

# Executive Housekeeping

## OPENING DILEMMA

**The general manager of the hotel has requested that you come to his office to talk over last week's lack of efficiency in your housekeeping department. Your housekeepers have not met their quota of cleaning 18 rooms per day; they only cleaned 15.5 rooms per day. How are you going to respond?**

## CHAPTER FOCUS POINTS

- Importance of the housekeeping department
- Overview of a housekeeping department
- Relationship of an executive housekeeper to the general manager
- Managing a housekeeping department

## Importance of the Housekeeping Department

Guests return to a hotel, in part, because of its cleanliness—not the initial advertising efforts of the hotel marketing department to attract guests with price, product, and service features. This basic operating concept therefore requires a special consideration of how housekeeping fits into the marketing effort. The focus of this chapter is the executive housekeeper's management of the people, processes, communications, and interactions that affect the guests' stay. These operational procedures have an enormous impact on the financial position of the hotel. Guests who have a negative first experience—a messy

lobby, a dismal-looking bathroom, or worn bedding—will not be impressed; the possibility of a return visit are minimal. Also, negative word-of-mouth advertising will become another problem to manage.

John Hendrie reports that the major hotel chains are now using housekeeping concepts in their marketing campaigns to attract customers:

In print and television, the consumer is no longer battered by the flash, pizzaz and glitter for their travel dollars. Rather, we are now shown the “glamour” and receptivity of a wonderful, welcoming, warm bed, home-like furnishings and restful color schemes. Quite a turnaround in marketing strategy, but, after all, at the end of the day, we travelers do spend significant time in our guest room, and it should be comfortable, tasteful, clean and safe—a return to hospitality basics.

All Hospitality operators need to pay attention to what leading hotel companies, such as Westin, Radisson, Sheraton and Hilton, are doing and demonstrating in the marketplace. They have the marketing clout to research, in-depth, Guest satisfaction and expectation, gather reliable data, and present to the public what their research has uncovered. For this round, the results show that the consumer wants a Quality Experience in their room. And, you know what, they are right! One large hotel concern, Westin, even has beds and appropriate linens for sale on their Website, and these products have become a new cottage industry for them. Talk about Branding!<sup>1</sup>

Barbara Worcester writes about the importance of housekeeping to the guest:

Sheets, blankets, pillows, towels and shower curtains aren’t just soft goods . . . If sheets are soiled, blankets are rough and scratchy, pillows thin and nonsupportive and shower curtains are moldy and stained, the entire image of the hotel is tarnished, and the guest most likely will not return.<sup>2</sup>

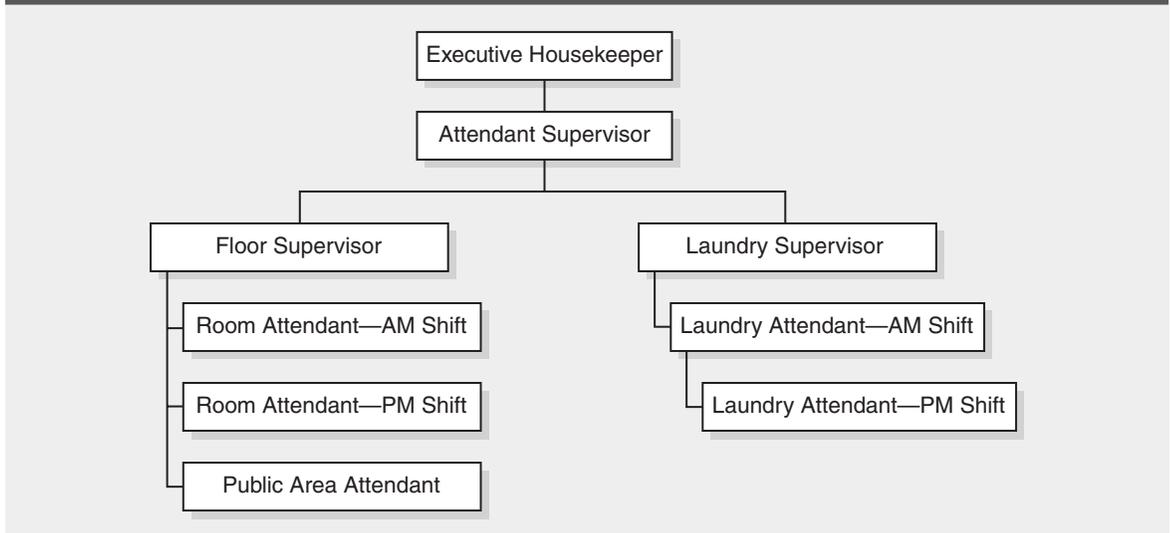
All of this advertising effort encourages a profitable financial bottom line for the hotel. Now let’s review the organization of the housekeeping department.

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## **Overview of a Housekeeping Department**

The housekeeping department is usually organized with an executive housekeeper as its leader. This person’s job, even in limited-service properties, is usually rather standard. In full-service hotels, an assistant executive housekeeper with floor supervisors manages the duties of the room attendants (housekeepers or housemen). Also, in limited service as well as full-service hotels, additional housekeepers are assigned to clean and maintain public areas. The responsibility for operating the in-house laundry also falls to the housekeeping department. The staffing of this housekeeping subdepartment includes a supervisor, shift supervisors, and attendants. Figure 15-1 is an organization chart of a housekeeping department for a large hotel, while Figure 15-2 is one for a limited-service property. Both properties operate an on-site laundry facility.

**FIGURE 15-1** Organization chart for a housekeeping department in a large hotel with in-house laundry.

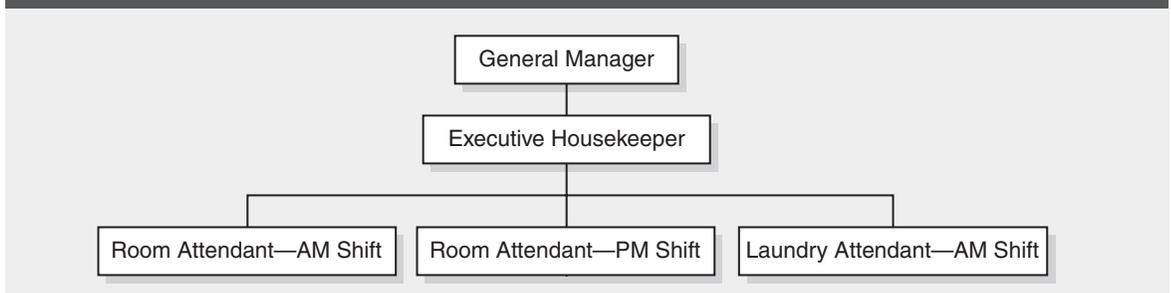


Shifts vary from hotel to hotel because of guest checkout times. Some executive housekeepers schedule a few room attendants from 7 A.M. to 3 P.M. and stagger the starting time of other room attendants depending on the size or nature of the group in the hotel. Laundry attendants may start earlier in the day depending on banquet and restaurant linens that must be laundered or laundry that was held from a previous day.

### **Relationship of the Executive Housekeeper to the General Manager**

The executive housekeeper facilitates the work of the general manager by coordinating operational efforts that affect the customer satisfaction level—which, in turn, has an enormous impact on the financial position of the hotel. For example, when a group of businesspersons that represents \$100,000 in gross sales to the hotel is pleased because the

**FIGURE 15-2** Organization chart for a housekeeping department in a limited-service hotel.



executive housekeeper's staff was able to provide quick turnaround service on room entry the day they arrived, keep the hallways free of room service trays, respond rapidly to requests for extra towels and toiletries, and maintain exceptionally clean bathrooms, then the executive housekeeper's staff can appreciate how important their role is in producing a profit for the hotel.

Throughout this text, the job analysis is used to trace the administrative and supervisory tasks of a member of the management team. The following job analysis portrays a typical day in the life of an executive housekeeper.

- 6:30 A.M. Greet laundry staff; reviews banquet laundry; checks voice mail for call-offs  
Checks for room status to clean; assigns rooms to attendants  
Calls extra people if needed
- 6:50 Checks with front office for updated room status report; assign rooms to attendants  
Conducts meeting with room attendants for announcements and five-minute stretching/exercising routines  
Lays out master keys by section and assignment sheets
- 7:00 Fills guest requests—toothbrushes, hairdryers, towels, cots  
Checks emails  
Checks deliveries of guest soap, toilet paper, chemicals, coffee, paper, linen, etc.  
Visits with room attendants at workstations
- 7:45 Works on projects such as employee schedules, employee insurance
- 9:00 Meets with laundry supervisor to discuss purchase of new dryer
- 9:30 Attends staff meeting—discusses upcoming events, occupancy, successes, etc.
- 9:35 Attends meeting with general manager to discuss new advertising program and how housekeeping department will be involved
- 11:15 Meets with assistant executive housekeeper on employee motivation program
- 12:00 P.M. Lunches with front office manager
- 12:45 Visits with room attendants to discuss condition of bedding
- 1:15 Meets with director of security to update a fire safety training session
- 2:30 Meets with front office manager to discuss recent comments on guest checkout
- 2:45 Prepares a to-do list for next day
- 3:00 Checks with front office manager on potential house count for tomorrow and next few days
- 3:15 Revises room attendant schedule for next day
- 4:00 Departs for the day

## HOSPITALITY PROFILE



Marti Cannon is the executive housekeeper at the Reading Sheraton Hotel in Reading, PA. She graduated from the University of Nevada at Las Vegas in Hotel Administration where some of her favorite courses were in foods, gaming, and hotel entertainment. Some of the part-time jobs she held while she was in college included front desk at the former Sands Hotel, inventory control, mystery shopper, and catering attendant in various hotels in Las Vegas hotels.

Her lodging career began with Marriott as the front desk manager at the 1000 room Los Angeles Marriott. She then traveled to New York and was promoted to the front office manager position at the 1800 room Marriott Marquis. She traveled back to the west coast and went to work for the San Antonio Marriott as the front office manager. As Marriott began to expand their brand, Ms. Cannon expanded her career and used her background to become the training manager for Courtyard by Marriott in Dallas, TX. Not wanting to reject a challenge, she went into another segment of the hospitality business and operated her own private business for 10 years—Cannons' Pub, which was an Irish pub in New York City. Her next move was back to the hotel business, but this time into the role of executive housekeeper at the 250 room Hotel Hershey in Hershey, PA. She continued build-

ing her career as executive housekeeper at the 750 room Hyatt Regency in San Francisco, CA and the 250 room Inn At Reading, located in Reading, PA.

Ms. Cannon describes her role as executive housekeeper in relation to the general manager as one that allows him to concentrate on issues of operating the hotel. He knows that rooms will be clean and guests will be satisfied with their rooms. If her department was not run efficiently, then it would take away time that the general manager would have to use on other projects such as marketing the hotel.

She belongs to the International Executive Housekeepers Association (I.E.H.A.) and feels that this organization provides useful information for her through their monthly trade journal—Executive Housekeeping Today. She also remains current by reading *Hotel & Motel Management Magazine*, *Laundry Today*, and she logs on to the web site [www.hotel-online.com](http://www.hotel-online.com) each day.

Some of the “big issues” she would like to pass along to students who should consider the role of an executive housekeeper on their way to the role of a general manager include knowing how to prepare budgets, costing payroll, and managing employees. She elaborated on managing employees to include motivating employees, working with them sometimes on the job, and developing loyalty with them on a one on one basis.

This job analysis indicates that the job of an executive housekeeper is focused on the small details of running a department, yet at the same time is concerned with the department's interaction with others, such as the front office and security. The executive housekeeper realizes that his or her department provides a service to the guest, and this service relies on good communication efforts with staff and departmental managers.

## **Management of a Housekeeping Department**

The executive housekeeper is a manager first and foremost. This department, like any other in the hotel, requires the ability to plan, organize, control, direct, and communicate with people. There are many systems to develop, details to oversee, and people to supervise to

## FRONTLINE REALITIES



Employees in your housekeeping department have indicated they are dissatisfied with their hourly rate of pay. They tell you that in the hotel located next door, they could earn an additional 50 cents per hour plus have one less room to clean per day. How would you respond?

ensure a well-run department. The job analysis indicates a diverse array of staffpersons, department heads, and hotel procedures that make up a typical day in the life of an executive housekeeper. In this section, we review topics that support management practices for executive housekeeping, including:

- Room assignment/workload
- Training
- Room inspection
- Housekeepers report
- Communication—English as a second language
- Inventory control—linens, guest supplies, cleaning supplies, furniture
- Cleaning control
- In-house laundry versus outsource laundry
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- Material Safety Data Sheets
- Going green
- Professional associations

## Room Assignment/Workload

The number of rooms assigned to a **room attendant** has particular significance to the hotelier and general manager, the executive housekeeper, and the room attendant. The hotelier and general manager look at this number as a measure of effective use of human resources, daily income, and guest hospitality. The executive housekeeper views the number as an indicator of how efficient his or her staff are in meeting daily goals and providing guest hospitality. The room attendant views the number of rooms assigned to him or her as “the work of the day”—something that provides an opportunity for fulfillment of his or her biological, safety, and social needs as well as an expression of hospitality to the guest.

Determining the number of rooms a room attendant can clean during a day takes into consideration the design of the room, room furnishings, fabrics, number of people occupying the room, nature of the guests in the room, training provided for employees, and incentives. The usual number is between 15 and 20, depending on the hotel and its policies.

The method of assigning room attendants starts with the executive housekeeper or the assistant to the executive housekeeper retrieving the number of rooms occupied the previous night (let’s say 180 rooms) from the PMS housekeeping module. This number is divided by the number of rooms assigned to each room attendant (let’s say 18). This quo-

**FIGURE 15-3** Room attendant staffing requirement chart.

No. Rooms in Hotel	Occupancy Percentage	No. Room Attendants Required
180	100	10.00
180	99	9.90
180	98	9.80
180	97	9.70
180	96	9.60
180	95	9.50
180	94	9.40
180	93	9.30
180	92	9.20
180	91	9.10
180	90	9.00
180	89	8.90
180	88	8.80
180	87	8.70
180	86	8.60
180	85	8.50
180	84	8.40
180	83	8.30
180	82	8.20
180	81	8.10
180	80	8.00

*Note:* Each room attendant is required to clean 18 rooms per day.

tient equals 10; therefore, the schedule for the day is adjusted to reflect the need for 10 room attendants. An executive housekeeper could prepare a chart like that shown in Figure 15-3 to assist in this daily room assignment. However, room characteristics like those previously mentioned usually detract from the chart's usefulness.

### **Training**

Training is an essential supervisory practice of the executive housekeeper. Each moment and movement of the staff is under the watchful eye of the guest for the production of hospitality and the hotel owner for efficiency and safety. Robert J. Martin, in his text *Professional Management of Housekeeping Operations*,<sup>3</sup> lists the following areas for skill training: bed making, vacuuming, dusting, window and mirror cleaning, setup awareness of the room, bathroom cleaning, daily routine of the worker, caring for and using equipment,

and industrial safety. These major areas provide focus points where time, labor, safety, and cost savings can be evaluated. Training should be viewed as an objective of a goal for delivering hospitality; a plan must be developed to carry out that objective.

How can the executive housekeeper most effectively train his or her staff? The answer reflects such factors as time available, skilled people in the department to train, resources for purchasing VCR or DVD equipment and materials, room available in which to hold training sessions, etc. However, the underlying question is whether or not the hotel owner or general manager believes training will improve hospitality. If so, then the small financial investment in training will pay large rewards.

It is important to provide training to both new and experienced employees. Training gives new employees the opportunity to strengthen skills brought with them, and it helps them adapt to their new environment. Training helps employees of all levels of experience take on new responsibilities with confidence, helping them to be more productive.<sup>4</sup>

### **Room Inspection**

If training is properly managed in the housekeeping department, then the task of room inspection, a final review of the room to assure that all housekeeping tasks are completed and room furnishings are in order, can be approached with a positive management strategy. In some hotels, one person is appointed to inspect rooms in each area prior to releasing them to the front desk for occupancy. This person, usually a supervisor, goes around to the rooms and inspects their cleanliness, orderliness, and operational details. Although this system may work well in some hotels, executive housekeepers should consider having room attendants inspect their own work. This saves time and builds employee confidence. If a motivational system is built into this option, then it will probably work. As for any good plan, an evaluation mechanism must be in place; examples include guest comment cards and a front desk staff who asks random guests at checkout for feedback on cleanliness of bathroom, bedding, proper working order of electronics, etc.

Another department that works closely with housekeeping in producing hospitality is maintenance. The following article describes how one hotel chain combines the talents of the employees of both these departments to self-inspect guest rooms. An incentive program is built in.

At PMHS hotels, managers empower their housekeepers. In addition to cleaning supplies and fresh linen, housekeepers also carry a small yellow “Zero Defects” kit containing fresh light bulbs and batteries for remote controls, and a small screwdriver to fix a loose toilet seat. Although housekeepers never do major repair work, all are equipped with the necessary training that allows them to discern what repairs they are able to do, and what repairs need a work order.

Jim Lowe, Director of Facilities for PMHS, explains the logic behind Zero Defects. “During the half-hour that a housekeeper spends cleaning a room, he or she uses all of the appliances, remote control, air conditioner or heater, and the faucet. Housekeepers are in a better position than anyone to evaluate whether or not a room is functional. And if there are any small repairs that need to be made, such as a new battery in a remote or a new filter for an air conditioner, the housekeeper is in the prime position to make them.”

If there are any problems the housekeeper is not able to fix, he or she fills out a three-part International Work Order. A maintenance technician takes it from there, treating the work order as if it were a guest complaint. The Zero Defects program, [PMHS chief operating officer Greg] Miller explains, anticipates and eliminates guest complaints.

To reward their housekeepers for taking a proactive stance, PMHS offers a bonus for every room that is inspected and found to have zero defects. The housekeeping department also receives a team bonus for every problem-free room. For every work order completed in a timely manner, maintenance technicians receive the same bonus.

One result of the Zero Defects program has been greater unity between the housekeeping and maintenance departments. “Instead of only communicating with each other by paperwork, our employees are free to consult one another and work together to make their jobs easier,” explains Miller. “These departments are indeed the ‘Heart of the House,’ and the Zero Defects program really makes that clear.”

In addition to bonuses and other incentives, the Zero Defects program includes a yearly event, the Heart of the House Olympics, in which staff from every hotel, as well as the corporate office, gets together for games, prizes, food, and fun. These programs make sure that keeping properties free of defects is profitable for both employees and employers.<sup>5</sup>

## **Housekeeper’s Report**

The housekeeper’s report was introduced in chapter 10. This report verifies the number of rooms sold on a particular night as well as rooms vacant and rooms out of order. This is an essential communication tool for the night auditor as he or she compiles the financial data for the current day’s activities.

This report is compiled from the housekeeping status transmissions that are relayed to the front office throughout the day via the PMS or telephone calls, voice messages, text messaging, emails, electronic data submission, or, in some hotels, a visit to the front desk to transfer the current housekeeping status. The executive housekeeper or his or her representative assembles data like that displayed in Figure 10-6. This function, provided by the executive housekeeper, is a safeguard in the accounting process.

## **Communication**

### ***English as a Second Language (ESL)***

The hospitality industry has always provided individuals with an initial access to their careers. Working as a bellperson, front desk clerk, receptionist, or in the food service areas of the hospitality industry allows people to earn funds for furthering their academic career or supporting a growing family. The hospitality industry also continues to attract many people for whom English is a second language. Executive housekeepers are challenged to manage employees with limited English communication skills in areas such as issuing daily duties, training, and communication. How can these communication bridges be crossed with ease?

Some of the strategies that an executive housekeeper may develop would be to initially locate an English-speaking group leader with whom the minority feels comfortable and

**FIGURE 15-4** Spanish numerals—English phonetics pronunciation.

Spanish	English
Uno	Oo no
Dos	Dose
Tres	Trese
Cuatro	Quatro
Cinco	Sin co
Seis	Sais
Siete	See eight a
Ocho	Och oo
Nueve	New vea
Diez	De es

communicate with that person to get your strategy developed with others in the minority-speaking group. Try to develop a rapport and a trust level that communication is important for delivery of hospitality to the guest, performing their job, and their safety. Next there are several English as second language resources on the market that could serve as a reference for the minority-speaking employees. Also, there are many resources on the market for foreign languages that an executive housekeeper could refer to in order to develop training aids for phonetic pronunciation, such as that in Figure 15-4.

**Communication Between Departments** Communication between the front office and the housekeeping department is most important in the delivery of hospitality to the guest. After room attendants complete their tasks, they must relay this information to the PMS. If their work is delayed—and, hence, the transfer of the information—then so is the delivery of hospitality. Review the following scenario to see how a small gesture to fulfill a need for a group of guests caused great turmoil.

## INTERNATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



A regional conference of meeting planners whose clientele is international is scheduled to take place in your city. The general manager of your hotel, a member of the local visitors bureau, agrees to host the event and requests that her team develop ways to show their welcome of international guests into the hotel. Some of the ways the executive housekeeper cites in his presentation are (1) room attendants are made aware of international guests upon check-in; (2) room attendants can speak at least two languages; and (3) room attendants inquire if international guests need additional travel accessories to make their visit easier.

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## **Situation 1: Why Can't Room Attendants in Housekeeping Get Those Rooms Cleaned More Quickly, or, If That Guest Asks One More Time . . .**

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It is a busy Tuesday morning at the front desk. The Rosebud Flower Association (350 guests) is checking out of the hotel. The Franklin Actuary Society (250 guests) is beginning to arrive for registration. Yesterday, the president of Rosebud, Jose Rodriguez, requested a late checkout for all his members because they had to vote on an important legislative issue. The president asked a desk clerk, Samantha (a new member of the front office staff), to approve the late checkout. Samantha, unaware of any reason not to grant this request, OK'd a 2:30 P.M. checkout time.

It is 11:15 A.M., and the front office manager is on the phone with the housekeeper asking why some of the rooms have not been released. The housekeeper assures the front office manager that he will investigate the situation immediately and goes to the first, second, and third floors of the hotel to speak with the floor supervisors. They tell him that there are DO NOT DISTURB signs on the doors of the majority of the rooms. One of the guests told the supervisor on the second floor that he had permission to stay in his room until 2:30 P.M. When the housekeeper relays this information to the front office manager, a nasty exchange takes place concerning the delivery of professional hospitality.

It is now 3:15 P.M., and the hotel lobby is jammed with people checking out and checking in. Only about 20 percent of the rooms needed have been released by housekeeping. The food and beverage manager arrives and suggests to the front office manager that he announce the availability of the hotel coffee shop and lounge to the waiting guests. The front office manager feels this is a good idea but that, with such chaos, no one would hear the announcement. Therefore, he does not make the announcement.

At 7:20 P.M., the last guest is checked in. The front office manager breathes a sigh of relief and happens to notice a gift box addressed to Samantha, who opens it and reads the card out loud: "Extra thanks to you for your kind consideration." The front office manager reminds Samantha that gifts from registered guests are not encouraged. Samantha replies that this is from a former guest—"You know, that nice Mr. Rodriguez from the flower association. All he asked for was a late checkout time for his group."

### **Analysis**

The miscommunication in this case was the fault of the front office manager. At some time during the orientation and training of new employees, the front office manager must communicate the policies, procedures, and limits of authority. Well-developed operational policies and procedures and documented training enable communications to flourish. For example, new employee orientation should include a discussion on the policy for communicating requests for late checkout to the supervisor on duty. An in-depth review of the clearance procedure that the supervisor on duty must follow would further help the new employee understand that the front office does not act alone. A decision made by one employee affects the work of many people. A typical review of procedures could include the following:

1. Consult with the reservations manager to determine the expected time of departure for the guests or groups of guests currently in the hotel and expected times of arrival of those who will be registering the next day.
2. Consult with the director of marketing and sales to determine if any special group requests concerning checkout departure on arrival times have been granted.
3. Consult with the housekeeper to determine the effect of a delayed checkout time on daily operations of the housekeeping department.
4. If the request for a delayed checkout time will conflict with another group's check-in time but the situation warrants approval of the request, ask the food and beverage manager to set up a special snack table in the lobby for guests unable to check into their rooms.

When the front office manager takes the time to explain the policies and procedures of the department, the new employee can think through situations rather than responding with a knee-jerk reaction. The delivery of service in a hotel requires the employee to be able to meet the needs of the guests by exercising his or her authority and taking responsibility for conveying an atmosphere of hospitality.

## Inventory Control

Inventory control is a major responsibility of the executive housekeeper. Linens, guest supplies, cleaning supplies, fixtures, and furniture all require attentive review for timely replenishment and replacement.

### ***Linen Control***

Linen control is based on a **par system**—an established level of inventory that provides adequately for service. The par system is established by the hotel general manager because linens are a major expense for the hotel. For example, if the hotel decided to have a par of four (one set of sheets in the wash, one set of sheets on the bed, and two sets of sheets on the shelf ready for use) rather than a par of three (one set of sheets in the wash, one set of sheets on the bed, and one set of sheet on the shelf ready for use), the additional set of sheets could tie up several thousands of dollars each year in inventory. The same reasoning is applied to bath towels, bath mats, hand towels, face cloths, pillowcases, blankets, bedspreads, and so on.

### ***Guest Supplies***

Guest supplies, more commonly referred to as guest **amenities**—personal toiletries or care items—are another cost to the hotel that requires close attention because they support guest hospitality but are open to theft. Guests enjoy and appreciate the small bottles of shampoo, hair conditioner, lotion, soap, mouthwash, shoeshine cloth, mending kit, and other amenities. However, supplying these goods costs the hotel at least \$1.50 per guest room per room-night. If this figure is extended for a hotel with 250 rooms and an annual 65 percent occupancy, the expense rises to \$88,968.75.

$$(250 \times 0.65 \times 365 = 59,312 \text{ rooms} \times \$1.50 = \$88,968.75)$$

## FRONTLINE REALITIES



One of the housekeepers asks you where she can obtain more information on a certain chemical included in a cleaning solution she uses for the bathroom tubs. Lately she has a rash on her forearm, and she thinks this cleaner is causing the rash. How would you assist the housekeeper in locating the information?

Keep in mind that this is a *minimum*, and some hotels spend more. Not only is the hotel spending that amount of money on a guest service, these types of products are easily removed from the premises by guests and employees from storage rooms and housekeeper's carts parked in hallways during cleaning time. For these reasons, a workable inventory system must be initiated that ensures ease of use accountability. Figure 15-5 displays a simple inventory request, while Figure 15-6 displays a weekly inventory sheet.

[*Author's note:* The definition of *amenities* has recently begun to include other guest room equipment such as the items cited in the title of this article dated February 15, 2005: "Hilton Garden Inn® Evolving with New Guest Room Amenities: 26" Flat Panel High-def TVs, Ergonomic Desk Chair and New Technology Air Cell Mattresses."]<sup>6</sup>

### Cleaning Supplies

Cleaning supplies for guest rooms include cleaners, disinfectants, and polishers for windows, tile, bathroom fixtures, office furniture, kitchen equipment, living room furniture, and so on. These may be purchased in one-gallon to five-gallon or larger containers for economy, or in aerosol cans. The larger containers of the product are stored in the housekeeping department area, while the usable sizes for guest room cleaning are stored on the room attendant's cart. The product is dispensed into these smaller, more usable containers for the room attendants. Dispensing must be controlled by the executive housekeeper with a requisition and inventory sheet, as shown in Figures 15-7 and 15-8.

**FIGURE 15-5** Inventory requisition for amenities.

The Times Hotel Housekeeping Department Requisition			
Attendant Name	<u>I. Maid</u>	Floor #	<u>2</u>
		Cart #	<u>4</u>
Amount	ITEM #	ITEM	SIZE
24	4530	Deod. Soap	1.5 oz.
24	6309	Shampoo	2 oz.
12	6555	Cond.	2 oz.
6	9845	Sewing Kit	Small
Issued by	<u>John Housekeeper</u>	Received by	<u>I. Maid</u>
Today's Date	<u>May 1</u>		

**FIGURE 15-6** Weekly inventory—guest supplies.

**The Times Hotel Housekeeping Department**

**Inventory Sheet**

Category: \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM #	SIZE	Beg. Inv.	+ Purch.	- End Inv.	Amt. Used	Price/Unit	Extension
4530	1.5 oz.	3 cs.	13	15	3	\$40.00	\$120.00
4535	1.5 oz.	3 cs.	7	6	4	\$30.00	\$120.00
4540	1.5 oz.	2 cs.	5	5	2	\$45.00	\$90.00

Counted by: L. Smith      Recorded by: D. Manager

Today's Date May 8

## Fixtures

Fixtures of all types, makes, and sizes make the guest rooms, lobby, and public spaces the bright and inviting places that please the guest. However, all of these must be maintained. In some hotels, this is the responsibility of the housekeeping department. The light bulbs that go in the many lamps and chandeliers located throughout the hotel as well as the batteries that operate hand-held devices and smoke alarms (if the property is not electrically wired for such purposes) must be checked periodically to determine if they need to be replaced.

With respect to light bulbs and batteries, a preventative maintenance program must be initiated to ensure that guests' safety is at the forefront. For example, a room attendant

**FIGURE 15-7** Requisition sheet—cleaning supplies.

**The Times Hotel Housekeeping Department Requisition**

Attendant Name I. Maid Floor # 2 Cart # 4

Amount	ITEM #	ITEM	SIZE
1	290	Window Cleaner Spray	12 oz.
2	387	Tile Cleaner Spray Can	12 oz.
1	6555	Spray Bottle 20 oz.	24 oz.

Issued by J. Housekeeper Received by I. Maid

Today's Date May 1

**FIGURE 15-8** Weekly inventory—cleaning supplies.

<b>The Times Hotel Housekeeping Department</b>							
<b>Inventory Sheet</b>							
Category: _____							
ITEM #	SIZE	Beg. Inv.	+ Purch.	- End Inv.	Amt. Used	Price/Unit	Extension
387	12 oz.	5	13	15	3	\$2.10	\$6.10
Counted by: L. Smith		Recorded by: D. Manager					
Today's Date <u>May 8</u>							

may be assigned to go around regularly and check the level of energy in batteries in TV remote controls instead of waiting for a guest to call the front desk and ask for a replacement. These activities can be controlled through a computerized spreadsheet program that tracks the replacement trail of light bulbs and batteries for a particular unit. The dispensing of light bulbs and batteries requires control mechanisms (requisition sheets and inventory sheets) similar to those used for dispensing guest room and other cleaning supplies.

### ***Furniture***

Hotel basements are filled with used and worn-out furniture. These retired pieces of furniture represent the many inventory dollars that were spent furnishing a guest room. Each item in the room—pictures, beds, headboards, desk chairs, tables, arm chairs, desks, portable closets, televisions, computers, armoires—represents an investment by the hotel in a business venture. Therefore, this costly pursuit requires control in maintaining them as new. Each piece of furniture should be cared for according to manufacturer's recommendation. This may be as simple as "Use a clean, damp cloth," or "Polish wooden surface with lemon oil polish as needed." A system should be developed that identifies each piece of equipment with its date of purchase, cost, its location/relocation, refurbishing, and any other data the hotel wants to track. For example, if a hotel has a consistent group of business travelers, it may consider relocating the pictures on the wall periodically. Also, television sets have a certain life span; this should be tracked and that data used for developing budgets.

### **Theft Control of Inventory**

Unfortunately, theft by guests and employees in the housekeeping department is commonplace. "The American Hotel & Lodging Association estimates that theft in hotel rooms—from towels to televisions—costs the lodging industry \$100 million annually." Mark Snyder, senior vice president of brand management for Holiday Inn, says that

informal research estimates that 560,000 towels are stolen per year.<sup>7</sup> This should not be accepted; rather, aggressive campaigns against theft should be developed. Small items from attendants' carts are an easy target for removal by guests passing in the hallway. Usually these carts are overloaded with items exposed for viewing. Perhaps placing tempting items in plastic see-through boxes would inhibit a passerby from picking them up.

More important than developing ways to control theft is for the executive housekeeper to calculate how much theft costs the hotel and then turn the challenge over to the employees. For example, if a particular hotel is experiencing a theft of \$45,000 per year from towels, linens, toiletries, remote controls, toilet paper, tissue paper, light bulbs, batteries, televisions, etc., the executive housekeeper could develop a committee to address this challenge. The plan might include incentives so that a percentage of savings experienced because of theft reduction is passed along to employees.

## Cleaning Control

The mark of the housekeeping department is cleaning. Most housekeeping departments have one standardized routine for cleaning rooms and another for **deep cleaning**—a more thorough cleaning of furniture and accessories, windows, flooring, and walls. This process encompasses the guest rooms and the public areas. It requires a plan of communication with the front office manager to determine when occupancy will be low; with the maintenance engineer to identify scheduled repair dates; and with the food and beverage manager to identify down times in which empty banquet rooms can be deep cleaned. The plan is facilitated with a spreadsheet that outlines the room or area that needs to be deep cleaned and the specific sections of the room or area that need attention; the date is entered to maintain a continuous log of that particular deep cleaning activity. See Figure 15-9 for an example of a deep cleaning control log.

**FIGURE 15-9** Deep cleaning log.

The Times Hotel Deep Cleaning Log						
Room	Rug Shampoo	Wall Wash	Wall Paint	Window Wash Outside	Grout	Mattress Turning Date
101	Jan. 10		Dec. 15	July 1	Dec. 1	April 5
102	Jan. 10		Dec. 15	July 1	Dec. 1	April 7
103	Jan. 13		Dec. 15	July 1	Dec. 5	April 9
104	Jan. 13		Dec. 15	July 1	Dec. 5	April 20
105	Jan. 13		Dec. 15	July 1	Dec. 7	April 23

## **In-house Laundry versus Outsourced Laundry**

The decision of how to provide clean linens, uniforms, and other fabric items for the hotel depends on several factors. According to Martin,<sup>8</sup> planning an in-house laundry should include the following ten concepts: determination of needs; system definition and space allocation; equipment layouts; equipment selection, specifications, and budgets; detailed drawing and specification; equipment procurement and shipment coordination; installation scheduling and supervision; start-up, test, and demonstration; operator training, maintenance; and after-sale service. These well-thought-out concepts are time-consuming but assure the executive housekeeper that the in-house laundry will be operated correctly and efficiently.

Why would a hotel consider outsourcing this function if it's going to be operated so well? Review the above list and note the required capital investment in equipment and replacement of that equipment; the cost of maintaining the equipment; the cost of personnel to operate the facility; the cost of training personnel; and the initial investment in linen and uniform inventory. On the plus side, the in-house laundry gives greater control of where and when the inventory will be laundered, stored, and ready for use.

The outsourcing of laundry eliminates all the planning, with the exception of storage, for the hotel. There is no initial cash outlay for equipment and inventory and no replacement costs either. Also, preventive and emergency maintenance of equipment is not a concern. However, some hoteliers still don't adopt the outsourcing opportunity because they feel they will lose control of their inventories through irregular pickup and deliveries and through sorting mistakes at the cleaning plant.<sup>9</sup>

## **Occupational Safety and Health Administration**

The goal of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), in existence since 1971, is to send every worker home whole and healthy every day. OSHA carries out the following tasks, which are important in operating the housekeeping department:

- Encourages employers and employees to reduce workplace hazards and to implement new safety and health programs or improve existing programs.
- Develops mandatory job safety and health standards and enforces them through worksite inspections, employer assistance, and, sometimes, by imposing citations or penalties or both.
- Establishes responsibilities and rights for employers and employees to achieve better safety and health conditions.
- Conducts research, either directly or through grants and contracts, to develop innovative ways of dealing with workplace hazards.
- Maintains a reporting and recordkeeping system to monitor job-related injuries and illnesses.
- Establishes training programs to increase the competence of occupational safety and health personnel.

- Develops, analyzes, evaluates, and approves state occupational safety and health programs.
- Provides technical and compliance assistance, training and education, and cooperative programs and partnerships to help employers reduce worker accidents and injuries.

If you are an *employer* covered by OSHA, you must:

- Meet your general duty responsibility to provide a workplace free from recognized hazards.
- Keep workers informed about OSHA and safety and health matters with which they are involved.
- Comply in a responsible manner with standards, rules, and regulations issued by OSHA.
- Be familiar with mandatory OSHA standards.
- Make copies of standards available to employees for review upon request.
- Evaluate workplace conditions.
- Minimize or eliminate potential hazards.
- Make sure employees have and use safe, properly maintained tools and equipment (including appropriate personal protective equipment).
- Warn employees of potential hazards.
- Establish or update operating procedures and communicate them to employees.
- Provide medical examinations when required.
- Provide training required by OSHA standards.
- Report within eight hours any accident that results in a fatality or the hospitalization of three or more employees.
- Keep OSHA-required records of work-related injuries and illnesses, unless otherwise specified.
- Post a copy of the *OSHA 200—Log and Summary of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses* for the prior year each year during the entire month of February unless otherwise specified.
- Post, at a prominent location within the workplace, the OSHA poster (OSHA 2203) informing employees of their rights and responsibilities.
- Provide employees, former employees, and their representatives access to the OSHA 200 form at a reasonable time and in a reasonable manner.
- Provide access to employee medical records and exposure records.
- Cooperate with OSHA compliance officers.
- Not discriminate against employees who properly exercise their rights under OSHA.
- Post OSHA citations and abatement verification notices at or near the worksite involved.
- Abate cited violations within the prescribed period.<sup>10</sup>

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## Material Safety Data Sheets

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**Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)**—a listing of the chemical contents, relative hazards to the users, and name and address of the producers of the contents—are a mainstay in the housekeeping departments of hotels. MSD sheets are available for employees to read in a readily available area. Each MSD sheet has specific requirements, including the following.<sup>11</sup>

Each Material Safety Data Sheet shall be in English, and shall contain at least the following information:

1. The identity (product name) used on the label, and chemical and common name(s) of ingredients which have been determined to be health hazards, and which comprise 1% or greater of the composition, except carcinogens shall be listed if the concentrations are 0.1% or greater; and,
2. The chemical and common name(s) of all ingredients which have been determined to present a physical hazard when present in the mixture;
3. Relevant physical and chemical characteristics of the hazardous chemical (such as vapor pressure, flash point);
4. Relevant physical hazards, including the potential for fire, explosion, and reactivity;
5. Relevant health hazards, including signs and symptoms of exposure, and any medical conditions generally recognized as being aggravated by exposure to the chemical;
6. The primary route(s) of entry into the body;
7. The OSHA permissible exposure limit and ACGIH Threshold Limit Value. Additional applicable exposure limits may be listed;
8. Whether the hazardous chemical is listed in the National Toxicology Program (NTP) Annual Report on Carcinogens (latest edition) or has been found to be a potential carcinogen in the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) Monographs (latest editions), or by OSHA;
9. Precautions for safe handling and use, including appropriate hygienic practices, protective measures during repair and maintenance of contaminated equipment, and procedures for clean-up of spills and leaks;
10. Appropriate control measures, such as engineering controls, work practices, or personal protective equipment;
11. Emergency and first aid procedures;
12. The date of preparation of the Material Safety Data Sheet or the last change to it; and,
13. The name, address and telephone number of the chemical manufacturer, importer, employer or other responsible party preparing or distributing the Material Safety

Data Sheet, who can provide additional information on the hazardous chemical and appropriate emergency procedures, if necessary.

The history of the MSDS is as follows:<sup>12</sup>

On November 25, 1983, OSHA published the Hazard Communication Standard as 29 CFR Part 1910, adding §1910.1200. This initial standard applied only to Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Codes 20 through 39. The requirement that manufacturers and distributors provide MSDSs to their customers became effective on November 25, 1985. The standard does not require a particular format for the MSDS but does specify what information must be included. Effective September 23, 1987, the requirements of the standard were extended to include “. . . all employers with employees exposed to hazardous chemicals in their workplaces.”

In 1986, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published the “Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986,” and in 1988 “Toxic Chemical Release Reporting: Community Right-to-Know.” The use and distribution of MSDSs is an important part of these regulations. The “Toxic Chemical Release Reporting” regulation requires that MSDSs for chemicals requiring reporting by these regulations contain specific language notifying users that these chemicals are subject to these regulations. These and other EPA regulations have been promulgated under Title III C Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (EPCRA).

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## Going Green

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Businesspersons should reflect carefully on the responsibility to take care of environmental resources. This is not only a responsibility that organizations owe to future generations but also another opportunity to make profits for the organization. The money saved in laundry cleaning products, energy to operate washers, dryers, and other pieces of equipment in the laundry, water to launder bedding and towels, and labor in person-hours can add up.

Many hotels place a printed card on the pillow of an unmade bed asking guests to indicate their preference for bed making as an option. This can save many thousands of gallons of water, energy, and cleaning products per day if guests are inclined to participate with this program.

Ishmael Mensah reports, “Studies conducted by the International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI) and Accor revealed that 90% of hotel guests preferred to stay in a hotel that cared for the environment.” He says, “Cost savings seem to be the prime motivation for the increasing adoption of environmental management practices [energy and water] in hotels.”<sup>13</sup>

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## Americans with Disability Compliance

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One part of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990—adapting accommodations for people with physical challenges—should alert executive housekeepers to prepare their staff for compliance with this law and delivery of hospitality. Curtis<sup>14</sup> has written a thoughtful article for executive housekeepers on this topic. Highlights of the article include:

The foremost rule must always be to treat every guest with respect and dignity. Speak directly to the guest, not to a companion. Just relax. People who are blind also say, “Its nice to see you.”

Try hands-on training. Use a wheelchair to navigate through the hotel—or have one employee try to help guide another while one is blindfolded. If a guest has a guide dog, do not pet or play with the animal. It is performing a job and should not be distracted.

Training in the housekeeping department involves teaching housekeepers to leave guests’ personal belongings precisely where they were found once the guestroom has been cleaned. The hand-held showerhead must be left hanging, furniture must not be repositioned, and hallways must be kept clear to allow movement.

If guests request a guide to get to their room, an employee should offer an arm or shoulder and provide verbal commentary while proceeding through the hotel. For example: “The elevator is 20 paces to your right. Your guest room is three doors past the elevator on the left. The key card slot is located two inches above the door handle.” Specific quantifiable directions are crucial to the visually impaired.

Staff should explain where emergency exits are located relative to the guest’s room and note the numbers to dial on the telephone to reach the front desk and other services. Be clear in terms of directions. Don’t say “over there.”

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## Professional Associations

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The American Hotel & Lodging Association’s (AH&LA) Educational Institute (EI) offers a Certified Hospitality Housekeeping Executive (CHHE) program for executive housekeepers. AH&LA is headquartered in Washington, D.C., for its 10,000 property members, and is prominent in supporting hoteliers with their operations, education, communications, and lobby efforts. The website for the AH&LA is <http://www.ahla.com/index.asp>, and the website for the EI is <http://www.ei-ahla.org/>.

The International Executive Housekeepers Association (IEHA), located in Westerville, Ohio, provides an opportunity for executive housekeepers to earn status in their profession as Certified Executive Housekeeper (CEH) and Registered Executive Housekeeper (REH). Its membership in 2004 was 3,500 within 16 districts and 95 chapters. The IEHA offers its membership *Executive Housekeeping Today* as their monthly trade publication and newsletter. Their website address is <http://www.ieha.org/>.

## Solution To Opening Dilemma

This is a common question. The industry norm of 18 rooms per housekeeper per day can be maintained if proper training is implemented and maintained, adequate supervision and motivation is provided, and adequate tools and equipment are available. If any of these are missing on a daily basis, the overall picture will reflect the lapse.

## Chapter Recap

This chapter focused on the executive housekeeper as the manager of many opportunities to provide hospitality to guests. The first section discussed how the efforts of the housekeeping department supplement the marketing efforts of the hotel. The organization of the housekeeping department for full-service and limited-service properties was described. The relationship of the executive housekeeper to the general manager was delineated with a job analysis that traced his or her typical day. The final section of this chapter focused on the management of a housekeeping department. Topics included the significance of room assignment and workload of the staff to the hotelier, executive housekeeper, and employee. The method of assigning room attendants was also discussed, as was the importance of staff training. The key element of room inspection and how to organize this practice was presented. The housekeeper's report was presented as a crucial link in the hotel's communication chain. Communication in the housekeeping department with regard to the important aspects of English as a second language and communication between departments was offered. Inventory control of linens, guest supplies, cleaning supplies, fixtures, and furniture, was presented with a focus on meeting goals of profitability and guest service. Theft control of inventory was presented together with the suggestion that employees work to resolve the problem. The master plan for cleaning control or deep cleaning was described. A plan for developing an in-house laundry and a discussion on the pros and cons of an in-house laundry versus outsourcing was included. Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Material Safety Data Sheets were presented with historical notes and a discussion of related administrative responsibilities. Going green was introduced not only as a popular consumer trend but also as an opportunity to save money for the organization. The section on compliance with the Americans with Disability Act encouraged future executive hoteliers to prepare their staff with practical tips on delivering guest hospitality to people with physical challenges. Certification information offered through professional associations such as the American Hotel & Lodging Association's Educational Institute and the International Executive Housekeepers Association was presented.

## End-of-Chapter Questions

1. Mr. Jones is a corporate executive traveling on an expense account. He finds that his room has no extra towels, old socks are left under a chair, and the television remote batteries are dead. How does this reflect on the importance of the housekeeping department in the marketing plan of the hotel?
2. If you are employed in a full-service hotel, talk with the executive director of the housekeeping department and ask him or her to outline the organization of the department.
3. If you are employed in a limited-service hotel, talk with the executive director of the housekeeping department and ask him or her to outline the organization of the department.
4. What does the job analysis of an executive housekeeper tell you about his or her job?
5. How does the assignment of rooms differ to (1) hotelier and general manager; (2) executive housekeeper; and (3) room attendant?
6. If you had to develop a list of skills in which to train a room attendant, what would you include?
7. What is your opinion of having room attendants inspect their own rooms? What built-in safeguards would you include to make the system work if you support it?
8. Why is the housekeeper's report so important to the night audit?
9. Do you think offering English as a second language courses to housekeeping staff will help them in performing their job?
10. Explain the par system for linen control. Do you think raising the par by one or two items will be a problem for the hotel?
11. How should guest amenities be controlled?
12. How should cleaning supplies be controlled?
13. What would you include on a computerized spreadsheet program to control the maintenance of the fixtures in a hotel?
14. How do you feel about including employees in developing a plan to decrease theft in a hotel? What incentives would you include to make this plan work?
15. What does the term *deep cleaning* indicate, and how do executive housekeepers organize it?

16. Discuss what to include in planning an in-house laundry.
17. Discuss the pros and cons of an in-house versus an outsourced laundry.
18. What are the main features of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration law of April 28, 1971?
19. What are Material Safety Data Sheets? If you are employed in a hotel, ask your executive housekeeper for a copy of one to bring to class.
20. How can going green be a win-win situation for a hotel's marketing and housekeeping departments?
21. What are some ways to comply with the Americans with Disability Act?
22. View the websites of the American Hotel & Lodging Association's Educational Institute and the International Executive Housekeepers Association to determine the requirements for their certification of executive housekeepers. What is your opinion of these requirements?

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### CASE STUDY 1501

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Margaret Chu, general manager of The Times Hotel, asked Thomas Brown, executive housekeeper, to review the most recent display copy for the new billboard. Tom looked at the copy and said, "Margaret, what is it that you want me to say? I see our hotel, a bellman opening the door. And there is the caption—Our House Is Your House. And that's all." Margaret responded, "Tom, we put this billboard together to not only get people in the door of The Times Hotel, but to keep them here. Our marketing department tells me that it is the cleanliness of the hotel that will bring them back. Guests want a room

that is exceptionally clean—no excuses. Tom, can you guarantee this? This billboard campaign is going to cost us over \$25,000. That's a lot of money I am allocating in the budget this quarter. Our owners are depending on us to bring these corporate guests back for the second, third, and fourth visits!" Tom left the meeting with Margaret and decided that he had to develop a plan to make his part of the advertising campaign work. He wants to be sure his staff of room attendants benefit from a plan for training and motivation. If you were the executive housekeeper, how would you proceed with such a plan?

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### CASE STUDY 1502

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Thomas Brown, executive housekeeper of The Times Hotel, has been reviewing the last five quarterly reports on linen costs from the supplier, and he feels this cost is getting out of control. In addition to that, the supplier was unreliable in over the busy

convention season. Mr. Brown scheduled a meeting with Simon International Laundry Equipment in two days to discuss the possibility of an in-house laundry. What should he research prior to the meeting?

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## Key Words

amenities

room attendant

deep cleaning

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)

par system