

CHAPTER III

INTERNSHIP IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Position and Coordination

The front office department is the central of operations in a hotel. Thus, it needs to have relations with every other department in the hotel to ensure the guest's satisfaction. The following is an explanation of why one department is related to other departments:

a. **Front Office and Housekeeping department**

The front office and housekeeping departments work closely together to provide a seamless guest experience. The front office depends on housekeeping to share timely updates on room availability, cleanliness, amenity setup, and maintenance status to ensure smooth check-ins and check-outs. Meanwhile, housekeeping relies on the front office to notify them about guest arrivals, departures, and any specific requests, such as additional amenities or customized cleaning services. Their collaboration is also crucial for accommodating special requests like early check-ins, late check-outs, or room changes. Effective communication, supported by hotel management systems and regular briefings, is key to maintaining efficiency and enhancing guest satisfaction.

b. **Front office and Food and Beverage Department**

The front office and food and beverage (F&B) departments have a collaborative relationship focused on enhancing the guest experience. The front office communicates guest information, such as dining reservations, special dietary requirements, or celebrations, to the F&B team to ensure personalized service. Similarly, the F&B department informs the front office of ongoing promotions, events, or service changes, allowing the front desk staff to relay this information to guests effectively. They also need to communicate in case there is a bill correction or mistake, so that they can provide the right invoice for the guest. Coordination is also critical for VIP guests or group bookings, where both departments must work together to

meet specific requirements. This partnership ensures smooth operations and creates a cohesive and satisfying experience for guests.

c. Front office and Kitchen/Pastry department

The front office and the kitchen and pastry departments maintain a collaborative relationship to ensure guest satisfaction. The front office provides critical information about guest preferences, special dietary needs, and event details, enabling the kitchen and pastry teams to prepare meals and desserts tailored to these requirements. For occasions like birthdays or anniversaries, the front desk communicates requests for special cakes or customized dishes. In turn, the kitchen and pastry teams inform the front office about menu changes, seasonal offerings, or available specials so that this information can be shared with guests. This synergy ensures smooth operations and enhances the overall guest experience.

d. Front office and Finance department

The front office and finance departments have a vital relationship centered on accurate financial transactions and record-keeping. The front office is responsible for handling guest payments, processing deposits, managing billing, and ensuring that all transactions are properly recorded. This information is then relayed to the finance department, which reviews and reconciles the financial data to maintain accurate accounts. Additionally, the finance department relies on the front office for reports on room revenue, guest charges, and any adjustments or discounts applied. Clear communication between these departments ensures smooth financial operations, minimizes errors, and contributes to the hotel's overall financial integrity.

e. Front office and Security department

The front office and security departments work together to ensure the safety and security of guests, staff, and property. The front office provides security with essential information, such as guest arrivals, VIP stays, or special events, to help monitor and manage safety protocols effectively. In turn, the security department supports the front office by handling lost and found

items, monitoring access to restricted areas, and responding promptly to emergencies or disturbances. Security also assists the front office in monitoring guests who have no deposit, to ensure they don't leave the hotel without paying their bill. This collaboration is essential for maintaining a secure environment while delivering a seamless and reassuring guest experience. Clear communication and shared responsibility between these departments are key to achieving operational safety.

f. Front office and Engineering Department

The front office and engineering departments work closely to ensure the hotel's facilities are functioning smoothly and guest needs are promptly addressed. The front office is the main point of contact for reporting issues such as malfunctioning air conditioning, plumbing problems, or faulty electrical systems. These concerns are communicated to the engineering department, which ensures timely repairs or maintenance. Additionally, engineering relies on the front office for room access and occupancy updates to avoid disturbing guests during their stay. This collaboration is essential for maintaining the property's standards and ensuring a comfortable experience for guests.

g. Front office and IT Department

The front office and IT departments have a collaborative relationship aimed at ensuring seamless technological operations and guest satisfaction. The front office relies on IT to maintain and troubleshoot critical systems such as gadgets like computers, iPad, TV, WIFI, reservation systems, electricity systems, and payment processing tools. Any technical issues that disrupt guest services, such as internet connectivity problems or malfunctioning devices, are reported to the IT department for prompt resolution. In turn, IT depends on the front office for feedback on system performance and user challenges.

h. Front office and HR (People & Culture and Learning & Development) department

The relationship between the front office and the HR department is focused on ensuring effective staffing, training, and employee support. The front office relies on HR to recruit and onboard qualified personnel who can deliver excellent guest services. HR also provides training programs to enhance the front office team's skills in areas such as communication, problem-solving, and using hotel management systems. HR also assist the front office with manning from trainees as well to help with their day-to-day operations. Additionally, the front office communicates staffing needs, shift schedules, and any employee-related concerns to HR for resolution. This collaboration helps maintain a motivated and well-prepared team, contributing to smooth operations and an exceptional guest experience.

3.2 Assignment and Review

The writer was assigned to be a Front Desk trainee in Mandarin Oriental, Jakarta. During the internship, the intern was actively involved in a wide range of tasks that provided valuable exposure to front office operations in a luxury hotel setting. The writer's responsibilities included learning about the various types of rooms, such as Deluxe Rooms, Urban Suites, and corner rooms, along with their unique features, layouts, and pricing structures. The writer also acquired the ability to identify room views based on their ending numbers and the specific locations of premium suites like the Oriental Suite and Mandarin Suite. This knowledge was crucial for understanding room assignments and providing accurate information to guests.

The intern received extensive training in the check-in and check-out processes, observing and role-playing these interactions to enhance their skills in guest handling. They learned to use the HMS system to manage reservations, folios, and billing instructions effectively. This training included understanding the use of folios for separating charges, handling third-party payments, and managing accounts receivable for corporate or group bookings. Additionally, they practiced processing corrections in guest bills and maintaining clear records to ensure transparency and accuracy.

In addition to front office duties, the intern assisted with operational tasks such as preparing rooming lists for group arrivals, completing guest data updates, and handling interdepartmental communication sheets for daily briefings (Day of Exceptional). They also managed IAR (Internal Action Requests) to ensure guest requests and follow-ups were handled across shifts.

Furthermore, the intern gained practical experience in handling payments through EDC machines (Mandiri and BCA) and AsiaPay, learning to process pre-authorizations, deposit releases, and direct payments efficiently. They also assisted with special services, such as arranging Blue Bird transportation for guests, making restaurant reservations, and managing wake-up call requests. Their role extended to supporting the concierge team by coordinating with other departments like housekeeping, security, and engineering to fulfil guest requests and ensure a seamless experience.

Additionally, they gained knowledge about the hotel's facilities and outlets, such as the Fitness Centre, swimming pool, restaurants, and Club Lounge, which enabled them to provide guests with detailed and accurate information about these services. They were also trained to handle lost-and-found procedures, guest inquiries, and internal complaints with professionalism and empathy.

Review Section

The internship at Mandarin Oriental Jakarta provided a comprehensive learning experience that allowed the intern to understand the intricate workings of front office operations in a luxury hotel. Through a mix of theoretical knowledge and practical application, they developed a strong foundation in guest service excellence and operational efficiency.

One of the most significant aspects of the internship was learning the check-in and check-out processes in detail. From greeting and registering guests to handling billing instructions and escorting them to their rooms, the intern became proficient in ensuring a smooth and personalized guest experience. The training they received on managing reservations and using the HMS system helped them understand the importance of accuracy and attention to detail in hotel operations. Another highlight was their exposure to payment processing. The intern became skilled in using EDC

machines and AsiaPay to handle various payment methods, including pre-authorizations, credit card charges, and refunds. These tasks required precision and an understanding of financial processes to ensure proper billing and guest satisfaction.

Interdepartmental coordination was another key learning area. By working closely with housekeeping, concierge, food and beverage, and other departments, the intern realized how essential teamwork and clear communication are in delivering seamless service. They also gained insights into the importance of daily briefings and interdepartmental communication sheets in keeping everyone informed and aligned. Their understanding of guest services was further enriched by learning about the hotel's facilities, such as the Club Lounge, gym, spa, and restaurants. This allowed them to provide guests with accurate information and assist them in making reservations or enjoying these amenities. Additionally, handling wake-up calls, lost-and-found items, and transportation arrangements taught them how to cater to guest needs with professionalism and care.

Overall, the internship provided the intern with a well-rounded understanding of front office operations and the collaborative efforts required to maintain high standards of service in a luxury hotel. The hands-on experience not only improved the writer's technical skills but also strengthened their communication, problem-solving, and organizational abilities, which are essential for a successful career in the hospitality industry.

3.3 Job Description

Front Desk Agent Job Description

The Front Desk Agent plays a pivotal role in providing exceptional guest service and ensuring smooth front office operations. Responsibilities encompass a wide range of tasks, including handling guest inquiries, managing check-ins and check-outs, coordinating with other departments, and maintaining accurate records. Below is an outline of the primary duties:

Guest Services and Communication

- a. Greet and welcome guests, ensuring a warm and professional first impression.

- b. Assist guests with check-ins and check-outs, following standard operating procedures.
- c. Reconfirm guest details, including reservation dates, room preferences, and package benefits.
- d. Provide information about hotel facilities, dining options, and local attractions.
- e. Escort guests to their rooms when required, explaining key features and amenities.
- f. Address guest inquiries and requests promptly and courteously, including special arrangements such as wake-up calls, parking registrations, and transportation services.

Reservation and Billing Management

- a. Utilize the HMS system to manage reservations, update guest profiles, and process payments.
- b. Handle billing instructions, deposits, and credit limits to ensure accurate financial transactions.
- c. Process payments using EDC machines (Mandiri, BCA) and digital platforms like AsiaPay.
- d. Generate and manage folios, including Accounts Receivable, third-party, and corrections folios.
- e. Perform transfer records to consolidate payments or adjust accounts as needed.

Data Management and Reporting

- a. Ensure guest profiles are complete and updated, including email addresses, phone numbers, and nationalities.
- b. Generate daily reports such as credit limit, Fans of MO enrolment, and data completion reports.
- c. Create and manage rooming lists for group arrivals to streamline check-in processes.

Coordination with Other Departments

- a. Communicate with housekeeping, engineering, and concierge teams to ensure room readiness and guest satisfaction.

- b. Collaborate with the food and beverage department for restaurant reservations and in-room dining arrangements.
- c. Liaise with security for lost and found procedures and guest safety concerns.
- d. Regularly checking emails and WhatsApp Group for any inquiries.

Additional Responsibilities

- a. Perform role-playing sessions with supervisors to enhance service skills and adhere to LQE standards.
- b. Handle special requests such as early check-ins, late check-outs, and waiting-for-room scenarios.
- c. Assist in providing support as a doorman when needed, including welcoming guests and preparing refreshments.
- d. Promote the Fans of MO program by enrolling guests and explaining associated benefits.
- e. Ensure proper closing procedures, including updating records, cleaning workstations, and submitting reports for approval.

3.4 Challenges Faced

While working at Mandarin Oriental Jakarta as a Front Desk Agent, there are several problems that the writer has encountered, the following are the problems and solutions the writer did during his internship as a trainee at Mandarin Oriental Jakarta.

a. Waiting for Room

As a front desk that has to check in guests, it is not rare to stumble upon a check-in when the room is not ready. Sometimes this could even happen after 2 PM which is our normal check-in time. Although most of the time, the room can be switched with another that is ready, but in the case where the hotel is under a very high occupancy, it is inevitable to not stumble upon a room that is not ready and were unable to be switched due to some reasons. The reasons could be because there is no other room with the same type or preferences that is ready, the room has a special amenity setup inside, etc. This could result in a complaint from the guest due to the room not being ready at 2 PM. In some view cases, this

even happens long after 2 PM, which occur around 4-5 PM due to very high occupancy. From my understanding, this sometimes happened due to our linen par stock being low. A low linen par stock can directly affect room readiness, particularly when it delays the housekeeping process. With insufficient linens, housekeeping staff must wait for used linens to be laundered and returned before they can prepare rooms, pushing cleaning schedules beyond the standard check-in time. This issue is compounded if the laundry department becomes overloaded, causing further delays. Additionally, low stock leads to frequent use of existing linens, accelerating wear and tear, which may reduce available stock further. As a result, rooms may not be ready for guests on time, potentially impacting guest satisfaction and increasing the workload for front office staff who must manage waiting guests.

2. System Issue (Unable to Generate Report)

Although HMS is a comprehensive and reliable hotel management system, it is not without its challenges, as frequent issues and technical troubles can still arise. One of the most commonly encountered problems is the system's inability to generate reports, which can significantly disrupt operations and the role of a front desk agent. Reports are an essential component of daily tasks, as they encompass crucial documents such as folios, closing reports, invoices, bills, registration cards, and other key records required to manage guest stays effectively. When the HMS system fails to generate these reports, the entire check-in and check-out process can be delayed. For instance, during check-out, guests may need an invoice or folio to review their charges before completing payment. This issue sometimes could also happen due to slow WIFI. If the system is unable to generate these documents, it can cause frustration and lead to dissatisfaction, potentially escalating to complaints. Similarly, during check-in, the inability to produce registration cards can hinder the smooth onboarding of guests, creating unnecessary delays. Moreover, the failure to generate reports can disrupt internal workflows, such as the preparation of daily briefings, monitoring of credit limits, and handling of IARs (Internal Action Requests). These tasks rely heavily on accurate and timely data to ensure operations run smoothly and guest requests

are fulfilled promptly. A malfunctioning system can lead to miscommunication between departments, incomplete guest profiles, or errors in billing, all of which can compromise service quality. Frequent technical issues also increase the workload for front desk agents, who must find alternative solutions, such as manually preparing documents or contacting IT support, which consumes valuable time and resources. This not only impacts operational efficiency but also places additional stress on the front desk team, particularly during peak periods when the system's reliability is most critical.

3. Time Management

Time management is a critical skill for a front desk agent, as they must juggle multiple tasks simultaneously while maintaining excellent service quality. One major challenge is balancing the demands of immediate guest interactions with administrative responsibilities. For example, during busy check-in or check-out periods, agents must prioritize attending to guests at the counter while also managing phone inquiries, processing payments, email inquiries, and their mandatory duties. Another issue arises when dealing with unexpected situations, such as last-minute room changes, guest complaints, or system malfunctions. These unplanned disruptions can delay other tasks. Additionally, agents often work under tight deadlines as well as a good time management is a must for every Front Desk Agent. Peak hours, such as early mornings or late afternoons, add to the challenge, as the volume of guests can overwhelm the team, requiring quick decision-making and prioritization to keep operations running smoothly. Poor time management in these situations can lead to errors, delayed services, or dissatisfaction among guests.

4. Understanding Unique Guests

Understanding the unique needs and preferences of each guest is one of the most challenging aspects of being a front desk agent. Every guest has different expectations, personalities, and cultural backgrounds, which require personalized attention and adaptability. Some guests may prioritize efficiency and prefer a quick check-in process, while others might expect a more detailed introduction to the hotel's facilities and services. Additionally, guests may have

unique requests or concerns, such as specific room preferences, dietary restrictions, or assistance with local transportation and recommendations. Front desk agents must quickly grasp and address these needs, often on the spot, while ensuring they maintain a positive and professional gesture. Cultural and language differences can further complicate this challenge. Misunderstandings or miscommunications may arise, requiring patience and excellent communication skills to resolve. Agents must also be aware of cultural sensitivities and adjust their approach accordingly to ensure every guest feels welcomed and valued. The ability to read and respond to a guest's behavior is another layer of complexity. Some guests may openly communicate their needs, while others may expect agents to anticipate and fulfill their expectations without being asked. Balancing all these factors requires a combination of emotional intelligence, active listening, and problem-solving skills. Failing to understand a guest's unique needs can lead to dissatisfaction and complaints, potentially affecting the guest's overall experience and the hotel's reputation. Front desk agents must constantly adapt their approach to provide great service, ensuring that every guest feels seen and cared for, regardless of their individual preferences or uniqueness.

3.5 Problem Solving

The following are the solutions that the writer found to be fitting for the hotel and the trainees to implement to avoid or face the challenges discussed before:

a. Waiting for Room

As a front desk staff member, it is not uncommon to encounter situations where a guest's room is not ready at the time of check-in, even after 2 PM, our standard check-in time. While the usual solution is to switch the guest to another room that is ready, high occupancy levels can make this challenging. Factors such as specific room type or guest preferences, or special amenity setups, may further limit the availability of alternate rooms. In extreme cases, delays may stretch to 4-5 PM due to these constraints. One contributing factor to such delays is often a low linen par stock, which directly impacts the housekeeping process. With

insufficient linens, housekeeping staff must wait for laundered linens to become available, delaying room preparation. This situation can be exacerbated if the laundry department is overloaded, causing a ripple effect that affects guest satisfaction and places additional pressure on the front desk to manage waiting guests. To handle situations where guests are waiting for their rooms (WFR), we first offer a sincere apology to the guest for the delay and provide a brief explanation without overloading them with operational details. Next, we inquire whether the guest would prefer to wait inside the hotel or outside. For guests choosing to wait inside the hotel, several options are provided. Guests without children or teenagers under 17 years old are invited to wait in the club lounge, where they can enjoy complimentary beverages and desserts in a relaxing environment. Families or guests with children are directed to our Cinnamon restaurant, where they can also enjoy complimentary beverages while waiting. Additionally, all guests are welcome to use hotel facilities such as the gym, swimming pool, or steam/sauna to make their wait more comfortable and enjoyable. When the room is ready, we ensure a seamless process for informing the guest. For guests waiting inside the hotel, the room key is delivered directly to their location. If the guest is outside, we promptly notify them via WhatsApp or another preferred contact method, ensuring that they are kept informed and reassured throughout the process. By taking these steps, we aim to mitigate the inconvenience of waiting, maintain guest satisfaction, and uphold the high standards of service expected at our hotel.

b. System Issue (Unable to Generate Report)

To address the issues caused by HMS system failures in generating reports, several solutions can be implemented. First, enhancing IT support and maintaining the system regularly can prevent technical glitches. Upgrading the hotel's server, WIFI, and network infrastructure can also improve reliability, especially during peak periods when demand on the system is highest. Monitoring system usage patterns can help identify peak times when performance issues are more likely to occur, allowing for adjustments in workflows or server capacity. Finally, maintaining strong communication with

the HMS customer service and vendor is crucial. Regularly reporting recurring issues and collaborating on solutions, such as software updates or patches, can improve the system's overall performance. By implementing these measures, the hotel can reduce the impact of HMS failures, ensure smooth operations, and maintain high levels of guest satisfaction.

c. Time Management

To address time management challenges faced by front desk agents, several solutions can be implemented. First, establishing clear task prioritization is crucial; agents should focus on high-impact responsibilities, such as attending to guests at the counter and resolving urgent issues, before moving on to administrative duties like email inquiries or reports. Using a well-organized daily checklist, task list, or notes can also help agents track their tasks and stay on schedule. Implementing team collaboration and delegation is another effective approach, during peak hours, responsibilities can be distributed among team members to ensure all duties are managed efficiently. Proper training in multitasking and time management skills is essential to help agents handle unexpected situations, such as guest complaints or system malfunctions, without compromising their workflow. Additionally, utilizing HMS effectively can streamline tasks like room assignments, payments, and check-in/check-out processes, reducing manual effort and saving time. Scheduling staff strategically to match peak hours ensures there is sufficient coverage during high-traffic periods, minimizing unhandled issues, and guest wait times. Finally, regular briefings and open communication within the front office team help keep everyone informed and prepared for the day's priorities. By implementing these strategies, front desk agents can better manage their time, deliver consistent service quality, and enhance the overall guest experience.

d. Understanding Unique Guests

To effectively address the challenge of understanding and meeting each guest's unique needs, front desk agents should focus on developing strong interpersonal and problem-solving skills. Training programs on cultural awareness, active listening, and emotional intelligence can help agents better recognize and adapt

to the diverse expectations of guests. Clear and empathetic communication is crucial, especially when handling unique requests or addressing potential misunderstandings due to cultural or language differences. Utilizing tools like detailed guest profiles in the hotel management system (HMS) can provide valuable insights into past preferences, enabling agents to anticipate needs proactively. Additionally, front desk teams should collaborate closely with other departments, such as housekeeping and food and beverage, to fulfill guest requests efficiently. Providing agents with access to translation tools or basic language training can also bridge communication gaps with international guests. By consistently adapting their approach and leveraging available resources, front desk agents can deliver personalized service that enhances guest satisfaction and strengthens the hotel's reputation.

