

Tourism & Hospitality  
**Front Office Associate**  
(Participant's Guide)  
Reference Id: THC/Q0102





## Welcome Note

We welcome you to a whole new world of learning.

The Hotel Front Office Associate works in the hospitality industry offering the best possible service for the guests. He/she holds a key position in the hospitality industry. Front office is known to be the nerve centre of a hotel. Therefore, the front office associates deal with customer queries, their needs, complaints etc. They are the chief point of communication for the guests.

It is said that a good first impression is made in the very first attempt. The Front Office Associate does that with their skill and efficiency. The impression of the entire hotel and its performance essentially reflects through the appearance and professional behavior of the front Office associates. They aim at creating a positive first impression to the guests to make them feel that they have come to the right place.

Hotel Front Office plays a vital role in offering the hospitality service to the guests. They play the roles of the information provider, communicator, front Office service provider etc. Considering the diverse roles they play, knowledge and skill in front Office operation is important for hotel front office associates.

It means that individual intending to work as a hotel front office associate is required to have the ability to present a remarkable guest service experience.

The activities and performance of hotel front office associates have a big impact on the reputation and success of hotel and in a broader sense on the hospitality industry.

This Student Handbook will help you learn and practice the skills required to become a Front Office Associate. You can highlight the important points and make notes too. The more you interact with the handbook, the more you learn.

It contains Activities to be performed in class and at home as well as Study Material for you to read.

This handbook will help you to learn better during the course and be useful later as a reference.

You will find this course material useful both for studying and as future reference. We welcome your feedback on any issue relating to this course and wish you all the best. Happy Learning!



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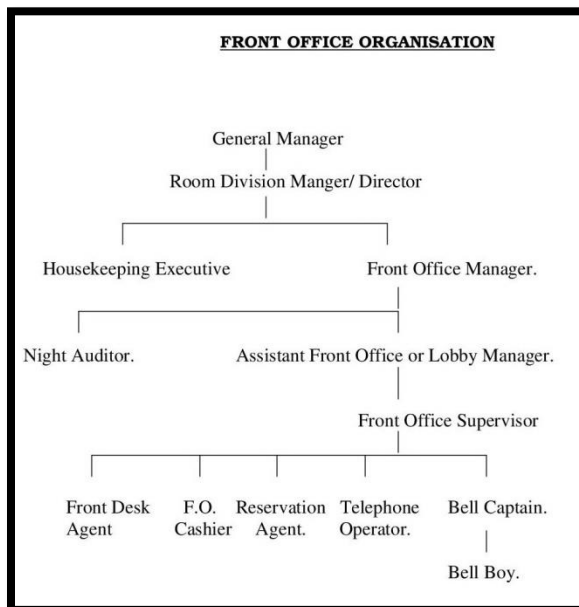
## Unit 1 – Record Guest Details for Registration

### Learning Objectives:

- Welcome the guest
- Check for room availability and reservation status
- Complete guest registration
- Follow standard registration guidelines

### Introduction

Front Office Associate is a designation that exists in the hotel, health care organization and in other agency. An individual working in this position gives more importance to the customer support service performing an array of responsible jobs. A simple mention of the word “hotel” itself conjures up the images of a hotel lobby filled up with domestic and international guests, busy hotel representatives, large reception area, well operated front office etc.



Front office is the key center of a hotel that basically manages hospitality service and its correlated tasks. The concept of hospitality service remains incomplete without the understanding of front Office operations. The most important functions of hospitality service lays in the front office operation. Hence, we can term it as the root area or as the nerve point of a hotel.

The excitement of providing hospitality to the guests starts from the front office area. It is the principle of every well operated hotel to deliver an image of impressive working approach to the guests from the moment the guests enter the hotel. Therefore, they primarily focus on the front Office area and make it lively for the guests.

The Front Office Department is headed by the Front Office Manager whose chief duty is to enhance the guest services. In this regard, a Front Office Manager supervises different front office employees holding different designations. The front office management is performed by the front office staffs mentioned following-

1. General Manager
2. Room division Manager
3. Housekeeping Executive
4. Front Office Manager
5. Night Auditor
6. Assistant Front Office/ lobby Manager



7. Front office supervisor
8. Front Office Agent
9. Front office cashier (often performed by front office associates)
10. Bell boy.

However, the key role of operating the front Office service is played by Front office Associate.



In the title of this designation, the key function is emphasized. The person in this position plays an essential role in representing the hotel to the guest throughout all stages of a client's stay. He or she reports to the front office manager.

An effective front office associate wants to project a hospitable image to the guests and thereby cater the guests with the best hospitality. This is an exciting position that requires skill and

passion to excel in the work.

### **Maintain Standard in Front Office Work**

Hotel front office management is always in needs of a standard to address the increasing demand of the hotel industry. This standard is set and maintained by the professionals of this sector. So, those who are preparing for this role as the front office associate are expected to meet the challenges to keep up that standard. These challenges chiefly come in the following areas:

- Hotel operations
- Empowerment
- Technology
- International applications
- Training

Being a member of hotel management team, a front office associate should take part in applying their knowledge and skill in these challenging areas of hotel operations. Managing customer's requirements continues to be their chief focus of operation.



But, there are some interrelated areas that also require the equal attention and efficiency to handle. A front office associate should have proper understanding of five important aspects related to hospitality sector-

1. Various kinds of hotel properties
2. Their locations
3. Market orientation
4. Sales indicators
5. Occupancy as well as revenues



All the above-mentioned aspects relate to the different types of service and types of business associations. The classifications of the five related aspects are mentioned in the following table:

Types of Hotel Properties	Market Orientation	Sales Indicators	Levels of Service	Affiliation
a. Hotels	<b>a. Residential</b>	a. Occupancy	a. Full-service	<b>a. Chain</b>
b. Motels	<b>i. Center-city</b>	b. Average daily rate (ADR)	b. All-suites	i. Franchise
c. All-suites	1. Hotels	c. Yield percentage	c. Limited-service	ii. Company-owned
d. Limited-service hotels	2. All-suites	d. Revenue per available room (RevPAR)	d. Extended-stay	iii. Referral
e. Extended-stay hotels	3. Limited-service	*		iv. Management contract
	4. Extended-stay			<b>b. Independent</b>
	<b>ii. Suburban</b>			
	1. All-suites			
	2. Limited-service			
	3. Extended-stay			
	<b>b. Commercial</b>			
	<b>i. Center-city</b>			
	1. Hotels			
	2. All-suites			
	3. Limited-service			
	4. Extended-stay			
	<b>ii. Suburban</b>			
	1. Hotels			
	2. Motels			
	3. All-suites			
	4. Limited-service			
	5. Extended-stay			
	<b>iii. Airport</b>			
	1. Hotels			



	2. Motels and suits			
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### Job Responsibilities of Front Office Associate

The chief function of a Front Office Associate is to determine guests' reservation status and help them in registering cards, assign suitable rooms and keep special requests wherever possible. Apart from this he or she is responsible to perform the following tasks-

1. Administer guests' departure on everyday basis.
2. Monitor the reservation inquiries and assist hotel authority to increase revenue.
3. Manage client communication and give assistance on phone as well as in person too.
4. Develop and maintain professional relationship with the clients and bring beneficiary effect to the hotel's business.
5. Monitor the work of employees to ensure their optimal performance.
6. Ensure work performance and compliance to the established standards.
7. Ensure best possible customer service for clients and assist clients in check-in and check-out process.
8. Answer guests' queries and provide information on room availability and other hotel services.
9. Assist sales and marketing department, housekeeping department of hotel providing their required information.
10. Manage cashiering process, maintain accounting records and perform efficiently in calculating the total payments.
11. Maintain neat and clean front Office and lobby area at all times.
12. Greet the guests with smile and deal them with courtesy.
13. Monitor overall functions of hotel and ensure the quality assurance standard.
14. Coordinate with housekeeping department and ensure the cleanliness of guestrooms.



You are at the beginning of understanding the role of Front Office Associate or Guest Service Associate. The above mentioned job responsibilities will give you an idea of front Office operations performed in a hotel. As you begin to learn about the jobs of front Office associates, you will gradually discover the important role played by the person in this position.



**Activity:**

Imagine you have been employed as a front Office associates in your father's office for a day. Make a list of the things you would do for your customers.

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### Checklist:

- The identity of the clients: confirmed
- Their purpose of coming: understood
- Their needs: fulfilled
- Client information: shared
- Impressive professional approach: taken
- Professional looks: maintained
- Expected service: provided
- Clients' satisfaction: achieved



In this section, you will acquire learning on recording guests' details for registration process. This is said to be one of the most important function of a Front Office Associate. This vital job includes four important consecutive stages-

1. Welcoming guests when they first enter the hotel.
2. Checking reservation status and room availability.
3. Complete guest registration
4. Following established guest registration standard and guidelines

### **Welcoming Guests**

#### **1) Greeting session**

One of the first opportunities for face-to-face contact with guests occurs when they come to register. At this point, all the efforts and hospitable approach should come together to make the introduction session strong and appealing. One of the most acceptable ways to create an effective hospitable image is to make an engaging guest welcome.

#### **2) Make a Good First Impression**



The first impression a guest receives of an accommodation facility during registration is extremely important in setting the tone for establishing a continuing business relationship. The guest who is warmly welcomed with a sincere greeting will respond positively to the hotel. They will expect similar hospitality from other hotel employees. If the guest receives a half-hearted welcome, he or she will not be enthusiastic about the lodging facility. He or she will be more likely to find fault with the hotel during his or her visit.

The Front Office is considered as the front line for the guest services. Most of the hotels provide on-job training to train their front Office employees to be amiable. They understand the importance of opportunity and responsibility of front Office operations. They understand the guests who want an optimal level experience in the hotel.

And it must be provided from the time they first appear in the premise. The cordial welcome from the man behind the front Office counter can make the initial guest experience at its best.



After a long travel, nobody wants to be received by some dull words or sullen expressions. The words and expression should have the power to make the guest feels that he or she is there with you. Instead of saying “Sir, how can I help you?”, it is better to receive them by saying, “ Sir, feeling extremely happy to meet you”.

And then you can continue with the expression like “how can I help you” and so on so forth. Be sure to speak in a tone so that the guests can communicate directly with the place and situation.

Today’s guest expects to be treated with respect and concern. The definition of a warm welcome varies from employee to employee. It begins with the employee’s empathizing with the feelings of the traveler. Every front office associate should consider the guests as someone who has been away from familiar surroundings for many hours or many days. Therefore, they should be treated with utmost care, positivity and in an understanding manner.

### 3) Attitude to Maintain

There is no second chance of making a first impression. It is the behavior of the front Office associates that sets up the tune for the entire guest experience. If the guests are properly treated at the time of check-in, they become happy and satisfied. If handled poorly, they feel neglected. In some hotels, the front Office people make follow-up phone calls to ensure the customers’ satisfaction. But, this often proves to be very annoying to the guests. Therefore, you should spent time and effort only for those techniques that are welcome. Thus, you can reinforce the level of your caring for the guests.



The goal of welcoming guest is to present the right company image. This requires right attitude and professional approach towards your guests. The attitudes to follow for this purpose are below-mentioned-

- Greet guest and colleagues with a smile and maintain a friendly facial expression.
- Do not fold your arms in front of a guest.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets.
- Do not lean on wall at the time you welcome the guests.
- Do not play with hair and jewelry.
- Do not be informal in dress and in words while greeting your guests.



A proper guideline should be followed to maintain your greeting attitude welcoming. Every organization asks their associates to follow an established guideline for greeting. However, the following points will help you to make the right attitude on at your end.

DO'S	DON'T S
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be tactful and courteous</li> <li>2. Be humored and even mannered</li> <li>3. Make eye contact with the guest when addressing him/her</li> <li>4. Look and act professional</li> <li>5. Always appear confident</li> <li>6. Be positive</li> <li>7. Listen carefully to guest when talking to him/her</li> <li>8. Use the guest's name at least twice once known</li> <li>9. Ask the right question to identify needs.</li> <li>10. Talk clearly and maintain a good tone of voice at all times</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do not argue with guests</li> <li>2. Do not become over friendly with guests</li> <li>3. Do not criticize one guest to another</li> <li>4. Do not refer guest as "he/she to they" in their presence</li> <li>5. Do not weary the guest with your troubles</li> <li>6. Do not discuss religion or politics with guests</li> <li>7. Do not be rigid in your attitude</li> <li>8. Do not be illogical in your explanations</li> <li>9. Do not avoid taking your colleagues' suggestion if any doubt arises</li> </ol>

#### 4) Make the Guests Feel Comfortable

The guests come with the thoughts if they would get the right service against their money. It is your duty to make them assure of your valuable service. To meet this aim, make the guests feel comfortable and safe from the very first stage of your service.

On arrival, greet the guest and assist them for registration. Arrange a comfortable seating in the lobby area. Ensure that the entrance is clean. Ask the waiters to serve water or some fresh drinks. Ensure the glasses are clean.



However, there are some other important points which will help you to get an idea on how to reach the guests' comfortable level-

- Greet them with a smile.
- Have a good knowledge of the guests and their needs before they arrive at the hotel.
- Be aware of the special interests of the guests.
- Know the specific function you should perform for a special kind of guest. For an example, your action would be different for a business person and for a celebrity guest.
- Some guests can be physically or mentally handicapped. You should specially treat these guests. Your service treatment should be as per their comfortable level.

#### 5) Establish an Approachable Contact

- Make eye contact while speaking to guest. This shows your care and attention to them.
- Make a warm and friendly welcome to them. You can start like "good morning Mr.... how can I help you"
- Make them as much as comfortable. Right attitude and right words work the best in this concern.



- Refer to the guest twice by correct title and name if known.
- Identify the guests' requirements and meet their needs.
- Take your time for the guest.
- Make them feel that they are valuable to you.

#### 6) Be Presentable

Every guest expects the associates of the hotel to be presentable. The more presentable you are, the more impressed your guests would be. Generally, a guideline is provided to the associates to make them presentable before the guests. As a front Office associate you should strictly follow the guidelines of your organization to maintain a presentable look every time the guests appear.



It must be remembered that the guests first encounter the front Office associates when they enter the hotel. This means your attire and appearance is very important to make the right image of your hotel.

#### 7) Importance of Wearing Uniform

There is an interesting point to note. It is often observed by some hotel managers that when the front Office associates wear a perfect uniform, the guest complaints get reduced. Practically, any uniformed person gets more respects than a person wearing regular clothes.

Two examples are provided here to help you understand the importance of a uniform for a presentable look-

##### Example 1: Hotel A

Front Office associates wear a simple combination of black pants and white shirts. They do not have any nameplate badge. There are no strict rules of wearing clothes for the front Office people.

**Result:** In reaction, they do not get any creditably and respect from their guests.

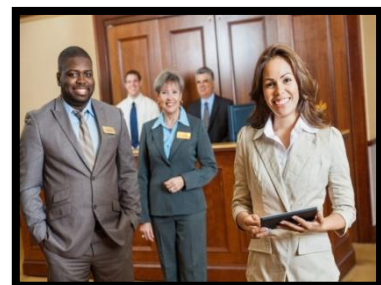
##### Example 2: Hotel B

Front Office associates wear a proper uniform and also use a badge having their names in their blazer.

##### Results:

- Front Office associates commands respects
- Enjoy a higher level of creditability
- Customers' satisfaction level increases

The only acceptable uniform is the one issued by the organization. Uniforms must be cleaned. In most of the cases, the uniform department of the hotels cleans the employees' uniforms. Wearing jewelry is strictly prohibited. It is always instructed to maintain a well groomed hair that must be cut in a conservative style.





## 8) Make a Good Rapport

As a Front Office Associate you should show a positive attitude. Welcome cordially, escort and build a good rapport with the guest. All should be started from the front Office area. Greet guests with a smile and welcome them to the hotel saying “Welcome to The Royal Hotel” For the return, guest you should welcome them by saying “Welcome back to The Royal Hotel”.

Introduce yourself with your first name and offer your assistance. You can start like “Good Morning. My name is John. How can I help you?”

Build a good rapport with the guests and explain a bit about hotel’s facilities. Ensure that your other colleagues are well informed to take the position at the Lobby entrance.



## 9) Deliver Superior Service

Anytime you install new equipment or use a new technology in your front Office Desk, you should make a plan for its implementation. An example will help you to understand the importance of this statement. Imagine, you have installed a new telephone system in the front Office area. One of your customers has a conference there in the hotel. Everything is going perfectly. But, suddenly the telephone system stops working. Consequently, the guests become unable to reach the front office associates to make any alternative arrangement.



However, to overcome such situation, you need to have a strong recovery plan. This is an important part of a good customer service. Else, you should use reliable equipments so that such situations never occur.

## 10) Enhance Your Service

The responsibility of enhancing front Office service is included in the job responsibilities of a front office associate. The guidelines mentioned here will help you to do that.

- When you deal the guests personally, try to understand their problems if any
- Take care of the guests’ requirements
- Assure the customers to solve the problems immediately
- Note down the missed opportunities and report to the manager
- Plan for the enhancement of the service accordingly

Thus, you can make your guests feel a higher sense of satisfaction even when the problems arise.



**Activity:**

Imagine some guests are coming to visit you during the next month. Make a list of the things you would do to welcome them.

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**Checklist:**

- Number of guests: confirmed
- Date of arrival: confirmed
- Preparation of greeting: done
- Dressing: properly done
- Behavioral attitude: maintained
- Cordial welcome: given



**Checking Reservation Status**

Will the guest receive what has been promised? A well trained front Office associate is liable to handle this matter. Though the responsibility of providing promised service is of all the associates of hotel, but the first responsibility is of a front Office associate. A properly trained front Office associate is able to portray the hotel in a positive manner.

This first impression ensures an enjoyable stay at the hotel. The primary step in the guest registration process is to collect the guest information and check the reservation status. The guest information contains:

Guest Name	John Smith
Address	23,A/6 Royal Street, New Jersey
Zip Code	230008
Duration of stay	23.08.16-25.08.2016
Date of arrival	23.08.2016
Date of departure	25.08.2016

This data is required during his or her stay and after departure. Various departments in the hotel also require this information to provide service to the guest.

**Types of Hotel Guest**

Hotel guests can be classified according to their following requirements:



- Trip purpose - pleasure or business travelers
- Numbers - independent or group travelers
- Origin - local or overseas travelers
- Pleasure travelers

They are individuals who travel to engage in leisure activities, outdoor recreation or to attend sports or cultural events.

### 1) Corporate Business Travelers

They are individuals who often travel for business purpose. Their booking is generally done by their companies. Their purpose of travel is to attend conference, workshops or business meetings.



### 2) Free Independent Travelers

They are sometimes called as “foreign independent travelers”. These tourists are generally international tourists. They purchase their own accommodation.

### 3) Group Inclusive Tours

Tourists who travel together are known as GITs or group Inclusive Tourists. They are generally interested on package tours with accommodation and sometimes meals. The accommodation booking is done by the travel agencies for these travelers.

### 4) Domestic Tourists

They are local residents who stay at a hotel for special occasions and functions.

### 5) Conference Participants

Individuals who travel to attend conference are known as the conference participants. Their accommodation is reserved by themselves or conference organizers.



### 6) VIP Tourists

Very important persons are known as VIP tourist. They may include celebrities, political persons etc.

### 7) Incognito

They are guests who stay in a hotel hiding their identities to avoid notice and formal attention.