

# PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF HOTEL GUEST CYCLE

## PRE-ARRIVAL STAGE

(Practical exercises and worksheets with role play scenarios)



**DR. HARDAMAN SINGH BHINDER**

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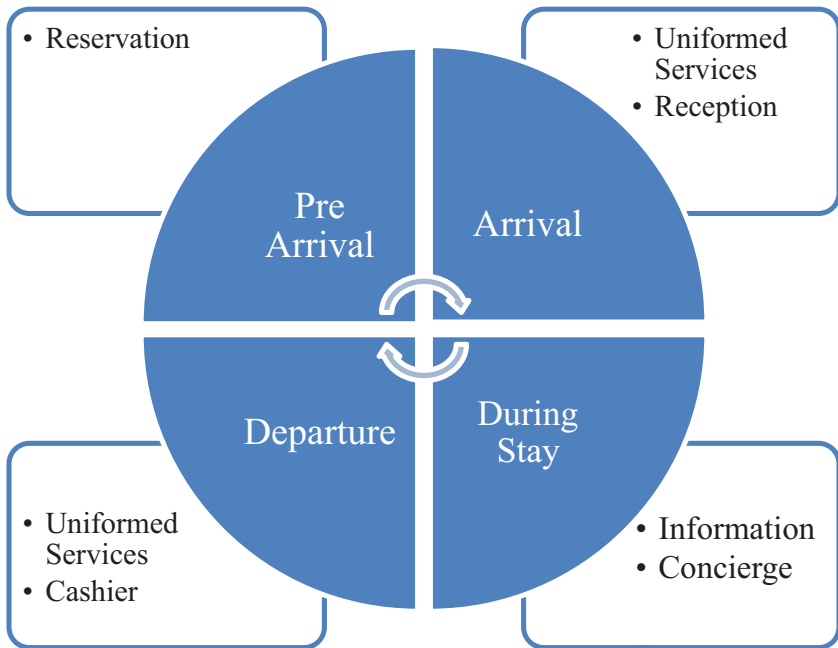
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# Chapter 1

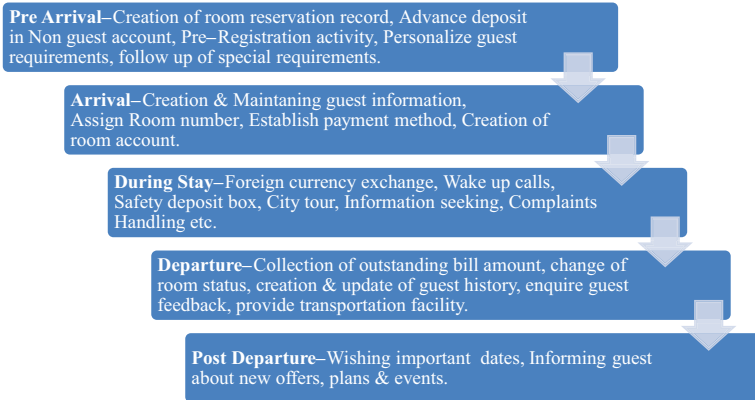
## Introduction to Guest Cycle

It consists of various stages of interaction that takes places between guest and hotel front office staff. It is basically divided into four stages. All stages are closely interlinked with each other. Front office staff tries to extend customer care and make efforts to provide pleasant stay & memorable experience. Front office staff must anticipate the needs of the guest in each stage of the guest cycle. They should have clearly understanding of all activities of the cycle flow.



**Guest Cycle Stages & Interactions of Hotel Front Office Sections**

## Activities carried out in various stages of Guest Cycle



### Pre-Arrival

The interaction between a guest and a hotel before the guest arrives at the hotel forms the pre-arrival phase of the guest cycle. Guest makes room reservation request in this stage. This stage is handled by reservation section of the hotel. Identifying guest needs and requirements properly at this stage can makes guest stay happier and comfortable. Guest selects a particular hotel may be because of advertisement, positive WOM, recommended by friends and family members etc. Hotels try to make it easy for the potential guests to approach hotel for making reservation request through toll free numbers or CRS. Hotel website should also display 360 angle video presentations of rooms and facilities available in the guest rooms. In this stage most of the times guest communicate with hotel on telephone or through mail, hence there is no face to face conversation involves in this stage. It is important to verify all guest details and cross checked with the guest so that it should not cause any error at the time of arrival process. Staff handling this stage of guest cycle should deal in effective and professional manner to create first impression in the minds of guest. Once the reservation is created; first step of guest cycle get initiated.

#### Activities performed in Pre arrival stage:

- *Creation of reservation record*
- *Posting of advance deposit in the non guest account*
- *Block rooms as per guest requirements for future period of time*
- *Personalise guest requirements*

- *Follow up of special requirements made by guest such as international newspaper, cervical pillow etc.*
- *Pre registration is to be done before the arrival of the guest*
- *Filling up relevant forms & formats such as Welcome drink voucher, Amenities voucher, GRC, C form etc.*

## **Arrival**

This stage is also known as check in or rooming the guest. In this stage guest arrives and there is face to face conversation involves between guest and receptionist. First encounter of the guest will takes place between uniformed service staff members and guest (such as doorman, valet attendant and bell boy). Reception assistant should inquire guest reservation details for tracing the room reservation. Once the reservation record is identified, always verify with the guest in order to remove any communication gap. After verifying records, reception assistant assign guest room number and establish the payment method. Reception assistant present printed GRC to the guest to verify details like room rate, departure date and time, payment method details etc and sign it. Once GRC signed by the guest, there is a creation of agreement between hotel and guest. In which hotel gives the assurance of providing clean and secure accommodation facility to the guest at an accepted room rate and in return guest agrees to abide rules and regulation mentioned on the GRC. Reception assistant then handover the room key to the guest and provide room directions to the guest.

### **Activities performed in Arrival stage:**

- *Reception and welcome of the guest*
- *Create and maintain guest personal & financial details on GRC, C Form.*
- *Room rate and room assignment to the guest (in case of walk in guest)*
- *Assigning room number as per reservation request.*
- *Establish method of payment and process advance as per policy of the hotel.*
- *Handing over the room key to the guest.*
- *Delivering the mails and messages that the hotel has received on behalf of the guest.*
- *Prepare welcome drink and amenities voucher for f & b service department.*
- *Create room account*
- *Notification of guest arrival to others department.*

## ***During Stay***

During this stage guest experiences hotel services & facilities. In this stage, guest contact front office for various purposes. Front office staffs were responsible for fulfilling guest requests by coordinating with other departments of the hotel. Delivery of services during stay would lead to the satisfaction of the guest. Front office staff extends following below mentioned services during stay to the guest:

- *Mail & message handling*
- *Safety deposit box*
- *Foreign currency exchange*
- *Complaints/room change requests*
- *Key handling*
- *City tour*
- *Arranging table reservations, theatre tickets etc.*
- *Arranging transportation services.*
- *Recording wake up calls request*
- *Second service requests for housekeeping*
- *Posting of room & POS charges into respective room accounts.*

Front office staff apart from providing above mentioned services, their major role is in recording and posting of POS charges in the respective room accounts.

## ***Departure–Check out***

In this stage of guest cycle, guest is going to depart from the hotel. Guest vacates the room and settles the outstanding balance of room account. Cashier collects room key from the guest and bell boy load the guest baggage items in the transportation vehicle. At this point of time it is essential to know guest feedback about hotel services and facilities. Once the guest has left the hotel after settling the bill, cashier changes or PMS automatically changes room status of the occupied room as departure room.

### **Activities performed in Departure stage:**

- *Luggage handling by the bell desk*
- *Verifying last purchases from the guest*
- *Print the updated guest folio and determine the method of payment*
- *Payment settlement and change of room status*
- *Creation & updating guest history records*
- *Provide transportation facility if required by the guest*
- *Left luggage handling*



- Request the guest to fill up guest feedback form.
- Inquire future reservation requirements, if any

### **Summary of various transactions take place in a Front Office department**

Before a guest arrives?	Telephone call
	Booking/reservation
	Guest enquiry
	Room assignment
When a guest checks in?	Registration
	Issue of keys
	Baggage handling
	Method of payment
During a guest's stay?	Telephone calls
	Guest mail/messages
	Safe deposits
	Currency exchange
	Booking of internal or external services
When a guest departs?	Check out
	Settlement of account
	Transportation
	Baggage handling
	Booking onwards

### **Worksheet**

1. Find out at which stage of the guest cycle the following guest service could occur. Fill in the **Answer** column below with the correct alphabet (A-D) which denotes the four different stages of the guest cycle.

- A** – Pre-arrival      **B** – Arrival  
**C** – Occupancy      **D** – Departure

Guest Services	Stage
Bill settlement	
Wake up call request	
Reservation cancellation	
Request for storing luggage	
Registration	
Message given by visitor of in house guest	
Issuing of key	
Transportation	
Room number allocation	
Posting POS charges into room account	
Foreign currency exchange	
Arranging theatre tickets	
Issuing safety locker	
Room change	
Changing arrival dates	
Key handling	
Blocking rooms	

2. True or false
- Registration card is filled at the time of making reservation
  - Guest room account is created at the time of check in
  - Reservation form is prepared at the time of check in
  - Reservation amendment means changing reservation details
  - Guest feedback is taken at the time of reservation

## Chapter 2

### Practical Task: Handling Room Reservation Request

#### Practical outcomes:

- ▲ Students will learn various steps to be followed while handling room reservation inquiry.
- ▲ Learner will be able to handle room reservation request by practicing role plays.
- ▲ Learner will also get to know how to communicate with the guest in case of sold out dates and non availability of rooms for a particular date.
- ▲ Learner will be able to clarify their doubts by doing various students exercises and worksheets designed on room reservation module.

**Introduction:** Guest planning to visit another city, state or country due to any purpose (pleasure, business or Bleisure) would like to first make reservation for transportation followed by hotel room reservation. In five star hotels approximately 70 to 80% guests arrive at hotels with their prior bookings. Very less percentage of guests arrives in large hotels without reserving their rooms and known as walk in guest. In today's scenario most of FIT business or corporate guests are making their reservation directly through either through Global Distribution System (GDS), Central Reservation System (CRS) or Online Travel Agencies (OTA). Due to technology advancement, nowadays potential guests are less dependent on physical travel mediators for processing their reservation requests and several hotel chains have introduced their own reservation mobile apps. Mobile apps are offered by hotel chains for direct booking and some of them are of a third party. Advantages of using apps gives guest to get last minute deals and keep track of rewards points (example of Hotel apps such as SPG-Starwood Hotel & Resorts, Hilton Honors and World of Hyatt). However still family or leisure guests who are interested in exploring new places, buying packages from travel or tour operators. Earlier potential guests used to call hotels for making room reservations. Nowadays

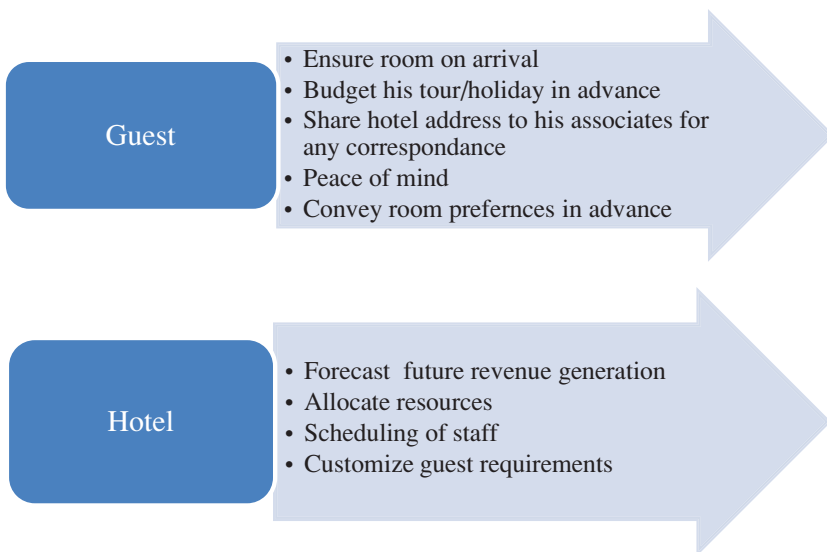
most of guests process their reservation requests either through hotels online reservation portal or chain CRS.

Processing room reservation request through portal is easy and guest first enters room requirements in terms of Location (Country, State, and City), stay dates and room requirement. Once requirements entered in the portal, processing takes place to search a set of room options with available rates and inclusive services. Search results will then displayed on the user screen. Guest review the options and select a suitable hotel room as per budget and preferences and enter details in the portal. After finalising the room requirements guest process online payments through various modes. System confirms the reservation and send reservation confirmation message on given mobile number or email id.

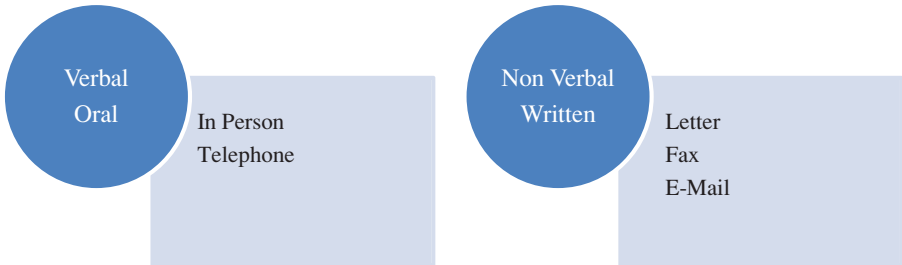
Trend of processing hotel room reservation request through online hotel booking is growing and becoming competitive so hotels are facing threats from major online travel agencies and hotels prefer that potential guests process their room reservation requests directly through their own hotel websites or portal instead of processing reservation request on OTAs. For that hotels are offering lowest room rates, inclusive services and loyalty points.

Reservation assistant resourcefully try to link guest room inquiry with the room availability.

## ***Importance of room reservation***



## Mode & Sources of potential room reservations inquires

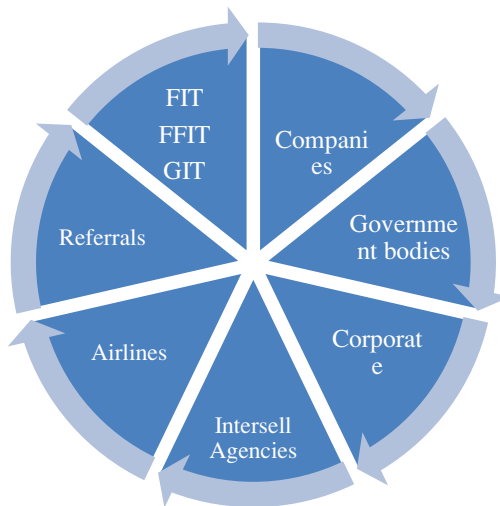


**Non Verbal Mode:** This mode is clear-cut and provides a written record for the hotel, which can be referred to in case of any confusion.

**Verbal Mode:** This is swift, and generates immediate feedback such as room availability, room charges etc.

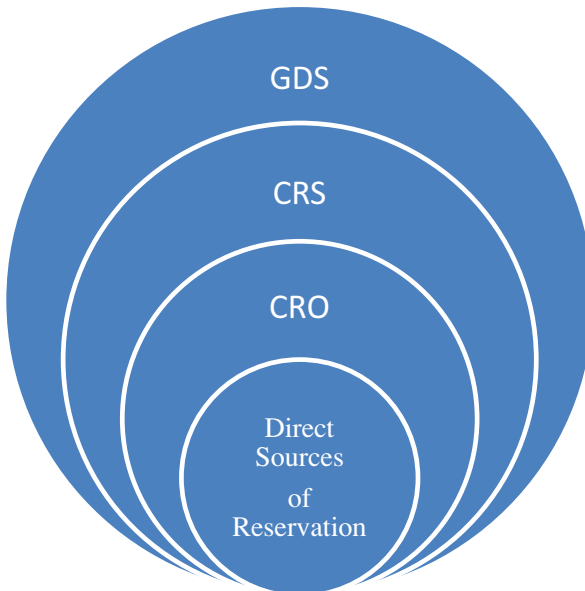
### Examples of Reservation Modes:

- *A letter is sent by post containing all guest details & requirements.*
- *Reservation request received through fax sent by company*
- *Direct reservation received through CRS*
- *Personally guest approaches hotel for making reservation request*



## SOURCES OF RESERVATION

- **FITS**—*Free Individual Travellers/Free Independent Travellers*
- **DEIT**—*Domestic Free Individual Traveller.*
- **FFIT**—*Foreign Free Individual Traveller*
- **GIT**—*Group Inclusive Tour*
- **COMPANIES**—*Independent/Tie up—CVGR (Company volume guaranteed rate)*
- **GOVERNMENT BODIES/ASSOCIATIONS**
- **TRAVEL AGENCIES/TRAVEL AGENTS**
- **TOUR OPERATORS**
- **AIRLINES**
- **CRS**
- **GDS**
- **REFERRAL GROUPS**



- **CRO (CENTRAL RESERVATION OFFICE)**—*for independent hotel itself*  
*Hotels create a central reservation office with a toll free number for giving room reservation request. Toll free number is 24 hour operational for receiving room reservations. Hotel groups also create regional reservation offices for the entire chain.*

- **CRS (CENTRAL RESERVATION SYSTEM)**—*Hotel chains*. It is a computer based reservation system which helps the guest to process their reservation in any of the hotel property of a particular group. Guest can access it either through hotel group website or make a call at a toll free number. CRS is of two types.
  - ✧ **Affiliated System:** In this all hotel properties belong to one chain or group.
  - ✧ **Non Affiliated System:** In this many independent hotel properties or non chain properties are part of this system.
- **GDS (GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM)**—*Booking network of different hotels*
- **GDS:** It is a worldwide computerized reservation network of various affiliated hotel properties, Airline companies, Car rentals and other travel related services providers. Some examples of GDS are Amadeus, Galileo, SABRE, World span etc.

### ***Types of Room Reservation Requests***

1. **Provisional/tentative reservation:** When a guest makes an enquiry regarding reservation request on a tentative basis for particular dates. The hotel holds room for the guest till a cut off date by which guest is supposed to confirm the reservation. In case guest sends his confirmation then reservation section changes the tentative reservation to confirmed reservation category. If guest after that makes no further contact with the hotel, then reservation assistant usually cancel the reservation request. This kind of reservation doesn't ensure whether guest will arrive.
2. **Confirmed Reservation/Non Guaranteed reservation:** When a guest makes a reservation and after that confirms the room reservation request by sending a letter, fax etc as required by hotel. Confirmation send by the guest is a contract which has been entered with hotel and in return hotel ensures to provide a room on arrival date till a stated cancellation time/cut of time. Which is normally 6.00 pm or known as 6 pm release time. After that reservation will be cancelled and hotel can offer that room to some other walk in guest on that day.

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