

IMPORTANCE OF FRONT OFFICE IN HOTEL INDUSTRY

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Annotation: The front office department in a hotel is a critical area where guests first encounter hotel staff. It manages key functions like reservations, guest services, and check-ins/check-outs. This department is essential for creating first impressions, ensuring guest satisfaction, and effectively managing room inventory and billing, making it vital for a hotel's operation and reputation.

Key words: tourism, tourism infrastructure, tourism transport, restaurants, hotels, tourists

A hotel is a facility with collective responsibilities and cooperation between all the departments to assure that the guest satisfaction is always attained. This inter departmental working relationship is crucial to the unit's success. The varied channels of communication have to work together to create a world class experience for a hotel guest. The managers in respective departments have the responsibility that this communication is constant, complete and quality oriented. The front desk plays a key role in ensuring that the guests' needs are addressed in time and have to coordinate with all the functional departments for smooth operations. The front office manager has an important role in developing cordial relations with other departments to collect and share vital information about the guests and functional activities.

The front office department plays a crucial role in the success of the business, as it is the first point of contact for your customers and the main point of contact while they stay with you. All your guests will interact with your front office department. They will book reservations through the front desk and then check in when they arrive. If they have problems or queries, the front office is the department that will deal with them. They will interact with the front office again when they check out and leave. The front office will also assign their rooms and keep the room status updated.

The front office department of the hotel has a special responsibility when it comes to creating the ideal guest experience. It is often seen as the hotel's face. Performing smooth check-ins, handling queries in a prompt and helpful manner, and responding speedily to resolve any problems will all go a long way to making a guest's experience more enjoyable and positive. As you can see, your front office department plays a key role in creating a good impression. Hotel trends might change, but a hotel's front office must always maintain smooth and friendly interactions with customers.

Arrival: This stage is when the front desk staff receives the guests in the hotel at the hotel reception. The bell boys get the baggage from the porch to the main lobby and the receptionist then checks whether the guest has a reservation or not. For guests with confirmed reservation the prefilled Guest Registration Card is presented to the guest for signatures and to fill any

information that was not previously shared. For a guest with no reservation i.e. a walk in guest the receptionist presents the tariff card and then explains the types and facilities available, on confirmation the registration formality commences. Once the registration is complete the guest is handed over the welcome kit and the room keys and the bell boy or the executive takes the guests to the allocated room. At the same time the guest record is created in the hotel systems known as the guest folio or guest account where all the charges and payments are posted in the next stages.

Occupancy: The posting of various charges for services used by the guest, payments made, room bill, etc. are updated in the hotel system from different outlets takes place in occupancy stage. Any mails and messages received for the guest when he/she is away or not in the room are processed and delivered with confidentiality. The staff also ensures that the room keys are assigned to the correct individual by asking for key card every time the need arises. The services like booking a taxi, booking travel tickets, booking tickets for special events, babysitting, local sightseeing, etc. on request of the guest are also provided.

Departure: As the name suggests the departure stage includes the preparation of final bills, presentation of bills, receipt of payments and procession of payments for settlement apart from creation of guest history records. The bills which are not settled in full are processed with necessary documents collected from the departing guest for transferring them to the accounts department for follow up. The guest record then gets changed to the non – guest record. The baggage is picked up and loaded into guest vehicle by the bell desk porters. And if any facility like a drop is needed to the airport of nearest transit point it is also provided.

Front of the House Operations

- Creation of guest database
- Harmonizing guest services
- Up-selling the services
- Preparation and management of guest accounts
- Ensuring guest satisfaction

Front Office Management

- Handling in-house communication through PBX, EPBX or EPABX.
- Interacting with the guests for room booking.
- Checking accommodation availability and assigning it to the guest.
- Assuring complete and correct information is collected during guest registration.
- Ordering welcome drinks, issuing room keys, handling mails and messages.
- Settling guest payment at the time of check-out.

Back of the House Operations

- Verifying the guest records to ascertain the type of guest (fresh/repeat) to ensure preferences are offered without being requested.
- Maintaining guest's account with the accounting system.
- Processing of the guest's bill after check out.
- Assisting in follow up and collecting the balance amount of guest bills by accounts department if any issue arises.
- Generating operational and financial reports.

Housekeeper's room report– the report prepared by the housekeeper that lists the guest room occupancy status as vacant, occupied, or out - of - order. This is prepared at the end of the day to iron out any discrepancies in room status as per the front office and housekeeping systems and manual reports. In case a guest is waiting for a room to be allocated despite having arrived as per the Check in time but room may not be available due to late check out by previous guest, the

coordination becomes direct between the departmental supervisors for speedy service. The front office shares daily arrival and a comprehensive weekly report that indicates the number of departures, arrivals, walk - ins, stay overs, and no - shows etc. This assists the housekeeper to allocate appropriate number of staff for the busy dates and shifts. The front office depends on housekeeping for security and safety needs of guests and hotel property as any suspicious information and movements are reported by housekeeping immediately as they are noticed. An open fire exit, unwarranted activities in guestroom, an unregistered guest movement in guest floor have to be reported ASAP. Guest requests for additional or special amenities and guest room supplies, request for extra blankets, towels, soap and shampoo, shaving kit, dental kit etc., may be communicated to the front desk and then from where it is forwarded to the control desk in housekeeping for prompt action.

The process of registration starts in the second phase of guest cycle in case of a guest with confirmed reservation. The process begins with the arrival of the guest at the front desk. In the present chapter we will study the activities that speed up the registration of the guest to avoid queuing at the front desk during the peak hours of guest arrivals. The activity that supports the speedy check-in of the guest is termed as Pre-registration activity. The registration of a guest at the front desk involves legal implications on the both hotel as well as the guest. This is a valid contract between guest and the hotel. A registration activity takes place at front desk. The check-in procedure of the guest varies with their status. In this chapter we will study the steps involved in check-in of the guest with confirmed reservation, walk-in, VIPs, Group, Crews and Scanty baggage guest in detail. Success or failure within the hospitality industry ultimately rests on the ability to sell. A roadside motel at an intersection of major highways or a popular restaurant with waiting lines is sometimes viewed as being above the need —to sell. No member of the hospitality industry can accept this as a long run view point. Discourteous front desk agents & cashiers who would impress Grumpy of the Seven Dwarfs are part of one's sales force.

These & all other who face the public can drive away or attract business. In the best cases, they can sell through suggestive selling, thus increasing the check size by effectively suggesting suit room (instead of simple single or double room) or higher margin suites can be sold instead of lower price room. The aim of the hotel business is to generate profit by providing services like accommodation, food and beverage, and use of facilities such as fitness center, sauna bath, Jacuzzi so on and so forth to the guest in return of money. The maintenance of financial transactions with the guest is utmost important. The hotel is responsible to maintain the guest account. The hotel should ensure that the guest account is maintained properly and accurately. The guest's duration of stay is generally very short in most of the cases and they may have a large number of transactions, only timely posting in the guest account will ensure the hotel to make an accurate bill and receive the payment from the guest. The present chapter is aimed to provide an overview of how hotel maintains the guest accounts and ensures the settlement of the same from the guest. The chapter begins with discussing the different type of account followed by detailed study of folios, vouchers, and ledgers. The process of creating and maintaining of guest account is discussed in the later part of the chapter. The present chapter also deals with credit monitoring and foreign exchange at the end. Accounting section of any business or organization monitors or tracks, records, and manages the financial transactions that takes place between the hotel and others i.e. resident guests, companies, agencies, non-resident guests etc.. All through the day the hotel undergoes many transactions with its resident guests. The transactions related to various services that the guest can avail, be it room service or laundry service. On most of the occasion the guest does not make any payments after availing the service at the hotel and the amount is posted on

his/her room so timely and accurate posting of a guest's transaction in his account is very important for successful running of the business, it help the hotel to make an accurate bill and receive payment from the guest besides that an efficient and error free billing also leads to higher guest satisfaction. So it is very important for hotels to maintain its guest account accurately properly and up to date. The accounting department handles the financial aspect and tracks the performance of hotel directly. It is helpful for the management to take appropriate decisions. When it comes to a hotel business, accounting is managing expenses and revenue. It provides clear information to the guests thereby avoiding any kind of confusion at the time of settlement of the guests.

Conclusion. The organization of a large hotel with a large number of employees, guests and rooms is very difficult task, it is very important to do a proper planning. Division of work is done on the basis of the size of the organization. Front Office manage to bell boys everyone should be aware of their jobs and their limitations. For the efficient and smooth functioning of the front office department it is important to list out the individual duties and responsibilities of the staff. Internal and external communication is very important for smooth hotel operations. The front office department is vital link in both external and internal communication in this unit we have understood how front office coordinates with other departments of the hotel say housekeeping, sales & marketing, security, maintenance, food & beverages, banquets, human resources and others. Coordination among the various departments of a hotel is very important to provide flawless services and facilities to the guest. Front office is the department is the most visible department to the guest so for any kind of requirement/problem the guest comes to the front office and it is front office that passes on the relative information to the relative department and solves the problem of the guest and makes the guest happy. Therefore, to make the guest happy the front office need to coordinate almost with every department of the hotel.

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