CORE-VET

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Επαγγελματικές ευκαιρίες για ανειδίκευτους και ημιειδικευμένους εργαζομένους στον τομέα του τουρισμού

Εκπαιδευτικό υλικό – εγχειρίδιο

ΒΑΣΙΚΕΣ ΙΚΑΝΟΤΗΤΕΣ - ΓΝΩΣΕΙΣ - ΔΕΞΙΟΤΗΤΕΣ

ΠΡΟΤΥΠΑ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΡΕΣΕΨΙΟΝΙΣΤ ΚΑΙ ΤΙΣ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΕΣ ΥΠΟΔΟΧΗΣ

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1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

EXCELLENCE IN HOSPITALITY

The front office is the nerve centre or hub of a hotel. It is the department that makes the first and last impression on the guests, and the place that guests approach for information and service throughout their stays.

The primary function of the front office is that of a facilitator between the guest and other departments of the hotel. Another job of Front office desk is also to support and help in providing services to the guests. The number of interactions and transactions between the guest and the hotel during a guest stay, determine the type and nature of front office operations.

THE STAGES OF GUEST STAY ARE:

*   pre-arrival
*   arrival
*   occupancy
*   and departure.

Various transactions between the guest and the hotel, therefore, depend upon the stage of the guest stay. The transactions can be best understood by going through the guest cycle.

1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

FUNCTIONS AREA OF OPERATIONS

1. Sell guest rooms
- Accept reservations Handle walk-ins
- Perform the registration process

2. Provide information on hotel services
- Concerning internal hotel operations
- About external events and locations

3. Coordinate guest services
- Liaison between front and back-of-the-house areas
- Handle guest problems and complaints

4. Chart room status reports
- Coordinate room sales and housekeeping: occupied status On-change status, out-of-order status

5. Maintaining guest accounts
- Construction of folio and account
- Posting to folios (updating) Supervision of credit levels Documentation of guest's transactions

6. Settlement of guest accounts
- Preparation of guest statement Reconciliation of folio Perform the checkout procedure

7. Construct guest history file
- Record the guest's personal data for future references

1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

For a hotel to achieve excellence in hospitality, many guest relations skills must be learned by the employees who will be delivering the services.

Eleven basic skills of hospitality will serve as a beginning to achieving this excellence. These are:

- Smiling
- Greeting
- Conversing
- Using proper telephone etiquette
- Providing assistance
- Giving attention
- Providing positive endings
- Following through
- Maintaining a positive attitude
- Making positive decisions
- Keeping a sense of humor

Smiling
Smiling, when dealing with guests, helps to create a friendly atmosphere. By smiling, the clerks are showing the guests that they are glad they chose this hotel for their stay. A smile says, "We're glad you're here!"

Greeting
Greeting a guest includes smiling as well as eye contact. For example, if the guest's name is not known, 'Sir or Madame' is the appropriate address.

Conversing
A guest's name should be used as many times in the conversation as possible. People love to hear their name; it is a very positive form of recognition.

1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

Telephone Etiquette

The telephone should be answered as quickly as possible, certainly by the third ring.
No one likes to be put on hold, but when this is necessary, the guest should be thanked for waiting.

Assistance

When the guest arrives at the hotel and during the course of his or her stay, the guest should know that the employees are there to assist with his or her needs. Whenever an employee speaks with a guest, the employee should end the conversation with the statement," Please call on me if I can be of any further assistance."

Attention

Providing attention to the guest is enhanced by the little extra in guest interactions. For instance, when guests return to the hotel at the end of the day, they should be welcomed back. It is these little things that make the guest feel at home. When the guests are around, they should not be ignored. Employees must remember to chat with the guests, not their coworkers.

Positive Endings

Upon departure from the establishment, guests should be thanked for staying at the hotel and told how much they are wanted back again. Statements such as "Please stay with us again" and "Have a nice trip home" or "Enjoy the rest of your vacation" help to ensure that the guest will depart with a smile.

Follow-Through

The initial follow-through comes after check in. After the guest is roomed, the guest relations can call the room to see if everything is satisfactory. During the guest's stay, a follow-up call should be made after any problems are reported to ensure that the guest has been pleased with the service.

Positive Attitude

Having a positive attitude means that the employee has the desire to consistently provide excellent service to the guests. It is the manager's responsibility to create the kind of atmosphere that satisfies the guests' needs.

Positive Decisions

"Think before speaking or acting" is a rule that every person – especially those in the service business – should follow. Employees must be taught to be objective when making decisions. This includes keeping their emotions under control at all times.

1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

SKILL SET

THE FOUR CATEGORIES:

- Communication Skills
- Decision-Making Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Lifelong Learning Skills
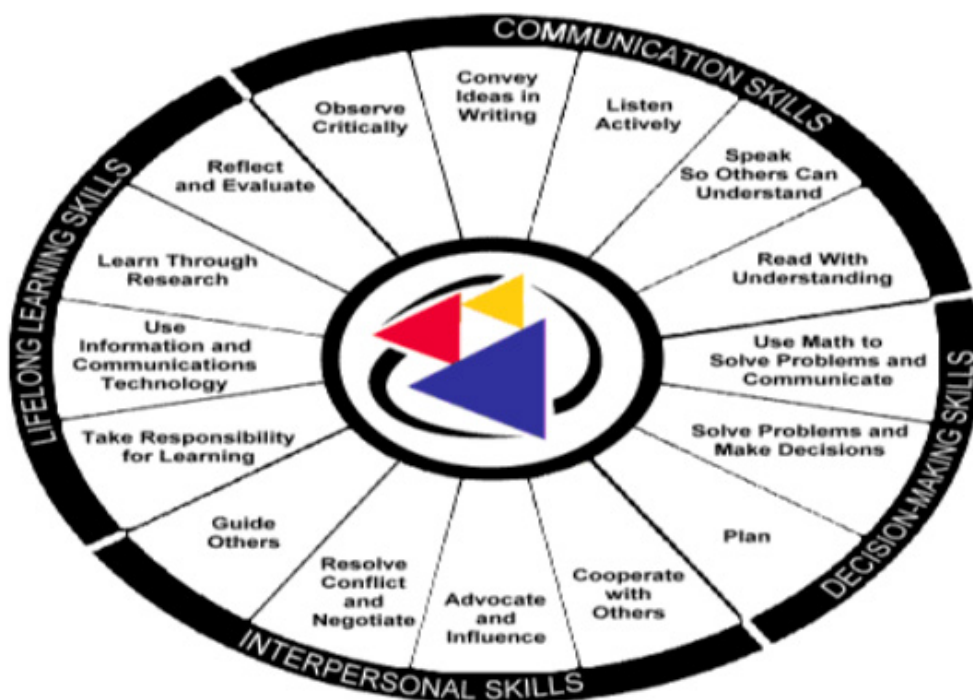
What five things did the front desk clerk do in this dialogue?

A - Apologized - I am terribly sorry!

S - Empathized - You must be so tired, especially after the wedding. I apologize that the attendant didn't understand that vacuuming would be so disturbing.

A - Accepted responsibility and thanked the guest for telling her about the situation - I will call up there now and have her stop. Thank you for bringing this to our attention.

P - Prepared to act - I see you are calling from room 924, Mrs. Aaronson — is that correct?

1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

STEPS TO LISTENING WITH EMPATHY

When listening to an upset guest:

1. **Remain centered**: Focus on your breathing, maintain eye contact and continue to listen to what is being said. When guests are upset, they are looking to resolve a problem. Allow them to vent.

2. **Take ownership and offer your assistance**: How does it feel to be in the guest's shoes? What needs does he/she have that are not being met? Example: "I can understand why you are frustrated that your room is not ready. Please let me see what I can do to resolve the problem."

3. **Ask probing questions**: Continue to ask questions to understand what the guest is trying to say and to reassure the guest that he/she is being heard. Clarify the guest's needs, and get more information to solve the problem: "Do you mean …?" or "Did I understand you to say …?"

4. **Remain calm**: Don't feel incompetent, angry or nervous if the guest is overreacting. The guest has a right to express his/her feelings. This is not a personal attack on you. Don't join the participant in an argument. Don't tell guests to calm down, as this often makes them angrier. Continue to listen and maintain eye contact.

5. **Summarize and apologize**: "You wanted the food cooked without butter." "You'd like extra towels in your room." Apologize to them and take ownership of the problem. Assure them that you understand that this has been a mistake on the part of the hotel.

6. **What will resolve situation?** Explain how you will take care of this. Do you need to refer them to another department? Communicate this in an assuring and genuine tone.

7. **Do not take it personally**: Do not carry any negative experiences home with you. Leave the situation in the past.

1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

GREET CUSTOMERS AND COLLEAGUES

Guest Hospitality

The registration process begins when a guest requests to check into the hotel. The guest may arrive alone or with a group. The front desk clerk begins the check-in process with a display of hospitality toward the guest; important elements include eye contact, a warm smile, an inquiry regarding travel experience, an offer to assist the guest in a dilemma, and the like. As mentioned earlier, the importance of a warm welcome to a guest's positive impressions of the hotel and its staff cannot be overemphasized. Most travelers expect common courtesy along with a quality product and a well-developed delivery system.

Importance of the First Guest Contact

The first impression a guest receives of a lodging facility during registration is extremely important in setting the tone for hospitality and establishing a continuing business relationship. The guest who is warmly welcomed with a sincere greeting will respond positively to the hotel and will expect similar hospitality from other hotel employees. If the guest receives a half-hearted welcome, he or she will not be enthusiastic about the lodging facility and will be more likely to find fault with the hotel during his or her visit. Today's guest expects to be treated with respect and concern, and many hotels make the effort to meet those expectations—those that do not should not expect the guest to return. What constitutes a warm welcome of hospitality? This varies from employee to employee. It begins with the employee's empathizing with the feelings of the traveler, someone who has been away from familiar surroundings for many hours or many

days. He or she may be stressed by the frustrations of commercial travel, delayed schedules, lost luggage, jet lag, missed meals, unfamiliar surroundings, unclear directions, or unfamiliar public transportation. The hotel employee who is considerate of the traveler under these circumstances will be more likely to recognize anxiety, restlessness, and hostility and respond to them in a positive, understanding manner.

1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

IDENTIFY AND ATTEND TO CUSTOMER NEEDS

DELIVER SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS

Inquiry about Reservation

After the front desk clerk has welcomed the guest, he or she asks if a reservation has been placed. If the guest responds affirmatively, the reservation is retrieved (called up on the computer). If the guest is a walk-in, the front desk clerk must check the availability of accommodations. If accommodations are available, the next step is to complete the registration card.

Meeting Guest Requests

Guests' needs usually include bed requirements, room location, floor plan arrangements, ancillary equipment, rooms designed and equipped for special needs, immediate availability, and price. If the guest has a reservation, the room selection will be blocked prior to the guest's arrival. The walk-in guest presents opportunities to the front desk clerk to optimize a sale and meet the needs of the guest. Opportunities to sell are discussed later in this section.

1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

HANDLE INQUIRIES

INFORMATION BOOK

Front office personnel need to respond knowledgeably to guest requests for information.

Common guest questions may include:

- Can you recommend a nearby restaurant?
- Can you call a taxi for me?
- Where's the nearest shopping center, drugstore?
- Where is the nearest church?
- Where is the theater from here?
- When is check-out time?
- How do I get to the museum, the library?
- What recreational facilities are available in the hotel, near the hotel?
- When is opening time of your restaurant for breakfast?

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Guests may request special equipment and supplies during the reservations process, at registration, or during their stays.

Reservations agents should have a reliable method of recording such requests to ensure that they are satisfied.

When a guest requests special equipment or supplies at registration or during occupancy, they will almost always ask a front desk agent. The agent then relays the request to the appropriate service center or hotel department for processing.

1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES COMMONLY REQUESTED BY GUESTS INCLUDE:

- Roll-away beds
- Baby cot, crib
- Additional linens/pillows
- Irons and ironing boards
- Bed board
- Additional clothes hangers

- Adaptor
- Transformer
- Additional blanket
- Vase
- Hairdryer

1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

HANDLE COMPLAINTS

SIX STEPS IN HANDLING GUEST COMPLAINTS

In dealing with guest's complaints, there are several steps to follow:

1. Addressing the guest
2. Giving attention
3. Determining the solution options
4. Finding answers
5. Taking action
6. Checking up

Addressing the Guest

The guest may be bothered by the problem for a long time or that the incident has possibly occurred more than once. So that when the guest finally decides to lodge the complaint, he or she may be extremely emotional in the way chosen to confront the employees. When a guest comes forward with a complaint, the employee receiving it should address the guest with his or her full attention.

Attention

The next step involves paying attention to what the guest is saying. The employee should listen to the guest and not try to speak while the guest is talking. The best approach is for the employee to keep a pleasant expression and to nod in agreement.
The employee should never argue with the guest about what is being said

Determination

Now it is time to determine exactly what the problem is. The employee should focus on the facts of the problem and deal with the problem, not the personality. The employee can focus his or her questions on clarifying the problem and repeating to the guest in his or her own words what the problem is, always including who, what, where, and when in this analysis.

Answers

At this point, the guest is ready to hear some answers to the problem he or she has brought forward. The employee should indicate that the guest's feelings and understandable and that the employee would feel the same way if he or she were in the guest's position. The employee might offer a solution to the problem. If the guest is not happy with that solution, an alternative one can be suggested.

1. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER CARE

Action

Action should be taken immediately after the complaint is discussed. When the guest sees that the employee is taking action to solve the problem, he or she will feel vindicated. For example, if the solution means housekeeping has to be called, a note should not be made to call later. The call should be made while the guest is still there.

Check-up

After the problem is resolved, the guest should be contacted to ensure that he or she is satisfied with the resolution. This is just one more way of showing the guest that the problem has received attention and the hotel wants to make sure he or she is satisfied. When guest complaints are handled in this manner, a bad situation can be turned around into a positive experience. Through a problem resolution process such as this, the hotel may gain a loyal customer and very positive word-of-mouth advertising.

2. PRACTICE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATE WITH CUSTOMERS AND COLLEAGUES

THE FRONT OFFICE INTERACTION WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS OF THE HOTEL

The front office staff interacts with all departments of the hotel, including marketing and sales, housekeeping, food and beverage, banquet, controller, maintenance, security, and human resources. These departments view the front office as a communication liaison in providing guest services. Each of the departments has a unique communication link with the front office staff. The front office in any type of lodging property provides the face and voice of hospitality for the organization around the clock. Guests are most likely to approach the front office staff for connections to staff in other departments. As you review the following lodging facility departments, try to grasp the role of the front office in communication with each. As shown in Figure 3-1, the front office is a clearinghouse for communication activities. The members of the front office team must know to whom they can direct guest inquiries for assistance. They learn this by means of a thorough training program in in-house policy and procedures and a constant concern for providing hospitality to the guest.

2. PRACTICE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

PARTICIPATE IN WORKPLACE MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Communication is the process of exchanging information and ideas. There are many means of communication. To be an effective and valuable member of your workplace it is important that you become skilled in all of the different methods of communication that are appropriate.

THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

For communication to occur it must pass from a sender to a receiver. This must occur irrespective of the form of communication. For communication to be effective it must be understood by the receiver and be able to be responded to. This means that total communication involves speaking, reading, listening, and reasoning skills.

As communications pass from the source to the receiver there is plenty of opportunity for its original meaning to change or alter. Therefore listening, reasoning and feedback is an important part of the process as it is an opportunity for the sender to make sure the receiver has understood the message.

The other consideration is the "noise" associated with the communication – what else is happening, what are the distractions, the baggage etc. Noise can have a big impact on the message the receiver decodes.

2. PRACTICE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

HANDLE RELEVANT WORK RELATED

EXAMPLES

Ex 1. Incoming telex/Fax

- Time stamp on the top of the telex
- Sort of incoming telex
- Mark down the incoming telex on the log book

For the guest:

A. in house guest

1. Double check the room number and name, put the telex in the envelope, type or write down the room number, guest name on the envelope and telex copy.
2. keep it at the Information Counter together with the log book
3. Write a notice for guest and place it in the key box.
4. Turn on the message light.
5. If the guest call down to the Information Desk to ask for it, tell the guest that there is an incoming telex for him/her, ask the bellboy to send it up to the guest room if requested. The guest must sign on the log book.
6. If the guest comes to the counter to get the room key, give the telex to him/her and ask him/her to sign the name on the log book.
7. Turn off the message light when the guest receive the telex.
8. For urgent telex, if the guest is in the room, send it up right away, if not give it to AM to follow up.

2. PRACTICE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

B. Guest with reservation

1. Check the arrival date and name.
2. Put the telex copy in the envelop, mark down the guest name, arrival date and reservation number on both the telex copy and envelope.
3. Make a special remarks in the computer, keep it at the Information Counter put it in the "hold for arrival" file by date.
4. Check it daily in the evening.
5. For today's reservation, staple the incoming telex to the back of the reservation from give it to the guest upon the guest check in.
6. Ask the guest to sign on the log book.

C. Guest without reservation.

1. Check today's expected arrival list.
2. Put it in the "hold for arrival" file in alphabetical order.
3. Check it daily in the evening.
4. Hold the unclaimed telex for 3days then reply to the sender. Such as:"Re your telex to Mr. ××× we have no trace of his/her booking regards. Holiday Inn Yangtze Chong Qing."

D. Check out guest inform the sender the guest checked out already.

For hotel staff:

1. Ask the bellboy to send the incoming telex to the department concerned during the office hours.
2. The office staff should sign the name on the log book.
3. After office hours. We'll give it to AM to follow up if it's an urgent telex, others we'll send over the next morning.

2. PRACTICE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

EX 2 OUTGOING TELEX/FAX

- The standard outgoing telex form should be used. (use block letters)
- Request the guest to sign the "Telex Debit Voucher".
- Inform the guest the telex charges.
- Double check the guest room number, name against the computer.
- For the non-in-house guest, ask him to pay the deposit in advance at the Front Office Cashier.
- Double check the telex draft, make sure you can read it clearly, especially the telex content. (words spelling)
- Time stamp the telex form and sign the name on it.

- Pass it to the Telex Operator.
- For the hotel staff, ask him/her if it's own account or house account and fill in the voucher. (for house account should signed by the authorized person /department head)
- For the house account and staff own account telex don't add the service charge on it.
- After the Telex Operator sent out the telex, one copy should be given to the guest by putting in the key box and record down on the "outgoing telex log book", turn on the message light.

For the checkout guest, keep the outgoing telex copy in the "check out guest telex file" in alphabetical order for one month then destroy.

The Telex Operator will pass the "outgoing telex control sheet" to the F.O. Cashier at the end of the day, together with the telex draft and the "Telex Debit Voucher." The F.O. Cashier will debit the charge on his/her account.

2. PRACTICE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

EX 3. INCOMING MAIL

One of the many service offered by the hotel is the handling of guest mail. Careful attention must be given to the security and prompt delivery of guest mail.

Mail can be received by the hotel for:
1. Registered guest
2. Guest who are expected arrivals.
3. Guests who do not have reservation.
4. Check out guest.
5. Hotel staff.
6. For the cable (telegrams), parcel (package), register letters we should sign the name on the postman's book and check it immediately.

We accept the cable, parcel, register letters only:
1. In house guest.
2. Guest with reservation.
3. Made prior arrangements for the hotel to accept the cable or parcel.
4. There is a note on the cable or parcel to hold it for the guest arrival.
5. Guest with forwarding address.

If we can't find above information, ask the postman to get the cable, register letters, parcel back immediately.

For the cable, we should ask the bellboy to send it up to the guest/staff right away.

2. PRACTICE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

We should sort of incoming mail first.

For in-house guest:

1. Time stamp the mail.
2. Double check the room NO. Guest name against the computer.
3. Mark down on the log book. (Date, room NO. Guest name, kind of mail, received time, clerk's signature, guest's signature remarks, etc.)
4. For parcel, cable, register letter, leave a note, put the note in the key box, hold the cable and register letter, parcel at Information Counter, turn on the message light.
5. Put the letters, post-cards in the key box, turn on the message light.
6. Present or deliver mail when the guest calls for it, for parcel, register letter ask the guest to sign the name on the logbook, turn off the message light.

2. PRACTICE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

EX 4 MAIL FORWARDING

It is the hotel's responsibility to forward mail to guests after they have checked out. This service must be performed promptly to ensure that the mail will reach the guest as quickly as possible.

Procedures:

1. When a guest requests to have mail forwarded after departure, complete a Mail Forwarding Card by recording the following information:

    a. the date of departure .

    b. the guest's room number .

    c. the guest's name.

    d. the forwarding address (current until a special date)

    e. a second forwarding address (current after the date specified)

    f. the guest's permanent address.

2. File the card in the mail forwarding file.

3. Check incoming mail against

4. Forward guest mail to the current address for the date specified.

    Mail must be forwarded for those guests who left a forwarding address when no forwarding address is receded when no forwarding address is receded, and no reservation is on file the mail is held for 14 days and then return to the sender.

5. Mark on the back of the Mail Forwarding Card the date and number of pieces for each type of mail forwarded. (Letters, post-cards, telegrams and parcels)

6. Record the forwarding information in the mail forward log book:

    a. the date that you forwarded the mail.

    b. the name of the party to whom the mail was forwarded.

    c. the forwarding address.

    d. any remarks, if necessary.

2. PRACTICE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

EX 5 PROVIDING INFORMATION TO GUESTS

- The Information Clerk should know all the hotel facilities.
- Should know the hotel key staff: name, department, telephone NO. room NO.
- Should know the special "function" for the day.
- Other hotels information.
- Should know the local travel agencies.
- Should know some local information such as : hospitals, foreign affair offices, public security bureau, tourist, ect.

If you cannot provide what the guest asks for, try to find it out or ask your Supervisor to help and make sure you give the guest right information.

EX 6 MESSAGE TAKING (THROUGH THE TELEPHONE, COUNTER MESSAGE):

When we take a message, should use the standard message form and block letters, message must be treated as confidential.

- Answer the phone in polite way.
- Double check the guest name, room number for kinds of guest status:
1. Registered guests (in-house guest)
2. Guests with reservations.
3. Guest without reservation. (Walk-in guest)
4. Check out guest
- Ask the caller's name, telephone number.
- Mark down those items:
- The guest name, room number. (If he/she is an in-house guest)
- Caller's name, telephone number (ask the spelling if necessary)
- Date, time, clerk's initial
- Ask the message.
- Repeat the message to the caller, also the caller's name & telephone number.
- Inform the caller we'll pass the message to the guest and thank the caller for calling and

- wish a pleasant day.
- Place the copy in the key box and turn on the message light.
- one copy in the key box.
- one copy will send to the guest room.
- one copy for file.
- Make sure to turn off the message light when the guest receive the message.

Registered guest (in-house guest):
Procedure as above.

2. PRACTICE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

HANDLE TELEPHONE

It is essential, being a hotel receptionist to know-how to answer and make phone call appropriately. By just answering the phone call, the hotel as well as service is being publicized at the same time promoted. The telephone call received at your receptionist desk can be varied such as a reservation, an inquiry, a call looking for a client in the Hotel and other miscellaneous calls. Whatever calls it is made or received, your duty as a receptionist is to handle it with courteousness.

Before you pick up the Telephone:
Stop your conversation if you were in the middle of talking with somebody. If your hotel policy is a receptionist standing policy, then stand straight. But if it is sitting then sit on your chair straight. Exhale and make a smile before you pick up the telephone. Even if you are busy with another stuffs, try to escape from it pay your full attention to the telephone. Wait for two or three times ringing before you pick up the telephone. Prepare a note pad and ball pen to take note.

On the Telephone:
Assumed that you are already on the smile. "Hello, Good Morning/Good afternoon/Good evening. Welcome to Hotel Corevet reception. How may I help you? (For example) Ms. Yianna speaking." Speak pleasantly. Do not be in a hurry. Speak clearly. Be familiarized with the total number of in-house guests list and names. Help the privacy of your guests. Do not give the information of confidential things on the phone such as room number and complete address of the guests. If they insist, "I am afraid but Sir/Madam, this is our hotel policy."

If the caller would like to talk to the in-house guest, ask him to hold on for a moment. But do not let it go over more than 30 seconds. Then set the caller's telephone on "Hold on" mode. When you got back to the caller, start with an appreciation word, "Thank you for waiting, Sir/Madam."
If the telephone call is not for the Front Office desk, "Would you like to please hold on for a moment, I will connect you to GM or Business office right away." Remember that you, being a receptionist, you will receive all kinds of telephone call. All the call will first arrive at your desk.

At the End of the telephone calls:
Always leave an impressive word to the caller. If he is able to talk to a person whom he would like to talk, ask "Would you like to leave a message?" And try to mention his/her name before the telephone hang up. Do not hesitate to say "Thank you for calling."

3. PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

INPUT DATA INTO COMPUTER

The right technology will get your business ahead of the game. It shouldn't be another liability. It should be a tool that empowers your employees to provide not just good, but great service. It should be reliable, a profit maximizing investment that organizes information and helps you better manage operations.

PMS Applications

The property management system is organized around the functions needed to assist in delivering service to the guest. The software options listed earlier in this chapter are only a few of the many that are available to hoteliers. For purposes of this review, assume that the lodging property has been equipped with a state-of-the art PMS and the system is up and running.

The software program **main menu** lists on the screen all the available individual programs (modules) that are included in the system. Refer to the options shown in Figure below are similar to those previously listed in this chapter.

The front desk clerk can access any of these individual programs by typing the designated keystrokes or following directions on a touch screen, a type of computer monitor screen that allows the operator to input data by the touch of a finger.
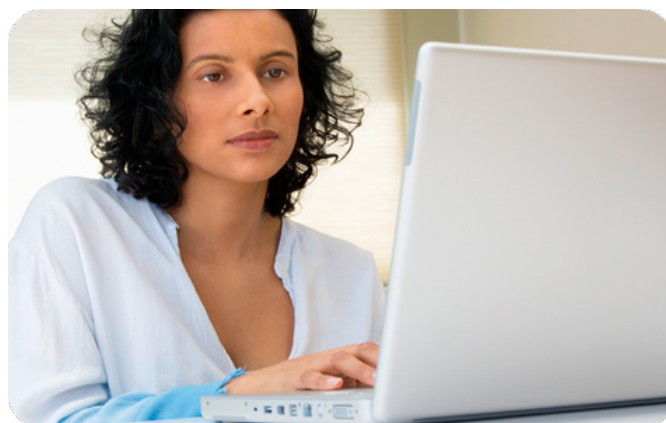
The documentation, which consist of either printed or on-screen (monitor) instructions, explains how to operate the hardware or software that accompanies a specific PMS.
This documentation will consist of written step-by-step instructions as well as a flowchart of individual programs and subprograms, all of which is very valuable in training staff. The flowcharts are comparable to the blueprints of a building.

3 . PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

The following discussion of individual modules and subprograms will highlight the applications of these software options in a property management system.

1. Reservations
2. Yield Management
3. Registration
4. Room Status
5. Posting
6. Call Accounting
7. Checkout
8. Night Audit
9. Inquiries/Reports

10. Back Office
11. Housekeeping
12. Food and Beverage
13. Maintenance
14. Security
15. Marketing and Sales
16. Personnel
17. Electronic Mail
18. Time Clock

PMS INTERFACES

A fully integrated hotel computer system provides management with effective means with which to operate and control many front office and back office activities.

Οι κυριότερες διασυνδέσεις των λειτουργιών ενός ξενοδοχείου περιλαμβάνουν τις εξής:

- Point of sales systems {POS}
- Call accounting system
- Electronic locking system
- Energy management System
- Auxiliary guest services
- Guest operated devices

3 . PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

POINT OF SALE SYSTEMS:

POS refers to point of sale (POS) software that runs on computers, usually touch screen terminals or wireless handheld devices. Restaurant POS systems assist businesses to track transactions in real time.

Typical restaurant POS software is able to print guest checks, print orders to kitchens and bars for preparation, process credit cards and other payment cards, and run reports. In addition, some systems implement wireless pagers and electronic signature capture devices. Computer terminals are located in each point of sale department such as restaurants, spas, coffee shop, etc.

These terminals connect to a central processing unit, when the main terminal interacts with the PMS data can be transferred from the POS systems to various front and back office modules for further processing. This system accomplishes the basic objectives of electronic data processing. The time taken for posting charges to a guest folio is significantly reduced and the number of times a significant piece of data is handled is also minimized. It also reduces posting errors and the possibility of late charges.

3 . PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

CALL ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS:

This system is capable of handling direct distance calling, distribute calls through a least cost routing network and price outgoing calls. When a CAS is interfaced with a PMS's front office guest accounting module telephone charges can be directly posted to a proper guest folio. It reduces space needed, labour cost as no telephone operator is needed and maintenance costs.

ELECTRONIC LOCKING SYSTEMS:

Some ELS provide a "Do not disturb" option for guests. This option typically employs an indicator that displays a notice when guests want privacy. The notice is often given by a flashing red light located within a locking mechanism. The indicator may be triggered when a room attendant inserts a key into the locking mechanism. No longer must housekeeping staff test the door's chain to realize that the guest is still in the room

A safety feature built into ELS prevents the door from opening while the key remains in the lock. This prevents the guest from entering the room while forgetting the key in the door. If the key remains in the locking mechanism beyond a predetermined time interval, the system destroys the key by scrambling the code. To avoid any inconvenience the staff should inform the guests that failure to promptly remove the key from the lock will cause it to become invalid.

Newest electronic locking systems allow guest to set the locking system by programming their own four digit code number. Some ELS also allow guests to use their own credit card to enter the room. At the time of check in the credit card is moved through a magnetic card reader.

The reader captures and encodes the information contained on the card's magnetic strip and sends it as the access code for the appropriate guest room door. When the guest arrives at the assigned room, the credit card operates as the room key.

3 . PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

ELS REPORTS:

Management can find out which keycards opened which doors, by date and time. Communicating this ELS capability to hotel staff and guests may help reduce the number of guestroom incidents. An ELS typically maintains an audit trail involving the use of system based keycards. Some systems print out reports in chronological sequence. Some systems record and store activity data that can be formatted to provide printed reports on demand. The creation of reports, as well as other system functions, should be controlled by operator identification and password security codes

ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM {EMS}:

Heating, lighting, ventilation and air conditioning are essential to a hotel's existence. The greater the efficiency of this equipment the better the hotel serves the needs of the guest. Energy management systems may conserve energy contain energy costs and tighten operational costs over guestroom and public are environments. An important feature of these systems is their ability to minimize the building's energy needs while not significantly affecting the hotel's comfort conditions.

An energy management system may be a central feature of the room's management module. It is a computer based control system designed to automatically manage the operation of mechanical equipment in a property. The programming of this system enables management to determine when equipment is to be turned on or off or otherwise regulated. For example if the meeting rooms of a hotel will be used at 10:00 am to 2:00pm, the computer can be programmed to automatically conserve energy during the hours the rooms will not be in use, while ensuring that by 10:00 am the rooms reach a satisfactory comfort level for the guests. This programming technique can be used for equipment affecting various spaces throughout the property.

3. PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

AUXILIARY GUEST SERVICES:

Placement of wake up calls and the delivery of messages to guests are examples of these systems. The main reason for interfacing these systems to the property management system lies in the comprehensive co-ordination and tracking of guest related functions.

An automated wake-up call system permits the front desk employees to input a guest room number and requested wake-up time. At the specified time the system automatically rings the room and calls back at predetermined intervals until the system stops calling and makes note of the guest's failure to answer. If the guest answers the call, the system completes a pre-recorded morning greeting and then disconnects. Some systems require that the guest speak into the phone to confirm he/she is awake. A notation of the answered call is often stored for the day in the system.

Electronic message waiting systems are designed to let a guest know that a message is waiting at the front desk. Some of these systems display messages on the television screen in the guest's room.

Hotels have also adopted voice mailboxes. These are devices that record telephone messages for guests. A caller, who wishes to leave a message for the guest, does so over the phone and the message is recorded for the guest to access later. To access the message the guest typically dials a special telephone number, connects with the voice mailbox and listens to the message delivered in the caller's own voice. By interfacing the voice mailbox service with PMS, the recording of the message trips the message waiting mechanism in the guestroom, leaving the switchboard staff free to perform other productive tasks.

Guest operated devices:
These systems may be located in public areas of the hotel or in private guestrooms. Assortments of devices provide concierge-level service with in-room convenience. Guest operated devices discussed in the following sections include:

- Self-check in/self-checkout systems
- In-room entertainment systems
- In-room vending systems
- Information Systems

3 . PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

SELF-CHECK IN /CHECK OUT SYSTEMS:

They resemble automatic bank teller machines. These are usually located in the lobby. They possess both audio and video capability. In a self-check in system, the guest initiates the registration process by inserting the credit card in the terminal. After collecting registration data the terminal screen may display room rates and types. Since the terminals are interfaced with the PMS automatic room and rate assignment are possible. The terminal may also dispense an electronic guestroom cardkey or tell the guest how to obtain a room key.

Lobby terminals are also capable of handling a checkout process. Here the guest uses his credit card used at check in to access and settle his account. The system automatically posts the account balance to the credit card for billing and dispenses an automized statement for the guest.

These days guests also have the opportunity for both in-room folio review and in-room check out. These systems may use in-room computer terminals, the hotel's television cable station, or guestroom telephones to access and display guest folio data on the guestroom television screen. When in room terminals are linked with PMS guests can access folio data and can approve and settle their accounts. Guest room telephones when interfaced with PMS can also be used to display the guest folio details on the television screen. The system provides guests with folio details and directs a self-checkout procedure. Folio copies are typically available at the front desk to copy.

These systems reduce the time it takes to process guest registrations, check-ins and checkouts. They can also be enhanced to introduce guests to the facilities and amenities available. Automated check-in and check-out devices free front office personnel to spend more time with guests who need personal attention.

3 . PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

IN-ROOM ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS:

When interfaced with a PMS in room movie systems provide guestroom entertainment through a dedicated television pay channel. The interface includes a timing device. After the channel has been tuned in for a specific amount of time, the device triggers an automatic charge posting to the appropriate guest folio.
Stand alone in room movie systems generally require the guest to dial an in-house service and request

that the movie be turned on.
The operator who turns on the program also is responsible for posting the charge to the proper guest folio.
Although the telephone call approach is not fully automated, it does provide a sound approach for minimizing guest-disputed

3 . PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

IN-ROOM VENDING MACHINES:

Non-automated minibars in the guest room require that the beginning inventory level are noted either by the housekeeping or room service attendants during their normal rounds. In either case the employee uses a hand-held portable computer or touch tone telephone in the guest room to connect with the remote minibar's computer terminal. The product code of the items consumed, are put in and the bars CPU relays the guestroom information and charges of the consumed items via the property management system and issues a stock replacement report.

If these systems are electronic and microprocessor based, they may contain fiber optic sensors that record the removal of stored products. Once triggered the sensors relay the transaction to build in microprocessor for recording. Individual room microprocessors are typically cabled to a remote CPU which stores recorded transactions. The CPU converts transactions into accounting entries and relays them to the property management system guest accounting module for folio posting. The bar system's CPU also maintains perpetual inventory replenishment data which directs the restocking of vending units.

Microprocessor based systems enable hotel managers to use a remote central console to lock in-room vending units. Some systems help guests to lock their minibars using their guestroom keys. Interfacing with PMS helps reduce late charges as well as labour costs.

3 . PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

GUEST INFORMATION SYSTEM:

These systems are television based and can connect to cable broadcast systems, wire news services, transportation schedules and restaurant and room service menus and may also access the internet. When in-room computers are able to connect to the internet, guests may access


- Airline schedules
- Local restaurant guides
- Stock market reports
- News and sports updates
- Shopping catalogues and transactions
- Video games and casino games

These systems may also be connected to the hotel's cable television band. This connection enables the property to keep in house guests and convention attendees informed about events and functions to provide tourists with information about local attractions and to inform business travelers about support services by the property.

3 . PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

ACCESS INFORMATION USING COMPUTER

Front desk staff use computer software programs to make reservations. Using the program, they determine which rooms and rates are available for a specific night or range of nights. Front desk representatives also use the software to check-in and check-out guests and to print off bills. Additionally they may check the computer to see if a room has been cleaned before checking in a guest. Finally, front desk staff enter guest names and mailing addresses into a database to use for future.
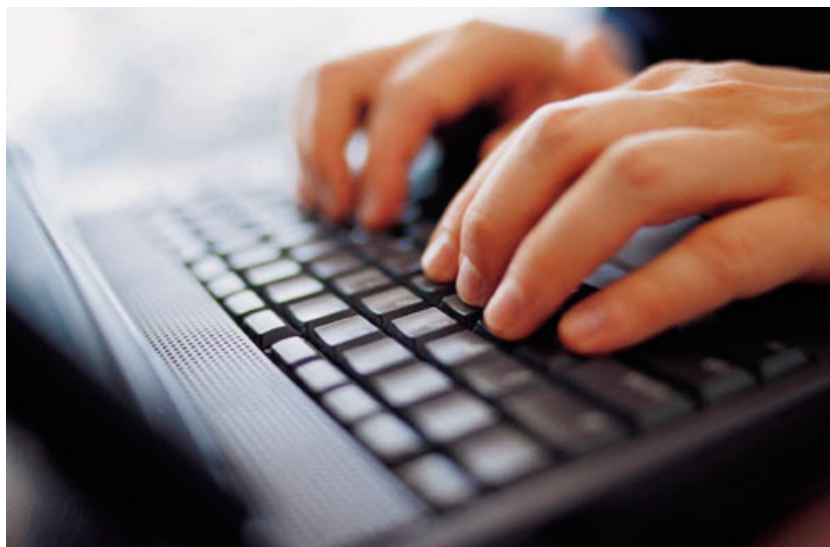
PRODUCE/ OUTPUT DATA USING COMPUTER SYSTEM

Computer output devices get information out of the computer, delivering data that has been processed by the computer to you, the user. Output devices produce data in different forms including audio, visual and hard copy e.g. Room Status form, invoices, guest bill.
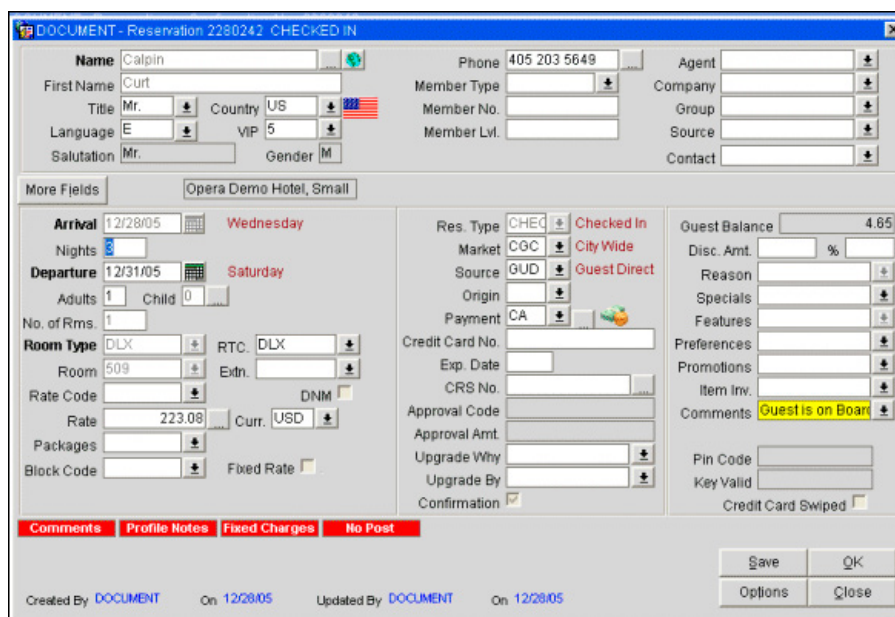
3 . PERFORM COMPUTER OPERATIONS

EX 1   RESERVATION OPERA PMS

The Reservation screen is used to complete reservations for individual guests, travel agents, groups, source, and companies. When you access this screen from the Profile screen (by selecting the New Resv. button) or from the Rate Query Details screen (by selecting the Resv. button), profile or rate information automatically fills the appropriate fields on the Reservation screen. You may make changes as necessary.

The Reservation screen is made up of the following sections:

Header: Information about the guest and the guest's company, travel agent, group, and membership affiliation's. A button links you directly to the guest's Profile screen where complete guest demographics are stored.

Details: Particulars about the guest's stay, including arrival and departure dates, room and rate information, payment method, credit cards, and packages.

More Fields: Additional information such as transportation requirements. These fields may be customized for each property. Options in this section may control whether transactions may be posted to the guest's Billing screen, whether video check out may be used by this guest, and check out time. This section appears when the Reservations>Reservation More Fields application parameter is set to Y (this is the default).

4 . PROVIDE RECEPTION SERVICES

IDENTIFY AND EXPLAIN THE KEY REASONS WHY CUSTOMERS COMPLAIN

GUEST COMPLAINTS

There may not be easy answer to solving guest complaints, but there are some basic rules that can be followed. By following these rules, the employees and management will stand a better than average chance of turning that complaining guest into a permanent repeat guest for the hotel.

The following represent a few basic ideas for handling guest complaints:

- **Do not argue** with a guest who is complaining; assume he or she is correct, because the guest may be right.
- **Always listen** with undivided attention to what the guest is complaining about
- **Try to put yourself** in the guest's place; how would you feel?
- **Never raise** your voice or yell at the guest, if you are pleasant, you may be able to turn the guest around
- **By objective** and get all of the facts; try to weed out the subjective statements the guest may be making
- **Show the guest** you are concerned about the situation
- **When the guest is correct**, tell him of her that you and the hotel will go to work on correcting the situation at once
- **When the guest is very loud** or if you feel the situation is of a private nature, move the guest to a location that is out of the hearing range of the other guests

- **If the guest is wrong** and complaint is in regard to a policy of the hotel that you know must be followed, be pleasant but explain the policy and the need for it. An example of this is the check-out time policy
- **A front office** employee should be supported by the supervisor. If the guest's complaint cannot be resolved by the employee, the supervisor should step in and attempt to resolve it
- **In the case of an accident** or theft, employees should never accept responsibility on behalf of the hotel. A manager is the only person who should handle these matters

4. PROVIDE RECEPTION SERVICES

DEMONSTRATE THE POSITIVE OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM HANDLING CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

After the problem is resolved, the guest should be contacted to ensure that he or she is satisfied with the resolution. This is just one more way of showing the guest that the problem has received attention and the hotel wants to make sure he or she is satisfied.

When guest complaints are handled in this manner, a bad situation can be turned around into a positive experience. Through a problem resolution process such as this, the hotel may gain a loyal customer and very positive word-of-mouth advertising.

PRACTICE STANDARD ORGANIZATIONAL TECHNIQUES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Six Steps in Handling Guest Complaints

In dealing with guest's complaints, there are several steps to follow:

1. Addressing the guest
2. Giving attention
3. Determining the solution options
4. Finding answers
5. Taking action
6. Checking up

4. PROVIDE RECEPTION SERVICES

Addressing the Guest

The guest may be bothered by the problem for a long time or that the incident has possibly occurred more than once. So that when the guest finally decides to lodge the complaint, he or she may be extremely emotional in the way chosen to confront the employees. When a guest comes forward with a complaint, the employee receiving it should address the guest with his or her full attention.

Attention

The next step involves paying attention to what the guest is saying. The employee should listen to the guest and not try to speak while the guest is talking. The best approach is for the employee to keep a pleasant expression and to nod in agreement.
The employee should never argue with the guest about what is being said

Determination

Now it is time to determine exactly what the problem is. The employee should focus on the facts of the problem and deal with the problem, not the personality. The employee can focus his or her questions on clarifying the problem and repeating to the guest in his or her own words what the problem is, always including who, what, where, and when in this analysis.

Answers

At this point, the guest is ready to hear some answers to the problem he or she has brought forward. The employee should indicate that the guest's feelings and understandable and that the employee would feel the same way if he or she were in the guest's position. The employee might offer a solution to the problem. If the guest is not happy with that solution, an alternative one can be suggested.

Action

Action should be taken immediately after the complaint is discussed. When the guest sees that the employee is taking action to solve the problem, he or she will feel vindicated. For example, if the solution means housekeeping has to be called, a note should not be made to call later. The call should be made while the guest is still there.

Check-up

After the problem is resolved, the guest should be contacted to ensure that he or she is satisfied with the resolution. This is just one more way of showing the guest that the problem has received attention and the hotel wants to make sure he or she is satisfied. When guest complaints are handled in this manner, a bad situation can be turned around into a positive experience. Through a problem resolution process such as this, the hotel may gain a loyal customer and very positive word-of-mouth advertising.

5 . HANDLING CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS
PREPARE FOR GUEST ARRIVAL

WELCOME AND REGISTER GUESTS

REGISTRATION

Guest registration modules have greatly improved the check-in process. Because information has already been captured at the time of reservation, less time is required for registration. The front desk clerk need only verify the guest's request for room type, location, and rate with room inventory and room status. Provisions for walk-in guests without reservations are similarly handled. Method of payment is also established. The hard plastic key can be issued after the security module has changed the entrance code for the room. The guest registration procedure can also be completed by the **self-check-in process**, a procedure that requires the guest to insert a credit card having a magnetic stripe containing personal and financial data into a self-check-in terminal and answer a few simple questions concerning the guest stay. The data bank of room occupancy information provided by the housekeeper is available to the front desk via the computer. The front desk clerk chooses the room the guest will occupy and issues a key. The total time required for registration is less than five minutes.

5. HANDLING CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

PREPARE FRONT OFFICE RECORDS AND REPORTS

ROOM STATUS

Access to the room status module provides information on availability of entry to a guest room. There are two types of room status: reservation and housekeeping. Reservation status can be open, confirmed, guaranteed, or repair. Housekeeping status can be ready, on change, or out of order. Reservation status is maintained by the reservation department or reservation system, while housekeeping status is provided by the housekeeping department. The room status feature is one of the most valuable features of the PMS. It streamlines the operation problems of check-in and assists other departments as well. This module, which may share the same room data bank with reservations, pro- vides reports used by the housekeeper, front office manager and staff, maintenance engineer, night auditor, reservations clerk, and marketing and sales department.
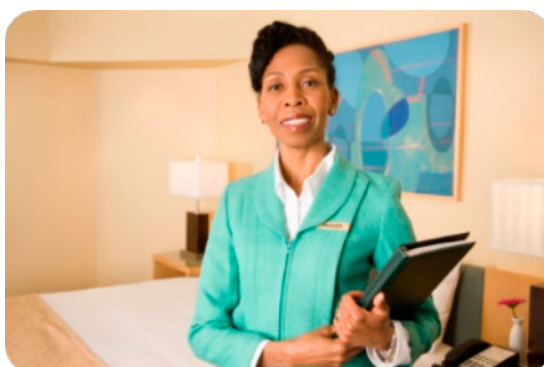
The housekeeper must know which guest rooms have been occupied and need cleaning; desk clerks must know if the guest room is reserved or open for sale; the maintenance engineer must plan for routine painting and refurbishing; the night auditor must verify which rooms have been sold to complete the night audit; the reservations clerk needs information on the availability of guest rooms; and the marketing and sales department must have current information on room availability for conventions.

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5. HANDLING CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

POSTING

The **posting** module of a PMS often supplies one of the first benefits realized by the front office manager: immediate posting of charges incurred by the guests.

Not only is the posting operation streamlined but also accuracy is ensured. A PMS allows the posting to occur at the point of sale in the restaurant, lounge, or gift shop. Similarly, room and tax charges or telephone calls can be posted to the electronic folio in a very short time. Transfers and adjustments of guest charges (with approval by management) to folios are easily made. Charges incurred on behalf of the guest can be posted to the electronic folio by entering room number, amount of charge, department, and transaction type. These data are stored in memory and retrieved after an inquiry, during report generation, or at checkout.

The accuracy of these charges still depends on the employee operating the point-of-sale terminal in the restaurant. Entering an inaccurate room number (room 412 entered as 712) or a reversed amount (€32.23 entered as €23.32) will still result in an incorrect posting.

After the desk clerk has processed the paid-out to the delivery-person, this charge is posted to the electronic folio by entering the room number, amount of charge, department, and type of transaction. The night auditor verifies the integrity of all department totals.

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5 . HANDLING CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

CHECK-OUT

The inconvenience of guest checkout (long lines, disputes over charges) is greatly reduced with the PMS checkout feature, which prints out an accurate, neat, and complete guest folio in seconds.

Disputes over guest charges still occur at the time of checkout, but not as often. The posting of a long-distance telephone call to room 295 instead of room 296 is less likely to occur with a PMS, because the PMS interfaces with the call-accounting system and the phone charge is automatically posted to the guest's electronic folio.

Efficiency at time of checkout is also improved when the desk clerk retrieves a hard copy of the folio and presents it for review to the guest. The guest has already indicated method of payment at check-in. An imprint of the credit card has been made, or prepayment has occurred. The **floor limit**, a dollar amount of credit allowed by the credit card agency, and **house limit**, a dollar amount of credit allowed by the hotel, have been monitored by the PMS. These controls help avoid high **debit balances**; the amount of money the guest owes the hotel. Last-minute purchases of products or services are automatically posted at the point-of-sale terminals.

The guest completes the checkout process by confirming the method of payment. The desk clerk may suggest making future reservations at this property or other properties in the chain or referral group. Transfers to the city ledger are made electronically at this time. Cashier activity reports are monitored, as is other information about the day's checkouts (such as number of guest departures and time of departures). A PMS can generate a **paid in advance** (PIA) listing, which monitors guests who paid cash at check-in. The PIA prevents guests from charging products or services to their guest folio.

CHECK OUT

5. HANDLING CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

Guests can avoid checkout lines by using **in-room guest checkout**, a feature of the property management system that allows the guest to use a guest room television to check out of the hotel. For this process, the night desk staff slips a copy of an updated guest folio under the door the night before checkout. The guest enters a few digits on the television control panel to start the process. After he or she answers questions about multiple guest accounts in the same room, accuracy of charges, and method of payment, for example, the process is complete. The guest can pick up a copy of the folio at the front desk if desired.

NIGHT AUDIT

The night audit has always been labor-intensive. In addition to acting as a desk clerk and posting the room and tax charges, the night auditor must balance the guest transactions of the day. To extend credit to guests, debits and **credits**, the amount of money the hotel owes the guests, must be balanced daily. The debits originating from the various departments must be checked against the totals posted to the guest folios. The credits, in the form of guest payments, must be accounted for by reviewing the guests' outstanding balances. Although this sounds like a simple process, the procedure can be very involved.

The PMS simplifies the night audit by producing totals from departments and guest folios. These data are assembled into standard report forms. Financial information is presented in the daily report, used by the management of the lodging property to determine the financial success of a particular day. Note that the intranet can also be included in this module because the night auditor can post emails to departmental employees concerning the final night audit or other operational details from the previous evening.

INQUIRIES/REPORTS

The **inquiries/reports** feature of the PMS allows management to retrieve operating or financial information at any time. The front office manager may want to check the number of available rooms in the room inventory for a particular night, the number of guests expected to be checked in, the number of guests to be checked out for the day, the cur- rent room status from the housekeeping department, or the **outstanding balance report**, a listing of guests' folio balances. These reports can be produced easily on a PMS. The inquiries/reports feature of the PMS enables management to maintain a cur- rent view of operations and finances.

Lifelong Learning Programme

5 . HANDLING CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

RECEPTION CORRECT COMMUNICATION

- My name is---, Please call me anytime and I'll be glad to be of service. Enjoy your stay with us.
- What type of room would you prefer?
- How long are you going to stay with us?
- Let me check if we have a room available.
- I am sorry, sir/madam. We can accommodate you for -----, nights only at this moment, but we Eli put you on our top priority waiting list for the rest of dates and keep you informed.
- May I know if you are paying in cash or by credit card?
- Will you settle your bill by travelers cheque?
- It is our hotel policy that we need a deposit in advance. Mr.------. Would you mind going to the Cashier counter please.
- One moment please, I'll see if he is registered.
- You may call him on the house phone. It's over there behind the pillar.
- Could you wait a few minutes? I'll have the bellman page him.
- I'm sorry, I didn't make it clear.
- Would you mind going/stepping over to the ------desk at the end of the counter?
- We are looking forward to seeing you again soon.
- Certainly, you may leave a message.
- One moment please. Sorry to keep you waiting. Go ahead please.
- Would you mind repeating that please?
- I am afraid there is no message for you at the moment.
- May I know how long you would like to extend your stay in our hotel?
- May I be of assistance?
- Are you being served?
- I'll send/have somebody to attend to you in a minute.
- I am sorry I don't understand, I'll get my super for you right away.
- Mr.----, for your protection, this is the only key available.
- I will make sure that the other clerks are informed of your new location and that all message or calls will be forwarded to you.

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Επαγγελματικές ευκαιρίες για ανειδίκευτους και ημιειδικευμένους εργαζομένους στον τομέα του τουρισμού

HOUSEKEEPING

Εκπαιδευτικό υλικό – εγχειρίδιο

ΒΑΣΙΚΕΣ ΙΚΑΝΟΤΗΤΕΣ - ΓΝΩΣΕΙΣ - ΔΕΞΙΟΤΗΤΕΣ

ΠΡΟΤΥΠΑ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΡΕΣΕΨΙΟΝΙΣΤ ΚΑΙ ΤΙΣ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΕΣ ΥΠΟΔΟΧΗΣ