

During the Stay Activities- Front Office

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Categories: 2nd Sem Front Office Notes



Guest Handling & Complaints

When guests are not satisfied with some services and express their discontent to hotel employees, most of them to the front office staff, their grievances are recorded as guest complaints. When guests find it easy to express their opinion to the staff, both the hotels and the guest benefit. The hotel gets a feedback about its staff and services and can take corrective action, while the guest can have a comfortable stay if his problem is addressed.

Types of guest complaints:

1. **Mechanical Complaints:** This is related to malfunctioning or non-functioning of system and equipment installed in guest room like television, minibar, thermostat etc.

2.

Attitudinal Complaints: When the guest feels insulted by the rude or tactless hotel staff and lodges a complaint, it is referred to as attitudinal complaint.

3.

Service Related Complaints: Service related complaints are about the problem in service provided by the hotel, like delay in the room service or lunch or delay in the clearance of soiled crockery from the room after meals.

4.

Unusual Complaints: Unusual complains are those over which the hotel does not have a control. E.g. A guest may complain about the lack of golf course in the hotel or lack of central heating facility.

Guest Handling

The front office should handle guest complaints tactfully, exercising patience, empathy and decision-making skills. As hospitality is a service oriented industry the hotel staff should always try to resolve the customer problem immediately which appears him. If a front office agent is unable to handle guest complaints, she should call her supervisor before the situation gets out of control or become worse.

The following guideline may be followed while a guest complains.

1. Listen silently without interruption, with empathy.
2. Show concern and take complaints seriously.
3. Never argue. Remember the guest is always right.
4. Never try to win an argument– You may win the argument but lose the guest forever.
5. If, possible isolate the guest so that other guest may not overhear.
6. Offer choice and never make a false promise.
7. Monitor the corrective measures
8. Follow up and inform the guest about the solution.
9. If unable to resolve the guest problem, consult your supervisor.

Guest History

Managing guest history starts with the sources of information i.e. the guest himself (Data Sources) or his representative such as company or travel agents etc. To begin the flow of information, the hotel must request it and this include all information asked of customer before, during and after their stay and this is a "Data Request". Further the information that is actually received is called "Data Received". Once the data is received then it is needed to be stored i.e. kept in files and is called "Data Storage". Finally the actual application of guest information for the purpose of enhancing services is called "Data Use".

Greater the volume of accurate data more effective the guest history system will be. Service excellence is always the key factor in the success of hotels. This involves remembering frequent guest needs of desires and to be able to provide them even before the guest ask for them. Before the computer age guest information was recorded manually sometimes in register or cards but now with large number of rooms and with increasing labor cost with increasing capacity of not only written records are gone but hotel can no longer rely on their employees to remember frequent guest. Another factor is guest stays now are relatively short and the

employees turnover is also very high these days. So it is very essential that each and every detail of guest is recorded.

Room Selling Techniques

- **Telephone Salesmanship**

Since the caller is not directly in contact with the front desk staff and cannot see him it is very important that the person handling the telephone call is able to give a warm and courteous conversation to the caller. The receptionist should not have a tendency to treat such inquiries lightly, and should give his full and undivided attention. The approach of the staff will be instrumental in gaining or losing a potential sale for the hotel. Since the prospective guest is on telephone, the receptionist /reservations agent must be able to communicate to the prospective guest the product or services in such a way that the guest is able to perceive a picture of this product which matches his requirements and is immediately ready to buy it .The person describing the product should be specific while describing the room, for e. g, size, location, furnishing, fixtures etc.

- **Selling room to prospective guest who is concerned about the prices**

A guest who is not ready to pay more but at the same time expecting a superior product is very difficult job, and hence it is very important for the receptionist to picture or describe the product when quoting any rate. The receptionist should not begin with quoting a lower rate and he should offer a range of products with ranging price and should allow the guest to make the selection. Don't undersell, try upselling, If the receptionist is a good salesman and is able to highlight features and facilities he would always be able to make a higher sales, while up selling be careful that you are not pushing the guest towards a higher rate because if the guest gets a feeling that he has been cheated then although the hotel might get the higher sale but he will not get the repeat business.

- **Selling during rush hours**

Usually hotels have a set pattern of arrivals load for e.g. in case of an airport hotel the load of the guest usually is in the night and there is heavy load of arrivals during night period. The selling ability and skills of a receptionist to an unannounced guest are put to test in such rush hours. His patience with the guest and how calmly and efficient, he is able to deal with such guest is of great importance. In order to be able to attend to unannounced guest efficiently the hotel may open a new and extra arrival registration counters for the heavy check-ins.

- **An undecided guest**

This category guest provides an excellent opportunity to the receptionist to up sell the room. When such a guest arrives without any pre notice it will be easy for the receptionist to convenience him to buy a higher priced room. For such a guest the receptionist should first try to find out why is he in the city. This could provide him lead for promoting certain types of accommodation. Offer the guest a variety of room explaining the features and merits of them. Always promote a higher rate accommodation fist, as it is easier to back down rather than to try selling up.

Hospitality desk

Hospitality desk is located at the entrance of the lobby lounge which is manned by the experience staff to assist the guest without any charges related to any hotel specials and services such as latest dining and room promos, ongoing and upcoming events and many other facilities like advice the various hall where the meetings / sessions are taking place .Arrange luncheons /dinner for the delegates, hotel room booking ,air ticket reconfirmation ,arrange cars, co-ordinate assist the transport schedule, also provide additional information like where to shop native item and delicacies nature and cultural touring and where the special parties are going on.