

Chapter 2 Front office Introduction

1. Role of Front office
2. Layout & sections of front office
3. Organization chart of front office
4. Duties & Responsibilities of various staff
5. Coordination of Front office with other departments
6. Personality traits of Front office staff
7. Equipments used in Front office

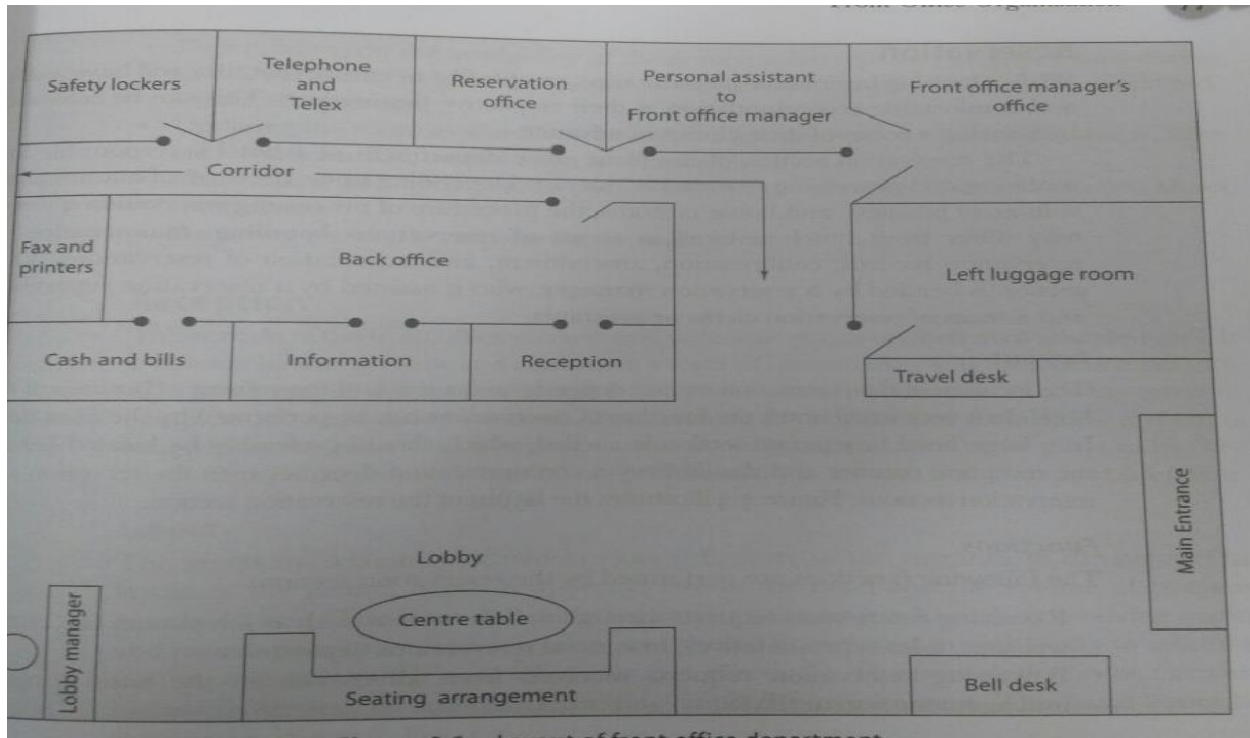
Role of Front office

Front office is the face of the hotel and it has all the responsibility to ensure that all the guest needs are full filled and the request of the guest are taken care off. The better coordination between the guest and the hotel is through Front office the GSS of the guest is always passed through the front office and the guest calls front desk and AYS for any assistance if needed. The front office staffs have the prime responsibility to up sell the rooms and to boost the revenue where possible.

Functions of Front office

1. To sell guest rooms
2. Co-ordinate guest services
3. Provide information on hotel services
4. Updating Chart/ room status forms
5. Make guest account
6. Settlement of Guest Account
7. Construct Guest history file.

Layout & Sections



Front Office – Reservation– Reservation is the part of front office department. Hotel bookings are made through this section. A large chain may have its own centralized reservation system which is a single point where all reservation of the chain are made, while independent hotels may subscribe to an international reservation system that is open to any hotel who subscribes to it

- a]The main functions of this section are to book rooms in advance.
- b] Maximize the sale of rooms.
- c] Gather as many information from the guest for making reservation.
- d] Reservation agent should have good and healthy relation with the sales and marketing department to maximize the revenue of the hotel.

Front Office – Reception – It is located at the lobby level of the hotel. The main work of this section is the registration. Other functions of this section are as follows.

- a] To welcome the guest.
- b] Procedure of check in and check out of the guest carries out in this department.
- c] Assigning or allocating rooms to the guest.
- d] Issuing room keys to the guest.

e] Creating guest folios and settling guest account are most important job responsibilities of the receptionist.

Front Office – Telecommunications-The telecommunication department is responsible for all communication within the hotel as well as outside the hotel. Importance of this department is as follows;

a] guest can make local as well as international calls directly from their respective rooms.

b] Charges or the amount are directly posted to the guest folios.

c] Facilities given to the guest by the hotel like wake up calls, DND, interconnecting phones, call waiting etc are handled by telecommunication department.

Front Office – Concierge- The concierge staff is responsible for security, lodging and arrangements of Hotels if they want to visit for entertainment. These staff also provides information about the City Events. There are other functions of the sections are as follows:

The Concierge staff provides information about the tourist places; provide guide maps to the guest.

They also help guest to book tickets for sight seen, reserve restaurants for the guest, books movie tickets for the guest.

Other important function of this section is to provide or deliver messages to the guest rooms.

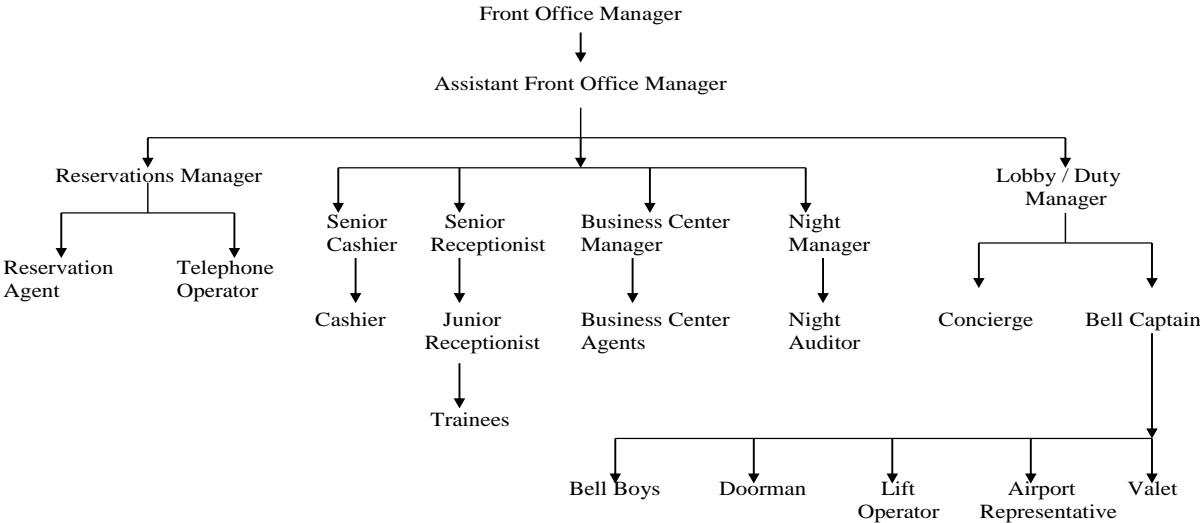
Front Office – Bell Desk- It is also important section of front office department because it deals with guests' luggages and baggage's. The important function of this section is as follows:

Co-ordinate the movement of guests' luggage and baggage during the check – in and check – out of the guests.

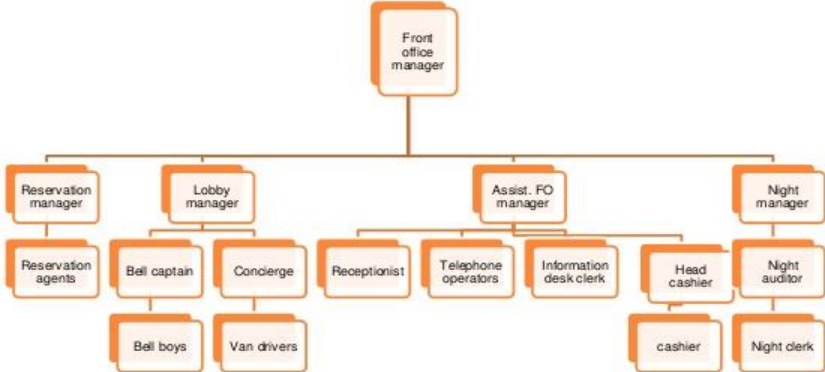
Distributing daily newspaper and magazines to the guest rooms.

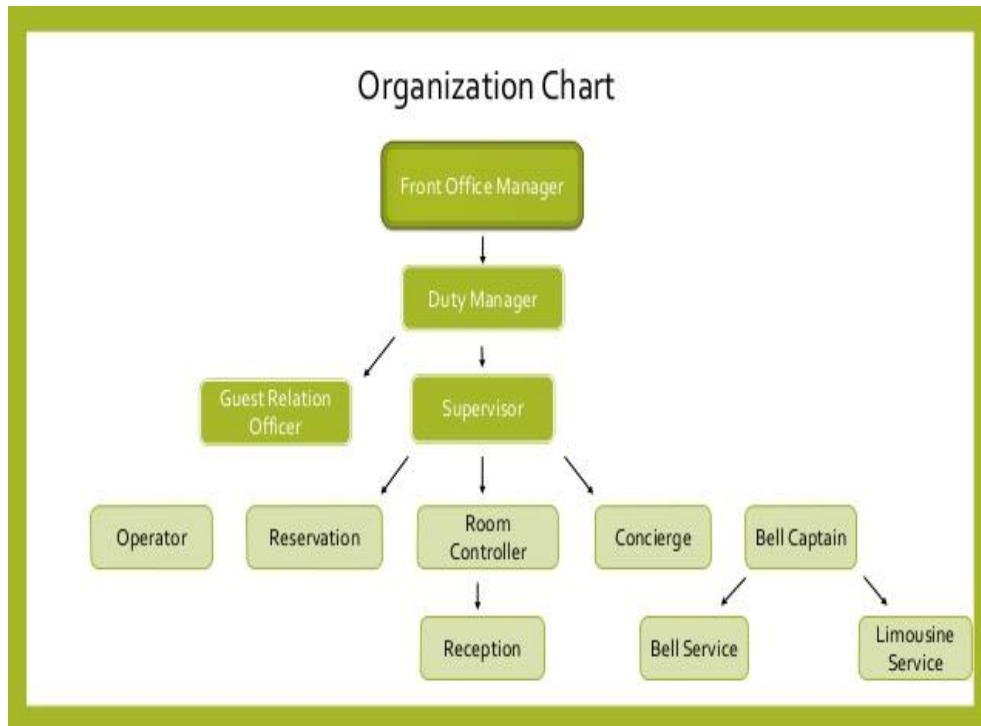
He is responsible for creating reports for guest Errand Card, left luggage procedure, Scanty baggage procedure.

Organization Charts



FRONT OFFICE ORGANISATION





Duties & Responsibilities of Front office staff

- **Front Office Manager:**
 - In charge of the Front Office Department. He is wholly responsible for the daily functions.
 - Directs and coordinates the activities of the department
 - Coordinates with closely related departments such as housekeeping, F&B Service etc.
 - Reports to the management at regular intervals to plan and coordinate hotel housing activity
 - Responsible for the employment and training of his staff
 - Responsible for maintaining work performance records
 - Meets individual guests or group representatives to solve problems related to room assignment, price, billing etc.

- **Assistant Front Office Manager:**
 - In charge of the department in absence of the Front Office Manager.

- Assists the Manager in supervising and coordinating the day to day operations of the staff.
- Responsible for the employment of staff
- Deals with problems arising from guest complaints
- Coordinates with future guests for large conventions
- **Reservations Manager:**
 - Supervises reservation agents.
 - Makes their Duty Rota
 - Trains new agents on the policies and procedures to be followed
 - Maintains close liaison with secretaries of major companies to get business.
 - Maintains monthly room nights report
 - Reports to the FOM on the hotel's opening and closing status
- **Lobby / Duty Manager:**
 - Co-ordinates with front desk to facilitate rooming and departure of guests.
 - Coordinates with other various departments for effective guest handling
 - Coordinates with the security to ensure no unwanted happening takes place in the hotel
 - Handles guest complaints
 - Trains all the staff under him and trainees as well
 - Responsible for all going-ons in the lobby
- **Reservation Agent:**
 - Handles all the reservations through various sources
 - Up-date the reservation records
 - Carry out amendments and cancellations accurately
 - Keep availability chart updated
 - Check on reservation stationery
- **Telephone Operator:**
 - Handling incoming and outgoing calls
 - Keeping a track of calls made from guestrooms

- Assisting staff and guests with telephone numbers outside the hotel
- Handling guest messages
- Receiving and sending fax on behalf of the guests and the staff
- **Cashier:**
 - Presents final bills to the guest and solves guest queries, if any.
 - Ensures all guest dues are settled before departure
 - Posting all guest charges and credit to their respective folios
 - Handles encashment of foreign exchange
 - Also deals with non-cash payments such as credit cards, airlines and travel vouchers, bill to company
- **Receptionist / Front Office Assistant:**
 - Check VIP reservations and issue VIP amenities
 - Be informed on daily room status and their rates
 - Sell higher priced room
 - Take check-ins efficiently
 - Room all the guests
 - Open guest folio without delay
 - Provide safe keeping for guest valuables
 - Give all departure rooms to housekeeping promptly
 - Take all cleaned rooms promptly from housekeeping
 - Deal with complaints and emergencies
- **GRE- Guest Relation Executive.**
 - Responsible for receiving guests in the hotel.
 - He/She helps the guest to complete check in formalities.
 - Responsible for **Rooming** of the guest.
 - Checks VIP rooms before arrival for any preferences or special requests.
 - Handles guest complaints and coordinates with other department to resolve the same asap.
 - Maintains **History Cards** for all the guests.

- **Business Center Agents:**

- Take bookings for meeting rooms
- Provide secretarial services
- Assisting guests in using various facilities like internet, fax, typing, lamination, photocopying, video conferencing etc
- Post charges to the guest folio in case of in-house guests
- Bill non-resident guests and settle their accounts

Concierge:

- Introduces and sells all hotel services and facilities to the guest
- Arranges welcome drinks for all arriving groups and ensures that these drinks are served promptly
- Required to make airlines booking, taxi booking and planning of itineraries for guests.
- Takes care of out-of-the-hotel services
- Maintains an up to date logbook.
- Prepares daily summary reports

Coordination of Front office with other departments

Hotel Front office Coordination between front office department and other departments is required to ensure maximum satisfaction for the guests. The front office department has to exchange necessary information about the guests with the other departments for giving good service.

Front office Coordination with HOUSEKEEPING

1. Both departments must inform each other about the changes in room status.
2. General Guest requests like extra towels are conveyed to housekeeping.
3. Scanty baggage guests should be informed to the housekeeping so that they can be tracked.
4. Housekeeping is also contacted for cleaning of lobby and front office areas.
5. The Front Office Manager and Executive Housekeeper should meet frequently to review upcoming hotel activities.
6. Special requests for VIPs or groups should be known by the housekeeping to avoid inconvenience of guests.

Front office Coordination **with ENGINEERING & MAINTENANCE**

1. In most hotels, engineering and maintenance personnel begin each shift by examining the front office log book or software for repair work orders.
2. Front desk agents use the log book or software to track maintenance problems reported by guests or staff, such as poor heating or cooling, faulty plumbing, noisy equipment, or broken furniture

Front office Coordination **with MARKETING and PUBLIC RELATIONS**

1. The front office staff should know about the events the hotel schedules for publicity.
2. Special hotel promotions, health and fitness programs, family events and even a complimentary coffee in a hotel's lobby can help promote repeat business.
3. Front office staff contribute to hotel newsletter, guest history files that help marketing departments for frequent guests.

Personality traits of Front office staff

1. Pleasant Personality

- ✓ Neat, Clean & Well ironed Uniform
- ✓ Short, well trimmed hair with soothing style
- ✓ Trimmed nails
- ✓ Minimum & sophisticated Jewelry
- ✓ Well polished shoes
- ✓ Female employees preferably in tied hair
- ✓ Use of soft cologne instead of strong perfumes

2. Personal Hygiene

Front office staff comes in direct contact with the guest. In order to maintain the cleanliness and positive image of the employees and hotel one should –

- ✓ Have Clean & Fresh looking appearance
- ✓ Should follow daily hygiene chores
- ✓ Should not have a body odour or bad breath.
- ✓ Keep your hands clean all the time
- ✓ Use of sanitizer is a new normal in the hotel
- ✓ Ensure that all the tools & equipments are sanitized

3. Physical Fitness

- ✓ There are no fixed working hours in this field. One must be ready to work for round the clock and even on night shifts.
- ✓ Physical fitness is the utmost requirement for all the staff of hotel industry especially for front-office department because they need to stand for long hours.
- ✓ If an employee is physically fit it translates into energy, enthusiasm, lightness, ability to cope, youth and joy and able to serve the guest with smile and pleasure
- ✓ In the front office desk and lobby area, every one performs his or her duty while standing for 8 to 10 hours everyday
- ✓ During working hour, there is no provision made for hotel employees to sit
- ✓ Therefore, physical fitness is a must for every hotel staff, especially, for front office staffs, because standing on duty time is essential

4. Honesty & Loyalty

- ✓ It is the moral responsibility of the employee to be loyal towards the guest and the organization
- ✓ They are responsible for not providing hotel's confidential information to other people or competitive hotels
- ✓ Dishonest people are no fit for the successful team

5. Salesmanship

- ✓ In order to get more business, front office staff needs to understand and sometimes anticipate the guest needs and offer best suitable hotel products to them.
- ✓ If the customer does not know about the products, he or she will not buy it.
- ✓ Front office staff gives information about hotel products and services in such a way that, guest feels motivated to buy it.
- ✓ However one should not push beyond a limit for the same.

6. Diplomacy

- ✓ It is again an essential quality of the front office personnel to have a diplomatic approach towards the guests in order to diffuse any type of tension, which may occur due to the poor service of the hotel

- ✓ Never say No to the guest, offer alternatives best suitable to his needs and make sure that guest requirements are taken care of in order to make his stay comfortable.

7. Good Memory

- ✓ It is a rare attribute present in very few of the front office staffs and this ability differentiates the good front office staff from the average because
- ✓ Calling guests by their names, remembering their preferences make a guest feel special, and valued.
- ✓ This encourages them to return to the hotel and that is good for our business

8. Communication Skills

- ✓ It is important for the front office staff to have excellent communication skills.
- ✓ A clear, precise (to the point) and composed communication always turns out a successful communication
- ✓ Having said that along with good communication skills, FO staff also needs to be multilingual.
- ✓ That means, front office staff should know International language and a local language of the place where the hospitality property is located
- ✓ Hence, it becomes important for the front desk people to have a foreign language in order to deal with the guests coming from the different countries

9. Calmness

- ✓ One of the very essential abilities which is not inborn but one needs to learn it.
- ✓ The ability to handle pressure, anger, insults, selfishness (negativity) from others, is calmness
- ✓ It is important to handle such difficult situations by keeping cool and thinking wisely.
- ✓ The front office staff has the ability to improvise and solve the various problems of the guests requiring quick decision making ability and at the same time take care that the interest of the organization is not at stake.

10. Courtesy

- ✓ Etiquette and manner are the essential quality that every front office staff has to possess whether it is a small hotel or large.
- ✓ Especially the star level hotels are the meeting place of the elite of the society.
- ✓ At this level of environment, *good manners, courtesy and politeness* must be maintained in service.
- ✓ Wishing guest as per time of the day and using magic words to satisfy them are important traits of hotel staff

11. Punctuality

- ✓ It is a hallmark of good front office staff. The front desk employee should be punctual in reporting for their shifts, as well as in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities. The punctuality of employees reflects their commitment to their work
- ✓ Being on time can also protect you from an angry guest. Hotel guests are becoming increasingly demanding in terms of service delivery and, delay means denial of service

- Equipments used in Front office

Manual Equipments

- Room Rack
- Mail, Message & Key racks
- Reservation rack
- Guest Folio bucket/trays
- Cash box drawer
- Account Posting Machine
- Credit card Imprinter (For credit card payment manually)

Automated Equipments

- Computer/laptop
- Fax machine
- Printer
- Scanners
- Telephone System:
 - Switchboard/EPABX
 - Electronic Private automated branch exchange
 - It manage several telephone lines and multiple extensions.
 - Receiving several calls at once
 - Making several calls at once
 - Place many calls on hold or transfer calls
 - Interfacing with hotel's property management system (PMS) to record calls made and automatically charge the charges.
- Paper Shredder
- Credit card machine
- Photocopier
- Key Card Machine
- Multi-zone clock

Prepared By

Rasika Shahane