

Healing : Jurnal Pariwisata

Volume 02 No. 01 | 2023

E-ISSN : 2964-8378

Homepage : <https://journal.cdfpublisher.org/index.php/Pariwisata/index>

The Role of the Concierge in the Front Office Department at the Swiss-Belinn Hotel Jalan Surabaya Medan

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| Article Info | ABSTRACT |
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| Keywords: Concierge Responsibility Goods Handling | <p>The Concierge is an essential part of the Front Office department, playing a significant role in enhancing service quality and guest satisfaction. Responsibilities include providing information, handling guest belongings, welcoming guests at the hotel entrance, locating guests within the premises, managing vehicle parking, arranging external transportation, and assisting with airport pick-up and drop-off services.</p> <p>To obtain accurate and reliable data, the researcher conducted direct field observations using a qualitative approach. Observations were carried out involving two Concierge staff members, one Front Office Supervisor, and twelve hotel guests at Swiss-Belinn Hotel, Jalan Surabaya, Medan. The findings indicate that the performance of Concierge staff is still lacking in several areas, particularly in guest service and the handling of guest items. Additionally, weak interdepartmental communication has led to misunderstandings that affect overall hotel operations.</p> <p>This study recommends that the hotel reinforce the implementation of existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), ensure careful and attentive handling of guest belongings, and foster stronger collaboration between departments. Strengthening these aspects is expected to improve operational efficiency and enhance guest satisfaction.</p> |

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INTRODUCTION

Hotels are a business sector that is developing along with the progress of the tourism sector. Hotels as a means of public accommodation are very helpful for visiting tourists because they provide facilities and services such as lodging, food and drink and other services for the public to stay in temporarily and are managed commercially with the aim of making a profit. The demands of tourists who want to get accommodation services on demand are driving the hotel business to continue to expand, both quantitatively and qualitatively. This is inseparable from mobilization throughout the world which is increasing from time to time.

In line with developments over time, the hotel business does not just provide accommodation, food and drink facilities, but has expanded to fulfill other needs such as therapy, entertainment, sports and recreation. Along with the development of tourist destinations and business development in the city of Medan, it has triggered the development of hotels throughout the city of Medan. With the large number of hotels in Medan, competition for the hotel business in the city of Medan is becoming increasingly tight. This makes every hotel survive and must be able to compete with its competitors. The presence of new hotels in the Medan area means

hotel business owners must increase resource productivity in hotel businesses and improve the quality of service provided to guests so that guests want to return to the hotel.

The hotel business has special characteristics, namely a combination of the business of selling tangible hotel products (tangible products) such as rooms, food and drinks with service businesses (intangible products) such as friendliness, courtesy, dexterity, speed. Convenience and so on. The Front Office Department is one of the departments in a hotel that has this, this department is the heart of a hotel, because the Front Office is one of the departments in a hotel that first welcomes and takes care of guests' room needs.

The Front Office is the department that handles guests who will stay overnight, starting from reservations, reception, guests arriving (Check-In), until guests leave the hotel (Check-Out). In accordance with this, all employees in the Front Office Department must be ready, alert, precise and able to carry out their functions, duties and responsibilities as fully as possible. This is very important for hotel operations to improve the quality of service whether guests come to stay or not. This situation makes the Front Office Department "The first and the last impression of the guest", meaning that this section is the first and last impression of the guest. Guests arriving at the hotel are greeted by the Concierge and then taken to Reception for Check-In registration. At check-out time, guests will be in contact with staff from the Front Office Department. So a deep impression will be created from the Front Office Department. Concierge is a part of the Front Office department which has an important role in improving quality and service in terms of handling all guest requests and needs so that every guest has a good impression of the hotel. The duties and responsibilities of a Concierge are to provide services for handling guest luggage when arriving at the hotel and handling guest luggage when leaving or leaving their luggage, explaining the facilities at the hotel and how to use them, welcoming guests who arrive and can help guests find transportation for guests travel to their destination. That's what makes a concierge have to have an honest, precise and fast attitude in carrying out his duties. Bellboy is one of the Concierge sections whose main task is to help lift guests' belongings during Check-in, Check-out, Move Room and help store guest suitcases/bags if guests want to leave their items in the luggage store and are able to explain the facilities at the hotel. along with how to use it. A Concierge also has duties and responsibilities as a source of information for guests, for this reason a Concierge must consistently know various kinds of information ranging from tourism, culinary places, shopping places, and various ongoing events.

In the work carried out by Concierge staff, obstacles and problems often occur. The concierge in charge of carrying goods must also pay careful attention to the type and number of items being carried. For example, when the author conducted research at the Swiss-Belinn hotel, Jalan Surabaya, Medan, the Concierge staff handled guests' luggage at check-in, the staff put the guests' belongings on the trolley beyond the proper load or limit, were not arranged neatly and did not look carefully. the type and number of guests' luggage when being put on the trolley so that when the guest gets the room number, the staff must push it very slowly and need to be careful with the items so that they don't fall when pushing and lifting them into the lift, when the staff is already in front of the guest's room, The guest's items are at the bottom and are not in sequence, so the staff has to unload all the cargo on the trolley again, making service to guests less precise and fast.

There are still concierge staff at the Swiss-Belinn hotel, Jalan Surabaya, Medan who do not carry out their duties and responsibilities, such as when guests ask for information about recommended tourism or culinary delights around the hotel and in the city of Medan, there are still many staff there who are not updated. with regards to information and a lack of welcome when guests enter the hotel for check-in, starting from a lack of asking if they need help with the guest's luggage and opening the door when the guest wants to enter the hotel so that the guest feels poorly served at the hotel.

And the working relationship between the departments that are still involved with the Concierge is still not optimal, for example the relationship with the Housekeeping Department for cleaning the lobby area which is often visited by guests and the Concierge work area, the Housekeeping team is not quick enough to handle the area even though the Concierge has contacted it. so that it makes the area look dirty, the relationship with the Food and Beverage Department, guests entrust items to the Restaurant to be stored in the refrigerator, but the Restaurant forgets to tell the Concierge about the items, that the bags used by guests to store the items are separate because they are not permitted. put in the refrigerator, causing guests to complain and there are many other problems that the author has faced when carrying out collaborative relationships with the departments concerned.

METHODS

Types of research

This type of Final Assignment research is qualitative descriptive, that is, it describes the research results in accordance with facts in the field, observation results and theories that have been obtained through literature and the lessons the author took during lectures.

Data collection technique

To obtain complete data the author conducted research.

There are 2 methods of research carried out, namely as follows:

1. Observation

According to Nasution in Sugiyono (2019: 297) states that observation is the basis of all science. Scientists can only work based on data, namely facts about the real world obtained through observation.

2. Interview

Esterberg in Sugiyono (2019: 304) states that an interview is a meeting of two people to exchange information and ideas through questions and answers, so that meaning can be constructed on a particular topic. Interviews are used as a data collection technique if the researcher wants to conduct a preliminary study to find problems that must be researched, but also if the researcher wants to know things from the respondents in more depth.

3. Literature Study

Literature studies relate to theoretical studies and other references related to understanding the object being studied, the values, culture and norms that develop in the social situation being studied (Sugiyono, 2019: 387). The author collected data by reading reference books related to the problem under study.

Research Location and Time

Research sites

SWISS-BELINN HOTEL JALAN SURABYA MEDAN

Address : Jl. Surabaya No 88, Ps. Baru, Kec. Medan City

Phone : (061) 8881 15531

Website : www.swiss-belhotel

Research time

This research was conducted for 6 months, starting from 1 September 2020 to 28 February. By using a schedule, namely 6 working days and 1 holiday. The writer in the training period works in the morning shift and afternoon shift with 8 working hours:

Morning Shift: 08.00 – 16.00 WIB

Afternoon Shift: 15.00 – 23.00 WIB

Population and Sample

Population

Population is a generalization area consisting of: objects/subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by researchers to be studied and then conclusions drawn (Sugiyono, 2019: 126).

The total population determined by the author is 127 (one hundred twenty seven) 7 Front Office staff consisting of, 1 Front Office Manager, 1 Front Office Supervisor, 3 Front Desk Agents, 2 Concierges, and 120 visiting guests. to the Swiss-Belinn hotel Jalan Surabaya Medan.

Sample

Sugiyono (2018 : 127) the sample is part of the number and characteristics of the population. If the population is large and it is impossible for researchers to study everything in the population, for example due to limited funds, energy and time, then researchers can use samples taken from that population. The sample that the author determined was the entire population, namely 15 (fifteen) 3 Front Office staff including 2 Concierges, 1 Front Office Supervisor, and 10% of the total guest population, namely 12 guests.

Data analysis

According to Creswell in Sugiyono (2019: 344) data analysis is providing raw data in the form of transcriptions, field notes and the researcher's own views; organizing and preparing the data to be analyzed, reading all the data, constructing themes, interpreting and giving meaning to the themes that have been compiled. In conducting research, the author used qualitative methods, namely in the form of direct surveys in the field, carrying out various analyzes and comparisons with the reality that occurred in the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concierge Duties and Responsibilities at Swiss-Belinn Hotel, Jalan Surabaya, Medan

Concierge is a section in the Front Office department which is tasked with information, handling goods, welcoming at the hotel gate, searching for guests at the hotel, parking vehicles, transportation out of the hotel, up to pick-up and drop-off issues at the airport. Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by the author with the Front Office Supervisor, the Concierge staff at the Swiss-Belinn Hotel Medan in carrying out the tasks and responsibilities that have been given are still not optimal, for example a lack of welcome when guests want to check-in, for example a lack of greetings. towards guests, lack of concern for guests' luggage, and lack of updates regarding recommended tourist or culinary information around the hotel and in Medan City, and lack of knowledge of the facilities available at the hotel. The hotel should provide communication tools such as a computer and wi-fi network at the concierge or if the hotel is not adequate then just provide a cellphone at the counter, this is used if the guest wants to ask about information needed by the guest then the concierge is easier look for it without asking other staff, the concierge must also have a good greeting and increase concern for the guest's luggage, for example asking the guest if they want help with their luggage, and superiors must also more often supervise the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures carried out by their subordinates, and superiors must also train new and existing staff, for example conducting training regarding the information needed by guests starting from tourist areas, culinary delights, shopping centers in Medan City and its surroundings. This is all to improve operational smoothness so that guests feel happy with the services provided by the hotel.

Guest Luggage Handling System Check-In Concierge Section Front Office at Swiss-Belinn Hotel, Jalan Surabaya, Medan

Based on the author's observations when conducting observations at the Swiss-Belinn Medan hotel, there were many obstacles that occurred when handling guest belongings at check-in. The problems that occurred were, the Concierge staff in handling guest luggage at Check-In, the staff put the guest's belongings on the trolley in excess of the proper load or limit, the guest's belongings were not arranged neatly according to the order and type of items, then the Concierge staff also do not provide luggage tags on guests' luggage when the Concierge staff wants to bring more than 1 guest / 1 room with guest luggage to be delivered to the room.

Table 1. Responses regarding the handling of guest belongings during check-in at the Swiss-Belinn hotel, Jalan Surabaya, Medan

| No | Indicator | Satisfied | Enough | Not satisfied | Total |
|----|------------------------------------|-----------|--------|---------------|-------|
| 1 | Concierge Service Satisfaction | 7 | 3 | 2 | 12 |
| 2 | Waiting Time for Goods | 3 | 4 | 5 | 12 |
| 3 | Goods Service at Check-in | 5 | 3 | 4 | 12 |
| 4 | Providing information by Concierge | 5 | 4 | 4 | 12 |
| 5 | Storage of goods at the Concierge | 6 | 4 | 2 | 12 |

Source: Processed data and author's research, (2021)

Of the 12 guests the author interviewed, there were still many guests who were not satisfied with the goods service at check-in and there were also several guests who were satisfied with the goods service at check-in too.

Therefore, the Concierge staff should be more careful in handling guests' luggage. If there are too many guests checking in and their luggage is too much, the Concierge staff should look carefully at the number of guests' luggage and then give luggage tags to the guests' belongings, if the guests Have received a room asking for the guest's room number so that the Concierge staff can put the guest's luggage in the luggage store first while waiting for the Concierge staff to deliver other guests' belongings. So that the items on the trolley are not overfilled and can be arranged neatly according to the room number of the guest we will deliver to next. All of this is very useful for smooth operations in handling guests' luggage so that there are no complaints about the onions we bring. All of this is done to improve operational smoothness and achieve common goals

Concierge Working Relationships with Other Departments

Almost every type of operational work at the Swiss-Belinn Medan hotel involves team work. Even when carrying out their duties, concierges are assisted by other departments and vice versa. It cannot be denied that in hotel operational activities the Concierge will liaise and communicate with other departments. During the time the author made observations at the Swiss-Belinn Hotel Medan, there were still many relationships between the Concierge and other departments that were not optimal, for example the relationship with the Housekeeping Department for cleaning the lobby area which is often visited by guests and the Concierge work area for Housekeeping was not quick enough to handle this matter. , relations with the Food and Beverage Department regarding storing guest items in the form of food or drinks in the freezer or chiller and forgetting to notify the Concierge staff, slow handling of broken lights in the lobby area, damage to facilities in guest rooms, and trolley repairs carried out by the Engineering Department. Based on interviews with Concierge staff, it appears that cooperative relations are still lacking and during the pandemic era staff in various other departments were laid off so that several other departments still really need help with other departments due to lack of staff.

Concierge should build more communication with other departments, for example when Housekeeping has finished cleaning the lobby area then Housekeeping notifies Concierge via HT (Handly Talky) or by telephone then Concierge records it in the log book, this is useful for notes that we have done, so if when another shift comes in, they can see in the log book starting from the work carried out by the concierge with other departments and notes regarding the storage of guest luggage which was kept by the previous staff and the Concierge should coordinate with the Engineering Department to carry out minimum equipment maintenance 1 month 1 times, as well as collaborative relationships with other departments in the concierge. All of this is useful to help run the hotel's operations and be able to satisfy guests without any dependency between each department. If this can be done, then all the hopes and desired goals can go well.

CONCLUSION

After providing an explanation and discussion regarding the role of the Concierge in the Front Office Department at the Swiss-Belinn Medan hotel Jalan Surabaya Medan, the author can draw the following conclusions. The duties and responsibilities of the Concierge at the Swiss-Belinn Medan hotel are still not optimal. This can be seen from the lack of Concierge responsibilities that have been determined by the hotel, such as the lack of a welcome when guests enter the hotel, the lack of updates regarding information ranging from tourism, culinary and other facilities. is at the hotel. This can make guests feel that they are not being served by the hotel, making them not want to come back to stay overnight. In handling guest luggage there were several mistakes made by the Concierge staff including, the Concierge staff in handling guest luggage at Check-In, the staff put the guest's belongings on the trolley beyond the proper load or limit, the guest's belongings were not arranged neatly according to the order. and the type of item, then the Concierge staff also does not provide luggage tags on the guest's luggage when the Concierge staff wants to take the guest's luggage at the same time to be delivered to the room for more than 1 guest / 1 room. There are still many relationships between the Concierge and other departments that are still not optimal, for example the relationship with the Housekeeping Department for cleaning the lobby area which is frequently visited by guests and the Housekeeping Concierge's work area is not quick enough to handle this, the relationship with the Food and Beverage Department regarding the storage of guest items in the form of food or drinks in the freezer or chiller and forgetting to notify the Concierge staff, slow handling of broken lights in the lobby area, damage to facilities in guest rooms, and trolley repairs carried out by the Engineering Department.

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