



A hotel is an organisation made up of different departments all of which have to work in close co-ordination for the efficient working of the organisation.

Some departments are more important as far as revenue is concerned, some do not produce revenue but are very important from the operational point of view. Thus the departments of the hotels can be classified under three main headings. They are

Operating and Revenue producing.

Operating and Non revenue producing.

Operating and Revenue producing departments (O.R.P.) :

Minor revenue producing departments.

a) Laundry : The hotel may have it's own laundry or may have a contract with an outside laundry. In any case laundry of guest clothing is a facility provided by the hotel & is charged for.

b) Telephone department : Guests are charged for the local and trunk or STD calls. Charging can be done either by the telephone operator or in case of direct billing by telephone meters. In a small hotel, there would be just a small switch board, probably operated by the receptionist. In large hotels, there exists a separate telephone department, where the board is manned by operators working in shifts.

c) Swimming pool : Though hotel guests are not charged for using the pool, their guests can be charged for this facility. Many hotels offer a free swim alongwith a buffet lunch (charged per head) setup near pool side.

Major revenue producing departments:

1. Rooms departments : These are the departments concerned with the actual sale of rooms. This revenue producing section earns around 60% of the total hotel revenue. The departments under this section are Housekeeping and Front office.

2. Front office is concerned with actual sale of rooms and hence comes in direct contact with the guest. Housekeeping is concerned with keeping the guest rooms clean and in a position to be sold. Hence though Housekeeping is a behind the scene activity it is extremely important.

3. F & B Department : These are the departments concerned with the production of food & beverage items and their sale.

4. F & B Production includes all kitchens, bakery, confectionery, stores and pantry. All these are behind the scene and responsible to the total preparation of the food items right from the storage of raw material to the presentation of the final dish.



5. F & B Service includes all the service outlets where the food prepared by the production areas is sold to the guests. These areas can be listed as

Restaurants - General as well as specialty restaurants. These restaurants have fixed hours of service.

Coffee Shop - A coffee shop is open 24 hours of the day & serves mainly snacks & beverages. Heavy meals are generally served only during lunch and dinner time. A coffee shop generally has an informal atmosphere and plated service.

Bar : Serves alcoholic and non alcoholic beverages along with snacks. A permit is required to operate it and there are fixed hours of operation.

Room Service : 24 hours service in most large hotels.

Banquets : It is the major revenue producing department, among the F&B service departments. Some of the banquet functions are Dinners, Lunches, Wedding receptions, Cocktail parties, Conferences, Club meetings, out door catering, etc.

Operating and Non revenue producing departments (O.N.R.P.) :

1. Personnel : Deals with recruitment and training of staff, staff induction, promotions, welfare, etc.

2. Security : Deals with all unusual events in the hotel.

3. Maintenance : They are responsible for total maintenance and upkeep of rooms and public areas, i.e. Air-conditioning, Lifts, Plumbing, Electricity, Lighting, carpentry, etc.

4. Accounts : Receives a copy of all departmental vouchers & the guest bills. Maintains cash register, city ledger, etc. Prepares sales summary sheets for each day's sales.

5. Sales and Marketing : Sales is concerned with getting and maintaining clientele for both rooms and food & beverage.

Non operating and Revenue producing departments (N.O.R.P.) :

They include travel agencies and airline offices, book shops, chemists, florists, bank, beauty parlor, etc. They either be let out on commission bases or on rental bases. These 'concessionaires' should be reputable as for the guests they are a part of the hotel services.



FUNCTIONAL ORGANISATION OF FRONT OFFICE

The Front Office department can be divided into different sections according to the nature of their functions. They are :-

1. Reservations.
2. Reception.
3. Information.
4. Cashiers.
5. Bell desk.
6. Telephones.

1. Reservations

It is often referred to as the nerve center of the department. All booking requests are received and processed here. Prior arrangement for guest arrival can be made from the information processed at reservations which facilitates efficient and satisfactory service to the guests.

2. Reception

It is responsible for receiving the guests with warmth and a genuine smile. Registration of guests during check in, sensible and efficient dealing with situations which may arise at the counter are important tasks for the reception staff.

3. Information : The main functions of this section are :

- a. To maintain an alphabetical guest index.
- b. To receive messages for resident guests.



- c. Handling guests room keys.
- d. Handling guest mail, packages etc.
- e. Paging for guests.
- f. Providing relevant and accurate information to the guests and answering queries.

4. Cashier

Responsible for handling guest bills, where guests settle final bills either by cash, credit card or as charge settlement for their entire stay in the hotel. Expenses would include room, F & B service and charges for any other services or facilities used. These charges are recorded centrally upto the minute at the cashier's cabin. The cashier's role therefore is to post all guest charges and credits on the master bill so as to present the same duly totaled for payment at the time of guest departure. This section is also responsible for exchanging foreign currency and for safe deposit lockers provided for guest valuables.

5. Bell desk

Responsible for baggage handling at guest arrival or departure time and running errands during the guest's staying in the hotel.

6. Telephones

Handles all incoming and outgoing local calls and trunk and international calls for both guests and the hotel management.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FRONT OFFICE

A. Front Office Manager

- Ø He is the head of the department.
- Ø He ensures the smooth running of the department
- Ø He sees to it that his staff reports to duty in time and in proper uniform.
- Ø He ensures that courteous and personalized service is given to the guests by his staff.
- Ø He deals with front office correspondence on reservations, enquiries, room booking etc.
- Ø He is responsible for the up keep of the front desk, lobby manager's desk and their equipment.
- Ø He deals with the complaints against his staff and other complaints of the guests.
- Ø Participants in the selection of F O Personnel
- Ø Conducts regularly scheduled meeting of F O Personnel.



B. Lobby Manager

- Ø He ensures that all rooms are blocked as per reservation requests
- Ø He keeps a check on room position
- Ø He instructs the airport representatives regarding the list of arrivals to be met.
- Ø He checks pre-registration cards
- Ø He also checks house keeping discrepancy report
- Ø He ensures that guest requests and complaints are followed up
- Ø He follows up on group and crew movement
- Ø He takes actions for all unusual events in the lobby like fire, accidents, etc.,
- Ø He ensures the smooth running of the lobby.
- Ø He sends "C" Forms to the FRRO.

C. Reception Supervisor

- Ø To train all front office assistants on the job
- Ø To make the duty roster for the staff
- Ø To check the shift in-charge's list on a daily basis
- Ø To check the next day's arrival list and to brief the staff accordingly
- Ø He makes the requisition for the stationery required for the Front Office
- Ø Ensures the smooth running of the reception
- Ø Welcomes VIP guests
- Ø Attends to guest complaints
- Ø Assists the reception staff
- Ø Maintains records of the reception

D. Reception Assistant

- Ø To answer the queries of the guest to their satisfaction and to provide information
- Ø To promptly register guests and to assign rooms to them



- Ø To update the room rack regularly
- Ø To complete pre-registration formalities for VIPs
- Ø To execute government formalities regarding foreigners
- Ø To prepare room reports and occupancy statistics
- Ø Send messages to the guests
- Ø To print the arrival list for the next day.

E. Reception Shift in-charge

- Ø Performs the tasks of reception assistant
- Ø Supervises and checks the entire Shift Operation
- Ø Handles guest complaints
- Ø Checks all the reports before the end of the shift
- Ø Airline crew blocking and group blocking

F. Reservation Supervisor

- Ø To help out Reservation Assistant in calls, courses and feeding reservation information.
- Ø To supervise the staff under her and impart training
- Ø To monitor all new movements
- Ø To follow up on billing instructions and other special requests
- Ø To check on credit facilities to Companies, discount policies and discounts offered to various companies.
- Ø Co-ordination with Reception, Information, Sales and Marketing Departments and Tour Operator.
- Ø Up-to-date information of the position of the house for the day and the next three days.
- Ø She draws up a weekly, monthly and quarterly forecast
- Ø Monitors VIP movements and informs all concerned



Ø Monitors house status and keep Front Office Manager informed of sold out dates.

Ø Deals with correspondence, vouchers, exchange orders, deposits, refund of deposits and actions thereon.

Ø She handles the group and conference booking.

G. Reservation Assistant

Ø To update regularly the reservation chart and computer

Ø To properly and courteously handle all reservation requests

Ø To keep all reservations correspondence up to date

Ø To handle amendments and cancellation of reservation.

H. Senior Bell Captain

Ø He controls the movements of Bell Captains and Bell Boys

Ø He briefs the Bell Boy and ensures that they are always well groomed

Ø Takes stock of the luggage, parcels and any other material

Ø Has thorough knowledge of the hotel, shops, airline offices, executive offices etc.

Ø Thorough procedure on arrival and departure

Ø To carry out different errands for the guests

Ø Responsible for the proper distribution of newspapers

Ø Keeping stock of the equipments, trolleys and ensuring that they are in good working order

Ø Vigilant and alert on duty

Ø To initiate action against guests having scanty baggage

Ø To assist in crew and group wake up call procedures

I. Bell Boy

Ø Take the baggage front the porch to the room



- Ø Escort the guest to the rooms on arrival
- Ø Place the baggage in the room
- Ø Explain the operation of light switches, air conditioning control to the guests.
- Ø Brings the baggage down in case of departures
- Ø Checks the room to ensure that the guest has not left any articles in the room
- Ø Obtain clearance from Front Office cashier on the errand card regarding the bill.
- Ø Check that mail and messages are distributed to the guests.

J. Front Office Cashier

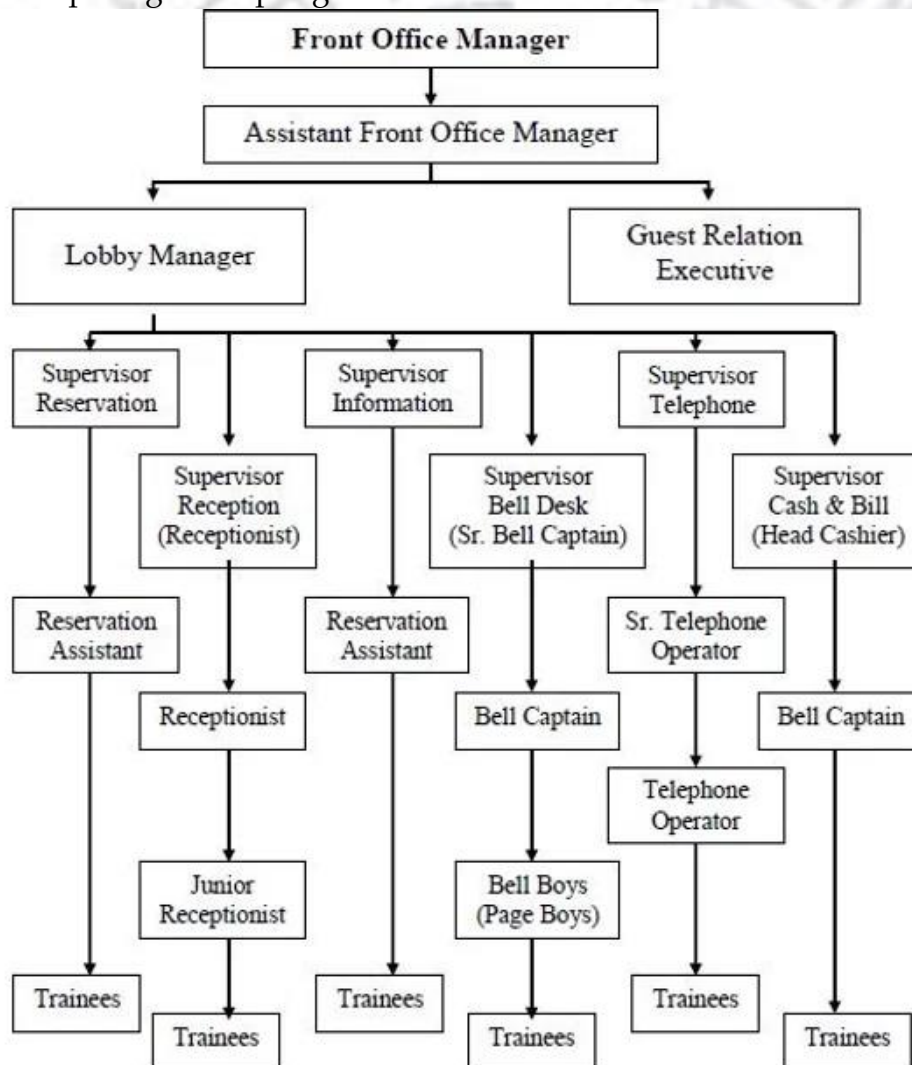
- Ø Operates front office posting equipment
- Ø Completes cashier pre-shift supply checklist
- Ø Completes guest check in procedures
- Ø Post charges to guest account
- Ø Handle paid-outs
- Ø Completes guest check-out procedures
- Ø Settles guest account
- Ø Makes account adjustments

K. Night Auditor

- Ø Posts room charges and taxes to guest accounts
- Ø Processes guest charge vouchers and credit card vouchers
- Ø Transfers charges and deposits to master accounts
- Ø Verifies all account postings and balances
- Ø Prepares a summary of cash, check and credit card activities
- Ø Summarizes results of operations for management



- Ø Knows how to operate position machines, typewriters and F O equipment
- Ø Understands and knows how to perform check-in and check-out procedures
- Ø Handle errands requested by guests and Front Office staff
- Ø handle baggage of guests when they are shifting to another room
- Ø Distribute news papers
- Ø To page guests in the lobby
- Ø To report guests with scanty baggage the bell captain
- Ø To issue postage stamps against cash.





Classification Of Hotels Based on Meal Plans

On the basis of the type of meal plan, hotels can be classified into the following :

European Plan

Continental Plan

American Plan

Modified American Plan

S. No.	Plans	Meaning
1	AP (American plan)	Room including all meals
2	MAP (Modified American plan)	Room including breakfast and any one meal
3	CP (Continental plan)	Room including only breakfast
4	EP (European plan).	Only room (without any meals)

European Plan

It is a plan where only the lodging that is a bed is offered. Thus the charges are made for lodging facilities only. The guest is free to take or not to take teas, breakfast, and meals in the hotel. He has a choice of eating out at any other good restaurant. The guest is booked to pay for lodging only and is charged separately for all other things or services he enjoys or consumes. This system is generally followed by youth hostels or hotels which are situated in metropolitan cities. In India, most of the hotels are being run on the European plan. Almost all the public sector hotels are run on this basis.

Continental Plan

In the case of continental plan, bed and breakfast are included in the tariff charges. Thus bed is offered along with breakfast and the guest is, however, free to take his meal and tea as he likes. Thus the guest tariff includes lodging and 'bed and breakfast' and for others, he is separately billed.

American Plan

The hotel where American plan is prevalent, boarding, and lodging is provided in the charge. The tariff fixed includes board and lodging. It is an all-inclusive full board tariff. Accommodation and three meals daily are included in the price of the room. It includes bed, breakfast, and two principal meals and evening tea. It does not include early morning tea or coffee after lunch, or dinner. The needs are usually 'table d'hote menu'. It is also known as 'full pension'. This analysis is mostly used at those tourist resorts, which are not situated in big cities.



Modified American Plan

The tourists mostly prefer this plan, as it is comparatively more flexible. It is offered in most of the good hotels and is normally by arrangement. It includes hotel accommodation, breakfast and either lunch or dinner in the price of the room. Thus, in this type of accommodation bed and breakfast and along with it one principal meal, lunch, or dinner at the discretion of the guest is also included. It generally includes continental breakfast and either 'table d'hôte lunch or dinner in the room rates. It is also known as 'demi-pension'.

Front Office co-ordination with other departments

The Front Office plays a major role in delivering hospitality to guests. It sets the stage for a pleasant or an unpleasant visit. The front office communicates the guest requirements to other departments, which work in close co-operation and co-ordination to deliver required products and services.

In order to maintain the desired level of service, the front office department communicates with the following department of the hotel –

1. Sales and Marketing
2. Housekeeping
3. Food and Beverage department
4. Maintenance or Engineering department
5. Security department
6. Banquet department
7. Finance Controller
8. Human Resource department

Front Office Co-ordination with Sales and Marketing Department

These two departments co-ordinate with each other for the following information –

- ☐ **Guest histories**
- ☐ **Room Reservation Records**
- ☐ **Current Room Availability Status**
- ☐ **Group, corporate and travel bookings**
- ☐ **Setting the transient and bulk room sales**
- ☐ The front office must take every effort to keep the room information on Room Availability Status and Guest Histories current & accurate.
- ☐ The Sales and Marketing executive needs information on room availability as to which rooms to sell in future to design marketing strategy for off season.
- ☐ Sales and Marketing needs information on guest types and slogans to develop marketing strategy and target key guest segments. The S&M department needs



Front Office support in selling room facilities and service.

□ Front office needs information on special promotion. For eg. Special rates, Inclusion campaign etc.

Front Office co-ordination with Housekeeping Department

These two departments communicate with each other for the following information-

□ Room Status:

As rooms generate maximum revenue for hotels, the information about the room status should be updated correctly and frequently. Front Office and Housekeeping must closely coordinate on the room status. The Housekeeping department prepares an occupancy report thrice a day, which is sent to the front desk, where it is tallied with room status records of front desk. This helps to:

- i. Update room status
- ii. Find sleepers (a room from which the guest has checked out but it is showing as occupied in front office room status records).
- iii. Know as the exact house count.
- iv. Charge the guest if an extra person has occupied the room.
- v. Coordinate in guest room change.

□ Security concerns:

The Housekeeping staff should inform the front office about any unusual circumstances that may indicate a violation of security for the hotel guests.

The front office personnel will in turn inform in-house authorities to ensure safety and security of guests.

□ Special arrangements:

Guests may request for additional or special amenities during their stay, like extra blanket, towel, soap, shampoo, iron and ironing board, etc. when such requests are received at front desk, they should be either immediately informed to the HK Control Desk, or such calls may be forwarded to control desk.

Front Office coordination with F&B department

These departments coordinate with other for the following information -

- Arrival and departure of guest
- Setting up of bar in VIP rooms
- Special arrangements like cookies, fruit baskets and assorted dry fruits.
- In-house and expected VIPs and corporate guests
- In-house and expected groups
- In-house and expected crews
- Information about Scanty baggage guest:

All Point of Sales (POS) are notified about In-house Scanty baggage guest to receive all payments in cash from them and no credit is given to them.

- Groups and guests with booking of specific meal-plans.

Front office coordination with Banquets department

- The front office department coordinates with banquets for putting information on bulletin boards and placing directional signs for particular function areas.



□ The Banquet department sends FP Sheet (Function Prospectus Sheet) to the front desk, so that if any communication from the parties hosting the functions reaches the front desk, the same may be transferred or replied promptly.

Front office coordination with Finance Controller

The front desk provides a daily summary of the financial transactions after night auditing to the finance controller. The information provided by the front desk helps the finance controller to make budgets and to allocate resources for the current financial period. The front office provides the controller the financial data for billing and maintenance of credit card ledgers.

Front office coordination with Engineering and Maintenance

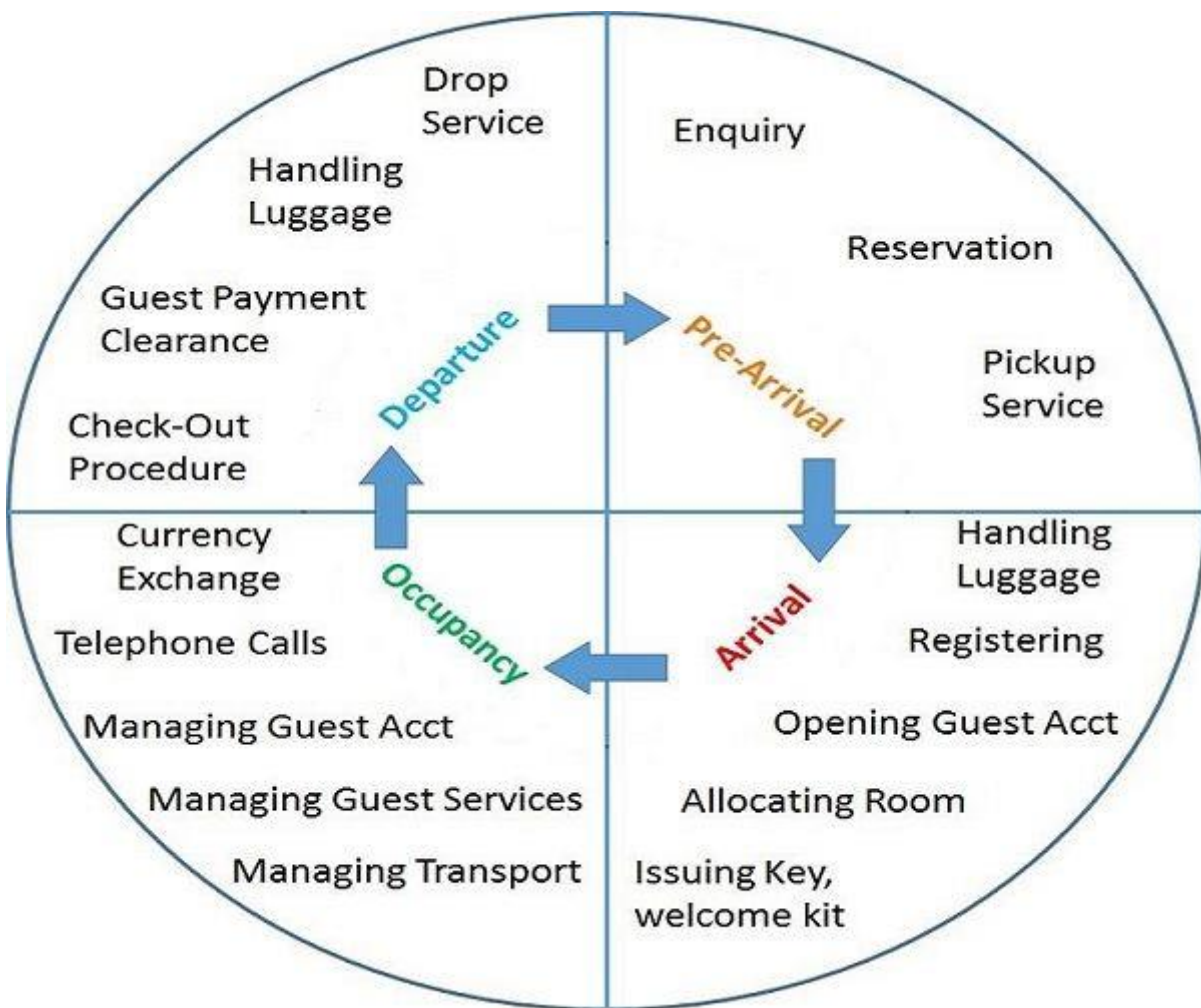
These departments coordinate with each other for the following information-

- Proper upkeep of the equipments and systems installed in the hotel
- Front office informs about any repair work required to be done
- In case of an occupied room in which occurs an extensive maintenance problem, front office requests the guest for his/her room change.

Front office with Human Resource Department

A close coordination and communication between the front desk and the human resource (HR) department helps in the growth and development of front office employees.

- Front office informs the HR department about its requirement of new staff, training requirements for the new staff, refresher training course for existing staff, and cross-training requirements.
- The HR department works in close coordination with the front office department to procure quality personnel for the front desk and to impart training to the employees to keep them upto-date with the latest happenings in the hotel industry.



Guest Cycle in a Hotel

The guest cycle is the complete experience that a guest goes through in a hotel: from making the booking to departure and the interaction with the hotel even after departure.

The hotel industry provides food and lodging to guests. It is the responsibility of hotels to ensure that their guests do not face any kind of problem during their entire stay at the hotel.

There are various stages or phases of interface between a guest and a hotel -

1. Pre-arrival
2. Arrival
3. Stay
4. Departure



5. After departure

All these phases are collectively called Guest Cycle.

Phases/stages of guest cycle

1. Pre-arrival:

The interaction between a guest and a hotel before the guest arrives at the hotel forms

the pre-arrival phase of guest cycle.

Reservation is the most important pre-arrival activity.

During this phase, the guest first selects a hotel for stay. The guest's choice about a particular hotel is affected by factors like advertisements, recommendations from family and friends, previous experience with the hotel, reputation, location, etc.

Once a hotel has been chosen, the guest or a person designated by him, on behalf of the guest contacts the selected hotel through telephone, e-mail, or fax for reserving room/s for a future period. The reservation request is received by the reservation staff,

whose efficiency and competence in handling the request creates a first good impression of the hotel in the mind of the guest.

Before confirming a reservation, the hotel may ask for a credit card guarantee or an advance payment/ deposit from the guest.

The hotel also makes note of any special arrangements to be made, like a wheelchair, or airport pick up, or extra bed in room, etc.

Thus, the functions of the front office in the pre-arrival phase include a) Processing the reservation request of the guest.

b) Creation of guest folio (in case the hotel has received any advance payment).

c) Blocking the room for the guest.

d) Making special arrangements for the guest (if required).

2. Arrival:

Guests have their face-to-face interaction with the hotel staff on their arrival at the hotel. This is a crucial stage as guests form an opinion about the standards and services that the hotel can provide to them



The functions of Front Office on the arrival of a guest includes a) Reception and welcome of the guest (aarti, tilak, and garlanding, or offering welcome drink as per the policy of the hotel).

- b) Registration of the guest
- c) Room rate and room assignment to the guest
- d) Handing over the room key to the guest
- e) Luggage handling of the guest by bell desk
- f) Delivering the mails and messages that the hotel has received on behalf of the guest.

3. Stay:

During this stage, the guest gets a first-hand experience of the facilities and services offered by the hotel. These services and facilities are the most important part of a guest's overall experience at a hotel.

The stay phase is the most important phase in the guest cycle for the hotel, as guest's comfortable and pleasant stay at the hotel would bring repeat business and positive feedback from the guest. The front office is the interface between the guest and the other departments of the hotel, so it must coordinate well with other departments to ensure that the guest receives smooth and efficient services and facilities.

The functions of the front office during stay of a guest includes a) Handling guest accounts: The creation and maintenance of guest accounts by the front desk cashier and the daily auditing of guest accounts by the night auditor.

b) Message coordination: Receiving messages or guests when they are not in their rooms and ensuring the delivery of the same on their arrival by the information assistant.

c) Key handling: Accepting the room key when the guest goes out of the hotel premises and returning the same to the guest when he comes back to the hotel.

Some hotels also issue a key card to the guest at the time of accepting the key, and ask the guest to present the key card at the time of collecting the room key. These days, hotels issue Card keys to guest at the time of arrival, therefore key handling, as mentioned above, in large hotels is not required.



- d) Guest mail delivery: Accepting mails of guests and delivering the same to them. When a guest is not in his room, the front desk receives his mail, keeps it in the room and mail key rack, and delivers it to the guest when he returns to the hotel. If the hotel receives mails for a guest who has a reservation in the future, the mails are sent to reservation section and kept in the reservation docket attached to the reservation form. The mail is later attached to the GRC (Guest Registration Card), which is handed over to the guest at the time of registration.
- e) Guest Paging: Locating a guest in the specific area of the hotel when he is not in his room.
- f) Safety deposit locker: Providing the locker facility to guests to keep their valuables like important documents and jewellery. Safety lockers are located in the back office.
- g) Guest room change: Changing the room of a guest, in case the guest's preference of room could not be fulfilled at the time of check-in due to unavailability of such a room. The room can also be changed if there is any defect in the room that requires extensive maintenance work or in case of upgrading. Upgrading is allotting a room of a higher price band without any extra charge from the guest.
- h) Handling guest queries and complaints
 - i) Providing information about the hotel, its products and services.
 - j) Providing information about the city.
 - k) Making intra and inter- city travel arrangements for the guests, if required.

4. Departure and Post Departure:

The front office should try to cover up any unpleasant episodes during guest's stay by ensuring smooth and hassle-free departure of the guest.

The functions of front office at the time of departure are as followsa) Preparation and presentation of guest bills: The front desk cashier prepares a guest's bills on the basis of financial transactions between the hotel and the guest recorded in the guest folio. The bill is presented to the guest for settlement.



b) Settlement of guest account: A guest's account is settled by zeroing the guest folio balance. The folio balance may be debit or credit. If the guest folio balance is in debit, then the required amount of money is received from the guest to make the balance zero. If the balance of guest folio is in credit, then the balance amount is returned to the guest to settle his account.

c) Luggage handling by bell desk

d) Left luggage handling

e) Sales and Marketing activity for future reservation: Giving promotional materials to guests, informing them about upcoming offers, and making future bookings in the same hotel or sister concerns in other cities.

f) Warm farewell

It is important to keep in touch with guests even after their departure, generally done by sales and marketing team, which sends flyers with special offers or discounts, gift vouchers etc and wish guests on their important life events.