FRONT OFFICE

INTERNATIONAL
OPERATIONS
PRE-OPENING
MANUAL

TRAINING RELATED INFORMATION

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FRONT OFFICE TRAINING AND SCHEDULING

RESPONSIBILITIES

The overall training program for the front office area is generally done by the front office manager. This is not limited to that position, but whomever heads up this responsibility must work in concert with all areas of the hotel to best coordinate the training efforts and energies.

PLANNING THE PROGRAM

Listed below is an overview of the training schedule. The designated manager coordinating the training schedule needs to consider these events when planning the final training schedule.

- Management Fidelio Training - 4 weeks prior to associate training
- Front Office Associate Training - begins 3 weeks prior to opening
- Associate PMS or Fidelio Training - coordinate schedule with the appropriate system representative within the 3 weeks of associate training
- Task Force Arrival - from 10 - 24 days prior to opening, depending on area

Also see the sample pre-opening schedule of important events in this manual.

OTHER NOTES:

- A minimum of 5 days "classroom" training, 10 days computer training (depending on your hotel's system) and 4 days role play (split into shifts) are needed.
- If possible, have uniform fittings and hotel orientation prior to training week.
- Combine classes as much as possible and then have "breakouts" for individual jobs. Try to stay within a 8 hour day.
- Make every minute count. Time is precious!
- Be flexible. No matter how much you plan and organize, everything is subject to change during an opening.

Since each hotel and each situation is unique, there will, of course, be adaptations to the above format. However, the important point to make there is that a minimum of nineteen full days of training has been found necessary for the opening of the front office area in a new hotel, with computer and system-based training needs.

THE FINAL TRAINING PROGRAM

A complete training program should have all of the materials listed on the following pages. The Reporting Times for Associates is helpful to have during the interviewing / hiring process so the hired associates can have an idea of what time commitments they will need to have.

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- General Schedule Outline
- Front Office Training Schedule
- Front Office Associate Training (daily lesson plans)
- Reporting Times for Associates
- Task Force Information Sheet
- General Task Force Information Sheet

SAMPLE TRAINING SCHEDULE

On page 7 is a typical training schedule calendar for the front office area during the pre-opening process. Also included is a blank calendar for you to create a custom schedule for your particular opening.

SAMPLE FRONT OFFICE ASSOCIATE TRAINING PLAN

After the two calendars, is a typical training plan to follow when training your new associates for the opening of your hotel. Appropriate subjects are spread out over this fifteen-day schedule. The listed training topics are formatted for you to add time frames for each subject. Where applicable, related resources are listed, so that you can use the prepared training materials on that subject.

Once again, you can customize this schedule to fit your hotel's needs, but the lessons listed are the minimum subjects you must teach to your new associates.

PLANNING THE ACTUAL SCHEDULE

Whenever possible and workable, combined classes should be held...

- so everyone hears the same thing; cut down on misunderstandings.
- to save time; to utilize time to the best advantage.
- to save energy.

Listed below are those subjects recommended for combined sessions as well as for individual sessions.

FOR ALL ASSOCIATES IN FRONT OFFICE:

- Rules and Regulations
- Organization Charts and Departmental Relationships
- Appearance Standards
- Cycle of a Hotel Guest (reservation, check-in, rooming, check-out)
- "A Guest!" "Two Rules We Live By..."
- Hours of Operation... for all hotel services
- What amenities are offered in the hotel (if possible give a hotel tour)
- Job Relationships, Teamwork, Second Effort Program

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FOR FRONT DESK ASSOCIATES - COMBINED AM, PM AND NIGHT SHIFTS:

- Front Office Do's and Don't's - Guest Response Process
- Minimum Standards for Check In and Check Out
- Handling Special Check Ins... VIPs, FIT, Walk-Ins, Claimed Reservations
- Methods of Payment
- PMS / Fidelio Training
- Problems at Registration/Reception
- Room / Rate Changes
- Room Reservations
- Departures - Late Check-Out, Extension of Stay, Room Discrepancies
- Behaviors When Interacting with Guests
- What is Hospitality? Aggressive Hospitality, Hospitality Standards
- [redacted]
- Basic Rules of Handling Guest Complaints
- 50 Ways to Improve Guest Service
- Telephone Training
- AM Shift Checklist
- PM Shift Checklist
- Night Shift Checklist

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SAMPLE FRONT OFFICE TRAINING CALENDER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			Norms, Rules, Appearance, Standards, Do's & Don't's Hospitality	First Ten Know your hotel Check-in and out procedures	Service Excellence Class	Service Excellence Class & Service Standards
Off	Total Hotel Orientation	PMS / Fidelio Training	PMS / Fidelio Training	PMS / Fidelio Training	PMS / Fidelio Training	Off
Off	PMS / Fidelio Training	PMS / Fidelio Training	PMS / Fidelio Training	PMS / Fidelio Training	PMS / Fidelio Training Rooms Managers System	Rooms Managers System OFF System Moves to FO
Off	Role Plays Routine Set-up System Goes Live	Role Plays Routine Set-up	Role Plays Routine Set-up	All Uniforms Get Ready for Operations Pre-opening Celebration	HOTEL OPENS!!	

SAMPLE FRONT OFFICE TRAINING CALENDER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY

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In this section, you will find handouts that can be used for training. Fifteen-minute training sessions can be easily designed around it. Let the associates come up with some examples and scenarios:

- Do's and Don'ts
- Aggressive Hospitality
- Never say NO
- A Guest
- Two Rules We Live By
- Guest Complaints - Basic Rules
- Behaviors When Interacting with a Guest
- Minimum Standards for Check-in
- Minimum Standards for Check-out

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DO'S AND DON'T'S

PURPOSE:

- To ensure the most efficient behaviors in front of customers
- To increase the attentiveness of the front desk staff
- To generally increase staff efficiency
- Increase GSS scores
- Be self-disciplined at all times
- Test

DO'S

- Make eye contact, smile and greet every guest
- Do concentrate only on the customer in front of you but, also acknowledge waiting customers
- Lean towards customers, stand alert, tall and visible
- Control body language
- Keep a positive attitude
- Offer assistance before the guest has to ask - anticipate guest's needs.

DON'TS

- Fail to acknowledge the customer
- Make faces
- Use slang
- Say "mmmmh" all the time
- Gather in groups to chat
- Have personal conversations with others in front of guests
- Put your hands in your pockets

NOT TOLERATED

- Chewing gum
- Rude behavior
- Lack of focus on the customer who is currently being served
- Discriminating against customers
- Failing to follow 10 points check-in and check-out list
- Forgetting to complete work or to follow up on customer requests to be sure they have been carried out
- Inattentiveness

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AGGRESSIVE HOSPITALITY

[redacted] a leader in the hospitality industry due to the fact that we give great service. These procedures help make that happen. Each of these rules we live by. Please read and give your own comments.

1. Acknowledge the guests immediately. DO NOT WAIT FOR THEM TO APPROACH YOU! This means making eye contact before they walk up to the desk and greeting the guest with a smile and verbal, "Can I help you?". Picture yourself with a lasso to rope the guest and pull towards you. Always anticipate and make the first move. When we acknowledge the guest immediately we:

2. Use eye contact. This lets the guest know you are listening and paying attention. By using eye contact we:

3. Smile. A smile bespeaks good will and lets people know you are happy to see them. Not only that smiles are contagious, so before you know it you can have a guest who was in a bad mood smiling at you. By smiling we:

4. Use the guest name: Calling the guests by their name makes them feel like they are not just a number, and gives your encounter a personal touch. Remember, people love to hear their own name, so remember to use names. When we use the guest name we:

5. Take that extra step without being asked. If someone should ask you something you do not know, find the answer and make sure you get it to them. Offer your help whenever possible. A few examples are making dinner reservations, looking up a phone number and offering information about the city/area, if the guest is here on vacation. Remember the guests are paying a lot of money to stay at our hotel. These services make them feel their money has been well spent. When we take that extra step we:

6. Put a sense of urgency in your work. No one likes to wait while somebody takes his or her time to accomplish a task. Urgency sends out a signal that you care when dealing with a problem. By putting a sense of urgency in our work we:

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NEVER SAY NO

The "never say no" policy does not necessarily mean that you say "yes" to every guest request.

In the hotel industry, many policies are flexible to meet certain guest needs where appropriate. The "never say no" policy allows you to keep "all doors open" to guest requests.

This approach gives the guest a feeling that we are concerned with his/her situation and is trying to fulfill the request. By no saying no or can't, you create a potentially embarrassing situation for you if a manager or supervisor overrides your answer to the guest.

Always consult a manager or supervisor if you are not certain a guest request can be fulfilled.

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A GUEST!

- A guest is the most important person in any business.
- A guest is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him/her.
- A guest is not an interruption of our work. He/she is the purpose of it.
- A guest does us a favor when he/she comes in. We are not doing him/her a favor by waiting on him.
- A guest is part of our business, not an outsider.
- A guest is not just money in our cash register. He/she is a human being with feelings like our own.
- A guest is a person who comes to us with his/her needs. It is our job to fill them.
- A guest deserves the most courteous attention we can give. He/she is the life blood of this and every business, and pays your salary. Without him/her we would have to close our doors.

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THE TWO RULES WE LIVE BY

To be successful in this business you must have not only a great attitude but you must also be able to make a guest feel at ease and wanted. The attitude is up to you. But to help you accomplish the second part, we have two rules to live by:

#1 Make the guest feel *important!*

Psychologists have proven that the need to feel important is a basic need right along with shelter, food and love. If you make guests feel important, they will remember the great and courteous service you gave them. Many of the aggressive hospitality rules you will study are ways of making the guest feel important.

#2 Show *genuine* concern!

Genuine concern sends a message to the guest that we truly care. Concern prevents the guest from feeling like they are just money in our cash registers or one of many nameless faces that pass us each day.

In everything that you do, ask yourself, "Am I making the guest feel important? Am I showing genuine concern?" By doing this you will find that all other rules, such as smiling and putting urgency in your work, will come naturally.

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GUEST COMPLAINTS - BASIC RULES

There are reasons behind a guest complaint that we will never know. Things can build up in a guest, and by the time he reaches us, perhaps something happens that is the "last straw." There are those cases when you deal with a guest who naturally is a complaining person.

It is our job to make things pleasant and comfortable for guest so that we don't give reasons for anyone to complain. When complaints occur, remember that a series of unfortunate experiences may have triggered a guest's anger, so try to be understanding and patient.

Here are a few tips on handling guest complaints:

1. Never argue with a guest; assume he is right and work from there. A guest is always right even if he is wrong - as long as he perceives a problem to exist.

2. The guest always feels there is a legitimate reason to complain; listen to the reason without interrupting.

3. Be understanding - put yourself in the guest's shoes.

4. Don't raise your voice in an effort to be heard.

5. Make every effort to determine the cause of the complaint and remain impartial until the situation is clear in your mind.

6. Let the guest know that you are concerned and interested.

7. If the guest is right, say so... then make a sincere effort to correct the situation.

8. If we are not at fault, explain our policy to the guest and the reason for it. Try to avoid the word "policy" whenever possible. This should be the last resort.

9. Be flexible--standing rigid for the sake of it will create anger. (Don't simply quote policy.)

10. If applicable, try to take the guest to an area out of sight and earshot of other guests. Privacy may settle things down.

11. Guests almost always want to voice complaints to a "higher up." They will ask to see the person in charge and sometimes even the company President. If there is much anger, ALWAYS, call your supervisor and don't try to handle it further.

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12. Rude or abusive language on our part will not be tolerated by the company - on the other hand - you don't have to listen to it either. Politely excuse yourself and call your supervisor.

13. Never admit fault on behalf of the hotel for any accident, concerning either a person or belongings. Do show concern and gather information.

14. Always be calm under adverse conditions.

15. When in doubt about a request via telephone, refer to manuals or assign someone who may know. Offer to call a guest back with the requested information, if it is taking too long.

16. If you see a "suspect" person or situation, discreetly call security and carefully describe the details to them.

17. Don't gawk at personalities - you will see a lot of them. Always be courteous and help protect their privacy. BE PROFESSIONAL.

18. No matter where you are in the hotel, project a friendly attitude on the escalators, in the lobby, associate cafeteria and elevators. Let this attitude become a habit.

19. Make sure you have specific information regarding a service - quality, hours, location, prices, etc.

20. If you see anything wrong with the hotel in a common area (hallways, stairways, elevators, etc.), contact the appropriate department (Housekeeping, Engineering, Front Office, Security or the Executive Offices).

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BEHAVIORS WHEN INTERACTING WITH A GUEST

- Use appropriate and friendly greeting/welcome and maintain eye contact.
- Use guest name as often as possible.
- Full concentration on guest - keep looking to the lobby area.
- Do not stare at the computer.
- Keep administrative work in the back area.
- Answer the phone within three rings.
- Be organized and work accurately - correct flow and handover of information.
- Be informed about daily functions and daily operations.
- Offer hotel restaurant(s) first.
- Check name when handing out key (ID check).
- In every conversation with the guest - find out if he or she is satisfied.
- Treat every guest as an individual.

REMEMBER: The guest is not an interruption or disturbance of your daily work, but is the reason for us being here the guest pays our check.

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MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHECK-IN

- Smile!
- Appropriate greeting
- Confirm/use guest name
- Confirm room rate and check-out date.
- If required, get passport number and address.
- Get signature on reg-card.
- Hand out key pack - Important: Never state room number aloud.
- Offer any other assistance or information, i.e., map of the city, restaurant recommendations, etc.
- Offer assistance with luggage.
- Give directions to the elevator.
- Wish a pleasant stay.

DO NOT FORGET: Smile during the entire conversation and use guest name as often as possible.

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MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHECK-OUT

- Smile!
- Confirm room number with the guest name.
- Ask for any late charges, i.e., minibar, breakfast, etc.
- Present statement.
- Confirm method of payment.
- Print final invoice.
- Ask if stay was satisfactory.
- Hand out GSS form - inform guest that envelope is stamped, if applicable.
- Offer assistance with future reservations.
- Offer luggage assistance.
- Return key.
- Farewell and thank you.

Important: Use waiting times for small talk with the guest.
Do not stare in the computer.
Do not forget to say "thank you" and "you are welcome."

SAMPLE TRAINING PLAN - FRONT OFFICE

Front Office (FO) is defined as: Front Desk, Concierge, Concierge Lounge Attendants, PBX (GSC-Guest Service Center), Bellstand, Pageboy, Guest Relations, HOD (if applicable), Doorman, Hospitality Express

DAY 1

TIME	SUBJECT	PARTICIPANTS	CONDUCTED BY	RESOURCES
8:00	Coffee - Introductions	FO	FOM	
8:30	Norms, Icebreaker	FO	FOM	Flipchart
8:40	Your New Hotel - amenities, segments, hours of operation	FO	FOM	Infobook (develop locally)
9:00	Rules & Regulations, Schedule for 20 Days	FO	FOM	Associate Handbook (HRI)
9:30	Appearance / Grooming Standards	FO	FOM	Associate Handbook (HRI)
10:00	Break - Energizer			
10:15	FO - Do's and Don't's	FO	FDM	Handout
10:30	Cycle of a Hotel Guest	FO	FDM	Handout
11:00	Hospitality Training includes: - A Guest - Two Rules We Live By - Guest Response	 FO FO	 FOM FOM & FDM	Handout Guest Response Manual and Video
13:00	Lunch			
13:30	Hospitality Behaviors when interacting with a guest Ways to improve guest services	FO	FOM & FDM	Hospitality Manual and Video
17:30	End Day			

DAY 2

TIME	SUBJECT	PARTICIPANTS	CONDUCTED BY	RESOURCES
8:00	Continental Breakfast	FO		
8:30	First Ten Training (Break at 10:00 for 15 minutes)	FO, HSK, Reservations	FOM DORS DORS	1st 10 Manual and Video
12:30	Lunch Boxes			
13:00	Work on part of the Certified New Hire Training Program (CNHT) - Know your hotel, local area - Procedures	 FO FO	 FOM FOM	 CNHT Booklets
14:00	Concierge Lounge	Concierges, Concierge Lounge Attendant Guest Relation	FOM	
14:00	Registration and Check Out	Front Desk	FDM	
14:00	PBX Procedures	PBX	PBX Superv.	
14:00	Luggage Handling	Bellstand	Head Concierge	
15:00	Rooms Control Tasks	Front Desk	FDM	CNHT
15:00	PBX Equipment	PBX	PBX Super.	
15:00	Vehicles	Bellstand	Head Concierge	
15:00	Local Area	Concierge & Related	Head Concierge	Local area information

17:00	End of Day		FOM	

DAY 3

TIME	SUBJECT	PARTICIPANTS	CONDUCTED	RESOURCES
8:00	Breakfast	FO		
8:30	Service Excellence, class for entire day. Break twice a day for coffee and lunch break	FO	FOM and Assistants	Service Excellence Manual & Video
17:00	End Day			

DAY 4

8:00	Breakfast	FO		
8:30	Service Excellence	FO	FOM & Assistants	Service Excellence Manual & Video
10:00	Break for 15 minutes			
12:30	Lunch Boxes			
13:00	Service Standards	FO	FOM & Assistants	Service Standards Manual & Videos
17:30	End Day			

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DAY 5 - continued after lunch - First half of the day is total hotel orientation

TIME	SUBJECT	PARTICIPANTS	CONDUCTED BY	RESOURCES
13:30	[redacted]	FO	FOM	[redacted]
14:00		Front Desk Concierge Concierge Lounge Attend.	FOM & FDM	
14:00	Cash Handling, Routine Set-Up Wake Up Call Set Up Luggage Pick Up Procedures	Bellstaff GSC		LSOP's
16:00	Review first 5 days, wrap up	FO	FOM	
17:00	Introduce System Trainers	FO	FOM	
17:00	End Day			

TIME	SUBJECT	PARTICIPANTS	CONDUCTED	RESOURCES
DAY 6	Computer Training, Uniform Fitting		FO	Computer Specialists
DAY 7	Computer Training, Uniform Fitting			
DAY 8	Computer Training, Uniform Fitting			
DAY 9	Computer Training, include ? training			
DAY 10	Computer Training			
DAY 11	Computer Training			
DAY 12	Computer Training, Switchboard Training Uniforms Issued, practice with them			
DAY 13	Computer Training, Checklists Uniforms Issued			
DAY 14	Computer Training			
DAY 15	Computer Training, Role Plays			

DAY 16

TIME	SUBJECT	PARTICIPANTS	CONDUCTED	RESOURCES
8:00	Breakfast			
8:30	Emergency Procedures	FO	FOM	HOD Manual Emergency procedures
9:00	Breakout in groups to role play Use check lists, do performance checks Cross train staff on switchboard and housekeeping	FO in departmental groups	FOM and assistants	CNHT Role games
18:00	End Day			

DAY 17, DAY 18, DAY 19

TIME	SUBJECT	PARTICIPANTS	CONDUCTED	RESOURCES
8:00	Breakfast			
8:30	Same as previous day All Associates are in uniform on Day 19			

DAY 20

OPENING DAY!! - Associates report in regular shifts

Give off days in between
Don't forget to make notes at the beginning.