

Chapter 2 – Accommodation Sector

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2.1 Introduction to the Accommodation Sector

2.1.1 Classification of Accommodation Establishment

There is no generic rule for classifying accommodation establishments globally. One method is to divide accommodation into two main groups:

- Non-commercial; and
- Commercial.

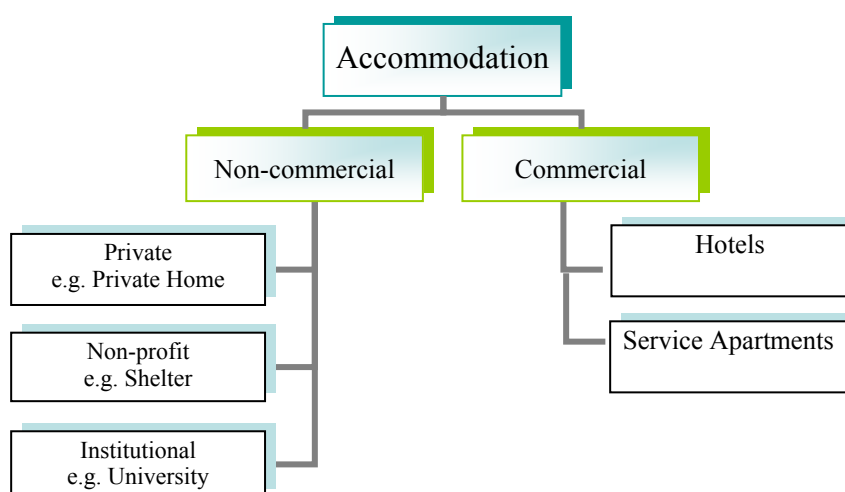


Figure 2.1 – Accommodation structure

2.1.2 Hotels and Their Classifications

As **Hotel** is the predominant type of commercial accommodation in Hong Kong, we, therefore, will discuss in depth about how hotels can be classified.

The Hotel Proprietors Ordinance Chapter 158 provides a clear definition of a hotel:

“Hotel” means an establishment held out by the proprietor as offering sleeping accommodation to any person presenting himself who appears able and willing to pay a reasonable sum for the services and facilities provided and who is in a fit state to be received.



Guest room

A hotel is classified as a commercial establishment providing accommodations, meals and other guest services. Originally guests had two choices:

- Luxury hotels; or
- Budget hotels.

In some countries, hotels were built to serve middle-class families and, when the economy in general boomed and room supply increased; hoteliers then focused on setting themselves apart by offering specialised accommodation for:

- Conventioneers;
- Business groups; and
- Special weekend events and families.

As diversity flourished so did competition and brand loyalty. Anyone who can pay (within reason) can rent a room for a night in a hotel. Hotels vary greatly in style and services, from luxury, business, resort, townhouse to boutique and budget. A standard room will have a bed, bathroom facilities, shower, telephone, TV, lounge area and mini-bar. Housekeeping services available include laundry and dry-cleaning. Nowadays guests would usually have access to a wireless computer network and also to a business centre. Most major hotels will have restaurants and bars available for guests and if they are situated in a large city they are usually located near the business districts, tourist destinations and/or airports.

According to the tourism statistics in year 2012, there are a total of 196 hotels in Hong Kong which provide more than sixty thousands rooms in different scales. Classification systems of hotels are numerous and some of them are developed for evaluation purposes. Figure 2.2 summarizes some common factors criteria which are usually applied in hotel classification.



Guest room

Hotels can be classified by:

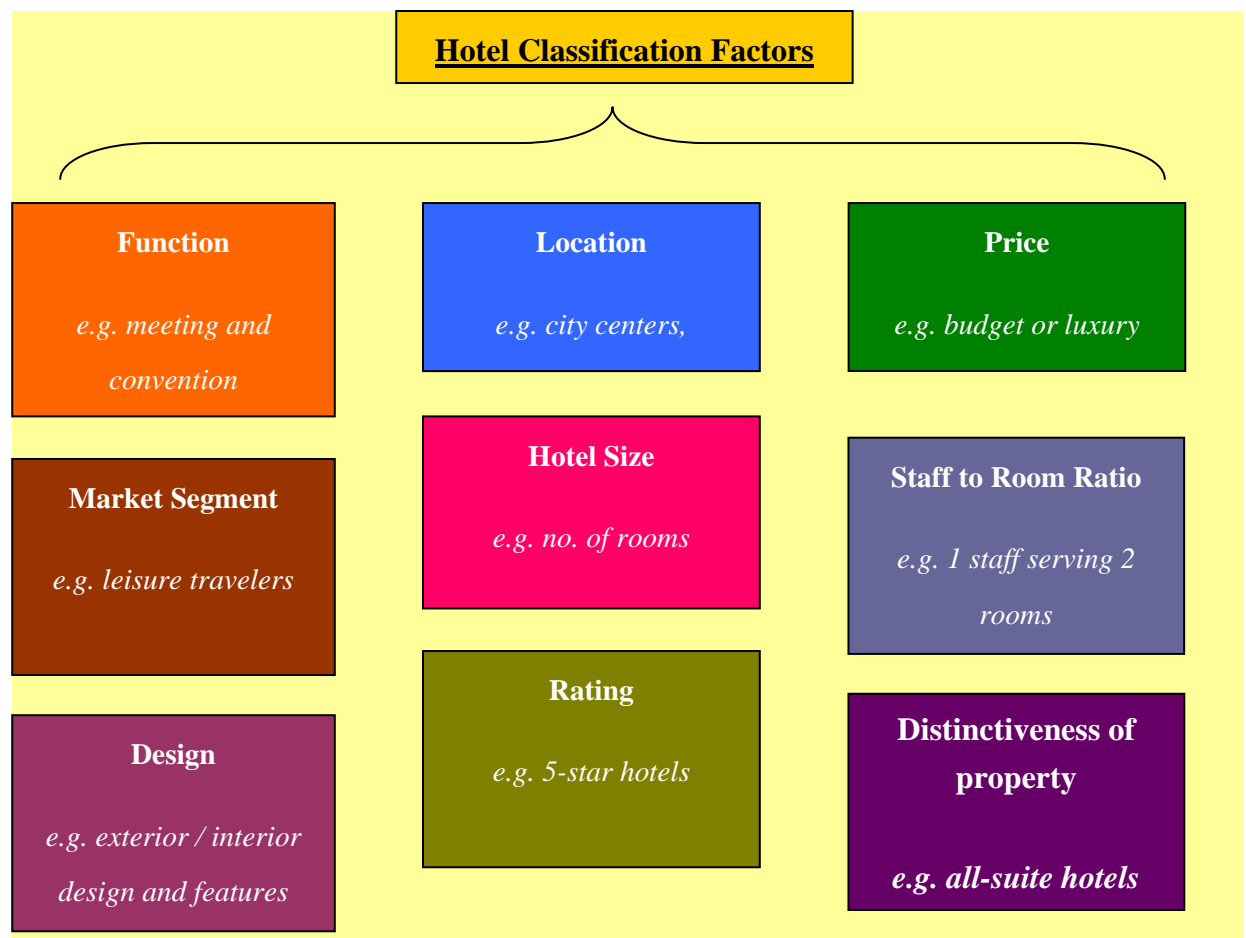


Figure 2.2 – Hotel Classification Factors

Through classification, the characteristics of different hotels can be highlighted which provide travelers a brief idea about different options available and make comparison before their reservation. Let's see the following example:

- Regal Airport Hotel is *located* near the airport. Its major *target groups* include transient guests, business travelers and air crews. It is a 5-star *rating* hotel and has a *hotel size* of above 1,100 guest rooms available for sale.

2.1.3 Types of Accommodation

The following chart shows various types of accommodation used by travelers and their respective characteristics:

Name(s)	Characteristics
City centre hotels	<p>These hotels are located within the heart of a city. The type may vary greatly from business, suites, residential, economy, mid-scale to luxury.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Suburban hotels	<p>Suburban hotels tend to be smaller properties which usually provide full-service, and locate in suburban area.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Airport hotels	<p>These hotels are designed especially to accommodate air travelers. They offer a mix of facilities and amenities. The majority offer customers transportation to and from the airport.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Highway hotels or Motels	<p>They are designed for overnight stays for car travelers, often with very basic facilities. The rooms usually have direct access to an open parking lot. They are often smaller than most hotels. They are located on the outskirts of towns and cities.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>

Convention hotels	<p>These hotels can provide a large quantity of rooms. In addition to accommodation, they provide extensive meeting and function space for holding conventions. There are banquet areas within and around the hotel complex. Most of them provide an in-house laundry, a business centre, airport shuttle service, and 24-hour room service. They are often in close proximity to convention centres and other convention hotels.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Commercial hotels	<p>They are located in downtown areas. They tend to be smaller than convention hotels. Meeting and function space are smaller, and there are fewer banquet areas.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Resort hotels	<p>These hotels are located in picturesque, sometimes remote settings. Customers travel long distance to resorts. Usually, they tend to stay longer. Resorts typically provide a comprehensive array of recreational amenities, as well as a variety of food & beverage outlets ranging from informal to fine-dining restaurants.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Spa hotels	<p>They are located in resort-type settings or as part of city spa hotels. They provide accommodations, spa treatments, programs and cuisine. Programs offered vary widely. They may include relaxation/stress management, fitness, weight management, grief/life change and pilates/yoga. Spas have professional staff that often include dieticians, therapists, masseurs, exercise physiologists, and in some cases, physicians.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Casino hotels	<p>They have gambling operations which are the major revenue centres. They also provide live entertainment. A wide variety of luxury amenities, hotel services including fine and casual dining and shopping centres are typically available on site.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>

All-suite hotels	<p>The guest rooms in these hotels are larger than normal hotel rooms, with separate areas for working, sleeping and relaxing. A living area or parlour is typically separated from the bedroom, and some properties offer a kitchen set-up in the rooms. The amenities and services can vary widely. They can be found in various locations such as urban, suburban, or residential.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Boutique hotels	<p>Boutique hotels differentiate themselves from traditional hotels and motels by providing personalized accommodation and services/facilities. They are sometimes known as "design hotels" or "lifestyle hotels". The price varies greatly. They are very different in their "look and feel" from traditional lodging properties. They are more intimate, and, perhaps, more luxurious, and stand out as an individual. The amenities vary greatly depending on what the hotel's environment and theme chosen. For example, a boutique hotel may not offer Wi-Fi Internet, air conditioning, or cable/pay TV if it is focus on comfort and solitude.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Timeshares or Vacation ownership	<p>This is a type of shared ownership where a buyer purchases the right to use the property for a portion of each year. In many cases, when the timeshare is purchased, the buyer receives a deed. This indicates that the buyer can use the property each year at the time specified for the number of years based on the deed and the purchase can be handed down to the buyer's heirs.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Historic conversion hotels	<p>These properties have historic significance. They have been converted into lodging establishments with retention of their historic character.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>

Extended-stay hotels or Serviced Apartments	<p>These properties cater to customers who stay for an extended period. They usually offer full kitchen facilities, shopping services, business services and limited housekeeping services.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Bed and breakfast inns (B&Bs)	<p>They are usually family-owned. They are private homes whose owner lives on or near the premises and rents out rooms to overnight customers. The paid accommodation typically includes breakfast. A popular term is “B&Bs” (i.e. bed and breakfast provided). The host often provides customers with assistance regarding directions, and information regarding the local area including sightseeing suggestions. It is usually located in rural areas and villages.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Guest houses	<p>Guest houses are similar to bed and breakfast inns. They range from low-budget rooms to luxury apartments. They tend to be like small hotels in bigger cities. Though the facilities are limited, most rooms are air-conditioned with en-suite shower and toilet.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Hostels	<p>They are very cheap accommodation. The sleeping arrangements are usually in dormitory style and there may also be self-catering facilities on site.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Cabins	<p>They are bedrooms on a ship or train for passengers.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>
Villas or Chalets (usually found in skiing and beach resorts)	<p>They are self-catering accommodation in a private bungalow, usually rented to prestigious or renowned customers. In many cases, it refers to a small cottage with an overhanging roof in a seaside resort, e.g. beach houses.</p> <p>Local example: _____</p>

Figure 2.1 – Types of Accommodation

ACTIVITY 2.1

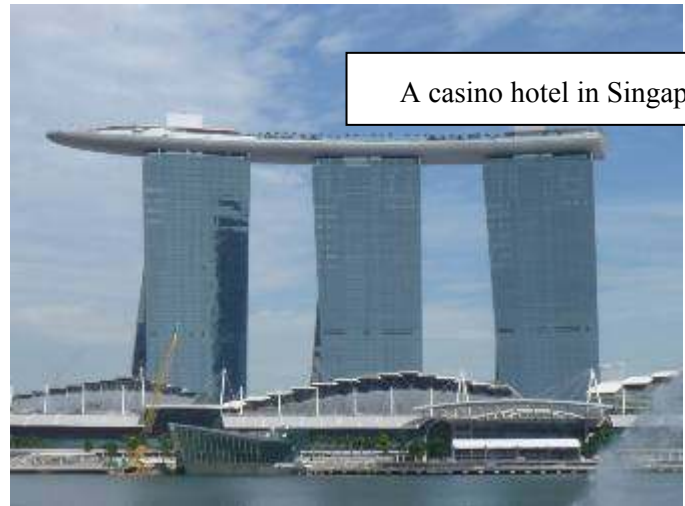
Browse the website and find a five-star hotel in **Hong Kong/Macau** that has a video in English and Chinese promoting its services and facilities to the guests.

2.1.4 Common Types of Hotel in Hong Kong

A list of all common types of hotel with their detail descriptions has been provided in Section 2.1.2. It should be noted that even though Hong Kong is a famous tourism destination, some types of hotel are not available or easily found in the city. Let's try to have a closer look at the issue by going through Activity 10 in the next page.



A business hotel in Hong Kong



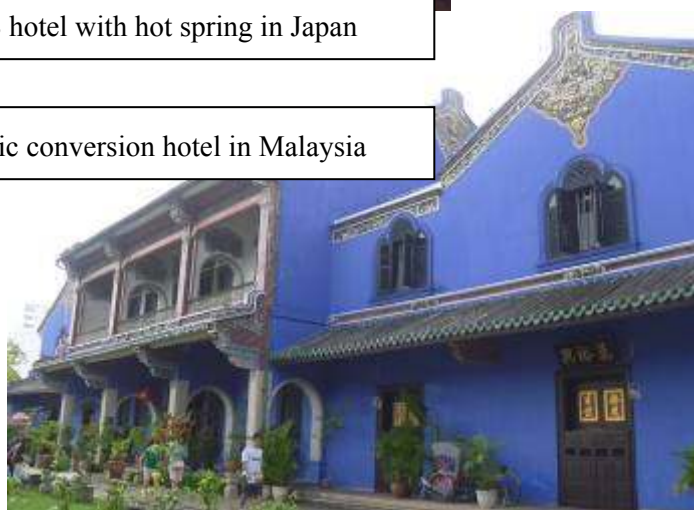
A casino hotel in Singapore



A B&B hotel with hot spring in Japan



A resort hotel in the mainland



A historic conversion hotel in Malaysia



A villa in Kenting

ACTIVITY 2.2 – Types of Tourist Accommodations Available in Hong Kong

By utilizing the information from the internet, check if the following types of tourist accommodations are available in Hong Kong. Give one local example for each type of tourist accommodations or an overseas example if it is not locally available.

Types of Tourist Accommodations	Is it available in Hong Kong? (Put a '✓' if yes; a 'X' if no)	Name an example (Give a local example if the accommodation type is available; give an overseas example if it is not locally available)
City centre hotel		
Suburban hotel		
Airport hotel		
Highway hotel or motel		
Convention hotel		
Commercial hotel		
Resort hotel		
Spa hotel		
Timeshare or Vacation ownership		
Casino hotel		
All-suite hotel		
Boutique hotel		
Extended-stay hotel or Serviced apartment		
Historic conversion hotel		
Bed and breakfast inn (B&B)		
Guest house		
Hostel		
Cabin		
Villa or Chalet (usually found in skiing and beach resorts)		

2.1.5 Special Hotels Worldwide

Besides those hotels as mentioned in the previous section, there are also some unusual hotels which are unique in their features, functions or designs. Below shows some examples of special hotels located in different countries:

1. Capsule Hotels

It is a type of hotel originated in Japan which provides small and ‘bed-only’ cabinets for its guests. The cabinet size is roughly 2m x 1m x 1.25m and they are mainly designed for local citizens who look for cheap accommodations when traveling back to their homes is not an option. Services and facilities are limited, e.g. some may not have restaurants and guests are required to share the common washrooms inside the hotel properties.

Link - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capsule_hotel

ACTIVITY 2.3 – Can Capsule Hotels Be Developed in Hong Kong

Instructions:

- Work as a group of 4 to 5.
- With the aid of the link provided above and any other information collected from the internet, try to answer the following questions:
 - What kinds of services and facilities are available in capsule hotels?
 - What are the differences between a cabinet and a general hotel room?
 - Why this type of hotel is suitable for the Japan market; who are the target segments?
- Discussion - From a customer’s point of view, do you think capsule hotels are suitable for the Hong Kong market? Why?
- Conclude and share your opinions to other groups in the class.

2. Ice Hotels

As expressed in its term, ice hotels are mainly built by using snow and ice. The first ice hotel is located in Sweden and its concept has been followed by Canada and some other European countries in building their own ice hotels to attract visitors. Different from other general hotels, this type of hotel is temporary in its nature which is always torn down and then rebuilt by artists and designers in different seasons. Due to this reason, a guest who chooses to stay in an ice hotel in different seasons would find his/her experience entirely different once the hotel is rebuilt.

Links - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ice_hotel; <http://www.icehotel.com/>

ACTIVITY 2.3 – What Guests Can Do In an Ice Hotel?

Instructions:

- Work as a group of 4 to 5.
- Discuss the following questions:
 - What are the problems you can foresee if staying in this kind of hotel?
 - What special services, facilities or events can be provided by utilizing the features and surroundings of an ice hotel?
 - Besides hotels, what other sectors can apply the concept of ice in their business?

3. Cave Hotels

Typical examples of cave hotels can be found in Turkey which are originated from residences for people in the old times who stayed in the caves to avoid the disturbance and attack of wild animals. Some of these old caves have been reused and redeveloped into different hotels which attract visitors who would like to experience in deep the culture and tradition of the host countries. These hotels are also preferred by visitors who look for environmental friendly accommodation and can provide a ‘close-to-nature’ experience in their journey. Besides, some cave hotels are also built

underground, such as the Coober Pedy in South Australia which are restructured from an opal mine.

Link - <http://www.cappadociaturkey.net/cavehotels.htm>

4. Tree House or Treetop Hotels

These kinds of hotels are mainly located in countryside, especially in forests. Hotel rooms are built in harmony with trees which mainly follow the building method of the native tree houses. The most valuable experience is not provided by the ‘no-gimmick’ in-room facilities but a variety of tours and tourist activities, such as jungle walk, nightlife animal tours and visiting to native’s houses, etc. Such activities provide visitors an opportunity to have a closer contact with the natural environment. Examples of tree house hotels can be found in Costa Rica, Kenya, Brazil and Amazon, etc.

Link - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treehouse_hotel#Treehouse_hotels;

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treetops_Hotel

5. Underwater Hotels

The hotel concepts associating with water have contributed to the development of innovative hotels with their rooms being built under the water. One example of underwater hotel can be found in Florida (U.S.) and hotel guests are required to have a diving certification so they can dive in order to get into their rooms. Some travelers, who may have negative impression of staying under the water, would prefer choosing other alternatives, such as floating ones and those which have been built above the water.

Link -

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/2187453/4_underwater_hotels_plus_alternatives.html?cat=16;

http://www.poseidonresorts.com/poseidon_main.html

ACTIVITY 2.5 – Green Hotels

Green hotels mean those properties which implement different practices to minimize their harms to the natural environment. By referring to the examples of cave hotels, tree house hotels and underwater hotels as mentioned above, try to discuss the following questions:

1. Will the constructions of these types of hotels have any harm to the natural environment? Give examples if any.
2. Explore what the hotel management can do in order to help protecting the environment while running these types of hotels. Try to think about:
 - The operational practices;
 - The education that can be provided to hotel guests.

ACTIVITY 2.6 – Other Special Hotels Worldwide

Besides those special hotels introduced in this section, there are also some other kinds of special hotels which are considered as ‘unusual’ in their designs and features. Try to explore more examples by inputting the following key words in any internet search engine. Describe how special the hotels are and comment their feasibilities to be developed in Hong Kong.

Special Hotels – Key words

1. **Floating hotels** - Special Features: _____
 - Feasibility to be
 opened in Hong
 Kong: _____

2. **Sleep boxes** - Special Features: _____
 - Feasibility to be
 opened in Hong
 Hong: _____

3. **Aeroplane hotels** - Special Features: _____
 - Feasibility to be
 opened in Hong
 Hong: _____

2.1.6 Hotel Rating Systems

Hotel rating systems can generally be classified into two different categories: ‘official’ and ‘commercial’. Official rating systems refer to those implemented by government units, e.g. the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) is the official unit in Hong Kong which develops its own hotel rating system. Rating systems which are commercially-oriented can usually set up by associations or privately owned enterprises.

1. Rating System of the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB)

As an indicator which reflects the quality and service of hotels in Hong Kong, the HKTB has introduced its own rating system which classifies hotels into 4 different categories:

1. High Tariff A Hotels;
2. High Tariff B Hotels;
3. Medium Tariff Hotels; and
4. Tourist Guesthouses.

The rating is based on the performance of 5 key indicators with their weightings as shown in Table 2.2.

Indicator	Weight
- Facilities (A)	0.25
- Location (B)	0.20
- Staff to Room Ratio (C)	0.20
- Achieved Room Rate (D)	0.20
- Business Mix (E)	0.15
Overall	1.00



Table 2.2 – Five Indicators in Hotel’s Rating

The composite scores of hotels are calculated by using the formula as shown below:

$$\text{Composite score} = (A) \times 0.25 + (B) \times 0.20 + (C) \times 0.20 + (D) \times 0.20 + (E) \times 0.15$$

Based on the composite scores compiled, the categories of hotels can be determined by the following criteria:

Hotel Category	Composite Score
- High Tariff A Hotels	3.00 – 3.99
- High Tariff B Hotels	2.00 – 2.99
- Medium Tariff Hotels	1.00 – 1.99
- Tourist Guesthouses	Not applicable *

* Note: Composite scores obtained cannot be applied to ‘tourist guest houses’ under this rating system.

Table 2.3 – Composite Scores of Different Hotel Categories in Hong Kong

As a general practice, the HKTB will only inform individual hotels of their results for their reference and will never disclose their scores or categories to the public. It differs from the rating systems of the private sectors which provide useful reference sources for travelers in planning for their trips and making decisions in their choices of accommodation.

Further information about the rating system of HKTB can be referred to ‘Additional Information’ on page 46-49.

ACTIVITY 2.8 – Rating of a Local Hotel

ABC Hotel is a city hotel located at Causeway Bay. It has a total of 350 rooms and 225 staff. The hotel has a record of achieved room rate at HKD\$1100 and over 50% of the hotel guests are business travelers. By referring to the link as provided in the above section relating to the calculation of the composite score, complete the following table:

Indicator	Score	Weight	Composite Score
Facilities	1.00	0.25	
Location			
Staff to Room Ratio			Hotel Category
Achieved Room Rate			
Business Mix			

Additional Information—

Hong Kong Tourism Board Hotel Classification System 2010

1. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) in 2001 has modified the hotel classification system and a review exercise was undertaken in 2009 so as to reflect more accurately the quality and service of hotels in Hong Kong.
2. This Classification System still maintain 5 key indicators including Hotel Achieved Room Rates, Staff to Room Ratio, Location, Facilities and Business Mix of hotels.
3. This scoring system is adopted in the classification of hotels. For each important indicator selected above, scores are compiled based on results of the survey, except for average achieved room rate, which is based on results of the monthly Hotel Room Occupancy Surveys.
4. The scoring method for each indicator is given as follows:
 - a) *Facilities—Separate assessments on F&B, IT, business as well as health and related facilities are undertaken to consolidate the score for facilities. The scoring methods for individual components of facilities are shown below:*

<i>Components</i>	<i>Score</i>	
F & B Facilities (0.09)	0 to 8	Based on number of F&B Outlets.
IT Facilities (0.05)	0 to 4	Based on the availability of the following facilities including Laptop computer on Request, In-room Broadband Access, Wireless Internet Access and In-room Data Port.
Business Facilities (0.06)	0 to 4	Based on the availability of the following facilities including Business Center, Banquet Facilities, Conference/Meeting Facilities and Executive Floor.
Health and Other Facilities (0.05)	0 to 6	Based on the availability of the following facilities including Fitness Centre, Swimming Pool, Sports Facilities, Massage Service, Sauna/Spa and Rooms for Disable Guest.

b)

<i>Location</i>	<i>Score</i>
Tsim Sha Tsui, Central, Admiralty, Causeway Bay and International Theme Park	5
Jordan, Mong Kok, Yau Ma Tei, Wan Chai and Terminal with/next to Immigration Clearance & International Convention & Exhibition areas.	4
North Point, Sheung Wan, Western Districts, Hung Hom, Shatin and Tsuen Wan	3
Other Kowloon and Hong Kong areas	2
Other NT areas and outlying islands	1

c)

<i>Staff to Room Ratio (SRR)</i>	<i>Score</i>
$SRR \geq 1.00$	3
$1.00 > SRR \geq 0.50$	2
$SRR < 0.50$	1

d)

<i>Achieved Room Rate (ARR)</i>	<i>Score</i>
$ARR \geq 1,350$	3
$1,350 > ARR \geq 750$	2
$ARR < 750$	1

Note: Figures updated based on result from Hotel Occupancy Survey

e)

<i>Business Mix (BM)</i>	<i>Score</i>
% of Business Visitors $\geq 20\%$	2
% of Business Visitors $< 20\%$	1

Note: Figures updated based on result from HKTB Departing Visitor Survey

5. A composite score for each hotel is calculated by weighting the scores of indicators obtained from the hotel against the relative importance of the indicators. Reflecting the opinion of hotel industry members as collected from the survey, the weights of the indicators adopted in the hotel classification system are given as follows:

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Facilities	0.25
Location	0.20
Staff to Room Ratio	0.20
Achieved Room Rate	0.20
Business Mix	0.15
Overall	1.00

6. The composite score of a hotel, which is compiled, based on the scores obtained for the indicators and the weights of the indicators, is an overall measure reflecting the category standing of the hotel. Under the above scoring and weighting methods, the composite score of a hotel will range from 1 to 4.
7. Based on the composite score compiled, the category standing of the hotel will be determined according to the following criteria:

<i>Hotel Category</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
High Tariff A Hotels	3.00 or above to 3.99
High Tariff B Hotels	2.00 or above to 2.99
Medium Tariff Hotels	1.00 or above to 1.99
Tourist Guesthouses	– self explanatory –

Note: Tourist Guesthouses are classified using the list provided by Home Affairs Department

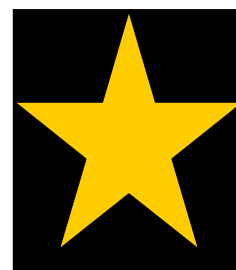
8. The Hong Kong Tourism Board does not make public the listings of hotels by category. However, individual hotels are informed of their respective category so that they can compare their own performance against their category averages when reading research reports on hotel industry published by the Hong Kong Tourism Board.
9. In order to maintain a consistent base for data comparison, an observation period will be given before any action is taken to change the category standing of a hotel for which, based on the new classification system, change

Source—Hong Kong Tourism Board (2011). Hong Kong Tourism Board Hotel Classification System 2010.

2. Star Award and Diamond Award Rating Systems

Two examples of commercially-oriented hotel rating systems are developed by the Mobil Travel Guide (rebranded as Forbes Travel Guide

in 2009) and the American Automobile Association (AAA). These two key organizations give ratings to hotels according to objective criteria such as facilities, scales and staff to room ratios. The Mobil Travel Guide introduced the ‘star-award’ system and the AAA has also applied a similar concept – ‘diamond-award’



which are used for rating those participating hotels under a five-point scale from 1 to 5 in a regular basis. The assessments of hotels are conducted by ‘mystery shoppers’ which usually consist of industry professionals and frequent travelers. Comparatively, visitors worldwide are more familiar with the ratings of private bodies which act as standard indicators of hotels’ quality for visitors’ references.

More background information about the Mobil Travel Guide and the American Automobile Association (AAA) can be referred to the following links:

Forbes Travel Guide—

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forbes_Travel_Guide

American Automobile Association—

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Automobile_Association

ACTIVITY 2.8

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) has developed its own hotel classification system. Look up the information from the PartnerNet website (<http://partnernet.hktb.com/pnweb/jsp/comm/index.jsp>) and answer the following questions:

1. How does HKTb define the hotels in Hong Kong?
2. Does HKTb make public the listing of hotels by category?

ACTIVITY 2.9 – Comparison of Hotels in Different Star Ratings

Instructions:

- Work as a group of 4 to 5.
- With the aid of the link provided below, find out those 5-star and 4-star hotels in Hong Kong.

(<http://www.forbestravelguide.com/star-awards-2011.htm>)
- Select one 5-star hotel and one 4-star hotel for comparison.
- The comparison could be in the following dimensions:
 - Location and accessibility
 - Room number
 - Room types and rates (only the standard rates are required)
 - Number of restaurants
 - Facilities and services
 - Sister hotels in Hong Kong or worldwide (if any)
- From a customer's point of view, which hotel would you prefer to stay? Why?
- Conclude and share your opinions to other groups in the class.

The classification criteria, such as location, market segment, rating and hotel size are utilized in highlighting the hotel features to travelers. Try to complete Activity 2.10 and **identify the similarities and differences of three local hotels in Hong Kong.**

ACTIVITY 2.10 – Classification of Hotels**Instructions:**

- Select three different hotels in Hong Kong;
- Complete the following table by using any information collected from the internet;
- Observe if there are any similarities or differences among the hotels.

Hotels	Classification Criteria	
(1) _____	- Function - Location - Rating - Market Segment - Price (standard rate)	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
(2) _____	- Function - Location - Rating - Market Segment - Price (standard rate)	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
(3) _____	- Function - Location - Rating - Market Segment - Price (standard rate)	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Similarities:		
Differences:		

2.1.7 The Accommodation Product

Accommodation is the core product of a hotel and is always one of the largest revenue sources in a hotel operation.

Accommodation products refer to rooms and other related products or services that hotel guests will consume during their stays. Front line staff, especially receptionists and reservation staff, should be equipped with product knowledge which enables them to recommend or explain to their guests what is being offered by the hotel. Some basic concepts about the accommodation products, including bed types, room types and room rates are described in this section.

1. Types of Room

Room types of hotels can be numerous which vary in their grading, features and functions. Receptionists and reservation staff should be familiar with all different room types and their characteristics so that a perfect guest-to-room fit can be achieved.



a) Differences in Room Grading

The grading of rooms is generally divided into 3 categories. Table 2.4 illustrates an example of how different rooms are graded in a typical hotel.

Grade	View	Furniture / Amenities / Supplies	Extra services / products
Standard	Average, e.g. garden view, car park view	Basic setting, e.g. pine furniture, bed with blanket only, disposable paper slippers, etc.	Nil

Superior	Superior, e.g. city view, sea view	Upscale setting, e.g. rosewood furniture, bed with comforter, cloth slippers, etc.	e.g. complementary newspaper, complementary breakfast, etc.
Deluxe	Magnificent, e.g. sea view at high floor, attraction view	Grand setting, e.g. antique furniture, bed with feather comforter, leather slippers, etc.	e.g. free access to executive lounge and its services, express check-in, welcome drinks, complementary breakfast, free in-room internet and wi-fi services, free limousine pick-up service from the airport, etc.

Table 2.4 – Examples of Room Grade in a Hotel

(Adapted from www.sleeping-around.com/practical/hotel_room_types.shtml)

b) Common Types of Room

In addition to the room types mentioned in the handbook, more room types are available for guest s' selection according to their needs and preferences. Table 2.5 shows a comprehensive list of room types which are commonly provided by hotels worldwide.



Types of Room	Descriptions
Single Room	A room that sleeps only one person and has been fitted with a single, double or queen-size bed.

Twin Room	A room that can accommodate two persons with two twin beds.
Double Room	A room that can accommodate two persons with a double or queen-size bed.
Double-Double Room	A room that can accommodate two to four persons with two twin, double or queen-size beds.
Triple Room	A room that can accommodate three persons and has been fitted with three twin beds, one double bed and one twin bed or two double beds.
Hollywood Twin Room	A room that can accommodate two persons with two twin beds joined together by a common headboard. Medium tariff and budget hotels tend to provide many of these room settings which cater both couples and parties in two.
Studio / Murphy Room	A room that is fitted with a sofa bed or a Murphy bed (i.e. a bed that folds out of a wall or closet) which can be transformed from a bedroom in night time to a living room in day time.
Suite	A room with one or more bedrooms and a living space. The bedrooms might be singles, doubles or twin doubles.
President Suite	The most expensive room provided by a hotel. Usually, only one president suite is available in one single hotel property. Similar to the normal suites, a president suite always has one or more bedrooms and a living space with strong emphasis on grand in-room decoration, high quality amenities and supplies, and tailor-made services (e.g. personal butler during the stay).

Villa	A special form of accommodation which can be found in some resort hotels. It is a kind of stand-alone house which gives extra privacy and space to hotel guests. A fully equipped villa contains not only bedrooms and a living room but a private swimming pool, Jacuzzi and balcony. It is suitable for couples, families and large groups.
Accessible Room	This room type is mainly designed for disabled guests and it is required by law that hotels must provide certain number of accessible rooms to avoid discrimination. The room setting of an accessible room is different from other standard rooms for guests' conveniences. Common features include safety bars and emergency buttons in the bedroom and bathroom, touch floor lamps, fire alarm lights, and outward opening door for bathroom, etc. The rooms should always be located at ground or at lower floors and should be near to the elevators for easier accessibility of disabled guests. Besides, this room type is also suitable for seniors.
Balcony Room	A room with a balcony.
Executive-Floored Room	A room located at the 'executive floor' which enables convenient access to the executive lounge. Besides, some hotels also provide 'female executive floors' with their rooms assigned to female guests only due to safety and security reasons.
Room for Extended Stay	This room type can be found in service apartments and hotels which target for long stay guests (e.g. expatriates). Open kitchens or cooking equipment are usually available in the room. Some would also provide housekeeping services (e.g.

	once a week) in a regular basis.
Smoking / Non-Smoking Room	Many hotels provide both smoking and non-smoking rooms for their guests. In order to minimize the effects of secondhand smoke exposure on non-smoking guests, some hotels group all smoking rooms in certain floors and separate them from non-smoking rooms.
Adjacent Room	Rooms close by or across the corridor, but are not side by side.
Adjoining Room	Rooms that are side by side, but do not have a connecting door between them.
Connecting Room	Two rooms that are side by side and have a connecting door between them.

Table 2.5 – Hotel Room Types

ACTIVITY 2.11 – Guest-to-Room Fit

Match up the guests to the most suitable room types

Guests		Room Types	
1.	Two friends go to Tokyo for vacation.		
2.	The chair lady of Lion Club wants to attend a meeting in Singapore.	A.	President Suite
3.	An American has been assigned by his boss to station in Hong Kong for a year.	B.	Villa
4.	A large family group would like to go to Thailand for vacation and is looking for a resort which can provide high privacy with relaxing facilities.	C.	Room for Extended-Stay
5.	A business traveler wants to have a meeting with his potential partner with high privacy. He is looking for a hotel room at reasonable price.	D.	Female Executive Floor
6.	The U.S. president will go to Beijing to attend an international financial conference.	E.	Twin Room
		F.	Studio / Murphy

2. Types of Bed

A hotel has different types of guest room and bed for the guests to choose from. Hotel staff should explain these clearly to guests, as they may not be familiar with the hotel terminology.

Types of bed	Sizes (e.g.)
Twin	39" x 75"
Double	54" x 75"
Queen	60" x 80"
King	78" x 80"

Table 2.6 – Types and sizes of bed

There are various kinds of bed which sized differently to cater the needs of hotel guests. Some of them are particularly available in certain room types and are introduced as below in Table 2.7



Types of Bed	Symbols / Codes	Sizes	Descriptions
Single / Twin	S / T	39"x75"	Designed for one person only; single and twin beds sized the same; the term 'twin beds' implies they are in pairs and the room type is always described as 'twin room'.
Double	D	54"x75"	Designed for two persons; easily confused with the term 'twin beds' in Chinese

			translation.
Queen	Q	60"x80"	Designed for two persons; wider and longer than double beds for better comfort of guests.
King	K	78"x80"	Designed for two persons; wider than queen beds for better comfort of guests.
Hollywood Bed	T	78"x75"	Two twin beds placed side by side and shared the same headboard; it is designed for two persons.
Studio Bed / Sofa Bed	H	48"x75"	Available in a studio room; it caters the needs of business guests for conducting business meetings in the guest room.
Murphy Bed	M	60"x80"/ 78"x80"	It serves the same function as sofa bed; the bed folds out of a wall or closet, which makes it more convenient for guests to conduct business meetings in the guest room.
Roll-away Bed	/	30"x72"/ 34"x75"	Extra bed temporarily added according to guests' requests; extra charges are usually required.
Baby Cot	/	/	Provided to those guests who bring along with their babies; usually requested in advance by guests in their reservations.

Table 2.7 – Different Types of Bed in a Hotel



Twin bedroom



Double bedroom

3. Room Rates

A guest who books accommodation receives more than just a room with a bed. It includes the facilities and services provided by the hotel staff. Since guests in general cannot examine the hotel product before purchase, front office staff must have a clear understanding of the accommodation product and describe it accurately and clearly to the guest. Examples include:

- Room rates;
- Size of beds;
- Frequent-guest programme; or
- Other services provided to the guest.

Front desk personnel need to know how the room rates are derived. The following criteria will influence the room rate charged to the guests:

- Type, size, décor and location of room;
- Meal plan;
- Season and seasonal events;
- Kind of guest; and
- Length of stay and day of the week.

a) Types of Room Rates

The room rate categories have variations in all hotels. Many hotels offer a number of different room rates to attract different guests who will provide repeat business and help ensure full occupancy. Examples of different room rates are as follows:

(i) Rack Rate

The standard rate charged for the room only.

(ii) Corporate Rate

Room rate offered to executive personnel who are regular guests or employees of a corporation that has a contract rate with the hotel which reflects all businesses from that corporation.

(iii) Commercial Rate

Room rate offered to executive personnel of an enterprise who have infrequent visit.

(iv) Airline Rate

The rate agreed between an individual airline and the hotel as determined by the volume of business the hotel obtains from the airline.

(v) Group Rate

Room rate given to bookings for a large group of people made through a travel agent or professional organisation.

(vi) Children's Rate

Each hotel has a specific age limit for the child to stay with their parents in the same room free of charge or at a nominal rate.

(vii) *Package rate*

Room rate, which includes goods and services and the rental of a room, is developed by the hotel to attract guests in during low sales periods.

(viii) *Complimentary rate (Comp)*

Guest is assessed no charge for staying in a hotel. The management of the hotel may grant comp rooms for guests who are tour directors, local dignitaries, executives from the hotel's head office and so on.

Additional Information - Frequent-guest program

Hotels build guest profiles, often called the guest history record, that keep track of preferences of guests and enable the hotels to provide customized guest services. Loyalty programs let the most valuable guests be recognized on-property and have been at the core of how chain hotel brands attract and retain their best guests. The loyalty program is a strong factor in persuading hotel owners to become franchisees or give a particular hotel brand the management contract to run their property. Some studies found that members wanted a streamlined reward redemption process, and points that did not expire. The most important features of a hotel program were room upgrades and airline miles, followed by free hotel stays, and a variety of on-property benefits and services. However, no amount of miles or points is ever going to replace a warm welcome and being recognized by the hotel as a loyal guest.

Note –Hotels usually offer different rates when selling their rooms. For example, deluxe rooms are always more expensive when compared with superior and standard rooms.

ACTIVITY 2.12

Give an example of how a chain hotel could customize a frequent guest's hotel experience using the frequent-guest program.

ACTIVITY 2.13—Factors Affecting Room Rates

Instructions:

- Work as a group of 4 to 5.
- Suggest 5 factors which may affect the pricing of hotel rooms, e.g. the room grading as mentioned above.
- Give examples of how room rates are different under each factor, e.g. superior room is more expensive than standard room under the room grading factor.
- Try to prioritize the 5 factors according to their degrees of importance in room pricing.
- Share and compare your results with other groups in the class.

ACTIVITY 2.14 – Different Types of Rate

Match up the guests to the most suitable room types

Types of Rate	Description
1. Rack rate	A. is applied to air crews, e.g. flight attendants and pilots who need accommodations during their works
2. Corporate rate	B. is a discount rate enjoyed by staff of business partners who visit infrequently
3. Commercial rate	C. equals to standard rate and walk-in rate
4. Airline rate	D. is a discount rate enjoyed by parents who bring their kids together in their hotel stays
5. Group rate	E. is a discount rate agreed by a hotel and an enterprise. A minimum number of room nights is guaranteed in contract per year
6. Children's rate	F. is a discount rate enjoyed by a travel agent or organization through bulk purchase
7. Package rate	G. can be provided to those top management of the same hotel chain who visit the hotel for work purpose
8. Complimentary rate	H. is a discount rate offered to guests, normally in low seasons, with bundles of other products / services included in the rate

b) Meal Options Included in the Room Rate

Some hotels offer meal options to guests when they reserve rooms. Four common meal options are described in Table 2.8 below.

Meal Options	Description
European Plan (EP)	Room only
Continental Plan (CP)	Room with breakfast
Modified American Plan (MAP)	Room with 2 meals, usually breakfast and dinner
American Plan (AP)	Room with 3 meals, i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner. Afternoon tea is also included in some hotels

Table 2.8 – Meal Options in Room Rate

c) Other Related Products and Services

It is assumed that a guest who pays a room charge is not only provided with the right to stay in a guest room but to use other related products and services. Following shows some common examples of products and services which can be included in the room rate.

- Wake-up call service;
- Safe deposit box;
- Free internet and Wi-Fi access;
- Room cleaning service;
- Turn down service;
- Swimming pool;



- Gymnasium;
- Valet parking;
- Free shuttle service;
- Bell service;
- In-room complimentary food and beverage items (e.g. tea and coffee bags);
- Express check-in service;
- Free access to executive lounge;
- Complimentary newspapers; or
- Welcome drinks at bars or lobby lounge, etc.



d) Hotel Brochures and Tariffs

Hotel brochures and tariffs are sales and marketing tools used by the hotel to provide information on the room rate (rack rate) charged and the facilities and services provided to the guests. In general, the brochures contain pictures of guest rooms, restaurant outlets and other facilities. Tariffs are usually printed separately as an insert, as the price may change every season or year.

ACTIVITY 2.15 – Comparison of Accommodation Products

Instructions:

- Work as a group of 4 to 5.

Step 1:

- Choose 2 different hotels in Hong Kong and go to their official websites.
- Try to find out the following information:
 1. How many room types do the hotels have?
 2. What kinds of room rate are available in the website?
 3. What are included in the room rates? Any meals, services or products are included in the room rates?
- Comment about the pricing of rooms and the target segments of the 2 hotels.

Step 2:

- Use internet search engines to find some online reservation agents.
E.g. www.hotel.hk;
www.hotel-hong-kong.com;
www.hongkonghotels.com
- Choose 1 online agent and check the rates of the 2 hotels selected in Step 1.
- Check and see if there are any differences of information shown in the hotel official websites and the online reservation agent.
E.g. Room rates;
Choices of room type; or
Auxiliary services or products included in the room rate.
- Comment about the differences of information shown in 2 different sources.

2.1.8 Types of Hotel Guests

Hotel guests can be classified according to their:

- Trip purpose – pleasure or business travelers
- Numbers – independent or group travelers
- Origin – local or overseas travelers

1. Leisure Travelers

They are individuals who travel to engage in leisure activities, outdoor recreation, relaxation, visiting friends and relatives or attending sports or cultural events.

2. Corporate Business Travelers

They are individuals whose frequent bookings are usually made by enterprises with reduced room rates. Business travelers travel to conduct business, attend business meetings or workshops, and engage in selling or purchasing products.

3. Free Independent Travelers (FITs)

They are sometimes referred to as "foreign independent travelers ". FITs are international tourists who purchase their own accommodation and make their own travel arrangements.

4. Group Inclusive Tours (GITs)

Tourists who travel together on package tours with accommodation and sometimes meals which are booked through travel agents. Group tourists tend to spend less and budget their spending allowance.

5. Domestic Tourists

They are local residents who stay at a hotel for special occasions and functions.

6. Conference Participants

Individuals who travel to attend conference and whose accommodation is usually reserved by himself/herself, his/her enterprise or a conference organiser before their arrival.

7. Very Important Persons (VIPs)

Very important persons may include celebrities, frequent-stay guests, guests in expensive rooms, guests with security risks and top executives from enterprises.

8. Incognito

They are guests who stay in a hotel with concealing identities so as to avoid notice and formal attention.

2.1.9 Types of Guest Requests

1. Guests with Special Needs

- Wheelchair; and
- Facilities for the disabled.

2. Business Travelers

- Broadband Internet service;
- International direct dialing (IDD) service;
- Local & international newspapers;
- Laundry/valet service;
- Shoes polishing service;
- Other business facilities, e.g. business centre, executive floor, fax machine, laptop computer, conference and meeting facilities.

3. Leisure Travelers and Holiday Makers

- Rollaway bed/ baby cot;
- Connecting rooms;
- In-room movies;
- Sports facilities, e.g. gymnasium, swimming pool;
- Spa facilities for beauty and health treatments, e.g. massage, hydrotherapy, facials and intensive foot and hand therapies;
- Baby sitting service.

4 Other Requests

- In-room dining (Room service);

- Doctor service;
- Smoke-free guest room;
- Room make-up service;
- Alteration & mending service;
- Repair and maintenance service;
- Food & beverage enquiries, e.g. hours and location of meals.

2.2 Introduction to the Hotel Operations

2.2.1 Hotel Ownership

Another way to classify hotels is by their ownership, which can be:

1. Private

An independent hotel owned by a person/partnership/private enterprise, e.g. Shamrock Hotel.

2. Local Group

Several hotels owned by a local enterprise, e.g. Harbour Grand Hong Kong, The Kowloon Hotel, Harbour Plaza Hong Kong, Harbour Plaza Metropolis, Harbour Plaza North Point and Harbour Plaza Resort City are all owned by Harbour Plaza Hotels & Resorts.

3. International Group

A hotel which is part of an international chain of hotels, e.g. JW Marriott Hotel Hong Kong is part of the Marriott International, Inc.

2.2.2 Modes of Hotel Management

Hotels can be operated in one of the following ways:

1. Independently Owned and Operated

These can be independent hotels, with no affiliation, that are being managed by the owners of the properties.

2. Management Contract

Management contracts are hotel management enterprises which operate properties owned by other entities. In some cases, the hotel owners may arrange to run their properties through a management contract with an enterprise that specialises in managing hotels. The reason for this is that the owner may not:

- Have the necessary expertise; or
- Desire to become involved in the operation of the hotel.

Below is a summary of advantages and disadvantages of management contract to both hotel owners and management enterprises.

	Advantages of management contract	Disadvantages of management contract
Hotel owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acquisition of operational expertise which can reduce the chance of business failure and enhance the services quality; - Gain national or international recognition for the hotel if it is operated by a reputable management enterprise; - The owners are not required to be involved in hotel's operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lost of operational control; - Financially liable for all costs, expenses and losses of the hotel; - The management enterprise may have less incentive and morale in managing the hotel if only a fixed management fee is paid without any sharing of profits.

Management enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receive a management fee during the contract period regardless of the hotel performance; - Little or no up-front financing or equity involved; - Management contract period can last for five, ten or twenty years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over dependence on owner for providing necessary funds in operations; - Minimum input in ownership decisions, such as the transfer of hotel ownership from the owner to another buyer; - No extra rewards for good business performance if the management contract is run in a fee structure without any incentive schemes.
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Table 2.8 – Advantages and Disadvantages of Management Contract to Owners and Management Enterprises

3. Franchising

Some investors prefer to use the franchising concept in running the hotel. Franchising in the hospitality industry is a concept that:

- Allows interested investors to use a enterprise's (the franchisor) name and business format;
- Is made up of properties where the franchisees agree to run the hotel in accordance with the strict guidelines set by the franchisor; and
- Allows a enterprise to expand more rapidly by using others' capital.

Below is a summary of advantages and disadvantages of franchising to both franchisees and franchisors.

	Advantages of franchising	Disadvantages of franchising
Franchisees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtain from the franchisor the expertise in doing business such as site selection, planning, pre-opening training, operations manuals, information management, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to follow the standard set by franchisors without any tolerance of modifications in operations; - Need to pay for a joining fee and an ongoing fee which means

	<p>central reservation system, field support, quality control, purchasing, advertising, marketing, new products and concepts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acquire a brand name with regional or national recognition; - The franchisee has complete control and responsibility over the daily operation of the property. 	<p>sacrificing some of the revenues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risks of termination of contracts or no continuation of new contract if franchisor wants to take the rights of operation back.
Franchisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receive a joining fee and an ongoing fee from the franchisee; - Expend the business and market share more rapidly without heavy investment; - Lower the risk of business loss by using franchisees' investment to expand the chains in new locations and markets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Franchisees may fail to follow the standard set by the franchisors and so may affect the quality of services provided to customers; - The trade name can be spoiled by misfits of franchisees; - The franchisor has to disclose confidential information to franchisees and this may constitute a risk to the business.

Table 2.9 – Advantages and Disadvantages of Franchising to Franchisees and Franchisors

- **Benefits for the franchisee:**

4. Referrals

Referral associations, e.g. Leading Hotels of the World (LHW), offer to hotels similar benefits as franchising, but at a lower cost. Some hotels choose to become a referral property. This means that the property is being operated as an independent hotel in association with a certain chain. These hotels refer guests to one another's properties and share a centralised reservation system, a common logo, image, or advertising slogan. Hotels pay an initial fee to join a referral association and further fees are based on services required. As the property has already been physically developed, the owner may want assistance only with marketing, advertising, management, or

reservation referral. In addition, guests may find more variation among the referral properties as size and appearance standards are less stringent than those in a franchise agreement. However, every hotel is assessed and checked regularly to ensure that it maintains the highest standards.

ACTIVITY 2.16

State two drawbacks for a franchisee joining a franchise enterprise.

ACTIVITY 2.17

Browse the website and find out two international hotel chains that provide management contract and franchising services to the hotel owners.

2.2.3 Hotel Departments



1. Classifications of Hotel Departments

Besides classifying units or departments according to their functions as mentioned in the previous section, there are also two other types of classification which are commonly used in describing the nature of hotel departments:

1. 'Revenue centered' and 'Cost centered' Departments; and
2. 'Front-of-the-house' and 'Back-of-the-house' Departments.

a) Revenue Centered and Cost Centered Departments

Instead of segmenting a hotel structure into departments according to their functions, some hotels would also group their departments or units into two different categories: revenue centers and cost centers.



'**Revenue centers**' refer to those departments or units which generate direct income to the hotel through the provision of goods and services to guests, e.g. front desk, restaurants, room service, gift shop and business center.



'**Cost centers**', which are also interpreted as 'support centers', mainly assist the functioning of revenue centers with no generations of any direct income for the hotel, e.g. human resources, purchasing, accounting and engineering departments. This classification is particularly useful for the accounting

department in summarizing the performances of different units under these two main categories.

b) Front-of-the-House and Back-of-the-House Departments

Besides the revenue centered and cost centered classifications, it is quite common that hotels would also group their units or areas into ‘front-of-the-house’ and ‘back-of-the-house’.

‘**Front-of-the-house**’ refers to those departments or areas which are accessible and visible by guests, e.g. front desk



counters, restaurants, concierge and bell services. They are the points of service encounters where service staff usually have direct contacts and interactions with guests.



‘**Back-of-the-house**’, on the contrary, refers to those departments or areas which rarely have staff-to-guest interactions, e.g. kitchen, housekeeping, human resources and engineering departments. It should be emphasized that some ‘back-of-the-house’ positions would also come across and interact with guests. For example, a room attendant may meet a guest while cleaning the guest rooms. However, they are not considered as ‘front-of-the-house’ positions since their major duty is room cleaning rather than communicating with their guests.

ACTIVITY 2.1.8 – Classifications of Hotel Departments

Questions:

By referring to the photos provided below:

1. Identity whether they are ‘revenue centered’(R) or ‘cost centered’(C) units.
2. Identity whether they are ‘front-of-the-house’(F) or ‘back-of-the-house’(B) units.



(a) Kitchen



(b) Bar



(c) Free airport shuttle



(d) Engineering department



(e) Front desk



(f) Security department

2. Organization of Hotel Departments and Their Functions

The day-to-day operations of a hotel are the key factors determining the success or failure of its service. It is necessary to understand the structure of hotels in order to get an overview of how the organisation fits together.

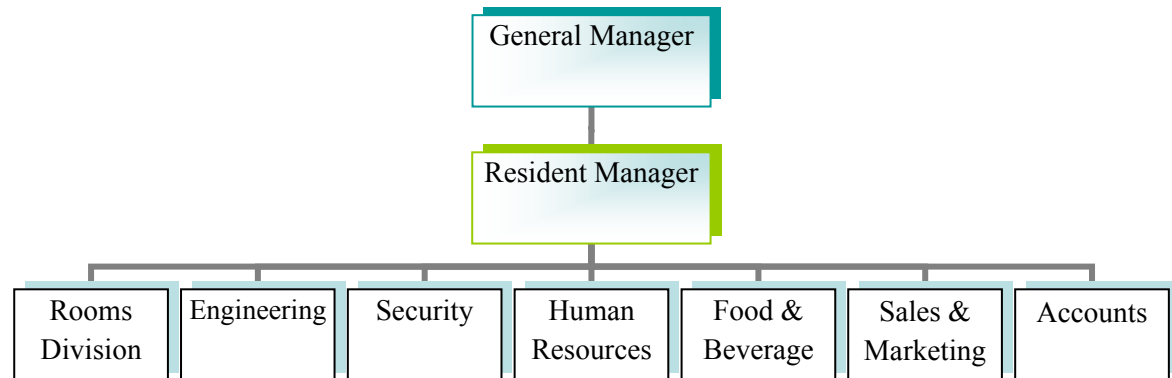


Figure 2.3 – Major departments of a five-star hotel

Regardless of the size of a hotel, the organisational structure will be basically the same. It is usually divided into several distinct departments, each responsible for a particular area of work. The larger the hotel is and the more facilities it offered, the more specialised the departments become. For example, the front office and housekeeping department are under the control of the director of rooms.

a) The Duties of Key Executives

(i) *General Manager*

The main responsibilities of the general manager (GM) include:

- Providing leadership to the management team;
- Coordinating the work of all departments;
- Participating in the formulation of hotel policies and strategies;
- Leading the hotel staff in meeting the financial, environmental and community responsibilities;and
- Assuming full responsibilities for the overall performance of the hotel.

(ii) Resident Manager

The main responsibilities of the resident manager include:

- Holding a major responsibility in developing and executing plans developed by the owner(s), the general manager and other members of the management team;
- Checking on operations, providing feedback and offering assistance when needed;
- Completing, reviewing and summarizing statistical reports and sharing them with the general manager; and
- Assuming responsibilities for the daily operations and management of the hotel.

b) Functions of Major Hotel Departments

(i) Engineering

The engineering department is responsible for maintaining the physical plant of the hotel such as electricity, plumbing, air conditioning, heating and elevator systems; and for overseeing all mechanical and technical conditions of the hotel.

(ii) Security

Security is an important concern in every hotel. The security department is responsible for implementing procedures which aim at protecting the safety and security of hotel guests, visitors, hotel employees and the hotel itself. Examples include monitoring surveillance equipment, patrolling the hotel premises and maintaining security alarm systems.

(iii) Human Resources

The human resources (personnel and training) department is responsible for hiring, orientation, training, wages and benefit administration, labour relations, employee relations, and staff development.

(iv) Food and Beverage

The food and beverage (F&B) department provides food and beverage services to the hotel guests and visitors through a variety of outlets and facilities/services. Examples include lounge, bar, coffee shop, restaurants, banquet service, room service (also called in-room dining) and cake shop.

(v) Sales and Marketing

The main functions of the sales and marketing department involve generating new businesses for the hotel, coordinating advertising, as well as sales promotions and public relations activities aiming at enhancing the hotel's image.

(vi) Accounts

The accounts department is headed by the financial controller who, as a key member of the management team, can guide the hotel to an increasing profitability through better control and asset management. In addition, this department is responsible for monitoring all of the financial activities of a hotel. Examples include overseeing accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, and cost control systems of the hotel; keeping records of assets, liabilities and financial transaction of the hotel; preparing the monthly profit-and-loss statement, coordinating with purchasing department and information technology department, and handling guests s' inquiries about billing.

The functions of **Rooms Division** will be covered in detail in Unit 2.2.4.

One effective way to examine how a hotel can be operated is by studying the organizational structure and the functions performed by different departments. Referring to section 2.2.3, try to complete Activity 2.19 and test your understanding about the functions of some hotel departments.

ACTIVITY 2.19 – Functions of Major Hotel Departments

Try to read the cases provided in the right hand side and think about which department should be responsible for handling different situations. Use lines to match them up if appropriate.

Hotel Departments	Cases
1. Rooms Divisions	A. A customer has found that his watch being kept in his room is missing.
2. Engineering	B. A customer has just arrived to the hotel and would like to get a room for tonight.
3. Security	C. A customer wants to order the room service.
4. Human Resources	D. A customer complained that his in-room telephone is not working.
5. Food and Beverage	E. A hotel is planning to launch a club membership program to attract more business.
6. Sales and Marketing	F. A hotel's GM wants to know the performance of the hotel in the last 3 months.
7. Accounting	G. A hotel's staff is receiving training in the first day of her employment.

2.2.4 Rooms Division

Introduction to the Rooms Division

'Rooms' as the core products of a hotel business are managed by the department of 'rooms division'. However, not all hotels, particularly some small-scaled ones have rooms division due to their limited room numbers and human resources. By referring to Figure 2.5 – Organisation of the rooms division, it has been mentioned that rooms division usually comprises two major departments – front office and housekeeping. In fact, a typical structure of the rooms division also comprises other sub-units as shown in Figure 2.4 below:

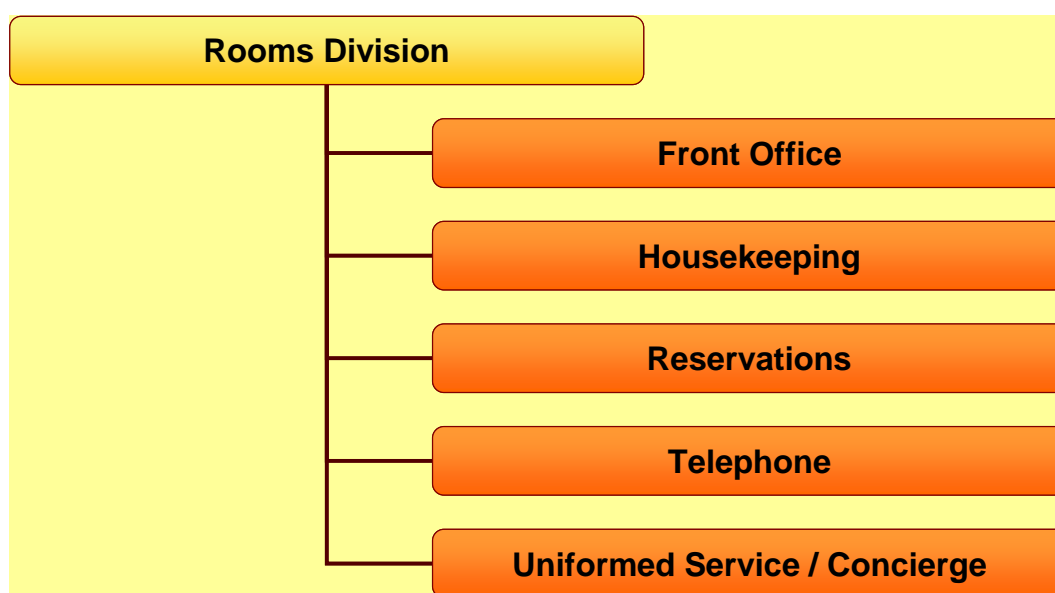


Figure 2.4 – Departmental Structure of Rooms Division

When compared with the rooms division chart provided in Figure 2.5 – Organisation of the Rooms Division, it can be seen that three more sub-units: reservations, telephone and uniformed service are put under rooms division. Sometimes, these three departments are grouped under the front office for simplicity reason (Please refer to Figure 2.6 for an example of front office organisation chart in a large hotel).

In general, the rooms division comprises two major departments, the front office and housekeeping, which are involved in the sales or services of rooms to guests.

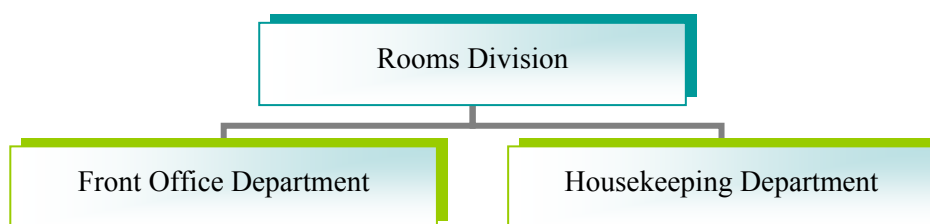


Figure 2.5 – Organisation of the Rooms Division

On the other hand, there are some reasons why hotels would prefer to combine the front office and housekeeping departments into one single division. As front office depends heavily on housekeeping for their cleaning of rooms before they can be sold to the guests, there are always conflicts and pressure among staff of the two departments. Managers of the two major departments would find it quite difficult to resolve problems and it is quite obvious that they may sometimes have bias in protecting their own staff. The position of director in rooms division helps solving this problem as he/she is the only one who manages both departments. The position requires the manager to have solid experience in both front office and housekeeping who will have a better understanding of the operations and strategies in handling the conflicts between the two departments.

ACTIVITY 2.20 – Conflicts Between Front Office and Housekeeping Departments

Think about the following situations and how they may lead to conflicts between the front office and housekeeping departments.

Situations:	Possible Consequences:
1. A VIP kept asking the front desk to change his rooms for several times in one single day.	
2. A guest found out that the room she had just checked –in had no signs of cleaning by room attendant.	
3. Too many walk-ins requested for rooms at 2:30 p.m. and not enough clean rooms were available at the moment.	
4. A front desk clerk forgot to update and input the ‘Do Not Disturb’ request of a guest in the morning.	

Note –The director of rooms is responsible to the general manager for the effective leadership and smooth operation of all departments that make up the rooms division.



Front desk counter

2.2.5 Front Office Department

1. Front Office Operations

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



Front desk clerk

The three main functions of the front office are as follows:

1. Selling rooms;
2. Maintaining balanced guest accounts; and
3. Providing services and information to guests.

2. Organisation of Front Office Department

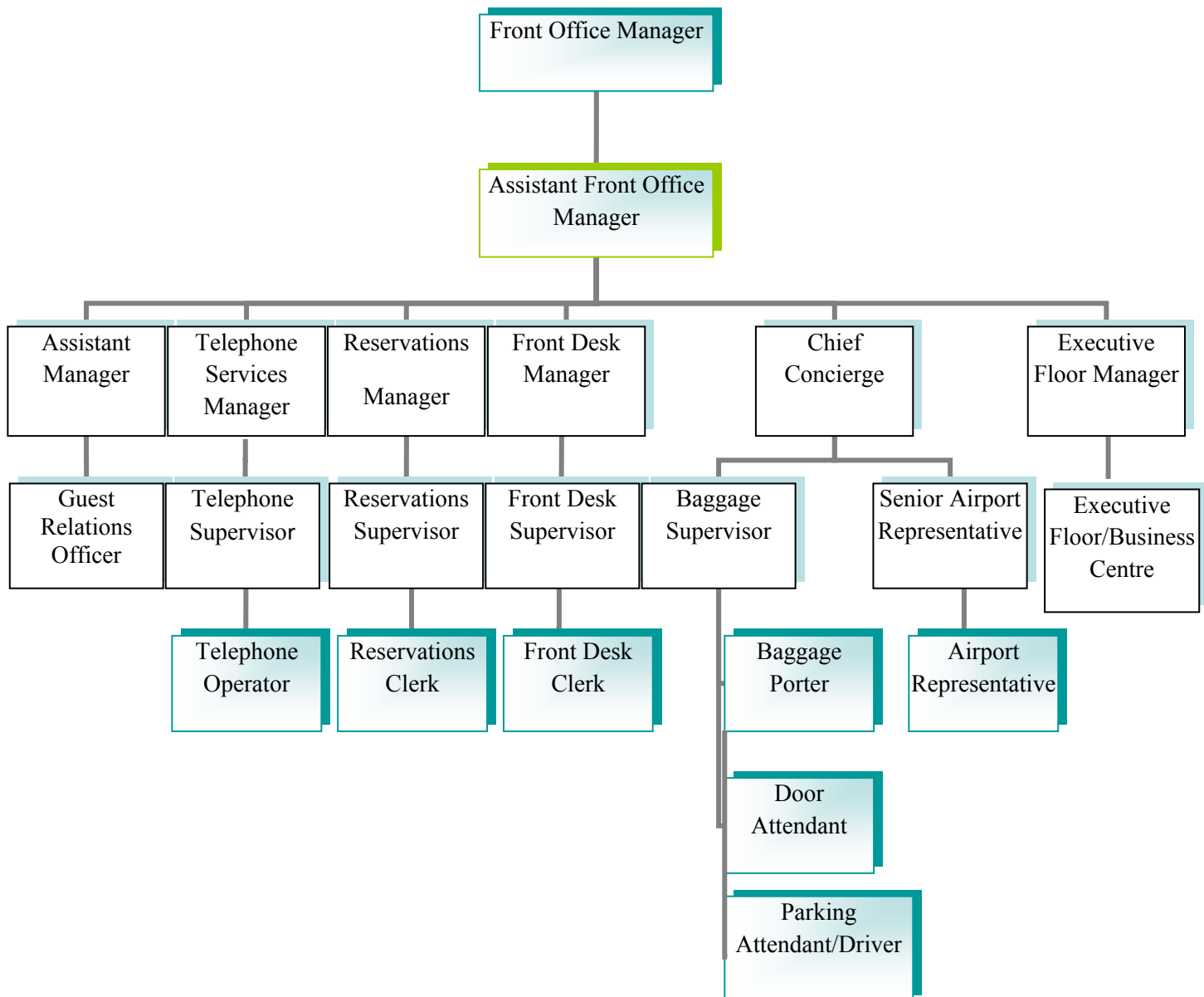


Figure 2.6 – Front Office Organisation Chart of a Large Hotel

Figure 2.6 shows an organizational chart for a front office. This illustrates the structure and lines of communication which operate within the front office.

3. Duties of Key Positions

a) **Front Office Manager**

The front office department is headed by the front office manager (FOM) whose main duty is to enhance guest services by constantly developing services to meet guests' needs.

The FOM performs the following duties:

- Monitoring reservation status;
- Looking over market mix and preparing occupancy forecasts;
- Determining rate structures and supervising implementation of rate policies;
- Reviewing previous night's occupancy and average room rate;
- Reviewing arrivals and departures for the day and the next day;
- Making staffing adjustments needed for arrivals and departures; and
- Reviewing the VIP list, checking VIP rooms, meeting VIPs and entertaining them.

b) **Assistant Manager & Guest Relations Officer**

The Assistant Manager and the Guest Relations Officer also serve the guests from a separate desk located in the lobby of the hotel.

(i) Assistant Manager

The Assistant Manager represents the management in handling the daily operations of the hotel and could directly report to the General Manager in some hotels. Duties include:

- Welcoming VIPs upon check-in;
- Conducting guest relations role;
- Handling efficiently all inquiries and complaints of guests; and
- Ensuring the smooth functioning of all departments in the hotel.

(ii) Guest Relations Officer

The Guest Relations Officer reports to the Assistant Manager. Duties include:

- Greeting all arriving individual guests, especially those under commercial accounts;
- Providing local information for guests;
- Promoting in-house functions, facilities and services; and
- Assisting front desk staff when they are busy and assisting guest to check out.

c) Telephone

The telephone department is headed by the telephone services manager. The telephone supervisor and telephone operator process all incoming and outgoing calls through the hotel switchboard. Staff in this department generally possesses good language and communication skills. The members need to:

- Provide general information regarding the hotel or local attractions to guests over the telephone;
- Place international calls, morning calls and wake-up calls as required by guests;
- Administer the paging system of the hotel, which provides a communication service between certain hotel staff and management staff who are not always in their offices;
- Administer the in-room movie system of the hotel;
- Stay familiar with the names of Very Important Persons (VIPs) in the hotel;
- Protect guest privacy by not disclosing room number, guest information and reporting suspicious person;
- Communicate weather emergency to management, engineering, security and guests; and
- Perform the role of communications centre in the event of emergency.

In order to provide better service, some hotels have introduced the “one-stop service” with all guest requests being carried out through the telephone department. For example, if a guest called in and wanted to place a booking with the coffee shop, the line would be transferred by the telephone operator to the coffee shop in the past. With the “one stop service”, the telephone operator will take the booking for the guest. This can speed up the booking process and leave the guest a better impression.

d) Reservations

The reservations manager takes charge of this section and makes decisions on whether room reservations/bookings should be accepted when the hotel is fully booked. That is, to stop taking room reservations or to allow overbooking of rooms.

The reservations supervisor will monitor closely all the room reservations taken and report to the reservations manager when abnormal situations happen. For example, there is a larger number of room cancellations than usual.

Reservations Clerk

Duties include:

- Handle reservation request and prepare reservation confirmation slips;
- Request guests to confirm or guarantee their room reservations;
- Keep records of the details of each reservation and the number of room reservation taken for each night;
- Provide the front desk with details of room reservation due to arrive the next day;
- Prepare VIP lists; and
- Update guest history records.

Reservations may originate from different sources, including:

- Direct reservation via telephone, fax, letter, e-mail or Internet;

- Reservation network systems such as Leading Hotels of the World (LHW);
- Travel agents;
- Tour operators;
- Meeting planners; or
- Walk-in.

When a reservation request is accepted, the details of the room reservation such as guest name(s), staying period, room type and rate, method of payment, guest contact information and special requests will be recorded on a reservation form, as shown in figure 2.7, and in the computer.

It is common practice for hotels to overbook during peak season in order to ensure full occupancy as some guests are likely not to show up. Overbooking refers to a situation when the hotel takes more reservations than the number of its rooms to accommodate. Usually, reservations clerk will request guests to guarantee their booking during peak season.

For guaranteed reservation, hotel will hold the room for the guest overnight or during the guaranteed period as the guest has prepaid for the room and no refund will be given if the guest does not show up.

By contrast, a non-guaranteed reservation means that the hotel will hold the room until a stated cancellation time, normally up to 6 p.m. on the arrival date and then release the room for sale if the guest does not arrive.

RESERVATION FORM			
Title	Surname	First Name	Second Name
Arrival Date:		Departure Date:	
Flight/Time:		Flight/Time:	
No. of Persons:		No. of Rooms/Room Type:	
Room Rate: _____			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate	Travel Agent	Airline	Courtesy
Discount	Discount	Discount	Package
Transportation Required:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Airport to Hotel	Hotel to Airport	Round Trip	
Billing Instruction:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guest A/C	Room on Company	All Expenses on Company	Other: _____
Guaranteed By:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Company letter/fax/e-mail	Fax	Deposit	
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card No.: _____ Expiry Date: _____			
Company Name:			
Telephone/Fax no.:		Reserved by:	
E-mail Address:			
Confirmation: Yes/No			
Remarks:			
Approved by:		Taken by:	
		Date:	

Figure 2.7 – Reservation form

e) **Front Desk (Reception)**

The front desk is headed by the **front desk manager** whose main duty is to ensure that the hotel achieves the highest possible level of room occupancy and the maximum revenue.

(i) *Front Desk Supervisor (Reception Supervisor)*

Duties include:

- Overseeing the smooth running of the front desk;
- Compiling duty roster;
- Greeting important guests (VIPs);
- Assigning rooms to guests;
- Dealing with group arrivals; and
- Handling guest requests such as room change and complaints not being able to be handled by subordinates.

(ii) *Front Desk Clerk (Receptionist)*

Duties include:

- Greeting the guest;
- Providing information and promoting hotel facilities and services to guests;
- Checking in the guest;
- Maintaining guest account;
- Checking out the guest;
- Administering the safe deposit system of the hotel; and
- Providing foreign currency exchange service to guest.

f) **Concierge**

The concierge comprises of a large group of uniformed staff, including:

- Chief Concierge;
- Airport Representative;
- Driver;
- Parking Attendant;
- Door Attendant;
- Baggage Porter; and
- Baggage Supervisor.

(i) *Chief Concierge*

The chief concierge is the overall in charge of this section. He/she normally works at a desk in the main foyer. The following guest services are provided by the concierge:

- Providing information/advice on hotel products/services, entertainment, attractions, sightseeing tours and local restaurants;
- Confirming airline passages and purchasing airline tickets;
- Reserving tables at restaurants and tickets to shows;
- Arranging the hire of hotel limousine and other transportation service such as a private jet; and
- Handling guest requests and inquiries, e.g. shopping request and an inquiry concerning the direction to a local bank.

(ii) *Airport Representative*

Duties include:

- Greeting hotel guests at the airport;
- Arranging hotel transportation for guests from the airport to the hotel;

- Answering inquiries from guests about the different means of transportation available from the airport to the hotel such as airport express train, airport shuttle and bus;
- Taking hotel room bookings;
- Assisting departing guests at the airport; and
- Liaising with airlines for special arrangements such as wheelchair for guests and the handling of guest baggage lost by the airlines.

(iii) Driver

Duties include:

- Taking guests to and from the airport; and
- Acting as personal driver for guest upon request such as taking guest to his office or for sightseeing tour.

(iv) Parking Attendant

Duties include:

- Parking cars for guests patronising the hotel; and
- Assisting the door attendant in ensuring that traffic at the main entrance is smooth.

(v) Door Attendant

In general, the door attendant works outside the hotel's entrance.

Duties include:

- Greeting all new arrivals;
- Providing door service to guests;
- Summoning baggage porter to assist arriving guests;
- Calling taxis and providing the hotel address card for guests;

- Paying taxi fare on behalf of the hotel guests who do not have local currencies; and
- Directing traffic and parking of vehicles at the main entrance.

(vi) Baggage Supervisor (Bell Captain)

Duties include:

- Answering telephone calls from guests regarding baggage pick up from room;
- Assigning baggage porter to handle the guest baggage;
- Receiving guest article, such as a tailor-made shirt from outsider, and assigning a baggage porter to deliver it to the guest room; and
- Handling guest requests for postal services such as collecting the postage fee of sending a parcel from the guest.

(vii) Baggage Porter (Bell Attendant)

Duties include:

- Handling guest baggage in and out of the hotel;
- Escorting check-in guests from the front desk to their rooms and introducing facilities in the room;
- Running errands for the executive office and hotel guests such as going to the post office buying stamps/sending parcels, doing grocery shopping and obtaining visa for guests;
- Delivering to guest room newspapers, mail, fax, message and parcel, etc; and
- Handling storage of guest baggage/belongings for late check-out, next arrival or outsiders to pick up.



Hotel entrance

g) The Executive Floor

The executive floor manager oversees the smooth operation of the executive floors and business centre.

(i) The Executive Floor

Business travelers who require an environment conducive to business and privacy will choose to experience enhanced services in the executive floor for an additional fee. The executive floor(s) is usually the top floor(s) of a hotel. Guests of the executive floor will enjoy a range of complimentary exclusive privileges and benefits which vary from one hotel to another. Examples are as follows:

- Express check-in and check-out services on the executive floor;
- Complimentary breakfast buffet, afternoon tea, cocktails, evening hors d'oeuvres and all-day refreshments in the executive floor's lounge;
- Complimentary in-room local calls and high-speed Internet access;
- Garment ironing service;
- Complimentary use of the hotel's fitness centre, swimming pool and private use of the boardroom for one-hour per stay; and
- Personalised business and concierge services such as flight confirmation and hotel limousine arrangement.

(ii) Business Centre

Many hotels provide a business centre to both their business and leisure guests. The range of services and facilities provided may include business equipment, presentation supplies, computers, meeting and function space with wired or wireless Internet access, secretarial and translation services. Economy properties typically offer limited business services with self-serve options.

4. Relationship Between Front Office Department and Other Departments

The front office is the centre of guest transactions in a hotel and so often acts as the centre for collection and distribution of guest information. Such information may help other departments providing the best service to guests throughout the different stages of the guest cycle.

a) Housekeeping Department

The housekeeping department requires the following information from the front desk:

- Check-in, occupied and check-out rooms in order to organise room cleaning; and
- Special requests from guests, such as baby cot or extra blanket, etc., so that extra amenities and services can be provided to guests.

In return, the housekeeping department will provide the actual room status to the front desk for comparison with the computer record which ensures that the front desk has the correct room status. Any discrepancy found will be double checked by the Assistant Manager.

b) Engineering

The engineering department is responsible for maintaining properly the hotel facilities under the care of the front office department such as the proper of functioning of the guest lift.

c) Security

The front office needs to provide guest information to the security department in the event of emergency; such as fire alarm, power failure and so on. When guest reports loss of property to the front office, security department will be informed to handle the case together with front office's assistant manager.

d) Human Resources

The human resources department provides staff training and recruitment service to the front office. It also sets up the staff grooming and discipline standard for staff to follow.

e) Food and Beverage Department

The front desk will provide the food and beverage department with a guest room special amenities request form. The food & beverage department then arranges for item such as welcome fruit basket with fruits, chocolates and wine to be put in the guest room. For groups, the food & beverage department will need the front desk to provide information on meal arrangements so as to reserve seats in the outlets or conference rooms for guests' meals.

f) Sales and Marketing Department

The sales and marketing department needs to work closely with the front desk and reservations department for reservations of groups, tours and corporate bookings. The front desk will provide to the sales and marketing department an updated rooming list, see example on figure 2.8, with guest room number upon the arrival of tours or groups.

g) Accounts Department

Information concerning advance deposits received by the reservations department and payments received by the front desk must be recorded and passed to the accounts department which is responsible for monitoring guest accounts, checking credit limits and seeking settlements of guest accounts. Accounts department is responsible for compiling a list of credit-approved enterprises, which is needed by reservations and front desk when receiving bookings.

Rooming List of Samson Trading Company Ltd. (May 1-12, 2009)

Guest Name	Title	Nationality	Passport No.	Period of Stay	Preference	Room Type
Ms Wong Mei Bo	Liaison Officer	Chinese	G45889246	May 1 - May 12	Non- Smoking Room	Standard Room
Mr Chen Wei Kit	Vice President	Chinese	G27205533	May 1 - May 10	Smoking Room	Harbour Suite
Mr Peter Gibbs	Financial Controller	Australian	E2007201	May 1 - May 5	Non- Smoking Room	Deluxe Room
Ms Patricia Sand	Trading Manager	Australian	E6572458	May 4 - May 12	Non- Smoking Room	Deluxe Room
Mr Bill Lewis	Project Manager	American	107225422	May 4 - May 12	Smoking Room	Deluxe Room
Ms Devon Morton	Marketing Manager	Australian	E4470237	May 5 - May 10	Non-Smoking Room	Deluxe Room
Mr Dan Morris	Marketing Manager	Australian	E4589632	May 5 - May 10	Non- Smoking Room	Deluxe Room
Mr Anthony Beer	Treasury Manager	American	197520409	May 5 - May 9	Non- Smoking Room	Deluxe Room
Mr Tey Wing Fatt	Sales Manager	Singaporean	S7127001H	May 5 - May 8	Non- Smoking Room	Deluxe Room
Ms Yetty Thomson	Sales Manager	Australian	E2477082	May 5 - May 8	Non- Smoking Room	Deluxe Room
Mr Jason Herrick	Technical Support Manager	Australian	E7142355	May 5 - May 8	Non- Smoking Room	Superior Room
Ms Jill Steward	Technical Support Manager	Australian	E7568933	May 5 - May 8	Non- Smoking Room	Superior Room

Figure 2.8 – Rooming List

5. Main Duties of Front Desk

a) Registration and Check-in Procedures

Most of the hotels allow their guests to check-in at 2 p.m. or after. The registration procedures performed by receptionists should be efficient and accurate. These contribute to a positive first impression to guests upon their arrival. Figure 2.4 shows the standard procedures of registration at the front desk counter:

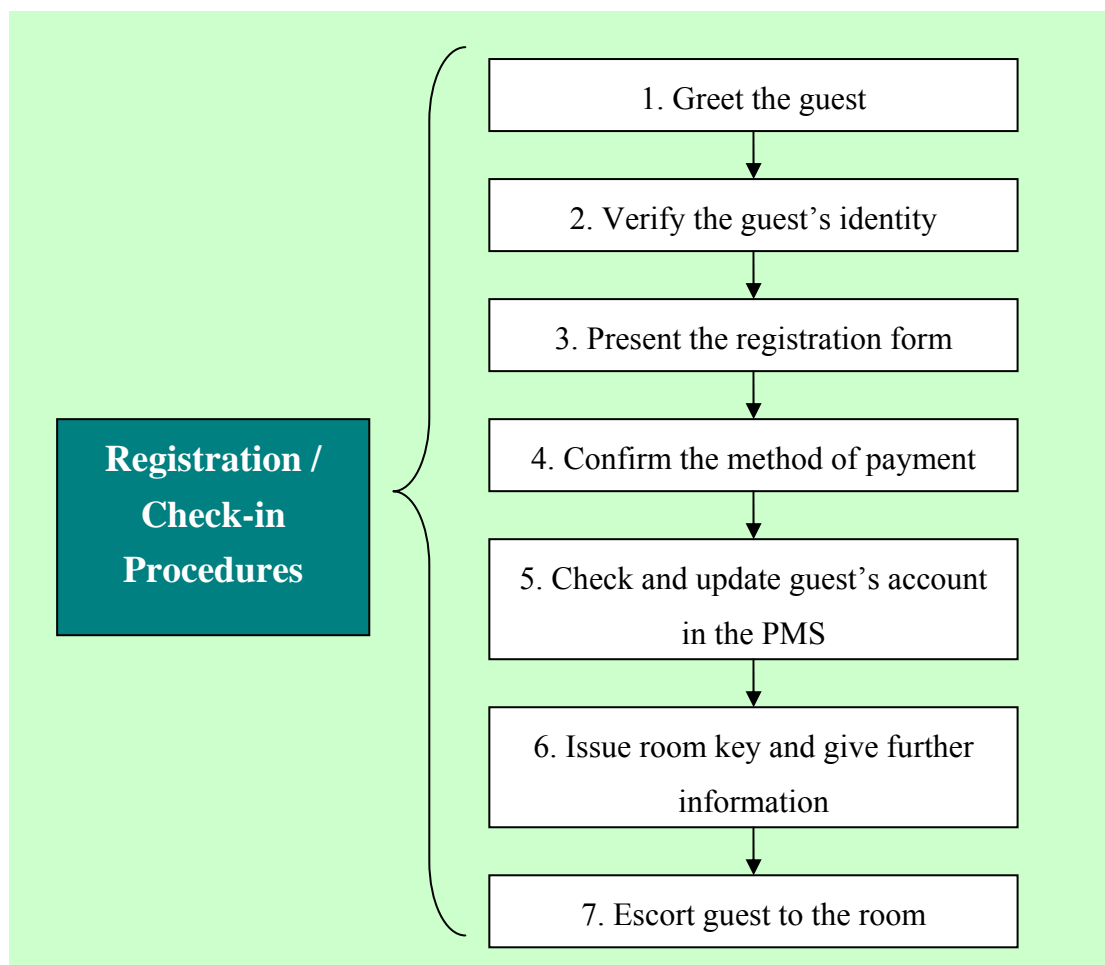


Figure 2.9— Registration / Check-in Procedures

(i) Greet the Guest

Receptionists should always be attentive to the presence of guests at the front door and lobby areas. They should give warm greetings to the guests when they approach to the front desk.

(ii) Verify the Guest's Identity

Ask if the guest would like to check-in. Verify the guest's identity by checking his/her passport, booking voucher and confirmation number.

*(iii) Present the Registration Form to the Guest*

Confirm booking information printed in the registration form with the guest. For example, room type, room rate, length of stay and special requests if any. Ask the guest to complete and sign the registration form if he/she agrees with the terms of accommodation arrangement.

*(iv) Confirm the Method of Payment*

If a credit card is used, check the guest's name, the card's validity and its date of expiry. For guests who prefer paying cash, make sure they have "paid in advance" (PIA) with cash deposit. Guests should also be reminded that they will not be allowed to post any charges to their guest accounts if no credit card is provided at the time of checking-in.



Procedures of handling other types of payment, e.g. personal checks or direct billings should also be handled with extra care.

(v) Check and Update the Information of the Guest's Account in PMS

Check if any mail, message or article is received before the guest's arrival. Select and assign a suitable room to the guest according to his/her booking information.

*(vi) Issue Room Key and Give Further Information*

While issuing the room key and giving direction to the guest, a receptionist should also take the chance to provide more information of the hotel. For example, the breakfast arrangement; the operation hours of hotel's outlets and facilities and; how to contact the hotel's staff for assistance during the stay, etc.

*(vii) Escort Guest to the Room*

Ask if the guest need assistance from the baggage attendant who can take the guest's baggage and escort the guest to the guest room.



Additional Information - Variations of Registration (Check-in) Procedures for Groups

The registration procedures of group guests (e.g. tours and event attendees) are different from the general procedures of checking-in an individual guest. In order to speed up the service process and prevent guests from waiting too long at the lobby, the following procedures are usually performed by the hotel receptionists.

(i) Pre-registration

Some preparation works can be performed by receptionists before group guests' arrivals, including the confirmation of room numbers and number of rooms available for groups. Key cards are always prepared by receptionists in advance according to the rooming lists provided by travel agents or event organizers.

*(ii) Group Check-in*

Some hotels have group check-in counters which specifically serve group guests. Tour escorts or event organizers check-in at the group check-in counter without the need of checking-in each guest individually.



Some hotels would also set up a tour assembly point for large groups by using meeting rooms if necessary. Such a practice can control the traffic of hotel lobby and enhance the comfort of guests upon their arrivals.



ACTIVITY 2.21 – Up-selling During the Check-in Process

By examining the check-in procedures of a front desk receptionist, please discuss with your classmates and answer the following questions:

- At which stage should a receptionist conduct up-selling during the check-in process?
- What kinds of products or services can be recommended by a receptionist in an up-selling task?
- In which situations should a receptionist forego up-selling?

Figure 2.10 shows the sample of a completed registration form. During the process of registration, the front desk clerk will request to see the guest's identity card or passport to check if the guest is an alien, for verification purpose. When all formalities are completed, the front desk clerk will issue the room key to the guest. The baggage porter will then take the guest's baggage and escort the guest to the guest room.

Registration Form**Welcome to Parkside Hotel**

Guest Name:		Mr. Brent David Ritchie		Room Number :	1718
Address:		8200 River Road Richmond BC Canada V6X 3P8		Date of Birth:	11 Oct 77
				Nationality:	Canadian
Tel/Fax No.:				Passport No.:	JP089556
E-mail Address:		britchie201@yahoo.com		Next Destination:	Canada
Occupation:		Engineer		Arrival Date:	12 Sep 07
				Flight/Time:	CX839/20:55
Company Name:				Departure Date:	14 Sep 07
				Flight/Time:	CX838/16:35
Room Type:		Deluxe Suite		No. of Nights:	2
Room Rate:		\$2300 (HKD) Room rate is subject to 10% Service Charge & 3% Government Tax		No. of Guests: (Adult/Child)	1/0
Payment Method:	<input type="checkbox"/> VISA	<input type="checkbox"/> MASTER	<input type="checkbox"/> AMEX	<input type="checkbox"/> JCB	<input type="checkbox"/> DINERS
	<input type="checkbox"/> CUP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 現金	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他 : _____		
Guest Signature: <u>Brent D. Ritchie</u>					
I understand that the guest signature on the registration form is authorized for use of the credit card on the file for payment of my account for this and future stays. I agree that my liability for this bill is not waived, and agree to be held personally liable in the event that the indicated person, company, or other third party billed fails to pay part or all of these charges.					
Express Check Out Service:			I hereby authorize Parkside Hotel to charge my credit card for all expenses pertaining to my stay.		
Signature of Credit Card Holder: _____				*Express check out is available for credit card paying guest.	
I understand that Parkside Hotel is not responsible for money, jewels or other valuables that have been misplaced, stolen or left in the guest rooms, meeting rooms, public areas, and family and/or hotel vehicles. Safe deposit boxes are available at the Front Desk.					

Figure 2.10— A Completed Registration Form

Note –Guests who arrive at the hotel without having made a reservation are known as walk-ins. It is common practice for hotel staff to obtain from the guest a substantial deposit or credit card imprint before checking the guest into the hotel.

ACTIVITY 2.22

Mr Christie, a walk-in guest, will stay in your hotel for one night only and will be fully responsible for all charges incurred. As a front desk clerk, how would you explain to the guest that you have to collect one night room rate (HK\$2,000.00) + 10% service charge + prevailing government room tax (e.g. 3%) + an extra HK\$ 1,000.00 for hotel signing privileges from him as the deposit for check-in?

ACTIVITY 2.23

Role play

In groups of 2, one student will act as a front desk clerk helping a guest, i.e. another student, to check-in. Answer the following questions asked by the check-in guest:

- Question 1:** Is it possible for me to check-out two hours later than the hotel's standard check-out time with no additional charge?
- Question 2:** Is there any show or concert that you could recommend to me?
- Question 3:** Where could I find foreign currency exchange service?
- Question 4:** Where would you recommend me to go for delicious Chinese cuisine?

b) Check-Out Procedures

The standard check-out time is always set at 12 p.m. or before. The check-out procedures are as important as check-in since guests would expect they can leave with no ‘troubles’ on their bills. Important issues that the receptionists should put into focus are payment collection, give assistance and create a positive parting impression to guests. Figure 2.11 shows the general procedures of checking-out a guest upon departure:

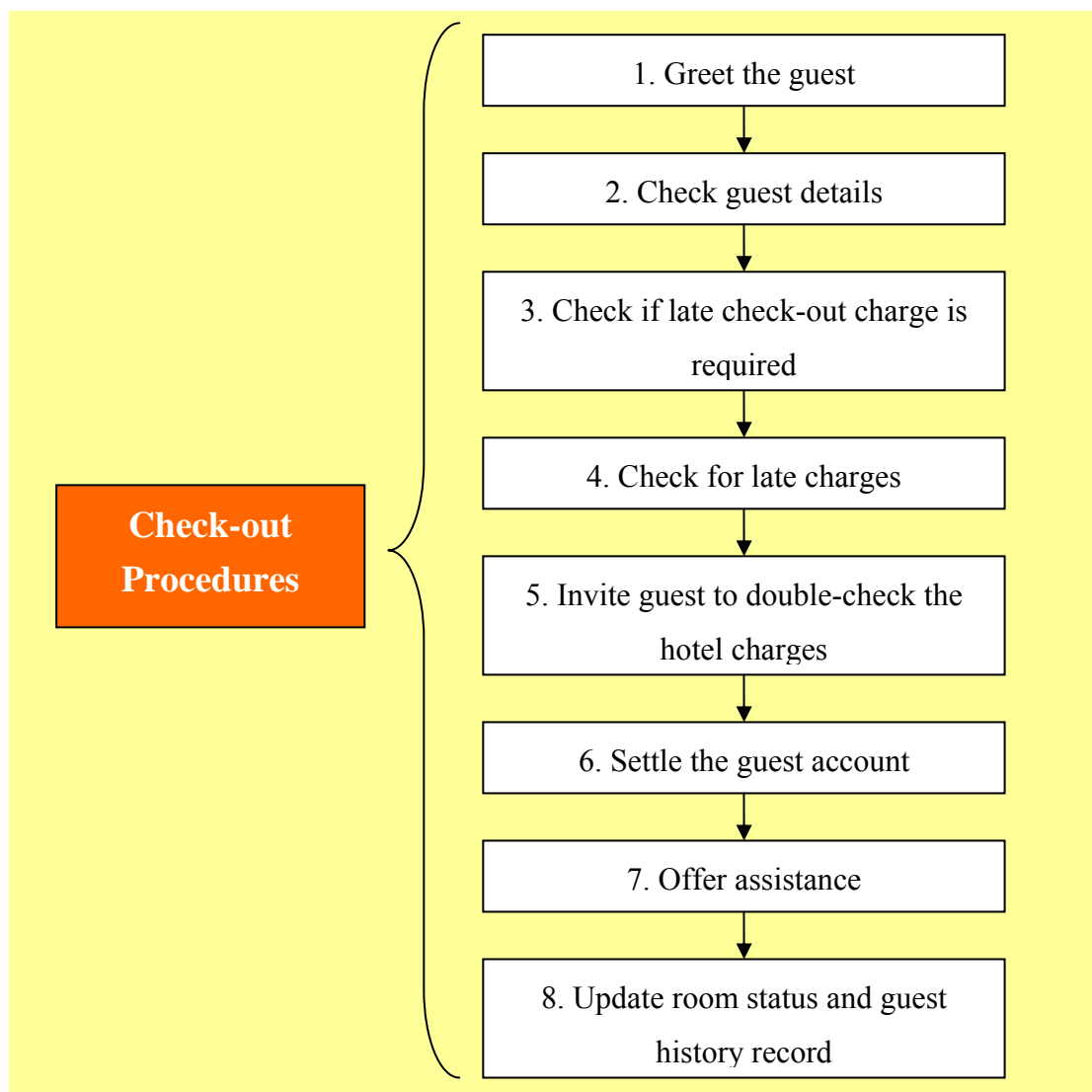


Figure 2.11– Check-out Procedures

(i) Greet the Guest

Same as the check-in procedures, greeting is the basic of a quality service to your guest. Through greeting, a receptionist can also take the chance to ask the guest for his/her comment about the stay.

(ii) Check Guest Details

It is important to check guest's details, e.g. the guest's name and room number. Guests with identical or similar names should be aware to avoid mistakes in the check-out process.



If the guest leaves earlier than expected, either departments will need to be informed. Double check with the guest so to make sure satisfactory services are provided to the guest during the stay. Ask the guest to return the room key. Check the corresponding room number if 'old-style' metallic keys are used in the property.

(iii) Check if Any Late Check-out Charges Should be Imposed

Normally, hotels would request their guests to check-out before 12pm. Receptionists should follow the hotel's policy for handling the cases of late check-out. Some hotels would charge 50% of the daily room rate for those who check-out before 6pm and a full rate is charged after 6pm.

(iv) Check for Late Charges

It is the responsibility of the receptionist to ask whether the guest has used some charged services while checking out. For example, the guest may check-out immediately after he/she has consumed



breakfast in the restaurant. The breakfast charge may not have been posted to the guest account by the restaurant staff if he/she is too busy in serving other tables at the moment. Consumption of mini-bar items is another common example of late charges which may require the help of room attendants in updating the status upon check-out. Any discrepancies could lead to unnecessary losses in hotel's revenue.

(v) Invite Guest to Double-Check the Hotel Charges

Produce guest folios (guest bills) for guest inspection and master folios (master bills) for tour escort's inspection. The receptionist should print and present the master to the guest for his/her checking before bill settlement. It is the responsibility of the receptionist to explain the charges to the guest if he/she has any questions and make corrections if necessary.



(vi) Settle the Guest Account

Re-confirm the method of payment. It is common that some guests, especially business travelers and tours would like to split their consumptions into two different folios (bills): **master** and **incidental**.

Generally, **master folios (master bills)** only include room and breakfast charges which should be paid by enterprises to cover the necessary expenses of their travelling staff or; by travel agents which have already received the payments from tourists included in packaged prices beforehand. Other personal expenses, such as telephone, spa, and in-room movies, would be put into the **incidental folios (incidental bills)** as guests' own responsibilities.



(vii) Offer Assistance

Ask if the guest need any assistance of the bell service, shuttle or arrangement of other transportations. Some may request the front desk to keep their baggage for a certain period of time before their departure. Receptionists should also take the chance to help the guests in making future reservations upon request, particularly reservations in other hotels under the same chain.



(viii) Update Room Status and Guest History Record

After checking out the guest, make sure to update the room status (i.e. from OD to VD) which facilitate room cleaning and make the room available for sale as efficiently as possible. The creation of a guest history record involves the transferring of guest's basic information, room preference and consumption record. Through the help of the new information technology, guest-history profiles can be automatically created and updated upon check-out by the property management system (PMS).

ACTIVITY 2.24 – Errors in Billing

The call accounting system has recorded a long-distance call made in Room 608. However, the guest said he has not made any call during his stay upon his departure.

Discuss with your classmates how a receptionist should respond to the guest in this case. Think about how the following may affect your decision:

- Number of people staying in the same room;
- Guest type, e.g. VIPs, frequent travelers or corporate business travelers, etc.;
- Room type and rate;
- Guest history record; and
- Duration of the call.

ACTIVITY 2.25

As a front desk clerk, you have been informed by Mr Schneider, a regular customer on own account, who receives daily newspaper and fruit basket that he has decided to leave now; one day earlier than expected. Fill in the reason(s) column below showing why the following departments need to be informed. The last one has been done for you as an example.

Department(s)	Reason(s)
Housekeeping	
Concierge	
Room Service (In-room Dining)	Stop delivering fruit basket the next day

c) **Handling Overbooking**

Overbooking occurs when a hotel takes more reservations than the number of rooms available. It is a common practice of hotels which contributes to a higher chance of full house while reducing the loss of no-shows and last minute cancellations. Major problems of overbooking should be noted, which include the loss of reputation, increase in guest dissatisfaction and complaints, etc.



Generally, receptionists should be able to anticipate overbooking and take appropriate actions prior to the guests' arrivals. Sometimes, it is possible to find additional rooms available for sale in the hotel property. For example, check whether OOO rooms can be fixed immediately by the engineering department (Refer to Table 2.13 for explanation of the term – OOO rooms) and any 'double up' reservations have been made, i.e. two reservations under the same person are made by mistake.



If no rooms are available, prioritize expected arrivals for room assignment according to hotel policy, e.g. put VIPs, guests with guaranteed reservation and frequent guests at top priorities. Contact and reserve rooms in sister hotels or hotels nearby before guests' arrivals.

For those who cannot get a room upon arrival, the hotel will have no choice but 'walking the guests'. It means that the hotel has to reject guests even they have made reservations. By turning a guest away who is supposed to get his/her room reserved, the hotel has breached the contract which can lead to legal actions of guests. Therefore, 'walking the guests' should only be handled by experienced receptionists or front desk managers. The proper procedures include the followings:

(i) Apologize to the Guest

As it is the hotel's own fault of overbooking, hotel staff should apologize to the guest with no excuse.

(ii) Provide Alternatives

Compensations are always provided by the hotel to please the unhappy guests which generally involve:

- Free room for the 1st night of stay in an alternate hotel;
- Free transportation to the alternate hotel;
- Free long distance calls;
- Fruit plates;
- Free room upgrade for future purchase; or
- Discount coupons for food and beverage consumptions, etc.

In case the guest has reserved more than one night in the hotel, try to invite him/her to come back in the remaining nights during the conversation if rooms are known to be available.

(iii) Provide Baggage Assistance and Transportation

Once the guest agrees with the hotel's arrangements, receptionist should ask the bell person to take care of the guest's baggage and arrange transportation to the designated hotel.

(iv) Follow-up Services

Call the designated hotels to pay special attention to the unhappy guests. Some hotels would request their duty managers or front desk managers to give personal calls to the unhappy guests so to make sure that they have no problems with their rooms in the alternate hotels.

ACTIVITY 2.26 – Advantages and Disadvantages of Overbooking

Instructions:

- Work as a group of 4 to 5.
- Discuss the following questions:
 1. What are the advantages of overbooking to a hotel?
 2. What are the disadvantages of overbooking to a hotel?
 3. What should be done in minimizing the problems of overbooking?
- Conclude and share your opinions to other groups in the class.

6. Guest Cycle

The operation of the front office department is mainly determined by the type and number of guest transactions which take place during the four different phases of the guest cycle as shown in Figure 2.12 and listed below:

- **Pre-arrival**— The stage where the guest makes room reservation.
- **Arrival**— The point when the guest arrives at the hotel.
- **Occupancy**— The period during which the guest stays in the hotel.
- **Departure**— The point when the guest checks out and leaves the hotel.

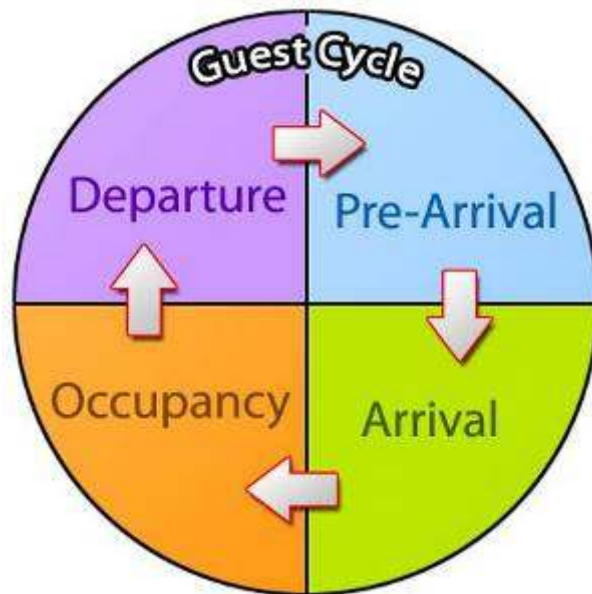


Figure 2.12 – The guest cycle

Complete Activity 2.27 to enhance your understanding of the various types of transactions and services which may occur between the guest and the hotel during different phases of the guest cycle.

ACTIVITY 2.27

Determine at which stage(s) of the guest cycle the following guest transaction or service could occur.

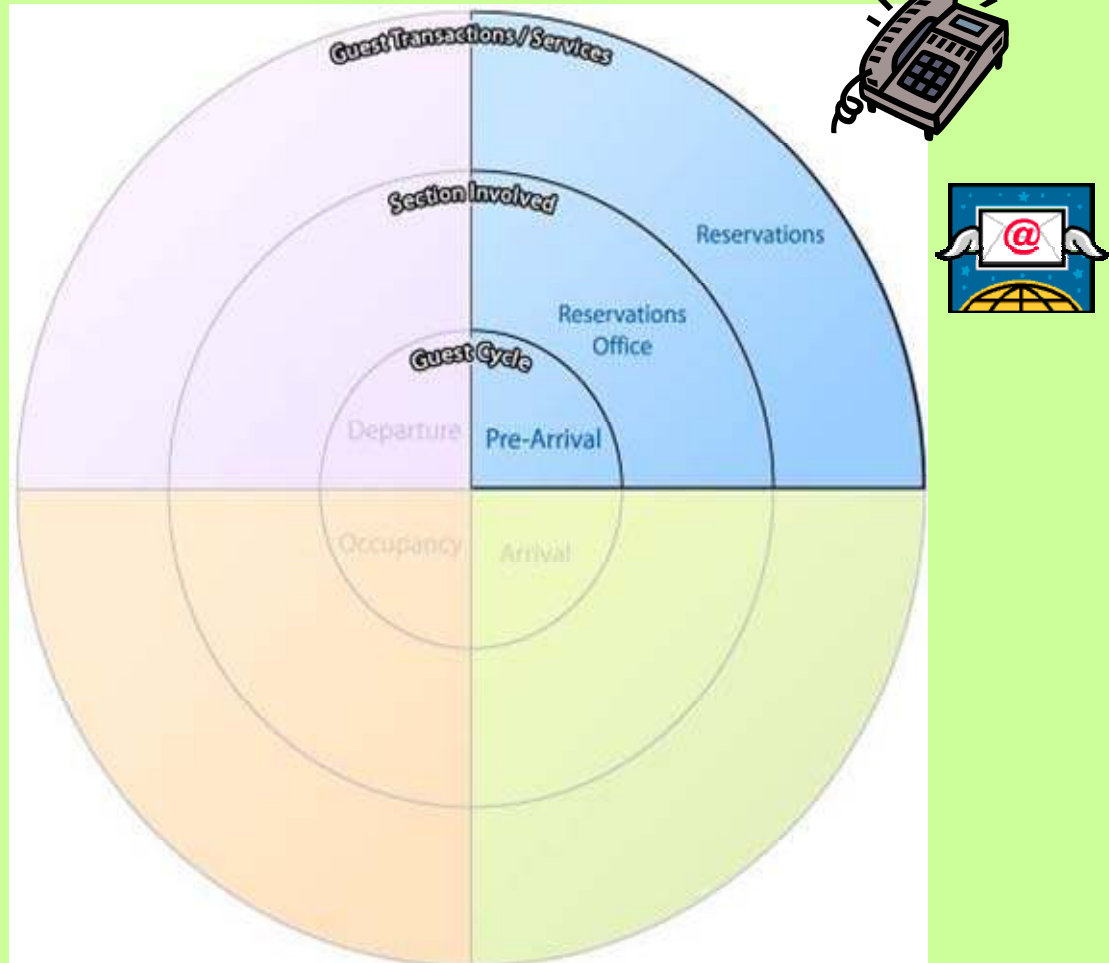
- a) Fill in the **Answer** column below with the correct alphabet (**A-D**) which denotes the four different stages of the guest cycle.

A – Pre-arrival	B – Arrival
C – Occupancy	D – Departure

The first one has been done as an example for you.

No.	Guest Transaction or Service	Answer(s)
1.	Reservation	A
2.	Mail and information	
3.	Transportation	
4.	Telephone call and message	
5.	Check-in and registration	
6.	Flight confirmation	
7.	Room assignment	
8.	Safe deposit	
9.	Issuing of key	
10.	Baggage handling	
11.	Maintaining guest account	
12.	Bill settlement	
13.	Issuing of breakfast coupon	
14.	Currency exchange	
15.	Wake-up call	
16.	Check-out	
17.	Booking of theatre ticket	

b) When you complete studying this section – 2.2.4 Front Office Operations, try this activity again by filling in your answers using the guest cycle provided below.



In Activity 2.27, we have learned that different types of guest transactions and services could occur in the four different phases of the guest cycle which are being handled mainly by the front office department. The following will explain how different sections of the front office department are being organised to handle these guest transactions.

7. Revenue From Room Sales and Sales Indicators

a) Revenue From Room Sales

Figure 2.13 shows the percentage distribution of hotel revenue in Year 2010 in Hong Kong. Similar to hotels worldwide, room sales normally contribute to the majority of a hotel's revenue, followed by sales in food & beverage sections. Variations on revenue contribution of different units occur in different types of hotels. For examples, the revenue of casino hotels are mainly from the gambling units, while charges in rooms and catering services are relatively cheap or even subsidized in order to attract more guests. Convention hotels and those which target for events would also have higher income from banqueting and consumption of meeting facilities when compared with other hotels in general. Small-scaled hotels with no restaurant outlets mainly depend on their revenue in room sales for survival.

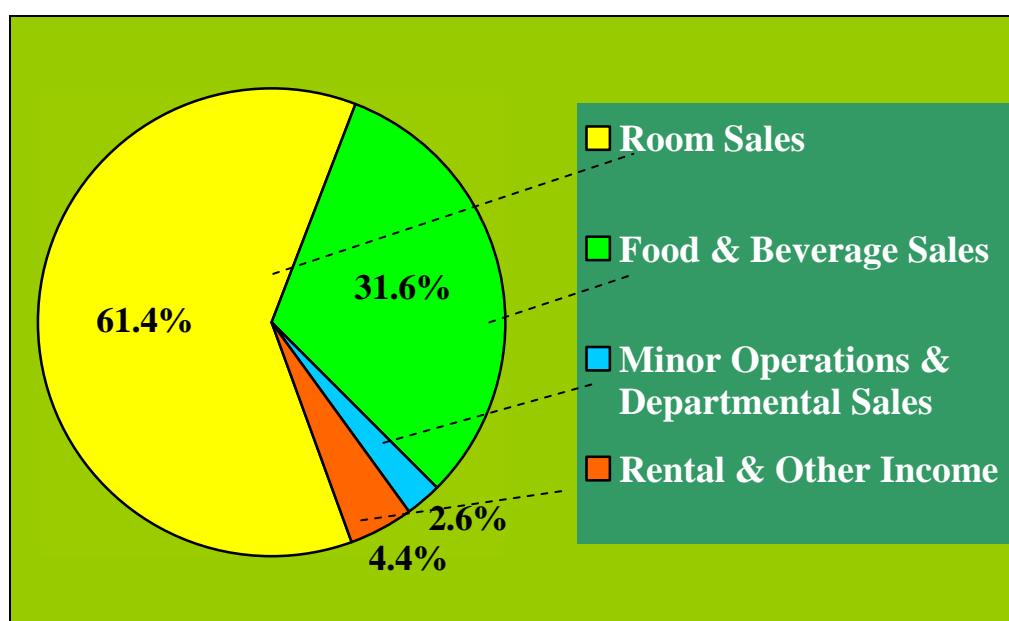


Figure 2.13 — Sources of Hotel Revenue in Hong Kong (Year 2010)



b) Sales Indicators

Sales indicators refer to how hotels count and measure their business performances. Some basic indicators which are applied by hotels include the followings:

(i) *Occupancy Rate*

‘Occupancy rate’ is a common sales indicator which tells how well the hotel has fully utilized the room resources to maximize profit. It is always the objective of hotels to achieve full-house, i.e. 100% occupancy, when all the rooms are sold out for the night. In Hong Kong, the hotels’ occupancy rates remain at around 80% to 87% (Year 2006 - 2010). The formula of occupancy rate is shown as below:



$$\text{Occupancy Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of Rooms Sold}}{\text{Total Number of Rooms in a Hotel}} \times 100\%$$

(ii) *Guests Per Occupied Room*



‘Guests per occupied room’ tells the ratio between guests staying in the hotel and the quantity of occupied rooms. Regardless of the room types available in the hotel, it gives a general idea of how many guests are being served in each room. The information would be useful for different departments, e.g. housekeeping department can refer to the guest ratio to estimate the consumption rate of guest supplies. The formula of guest per occupied room is shown as below:

$$\text{Guests Per Occupied Room} = \frac{\text{Number of Guests Staying in a Hotel}}{\text{Number of Rooms Occupied}}$$

(iii) *Average Daily Room Rate (ADR)*

While occupancy rate tells the ‘quantity’ of businesses, top management are also interested to know about the ‘quality’, i.e. how much they charge for a hotel room. The ‘average daily room rate’ is calculated which gives a general estimate of the average room charge received by a hotel, regardless of the differences in room types and rates. The formula of average daily room rate is shown as below:



$$\text{Average Daily Room Rate (ADR)} = \frac{\text{Room Revenue}}{\text{Number of Rooms Occupied}}$$

(iv) *Revenue Per Available Room (REVPAR)*

‘Revenue per available room’ (REVPAR) is similar to the ‘Average daily room rate’ (ADR) in indicating the hotel’s performance. The only difference between REVPAR and ADR is the denominator. Instead of just considering the actual number of rooms sold, hotels tend to use all rooms available in calculating the REVPAR, i.e. to include all vacant rooms, out-of-order rooms and rooms for ‘house use’ in calculation. The value is always smaller than the ADR which serves as a good means to check the ability of management in utilizing all room resources to maximize the hotel revenue. The formula of REVPAR is shown as below:



$$\text{Revenue Per Available Room (REVPAR)} = \frac{\text{Room Revenue}}{\text{Total Number of Hotel Rooms}}$$

ACTIVITY 2.23 – Calculations of Sales Indicators

A business hotel with a total of 310 rooms had recorded 405 guests staying in the property in a particular night. The PMS had shown 265 rooms occupied which has generated HKD 424,500 in room revenue. With the above information, please calculate the followings: *(Note - Please give your answers with 2 decimal places if necessary)*

1. Occupancy Rate
2. Guests Per Occupied Room
3. Average Daily Room Rate (ADR)
4. Revenue Per Available Room (REVPAR)

2.2.6 Housekeeping Department

1. Housekeeping Operations

The housekeeping department is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the guest rooms, public areas, office spaces and back of the house areas in the hotel so that the property is as fresh and attractive as its first day of business. For both business and leisure travellers, having a clean room is the basic requirement for their staying in a hotel. It is also supported by numerous surveys conducted by the hotel industry which constantly indicate cleanliness as the prime factor in guests' decision of selecting a hotel. A hotel which fails to provide clean rooms to their customers would lead to less businesses received by the hotel.

Therefore, the housekeeping department and its staff play a critical role to ensure the profit and success of the hotel. In general, it maintains the cleanliness of guest rooms and public areas in such a way that reflects the hotel's commitment to standards of excellence. In many hotels, the housekeeping department is the largest department in the hotel.

ACTIVITY 2.28

Brainstorming – Using the information you learned in the previous sections, imagine yourself as a tourist or business traveler, what kind of a hotel would you like to stay in? In three minutes, brainstorm with your partner a list of the qualities of an ideal hotel. Use as many adjectives or phrases as possible to describe your ideal hotel. Here are examples of statements to use to start the brainstorming process:

An ideal hotel should be ...

An ideal hotel should have ...

2. Key Roles of Housekeeping Department

As a support center, the main duty of housekeeping department is to maintain the cleanliness of the hotel, including both back-of-the-house and front-of-the-house areas. Setting good standards in room cleaning and public area cleaning can ensure a comfortable, safe and hygienic environment for hotel guests and staff in the property. A detail description of the responsibilities of housekeeping department includes the following areas:

Cleaning of Guest Room Floors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest rooms • Corridors • Service lift and floor storage areas
Cleaning of Public Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby and lifts • Public restrooms • Recreation facilities, e.g. tennis courts, swimming pools, gymnasiums, club centers • Guest self-serviced laundry • Business centers • Concierge • F&B operations, e.g. restaurants and bars • Meeting rooms and banqueting halls
Cleaning of Staff Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offices of different departments

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff canteen• Changing and locker rooms• Storage areas
Other Utilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laundry services• Linen and uniform control• Gardening• Pest control• Flower shops

Table 2.10 – Responsibilities of the Housekeeping Department

3. Organisation of Housekeeping Department

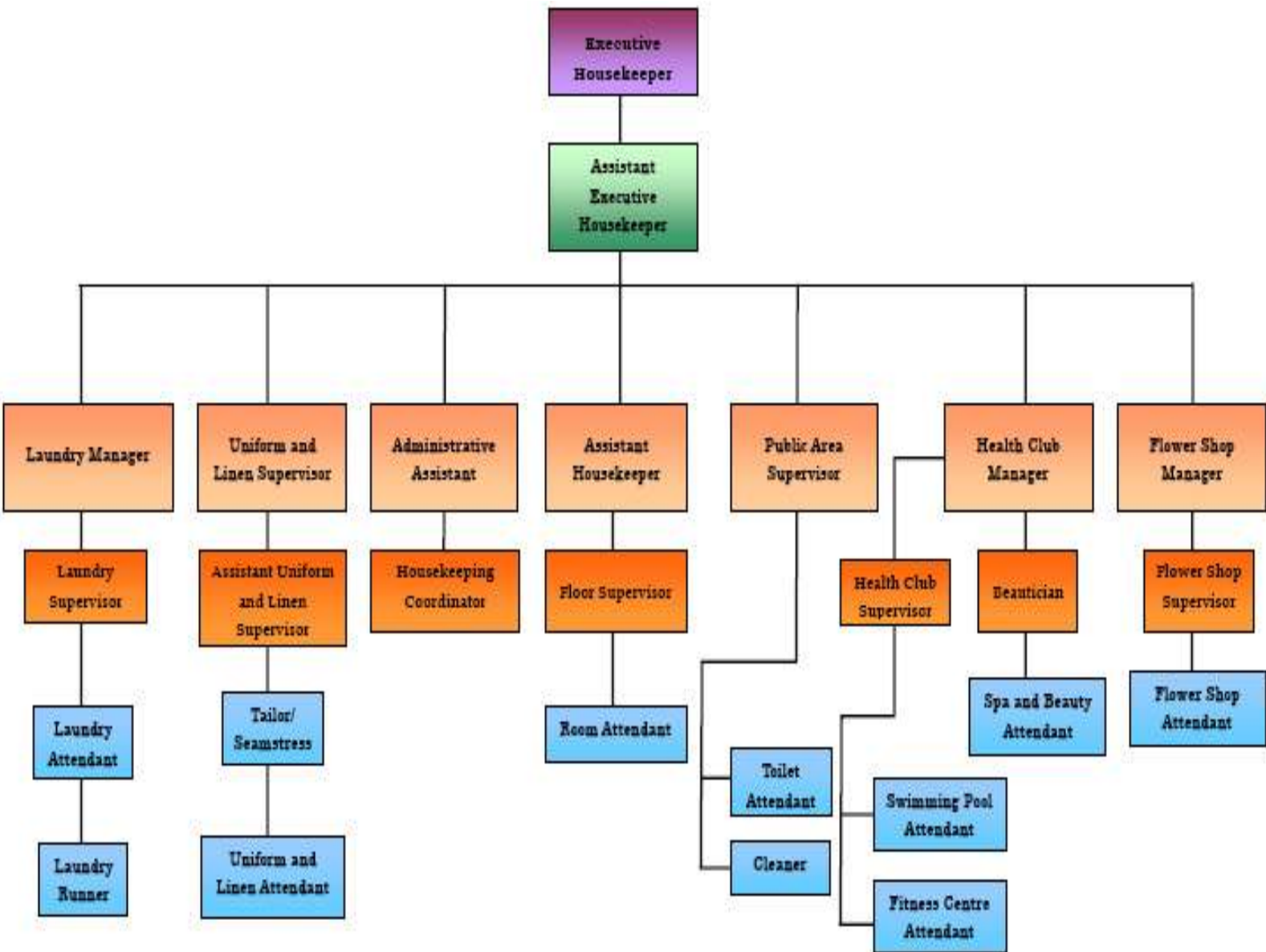


Figure 2.14 – Housekeeping Organisation Chart of a Large-sized Hotel

The organisation of the housekeeping department will vary from one hotel to another depending on the number of rooms and the hotel management. This department is usually headed by an executive housekeeper, who is often assisted by an assistant and several supervisors. In the case of a small hotel, an executive housekeeper might have no assistant and is assisted by smaller number of supervisors. Increasingly hotel management are streamlining their organisational structures and employing casual employees. As a result many hotels have substantially reduced the number and role of housekeeping staff. This helps reduced the bottom line. However, set standards may be scarified and staff must assume a larger responsibility.

The housekeeping department of a large-sized hotel, see Figure 2.14, comprises of the following sections:

- Laundry department
- Uniform and linen room
- Housekeeping office
- Guest floors
- Public areas
- Health club
- Floral and plant arrangement

The laundry department provides laundry, dry cleaning and pressing services to guests. Some hotels maintain their own laundry, while others rely on commercial operators. In either case, close teamwork is necessary to assure a steady flow of linen back and forth for restaurants, banquet areas, floor pantry and recreational areas. Examples of linen follow:

- Towels
- Blankets
- Sheets
- Pillowcases
- Mattress protector

- Tablecloths
- Napkins
- Cleaning cloths

ACTIVITY 2.29

Imagine yourself as the executive housekeeper of a large-sized hotel. Due to the recent financial tsunami, your hotel decided to cut cost by streamlining the organisation structure. As the Executive Housekeeper, how would you redesign the organisational chart of your department, see Figure 2.14, to suit the need of your hotel?

4. Duties of Key Positions

As mentioned, the housekeeping department is generally the largest department in hotel operations. A sizeable hotel in Hong Kong would typically employ more than 100 staff. Owing to its sometimes complex organisational structure, it is important for every housekeeping staff to clearly understand his own responsibilities in order to provide the most efficient service to guests.

Study the following list of job descriptions for housekeeping staff. Do you think some of the responsibilities of one post can be taken up by another post in the housekeeping department? Why or why not?

a) Executive Housekeeper

Duties include :

- Interviews, selects and engages staff in conjunction with human resources manager;
- Training;
- Deployment;
- Prepares work schedules, work procedures and job descriptions;

- Compiles duty rotas, holiday lists, etc.;
- Personnel records;
- Arranges supervision;
- Staff welfare;
- Orders and controls equipment, materials and linen;
- Handles complaints; and
- Key control.

b) **Assistant Executive Housekeeper**

Duties include :

- Assists executive housekeeper in day-to-day operation;
- Assumes responsibilities of executive housekeeper in his/her absence;
- Revises daily work schedule depending on the occupancy;
- Prepares master list for carpet spotting, curtains, etc.;
- inspects work to ensure prescribed standard of cleanliness;
- Inspects rooms, lobbies and restaurants for cleanliness and also determines need for renovations and makes recommendations;
- Coordinates with the front office; and
- Screens applicants, trains new employees and recommends disciplinary actions or dismissals.

c) **Assistant Housekeeper**

Duties include :

- Assists executive housekeeper in day-to-day operation;
- Dispatches room attendants and floor supervisors to assigned floor;
- Checks equipment and recommends new purchases;

- Inspects guest rooms, lobbies and back stairs;
- Keeps records of extra work performed by housekeeping department;
- Takes inventory; and
- Prepares attendance records.

d) **Floor Supervisor**

Duties include :

- Checks staff on duty;
- Redeployment;
- Supervision of staff;
- Checks section/floor of rooms by filling in the room inspection list;
- Conducts induction and general training;
- Orders and issues cleaning materials;
- Linen checks;
- Maintenance checks; and
- Liaises with reception on guest arrivals and departures.

e) **Room Attendant**

Duties include :

- Cleans rooms, bathrooms and suites;
- Handle dirty and clean linen;
- Provide turn-down service; and
- Reports faults, maintenance and peculiarities.

f) **Public Area Supervisor**

Duties include :

- Inspects public areas cleaned to see whether cleaning is adequate, supplies in public areas meet the standard and needs for immediate repair is reported;
- Makes maintenance report for restaurant or item in need of repair and follows up to make sure work is completed satisfactorily;
- Supervises cleaning of public areas, corridors and offices;
- Trains cleaners, advises executive housekeeper if performance is not satisfactory; and
- Liaises with other departments such as food and beverage department regarding the cleaning schedule.

g) **Cleaner**

Duties include :

- Maintains the cleanliness and order of the hotel premises;
- Spots rugs, carpets, upholstered furniture using vacuum cleaner, broom and shampooing machine;
- Keeps corridors dust free;
- Moves and arranges furniture; and
- Carries out special work assigned by the public area supervisor.

h) **Tailor and Seamstress**

Duties include :

- Alters and repairs linens, uniforms, curtains and drapes;
- Distributes and measures uniforms for new employees and keeps record;
- Discards uniforms, room and table linen;
- Keeps records of all discarded items;

- Prepares inventory; and
- Repairs guest clothing.

i) **Uniform and Linen Room Attendant**

Duties include :

- Sorts and counts dirty linen and uniform;
- Checks and counts clean linen and uniform;
- Issues and receives linen and uniform; and
- Assists in inventory taking of all linen/uniform.

5. Relationship Between Housekeeping Department and Other Departments

No matter what the type of hotel or the category of traveler, hotels are in the service industry and their goal is to meet the guest expectations. To help achieving this goal, all hotel staff must work as a team to provide consistently high quality service that promotes guest loyalty. An example would be when the housekeeping and front office departments work closely as a team to ensure that the guest rooms are cleaned and made ready for arriving guests. If housekeeping cannot provide cleaned rooms quickly enough to front office for sale, especially in peak season, the result is a loss of sales and guests.

Apart from the front office, can you think of other departments which work closely with the housekeeping department? What is the result if communications breakdown between housekeeping and these departments? The following diagram shows the relationship between the housekeeping department and other departments:

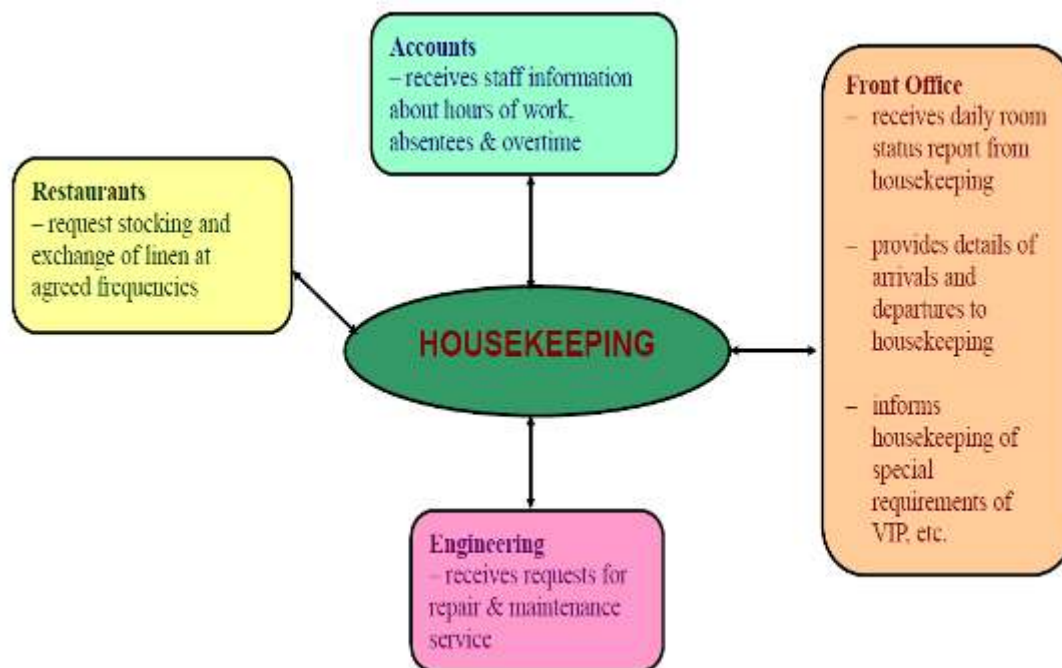


Figure 2.15 – Relationship of Housekeeping Department with Other Departments

The following are brief descriptions of the relationship of housekeeping department with other departments:

a) **Front Office**

Rooms are the main concern of both departments. They must continually exchange information on room status so that check-out rooms can be returned as quickly as possible. In addition, renovations, repairs and maintenance can be scheduled during periods of low occupancy. The housekeeping department needs to report to the front office any unusual guest behaviours that may result in loss of revenue or bad publicity for the hotel.

b) **Engineering**

It is the housekeeping staff's responsibilities to request the engineering department for minor repairs in order to avoid a major breakdown. They must work closely as a team to do preventive maintenance and renovations with minimum disturbance to guests. The engineering department also expects housekeeping staff to contribute to the efforts of conserving heat, water and electricity.

c) Security

Security's responsibilities may include patrolling the property, monitoring surveillance equipment, and in general, ensuring that guests, visitors, and employees are safe and secure at the hotel. Since housekeeping personnel work in every area of the hotel, they are in a position to significantly contribute to the hotel's security efforts. For example, when cleaning guest rooms, room attendants are usually responsible for locking and securing sliding glass doors, connecting doors, and windows.

d) Human Resources

The relationship between human resources department and housekeeping department is similar to those mentioned earlier with the front office department.

e) Food and Beverage

The relationship between the housekeeping department and food and beverage department involves the supply of table linen and uniform, and the cleaning of their outlets. The banquet department, in particular, must advise housekeeping of its anticipated needs since banquet business may fluctuate considerably, thus requiring special planning to assure the required quantity of linen is available and in good condition. The food and beverage department has a responsibility to separate stained or damaged linens that requiring special treatment. A good relationship should be maintained between housekeeping and room service to ensure provision of timely housekeeping services, e.g. removal of trays and tables from the corridors to service landings, VIP set-ups etc. In some hotels, housekeeping is also responsible for mini-bar replenishment, although the revenue goes to food and beverage department.

f) Sales and Marketing

The sales and marketing department relies heavily on the housekeeping department for prompt delivery of goods/services as promised to the guests. The major problem they face together, especially in large hotels, is back-to-back conventions and groups. Front office, sales and marketing and housekeeping share the responsibility to ensure that rooms are ready and cleaned for the arriving groups of guests.

g) Purchasing

The Purchasing department buys all cleaning and guest supplies. Its relationship with the housekeeping department is self-evident. When it comes to deciding what brand, quality or size should be stocked - whether the item is cleaning powder or mattresses - the executive housekeeper and the purchasing agent must pool their knowledge to consider the characteristics, cost and availability of the products.

h) Accounts

The hotel's controller manages the accounting division which is responsible for monitoring the financial activities of the property. As the housekeeping department maintains inventories of cleaning supplies, equipment, linen, uniform, and other guest amenities, the executive housekeeper must often work closely with for example the storeroom manager, etc who reports to the hotel's controller.

ACTIVITY 2.30

Fill in the right column with the correct hotel department(s)/staff involved so as to meet customer needs in the following scenarios.

Scenario	Department(s)/Staff Involved
1. A guest wants to get a bouquet and some chocolate for her girlfriend's birthday.	
2. A guest calls the housekeeping department to complain that there is no hot water in the bathroom.	
3. A guest orders room service.	
4. A business traveler discovers that his personal computer left in the guest room has been stolen.	
5. An old lady feels sick in her room.	

6. Cleaning Tasks

The main function of housekeeping department is to maintain the cleanliness of a hotel property. Cleaning tasks are mainly divided into two different categories:

1. Room Cleaning; and
2. Public Area Cleaning.

a) Room Cleaning

Room cleaning refers to the cleaning tasks of all guest rooms in a hotel property. It is the responsibility of the room attendants to follow the proper procedures of room cleaning so suitable rooms can be provided to guests during their staying in the hotel.

Room attendants should ensure that the rooms are:

- Tidy;
- Clean; and
- Comfortable.

(i) *Morning Briefing*

In general, most room attendants work in the a.m. shift (e.g. 8a.m.) as check-outs are always happened before 12 p.m. in the morning. Before the commencement of their normal duties, room attendants are required to attend a morning briefing conducted by the executive housekeeper or the supervisors. It gives important information to room attendants which include:



- How many rooms are required to be cleaned for the day;
- Will any large groups or tours come earlier and request for rooms; and
- Are there any special cleaning requests, such as the setting up of extra beds before guests' arrivals?

Special issues such as complaints received or problems associated with conducts or work procedures will also be addressed by supervisors during the meeting.

(ii) Room Assignment

Room assignment sheets and key cards will be distributed to room attendants during the briefing. In Hong Kong, the number of rooms to be cleaned by each room attendant ranged from 10 to 15, which varies according to the room sizes, room grades, complexity of room settings (e.g. supplies and amenities provided) and also the cleaning



standard as required by the hotel. Normally, the standard time of cleaning a standard check-out room is around 30 minutes. Less time is required for cleaning an occupied room than a check-out room should be considered by supervisors in room assignment so to ensure workloads can be fairly assigned to all room attendants.

(iii) Preparations Before Cleaning

The preparation works to be completed by room attendants before their cleaning tasks include stocking the maid cart and prioritizing the room cleaning orders. Maid cart should be filled with sufficient linens and guest supplies required for the day. Rooms being cleaned are always prioritized in a logical order as below:



- 1st priority — Occupied rooms with ‘first service’ request
- 2nd priority — Check-out rooms which have been blocked for arrivals
- 3rd priority — Check-out rooms
- 4th priority — Occupied rooms



(iv) Cleaning the Guest Rooms

The standard procedures of cleaning a guest room are more or less the same among different hotel properties. Room attendants with no experience are always provided with training in order to learn the skills and methods for performing their room cleaning duties. Table 2.11 summarizes the major steps performed by room attendants during the room cleaning process.

Room Cleaning Procedures	
1.	<p>Entering the Guest Room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow the industry standard by knocking the door and announcing housekeeping for 3 times before entering the guest room ● Park the maid cart properly in front of the door
2.	<p>Having a First Check and Opening Up the Room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open all the lights, TV, air conditioner and refrigerator and check if they are in good condition ● Check items in refrigerator ● Make sure if no personal belongings are left in the check-out rooms
3.	<p>Making the Beds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Replace dirty linens with clean ones
4.	<p>Cleaning Up the Trash and Dusting the Room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collect the trash in the room ● Empty and clean the ashtrays if any
5.	<p>Cleaning the Bathroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clean and disinfect the bathroom ● Replace clean towels ● Refill guest supplies, e.g. toilet rolls, toothbrush and shower lotion
6.	<p>Vacuuuming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vacuum from inside to outer side of the room
7.	<p>Final Checking and Returning Rooms to Inventory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check all the items and setting inside the guest room before leaving ● Return rooms to inventory by using the in-room telephone system ● Update the room assignment sheet

Table 2.11 – Room Cleaning Procedures

b) Public Area Cleaning

Public areas refer to all front-of-the-house and back-of-the-house areas inside the hotel property. Generally, floor plans are sub-divided into sections which help assign job duties to cleaners or public area attendants. The schedules and frequencies of cleaning depend mainly on the level of traffic and also the conveniences and safety of both staff and guests.



For example, deep cleaning of the lobby can only be conducted in the overnight shift when traffic is low in the hotel. At day time, public area attendants can only perform some minor and routine cleaning to avoid any disturbances while maintain an impressive appearance to the hotel guests. Table 2.12 below shows some other examples of hotel areas being cleaned by public area attendants in their normal duties.

‘Front-of-the-house’ Areas Cleaned By Public Attendants	‘Back-of-the-house’ Areas Cleaned By Public Attendants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbies • Elevators and escalators • Restrooms • Parking areas • Restaurants • Banquet and meeting rooms • Gymnasiums and swimming pools • Business Centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff changing rooms • Service elevators • Canteen or Cafeteria • Kitchens • Departmental offices • Stairways • Store rooms • Laundry and uniform rooms

Table 2.12 – Areas Cleaned By Public Area Attendants

It should be noted that areas, such as restaurants, kitchens and banquet rooms are always cleaned by their own waiters or waitresses, chefs and banquet servers, respectively. Departmental staff should take their own responsibilities in maintaining a clean and safe environment for their guests and other staff in the operational hours. Housekeeping department, on the other hand, would usually take a supportive role in assisting these departments to conduct some deep or routine cleaning in the off hours.



ACTIVITY 2.31 – Carpets Inside the Elevators

Some hotels in Hong Kong are using carpets with patterns of ‘weekdays’ or ‘weekends’ for their elevators. Try to think about the functions of using such kinds of carpets in hotel operations.



7. In-room Guest Supplies and Amenities

Hotels provide a variety of guest supplies and amenities for the guest's needs and convenience. Guest supplies refer to items the guest requires as part of the hotel stay, e.g. toilet tissues, hangers etc. Guest amenities refer to the non-essentials that enhance the guest's stay, e.g. in-room safe etc. The housekeeping department is responsible for storing, distributing, controlling and maintaining adequate inventory levels of both guest supplies and guest amenities.

Housekeeping staff may be called upon to provide special amenities and stock guest loan items to meet requests. These items include everyday items that the guest may have forgotten to pack or items such as irons and ironing board (if they are not routinely provided in the guest room) and personal care items.

Such items also vary from hotel to hotel, depending on the market segment the hotel attempts to reach and satisfy. Some examples (Table 2.13) of such items are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapter • Additional furniture, e.g. table, chair • Air-purifier • Bed board • Crib/Baby cot • Dehumidifier • Extension cord • Extra bedding supplies, e.g. pillow, blanket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fan • Heater • Humidifier • Iron and ironing board • Morning set (tooth brush & paste...) • Rollaway bed* • Transformer • Vase • Tapes
--	--

* *chargeable item*

Table 2.13 – The In-room Guest Supplies and Amenities



Stationery & Service Directory



Iron & Ironing Board

Most items mentioned above are free of charge upon request. However, some hotels may charge the guest if they request to add a rollaway bed in the guest room. Note that some properties provide only the basic items of guest supplies to guests, while others pamper guests with extra items like fresh fruits and flowers etc. Apart from these items, guests may also request other services from the housekeeping department. If you were a hotel guest, what other services you would require or expect the hotel to provide to you?

ACTIVITY 2.32

Browse the website of Hong Kong hotels. Complete the table by filling the columns with three appropriate guest supplies and amenities. The first one has been done as an example for you.

Guest Supplies	Guest Amenities
Bath towels	Minibar
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

8. Room Status Codes

Special codes and terminologies are widely used by hotels in enhancing the inter-departmental communications. Room status codes are mainly applied by the housekeeping and front office departments in verbal or in words and can always be seen in reports of rooms division and computer systems.

One typical example of how these special codes and terminology are used is that when a guest check-out from the front desk and settles his account, the front desk computer system will automatically change the room status to ‘Vacant Dirty’ or ‘VD’. This enables housekeeping staff to make up the room promptly for arriving guests. Once the ‘Vacant Dirty’ room is made ready for sale, housekeeping department will notify the

front desk through changing the room status to ‘Vacant Clean’ (‘VC’) or ‘Inspected Clean’ (‘I’).

Some common examples and their detail descriptions are shown in Table 2.14 as below:

Terminologies	Codes	Descriptions
Occupied Clean	OC	The room is occupied and has been cleaned by room attendant
Occupied Dirty	OD	The room is occupied and hasn’t been cleaned by room attendant
Vacant Clean / Ready	VC / VR	The room is vacant and has been cleaned by room attendant or ready for sale
Vacant Dirty	VD	The room is vacant and hasn’t been cleaned by room attendant
Do Not Disturb	DND	The guest has requested no disturbances
Out of Order	OOO	The room is under maintenance, refurbishment or extensive cleaning
Extra Bed	XB	An extra bed is being used in the guest room
Light Baggage	LB	An occupied room with no large baggage, e.g. trunk
No Baggage	NB	An occupied room with no baggage
No Need Service	NNS	The guest has requested ‘no service’ for the room

Sleep-out	SO	The guest is supposed to be staying in the room but the bed has no signs of being used
Check-out	CO	The guest has paid the bill and checked out his/her room
Expected Departure	ED	It is the same as 'due-out' which means the guest would depart prior to the check-out time of the following day
Inspected Clean	I	The room is double checked by the floor supervisor after the cleaning of room attendant
Did Not Check Out	DNCO	The guest has paid or made payment arrangement but has not completed the check-out processes or informed the front desk while leaving
Late Check-out	/	The guest has requested and is approved to check out later than the standard check-out time
Skipper	/	The guest has not paid and left without informing the front desk
Complimentary	/	The room is occupied for free
Stay-over	/	The guest is not checking out today and will remain at least one more night
Lock-out	/	The occupied room has been locked which disallows the guest to re-enter until he/she comes into contact with hotel staff to clarify his/her status

Table 2.1 – Room Status Codes and Terminologies

In reality, the room status codes and terminologies used by hotel practitioners could be different among various hotel chains and properties. Special attention should be paid by hotel practitioners on some special room statuses, such as DND, LB/ NB, SO and 'lock-out' which may turn into 'skipper' and would result in a loss of hotel revenue and reputation.

ACTIVITY 2.31 – Room Status

Give the correct room status codes or terminologies according to the following cases provided.

Cases	Codes / Terminologies
1. A room attendant entered an occupied room and found out that the guest has only left a small handbag in her room.	
2. A receptionist has just reconfirmed with a room attendant that the guest in Room 618 has already left without checking-out.	
3. A guest has just called the telephone unit in the morning and has requested to extend his stay for 1 more night instead of leaving in this afternoon.	
4. Room 810 has been blocked by the engineering department for changing the carpet for 3 consecutive days.	
5. The hotel's G.M. has reserved a room for the regional director who will be staying in the hotel for observation and meeting with hotel staff.	

Housekeeping Room Status Report

Date _____

Code :

CO	Check-out	NB	No Baggage	OOO	Out-of-order	VD	Vacant Dirty
DND	Do Not Disturb	NNS	No Need Service	OOT	Out-of-town	XB	Extra Bed
ED	Expected Departure	OC	Occupied Clean	SO	Sleep Out		
LB	Light Baggage	OD	Occupied Dirty	VC	Vacant Clean		

Floor Room No	Floor Room No	Floor Room No	Floor Room No	Floor Room No	Floor Room No	Floor Room No	Floor Room No	Floor Room No	Floor Room No
01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01
02	02	02	02	02	02	02	02	02	02
03	03	03	03	03	03	03	03	03	03
04	04	04	04	04	04	04	04	04	04
05	05	05	05	05	05	05	05	05	05
06	06	06	06	06	06	06	06	06	06
07	07	07	07	07	07	07	07	07	07
08	08	08	08	08	08	08	08	08	08
09	09	09	09	09	09	09	09	09	09
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18

Checked By: _____

Figure 2.16 – Housekeeping Room Status Report

9. Security Procedures

In a hotel of any size, security is a major concern. The security division is responsible for maintaining systems and implementing procedures which protect the personal property of guests and employees and the hotel itself. Every hotel has its own procedures and guidelines for staff on how to handle guests' valuables, keys and telephone calls. Any unauthorized disclosure of guest information to anyone by hotel staff will be regarded as misconduct. Hotel staff should never disclose guest's information such as guest name and room number to anyone calling in.

a) Handling Guests' Valuables

A room attendant must report to the housekeeping office any guests' valuables found inside the guest room during cleaning. It is important that the room attendant stays in the room until the assistant manager, floor supervisor and the security officer arrive at the scene. The case must then be recorded very clearly in the Housekeeping Log Book with the time, room number, item(s) found, the name of finder, and the name of whom the case is reported to and handled by for future reference. The guest room will then be double locked until the guest returns.

b) Key Control

The room key is an important instrument that housekeeping staff use to access the guest room and carry out their duties. All keys must be kept securely and distributed properly. Every room attendant is responsible for taking care of the keys under their charge and not allowing anyone else access to their keys. All keys are kept in the housekeeping office in a locked cabinet and are properly coded. The housekeeping co-ordinator is responsible for the distribution and control of keys. All keys issued must be properly signed for and cancelled after return. The room attendant must complete or sign "The sign in and out" log book listing the number of keys issued.

The housekeeping co-ordinator takes inventory of the keys at the beginning of each shift and prior to the handover of keys to the subsequent shift in charge. The key cabinet must remain locked at all times. Keys issued to the employees must be kept under their own custody and never be left hanging on the trolley or in the door lock. All keys must always be returned to the housekeeping office.

Keys must never be taken out of the hotel premises. The misplacing or loss of key is a very serious matter and should be reported to the executive housekeeper or assistant

manager and security officer immediately. An immediate search must be made until the key can be located.

Every member of staff in the housekeeping department is trained to handle the different keys and use the correct procedures when someone asks to open a guest room.

c) **Suspicious Person**

The housekeeping staff must report any suspicious person loitering on guest floors and public areas to the housekeeping office. The housekeeping coordinator will in turn inform the floor supervisor/assistant housekeeper, the assistant manager and the security officer.

d) **Lost and Found**

'Lost and Found' refers to:

- a place or an office that keeps any items found inside the hotel; or
- a place or an office where reports of missing items, reported by either guests or staff, are kept and followed up.

All staff should hand in items found inside the hotel premises, regardless of their value. Most hotels assign this duty to the housekeeping department, or the Security department. All information is recorded in the Lost and Found Logbook for prompt and easy reference in case of a guest enquires about a lost item. All items found by the guests and staff should be stored in a ventilated room and **kept for three months** before being releasing to the finder. Some items, such as perishable food or drink, may be kept for a shorter period. The storage area must be secure.

ACTIVITY 2.32

Discuss the following scenario: A guest enquires about a missing item in his room, but the Lost and Found Log book has no record of it. How would you handle this situation if you were the assistant executive housekeeper?