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## **UNIT 12 MANAGING FRONT OFFICE OPERATIONS**

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### **12.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After studying this Unit you will be able to explain the:

- Importance of front desk functions in a hotel,
- meaning of front-of-the-house and back-of-the-house operations and their role in the hotel,
- various operations associated with front office, and
- importance of each of the front-desk operations in context to the smooth running of the hotel.

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### **12.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Regardless of the class or type of the hotel, front office is the most visible and essential focal point of a hotel. The focal point of activity within the front office is the reception desk, which is located in the front lobby of a hotel and dispenses all front-of-the-house activities of the hotel. It is the communication centre of the hotel with great amount of guest contact. Guests interact with the hotel for the first time by interacting with the staff of the front office, and they form the first impression about the hotel based on the efficiency, competency and behaviour of the front office staff.

The reception desk performs the functions like the sale of rooms, guest registration, room assignments, handling of guest requests, maintenance of the guest accounts, cashiering along with handling mail and providing information. The financial tasks usually handled by the front desk personnel include receiving cash payments, handling guest folios, verifying cheques and handling foreign currency and credit cards. In this Unit, you will be familiarised with all these aspects of the front office management.

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### **12.2 FRONT OFFICE FUNCTIONS**

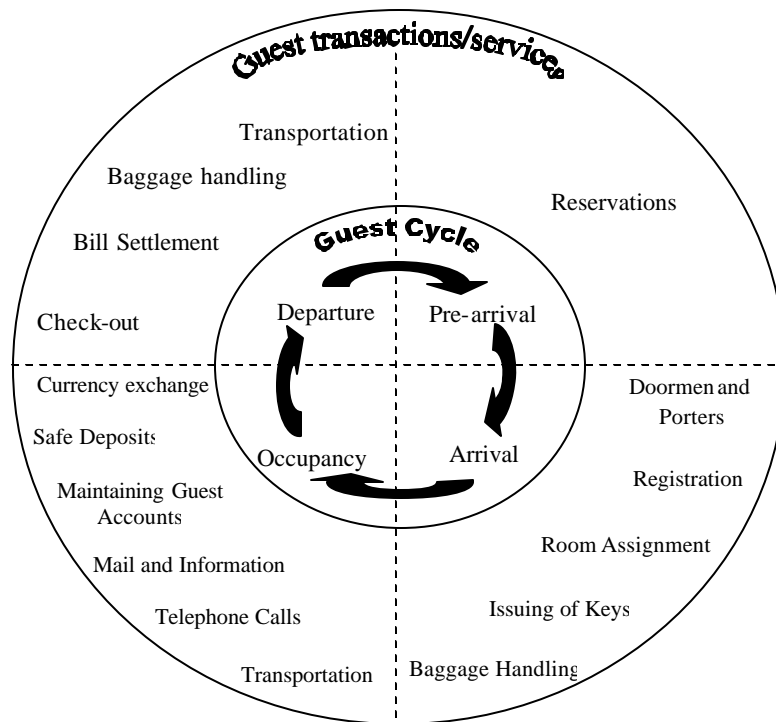
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The primary function of the front office is that of a facilitator between the guest and other departments of the hotel. Another job of Front office desk is also to support and help in providing services to the

guests. The number of interactions and transactions between the guest and the hotel during a guest stay, determine the type and nature of front office operations. The stages of guest stay are:

- pre-arrival,
- arrival,
- occupancy, and
- departure.

Various transactions between the guest and the hotel, therefore, depend upon the stage of the guest stay. The transactions can be best understood by going through the guest cycle.



**Figure I: The Guest Cycle**

(Source: Principles of Hotel Front Office Operations, Sue Baker, Jereeny Huyton and Pam Bradley)

**Figure I** shows the following transactions and exchange of services between a guest and the hotel:

- reservations,
- check-in and registration,
- mail and information,
- uniformed service and baggage handling,
- telephone calls and messages,
- handling guest accounts, and
- check-out and bill settlement.

All these services and transactions are handled by the front office department. The functions and services of the front office department can be differentiated depending upon the area where they are being performed. Some of the functions are performed by the reception desk as front-of-the-house operations and rest are performed as back-of-the-house operations. Table 1 gives a brief summary of the functions performed by the front office as described by **Michael I. Kasavana**.

**Table 1: Summary of front office functions.**  
(Source: Michael L. Kasavana, VNR's Encyclopaedia)

FUNCTIONS	AREA OF OPERATIONS
1) <b>Sell guest rooms</b> Accept reservations Handle walk-ins Perform the registration process	Front of the house activity
2) <b>Provide information on hotel services</b> Concerning internal hotel operations About external events and locations	Front of the house activity
3) <b>Coordinate guest services</b> Liaison between front and back-of-the-house areas Handle guest problems and complaints	Front of the house activity
4) <b>Chart room status reports</b> Coordinate room sales and housekeeping: occupied status On-change status, out-of-order status	Back of the house activity
5) <b>Maintaining guest accounts</b> Construction of folio and account Posting to folios (updating) Supervision of credit levels Documentation of guest's transactions	Back of the house activity
6) <b>Settlement of guest accounts</b> Preparation of guest statement Reconciliation of folio Perform the checkout procedure	Front of the house activity
7) <b>Construct guest history file</b> Record the guest's personal data for future references	Back of the house activity

### 12.2.1 Front-of-the-House Operations

Front-of-the-House operations are known so because these operations take place in front of the guests. Thus, these operations are related either to direct interaction with the guest or they are being conducted in front of the guest. The front office activities start from the time a guest calls or sends in a request for reservation/ accommodation. Staff of the front office department starts interacting with guest by taking in guest information and reservation request, leading to confirmation of reservation and finally to the handling of guest on arrival and guest check-in.

Check-in activity is a must for both, a guest with reservation or a walk-in-guest, i.e., one without prior reservation. The reservation system of hotels varies but nowadays since it is mostly computerised, therefore, features are the same. Check-in procedures require the collection of a lot of information. This is because information helps in building guest record data and serves the purposes of a ready reckoner in case of any emergency involving the guest. Front office takes in the guest information for future use and provides the guest with information about the hotel and its various services and thus, becomes the connecting link between the guest and the hotel. The pivotal role played by the front office is quite apparent from this very fact that it is the centre of all activities connected with guests in the hotel.

Therefore, decisions regarding the sale of a room to a particular guest, availability and allocation of a room, maintaining guest account by coordinating with the housekeeping and room service are the major front-of-the-house activities. Finally, the account settlement or deciding on the time of account settlement is generally a part of check-out process, performed by front office. Thus in short we can say that front office is the first and last place (as in check-in and check-out), wherein a guest interacts with the hotel.

## 12.2.2 Back-of-the-House Operations

As the name suggests these operations involve the activities which do not take place in front of the guests. The front office activities start the moment an enquiry or request regarding accommodation is made. This enquiry is answered keeping in view converting it into a reservation request. Although reservation is an activity of front office, major hotel lines/chain of hotels have centralised reservation system, operational 24 hours a day 365 days a year. (Reservation and its various intricacies will be discussed in the later sections). A confirmed reservation leads to browsing of information, i.e., guest-record to determine whether this is a repeat guest and if yes what are the personal information and preferences of the guest. This helps you giving personal touch to guest's stay with the hotel.

When the guest checks-in, his or her account gets activated. This account keeps track of the guest's financial interaction with the hotel. These financial interactions involve room rent, room services, laundry, food and beverage at the hotel's outlet and any other facility used by the guest during his or her stay. For instance, these financial transactions begin the moment when he/she while waiting for allocation of a room start making phone calls to his/her associates to inform them the arrival or order for something in the lobby itself. The daily night auditors help the back of the office department in the hotel in maintaining the guest accounts. Many hotels have a credit line extended to their guests or to the companies which they represent. The credit limit is predetermined and the hotel allows the guest to accumulate the amount before asking for either a full or partial payment. Many a times a guest is asked to provide his/her credit card during check-in while cash is expected mode of payment during checkout with multinational brands coming into India the concept of property management system has emerged which allows night auditors to flash guest's folio on day to day basis on their T.V. monitors. This kind of arrangement saves lot of guest's time at the time of checkout.

It also co-ordinates with housekeeping and room sales to maintain the status of occupied as well as unoccupied rooms. Finally, the guest record or personal data is maintained by the front office, which is essentially a back-of-the-house activity. Thus, the Guest cycle which started by taking guest booking, receiving guests, providing for their stay and billing them on departure gets completed.

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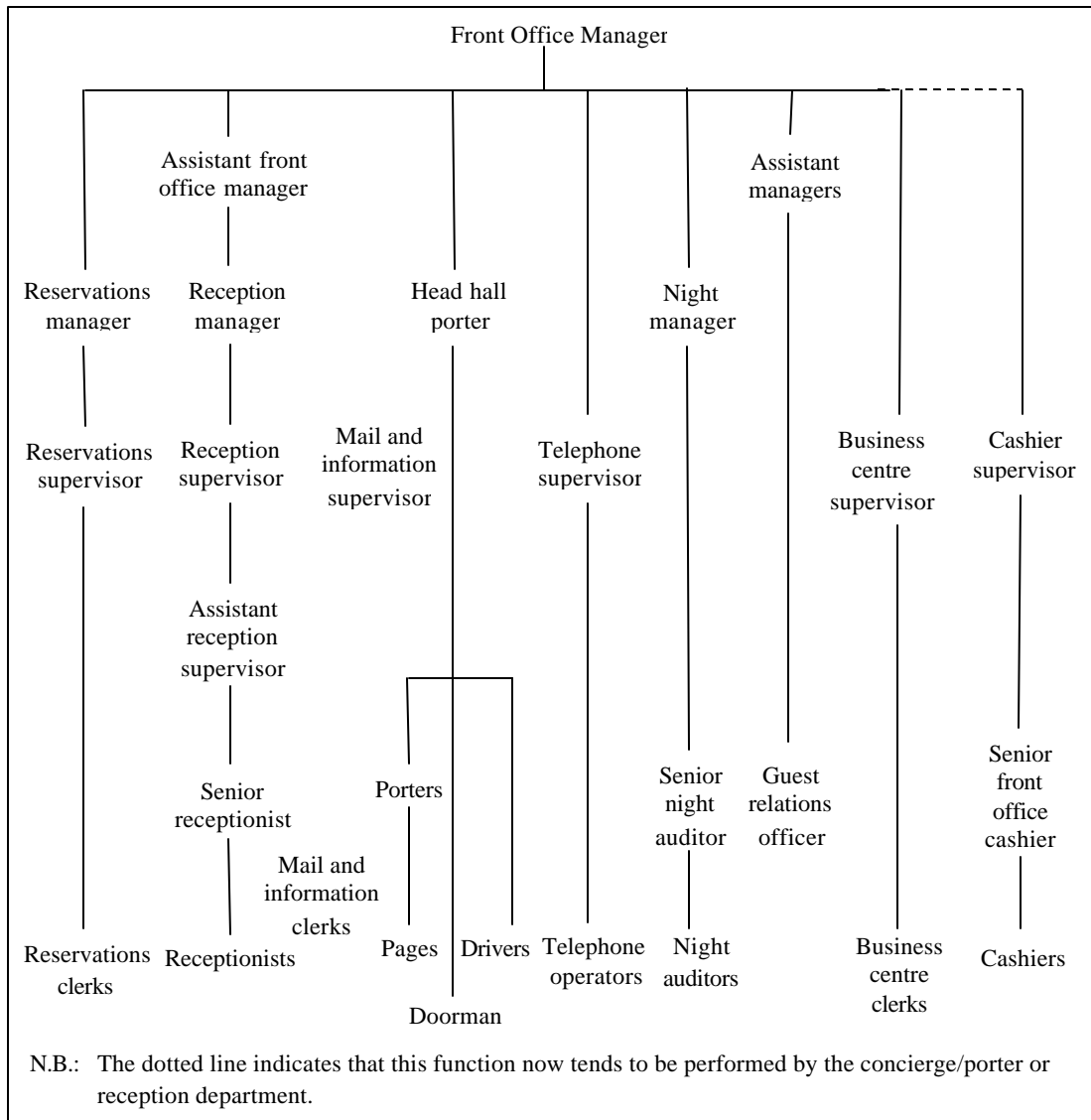
## 12.3 FRONT OFFICE: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

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The department of the front office performs quite a few functions/operations. It becomes necessary to have a well-defined organisational structure for smooth operations. The organisational structure of the front office depends on many factors (Principles of Hotel Front Office Operations, Sue Baker, **et. al.**) have described them thus:

- **Size of the Hotel:** Bigger the hotel, the more specialised the staff is required to be. Whereas in the smaller hotels, one employee/staff member may perform a wide variety of duties.
- **Standard of Service:** High-class hotels usually provide more personal services for guests and, therefore, they expect greater specialisation from their staff.
- **Type of Guests:** The needs of Guests usually differ on the basis of their purpose of visit, i.e., business client prefers less time to be spent on checking-in and checking-out, and it is quite possible they won't mind carrying their own luggage. So the emphasis is more on staff in the front desk section than at the concierge.
- **Type of Hotel:** A hotel situated in the airport area knows that a guest may check-in or check-out at any time during the 24 hours of a day. So more emphasis needs to be there on front desk as a full team is needed to be on duty at all times.

Even though the organisational structure of a hotel depends on the above stated factors, typically all the hotels follow somewhat similar organisational structure. **Figure II** gives the uniform structure of the organisation structure followed by a large hotel.



**Figure II: Organisational Chart of the Front Office**

(Source: Principles of Hotel Front Office Operations, Sue Baker, Jereeny Huyton and Pam Bradley)

This figure makes it clear that the department of front office is divided into many sub-divisions or functional/operational areas. In the figure a broken line joins the front office manager to the cashiering section. This is so, as in large hotels the cashier's department reports directly to the accounts department, with the financial controller taking overall responsibility. Thus, the sketch of the front office department remains the same but it takes different structure depending on the hotel or hotel culture.

## 12.4 THE RESERVATION OFFICE

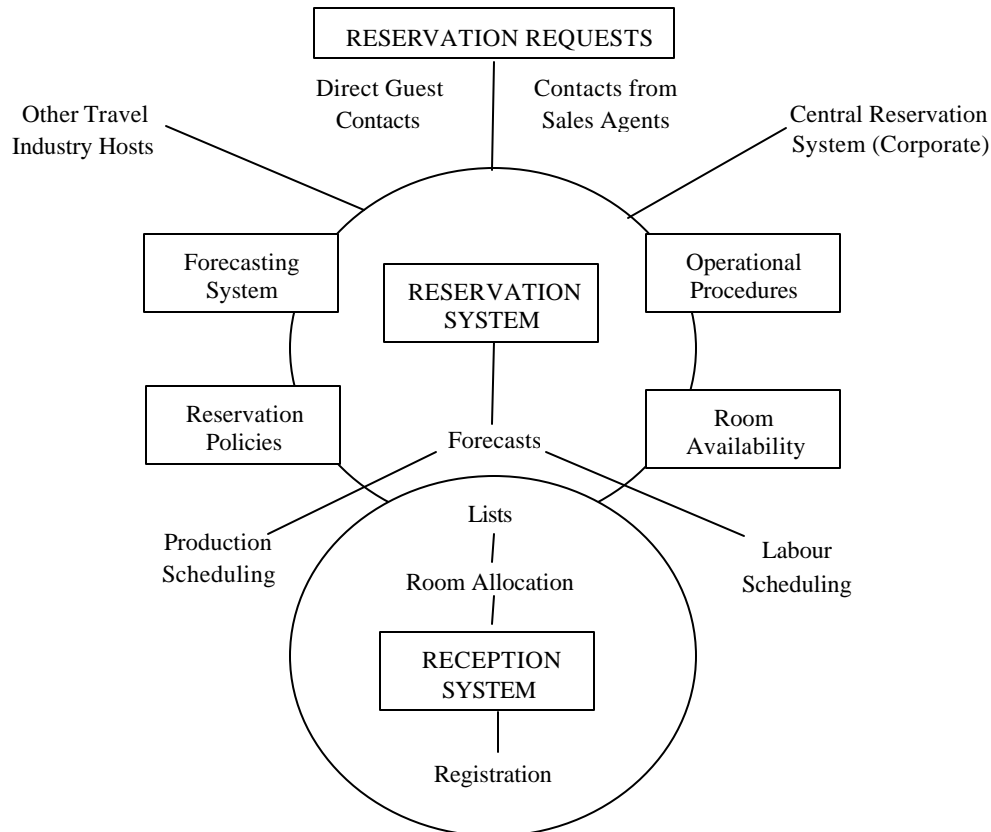
The term "reservation" used in the context of a hotel, means the booking or reserving of a room (accommodation) by a guest. Reservations lead to reserving of a particular type of room for a particular guest for a given period of time. Reserving a room ensures or guarantees the guest the availability of a room on arrival at the hotel, as reservation is a commitment made by the hotel, when the hotel has accepted the reservation request.

A great deal of importance is attached with the reservation system because it helps in:

- selling the primary product of the hotel, i.e., lodging or accommodation,
- building a good first impression on the prospective client,

- generating customers for the other departments of the hotel, and
- generating and providing information to the other departments of the hotel.

The organisational structure of the front office has already been discussed in Sec.12.3. The reservation clerks takes in the reservation bookings. And they are passed on. The reservation procedure differs from hotel to hotel depending on the **reservation system** used by the hotel. The process of reservation can be indicated through **Figure III**:



**Figure III: Simplified diagram of a reservation system.**

(Source: Principles of Hotel Front Office Operations, Sue Baker, Jereny Huyton and Pam Bradley)

It is often said that reservation system is the engine of a lodging property, since everything else operates accordingly. Hotels and motels depend on the reservation system and can go out of business if the system does not work well.

### 12.4.1 Types of Reservation System

The reservation system comes into action once a request for reservation comes to the hotel. It can be a direct query from the guest, or from a travel agent or tour operator among others sources. An effective and efficient reservation system is essential for maximising a hotel's profitability. Reference has already been made to the reservation systems of a hotel in MTM-4. The type of reservation system depends on the type and size of hotel. Many small hotels and motels use a booking dairy to keep track of reservation and resident guests. The front desk manager can double up as the reservation supervisor and the front desk clerk as reservation clerk. In a very small establishment (as in case of Bed and Breakfast lodges) you may see owners performing the task of reservation supervisor.

The most common manual system used by hotels of any type or size is known as **Whitney System**, devised by Whitney Paper Corporation of New York in the 1940s. In this system each reservation is recorded on a small, multipart piece of paper mounted in a metal frame, which, in turn, is filled in date and alphabetical order on a metal rack. The slips are usually colour coded to denote the type of guest. Usually there is one rack for every day over say, the next three months, and fewer racks for future

periods. Copies of the slip, also on racks, may be sent to other departments such as reception or telephones when the guest arrives. This system gave rise to the expression “rack rate”, which is how hoteliers often refer to the price for rooms (Source: Paul R. Gamble, VNRs Encyclopaedia).

Whitney System, though very efficient, generates lots of paperwork. This problem, however, is solved by computerised reservation system. The computerised system can perform all the tasks of Whitney System and organises the guest data more efficiently. The guest’s record is maintained in the hard disk of the computer. This not only helps in matching the guest information, but also provides information about the importance of the guest which can be judged from the data available on computer. This kind of information compiled on computer based reservation systems not only provides their credit standing and the reliability of the booking done through the agent but it also makes searching for data very easy.

The large group/chain of hotels have Central Reservation Systems which handle the reservation of the various properties of a single group atoned to centralised reservation office. For example, a hotel may have central reservation number, i.e., 24-7-365- symbolising availability 24 hours a day 7 days a week and 365 days a year. Nowadays, many single hotels have come together to form their own Central Reservation System serving these individually owned establishments. The use of computers in reservations has simplified check-in and checkout process. The hotel does not need much information during these operations as data is fed simultaneously.

Though computerised reservation systems are proved to be of a great help to hoteliers, it is up to a particular hotel to choose and use a system most suitable to their requirements. The most recent and most used way of making reservations accessible at far-flung locations is via internet. In such operations direct bookings and reservations requests can be made over the internet by just a click on the website of the hotels concerned. In some cases the reservation is directly upgraded but mostly the reservation staff reconfirms the request via e-mail or telephone before making official reservations.

#### 12.4.2 Accepting or Denying Reservation

The procedure of accepting a reservation request involves, checking the availability of the requested type of room for the stated period of time as is mentioned in the request. This can be confirmed or checked through the reservation charts, forecast boards or computerised systems. If the room is available the reservation request is accepted or else shall be denied immediately.

The procedure of accepting reservation is not that simple as it appears. This is a crucial decision that the reservation staff needs to make regarding accepting or rejecting it. To make this decision, the staff on duty uses information like the credit standing of the person/agency/company, the type of guest whether VIP/tourist/business traveller, the purpose of visit, length of stay, etc. In case of computerised system the staff would require few minutes to come to a decision, as the required information would be within the reach of pressing the keys. But in case of manual system, the processing for information may take longer time. Of course, denying of reservation to guests means loss of business which means loss of revenue. At times the way a guest has been denied reservation may lead to a permanent loss of business from that particular client. Denying reservation is a decision taken in the following circumstances:

- 1) **If the hotel is booked to its capacity:** In case the hotel is fully booked you cannot help it but can only refuse the reservation politely or gently. In such cases, if possible, alternate hotels in the area can be suggested or a different property of the same group of hotel, if not available, any other hotel of the same level can be suggested.
- 2) **If the requested category of accommodation is not available:** In case the requested type of room is unavailable, you may suggest alternate category of room available and always try to sell upper class rooms which, however, shouldn’t seem to be unethical.
- 3) **The guest or agent is backlisted:** At times some guests are backlisted because of their previous record of non-payment or delayed payments of bills. The same holds true for the agents. In such a situation if any doubt or complication crops up it is always advised to ask for the reservation supervisor/manager’s help.

Many a times the reception staff overbook to cover contingencies like, guest not turning up even after having confirmed reservation or at times when tour operators make reservations for more than actual number of passengers to get greater discounts on volume. Whether it's the season or not also plays important role in making over-bookings. During the main season reservation staff would not like to take chance with over-booking. However, decisions related to the issues of over-booking, etc. depends upon the reservation policy of the hotel, i.e., the way the management of the hotel wishes to position their hotel in the market will usually determine its reservation policy. The reservation policy of many hotels also speak about of the mode and time of payment. Bulk booking of rooms or the booking of some special rooms or a room for a long period of time during main season would require some advance payments. The advance payment can either be full or partial room rent, partially or fully refundable or non-refundable at the time of cancellation, all depending upon the reservation policy.

The final job of the reservation section is to send the final list of reservation for a day to the reception desk of the front office along with the essential information like whether the guest is a repeat guest or guest has some particular liking related to the location of the room, décor of the living room, etc. The message is sent from there to the housekeeping so as to prepare rooms according to the guest needs for the day.

### 12.4.3 Generating Reservation Reports

Now as you know that reservation section has a lot of information with them which needs to be properly organised. Once the required data is gathered, guests' folio is created which is updated from time to time. Once this is done they need to generate daily/weekly reports based on this information base. These reports may include:

- 1) **Room Availability Report:** A list showing the number of rooms sold/available. It can be prepared on the daily or weekly basis.
- 2) **Expected Arrivals and Departure Lists:** A list of guests who are due to arrive or to depart on a particular day.
- 3) **Group Status Report:** A list of groups to arrive/depart in the week or month, along with information like the group size, whether a guaranteed or non-guaranteed booking, etc.
- 4) **Special Arrivals List:** A list of special guests or VIPs arriving. This should contain their special request and additional information about the preferences of the guest.
- 5) **Turn Away Report:** A report on number of reservation requests denied and if possible, some information about the one asking for reservation.
- 6) **Revenue Forecast Report:** A report on the projected revenue from the future room sales along with or regular upto date report.

In most of the hotels, the front office manager supervises the final preparation of the report before it is sent to the management team. Additional guest information, related to walk-in-guests also incorporated in the report.

### 12.4.4 Managing Reservations

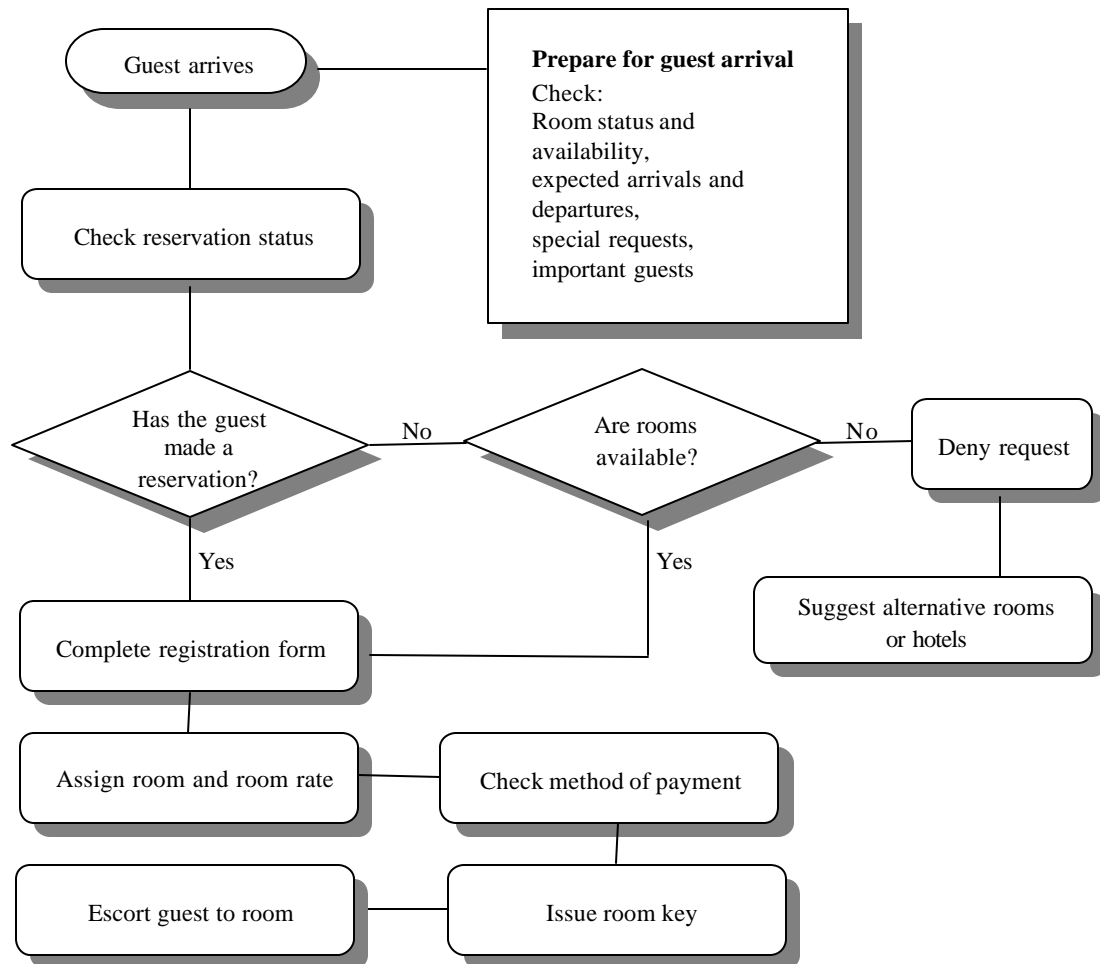
The major decisions by the management team would be to forecast the requirement of rooms according to the reservation reports. The forecasting can be done for a period varying from over 10 days to several months, since tour groups plan their tour schedules 12-14 months in advance. The forecasting also depends upon the available capacity of the hotel at that point of time. The forecasting is done for short terms keeping in view important functions/festivals or sporting events in the area.

Therefore, the reservation policy formulation is the most important function of management. It focuses upon the selection of the criteria for selection of sales channels, i.e., the hotel should bank upon the travel agents, corporate clients or walk-ins for their reservations. It is sometimes at the discretion of the reservation section to adopt its own policy to run the business successfully. These all factors help in managing the reservations.



## 12.5 CHECK-IN PROCESS

Check-in process is a critical process, since a lot of vital information is exchanged between the guest and the hotel staff during this process, irrespective of the fact whether check-in process is manual or computerised. The manual process starts when a guest either walk-in (without reservation) or one with prior reservation walks into the hotel looking for desired or requested accommodation, i.e., depending upon the availability of room the walk-in guest is assigned room whereas the guest with prior reservation is usually assigned the room for which he has requested.



**Figure IV: The Check-in Process**

(Source: Principles of Hotel Front Office Operations, Sue Baker, Jerenry Huyton and Pam Bradley)

The minimum information you usually require for manual registration is name of the guest, number of persons in the group, the expected length of stay and mode of payment. The room is assigned to the guests and usually a porter or bellboy carries their luggage and show the guests their assigned rooms. The front desk in the meantime processes the information received and generate the guest account for the mentioned period of stay.

However, the process of assigning rooms commences even before the arrival of the guest. After the major check-outs of the day, the front office generates a list/printout regarding number of guests staying with the hotel. Then after comparing the reservation requests for the day with this report, assigns the remaining unoccupied rooms to the walk-in guest. In case of computerised check-in procedure, only the walk-in guests need to provide their personal information whereas guests with reservation need to confirm the information available in the computers of the reception/front desk. Once the guest is allotted assigned room, the computer automatically updates the information and for the desired length of stay, room(s) will be shown as occupied.

The help of the front office manager is sought rarely, particularly in the case of over-bookings, i.e., when two or more guests arrive for the same room, the manager can either assign another room to the guest or can try to up scale the room type. However, if the hotel is unable to adjust the extra guest special arrangement for the guest at a different hotel of similar standing should be made.

Lately, a guest registration system using Point of System (PoS) to hasten check-in process is gaining popularity. This system enables the guest to register at self-service terminals in the lobby or at self-service terminals at the airport or en-route to the hotel. New innovations have also helped transfer the credit cards to room keys. According to **Tom Van Dyke** one popular system asks the guest to insert his or her magnetic stripe credit card into a check-in terminal which calls up the property's computerised reservations list filed by arrival date and last name. When the reservations match is found, the room selecting function of the hotel's **Property Management System** generates a room assignment and prints a check-in form. The guest removes the completed form, signs it and then is directed to the key pick-up area at or near the front desk. He cites the example of the Sheraton Meadowlands in New Jersey which works with Avis Rent-A-Car so that guests picking up cars at any of the New York areas three major airports can simultaneously check-in to a room at the Sheraton.

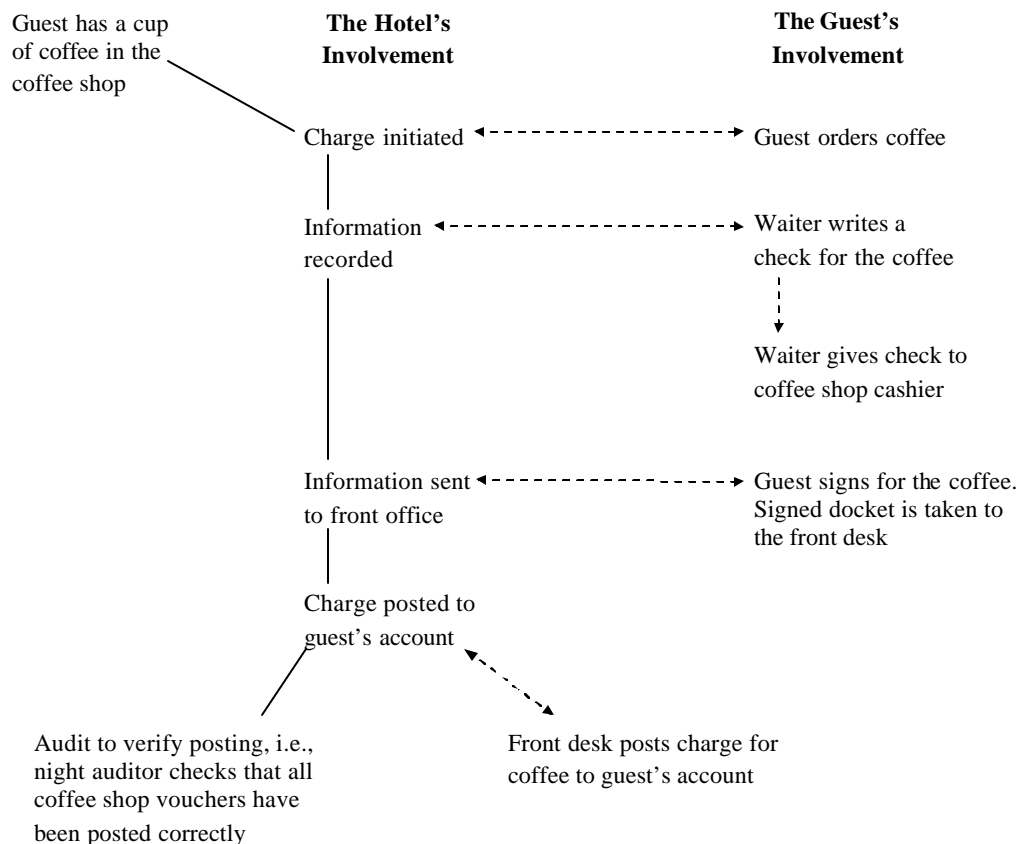
Whatever may be the method of check-in, the basic idea of check-in is to collect information about the guest and try to keep the operation as simple and convenient as possible while trying to project warmth and friendliness.

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## 12.6 FRONT OFFICE ACCOUNTING

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All through the day the hotel has many transactions with its resident guests. The transactions pertain to various services that the guest can avail, be it room service or laundry service. On most of the occasion the guest does not make any payments after availing the available service at the hotel and the amount is posted on his/her bill.



**Figure V: The Process of Posting a Charge to a Guest's Account**  
 (Source: Principles of Hotel Front Office Operations, Sue Baker, Jerenry Huyton and Pam Bradley)

The process of posting keeps the guests billing up to date. The process can be performed either manually or by a computer. Once the posting has been done, it is important to recheck whether the correct amount has been posted on the correct guest folio and also to the account of right department. As a supervisor you are required to check these details regularly because guests check in and out daily and the guests' transactions take place regularly. During the day time the front office section is quite busy with a lot of other activities but during night it is comparatively less burdened with work. So this is the night time to match bills and receipts. The staff doing this job is called night auditors. Usually, there night auditors check the posting of bills from other departments but more particularly the credit limit. These credit limits can be that of the hotel or of a credit card or even that of a company's account floor limits. Thus, the accounts of the resident guests are maintained regularly so as to ensure speedy settlement of bills.

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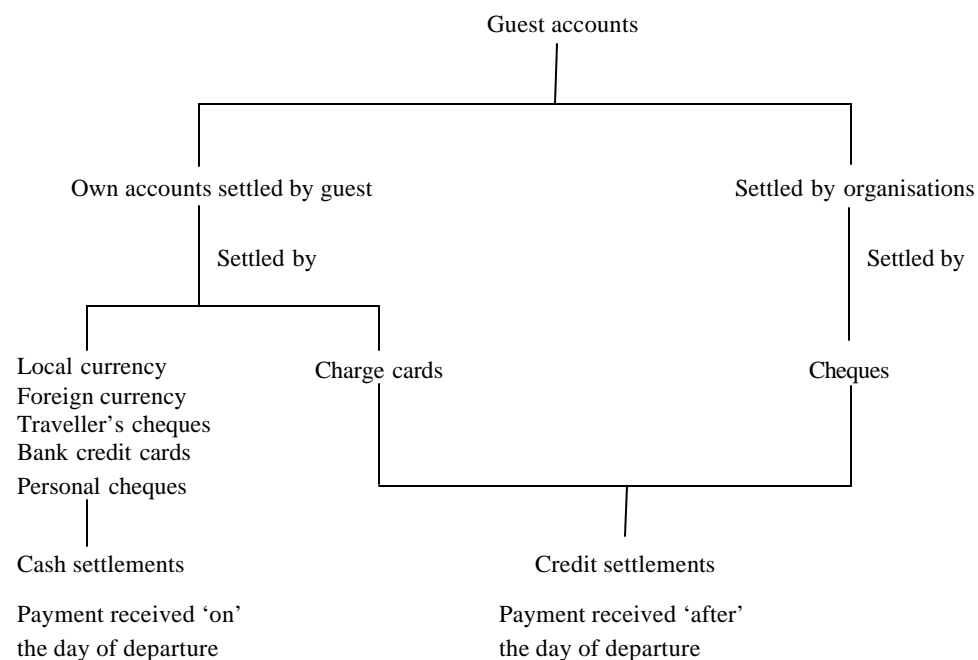
## 12.7 CHECK-OUT PROCESS

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Check out point is the last contact a guest will have with the property and experience at this point will determine what kind of impression will a guest carry with him/her. In other words, if it is smooth guest will carry pleasant memories. Thus, to make this point more efficient and error proof, you shall divide it in to three parts:

- a) Guest vacating the room;
- b) Guest settling the bill; and
- c) Guest departing.

Guest vacating the room usually depends upon the hotel's check out time. Usually the check out time is 12 noon. Sometimes depending on the availability of the room and the type of client the check out time can be extended for the guest on special request. Following a routine check out time helps the hotel since the housekeeping can prepare the room for the next guest. Still there are small hotels which provide the guests with flexi-check-out time. In these cases next guest allotted this room has to wait in the lobby because the upkeep of the room takes time.



**Figure VI: The Types of Accounts and the Settlement Methods**

As the above illustration suggests, bill settlement is the next important component of check out process. Usually the bills are updated during the night so as to provide the bills for guests checking out early in the day. It is advisable to ask the guest before time when he or she would be checking out to ensure that the staff has some idea when the guest would be checking out and have a bill ready at

check-out. The bill would include the room service charges as well as any other unpaid bills for services rendered by different departments of the hotel. Yet the settlement of the bill can take some time, as the guest would like to recheck the bill before making the payment or may the payment be credited to the account of the company whom the guest is representing.

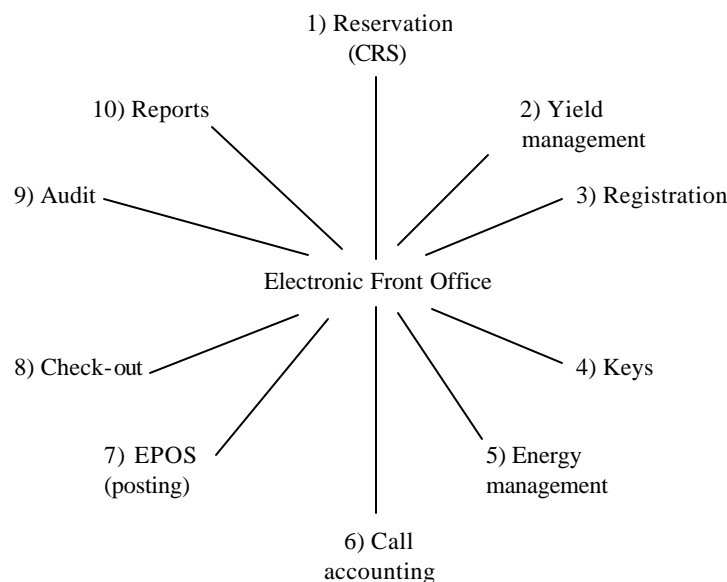
The actual guest departure, however, takes place only when the guest returns the keys and leaves the premises. The guest is provided with transportation if required and paid for. The guest folio created is updated for future use.

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## 12.8 THE ELECTRONIC FRONT OFFICE (EFO)

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In the modern age of computerisation, front office is becoming very important to provide efficient, effective and reliable services to the guest with the optimum use of technology. The computerisation of the front office is a part of the Property Management System, wherein all the departments of a property/hotel are linked to the mainframe. It is important to state here that EFO does not work independently but is also connected with other departments of the hotel. **Figure VII**, given below, clearly illustrates the inter-dependence of EFO with the other departments of the hotel.



**Figure VII: Jobs and Tasks Served by the Electronic Front Office**

Let us now discuss the significance of computerisation and consequent inter-dependence of the front office with the other departments.

- 1) **Reservation:** Reservation bookings are instantly taken in and matched against the existing data in the computer. Thus, immediately you can come to know whether the particular type of room requested is available or not along with other facts like the other type of rooms available on that date, room's location, facilities, room rates and also whether the guest is a repeat guest. The reservation booking along with guest information is forwarded to front office people. Thus, front office knows about advance bookings and receives client information very quickly.

CRS of the hotel helps a guest to book and know the status of his/her booking in any of the group hotel(s). The group hotel can be national or international but CRS gives quick and reliable information on room availability to the guest.

- 2) **Yield Management:** The purpose of the yield management system is to maximise room occupancy while at the same time realising the best average room rate. Yield management needs to consider a variety of reports and "what if ...?" situations, since the room rate is adjusted keeping in mind the occupancy rate of the hotel during the same period in previous years. The front office manager takes the yield management decisions and the reports generated by the computerisation are very helpful for making these decisions.

- 3) **Registration:** As you know that the required guest information is taken in during reservation and thus, the guest only needs to sign-in and checkout. Remote check-in facilities at airports are also becoming popular. The use of plastic or paper key is also becoming very popular. Once the guest is assigned a room the key is automatically printed. Simultaneously the lock configuration of the allocated room is changed to suit the unique key. This means that upon check-out or should the guest inadvertently lose their key, the lock is reprogrammed, and that any lost keys or keys belonging to previous guests will not be able to be used. (Source: Principles of Hotel Front Office Operations, Sue Baker, Jerenry Huyton and Pam Bradley)
- 4) **Energy Management System (EMS):** This ensures the regulated use of energy. Once the guest inserts their key into a special socket located next to door, the EMS activates the power to the room which includes the room lights and ventilation. As the guest leaves the room, after a short delay the power supply is switched off. The front office needs to notify the guest upon arrival about the EMS.
- 5) **Telephone Call Accounting:** The guests can make direct calls from their room without going through an operator. This means privacy and better service for the guest and less work for the hotel staff. The calls details are recorded and call charges are posted to the guest bill.
- 6) **Posting:** The charges from the various departments of the hotel, let it be restaurant, bar, room service, laundry or business centre, are posted directly on to the guest bill. Guest name, room number and account details are updated on the guest account. This ensures less paper work for the staff involved.
- 7) **Check Out:** A fully automatic check-out system allows the guest to review his/her account on the room's TV set. The guest can check and verify the bill and their check out from the room. The actual settlement of the bill takes place on the reception when the client pays for the visit. As a result a lot of time will be saved and there won't be long queues of guests waiting to check out especially during early morning hours of the day.
- 8) **Auditing:** Computer checks and rechecks the various postings of changes. It also crosschecks balance with the amounts paid on the reception. The function of the night auditors is greatly reduced.
- 9) **Reporting:** The various reports needed by the front office manager are efficiently produced. Even hourly status of the room from the front desk and housekeeping are made available for ready reference. The managerial functions like forecasting becomes easier with such up-to-date reports supported by data.

**Check Your Progress**

- 1) Discuss the components of Guest Cycle.  
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- 2) Prepare a list of front of the house operations of a hotel.  
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- 3) Define Reservation System. What are its various types?  
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## 12.9 LET US SUM UP

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Managing front office function in present times of competition with multinationals having a good command over technological advancements, makes the job for front office staff all the more challenging. Introduction of the new concepts like Tele-check-in, Property Management System, Yield Management and many more, by these multinationals has forced the front office staff to train and retrain themselves to handle these latest technologies and management practices. To make the situation more complex guest's expectations from hoteliers have become so diversified, i.e., expectation are varied ranging from quality of services to time taken at point of check-in or check out through briefing sessions by bell boy regarding usage of electrical gadgets in the room, etc.

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## 12.10 CLUES TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS ANSWERS

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<b>Check Your Progress</b>
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- 1) Refer Sec. 12.2.
- 2) Refer Sec. 12.2.1.
- 3) Refer Sec. 12.4.

<b>Activities</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Visit one medium sized travel agency and one large size agency. Visualise differences in the departmentalisation method adopted by both of them.</li><li>2) Collect advertisements of leading travel agencies promoting tourist destinations. Prepare a list of tourist attractions at some of the leading tourist destinations and try to rate them according to interest generated by each advertisement.</li></ol>