

## UNIT 2

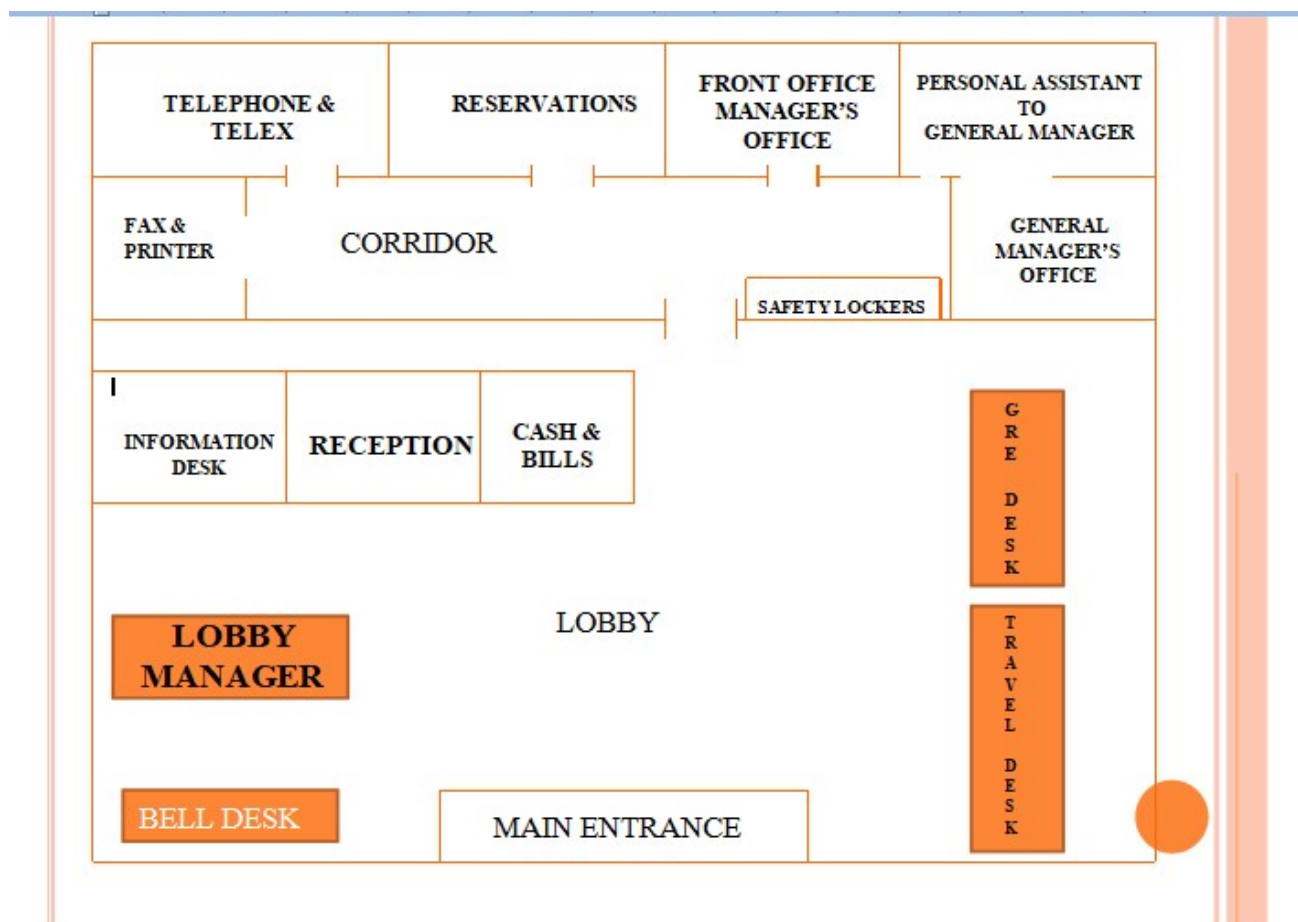
### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF FRONT OFFICE

#### STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF EACH SECTION OF FO

The front office personnel are mostly in direct contact with guests throughout their stay. Guests contact the front desk to book a room; check-in; inquire about hotel services, facilities, and about the city or surrounding areas; and finally, to settle bills and check out from the hotel. Apart from these services, the front desk also provides services like handling guest mails and messages, maintaining guest accounts, paging guests (locating guests within the hotel), arranging travel services, and various other services as per the guest's requirement.

Layout is the physical demarcation of the sections of a department. A well designed layout should involve proper space utilization, aimed at improving the efficiency and control of the staff. The front desk should be located at a prominent place in the lobby. The front office layout includes the following areas of the department: lobby, reservations, reception, information, cash and bills, travel desk, communication, and uniformed services like bell desk and concierge.

#### LAYOUT OF FRONT OFFICE DEPARTMENT



**❖ HOTEL ENTRANCE**

- The main entrance must be identifiable and directly lead to reception area i.e. lobby of the hotel.
- As a general rule the driveway in front of the lobby entrance should be at least 18 feet wide so as to allow at least two cars to pass easily.
- Another important point to be considered is the number of steps for entrance in to the lobby area, as generally a raised entrance approached by steps is used.
- To avoid the problem of carrying of luggage through steps it is advisable to have separate luggage entrance in the form of a ramp, which should not be very steep.

**❖ LOBBY**

- It is a sitting area for residents and non-resident guests.
- There should be sufficient space in the lobby for short time keeping of luggage.
- Lobby of the hotel includes general circulation and waiting area which leads to check in, information and cashier's counter and also desks such as concierge, bell desk, hospitality desk, travel counter and elevators etc.
- The whole area is controlled by lobby manager.
- The shopping arcade may also be there in the lobby.
- Various restaurants, and other food & beverage outlets may also be reached through lobby.
- It usually serves as a gathering point for guests and their visitor's, so lobby must be very well planned, designed and decorated from inside and outside to give the first impression to the guests.

**❖ RECEPTION**

- Various activities connected with guests such as arrival, information, departure, mail handling, etc. are done from the reception counter.
- The counter must be fully functional and operational and well planned.
- The height of the counters should be between 38" to 42", width 30" (approx.) and it may vary as per the size, type, business profile of the hotel and the systems used etc
- Shape of the counter can be:
  - L shaped
  - Straight shape
  - Curved shape
  - Circular shape

**❖ RESERVATION**

- Receiving reservation requests through various means like telephone, fax, e-mail, websites, sales representatives, or central reservations department.
- Processing reservation requests received from all means on the hotel property management system (PMS).
- Depending upon the availability of desired room type and projected sales during and around the requested stay dates, the reservation request may be confirmed, waitlisted, or denied.
- Updating the room availability status after each reservation transaction, i.e., after each confirmation, amendment, and cancellation.
- Maintaining and updating reservation records to reflect accurate information about room status.
- Preparing reservation reports for the management.

**❖ INFORMATION DESK**

- Maintaining resident guest rack.
- Handling guest room keys.
- Coordinating guest mails, telegrams, faxes, couriers, parcels, etc.
- Providing information to guests regarding hotel facilities and services, city information, etc.
- Handling guests messages.
- Paging guests.

**❖ CASH AND BILLS**

- Opening and maintaining of guest folios.
- Posting room charges in guest folios.
- Recording all credit charges in guest folios.
- Maintaining a record of the cash received from guests.
- Preparing bills at the time of check out.
- Receiving cash travellers cheques/demand draft for account settlement.
- Handling credit/debit charge cards for the settlement of a guest account.
- Organizing foreign currency exchange for the settlement of a guest account.

**❖ TRAVEL DESK**

- Arranging pick up and drop services for guests at the time of their arrival and departure.
- Providing vehicles on request to guests at pre determined rates charged kilometre/hour wise and depend on the kind and sue of vehicle used premium cars, semi luxury cars, coaches, mani vans, etc).
- Making travel arrangements like railway reservations/cancellations amendments or purchasing air tickets for guests.
- Organizing half day or full day sightseeing tours in and around the city arranging for guides who can communicate in the guest's language.

### ❖ COMMUNICATION SECTION

The communication section maintains the communication network of the hotel which generally quite complex. The hotel may have its own private branch change (PBX), along with post and telegraph lines. Earlier all outgoing calls were united through the telephone operator. This was done to ensure proper accounting of outgoing calls. Switchboard operators were required to place wake-up calls, monitor automated systems and coordinate emergency communications. Recent technological advancement in telecommunications has revolutionized the way hotel operations are run. Now guests are able to make outgoing calls without routing them through the operator. There is a computerized call accounting system that charges the outgoing calls to the guest's account. Wake-up calls may also be registered on the system, which dial the guest's extension at the pre-registered time and plays pre-recorded message when answered. So hotels can now manage with lesser number of telephone operators per shift. The telephone operators, who answer incoming calls, protect the guest's privacy and contribute to the hotel's security programme.

### FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION DESK

- Answering incoming calls.
- Directing calls to guest rooms through the switchboard/PABX system.
- Providing information on guest services.
- Processing guest wake-up calls.
- Answering inquiries about hotel facilities and events.
- Protecting guests' privacy.
- Coordinating emergency communication.

### ❖ HOSPITALITY DESK

The functions of hospitality desk includes tasks such as:

- Aarti, tikka, garlanding
- Welcome drink
- Baby-sitting
- Free airport pick-up/drop to airport
- Assistance in shopping
- Guiding foreign guests on tours
- Courtesy call to VIP
- Ensuring comfortable stay

### ❖ UNIFORMED SERVICE

The uniformed service in the hotel include the **Bell desk Team** and the **Concierge**.

**❖ BELL DESK**

- Headed by a bell captain
- Bell captain leads a team of bell boys(also called bellhops) and page boys
- Bell desk is responsible for handling guest luggage from the guest vehicle to the lobby and to the guest rooms at the time of arrival and from their rooms to guest vehicle at the time of departure.
- Bell desk is also called as 'porters lodge'.
- Handling guest luggage at the time of guest arrival and departure.
- Escorting guests to their room on arrival.
- Familiarizing guests about safety features and in-room facilities.
- Providing information to guests about hotel facilities and services when asked.
- Locating guest in a specified area of the hotel.
- Handling guest and hotel mails.
- Keeping the guests luggage in left luggage room if requested by the guest.
- Making sundry purchases like postage stamps, medicines etc. for guests.
- Reporting a scanty baggage guests.
- Distribution of newspaper and magazines to guests rooms.

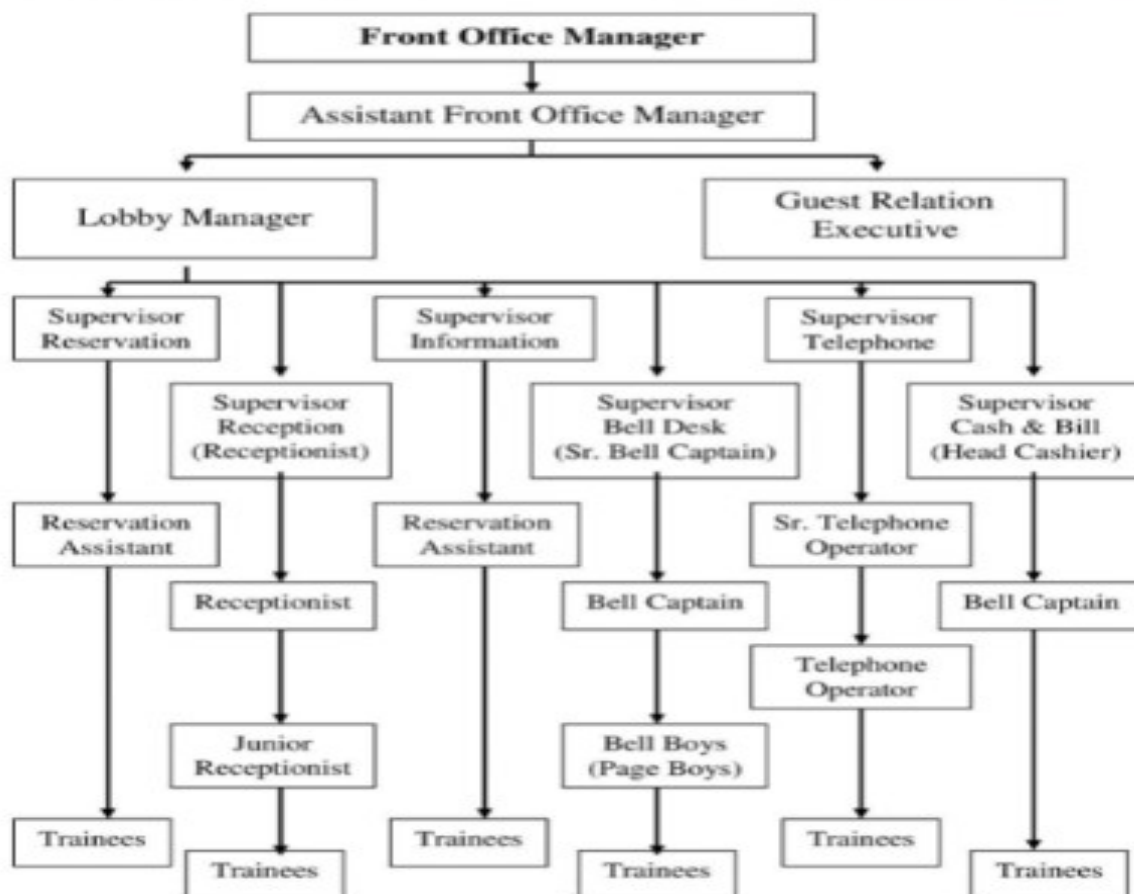
**❖ CONCIERGE**

- Making reservations for dining in famous restaurants.
- Obtaining tickets for theatres, musicals, sporting events, etc.
- Arranging for transportation by limousine, car, coaches, buses, airplanes, or trains.
- Providing information on cultural and social events like photo exhibitions, art shows, and local places of tourist interest.

## **FRONT OFFICE STAFF ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE**

To carry out its vision, mission, objectives, and goals, every hotel requires a formal structure, known as the organization structure. This structure defines the company's distribution of responsibility and authority among its management staff and employees. It establishes the manner and extent of roles, power, and responsibilities, and determines how information flows between different levels of management. This structure depends entirely on the organization's objectives and the strategies chosen to achieve them. In a centralized structure, the decision-making power is concentrated in the top layer of the management and tight control is exercised over departments and divisions. In a decentralized structure, the decision-making power is distributed and the departments and divisions have varying degrees of autonomy.

The number of staff working under the front office manager. The structure of the front office department depends on the size of the hotel business, the physical size of the hotel, and the hotel management policies.



### FRONT OFFICE ORGANIZATION CHART OF A LARGE HOTEL

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FRONT OFFICE STAFF

### ❖ FRONT OFFICE MANAGER

Front office manager (FOM) is in charge of the front office department and allocates the available resources (men, machine, materials, and money) of the department to achieve the goals of the department and the organization. The basic function of the FOM is to directly supervise all the front office personnel and to ensure the proper and smooth operation of the department. FOM is often assisted by an assistant front office manager (AFOM).

**Duties and Responsibilities**

- Direct and coordinate the activities of the front office department.
- Perform the function of a link between the management and front office employees.
- Plan the present and future need of resources to carry out the functions of the department.
- Responsible for hiring, training, supervision and disciplining all front desk, reservation, and guest services staff members in order to maintain the desired standards of service.
- Maintain and develop applicable standard operational procedures and ensure that they are followed.
- Prepare the budget for the front office department.
- Motivate the front office employees to work in a team to attain the organizational objectives.
- Evaluate the job performance of each front office employee.
- Schedule tasks of front office employees and re-arrange work schedule if an employee is on leave.
- Ascertain the training needs of the employees of the department, and arrange for trainings, refresher trainings, and cross trainings.
- Ensure the proper image of the organization is being maintained by all team members with respect to grooming and uniform standards.
- Prepare all necessary forecasts, work closely with reservations, front office and sales to maximize occupancy, rate, and revenue. Keep all departments notified of any fluctuations in business levels, special guests, groups, etc.
- Review all reports generated by all the sections of the department.
- Hold regular meetings with staff members in order to keep them properly informed and trained.
- Maintain a good communication with other departments to ensure maximum cooperation, productivity, and guest satisfaction.
- Develop relationships with guests and clients by providing maximum personalised guest service.
- Resolve guest problems quickly, efficiently, and courteously.
- Arrange for private telephone line and other special services for guest.
- Conduct property checks.
- Be responsible for the cleanliness of the office area.
- Attend regular department heads meetings and contribute ideas with regard to hotel operations in general.
- Manage online inventories.
- Keep updated with the new trends and ideas in the hospitality industry.
- Assist staff with any concerns they have regarding housing, payroll, investment and any other policy.
- Respond promptly and take a supervisory role in any hotel emergency or safety situation, and convey the required emergency procedures to the rooms division.

## ❖ RESERVATION ASSISTANT

Reservation assistants process the reservation requests that reach the hotel by any mode-- telephonic, written, or online Depending on the availability of a desired room type, they confirm, put on waitlist, or deny a reservation request. They are the sales persons of the hotel and may practice their skills of salesmanship by suggesting higher room categories, and also selling other hotel services like spa, speciality restaurants, etc to guests at the time of receiving the reservation request.

### Duties and Responsibilities

- To receive and process the reservation requests of future guests.
- To maintain reservation records by completing reservation forms, sending reservation confirmation or amendment letters, and updating the status of rooms after processing each reservation request ie, confirmation, amendment, and cancellation).
- To process reservations from the sales offices, other departments of the hotel, travel agents, tour operators, and corporate booking agents.
- To communicate the reservation information to the reception.
- To prepare the expected arrival list and the expected departure list every day.
- To fill the registration cards of guests that are expected to arrive each day (using the information available from reservation forms and guest history cards), and to send this information to front desk.
- To prepare a guest folder and to keep the mails and messages of guests with reservation documents.
- To promote goodwill by being courteous, friendly, and helpful to guests, managers, and fellow employees.

## ❖ RECEPTIONIST

A receptionist is the first person to come in contact with guests at the time of their arrival, so she is an important bearer of the hotel's image. The basic function of a receptionist is to receive guests and answer their queries.

### Duties and Responsibilities

- Greet guests on their arrival.
- Politely confirm the details of guests with confirmed reservation.
- Complete the registration formalities of guests with confirmed reservation.
- Check the availability of rooms in case of walk in guests.
- Assign rooms and call the bell boy to escort guests to their rooms.
- Use up-selling techniques to sell higher category rooms and also to promote other services of the hotel.
- Coordinate room status updates with the housekeeping department.
- Notify housekeeping of all check outs, late check outs, early check ins, and special requests.
- Process guests' check out requests.
- Post all the credit charges to the guest folios.
- Process requests for safe deposit boxes according to the house policy.
- Process reservation requests of guests if directed by the reservation section.



### ❖ INFORMATION ASSISTANT

Information assistants provide information to guests about the hotel's products and services, nearby food and beverage outlets, places of tourist interest in the city and around, etc. They also handle guests' mails and messages, and provide other services.

#### Duties and Responsibilities

- Provide desired information to guests.
- Update the guest rack after every arrival and departure.
- Maintain information rack.
- Handle guest mails and messages.
- Coordinate guest room maintenance work with the engineering and maintenance departments.
- Assist in guest paging.

### ❖ CASHIER

During their stay in a hotel, guests may perform various credit and debit transactions with the hotel. At the time of their departure, the hotel has to present them with a consolidated statement of their financial transactions, and raise the bill for the outstanding amount. It is the responsibility of a front desk cashier to keep the guest folio updated by posting all credit and debit transactions.

#### Duties and Responsibilities

- Prepare bills and present the same for settlement at the time of guest departure.
- Update guests credit transactions on a daily basis.
- Maintain guests' weekly bills.
- Obtain the house bank (a fixed amount which comprises currency and coins of different denomination to carry out the day's work and keep at balanced).
- Transfer guest balances to other accounts, as required.
- Handle paid out vouchers of guests.
- Settle guest accounts by accepting cash, credit card, traveller's cheque, etc.
- Check the authenticity of the currency received.
- Exchange foreign currency according to daily exchange rate, accordance with the rules and regulation of Reserve Bank of India.
- Balance the cash and close the shift.

### ❖ TELEPHONE OPERATOR

Although telephone operators seldom come in direct contact with guests, they play an important role in creating the image of the hotel in the minds of guests. The basic skills of a good telephone operator include courteous tone of voice, attentiveness, clear and distinct speaking, and objective listening.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

- Answer all incoming calls.
- Direct incoming calls to the desired extension, which are routed through private branch exchange.
- Prepare bills of guests' outgoing calls and send them to the front desk to be posted in the guest folio.
- Provide paging services for guests and employees.
- Log all wake up calls on the system.
- Answer questions about the hotel's services and products.
- Understand and follow the emergency procedure installed in the property.

**❖ BELL BOY**

Bell boys transport the guest luggage at the time of check in and check out They also escort guests to their rooms and familiarize them with the in room facilities and services provided by the hotel.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

- Handle the guest luggage, i.e., transport the guest Luggage from lobby to the room at the time of check in, and from the room to the vehicle at the time of departure.
- Put luggage tag at the time of the arrival of a guest.
- Escort guests to their rooms and familiarize them with the use of in-house telephone directory, weather control, and functions of all other equipment installed in the room.
- When collecting luggage at the time of check out, take the room to ensure that everything is intact.
- Keep the records of the left luggage rooms.
- Inform about the scanty baggage guest at the time of check-in.
- Perform sundry guest services like posting of guest mails, making purchases from outside the hotel premises like flowers, etc.
- Help in locating guests in a specified area within the hotel premises.
- Deliver mail, packages, and messages to guests in their rooms.

**❖ DOOR ATTENDANT**

A door attendant is among the first people to see and greet guests. A door attendant is the person who opens the door of the guests' vehicles on their arrival in the hotel portico He greets the guests and opens the hotel's main entrance for them.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

- Open the doors of guests' vehicles arrival in the hotel portico.
- Help bell boys in lifting luggage.
- Open the hotel's entrance door for guests.
- Coordinate with parking attendants for parking guests vehicles in the hotel's parking are