are some examples of new attractions.

Sporty groups are much more adventurous and least critical of their stay as their main focus is the sport. They expect the people who serve them to be knowledgeable of the sport they are pursuing. They expect the hotel to be linked to local organisations that can fix their sports equipment should they need that service. They want a hearty breakfast to take them through the day to return in the evening for drinks and dinner and some entertainment.

Special interest groups

Special interest groups are those who travel in pursuit of their hobby. There is no limit to special interest groups who have connected with each other over the web to make the exchange of interest easier across continents. Some popular choices are:

1. Ornithologists who pursue their interest in rare birds some of which are only found in certain locations.
2. Many may opt for travelling to appreciate both old and modern architectural constructions.
3. Wildlife has become a popular interest and people go to safari parks where animals are conserved from extinction. The Kenyan National Park is world famous for African wild animals; the Jim Corbett Park is known for the Kumaon tiger; while enthusiasts huddle around Kaziranga National Park in India to see the one-horned rhino. Whether they ride by elephants or modern utility vehicles, the thrill is immense.

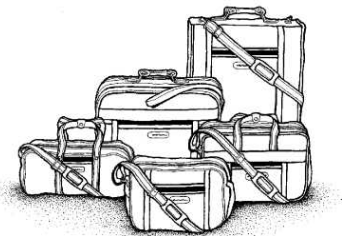


Such groups have similar needs as the sports groups. Their main focus is their area of interest.

Shopping

This is a major attraction for anyone visiting new places. There are four objectives when shopping:

1. To gather mementos of their visits to a place. For example, travellers would buy cuckoo clocks in Switzerland or the Masai Spear in Kenya.
2. To get bargains. Shopping has taken a new dimension with modern electronic gadgets such as cameras, cell phones, television sets, etc. People seek bargains at places like Singapore and Dubai who have set the lead in making a state a destination for shopping. With innovative shopping festivals they attract people from around the world.
3. To have an experience. Mega Shopping malls are the marvels of our time. They are virtual cities with food courts, cineplexes, children playgrounds, restaurants, etc., to make shopping interesting and attractive. Toronto has



underground shopping complexes to protect shoppers from the cold winters while Abu Dhabi has shopping malls that are fully air conditioned from treacherous hot temperatures outside. These complexes give several options to a family under one roof when they are out shopping.

4. To purchase commercial equipment. Modern concept of trade fair goes beyond shopping. While the daytime is restricted to purchasers of business equipment supported by seminars, workshops and demonstrations, the evenings are the fun time for the public to see latest innovations along with fun programmes like concerts, food courts, and competitions.

Shoppers are leisurely and may want transportation like coaches and taxis to take them to the shopping centres. They are financially well-off and prefer having all three meals. Some may have their lunches at the shopping mall food courts to shop without a break. They are like leisure travellers who want to have fun with good entertainment and food at night.

Business

Business as a purpose for travel has from ancient times been a strong motivator. We know of trade between the earliest civilisations to distribute goods not available locally. We have evidence of trade between Egypt, Phoenicia, Indus Valley and Mesopotamia. Naturally business has become more sophisticated. With countries breaking down trade barriers, companies can go global in terms of possession of business in other countries or through franchise. Business travellers are moneyed and therefore require the following services wherever they travel:

1. Hotels of quality
2. Unique food and beverage facilities to entertain their business clients
3. Once in a lifetime entertainment
4. Rent-a-car
5. Local facilitations
6. Translators and multilingual staff
7. Business centres
8. Convention and conference centres for exchange of information
9. Efficient telecommunications
10. Broadband web facilities

Governmental Travel

Governmental travel has become important to foster better understanding and trade between nations. Today, countries want to maintain good diplomatic relations with

other countries to promote trade, culture and goodwill. Regular travelling under exchange programmes takes place to keep in touch and to help each other in the progress of mankind and in improving mutual relationships.

Government delegations are normally hosted by the state who may book hotel accommodation to house them. Some host a state banquet in the premises. Obviously, such groups will need security, translation services, multilingual front-office staff and perfect service.

Education

Education as a reason for travel was a state-sponsored tradition throughout the ancient times. We know that the Hindu temples, Buddhist monasteries and Islamic *madrassas* went beyond religion to educate their people. They provided boarding and lodging to visiting scholars. Today, education is a multi-million industry where universities have made it possible for anyone around the world, with certain minimum qualifications, to enter their education system. We have seen the eastern students flooding American, European and Australian universities. Likewise western scholars have moved to eastern universities for their special interests in history, culture, linguistics or society.



Reunions

Reunions are a major reason for travel. They are created for the following reasons:

1. Overseas employment: With people working in other countries due to global opportunities of employment, the return home for family reunions is a strong motivation. The Middle East for instance has a large expatriate population from eastern nations, especially India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Nepal. Workers from construction labour to corporate executives return in planeloads for family unions.
2. Overseas education: Similarly, children who have left home for international work, education and assignments touch base with their loved ones at Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter or national holidays, and religious festivals.
3. Fraternity get-togethers: Another type of reunion is the alma mater of schools, colleges and higher universities. These reunions take place when students



have advanced in age and reached economic self-sufficiency to finance these get-togethers anywhere in the world, especially in exotic locations.

4. Military unions are another reason for travel. Old regimental officers get together to relive old battles or to revisit old battlefields where they lost many of their friends. Soldiers of the Second World War may visit Bastogne in Belgium or the Normandy beaches to praise their survival during those terrible days of D-Day.

Reunions require group room bookings. Most pay for their stay and meals. The front-office will have to maintain individual bills of reunion members. Some have their preferences of adjoining rooms to visit each other any time of the day.

Health

Health has become a new reason for travel. There are three purposes under this category:

1. Many travel to access the best hospitals worldwide for specialised medical, dental, and surgical care. This type of travel has arisen because of the high cost of healthcare in the industrialised nations. Western people are visiting places like Bolivia, Argentina, India, Thailand and South Africa for cheaper health services which can be one-tenth of the cost of industrialised nations. Medical tourism also adds a vacation package along with such visits.
2. People visit health resorts to get into better shape. Spas have converted their natural mineral springs into luxurious resorts to enjoy and rejuvenate their body.
3. Another variant are the health camps where people are introduced to meditation and yoga along with a diet regimen. These camps are truly meant to re-shape the body, mind and soul.

Travellers for the purpose of health will need house doctors for emergencies and easy access to hospitals. They will have special dietary restrictions as well as special medical equipment in their rooms. They are anxious and jittery, and will expect the hotel staff to be patient and understanding.

Religious travel

This has always fascinated humankind from ancient times. We know of pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the Christians and the *Haj* to Mecca for the Moslems, Bodh-Gaya for the Buddhists, Vatican for the Roman Catholics, Haridwar for the Hindus, etc. This involves large-scale travelling with millions of travellers at a time.

Religious travellers observe abstinence and have very little needs. Some may have dietary restrictions like vegetarian food or foods without some ingredients. They may want prayer rooms and perhaps a priest of their faith on premises.



Key Terms

Leisure	passive recreation
Hobby	active recreation
Spa	health resort originally with mineral springs



Review Quiz

True or False

1. Travel became easier by domesticating animals.
2. People like to connect with other nations to understand culture.
3. Spas are resorts.
4. A major attraction in leisure travel is the weather.
5. Adventure sport is a strong reason for travel.
6. Architecture appreciation is an example of travel for special interest groups.
7. Shopping malls have become virtual cities.
8. Globalisation has increased business travel.
9. Travel is not essential to diplomatic relations.
10. Western scholars do not find any reason to travel to the east.
11. Expatriate workers have made travel for reunions very significant.
12. Pilgrimages are a strong reason for mass travel.



Training Methodology

This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use pre-prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations as training aids.

5 Role of Tour Operators and Travel Agents

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the reader understand the role of tour operators and travel agents.

INTRODUCTION

A tour operator is a wholesaler of packaged tour programmes, who puts together a tour package by negotiating rates either directly or through a travel agent in certain locations, with other principals like airlines for airline bookings, hotels for rooms, surface transporters for transport facilitations, etc., and promotes that tour package under a single price. Because they deal in bulk, they get volume discounts on rates by the service providers. Tour operators invest in printing brochures, posters, advertisements in newspapers and travel magazines, etc., and get the travel agents in various regions to sell the package. The relationship with travel agents is best illustrated in Fig. 5.1.

A travel agency is a local retailer of travel and offers the following services:

1. Provides information on national and international tours;
2. Arranges international and domestic airline, railway, bus, river boat, ocean liner tickets, to the public consumer;

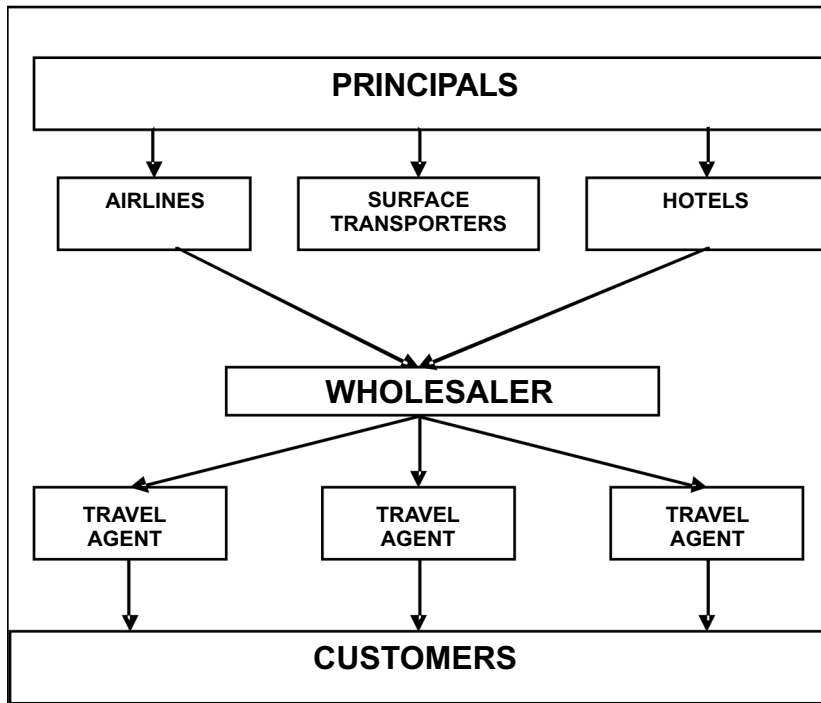


Fig. 5.1

Relationship Between Tour Operators and Travel Agents

3. Arranges hotel accommodation;
4. Arranges city and inter-city tours;
5. Arranges surface transportation including limousines and coaches;
6. Organises local sightseeing tours;
7. Makes arrangements for passports and visas for foreign travel.

A travel agent may be a freelance individual or a gigantic company. Their most important role is to be on-the-spot neighbourhood advisor on travel. As travel has become popular, we see travel agents in most neighbourhoods. They are recognised by the attractive posters of tourist destinations in their show windows. They sell dreams and are important partners in any travel plan. The diagram below illustrates the number of other agencies they coordinate with to give quality services.

Role of a Travel Agent

The role of travel agents is that of a retail agent who sells travel plans and services (Fig. 5.2). Travel Agents approach travel principals to get cheap rates for the facilities they offer. Principals would be those travel partners like the airlines, surface transporters,

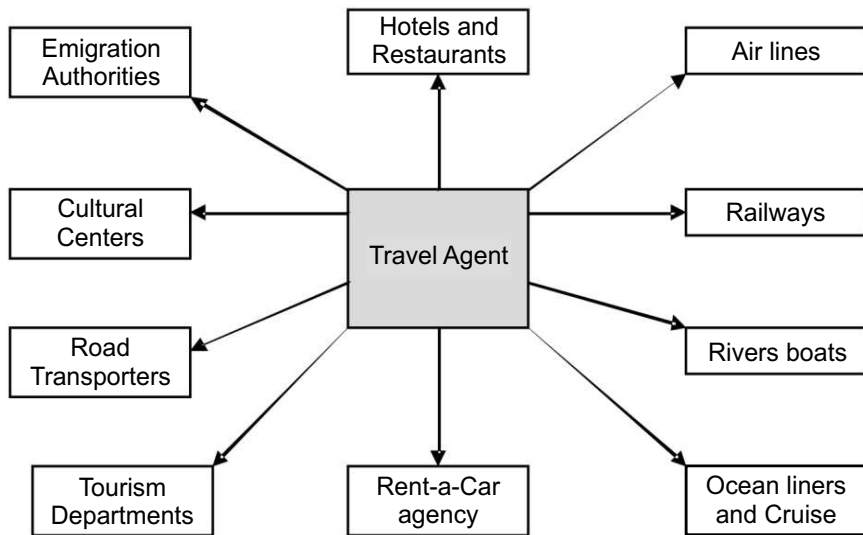


Fig. 5.2

Role of a Travel Agent

hotels, etc., who provide essential services. Travel agents get better rates because of the volume of business they give each Principal. They also provide access to Principals in regions that would require heavy investments to get access on their own. Travel Agents, therefore provide the distribution network that principals crave for. A travel agent's typical role would be to:

1. Plan itineraries for wholesale operators in their region, including arranging hotel accommodations, surface transportation, and sightseeing tours.
2. Negotiate favourable rates with surface transporters to provide coaches for airport transfers, sightseeing tours, and inter-city travel.
3. Negotiate with hotels for favourable room rates and meal prices.
4. Negotiate with art centres for cultural entertainment.
5. Negotiate fares with domestic airlines and railways for inter-city travel by the most economical route.
6. Coordinate with various tourist centres for sightseeing tours.
7. Develop comprehensive packages for tour operators and individual travellers.



Travel Agency Revenue Travel agents make money through commissions from the various Principals. Principals work with travel agents as partners. Such partnerships are formerly cemented in an agreement that covers the following:

1. The amount of commission. Travel agents get as much as 20 per cent from Principals.
2. Discounted tariff that they can pass on to the traveller or keep as their profit.
3. Reservation quotas to freely confirm rooms, seats, berths, etc., in hotels, airlines, boats, etc.
4. Policy on cancellation of bookings with penalty clauses.
5. Advance payments from travellers for services expected.



Key Terms

Tour Operator	a wholesaler of travel packages
Travel Agent	the neighbourhood retailer of travel plans and services
Principal	a source provider of services
Wholesaler	a person or company that deals in volume business
Retailer	a person who sells in local markets
Package	a group of products and services for a single price
Commission	a fee for sales generated
Tariff	charges for a facility
Discount	deductions from the usual price



Review Quiz

True or False

1. A tour operator is a retailer of tour packages.
2. Tour operators earn through commissions.
3. Hotels are Principals in a travel framework.
4. Tour operators invest in advertisements and promotions.
5. A freelancer can be travel agent.
6. A travel agent is the local travel professional.
7. Travel agents coordinate with rent-a-car agencies.
8. Travel agents provide the distribution network for Principals.

9. Travel agents coordinate with airlines for the most economical route.
10. Travel agents develop comprehensive packages for tour operators.

Fill in the blanks

1. Travel agents pass on up to _____ per cent of commission to customers.
2. Travel agents get their room quotas at _____.
3. Travel agents can freely confirm hotel bookings through _____.
4. Travel agents earn through _____.
5. Travel agents organise cultural entertainment with _____.

***Training Methodology***

This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use pre-prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations as training aids.

Students may be asked to conduct research on travel agents in their neighbourhood and list major Tour Operators of the country and worldwide.

It is advised to organise a field trip to a tour operator, or travel agent office, or alternatively invite them for talks to trainees on their role and how they operate.

6 Scope of Tourism

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the reader understand the principal components that shape tourism.

INTRODUCTION _____

Tourism is a collective term that involves all those agencies and activities that support travel. These sectors are explained in this chapter:

TRANSPORTATION _____

Tourism could never have survived had it not been for the transportation sector. It is only with the help of various modes of transport that it is possible for people to travel. Let us look at the various transport options:

Airlines

International Airlines These airlines transport people from one country to another. In many ways, international airlines help countries connect with one another. Every country has its own national carrier which outdo each other to give passengers value-added services within affordable prices especially on competitive routes. As aviation fuel gets more expensive, the challenge is to retain services of high quality within smaller margins from passenger fares. Some



services include pre-check-in, cabin crew courteous efficiency, food options, beverage service, and ground facilitations, etc.

Domestic Airlines Domestic Airlines support international carriers to connect principle cities of a country and even upcountry locations through feeder services. Domestic airlines, earlier promoted by the State, are now open to private sector under the Blue Sky policies. Budget airlines have slashed all the frills of service to give cheaper fares to make domestic air travel affordable.

Train Services

Train services traverse across the country. Places like the US, Canada, Russia, India, and China have some of largest rail networks making every remote corner accessible. Europe has the inter-Europe rail travel which is popular with tourists.



Bus Services

Inter-city Bus Services are efficient and comfortable for the budget conscious. Buses have improved in their comfort and noiselessness, and compete well with rail travel.

Inner-city Services are those transports that ply within a city. Most hotels for example link up with coach services to transport their guests to and from the airport. Inner-city travel also includes trams, local unique conveyances like the phut phut in Bangkok, or the rickshaw in Kolkata. Local buses, metros, and tourist coaches for sightseeing fall in this category.

Car Rental Services

A popular method of travel is by renting cars. Cars are used for travel within a city as well as cross-country travel. Travellers need recognised international driving licences to be eligible to rent a car. These services have sprung all over the world with latest model cars. Hi-tech tracking methods and credit card payment options have made car rentals popular.

Sea and River Travel

Sea travel has been made less popular by the quicker air travel. Nevertheless, there is a niche market of travellers who would love to indulge in a cruise on a luxury liner as one of their lifelong dreams. There are popular cruise liners to the Caribbean, Alaska, and even the Antarctic. Travel along interior rivers is done by motorised ferries

and launches which provide all the luxuries and facilities to the traveller including restaurants and bars, car park, viewing decks, etc. The Hovercraft that travels by land and water, across the English Channel is popular and unique for many.

Cable Cars

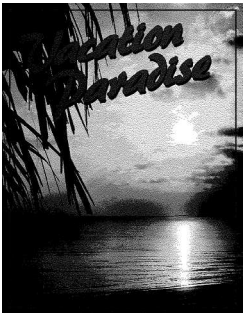
Cable cars and funiculars are popular transports at ski resorts and hill stations. While cable cars are transported by overhead cables across valleys and to hilltops, funiculars are hauled up a hill slope by cables along the ground and kept in position by rail traction.

Termini

The bus, rail, and boat terminals are cities in themselves providing travellers every conceivable facility such as accommodation, eateries, left-luggage facilities, exchange bureaus, rest rooms, souvenir shops, drug stores, etc.

TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS

An important aspect of any tourism activity is the role of tour operators and travel agents who put travel together. While a tour operator is one who incorporates the various aspects of a holiday, including air travel, surface transportation, hotel accommodation, etc., into a complete, attractive, and economical single package, travel agents are retailers in local locations to sell the packages and facilitate travel by arranging bookings on tours, visa formalities, etc.



The fancy advertisements and brochures announcing a week holiday in Greece or two nights and three days in Seychelles is the handiwork of the tour operator. Because of the volume of business the tour operator generates principals give discounts to tour operators who are able to promote affordable packages. The tour operator then becomes the wholesaler who sells the tour packages through retailers called travel agents.

The travel agents have moved beyond just displaying tour packages of tour operators to the public. They are active in making local tour programmes themselves, and make bookings on behalf of the customer at hotels, airlines, and surface transport for which they get a commission. Travel agent business is easy to establish, therefore, we find an abundance of individual entrepreneurs all over a city and country. The important aspect of travel agency business is to be close to the public. Each area would have their neighbourhood travel agent, who brings the whole plethora of travel offers available at the doorstep, therefore, making travel attractive and easy. Travel agents get their revenue

from commissions from tour operators, hotels, surface transporters and airlines. They are a vital ally to the various components of tourism as they are in touch with the consumer.

Accommodation

Accommodation is an important part of tourism infrastructure because it provides a 'home away from home' on a trip. The hotel industry satisfies this need of the traveller. Accommodation comes in many forms:

- **Hotels**—They come in various categories and standards to meet every possible budget. (Please see Lesson 9 Types of Lodgings for detailed information.)
- **Motels**—These are motor hotels located on highways. They come with swimming pools, diners, and a bar. They also provide microwave ovens, coffee kettles, and refrigerators for those who wish to heat their own meals.
- **Lodges**—Lodges are upcountry accommodation mostly sponsored by the local state. Some examples are forest lodges, country lodges, ski lodges, etc.
- **Guest Houses**—These were originally meant for government officials on tour, but are now opened to the public. India has the dak bungalows, circuit houses, PWD rest houses, etc.
- **Furnished Apartments**—These are modern popular alternatives to hotels especially for travellers staying longer. They are usually with a living room, a bedroom, and kitchenette. They would have efficient security and a laundromat. They usually do not provide food and beverage service, but at most have a coffee shop. They are located close to other eating places.
- **Camps**—Camps are ideal for trekkers on foot or caravans. They provide outdoor accommodation ranging from tents, porta-cabins to caravan sites. Caravans are homes on wheels and most popular for travel in North America.
- **Resorts**—Resorts are for holidaymakers and located at attractive natural sites like hills, beaches, hot springs, waterfalls, lakes, etc. Man-made resorts are the latest fad like Disneyland, the Universal Studios, Lego-land, Wild Wadi, etc.

Emigrations

Emigrations are important to screen and permit legitimate visitors into a country. A foreign traveller needs a travel permit (visa) to enter a country. The easier the visa formalities easier does it become for travellers to enter a country. For some countries political compulsions make the granting of visas very difficult affecting tourism.

Visas are issued by the High Commission (of Commonwealth countries), embassy or consulate (representative office) of a country located in another.

Duty Free Shops

They are major foreign exchange earners for any country. Here foreign and domestic goods are exempt from local excises making these goods cheaper than those in local markets. Duty free shops are found primarily at airports and seaports that have recognised the value of such shops by opening extensive shopping arcades for transit passengers.

Emporiums

Emporiums promote and sell the local handicrafts of the nation. It becomes a show window for cottage industries of the country. Travellers want to take souvenirs of the country back home and visit emporiums to get authentic handicrafts. They are located at airports and local shopping centres.

Exchange Bureaus

Exchange Bureaus convert foreign currency into local currency and viceversa for travellers. They issue exchange certificates for each transaction required by many countries from their citizens. The exchange bureaus can be found at airports, seaports, shopping malls, and shopping districts. Most hotels have the licence to exchange currency. Of course, all banks have the licence to convert foreign currency.

Customs

Customs are an important security wing of the government at airports and surface transport terminals to protect a country from the illegal traffic of banned goods like drugs, animal skins, arms, etc. They also levy duty on dutiable goods.

Left Luggage Facilities

These are found at airports, seaports, surface transport terminals, and hotels to enable guests to travel upcountry without having to haul their heavy baggage. Travellers can transfer basic essentials into handbags for light travel, leaving their heavier baggage at these left-luggage facilities.

Health Facilities

Health services are obviously required for the medical care of travellers. Hotels have house doctors while tourist centres have care centres. Specialised care can be taken at hospitals located in every major town and city. We must understand that most of the

tourist traffic is done by pensioners who look at travel as the last gift to themselves on retirement with huge sums of gratuity and pension funds to make travel possible. The mature travellers will need medical care.

Entertainment

Entertainment is a huge arena of activity for every kind of taste like the Palace on Wheels in Rajasthan, reliving the rail travels of the old Maharajas; 'Maid of the Mist' a boat ride under the thunderous Niagara Falls; a trek to the bottom of the Grand Canyon in Arizona; or an air flight around Mt. Everest in Nepal. Modern man-made joy rides; theme parks and water worlds have transported entertainment to new heights of excitement. Each city also has its entertainment district of theatres, cinema, night clubs, restaurants, and bars. Each country likes to promote their national dances and folk arts to travellers to see.



Historical monuments maintained by the Archaeological Department of a country are brought alive by son-et-lumiere shows. Countries like India, Egypt, Greece, Italy or China, with rich historical pasts, convert ancient monuments as tourist attractions. Tourist guides provide travellers with authentic historical facts.

Museums

Museums are a great attraction to all travellers both for historical and educational value. England and France have set the lead in museums of extraordinary quality like the Natural History Museum, Madam Tussauds Wax Museum, Louvre, etc. The Salarjung Museum in Hyderabad, India is the largest single collection of art and artefacts.

Tourist Offices

Tourist offices are established by the tourism department of a state in source markets, to enable tourists get better information about travel to that country.

Food Services

Food services are implicit to travel. Just as people need shelter, so do they need food. Tourism provides both state sponsored and private food facilities to meet any taste and budget. These facilities may be classified into canteens, restaurants, kiosks, food courts, and cafes.





Key Terms

Blue Sky Policy	a government policy that permits private airlines to operate in a country
Cable cars	cabin cars that travel overhead on cables
Cruise	a luxury holiday trip by sea
Domestic airlines	airlines that connect cities within a country
Emporiums	shops that sell local handicrafts
Funicular	mini-trains that are hauled up hill slopes by land-based cables and rail traction
International airlines	airlines that brings people into a country
Termini	transport final stops
Tourism	a collective term of agencies and activities that support travel
Tourist Offices	representative tourism offices in source destinations
Travel agent	a neighbourhood travel specialist
Tour Operator	a wholesaler of tour packages
Package	a compilation of travel services at a single price.
Motels	accommodation on highways
Lodges	state sponsored upcountry accommodation
Furnished apartments	apartments equipped for longer stay
Camps	outdoor accommodation
Resorts	natural or man-made leisure sites



Review Quiz

True or False

1. Pre check-in is an example of value-added services provided by airlines.
2. Feeder services are provided by domestic airlines.
3. A Blue Sky policy allows private airlines to operate in a country.
4. Budget airlines provide value-added services.
5. India has one of the largest rail networks in the world.

6. Inter-city bus travel competes with domestic airline.
7. Trams are an example of inter-city transportation.
8. Car-rental services are able to receive payments through credit cards.
9. Travel agents make local tour packages.
10. Guest houses were originally intended for the travelling public.

Fill in the blanks

1. Popular overhead transport at hill resorts are _____.
2. The person who compiles the various aspects of a holiday into a single package is called a _____.
3. It is important for the travel agent to be close to the _____.
4. Travel agents get their revenue from _____.
5. Lodgings on highways are called _____.
6. Upcountry accommodations provided by the state are called _____.
7. Disneyland is a _____ resort.
8. Camps are ideal for _____.
9. A popular alternative to hotels nowadays for longer stay are _____.
10. Caravan sites are examples of _____.



Training Methodology

This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use pre-prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations as training aids.

The trainer can support the lecture with pictures and slides of various modes of transport, lodging, cruise liners, etc. Field trips to various facilities are ideal.

7

Role of Airlines

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the reader learn how airlines serve travellers and the range of services they provide.

INTRODUCTION

The major role of airlines is to provide quick transportation to travellers over long distances. They transport passengers to a country and within a country. International airlines, like Air India, Lufthansa, Malaysian Airlines, Philippine Airlines, Cathay Pacific, etc., are the main carriers of a country meant to bring people from all over the world into their country to propagate tourism and trade. Domestic airlines transport travellers within a country on trunk routes connecting major cities; and small towns through feeder airline services. Their main challenge is to provide efficient services at least cost. This becomes difficult with rising petrol costs and stronger competition.

IMPORTANCE OF AIRLINES TO HOTELS

Airline business to a hotel is very lucrative for the following reasons:

1. They bring in bulk passengers to a destination. A hotel likes to tap into that business to fill rooms.
2. Airline crews form volume business at a destination. Not only are they frequent flyers to a destination but also constitute bulk bookings to a hotel.

3. Airlines provide hotel accommodation between connecting flights or when the airline foresees any delays in their departure. This brings in volume room and food and beverage sales.
4. Charter flights (discussed later) bring in packaged tour groups and can give hotels volume business.
5. Airlines actively promote the destinations they fly to. Hotels en route can get the benefit of such promotions.
6. Airlines link up with hotels at destinations where they do not have their own hotels to give passengers better facilitation. These become referral hotels. Airlines have captive travellers once they are on board and announce referral hotels to the passengers at the next destination.
7. Airlines bring in foreign and domestic travellers through the network of international and domestic airlines.

Airlines and Tour Operations

Another role of the airlines is to provide tour packages that are economical to the traveller. A package is a combination of travel services put together at a single price. The travel services include hotel accommodation, surface transportation, meals, and the air ticket. Airlines with their own hotels are better placed to provide packages.

Keeping this in mind, airlines offer the following types of packages:

1. **Destination package**—where the ultimate destination is the unique selling point, for example, three nights and four days in Cyprus. The package includes the airfare, hotel, surface transportation, and meals.
2. **Stopover package**—where a passenger has the benefit of stopping at other destination en route at no additional cost in their airfares. So a person travelling to London can stopover at Dubai or Frankfurt en route to the London.
3. **Special interest packages**—where travel is centred on a special interest like sport, history, archaeology, etc. For example, airlines organise special packages for sports enthusiasts to visit the Olympic Games, Major Championships, etc.
4. **Brand name packages**—where packages are built around famous attractions, for example, tour to the Niagara Falls; Everest Tours, etc.

These packages guarantee value for money backed by the airline's name and reputation.

Airfares

In modern times, airlines have introduced novel fares to suit passenger budgets:

1. First class fares for exclusive passengers.
2. Business class fares for the business traveller.
3. Economy fares for the common traveller.
4. Excursion fares for economy tourists.
5. Charter fares for groups travelling under a package scheme.
6. Discounted fares for students, senior citizens, and emigrants.

These fares are taken into account as a product-mix based on conditions of sale. While the seat is the same the conditions of sale vary such as:

1. Value-added services on board for higher paying passengers. These services could include the service of drinks, type of food, on-flight entertainment, comfort of seats, etc.
2. Length of stay permissible at destination before they resume their onward journey.
3. The number of stopovers en route.
4. Fare limits to different segments of the passenger market.
5. Time of the week, month or year of travel.
6. Rules on refunds, e.g. refunds will not be permitted beyond a particular date.
7. Return flight fares are valid during a specific period.
8. Group travel rules, e.g. that group members must travel together.



All fares are governed by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) or the government. IATA fares give guidelines for fare structures and how tickets are to be sold. This is an understanding with all associate members. The government directed fares are those specifically negotiated between two nations that are unique to the carriers of the two nations. Fares have a relation to volume and capacity. With wide bodied aircraft that carry more passengers, the cost of operation of each flight is distributed over a larger number of passengers. Freddie Laker brought in a revolutionary concept of air travel. He created the airbus which was budget airline that cut down all ground and cabin services to an essential minimum so as to reduce overheads. He was able to give passengers budget fares without any frills. Many independent airlines followed suit and exist today.

Charters

A charter is when a group of individuals book a dedicated flight. It becomes economical for them because of the volume of people in the group. For example, a large group of people attending the Olympic Games may charter a plane exclusively for themselves. Charters had their genesis when obsolete aircraft were phased out by airlines and used for specific movement of people and cargo at a profit. This activity has become more widespread and has spurred major airlines to have their own charter subsidiaries. There are three types of charters:

1. **Ad-hoc**, where an organiser takes an aircraft to move a large number of people between two points at fares well below normal ones. This is normally a one-off flight.
2. **Series** is the mainstay for charter airlines and the tourism industry. Hotels recognise the importance of series charters as a source of regular business. A tour operator or organisers may schedule a series of charters at economical rates during the holiday season.
3. **Time charters** are those when individuals or companies lease out an aircraft for a fixed period of time at an agreed cost. Such type of charters may be used by freight operators who transport cargo around the world.



Key Terms

Airlines	a commercial air carrier of a country
Domestic Airlines	commercial carriers commuting within a country
International Airlines	commercial air carriers commuting to external destinations
Charter Airlines	aircrafts hired for specific purposes
Packages	all-inclusive tour proposals
Value Additions	extras given for the same price



Review Quiz

True or False

1. Airlines transport passengers to a country and within it.
2. The main challenge for an airline is to provide efficient service at least cost.
3. Airline crews form volume business at a destination.

4. Airlines actively promote the destination they fly.
5. A role of an airline is to provide tour packages.
6. Special interest packages are built around famous attractions.
7. Economy fares are for economy tourists.
8. On-flight entertainment is a value-added service.
9. Fares vary by the time of the year.
10. Fares have a relation to volume and capacity.

Fill in the Blanks

1. Flights within a country are provided by _____.
2. Domestic airlines provide transport to smaller towns by _____.
3. Hotels that link up with airlines are called _____.
4. A tour package where the ultimate destination is the unique selling point is called a _____.
5. The fare category for exclusive passengers is called _____.
6. The fare that governs groups under a package scheme is called a _____.
7. Fares are governed by the _____.
8. A one-off charter flight is called _____.
9. Air charters that are leased for a fixed period are called _____.
10. An all-inclusive tour proposal is called a _____.



Training Methodology

This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use pre-prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations as training aids.

A talk by an airline professional will add value to the lecture.



Multicultural Awareness

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To appreciate the different foreign business cultures so as to enable students to be true global citizens.

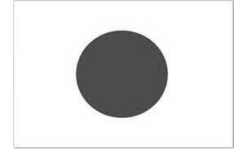
INTRODUCTION

The world has become a ‘global village’ with the advent of cyberspace and the developments in information technology (IT). Upwardly mobile people call themselves ‘global citizens’ where they work and have vacation in foreign locations never thought possible before. The breaking down of distances with faster transport, political and trade barriers have enabled better movement and exchanges among countries. Who would have imagined South African pilots in India’s domestic airlines; space technologists from India at NASA; the Philippine labour fronting the service industry in Dubai; or the Chinese engineers developing ports in Sri Lanka? The hospitality industry in America has been a pioneer since the 1950s—expanding into international chains, through franchises, throughout the world, employing and training local professionals into their ways of doing things. Today, all big businesses and brands are looking at emerging markets like the BRIC nations, viz., Brazil, Russia, India and China to establish themselves. It is only but natural to sensitise oneself to foreign cultures to be able to be more effective when on business or pleasure. This lesson attempts to give cultural snapshots of countries frequently travelled these days.

JAPAN

Culture

Harmony or *Wa* is a cherished value in Japanese society encouraging teamwork, avoidance of self assertion and individualism. This reflects in the harmony that unifies modernisation and tradition. They place great emphasis on politeness, personal responsibility and working together for universal, rather than individual good. Japan is a model of hierarchy, honour and etiquette reflected in many social and business practices today. Japanese is spoken in over 99 per cent of the country.



Face or *Kao* is a symbol of personal pride and that defines one's reputation and social status. Saving of face is achieved by avoiding confrontations and direct criticisms. Losing face is disastrous in a business relationship.

Empathy or *Omoiyari* is encouraged in the Japanese business culture and is based on trust and mutual feelings. It is important to understand others' limitations and strengths.

Business Protocol

- **Appointment:** The Japanese prefer to deal with someone with a good reference. They are able to place you in a hierarchy to give you the right respect and protocol. Engaging a Japanese lawyer is recommended and considered a gesture of goodwill when transacting business. Japanese prefer making an appointment. It is better to telephone to fix a time and date. Always be punctual just as much as they are punctual.
- **Dress:** Wear dark suits with white shirt and subdued tie from October to April; and grey suit from May to September. A black tie with a black suit is funeral attire. Short hair is preferred. Women should wear trouser suits or long skirts. Japanese men are usually uncomfortable to deal with women especially those in power.
- **Greeting:** While Japanese gently bow when greeting each other they do not expect this from foreigners. They are quite comfortable to shake hands. It is important to show respect to someone of higher status. They prefer you to be introduced by someone else. Introducing oneself is impolite in their culture. One must not be surprised when instead of meeting one person there is a team awaiting you. The senior most sits furthest to the door and in strict descending order the junior most will sit near the door.



- **Business Cards:** These are a must in Japanese business culture. Double-sided cards with the Japanese language on one side are very impressive to them. Present the card with both hands with the Japanese side on top. Bow slightly to show respect. Present the card first to the most senior in the hierarchy. Never write notes on the business card nor play with it during the meeting. The card is their face. They must be stored neatly in a card case after the meeting.
- **Meeting:** Japanese are non-confrontational. It may be several meetings before they transact business with you. They must get comfortable with you first. The initial meetings are crucial to set the foundation for a lasting relationship. They may test you out by making a personal request. Never refuse it however bizarre it is. The speed with which that request is attended to with excellent service seals the long-lasting relationship. Japanese like gifts as a token of esteem. Give a gift to the senior most at the end of the meeting. Pay attention to the packing. It must be a good quality. Chocolates are safe so are bouquets. Avoid giving flowers in white as they are used at funerals. No potted plants. They do not open the gifts in your presence, when received.

Japanese like to answer with 'Yes' or 'No'. Therefore, it is important to phrase the queries with closed questions. Their silence at times is not to be misunderstood. They have a system of group consensus and need time to reach that. Sometimes they close their eyes to concentrate. They like signing broad contracts to be flexible in their relationship. Contracts are not the final agreement. They like the flexibility for renegotiation.

- **Dining Etiquettes:** Japanese like to entertain away from home. Rarely do they invite guests to their house. But if they do, arrive on time and in formal wear unless otherwise advised by the host. It is appropriate to remove the shoes at the entrance, pointing away from the door. Slip into slippers at the door. Wait to be told where to sit. They believe in strict protocol. The most senior and guest will sit farthest from the door. Japanese love to drink. Their toast is *kahm-pie*. Empty the glass after toasting. Wait to be served. Do not help yourself and start eating only after the senior most has started. Use chopsticks. It is alright to ask what the dish is. Try everything. The housewife has taken the trouble to make it. Eat them one by one; never mixed together. Leave some drink in the glass if you do not want it to be refilled.
- **Post meeting:** Keep in touch always through cards on special occasions. Japanese like to do business on the basis of personal relationships.

CHINA

Culture

Relationships or *Guanxi* in the Chinese business environment is the network of relationships among various parties that cooperate and support one another. The Chinese business mentality is quite simple: ‘You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours’. In essence, this boils down to exchanging favours which are expected to be done regularly and voluntarily. The right relationships or contacts will ensure that the business is successful. It minimizes risks especially in the government. Giving gifts (wine, cigarettes, etc.) is welcome. Though it is not legal for government officials to receive gifts, it is managed through underlings or at residences. Business cannot proceed without these relationships. Chinese are obligated to do business with whom they consider friends.



‘**Saving Face**’ is one of the building blocks of Chinese culture. In practice, it means avoiding conflict and preserving other people’s dignity. Chinese are most comfortable in being silent. They may ponder before answering.

Business Protocol

- **Appointments:** The Chinese like to make appointments, usually through a known person. A reliable interpreter is a must in business dealings.
- **Dress:** Men should be in conservative business suits in subdued colours. For formal functions like banquets, it is safe to wear formal clothes. Women can wear business suits, skirts or dresses. Modest necklines, heels and jewellery are expected.
- **Greetings:** A handshake is quite acceptable though one should not see too much into the firmness of the handshake. The Chinese will often greet themselves with a gentle nod of the head. Chinese greetings like *ne hao* (Hello) or *ni hao ma* (How are you?) make a good impression. The Chinese have dispensed with bowing as the Japanese do. First and family names are in reverse order from English. So Mr. Hu Jintao is Mr. Hu.
- **Business Card:** It is essential to have double-sided business cards with Chinese on one side. It is to be presented with both hands. It is appreciated to take a look at the card and compliment a title or office.
- **Meeting:** It is prudent to be on time. Lateness is considered rude and deserves a formal apology. As a host of the meeting it is customary to send a representative to



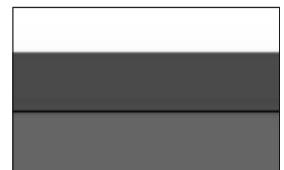
receive them at the main door and escort them. The senior most must enter first especially at formal meetings. The seating is arranged by the rank, the senior most furthest from the door but facing it. The guest of honour sits opposite him. A small talk is necessary to feel comfortable after which the host gives the welcome speech and presents the topic of the day. Chinese meetings are highly structured, and interjecting beyond a quick remark is considered rude.

- **Communication:** Avoid using hand gestures while talking. It is a distraction to the Chinese. Avoid touching anyone. Pointing while speaking is considered rude. It is considered improper to put your hand in your mouth.
- **Dining etiquettes:** A traditional Chinese restaurant has round tables to seat eight to ten people. The senior most person will sit furthest but facing the entrance. The chief guest sits on the right of the senior most person. The person paying the bill sits closest to the door facing the senior most person. The remainder of the seating arrangement is in a social hierarchy the next senior most next to the head. It is prudent to wait to be seated in the right order. The host orders the food with a lavish spread. Food may not come all at once but as it is being freshly prepared in the kitchen. Chinese tea is served after the entrée. A 'lazy suzy' helps pass food easily but the senior most serves himself first followed by the chief guest. The same trend is adopted with drinks. Eating with chopsticks is appreciated. Avoid dropping the chopsticks as it is a bad omen. Always leave some food in the plate. It shows you are well fed. Never discuss politics at a meal. Unless invited, it is polite to offer to pay the bill.
- **Gifts:** It is a well-established tradition to exchange gifts with visitors especially the first time. Fountain pens, clocks, handkerchiefs or desk appointments are considered appropriate. The highest valued gift is given to the senior most. Modest gifts should be presented to others as well. Chinese do not open their gifts immediately but may do so if insisted upon. The government officials do not accept gifts openly but through intermediaries.

RUSSIA

Culture

Russians are family oriented and each family member contributes to family income. Many of them are literate and can speak English as it is introduced in school. Because of economic reasons many generations live together as a joint family. Russians are proud of their country. Patriotic songs



and poems extol the virtues of their country. They take great pride in their cultural heritage and expect the rest of the world to admire it. Patience is a great virtue and they are prone to test you on this. After the dissolution of the communist state, a number of citizens are turning to religion especially to Protestantism, Islam, Russian Christian Orthodoxy and Judaism.

Business Protocol

Appointments: Appointments are necessary and should be made as far in advance as possible. It takes roughly six weeks to fix an appointment with a government official. The first week of May has several holidays so it is best to avoid at that time. Russians believe in *Svyasi* or connections/contacts. They would like to be introduced by a trustworthy person who they know. The first meeting is critical to establish whether they would like to deal with you in future. They like to know your strengths and why you are different.

Dress: Russians are formal and conservative. For them the clothes define the person. A business suit is recommended. Women should wear conservative business skirts below the knee. Shoes should be properly polished. Jackets should be kept on throughout the meeting. Having hands in the pocket is considered rude. For evening dinners, formal casual attire without tie is permitted.

Business Cards: It is prudent to have several business cards with English on one side and Russian on the other. You may show off your advanced degrees. Present the card with the Russian side upwards.

Meetings: Punctuality is considered essential though they are themselves slack in time management. Don't be surprised if you have to wait sometimes without an apology being granted for two hours! They like to test your patience. Meetings can be cancelled at short notice. A first meeting is a firm almost bone-crushing handshake while maintaining an eye contact with the appropriate words of greeting. Handshakes with females are less firm. Shaking hands with gloves on is considered rude. When female friends meet, they kiss on the cheek three times, starting with the left and then alternating. Close male friends may pat each other on the back or hug. Showing the soles of your shoes while talking is also considered rude. Meetings and negotiations are slow. They do not like to be rushed. They like technical experts where necessary. Keep adequate brochures and technical



documents at hand to support arguments. Hierarchy is important to Russians. They respect age, and rank. The senior most gives the decision. They look at meetings as win-lose and not win-win as they view compromise as a weakness. It is prudent to be prepared with concessions. They are short tempered and can even walk out of meetings or threaten to terminate the relationship. Nothing is final till a contract is signed with modifications that suit their purpose. Being aggressive can work against you. Russian names comprise first name, middle name and finally family name.

Communications: While Russian is the official language; most of them would know English now as it is introduced in school from the third grade. Speaking or laughing loudly in public is considered rude. Russians are transactional, and do not need to build a relationship first to transact business. It is better to err in formality when making first contact. They do not like to talk only business. They like to talk of other things in general too. A good indication that they have got close to you is when they ask you for a personal favour.

Dining Etiquettes: It is advised to arrive on time, no later than 15 minutes, for the dinner appointment. If the dinner is at home, remove the outdoor shoes as it would usually have snow slush. You will be provided with slippers by the host. Dress formally as it shows respect for the hosts. You will be treated with honour and respect. It is customary locally to assist the host with the setting of the table and clearance after the meal. This may be turned down politely by the hostess. Respond with, 'Are you sure' giving the host to accept the offer. The table set-up is like in Europe with cutlery. The eldest or most honoured guest is served first. Avoid eating until the guest invites you to start. Do not rest the elbows on the table, though the hands must be visible at all times. It is okay to take second helping when asked. It is permitted to soak bread in gravy and sauce. Men pour drinks for women seated next to them. Always leave food in the plate when finished. It shows to the host that you had ample hospitality. Do not get up from the table till you are invited to leave the table.

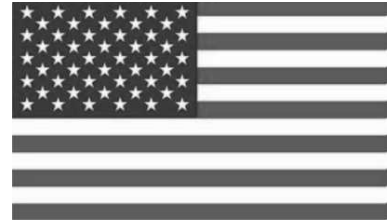
Gifts: Take a small gift if you are invited to the house of a Russian host. Male guests are expected to bring flowers. Avoid giving yellow flowers. Do not give a baby gift till after the baby is born as it is considered bad luck. Russians will politely refuse the gift but insist on it as a token of friendship and they will accept the same.

UNITED STATES

Culture

America is a nation of immigrants resulting in a cultural brew in every sense of the word. Americans trace their ancestry to Ireland, Poland, England, Italy, Cuba, Mexico, Africa,

India, etc. This is evident in every major city. Most people are influenced by Hollywood movies which at times are a skewed reality, but they are impressed by the American friendliness and informality. To Americans 'Time is Money' and people save it or spend it like cash. Hence, respecting their time is important. As nuclear (small) families, they value individualism and encourage individual accomplishments, initiatives and success. Self-reliance is highly valued, and children are trained and encouraged to be independent at an early age. Americans believe in equality be it equal rights, equal social responsibility, or equal opportunities. Consequently, there is a lack of deference for age, status, authority or wealth. They are hard working and measure their success by financial prosperity.



Appointments: Respect their time and be punctual. It is a good way to start a relationship. It is common to have breakfast meetings or a dinner invitation at 5.30 p.m.

Business Dress: Generally people in the West are more casual than those in the East. Executives usually dress formally in dark suits. Women can wear business suits or dresses. It is better to err on formal dressing in first contacts.

Greetings: Greetings are casual with a handshake and a 'Hi'. Handshakes are firm, brief and confident. Eye contact is essential at the time of meeting. They prefer first names and may insist on using their nick name. In first business meetings it is prudent to call them with their title and surname till they invite you to call them by their first name.

Business Cards: Business Cards are in English and are presented without much ritual.

Meetings: Punctuality is essential especially with Americans in the North East and Mid West. Late coming is viewed as a mark of disrespect. While meetings are relaxed they are actually quite serious. If there is an agenda, it will be strictly followed. Presentations should be supported by audio-visuals and statistics. Americans are impressed with researched hard data and facts. Presentations should be direct and to-the-point. Americans respect time management and reaching a decision is done quickly. They are interested in signing a contract rather than building a relationship. A business meal is a natural extension to a meeting but no business is transacted at the meal. Women play an active part



in the US business. Be prepared to be dealing with one. They should be treated as one would with a man. Gender issues are very sensitive in America. They like to end meetings with a summary of proceedings and fixing accountability as to who will do what next. Impasses in meetings are met with confrontational bold moves and debates are openly encouraged. The ultimate decision is made by the boss though everyone is allowed to contribute to the discussion. The boss then is responsible for the decision.

Communication: Americans are direct in their approach. They value logic and linear thinking and expect people to speak clearly and in a straightforward manner. Since time is of essence, they have no patience for vagueness, diplomacy and lack of focus. They address issues directly with a way to find solutions and conclusions. This may be viewed by eastern cultures as being 'aggressive' when actually they are not. Americans are quite comfortable to transact business by phone. Meetings to them are time consuming.

Dining Etiquettes: Americans like to socialize either in their backyards at home over a barbeque, or in a restaurant or bar. It is prudent to arrive on time not later than 10 minutes. The atmosphere is very casual. Remain standing till asked to sit. They eat with their fork and use the knife only to cut food into smaller slices. The fork is held in the right hand with tines facing down. If one has not finished eating, the knife and fork should be crossed on the plate with the fork over. When one has finished eating, the knife and fork is laid parallel to the right side of the plate. Food is served in a family style, i.e., food in platters which is passed around to be served into the plate. They are not offended if you refuse a drink or food. Do not start eating till the hostess starts or gives the permission to start. Do not rest the elbows on the table. Place the dinner napkin on the lap. Leave a small amount of food in the plate when finished eating. They will feel they have given good hospitality.

Gifts: Gift giving is unusual in the United States and many companies have policies to restrict or forbid the acceptance of presents. A bottle of wine when invited for dinner or a box of chocolates is appreciated.

ENGLAND

Culture

The English are very traditional in their ways. While they have introduced the latest changes to the world, they are very strict about protocol and cling onto age old practices. At first, they may appear very stiff and formal but warm up as they get to know you. England is predominantly a Christian country with the largest



population of Moslems in Western Europe. Other religions in the UK are Hinduism, Judaism, and Sikhism. English is spoken throughout the country. Women and men have similar roles in England. It is not uncommon to find men doing household chores while the women are at work. English like to deal with those who are familiar to them or those recommended by someone they know well. The older generations like to build long-term relations with those whom they do business with and are cautious with those who want to make a quick deal. However, the younger generations are not so insistent. The British like their privacy and value space for themselves in any programme. Except for some general questions, they do not like anyone to pry into their private lives. It is best to stop talking if one is getting one word answers from them. They are generally not fussy as they do not want to attract attention to themselves. They are patient and will wait in a queue for their turn.

Business Dressing: The English are formal and dress in grey or dark suits. Women also wear conservative business suits or dresses. Being people who follow protocol, it is a must to enquire about the dress code for an evening function. A 'Black Tie' event will include a tuxedo, with a white dress shirt with cufflinks and shirt studs; black or red bow; and a cummerbund (wide silk belt) and patent leather shoes. Women at a Black Tie event should wear a long dress, sheer stockings with matching shoes. Foreigners may wear their formal national costumes.

Greetings: There is still some protocol when greeting. A younger person is introduced to the elder. A person of lower status is introduced to someone of a higher status. Introduce the more familiar person to the other if they hold equal rank. People shake hands upon meeting with a statement, 'How do you do?' which is replied as 'How do you do?' Staring at someone is treated as rude even in public places. Another popular greeting is 'How are you?' which is replied with, 'I am fine thank you, and you?'

Business Cards: Business cards are in English and presented without much ritual.

Business Meetings: The English like to work on an agenda. They must receive it before the meeting to review and prepare. Being punctual for the meeting is absolutely imperative. They appreciate a call even if the person is delayed by 5 minutes. If all members at the meeting are of equal rank, there will be a free flow of discussion. A senior person does most of the talking, if present, unless they invite members to speak. The meeting starts with general chit chat before they get into business. The ones making the presentation must give researched facts. It is better



to understate than over exaggerate. The British believe in facts rather than on emotion to make decisions. The meeting should be followed by the Minutes of the Meeting.

Communication: Most English are terse in their communication. The older generations are masters of understatements using qualifiers such as 'Perhaps', 'Possible' or 'It could be'. Written communication follows strict rules of protocol. Written communication is always addressed using the person's title and their surname. First names are rarely used unless they know each other well. The English deplore over-familiarity in public. They would rarely use slang in any form of communication.

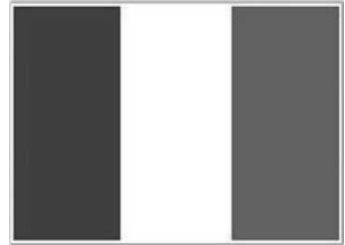
Dining Etiquette: The English like to entertain guests. If the invitation is formal with an RSVP, it is incumbent to reply confirming your attendance. One should never accept an invitation unless one plans to go. Should an emergency arise when you cannot go, it is important to call and inform them of your predicament. Being punctual is however a must. If the invitation is during the day, the guests are first welcome with a cup of tea and if in the evening with a drink at a bar. Full course meal invitations are not common, as in most cases both husband and wife are working; elaborate cooking at home becomes cumbersome for them as they look forward to weekends for leisure and entertainment. It is polite to come with a gift like a box of chocolates, a bottle of wine or a bouquet of flowers. Wait till you are invited to sit at the table at a chosen seat. Hands must be on the lap. Elbows should not rest on the table. English eat with a fork and knife as the foods are predominantly meat dishes accompanied with roasted potatoes and sautéed vegetables. If not finished, the knife and fork should be crossed in the plate with the fork above the knife. One can indicate that they have finished by placing the knife and fork parallel on the right side of the dinner plate. The English drink with their food. It is common to offer toasts. At pubs it is customary to buy a round of drinks. At a restaurant, the host will pay for the meal. There is no point in insisting. One can repay the meal by inviting them at another time. The English are very particular about table manners. Start eating only after the host starts. Chew with the mouth closed. Never talk when there is food in the mouth. In fact, stuffing the mouth is considered crude. It is impolite to slurp soup. Never reach out for dishes over someone else's plate nor should one take food from someone else's plate. Never blow one's nose into the napkin. The napkin is only meant to dab the lips.

Gifts: The English like gifts, however, simple. They open the gift immediately and show their appreciation. The gift should be closer to their interests. Therefore, do some research into what they like before the meeting.

FRANCE

Culture

France, and in particular the capital city Paris, has been the centre of the arts and culture since the 17th century in Europe and the 19th century in the world. The French culture has witnessed quite a few ups and downs over the centuries, depending on its economic, political, and military influence. The French culture today is marked both by great regional and socio-economic differences yet bound by a central unity. Its ethnic make-up consists of Celtic, Latin, Slavic, North African, Indo-Chinese and Basque minorities. The French are noted for their cuisine, performing arts, cinema, fashion, wines, cheese, bakery products, and language. They have stamped their distinct signature in their colonies from the Far East to Africa and North America. For decades, French was considered the alternate language to English. Ethics implicitly regulate business behaviour and government control.



Business Etiquette

Appointments: Always fix an appointment at least two weeks in advance before a meeting. French just hate unexpected visitors. Appointments are made in writing or by telephone depending on the seniority of the person being visited. Appointments are generally managed by secretaries and not directly. Avoid fixing appointments in the months of July and August as it is vacation time. Always call-up in case an appointment is delayed.

Dress: The French are stylish in their dress sense. Being fashion conscious, even their casual wear is chic. The French like the fine things in life, so they usually wear good quality accessories. This explains their meticulous attention to detail. Men should wear dark coloured conservative suits. Women should wear either stylish suits or elegant dresses in soft colours. Necklines and hemlines must be modest. Revealing clothes is a sign of bad taste. Backless long dresses and elegant blazers are considered classy. The French wear black dresses for cocktails. Conservative shoes are accepted. They look down on sneakers.

Business Cards: Business cards are exchanged without much ceremony. It is an advantage to have one side of the business card in French. Although not a business necessity, it demonstrates an attention to detail that is appreciated. The business card must include all the academic qualifications as it establishes your credibility.

Greetings: The common form of greeting in France is the handshake. Close friends kiss each other on the cheeks. The same applies when leaving. A formal greeting in France would be, *Bonjour Monsieur Dupont* (Good day Mr. Dupont) or *Bonsoir Madame Blanchard* (Good evening Madam Blanchard). Business and private lives are strictly separated. They are very polite in public and will even open doors for you to which you reply *Merci* (Thank you).

Meetings: The French begin a meeting 15 minutes later than scheduled so as to wait for latecomers. Meetings are usually for discussing issues and not making decisions. The French are very formal and insist on courtesy. However, they are less formal than their English counterparts and do not hesitate to pat on the back or touch the arm. However, overfriendliness is not accepted. They like to keep their professional and personal relationships separate. The French are proud of their language and are intolerant to answer in English even if they know to speak it. Speaking in French gives a definite edge. They are direct and do not hesitate in asking questions. Discussions are spirited. Avoid exaggerated claims as the French do not appreciate hyperbole. Stick to the agenda if there is one. Avoid rushing the proceedings as they like to take things slowly and follow protocol. Do not interrupt a speaker. Most discussions are very creative. They are patient listeners and expect others to be the same. They like flexibility in discussions to bring in creative changes. They look into detail however minute. They in fact appreciate good debating skills. Confrontational stances can be counterproductive though discussions may be intense. Summarise a meeting in writing after the meeting. Decisions are made by the senior most in the company. When an agreement is reached, the French may insist it to be formalised into an extremely comprehensive but precise contract.



Communication: The French are proud of their language and prefer to speak in French. They like formal language with the use of correct titles. The modern generation is learning English to get around in the globalised world. Do not use the index finger to point at something. Instead use the whole hand. It is considered acceptable not knowing the language and apologising for it. However, it is important to learn some key words to indicate intent towards a long relationship. Written communication is formal. Business lunches with wine are an important part of corporate communication. Maintain direct eye contact when speaking. On written communication is valid. Oral agreements mean nothing.

Dining Etiquettes: Punctuality is important to the French. They will accept arrival no later than 10 minutes. However, the more south one goes in France, time becomes

more flexible. The French hate to have unexpected guests, so it is a blunder to drop in with an uninvited guest without informing the host. French cuisine is expensive. They take pride in their knowledge of wines which they drink throughout the evening, including the meal. They are not too fond of spirits. They frown on anyone asking for water as wine for them is *eau du vie* or 'Water of Life'. Commence eating after the host has wished you *bon appétit*. Avoid putting your elbows on the table. A tradition is to have an aperitif half an hour before a meal for general socialising. They eat with fork and spoon and may have an array of cutlery for various courses. Use cutlery from the outside towards the plate. They cut everything deftly except salads which they fold and eat with a fork. Cheese is cut lengthwise and round cheese in wedges. Cross the knife and fork, with the fork over the knife if the food is not completed.

GERMANY

Culture

In many respects, Germans can be considered the masters of planning. They prize forward thinking and precise execution. Planning gives them a sense of security. Rules and regulations allow people to know what is expected of them and conform zealously. Their personal and professional life is structured where there is a proper time for every activity. For example, anyone leaving the office late indicates poor daily planning. Germany is known for their classical music (*Bach*), motor industry (Mercedes Benz, Audi, BMW, Porche); Sports including motor sports (Michael Schumacher); Football (FIFA World Cup winners in 1954, 1974, and 1990 with renowned Franz Beckenbauer, Gerd Müller, Jürgen Klinsman, Lothar Matthäus, Oliver Kahn); Olympics (fifth in 2008 Summer Olympics, and first in Winter Olympics); literature (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; Brothers Grimm; Bertolt Brecht), cinema (Marlene Dietrich, Berlin Film Festival).



Business Protocol

Appointments: Appointments are mandatory preferably in writing in German, one or two weeks in advance.

Dress Etiquette: Business dresses are formal and conservative. Men wear dark suits while women wear dark executive suits or conservative dresses. Accessories must be frugal.

Greeting: Greetings are formal. A quick, firm handshake is the traditional greeting with everyone including children. Titles like *Herr* or *Frau* are important and denote

respect. They must be used unless you are invited to use first names. Wait for the host to introduce you to a group. It is customary to shake hands even after the meeting. When being introduced to a woman, wait for her to extend her hand first.

Meetings Punctuality is taken seriously as late coming is considered rude. Make a telephone call if you are expecting to be late. It is rude to cancel a meeting at the last minute. It will ruin the relationship. There is a protocol when entering the room. The highest ranking person enters the room first. Men enter before women if of the same



rank. Meetings are generally formal. Initial meetings are important to determine whether you are trustworthy. Meetings strictly follow an agenda, and start and end on time. Maintain direct eye contact when speaking. They consider meeting as very formal and dislike humour. Though English is spoken, hire an interpreter to avoid misunderstanding. Germans signal their approval by rapping their knuckles on the table. Germans are

individualistic. The German thought process is extremely thorough and detailed. This is often time consuming. They do not like surprises even if it's for the good. They do not expect to be complimented as they generally work at a satisfactory pace.

Communication: Ninety-nine per cent of the population speaks the German language. They are formal in their speech which at times may appear terse and rude. They like to talk on phone and will use it for follow-up on meetings. They do not mix their professional and private life. Avoid calling them at home on business matters. They do not need a relationship to transact business. They are impressed with credentials about you and the company you represent. They pay a lot of deference to authority, age, and rank. They will be direct to the point of bluntness. They will back-up decisions and agreements in writing.

Dining Etiquette: It is imperative to always arrive on time—never early or late. The maximum allowance for lateness is 15 minutes which will require an apology and reason for the tardiness. Remain standing till invited to sit. You may be shown a particular seat. Place the napkin on the lap only after the hostess does it. The host presents a toast wishing *Zum Wohl* (good health). The toast with beer is *Prost* (good health). The honoured guest returns the toast. Germans eat with knife and fork. Wait till the host starts eating wishing *guten appetit* (good appetite). Never rest the elbows on the table. Cut as much of food with the fork to indicate the food is tender. Finish all the food in the plate to show you relished it. Rolls must be broken by hand into smaller edible pieces. Always send a handwritten thank you for the meal.

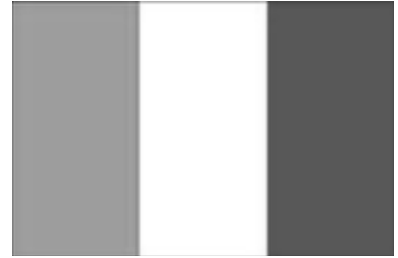
Gifts: When invited to a German home always take a gift such as chocolates or flowers. Yellow roses are well received. Avoid red roses (intention to romance);

carnations (sign of mourning); or lilies or chrysanthemums (given at funerals). If you are taking a wine, make sure it is either French or Italian. Giving German wine indicates your doubt not being served quality wines. Germans like to open their gifts immediately in your presence.

ITALIAN

Culture

Italy is an ancient civilization with a lot of history. Apart from being the seat of the Roman Empire the Italians have invented many things which have become part of our daily lives including Pizza, Pasta, electric volt, piano, electric battery, nitro glycerine, wireless telegraphy, telephone, eyeglasses, espresso machine and typewriter. Explorers Christopher Columbus and Marco Polo are famous Italians who changed the world. Italy is a member of the Euro Zone. Italians are predominantly Roman Catholic. It is famous for its cars (Ferrari, Lamborghini); wines (Asti); fashion; soccer (World Champions) and history. Italians in the North are direct; see time as money and get down to business. People in the South of Italy are more leisurely and want to know people before transacting business. It is best to allow them to set the pace. Italians prefer to do business with high ranking people. Hierarchy is the cornerstone of Italian business. They respect power and age. They prefer to do business with people they know. They prefer face-to-face than long distance negotiations. In Italy, personal contacts can get you ahead.



Appointments: Italians work on appointments. It should be requested in writing in Italian two or three weeks in advance. Reconfirm the meeting by telephone or fax. August is a month for vacations so avoid it.

Dress: Italy is a fashion destination of the world. Milan is a fashion capital where the best designers show their creations. It is not surprising therefore that appearances matter in Italy. It indicates your social status, family background, and education. 'First impressions are lasting impressions' is true in Italy. They unconsciously assess another person's age and social standing in the first few seconds of the meeting even before a word is spoken. You are judged on your clothes, shoes, accessories and demeanour. Men should wear expensive, sophisticated ties and well-cut dark suits. They wear long sock as showing their leg is inelegant. Men often wear cuff links, tie clips and stylish watches. Choose only quality fabrics such as light-weight wools and silks. Women are expected to wear simple clothes in subdued shades but with elegance. Italian businesswomen wear more make up than others. Expensive perfumes are part of the ensemble for both men and women. Social events require formal casuals.

Greetings: Greetings are formal yet enthusiastic. The usual handshake with eye contact and a smile will suffice even with strangers. Men with well-known relations will kiss on both cheeks starting with the left and a pat on the back. It is prudent to address them formally till you are invited to call them by first names. You are expected to address men with *Signore* (Mr.) and women with *Signora* (Mrs).

Business Cards: It is essential to have business cards preferably with Italian script on the reverse of the card. They are used only at business and not socially where they use calling cards which are slightly larger which include the name, address, title, academic honours, and telephone number. They are exchanged only at the first meeting and handed to them and not tossed to them. Give the business card only once. When looking at a business card, look at the name and title carefully, then set it on the table in front of you during the meeting. Usually meetings commence after a little 'small talk'.

Meetings: Italians take punctuality for meetings seriously and consider late coming as sloppy. Use initial meetings to build a relationship. They like to evaluate your temperament. They do not make decisions initially. In fact, initial meetings are filled with eloquence, personality, and status. Italians like to deal with someone they can trust. Such relations must be mutually profitable. Italians do not believe in protocol. Italians like to take time in negotiations. Being rushed is viewed as a weakness. Italian companies are intuitive and can identify and exploit a business opportunity. They hardly think strategically. Meetings styles are unstructured and informal. It is common to be interrupted or discussions going on at the same time. It is not common to see presentations. Written agendas may not be followed. Often business decisions are agreed to privately before meetings. Honour such agreements to keep such relationships. Meetings are meant for free flow of ideas to let everyone have their say. Heated debates and arguments are part of the discussion. Haggling over price and delivery dates is common. Go with printed material both in English and Italian.



Communication: The use of the English language is common in business meetings. However, it is prudent to check with the host whether an interpreter is required. Do not call Italians at home unless it is an emergency. Italians are extremely expressive communicators. They tend to be wordy, eloquent, emotional and demonstrative often using facial and hand gestures to prove their point. They like to speak about architecture, art, films, soccer, Italian food and wine, opera, current events and history.

Dining Etiquettes: You may arrive 15 minutes late. Bring gift wrapped wine or chocolates. Remain standing till invited to sit. You may be shown to a particular seat. They use knife and fork to eat. The hostess sets the lead for the dining process. Follow her. The host gives the first toast. The honoured guest gives the toast later during the meal. Topics to avoid are religion (Vatican policies), taxes, the mafia, World War II, private family issues, and their profession.

Gifts: Wine and chocolates are accepted properly gift wrapped when visiting their homes. Do not present a business gift until you have received one first.

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Key Terms

Bon Appétit	“Good appetite” a wish in French at the commencement of a meal
Bonjour	“Good Day” in French
BRIC	Acronym for Brazil, Russia, India and China
Eau de Vie	“Water of Life” a reference to wine in French
Frau	German female title meaning “Madam”

Guanxi	“Relationships” in Chinese
Gûten Appétit	“Good appetite” a wish in German at the commencement of a meal
Herr	German male title meaning “Mister”
Kahm Pie	Toast in Japanese
Kao	“Face” in Japanese
Ne Hao	“Hello” in Chinese
Ne Hao Ma	“How are you?” in Chinese
Omiyari	“Empathy” in Japanese”
Prost	“Good Health” German toast with beer
Signore	Italian male title meaning “Mister”
Signora	Italian female title meaning “Madam”
Signorita	Italian female title meaning “Miss”
Suyasi	“Contacts” in Russian
Zum Wohe	“Good health” a German toast with wine and spirits



Review Quiz

True or False

1. Japan is a model of hierarchy, honour and etiquette.
2. The Japanese believe in individualism
3. Relationships are important in the Chinese culture.
4. Saving face is one of the building blocks of Chinese culture.
5. The Russians are family oriented.
6. Russians are casual in their business attire.
7. The Americans are flexible with their time
8. The Italians are fashionable in their dress sense.
9. The English are very traditional in their ways.
10. The French wait for latecomers to a meeting.

Fill in the blanks:

1. Upwardly mobile people call themselves _____
2. The Japanese term for “Harmony” is _____
3. Exchanging _____ is a well established tradition in Chinese social culture.
4. It takes roughly _____ weeks to get an appointment with a Russian government official.
5. _____ is highly valued by the Americans.
6. The English are _____ in their dress sense.
7. The French are _____ in their dress sense.
8. At the commencement of a meal the French say _____
9. The Germans are known for their _____ which gives them security.
10. The title of a German male is _____

***Training Methodology***

Give each student an assignment to pick one country and research its culture including what is given in this Lesson. Let them make a PowerPoint presentation with pictures and YouTube clips.

3



UNDERSTANDING A HOTEL

9 Types of Lodgings

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To understand the meaning of a hotel and how they are categorised so as to understand their uniqueness when working for them.

INTRODUCTION

British Law defines a ‘Hotel’ or ‘Inn’ as ‘a place where a bona fide traveller can receive food and shelter, provided s/he is in a position to pay for it and is in a fit condition to be received’. Therefore, a hotel must provide food (and beverages) and lodging to travellers, on payment and has, in turn, the right to refuse admission if the traveller is drunk, disorderly, unkempt or is not in a position to pay for the services.

By this definition a hotel must provide rooms and meals. The provision of beverages is subject to local customs and practices. Therefore, in Europe and America, bars are an important part of hotel facilities while in Islamic countries bars may be considered a taboo on religious grounds. One thing is certain, that the rights of admission are reserved and



Reference: “The World Book” Reference:

“Principles of Grading and Classification of Hotels, Tourism Resorts & Restaurants” by Dr. Jagmohan Negi.

“Managing Front Office Operations” by Michael L. Kasavan and Richard M. Brooks

many hotels display that sign prominently at their doorways or reception. A hotel can refuse a guest accommodation if s/he is not in a fit and orderly state. With this tradition, hotels have always been a place where visitors and guests always dress their best. The guest has to also show financial credibility. Earlier inns and hotels insisted on advance payment before guests were allocated the room. The credit card has made the issue of financial credibility easier. Surprisingly hotels do not accept personal cheques as a credible instrument of payment. Hotels worldwide have credit limits as per hotel policy. Once those limits are reached, it is mandatory for the guest to clear the limit reached. A hotel, in other words, has the full right to expel a guest for valid reasons of doubt.

Hotel Categories

With the evolution of hotels and its proliferation around the world it is impossible to categorise them under one term. It is, therefore, made easier for readers to classify them as given under:

- Location
- Number of Rooms
- Ownership
- Pricing Plan
- Type of Clientele
- Length of Guest Stay
- Facilities Offered

Let us examine each in detail.

Location

Hotels are classified by their location as follows:

- Downtown
- Suburban
- Resort
- Airport
- Motel
- Camps

Downtown hotels are located at the centre of the city in busy commercial and shopping districts. Everyone likes to stay downtown within easy reach of the government and private offices, shopping malls and entertainment centre. However, since the price of land is expensive in downtown areas, the hotels charge high room rates to enable the

investor to recover his investment. Investors, therefore, believe in constructing quality hotels to cater to a moneyed clientele, usually the business and corporate community. Upmarket tourists who travel in groups may also find downtown hotels affordable. Usually downtown hotels will cater to guests on short visits to a maximum of one week stay. Premium brands of hotel chains and independent hotels of a very high quality are found in downtown locations. Naturally these hotels will also boast of leading restaurants, bars and night clubs. Since downtown hotels are close to shopping centres, food and entertainment districts, they may restrict their facilities to only bars and an all-purpose coffee shop, off the lobby. Guests can avail of a range of dining restaurants at a walking distance from the hotel. Nowadays, downtown hotels have purpose built shopping malls with food courts and cineplex's along with their hotel for the benefit of their guests. Many have also added residential apartments and commercial office buildings to create a captive community within their precincts. Because of the paucity of space, downtown hotels are often tower blocks and skyscrapers, building upwards to create space and business opportunities.



Suburban hotels are located on the outskirts of a city where land is cheaper than downtown locations. Suburban hotels will be sprawling constructions with ample parking spaces. They attract clientele that are cost conscious, though not necessarily



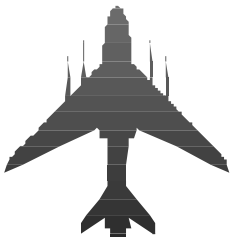
budget travellers. Such hotels promote their facilities for training programmes, conferences and seminars. Participants like to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city and find peace in learning opportunities. Suburban hotels have become quite lucrative to its investors as cities are growing outwards making suburbs self-contained mini cities. A suburban hotel soon finds itself at the centre of townships that grow on the outskirts of the city. Quick and efficient local transportation has made travel to the city centre and back, easy and convenient. With outward growth, many residential townships have developed to make these hotels the centre of social activity. Encouraged with these developments, investors

have been able to create communities with shopping malls, cineplex's, residential apartments and office blocks. Travel agents have found suburban hotels offer better room rates and facilities for groups. Suburban hotels, therefore, become ideal group hotels handling volume traffic. We all know that airports are mostly located out of the city for safety reasons. Many suburban hotels close to the airport also capture the airline crew, passenger layover and transit stay.

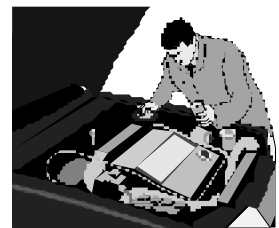
Resort properties are located in natural and man-made sites. Resort hotels will be found at hill stations, seaside resorts, ski resorts, canyons, waterfalls, etc. Niagara Falls, St Moritz Ski Resort, Miami Beach Resort, Safari Parks and the Grand Canyon are some good examples of resorts around natural resources. Disney Land, Lego Land, Universal Studios in Hollywood and Dam Reservoirs are good examples of man-made marvels. Historical monuments like the Taj Mahal in India, Pyramids of Egypt, etc., are other sites for resorts. A resort hotel will, therefore, cater specifically to the visitors of those sites. Many of these resorts are highly seasonal depending upon climates and holidays to get their clientele. Resort properties have to make most of those times and charge well. They would give heavy off-season discounts to the budget conscious. Such properties would be geared towards families and couples. They would have possibly one all-purpose dining room and have meals that depend on local seasonal vegetables.



Airport Hotels, as the name suggests, are located within the precincts of an airport. They cater mostly to transient airline passengers who may be catching another flight to complete their journey. Such guests need only a room to sleep before the next flight. They cater to those passengers with cancelled flights or delayed flights. Rather than wait at the airport, airlines provide hotel facilities. Transient airline crews too find the airport hotel convenient between flights. The airport hotels have a 24-hour coffee shop for quick meals. It is unlikely that these hotels will have gourmet restaurants and entertainment. They would, however, have large coffee shops to accommodate a full flight of transient passengers and crew. Airport hotels may provide an all-purpose drug store and a few emporiums with local arts and crafts for passengers who really do not have time for city shopping. Airport hotels must have reliable wake-call services and perhaps a cybercafé. Airport hotels will be linked to airport air traffic schedules for passengers to check their flight arrival and departure timings. A shuttle coach service is essential to the airport and left luggage facilities for those who have a little more time to visit the city. Airport hotels are simple in structure—possibly two floors and have the least frills.

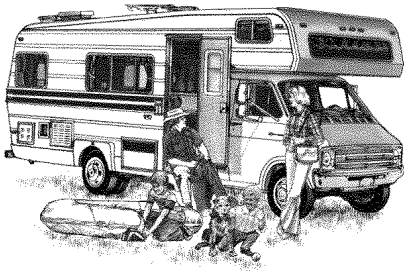


Motels are located on principle highways and road junctions. It is a lodging facility with 15–100 rooms for the automobile traveller. Motels have independent entrances to their rooms which guests have access to, after they have registered themselves at the reception. Motels are low buildings maybe a story or two. With ample parking spaces, guests can park their cars in front



of their rooms. They do not have the tedium of unloading and reloading their transport with this facility. The rooms are equipped with tea/coffee stations, a microwave oven to heat their own food and a mini-fridge. The motel may or may not have a diner and a bar at the most. They may supplement eating facilities with food and beverage dispensers at convenient spots on the floor. Earlier motels provided garage facilities for car servicing and handling breakdowns. This is not always possible these days. Rooms are simple and clean with hot and cold shower or bath facilities. Guests have an overnight stay at the most.

Camps are located on trekking routes. Automobile travel has revolutionised the way people trek. Families hire caravans which are mobile homes and move from camp-to-camp equipped to handle such travel. At each camp the trekkers could take interior



routes by foot. The camps have large parking lots where caravans are parked. Each lot has a water hydrant connection and electricity plug-in point for the caravans to be serviced. The camp will have common toilet and bath facilities with hot and cold water and an all-purpose diner. Guests would sleep in their own caravans. The earlier camps had plots to pitch tents with common toilet and bath facilities. Food was cooked around a campfire and people trekked on foot. Other variations are the forest lodges in

remote locations that are fully equipped for self cooking, bed linen and water supply, though not necessarily hot water. Payment for the use of the lodge is done at the nearest village office. Some lodges may have a caretaker from the local village to meet the needs of the guests.

Number of Rooms

Hotels may be classified by the number of rooms they have:

- 25 and less small
- 26–100 medium
- 101–300 large
- 300–1,000 very large
- Above 1,000 mega

The size of property depends on the financial strength of the investor. Most motels, lodges, bed and breakfast establishments, etc., come under the small category where individual families and entrepreneurs supplement the tourism effort of the country.

More ambitious individual entrepreneurs may establish medium-sized properties as a regular business which must give the investor a return on investment. These properties would still be closely held by families to keep total control on operations and expenditures. The large properties enter a different league where large investments are provided by finances other than the entrepreneurs own contribution but also by banks, financial institutions and joint ventures. Mega properties have to be financed by public limited companies to raise finance of large proportions.

Ownership

There are different types of organisations based on their ownership:

- Sole Proprietor
- Partnerships
- Public Limited Companies (PLC)
- Private Limited Companies

The Sole Proprietor is an individual business who uses his or her own resources to set-up the business. S/he will only limit the size of operations to the extent of his or her financial limits. Funds come from personal wealth in terms of cash and fixed assets, like land, building and jewellery, against which the proprietor gets additional loans from the banks. The funds must cover the cost of land, building, interiors, facilities and operational costs. Naturally the sole proprietor will have small-to-medium sized properties to be able to personally manage. The sole proprietor is the main architect and promoter of the business based on his or her knowledge and skill. Upon his death, the business ceases to exist unless there is a family heir competent enough to take over the reins.

Partnerships are another method of raising funds. Partnerships help in aspiring for medium to large hotels. “A partnership is the relation that subsists between persons carrying on a business in common, with a view of profit” (1890 Partnership Act of the UK). Partners are limited to 20 persons only. Partnerships can be Limited Companies or Unlimited Companies. In Limited Companies, the shareholders are liable for debts only to the extent of their investment. In Unlimited Companies the shareholders are liable for all debts of the company.

Public Limited Companies (PLC) are those companies that finance mega hotels of 1,000 rooms and above. Las Vegas is an example of mega projects where rooms go as high as 6,000 in number. In fact, Las Vegas boasts of seven of the largest hotels in the world. Obviously no one entrepreneur can finance such a project and will have to raise funds by having several shareholders interested in the project.

Pricing Plans

Pricing Plans are another way to classify hotels. The various pricing plans as shown below are discussed in detail in Lesson 12 entitled “Front Office Organisation”.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • European Plan | Room charges only |
| • American Plan | Room + all meals |
| • Modified American Plan | Room + Breakfast
+ Lunch or Dinner |
| • Continental Plan | Room + Continental Breakfast |
| • Bed and Breakfast | Room + English Breakfast |

Downtown hotels prefer offering the **European Plan** to short stay guests who want the flexibility of eating out, as downtown hotels are close to business, shopping and entertainment districts which offer ample dining options to guests. The **American Plan** is often found at resorts where vacationers prefer to have all meal options so that they can concentrate on holidaying and relaxing. We may have this plan at suburban hotels that gear themselves for training programmes, seminars and conferences. Participants may prefer to concentrate on their study than be worried about where to get the next meal. The **Modified American Plan** is found in hotels that cater to tour groups who like to start the day with a hearty breakfast before proceeding to their sightseeing tours only to return in the evening for a warm dinner. The **Continental Plan** is found in Europe mostly, or for European travellers visiting other countries, who are used to continental breakfasts. **Bed and Breakfast** meal option is offered by sole proprietors running small lodging places or city hotels where guests prefer the flexibility of eating out with friends and office colleagues.

Type of Clientele

Type of clientele is another way to classify hotels. This classification enables the hotel to specialise for a market segment, as against those that are geared for multi-guest profiles. These segments are:

- Business Hotel
- Group Hotel
- Family Hotel
- Convention Hotel
- Youth Hostels

Business Hotels specialise in providing facilities and amenities to the business and corporate traveller. Such facilities will include business centres that provide temporary offices, meeting rooms, secretarial services and modern telecommunication facilities including the Internet. The business centres are equipped with modern office automation. A business lounge allows executives to have private meals and will have the latest newspapers and perhaps a library. The rooms of business hotels will be equipped with high-speed Internet facilities, direct dial telecommunication link-up globally, ergonomic writing desks and chairs, mini bar, safety lockers, multi-channel television, etc. Services could include limousine service to and from the airport, concierge service, same day laundry service, health club, access to golf courses, etc.



Group Hotels are geared for volume traffic at any given time. Their lobbies are large to welcome groups; have separate registration counters; lobby staff that are equipped to handle volume baggage; separate baggage elevators; rooms that are all twin-bedded; large dining halls to seat several groups at a time; and briefing rooms for tour groups. They may not have all the frills in the rooms of a business hotel because of facility misuse. The hotel will have facilities for the handicapped, medical services for the aged and infant care.

Family Hotels are found mostly at resorts geared specifically for families. Rooms will be interconnected with perhaps a kitchenette and basic cooking facilities. There would be entertainment lounges equipped with television, indoor games and children play area. Many would have outdoor children parks, jogging paths and independent barbeque areas.

Convention Hotels would firstly have plenary halls (to seat all participants), smaller meeting rooms, administration offices, large registration areas and large dining halls to feed up to 2,000 people. The rooms would be mostly twin-bedded with modern telecommunication systems, mini-bars, safety lockers, etc. The hotels will have shuttle coach services from the hotel to the airport and the city centre to transport delegates.

Youth Hostels cater to the travelling youth. The hostels will have dormitory style accommodation and maybe some single rooms for the discerning. Hostels will have common toilets and shower areas, large dining halls with simple food, gymnasium, games courts and fields. They may be equipped with an assembly hall with a stage for youth gatherings and entertainment. The YMCA and YWCA hostels are the best example of this type.



Length of Stay

The length of stay is another classification where hotels specially gear themselves to short-term and long-term stay of guests and this is as follows:

- Transient Hotel
- Residential Hotel
- Suite Hotels
- Semi-residential
- Furnished Apartments

Transient Hotels are those where guests stay for short duration—stays to a maximum of a week. Downtown hotels, motels and airport hotels are good examples of transient hotels. Guests need a comfortable room with possibly in-room tea/coffee facilities.

Residential Hotels are those that are equipped for longer stay. Hotel Apartments are a good example of this and are found in many community hotel complexes. The rooms will be suites consisting of two rooms—a living area and a bedroom. The suites are fitted with kitchenettes for personal cooking. The rooms are cleaned by an outsourced housekeeping service. The complex will have security service with pass keys to enter the building at night. Guests may lease this accommodation for anything up to a year. These hotels are convenient for long tenure



business executives who do not want the hassle of running a home. These are ideal in university campus locations for mature students who have families.

Suite Hotels are similar to residential hotels with shorter stay to perhaps six months or less. It is ideal for families who need a temporary accommodation before moving into their permanent abode. Professionals find it convenient to set up travelling offices in their living area without intruding into the bedroom. They would have all the facilities and amenities of the residential hotel except that they may have a coffee shop, bar and perhaps one more specialty restaurant. Most lodging investors nowadays are opting for Suite Hotels.

Furnished Apartments are another variation of extended stay properties. The rooms are studio with open fully-equipped kitchens. Such hotels will have reception counters, lobbies for meeting visitors, outsourced housekeeping services and a swimming pool and gymnasium. They may have laundromats in the basement. They will not have eating facilities except for some vending machines. Furnished apartments would have close



circuit television for security. A receptionist acts as a caretaker, security guard, cleaner of public areas and guest relations person who rooms guests. The apartments would have a plumber and electrician on full time role. Between them, they operate all the utility services including water supplies, central air conditioning, central heating, and swimming pool maintenance. These apartments are ideal for single professionals who do not want the hassle of running a home.

Facilities Offered

The facilities offered by hotels are another way to classify them.

- Star rating
- Deluxe Hotels
- Palace Hotels
- Convention Hotels
- Conference Hotels
- Casino Hotels
- Business Hotels
- Sports Hostels
- Budget Hotels
- Suite Hotels
- Bed and Breakfast

Star Rating is one of the most definitive standards which guide travellers as to what to expect. The star ratings are organised by the State Tourism Department who puts together a team of representatives from the government, hospitality educationists, travel agents, airlines and the hotel industry. They are guided by a checklist of minimum requirements to achieve a certain star rating. The owner of the property will inform the tourism department of the star rating they aspire and will set a date for the inspection. Star Ratings range from one-to-five star though there are even six and seven stars which are outside the purview of this lesson as these properties are rare. A five-star rating, for instance, will specify that rooms are of certain minimum dimensions with attached bathrooms supplying hot and cold water. The bathrooms must have bathtubs. A five-star hotel will have a shopping arcade with a bank, post office, travel agency, etc. They must have a coffee shop and other dining options. It is necessary for them to have a swimming pool, room service, etc. From those high standards of investment, the hotel rating reduces as hotels provide lesser facilities. Hotels are required to display their star rating at the main portal of the hotel so that guest can know what standard to expect.

Deluxe Hotels would normally have a minimum five-star rating. These hotels are rated as deluxe as they would have décor and appointments of luxury. They would have every conceivable comfort built into the guest experience. Take Burj-al-Arab in Dubai where accommodations are suites that overlook the Persian Gulf. The rooms are fitted with remote control window shades, gold plated taps, etc. Guests are transported to the hotel from the airport by the hotel helicopter that lands on a helipad on the hotel rooftop. It has a restaurant under the sea as well as one at the rooftop that gives breathtaking aerial views. Deluxe hotels ooze opulence and are available only to those moneyed people who can afford the stay. Some deluxe business hotels provide individual butlers and specialised cuisines. Many older stand-alone hotels like the Grosvner House, The Claridges, etc., set standards of luxury. Many palaces, mansions and villas of the royalty of yore converted their lodgings into hotels which really cannot be given a star rating for their uniqueness and may be certainly classified as deluxe.

Palace Hotels are really an Indian concept where ancient Indian maharajas converted their palaces into hotels after they were stripped off their princely privileges. The palaces transport guests to old heritage, architecture and priceless appointments. The Umaid Bhavan Palace in Jodhpur, for example, boasts of a crystal fountain in the lobby and an array of vintage cars in the private garage complex. The beds in which the guests sleep in are where actual royalty once slept. Of course, these palaces have been equipped with modern conveniences such as television, mini-fridges, air-conditioning and telephone connections though intruding into the original uniqueness of the property. Guests are exposed to rare art and artifacts that are not found anywhere else in the world. A similar concept may be found in Europe where manor houses of the royalty are converted into luxury accommodation.



Convention Hotels are specially designed for such purposes. They would have a plenary hall to seat 2,000 people, breakout meeting rooms for smaller groups, administrative offices providing all the secretarial, office automation facilities, ample registration lobbies and large dining halls. The plenary hall and meeting rooms have state-of-the-art projection and public communications systems required for conventions. Most of the rooms will be twin-bedded to use as single and twin rooms for delegates.

Conference Hotels would have similar facilities as convention hotels but scaled down in size. Many hotels may have conference centres attached to their main hotel to have the flexibility for business, tourist and conference business. The conference annexes will have independent entrances and large parking lots. Some conference hotels may also include auditoriums that are leased out for public shows.

Casino Hotels serve only one purpose—to serve guests who want to gamble. Las Vegas in Nevada, USA is the best example of the location of casino hotels each more dramatic than the other. The essential features of casino hotels are gaming halls sometimes the size of a football field with all possible gambling games including banks of slot machines, blackjack tables, roulettes tables, etc. Each hotel outdoes each other



in terms of features and entertainment. New York, New York boasts of a lobby that represents a New York street with street cafes, steam from sewers, street lamps leading to the gambling floor; MGM boasts of a sunken bar on the style of the Brazilian rainforest. Treasure Island has a sound and light show of a pirate ship being sunk while Bellagios has dancing fountains that are a unique sight. Caesar's Palace has all staff dressed in Roman togas and boasts of amphitheatres where famous modern day stars perform. The bar is a Roman galleon built-in the lobby itself. With such funds casinos hotels are truly deluxe with the best facilities to meet practically every guest need. Most rooms are large and fitted with twin-queen-sized beds with bathrooms with separate bathing, shower and toilet areas. A bathroom would perhaps be the size of a guest room in a smaller property!

Business Hotels are specifically built-in structure and facilities to cater to the business and corporate clients. This type of hotels has been explained in detail earlier in the lesson.

Sports Hostels and Hotels may go back to the time of the Olympic Games in 776 BC at the height of the Greek empire. The games started in Olympia about 18 kilometres from Pirgos, Greece. While Olympia was covered by earthquakes and floods, later excavations showed that the complex had a wrestling and boxing school, gymnasium and dormitories for athletes to stay. Olympic Games were held every four years which later split into Winter Olympics (in 1994) and Summer Olympics. The holding of the Olympics is really a State matter that funds complex games villages that carefully segregates national teams with independent gymnasiums, practice fields and large dining halls to cater to different cuisines. The games villages will have special security, medical rooms, dope-testing facilities including a number of administrative features. Rooms are dormitories with common bathrooms for athletes and individual rooms for officials. Nowadays, sport has become an industry that earns mega bucks from television rights, sponsorships and large gate money. Games like soccer, basketball, cricket, rugby, tennis, football, etc., have become multi-million dollar industries pulling huge crowds. Events like World Cups and championships have made investment into these games a lucrative proposition. Purpose built sports hostels and hotels are built at popular stadiums to accommodate athletes and spectators of the sport. Essential

features of these accommodations are gymnasiums, health clubs, swimming pools, large dining halls, facilities such as doctors specialised in sports medicine, special security to protect rampaging fans reaching their sports idols, dieticians for special diets for sportsmen and sportswomen, trainers, etc.

Budget Hotels are relatively a new concept that makes travel inexpensive in a world that is getting more and more costly. Budget hotels strip rooms and services to the bare minimum and use automation to fulfil many guest needs. A room would have bunker beds with perhaps a sink in the room for washing purposes. There would be common toilets. A mini-television will be mounted on the wall to save space. Budget hotels will have dispensers for hot and cold foods, ice, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, toiletries, etc., located at common areas on the floors or lobbies. Many motels have built these facilities into their way of operations.

Suite Hotels cater to those who need more room. Such facilities are found in deluxe properties or family resort hotels. They would have all the other facilities of a modern hotel. Suite hotels have been discussed in detail earlier.

Bed and Breakfast establishments are usually small family businesses. A family may have an extra set of rooms in their home that they let out to tourists. This is a typical concept from Europe which perhaps earlier did not have well-developed hotel facilities. Ireland and Scotland, for example, supplement hotel accommodation in the huge tourist season with bed and breakfast properties. The family of the establishment takes the responsibility of providing comfortable rooms much on the homestyle with their dining rooms serving as the breakfast venue. Breakfast would be sumptuous English Breakfasts with a full array of cereals, meats, breads, and tea and coffee. These breakfasts are legendary to many travellers who could sustain a full day till the evening with this meal.



Time-Share Hotels are a relatively new concept of ownership of holiday rooms or suites. Each room or suite is owned by several people who will schedule their visit well in advance with the management office to ensure that the room or suite is available. Time-share properties are located at dream sites normally at beaches, ski slopes, hill resorts, waterfalls, spas, etc. People book time for a week to a fortnight. Should they not be free to avail the room for any reason, they can rent their time slot to another person. Sometimes the management company can help in this process. One great advantage is that time-share owners can become



members of international time-share properties and exchange their time with another time-share owner at another location. Time-share properties have fully furnished rooms with kitchenettes. They may have a dining hall with a bar. They outsource recreation expertise such as guides, boatmen, ski instructors, paragliding specialists, etc.

Condominiums (or Condos) are another type of accommodation. Here the owner leases out a unit which is a room or apartment in a complex of several other such accommodations. The owner furnishes it to his/her taste and informs the management the times s/he will occupy the apartment. S/he permits the management to rent out the apartment at other times and the rent goes to the owner. Condos have restricted entry. Owners have their own password to enter the premises. These passwords are given to lessees of their property. Owners pay a monthly or annual maintenance fee that covers cleaning of common areas; central air conditioning/heating maintenance; landscaping and gardening; water supply; security and garbage disposal. Condo management which is appointed by the owner's association may lease space to a grocery store in the basement to provide the basic needs to the residents of condos.



OTHER LODGING INNOVATIONS

Caravans are mobile homes that families take across the country. Caravans are fitted with sleeping, dining, lounge and bathroom facilities. They have tanks with fresh water and septic tanks for refuse. Some caravans have kitchenettes with basic heating facilities. As discussed before, caravans are moored at camping sites constructed for just this purpose.



Rotels are double-decker buses where passengers sit on ergo-planned seats on the ground floor and sleep on the second. Such buses are used for long cross country tours covering fifteen days or more. The second floor has tiered berths fitted with bed-side lamps, toilet shelf, and privacy curtains. Buses are fitted with bathrooms much like that found in an aeroplane and kitchens with a chef to cook their foods. The buses are fitted with heating and/or air-conditioning facility. Buses stop at vantage points en route for meals and hotel accommodation for a hot bath. The greatest benefit of such travel is that guests



do not have the hassle of packing and unpacking. They are provided with cupboards on board. Rotels were introduced by the Conti Hotel Bus Company of Germany.

Matels are fully-automated hotels which require minimum human contact. A guest books online and gets an immediate confirmation. On arrival he punches in his reservation number and name in a machine which initiates a dialogue with a virtual receptionist who registers the guest through a close circuit TV and issues a key to the room through a slot machine. Outsourced cleaning crews come during the day to clean the room, and make it fresh and impeccably clean. This concept was started in Japan and is likely to be the future of hotels.

Sanataria are health resorts found at spas and other treatment centres. The rooms are specifically equipped for therapy including sauna, Turkish bath and Jacuzzi. Meals are personalised diet regimes for each guest. These hotels have proper dieticians, doctors and medical arrangements. This is ideal for those recouping from surgeries and illnesses. It is also a place for attaining physical fitness. ('Sanitaria' must be distinguished from 'Sanitoria' which are hospitals for long-term illnesses like tuberculosis.)



Palace on Wheels is a unique railway journey recreating the journeys of the maharajas of India. It is a tour from New Delhi, India to the historic sights in Rajasthan including forts, palaces and cultural attractions. The guests are fed traditional Indian food of royalty and served by liveried waiting staff.



Government Houses are a composite name for *Dak Bungalows*, Circuit Houses, PWD Houses and Forest Lodges which were the legacy of the British Raj in India. These were during the administrative tours. *Dak Bungalows* were for the postal couriers to rest while circuit houses were for the higher ranked officials. Forest lodges were built for those involved in forestry and building the winter capitals of the Raj. The PWD Houses were for those officials involved in road building and laying electricity power lines. These establishments have caretakers drawn from local villages who are multi-skilled to cook, clean and provide security of the establishment. They are trained to give the standards required by the officials and are very capable. These establishments are still available to government personnel and authorised public.

Floating Hotels are found on passenger ships. Some are permanently docked at a port while others are cruise liners taking passengers on a week long trip around famed locations connected with water. The ships are five-star hotels with every conceivable

luxury including several restaurants with multi-cuisine, suites, ball rooms, shopping arcades, etc. Guests are served by well-trained and talented personnel. A wonderful variation of this concept is the houseboat of Kashmir. Houseboats are moored on the banks of the lakes and fitted with telephone connections, modern sanitation in bathrooms and the most luxurious appointments and décor. The roof acts as the sun deck while the boat within has a living room, a dining room and several bedrooms. The houseboat is staffed by the owner and his family, who cook, clean and does small errands. *Shikaras* are smaller boats that sidle along the boat for transportation around the lake. Hawkers come alongside the houseboats in their *shikaras*, to sell their wares. Houseboats are fitted to suit all budgets from the economical to the ultra luxurious.



Hospices have been traditional lodgings since 1065 in Europe for the terminally-ill Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem during the Crusades. The first hospices were established by the Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem. Hospice is a philosophy of care for terminally-ill patients who show physical, emotional, spiritual or social symptoms. The concept of hospice has been evolving since the eleventh century and became places of hospitality for the sick, wounded, or dying, as well as those for travellers and pilgrims. The modern concept of hospice includes old-age homes, retirement homes, hospitals nursing homes, or shelters for those who want to go on a final pilgrimage. Each religion has its religious support groups running on charity. For example, the Hokke Club of Japan build specially designed and serviced facilities for the Buddhist pilgrims. They provide meditation centres to monks for prayers. Followers of Islam provide *madrassas* while Hindus have their *dharmshalas* for the pilgrims of their faith.



SEGMENTATION

A relatively new concept employed by big chains is that they segment their properties into several subcategories to capture and serve a larger market. For example, Marriot Hotels and Resorts have several brands of properties: JW Marriot, Marriott Marquis, Marriot Hotels, Marriot Inns, Courtyard by Marriott and Fairfield Inn by Marriot.

Even the residential apartments have been further sub-branded as the Residence Inn by Marriott, Towne-Place Suites by Marriott and Spring Hill Suites by Marriott. Marriott also owns the Ritz-Carlton and Renaissance brands. Each brand is directed to a specific market segment.

Such a strategy serves the following purposes:

1. To serve several distinct market segments;
2. To enter world locations that may or may not support superior hotels;
3. To capture properties worldwide based on emerging opportunities and fund flows;
4. To have price ranges to suit various guest budgets;
5. To have varying amenities and facilities without compromising on basic standards and image of the chain;
6. Have all brands benefit from the central reservation system of the hotel chain.



Key Terms

Airport Hotel	hotel located within the precincts of an airport
American Plan	pricing plan with room plus all meals
Camps	temporary lodging facilities for outdoor stay
Caravans	mobile homes
Condominium	owner leased lodging units in a complex
Continental Plan	pricing plan with room plus Continental breakfast
Downtown Hotel	hotel located at the centre of a city
European Plan	pricing plan with room charges only
Modified American Plan	plan with room, breakfast, lunch or dinner
Motel	hotel on the highway
Resort Hotel	hotel meant for leisure and relaxation
Residential Hotel	hotel for long stay
Rotels	buses with sleeping facility
Segmentation	splitting a market into demographic groups
Suburban Hotel	hotel located on the outskirts of a city
Transient Hotel	hotel for short stay



Review Questions

Multiple Choices:

1. A European Plan is best suited to which of the following types of hotel?
 - (a) Family Hotel
 - (b) Business Hotel
 - (c) Group Hotel
2. A shuttle service to the airport is a typical feature of which type of hotel?
 - (a) Airport Hotel
 - (b) Resort Hotel
 - (c) Casino Hotel
3. A Modified American Plan is best suited for?
 - (a) Resort Hotel
 - (b) Business Hotel
 - (c) Group Hotel
4. Where will you best find brunch service?
 - (a) Airport Hotel
 - (b) Convention Hotel
 - (c) Resort Hotel
5. What are properties that are owned for a specified period called?
 - (a) Youth Hostels
 - (b) Time-Share
 - (c) Condominiums
6. What is a typical feature of a business hotel?
 - (a) Business Centre
 - (b) Indoor entertainment lounge
 - (c) Coffee Shop
7. Where will you find a plenary hall?
 - (a) Motels
 - (b) Youth Centre
 - (c) Convention Hotel

8. A hotel with minimal services is called _____.
 - (a) Motel
 - (b) Budget Hotel
 - (c) Time-share
9. Which would be considered as mobile lodging?
 - (a) Rotels
 - (b) Caravans
 - (c) Cruise Liners
 - (d) All the above
10. Where will a business hotel be found?
 - (a) Suburbs
 - (b) Spa
 - (c) Downtown

Fill in the Blanks

1. A business lounge will be found in a _____ hotel.
2. A property that has self-sufficient units with kitchenettes is called _____.
3. A property which provides full ownership of units is called a _____.
4. Lodging facilities attached to sports arenas are called _____.
5. We can find unique artifacts and accommodations in _____ hotels.
6. Lodgings where one finds a laundromat is called _____.
7. A property equipped with the state-of-art audio-visual aids will be found in _____.
8. A strategy that serves different markets is called _____.
9. A facility that has arrangements for caravans is called a _____.
10. Online flight schedules may be found in _____ hotels.

10

Hotel Organisation

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the reader understand how a hotel and its departments is structured and organised, with a view to establishing the relationship of a front office with the rest of the hotel.

INTRODUCTION

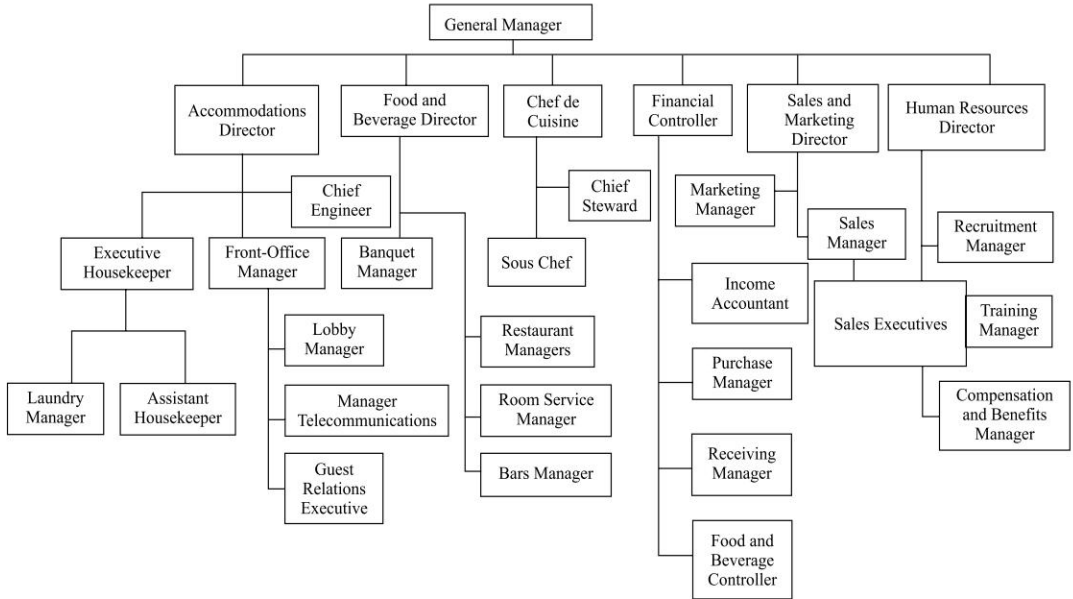
The structure of an organisation is a relationship of people in various departments with each other, so as to establish communication in keeping with levels of authority. The structure is represented graphically in an organisation chart. The structure of a hotel is based on its size and range of services it offers. The services depend on economic viability of the property and the market segment/s it wishes to attract. To make it convenient to understand, let us categorise properties simply into large and small and see the structures they have.

STRUCTURE OF A HOTEL

Large Independent Hotel Structure

Large hotel operations require more people to operate it compared to smaller ones. The amount and extent of specialisations also increase and therefore has an elaborate structure. The structure mentioned as under is a representative one and is modified according to the policies of the enterprise.

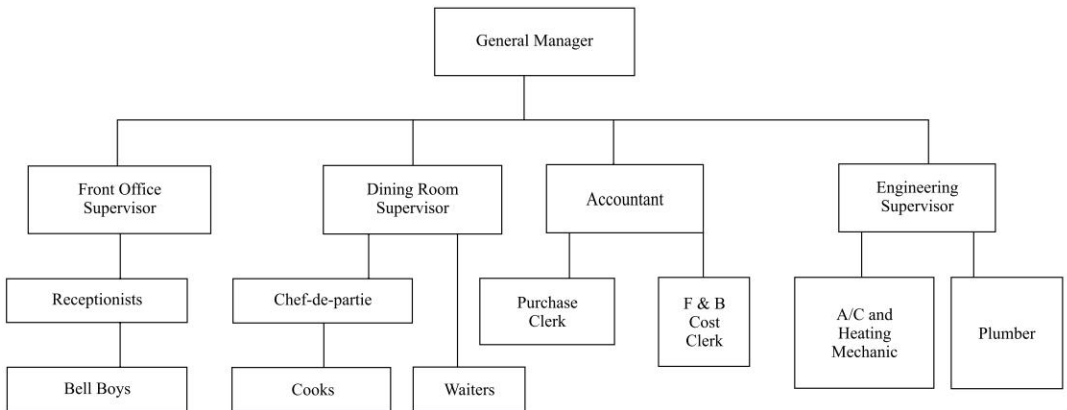
Management Organisation Structure of a Large Hotel



Small Hotel Structure

Smaller hotels would club many functions, represented earlier, done by fewer people with multiple skills. The organisation structure below shows how a structure is developed to fit limited payroll budgets.

Organisation Structure of a Small Hotel



A smaller structure adapts its roles as follows:

1. The General Manager takes on the roles of human resources manager and sales manager in addition to the operations responsibilities.
2. The Front Office Supervisor oversees the front desk operations as well as lobby activities.
3. The receptionist does the reservation, reception, information, telephone and cashier functions.
4. The Dining Room Supervisor will oversee possibly only a dining room (or coffee shop) that serves all meal times and the kitchen operations. It is possible that the dining room has a dispensing bar to provide drinks eliminating the need for a formal bar.
5. The Accountant takes over the income and payable responsibilities in addition to producing the statutory requirements such as Profit and Loss statements and Balance Sheets. He is assisted by the Purchase Clerk who doubles the receiving and store function. Though this is strictly not ideal in terms of food and beverage control, the operations is small enough for direct supervision and control of the General Manager.
6. The Food and Beverage Cost Clerk will do all the costing functions.
7. The Engineering Supervisor is multiskilled to trouble shoot engineering problems. However, any operation requires specialists like airconditioning and heating mechanics and plumbers. Major maintenance works are outsourced to the original suppliers of products like the elevators, fire systems, diesel generators, etc.
8. Most additional services would be outsourced, such as laundry, horticulture, security, housekeeping, etc.

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS

A hotel has two major revenue producing departments:

Accommodations which is responsible for the letting of rooms (sales) along with the support departments such as housekeeping, laundry, telecommunications, etc., required to make them saleable, and

Food and Beverage which is responsible for the sale of food and beverage supported by service departments such as kitchens, stewarding, restaurants, room service and banquets. In addition, there are staff departments like Finance, Human Resources, Sales and Marketing, and Information Technology. Let's look at each in detail:

Accommodations

Front Office

The front office is the central point with the following responsibilities:

1. Make room reservations
2. Register guests into the hotel
3. Provide information to guests during their stay
4. Maintain guest master bills
5. Coordinate guest services
6. Ensure room revenues are met as per budget



The Front Office structure is discussed in detail in Lesson 12 but for immediate reference given as under are thumbnail descriptions of the role of each person in the front office operation.

Front Office Manager: Responsible for managing the front office, lobby and transport activities. S/he translates company policies and procedures into the department.

Front Office Supervisor: Responsible for a shift as the front office operates for 24 hours. There are, therefore, three shifts.

Registration Assistant: Is the person who registers guests into the hotel and allots rooms to them. S/he is generally called the receptionist.

Reservation Assistant: Makes room reservations and controls the supply of rooms for sale.

Front Office Cashier: Maintains the guest folios (bills) and receives payment when the guest checks out.

The Front Office is supported by the uniformed services (details in Lesson 15). The brief responsibilities of uniformed services are:

1. Be the 24-hour managerial representative of the hotel through the Lobby Manager.
2. Provide valet parking services to guests.
3. Welcome guests to the hotel through the doorman.
4. Provide porter services through the bell-desk.
5. Provide left-luggage facilities.
6. Provide external facilitation through the concierge (details in Lesson 19).

7. Distribute newspapers to guest rooms.
8. Provide paging/fax/email services.
9. Provide transportation services to guests and employees.

Housekeeping

This department is responsible for the cleanliness, maintenance and the aesthetic standard of the hotel. The brief responsibilities of housekeeping are:

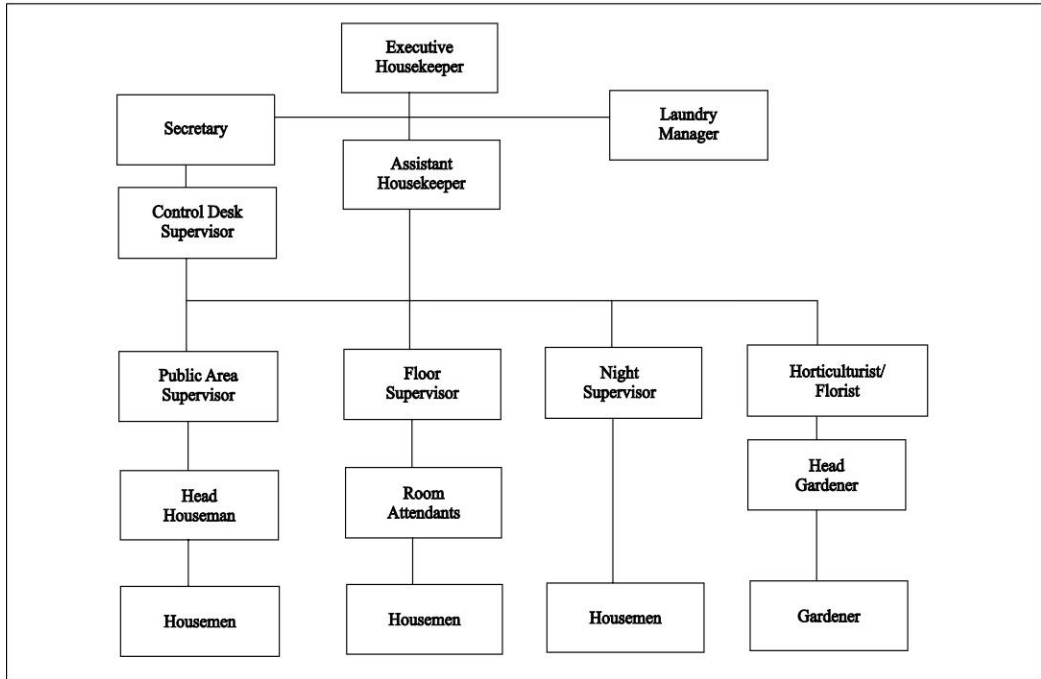
1. Clean and prepare guest rooms for sale.
2. Clean public areas.
3. Provide laundered staff uniforms.
4. Provide fresh room and restaurant linen.
5. Decorate the hotel.
6. Control the lost and found procedures.
7. Manage the in-house laundry.
8. Manage the horticulture and landscaping of the hotel.



These tasks are accomplished by the different sections of the department that is organised as follows:

1. The **housekeeping control desk** which passes information to housekeeping staff working at various parts of the hotel;
2. A **linen and uniform room** that coordinates with the laundry for the supply of clean linen and uniforms;
3. **Horticulture** that tends all landscapes, gardens and nurseries; the flower shop where flowers are procured and arranged for decoration in rooms, lobbies or buffet tables and also sold to customers;
4. The **lost and found section** to deposit misplaced guest belongings;
5. **Guest room cleaning** brigade who clean and maintain all guest rooms for sale;
6. **Public area** brigade who are responsible for the cleaning of the front office, lobby, restaurants and other areas.
7. **Laundry** that washes, dry-cleans, spots and presses guest and hotel uniforms and linen.

Organisation Chart of Housekeeping



Executive Housekeeper: Is the head of housekeeping and is responsible for translating hotel policies, procedures and standards into housekeeping operations. It is often a woman's role and part of the senior-management team.

Assistant Housekeepers: Heads a shift as the housekeeping provides 24-hour service. They supervise Floor Supervisors who are given a set of floors with guest rooms to manage with a team of Room Attendants.

Floor Supervisors: Directs the cleaning of guest rooms on allotted floors.

Room Attendant: Also called Chambermaid, are responsible for the cleaning of allotted guest rooms.

Housemen: They are male cleaning personnel allotted to rooms and public areas to manage heavy cleaning duties.

Linen Room Supervisor: Coordinates the exchange of soiled linen for fresh ones with a team of linen attendants. She works closely with the laundry for the supply of clean linen.

Uniform Room Supervisor: Responsible for keeping uniforms in safe storage conditions. Issues laundered uniforms to hotel staff against soiled ones, with a team of Uniform Room attendants and tailors. She too coordinates closely with laundry.

Public Area Supervisors: Ensures the cleanliness, maintenance and aesthetic upkeep of all public areas like lobbies, restaurants, banquets space, etc., with a team of housemen.

Control Desk Supervisors: They man the housekeeping control desk over three shifts, to ensure communication between the various housekeeping personnel and with other departments. They are the heart of housekeeping operations. They also control the lost and found activity as well as housekeeping stores.

Horticulturist: Responsible for the upkeep of all landscapes, gardens and nurseries. Large hotels will have a separate florist responsible for flower arrangements and the sales of flowers from the flower shop.

Food and Beverage Service

The other major revenue producing department of a hotel is the Food and Beverage Department. Its basic tasks are:

1. To provide food and beverage of international standards to guests.
2. To run restaurants to maximise food and beverage sales.
3. To run a banquet operation to capitalise on volume business.
4. To run an efficient and quick room service providing food and beverage to rooms.
5. To provide outdoor catering services.

These tasks are accomplished through the following facilities:

Restaurants

A restaurant is a commercial establishment committed to the sale of food and beverage. Basically, restaurants provide tables and chairs for customers to eat food from an attached kitchen. The restaurants are equipped with crockery, cutlery, linen and décor which may vary in quality and concept in keeping with the objectives of that establishment. The hotel may have the following ways to run restaurants:

1. Have restaurants that are a licensed parts of hotel operations, whereby the sales of the restaurant contributes to the sales performance of the hotel.
2. Have franchised operations within the hotel premises, whereby the hotel leases space and has no share in the profits of the restaurant operations.

In addition to the basic purpose, restaurants may provide the following facilities:

- Bar
- Entertainment
- Children party facilities
- Home delivery services (by independent restaurants only)
- Take-away services (by independent restaurants only)
- Outdoor catering
- Food festivals
- Gala nights
- Dinner and dance

Types of Restaurants

Restaurants come in various types in a hotel. A front office professional must understand their difference to advise guests at the front desk.

- **Coffee Shop:** A 24-hour casual restaurant usually off the lobby. Most groups and those on the American Plans and Modified American Plans are fed here. The food is pre-plated borrowed from American practice. Coffee shops may have elaborate buffets to cope with volume guests.
- **Specialty Restaurant:** Here the restaurant is geared to a special theme surrounding the cuisine it serves. Examples are Chinese, Indian, Thai, etc. The décor, costume, entertainment and style of service reflects the country of origin.
- **Grill Room or Rotisserie:** A restaurant that specialises itself on grills of meat, fish and poultry. The distinguishing feature is a glass partition between the restaurant and kitchen for guests to actually witness the preparation of their dish.
- **Dining Room:** They are found mostly in small establishments who do not have the budgets to provide multi-dining options. It is open for residents only though some properties open it to the public also. They provide wholesome buffet spreads or *Table d'hote* menus which are complete meals under a single price.
- **Discotheque:** It is a facility principally meant for dancing to recorded music. The discotheque has a dance floor and a bar which supplies finger-picking

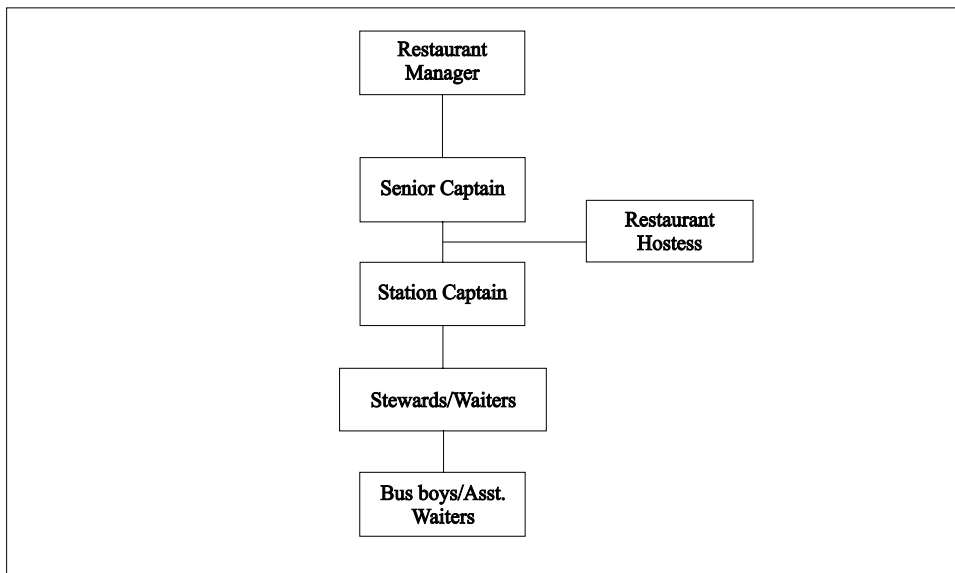
snacks. Discotheques in hotels operate on membership basis and open to resident guests. They often have an entry charge to restrict entry to desirable couples only. Today a discotheque is also called to night club.

- **Night Club:** It is a formal restaurant open at night only for dinner, dance and entertainment. It is expensive and exclusive. A night club has live entertainment. A wonderful variation today is the Lounge Bar which is a formal sofa setting with an informal atmosphere for conversation.
- **Food Bar:** A food bar is an informal place where food is served against a counter for quick meals. People sit on high stools against the counter when eating. Food is pre-plated for easy service and clearance.
- **Bar:** This is a facility that serves alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. The bar will have a counter with high stools set against it for people to have their drinks. They also have sofa seating for small groups. A variation to this is the pub which is an English concept that serves beers of different types from taps connected to beer kegs. Pubs are much more informal and have games such as pool and darts. Some screen popular sports matches for the entertainment of the guests. Bars and pubs may have live duo entertainment.

Organisation of a Restaurant

A restaurant will have a typical structure as follows:

Organisation Chart of a Restaurant



Restaurant Manager is responsible for the sales targets set for the restaurant through quality food and beverage service and customer satisfaction.

Senior Captain is the person who coordinates the food and beverage operations in a restaurant through station captains. S/he stands in for the restaurant managers in his or her absence.

Station Captain is responsible for a set of tables in a restaurant. S/he is supported by a team of waiters who as a team fulfil the standards of food and beverage service at the station.

Waiters are assigned to a station and perform the actual food and beverage service to guests to standards of the organisation.

Busboys are important to do odd jobs in a station which includes replenishing water in water goblets, clearing tables and doing the general bussing services.

Room Service

Room Service is a food service operation that provides food and beverage to guest rooms. Guests may order their food and beverage directly from their rooms to the room service. It has the following features:

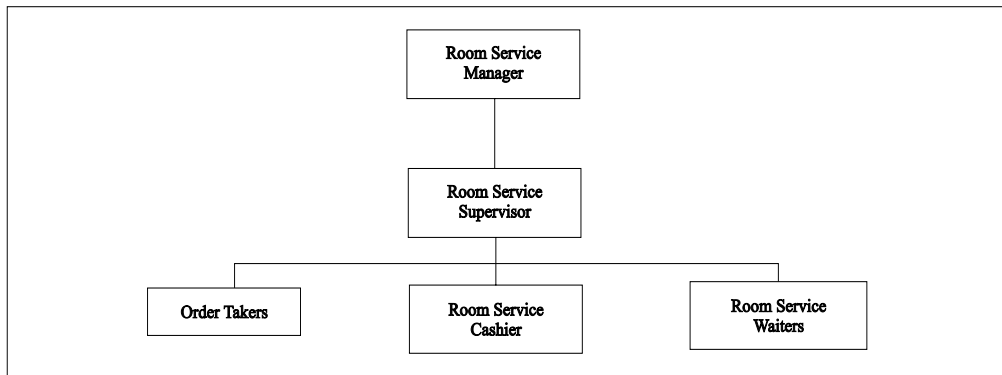
1. Room Service menus are placed in guest rooms to prompt food and beverage orders.
2. Room Service is located in the kitchen close to the service elevators.
3. It has an order-taker's cabin. The order-taker who will pass on the order to the service team.
4. The Room Service has its own dispense bar.
5. The service team coordinates with the kitchen or bar for the preparation of the item.
6. Servers pre-set service trays and trollies that will transport food to the rooms.
7. Servers use service elevators only and not guest elevators.
8. Servers have access to rooms and floors for the supply of food and beverage.
9. Bills are signed by guests. They never give cash.
10. Servers clear the used trays and trollies after a while.
11. Room Service resupplies the mini-bars in rooms.

12. Room Service provides free VIP guest amenities like juices, cookies and cakes.
13. Room Service bills are sent to the front-office cashier who enters the amounts into the guest folio.

Organisation of a Room Service

The room service structure is as follows:

Organisation Chart of Room Service



Room Service Manager: Responsible for translating management policies, procedures and standards to the department. S/he is accountable for all room service operations.

Room Service Supervisor: Responsible for a shift in a 24-hour room service operation of a busy hotel. He would direct the waiters and order takers in the shift to provide efficient service.

Order Takers: Responsible for receiving guest food and beverage orders on the phone and raising the required bill. S/he will also coordinate breakfast door knobs which are pre-ordered breakfast requests made the previous night.

Room Service Waiters: They have the privilege to serve guests in the privacy of their rooms. They are also responsible for clearance of trays and trolleys from rooms once the guest is finished with the meal.

Room Service Cashier: He or she is responsible for accounting of all food and beverage service transactions so as to recover the charges from the guests either in cash or billing the master guest folio at the front office.

Bars

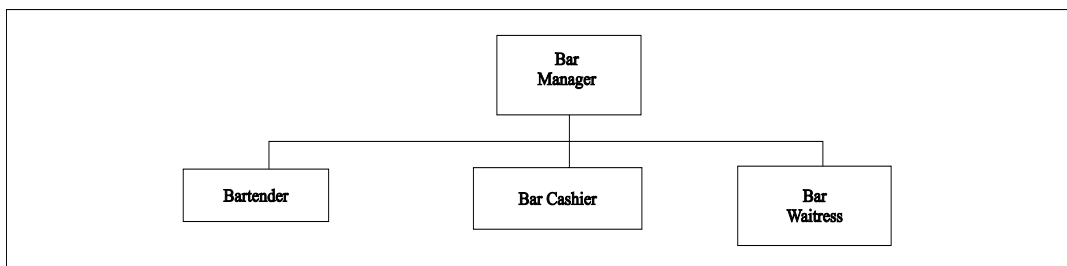
The bar dispenses wines, liquor, spirits, juices, aerated waters, cigars and cigarettes. Bars are of two types: those which are independent in operation and dispense bars which are mobile and set-up where the need is (like in banquets, room service, restaurants). Dispense bars take their stock from the regular bar which has to account for the consumption of alcohol. The features of a bar are:

1. It has to be licensed to serve alcoholic beverages.
2. It has a separate beverage store or cellar which is locked and the liquor issue is controlled.
3. The bar has a bar counter with high stools against it. It has a lounge area as well.
4. Bars have restricted entry to bar personnel only.
5. It is opened to adults only.
6. Profit margins from liquor sales are high.
7. All bar bills are sent to the front-office cashier for safekeeping for later audit. S/he enters the amounts of resident guests who sign their bills in the guest folios.

Bar Organisation

The bar structure is as follows:

Organisation Chart of a Bar



Bar Manager: Translates hotel policies, procedures and standards into the bar operation. He directs the bar operations ensuring efficient guest service.

Bartender: Mans the bar counter and supplies drinks directly to guests seated at the counter and to the waitresses serving tables elsewhere. He is known for his customer relations, showmanship and unique cocktails.

Bar Waitresses: Also known as barmaids or cocktail waitresses, they serve beverage orders at tables. Waitresses bring in a lot of showmanship and charm to bar operations.

Banquets

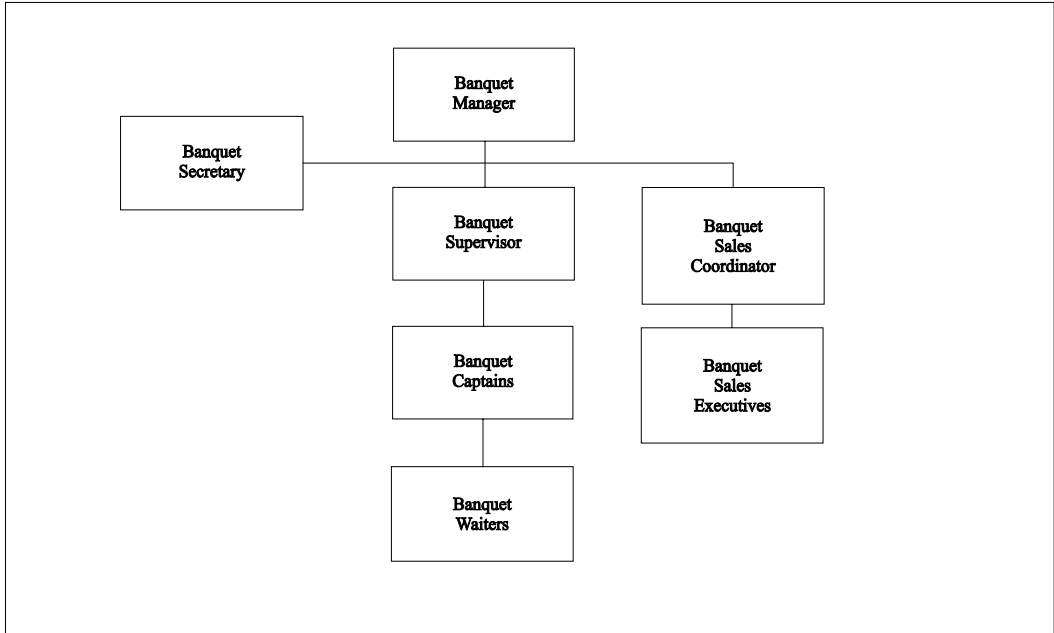
The banquets department is a major revenue area within food and beverages. They cater to various occasions in dedicated function rooms within the hotel premises as well as outdoor sites away from the hotel. They cater to a range of functions—social (weddings, fraternity get-togethers, etc.); professional (meetings, conferences, brand launches, etc.) and state banquets.

The features of the banquets department are:

1. It has an independent entry to facilitate large volumes of people.
2. It usually has its own ample parking spaces to accommodate volumes of vehicles.
3. It has an independent brigade of management and service staff.
4. Large banquets have independent banquet kitchens with specialised staff and equipment for volume cooking.
5. It has independent service entries.
6. Banquets have specialised furniture and equipment that can be stored easily and used for various types of functions.
7. They serve liquor through dispense bars.
8. The number of people attending is guaranteed and there is strict control on food and beverage consumption.
9. It outsources various specialists like interior decorators, lighting and sound experts, floral arrangements, etc., required for a function.
10. It operates with a large base of part-time workers during functions.
11. It owns specialised outside catering vans to meet external banquet needs.
12. There could be several functions at the same time.
13. Security is necessary for crowd control.
14. A cashier deputed by the accounts department ensures monies for services are recovered.

A typical banquet structure would look like this:

Organisation Chart of the Banquets Department



Banquet Manager: Is responsible for meeting banquets sales targets through proactive sales activity; and also the overall service of various functions.

Banquet Secretary: Keeps all correspondences and communication on banquet matters. May also record function requirements and coordinate with guests in the absence of any banquet member.

Banquet Supervisor: Is responsible for the set-up of events and the ultimate service. It must be remembered that a hotel may have multi-functions at the same time, which requires scheduling of equipment, staff and other agencies that coordinate for a function.

Banquet Captains: They would supervise the set-up and service of a function. The function captain is totally accountable for providing quality food and beverage service.

Banquet Waiters: They are trained to serve large numbers of people.

Sales Coordinator: Is responsible to formalise all sales generated by the sales executives through proper reports and documentation. S/he provides the link between

the hotel and sales personnel who are always on the move in the market. S/he would also schedule the function rooms in a manner that optimises the sale of banquet space.

Sales Executives: They are the team that generates business by actually going out into the market and contacting potential clients.

Kitchens

A kitchen is the place where food is prepared. It has the following features:

1. Large kitchens have independent sections (discussed later) to deal with various aspects of food preparation due to the sheer volume of activity.
2. Smaller kitchens club sections or have multiskilled cooks to carry out several roles.
3. Kitchen personnel coordinate closely with restaurants, room service, bars and banquets for the supply of food orders.
4. Kitchens maintain strict hygiene and sanitation standards set by the municipality.
5. Kitchens have proper ventilation systems to extract smoke and odours.
6. Kitchens are properly cooled as heat is generated by cooking.
7. Kitchens have industrial refrigerators and deep freezes to preserve food.
8. All equipment and tables are of stainless steel to maintain sanitary conditions.



The various sections of a kitchen are:

Butchery: In this section, raw meats are cut from wholesale cuts and carcasses into smaller portions of given weight, ready for cooking. This section is also responsible for curing meats like bacon, sausages and hams by having curing chambers. In modern hotels, the butchery function is outsourced to external butchers who supply pre-cut portions as per the specifications of the hotel.

Garde Manger: It is the section where cold dishes such as *hors d'oeuvres*, cold meat cuts, salads, galantines and *pates* are made. This section would be kept cool to deal with perishable items as also ice carving for buffets. This section supplies items for public sale to the in-house delicatessen of the hotel.

Pantry: It is the source for sandwiches, fruit platters, juices and shakes. Some pantries undertake light hot snacks like burgers, club sandwiches, grilled sandwiches, etc.

Bakery and Confectionery: This section prepares various breads, bread rolls, croissants, brioches, cakes, pastries, muffins, cookies, flans, tarts, and ice creams. While the temperature in a bakery is hot with industrial ovens, the confectionery is kept cool, as most pastry items have to be kept fresh. Modern hotels have found it convenient and economical to outsource this activity as well. A hotel with a captive bakery and confectionery shop may receive from this section supplies for public sale.

Hot Range: It is the main cooking range where hot foods are made. They have a wide variety of equipment from ranges, which are coal, gas or electric; to griddles, deep fat fryers and steamers. An essential part of the hot range is a counter with hot cases to keep prepared food warm. It becomes the nodal point for controlling all guest food orders. The hot range is where sauces are prepared for various continental dishes.

Grill: Provides grilled items like *kebabs*, sizzlers, *tandooris* and other grilled meats and vegetables.

Vegetable preparation: Processes raw vegetables into smaller cuts for cooking. There are modern automatic machines for peeling, slicing and cutting.

Still Room: Tea and coffee are brewed here. A still is a chamber in which water continuously boils. For tea or coffee service, a waiter may insert the teapot with tea leaves or tea bags, according to the portions required, and fill the teapot with boiling water from the still. In operations where there are quick turnovers of tea or coffee, the stills can actually keep brewing tea or coffee at low temperatures. In coffee stills, ground coffee is brewed and supplied instantly.

Soups Section: Huge stock kettles prepare quantity stock used as the base for various soups.

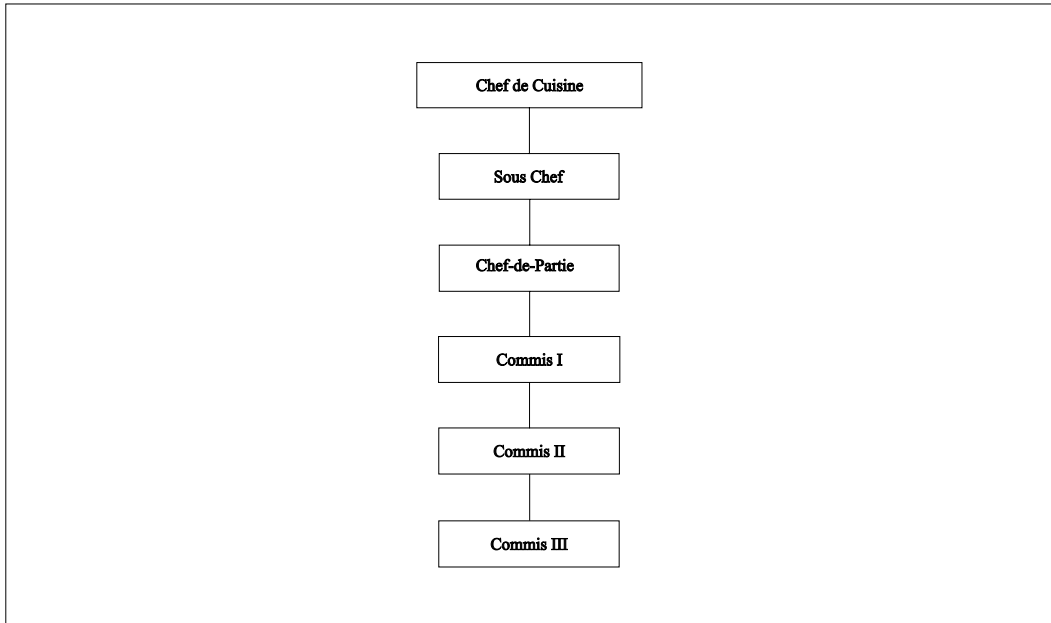
Satellite Kitchens: These kitchens are located away from the main kitchen to supply food to scattered restaurants in a hotel. Often these kitchens are attached to specialty restaurants with their specialised cuisine preparation methods, equipment and service.

Organisation of a Kitchen

Given below is the organisation structure of a typical large kitchen:

Chef-de-Cuisine is the head of the kitchen responsible for planning, organising, and controlling the kitchen operations. It is a management position.

Organisation Chart of a Kitchen



Sous Chef is the deputy chef who shares some of the *Chef-de-cuisine's* responsibilities. He directs the kitchen operation in his absence.

Chef-de-parties are supervisors responsible for a section of the kitchen. S/he translates the management's policies and procedures into the section. A *chef-de-partie* is skilled enough to head a small kitchen operation.

Specialist *Chef-de-parties* are those who have developed skills in a specific field of a kitchen. Such specialists are:

- The *Chef Tournant* is a reliever chef who can replace any of the regular *chef-de-parties* in their absence. Therefore, this specialist has to have a wide variety of cooking skills.
- The *Chef Saucier* is a specialist in sauces. He becomes a key person in French cuisine, which relies heavily on sauces.
- The *Chef Pâtissier* is specialised in confectionery items especially cakes and pastries.
- The *Chef Rotisseur* is skilled in roasts and grills and is assisted by the *Grillardin* the grill cook and the *Savourier* the savoury cook.
- The *Aboyeur* is the announcer of dishes for preparation to various sections, once orders come in from the restaurant. He is also known as a 'barker' who coordinates the restaurant orders with the kitchen.

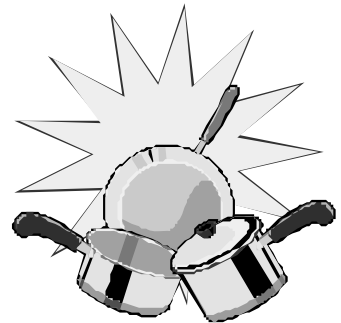
- *Chef Garde Manger* is responsible for the cold kitchen preparations.
- *Chef Bouchier* is the expert in butchery and meat cuts. Another variation to the butcher is the *Chef Charcutier* who is the expert on pork based items like sausages, ham, etc.
- *Chef Poissonier* specialises in fish preparations.
- *Chef Potager* is responsible for the soups section. He becomes another key person in French cuisine.
- *Chef Communar* is responsible for staff cafeteria meals.
- *Chef Entremetier* who prepares vegetables.
- The *Chef Volailleur* is the poultryman specialised in chicken items and game birds.
- The Breakfast Cook is a specialists on breakfast preparations.
- *Chef de Banquets* is a specialist in volume cooking.
- *Chef de Nuit* (the night cook) is a multiskilled cook who cooks food placed at night in the rooms service and coffee shop.

Commis are general cooks who make the food items. They may be given titles of Commis I, Commis II and Commis III based on their experience and skill level. Commis I is the most experienced. Each section of the kitchen will have a team of Commis to complete the tasks set for that section.

Kitchen Stewarding

The department is primarily concerned with the storage, maintenance, cleanliness and issue of cutlery, crockery, holloware, chinaware and glassware to the restaurants and kitchens. It is an integral part of food service operations. Its responsibilities include:

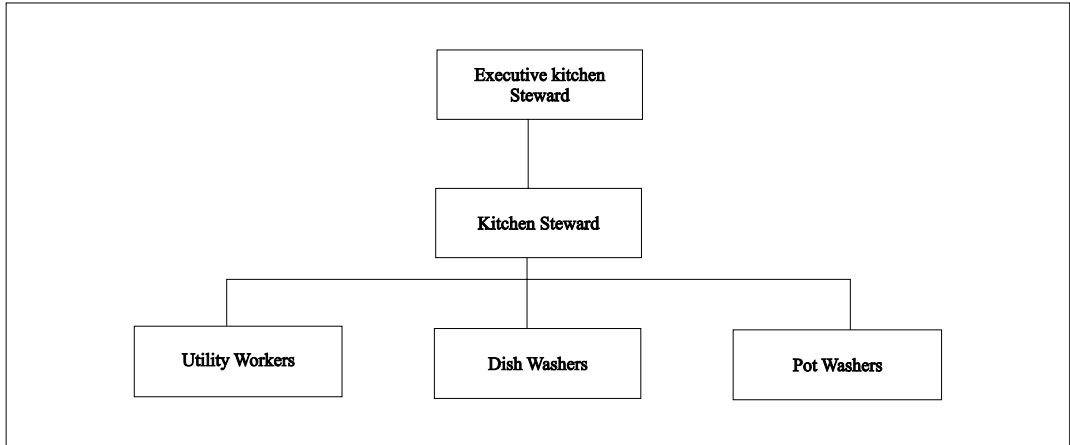
1. The cleanliness of kitchens
2. Washing of the kitchen pots and pans
3. Procurement, installation and service of gas connections and coal supply for cooking
4. Storage and control of kitchen and service equipment
5. Dishwashing of restaurant serviceware
6. Many hotels may give the responsibility of the staff cafeteria to the kitchen stewarding. In such cases the stewarding would have their own brigade of cooks to prepare staff meals.
7. Pest control activity of a kitchen.



Organisation of Kitchen Stewarding

The organisation structure of kitchen stewarding is given as follows:

Organisation Chart of Kitchen Stewarding



Executive Kitchen Steward: Is responsible for planning, organising, directing and controlling the stewarding activity. He would control the kitchen stewarding stores and ensure that the kitchens and restaurants get their needs smoothly.

Kitchen Steward: This is a supervisory level responsible for a shift. Stewarding activity is a 24-hour activity in a busy hotel.

Utility Workers: These are the cleaning brigades, who clean kitchens and equipment and do other heavy work.

Dishwashers: They operate the dishwashing machine that cleans all serviceware.

Pot Washers (plongeurs): They clean large pots and cooking utensils of the kitchen, using jet water sprays.

Utility Workers: They are those general cleaners who keep the kitchen areas and their ancillary services sanitised to local municipal standards. The American term for them is Kitchen Porters.

Staff Functions

Staff departments are those that support the revenue departments in their efforts. These departments are:

Finance and Accounts

The Finance and Accounts department is responsible for two major activities:

1. The finance section is responsible for raising funds and multiplying profits through innovative investments and funding so as to ensure that the hotel meets its capital and operational funds. It is because of this function that the traditional accountant is re-titled the 'Financial Controller'. He is ably assisted by 'Financial Analysts' who are educated and trained in funds management.
2. The accounts section monitors the revenues and expenditures of the hotel. They ensure that cash flows are available for daily operations by controlling the bank accounts and making cash available through the 'General Cashier'. The accounts section will prepare the statutory balance sheets and profit and loss statements for the investors of the hotel.

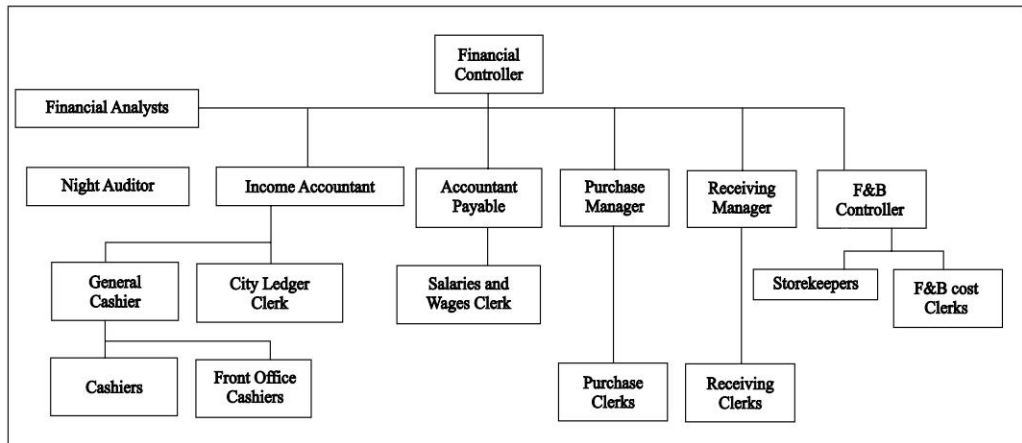
The accounts section has important professionals like:

- *Income Accountant* who monitors all the cash and credit receivables from guests for services rendered.
- *City Ledger Clerk* who monitors all credit receivables.
- *Accounts Payable Clerk* pays all creditors including contractors and suppliers.
- *Salaries and Wages Clerk* who computes salaries and staff deductions on a monthly basis to ensure that employees get their salaries on time.
- *General Cashier* who makes funds available for daily operations and banks revenues received.
- *Cashiers* who account for daily revenues and expenditures at revenue points of the hotel.
- *Food & Beverage Controller* costs all food and beverages consumed in restaurants, bars, rooms, service, banquets, and outside catering. He is responsible for the inventory maintained in all stores and gives independent reports of goods received and issued.
- *Food Clerk* is responsible for costing all food consumption.
- *Beverage Clerk* who costs all beverage consumption.
- *Storekeeper* who stores and issues all supplies of the hotel. There are several stores requiring independent storekeepers—food stores, general stores, beverage stores, engineering stores, housekeeping stores.
- *Financial Controller* who directs the finance and accounting function.

- *Chief Accountant* who completes all statutory accounting requirements like the profit and loss statement and balance sheet.
- *Purchasing Manager* who is responsible for all purchases made by the hotel.
- *Receiving Manager* who receives all items purchased by the hotel and ensures that they adhere to the specifications.

The organisation structure of the Finance and Accounting department looks as follows:

Organisation Chart of the Finance and Accounts Department



Engineering

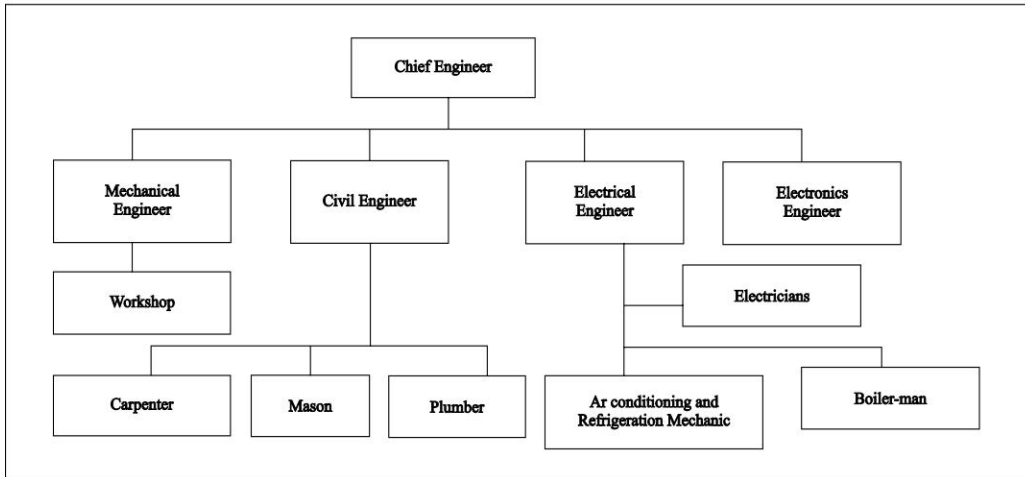
The Engineering department is critical to hotel operations as it keeps all the engineering aspects of the hotel functioning. Its main responsibilities are:

1. The supply of air-conditioning (or heating), to the entire hotel especially the guest rooms, offices and revenue areas.
2. Plumbing requirements are immense. All guest rooms, kitchens, gardens, staff locker rooms need hot and cold water supply. Plumbers have to deal with the network of plumbing to provide all these needs.
3. Lighting that meets the specialised standards of each type of lighting. For example, driveways and parking areas need streetlights of certain specifications while spotlights for banquet functions need other kinds of specifications. They coordinate with the local electricity department to maintain the sub-station provided by them for the hotel. It involves back-up generation in case of power outage.

4. Mechanical works that ensure that all mechanical equipment are in functioning order. Such items range from sewing machines, manual lawn movers, restaurant trolleys, etc. The Engineering have a captive workshop to attend to such mechanical maintenance.
5. Electrical maintenance that include electrical conduits, vacuum cleaners, electro-mechanical equipment in housekeeping, kitchens, restaurants, boilers, etc.
6. Carpentry section is essential to maintain all woodworks from furniture to doors and windows.
7. Electronic section that maintains all electronic equipment like sound systems, information panels, microwave ovens, etc. This has become more specialised in modern times to deal with sophisticated electronic equipment like wake-call systems, fire alarm systems, CCTV, etc.
8. Civil works of the hotel that deals with all building construction, renovations, wall painting, etc.

The organisation structure of the Engineering department is as follows:

Organisation Chart of Engineering



Chief Engineer: A man qualified and experienced to lead a team of engineers. He translates the hotel policies into the department.

Mechanical Engineer: Responsible for all mechanical works like elevators, escalators, mechanical equipment, etc. He has a workshop where mechanics repair and maintain things.

Civil Engineer: Responsible for all building and allied services. In addition to carpentry, masonry and plumbing he would also be responsible for all water treatment and sewage systems.

Electrical Engineer: Responsible for all electrical systems like power and lighting fed by sub-stations to the building. He has the responsibility for the air-conditioning and refrigeration. The task gets larger when hotels become mega-complexes.

Electronics Engineer: Responsible for all electronic equipment including networked personal computers, electronic engineering control panels, security systems, fire alarm systems, music systems, audio-visual systems, etc., operated by electronics.

Human Resources

The Human Resources department is crucial to any hotel operation as they are concerned with the very important resource people. The department is responsible for the hiring, maintenance and exit of staff. They are concerned with such vital activities such as:

Recruitment: To fill permanent and temporary vacancies. This becomes critical especially when additional staff is required during peak periods in a day, week or season. The HR department is good at contacting sources of manpower supply. Their challenge is to feed the hotel operations with qualified people to meet the objectives of the establishment.

Orientation and Socialisation: This is provided to newcomers to help them settle into the organisation and job at the shortest possible time.

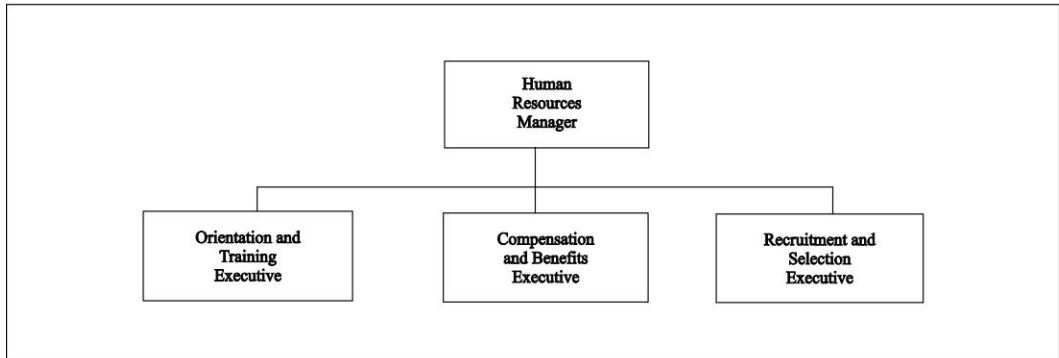
Training: This makes a very important contribution to any hotel operation to keep its employees meet high international standards and keep up to date with new developments in knowledge and skills. The HR department will have trainers to develop skills and careers to the standards set by the organisation.

Compensation and Benefits: This is an important function to ensure that salaries and wages are kept competitive and also coordinates the performance appraisal process to ensure that good performers are rewarded.



Exit formalities are important to ensure that all the dues to an exiting employee are honoured as per labour laws.

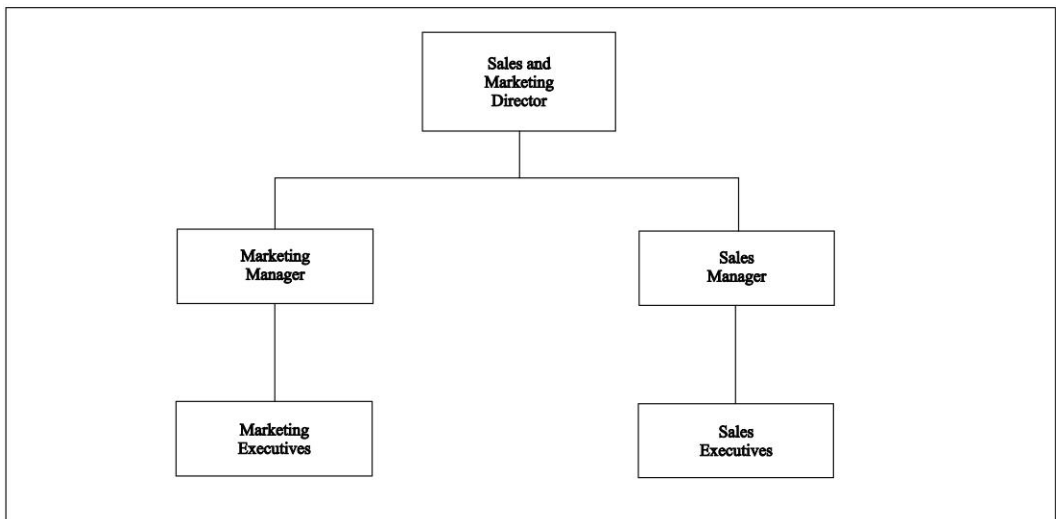
Organisation Chart of the Human Resources Department



Sales and Marketing

The marketing department creates the groundwork to get customers to want to select the property for their stay and converts that decision into a sale by actually booking a room and staying in it. The marketing activity involves advertisement in various media such as television, newspapers, trade magazines, etc. The department also organises promotions to attract guests in different seasons and festivities. Their team of sales personnel go out into the market and sell the property to corporate houses, travel agents, tour operators and airlines for volume business.

Organisation Chart of Sales and Marketing



Sales and Marketing Manager is responsible to translate hotel policies and budgets into departmental action plans. S/he is the main person to feed the management with information from the external environment. This is achieved through market research and market intelligence of changing government policies and laws, customer preferences and behaviour, competition and general changing business trends. S/he converts this into marketing plans that meet the revenue targets of the hotel. S/he then distributes these responsibilities to the sales and marketing team.

Marketing Manager takes the load of marketing activity and distributes his or her responsibilities to the marketing assistants. The marketing manager will be responsible for coordinating with advertising agencies to prepare and schedule advertisement campaigns; prepare brochures and sales kits; merchandising material for all revenue departments of the hotel; and special promotional campaigns. S/he will commission market research agencies to conduct guest surveys and competition analysis.

Sales Manager conducts personal sales calls with his team of sales executives. The responsibilities of the sales executives may be distributed in two ways: (1) by geographical regions; or (2) by specialised clients such as travel agencies, airlines, corporate houses, diplomatic missions and government.



Key Terms

Organisation Structure	a system of reporting relationships, responsibilities and communication channels
Staff functions	those functions in a supportive role



Review Quiz

Fill in the Blanks

1. A Chief Steward reports to the _____.
2. A Food and Beverage Controller reports to the _____.
3. The Room Service Manager reports to the _____.
4. The Manager Telecommunications reports to the _____.
5. In a small hotel the head of food and beverage is the _____.
6. The two revenue departments of a hotel are the Food and Beverages and _____.
7. The job position that is responsible for the exchange of soiled linen for fresh ones is the _____.

8. An order taker is found in the _____.
9. The person who formalises all sales leads in the banquet department is the _____.
10. Cold dishes in a kitchen are prepared in the _____.

Multiple Choices

1. Where will you find a lost and found section in a hotel?
 - (a) Front Office
 - (b) Food and Beverage
 - (c) Housekeeping
 - (d) Concierge
2. Which section in the kitchen supplies tea or coffee?
 - (a) Still Room
 - (b) Hot range
 - (c) Cold room
 - (d) Confectionery
3. Which job position in banquets coordinates communication and correspondence for the department?
 - (a) Sales Executives
 - (b) Banquet Sales Coordinator
 - (c) Banquet Secretary
 - (d) Banquet Supervisor
4. The Transportation Supervisor reports to the:
 - (a) Front Office Manager
 - (b) Senior Bell Captain
 - (c) Lobby Manager
 - (d) None of the above
5. The Chef-de-Partie responsible for vegetable preparation is the:
 - (a) Potager
 - (b) Charcutier
 - (c) Entremetier
 - (d) Poissonier

6. The person who cleans the kitchen is:
 - (a) Utility Worker
 - (b) Dish Washer
 - (c) Pot Washer
 - (d) Kitchen Steward
7. The department that includes the receiving function is:
 - (a) Human Resources
 - (b) Food and Beverage
 - (c) Finance and Accounting
 - (d) Kitchen Stewarding
8. The department responsible for food costing is:
 - (a) Kitchen
 - (b) Food and Beverages
 - (c) Kitchen Stewarding
 - (d) Food and Beverage Controls
9. The position responsible for the landscapes and gardens is the:
 - (a) Florist
 - (b) Horticulturist
 - (c) Public Area Supervisor
 - (d) Gardeners
10. The section in the kitchen responsible for sandwiches is:
 - (a) Hot Range
 - (b) Confectionary
 - (c) Pantry
 - (d) Garde Manger



Training Methodology

This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use pre-prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations as training aids.

The lecture can be supported by pictures and organisation charts. A field trip to the various sections of a hotel is ideal to consolidate learning.

11

Differentiation of Guests

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the reader understand how guests are differentiated so as to recognise their special needs and thus address these effectively.

INTRODUCTION

Guests may be differentiated on the basis of various criteria; one of the important being their purpose of travel. Figure 11.1 gives a macro, as well as micro, view of classification of guests into several categories on the basis of their occupation and purpose of travelling.

THE INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC TRAVELLER

Let us analyse the chart (Fig. 11.1) to get a better understanding. It starts with the nativity criterion, i.e., differentiation between the domestic and international traveller. A domestic traveller is a resident of a country and travels within it, while an international traveller is a resident of a foreign country who visits another country. It may not seem reasonable to the reader to make a distinction between the two as regards hotel services are concerned. However, there are certain distinctive features of both. For example, international travellers require the following additional services as compared to the domestic traveller:

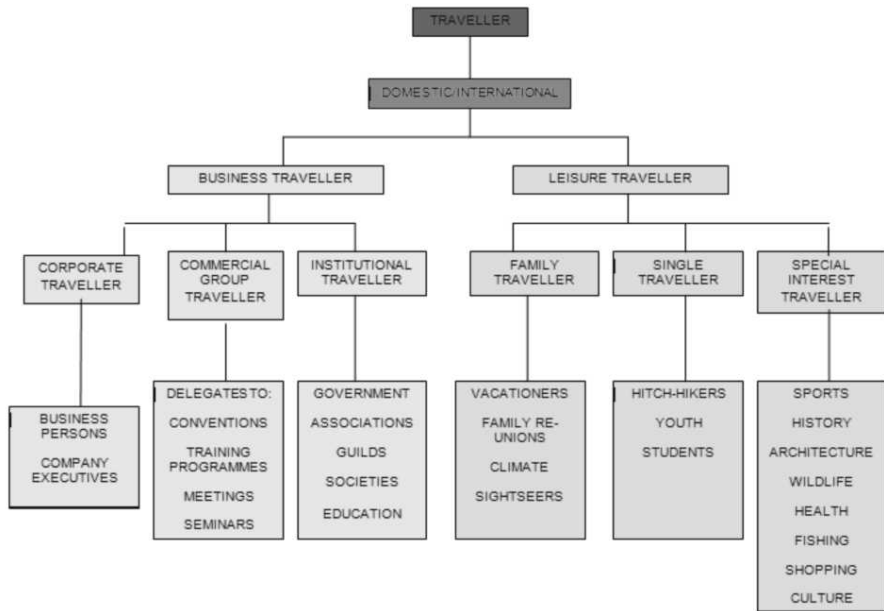


Fig. 11.1

Classification of travellers

International Travellers Needs

- Multilingual staff at the hotel
- Translation facilities
- International communication services (ISD services, Internet, teleconferencing facilities, etc.)
- International cuisine
- Foreign brands liquor at bars
- Mineral water and international aerated drinks
- Rooms and bathrooms of international standard
- Hotel brand names that are respected in the industry
- Foreign currency exchange facility
- International television channels in the guest room TV
- All published communications in different languages
- International newspapers
- Left-luggage facility
- High standards of hygiene and sanitation

- Airport-Hotel-Airport coach service
- Safety deposit box in the guest room
- Electric power plug adaptors
- Doctor on call

Hotels that cater to the foreign travellers will have to provide these facilities to attract them.

The next differentiation is based on purpose of travelling. Here the differentiation lies between business travellers and leisure travellers.

Business Travellers

The category of business travellers would include the following:

- **Corporate Travellers**—business persons and corporate executives who travel for business reasons specifically.
- **Commercial Group Travellers**—those who travel in groups for business reasons. They would be delegates attending conventions, conferences, training programmes, trade delegations and seminars.
- **Institutional Travellers**—those that represent institutions on official work. They may be government officials, association members, etc.

Do they need special facilities? The answer is 'Yes'. The facilities provided by hotels that are specific to the business traveller are:

Corporate Traveller: A corporate traveller has some special business needs that are to be met by hotels. These special set of needs include:

- Business centre
- Secretarial facilities
- Meeting rooms
- Office automation
- Fax facility in the rooms
- Internet facility in guest rooms
- Business lounge
- International financial newspapers
- Range of restaurants and bars for entertainment
- International telecommunications



- Party halls
- Limousine service
- Mini-bars in rooms
- Personalised butler service
- Executive rooms that provide a desk
- Pre-registration
- Safety deposit lockers in guest rooms
- Business and news channels on television
- Bloomberg channel to keep in touch with stock market performances
- Quick laundry services
- Efficient room service
- Tea/coffee facility in rooms
- Wake-call service
- Mobile charging facilities
- Laundry services
- Bar/s

Women Business Traveller

We must recognise an ever growing market segment of working women who travel. Women have some additional expectations from a hotel to make their stay pleasant:

- Double latches on guest room doors
- Peep holes on doors to identify visitors at the door
- Safety deposit box in the guest room
- Iron and foldable ironing table
- Beauty salon on the premises
- Hair dryer in the bathroom
- Popular entertainment channels on television
- Room Service
- Laundry Service
- Extra hangars in the wardrobe
- Bath gown

- Sanitary bags
- Bidets in the bathroom
- Full length mirrors in the room
- Vanity Set in the bathroom
- Women butlers
- Guest floor security

Commercial Group/Institutional Traveller

While many of the needs given above would apply to this category of guests, there are some additional facilities which are needed by them:

- Plenary hall with breakout meeting rooms—for conventions
- Meeting halls equipped with sound and projection equipment
- Foyers for mid-morning and mid-afternoon tea/coffee breaks
- Podiums or stages
- Lecterns
- Registration desk
- Photocopying facilities
- Buffet meals
- Group dining facilities
- Evening entertainment programmes

One can see that the moment a hotel caters to the business traveller there is a limitless range of services required, which keep getting sophisticated as technology improves.

Leisure Travellers

Leisure travellers fall under the following categories:

Family Traveller: A family comprises a husband, wife and up to two children under the age of 12 years in hotel parlance.

Single Travellers: These are adults who travel singly. More and more adults are delaying marriage in the pursuit of a career. They constitute a rich segment of travellers. We must not forget the woman traveller who is showing her independence by travelling alone. Youth and students have always been adventurous and travel for education, experience and to learn cultures and languages.

Special interest groups: These are those who are focused on one aspect of travel based on their personal interest. It could be adventure sport, fishing, architecture or even bird-watching.

Each of these categories has special needs. Let us look at each.

Families: Families travel with children and book those special periods in the year when schools have their vacations and a working husband and wife teams are able to coordinate their holidays. This makes this period very special to unwind and re-build their attention to each other. Moreover, they want to get away from the hassles of daily chores. Hotels have to meet those special needs. Most families would go to holiday resorts to unwind. Their special needs are:



- Spacious rooms for their family
- Queen size beds
- Extra beds and bedding
- Brunches rather than breakfasts as they would wake up late in the mornings
- Outdoor entertainment for children parks, beaches, treks, etc.
- Safety features for children like concealed plug sockets, furniture and door handles with rounded edges, etc.
- Late evening lounges equipped with television, indoor games and animated family shows for children
- Children's television channels
- Baby-sitting services
- Crèche facilities within the property
- Rules permitting casual wear
- Telecommunications to their homes
- Photoshop to develop their camera reels

Single Adults: The major emerging segments of single adult travellers are women and youth. Let us look at the needs for each:

Women Leisure Traveller

- Room safety features—double lock, safety door chains, peep holes
- Hairdryers in bathrooms

- Clothes pressing facilities
- Beauty salon in the premises
- Health club
- Good room service menu as they prefer to eat in the room
- Diet foods in all menus
- Efficient security
- Preferably women service staff
- Television channels that screen popular soap operas
- Local drug store
- Safety lockers
- Full length mirror in the room



Youth

- Budget prices – willing to compromise on quality and space
- Left luggage facilities – to trek up country
- Outdoor sports facilities – tennis, swimming, basketball, etc.
- Indoor sports facilities – pool, squash, badminton
- Gymnasium
- Plentiful food portions
- Discotheques and social lounges
- Fast food options
- Courtesy bus service to city centre
- Courtesy airport pick-up and drop bus services
- Do-it-yourself facilities – vending machines, cafeteria food service



Special Interest Groups: Special interest groups are focused on their interest to the extent that they are willing to sacrifice some normal luxuries. For example, anglers wouldn't mind camping at fishing spots overnight, with barbeque cooking, and minimal toilet luxuries. Wildlife enthusiasts or mountain climbers wouldn't mind living in tents, with basic facilities. Others could be pursuing spiritual upliftment through yoga. They would require



yoga instructors and secluded environs to do their meditation. On the other hand, gamblers going to Las Vegas may want the most luxurious facilities because they are affluent with a lavish lifestyle and want to enjoy when not at the casino. It is difficult to classify the needs of each special interest group in a generic manner. However, some common requirements of this category of traveller are :

- Guides
- Special maps leading them to their special interest sites
- Brochures and pamphlets of their area of interest
- Evening entertainment, be it singing around a bonfire or special film shows of their interest
- Left luggage facilities when they go upcountry in pursuit of their interest
- Camping stores to procure essential equipment
- Group meal facilities
- Photo studio and shop to either make purchases and/or to develop their camera reels

Summary

There is a clear distinction between the business traveller and the leisure traveller. Both segments have their unique needs. Lodging establishments are able to further identify sub-segments to sharpen their understanding of these segments and provide those needs. It is clear that a hotel cannot satisfy all segments and have niche target markets within the competitive hospitality business. Each segment has its unique needs and budgets which the lodging industry caters to.



Key Terms

Business Traveller	a generic term for owners of businesses and professionals
Corporate Traveller	salared professionals working in companies
Commercial Group Traveller	owners and employees of business who travel together
Institutional Traveller	members of government and private institutions
Leisure Traveller	one who travels for relaxation
Segment	a section of the market that have a set of common characteristics and needs



Review Questions

Write short notes:

What are the physical and service requirements of the following?

1. International Travellers
2. Corporate Travellers
3. Families
4. Single Adults
5. Special interest groups

True or False

1. Hotels do not make a distinction between international and domestic travellers.
2. Domestic travellers require translation services.
3. Institutional travellers fall in the category of business travellers.
4. Business travellers require quick laundry services.
5. Women travellers want an efficient room service.
6. Travelling youth are comfortable with vending machines.
7. Buffet service is essential in managing group travellers.
8. Special interest groups need maps and guides.
9. A way of classification of guests is by their budget.
10. Some special interest groups are comfortable with limited facilities.



Training Methodology

- This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use pre-prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations as training aids.
- The lecture can be supported by a flow chart (Fig. 11.1).
- Learners must be quizzed to ensure learning.

4



THE FRONT-OFFICE

12

Organisation of the Front Office

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help readers understand the role of front office and how it is structured and organised.

INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry satisfies two basic physiological needs of all human beings—shelter and food. Whether a hotel is simple or elaborate, the hotel business is a safe investment. In a globalised world people must travel for business, leisure, or education.

FUNCTIONS OF A FRONT OFFICE

The Front Office is a prime revenue generating department of a hotel as it sells rooms. In large hotels, it is part of a larger division called 'Accommodations Division' or 'Rooms Division' headed by a Director. The Accommodations Division includes many other services that support a guest stay, such as the bell desk, concierge services, telecommunications, cashiering, housekeeping, engineering, information technology, laundry and business centre. Small hotels may call the Front Office as simply 'Hotel Reception' reporting directly to the General Manager. Figures 12.1 and 12.2 depict the Front Office



Small hotels may call the Front Office as simply 'Hotel Reception' reporting directly to the General Manager. Figures 12.1 and 12.2 depict the Front Office

Organisation charts of a large hotel and a small hotel. It also gives the job description of the Front Office Manager, Assistant Front Office Manager and a Shift Supervisor. The Front Office Manager is exclusively in charge of the Front Office functions including the Uniformed Services, Guest Relations and Telecommunications. He is assisted by an Assistant Front Office Manager and a Shift Supervisor each in every shift as the Front Office is a 24 × 7 operation.

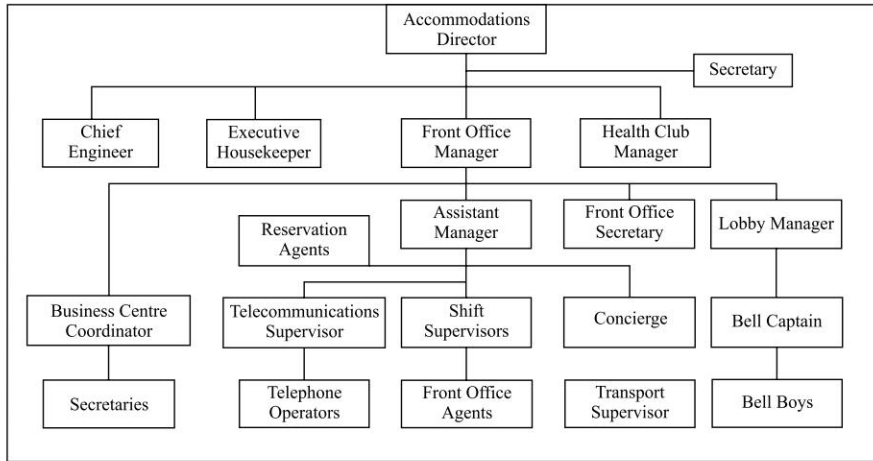


Fig 12.1

Organisation Structure of a Large Hotel Accommodations Division

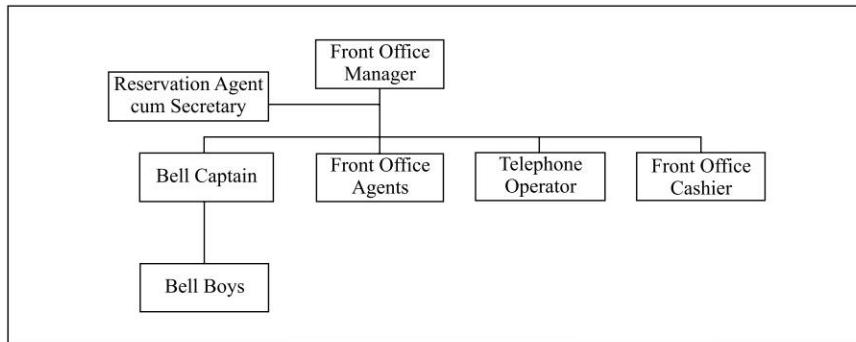


Fig. 12.2

Organisation Structure of a Small Hotel Front Office

Job Title:	Front Office Manager
Reports to:	1. Accommodations Manager 2. General Manager
Job Summary	To recommend and meet budgets and goals by leading a Front Office team that ensures quality service standards with personalised guest attention

<p>Duties and Responsibilities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recommend and monitor a Front Office budget and plan for the year. 2. Lead, train and motivate a Front Office team. 3. Conduct daily department meetings to ensure two-way communication, training and policy information. 4. Check the arrivals of the day and inform VIP arrivals to management. 5. Approve expenses of the Front Office department. 6. Conduct sales calls to corporate houses, embassies, government, etc., and develop innovative ways for sale of rooms. 7. Meet and greet guests and develop a guest database to ensure continued patronage. 8. Approve staff rotations and duties, and organise extra hands when required. 9. Ensure the safety and hygiene of the Front Office and its staff. 10. Maintain discipline and conduct staff appraisals. 11. Coordinate with housekeeping and engineering to ensure room availability for sale. 12. Monitor the reservation system. 13. Monitor proper billing and cash recovery by the cashier. 14. Resolve guest and staff complaints and grievances. 15. Represent the department in coordination meetings. 16. Conduct periodic competition analysis. 17. Exercise revenue and yield management to maximise room income. 18. Introduce technology to improve efficiency and information for decision making
<p>Supervises</p>	<p>Assistant Manager Front Office, Front Office Supervisors, Lobby Managers, Concierge Services, Reservation Agents</p>
<p>Limits of Authority</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluates performance of staff 2. Discipline of staff 3. Can provide complimentary rooms
<p>Coordinates with</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housekeeping for cleanliness of rooms and making them available for sale. 2. Accounts for budgets and depositing daily sales. 3. Engineering on matters of maintenance and safety. 4. Security on matters of security and safety. 5. Marketing on matters of room sales and promotions. 6. Accommodations Director for policy directions and evaluation of department performance.
<p>Minimum Educational Qualifications</p>	<p>Diploma in Hotel Management</p>

Experience	Minimum 10 years after hotel management.
Skills and Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough knowledge of Front Office systems and procedures • Proficiency in the English language. Another foreign language preferred • Training skills • Guest handling skills • Leadership and motivation skills • Personable and well groomed
Job Title	Assistant Manager — Front Office
Reports to	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Front Office Manager 2. Accommodations Manager
Job Summary	Organise, supervise and train all Front office personnel with a view to maximising room revenue by providing quick and personalised guest service.
Duties and Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deputise in the absence of the Front office Manager and ensure the smooth functioning of the Front Office. 2. Schedule weekly/fortnightly staff duty rotations with the approval of the Front Office Manager ensuring that work exigencies are met and the staff are rotated fairly. 3. Allot daily duties to subordinate staff to meet work exigencies ensuring equity of work. 4. Conduct daily briefing using it as a vehicle for two-way communication, training and corrective action. 5. Attend to guest complaints and ensure guest satisfaction through immediate action. 6. Check the daily arrivals and departures and tally with the room position. 7. Ensure the maintenance and aesthetic upkeep of the front desk in close coordination with engineering and housekeeping. 8. Organise the training of staff for meeting the standards of service. 9. Develop room sales by up selling, rooms and ensuring good service. 10. Ensure that the Front Office is free from work hazards. 11. Supervise front desk operations with a view to ensure speed, quality of service and personalisation. 12. Appraise staff performance and recommend rewards to the Front Office Manager. 14. Control costs of supplies. 15. Motivate staff through fair leadership. 16. Ensure proper coordination with other departments.

Supervises	Front Office Supervisors, Front Office Agents, Reservation Agents and Concierge.
Limits of Authority	Recommending authority but initiates the performance appraisals of staff for the final approval of the manager.
Coordinates with	<p>Housekeeping—for the preparation of rooms for sale.</p> <p>Engineering—for the maintenance of Front Office.</p> <p>Lobby Bell Desk—for the movement of guest baggage and transport facilities.</p> <p>Accounts—for depositing room sales.</p> <p>Telecommunications—for services to the department and guest rooms.</p> <p>Information Technology—on all Front Office hardwares, software, cabling and database matters.</p>
Minimum Educational Qualifications	Diploma in Hotel Management
Experience	Three years after hotel management
Skills and Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough knowledge of Front Office systems and procedures • Socially confident • Proficiency in the English language. Knowledge of a foreign language is preferable • Leadership and motivation skills

Job Title	Front Office Supervisor
Reports to	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assistant Manager—Front Office 2. Front Office Manager
Job Summary	Organise and supervise a shift with a view to providing fast and efficient front desk service.
Duties and Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that all shift staff report on time in proper uniform and are well groomed as per hotel standards. 2. Take over from the previous shift and check the log book for follow-up actions. 3. Assign duties ensuring equity of work during a shift. 4. Brief staff to ensure two-way communication. 5. Check for VIPs in the house and expected and give them the courtesies as per policy of the house. 6. Check arrivals and departures and tally the room position. 7. Meet and greet all arrivals and ensure accurate and speedy rooming. 8. Train and supervise Front Office Agents to give high standards of service in terms of time, quality and personalisation.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Check all equipment for serviceability. 10. Check guest mail and packages and arrange their distribution. Keep those handy for new arrivals. 11. Check statistical data such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily room revenue • Occupancy • House count • VIP List • Room Report • Guest Folios 12. Prepare monthly statistics with regard to complimentary rooms, room nights and statutory data for the Ministry of Tourism. 13. Assist in registering guests during busy periods. 14. Ensure that staff meet hygiene and discipline standards.
Supervises	Front Office Agents and trainees
Limits of Authority	<p>Only advisory (to the Assistant Manager). Supervises a shift within which he may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allot rooms Refuse rooms Upgrade regular guests Handle guest complaints Offer discounts within policy Allot duties in the shift Take disciplinary action within the shift
Coordinates with	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housekeeping—for the preparation of rooms for sale. 2. Stores—for the requisition of supplies. 3. Engineering—for the maintenance of front desk fittings and equipment. 4. Bell Desk—for the movement of guest baggage. 5. IT—for all matters of hardware and software. 6. Telephones—for room updates and problems. 7. F&B—Group arrivals, guests on the American and MAP plans, complimentary F&B in VIP rooms. 8. Accounts—for guest billing and recovery 9. Lobby Manager—on matters of policy
Minimum Educational Qualifications	Diploma in Hotel Management
Experience	Direct recruit from a Hotel Management School with 6 months orientation or 3 years as a Front Office Agent.

<p>Skills and Competencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough knowledge of Front Office systems and procedures. • Guest complaint handling skills • Customer service skills • Socially confident • Proficiency in English. Knowledge of a foreign language is preferable • Supervisory skills • Trained trainer
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Role of the Front Office

The Front Office as the name suggests is the first and last point of contact in a hotel for a guest. Its unique role is to:

1. Book hotel rooms through systematic methods of reservation.
2. Sell guest rooms as their revenues contribute to as much as fifty per cent or more to a hotel’s profit. In many cases, such as motels and airport hotels, rooms are the main source of revenue.
3. Control guest room keys.
4. Register guests into the hotel and assign rooms to them.
5. Provide 24 × 7 information to guests.
6. Have a proactive role in creating the image of the property.
7. Provide communication and coordination between departments.
8. Maintain guest accounts and settle bills at the end of their stay.
9. Contribute high profit margins as the cost of room sales is relatively low as the only variable costs are the consumable guest supplies and amenities.

The term ‘sale’ in Front Office parlance may appear misleading to those unfamiliar with the industry. ‘Sale’ means the lease of a room for stay for a duration (at least one night) at a price. A room is considered sold when the room space is leased by a guest for a specific time. A room tariff is the rate charged per room night computed for a revenue day which begins at noon and ends at noon the next day. Of course, rooms may be sold for half a day as well, for which there is a day rate.

To fulfil these basic responsibilities, the Front Office is broken into different sections each with distinct roles. These sections are:

The Front Office Reservations

Most hotel room bookings are reserved in advance as travellers come from outstation. Very few room bookings are ‘walk-ins’, a term used for those guests who check-in

without reservations. A large chain often has its own centralised reservation system which is a single point where all reservations of the chain are made, while independent hotels may subscribe to an international reservation system (IRS) or Computer Reservation System (CRS) or Global Distribution System (GDS) that is open to any hotel which subscribes to it. While these reservation systems originated with airline bookings they soon included hotels and car rentals. Some popular global reservation systems are Galileo by Travelport, Sabre, Amadeus, Worldspan by Travelport and Abacus. International reservation systems are global in reach they specialise in regions. It is not unusual to subscribe to more than one system based on the volume of bookings from that region. For example, KIU is strong in South America while Mercator is strong in the African continent. The purpose of this strategy is to increase the reach of independent hotels to a larger travelling public.



The reservation agent at the hotel is an important person who can contribute to the room revenues of the property by adept management of rooms. S/he is no longer a clerk recording reservations but a person who actually sells rooms and procures that extra dollar. In fact, many sales executives started their career as reservation agents. Because of the importance of the reservations function, the reservation agent reports directly to the Front Office management which can work closely with the reservation agent to maximise the sale of rooms.

The principle role of reservations is to:

1. Book rooms in advance.
2. Maximise the sale of rooms as they are 'perishable' as room space is linked with time. The potential revenue from a time period not sold is lost forever. The challenge is to ensure that these time slots are fully sold. One way to do it is by overbooking. Over-booking is a fine art of maximising room sales. It counters reservations that are cancelled at the last minute. This art is developed with experience and historical patterns of the hotel reservations. Yield Management is another modern unique practice of variable pricing to maximise revenue.
3. Process, document, store and retrieve reservation information from various sources to ensure a guest gets the room at the time of arrival.
4. Upsell rooms to get the extra dollar.

5. Work closely with the sales and marketing division to ensure that room sales are maximised. Many reservation databases are networked with the sales division to ensure total coordination in room availability and sale.

All modern hotels maintain accurate accounts of rooms through specialised Property Management Systems (PMS) software such as the Opera PMS which is designed to meet the Front Office requirements of any size hotel or hotel chain. It empowers staff to handle reservations, check guests in and out, assign rooms, manage room inventory, maintain guest history and handle guest accounting and billing. The PMS is configurable to each property’s specific requirements and operates in either single-property or multi-property mode, with all properties in a complex sharing a single database.

Given below is the job description which details the duties and responsibilities of a Reservation Agent.

Job Title	Reservation Agent
Reports to	1. Assistant Manager 2. Front Office Manager
Job Summary	To be accountable for room revenue targets, and receive and record accurately room reservations requests as per the procedures laid down by management on the PMS system.
Duties and Responsibilities	1. Handle courteously and promptly all reservation requests from various media and sources as per standard procedures. 2. Attend briefings at the beginning of the shift. 3. Carry out amendments and cancellations of reservations accurately. 4. Update guest history sheets. 5. Be accountable for room revenue targets
Supervises	Trainees assigned.
Limits of Authority	Can take reservations and confirm bookings as per procedure. May also amend and cancel bookings.
Coordinates with	1. FITs, Travel Agents, Airlines, Corporate Houses, etc. —for room bookings. 2. Housekeeping —for cleaning the reservation area. 3. Stores —for the requisition of supplies.
Minimum Educational Qualifications	Graduate with preferably a Craft Course Certificate in Reception.
Experience	One week department training adequate

Skills and Competencies

- Fully conversant with the Property Management System of the house.
- Energetic
- Sound telephone skills
- Socially confident and pleasant
- Has salesmanship
- Proficiency in the English language. Knowledge of a foreign language preferable.
- Thorough knowledge of Front Office procedures.
- Has etiquettes and manners
- Is methodical and has eye for detail.

Reception

The reception registers guests into the hotel and assigns rooms to them.

The main tasks of reception are:

1. To welcome guests on behalf of the hotel.
2. Complete registration formalities, especially the billing information, for the cashier to process during a guest's stay and settle bills at the end of their stay. Smaller hotels may combine the receptionist's, telephone operator's and cashier's role.
3. Control all the guest room keys meticulously by carefully issuing keys and receive them back after a guest stay. Key control is a vital activity because a room key lost would mean changing the lock/s.
4. Be the constant source of guest information, mail and messaging.
5. Multi-task in small hotels by being the telephone operator as well..



Given below is the detailed job description of the Front Office Agent:

Job Title	Front Office Agent
Reports to	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Front Office Supervisor 2. Assistant Manager
Job Summary	Reserve, register and assign rooms to guests using the PMS system, and be a continuous source of information during their stay in the hotel.
Duties and Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend briefings prior to the shift opening and take over from previous shift. Attend to log book for any special instructions. 2. Check the arrivals for the day and room status including departures for the day. 3. Check the expected VIPs for the day and issue VIP amenities vouchers for fruits, flowers, beverages, etc., as per policy. 4. Prepare records and pre-registrations for VIPs, handicapped people and old people. 5. Handle Group/Crew registration as per laid down procedures. 6. Ensure that all stationary supplies and forms are available for a full shift and requisition them from stores if necessary. 7. Register and room all arrivals during the shift. 8. Constantly update Front Office database. 9. Open guest folios immediately of new arrivals and send to Front Office cashier. 10. Maintain room rates absolutely current as per current Yield Management specifications. 11. Prepare the room discrepancy report and double check by physical verification by a bell boy. 12. Work closely with the Concierge and provide relevant information to him. 13. Give departure rooms to housekeeping promptly for resale. 14. Assist in making room and occupancy reports. 15. Upsell rooms to get higher revenues. 16. Handle guests with scanty baggage diligently. 17. Update guest history periodically to have an accurate database.
Supervises	Trainees assigned.
Limits of Authority	May assign rooms.
Coordinates with	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housekeeping—for the cleanliness of rooms for sale. Also tallies the room position. 2. Engineering—for the maintenance of service equipment and furniture. 3. Lobby—for the movement of guest baggage at the time of arrival and departure. 4. F&B—for meal plans 5. Concierge—for messages, mail and relevant information update.

Minimum Educational Qualifications	Graduate with preferably a Craft Course certificate or six months training in Front Office Reception.
Experience	Six months departmental training
Skills and Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough knowledge of Front Office Property Management Systems and procedures. • Socially confident • Personable and well groomed • Physically sturdy to stay on one's feet for a shift. • Proficiency in the English language and knowledge of the local dialect. A foreign language is preferable. • A team person • Etiquettes and manners • Proficiency in the Front Office software • Ability to take stress • Customer service skills • Tact and diplomacy

Telecommunications

The telecommunications section is responsible for all communications within the hotel and external to the hotel. Modern telecom systems have allowed the hotel to manage a huge exchange with perhaps one operator in a shift. The system is networked into wake call systems, fire alarm systems, automated door systems, etc. Progressive hotels have re-christened this department to Guest Services to handle any information on phone.

Their main tasks are to:

1. Keep telephone channels of communication open.
2. Play an important role in the case of fire and keep the hotel connected within and outside the hotel in case of emergency.
3. Maintain the sophisticated telecommunication equipment. Telecommunication equipment has changed dramatically with the following features:
 - Make local and international calls directly from guest/office rooms.
 - Post call charges automatically directly onto on-line guest folio accounts.
 - Have message indicators on telephone instruments
 - Voice mail services
 - Caller ID
 - Do-not-Disturb
 - Room-to-room connections



- Call waiting
- Wake call and alarm systems
- Conference call facility

There is no limit to the progress of telecommunication systems which has already revolutionised the way hotel operations are run.

Lesson 21 'Telecommunications' will detail the role further and provide the Job Description of the telephone operator.

Guest Relations Desk

The Guest Relations Executive (GRE) is the representative of the management that ensures the comfort and convenience of all guests. She is normally a well groomed and personable woman.

Her principal tasks are to:

1. Attend to the comfort of VIPs and other guests.
2. Provide internal PR to enhance the perception of the hotel in the guest's eyes.
3. Maintain guest history cards either manually or electronically and respond to the guest needs and behaviour to a high level of personalisation.
4. Coordinate well with the concierge in procuring city services like tickets, table reservations, etc.



Lesson 20 details the job description of the GRE.

Front Office Cashier

Is a member of the accounts department deputed as a crucial team member of the Front Office.

The main tasks are to:

1. Maintain the guest's accounts during his or her stay,
2. Monitor credit limits
3. Settles cash and credit bills as per instructions.
4. Maintain a cash bank
5. Provide petty cash for hotel expenses
6. Exchange foreign currency.

Given below is the detailed job description of a Front Office Cashier:

Job Title	Front Office Cashier
Reports to	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Cashier 2. Income Accountant
Job Summary	Post guest charges into guest folios accurately and promptly from various revenue outlets; settle guests accounts, either by cash or credit, upon their departure; disburse cash as per rules; and maintain safety boxes.
Duties and Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take over shift and note special instructions for the shift. 2. Check the cash bank at the beginning of each shift and requisition petty cash from General Cashier if necessary. 3. Open guest folios accurately for new arrivals and post charges as soon as they arrive. 4. Issue safety deposit lockers to guests according to procedures. 5. Disburse petty cash and authorised paid outs. 6. Pass allowances as directed for wrong charges posted in folios. 7. Cash foreign currency as per central bank regulations and prepare the necessary documentation. 8. Settle guest bills ensuring accurate cash is received or credit formalities as applicable. 9. Handle credit card payments through proper procedures. 10. Accept personal checks after ensuring proper authorised. 11. Prepare the Front Office Cashier's report and other reports. 12. Ensure that telephone meter readings are accurately taken to raise appropriate charges. 13. Coordinate closely with the night auditor for the day's audit. 14. Receive the cash sales of all revenue outlets at the end of each shift and keep in safe custody. 15. Submit the petty cash balance with the necessary documents for issue of cash to the General Cashier at the end of the shift.
Supervises	None
Limits of Authority	<p>Can refuse to accept credit cards or foreign exchange not accepted by the hotel.</p> <p>Can refuse any disbursement of cash unless convinced on the authenticity of documents.</p> <p>Give final clearance to bell boys to remove guest's baggage for departure guests.</p> <p>Can post charges to the guest folios against proper documentation.</p> <p>Is the custodian of safety deposit lockers</p>

Coordinates with	Lobby for clearance to remove guest baggage from the premises. Front Office Agent for guest arrivals to open guest folios. F&B outlets to receive cash and credit sales
Minimum Educational Qualifications	Bachelor of Commerce
Experience	Six months departmental training
Skills and Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good at accounting • Socially confident • Well groomed • Etiquettes and manners • Proficiency in the English language. Another foreign language is preferred.

Lesson 16 ‘ Front Office Cashier’ deals exclusively with this topic.

UNIFORMED SERVICES ---

Lobby Desk

The Lobby Desk is situated prominently in the Lobby. It is a one-point contact of the management for all guests to sought issues about the hotel. The desk is manned on all three shifts by a Lobby Manager who is the representative of the General Manager at all times during the day and night. During the day he or she has certain powers to make decisions on behalf of the management but is the sole in-charge at night when the management offices are closed. He or she oversees the Bell Desk services which includes portorage, concierge, transport and left luggage activities.

In a nutshell the Lobby Manager’s main tasks are to:

1. Coordinate all guest services from a central point.
2. Handle all guest complaints and disputes.
3. Interpret and safeguard house policies with guests.
4. Evict undesirable guests from the premises.
5. Ensure proper baggage handling services.
6. Ensure efficient transportation services to guests.
7. Maintain order in the lobby.
8. Be the sole representative of management at night.

Lesson 15 ‘Uniformed Services’ gives a more detailed insight into this function including the job descriptions of the Lobby Manager.

Concierge

Traditionally the concierge was a castle doorkeeper who was responsible to ensure that all guests were properly roomed for the night. The concierge accompanied the travelling royalty and provided them with security, lodging arrangements and entertainment sites. With modernisation the concierge concept has been adopted by hotels in Europe as the person who provides such personalised services as providing box office tickets at nearby theatres, coach tickets for sightseeing, or table reservations at city restaurants, etc. He knows everything about the city, its sites and events.



His main tasks are to:

1. Provide information to guests about the city.
2. Facilitate guests acquire box-office tickets.

Chapter 15 'Uniformed Services' gives a comprehensive view of the Concierge's roles and responsibilities.

Bell Desk

The Bell desks primary function is to provide portering service of guest baggage.

Consequently its next major function is the handling of left-luggage formalities. Left-luggage are the personal baggage and other property of residing guest who do not want to carry their cumbersome baggage when travelling to other parts of the country. This means that their itinerary includes them returning the hotel to collect their baggage. The Bell Desk also handles other miscellaneous tasks as distributing newspapers to guests and offices, handling guest postage and attending to errands within and outside the hotel. The Bell Desk reports to the Lobby Manager and is headed by a senior Captain.



The Bell Desks main tasks are to:

1. Coordinate the movement of guest baggage. This is a real challenge as the volume of baggage during a single day is very large for a busy hotel. The movement of guest baggage is an integral part of check-in and check-out formalities.
2. Carry out errands for the guest and management within and outside the hotel precincts.

3. Distribute daily newspapers to occupied guest rooms, executive offices, business centre and coffee shop.
4. Sell postage stamps.
5. Maintain first-aid kit and some essential medicines under the direction of the house doctor in case of emergencies.
6. Be responsible for the left-luggage procedures.

Chapter 15 'Uniformed Services' gives a more detailed account of the duties and responsibilities of this function.

Transport Services

It is common nowadays to see hotel courtesy transport waiting at airports for guests with reservations at the property. This is a free service of limousines for VIPs to mini-vans for others and airline crew members and larger coaches for groups. These transports may be owned by the hotel, leased or contracted out to transport companies. The drivers then become the first physical point of contact with the property for those arriving by air, rail or sea. The drivers, therefore, have to be licensed and knowledgeable about the property. Drivers possess etiquettes and manners. The drivers must drive safely and observe all the traffic rules. Superior hotels provide the drivers with cell phones to inform the Bell Desk and doorman of their arrival at the porch. This is critical when bringing in groups. The Bell Desk can then keep their staff ready to handle volume baggage. The Front Office Agent can also have the registration and room keys ready for their arrival. The transport services are headed by a Transport Supervisor who reports to the Lobby Manager.

The transport services key tasks are to:

1. Provide efficient transport service to and from the airport and city centre to guests.
2. Provide transportation to hotel executives on official business.
3. Help load and unload baggage.
4. Keep the transport clean and well maintained.
5. Maintain all the necessary documents concerning each transport and keep them updated.

Chapter 15 'Uniformed Services' gives a comprehensive view of their duties and responsibilities including their job descriptions.

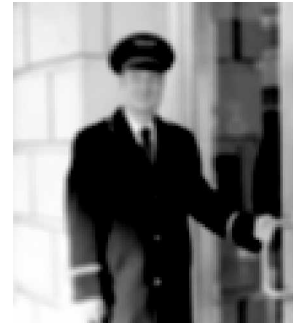
Doorman

The doorman is important because he is the first and last hotel employee who is in contact with the guest upon his or her arrival and departure. In recognition of this,

the doorman is given a resplendent uniform and is smart and personable. Ideally he should speak many languages but fluency in the English language is desirable.

The doorman's main duties are to:

1. Welcome the guest to the hotel.
2. Assist in loading and unloading the guest baggage from the transport.
3. Open the hotel doors and perhaps escort the guest to the registration desk.
4. Control the traffic at the entrance to avoid traffic congestion at the entrance.
5. Support the valet parking attendants, on gala nights and daytime functions. They may park guest automobiles in smaller properties.
6. Perform security functions as keeper of the hotel portal.
7. Hail taxis for guests.



Chapter 15 'Uniform Services' gives more accurate accounts of their duties including their job description.

Valet Parking Attendant

Valet parking is a service provided by superior hotels as a value-added facility. Some hotels may charge for this service while others give it as a free facility. In any case the valet attendants make side money from tips given by guests. Valet parking attendants are licensed drivers with skills in driving a variety of cars both manual and automatic. Cars handed to valet parking attendants become the responsibility of the hotel as against those that are personally parked by guests. Most hotels keep signs posted at car parks informing that the guests park cars at their own risk, thereby absolving the hotel from any damaged or stolen vehicles. However, cars parked by valet attendants are kept in safe areas under security surveillance.



The Valet Parking Attendant's main tasks are to:

1. Park private automobiles of guests.
2. Control car keys and ensure that they are handed to the rightful owner. This is done by issuing numbered tickets. The guest has to produce his ticket to claim the car.

Chapter 15 'Uniformed Services' gives a detailed job description.

Summary

The Front Office is a comprehensive term that encompasses reservations, reception, front office cashiering, telecommunication and uniformed services. Being in the main lobby, the department is the first and last point of physical contact with the hotel. It is, therefore, responsible to uphold the image of the property. In other words, the Front Office is the face of the hotel.



Key Terms

Central Reservations	a single point from which reservations are made for a chain
Chain	series of hotels under a single brand name
International Reservations	a global reservation office that makes reservations on behalf of any hotel that subscribes to it
Overbooking	reserving rooms beyond the hotel room capacity
Room revenue day	12 noon to 12 noon of the next day
Room tariff	room rate
Sale	lease of room for a period
Walk-ins	guests without prior reservations
Yield management	a pricing strategy to get maximum revenue at peak and low business cycles.



Review Quiz

True or False

1. Front Office creates the image of the hotel.
2. The revenue day for a room starts at 12 noon and ends at 12 midnight.
3. Housekeeping is part of the accommodations division.
4. A function of the Front Office is to maintain accurate room status information.
5. Key control is a vital activity of the Front Office.
6. A Lobby Manager represents the Front Office Manager throughout the day and night.
7. The Guest Relations Executive maintains guest history cards.

8. A walk-in is a guest with a confirmed reservation.
9. The transport section provides airport pick-up and drop.
10. The challenge for a doorman is the control of car keys.

Match the following:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| 1. Reservation Agent | ___ | (a) box office tickets |
| 2. Front Office Agent | ___ | (b) first welcome |
| 3. Concierge | ___ | (c) wake calls |
| 4. Bell Desk | ___ | (d) guest folio |
| 5. Doorman | ___ | (e) parking |
| 6. Valet parking | ___ | (f) management representative |
| 7. Lobby Manager | ___ | (g) guest history |
| 8. Guest Relations | ___ | (h) overbooking |
| 9. Front Office Cashier | ___ | (i) room position |
| 10. Telecommunications | ___ | (k) left luggage |

Write short notes on the following:

1. Role of a Front Office Agent
2. Role of Guest Relations
3. Role of Lobby Manager



Training Methodology

This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use pre-prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations as training aids.

The lecture can be supported by an organisation chart of the Front Office.

A field tour to a hotel is essential. A Front Office representative can explain the duties and responsibilities. Most hotel management students must ensure that they do an internship in the Front Office as it is necessary to understand its functions irrespective of which part of the hotel they will finally work. Of course, Front Office provides a meaningful career to those who opt for it.

13 Reservations

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help readers learn the importance of the reservations function as also the systems and procedures followed to give quality service.

INTRODUCTION

Reservation function is a section of the Front Office department. A reservation, in hotel parlance, is the process of booking a room before the arrival of a guest so that the room is available at the time the guest checks-in. The reservation process involves taking the guest's requests for a particular room if any, at an agreed price and recording such requests precisely and confirming the reservation. A reservation agent is one who takes room bookings (Please refer to the Job Description at the end of this Chapter) and has moved a long way from being a booking clerk to one who influences room revenue. The agent is assisted by Property Management Systems (PMS) when quoting prices.



The reservation agent initiates the electronic reservation form of the PMS that will later be used by front desk colleagues and other departments. The electronic reservation form registers the guest profile also. The information on the PMS upgrades various databases and reports, in the system. The reservations section therefore is the nerve centre for room revenues and profitability. Before we can go into the reservation procedures, it is important to be familiar with some reservation terminology which will be used in this and later chapters.

RESERVATION TERMINOLOGY

The reservations terminology pervades the entire front office operations and the rest of the hotel services that support room sales. It is important for front office professionals to learn these terms to fulfil their tasks.

Allowances	Daily fixed cash paid-outs by the hotel cashier to airline crews recovered from the airline at a later date.
Amendments	Changes made in records concerning a guest's stay.
Cancellation	A confirmed booking that has been withdrawn by the guest.
Confirmation	A room reservation that has been confirmed in writing by a guest.
Check-in	The process of registering a guest into a hotel.
Double Occupancy	Two guests staying in a room.
Group	Fifteen persons and above who travel together.
Guaranteed Booking	A room booking confirmed in writing by a guest.
Guest	A client of the hotel.
Forecast	A studied anticipation of room business.
Free Sale	Rooms that are available for booking.
FIT	Stands for 'Free Individual Travellers' who are independent guests who book their room directly.
GIT	Group Inclusive Traveller.
Lay-over	Airline passengers catching a connecting flight of the airline sometime later.
On-request	A status when guests are waitlisted for a room booking confirmation.
Overbooking	Booking rooms that are beyond the room capacity of the hotel.
Pax	Person
Revision	Change in booking instructions.
Room Availability	The room position when rooms are available for sale.
Room Blocking	Making a room unavailable for sale.
Room-Night	A charge for a one night of room occupation, spanning two days from noon to noon.
Sale	A room space sold.

Sold Out	A status in which all the rooms in the hotel are sold.
Single Occupancy	One guest staying in a room.
Waitlist	A guest awaiting a confirmation of the room booking

TYPES OF ROOMS

A reservation agent must have knowledge of the rooms of the hotel available for sale. Each hotel has a variety of rooms to meet the needs of guests.



- A single guest would like to stay in a single room to be cost-effective.
- A couple will find a double room more convenient.
- A family may choose a suite to have more leg room for children to move around.
- A business executive may want a special suite to transact business, entertain privately or show off his financial status to his or her clients.
- Budget groups may be willing to share twin rooms.
- Up market groups may prefer single rooms.

Guest needs are endless and their motives for booking a type of room may be varied.

A typical hotel will have the following types of rooms:

Adjacent Room	Two rooms facing each other across the corridor
Adjoining Room	Two rooms beside each other on the same side of the corridor
Cabana	A room with a sofa cum bed ideally situated beside swimming pools or at beaches
Connecting Room	Two rooms with an interconnecting door, ideal for a family
Double Room	A room with one king-size double bed
Executive Room	A room with additional features like Internet connections, computer points, mini bars, etc.; specially designed for the business executive
Single Room	A room with a single bed
Studio	A room with a sofa cum bed
Triplet	A double room with one extra roll-away cot
Twin Room	A room with two single beds

Quad	A room for four people fitted with twin beds and two roll-away beds
Queen Room	A room with a queen-sized bed for single or double occupancy

Suites

Junior Suite	A room with a seating parlour and a bed
Double Suite	Two rooms, one serving as a living-cum-dining area and the other a bedroom with a double bed
Duplex Suite	Two suites on two floors with an inter connecting staircase
Executive Suite	Suite specially fitted for business executives (as explained in an executive room)
Single Suite	Two rooms, one serving as a living-cum-dining area and another a bedroom with a single bed
Tourist Huts	An independent suite detached from the main hotel. They will be found in resorts for greater privacy and exclusivity. Some suites have independent mini-kitchens.

TYPES OF RATES AND PLANS

A hotel normally develops room rates based on various purposes it serves:

- 1. Minimum-moderate-maximum rates.** These rates are arrived at by evaluating the rates quoted by competition and the contribution required from room revenue to meet operational costs and investment. The reservation agent then gets the flexibility to offer rates to the guest's budget. The location of rooms for instance, can influence price. A prime view can attract maximum rates than one with restricted views.
- 2. The rack rate.** This is the rate of the day based on market trends. The rack ranges from the maximum rate during peak season to the minimum rate during off season.
- 3. Room plans.** A room plan is a package proposal of rooms and meals.

These plans are as follows:

European Plan (EP)	Charges for the room only
American Plan (AP)	Charges for room and all meals
Modified American Plan (MAP)	Charges for room plus breakfast and lunch or dinner
Continental Plan	Charges for room and a continental breakfast
Bed and Breakfast	Charges for room and English breakfast.

Guest decisions on opting for a particular plan is influenced by their tour itineraries such as:

- Business guests are entertained by clients or eat at restaurants closer to the place of work. They may prefer to pay for the room without meal options. They opt for EP.
- Shoppers grab a bite from a hotdog stand or in a food court when on the move. They may prefer a hearty breakfast only. They may opt for bed and breakfast or CP.
- Tourists may like to start the day with a hearty breakfast before venturing out on sightseeing tours and return to a warm dinner. They would like to skip the lunch option. They may opt for MAP.
- Families on holidays do not want the chores of cooking and may opt for AP.
- Again there are some whose daily schedule is uncertain and may opt for the room and a morning breakfast before setting out.

Meal Menus related to Plans

It is only but fair that the reservation agent is familiar with the way meals are priced as they would negotiate rates with the room plans given earlier. Some basic knowledge of the way meals are priced is given as under:



A la Carte Menu: This is a menu in which each food item is separately priced to give the guest choice to suit his or her taste and budget. Each course has a number of choices. The courses generally follow an accepted sequence.

MENU	
Starters	Vegetables
Soups	Breads
Seafood	Deserts
Meats	Beverages
Poultry	

A la Carte Menu

Guests on the European plan without meal options will select, meals from an *a la carte* menu in any restaurant of the hotel. Naturally the meals would cost more as these are commercial rates for the general public. The guests, however, have the advantage of choosing dishes of their choice.

Table d'hote Menu: This is a menu which prices the entire meal, irrespective of whether the guest avails of the entire meal or not. Sometimes there is a choice of two dishes under each course to accommodate those who are vegetarian or allergic to certain meats or prefer white meats to red meats for health reasons.

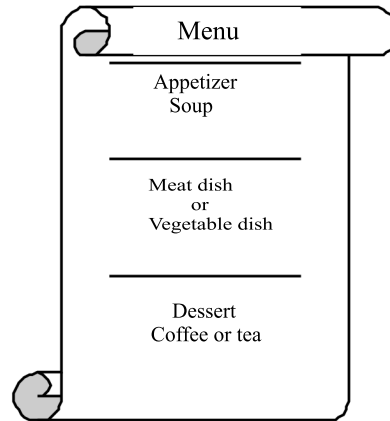


Table d' hote Menu

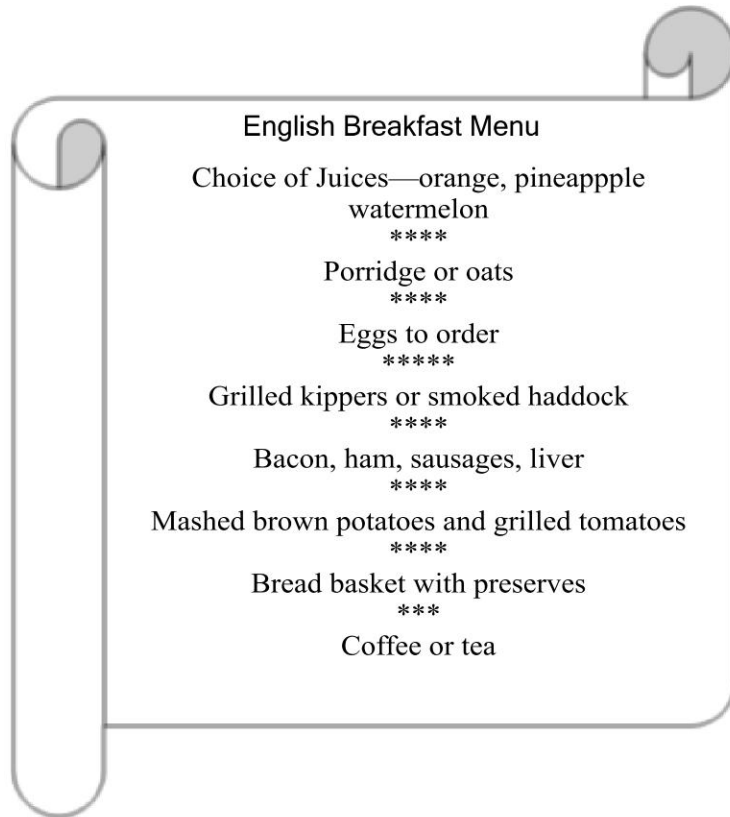
Resort properties with dining rooms may opt for this style of menu based on the availability of local raw materials. They build the menu around seasonal offerings. It is offered in American Plans and Modified American Plans. The *table d' hote* menu is economical from the hotel's point of view as they can choose raw materials that are least expensive.

Breakfast Menus: There are three types of breakfast menus: (1) the English breakfast; (2) the Continental breakfast; and (3) the American breakfast.

1. English breakfasts offer the following:

- choice of juices, assorted fruit cuts, stewed fruit, flavoured yoghurt
- choice of cereals
- eggs to order (fried, scrambled, poached, omelette, boiled)
- choice of meat dishes for breakfast like bacon, sausages or ham, kippers, breakfast steaks
- hash brown potatoes and grilled tomato
- toasts and assorted breads with butter
- preserves like jam, marmalade and honey tea or coffee

Most bed and breakfast plans in the UK and Ireland will offer the English breakfast.

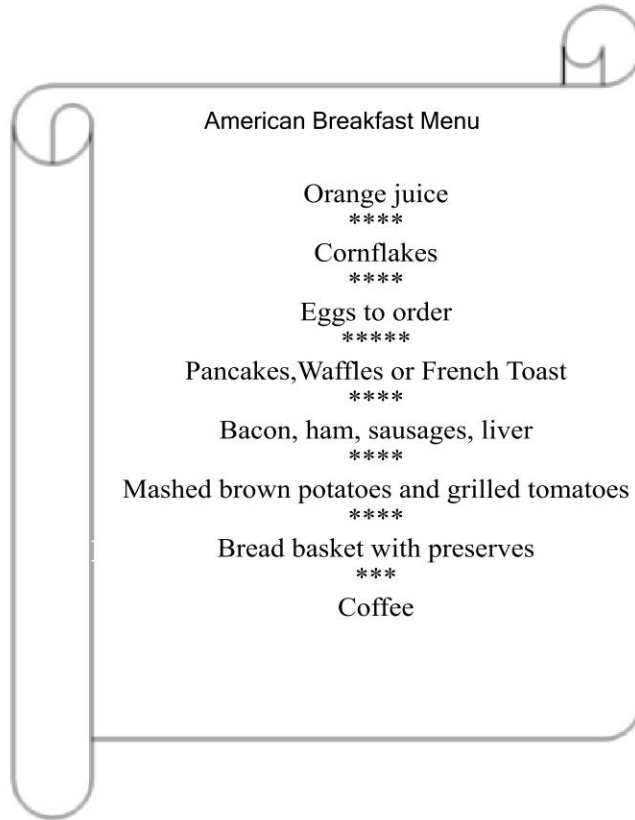


2. Continental breakfasts offer the following:

- assorted juices, assorted fruit cuts and flavoured yoghurt
- assorted breads with butter
- preserves like jam, honey and marmalade
- cold meat cuts
- assorted, cheese, tea or coffee

The Continental Plan offers this style of breakfast. It emanates from the eating habits in Europe especially France who lead in gourmet innovations.

- 3. American breakfast** is an English breakfast with the addition of waffles or pancakes with maple syrup for the sweet toothed. Coffee is drunk throughout the meal. Traditionally, the American Plans and Modified American Plans offer American breakfasts but as travel has spread worldwide, the breakfasts are altered to local practices and tastes.



Lunch Menus: Lunch menus can vary from elaborate meals to light meals depending on the purpose and culture of the guest. Businesspersons prefer sandwiches, salads, and soups due to limited time at lunch breaks or are weight watchers. Salad bars have become an important part of most luncheon restaurants to accommodate the health conscious. Buffets are popular at lunch time to save time for those with limited lunch breaks.

Dinner Menus: These menus are elaborate as guests have more time and leisure for eating. Dinner menus are an entertainment and people want more than just food. Alcoholic drinks are an essential part of dinner menus though guests have to pay for it separately and not part of the plans. Some European countries may include a glass of house wine within the meal plan.

Buffet Service: It is a self-service where food is displayed on tables. Dishes on the buffet table are attractively



displayed and can have soup, salads, vegetarian spreads, meat spreads, breads or rice, and a dessert. They may have a choice of each to accommodate varied tastes. The guest take plates stacked at the beginning of the table and proceed along the table requesting the buffet attendant to serve him or he serves himself.

Sit-down buffets have tables laid with cutlery and glassware.

Hotels with group business prefer the buffet service as it is quick and requires minimum service staff to manage volume meals. The coffee shop is the preferred restaurant for group eating as it is casual and easily accessible from the lobby. Most groups on American Plans and Modified American prefer the buffet style of service. Convention hotels, suburban hotels where training programmes take place, and Group Hotels use the buffet service for all meals.

Other Rates

In addition to the plans, there are other rates that reservation agents quote. These are:

Airline Contract Rate	A special negotiated rate for airline crews.
Corporate Rate	A rate for business houses that guarantee a minimum number of room nights per year.
Crib Rate	A cradle or basinet provided in a room for infants.
Day Rate	A rate for guests who are not staying overnight
Diplomatic Rate	A negotiated discounted rate to attract diplomatic business.
Extra Bed	A wheeled foldable bed that is added in a room on the guest's request.
Family Rate	A rate found in resorts for families on holiday.
Frequent Traveller Rate	A rate that gains discounts for frequent use of the property under a loyalty programme.
Group Rate	A discounted rate for groups in view of volume business.
Government Rate	A negotiated discounted rate with government bodies for their travelling officials and foreign visitors.
Hotel Federation Rate	A courtesy rate to all members of the hotel federation
Maximum-Moderate-Minimum Rate	A price range to maximize revenue according to the circumstances
Package Rate	A rate quoted when there are events in the city and includes the price of access to the events.

Rack Rate	The official rate of the hotel on a given day.
Trade Rate	A negotiated discounted rate with trade organizations that guarantee a minimum number of room nights
Travel Agents Rate	A negotiated rate for volume business
Travel Writers	A discounted rate to encourage them to write about the hotel and facilities
U.N. Rate	A negotiated rate for all local United Nations representatives for the U.N. staff provided they guarantee a minimum number of room nights

Discounted rates are a percentage of charge off from the published rate offered to institutions and individuals to procure volume business or as a public relations gesture. Discounts are subject to revision on mutually agreed terms between parties. The reservation agent needs to keep updated on prevalent discounted rates.

SOURCES OF RESERVATIONS

A 'source' is classified as any individual or body that actually pays a hotel for its services. A reservation agent has a large market from which s/he receives reservations. The principle sources of reservation are:

Tour Operators: Tour operator's package tour programmes and sells them in bulk worldwide. They are wholesalers who coordinate with hotels, surface transporters, airlines, cruise ships, tourist offices, etc., to put together an all inclusive trip to a destination. We often read advertisements of 'Three days and two nights in Kathmandu' or 'A week pleasure cruise to Alaska'. These ambitious travel programmes are compiled by tour operators who market them through travel agents who are neighbourhood retailers in each city. Hotels prefer to deal with tour operators as room business comes in bulk.

Travel Agents: Travel Agents are retailers located in convenient places in cities and up country. They take a commission from the tour operators to sell their travel packages.

Ordinary citizens would find attractive posters and brochures displaying these travel packages in the travel agents' show windows. In addition to selling tour packages, travel agents also independently promote hotel accommodation and airline bookings taking advantage of special discounts and commissions from these establishments. A reservation agent gives a lot of importance to them as they are the ones in contact with the ultimate guest in a location.



Hotels usually follow the following practice in dealing with travel agents:

1. Give 10 per cent—20 per cent commission on rooms.
2. Give the commission on boarding and lodging charges for bookings on an American Plan.
3. Give the commission on room only for bookings on the European Plan.
4. Commission is payable for the entire stay of the guest up to a maximum of 21 days.
5. Commission is payable on the rack rate. However, if discounts are given on room charges the hotel has the right to deny the commission.
6. Hotels planning a partnership are obliged to fill any questionnaire submitted by the travel agent.
7. Either party cannot place a condition to advertise each other. The partnership is purely on a relationship basis.
8. Travel agents are forbidden to quote rates in excess of rates agreed upon.
9. Travel agents must get at least 1 month notice before a revision of room tariffs.
10. Hotels agree to give a complimentary room to a bona fide tour leader for a group comprising 15 members and above. A discount of 50 per cent is given to the tour leader of the group is less than 15 but more than 10 members.
11. Should a hotel not be able to give the room negotiated, it is obliged to give a superior room at the rate of the original booking. If an inferior room is given, then the lower price is charged.
12. Hotels operating on the European Plan only, may accept bookings on the American Plan provided it is a group booking of 15 persons or more.



Airlines business is sought after by hotels for the image factor and certain volume business throughout the year. Airline crews bring a lot of glamour to a property and though the airlines squeeze as much of discounts of room rates because of their business, hotels still pursue them to get business. Airline contracts are negotiated by the management who welcome such business because they are assured of a certain steady business throughout the year.

Corporate Houses are another source of volume business because they have better funds. Rates are negotiated for minimum room nights a year. The more the room nights guaranteed by a business house the better is the rate. The sales and marketing department of the



hotel actively pursues this business as they are lucrative and reliable. Other aspects of corporate business are their company training programmes and corporate meetings. Hotels can get volume room sales by harnessing this business. Resorts try to capture this business to give business and pleasure, especially during off-season months when corporate houses can avail of off-season discounts on rooms.

Embassies and Consulates are a source of lucrative business for hotels located at cities where the diplomatic core has established offices. Diplomatic officials travel throughout the year and a good hotel would like to capture that business. Under this category come the United Nations employees who visit the city on assignments. The local U.N. office would then be the source for bookings.

Free Individual Travelers (FITs) provide the bread and butter business on a regular basis. FITs are individual guests who book rooms directly with the hotel. They choose a property based on the quality of service, recommendations of others, image of the establishment, budget and convenience. Hotels try to get their repeat business through recognition programmes and by maintaining guest history cards. FITs nowadays are becoming a greater source of business because of the convenience of booking directly through the web from the comfort of their homes and offices. Websites provide all information including virtual tours of properties to assist the FIT to make a choice.

Central Reservation Offices (CRS) are another expanding phenomenon to make bookings easier. They provide toll free telephone numbers to encourage travellers to use their facility. These establishments are 'one-stop-shops' and have reservation tie-ups with all corners of the earth. The central reservation system is ideal for independent operators who have limited budgets to promote their property worldwide. They register with non-affiliate reservation systems on a subscription basis, like the Leading Hotels of the World, Preferred Hotels, Distinguished Hotels, and Steigenberger Reservation System, etc. Hotel chains have their own central reservations (Affiliate Reservation Network) to not only fill their hotels in the chain but also hotels with referral tie-ups in locations where they do not have hotels. Depending on the season, hotels give free sale of rooms to a certain limit to the CRS who do not have to check with them to confirm a booking. In busy seasons, they will have to communicate with properties before they can confirm a booking.

Chains may divide the world of operations into regions like North and South America, Asia Pacific, Middle-East, Africa and Europe. Chains may commission Regional Reservation Offices to serve a region. Each regional office can serve other regional offices as well for outbound traffic from their region. Airlines have now jumped on the bandwagon of central reservation systems to serve their passengers with value added facilities of hotel bookings in addition to the airline seat. Global Distribution Systems like SABRE, Galileo International, Amadeus and Worldspan have created

distribution networks to hotels, travel agents, airlines and tour operators, worldwide (please see Global Distribution Systems section later in the lesson).

Another facility for independent hotels especially is the Intersell Agency that represents other companies in the travel chain like airlines, rent-a-car, cruise liners, etc. They have the benefit of receiving hotel reservation request for travellers using other services that they represent. For example, a person renting a car may want a suggestion for a suitable hotel en route when he is travelling cross country.

Hotel Websites are the new popular way to get bookings. Hotels have spent a lot of investment in making hotel websites user-friendly. Guests can fill on-site reservation forms that register rooms directly with the hotel. They can also get instant confirmations. Websites have reached a level of sophistication that offers virtual tours of the hotel before they choose a room.

Associations are another great source of business. Associations like the Medical Association, Automobile Association, Free Masons, Trade Associations, Hotel Federation, etc., have business meetings, local conferences and annual conventions during the year that bring in volume business. Reservation agents would like to tap local associations to tie-up their year long business. Local associations network with regional and international offices, and therefore can procure worldwide business.

Government Offices often have their own guest houses and hostels for stay. However, they do give their senior officials and guests superior accommodations in hotels. They are a valuable source of business. While government business is often on low budgets they add image and credibility to the establishment.

Referral Hotels are those independent hotels that do not have the clout of chain operations, and therefore get-together to recommend each other to guests staying in their property, provided the establishment does not have a hotel in that location. Chain hotels too have referral hotels that match their standards of quality at locations where they do not have a property. An airline ties-up with referral hotels to attract passengers. In such a tie-up, airline staff recommends hotel stay when booking the airline seat. We often hear the cabin crew of airlines recommending a hotel before they are due to land at a location. We must remember that at one time airlines spawned great hotels.

Most airlines have disinvested their stake in hotels as economic measures post the oil crisis created by the OPEC nations.

Global Distribution System (GDS)

A global distribution system is a network of providers driven by computer technology that brings travel products and services geographically spread across the world to the doorstep of consumers anywhere in the world. While most of them started with airlines

reservations they are now adapted to hotel reservations too. Most hotels subscribe to these systems as a valued source of room reservations. Some popular GDSs are:

- Sabre Computer Systems
- Amadeus Computer System
- Galileo Central Reservations System
- World Span
- SMART

Sabre Computer System

Semi-Automated Business Research Environment (SABRE) is a computerised GDS used by airlines, railways, travel agents, and other travel companies. It is a system promoted by the Sabre Travel Network division of Sabre Holdings. The system was developed to help the American Airline in 1950 to solve a major problem of bookings by outdated manual methods. The old system used a rotating file with cards for every flight which a team of eight operators would sort through. If a seat was booked they would place a mark on the side of the card and knew visually whether the flight was full. The entire process to the point of writing out a ticket took 90 minutes on an average. The system was limited for growth as it could take only eight operators who could not cope with additional flights. An automated system was definitely required in the jet age and when people were more time conscious.

It was at this juncture that an IBM salesman Blair Smith who was flying American Airlines had a chance meeting with his neighbouring passenger—C.R. Smith, the President of American Airlines. He proposed a technology already developed for the military to coordinate radars worldwide to intercept enemy bombers. The technology involved locating teletype machines at the various radar sites that fed information into a central system.

The American Airlines adopted the concept and placed teletype machines at ticketing offices across the United States that sought or fed the information into a central system. The system called SABRE was installed in 1960 based on two IBM 7090 mainframes later upgraded to IBM/360 based presently in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Originally used by only American Airlines the system was expanded to travel agents in 1976 and today connects 30,000 travel agents, and 3 million consumers with more than 400 airlines, 50 car-rental companies, 35,000 hotels and dozens of railways, tour companies, ferries and cruise lines. IBM used their successful technology to other airlines developing the DELTAMATIC for Delta Airlines and PANAMAC for Pan American World Airways. In 1968, they perfected the system calling it the PARS system that could accommodate any sized airline.

In 2000, the American Airlines made SABRE a public corporation under Sabre Holdings. The Travelocity website is owned by this company and serves as a consumer interface to the system. Today it has a market share of 30.8 per cent of global reservations. It is partnered with Abacus a CRS which was founded by All Nippon Airways, Cathay Pacific Airways, China Airlines and Singapore Airlines, to cover the Asian markets.

Amadeus Computer System

Amadeus, founded in 1987, has the most extensive distribution network with the most international bookings in the world. Amadeus was formed by an alliance between Air France, Lufthansa, Siberian Airlines and Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) specialising in IT solutions to manage airline, train, cruise ship, rental car, and hotel and travel bookings. Through Amadeus 67,000 travel agency locations and 10,000 airline sales offices worldwide are able to make bookings with:

- 490 airlines, representing more than 95 per cent of the world's scheduled airline seats
- 70,000 hotel properties
- 45 car rental companies, serving over 29,000 locations
- Other travel providers, e.g. ferry, rail, cruise liners, insurance companies and tour operators.

Amadeus has subscribers in more than 217 countries worldwide delivering localised solutions for marketing, customer services and support through a network of over 70 National Marketing Companies (NMCs). It has a worldwide NMCs, headquarters in Miami, Florida and Madrid Spain. Other major offices are in Sophia Antipolis, France and Erding, Germany. There are IT service centres in London and Sydney. The Amadeus Global Travel Distribution System is the world's largest electronic reservations system by market share, used by the entire travel industry. Today, it has a market share of 31 per cent of airline reservations.

Galileo Central Reservations System

The Galileo Central Reservations System is one of the main computer reservation systems designed for the travel industry by a consortium of airlines. It is currently owned by Travelport.

Travelport is one of the world's largest travel conglomerates, operating leading brands such as Galileo and Worldspan which use Travelport Global Distribution System (GDS) and GTA a group travel and wholesale hotel business. Travelport also owns 48 per cent of Orbitz Worldwide, a leading online travel company.

Travelport GDS is currently working towards the introduction of a new customer tool—for suppliers and travel agents—that will accurately measure carbon emissions as its commitment to eco-tourism.

Orbitz, on the other hand, sponsors 'Voluntourism' holidays for its employees to promote ecotourism. It also has a micro-site that features environment friendly hotels.

Galileo was created by a group of European airlines to replace the existing multi-access systems that allowed a single travel agent terminal to switch between the reservations systems of different airlines. Such systems were used in the UK, Ireland, Italy, Switzerland, and Austria. The multi-access system was cumbersome as an agent booking a multi-itinerary had to make separate bookings for each airline in its own system. The Galileo system by contrast holds information on all airlines in a single database and allows a single booking record to be created.

Almost all airlines in the world are accessible through Galileo or similar systems. The main exceptions are some of the smaller less technological airlines in Africa and the former communist states, or airlines set up specifically for Internet sales only. They can, however, be shown on an itinerary in Galileo by using dummy segment to allow a complete itinerary to be printed for the passenger.

The system is not confined solely to ticket sales. Depending on the restrictions of the airfare and the airline policies, requests can be made for specific seats, special meals and other requests. Galileo, like other GDSs can also be used to book hotels, car hire, and even train tickets.

In 1997, Galileo International Inc. bought the Apollo Reservation System designed by the United Airlines in 1976. In December 2006, TravelPort agreed to buy and merge with Worldspan GDS. Due to merging delays, both systems are currently working in parallel. It has a market share of 26.4 per cent.

Worldspan

Worldspan is a technology company with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia that specializes in travel related software and systems. Its primary system is commonly known as a Global Distribution System that is software used by travel agents, and travel related websites to book airline tickets, hotel rooms, rental cars, and associated products and services. Worldspan also developed and maintains the Deltamatic system which is used exclusively by Delta Airlines for reservations and operations.

Worldspan was formed in early 1990 by Delta Airlines, Northwest Airlines, and Trans World Airlines to operate and sell its GDS services to travel agencies worldwide. In mid 2003, Worldspan was sold by its owner airlines to Citigroup Venture Capital and Ontario Teachers' Pension Fund. In December 2006, TravelPort owner of Galileo GDS and Orbitz agreed to buy and merge with Worldspan. It has a market share of 15.1 per cent.

Scandinavian Multi-access Reservations for Travel Agents (SMART)

SMART is a computerised system for ticket reservations created in 1979 by SAS, Braathens and the Swedish Railways. Before SMART, travel agents and travel companies had their own computer reservation systems often involving widely different codes and procedures. It was cumbersome and expensive for a travel agency to have multiple terminals, each one connected to a different provider. SMART solved this by providing a single interface over the public data network Datex. It worked by having a Host Interface Processor (HIP) at each travel company. These would translate a number of terminals, translate the message, codes and addresses, wrap them in SMART's own communications protocol, and provide the interface over Datex to the various travel agencies.

On the travel agencies side, there would be SMART Terminal Equipment (STE) with the reverse function, translating a server and providing interfaces for terminals. A travel agent could easily switch between screens for the different companies. The STE would also allow printing of documents, tickets, bills, and interface with accounting systems. Parallel sessions could be held with different or the same provider.

SMART was bought off by Amadeus and is now called Amadeus Scandinavia.

List of Global Distribution Systems Worldwide

- Amadeus
- 1B Abacus (Asia/Pacific)
- 1E Travelsky (China)
- 1F Infini (Japan)
- 1G Galeleo International
- 1J Axess (Japan)
- 1P Worldspan
- 1S Sabre
- 1U ITA software
- 1V Apollo (Galileo)
- Atraxis (ex Swissair now EDS)
- Topas (Korea)
- Fantasia (South Pacific)
- N1 Nextres' Iridian Project (Scandinavia)

- SITAs Gabriel
- Ix-Hotel (international)
- TechSpan

Modes of Reservations

Some popular modes used by guests to make room reservations are:

1. E-mail—It has vastly revolutionised communication. Today a written confirmation by an e-mail is accepted in business communication.
2. Post, faxes and SMS.
3. Websites—Modern reservation software gives instant confirmation to guests through the web.
4. Telephone calls
5. Personal visits by local representatives of the guests—Many guests still want the comfort of human contact when making reservation.

The reservation agent will, therefore, be important in the foreseeable future.

Types of Reservations

Reservations may be broadly classified into three broad categories:

1. Confirmed Reservations
2. Non-confirmed Reservations
3. Group Reservations

Confirmed Reservations and Modes of Payment A confirmed reservation assures the guest a room at the time of his or her arrival. To make this possible, the hotel requires some assurances against a no-show.

Reservation agents have found some tools to ensure this:

1. **Booking in writing:** This is a good proof of sincere intent for a room booking. Today e-mail bookings are accepted and are quick to give room confirmations.
2. **Prepayment** in full is the best confirmation of intent. Some ask for payment for the first night stay to cover themselves against a 'no show' in a busy season. Resorts in remote areas ask for prepayments because they are unable to immediately fill rooms in the case of a 'no-show'. 'No show' is a term when a confirmed guest does not arrive.

3. *Credit Card* numbers are a popular method of confirming bookings. A hotel asks for the credit card number at the time of booking and will charge the card in case of a 'no-show'. Of course the reservation agent must check if the credit card offered is accepted by the establishment. Some universally accepted credit cards are the Visa, Mastercard, and American Express.
4. *Advance deposit* is another assurance for bookings usually used for longer stay or group bookings. The advance deposit covers at least one night stay. The deposit is forfeited in case of a last minute cancellation. Hotels may insist on this from unknown travel agents or those not registered with the hotel.
5. *Penalty charges* are incorporated in the case of negotiated contracts with airlines, associations, corporate houses, etc. The clauses may permit charging one night stay to the agency for a no-show.
6. *Miscellaneous Charge Orders (MCOs)* are issued by travel agencies to guests who pay the room charges to the travel agent. The guests present the MCO at the time of check-in who recovers the room charges from the travel agent later.

Non-Confirmed Reservations Non-confirmed reservations are for those guests who have not secured their room booking in writing or by other instruments mentioned earlier. Such guests have to wait for the check-out time of 12 noon to secure a room. Even then the first priority is given to those guests with confirmed reservations. A no-show would be the best opportunity for the guest to secure a room around the cancellation hour of 4 p.m.

RESERVATIONS OPERA PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PMS)*

It is a relief to note that modern front office software takes care of every step automatically. The reservation agent fills in details of the guest directly into the computer which automatically processes information for various needs. One such popular PMS is the Opera Property Management System. Smaller hotels may commission software engineers to customize PMS to suit their limited needs. For the purpose of this manual we shall look at the Opera PMS. Let us explore the various features of an automated system.

* (Note: This portion is reproduced with the permission of the local office of MICROS Systems Inc. It is only a representation of the Opera PMS and not construed as a training manual. Please refer to the authorised Reference Manual of the company for training purposes).

Making a Reservation

Step 1: Pick the phone before the third ring. Since this is the first point of contact of a guest with the hotel, s/he evaluates the efficiency of the hotel on the basis of how the reservation agent handles the reservation request. We must remember that guests are widely travelled these days and can discern one hotel experience from another. Answering the phone promptly is the first sign of efficiency. A guest does not want to keep waiting to be attended to. If busy the reservation agent will say, “Reservation, good morning, I am taking another reservation, would you like to stay on the line or may I call you back”. If the guest chooses the later option, make sure to take the name and telephone number correctly by repeating the information.

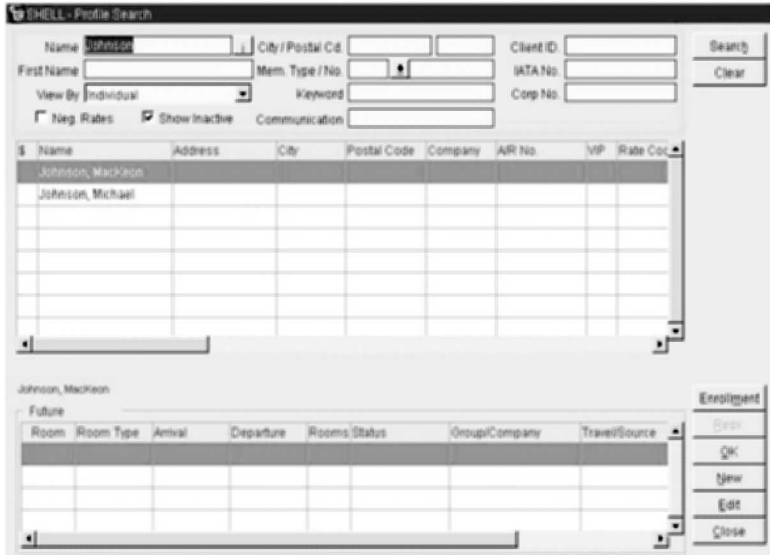
If free, the reservation agent should answer by saying, “Reservations, good morning, how may I help you?”

Step 2: The guest requests for a room reservation on certain dates. 1. Use the **F5** function key to open the **RATE INFORMATION** screen, then select **Rate Query** (diagram below) or from the main menu, select **Reservations** then **New Reservation**. Alternately, you may press the **F7** function key to bring a new reservation.

The screenshot shows a window titled "SHELL - Rate Query". The form is organized into several sections:

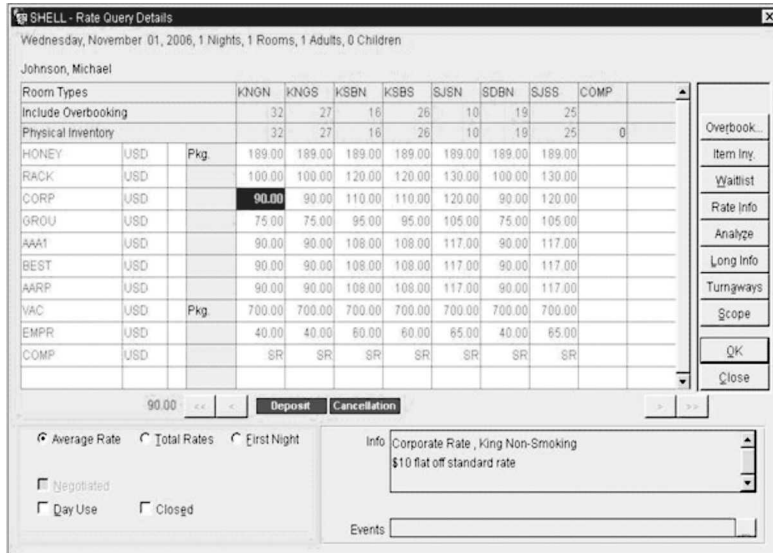
- Arrival/Departure Section:** Arrival date (11-01-06), Nights (1), Departure date (11-02-06), Adults (1), Children (0), and No. of Rooms (1).
- Guest Profile Section:** Name, Block, Member Type, Member No., Company, CORP No., Agent, IATA No., and Source No.
- Show Rates Section:** Checkboxes for Closed, Day Use, and Pseudo.
- Rate Selection Section:** Rate Class, Room Class, Rate Category, Features, Rate Code, and Packages.
- Additional Options:** Incl Non Deduct checkbox.
- Buttons:** Last Resv., OK, and Close.

1. Enter an Arrival date and number of Nights to qualify the rate information.
2. Then, enter the number of Adults and/or Children.
3. If the guest has stayed at your hotel before, enter his/her name in the **Name** field so that you may use their profile to expedite the reservation and also view the guest's preferences and/or stay history. The Profile Search appears:



- 4. Either enter the last Name of the existing profile or select New to create a new profile. Complete the applicable fields and select OK to return to the RATE QUERY screen.

The **RATE QUERY** screen appears with available rates and room types, in a grid format, for your hotel on the requested dates.



Along the top of the screen are the **Room Types**, while **Rate Codes** list along the left side. In the center of the grid are actual **Rates**.

Rates that are **GREEN** in color indicate availability for that Room Type and Rate Code, where those **RED** in color indicate no availability. Selecting a cell within the grid displays Rate and Room Type information in the gray box in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen. This box also contains any rate specific information, such as Rate Features, Rate Restrictions or Deposit/Cancellation information. The buttons along the right side of the screen offer supplemental information and additional options like Overbooking, Waitlisting, Additional Charges, etc

5. **Close:** closes the Rate Query Details screen
6. After making a Rate and Room selection within the grid, select **OK** to move forward with the reservation. The **RESERVATION** screen appears:

The screenshot shows the 'SHELL - Reservation' window. The form is divided into several sections:

- Guest Information:** Name (Johnson), First Name (Michael), Title (Mr.), Country (US), Language (E), VIP, Phone (443-555-1234), Member Type, Member No., Member Lvl, Agent, Company, Group, Source, Contact.
- More Fields:**
 - Arrival:** 11-01-06, Wednesday, Nights: 1
 - Departure:** 11-02-06, Thursday, Adults: 1, Child: 0
 - No. of Rms.:** 1
 - Room Type:** KNGN, RTC: KNGN, Room, Extn.,
 - Rate Code:** CORP, Fixed Rate, Rate: 90.00, Curr: USD, Packages, Block Code, ETA
 - Res. Type:** CC (Credit Card C), Market: IND (Individual Co), Source: GD (Guest Direct), Origin, Payment: VS (Visa), Credit Card No: 4444333322221111, Exp. Date: 1208, CRS No., Approval Code, Approval Amt, Suite With, Confirmation
 - Guest Balance:** 0.00, Disc. Amt, Reason, TA Rec Loc, Specials, Comments, Item Inv.
- Footer:** Created By: SUPERVISOR, On: 06-27-06, Updated By: SUPERVISOR, On: 06-27-06
- Buttons:** Save, OK, Options, Close

7. Complete all the necessary fields using proper capitalization and punctuation. Fields that are required to complete the reservation in OPERA have a bold field descriptor (i.e. **Arrival**, **Departure**, **Room Type**, **Rate Code**, **Res. Type**, etc.). Most information transfers by default from the Profile Search and Rate Query fields.
8. **Record Payment:** Records the method of payment to guarantee the reservation (i.e. Visa, American Express, Cash). To change the method of payment, click the drop down arrow next to this field. To add more than one form of payment, select the ellipsis button to enter multiple payments. Below is an example of a multiple payment method window:

Window	Pay Type	Credit Card	Expiry	Auth Rule/Amt/Pct	Name	AR No.
1	VS	444433322221111	12/08	2	25.00 Minton, Zachary	
2	AK	373344556677889	12/10	5	100.00 Minton, Zachary	
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

Rule Description: Amount

Within this window, you may also set specific authorization rules for each payment type. To establish different authorization rules, click the drop down arrow in the **Auth/Rule** field. If a value is required, also enter the flat amount or percentage in the **Amt/Pct** field.

Credit Card No.: When guaranteeing a reservation with a credit card, enter the card number in this field. Depending on the **Payment** type chosen, OPERA validates the card number. In addition, if a credit card number exists on the guest profile, an additional window displays asking if you would like to use the card number on file.

Exp. Date: When guaranteeing a reservation with a credit, enter the card's expiration date. OPERA validates expiration dates for future dates only.

9. After saving the reservation, an OPERA confirmation number displays.
10. Select **OK** to the confirmation number. Lastly, the **CLOSING SCRIPT** screen appears for you to recap the reservation details with the guest.
11. Generate the Electronic confirmation slip as shown below.

Language: [E]

It has been a pleasure speaking with you today.

I would like to confirm the reservation information at this time. I have made a reservation for Zachary Minton for 1 nights at the Opera Demo Hotel, Small. The arrival date is 06-28-06 with a departure on 06-29-06 for 1 adults and 0 children for a HONSKING Smoking at the rate of \$100.00 USD. The reservation is on a CC courtesy hold. A credit card number is required for guarantee post-CC on the day of arrival. Your confirmation number for this reservation is 13650.

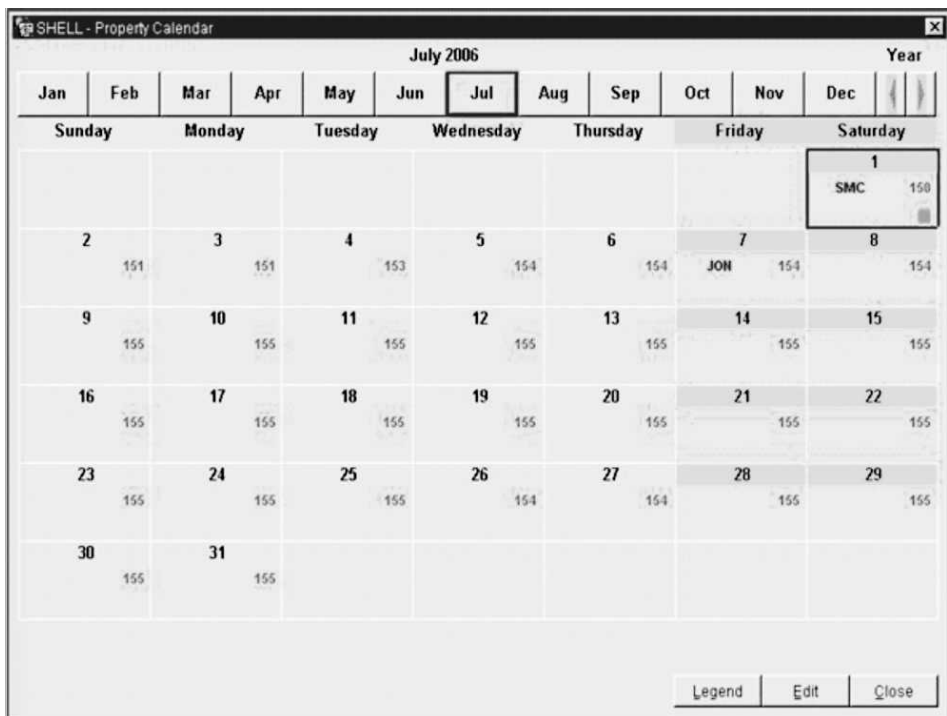
Again, we thank you for calling Zachary Minton and the staff at Opera Demo Hotel, Small is looking forward to your visit. Have a great day.

The PMS system is dynamic and processes several other features as listed below:

Option	Description
Adding Accompanying Guest	The option to add a guest to a reservation arriving later
Alert	Alerts signal an action needed on a reservation at a particular time in the life cycle of a reservation
Batch Confirmations	Confirmation Letters can be printed, faxed, or emailed immediately in batches on a group of reservation
Billing	This option allows easy access to the guest folio from the reservation of in-house guests
Cancelling a Reservation	Reservations that have been cancelled by the guest
Changes	This option displays all recorded history for a reservation in case of discrepancies
Credit Cards	Details of credit cards for guests paying by credit card
Fixed Rate Reservation	A feature to override an existing rate due to rate changes
Floor Plan	The feature is a visual display of all rooms in the hotel in relation to each other, floor by floor
Housekeeping	Special instructions to Housekeeping regarding a guest
Individual Group Reservations	Assigning blocks of rooms to a group
Locator	Allows the Front Desk to determine the location of an in-house guest at any time during their stay
Name Change on a Reservation	Changing a name on a reservation
Reservation with Multiple Profiles	Linking one of each profile type to a Reservation e.g. Travel Agent, Company
Reservation with Negotiated Rate	Assigning pre-negotiated rates
Reinstating a Reservation	Putting back the reservation after a guest has cancelled a reservation
Room Move	This option moves a guest from one room to another after the guest is in-house

Contd.

Room Plan	This option is useful to organize pre-blocked rooms to maximize hotel availability in a calendar function to view a week at a time (See Room Plan screen below)
Routing	This option allows automatic charge routing of transactions like routing charges directly to a company's account with the hotel
Search and Edit Reservations	Permits search and edit of reservations by multiple fields
Traces	Internal, interdepartmental messages that serve as reminders for other employees to take actions on a special guest request
Travel Agents Name	Guests booked through a travel agent
Waitlisting a Guest	Guest awaiting a room to be released
Wake Up Calls	The option allows one to place and manage manual wake up requests from resident guests



Room	Room Statu/Rm. Type	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
		06-27-06	06-28-06	06-29-06	06-30-06	07-01-06	07-02-06	07-03-06	07-04-06	07-05-06	07-06-06
407	Occupied KSBBS										
411	Occupied KNON		O'Conner, Patricia (2)	>>							
416	Occupied SJSS										
417	Occupied SDBN										
418	Occupied KSBBS										
419	Pickup KSBN										
420	Occupied SJSS										
421	Occupied KSBN										
422	Occupied KNON										
423	Occupied SJSS										
425	Occupied KSBBS										
426	Occupied KNON										
427	Occupied KNON										
429	Pickup SDBN										
430	Occupied KSBBS										
431	Pickup KNON										
432	Pickup SDBN										
433	Pickup KSBN										
434	Pickup KSBN										
435	Occupied KSBBS										
436	Occupied KSBBS										
438	Occupied KNON										
9003	Occupied PM		Day/Fowler								
9004	Occupied PM										
9005	Occupied PM										
9006	Occupied PM										

GROUP RESERVATIONS

What is a Group?

A group is a body of 15 persons or multiples of it. Because of the volume of rooms involved, the sponsor of the group gets a discount. Sponsors can be tour operators, event management companies, convention planners, corporate training departments, associations, etc. The principles for group reservations remain the same. The group leader gets a complimentary room for each multiple of 15 group members.

Types of Groups

- Groups may be classified in many ways:
- Tour groups
- Convention groups
- Participants to a seminar
- Participants of a Training Program
- Political delegations
- Performing artiste troupes
- Military troops

- Participants of exhibitions, trade fairs, air & motor shows
- Fashion show organisers and models
- Reunions
- Sports teams and delegations
- Airline crews
- Government delegations
- State visits by foreign dignitaries

Importance of Group Reservations

Group reservations and correspondence assume importance and poses a challenge to reservation agents, because of the following reasons:

1. Groups form a major part of hotel business.
2. A group sponsor can only proceed in marketing the package after s/he secures room confirmations. A final confirmation of group booking takes longer to materialise and therefore are done sometimes years in advance of the event.
3. Group reservations require block bookings of several rooms at once
4. Hotels compete for group business because of the volume of rooms involved. The discounted rate becomes the point of issue. Sponsors like to get the maximum discount while hotels like to get the maximum profit margin.
5. Blocked rooms with discounted rates effect regular business at full rate. The reservation agent has to get the best mix of group and individual business to maximise room revenues.
6. The complimentary rooms to group leaders in full season are revenue lost.
7. The credibility of the sponsor is critical especially when they come from overseas. Adequate precautions have to be taken to protect the hotel from errant dubious sponsors.
8. Changes in guest room preferences become a challenge as the arrival date draws near. Such preferences include:
 - Same floor as their friends,
 - Adjoining rooms especially for elderly people who come with a medical escort.
 - Special medical assistance for the elderly.
 - Handicapped facilities such as wheelchairs, ramps, specially fitted bathrooms, reachable door locks etc.

- Infant and child care such as baby-sitting services, crèche, cribs and playgrounds.
 - Non-smoking rooms.
 - Orthopedic mattresses
 - Noiseless rooms (especially for airline crews on odd shifts).
9. A reservation agent has to take into account the ability of other departments to cope with volume business. For example, housekeeping should be able to clean volume rooms within short times; food and beverages should be able to cater to guests coming in volume is specific periods of time; the ability of the bell-desk to deal with volume baggage; etc.

It is prudent for the reservation agent to insist on a minimum 30-day advance notice should a sponsor wish to cancel a group booking. A hotel may charge a retention charge equivalent to one night group stay in case of a cancellation within 30 days, waiving a retention charge by the hotel depends on:

- The size of the group
- Relation between the group sponsor and the hotel
- The inability of the hotel to re-sell the cancelled rooms.

Steps in Making Group Bookings

Pre-Booking

1. The group sponsor makes a familiarisation tour (FAM Tour) of the hotel to ascertain its suitability for the proposed tour. The management will also check the antecedents of the sponsor in terms of their reputation in honoring contracts and timely payments.
2. If suitable, the reservation agent confirms the availability of such a large number of rooms at the date and time of the intended booking to the management before they negotiate the rates. S/he also takes into account the number of displaced regular business and the financial gain of such a booking.
3. The reservation agent checks with the food and beverage department if they can handle such groups. Readers must understand that a group could be as large as 2000 persons (as in a convention). Again there may be several groups in the house at the same time by different sponsors. Such large numbers need adept menu planning, cooking and service crews and restaurant guest

flow management. The food and beverage department must also have the capacity in terms of seating, equipment, cutlery, crockery etc. to service such large volumes.

4. Once all is in place the sponsor and the hotel negotiate rates. This is critical as both want the best deal.
5. The Hotel and sponsor draw up a contract. Group business requires a contract because the volume of business committed large effecting both. An important part of the contract involves the billing instructions including deposits and payment schedules.
6. The Reservation Agent opens the Inquiry feature in the Opera PMS to check the following information:
 - Review the client's requested dates as well as alternate dates
 - Assess availability during those periods
 - Select the desired dates to view the revenue and occupancy impacts
 - Close the sale immediately

To access the Inquiry feature, the steps below are followed:

1. From the main menu, select Reservations and Blocks.
2. Select Inquiry.

NOTE: This feature may be accessed by using the **Shift F4** quick keys. The **INQUIRY PROCESS** screen displays.

Account information: Acct/Comp: Robinson Marketing, Agent: Robinson, Source: Robinson, Contact: Robinson, Cheryl.

Start Date: 11-06-06, # Nights: 4, End Date: 11-10-06, Alt Start Dates: 1: 11-20-06, 2: 12-04-06, 3: .

Room Types: kKNGN (12), SDBN (14), KSBN (4). Rate code: .

Day	Total	KNON	SDBN	KSBN	KNKS	KSBS	SJSN	SJSS	COMP
Day 1	30	12	14	4					
Day 2	30	12	14	4					
Day 3	30	12	14	4					
Day 4	30	12	14	4					

7. S/he enters the **Start Date** and # **Nights** and any **Alt. Start Dates** for three additional alternate dates. This is helpful if the group is flexible on dates. Alternately, s/he may enter a date **Range** with the **From** and **To** dates, # **Nights** and check the boxes for the days of week within that date range.
8. S/he enters the number of **Rooms per day** the group requests. **Rate Code** allows to enter a specific rate code for a group. Rate Codes are not required as each group can have a specially contracted rate; but if there is a rate already established for the account; this option gives you the flexibility to use the existing Rate Code.
9. Enter the requested number of rooms for each **Room Types**. S/he can enter the actual number of rooms requested or you can check the box next to the percentage sign and enter the percentage of rooms for each room type (i.e. 50% king beds and 50% double beds).
10. Select **Inquiry Grid** to populate the grid below with the results of the availability search for the first start date or first range of dates.
11. Select **Bus. Block** if there is availability and you wish to move forward with the contract.
12. S/he selects **Reset** to reset the data on the screen to re-enter new requirements. S/he selects **Availability** to view detailed results on the inquiry for each alternate date. The **RESULTS** screen appears.

SHELL - Result Screen

Acct/Comp Robinson Marketing, ... Contact Robinson, Cheryl

Agent ... Contact ...

Source ...

Periods Available

From	To	H	Date	Min. Occ %	Max. Occ %	House Avail.	Rooms Req.	House Avail.
11-06-06	11-10-06		11-06-06	0.65	0.65	154	30	124
11-20-06	11-24-06		11-07-06	0.00	0.00	155	30	125
12-04-06	12-08-06		11-08-06	0.00	0.00	149	30	119
			11-09-06	0.00	0.00	149	30	119

Current Net

Inquiry

Ctrl Panel

Get Avail

Bus. Block

Reset

Close

13. Have the names of group members and get their room distribution preferences if they are sharing rooms.
14. Procure passport details to initiate government formalities if any.
15. Inform the food and beverage department for meal timings and menu compilation
16. Book coaches for sight-seeing tours if required.

Pre-arrival

17. Get the exact time of arrival and departure from the sponsors in order to advice the reception to have the rooms ready and alert the lobby staff.
18. Name of the group leader to award a complimentary room and initiate communication as the day of arrival gets nearer.

Post Group Stay

19. Give feedback to the management on the performance of the group for future relations.

JOB DESCRIPTION OF A RESERVATION AGENT

A job description is a formal document that stipulates the duties and responsibilities of a job holder and those aspects that are expected of him or her to be able to perform ones duties successfully.. These aspects include reporting relationships, limits of authority and areas of coordination. Every establishment may have their own policies as to what it wants to document in the job description to make the job holder clear as to what is expected of him or her. They job description could include: working hours, equipment handled, workplace limits and even the salary grade in the compensation hierarchy. It is therefore a realistic guide to any employee recruited for a particular job. Having Job Descriptions is essential to all organisations. They offer the following benefits:

Benefits of having Job Descriptions

- A new recruit knows exactly what the job entails and can perform to those requirements.
- It is the basis of expectations of the organisation from the individual.
- It acts as a vital part of orientation programs.
- It acts as the basic foundation to set standards of performance against which the performance appraisal is done.

- The job description brings parity in the perception of the job between an employee and his/her superior.
- It is a legal document for any disputes arising out of a lack of role clarification.
- It protects an employee from an unreasonable superior wanting to victimize his/her subordinate either by over-burdening or exploiting an employee.

Job Title	Reservation Agent
Reports to	1. Assistant Manager 2. Front Office Manager
Job Summary	To receive and record accurately room reservations requests as per the procedures laid down by management.
Duties and Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Handle courteously and promptly all reservation requests from various media and sources as per standard procedures. 2. Update the reservation register to have a current room inventory position. 3. Type out advance reservation slips and maintain reservation racks (in the manual system) and correspondence. 4. Attend briefings at the beginning of the shift. 5. Carry out amendments and cancellations of reservations accurately. 6. Keep room status board (in manual system) and database (in computerized system) updated at all times. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check for reservation stationary and requisition supplies from stores where necessary. 2. Up sell rooms to generate revenue. 3. Maintain guest history sheets.
Supervises	Trainees assigned.
Limits of Authority	Can take reservations and confirm bookings as per procedure.
Coordinates with	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travel Agents, Airlines, Corporate Houses, etc. – for room bookings. 2. Housekeeping - for cleaning the reservation area. 3. Stores - for the requisition of supplies.

Contd.

Minimum Educational Qualifications	Graduate with preferably a Craft Course Certificate in Reception.
Experience	1 week department training adequate
Skills & Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient in Opera PMS • Energetic • Sound telephone skills • Socially confident and pleasant. • Has salesmanship • Proficient in the English language. Knowledge of a foreign language preferable. • Thorough knowledge of front office procedures. • Has etiquettes and manners • Is methodical and has eye for detail.

Summary

The reservations department of the hotel is a key sales centre. The reservation agent has transformed from a booking clerk to a salesperson. The manner in which reservations are taken ensures that a guest has a room awaiting him or her on arrival. The reservation agent, therefore, follows accurate systems and procedures both on manual and automated systems. The manner in which reservations are made has been revolutionised. Extensive distribution systems have made it convenient for a guest situated anywhere in the world to access rooms on global sites.



Key Terms

<i>A la Carte</i>	A menu that prices each individual food item
Allowances	Daily fixed cash paid-outs to airline crews as negotiated with the airlines and recovered from them at a later date.
Amendments	Changes made of records concerning his stay.
Buffet	Food display for self service
Cancellation	A confirmed booking that has been withdrawn by the guest.
Check-in	The process of registering into a hotel
Confirmation	A room reservation that has been confirmed in writing by a guest
Distribution System	A network of providers of products and services, geographically spread, to the doorstep of consumers

Double Occupancy	Two guests staying in a room.
FIT	Free Individual Traveller
FIT	Stands for 'Free Individual Traveller' who is an independent guest who does not use the services of middlemen for booking his or her room.
Forecast	A studied anticipation of room business.
Free Sale	Rooms that are available for booking.
GDS	Global Distribution System
GIT	Group Inclusive Traveller.
Group	Any body of guests of 15 persons and above who travel together.
Guaranteed Booking	A room booking that is confirmed in writing by a guest.
Guest	A client of the hotel.
Lay-over	Airline passengers checked in by the airlines that are catching a connecting flight sometime later.
On-request	A status when guests are kept waiting for a room booking confirmation.
Overbooking	Booking rooms that are beyond the hotel room capacity.
Pax	Person
Rack Rate	Quoted rate on a given day
Reservations	The process of booking rooms
Revision	Change in booking instructions.
Room Availability	The room position when rooms are available for sale.
Room Blocking	Blocking a room in the Reservation Chart.
Room Night	A charge for a one night occupation, spanning two days from noon to noon
Room Plan	A package proposal of room and meals in a single price
Table d' Hote	A menu that prices a complete meal
Tour Operator	Wholesaler of travel programmes
Travel Agent	A retailer of travel products and services
Sale	A room space sold.
Sold Out	It is a status in which all the rooms in the hotel are sold
Single Occupancy	One guest staying in a room.
Waitlist	A guest awaiting a confirmation of the room booking.



Review Quiz

Fill in the Blanks

1. A room with two single beds is called _____.
2. A document kept under strict control is called _____.
3. The term FIT stands for _____.
4. The meal where each item is priced individually is called _____.
5. A studio beside the pool is called _____.
6. Independent hotels that chain together are called _____.
7. The document that takes all details of a reserving guest is called _____.
8. The room rate quoted to embassies and high commissions is called _____.
9. A guest who checks in without prior booking is called _____.
10. A group consists of minimum _____ members.

Match the Following:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Occupancy ____ | (a) rooms available for sale |
| 2. Double Room ____ | (b) number of rooms occupied |
| 3. Guaranteed Booking ____ | (c) withdrawn booking |
| 4. Free Sale ____ | (d) double bed |
| 5. Cancellation ____ | (e) booking in writing |

Write short notes on:

1. Taking a reservation on phone
2. Automated reservation systems
3. The role of airlines in the reservation process
4. The features of a group contract
5. Buffets



Training Methodology

This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use pre-prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations as training aids.

Learners must know the key terms and should be quizzed on them.

The trainer should give hands-on training on the PMS of the hotel.

Take learners through each procedural step which may be adapted to house policies and procedures.

The best way to confirm learning is to put learners on-the-job to practice the procedures under supervision.

14

Reception

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the readers learn the importance of the reception and its systems and procedures.

INTRODUCTION

We have learnt by now that the front office is the focal point of guest contact. The reception is the front-end of the front office. It is the place where the guest builds a mental picture of his/her stay.

Role of the Reception

The Reception is the place where guests formally register themselves into the hotel. All governments insist that guests register themselves. The act of registering has many benefits:

1. It creates a relationship between the hotel and the guest. This relationship is one of mutual trust and respect.
2. It protects the hotel and the guest from any abuse of the relationship.
3. The hotel becomes responsible for a guest's stay and safety.
4. It empowers the guest to access the various guest services.



5. The hotel can expect the guest to adhere to the house rules and code of conduct.
6. It helps governments keep track of foreign travellers during their stay in that country.

The basic role of the reception is to:

- Welcome guests
- Establish a guest's identity and reservation status
- Register the guest (pre-register in some cases)
- Assign a room
- Issue a room key/access card
- Act as a source of continuous information

Reception Terminology

Just as we saw that the reservations section had its peculiar terminology, so does the reception have its own terminology that a front office professional must be familiar with.

Arrival	A guest who has just checked in
Blocking	To reserve a room for a guest arrival
Check-in	The time a guest has registered at the front-desk
Check-out	A guest who has completed his billing formalities and departed
Complimentary	Free use of a room
Crew	Airline flight and cabin crew
Departure	Guest leaving the hotel after their stay
Do-not-Disturb	A guest request not to be disturbed
Double Occupancy	Room occupied by two persons
Due out	An occupied room expected to be vacated
Group	15 persons or more travelling together
Guest Folio	The running bill of a guest, recording room and other charges during his/her stay
House	Hotel
House Count	The number of guests residing in the hotel

Late check-out	A guest who has requested a departure beyond 12 noon, the official check-out time of the hotel
Lock-out	A guest room sealed for entry by the guest because he has not settled his bill
No Show	A guest with a confirmed reservation who has not turned up
Not Cleared	Room that is being prepared by housekeeping for sale
Occupancy	The number of saleable rooms occupied by guests
Occupied	A room occupied by a guest
Out-of-Order	Room under maintenance
Position	Rooms available for sale at the beginning of a shift or day.
Registration	The act of registering into the hotel by completing the registration form
Registration Form	The formal document that registers a guest into the hotel for stay
Room Allocation	Assigning a room to a guest after he has registered into the hotel
Room Key/Card	The access key/card of a given guest room
Scanty Baggage	A guest with hand luggage only
Skipper	A guest who has departed without settling his bill
Sleep-out	A registered guest who has not used the room
Stay-over	Guests who extend their stay
Under-stay	A guest who has checked-out before his scheduled departure date
VIP	A very important person who is extended special privileges by the hotel
Walk-in	A guest who wants a room without a prior reservation

Front Desk Counter

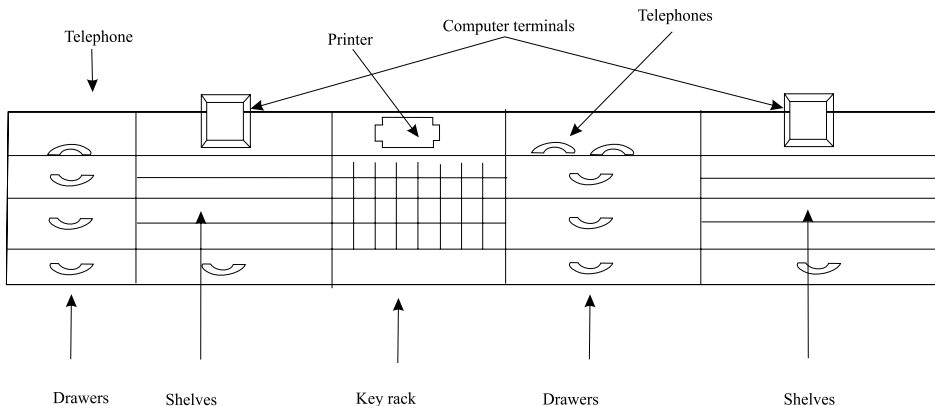
The front desk counter is the centre piece of a lobby. It is where guests' register themselves into the hotel and pay their bills on departure. It is made to look attractive and clean with flower arrangements, brochure racks and other displays. Basically, the counter top must be clear to conduct registration formalities. It is behind the counter that all the necessary spaces are created for work.



Some modern hotels have replaced the counter with desks and chairs to personalise the interaction at the time of registering.

Let us see the front desk counter looks behind the scenes:

Automated System Counter



Support Devices The front desk counter can have other support devices like the printer, computer, and credit card reader that confirms whether the card is valid or the credit card swipe to emboss the card onto credit card charge vouchers. The counter may be equipped with CCTV monitors in small hotels and motels for the receptionist to monitor the movement of guests in public areas. A fax machine is handy for confirmation of bookings and other official communication.

Registration Card Smaller hotels may use a Registration Book to register guests while larger properties use Registration Cards. The benefits of registration cards/forms are as follows:

1. the receptionist can register more than one guest at a time;
2. it is more private;
3. it can be stored conveniently;
4. it takes less space on the reception counter; and
5. it has multiple purposes such as a legal document, market research source, folio in small hotels, etc.

Registration Card

Name	Forwarding Address:
Occupation:	Payment Mode: Cash, Credit Card, Co. Acc, Travellers Cheque, Vouchers
Name of Organisation & Address:	Passport No.:
Designation:	Date of Issue:
Residential Address:	Place of Issue:
Nationality:	Date of Birth:
Date of Arrival: Time:	Date of Arrival in Country (For Foreign Nationals):
Expected Date of Departure:	Port of disembarkation (For Foreign Nationals):
Purpose of Visit:	No. of Persons:
Arrived From: Mode of Travel:	Room No.:
Next Destination:	Room Rate:
The Management does not hold any Responsibility for the Loss of Guest Valuables. Lockers are Available with the Cashier	I have gone through the Terms and Conditions of my Stay in the Hotel and I Agree to Abide by the same
Guest Signature:	

The registration card is a very important document kept under strict control. Its basic purpose and features are as follows:

1. It registers a guest into the hotel.
2. It legally binds the hotel and the guest during his or her stay.
3. The guest confirms his/her name, arrival and departure date, room rate and mode of settling his/her bill.
4. It is serially numbered for better control and verification. For example, the Income Accountant cross-tallies it with guest folios raised by the front office cashier.
5. Filing can be done numerically, alphabetically or by country of origin, based on the use of the document by the management.
6. It acts as the primary source of information for the guest history.

The Registration Book, used by smaller hotels, clubs, guest houses, etc. has modified information broken into columns of the register:

Name	Nationality	Address	PP No.	Date of Issue	Place of Issue	Room No.	Date of Arr.	Date of Dep.	Room Rate	Guest Signature

Arrival of a Guest (In an Automated System)

- As soon as the guest arrives welcome the guest with a smile saying, ‘Good morning. Welcome to Hotel XYZ. May I help you?’
- Ask them if they have a confirmed reservation by saying, ‘Do you have a reservation with us sir/madam?’
- The guest usually claims to have made a reservation.
- If the answer is ‘yes’ say, ‘May I have your name please?’

To search for arriving guests, follow the steps mentioned as under:

1. From the main menu, select **Front Desk**.
2. Select **Arrivals**.

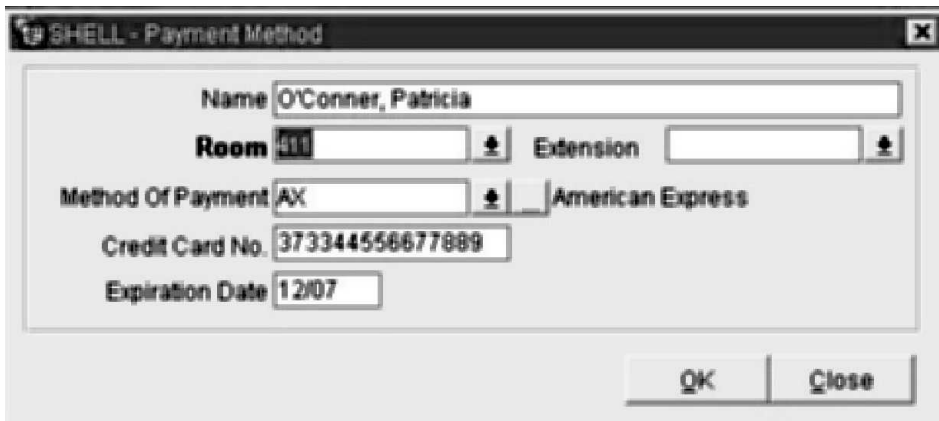
The Arrivals screen will display.

The top portion of the screen provides a variety of fields to narrow the search for the arriving guest. The bottom portion of the screen displays reservations and search results in the grid.

3. Enter the search information into the appropriate fields. Select **Advanced** to produce more search options. Use the **Clear** feature to remove all search options and begin a new search.

Common fields can be **Name, Date of Arrival, Contact Number.**

4. Select **Search** and the **Payment Method** screen appears as under:



The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "SHELL - Payment Method". It contains the following fields and controls:

- Name: O'Conner, Patricia
- Room: 310
- Extension: (empty)
- Method Of Payment: AX
- American Express: (checkbox)
- Credit Card No.: 373344556677889
- Expiration Date: 12/07
- Buttons: OK, Close

The **Method of Payment** defaults from the reservation. Whether the presented method of payment is the same or needs to change, swipe the credit card at this point for accuracy purposes. If the card is not available to swipe, manually enter the card or payment details.

6. Click the drop down arrow next to the **Method of Payment** field to select the form of payment. Alternately, if there are multiple forms of payment (i.e., a credit card for room and tax and one for incidentals), select the ellipsis button next to this field.
7. Enter the **Credit Card No.** and **Expiration Date.**
8. Select **OK** to save.

With a reservation highlighted, various function buttons become available. Information such as Advanced Deposits, Special Requests, etc., are displayed.

Assignment of Room

Once the registration formalities are completed, the front desk agent will assign a room as per the guest's requirement and within the rate agreed.

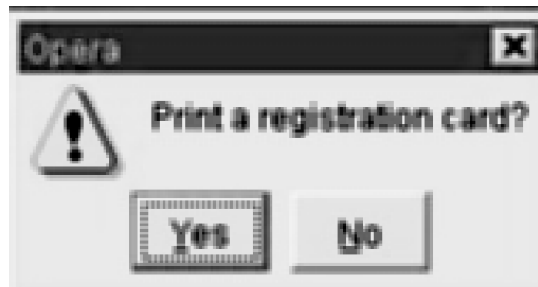
Follow the steps below to check in a guest:

1. From the main menu, select **Front Desk** and **Arrivals**.
2. Search for and highlight the arriving guest.
3. Select **Edit** if the guests' accommodation needs to change in any way (additional nights requested or a change in room type. Otherwise, select **Check In**).

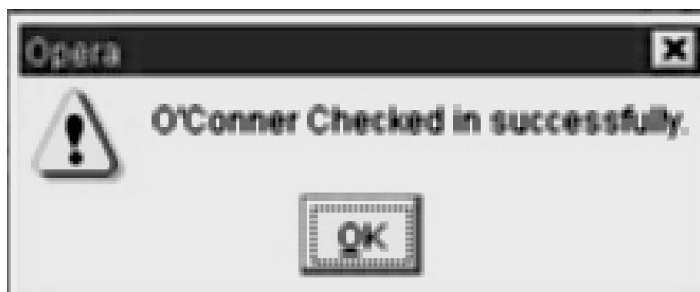
Name	Room	Extension	Room Type	Arrival	Departure	Rms	Prs	Status	Group
O'Connor, Patricia	411		QNQN	06-27-06	06-30-06	1	1	CC	

A **Room** number automatically assigns for the room type reserved. If no rooms are available, the **Room** field is blank.

4. To change the room number assigned, or to search for an alternate room, click the drop down arrow next to the **Room** field.
5. Search for and highlight an available room (clean or inspected), and select **OK** to return.



The Opera PMS has the option of creating a registration card in case the formality has not been done earlier. Press **Yes** or **No** based on the requirement.



A message displays confirmation to show the successful check in.

10. Select **OK** to complete.

Modes of Payment

There are different modes of payment. It is appropriate to mention them briefly:

Cash: This is the best method of payment especially for unknown guests or those with scanty baggage. They are required to make cash deposits at least for the first night stay. Cash payments immediately contribute to the hotel's cash flow situation.

Credit Cards: More travellers are carrying credit cards as convenient instruments of payment. The receptionist must first ascertain whether the credit card is accepted by the hotel. Popular credit cards are the Visa Card, MasterCard and American Express. The receptionist must also check the expiry date and take down the credit card number. The cashier can later verify the cards authenticity.

Miscellaneous Charge Orders (MCO): These are payments made in advance to travel agents for hotel services. The Travel Agent issues an MCO which is presented

to the hotel to adjust charges. The MCO will be redeemed later by the hotel from the travel agent.

Personal Cheques: These are rarely accepted by hotels. It may be from a known guest who has already established his or her credentials. Personal cheques will need appropriate identification like driving licence, passport and credit cards. In any case only local cheques are accepted. A lobby manager authorises a cheque where he gets the guest to make a formal application and supports it with credit card guarantees or local third party guarantor. Third party cheques are not accepted.

Debit Cards: These are another type of magnetic swipe card that charges a guest's bank account directly. These may be accepted as they are as good as cash.

Company Accounts: Most travelling executives are either given daily allowances for board and lodging or may charge their expenses to the company directly. In such a case the company would have already negotiated a credit line with the hotel with perhaps some corporate discounts for the amount of room nights given by the company.

Promotion Vouchers: Hotels participate in various social events and offer prizes or raffle tickets. This is done as publicity measures or social contributions to various charitable causes. Winners get a weekend stay for two at the hotel as a prize. They are presented with vouchers to show at the front desk. The receptionist is bound to honour such vouchers.

Advance Deposits: These are specially given by travel agents and tour operators to the hotel when there are group bookings that require the booking of volume rooms. Hotels insist on these deposits as guarantees.

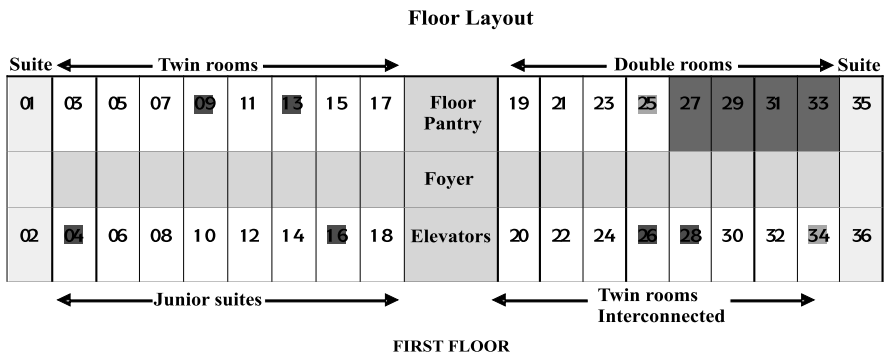
The success of a check-in is based on taking adequate precautions as follows:

1. Maintaining an accurate and timely room status position. Nothing is more embarrassing to the hotel and guest than to enter a room already occupied, not cleaned or under repair.
2. Maintaining an update room status. This is a challenge involving manual checks requiring close coordination between housekeeping and the front desk. They tally the status of rooms in every shift as a ritual. The housekeeping independently record the room's status in a housekeeping report. A bell boy checks any discrepancy between the housekeeping report and the room rack at the front office. The room status is accurately recorded in an automated system.
3. The room number must be carefully recorded as the information is used by the other departments including the concierge, telecommunications, room

service and housekeeping. In an electronic assignment of room process, a click of the button on the computer screen activates the following sub-electronic systems that influence the room stay as follows:

- Guest recognition and response software
- Guest room telephone and its charge process
- Energy management system for the room
- Guest list
- Room list
- Point of sale micros in revenue areas
- Internet and fax access in guest rooms
- Guest history
- Credit card processing system
- Room entertainment system
- Voice mail and messaging system
- Room service alert system
- Guest relations software
- Minibars

A receptionist is often assisted by a graphic display of floor layout in an automated system. It helps her to identify the type of room requested by the guest. It also tells the rooms occupied and as shown in red; those under repair as shown in green; and those blocked for a group or crew in blue. It will look something like this:



This visual display greatly enhances accuracy. The room turns red in the automated system the moment the receptionist assigns the room. Colour codes also help even the less educated to recognise occupied and free rooms. The front office agent can have similar charts in a manual system as well.

4. Once the registration formalities are over, buzz for the bell boy. Smile and say to the guest, 'The bell boy will escort you to your room sir/madam. Wish you a pleasant stay with us'. Hand over the key/access card to the bell boy.

The Morning Shift

The morning shift sets the tone for the rest of the day activities. It is during this shift that the 12 noon arrivals and departures take place. The deft handling of this makes it easier for the subsequent shifts. Let us go through steps taken by the shift receptionists:

Pre-arrival Procedures

1. Report for duty 10 minutes before the scheduled start of the shift properly groomed, to take briefings from the morning shift supervisor.
2. Take over from the night shift. Study the log book in which the night shift leaves instructions for the morning shift. Such instructions could include adjusting rooms for complaining guests, arrival of a VIP at night; special instructions left by guests at night, etc. The day staff must follow-up on the instructions during the day.
3. Check the arrivals of the day by checking the PMS following the steps mentioned earlier.
4. Check the departures for the day and ascertain the room position. The room position is the number of rooms available for sale at the beginning of a shift or day. It is important for receptionists to know the room position to make alternate arrangements. The position is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Position} = \text{Expected Departures} + \text{Vacant Rooms} - \text{Expected Arrivals}$$

If rooms available are less than expected arrivals it is termed a 'minus position' and if they are in excess it is termed 'plus position'. Minus position situations require remedial actions immediately such as:

- Not permitting the check-out guests with extended stay beyond 12 noon;
- Making arrangements with other hotels of the same standard, to accommodate spill over guests with confirmed reservations;
- Calling each expected departure guest and confirming his or her check-out plans by 12 noon;

- Denying all walk-in guests accommodation;
 - Persuading housekeeping and engineering departments to get out-of-order rooms serviceable immediately.
5. Check for VIPs expected. Give priority to them for the allocation of rooms and block those in the PMS as follows:

From the main menu, select **Front Desk** and **Room Assignment**.

The **ROOM ASSIGNMENT** screen displays.

HK Status	Room	Room Type	Name	ETA	Rms	Departure	Adult	Child	Group/Company
		SJSH	Cristiancen, Adlanah	00:00	1	07-09-06	1	0	
		KNON	Deposit, Test	00:00	1	06-28-06	1	0	
		KSBS	O'Conner, Patricia	10:16	1	06-30-06	1	1	
		KNGS	Schulte, Bridget	00:00	1	06-28-06	1	0	MICROS System

NOTE:

1. This screen only displays reservations that do not have a room number assigned.
2. Enter the search criteria desired for the arriving guests to pre-block.
3. Highlight the individual reservation you wish to pre-block and select **Assign**.
The housekeeping ROOM ASSIGNMENT screen appears.
4. Highlight the desired room number and select OK.
The reservation pre-assigns to a room and removes from the display. The PMS has an auto assignment of rooms at the time of registration also.
6. It is a courtesy extended by hotels to provide VIPs with complimentary fruits, flowers, juices or bar. Fill the Complimentary Fruits and Flowers Register

and complete the Complimentary Amenities Requisition Form, in two copies, one for the food and beverages (room service) for fruits, juices and bar and housekeeping for flowers, and any special amenities provided as per policy. Prepare the VIP list with room numbers for the following departments:

- General Manager
- Front Office Manager
- Telecommunications
- Housekeeping
- Room Service
- Guest Relations Executive

Complimentary Amenities Requisition Form

Room No:
Guest Name:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Letter • Fruit Basket • Juices • Full-Bar • Half-Bar • Additional Towels • Vanity Kit • Extra Soaps
Signature of Receptionist:
Approval of Front Office Supervisor

7. Check with housekeeping, the rooms that are under repair and block the rooms on the PMS system. Normally the networked housekeeping blocks rooms under maintenance.
8. Block rooms for groups and airline crews expected. Since this involves volume rooms, make sure it is done meticulously. Assign rooms as per the group guest list and seal the room numbers in envelopes with the guests' names and arrange them in a tray for their arrival. Complete the registration cards of guests with information received and keep them ready for the guests' signatures. Prepare the Group Crew List with room numbers for the following departments:
 - Food & Beverage Manager (for food arrangements)

- Telecommunications (to raise telephone bills)
 - Room Service (to maintain individual billing accounts)
 - Housekeeping (for clearance programmes)
9. Dispatch the appropriate forms and formats filled by the night receptionist to the Foreigners Registration Office (as required by various governments to keep tab on the movement of foreigners).

The check-in of guests is not that simple as the book may represent. The front desk agent is confronted in various situations that need special experience in handling. While some common situations are given as under with measures of how to handle them, they are not the only situations that confront the front desk agent:

Situation 1:

- Should the guest not have a reservation, then allot the room if there is a 'free sale' status quoting the maximum room rate. If the hotel is full, say, 'I am sorry sir/madam, we are fully booked today. Would you like us to check if we can get you a room in another hotel and perhaps shift you tomorrow back into our hotel?' This is a courtesy extended to leave a good impression of service as also to get him/her back to the hotel the next day or in the future.

Situation 2:

- If the guest has a confirmed reservation and his/her room is getting ready, say, 'Sir your room is getting ready. Would you like to wait in the lobby and I shall call you as soon it is ready' or 'Would you like to have a coffee at our Coffee Shop with our compliments as your room gets ready?' Hotels do provide refreshments as a courtesy to guests with confirmed reservations, who have to wait.

Situation 3:

- If the guest has a confirmed reservation but the hotel is 'sold out', then say, 'Sir/Madam we had an unexpected rush for rooms and do not have one today. We have made arrangements for your stay in another hotel of the same quality. We shall bear your transport expenses, and bring you back to our hotel tomorrow'. If the guest creates a rumpus hand him over to the Lobby Manager. If s/he is cooperative, say, 'Thank you for your understanding and cooperation'. Any additional room charges are borne by the hotel.

Situation 4:

- Walk-in guests arrive obviously without prior reservations. They are a healthy segment for hotels to fill odd vacant rooms. The benefit is that they can be offered the highest rate to increase room revenues. While there is no obligation to give them a room if the hotel is running a high occupancy, a room assignment could convert the guest into a regular resident. Help the guest in finding an alternative accommodation in the city as this leaves a good impression on the guest.

Situation 5:

- Denying guests a room is an art. Some guests are undesirable based on history, or the way they are dressed or simply by the way they behave. Remember that the hotel has the rights of admission and is legally protected to deny a guest a room. The best way is to tell them that all rooms are booked. If they create a scene and are rude, it is best for the front desk agent to hand them over to the lobby manager who may involve the security staff if required. It is pointless arguing with them at the counter as it creates a disturbance to other guests and takes up too much time to attend to others.

Situation 6:

- A guest with a confirmed reservation may arrive after the check-in time (normally 12 noon) due to delays in his/her travel schedule. Strictly the room is not held for him/her after the lapse of the check-in time if there is a demand for rooms. The receptionist must state the policy of the hotel but should help him/her find another accommodation in the city and promise to bring him back to the hotel the next day.

Group/Crew Arrival Procedure

Group arrival procedures must be handled with care as it involves a volume of guests checking in at the same time. This requires certain preparations which have been discussed earlier. At the time of their arrival the following procedures need to be taken:

- Confirm the rooming list with the group leader. Get him/her to get the group members to confirm the information already filled in registration cards/forms by the receptionist and to sign them.
- Collect all registration cards/forms and confirm that they have been all signed. Hand over the key/access card tray with pre-assigned envelopes with keys/access cards to the group leader who will distribute them to each group member.
- Authorise the bell boys to move the guest baggage into their respective rooms.

VIP Procedure

Very Important Persons (VIPs) are those that get special attention due to their status and contributions to society. They could be people who may not be public figures but important to the hotel like a travel writer or tour operator. Let us list those who may be considered VIPs:

- Heads of States
- Ministers
- Senior Administration Officials
- Film Stars
- Rock Stars
- Philharmonic Conductors
- Sports Stars
- Corporate Chairpersons
- Association Presidents
- Business Persons
- Travel Writers
- Senior Media Personnel
- Senior Defence Officers
- Tour Operators
- Senior Executives of Hotel Chains
- Government Delegations
- Senior Airline Officials
- Large Travel Houses
- Senior Executives (hotel)

While the list fairly represents all those whom the hotel industry considers as VIPs, each property will have those private lists that classify VIPs. The private lists are based on a visitor's importance to the hotel in terms of the business given to the hotel, the potential business they promise or their publicity value to the property. Irrespective, hotels may adopt the following VIP procedure:

Airport Arrival

Obviously, Heads of State and senior foreign government delegations will be received at the airport by the local government as per protocol. They would have an entourage of

press people to cover the event. Due to security reasons security becomes an overriding matter and therefore the hotel has little role to play. State intelligence bureaus would have taken precautions for the arrival of the dignitary. Such VIPs are led by state police in cavalcades to the hotel where the first contact to the hotel takes place. Due to the importance of such VIPs, the owner, senior management and general manager will receive them and welcome them to the hotel. The registration formalities have already been taken care of by the government liaison person.

The same fanfare could exist for film, music, sport or other celebrities. The event management company, who would have promoted them in the city, is there to receive them and bring them in hired transport or the hotel limousine to the hotel. Pre-registration is done by the event management company representative who absorbs the hotel expenses.

The hotel's role starts at the airport for VIPs. Many hotels have created the job position called the 'Airport Representative' for this reason. The Airport Representative is a member of the front office staff but positioned at the airport. The role of the representative is to facilitate smooth check-outs from the airport. They have good contacts with airport officials to intervene when required to give preference to VIPs. The hotel would provide a limousine to receive the VIPs. Some premium hotels have established courtesy lounges at the airport for the guest to relax till his or her baggage is claimed by the airport representative. At the airport courtesy lounges guests can be pre-registered while enjoying a cool drink.

Arrival in Lobby

Hotels have their own welcome procedures. For dignitaries the General Manager will personally receive guests, while less in seniority by the Front Office Manager and the rest by the Guest Relations Executive. Welcomes may adopt local practices and customers ranging from simple gestures to pomp and fanfare. All VIPs are pre-registered. Pre-registration means that the registration card is filled in detail by the receptionist. All that the VIP has to do is sign the card. The signing can be done at the airport, in the limousine, at a lounge in the lobby or in the guest room. The purpose is that the VIP does not have to register at the front desk but can move directly to his or her room.

In the Room

Normally each hotel has its own policy regarding the special amenities provided to the guest in the room. These amenities can be chosen from an exclusive list:

- Suite accommodation
- Full bar with alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages

- Special flower arrangements
- Special fruit baskets
- Tray of cookies
- Bathrobe
- Bath slippers
- Full vanity basket of colognes, creams, bath gels, combs, shaving kit, etc.
- Additional hangers in the wardrobe
- Special welcome letter from the General Manager
- Additional pillows
- Butler service
- Queen/King sized beds
- Preferential views

During the Stay

All services are alerted by the information systems of the hotel about the occupancy of a VIP. Those rooms get priority service. All hotel personnel are trained to address the VIP by name. Departments directly affected by a VIP occupancy are the housekeeping, telecommunications, room service, guest relations, front desk, concierge, lobby desk and engineering (to keep the room in top working order).

Check-out

The moment a VIP expresses a departure, his/her bill is kept ready by the cashier for his signature in case of sponsors picking the tab of hotel expenses or cash payment. Bill payment formalities can be done in the room. The VIP is escorted to the limousine by the appropriate authority of the hotel. The airport representative is alerted of his/her arrival and awaits his arrival to escort him/her through airline departure formalities. Normally VIPs are made to relax at the airport common lounge or the hotel courtesy lounge with food and beverage services. The airport representative hands over the boarding ticket as well as the baggage stubs. Based on his influence with airport officials, the airport representative can escort the VIP to the departure lounge.

Night Shift Reception Procedures

The night front desk agent assumes a different role from the day shift agent. Since arrivals and departures are slower, it is the time for the recapitulation of the day's activities at the front office.

The crew sheet has two vital pieces of information as far as the hotel coordination with the local airline office—Wake Call time and the Pick-up time. The crew departure on time is linked to the airline departure time. The airline crew has a number of technical checks and formalities to complete before the airline departs. They have to complete it meticulously to be able to ensure the flight leaves on time.

- Prepare the VIP List of those staying in the hotel, from the room rack and those expected the next day, from the reservations rack. One can see from the distribution that coordination is required by various departments to make a VIPs stay comfortable. His or her movement in the hotel is monitored during the stay. The Special Instructions column includes those things like amenities and features required.

VIP List

Name	Room Assigned	Date of Arrival	Date of Departure	Guest Profile	Reservation Made By	Special Instructions
VIPs in House:						
VIPs Expected Today:						
Distribution: • General Manager • Accommodation Director • Food & Beverage Director	• Sales Director • Guest Relations Executive	• Executive Housekeeping • Lobby Manager	• Room Service Manager • Exec. Chef	• Tele. Supervisor. • Chief Engineer	• Security Officer • File	

- Prepare the Night Clerks Report (Fig. 14.1).

One notices a number of statistics in the report. The notable ones are given as under on which a number of decisions are made and represents the health of room business:

$$\text{Percentage of Occupancy} = \frac{\text{Number of rooms sold}}{\text{Number of saleable rooms}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Percentage of Double Occupancy} = \frac{\text{Home Count} - \text{Rooms Sold}}{\text{House Count}} \times 100$$

$$\text{House Count} = \text{House Count of Previous Day brought forward} + \text{Today's Arrivals} - \text{Today's Departures}$$

Expected Occupancy Tomorrow:- 96

Day Date

STATISTICS	TODAY		MONTH-TO-DATE		YEAR-TO-DATE		House use	No. of order	Room Type	Actual	Nationality	No. of Persons	TODAY		MONTH-TO-DATE		YEAR-TO-DATE		No. of Rooms	Travel Agent	Group Leader	E.T.D.	REMARKS		
	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted							Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted						Actual	Budgeted
	RNS	GNS	RNS	GNS	RNS	GNS							RNS	GNS	RNS	GNS	RNS	GNS						RNS	GNS
1. Room Occupied									SGLS																
2. House Count									DBLS																
3. % Occupancy									Incl. Rooms																
4. % Double Occupancy									Exec. Room																
5. % Indian Occupancy									Exec. Suite																
6. Avg. Room Rate									Dynasty Room																
7. Avg. Rate Per Person									Lux. Suite																
8. Room Revenue									Ashoka																
9. No Shows									Chandragupta																
									TOTAL																
OCCUPANCY BREAKDOWN									GROUPS IN HOUSE																
G.I.T.																									
FOREIGN FIT																									
DOMESTIC FIT																									
C.G.R.																									
AIRLINE CREW																									
AIRLINE/LAYOVER																									
CONFERENCE/CONVENTIONS																									
COMPS-GITS-FITS																									
TOTAL OCCUPIED																									
SOURCES OF BUSINESS																									
IRS																									
SHERATON																									
LOCAL RESERVATIONS																									
AIRLINE FULL RATE																									
EMBASSY																									
TRAVEL AGENTS																									
WALK-INS																									
OTHERS																									
TOTAL																									

Distribution: Gen. Mgr/Res. Mgr/Sales Mgr./U.F.C./Accn. Mgr./File

Prepared By

Lobby Manager.....Accn. Manager.....

Fig. 14.1

Night Clerks Report

$$\text{Percentage of Domestic Occupancy} = \frac{\text{Domestic Guests in House}}{\text{House Count}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Percentage of Foreign Occupancy} = 100 - \text{Percentage of Domestic Guests}$$

$$\text{Average Room Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Room Revenue}}{\text{Number of Rooms Sold}}$$

$$\text{Average Room Rate Per Person} = \frac{\text{Total Room Revenue}}{\text{House Count}}$$

Other features of the Night Clerks Report include:

- Break-up of room allocations and revenue thereof in terms of Rooms Nights Sold (RNS) and Group Nights Sold (GNS). An essential feature is the progress of sale against budgets for the day and year-to-date.
- Sources of business to analyse the productivity of each. Sources like Travel Agents, Central Reservations Systems, Airlines, etc., need to be monitored for their productivity. Sources that are less productive may need a push from the Marketing Director, while the good sources need to be maintained and nurtured at all costs.
- A close watch is made of groups, in the house and those expected in the day, because they involve volume room sales and represent a mix with FIT business to get the best revenue earnings.

Other Registration Options

- A prominent hotel did away with the reception desk initially. Guests were led to a courtesy lounge off the lobby where guests registered themselves while having a welcome drink.
- Budget and small hotels may have self registration booths much like an ATM machine where a guest swipes his credit card and enters his personal reservation code. The screen displays his registration form which he can amend, if necessary. Upon confirmation of the information a room key is issued in a tray below much like vending machines.
- VIPs, as discussed earlier, may register themselves at the airport, in the limousine or the room.
- Groups and conference delegates can register themselves in purpose built registration desks to avoid crowding the lobby or the main front desk counter. Delegates can be registered at the conference site itself while groups may be registered in briefing rooms hired by the tour operator.

3. Input the **Name** or **Room** of the party to receive the message(s) and select **Search**.
4. Place an 'X' next to the guest and select **OK**.

The **NEW MESSAGE** screen displays the following:

Name	Room	Arrival	Departure
Mathews, Mark	116	06-27-06	06-28-06

Message For

Name: Language:

Message From

Name: Company:
 First: Phone No.:
 Title:

Let's meet for drinks in the lounge at 8.

Print
OK
Close

5. Enter the caller's information and message as learned in the 'Reservations' chapter of this manual.
6. Select **OK** to deliver the message.

Delivering Messages

When you relay a message to a guest, either verbally or through a printed message, the message delivers to the guest and marks as received. This prevents accidentally delivering the same message to guests more than once.

To deliver a message to a guest and mark the message received, follow the steps as under:

1. Select **Front Desk** and **Messages**.

The screenshot shows a software window titled "HELL - Messages". It features several search filters: Name, Company, Room, Agent, Block, Group, Party, and Source. There are also checkboxes for "Message Status" (Received, Not Received, Printed) and "Status" (In House, Checked Out, Reservations, Cancellations, Due Out, Dye In, No Shows, Waitlist). A table with columns X, Date, Time, Name, Received Date, Printed Date, Entered By, and Received By is present. Below the table are fields for Arrival, Departure, Room, and Status. On the right side, there is a search bar and buttons for Retrieve, Print, New, Edit, Delete, and Close.

2. Search for the party to receive the message(s).
3. Highlight the message and select **Receive** to indicate that you have given the message to the guest. To mark multiple messages, place an 'X' next to each message (or choose **All** to mark all messages) and then select **Receive**.

Upselling

Upselling is the process of persuading the guest to opt for a superior room with a better room rate. This is a skill essential for all front desk staff. It is recognised that front desk personnel are salespersons and must find opportunities to increase room revenues by upselling. This skill requires:

1. understanding the room product and its features thoroughly;
2. know the room revenue targets for the day, week, and month;
3. assessing the guest's capacity to pay;
4. establish the guest needs by encouraging a discussion;
5. listen to guest feedback;
6. explain the features and benefits of a superior room to the guest in a manner that motivates him to buy.

Some of the features and benefits that could be used to upsell are:

- Room views
- Noiseless rooms
- Privacy

- Larger sized beds
 - Mini-bars
 - Safety lockers in the room
 - Access to in-house video library
 - Butler service
 - Free use of some hotel services like the business center, gymnasium, internet café, etc.
6. After the presentation of the superior room, the receptionist must close the sale by asking the guest, 'May I assign this superior room to you, Sir?' The guest will be obliged to answer. Most of the time guests agree to the purchase.
 7. Congratulate them on the excellent choice and reaffirm that they would have a better stay.
 8. Follow-up with the guest after a day, whether the room was upto his expectations.

JOB DESCRIPTION OF A FRONT OFFICE AGENT

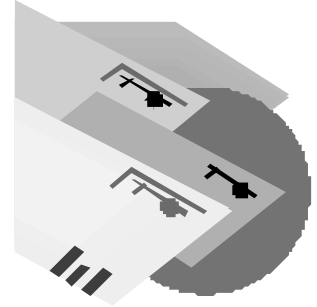
Job Title	Front Office Agent
Reports to	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Front Office Supervisor 2. Assistant Manager
Job Summary	Reserve, register and assign rooms to guests and be a continuous source of information during their stay in the hotel.
Duties and Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend briefings prior to the shift opening and take over from previous shift. Attend to log book for any special instructions. 2. Check the arrivals for the day and room status including departures for the day. 3. Check the expected VIPs for the day and issue VIP amenities vouchers for fruits, flowers, beverages, etc., as per policy. 4. Prepare records and pre-registrations for VIPs, handicapped people and old/senior people. 5. Handle Group/Crew registration as per laid down procedures. 6. Ensure that all stationary supplies and forms are available for a full shift and requisition them from stores if necessary. 7. Register and room all arrivals during the shift. 8. Constantly check front office database. 9. Open guest folios immediately of new arrivals and send to front office cashier.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Maintain room rates absolutely current and up to-date. 11. Maintain room rates absolutely current and be informed of the days rack rate. 12. Prepare the room discrepancy report and double check by physical verification by a bell boy. 13. Work closely with the Concierge and provide relevant information to him. 14. Give departure rooms to housekeeping promptly. 15. Assist in making room and occupancy reports. 16. Upsell rooms to get higher revenues. 17. Handle guests with scanty baggage diligently. 18. Update guest history periodically to have an accurate database. 19. Handle guest messaging 20. Handle guest and hotel mail
Supervises	Trainees assigned.
Limits of Authority	May assign rooms.
Coordinates with	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housekeeping—for the cleanliness of rooms for sale. Also tallies the room position. 2. Engineering—for the maintenance of service equipment and furniture. 3. Lobby—for the movement of guest baggage at the time of arrival and departure. 4. F&B—for meal plans 5. Concierge—relevant information update.
Minimum Educational Qualifications	Graduate with preferably a Craft Course certificate or six months training in front office reception.
Experience	Six months departmental training.
Skills and Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough knowledge of front office PMS systems and procedures • Socially confident • Personable and well-groomed • Physically sturdy to stay on one's feet for a shift • Proficiency in the English language and knowledge of the local dialect. A foreign language is preferable. • A team person • Etiquettes and manners • Proficiency in the front office software. • Ability to take stress • Customer service skills • Tact and diplomacy

Handling Mail

Of the many responsibilities of a concierge, handling guest and hotel mail is very important and critical for several reasons:

- A large hotel receives volumes of letters everyday that need careful routing to reach the addressee correctly and immediately.
- Mail must be delivered on time because it may have a critical impact on a guest plan.
- Executives and businessmen may await information for critical decisions.
- Mail comes in many forms including letters, cables, couriers, faxes, registered post, parcels, etc., each needing separate attention.
- The concierge receives the couriers on behalf of the guest. He represents the 'addressee' at the property.
- To safeguard the hotel from complaints associated with mail.



Hotels follow the following procedure to protect themselves:

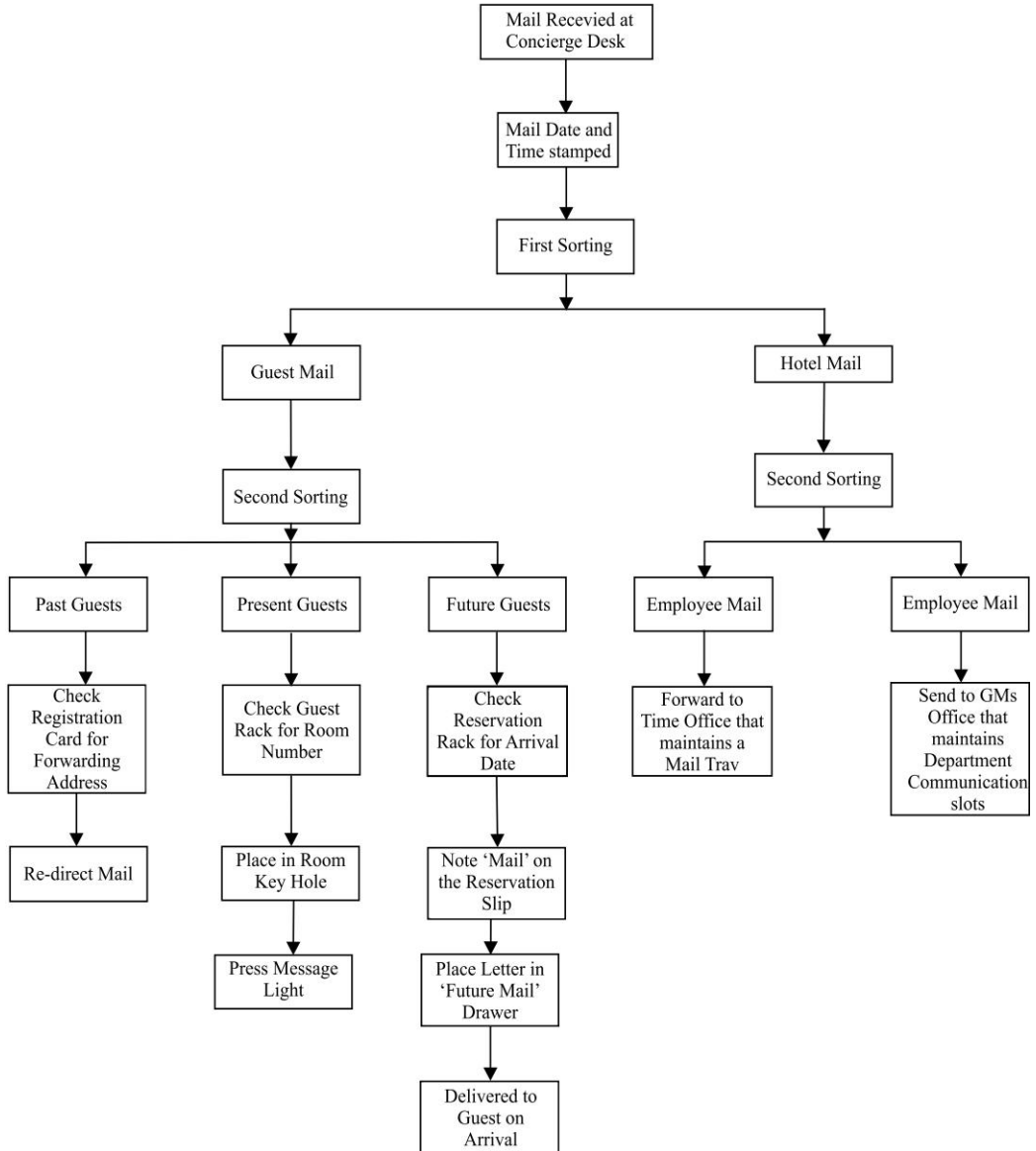
1. Time-stamp all mail at the time of receipt.
2. Record any open or damaged mail and parcels in the log book and have it countersigned by the postman.
3. All registered mail and parcels must be countersigned by the guest to acknowledge receipt.

The flow chart shows the hotel and guest mail procedure:

The flow chart only refers to letters. Insured packages, registered parcels, and mail and courier services have another procedure given as under.

In the flow chart one observes that there are two categories of mail — one for guests and one for the hotel.

Mail Process Flow



Guest Mail

The guest mail is sorted into:

- Guests who have checked-out (past resident guests)
- Guests presently residing in the hotel (present resident guests) and
- Guests expected (future resident guests).

Past resident guests: The past guests have their address on the registration card as per normal practice. It can be used as the forwarding address.

Present resident guests: Present guests need to have their mail delivered to them immediately. The mail is placed in their key pigeon hole and the message light pressed for the room. Contemporary hotels have message lights that flash on the room telephone. As soon as the guest reaches the room s/he will call the front desk agent or concierge to know the status of the message. The concierge will convey that a mail has been received. The guest can either request for it to be delivered to his/her room by the bell boy or will collect it at his/her convenience.

Future resident guest: The arrival date of the future guest can be ascertained from the computer in an automated system. The concierge will mark 'mail' on the slip to alert the receptionist when the guest arrives to register into the hotel. Hotels provide a separate drawer where future mail is stored.

Hotel Mail

Hotel mail is sorted into the following categories:

- Private employee mail and
- Hotel official mail.

Private Employee Mail: The private mail is sent to the time-office situated at the staff entrance at the rear of the hotel. It is the only authorised point for employees to enter and exit the hotel. The time office is where an employee stamps his/her date and time on time cards used to ascertain attendance and consequent salary payments. The time office maintains a mail tray.

Hotel Official Mail: Hotel official mail is sent to the General Manager's Office. The secretary's room has departmental pigeon holes where all official correspondences for any department are placed. The departmental secretary periodically checks the concerned pigeon hole for mail.

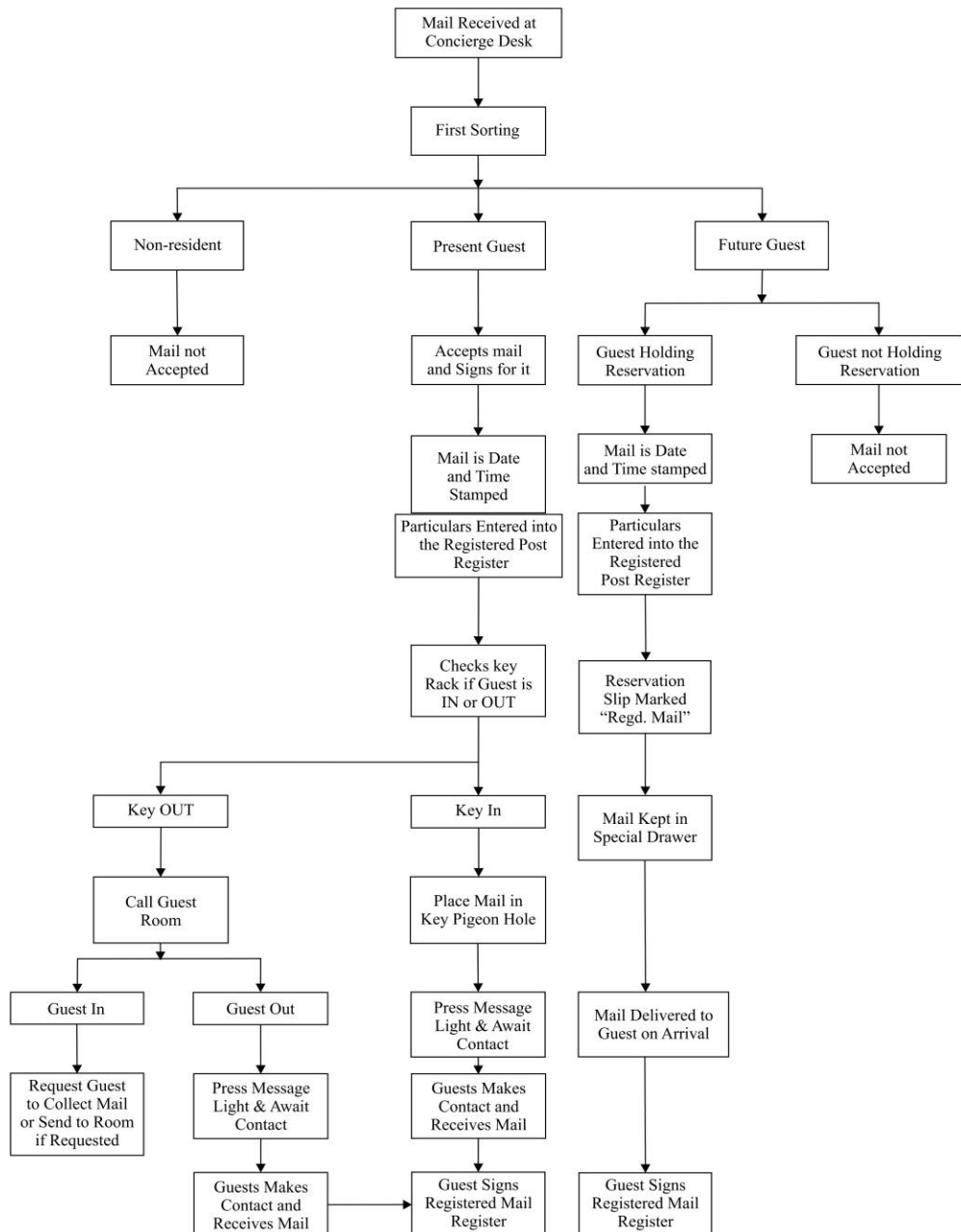
Handling Insured or Registered Mail and Courier Services

Such mail is critical as there is a direct responsibility of the hotel once they sign for it. There are two aspects of this mail: (1) Whether the mail should be accepted or not; and (2) once accepted, how carefully it is processed. Obviously, if mail comes through higher paid mail channels like registered, insured or courier, means that the mail is

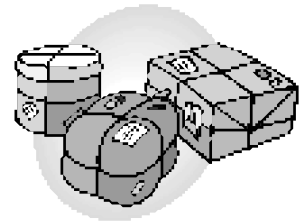


important to the guest and therefore requires careful handling. We must remember that mail here also includes parcels. The chart mentioned as under gives the systems and procedures adopted by the concierge to protect the guest and hotel interests.

Handling Insured, Registered and Courier Mail



One sees in the flow chart that the concierge will only accept registered mail if the guest is residing in the hotel or expected and holding a confirmed reservation. The concierge may help the postman with the forwarding addresses of guests who have checked out. Another key feature is the Registered Mail Register. It is used as a control measure. Guests who receive their mail have to sign the register in acknowledgement.



Registered Mail Register

Date	Time	Name of Guest	Resident Room Number	Future Guest Date of Arrival	Description of Package/ Mail	Concierge Signature	Guest Signature of Receipt	Date And Time of Receipt

Summary

The reception desk is the centrepiece of the lobby. It is also the converging point of all guest activities in the hotel. This places the front desk agents as important people to coordinate all guest activities. The main function is the registration process and assigning rooms. The task gets more complex for groups and crews. There are in addition distinct additional duties for the front office agents in the morning shift and those in the night shift. Mercifully, automated systems have taken a lot of processing of information leaving the front office agents to upsell rooms to get a better yield of revenue from the guest.



Key Terms

Arrivals	A guest who has just checked in
Blocking	To reserve a room on the room rack for a guest expected to arrive.
Check-in	The time a guest has registered at the front desk.
Check-out	A guest who has completed his billing formalities and departed.
Complimentary	Free use of a room
Crew	Airline flight and cabin crew
Departures	Guest leaving the hotel after their stay
Do-not-Disturb	A guest requesting not to be disturbed
Double Occupancy	Room occupied by two persons
Due out	An occupied room expected to be vacated
Group	Body of 15 persons or more travelling together
Guest Folio	The running bill of a guest, recording room and other charges for his/her stay
Guest Rack	The Whitney rack, at the information section of the reception, arranges guest names of hotel guests staying, in an alphabetical order.
House	Hotel
House Count	The number of guests residing in the hotel.
Late check-out	A guest who has requested a departure beyond the official check-out time of the hotel
Lock-out	A guest room sealed for entry by the guest because he has not settled his bill
No Show	A guest with a confirmed reservation who has not turned up.
Not Cleared	Room that is being prepared by housekeeping for sale
Occupancy	The number of saleable rooms occupied by guests.
Occupied	A room that is assigned to a guest
Out-of-Order	Room under maintenance
Position	Rooms available for sale at the beginning of a shift or day.
Registration	The act of registering into the hotel by completing the registration card
Registration Card	The formal document that registers a guest into the hotel for stay.
Room Allocation	Assigning a room to a guest after he has registered into the hotel.

Room Key	The key of a given guest room.
Room Rack	The Whitney rack arranged by room numbers.
Scanty Baggage	A guest with hand luggage only
Skipper	A guest who has departed without settling his bill
Sleep-out	A registered guest who has not used the room
Stay-over	Guests who extend their stay for a night
Under-stay	A guest who has checked-out before his scheduled departure date
VIP	A very important person who is extended special privileges by the hotel
Walk-in	A guest who wants a room without prior reservation



Review Quiz

Fill in the Blanks

1. Rooms available for sale at the beginning of a shift or day are called _____.
2. The Whitney rack, at the information section of the reception, that arranges resident guest names in an alphabetical order is called _____.
3. Guests who extend their stay for a night are called _____.
4. The formula of Expected Departures + Vacant Rooms – Expected Arrivals gives us _____.
5. The formula $100 - \text{Number of Domestic Guests}$ gives us _____.
6. The document that is presented to the Front Office for free services by charitable organisation is called a _____.
7. The document that coordinate two shifts is called the _____.
8. The document that gives the rooms numbers with the guest names of groups is called _____.
9. The document that blocks out-of-order rooms in the room rack is called _____.
10. The document that seeks special privileges for VIPs is called _____.

Write short notes on the following:

1. Benefits of a registration card
2. Purposes of an Arrival and Departure Register

3. Duties of the morning shift receptionist
4. Duties of a night receptionist
5. Features of a Night Clerk's Report



Training Methodology

This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use pre-prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations as training aids.

Learners must know the key terms and should be quizzed on them.

- The trainer must give hands-on training on the PMS of the hotel.
- Take learners through each procedural step which may be adapted to house policies and procedures. An on-the-job training will complete the learning exercise.
- The best way to confirm learning is to put learners on-the-job to practice the procedures under supervision.

15 Uniformed Services

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the reader understand the role of the Uniformed Services in fulfilling the Front Office obligations towards a guest.

INTRODUCTION

Uniformed services are an integral part of front office operations of every hotel. It provides support to the arrivals and departures of guests and is a continuous source of services to guests during their stay.

The uniformed services consist of:

- Lobby Desk
- The Bell Desk
- Doorman
- Transportation
- Valet Parking

LOBBY DESK

A lobby in a hotel is the immediate public area when the guest enters the portals of the hotel. It has seating arrangements and is a meeting place common to all hotel guests, whether residents or visitors. The lobby area is in direct proportion to the number of rooms. The larger the number of rooms, the larger is the lobby as it needs bigger

space for guest congregation. The lobby assumes importance as it is the first and last area of contact for a guest of the hotel. The hotel spends considerable funds and efforts to make the lobby aesthetically attractive and rationally convenient.



Essential Features of the Lobby

- The front office reception and cashier's cabin
- The Lobby Manager's desk
- The Guest Relations Executive's Desk
- Lobby lounge for drinks and snacks
- The Bell Desk
- The Concierge Desk
- Easy access to the Coffee Shop or Dining Room
- Access to the shopping arcade
- Seating areas
- Access to the guest elevators

While several millions have been invested in producing unique lobbies, the basic features of a lobby have to be respected. A typical lobby layout (Fig. 15.1) represents the essential features irrespective of the grand trimmings that lobbies can have is given below:

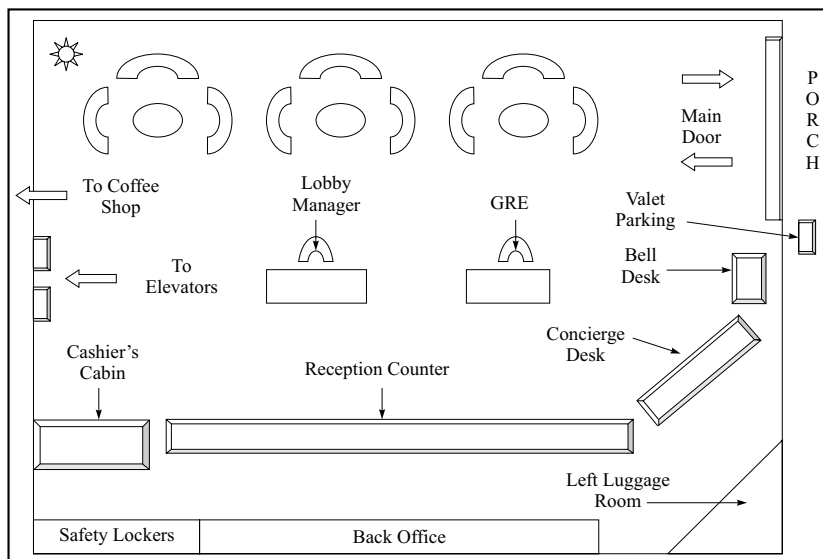


Fig. 15.1

Typical Lobby Layout

Lobby Organisation

The organisation chart of uniformed services is given in Fig 15.2.

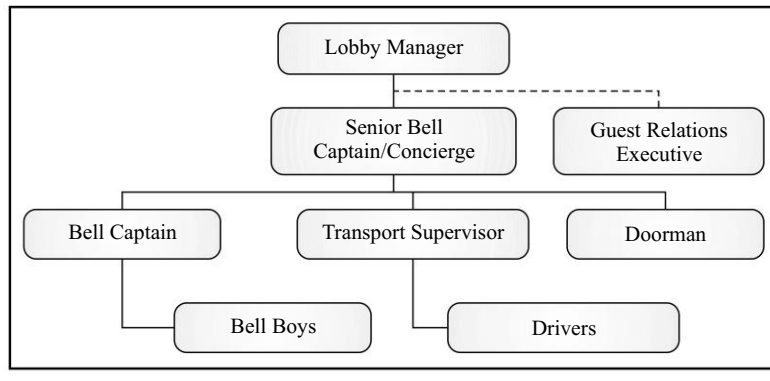


Fig. 15.2

Organisation Chart of the Uniformed Services

Let us examine the job descriptions of all positions in the uniformed services.

Lobby Manager

The Lobby Manager is a key functionary in the lobby as he represents the management. The lobby desk is therefore manned all 24 hours of the day. The lobby manager is a problem solver and holds the authority to make decisions regarding guest affairs. He/She is the custodian of the hotel policies and must, therefore, be conversant with all hotel policies and procedures; he/she must also be intimately knowledgeable with regard to operational procedures of all departments and be effective in dealing with guest problems. This post requires a person who is mature, alert, well-informed, diplomatic and physically agile. He/She is the head of all uniformed services and coordinates with the guest relations executive, front office reception and the front office cashier very closely.

Every shift has a Lobby Manager. The Night (lobby) Manager is important as he/she operates on behalf of the General Manager and all department heads. His/her understanding of all the departments and their systems and procedures has to be perfect, to make decisions for the night staff in those departments. Since all restaurants and bars are operational during the night, he has to ensure proper conduct of all guests. Cosmopolitan cities with international airports may have major arrivals and departures at night when the front office becomes busy. Night flights have crew who check-in and check-out during the night and the early hours of the morning.

Job Description of a Lobby Manager

Job Title

Lobby Manager

Reports To

1. Front Office Manager
2. Accommodations Director

Job Summary

To represent the hotel management in the lobby and organise, supervise and control all uniformed services in a shift.

Duties & Responsibilities

1. Take over shift from previous Lobby Manager and note any special instructions for the shift.
2. Brief staff of uniformed services and make sure the lobby is clean and tidy.
3. Manage all guest complaints and take corrective action appropriately.
4. Manage scanty baggage procedures.
5. Monitor airline crew movements and coordinate with the respective airline control rooms for wake calls and schedules.
6. Manage the discipline of the uniformed services.
7. Oversee the left-luggage procedures and the safety of the left luggage room.
8. Attend to any disputes over guest billings.
9. Update on operational policies and procedures and inform the uniformed services.
10. Train staff of the Uniformed Services.
11. Appraise the performance of the uniformed staff and recommend rewards and recognition.
12. Coordinate all guest requests with all departments of the hotel.
13. Assist the security in lobby surveillance.
14. Ensure that group and crew arrivals and baggage movement is conducted efficiently.
15. Oversee the concierge, bell desk services, valet parking and doorman services and transportation
16. Acts on behalf of the front office management at night.
17. Custodian of the master key and the keys to all stores (at night).

Supervises

All personnel of the Uniformed Services

Limits of Authority

May have dialogue with guests directly for proper coordination between the hotel and them. Custodian of the house master key and the store keys (at night). May enter and authorise the entry into any guest room. Can make policy decisions on behalf of the management as regards guest within certain guidelines. May debar a guest from entry into the hotel. May enforce house rules. Coordinates with airline offices.

Coordinates with

1. Front office—lends support on all arrivals and departures, especially in the night.
2. All departments—for better coordination between guest requests and the hotel.
3. Cashier—on matters of guest billings and paid-outs on behalf of the hotel.

Minimum Educational Qualifications

Diploma in Hotel Management.

Experience

A minimum two years as management trainee or Senior Captain.

Skills & Competencies

- Thorough knowledge of front office systems and procedures
- Socially confident
- Proficiency in the English language (Knowledge of foreign languages is preferable)
- Etiquettes and manners
- Personable and well-groomed
- Having flair and showmanship
- Tact and diplomacy
- Assertive in protecting the interests of the hotel

Guest Relations Executive

The Guest Relations Executive provides value-added services to guests especially VIPs. Her role is explained in detail in Lesson 20, 'Guest Relations Executive.'

Bell Desk

Senior Bell Captain

The Senior Bell Captain is a senior supervisor who covers the morning shift. His main role is to:

1. Set the work schedules for all the other shifts.
2. Supervise the morning shift as all arrivals and departures are related to the room day which is 12 noon.
3. Set responsibilities for each Bell Captain per shift who assumes all responsibilities as a supervisor for that shift.
4. Stand in for the lobby manager in his absence.
5. Be accountable for the movement of guest baggage.
6. Control the left-luggage procedures.
7. Organise errands as required by guests and management.
8. Oversee the transport operations and valet parking.

Job Description of a Senior Bell Captain

Job Title	Senior Bell Captain
Reports To	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lobby Manager 2. Front Office Manager
Job Summary	To organise, supervise and control all uniformed services in the lobby to the standards set by management and to guest satisfaction.
Duties & Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supervise the Bell Captains and ensure that they follow systems procedures. 2. Prepare staff schedules to meet the exigencies of work. 3. Set standards of daily briefings and establish effective two-way communications. 4. Attend to guest complaints and take prompt corrective action. 5. Assist Bell Captains with guest requests within policy. 6. Oversee the Left Luggage formalities and the baggage room. 7. Train the Bell Captains and the Bell Boys for maximum departmental efficiency. 8. Oversee all baggage movements during check-ins and check-outs, especially of groups and airline crews in his shift.

9. Set control for the sale of postage stamps to guests.
10. Ensure Bell Captains report guests with scanty baggage and maintain the 'Scanty Baggage Register'.
11. Assist the security in lobby surveillance.
12. Appraise the performance of lobby staff and recommend to the Lobby Manager their rewards and recognition.
13. Oversee the distribution of morning newspapers to the guest rooms and the executive offices.
14. Maintain First Aid kits as prescribed by the house doctor.
15. Ensure that the lobby premises are kept clean at all times.
16. Ensure that the guest baggage is kept at appropriate designated places and is secure.
17. Assist Lobby Manager in the coordination of wake calls for airline crews and groups.
18. Step-in for the Lobby Manager in his absence.
19. Oversee the transport operation station valet parking services and doormen.

Supervises

1. Bell Captains
2. Bell Boys
3. Doormen
4. Parking attendants
5. Transport in-charge

Limits of Authority

1. May communicate with guests for the purpose of uniformed services.
2. Maintains discipline and recommends any deviations in behaviour.
3. Mans the lobby desk in the absence of the Lobby Manager.
4. Recommends rewards and recognition of uniformed services staff.

Coordinates With

1. Front Office—for the movement of guest baggage at the time of arrival or departure and transport coordination.
2. Lobby Manager—for management instructions, policies and procedures.
3. Cashier—for confirmation of the settlement of bills.
4. Housekeeping—for the cleanliness of lobby premises.
5. Telecommunications—for wake-calls of airline crews and groups.
6. Security—to help protect hotel property and lobby image.

Minimum Education Qualifications

High School with preferably a Craft Course in Front Office.

Experience

Three years as a Bell Boy and one year as a Bell Captain.

Skills & Competencies

- Thorough knowledge of lobby procedures
- Proficiency in the English language and the local dialect (knowledge of a foreign language is preferred)
- Well groomed
- Socially confident
- Physically sturdy and having stamina to stand for long hours and to lift heavy baggage
- Willingness to be of help to guests at all times
- Supervisory skills

Concierge

A new concept called the Concierge has in some cases replaced the Senior Bell Captain with certain additional responsibilities. Because of relatively newness of this position, it has been dealt with extensively in a separate chapter. Please refer to Lesson 19, 'Concierge Services'.

Bell Captain

The Bell Captain is a supervisor of a shift. His main role is to:

1. Control the bell boys in a shift.
2. Supervise the smooth movement of guest baggage in a shift.
3. Control the left-luggage procedure in a shift.
4. Allot errands to bell boys

Job Description of a Bell Captain

Job Title

Bell Captain

Reports To

1. Senior Bell Captain
2. Lobby Manager

Job Summary

To organise, supervise and control all uniformed services in a shift as per standards of the property and to guest satisfaction.

Duties & Responsibilities

1. Supervise the movement of bell boys in a shift and record in the Lobby Control Sheet.
2. Take attendance and prepare staff schedules to meet work exigencies.
3. Attend to guest complaints and initiate prompt action.
4. Receive telephone calls at the bell desk and respond to requests and instructions.
5. Handle left luggage formalities and maintain the baggage room.
6. Train bell boys to maximise departmental efficiency.
7. Organise and supervise all baggage movement at the time of arrivals and departures, especially of airline crews and groups.
8. Control the sale of postage stamps and the stationery to guests.
9. Be alert and report guests with scanty baggage and maintain the "Scanty Baggage Register".
10. Assist the security in lobby surveillance
11. Conduct daily briefings of bell boys in a shift.
12. Coordinate and control the distribution of daily newspapers to guest rooms and executive offices.
13. Keep baggage neatly in their designated places.
14. Ensure that the lobby is clean at all times during the shift.
15. Supervise the paging services during the shift.

Supervises

Bell Boys

Limits of Authority

Authority to communicate with a guest directly on matters of baggage movement, sale of postage, etc.

Coordinates With

1. Front Office—for the movement of guest baggage.
2. Telecommunications—for the wake-up calls of airline crews and groups.
3. Cashier—for authorisation to move guest baggage at the time of departure.
4. Housekeeping—for the cleanliness of the lobby.

Minimum Educational Qualifications

High School

Experience

Three years as a Bell Boy.

Skills & Competencies

- Thorough knowledge of lobby systems and procedures.
- Proficiency in the English language and local dialect, with preferably a foreign language.
- Physically sturdy and stamina to stand for long hours and lift heavy luggage.
- Socially confident.
- Personable and well-groomed because of constant guest contact.
- Supervisory skills.

Bell Boys

Bell Boys may also be called porters or bell hops. They carry guest baggage at the time of guest arrivals and departures and perform errands for them. They have to be well-groomed, physically sturdy, have a command of Basic English, be courteous and of course, be willing to help.



Job Description of a Bell Boy

Job Title

Bell Boy

Reports To

1. Bell Captain
2. Senior Bell Captain

Job Summary

Execute the movement of baggage of guests and also perform any other errands of guests and management.

Duties & Responsibilities

1. Handle guest arrivals:
 - Receive baggage from the porch.
 - Escort guest to room with baggage after clearance of registration at the front office.
 - Place baggage in room rack and explain clearly the various facilities of the room to guest.
2. Handle guest departures:
 - Upon instructions from the Bell Captain bring down guest baggage from the room.
 - Check room for guest belongings that may have been left behind, damaged hotel property and/or any other missing articles.
 - Await cashier's authorisation for movement of baggage to the porch and guest transport.
3. Handle and store lobby trolleys, wheel chairs, etc. carefully and appropriately.
4. Report guests with scanty baggage to the Bell Captain.
5. Account for postage stamps sold to guests during the shift.
6. Execute errands within and outside the hotels as directed by the Bell Captain.
7. Complete left luggage formalities as per procedures set by the management.
8. Distribute daily newspapers to guest rooms as directed.
9. Assist handicapped, invalid and old people to elevators and other parts of the hotel.
10. Assist in the transfer of guest baggage in the event of a change of rooms.

Supervises

None

Limits of Authority

Authority to enter guest rooms when directed. Authority to communicate with guest on matters of guest baggage movement.

Coordinates With

1. Front Office Agent—for authorisation to room a guest.
2. Cashier—for authorisation to remove guest baggage from the property at the time of departure.
3. Concierge—for the passing of messages to guest rooms.
4. Housekeeping—for the exchange of personal uniforms.

Minimum Educational Qualifications

High School

Experience

None. One month on-the-job training is adequate.

Skills & Competencies

- Proficiency in the English language
- Personable and well groomed
- Physically sturdy to do active physical duties including lifting heavy baggage
- Willingness to be of assistance to guests and staff
- Team player

Transport Services

Providing transport is another important service of the hotel. This service comes under the control of the concierge. The transport supervisor or head driver reports to the concierge. Under the head, there are a number of drivers performing various duties under the Head Driver. Drivers are scheduled on each shift to fulfil the following duties:

Courtesy Coaches

Courtesy coaches pick up guests from the airport and drop them to the airport. A courtesy coach is a free service. A traveller will find these courtesy coaches of practically all hotels in the city at the parking lot. The coaches follow a cyclical drive pattern to and from the hotel to cover all flights. A cosmopolitan city would have several flights during the day and night. The courtesy coaches are therefore



quite busy for almost 24 hours of a day. They need to thus work in shifts to avoid exhaustion and possible accidents. Drivers are rotated through the three shifts of a day to complete this activity.

While guests with confirmed reservations are automatically provided the courtesy coach privileges, passengers without reservations may also use the coach with the hope of getting a room at the hotel. Many hotels nowadays have direct telephone lines from the airport itself. Tourist-conscious airports provide a section where the slides of hotels are displayed with route maps, room rates, etc. Passengers may call the hotel from the airport itself and secure a confirmed reservation in which he/she will be instructed to catch the courtesy coach. Hotels may even display the coach schedule at the airport for the benefit of the guest.

Limousine Service

Limousine services are another service provided to VIPs. A limousine is a luxury car driven by a liveried driver who has languages skills, etiquettes and manners and conversational skills. He is expected to be very well-informed of the hotel and city features and facilities. A VIP asks for such a service at the time of making a reservation. Sometimes limousine services are charged to a guest.



Cars for Official Duties

- Hotels also provide cars to their executives on **official duties**. The General Manager may want to attend a Hotel Association Meeting, the Financial Controller may want to visit the bank, or sales executives may want to make sales calls, etc. Hotel cars are maintained with or without drivers to meet such official travel trips.
- Many hotels provide **company cars** as perquisites to their senior executives for official travel. The upkeep of these cars is the responsibility of the transport section. The duties include car registration with the authorities, periodic servicing, petrol control, etc. They also respond to breakdowns by linking with the local Automobile Association.

Transport for Staff

Staff transportation is also an important responsibility of the transport section. Hotels provide pick and drop facilities to their staff to ensure punctuality on a shift. Many hotels have exclusive staff accommodation especially when staff is not locally hired.

Staff accommodation gives expatriate staff the benefit of accommodation, a perquisite to attract good talent. The staff buses ply at convenient times to cover all shifts.

Valet Parking

Valet parking is a service provided by finer hotels for their local guests. Parking especially when there are large functions and galas in the hotel can be inconvenient to guests. The transport section provides drivers (male/female) for this purpose (A&B in picture). The hotel keeps dedicated parking slots for valet parking drivers. While this is normally a free service, the guests do tip drivers for the service. Valet parking becomes critical to downtown hotels that have parking limitations.

Valet parking attendants may have to park cars a distance from the property. A valet parking attendant has a serially numbered tag with a counterfoil. He notes the car registration number on the tag and hands the counterfoil to the guest. The main tag is strung onto the car keys which are maintained at the valet parking desk in the porch. As soon as a guest wants to exit the hotel, he/she hands over the counterfoil to a valet parking attendant to identify the car and bring it to the porch. Obviously, these valet parking attendants are special as they must be skilled to drive any model of car.



City Courtesy Service

City Courtesy Service is another free bus service by the hotel to take hotel guests to the city centre. This service is particularly critical to hotels in the suburbs, airports or remote resorts. They want to give the guests the comfort that they are accessible to the city centre even though the hotel is situated out of town. Hotels display city courtesy service schedules in the lobby for the convenience of guests. The driver will identify pick-up points in the city (often only one at the city centre) at the time schedules of such pick-ups. Guest will have to meet those deadlines to avail the benefit of this courtesy service.

City Tours

City Tours are another service provided by the transportation section. This may be outsourced by the hotel to transporters who are more qualified and certified for tourist trips or run this service themselves. Either way, it is a charged service which includes the bus charges, tour guides and perhaps meals at pre-negotiated restaurants. The hotel may even provide packed lunch-boxes to guests on city tours.



Ambulance Service

Ambulance Services are a relatively new feature provided by finer hotels. Such hotels have their private ambulance equipped to handle medical emergencies while on route to the nearest hospital. This is an integrated service of medical emergency that involves the telephone department, security, hospital, house doctor and the lobby staff. Hotels recognise that highly-stressed executives can have medical emergencies at any age. Retirees are another great travelling public who invest their lifelong earnings on a once in a lifetime world tour. Being an older generation will need medical support wherever they travel.

The Transportation Supervisor

The Transportation Supervisor reports to the Senior Bell Captain/Concierge who coordinates all transport movements. The Transportation Supervisor has a number of drivers who have the following essential duties:

- Pick and drop guests from and to the airport in the courtesy coach.
- Pick and drop staff from and to their residences to assume duty or when they finish it. Hotels provide this service to staff to ensure that they are on time for a shift.
- Operate limousine car services for VIPs.
- Manage valet parking services if provided by the hotel.
- Drive the city tour coaches if the hotel has such a captive facility. Many hotels outsource city tours to other surface transporters.
- Do errands for the management including banking cash, delivering important documents, etc. They also do errands for guests including collecting tickets for guests, etc.



The Doorman

The Doorman reports to the Senior Bell Captain and receives guests at the porch in their respective transport. He helps in opening the doors of the transport and welcoming them to the property. He alerts the bell desk for a bell boy/s and assists him in unloading guest baggage and opens the hotel portals for the guests. In some cases, he may escort them to the reception. His main challenge is to keep the porch free from traffic congestion.



Job Description of a Doorman

Job Title	
Doorman	
Reports To	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bell Captain 2. Senior Bell Captain 	
Job Summary	Provide welcome and arrival and departure services at the front entrance with courtesy.
Duties & Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome guests at their arrival at the porch. 2. Alert the bell desk. 3. Assist guests to unload baggage. 4. Open doors for guests and escort them to the registration desk if necessary. 5. Control traffic at the porch to avoid congestion. 6. Provide valet parking services if necessary as per policy. 7. Assist the security in providing front porch surveillance. 8. Hail taxis for guests. 9. Be a source of information on hotel facilities and city landmarks.
Supervises	None
Limits of Authority	May direct traffic at the hotel porch. May keep guest car keys if given valet parking duties.
Coordinates With	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bell Desk—to inform about guest arrivals. 2. Transport—to organise traffic flow at the porch. 3. Valet parking—for guest car parking needs. 4. Security—for porch surveillance.

Minimum Educational Qualifications

High School

Experience

One week doorman training

Valet Parking Attendants

Valet Parking Attendants report to the Senior Captain and assist local visitors to park their cars in the hotel parking lots. They also retrieve the cars when visitors depart. Their main challenge is when there are big functions and gala celebrations in the hotel with many visitors and cars. They need to have the skill to drive all models of cars both manual and automatic.

Job Description of a Valet Parking Attendant

Job Title

Valet Parking Attendant

Reports To

1. Bell Captain
2. Senior Bell Captain

Job Summary

Provide valet parking services to guests in a courteous manner ensuring car safety.

Duties & Responsibilities

1. Be knowledgeable about various cars and their driving features.
2. Prepare car parking tickets for guests who wish the service.
3. Park the cars in the designated areas.
4. Keep car keys in safe custody.
5. Bring cars back to the porch when guests wish to depart.
6. Hand over keys against valid tickets only.
7. Assist doorman in traffic control if required.

Supervises	None
Limits of Authority	May take possession of guest car keys for safekeeping. Drive guest cars. Return car keys only against valid tickets.
Coordinates With	Doorman—for guest car parking requests.
Minimum Educational Qualifications	High School and a valid driving licence.
Experience	One year driving experience.
Skills & Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled in driving various manual and automatic cars. • Etiquettes and manners • Polite and courteous

LOBBY TERMINOLOGY

Before one proceeds to describe the lobby procedures it is important to understand some of the terminology that is typically used in this area:

Arrival	A guest intending to check-in to the hotel
Baggage	Guest luggage
Departure	A guest checking-out of the hotel
Left Luggage	Guest baggage that is temporarily kept with the hotel, to be claimed later
Occupancy	The number of rooms sold in the hotel
Scanty Baggage	A guest with hand baggage or no baggage
Skipper	A guest who has departed without clearing his bill

BELL DESK PROCEDURES

Briefing

Briefings are perhaps the single most critical communication point between the management and staff. It is the moment of upward and downward communications. Briefings of the uniformed services are led by the Lobby Manager and in his absence the Senior Bell Captain. Briefings are also held by the Bell Captains and Transportation Supervisor for their respective direct teams.

At the briefing the Lobby Manager checks the following:

- Grooming standards of the lobby staff
- Uniforms are properly pressed and clean
- Fingernails are manicured and clean
- Shoes are well polished
- Staff grievances
- Staff feedback on operations of the previous day
- Staff suggestions for improving the lobby staff performances

The Lobby Manager will also communicate the following:

- New policies of the management
- Occupancy status of the shift and day
- VIPs expected
- Airline crews expected
- Groups expected
- Service standards that need re-enforcing
- Guest complaints and how they can be avoided
- Training tips
- Recognition for jobs well done
- Transfers, promotions, new staff and exits
- Introduction of new staff joining the service team
- Encouragement and motivation
- Staff schedules
- Cost control measures
- Reinforcement of lobby procedures
- Management observations and suggestions

Guest Arrival Procedure

- Step 1:** When a guest arrives, the doorman buzzes the Bell Captain's desk for a Bell Boy.
- Step 2:** The Bell Captain will initiate the Arrival Errand Card (Fig. 15.3) below, by giving the bell boy (who is attending to the guest) an identity number.
- Step 3:** The Bell Boy wishes the guest/s and unloads the baggage from the transport. He brings the baggage via the baggage entrance beside the main door. He places the baggage at the bell desk and awaits instructions from the receptionist to move the baggage to the guest room. Hotels may have tags to identify baggage.
- Step 4:** The Bell Boy will inform the receptionist or Lobby Manager in case a guest has scanty baggage. Hotels have a separate policy for guests with scanty baggage, which will be discussed later.

BELL BOY NO:	DATE: TIME: AM/PM
ROOM NO:	GUEST NAME:
BAGGAGE TYPE & NO: • SUITCASE _____ • BRIEFCASE _____ • HANDBAG _____ • OTHER PACKETS _____	REMARKS:

Fig. 15.3

Arrival Errand Card

- Step 5:** The receptionist will confirm to the bell boy that the guest has been registered into the hotel by signing the arrival errand card and gives the name and room number of the guest. The receptionist will also hand the allotted room key to the Bell Boy.
- Step 6:** The Bell Boy will bring to the attention to the guest any pre-damage to the baggage to absolve the hotel responsibility for it.
- Step 7:** Lead the guest to his/her room with the baggage. Some hotels will have separate baggage elevators in which case the guest is given the direction to the room and the Bell Boy follows in the baggage elevator.

- Step 8:** The Bell Boy will open the door and let the guest enter the room first. He follows and places the baggage on the luggage rack provided in each room. He leaves the room key on the dresser or allotted place at the entrance in modern hotels.
- Step 9:** The Bell Boy explains the following features in the room:
- The console from where room lights are operated
 - Air conditioning/heating thermostat and how to operate it
 - The television controls and how to operate it
 - Internal locking system
 - Mini-bar operation
 - Telephone controls include messaging facility
 - Internet connection points
 - Display of fire-exit rules
 - Safety locker (if provided in the room) and how to operate it
- Step 10:** Wish the guest a pleasant stay and leave. Though it is an international practice to give tips, Bell Boys should not solicit it.
- Step 11:** Return to the bell desk and complete the baggage information on the arrival card and surrender it to the bell captain.

Scanty Baggage Procedure

The term 'Scanty Baggage' refers to a guest with hand baggage or no baggage at all. Such guests pose a hazard as they can check-out of the hotel without paying their bill. There is no way of knowing whether a guest walking out with scanty baggage will return at all. Most management stipulates a policy that such guests deposit an advance as a safeguard against skipping out of the hotel. A guest who has left the hotel without clearing his bills is called a skipper. The bell desk maintains a strict control of such guests with definite policies to guide them. The procedure is as follows:



- Step 1:** The Bell Boy informs the Bell Captain and receptionist of a guest with scanty baggage.
- Step 2:** The Bell Captain stamps 'Scanty Baggage' on the Arrival Errand Card and informs the lobby manager. The receptionist is alerted with the stamp when he/she receives it.

- Step 3:** The receptionist will stamp 'Scanty Baggage' on the Registration Card.
- Step 4:** The receptionist gets the Lobby Manager to see the registration card once completed by the guest. The Lobby Manager has the following options:
1. To ask for the entire room charges in advance
 2. To ask for a deposit that covers at least one night charge or
 3. To lower the house credit limit for bills in which the guest has to clear the bills periodically as he touches the limit.
- This is normally exercised when guests check-in to the hotel for the first time. Regular guests known to the hotel management may be excused from such a policy. The Lobby Manager signs the registration card with his/her instructions.
- Step 5:** The Bell Captain fills the Scanty Baggage Register (Fig. 15.4) and gets it signed by the Lobby Manager.
- Step 6:** Housekeeping and Security are informed of the guest room number to keep a watch.

Date	Time	Guest Name	Room Number	Name of Bell Boy	Description of Luggage	Remarks	Lobby Manager Signature	Bell Captain Signature

Fig. 15.4

Scanty Baggage Register

Guest Departure Procedure

- Step 1:** A guest calls the bell desk about his intention to check-out. The Bell Captain asks the guest the number of baggage he/she has to send the right number of bell boys. The Bell Captain initiates the Departure Errand Card (Fig. 15.5 below) writing the date, time, guest name, room number and the number of the baggage. He allots a Bell Boy/s and writes his identity number on the card.
- Step 2:** The Bell Captain deposits the Departure Errand Card with the Front Office Cashier who gets the cue that since a check-out is taking place he has to prepare the billing formalities.

BELL BOY NO:	DATE: TIME: AM/PM
ROOM NO:	GUEST NAME:
BAGGAGE TYPE & NO: • SUITCASE _____ • BRIEFCASE _____ • HANDBAG _____ • OTHER PACKETS _____	REMARKS:

Fig. 15.5

Departure Errand Card

- Step 3:** The Bell Boy in the meantime proceeds to the guest room and knocks on the door announcing his name in. He may repeat the knock after 30 seconds if there is no response, announcing himself again.
- Step 4:** Upon entering the room, the Bell Boy wishes the guest the time of the day. He then proceeds to search the room and bathroom for guest belongings.
- Step 5:** He looks for around the room for any damage to hotel property or anything missing. If there is any default, he reports the same to the Lobby Manager or Bell Captain.
- Step 6:** He takes custody of the room key and also takes the baggage out of the room.
- Step 7:** He switches off the air conditioning/heating and room lights and shuts and locks the door.
- Step 8:** The Bell Boy then leads the guest to the elevator or informs him (the guest) to meet him in the lobby in case a baggage elevator has to be used.
- Step 9:** The Bell Boy places the baggage at the bell desk. He hands over the room key to the cashier and awaits confirmation from him/her that the billing formalities have been completed. In the meantime, he attaches the hotel baggage tags or any publicity stickers of the hotel onto the baggage.
- Step 10:** The cashier signs the Departure Errand Card and hands it to the Bell Boy as a cue to remove the guest baggage. The Bell Boy deposits the errand card with the Bell Captain and proceeds to remove the guest baggage using the baggage door to the front porch.
- Step 11:** He wil proceed to load the baggage onto the transport. He wishes the guest a pleasant trip and returns to the bell desk for the next assignment.



Bell Boy Control Procedure

One of the primary functions is to control the movement of bell boys in a shift. It is necessary to control them as they perform many errands by the management and guests apart from the duties concerning guest baggage. The challenge for the Bell Captain is to get the best productivity out of Bell Boys. The Lobby Control Sheet (Fig. 15.6) serves just that purpose, i.e., to keep a record of the movements of Bell Boys in a shift.

Bell Captain Name:.....					Sheet No:.....				
Date:.....					Shift: From..... To.....				
Room No.	Bell Boy No.	Arrival	Departure	Room Change		Service Call	Time		Comments
				FRM	TO		FRM	TO	

Fig. 15.6

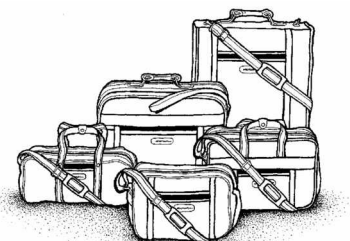
Lobby Control Sheet

The control sheet is self-explanatory. Every Bell Boy is given a code number for easy and quick identification. The Bell Boys' names may also be used. The "Room Change To" indicates a new room that is allotted to a guest on the control sheet. The first column under this head indicates the old room and the second the new room allotted. The column 'Service Call' identifies the special errands given by a guest. An important part of the control sheet is the time the bell boy has been allotted an assignment and the time he completes it. It ascertains the productivity of every Bell Boy who cannot slack in their timings as they know that they are being monitored. The Bell Captain, with experience, schedules a time frame standard for each job.

Left Luggage Procedure

The term 'left luggage' is attributed to luggage left by a guest who checks out of the hotel but wishes his luggage later. Many guests often visit other cities in the country on a short tour but naturally do not want to carry their heavy baggage with them.

Hotels provide a left luggage facility to guests who are sure to return to the hotel after their tour. The left luggage room is a strong room specifically for this purpose under the guarantee of the management for their safety. The room will have racks along the wall where baggage is deposited. Baggage is stored on racks to keep it safe from water, insects, rodents, etc. When



groups leave their baggage they are placed together and covered with a netting to identify the baggage with the group. Smaller hotels may not have this facility.

Given below is the step-by-step procedure for handling left luggage:

- Step 1:** The Bell Captain ascertains whether the guest has settled his hotel bill with the front office cashier.
- Step 2:** The Bell Captain inspects the baggage and brings to the notice of the guest a pre-existing damage. He enters the description of the baggage on the Baggage Tag (Fig. 15.7) and strings it to the baggage piece. The sticker has a number with a counterfoil with the same number.
- Step 3:** The Bell Captain enters these details in the Left Luggage Register (Fig. 15.8). He mentions any pre-damage comments in the remarks column. He also mentions the expected date of delivery in the register.
- Step 4:** He tears off the counterfoil of the Baggage Tag and hands it over to the guest.
- Step 5:** He instructs a Bell Boy to deposit the baggage in the left luggage room.

<p>HOTEL XYZ GUEST NAME</p> <p>DATE ROOM NO.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BAGGAGE CHECK (Guest Copy)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NO. 1234</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MANAGEMENT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR GOODS LEFT OVER 30 DAYS</p> <hr/> <p>BAGGAGE CHECK (Hotel Copy)</p> <p>NO. 1234</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUITCASE • BRIEFCASE • GOLF KIT • OVERCOAT • UMBRELLA • OTHERS..... <p style="text-align: center;">MANAGEMENT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR GOODS LEFT OVER 30 DAYS.</p> <p>GUEST NAME</p> <p>DATE..... ROOM NO.....</p>
--

Fig. 15.7

Baggage Tag

Date	Room No.	Guest Name	Bell Captains Name	Baggage Tag No.	Description of Baggage	Expected Date of Delivery	Actual Date of Delivery	Remarks	Guest signature

Fig. 15.8

Left Luggage Register

Return of Baggage

- Step 6:** Upon the return of the guest, the Bell Captain takes the counterfoil from the guest.
- Step 7:** The Bell Captain then cross-checks it with the Left Luggage Register. (It must be remembered that the delivery of the baggage could be done by another Bell Captain on another shift and is not originally familiar with the transaction). It is quite possible that the guest withdraws his/her baggage later or earlier than the expected date in the register.
- Step 8:** The Bell Captain assigns a Bell Boy to bring the baggage from the left luggage room to the bell desk for inspection.
- Step 9:** The Bell Boy tallies the guest counterfoil number with the baggage tag on the baggage and also confirms the nature of baggage mentioned. He brings the baggage to the bell desk.
- Step 10:** The Bell Captain inspects the baggage with the guest and reconfirms the numbers on the tags.
- Step 11:** The Bell Captain enters the date of release in the Left Luggage Register and obtain the guest's signature.

Other Duties of Bell Desk Staff

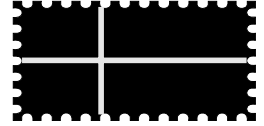
Housekeeping Discrepancy

The housekeeping department makes a physical check of all rooms and prepares a Housekeeping Report. A copy of the report is sent to the front office receptionist, who tallies the report with the room rack. If there is a discrepancy, a Bell Boy is summoned to independently reconfirm the status of the room. Statuses of rooms are coded as follows:

- V = Vacant
- O = Occupied
- UR = Under Repair
- DND = Do Not Disturb
- DL = Double Lock
- L = Luggage but bed not slept in
- LB = No Luggage but bed slept in
- SB = Scanty Baggage
- OOO = Out of Order
- NC = Not cleared though check out taken place

Postage

Large hotels may have a post office located in its premises, especially in the shopping arcade. Hotels that do not have this facility provide postage at the bell desk. The desk has a post box where guests can post their mail. The postman picks the mail as per the arrangement with the hotel. This facility is fast falling out of practice due to the internet which has made the postal service obsolete.



Daily Newspaper

Hotels worldwide, especially business hotels provide free daily newspapers. While business hotels may have options of different newspapers, most others provide at least the leading newspaper outside each room every morning. A Bell Boy in the morning shift may be directed to place these papers outside each occupied guest room door. Additional copies are kept in the coffee shop, business lounge and the bell desk.



Security

While hotels have their own security services, bell staff assist by keeping a vigilance of the lobby and the rooms they serve. Any suspicious matters are immediately reported to the Bell Captain.

PAGING

Paging refers to a system of locating guests within the hotel precincts. The bell desk has a mini-board with bells on a long handle. The guest's name and/or room number is written on the board. When a guest has to be paged, the bell boy pages the guest by holding the

board aloft around the lobby, coffee shop or swimming pool, ringing the bells to draw attention of all guests. The guest concerned identifies himself. Paging is necessary when guests receive phone calls on the house phone, or need to be identified by a visitor, or the hotel requires passing on an urgent message. This task is coordinated by the concierge Sr. Bell Captain who has this service. Modern hotels have public address systems much like that at an airport. The paging can be done on the P.A. system. The guest may be asked to contact the concierge desk. There are many views regarding the adoption of this method. Some hotel managements believe that the P.A. system disturbs the peace of guests and removes the exclusivity of the property.



Key Terms

Arrival	A guest intending to register into the hotel
Baggage	Guest luggage
Departure	A guest checking-out of the hotel
Left Luggage	Guest baggage that is temporarily kept with the hotel, to be claimed later
Occupancy	The number of rooms sold in the hotel
Paging	A system of locating guests within the hotel presincts
Scanty Baggage	A guest with hand baggage or no baggage
Skipper	A guest who has departed without clearing his bill



Review Quiz

Multiple Choice Questions

- The document that helps lobby managers hand over charge is called
 - Lobby Control Sheet
 - Errand Card
 - Log book
- The document initiated by the Bell Captain on a guest arrival is called
 - Errand Card
 - Lobby Control Sheet
 - Scanty Baggage Register

3. The Bell Boy gets his cue to room the guest is by
 - (a) The receptionist buzzing the desk
 - (b) The receptionist fills the Arrival Errand Card
 - (c) The receptionist fills the guest folio
4. Which is not an essential feature of a lobby?
 - (a) Bell Desk
 - (b) Lounge chairs
 - (c) Cigarette stand
5. Which is not the duty of a Lobby Manager?
 - (a) Briefing
 - (b) Giving instructions for 'Scanty baggage' guests
 - (c) Registering a guest
6. Which of the following is not an authority of the Lobby Manager?
 - (a) Entry into a guest room
 - (b) Coordination with airline offices
 - (c) Making paid-outs to guests
7. Which of the following is not the duty of a Bell Boy?
 - (a) Explaining the room features
 - (b) Waiting for a tip from the guest
 - (c) Distributing morning newspapers
8. Which is not the duty of a Doorman?
 - (a) Controlling the traffic at the porch
 - (b) Hailing taxis
 - (c) Escorting guests to the room
9. Which of the following documents is involved in Left Luggage procedures?
 - (a) Baggage Tag
 - (b) Lobby Control Sheet
 - (c) Departure Errand Card
10. Who is responsible for postage sales?
 - (a) Receptionist
 - (b) Doorman
 - (c) Bell Captain

True or False

1. The lobby area is in direct proportion to the number of rooms.
2. The Lobby Manager controls the master key.
3. A Lobby Manager has the authority to reduce the house limit for a 'scanty baggage' guest.
4. The Guest Relations Executive sits in the back office of the front office.
5. The VIP list is distributed to the telecommunications department.
6. The Crew List is required by the Foreigners Registration Office.
7. In a guest departure procedure, the Bell Boy will check for damages in the room.
8. The Lobby Control Shift schedules the lobby staff.
9. The Transport Supervisor controls valet parking attendants.
10. Bell Boys check the occupancy status of rooms on behalf of the reception.

***Training Methodology***

This lesson should be delivered by using lecture method to ensure knowledge input. The lecture should be supported by training aids such as flip charts or PowerPoint presentations

Learners must know the key terms and should be quizzed on them.

The lecture can be supported by copies of forms and formats. The trainer should take learners through each of them ensuring their purpose and use in the procedures.

Take learners through each procedural step which may be adapted to house policies and procedures.

Distribute copies of the job descriptions and take learners through each. Ensure learning by quizzing them.

The best way to confirm learning is to put learners on-the-job to practise the procedures under supervision.

Quiz learners thoroughly before putting them on the job.

16

Front Office Cashier

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To help the reader understand how front office cash operation is structured and organised.



INTRODUCTION

The Front Office Cash section is the nerve centre of all guest billings. It is where all credit revenues are accounted for and realised at the time of a guest's check-out. The front office cashier assumes a critical responsibility because he/she has to be vigilant of all payments made and received. He/She is an accountant by profession who knows all accounting procedures of the hotel. He/She reports to the Income Accountant in the Finance and Accounting department.



IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGIES

To be able to understand this lesson, it is important to understand some terms frequently used in front office cash operations.

Account	Summary of all cash and credit transactions
Account Balance	Difference between charge and credits in an account
Accounts Receivable	Amounts due to the hotel

Allowance	A benefit given to the guest in cash or credit
Amendments	Correction in accounts
Cash	Liquid money
Cash Bank	Cash amount provided by the hotel for daily transactions
Cash Voucher	Receipt of payment made by cash
Charge Payments	Deferred payments
City Ledger	Summary of all creditors
Credit	Facility that enables a guest to use goods and services now but paid later
Debit	Charge to an account
Due Back	Cash amount owed to the cashier
Employee Folio	Account that tracks payments made on behalf of an employee who is given a charge privilege
Guest Folio	Statement of account of a resident guest
Guest Ledger	Statement of accounts of guests/organisations who give advance deposits as also long staying guests
House Limit	Credit limit set by the management, which has to be cleared by the guest during his/her stay
Late Charge	Amount posted to a guest account after check-out
Master Folio	Common statement of account for more than one guest
Miscellaneous Voucher	Voucher to support a charge purchase from minor revenue outlets
Non-guest Account	Account of transactions of companies and non-resident individuals given this privilege
Outstanding Balance	Amount due from the guest
Overage	When cash, cheques, negotiable instruments and paid-outs from the cash bank are greater than receipts into the cash bank
Paid-Out	Authorised cash payment made on behalf of the hotel or guest
Par	Cash balance is equal to the cash bank
Petty Cash	Small amounts of authorised money issued to staff
Posting	Entry made in the guest folio

Room Night	A room that is booked for a night against which room rates are applicable
Shortage	When the amount paid out from the bank is less than receipts into the cash bank
Transaction	Exchange of cash or credit for services purchased
Transfer Voucher	Document to record transfers from one account to another
Voucher	Document that records a purchase transaction with a cashier

BROAD DUTIES OF A FRONT OFFICER CASHIER _____

- Requisition and maintenance of a cash bank for shift transactions
- Post guest charges and credits into respective guest folios
- Settle all guest bills upon departure
- Exchange foreign currency as per regulations
- Disburse allowances
- Issue Paid-Outs upon instructions
- Control Safety Deposit lockers
- Operate the accounting machine (software)
- Receive and hold in safe custody all cash payments by guests and revenue departments till they are audited
- Ensure internal controls of all transactions
- Prepare reports as specified by management

We shall go into each broad responsibility in detail.

Cash Bank

At the beginning of a shift, the cashier requisitions an amount specified by the Chief Accountant, from the General Cashier for any cash transactions required during the shift. This amount comes in various cash denominations for the ease of providing change to guests.

The cashier is required to account for this money at the end of the shift when he/she returns the balance. There are three types of situations at the end of the shift:

1. **Overage**—when cash, cheques, negotiable instruments and paid-outs from the cash bank are greater than receipts into the cash bank.

2. **Shortage**—when the amount paid out from the bank is less than receipts into the cash bank; and
3. **Par**—when the amount requisitioned is equal to the amount deposited. Amounts not accounted for is treated as a negligence of the cashier and can be debited to his personal salary. Many hotels have now insured such transactions but any unaccounted for money certainly goes negatively in the cashier's performance report.

Guest Folio

A **guest folio** (Fig. 16.1) is the bill in which all cash and credit transactions are recorded for each resident guest. They are maintained as hard copies in folio racks at the cashier's cabin in a manual system. In an automated system, the folio remains in the computer and a hard copy is only printed out at the time of a guest check-out. Each entry into the folio is called a posting. Each posting is recorded sequentially in the folio in the order of transactions on a given date.

Room No.	Guest Name & Address	Date of Arrival	Date of Departure	Room Rate
<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Debit (dr)</u>	<u>Credit (cr)</u>	<u>Running Total</u>
<u>Telephone</u> <u>Metre</u> Opening reading: Closing reading: Total units:	Meal Plan: EP/AP/MAP/CP/B&B Billing Instructions:	Credit Card No: Expiry Date:	Cashier's Signature & Stamp: Guest Signature:	

Fig. 16.1

Basic Principles of Accounting

The principles of accounting are simple.

1. Any amount owed by the guest is posted in the **debit** column. A debit (dr.) is, therefore, moneys owed by the guest to the hotel.
2. Any moneys, received from the guest is posted in the **credit** column. A credit (cr.) is any money paid by the guest towards settling his/her bill including advance deposits.
3. The balance column reflects a progressive difference between debits and credits calculated on the basis of the *previous balance + debits – credits*.

Process of Initiating a Folio

1. Raise a folio as soon as a guest checks-in, giving the name, room number, date of arrival, date of departure, room rate, address and billing instructions. Each folio has a serial reference number which will keep a control on folios for the purpose of audit.
2. Hand it to the cashier. From that point onwards, the cashier is responsible for the guest folio till the guest departs.

Establishing Creditworthiness

During the time the guest remains in the hotel, his/her stay is on a credit, i.e., he will avail of the goods and services in advance before settling the charges upon his/her departure. The credit facility is given only when a guest gives proof of his creditworthiness. The various ways in which a guest's creditworthiness is established are:

1. By a credit card,
2. Making a cash deposit,
3. MCO,
4. Authorisation in writing from a company credit account.

Over time, hotels establish which guests are reliable and which need close monitoring. The challenge is with the new customers who need to establish their creditworthiness. Any establishment has two checkpoints before it offers a line of credit to a guest:

1. By the reservation agent at the time of booking
2. Receptionist at the time of registering a guest into the hotel.

In case of doubt, both can refer the matter to the Lobby Manager or Front Office Manager who makes a final decision. In empowered front office operations, the receptionist can

make the decision on this matter but is fully accountable for the guest settling his/her bills. Figure 16.2 gives the various revenue points in the hotel where he/she raises a credit:

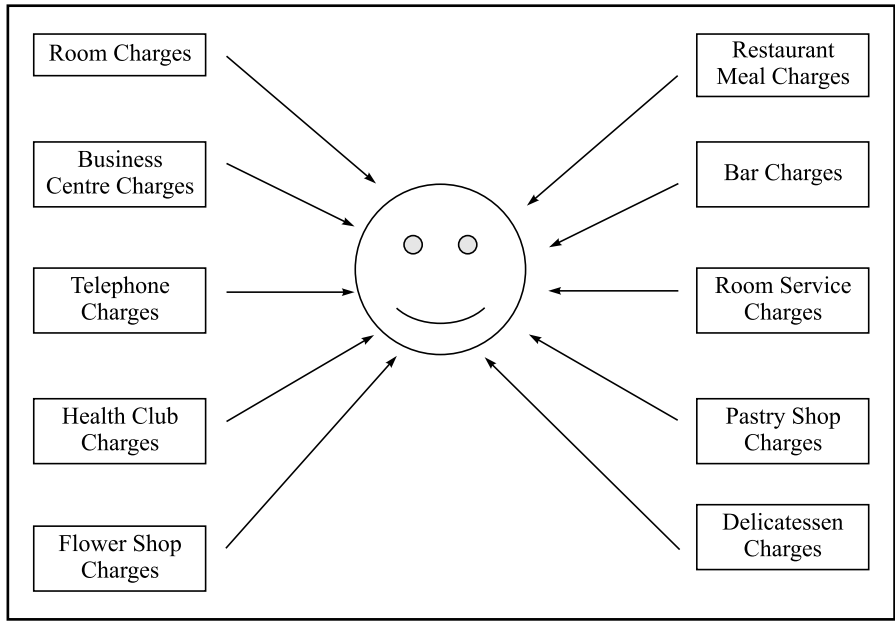


Fig. 16.2

Sources of Credit

Credit Limit

To safeguard the hotel from guests who overspends, the management sets a house credit limits. The moment any guest bill reaches the house credit limit the guest will be required to settle his/her bill. Any default can result in sealing the room for guest entry. The house credit limits are monitored closely by the Front Office Cashier and later the night auditor who produces a daily statement of those guests exceeding the house credit limit.

Settling of Bills

Guests settle their bills in the following manner:

- Cash payments in which case guests receive a cash voucher from the cashier in acknowledgement of such payments.
- Sign their bills to be recovered by city ledger by a pre-arrangement with their organisations.
- Pay by an acceptable credit card.
- Debit cards.

- Sign their bills to be adjusted against advances and deposits
- Traveller’s cheques which are as good as cash.

Point of Sale

Every outlet is a point of sale (POS). When a guest wishes to sign his bill to the guest folio at any of the POS, the cashier will take down and verify the guest’s room number by calling up the front office in the manual system or check the rooming list called up on the POS micro. The cashier then creates a charge voucher, similar to a restaurant voucher, which is signed by the guest. This voucher is immediately forwarded to the front office cashier who posts the amount into the guest folio.

Hotels lease out space to shop owners in the shopping arcade. Guests are required to normally settle their accounts directly with them. Each shop has an independent accounting system unrelated to the hotel.

Room Charges

Charges into the guest folio come from various sources as we have seen above. The room charges are posted by the night cashier for every night occupied by the guest according to the meal plan (i.e., EP, AP, MAP, CP or B&B) mentioned on the folio.

Food & Beverages Charges

Restaurant and bar charges are posted when the restaurant or bar check is signed by the resident in the restaurant.

Guest Name:		Room No:		Account No:	
Date	Server	Table No.	Persons	Total	
Guest Signature: _____ (Please do not sign if you have paid by cash or credit card)					
Server’s Receipt					
Date:	Server’s Name				

Fig. 16.3

Restaurant/Bar Check

These are immediately sent to the front office cashier by the restaurant cashier to ensure that it is posted instantly to recover from the guest should he checks out instantly. These charges come in the form of a Restaurant/Bar Check (Fig. 16.3). Immediacy is vital as a guest could be checking out after the meal.

In the automated system, restaurant micros are linked directly to the guest folio and the charges instantly recorded. The restaurant/bar check follows physically later. Room Service and Banquet checks adopt the same procedure.

Other Revenue Outlets

Checks are raised by the cashiers of other revenue outlets like the:

- Bars
- Business Centre
- Health Club
- Delicatessen
- Pastry Shop
- Laundry
- Barber Shop
- Beauty Salon

In addition, there are also miscellaneous charges for such services as:

- Babysitting services
- Shoe-shine services
- Postage
- Safe Deposit charges (if any)
- Left Luggage charges (if any)

Miscellaneous charges made in the Miscellaneous Charge Voucher (Fig. 16.4).

Guest's Name:	Room No:	Date:
	Explanation	Charges
	Total	
Cashier's Signature:		

Fig. 16.4

Miscellaneous Charge Voucher

Telephone Charges

The telephone department is unique as calls are charged according to local, domestic and international status. Earlier hotels had a PBX telephone exchange where calls from guest rooms and offices had to be routed through the operator. The operator raised telephone vouchers for local, domestic and international calls. Then the APBX system had meters for each extension located at the front office cashier's cabin. The cashier would note the opening number of the meter at the time a guest folio was raised and the closing number at the time the guest was checking out. The difference in readings represented the number of units used. The cashier would then apply the telephone rate and post the charges in the guest folio. In the APBX system, the metre ran at a faster rate for domestic and international calls.

The EPABX telephone exchange did away with the active role of the telephone operator or the meter. In fact, modern software charges the guest folio directly as soon as a call is made. This is represented in terms of units. The guest can get printouts if he/she wants to see details of the telephone charges.

Credits to the Folio

The Guest Folio has a credit column also where postings are done in the following circumstances:

1. When a guest pays the bill either by cash, traveller's cheque, credit card or debit card.
2. When a guest makes a deposit or advance.
3. When a guest is given a discount by the management.
4. When the guest is complimented with free services or facilities recorded as an allowance. In such circumstances, the cashier raises an allowance voucher duly authorised by the Lobby Manager.
5. When the cashier overcharges and makes a correction. In such a case, the cashier raises a correction voucher duly signed by the Lobby Manager.
6. When the cashier transfers an amount to another account.

Credits through City Ledger

Another form of credit is when a guest signs his folio that is then sent to the **city ledger** under the accounts receivables section of the accounting back office. A hotel enters into a contract with commercial organisations that permits their employees to sign their hotel bills as a convenience. These bills are later recovered from the organisations by the city ledger section of the hotel. Such contracts are negotiated on the basis of the

amount of room nights they promise to the hotel in a year. A hotel will set a guaranteed number of room nights that have to be satisfied to justify such a credit arrangement.

Commercial organisations that benefit are corporate houses, travel agents and tour operators. Each would have to prove their creditworthiness. Some organisations may deposit advances to adjust against room nights used by their employees. Such accounts are maintained in a **guest ledger** maintained by the accounts receivable. The concerned organisation is notified when the balance is expended in which case they may replenish the amount. The guest ledger is also opened for long staying guests who give monthly lease payments for rooms. These ledgers are found in hotel apartments and condominiums.

Vouchers

All credits are supported by vouchers. A voucher is a receipt of a transaction. There are several types of vouchers:

- Cash vouchers
- Charge vouchers
- Allowance vouchers
- Paid-Out vouchers

Before exiting this section on folios, the reader must know that the front office cashier also maintains four other types of folios:

Non-Guest Accounts

Non-guest accounts are those in-house credit accounts given to corporate houses, established travel agencies and tour operations, etc. as a privilege as they have a continuous business with the hotel. Expenses on their behalf may be charged to their account and redeemed later on a mutually agreeable basis.

Employee Folios

Credit accounts given to some privileged senior executives for the execution of their duties are known as Employee Folios. Executives like the sales and marketing director, front office manager, public relations manager, etc. may charge the hotel for travel and entertainment to promote the business. These accounts are later either charged to the hotel expenditure accounts or recovered from the employee based what is considered legitimate business expenses and personal expenses.

Master Folio

A Master Folio is a joint account of two or more people. A couple, family or group may independently charge this account. Tour operators who bring groups make a distinction

between legitimate expenditures and personal expenditures. Legitimate expenditures of a group are charges included in a group plan including meals, transportation or conference charges (in the case of delegates to a conference). Normally, personal charges would include laundry, alcoholic beverages, meals outside the group plan, entertainment and personal city travel. The cashier would open normal guest folios for such personal expenses in addition to the master folio.

Split Folios

Split Folios are those when two guests wish to have separate accounts though they share the same room. While room charges will reflect on one folio for convenience, other charges would be reflected individually in split folios. Another case is when a company executive would like to maintain two separate accounts, one that is charged to his/her company as per a negotiated arrangement and the other to record his/her personal expenses.

Departure Procedure

The cashier will follow the following step-by-step procedure:

1. The guest calls the bell desk to collect his/her baggage from the room.
2. The Bell Captain raises a Departure Errand Card which mentions the guest name and the room number. He hands this to the front office cashier who gets the cue to prepare the departure formalities.
3. Complete the Telephone Charge Voucher in a non-automated telephone system (Fig. 16.5).

Guest's Name:	Room No:	Date:
	Explanation	Charges
	Total	
Cashier's Signature:		

Fig. 16.5

Telephone Charge Voucher

4. Find out if there are any outstanding checks from other revenue outlets and post them in the folio.

5. Upon the arrival of the guest ask him/her if he/she has signed any checks in other revenue outlets, including the use of the mini bar, in the past hour. If so, call the cashier of that outlet to send the check immediately.
6. Post outstanding checks.
7. Present the bill to the guest for verification.
8. Receive payment in cash, credit card (procedure mentioned later), Travellers Cheque (procedure mentioned later). Foreign Nationals are required to pay in accepted foreign currency only) or Travel Agency Vouchers.
9. Return any change in local currency only.
10. Stamp the folio "Paid" and sign the folio in confirmation. Tear off the first copy of the folio.
11. Prepare the Cash Receipt Voucher (Fig. 16.6) in triplicate, affix a revenue stamp and sign the voucher on the first copy. Staple it to the folio and hand it over to the guest in an envelope.
12. Send second copy to the Accounts Department.
13. Leave the third copy in the cash receipt book.



Cash Book Serial No:	Date:
Received From:	
Address:	
The Sum of (In Words)::	
The Sum of (In Numericals):	
On Account of:	
A/C Code (For City Ledger Billing):	
Cashier's Signature: (With Revenue Stamp):	

Fig. 16.6

Cash Receipt Voucher

Travel Agency Vouchers

Travel Agency Vouchers indicate that a guest has pre-paid an amount to the travel agent. Such amounts usually are for rooms and meals (in the case of room plans). The travel agent issues it to the guest. The procedure for a front office cashier to accept these vouchers is as follows:

1. Receive the travel agency voucher and see if such billing instructions are mentioned in the folio.

2. Read the voucher carefully and determine whether it has been issued from a bona fide travel agency recognised by the hotel, by referring to the list of bona fide agencies as issued by the accounts department. Foreign travel agency vouchers must be counter-authorised by the Lobby Manager.
3. See whether all the charges are covered by the voucher. Valid charges are credited to the folio and the balance is charged to the guest to be paid.
4. If all charges are covered, then credit the entire amount to the folio and ask the guest to sign it. The original folio is retained by the cashier to present to the travel agent for reimbursement. The voucher/s is attached to the folio when forwarding the folio to the travel agent.
5. In case of group vouchers, the tour leader is required to sign the folio and the procedure is followed as above.

Hotel Credit

Hotel Credit is one of the very critical aspects of hotel operations. From the moment a guest registers himself into the hotel, he uses some credit facility or the other. Though a credit policy is healthy to the business, realisation of bills becomes an arduous task. In order to make the credit facility feasible, hotels adopt their own safeguards before extending credit to any guest. The usual safeguards are:

1. Maintain a specified credit limit on guest bills beyond which the guest will be asked to settle the bill before raising more credit.
2. Accept only those credit cards that the management has officially recognised. Credit Cards must be current and not blacklisted by the credit card company.
3. Personal cheques are not accepted. The Lobby Manager can approve cheques only if the guest is known to the establishment and takes the responsibility of such a decision.
4. For guests who wish to charge their bill to the company account must have the hotel management's approval prior to availing such a facility. This must be further substantiated by an official letter from the sponsoring company.
5. Cheques presented by companies on the approved city ledger account have to be from local or domestic bank accounts. Foreign bank cheques are not accepted.
6. Post-dated cheques are not accepted.
7. All vouchers presented by revenue outlets that are signed by resident guests are transmitted to the front office cashier immediately.
8. No payments are received from minors (below 18 years).

Credit Cards

A credit card is a facility that accepts charges of products and services on behalf of an individual. The basic concept of a credit card system is that members pay an annual fee to a credit card company for membership. The institution that floats the credit card gets discounts from the merchant from whom the member has acquired a sale. The credit card company charges the member the full amount of the bill but pays the merchant the discounted value. It is from these discounts, membership fees and interest on credit that credit card companies get their revenue.

Hotels accept credit cards in a big way, covering a wide range of credit card institutions, because they pass on their liability to the credit card institution. Hotels receive prompt payment from the credit card companies which makes the commission paid by the hotels to the credit card companies cheaper than maintaining machinery to collect the debts. Some popular credit card companies are Visa, MasterCard and American Express.

Procedure for Handling Credit Cards

Travellers today are using the credit card extensively to manage their financial transactions because it is convenient to carry in person substituting volumes of cash. Credit card companies are making it easier to procure one, and as a result, guests have an array of them in their wallets. It is, therefore, important for the front office cashier to know how to accept and process them correctly so as to protect the hotel's interests.

Here is the step-by-step procedure in dealing with credit cards:

1. Check the billing instructions in the guest folio as to whether it is the stipulated mode of payment.
2. Check the following before processing the card:
 - (a) Whether the credit card is accepted by the hotel.
 - (b) The expiry date of the card. It can only be processed if the card is still valid.
 - (c) The cancellation bulletin issued by the credit card company periodically giving the credit cards that are cancelled or blacklisted.
 - (d) Alterations on the card.
 - (e) The guest's signature is on the reverse of the card so as to compare it during the processing of the card.
3. Emboss the credit card number on the Credit Card Charge Voucher (Fig. 16.7) or fill the details manually by mentioning the following:

- (a) Guest's name as mentioned on the credit card
- (b) Date

CREDIT CARD CHARGE RECORD				
DINERS CLUB India Private Limited				
Number				
Name				
Expires		Record of Charge		
Number		Rs.		Amt. for Purchase Service of or MDSE,
Name				Taxes
City				Tips
Cardholders Signature X				
Date	Bill No.			
The Amount of the Charges Recorded Hereon were Incurd by Me and Receipt of the Service or Merchandise is Hereby Acknowledged by Me.		Credit Approval	Total	
		↑ ↑ ↑		Establishment Personnel's Initial

Write Firmly
Cardholder's Copy

Fig. 16.7

Credit Card Charge Voucher (Cardholder's Copy)

CREDIT CARD CHARGE RECORD							
Auth. No.		Date MO.	DAY	YR.	Dept.	Initials	<input type="checkbox"/> Take <input type="checkbox"/> Send
Quan.	Class	Description			Unit cost	Amount	
The issuer of the card identified on this item is authorised to pay the amount shown as total upon proper presentation. I promise to pay such total [together with any other charges due thereon subject to and in accordance with the agreement governing the use of such card]					Tips/Misc		
Sign Here X					Local Currency Total		
Sales Slip					U.S. Dollar Total		

Merchant Copy

Bank of America

Fig. 16.7(a)

Credit Card Charge Voucher (Merchant Copy)

CREDIT CARD CHARGE RECORD			
Cardmember Acct. No.			
Cardmember		Approval Code	
Check or Bill No.			
Service Establishment	Date of Charge	Any delayed charged are listed below	
	Merchandise/Service	Type delayed Chg.	
	Taxes	Amt. of Delayed Chg.	
Establishment agrees to transmit to American Express Company (Amexco) or Authorised Representative for payment. Merchandise and/ or service purchased on this card shall not be resold or returned for cash refund.		Tips/Misc.	Revised Total
Cardmember Signature X		Total	Amexco Use Only Equivalent Amount
American Express	Invoice Number	Please Print Firmly Service Establishment Copy	Record of Charges

Fig.. 16.7(b)

Credit Card Charge Voucher (Service Establishment Copy)

- (c) Credit Card number
- (d) Bill number
- (e) Amount to be charged in the totals column
- (f) Service Charge (if any)
- (g) Taxes
- (h) Tips (filled in by the guest who will total the amount in such a circumstances) before affixing his/her signature.

None of the information written has to be overwritten or crossed out. Therefore, the manual inclusion of information has to be done carefully.

4. Swipe the card and fill in the amount if the establishment has a credit card processing machine. The credit card company accepts the charge, in which case take the guest's signature on the confirmation slip.
5. Enter extra charges for late payments in the box provided in the Charge Record Form giving reasons clearly.

6. Check if the guest's signature tallies with the one on the credit card.
7. Clip the original of the Charge Record Form or staple the copy of the Charge Confirmation Slip to the bill. Put them in an envelope and hand them over to the guest.
8. Clip the hard copy of the Charge Record Form or the original of the Confirmation Slip to a copy of the bill and maintain it.
9. At the end of the shift, complete the Summary of Charge Records (Fig. 16.8). Using the special imprinter issued by the credit card company to the hotel, imprint the company's name and account number embossed on the plastic card onto the Summary of Charge Records enclosing all charge records, send them to the City Ledger accountant for signature and recovery from the credit card company.

Credit card Co. A/C No:	Name of Hotel:	Address:	Date:
SL No.	Card Number	Cardholder's Name	Amount
Front Office Cashier's Signature:	Company Authorised Signatory for Credit Company:	Grand Total:	

Fig. 16.8

Summary of Charge Records

10. Every hotel has an authorised signatory approved by the credit card company who must sign the Summary of Charge. The authorised signatory could be the Chief Accountant, Income Accountant or the City Ledger Accountant.
11. When the copies of charge records are sent to the credit card company, they are not folded or damaged in any way as they are processed by the credit card company by high speed electronic equipment.

Foreign Currency Transactions

The tourism industry in any country is a prime source for the generation of foreign exchange. Governments would, therefore, like to keep a close tab on the flow of foreign currency. They institute a strict system of checks and records which extend to hotels as well.



These stipulations for a hotel are:

1. The hotel must have a licence to exchange foreign currency.
2. Someone must be authorised to deal in foreign exchange transactions. It is normally the front office cashier.
3. Exchange is done only in local currency.
4. Exchange rates must be displayed prominently at the exchange point. The rates are governed by the central bank which updates them on a daily basis.
5. Foreign currency exchange can be only extended to resident guests of the hotel. Non-resident visitors are required go to exchange bureaus and banks to exchange their currency.

Procedure for Accepting Foreign Currency

The front office cashier has to follow certain procedures as stipulated by the central bank when receiving foreign exchange. This procedure is given below:

1. Request the guest for his/her Passport and determine the credentials such as name and photo identification, place of issue, date of issue and date of expiry of the passport.
2. Confirm that the guest is a resident of the hotel by asking for his/her room number. In case of a non-resident direct him/her to the lobby manager for authorisation who will only extend this facility to VIPs or regular guests.
3. Check if the foreign exchange is accepted by the Government. Normally transactions are done for dollars, sterling pounds, euros and yen.
4. Receive the cash or Traveller's cheques.
5. Calculate the total amount of local currency to be paid by multiplying the foreign currency total amount by the exchange rate displayed at the cabin.
6. Fill in details in the Foreign Exchange Encashment Certificate (Fig. 16.9). The Foreign Exchange Encashment Certificates come in serially numbered books for better control.
7. Request the guest to sign the Traveller's cheques if it is the instrument of exchange. Make sure that the signature tallies with the earlier signature on the Traveller's cheques.

Guest Name:	PP No:			Nationality	Hotel Licence No:	Room No:
Traveller's Cheque/s No: (Name of Bank)	Denomination	NOS	Amount	Type of Money	Exchange Rate	Amount
Guest's Signature:	Approved By:			Cashier's Name		

Fig. 16.9

Foreign Exchange Encashment Certificate

8. Request the guest to sign the Foreign Exchange Encashment Certificate and compare the signature with the passport.
9. Give the total amount of local currency with the original Foreign Currency Encashment Certificate to the guest.
10. Attach the second copy of the Foreign Currency Encashment Certificate to the notes or Traveller's Cheques.
11. Leave the third copy of the certificate in the certificate book.
12. Fill in details in the Record of Foreign Currency Transactions (Fig. 16.10). This is a control sheet of all foreign currency transactions in a shift.

Date:	SR. No.	Name of Tenderer	Nationality	PP No.	Pound Sterling	US Dollars	Euro	Others	Rate	Local Currency

Fig. 16.10

Record of Foreign Currency Transactions

13. Fill details in the Front Office Cashier's Report (Fig. 16.11) under the 'Foreign Exchange' column.

Cashier Name:..... Shift: From.....To.....

Date:

Received					Paid		
Folio No.	Departure Account	Guest Name	Nationality	Foreign EX	Room No.	Name	Voucher No.
Cashier's Signature:					Audited By:		

Fig. 16.11

Front Office Cashier's Report

Allowances

An allowance in the hotel context is cash paid out to a guest by the hotel. Allowances are given to airline crew and in some cases groups. These allowances are strictly controlled and therefore, require written authorisation from the airline or group sponsor. These sponsors give guarantees to reimburse these amounts to the hotel upon them producing the necessary documentation. Following is the procedure for issuing allowances:



1. Get instructions from the Front Office Manager or Lobby Manager (who coordinates with airline offices).
2. Check the names and designations of crew or group members prior to their arrival and confirm the allowances to be given. Build it into the guest folios.
3. Take out the required numbers of envelopes and write down the name, designation, amount of the allowance and room number (if pre-registered).
4. Place the cash in each envelope.
5. Upon arrival of the crew or group, check the guest folios for the amount of allowance authorised by the management. Guests claiming allowance but do not have such authorisation should be referred to the Lobby Manager.
6. Refer to the list of crew and groups entitled to allowances and request each member for their identification (normally their passport).

7. Fill in the details in the Allowance Voucher (Fig. 16.12).

Name:	Room No:	Date:
Authorisation No:	Detailed Explanation:	Amount
Amount in Words:	Guest's Acknowledgement:	
Prepared By:	Authorised By:	Audited By:

Fig. 16.12

Allowance Voucher

8. Have the voucher signed by the Lobby Manager and guest and also put down your own initials.
9. Hand over the original copy to the guest.
10. Attach the second copy to the Front Office Cashier's Report and fill in the paid column.
11. Leave the third copy in the Allowance Voucher booklet.
12. Post the Allowance Amount in the debt column of the folio as per previous procedure.

Paid-Outs

Paid-Outs are cash payments made on behalf of a guest or the management for any external services rendered to them. Such expenses are usually taxi charges, porter charges, emergency medical expenses, ticket confirmation charges, tips, etc. These payments are made from the cash bank maintained by the front office cashier. Paid-Outs are only made in local currency. The procedure to process paid-outs are as follows:

1. Confirm the name, room number and identity of the guest/employee.
2. Find out the details of services for which the paid-out is being made.
3. Fill in the details in the paid-out voucher (Fig. 16.13). Every voucher is serially numbered to maintain control.
4. Get the voucher authorised by the Lobby Manager.
5. Get the guest/employee to sign the voucher in acknowledgement.

6. Make the payment in cash to the guest/employee.
7. Fill in the details in the 'Paid-Out' column of the Front Office Cashier's Report.

Serial No.

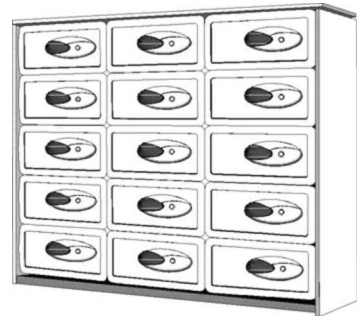
Guest Name:	Room Number:	Date:
Detailed Explanation	Denomination	Amount
Amount in Words		
Name and Signature of Recipient:	Authorised By:	Cashier's Signature:

Fig. 16.13

Paid-Out Voucher

Safety Locker Management

Safety lockers are a facility provided by hotels in which resident guests can keep their valuables and important documents in safekeeping during their stay at the hotel. These lockers are steel compartments located behind the front office away from traffic. The lockers have only one key per locker and therefore have to be kept in safety. The front office cashier is the custodian of lockers. Each locker has an independent second key with the cashier. It takes the guest key and the cashier's key to open a locker. Hotels may provide this as a free facility or may charge for it as per policy. Better hotels now provide safety lockers in each guest room with personal serial numbers for locking.



Procedure for Issuing a Locker

1. Upon a request from a guest, look for an empty locker.
2. Hand over the Safety Locker Registration Card (Fig. 16.14) to the guest to complete.
3. Write down the locker number on the registration card.
4. Have the guest sign the card at two places—one as a specimen signature and the other as the confirmation signature.
5. Deposit the card in racks against the locker number.

6. Turn the cashier's key on the locker in the appropriate keyhole.
7. Let guest use his/her key to open the locker.
8. Leave the premises to give the guest privacy to load the locker.
9. The guest will lock the locker with his/her key and ask the cashier to double lock it with his key.

Guest Name:	Room No:	Date:	Locker No:
Permanent Address:			
Specimen Signature			
Key Delivered By (Cashier's Signature):			
Locker Charge:		Lost Key Charges:	
The management shall take sufficient care for the safety of the locker but is not responsible for any loss, theft, shortage or spoilage of the contents in the safety box, which is being used by the guest exclusively. For security reasons, the locker has only one key. In case of a loss of the key, the guest is responsible for the replacement charges. The management regrets any delay in the opening of the box in case of the loss of the key.			
Guest's Signature:			

Fig. 16.14

Safety Locker Registration Card

Date of Withdrawal	Time of Withdrawal	Guest's Signature	Cashier's Signature
Date of Key Return	Guest's Signature	Cashier's Signature	

Fig. 16.14(a)

Reverse of Card

Withdrawal from Safety Box

When a guest wishes to take out items from the safety box, the following procedure may be followed by the front office cashier:

1. Escort the guest to the safety lockers.
2. Request the guest to open the locker with his/her key.
3. Open the locker with the cashier's key.
4. Ask guest to put the date and signature on the reverse of the registration card to monitor when he/she has opened the locker.
5. Leave the guest. Return when the guest is ready. Ask guest to lock the locker with his/her key and then use the double lock with the cashier's key.
6. Return the card to the safety deposit locker rack.

Surrender of Safety Box

1. Escort the guest to the safety lockers.
2. Request the guest to open the locker with his/her key.
3. Open the locker with the cashier's key.
4. Ask the guest to put the date and signature on the reverse of the registration card to confirm the return of the key.
5. Let the guest empty the locker in your presence.
6. Take possession of the guest key.
7. Lock the box with both the guest key and cashier's key.
8. Return the key to the rack.
9. Post the appropriate charge (if any) for the use of the safety deposit box.

Receiving Cash Remittances from Revenue Outlets

The front office cash section is the repository of all cash and credit revenues from all other cashiers of revenue outlets like restaurants, bars, pastry shop, etc. Each cashier at the revenue outlets prepares a Restaurant Sales Summary Sheet (Fig. 16.15) which mentions the cash and credit sales enclosing all supporting documents including checks, credit card slips, etc. There is a procedure to accept them which is as follows:

1. Provide a Cashier's Remittance of Funds Envelope (Fig. 16.16) to the outlet cashier and ask him/her to fill all the details on the envelope.
2. See that the cash and documents are placed in the envelope and that the envelope is sealed.
3. Keep such envelopes in locked drawers or safety boxes till they are called for by the Internal Auditor or General Cashier.

Check no.	Waiter's Sign.	Table No.	No. of Persons	Food	Liquor	Cigarettes	Misc.	Sales Tax	Service Charge	Total	Cash	Credit	Credit Card No./Guest Name/Room No.

Fig. 16.15

Restaurant Sales Summary Sheet

JOB DESCRIPTION

Front Office Cashier

Job Title

Front Office Cashier

Reports To

1. General Cashier
2. Income Accountant

Job Summary

Post guest charges into guest folios accurately and promptly from various revenue outlets; settle guests' accounts, either by cash or credit, upon their departure; disburse cash as per rules; and maintain safety boxes.

Duties & Responsibilities

1. Take over shift and note special instructions for the shift.
2. Check the cash bank at the beginning of each shift and requisition petty cash from General Cashier if necessary.
3. Open guest folios accurately for new arrivals and post charges as soon as they arrive.
4. Issue safety deposit lockers to guests according to procedures.
5. Disburse petty cash and authorised paid-outs.
6. Pass allowances as directed for wrong charges posted in folios.

7. Cash foreign currency as per central bank regulations and prepare the necessary documentation.
8. Settle guest bills ensuring accurate cash is received or credit formalities as applicable.
9. Handle credit card payments through proper procedures.
10. Accept personal checks after ensuring that they are properly authorised.
11. Prepare the Front Office Cashier's report and other reports.
12. Ensure that telephone meter readings are accurately taken to raise appropriate charges.
13. Coordinate closely with the night auditor for the day's audit.
14. Receive the cash sales of all revenue outlets at the end of each shift and keep in safe custody.
15. Submit the petty cash balance with the necessary documents for issue of cash to the General Cashier at the end of the shift.

Supervises

None

Limits of Authority

Can refuse to accept credit cards or foreign exchange not accepted by the hotel.
 Can refuse any disbursement of cash unless convinced on the authenticity of documents.
 Give final clearance to bell boys to remove the guest's baggage for their departure.
 Can post charges to the guest folios against proper documentation. Is the custodian of safety deposit lockers.

Coordinates With

1. Lobby—for clearance to remove guest baggage from the premises.
2. Front Office Agent—for guest arrivals to open guest folios.
3. F&B Outlets—to receive cash and credit sales

Minimum Educational Qualifications

Bachelor of Commerce

Experience

Six-month departmental training

Skills & Competencies

- Good at accounting
- Socially confident
- Well groomed
- Etiquettes and manners
- Proficiency in the English language (knowledge of another foreign language is preferred)

Cashier's Name:			
Revenue Outlet:			
Shift: From _____ Am/Pm To _____ Am/Pm			
Collections:			
Disbursements:			
Overage/shortage:			
Net Funds Remitted:			
Imprest at Beginning of the Shift:			
Balance Imprest (at End of Shift)		Contents of Envelope	
Notes	Amount		Amount
X 100		X 100	
X 50		X 50	
X 20		X 20	
X 10		X 10	
X 5		X 5	
X 2		X 2	
X 1		X 1	
Coins		Coins	
X 2		X 2	
X 1		X 1	
X 0.5		X 0.5	
X 0.25		X 0.25	
X 0.10		X 0.10	
X 0.05		X 0.05	
Total Imprest		Total Cash	
		T.A. Voucher	
		Void Checks	
Cashier's Signature:			

Fig. 16.16

Cashier's Remittance of Funds Envelope

Automated Systems

Technology has made billing much easier and accurate. As soon as a guest has been registered into the property, the system initiates a computer generated guest folio with all relevant information in the central server. The front office cashier will not only know the arrivals of the day but also can call up the guest folio of a newly registered guest. Expenditures of a guest in any revenue outlet are directly transmitted by micro-computers into the guest folio at the front office cash desk terminal. The computer can generate a print out of the folio with details at the time the guest checks-out. The guest also has confidence in computer generated systems as it reduces the chance of human error. The moment a guest has settled his or her bill the information automatically feeds the guest history folios. Should a guest forward his bill to the company, the cashier can instantly do so via e-mail. The information keeps updating revenue statistics, guest account balances and expenditures above the house credit limit.



Key Terms

Account	Summary of all cash and credit transactions
Account Balance	Difference between charge and credits in an account
Accounts Receivable	Amounts due to the hotel
Allowance	A benefit given to the guest in cash or credit
Amendments	Correction in accounts
Cash	Liquid money
Cash Bank	Cash amount provided by the hotel for daily transactions
Cash Voucher	Receipt of payment made by cash
Charge Payments	Deferred payments
City Ledger	Summary of all creditors
Credit	Facility that enables a guest to use goods and services now but pay for them later
Debit	Charge to an account
Due Back	Cash amount owed to the cashier
Employee Folio	Account that tracks payments made on behalf of an employee who is given a charge privilege
Guest Folio	Statement of account of a resident guest
Guest Ledger	Statement of accounts of guests/organisations who give advance deposits as also long staying guests.

House Limit	Credit limit set by the management, which has to be cleared by the guest during his/her stay
Late Charge	Amount posted to a guest account after check-out
Master Folio	Common statement of account for more than one guest
Miscellaneous Voucher	Voucher to support a charge purchase from minor revenue outlets
Non-Guest Account	Account of transactions of companies and non-resident individuals who have been given this privilege
Outstanding balance	Amount due from the guest
Overage	When cash, cheques, negotiable instruments and paid-outs from the cash bank are greater than receipts into the cash bank
Paid-Out	Authorised cash payment made on behalf of the hotel or guest
Par	Cash balance is equal to the cash bank
Petty Cash	Small amounts of authorised money issued to staff
Posting	Entry made in the guest folio
Room Night	A room that is booked for a night against which room rates are applicable
Shortage	When the amount paid out from the bank is less than receipts into the cash bank
Transaction	Exchange of cash or credit for services purchased
Transfer Voucher	Document that records transfers from one account to another
Voucher	Document that records a purchase transaction with a cashier



Review Quiz

Fill in the Blanks

1. A cash amount provided by the hotel to the cashier for daily transactions is called _____.
2. The document issued to a guest who pays in foreign exchange is called the _____.
3. Daily rates for the exchange of foreign currency is provided by _____.
4. Authorised payments made to airline crews and groups are called _____.

5. Cash payments made on behalf of the guest or management for any external services rendered to them is called _____.
6. The facility in which resident guests can keep their valuables and documents is called _____.
7. The Master Bill in which all guest and credit transactions are recorded is called _____.
8. Charges raised by minor revenue departments into the guest folio is called _____.
9. The bell captain raises a _____ to initiate a guest departure.
10. The document of pre-payment made by a guest to the travel agent is called _____.

True or False

1. One of the responsibilities of a Front Office Cashier is to hold cash payments of revenue departments.
2. A posting is an entry made into a cash receipt.
3. The cash bank is supplied by the Income Accountant.
4. A guest folio of a new arrival is initiated by the receptionist.
5. A guest folio mentions the billing instructions.
6. Postage expenses by a guest are charged on Miscellaneous Charge Vouchers.
7. Personal cheques are accepted by hotels as a regular mode of payment.
8. Hotels maintain a credit limit for all resident guests.
9. The first step in accepting a credit card by a cashier is to check if it is blacklisted.
10. Charges made by credit cards are recorded on Charge Record Forms.



Training Methodology

This lesson should be delivered by using lecture method to ensure knowledge input. The lecture should be supported by aids such as flip charts or power point presentations.

17 Night Auditor

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the reader understand the role of the Night Auditor and the systems and procedures he follows.

INTRODUCTION

The night auditor is perhaps one of the most important persons in the hotel. He is the person who reconciles and records all the cash and credit transactions of the day. The definition of a night audit is best explained below:

‘The audit is a daily review of guest accounting transactions recorded at the front-desk against revenue centre transactions.’

The night auditor’s job includes:

- Verifying posted entries to guest and non-guest accounts
- Balancing all front office accounts
- Resolving room status and rate discrepancies, if any
- Monitoring credit limits
- Producing operational and managerial reports

He prepares the **Daily Sales Recapitulation Sheet** of all revenues from various sales outlets and the **Daily Transcript**, a detailed report of all guest transactions. These reports are very essential for proper managerial analysis and help in decision-making.

The night auditor works at night when all revenue outlets finish their evening shifts and submit their **Sales Summaries** to the front office cashier. The night auditor also prepares important statistics for decision-making by the management. The General Manager, Chief Accountant, Front Office Manager, Food and Beverages Manager and the Sales Director all eagerly await his report the next morning to evaluate their respective revenue performances and make crucial decisions for further operations.

It must be noted that the night auditor marks the revenues of the front office and food and beverages and not the costs done by the food and beverage controls department for the food and beverages revenue outlets.

ORGANISATION CHART

Although the night auditor coordinates closely with the General Cashier for depositing cash, he reports to the Income Accountant. At night, he works independently, reporting administratively and for coordination purposes with the Night Lobby Manager. All cashiers stay alert to the night auditor's requirements and clarifications. He holds the authority to challenge any transaction and ensures that correct practices were employed by them. He has the authority to call cashiers from home when they have retired for the day, to clarify transactions and locate missing cheques.

ORGANISATION OF THE NIGHT AUDIT FUNCTION

The Income Auditor to whom the night auditor reports (see Fig. 17.1), is responsible for all income received and due from hotel service users. He reviews the night auditor's reports before distributing it to the management. The night auditor works closely with the front office cashier and cashiers of other revenue outlets.

DUTIES OF A NIGHT AUDITOR

The night auditor is an accountant well-versed in hotel accounting systems and matters of hotel operations. He has experience in hotel accounting and is a specialist in his field. He summarises all cash and credit transactions of the day at the front office and reaches final balances of room and other revenue outlets. In the process, he locates and corrects any wrong postings made by cashiers from the documents that they submit and reconciles the correct balances. He also translates the performance of revenue centres in terms of statistics useful to the management.

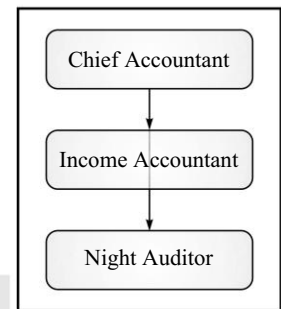
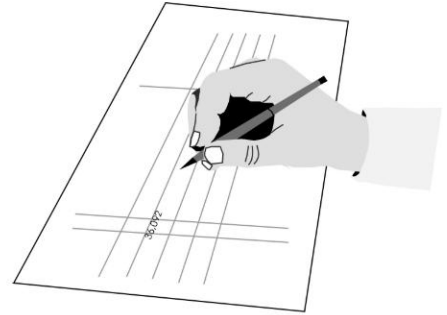


Fig.17.1

Organisation of the Night Audit Function

The broad duties of a night auditor can be summarised as:

- Complete outstanding postings
- Reconcile room status discrepancies
- Verify room rates
- Balance all departmental accounts
- Verify no-show reservations
- Post room rates & taxes
- Prepare required reports
- Prepare cash receipts for deposit
- Clear all back-up systems
- Distribute reports



The Night Auditor's first task is to reconcile the cash and credit sales of all revenue centres in the hotel at the end of each day. The end of the day is perhaps when all revenue outlets finish their evening shift. Most food outlets close at 12 midnight when his work starts. If a night club closes at 3 a.m., he will have to factor those accounts after that period. The diagram below (Fig. 17.2) gives an appreciation of the common revenue centres that exist in a hotel. The night auditor restricts himself to direct hotel operational activity only.

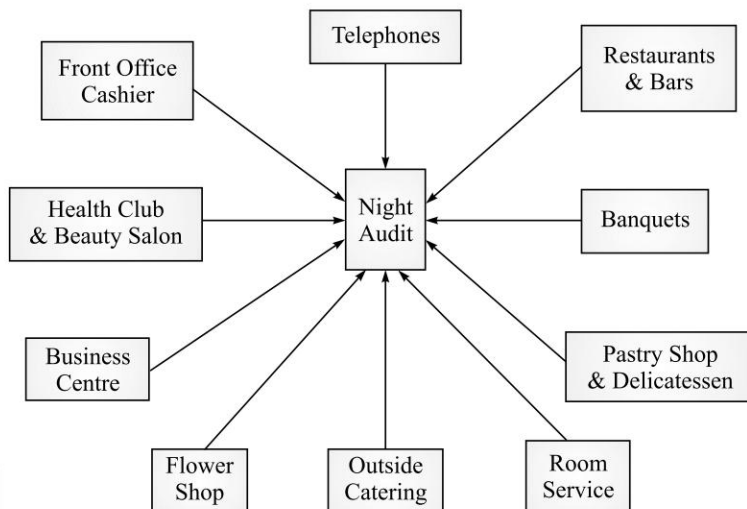


Fig. 17.2

Common Revenue Centres of a Hotel

His interventions with other revenue outlets are with the purpose of verifying the impact of their transactions on the guest folios and over all revenues. Modern automated systems make it easy for him as they are interfaced with the front office accounting

system. Postings happen automatically overcoming the tedious process of tallying sales summaries manually. All charge accounts must be posted into the guest folios and all cash payments must tally with cash received. Other devices like in-house entertainment, Internet, fax, telephone charges are electronically fed into the front office accounting system.

Let us examine in detail the step-by-step process the night auditor employs to complete his task for the day:

Detailed Procedure for Reconciling Outlet Sales Summaries

1. Ensure that all cashiers have submitted their Sales Summaries (Fig. 16.15, Lesson 16) and cheques (Fig. 17.3). Most cashiers would have submitted

RESTAURANT XYZ HOTEL ABC Guest Name: Room No: Date: _____		
QTY.	ITEM	PRICE
		Sales Tax
		Total
Cashier's Signature	
Waiter Name/No.	Table No.

Fig. 17.3

Restaurant Cheque

them to the front office cashier in Cashier's Remittance of Funds Envelopes (Fig. 16.16 in Lesson 16) at the end of their shift, as per procedure. If not, it may mean for the auditor to wait for restaurants and bars to close to start his work.

2. Open the sealed Cashier's Remittance of Funds Envelopes and separate the **cheques** (vouchers) into their respective revenue outlets, e.g., restaurants, bar, laundry, etc. and arrange them in serial order. The cheques must follow a serial order and any missing number has to be accounted for. The serial numbers must correspond with the opening number in the sales summary sheet to the closing number. **Void cheques** have also to be included in this summary sheet. Void cheques are those cancelled for various reasons including (a) wrong postings, (b) services made complimentary because of guest complaints, and (c) a cheque has got damaged (torn, stained, etc.) during operations.

These can be only approved by the outlet manager. Follow up with the concerned cashier for missing bills or incomplete information; this is an essential part of the job of the Night Auditor. He has the authority to even call up the cashier at home if need be!

3. Tally the cheques with the Sales Summary Sheets for each revenue outlet. Create a basic trial balance of the outlet to ensure that all arithmetic is right. Correct any arithmetic errors and confirm each corrected cheque by signing on the reverse side of the cheque.

Cheque are of two types—those paid by cash or credit card and those signed by resident guests to be charged to their guest folio. Confirm that charge cheques have the guest's name, room numbers, and signature. Some guests may sign without mentioning their name and room number. The outlet cashier is supposed to complete that information. If not, proceed to locate the name and room number by checking registration cards from where the signature is verified.

4. Post all charge cheques signed by resident guests into their respective guest folio if not already done by the night cashier.
5. Tally the cash in each Cashier's Remittance of Funds Envelope with the declaration of each outlet's cashier on the top of the envelope. The amount must be accurate to the last dime.
6. Proceed to fill details in the Daily Sales Recapitulation Sheet (Fig. 17.4).

	Room Sales	Food Sales	Liquor Sales	Soft Drinks	Cig.	Misc.	Sub-Total	Sales Tax	Paid Outs	Service Charge	Total	Cash Sales	Less		Total	
													Discounts/ Allowances	Credit		
<u>Accommodation</u>																
Rooms																
Banquet Halls																
Bus. Centre																
<u>Food Beverage</u>																
Coffee Shop																
Specialty Rest.																
Grill Room																
Bar																
Room Service																
Pastry Shop																
Delicatessen																
Banquet Food																
Banquet Bar																
AP Food Sales																
<u>Others</u>																
Beauty Parlour																
Barber Shop																
Laundry																
Telephones																
Health Club																
Postage																
Total																

Daily Sales Recapitulation Sheet

Fig. 17.4

Room Revenues

7. Reconcile the room status and corrects discrepancies, if any. Do this by comparing the housekeeping report of the night shift with the front office room status report. We have read earlier that both the housekeeping and front office carry out independent physical cheques of rooms in each shift to ascertain the exact number of occupied rooms and rooms available for sale. If there is a discrepancy in the reports, he will request a bell boy to do a physical verification.
8. Ascertain then whether each guest room has a guest folio at the front office cash desk.
9. Proceed to check all guest folios and ascertain whether the daily room rate applicable is mentioned and is posted for the day. Post the necessary sales taxes and service charges (if applicable). If the room rate differs from the daily rack rate, investigate the reason if not mentioned on the folio itself. The reason for rate discrepancy could be:
 - (a) The guest has a special rate (group rate, corporate rate, airline rate, trade discount, etc.) which he verifies from the guest's reservation form and registration form.
 - (b) The guest may have got a discounted rate from central reservations or other distribution systems. Verify the rate applicable.
 - (c) Two guests may be sharing a room and have asked for a split folio. Mention 'split-folio' in the folios of both guests.
 - (d) If the guest has been staying in the hotel on a complimentary status, ensure that the supporting authorisation is attached to the folio.
10. Examine the departure dates of each guest on the folio. Should a departure date have expired ascertain the status of the guest. Check the amendment forms for any new dates of departure for the guest not posted and enter the correct dates. A guest could be a skipper which explains why his folio is still active after the departure date. Make a note 'Skipper' on the folio and send to the city ledger for further action.

Another scenario could be that the guest has checked out but the cashier has not completed the check-out formality. In such a case, the auditor completes the check-out formality.
11. Check the arrival list of the day and verify the 'no shows'. Check first the cancellation forms of the day if the front office has a legitimate cancellation amendment in which no charges need be made to the guest account.

Cancellations are only accepted in writing before a cancellation amendment is made. If there is no such document then charge the guest for a one-night stay by using his credit card number. This is a sensitive matter and needs careful verification as it could lead to loss of future business from the guest. All guests are cautioned of this charge in case of a 'no show' at the time of reservation especially in the busy season.

Paid-Outs & Allowances

12. Check all paid-outs as well as allowances and whether they have the appropriate authorisation. Fill totals Daily Sales Recapitulation Sheet.

Foreign Currency Exchange

13. Tally all Foreign Exchange Encashment Certificates (Fig 16.9 in Lesson 16) with the Record of Foreign Currency Transactions (Fig. 16.10 in Lesson 16).

Miscellaneous Vouchers

14. Audit all Miscellaneous Vouchers for services like babysitting, shoeshine, butler service, etc. before entering totals in the Daily sales Recapitulation Sheet.

Bills Exceeding House Limits

15. Check all bills exceeding the house credit limit and prepares the Statement of Bills Exceeding Limits (Fig. 17.5)

Serial No.	Room No.	Guest Name	Arrival Date	Departure Date	Amount	Billing Instructions	Remarks

Fig. 17.5

Auditor's Signature

Statement of Bills Exceeding Limits

16. Audit the Front Office Cashier's Summary and ensure that each column of the summary has supporting documents.
17. Prepare the following statistics:
 - Occupancy Report
 - Average Room Rate
 - Average Sales Food & Beverages
18. Prepare finally the Daily Transcript which is a recap of all front office transactions and information. This information includes:
 - Revenue from FITs
 - Revenue from Groups and names of the groups
 - Revenue of Crew and names of the crew
 - Single Occupancy Statistics
 - Double Occupancy statistics
 - Average Room Rate
 - Food and Beverage Revenues
 - Revenues from banquet functions
 - Revenues from outside catering
 - Revenues from other revenue centres
 - Revenues from miscellaneous charges
 - Paid-Outs and expenditures
 - Variances from budgets
 - Comparisons with last year-to-date statistics
 - Revenues to date



Key Terms

Allowances	Amounts for daily expenses paid by the front office cashier for daily expenses to airline crew and some groups
Cashier Remittance of Funds	An envelope in which all sales and documents are enclosed and deposited with the front office cashier
Cheque	Bill of a revenue outlet
Daily Sales Recapitulation	A transcript of all sales of the hotel for the Sheet day which is prepared by the night auditor
Foreign Currency Encashment Certificate	A document confirming a foreign currency exchange for local currency

Guest Folio	A master bill of a resident guest
Miscellaneous Vouchers	Bills for minor services of the hotel
No show	Guest with a reservation but does not arrive without prior intimation
Outstanding Postings	Those charges and credits not included in the guest folio
Paid-Outs	Cash payments made by the front office cashier to guests and management for external services
Record of Foreign Currency Transactions	A Summary of Foreign Currency Exchange certificates
Restaurant Cheque	Bill of a restaurant
Sales Summary Sheets	A record of all cash and credit sales made in a revenue outlet
Statement of Bills Exceeding Limits	Document recording all guest master bills exceeding house credit limits



Review Quiz

Fill in the Blanks

1. The final report that the night auditor prepares is called _____.
2. All revenues received by a sales outlet is recorded in a document called _____.
3. A night auditor reports to _____.
4. The first task of a night auditor is to _____.
5. Leasing of shopping space is the responsibility of the _____.
6. Revenue outlets record all their cash and credit sales in a _____.
7. Cheques cancelled in a revenue outlet are called _____.
8. Foreign Currency Encashment Certificates are tallied with _____.
9. Those bills exceeding house credit limits are recorded in _____.
10. A void check in a restaurant is authorised by the _____.

Short Notes

1. What are the broad functions of night auditor?
2. What are the statistics prepared by the night auditor?
3. What are the duties of a night auditor?
4. List all the revenue outlets of a typical hotel.
5. Give the procedure to reconcile revenue outlet sales summaries.

***Training Methodology***

This lesson should be delivered by using lecture method to ensure knowledge input. The lecture should be supported by training aids such as flip charts or PowerPoint presentations.

Learners must know the key terms and should be quizzed on them.

The lecture can be supported by copies of forms and formats. The trainer should take learners through each of them elaborating on their purpose and use in the procedures.

Take learners through each procedural step which may be adapted to house policies and procedures.

The best way to confirm learning is to put learners on the job to practise the procedures under supervision.

Quiz learners thoroughly before putting them on the job.

5



GUEST SERVICES

18

Understanding Guest Service

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To help the reader understand how to develop positive attitudes to provide excellent guest service.



INTRODUCTION

You would have learnt by now that the front office in a hotel is the first point of contact. Here, you are in direct contact with the guest. You, therefore, can enhance or mar the first impressions of a guest about the property. You must, therefore, have excellent customer skills.

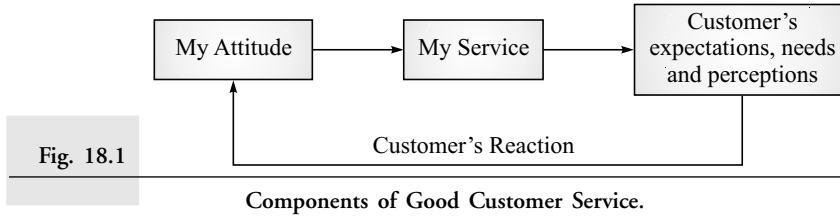
What does this mean?

This means that you make the difference in making a positive guest experience. Most hotels of the same category are physically comparable to their competitors. Rooms, lobbies, coffee shops, etc. look almost alike. But the people who work in them bring about a difference in guest experiences.

In this lesson, we shall focus on you and the customer. It is better understood when you look at yourself as *the host* and the customer as *the guest*. This helps you to acquire the perspectives and attitudes at a totally different level. When we are at home



we go that extra distance to welcome guests, give them unrivalled hospitality with food and drink, keep them safe and anticipate and attend to their every need. The hotel is no different. Providing a guest experience is a cycle of events that starts with you as the host with your attitudes and services which depend on your mindset. A good customer service should meet the guest's expectations, needs and perceptions to provide a positive response. This concept is schematically shown in Fig. 18.1.



Let us take each component and understand it carefully.

COMPONENTS OF A GOOD SERVICE

My Attitude

What is an attitude? An attitude is the way you communicate mood to others, who respond accordingly. A happy host gets a happy response just as a sour person gets a negative response.

The question that arises is, “Is my attitude positive or negative?” Let us look at some characteristics of each:

Positive Attitudes

- Being optimistic
- Feeling good about yourself
- Feeling good about others
- Feeling good about life
- Seeing the best in others
- Expecting good things to happen
- Seeing the bright side of all situations
- Being enthusiastic
- Being creative and open
- Anticipating successful encounters
- Seeing each guest as an exciting challenge



Negative Attitudes

- I am bored
- I do not have time
- It won't work
- I cannot get organised
- I'm too busy
- I don't know what to say
- I am nervous
- I cannot do it
- I don't stand a chance
- I don't have energy
- Nobody likes me
- I am not good enough
- Others are better than me
- I cannot win
- It's not my day
- I am scared of customers



Obviously, positive attitudes have a greater range of benefits to you and the people you interact with. Let's look at some of these:

Benefits of Positive Attitudes

- Creates enthusiasm
- Enhances creativity
- Magnifies positivity
- People like you
- Boss likes to work with you
- You become helpful
- Makes others positive
- Wins cooperation
- You become popular



The next question that arises is, "How do I develop positive behaviour?" Here are some tips.

Habits: What is a habit? A habit is a constant, often unconscious, inclination to perform some act acquired through its frequent repetition. This then influences our behaviour.

An action repeated becomes a *habit*.

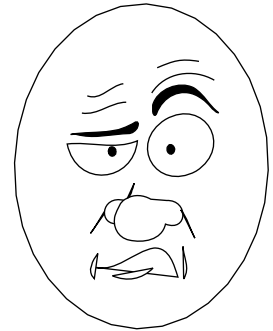
A habit repeated becomes a *behaviour*.

The approach then is to change habits by *constant conscious repetition*. It takes thirty days to change a habit. It starts with a belief.

Beliefs: What is a belief? It is accepting a thought as true. There are so many beliefs you carry about yourself and about others. When these beliefs are negative, you exhibit negative behaviour often resulting in violence. You need to change your beliefs about yourself and others.

How do we get to know our belief system and how does it affects others?

1. Simply ask others of how they perceive your beliefs. These people could be your parents and close friends who can give you selfless feedback.
2. Receive such feedback openly and do not defend them.
3. Introspect on these beliefs and find out areas of improvement.
4. Define a schedule of improvement by defining actions to be taken and the time period by which negative behaviours are to be rectified. One of the proven methods for correction is auto-suggestion.



What is auto-suggestion? Auto-suggestion is voluntary talking, done with oneself to change an attitude, action, habit or feeling. If you are interested in developing positive attitudes, develop a programme for yourself of frequently repeating positive behaviours over a period of thirty days.

It is useful to remember the following:

Programming creates Beliefs.

Beliefs create Attitudes.

Attitudes create Feelings.

Feelings determine Action.

Action creates Results.

Tools for Success (to develop a positive attitude)

- Silent self-talk
- Loud self-talk
- Self conversation

- Visual reminders—pin up ideas and actions to be taken during the day at places you frequent most.
- Ignore negative people
- Self education—reading books on the subject.
- Physical exercise—on the belief that a healthy body generates a healthy mind.
- Food for the soul—meditation and yoga.



Secret of Success

Persistence—don't give up

Repetition—do it over and over again

Determination—say you will win no matter what

MY SERVICE

What is service? It is the total experience that a customer gets through people, when satisfying a need. Service touches all the senses of a discerning guest. Let us examine each component:

Sense of Sight: Guests like to see a well-groomed person. Grooming has been touched upon extensively in Lesson 15 titled 'Competencies of Front Office Personnel'. The way the front desk is kept neat and orderly creates the service experience just as the décor of the lobby and the artifacts that adorn it.

Sense of Smell: A guest is influenced by how fresh a lobby smells. It gives him or her confidence of the hygiene standards of the establishment. The aroma of food in the dining industry is well known. Appetising smells trigger hunger and want. The chef builds this into the total food preparation and presentation. We have known coffee shops to crush coffee beans to give that fresh coffee aroma to passers-by to attract them to the restaurant. Similarly, a guest evaluates you on how you smell. A light perfume or cologne conjures up images of hygiene and freshness.

Sense of Hearing: There are things that should not be heard by the customer and things that should be. A customer does not like to hear you fighting with your colleagues, loud back-office discussions, rude language, slang, technical jargon, etc. What they like to hear is the courtesy shown by you, the use of their name, suggestions in case of doubt, low tones and words of etiquette like "Thank you", "Please", "May I help you?", etc.

Sense of Taste: This is the one most applicable to the food industry. Taste defines the customer's ultimate experience. Chefs have gone to various extents with innovative use of spices, cooking methods and beverages to provide unique and wonderful experience to the guest. It is common to find use of wine to enhance the flavours of sauces and extracts of herbs to marinate meats. The taste of meat cooked in earthen ovens is different from that cooked on charcoal spits. Tastes are the distinctive signature to a cuisine offered by an establishment. The chef's skill provides the experience. How can you contribute to taste? Taste is interpreted by guests in another way as far as you are concerned — the taste of quality service! The owner of your hotel has already built in taste in the aesthetics shown in the interior design and décor. Guests immediately recognise the quality of the property by the appointments, furnishings, carpeting, etc. used in the physical product. Guests expect superior service from you. Once they taste it they talk about it and keep coming back.

Sense of touch: The temperature levels in the lobby and in the guest room, the softness of bed and bathroom linen, the fluffiness of the pillow are some examples that create the touch experience. You can enhance the sense of touch by providing clean registration cards, clean room keys, baggage tags, etc.

UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER NEEDS AND WANTS —————

You must first understand the difference between needs and wants. **Needs** are essential to human well being. These could include those that are essential to human survival such as food, water, clothing and shelter at the basic level as well as, to those that are essential for social survival. **Wants** are the cultural manifestation of these needs. An American needs food just as much as an Indian. While an American may interpret this need by wanting hamburgers and fries, an Indian will demand rice and curry. An American interprets clothing in terms of a demand for jeans while the Indian the sari.

Abraham Maslow, a social scientist, explained the concept of needs by proclaiming that:

1. All humans have needs.
2. These needs can be collated into five broad categories.
3. The categories have an ascending hierarchical order.
4. That one must be satisfied to move to the other. (Later scientists proved that all needs can coexist together in varying levels of importance for every individual).

This has been lucidly displayed in the famous **Maslow's Need Hierarchy** as shown in Fig. 18.2.

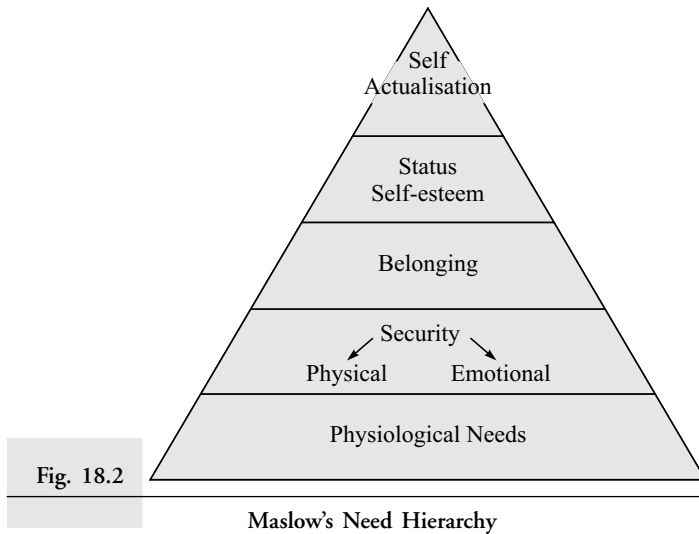
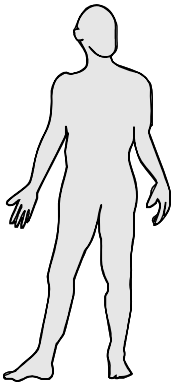


Fig. 18.2

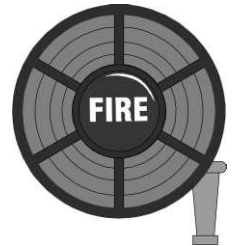


The needs start from the bottom and we shall examine how they reflect in providing the perfect guest experience.

Physiological Needs: These are the basic needs for survival such as food, water, clothing, shelter, air and sex (for procreation of the human species). The hotel industry recognises the basic needs by offering a spread of cuisines, and shelter by providing a “home away from home” through its choice of rooms. You control that important “home away from home”.

Security Needs: Security needs are both physical and emotional.

Physical: The guests want to feel physically safe in a hotel. Hotels provide locks, fire-warning systems, sprinklers, fire-fighting equipment, latch chains, peep-holes, etc. to meet this need. Your role in providing physical safety is to protect the name and room numbers of guests from callers and visitors. You are expected to cooperate with the security staff.



Emotional: Guests need emotional security in an estranged environment when they travel. You can provide emotional security in many ways:

1. Give a guest immediate attention.
2. Smile! It shows you are friendly.

3. Welcome each guest to the hotel and recognise him.
4. Be well groomed. It shows you as hygienic and free from diseases.
5. Respect guest privacy.
6. Treat each guest with courtesy and respect.
7. Value the guest's time. Perform each transaction with them quickly.

Belonging: Human beings are social animals. They prosper and grow when interacting with others. Hotels are great social spots to meet this need. They have made this a fine art where people meet and socialise. You can make a guest belong by remembering his/her name and using it frequently. Show that you care and that you will go that extra mile to make the guest feel welcomed.



Status and Self-esteem: While status is the way others perceive you, self-esteem is the way you perceive yourself. Hotels provide the perfect platform to satisfy varying status needs. This shows in the rating system from one to five-star. Each is distinguished by the pricing, level of service and food-offers based on the customer's need and want. A guest chooses a hotel to get status to his clients and friends. It gives a guest an image.

Self-esteem is sometimes a tricky issue. For example, guests do not want to feel embarrassed in a public place like a hotel and so they show their best behaviour. They are nervous in new environments and want help in getting around. You can guide them without them feeling humiliated. You can also praise their selection of rooms, choice of restaurant, etc. Flattery never hurts. Guests feel important if you recognise them and call them by their name. They are flattered when you remember their personal preferences based on their last stay. The guest history system is meant to satisfy the self-esteem needs of guests.



Self-Actualisation: This is a state when human beings reach their potential and are able to control and contribute to the environment. The hotel industry has recognised this and has come with innovative methods to meet this need. Hotels offer to the guests facility to book a room from the convenience of their home over the web while at the same time selecting a room of their choice within their budget. This is one such attempt made by hotels to make the guests feel that they are in control of their environment. As hotels develop, guests will be more in control of their stay

through more transparent sharing of information. Hotels also invite guests to give their impressions of the total experience by filling guest comment forms. Guests now feel that they can contribute to the establishment's prosperity.



Key Terms

Attitude	The way one communicates mood to others
Behaviour	A repeated habit
Beliefs	Accepting a thought as true
Belonging Needs	Being part of a group
Habit	A repeated action
Physiological Needs	Basic needs for survival
Needs	Needs that are essential for a person's well being
Security Needs	Needs for physical and emotional well being
Status Needs	Needs to satisfy the ego
Self-esteem Needs	Needs for self respect
Self Actualisation	The stage where a person is in control of his personal environment and has the desire to contribute to it
Wants	Cultural interpretations of needs



Review Quiz

Fill in the Blanks

1. A constant often unconscious inclination to perform some act is called _____.
2. A voluntary talking to oneself to change an attitude, action, habit or feeling is called _____.
3. The way we perceive ourselves is called _____.
4. The way others perceive us is called _____.
5. A state when human beings reach their potential and are able to control and contribute to their environments is called _____.
6. Cultural interpretations of needs are called _____.
7. The way one communicates a mood to others is called _____.

8. A repeated habit is called _____.
9. Accepting a thought as true is called a _____.
10. Security includes physical and _____ security.

Short Notes

1. What are the benefits of positive attitude?
2. What is the difference between needs and wants?
3. Give the difference with examples between physical security and emotional security.
4. Give the difference between status and self-esteem.
5. How does self-actualisation apply in the hotel industry to guests and employees?



Training Methodology

Get learners to identify the areas they wish to change. Learners must give their action plan and the time frame by which they want to change their behaviour. They can then use the principles mentioned in this lesson to change their behaviour.

19 Concierge Services

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the readers learn the relatively new role of the Concierge with the services s/he provides.

INTRODUCTION

The Concierge service is relatively new to modern hotel-keeping though it is quite old in its concept. Traditionally, the Concierge was a castle doorkeeper who was responsible to ensure that all guests were properly roomed for the night. The Concierge accompanied the travelling royalty and provided them with security, lodging arrangements and entertainment sites. He travelled ahead of the royal entourage to make lodging arrangements before they arrived.

With modernisation the Concierge concept is adopted by hotels in Europe as the person who provides personalised services such as providing box office tickets at nearby theatres, coach tickets for sightseeing tours, or table reservations at city restaurants, etc. He is the person who knows everything about the city, its sites, and events.

THE CONCIERGE

The Concierge is a specialised position recognised by crossed gold keys on their lapels. The emblem signifies their certification by the International Association of Concierges (Les Clefs d'Or) which sets very high standards for its members. While many hotels may position experienced members at the Concierge Desk, they cannot call themselves

concierges till they get the official certification. The Concierge Desk is located in the lobby beside the bell desk for better coordination and is the new member of the uniformed services. The concierge reports to the Lobby Manager.

Role of a Concierge

A Concierge is a very resourceful person. His typical role would be to:

1. develop useful contacts with necessary agents in the city like box office attendants, tourism offices, events management companies, restaurant maitre d' hotels, etc., to use when guests require their services;
2. procure tickets for sold-out concerts, table reservations or even a seat on an oversubscribed city tour;
3. be equipped with brochures, pamphlets, maps, etc., to support the wide range of knowledge he has of the hotel services and city highlights;
4. be up-to-date with daily events in the city each morning to be of information to guests;
5. provide customised or personal services to guests;
6. be local contact man for many guests to get things done in the city;
7. help develop guest loyalty;
8. speak many languages and assist the front office to bridge language barriers with guests.



Job Description of a Concierge

A typical job description of a concierge is given as under:

Job Title:	Concierge
Reports to:	1. Lobby Manager 2. Assistant Front Office Manager
Job Summary	Provide information services and other support help to guests as per the standards of the establishment.

Duties and Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Answer queries of house facilities and places of tourist interest. 2. Keep information aids like time-tables, road maps, hotel guide, etc. 3. Help guests confirm airline, bus or train tickets. 4. Procure box office tickets for cinemas, concerts, special shows, etc., for the guests. 5. Coordinate with the bell boys to page guests in the hotel. 6. Develop contacts with city services to facilitate guests.
Supervises	None
Limits of Authority	To develop contacts with essential city services to get their cooperation when needed. May depute lobby staff to procure tickets, confirm travel tickets, etc., for guests.
Coordinates with	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bell Desk — for errands on behalf of the guests. 2. City Services — to facilitate guests' requests.
Minimum Educational Qualifications	Graduate with preferably a Craft Course in Front Office Reception or a Diploma in Hotel Management. (Preferably with Les Clef d'Or certification).
Experience	3 months departmental training is adequate.
Skills and Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically sturdy for active work on a shift. • Socially confident. • Personable and well groomed. • Teams person. • Proficiency in the English language and other foreign languages.

Providing Information

The concierge is the repository of all information inside and outside the hotel. Guests have confidence that all they need to do is to consult the reliable Concierge for any information they require. Some of the typical information required by guests are:

Hotel Information and Services

- Hotel facilities
- Hotel rules and regulations

- Management policies
- Events within the hotel
- Schedule of special events
- Guest information
- Tickets for events in the hotel (supper theatre, rock concerts, recitals, fashion shows, galas, etc.)
- Messages
- Conventions, banquets and directions to the locations

City Information

- Private taxi firms
- City tour buses, schedules and rates
- Tourist sites and entry charges
- Map of the city
- Airline, Bus and Rail schedules
- Location of shopping centres and their timings
- Telephone numbers of doctors and medical specialists
- Location of hospitals
- Location of High Commissions, Embassies and Consulates
- Cultural events in the city and entry charges
- Addresses and telephone numbers of kennel clubs
- Addresses and telephone numbers of beauty salons and gymnasiums
- Telephone numbers of florists
- Prominent restaurants and table reservations
- Ethnic restaurants and table reservations
- Theatres and cinema and box office bookings
- Tourist offices and information

The Concierge keeps aids to support his task of providing information. These are:

- Airline, bus and rail timetables
- Telephone directories
- Hotel guides
- Road maps

- Tourism brochures and pamphlets
- List of restaurants
- Timetables of cultural events

Functions in the Hotel

Most hotels have a function hall or several halls as they recognise the potential of revenue earned from functions. These functions are organised by the banquet department that falls under the Food and Beverage department. The types of functions that are held in hotels are:

Social	Professional	State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wedding Receptions • Birthday parties • Cocktail parties • Balls • Alumni get together • Annual company staff socials • Theme nights • Religious and National celebrations • New Year parties • Dinner Theatres • Sorority and Fraternity luncheons • Graduation parties • College faculty and staff dinners • High school proms • Reunions • Athletic dinners • Anniversary events • Fund raisers • Kitty parties • Musical concerts • Dance recitals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences • Conventions • Training Programmes • Meetings of professional bodies • Board Meetings • Dealer Meetings • Exhibitions • Fashion Shows • Product launches • Education Fairs • Employment Fairs • Staff Awards Dinners • Ceremonial Events • Political meets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State banquets • Diplomatic cocktails and dinners

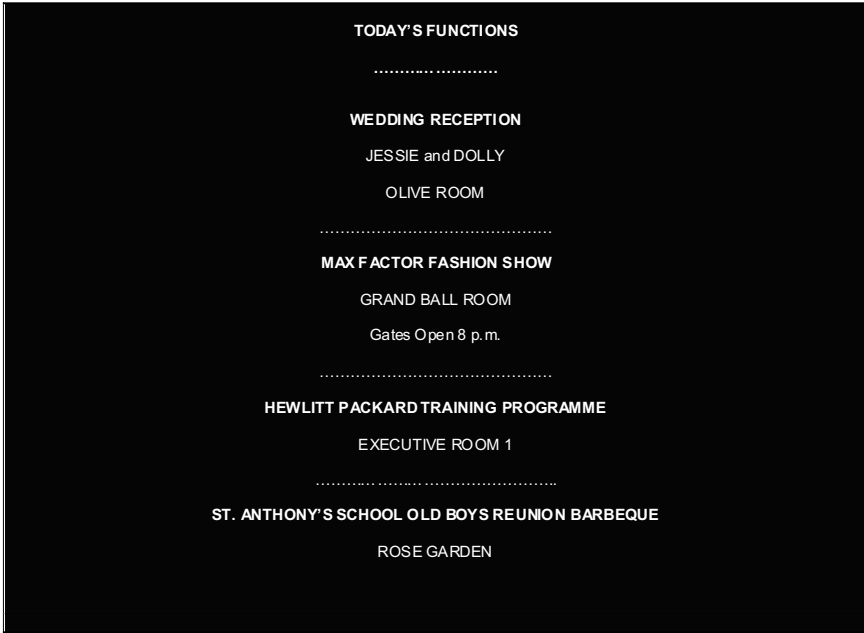
Various departments of the hotel are informed about these events being held in the hotel by the banquet department through a Function Prospectus. The Concierge receives a copy of the function prospectus. His duty is to display the daily functions on the Function Board maintained in the lobby. The function board will mention the name of the function, the location of the function and if necessary the time. He gets the relevant information from the Function Prospectus found under ‘Lobby Display Board Info’.



Function Prospectus

Name of Client	Address	Telephone Nos.
Type of Function	Date and Time of Function	Lobby Display Board Info.
Banquet Rooms Booked	No. of Guests Guaranteed	Hall Charges
Food Menu	Beverage List	Food Menu Rate: Beverage List Rate: Corkage:
Meeting Set Up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table Set Up • Head Table • Writing Pads • Flip Chart Boards • Stage • Lecturn • Welcome Desk 	Lunch/Dinner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table Set Up • Host Table • Table Numbers • Stage • Dance Floor • Entertainment • Candlestands 	Coffee Breaks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee • Tea • Mineral Water • Snacks Hot • Cookies • Pastries
Technical Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video-Player • CD Player • Overhead Projector • Film/Slide Projector • Sound Mixer • Sound System/Speakers • Microphone • Stage • Ramps • Special Lighting 	Weddings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flower Decorations • Table Set-Up • Bar • Dance Floor • Bandstand • Orchestra • Piped Music • Transport • Bridal Suite • Priest 	Exhibitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booths • Registration Counter • Display Boards • Display Racks • Desks and Counters • Signages • Electrical Points • Equipment • Food Counters • Beverage Bars
Additional Information	Terms and Conditions	Advance Paid
Signature of Client:	Signature of Banquet Sales Rep:	Date:

Given below are typical ways the function board in the lobby reads:



Summary

The Concierge is a relatively new position though an old concept. Hotels have defined and redefined the concierge's role. His basic role worldwide is to be that person who facilitates guest needs within the city. For this, he has to have excellent contacts with relevant agencies. He is a facilitator and friend who fix things required.



Key Term

Concierge

a resourceful person who provides personalised services to the guest



Review Quiz

True or False

1. A Concierge provides personal services.
2. A Concierge is well informed about the city.

3. A Concierge is a generalist position
4. A Concierge desk is positioned at the back-office.
5. The Concierge reports to the Front-Office Manager.
6. The Concierge's key role is to develop contacts in the city.
7. It is not necessary for the Concierge to be informed about the hotel services.
8. The Concierge helps in developing guest services.
9. A good Concierge is multi-lingual.
10. A Concierge coordinate with the Bell Desk.



Training Methodology

- This lesson is a knowledge input delivered by lecture. Trainers should use pre-prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations as training aids.
- Learners must know the key terms and should be quizzed on them.
- The lecture can be supported by copies of forms and formats. The trainer should take learners through each of them ensuring their purpose and use in the procedures.
- Take learners through each procedural step which may be adapted to house policies and procedures.
- Distribute copies of the job description and take learners through it. Ensure learning by quizzing learners.
- The best way to confirm learning is to put learners on-the-job to practice the procedures under supervision.
- Quiz learners thoroughly before putting them on-the-job.

20 Guest Relations Executive

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the reader understand the role of a Guest Relations Executive and the services she provides.

INTRODUCTION

The best way to describe the role of a guest relations executive (GRE), is to compare her to a hostess at a home. Whenever a guest arrives at home, the hostess—a mother, wife or daughter who welcomes a guest and makes him/her feel comfortable and tends to every need of the guest. The hotel is a ‘home away from home.’ The guest relations executive assumes the role of a hostess in a hotel and extends the same attention and warmth to a guest. Since the General Manager is the head of the hotel, he would like to give personalised attention to all the guests. However, since this is not practical in being implemented, he delegates this role to the GRE. The GRE is the hotel’s representative for guest comfort and convenience. The GRE is normally a lady on the belief that a woman is most sensitive to guests’ needs and comforts. She welcomes the guest and makes him feel at home in a new environment. Ideally, the GRE is expected to provide that personalised



service to all guests, but as hotels become larger, this becomes difficult. So the GRE is generally in charge of attending to VIPs and regular guests only, though she cannot and does not deny assistance to any guest who seeks help. Again, the GRE cannot perform all the tasks requested by guests and therefore has to seek the help of other members of the hotel team to assist her.

ORGANISATION OF GRE

The GRE reports to the Front Office Manager and holds an independent charge in the lobby. She coordinates closely with the Lobby Manager on matters of policy and the welcome of guests. Her desk is prominent in the lobby and upfront for all guest contact. Smaller hotels usually do not have a budget to employ a GRE and therefore, this is handled by the Lobby Manager. Experience 'however' shows that the GRE's plays a major role in enhancing brand loyalty of existing customers as well as creating a positive impression on the new ones.

The GRE operates in a shift that covers the peak hours when guests leave the hotel and return. The trend of guests moving out for the day shows that guests leave in the morning (8 a.m. to 9 a.m.) for work or sightseeing. Many return for lunch (12.30 p.m. to 2 p.m.). Guests finally return in the evening at around 6 p.m. to 8.p.m. The GRE plans her presence so as to be available during these hours for maximum interaction with guests. She enquires about their day and finds out if they would like any specific service that would make their stay more comfortable.

Job Description of the Guest Relations Executive

Job Title	
	Guest Relations Executive
Reports To	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Front Office Manager 2. Accommodations Director
Job Summary	
	To provide personalised services in a cordial and courteous manner to guests, ensuring their comfort and linkage with various services to their satisfaction.

Duties & Responsibilities

1. Note any special instructions left in the Lobby Managers Log Book.
2. Check the arrivals and departures of the day, especially the VIPs and plan to be there to receive them or see them off.
3. Welcome guests as per procedures set by management.
4. Offer assistance for any services required by guests.
5. Manage all guest complaints and take action appropriately.
6. Coordinate with group leaders and crew at the time of arrivals and departures.
7. Maintain guest history cards of regular guests and VIPs.
8. Assist the sales in familiarisation tours of the hotel.
9. Coordinate with concerned departments to resolve guest needs.
10. Assist the security in lobby surveillance.

Supervises

None

Limits of Authority

May communicate with guests directly for proper coordination between the hotel and them. May access any part of the hotel in the performance of her duties.

Coordinates with

1. Front Office—for latest arrivals and departures & changes in guest room allotments.
2. Concierge—for external services and baggage movement.
3. F&B—on matters of guest parties, food & beverage services, table reservations.
4. Housekeeping Desk—for room clearances, room maintenance, laundry services, room supplies.
5. Health Club—for booking of services.
6. Business Centre—for booking meeting rooms, secretarial services and office services.
7. Florist—for flower arrangements and bouquets.

Minimum Educational Qualifications

Graduate

Experience

Minimum one month training in hotel systems, procedures & facilities.

Skills & Competencies

- Thorough knowledge of front office systems and procedures
- Socially confident

- Proficiency in the English language (Knowledge of foreign languages is preferable)
- Etiquettes and manners
- Personable and well-groomed
- Having flair and showmanship
- Tact and diplomacy
- Assertive in protecting the interests of the hotel

OTHER RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS FOR THE GRE

The diagram below (Fig. 20.1) shows who she coordinates with to fulfil guest needs:

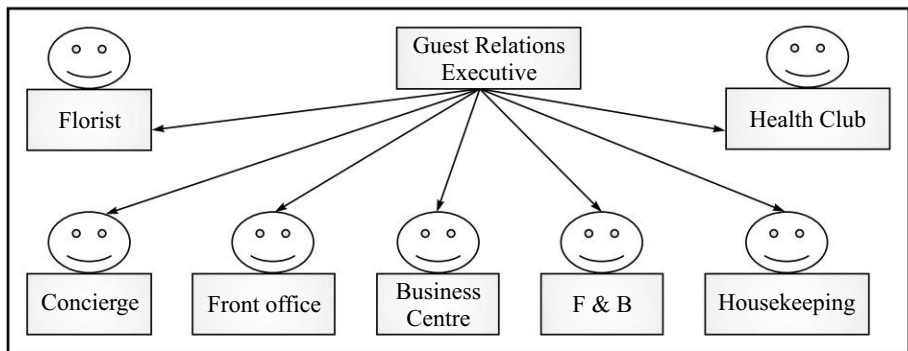


Fig. 20.1

Departments GRE Coordinates with

Let us examine how each department can assist the GRE in providing personalised service to the guest.

Concierge

- Confirmation of airline, bus and rail tickets
- Procurement of city tour tickets
- Providing tourist information and brochures
- Providing city maps
- Making table reservations at city restaurants
- Procurement of box office tickets for cinemas, theatre and concerts
- Getting personal transport to pull up at the porch
- Left luggage information and service
- Assistance in moving baggage to re-assigned rooms

Front Office

- Room changes
- Upgrading rooms
- Future reservations
- Safety deposit lockers
- Preparation of final bills before departure
- Wake-up call services

Business Centre

- Booking meeting rooms
- Arranging secretarial service
- Arranging photocopy and fax services
- Booking office space
- Escorting VIPs to the board room

Food & Beverages

- Making table reservations at in-house restaurants
- Arranging private parties
- Booking banquet space
- Planning menus for parties
- Bars for the supply of liquor for private entertainment
- Room service for the removal of trays from the room

Housekeeping

- For maintenance requirements in guest rooms
- Clearance of guest rooms
- Extra beds, blankets and guest supplies
- Housekeeping second and third service
- Babysitting services
- Lost & Found services

Health Club

- Bookings for massage services
- Bookings for yoga, meditation and aerobic classes

- Bookings for outboard boats, wind-surfing, paragliding, snorkelling, etc.
- Bookings for personal physical trainers
- Bookings for the gymnasium

Florist

- Special flower arrangements for the room
- Special flower arrangements for private parties
- Bouquets and delivery services

The above list of needs is typical and does not cover the range of odd requests that guest may ask for.

GENERAL PROCEDURES _____

Starting the Day

1. Check the lobby log book for any instructions left for her overnight. Instructions include special requests by guests..
2. Check with the front office for VIPs checked-in overnight.
3. Check with the front office the expected arrivals and departures for the day, especially of VIPs, regular guests, groups and crews.
4. Follow-up with concerned departments for any guest requests already initiated by the night staff.
5. Prepare welcome formalities for VIPs and groups if required.

Welcome Services

1. Meet each new guest at the time of registration and welcome him/her into the house and give her telephone extension number for any assistance they require.
2. Extend the welcome procedure to VIPs as per hotel policy:
 - A simple welcome where she meets the guest as soon as s/he enters the lobby and greets them saying, “Welcome to the hotel Mr/Ms My name isI am the Guest Relations Executive extending any help to make your stay comfortable”. She escorts the guest to the reception counter.
 - A welcome based on national tradition. This could include garlands, religious ceremony of welcome (*aarti* in India), providing welcome drinks

(in coconut shells in coastal resorts) or a religious chant (at pilgrim centres). The idea is to make an impact and identify as far as possible with the country traditions.

- A group welcome — This may prove a bigger challenge. The GRE arranges additional personnel from the reception or sales to provide the formal welcome required. They are herded to designated areas in the lobby to avoid congestion in the lobby. Based on prior arrangements with the tour organiser, she may also be required to provide welcome drinks. Welcome drinks are often non-alcoholic but some cold countries may offer alcoholic drinks.

Pre-registration

Pre-registration is the process of filling a registration card and receiving a room key before the guest arrives.

1. Escort guests to the reception counter. Assist the guest in filling the registration form. Act as translator for guests to fill the forms.
2. Arrange pre-registration formalities for VIPs. Fill documents in advance requiring them to sign only upon arrival. This is done in many ways:
 - Escort VIP to her desk, seat him and ask him to only sign the registration form. Tired guests welcome this convenience.
 - Escort the guest to his/her room and get him/her to sign the registration card in the room.
3. Arrange group or crew pre-registration. This is necessary to avoid congestion at the reception counter.
 - Fill registration forms with information provided by the front office.
 - Seal room keys in envelopes against a rooming list provided by front office. Mention the name and room number on the envelope.
 - Lead group or crew to the designated spot in the lobby.
 - Bring the rooming list, registration cards and room keys (pre-sealed in envelopes).
 - Coordinate with the group leader or Airline Captain to get registration cards signed and distribute the room keys.



4. Conference registration: Sponsors of training programmes, seminars, conferences and conventions request the GRE to act the registration desk for delegates. The GRE can accept this role provided the number of delegates is few and manageable (about 20 maximum). Larger numbers will need independent well-coordinated registration desks.
 - Fill the registration cards in advance.
 - Seal room keys in envelopes in advance and mention name and room number.
 - Prepare identity badges.
 - Make conference reading material into sets. These are provided by the conference organiser.
 - Create a registration desk with a placard announcing the same.
 - Get registration card signed on the arrival of the delegate and hand over room key, ID badge and conference material.

Press Coverage

Often prominent hotels get celebrities from all over the world to stay with them. Celebrities could include heads of states, sports teams, rock stars, danseuse, divas, film actors, etc. naturally the hotel would like to get full mileage of their visit. The GRE follows this procedure:

- Contact the marketing department of the hotel to organise the media to cover their visit to the hotel and perhaps have a press interview.
- Contact the banquets for space for a press interview. Ensure power points for cameras and arc lamps, refreshments after the interview.
- Arrange welcome drinks for the press.
- Receive the press crew.
- Lead them to the press conference venue.
- Distribute press kits, etc.
- Welcome the celebrity and escort him/her to the press conference venue.



Familiarisation (FAM) Tours

A FAM tour is an escorted walk-around the hotel premises for potential clients who are evaluating the use of the hotel for a future purpose. These visitors are tour organisers,

travel agents, convention and conference organisers, event managers, trainers, etc. The GRE is given the task of such familiarisation tours. She shows the visitors the following:

- Different types of guest rooms
- Restaurants & bars
- Function rooms
- Health club and swimming pool
- Recreation areas
- Any other areas of the hotel that is relevant to the visitor's purpose. For example, a trainer would be interested in the function rooms, break-out areas, tea foyers, audio-visual equipment, venue for meals, rooms for delegates and registration desk.

Visitors requesting FAM tours are of two types:

1. The casual guest who drops into the hotel to evaluate the property for future use. Such guests would contact the reception for an FAM tour. They direct the GRE to fulfil this requirement. The GRE notes such enquiries and gives the sales department the lead for further development.
2. Larger groups like travel writers, travel agents, airline administrations, etc. who could be the source of future business. The sales department may request the GRE to assist them in the FAM tours. Such groups are important to hotel business and therefore "wined and dined".

The GRE would have to be informed about the needs of different market segments to focus on their specific needs.

Inspections

Inspections by local authorities ensure that the hotel provides the legal services and facilities to the public. Such inspections are carried out many times throughout the year and thus become very important to the existence and reputation of the hotel. While certain departments of the hotel lead such inspection tours on behalf of the hotel, they rely on the GRE to provide the necessary internal PR and entertainment to foster goodwill. Some inspection teams are:

1. The Classification Committee

They are a team of representatives of the department of tourism, entrusted to ensure that hotels meet and continue to provide the facilities and services to the standard required by their star rating. The star rating of a hotel is dependent on the report submitted by this committee.

2. The Fire Safety Committee

They are a team from the local fire department who certifies whether the hotel is maintaining the standards of fire safety required.

3. The Health Committee

This is an important committee especially to any property providing food and beverage services, including food production. They will evaluate the standards of hygiene and sanitation especially in food areas. There are certain norms for food preparation and consumption that have to be followed to protect the public. Some hotels are closed due to poor conditions and lose their image.

4. The Municipal Authority

They are responsible to ensure that hotels follow building laws. They will inspect gas supply facilities, kitchen exhaust facilities, drainage systems, power supply, traffic flows, etc.

While these are a few of the essential committees that influence the working of the hotel there are many other smaller bodies that come for inspections from time to time that requires the attention of the GRE.

Complaint Handling

Complaints are breakdowns in the systems and procedures of the hotel and therefore unfortunate. In spite of the best intentions of managements, complaints do happen as a way of life in hotels. The GRE being in the frontline is the main person to receive them. She has to be tactful and cool to meet the needs of them. Here are some tips in managing complaints:



- **Listen** carefully to the complaint. It is important for the GRE to divorce herself from the emotions expressed and understand the nature of the problem thoroughly.
- **Give directions** if it seems a problem that can be handled by the guest. For example, the guest may complain about 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 done politely but clearly.
- **Apologise** to the guest. An apology is the least that a guest expects from the management and reduces his/her hostility.

- Tell the guest the exact **action** that will be taken. For example, the GRE can say, “I will inform the maintenance immediately, who will be in touch with you shortly.” Guests like action not discussions on the issue.
- **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 on the matter.

Many guests lodge their complaints in the morning when leaving for the day on work or pleasure. The GRE must try to ensure that such complaints are attended to by lunch. This is a reasonable time frame. Even with the knowledge that the complaint has been attended to, it necessary to inform the guest on his/her return about the action. This is giving personalisation.

Guest History System

An important activity of a GRE is to develop and maintain a guest history system. The guest history system tracks the guest’s movements, preferences and habits with the objective of providing better and more personalised services. Earlier this was done by filo-flex cards, but computers have made this task much easier and certainly more systematic. Registration cards do provide useful information, but they are limited in scope. Let us see what kind of information is found in a guest history system:

- Name and address of guests
- Arrival and departure dates
- Frequency of visits
- Length of stay in each visit
- Source of bookings (travel agent, airline, secretary, etc.)
- Choice of rooms (location, smoking/non-smoking, colour, etc.)
- Room rate
- Additional room facilities requested (extra bed, extra blankets, babysitting services, etc.)
- Complaints lodged by the guest and resultant actions
- Room service usage
- Food and beverage ordered from room service
- In-house restaurants visited
- Type of food and beverage ordered



- Transportation pattern (rent-a-car, hotel limousine, own company care, etc.)
- Use of Business Centre and facilities availed
- Use of the Health Club and facilities availed
- Complaints lodged against the guest by hotel staff and other guests (noise in the room, sexual harassment, etc.)
- Special tendencies: early riser, vegetarian, allergic, diet-conscious, health problems, etc.
- Overall satisfaction quotient

While these are just indicative, there is no limit to the information that can be stored with modern technology. Every GRE maintains such information as per the hotel policy and her particular approach towards personalisation.

The purpose of guest history, as mentioned earlier, is to improve services to a degree that the guest feels at home and not intruded upon. For example, if Mr. John Doe were to check in and told by the receptionist, “Would you prefer the room facing the swimming pool as preferred by you the last time you were with us, Sir?” he would certainly be impressed with such attention paid to his choice. Guest history systems are now networked with room service, reception, telephones, concierge and housekeeping to provide a coordinated response of personalisation. Taking this example, if John Doe went to his room and found that extra blanket and ordered coffee and told by the order-taker whether he liked it black without sugar like the last time, he will be impressed and talk about this level of detailing that went into the service quality to others.

The GRE is the driver of the guest history system and held responsible for its execution and content.

GRE Log Book

The GRE maintains her own log book to be able to follow-up on matters each day and the following. She records the following information:

- VIPs in the house.
- Groups in the house.
- Airline crews in the house.
- Complaints of guests with their room numbers. She enters these incidents in the guest history system too.
- Tasks given by the guests and whom she forwarded the task to for follow-up and completion.

- Special requests like airline confirmation, box office tickets, city sightseeing tour booking, etc.

The GRE works on information that stimulates her activities for the day.

All hotels would greatly benefit from the presence of a GRE. She is the barometer of guest needs and problems. She reports directly to the front office manager to appraise him or her of the important aspect of guest comfort.



Key Terms

FAM Tour	A tour to familiarise a potential client with hotel facilities
Pre-registration	The process of filling registration card and receiving a room key before the guest arrives
Personalisation	Customised service
Guest History	Record of past hotel stays of guests



Review Quiz

True or False

1. The first task of a GRE is to check the Lobby Manager’s log book.
2. The GRE is the driver of the guest history system.
3. Any potential guest can be provided with a FAM tour.
4. A GRE is not involved in registration formalities.
5. A guest history keeps tab of past guests who are vegetarians.
6. The task of welcoming groups is handled by the receptionist.
7. Complaint handling is the duty of the Lobby Manager only.
8. One of the attributes of a GRE is social assertiveness.
9. The GRE is involved in press conferences.
10. The GRE alerts the management about any celebrities in the house.

Short Notes

Give Short description of the following:

1. The five steps in handling complaints
2. Welcome procedure

3. Role of a GRE in FAM tours
 4. GRE's role in press conferences
-



Training Methodology

This lesson should be delivered by using lecture method to ensure knowledge input. The lecture should be supported by training aids such as flip charts or PowerPoint presentations.

Learners must know the key terms and should be quizzed on them.

The lecture can be supported by copies of forms and formats. The trainer should take learners through each of them ensuring their purpose and use in the procedures.

Take learners through each procedural step which may be adapted to house policies and procedures.

Distribute copies of the job description and take learners through it. Ensure learning by quizzing learners.

21 Telecommunications

LEARNING OBJECTIVE



To help the reader learn the role of telecommunications in a hotel as well as the systems and procedures it uses to give quality guest services.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, every hotel, regardless of its size and situation, has a telephone board/exchange. The larger the property, the greater is the need for more incoming and outgoing lines and internal extensions.

A small hotel may have a switchboard placed at the reception counter. The receptionist operates it adding to her usual responsibilities.

A larger hotel, on the other hand, has a dedicated room to house the telephone switchboard with operators who operate them. The room adjoins the reception area as both have to coordinate for better service. The telephone exchange has a controlled temperature environment to maintain modern equipment.

Very often, the first and sometimes the only contact a guest may have with a hotel, is with the telephone operator. The speed and manner with which the call is attended to, leaves a lasting impression—either good or bad. It is of paramount importance for all telephone operators to attend to calls promptly, with a clear, friendly voice, the tone of which conveys courtesy, patience and cheerfulness.

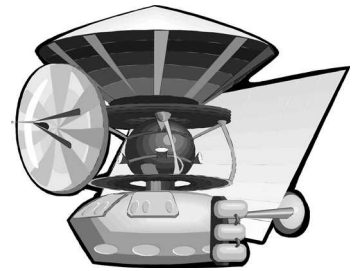


The number of rooms in the hotel also determines the size of the switchboard and the number of operators required to man it. The telephone department has to be manned twenty-four hours a day which requires three shifts. Additional operators are employed during peak times to cover the traffic. The peak hours are when guests are in the house, normally mornings and evenings. Daytime hours are occupied by the hotel telephone traffic as all departments are usually open.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

The telecommunications industry has developed rapidly with new innovations every six months. They have hotel telecommunications as follows:

1. Satellite connections have made cumbersome telephone exchanges redundant.
2. Electronic exchanges can be operated from desktops requiring minimal space.
3. A telephone operator can service several hundred rooms because of many automatic features in guest room extensions that do not require operator contact.
4. Mobile phones make communication easier reducing the use of the telephone exchange.



There are many types of calls a guest may place during a hotel stay:

- Local calls
- Domestic long distance calls
- International calls
- Calling card calls
- Credit card calls
- Collect calls
- Conference calls
- Person-to-Person call
- Toll-free calls



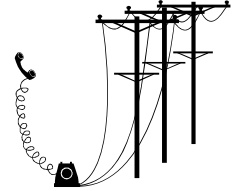
The hotel is obliged to charge for these services and thereby earn subsidiary revenue for the establishment.

Type of Exchanges

Before we go further in this lesson, it is important to know the difference between different exchanges. The exchange has had rapid evolution from the simple PBX, PABX to the EPABX.

PBX — stands for Private Branch Exchange. The features are:

1. It requires the telephone operator to connect all incoming and outgoing calls.
2. They come in many sizes, for example, 3+9, 5+20, 10+50, etc. The first digit/s stands for the number of incoming lines and the second digit stands for the number of extensions.
3. The exchange can be increased in capacity in a modular way.



This exchange is probably outdated now. It may be found in countries that do not have satellite access.

PABX — stands for Private Automatic Branch Exchange. Its features are:

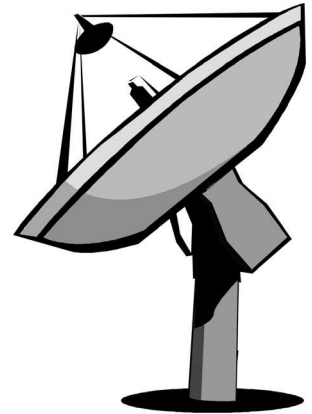
1. Guests can make local and domestic long-distance calls directly from the rooms.
2. Only international calls are routed through the telephone operator.
3. The exchange works on the basis of independent meters for each extension. These meters are situated behind the front office cashier's cabin. All he/she has to do is note the opening and closing reading of the meter of a room to determine the number of units used by the guest. He/She multiplies the units with the hotel charge per unit to arrive at the total telephone charge for the room. He/She posts this charge in the guest folio.

With the tremendous surge in telecommunication development this type of exchange has been retired except in developing states.

EPABX — stands for Electronic Private Automatic Branch Exchange. This type of exchange acts as virtual telephone operators and responds to all the needs of a guest. The EPABX is based on satellite connections. The EPABX can fulfil the following functions:

- Direct dialling local calls
- Direct dialling domestic long distance calls
- Direct dialling of International calls

- Direct dial internal extensions
- Call waiting facility
- Speed dialling
- Hold buttons
- Hands free speakers
- Voice messaging service
- Message waiting alert
- Do-not-disturb service
- Conference calling
- Calling landline to landline
- Calling landline to mobile phones
- Caller identification
- Call block service
- Personalised ring tone bank
- Charge monitoring facility
- Wake-up call facility



All charges are electronically fed into the front office automated systems which charge the guest folio directly through a call accounting system. CAS is software that interfaces with the hotel management system. This eliminates earlier tedious billing procedures.

An Exchange Comparative Chart (Fig. 21.1) below gives a bird eye view of the differences in the three systems:

OTHER COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

The telephone department also maintains other forms of telecommunications. This is required by both the hotel staff and guests. Some of these are:

Two-Way Walkie-Talkies: They are used by the security personnel to communicate with each other when on their rounds to all parts of the property. They are especially valuable during large gatherings.

Pager: They are distributed to hotel staff who are spread throughout the property on duty and need to be contacted. The pager beeps them and they call the telephone department for instruction from the nearest house phone.



QUALITIES	PBX	PABX	EPABX
EXTENSIONS	Limited	Large number	Limitless extensions
BILLING PROCESS	By the operator	By the front office cashier	Automatically into the guest folio
SERVICE CONNECTIONS	Only one phone to essential offices & services	Parallel lines ring simultaneously within an office	Individual numbers to all service extensions
INTERNAL CONNECTIONS	Routed through the operator	Direct dial	Direct dial
EXTERNAL CONNECTIONS	Routed through the operator	Direct dial	Direct dial
TRAFFIC LOAD ON OPERATOR	Very High	Medium	Little
TYPE OF EXCHANGE	Jacks & sockets	Jacks & sockets	Keyboard
TYPE OF TELEPHONE INSTRUMENT	Dial	Dial or key	Key
NUMBER OF OPERATORS	One per panel/shift	One per panel/shift	One/shift
WAKE-UP CALL	By the operator	By the operator	By Automatic Software
MAINTENANCE	By the operator	By Qualified Technician	By Telephone Company

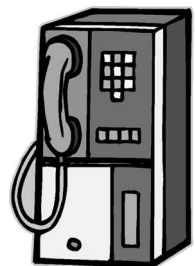
Fig. 21.1

Mobile phones: These are purchased and maintained by the telephone department for hotel employees and VIP guests as a value-added facility. Executives and employees on the move find them convenient to coordinate with the hotel.



Telephone Instruments: They are procured and installed by the telephone department with the help of the telephone company. The department is required to attend to any problems and complaints of telephone instruments in guest rooms and offices.

Pay Phones: They are used by budget hotels and some motels that strip room telephone facility to keep prices down. They may install pay phones in the lobby for guests to use. These are maintained by the local phone company which receives the revenue found in the phone box. Some hotels may have an arrangement with the phone company for long distance calls which are connected and monitored by the hotel. The hotel may charge a commission for such service to the phone company.



Fax and Internet: Modern hotels provide dual lines in guest rooms—one for the telephone instrument and the other for laptop and fax interfaces. Rooms have access to the Internet for guests to send and receive written communication. Some hotels may have wireless technology in their rooms as they progress towards high-tech rooms. Hotels will naturally have to work with the Internet service providers on a contract basis. To facilitate several Internet users at the same time, service providers will need to link up with broadband satellite services.



ORGANISATION OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The organisation chart (Fig. 21.2) of the telecommunications department is given below:

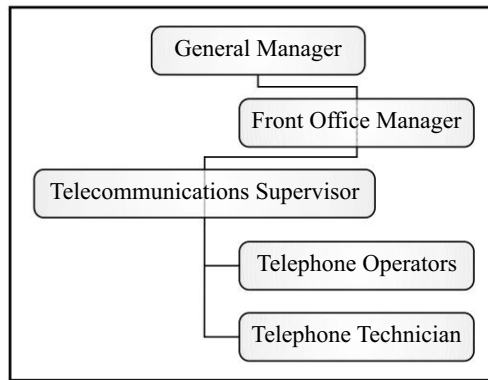


Fig. 21.2

Organisation Chart of the Telecommunications Department

Job Descriptions of the Telecommunications Department

Telecommunications Supervisor

Job Title	Telecommunications Supervisor
Reports To	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Front Office Manager 2. Accommodations Manager

Job Summary

Organise, supervise and control all telecommunications operations; provide telecommunication services to guest and management satisfaction; and maintain equipment so that they are operational at all times.

Duties & Responsibilities

1. Schedule staff to cover work requirements on all shifts. Take attendance and ensure they are punctual.
2. Train staff to maximum departmental efficiency.
3. Brief staff on a daily basis to promote a two-way communication.
4. Debit telephone charges of guests and management correctly and such debits to the cashier promptly.
5. Check all telephone equipment periodically.
6. Ensure that the telephone operators exhibit the best telephone etiquettes and manners.
7. Liaise with local government telecommunications authorities and ensure the necessary licences, fees, bills and reports are discharged promptly.
8. Be aware of VIPs in the house and ensure that the operators provide the necessary services as per policy.
9. Ensure that all telecommunications staff are fully conversant with fire procedures and conduct drills along with the security.
10. Maintain an updated list of emergency telephone numbers at all times.
11. Coordinate with the Front Office for the latest arrivals and departures of guests.
12. Supervise the wake call procedures and ensure that they are carried out promptly.
13. Represent the department at coordination meetings.
14. Ensure that the privacy of guests and management in telephone traffic is maintained at all times.
15. Appraise the operator performance and recommend rewards and recognition where applicable.
16. Attend to guest complaints and ensure that they are acted upon promptly.

Supervises

Telephone Operators

Limits of Authority

1. Can make telephone charges to guests for services.
2. Can deal with the government telecommunications authority directly.
3. Can deal with telecommunication maintenance contractors directly.
4. Represents the department at coordination meetings.

5. Appraises telephone operator performance and recommends rewards and recognition.
6. May discipline staff and recommend disciplinary action.

Coordinates With

1. All departments on telecommunication matters.
2. Government telecommunication authority—on matters of licensing, fees, bill settlement and maintenance.
3. Telecommunication Maintenance Contractors—to troubleshoot any equipment and cabling problems and carry out preventive maintenance.
4. Finance & Accounting—for the settlement of fees and telecommunications bills with the Government authority.

Minimum Educational Qualifications

Graduate with a Certificate in Telephone Operations

Experience

Three years as a telephone operator

Skills & Competencies

- Fluency in the English language with a clear diction
- Ability to take pressure
- Telephone etiquettes and manners
- Capable of good listening

Telephone Operator

Job Title

Telephone Operator

Reports To

1. Telephone Supervisor
2. Front Office Manager

Job Summary

Provide prompt, efficient and courteous telephone services to guests and hotel employees as per standards set by management.

Duties & Responsibilities

1. Organise the wake-up call service and provide a timely service to guests.
2. Be familiar with all operational procedures within the department.
3. Maintain the telephone equipment and ensure its proper usage.
4. Update and maintain the guest information rack (in the manual system) so as to be aware of details of guests in rooms.
5. Maintain the information board of the room numbers and names of VIPs, groups and airline crews in the house.
6. Responsible for the accurate accounting of telephone charges of guests and employees.
7. Practise proper telephone manners.
8. Offer prompt and accurate connections to guests and employees (in the old exchange systems).
9. Take over shift log book and note the special instructions for the shift. Record special instructions for the next shift as appropriate.
10. Maintain caller privacy at all times.

Supervises

None except when promoted as team leader, supervises the operators.

Limits of Authority

May charge guests and employees appropriate telephone debits.

Coordinates With

1. All departments for telephone connections but the following on a special basis:
2. Reception—for updating the telephone guest rack on guest arrivals and departures.
3. Housekeeping—for testing telephone equipment in guest rooms by chambermaids. Also to convey guest room complaints to the housekeeping desk.
4. Front Office Cashier—for telephone charges to guest folios.

Minimum Educational Qualifications

High School with Certificate of Telephone Operation.

Experience

Six months training

Skills & Competencies

- Proficiency in the English language (Knowledge of another foreign language is preferable)
- Clear diction and voice tone
- Accuracy
- Speed in operation
- Telephone etiquettes and manners
- Telephone courtesy
- Ability to work under stress
- Ability to sit at the telephone board for long hours
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Teamwork
- Grooming and hygiene

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES OF THE TELEPHONE OPERATOR

Skills

Accuracy

Accuracy is required in the following circumstances:

1. Providing information, especially when the telephone department is sometimes the only point of contact with the hotel.
2. Connecting the right extension of either the guest or hotel staff.
3. Recording appropriate charges for services rendered.

Errors are usually caused by carelessness, misunderstanding or inattentiveness resulting in unprofessional service.

Speed

Speed in service is important but not sacrificed for accuracy. Speed is a skilled performance for each operation with the least effort. An expert maintains consistency with speed.

Clarity of Speech

The telephone is an instrument where people do not see each other. This poses the following challenges:

1. Communication is done with the strength of speech.
2. Improper communication creates misunderstanding.
3. The voice must have a proper tone and pace.
4. The voice must sound professional and not emotional. Emotions trigger emotions from the listener.

The operator must always repeat the message of the guest to get the instructions right.

Competencies

Punctuality

It is important to report for duty at least five minutes before her shift commences. This practice facilitates the following:

1. Take over from the previous operator.
2. Relieves the previous operator after a tiring shift.
3. Mentally prepare for duty.

Grooming

Telephone staff is well groomed for the following reasons:

1. Some exchanges are located at the reception counter.
2. Some operators may need to assist the receptionist requiring guest contact.
3. The receptionist in smaller hotels may operate the telephone exchange.
4. Telephone staff may have to visit guest rooms for telephone complaints.
5. The department looks professional to the odd guest who drops in.
6. It shows personal discipline.

Oral Hygiene

Operators are required to maintain high standards of oral hygiene as they are handling earphones and mouthpieces used by other operators as well.

Teamwork

Teamwork is the cooperation between colleagues. Cooperation in the telephone department is shown in the following ways:

1. Pass messages immediately and correctly.
2. Help a colleague in answering a phone at her station.

3. Be on time to relieve the operator on the previous shift.
4. Strictly maintain the time limits of coffee breaks.
5. Seek permission from the supervisor before leaving a station. She can put a substitute.
6. Complete all tasks and instructions in the shift.
7. Show respect and courtesy to your fellow colleagues.
8. Protect the image of the department by excellent performance.

Secrecy

The rules and regulations make it an offence, which is punishable, to violate the secrecy of telephone conversations. They must follow the following norms:

1. It is forbidden to listen into conversations or to interrupt them unless there is an emergency.
2. Do not allow others to listen into conversation.
3. Keep the telephone exchange as a restricted area for telecommunications personnel only.
4. Keep the room numbers of guests confidential and follow the procedure (discussed later) to maintain secrecy.

Memory

Developing a good memory is an important competency of an operator.

1. Remember the numbers of various extensions in the house.
2. Remember important numbers in the city especially the fire department in case of an emergency.
3. Remember the guest names as it gives recognition and a personal touch.
4. Memorise the policies and procedures governing telecommunication practices in the hotel.

Cheerfulness

It is important that an operator is cheerful while speaking because it carries through in her tone of voice to the caller. Operators are trained to smile when speaking on the phone because it helps in exuding cheeriness.

Telephone Etiquettes

A telephone operator would have been trained when she qualified as a telephone operator to show telephone etiquettes. These include:

1. Addressing guests as ‘Sir’ or ‘Ms’.
2. Not listening into conversations.
3. Not interrupting conversations.
4. Inform a guest waiting for a connection the status of a call.
5. Calling back guests if it is promised to them.

GENERAL DUTIES OF A TELEPHONE OPERATOR

This section covers all the general duties of a telephone operator in a hotel. These include:

Log Book

The telephone department maintains a log book (Fig. 21.3). It is an important source of communication between shifts. Operators of a shift note those important information and instructions for the next shift operator. Such communications include:

1. Change in duty roster;
2. VIPs in the house;
3. Wake-up call instructions;
4. Change in telephone rates;
5. New policies and procedures;
6. Groups and crews staying in the hotel.

Shift: FromAM/PM ToAM/PM

Date	Time	Information/ Instruction	Left by (SIG.)	Read by	Action Taken	Date & Time	Signature

Fig. 21.3

Log Book

An operator reads this log book first before assuming duty at the exchange.

Complaints Register

The complaint register (Fig. 21.4) notes all complaints by guests and hotel staff regarding faulty telephone instruments. Since communications is vital these complaints must be resolved immediately by the telephone technician. Equipment is replaced if necessary.

Shift: From.....AM/PM. ToAM/PM.

Serial No.	Date	Time	Name of Guest/Dept.	Room/Ext. No.	Nature of Fault	Received by	Completed by		
							Name	Date	Time

Fig. 21.4

Complaints Register

While technical faults constitute a large part of complaints received, there are also others which concern not being given a wake call; not receiving a message left by a caller; rude behaviour of the operator; slackness in service quality; etc. Such complaints are referred to the telephone supervisor.

Automated Systems

Information of arrivals and departures are fed into a central server that maintains room and guest lists just as they are done in racks. To get the latest position of room status, the operator has to simply call up the list on her computer screen. This also eliminates the need to tally the list in every shift as was done in the manual system. Should there be a doubt in the list the operator can call up the guest arrival registration card by typing the guest's name into the computer.

Wake-up Calls

Wake-up calls are alarm calls to guests upon request. These requests are recorded on a Guest Wake-up Call Sheet (Fig. 21.5) in a manual system. Wake-up calls can be extremely critical to guests who have to catch early morning flights. Some guests are sound sleepers and can even sleep through a wake-up call. Some guests take sleeping pills or are intoxicated after a late night celebration. They may have to be physically

awoken by breaking into their rooms if need be. Wake-up calls are absolutely critical to airline crews who have to be woken at odd hours to operate their flights. The same goes for groups who have to catch the same flight and will need adequate notice to get ready to assemble in the lobby.

Date: Commencing: 12 Midnight/12 Noon Shift: From To.....

Guest Name	Room No.	1200	1215	1230	1245	1300	1315	1330	1345	1400	1415	1430	1445	1500	1515	1530	1545
Guest Name	Room No.	1600	1615	1630	1645	1700	1715	1730	1745	1800	1815	1830	1845	1900	1915	1930	1945

Fig. 21.5

Wake-up Call Sheet

Procedure for Wake-up Calls

The procedure for wake-up calls is as follows:

Step 1: When the guest calls for the wake-up call allow him/her to give the details.

Step 2: Fill the Wake-up Call Sheet column by column and repeating the instruction. The main information would be:

- The guest name,
- The room number,
- The date and time of the wake-up call.

The wake-up call sheet has time zones to control calls within those zones. Remember that the actual wake-up call may be done by another operator. So the information must be precise and clear.

Step 3: Repeat the entire information back to the guest once again to be sure.

Step 4: At the allotted time zone, call the guest by saying, “Good morning Mr./ Ms..... this is your six o’clock wake-up call”. There could be a few different responses:

1. The guest may not pick up the phone
2. The guest will pick but will not answer
3. The guest will pick and give a sleepy grunt
4. The guest will thank the operator for the call
5. The guest will ask to be given a wake-up call at another time

Each has a different follow-up.

- Step 5:** Always call guests after five minutes saying, “Mr/Ms This is your second wake-up call. Have a nice day”.
- Step 6:** For the guest who does not respond to the wake-up call, contact the Lobby Manager immediately who will either instruct a bell boy or go himself to wake-up the guest by entering the room with the master key. A guest not responding to a wake-up call could also be in a medical emergency and therefore, a non-response is serious.
- Step 7:** For a guest asking for another time from the one he/she gave in the first instance, repeat the new time and enter the information in the appropriate time zone of the Wake-up Call Sheet. Cross out the old time on the sheet.
- Step 8:** An operator has the discretion of calling the guest a third time if the guest picks the phone and gives no answer or a sleepy grunt. The operator would like to get a verbal response from the guest.
- Step 9:** After giving the second wake-up call, strike the guest off the list on the Wake-up Call Sheet to confirm that the procedure has been followed.

This is a representative wake-up call sheet and actually completes a full 12-hour cycle starting either at midnight or noon. For convenience, the time zones are shaded to assist the operator, however this is optional.

Automated Systems

Modern hotels have sophisticated software which automatically does the wake-up call function. The operator keys in the guest's name, room number and the time of the wake-up call requested into a computer. The software will automatically call the room extension at the given hour and a recorded voice will inform the guest of the wake-up call. The software calls after five minutes to make the second call with the appropriate message. Though impersonal this device is very effective.

Alternatively, guests now do not have to go through the operator at all. They can key in their wake calls directly into the software through their telephone instruments, using the appropriate codes. This is convenient for guests who like to control their stay as far as possible.

Fire Emergencies

The telephone operator plays a very important role in the case of a fire emergency. Fire alarms and detecting systems from all over the hotel culminate at the telephone department. The virtue of this is that the telephone department is manned all twenty-four hours a day. Better hotels will have display panels which will identify the origin of the fire. The operator immediately notifies the following personnel:

- The Chief Security Officer—he is also the Chief Fire Officer of the hotel. He organises the evacuation of the hotel guests and employees.
- Chief Engineer—he activates all the fire hydrants and fire extinguishing systems. Most important is that he must ensure that there is water in the fire tank.
- The City Fire Brigade—to send fire engines for bigger fires.
- The General Manager—who gives the necessary decisions required by the fire crew.
- The Lobby Manager—to start evacuation procedures if necessary.
- Guests in their rooms—to warn them of a fire in the vicinity so that they may use the fire escape. Also to reassure them that help is on their way.

The telephone operator has to be stationed at her post and is perhaps the last person to evacuate the building as she is the centre of all communication during a fire. Her calm yet courageous composure is required as it is these qualities that can save human lives and valuable property.

As an after procedure she fills a Fire Log Book (Fig. 21.6) which gives the details of the fire for future precautions.

Date of Fire	Time of Fire	Location of Fire	Cause of Fire	Time taken to Sort	Problems Faced	Signature

Fig. 21.6

Automated Systems

Integrated technologies have brought fire display panels into the telephone department location by location, with fire exit routing and fire doors that can cordon off sections of the hotel. In the event of a fire, the panel will give the exact location of the fire

by strategically-located fire detectors. The fire alarm automatically sounds with flashing lights at the source of the fire. The operator is able to give the fire officer the exact directions of the fire, so that appropriate action can be taken immediately. She also has the opportunity to close fire doors automatically when the fire officer informs that the evacuation of guest and hotel guests has taken place. Rooms have public address systems to announce a fire that saves time to call rooms individually.

Telephone Communications

The primary responsibility of the telephone operator is to facilitate communication. The diagram below (Fig. 21.7) shows the communication flow from an operator:

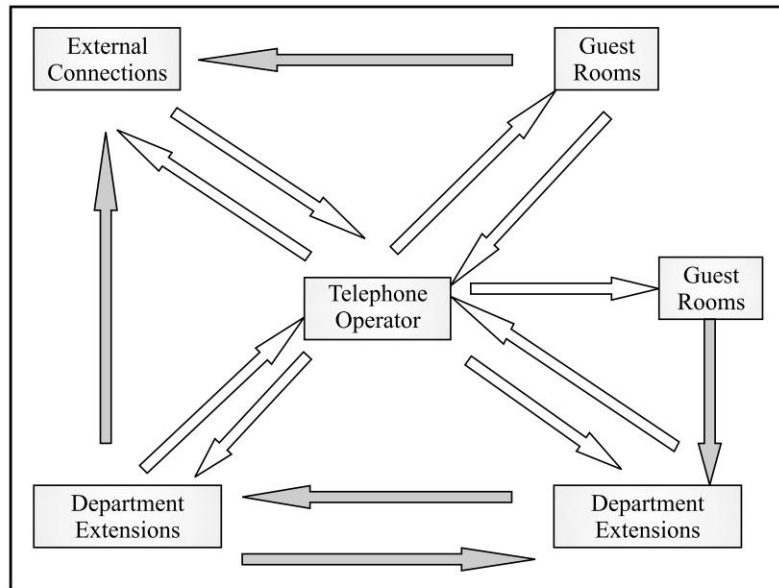


Fig. 21.7

Communications Flow from an Operator

One will observe in the diagram that the telephone operator connects with three principle sources:

1. Guest Rooms
2. Department Extensions
3. External Connections

It will be noticed that communications between guest rooms is not permissible. This is to maintain the privacy of guests. This means that all connections to a guest room from another is routed through the telephone operator irrespective of the type of exchange employed by the hotel. Guests may, however, call directly to department extensions or

external numbers in the EPABX system denoted by shaded arrows. Similarly, in this system departments may communicate with each other thereby relieving the operator from a lot of connection duties. In the outdated PBX system, all connections were made by the telephone operator.

Receiving calls from external numbers must be answered, *“Good Morning (or the appropriate time of the day), Hotel XYZ, how may I help you?”*

Calls from internal extensions are answered, *“Good morning (or the appropriate time of the day), how may I help you?”*

When taking instructions for connections the telephone operator has to be very clear and succinct in communication. She will repeat most communication to confirm the message. Misunderstandings can arise with numbers and alphabets, especially when repeating room numbers and guest names. The following practice is employed by operators worldwide for clarity:

Numbers:

- 0 to be pronounced as OH with a long O
- 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 a 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

Alphabets

- A—Alpha
- B—Bravo
- C—Charlie
- D—Delta
- E—England
- F—France
- G—George

While this terminology is universally understood, each property may adopt their codes based on what is appropriately understood locally, for local communication, e.g., C for China for the Chinese, C for Calcutta for the Indians and C for Camel in the middle-east people.

H—Harry
I—India
J—Jack
K—King
L—London
M—Mother
N—Nellie
O—Orange
P—Peter
Q—Queen
R—Roger
S—Sugar
T—Tommy
U—Uncle
V—Victor
W—William
X—X' Mas
Y—Yellow
Z—Zebra

Typical Telephone Requests by Guests

- The telephone operator will soon realise that guest requests are typical. An operator can memorise such responses to give good service. Such requests and responses are:

Connection to an internal extension.

Response: “One moment please, I am connecting you”.



Connection to an external telephone number.

Response: “May I have the telephone number please?” Repeat the number and say “Would you like to stay on the line as I connect or shall I call you back?”



Enquiry of hotel facilities and timings.

Response: Give accurate information and say, “The information may be found in the house directory in the drawer of your telephone console”.



Enquiry of city facilities and highlights.

Response: “One moment Sir/Ms, I shall connect you to the concierge/information desk who will give you the required information”.



Complaint of faulty equipment in the room.

Response: Listen to the complaint carefully and say, “May I have your room number Sir/Ms? I shall report this to the housekeeping desk who will attend to your problem at the earliest”.



“I would like to place a wake-up call”.

Response: “Certainly Sir/Ms. May I have your name, room number and time of the wake-up call?” Repeat the message to confirm.



“Can I have the correct time, please?”

Response: “Certainly Sir, the time is” The telephone department is expected to have the correct local time and maintain a clock by which the entire hotel adjusts their clocks. It is the supervisor’s duty to ensure that the clock is accurate by referring to the broadcasting station.



“Please forward my calls to the restaurant as I am expecting an important call”.

Response: “Please inform the captain of the restaurant that you are expecting important call Sir/Ms.”



While these are typical questions asked, the telephone operator must be alert to unusual calls some of which are given below:

- “There is a stalker outside my door”.
- “I am locked inside my bathroom”.
- “My bed has caught fire!”
- “There is a mouse in my room”.
- “The guests in the next room are making too much noise and therefore, I’m unable to sleep”.
- “The television in the room next door is too loud, I cannot sleep!”
- “My passport is stolen from the room.”
- “I am terribly sick!”

In all these situations, the housekeeping staff on the floor is the closest help that can visually take stock of the situation and call for additional help from the security, engineering or other appropriate departments. The best response is to tell the guest to keep calm and that help is on the way. The operator must call the housekeeping desk immediately and if need be, follow up with the guest whether help has arrived. Such incidents must be recorded in the log book in case follow-up is required by operators of the next shift.

Whether it is making line connections or responding to guest queries, it is important to show courtesy at all times. Addressing the guest as Sir or Ms is basic courtesy. Some courtesy words that should be used in conversation are:

- “May I help you?”
- “Thank you”
- “Have a nice day”
- Wishing the time of the day. ‘Good morning’ is said between midnight and noon. The term ‘Good afternoon’ is used between noon and four p.m. The term ‘Good evening’ is used between four p.m. and midnight. The term ‘Good night’ must be used only when the guest is retiring to bed. The operator will otherwise use ‘Good evening’ or ‘Good morning’ on the either side of midnight.



- “One moment please”
- “The line is busy, would you like to hold the line or should I call you back?”
- Female guests will be addressed as ‘Ms’ unless it is known that the guest is Mrs. Male guests will always be addressed as ‘Sir.’
- “Sorry for the inconvenience,” is used when there are delays.

HANDLING TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT

Telecommunication equipment is expensive and constitutes a major part of the hotel investment. As technology progresses, telecommunication equipment also becomes very sensitive to climatic changes, mishandling or poor connections. Telephone companies that install their equipment are responsible for installing, conducting and connecting the cables and equipment properly. Almost always, a hotel enters into a contract with the telephone company for maintenance of the equipment especially since it is very expensive and sensitive too. The telephone company also trains the operators and other hotel staff in the use of the equipment to ensure the long life of the equipment. Some tips for the safety of equipment are given below:

1. *Cleanliness*: Clean the equipment and disinfect it with special disinfectants for the safety of the equipment and hygiene of the operators.
2. *Water*: Do not spill water on the equipment as it can cause short circuits and permanent damage to equipment. Do not drink water or coffee while at their work stations.
3. *Headsets*: Mount and remove headsets with care and store them at designated places. The headsets are the main conduits of communication.
4. *Keys and Jacks*: Handle keys softly. Hold jacks used in the older PBX and PABX systems with the thumb and forefinger to slip them easily into sockets without jerks. Withdraw jacks by the fingers and do not yank by the fist. Make contacts with extensions with one second bursts. EPABX systems have automatic ringing tones.
5. Untangle cords of older systems before use for easy connections.
6. Instruments with dials must be rotated by fingers and pencils and other sharp tools. Dials are allowed to return to their original spot by themselves and not navigated by force.
7. Faults must be attended to immediately by a qualified technician. This becomes especially critical with modern electronic equipment that has mother boards only understood by someone qualified.

INFORMATION BOARD

The information board in a telephone exchange is a vital communication source for all operators to refer to. The information kept is:

- Room numbers and names of VIPs in the house.
- Room numbers of groups in the house. The room numbers would be clubbed under the name of the group with the exception of the group leader with whom all communication of the group takes place.
- Room numbers of crew of a particular airline are clubbed under its name to facilitate fast and clear identification. The airline captain's room number is highlighted as communications from the local airline office takes place with him or her.
- Functions in the house including their locations in the hotel.
- Food festivals being held with crucial details.
- *Emergency telephone numbers:* Fire Brigade, Police, Hospital, House doctor, Hotel Chief Fire Officer's residential number, General Manager's residential number, Telephone Maintenance Contractors, etc.



Key Terms

Automated System	An electronic telecommunications system
Competencies	Desired attitudes and behaviours
EPABX	Electronic Private Automatic Branch Exchange
Global Roaming System	A facility on cell phones that allows calls to be made and received from anywhere in the world
Guest Rack	The Whitney system that lists guests by name
Log Book	A register that facilitates communication between shifts
PABX	Private Automatic Branch Exchange
Pager	A device that alerts a receiver by sound
Pay Phone	A public phone that is activated by inserting coins
PBX	Private Branch Exchange
Telephone Exchange	Facility from where all telecommunications are controlled
Wake-up Call	An alarm system that awakens guests
Walkie-Talkie	A hand held two-way communication system



Review Quiz

Fill in the Blanks

1. Wake-up calls are recorded in the _____.
2. Telephone operations must cover _____ shifts.
3. Coordination between shifts are done through a _____.
4. In case of a fire emergency, the operator calls the _____ first.
5. We find telephone meters in the _____ exchange.
6. Between 12 noon and 4 p.m. we wish guests _____.
7. We can find conference call facilities in a _____ exchange.
8. The telephone supervisor analyses complaints recorded in a _____.
9. The telephone technician reports to the _____.
10. Security personnel use _____ to communicate with each other.

True or False

1. The telephone department is the central coordinator in case of a fire emergency.
2. A PABX exchange has a call waiting facility.
3. A telephone operator wishes a guest 'Good night' at late evening hours.
4. The General Manager is also the Chief Fire Officer of the hotel.
5. The Guest Rack is updated at every shift.
6. One of the competencies of a telephone operator is to maintain confidentiality.
7. A telephone operator may listen into a conversation if s/he wishes to.
8. Wake-up calls are maintained within timezones.
9. Grooming is not critical for a telephone operator.
10. The telephone department maintains all hotel mobile phones.



Training Methodology

This lesson should be delivered by using lecture method to ensure knowledge input. The lecture should be supported by training aids such as flip charts or PowerPoint presentations.

Learners must know the key terms and should be quizzed on them.

The lecture can be supported by copies of forms and formats. The trainer should take learners through each of them ensuring their purpose and use in the procedures.

Take learners through each procedural step which may be adapted to house policies and procedures.

Distribute copies of the job descriptions and take learners through each. Ensure learning by quizzing them.

The best way to confirm learning is to put learners on-the-job to practice the procedures under supervision.

Quiz learners thoroughly before putting them on the job.



APPENDICES

1 Answers to Review Quizzes

Part 1 “Historical Evolution of Travel”		
Lesson 1 “History of Travel & Tourism”	Lesson 2 “History of Lodging”	Lesson 3 “History of International Chain Associations”
<p>Fill in the blanks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10,000 B.C. harnesses military Mesopotamia Egyptians stagecoach travel emigration steam engine 1919 A.D. steamboat <p>True or False</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> False (Middle East) True True False (5000 B.C.) True True True True False (1825) False (Phoenicians) 	<p>Fill in the blanks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3000 B.C. inns church Samuel Cole City Hotel Tremont House Statler Hotel chalets steamships Conrad Hilton Tourist cabins 1900 Motor and Hotel Holiday Inn Cecil B. Day <p>True or False</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> True True True True False (USA) False (Statler Hotels) False True False (Palace Hotel, California) False (Statler Hotel) 	<p>True or False</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> True False False True True True True True False True <p>Fill in the blanks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Howard Johnson budget hotel partnerships straight lease agreement franchise franchise agreement dormant owner owner General Manager

Part 2 "Aspects of Tourism"				
Lesson 4 "Purpose of Travel"	Lesson 5 "Scope of Tourism"	Lesson 6 "Role of Tour Operators and Travel Agents"	Lesson 7 "Role of Airlines"	Lesson 8 "Multicultural Awareness"
True or False	True or False	True or False	True or False	True or False
1. True 2. True 3. True 4. True 5. True 6. True 7. True 8. True 9. False 10. False 11. True 12. True	1. True 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. True 6. False 7. False 8. True 9. True 10. False	1. False 2. False 3. True 4. True 5. True 6. True 7. True 8. True 9. True 10. True	1. True 2. True 3. True 4. True 5. True 6. True 7. False 8. True 9. True 10. True	1. True 2. False 3. True 4. True 5. True 6. False 7. False 8. True 9. True 10. True
	Fill in the Blanks	Fill in the Blanks	Fill in the Blanks	Fill in the blanks:
	1. Cable cars 2. Tour Operator 3. Public 4. Commissions 5. Motels 6. Lodges 7. Man-made 8. Trekkers 9. Furnished Apartments 10. Homes on Wheels	1. 20% 2. Discounted rates 3. Free Sale 4. Commissions 5. Art Centres	1. Domestic airlines 2. Feeder services 3. Referrals 4. Brand name charters 5. First Class 6. Excursion Fares 7. IATA 8. Ad hoc 9. Time Charters 10. Package	1. Global citizens 2. Wa 3. Gifts 4. Six 5. Self-reliance 6. Formal 7. Stylish 8. Bon Appétit 9. Planning 10. Herr

<p style="text-align: center;">Part 3 “Understanding a Hotel”</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Lesson 9 “Hotels and their Classification”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lesson 10 “Hotel Organisation”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lesson 11 “Differentiation of Guests”</p>
<p>Multiple Choices</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. b 2. a 3. c 4. c 5. b 6. a 7. c 8. b 9. d 10. c <p>Fill in the Blanks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business 2. Residential Hotel 3. Condominium 4. Sports Hostels 5. Palace Hotels 6. Conference Hotels 7. Furnished 8. Apartments 9. Segmentation 10. Camp 11. Airport 	<p>Fill in the blanks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Executive Chef 2. Financial Controller 3. Food and Beverage Manager 4. Front Office Manager 5. Dining Room Supervisor 6. Accommodations 7. Linen Room Supervisor 8. Room Service 9. Sales Coordinator 10. Garde Manger <p>Multiple Choices</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. c 2. a 3. c 4. c 5. c 6. a 7. c 8. d 9. b 10. c 	<p>True or False</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. True 2. True 3. True 4. True 5. True 6. True 7. True 8. True 9. False 10. True

Part 4 “The Front-Office”		
Lesson 12 “Organisation of a Front Office”	Lesson 13 “Reservations”	Lesson 14 “Reception”
<p>True or False</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. True 2. True 3. True 4. True 5. True 6. False 7. True 8. False 9. True 10. False <p>Match the Following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. i 2. h 3. a 4. k 5. b 6. e 7. f 8. g 9. d 10. c 	<p>Fill in the Blanks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. twin 2. Registration Card 3. Free Individual Traveller 4. a la carte 5. cabana 6. referrals 7. Reservation Form 8. Diplomatic Rate 9. Walk-in 10. fifteen <p>Match the Following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. b 2. d 3. e 4. a 5. c 	<p>Fill in the Blanks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. position 2. Property Management System 3. over-stay 4. Position 5. No. of Foreign Guests 6. Promotion Voucher 7. Log Book 8. Rooming List 9. Hotel Mail 10. VIP Amenities Voucher

Contd.

Part 4 “The Front-Office”		
Lesson 15 “Uniformed Services”	Lesson 16 “Front-Office Cashier”	Lesson 17 “The Night Auditor”
<p>Multiple Choice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. c 2. a 3. a 4. c 5. c 6. c 7. b 8. c 9. a 10. c <p>True or False</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. True 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. True 6. True 7. True 8. False 9. False 10. True 	<p>Fill in the blanks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cash bank 2. Foreign Exchange Encashment Certificate 3. The Central Bank 4. Allowance Voucher 5. Paid-out voucher 6. Safety Locker 7. Guest Folio 8. Miscellaneous Charges 9. Departure Errand Card 10. Travel Agency Vouchers <p>True or False</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. True 2. False 3. False 4. True 5. True 6. True 7. False 8. True 9. False 10. True 	<p>Fill in the Blanks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Transcript 2. A Check 3. Income Accountant 4. Complete all outstanding postings 5. Estate Manager 6. Sales Summary Sheet 7. Void checks 8. Record of Foreign Currency Transactions 9. Statement of Bills Exceeding Limits 10. Outlet Manager

Part 5 “Guest Services”			
Lesson 18 “Understanding Guest Services”	Lesson 19 “The Concierge”	Lesson 20 “Guest Relations Executive”	Lesson 21 “Telecommunications”
Fill in the Blanks Habit Auto-suggestion Self-esteem Status Self-actualization Wants Attitude Behaviour Belief Emotional	True or False 1. True 2. True 3. False 4. False 5. False 6. True 7. False 8. True 9. True 10. True	True or False 1. True 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. True 6. False 7. False 8. True 9. True 10. True	True or False 1. True 2. False 3. False 4. False 5. True 6. True 7. False 8. True 9. False 10. True Fill in the Blanks 1. Wake-call Sheet 2. Three 3. Log Book 4. Chief Security Officer 5. PABX 6. “Good Afternoon” 7. EPABX 8. Complaint Register 9. Telephone Supervisor 10. Two-way Walkie-Talkie



Glossary

Account Balance	Difference between charge and credits in an account
Account	Summary of all cash and credit transactions
Accountability	Ownership of a result
Accounts Receivable	Amounts due to the hotel
Adjacent Room	Two rooms beside each other across the corridor
Adjoining Room	Two rooms beside each other
Airline Contract Rate	A special negotiated rate for airline crews
Allowance	A benefit given to the guest in cash or credit
Allowances	Amounts for daily expenses paid by the front office cashier to airline crews and some groups
Amendments	Changes made of records
Amenities	Features and services
American Plan	Charges for room and all meals
Arrival	A guest who has just checked into the hotel
Attitude	The way one communicates mood to others
Baggage	Luggage
Bed and Breakfast	Charges for room and English breakfast
Behaviour	A repeated habit
Beliefs	Accepting a thought as true
Belonging need	Being part of a group
Billing	Account for a guest stay
Blocking	To reserve a room on the room rack for a guest expected to arrive

Briefing	A communication to plan future action
Budget	A planned expenditure for the future
Cabana	A room with a sofa-cum-bed ideally situated beside swimming pools or at beaches
Cancellation	A confirmed booking that has been withdrawn by the guest
Cash Bank	Cash amount provided by the hotel for daily transactions
Cash Voucher	Receipt of payment made by cash
Cash	Liquid money
Cashier Remittance of charge payments	An envelope in which all sales cash and documents are placed
Check	Bill of a revenue outlet
Check-in	A guest who has registered at the front-desk
Check-out	A guest who has completed his billing formalities and departed
City Ledger	Summary of all creditors
Competency	A set of behavioural traits and technical abilities that is suitable for a job
Complimentary Skills	Essential skills that other team members do not have, to supplement a performance
Complimentary	Free use of a room
Confirmation	A room reservation confirmed in writing by a guest
Connecting Room	Two rooms with an interconnecting door, ideal for a family
Continental Plan	Charges for room and a Continental Breakfast
Corporate Rate	A rate for business houses that guarantee a minimum number of room nights per year
Credit	Facility that enables a guest to use goods and services now but paid later
Crew	Airline flight and cabin crew
Crib Rate	A cradle or basinet provided in a room for infants
Currency Transactions	Exchange of foreign monies
Daily Sales Recapitulation	A transcript of all sales of the hotel

Day Rate	A rate for guests who are not staying overnight
Debit	Charge to an account
Departure	A guest checking-out of the hotel
Diplomatic Rate	A negotiated discounted rate to attract diplomatic business
Do-not-Disturb	A guest requesting not to be disturbed
Double Occupancy	Room occupied by two persons
Double Room	A room with one King-size double bed
Double Suite	Two rooms, one serving as a living cum dining area and the other with a double bed
Due Back	Cash amount owed to the cashier
Due Out	An occupied room expected to be vacated
Duplex Suite	Two suites on two floors with an interconnecting staircase
Employee Folio	Account that tracks payments made on behalf of an employee who is given a charge privilege
Encashment Certificate	Document confirming the exchange of foreign currency for local currency
European Plan	Charges for the room only
Executive Room	A room with additional features like internet connections, computer points, mini bars etc; specially designed for the business executive
Executive Suite	Suite specially fitted for business executives
Extra Bed	A wheeled foldable bed that is added to a room on the guest's request
Family Rate	A rate found in resorts for families on holiday
FIT	“Free Individual Traveller”, an independent guest, who does not use the services of middlemen for booking his or her room
Forecast	A studied anticipation of room business
Foreign Currency	Foreign monies
Free Sale	Room that is available for selling
Frequent Traveller Rate	A rate that gains discounts for frequent use of the property under a Frequent Traveller program
Funds Envelope	Of a revenue outlet are enclosed and deposited with the front office cashier

GIT	Group Inclusive Traveller
Government Rate	A negotiated discounted rate with government bodies for their travelling officials and foreign visitors
Group Rate	A discounted rate for groups in view of volume business.
Group	Any body of guests of 15 persons and above who travel together
Guaranteed Booking	A room booking that is confirmed in writing by a guest
Guest Folio	A master bill of a resident guest
Guest Ledger	Statement of accounts of guests/organisations who give advance deposits as also long staying guests
Guest Rack	The Whitney rack, at the information section of the reception, arranges guest names of hotel guests staying, in an alphabetical order.
Guest	A client of the hotel
Habit	A repeated action
Hotel Federation Rate	A courtesy rate to all members of the hotel federation.
House Count	The number of guests residing in the hotel
House Limit	Credit limit set by the management, which has to be cleared by the guest during his/her stay
House	Hotel
Interdependence	Depending on each other
Intrapreneurship	Internal entrepreneurship
Job Description	A formal document that stipulates the duties and responsibilities of a job holder
Junior Suite	A room with a seating parlour and a bed
Late Charge	Amount posted to a guest account after check-out
Late Check-out	A guest who has requested a departure beyond the official check-out time of the hotel
Lay-over	Airline passengers checked in by the airlines that are catching a connecting flight sometime later
Left Luggage	Guest baggage that is temporarily kept with the hotel, to be claimed later
Limits	Exceeding house credit limits
Line Functions	Those functions involved in direct guest service

Lock-out	A guest room sealed for entry because a guest has not settled his bill
Master Folio	Common statement of account for more than one guest
Maximum-Moderate-Minimum Rate	A price range to maximize revenue according to the circumstances
Miscellaneous Vouchers	Bills for minor services of the hotel
Modified American Plan	Charges for room plus breakfast and lunch or dinner
Needs	Those that are essential one's well being
No show	Guest with a reservation but does not arrive
Non-guest Account	Account of transactions of companies and non-resident individuals given this privilege
Not Cleared	Room that is being prepared by housekeeping for sale
Occupancy	The number of saleable rooms occupied by guests
Occupied	A room that is assigned to a guest
On-request	A status when guests are kept waiting for a room booking confirmation
Organisation Structures	A chart of reporting relationships
Out-of-Order	Code for a room under maintenance
Outstanding balance	Amount due from the guest
Outstanding Postings	Those charges and credits awaiting entry in the guest folio
Overage	When cash, cheques, negotiable instruments and paid-outs from the cash bank are greater than receipts into the cash bank
Overbooking	Booking rooms that are beyond the hotel room capacity
Package Rate	A rate quoted when there are events in the city and includes the price of access to the events
Paid-Out	Authorised cash payment made on behalf of the hotel or guest
Par	Cash balance is equal to the cash bank
Pax	Person
Petty Cash	Small amounts of authorized money issued to staff
Physiological Needs	Basic needs for survival
Position	Rooms available for sale at the beginning of a shift or day
Posting	Entry made in the guest folio

Quad	A room for four people fitted with twin beds and two roll- away beds
Queen	A room with a queen-sized bed for single or double occupancy
Rack Rate	The official rate of the hotel on a given day
Record of Foreign Registration Card	A Summary of Foreign Currency
Registration	The formal document that registers a guest into the hotel for stay
Registration	The act of registering into the hotel by completing the registration card
Reservation System	The procedure to reserve a room
Restaurant Check	Bill of a restaurant
Revision	Change in booking instructions
Room Allocation	Assigning a room to a guest after he has registered into the hotel
Room Availability	The room position when rooms are available for sale
Room Blocking	Blocking a room in the Reservation Chart
Room Key	The key of a given guest room
Room Night	A charge for a one night occupation, spanning two days from noon to noon
Room Rack	The Whitney rack arranged by room numbers
Room Revenue Day	12 noon to 12 noon of the next day
Room Tariff	Room rate
Sale	Lease of room for a period
Sales Summary Sheets	A record of all cash and credit sales made in a revenue outlet
Scanty Baggage	A guest with hand luggage only
Security Needs	Needs for physical and emotional safety
Self actualisation	A position of being in control of ones personal environment and the desire to contribute to it
Self-esteem Needs	Needs for self respect
Service Standard	A yardstick for service performance day prepared by the night auditor
Sheet	
Shift	A work period of eight hours

Shortage	When the amount paid out from the bank is less than receipts into the cash bank
Single Occupancy	One guest staying in a room
Single Room	A room with a single bed
Single Suite	Two rooms, one serving as a living cum dining area and another with a single bed
Skipper	A guest who has departed without settling his bill
Sleep-out	A registered guest who has not used the room
Sold Out	It is a status in which all the rooms in the hotel are sold
Staff functions	Those functions in a supportive role
Statement of Bills Exceeding	Document recording all guest master bills
Status Needs	Needs to satisfy the ego
Stay-over	Guests who extend their stay for a night
Studio	A room with a sofa-cum-bed
Team	A small interdependent group of people with complementary skills, who are committed to a common purpose
Tourist Huts	An independent suite detached from the main hotel. They will be found in resorts for greater privacy and exclusivity. Some suites have independent mini-kitchens
Trade Rate	A negotiated discounted rate with trade organisations that guarantee a minimum number of room nights
Transaction	Exchange of cash or credit for services purchased
Transfer Voucher	Document to record transfers from one account to another
Travel Agents Rate	A negotiated rate for volume business
Travel Writers	A discounted rate to encourage them to write about the hotel and facilities
Triplet	A double room with one extra rollaway cot
Twin Room	A room with two single beds
UN Rate	A negotiated rate for all local United Nations representatives for UN staff provided they guarantee a minimum number of room nights
Under-stay	A guest who has checked-out before his scheduled departure date
VIP	Very Important Person

Voucher	Document that records a purchase transaction with a cashier
Waitlist	A guest awaiting a confirmation of the room booking
Wake-up Call	A system to awaken guests at a time set by them
Walk-ins	Guests without prior reservation
Wants	Cultural interpretations of needs
Yield Management	A system of recovering maximum revenues from rooms during any given period

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