

Chapter – 2 Staffing of the Front Office

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Introduction to Front Office Personnel and Uniform Staff

The front office staff refers to the personnel who are assigned at the reception area. They are the first personnel of the hotel to meet and engage guests. Front office staff handles the transactions between the hotel and its guests. The Front Office staff receives the guests, handles their requests, and creates the first impression about the hotel into their minds.

Uniform Staff-Uniformed services in a hotel are provided by the staff members who perform essential duties that add to the guest experience.They provide more personalised services. Taken into consideration the degree of attention given to the guests by this department.

The uniformed staff include door persons, bell attendants, valet parking attendants, transportation drivers, and concierges.

While personal in reservations, reception, and communications areas affect guest perceptions, it is often personal in uniformed service who make a lasting impression. Also uniformed service staff are usually classified as "tipped employees", Since a portion of their income is derived from guests gratuities!

2.1 Planning for Staffing in Front Office Staff & Uniform Staff.

The Front Office department is the first impression of the hotel since the guest comes in contact with the Front Office staff on arrival (or even before). Choosing the right staff is crucial. Human resources in Front Office should be of the right quality and quantity for efficient functioning of the department.

Planning the staffing is a crucial activity for any department. The Front Office department

A key challenge is to have the correct number of qualified staff members available in every necessary position to meet the hotel's daily business needs.

- Design a formal structure of hierarchy
- Identify shifts timings
- Scheduling each shift

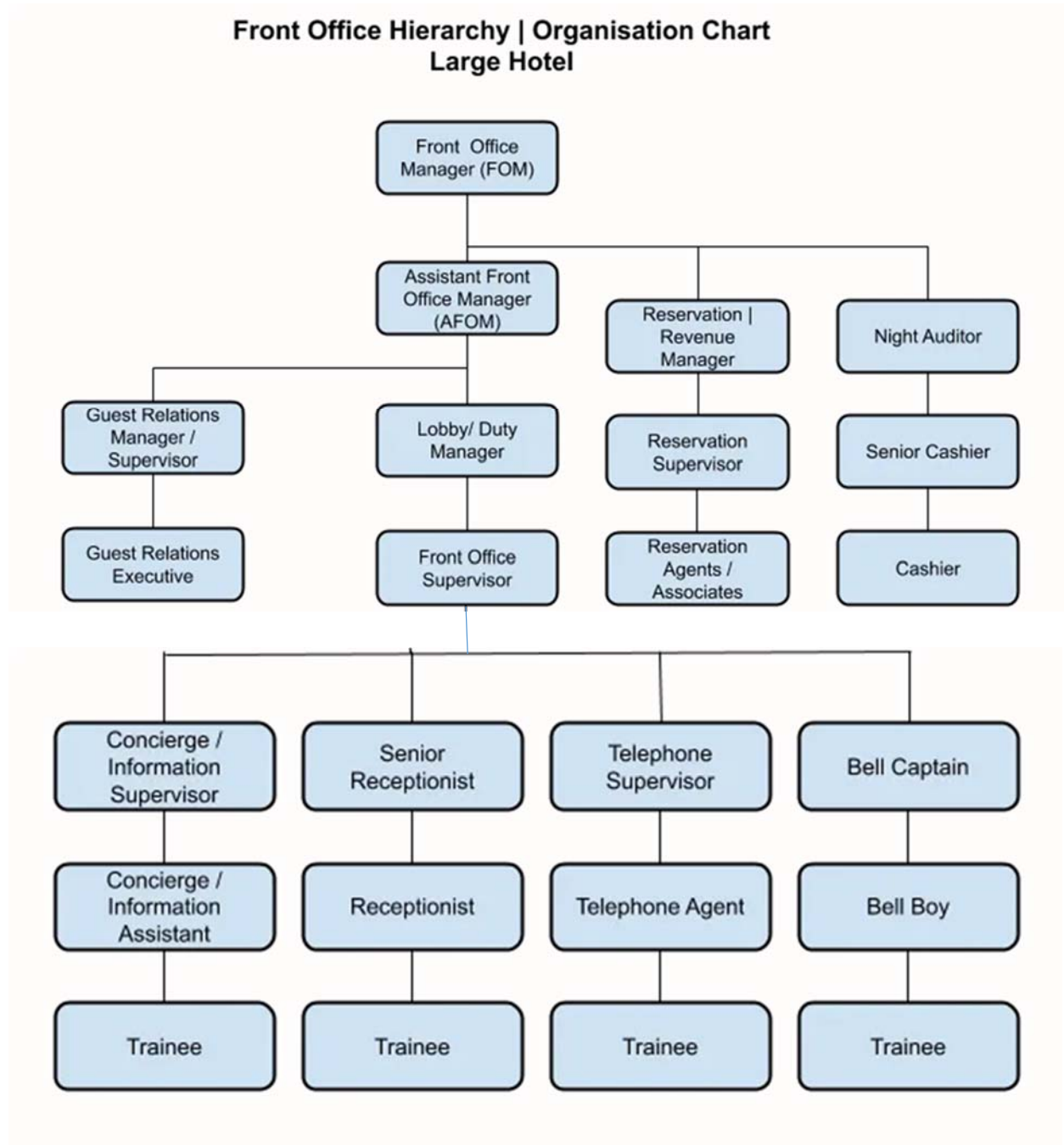
Design a formal structure of hierarchy

Every hotel builds a formal structure depicting different hierarchy of management, supervision, and employee (staff) levels.This structure is called as an organization chart

Moreover, the organisation chart shows reporting relationships, the span of management, and staff/line functions. The organisation chart for the front office department differs as per the size

of the hotel.

Front Office Hierarchy | Organisation Chart Large Hotel



Identify shifts timings

The 24-hour nature of front office operations requires constant staffing. The day in the front office is usually divided into three shifts.

The first shift or morning shift typically is from 7 am to 4 pm. The morning shift arrives to relieve the night shift and take over from them for the day's operations.

The second shift or afternoon shift usually is from 3 pm to 12 am. There is an overlap of 1 hour with the morning shift. This is important since important tasks like handover, cash counting and

tallying and briefing happen during this overlap. Sometimes departmental meetings or training sessions are scheduled during this time too.

The third shift or the night shift is from 11 pm to 8 am. They relieve the afternoon shift. Night audit happens during the night shift. This shift is also called as (Graveyard shift)

In India, most of the shifts are 9 hour shifts and have 1 hour overlaps. A swing shift may be required where employees are given a break for a few hours and they report back in the evening. This may be required in case of group arrivals or on busy days or when a couple of employees are on leave/unwell. It is also known as a break shift.

Scheduling each shift

The scheduling of staff ensures that the demands during the business hours are met. Front Office operation is a 7 day a week operation and 24 hours a day. Hence the following points are kept in mind while scheduling.

Room Forecasts: The scheduling of each shift and the number of employees needed per shift largely depends on room forecasts. Front Office Managers do their own staff forecast using longer-term room forecasts (60 to 90 days forecast).

Expected number of employees: The volume of business expected dictates the number of employees needed on a shift. Hotels that are very seasonal in demand rely heavily on forecasts to plan their staffing.

Preparing Duty Roster- Duty Chart shows the allotment of jobs, hours of duty, and days off for each member of the staff. The duty roster or schedule must be made at least 3-4 days prior to the date of implementation so that staff can plan their personal commitments. Not all staff can get leave on the same day. The front office staff has to be on-duty round the clock to give service to the guests.

2.3 Factors/Guidelines for Staffing:

As Front Office Managers determine the number of front office staff members needed for a specific work shift, they consider many factors:

- **The Occupancy Rate:**
Lesser occupancy rates means lesser transactions and customer contact. Hence forecasted occupancy rates determine staffing
- **The average length of stay:**
Guests who stay for longer duration on inclusive terms put less of a burden on front office than one night stayers
- **The pattern of activity:**

Most hotels experience departure and arrival peaks in the early morning and later part of the afternoon, and these may call for extra staff on duty. Similarly resorts or airport hotels have their peak activity periods

- The amount of personal contact required:
Various hotels have their standard operating procedures (SOPs) that spell out the touch points or personal contact required for each guest for every process.
- The character of the hotel:
A few minutes wait may be acceptable in a small hotel or a mid budget business hotel; however it is quite inappropriate to make guests wait in luxury hotels. So the positioning of the hotel/brand determines the staffing levels
- The technology being employed
The level of technology and automation used has a bearing on the staffing levels. Also the number of work stations available at the front desk determines the staff per shift.
- Legal factors
The legal factors or law of the land regarding employees and working hours and days determine staffing levels as well.

2.2 Duty Rota

A work shift or duty Chart shows the allotment of jobs, hours of duty, and days off for each member of the staff. Duty chart also ensures that the staff has sufficient time to note their working schedule for the following week/month. The work shifts or timings may vary according to the hotel occupancy and peak business days.

Advantages Of Making a Duty roaster:

- The exact number of staff required to be on duty at any given occupancy.
- That staff working hours are as per their employment contract.
- That regular off-days are availed for enhancing productivity.
- Knowledge of which employees are present on the premises in instances of emergencies.
- Accuracy in attendance and payroll reports.

Steps for Planning and Making a Duty Roster:

Step 1-Ascertain occupancy levels and events expected in the hotel.

Step 2- Ascertain the spread of duty hours to be scheduled in the duty roaster, whether 12 hours, 16 hours or 24 hours.

Step 3 - Ascertain the type of shift-straight shift, break shift, rotating shift, or any other alternative scheduling-to be used.

Step 4 -Ascertain the number of full time and part-time staff on the payroll.

Step 5 - Ascertain the number of labour hours per day and per week required for various positions.

Step 6 - Incorporate coffee breaks and mealtime in the roster.

Step 7- Ascertain that each employee gets a weekly off the day after 6 working days. Provide for compensatory offs. Schedule one reliever per 6 employees

Step 8 - Ascertain closed days and restricted holidays, and any contingency planning that may be needed.

Sample format

STAFF DUTY CHART							
December	Mon 03	Tue 04	Wed 05	Thu 06	Fri 07	Sat 08	Sun 09
Occupancy %							
No Of Arrivals							
No Of Departures							
No Of In-House							
FRONT OFFICE AGENT							
FOA 1							
FOA 2							
FOA 3							
FOA 4							
CASHIER 1							
CASHIER 2							
CASHIER 3							
BELL DESK							
STAFF 1							
STAFF 2							
STAFF 3							
LEGEND							
07:00 - 15:00	M						
15:00 - 23:00	A						
23:00 - 06:00	N						
Weekly OFF	WO						
Comp OFF	CO						
Pubic Holiday	PH						
		Prepared By : _____					
		Approved By: _____					

Time and Motion Study in Business hotels/Resorts for Check-in and Check-out

Work Study

Definition: Work study may be defined as the analysis of a job for the purpose of finding the preferred method of doing it and also determining the standard time to perform it by the preferred (or given) method. Work study, therefore, comprises of two areas of study: method study (motion study) and time study (work measurement).

Role of Work Study in Improving Productivity

In order to understand the role of work study, we need to understand the role of method (motion) study and that of time study.

A **time and motion study** is a business efficiency technique combining the Time Study work with the Motion Study work. It is a major part of scientific management after its first introduction, time study developed in the direction of establishing standard times, while motion study evolved into a technique for improving work methods. The two techniques became integrated and refined into a widely accepted method applicable to the improvement and upgrading of work systems. This integrated approach to work system improvement is known as methods engineering and it is applied today to industrial as well as service organizations, including banks, schools and hospitals.

Motion Study:

It is a study method based upon the analysis of **work motions**, consisting in part of filming the details of a worker's activities while recording the time. The films served two main purposes: One was the visual record of how work had been done, emphasising areas for improvement. Secondly, the films also served the purpose of training workers about the best way to perform their work. This method allowed the Gilbreths to build on the best elements of these work flows and to create a standardized best practice.

Motion study is mostly used to improve the method of doing work. It is equally applicable to new jobs. When applied to existing jobs, method study aims to find better methods of doing the jobs that are economical and safe, require less human effort, and need shorter make-ready / put-away time. The better method involves the optimum use of best materials and appropriate manpower so that work is performed in well organized manner leading to increased resource utilization, better quality and lower costs.

Time Study:

Time study, on the other hand, provides the standard time, that is the time needed by worker to complete a job by the standard method. Standard times for different jobs are necessary for proper estimation of

- manpower, machinery and equipment requirements
- daily, weekly or monthly requirement of materials
- manpower budgets
- worker's efficiency

By the application of motion study and time study in any organization, we can thus achieve greater output at less cost and of better quality, and hence achieve higher productivity.

Time study is a direct and continuous observation of a task, using a timekeeping device (e.g., decimal minute stopwatch, computer-assisted electronic stopwatch, and videotape camera) to record the time taken to accomplish a task and it is often used when

- there are repetitive work cycles of short to long duration,
- wide variety of dissimilar work is performed, or
- Process control elements constitute a part of the cycle.

Work measurement or Time study is the application of techniques designed to establish the time for an average worker to carry out a specified task at a defined level of performance. It is concerned with the length of time it takes to complete a work task assigned to a specific job .

Usage

Work measurement helps to uncover non-standardization that exist in the workplace and non-value adding activities and waste. A work has to be measured for the following reasons:

1. To discover and eliminate lost or ineffective time.
2. To establish standard times for performance measurement.
3. To measure performance against realistic expectations.
4. To set operating goals and objectives.

Direct time study procedure

Following is the procedure developed by Mikell Groover for a direct time study

1. Define and document the standard method.
2. Divide the task into work elements.

These first two steps are conducted prior to the actual timing. They familiarize the analyst with the task and allow the analyst to attempt to improve the work procedure before defining the standard time.

3. Time the work elements to obtain the observed time for the task.
4. Evaluate the worker's pace relative to standard performance (performance rating), to determine the normal time.

Note that steps 3 and 4 are accomplished simultaneously. During these steps, several different work cycles are timed, and each cycle performance is rated independently. Finally, the values collected at these steps are averaged to get the normalized time.

5. Apply an allowance to the normal time to compute the standard time. The allowance factors that are needed in the work are then added to compute the standard time for the task.

Conducting time studies:

The collection of time data can be done in several ways, depending on study goal and environmental conditions. Time and motion data can be captured with a common stopwatch, a handheld computer or a video recorder. There are a number of dedicated software packages used to turn a palmtop or a handheld PC into a time study device. As an alternative, time and motion data can be collected automatically from the memory of computer-control machines (i.e. automated time studies).