

CHANGING TRENDS IN HOUSEKEEPING DEPARTMENT

1. Introduction

The current challenges and best practices are the emerging trends in housekeeping department which can lead to higher growth by involving cost effective tool for the hotel industry. Hotel housekeeping need to meet leading challenges, which have to be in organized manner, it can lead to hotel growth opportunities and long term profitability. This module augments new urgency to develop new trends in hotel housekeeping domain specific for manifold benefit.

2. Objectives

After reading this module you will enable to

- Describe the emerging trends in housekeeping
- List the application of information technology in the housekeeping department

3. Need For Changing Trends In Housekeeping Department

In mid 90s major changes had been noticed but the use of technology has changed the style and functioning of the department in a large way by the application of increased professionalism. In the modern world professional housekeepers are striving to get housekeeping operations in scientific and mechanized way. In the present stringent competitive scenario maintaining hotel is very tough and satisfying guest is even tougher. Currently in India 200,000 hotel rooms swell across hotel categories and guest houses and still facing a short fall of over 100,000 rooms (FHRAI). For every room constructed, 3 to 4 jobs are created, the World Travel and Tourism Council has estimated 8 percent annual escalation in jobs in India. According to Indian Hotel Industry 2011 reported that in next two years, a total investment is INR 545.2 billion in the hospitality sector as the hospitality industry grows in diverse sections. In modern day hotel executive housekeeper is faced with challenges which entail a high degree of professionalism.

This module has its focal point on the latest trends that hotels can use to expand revenue from accommodation operations. The progression in the hotel industry must follow new trends to develop a unique commodity value or service mode in order to keep the dominance in the intense competition. In order to compete with challenges hotel housekeeping department must adopt these latest trends in the industry.

Hotel Restaurant Association of North India, 2013 to being ecologically friendly than reusing sheets and towels. Environmentally friendly properties, whose managers are eager to institute programmes that save water, save energy and reduce solid waste while saving money. Eco practices are one of the most spectacular emerging trends in hotel housekeeping. —Going green is a trend of the day and environment sound policies increases the monetary health of a property. There is an increasing awareness to use eco-friendly amenities, commodities and practices. Housekeepers are developing and adopting new ways to conserve water and energy. According to American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) hospitality industry spends \$3.7 billion in a year on energy. AHLA estimates that reducing energy use by 10% industry would save \$285 million. The energy management system in the hotel helps to analyse data from major energy consuming appliances. Compact fluorescent lamps are the spinal column in high efficiency lighting. These lamps save energy waste. Ceiling motion sensors are used in meeting rooms, conference rooms and public areas to reduce energy waste. Housekeepers are looking for products and equipments that help in conserving energy.

4. Outsourcing of services

In the present era housekeeping focuses on outsourcing which is a better business strategy to meet the demands of hotel standards and it will help in reducing manpower gap, availability of suitable personnel and also proves to be the best solution for many specialized tasks as it is cost effective services.

Over the past five years, in India outsourced services has witnessed a huge growth in the housekeeping department. It also brings both man and machine to deliver quality as per the

standard norms. Today housekeeping demands skilled specialization, which in turn requires a sizeable investment in terms of the infrastructure and equipment required to achieve superior results. Housekeeping experts opine that outsourcing proves to be the best solution for many specialized tasks and at the same time to meet the demand of quality standards.

The jobs that are generally outsourced are garden maintenance, management of ‘wet areas’ such as the swimming pool, gym maintenance , laundry services, facade cleaning ,floor care ,carpet care , horticulture ,public – area cleaning ,terrace maintenance, pest control ,exterior window cleaning and marble polishing. These areas do not have direct contact of the housekeeping staff with an individual guests, therefore outsourcing the public areas cleaning and maintaining does not affect the chances of getting repeat guests in terms of housekeeping services. Outsourcing cuts down on the training needed for operating these machines and the safety hazards that are often involved as well as the need for investment in machinery that is not used frequently.

5. Training

The biggest challenge in hotel housekeeping in the present scenario is finding, training, retraining and continuously motivating quality staff. Increased mechanization of housekeeping managers in a position to trained staff have a optimum usage of equipments, supplies and labour to increase efficiency in operations. Today, housekeeping jobs are more machinery oriented and training is crucial to maintain high levels of performance and productivity standards.

Another upcoming training trend is that of house keepers collaborating with hotel management institutions for theoretical knowledge where the institution’s faculty deliver lecture sessions to the housekeeping staff. Training for housekeeping staff has to be divided into four parts – attitudinal, technical, soft skill and SOPs , Once certain activity have outsourced traning sessions will not take place in hotel industry.

6. IT Savvy Housekeeping

Hospitality industry strongly invested in information technology (IT) to generate new technologies in housekeeping department. New technologies like Wi-Fi (wire less fidelity), radio frequency identification, GPS (Global Positioning System), VOIP (VOICE OVER INTERNET PROTOCOL), hand held communication devices and WLAN (Wireless local area networks) are developing rapidly. Many types of software having comprehensive housekeeping applications are being used today in the hotels. With the help of technology customers involvement in service delivery has been increased.

WLAN technology is enabling a wide range in the housekeeping department. Housekeeping staff can now conduct room checks after a guest vacates the rooms through a handheld Wi – Fi enabled device to report the status of the room. In emergency situation they can communicate through email and staff can also ensure about the functioning and check inventory information for guest room supplies and to replenished in effective way. Housekeeping managers can also contact workers and identify their locations quickly, resulting in quicker response times.

In most hotels today VoIP is the fundamental enabling technology that converts voice signals into a form that can be sent over a data network, such as the internet or one of the typical local area networks (LANs) . Many software packages are now available in India that provides specific applications for housekeeping operations. This technology greatly reduces the cost of individual wiring in each guestroom. For instance, an interface can be created between the telephone system and the CPU (central processing unit) of the hotel's computer network by the GRA dialing a specific sequence of numbers on the phone from a specific guestroom. Once connected, the computer immediately recognizes the room numbers to which it being connected, after the connection is established, a specific list of dial-up codes become available to the GRA.

7. Special Softwares in Housekeeping

Housekeeping operations modules are now an integral part of integrated hotel management software such as forecasting GRA requirements, daily housekeeping scheduling, tracking housekeeping history and monitoring GRA performance.

8. Forecasting GRA Requirement

This is designed to forecast the total number of GRAs needed each day in the future, based on the current in-house occupancy and staffing and the expected arrivals/departures over the forthcoming period. This also can forecast staffing requisites up to 365 days in advance.

9. Daily Housekeeping Scheduling

This application can automatically create and print a cleaning schedule each day for each GRA, based on the number of dirty rooms, estimated cleaning time needed per room and the number of GRAs in the establishment. A 'housekeeping status screen' is the core element of the system, and tracks each.

10. Other Applications of IT in housekeeping

When a guest puts a tray outside of the door by tray detection technology it alerts through a triangle sensor on the tray triggers another sensor in the doorway to the housekeeping department way of a blinking light. In this applications , guests click a button , which sets off another sensor, to indicate they are gone and the room can be cleaned. While going through the typical routine in a guestroom , a room attendant may notice a problem such as a leaking WC or a malfunctioning thermostat, the housekeeper can pick up the room phone and follow through a protocol to identify that specific problem. The report immediately alerts the proper maintenance person via through wireless phone.A major trend in hotels is towards becoming more eco-sensitive. Housekeepers are developing and adopting new ways to conserve water and energy and opting for eco-friendly amenities and products. Use of ozone in various areas in the housekeeping departments , in particular, has been a big step towards environmental protection.

11. Eco practices in housekeeping

Eco practices are one of the most spectacular emerging trends in hotel housekeeping. “Going green” is a trend of the day and environment sound policies increases the monetary health of a property . With the focus progressively on responsible tourism and green practices, there is much more to being ecologically friendly than reusing sheets and towels. Environmentally-friendly properties whose managers are eager to institute programmes that save water, save energy and reduce solid waste—while saving money.”. There is an increasing awareness to use eco-friendly amenities, commodities and practices. Housekeepers are developing and adopting new ways to conserve water and energy. Through the different ozone treatment in hospitality industry ecotel practices are adopted they are

1. In hotel rooms and in public areas air can be treated by ozonizers,
2. To improve the quality of indoor air in the guest rooms room ozonizers can be used to remove the smoke and off odour
3. One gram module to disinfect the air more effectively in public areas this ozonizers can be applied.
4. Ozonizers disinfect remove turbidity and unpleasant tastes and odours from water to provide safe drinking water within a few seconds.
5. Ozone is injected at the water entry point of the pool to disinfect the water, this type of treatment makes the water clear, sparkling , appealing and prevent the swimmers from infection.

12. Ergonomics

In relation to housekeeping professionals ergonomics is scientific discipline which interact and analyses the tasks, equipments and time taken for the specific job. Many housekeepers have realized this value of work studies and are developing SOPS (standard operation procedures) based on work studies done at their properties.

13. Safety and Security

Risks of fire are also serious loss of life and damage to property has increased in recent years. Safety refers to the physical injuries in a work environment and security refers to anticipation of theft, fire and other emergencies. The Occupational, Safety & Health Act (OSHA) was enacted in 1970 to protect workers at workplace. OSHA assure safe and healthful working conditions for the staff by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance. Security in hotels is a broad task of protecting both people and assets.

14. Employee Turnover and Retention

Employee retention or turnovers in hotel industry is a major challenge and it is even harder in housekeeping department. It has got long work schedule, less compensation, physically demanding tasks, high pressure environment and uncomfortable work culture which leads to high turnovers in housekeeping.

15. Conclusion

The important solution is to prepare hotel housekeepers to face challenges one of the precarious success factors of hotel housekeeping and is the revolutionary trends or best housekeeping practices. To become more energetic & innovative, new trends must be implemented and incorporated in hotel housekeeping, standard operating procedure and work manual strengthened through new trends and demand of hospitality sector. Various tools are used to generate optimum output in hotels but there is a strong need of optimum utilization of resources available ,manpower, supplies and new scientific trends like Ergonomics, Eco –friendly practices(energy conservation, waste management, eco-friendly products, stationary, ozone treatment , reduce, recycle, reuse), Payroll Analysis etc. Information technology can lead to hotel growth and long term success.