

# Hotel Organization and the Front Office Manager

## OPENING DILEMMA

At a recent staff meeting, the general manager of The Times Hotel asked if anyone wanted to address the group. The director of housekeeping indicated he was at a loss in trying to work with the front desk clerks. He had repeatedly called the desk clerks last Tuesday to let them know that general housecleaning would be performed on the seventh and eighth floors on Wednesday morning and that they should not assign rooms on those floors to guests on Tuesday night. When the cleaning crew came to work on Wednesday morning, they were faced with 14 occupied rooms on the seventh floor and 12 occupied rooms on the eighth floor. This cost the hotel several hundred dollars because the cleaning crew was from an outsourced contract company, which charged the hotel a basic fee for failure to comply with the contract. The front office manager retorted that a bus group called two weeks ago and asked if any rooms were available because there was a mix-up in room rates at the group's original hotel. The front office manager indicated something must have gone awry in the computer system. After all, this was a good opportunity to bring in 26 additional room-nights.

### CHAPTER FOCUS POINTS

- Organization of lodging properties
- Organization of the front office department
- Staffing the front office
- Function of the front office manager

## Organization of Lodging Properties

The objective of most hospitality establishments is to produce a profit. To meet this goal, factors such as current economic conditions, marketing plans, competition, and staff size and ability are constantly reviewed.

The **general manager**, the person in charge of directing and leading the hotel staff in meeting its financial, environmental, and community responsibilities, develops organization charts that fit his or her plan to meet the goals of the company. The **organization charts**—schematic drawings that list management positions in an organization—included in this chapter are offered only as instructional examples. An organization chart represents the span of control for the general manager. Not all hotels have every position listed in these organization charts. Persons pursuing a career in the hotel industry will be called on many times throughout their career to develop or restructure an organization. The people who are part of these operational plans will have a direct influence on the type of structure developed or reorganized. The goals of the organization must be paramount in the decision-making process. However, there must be flexibility to make the plan work. This section points out the major organizational features of a lodging property and typical managerial duties of the people within the organization.

It is not uncommon for a general manager of a property to move people from department to department of the hotel. This is done for many reasons. The **front office manager**, the person responsible for leading the front office staff in delivering hospitality, may express interest in the position of **controller**, the internal accountant for the hotel, or in a position in the marketing and sales department. The general manager realizes a candidate must possess certain skills before being placed in any new position. To prepare someone for an opening in the controller's office, the general manager may assign him or her some of the controller's busywork. The front office manager might also spend slack periods with the **director of marketing and sales**, the person who analyzes available markets and sells products and services at a profit, to become familiar with that department.

The general manager may also use the weekly staff meeting to explain the financial condition and marketing plans of the property. This tactic reinforces the management team concept. By exposing interested employees to the responsibilities of other departments and by keeping the staff informed of the current situation of the property, the general manager enables staff members to meet their career goals within the organization.

Flexibility is the key to hospitality organization. At the operations level, familiarity with the staff's strengths and weaknesses is essential to meeting the demands of the situation. When the property experiences an expected slow period, regrouping may be necessary to maintain full-time positions. The front office manager may have to assist the marketing and sales office in advertising or hosting tour directors for a specific weekend. The food and beverage director might have to spend some time in the controller's office completing reports and developing budgets. This interdepartmental cooperation provides the backdrop for a smooth-running organization. Such flexibility prevents departmental

jealousies and territoriality from becoming roadblocks to communication. The general manager receives additional operational support from the director of security, the person who takes a proactive role in establishing and maintaining a safe environment for guests and employees. Because of the precautions necessary in delivering hospitality, the director of security is vital to the operation of the lodging property.

## Organization Charts

The major positions found in a large, full-service hotel or resort are presented in Figure 2-1. This lodging property features:

- 500+ rooms in a commercial property
- Center-city or suburban location
- \$142 **average daily rate (ADR)**—total room revenue divided by the number of rooms sold
- 60 **percent occupancy**—number of rooms sold divided by the number of rooms available
- 34 **percent yield**—number of rooms sold at average daily rate divided by the number of rooms available at **rack rate**, the highest room rate category offered by a hotel
- \$84.93 **RevPAR (Revenue per Available Room)**—room revenue divided by the number of rooms available *or* hotel occupancy times average daily rate
- \$15.5 million in revenues
- Full service
- Chain—company ownership
- **Corporate guests**—frequent guests who are employed by a company and receive a special room rate
- **Convention guests**—guests who attend a large convention and receive a special room rate
- Meeting and banquet rooms
- Dining rooms
- Lounge with entertainment
- Exercise facilities with indoor pool
- Gift shop
- Business office and retail rentals
- Attached parking garage
- **In-house laundry**—a hotel-operated department that launders guest linens
- **Referral reservation service**—a service offered by a management company of a chain of hotels to franchisee members

**FIGURE 2-1** The organization of a large, full-service hotel requires many positions to provide service to the guest.

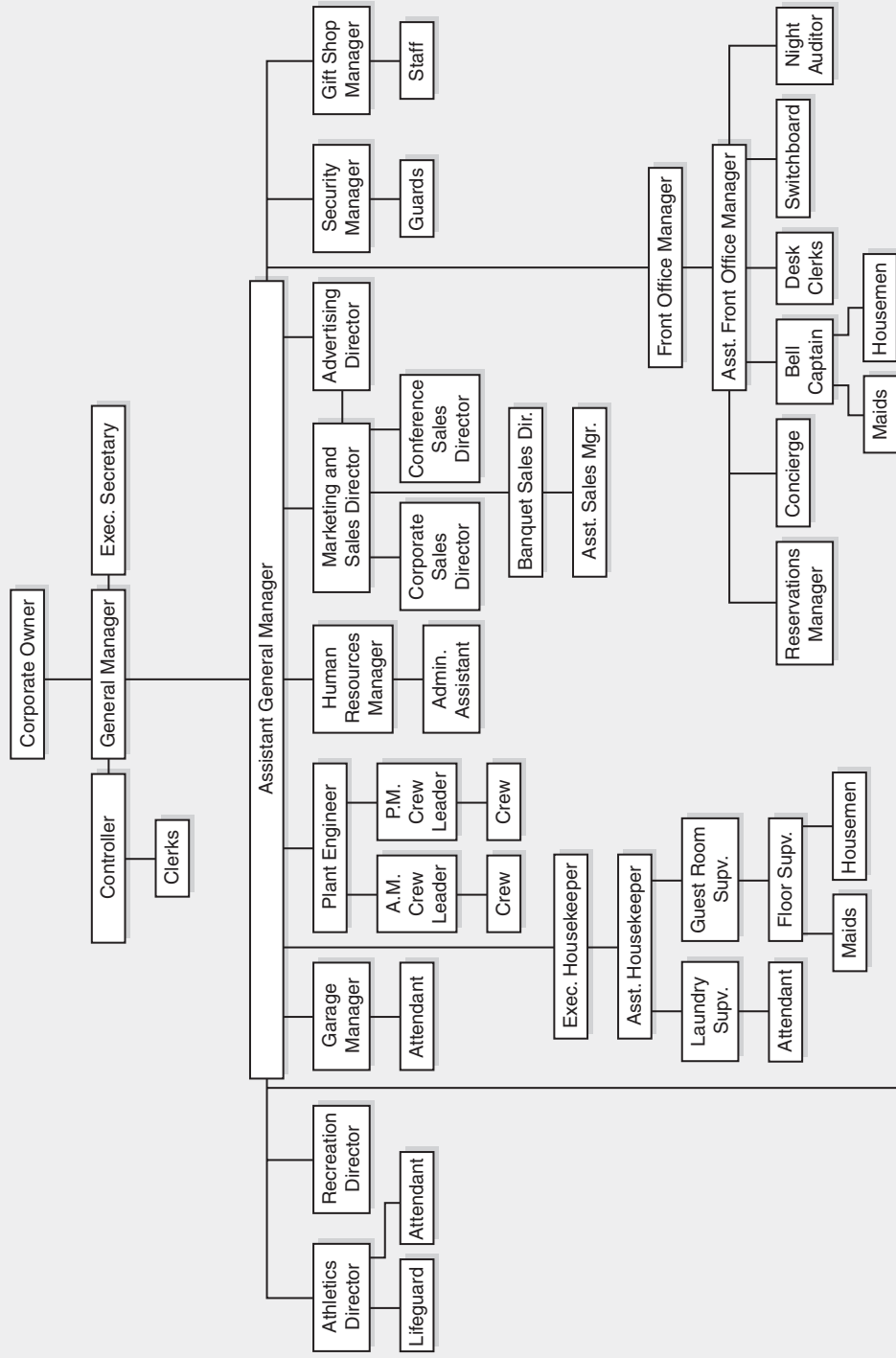
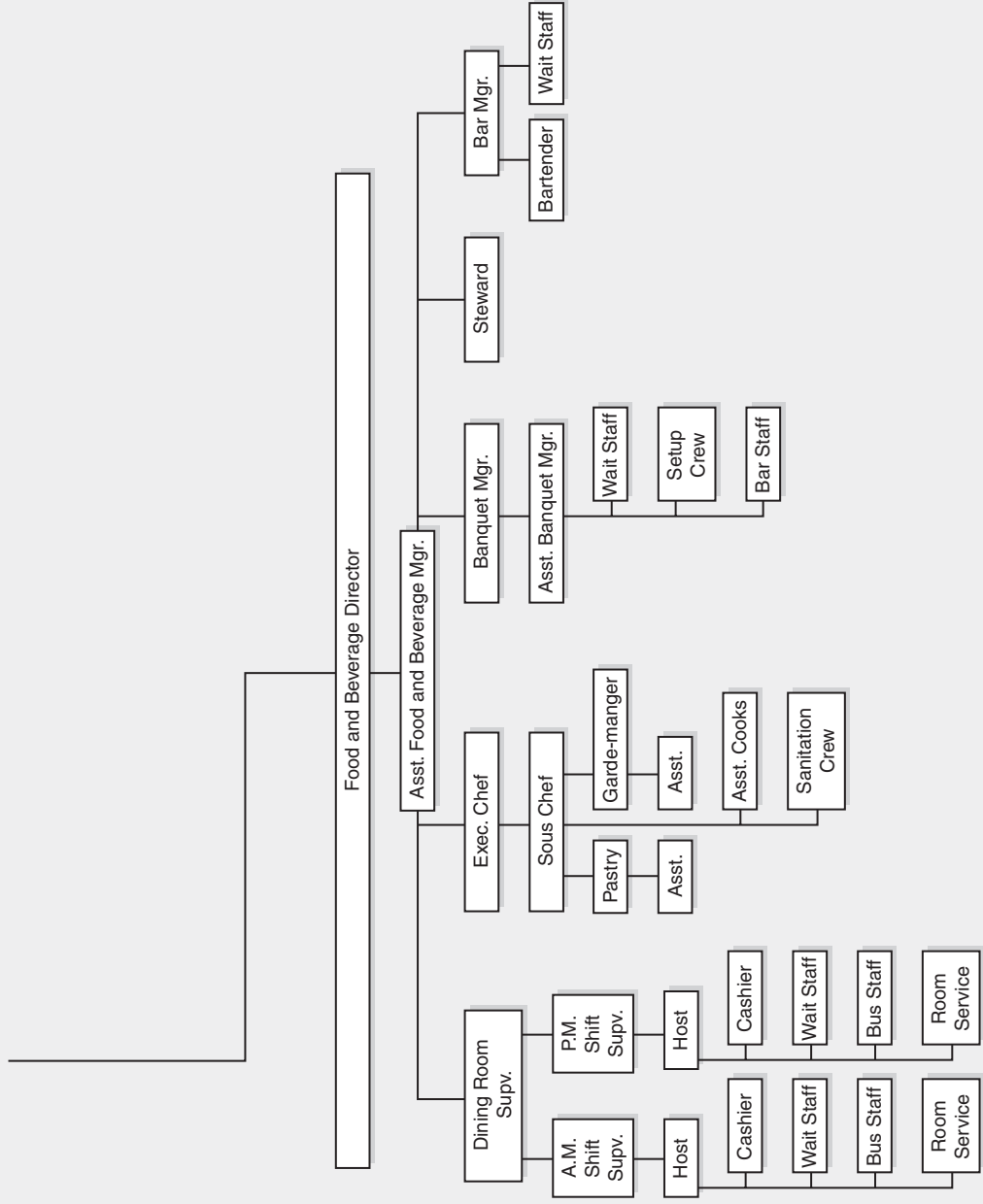


FIGURE 2-1 (Continued)



To function as a well-run lodging facility, this property requires the following department heads:

- General manager
- Assistant general manager
- Controller
- Plant engineer
- Executive housekeeper
- Human resources manager
- Director of security
- Recreation director
- Athletics director
- Marketing and sales director
- Gift shop manager
- Front office manager
- Food and beverage director
- Garage manager

The corporate owners have entrusted the financial success of this organization to the general manager, who must organize departments to provide optimum service to the guest. Each department is well organized and staffed to allow the supervisor time to plan and develop the major revenue-producing areas. The marketing and sales director, gift shop manager, front office manager, food and beverage director, and garage manager develop programs that increase sales and profits and improve cost-control methods. Those supervisors who do not head income-generating departments—controller, plant engineer, executive housekeeper, director of security, human resources manager, recreation director, and athletics director—provide services to the guest, principally behind the scenes.

For example, the controller develops clear and concise performance reports that reflect budget targets. The **plant engineer**, the person responsible for the operation and maintenance of the physical plant, establishes an effective preventive maintenance program. The **executive housekeeper**, the person responsible for the upkeep of the guest rooms and public areas of the lodging property as well as control of guest room inventory items, keeps on top of new trends in controlling costs and effective use of personnel. The director of security provides the training for the staff for front-line safety needs of guests. The **human resources manager**, the person who assists department managers in organizing personnel functions and developing employees, provides leadership in attracting new hires and maintaining a stable yet progressive approach to utilization of personnel. The **recreation director**, the person in charge of developing and organizing recreational activities for guests, and the **athletics director**, who is responsible for supervising physical exercise facilities for guests, provide direct hospitality services for the guest, helping ensure their safe and interesting stay.

**FIGURE 2-2** Notice that several of the positions listed in the full-service hotel organization chart are eliminated from this one for a medium-size lodging property.

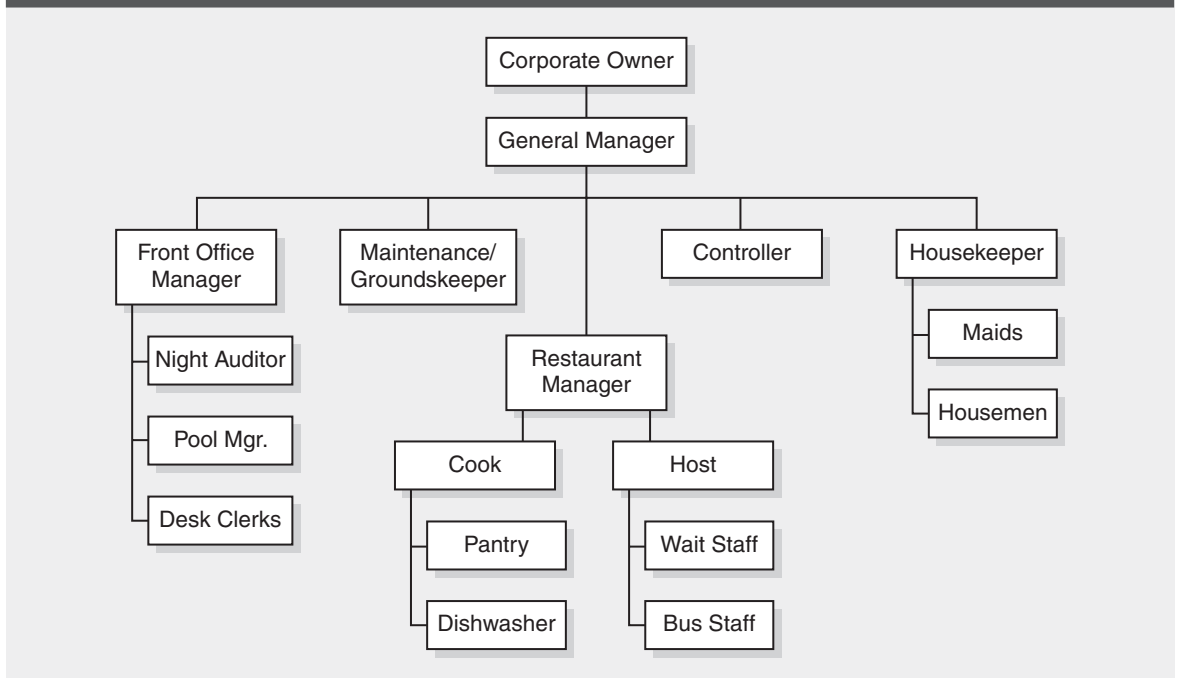


Figure 2-2 outlines the organization of a somewhat smaller lodging property. This hotel features:

- 200 rooms in a commercial property
- Suburban location
- 58 percent occupancy
- 38 percent yield
- \$4 million in revenues
- \$95 average daily rate
- \$55.10 RevPAR
- Full service
- Chain-franchise
- Corporate guests
- Local-community guests
- Dining room
- Lounge
- Outdoor pool
- Referral reservation service

The department heads required include:

- General manager
- Maintenance/groundskeeper
- Front office manager
- Controller
- Restaurant manager
- Housekeeper

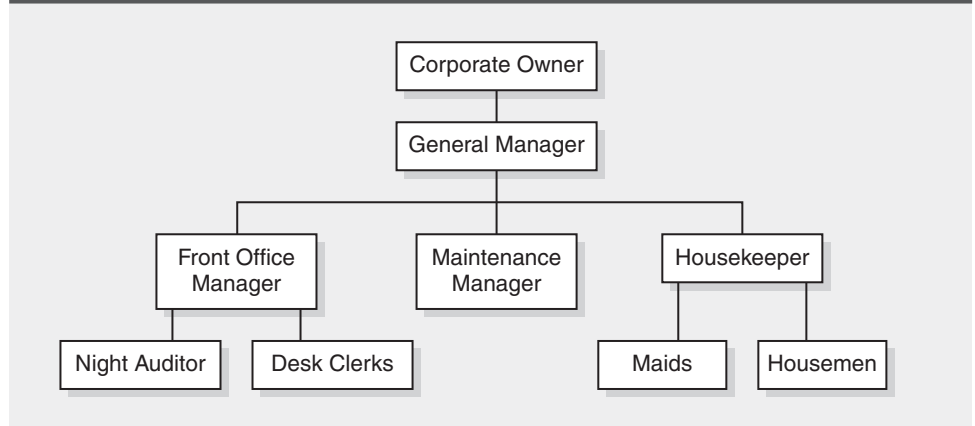
This managerial staff seems skeletal compared to that of a large hotel or resort. This type of organization chart is possible because the level of service provided to guests is reduced. At this property, the guest's stay is one or two nights, and a dining room and lounge are provided for convenience. Many of the department heads are **working supervisors**, which means they participate in the actual work performed while supervising. Laundry and other services are contracted out. The controller provides accounting services as well as human resources management. The maintenance/groundskeeper oversees indoor and outdoor facilities. The front office manager and the clerks take care of reservations as well as registrations, posting, checkout, and the like. The restaurant manager works closely with the cook and hostess in maintaining quality and cost control and guest services. The housekeeper inspects and cleans rooms and maintains linen and cleaning supply inventories as well as providing leadership for the housekeeping staff. Security services are provided by the general manager and outsourced as needed.

Figure 2-3 shows the organization chart of a typical limited-service property, much scaled down from that of a large hotel. The features of the property are:

- 150 rooms in a commercial property
- Highway location
- 60 percent occupancy
- 50 percent yield
- \$40.18 RevPAR
- \$2.2 million in revenues
- \$67 average daily rate
- Limited service
- Chain—franchise
- In-house laundry
- Vacation travelers
- Business travelers
- Complimentary **continental breakfast**—juice, fruit, sweet roll, cereal
- Referral reservation service
- **Business services and communications center**—guest services that include copying, computers and fax



**FIGURE 2-3** The organization chart for a small, limited-service lodging property includes only minimal staffing. Several duties are combined under various positions.



The department heads include:

- General manager
- Front office manager
- Housekeeper
- Maintenance manager

The general manager is a working supervisor in that he or she participates in the actual work performed while supervising at the front desk. The general manager at this type of property assists with marketing plans, reservations, maintenance, and groundskeeping, maintains financial records; and implements cost-control measures. The front office manager works regular shifts to provide coverage along with the night auditor and desk clerks. The housekeeper, also a working supervisor, assists the **room attendants**, employees who clean and maintain guest rooms and public areas.

The organization charts shown here were developed by evaluating the needs of guests. The organization of departments and the subsequent staffing are influenced by the available labor pool, the economic conditions of the region, and the financial goals of the organization. Each organization chart varies depending on the factors influencing a particular lodging establishment. Flexibility is essential in providing service to the guest and leadership to the staff.

## Typical Job Responsibilities of Department Managers

As you begin your career in the lodging industry, you will undoubtedly come in contact with the various department managers in a hotel. Some of the positions seem to be shrouded in mystery, while others are clear. The controller, for example, works behind the scenes, and little about his or her role is obvious. The security director seems to be everywhere in the hotel, but what does this person do, and for what is he or she responsible? The food and beverage director holds a visible position that seems to encompass much. The general manager must be aware of both the forest and the trees, overseeing all operations while staying on top of the small details. How can all of these positions be coordinated to provide hospitality to the guest and profit to the investors?

### General Manager

Several years ago I invited a guest speaker to my class. This person was the general manager of an inn in our community. He was well prepared for the lecture and described the organization chart and staff he had developed. After he explained the work that goes on in the various departments and the responsibilities of the respective supervisors, a student asked, “What do you do as the general manager if all the work is being done by your staff?” This honest question made me terribly aware that the role of the general manager is not easy to understand. Indeed, detailing this managerial role could fill volumes and encompass decades of experience. However, the legitimacy of the question compels me to be specific in describing this essential job in the organization chart.

The leadership provided by the general manager is undoubtedly the most important quality he or she brings to this position. The general manager orchestrates the department directors in their efforts to meet the financial goals of the organization through their employees. The general manager is required to use the full range of managerial skills—planning, decision making, organizing, staffing, controlling, directing, and communicating—to develop a competent staff. Performance is judged according to how effectively supervisors are directed to meet the goals of the organization. Efficiency depends not on how well tasks are performed but on how well employees are motivated and instructed to meet the goals and objectives of the plans the general manager and staff have formulated. Figure 2-4 presents a group of managers, supervisors, and frontline employees who carry out the goals of the general manager.

The plans developed by the general manager along with the department supervisors provide the vision the business needs to compete for the hospitality markets. The evaluation of candidates for positions based on a well-structured division of labor begins the process of meeting the goals and objectives of the planning stage. Who should be chosen to lead operations? What skills and strengths are necessary to get the job done? What degree of business acumen must this person have? What vision should be brought to the job? How will the new hire fit into the existing staff? These are just a few questions that a general manager must consider and act upon.

FIGURE 2-4

The general manager of a hotel is responsible for orchestrating the efforts of managers and employees to produce a financially successful establishment. Photo courtesy of Red Lion Hotels.



The **operational reports**—operational data on critical financial aspects of hotel operations—that a general manager must review can be overwhelming in both quantity and complexity. However, the efficient general manager knows which key operating statistics reflect the profitability and efficiency of operations. Do the food cost percentage, labor cost percentage, alcohol beverage cost percentage, and sales item analysis provide enough information to indicate the success of the food and beverage department? Are the daily occupancy percentage, average daily room rate, and total sales for the day adequate to indicate the hotel's profitability? Each general manager develops key indicators that measure the financial success and operational success of the department directors. These concepts are flexible, depending on the goals the corporate ownership established.

Communicating ideas and goals and providing feedback on performance are skills the general manager must develop. The general manager is a pivotal link in the communication process. Each department director works from communications received (or not received) from the general manager. Weekly staff meetings serve as a major vehicle for sharing information. Individual meetings with department directors additionally support the communication process. At one-on-one meetings, the general manager helps the department director transform organizational goals into operational functions.

The general manager offers practical supervisory training to his or her staff. For example, the director of marketing and sales may have set a goal of increasing guest room sales by 10 percent in the next quarter. At an individual meeting with the general manager, the director of marketing and sales agrees to meet that goal over the next three months.

What does a general manager do? He or she provides leadership to meet organizational goals of profitability and service. Leadership skills are acquired by studying theories of management and the behavior of other managers as well as practicing leadership and receiving constructive criticism from superiors on efforts expended. The job of general manager is a professional position. It is a career goal the achievement of which is based on operations experience and education.

The role of the general manager, whether in a full-service or limited-service property, must encompass the concepts previously discussed. The general manager in a limited-service property may perform additional hands-on responsibilities, but he or she is required to provide leadership to the other members of the management team. The use of **total quality management (TQM)**, or the application of managerial concepts to understanding operational processes and developing methods to improve those processes (described in chapter 11), allows managers in full-service and limited-service properties to extend leadership to front-line supervisors and employees. In full-service and limited-service properties, where profit margins are based on lean departmental budgets, total quality management is encouraged.

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## **Assistant General Manager**

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The **assistant general manager** of a lodging property holds a major responsibility in developing and executing plans developed by the corporate owners, the general manager, and other members of the management staff. The relationship between the general manager and the assistant general manager must be founded on trust, skill, and excellent communication. The assistant general manager works with department directors to meet their respective goals and objectives through efficient operations. Often, he or she is the liaison between management and operations. The more thoroughly the assistant general manager understands the reasons for management decisions, the better able he or she is to communicate plans to the operations supervisors. The assistant general manager is sometimes referred to as the *rooms division manager*. He or she is responsible for the entire front office operations, which includes front desk, housekeeping, bell staff, concierge, and parking garage. The assistant general manager may also be called the *operations manager*.

The assistant general manager often must oversee the beginning of a task and ensure that others complete it. He or she must also complete, review and summarize statistical reports, and share them with the general manager. The assistant general manager is everywhere on the property, checking on operations, providing feedback, and offering assistance as needed. This job requires a wide variety of established operational skills, such as front office, food and beverage, marketing and sales, and accounting. A large property may divide the responsibilities of the assistant general manager between a rooms division manager and an operations division manager.

Limited-service hotels usually do not have an assistant general manager position in their organization chart. The department managers report directly to the general manager to streamline guest services and operational budgets. Again, the general manager of a

limited-service property may perform some hands-on tasks, but he or she is required to provide direct leadership to the other members of the management team.

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## **Food and Beverage Director**

The **food and beverage director** is responsible for the efficient operation of the kitchen, dining rooms, banquet service, room service, and lounge. This includes managing a multitude of details with the supervisors of these outlets. Such details include food quality, sanitation, inventory, cost control, training, room setup, cash control, and guest service, to name a few. The food and beverage director keeps a keen eye on new trends in food and beverage merchandising, cost-control factors in food and beverage preparation, and kitchen utilities. The food and beverage director works closely with the assistant food and beverage director, a highly skilled executive chef, a dining room supervisor, a banquet manager, and a bar manager. This team's goal is to provide high-quality products and services around the clock, every day of the year. Constant supervision of products, employees, and services is essential to ensure a fair return on investment.

Although food and beverages are served at a continental breakfast or cocktail hour at a limited-service property, there is no food and beverage director position; here, the responsibility for serving food and beverages is an extension of the front office manager's duties. However, the same principles of sanitation, food purchasing and storage, marketing, standards of service, and so forth must be followed to provide good service to the guest.

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## **Physical Plant Engineer**

The plant engineer is important in the overall delivery of service to the guest. This person oversees a team of electricians, plumbers, heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning contractors, and general repair personnel to provide behind-the-scenes services to the guests and employees of the lodging property. With today's emphasis on preventive maintenance and energy savings, he or she must develop a plan that will keep the lodging property well maintained within budget targets. Knowledge of current advances in equipment and machinery is essential. This position requires a range of experience in general maintenance and a positive attitude about updating skills and management concepts through continuing education.

The plant engineer interacts with all the departments of the hotel. This person is part of the management team and can be relied on to provide sound advice about structural stability, equipment maintenance, and environmental control. He or she can be one of the most treasured assistants in a lodging business.

A role similar to that of the plant engineer in a limited-service property is that of **maintenance manager**, a staff member who maintains the heating and air-conditioning plant, produces guest room keys, helps housekeeping attendants as required, and assists with safety and security. The limited-service property emphasizes quality in guest service, which is delivered by an efficient staff.

## Executive Housekeeper

The executive housekeeper is responsible for the upkeep of the guest rooms and public areas of the lodging property. This person truly must work through other people to get the job done. Each room attendant must be thoroughly trained in cleaning techniques. Each **floor inspector**, a person who supervises the housekeeping function on a floor of a hotel, and each housekeeping employee must be trained in standard inspection techniques. (Many hotels are moving away from the use of floor inspectors, and are implementing self-inspection systems.) Speed and efficiency are paramount in performing the vital service of maintaining guest rooms and public areas.

Skill in supervising unskilled labor is essential. Survival fluency in foreign languages is important to the executive housekeeper, who must communicate effectively with employees. Accurate scheduling of employees is also necessary to maintain control over labor costs. The executive housekeeper is further responsible for maintaining and controlling an endless inventory of linens, soap, guest amenities, furniture, in-house marketing materials, live and artificial plants, and more. The executive housekeeper, like the plant engineer, must stay abreast of new ideas and techniques through trade journals and continuing education courses.

The executive housekeeper supervises the in-house laundry, if one is present. The equipment, cleaning materials, cost controls, and scheduling are handled in cooperation with the laundry supervisor.

The limited-service property depends on this member of the management team to supervise the staff that provides clean rooms and operates an in-house laundry. This hands-on supervisor works with the staff to provide many behind-the-scenes guest services. The housekeeper travels the elevators of high-rise limited-services properties, stopping at each floor to provide employees with constant supervision and motivation.

Interdepartmental cooperation and communication with the front desk and maintenance department are vital for the executive housekeeper in both full-service and limited-service hotels. The release of cleaned rooms for occupancy and the scheduling of periodic

### INTERNATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



**M**anagers in a hotel have a particular responsibility to prepare their employees to communicate with their guests. This is very important for international guests. Front-line employees can assist an international guest by adopting an attitude of “hospitality without question.” This simple concept encompasses a front-line employee maintaining a watchful eye for guests who appear confused, express difficulty in communicating in the local language, or seem hesitant about responding to inquiries. Training programs with role-playing exercises that focus on visitors who can’t communicate in the local language and employees who have to respond to their inquiries allow front-line employees to practice hospitality without question. This concept can be further advanced when a front office manager maintains an inventory of employees who speak various international languages.

maintenance are only two functions demonstrating why interdepartmental cooperation is critical. In addition, the marketing and sales efforts in hotels depend on the housekeeper to enforce cleanliness and appearance standards in the public areas so guests are attracted to and impressed by the property. More information about the executive housekeeper and that department is detailed in chapter 15 of this textbook.

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## Human Resources Manager

In a full-service lodging property, the luxury of employing a human resources manager is beneficial for everyone. This person is responsible for administering federal, state, and local employment laws as well as advertising for and screening job candidates and interviewing, selecting, orienting, training, and evaluating employees. Each department director can rely on the human resources manager to provide leadership in the administration of complex personnel programs such as implementation of wage and salary laws.

Staffing a hotel involves many time-consuming tasks:

- Writing and placing classified ads
- Screening, interviewing, testing, and selecting candidates
- Orienting, training, and evaluating new employees

The preparation of job descriptions, while perceived by many in the hotel industry as a luxury, is mandatory if the employees are represented by a **collective bargaining unit**—that is, a labor union. The human resources manager can assist in preparing the job analysis and subsequent job description. This process helps him or her develop realistic job specifications.

The development of employees by providing a plan for the growth of each takes a great deal of planning and evaluating. Each department director works under pressure to meet budget guidelines, quality control levels, sales quotas, and other goals. The human resources manager can assist each director in making plans to motivate employees, to develop career projections for them, to provide realistic pay increases, and to establish employment policies that reflect positively on the employer.

Limited-service properties do not employ a human resources manager but rather divide the responsibilities among department heads. Although the emphasis remains on well-planned and competently delivered human resources activities, the streamlined limited-service property relies on interdepartmental cooperation to accomplish its objectives.

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## Marketing and Sales Director

In the title of this position, the marketing function is emphasized. The person in this position plays an essential role in all departments of the hotel. An effective director of marketing and sales not only wants to attract external sales such as conventions, small business conferences, wedding receptions, and dining room and lounge business but also provides direction for promoting in-house sales to the guests.

This is an exciting position that requires endless creativity. The director of marketing and sales is constantly evaluating new markets, reviewing the needs of existing markets, watching new promotions by the competition, organizing sales blitzes, working with community and professional groups to maintain public relations, working with other department directors to establish product and service specifications and in-house promotional efforts, and following up on details, details, and more details. This is a high-energy position that not only provides financial vitality but also fosters the attainment of financial goals by all departments.

Some limited-service properties employ a full-time or half-time marketing and sales director. The duties of this position may also be shared by the general manager and front office manager; these duties (with the exception of soliciting food and beverage business) are the same as those of the marketing and sales director. Competition for room sales to the corporate, group, and pleasure travel markets is enormous, and each hotel must address this planning need.

## Front Office Manager

The role of the front office manager is detailed more completely later in this chapter. In short, however, the major responsibilities of the front office manager include reviewing the final draft of the **night audit**, a daily review of the financial accounting procedures at the front desk and other guest service areas during the previous 24-hour period and an analysis of operating results; operating and monitoring the reservation system; developing and operating an effective communication system with front office staff and other department directors; supervising daily registrations and checkouts; overseeing and developing employees; establishing in-house sales programs at the front desk; preparing budgets and cost-control systems; forecasting room sales; and maintaining business relationships with regular corporate and community leaders. The front office manager works with an assistant front office manager, a night auditor, a reservations manager, and a bell captain to tend to the details of running an efficient department.

These are just a few of the responsibilities of the front office manager. The front office is a pivotal point in communication among in-house sales, delivery of service to the guest, and financial operations. The position requires an individual who can manage the many details of guest needs, employee supervision, interdepartmental communication, and

### FRONTLINE REALITIES



**A** future guest has called the hotel and wants to arrange a small dinner party for his guests on the first day of his visit. The marketing and sales office is closed for the day, and the banquet manager has left the property for a few hours. What would you suggest the front desk clerk do to assist this future guest?



transmittal of financial information. The person who holds this exciting position can develop an overview of the lodging property with regard to finances and communication.

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## **Controller**

The controller is the internal accountant of a hotel. He or she is responsible for the actual and effective administration of financial data produced daily in the hotel. In the lodging property, appropriate daily financial information must be available to corporate owners, management, and guests. This requires a well-organized staff, not only to prepare operating statistics but also to assist the general manager in determining the effectiveness of each department manager. Often the general manager relies on the controller for financial insight into the operations of the property, including cash flow, discounts, evaluation of insurance costs, fringe-benefit cost analysis, investment opportunities, computer technology applications, banking procedures, and more.

The controller's department processes **accounts payable** (amounts of money the hotel owes to vendors); **accounts receivable** (amounts of money owed to the hotel by guests); the **general ledger** (a collection of accounts the controller uses to organize the financial activities of the hotel); **statement of cash flows** (a projection of income from income-generating areas of the hotel); the **profit-and-loss statement** (a listing of revenues and expenses for a certain time period); and the **balance sheet** (a listing of the financial position of the hotel at a particular point in time). This busy department provides financial information to all department directors.

The general manager of a limited-service property acts as the controller with the assistance of the night auditor. (In some properties, the night audit is performed during the day, and the night auditor is replaced with a lower-salaried front desk clerk for late-night coverage.) The ownership of a limited-service hotel may be a part of a larger financial portfolio of a business, which helps the general manager perform the controller's responsibilities by processing accounts payable, accounts receivable, and payroll.

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## **Director of Security**

The **director of security** works with department directors to develop cost-control procedures that help ensure employee honesty and guest safety. This person supervises an ongoing training program in cooperation with department directors to instruct employees in fire, job, and environmental safety procedures. Fictional stories often depict the security director as someone who investigates crimes after the fact. On the contrary, this person's primary responsibility is to implement programs that make employees security-minded, helping prevent crime from occurring.

Unfortunately, the lodging industry has always been involved in lawsuits, which have multiplied in both number and cost in recent years. A substantial body of law provides regulations under which properties must operate. Preventive security precautions are the central theme of the security department today. The director of security's background is usually in police or detective work or in security or intelligence in the armed services. He

or she usually has an understanding of the criminal mind and the practices of criminals. This person is constantly on the lookout for suspicious people and circumstances. The responsibilities of this necessary position in a limited-service property are shared by the front office manager and the general manager. Security services for on-site and parking-lot patrol are often outsourced, but this practice does not relieve the general manager of the need to develop and provide ongoing procedures to train employees to become security-minded. More information about the director of security is explained in chapter 14 of this textbook.

## **Parking Garage Manager**

The responsibility of ensuring a safe environment for guests' vehicles falls to the **parking garage manager**. This person supervises the work of garage attendants and maintains the security of guests and cars in the parking garage. Garage maintenance, in cooperation with the engineering and housekeeping departments, is another responsibility of this position. Often a hotel rents parking spaces to local businesses and professional people, and the associated accounting process involves accurate billing and recording of funds and subsequent deposits. The parking garage manager also has to develop budgets and recruit and train employees. He or she often provides driver assistance to guests when their cars break down and directional information to departing guests. Even though these

### HOSPITALITY PROFILE



**E**ric O. Long, general manager of the Waldorf=Astoria in New York City, has been employed by Hilton Corporation for 30 years. He has served in various management positions at the Hilton Short Hills, Chicago Hilton and Towers, Hilton Walt Disney Village, Fontainebleau Hilton Resort, and the Palmer House.

His well-thought-out career with Hilton allowed him to develop a strong network of relationships and vital experience to prepare him for the position he holds today. Mr. Long indicates that there are four major areas of responsibility in his job: finance, marketing, customer service, and human resources management. Although other employees carry out the day-to-day administration of those departments, he feels he is ultimately responsible for their success. For example, he wants to ensure that a

marketing and sales plan is current and operating, and he attends an 8:00 A.M. customer feedback meeting each day to review feedback on the previous day's efforts to provide high-quality service. He adds that he wants to ensure that the level of talent in the organization is nurtured through motivation, training, development, and so forth.

Early in Mr. Long's career, his mentor encouraged him to gain expertise in any three areas of the hotel and a solid working knowledge of all the others. He feels that achieving this has been an overriding factor in his career progression. He encourages future hoteliers "to take complete ownership and responsibility for your own career. Don't take promotions just for the sake of the promotion; be selective of the moves that you make. Each move should be weighed against the potential that it will have in growing your career."

jobs may seem small in the overall operation of a lodging property, they build a strong foundation in providing service to the guest.

## Organization of the Front Office Department

### Typical Front Office Organization

The organization chart in Figure 2-5 depicts a typical organization of staff for a front office manager. The staff includes desk clerk, cashier, reservations manager, concierge, night auditor, telephone operator, bell staff, room key clerk, and elevator operator. Not all of these positions are found in every lodging establishment. In some operations, the front desk clerk acts as desk clerk, cashier, telephone operator, and reservations clerk, as required by the volume of business. Many large, full-service hotels, in contrast, employ the complete staff as listed.

Staffing the front desk positions incurs a cost. The front office manager, in consultation with the general manager, usually prepares a personnel budget related to salary levels throughout the lodging establishment.

The responsibilities of the front office staff are quite varied. The position of the **desk clerk** can encompass many duties, which typically include verifying guest reservations,

**FIGURE 2-5** This organization chart lists positions found in a front office.



registering guests, assigning rooms, distributing keys, communicating with the house-keeping staff, answering telephones, providing information about and directions to local attractions, accepting cash and giving change, and acting as liaison between the lodging establishment and the guest as well as the community.

The position of **cashier** includes processing guest checkouts and guest legal tender and providing change for guests. This position is found in a number of lodging establishments, and it helps make the front desk workload manageable when a **full house**, a hotel that has its entire guest rooms occupied (sometimes referred to as *100 percent occupancy*) is checking out. Given the possibility that every attendee of a 400-guest convention could check out within a few hours, this division of labor is a well-planned concept. Even with the best-planned systems—such as **express checkout**, whereby the guest uses computer technology in a guest room or a computer in the hotel lobby to check out; **prior approved credit**, the use of a credit card to establish creditworthiness; or **bill-to-account**, an internal billing process—the lines at the cashier station can be long and seem longer when a guest is in a hurry.

The **reservations manager** can be found in many of the larger lodging establishments. This person is responsible for taking incoming requests for rooms and noting special requests for service. The particulars of this position are endless, aimed at providing the guest with requested information and services as well as accurate confirmation of these items. The reservations manager is responsible for keeping an accurate room inventory by using a reservation module of a property management system. This person must communicate effectively with the marketing and sales department. Peak as well as slow periods of sales must be addressed with adequate planning.

The **night auditor** balances the daily financial transactions. This person may also serve as desk clerk for the night shift (11:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M.). He or she must have a good grasp of accounting principles and the ability to resolve financial discrepancies. This position requires experience as a desk clerk and good communications with the controller.

The **telephone operator** has a very important job in the lodging establishment. This person must be able to locate the registered guests and management staff at a moment's notice. He or she also must be able to deal with crises up to and including life-threatening emergencies. With the introduction of **call accounting**, a computer technology application that tracks guest phone calls and posts billing charges to lodging establishments, the telephone operator's job has been simplified, as the tracking of telephone charges to registered guests can now be done with ease. This person may also assist the desk clerk and cashier when necessary.

The **bell captain**, with a staff of bellhops and door attendants, is a mainstay in the lodging establishment. The **bell staff** starts where the computerized property management system stops. They are the people who lift and tote the baggage, familiarize the guest with his or her new surroundings, run errands, deliver supplies, and provide the guest with information on in-house marketing efforts and local attractions. These people also act as the hospitality link between the lodging establishment and the guest. They are an asset to a well-run lodging establishment.

The **key clerk** can be found in very large, full-service hotels that do not have electronic key systems. This clerk is responsible for issuing keys to registered guests and for related

FIGURE 2-6

The concierge provides information on tourist attractions and entertainment in the area to hotel guests. Photo courtesy of Wyndham Reading Hotel, Reading, Pennsylvania.



security measures. Often he or she sorts incoming mail for registered guests and the management staff. This position is now obsolete in most hotels.

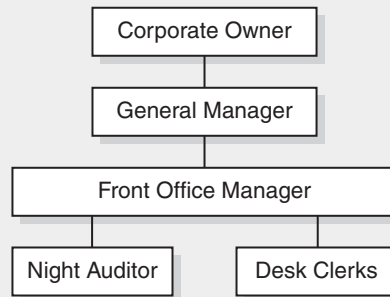
The **elevator operator**, a person who manually operates the mechanical controls of the elevator, is almost extinct in the lodging establishment, replaced by self-operated elevators and escalators. Some elevator operators now serve as **traffic managers**, who direct hotel guests to available elevators in the lobby. In large, full-service hotels, the traffic manager can be a welcome sight; the confusion of check-ins and checkouts can be lessened when he or she is on duty.

The **concierge** (Figure 2-6) provides guests with extensive information on entertainment, sports, amusements, transportation, tours, church services, and baby sitting in the area. He or she must know the area intimately and be able to meet the individual needs of each guest. This person also obtains theater tickets and makes reservations in restaurants. In most cases, the concierge is stationed at a desk in the lobby of the lodging property.

### **Limited-Service Hotel Front Office Organization**

The organization chart in Figure 2-7 portrays a simpler workforce than that seen with a full-service property. The desk clerks perform multiple duties such as reservations and registrations, and they act as cashiers, telephone operators, and so forth. Whatever guest need is presented, the front desk clerk is called on to meet it with efficiency and professionalism. In limited-service properties, the general manager may also assist, when needed, to process reservation requests, check guests in upon arrival, and check guests out upon departure.

**FIGURE 2-7** The front office staff in a limited-service hotel includes a minimal number of employees.



The night auditor's role in a limited-service property is unlike that of his or her counterpart in a full-service hotel. Because there are usually no departmental transactions from restaurants, banquets, lounges, gift shops, or spas, the night auditor is mainly concerned with posting room and tax charges and preparing statistics for the hotel. With the utilization of computer technology, the completion of the night audit has been reduced to a minimum of time. As previously mentioned, this task may be performed early in the morning prior to guest checkouts.

## Function of the Front Office Manager

A successful front office manager conveys the spirit of a particular lodging property to the customer. By applying management principles, he or she works through the front office staff to communicate feelings of warmth, caring, safety, and efficiency to each guest. The front office manager must train personnel in the technical aspects of the **property management system (PMS)**, a hotel computer system that networks the software and hardware used in reservation and registration databases, point-of-sale systems, accounting systems, and other office software. He or she also must maintain the delicate balance between delivery of hospitality and service and promotion of the profit centers, and maintain the details of the communication system.

The front office manager has at his or her disposal the basic elements of effective management practice: employees, equipment, inventory (rooms to be sold), a budget, and sales opportunities. This manager is responsible for coordinating these basic elements to achieve the profit goals of the lodging property.

Front office employees must be trained properly to function within the guidelines and policies of the lodging establishment. The front office manager cannot assume that an

employee knows how to do certain tasks. Every employee needs instructions and guidance in how to provide hospitality; front office employees' attitudes are of utmost importance to the industry. To ensure that the proper attitude prevails, employers must provide an atmosphere in which employees are motivated to excel and that nurtures their morale and teamwork.

The property management system gives the front office manager an unlimited opportunity for managerial control. He or she can easily track information such as Zip codes of visitors, frequency of visits by corporate guests, and amount of revenue a particular conference generated, and pass this information on to the marketing and sales department.

An unsold guest room is a sales opportunity lost forever. This is one of the major challenges of the front office manager. Cooperation between the marketing and sales department and the front office is necessary to develop profitable advertising and point-of-sale strategies. The subsequent training of front office personnel to seize every opportunity to sell vacant rooms helps ensure that the financial goals of the lodging property are met.

Budgetary guidelines must be developed by the front office manager and the general manager, as the front office manager does have a large dollar volume under his or her control. The budgeting of money for payroll and supplies, the opportunity for improving daily sales, and accurate recording of guest charges require the front office manager to apply managerial skills.

The foremost concept that characterizes a front office manager is *team player*. The front office manager does not labor alone to meet the profit goals of the lodging property. The general manager sets the goals, objectives, and standards for all departments to follow. The assistant manager offers the department heads additional insight into meeting the operational needs of the establishment. The controller supplies valuable accounting information to the front office manager as feedback on current performance and meeting budgetary goals. The food and beverage manager, housekeeper, and plant engineer provide essential services to the guest. Without cooperation and communication among these departments and the front office, hospitality cannot be delivered. The director of marketing and sales develops programs to attract guests to the lodging property. These programs help the front office manager sell rooms. The human resources manager completes the team by providing the front office with competent personnel to accomplish the goals, objectives, and standards set by the general manager.

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## **Job Analysis and Job Description**

A **job analysis**, a detailed listing of the tasks of a job, provides the basis for a sound job description. A **job description** is a listing of required duties to be performed by an employee in a particular position. Although almost nothing is typical in the lodging industry, certain daily tasks must be performed. A job analysis is useful in that it allows the person preparing the job description to determine certain daily procedures. These procedures, along with typical responsibilities and interdepartmental relationships involved in a job, form the basis for the job description. The future professional will find this management tool helpful in preparing orientation and training programs for employees. It

also helps the human resources department ensure that each new hire is given every opportunity to succeed.

The following is the job analysis of a typical front office manager:

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 7:00 A.M.  | Meets with the night auditor to discuss the activities of the previous night. Notes any discrepancies in balancing the night audit.  |
| 7:30       | Meets with the reservation clerk to note the incoming reservations for the day.  |
| 8:00       | Greets the first-shift desk clerks and passes along any information from the night auditor and reservation office. Assists desk clerks in guest checkout.  |
| 8:30       | Meets with the housekeeper to identify potential problem areas of which the front office staff should be aware. Meets with the plant engineer to identify potential problem areas of which the front office staff should be aware.                                       |
| 9:00       | Meets with the director of marketing and sales to discuss ideas for potential programs to increase sales. Discusses with the banquet manager details of groups that will be in-house for banquets and city ledger accounts that have left requests for billing disputes. |
| 9:30       | Checks with the chef to learn daily specials for the various restaurants. This information will be typed and distributed to the telephone operators.   |
| 9:45       | Meets with the front office staff to discuss pertinent operational information for the day. Handles guest billing disputes.  |
| 11:00      | Meets with the general manager to discuss the development of the next fiscal budget.   |
| 12:30 P.M. | Works on forecasting sheet for the coming week. Prepares preliminary schedule and anticipated payroll.   |
| 1:30       | Has a lunch appointment with a corporate business client.  |
| 2:15       | Works on <b>room blocking</b> —reserving rooms for guests who are holding reservations—for group reservations with the reservations clerk.   |
| 2:30       | Works with the controller on budgetary targets for the next month. Receives feedback on budget targets from last month. Checks with the housekeeper on progress of room inspection and release.  |
| 2:45       | Checks with the plant engineer on progress of plumbing repair for the eighteenth floor.  |
| 3:00       | Greets the second-shift desk clerks and relays operational information on reservations, room assignments, room inventory, and the like.  |
| 3:15       | Assists the front desk clerks in checking in a tour group.   |
| 4:00       | Interviews two people for front desk clerk positions.  |



4:45	Assists the front desk clerks in checking in guests.
5:15	Reviews trade journal article on empowerment of employees.
5:45	Telephones the night auditor and communicates current information pertinent to tonight's audit.
6:00	Checks with the director of security for information concerning security coverage for the art exhibit in the ballroom.
6:30	Completes work order request forms for preventive maintenance on the front office posting machine.
6:45	Prepares "things to do" schedule for tomorrow.

This job analysis reveals that the front office manager has a busy schedule involving hands-on participation with the front office staff and communication with department heads throughout the lodging establishment. The front office manager must be able to project incomes and related expenses, to interview, and to interact with potential business clients.

Based on this job analysis, a job description for a front office manager is easily prepared, as shown in Figure 2-8. The job description is an effective management tool because it details the tasks and responsibilities required of the job-holder. These guidelines allow the individual to apply management principles in the development of an effective front office department. They also challenge the person in the job to use prior experience and theoretical knowledge to accomplish the tasks at hand.

## The Art of Supervising

The art of supervising employees encompasses volumes of text and years of experience. Management experts have analyzed the complexities of supervising employees. Some of your other management courses explain in detail the concept of management. This chapter covers a few concepts that will assist you in developing your own supervisory style.

The first step in developing a supervisory style is to examine the manager's position in the context of the management team. As the front office manager, you are assigned certain responsibilities and granted certain authorities. These are areas for participation, growth, and limitation on the management team. Although this is a simplified overview of the management team, it does help clarify managerial intended performance. Early in the new job, a manager should review personal career goals with this organization. The ports of entry to the position of general manager (described in chapter 1) will help an aspiring general manager clarify goals and understand which areas of the hotel will provide good exposure and experience. Once you have clarified your arena of participation and plan for growth, you can decide how best to lead a team to financial success and personal growth.

The first concept a new supervisor should address is employee motivation. What helps each employee perform at his or her best? The emphasis is on *each* employee; different incentives motivate different people. The better shift scheduling that motivates the

**FIGURE 2-8** The job description is based on the job analysis of a front office manager.**JOB DESCRIPTION**Title: *Front Office Manager*Reports to: *General Manager***Typical duties:**

1. Reviews final draft of night audit.
2. Operates and monitors reservation system for guest room rentals.
3. Develops and operates an effective communication system with front office staff.
4. Supervises daily operation of front office staff—reservations, registrations, and checkouts.
5. Participates with all department heads in an effective communications system facilitating the provision of guest services.
6. Plans and participates in the delivery of marketing programs for the sale of rooms and other hotel products and services.
7. Interfaces with various department heads and controller regarding billing disputes involving guests.
8. Develops final draft of budget for front office staff.
9. Prepares forecast of room sales for upcoming week, month, or other period as required.
10. Maintains business relationships with various corporate community leaders.
11. Oversees the personnel management for the front office department.
12. Performs these and other duties as required.

**Review cycle:**

1 month \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

3 months \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

6 months \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

1 year \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

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second-shift desk clerk may have no effect on the part-time night auditor who is a **moonlighter**, a person who has a full-time job at another organization and a part-time job at a hotel, two days a week on your property. The young person who prefers the second shift (3:00–11:00 P.M.) because it better fits his or her lifestyle will not be inspired by the possibility of working the first shift. Tuition reimbursement may motivate the recent graduate of an associate degree program who wants to continue toward a four-year degree; this

same benefit will mean little to someone uninterested in higher education. The possibility of promotion to reservations clerk may not have the same motivating effect on a telephone operator who is a recently displaced worker concerned about a schedule that meets the needs of a young family as it does on a front desk clerk who has no dependents. Sometimes a supervisor cannot figure out what motivates a person. It is a manager's ultimate challenge to discover how to motivate each member of his or her staff. By using this knowledge, a manager can promote not just the best interests of the employee but also the best interests of the hotel.

Another supervisory responsibility is to achieve a balance among varying personalities in a group work setting. This is a constant and evolving situation. Very often, a new supervisor does not have time to assess each employee's relationship with others on the team, yet these dynamics are key to establishing a positive and effective team setting. The front office staff may jockey for position with the new boss; this common situation must be addressed as part of the job. Once the new supervisor shows himself or herself capable and competent, the supervisor can move on to the day-to-day tasks. The staff needs this time to learn their new manager's reactions under stress. They also want to make sure their supervisor will be their advocate with top management. All new supervisors are tested in this way. You should not be discouraged by this challenge but embrace it as the first of many to come.

After working out whatever personality clashes exist among the employees, the manager must be objective about the strengths and weaknesses of the staff. Who is the unofficial leader of the group? Who is the agitator? Who is the complainer? Objective views of staff are probably shared by the rest of the team. Often, the staff members are quite aware of the shortcomings of their coworkers. They also know on whom they can rely to check out the full house and check in the convention three hours later. The unofficial leader of the group can assist the supervisor in conveying important ideas.

Some supervisors respond negatively to such accommodation of the staff. Their response is based on the assumption that the supervisor has the first and last word in all that goes on in the front office. Of course, authority is important, but any supervisor who wants to maintain authority and have objectives met by the staff must constantly rework his or her strategy.

Adequate personnel training (discussed in chapter 12) makes the job of a supervisor much easier. When training is planned, executed, and reinforced, the little annoyances of human error are minimized. As previously discussed, each job description lists the major duties of the employees, but the gray areas—handling complaints, delivering a positive image of the lodging property, selling other departments in the hotel, and covering for a new trainee—cannot be communicated in a job description. **On-the-job training**, employee training that takes place while producing a product or service, and videotape training are excellent methods for clarifying such tasks. These methods serve not only to demonstrate skills but also to communicate the financial goals, the objectives of hospitality and service, and the idiosyncrasies of the lodging property and the people who work in it.

Employees always have special scheduling needs as well as other job-related requests, and supervisors should try to accommodate them. The new hire who made commitments

four to six months prior to accepting a position at the front desk will appreciate and return a supervisor's consideration. The individual who wants to change shifts because of difficulties with another person on the job may just need advice on how to handle that person. These individuals may make a good team, but they wear on each other's patience. A longtime employee might ask you how he or she can advance in the organization. You may not have an immediate response, but you can indicate that you will act on the request in the near future. Sometimes employees know that a good thing takes time to develop. Listen to their needs; their requests may answer your problems by fitting into the demands of the job. For example, a desk clerk who needs additional income may request overtime hours. An opportunity may arise for this employee to fill a vacancy caused by another employee's illness or vacation.

The responsibility of communications within the hotel usually rests with the front office. From the guests' perspective, this department is the most visible part of the lodging establishment. The various departments in the hotel realize that the transfer of information to guests is best done through the front office. When such communications fail to reach guests, it is often the front office that bears the brunt of their unhappiness at checkout time.

The more systematic the communication process can become, the better for all concerned. For example, messages that will affect the next shift of desk clerks can be recorded in the **message book**, a loose-leaf binder in which the front desk staff of any shift can record important messages. This communication tool is vital to keeping all front office personnel informed of additions, changes, and deletions of information and activities that affect the operation of a front office. Additionally, **daily function sheets**, which list the planned events in the hotel and their updates, must be delivered to the front office on a routine basis. The daily function board or electronic bulletin board in guest rooms available on in-room television or in public areas is usually maintained by the front office. The guest who complains about the maintenance of a room must have the complaint passed along to the right person. The complaint is then reviewed by a member of the staff, front office manager, member of the housekeeping staff, housekeeper, member of the maintenance staff, or maintenance director to ensure it is resolved.

Inquiries about hotel services, reservations, **city ledger accounts** (a collection of accounts receivable of nonregistered guests who use the services of the hotel), accounts payable, scheduled events, and messages for registered guests constitute only some of the many requests for information. Desk clerks and telephone operators are expected to know the answers to these questions or to whom they should be referred.

Some of this advice is based on my own experience. One of the jobs I was responsible for as a front desk clerk included operating the switchboard. This job was truly stressful, involving accuracy at every contact. Finding the right department head to meet the request of an incoming caller or ensuring that a message is passed along to a guest are only some of the tasks required every minute a person is on the job. If a message is conveyed inaccurately or if an employee fails to complete the communication process, hospitality is not projected to the guest.

Ways of applying employee empowerment concepts are explored in chapter 12. The contemporary front office manager needs extensive training and experience in this vital

area to manage a workforce that can deliver hospitality on a daily basis. Ensuring that an employee can conduct business without constant approval from a supervisor is the goal of empowerment. The mastery of empowerment requires a supervisor to train employees and to practice much patience. Employees accustomed to direct supervision on all matters may not readily adapt to a work environment that requires independent thinking to address challenges.

## Staffing the Front Office

The schedule for the front office staff is based on both budgetary targets and anticipation of guest check-ins and checkouts. An increase in the frequency of guest requests for information and various front office services may affect the schedule. The front office manager must also determine labor costs by reviewing salaries and hourly wages and respective rates. The resulting figures show if the front office manager has adhered to the projected budget. Table 2-1 (pages 66–67) shows how the costs for staffing are determined. Table 2-2 (page 68) compares these projected costs with the projected revenue generated by room rentals, which allows for a preevaluation of income and labor expenses.

The preparation of the front office schedule is broken into four steps. The first step requires the front office manager to estimate or forecast the needs of his or her department for a certain period. The front office manager must review the sales history of previous events, current functions, current reservations, anticipated walk-ins, stayovers, and check-outs for that period to determine their impact on the labor requirements for the workweek. As you can see from the listing of personnel in Step 1 (Table 2-1), all job categories are included so the front office manager can determine how each job will be affected.

Step 2 (Table 2-1), developing the schedule, is a twofold process that requires meeting both the needs of the lodging establishment and the needs of employees. The lodging establishment must deliver hospitality to the guest by remaining open 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Also, employees have personal requests for time-off as well as needs for working around family responsibilities and financial needs for more or less working hours.

Step 3 (Table 2-1), calculating the anticipated payroll, requires the front office manager to go back and price out each category of employee. This allows the front office manager to determine how much money he or she has spent against the predicted income sales.

Step 4 (Table 2-1), summary of costs by category, provides a grouping of costs by category for each subdepartment in the front office. This total payroll figure is needed to compare projected income for weekly room sales and weekly payroll.

Table 2-2, Comparison of Projected Income from Weekly Room Sales and Projected Weekly Payroll, allows the front office manager, general manager, and controller to anticipate financial performance in a hotel for a certain time frame. As you can see,

**TABLE 2-1 Front Office Scheduling Process**

**Step 1. Estimate Needs (Review Front Office Forecast First)**

	10/1	10/2	10/3	10/4	10/5	10/6	10/7
Desk Clerks							
Night Auditors							
Cashiers							
Concierges							
Telephone Operators							
Bell Captain							
Bellhops							

**Step 2. Develop Schedule**

	10/1	10/2	10/3	10/4	10/5	10/6	10/7
Desk 1	7-3	7-3	7-3	7-3	X	X	7-3
Desk 2	9-5	X	9-2	10-6	X	7-3	9-Noon
Desk 3	3-11	3-11	3-11	3-11	3-11	X	X
Desk 4	X	X	X	3-7	7-3	3-11	3-11
Aud. 1	11-7	11-7	11-7	X	X	11-7	11-7
Aud. 2	X	X	X	11-7	11-7	X	X
Cash.	8-Noon	X	9-2	9-Noon	X	X	11-3
Concierge 1	Noon-8	Noon-8	Noon-8	Noon-5	Noon-5	X	X
Concierge 2	X	X	X	X	X	Noon-5	Noon-8
Tel. 1	7-3	X	X	7-3	7-3	7-3	7-3
Tel. 2	3-11	3-11	3-11	X	X	3-11	3-11
Tel. 3	X	7-3	7-3	3-11	3-11	X	X
Bell Capt.	7-3	7-3	7-3	7-3	X	7-3	X
Hop 1	9-5	X	X	10-6	7-3	3-11	7-3
Hop 2	3-11	X	3-11	3-11	3-11	X	3-11
Hop 3	X	3-11	8-2	X	X	X	11-5

### Step 3. Calculate Anticipated Payroll

	10/1	10/2	10/3	10/4	10/5	10/6	10/7
<b>Category: Desk Clerk = \$1,300.00</b>							
8 hrs. @ \$ 9.50 = \$ 76.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.50 = \$ 76.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.50 = \$ 76.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.50 = \$ 76.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.50 = \$ 76.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.50 = \$ 76.00
8 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 88.00	8 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 88.00	8 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 88.00	8 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 88.00	8 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 88.00	8 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 88.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00
8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	5 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 40.00	5 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 40.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	4 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 32.00	3 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 24.00	3 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 24.00	3 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 24.00
	<u>\$228.00</u>	<u>\$204.00</u>	<u>\$204.00</u>	<u>\$260.00</u>	<u>\$152.00</u>	<u>\$128.00</u>	<u>\$164.00</u>
<b>Category: Night Auditor = \$704.00</b>							
8 hrs. @ \$13.00 = \$104.00	8 hrs. @ \$13.00 = \$104.00	8 hrs. @ \$13.00 = \$104.00	8 hrs. @ \$11.50 = \$ 92.00	8 hrs. @ \$11.50 = \$ 92.00	8 hrs. @ \$13.00 = \$104.00	8 hrs. @ \$13.00 = \$104.00	8 hrs. @ \$13.00 = \$104.00
	<u>\$104.00</u>	<u>\$104.00</u>	<u>\$104.00</u>	<u>\$ 92.00</u>	<u>\$ 92.00</u>	<u>\$104.00</u>	<u>\$104.00</u>
<b>Category: Cashier = \$128.00</b>							
4 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 32.00	0 hrs. @ \$ 0.00 = \$ 0.00	5 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 40.00	3 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 24.00	0 hrs. @ \$ 0.00 = \$ 0.00	0 hrs. @ \$ 0.00 = \$ 0.00	0 hrs. @ \$ 0.00 = \$ 0.00	4 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 32.00
	<u>\$ 32.00</u>	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	<u>\$ 40.00</u>	<u>\$ 24.00</u>	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	<u>\$ 32.00</u>
<b>Category: Concierge = \$501.00</b>							
8 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 88.00	8 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 88.00	8 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 88.00	5 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 55.00	5 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 55.00	5 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 55.00	5 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 55.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.00 = \$ 72.00
	<u>\$ 88.00</u>	<u>\$ 88.00</u>	<u>\$ 88.00</u>	<u>\$ 55.00</u>	<u>\$ 55.00</u>	<u>\$ 55.00</u>	<u>\$ 72.00</u>
<b>Category: Telephone Operator = \$920.00</b>							
8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.00 = \$ 72.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00
8 hrs. @ \$ 9.00 = \$ 72.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.00 = \$ 72.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.00 = \$ 72.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.00 = \$ 72.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.00 = \$ 72.00
	<u>\$136.00</u>	<u>\$132.00</u>	<u>\$132.00</u>	<u>\$124.00</u>	<u>\$124.00</u>	<u>\$136.00</u>	<u>\$136.00</u>
<b>Category: Bell Staff = \$720.00</b>							
8 hrs. @ \$ 7.00 = \$ 56.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.00 = \$ 56.00	6 hrs. @ \$ 7.00 = \$ 42.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.00 = \$ 56.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.00 = \$ 56.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.00 = \$ 56.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.00 = \$ 56.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.00 = \$ 56.00
8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00		8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00
	<u>\$116.00</u>	<u>\$ 56.00</u>	<u>\$102.00</u>	<u>\$116.00</u>	<u>\$116.00</u>	<u>\$ 56.00</u>	<u>\$158.00</u>
<b>Category: Salaries—Front Office = \$1,757.00</b>							
Front Office Manager: \$807/wk.      Reservations Manager: \$575/wk.      Bell Captain: \$375/wk.							

### Step 4. Summary

Desk Clerks	\$1,300.00
Night Auditors	704.00
Cashiers	128.00
Concierges	501.00
Telephone Operators	920.00
Bell Staff	720.00
Salaries	1,757.00
Subtotal	\$6,030.00
Taxes/Fringe benefits	x .27
	= \$1,628.10
	+ 6,030.00
Total Projected Payroll for Week	\$7,658.10

**TABLE 2-2 Comparison of Projected Income from Weekly Room Sales and Projected Weekly Payroll**

	10/1	10/2	10/3	10/4	10/5	10/6	10/7
Yesterday's sales	135	97	144	147	197	210	213
Departures	<u>-125</u>	<u>-10</u>	<u>-72</u>	<u>-75</u>	<u>-5</u>	<u>-15</u>	<u>-125</u>
Stayovers	10	87	72	72	192	195	88
Arrivals	+72	+40	+50	+125	+10	+15	35+
Walk-ins	+20	+20	+30	+10	+10	+5	+50
No-shows	<u>-5</u>	<u>-3</u>	<u>-5</u>	<u>-10</u>	<u>-2</u>	<u>-2</u>	<u>-3</u>
Number Sold	97	144	147	197	210	213	170
Total rooms sold (sum of number sold each day) 1,178							
Income from rooms sold (at average daily rate of \$75.00) \$88,350.00							
Projected payroll budget (from weekly estimate, Table 2-1) \$ 7,658.10							
Percentage of income required for payroll ( $[\text{payroll} \times 100] \div \text{income}$ ) 8.66%							

room sales are tracked from Yesterday, Departures, and Stayovers, while Arrivals, Walk-ins and No-shows are projected.

The information in Table 2-2 allows the front office manager to be more effective. He or she has the opportunity to review and thus adjust data for departures, stayovers, arrivals, and walk-ins, which affects the number of rooms sold each night. For example, if the front office manager realizes that on a certain day at 6:30 P.M. there are 25 vacant rooms and no more confirmed or guaranteed reservations are being held, desk clerks can be empowered to negotiate a reasonable room rate with guests to obtain their business (in order to secure a full house). If there were three vacant rooms and eight guaranteed reservations being held, desk clerks would not be so empowered.

## Solution to Opening Dilemma

Communication in a hotel is essential to efficiency, delivery of high-quality service, and making a profit. In this case, the front office staff failed to place a room block in the computer system for the additional 26 rooms. Does this happen frequently in the hotel business? Unfortunately, it does. However, the delivery of high-quality service is dependent on the upkeep of a hotel's physical property, and this is an important operational procedure. The front office manager and the director of housekeeping must cooperate in setting up times for taking guest rooms out of available inventory. The front office manager must be made aware of the costs involved in contracted services and work in partnership with the director of housekeeping.



## Chapter Recap

This chapter outlined the organizational structure of lodging properties and typical job responsibilities of department managers. Specific review of the role of the front office manager revealed many related concepts. Success in providing effective supervision begins with a review of the resources available to the front office manager, such as employees, equipment, room inventory, finances, and sales opportunities. After analyzing these resources, the front office manager can direct the department more effectively; the objectives of making a profit and delivering hospitality to the guest can be achieved more easily.

The functional role of the front office manager can be understood by preparing a job analysis and job description. This process allows the future professional to see the major responsibilities of the job and the departmental relationships involved.

The many positions found in a front office staff have the common goal of providing hospitality to the guest. Training, empowerment, and flexibility are necessary to make the team work.

Forecasting, scheduling, developing a supervisory style, motivating personnel, balancing staff personalities, delegating tasks, training, and effectively communicating are only a few of the skills a good supervisor must master. This lifelong effort is developed through continuing education and trial and error.

## End-of-Chapter Questions

1. If you are employed in the hotel industry, sketch the organization chart of the property where you work. Have you seen this hierarchy change since you have been employed there? If so, what do you think caused this change?
2. Compare the organization of a full-service hotel and a limited-service hotel. How can a limited-service property operate with such a seemingly minimal staff?
3. If you are employed in the hotel industry, describe the tasks your general manager performs on a daily basis. Describe the tasks your department director performs on a daily basis. What relationship do both of these positions have to the overall success of the hotel?
4. How are the positions in a front office organized? Describe the positions found at the front office in a full-service hotel. Which positions are most crucial to providing guest service?
5. If you have ever worked in a front office in a lodging property, summarize what you think the front office manager does. If you have not worked in a front office of a hotel, you might want to visit with a front office manager and ask for insight into this position.

6. What resources are available to the front office manager? Rank the importance of these resources in providing service to guests and supervising employees.
7. How does the front office manager relate to other members of the hotel management staff? Give examples.
8. Why should a job analysis be performed prior to preparing a job description? Do you think this procedure is necessary? Why or why not?
9. What are the four steps required in preparing a schedule?
10. How do you think your supervisor developed his or her supervisory style? What do you think will be the basis in developing your supervisory style?
11. What does “the art of supervision” mean to you? Reflect on your answer and highlight which concepts are important to your future supervisory style.
12. Why does trying to understand individual motivation help in supervising?
13. What are some of the personality clashes you have noticed where you work? How did your supervisor handle them? Would you have handled them differently if you were the supervisor?
14. Generally speaking, what benefits can a well-trained front office person offer the front office manager?
15. Give examples of how the front office is responsible for communication with other departments, with hotel guests, and with the public.

### CASE STUDY 201

Ana Chavarria, front office manager, has been with The Times Hotel for several years. She recalls her first few months as a time of great stress. Milo Diaz, the personnel manager, was always calling her to post her schedules on time and authorize payroll forms. Thomas Brown, executive housekeeper, seemed a great friend off the premises of the hotel, but at work, he continually badgered the front desk clerks on guest check-in and checkout problems. Yoon-Whan Li, executive engineer, also had communication issues with Ana, such as the time when a desk clerk called Yoon-Whan at home to indicate that an elevator was stuck on the fourth floor when it was only manually stopped by a group of chil-

dren. Eric Jones, food and beverage manager, blamed Ana’s desk clerks because hotel guests were not frequenting the dining room and lounge, asking her, “When will the desk clerks ever learn to talk about those free coupons for the dining room and lounge that they so stoically hand out?” Then there was Lorraine DeSantes, director of marketing and sales, who had just about all she could take from desk clerks who misplaced phone messages, directed hotel guests to restaurants across the street, and offered information on “a good restaurant right around the corner.”

Ana has taken those comments to heart and feels she can justify her shortcomings and those of her

### CASE STUDY 201 (continued)

staff. She knows the schedules are to be posted by Tuesday morning of each week, but several of her employees give her last-minute requests for days off. Her payroll forms are usually delayed because she wants to spend time with the guests who are registering or checking out. The front desk clerks have made major errors in checking guests into rooms that are not ready, but she offers, "It must be that the computer system gives them the wrong information." The elevator issue wasn't the front desk clerk's fault. It was his third night on the job, and no one had thought to explain what constitutes an emergency call to the executive engineer. She wants her front desk clerks to distribute those food and beverage coupons, but they just don't get excited about it. And Lorraine DeSantes's messages are always given to her; "She just makes no attempt to look in her mailbox."

She also remembered when Margaret Chu, general manager of The Times Hotel, asked her to visit

in her office. She let Ana know that her six-month probationary period would be over in one month and it was time to discuss Ana's progress before a permanent offer was made. Ana was uneasy, knowing her colleagues had reported major errors on her behalf. However, Margaret Chu took an approach that was different from that of other general managers with whom Ana had worked. Ms. Chu asked her to prepare a list of strategies to use in working toward improvement in the following areas:

- Employee motivation
- Personnel training
- Effective scheduling of employees
- Communication
- Empowerment

Ms. Chu has asked you to assist Ana in developing strategies to use for improving her ability in the art of supervising employees. What would you suggest?

### CASE STUDY 202

A local hotel developer has called you to assist her corporation in designing job descriptions for a new hotel. This is the corporation's first venture into the hotel business, so the developer wants you to be explicit in writing the job descriptions. The hotel is similar to the 500+-room full-service hotel depicted in Figure 2-1. Prepare job descriptions for the following management positions:

- General manager
- Front office manager
- Executive housekeeper
- Food and beverage director

## Key Words

accounts payable  
accounts receivable  
assistant general manager  
athletics director  
average daily rate (ADR)  
balance sheet  
bell captain  
bell staff  
bill-to-account  
business services and communications center  
call accounting  
cashier  
city ledger accounts  
collective bargaining unit  
concierge  
continental breakfast  
controller  
convention guests  
corporate guests  
daily function sheet  
desk clerk  
director of marketing and sales  
director of security  
elevator operator  
executive housekeeper  
express checkout  
floor inspector  
food and beverage director  
front office manager  
full house  
general ledger  
general manager  
human resources manager  
in-house laundry  
job analysis  
job description  
key clerk  
maintenance manager  
message book  
moonlighter  
night audit  
night auditor  
on-the-job training  
operational reports  
organization chart  
parking garage manager  
percent occupancy  
percent yield  
plant engineer  
prior approved credit  
profit-and-loss statement  
property management system (PMS)  
rack rate  
recreation director  
referral reservation service  
reservations manager  
room attendants  
room blocking  
statement of cash flows  
telephone operator  
total quality management (TQM)  
traffic managers  
working supervisors