

Introduction to Hospitality Management (Class XII)

UNIT I

Introduction to Hospitality Industry

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Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the meaning, concept, origin and development of hospitality industry
- ✓ Know new trends and dimensions of hospitality industry.
- ✓ Customer and its importance in hospitality industry
- ✓ Famous hotel chain in India and world-wide
- ✓ Importance of hospitality industry in tourism

1. Introduction

Hospitality is the relationship between guest and host, or the act or practice of being hospitable. Hospitality is also known as the act of generously providing care and kindness to whoever is in need. According to Dictionary.com hospitality means 'the friendly reception and treatment of guests or strangers'. Specifically, this includes the welcome, reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers in a warm, friendly and generous way. The word hospitality is derived from the Latin word *hospes*, meaning "guest, visitor, or one who provides lodging for a guest or visitor." In India, hospitality is based on the principle *Atithi Devo Bhava*, meaning "the guest is God."

KEY TERM

Hospitality: kindness in welcoming guests or strangers

What is Hotel?

A 'hotel' or 'inn' is defined by the British law as 'the place where a bonafide traveller can receive food and shelter, provided he is in a position to pay for it and is in a fit condition to be received'. Hence a hotel must provide food and lodging to a traveller on payment and has, in turn, the right to refuse if the traveller is drunk, disorderly, unkempt or is not in a position to pay for the services.

2. Structure of the hospitality industry

The hospitality industry is a billion dollar industry and is a cluster of industries comprising of lodging, food services, recreation, entertainment, amusement and travel sectors. These organizations offer comfort, entertainment and guidance to strangers.

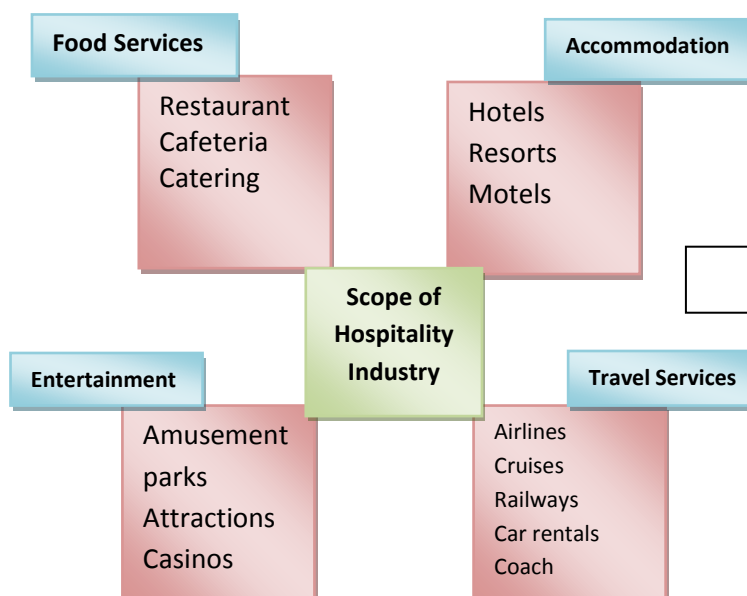


Fig. 1: Scope of Hospitality

The hospitality industry can also be divided in different ways:

Commercial or service sector: Most of the hospitality operations are being run as business to earn profits.

Profit making or working within a budget: Most hospitality operations need to make profit but some need to work on specific budget. For example school canteens.

Restricted customer or open to the general public: Most hospitality operations can sell to anyone but some are restricted to selling to a small part of the public. For examples customers on train, cruise.

Commercial	Service	Profit Making	Working to a budget	General public	Restricted customers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotels Hostels Contract caterers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourist attractions Hospitals Prisons Colleges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School/College canteen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train, cruise and ferry catering Casinos

3. Characteristics of the hospitality industry

Intangibility: The hospitality products cannot be seen, tasted, felt, heard or smelled before they are purchased. When the sales representative of a hotel goes to sell hotel room they do not take hotel room with them. In fact they do not sell a room. Instead, they sell the right to use a room for a specific period of time.

Inseparability: In most hospitality services, both the service provider and the customer must be present for the transaction to occur. The food in a restaurant may be outstanding, but if the service person has a poor attitude or provides inattentive service, customers will down-rate the overall restaurant experience.

Variability or heterogeneity: Services are highly variable because their quality depends on who provide them and when and where they are provided. In service delivery high level of human involvement is required. This makes it vary every time the consumer is availing the service. Hotel room will remain the same but the service and facilitation in the room will depend upon the housekeeping staff. The cleanliness of a hotel room may have different standards if the housekeeping supervisor or the room cleaner is changed.

Perishability: Services cannot be stored. Vacant rooms are perishable. The unsold room tonight can never be sold again. Like empty airline seats, Theatre seats or sport arena seats, hotel rooms cannot be stored, cannot be saved and cannot be used a new.

Fixed Supply: Supply of rooms in a hotel is fixed. Airlines adjust to demand by temporarily adding or removing flights. This is not so with hotels.

High Operating Cost: Unlike manufacturing industries, which offset labour with large capital investments, hotels are both capital and labour intensive. The result is high fixed costs, which continue whether or not the hotel has business. Thus a high percentage of occupancy is needed just to break even.

Seasonality: Seasonality means changes in business, employment or buying patterns which occurs predictably at given times of the years. On a business site, seasonality is defined as seasonal fluctuation in economic or business activity which occurs again and again regularly during a year as a result of changes in climate, holidays and vacations (Dictionary of Finance and Investment Terms 2011). Seasonality indicates the subject matter of fluctuations of demand or supply in the tourism industry which are effected due to weather conditions, public and school holidays. (Cooper, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill 2005, 279.). Seasonality in hotels involves fluctuations in number of guests, occupancy rates and bed nights. The Indian hotel industry

normally experiences high demand during October–April, followed which the monsoon months entail low demand.

4. History of Hospitality Industry

Early History

The concept of hospitality is extremely old; it is mentioned in writings dating back to ancient Greece, ancient Rome and Biblical Times. In ancient times people felt that hospitality to strangers was necessary to their religious well-being. Religion was the principal motivating force in the concept of hospitality. In ancient Greece missionaries, priests, and pilgrims formed a very large part of the travelling public. Often they were journeying to holy places, perhaps oracles or temples that had a dominant position in their religion. During the Roman era, travellers who were not on the road for religious reasons were usually on military, diplomatic or political missions. Many military travellers disdained using the accommodations that were available along the route. Inn in the cities was of bad reputation and detrimental to travelers; outside the cities, they neither existed nor were needed. The military travelers preferred, therefore, to sleep in the tents they carried with them. In ancient Persia, travelling was done in large caravans, which carried elaborate tents for use along the caravan routes. However, at certain points on these routes, accommodations known as Khans were constructed. These were simple structure consisting of four walls that provided protection not only against natural elements but also against enemies who attacked under cover of darkness.

Early history of accommodation for travellers can be traced back to the Greek word 'xenia' which not only meant hospitality, but also the protection given to a traveller from discomforts. The city was bound to traditions of hospitality. In Sparta city, despite rigorous customs restricting visitors, goddess Athena was considered a 'protector of strangers' and hence her name, Xenia Athena. In this period travellers were mainly diplomats, philosophers, intellectuals and researchers. Guests were invited to stay with the nobleman. In ancient Olympia, buildings constructed with the aim of accommodating strangers are still visible. They were called 'Leonardo' and were built in fourth century BC. The concept of hospitality can also be traced back to ancient times. Mention of it is found in Iliad and The Odyssey by Homer. Hotel keeping can also be traced back to many centuries and its evolution through the ages has been brought about by Britain's economical and industrial changes and developments. The next stage in the cycle of evolution of the hotel industry was the coming of the motor car. It enabled people to visit those parts of the country which could not be reached by railways. This gave birth to inland resorts and the hotel industry began to flourish. International air travel has helped create the modern stop-over hotel. With the increase in this form of travel, the number of hotels built close to airports has multiplied. Another trend in hotel keeping is the Motel, which is the twentieth century version of the old Coach Inn. People travelling the country by car, stopping overnight here and there; require not only refreshment for themselves, but also safe parking for their cars. Post houses, developed by the Trust houses Forte Group, are in fact the modern version of the old coaching inns. This is probably why Great Britain is considered as the 'motherland of hotel industry'.

In the later years of the Roman Empire, taverns and inns provided shelter for travelling merchants, actors, and scholars. Accommodations were still primitive. Sometimes there were rooms for the people but no stables for the horses; more often there were stables but no rooms.

The high spot of that era in terms of hospitality was the development by the Persians of post houses along the caravan routes. These developed later than the khans and provided accommodations and nourishment for both soldiers and couriers.

Marco Polo described the post houses known as yams as apartments suitable for a king. They were located 25 miles apart, perhaps equivalent of a day's ride, and supplied fresh horses for the couriers carrying messages throughout the land. By Marco Polo's estimate, there were 10,000 such post houses in existence at the time of his journey to the far-east.

Middle Ages

During the Middle Ages religion was the driving force for hospitality. It was considered as the duty of the Christians to offer hospitality to travellers and pilgrims. Monasteries functioned as inns, providing accommodations and food for the weary traveller. Some monasteries and churches, constructed a separate building to accommodate travellers. These building were known as **xenodocheions**, a Greek word meaning inns or resting places.

Charlemagne during his reign enacted laws setting out the duty of a Christian to provide a free resting place for a traveller. However, in consideration perhaps of the possibility that a traveller might overstay his welcome, and also the burden of providing free food for an indefinite period of time, the law limited the stay of any traveler in any place to three nights.

In 1282 in Florence Italy, the great innkeepers of the city incorporated an association for the purpose of turning hospitality into a business. Inns became licensed and were permitted to import and resell wine. The inns themselves belonged not to the innkeepers but to the city, and they were operated under three-year leases, which was sold by auction. In the year 1290, 86 inns in Florence were members of the guild. Shortly thereafter, the business of hospitality spread to Rome and other Italian cities. It is interesting to note that during that period many of the innkeepers were German rather than Italian- possibly because many of the merchants who were travelling themselves German and were eager to find accommodation where they would find their own language and food they were accustomed to.

The 16th to 19th Century

During this period, considerable improvement took place, particularly in England, in the quality of accommodations. The common mode of transportation used then was stagecoach. Stagecoaches were forced to make overnight stops on long journeys. These called for not only food and rest for the horses but also food and accommodations for the passengers. This resulted in the construction of inns or taverns at suitable locations along the stagecoach routes. Since the passengers were mainly wealthy people, accustomed to certain luxuries, the stagecoaches contributed not only to growth in the number of inns but also to improvements in their quality. The inns or taverns also became popular meeting places for local nobility, politicians, priests and other. License for the inns were issued by the local lord or knight whose territory the inn laid. The design of the inns was in the form of quadrangle, with stagecoaches and people entering through a vaulted gateway. The yard within the quadrangle was used for many purposes, such as weddings. The quadrangular form provided outside was easy to control and protect. The various buildings or sections within provided sleeping accommodations for the travellers. Food and drink was also served with additional shelter for both the drivers and the

horses. In the 18th century, coffeehouses became extremely popular in Europe and were incorporated into many of the inns.

Till the industrial revolution of the 1700s, no significant improvement was made in the inns and taverns, and they were not very suitable for aristocrats. To accommodate wealthy travellers, luxurious structures were constructed with private rooms, individual sanitation and the comforts of a European castle. These elegant new establishments adopted the French word for mansion - 'Hotel'. Not surprisingly, their rates, too, were beyond the reach of an ordinary person. In America early inns were modelled after European taverns, with sleeping quarters shared by two or more guests.

During industrial revolution 1750-1820 English inns were considered finest in the world . Hotel de Henry was one of the first European hotels built in 1788 with capacity of 60 rooms. Growth of hotel inns took place with concept of family hotels i.e run by the families were called **mom & pop** in England. Industrial Revolution in England brought ideas and progress in the business of inn keeping.

The lead in hotel keeping was taken by the emerging nations of Europe, especially Switzerland. It was in Europe that the birth of an organised hotel industry took place in the shape of small hotels which provided services to the aristocrats. The word “hotel” was used in England in about 1760.

The real growth of the modern hotel industry took place in the USA with the opening of City Hotel in New York in 1794. Termand house was first class hotel made in Boston 1829 which provided private guest room, door with lock, free soap bellboy service. It is called Adam and Eve of modern hotel industry. Mr. Ellsworth M Statler started new chain and made his first hotel “Buffalo Statler” on 18 Jan 1908. He gave a slogan" room and a bath for a dollar and a half".

5. Hospitality Industry in India

In India the concept of shelter for traveller came in the form of viharas, dharmshalas, sarais, musafir khanas etc. These accommodations provided a home to all pilgrims, scholars, adventurers and merchants. Along with industrial revolution and technological development, hospitality industry took a new shape and the purpose of these accommodations shifted from social to commercial benefits. Following table shows the number of hotels and number of rooms available in India:

Table 1: Number of Approved Hotels and Availability of Hotel Rooms

Category of Hotels	Number of Hotels	Number of Rooms
One Star	67	2537
Two Star	307	8446
Three Star	869	36585
Four Star	157	12059
Five Star	149	17144
Five Star Deluxe	153	34187
Apartment Hotels	8	756
Time Share Resorts	1	62
Heritage Hotels	146	3879
Silver Bed and Breakfast	469	1540
Guest House	1	40

Unclassified	156	580
Total	2483	117815

Source: India Tourism Statistics 2011, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India

Presently there are 1702 classified hotels with a capacity of 11,0958 rooms in the country. The hotels sector comprises various forms of accommodation, namely star category hotels, heritage category hotels, timeshare resorts, apartment hotels, guest houses, and bed and breakfast establishments. In India hotels are classified into six categories: Five star deluxe, Five star, Four star, Three star, Two star, One star. These are mainly situated in the business districts of metro cities and cater to business travellers and foreign tourists. These hotels provide standardized services and are considered to be expensive. These account for about 17.7% of the industry.

Star Category Hotels

Five Star Deluxe & Five Star hotels are restricted to the four metros and some major cities like Bangalore and Hyderabad. The customers of these hotels are mostly business and leisure travellers, senior business executives and top government officials.

Three Star & Four Star hotels are located in all major cities as well as tourist destinations. Their customer group ranges from middle level business executives to leisure travellers.

One Star & Two Star hotels are located in major cities as well as in small cities and other tourist destinations. Their customers include usually the domestic tourists.

Major players in this segment are Taj, WelcomeGroup, EIH and Oberoi. Apart from Indian players some of the international hotels also have their presence in this segment. Those include, Best Western, Choice hotels, Bass Hotels, Park Plaza and Carlson Hospitality.

Heritage hotels

These are running hotels in palaces, castles, forts, hunting lodges, etc. They are further classified as: Heritage classic (hotels built between 1920 and 1935), Heritage Grand (hotels built prior to 1920) and Heritage (hotels built between 1935 and 1950)

Budget hotels

Budget hotels cater mainly to domestic travellers who prefer reasonably priced accommodations with limited luxury. These are characterized by special seasonal offers and good services.

Unclassified hotels

These are low-priced hotels spread throughout the country. A low-pricing policy is their only selling point. This segment accounts for about 19% of the industry.

Resorts and Clubs

Located at the outskirts of city could be from premium to budget category.

Restaurant

These are food chains and outlets set up in the India. The international chains are like Dominos, Espresso, Pizza Hut and McDonalds. The domestic chains are like Sagar Ratna, Nirulas.

5.1 Emerging trends in hospitality industry

Hotels today are much more than just a place to sleep. Global business conditions, lifestyle changes and higher disposable incomes have resulted in shifting travel preferences. Travellers are looking for 'out-of-the-box' experiences. Travel service providers are offering niche, customized tourism products. This trend is equally visible in the hotel industry.

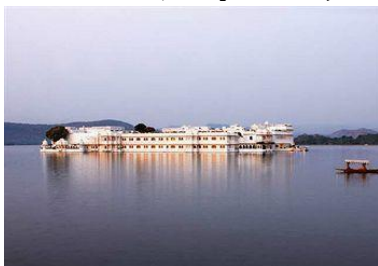
Box 1: Based on Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Association of India (FHRAI's) 2010 -11 survey, information on various aspects of hotel industry in India:

- Most of the rooms in all categories of hotels were air-conditioned.
- Average employee per room for all categories of hotels taken together was 1.6 Among the classified categories, variation was quite low 1.1 in 1-Star & 2-Star categories and 2.1 in 5-Star Deluxe category.
- 78.4% of the employees were trained highest being 87.7% under 4-Star category and lowest 73.6% under 2-Star category.
- Share of tourist is the highest from UK being 14.1%. USA and Other countries dominate the overall visitations with a share of 11.7% and 11.2% respectively.
- Share of tourists from UK and USA was the highest in the 2-Star and above category hotels.
- Share of tourists from UK & France was the highest in Heritage category hotels.
- Share of domestic guests was 74.0% for all the hotels taken together. However, share of foreign guests was higher in 5-Star Deluxe (52.9%) and Heritage (59.3%).
- Leisure tourists constituted about 40.0% of the total guests and the remaining 60.0% were business guests. Except the Heritage categories of hotels, share of business guests was higher in other categories.
- While the average stay of foreign guests was 3.4 days, it was 2.8 days for domestic guests.
- Average stay of business and leisure guests was 3.0 days and 2.3 days respectively.

Innovation: The hotels industry is developing on the lines of that innovation is key to survival. With growing demands of customers and to offer novel experience to the guests the hotels are offering unique accommodations. Homestays, heritage hotels, boutique hotels, houseboats, tree-houses, luxury trains are some of the good examples of unique products of hospitality.

Homestays give the tourist an opportunity to stay with the host family and learn about the place, culture, traditions and family. The visitors are engaged in activities like exploring a coffee plantation in Kerala, watching a polo match in Rajasthan, herding animals in remote northern India, village visits, picnics, and temple tours. The homestays are economical than hotels. Kerala, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh are offering quality homestays in India.

Heritage hotels are hotels in palaces/castles/forts/havelies/ hunting lodges/ residence built prior to 1950. Heritage hotels give royal treatment to their guests by offering royal menu; the interiors and the ambience of rooms give royal feeling. Above all the guests get a chance to stay in the actual palace where once kings had their home. Rambagh Palace in Jaipur, Umaid Bhawan Palace in Jodhpur, Taj Lake Palace in Udaipur are examples of heritage hotels.



Boutique hotels is a term popularized in North America to describe intimate, usually luxurious environments. Boutique hotels are generally small and associated with being design oriented. These hotels are furnished in a themed or stylish manner. Boutique hotels focus on their customers by offering services in a comfortable, intimate, and welcoming setting.

Houseboats are luxurious floating hotels. The houseboats offer comforts of a good hotel including furnished bedrooms, modern toilets, cozy living rooms, a kitchen and even a balcony for angling. In Kashmir they are known as *shikaras* and in Kerala they are known as *kettuvallams*.

Tree houses are unique accommodation on trees in natural environments and thus an absolute delight for nature lovers.

Luxury Trains are moving hotels. Like Palace-on wheels is a rotel. Palace-on-wheels has fourteen coaches named after former Rajput States. It has luxurious room decorated with Mughal and Rajasthani style of art. The train has two lavish restaurants "The Maharaja" and "The Maharani" serving Continental, Chinese, India and Rajasthani cuisines.

Investment in smaller cities: Hotels are predominantly found in metropolitan cities or tourist cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata. But now because of rise in business and leisure travel to smaller cities such as Udaipur, Thiruvananthapuram, Bhubaneswar, Pune, Kochi, Chandigarh etc have increased demand for quality hotel rooms in these cities. Hospitality chains are increasing their presence in smaller cities.

Diversification into new segments: Many hospitality chains that were earlier focused only on the luxury segment are now diversifying into new product segments, such as budget hotels and serviced apartments, in order to reduce risks. The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), a unit of Tata Group known mainly for its Taj luxury hotels has ventured into economy segment by opening Ginger Hotels. Accor has announced plans to introduce its budget hotel brand, Formule1, in the country.

5.2 Career Options in the Hospitality Industry

Quality manpower is the need of the hour in hospitality industry. It is also one of the major challenges confronting the hospitality industry in India. Given the boom in the sector, universities and institutes across the country are offering degree and diploma courses in hotel management. The range of career in hospitality industry includes:

Hotels: Hotels ranging from Indian chain of five star properties such as Taj, Oberoi and Welcome group, to an international chain like Hyatt, Sheraton in different department i.e. Front Office, House Keeping, Food and Beverage Service and Food Production.

Airline Industry: Air Hostess and Flight Stewards in national and international airline

Retail Sector: It includes PVR, Malls, Back Office jobs, joining as receptionist in corporate offices, Hospitals and BPO industry.

Teaching: Teaching Institutes and universities offering hotel management courses.

Entrepreneur: Opening own restaurants or working as consultants for building up hotels or restaurants.

Others: executive in tourism development corporations and resorts, catering officer or chef in cruise lines, hospital and institutional catering executives.

5.3 Eco friendly practices in hospitality

For construction of hotels trees are cut down, land digging, air conditioners are installed for comfort, autos, taxis and buses cater to transport needs. All this leads to destruction of ecosystem thus leading to loss of vegetation, polluting the air, water and also disturbing the animal life. Environment friendly practices are required to be adopted to save the environment, preserve energy and water; controlling water, noise and environment pollution by responsible waste management.

Some of the environment friendly practices adopted by hotels are:

- Use low energy lamps (compact fluorescent lamps) for all lighting.
- Hotels room lights and A/C are switched on only when the key is inserted.
- The interactive TV in the rooms can be used to send/receive messages and clear bills, thereby saving paper/ phone costs.
- Taps in the guest rooms, toilets, cafeteria and the kitchen contain special devices that increase force and decrease water outflow, saving nearly 50 per cent water.
- Recycled water is used for gardening and air-conditioning.
- Rain-harvesting wells are constructed which helps restore the water table.
- Bio-degradable kitchen, toilet and garden waste is decomposed in decompose pits and used as manure.
- Non-bio-degradable waste is segregated and sent to recycling centres.
- Laundry Paper bags instead of plastic.
- Recycled Garbage Bags bio-degradable.
- Water Glasses inverted and placed on a cork surface, thereby doing away with plastic covers
- Eco-friendly pens and pencils are made using recycled cardboard, reprocessed plastic and scrap wood. The eco pencils are not made of wood but of a non-toxic polymer with the use of natural fillers. Wood saver pencils are made using a shaft, which is made of biodegradable materials such as talc, gypsum and clay.
- Instead of cut flowers, potted flower bearing plants are used all over the hotel. All these plants will clean up a variety of pollutants in the atmosphere.
- Guests checking in and staying for a day could be encouraged to reuse linen thus saving water and energy. It also increases the life of linen.

Box 2: ECOTEL- It is the certification provided by environmental experts from Hospitality Valuation Services (HVS) International, a global ISO-certified body.

To get an ECOTEL certification, a hotel must adhere to at least two of the 'five globes' of energy efficiency, water conservation, employee education and community involvement, solid waste management and environmental commitment.

Hotels that do not adhere to the five globes lose their certification.

ECOTELS in India

- The Orchid, Mumbai
- Rodas, Mumbai
- The Uppal's Orchid, New Delhi
- Cabbana Orchid, Phagwara
- The fern, jaipur
- The Rain Tree
- Hotel Gautam, Mahabaleshwar
- Hotel Lagoon, Lonavala
- The Beach orchid, Kollam

6. Customer care in hospitality industry

Customer service is the backbone of any industry, especially the service industry. Customer service is the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase. Customer service is required for satisfying the customer. Customer satisfaction is important to a business because satisfied customers are likely to be loyal, make repeated orders and use a wide range of services offered by a business.

6.1 Who is a customer in hotel?

Hotel Guest-The person availing the services and facilities of hotel in return of payment. There are different types of guests and can be classified according to their:

Trip purpose – pleasure or business travellers

Numbers – independent or group travellers

Origin – local or overseas travellers

Pleasure travellers: They are individuals who travel to engage in leisure activities, outdoor recreation, relaxation, visiting friends and relatives or attending sports or cultural events.

Corporate business travellers: They are individuals whose frequent bookings are usually made by companies with reduced room rates.

Business travellers travel to conduct business, attend business meetings or workshops, and engage in selling or purchasing products.

Free independent travellers (FITs): They are sometimes referred to as "foreign independent travellers". FITs are international tourists who purchase their own accommodation and make their own travel arrangements.

Group inclusive tours (GITs): Tourists who travel together on package tours with accommodation and sometimes meals which are booked through travel agencies. Group tourists tend to spend less and budget their spending allowance.

Conference participants: Individuals who travel to attend conference and whose accommodation is usually reserved by himself/herself, his/her company or a conference organiser before their arrival.

Very important persons (VIPs): Very important persons may include celebrities, frequent-stay guests, guests in expensive rooms, guests with security risks and top executives from companies.

Incognito: They are guests who stay in a hotel with concealing identities so as to avoid notice and formal attention.

6.2 What are the needs of customers?

The physical product or service of quality

A welcoming environment

A clean environment

Efficiency and patience of the staff serving them

Honesty and fair treatment

Attention to individual needs

Courtesy and warmth

Feeling of importance

Reassurance and security

Being kept informed

Action-orientation

Speed in service

An invitation to come again

6.3 What are benefits of satisfied customer?

Returns back to the hotel in his next visit i.e. loyalty

Recommends hotel to his/her friends and relatives

Avails other services and facilities in hotels thus increasing revenue for hotel

Appreciates the hotel staff

6.4 What are the types of complaint by customers?

Staff was rude

The service promised was not delivered

Delay in delivering the service

6.5 What is the impact of complaint?

Losing the customer

Losing the opportunity to serve the customer

Bad name for organization

Negative publicity

6.6 How to handle complaint?

Provide customers with the opportunity to complaint

Give full attention to customer

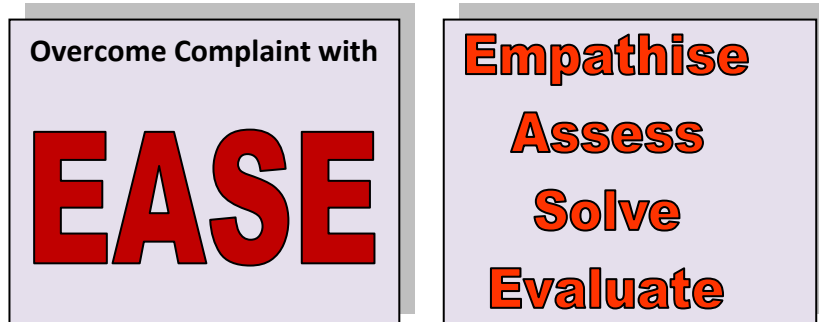
Listen carefully and completely

Agree that problem exists; never disagree or argue

Apologize

Resolve the complaint

Thank the customer for bringing complaint to your attention



7. Hotel chains in India

The major players in the Indian hotel industry comprise of Indian Hotels Company Limited (the Taj Group) and associate companies, EIH Limited (the Oberoi Group), ITC Hotels Limited (the ITC Welcome Group). Most of these chains have presence in one or more metro cities and other locations in India and outside India.

They are companies that have preferred to opt for operating/management arrangements with international players of repute. Some of the companies in this category are Hotel Leela Venture (with Kempinski), Asian Hotels (Hyatt International Corporation), Bharat Hotels (formerly with Holiday Inn and Hilton and now with Intercontinental). These are small chains and have fewer properties, compared with the big chains.

Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) and Hotel Corporation of India (HCI) are the Public Sector chains.

Company	Type of Property	Brand
Indian Hotels Company Limited	Luxury, mid-segment and budget	Taj Luxury/Taj, Taj Exotica, Taj Safari, The Gateway hotels, Vivanta by Taj Hotels & Resorts and Ginger
ITC Welcomgroup	Luxury, budget and heritage hotels	ITC Hotel—Luxury Collection, WelcomHotel—Sheraton, Fortune and WelcomHeritage
EIH	Business hotels, leisure hotels and cruises	Oberoi and Trident
The Leela		
Carlson	Luxury, business hotels, economy and cruises	Radisson Hotels and Resorts, Park Plaza, Country Inns & Suites, Park Inn

InterContinental	Luxury, mid-segment and business hotels	InterContinental, Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express Hotel
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Source: IBEF

7.1 Profile of some of the major players in the Hotel Industry



The Indian Hotels Company

The Indian Hotels Company and its subsidiaries are collectively known as Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces, recognised as one of Asia's largest and finest hotel company. Incorporated by the founder of the Tata Group, Jamsetji N Tata, the company opened its first property, The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, Bombay, in 1903. The Taj, a symbol of Indian hospitality, completed its centenary year in 2003. Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces comprises 93 hotels at 53 locations, including 25 Ginger hotels across India. There are additional 16 international hotels in the Maldives, Mauritius, Malaysia, United Kingdom, United States of America, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Africa, the Middle East and Australia.

IHCL operate in the luxury, premium, mid-market and value segments of the market through the following:

Taj Luxury/Taj- These are luxury full-service hotels, resorts and palaces.

Taj Exotica- is resort and spa located in most exotic and relaxing locales of the world. The properties are defined by the privacy and intimacy they provide.

Taj Safaris are wildlife lodges that allow travelers to experience the unparalleled beauty of the Indian jungle amidst luxurious surroundings.

Vivanta by Taj Hotels & Resorts - They are located in metropolitan cities, other commercially important centres as well as some of the best-loved vacation spots.

The Gateway Hotel – They are upscale/mid-market full service hotels and resorts. They are found across India and are meant for business and leisure travelers.

Ginger – They are economy hotels.



ITC/ Sheraton Corporation

ITC's Hotel division was launched on October 18, 1975, with the opening of its first hotel - Chola Sheraton in Chennai. ITC - Welcomgroup Hotels, Palaces and Resorts, is today one of India's finest hotel chains. Its logo is hands folded in the traditional Namaste which is recognized as the ultimate in Indian hospitality. The hotel chain pays architectural tribute to ancient dynasties, which ruled India from time to time. The design concept and themes of these dynasties play an important part in their respective style and decor. With more and more hotels being added at

strategic destinations, the group has joined hands with the Sheraton Corporation to strengthen its international marketing base.

ITC Hotels are classified under four distinct brands:

ITC Hotels - Luxury Collection – These are super deluxe and premium hotels located at strategic business and leisure locations.

WelcomHotel | Sheraton- Two hotels have been aligned under the renowned Sheraton brand, offering warm, comforting services to the global traveler. Three WelcomHotels are designed to cater to the discerning business and leisure traveler offering five-star hospitality.

Fortune Hotels- offer full service properties all over India, including smaller towns and cities, ideal for the budget traveller.

WelcomHeritage- brings together a chain of palaces, forts, havelis and resorts that offer a unique experience.



ITC Grand Chola, Chennai

The EIH Limited (The Oberoi Group)

EIH Limited, under the aegis of The Oberoi Group, operates hotels and cruisers in five countries under the luxury 'Oberoi' and five-star 'Trident' brands. The Oberoi Group operates primarily in India, but also in Australia, Egypt, Indonesia, Mauritius, and Saudi Arabia. Most of the company's luxury properties bear the Oberoi banner. The Oberoi Group also operates luxury cruises of the Nile River and India's Kerala region. The Group is also engaged in flight catering, airport restaurants, travel and tour services, car rentals, project management and corporate air charters. The company has following hotels:

The Oberoi Hotels and Resorts- These are luxury properties serving foreign and domestic business customers and high-end leisure travellers. They have been assigned five star deluxe ratings by the Ministry of Tourism.

The Trident Hotels- They target business and leisure travellers to metropolitan and tier two cities in India who seek high-quality boarding, lodging and business or recreational facilities at more affordable rates than the five star deluxe segment. Several of the Trident Hotels have been assigned five star ratings.



The Oberoi, Mumbai



The Leela Group

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts is owned and managed by Hotel Leelaventure Limited which was established in 1987 in Mumbai. The company is part of The Leela Group whose portfolio includes luxury hotel and resort properties, IT and business parks, as well as real estate development. The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts comprise a collection of luxury hotels and resorts in New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Gurgaon-Delhi N.C.R., Udaipur, Goa, and Kovalam (Kerala). The Group has marketing alliances with Germany based Kempinski (Hoteliers since 1897); US based Preferred Hotel Group and are members of Global Hotel Alliance based in Geneva, Switzerland. The Leela Kempinski, Mumbai and The Leela, Goa are two of the best hotels in India, and have also won considerable international acclaim.



The Leela, Mumbai



India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) / The Ashok Group

India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) was established in 1966 as an autonomous public sector corporation, entrusted with the task of helping develop tourism infrastructure and promoting India as a tourist destination. The ITDC Ashok Group of hotel chains manages some of the best five star and luxury tour hotels in the Indian hospitality industry. The hotels run by the ITDC Ashok Group of hotel chains may be divided into different categories, these are elite hotels, comfort hotels and classic hotels. The Ashok Group of hotel chains boasts of running some of the best hotels in the Indian hotel industry. The hotels that are a part of the elite and classic category of the ITDC Ashok Group are the Ashok Hotel in New Delhi, the Kovalam Ashok Beach Resort in Kovalam, Kerala, the Agra Ashok in Agra, Hotel Jaipur Ashok in New Delhi.

The Hotel Corporation of India (HCI)

The Hotel Corporation of India Limited (HCI) is a public limited company wholly owned by Air India Limited and was incorporated on July 8, 1971 under the Companies Act, 1956 when Air India decided to enter the Hotel Industry in keeping with the then prevalent trend among world airlines. The objective was to offer to the passengers a better product, both at the International Airports and at other places of tourist interest, thereby also increasing tourism of India.

The Centaur Hotel at Bombay Airport (CHBA) is the first hotel of the company. Some other properties of the company are the Centaur Hotel at Delhi Airport (CHDA), the Centaur Lake View Hotel at Srinagar (CLVH) and the Centaur Hotel at Juhu Beach, Mumbai.

7.2 International Hotel Chains

They are also looking at India as a major growth destination. These chains are establishing themselves in the Indian market by entering into joint ventures with Indian partners or by entering into management contracts or franchisee arrangements. Some of the players who have already entered or plan to enter the Indian market include Marriott, Starwood, Berggruen Hotels, Emaar MGF. Most of these chains have ambitious expansion plans especially with a strong focus on the budget segment and tier II cities.

There are many international players who are well established in India. These include Hilton, Shangri-La, Radisson, Marriott, Meridian, Sheraton, Hyatt, Holiday Inn, InterContinental and Crown Plaza. New brands such as Amanda, Satinwoods, Banana Tree, Hampton Inns, Scandium by Hilt and Mandarin Oriental are planning to enter the Indian hospitality industry in joint ventures with domestic hotel majors.

Company	Hotel Brands	Number of Existing Hotels
InterContinental Hotels Group	Holiday Inn Hotels & Resorts, Crowne Plaza, Intercontinental	12
Wyndham Hotels	Ramada, Days Inn, Dream	14
Marriott International	Courtyard, Renaissance, JW Marriott, Marriott, Marriott Hotels and Convention Centre, Marriott resort & Spa, Marriott executive apartments	18
Hilton Worldwide	Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Garden Inn, Double Tree by Hilton, Hampton by Hilton	8
Accor Group	Ibis, Mercure and Novotel	13
Starwood Hotels	ITC luxury Collections, Le Meridian, Westin, Four Points by Sheraton, Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, Aloft	33
Carlson group	Radisson Blu, Country Inn & Suites, Park Inn, Park Plaza	46
Hyatt Hotels Corporation	Hyatt Regency, Grand Hyatt, Park Hyatt	8

Source: Industry and ICRA Estimates

8. Role of hospitality industry in tourism

Tourism comprises activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and social, recreational, and knowledge seeking purposes. The tourism industry is primarily service and people oriented; it is made up of businesses and organizations belonging to various other industries and sectors. It is interplay among these businesses and organizations/persons which offer “travel experience” to tourists. The tourism industry comprises hospitality (related to accommodation and dining), travel (transportation services through different modes), and various other businesses which offer services and products to tourists. The components of the tourism industry are shown in Figure 2.

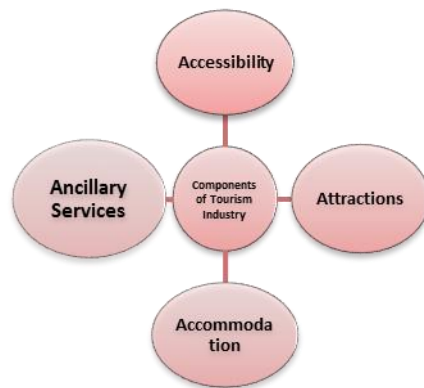


Fig. 2: Components of tourism industry

Accommodation: Comfortable hotels and accommodation facilities play a very important role in popularizing any tourist destination. If a person, who is quite far away from home, gets to enjoy the same facilities and comforts as he enjoys at his home, then he is bound to become attached to the place. On the other hand if the tourist ends up at a place where the hotels and accommodation facilities are not satisfactory, it is quite likely that he might never return to that place. This is the reason why hotels and accommodation facilities are being made available at different tourists spots. Comfortable accommodation is required to all types of tourists whether domestic or international belonging to budget or luxury segment.

UNIT II

Organizational Structure of Hotel

Structure

1. Introduction
2. Departments in hotel and their functions
3. Organizational charts in hotels
4. Facilities provided in hotels

Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Know the different departments in hotel
- ✓ Understand the function of different departments in hotel
- ✓ Importance and types of organizational structure
- ✓ Learn the various facilities in hotels

1. Introduction

Organizing is the process of structuring human and physical resources in order to accomplish organizational objectives. The organisational structure will help achieve objectives like:

1. To maximize revenue through efficient room occupancy
2. To maximize food and beverage revenue with excellent meals
3. To earn from minor departments
4. To give quality service to guests

An organisation structure is a framework which assigns responsibilities and establishes channels of communication to make decisions and set operational accountabilities. The structure helps in establishing relationship of people from various departments. It helps in better communication and coordination. It reflects the levels of authority in the organisation hierarchy. The organization structure is represented through organization chart. Organisation chart is a pictorial presentation of the organisation structure and the functional relationship of the personnel and the departments in the organisation. The organization structure of hotel is based on its size and range of services it offers.

2. Departments in hotel and their functions

The hotel is organized into different departments. Each department has specific function to perform. The departments in a hotel can be classified into revenue and non-revenue

departments. The major revenue producing departments are the major source of revenue for the hotel. The minor revenue producing are those that produce revenue mostly based on the products of other departments of the hotel. The non revenue producing department support the revenue department in their efforts. The following figure enlists the major revenue producing, minor revenue producing and non-revenue producing departments.



Fig 1: Major/Minor/Non-Revenue producing department

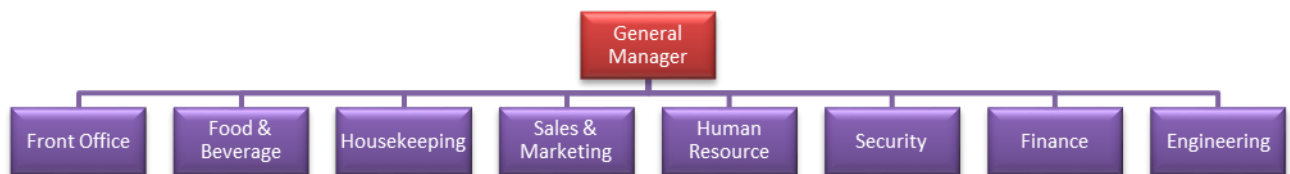


Fig 2: Hotel Organization Chart

1. **Front Office:**

- ❖ Sell guestrooms, reservation, register guests and assign guestrooms
- ❖ Coordinate guest services
- ❖ Provide in-house and external information to guests
- ❖ Maintain accurate room statistics and room key inventories
- ❖ Maintain accurate room status information
- ❖ Maintain guest accounts and settle their bills



To fulfill these basic responsibilities the front office is broken into different sections each with distinct roles. These sections are:

Front desk

Reception: this section receives and welcomes the guest. The reception registers guests and assigns room to them.

Information: this section is used for providing various information to in-house guest.

Cashier desk: this section is used for checkout process of the guest. The cashier maintains the guest's accounts during their stay.

Guest relation desk: this section is used for collecting guest feedback and maintenance of guest history. The guest relation executive ensures that all guests, especially the VIPs, are kept comfortable during their stay.

Bell desk: this section is used for assistance of guest during check-in and checkout process.

Travel desk: this section is used for assistance of guest for arranging vehicles for guest movements and for making train/ airplane reservation.

Lobby manager: The lobby manager coordinates all guest services. He is the representative of the General Manager at all times during the day and night. He /she oversee the bell desk, concierge, transportation and valet services.

Back office

Reservation desk: this section is used for taking booking for rooms.

Telephone operator: this section is used for attending all phone calls land up in the hotel or for providing trunk dial facility to guest.

Business center: this section is used for secretarial job of guest.

2. **Housekeeping:** This department is responsible for the cleanliness, maintenance and the aesthetic standard of the hotel.
 - ❖ Inspects rooms before they are available for sale
 - ❖ Cleans occupied and vacant rooms
 - ❖ Communicates the status of guestrooms to the Front Office Department
 - ❖ Cleans and presses the property's linens, towels, and guest clothing
 - ❖ Maintains recycled and non-recycled inventory items
3. **Uniformed Services:** is the collective term for lobby services. The porter service is the main service of uniformed services.
 - ❖ Bell Attendants: Ensure baggage service between the lobby area and guestrooms.
 - ❖ Door Attendants: Ensure baggage service and traffic control at hotel entrance(s).
 - ❖ Valet Parking Attendants: Ensure parking services for guest's automobiles. His challenge is to keep a track of the car keys and return them to the rightful owner.
 - ❖ Transportation Personnel: Ensure transportation services for guests from and to the hotel.

- ❖ Concierge: Provides personalised services and information like making restaurant reservations, arranging for transportation, and getting tickets for theatre, sporting, or any other special events and also offers mails and messaging services.

4. Telephone Department: ☎

- ❖ Answers and distributes calls to the appropriate extensions, whether guest, employee, or management extensions
- ❖ Places wake-up calls
- ❖ Monitors automated systems
- ❖ Coordinates emergency communications

5. Food & Beverage Department:

This department comprises of the Kitchen where the food production takes place and of various types of outlets where what is produced in the kitchen is served and sold to the guest. Food and Beverage outlets might have the following forms:

- ❖ Restaurant
- ❖ Quick Service
- ❖ Table Service
- ❖ Specialty Restaurants
- ❖ Coffee Shops
- ❖ Bars
- ❖ Lounges
- ❖ Clubs
- ❖ Banquets
- ❖ Catering Functions ⇒ Wedding, Birthdays...

6. Sales & Marketing Division:

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 .A typical Sales & Marketing Division is composed of four different sections:

- a) Sales
- b) Convention Services
- c) Advertising
- d) Public Relations

7. Finance & Accounts

The Accounting Division monitors the financial activities of the property. Some of the activities that are undertaken in the Accounting Division are listed below:

- a) Pays outstanding invoices
- b) Distributes unpaid statements
- c) Collects amounts owed
- d) Processes payroll
- e) Accumulates operating data
- f) Compiles financial reports
- g) Makes bank deposits
- h) Secures cash loans
- i) Performs other control and processing functions

8. Engineering and Maintenance:

This very department maintains the property's structure and grounds as well as electrical and mechanical equipment. Some hotels might have this very division under different names, such as maintenance division, property operation and maintenance department.

9. Security:

Security division personnel are usually screened from in-house personnel, security officers or retired police officers, across certain physical skills, and prior experience.

Some of the functions of the security division are listed below:

- a) Patrols the property
- b) Monitors supervision equipment
- c) Ensures safety and security of guests, visitors, and employees

10. Human Resources:

The department is responsible for the hiring, maintenance and exit of staff. Following are functions of human resource department:

Recruitment of qualified people.

Orientation programme- the department provides new entrants in the hotel to get well versed with the organisation work culture and people.

Training- The employees are trained with new developments in hotel operations.

Compensation and benefit- It is an important function to ensure that salary and wages are kept competitive. Good performers are rewarded through good performance appraisal policy.

Ensures employees' safety and working conditions

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

11. Other Divisions:

Some other divisions that might exist in a hotel:

- a) Retail Outlets (i.e.: Shops rented to outsiders or managed by the hotel)
- b) Recreation Facilities (ex: Fitness Centre, Tennis Courts, and Cinema Saloons...)
- c) Conference Centres
- d) Casinos

3. Organizational chart in hotels

Organizational structure of large hotel- Large hotel operations requires more people to operate it. People working in hotels are specialized in different area of operation like front office, food and beverage etc. There is elaborate organisation structure because of the specialization in large hotels. Following chart represents organisational structure of large hotel but it can be modified according to the policies of the hotel:

Figure 1 Organizational structure of large hotel (separate attachment)

Organizational structure of small hotel- In smaller hotels there are fewer people with multiple skills. Following chart represents organisational structure of small hotel but it can be modified according to the policies of the hotel:

Figure 2 Organizational structure of small hotel (separate attachment)

4. Facilities provided in hotels

A hotel is an establishment offering accommodations, meals, and other services for travelers and tourists on paid and short-term basis and also he/she is in fit state to be received. People who travel and stay away from home for more than a day need lodging for sleep, rest, safety, shelter from cold temperatures or rain, storage of luggage. Today hotels provide varied types of facilities for a comfortable stay and memorable experience. These additional facilities are not only available for the hotel guests but also for general public and hotels often generate

additional income from offering the use of other facilities. Following are some of the basic facilities available in hotel complex:

➤ Hotel Facilities

- Parking
- Valet services
- 24 hours reception
- Money changing facility
- Room service
- Left Luggage facility
- Mail service
- Travel Desk
- Shopping Arcade
- Multi cuisine restaurant
- Coffee Shop
- Bar
- Business Centre
- Laundry
- Library
- Swimming pool
- Fitness center
- Spa
- Childcare
- Conference facilities
- Left Luggage facility
- Money changing facility
- Souvenir/Utility shop
- Book shop

➤ Room Facilities

- Bathroom with hot and cold running water available 24 hours
- Drinking water with minimum one glass tumbler per guest
- Sufficient lighting, 1 per bed
- Shelves /drawer space
- Wardrobe with minimum
- 4 clothes hangers per bedding
- A mirror at least half length (3’)

- A wastepaper basket
- A bedside table and drawer
- Telephone
- Music
- Air conditioning
- Mini bar/refrigerator
- Hair dryer
- Safe keeping / in room safe
- Television with cable

UNIT III

Classification of hotels

Structure

1. Introduction
2. Types of rooms
3. Room Rates
4. Classification of hotels
5. Registration & Gradation of Hotels

Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Know the different types of hotels and types of rooms in hotels
- ✓ Understand the types of room rates and meal plans
- ✓ Know the importance and criteria of classification of hotels

1. Introduction

A hotel is an establishment offering accommodations, meals, and other services for travelers and tourists on paid and short-term basis and also he/she is in fit state to be received. People who travel and stay away from home for more than a day need lodging for sleep, rest, safety, shelter from cold temperatures or rain, storage of luggage. Today hotels provide varied types of facilities for a comfortable stay and memorable experience. Parking, 24 hours reception, travel desk, restaurant, business centre, laundry, conference facilities, swimming pool, spa etc. are some of the facilities available in hotels.

A *Guestroom* in a hotel is a space provided to the guest for resting and keeping the luggage.

Facilities inside the guestroom:

- Fully furnished clean rooms with bed and mattresses
- Air conditioning
- Wireless internet access
- TV with cable TV 24 hours
- Hair dryer
- In-house movies on demand
- In-room safe/ Lockers
- Kitchenette,
- Iron and ironing board

- Refrigerator
- Mini bar
- Tea and coffee making facilities
- Direct telephone
- Private bathroom with bathtub and shower
- Hot and cold water supply
- Bath robe
- Slippers

2. Types of Rooms

Single Room- Room for an individual with a single bed

Double Room- Room with double bed meant for double occupancy

Twin Room- A room having two beds separated from each other by a single piece of furniture or lamp

Cabana- A room adjacent to the pool area, with or without sleeping facilities

Lonai- This is a room with a balcony which generally overlooks a garden, waterfall or any other such element of scenic beauty.

Pent House- It is a luxurious furnished room situated exclusively on the top floor of the hotel. It might be accompanied by a swimming pool or tennis court etc.

Deluxe Rooms-It contains extra amenities such as refrigerator, mini bar. The room has a prominent location and provides highest comfort.

Suite- It is a set of two interconnected rooms out of which one is used as a bed room while the other is used as a living room. It may also contain a bar, more than one bathroom and a kitchen.

Duplex- These are rooms at different levels or floors and both being connected by stairs.

Parlour- A living or sitting room not used as the bedroom. It is also called saloon and is found in some parts of Europe.

Studio- It is a room with bed and sofa cum bed.

3. Room Rates

Accommodation is one of the largest sources of revenue for the operation of a hotel. It is the main product provided by a hotel.

A guest who books accommodation receives more than just a room with a bed. It includes the facilities and services provided by the hotel staff. Since guests in general cannot examine the hotel product before purchase, front office staff must have a clear understanding of the accommodation product and describe it accurately and clearly to the guest. Examples include:

- Room rates

- Size of beds
- Other services like spa, business centre etc

The price charged from the guest by a hotel for the right to occupy a room is known as room rate. The room rate also known as room tariff is printed on the Tariff Card of hotels. The printed rate on tariff card is known as rack rate. The discounts on rooms are available on rack rate. The rate of rooms is based on the following:

Hotel property- whether it is a one, two, three, four, five, five star deluxe, heritage hotel.

Room location- such as pool side, ocean view, beach front, market front, ground level and suitability to the handicap.

Size and type of room-single, double, twin, deluxe, suite

Meal Plan- European Plan, American Plan, Modified American Plan, Continental Plan

Taxes- Various states, countries or cities impose taxes on hotel rooms. Such taxes may be called room tax, hotel tax or bed lodging or value added tax, etc. Generally, the room rate excludes these type of taxes.

Seasonality - Peak or a lean season. Mostly in peak season the hotels charge a high rate whereas in a lean season low rate is charged.

The following room rates are mostly following in hotel industry:

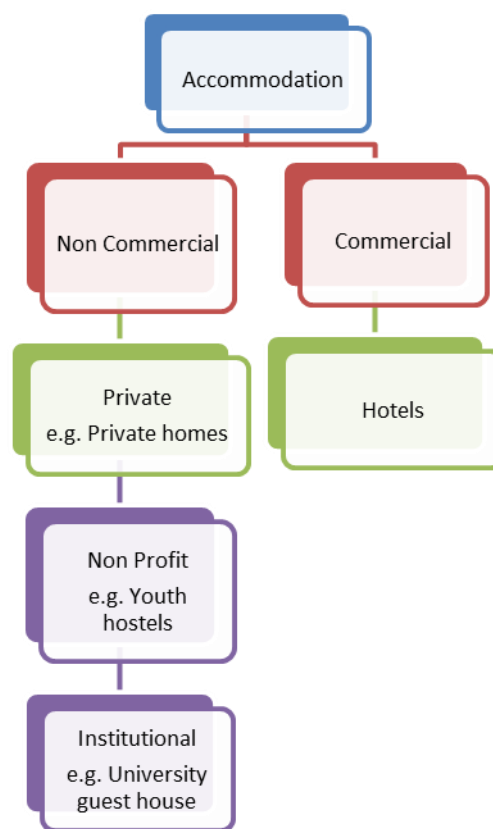
1. **Rack rate**—It is a standard rate charged by a hotel from the guests. These are the printed rates.
2. **Group rate**—It is a discounted rate based on the purpose of a pre-set quantity of rooms. For example when rooms required for the attendees of convention, conference or a meeting, the hotel charge a discounted rate because it increases the sale of rooms during that period or it provides a consistent cash flow.
3. **Package rate**—Many hotel chains offer a complete package of hotel products. It means hotels provide / offer accommodation and other components in a package such as a New Year 's Eve package or a tennis resorts that offers a package rate that includes tennis court fee as well as accommodation in a seasonal package.
4. **Wholesale rate**—It is also known a tour rate. It is given to wholesalers or tour operators who buy the rooms in bulk. In some hotel properties, it is a fixed rate, while in others it is negotiated by the tour operators. Usually the tour operators fix this rate for a specific period, say one night or peak or lean season, before the client itinerary is made.
5. **Special rate**—It is known as promotional rate and is offered to corporate clients, government employees, travel professionals, military personnel and repeat customers.
6. **Family rate**—Some hotels provide free accommodation to the children with parents, under a specified age. However, additional rates are charged if extra facilities are provided to the children.

7. **Run of the house rate**—If, for some reasons, a hotel management cannot guarantee a particular room type, a special rate may be offered for the best room that is available at the time of check-in. For example, rooms that are sold by hotels at tour rate are based on the run of the house.

8. **Day rate**-Part rate is charged for persons who want a room for day use only

4. Classification of Hotels

There is no generic rule for classifying accommodation establishments globally. The hotel industry is so vast that many hotels do not fit into single well defined category. One method is to divide accommodation into two main groups:



Hotels can be classified according to different criteria. Some important criteria to classify hotels can be location, size of property, length of stay of guest, target market, level of service, theme and ownership. Following table highlights the criteria and corresponding types of hotels:

Factors	Types
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City-centre/Downtown hotels Suburban hotels Motels

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport hotels • Resort hotels • Forest hotels • Floatels • Rotels
Size of property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small hotels • Medium sized hotels • Large hotels • Mega hotels • Chain hotels
Length of stay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transient hotels • Residential / Apartment hotels • Semi-residential hotels
Target Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business hotels • Resort hotels • B&B hotels • Extended stay hotels • Casino hotels
Level of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy/budget hotels • Luxury hotels
Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage hotels • Ecotels • Boutique hotels • Spas
Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeshare • Condominium • Chain hotels • Independent hotels

1. On the basis of Location

- **City-centre/Downtown hotels-** Generally located in the heart of city within a short distance from business and shopping centers. These hotels are more expensive than the suburban hotels. The clientele to these hotels is business men and high income tourists. These hotels are centrally located and at a convenient distance from markets,

government and private offices, shopping malls and entertainment centres. They usually 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. These hotels may have leading restaurants, bars and night clubs.

- **Suburban hotels-** These hotels are located in the outskirts of cities, moderately priced and are of mostly medium, large or small size. They attract clientele that are cost-conscious, though not necessarily budget travelers. These hotels are also preferred by people who do not want to stay in the heart of city as they want to be away from hustle and bustle of city. Such hotels promote their facilities for training programmes, conferences and seminars.
- **Motels-** Motels are located alongside the highways and road junctions. Motels cater to the hospitality requirements of road travellers. Motels are normally economical and provide comfortable bedrooms. Motels have facilities of proper motor garage to service a car and a filling station to refill vehicles, parking area for motor vehicles etc. They also have road maps, dormitory for drivers. These days Motels also provide various indoor and outdoor facilities like video parlor, billiards, table tennis, cyber café, library etc. These are meant for overnight stays.
- **Airport hotels-** These are hotels located near the airports. They cater mainly to business clientele, transient airline passengers, passengers with delayed or canceled flights and airline personnel. The airport hotels have a 24- hour coffee shop, an all purpose convenience store, cyber café, shuttle coach service, and left luggage facilities.
- **Resort** - A resort is a place used for relaxation or recreation, attracting visitors for holidays or vacations. They are located in natural and man-made sites. They are found at natural sites like hills, beaches, islands, waterfalls. Historical monuments like Taj Mahal, Khajuraho temples etc are man-made sites for resorts. They cater a person who wants to rest, relax and enjoy beautiful location. Most resort work to full capacity during peak season. Sales and revenue fluctuate from season to season.
- **Forest hotels-** These are located in forest range and cater to tourist visiting the forest.
- **Floatels-** The hotels which float on water are called floatels. It is located on river, sea or big lakes. Cruise liners float on sea water taking passengers to famed locations connected with water. The cruise ships are five star hotels with multi cuisine restaurants, shopping arcades, ball rooms, swimming pool, cabins etc. The guests are offered cabins to stay. The best examples of floatels in India are house boats i.e. *shikaras* in Kashmir floating on Dal Lake and *kettuvalams* in Kerala floating on backwaters.



Kettuvallam

- **Rotels**-The hotels which rolls on wheels are called rotels. It can be a moving coach or train. Best example of rotel in India is Palace on wheels. It is a luxurious train, fully air-conditioned, well-furnished with attached restaurant and bar.



Palace on wheels



Interiors of Palace on wheels

2. On the basis of size of property

The number of rooms available in the hotel is the criteria for for classifying hotels on the basis of size.

Small hotel: hotel with 100 rooms and less may be termed as small hotel.

Medium hotel: hotel which has 100-300 rooms is known as medium sized hotel.

Large hotel: hotel which have more than 300 rooms are termed as large hotel.

Mega hotel: are those hotels with more than 1000 rooms.

Chain hotel: these are the groups that have hotels in many numbers of locations in India and international venues.

3. On the basis length of stay

Hotel can be classified into transient, residential and semi residential hotels depending on the length of stay of a guest in the hotel.

Transient hotel: These are the hotel where guest stays for a day or even less. Eg. Airport hotels.

Residential / Apartment hotel: These are the hotel where guest can stay for a minimum period of one month and up to a year. The room tariff is charged in these hotels on a monthly,

half-yearly or yearly basis. Guest rooms generally include living room, bedroom, kitchen, private balcony, washing machines, kitchen utensils etc. Residential hotel also provided housekeeping, laundry, telephone and in some hotels a restaurant and lounge etc will be present on the premises. Such hotels are located in big cities. These were developed in the USA and are called **Pensions** there. These type of hotels are popular in USA and western Europe.

Semi residential hotel: These hotels incorporate features of both transient and residential hotel.

4. On the basis target market

Business Hotel: - These hotels are the largest group of hotel types and cater primarily to business travellers and usually located in downtown or business districts. Business hotels primarily serves business travellers, tour groups, individual tourists and small conference groups. Guest amenities at business hotels may include complimentary newspapers, morning coffee, free local telephone calls, breakfast etc. In addition to these facilities business centre, meeting room, personal computer, Wi-Fi and fax machines are also provided to the guest.

Resort hotel: They are located in natural or man-made sites. They are found in hill stations, beaches, islands, heritage sites etc. These leisure hotels are mainly for vacationers who want to relax and enjoy with their family. The atmosphere is more relaxed. Many of the resorts are highly seasonal depending upon climates and holidays.

Extended stay hotel: Extended stay hotel is somewhat similar to the suite hotels, but usually offers kitchen amenities in the room. These kinds of hotels are for travelers who want to stay more than a week and do not want to depend on the service of the hotel. Extended service hotels usually do not provide any food and beverage (F & B) service or laundry service etc.

Bed and Breakfast (B&B) hotel: These establishments are usually small family businesses run in private homes. They are also known as 'Home Stays'. The owner of the B&B usually stays on the premises and is responsible for serving breakfast to guest. Due to the limited services offered at these hotels the price for room is very less than any full service hotel.

Suite hotel: These hotel offer rooms that may include compact kitchenette. The stay of the guest can be six months or less. They cater to people who are relocating.

Casino hotel: Hotel with predominantly gambling facilities comes under this category. They have guest room and restaurants too. These hotels tend to cater leisure and vacation travelers. Gambling activities at some casino hotels operate 24 hours a day and 365 days a year.

5. On the basis of level of service

Hotels may be classified into economy, and luxury hotels on the basis of the level of service they offer.

Economy/ Budget hotel: These hotels meet the basic need of the guest by providing comfortable and clean room for a comfortable stay.

Luxury hotel: These offer world class service providing restaurant and lounges, concierge service, meeting rooms, dining facilities. These guest rooms contain furnishing, artwork etc. Prime market for these hotels are celebrities, business executives and high ranking political figures. Example: Hyatt Regency, New Delhi.

6. On the basis theme

Depending on theme hotel may be classified into heritage hotels, ecotels, boutique hotels and spas.

Heritage hotel: These are hotels in palaces/castles/forts/havelies/hunting lodges/ residence of any size built prior to 1950.

Ecotels: These are environment friendly hotels. These hotel use eco friendly items in the room. Example: Orchid Mumbai is most popular five star ecotel.

Boutique hotel: These hotel provide exceptional accommodation, furniture in a themed and stylish manner and caters to corporate travelers. Example: The Park Bangalore is a boutique hotel.

Spas: These are hotels which provide therapeutic bath and massage along with other features of luxury hotels. Ananda in the Himalayas is the most popular Spa resort located in Uttarakhand.

7. On the basis ownership

Timeshare: A timeshare is a property with a particular form of ownership or use rights. These properties are typically resort condominium units, in which multiple parties hold rights to use the property, and each sharer is allotted a period of time (typically one week, and almost always the same time every year) in which they may use the property. Units may be on a partial ownership, lease, or "right to use" basis, in which the sharer holds no claim to ownership of the property. Timeshare properties are Located at exotic locations like beaches, hills, water fall etc. Examples Mahindra holidays and resorts India Ltd, Sterling resorts.

Condominium or Condos: Here the owner of a unit rents out a room or apartment in a complex of several such accommodations. The apartment is furnished according to the taste and liking of the owner. Owner informs the management to rent out the apartment and the rent goes to owner. 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.

Chain hotel: When one hotel realizes that they can offer the same services in other cities, chains of the same hotel are opened in those places. These kind of ownership usually imposes certain

minimum standards, rules, policies and procedures to restrict affiliate activities. In general the more centralized the organization the stronger the control over the individual property. Some chains have strong control over the architecture, management and standards of affiliate properties. Others concentrate only on marketing, advertising and central purchasing. Chain operations of 'hotels allows for efficient management through the use of mass purchasing, central reservations and billings, and extensive advertising and promotion campaigns

Independent hotel: They do not have identifiable ownership or management affiliation with other properties. That means these properties don't have any relationship to another hotel regarding policies, procedures, marketing or financial obligations. Example for the same would be family owned and operated hotel that is not following any corporate policies or procedures. The advantage of a individual property is its autonomy. An independent hotel however does not get the advantage of board advertising exposure or management insight and consultancy of an affiliated property.

5. Registration & Gradation of Hotels

Hotels are an integral part of a tourist's visit to a place. The services offered in hotel can make or spoil a visit completely. With the aim of providing standardized, world class services to the tourists, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has a voluntary scheme for classification of operational hotels which will be applicable to the following categories:

Star Category Hotels: 5 Star Deluxe, 5 Star, 4 Star, 3 Star, 2 Star & 1 Star

Heritage Category Hotels: Heritage Grand, Heritage Classic & Heritage Basic

Star Classification of Hotels

The Hotel & Restaurant Approval & Classification Committee (HRACC) inspects and assesses the hotels based on the facilities and services offered. Following are the facilities and services required in star category hotels:

Five Star Deluxe Hotels

These are the most luxurious hotels. These hotels are located primarily in metropolitan cities like New Delhi and Mumbai and major tourist destinations like Jaipur, Agra, and Goa. The architectural features and general features of the building should be exceptionally good. There should be ample parking facilities. The hotel should be centrally air conditioned. The ambience and décor of the hotel should be good. There should be lounge or seating area in the lobby with Door man on duty. There should be reception facility with reservation and information facility.

The staff should be well trained and in proper uniform. Proper standards of hygiene and sanitation must be followed.

All the rooms should be spacious and should have attached bathroom. The rooms should have television with cable. At least one room for the differently-abled guest should be provided.

Verification of guest, CCTV installed at strategic locations, Metal detectors (door frame or hand held) , Under belly scanners to screen vehicles and X-Ray Machine are safety and security measures to be taken by the hotels.

There should be provision of business centre, swimming pool, conference, health and fitness facility, souvenir shop, utility shop, book shop and left luggage facility is mandatory. The hotel must have one multi-cuisine restaurant cum coffee shop, specialty restaurant and 24 hr. room service and bar.

The facilities and services in Five Star Deluxe hotels are similar to Five Star hotels, but the difference is that in Five Star Deluxe hotels the décor, furniture and fixtures are exceptionally luxurious, expensive.

Five Star Hotels

These are luxurious hotels located mostly in the big cities. These hotels provide all the modern facilities for accommodation and recreation matching international standards in hospitality. The architectural features and general features of the building should be exceptionally good. There should be ample parking facilities. The hotel should be centrally air conditioned. The ambience and décor of the hotel should be good. There should be lounge or seating area in the lobby with Door man on duty. There should be reception facility with reservation and information facility. The staff should be well trained and in proper uniform. Proper standards of hygiene and sanitation must be followed.

All the rooms should be spacious and should have attached bathroom. The rooms should have television with cable. At least one room for the differently-abled guest should be provided.

Verification of guest, CCTV installed at strategic locations, Metal detectors (door frame or hand held), under belly scanners to screen vehicles and X-Ray Machine are safety and security measures to be taken by the hotels.

There should be provision of business centre, swimming pool, conference, health and fitness facility, souvenir shop, utility shop, book shop and left luggage facility is mandatory. The hotel

must have one multi-cuisine restaurant cum coffee shop, specialty restaurant and 24 hr. room service and bar.

Four Star Hotels

The architectural features and general features of the building should be exceptionally good. There should be ample parking facilities. The hotel should be centrally air conditioned. The ambience and décor of the hotel should be good. There should be business centre, left luggage facility. All the rooms should be spacious and should have attached bathroom. The rooms should have television with cable. At least one room for the differently-abled guest should be provided.

There should be lounge or seating area in the lobby with Door man on duty. There should be reception facility with reservation and information facility. The staff should be well trained and in proper uniform. Proper standards of hygiene and sanitation must be followed.

There should be one multi-cuisine restaurant cum coffee shop, one specialty restaurant and 24 hr. room service and bar.

Verification of guest, CCTV installed at strategic locations, Metal detectors (door frame or hand held) and under belly scanners to screen vehicles are safety and security measures to be taken by the hotels.

Three Star Hotels

These are mainly economy class hotels located in the bigger and smaller cities and catering to the needs of budget travelers. The architectural features and general features of the building should be good. There should be ample parking facilities. At least 50% of the rooms should be air conditioned. The ambience and décor of the hotel should be good. All the rooms should have attached bathroom. The rooms should have television with cable. At least one room for the differently-abled guest should be provided.

There should be lounge or seating area in the lobby with Door man on duty. There should be Reception facility with reservation and information facility. The staff must be well trained and proper standards of hygiene and sanitation must be followed. There should be one multi-cuisine restaurant cum coffee shop and 24 hr. room service.

Verification of guest, CCTV installed at strategic locations, Metal detectors (door frame or hand held) are safety and security measures to be taken by the hotels.

Two Star Hotels

These hotels are most available in the small cities and in particular areas of larger cities. Catering to the backpacker tourist traffic, these hotels provide all the basic facilities needed for general accommodation and offers lowest prices. There should be lounge or seating area in the lobby with Door man on duty. There should be Reception facility with reservation and information facility. The staff must be well trained and proper standards of hygiene and sanitation must be followed. At least 25% of the rooms should be air conditioned. All the rooms should have attached bathroom. At least one room for the differently-abled guest should be provided. There should be minimum one dining room serving all meals. Room service not necessary.

One Star Hotels

These hotels provide most basic facilities and services. These hotels are best when looking for cheapest available accommodation option (apart from camps and hostels). There should be lounge or seating area in the lobby with Door man on duty. There should be Reception facility with reservation and information facility. The staff must be well trained and proper standards of hygiene and sanitation must be followed. At least 25% of the rooms should be air conditioned. All the rooms should have attached bathroom. At least one room for the differently-abled guest should be provided. There should be minimum one dining room serving all meals and Room service not necessary.

Heritage Hotels

Ministry of Tourism, Government of India defines Heritage Hotels are running hotels in palaces/castles/forts/havelies/hunting loges/ residence of any size built prior to 1950. The facade, architectural features and general construction should have the distinctive qualities and ambience in keeping with the traditional way of life of the area. The architecture of the property to be considered for this category should not normally be interfered with. Any extension, improvement, renovation, change in the existing structures should be in keeping with the traditional architectural styles and constructional techniques harmonising the new with the old. Heritage Hotels will be sub-classified in the following categories:

Heritage:

This category will cover hotel in Residences/Havelies/Hunting Lodges/Castles/Forts/ Palaces built prior to 1950. The hotel should have a minimum of 5 rooms (10 beds).

Heritage Classic:

This category will cover hotels in Residences/Havelies/Hunting Lodges/Castles/Forts/ Palaces built prior to 1935. The hotel should have a minimum of 15 room (30 beds).

Heritage Grand:

This category will cover hotels in Residence/Havelies/Hunting Lodges/Castles/Forts/ Palaces built prior to 1920. The hotel should have minimum of 15 rooms (30 beds).

UNIT IV

Distribution Channel

Structure

1. Introduction
2. Functions of distribution channel
3. Number of channel levels
4. Distribution Channel in Hospitality
 - 4.1 Travel Agents
 - 4.2 Tour Operators
 - 4.3 Specialists
 - 4.4 Hotel Representatives
 - 4.5 National, State and Local Tourist Agencies
 - 4.6 Global Distribution System
 - 4.7 Consortia and Reservation Systems
 - 4.8 Concierge
 - 4.9 Internet-Online travel companies, Individual hotel website, mobile phones
5. Conclusion

Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Describe the nature of distribution channels
- ✓ Understand the different marketing intermediaries available to the hospitality industry
- ✓ Know how to use the Internet as a distribution channel

1. Introduction

The hotels are commercial establishments providing boarding, lodging, meals and other services to guests. Today's traveler is highly demanding in terms of services and facilities and looks for value for money. The hotel rooms are perishable, if they are not sold each night no revenue will be generated. The increasing competition, demands of tourists and highly perishable nature of hotels, puts lot of pressure on hoteliers in choosing an effective distribution channel.

A distribution channel is a set of independent organizations involved in the process of making a product or service available to the consumer or business user. It is used to move the customer towards the product. It is a bidirectional, simultaneous path, through which products and

services travel from vendors to consumers and payments flow back in the opposite direction (Business Dictionary).

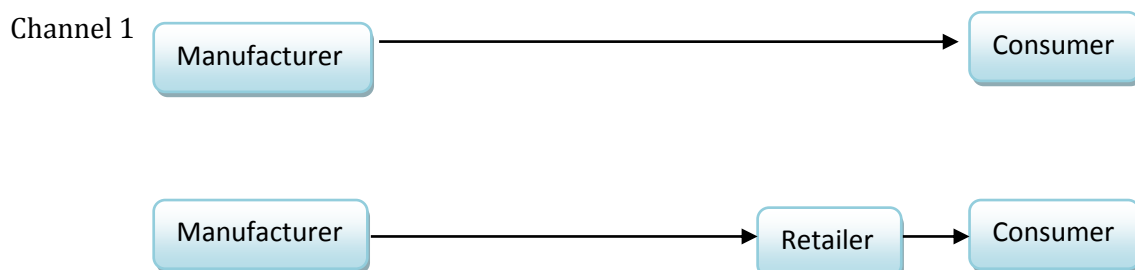
In service industry like hotels, the distribution channel differs from the distribution of physical goods. This difference stems from the nature of hotel services and their production system and consumption patterns. Hotel services require simultaneous production and consumption, meaning the product is not normally 'moved' to the consumer. The consumer has to come to the hotel for consumption of goods and services. This is not the case in manufactured goods. The manufactured goods are transported to the consumer at proper place.

2. Functions of distribution channel

- The primary function of a distribution channel is to bridge the gap between production and consumption.
- A close study of the market is extremely essential because of the changing consumer needs and growing competition. A sound marketing plan depends upon thorough market study.
- The distribution channel is also responsible for promoting the product. Awareness regarding products and other offers should be created among the consumers.
- Creating prospective buyers and maintaining liaison with existing customers.
- Understanding the customer's needs and adjusting the offer accordingly.
- Negotiate price and other offers related to the product as per the customer demand.
- Catering to the financial requirements for the smooth working of the distribution chain.

3. Number of channel levels

Distribution is the process of delivering the products manufactured or service provided by a firm to the end user. Various intermediaries are involved in this process. This chain of intermediaries which helps in transferring the product from one intermediary to the next before it reaches the end user is called the Distribution Chain or Distribution Channel. Each intermediary has a specific role and need which the marketer caters to. The structure of the distribution system may be either direct (from the producer to the consumer) or indirect (the sale to the consumer through an intermediary). In direct there is no intermediary involved whereas in indirect there is intermediary involved.



Channel 2

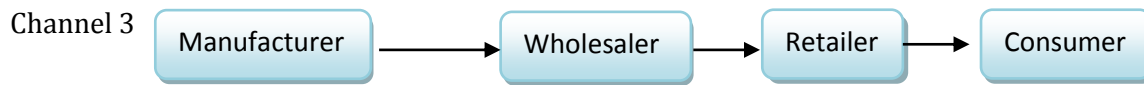


Figure 1: Distribution channels in hospitality

In hospitality, the manufacturer is hotels, resorts, motels. They are producers of goods and services like food, room, spa etc. The consumer of these goods and services will be tourists, business travelers, weekend travelers etc. The challenge is how to get the customer to the consumption site. This unique feature raises the need for a different kind of distribution system in hotels. Hotels may use several different methods to distribute their goods and services. *Channel 1* is direct distribution channel where no intermediary is involved. In this case the hotel has their own channels (partially or wholly owned) i.e. selling through management and marketing contracts, franchising, sales representatives.

Channel 2 and 3 is indirect distribution that is it involves intermediaries. In *Channel 2* one intermediary or retailer is used. A retailer sells goods /services directly to the end users. Retailer buys products/services from the manufacturer or wholesalers. In *Channel 3* along with retailer a second member is added to the distribution chain. He is the wholesaler. A wholesaler buys and stores products in bulk from manufacturers. He sells these products in smaller quantities to retailers. The intermediaries in a hotel channel of distribution consist of tour operators, retail travel agents, specialists, consortia, reservation systems, global distribution system, the internet and concierges.

New developments in technology like the internet, global distribution systems make accommodation arrangements instant and more accessible. Direct selling, away from the location of production and consumption, is on the increase since consumers have more access to the Internet and other available information databases.

4. Distribution Channel in Hospitality

A firm can decide not to use any middlemen at all if its market is small and it can reach there directly. But if the market grows or is dispersed then reaching tourists directly can be difficult and expensive. Here the firm prefers intermediaries /middlemen. Following are the intermediaries of distribution system of hospitality:

1. Travel Agents

2. Tour Operators
3. Specialists
4. Hotel Representatives
5. National, State and Local Tourist Agencies
6. Global Distribution System
7. Consortia and Reservation Systems
8. Concierge
9. Internet-Online travel companies, Individual hotel website, mobile phones

4.1 Travel Agents- In the lodging industry, travel agents are one of the oldest and most widely used traditional distribution channels, acting as the intermediary between customers and room providers. Travel agents are retailers in travel and tourism who buy from the wholesalers and principals and sell to the tourists for commission. The role of the travel agent is to provide information to the customer as well as to effectuate the booking and purchase of the hospitality product. Examples of travel agents are Carlson Travel, Thomas Cook, and Balmer and Lawrie. They access rates and place reservations in a variety of ways. The most common is through a global distribution system (GDS). Travel agents may also contact a hotel property directly, through wholesalers, or by accessing the Internet. Travel agents help hotels to sell rooms at a negotiated rate, while hotels pay them high commissions as benefits. Travel agents always get room resources in different ways. Mostly, they have contracts with hotels, under which they can choose pre-selected rooms in certain price -ranges. Travel agents typically work on commission, i.e., they sell rooms at a negotiated rate or at the prevailing rate, and receive a percentage of the sale from the suppliers. The commission received from hotels is the second largest component of total agency revenue.

There are small and large travel agents in the market. The Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India grants approval and recognition to the travel agents across India thus trying to keep a check on the quality of services being provided by them. In December 2011, India had 338 recognized agents.

4.2 Tour Operators- An organization who buys individual travel components, separately from their suppliers and combines them into a package tour, which is sold with their own price tag to the public directly or through the middlemen, is called a tour operator. Package tour is a pre-arrangement, prepaid trip that combines two or more travel components like airfare, airport transfers, accommodation and other services.

Wholesalers, also called consolidators, can often negotiate for deeply discounted rates because they buy large volumes or have access to a surplus inventory of deeply discounted tickets and

hotel rooms that they are free to sell at slightly marked-up prices. The wholesalers obtain rates and availability directly from the supplier and create packages with different accommodation and transportation options, such as airlines, cruise lines, railroads, car rentals, and bus companies, which are sold directly to the consumer or through travel agents. Examples of wholesalers are D. Pauls Travel and Tours, Southern Travels Pvt. Ltd., Sita World Tours .

4.3 Specialists- These deal with specialized products, such as conferences, meetings, casinos etc. They connect sellers and buyers. Meeting planners and travel agents specializing in MICE, are companies that specialize in providing business travel services, such as meeting planning, incentive travel, and convention services. They prescreen hotels, negotiate rates, and organize events, working with travel agents or acting as specialized travel agents in order to cater to corporate group travel needs.

4.4 Hotel Representatives- Hotel representatives sell hotel rooms and hotel services in a given market area. Hotel representatives are more useful when the market is a distant one and when cultural differences make it hard for an outsider to penetrate the market. For example a hotel in Mauritius shall hire a hotel representative in India than to send sales manager to India.

4.5 National, State and Local Tourist Agencies-These are government bodies that regulate the national resources of the tourist destinations. These organizations give information about the tourist attractions, service providers like travel agencies, hotels, tour operators etc. The Ministry of Tourism act as the national tourism organization in India. The various state tourism corporations act as regional bodies that develop and promote tourism in the framework of the national tourism policy. These organizations play important role in new destinations by developing tourist infrastructure and promoting the destination. The private operators do not invest in the initial development of the destination but the government tourism organizations play the following functions:

- Formulation and implementation of national and regional tourism policies and strategies
- Make investment attractive in tourism i.e. attracting private players
- Approval and classification of hotels and restaurants
- Approval and recognition of travel agents, tour operators etc.
- Training and education in tourism and hospitality
- Manage crisis
- Tourism product development
- Marketing and promotion of tourism products and destinations
- Market research and activities

4.6 Global Distribution System- GDS is a type of computer reservations system or central reservation system (CRS), which is used to store and retrieve information and conduct transactions related to air travel, hotel booking, and car rental services. GDS serves as product catalog for travel agents and other distributors of hospitality products. At the very beginning, it was designed and operated only by airlines, and later extended for broader usage, such as by travel agencies. The GDS originally consisted of a set of private networks listing only air flights for use by travel agents. With the boom of Internet computer usage, GDS systems have grown to serve a worldwide clientele, with nearly 500,000 access points offering a full array of travel services. Being on the GDS is requisite because the portal travel sites are usually the first places guests would like to search for their next vacations. The more visible the travel agents are on the Internet, the more reservations they will acquire. Since 2005, online bookings have reached \$100 billion every year. On an average rate, GDS produces nearly 30% of all hotel reservations (Valarie, 2012). Currently there are four major GDS systems worldwide: Amadeus: founded in 1987 by Air France and three other companies; Galileo International: founded in 1993 by 11 major North American and European airlines; Sabre: founded in 1960s, with headquarter in Southlake, Texas; Worldspan: founded in 1990, and currently owned by Delta Air Lines, Inc. Northwest Airlines, and American Airlines .

4.7 Consortia and Reservation Systems- These are associations with common marketing efforts. A consortium is a group of hospitality organizations that is allied for the mutual benefit of the members. A consortium allows a property to be independent in ownership and management while gaining the advantages of group marketing. An example of a consortium is the 'Leading Hotels of the World.'

Hotels have a central reservation system (CRS) which is a computerized system that stores and distributes information of a hotel, resort, or other lodging facilities. A CRS is mainly assistance for hoteliers to manage all of their online marketing and sales, where they can upload their rates and availabilities to be seen by all sales channels that are using a CRS. Sales Channels may include conventional travel agencies as well as online travel agencies. A hotelier using a central reservation system easing his/her tasks for online distribution, because a CRS does everything to distribute hotel information to the sales channels instead of the hotelier.

The image shows a web-based 'Hotel Search' form. At the top, there are icons for different travel services: Hotel (selected), Bus, Car, Flight, and Excursion. Below these are two dropdown menus for 'Country*' and 'Location*'. The 'Check-in Date*' and 'Check-out Date*' fields are set to '08/15/2008'. The 'Rooms*' field is set to '01' and 'Nights' is set to '03'. The 'Room Type' is set to 'Suite', 'Adults' is set to '01', and 'Children' is set to '01'. A 'Search' button is located at the bottom right of the form.

CRS commonly stores the following information commonly :

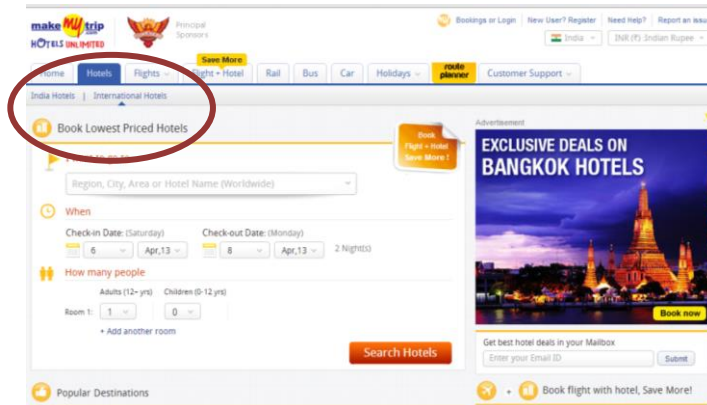
- Room Types
- Room Rates & conditions (guarantee, deposit, customized cancellation rules, Minimum Length Of Stay, Maximum Length Of Stay, Closed to Arrival, Arrival not allowed, departure not allowed...)
- Room inventories
- Generic hotel information (address, phone number, fax number)
- Distribution content (descriptions, amenities, pictures, videos, local attractions...)
- Reservation information
- Geocode information
- Nearby IATA cities and airports

4.8 Concierge-In hotels, a concierge assists guests with various tasks like making restaurant reservations, arranging for spa services, recommending night life hot spots, booking transportation (limousines, airplanes, boats, etc.), procurement of tickets to special events and assisting with various travel arrangements and tours of local attractions.

4.9 Internet-With the boom of the Internet and wide usage of personal computers, people are more likely to plan their vacations online instead of visiting travel agencies in person. Physical travel agencies are not as attractive as before, since it is easier to find better travel deals just by surfing online. Relying on this trend, several new distribution channels have appeared and are growing fast. Most of these are operated online, such as OTAs, individual hotel websites, and mobile phones.

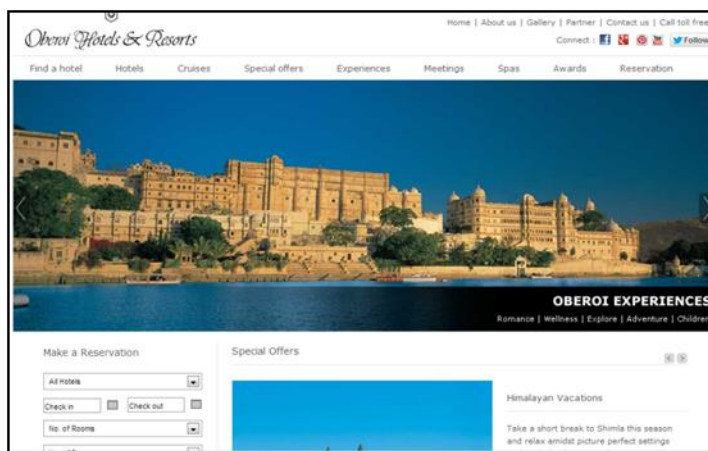
- 1) **Online Travel Agents (OTAs).** OTA is an acronym for online travel agents, who have the same function as traditional physical travel agents, but the service is conveyed via the Internet. Unlike traditional travel agents, OTA specializes in offering vacation-planning sources and booking resources. Most OTA websites provide reviews from former customers. In this way, customers have a platform to communicate with each other and use others' comments for references. These reviews on OTAs are essentially experiences of customers. These reviews help in influencing the decisions of other potential customers. These reviews are also taken seriously by OTAs to maintain the quality of their services and products in order to build positive reputation of their company. Hotel reservations can be done easily through OTAs. They are a popular method for booking hotel rooms. Travelers can book rooms on a computer by using online security to protect their privacy and financial information. Pictures, prices, facilities and deals of different hotels can be compared by using OTAs. Online hotel

reservations are also helpful for making last minute travel arrangements. The major players are Make My Trip.com, Yatra.com, Cleartrip.com etc.



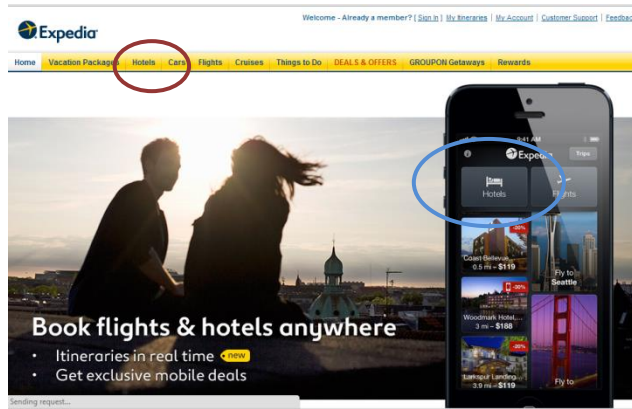
Source: <http://www.makemytrip.com/hotels/?type=Intl>

- 2) **Individual hotel websites-** Individual hotel websites are another current primary distribution channel. More and more hotel brands build their own websites and provide booking service on their home pages. Major hotel chains such as Hilton and Marriott book millions of dollars worth of rooms over the web. Some of the advantages of the internet are that it never closes, it is open 365 days, has worldwide coverage and can transmit colored pictures. The hotels website can provide a lot of information and enables users to access information of their interest.



Source: <http://www.oberoihotels.com/>

- 3) **Mobile phones-** The rise of smart phones is the most significant factor. There are exclusive mobile apps (mobile applications) which can be downloaded by the smart phone holders on their mobiles. These mobile apps help in finding the hotels across the globe and also get the booking done.



Source: <http://www.expedia.com/app>

5. Conclusion

The hospitality industry varies from other industries significantly due to the perishable and intangible nature of the hospitality service/product. A good distribution system is essential to overcome this challenge and reach the target customer and also it shall help the customer for making choice of the hospitality services and thus having a satisfying experience. With the growth of internet, new distribution channels have emerged which are changing the rules of distribution.

UNIT-V Introduction to Front Office Division

Structure

- Objectives
- Introduction
- Front Office department and its functions
- Sections and layout of Front Office
- The organization structure of rooms division
- Organizational chart of front office department (small, medium and large hotels)
- Duties and responsibilities of various staff
- Attributes of front office personnel
- Co-ordination of front office with other departments of the hotel
- The Guest Cycle
- Property Management Systems

Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to

- Understand the hotel industry and front office department.
- Identify different sub-sections in front office department of hotel.
- Know about the designations and roles played by the front office team in managing the hotel efficiently and the traits required in them.
- Understand how different departments of the hotel liaise.
- Handling guests professionally with the usage of PMS.

An Introduction to the Hospitality

To understand the Front Office Department of the Hotel, we must first understand concepts of Tourism, Hospitality and Hotel as these are broadly interconnected and interrelated to each other and represent tourism industry on a whole.

Tourism –

As Per WTO -

Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.

- The term “usual environment” is intended to exclude trips within the place of residence, trip to the usual place of work or education and daily shopping and other local day-to-day activities.
- The threshold of twelve months is intended to exclude long-term migration.
- For the distance travelled there is no consensus. It varies from at least 40 km to at least 160kms away from home one way for any purpose other than commuting to work.

**Tourism Industry comprises
of:**

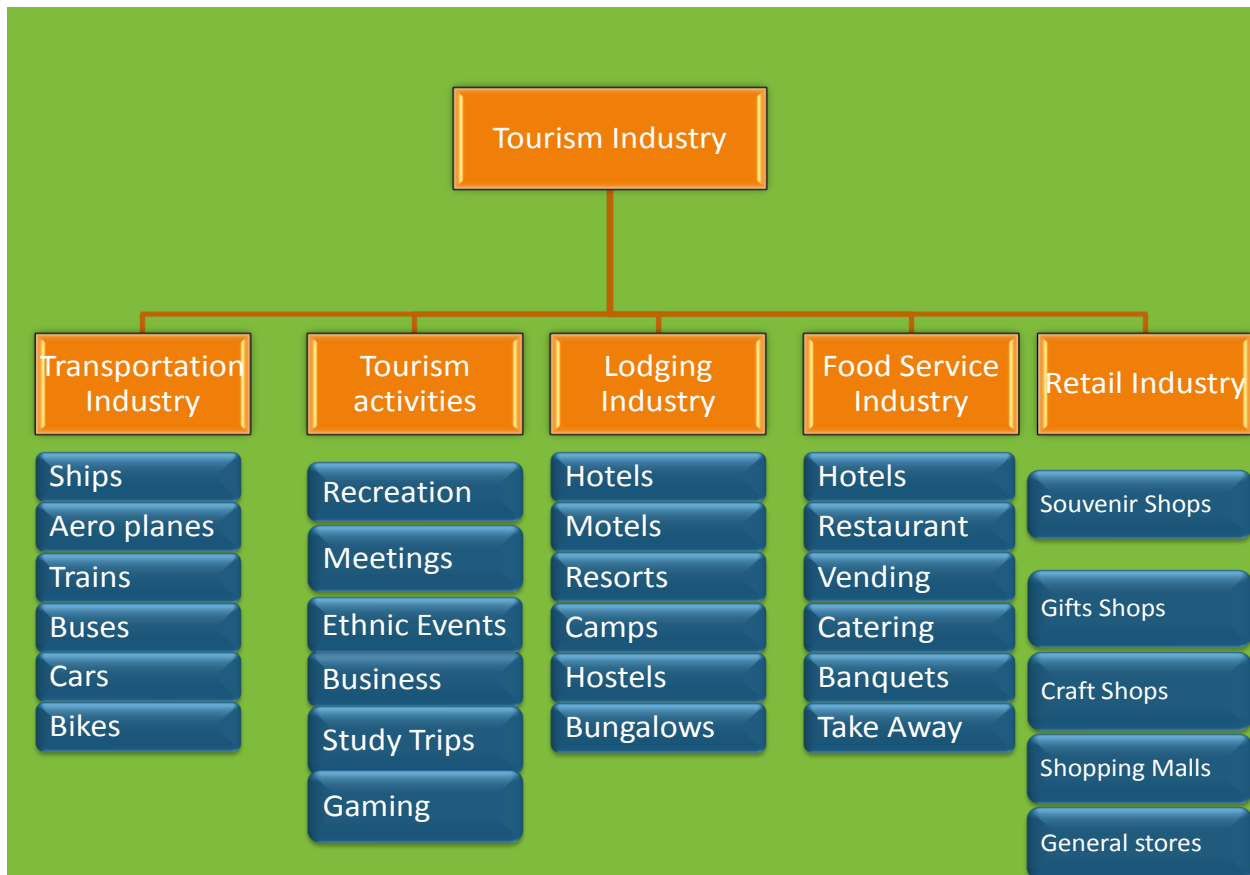


Fig: 1.1 Classification of Tourism Industry

Hospitality –

The Word “*Hospitality*” means Friendly Treatment, which is offered to a stranger.

“***Hospitality Industry*** can be defined as a dimension of the travel and tourism industry encompassing the lodging and foodservice industry.”

Whereas Hospitality Industry consists only Lodging and Food Service industries and does not consist of other industries such as Transport, Tourism activities and Retail Industry.

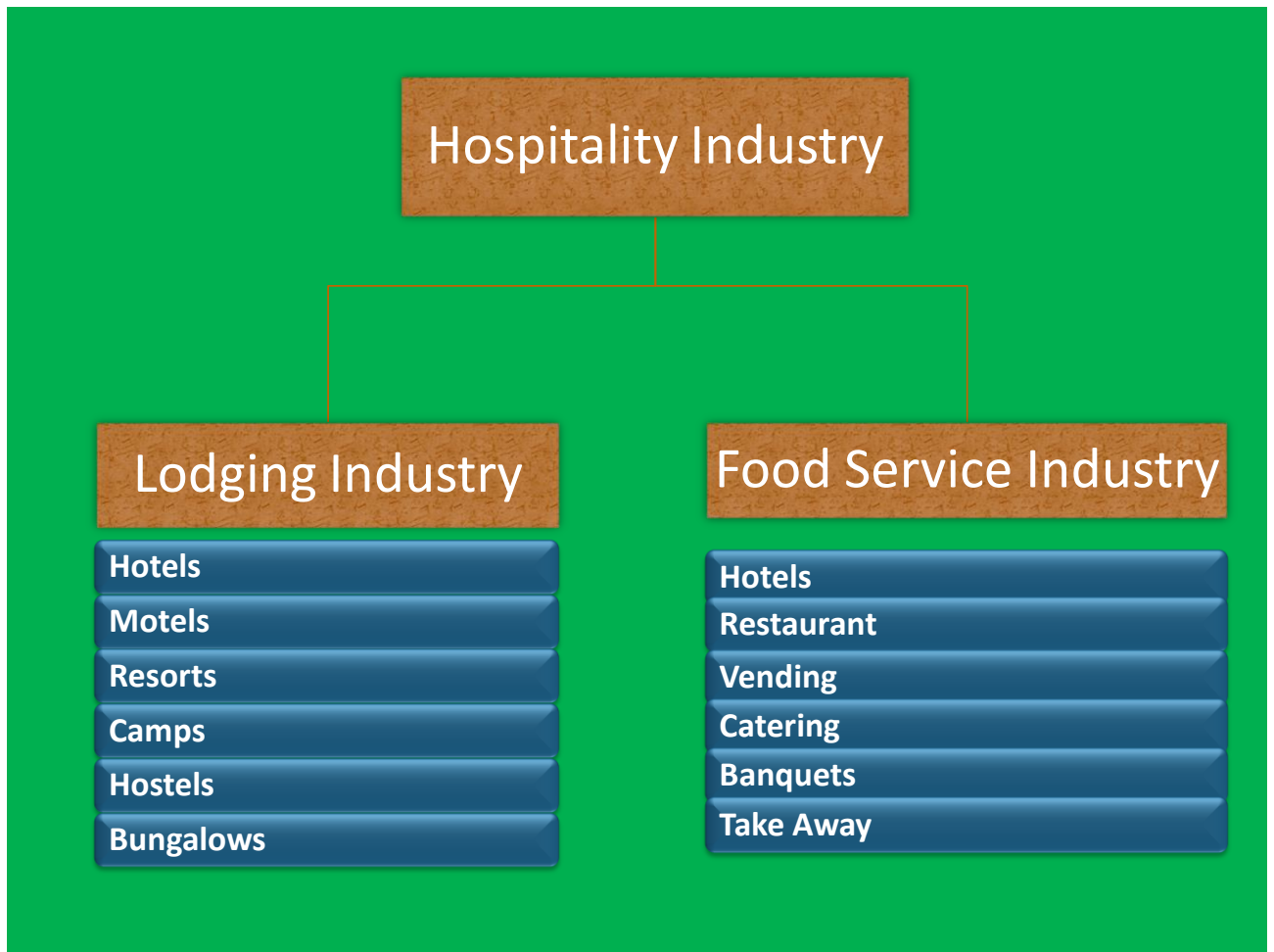


Fig1.2 Classification of Hospitality Industry

Lodging means “a place to live or temporary sleeping accommodation”. Many places provide lodging facilities like Hotels, Motels, Resorts, Hostels, Yatri Niwas, and Circuit Houses etc. So Collectively in a group these are called Lodging Industry.

Food Service Industry includes all establishments which sell food and beverage products on a given price. They are Hotels, Restaurant, Catering, Banquets, Retail, and Take-away etc.

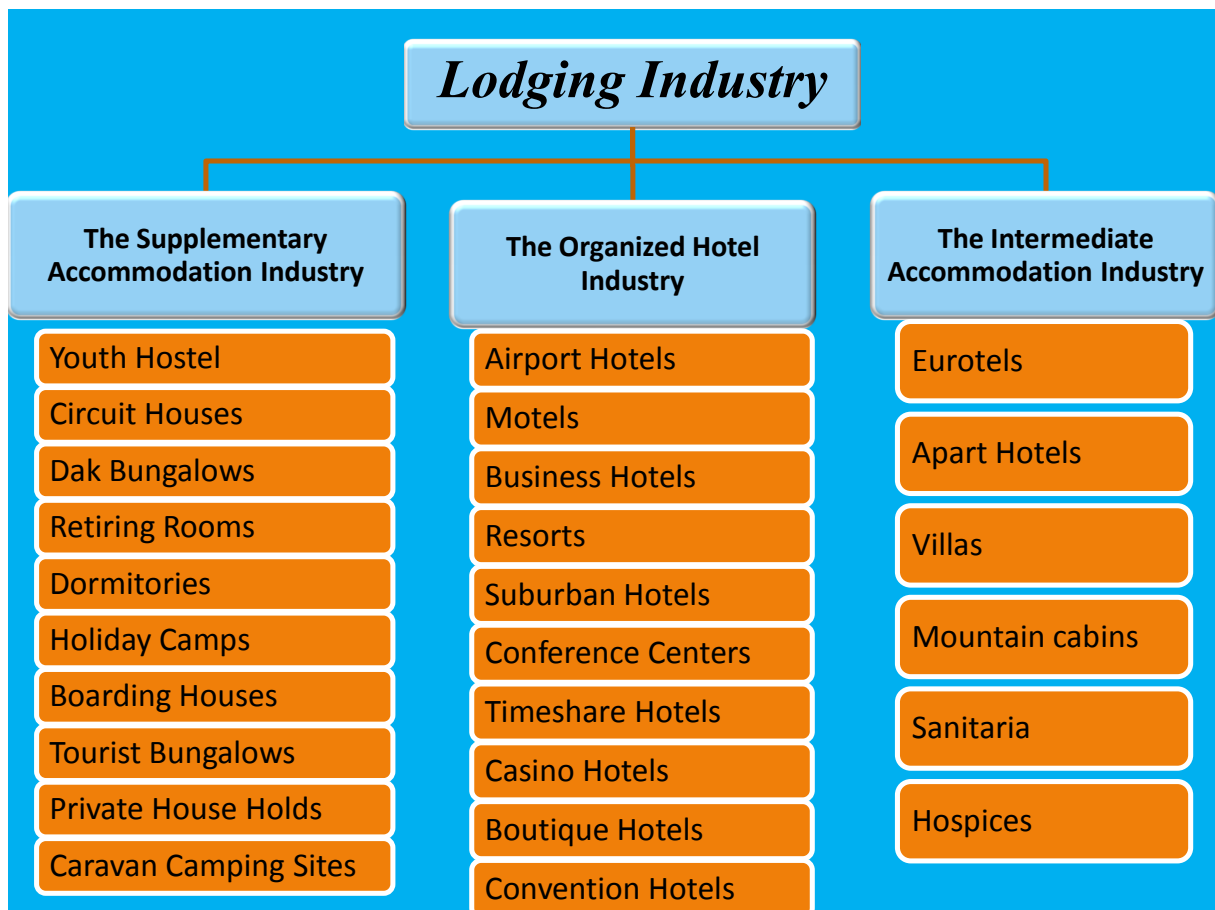


Fig 1.3 Lodging Industries

Hotels –

A hotel may be defined as an establishment whose primary business is to provide Lodging and Food and Beverage service facilities to its guest and also provides one or more of the following services in exchange of price.

- Housekeeping service
- Bell and door attendant service
- Laundry and dry cleaning
- Concierge
- Use of furniture and fixtures

“Hotel is a Home away from home”.

As consumer in the hotel industry is termed as a “*guest*”, and earnest efforts are made by the hotel management and staff to make a guest’s stay in the hotel a most comfortable and memorable experience and make them feel as they are at home and are not away from it.

DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION OF A HOTEL

A hotel is an organization made up of different departments all of which have to work in close co-ordination for the efficient working of the organization. Some departments are more important as far as revenue is concerned; some do not produce revenue but are very important from the operational point of view. Thus the departments of the hotels can be classified under three main headings. They are

1. Operating and Revenue Producing.
2. Operating and Non revenue Producing.
3. Non-operating and Revenue Producing.

Operating and Revenue Producing Departments (O.R.P.) :

A. Minor revenue producing departments of the hotel.

a) **Laundry:** The hotel may have its own laundry or may have a contract with an outside laundry. In any case laundry of guest clothing is a facility provided by the hotel & is charged for.

b) **Telephone department:** Guests are charged for the local and trunk or STD calls. Charging can be done either by the telephone operator or in case of direct billing by telephone meters. In a small hotel, there would be just a small switch board, probably operated by the receptionist. In large hotels, there exists a separate telephone department, where the board is manned by operators working in shifts.

c) **Swimming pool:** Though hotel guests are not charged for using the pool, their guests can be charged for this facility. Many hotels offer a free swim along with a buffet lunch (charged per head) setup near pool side.

B. Major Revenue Producing Departments:

1. Rooms Department

These are the departments concerned with the actual sale of rooms. This revenue producing section earns around 60% of the total hotel revenue. The departments under this section are Housekeeping and Front office.

1. a) Front Office is concerned with actual sale of rooms and hence comes in direct contact with the guest.

1. b) Housekeeping is concerned with keeping the guest rooms clean and in a position to be sold. Hence though Housekeeping is a behind the scene activity but is extremely important.

2. Food & Beverage Department:

These are the departments concerned with the production of food & beverage items and their sale.

2. a) Food & Beverage Production includes all kitchens, bakery, confectionery, stores and pantry. All these are behind the scene and responsible to the total preparation of the food items right from the storage of raw material to the presentation of the final dish.

2. b) Food and Beverage Service includes all the service outlets where the food prepared by the production areas is sold to the guests. These areas can be listed as:

- **Restaurants** - General as well as specialty restaurants- These restaurants have fixed hours of service.
- **Coffee Shop** - A coffee shop is open 24 hours of the day & serves mainly snacks & beverages. Heavy meals are generally served only during lunch and dinner time. A coffee shop generally has an informal atmosphere and plated service.
- **Bar:** Serves alcoholic and non alcoholic beverages along with snacks. A permit is required to operate it, and operating hours are fixed.
- **Room Service:** 24 hours service to the guest rooms in most of the large hotels.
- **Banquets:** It is the major revenue producing department, among the F&B service departments. Some of the banquet functions are Dinners, Lunches, Wedding receptions, Cocktail parties, Conferences, Club meetings, out-door catering etc.

Operating and Non revenue producing departments (O.N.R.P.):

1. Personnel: Deals with recruitment and training of staff, staff induction, promotions, welfare, etc.

2. Security: Deals with all unusual events in the hotel.

3. Maintenance: They are responsible for total maintenance and upkeep of rooms and public areas, i.e. Air-conditioning, Lifts, Plumbing, Electricity, Lighting, carpentry, etc.

4. Accounts: Receives a copy of all departmental vouchers & the guest bills. Maintains cash register, City ledger, etc. prepares sales summary sheets for each day's sales.

5. Sales and Marketing: Sales is concerned with getting and maintaining clientele for both rooms and food & beverage departments.

Non operating and Revenue producing departments (N.O.R.P.) :

They include travel agencies and airline offices, book shops, chemists, florists, bank, beauty parlour, etc. They either are let out on commission bases or on rental bases. These '**concessionaires**' should be reputable as for the guests they are a part of the hotel services.

FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION OF FRONT OFFICE (Sub departments)

The Front Office department can be sub-divided into different sections according to the nature of their functions. They are:-

1. Reservations.
2. Reception.
3. Information.
4. Cashiers.
5. Bell desk.
6. Telex/PABX.
7. Travel Desk
8. Business Centre

1. Reservations

It is often referred to as the nerve centre of the department. **All booking requests are received and processed here.** Bookings, confirmations, amendments and cancellations of reservations are handled in this department. Prior arrangement for guest arrival can be made from the information processed at reservations which facilitates efficient and satisfactory service to the guests. Preferably reservations section is located behind the front desk but it may also be located at back office in large hotels.

2. Reception

This section is responsible for receiving the guests on their arrival. Section is headed by Senior Receptionist and rest of the team includes receptionists and front office executives. Registrations of guests during check in, sensible and efficient dealing with situations which may arise at the counter are important tasks for the reception staff.

3. Information Centre/ Concierge Desk: The main functions of this section are:

- a. To maintain an alphabetical guest index.
- b. To receive messages for resident guests.
- c. Handling guest mail, packages etc.
- d. Paging for guests.
- e. Providing relevant and accurate information to the guests and answering queries about whereabouts of in house facilities or any event that is happening in the city.

4. Cashier

This section is responsible for handling guest bills, where guests settle their final bills either by cash, credit card or as charge settlement for their entire stay in the hotel. Expenses would include Room Tariff, Food & Beverage service charges and charges for any other services or facilities used during stay. These charges are recorded centrally up to the minute at the cashier's cabin. The cashier's role therefore is to post all guest charges and credits on the master bill so as to present the same duly totaled for payment at the time of guest departure. This section is also responsible for exchanging foreign currency and for safe deposit lockers provided for guest valuables.

5. Bell desk

Responsible for baggage handling at guest arrival or departure time and running errands during the guests staying in the hotel. And also for petty jobs

6. Telex/PABX

Telex also called telephone exchange handles all incoming and outgoing local calls and trunk and international calls for both guests and the hotel management. The other name for telex is Private Branch Exchange (PBX). Latest technology which is used now-a-days in the hotels is updated technology of PBX called Private Automated Branch Exchange (PABX).

PBX/PABX

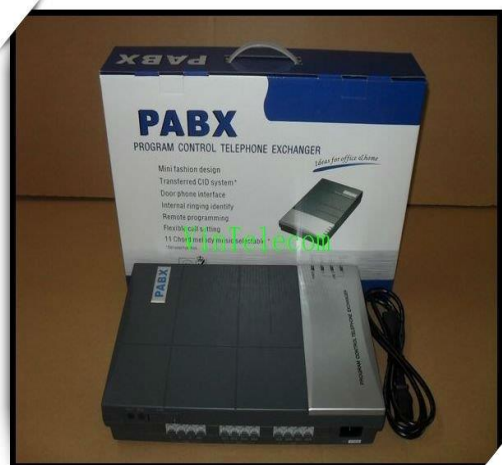


Fig 1.4: Private Branch Exchange and PABX

7. **Travel Desk:** This section of front office is responsible for travel arrangements like air tickets, rail tickets, pick and drop from airport and railway station etc for the guest as per their request.
8. **Business Centre:** The person who handles the business centre is known as Business Centre Attendant and the main function of this section is to provide the communication facilities to the guests and services like STD, ISD, E-mail, internet, fax, Xerox etc.

Layout of Front Office Department

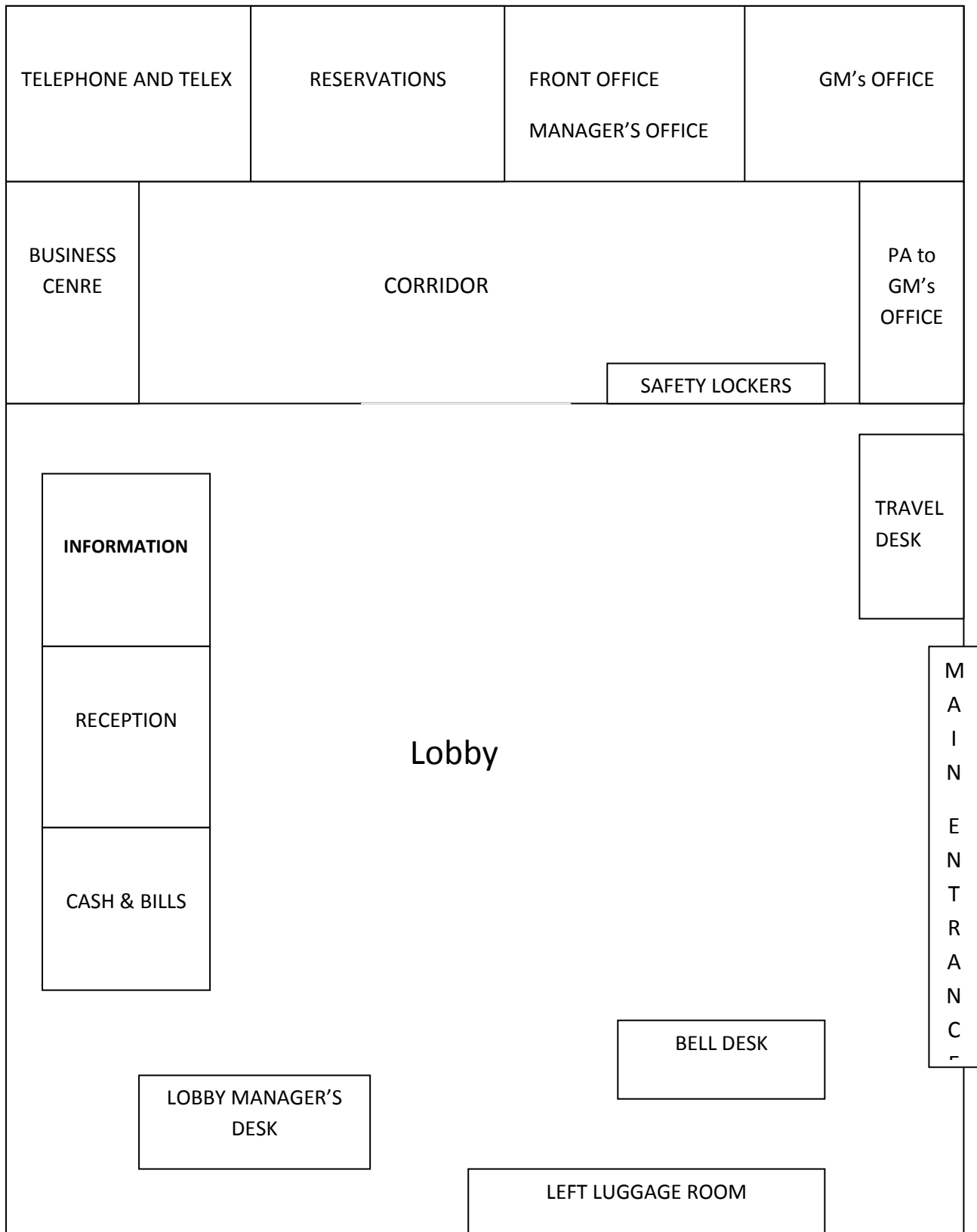


Fig 1.5 Layout of Front Office Department

Organization Chart of Large Hotel

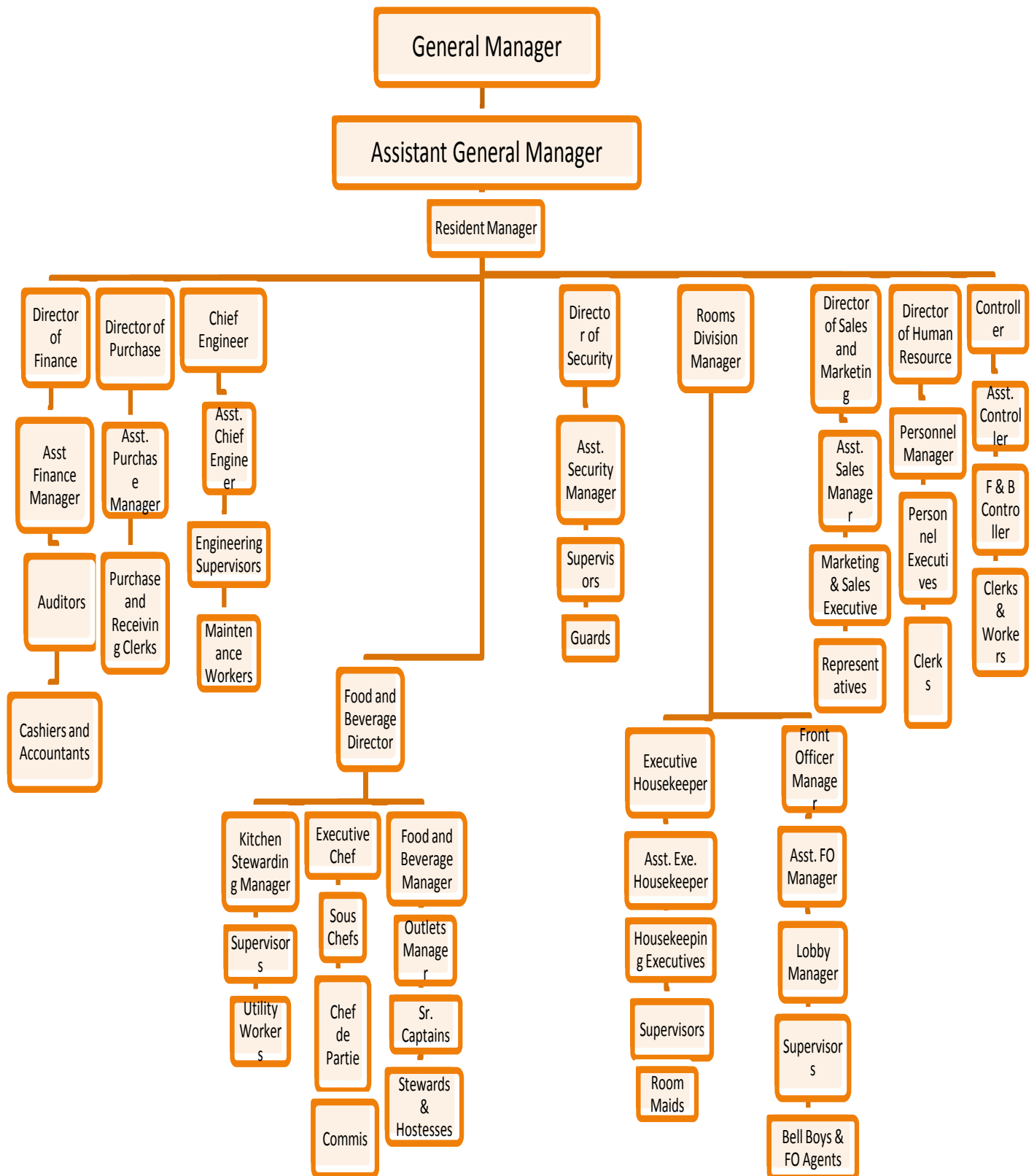


Fig 1.6 Organization chart of Large Hotel

ORGANIZATION CHART OF FRONT OFFICE DEPARTMENT IN LARGE HOTELS

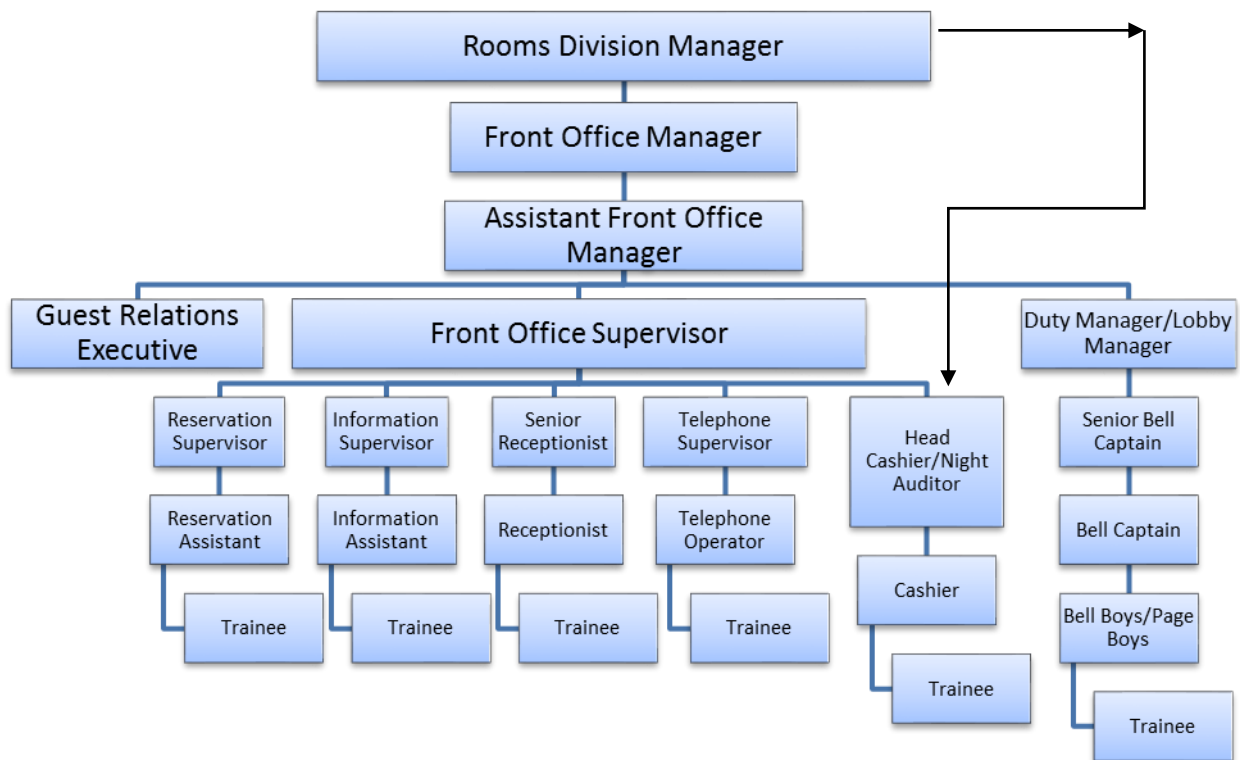


Fig 1.7 Front Office Organization chart of Large Hotels

ORGANIZATION CHART OF FRONT OFFICE DEPARTMENT IN SMALL SIZED HOTEL

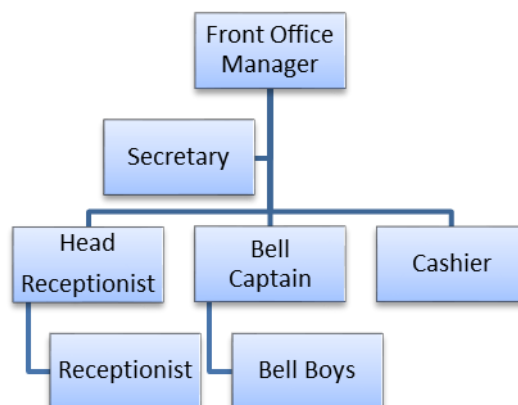


Fig : 1.8 Front Office Organization chart of Small Hotels

Organization Chart of Front Office in Medium

Hotels

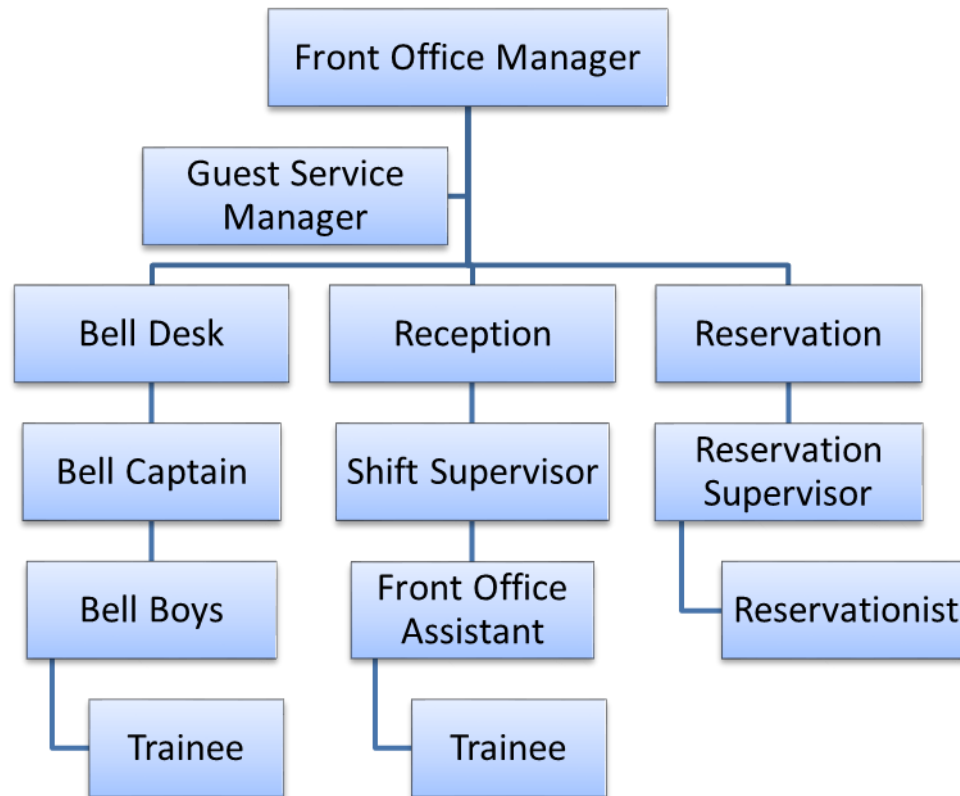


Fig: 1.9 Organization Chart of Front Office in medium hotels

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FRONT OFFICE STAFF

A. Front Office Manager

- ☐ He is the head of the department.
- ☐ He ensures the smooth running of the department
- ☐ He sees to it that his staff reports to duty in time and in proper uniform.
- ☐ He ensures that courteous and personalized service is given to the guests by his staff.
- ☐ He deals with front office correspondence on reservations, enquiries, room booking etc.
- ☐ He is responsible for the up keep of the front desk, lobby manager's desk and their equipment.

- ☐ He deals with the complaints against his staff and other complaints of the guests.
- ☐ Participants in the selection of F O Personnel
- ☐ Conducts regularly scheduled meeting of F O Personnel.

B. Lobby Manager

- ☐ He ensures that all rooms are blocked as per reservation requests
- ☐ He keeps a check on room position
- ☐ He instructs the airport representatives regarding the list of arrivals to be met.
- ☐ He checks pre-registration cards
- ☐ He also checks housekeeping discrepancy report
- ☐ He ensures that guest requests and complaints are followed up
- ☐ He follows up on group and crew movement
- ☐ He takes actions for all unusual events in the lobby like fire, accidents, etc.,
- ☐ He ensures the smooth running of the lobby.
- ☐ He sends “C” Forms to the FRRO.

C. Reception Supervisor

- ☐ To train all front office assistants on the job
- ☐ To make the duty roster for the staff
- ☐ To check the shift in-charge’s list on a daily basis
- ☐ To check the next day’s arrival list and to brief the staff accordingly
- ☐ He makes the requisition for the stationery required for the Front Office
- ☐ He ensures the smooth running of the reception
- ☐ Welcomes VIP guests
- ☐ Attends to guest complaints
- ☐ He assists the reception staff.
- ☐ Maintains records of the reception

D. Reception Assistant

- ☐ To answer the queries of the guest to their satisfaction and to provide information
- ☐ To promptly register guests and to assign rooms to them
- ☐ To update the room rack regularly
- ☐ To complete pre-registration formalities for VIPs
- ☐ To execute government formalities regarding foreigners
- ☐ To prepare room reports and occupancy statistics

- ☐ Send messages to the guests
- ☐ To print the arrival list for the next day.

E. Reception Shift in-charge

- ☐ Performs the tasks of reception assistant
- ☐ Supervises and checks the entire Shift Operation
- ☐ Handles guest complaints
- ☐ Checks all the reports before the end of the shift
- ☐ Airline crew blocking and group blocking

F. Reservation Supervisor

- ☐ To help out Reservation Assistant in calls, courses and feeding reservation information.
- ☐ To supervise the staff under her and impart training
- ☐ To monitor all new movements
- ☐ To follow up on billing instructions and other special requests
- ☐ To check on credit facilities to Companies, discount policies and discounts offered to various companies.
- ☐ Co-ordination with Reception, Information, Sales and Marketing Departments and Tour Operator.
- ☐ Up-to-date information of the position of the house for the day and the next three days.
- ☐ She draws up a weekly, monthly and quarterly forecast
- ☐ Monitors VIP movements and informs all concerned
- ☐ Monitors house status and keep Front Office Manager informed of sold out dates.
- ☐ Deals with correspondence, vouchers, exchange orders, deposits, refund of deposits and actions thereon.
- ☐ She handles the group and conference booking.

G. Reservation Assistant

- ☐ To update regularly the reservation chart and computer
- ☐ To properly and courteously handle all reservation requests
- ☐ To keep all reservations correspondence up to date
- ☐ To handle amendments and cancellation of reservation.

H. Senior Bell Captain

- ☐ He controls the movements of Bell Captains and Bell Boys

- ☐ He briefs the Bell Boy and ensures that they are always well groomed
- ☐ Takes stock of the luggage, parcels and any other material
- ☐ Has thorough knowledge of the hotel, shops, airline offices, executive offices etc.
- ☐ Thorough procedure on arrival and departure
- ☐ To carry out different errands for the guests
- ☐ Responsible for the proper distribution of newspapers
- ☐ Keeping stock of the equipments, trolleys and ensuring that they are in good working order
- ☐ Vigilant and alert on duty
- ☐ To initiate action against guests having scanty baggage
- ☐ To assist in crew and group wakeup call procedures

I. Bell Boy

- ☐ Take the baggage front the porch to the room
- ☐ Escort the guest to the rooms on arrival
- ☐ Place the baggage in the room
- ☐ Explain the operation of light switches and air conditioning control to the guests.
- ☐ Bring the baggage down in case of departures
- ☐ Checks the room to ensure that the guest has not left any articles in the room
- ☐ Obtain the clearance from Front Office Cashier on the errand card regarding the bill.
- ☐ Check that mail and messages are timely distributed to the guests.

J. Front Office Cashier

- ☐ Operates front office posting equipment
- ☐ Completes cashier pre-shift supply checklist
- ☐ Completes guest check in procedures
- ☐ Post charges to guest account
- ☐ Handle paid-outs
- ☐ Completes guest check-out procedures
- ☐ Settles guest account
- ☐ Makes account adjustments

K. Night Auditor

- ☐ He posts room charges and taxes to guest accounts

- ☐ He processes guest charge vouchers and credit card vouchers
- ☐ He transfers charges and deposits to master accounts
- ☐ He verifies all account postings and balances
- ☐ He prepares a summary of cash, check and credit card activities
- ☐ He summarizes results of operations for management
- ☐ He knows how to operate position machines, typewriters and Front Office equipments.
- ☐ Understands and knows how to perform check-in and check-out procedures
- ☐ Handle errands requested by guests and Front Office staff
- ☐ Handle baggage of guests when they are shifting to another room
- ☐ Distribute news papers
- ☐ Page (with the use of Page Board) guests in the lobby.
- ☐ He reports about scanty baggage to the bell captain
- ☐ He issues postage stamps against cash.

1.5.1 Attributes of FO Staff

The attributes of different front office personnel are discussed below:

- Grooming
- Personal Hygiene
- Communication Skills
- Self Confidence
- Diplomatic Approach
- Good Memory
- Good Manners and Etiquettes
- Physical fitness
- Decision making Ability

There are some general attributes which front office personnel must have or should develop to handle hotel's guests

FOA (Front Office Assistant) – After the doorman, he/she is person to come in contact with the guests. As said the first impression is the best one, so is the case here. The personnel should be fluent in his/her language with up to date knowledge of the product. He / She should be a good sales man, tactful and diplomatic to deal with the difficult situation. The

most important attribute is to be a good communicator with a great sense of humour and positive attitude. Good memory, patience, managing the stress is the hallmark of his attribute.

- **GRE (Guest Relations Executive)** – As the guest relation executive is mainly to do with the problem solving and having more of the guest interaction. This person should be charming in all the aspects especially with respect to communication skill. He/She should be versatile in thinking and should have a discerning mind to judge the situation and act quickly on it. He /she should have smart appearance, mature mannerism and knowledgeable about the current happenings and places.

- **Lobby Manager** – The manager should be a mature, possessing the presence of mind, quick in decision making, good communicator, tactful and diplomatic as he/she deals directly not only with the bell(lobby) staff but also customers.

- **FOM (Front Office Manager)** – Since the front office manager is the head of the department, he/she should have leadership qualities, be a self motivator and who motivates his/her staff members to excel and be an initiator. The person should acquire excellent communication skills (verbal, written and non verbal) so as to be effective with not only with the staff members but also with the customers specially in handling difficult guests. It is also the management principles having a good insight of the market and applying strategies accordingly that helps him/her to be successful in the long run. FOM should be intuitive and have the foresight and planning is an essential virtue.

- **Bell Captain** – Handling Porters, familiarizing guests with their new surroundings, run errands, deliver supplies and provide the guests with information, as required. All the above given tasks are done under his/her guidance along with Lobby manager. To perform, he/she along with excellent communication skill should also have effective leadership qualities.

Co-ordination with Other Departments-

(Housekeeping, Food and Beverage Service, Food and Beverage Production, Engineering & Maintenance and Security)

.Without the coordination of various other departments in the hotel, front office department cannot function effectively. The following sections show the type of liaison required with various sections in the hotel –

- **Housekeeping** – Exchanging the room status report to reconciliation of discrepancies and smooth flow of sales of rooms is one of the major tasks to be coordinated. Minute details from house count, to security concerns, and special guests requests are the issues which need to be sorted together. Also for room change the room has to be readied. A hotel gets repeat customers, when a guest feels at home and is provided with all possible basic amenities and necessities like shampoo, toothpaste, mouthwash, electrical equipments, and in-house entertainment, most of which are given by the housekeeping. Not to forget also the laundry, linen handling and dispatch are done by the housekeeping department.

Starting from the projection of sales during the planning phase of the management cycle to the executing of the plans, there has to be close link between the two departments.

- **Food and Beverage Service Department** – Communication activities like reporting predicting the anticipated house counts basically to do with the sales of Food and beverage, VIP services and the preparation behind it. For the In house customers, usually in an automated system, it's the computer terminals/interface which helps in transferring the data to the guest folio in the front office terminal to be charged. If the hotel has a manual system, then all the vouchers have to be signed by the customer and needs to be posted manually into the folio promptly to avoid the late charges.

Also during the functions (Banquet Department) the guests need to be greeted and informed about various details like venue direction, billing, any last minute paid out for the function to be done by FO Cashier, other necessary announcement via message boards for example and also booking and allocating rooms if required.

- **Production Department** – This department goes in sync with the Food and Beverage Service Department for the preparation of the Food and Beverage and the set up as per the estimated number of guest arrival in- house and out house and for the function, if any. Also to act on special requests like food diet for sick customers. For the purchases of raw material proper house count is very important and also paid outs for any emergencies during the function.

- **Engineering and Maintenance** – Any request about the maintenance work through the customer and also the room status has to be coordinated well for prompt dealing of the problem. For example – to rectify any plumbing problem, the maintenance person needs to

know whether the room is occupied or not. Usually any repair from the guest is directed to Front Office or the Housekeeping department.

- **Security Department** – Measures like fire safety and emergency situations like bomb threats, terrorism, and security of diplomatic customers' appeals to be looked into by both Front office and Security Department. Also for routine investigation of the guests, security concerns need the cooperation of each other.

- **Sales and Marketing Department** – It is the guest history which is maintained by the Front Office Department which is most valuable for the sales and marketing department. Also during the planning stage, it is the forecasting of the room sales, very much needed for purchases of supplies by housekeeping and other departments, staffing and other needs, is done in close coordination between both front Office and Sales and Marketing department.

- **Stores:** Responsible for constant supply of relevant forms, formats, stationery for running the department

GUEST CYCLE

The guest cycle describes the activities that each guest passes by from the moment he/she calls to communicate a reservation inquiry till he/she departs from the hotel. In fact, the guest cycle encompasses 4 different stages, which are depicted in the underneath, diagram:

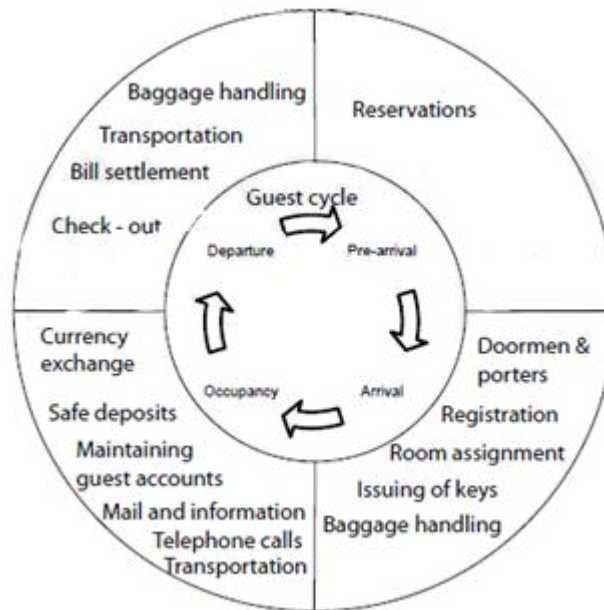


Fig: 1.10 A Guest cycle

Pre-arrival → Arrival → Occupancy → Departure

Each stage of the guest cycle is associated guest service, and guest accounting activities.

1. Guest services:

Reservation ⇒ Registration ⇒ Occupancy services ⇒ Check-out and history

2. Guest Accounting:

Establishment of credits ⇒ Posting charges ⇒ Night auditing ⇒ settlement of accounts

- Below is a description of the activities undertaken at each stage of the guest cycle:-

1. **Pre-arrival:**

- At the pre-arrival stage, the hotel must create for every potential guest a reservation record. Doing this initiates the hotel guest cycle. Moreover, reservation records help personalize guest services and appropriately schedule needed staff and facilities

- The reservation department should, then, complete all the pre-registration activities and prepare guest folios (applicable only for automated systems). Doing so will eventually maximize room sales by accurately monitoring room availability and forecasting room revenues

2. Arrival:

- At the arrival stage, registration and rooming functions takes place and the hotel establishes a business relation-ship with the guest.
- The check-in clerk should determine the guest's reservation status (i.e. pre-registered guests versus walk-ins). Later, he/she shall prepare a registration record or make the guest sign the already-printed pre-registration record (under some of the semi-automated and all fully automated systems).
- The registration records shall include the following personal and financial items:
 - a) Personal information:
 1. Name and Surname of the guest along with billing address, telephone number, and any other coordinates
 2. Passport number, birth certificate, and/or driving license number (whatever applicable)
 3. Any special needs or requests
 4. Guest Signature
 - b) Financial information:
 1. Date of arrival
 2. Expected date of departure or length of stay depending on how the system in the hotel is designed
 3. Assigned room number
 4. Assigned room rate
 5. Guest's intended method of payment
- Registration records can be used for various purposes:
 - a) Satisfy guest needs
 - b) Forecast room occupancies
 - c) Settle guest accounts properly
 - d) Establish guest history records at check-out [personal & financial information]
 - e) Assign a room type and a room rate for each guest

- f) Determine long-run availability [i.e. reservation information] versus short-run availability [i.e. room status]
- g) Satisfy special categories of guests such as disabled people through barrier-free designs

3. Occupancy:

- At the occupancy stage, the front office department shall coordinate guest services in a timely and accurate manner. Moreover, front office clerks should encourage repeat guests by paying a great attention to guest complaints. This is ensured by placing complaint and/or suggestion cards in every public place and revenue centres in the hotel. Moreover, the hotel shall, at least on a daily basis, collect comment cards, proceed with their analysis, and provide positive feedback to guest as soon as possible.
- In addition, shall design effective procedures in order to protect the funds and valuables of guests. This might be ensured through guest key control, property surveillance, and safe deposit boxes, and well designed emergency panels and exits.
- Another activity at occupancy is to process posting of guest charges (i.e. room rates, food and beverage charges, additional expenses, and taxes) to various guest folios, master folios. While doing so, front office clerks shall continuously check for deviations from the house limit, and take corrective measures as to change the status of the guest to Paid-in-advance. Finally, front office clerks shall periodically review Account Balances in coordination with the night auditor.

4. Departure:

- At the departure stage, the guest shall be walked out of the hotel. Moreover, front office clerks shall create guest history record. Finally, cashiers shall settle guest account outstanding balances (i.e. balancing the guest account to zero balance)
- In general, a proper check-out occurs when the guest:
 - a) Vacates the room
 - b) Settles the guest account
 - c) Returns room keys
 - d) Leaves the hotel
- At departure, checkout personnel should encourage guests to consider returning to the hotel on any future date. That's why cashiers should act like a true sales person, and might

eventually accept guest future reservations. That way, the stages of the guest cycle become really a cycle (i.e. start from where it ends).

- If at departure, the guest account is not fully settled, then late charges accumulate. In such an undesired case, the responsibility of collection lies within the accounting department, however the front office department shall provide all necessary types of information to make this collection easier, quicker, and feasible.

II- Front Office Systems:

- Until the 1960's, nearly all hotels were operating under the manual system. At late 70's, with the introduction of computers, hotels shifted to semi-automated systems. Nowadays, most of the five-star hotels operate under the fully automated system. Below is a brief description of the three different systems under which hotels might operate.

1. Non-automated/manual systems:

This very system is the one characterized by the sole usage of hands. In fact, all formats, procedures, and different kinds of calculations are done manually.

2. Semi-automated/Electro-mechanical systems:

This system gets use of some Electro-mechanical equipment. In fact, under the semi-automated system, each department might have its own computer system under which it handles all its operations.

3. Fully automated/Computer based systems:

That's the best system ever used in the hotel industry. In fact, it is characterized by the excessive use of departmental software package programs integrated and connected to a main frame or terminal situated at the front office department.

III Guest Cycle under Three Different Systems:

At this stage, it is essential to notice that the following stages of the guest cycle under the three different systems do not conflict with each other. In fact, the only differences are due to the nature of the system use. Therefore, what will be discussed above is not the repetition of the sequence; rather only differences will be highlighted.

1. Non-automated systems:

A- Pre-arrival activities:

At the pre-arrival stage, reservation requests should be introduced in a loose-leaf notebook or index 9 x 4 cards. Moreover, only reservations up to 6 months horizons shall be honoured. Lastly, it is not practical, under this very system, to issue reservation confirmation numbers, initiate pre-registration activities (at the exception of VIP and groups) and prepare occupancy forecasts. The reason is time and money loss along with insufficient labour force to manually conduct all the above mentioned activities.

B- Arrival activities:

At the arrival stage, guests shall either sign a page in the registration book or fill manually a registration record. Under this very system, the most widely used front office equipment is the room rack, in which registration records are inserted to serve as room rack slips. Moreover, registration books and records shall be time stamped as an internal control proving when the guest exactly came, who registered him/her...Lastly, guest folios shall be opened for each registered guest.

C- Occupancy activities:

Under the occupancy activities, registration records shall be prepared with multi-copies. In fact, one copy shall be distributed to room rack, another stamped to the guest folio, another given to switchboard operators, and a final copy handed to the uniformed service personnel. Lastly, guests with charge privileges charges and payments shall be posted to respective guest folios.

D- Departure activities:

At departure stage, cashiers should settle each guest account's outstanding balance and get room keys back from guests. Moreover, cashiers shall notify the housekeeping department that the room is no more occupied (i.e. room status change) to let this very department clean the room and prepare it for new arrivals. In addition, cashiers shall remove room rack slips from room racks to indicate departure. Lastly, these very rack slips of departed guests shall be filed in a cardboard box to serve as a guest history record

2. Semi-automated systems:

This very system is less common in small and middle size hotels. For, these very hotels, financially wise, might not afford the huge investments associated with the installation of different hardware and software.

The main advantage of this very system over manual system is that various reports can automatically be generated. However, the major disadvantages associated with this system are various complexities of operating and controlling devices due to the fact that this equipment are not integrated with other systems and are subject to frequent maintenance problems.

A- Pre-arrival activities:

- At this very stage, guests can either call a national reservation network or directly contact the hotel. Moreover, reservation clerks can prepare pre-registration records, guest folios, and information rack slips.

B- Arrival activities:

At this very stage, already reserved guests shall verify their pre-registration forms and have only to sign it. On the other hand, walk-ins shall complete a multiple copy registration record from the beginning.

C- Occupancy activities:

At the occupancy stage, in order to track the different guest charge expenditures and all other possible guest transactions, hotels get an intensive use of various kinds of vouchers.

Moreover, the most widely used equipment, under this very stage, is the mechanical cash registers and front office posting machines. Lastly, under this very stage, night auditor shall continuously resolve any discrepancy in guest accounts and efficiently reconcile guest folios.

D- Departure activities:

At this very stage, cashiers shall relay room status information to the housekeeping department. Moreover, they should place registration records of departed guests in property's guest history files.

4. Fully automated systems:

A- Pre-arrival activities:

Under this stage, the reservation department is equipped with a software package, which is interfaced and connected with one or more central reservation office. Moreover, the reservation department can automatically generate letters of confirmation, produce requests for guest deposits and handle pre-registration activities for all types of guests and generate daily expected arrival lists, occupancy and revenue forecast lists.

B- Arrival activities:

- At this stage, various reservation records can be transferred to front office department. Moreover, hotels might be equipped with an on-line credit authorization terminals for timely Credit Card Approval, self check-in / check-out terminals. Lastly, all guest charges and payments are saved in electronic guest folios.

As far as walk-ins are concerned, all registration activities should be initiated from the very beginning.

C- Occupancy activities:

Under this very stage, guest purchases at different revenue outlets are electronically transferred and posted to appropriate guest accounts. Moreover, the front office department can run and process continuous trial balances and, therefore, eliminate the tedious work for the Night Auditor.

D- Departure activities:

At this very stage, cashiers can automatically produce bills to be sent to various guests with direct billing privileges and create electronic guest history records.

IV- Front Office Forms:

At different stages of the guest cycle different forms are used depending on which operating system a hotel chooses. Below are some of the common forms used:

1. Pre-arrival activities:

- a) Reservation record or a reservation file
- b) Letter of confirmation

c) Reservation rack and reservation rack slips

2. Arrival activities:

a) Registration card (or record) or registration file

b) Room rack and room rack slips

3. Occupancy activities:

a) Guest folio: shall be of duplicate forms and pre-numbered for cross-indexing control purposes

b) Vouchers: support documents detailing facts of a transaction, but does not replace the source document (i.e. the invoice). Examples of vouchers might include charge vouchers, allowance vouchers, paid-out voucher, and correction vouchers...

c) Information rack slips

4. Departure activities:

a) Credit card vouchers

b) Cash vouchers

c) Personal check vouchers

d) Transfer vouchers

e) Guest history records

V- Front Office Functional Organization:

Whatever system and setting the hotel might use, it should reflect easy access to the equipment, forms, and supplies necessary. Moreover, the setting shall reflect position flexibility. Moreover, nowadays trend shows that traditional mail, message, and key racks are unnecessary at the Front Desk. Rather, they shall be stored in drawers or slots located under or away from the Front Desk. For, this would ensure security and safety of guests.

1. Front Desk designed alternatives:

a) Circular or semi-circular structure: this very structure provides an effective service to more guests and appears more modern and innovative but since guests will approach the Front Desk from all angles, more staff is needed.

b) Traditional straight desk: Under this very design, fewer staff is needed, but fewer guests can be served at the same time.

- c) Desk less environment: Under this design, there is no Front Desk at all. This is usually replaced by a hostess, or steward welcoming the guest, seating him or her on a chair/sofa, and conduct registration activities there while, for example, having a cocktail or a drink.

VI- Front Office Equipment:

1. Room rack
2. Mail, message, and key racks
3. Reservation racks
4. Information racks
5. Folio trays or folio buckets
6. Account posting machine
7. Voucher racks
8. Cash registers
9. Telephone equipment

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Property Management System (PMS) is a broad term for the soft-wares specially designed to manage hotel through computers as in fully automated system. PMS helps in managing reservations, registration, guests' accounts, bill settlement, check-outs, and saving guest history using software. There are many soft-wares available in the market such as Opera, Amadeus, Shawman, Fidelio and Micros. PMS being a fully integrated hotel computer system provides management with effective means with which to operate and control many front office and back office activities becomes easy and efficient.

Important interfaces of hotel operations include:

- Point of sales systems (POS)
- Call accounting system
- Electronic locking system
- Energy management System
- Auxiliary guest services
- Guest operated devices

Point of sale systems:

POS refers to point of sale (POS) software that runs on computers, usually touch screen terminals or wireless handheld devices. Restaurant POS systems assist businesses to track transactions in real time.

Typical restaurant POS software is able to print guest checks, print orders to kitchens and bars for preparation, process credit cards and other payment cards, and run reports. In addition, some systems implement wireless pagers and electronic signature capture devices.

Computer terminals are located in each point of sale department such as restaurants, spas, coffee shop, etc.

These terminals connect to a central processing unit, when the main terminal interacts with the PMS data can be transferred from the POS systems to various front and back office modules for further processing. This system accomplishes the basic objectives of electronic data processing. The time taken for posting charges to a guest folio is significantly reduced and the number of times a significant piece of data is handled is also minimized. It also reduces posting errors and the possibility of late charges.

Call Accounting Systems:

This system is capable of handling direct distance calling, distribute calls through a least cost routing network and price outgoing calls. When a CAS is interfaced with a PMS's front office guest accounting module telephone charges can be directly posted to a proper guest folio. It reduces space needed, labour cost as no telephone operator is needed and maintenance costs.

Electronic Locking Systems:

Some ELS provide a "Do not disturb" option for guests. This option typically employs an indicator that displays a notice when guests want privacy. The notice is often given by a flashing red light located within a locking mechanism. The indicator may be triggered when a room attendant inserts a key into the locking mechanism. No longer must housekeeping staff test the door's chain to realize that the guest is still in the room

A safety feature built into ELS prevents the door from opening while the key remains in the lock. This prevents the guest from entering the room while forgetting the key in the door. If

the key remains in the locking mechanism beyond a predetermined time interval, the system destroys the key by scrambling the code. To avoid any inconvenience the staff should inform the guests that failure to promptly remove the key from the lock will cause it to become invalid.

Newest electronic locking systems allow guest to set the locking system by programming their own four digit code number. Some ELS also allow guests to use their own credit card to enter the room. At the time of check in the credit card is moved through a magnetic card reader. The reader captures and encodes the information contained on the card's magnetic strip and sends it as the access code for the appropriate guest room door. When the guest arrives at the assigned room, the credit card operates as the room key.

ELS Reports:

Management can find out which key cards opened which doors, by date and time. Communicating this ELS capability to hotel staff and guests may help reduce the number of guestroom incidents. ELS typically maintain an audit trail involving the use of system based key cards. Some systems print out reports in chronological sequence. Some systems record and store an activity data that can be formatted to provide printed reports on demand. The creation of reports, as well as other system functions, should be controlled by operator identification and password security codes

Energy Management System {EMS}:

Heating, lighting, ventilation and air conditioning are essential to a hotel's existence. The greater the efficiency of this equipment the better the hotel serves the needs of the guest. Energy management systems may conserve energy contain energy costs and tighten operational costs over guestroom and public areas environments. An important feature of these systems is their ability to minimize the building's energy needs while not significantly affecting the hotel's comfort conditions.

An energy management system may be a central feature of the rooms management module. It is a computer based control system designed to automatically manage the operation of mechanical equipment in a property. The programming of this system enables management to determine when equipment is to be turned on or off or otherwise regulated. For example if the meeting rooms of a hotel will be used at 10:00 am to 2:00pm, the computer can be

programmed to automatically conserve energy during the hours the rooms will not be in use, while ensuring that by 10:00 am the rooms reach a satisfactory comfort level for the guests. This programming technique can be used for equipment affecting various spaces throughout the property.

Auxiliary Guest services:

Placement of wake up calls and the delivery of messages to guests are examples of these systems. The main reason for interfacing these systems to the property management system lies in the comprehensive co-ordination and tracking of guest related functions.

An automated wake-up call system permits the front desk employees to input a guest room number and requested wake-up time. At the specified time the system automatically rings the room and calls back at predetermined intervals until the system stops calling and makes note of the guest's failure to answer. If the guest answers the call, the system completes a pre-recorded morning greeting and then disconnects. Some systems require that the guest speak into the phone to confirm he/she is awake. A notation of the answered call is often stored for the day in the system.

Electronic message waiting systems are designed to let a guest know that a message is waiting at the front desk. Some of these systems display messages on the television screen in the guest's room.

Hotels have also adopted voice mailboxes. These are devices that record telephone messages for guests. A caller, who wishes to leave a message for the guest, does so over the phone and the message is recorded for the guest to access later. To access the message the guest typically dials a special telephone number, connects with the voice mailbox and listens to the message delivered in the caller's own voice. By interfacing the voice mailbox service with PMS, the recording of the message trips the message waiting mechanism in the guestroom, leaving the switchboard staff free to perform other productive tasks.

Guest operated devices:

These systems may be located in public areas of the hotel or in private guestrooms. Assortments of devices provide concierge-level service with in-room convenience. Guest operated devices discussed in the following sections include:

Self check in/self check out systems

In-room entertainment systems

In-room vending systems

Information Systems

Self check in /check- out systems:

They resemble automatic bank teller machines. These are usually located in the lobby. They possess both audio and video capability. In a self check in system, the guest initiates the registration process by inserting the credit card in the terminal. After collecting registration data the terminal screen may display room rates and types. Since the terminals are interfaced with the PMS automatic room and rate assignment are possible. The terminal may also dispense an electronic guestroom cardkey or tell the guest how to obtain a room key.

Lobby terminals are also capable of handling a checkout process. Here the guest uses his credit card used at check in to access and settle his account. The system automatically posts the account balance to the credit card for billing and dispenses an automated statement for the guest.

These days guests also have the opportunity for both in-room folio review and in-room check out. These systems may use in-room computer terminals, the hotel's television cable station, or guestroom telephones to access and display guest folio data on the guestroom television screen. When in room terminals are linked with PMS guests can access folio data and can approve and settle their accounts. Guest room telephones when interfaced with PMS can also be used to display the guest folio details on the television screen. The system provides guests with folio details and directs a self checkout procedure. Folio copies are typically available at the front desk to copy.

These systems reduce the time it takes to process guest registrations, check-ins and checkouts. They can also be enhanced to introduce guests to the facilities and amenities available. Automated check-in and check-out devices free front office personnel to spend more time with guests who need personal attention.

In-room entertainment Systems:

When interfaced with a PMS in room movie systems provide guestroom entertainment through a dedicated television pay channel. The interface includes a timing device. After the channel has been tuned in for a specific amount of time, the device triggers an automatic charge posting to the appropriate guest folio.

Stand alone in room movie systems generally require the guest to dial an in-house service and request that the movie be turned on. The operator who turns on the program also is responsible for posting the charge to the proper guest folio.

Although the telephone call approach is not fully automated, it does provide a sound approach for minimizing guest-disputed charges.

In-room vending machines:

Non-automated mini-bars in the guest room require that the beginning inventory level are noted either by the housekeeping or room service attendants during their normal rounds. In either case the employee uses a hand-held portable computer or touch tone telephone in the guest room to connect with the remote mini-bar's computer terminal. The product code of the items consumed, are put in and the bars CPU relays the guestroom information and charges of the consumed items via the property management system and issues a stock replacement report.

If these systems are electronic and microprocessor based, they may contain fibre optic sensors that record the removal of stored products. Once triggered the sensors relay the transaction to build in microprocessor for recording. Individual room microprocessors are typically cabled to a remote CPU which stores recorded transactions. The CPU converts transactions into accounting entries and relays them to the property management system guest accounting module for folio posting. The bar system's CPU also maintains perpetual inventory replenishment data which directs the restocking of vending units.

Micro processor based systems enable hotel managers to use a remote central console to lock in-room vending units. Some systems help guests to lock their mini-bars using their guestroom keys. Interfacing with PMS helps reduce late charges as well as labour costs.

Guest information system:

These systems are television based and can connect to cable broadcast systems, wire news services, transportation schedules and restaurant and room service menus and may also access the internet. When in-room computers are able to connect to the internet, guests may access

- Airline schedules
- Local restaurant guides
- Stock market reports
- News and sports updates
- Shopping catalogues and transactions
- Video games and casino games

These systems may also be connected to the hotel's cable television band. This connection enables the property to keep in house guests and convention attendees informed about events and functions to provide tourists with information about local attractions and to inform business travellers about support services by the property.

Check your knowledge-

1. Define Hospitality
2. Define Tourism.
3. What are the constituents of Hospitality industry?
4. Discuss the role of Front Office in Hotel.
5. Which are the major revenue producing departments there in a hotel?
6. What are the duties and responsibilities of the night auditor?
7. What are the duties of bell boys?
8. How many stages are there in a Guest Cycle?
9. What is PMS and how is it useful in the hotel?
10. Why should all the departments of the hotel liaise with each other?

UNIT VI

Front Office Services

Structure

- Equipments used (Manual and Automated)
- Role of Front Office in
 - o key control and key handling procedures
 - o mail and message handling
 - o paging and luggage handling
 - o bell desk and concierge
- Rules of the house
- Black list

Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to

- Identify various equipments used in front office operations
- Understand various guest services including key handling, mail handling, luggage handling etc. procedures
- Know about the rules for guests and staff

Introduction

With the advent of technology the usage of machineries has also increased in hotels. Hotels of five star categories generally are known for being among the first ones to introduce latest technologies in their establishments. It becomes necessary to introduce latest trends on the part of hoteliers as their revenue generation is directly proportionate to curb appeal, overall ambience of an establishment, and usage of finest equipments as these may play an important role in enhancing the mass appeal of an establishment.

The usage of equipments during guest handling makes working fast and easy for front office's as well as other department's executives. The choice of equipments will depend upon the size and budget of the establishment. A big hotel with limited budget generally opt for semi automated equipments and buys only which suits them best whereas on the other hand, a big hotel with a high budget will definitely choose an automated front office with fully automated or computerized equipments.

Equipments used in Front Office:

- Room Rack

- Billing and posting Machine
- Postal Weighing Machine
- Photocopy and Printing machine
- Credit Card Imprinter
- Telephones
- Luggage trolley
- Luggage Net
- Wall Clocks
- Fire extinguisher
- Computers
- Cash Registers – NCR & ECR
- Folio Bucket
- Key & Mail Rack
- Franking Machine
- Safe Deposits
- Time and Date Punching Machine
- Page Board
- CCTV Camera
- PBX, PABX, EPABX

Room rack – This rack is found in non-automated and semi-automated hotels. A room rack is an array of metal file pockets designed to hold room rack slips bearing the name of the guest, date and time of arrival, number of rooms, room type and rate, date of departure, other minor details like – reserved by, billing instructions, special instructions, which is used to indicate room status. In some hotels, a slip or the registration card itself can be inserted in the rack. Various colour codes are also used to indicate the room status information (occupied, out of order, vacant and so on). These racks cannot be moved easily and can be reused. Reservations can be kept in accordance with the date of arrival order. Room rack is eliminated in a fully automated system (property management system).

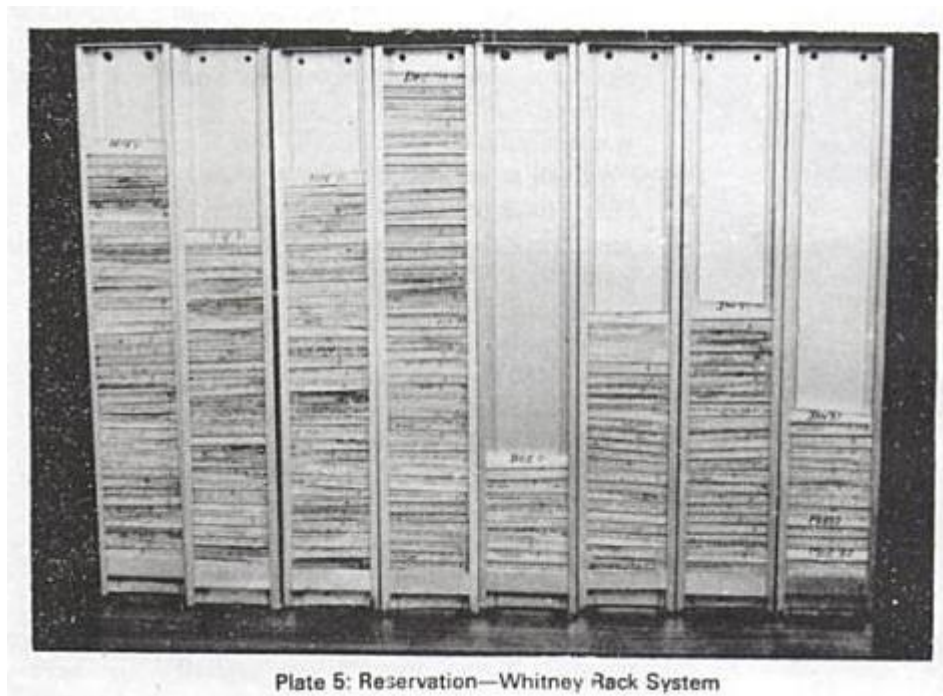


Fig 2.1 Whitney Rack

Key rack – Key rack has sockets to store guestroom keys. Presently, with the development in technology, we have electronic key system which can be generated through one console itself and does not require any storage; the extra space needed for the keys is eliminated. Those hotels which still depend on key slots; they utilize their space by combining it with mail, and message rack.

Mail and Message rack – Even if the mail, and message rack is separated from the key rack, accessibility factor for the person who is responsible for the same is a must.

For the mails and messages in a fully automated hotel, it can be retrieved from the room, house phone as the message can be stored through the voice mail system. Even for the delivery of mail, the message for the same can be passed through the electronic message centre. The guest gets to know about it through a message light in the room.

Information rack – This rack is used to help the employees to route the mail, messages and other visitor inquiries in a systematic way. To smoothen the functioning, the rack has two listing – one in alphabetical order and other one by room numbers. Again this rack is not required in a fully automated hotel.

Folio bucket – this tray is kept usually in the non-automated hotel and semi-automated hotel as well, which is kept in ascending order of the room numbers. The placement of folio bucket should be such a way that it can be accessed by both the front office assistant and the cashier, for the updating/posting of transactions of the guest staying in the hotel and final billing.

For the departed guest, who pays the bill through credit card or by company account, there is one more folio tray in the accounts department. This folio is closed only after the final payment (when the balance shows zero amount) or if not paid and is declared as bad debt.

Folio Bucket/ Folio Tray



Fig: 2.2 Folio bucket

Billing and Posting Machines – Semi-automated hotels use posting machines. This machine records transactions, makes account statement, also analyses sales activity and does an audit trail of charge purchase transactions. The advantage here is printed copy of the guest's folio. But the disadvantage and being the major one is that it is prone to errors as it requires a person to update charge manually and difficult to operate.

Fully automated do not require posting machines as hotels PMS can do all the work with greater advantages over posting machines.

Billing and Posting Machine



Fig: 2.3 Billing and posting machine

Voucher rack – Once the transaction is over, the vouchers are required for the audit process by the accounts department for verification, hence the need of the voucher rack. Ideally this should be situated near the posting machine where the cashier or the front desk assistant can access it easily.

Call accounting system – CAS is a software program that helps in processing of calls (outgoing or incoming), pricing them and billing accordingly towards the necessary account (guest account in the guest folio). With this system, there is no requirement of any phone company operators or staff to place the call. For the activation of phone calls in the guest rooms the front desk clerk has to enter the guest's name and room number into the data bank, which automatically keeps the call charges updated.

National Cash register/Electronic Cash Register – This is used to record any cash transactions. Today posting machine and computer have taken the place of cash register with the printing device for producing various cash reports like sales receipts, price control reports etc. There are several keys which can be used to record data like amount of transaction, its type, concerned department, its purpose, method of payment and so on.

Wake up devices – this is an alarm clock that is used by the front office assistant to remind them to awaken the guest as per the request. Presently this wake services are replaced by in room wake up messages through computer interfacing (automatic call dispensing system).

Telecommunication equipment –

PBX- (Private Branch Exchange) - this equipment takes inbound calls to the hotels operator's console, through whom the calls are further diverted to the respective areas. With these types of systems, number of telephones lines is limited. Outbound calls normally do require an operator. Charging of calls is also done by the operator.

With a PABX (Private Automated Branch Exchange) the problem of calculation is eliminated with the usage of individual meters for each extension. The need of the operator is also eliminated.

Call accounting system- this system eliminates the requirements of any telephone company or any operator for any billing purpose. As discussed above, it's software.

Pager and cellular phones – some hotels give a pager or the cellular phones on rent as soon as guests check in. billing is done according to usage shown in the meter. This system is not diverted through any CAS but is been posted manually.



Fig: 2.3 Telephone and Telex department

Other equipments – other equipments comprises of Fax machine, Telex, credit card imprinter (automatic as well as manual), credit card imprinter, time stamp and the latest technology i.e., the call detection system.

The Key Control System In hotels

In early times the hotels were using metallic keys as time has changed and technology is improved so hotels have introduced **Key Cards** which are also called as **Electronic Key Cards**. There is an electronical machine which is used to put the codes on key. To make it safer the F.O executive keep on changing all the codes whenever guest checks out. This equipment is known as **Standalone Central Control Machine**.



Fig: 2.4 Credit card imprinter

Security and control of room keys:

A guest room is the most important hospitality product. One of the chief concerns of the hotel staff is to ensure of guest rooms, which is done by controlling the access to guest rooms by maintaining a strict control over room keys. Now the days every hotel is using Electronic keys. If any hotel is using hard keys or metallic keys following is the process for security measures:

- Request the guest to deposit the keys at the reception while leaving the hotel premises.
- In case of loss of key the lock should be immediately replaced.

An Electronic key system is an investment in guest safety and security. For security reasons hotel may use three types of keys:

1. Emergency Key
2. Master Key
3. Guest room key

Emergency key: The emergency key is also known as grand master key which opens the guest room even if they are double locked. The emergency key should be highly protected

Paging: Paging is the process of locating a guest in a given area within the hotel. When a party calls a guest on the phone and the party specifically knows that the guest he is contacting is in a specific area, then the information assistant writes the guest's name and room number on the paging board and deploys a bell boy to do the paging with this board. The bell boy then holds the board (which has bells with rings which draw the attention of the guest when shaken) above his head so that guests in an area can see. The bell boy walks through that specified area. The guest, if in that area, immediately contacts the bell boy who escorts the guest to the phone.



Fig: 2.5 Page Board

Bell Desk

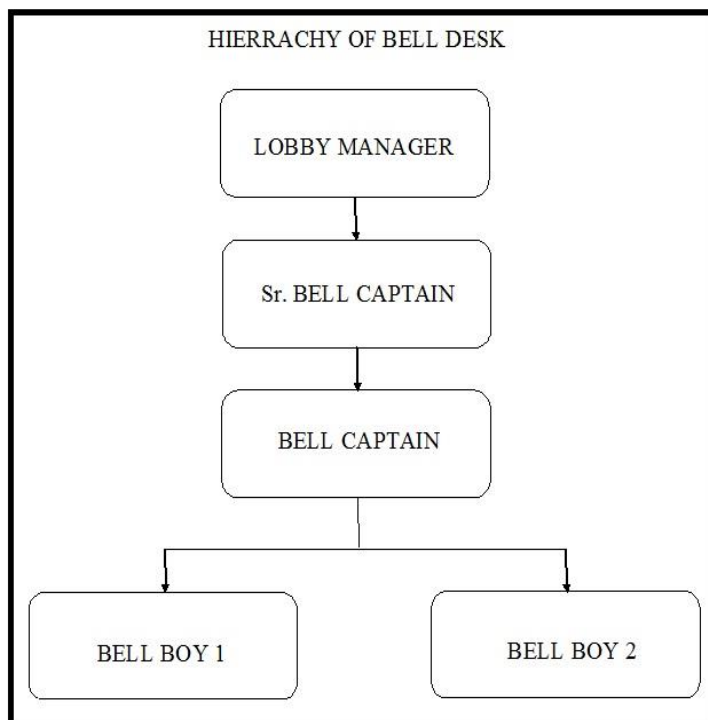


Fig: 2.6 Hierarchy of Bell Desk

Job Description of Bell Captain:

Job Title: Bell Captain

Job Category: Supervisory

Reports to: 1. Sr. Bell Captain
2. Lobby Manager

Job Definition: To supervise and provide all porter services with efficiency and politeness.

Directly controls: Bell Boys

Assigned area of activity: Principally it is the lobby area but is authorized to work in any part of the hotel depending upon the errand demanded.

Hours of Operation: One shift of 8 hours in 24 hours, or as per policy of the management.

Authority: To check bell boys in their daily operations and to appraise their performance.

Work performed:

1. Brief all bell boys at the beginning of a shift.
2. Ensure that bell boys in their shifts are well groomed and uniformed.
3. Control the movement of all bell boys.
4. Assign errands to bell boys.
5. Ensure that the bell desk is well stocked with postage.
6. Initiate action against “scanty baggage” guests.
7. Organize paging services in the lobby.
8. Execute formalities regarding “left luggage”.
9. Assist in security vigilance functions.
10. Assist in crew and group wake call procedure.
11. Perform any other duties that are required by management from time to time.

Errand card: Errand card indicates that room has been allotted to the guest. The information counter at the front office will indicate that the guest has been allotted a room by handing over the errand card, which mentions the room number. The room key is also handed over with the errand card. This is mainly brings to the guest’s attention of any -baggage damaged to protect the hotel from blame.

GUEST ARRIVAL/ERRAND CARD					
Bell boy No:-			Date:-		
Room No:-			GUEST NAME:-----		
Suitcase	Briefcase	Hand bag	Packets	Others	Remarks
Bell boy sign.			Bell Captain sign.		

Fig: 2.7 Errand Card/Guest Arrival Card

Concierge:

Duties: Assists hotel guests with personal services, including reservations, activities, and more

Best Geographical Location(s): All, with the greatest opportunities in large cities and heavy tourist regions with many resorts and hotels

Prerequisites:

Education and Training—No formal educational requirements although many have college degrees; on-the-job training

Experience—Prior hotel experience including front desk work

Special Skills and Personality Traits—Superior interpersonal and communication skills; ability to be diplomatic, tactful, resourceful, and detail-oriented; good at solving problems

Position Description

The word concierge translated from French means “the keeper of the candles,” coined for those who tended to visiting nobles in medieval Europe. Concierge today is essential to all

aspects of guest service and satisfaction. By answering questions and assisting guests with personal services, Concierges serve to enhance the visit of guests staying in their hotel.

Out of all the jobs in the hospitality industry, Concierge is probably the one that most defines “hospitality.” Concierges are on the front line, working with people and trying to meet their needs every day. Their role is to serve as a resource for hotel guests and the scope of their responsibilities can be quite varied. Depending on the circumstances, Concierges can do anything from making restaurant recommendations and dinner reservations to finding an after-hours pharmacy to obtain medication.

Most Concierges spend most of their time at a stand that is part of or near the front desk of their hotel or resort. However, for some guests, their interaction with the Concierge begins before they even check in. They may e-mail or call the Concierge to have plans arranged, including dinner reservations, tours, and activities, before they arrive. Concierges may also field pre-trip questions about weather, packing advice, and suggestions for itineraries.

Guest Mail Handling:

Mail is often handled by the information assistant. If the hotel has a large number of rooms, the volume of mail received everyday may be appreciable enough to take the handling of it one of the major and critical tasks of the front office. Mail may vary from letters, business and promotional material, cables and telexes, to large parcels. The timely delivery of the same to guests is important as it might influence his certain plans. To safeguard the hotel from guest complaints regarding mail, most hotels insist on the following:

1. Timing-stamp of all mail at the time of receipt.
2. If the registered insured envelope or parcel is received in an opened state, to record this in the mail log book and have it counter signed the postman.
3. All registered mail, insured mail, etc. should have the signature of the guest when delivered.

Front Office- Handling mail and messages

Handling mails and messages on behalf of the guests and the hotel is an important responsibility of front desk personnel. For example if a registered letter is received by a hotel but not delivered to the guest, the hotel may be held liable for any losses or inconvenience caused to the guest. Therefore an efficient system of handling messages and mails is

essential. As a protection against charge of negligence against both the hotel and the person dealing with the mail many hotels insist that for all incoming mails time and date should be stamped upon arrival.

All incoming mail is divided into three main categories

- Hotel mail which is normally distributed to the relevant departments concerned
- Staff mail which is normally distributed through the personnel department.
- The guest mail which consists of resident (i.e. current guest) mail, past guest mails and future guest mails

The following procedure has to be followed with all mails

1. All mails are date and time stamped

2. As soon as the mail bag arrives, it is sorted in the GMs office or at the particular responsible person's office. Mail is then sorted, hotel or guest mail. The hotel mail is again sorted to staff or management mail. The management mail is put into the respective boxes. The staff mail is sent across to the time office. Usually bell boy takes the across to the time office.

3. Mails for the guest is again sorted into:

- current guests (guests who are in house)
- past guests (guests who have already checked out)
- Future guests (guests who are expected to check in at a future date.)

4. All ordinary mails must be sent across to the guests as soon as possible. The key rack is checked if the key is there, that indicates the guest is not in the hotel the letter can be kept along with the key and be handed over to guest when he comes to collect the keys. But these days, since most of the hotel follows electronic key card system, it is possible that the guest may carry the card along with himself. Therefore the letter can be sent to the room and the guest availability can be checked for delivery of the letters.

5. In case the mail is a registered mail, the bell desk is authorized to receive mail on behalf of the guest; if prior authorization by the guest is given. Many hotels have a system of recording the registered mail in the front office logbook to inform others on shift.

Past Guests

For guests who have already checked out, a check for mail forwarding slip is made. This slip

is filled out by the guest at the time of checking out where the guest indicates the address of the destination he would like his to be forwarded, in case any mail arrives for him after he checks out. In case if no information is received, the mail is kept for a period of one month, after which it is redirected to the sender or the permanent address of the guest.

XYZ HOTEL
Please forward the mail arriving for
Dr/ Mr /Mrs /Miss-----
Room No----- during the next-----days
in the following address
Date-----Signature-----

Fig: 2.8 Mail forwarding slip

Future guests

Details of the guest arrival date are obtained from the reservation file and this date is written on the guest mail. A note is then made on the computer or recorded on the guest reservation file. On the evening before the guest arrival, the mail is sorted out and attached to the registration form or kept at the front desk. On arrival of the guest it is handed over and noted in the logbook.

OUTGOING MAIL:

It involves mail for the guests as well as hotel mail. Departmental mails are handled by individual departments. Large hotels use franking machine for postage. A record needs to be kept of the quantity and costs of the mail being sent out. Any letters or parcels posted for guests must be weighed and a voucher of the charges is sent to the cahiers desk.

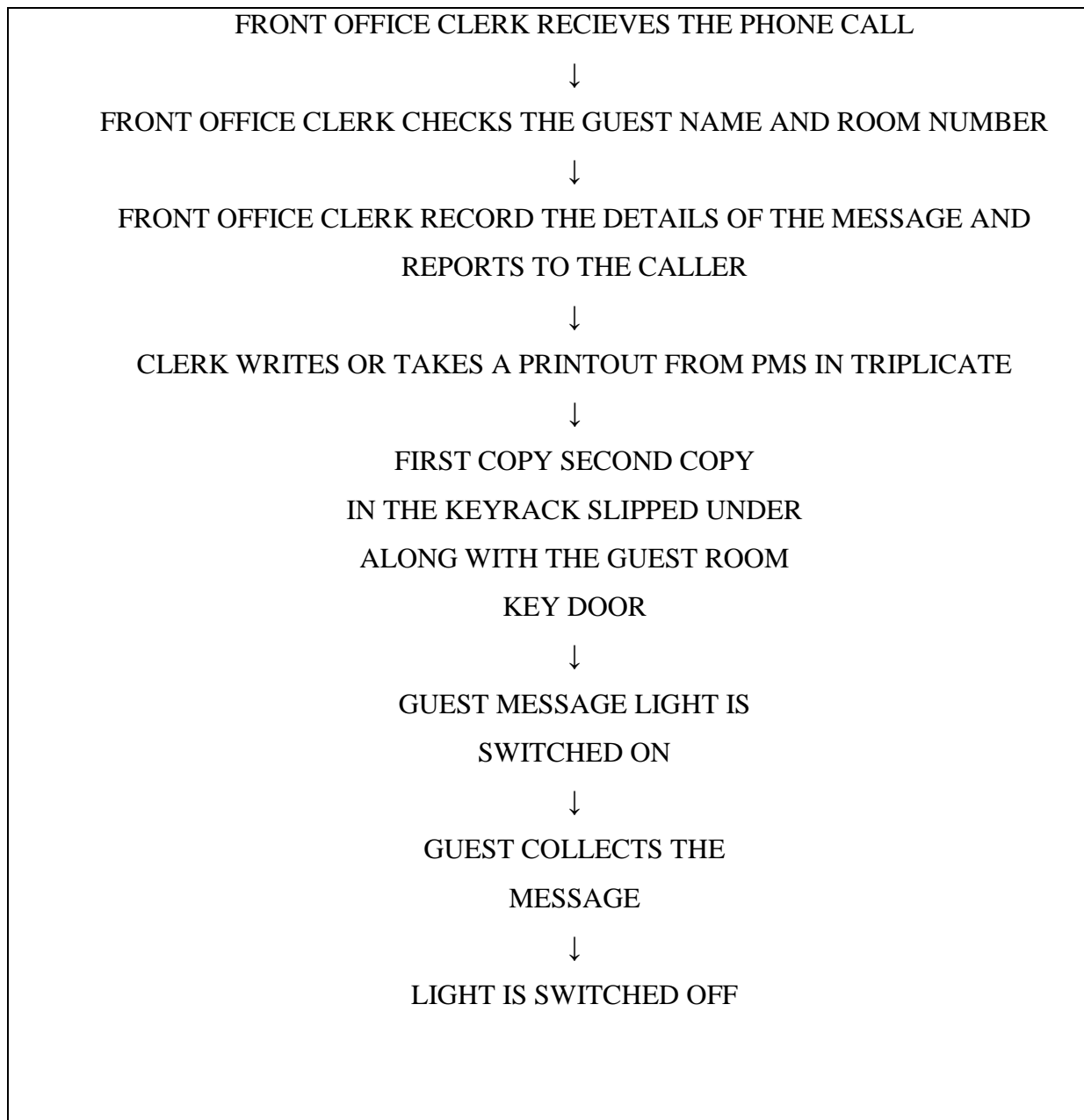
MESSAGES:

The recording of guest messages can be done manually or by computer. Guest messages are important and if not promptly given to the guest concerned may cause problems or embarrassment which could result in a strong complaint. The accurate handling of messages and their delivery is essential. In case a message is received, three copies are made. One copy

is placed in the key rack along with the key, the second is slipped under the door, and the third is book copy. In case of manual message recording system process is given in Fig: 2.9 below.

Regular check on the pending undelivered mail/.messages has to be done by the shift in-charge to ensure prompt delivery of the same. Messages received for guests who are expected to arrive at a hotel on a particular day should be attached to their registration cards at the front desk. Guests who are expected to arrive in future will have their messages filed in alphabetical order and a note is attached to their reservation file to remind the front desk clerk on the pending message. Message for the guest who has checked out will be checked against mail forwarding record and if necessary redirected.

Fig 2.9 Manual message handling procedure



XYZ HOTEL	
To-----	Room No-----
You were called	
By-----	
Of-----	
At-----	
<input type="checkbox"/> Please call back _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Will meet you a _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Will call again _____	
Message: _____ _____	

Fig 2.10 Message Record Slip

Black List:

It is a list of unwanted guests. These may be those guests who make a lot of fuss and create a lot of problems for the hotel. Non payment of bill, damage to hotel's property, misbehaves with its staff or other guests of the hotel. FHRAI is usually informed about such a guest.

General House Rules:

The Front Office working Manual include the Common and General Front Office Duties, Job Guidelines and Responsibilities which can be applicable to all Front Office Operations and it could be modified and Personalized to Match with each Front Office Operation subject to the Hotel General Policies and Procedure.

1. Introduction
2. Get to Know your Hotel (Hotel Detailed Fact Sheet)
3. Front Office Department
 - Organization Chart
 - Standard for Front Office Personnel
 - Rules and Regulations for Front Office Department
4. Front Office Position Guide Lines (Job Description).
5. Working Manual

- Telephone Operator
- Front Desk
- Reservations
- Bell Stand
- Drivers

1. Always bear in mind your working hours.
2. Be ready to work at your station at least 15 minutes before schedule. Sign in and sign out in the assigned book.
3. You should always be well groomed, uniform must be neat and clean and nametag should be worn at all times.
4. Always greet your fellow workers when you first arrive at your station.
5. No food, no chewing gum, no smoking around working area.
6. Greet guests politely every time you see them. If you know the name, greet them by name, if you do not use Sir or Madam every time.
7. Be polite to guests and fellow workers, however, do not exceed the limits of courtesy and politeness.
8. Never leave your station when nobody else is there.
9. Pick up the telephone at your station within 3 rings.
10. Always Smile
11. Every time you have to leave your station inform your fellow workers where you will be and when you will be back.
12. Check the back office board every day.
13. Do not leave your shift until you have been replaced.
14. Any staff who is unable to come to work must phone to his supervisor at least 4 hours before the shift starts.
15. Changing shift or days off with other employees will not be permitted unless approved by supervisor.
16. Working area must be kept neat and clean at all times.
17. All equipment should be used carefully with routine maintenance.
18. Personal calls other than emergency are not made or received while on duty.
19. Do not stay around the working area when off duty or have finished the shift.
20. Report all unusual situations promptly to your supervisor.

Check your Knowledge:

Q1. How is PBX different from PABX?

Q2. What is Call Accounting System?

Q3. What are the duties and responsibilities of concierge?

Q4. Draw hierarchy of Bell Desk.

Q5. What rules should be followed by the front office staff to carry out daily work?

Q6. How equipments used in front office are helpful in handling guests?

Q7. In what conditions a guest is not entertained in a hotel?

Q8. Name different automated equipments used in front office.

Q9. Draw a format of Errand Card.

Q10. Discuss the procedure which is adopted for mail and message handling by the front desk staff.

UNIT VII

Front Office Communications & Other Attributes

Structure

- Communication Fundamentals
- Telephone etiquettes – restaurant and hotel English
- Professional Attributes - Attitude towards your job,
- Personal Hygiene
- Uniforms
- Care for your own health & safety
- Important terminology used in hotels

Objectives

After reading this unit, students will be able to

- Know about the expectations of the hotel industry and importance of role of attitude, hygiene and appearance of any individual who wishes to work as the front office personnel in standard hotels
- Understand the importance of communication skills in the hospitality industry.
- Handle the telephonic conversations being the front office employee in a professional way.
- Familiarize with the Jargon of Front Office

Introduction

Front Office being in general the first department of a hotel to get an opportunity of interacting with the guests that too face to face also bears the greatest responsibility of leaving the best impression of the hotel upon the guests and earns goodwill for the hotel. First impression is build on the basis of individual's own attributes such as communication skills and appearance. Front Office agents are brand ambassadors of the hotel as they represent hotel management and it is expected from them to handle guests in such a way that hotel gets

repeated business from the same guest. Hotel earns revenue due to guests' expending on rooms and food and beverages and other services as at every point of sale, interaction between guest and hotel staff is inevitable. So, hotel staff needs to maintain hygienic appearance and communicate at every step of providing services to the guest. It should also be kept in mind that while communicating with guest; his/her privacy should also be taken care of by the front office employee and efforts should be made to be particular and just but with a natural smile and remember to treat guests like guests (as guest has come to your home) . Communication also plays an essential role to gather inter-departmental information so that hotel is managed more efficiently. As there could be different means of communication such as telephone, personal, e-mails, messages etc so handling telephonic conversations, reverting to e-mails or mails and messages also are important part of front office.

Communication Fundamentals

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary communication means 'the activity or process of expressing ideas, feelings or of giving people information'.

According to Newstron and Davis (1997) 'it is the transfer of information from one person to another person. It is a way of reaching others by transmitting ideas, facts, thoughts, feelings, and values.'

So, Communication in general may be expressed as the process of sharing views, thoughts, ideas, and knowledge between two or more individuals or between groups. Information has to be conveyed from sender to receiver using the medium (language/signs etc.) that is understood by both sender and receiver. The most important aspect in the process of the communication is the interpretation of the message. The receiver of the message should interpret the message in the sense the sender intends it. The following criteria should be fulfilled for proper communication to take place-

1. There is something to transfer – ideas, feelings, knowledge, information etc.
2. There must be a sender and a receiver to complete the process of communication.
3. The message should be correctly interpreted.

The Communication Process



Fig 3.1: The Communication Process

Source: The source is an individual or a group, of people who wish to share the given information, facts, or thoughts with another person or group of people (the target audience of the message), and initiate the communication. A good communication depends upon the skills of the source, which should provide complete information in a proper manner.

Message: Message is the subject matter of the communication that is passed from the sender to the target audience. It may be views, ideas, orders, facts, data, request etc.

Encoding: In order to convey information, the sender must encode or translate the information into messages, which others can understand (should be a common language).

Channel: The medium through which the encoded message passes between sender and receiver is known as the channel of communication. It may be a written form (like letter, e-mail or fax), or telephonic conversation, or personal contact, etc. It depends upon the communication options (telephone, e-mail etc.) available between the sender and receiver.

Target: The target of the message is the receiver of the message to whom sender has communicated his ideas, views, information, feelings etc. The extent to which receiver

comprehends the message will depend upon the receiver's knowledge about the topic, their receptivity to the message.

Decoding: Once the message reaches the receiver, the later tries to interpret it. A communication is successful if the receiver correctly interprets the sender's message.

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

Importance of Communication

Communication as discussed earlier is sharing of views, thoughts etc in a manner so that both the parties (sender and receiver) understand the subject of the matter in a common way. In front office, communication plays an important role as these personnel have to interact regularly with the guests so as to add personalised services to make guests' stay comfortable in the hotel. As information also has to be passed inter departments for the purpose of planning and execution of tasks properly, so communication becomes essential for all the departments to run efficiently. Thus-

- External Communication is very important to satisfy and please guests.
- Internal Communication is very important for proper coordination among various departments.

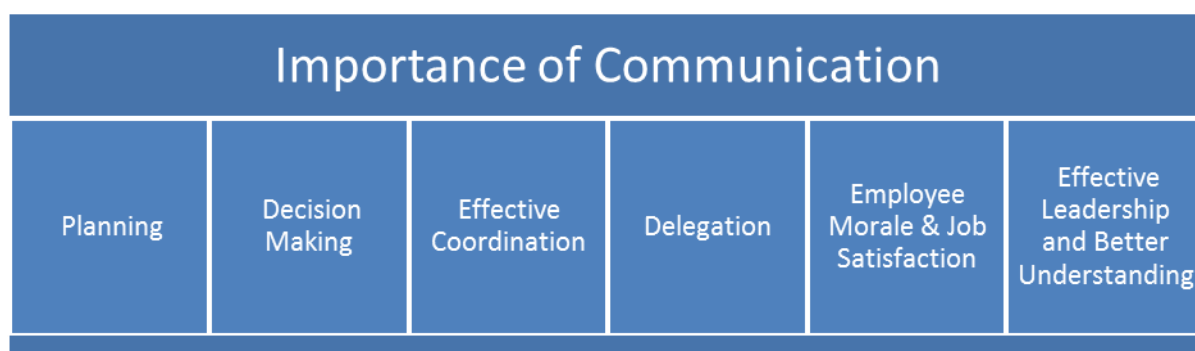


Fig3.2: Importance of Communication

Planning: Proper communication plays an important part in planning the work and distributing the responsibilities to the employees. As advance information about the 'guest arrivals' will enable the manager to plan in a better way for the day. Managers gather relevant information from each section or department through oral or written communication like arrival reports, staff briefings, reservation requests etc.

Decision Making: On many occasions, managers are required to make important decisions on the basis of the information available to them. They should be able to study all the

available options before choosing the most suitable alternative. So effective communication generates all the necessary information which is helpful in the decision making process.

Effective Coordination: As departmental information is exchanged with rest of the departments so as to take care of the daily business; it becomes necessary that information which is exchanged is communicated correctly and is complete. To perform this routine course of communications, effective coordination or liaison between all the departments (Front Office, Housekeeping, Food and Beverage, Maintenance, Sales and Marketing etc) of the hotel should be maintained

Delegation: Delegation means to distribute the jobs and responsibilities to the workforce as per the planning done by the top management of the hotel. To do so, effective communication process has to be followed by the management so that job's responsibility is given to the same person who has been specified for that job.

Employee Morale and Job Satisfaction: When team members can communicate and discuss their problems and resolve them too, the performance level of the employees also gets better.

Effective Leadership and Better Understanding: Good leaders communicate effectively with their teams, leading to good understanding, cooperation and coordination among team members.

The Basic Forms of Communication:

The basic forms of communication are of two types such as verbal and non-verbal communication. It can be in the form of meetings, speeches or writing, gestures or expressions.

Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication is a primitive form of communication that does not involve the use of words. It rather uses gestures, cues, vocal qualities, spatial relationships etc. to convey a message. It is commonly used to express emotions like respect, love, dislike, unpleasantness, etc.

Non-verbal communication is less structured compared to its verbal counterpart and is most often spontaneous. As it is not planned, it is sometimes considered more reliable than verbal communication, as it reflects the communicator's true feelings.

Non-verbal communication enhances the effectiveness of the message as gestures and body language are registered easier and quicker with the audience than verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication, when combined with verbal communication, makes a presentation more effective and has greater impact on the audience.

Verbal communication

However, non-verbal communication has its limitations. Many complex ideas, thoughts or messages have to be communicated sequentially to be meaningful. Verbal communication involves the arrangement of words in a structured and meaningful manner, adhering to the rules of grammar. The message is then conveyed to the audience in either spoken or written form.

Speaking and Writing

Effective verbal communication involves the use of both speech and writing to transmit a message. While oral communication is more effective in reaching a focused target audience, as it involves interaction and additional non-verbal cues to augment the speech, written communication is necessary for reaching a large number of scattered recipients. Depending on the situation and the requirements, businesses use both the spoken as well as written channels for communication.

Listening

Businesses have far not paid much attention to listening as a skill. Equal importance should be given to listening and expression. Oral communication cannot be effective unless the audience is good at listening and most of its content is forgotten after a presentation. Developing good listening skills is essential for grasping the contents of an oral presentation and retaining them.

Barriers to Communication:

The process of communication is susceptible to many barriers. These can be categorized into problems caused by the sender, problems in message transmission, problems in reception, and problems in receiver comprehension.

Dealing with Communication Barriers:

Though most communication barriers require situation specific handling, a few basic methods for dealing with them are available. These methods such as know your subject, focus on the purpose, know your audience, and be organized.

Attributes for Phone Handling

Friendliness - Your voice will carry your attitude over the phone.

Confidence - Prepare yourself. This will enable you to speak with confidence. Know your property. Know how to analyze your status data quickly.

Intelligence - Remember that you are talking with individuals from different backgrounds and levels of education. Meet your caller on his level.

Clarity - It is embarrassing for the listener to ask you to repeat a statement.

Creativity - If the opportunity avails itself, help solve problems. Use your expertise to offer alternatives he may not have thought of.

Enthusiasm - Find out the positive points about your property and concentrate on them.

Integrity - Be honest, if you do not know, admit it & offer to find out. Do not mislead your prospect.

Tact - Be tactful in any situation. Try to convince the guest without hurting his feelings.

Pride - Take pride in your company and your work. Let the pride reflect in your voice and your speech. Pride generates enthusiasm. Your pride in the hotel will instill interest & confidence in the mind of the caller.

Use of Telephone by Front Office Personnel

1. The telephone is to be used for reception business. If you want to make a private call, use the private call box in the lobby. If somebody calls you personally (not on business), keep your conversation as brief as possible and offer to telephone back from the call box when you are free. Unless you do this, you may keep waiting a potential guest who wants to make a booking.

2. When the telephone rings answer it immediately. The call should be attended within three rings. If you are attending to a guest at that time, first answer the phone, excuse yourself. Do not let the telephone ring without answering it. Although it may at times be irritating the telephone should always come before any desk work, but should not take precedence over the guest at the counter with whom you were dealing before the telephone rang.

3. Do not keep the caller waiting for a long time before attending to him. A caller on the telephone should never be left longer than 45 seconds without somebody picking up the telephone and telling him again "I am sorry to keep you waiting."

4. Answer the telephone by saying, "RECEPTION (information or reservation) GOOD MORNING (good afternoon or good evening), MAY I HELP YOU. *Do not answer "Hello".*

5. Speak clearly. Pronounce the words carefully. The caller may find it more difficult to understand you on the telephone than if you speak to him at the counter.
6. Be brief and to the point, but not abrupt. Remember that telephone time costs money and that the switchboard operator may be holding another call for you.
7. Be polite, friendly and helpful. On the telephone only your voice can indicate the welcome we want every potential guest to receive. Do not interrupt the caller while he is talking. You must never sound short, sharp, irritated and impatient.
8. Be accurate in what you say. The guest wants to have confidence in you. Do not 'THINK' or 'SUPPOSE' if you do not know the answer; find out and call back.
9. Be courteous in explaining the hotel rules. Do not use the phrase "You have to", "I suggest" or "would you mind" is preferable. Never argue with the guest, the guest is always right. If you cannot deal with a certain problem, inform the seniors in the department, so that they can deal with it.
10. Take the correct name and contact number of the caller. This information will help you if you have telephone the caller back.
11. Finally, Always remember that you represent the hotel or the organisation you are working for when you pick-up a telephone call at work. Caller does not see you or your hotel, so your voice alone has to help the caller become and remain a satisfied customer.

Telephone etiquettes: Thirty-six tips

Before you answer, be prepared (this includes knowing how to use the phone/system features):

1. Turn away from your computer, desk or other work.
2. Have pens, pencils and notepaper handy.

In answering the phone:

3. Answer calls promptly, by the second or third ring.
4. Smile as you pick up the phone.
5. Assume your "telephone" voice, controlling your volume and speed.
6. Project a tone that is enthusiastic, natural, attentive and respectful.
7. Greet the caller and identify yourself and your company/department/unit.
8. Ask, "To whom am I speaking?"
9. Ask, "How may I help you?"

In the course of the conversation:

10. Focus your entire attention on the caller.
11. Enunciate/articulate clearly. Speak distinctly.
12. Use plain English and avoid unnecessary jargon and acronyms.
13. Use action specific words and directions.
14. Use the caller's name during the conversation.
15. Always speak calmly and choose your words naturally.
16. Use all of your listening skills:
 - a. Focus your full attention on the caller and the conversation.
 - b. Listen "between" the words.
 - c. Use reflective/active listening to clarify and check for understanding.
17. If there is a problem, project a tone that is concerned, empathetic, and apologetic.
18. Avoid the Five Forbidden Phrases.

a. "I don't know"

Instead, say: "That is a good question; let me find out for you" or offer to connect the caller with someone who could provide the answer.

If a call involves some research, assure the person that you will call back by a specific time.

If you do not have an answer by the deadline, call back to say, "I don't have an answer yet, but I'm still researching it." There is no excuse for not returning calls.

b. "I/we can't do that."

Instead say: "This is what I/we can do."

c. "You'll have to"

Instead say: "You will need to" or "I need you to" or "Here's how we can help you."

d. "Just a second"

Instead: Give a more honest estimate of how long it will take you and/or let them know what you are doing.

e. "No"

Instead: Find a way to state the situation positively.

19. Use "LEAPS" with the emotional caller to vent.

L - Listen; allow the caller to vent.

E - Empathize; acknowledge the person's feelings

A - Apologize when appropriate, even if the problem is not your fault, you can say, "I am really sorry this has happened" and mean it.

P - (Be) Positive

S - Solve; suggest/generate solutions that you can both agree on and/or ask what you can do to help and, if reasonable, do it! If not, find a compromise.

In concluding the call:

- 20. End the conversation with agreement on what is to happen next; if you are to follow-up, do so immediately.
- 21. Thank the caller for calling; invite the caller to call again.

In transferring calls:

- 22. Transfer ONLY when necessary; get the information yourself.
- 23. If you must transfer, avoid the use of the word "transfer." Say instead: "I am going to connect you with".
- 24. Explain why you are "transferring" the call.
- 25. Give the caller the person's name and direct number
- 26. Stay on the line and introduce the caller.

In taking messages:

- 27. Identify yourself and for whom you are answering the phone.
- 28. Practice political sensitivity.
- 29. Indicate the period of time the person will be unavailable.
- 30. Write down all the important information given:
 - a. The name of the caller. Ask for spelling if unclear.
 - b. The (correct) telephone number of the caller.
 - c. The message. Ask for clarification if necessary.
- 31. Read back what you've written to be sure you've understood the message correctly.
- 32. Always assure the person that you will deliver the message promptly.
- 33. Deliver the message in a timely fashion.

NEVER:

- 34. Eat, drink or chew gum while on the phone.
- 35. Leave an open line:
 - a. Place the caller on hold
 - b. Check back with the caller frequently: every 30-45 seconds.

ALWAYS:

- 36. Put a smile in your telephone voice and let your personality shine!

The Complaint Call

Complaint callers who are irate are really saying, "I rate." They have bought into society's "the squeaky wheel gets the grease" mentality. When that happens, try the EAR method:

Empathize with the caller.

Apologize and acknowledge the problem.

Accept Responsibility. (You'll do something.)

Empathize with the caller. This is different from sympathy, where you take on someone else's problem. Try to understand how the person is feeling. Apologize and acknowledge the problem. You don't have to agree with the caller, but express regret that there is a problem. People want to be heard, and no one's complaint is trivial. Each deserves prompt handling, so do not deal with it in a trivial manner. Accept responsibility. Make sure something is done. Take it upon yourself to **DO** something. Many times, that's all that people want: the reassurance that something will be done. People want to be helped. They want to know that you care. Use these phrases to get that sentiment across: "How can I help you?" "What can I do for you?" "I'll make sure this message/information gets to the right person." The acceptance of responsibility may be as simple as forwarding the call to the appropriate individual or sending the caller more information. If you do forward the caller to someone else on your staff, follow up with that person to make sure the caller was taken care of.

If you get an irate caller, or even one who is calm, cool, and collected, here are some more methods to handle complaint calls:

First, don't overreact, especially if the caller starts using "trigger" words or phrases, such as: "I want to talk to someone who knows something." Most people respond by getting defensive when their "hot-button words" are pressed.

Remember, a positive attitude is the most important asset you have.

Second, listen completely to the complaint. Allow the caller the opportunity to vent some frustration. When you listen, don't try to apply logic to the situation. Many people are beyond logic if they are angry, so accept the feelings being expressed. Avoid argument and criticism.

Third, do not blame anyone -- the caller, yourself, or someone on your staff -- even if you know who is to blame for a problem. This information should not be shared with the caller.

Fourth, paraphrase the caller's comments, and ask questions if you do not understand the information being presented to you. Restate the problem as you understand it.

Fifth, offer solutions and, if appropriate, offer alternatives. Providing alternatives empowers callers. It gives callers a feeling that they were not dictated to and that they were part of the solution.

Finally, confirm the solution with the caller. Make sure the caller agrees with what has been decided.

Of course, not everyone will be happy, no matter what you do. These people will not be content; they just like being grumpy. Usually, these are the people who want to talk to the person "above you." If that is what it takes to lessen their anger, then do so. By the time they have been transferred to a supervisor, they usually have become calmer and less demanding. It seems that they just needed to vent their anger at someone: you. Just remember that most people are not that way and keep a firm grip on that positive attitude of yours.

How do people answer the phone in different parts of the world?

- In Spain they say "Get on with it!"
- In Italy they say "Ready!"
- In the Czech Republic they say "Ahoy!"
- In Japan they say "Mushi-mushi!"
- In New Zealand they ask "Are you there?"
- In Hong Kong they say "Waay!"
- In the Netherlands they say "With..."
- In Finland they state their full name

PERSONALITY TRAITS OF THE FRONT OFFICE STAFF

Professional Manners:

- Report to work on time
- Has a positive attitude toward the job & the hotel
- Recognizes positive & negative aspects of the job
- Possesses maturity in judgments
- Appears business like
- Maintain control & composure in difficult situations

Congenial Nature

- Smiles readily
- Exhibits cordial & pleasant behaviour
- Helpful attitude
- Is sensitive to the guest needs
- Possesses a sense of humour
- Responds and speaks with intelligence
- Demonstrates creativity

- Practices good listening skills

Flexibility

- Willing and able to accept a different work shift if necessary
- Understands others points of view
- Will to try new ways of doing things innovative
- Liaise with the guests and hotel staff and works as a team player

Well Groomed Appearance

- Dresses appropriately
- Meets property standards for the wear and care of uniform, Jewellery and personal grooming

Empathy:

- The best employee is the one who sees a customer in every individual, and an individual in every customer.
- Feel like a guest, and act like a host.

Recognition:

- Call regular guest by name.
- Make guest feel that he is welcomed back.

Attention

- Stop what you are doing to attend to a guest.
- Concentrate on what guest is saying.
- Listen carefully without any interruption.

Honesty:

- Do not promise what you cannot fulfil.
- Do not sell what you don't have.

Respect:

- There should always be a limit between you and the guest, even if you are the friendliest.

Here are under some guidelines for guest contact techniques

- We Learn Something From What We Hear.
- We Learn More From What We See.
- We Learn Most From What We Do
- Look Neat And Well Groomed.
- Your Smile Is The Magic Touch To Start With.

- Show The Guest That You Care
- Great The Guest Warmly Using The Magic Words.
- Give The Guest Your Immediate And Undivided Attention.
- Be Friendly and Helpful.
- Be Interested To People.
- Maintain Eye Contact Whenever Talking To A Guest.
- Actively Listen.
- Never Ignore A Guest Even If You Are Busy.
- Show The Guest That They Are Important.
- Use The Guest Name Whenever Possible.
- Be A Good Listener Without Any Interruption.
- Always Show Respect.
- Cover The Guest Needs, Exceed His Expectations.
- Protect The Guest Privacy.



Fig: 3.3 Fundamentals to achieve top quality services in hotels

Grooming Standards

WHAT TO DO	HOW TO DO	WHY
Grooming standard for Male / Female	Always present a clean cut, well groomed image representing the stature of Hotel.	Guest's impression is very important.
1) HAIR	Should be neat, clean and off the face at all time. Uniformed staff with off shoulder hair length must have it combed up (Follow up the hotel standard) Extremes in hairstyles are not allowed	Standard policy of the Hotel

	Prominent hair accessories are to be avoided	
2) MAKE- UP	Use light make- up minimum requirement. Powder - Light Lipstick - Light Eye shadow - Light Colour	To appear "Lively "and professional.
3) SHOES	Black leather shoes should be clean, safe and comfortable The heel of shoes should be reasonable	Sign of respect to the guest. For safety reasons will be bring as you may need to walk and stand most of the time.
4) JEWELRY	Should not be excessive especially dangling ear rings and long chains Limited to wedding / engagement ring and wrist watch All other items like outsized watches, nose jewellery, bangles, anklets and Unconcealed necklace are not permitted.	Unprofessional and not hygienic.

Care for Health and Safety

You must ensure that your safety statement, which includes the risk assessments, is brought to the attention of all employees and others at the workplace that may be exposed to any risks covered by the safety statement. The statement must be in a form and language that they all understand. In particular, all new employees must be made aware of the safety statement when they start work. Other people may be exposed to a specific risk dealt with in the safety statement and the statement should be brought to their attention.

These people could include:

- Outside contractors who do cleaning, maintenance or building work
- Temporary workers
- Delivery people who stack their goods in your premises and come in contact with activities there
- Self-employed people who provide a service for the employer

Where specific tasks are carried out which pose a serious risk to safety and health, the

relevant contents of the safety statement must be brought to the attention of those affected, setting out the hazards identified, the risk assessments and the safety and health measures that must be taken.

You should ensure that the relevant contents of the safety statement are brought to the attention of your employees and others affected at least annually, and whenever it is revised. You have an ongoing responsibility to ensure that all relevant persons are aware of the safety statement and understand its terms. A campaign to discharge this responsibility could include a combination of written and verbal communication, including:

- Distributing the safety statement, specific risk assessments or relevant sections of it to all employees when first prepared and whenever significant changes are made
- Making the safety statement and specific risk assessments available electronically on company intranet sites which can be easily interrogated
- Verbal communication of the terms of the safety statement or particular risk assessments
- Inclusion of the relevant parts of the safety statement and specific risk assessments in employees' handbooks or manuals
- Through ongoing training

Carrying out risk assessments, preparing and implementing a safety statement and keeping both up to date will not in themselves prevent accidents and ill health but they will play a crucial part in reducing their likelihood. The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill. Accidents and ill health can ruin lives, and can affect your business too if output is lost, machinery is damaged, insurance costs increase, or you have to go to court.

Employers, managers and supervisors should all ensure that workplace practices reflect the risk assessments and safety statement. Behaviour, the way in which everyone works, must reflect the safe working practices laid down in these documents. Supervisory checks and audits should be carried out to determine how well the aims set down are being achieved. Corrective action should be taken when required. If a workplace is provided for use by others, the safety statement must also set out the safe work practices that are relevant to them.

Glossary of Hospitality/Tourism Terms

Channel of communication -- System or process of communication. How communication moves within department.

Check-in – Procedure of registering the guest when he arrives at a hotel or in other way is the action of arriving and process of registration.

Check- in procedure - Formalities to be done when a guest checks in (allocating a room, taking guest's name, asking the guest to sign the hotel register).

Check-out - Action of leaving and paying the bill.

Check -out procedure -Formalities to be done when a guest checks out (presenting the bill and making sure it is paid, taking the room key, etc).

Concierges - A moving information desk. The tables are set up for special function, festival, for a special group or for events.

Errand Card - Is a task card which mentions room number, guest name and luggage types. It is prepared by reception and hand over to bell boy.

Image building - Creating good-will of the company or representing a positive image of the company.

In-house guest - Guests staying in the hotel.

Personal grooming - Process of positive development of a staff.

Paging - Process of identifying and informing of a guest.

Reference point - From where the information is received.

Scanty baggage - Term used for any guest with light baggage

Skipper - A room status term indicating that the guest has left the hotel room without making arrangements to settle his or her account.

Sundry services - Extra services. Small but important services provided to the guests. It includes message, male handling of guests.

Amenities - Extra facilities, service added with attraction, accessibility and accommodation to create tourism. It includes trust, friendship, hospitality, etc

Back of the house - Staffs who are not directly involved in providing service. Guests rarely interact with them

Continuously rendered service - The services are prepared and provided when customer is physically present. Here service is process and is extended to a time limit and it is face to face interaction. For example reservation service, restaurant service, massage, etc

Excursionist - Temporary visitors, who stay less than twenty- four hours

Front of the house - Staffs directly involved in providing services. For example receptionist, bellboys, gate-keeper, etc.

High-touch service - the services which are prepared in advance and customer will receive when he wants such as room reservation, fast-food, printed information, housekeeping service, etc

Hospitality - Literal meaning is "looking after guests well being". It includes organizing, providing services and taking proper care of guests. It means friendly and generous treatment of guests.

Hospitality industry –It includes all companies involved in providing services for guests. They are travel agencies, hotels, lodges, inns restaurants and all other recreational centers. They provide more mental satisfaction than tangible objects.

Intangibility - Which cannot be seen, tested, felt heard or smells or measured before they are delivered and received by customer. For example travel experience, trust, confidence, hospitality, satisfaction, etc.

ABA - American Bus Association; comprised of bus companies, operators and owners

Attendance Building - Marketing and promotional programs designed to increase attendance at conventions, trade shows, meetings, and events.

Attractions - General all-inclusive term travel industry marketers use to refer to products that have visitor appeal, like museums, historic sites, performing arts institutions, preservation districts, theme parks, entertainment and national sites.

AVHRM - Association of Vacation Home Rental Managers.

Bed Tax (Transient Occupancy Tax of TOT) - City or county tax added to the price of a hotel room.

Blocked - Hotel rooms held without deposit

Booked - Hotel rooms, airline tickets or other travel services held for a specific client.

Booking - Term used to refer to a completed sale by a destination, convention center, facility, hotel or supplier (i.e. convention, meeting, trade show or group business booking).

Business Travel - Travel for commercial, governmental or educational purposes with leisure as a secondary motivation.

Buyer - A member of the travel trade who reserves room blocks from accommodations or coordinates the development of a travel product.

Carrier - Any provider of mass transportation, usually used in reference to an airline.

Chambers of Commerce - Typically, a Chamber of Commerce will specialize in local economic development that can include tourism promotion.

Charter Group - Group travel in which a previously organized group travels together, usually on a custom itinerary.

C of C - Chamber of Commerce

Commissions - A percent of the total product cost paid to travel agents and other travel product distributors for selling the product to the consumer.

Convention and Visitors Bureau - These organizations are local tourism marketing organizations specializing in developing conventions, meetings, conferences and visitations to a city, county or region.

Conventions and Trade Shows - Major segment of travel industry business. Trade shows differ from conventions in that they have exhibit space that provides product exhibition and sales opportunities for suppliers, as well as information gathering and buying opportunities for customers.

Conversion Study - Research study to analyze whether advertising respondents actually were converted to travellers as a result of advertising and follow-up material.

Co-op Advertising - Advertising funded by two or more destinations and /or suppliers.

Cooperative Marketing - Marketing programs involving two or more participating companies, institutions or organizations.

Cooperative Partner - An independent firm or organization which works with a tourism office by providing cash or in-kind contributions to expand the marketing impact of the tourism office's program.

Cover - Each diner at a restaurant.

CTRLA - Car and Truck Rental and Leasing Association.

CVB - Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Destination - A hotel, resort, attraction, city, region, or state.

Destination Marketing - Marketing a city, state, country, area or region to consumers and trade.

Destination Marketing Organization - Local tourism marketing organizations, such as convention and visitors bureaus or chambers of commerce.

Discounted Fare - Negotiated air fare for convention, trade show, meeting, group and corporate travel.

Discover America - Theme used by the Travel Industry Association and its marketing partners to market travel within the United States.

Fam Tours - Organized trips for travel agents, tour operators, tour wholesalers or other members of the travel trade for the purpose of educating and "familiarizing" them with tourism destinations. By seeing the destinations where they are sending travellers, the travel

trade is better prepared to answer customer questions and promote travel to the location. Also called “fams” or “familiarization tours.”

Feeder Airport/City - An outlying city which feeds travellers to hubs or gateway cities.

FIT (Free Independent Travel) - Individual travel in which a tour operator has previously arranged blocks of rooms at various destinations in advance for use by individual travellers. These travellers travel independently, not in a group, usually by rental car or public transportation.

Frequency - The number of times an advertisement appears during a given campaign.

Fulfilment - Servicing consumers and trade who request information as a result of advertising or promotional programs. Service often includes an 800 number, sales staff and distribution of materials.

Gateway or Gateway City - A major airport, seaport, rail or bus centre through which tourists and travellers enter from outside the region.

GIT (Groups Independent Travel) - Group travel in which individuals purchase a group package in which they will travel with others along a pre-set itinerary.

Group Rate - Negotiated hotel rate for convention, trade show, meeting, tour or incentive group.

Head in Beds - Industry slang referring to the primary marketing objective of accommodations and most destinations - increasing the number of overnight stays.

Hospitality Industry - Another term for the travel industry.

Hub - An airport or city which serves as a central connecting point for aircraft, trains or buses from outlying feeder airports or cities.

Hub and Spoke - Air carriers use of selected cities as “hubs” or connected points for service on their systems to regional destinations.

Icon - A facility or landmark which is visually synonymous with a destination.

Incentive Travel - Travel offered as a reward for top performance and the business that develops markets and operates these programs.

Inclusive Tour – It is an inclusive tour programme having varieties of feature for a collective rate e.g. airfare, accommodations, sightseeing, performances, etc. are included in a package along with accommodation and meals.

International Marketing - Marketing a destination, product or service to consumers and the trade outside the of the United States.

Leisure Travel - Travel for recreational, educational, sightseeing, relaxing and other experiential purposes.

Market Share - The percentage of business within a market category.

Market Volume - The total number of travelers within a market category.

Mission (Sales) - A promotional and sales trip coordinated by a state travel office, conventional and visitors bureau or key industry member to increase product awareness, sales and to enhance image. Target audiences may include tour operators, wholesales, incentive travel planners, travel agents, meeting planners, convention and trade show managers and media. Missions often cover several international or domestic destinations and include private and public sector participants. Mission components can include receptions, entertainment representatives of the destination, presentations and pre-scheduled sales and media calls.

Motor-coach - Deluxe equipment used by most tour operators in group tour programs. Amenities include reclining seats, bathrooms, air conditioning, good lighting and refreshment availability.

Net Rate - The rate provided to wholesalers and tour operators that can be marked up to sell to the customer.

No Show - A customer with a reservation at a restaurant, hotel, etc. who fails to show up and does not cancel.

NTA - National Tour Association comprised of domestic tour operators.

Occupancies - A percentage indicating the number of bed nights sold (compared to number available) in a hotel, resort, motel or destination.

Package - A fixed price saleable travel product that makes it easy for a traveler to buy and enjoy a destination or several destinations. Packages offer a mix of elements like transportation, accommodations, restaurants, entertainment, cultural activities, sightseeing and car rental.

Peaks and Valleys - The high and low end of the travel season. Travel industry marketers plan programs to build consistent year-round business and event out the “peaks and valleys.”

Person Trip Visit - Every time a person travels more than 100 miles (round-trip) in a day or stays overnight away from their primary domicile, whether for business or leisure purposes, they make one “person trip visit.”

Pow Wow - The largest international travel marketplace held in the United States, sponsored by the Travel Industry Association of America.

Press/Publicity Release - A news article or feature story written by the subject of the story for delivery and potential placement in the media.

Press Trips - Organized trips for travel writers and broadcasters for the purpose of assisting them in developing stories about tourism destinations. Often, journalists travel independently, though with the assistance of a state's office of tourism or a DMO.

Property - A hotel, motel, inn, lodge or other accommodation facility.

Rack Rate - The rate accommodations quote to the public. Group rates, convention, trade show, meeting and incentive travel rates are negotiated by the hotel and program organizers.

Reach - The percentage of people within a specific target audience reached by an advertising campaign.

Receptive Operator - Specialists in handling arrangements for incoming visitors at a destination including airport transfers, local sightseeing, restaurants, accommodations, etc. Receptive operators can be a travel agent or tour operator.

Repeat Business - Business that continues to return, thereby generating increased profits.

Reservation Systems (Automation Vendors) - Computerized systems leased to travel agencies offering airline, hotel, car rental and selected tour availability and bookings. Systems are affiliated with major carriers, including American (Sabre), United (Apollo), Eastern (System One), TWA (PARS), and Delta (DATAS II) and feature flight schedules of the sponsoring and other carriers, plus additional travel products.

Retail Agent - A travel agent.

Retailer - Another term for travel agents who sell travel products directly to consumers.

Room - Double: No guarantee of two beds; Double-double: Two double beds (or two queens or kings); Twin: Two twin beds (or two doubles or queens)

Room Blocks - Several rooms held for a group.

Sales Mission - Where suppliers from one DMO travel together to another state or country for the purpose of collectively promoting travel to their area. Sales missions may include educational seminars for travel agents and tour operators.

Sales Seminar - An educational session in which travel agents, tour operators, tour wholesalers or other members of the travel trade congregate to receive briefings about tourism destinations.

Shells - A marketing and sales promotional piece that depicts a destination, accommodation or attraction on the cover and provides space for copy to be added at a later date. Usually shells fit a #10 envelope.

Site Inspection - An assessment tour of a destination or facility by a meeting planner, convention or trade show manager, site selection committee, tour operator, wholesaler or incentive travel manager to see if it meets their needs and requirements prior to selecting a

specific site for an event. After site selection, a site inspection may be utilized to make arrangements.

Spouse Program - Special activities planned for those who accompany an attendee to a convention, trade show or meeting. Note that programs today are not simply for women, but rather for men and women, spouses and friends. Programs must be creatively designed to interest intelligent and curious audiences.

Supplier - Those businesses that provide industry products like accommodations, transportation, car rentals, restaurants and attractions.

Target Audience/Market - A specific demographic, sociographic target at which marketing communications are directed.

Target Rating Points - TRPÖs are a statistical measurement which allows one to evaluate the relative impact of differing advertising campaigns.

Tariff - Rate of fare quoted and published by a travel industry supplier (i.e. hotels, tour operators, etc.) Usually an annual tariff is produced in booklet form for use in sales calls at trade shows.

TIA - Travel Industry Association of America.

TOT - Transient Occupancy Tax.

Tour Operator - Develops, markets and operates group travel programs that provide a complete travel experience for one price and includes transportation (airline, rail, motor-coach, and/or ship), accommodations, sightseeing, selected meals and an escort. Tour operators market directly to the consumer, through travel agents and are beginning to be listed on computerized reservation systems.

Tour Wholesaler - An individual or company that sells tour packages and tour product to travel agents. Tour wholesalers usually receive a 20% discount from accommodations, transportation companies and attractions and pass on a 10 to 15% discount to the retail agent.

Tourism - Leisure travel.

Tourist/Visitor/Traveller - Any person who travels either for leisure or business purposes more than 100 miles (round-trip) in a day or who stays overnight away from his/her primary domicile.

Transient Occupancy Tax - TOT or bed tax is a locally set tax on the cost of commercial accommodations and campgrounds.

Travel - Leisure and other travel including travel for business, medical care, education, etc. All tourism is travel, but not all travel is tourism.

Travel Agent - An individual who arranges travel for individuals or groups. Travel agents may be generalists or specialists (cruises, adventure travel, conventions and meetings.) The agents receive a 10 to 15% commission from accommodations, transportation companies and attractions for coordinating the booking of travel. They typically coordinate travel for their customers at the same or lower cost than if the customer booked the travel on his/her own.

Travel Product - Refers to any product or service that is bought by or sold to consumers of trade including accommodations, attractions, events, restaurants, transportation, etc.

Travel Seasons - Travel industry business cycles including: Peak: Primary travel season Off Peak: Period when business is slowest Shoulder: Period between peak and off peak periods when business is stronger, but has room for growth.

Travel Trade - The collective term for tour operators, wholesalers and travel agents.

Traveller - Definitions vary, but in general a traveller is someone who leaves their own economic trade area, (usually going a distance of a minimum of fifty to one hundred miles) and stays overnight.

Visitors Centre - Travel information centre located at a destination to make it easier for visitors to plan their stay; often operated by a convention and visitors bureau, chamber of commerce or tourism promotion organization.

Vouchers - Forms or coupons provided to a traveller who purchases a tour that indicate that certain tour components have been prepaid. Vouchers are then exchanged for tour components like accommodations, meals, sightseeing, theatre tickets, etc. during the actual trip.

Wholesaler - Develop and markets inclusive tours and individual travel programs to the consumer through travel agents. Wholesalers do not sell directly to the public.

Check your knowledge:

- Q1. What are the barriers of communication?
- Q2. Why does appearance play an important role in hotel industry?
- Q3. What should be the ideals for personal hygiene?
- Q4. How should a complaint call be handled?
- Q5. What are the attributes of Front Office personnel?
- Q6. What are the basic forms of Communication?

Q7. What is no-show?

Q8. Write the 36 steps of handling telephone.

Q9. What care should be taken to assure your own safety in work area?

Q10. What is difference between an excursionist and a tourist?

UNIT VIII

Front office and guest safety and security

Structure

- Safety practices & procedures- Accidents, types, nature, classification
- Preventive measures for each type of accident
- Reporting accidents
- First aid - meaning, importance, and basic rules
- Fire prevention

Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to

- Understand to handle various emergency situations which may arise in hotel
- Know basic rules of First aid in case of emergency
- Understand the preventive measures

Introduction

In these times, safety and security is one of the main concerns in hotels. At hotels, safety of the guest is taken seriously and measures are taken to make sure that guest's stay is as safe as possible. Hotels offer various safety features to the guests such as key cards, security guards, lifeguards, security cameras, fire alarms, emergency power, emergency manual etc to make guest's stay secure and safe. Front office staff must be trained to cope with all emergency situations and their priority should be to abide by the basic rules and regulations defined by the hotel management to counter such situations like theft, accidents, fire, terrorist attack etc. So the understanding and knowledge of emergency situations handling and practicing preventive measures for the same is must.

Security Issues

Security encompasses areas such as security of the property itself, company assets, employees' and customers' personal belongings and valuables, life security; personal security etc.

In all workplaces management stipulates that it is not responsible for valuables and employees personal belongings (their handbags, items kept in the personal lockers, etc.). Yet management must take all possible measures to prevent theft among employees and of employee belongings through its hiring practices and through the implementation of effective management, human resources and operational policies, such as:

- Background checks of selected applicants
- Policies related to employees' entry to, and exit from, the workplace
- Spot checks of locker rooms and lockers
- Effective supervision and control during the work cycle
- Policies related to the discovery of criminal records and wrongdoing among, and by, employees
- Control of people entering and exiting the workplace

With regard to guest valuables, management informs guests that the hotel is not responsible for valuables left in the room, advising them to secure these in safety deposit boxes provided by the hotel. Besides taking care of security issues related to the people they employ (as outlined above), management must undertake some necessary measures, among which:

- Providing "secure" (safety) deposit boxes and areas to keep valuables
- Policies and practices to ensure the security of these boxes and areas
- Management and operational policies regarding the security of guest rooms
- Management and operational policies regarding the security of public areas
- Security policies and practices for the back-of-the-house areas
- Employment and training of security personnel
- Policies and practices to minimize the "presence" and "patronage" of "shady characters" and criminals, verification of registration and check-in personal data and documentation submitted, and curtailing free movement of unknowns on the premises, as well as direct, free flowing communication with local, national and international security authorities)
- Training of staff in guest and valuable security
- Effective supervision and control procedures.

Some of the security measures taken by hotels:

Key Card Locks:

While key card locks on guest rooms are quickly becoming the standard, some hotels still don't take advantage of the added safety provided to guests.

Guest room locking systems these days include punch and magnetic key cards which have locks with flash memory and other productivity linked functions. The system can directly be linked with PMS.

Security Guards:

Most hotels do not have security guards while some employ them only at night. At Best Western Sterling Inn, we have our own staff of trained security guards working 24-hours every day to provide the best in safety and security for our guests

Defibrillation Units:

A life saving device in case of heart attacks, defibrillation units are starting to be deployed among police and emergency personnel across the nation.

Security Cameras:

Few Hotels have security cameras with digital technology, intelligent access central system, software interface with CCTV for matching undesirable visitors and criminals, interfacing with motion detectors, pocket lie detectors and spy cameras and use of biometric readers like hand key reader or face recognition system etc.

Fire Alarms:

While most hotels now have smoke detectors and fire alarms, Some hotels have a state of the art alarm system with smoke detectors in each guest room and throughout the entire complex that is monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days per week that pinpoints the exact point of the alarm allowing our security staff to respond immediately to the area of any alarm condition.

Emergency Power:

Very few hotels have any provision for emergency power in case of an electrical outage while a few hotels provide limited emergency stand-by power to provide elevator service and some lighting. Some hotels have 2-Megawatt stand-by generator that provides 100% emergency power that can provide uninterrupted guest service during a power outage.

Emergency Manual:

Hotels maintain an emergency manual, detailing operations in the event of a variety of emergencies.

Employee Photo ID:

For added security, some hotels have employees wearing a photo ID nametag allowing quick identification.

In-Room Safes:

In addition to the safety deposit boxes offered by most hotels at the front desks, Some hotels provide in-room guest safes capable of holding a lap-top computer that use the guest's own credit card as the key.

Guest elevators:

Elevators may also be interfaced with a room electronic locking system, where swiping the room card key takes the guest to the floor on which he is staying.

Bomb threat security:**Precautions and measures that may be taken in the above case:**

- Security nets and body searches for guests not known to the staff.
- Banqueting suites and other non-public areas should be security checked and locked after use
- Goods received and bags should be checked and kept tidy.
- If a bomb threat is received via telephone, the telephonist should note carefully what exactly is said, the time of the call received the accent of the caller and background noise if any. After the alert the GM should stay put in the lobby where he can be reached easily.
- Duties and responsibility of staff during an emergency should be well-defined.
- The hotel should work closely with the police to keep them updated.
- Chamber maids and HK supervisors should be trained to conduct security checks in the guest rooms.

Security measures for women travellers

- -Mirrored walls of the guestroom floor elevators so that you can see who is walking behind you
- -Well-lit public areas such as lobby bars
- -Valet parking services to avoid the need of a woman to enter the parking lot
- -Assigning rooms closer to the elevator
- -If a woman traveller is not assigned a room on the special executive floor, hotels most often on request, upgrade her accommodation to that floor without an increase in room rate. The floor is staffed almost 24 hours a day with a concierge

IMPORTANCE OF A SECURITY SYSTEM

The guest, who comes to a particular hotel, comes with an understanding that he and his belongings both will be safe and secure during his stay at the hotel. At the same time it is also quite important that the hotel staff and assets are protected and secure. Hence it is very important to have a proper security system in place to protect staff, guests and physical resources and assets such as equipment, appliances buildings, gardens of the hotel and also the belongings of the guest.

The management must take care that the security and safety systems cover the following areas:

- Guest: Protection from crimes such as murder, abduction and health hazards from outsiders, hotel staff, pests, food poisoning etc.
- Staff: Providing staff lockers, insurances, health schemes, provident funds etc. Protective clothing, shoes, fire fighting drills, supply of clean drinking water use of aqua guards, sanitized wash rooms etc.
- Guest luggage: Secure luggage store rooms and proper equipment such as luggage trolley and bell hop trolley should be provided.
- Hotel Equipments: Lifts, Boilers, Kitchen equipment, furniture fitting and building etc. must be protected and for these the security and safety should cover up fire safety equipment, bomb threat security system, water floods security system, earthquake security system, safe vault security system etc.

- Protection of raw materials, goods, provisions and groceries etc. for this the security system should cover proper storage and pest control systems, apart from the application of total material management system.

Types of security:

- 1) Physical aspect
- 2) Security of persons
- 3) Security of systems

1) Physical aspect is divided into two parts

- a) Internal
- b) External

a) Internal security

- Against theft
- Fire safety
- Proper lighting
- Safeguarding assets
- Track unwanted guests

b) External Security

- Proper lighting outside the building
- Proper fencing of the building
- Fencing of pool area to avoid accidents in the night
- Manning of service gates to restrict entry
- Fixing of closed circuit TV cameras

2) Security aspects of persons

a) Staff

- Effective recruitment and selection
- Identification of staff

- Key control
- Red tag system
- Training
- Locker inspection

b) Guests:

- Check scanty baggage guests
- Guests suspected of taking away hotel property should be charged according to hotel policy
- Guest room security:
 - Provide wide angle door viewer, dead bolt locks, night torch, chains on doors etc
 - Employees should be trained to not give any information about in house guests to outsiders
 - While issuing a card key ask for key card if in doubt of the guest.
- House- keeping staff should never leave keys expose on unattended carts in corridors

3) Security aspects of systems:

- Record of all losses and missing items immediately
- Inventory control should be proper
- Auditing should be done on a regular basis
- Proper system for cash disbursements should be made

The term system implies the operations of the hotel eg: all the equipment used for operation, procedures laid down for operations and policies to be followed. Systems procedures and policies if followed properly shall safeguard the assets and increase life span of equipment as well as avoid any breakdown maintenance

This would mean the following:

- Fix duties and responsibilities: Fix duties of staff members so that they don't interfere with others' work.
- Make surprise checks

- Staff who have access to liquid assets should be made to sign a bond so that in case of theft the concerned person can easily be caught
- Hiring of some independent security company to check the security system of the hotel

Safety issues

- When we take the same hotel as example, it is management's duty to ensure "safety" in several areas, such as:
The structure itself
- Installations and fixtures (check electrical, plumbing, air-conditioning and other installations)
- Public and work areas (e.g. slippery floors, hazardous obstacles in traffic areas), safety of furniture, equipment, appliances, and utensils.

This is followed by:

- Health safety (nontoxic cleaning material and detergents used)
- Good quality air (what we breathe, dependent upon the type of equipment, installations and fixtures used, and regular repairs and maintenance)
- Food safety (a whole world in itself including sanitation, food quality, food spoilage, correct handling procedures, allowable and recommended temperatures, etc.), and checking and control procedures.

An important "preventive measure" is eliminating the possibility of communicating contagious diseases. Even if local regulations do not require it, it is recommended to send food and beverage handlers for a regular medical check-up. Another preventive measure is the formulation and implementation of policies and procedures related to employee accidents which may present a threat to food sanitation.

Culinary staff that cut themselves accidentally at work, as often happens while slicing food products, have to immediately stop handling food, and report to their Executive Chef and to the person in charge of First Aid in their company (Security or Human Resources Department) for preliminary treatment and handling. Healing and precautionary measures are taken before they are allowed back at their job.

There are also some basic "dress" requirements for staff involved in food and beverage preparations: e.g. Chefs' hats (to prevent hair and whatever hair contains to fall into the

food), discreet earrings (non-dangling) or no earrings for women, and long hair neatly and securely tied in a bun at the back of the head.

Of no lesser importance is the safety of work tools and work procedures covering all areas, such as stable ladders, secure shelving, safety shoes, well-fitting work garments, clearly written and complete safety procedures and guidelines from management, safety training, and safety installations and equipment, e.g. fire fighting units, regular maintenance schedules for safety equipment and installations, wider traffic areas (to prevent accidents), adequate staffing, and last but not least, continuous effective training in work procedures.

All of this necessitates comprehensive planning, the creation of clear policies and work procedures, organization, implementation, training of supervisors and employees, supervision and control.

FIRE:

Fires in the hotel may result in the injury and loss of life of both the guests and the staff.

Main causes of fire are:

i). Smoking:

- Smoke only where allowed.
- Put out cigarettes in the right place.
- Sufficient ash trays should be provided in eating places and in rooms, but away from curtains and draperies.
- Educate the guests about fire possibilities due to smoking.

ii). Defective wiring, faulty appliances and motor and worn out insulation

Such hazards should be immediately reported to the concerned person and such equipment should be immediately repaired

iii). Laundry Areas:

Care should be taken to see that none of the electrical equipment is left on after use

iv). Gas leaks:

Precautions should be taken against this especially in kitchen areas.

v). Combustible waste

Combustible material should never be left near the boiler room

vi). Kitchen

All equipment such as chimneys, exhausts, ventilators, grills, hoods etc. which collect a lot of fume vapor and catch fire easily should be cleaned regularly.

vii). Elevator shafts:

These require constant check and inspection. Cigarette butts can ignite the debris and oils that gather at the bottom of elevator shafts.

Types of Fire and fire extinguishers:

Hotel personnel are trained about the fire protection procedure and the types of fire. They must be able to recognize the various types of fire, all fire require air. Air contains O₂ which is necessary for combustion. Fire has been classified in 5 categories depending on how they can be extinguished-

Class A Fire- It is the fire of wood, paper, linen and similar dry materials. They are extinguished by cooling and quenching effect of water. The water reduces the temperature of burning substances below their combustion temperature. These are the most frequent and easiest to extinguish when there is an ample water supply and when water can be directed on the combustible material. Keeping the other combustible material wet will limit the spreading of fire

Class B Fire-These include fires of oil, gasoline, grease and other petroleum product. These fires are extinguished by blanketing the source of burning substances and eliminating the supply of O₂. Petroleum products are lighter than water and will float on water and continue to burn and spread by means of flowing water to other section of the building, hence water is never used for this category.

Class C Fire-These are the fires of pressurized gases. For e.g. L.P.G., most of the gases are lighter than air but L.P.G. is heavier than air. Water is not to be used for this class of fire.

Class D Fire-These are fire of metals having low burning temperature for e. g. Na, Mg etc. This class of fire does not exist in the hotel.

Class E Fire-These are electrical fire. The fire extinguishing agent must not conduct electrical energy which could spread the fire. Electrical fires are usually blanketed and cooled down. Water is a good cooling agent but it also conducts electricity, so it is not used to control or extinguish this class of fire. Electrical fire is usually caused by a part of circuit overheating or by short circuit. Controlling the sizes of electrical fuses and circuit breaker will often minimize this class of fire.

There are 2 systems of fire protection

1. *Portable fire extinguisher.*
2. *Stationary fire fighting system.*

Portable fire extinguisher

- a. **Soda acid fire extinguisher-** It is used for class A fire. The extinguishing agent is H_2O . The fire extinguisher is a cylinder type of tank in which a rubber or flexible hose is attached to the top. When it is desired to use the extinguisher, it is carried to the fire and inverted. A small bottle of acid usually H_2SO_4 is spilled when the cylinder is inverted or turned upside down. Powdered sodas, bicarbonate of soda (Baking Soda) is mixed with H_2O when the tank is charged or filled with water. The chemical reaction of acid and soda water creates a pressure which forces the water out of the cylinder or tank. The hose is used to direct the flow of water to the fire. It has 2 disadvantages:-
 - It must be kept away from freezing
 - Acid causes corrosion problem which reduces the life of the tank or cylinder. The corrosion problem has been minimized by replacing the acid with CO_2 cartridge. Upon the cylinder inversion the cartridge opens and releases CO_2 gas under high pressure. The high pressure gas then forces the water out of cylinder.
- b. **$CaCl_2$ fire extinguisher-** It is also used on class A fire. $CaCl_2$ is a salt which when added to water forms brine which has very low freezing temperature. CO_2 cartridge is used as pressure agent to force H_2O and $CaCl_2$ out of the cylinder to the fire. These extinguishers are used where freezing is a potential hazard
- c. **Foam type extinguisher-** It is used on class B type of fire. The extinguisher is charged with special chemical (Al_2SiO_4), the chemical spread on the burning material and the solution blankets the fire by excluding O_2 .
- d. **CO_2 fire extinguisher-** It is used on C, D and E class of fire. The CO_2 types spray a chemical fog towards the fire. The fog quickly excludes the O_2 from the burning material and blankets the combustible material.
- e. **D.C.P. extinguisher-** It can be used on C, D and E class of fire. The most common extinguishing agent is sodium bicarbonate or plain baking soda. The extinguisher is charged with the dry chemical and a small tank of CO_2 gas. The CO_2 gas exerts pressure on dry chemical and forces it out of a nozzle directly to the fire. The powder smothers the fire and the heat from the fire breaks down the chemical which releases CO_2 gas on a large scale which helps in extinguishing the fire.

Stationary fire fighting system

- a. **Automatic sprinklers**-It is generally mounted just below the ceiling height with a temperature detector or smoke detector, attached with each sprinkler. The temperature from the fire melts the fusible link on the detector, which opens a water valve. The water is then sprayed on the ceiling and falls on the floor, extinguishing the fire. If the fire area should spread, more sprinklers are automatically opened, thus confining the fire to a small area. The temperature detector can be purchased for different activating temperature. The high temperature detectors are often used in kitchens.
- b. **Fire Hose System**-It is a semi portable system. In this system the fire hose box is permanently located but the flexible hose can be moved to various distances throughout the building. The hose used to fight fire within a building should be of linen type. The linen allows some water seepage through it which will prevent its burning when in use.

HANDLING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Apart from fire and bomb threat etc. the front office staff at some point of time have to handle a lot of unusual situations also. Some such situations may be death and illness of guests, theft in hotels etc and many others.

1) Death of a guest in the hotel:

- Once the information comes to the front desk it should directly be reported to the front office manager.
- The front office manager will then report it to the GM or resident manager
- The security manager should also be informed immediately
- The police is informed and the hotel doctor is summoned who will check and confirm the death
- Meanwhile the hotel will locate the residential address of the deceased and will inform the relatives.
- Once the police complete all formalities and activities and gives the permission, the dead body is fully covered and then removed from the room on a stretcher. For this purpose the service elevator and not the guest elevator is used
- A death certificate is obtained from the doctor
- A report should be prepared as to who informed of the death, time, room number and date of death. In case there is any luggage of the deceased in the room a list should be

prepared and the luggage should be kept in the luggage room and the person performing this activity should sign this report

- The guest room is locked and sealed.
- After obtaining clearance from the police the room is opened and thoroughly disinfected and spring cleaned and only after permission of the police and subsequent permission of the GM or resident manager the room should be sold.

Some important facts to be kept in mind are:

- Do not enter the room alone always take the lobby manager and security officer with you
- In case you are aware that the deceased was under the treatment of a specific doctor, the same should be called instead of the hotel doctor. His physician will also be helpful in knowing and notifying the incident to the relatives and people known to him
- Do not disturb the body or touch anything before the arrival of the police as this may be a murder or suicide case.

2) Handling accident cases:

- Knowledge of first aid would come very handy in such situations. In general the following points should be taken care of :
- Remove the person who has met with accident from the site of accident {as early as possible and take him to a more comfortable area, use a stretcher in case the need be}
- Call the doctor and if possible give him the details of accident and gravity of the accident.
- Take someone along with you to the site of the accident as you may need help
- Keep alert you must serve the victim immediately by providing first aid
- Try to protect your establishment from any false allegations

Prepare a full report of the whole accident giving details of the date and time who reported the incident, room no., site of the accident etc. Also make your comments as to the reason of the accident and how could it have been prevented and what action is to be taken to avoid the same in the future.

The accident book:

- An accident book is usually maintained in all organizations and the receptionist should record all details of accidents which have occurred to employees whilst carrying out their daily activities.
- The book must be kept in a place easily accessible by any injured person or a person bona fide
- Particulars of an accident may be entered here in either by the injured person himself or by a person acting on his behalf
- The accident book when filled up should be preserved for a period of three years after the date of the last entry
- Every employer is required to take steps to investigate the circumstances of the accident recorded and if there happens to be any discrepancy between the circumstances found by him and the entry made, he is required to record the circumstances so found.

3) Situation of Theft:

Theft is divided into four categories:

I. Theft by employees of the hotel can be avoided by:

- Work business and personal references should be checked before the employee is hired.
- A detailed record of all employees who enter the guest room such as chamber maids bellboys room boys maintenance etc
- All hotel keys should be returned to the department concerned and no employee should be allowed to take keys out of the hotel's premises.

II. Damage of hotel property by the guest can be avoided by:

- The hotel staff should identify the main cause for the damage.
- If the damage is appears to be done intentionally the hotel can ask the guest to pay compensation for the same. For this it is necessary that the front desk is well versed with the cost of the damaged item.

III. Theft of hotel property by the guest:

Can be avoided by taking the following steps:

- Installing automatic locks on the guest room doors

- Appointing a security officer who would walk and take rounds at regular intervals
- Inform guests to use the safe vault of the hotel and not to keep valuables in the guest room
- Keep a watch on walk in as their likelihood of being a thief is more as compared to a guest who has undergone a process of making a reservation in the hotel
- Avoid giving room numbers of resident guests to visitors or over the telephone callers.
- In case the guest loses his key and asks housekeeping to open the room door for them, HK should direct them to front desk
- Master key should be kept under strict supervision and control

Theft by outside visitors can be avoided by:

- being aware of suspicious persons
- regular and irregular schedule of vigil and rounds
- Stagger lunch and rest periods of employees so as to keep one person on duty on each floor at all times
- Instruct the telephone operator not to connect calls to the guest room in case the request is made by the caller by room number. The receptionist should insist on knowing the name of the guest who the caller wishes to speak to.
- Guest should be informed to keep the balcony door closed to avoid anyone entering the rooms from the balcony
- Closed circuit televisions should be used

4) Situation of illness and epidemics:

- The receptionist may be called for assistance during sickness of a guest.
- Patient should be advised to consult the house physician but in case the guest has his own physician the same should be called.
- Housekeeping needs to be notified about the sickness and instructions if any
- If the case of serious sickness, the guest should be moved to a nursing home
- During epidemics all precautionary measures especially in food and beverage service area should be followed

5) Handling a drunken guest:

- The guest should be removed from the lobby as early as possible but being careful not to irritate/offend him.
- Preferably taken to the back office or to his room.
- If he behaves unruly, the hotel security must be called.

Safe deposit facility in the hotel for security of guests' valuables:

- It is the responsibility of management to develop and maintain proper safe deposit procedures for its property.
- If this facility is available for guests, notices regarding it should be put up in various conspicuous/noticeable places in the hotel and also should be mentioned to the guest.
- Safe deposit boxes should be located in an area, in vicinity of the front desk and which has limited access. Unauthorized guests or personnel should not be permitted inside the area.
- Front office staff should be well-versed with the procedures regarding safe deposit boxes.
- Strict control should apply to the storage and issue of safe deposit keys.
- At any point of time there should be only one key issued for each safe even if more than one person is using the safe.
- Two keys are required to open a safe deposit box: one being the guest's key and the other being the control key/guard key put in by the cashier/safe deposit attendant.
- After the verification of the identity of the guest, the safe deposit attendant/cashier should accompany the guest to the safe deposit area where in clear sight should make use of the control key and the guest's key to open the safe.

Sometimes the hotel may not be able to meet the demand for individual safe box; in that case a large box containing the belongings of more than one guest is used. Each guest's belongings are put in an envelope which is sealed. The key to this box is stored in a secure place and a log is maintained which records an entry each time the key is used to open the box

First Aid

First-aid in the workplace includes the provision of first-aid facilities, services and personnel required for the initial treatment of persons suffering from injury or illness at a workplace. It is the immediate treatment or care given to a victim of an accident or sudden illness before qualified health personnel attend to provide treatment.

The aims of first aid are to:

- Preserve life;
- Prevent illness or injury from becoming worse;
- Reduce pain;
- Promote recovery; and
- Care of unconscious.

First-aid facilities includes

- First-aid box
- First-aid room
- First-aid equipment, e.g. oxygen tanks and stretchers.

First-aid requirement means the requirements for first aid facilities, services and personnel at a workplace;

First-aid services mean any procedure or method associated with the provision of first-aid at the workplace;

First-aider means a person who has successfully completed a first-aid course and has been awarded with a certificate of proficiency in first-aid by an institution.

Risk means the likelihood that a hazard will cause harm.

Universal Precautions means a set of precautions designed to prevent transmission of blood-borne pathogens when providing first aid or health care.

First aid is defined as the immediate care given to an acutely injured or ill person. It can literally be life-saving so it behooves all of us to know some basic principles.

What follows are some rules that cover common conditions and general practices:

1. **Don't panic.** Panic clouds thinking and causes mistakes. When I was an intern and learning what to do when confronted with an unresponsive patient, a wise resident advised me when entering a "code blue" situation to always "take my own pulse first." In other words, I needed to calm myself before attempting to intervene. It's far easier to do this when you know what you're doing, but even if you encounter a situation for which you're unprepared, there's usually *some* good you can do. Focus on *that* rather than on allowing yourself an unhelpful emotional response. You can let yourself feel whatever you need to feel later when you're no longer needed.
2. **First, do no harm.** This doesn't mean do nothing. It means make sure that if you're going to do something you're confident it won't make matters worse. If you're not sure about the risk of harm of a particular intervention, don't do it. So don't move a trauma victim, especially an unconscious one, unless *not* moving them puts them at great risk (and by the way, cars rarely explode). Don't remove an embedded object (like a knife or nail) as you may precipitate more harm (e.g., increased bleeding). And if there's nothing you can think to do yourself, you can always call for help. In fact, if you're alone and your only means to do that is to leave the victim, then leave the victim.
3. **CPR can be life-sustaining.** But most people do it wrong. First, studies suggest no survival advantage when bystanders deliver breaths to victims compared to when they only do chest compressions. Second, most people don't compress deeply enough or perform compressions quickly enough. You really need to indent the chest and should aim for 100 compressions per minute. That's more than 1 compression per second. If you're doing it right, CPR should wear you out. Also, know that CPR doesn't reverse ventricular fibrillation, the most common cause of unconsciousness in a patient suffering from a heart attack. Either electricity (meaning defibrillation) or medication is required for that. But CPR is a bridge that keeps vital organs oxygenated until paramedics arrive. Which is why...
4. **Time counts.** The technology we now have to treat two of the most common and devastating medical problems in America, heart attacks and strokes, has evolved to an amazing degree, but patients often do poorly because they don't gain access to that technology in time. The risk of dying from a heart attack, for example, is greatest in the first 30 minutes after symptoms begin. By the time most people even admit to themselves the chest pain they're feeling could be related to their heart, they've usually passed that critical juncture. If you or someone you know has risk factors for heart disease and starts experiencing chest pain, *resist the urge to write it off*. Get to the nearest emergency room as quickly as you can. If someone develops focal weakness of their face, legs, or arms, or difficulty with speech or smiling, they may be having a stroke, which represents a true emergency. Current protocols for treatment depend on the length of time symptoms have been present. The shorter that time, the more likely the best therapies can be applied.

5. **Don't use hydrogen peroxide on cuts or open wounds.** It's more irritating to tissue than it is helpful. Soap and water and some kind of bandage are best.
6. **When someone passes out** but continues breathing and has a good pulse, the two most useful pieces of information to help doctors figure out what happened are: 1) the pulse rate, and 2) the length of time it takes for consciousness to return.
7. **High blood pressure is rarely acutely dangerous.** First, high blood pressure is a normal and appropriate response to exercise, stress, fear, and pain. Many patients I follow for high blood pressure begin panicking when their readings start to come in higher. But the damage high blood pressure does to the human body takes place over years to decades. There is such a thing as a hypertensive emergency, when the blood pressure is higher than around 200/120, but it's quite rare to see readings that high, and even then, in the absence of symptoms (headache, visual disturbances, nausea, confusion) it's considered a hypertensive urgency, meaning you have 24 hours to get the pressure down before you get into trouble.
8. **If a person can talk or cough, their airway is open.** Meaning they're not choking. Don't Heimlich someone who says to you, "I'm choking."
9. **Most seizures are not emergencies.** The greatest danger posed to someone having a seizure is injury from unrestrained forceful muscular contractions. Don't attempt to move a seizing person's tongue. Don't worry—they won't swallow it. Move any objects on which they may hurt themselves away from the area (including glasses from their head) and time the seizure. A true seizure is often followed by a period of confusion called "post-ictal confusion." Your reassurance during this period that they're okay is the appropriate therapy.
10. **Drowning doesn't look like what you think it does.** For one thing, drowning people are physiologically incapable of crying out for help. In fact, someone actually drowning is usually barely moving at all (I strongly encourage everyone to click on this link to learn more about how to recognize what drowning does look like).

Recommended Contents of a First-Aid Box

1. 5 Triangular bandages 130cm x 90cm x 90cm
2. Sterile eye pads
3. Non-sterile 4x4" gauze pads
4. Sterile 4x4" gauze pads
5. Sterile 10x10" gauze pads
6. Elastic bandage
7. 4 Roller bandages 7.5 cm
8. 4 Roller bandages 3 cm.

9. 4 Roller bandages 2.5 cm
10. Cold pack compress gel
11. Burn sheet/dressing
12. Pairs of gloves (disposable/ non sterile)
13. Stainless steel bandage scissors
14. Adhesive tape
15. Sterile multi-trauma dressing/gauze
16. Alcohol prep pads
17. Cetavlon
18. Cotton buds
19. Barrier device for CPR (pocket mask, face shield)
20. Elastoplasts/sterile adhesive dressing
21. Safety pin for triangular bandages
22. Thermometer
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23. First aid manual
24. Waterproof waste bag
25. Inventory of box contents (checklist)

Recommended Facilities for a First-Aid Room

The following should be provided in a first-aid room:

1. First aid box
2. Sink with tap water
3. Antiseptic hand wash soap
4. Paper towels
5. An examination/treatment couch with pillow & blanket
6. Portable stretchers
7. Splints (upper & lower limbs)
8. Disposable plastic apron
9. Separate disposable waterproof waste bag/basket for hazardous & non-hazardous materials
10. Spinal immobilization equipment (cervical collar, spinal board)
11. Torch light
12. Chairs for waiting room

13. Cupboard for storing first aid equipment (as in the first aid box) for top up purposes

First aid tips:

CPR on Adults

If the adult person is not breathing and/or unconscious, first call the ambulance and then start CPR, or cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. It involves a combination of chest compressions and rescue breaths. Place hands on center of chest; use the heel of your hand, and give two breaths into mouth of victim after every 30 chest compressions. Giving breaths involves pinching the victim's nose and blowing into his mouth steadily. If you are unable or unwilling to give rescue breaths, give chest compressions until help arrives.

Severe Bleeding

You will want to stop or slow down the flow of blood. Use gloves if you have access to them so that you don't risk giving the victim an infection or contracting anything yourself. The first thing you will check for is whether an object is in the wound. If there is an object there, do not press on it; rather, press around it before bandaging to avoid putting pressure. If you do not find anything, press the wound with your hand, or if you have a clean pad, place that on top and secure it with a bandage. If the wound is on the arm or leg, raise the victim's limb above the level of their heart.

Heart Attack

Having a heart attack is one of the most common life-threatening conditions. First, determine if the victim is suffering from heart attack symptoms. Look for bluish lips, profuse sweating, gasping for air, fainting or dizziness or persistent or sudden chest pain. Make sure to sit the victim down; call an ambulance; give an aspirin for the victim to chew if she is conscious. You may have to perform CPR if necessary.

Check your knowledge:

Q1. Define First-aid.

Q2. Classify fire and how many types of fire extinguishers are there?

Q3. How these emergency situations should be handled?

- in case of accident

- and theft

Q4. Write a note upon different security measures taken by the hotel for the safety and security of guest.