

Housekeeping and Laundry Service

Level-II

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Module Title: Identifying Basic Front Office Operation

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Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Acknowledgement | 5 |
| Acronym..... | 6 |
| Introduction to the Module | 7 |
| Unit one: Identify the Front Office Department..... | 8 |
| 1.1 The front of the house of a hotel organization..... | 9 |
| 1.1.1 Reservation Section/ agent..... | 9 |
| 1.2.2 Front Desk Agent / section | 9 |
| 1.1.3 Uniformed Bell Service Staff..... | 9 |
| 1.1.4 Travel Desk Section | 10 |
| 1.1.5 Business Centre..... | 10 |
| 1.1.6Concierge | 10 |
| 1.1.7 Cashiering Section | 10 |
| 1.1.8 Communication and Telephone Section / Switchboard Operator..... | 11 |
| 1.1.9 Food and Beverage Service Department..... | 11 |
| 1.2 Guest service | 11 |
| 1.2.1 Reservation | 11 |
| Bedroom Journal | 12 |
| 1.2.2Registration | 14 |
| 1.3 Guest cycle | 18 |
| 1.4 Communicating information to internal and external customers. | 19 |
| 1.5 Knowledge of hospitality etiquettes | 23 |
| 1.6 Hierarchy, role and responsibility of front office department..... | 26 |
| 1.7 Front office systems..... | 29 |
| Unit Two: Clarify Interdepartmental Coordination | 33 |
| 2.1 The Role of Front Office..... | 34 |
| 2.2 Significance of front office..... | 35 |
| Self check 2 | 37 |
| Unit Three: provide porter service..... | 38 |
| 1.1 Escorting Guest to Rooms | 39 |
| 3.1.1 SOP for Escorting Guest to Room | 39 |
| 1.2 Operate luggage storage system..... | 40 |

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 3.2.1 SOPs for Tagging Guest Luggage - Arrivals Departures Left Luggage | 41 |
| 1.3 Track any lost luggage | 42 |
| 3.3.1 SOPs for handling lost luggage..... | 42 |
| 1.4 Ancillary service | 43 |
| Self check 3 | 45 |
| Unit Four: Receive and Respond to Telephone Calls | 48 |
| 1.2 Establish Purpose of the call | 49 |
| 4.2 Use telephone equipment..... | 50 |
| 4.3 Answering telephone calls | 52 |
| 4.3.1 Using an appropriate telephone manner | 52 |
| 4.3.2Applying enterprise standards..... | 53 |
| 4.3.3Placing the call on hold..... | 54 |
| 4.3.4 Offering friendly assistance | 54 |
| 4.3.5The need to focus on the call | 55 |
| 4.3.6Tips to apply when answering enquiries..... | 56 |
| 4.3.7 Transferring calls | 56 |
| 4.3.8Taking message..... | 57 |
| 4.4 Clearly Communicating | 58 |
| 4.5 Repeating call details | 61 |
| 4.6 Transfer caller enquiries | 63 |
| 4.7 Record caller requests and information | 63 |
| 4.8 Record Threatening..... | 65 |
| Self check 4 | 66 |
| LAP Test 1: Make a call and confirm reservation to guest..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Reference | 70 |

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Acronym

BIR-----Baggage irregularity report
 PIR-----Property irregularity report
 SOP-----Standard operation procedure
 PABX -----Private automated branch exchange
 VIP-----Very important person

Introduction to the Module

This **Module** describes the knowledge, skills and attitude required to identify the front office department and its functions in commercial accommodation establishments. It requires the knowledge of the front of the house departments and their functions to understand the role, responsibility and the organizational structure of the front office department.

\This module is designed to meet the industry requirement under the Front Office Service occupational standard, particularly for the unit of competency: Identifying Basic Front Office Operations

This module covers the units this module covers the units:

- front office department and functions
- interdepartmental coordination
- Provide Porter Services
- Receive and Respond to telephone calls

Learning Objective of the Module

- **Identify the front of the house department**
- **Clarify interdepartmental coordination**
- Perform porter service
- Handle and telephone calls

Module Instruction

For effective use this modules trainees are expected to follow the following module instruction:

1. Read the information written in each unit
2. Accomplish the Self-checks at the end of each unit
3. Perform Operation Sheets which were provided at the end of units .
4. Read the identified reference book for Examples and exercise1
5. Perform operation sheet which where provided at the end of this unit
6. Do the LAP test given at the end of each unit

Unit one: Identify the Front Office Department

This unit is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Front areas of the hotel organizations
- Guest service
- Guest cycle
- Communication information with internal and external customers
- Knowledge of hospitality etiquettes
- Hierarchy, role and responsibility
- Front office system

This guide will also assist you to attain the unit stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this learning guide, you will be able to:

- Identify Front areas of the hotel organizations
- Coordinate Guest service
- Identify Guest cycle
- Communicate with internal and external customers
- knowledge of hospitality etiquettes
- understand hierarchy, role and responsibility
- Differentiate Front office system

1.1 The front of the house of a hotel organization

Front office is the name given to all the offices situated in the front of the house, that is, the lobby, where the guest is received, provided information, checked-in, his luggage is handled, his accounts are settled at departure, and his problems, complaints and suggestions are looked after. Foreign guests use the front desk to exchange currency, find a translator, or request other special assistance.

The front office department of a hotel comprises of various sections and depending on the size of the hotels, depends locations such as resorts motels inns and resorts. The In small or medium sized hotels the sections may be merged and handled accordingly. The following are the sections of the front office department.

1.1.1 Reservation Section/ agent

Normally found in larger hotels, in smaller hotels Front office agent handles this job. Basic Function: To handle all future reservations, matching the needs of the guests with the hotel.

1.2.2 Front Desk Agent / section

Also designated, as Receptionist or Front office Assistant in some hotels, is the first person a guest sees on entering the property and the last person the guest sees on leaving.

Basic Function: To assist guests in all front office-related functions in an efficient, courteous, and professional manner that maintains high standards of service and hospitality.

1.1.3 Uniformed Bell Service Staff

Basic Functions: Meeting, greeting and escorting guests to their rooms and also the reverse of it i.e. escorting guests from their rooms to the front desk, to their means of transport etc. They also do Errands, handle messages and page guests. They also act as the eyes and ears of the hotels since they are strategically stationed and also make trips to many floors and rooms. Work closely with the front desk staff, room service employees and other hotel personnel in providing guest assistance with luggage, transportation and miscellaneous needs.

1.1.4 Travel Desk Section

Handles the transportation facility of the hotel guest. It assists in the booking of air tickets, hiring of the car and other transportation facilities. It also arranges / organizes city tours, sightseeing tours to the guests on request.

1.1.5 Business Centre

Serve the guests with laptops, internet, mobiles, facsimile, LCD projectors, and photocopier and also on request secretarial facilities. This is the latest addition in the large and medium sized hotels, in line with the electronic era.

1.1.6 Concierge

Basic Functions: They are specialized in assisting the guest regardless of whether inquiries concern in-hotel or off-premises attractions, facilities, services, or activities. Must provide concise and accurate directions; make reservations for flights, theater or special events, obtain tickets, organize special functions such as VIP cocktail receptions and arrange for secretarial services, if needed.

1.1.7 Cashiering Section.

Basic Function: Guest accounting tasks require efficiency and accuracy. The tasks of the front office cashier center on the guest accounting cycle. The front office cashiers post revenue center charges to guest accounts. The hotel's revenue center communicates information on charge purchases to the front desk. Cashiers then post these charges to guest accounts to ensure that the charges will be settled at checkout. Where computerized systems are installed, the Point of Sale operations are directly posted to the Guest Ledger whenever the guest utilizes a particular service. The cashiers also receive payment from guests at checkout. They coordinate the billing of credit card and direct-billed guest accounts with the accounting division. The cashier at the close of each shift balances all guest accounts. They also manage safe deposit boxes / lockers, variety of banking services including foreign exchange.

1.1.8 Communication and Telephone Section / Switchboard Operator

They are heard by the guest but are rarely seen. They represent the hotel through their voice on the phone. They build a very significant image of the hotel to a prospective guest. The work has drastically changed due to the electronic age, but the basic voice assistance is always a warm welcome. Basic Function: Receives and directs incoming and outgoing calls to individual guests, staff, or departments.

1.1.9 Food and Beverage Service Department

This department looks after the service of food and drinks to guests. The Food which is made in the Kitchen and Drinks prepared in the Bar to the Customers (Guest) at the Food & Beverage premises. Some examples of the food and beverage outlets are Restaurants, Bars, Hotels, Airlines, Cruise Ships, Trains, Companies, Schools, Colleges, Hospitals, Prisons,

Back of the House, also known as BOH keeps things to run efficiently behind-the-scenes. They have minimal guest contact and personnel that often invisible to guests.

The back areas of a hotel cover areas where guests will be nearby, and areas that are purely for internal work.

1.2 Guest service

1.2.1 Reservation

Reservation of the hotel accommodation is one of the important responsibilities of the front office department. A potential guest contacts a hotel for availability of the desired type of accommodation and any allied services that the hotel offers. The front office department needs to react to the enquiry of the guests.

For a guest, reservation increases the chances of a better deal for assured accommodation on arrival. For a hotel, reservation can enable a better management of guest experience during usual as well as peak seasons. Reservation procedure varies depending on the size and brand of the hotel and the reservation system employed.

• Types of Hotel Reservation Systems

An efficient and effective reservation system is what adds to the hotel's profitability. Following are the most popular reservation systems

✓ Whitney System of Reservation

It was developed in 1940 by Whitney Paper Corporation from New York, hence the name. This is a conventional manual reservation system the hotels used to follow during pre-computer days in the hotels. It contains the following setup for reservation –

- Slip for request of accommodation reservation
- Whitney slip that records guest name, accommodation type, number, and duration of stay
- Temporary/Permanent arrival slip
- Guest bill
- Guest registration card
- Correspondence file
- Bedroom journal that records daily occupancy of the guest with date, guest name, room type, and room number

Table 1.2 Whitney Slip

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Guest Name | Date of Arrival | Room Type | Room Rate | Date of Departure |
| Mode of Reservation | | Reserved By | | Date Received |
| Reservation Agency if Any: | | | | |
| Billing Instructions | | | Date of Confirmation | |

Bedroom Journal

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| Date: _____ | | |
| Guest Name | Room Number | Room Particulars |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Though this system proved efficient, it generated a lot of paperwork with occasional scope for errors. The drawbacks were overcome by the central reservation system.

- **Central Reservation System (CRS)**

It is a computerized reservation system that reduces paperwork and can handle large amount of reservation data effortlessly.

In this system, since the guest data and reservation data are stored on the storage disks of the computers, it can be accessed at wish. It is stored in the form of a database of collection of records which can enable searching, adding, removing, or updating any guest related data.

The computerized reservation system not only helps to make guest reservations but also helps to forecast how many accommodations can be reserved in an upcoming time period.

This is how a CRS typically works

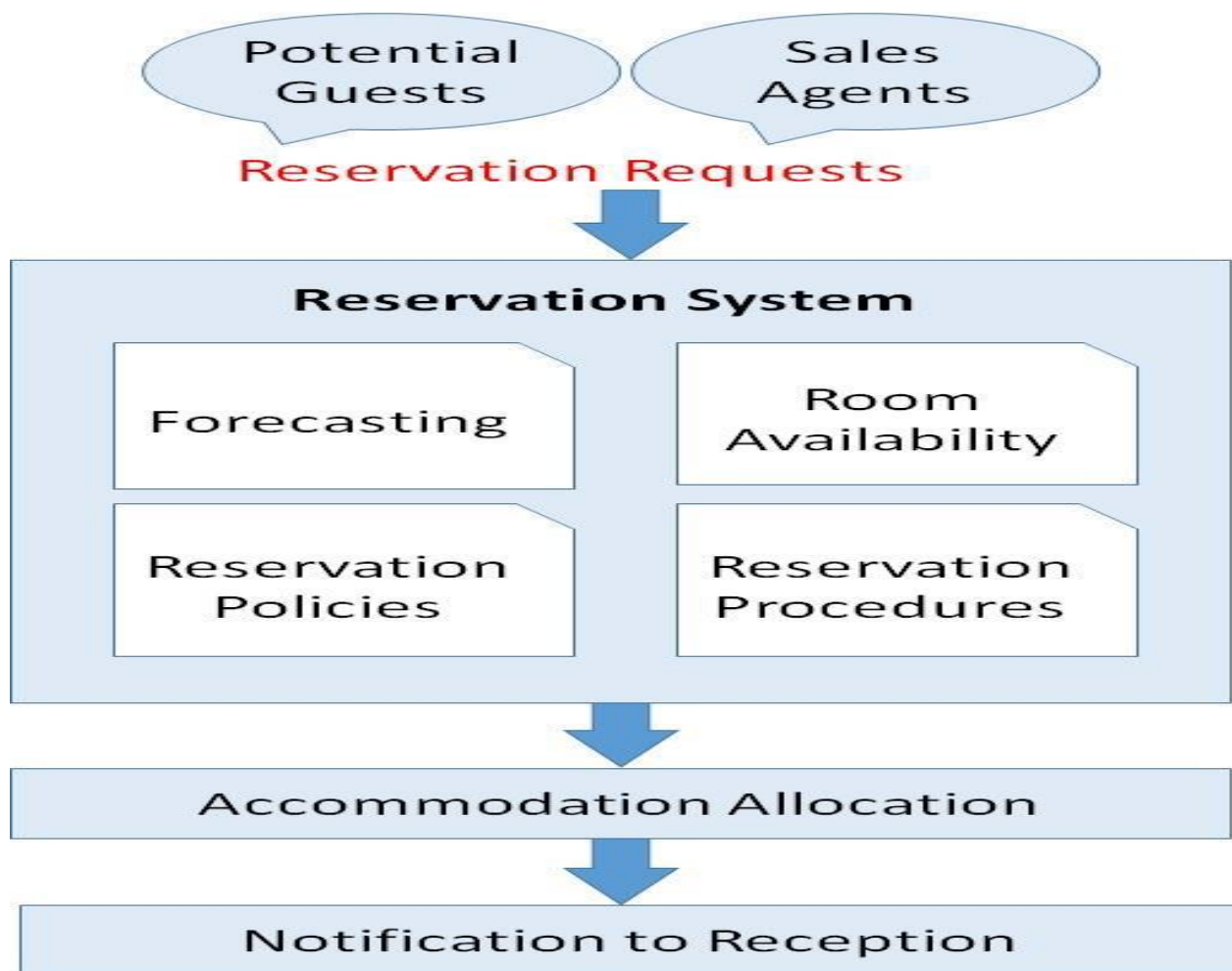


Figure 1.2.1 computerized reservation system

The guests of hotel sales agents call for checking room availability. It is forwarded to the front office reservation staff. The staff finds out details about the requirement and checks the

availability of desired accommodation in the database. According to the reservation policies and procedures, the reservation staff member then notifies or suggests the reception about the accommodation availability and takes further appropriate action.

1.2.2 Registration

Guest registration is nothing but recording the guest's information for official purposes. At the time of reservation, the front office staff asks the guests to enter their personal information on the GRC.

Registration activity is mandatory for both; the guest with reserved accommodation as well as for the walk-in guest. During registration, the guest is required to enter important information on the GRC such as guest name, contact number, purpose of stay at the hotel, and passport and visa details in case of foreign guest. It is the responsibility of the front office staff not to reveal the guest information to unauthorized persons.

- **Pre-registration Procedure**

This procedure involves the prospective guests enquiring about the availability of desired type of accommodation. Registration can also be conducted in advance before arrival. It can be done via telephonic conversation in case of frequent guests, VIPs, or group guests.

In case of new walk-in guest, pre-registration is absent as there is no prior interaction between the guest and the hotel. Pre-registration activity accelerates the actual registration process where the desired accommodation is marked as reserved.

- **Verifying Guest's Identity**

Since terror attacks on 9/11, the hotels are mandatorily verifying guests' identities. The staff verifies guest's identity first by politely asking the guest's name. The staff member then requests to show a photo ID such as driving license or a valid identity card from a well-known organization where the guest is working. If the guests are from a foreign country, the staff requests them to show passport. The staff member is authorized to ask any verifying questions politely.

The true copies of the passport or ID card are made to verify the guest's identity and to prepare guest database

- **Providing information**

One by the guest's last name and another by assigned room number. An Information rack is commonly used to assist Front Office employees with proper routing of telephone calls, mails, messages and visitors inquiries. The Information rack normally consists of aluminum slots designed to hold guest information slips.

- **Special request**

As a service to the guests, hotels provide a variety of items that the travelers need but are not kept in the rooms as a standard. The HK department takes care of the special requests of the guest and these items are loaned to the guest at no charge. Such items are generally placed with the HK control desk.

- **Sundry guest service**

Greeting guests upon arrival and making them feel welcomed. Administering check-ins and check-outs. Providing front desk services to guests. Assigning rooms and taking care of administrative duties.

Additional guest room hotel amenities and sundries include makeup remover wipes, lip balm, slippers, shower caps, toothbrushes, other personal care items, and more

Table 2.1.2 Registration Card Typical Format

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Registration Card | |
| | Date: |
| | Reservation Number: |
| Hotel Name: | |
| Hotel Address: | |
| Contact Number: | Email: Fax: |

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Guest Name: | |
| Address: | |
| Mobile Number: | Landline Number: |
| Organization: | |
| Arrived from: | |
| Passport Details: | Visa Details: |
| Date of Issue: | Date of Issue: |
| Date of Expiry: | Date of Expiry: |
| Place of Issue: | Place of Issue: |
| | Visa Type: |
| Payment Option: Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Card <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Card Type: Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Master <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Card Details: Card Number: Date of Expiry: | |
| Hotel Policies: | |

Guest Signature Front Office Signature

- **Creating Registration Record**

When the guests arrive at the hotel, the front desk staff hands over the GRC to the guest to fill up the information. In case of VIPs, the staff enters the information on the card and receives the guest's signature.

The staff then creates a registration record of the guest, countersigns, attaches the true copies of the passport or other ID cards, and files this set in the guest history file. The guest reservation record is created as a registration record in the software system.

- **Establishing Payment Method**

Guests can pay in advance or at the time of checking-out. Those who have paid in advance are put under Paid-In-Advance (PIA) list. There are various modes of payment out of which a mode that guest prefers is recorded at the time of registration. Following payment methods are available –

- ✓ Cash Payment (which also include money order, travelers' cheque).
- ✓ Credit Card/Debit Card Payment (which are accepted only if the cards have not expired).
- ✓ Cheque Payment (where post-dated cheques are not accepted).
- ✓ Direct Billing.
- ✓ Special Payment such as gift card and voucher.
- ✓ The guests need to select one of the options of payment at the time of registration.

- **Assigning an Accommodation**

The front office staff assigns an accommodation to the guest only when the registration is complete. The staff member records the accommodation number into the PMS and describes about its positive attributes briefly.

The reservations staff also informs the bell-boy to take the guest luggage.

- **Issuing Room Keys or Access Code**

After the accommodation is assigned, the front office staff gives away the keys or the computerized secret code keys for accessing the accommodation.

It is a general practice to not to speak anything about the room number or the computerized key loudly while giving it to the guest. The bell attendant then assists the guest with luggage handling to the accommodation and explaining the accommodation features. The attendant then gives the keys to the guest, greets for best stay, and leaves the accommodation by closing the door.

1.3 Guest cycle

A guest's interaction with the hotel is divided into the following four successive stages:

- Pre-arrival
- Arrival
- Occupancy Departure
- Departure

I. Pre-arrival: This is when the client is planning to book an accommodation at a hotel thus the process starts with finding about information related to the hotel and its facilities. Therefore they look forward to the information available on the internet, websites, brochures, media, magazines, tourist portals etc. Then the enquiry is processed via a phone call or email wherein the guest confirms the information with the hotel that has been selected by the guest for his/ her stay. When the guest interaction happens with the front desk employees the front office software records the guest's information such as name, age, contact numbers, probable duration of stay for room reservation and so on.

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

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

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

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

1.4 Communicating information to internal and external customers.

Customer service has been discussed on many platforms, and many organizations carry out training sessions, especially for front of house staff. I have gone through a couple of customer service training manuals, and internal customer service rarely features.

External customer service starts with internal customer service”.

It does not help to ignore the internal customer; management and other employees who do not necessarily deal with the external customer directly; it is true 'charity begins at home'

While internal customers may not necessarily bring the pay check, or purchase the products or services offered by their employer, they play a reciprocal role in delivering relevant information to the front office for good customer service.

Good internal customer service creates an environment of sharing and it becomes easier for employees to expand their service. The mentality that I am only employed in sales, my job is just

to sell, and not even answer the phone at the reception because it not part of their job description is dealt with when good internal customer service becomes a culture.

Customer service is not only about giving customers what you can give them under your job description, but also giving them something outside your area of responsibility.

Know that your fellow workmates are your customers that enable you to deliver good customer service for customer satisfaction. Internal customer service is an important link in the customer service chain.

“Customer service is not somewhere in a department in an organization, but it’s a company culture in which every individual at every level is customer oriented.”

It is without a doubt that Internal Customer Service is the foundation for two fundamental principles in marketing that deal with the employee, Internal Marketing, and new phenomena that is growing Internal Branding.

- **Importance of Front Office Communication**

Front office department is responsible for communicating with all other departments in the hotel as well as different sections within the department. To get the front office and back office jobs done successfully, the front office staff members need to communicate with their peers as well as the colleagues and subordinates.

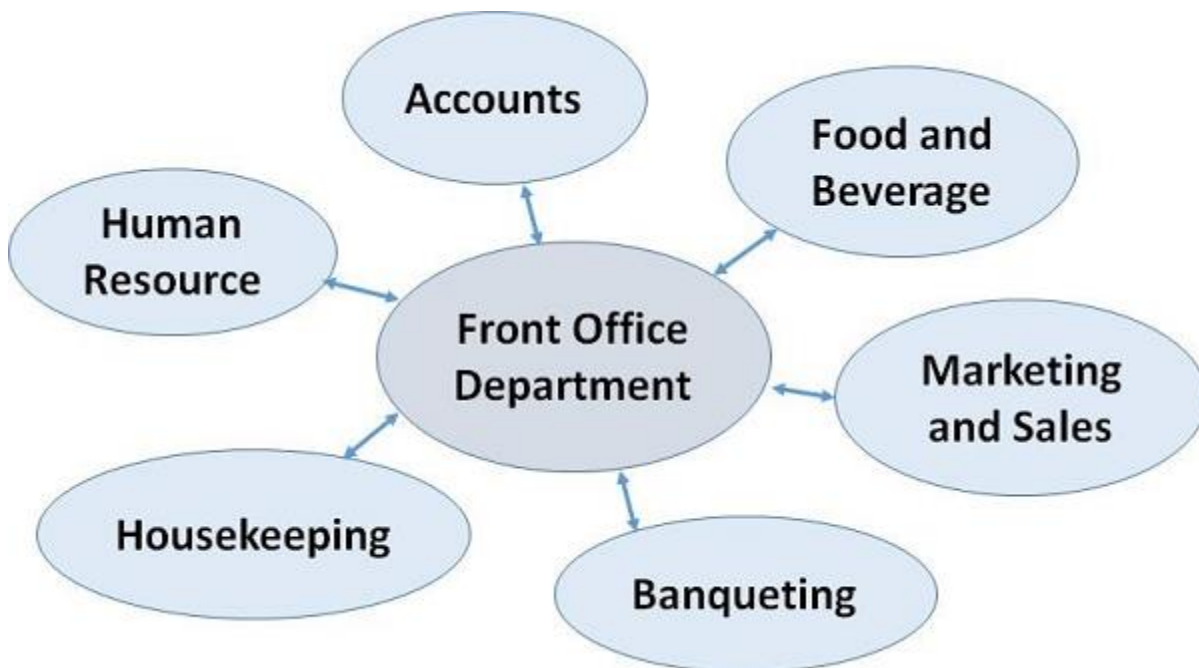
Within the department, the staff of front office communicates with each other to provide the best possible guest services such as reserving accommodations, registering guests, managing guest accounts, handling guest mails, and personalized guest services. Two types of communication on front office are listed below.

1. **Interdepartmental Communication**

Front office interacts with various departments since the guest inquire about reservation through the entire guest cycle up to the guest’s departure.

Here is how front office needs to communicate with the other departments –

- **Communication with Human Resource** – Front Office department is engaged with the HR department to interview, help shortlist them, and select the most eligible employees. It also contacts the HR department for employee training and induction programs, salaries, leaves, dues, and appraisals.
- **Communication with Accounts** – As front office department handles guest accounts with a complete responsibility, the staff needs to often interact with the back-office accounting colleagues regarding payment settlements or dues of guests or non-guests, discount offers, and coupons settlement. It also needs to sort out and get actual status of night auditing with accounts.



- **Communication with Food and Beverage Department** – Since front office department is the one where the guests speak about their food and beverage requirements during reservation, the front office needs to communicate with the food and beverage sections frequently.
 - ✓ It also keeps the track of guest's purchases from the restaurant, the bar, or coffee shops in the hotel.
 - ✓ It conveys special requests of the guest regarding food and beverage to the F&B department.
 - ✓ It deals, accepts, and reserves banquet inquiries and coordinates them with the respective departments.

- **Communication with Marketing and Sales Department** – Sales and Marketing department highly relies upon front office inputs about the guests. The guest history compiled by the front office department is an excellent source for segmenting the customers, prepare customer-oriented packages, and plan and execute the campaigns. The front office staff contacts marketing and sales department in case there is a need to prepare electronic marquees or message boards for promotions.
- **Communication with Housekeeping** – The front office staff needs to interact with the housekeeping department on the concerns such as –
 - ✓ Readiness of vacated accommodation for selling.
 - ✓ Security of the accommodation.
 - ✓ Guest's complaints and requirements about any amenities is initiated at the front desk.
 - ✓ Guest's requirement of removing soiled dishes or linen from the accommodation.
 - ✓ In addition, the housekeeping department relies upon front office staff for the number of accommodations sold, departures, walk-ins, stay-over guests, and no-shows. Timely distribution of the accommodation sales helps the housekeeping manager to plan employee personal leaves and vacations.
- **Communication with Banqueting** – The front office and banqueting department needs to interact with each other on the concerns such as –
 - ✓ Expected number of guests to attend the banquet.
 - ✓ Showing directions of the venue to the unfamiliar banquet guests.
 - ✓ Posting of daily messages on felt board regarding venue, occasion, hosts and guests.
 - ✓ Settling of the city account against the banquet service for the guest.

2. External customers include the actual guests/clients

The manner in which hotels communicate with travelers has far-reaching implications, influencing sentiment and behavior throughout the traveler's journey, including:

- Impressions of the property and its staff

- Decisions whether or not to book a room
- Expectations upon arrival
- On-property purchase decisions
- Ratings and comments in post-stay surveys and reviews
- Decisions whether or not to return

Given what's at stake, hotels must build a communication strategy that ensures a positive experience at every stage of the guest journey. This includes:

- **Pre-stay** communications such as confirmations and pre-arrival messaging.
- **In-stay** communications, such as information shared at check-in and throughout the stay.
- **Post-stay** communications, such as requests for feedback and promotional offers to come back.

1.5 Knowledge of hospitality etiquettes

Hotel staff should be trained and good qualified for the work which they are doing, it is a very high standard business, as it is the main source of it is the human being as you are dealing with guest you need to have some skills and abilities.

Etiquettes and Manners for the Hotel Staff especially Front Office Staff always you need to greet guest and colleagues with a smile and always you should maintain a friendly and a pleasant expression.

1. Always Stand upright, do not fold your arms in the front of hotel guest.
2. Keep your hands out of your pockets.
3. Keep a space between you and the guest when dealing with them.
4. Always Do not lean on the counter at any time and especially when dealing or contacted with the guest.
5. You should not play with your hair and jewellery when you are in the front of the house area.
6. Ensure a positive body language at all times.
7. Always be tactful and courteous, never argue with guests.

8. Always be humored and even-tempered, do not become over friendly with hotel guests.
9. Always be attentive when speaking to guest and look at a guest when addressing him/ her.
10. Always look and act professionally, do understand that there are other guests watching your behavior.
11. Always appear confident and be positive.
12. Always listen carefully to the guest when talking to him/ her.
13. Try to use the guest's name at least twice once known.
14. Try to ask the right questions to identify the needs of the guests.
15. Talk clearly and maintain a good tone of voice at all times.
16. Do not criticize one guest to another.
17. Do not refer guest as "She/he to They" in their presence.
18. Never weary the guest with your troubles.
19. One of the very important that Never discuss religion or politics with guests.
20. Be specific in your explanations, in-case of any doubt then consult your colleagues and promptly get back to the guest. If necessary repeat the information to be sure it goes to right understand.
21. Always give the guest a warm and friendly welcome, "Good morning Mr. / Madam, how may I assist you today".
22. Always do your best to make the guest feel comfortable and safe.
23. Refer to the guest twice by the correct title and name once known.
24. Identify the guest's needs and try to provide anticipatory service.
25. Always observe what is happening around you and be ready to assist the guest when needed.
26. Show guests a sympathetic interest.
27. Take your time for the guest and do not rush with them.
28. Always recommend in-house hotels services to the guest and provide with a brochure or additional details if required.
29. Appear neat and tidy but never severe or harsh or strict to the guests.
30. Always try to maintain eye contact with the guests.
31. Should have a good product knowledge and keep updating about new products and services offered.

32. Know the different facilities and services available in the hotel and be ready to describe the details to the guest when asked.
33. Know who is who in the hotel organization.
34. Know about VIP, VVIP and repeating guests.
35. Have a clear understanding of the layout of the hotel.
36. Should know the location, timings, promotions and theme nights of the outlets.
37. Know which function is taking place and where.
38. Have a good knowledge of the place and surroundings where the hotel is situated, eg: nearby places of interest, distance to the airport etc.
39. Be aware of any special promotions or food festivals going on in the hotel.
40. The Front desk team should have the full knowledge of all different rooms types and their rack rates .
41. The Food and beverage staff should have a good knowledge of the menus plates and contents of each one.

1.6 Hierarchy, role and responsibility of front office department

A large hotel, the department is headed by the Front Office Director who is assisted by the respective Reservation Manager, Front desk Manager and the Revenue Manager. Front Office department chart not only provides for a systematic direction of orders but also protects employees from being over directed.

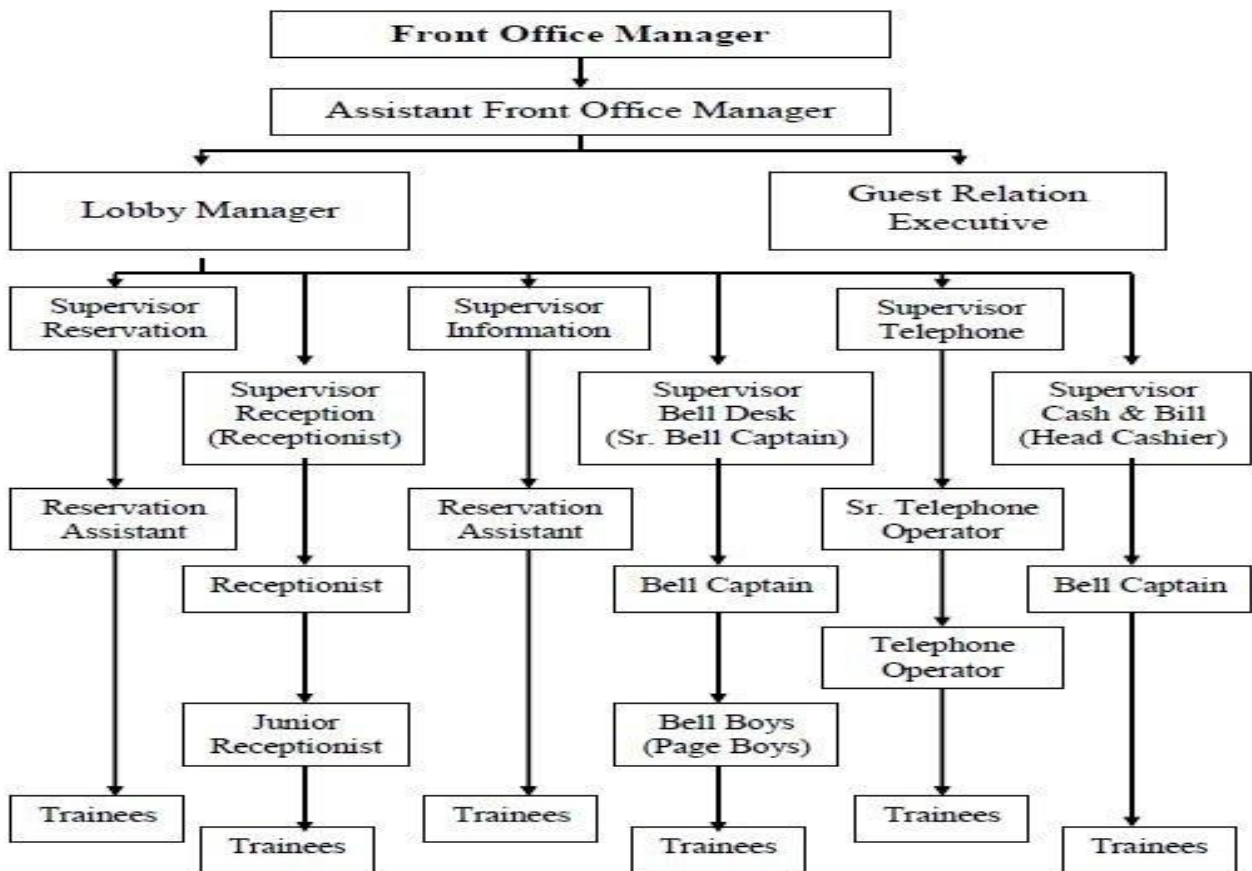


Fig1.6 Hierarchy of front office department

- **Front Office Manager**

- ✓ All administrative tasks
- ✓ Hiring staff
- ✓ Training
- ✓ Giving appraisals
- ✓ Ensure smooth functioning of the department
- ✓ Make departments budget
- ✓ Forecast sales
- ✓ Monitor reservation systems to maximize occupancy, sales, and revenue
- ✓ Conduct department meetings
- ✓ Check arrivals, departures, and review all reports of the FO department.

- **Assistant Front Office Manager**

- ✓ Supervise and coordinate day to day activities
- ✓ Assign duties
- ✓ Check daily reports, arrival lists, departure lists, VIP arrival, group arrivals
- ✓ Update FO manager about the happenings
- ✓ Coordinating with other departments like HK, sales, F&B

- **Lobby Manager**

- ✓ To ensure smooth check-in and check-out
- ✓ Handle guest complaints
- ✓ Coordinating with travel counter and airlines
- ✓ Coordinates with the security department and ensure the safety and security of the hotel
- ✓ Ensure smooth functioning of the lobby
- ✓ Handle keys

- **Guest Relation Executive**

- ✓ Take feedback from guests
- ✓ Maintain guest feedback forms
- ✓ Maintain guest comment cards
- ✓ Handle VIP arrivals
- ✓ Ensure that guests leave with a positive image of the hotel

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| Page 27 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 |
| | Author/Copyright | | November, 2022 |

- ✓ Check any complaints and inform the department

• Reservation Assistants

- ✓ Receive and process reservation inquiry of guests
- ✓ Maintain the reservation records
- ✓ Share the information with other departments like sales F&B
- ✓ To prepare the expected arrival list, departure list for the day
- ✓ To fill registration cards, guest history card
- ✓ To give the information to the receptionist
- ✓ To prepare guest folder having reservation documents, emails and messages

• Receptionist

- ✓ Greet the guests on arrival
- ✓ Confirm the identity of guests
- ✓ Fill the registration form
- ✓ Assign room
- ✓ Prepare room status report and check discrepancy with housekeeping
- ✓ Process request for check out
- ✓ Inform late checkout, early check out to HK department
- ✓ Give information about the hotel, facilities and the city to the guest

• Cashier

- ✓ Prepare guests' bills
- ✓ Update guest transactions daily
- ✓ Exchange foreign currency
- ✓ Make closing balance account at end of shift
- ✓ Maintain house bank

• Telephone Operator

- ✓ Answer the calls directly
- ✓ Direct incoming calls to the extension number, department, etc
- ✓ Answer the queries about the hotel and its services
- ✓ Log all wake-up calls
- ✓ Handling guest messages

| | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Page 28 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 |
| | Author/Copyright | | November, 2022 |

- ✓ Handling outgoing calls
- ✓ Handling calls from the rooms/guests

- **Bell Boys**

- ✓ Handle guest luggage
- ✓ Transport the luggage to the room on arrival/guest check-in
- ✓ Put luggage tag on bags and luggage on arrival
- ✓ Escort guest to the room and tell them about the room, service directory and function of equipment in the room
- ✓ Deliver mail, message and package to the rooms

- **Front Office Responsibilities**

- ✓ Directs and coordinates the activities of the FO department.
- ✓ Creating guests' database.
- ✓ Perform the function of a link between the management and front office employees.
- ✓ Perform budgeting function.
- ✓ Planning present and future needs for the resources.
- ✓ Schedule the tasks of the front office employees.
- ✓ Resolve guest problems quickly, efficiently, and courteously.
- ✓ Reviews all the reports generated by all the sections include night auditor's report.
- ✓ Coordinate with the sales and marketing team to ensure maximum sales and profit.
- ✓ The front office staff handles the transactions between the hotel and its guests.
- ✓ Creating a great first impression in guests' minds.
- ✓ Ensuring guests' satisfaction.

1.7 Front office systems

There are three main types of hotel front office systems you should know. As a hotelier, you must invest in a good and easy-to-use front office system. The other name for the hotel front office system is PMS (Property Management System).

Having a user-friendly front office system will ensure the smooth running of your hotel and make your staff task easier while giving your guests a pleasant experience staying at your hotel. Your front

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 29 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

office systems should be able to handle the daily routine of your hotel activities like room reservations, guest check-in and check-out, housekeeping, and more.

Below we share the three Types of Hotel Front Office Systems:-

1. On-premise hotel front office system

In this context, an on-premise hotel system refers to systems that hoteliers can only access within the hotel's premises. They are typically required to be installed on hotel computers and managed by the hotel's I.T staff. On-premise hotel front office systems generally are sold with a license and need frequent upgrades, which updates can only perform on the hotel's premises. Some known names for this system include Protel and Prestige.

- **Pros of On-Premise Front Office System**

Not dependent on the internet. The data are stored locally, meaning no one outside the hotel premises will access them. This unique feature eventually will safeguard the data from any possible misuse or hack.

- **Cons of On-Premise Front Office System**

They have no flexible accessibility. It is only installed on devices, one device only per account, and users can't access it outside hotel premises and on the internet.

Massive investment in smaller hotels will be a waste if they are not suitable. One-premise hotel front office systems usually require users to pay a 1-year subscription fee at one time. Sudden system crashes in the system can also cost users critical data. There's also no regular auto-update as they need to be directly downloaded and installed on the system.

1. Hybrid hotel front office system

As per the name, a hybrid hotel front office system refers to the duality of the system usage by hoteliers. Simply put, a hybrid hotel front office system incorporates some of the features of a cloud-based system while maintaining the ability to operate on-premises for the remainder of the operations. It is becoming more common for budget-class hotels with a limited staff to utilize this system, with only one employee responsible for overseeing the entire procedure. One of the providers for this is Booking Centre.

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Page 30 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 |
| | | | November, 2022 |

- **Pros of Hybrid Front Office System**

- ✓ **Simplify staff's jobs** around the hotel while still providing a more-humanly approach, which any customer would very much appreciate.
- ✓ **Flexibility in usage**; it's not 100% dependent on one main thing like the other two.

- **Cons of Hybrid Front Office System**

- ✓ Still **cost a lot, if not more**, since two systems are being used simultaneously. This might cause problems in the long run in terms of investment.
- ✓ **Overlapping** between the online and offline data can happen, and it will dampen the whole operation of your hotel.

2. Cloud-based hotel front office system

A cloud-based hotel front office system **refers** to a system that relies on the internet and doesn't need any downloading. Currently, this is the top choice amongst hoteliers as their hotel front office system, mainly due to its ability to be accessed 24 hours a day at any location (as long as there's an internet connection). Besides simplifying staff's work, it also allows for a more efficient process for guests to make their payments online, and they can also do their checking-in and checking-out process easily.

Pros:

- Requires minimum capital investment, as most cloud solutions are on a “pay as you go” basis.
- It only needs two main things: a stable internet connection and a PC

Cons:

- A stable internet connection is consistently required for the system to work smoothly.
- Data can be modified or deleted by an unhappy or fired employee who has access to it. As a result, proper data access should always be considered.

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| Self check-1 | Written Test |
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Part I: short Answer writing

Instruction: write short answer for the given question. You are provided 3 minute for each question and each point has 5Points.

1. What is CRS?
2. Write down types of hotel reservation system?
3. What are pre registration procedures?

Part II- Fill in the blank space

- 1- ----- front desk staff receives the guests in the hotel at the hotel reception
- 2- ----- the client is planning to book an accommodation at a hotel thus the process starts with finding about information related to the hotel and its facilities.
- 3- _____ is includes the preparation of final bills, presentation of bills, receipt of payments and procession of payments for settlement apart from creation of guest history records
- 4- _____ is Additional guest room hotel amenities and sundries
- 5 _____ a system that reduces paperwork and can handle large amount of reservation data effortlessly.

Note: Satisfactory rating – above 60% Unsatisfactory - below 60%

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers

Unit Two: Clarify Interdepartmental Coordination

This unit is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Role of front office
- Significant of front office

This guide will also assist you to attain the unit stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this learning guide, you will be able to:

- Identify the role of front office
- Understand Significant of front office

2.1 The Role of Front Office

The front office department in a hotel has eight main management roles. Sometimes these are handled by the general front office staff rather than dedicated personnel, especially in smaller hotels.

- **Front Office Manager**

A front office manager's role is to oversee the front desk staff. They are also tasked with ensuring a quality experience for every guest. Front office managers will prepare schedules to ensure full staffing at the front desk at all times. They may be involved in the hiring and training of new staff.

- **Guest Service Manager**

In some hotels, particularly larger establishments, there may be a separate guest service manager to oversee the front office staff. This position may involve scheduling, staff training and development, managing the departmental budget, and maintaining good working relationships with the hotel's other departments.

- **Reservation Manager**

The reservation manager's job is to handle reservation services, maximising efficiency in the front office department in the hotel. As well as dealing with cancellations and changes, the reservations manager will be tasked with ensuring that front desk staff are prepared to answer guests' questions. They may also coordinate with the sales and housekeeping departments.

- **Reception Manager**

The reception manager will be the first point of contact for guests arriving at the hotel. It's their job to make guests welcome and ensure their comfort and satisfaction during their stay. Reception managers ensure that reception areas operate smoothly and efficiently. They may also oversee a reception team.

- **Revenue Manager**

The revenue manager is tasked with ensuring that guests are charged at the appropriate room rate. They will also be responsible for periodically reviewing room rates and service charges, comparing them to other hotels in the area within a similar price bracket, and ensuring that rates remain competitive.

- **Night Audit Manager**

In the evenings, the night audit manager is tasked with supervising auditing processes. These are in place to make sure that all of the day's financial transactions are properly accounted for and fully reconciled. They will make sure that all cash taken that day is counted and will check for any discrepancies.

- **Concierge**

The concierge is responsible for running the front desk. A concierge will coordinate with various hotel departments to ensure that guests' needs are attended to. The concierge may also be involved with staffing the front desk, ensuring that there's always someone on hand to assist guests.

- **Housekeeping Manager**

The housekeeping manager oversees the housekeeping staff. They are responsible for cleaning and sanitizing rooms so that everything is ready for the next guest. They will also perform housekeeping tasks in the public areas in and around the hotel: cleaning bathrooms, vacuuming carpeted areas, etc.

2.2 Significance of front office

The front office department is extremely important because in most cases the front desk is the first thing that a visitor will see. In a sense, the front office department is an introduction to the company. How successfully the front office department runs is a reflection of the organization skills of the company as a whole. A well presented, well organized front office department will give a great first impression to visitors. A frantic, unorganized front desk will immediately give visitors a sense of unease and a negative impression about the company.

Front office departments are important to a company as they provide a number of benefits. A front office department can act as a welcome point to greet guests and customers, introducing them to the building and some of the employees before they go on to their meeting. There will be a receptionist close by to take down the visitor's name and ensure that they are comfortable while they wait to be seen.

A front office department that will be used as an area for visitors to wait in can be beneficial if the company arranges a lot of meetings. An area with chairs, an option to get drinks and things to look at make a much nicer environment for guests to wait in rather than outside an executive's office. If the

| | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Page 35 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 |
| | Author/Copyright | | November, 2022 |

person who has arranged the meeting is temporarily busy, the front office department can act as a messenger until the meeting can take place.

A well-run front desk that ensures good communication between the company and its visitors reflects the approach of the company as a whole. The department is also important when there is a need for multi-tasking. Receptionists can have daily tasks that vary from organizing databases to arranging meetings to filing paperwork.

Reception is the art of receiving. Welcoming entrances and reception areas provide the best guidance for a Hotel guest on “what to expect”.

The Front Desk at a Hotel creates the first and the last impressions in their minds. An efficient and friendly welcome from Reception staff can make all the difference. The entrance and reception areas are the first aspects of a Hotel that many guests encounter and will also be the natural hub of the Hotel.

The availability of professional staff to meet, greet and assist Hotel Guests and visitors is very important. Hotel Guests can be tired and emotionally disturbed when they enter Hotels and Reception staff needs to show some respect and empathy, always greeting with a smile, both of which can make all the difference.

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Self check 2

Written test

Part-I Matching

Instruction: select the correct answer for the give choice. You have given 1 Minute for each question.

Each question carries 2 Point.

A

B

-----1. Front Office Manager

A. Scheduling, staff training

-----2. Guest Service Manager

B. Handle reservation services

-----3.Reception manager

C. Oversee the front desk staff

-----4. Reservation Manager

D. Supervising auditing processes

-----5. Night Auditor

E. Contact for guests arriving

F. Running the front desk

Part II: short Answer writing

Instruction: write short answer for the given question. You are provided 3 minute for each question and each point has 5Points.

1. Write the role and responsibilities of front office for each manager

A. Front office manager

B. Guest service manager

C. Reception manager

D. Reservation manager

E. Night auditor

Note: Satisfactory rating – above 60% Unsatisfactory - below 60%

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers

Unit Three: provide porter service

This unit is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Escorting guests to rooms
- Operate luggage storage system
- Track any lost luggage
- Provide ancillary services

This guide will also assist you to attain the unit stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this learning guide, you will be able to:

- Using methods of escorting guest rooms
- Perform SOPs for operating luggage system
- Perform ancillary service

3.1 Escorting Guest to Rooms

3.1.1 SOP for Escorting Guest to Room

The first impression that the guest gets from the hotel will last and the hotel needs to make sure that a guest who stays for the first time in the hotel will get all relevant information in an effective way while he is escorted to his room.

The Concierge staff and Bell Desk team are often the first point of contact and should have good product knowledge & good knowledge of the city and places of interest to give clear directions/recommendations to the guests.

- Enterprise and room features for escorting guest room
 - ✓ dining options
 - ✓ sporting facilities
 - ✓ floor facilities
 - ✓ operating procedures for room equipment, such as telephone or television
 - ✓ general services, such as laundry and valet
 - ✓ meal arrangements

Directing Guest to Room Standard Procedure:

1. Present yourself to the guest with a genuine smile.
2. Always offer the guest to carry his/her bags.
3. Always try to walk to the right of the Guest while directing to their room.
4. Walk a short step ahead of the Guest maintaining a distance of 2 feet from him/her.
5. Smile warmly and maintain eye contact when conversing with the Guest.
6. On the way, briefly explain the hotel features and facilities which the guest needs to know (e.g. breakfast room, restaurant timings, pool area, spa access, complimentary hi-tea, city drop, boat ride etc.).
7. Walk professionally without making any noise.
8. Assist the guest to call the lift by pressing the button to get the lift for the guest.
9. When the lift door opens gesture with your open palm gesture.
10. Explain how to use the room key to activate the elevator if appropriate.

11. Once the lift arrives at the floor, gesture the Guest out first and then direct the Guest towards their room as above.
12. Once you reach the room, open the door for the Guest.
13. Demonstrate how to use the room key.
14. Open the door and gesture the Guest to the room.
15. Ask Guest permission to enter the room and ask if they wish to have an explanation of the room.
16. If the answer is yes, show the room and explain e.g. TV use, mini bar, air-conditioning, lightning etc.
17. Offer further assistance.
18. Wish the guest a pleasant stay.
19. Leave the room and close the room door behind slowly.

Other General Points to note while directing/escorting guests:

1. Be aware of the exact location of the facilities in and around the hotel.
2. Always explain in a clear and simple way.
3. Escort the guest whenever possible or have him/her escorted by another Associate.
4. Also ensure that you are aware of all health and safety procedures, especially in case of an emergency.
5. Know the location of the nearest fire exit, assembly

3.2 Operate luggage storage system

To operate luggage storage system Enterprise procedures and security requirements must known by the porter services department. This procedure includes

- luggage marking systems
- amount of luggage to be placed on trolleys or taken into lifts
- procedures or designated routes for moving luggage through public areas
- restrictions on areas into which luggage can be taken
- order in which luggage is to be moved

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 40 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

- procedures for dealing with heavy items
- lifting and bending procedures
- procedures for taking luggage from rooms
- placement of luggage within rooms
- group luggage procedures

3.2.1 SOPS for Tagging Guest Luggage - Arrivals | Departures | Left Luggage

1. Carefully unload the guest luggage from the car and place them on the trolley.
2. Luggage trolleys are used when there is more than one piece of luggage.
3. Confirm the total number of pieces with the guest and make sure no luggage has been left in the car.
4. Never leave the guests' luggage unattended.
5. Tag the guest luggage with appropriate luggage tag's.
6. Ensure sufficient luggage trolleys are available and in perfect condition.
7. Handle guest luggage carefully and take special care of any fragile items.
8. Take luggage to the lobby and follow up with the reception to allocate the room to the guest.
9. We need to make sure that the guest receives the correct baggage back.
10. Always tag the luggage when the guest arrives at the hotel and the room is not ready yet.
11. Always tag the baggage or luggage when the luggage is stored in the Bell storage closet upon check-out of the guest.

- **Verify Below details on the left luggage tag**

- ✓ Check the room number on the check-in tag.
- ✓ Identify wing/building/floor as per the tag color.
- ✓ Room number (if checking out, it is the room number that they have checked-out).
- ✓ Date of check-out/ check-in.
- ✓ The number of pieces being stored.
- ✓ Employees' initials tagging the luggage.

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 41 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

Distributing the tag components for left luggage

1. Tear off the luggage tag stub and give it to the guest by saying: “Mr. / Ms David here is your luggage tag. When you need to have your bags retrieved, please present this ticket to the Bell Desk or Concierge Desk.”
2. Attach the main luggage tag to the largest suitcase/bag.
3. Use the self-adhesive labels to mark the other pieces of luggage belonging to the guest.

Recording information on Baggage/Luggage movement:

1. Items being delivered, held or stored should be recorded in the Property Management System (PMS) or Hotels Software.
2. It should include the guest's name, time, date to be retrieved, number of pieces, bay location, initials of the bell attendant.
3. Fill up the errand cards as per the guest cycle (Arrival/Departure/Room Move) Etc.
4. Record the details of the baggage moment on to the luggage moment register.

3.3 Track any lost luggage

3.3.1 SOPs for handling lost luggage

Assisting the guest with lost luggage:

1. The purpose of this SOP is to assist the guest in retrieving lost luggage is coordinated by the Concierge Services team.
2. A guest who has lost his luggage on the way to the hotel for whatever reason is not only in a very uncomfortable position but may also experience his stay at the hotel in a negative manner due to his irritation about the situation.
3. Ask guest for the BIR (Baggage Irregularity Report) card or PIR Card (Property Irregularity Report) by saying: “Mr. /Mrs. David, we can follow up with your lost luggage, may I ask for a copy of the BIR Baggage Irregularity Report and we will let you know if we hear anything from the lost luggage department at the airport”

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 42 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

4. An active follow-up needs traces or internal message to be created on the hotel's property management system assigned to the concierge department.
5. Take a scan of the BIR / PIR card into the hotel system and attach to the traces or internal message.
6. Email a copy of the BIR or PIR card to the Airport Representative.
7. The guest has to be kept informed either verbally or via message about the status of his lost bags.
8. The Airport Representative will go to the Lost Luggage Dept with the BIR and claim the luggage if the same is found by the airlines.
9. While they claim the luggage they will call the hotel to inform them of the arrival of the luggage.
10. Concierge Services will dispatch a hotel car to the airport to collect the luggage.
11. Send a note to the room if the time is past 2200 Hrs or Call the room and inform the guest directly if it is outside this time.
12. In case the baggage is lost and cannot be found then assist the guest to buy any clothing or other required items by recommending shopping areas etc.

3.4 Ancillary service

In porter service there are different kinds of ancillary service. Such as

- wake-up calls
 - messages
 - organising transport
 - luggage pick up
 - paging guest
 - preparing guest information directories
- **wake-up call**

A wake-up call (alarm call in the United Kingdom, morning call in east Asia) is a service provided by lodging establishments allowing guests to request a telephone call at a pre-specified time, thus causing the guest to wake up at that time

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 43 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

- **Messages**

Receiving messages for in-house guests in their absence, recording them and communicating them to the guests as soon as possible is an important function of the front desk staff. The efficiency and professionalism of the hotel and the attitude of the staff is reflected by the way this function is carried out by the staff. Usually when a guest goes out of his room he would leave his room key at the counter where the information clerk would put it in the appropriate pigeon hole of his room in the mail and key rack. The guest may leave a filled “Location Form” indicating where he will be for the next few hours.

- **Paging guest**

- ✓ Paging is the process of locating a guest in a given area within the hotel premises.
- ✓ The concierge or bell desk team then writes the guest details on the paging board and deploys a bell boy to do the paging with the board.
- ✓ In earlier days the paging board had bells which draw the attention of the guest when it is shaken.
- ✓ Nowadays the hotels use digital paging boards with LCD or LED display or simply a large Android or IOS tablet.

- **preparing guest information directories**

Its purpose is to give the front office staff knowledgeable answers to common guest questions like recommending local restaurants, contacting transportation companies, providing directions to nearby businesses, shopping centers, drugstores, banks, churches, theatres, and any other needed business.

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| Self check 3 | Written test |
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Part I: short Answer writing

Instruction: write short answer for the given question. You are provided 3 minute for each question and each point has 5Points.

4. Illustrate SOPs for tagging guest luggage?
5. Discuss operating luggage system?
6. What are enterprise and rooms features for escorting guest?
7. What are the ancillary services in front office?

Part II- Fill in the blank space

- 5- -----is a service provided by lodging establishments allowing guests to request a telephone call at a pre-specified time
- 6- ----- is the process of locating a guest in a given area within the hotel premises
- 7- _____ is answers to common guest questions like recommending local restaurants, contacting transportation companies
- 8- _____ is for house guests in their absence, recording them and communicating them to the guests as soon as possible is an important function of the front desk staff

Note: Satisfactory rating – above 60% Unsatisfactory - below 60%

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers

Operation sheet 3

- **Operation title:** operate luggage system
- **Purpose:** To operate luggage storage system Enterprise procedures and security requirements must known by the porter services department
- **Instruction:** Read the instruction carefully and apply the procedure
- **Tools and requirement:**
 1. This operation sheet
 2. Paper
 3. Pen
 4. Luggage
- **Procedures in doing the task**
 - ✓ luggage marking systems
 - ✓ amount of luggage to be placed on trolleys or taken into lifts
 - ✓ procedures or designated routes for moving luggage through public areas
 - ✓ restrictions on areas into which luggage can be taken
 - ✓ order in which luggage is to be moved
 - ✓ procedures for dealing with heavy items
 - ✓ lifting and bending procedures
 - ✓ procedures for taking luggage from rooms
 - ✓ placement of luggage within rooms
 - ✓ group luggage procedures

Lab Test .1

Demonstration

Name: _____ Date: _____

Time started: _____ Time finished: _____

Instructions:

Task 1: Demonstrate operating luggage system.

Unit Four: Receive and Respond to Telephone Calls

This unit is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Purpose of the call prior to calling
- Use telephone equipment
- Answering telephone calls
- clearly Communicating
- Repeating call details to the caller
- Transfer caller enquiries
- Record caller requests and information
- Threatening or suspicious phone calls

This guide will also assist you to attain the unit stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this learning guide, you will be able to:

- Identify purpose of call
- Understand usage of telephone equipments
- Using telephone operator etiquettes

4.1 Establish Purpose of the call

There are different types of telephone sales calls done by the front office

- 1) **Prospect Calls:** The main objective of such type of call is to gather maximum inform of the potential company and to find the key decision makers.
- 2) **Qualifying Calls:** Are done to determine if the prospect company or bookers can afford the services provided by the hotel. Such type of calls is important to find out if the company has a requirement for hotel's rooms, banquet or other services.
- 3) **Appointment Calls:** Made to briefly introduce a prospective client about the services and facilities offered by the hotel and try to get a an appointment for direct meeting. Such type of calls doesn't generate any sales but the main purpose is to agree for an appointment with the booker / decision maker.
- 4) **Sales Calls:** The main objective of this type of call is to make an immediate sale during the call. This is normally performed by very well trained telephone sales team and they need to sell the benefits of bookings at the hotel rather than the features or services.
- 5) **Service Calls:** Once the guest or booker confirm the hotel services a follow-up call need to be made to the booker just to check any changes or additional services needed. For Banquet event booking such calls can also help to identify any changes expected etc.
- 6) **Promotion Calls:** Made by the sales team to bookers or potential customers about any new or ongoing promotions or special offers E.g.: Food Festivals, Room Packages, Wedding packages etc.
- 7) **Feedback Calls:** Once the hotel services or facilities are used by the booker or guest a feedback call is made by the sales manager to know about the experience, suggestions or any complaints during their stay or event.

Such feedback are always recorded on to the sales and marketing software and also informed the relevant team or departments.

8) Public Relations Calls: Such type of calls is made to generate goodwill. Made to regular or repeat guests, Loyalty members, bookers etc. by the Director or Sales, General Manager or other key executive in the hotel.

9) Incoming Calls: The sales department also receives many incoming calls and the team should always provide a positive impression to all kind of incoming calls. Some examples of incoming calls are general enquiries, reservation enquiry, response to advertisements, response to promotions etc.

4.2 Use telephone equipment

They are different kinds of telephone equipment. Such as single or multiple line telephone systems, Switchboards ,mobile phones and landlines

- **Switchboard**

A switchboard operator works for major companies, hospitals, and hotels where an influx of telephone calls are normally coming in. The operator assists callers by answering the line and connecting the caller to the correct person or department. Before modern inventions came into play, switchboard workers had to manually connect callers on a switchboard by plugging phone lines into the correct circuit. Today, switchboard operators work through computerized systems that need less human involvement. The

operators of today are more customer service driven than in older days.



Fig 4.1.1 telephone switch



board

- **Cordless Phones**

Cordless handsets with features including headset, speaker, text-messaging, and remote-control are now available

Make sure the type of cordless phone you choose has a long talk time battery and stand by time

Always consider the weight of the phone and battery for your employees

Built in personal phone book will help with quick dial calls

Some phones will have a vibrator to assist with receiving calls in a noisy environment such as a nightclub

Calls conducted between staff members are not charged as outside calls and can be free or charged at a substantially reduced rate

Fig4.1.2 Cordless phones

Cordless accessories:

- ✓ Charges
- ✓ Batteries
- ✓ Headsets

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 51 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

- ✓ Blue tooth
- ✓ Protective covers
- ✓ Phone holders

Call alert systems - Silent call alerter Small click-on accessory which vibrates to warn user of a call. Handy to stay in touch without disturbing a meeting

4.3 Answering telephone calls

All calls must be answered promptly to avoid keeping the caller waiting and must be answered in an appropriate manner in accordance with enterprise standards. Failure to answer the phone promptly may mean the caller hangs up and gives their business to another company. Answering “promptly” can be seen as answering as soon as possible (subject to enterprise requirements).

4.3.1 Using an appropriate telephone manner

An appropriate telephone manner includes the following:

- Using polite language at all times – regardless of the language being used by the caller.
- Using appropriate welcoming or greeting phrases – as set by the employer style of the greeting should reflect the style of business involved
- Showing enthusiasm (that is, a positive attitude or approach to the call) when taking a call – to demonstrate the business is eager to talk to the caller and to do business with them
- Being friendly – it is important for all those who take telephone calls to understand the need to be friendly to all callers. This friendliness while on the telephone has been referred to as the need to „put a smile in your voice“ when talking on the telephone. Some people recommend placing a mirror near the telephone or on the desk to remind users to smile while on the phone
- Making an offer of help to the caller. A standard requirement when answering all telephone calls is to either ask the caller a direct question enquiring what assistance the caller wants, or have a positive predisposition towards providing whatever help the caller asks for.

4.3.2 Applying enterprise standards

Enterprise standards may relate to:

- The use of appropriate greetings or welcoming phrases when answering the telephone.

These may require you to:

- ✓ Greet the caller
- ✓ Identify the business
- ✓ Identify yourself
- ✓ Make an offer of assistance

For example:

- ✓ “Hello, Joe’s Bar and Grill, Mary speaking. How may I help you?”
- ✓ “Good afternoon, Sami’s Tours. This is Ayele speaking.”
- ✓ “Good evening, thank you for calling Sami’s Tours. Fre speaking, How may I help you?”
- Certainly, it is totally unacceptable to pick up the telephone and say:
 - ✓ “What?”
 - ✓ “Yes”
 - ✓ “Hello”
- Adherence to ring limits. Some businesses set a „ring limit“ within which they want the telephone to be answered: for example, all incoming calls must be answered within three rings
- When the enterprise sets a ring limit it highlights to staff the need to answer the telephone promptly
- Use of the caller’s name. When you know the name of the person calling it is standard practice to use that name throughout the duration of the call
- It is often said everyone likes to hear the sound of their own name (so using the caller’s name is a positive thing to do), and it demonstrates to the caller you have taken the trouble to remember who they are. Using their name personalizes the call
- Making an offer of assistance. When taking a telephone call you must always be alert to the need to (as appropriate): Make an initial offer of help to the caller, such as:

- ✓ “Who would you like to speak to?”
- ✓ “Where can I direct your call?”
- Be responsive to directing the call-in accordance with the initial information provided by the caller:
 - ✓ “It sounds as if you need to talk to our Function department, Mr. Maguire. I’ll connect you to Mr. Thomas, our Banquet Manager”
 - ✓ “I think you will need to talk to Peter, he’s in charge of reservations”
- Take a message if the person the caller needs to speak with is unavailable:
 - ✓ I’m sorry Mr. Smith; Mr. Grey is unavailable at the moment. Can I take a message and get him to ring you back?

4.3.3 Placing the call on hold

If the call has to be put on hold it should be done courteously (again, making sure you follow organizational requirements).

Always ask the caller if they want to hold, for example:

- ✓ “Can you hold the line, please?”
- ✓ “I’m sorry Mr. Hickman; Mr. Williams is not in his room at the moment. Would you like to hold while I have him paged?”

Remember though to wait for the caller’s response; the caller may not want to hold. Nothing is more annoying for the caller to be asked a question and then have you not wait for their answer!

4.3.4 Offering friendly assistance

At all times, callers must be spoken to in a friendly tone. Remember to put a smile in your voice. Assistance must be offered when and where necessary without giving the impression that doing so is an imposition.

The key to answering queries is to be genuinely helpful which encompasses:

- Focusing on the call to the exclusion of other work. Do not get distracted
- Trying to understand the caller’s problem/s so your response is appropriate to the needs of the caller

- Asking questions to obtain more information to assist in providing relevant help
- Putting yourself in the caller's shoes by seeing things from the caller's perspective
- Taking time with the caller by not rushing the call or giving the impression you are eager to move on to another call or other work
- Checking the caller's level of satisfaction with what is happening, has been provided or is being suggested and then altering your service as necessary to improve service delivery.

4.3.5 The need to focus on the call

A Golden Rule when dealing with a phone call is to focus completely on the caller you are dealing with.

This means the telephone call you are answering must be your primary focus as opposed to being distracted by other calls that may be coming in, calls that are on hold or other people or customers in the area.

(Note: most businesses also require that a face-to-face customer takes priority over a telephone that starts ringing)

After the call has been initially answered it may be necessary to interrupt the call to answer another one. Where a need to do this exists you should:

- Excuse yourself from the caller you are talking to
- Answer the other incoming call and either:
 - ✓ Apologize for the delay
 - ✓ Ask them if they would mind holding
 - ✓ Put them on hold, take their details and offer to call them back, or (not the preferred option) ask if they would mind ringing back
 - ✓ Transfer the call to the appropriate person or department
- Go back to the original caller and apologies for the interruption and continue to focus on that call. Note that in some situations you will have to make a value judgment about whether to ignore the other incoming call and simply continue with your existing call. For example, when handling an already annoyed caller, or when talking with a customer who indicates they are likely to spend a lot of money with the organization (or a regular customer) it can be best to ignore other calls.

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|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 55 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

- It is generally best to answer one call at a time and get every one of them right, rather than answer every incoming call and get half (or even 5%) of them wrong, confused or incomplete.

4.3.6 Tips to apply when answering enquiries

The following should be applied when answering enquiries to optimize customer service:

- Remember previous advice. Put a smile in your voice (if appropriate – that is, it is inappropriate to put a smile in your voice if the caller is calling to make a complaint)
- Ensure the caller can see you are trying to help them. It is important you become part of the solution to the reason they called, as opposed to becoming an additional problem for them to deal with
- Keep them informed. Tell the caller what you are doing to try to help them. Remember they cannot see you so you have to tell them what you are doing
- Always be honest. Never make up an answer if you don't know, and make sure you tell the caller the full story in response to their question as opposed to just giving them half the story and therefore misleading them or creating unreal expectations
- Refer to documents or other staff where you are unsure. For example, prices change and advertising promotions and campaigns alter over time. Where you are not 100% sure of your facts, look it up or ask the „right person“
- Realize as quickly as you can when you cannot help the caller anymore. Callers get quickly annoyed at having to explain themselves to you and then having to do the same thing all over again to another person. Never waste the caller's time
- Try harder when you are on the telephone. Make an extra effort when dealing with people on the telephone in recognition of the fact they cannot see you and you cannot see them. Ensure your voice is appropriate and reflects the emotion you want to convey.

4.3.7 Transferring calls

Standard procedures for transferring calls include:

- Apologies – if appropriate – for the need to transfer the call. Where the caller has asked for another person, there is obviously no need to apologies

- Explain why you need to transfer the call. Highlight the fact the person they are being transferred to will be best able to deal with their call
- Tell them who you want to transfer them to. Give the person's name and title or position within the business
- Ask permission to transfer their call. For example:
 - ✓ “Mr. Watts, I’m sorry I can’t help you with your query but I’d like to transfer you to Mr. Brown who is the manager. Would you like to be connected to him? – I’m sure he will be able to give you the information you need.”
- Transfer the call and monitor it. If the call is not answered you must go back to the caller, apologies and make arrangements for the person to phone the caller back

4.3.8 Taking message

If the caller asks to leave a message or it becomes obvious a message needs to be taken, high levels of customer service must be provided. Never give the impression that having to take a message is a nuisance or a burden. It must be done as cheerfully as dealing with all other aspects of telephone operation.

When taking a telephone message:

- Use the designated telephone message form
- Make sure you capture all the information the caller gives you. The message must be meaningful and comprehensive. Remember another person will have to read, interpret and act on it
- Ensure you get the details (times, dates, numbers, prices, addresses and flight numbers) correct. Double-check them. Special attention needs to be paid to spelling of names, addresses and towns. Ask the caller to spell out names and destinations if unsure of the spelling or where variations on traditional spelling exist
- Repeat the message back to the caller to confirm it and allow them to provide extra information or detail (or change the details already provided) and make corrections (adjustments, additions) as required

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 57 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

- Thank the caller for their call, for leaving a message, or for calling back.

Make sure you remember this point!

If you make a promise to get back to a caller at a later time or date, then make sure you do!

Sometimes it takes very little for one business to stand out from the competition, and returning or making calls when promised is one way of doing this and one of the easiest things to do. It demonstrates respect for the caller and shows you value their business.

4.4 Clear Communication

Phone skills are the communication tools you use when making calls to customers, clients and team members. When you're unable to meet with business professionals in person, calling them on the phone is an effective way to stay in contact and communicate in real time. As you speak on the phone, you should be engaging and personable in order to build and maintain a strong connection with them.

Examples of phone skills

Using your phone skills to maintain a positive relationship with your clients is a great way to demonstrate strong customer service abilities. Showing your professionalism, empathy and positivity over the phone also impresses clients and assures them that you care about their needs. Here are some essential phone skills you can apply when communicating with customers:

1. Positive attitude

As you speak with clients over the phone, remain positive throughout the entire interaction and work to solve any challenging problems they may present to you. A positive tone can give a help to reassure the caller and may calm them down if they're expressing confusion or frustration with your product or service.

2. Clarity and strong diction

Try to remain clear and enunciate your words effectively while you speak on the phone. Use every day phrases and words as you talk with them to make it easy for both of you to follow the conversation. To ensure you have strong clarity, take a few pauses when you're speaking to give yourself time to think about what you'll say next. This ensures you're making complete sense while you speak and are avoiding any filler words. Talk at a slow and steady pace so the other person can easily understand what you're saying.

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 58 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

3. Interpersonal skills

Friendliness and interpersonal skills are crucial when talking with customers. Remain friendly and kinds as you answer questions and take messages. This keeps the conversation personable and can make the customer feel more connected to you. Smile as you talk on the phone. When you display friendliness as you talk, it reflects in your voice during the call.

When you first answer the phone, say your own name and the name of the business. For example, you can say, "Marketing Solutions, this is Paige. How can I help you?" This shows your eagerness to assist them and starts the conversation on a friendly note. Before you get too far into the conversation, ask their name and repeat it back to them naturally as you continue speaking. This builds a stronger connection and shows you care about them and their situation.

4. Empathy and sincerity

From the moment you answer the phone, maintain a genuine and sincere tone as you speak with the client. Keep your greetings and responses natural rather than scripted or generic. Connect with them by attempting to understand their perspective throughout the phone call. Stay patient with them as you listen and answer questions. If they ask you challenging questions, do everything you can to provide them with a satisfactory answer.

If there is someone else in your office who you know can better assist the customer, you can transfer them. Remain sincere as you transfer their call and politely ask the customer if you can put them on hold while you locate a helpful resource for them.

5. Active listening

To show the customer or client you care, use listening skills to let customers know that you're there to assist them. As they talk with you, show them you're actively listening by repeating information back to them or providing audible feedback by saying words like "okay" or "yes".

6. Professionalism

Speaking with clients on the phone rather than in-person means finding new ways to demonstrate your professionalism. Wear business-professional attire and use proper posture by sitting up straight and making sure your phone doesn't release any static or other unwanted noises during the call.

Keeping yourself looking professional helps you feel that way, which applies to phone conversations as well. This is why the way you dress and present yourself is important, even if you're working from

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 59 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

a remote or home office. Before your call, test the audio on your phone or headset to ensure your clients hear you clearly.

7. Organization

Even over the phone, clients may still expect strong organizational skills from you. If you're holding a meeting with your client over the phone, make sure you still have all the items or documents you need before calling them.

Have a pen and paper with you to take notes during the meeting, and keep your new workspace neat and organized. This shows your clients that you remain professional at all times.

8. Politeness

If you talk on the phone with many people during the week, make sure you stay polite from the beginning to the end of each day. If your job involves regularly calling clients or answering customer calls, your whole day may consist of solving client issues on the phone.

9. Gratitude and appreciation

Showing appreciation for your customers and thanking them regularly is an effective way to continue building lasting relationships over the phone. After the call, politely thank them for speaking with you. If you're reaching out to customers and they're taking time out of their schedule to talk to you, show your appreciation for allowing you to speak with them.

When you have to reschedule a meeting or hold it over the phone, thank the client for being flexible with their schedule and letting you conduct business in a different format.

10. Research and preparation skills

If you're making a call to customers, make sure you do your research by looking up their names and fully understanding why you're calling them. Have your reason for calling the customer prepared ahead of time to show that you respect their time. If you have questions to ask the client or customer at your upcoming meeting, conduct your research beforehand and write down all the questions you have. Have your meeting information and details ready before you speak with them to get the most out of both their time and yours.

11. Leadership

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|---------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Page 60 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 |
| | | | November, 2022 |

Leadership abilities are crucial when talking on the phone. Your clients may experience distractions from their day, which could cause the phone call to go off-subject. Keep the conversation flowing, positive and on topic with your agenda items. Make sure your voice remains at a steady, authoritative tone as you work with customers and clients.

12. Task and time management

If you regularly make calls to clients and customers, it requires extra care to maintain your other work responsibilities. Use time management skills to organize your time wisely and consistently reach out to customers while balancing your other work.

4.5 Repeating call details

Telephone plays an important role in times of reservation on phone. Perfect telephone handling ensures efficiency of the reservation agent which at the same time upholds hotel's standard.

All the time you should follow proper telephone manner. These are some basic tips you should follow while you are taking reservation on phone.

- I. Pick up the phone before 3 rings.
 1. Greet the caller. Try to keep very fresh, clear and friendly voice tone so that guest from other side of the phone may feel comfortable. Remember First Impression is the Last Impression.
 2. It is advisable to greet in this way “Namaskar Reservations. How may I assist you?”
 3. Try to identify caller gender by his or her sound. Listen to the name properly. Repeat the name with Mr. or Ms. Caller may be hurt if you by mistake call him wrongly.
 4. Try to understand why the caller calls. In a hotel people call not only for making reservation but also for getting information, arranging party, sending message to a guest or making business deal etc. So, first listen carefully to identify what sorts of assistance the caller wants from you.

5. If the caller calls for room reservation and if he is not a repeated guest then you should try to give a short overview on your hotel including hotel's feature and amenities, specialty, special offer you are offering etc.
6. In the meantime, look at the room status or reservation chart. It will be so bad if after informing everything, guest becomes convinced and wants to have a room booked but you don't find any room to sell as all are occupied. So, always be updated specially about room status.
7. If callers requested date indicates "SOLD OUT" which means you are unable to sell the room for that specific date, then very politely say sorry to the guest and let him know why you are unable to sell the room.
8. If the requested date indicates "WAIT-LISTED" then politely inform the guest about the situation and inform him that reservation on that day is wait-listed for that reason you are taking his reservation but not giving full guarantee and request him to check again closer to that requested date.
9. After giving an overview of you hotel, now try to identify what sorts of room the caller wants and try to offer him some options so that he can decide from his own or if he needs then assist him.
10. If the guest wants to book the room then says that we are very pleased to reserve a room for you. May I have some information from you please? Now try to collect these information with proper spelling:
 - Name of the Guest
 - His Contact Address
 - Room Types
 - Room Rates
 - Date of Arrival
 - Date of Departure
 - Date of Reservation Made
 - Mode of Payment
 - Special Remark (if any)

- Reservation Made by Person or Company
1. Repeat all the information caller gives and at the same time give him a reservation confirmation number.
 2. If you have any objection about guest's mode of payment or anything then inform the guest about your rules and request him to give you another option.
 3. After settling everything thanks the caller for his patience and calling you. End up the call as warmly as you start and try to make him feel that he just have made a perfect decision.

4.6 Transfer caller enquiries

Make sure you know the process to put the call on hold and that you can use the transfer operational process to contact another extension without cutting off the original caller. When transferring calls it is important to transfer information to the new department as well and not let the "customer or guest" have to keep repeating themselves.

4.7 Record caller requests and information

As a service to the guests, hotels provide a variety of items that the travelers need but are not kept in the rooms as a standard. The HK department takes care of the special requests of the guest and these items are loaned to the guest at no charge. Such items are generally placed with the HK control desk. These are also known as 'Guest Loan Items'.

Some of the items which may be requested by the guest are

- Voltage / international adaptors,
- Scissors
- Hot water bag,
- Nail cutter,
- Iron & Iron board (in case if not already placed in the room),
- Furniture items – like an extra chair,
- Hard bed – a piece of wood placed under the mattress to make a bed firm and reduce back pain

Extra beds – Chargeable

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 63 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

- All out machines,
- Torch
- Special pillows (cotton, hard pillow, etc) many people request for foam pillows since they are allergic to feather pillows
- Baby cot
- Indoor games
- Umbrella
- Cane stick
- Wheelchair
- Hairdryer
- Thermometer etc.

In most of the hotel desk supervisor maintenances Extra Item/ Loan Item cupboard in which these special items are placed.

Note – An extra blanket, pillow or towels are very normal requests. Some guests may request a bathrobe, more shampoo, floral arrangements, etc.

NOTE – not all requests by the guest are for additional/extra items, some are for service e.g.the room to be serviced, shoeshine, laundry to be picked up, etc.

1. Once the guest requests for special items it is recorded in the guest's special request register/ guest call register/ message register by the control desk supervisor.
2. The concerned GRA/ floor supervisor is informed so that the particular request is attended to at the earliest.
3. The time of receiving the request from the guest & the time request being forwarded to the Floor Supervisor is recorded in the Message Register.
4. The GRA / Floor Supervisor accordingly take appropriate action i.e. the Guest request is fulfilled
5. Once the requirement of the guest is fully filled; the floor supervisor gives a follow-up call to the control desk.
6. The items given on special request are recorded in the floor register/floor logbook
7. The entries are also made on the occupancy board and the logbook. This gives information to the subsequent shift's desk supervisor.

8. In case the guest is checking out the request items are removed from the room and the information is erased from the board.
9. The special request items are handed over by one shift to another shift. After every shift items are counted and handed over to the next shift

4.8 Record Threatening

Call centre staff will have to deal with suspected behavior phone calls. However, using the above de-escalation techniques will help calm the situation down, leaving both agents and customers in a happier place.

Putting a policy in place will ensure that angry customers don't take things too far and the staff knows where the limits lie.

Knowing how to deal with angry calls will give your company a better reputation, and provide customers a better experience, encouraging them to keep on coming back.

Some suggestions on how to establish this are through:

- **The three-strike rule** – This is giving two warnings to the customer before cutting off an angry phone call. Of course, this should be done in a diplomatic way and as a last resort. But, if the agent has tried to work alongside the customer and they just aren't playing ball, it's time to say goodbye.
- **Let managers listen to the call** – Having people with more expertise listen to an angry call can help. They know when it's appropriate to cut things off, and can help agents learn for the future. It also lets staff know they are respected in their job.
- **Make a follow-up call** – Of course, you want to support your staff when they deal with a bad customer. But even if a client is having a (very) off day, you don't necessarily want to lose custom with them. It can have a bad impact on your brand, to say the least. Having a follow-up call can help mend any ties.
- **Know how to deal with repeat offenders** – Unfortunately, there will always be people that keep on abusing staff. The first time, they can be forgiven. But the fourth time? Well, perhaps then it's time to

tell them to never call again. You may need to create another policy to add to your angry caller policy to decide how to deal with this issue.

- **Finding alternative solutions** – Perhaps a customer is finding it hard to verbalise themselves. Giving them the choice to write things down and communicate via email will mean that you aren't having to deal with any angry outbursts.

There are other points that you might want to add to your policy. Such as redirecting calls to experts or simply dropping the customer from your company. A policy will help establish how far is too far and how much you need each customer.

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| Self check 4 | Written test |
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PART-I: Directions: Choose the best answer from the given alternatives

1. Which one are phone skills?

A/ positive attitude B/ Aggressive behavior C/ Crying D/None

2.is telephone equipment,.

A/ cordless B /switch board C/ landlines D. All

3. One is part of cordless phones.

A/ charges C/ switch board

B/ phone holders D/ A&B E/ None

4. Which one is enterprise standard for telephone call?

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 66 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

- A/ use of appropriate greetings B/ Use of the caller's name
C/ Making an offer of assistant D/ All

PART-II Directions: Read & Answer by choosing TRUE for correct question and FALSE for Incorrect question.

-1/ Placing the call on hold to be put on hold.
.....2/ In telephone calling Using polite language is must at all times.
.....3/ A switchboard operator works for schools.
.....4/ Repeating message makes the customer anger.
.....5/Apolologies is one procedure of transferring call.

Operation sheet 1

- **Operation title:** Demonstrate telephone communication skills
- **Purpose:** To make clear communication with guest in telephone.
- **Instruction:** Read the instruction carefully and apply the procedure
- **Tools and requirement:**

5. Telephone

Procedures in doing the task

1) Demonstrate positive attitude to the caller

- ✓ Use positive tone to the caller
- ✓ Ask the guest his/her demand

2) Use clarity and strong diction

- ✓ Try to remain clear and enunciate your words effectively

| | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 67 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

3) Show interpersonal skills

- ✓ Talk with Friendliness and interpersonal
- ✓ For example, you can say,
- ✓ "Marketing Solutions, this is Paige. How can I help you?"

4) Have empathy and sincerity

- ✓ Maintain a genuine and sincere tone as you speak with the client.
- ✓ Keep your greetings and responses natural
- ✓ Remain sincere as you transfer their call

5) Active listening

- ✓ Use listening skills
- ✓ Show them you're actively listening by repeating information back to them

6) Demonstrate your Professionalism

- ✓ Wear business-professional attire and
- ✓ Use proper posture by sitting up straight
- ✓ Making sure your phone doesn't release any static or other unwanted noises

7) Organization

- ✓ Show strong organizational skills from you..
- ✓ Have a pen and paper with you to take notes

8) Demonstrate politeness for the client

9) Gratitude and appreciation

10) Showing appreciation

- ✓ Thanking them regularly for allowing you to speak with them.
- ✓ Thank the client for being flexible

11) Research and preparation skills

- ✓ Make you looking up their names and fully why you're calling them.
- ✓ Have your reason for calling the customer

12) Show Leadership Abilities

- ✓ Make sure your voice remains at a steady, authoritative tone as you work with customers and clients.

13) Task and time management

- ✓ Use time management skills to
- ✓ Organize your time wisely and consistently

14) Engagement and interactive skills

- ✓ Asking engaging questions about how you can assist them.

15) Technical skills

- ✓ Show your technical skills while using phone or through video conferences.

Lab Test -1

Demonstration

Name: _____ Date: _____

Time started: _____ Time finished: _____

Instructions: Read and demonstrate the questions in your lab class (10 point)

Task 1. Demonstrate arranging critical needs before making a call.

Task 2. Demonstrate making a call to confirm reservation to guest.

Task 3. Demonstrate making a call to confirm table reservation to guest.

Reference

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- Trainee Manual: Operate Private Automatic Branch Exchange (PABX) Switch Board, ASEAN
- Basic Hospitality Telephone Skills:/ Internet
- PABX Machine Types and Features/Internet

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|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Page 70 of 71 | Ministry of Labor and Skills Author/Copyright | Controlling and ordering stock | Version -1 November, 2022 |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

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