

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 that 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 out-sourced 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 bus group's original hotel. The front office manager indicated that something must have

CHAPTER FOCUS POINTS

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

gone awry in the computer system. After all, this was a good opportunity to bring in 26 additional room nights.

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 and stylizes organization charts that fit his or her plan to meet the goals of the particular company. The **organization charts**—schematic drawings that list management positions in an organization—that are 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 upon 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 you develop or regroup. 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 around in various departments of the hotel. This is done for many reasons. A **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 that 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 some of the busywork of the controller's office to the front office manager. The front office manager might also spend some slack periods with the **director of marketing and sales**—the person who analyzes available markets, and sells these 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 will reinforce 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 is enabling staff members to meet their career goals within the organization.

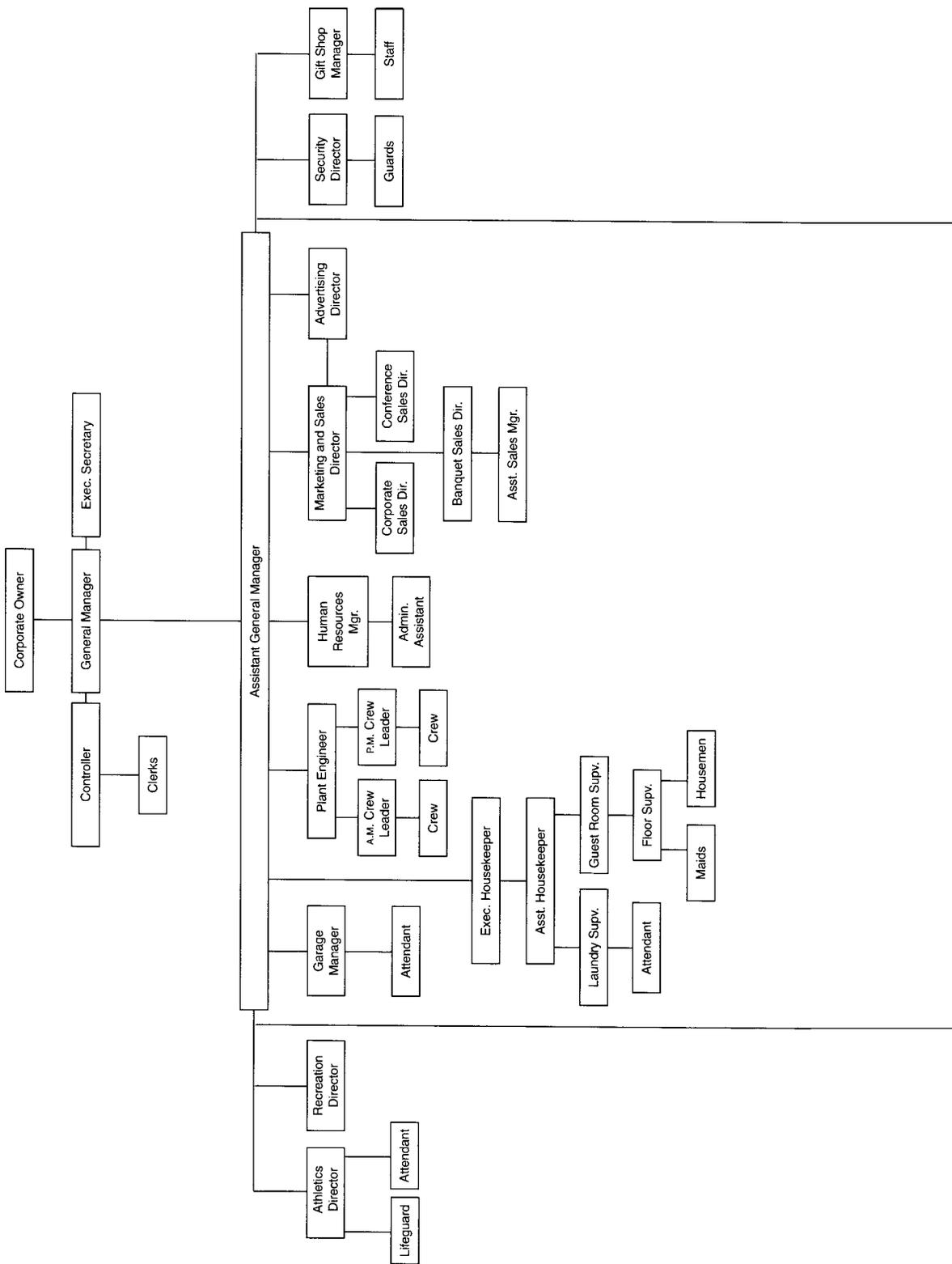
Flexibility is the key to hospitality organization. On the operations level, familiarity with the staff's strengths and weaknesses is essential to meet the demands of a particular situation. When the property experiences an expected slow period, regrouping may be necessary to maintain full-time positions. 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 with the controller. This interdepartmental cooperation provides the backdrop for a smooth-running organization. Such flexibility prevents departmental jealousies and territoriality from becoming roadblocks to communication.

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
- (ADR) \$110 **average daily rate**—number of rooms sold versus room income
- 70 **percent occupancy**—number of rooms sold versus number of rooms available
- 58 **percent yield**—number of rooms sold at average daily rate versus number of rooms available at **rack rate**, the highest room rate category offered by a hotel
- \$18.5 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

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



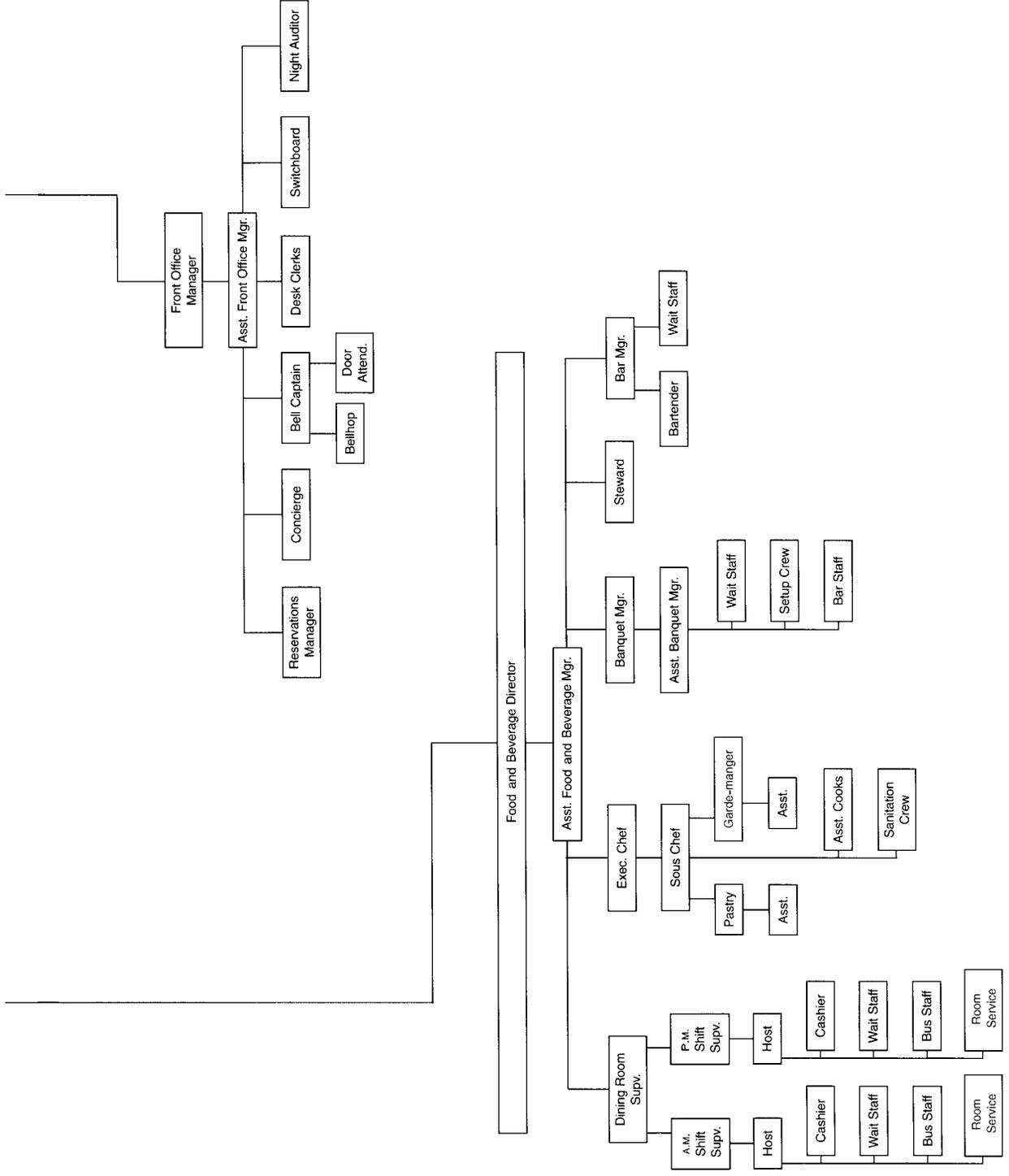


Figure 2-1. The organization of a large, full-service hotel requires many positions to provide service to the guest.

- General manager
- Assistant general manager
- Controller
- Plant engineer
- Executive housekeeper
- Human resources manager
- 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, 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 physical **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 **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 who is 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 to ensure a safe and interesting guest stay.

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

- 200 rooms in a commercial property
- Suburban location
- 65 percent occupancy
- 53 percent yield

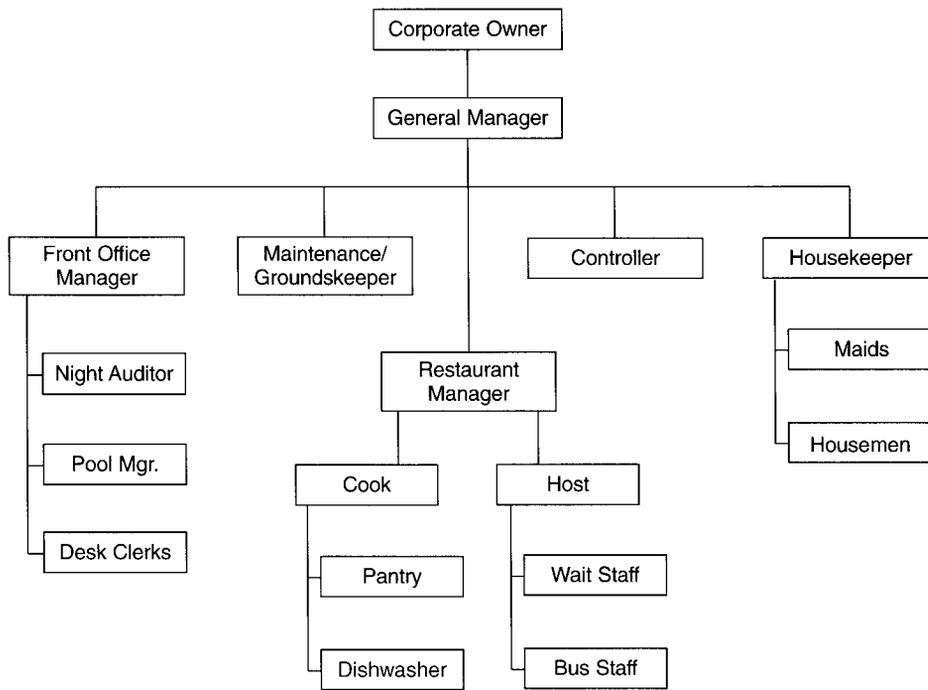


Figure 2-2. Notice that several of the positions listed in the full-service hotel organization chart have been eliminated from this one for a medium-size lodging property.

- \$4.5 million in revenues
- \$75 average daily rate
- 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 somewhat skeletal when compared to that of a large hotel or resort. This type of organization chart is possible because the level of service provided to guests has been reduced. At this property, the guest's stay is one to 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/grounds-keeper 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 very 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.

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
- 51 percent yield
- \$2.2 million in revenues
- \$65 average daily rate
- Limited service
- Chain—franchise
- In-house laundry
- Vacation travelers
- Business travelers
- Complimentary **continental breakfast**—juice, fruit, sweet roll, and/or cereal

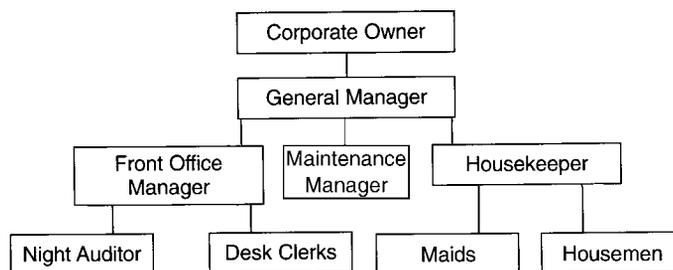


Figure 2-3. *The organization chart for a small, limited-service lodging property includes only minimal staffing. Several duties have been combined under various positions.*

- Referral reservation service
- **Business services and communications center**—guest services that include copying, computers, fax, and so forth

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 have been developed by evaluating the needs of the guests. The organization of departments and the subsequent staffing are influenced by the labor pool available, 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, holds one of those positions that seems to be performed behind the scenes, and little is obvious as to his or her role. 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 very visible position that seems to encompass much. The general manager must see 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 a local inn in our community. He was very 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 type of honest question has always made me terribly aware that the role of the general manager is not easy to understand. Indeed, detailing this managerial role could fill volumes, encompassing decades of experience. However, the legitimacy of the question still compels me to be specific in describing this very important job in the organization chart.

The leadership provided by the general manager is undoubtedly the most important quality a person brings to this position. He or she orchestrates the various department directors in meeting the financial goals of the organization through their employees. The general manager is required to use the full range of managerial skills—such as planning, decision making, organizing, staffing, controlling, directing, and communicating—to develop a competent staff. Performance is judged according to how effectively supervisors have been 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 meet the demands of a leader of operations? What skills and strengths are necessary to get the job done? What business acumen must this person have? What vision does this person bring 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.

The **operational reports**—operational data on critical financial aspects of hotel operations—that a general manager must review can be overwhelming. However, the efficient general manager should know 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 a profitable hotel? Each general manager has developed key indicators that measure the financial success and operational success of various department directors. These concepts are flexible, depending on the goals the corporate ownership has 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 takes the lead from communications received (or not received) from the general manager. Weekly staff meetings serve as a major vehicle for sharing communication. In addition, individual meetings with department directors enable the communication process to become more effective. At these one-on-one meet-



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.)*

ings, the department director can transform organizational goals into operational functions.

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

What does a general manager do? He or she provides leadership to meet organizational goals of profitability and service. It is acquired by studying theories of management and the behavior of other managers as well as actually practicing leadership and receiving constructive criticism from superiors on efforts expended. The role of general manager is a professional position. It is a career goal 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 re-

quired to provide leadership to the other members of the management team. The use of **total quality management (TQM)** concepts, which involve application of managerial concepts to understand operational processes and develop methods to improve those processes (described in Chapter 11), allows managers in full-service and limited-service properties to extend their role of leadership to frontline supervisors and employees. In full-service and limited-service properties, where profit margins are based on lean departmental budgets, total quality management is encouraged.

Assistant General Manager

The **assistant general manager** of a lodging property holds a major responsibility in developing and executing plans developed by the corporate owners, 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 communications. 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 the assistant general manager is informed of 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 rooms division manager, who is responsible for the entire front office operations, which includes front desk, housekeeping, bell staff, concierge, and parking garage.

The assistant general manager often must oversee the beginning of a job and ensure that others complete it. This position also requires the completion and review of statistical reports, which the assistant general manager summarizes and shares 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 previous operational skills, such as front office, food and beverage, marketing and sales, and accounting. Depending on the size of the operation and the personnel available, a large property may divide these responsibilities into rooms division manager and operations division manager.

Limited-service hotels usually do not have this type of 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 additional hands-on responsibilities, but he or she is required to provide direct leadership to the other members of the management team.

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 quality products and services on a 24-hour basis, every day of the year. Constant supervision of products, employees, and services is required to ensure a fair return on investment.

Although food and beverage are served for a continental breakfast or cocktail hour at a limited-service property, there is no food and beverage director position. 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 need to be followed to provide good service to the guest.

Physical Plant Engineer

The plant engineer is very 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 repairpeople 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 be able to develop a plan of action 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 the 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 of personal comfort to the guest. 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, however.) Speed and efficiency are paramount in performing the very important 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 needs to communicate effectively with employees. Accurate scheduling of employees is also necessary to maintain control over labor costs. The executive housekeeper is also responsible for maintaining and controlling an endless inventory, which includes linens, soap, guest amenities, furniture, in-house marketing materials, live and artificial plants, and more. The executive housekeeper, like the plant engineer, must keep abreast of new ideas and techniques through trade journals and continuing education courses.

If the lodging property operates an in-house laundry, this is also supervised by the executive housekeeper. 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 a staff that provides clean rooms and operates an in-house laundry. This hands-on supervisor works with the staff to provide the many behind-the-scenes guest services required. Because many limited-service properties are fairly small, the housekeeper travels the elevators of these high-rise buildings, stopping at each floor to provide employees with constant supervision and motivation.

Interdepartmental cooperation and communication with the front desk and maintenance department in full-service and limited-service hotels are vital for the executive housekeeper. The release of cleaned rooms for occupancy and the scheduling of periodic maintenance are only two functions demonstrating why interdepartmental cooperation is critical. In addition, the marketing and sales efforts in both types of hotels depend on the housekeeper to enforce cleanliness and appearance standards in the public areas so that guests are attracted to and impressed by the property.

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 inter-

INTERNATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



Managers in a hotel have a particular responsibility to prepare their employees to communicate with their guests. This is very important for international guests. Frontline employees can assist an international guest by adopting an attitude of “hospitality without question.” This simple concept encompasses a frontline employee’s 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 that include 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 frontline employees to practice hospitality without question. This concept can be further advanced when a front office manager maintains an inventory of current employees who speak various international languages.

viewing, 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.

Staffing a food and beverage or housekeeping department involves many time-consuming tasks:

- Writing and placing classified ads
- Preinterviewing, 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 employee within a hotel 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 elect to divide the responsibilities among department heads. Although emphasis remains on well-planned and -delivered human resources activities, the streamlined limited-service property relies on interdepartmental cooperation to accomplish its objectives.

Marketing and Sales Director

Notice that in the title of this position, “marketing” is emphasized. The person in this position plays an essential role in all departments of the hotel. An effective director of marketing and sales will not only want to attract external sales such as conventions, small business conferences, wedding receptions, and dining room and lounge business but will also provide 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 the 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, 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. This position may also be shared by the general manager and front office man-

ager. The previous discussion of duties (with the exception of soliciting food and beverage business) performed by the marketing and sales director in a full-service hotel is also a good indicator of what is required in a limited-service hotel. Competition for room sales to the corporate, group, and pleasure travel markets is enormous, and each hotel has to address this planning need.

Front Office Manager

Given the significance of the role of the front office manager in this text, it will be detailed more completely later on in this chapter. Some of 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. It requires an individual who can manage the many details of guest needs, employee supervision, interdepartmental communication, and transmittal of financial information. This exciting position enables the person to develop an overview of the lodging property with regard to finances and communication.

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 on a daily basis in the hotel. In the lodging property, daily financial status must be available to corporate owners, management, and guests. This requires a well-organized staff, not only to prepare oper-

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 that the front desk clerk do to assist this future guest?

ating statistics but also to assist the general manager in determining the effectiveness of each department manager. Often the general manager relies on the controller to provide financial insight into the operations of the property. These include cash flow, discounts, evaluation of insurance costs, fringe-benefit cost analysis, investment opportunities, computer technology applications, banking procedures, and more.

This 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 that the controller uses to organize the financial activities of the hotel; **statement of cash flows**—a projection of income from various 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. It is a busy department that 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.) Also, the ownership of a limited-service property hotel may be a part of a larger financial portfolio of a business, which assists the general manager to perform the controller's responsibilities.

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 to 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 has usually developed an understanding of the criminal mind and the practices of criminals. This person is constantly on the lookout for suspicious people and circumstances.

This necessary position in a limited-service property is shared by the front office manager and the general manager. Outsourcing of security services for on-site and parking-lot patrol is also used. The outsourcing of this vital guest service does not relieve the general manager of the need to develop and provide ongoing procedures to train employees to become security-minded.

Parking Garage Manager

The responsibility of ensuring a safe environment for guests' vehicles falls to the **parking garage manager**, the person responsible for supervising the work of garage attendants and maintaining 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 out parking spaces to local businesses and professional people. The accounting process associated with this service involves the accurate billing and recording of funds and subsequent deposits. This person also has to develop budgets and recruit and train employees. The garage manager often provides driver assistance to guests when their cars break down. Providing directional information to departing guests is also a frequent task of the garage manager. Even though these 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

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 employ the complete staff as listed.

Staffing the front desk positions incurs a cost to the lodging establishment. The front office manager, in consultation with the general manager, usually prepares a personnel budget that is 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, registering guests, assigning rooms, distributing keys, communicating with the housekeeping 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 to make the front desk workload manageable when a **full house**, a hotel that has all its guest rooms occupied (sometimes referred to as 100 percent occupancy) is checking out. Given the possibility that a 400-guest convention could all check out in a short time period, 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

HOSPITALITY PROFILE



Eric O. Long, general manager of the Waldorf=Astoria in New York City, has been employed with Hilton Corporation for 30 years. He served in various management positions, including 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 has 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 he has persons assigned to work on the day-to-day administration of those departments, he feels he is ultimately responsible for the success of those departments. For example, he wants to ensure that a marketing and sales

plan is current and operating. He also attends an 8:00 A.M. customer feedback meeting each day to review feedback on the previous day's efforts to provide 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 in all the other areas. He feels this has been an overriding factor in his career progression. He encourages future hoteliers who are entering the field "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."

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 when a guest is in a hurry.

The **reservations manager** is a position that 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 very 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 is also expected to be able to deal with crises such as 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

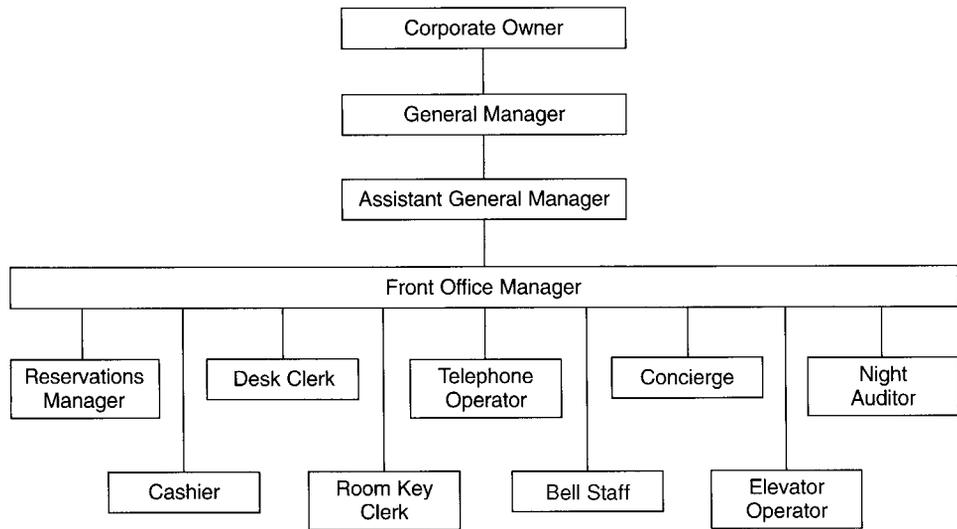


Figure 2-5. This organization chart lists positions found in a front office.

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 the entourage 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 security measures. Often he or she will sort incoming mail for registered guests and the management staff. This position has become obsolete in most hotels.

The **elevator operator**, a person who manually operates the mechanical controls of the elevator, is almost an extinct species in the lodging establishment. This person has been replaced by self-operated elevators and escalators. Some of these people have been relocated to 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; often the confusion of check-ins and checkouts can be lessened when he or she is on duty.

The **concierge** (Figure 2-6) provides 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 must be able to meet the individual needs of each



Figure 2-6. *The concierge provides information on tourist attractions and entertainment in the area to hotel guests. (Photo courtesy of Lincoln Plaza Hotel & Conference Center, Reading, Pennsylvania.)*

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.

The organization chart in Figure 2-7 portrays a much more simplified workforce than 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 provide hospitality 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.

The night auditor's role in a limited-service property is very different from 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.

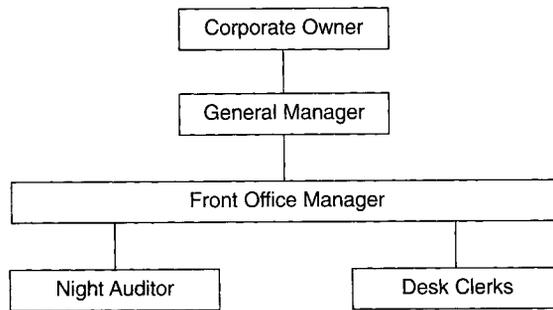


Figure 2-7. *The front office staff in a limited-service hotel includes a minimal number of employees.*

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, the atmosphere in which employees work must motivate them to excel and nurture morale and teamwork.

The equipment available to the front office manager is varied. With the advent of computers, the property management system has provided the front office manager with an unlimited opportunity for managerial control. He or she can now 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 to 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, since 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 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 various 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.

Job Analysis and Job Description

A **job analysis**, a detailed listing of the tasks performed in a front office manager’s 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 very 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, by laying a foundation for a job specification. 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 A.M. Greets the first-shift desk clerks and passes along any information from the night auditor and reservation office. Assists desk clerks in guest check-out.
- 8:30 Meets with the housekeeper to identify any potential problem areas of which the front office staff should be aware. Meets with the plant engineer to identify any 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.
- 1:00 Has a lunch appointment with a corporate business client.
- 2:15 Works on **room blocking**—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 any 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 P.M. 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 the various department heads in 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 would be easily prepared, as shown in Figure 2-8. The job description is an effective management tool because it details the basic tasks and responsibilities required of the front office manager. 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 experiences. Management experts have analyzed some of the complexities of supervising employees. Some of your other management courses will 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 a manager’s position in the scheme of the management team. As the front office manager, you are assigned certain responsibilities along with 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 to clarify managerial practice. At this time, 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. This information will help you to understand which of the various 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 (whether 20 or 60 years of age) 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 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

Figure 2-8. This 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—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 any 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 time 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)
-

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 the schedule 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 incentive 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. There are other cases in which 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 is jockeying for position with the new boss. This is common practice and a situation that needs to 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 that their supervisor will be their advocate with top management. All new supervisors will be tested in this way. You should not be discouraged by this challenge but embrace it as the first of many challenges to come.

After working out whatever personality clashes may 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 co-workers. They also know whom they can rely on 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 will 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 that 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 followed up, 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 the gray areas of different tasks of a job. They 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 will always have special scheduling needs as well as other job-related requests. Supervisors should try to accommodate their needs. The new hire who has 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 the other 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 is in need of additional income may have requested overtime hours. Later on, 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 on various shifts 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**, listing 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, and/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 know to whom they should be referred.

Some of this advice is based on my own experiences. One of the jobs I was responsible for as a front desk clerk included manning 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 will be 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 who have been accustomed to direct supervision on all matters will not readily adapt to a work environment that requires independent thinking to solve 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 will show if the front office manager has adhered to the projected budget. Table 2-1 (page 65) 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.

Solution to Opening Dilemma

Communication in a hotel is paramount to efficiency, delivery of quality service, and profit making. In this particular 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 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 have to 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 various 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 em-

ployees, 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 various departmental relationships involved.

The many positions found on 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. It is a lifelong effort 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 departments have to the overall success of the hotel?
4. How are the positions in a front office organized? Describe the positions found at a 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 are the resources 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 the 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 three 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 for developing your supervisory style?
11. What does “the art of supervision” mean to you? Reflect upon your answer and highlight which concepts are important to your future supervisory style.
12. Why does trying to understand individual motivations 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 some examples of how the front office is responsible for communication with other departments, with hotel guests, and with the public.

C A S E S T U D Y 2 0 1

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. There was Milo Diaz, personnel manager, who 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 children. Eric Jones, food and beverage manager, continued to blame 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 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 some major errors in checking guests into room 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 decision could be made on whether to continue Ana in the role of front office manager. Ana was very uneasy

knowing that her colleagues had reported major errors on her behalf. However, Margaret Chu took an approach that was very different from that of other general managers with whom Ana had worked. Margaret asked her to prepare a list of strategies that she could 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?

C A S E S T U D Y 2 0 2

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 very explicit in writing the job descriptions. The description of the hotel is similar to the 500+-room full-service hotel as 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
 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

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

Table 2-1. (Continued)

Step 3. Calculate Anticipated Payroll

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

Table 2-1. (Continued)

10/5	10/6	10/7
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. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00
		3 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 24.00
<u>\$152.00</u>	<u>\$128.00</u>	<u>\$164.00</u>
8 hrs. @ \$11.50 = \$ 92.00	8 hrs. @ \$13.00 = \$104.00	8 hrs. @ \$13.00 = \$104.00
\$ 92.00	\$104.00	\$104.00
0 hrs. @ \$ 0 = \$ 0.00	0 hrs. @ \$ 0 = \$ 0.00	4 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 32.00
\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 32.00
5 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 55.00	5 hrs. @ \$11.00 = \$ 55.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.00 = \$ 72.00
\$ 55.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 72.00
8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 8.00 = \$ 64.00
8 hrs. @ \$ 7.50 = \$ 60.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.00 = \$ 72.00	8 hrs. @ \$ 9.00 = \$ 72.00
\$124.00	\$136.00	\$136.00
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
<u>\$116.00</u>	<u>\$ 56.00</u>	6 hrs. @ \$ 7.00 = \$ 42.00
		\$158.00

Table 2-1. (Continued)**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	<u>1,757.00</u>
Subtotal	\$6,030.00
Taxes/Fringe Benefits	× <u>.27</u>
	= \$1,628.10
	+ <u>6,030.00</u>
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 ([payroll × 100] ÷ income)							8.66%	

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
telephone operator
total quality management (TQM)
traffic managers
working supervisors