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Printed on 25 January 2023

Duties and Responsibilities : Front Office Organisation

<https://hmhub.in/duties-and-responsibilities-front-office/>

July 24, 2018

Categories: 1st Sem Front Office Notes



Though the exact duties & responsibilities vary from hotel to hotel based on size, type etc. Here is a short & broad overview to help you get the idea.

Front Office Duties and Responsibilities

- Greet clients and set a positive office atmosphere
- Answer the phone, take messages, and redirect calls to appropriate offices.
- Organize and maintain files and records; update when necessary
- Create and maintain updated documents and spreadsheets
- Oversee the sorting and distribution of incoming mail
- Prepare outgoing mail (envelopes, packages, etc.)
- Operate office equipment, such as photocopier, printers, etc.

- Organize bookkeeping and issue invoices/checks
- Record meeting minutes and dictations
- Perform inventory of office supplies and order what is needed

Now let's look at Duties & Responsibilities in detail of each person in the Front office department.

1) Front Office Manager

Time Management :

One of the most important functions of the Front Office Manager is Time Management. The nature of the Front Office job is such that he is almost always crowded with various jobs and he often loses control over his time. He should be able to match the job needs to time available for effective and efficient performance. Time is a unique resource (24 hrs a day) and in highly perishable resources and its supply can't be increased. For maximum utility, the manager should first understand how he is utilizing his time currently and then decide how he should spend his time.

Further, he should be able to identify the wastage of time that he is doing currently. He should then master his time wasters. After this, he should make a new plan of action and then make sure he follows that. He should be able to fix the priorities of the job. For proper analyses, he should keep a record of the time spent on tasks and daily/weekly time spent on them and for this, he should prepare a work distribution chart for each task. He should identify key result areas of his job for effective performance. Assess the desirable time against each activity and note in the work distribution chart. The activities showing a wide difference between actual and desirable are possibly time problem areas of the manager. Further, he should understand that some of the time-wasters are:

- Interruptions
- Meetings
- Crises Management
- Lack of objectives, priorities, and deadlines
- Personal disorganization,
- Ineffective delegation
- Indecision and procrastination
- Complicated procedure and
- Commuting etc.

The strategies for Time Management include and means

1. Increase your discretionary time
2. Be time conscious
3. Plan days work
4. Hold priority meetings
5. Have prime time for "A" class jobs
6. Fragment workday
7. Do one job at one time
8. Say frank No if need be
9. Use time-saving equipment
10. Delegate work
11. Develop self
12. Keep diary etc.

Further making a daily plan of action is important by outlining work for the next day at the end of each day. Listing all activities for the next day under the ABC category as per the urgency and importance of the job. List activities that should be carried out and timed at which they can be best done. It is important to make flexible plans to fit in emergencies. Next, follow the plan and at the same time review the plan from time to time for any changes and improvements. Here it is important to note that as per scientific deductions normally a person works only for 16 years and 8 months in a span of 70 years of age and hence time management is very important.

In addition to this job description of a front office manager include the following

- Directs and coordinates the activities of the front office department. which includes room reservations, guest room assignments, mail, and information.
- Reports to the management '(either manager or executive assistant WW) and is, wholly responsible to him for the daily functions of the front office.
- Maintains and/or develops applicable operation procedures involving both convention and non-convention reservations, controlling of open and closed dates, availability and condition of rooms and suites, guest arrival patterns, control of keys, receipt, and flow of mail and messages to ensure efficient methods and liaison between department sections and shifts.
- Must understand the functions of, and be able to cooperate with closely related departments such as front office cashiers, assistant manager. credit, sales, housekeeping, service, and inter-hotel reservations.
- Meets with executive management and supervisors from these and other departments at regular intervals to plan and coordinate hotel housing activity.
- Works closely with various convention group secretaries to aid their planning of arrival and guest housing.
- Meets with individual guests or convention group representatives on problems of room assignment, price, and location.

- Prepares reports to the management and other supervision relative to anticipated rooms occupancy, reservation pattern, expected check-in, and out.
- Responsible, along with the personnel department, for the employment and training of staff.
- Aids and promotes in carrying out hotel-employee relation policies such as courtesy program, work performance records, vacations, etc.

2) Assistant Front Office Manager

- Assists front office manager in supervising and coordinating the day to day operations of the front office staff and resolves internal problems.
- Co-ordinates staffing of mail and information and reservation clerks with their supervisors.
- Arranges schedules of room salespeople.
- Liaises with the sales department for present and future convention and group bookings.
- Corresponds with future guests and blocks suites and special requests for large conventions.
- Deals with problems arising from guest complaints and reservation and room assignment activities.
- Interviews and hires applicants.
- Responsible also for any miscellaneous duties assigned by the front office manager.
- Assumes the responsibilities of the front office manager upon his absence.

3) Reservation Manager/Assistant Manager Reservation

- Supervises and answers inquiries of reservations agents.
- Arranges schedules of reservations agents.
- Maintains close liaison with secretaries of major companies that do business with the hotel. Frequently called upon to entertain these secretaries.
- Types and processes reservation requests received by phone, telegraph, a letter at Is responsible for accurate and effective handling of reservation tally sheet.
- Advises and informs the front office manager or assistant on the duty of a significant increase or decrease of reservation tally, which could affect the hotel's open or close status.
- Types and files reservation slips. Types confirmation slips.
- Trains new agents in all aspects of the above.
- Supervises and coordinates activities of filing clerks.
- Opens and routes all mail addressed to the front office. Timestamps all correspondence.
- Marks mail to emphasize important points for reservation typist.

- Keeps a record of all reservations and makes a monthly room nights report; in addition, prepares a half-year report of all accounts and their respective production.

4) Lobby Manager

- Schedules the duty roster and determines justification for manpower strength.
- Handles guest complaints, and ensures that the front office has good relations With all departments. Coordinates with various departments for effective guest handling.
- Co-ordinates with the front office (reception and information) to facilitate rooming and departure of guests and front office cash (to allow credits).
- Does liaison between the travel counter, airlines regarding arrival and departure of flights. Takes constant rounds at night of all operating areas to ensure smooth functioning.
- Passes credit bills in the absence of assistant front office manager.
- Trains all staff under him, and trainees as well.
- Co-ordinates with the security and ensures that no unwanted happening takes place in the hotel.
- Attends general manager's meetings.
- Completely responsible for all going-on in the lobby, and operating public areas and rooms at night as well.

5) Front Office Assistants

(i) Reservation Assistants

- Courteously and promptly handle all reservations on phone, by mail, telex cable, and computer, etc.
- Up-date the reservation register/records in order to have an updated inventory of room availability. (Receive and store information) .
- Type out advance reservation slips and maintain reservation racks and correspondence tiles and in case of computers update information in computers.
- Carry out amendments and cancellations intelligently and accurately.
- Keep the availability status chart updated.
- Display reservation position on "Flash Board".
- Check on reservation stationery and keep a satisfactory par stock if the same.

(ii) Reception/ Registration Assistants

The friendly welcome given by the receptionist to a guest changes an impersonal hotel building into a friendly and homely place and his unfriendly, hostile and

indifferent attitude may convert the guest's experience into an unpleasant and uncomfortable stay. If the front office is the hub of the hotel then the receptionist is aptly called the person who keeps this hotel world moving.

- Be informed on daily room status. Have detailed information regarding arrivals, their room requirements, and expected departures of the day.
- Check up VIP' s reservations and issue VIP amenities, a voucher for fruits and flower beverages, etc. and any other special requests.
- Prepares all records connected with pre-registration for VIP, invalids and old people
- Handle group/crew registration as per laid down procedures as well as FIT.
- Maintain a satisfactory part of all registration of stationery.
- Room all arrivals using arrival errand cards.
- Constantly update room rack/information rack.
- Type out permanent arrival slip after registering guests and slot in racks.
- Open out guest folio without delay and transmit it to the front office cashier himself or send the GR. card to cashier for opening the guest folio.
- Maintain room rates absolutely current and up-to-date.
- Prepare room discrepancy report and ensure a double-check through lobby attendant Work closely with information assistants.
- Give all departure rooms to housekeeping promptly. Take all cleared rooms promptly from housekeeping.
- Take room reports/occupancy statistics and maintain an inventory of rooms.
- Receive and greet the guest. The friendly welcome given by the receptionist to a guest changes an impersonal hotel building into a friendly and homely place, while his unfriendly, hostile and indifferent attitude may convert the guest experience into an unpleasant and uncomfortable stay. If Front Office is the 'Hub' of the hotel then the receptionist can be aptly called the person who keeps the hotel world moving.
- Sell higher priced rooms and other hotel facilities through trained salesmanship and assign rooms.
- Help room service and telephone departmentally to racks.
- Handle scanty baggage diligently.
- Know color codes used in reception.
- Know room history, namely location, kind, rate, theme, if any, and the view each room commands.
- Set up and posts the guest accounts in small hotels.
- Deal with cash, credit cards, and checkouts and perform cashiers function in a small hotel.
- Provide safekeeping for guest valuables.

- Deal with complaints and emergencies.

(iii) Information Assistants

- Distribute room keys to registered guests in the hotel when the arrival errand card is presented.
- Answer incoming calls for guests and report all messages.
- Handle all guest mail, information, parcels, telegrams as per laid down procedures
Answer queries on house facilities and places of tourist interest.
- Keep information aids like time-table, road maps, hotel guide, etc.
- Help in paying guests.
- Receive and give information.
- Maintain log for guest and staff information.
- Maintain guest racks alphabetically.
- Sell hotel facilities through trained salesmanship.
- Sign departure errand cards in acknowledgment of receipt of room key from a departing guest.
- Report keys not retrieved or lost to the front office manager at once.
- Maintain close contacts with housekeeping, engineering, lobby, food and beverages, and other coordinating departments.

Job Qualifications for above-mentioned positions

Minimum Educational Qualification: Graduation/high school with preferably a craft course in reception and book-keeping/hotel graduates.

Experience Required: Nil, at the time of entry. One month's departmental training.

6) Night Manager

- Supervises the operation of the hotel through the night.
- Represents management when decisions must be made during these hours.
- Answers inquiries concerning hotel services and facilities and deals with complaints.
- Maintains the reputation of the hotel by refusing or ejecting undesirables.
- Assists cashiers with questions of credibility.
- Dispatches security officers to investigate disturbance or investigates himself.
- Receives articles and maintains a ledger of articles turned-in for the Lost and Found Department.
- Maintains logbook noting unusual occurrences.
- Checks function board for accuracy.
- Keeps a close watch on night clerks.

7) Night Clerk

- Registers and assigns room to guests.
- Gives and receives keys-maintaining a "key control".
- Answers inquiries over the telephone and in-person pertaining to hotel services and registration of guests.
- Arranges for room changes as necessary.
- Makes and confirms reservations received in person, over the phone, or over teletype machine.
- Balances room revenue with night auditor.
- Completes numerous reports for management analysis through the following procedures. Prepares night clerks summary, three days, seven days, or fifteen days forecast, and VIP list.
- Verifies guest origin and source of business on previous day check-out cards.
- Completes reports on the geographical surveys.
- Checks the room racks against the information board (Concierge) and telephone operator's board for omissions and sleepers.

8) Bell Captain

Job Summary -To organize, supervise, and control all lobby services to guest satisfaction in a shift.

Job Specification

- Supervise the lobby attendants. Control their movement and activities on the lobby attendants control sheet.
- Take attendance and prepare staff schedules to meet exigencies of work.
- Advise the assistant manager-lobby periodically on the performance of lobby attendants, and at times provides information to the guest.
- Attend to guest complaints and handle telephone calls in the absence of assistant manager-lobby.
- Handle left luggage formalities and maintain the baggage checkroom.
- Train lobby attendants to maximize departmental efficiency.
- Organize and supervise check-in/out baggage formalities of groups, crews, etc. Control the sale of postage stamps and stationery to guests.
- Maintain a record of all guests with "scanty baggage" and inform assistant manager lobby and front office.
- Assist security in lobby surveillance.
- Conduct daily briefing of lobby attendants.
- Co-ordinate and control the distribution of morning newspapers.

- Supervise the storage of essential medicine prescribed by the house doctor and be accountable for the issues made. Keep lobby clean at all times.
- Keep baggage neatly and orderly at the specified places.

9) Bell Boy and Night Porter

The night porter will specifically take care of the cleaning of walls, carpets, furniture, etc and may also take charge of some snacks and hot and cold beverages service in a small hotel to make sure that the doors, windows, etc. are closed at a specific time and also make a note of all the midnight and early morning departure rooms so that properly their luggage may be handed.

Job Summary To execute porter and other lobby services as determined by the management during the day and night shift.

Job Performed

- Report to bell captain.
- Handle guest arrival.
- Take the baggage from the car in the porch/gate to the room.
- Escort the guest to the room on arrival.
- Place the baggage in the room, on the luggage rack.
- Explain the operation and control of light switches/air-conditioning etc. to the guests and switch them on.
- Handle departure of the guest (through use of departure errand card).
- Under instructions from bell captain bring the baggage down from the room on departure. Check the room to ensure that the guest has left no articles in the room by mistake.
- Switch off all lights and air-conditioning.
- Obtain clearance from the front office cashier on the errand card regarding the bill i.e. paid/signed by the guest.
- Ensure the collection of keys from guests at the time of check out and obtain clearance from the information section.
- Check for mail, messages for departure guests and, if available, collect and give mail or messages to departing guests.
- Take the baggage and place it in the car at the porch/gate.
- Handle errands requested by guests and front office staff.
- Track/keep eye on unwanted guests in the hotel.
- Attend the instructions of the supervisor.
- Handle baggage of guests when they are shifting to another room.
- Distribute newspapers to guest rooms and selected offices.

- Keep the lobby area clean and clear to ensure smooth traffic flow.

10) Page Boy

Job Summary – Welcomes guests, opens/ closes the front entrance doors. Assists guests in elevators.

Key Responsibilities –

Stations himself at the side of the main door along with the doorman; opens and closes lobby door for guests and assists them.

Pages guests in the lobby.

Performs any other duties as may be assigned, usually all duties of bell boy or porter.

Minimum Requirements – Ability to communicate in English. Pleasing personality.

11) Concierge

It is a French word and as per dictionary, the word means doorkeeper-porter. The word also refers to hospitality. In some hotels in India, it is used in a more broad sense and refers to a person who has a desk called 'The desk of concierge' which is in the lobby of the hotel. It is an extended arm of 'Information counter' and provides all that information when longer interaction with a guest is needed, such as planning itinerary, etc. The concierge may also handle room keys and does paging of guests. Calls guests (after they have been roomed) to ask whether they require any immediate service.

Job Specification

- The concierge can be called as a 'Man-about-town or 'Mister-know-it-all'. Unusually resourceful and knowledgeable about the hotel and the surrounding.
- It should be equipped with brochures, travel facilities information, sightseeing, shopping and other such things for providing assistance to the guest.
- He is required to make airlines booking, taxi booking and planning of itineraries etc. for guests and offers accurate and informative facts and opinions to the guests
- . Serves as guest's liaison with hotel and non-hotel services.
- Provides a personal approach to guest services Takes charge of all packet/ tickets for guests and ensures follow up.
- Prepares daily summary reports and checks daily mom position of suites. Introduces and sells all hotel services and facilities to the guests.
- Reviews and follow up any incidents and complaints of guests and coordinates with guest services manager.
- Coordinates with airlines and reconfirms the departure details of the 'crews' and arranges for transport for them.
- Arranges for hotel doctor as and when required

- Maintains an up to date "LOG BOOK "
- Arranges welcome drinks for all arriving groups and ensures that these drinks are served promptly.
- To have a complete understanding of policies and procedures relating to fire, hygiene, health, and safety.
- To have a complete understanding of the hotel employee's handbook and adhere to regulations contained within the book.

12) Doorman/Commissionnaire/Link Man/Carriage Attendant

Job Summary.

To greet guests upon arrival and welcome them.

To bid farewell upon departure and thank all the guests.

His place of duty is outside the main entrance of the hotel

Responsibilities

- First staff to greet the guest in a hotel.
- Calls taxis for guests and flags down the meter to ensure maximum guest satisfaction.
- Opens doors of arrival cars and taxis and greets and welcomes guests with a smile.
- Brings umbrella if needed.
- Checks baggage before the car or taxi leaves.
- Ensures smooth traffic flow in the porch and ensures that the porch is always clear.
- Provides other information about the hotel and city. No information should be given unless appropriate and correct.
- Calls for cars parked in the basement.
- Keeps the keys of incoming guest car orderly.
- Checks taxis to ensure that the guest has not left any belongings.
- Should know driving to assist the guest in case of an emergency.
- Performs any other duties as may be assigned.
- Responsible for the cleanliness and orderliness of the front area of the hotel and around it.
- Checks the luggage out pass before allowing the bell boy to load the luggage in a car or taxi at the time of departure and maintains a car register.

13) Guest service executive

Responsible for guest services such as hell desk, concierge desk and guest transportation and ensures the smooth running of these areas.

Key responsibilities-

Prepares duty schedules for the above area staff and supervises their routine and special work. Keeps information folder updated and keeps the GR. cards and room keys of pre-registered guests ready. It also looks after the training program for new staff. Handles complaints. Keeps an eye on the tidiness of the lobby area. Prepares daily summary reports and circulates them to EAM, and F .O.M., etc. Ensures that amenities are sent in time to the VIP rooms prior to their arrival. Meets and escorts VIP to their room at check-in.

14) Crew coordinator

Responsible for keeping the crew lounge clean and ensures that all services are planned and he is in constant touch with the crew to answer their queries Helps them to arrange sightseeing, tours, and shopping for crew and group members and handles their complaints and suggestions. Ensures their 'Wake up call' are given on time. It also ensures that the 'crew rooms' are blocked before their arrival and am ready on time. Keeps liaison with crew members. He is responsible for the necessary equipment in the crew lounge.