

THE USE OF ROOM RESERVATION MEDIA AT EVERBRIGHT HOTEL SURABAYA

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ABSTRACT

Front Office Department is one of the absolute parts of a hotel. The main function of the Front Office Department is to "sell" in the sense of renting out rooms which are the main products of the hotel to guests. Room sales from the Front Office Department can be done directly when guests arrive at the hotel (walk-in guest) or through reservations before guests arrive at the hotel, because the hotel cannot rely solely on guests who arrive without booking rooms first. The objective of this research was to find out and describe the room reservation media used by the customer at the Everbright Hotel Surabaya. The method used in this research was a qualitative descriptive method, aiming to describe a fact. The data collection techniques used in this research were observation and documentation. The results showed that the reservation media that can be used by the customer to make a room reservation at Everbright Hotel Surabaya were by telephone, fax, e-mail, coming directly to the hotel (walk-in), and internet. There was a significant difference between the use of the internet as a room reservation medium compared to the use of telephone, fax, e-mail or walk-in reservations. It can be concluded that more guests make room reservations using internet media at Everbright Hotel Surabaya.

Keywords: *Front Office Department, Reservation Media*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The hotel is a temporary residence for guests for a specific purpose. Hotel as hospitality industry, is a building that provides accommodation, food and beverage service facilities and services that support the comfort of guests while staying there. So hotel is a service industry that combines products and services. The need for a hotel is previously only as a place to stay for guests who travel for business or leisure purposes. But now the need for hotels has increased, ranging from providing facilities for weekends, weddings, meetings, to exhibitions which can be held at the hotel.

According to the Decree of the Minister of Tourism, Post and Telecommunications No.KM 37/PW.340/MPPT-86, regarding business regulations and classification of hotels, Chapter I, Article 1 paragraph (b) states that: "Hotel is a type of accommodation which uses a part or all parts of the building to provide lodging, food and beverage services and other supporting services for the public that are managed commercially". Because it is managed commercially, the purpose of the hotel business is to obtain financial benefits.

Hotels as an industry have grown very rapidly in recent years. The development of the hotel industry

also occurred in the city of Surabaya. This can be seen from the increasing number of hotels with various classifications. The development of hotels is also increasingly modern which is equipped with facilities that support guest comfort and offer convenience that is expected to attract guests to stay at the hotel optimally.

In a hotel there are parts that have their own roles in providing services to guests. Front Office Department is one the essential parts of a hotel. The main function of the Front Office Department is to sell in the sense of renting out rooms which are the main products of the hotel to guests. Room sales from the Front Office Department can be done directly when guests arrive at the hotel (walk-in guest) or through reservations before guests arrive at the hotel, because the hotel cannot rely solely on guests who arrive without booking rooms first. The Front Office Department is divided into several sub-sections, each of which has a different service function. Reservation section is an important sub-section which will be contacted first by the guests for room reservations before they come and stay at the hotel. The Reservation section's job is to receive and process room reservations, ensuring that hotel rooms can be booked before guests come to stay.

Reservation is a hotel room booking made by the guests before they come and stay at the hotel. Room reservations done in advance are often carried out by guests who will stay, long before the guests arrive at the hotel, to ascertain whether the rooms which fit their wishes and needs of guests are still available or not. Reservations are also made so that guests get a guarantee of getting the desired room when arriving at the hotel. For hotels, during high season, room occupancy and accommodation needs for guests are very high. The guests, who come directly to the hotel and ask if there are still rooms, may not get the room as desired or because the hotel is full, so it is rare for guests to come directly to a hotel and look for a room to stay right away. This is because guests will find it difficult to get a room directly. By making a room reservation before guests stay at the hotel, all accommodation needs can be predicted and prepared carefully. The hotel can prepare rooms and other needs from the guests properly.

Room reservation media is a booking interface between the customer/prospective guests and the hotel. Guests can make room reservation to hotel through various media without having to come directly to the hotel. The hotel provides a variety of media choices in terms of hotel room reservations. Guests who wish to make a room reservation can use telephone, e-mail, facsimile and online media. Reservation by telephone is a common medium to make room reservations. The customer can make a reservation by calling directly to the number provided by the hotel. Room reservations can be done via e-mail quickly sending a room order to the hotel e-mail address. Room reservations via the internet can be done on websites owned or managed by hotels, or through websites managed by other Travel Agents such as *traveloka.com*. At this present time many hotels use online media to sell their rooms. The majority of hotels sell their rooms to online travel agents as third parties such as *Agoda* and *traveloka*. The hotel also makes hotel official website to be able to sell rooms directly to hotel guests. There are many hotels that have websites or sites on the internet, so customers can find information about the hotel by seeing it on the internet which is complete with facilities and prices offered by the hotel. The customer who opens the website can simply choose the date, room type, payment method, and then send it to the website address. Room reservations done through the website will be easier, will shorten the reservation time and will find the room with cheaper price than when the room reservation is done directly.

Online reservations are certainly more effective and efficient compared to other reservation media.

Guests can search for hotels in the destination city. The system will automatically only display a list of hotels that still have rooms left or if not, there will be information whether the room is still available or not on the specified day. Thus, guests can find out information while making room reservations and can order desired services. Using internet media in booking for hotel rooms is very beneficial for guests, because guests can reserve hotel rooms from anywhere as long as the device and internet network are adequate. The necessary tools also make it easier for guests. Previously guests must rely on a laptop or computer when they want to connect to the internet, now the guests can easily access it via a smartphone. Not only can they save time as it can be done anytime and anywhere, they can also avoid having issues like running out of rooms, especially during high season. The price offered will be very diverse and varied according to the rules of the third party. Room price offers can be very attractive even up to 70% discount for each reservation. Customers who use internet facilities to make a reservation will get proof of room booking to show at check-in. With the existence of internet media, it will be easier to find the best hotel accommodation needs which fit the wishes and needs of guests.

Based on the description above, the writer was interested in knowing further about the use of room reservation media at Everbright Hotel Surabaya.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Based on the description in the background, the formulation of the problem in this research is: How is the use of room reservation media at Everbright Hotel Surabaya??

1.3 Research Objectives and Benefits

The objective of this research was to find out and describe the room reservation media used by the guests at the Everbright Hotel Surabaya.

The benefits of this research are expected to be able to add insight into the rapid development of the hospitality sector, especially regarding the problem of hotel room reservations. The results of this research are also expected to provide input for hotel management in determining further policies, especially in the Front Office Department.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of *Front Office Department*

The Front Office Department is a department that is located at the very front of the hotel and is the first place that guests will go to. The location of the Front Office Department must be easily seen and

found by every guest who comes to the hotel. Almost all activities in the Front Office Department deal directly with guests, starting from prior the arrival of guests, upon arrival, when guests stay at the hotel, until the time the guest leaves the hotel. According to Sujatno (2008: 1) “The Front Office Department is one of the essential parts of the hotel organizational structure that is at the forefront”. Meanwhile, according to Soenarno (2006: 2) “Front Office is a department that handles guests who will use rooms, starting from reservations, receptionists, guests coming (Check In) until guests leave the hotel (Check Out)”. Thus the Front Office Department is not only responsible for guest reception and registration, but in all activities that concern the interests of hotel guests, starting from the room reservation process, welcoming guests upon arrival, registering guests who will stay, providing room keys, handling the payment process when guests will leave the hotel, and becoming the place where guest come and say their complains.

The Front Office Department has an important function in managing the hotel as a whole.

According to Bagyono (2008:21) “The functions of *Front Office Department* include:

- a. Selling the rooms (reservation, *check-in* and *check-out*)
- b. Handling information about products or services and general information outside.
- c. Coordinating guest services (Coordinator from other departments in the hotel)
- d. Reporting about room status (room status can be updated manually / computerized)
- e. Recording guest payments (*guest bill/guest folio/guest account*)
- f. Completing guest payment (upon check-out)
- g. Making a guest visit history (for the purpose of improving service)
- h. Handling telephone, message, fax and e-mail
- i. Handling guest items and luggage”.

For the smooth execution of the Front Office Department function, the Front Office Department is divided into several sub-sections, each of which has a different service function. The sub-sections involved in the Front Office Department are *Reservation section*, *Reception section*, *Uniform section*, *Information section*, *Telephone section*, and *Front Office Cashier*.

2.2 Definition of Room Reservation Section

One of the sub-sections of the Front Office Department is the Reservation section. Most reservation section activities are done before guests

come to the hotel, because the rate of room bookings for hotel rooms depends on this section. This is because the hotel cannot expect a great number of guests from those who come directly to the hotel (walk-in guest).

According to Darsono (2001: 24) “The reservation section is a section of the front office that is responsible for all bookings of hotel guest rooms, individual guests, VIPs, or groups”. While according to Bagyono (2008: 28) “The reservation section is a section on the front office department whose duties and responsibilities deal with ordering requests from prospective guests”.

So it can be concluded that Reservation section is the part that carries out all activities related to everything on hotel room bookings, either for personal needs or for groups (groups). The main task is to answer requests for hotel rooms and process all hotel room bookings.

On Reservation section, guests can book a room before arriving at the hotel or directly coming to the hotel. When making a reservation guests will get information about the Hotel and its facilities as well as certainty from guests to stay at the hotel. The activities carried out in the reservation section are the beginning of the process of booking a guest room which is the center of the hotel activities.

2.3 The Function of Reservation Section

According to Bagyono (2008: 29) the reservation section has several functions, which are:

- a. Handling room reservation reception.
- b. Handling reservation changes.
- c. Handling reservation cancellations.
- d. Processing reservations.
- e. Archiving reservation data.
- f. Establishing good communication with guests, especially before guests arrive at the hotel.
- g. Selling rooms and other facilities at the hotel.
- h. Making reservation reports.
- i. Collaborating with other sections or departments within the hotel.

2.4 Benefits of Reservation

According to Bagyono (2008: 28), the existence of room booking activities is very beneficial for guests and hotels. By making a room reservation in advance:

- a. The hotel can provide an impressive good image when guests book a room. This will motivate guests to immediately come to the hotel
- b. Prospective guests can clearly predict the costs that will be incurred for accommodation during their trip.

- c. Prospective guests will feel safe and comfortable because upon arrival at the destination, they do not need to bother looking for a hotel to ask if there are still rooms available (vacant). There is also plenty of shuttle transportation provided by the hotel to provide services to prospective guests who have just arrived at the airport, port or station. Moreover, in "high season" where most hotel rooms have been fully booked, it is very risky to speculate to be a "walk-in guest" (guest without a room reservation).
- d. With careful preparation, the hotel can provide the best service to guests, such as picking them up, preparation for special requests, and others.
- e. When guests book a room, reservation officers can sell facilities and other products such as restaurants and banquets
- f. Hotels get information and data of prospective guests that will come so that it can become information material for other departments to prepare for their services.

2.5 Types of Reservation

According to Bagyono (2008: 31) types of reservations include:

- a. *New Reservation*
- b. *Amended Reservation* or modified reservation
- c. *Cancelled Reservation*
- d. *Confirmed Reservation*
- e. *Individual Reservation*
- f. *Group Reservation*
- g. *Conference Reservation*, which is reservation from guests for seminar/conference purpose
- h. *Guaranteed Reservation* by:
 - *Pre-payment*
 - *Advance Deposit*, or paying part of the room price as a down payment
 - *Voucher*, from the travel agent
 - *Guarantee letter*, from the company/government
 - *Credit Card*, that is by mentioning the number of the *credit card*
- i. *Non-guaranteed Reservation*, which is a reservation that is not guaranteed. This reservation will be maintained until six in the afternoon. If a guest does not arrive until the stipulated time, the booked room will be sold to other guests.

2.6 Source of Reservation

The source of reservation is the person or parties who are the source of the reservation.

According to Bagyono (2008: 30) "Room orders received by the reservation section can come from various sources, among others:

- a. *Airline*
- b. *Wholesale tour operator*
- c. *Travel Agent*
- d. *Car Rental*
- e. *FIT* (Free Independent Traveler)
- f. *Company*
- g. *Government* (instansi pemerintah)
- h. *Central Reservation network/office*
 - Affiliate network
 - Non-affiliate network".

2.7 Reservation Media

According to Sambodo & Bagyono (2006: 74) "Reservation media are tools, facilities, methods, or ways used by prospective guests in making room reservations". The media used for the reservation process include:

- a. Telephone
- b. Letter
- c. Faximile
- d. E-mail (*Electronic mail* through internet connection)
- e. *Computer Terminal*
- f. Personal way

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the formulation of the problem, this research does not intend to find a relationship or make a comparison of one variable with another. The method used in this research was a qualitative descriptive method aiming to describe a fact.

Descriptive research method is "a research intended to investigate the conditions, situations or other things that have been mentioned, the results of which are presented in the form of research reports" (Sugiono, 2013:3).

In this research, the researcher tried to find facts and then described the use of room reservation media at Everbright Hotel Surabaya which was the research site.

The data collection techniques used in this research were observation and documentation. The researcher conducted data collection by making direct observations about the use of room reservation media at Everbright Hotel Surabaya for three months; October 2017, November 2017, and December 2017. According to Arikunto (2006: 158) "Documentation is to find and collect data on matters in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, minutes, report cards, agendas, etc.". This documentation technique was intended to obtain data

based on existing data sources at Everbright Hotel Surabaya.

In analyzing data, the research used qualitative descriptive data analysis technique. The research described the data obtained, which are the secondary data regarding the facts on the use of room reservation media at Everbright Hotel Surabaya.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 HOTEL DESCRIPTION

Everbright Hotel Surabaya is a three-star hotel business located at Jalan Manyar Kertoarjo 44 Surabaya. Everbright Hotel Surabaya has 68 rooms, offering modern minimalist rooms with city views equipped with café, restaurant and bar facilities, valet parking, laundry and dry cleaning services, as well as free Wi-Fi access in all areas of the hotel. Based on PLAN (hotel room rates) in detail, the room types and rates of Everbright Hotel Surabaya are

Table 1.1 Room types and rates at Everbright Hotel Surabaya

ROOM TYPES	JUMLAH KAMAR	ROOM RATES / NIGHT						
		BASIC	INDIVIDUAL	CORPORATE	TRAVEL AGENT	GROUP	RACK BOTTOM	WEEKEND
Superior R/BF		665.000	400.000	390.000	385.000	375.000	330.000	450.000
Superior R/ONLY					350.000		300.000	
DELUXE		750.000	520.000	475.000	465.000	460.000	450.000	550.000
JUNIOR SUITE		999.999	735.000	710.000	690.000	690.000	650.000	735.000

Room rates include 21% tax and service charge.

Source: Everbright Hotel Surabaya

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF RESERVATION MEDIA USED AT EVERBRIGHT HOTEL SURABAYA

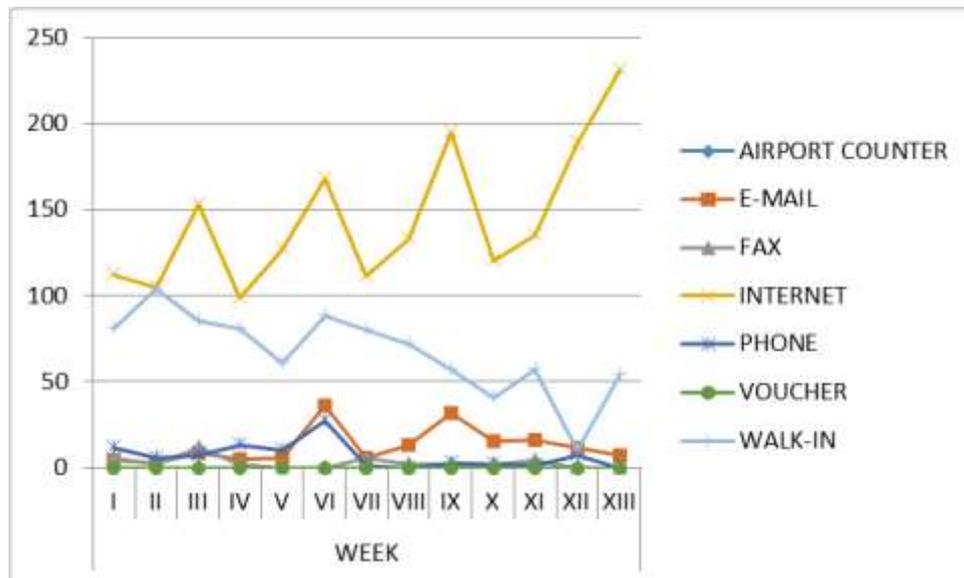
Reservation is one of the ways in selling hotel rooms by the Front Office Department. Room reservation is a request for a future room carried out by various sources to ascertain whether the rooms are still available and to find out information about the facilities needed by using various media/ways of booking rooms so the guests can expect that the rooms be available upon arrival at the hotel. In line with the development of increasingly modern technology, hotels cannot accept room reservations only by telephone or walk-in reservations. At this present time online room reservation with internet facilities as room reservation media are used by hotels in prioritizing their services. This is due to the fact that this media are seen as having several advantages comparing to direct room reservation media.

Reservation media that can be used by customers to make room reservations at Everbright Hotel Surabaya, include telephone, e-mail, fax, coming directly (walk-in) to the hotel, and online reservation. For guests who do not have much time to call or come directly to the hotel to make reservations, guests can make reservations online. Social media has always been an effective solution in almost all fields of business, as well as hotel business. Even though they already have a website, hotels still need to work with online sales agents. There are currently many free applications that serve online sales, especially regarding accommodation. Guests can search for hotel location, type of room up, or payment methods in a very easy way. Even the more interesting is that guests do not need to print hotel vouchers, but they can simply show an e-voucher or proof of reservation in the form of a booking code from the application online during the check-in process to the hotel.

Table 1.2
Reservation media at Everbright Hotel Surabaya

NO	FROM	WEEK												
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
1	AIRPORT COUNTER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	E-MAIL	4	3	9	5	6	36	6	13	32	15	16	12	7
3	FAX	6	2	12	2	0	0	6	2	2	2	4	0	0
4	INTERNET	112	105	153	99	127	168	111	133	195	120	135	189	231
5	PHONE	12	6	7	13	10	27	1	0	3	2	1	7	0
6	VOUCHER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	WALK-IN	81	104	85	81	61	88	80	72	57	41	57	10	54

Source: Everbright Hotel Surabaya



The table above shows that the type of reservation media that is more widely used by customers to make room reservations at Everbright Hotel Surabaya is internet media. There is a significant difference between the use of the internet as a reservation medium compared to telephone, fax, e-mail and direct reservation media (*walk-in*). The use of internet media has experienced a significant increase from the previous weeks. This indicates that room reservations using internet media are increasingly in demand by prospective hotel guests. By using online reservation media, the guests can get information about the hotel either the room rates or the room facilities according to the needs and desires of guests. Using the internet as a reservation medium provides many conveniences that can be received by guests and can shorten the reservation time when compared to using direct reservation media.

5. CLOSING

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the results of the discussion, researchers can draw conclusions regarding the use of room reservation media at Everbright Hotel Surabaya, which are as follows:

Reservation is an early hotel room reservation that is done before guests arrive at the hotel, even long before they come. Reservation media that can be used by customers to make room reservations at Everbright Hotel Surabaya are telephone, e-mail, fax, coming directly to the hotel (*walk-in*), and online reservations. There is a significant difference between the use of the internet as a room reservation media comparing to the use of telephone, fax, e-mail media or *walk-in* reservations. It can be concluded that more guests make room reservations using internet media.

This can be seen from the number of internet media users that reserve hotel room increases every week.

5.2 Suggestions

The suggestions that the researchers would like to convey to the management of Everbright Hotel Surabaya are:

- a. For walk-in reservations, the hotel management should also give price promotions, either for discount prices or room package prices. This can make guests more interested in direct room reservations, because the room prices are more attractive with a standard that is still maintained.
- b. The hotel management should inform the website to provide information based on what the hotel wants, so that there will be no lack of information that can make guests uninterested in booking a room. Information about hotels provided by the internet as a reservation medium sometimes lacks detail. This causes frequent guest errors in making room reservations.
- c. Contact with the hotel must be more publicized, so guests are easier to access when booking a room.

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