



Planning housekeeping for a guesthouse accommodation business

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business**

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Abstract

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A solid plan is already half the work. Prior to actual planning it is crucial to establish foundational groundwork such as clarifying the purpose. In accommodation business, having a structured housekeeping plan is the key to ensuring smooth operations. It is an indisputable fact that cleanliness plays an important role in ensuring customer satisfaction and a well-maintained environment is essential to the overall guest experience. When housekeeping is done effectively, it blends seamlessly into the background, remaining almost invisible because it is managed so well. Housekeeping is one of the more challenging services to deliver, as its success is typically only recognized when it fails to meet expectations. Additionally, cleanliness goes beyond basic hygiene, it encompasses deeper layer that significantly impact the overall wellbeing of the facility. A properly cared for establishment fosters a positive atmosphere, promotes health, comfortable and safe environment.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the various components to develop an efficient housekeeping plan, while also exploring the well-being of the housekeepers. This involves looking at the right equipment, potential risks, ergonomic practices, workload management and ways to optimize resources and time. It also explores the importance of maintaining the lifespan of accommodation facilities and how efficient facility management plays a key role in supporting core operations.

This research is based on a review of relevant literature and insights gathered from consultation with the owner of the guesthouse accommodation business, providing both theoretical and practical perspectives of the subject. The findings provide a foundation for future improvements in housekeeping practices, while also highlighting the importance of greater recognition for housekeepers, whose work is often undervalued and more challenging as it seems.

Keywords: Facility Management, Housekeeping, Guesthouse

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1 Introduction

The popularity of travel has been gradually rising worldwide after the global health crisis that significantly impacted the world, especially the travel industry. However, the dynamics of the travel industry are continuing to evolve now more than ever, having been significantly reshaped in ways unprecedented in recent history. The hospitality industry has persevered, particularly given the severe disruptions in global travel. During and after the disruption caused by the recent pandemic, the accommodation industry faced significant challenges in rebuilding travelers' trust. At the same time, local travel gain popularity once more worldwide. In Finland, people increasingly chose domestic vacations over international travel. The accommodation business, located in the Karelia region in Finland, offers guests a chance to experience the area's local charm, rich history, traditions and breathtaking nature. The facilities include historical wooden houses and other heritage buildings, adding to the unique character of the accommodation. A variety of activities are available in the town, adding to the overall guest experience. It is essential for guests to have access to high-quality accommodation, ensuring their stay is both comfortable and enjoyable.

There is no denying that one of the key factors influencing customer satisfaction in any accommodation business model is closely linked to the quality and efficiency of the housekeeping department. After all, there is a decrease in the value of the facility when housekeeping is not up to par. (Barker 2013, 142) Regardless of location, amenities, historical significance or marketing expense of the business. If housekeeping is not well handled, these other factors become secondary and cannot compensate for the resulting negative impact on customer satisfaction and overall business performance. In business perspective, this is vital information. The cost of acquiring new customers exceeds the cost of retaining an existing one, as the latter option requires fewer resources, taking care of existing customer relationship, loyalty, and customer satisfaction.

Planning housekeeping is a vital segment in facility management, and its importance cannot be ignored by the way it directly impacts the business. While often this service is undetectable labor in facility management if well-planned and organized. A good housekeeping promotes the well-being of the housekeeping department through proper instructions, providing appropriate work clothes, ergonomic tools, appropriate protective gears and educating on ergonomic way of working to encourage great overall well-being. This plays a key role in preserving and protecting the value of the facilities. A well-organized housekeeping plan contributes to both the safety of the employees and the long-term maintenance of the facility, guaranteeing its efficiency, longevity and optimal performance,

which ultimately leads to greater financial gains by minimizing the need for unnecessary repairs or renovation.

2 Accommodation business

This topic can be approached from various perspectives, but it fundamentally revolves around the concept of being a place intended for temporary stay. Businesses providing services to meet the demands of travelers are part of the tourism industry. Customers go through several steps when deciding on accommodation they will choose as a part of their plans. The hotel accommodation business particularly faces ongoing challenges in effectively capturing consumer interest and influencing their decision-making process. Majority of accommodation businesses generate revenue from two or more types of guests. Business travelers occupy accommodations during the workweek, while leisure visitors typically stay on weekends. There is a growing trend on combining both business with pleasure, increasing the phenomenon of professional and meeting attendees blending their work-related commitments with personal leisure time. Business guests often attend meetings or conferences during part of their trip and use the remainder of their stay for family vacations or personal enjoyment. Additionally, this benefits the accommodation industry, as guests extend their stays, boosting demand for lodging services during both business and leisure periods. (Hayes, Ninemeier & Miller 2017, 3-7)

This industry has an important part in the global hospitality sector, it caters to millions of customers daily around the world. It comes within the nature of the industry territory that consumers from different backgrounds have varying needs, ranging from low budget lodging to luxury accommodation experiences. The primary function of an accommodation business is to offer a place to rest and recuperation to the users. (Hassanein & Dale 2013, 25) According to the law, the accommodation business is characterized as the professional offering of facilities and services to customers. (Rautiainen & Siiskonen 2007, 22)

Hospitality experience is elevated when safety and security are not a concern. Everyone in the premises can fully be secured, knowing that their well-being is prioritized. A secure environment fosters trust, enhances comfort, encourages repeat visits. (Wood 2018, 65)

2.1 Types of accommodations

Accommodation facilities are diverse and encompass a wide variety of enterprises. Distinguishing between various accommodation types can be challenging due to the frequent overlap on their characteristics and are closely interrelated. The main function of accommodation is to provide a place to rest and recuperation. Accommodation hospitality facilities are hotels, guest accommodation, hostels, clubs, event venues, non-commercial

accommodation, school accommodation, mobile lodging, second homes, time shares, camping, motels and unusual accommodation. (Hassanien & Dale 2013, 25-26)

Lodging is one of the essential elements of the tourism and hospitality industry. According to the United Nation's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) classifies visitors based on the nature of their trip. A tourist is a visitor that engages in travel that involves an overnight stay at the destination. Travel can be for variety of reasons, one or more for four reasons are business, conference, vacation or for other purposes. (Hayes et al. 2017, 3) Depending on whether the guests are in for a short stay, a business-related trip or a leisure vacation, there is access to a variety of accommodation options. (Hayes et al. 2017, 3)

Among all the choices available to the consumers, hotels have traditionally been the most chosen type of lodging. The increasing demand have created more modern lodging options, such as vacation rentals (e.g. Airbnb) and hostels. While hotels are still the dominant choice for its convenience, many vacationers now have opted for vacation rentals, depending on preference, budget and the nature of the trip.

2.2 Guesthouse as an accommodation

An interesting detail, it is not a coincidence that the designation of accommodation clients is referred to as guests rather than customers is intentional and important. This represents a deeper aspect of the hospitality industry's service-oriented approach. These conveys a more personal, welcoming and more importantly hospitable tone. Commonly these terms are being used interchangeably. Professional extends the same level of hospitality and care to their guests as they would in their own personal business. The tactic of treating visitors as guest rather than customers plays a role in gathering a positive guest service philosophy, which is crucial in the accommodation industry field. This promotes a more welcoming experience that attribute to customer satisfaction and loyalty. (Hayes et al. 2017, 7)

The primary objective of a guesthouse is to provide accommodation facility for guests during their stay on the premises. The choice of location has always been crucial factor in this industry. The focus on local culture, history and community further enhances the appeal of guesthouses, contributing to its marketability.

2.3 Historical accommodation

Historical accommodations often reflect the cultural and architectural heritage of the region in which they are located and the era it represents. By preservation of these facilities, guests can experience history up close, offering them an opportunity to explore the architectural

and cultural heritage of the past. From the perspective of facility management, the preservation and use of these historical accommodations offers a unique window into the past, allowing guests to experience history in a way that closely mirrors time travel.

The housekeeping department spends majority of their working day maintaining floor areas, guaranteeing cleanliness and safety throughout the facilities. The responsibilities include often includes regular cleaning and overseeing the condition of the floor surfaces. The ongoing measures to maintain not only contributes to the aesthetic appeal of the establishment but also helps preserve valuable historical materials and more importantly prevent potential hazards, securing a safe environment for all facility users. It is fundamental to have proper protection treatment implemented in materials, to support effective maintenance in the future. (Ikonen & Karvinen 2000, 32) Wood has been widely known to be used as a floor material for centuries. Domestic wood, mostly pine is the most frequently used wood in floorboards, but other kind of woods are also sometimes used like birch, fir and oak. (Aaltonen et al. 1998, 67)

3 Facility Management

Most people use and benefit from facilities every day, yet majority rarely consider the complexity involved in constructing and maintaining them. Facility management is broad and an ever-evolving field. New legislation and techniques appear continually, and it is challenging to keep up with new information individually, therefor methods were developed to process make information processing task more attainable. (Barett & Finch 2014, 13)

Facility management is defined as synonymous to facilities management and FM is the commonly known international abbreviation regardless of the preferred spelling. (Jensen 2008, 11) It holds minimal relevance on which one of the terms is being used to refer as they are both often used interchangeably around the world. Facility management can straightforwardly be defined as everything that is not the core business of the establishment. (Barker 2013, 1) The significance of the facility management cannot be highlighted enough. Nowadays it is already widely accepted fact that facility management is important to the effective operation of all businesses. (Shiem-Shin & Hee 2013, 3)

Facility Management provides support in form of services to support the organization's core business. (Atkin & Brooks 2017, 17) Its core function is to ensure that different variety of facilities could operate efficiently, safely and sustainably. Facility management delivers services to an organization allowing them to focus on their primary agenda, while facility management support it by taking care of everything else. Facility management is a key business function that has a direct impact on both the financial performance and organizational structure. To simply put it facility management goes beyond just maintaining

the physical space of the facility, it plays a critical role on the resource optimization, controlling costs, and guaranteeing that the physical environment aligns with the company's mission, vision, values and goals. To begin with facility management is to guarantee security is the priority concern followed by legality, cost and customer service.

Facility management is directly responsible for every physical asset and function. The cost of ownership of facilities is a significant consideration, and it fall under the facility management task to ensure that that organizational leadership comprehends the associated expenses of it. Facility management can successfully achieved cost savings or avoided costs in by 30% to 35 % range, while not compromising the existing service quality. This can be accomplished through applying sound principle in planning, lease management, and energy management of the facility. Facility management is rightfully should be viewed as more than a technical management but also take into consideration the business management part of it. (Roper & Payant 2014, 12-15)

To explore more the concept of facility management, it is conceptualized as the integration of the three critical components referred to as the three letter P's: People, Places and Processes. These three elements are foundational to creating and maintaining environment that not only supports the operational efficiency but also the occupants of the facility. (Jensen 2008,11) As the facility management field evolves within the current world, IFMA (the International Facility Management Association) has recognized the increasing importance of technology. The incorporation of technology reflects a broader trend toward data-driven decision making, it highlights the growing importance of it in the field. (Rondeau, Brown & Lapidés 2006, 6) With the automation of facility management functions aided in increasing the chance of effectiveness in organizations. Ability to adopt, develop and maintain knowledge and required skills in information management and technology is vital to the effectiveness of the facility management sector. The volume and complexity increase with handling information getting to challenging to manage, technology is being utilized for this purpose. (Alexander 2016, 122)

Understanding the services facility management provide is important. Facility management has two layer of services first one is called hard services that deals with physical infrastructure within the facility such as fire systems service & maintenance, heating & ventilation maintenance, asbestos control, lift services and building maintenance. The second layer involves with non-physical aspect that concerns services such as cleaning, waste management, security, grounds maintenance, portorage, catering and post handling. (Barker 2013, 24)

3.1 Facility maintenance and repair

Facility begins aging the moment it is completed, as wear and tear, environmental factors and normal usage gradually impacts the structure, systems and components. Different maintenance strategies help prolong asset life, as shown in Figure 1. Facility management helps prolong the life cycle of the infrastructure and minimize the financial losses due to repairs by addressing the issues early and implementing preventative measures.

Systems and equipment used in facilities buildings and structures are required by the law authorities and agencies to meet the requirements and standards set to secured safe operating environment. (Edwards 2012, 29) Maintenance and repair demands do consume a significant amount of the overall facility budget. (Stipanuk 2006, 38)

Regular inspections on the facilities are part of a good maintenance plan. Maintenance activities are usually those done to keep something in existing state or to maintain from decline. (Stipanuk 2006, 38) Can be also describe as those activities required to maintain the facility or to keep the equipment in serviceable condition. To simply explain there are four categories of facility maintenance: preventive, reactive, and differed maintenance.

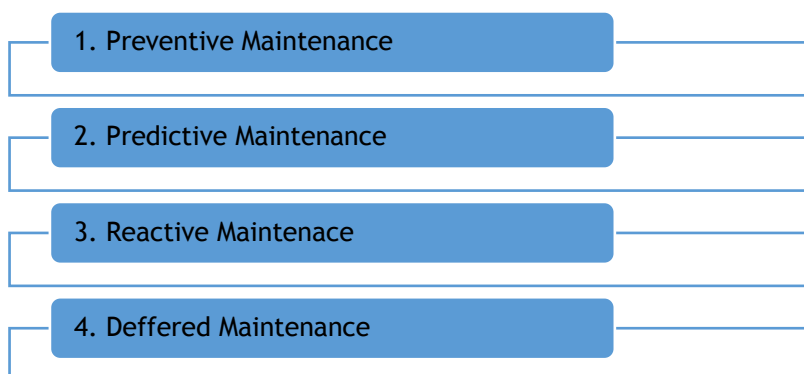


Figure 1: Facility maintenance categories (Stipanuk 2006)

Preventive maintenances are regularly planned and scheduled maintenance activities for the equipment's and the structures of the facilities. It contains inspections, lubrication, minor repairs with also adjustments and work order initiation. Guestroom maintenance is a perfect example on how this maintenance is preventative, this involves the inspection of the items in the guestroom, changing the filters of air condition units, minor lubrication of the door hinges & other equipment's. (Stipanuk 2006, 38)

Predictive maintenance implies predicted maintenance activities to replace equipment failures with the action of replacing the equipment.

Reactive maintenance is the unexpected maintenance activities due to equipment failure or interruption of the service. All action of repair falls under this term though repair requirements can be considered as a part of preventive or predictive failures. Typically, reactive maintenance is the most expensive form of all the maintenance due also to the fact that operational interruption does impact directly to revenue loss with this usually directly impact customer satisfaction of the facility.

Deferred maintenance means non urgent repairs that are postponed for later. This practice of delaying or deferring maintenance activity is because of mainly budgeting issue and for more convenient timing. All the maintenance requirements from other form of maintenance categories that does not directly affect the operation immediately does fall under this term. Although these are not urgent repairs this does not mean it is not necessary to perform these maintenances and simply be ignored.

Keeping maintenance records are essential element in facility management. Keeping records of the maintenance data are important part because it is effective to manage from collected data. It is recommended to always fact check on the equipment or system condition prior maintenance services, the age of the components or any other factor that directly affect the facility or equipment under the care. Good management involves solid decisions based on reliable facts. (Edwards 2012, 70-73)

Maintenance of facility entrances, sweeping, shoveling snow & sanding in the winter and taking care of the plants during summertime. Including also smoking areas and garbage bins in the perimeter of the facility is often considered part of outdoor space maintenance. (Aaltonen et al.1998, 230)

3.2 Housekeeping department

From the perspective of the accommodation business, all departments to keep the business running are equally important. However, surveys conducted regularly confirm that guests often appreciate and lean towards the housekeeping more. In fact, guests tend to value a clean guestroom the most and often prefer a room that looks they are being the first to sleep in the room. (Hayes et al. 2017, 42, 339) The Housekeeping department role is not limited into only providing clean rooms, but also maintaining other areas within the premises, ensuring a high standard of cleanliness. Cleaning work is simply a part of the service. The housekeeping department is responsible for keeping the facility clean for the users. (Ikonen & Karvinen 2000, 6)

There are three primary areas within the site that falls under the responsibility of the housekeeping department public areas, guestrooms and laundry area. As stated, the role of the housekeeping department in the hospitality industry is an important part of the facility management. Depending on the size and type of the accommodation business, housekeeping

department is mainly responsible for cleaning and maintaining public spaces like lobby areas, public restrooms (Hayes et al. 2017, 341).

Housekeeping operations behind the scenes of an accommodation business are well-planned and require diligent coordination to ensure top quality experiences. Examining the word hospitality, it is described as a cordial and generous reception and entertainment of guests or strangers in either situations of socially or commercially. This definition paints a picture of a welcoming feeling of a place or facility where people are cared for. Guests often require a clean comfortable and secure place to rest or sleep. The value housekeeping department is already a recognized in the industry and the impact it has on the overall operation of the business. The housekeeping department holds a vital key role in the current lodging industry. Housekeeping operation consist of service guest rooms, maintain & service both public and special areas. (Fallon & Rutherford 2011, 173-174)

Housekeeping departments duties consist of cleaning facilities, making the guestrooms beds, maintaining the linen, refilling minibar of the rooms and maintaining the housekeeping storage rooms clean, organized and replenished. All of these have direct linked into guest satisfaction, safety and arguably the reputation of the accommodation business.

4 Housekeeping

Housekeeping is a critical part of the accommodation business, an important aspect of the hospitality and service industry. It ensures cleanliness, hygiene and contribute into overall customer satisfaction. While often running operations behind the scenes, housekeeping is a major element into creating a good first impression by maintaining a clean environment as soon as visitors and guests enter the establishment. (Hayes et al. 2017, 340)

Well-planned housekeeping will maintain the rooms, common facilities, and an overall tidy environment does enhance costumer experiences. Although the term 'housekeeping' can be identified as an old-fashion term nowadays, it is still an accurate description of the soft maintenance and cleaning of accommodation facilities. Usually, the design and the furbishing or sometimes refurbishing of an accommodation business is seen as a strategic decision and most hotel accommodation companies have mostly centralize these issues. Housekeeping department rarely have input on this subject. Their main role is to maintain the accommodation premises despite the design of the accommodation premises can increase the challenge that housekeeping operations. Though the housekeeping department is mostly linked with the cleaning of the common areas and guest rooms, it is worth noting that in some organization it is commonly be more than that. The housekeeping responsibilities can range more widely. (Wood 2018, 70-71)

As stated earlier housekeeping department are rarely appreciated enough in this service industry. The role of being a part housekeeping continues to suffer from poor occupational image. It is reported that they are rarely tipped by the guests, and it is heavily associated as a low-skilled job. This stigma derives from discriminatory view of housekeeping as a 'women's work', even though it is the opposite of that because to be able to succeed in this work there are a lot of skills required that are complex and housekeeping is a physically demanding job. (Wood 2018, 71). Though cleaning the guest rooms is mostly the focus of housekeeping, their responsibilities does extend to other part of the property. (Wood 2018, 71)

Orientation is the process of providing the necessary information to the housekeeping staff. Effective well-planned orientation can guarantee a longer-term relationship between the employer and the employees. The aim for the effective orientation is to reduce employee anxiety, improve morale, reduce employee turnover, provide consistency and lastly to develop realistic expectation. To ensure to the new employee what is expected of them. Orientation aid to provide this information. (Hayes et al. 2017,128-129)

4.1 Room cleaning

Understanding that providing impeccably clean guestrooms is fundamentally a top priority for any establish accommodation business. It is the common aim in the housekeeping department to execute these tasks effortlessly to meet the high expectations of the guests. Recognizing that the importance of housekeeping in keeping effective communication regarding the room status and maintenance issues with the operations and maintenance department. This is a complex matter, even though might seem simple. Potential miscommunication or lack of communication between departments operating the accommodation business have a negative impact into the reputation of the business. (Hayes et al. 2017, 342)

Commonly most valued aspect in this field, as it is still one of the most important factors in determining customer satisfaction as stated before but at the same time the process and the workers mainly are still undervalued. Cleaning when done well, is rarely noticed as it usually just tends to blend into the background and usually taken for granted. (Barker 2013, 142) It should be a one of the top priorities for the business to provide a clean guest room.

The accommodation business guarantees a safe establishment to its guests, it is mandated by laws and regulations. Housekeepers are instructed to follow safety measures during their workhours, under no circumstances they are obligated to open any door upon a request from the visitors or guests. If, in a situation the guests have misplaced their respective key to their guestroom, it is mandatory to advised them to turn into the reception service for further instruction.

It will always depend on the nature of the rooms furniture and fitting on how the room is going to be cleaned. Though there are definitely more or less a general guideline to be commonly followed. First the availability of the room for cleaning must be determined (Wood 2018, 71) and then must determine what kind of cleaning does the room require - the main thing to identify whether it is a maintenance cleaning, meaning the room guest is still a resident or a reset cleaning that the occupying guest has already left and it is expected to have a new guest in the room.

While the guest is still a resident of the accommodation business, maintenance cleaning is required to be able to continue providing a comfortable stay, surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned, due to environmental factor and to be cost effective bed linens are changed only every three days unless the guest request otherwise. In the case of a reset cleaning routine for example, all surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned, bathroom towels and bed linens changed. Guest request must be taken into consideration as allergies or scent sensitivity can occur.

Housekeeper's work is challenging also in a way that time is very crucial in this physically active profession. The work pace specially during rush hours are brisk. The time it will take to clean depends on several factors. Basic cleaning is estimated 30-minutes per guestroom.

Though the status of the room is mostly already known, the housekeeping personnel is always advised to knock on the door first before entering any guestroom despite of the status of the room. Keeping in mind that housekeeping is a large part of the accommodations business therefore it is required to keep hospitality service and taking the guests into consideration. The housekeeping department's cleaning carts and other cleaning equipment's must be stationed that it will not disturb the surroundings and for safety reason. Also, it is part of providing good service to have a clean and organized equipment. (Rautiainen & Siiskonen 2015, 61)

The staple cleaning routine of a vacant guestroom has a limited time, and usually estimated between 30 minutes depending on the room's condition after the guests, therefor it is important to acknowledge that the work pace is possible to improve with a routine that is planned to avoid redundant step by taking notes on what are the specific tools and equipment needed to take along.

According to the centre of occupational safety (2020) accommodation guestrooms are cleaned in the following order:

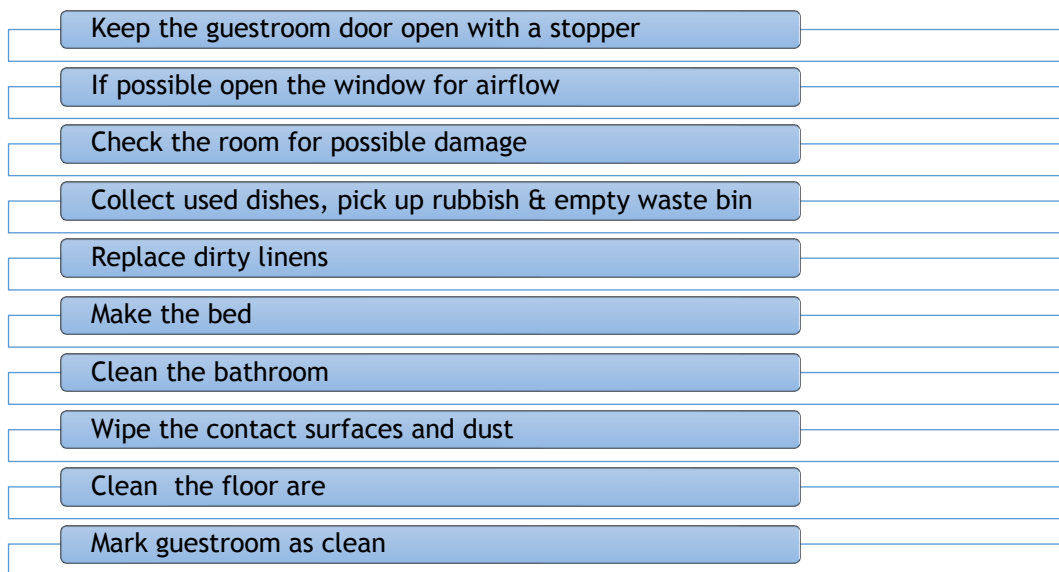


Figure 2: Guestroom cleaning instruction

The appearance of the housekeeper is a key element of the service. A clean, polished and properly dressed cleaner reflects positively on both them and the company. While there are different kind of cleaners for various environments, the primary goal remains the same. It is to maintain clean and well-kept facilities. While hygiene and appearance are important, they do not alone define cleanliness. Cleanliness also encompasses maintaining air quality, eliminating odors and ensuring that room amenities are in good working condition.

4.2 Linen management

One thing that is common in every accommodation business, regardless of the type of lodging, every guest in that facility is at a similar situation. Their circumstances are simply that they are away from the comfort and familiarity of their own respective home. An essential part of the hospitality service is ensuring that the guestrooms provided serves as a viable alternative to the guests' homes by providing clean linens thereby promoting an enjoyable restful stay, as if they are in the comfort of, they own home. In accommodation business terminology linen refers to bedsheet, pillowcases, towels, bathrobes, tablecloths, napkins and other fabric items used in the establishment. (Hayes et al. 2017, 345)

The housekeeping is responsible for changing the guest room linens. It is not a surprising fact that any lodging business do generate a tremendous amount of laundry in daily basis ranging from the obvious bed linens down to bathroom towels. Nowadays linen management are mostly outsourced by the organization as it is realistically the most cost-effective solution for most of the accommodation business. Though still these days it may not be a common knowledge to some accommodation guest that the bed linen in which they have slept in is not

owned by the hotel and not processed in-house but rather hired externally from an outsider contractor. (Wood 2018, 10). Beds are made and bedclothes are changed depending on the guests' status whether they are still staying or departing the premises. Bed linens are removed from the bed, taking it to be laundered. This is part of the cycle, ensuring the linens meet the hygiene standards and will be ready again for the next guests to be used. (Aaltonen et al. 1998, 233)

5 Workplace safety, health and ergonomics in housekeeping

A nurtured environment allows employees to thrive and feel better, therefore contributing to overall workplace productivity. When safety, health, and ergonomics are prioritized, employees not only perform better but also experience fewer injuries, reduce fatigue and increased job satisfaction. A supportive workspace fosters a culture that enables housekeepers to carry out their tasks efficiently and safely. This allows workplace to reduce physical strain and promotes welfare. Addressing the specific needs of the housekeeping role such as proper protective gear, equipment, adequate training and effective scheduling helps create an environment that promotes high performance and fosters sense of value in this line of work.

5.1 Promoting sustainable work practices

Prioritizing occupational health is essential, and the housekeeping department deserves a workplace environment that is safe. Given the critical importance of ensuring a safe and supportive workplace surrounding, particularly in physically demanding field. It is also mandated by the law to guarantee the protection of workers well-being. Unfortunately, it is common today for cleaning to be undervalued, even though it is the first thing that is noticed if not perform on standard or if it is neglected. Such undervaluation can lead to health and safety risks, as well as negative impact on the overall work environment and employee vitality. It is a huge advancement in the service industry how the ergonomic way of working is recognized nowadays compared to the humble beginnings of the trade. Environmental health and safety are areas of increasing importance in facility management. (Jensen 2008, 168) This is due to the generally increased consciousness about environmental and health issues. It is reasonable enough that promoting occupational health should be a priority. Depending on which country or area there are laws implemented to help employers to navigate their duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare at workplace. (Booty 2011,24)

Accident rates within the employees in the housekeeping department scores the highest within the accommodation business field. The first reason for this statistic is most likely since housekeeping department employees outnumber other departments in the accommodation

business and the second reason is due to the physical aspect of the labor they do. Housekeeper's job involves working with equipment and supplies needed, these should be handled carefully to decrease the chances of accident occurring. Access to proper equipment and supplies contribute into not only improving the overall productivity and safety but also reduce accidents in the workplace. It is logical to provide appropriate tools as this will help into decreasing work-related injuries and healthcare expenses. (Hayes et al. 2017, 350)

5.2 Proactive measures for ergonomics and safety in hospitality

Cleaning is undeniably a very physical job that comes with its own demands to the worker. This work is mostly carried out walking throughout the working day. The housekeeper bend, lift and carry workload and to note that still at these modern times despite of technology advances cleaning is mostly still done manually. Poor working postures are reasons why the worker is tired, and this can also lead to occupational health disorder. (Aaltonen et al. 1998,177- 185)

Making the beds in a guestroom is part of the housekeeping routine. Changing and arranging linen beside low and wide beds is one of the heavier tasks in housekeeping on rooms and therefor it is advice that the cleaner must be cautious on proper health-saving postures and properly maintaining physical fitness. (Aaltonen et al. 1998, 224) Wide double beds, low beds and beds located next to the wall involve reaching and working in bad postures. The housekeepers' arms are mostly elevated above shoulder height, reducing blood flow in the neck and shoulder area. One of the most common work-related injuries is back pain, possibly due to poorly designed working areas that then lead on poor posture and lifting and carrying of loads. (Booty 2011,24) Manual handling is one of the main reasons reported to attribute in workplace injuries reported each year and it is noted that it is mostly back injuries. This directly negatively impact the organization, resulting in the loss of estimated 10 million working days each year, primarily due to back injuries. While there are preventative measures to avoid poor working postures, they are sometimes unavoidable due various circumstances. For example, time constrains may prevent housekeeping from maintaining proper working conditions.

Accommodation industry may not seem like a dangerous place to work in and may not be commonly associate with an unsafe or unhealthy work environment. However, it is important to note while immediate treat do not often occur, there are still major risks involved in this field. Cleaning work is linked where accidents and occupational diseases tend to manifest. This occupation regularly involves handling aggressive cleaning agents and solutions. (Aaltonen et al. 1998, 33) The use of cleaning chemicals can make cleaning process easier and more effective, but it requires proper knowledge, especially when handling potent chemicals. Without proper education on the potential risk, the consequence can be severe. The

symptoms may include nausea, skin rashes, vomiting and blindness or in extreme case even death. That is why proper education, instruction and training are essential in housekeeping.

Educating about the risks associated with bloodborne pathogens should be a top priority, as housekeepers are often at risk of encountering body fluids and blood in linens while cleaning guestrooms. Awareness to the workers about these potential hazard issues decrease the risk of exposure to infections, additionally they may come across with discarded needles, which could be remnants of either medical procedures or illicit substance use. Given the uncertainty surrounding the risks and the limited time available for cleaning the guestrooms, it is important to understand the proper procedure to ensure proper care and safety. On a serious note, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a severe disease transmitted through bloodborne pathogens. This and other potential health threats must be addresses through comprehensive training. (Hayes et al. 2017, 352-353)

Cleaning can be a high-turnover business due to many reasons. (Barker 2013, 144) Yet, in Nordic countries, such as Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Iceland, the cleaning industry operates slightly under different circumstances. The wage level is generally fair and relatively high minimum wages contributes to large economical motivation to make service activities more efficient. (Jensen, Nielsen & Nielsen 2008, 16)

Ergonomic refers to the design of tools and the environment that are developed to serve to human needs. Cleaning equipment and devices have evolved, with tools being well-planned and designed to promote the well-being of the user. Though they are still not fully adapted to every user's measurement. (Aaltonen et al., 184-185)

5.3 Protective work equipment

In this line of work, it is advised and required by law to have a professional working cloths, footwear and protective equipment. The commonly used as protection in cleaning service are gloves, proper footwear and in some cases hearing & respiratory protective devices. It is required that protective devices used are according to European set standards and certified CE-marked. This regulation includes protective devices that are used during working hours and in leisure time. These devices are helmets, respiratory, eyes and hearing protective devices and protective gloves footwear and clothing. First, it is advised to minimize the danger of accidents or illness through technical measures or working arrangement. Employers are required to provide the workers the needed protection equipment (Aaltonen et al., 134)

The role of a housekeeper is physically demanding, with a significant amount of their workday is mostly spent on their feet standing and walking. On average, this consists of 60% standing and 40% walking. The lower limbs are thus subjected to severe strain during work, which place significant demands on high-performance footwear. (Haapanen & Mäntsälä 1996, 33) A

proper professional footwear can significantly help prevent workers feet from fatigue and will aid on maintaining posture throughout the working day. Spending time to conducting research is recommended when selecting appropriate work footwear. A good professional work shoe should be breathable, have anti-slip sole and most importantly be comfortable to wear. A shoe with a strap at the back of the ankle helps secure the shoe firmly, thereby enhancing the safety during the duty. (Laitinen & Yrölä 2006, 18)

Using of inappropriate footwear in work can cause unnecessary work-related health issues, such as workplace accidents, avoidable premature fatigue, swelling, and pain in both lower limbs and back. If the footwear being use lacks the ability to sufficiently support, absorb shock, or fit properly can cause to improper posture leading to place more strain onto the joints and muscles. With time, this increases the risk on experiencing pain and damage on the body. This emphasizes the importance of work footwear based on work environment and the level of activity it requires. Foot ailments, such as bunions, hammer toes and flat feet remain common due to use of improper footwear. (Haapanen & Mäntsälä 1996, 33)

The most common protective gear in cleaning is undoubtedly gloves as it is to be expected and a natural part of the job that cleaning entails handling water and various categories of cleaning agents. This is a common reason on why hands can get irritated and have dry skin. Dealing with cleaning various types of dirty environment come with the risk of contracting harmful microbes, therefor it is advised to keep gloves on to prevent exposure with the skin. (Laitinen & Yrölä 2006, 19)

The maintenance of the workers clothes can either be the employer's responsibility or by the worker. It is in hospitality industry's nature to have a tidy working clothes / uniform as its part of the service. Workers must follow the work clothes manufacturers instruction on washing the garments. (Aaltonen et al. 1998, 233)

6 Planning the housekeeping

A key starting point for creating a housekeeping plan in a guesthouse accommodation business is to carefully evaluate all aspects of the facility's operations. This includes understanding guestroom turnover, time management, maintaining common areas and managing linen logistics throughout from the service area facility. One of the main priorities is ensuring workplace safety while also reducing the unnecessary workload of the housekeepers. This involves safe handling of cleaning supplies, proper use of equipment and minimizing physical strain of the housekeepers by organizing task efficiently. Keeping in mind the well-being of both the employees and guests. Understanding these elements, creating a plan that improves efficiency, reduce risks and ensure a smooth operation. A compiled handbook manual for

employees provides a reliable reference for daily operations offering a clear guidance and support to ensure consistency and limiting time wasted in an environment where time is crucial, such as guest arrivals and departures. The manual combined with training will provide housekeeping staff with clear procedures to efficiently manage their tasks. A skill good to encourage on the employees is to researching answer provided to them (Morrow 2008, 167). Allowing employees to independently search for information from the manual promotes empowerment and efficiency. It helps with time management also by reducing reliance on other with standard information, allowing to resolve easy issues on their own. Cultivating problem-solving skills leads to more self-reliance and productive employees. Housekeeping manual should be printed for easy distribution during for example the orientation or first day of employment, ensuring employees have immediate access to information. Additionally, the manual should be available in digital format, such as PDF format to facilitate easy updates. The combination of both printed and digital formats ensures that the manual is both convenient and flexible for ongoing use and updates. Creating the manual in a program like Canva make it easier to navigate and edit with various types of format and images. This program made it easy and simple to create visually appealing. Presenting manual that is visually engaging and in colorful format can help ease the transition into the housekeeping department sector. Canva provides easy access and allows for simple updates and edits into the housekeeping manual. Adding a incase emergency section that will consist of important emergency contact numbers on the second page to ensure quick access to critical information during unexpected situation.

In any trade, careful planning is key component in achieving end goals and this holds true for the housekeeping operations of a guesthouse accommodation business. To establish a well-organized and efficient system, the owner of the accommodation business, through consultation meetings has provided necessary materials and insights required to outline the steps for housekeeping operations. As with any planning process, it is essential to first define the goals of the guesthouse accommodation business regarding their housekeeping. Through discussions with the commissionaire, potential issues were identified, and the aim is to explore options for solutions combined with recommendations.

Located in North Karelia, this accommodation business is nestled in the heart of a thriving historical area, where previous establishments and landmarks are transformed into charming guesthouses. Offering a mix of traditional Finnish charm and modern convenience, it serves guest seeking to relive the past, enjoy the nature or even experience the thrill of staying unique rooms such as former town jail converted into a one-of-a-kind guest room for one.

Before proceeding with the planning, it is essential define the purpose. In this case, the goal is to comprehensive written manual that will guide the housekeeping department in their duties. The manual outlines the room cleaning process, specifying all the rooms within the

guesthouse and the hotel accommodation that are part of the business. The manual is also equipped with visual images of the rooms and houses to help familiarize the housekeeping staff with the spaces that needed to be cleaned.

Working as part of the housekeeping in the establishment in the accommodation business involves navigating the perimeters of the facilities throughout the town which it is located.

Some of the properties are two-storey houses, which adds complexity to the workload of the employees, particularly in relation to linen logistics. The manual has a reminder to take appropriate number of linens are taken minimize unnecessary trips to the linen storage service area. While all properties have clean extra linen stocks taking the right amount in the first place helps reduce time spent going back and forth. Linen logistics are a critical aspect of the operation, as linens are outsourced and stored in a separate facility. Taking too few linens will cause delays in a working environment where its crucial to finish the work within the cleaning window, while taking too many adds unnecessary weight impacting health and efficiency. During peak summer months, its recommended to invest in a cart or bicycle with a cart in front to streamline linen and other supply transport. This is a practical and environmentally friendly solution.

7 Conclusion

In conclusion, planning housekeeping is not merely about establishing a simple cleaning routine list and ensuring cleanliness. It involves much more as it involves creating a well-rounded approach that not only ensures a clean environment but also enhances the experience of guests and everyone that uses the facility.

As the hospitality industry strives to recover from the global health crisis, it continues to focus on providing the best service to customers while maintaining operational efficiency. To achieve this, every aspect of business must work in balance. A critical silent element in achieving success is functional facility management. Ensuring the safety and comfort to all the facility users, manages cost effectively and the lifespan of the establishment, important in maintaining operational efficiency and supporting long-term success of the organization.

Reflecting on how to continue innovating and applying best practices that ensure both operational success and the welfare of the housekeeping department, it is important to acknowledge that despite its physically demanding in nature, housekeeping is not only undervalued role within the hospitality sector but also requires significant skill and knowledge, contrary to the common belief that is a low-skilled job. The importance of this

department extends far beyond maintaining cleanliness, it plays a vital role in shaping the guest experience ensuring comfort, safety and satisfaction.

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