

## Impact of Front Office Guest Cycle, on Guest Satisfaction & Staff Attitude

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### **Abstract:**

The front desk of a hotel is critical to guest happiness. Throughout the guest life cycle, the front desk personnel has the greatest contact with guests. Guests are more likely to return to the hotel or leave a positive review if the front desk operations personnel makes a good impression. In other words, the front desk has a direct impact on the hotel's success. According to the findings of different surveys, creative methods, service quality, courtesy, competency, and responsiveness (CCR) of personnel have a beneficial impact on client satisfaction levels in the hotel. Employees at the front desk are the hotel's face and one of its most significant divisions, and their performance is critical to clients' first impressions. Various research findings show that competence has a significant impact on a negative first impression, friendliness and service attitude have a significant impact on a positive first impression, and both positive and negative first impressions have a significant impact on customer satisfaction with the check-in experience. The outcomes of this research are intended to aid in the creation of future management training for new hotel personnel.

*Key words: Guest, Happiness, Satisfaction, Innovative, Service quality, Attitude.*

### **Introduction**

Modern hospitality is distinguished from other related activities in the sphere of providing accommodation by continuous maintenance of the quality of services and introduction of new types of services. Modern business philosophy is geared towards tourists, guests and consumers and satisfying their needs and desires.

According to the tourism ministry, 4.4 million tourists visited India last year and at current trend, demand will soar to 10 million in 2010 - to accommodate 350 million domestic travelers. 'Hotels in India' has a shortage of 150,000 rooms fueling hotel room rates across India. Sources estimate, demand is going to exceed supply by at least 100% over the next 2 years. Five-star hotels in metro cities allot same room, more than once a day to different guests, receiving almost 24-hour rates from both guests against 6-8 hours usage. With demand-supply

disparity, 'Hotel India' room rates are most likely to rise 25% annually and occupancy to rise by 80%, over the next two years.

The hotel front desk is a vital part of the Front Office operations because it creates the guest's first impression. In this era of competition hotels have adopted new practices to improve their level of performance and at the same time delight the guest. Each guest is treated with utmost consideration and made to feel special. The quick kiosk check-in concept was initiated where the guest checks in himself. Counter check-in system is practiced by the hotel as it is not possible to do in-room check-in for all the guests. Wi-Fi technology, online reservations and high-speed internet access are the leading technological facilities. The guest does not have to wait at the reception for his turn to come or do the check-in process. The guest is escorted by the Guest Relation Executive and the room allotment to the guest is done. The group check in is done by the front office staff to save on the time for the guests. Group members are given preassigned rooms off the rooming list. Front desk staff is attentive and strives to handle all customer complaints calmly. It includes in-room check in where the guest does not have to wait at the counter for his turn to come or do the check-in process. The new guest services are introduced to develop better relationships with the guest. Staff members are trained to be familiar with the room styles, features, and locations throughout the hotel. The guest satisfaction tracking system helps the hoteliers to understand which facilities are more important for the guests.

## **Literature Review**

Guest satisfaction is a differentiator and a critical factor for the hotel. The hotel performance is impacted because of the attitude and the motivational levels of the employees. Riza Munira Binti Shamsuddin, 2012, shows the results of the study of performance management of Front Office department and guest satisfaction. Kong Hai - Yan, 2006 Front Office staff in China's top four- and five-star hotels find work in this department challenging and demanding. High-quality human resources are lacking in the hospitality sector and training is needed to improve the skills of front office staff, a study has found.

According to the Ashad Mohsin, 2010 the researcher state that the service quality of customer perception of the hotel helps the management to identify the of the meet the needs of the customer. Whereas Alin Sriyam, 2010 suggests that if the employee of the front desk are more cooperative and understanding towards the customer nature and behavior then the management will automatically archive the satisfaction.

Judy Siguaw, 1999 discusses about implementing outstanding or best practices to improve operations. When effective practices were implemented in the front office especially check-in and check-out, there was an increase in the guest and employee satisfaction

## **Front office Operation and its relationship with guest cycle**

### **Hotel Guest Cycle**

Stages	Activity
Pre-Arrival	Reservation, Reconfirmation, Pickup, Pre -arrival letter
Arrival	Bell desk, Travel desk, Registration, Room assigned, Issuing room key, Baggage handling, Welcome letter
Occupancy	Safe deposit, Telephone handling, Concierge, Travel desk, Currency exchange
Departure	Bill settlement, key return, Bell desk, Travel desk, Concierge, Checkout

*Figure 1:1 Hotel Guest cycle*

**The Hotel guest cycle explained:** The hotel guest cycle, as explained by IQware and Set Up My Hotel, describes the consumer lifecycle. It begins with a research phase, during which potential guests evaluate and contrast several hotels before deciding. The booking stage, which confirms the guest's stay and is commonly completed online or over the phone, is the next step in the guest cycle. Reminders or changes to reservations are examples of other pre-arrival communications. Guests may contact parking valets or luggage attendants upon arrival before checking in at the front desk. They then proceed to their rooms and begin the process of settling in. They can request forgotten items like toothbrushes, order room service, or inquire about area activities and amenities at this time. Guests may still be assisted by hotel employees in getting a car or transporting their belongings to the parking lot after check-out. Finally, the post-stay step may entail the guest writing a review of the hotel or deciding whether to return.

**Front Office Operations and the guest cycle:** Throughout the guest cycle, the front desk is the major point of contact for the guests. Guests can contact the front desk if they have any questions throughout the research phase. They phone the front desk when they're ready to book. Through these phone conversations, the front desk employees may demonstrate their efficiency and friendliness, ensuring that guests are satisfied with their decision to stay well before their arrival.

When the guests come, the front desk has another opportunity to impress them with prompt (but not rushed) and friendly service. The front desk employees can build a warm rapport with guests while educating them of the hotel's various services and amenities. Guests should not leave with the impression that their questions or requests are bothersome to the front desk. Instead, the front desk employees should always appear eager to assist so that any issues that arise during the occupancy period are brought to their notice and resolved swiftly.

The quick check-out process also allows the front desk one last chance to ensure that the visitors are happy. For example, the staff could inquire if the guest requires any luggage or transit assistance. It's also a good moment to ask guests to leave a review, which can help you attract other guests who are still doing their research.

**The Front Office can not fix everything:** Keep in mind that even the best front-desk staff can't compensate for serious flaws in other areas. When a website appears amateurish or there aren't enough phone lines to handle all the calls, for example, potential clients are lost during the research and booking stages. When customers arrive at a place that appears unsafe or unwelcoming, they may decide to cancel all or part of their reservation and go somewhere else.

A poor breakfast, filthy rooms, slow room service, and unfriendly uniformed employees are just a few of the things that can leave a bad impression on visitors. These difficulties extend beyond front-desk responsibilities and must be addressed by hotel management. The front desk is frequently tasked with receiving complaints and resolving issues with guests, but if the issues linger, the hotel risks receiving unfavorable ratings and drawing fewer visitors.

### **Maintain the service quality in hotel using the guest cycle**

Hotel guests' behaviors, interests, and expectations are rapidly changing. Repeat business, word-of-mouth referrals, and good social media reviews will be rewarded for properties that can create a memorable experience through unique features, personal touches, and exceptional customer service. Consider these eight tried-and-true tactics for increasing hotel client happiness at your establishment. **As per an interesting blog by Amadeus Hospitality they have identified the below points related to the service quality during guest cycle in hotel:**

1. **Personalized service:** Central Reservation System organizes reservations throughout a hotel portfolio and can provide broad information on the guest's value and the amenities they use.

Customer Relationship Management technology may assist even the tiniest hotels learn how consumers buy products based on the context of their travel (both group and transitory), allowing you to give customized promotions or upselling offers to them ahead of time.

Service Optimization platform enables the operational collection and evaluation of a visitor experience for current and future stays.

Aside from systems, leaving a modest welcome gift in each room, offering free drinks in the lobby, and empowering your personnel to provide outstanding service are all examples of ways to provide a unique visitor experience.

If a couple is celebrating their anniversary at your hotel, for example, consider leaving a bottle of champagne or chocolate-covered strawberries for them when they arrive. It's a tiny gesture, but one they'll remember and value.

2. **Reach out with post room reservation communication:** With a follow-up email, establish a connection with the guest as soon as feasible. This will allow you to set the tone for the guest's stay and allow you to collect crucial information about them before they even arrive. Simple but thoughtful services like additional pillows or meal reservations are available. This is an excellent method to create

more detailed visitor profiles, demonstrate your dedication to customer service, and even reinforce your brand promise and reputation.

3. **Offer complimentary services:** Adding a little additional value to your clients' experience by delivering a few complimentary services will help them warm up to you and your business. Offering gratis services is a good way to provide excellent customer service that people will tell their friends about — or better yet, promote on social media. Offering free Wi-Fi or a free shuttle to the airport or nearby attractions can be as simple as that.
4. **In room technology:** The technology that is now being created for hotels is both fascinating and game changing. Hotels, for example, are beginning to install "smart room keys," which allow guests to unlock their doors with a simple swipe of their smartphone. This technology has already been applied in hotels around the country by brands like Sheraton and Hilton. For both guests and workers, tablets are proven to be an efficient communication tool. Travelers can make a request from their room in only a few clicks, which is sent to a staff member's mobile device and replied in minutes. The hotel can even use the tablets to advertise paid services or local attractions.
5. **Proactiveness:** Rather than waiting for a customer complaint, may assist you in transitioning from a reactive to a proactive service strategy, which will boost customer satisfaction and retention.
6. **Reward repeat guests:** Customer loyalty is critical to any hotel's success, but in today's competitive industry, it's becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. That is why hoteliers must concentrate on tactics that recognize and reward repeat customers. While loyalty programs are a terrific strategy, you need think about how you build your program. After a specific number of points are accumulated, many loyalty programs provide a free night or a discounted stay.

### **Front Office Practices and its impact on guest satisfaction**

To keep their guests satisfied, the hotel must provide the greatest services and offer something fresh for them. The guest had more options, and it was critical to keep them and provide them with once-in-a-lifetime experiences so that they would become loyal consumers. The hotel was able to adjust several its practices and implement new, cost-effective, and innovative ones as a result of the guests' candid feedback.

According to a poll, Wi-Fi technology, online reservations, and high-speed internet access are the most popular technological services offered by hotels to their consumers. (Hotel Industry Trends in Technology, Sustainability survey, 2013).

The modern customer expects prompt service. The hotel provides a flexible and straightforward check-in process. It offers in-room check-in, which eliminates the need for the guest to wait for his turn at the desk or complete the check-in process.

The guest is led by the Guest Relations Executive to his or her room. With advancements in technology, the rapid kiosk check-in concept was born, in which the guest checks oneself in. The hotel uses a counter check-in method because it is impossible to check in all of the guests in their rooms. To minimize time for the guests, the front office staff does the group check-in in the coach. Preassigned rooms are assigned to the group members from the rooming list. The front desk personnel engages with visitors, is attentive, and seeks to calmly resolve all client issues.

Digital boards are being used by drivers while going to pick up guests as part of the new practices. Traditional welcome with arti and tikka along with cold towels and some refreshment, small mini bar facility provided to the guest to treat themselves in the car, the travel desk executive sending the details about the chauffeur prior to the pickup, which helped the guest track the chauffeur easily, traditional welcome with arti and tikka along with cold towels and some refreshment.

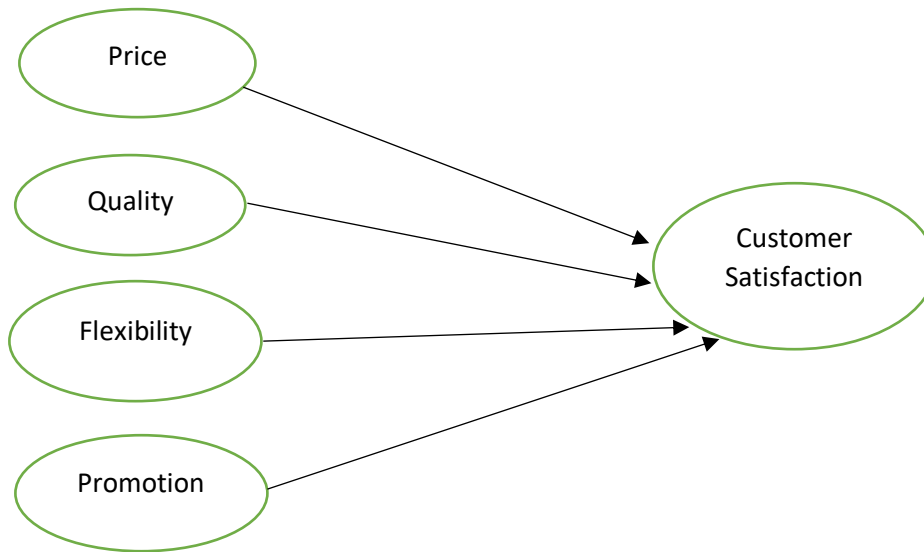
The hotel's personnel is trained to be knowledgeable with the many accommodation styles, features, and locations.

Employees at the front desk have been trained to be knowledgeable with the area and tourist attractions. The visitor satisfaction tracking system assists hoteliers in determining which amenities are most important to guests, resulting in increased guest retention.

The new guest services are being offered to improve visitor connections. Weekend activities for couples and children are organized by the hotel. At check-in, children are given a kids registration card on which they can put down their favorite's foods and beverages, which are then presented to them as a surprise in their rooms. On each of the guest's visits, he or she is recognized, and after the 10th, 25th, and 50th visits, the stay is commemorated with supper in the hotel's restaurant and a gift.

Front office practices which can impact the guest's satisfaction level are arrival and departure process, courtesy, competency, and responsiveness (CCR) of the reception staff, telephone operator, chauffeur, and travel desk staff. It also considers the hotel's ability to transport guests to and from the airport, as well as matching the personal preferences of guests, particularly repeat clients. When a guest checks in, the front desk department is the first point of contact for him. The findings indicate that most guests were satisfied with the Front Office department's services and operations. In the feedback, most of them rated it as outstanding. When customers arrive, they have already assessed the services and formed an opinion of the hotel. The CCR of the front desk employees was found to be the highest, followed by the CCR of the hotel's airport transport and the CCR of the chauffeur. Some respondents gave the front desk employees a low CCR because the details for accommodation reservations were wrong, and the receptionist did not react to guest concerns promptly. Observations like this were gleaned from the guests' particular comments. Although the leaving procedure receives a higher grade than the arrival, the percentages for these characteristics should be significantly higher for a five-star hotel. The departure process went well or according to the expectations of the guests. The CCR of telephone operators and travel desk workers received a satisfactory percentage rating. Based on the number of respondents, it can be stated that due to the widespread use of personal mobile phones, few people used telephone services. Some guests evaluated meeting the guests' personal preferences or special requests as outstanding, while some observations suggest that not all requests and guest preferences were met, such as specific demands for amenities not being met. As a brand, the hotel only accepts input that is rated as exceptional, and all other metrics are improved by making modifications to existing methods to make them more successful.





*Figure 1:2 Customer Satisfaction Model*

### **Front Office employee role and attitude towards hotel service quality and guest satisfaction**

The hotel's front desk personnel play a significant role. They are the first to greet and welcome guests when they arrive. They have more contact with guests than personnel in other departments, and they must deliver service that meets the guests' needs and expectations. Front-office workers include the front-office manager, the front-office receptionist, and the front-office.

Reservationists, receptionists, front cashiers, telephone operators, night auditors, guest relations officers, and bellboys are just a few of the positions available. The main functions which are performed by Hotel Front Office employees are:

1. Everything in the department is supervised and controlled by the front office manager. He/she oversees training newly hired employees and follows the management department's policies. To work efficiently, he/she also contributes to staff development.
2. Reservation agents oversee advanced hotel room reservations by various channels such as phone, fax, and email, as well as hotel guests' personal information.
3. Guests are greeted by a front desk personnel when they arrive. They're also in charge of rooms that haven't been reserved, registrations, room numbers, room keys, and guests' luggage, which they

- coordinate with the bellboy or other personnel. They also provide information, mail letters, take messages, take notes, and report on the guests' check-in and check-out statistics.
4. Front-desk cashiers keep track of visitors and payments by issuing receipts or daily reminders. They also receive money from guests and oversee the money in all areas of the hotel.
  5. The telephone contact, the hotel sound system supervision, and the morning call are all handled by telephone operators.
  6. When guests check in and out at night, the night auditor reviews their records, collects payments, and provides services to them.
  7. Guest relations executives are constantly on hand at the desk near the lobby to assist and advise visitors, as well as solve their difficulties. They must have a thorough understanding of the hotel as well as the city's significant tourist attractions. They should also be able to communicate in at least one foreign language.
  8. Bellboys are mostly in charge of the guests' luggage. They transport hotel visitors to their rooms after informing them of their room number and providing them with the room key. They may be required to respond to or advise clients about other hotel services on occasion.

In addition, front-office employees serve as a command centre in the event of a fire, a bomb threat, or medical issues. A capable, courteous, and professional front office staff can ensure that each guest has a great stay and that they will return.

The front desk, as previously stated, is the most visible department of the hotel. Even in stressful situations, front-line employees must be able to get along with a wide range of people. To maintain a smooth operation and to keep guest satisfied with service below attitudes are very important for any employee of hotel Front Office---

To begin, the front-desk workers should have a pleasant demeanor and be well-dressed and tidy. Individuals who are properly dressed convey authority and position; so, the initial impression is only one aspect of establishing a strong relationship between the hotel and its guests. Customers want front-office workers to have a perfect outer look.

Second, the personnel should be capable. They should be familiar with the hotel's basic product knowledge, accommodation types, and hotel amenities. Single rooms, double rooms, twin rooms, suites, connected rooms, and adjoining rooms are all types of rooms that a front desk personnel should be familiar with and explain.

Third, guests may speak English with varying accents, and some words may be difficult for front-office workers to comprehend due to the various countries, especially for reservations or operators who deal with clients over the phone. Staff in the front office should employ an alphabetic scheme similar to that used by travel agents and airlines.

When telephone operators answer the phone, they should introduce themselves and declare the hotel's name, along with the word.

Greetings, 1 or.

With the appropriate intonation, say "good evening." The adding of the words. Is it possible for me to assist you? will create the appearance of eagerness to assist, which is crucial in a hotel.

Furthermore, front-desk staff should be able to address various problems, complaints, or other challenges that visitors may encounter while staying at the hotel. When working with customers, good communication skills are necessary, as is a desire to solve problems as they emerge.

**Conclusion:** Finally, front-desk employees should make their customers happy and satisfied. The front desk crew is crucial to the hotel's sustained performance as a primary driver of visitor happiness. They provide constant guest connection and the hotel's most diverse operating exposure. The front desk employees, on the other hand, will portray the hotel's image to consumers, and they will have a good sense of anticipating guests' needs and exceeding their expectations. Standardized products, motivated and qualified staff, and quality management are the most essential factors in guest satisfaction and repeat business. Most guests are satisfied with the Front Office department's overall services, according to the study's findings.

The front office department appears to be one area that is a strong promoter of guest pleasure. Employee incentive strategies such as the Star-o-meter (getting star points for providing high-quality

services), Employee of the Month Award, and posting such information on bulletin boards for all to see are powerful motivational tools. It's also worth noting that the hotel's training processes, and recruitment policies are both effective. The Front Office practices of sending the bill the night before or slipping it in with the newspaper early in the morning for the guest to check, offering goody bags and gifts while leaving the hotel, capturing such moments in photos and mailing them to the guest, answering questions, and effectively handling complaints have all contributed to the level of guest satisfaction.

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