



# Chapter 5

# Importance of Communication

# Learning Objective

To learn

- ✓ Regarding the interdepartmental communication with other departments
- ✓ Maintaining information
- ✓ Handling keys and the different types of keys
- ✓ Handling of mails and fax

# Introduction and Background

- Critical aspect of departments is the interdepartmental communication
- Unique feature of this industry is handling of the keys and maintaining various types of keys
- Role of Front office is very crucial for delivering the hospitality to the guests
- The information and communication process begins right from the doorman
- Front office managers must take an active role in gathering information that will be of interest to guests.

# Interdepartmental Communication



# Interdepartmental Communication

## Housekeeping

Housekeeping and the front office communicate with each other about the housekeeping room status. Housekeeping room status will include the following aspects

1. Availability of clean and ready room
2. Occupied guest / guest are already occupying the room

# Interdepartmental Communication

## Housekeeping

1. Stay over guest
2. Dirty / On-change guest
3. Out of order room

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# Interdepartmental Communication

## Housekeeping

1. Housekeeping and the front office also communicate on the details of

- potential house count
- Security concerns
- Requests for amenities

# Interdepartmental Communication

## Housekeeping

2. The front desk also relies on housekeeping personnel to report any unusual circumstances that may indicate a violation of security for the guests
3. The housekeeper relies on the room sales projections a weekly report prepared and distributed by the front office manager that indicates –
  - Number of departures
  - Arrivals
  - Walk-ins
  - Stay over
  - No-shows



# Interdepartmental Communication

## Communication with Engineering and Maintenance

1. E&M Personnel begin each shift by examining the front desk log book for repair work orders
2. Front desk staff uses the log book to track maintenance status
3. Post completion of the work the E&M departments files the completed work order
4. Maintenance problem making room unsalable should be informed to the Front desk immediately

# Interdepartmental Communication

## Communication with Revenue Centres

Hotels also enjoy greatest revenue through sale of additional services at

- Coffee house
- Bars, lounges
- Clubs
- Banquet, meeting and catering facilities
- Local and Long distance calls services
- Health clubs, golf course and exercise rooms

# Interdepartmental Communication

## Communication with Revenue Centres

Hotels also enjoy greatest revenue through sale of additional services at

- Car rentals
- Tours
- Casino and Gaming activities
- Pay per view television movies
- Valet parking and parking charges

# Interdepartmental Communication

## Communication with Marketing and Public Relations

- Front office may contribute to hotel's newsletters
- Provide guest history as it is a valuable information for marketing and sales, which can be used by Marketing team for running campaigns
- The front office should maintain the guest database updated and accurate

# Interdepartmental Communication

## Communication with Marketing & Public Relations

- A switchboard operator needs to be friendly and also aware / knowledgeable about the hotel's operations so that this will lead to good first impression.
- On arrival of the guest the Front office team should make an effort to understand each and every requirement of the guest and ensure communication with respective departments for good hospitality
- The Front office manager should also establish a standard operating procedure for the front office employees for seamless communication of each departments activities in serving the guest

# Interdepartmental Communication

## Communication with Food and Beverage Department

- Relaying messages and providing accurate information on transfers, which are forms used to communicate a charge to a guest's account
- Communication also includes
  - Predicting house counts
  - Estimated number of guests
  - Processing requests for paid outs
  - Monies paid out of the cashier's drawer

# Interdepartmental Communication

## Communication with Food and Beverage Department

- Incoming messages for the food and beverage manager and executive chef from vendors and other industry representatives are important to the business operation of the F&B Department
- Switch-board operators is often issued instructions on screening callers so that the executive chef is not disturbed (unwanted callers, vendors etc)

# Interdepartmental Communication

## (..contd) Communication with Food and Beverage Department

- Hotels which do not have point of sale mechanism there the desk clerk is responsible for posting accurate charges on the guest folio
- The Front office manager should work with F&B Director in developing standard operating procedures and methods to complete the transfer of charges



# Interdepartmental

## Communication

### (..contd) Communication with Food and Beverage Department

- Specific guidelines concerning cash limits, TAT, prior approval, authorised signatures and purchase receipts developed by general manager and front office manager help smooth operation of the F&B with good internal controls

# Interdepartmental Communication

## Communication with Banquet Department

- Banquet often combines the functions of Marketing and Sales as well as Food and beverage
- Front office to relay information to guests about the scheduled events and bill payment
- Front desk also provides daily announcement boards

# Interdepartmental Communication

## Communication with Banquet Department

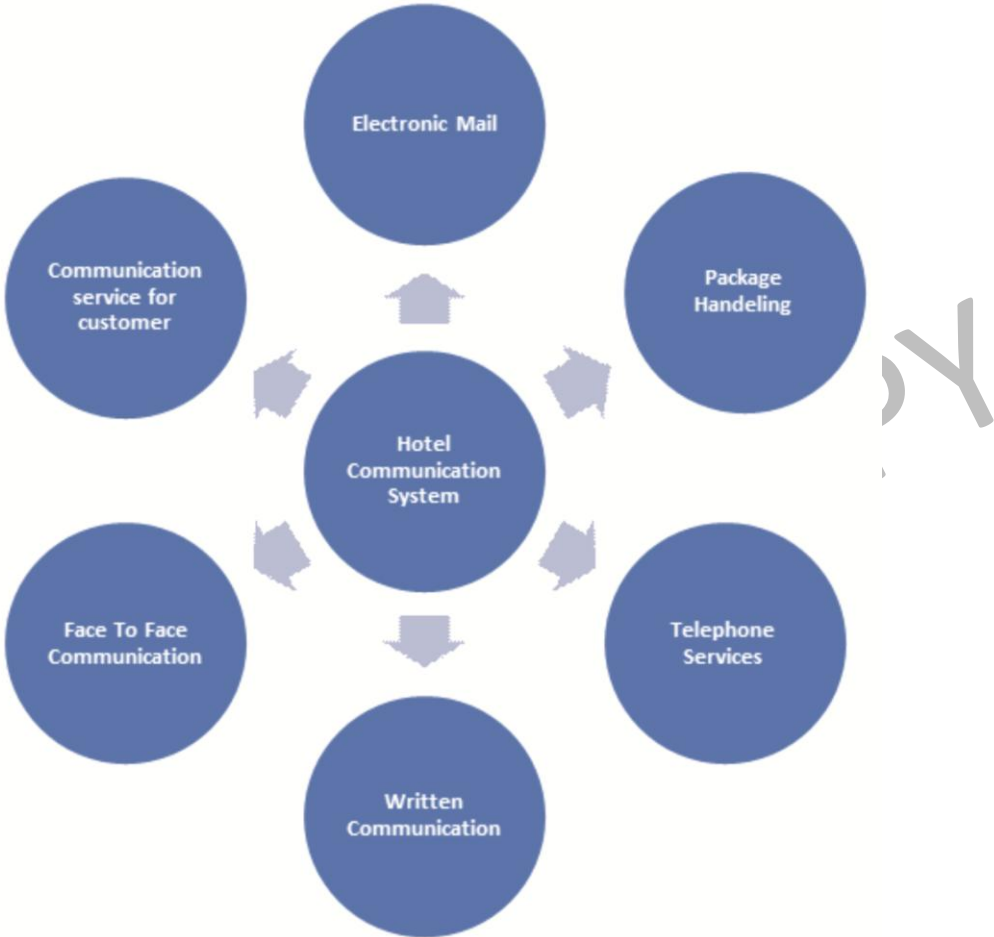
- Front office also provides a logical communications centre for the unregistered guest attending the banquet
- Banquet guest who is unfamiliar with the hotel property will ask at the front office for directions
- In absence of the Banquet clerk, the Front Desk clerk should be informed about the specifics of f&b charges, gratuities rental charges method of payment and the like

# Interdepartmental Communication

## Communication with Controller

- Controller relies on front office staff to provide a daily summary of financial transactions through a well-prepared night audit
- Information is useful to measure management ability to meet budget targets
- Front office and Controller functions must relay payments and charges through the posting machine or property management system for enabling the controller to review the financial data

# Handling of Hotel Communication System



# Handling of Hotel Communication System

## Electronic Mail

- Helpful in communicating the information on policies and procedures to large staff in a hotel
- Security codes are issued to maintain privacy of the information
- In franchise arrangements, email allows smooth communication among the establishments
- Email is most useful and efficient considering many operating departments and many such Heads in a Hotel

# Handling of Hotel Communication System

## Package Handling

- Front office also plays role of security locker for the guests
- Manages the custody of packages left by guest for shorter duration
- All the assets are being kept in the vaults with proper records of the guest for a definite period

# Handling of Hotel Communication System

## Telephone Service

- Most of the Hotels now have EPABX systems
- Cost of calls is charged to guest account
- Front office maintains the log book which has details of call that customer have made
- The log book (which may have queries raised by guest on room s availability) can serve as a source of information for the management to run loyalty programs



# Handling of Hotel Communication System

## Telephone Services also include the following

- **Mobile communications-** Mobile phones, cordless phones, walky-talkies are also used
- **Answering machines and messaging service –** Answering machines, voice mail, sms messaging and mobile email may be used to take enquiries, pass on guests messages etc
- **Telephone conferencing –** allows multi-party calls between different departments when required
- **Fax- Cross between a scanned and telephone -** Prospective guests / agencies may often use fax to send booking confirmations

# Handling of Hotel Communication System

## Paper-based written communication

- Internal mail delivery system (forms, reports, messages)
- External postal systems (Brochures, confirmation letters etc)
- Hotels also have their standard forms, documents and 'house style' communication

Front office needs to become familiar with the proficient and professional use of range of written formats in a hotel

# Handling of Hotel Communication System

## Face to Face communication

- 1. Meetings** – Staff meetings, shift handover meetings etc
- 2. Interviews** – staff selection, appraisal
- 3. Presentations** – Training, selling , presentation to corporate clients

# Handling of Hotel Communication System

## Face to Face communication

**Person to person discussions and information exchanges** – Front office interaction with guests

Face to face is an effective in hospitality service industry. It allows

- non-verbal clues,
- immediate interaction
- humanizes communication and
- key ingredient in providing personal service to guests.

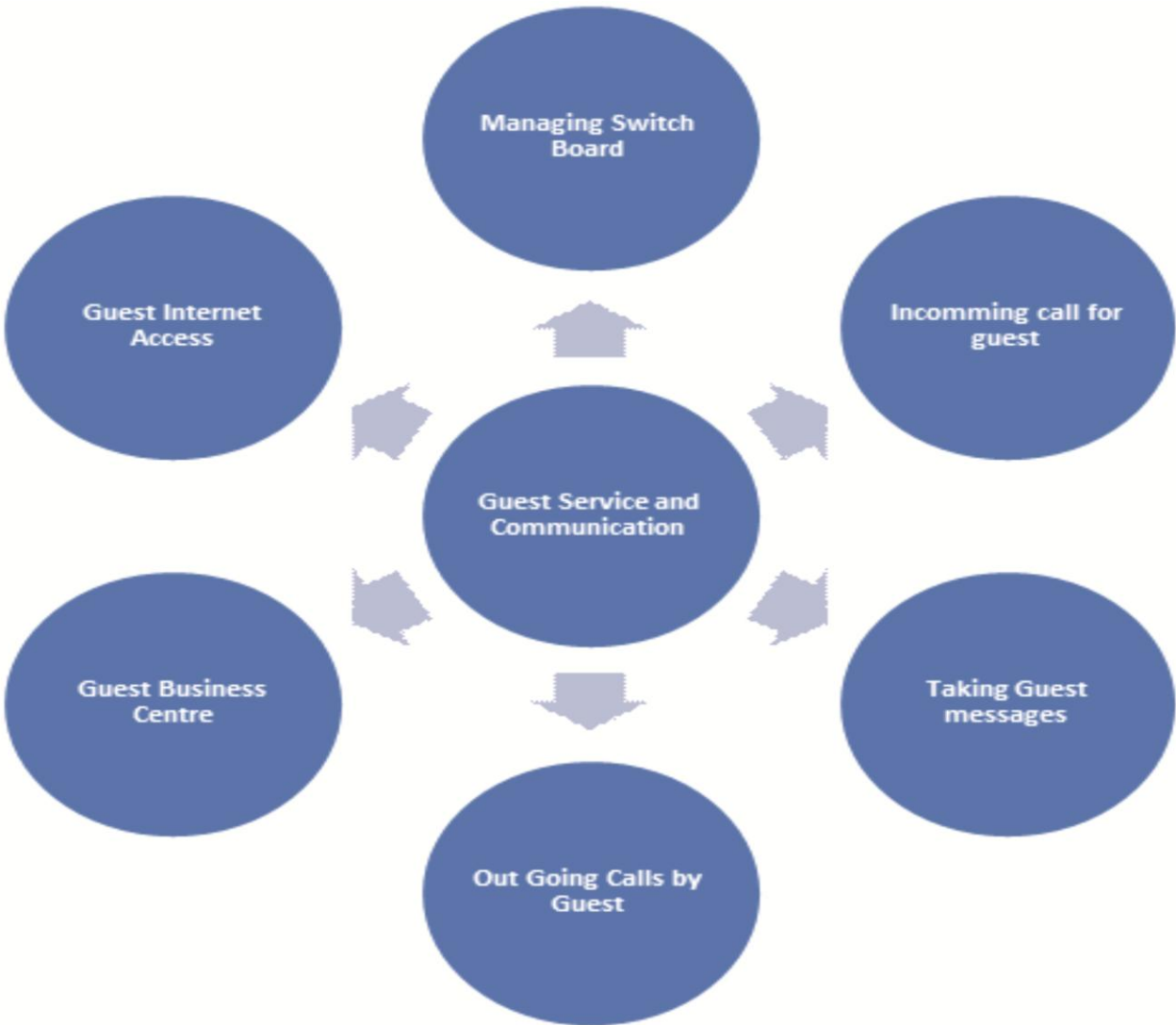
# Handling of Hotel Communication System

## Other communication services for the Guests

Communication services are important part of a hotel's package of benefits for the guests. Main communication services will include –

- Guest telephone services,
- Guest mail services,
- Business services and
- Information services

# Guest Services and Communications



# Guest Services and Communications

**Duties of the Front office is to answer and respond to the guest on phone on behalf of the hotel.**

**Important activities include-**

1. Deal with enquiries or issues raised by the caller
2. Transfer the call to the person or extension requested
3. Transfer the call to the most appropriate person or department to help the caller
4. Take messages where required

# Guest Services and Communications

## Managing the switchboard

- Operator should have immediate access to the directory of in-house extensions
- Every incoming call should be answered promptly
- The operator needs to be familiar with the procedures for dealing with different types of calls



# Guest Services and Communications

## Managing the switchboard

- ❑ Operator should be able to also deal with common problems in switchboard operations
- ❑ Switch board should ascertain the caller's name and purpose of calling and pass this on to the target recipient, so that callers don't have to repeat themselves

# Guest Services and Communications

## Incoming calls for guests

- Operator should be able to locate the guests rooms number swiftly and efficiently
- In manual system the operator needs to refer the printed guest list
- In computerised system, the operator can simply type the guest's name and trace the room number

# Guest Services and Communications

## Taking guest messages

- In manual system the operator may take hand written messages
- Telephone system of hotel may also allow a message waiting alert
- In computerised system the switchboard may type messages into the message area of the system

# Guest Services and Communications

## Outgoing call by guests

- ❑ Outgoing calls had to be placed on the guests behalf by a switch board operator
  
- ❑ Front office staff may need to call out from the hotel for a range of purposes
  - To return calls by enquirers
  - Return calls by travel agencies
  - To re-confirm bookings or notify guests of changes
  - To make calls on behalf of guests

# Guest Services and Communications

## Outgoing call by guests

The communications on behalf of the guests, the process should be-

- Make them as efficient as possible
- Records the call
- Keep commitments

# Guest Services and Communications

## Guest business centre

- Access to computer terminals
- Business Stationery
- Desks or workstations
- Meeting rooms and meeting areas
- Photocopying services or self service photocopiers
- Incoming and out-going fax services
- Binders, laminators
- Data projector
- Courier booking service
- Secretarial support services

# Guest Services and Communications

## Guest internet access

- Guests require internet access during the stay to
  - ✓ Stay in touch with friends and family
  - ✓ View and share digital holiday photographs
  - ✓ Confirm flights
  - ✓ Make travel and entertainment bookings
  - ✓ Supplement in-room entertainment

# Guest Services and Communications

## Guest internet access

- Front office will need a good level of knowledge about
  - the hotel
  - Its services
  - Amenities
  - Policies and
  - charges

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# Summary

- Front office generally exchanges the most information with personnel in housekeeping and engineering and maintenance
- A system of key control is essential to the security of a lodging property
- Handling mails and faxes of guests is very important in the industry
- Handling of telephones should be done in an professional way