

3: Managing Housekeeping Personnel

This chapter will help you to:

- Understand the management functions in housekeeping department
- Evaluate the responsibilities and job descriptions of various housekeeping roles.
- Review the attributes of housekeeping staff
- Gain a basic understanding of time and motion study.

Introduction

The housekeeping department is not only responsible for generating most of the revenue, but is also the department which holds most human volume. A room that is not clean and tidy cannot be sold to the guests, therefore the success of the sale depends on the efficiency of the housekeeping department. The work performed by the housekeeping department is very task-oriented and requires rigorous and meticulous effort, hard work and dedication to provide a quality service. In addition to this the housekeepers must deal with lot of time pressure, ensuring that the quality standards and procedures are followed as set by the hotel brand. Housekeeping jobs need training and expertise because housekeeping personnel must deal with:

- 1 Handling manpower, chemicals, equipment, supplies
- 2 Learning about technical processes and products utilisation (planning hard and soft furnishings and aesthetic appeal)
- 3 Time organisation and record keeping (especially when a new hotel prepares to open, as the entire detailed planning list of suppliers needs to be recorded thoroughly for future reference.)
- 4 Maintaining brand standard operating procedures to meet the expectation of the guests.
- 5 Cost control and effective waste reduction.

The size of the hotel housekeeping department depends on the size and the structure of the hotel, its star classification and the usage. Housekeeping is the backbone of the hotel operation and is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the hotel guest room and public areas. The department is headed by the head housekeeper or an executive housekeeper.

Management functions in housekeeping

Recruitment

As housekeeping is the largest department it needs to employ the right number and calibre of employees to carry out the specific tasks, keeping in mind the recruitment policies of the company. It is one of the most important responsibilities of the department, as manpower is the biggest cost in housekeeping department, therefore planning staffing and recruiting the right number of staff with the right attitude are significant to the hotel's success.

Training

Training staff is crucial to the success of a hotel as high quality and systematic training will develop the skills of the employees, who will then follow the right procedures in completing the set tasks. Investing in training staff will ensure consistency in the service delivery, thus meeting the guest expectation. Evaluation of training is equally important to see if it is effective and is helping to meet the objectives. It is equally important to plan refresher training along with the induction training as reinforcement is the key for success.

Budgeting and cost control

This is the most important management function in housekeeping as the department is responsible for different types of capital and operational expenses and therefore the right planning is the key to successful operation. The budget is based on the forecast and therefore requires a great deal of insight and data to understand the past and likely future occupancy pattern, so that the budget for the supplies and amenities can be set accordingly to avoid wastages and shortages. Budgeting for renovation and refurbishment likewise requires great deal of planning and understanding.

Purchasing

Purchasing decisions determine the quality of the products and services offered to the guests, and the housekeeping department has to deal with a lot of suppliers to procure a wide range of items for the various sections and operations. Therefore they need to review the right quantity, right price