

HOTEL HOUSEKEEPING MODERN PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES –AN APPRAISAL

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ABSTRACT

In present era hotel housekeeping is not confined to clean and maintain the various surfaces in the hotels but much more beyond that. Present article explore the current challenges, best practices and emerging trends in hotel housekeeping which if executed well, could lead to higher growth and cost-effective tool for the hotel industry. This paper has reviewed the academics and popular hotel housekeeping trends. Hotel housekeeping need to meet leading challenges, trends and best practices as eco-friendly practices, outsourcing, IT savvy housekeeping, training, retention of employees, payroll performance and Ergonomics techniques. If the hotels implement these trends in an organised manner, it can lead to hotel growth opportunities and long term profitability. This paper augments new urgency to develop new trends in hotel housekeeping domain specific for manifold benefits.

Key words- Housekeeping, Trends, Hospitality industry, Hotels

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INTRODUCTION

In India, travel and tourism accounts for 5.9 per cent of the GDP and 9.2 per cent of the total employment. The total number of jobs (direct and indirect), in the tourism sector in 2010 was 53 million and 49.8 million in 2009, followed by 13.1 million in automotive and 10.2 million only in the IT sector, in 2009. Our sector estimates around 77.5 million jobs by 2016. Housekeeping has undergone a sea change, especially since the mid-90s. The use of technology has changed the style and functioning of the department in a large way. This has changed the prevalent mind set and has increased professionalism. In modern world professional housekeepers are striving to get housekeeping its due recognition in the hospitality industry. This department is responsible for bringing in the largest share of profit to an accommodation operation, but this fact is hardly acknowledged and veterans of the industry too often must consider it a thankless job.

Housekeeping operations are increasingly becoming scientific and mechanized. Efficiently managed Housekeeping departments ensure the cleanliness, safeguarding and aesthetic entreat of the hotel. The tasks performed by Housekeeping department are pivotal to the horizontal daily operation of any hotel. In the present stringent competitive scenario maintaining hotel is very tough and satisfying guest is even tougher.

Foreign tourist arrivals in the country have increased substantially during the past decade motivated by both, business and leisure needs and are further expected to grow at a CAGR of around 8% during 2010-2014, as per our new research report “Indian Tourism Industry Analysis”. India currently has over 200,000 hotel rooms swell across hotel categories and guest houses and still facing a short fall of over 100,000 rooms (FHRAI). For every room constructed, 3-4 jobs are created, the world Travel and Tourism council has estimated 8 percent annual escalation in jobs in India. According to a report –The Indian Hotel Industry Report 2011 Edition by CYGNUS business Consulting and Research Firm, In next two years, a total investment of INR 545.2 billion is expected that will add over 20 New international brands in the hospitality sector as the hospitality industry grows it will face lots of challenges which leads to increase in latest trends in diverse sections of hospitality. Hotels are generating optimum revenue by major operating departments like Housekeeping which deals with the schedule operations of Hotels.

The modern day hotel executive housekeeper is faced with challenges which entail a high degree of professionalism. Hotel housekeeping is shifting hastily, earlier, the responsibility of the housekeeping department was to prepare clean guestrooms on a timely basis but now enormous changes have been made in Hotel Housekeeping. This highly fuelled and fast growing industry needs new trends and technology to strengthen hotel operations. After all, housekeeping department is responsible for bringing in the largest share of profit to the hotel. So this study examines the trends of housekeeping in hotel industry. This article has its focal point on the latest trends that hotels can use to expand revenue from accommodation operations.

With the progression in time the Hotel Industry must follow the trends of the times, develop unique commodity value or service mode in order to keep the dominance in the intense competition. The main product of hotel is room sale which expected clean, comfortable and home environment for the guest. In order to compete with challenges hotel housekeeping department must adopt these latest trends in the industry.

Eco practices in housekeeping

(HRANI,2013) With the focus progressively on responsible tourism and green practices, there is much more to being ecologically friendly than reusing sheets and towels. Environmentally-friendly properties whose managers are eager to institute programmes that save water, save energy and reduce solid waste—while saving money.” Eco practices are one of the most spectacular emerging trends in hotel housekeeping. “Going green” is a trend of the day and environment sound policies increases the monetary health of a property. There is an increasing awareness to use eco-friendly amenities, commodities and practices. Housekeepers are developing and adopting new ways to conserve water and energy. According to American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) hospitality industry spends \$3.7 billion in a year on energy. AHLA estimates that reducing energy use by 10% industry would save \$ 285 million.

The energy management system in the hotel helps to analyse data from major energy-consuming appliances. Compact fluorescent lamps are the spinal column in high efficiency lighting. These lamps save energy waste. Ceiling motion sensors are used in meeting rooms, conference rooms and public areas to reduce energy waste. Housekeepers are looking for products and equipments that help in conserving energy.

IT savvy housekeeping

Many hotels have invested heavily in information technology (IT) infrastructure and networking that deploy the latest technical advances in their operations. Hospitality Industry strongly invested in information technology (IT) to generate new technologies in housekeeping department. New technologies like Wi-Fi (wire less fidelity), radio frequency identification, GPS (global positioning system), VOIP (voice over internet protocol), hand held communication devices and WLAN (Wireless local area networks) are developing rapidly. Many types of software having comprehensive housekeeping applications are being used today in the hotels. With the help of technology customers involvement in service delivery has been increased.

Outsourcing of services

Present era focusing on outsourcing in hotel housekeeping and it helps in reducing manpower related issues like filling the gap due to attrition of manpower, unavailability of suitable personnel , trained manpower to fill the need and unionization.

Housekeeping is a labour intensive department. Most of the hotel chains perceive outsourcing as an effective business strategy. It proves to be the best solution for many specialized tasks as it is highly cost-effective. It is a better business strategy to meet the demands of hotel standards.

Training

Staff are the nucleus of your business and will have a major hand in determining its success. Make sure they feel valued right from the get-go with the right recruitment and training practices. Need for improved productivity has become universally accepted and that it depends on efficient and effective training is not less ostensible. It has further become essential in view of advancement in modern world to invest in training (Singh, 2014)

Lodging operations always depends significantly on the ability of managers to find and retain talented employees. Jyoti.et.al(2013) examines that In Europe, hotel management education and training involves Food and Beverages operations, but in USA priority is given to finance, marketing, computer technology and management. Jayawardena (1993) found that the best background for general manager is a mix of these two concepts education and training. Training and motivating employees is a fundamental tool in the present scenario. Increased mechanization of housekeeping operations has placed

housekeeping managers in a position to train staff, an optimum usage of equipment, supplies and labour to increase efficiency in operations. Housekeeping jobs are going to mechanized gradually and training is fundamental to maintain high level of performance and productivity standards. Need of collaborate efforts required between Hotel housekeepers and hotel management institutes for theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge.

Safety & Security

Hospitality operations, large and small, are extremely susceptible to security hazards. The very nature of the operation which involves the presence of a wide range of people, most of whom are unknown, poses a considerable threat to the security of a property. Risks of fire are also serious; the incidence of hotel fires causing loss of life and serious damage to property has increased in recent years.

Safety refers to the physical injuries in a work environment and security refers to anticipation of theft, fire and other emergencies. The Occupational, Safety & Health Act (OSHA) was enacted in 1970 to protect workers at workplace. OSHA standards covers work areas, sanitation, signs and tags, first aid and blood bone pathogens, listing hazardous chemicals, labelling all chemical containers and developing written hazard communication programme. OSHA assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance. Security in hotels is a broad task of protecting both people and assets. (Mc Millan. & Rossiter, 2006) observed their study that environment, technology, human resource, operations and security are the complex set of challenges which cannot be ignored by manager for being successful.

Ergonomics

Ergonomics deals with the study of body movement in relation to housekeeping profession during tasks performed which has significant impact on work fatigues. Housekeeping is a physically demanding profession and work environment has an impact on efficiency and comfort of the employees. Ergonomics is a scientific discipline which deals with interaction between employees and the elements of their work system.

Employee Turnover and Retention

Employee retention or turnover of employees in hotel industry is a major challenge and it is

even harder in housekeeping department. It has got long work schedule, less compensation, physically demanding tasks, high pressure environment and uncomfortable work culture which leads to high turnovers in housekeeping. Generally people says housekeeping job is thankless job which results into low morale of the employees. Housekeeping needs to focus on formulation and implementation of dynamic retention strategies to reduce the employee turnover.

Payroll Analysis

Payroll analysis of: number of rooms cleaned daily, VIP arrivals/ stay overs, check-outs, deep cleaning schedules, and other items that can affect labor costs are measured. Payroll analysis determines the total monthly labor costs and find out ways to cut various labor costs. This is an important practice to ensure that unnecessary labor is not being used when business does not demand it in housekeeping.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The important solution is to prepare hotel housekeepers to face challenges one of the precarious success factors of hotel housekeeping and is the revolutionary trends or best housekeeping practices. To become more energetic & innovative, new trends must be implemented and incorporated in hotel housekeeping, standard operating procedure and work manual strengthened through new trends and demand of hospitality sector. Various tools are used to generate optimum output in hotels but there is a strong need of optimum utilization of resources available ,manpower, supplies and new scientific trends like Ergonomics, Eco –friendly practices(energy conservation, waste management, eco-friendly products, stationary, ozone treatment , reduce, recycle, reuse), Payroll Analysis etc. Information technology can lead to hotel growth and long term success.

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