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SUPPORTING OPERATIONS OF HOTEL

The hospitality industry does not just employ a receptionist and a room attendant. To keep any large hotel operational round the clock, takes a diverse team of skilled specialists with backgrounds ranging from Accountancy to Information Technology. The various departments of a hotel which are essential to run it successfully are: the Personnel and Administration or Human Resources; the Vigilance and Security, Maintenance or Engineering, the Finance and Accounts and last but not the least important, the Sanitation and Gardening Department.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- describe the personnel and administration department of hospitality industry and its role;
- discuss the Vigilance and Security department and their importance as well as role;
- explain the role of the Maintenance department;
- describe the role of the Finance and Accounts department and
- explain the role of the Sanitation and Gardening department.

22.1 THE PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

The Personnel and Administration department is now a days rechristianed as the ‘Human Resource Department (H.R.D.)’. In the hotel industry the job of

the HR Manager is to manage human resources. No other industry provides so much close contact between employees and the guests and so many opportunities to either create a positive or negative impression. The HR manager is responsible to train employees into capable staff who know how to do their job. In most of the five star and five star deluxe hotels, there are many employees involved in different departments. Therefore, there is a need to motivate, control and effectively deploy them.

The Human Resource Department is a place which supervises and effectively communicates with other departmental heads and also with the top management.

A Typical Organisation of the Human Resource Department in large structure

22.1.1 Human Resource Planning

H.R. Planning is the first aspect of the human resource process. It is very commonly understood as the process of forecasting an organisation's future demand for the right type of people and in the right number. It is only after that, the H.R. department can start a recruitment and selection process. Hiring the talented people and providing them opportunities to enhance their capabilities to shoulder greater responsibilities in future, is one of the critical areas of H.R. functioning.

Growth of the organisation and that of individual employee should complement and supplement each other. H.R. planning is important for the future and current manpower needs:

- to cope with the change;
- to create a pool of highly talented personnel;
- for protection of weaker sections;
- for international expansion strategy of the company;
- it is the foundation for personnel functions,

22.1.2 Role of Human Resource Department

The human resource department plays a major role in helping plan the system and in developing job description, job specification and performance standards and implementing them. Specialists in that department may be assigned to conduct job analysis and write job description in cooperation with managers, supervisors and employees. The HR department is not involved in actual writing of performance standards but plays a diagnostic, training and monitoring role.



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22.1.3 Recruitment

In simple terms, recruitment is understood as the process of searching for and obtaining applicants for jobs, from among whom the right personnel can be selected. Recruitment is the process of finding qualified persons and encouraging them to apply for working with the organisation.

22.1.4 Managerial Roles

Responsibility for the overall recruitment process is assigned to HR managers. They are responsible for designing and implementing a recruitment program that will meet the hotel industry, personnel needs while complying with all legal requirements. This includes writing and placing advertisements, contacting schools, agencies and labour unions; establishing procedures to guarantee equal employment opportunity and administering the funds budgeted for this purpose.

22.1.5 Training and Development

Training & development activities are designed to impart specific skills, abilities and knowledge to employees. Effective training is the basic requirement in any organisation or industry and hotel industry is no different. The concept of training is well understood by all supervisors, yet it is revisited only when things go wrong. Training and development arise as a result of significant change in the operational environment or as a consequence of some crisis such as staff turnover or some department problems. Training is then used to cope with immediate problems. This crisis management could prove costly. Development refers to learning opportunities designed to help employees grow and have a vision about the future. The job of HR is to identify training needs and then accordingly design suitable programs for that. Training within a hotel provides a good opportunity to influence the attitude and performance of the employees. It includes familiarisation with fire drills, food hygiene, control of substances dangerous to health, first aid, technical skills, product knowledge, customer service etc. Moreover, on the job and off-the-job training is also done by this department.

22.1.6 Welfare

Employees welfare is another important function of H.R. Welfare measures develop trust in the organisation. It acts as a support system for the employees in unfavourable times.

22.1.7 Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal refers to the assessment of an employee's actual performance, behaviour in jobs and their potential for future performance. The

purpose of appraisal is to find out his/her training needs, analyse future promotions, pay incentives, retention or termination. Various organisations follow different performance appraisal methods. The hotel industry however follows rating scale method. A good HR policy would be the policy which not only considers all HR functions with proper care but also considers all the factors like culture of the hotel, type of customers it receives, nature of the business and also the place from where it operates.



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INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.1

1. What is the full form of H.R.D.?
2. Define Recruitment.
3. What is the basic function of the Personnel department?



ACTIVITY 22.1

Visit a large Hotel and prepare a list of welfare measures undertaken by the H.R. in the situation like disease, death and other such problems.

22.2 THE VIGILANCE AND SECURITY DEPARTMENT

Most ministries/ departments of the govt. of India and other public sector organisations have a vigilance unit for ensuring a safe and corruption free environment. Hotels are public places where high profile visitors from India and abroad stay. This brings them media attention and this factor makes hotels prone to terror attacks e.g. Hotel Taj Palace, Mumbai terror attack on 26/11. Safety and security must be given highest priority, Hotels should ensure that guests feel safe in their premises. The Hotel Association of India has therefore drawn guidelines to deal with terror. There is a list of security measures which hotels have the option of adopting according to their individual needs.

A Typical Organisation of Security Department

Chief Security Officer

Security Supervisor

Guards



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22.2.1 Role of the Security Department

The main role of the security department is to protect the guests and staff of the hotel. The security department also performs the role of protecting the hotel property i.e. building, furniture etc. The hotel security department usually performs functions such as patrolling, monitoring CCTV (Closed-Circuit Television) and investigating.

22.2.2 Measures for Security

External Access Control:

- (a) Limiting access points – Hotels have multiple access points which are needed to be reduced to a maximum of 2 or 3 to be regulated and monitored through CCTV cameras at these points.
- (b) Road barriers – Devices such as hydraulically operated road barriers can stop vehicles travelling at high speed.
- (c) Patrolling – Increasing the number of security guards and stepping up patrolling can prevent criminals.

Material Access Control:

- (a) Guest baggage check – Guest baggage should be passed through the scanning devices at the entry.
- (b) Hotel supplies check – All types of supplies (fresh and others) to the hotel should be scanned.

People Access Control:

- (a) Walk-in guests – Hotels should not entertain guests without reference.
- (b) Guest profiling – Detailed data (name, date of birth, address, contact no. etc.) about all guests should be kept with the hotel for reference to detect suspicious people.
- (c) Employee verification – background checks and verification of employees should be ensured. Staff should be recruited either directly or through reputed agencies.

Internal Access Control

- (a) Within the hotel, restricted entry to different parts of the hotel.
- (b) Access of staff to various departments should be regulated. e.g. apart from security, only housekeeping staff have room keys as they have to clean the guests' rooms.
- (c) There should be a strict procedure for key handling.

- (d) Lift usage – Lift usage should be selective and enabled by swiping the card key. These days many hotels with the latest technology have lifts which do not have buttons. Instead they have slots against each floor number. Only those people can go to a certain floor who have a key to that floor or room on that floor.

22.2.3 Other Security Measures

Additional measures should be implemented to detect explosives. Devices such as Room key scanners, snifex etc. should be bought by the hotel security department. Garbage management should also be carefully screened in case any explosives are hidden in it.

Efficient hotel security is an absolute necessity, and must be designed and implemented to ensure that guests feel secure, but not restricted or inconvenient. Hotel security is a never-ending task of balancing guest security and guest comfort. On-going media coverage of terrorist attacks and crime keep security issues in the spotlight and guests are very conscious of their security needs.

Why are hotels targeted:

- Icons of tourism
- High profile guests
- Hospitality orientated
- Public accessibility

The importance of hotel protection:

- Protection of guests and associates.
- Protection of the business.
- Protection of the brand.
- Investor confidence.
- Shareholder value.

The following points need to be kept in mind:

- Protection and security of hotel property.
- Crime prevention and investigation.
- Enforcement of hotel rules and regulations.
- Provide security for designated functions.



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- Reporting dangerous and unsafe conditions.
- Security and protection of personal property of the guests and staff.
- Issue of ID Cards, Passes, Permissions for various purposes.
- Identification and control of unauthorised persons.
- Coordinating with the district administration.
- Collecting information useful for maintaining law and order in the hotel.



ACTIVITY 22.1

Undertake a survey of security measures that have been taken by large and very large Hotels in India aftermath of 26/11 Taj Palace terrorist attack.

22.3 MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

The maintenance department affects the operation of the other departments of a hotel. It is commonly called the ‘ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT.’ The Engineering department is one of the major operational departments in any 5 star or 5 star deluxe category hotel.

It has 3 major functions:

- **Property operations:** This includes running the machinery, water treatment and distribution, boilers and water heating, sewage treatment, external and common area lighting, fountains and water features etc. This is carried out by a dedicated set of personnel working in shifts to cover 24 hours of the day. Operations will also include minor trouble shooting and technical support required for guest room problems and other areas.
- **Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM):** This is one of the most important functions of Engineering Department. The idea is to regularly carry out a set of preventive actions for every machine in the building rather than allow it to run to failure and then tackle expensive breakdown maintenance costs. A PPM schedule is drawn at the beginning of the year and a team of dedicated persons execute it accordingly. In some cases like elevators and kitchen equipments, temporary downtime may be required which is planned in coordination with the affected user departments.
- **Fire and Life safety:** The Engineering Department is also responsible to ensure a safe building for the hotel guests and staff. This includes ensuring 100 % up-time of all the fire pumps serving the sprinkler and hydrants around

the building, the Fire Alarm system consisting of smoke detectors, manual call points and alarm bells, emergency backup power generators, inverters, UPS(uninterrupted power supply), public address system, CCTV cameras, fire doors, bollards and boom barriers etc. They work hand in hand with security personnel in carrying out evacuation drills and safety checks of the property. Hotels should conduct mock drill on fire and life safety to improve capability to deal with emergency problems without causing inconvenience to the guests.

Apart from these, lately, a new area of focus called Environmental and Energy Management has increasingly taken priority. This includes energy conservation, waste management, recycling and using green measures to reduce the carbon footprint of the building. Some measures would be like replacing incandescent lamps with fluorescent lamps, economisers in boilers, heat recovery from AC condenser water etc.

The Engineering department expenses include energy, repairs and maintenance expenses. This accounts anywhere between 10 to 18 % of the revenue depending on size and external environmental factors of the building. Therefore Chief Engineers (or Director Engineering in larger hotels) spend most of their time planning, budgeting or doing complain analysis to figure out medium and long term solutions for the hotel's technical challenges.

Hotels operate twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. When the guests are asleep various other systems of the building such as heating and ventilation units, hot & cold water systems, laundry etc. continue to operate. This can be achieved only if there is an efficient engineering department which can handle everything so that everyone can do their jobs and the guests are safe and comfortable.

22.3.1 Role of the Maintenance Department

Basically if there is no engineering department; there is no hotel. This is because if there are no services like hot water, elevators/lifts, heating or cooling, electricity, kitchen equipment, laundry equipment etc, there would be no guests in that hotel.

The duties of the maintenance staff are –

1. Inspection
2. Repairs Maintenance
3. Preventive and Maintenance
4. Breakdown
5. Overhaul
6. Construction
7. Clerical jobs.



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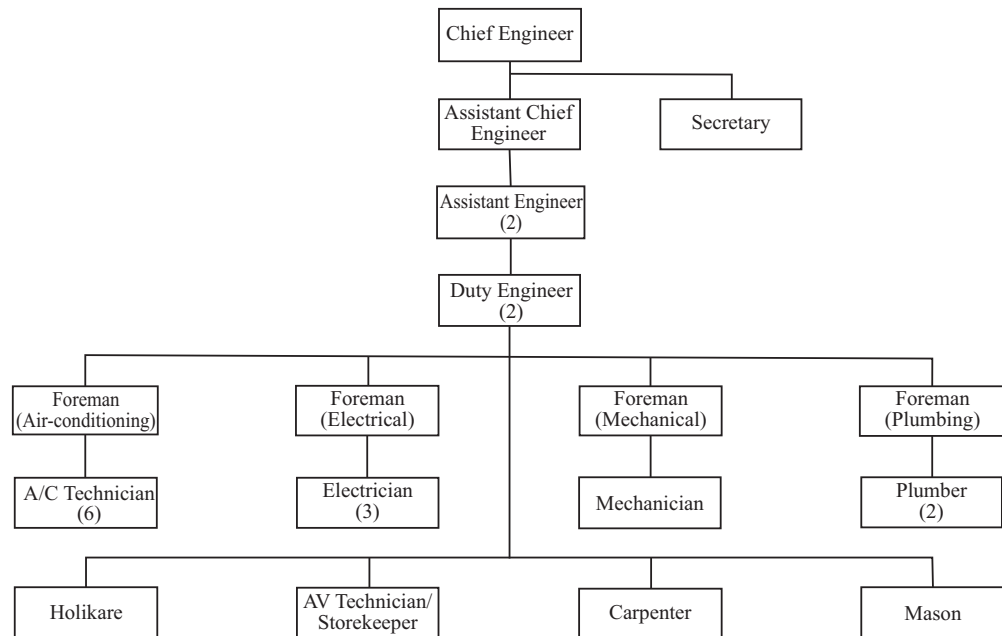


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The basic functions of the maintenance department are-

1. Protect the investment in the physical plant.
2. Control the maintenance cost.
3. Minimise the energy cost of the facilities.
4. Minimise safety problems.

A Typical Organisation of Maintenance Department

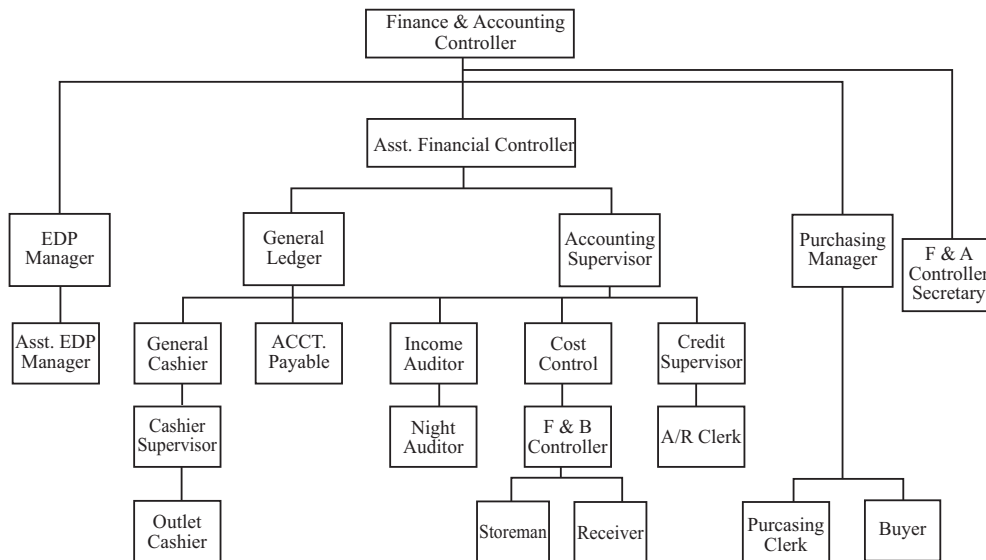


22.4 FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT

The Finance and Accounting departments play a significant role by providing the financial data used by all managers in their daily decision making, ensuring financially sound and thriving hotels. It basically tracks all revenues and expenditure. This department works closely with the General Manager and Department heads to assist with recommendations for desirable economic options, forecasting and prepare monthly and annual reports. The staff who works in Finance and Accounting requires excellent analytical skills, mathematical aptitude, strong leadership and strategic thinking.

A Typical Organisation of Finance and Accounts Department

Hotel Organisation Chart



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22.4.1 Role of the Finance and Accounts Department

The following are the main functions of this department

- Check the Daily General Cashier Report.
- Carrying out monthly balancing of all hotel bank accounts.
- To maintain general ledger, starting from posting, adjusting, and printing.
- Accounts Payable & Receivable.
- Audit.
- Brand Business Services Decision Support.
- Domestic & International Tax.
- Financial Planning & Analysis
- Salaries of all staff.
- Strategic Initiatives.
- Treasury.

22.5 THE SANITATION AND GARDENING DEPARTMENT

Sanitation can be defined as “the study and use of practical measures for the preservation of public health”. Alternatively it can also be defined as “the application of measures designed to protect public health.”

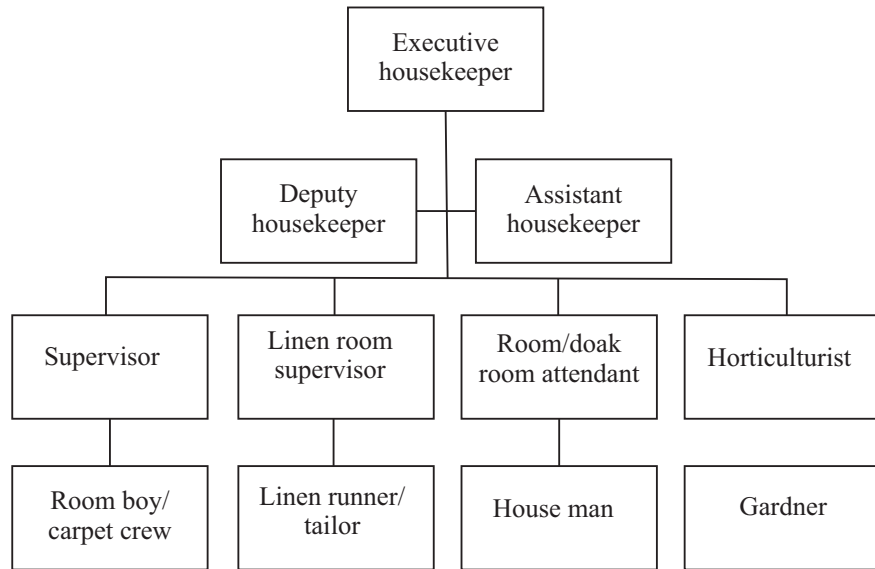
Gardening is the practice of growing and cultivating plants as part of horticulture in hotels. It play significant role in beautifying and enhance tourists



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or guests experience towards the hotels’ eternal surroundings. In gardens ornamental plants are often grown for their flowers and overall appearance of hotel.

A Typical Organisation of Sanitation and Gardening Department



22.5.1 Role of Sanitation and Department

Sanitation is essential to promote health. It includes overall cleanliness as well as treatment and proper disposal of waste. The housekeeping department of Hotel is responsible for the overall sanitation work.

Gardens are a place where hotel guests can relax after meetings, eat meals and socialise. The garden facing rooms are very popular and the management finds that they can charge a higher rate for them. These types of rooms (lanai).



INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.2

1. List any 2 functions of the security department.
2. Why is guest baggage checking important?
3. What is the full form of C.C.T.V.
4. Give an example of a security threat for a hotel.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- To conclude the various supporting operations of a hotel such as Human Resource, Maintenance, Security, Finance and Gardening are also very important for the effective and smooth functioning of any hotel.

- All big 5 star hotels have these departments which are well structured.
- The staff in every department is recruited according to the function that every department performs. Therefore, the basic function of hotel industry is to provide rooms and food and beverages to the guest. However in order to perform this basic function other supporting departments must also contribute.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Define Recruitment.
2. Define performance appraisal.
3. What is guest profiling?
4. Define sanitation.
5. What is the role of the H.R. Department?
6. What are the basic functions of the finance department?
7. What is the importance of gardening for a hotel?
8. Draw the organisation chart of sanitation and gardening department.
9. Explain in detail various measures for security taken by a hotel.
10. Draw the organisation chart of Maintenance department.



ANSWER TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

22.1

1. Human Resource.
2. Recruitment is the process of finding qualified persons to work with the organization.
3. Maintaining Payroll, Recruitment, Training and Welfare.

22.2

1. (i) External Access Control.
(ii) Material Access Control.
(iii) People Access Control.
(iv) Internal Access Control (Any two).
2. To check entry of any material i.e. arms, ammunition, explosives etc. into Hotel Premises.
3. Close Circuit Television.
4. Terrorist Attack like, 26/11, Taj Palace, Mumbai.



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