

Basic Rooms Divisions

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Foreword



Ms. Honey Tyagi is a dynamic, energetic and efficient faculty in AISSMS College of Hotel Management and Catering Technology. Her quest for knowledge, eye for detail, curiosity and questioning has helped her as a teaching professional earn much appreciation from students and peer alike.

Dr. Arati Prabhu was teaching faculty with us and now is working for Department of Management Sciences (PUMBA), SPPU. Her relentless quest to learn and explore new avenues is what I find striking. She continues to remain a team member and wish both of them success for this book. Best wishes for achieving this milestone, and wishing many more your way.

To the readers, studying various hospitality courses, I suggest you refer, read, digest and live books which help you grow as individuals and professionals. Knowledge, which is the basis for practical application, is invaluable. It is the foundation for success with its limitless possibilities.

Students, you are the leaders of tomorrow. Learn and know what there is to learn and know. Utilise all resources and opportunities to develop and grow. This will truly help you to come in your own so you can bring the change and become industry leaders. I sign off this thought quoting Pablo Picasso, “Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist”.

Dr. Sonali Jadhav

Principal
AISSMS College of HMCT



Foreword



I am glad to note that Ms. Honey Tyagi and Dr. Arati Prabhu have successfully completed their very first book as authors. My heartiest congratulations to both! I have known them, and also worked with them on projects and assignments. Being from the industry, working with academicians on various subjects and aspects has been a novel experience. I for one believe that industry and academia working together will bring about developing talent.

As I went through this book, I am happy to share a few observations. It is a well structured book. It also is presented in a straight forward manner for ease of use of the focused audience. What especially appeals to me is the generous use of visuals in the form of real-time pictures. Also, I appreciate the authors' attempt to bridge the old way of operations with the new.

I conclude by wishing the best for circulation of this book with more editions in the future. Also assure continued support for operations inputs from industry perspective as needed.

Mr. Yogesh Deshmukh

Housekeeping Manager
Hyatt Regency, Pune



Preface

Hospitality or hotel industry as it is commonly known is an integral part of the vibrant and dynamic tourism sector. Hotel comprises of various departments based on its functions, and Rooms Division Department is one of the core departments which contributes maximum to the revenue and profitability of a hotel organisation.

Accommodations Operations or Rooms Division comprises of two distinct departments that work closely in preparing the product and making it available or sale – Rooms. Housekeeping on one hand is responsible for cleanliness, upkeep and aesthetics of guest rooms and other guest areas. Whereas, Front Office is responsible for timely and optimal sale of rooms. The book also incorporates modules on Facilities Management which is a specialised term for managing premises for operational and maintenance departments. This broadens the scope of housekeeping both in terms of functions and organisations. India has witnessed an unprecedented growth in the number of hotels, retail stores, malls, office complexes, residential complexes, with this up and coming facilities management sector and this adds to the timeliness of this book.

This book is a recommended text book for the course BBA in Hospitality and Facilities Management (HFM), and other hospitality courses will also find it useful. It is a handy book which integrates theoretical and practical components. Since it is for beginners studying hospitality course(s), the authors have especially taken care to keep the language simple, use figures and formats wherever possible.

Dr. Arati Prabhu
Ms. Honey Tyagi



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Introduction to Housekeeping

Housekeeping may be defined as condition of providing a sparkling clean, hygienic, comfortable, safe, secure and aesthetically appealing environment. Housekeeping has a very significant role to play in the cleanliness and upkeep of the establishment, and is a continuous operational department. It is non-revenue producing operational area, that helps prepare, ready, maintain and upkeep the prime product of hotels that is rooms. Apart from rooms, public areas and the façade is also maintained and taken care by Housekeeping department. The Executive Housekeeper is at the helm of the department and ensures that daily and periodic operations are met efficiently by the housekeeping personnel. The housekeeping staff members are often referred as the eyes and ears of the management. Their vigilance and eye for detail enables them to be in the know of the goings on in the guest room, without intruding into the privacy of the guests. As the guest enters the premise of a hotel, his first impression is made by the warmth in service. As part of the service, the most credible component is the physical evidence. This comprises of the physical features such as landscape, furniture, fittings, equipment, façade etc. It also includes ambient features like lighting, colours, artifacts etc. Clean and well-maintained surroundings instantly create a positive impression and attract the guest. On the other hand, ill maintained, dirty and unhygienic surrounding creates not only a bad impression, but also risks losing the guest and business forever. This way the guest forms an instantaneous impression when he first walks into the lobby of the hotel, which is either enhanced or diminished as he moves from the front office to the elevator and then down the corridor towards the room i.e. approaching with either mild anticipation or otherwise. In a hotel, guest rooms are considered to be the heart of the hotel. Their décor is appropriate, fragrance, cleanliness, need to be appealing to the guest in order retain him forever. It is a task that requires diligent and continuous efforts on part of the housekeeping team to produce such results. In order to achieve the same, employees are hand-picked and trained so as to achieve the maximum output. Not only that, the Executive Housekeeper also is in constant touch with the market, always on the look-out to source new products that are cost saving, require minimum effort and maximise desired outcome of cleanliness.

As is understood, no hotel wants to room a guest in an unclean room. It is thus important that front office department communicates and provides real-time information to housekeeping with to meet the anticipated arrivals of the day. The head of the housekeeping department is involved in the planning and management of not just day-to-day operations of the department, but also

keenly anticipates ways of continually improving the systems and procedures. And it is not only guest rooms and guest areas, the Housekeeping also undertakes the responsibility of cleanliness of all the ancillary areas as well. Cleanliness is important for health and also for well being.

It is a fact that a resident guest in a hotel spends most time in his room than in any other part of the hotel. This is the prime reason why in the room and in the hotel surrounding should be clean and up to date. In fact, the bathroom in particular is considered to be the most sensitive place. Should it be even a bit short of desired standard of hygiene and cleanliness, it is not a lost not acceptable at all. Apart from the bath area, the room in general also needs to be well taken care of. The décor and maintenance and general good order of the room creates favourable impression and a welcome feeling of a home away from home for the guest. Room amenities and supplies, stock and quality of the same also show that the hotel is considerate towards the guests' stay and comfort. Services and facilities like mini bar, laundry etc. also add value to the quality stay of the guests. In case of hotels, the major contribution of revenue is from rooms. A room is a highly perishable product and a room unsold for a night is revenue lost forever. Keeping this in mind, readiness and cleanliness of rooms is very important, as they can be saleable when not occupied. Turning rooms over and selling them optimally is the ultimate aim of the rooms division department. Apart from residential guests, many local guests also visit the hotel. They may visit the lobby to meet someone, an F&B outlet or banquet perhaps. During their visit, they also notice and make impressions about the hotel in their minds. From the cleanliness And upkeep of the public areas such as the lobby, restaurant, toilets. Not only that, other forms of physical evidence like cleanliness of the staff uniform for example, guests judge the overall services of the hotel and make positive. Thus it may be said that housekeeping is responsible for overall cleanliness of the organisation and helps the other departments to get more business and earn profit. Housekeeping is thus a large contributor to the profit of the establishment and plays a crucial role as an individual department.

Based on the above discussion, it may now understood that owing the varied functions spanning from small to big, housekeeping operations are important to an organisation.

The following points enumerate the importance of the department:

- It undertakes the cleanliness and upkeep of the guest areas such as rooms and public areas. These areas are for prime consumption of guests and help create a favourable impression, positive impression, pleasant stay and repeat business.
- Cleanliness is the most basic and principle factor for health and well being. It is not possible for one to feel at ease and comfortable in an environment which is not clean and in good ordered.
- The practice of hygiene in cleaning tasks is important. Use of unclean and unhygienic methods of cleaning is strictly not acceptable. Hygiene should always be present in the all operations of housekeeping.
- A hotel provides the accommodation to the guests and housekeeping ensures clean and pleasant rooms to stay in. A guest spends most of his time in the room, than in any other part of the hotel. If he is not comfortable in the room and its surroundings, if he is not

satisfied by the levels of cleanliness and upkeep, it makes him lose confidence in the hotel and change his stay to another hotel with a neater and professional setting.

- The linen which comprises on bath and bed linen in rooms should also be of superior quality. It should also be clean and hygienically maintained, as the guest is going to use it. Dirty, unkept and ill-maintained linen is unforgiving and most irreversibly damaging. Similarly, the pillows and mattress also need to be checked prior to letting out the room to another guest.
- Housekeeping also provides a second service if so needed and requested by the guest.
- There are also other services that are provided by housekeeping. These are laundry, dry cleaning, pressing, shoe polishing, mini bar, etc.
- Since maximum amount of revenue is garnered from sale of rooms, stress is on maintenance on room and other guest areas.
- Cleanliness is all about health, which in turn is happiness in lives and therefore of paramount importance and hence cannot be compromised in our personal and / or professional settings.
- Decision on interiors, renovation and refurbishment.
- Handling lost and found articles, ensure safekeeping and return to the rightful owner.
- Assist in recruitment, training and control of staff.
- Selection of companies to contract for specialised tasks like pest control and co-ordinate with contractual staff.
- Maintenance and updation of documents and records for smooth functioning and audit.

Functions of Housekeeping Department

Housekeeping department's main functions involve activities that engage in providing clean, well-maintained and aesthetic upkeep of the establishment. Following are a few points that explain the functions of housekeeping department:

- Housekeeping department provides clean and hygienic environment in a hotel. This is key to making guests feel comfortable during their stay.
- The department also is responsible in making the guest rooms on a daily basis, which makes them livable and also ensures their good conditions over a period of time.
- Housekeeping department also takes care of cleanliness of public areas, areas that are accessed by the guests. These are also called as guests areas and include lobby, corridors, guest room floors, gymnasium, restaurants, banquets, porche, landscape etc.
- The department is also responsible for care, upkeep and maintenance of artifacts, fittings, furniture and fittings across all guest rooms and public areas.
- Housekeeping department also offers facilities for guests during stay. These include laundry, pressing, dry cleaning, mini bar, safe lockers and shoe polishing facilities for the guests.

- Safety of guests and security of their belongings is also the duty and responsibility of housekeeping department.

Co-ordination of Housekeeping with other Departments of the Hotel

A hotel comprises of a number of areas, based on their functions. Broadly, the departments may be classified on the basis of contact with guests as: Front of the House Departments (FoH). These departments closely interact with the guests. These are located in guest areas and include departments such as Front Office, F&B Service (which are the major revenue producing departments) and Sales. These comprise guest encounters and have a direct impact through their interactions. These departments are the face of the hotel and provide the human contact and touch. Contrary to these, there are departments that are Back of the House (BoH) which do not interact with guests on a regular basis, and are not as invisible to the eyes of the guests. But these are felt and experienced by guests and create impressions. These departments help in readying the core hotel products of lodging and boarding, and include Housekeeping and Kitchens. In addition to these, there are allied or auxiliary areas which further help in indirectly cater to internal and external guests of the hotel. These are: Maintenance, Kitchen Stewarding, Purchase & Stores, Human Resources.

As so many departments work towards a single goal of maximising revenues and guest delight, it is important to co-ordinate the operations of these departments. Housekeeping is like the centre of circle of a wheel which maintains close contact and works directly or indirectly with all the major departments of hotel.

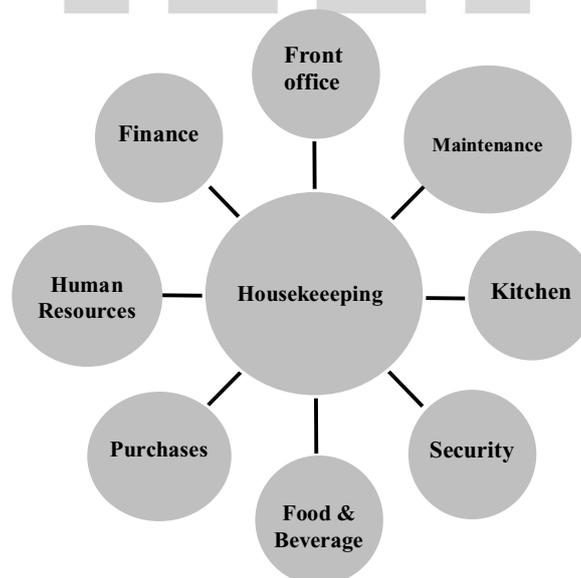


Fig. 1.1

Housekeeping Co-ordination with Front Office

Both Housekeeping and Front Office together operate as Rooms Division Department. They engage their operations in selling the main product of hotels which are guest rooms. Housekeeping prepares the rooms and makes them ready for sale, and Front Office sells the rooms. Keeping this in mind, it may be understood that for both the said departments work closely with one another. Until and unless a close relationship between the two is not maintained, it can be quite challenging for front office to sell rooms. The following points enumerate the importance of close liaising between the two departments.

- To enable seamless rooming of guests, housekeeping and front office must continuously inform each other of changes in a room's status. Real-time knowledge and update of status of rooms – whether occupied, vacant, departure, out of order (OOO), under repair, is essential for efficient room management.
- Front office public areas like lobby, porch etc. need to be cleaned. Co-ordination on the same is needed.
- Utmost and real-time exchange of information is needed between these two departments in tallying and updating occupancy figures. This aids to forecast occupancy for the coming period, which in turns and helps plan budget, stocks, staffing and operations accordingly.
- There should be coordination to record the daily room report and housekeeping discrepancy report.
- The co-ordination also helps to forecast demand, and plan for renovations, refurbishments and spring cleaning during times of low occupancy. This helps preventing loss of revenue and also ongoing upkeep of the room product.

Housekeeping and Front Office Departments also coordinate with each other for other important information which requires special attention like:

- **VIPs in House:** This information is given by Front Office to Housekeeping Department. This helps to place VIP amenities and provide extra special service with a knowledge that the guest staying is an important person.
- **Groups in House:** The Front Office provides Housekeeping with the rooming list of the group. It contains information about the group – names, room numbers, and remarks. It helps the housekeeping to service the group better. The rooming list is provided prior to the group's arrival. As the group movement is at the same time, in terms of arrival and departure, sightseeing and meals. Their rooms are needed to be readied together keeping in mind their strict time parameters. Group rooming list also enables Housekeeping department to organise its work and cater to the groups' needs efficiently.
- **Crews in House:** There are times that crew movement of arrival and departures overlap. During such circumstances, it is the allotted rooms need to be cleaned within a short period of time. Crews, owing to the nature and timing of their work, do not have the patience to wait for rooms. Thus, owing to these reasons there should be effective seamless coordination between front office and housekeeping.

- **Florals:** Florals are to be placed in rooms based on the VIP status of the guest. Sometimes, based on the occasion or person, Front Office might make special requests for flower arrangements or bouquets. These need to be provided by Housekeeping department.
- Apart from the above, the two departments communicate to ensure Front Office staff gets clean and crisp uniforms.

Housekeeping Co-ordination with Maintenance

One of the most important functions of housekeeping department is the upkeep and maintenance of the hotel. Also, to ensure safe and secure surrounding by ensuring repairs and done on time and going a step ahead, ensuring preventive maintenance for working order of assets for their longevity and also keeping in mind the safety of the guests, which is paramount. Hence a close co-ordination with the engineering department is essential.

- The housekeeping depends on maintenance department to keep things in working and desired order.
- When housekeeping staff is working on floors, rooms and public areas, they do come faulty machinery, plumbing, electrical issues, carpentry jobs, that need to be attended to immediately before it escalates into something bigger.
- A need for urgent repairs is reported to maintenance over telephone and these requests are usually taken into action immediately.
- Maintenance jobs are done under various heads. These are: Electrical work: air conditioning and heating; lights and lamps not working; fused bulbs, malfunctioning plugs and plug points; faulty geysers, short circuits; trouble with refrigerators and minibar – all fall under this category.
- Boiler work: maintained to ensure uninterrupted supply of hot water to guestrooms.
Mechanical work: it includes repair or replacement of faulty machine and equipment, such as vacuum cleaners, ice-cube machines etc.
- Plumbing work: this entails fixing faulty taps and faucets, showers, drainage systems, etc.
- Carpentry work: broken or malfunctioning furniture, closets and cupboards and other woodwork are all included in this.

Housekeeping Co-ordination with F and B Service

Housekeeping liaises with F&B service points of sale outlets essentially for cleaning, pest control, restaurant linen and uniforms. Also, they talk to each other for floor clearances. The following points explain the co-ordination between the two departments.

- The coordination of housekeeping and restaurants / banquet is mainly concerned with providing of restaurant linen comprising table cloths, slip cloths, serviettes, runners, frills and other linen items used to outfit restaurant tables.
- Another point of interaction is issue and exchange of uniform for F&B service staff.

- Restaurant and linen room liaise closely for linen exchange – clean against soiled, at specified timings.
- There is also coordination to maintain minibar and F&B amenities in guest rooms.
- The housekeeping should be informed in advance about any banquet function, so that housekeeping can provide necessary linen and cleaning services.
- Flower decorations for banquets and restaurants are also provided by housekeeping.
- The coordination between the two departments becomes particularly necessary in clearance of trays from guest corridors. The room service or In-room dining departments of F&B Service clears trays post guest has consumed the food. The trays are often cleared from rooms by housekeeping. Many times guests leave the trays outside their rooms. Such clearance is done from guest rooms/corridors by housekeeping to back area floor pantry. From here room service is called to clear them. As much as possible room service clears the trays on time from the guest rooms itself.
- In case of many hotels, housekeeping also is responsible to carry out pest control in restaurants and stores attached to them. Special cleaning of these areas call for coordination with the housekeeping department.

Housekeeping Co-ordination with Kitchen

As far as kitchen is concerned, housekeeping provides comprehensive and periodic pest control in order to ensure the area is free from pests, insects and rodents. Additionally, it also provides uniforms.

Housekeeping Co-ordination with Security

The guest room is a private place and hotels commits to ensure the privacy and security of residential guests. However, there are times when guest sometimes take undue advantage of this privacy. They may perform illegal activities inside the rooms. In such cases, housekeeping personnel have to be alert to such goings on, and promptly inform the security to take appropriate action.

- In case the housekeeping personnel come across any suspicious person(s) or movement(s), they should immediately inform the security department. Housekeeping on floor and public areas should be alert at all times.
- The security department conducts essential training sessions such as handling emergency situations, fire fighting, self defense etc. They also conduct mock fire drills. Housekeeping should co-operate and support by means of participation.

Housekeeping Co-ordination with Purchase

The purchase department assists housekeeping in procuring and purchasing various items used in housekeeping department. These include guest supplies, room amenities, various cleaning agents, linen, stationery and equipment. Housekeeping requests for its requirement to purchase by means of advance notice in the form of a purchase requisition.

Housekeeping Co-ordination with Human Resource Development

Housekeeping co-ordinates with the personnel department for selection, recruitment, training, promotion, transfers, career development, statutory and various employee welfare activities.

Housekeeping coordinates with the human resource department for following reasons:

- Acquisition: human resource planning, recruitment, selection and induction/socialisation.
- Maintenance: compensation management e.g. pay/salary, wages, over time, medical treatment etc.
- Motivation: performance appraisal system, reward management system and training and development.

Housekeeping Co-ordination with Finance

Accounting department collaborate with housekeeping for wages. These are tallied based on HR and departmental feedback and attendance records. Petty cash, settlements, income tax and returns are also helped out with by the accounts and finance section.

Guest Room (Types and Facilities)

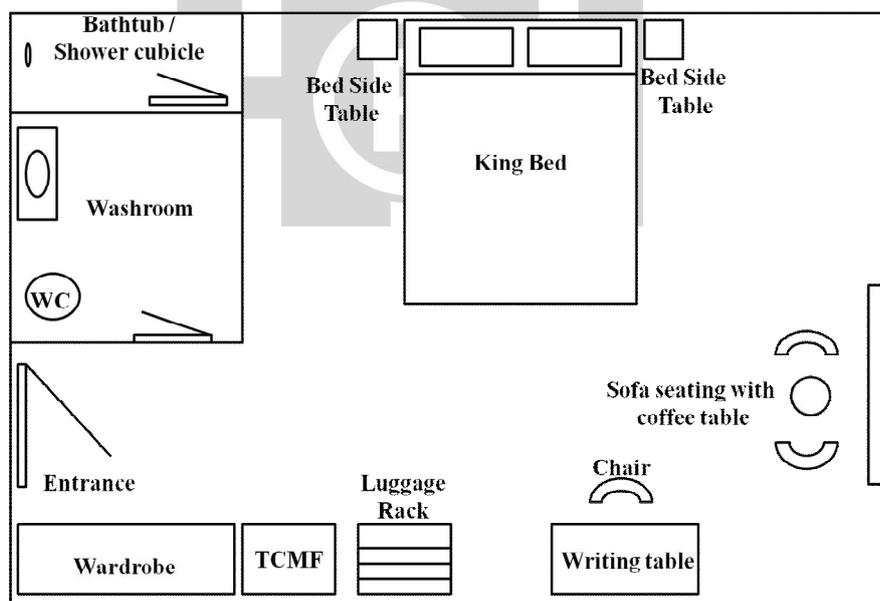


Fig. 1.2 : Sample Layout of a Guest Room

Knowledge of Rooms

The lodging product, meaning the room product is the core product of hotels. It contributes close to a substantial 70% of the total revenue for hotels. The term 'sale' of room means renting of the room at a predetermined cost and for duration of 24 hours. A room that is unsold on a particular day loses its opportunity to earn revenue for that day. Owing to this reason, rooms are

referred to as highly perishable commodities. The loss of an opportunity to sell a room may also arise due to inefficiency of housekeeping in readying a room when required. This may be addressed and minimised by close and real time communication between front office and housekeeping, efficient way of converting rooms by housekeeping and customer engagement by front office.

A hotel room is the place of residence for the visiting guest for the duration of his stay. It is not home, but success of a guest room is when it becomes a home away from home for the guest. A guest room means a lot of things for the guest, of these – the most important is it means comfort, security, privacy, convenience, cleanliness and hygiene.

Importantly, a guest room is very **personal** to the guest. When the room becomes succeeds in providing the personal experience, a guest is satisfied and keeps coming back. This is the reason why the guest demands the highest standards suiting his requirement, and these he does not compromise on. Room status may vary from being occupied (let), vacated (guest has departed) or vacant (not occupied). The amount of cleaning given to each room will vary based on its status. All rooms require a comfortable, clean and presentable appearance, so the work that is to be done in an occupied room will be as much to maintain this standard and image. In case of a vacated room, all signs of the previous guest have to be removed and the room is made ready for the new arrival. A vacant room is one that has not been occupied since the last clean.

Different Types of Rooms

There are many different types of guest rooms. These are also called as categories of rooms. A hotel might have various room types. Each type of room has distinct features and caters to specific needs of guests. On the basis of need of the guest, a certain room type may be availed. This adds more comfort during the stay, thereby increasing satisfaction.

Single Room: A room that is meant for single occupant and is characterised with one single bed with two side tables on either side of the bed. It is a standard room having a dressing-cum-writing table.

Double Room: A double room is the one which has a double bed (King or Queen) and is meant for two people, mostly a couple. But, it may also be sold on single occupancy. It is a standard room having a dressing-cum-writing table.

Twin Room: A twin room is the one which has two single beds and is meant for two occupants. It is suggested when the two guests are comfortable sharing a room, but not comfortable sharing beds. It is thus suitable for two colleagues, or siblings etc. Such rooms have only one bed side table between the two beds, and also have a dressing-cum-writing table.

Triple Room: A triple room is the one is meant for three occupants. It has two or more beds (three single beds or one double and one single bed).

Quad Room: A triple room is the one is meant for four occupants. It has two or more beds (two double beds or one double and two single beds or four single beds).

Double Double: A room which is meant for four persons and has two double beds. Also known as the Twin Double Family Room.

Hollywood Twin: A room with two single beds, but with one single headboard meant for two people. If need arises the two beds can be bridged together to make it appear as a double room.

Studio Room: A studio refers to a parlour set up with a studio bed which acts as a sofa during the day and can be converted to a bed during the night.

Parlour: A parlour room comprises a sitting room or a living room, which is not used as a bedroom. In addition, guest may sit and be entertained in the parlour. It also has the bed within the same room itself.

Interconnecting Rooms: Two rooms next to each other, having a common wall and an interconnecting door between them that allows entry from one room to another, without having to go into the corridor. The interconnecting doors can be opened when needed or locked as per the guest requirement.

Adjoining Rooms: Two rooms next to each other, having a common wall, but do not have an interconnecting door between them.

Adjacent Roms: Two rooms that are close to each other, but may not necessarily be adjoining. They might also be across the corridor.

Suite

Suite is a set of rooms consisting of a parlour or sitting area with one or more bed rooms, and may also have kitchenette facility. It is more opulent, spacious and luxurious and is marked with more facilities than a standard room and thus is more expensive. The rate for suite is much higher because:

- (a) The size of the rooms is larger, more comforting and has more privacy.
- (b) It has more facilities like an extra television, a mini fridge, mini bar, etc.
- (c) Particular décor and colour scheme to suit the theme of the suite.
- (d) Large and elaborate furniture.
- (e) It has separate sitting and bedding arrangements.

Penthouse Suite

A penthouse suite is a set of rooms which are located on the top-most floor of the building and characterised with terrace or balcony with a view. It has at least one room open to the sky.

Duplex Room: A duplex refers to set of rooms that are located at different levels. These rooms are connected by an internal staircase. Generally, the parlour is at the lower level and the bedrooms are at the upper level.

Executive Room: This is a larger bedroom with a sitting area provided with chairs and usually a sofa. There is a dressing table as well as a writing table. Newspaper and other business related magazines are also provided.

Efficiency Room: A room that has some sort of kitchen facilities and is often found in motels and residential hotels.

Cabana: Formally a room that is used for changing purpose is called a cabana. It is a room away from the main building and has all basic facilities. Often situated next to a swimming pool area. The décor would not be too luxurious and is meant more as a wash and change when at the pool/beach. Rates are comparatively less and are also less luxuriously appointed.

Sico Room: It is a type of room which has a Murphy bed. A Murphy bed folds up against the wall, giving the impression of a cabinet, wall, shelf or a wardrobe. These may be converted into beds by pulling them down at night. These save space when extra bed is not needed, more free and aesthetic living area by the day and save the inconvenience and heavy task of transporting bed in and out of the room.

All the above mentioned rooms may be furnished with extra roll-away cots on demand of the guest, provided at an extra charge. All rooms normally have attached bathrooms. Exceptions would be in hostels where common bathrooms per floor are more economical for the guest and management for the low charges they levy on rooms.

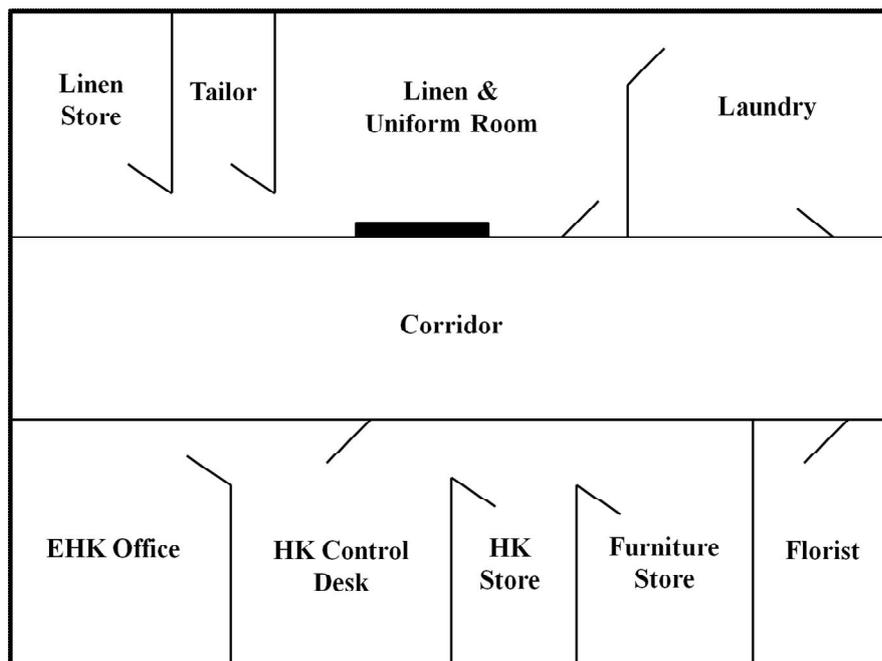


Fig. 1.3 : Layout of Housekeeping Department

The housekeeping department comprises of smaller or sub-departments. The differentiation is on the basis of specialisation of work. These sub-departments are called as **sections** of Housekeeping. The layout refers to the location map of the various sections of housekeeping, and is based on flow of movement, accessibility and ease of use. It is the physical demarcation of sections of the department. A well-planned layout enables smooth functioning of the department and is one of the chief decisions while planning and setting up the hotel establishment. The layout

and area attributed to each section is based on the size of the hotel, but in practicality is also influenced by space restrictions.

Below mentioned are the factors that are taken into account when allocating area and layout planning:

- Total number of guest rooms
- Total number of restaurants and banquets
- Manpower and staff strength
- Anticipated volume of business
- Number of contractual jobs
- Flow of traffic (people and equipment)

The Housekeeping Department constitutes of the following distinct sections:

- **Executive Housekeeper's Office:** The administrative work of the department is carried out here.
- **Control Desk:** It is accessible and operational 24 hours a day. The housekeeping staff reports here at the start and end of the shift. There are notice boards, storage shelves, registers, etc. It is the nerve-centre of the department. The Lost and Found cupboard, and key-hanger matrix is also housed as part of the control room.
- **Housekeeping Stores:** It is the place that stores the cleaning equipment and agents, and guest supplies. It is a secure area, well stocked, maintained and monitored.
- **Laundry:** Washing, ironing, dry cleaning, stain removal, folding of linen and staff uniform takes place here.
- **Florists or Flower Room:** It is an air-conditioned room with worktables, sink and water supply, cupboards to store vases and stones and a counter. All flower arrangement required in the hotel rooms, restaurant, banquets, public areas are dispensed from here.
- **Linen Room:** All the linen used in the hotel, comprising of bed, bath and restaurant linen, is stocked in the linen room. A par stock is pre-determined and maintained. Also, fresh linen is exchanged against fresh linen, alongwith the records.
- **Uniform Room:** The staff uniforms are collected, stored and distributed from the uniform room. It has a window/exchange shelf that helps employees to exchange soiled against new. Also nowadays, mechanised conveyor belts are used ease in uniform storing and issuing.
- **Tailor/Sewing Room:** Here, stitching and repairing of linen and uniforms takes place.
- **Floor Pantry/Maid's Service Room:** It is a pantry located on the guest floor back area. It is stocked with supplies that may be required on the floor while cleaning.

Attributes of Housekeeping Staff

Hotel industry is part of the service industry where personality and projection of the same enhances the image of the organisation and adds to the quality of service. Keeping in mind the

operational role of housekeeping personnel, and the guest contact they have especially on floors and public areas, there are certain qualities, that housekeeping staff should possess:

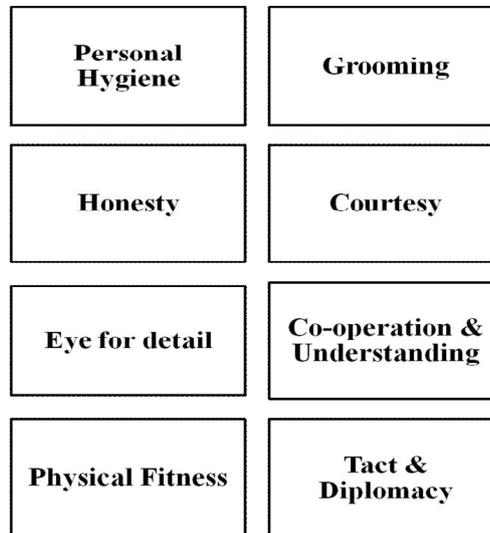


Fig. 1.4 : Attributes of Housekeeping Staff

Personal Hygiene

Grooming begins with personal hygiene. It is how clean and odour-free and well maintained a person is. It includes daily shower, maintenance of ones teeth, nails, feet. Housekeeping staff must always have clean hair, clean and trimmed finger nails, clean hands and feet. Before start of the shift they should ensure that there is no body and/or oral odour. If present, this can be very off-putting and creates a bad impression on guest. Since housekeeping staff closely handles linen, does the bed and various such activities that come in contact with the guest, the staffs' hygiene means hygiene of the guest service and is mandatory. In case a housekeeping personnel is suffering from an illness/infection, he/she must report the same to the hotel doctor. Especially in case of infectious diseases in order to eliminate any chances of spreading the germs. Carelessness in this regard may lead to assault on guest safety.

Grooming

Housekeeping is mostly a back of the house job, but room attendants and public area staff does come in guest contact. There might not be service encounters, but incorporates guest interactions. During such interactions, they must be well groomed. For ladies, well kept hair away from the face, light make up, minimal jewelry is desired. Men should not have facial hair, short hair and no side burns. No or minimal jewelry. For all in general, clean and crisp uniform, avoidance of heavy perfume and well maintained footwear is a must.

Honesty

This is one of the most important quality that housekeeping staff must possess. Especially those who have access to the guest room e.g. room attendant or house-man or supervisors must be

honest and sincere. Guests often have their belongings in the room, and there are chances an attendant might get tempted to smuggle or take it. In fact, there are times that a guest may forget about a particular belonging or might leave it by mistake on checkout. These may be a valuable, invaluable, or any type of guest belonging. But it is of course personal quality and sense of discipline that checks an attendant's temptation of pilfering any guest belonging. Any item found this way should be informed and returned to the rightful owner. To recognise such honesty on part of housekeeping staff, it is a recommended practice of the management to reward the honest staff so as to motivate to win a name and fame for themselves and the establishment.

Courtesy

Room/Public area attendants and supervisors often come in contact with the guests, especially at times and places (like on the guest room floor) where there is no one else that the guest can turn for help. During such times and situations, all guest needs, queries and complaints must be handled by housekeeping staff with utmost politeness and charm. Especially complains or requests must be listened and resolved with patience and tact. Staff should restrict their temper even if the guest is being unreasonable or stubborn. Housekeeping should always be polite and courteous in their communication with guests.

Eye for Detail

This is a crucial quality that is possessed and further honed by many a housekeepers. This calls for a keen eye which cannot only spot, but also own and correct any unwanted or undesired defect in the surrounding. It includes an appreciative and critical outlook, especially regarding matters of cleanliness and aesthetics.

Co-operation and Understanding

It is one of the key aspects of good management and is required to operate inter and intra departmental operations in a smooth and establishments smoothly and efficiently. It also leads to harmony and friendly atmosphere which is desired in a workplace and leads to positivity and high morale among employees.

Physical Fitness

Most of the housekeeping jobs are physically demanding, and at times straining as well. Especially, in the long run, it may take its toll on the body if not fit and healthy. Maintenance of a healthy lifestyle helps to not only doing the job efficiently, but also in maintaining own physical fitness which is most invaluable.

Tact and Diplomacy

There may be times that guests might request or outrightly do things that are not acceptable as per the rules, standards or policies of the hotel. During such times, housekeeping staff must be tactful yet firm in communicating the same. They need to be polite, and not rude. Yet they should

be able to convey such decisions without hurting or offending the guests. This calls for tactful and diplomatic approach in communication.

Job Description and Job Specification

Job Description and Job Specification refer to two separate and distinct documents. These are made and maintained in Human Resource Department.

A Job Description (JD) and Job Specification (JS) is made for all departments and all positions.

Job Description: The document describes the job, that is, the various duties and tasks that a particular job role entails. It is a detailed format which mentions:

- Job title, Department and organisation, Immediate supervisor, Subordinates directly supervised, Shifts and Hours of work, Objective of the job position, Scope of work, Basic duties, Additional duties.
- The advantages of JD are: It provides employees, especially new ones with clarity in role and duties, basis for assessing performance, legal document in case of disputes, co-ordination between superior and subordinate, ownership to accomplish work tasks.

Job Specification: This is a document which entails the qualities, traits, attributes, qualifications and required in an individual in order to perform a particular job. It includes the following:

- Educational Qualifications, Professional qualifications, Equipment skills, Experience, Age specifications, Physical, Mental, Emotional attributes, Personality, Language skills and any other special requirements.
- The advantage is that it helps to select the right candidate for the job. It gives clarity to the employer and also the prospective employee about the desirables a person needs to possess in order to qualify for a job and be able to perform duties as per the job description.

Activity: Prepare a Job Description and a Job Specification for any one position in Basic Room Division Department.

Duties and Responsibilities of All Housekeeping Staff

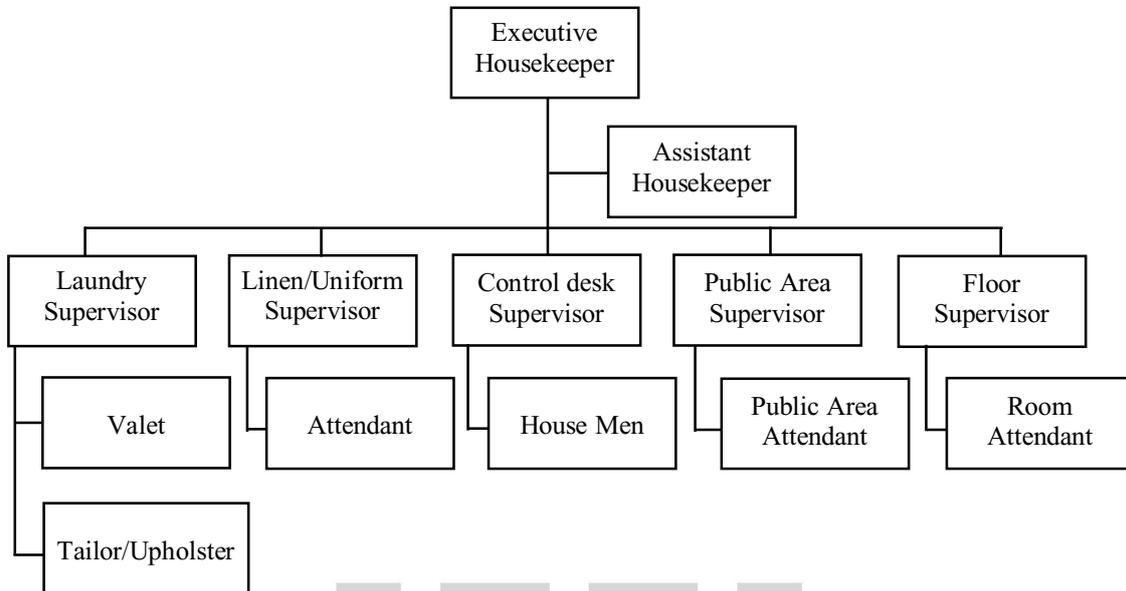


Fig 1.5 : Organisation Chart of Housekeeping Department

Executive Housekeeper

The Executive Housekeeper is the head of the housekeeping department. In a few hotels, the title may also be called as Housekeeping Manager. It refers to a role which heads the housekeeping team and reports to the General Manager/Resident Manager/Rooms Division Manager of the hotel, as might be the case. The working of the Executive Housekeeper is mainly administrative, ensuring all is working as per predetermined standards. Nowadays, special focus is also on quality, costs, environment sustainable operations which has added a dimension to the profile of this position. Planning and monitoring implemented plans, and control thereafter is the key authority and responsibility. Contracting, staffing and procurement are also important elements of the job profile.

The duties of an Executive Housekeeper are enumerated as below:

- Planning, organising, directing, coordinating and controlling work of the staff.
- Selection and recruitment of new staff.
- Induction, training, cross training, refresher training and development of staff.
- Dismissal of staff when they are found unsatisfactory.
- On spot checks and supervision (a spot check refers to a surprise check which keeps staff on toes and deters compromising with standards).
- Since he forms a link between the management and the staff, he is expected to solve staff grievances and pass on management orders.
- Decisions pertaining rooms to taken for special/spring cleaning/renovation/refurbishment, etc.

- Decisions on the type of fittings, furniture, décor, upholstery, soft furnishings, linen, uniforms, taken in conjunction with the general manager.
- Final authority for the requisitions for procurement of guest amenities and supplies, cleaning supplies, cleaning equipment, etc.
- Preparation of annual housekeeping budget for approval by management.
- Formulation of rules and regulations for staff and adherence of the same.
- Maintenance of contract staff records, and also for those who work on daily wages.

Deputy Housekeeper

The Deputy Housekeeper is the second in command in housekeeping department. The position is the same as Assistant Housekeeper. But in case of larger hotels, an Assistant Housekeeper may report to the Deputy Housekeeper. In the absence of the Executive Housekeeper, the Deputy Housekeeper takes the role of the head of the department. At other times, the position assists the head in the operations and guiding the team in meeting the departmental goals.

The duties of the Deputy Housekeeper include the following:

- Takes over the role of the Executive Housekeeper in his / her absence.
- Oversees the work allocation of staff.
- Preparation of duty roster of housekeeping staff and re-scheduling them in case of absenteeism or emergency.
- Maintenance of stock records.
- In-charge of the lost and found section.
- Ensures and check staff for grooming and decorum, settles disputes and complaints.

Floor Supervisor

The Floor Supervisor, as the title suggests, is responsible for cleaning of guest rooms on the floors. The final responsibility of the condition and timeliness of guest rooms preparation rests with them. Reports to the Assistant/Deputy Housekeeper. Allocation of attendants and issuance of section/floor keys is undertaken by the floor supervisor.

The duties of Housekeeping Supervisor are as follows:

- Inspection of each room completed by the room attendant as per the specific room check list and ensures that standards of the hotel are met.
- Issuance of section/floor keys to the floor attendants.
- Checks and maintains par stocks of linen, guest supplies and cleaning supplies, cleaning equipment, etc. specifically on his/her floor and requisites for the required amount from the stores after the authorisation of the executive housekeeper.
- Checks day-to-day grooming, punctuality and discipline of the staff.

- Provides assistance to guests in case of information, help, emergency or any medical support.
- Co-ordination with the desk supervisor and release of rooms ready for sale and undertakes departure rooms for cleaning. Prompt real-time exchange of information for room status change.
- Facilitate special needs of in-house guests' requests for extra bed, crib, iron etc.
- Report maintenance work and ensures it is completed.
- Scanty Baggage guests monitored.

Public Area Supervisor

The Public Area Supervisor supervises the front of the house areas of the hotel. These include lobby, porch, guest corridors, guest elevators, guest cloak rooms etc. Most of public area cleaning is undertaken during night, owing to minimal traffic that causes least inconvenience to guests and does not interfere in cleaning. This makes Public Area Supervisor to work in close co-ordination with the Night Supervisor.

The duties of the public area supervisor are:

- To check, inspect and supervise cleaning of all public area and ensure standards of cleanliness are met and maintained.
- Removal of furniture, curtains, fixtures, etc. that require spot mending, repairs or washing.
- Checks and controls working of mechanical equipment and having them sent for repairs if needed.
- Check the working of contract workers employed in the public areas.

Control Desk Supervisor

The desk is considered to be the nerve centre of the housekeeping operations. It is manned 24×7. It is the information transmission hub and the supervisor plays a critical role in smooth functioning and liaising for the department to ensure optimal performance.

Following are the duties of the desk supervisor:

- Co-ordination with Front Office regarding information on Departure rooms, and handing over clean rooms for sale. The timely and close follow up on conversion of room status and updation of the same.
- Messages are transmitted and received to and from all departments of the hotel including guest calls.
- Records like guest call register, attendance register, lost and found register, maintenance /job order register, log book, etc. are maintained here.
- Filing is a major part of the desk supervisor's job.
- Handling guest complaints and requests promptly.

Night Supervisor

Night Supervisor supervises all night staff in public areas and guest rooms.

The work includes:

- Attending to guest calls at night and helping them as required.
- Supervision of public areas cleaning.

Uniform and Linen Room Supervisor

The role entails supervision of uniform and/or Linen Room. Though these are separate sections of Housekeeping, both may be supervised by the same supervisor.

The Uniform and Linen Supervisor undertakes to perform the following duties:

- Maintenance of records for linen and uniforms issued and received.
- Maintenance of perpetual and physical inventory and resolve discrepancies, if any.
- Deal with requests or complaints made by the staff or guests of the hotel and pass and try to resolve with the laundry department.
- Check and maintain standards of cleanliness and hygiene for linen and uniforms.
- Maintain proper storage and control of linen and uniforms.
- Assign daily work to the tailors.

Room Attendant

The Room Attendants are also known as ChamberMaids, Room Maids or Room Boys. Nowadays, keeping in mind political correctness and also the fact that men have entered the arena, the term attendant is used commonly. They are required to undertake the actual cleaning of the entire guest room and toilet/bath area. As a thumb rule, room attendants service about 14 -16 rooms a day. These are then checked by the floor supervisor as per the set standards of the hotel. The room attendants use the chamber maid's trolley with them during the cleaning process and refill the trolley at the end of their shift and keep ready for the next day.

Tasks performed by room attendants:

- Clean and tidy the rooms as per standards laid by the organisations
- Outlay fresh bath and bed linen
- Make the guest bedspreads
- Refill guest supplies and arrange them as per specified standards
- Have a look at the room on check out to see and report any lost and found
- Replenish the maids' trolley and keep ready for the next day
- Nowadays, mini bar and laundry also are undertaken by the room attendants

Cloak Room Attendant

The Cloak Room Attendant is responsible for the cleanliness and maintenance of all the public areas of the hotel.

Duties and responsibilities are:

- Regular/periodic and need based cleaning of the public area wash rooms and ensure they are maintained as per desired standards.
- Need-based replenishment of soaps, tissues, hand towels and other supplies.
- Use air freshner to ensure pleasant fragrance at all times.
- Report malfunctioning lights, water faucets or any such maintenance work to ensure it is in working order.

Uniform/Linen Room Attendant

The Uniform Room Supervisor is assisted by the uniform room attendant who deals with issuing and receiving of linen and uniforms. It is his/her responsibility to check each piece of fresh linen and uniform which has come from the laundry and accordingly gives it to tailor for repair or stacks them on the storage racks for issue. He is the person who actually does all the physical work.

Duties are as follows:

- Receive soiled uniform, check and issue fresh uniform/linen or uniform slip
- Count and send soiled uniform/linen to laundry
- Receive laundered items and check them for fitness to use
- Maintain a physical and perpetual inventory of uniforms and linen
- Store the items in their designated place and maintain them

Horticulturist

Many hotels may contract out the horticulture work to an outside agency. However, a large hotel may have its own horticulture section. They maintain the landscape, garden, lawns, and also supply fresh flowers to the various areas of the hotel on daily requirement basis. Flowers are largely used enhance aesthetic appeal of various parts of the hotel. They are used in banquets, guest rooms, restaurants, lobby offices, buffet functions etc. The horticulturist ensures smooth supply of flowers as well as assists the housekeeping in flower arrangements.

Housemen

These are usually handy men who do the heavy physical work/cleaning required in various areas like the guest rooms, and in public areas. Their job includes heavy duty vacuuming, shifting of furniture, cleaning of window panes, brassoing, scrubbing of corridors, etc. They could be employed on daily wages or recruited on contract basis.

Spotters/Pressers

These are people who do the work of stain removal from the clothes. The pressers do the job of ironing different types of guest clothing and any emergency stock of housekeeping linen.

Valet/Runner

He is a person who goes from one guest room to another collecting or delivering guest laundry.

Helpers

Helpers are found in a linen and uniform room and they are involved in heavy duty work like transporting soiled linen to laundry, counting of fresh linen, bundling of fresh linen and stacking them on the right rack, etc.

Integration of In-house Housekeeping with Facilities Management Organisations

Facilities Management comprises of housekeeping as one of its core functions, amongst many others. The aim is to integrate and co-ordinate the soft and technical skills together in order to have a smooth co-ordination, control and efficient operation. The figure below illustrates the same.

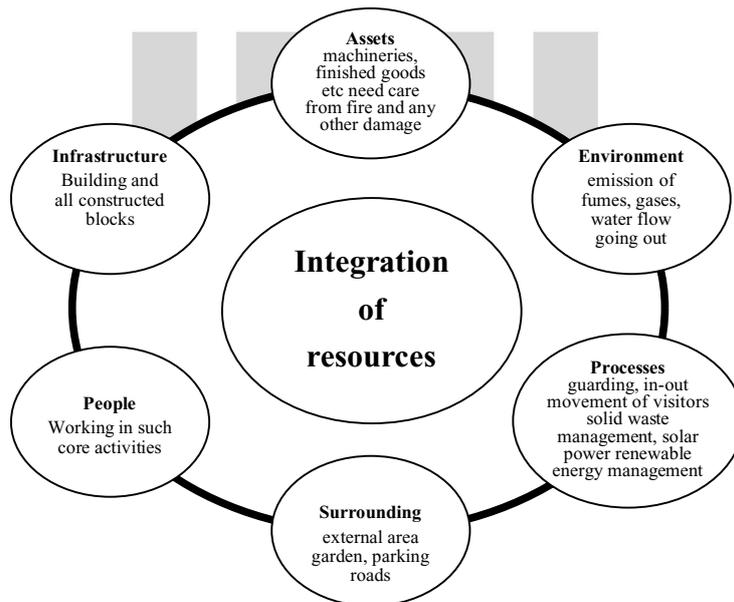


Fig. 1.6

Criteria for Outsourcing

Hotels often outsource to contractual services for many reasons spanning quality, expertise, cost efficiency, operational ease amongst others. Outsourcing may be defined as a “conscious business decision to move internal work to an external provider”.

The following criteria may be considered while outsourcing:

- Costs involved
- Restraints of time
- Restraints of expertise
- Credibility of the external agency
- Core business demands
- Vendor's commitment to quality
- Prior work of the vendor
- Terms of the contract
- Confidentiality
- Specialisation and expertise of the external agency

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