



Action plan for training new Housekeeping Employee: Case Hotel Indigo Helsinki

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In the hotel industry, housekeeping is a significant department of any accommodation establishment. A qualified housekeeper plays an essential role in maintaining the hotel standards of cleanliness and surrounding appearance. This thesis aims to build a training program for new housekeepers working in the commissioner Hotel Indigo Helsinki, Boulevard. The training program involves the working knowledge and skills required by a hotel housekeeper to perform in the housekeeping function appropriately. From the managers' perspective, what aspects they expect the new housekeeping workers to perform well after the training, is investigated in this thesis.

The theoretical background reviews literature that supports the author in investigating the relevant subjects and building the thesis outcome. It consists of the theories regarding four areas. They are housekeeper recruitment, housekeeper training, employer's obligations to a good working environment and housekeeping cleaning supplies. These literature subjects are researched, viewed and interpreted properly for the purpose of gaining deep understanding of the thesis topic.

The qualitative research methods, including in-depth interview and participant observation, were used in this thesis. In-depth interviews were implemented with two potential participants that are the case hotel's General Manager and Housekeeping Manager. Participant observation method was conducted during the author's internship in the Housekeeping Department at the case hotel. As a result, valuable data and findings from the research implementations enabled the author to answer the research questions and build the thesis outcome.

The outcome of this study is an action plan for implementing the training program for new workers in the case hotel's Housekeeping Department. The training program is designed with three main stages and the scheduled implementation. On this basis, the new worker is estimated to be qualified in carrying out the housekeeping function within two weeks. The training protocol, after adjusting, may be used in other accommodating businesses that have similar contexts to the case hotel.

Keywords: Hotel housekeeping, housekeeper knowledge, housekeeper skills, training program

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1 Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to build an action plan for the training program of new workers in Housekeeping Department, case study is the Hotel Indigo Helsinki, where the author was working. During the time working at the hotel, the author had experienced the work in the Housekeeping Department at the case hotel. For that reason, the idea came from the wish to create an appropriate protocol for training new housekeeping employee at Hotel Indigo Helsinki. Under the guidance and discussion with the Hotel General Manager as well as the Executive Housekeeper, author hopes to create a practical action plan as an easy guidance for training new employees who start working in the department. Thus, the commissioner hotel has the permission to use the thesis outcome for the purpose of human resource development.

In view of the business context, the author focuses on current situation, and thus, based on specific related theoretical framework. That consists of the theories in four areas, including Housekeeping Employee Recruitment; Training process; Employer's obligations to good working environment as well as the Housekeeping cleaning supplies. The literatures are viewed in term of Housekeeping Human Resources in the hotel business and act as a guidance for the research and determination of the study objectives. They demonstrate the knowledge base of concept and support the author in obtaining understanding of the research topic. Author believes that a good understanding of the theoretical background leads to the great result in building the action plan.

In this thesis, qualitative research methodologies, including in-depth interview and participant observation, will be applied for the purpose of collecting data for deeper understanding about the business context and of generating a practical action plan. Firstly, the selected participants for in-depth interviews are the Hotel General Manager and the Executive Housekeeper. The interviews were aimed to figure out the managers' experience and perspectives on housekeeping employees training. On top of that, the process of observation was implemented while the author was having work-placement in the hotel Housekeeping Department. As a result, this would be a proper methodology assisting the understanding and consciousness about the business context and the training in practice. The theories, implementation processes and results of the chosen research techniques are clarified in detail in chapter four.

2 Business context

This chapter aims at providing readers with an understanding of the Hotel Indigo background and the introduction of its Housekeeping Department. As the hotel is using franchised model of a popular hotel group, firstly the author presents an overview of the hotel chain and how it supports the property. The hotel background information such as, the hotel concept, the location, the neighborhood and the hotel facilities are mentioned in the first place. Secondly, the introduction of the hotel Housekeeping Department is also presented as it is the main objective of the thesis.

2.1 IHG and Hotel Indigo Helsinki

IHG stands for InterContinental Hotels Group - a British multinational hospitality company headquartered in England. It is one of the biggest hotel chains around the world with currently 17 brands and about 5,900 hotels and resorts globally. Some of their biggest brands are InterContinental, Crowne Plaza, Candlewood Suites, Hotel Indigo, Holiday Inn, etc. They operate hotels in three ways: franchised-, managed- or owned business models. Focusing on mainstream, upscale and luxury segments of the hotel industry, they have targeted portfolio of brands individually tailored to meet guests' needs and occasions. (InterContinental Hotels Group 2020.)

From the author's point of view, the impressive aspect of IHG is their respectful and diverse culture. True Hospitality is IHG brand's promise which is about making everyone feel welcome and cared for, at any IHG property globally, regardless whoever they are. It is about delivering great services and experiences to guests; treating colleagues with respect; looking after the environment and giving back to the local community. IHG staff members need to learn to deliver the True Hospitality promise to their customers. It is the knowledge base that trains the staff member the appropriate customer service to provide great customer experiences. (InterContinental Hotels Group 2020.)

Hotel Indigo Helsinki is an upscale boutique hotel located at Bulevardi 26, 00120 Helsinki, Finland. The hotel is operated by Scandic Hotels Oy under license from IHG Hotels Ltd. That means, Hotel Indigo Helsinki is using the Franchised business model of IHG, and eligible for the loyalty programme IHG Rewards Club as well as for the efficient reservation system. Additionally, IHG supports the hotel, as a franchise, with the comprehensive set of tools, including revenue management and marketing programmes for developing the business and meeting demand. Currently, this property is the first and the only hotel of Indigo brand in Finland. (InterContinental Hotels Group 2020.)

When the hotel was opened in March 2015, the interior was designed in a way that it reflects the neighbourhood and it gives the hotel guests special local feels. It celebrates elegant but functional and environmentally conscious Scandinavian décor. One of its biggest strengths is

the excellent location. Bulevardi is a lovely street not only because of the beautiful architectures but also of all great boutiques and restaurants in the area. The neighbour is not in the noisy city centre but just a stone throwing away from it.

Located inside the hotel is the Bröd Punavuori - an urban bistro-style restaurant, whose food is a mix of Scandinavian, European and even Helsinkian. It serves breakfasts every morning mainly for hotel guests, lunch buffets on weekdays mainly for workers in the neighbor, and à la carte dinners for everyone usually with reservations. In the morning, the restaurant serves breakfast from 6:30 till 10:00 on weekdays and 7:30 till 11:00 on weekends or holidays. On weekdays, the lunch is from 11:00 to 13:30. The dinner serving time is from 18:00 to 22:00 on Monday till Thursday, and from 17:00 to 22:00 on Friday and Saturday. During dinner time, they serve guests with à la carte menu, totally different menu from lunch menu. (Hotel Indigo Helsinki - Boulevard 2020.)

About the facilities, Hotel Indigo Helsinki has 9 floors with 120 guest rooms and suites along with the interior corridors. The hotel has its own spacious garage for up to 35 cars. Electric vehicles charging and parking places reserved for disabled use are available. There are also saunas and fitness room available for cultivating guests' mind, body and soul balance during their stays. Apart from the free Wi-Fi in guestrooms and throughout the property, the 24-hour Business Centre with access to computer, printer and fax helping guests stay connected and get their business done. (Hotel Indigo Helsinki - Boulevard 2020.)

Hotel Indigo Helsinki (and many other hotels in the chain) is using a computerized management system that is called Opera. The Opera Hotel Program is a property management system (PMS) solution for hotels. It automatizes basic front office services such as check-in, check-out and reservations, therefore this saves time, effort and reduces human errors. Opera PMS provides a full-featured system that enables the staff to deliver world-class guest service and increase operational efficiency across the hotel property. (Oracle 2020.)

2.2 The Housekeeping Department

In this sector, the author is going through some aspects to give the reader an overview of the Housekeeping Department at Hotel Indigo Helsinki. There are certain reasons why hotel room attendant plays an indispensable role in the hotel. On top of that, the property is running the internal housekeeping department which brings many benefits and has a great influence on the hotel performance. Additionally, the simplicity in organizational structure of the department is the key for the tight management and budgeting. Another factor to consider is how they perform the inter-departmental communication in the workplace.

Housekeeping department is an essential operational department in any lodging business, and Hotel Indigo Helsinki is not an exception. Due to the fact that major part of hotel profit comes

from the room sales, running good housekeeping service is fundamental in enhancing hotel reputation and revenue. The responsibilities of the room attendant are not only upkeeping the hotel operations, maintenance and regulations, but also assuring cleanliness, hospitality and comfortable guest stay. At Hotel Indigo, every housekeeping staff appreciates guest comfort zone and the team makes a great effort in satisfying guests and delivering memorable stay.

Hotel Indigo Helsinki is having internal housekeeping department instead of the outsourced one. The advantages of this outweigh the drawbacks in the operation of a small lodging business. In-house room attendant conveys the sense of pride and belonging to both the hotel and the employees. The feeling of being part of the team increases the motivation to keep up the good work as well as the instant gratification at work. Thus, the hotel remains the consistent quality of housekeeping service and reduces the employee turnover rate. According to the seasonality of the Tourism industry, most of the housekeepers of the hotel are unable to have the full-hour contracts. During the peak season with the high occupancy, the business requires more workers and be able to give more working hours to them or hire few temporary part-time staff. In contrast, it is not necessary to be overstaffed in the low season, so the hotel usually cuts off hour amount for budget saving purpose. Another key point for readers to be aware of, as Hotel Indigo Helsinki is the main objective of the thesis, next chapters will be analyzed in term of internal housekeeping operation. (Pesonen 2015, 21.)

As mentioned above, the property is a medium-sized boutique hotel, thus the organizational structure of the Housekeeping department is relatively simple. The department is headed by an executive housekeeper. She is part of the hotel management and she reports to the Hotel General Manager regularly. As the Chief Housekeeper works only on weekdays, there are two deputy housekeepers who take turns to assist her in managing the department tasks during weekends as well as taking care of other different responsibilities in the hotel areas. Depending on the business flow throughout a year, the hotel hires from 6 to 10 room attendants who take responsible for cleaning all the guest rooms and other areas of the hotel, such as lobby, business center, restaurant area, the basement, sauna rooms and fitness center. The hotel is outsourcing the laundry service so there is no laundry attendant needed in the organizational structure.

Inter-departmental communication with other major departments is one of the most essential organizational aspects. It helps the housekeeping department ensure the proficient flow of information. At the hotel, Opera PMS plays an important role in keeping all departments updated on the room status and special notifications. For instance, guest X will arrive with a pet, the front desk staff can leave a trace on the guest reservation and address it to Housekeeper Department. On the guest arrival day, the executive housekeeper finds that notification from the report of Reservation Traces which is daily checked, then she will prepare the sleeping package for the pet in the located room and conduct a deep cleaning after the guest departure. Similarly, the room status can be updated via TV system combined with the Opera PMS. On top

of that, traditional communication channels such as face-to-face, email, text and voice messaging application (e.g. WhatsApp) are also regularly used in case of quick notification, short message, urgent call, or group discussing, etc.

3 Theoretical background

In this chapter, theoretical perspectives supporting the author's outcome will be discussed in detail. Firstly, housekeeper recruiting process is fundamental step of operating Housekeeping Department. After selecting the right person, it is the matter of training new talent to get acquainted with the work and the house rules. Besides, the author also takes an overview of the cleaning supplies that assist housekeeping workers in accomplishing cleaning duties efficiently. Lastly, the employer's obligations to creating and maintaining good working environment are discussed. It involves the housekeeping personnel administration, particularly regarding the occupational health and safety; and creating worker motivation and satisfaction. These theory bases are viewed, evaluated and thoroughly interpreted for the purpose of gaining proper understanding of the subject and its related aspects.

3.1 Housekeeping employee recruitment

Housekeeper recruitment is a great concern for the lodging business. Especially when the number of workers in the Housekeeping Department varies throughout the year depending on the travel seasons. Most of the hotel housekeepers are hired on an as-needed basis. In this section, author focuses on two factors of the recruiting process. Firstly, hiring employee from different sources, internal or external, does matter to the department performance and it depends on the company strategies and approach at the time. In the second place, author suggests characteristics and basic skills that make a housekeeping candidate the right person for the position.

3.1.1 Internal versus external recruitment

During the peak season, the hotel Housekeeping Department usually needs more temporary workforce. It is important that the company should put a thorough consideration to filling the department vacancies from either internal or external sources. Both methods of recruitment have benefits and drawbacks. Flexibility in recruiting and balancing employees from different sources makes up the diversity of the working team in all aspects. (Pesonen 2015, 20.)

Internal recruitment is the process of hiring employees from existing workforce within the company. It is common that employers firstly inform the opening job internally before conducting external recruiting. On behalf of the employer, this recruiting method is cost-efficient as there are almost no recruiting fee or referral bonuses. The company also knows the candidates'

strengths and weaknesses. This is a risk-minimizing solution for finding the right person. Additionally, it is also easier for the workers as they already know the house rules, workplace connections and business culture which makes the training process faster. However, the biggest drawback of internal recruitment is the limitation in finding potential talents with new ideas and innovations. In short, though it is not always easy to find the right person internally for the vacancy, this brings out plenty of advantages if the company can conduct it successfully. (SHRM 2020.)

External recruitment on the other hand is when the organization targets for candidates from outside of the business. Though internal recruiting seems to be ideal and preferred, companies still look for new talents externally for fresh insights and perspectives. Especially when the business strives for a transformation or new direction in development, innovation from potential candidates is fundamental. However, a frequent drawback that employers should take into consideration are the risks they might face due to the candidate's limited understanding of the property environment and connections. On top of that, recruiting externally is more expensive process, compared to internal recruitment, due to the advertising cost or budget for the recruitment agencies. Thus, hiring incompetent worker for the vacancy becomes an even greater risk. (Alkula 2016, 13.)

Generally speaking, it is vital for companies to decide which recruiting method to use, based on their strategies and approaches. Taking the Housekeeping Department of Hotel Indigo Helsinki for illustration, the head housekeeper sometimes announces the hotel employees about the urgent labour need during peak seasons, in the hope of getting quick available workforce within the hotel or the Scandic Hotels Oy. For another example, at the beginning of Spring 2020 when the executive housekeeper wanted to resign from her position, the hotel filled the vacancy with new recruit from outside of the hotel. The newcomer devised many interesting innovations that enhanced the collaboration across departments. That is to say, flexibility in recruiting method selection is essential for the business human resource machine.

3.1.2 Housekeeper characteristics and basic skills

The major housekeeping functions are cleaning duties in order to maintain the cleanliness standard of the hotel, keeping steady supplies in guest rooms and hotel surroundings. This means that hotel housekeeper job is physically heavy and enervating, thus it requires specific skills and characteristics to perform the job effectively. With the approach of hiring the right person for the hotel attendant position, one should define what background characteristics and personal characteristics that are sought for from the candidates; as well as the required basic skills. (Harvard Business School 2008, 8.)

In view of housekeeper personal characteristics, the department prefer candidate who is interpersonal, detail-oriented and physically strong. Interpersonal skill involves team member reliability and listening skill. Working in a team, it is vital for housekeepers to be trustworthy and respectful workers towards not only teammates, but customers as well since they have access to guest rooms. In addition, room attendants should have a thorough attention to detail and self-control ability in order to accomplish their tasks independently and accordingly as the hotel standard. Housekeeping tasks are physically heavy and tiresome, one shift could last from 6 to 8 hours continuously. That is why high physical strength and moderate level of stamina are indispensable for a housekeeper to work constantly for long period of time. (Job Description WIKI 2019.)

Background characteristics basically mean the education and past experience that applicant has. The main reason which makes the housekeeping job low paid is that it does not require much education. Though it is better to have a high school diploma or GED (General Education Development) certificate, they are not compulsory. In this case, previous experience in the similar work is much more valuable. There is no doubt that the more experienced the candidate is, the less money, time and effort it takes employer for the training process. On another note, employer would be willing to pay more for the expertise than the freshman since there is higher chance that talent could get the job done fast and efficiently. (Job Description WIKI 2019.)

Despite low education requirements, housekeeping profession does require basic skills in four areas, including reading, writing, numbers and communication. Robert (2008, 3) clarifies the purposes of the four skills regarding the hotel housekeeping job as follow: "Reading: health and safety notices; procedure documents; information, messages from clients; risk assessment documents and instructions; following directions to sites. Writing: messages to clients; information and reports to managers and supervisors; order for materials. Numbers: cost control and the correct use of cleaning materials; the calculation of dilution ratios; the submission of time sheets for wage calculations; understanding the frequencies of cleaning. Communication: the need to converse and communicate with clients and colleagues; understanding that contact should be made if unable to come to work; the passing on of information regarding problems." (Gorden 2008, 3.)

Personal Characteristics	Background Characteristics	Basic Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal • Detail-oriented • Physically strong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience • Diploma or Certificates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing • Numbers • Communication

Figure 1: Selecting right housekeeper

Figure 1 summarizes the personal aspects one should consider when selecting a right candidate for housekeeper position. Most of the housekeeper duties are physically tiresome and expect the engagement and commitment from the employee. Another key point to consider is the worker's positive attitude and enjoyment of cleaning tasks. Additionally, turnover is expensive, so selecting the right person at the first place is budget-friendly for the hotel.

3.2 Housekeeping employee training

For internal housekeeping operation, training new department staff is the next significant step after recruiting process. The training process requires great effort from both sides, the housekeeping authority and new worker. In order to conduct the training, the person in charge needs to have the knowledge of job specifications and training ability so that the new employee will be able to achieve the standard performance towards the duties with minor number of faults after the process. According to Matt (2012, 170), the hotel housekeeping training should comprise of four principal aspects which are technical skills, employee attitude, personal development and knowledge of the property. (Casado 2012, 170.)

3.2.1 Technical skills

The purpose of technical skills training is to instruct housekeepers how to implement the department tasks efficiently, safely and appropriately. In more details, the major tasks include servicing guest rooms and hotel public areas, maintaining the equipment as well as security and guest safety. The assessments could be carried out mainly by the Executive Housekeeper or partly under assistance of other experienced housekeeping colleagues.

Housekeepers service guest rooms following hotel standard procedure and instruction. The procedure includes cleaning tasks such as tidying up rooms, clearing the garbage and waste, making beds, cleaning and sanitizing bathrooms, dusting furniture and fixtures, vacuuming and mopping floor, filling room amenities and minibar products, etc. Rooms that need to be serviced

are categorized into stayover rooms (occupied) and departure rooms (vacant). It takes more time and effort to clean a departure room than a stayover room. Guests' belongings are still in the occupied room which limits the cleaning area and makes it quick. On the other hand, the vacant dirty room must be properly cleaned for the next guest. In Hotel Indigo Helsinki, the standard time to service a stayover room is 10 minutes and it is 24 minutes for a departure room. Other areas of the hotel, for instance, lobbies, stairways, elevators, meeting rooms, business center, restaurant area, corridors, spa and fitness rooms, etc. should be maintained in clean and neat conditions as well. The room service procedure is created to ensure the hotel sanitation is met and to maintain a comfortable space for both residents and employees. (Casado 2012, 160-168.)



Figure 2: Housekeeping cleaning equipment at Hotel Indigo Helsinki

The housekeeping tasks cannot be accomplished without appropriate equipment. The cleaning equipment used in the department are, such as, vacuum cleaner, mop, dusting clothes, duster, ozone gun, brushes, window wiper, dish washer, etc. Figure 2 shows the cleaning equipment used daily in the Housekeeping Department to service rooms at Hotel Indigo Helsinki. As in the figure, the pink dusting cloth, for instance, is used in bathroom area and the blue one is for room furniture out of the bathroom. When a housekeeper is provided with the department equipment, he or she should be trained in advance how to utilize and maintain the assigned equipment in proper condition. All the equipment under responsibility of a housekeeper should

be inspected daily by the worker for cleanliness and functions before and after the shift, so that every maintenance issue can be noticed and reported on time to the chief housekeeper. (Clement 2020.)

Another key point in technical skills training is teaching the work safety and security for new housekeepers. That means the department worker should be knowledgeable about the actions they need to take in the event of an emergency, first aid, fire prevention, etc. The department personnel must follow all safety and security policies and procedures of the hotel in order to establish a safe and secured accommodation for guests as well as workplace environment for hotel staff. Housekeeping safety training consists of certain subjects, including fire and emergency safety, dealing with heavy physical work, electrics handling, litter and waste management, utilizing of chemical materials, etc. The new staff must know where to report maintenance issues and safety hazards. On top of that, security concerns are also essential part of practical training. Security has several elements, such as sheltering property assets and inventory, securing guest personal information, etc. (Polo & Tweed 2020.)

The main conclusion that can be drawn is that technical skills training comprises variety of aspects including servicing guest rooms, maintaining working equipment as well as work safety and security. An appropriate training helps prevent accidents at work and incoherence in performance. Proper knowledge and high awareness of safety can help not only maintain a smooth hotel operation, but also avoid accidents and injuries for hotel guests and employees.

3.2.2 Employee attitude

A good housekeeper should be well trained to have proper attitude toward people. Attitude training aims to conceive awareness of the workplace relationships, either with the colleagues, the customers or the employer. After the training, housekeepers will have enhanced the awareness of performance as a respectful teammate, a customer-oriented staff and a loyal employee. This aspect was mentioned in subsection 3.1.2 when discussing about personal characteristics concern during recruiting process. (Casado 2012, 170).

As housekeeping involves a lot of teamwork, a housekeeper should perform as a cooperative, sociable, responsible and respectful teammate. Cooperation is truly important for effective housekeeping operation. It is about coordinating not only with colleagues in the department to get the work done efficiently, but also with other departments' staff in order to operate the hotel services smoothly. Additionally, the diversity of labor background is common in the housekeeping department. Sensitivity and respect toward fellow staff from other countries, religions, races with different cultures or religions must be emphasized during the training. Housekeeping is essential work that affects directly and mainly to guest stay and experience, therefore a responsible room attendant will get the work done accordingly and that lessens troubles for her co-workers, and for the hotel performance in general.

As working in the service field, hotel housekeepers should be friendly, considerate in manner, approachable, and detail-oriented staff toward customers. Honesty is the utmost personality of housemaids as they have direct access to guest rooms and other staff rooms of the hotel. Moreover, there should always be the sense of good customer service in their attitude which is proactive and anticipates the guests needs and demands. Thus, the welcoming behavior and professional appearance give a positive impact on the guests stay experience. Regarding difficult situations while dealing with guests, housekeepers need to be courteous and polite. It is an important regulation that housekeepers should never argue with guests, if they are unable to deal with the case, it should be referred promptly to executive housekeeper or reception colleagues. Tact and diplomacy are also useful skills in attitude training, new housemaids need to be trained in handling customers who make uncommon requests or complaints. As every guest has various demands and needs that housekeepers should understand and comply with. (Satyajit 2016.)

Commitment and adaptability are highly appreciated by the hotel employer and the management. It is crucial that employees respect the hotel policies and decisions of the management. Adaptability is especially useful for the fresh employees who have just started their work at the new environment. An adaptable worker is willing to try out and explore new ideas or work conditions, which is a great time- and budget-saving for the employer during training process. Author believes that employees with right attitude help to improve the organization performance. That is why a talent with proper attitude is more of an asset to the hotel than a talent who has experience and skills but the wrong attitude. (Satyajit 2016.)

Considering all the above, workplace attitude has great impact on all individuals in the hotel, from the staff to the customers as well as the employer. Every worker with the proper attitude creates the positive workplace environment which brings out certain benefits such as enhancing productivity, improving worker motivation and morale. It is not compulsory to force new housekeepers to perform all the attitude mentioned above at the beginning, but it is worthwhile to mention in the training.

3.2.3 Personal development

The purpose of workers training is also to improve their personal potential and their competences to make changes in their own knowledge, skills and experience. The training focuses on basic skills which were mentioned in subsection 3.1.2, including reading, writing, numbers and communicating. This type of training can be conducted under personal grooming sessions, seminars or workshops that will support developing their basic skills. This also helps housekeepers to enhance their perceptions of themselves as functional individuals. (Casado 2012, 170.)

The basic skills are improved in their daily work practices. Housekeeper should be equipped with the reading skills in order to understand workplace notifications; procedure documents;

information; guests' messages; department task instructions; etc. Writing skill is developed when reporting to the Housekeeping Manager; sending messages and information to clients; ordering for materials. On top of that, skill in numbers is great tool in cost control and correct use of materials while working or filling the working time sheets and understanding the frequencies of housekeeping job. Additionally, communicating with guests and colleagues helps improve their communication skill in the service field. It is especially necessary to transferring information regarding any issue that might happen at the workplace. (Gorden 2008, 3.)

Personal development desires much of employees' effort towards improving themselves while working. The eager to learn new things and the will to experience the new working environment are great motivations for the new workers to speed up the training process. Furthermore, the worker with a positive attitude and proactiveness towards developing working skills would achieve success at work faster than others. As personal development at work is a long-term process, workers should have their own plans how to proceed it, what are their strengths and weakness as well as where to start.

3.3 Employer's obligations to a good working environment

This section is about employer concerns for housekeeping personnel administration, focusing on workplace health and safety issues as well as worker motivation and satisfaction. Due to the fact that staff performance is essential to productivity level and overall performance of the hotel. Thus, employer or leaders need to take responsibilities for their staff health and safety as well as how should they treat their staff in order to enhance the work productivity and achieve success in hotel operation.

3.3.1 Health and safety in the workplace

Housekeeping work is career where accidents and occupational hazards show tendency. Both employees and employers should cooperate in ensuring occupational health and safety in the department, and the whole hotel in general. There should be someone in charge of controlling work safety and occupational health, explaining appropriate procedures to workers in order to prevent hazards or accidents from happening. The hotel safety culture and regulation reflect the employers' concern on the priority of safety. On top of that, the implementation in safety training practice desires engagement from all team members. (Vasko & Yltiö 1995, 33.)

The hotel management should conduct safety training practices for instructing their housekeeping workers how to maintain health and safety in the workplace. Furthermore, printed regulations, instruction documents and recommendations should be administered and provided to the department employees. Matt (2012, 209) mentions the housekeeping safety standards, such as fire safety skills, first-aid skills, handling housekeeping chemicals properly, maintaining the grounding safety, etc. These education and trainings should be provided to all workers so that

they understand how to implement their job assignments and responsibilities safely. (Casado 2012, 209.)

Monitoring how the workers apply the established trainings and how they follow the safety policy and regulations is carried out by the department managers or supervisors. It is evaluated during consistent observations how workers undertake their job duties. Another key thing to remember is regular updating in the policy based on considerate changes in work conditions and matters that the policy does not affect positively. Due to those issues, work safety an occupational health policy needs to be reviewed and adjusted accordingly. All in all, it is primarily the employer's responsibility to control and secure the workplace health and safety of not only their staff, but also of all individuals involved in the hotel operation, including customers, visitors, neighbors and passers-by. (Bongarde Media 2018.)

3.3.2 Worker motivation and satisfaction

In the hospitality industry, it is essential to sell great service to customers. The only way to deliver the service is through employees. Treating them well is indirect approach to treating customers well. Especially, hotel housekeeping is a physically tough and tiresome work, it demands various tasks and responsibility from the workers. It is even more essential to create their motivation and satisfaction as well as express the recognition towards their great effort at work.

It is truly admitted that recognition is an influential management tool when dealing with staff. Recognizing staff effort with just a simple 'Thank you' or 'Well done' is often enough for them to feel appreciated. This cleaning job is tiresome, and the workers may get unmotivated sometimes. Recognition is efficient way for motivating the housekeeping staff. Especially, it is even a greater motivation for the weaker workers in the team and one might be surprised with the result. If a worker is always hardworking and performing well at work, managers or supervisors should let the worker know how helpful he or she is and how grateful the managers feel for the worker's diligence. This sounds simple but will absolutely lift workers spirit and make them feel appreciated. (Gordon 2008, 57.)

Employers can implement incentive programs to show their recognition and appreciation to their employees. The rewards such as gift cards, wage bonuses, plaques, complimentary stays in the hotels in the same chain or inhouse parking slots are illustrations for the incentives that can create extraordinary satisfaction for their staff at low cost. Another point to consider is building mutual trust and respect, which means managers should never look down upon their team members. Cultural diversity is not rare in housekeeping departments as employees in this profession may come from various countries and have different religions or backgrounds. Therefore, it is necessary for skilled motivators to have the sensitivity and understanding of their team members' differences. (Casado 2012, 172-177.)

Another key thing to consider is creating employee satisfaction in the workplace. A wise employer understands that satisfying his/her employees is an effective way to satisfying his customers. As it is not always easy to hire talents, employers should strive for keeping them stay in employment by making them feel satisfied and respected. It is fair to respect your excellent staff and let them know their contributions to the hotel are recognized and appreciated. Workers who perform well at work are worthy to be awarded with regular bonuses or salary increases. Once they feel respected by the employer and achieve satisfaction, employees tend to strive for the success of the hotel. (Entrepreneur Press & Lynn 2006, 124.)

This conclusion follows from the fact that creating worker motivation and satisfaction is how employers inspire their staff. Especially for the housekeeping workers who often implement heavy tasks, motivation and satisfaction is the key to minimize employee turnover which is a considerable income loss to lodging business. Additionally, these elements have direct impact on the hotel performance, on the services delivered to guests and chiefly on the productivity. That is why managers should enhance workers satisfaction by recognizing their effort and creating their motivation.

3.4 Housekeeping cleaning supplies

Cleaning supplies for use in hotel housekeeping department should be thoroughly selected in order to ensure the cleanliness standard of the hotel, thus lessen the risk of allergen, contamination or infection for hotel guests. Cleaning supplies used for housekeeping function can be categorized into three main segments, including manual cleaning accessories; mechanical equipment and cleaning chemicals. They are considered as extensions for housekeeping employees to accomplish their cleaning duties.

3.4.1 Manual cleaning accessories

Manual cleaning accessories are the basic nonchemical tools that are manually used to maintain the surface cleanliness. There are various manual cleaning equipment including cleaning cloths, mops, brushes, dustbins, window glass wipers, etc. Different hotels have their own selection of cleaning equipment. Below is the list of the selection commonly used in the Housekeeping Department at Hotel Indigo Boulevard.

Cleaning cloths

Various surfaces are wiped with cleaning cloths to collect dirt. The cloth can be used with the cleaning agent over the surface in case of loose and tacky dirt. At the hotel, housekeepers use the cleaning cloths made of synthetic chamois material which is durable and extremely effective in wiping dust. They can be washed in washing machine and reused many times. As shown in figure 2 (Housekeeping cleaning equipment at Hotel Indigo Helsinki), the pink cloth is used

in bathroom area and the blue one is for room furniture out of the bathroom. Additionally, cloths must be changed for every room and washed carefully after use to control and minimize infection. (Aaltonen et al. 1998, 119.)

Mops

The staff use moist floor mops to speed up the regular cleaning of floors, wiping dirt and clearing the leftover dust after vacuuming. The frame of the mop is made of metal and equipped with rubber head. Sweepers heads can be flexibly assembled and disassembled for changing and washing for prolonged use. The sweeper has two different sides, one is used for the bathroom floor and the other side is for other areas of the room floor. Again, the sweeper head is replaced to wash after using for each guest room. (Aaltonen et al. 1998, 121.)

Window squeegees

They are used for drying windows, bath glasses, mirrors or wiping water on surfaces such as bathroom walls, doors, sinks, etc. Window squeegee has a plastic or metal handle assembled with a rubber blade, which can be replaced if damaged. In case of facilitate working on higher area, one can attach it with a longer stick to the handle. The movement which should be applied when using squeegee is vertical or horizontal with overlapping strokes. (Aaltonen et al. 1998, 126.)

Brushes

They are handheld tools with plastic bristles that help sweeping surface with stubborn or tacky dirt. There are different sizes of the brushes to use for different areas accordingly. The hotel housemaids use hand brushes and washing brushes to service the bathroom. Hand brushes are efficient tool in sweeping soap guests dropped on the floor or ingrained dirt in the corners. Washing brushes equipped with long plastic handle are often used to brush toilets. (Aaltonen et al. 1998, 127-128.)

Cleaning buckets

It is convenient for the housekeeping staff to carry small bathroom manual cleaning accessories in a cleaning bucket. Housekeepers at the hotel use it to contain tools including toilet washing brush, cleaning agent bottle, small handheld brushes, a roll of trash bags, dust wiper and cleaning cloths. Though it is used to organized lots of stuff, the bucket is easy to carry due to the compact size.

3.4.2 Mechanical equipment

Hotel housekeeping nowadays tends to work more and more with automated workforce as an extension of the workers to carry out departmental functions efficiently. At the hotel, there are certain number of machines such as vacuum cleaners, floor polishers, washing machines, clothes dryers, dish washer or ozone gun as analyzed below. They all play significant role in the department operation and have become great assistance for the staff. The machines users expect that they are powerful, functional, safe, ergonomic, practical and feasible. In the first place, the staff should be well-trained before utilizing the electrical equipment for safety reason. (Aaltonen et al. 1998, 137).

Vacuum cleaners

The department is using bagged cylinder vacuum cleaners which are known for high quality, long duration and excellent versatility. This type of vacuum is suitable for all surfaces such as hard floors, carpet, stairs, cars, etc. As a bagged vacuum, it has an enormous capacity that lessens emptying task for the workers. Another favorable feature is the long-reach rewind electric cable that is practical in every move during cleaning process. Furthermore, backpack vacuum cleaners are also convenient equipment used for dusting hard-to-reach areas such as curtains, ceiling, ceiling ventilation, etc. (Argos Ltd. 2020.)

Floor polishing machines

Floor polishers help housemaid mechanically polish floor surface by buffing, striping, scrubbing, burnishing and shampooing functions. The floors which are first dusted can be applied with proper polishing procedure in order to add a shine. They are frequently utilized in large public areas such as restaurant, lobbies, meeting & event venues in hotels. The one at this hotel is big polisher, thus the users are required to follow instructions and drive it carefully to ensure the safety for guests and workers while cleaning. (Casado 2012, 95.)

Washing machines & Clothes dryers

Though guest room linens and bathroom linens are serviced by outsourced company Comforta Oy, the department desires machines for their cleaning cloths and mop heads or for internal uses. There are two washing machines and two clothes dryers available in the department currently. Washer is automatic appliance equipped with rotating barrel which is used to wash dirty laundry. Tumble dryer with power heater removes humidity from clothes and makes them dry fast after washing process.

Ozone guns

Ozone gun or ozone generator is electrical equipment which is used for purifying and deodorizing air. As can be seen in figure 2 (Housekeeping cleaning equipment at Hotel Indigo Helsinki), the ozone gun of the department is design with portable handle which make it easy for carrying. This magical machine produces the large amount of toxic gas ozone to disinfect, deodorize and remove irritating particles in the air of applied indoor environment. It is often that hotel guest rooms might have annoying smells or dusty air after guests stays. That is the reason why the hotel housekeepers use this equipment to purify and refresh the room air. The machine is easy to use as there is only one on/off button to turn after plugging it in. (Gromicko 2006.)



Figure 3: Housekeeping dish washer and glassware cart at Hotel Indigo Helsinki

Dishwasher

The Housekeeping Department of the hotel has one dishwasher installed for washing glasses, mugs and spoons from guest rooms. Figure 3 shows the dishwasher and glassware cart that are used in the Housekeeping Department at the hotel. The photos were taken by the author while doing participant observation in the hotel. After servicing all guest rooms delegated, housekeepers wash dirty glassware in the dishwasher and place them back to the cart to be ready for the next shift. Depending on how dirty the utensils are, users has several timing options to choose, including one minute-, 2 minutes- or three minutes option. The machine's drain and filter pads need to be cleared and handwashed daily after use.

3.4.3 Housekeeping chemicals

The three main functions of housekeeping chemicals are eliminating dirt, killing harmful microorganisms as well as disinfecting and polishing furniture, fixture, surfaces. Though the chemicals need to be powerful in cleaning function, the health and safety of guests and workers must be secured at the most priority concern when choosing the products. For that reason, the Housekeeping Manager should have proper knowledge in selecting and using cleaning chemicals in order to instruct the department workers and to control the appropriate amount of chemicals used for cleaning tasks. (Casado 2012, 97-98.)

Indigo Helsinki is an eco-friendly hotel which has considerable awareness of the impact on environment through every activities of the hotel operation. Thus, the hotel also chooses green chemicals which impact the environment as little as possible for cleaning purpose of their Housekeeping Department. Specific chemical products such as Kosti, Sanitop, MD 10+ Green, Toprinse Clean Jet; are commonly used at the department and worth mentioned in this subject. Figure 4 shows Kosti and Sanitop as chemical detergents that the housekeepers use for bathroom cleaning at Hotel Indigo Helsinki. The other two products are washing agent and rinse aid which are used for the dishwasher.



Figure 4: Bathroom chemical cleaners at Hotel Indigo Helsinki. (Kiilto 2019)

Kiilto Kosti

This is all purpose and basic cleaner for wet areas such as bathrooms, saunas, swimming pools or washrooms. Kosti is alkaline agent with pH level from 10.5 (working solution) to 13 (concentrate). The housekeeping manager is responsible for preparing the Kosti solution by adding water with correct ratio to the product to make it a lighter solution for daily cleaning. The appearance of the liquid is colourless and unscented. It is effectively used for removing dirt, clutter; deodorizing unpleasant smell; preventing the spread of contaminant and dust; and especially for removing organic and synthetic grease and oil dirt. According to product instruction, Kosti can be spread on surface for effect time or rinsed if necessary. Though Kiilto Kosti is an eco-friendly product, it still meets the quality required for cleaning function. (Kiilto 2019.)

Kiilto Sanitop

Sanitop is an acidic cleaner used for surfaces that can endure acidic chemicals, such as tiles, sanitary ware, stainless steel, etc. Its pH level ranges from 3 (concentrate) to 4 (working solution). This acidic cleaner is an alternative option for Kosti as its effect is similar to Kosti, but it has stronger impact on stubborn dirt. The detergent is especially efficient in removing and preventing deposits in sanitary facilities and lessening the surfaces tension. It is not for daily use due to the acidic feature, the staff uses it approximately once per week, the other days they use Kosti. According to product instruction, it is allowed to leave on the surface for 10 to 15 minutes before scrubbing and washing off. The appearance of the liquid is colourless, gel-like and unscented. Sanitop is plant-based product, which is made from biodegradable raw materials, so it is completely suitable for people with allergies. (Kiilto 2019.)

Kiilto MD 10+ Green

Kiilto MD 10+ Green is machine dishwashing agent suitable for professional dishwasher. The pH level of the detergent ranges from pH 12 (working solution) to pH 14 (concentrate) and it is ideal for medium hard and hard water conditions. It consists of substantial amount of compounding chemicals with various effects. In general, the agent assists industrial dishwasher in removing dirt, limescale deposits, dissolving grease, starch and protein from dishes as well as softening the hard water to enhance the cleaning effect. It appeared as a clear, transparent and unscented liquid. This chemical is another environmentally friendly product from the brand Kiilto. (Kiilto 2019.)

Ecolab Toprinse Clean Jet

Assisting the dishwashing process, Toprinse Clean Jet is dishwasher rinse aid product from the brand Ecolab. Its pH level is from 7 (working solution) to 7.5 (concentrate). The rinse aid is

dispensed into the rinsing water for the final step of the dishwashing process. The main functions of the rinse aid are removing water spots from hard water and making dishes dry faster as well as sparkling or polishing dishes, especially glasses. For safety reason, users should wear gloves when touching the agent and must not mix it with any other product. (Siivous 2020.)

4 Qualitative research methodologies

Qualitative research is a generic term for a wide range of naturalistic approaches to the research study. Qualitative research focuses on collection, analysis and interpretation of relevant data or information that support the study. It involves variety of textual materials, including field notes, interview documentation; and visual materials, such as video recordings, photographs, artifacts, etc. that reflect human experiences and actions in social science. Researchers use qualitative data collection methods such as in-depth interview, focus group, participant observation, ethnographic research to expand the deep understanding the research topic. (Saldana 2011, 3-4.)

The goal of qualitative research is to understand a study query by exploring people's experiences, behaviors, interactions or cultures. It may vary depending on the objectives of the specific study. The research results are comprised of important presentations of data collection from interpretations, analyses and syntheses. The findings are obtained from new insights, cultural observations and knowledge about group and individuals, assessment of programs, regulations, performances, etc. In comparison with quantitative research, its approaches are less measuring quantity, but more subjective about what influence the objective. (Saldana 2011, 4.)

In this thesis, the qualitative research methodologies that the author uses are in-depth interview and participant observation. The question of this study is determined as an action plan for conducting training program for new hotel housekeeper, particularly in the case of Hotel Indigo Helsinki. Thus, the research was implemented with the selected participants and the context of the case study. The findings and data collected from the research implementation are used for building the thesis outcome in chapter 5 (Contents of the Action Plan). Each technique is presented with firstly the theory background and implementation process; then with its result.

4.1 In-depth interview: Theory and Implementation Process

In-depth interviewing is defined as an effective qualitative research method which is conducted on a small number of interviewees for the deep explorations of their experience, perspectives, thoughts or feelings on a specific subject, idea, situation or program. Researchers choose this technique when they need detailed information regarding related concern from a relevant person's opinions for the purpose of data collection in depth. The method is especially appropriate

when researchers use open-ended questions that evoke information from respondents deeply and detailed. (Boyce & Neale 2006, 3.)

The considerable advantage of in-depth qualitative interviewing technique is that it helps researchers collect informative data and obtain rich understanding of the research topic from just few participants. Data collected from available sources is more valuable in comparison with other research methods, such as survey tool, which has a tendency to be more quantitative. Additionally, in-depth interviewing may also create a more comfortable atmosphere for both interviewer and interviewee while conducting the interview as it is planned beforehand with a proper preparation. Respondents may feel more relaxed when being interviewed and that increases the depth and trustworthiness of given information. (Boyce & Neale 2006, 3.)

The main characteristics of in-depth interviewing are identified by Guion et al. (2001), including open-ended questions, semi-structured format, seeking understanding and interpretation, Recording responses. Firstly, an open-ended question does not lead to static answers like “yes” or “no”, but it is high value question which usually starts with “how”, “why” or “what if” which allow interviewees provide informative response based on their experience, knowledge or feelings. As a result, responses for open-ended questions tend to be more detailed and descriptive toward the relevant topic, compared to closed-ended questions. (Guion et al. 2001.)

Secondly, in-depth interview is often conducted in semi-structured format. Beside the framework of themes and prepared question list, interviewer conducts the interview in the way that new opinions, ideas and inquiries may be brought up following the conversation rhythm. That means the researcher should be flexible in amending the order of the question list if necessary or can ask participants additional questions to deepen the understanding of what the interviewee shares. In semi-structured interview, questioners can also express their opinions on the research topic, in order to encourage respondents to provide more variable information, especially in case of sensitive aspects. (Guion et al. 2001.)

Next, it is essential during the interview that interviewer can present understanding and interpretation of the conversation. Active listening skills effective tools for interviewer to reflect upon what the participant is sharing. On top of that, the interview should also put effort in interpreting the inquiry and seeking understanding and accuracy during the interview. Clarifying the topic and directing the questions toward relevant concerns help interviewer gain accurate information and focused responses. (Guion et al. 2001.)

In the fourth place, recording responses is paramount for data collecting, transcribing and analysing. The responses can be audio-recorded or practical with written notes. The task of transcribing involves transforming the interview’s audio record of substantive questions and answers into precise written transcripts. The notes should also comprise participants’ verbal and non-verbal expression, especially their feelings, personal reflections or behaviours toward the

relevant issues. This requires the observation skill and attention to detail from the interviewer. (Guion et al. 2001.)

Regarding the in-depth interview implementation process of this thesis, the author followed the process as follow. The first step is developing a sampling strategy which is involved in selecting potential participants to the interviews. The second step is writing an in-depth interview guide which comprises open-ended questions for exploring knowledge and experience from respondents about the topic. Thirdly, researcher proceed the interviews by having appointment with chosen participants to conduct the interviews. And the last step after the interviews had been conducted is analysing the data collected by drawing the big picture covering the topic from the findings. Figure 5 describes the process that the author used for the in-depth interview research implementation. (Wallace Foundation 2020.)

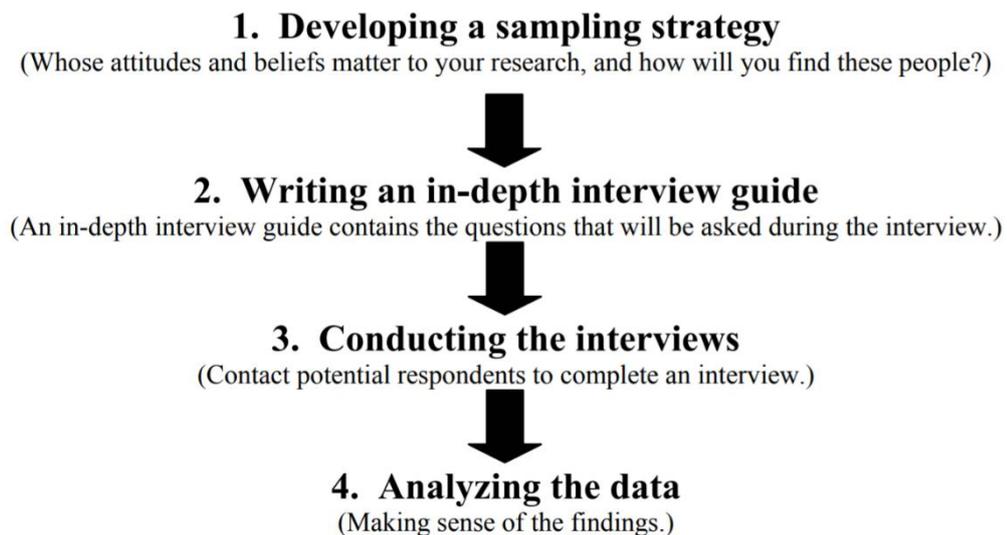


Figure 5: Steps involved in Conducting In-Depth Interviews. (Wallace Foundation 2020.)

Selecting participants to interview is the first step in conducting in-depth interviews. The author planned to invite two experts for the qualitative interviews. The first one is the Housekeeping Manager. and the other interviewee is the General Hotel Manager. They are both working at Hotel Indigo Helsinki. The author believes that these experts are highly knowledgeable and experienced about the research topic and they would be willing to share substantive responses to the author's inquiries. As the author is working in the same hotel, it was not difficult to contact the managers to invite them to the interviews and arrange the suitable interviewing time.

Next, an in-depth interview guide was created as the core open-ended questions that would be asked during the interview. The purpose of this study is to investigate in the training program for new workers in the hotel Housekeeping Department and to create a protocol for the training

procedure. Therefore, the inquiries focused on the managers' actions and experience on conducting new housekeeper training in management positions. Moreover, the author also inquired about the methods they used to manage or control the training process as well as to evaluate the result or trainee performance.

Then it came to the most essential step - conducting the interviews. The appointments with the two managers were made in advance. On Friday 22nd May 2020, the first interview was with the Housekeeping Manager at 15:30 and the second interview was with the Hotel General Manager on Monday 25th May 2020 at 10:00. The duration of the first interview was approximately an hour, and that of the second interview was about half an hour. Due to the Corona-virus situation at the time, the interviews could not be conducted face-to-face, but they were via telephone. The whole conversation of each interview was recorded thoroughly. Beside the prepared questions, the author also flexibly came up with additional inquiries as the flow of the conversations.

At the final step, the researcher analyzed data collected from both interviews with the two managers. The interview analytics involves written recollection and reconstructions of responses after transcribing the records. In particular, the information collected would be organized by theme and thoroughly filtered in order to reflect the managers' perspectives on the training program conduction. The analytics is fundamental to constitute the in-depth interview results which are clarified in the next section.

4.2 In-depth interview: Results

The first interview was implemented with the Housekeeping Manager of Hotel Indigo Helsinki. The whole conversation could be summarized in four points. The written transcript of the first interview with the Housekeeping Manager can be found in the expert interview form in Appendix 1. The author firstly concerned about the importance of conducting training program for new workers in the department. According to the manager, it is utmost significant as everyone might have different background and housekeeping is physical job, a proper training is good for health and safety handling. She especially emphasized the occupational health and safety for the hotel guests.

Secondly, the Executive Housekeeper was asked to give an example of a time she was responsible for training a new employee in her department. Her sharing about the usual training procedure was informative and valuable. They considered the fire safety of the property at first, it is safety knowledge preparation so that the trainee would not be in panic and know how to handle the case when it happens. Then she would show examples of how to enhance the security for the workers themselves. In addition, maintaining guest security while carrying out their job was also important. Once work safety regulations had been assured, they would start learning about cleaning following the IHG way to clean instructions. The trainee was usually arranged

to work together with an experienced housekeeper under the supervision. The manager put the good quality of the work on higher priority than how fast it was accomplished.

Next, the interviewer inquired about the duration of conducting the whole training procedure. The manager suggested that safety training would not take long and she expected that after two weeks training, a new housekeeper could do the job independently. Additionally, the trainee would be arranged to work together with other experienced housemaids for the practical training. For instance, the first days the trainee would learn how to make the bed, finding places, etc. It is totally understandable that some people learn faster and some may learn slower. In the beginning of learning the physical work, it takes time for the muscles to get acquainted to the new movements. For that reason, the duration of the training process might vary from person to person and the manager would not be too strict about this.

The last inquiry was about the methods that are used for evaluating the work performance of the trainee after the training. According to the Housekeeping Manager, the work results were evaluated in different ways. Sometimes, she would go herself to check the work and the trainee development. However, in some other large hotels, other experienced staff were assigned for supervision and inspection of the trainee's work. There would be always someone working together with a new housekeeper during the training time, in case the trainee needs help or instructions. Besides, IHG Room Cleanliness Inspection App was used to inspect the rooms or areas that the trainee had cleaned. The important aspect that the manager highly evaluated was the positive developments regarding customer service and the employee attitudes.

The second interview was conducted with the Hotel General Manager. The written transcript of the second interview can be found in the expert interview form in Appendix 2. In general, the purpose of this interview is exploring the General Manager's concerns for conducting training program for new staff in the Housekeeping Department. According to her, Executive Housekeeping Manager is the one who gets responsible for hiring new housekeepers for the hotel, based on flow of the business. In her opinion, it was extremely important to conduct appropriate training program for housekeeping trainees in order to ensure the smooth operation of the department and to minimize the risks.

Then, the interviewer was inquiring about the method(s) that the manager used to keep informed of the housekeepers' activities, achievements, progress toward their work performance. From the General Manager position, she could apply online or offline methods to keep track of the Housekeeping Department in general, or individual performances particularly. Daily conversations with the hotel hostesses, the Housekeeping Manager or randomly with normal housekeepers are traditional ways to get informed about their situations and how things were going on. She was always willing to meet if her staff would like to share anything with her.

Another effective way is tracking Heartbeat system which is the IHG Customer Feedback Platform. She regularly followed the customers feedbacks of cleanliness or safety handling. This is an appropriate way to maintain the good hotel performance as well as to improve customer experience and satisfaction.

The last question was about the criteria that was used to evaluate a housekeeper performance. In her opinion, worker positive attitude and desire to well perform their work are the most essential elements and are highly appreciated. The work experience and education are probably fundamental attributes of an employee. On top of that, the ability to work in a team was also thoroughly considered. Regarding the professional qualification, it would be under the evaluation from the Housekeeping Manager or supervisors.

In summary, the findings from the two interviews reflect the managers' perspectives of the research topic. The Executive Housekeeper provided relevant information and valuable experience that help the researcher obtain deep understanding of the training importance, the training procedure as well as evaluation criteria of new housekeeper after the training. By observing the participant behaviour, the author found that work safety and occupational health were put at the high priority during the training. Meanwhile, faithful sharing and viewpoint of the General Manager has clarified the employer expectation of the staff, particularly the hotel housekeepers; as well as the methods she used to keep track of the housekeepers' activities, achievements, progress toward their work performance. These informative findings play essential role in creating the effective action plan in chapter 5 (Contents of the Action Plan), especially for the follow-up and evaluation stage.

4.3 Participant observation: Theory and Implementation Process

Participant observation a qualitative research technique in which the researcher participates in a group of people not only to observe participants' daily actions, interactions, their thoughts and feelings; but to also engage in the activities. The researcher, thus, gains experience and deep understanding about the relevant researching topic from realistic perspective. The process should occur in a period of time that is long enough to ensure the complete observation and experiential knowledge. It requires the researcher to involve in the participants' environment and take fieldnotes about events and objects happening while observing. (Saldana 2011, 46-48.)

Participant observation can relate to informal interviewing at some points. What participants share with the researcher based on their perspectives or what they respond to the researcher's inquiries are considered as informal interview results. Thus, participant observation partly functions as a preliminary to interviewing the group individuals whose thoughts, feelings, experience and perspectives the research would like to explore to have a wider viewpoint about the research topic. (Saldana 2011, 46-47.)

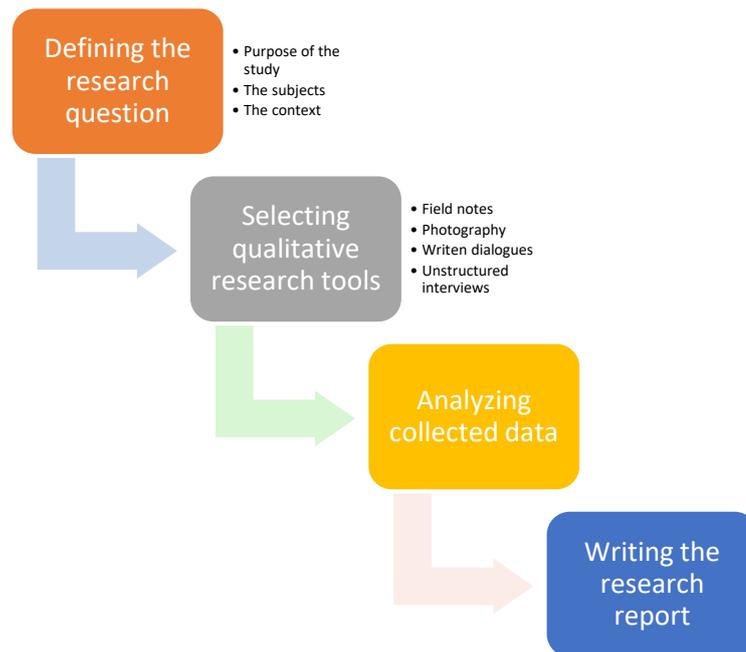


Table 1: Participant observation steps (Colorado State University 1993)

Yet there is no perfect template for conducting participant observation method, Colorado State University (1993) suggests main steps of participant observation as in table 1. The process includes four fundamental steps that are accordingly defining the research question or problem; selecting qualitative research tools; analysing reporting data and writing the research report. This procedure is simple, but it is an understandable and clear guidance for researchers to conduct an appropriate participant observation even without much experience about the method. (Colorado State University 1993.)

The first step is determining the research question or problem that requires insight perspectives. In some cases, research questions may have been defined in advance before the researchers enter the field. Thus, the researchers can concentrate on specific group activities, culture, participants' behaviours or objects that are directly relevant to the research topic. Meanwhile, other researchers plan to participate in the group first, and let the research questions define themselves. It can be true that entering the field with an already determined question may bias the observation process, and that leads to the failure in important patterns. Both approaches are acceptable as long as the purpose, the subjects and the context of the study are apparent. (Colorado State University 1993.)

Secondly, selecting suitable qualitative research tools is necessary step for designing the qualitative data collection method. Researchers can operate efficient process of observing based on a wide variety of research tools selection, such as field notes, photography, written dialogues, unstructured interviews, etc. Taking field notes of everything happens during the observation helps researchers in collecting available data and interpretation process as well as

storing the evidence. Photography is a quick and effective tool for capturing important moments, activities, objects, people, etc. while observing. Written dialogues between practitioner and participants within the study framework reflect participants speaks of their experience. Another commonly used tool is unstructured or informal interviews by which researchers explore participants' personal stories, experience or realistic conditions. (Colorado State University 1993.)

In the third place, data analysis is considered as the most important step of any research methodology. It involves data culmination, synthesis and interpretation. All data collected are summarized and categorized into logical patterns for efficient analysis of experimental observations. For descriptive data, the researcher analyses collected evidence and records to integrate them with what was observed and what was spoken by participants. Yet, this is not the last step of the research process, but the researcher may write some parts of the final research report based on the analysis. (Colorado State University 1993.)

The last stage is writing the qualitative participant observation research report. The researcher systematically presents the whole process of the study observation and connecting all the data analyses from the third step in order to conclude the outcome of the method. It can make enormous impact if the researcher knows what should be included or excluded in the report from the massive amount of data collected. The researcher should keep the research question in mind, so that the report is interpreted and organized around the question. (Colorado State University 1993.)

Category	Includes	Researchers should note
Appearance	Clothing, age, gender, physical appearance	Anything that might indicate membership in groups or in sub-populations of interest to the study, such as profession, social status, socioeconomic class, religion, or ethnicity
Verbal behavior and interactions	Who speaks to whom and for how long; who initiates interaction; languages or dialects spoken; tone of voice	Gender, age, ethnicity, and profession of speakers; dynamics of interaction
Physical behavior and gestures	What people do, who does what, who interacts with whom, who is not interacting	How people use their bodies and voices to communicate different emotions; what individuals' behaviors indicate about their feelings toward one another, their social rank, or their profession
Personal space	How close people stand to one another	What individuals' preferences concerning personal space suggest about their relationships
Human traffic	People who enter, leave, and spend time at the observation site	Where people enter and exit; how long they stay; who they are (ethnicity, age, gender); whether they are alone or accompanied; number of people
People who stand out	Identification of people who receive a lot of attention from others	The characteristics of these individuals; what differentiates them from others; whether people consult them or they approach other people; whether they seem to be strangers or well known by others present

Table 2: What to observe during participant observation (Mack et al. 2005, 20)

Once the research topic has been determined, one should have some questions in mind or inquiries of 'how' or 'why' about objectives. In general, the researcher should concentrate on observing the most relevant stakeholders' behaviours and other components involved in the research topic. Table 2 is the suggestion from Mack et al. (2005, 20) on aspects that researcher should consider when observing an objective or an activity. They are categorized into various aspects, including appearance; verbal or physical behaviour and interactions; personal space; human traffic as well as people who stand out. This suggestion is a clear guidance for researcher when conducting participant observation. (Mack et al. 2005, 20.)

Observation checklist

<p>Housekeeping daily routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies preparation <input type="checkbox"/> Servicing stay-over rooms <input type="checkbox"/> Servicing due-out rooms <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning corridors, stairways, public areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Refilling housekeeping cart <input type="checkbox"/> Washing guest room utensils <input type="checkbox"/> Waste handling <input type="checkbox"/> Daily reporting 	<p>Housekeeping Cleaning Supplies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Manual cleaning accessories <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning chemicals/detergents <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies handling
<p>Training process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Property instruction and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> Showing cleaning example <input type="checkbox"/> Instructing cleaning process <input type="checkbox"/> Following up 	<p>Working environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Property facilities and amenities <input type="checkbox"/> Customer service <input type="checkbox"/> Workers attitudes <input type="checkbox"/> Workers performance <input type="checkbox"/> Manager performance <input type="checkbox"/> Health and safety issues <input type="checkbox"/> Guest satisfaction

Figure 6: Observation checklist

In this thesis, participant observation method was used to explore the hotel Housekeeping Department and the training program for new department workers. The author spent one month of her internship in the Housekeeping Department of Hotel Indigo Helsinki. Thus, the observation was conducted in January 2020. As the author had not experienced the job before, she was truly a participant in the case of this study, which is training new housekeeper in the hotel.

Figure 6 is the observation checklist of the objects and activities that the researcher planned to observe while implementing the research method. They were categorized into four factors that the researcher focused on. These include housekeeping daily routine, housekeeping cleaning supplies, the training process and the working environment. With those in mind, the author had been doing the observation accordingly throughout the participating time in the department. Various qualitative research tools were applied while observing, including photography, field notes and unstructured interviews. The author also considered the suggestion of Mack et al. (2005, 20.) as in table 5 to explore all aspects of an object.

4.4 Participant observation: Results

In the beginning of the participating time, the author got acquainted to the general hotel working environment, especially in the Housekeeping Department. The findings about the property facilities and amenities are described in subchapter 2.1 (IHG and Hotel Indigo Helsinki). About the Housekeeping Department operation, the hotel is having internal housekeeping with simple organizational structure. Effective interdepartmental communication was managed either via Opera system or via traditional communication channels which are clarified in subchapter 2.2 (The Housekeeping Department). The department workers performance, customer service and attitudes are mainly based on IHG standard called 'True Hospitality' that differentiate the brand experience. As housekeeping is physically heavy job, health and safety regulations are strictly followed by the department staff to ensure the occupational health and working environment safety for all individuals involved in the business operation.

The author participated in the department as a housekeeping trainee and experienced the whole training process. Based on what had been observed, the author designs the training stages which is performed in subchapter 5.2 (Training stages). It includes knowledge training, practical training, follow-up and evaluation. The trainee would be firstly introduced about the property as well as health and safety regulations, especially when carrying out the housekeeping tasks, to ensure an appropriate work handling. Next, the supervisor showed the trainee an example of the procedure for servicing guest rooms. The trainee was arranged to work with other experienced housekeepers for practical training under their supervision. After two weeks when the author could work independently, the manager still followed up her performance to ensure the work was accomplished properly.

Valuable data was collected while observing and informally interviewing other housekeepers of their daily working process from the beginning to the end of a shift. The ordinary procedure is described as in Figure 7 (Housekeeping daily routine). A housekeeper started the shift by preparing cleaning supplies including manual cleaning accessories, bathroom cleaning detergents and housekeeping cart. Each housemaid would be provided a master key and assigned a list of rooms to be serviced, including stay-over rooms and due-out rooms. The corridors, stairways and areas under their responsibilities should also be kept in good appearance. All dirty utensils collected from guest rooms are separated into two groups, housekeeping utensil would be washed using the department dishwasher, other utensils which belong to the restaurant would be transferred to the kitchen dishwasher. Waste needed to be handled and housekeeping cart needed to be refilled at the end of the shift. Once all assigned tasks had been done, housekeeper returned the key and did the daily report by filling the working-time sheet. A shift may last from five to seven hours depending on the amount of work.

Another important aspect that the author focused on is the cleaning supplies in the Housekeeping Department and how they are handled. Data collected about this aspect is clarified in subchapter 3.4 (Housekeeping cleaning supplies). Efficient tools such as photography and informal interview were mainly used for the data collection. In general, they can be classified into three categories, including manual cleaning accessories; mechanical equipment and cleaning chemicals. Having appropriate cleaning supplies and good understanding of their uses are extensions for housekeepers to implement their cleaning tasks efficiently. For safety reason, the executive housekeeper always made sure that her staff knows how to handle the cleaning supplies and maintain their good shape. Especially with the cleaning detergents, workers were well trained for safe handling of chemicals in their cleaning procedures.

To conclude, the findings and data collected by using participant observation are categorized into four areas, including the hotel and the Housekeeping Department working environment; the training process that the author experienced; the daily routine of a housekeeper; and the housekeeping cleaning supplies. These findings are useful source of information for creating the thesis outcomes. Collected data is used and presented chapter 5 (Contents of the Action Plan), especially for building the content of knowledge training and practical training stages.

5 Contents of the Action Plan

In this chapter, the thesis outcome is presented as the action plan contents. Firstly, the author determines the goals and objectives of the action plan in order to give the reader a clear direction of the study outcome. On top of that, the training program is divided into three essential stages, including knowledge training; practical training; follow-up and evaluation. In

the last place, a Gantt chart with defined milestones will be built as a planned schedule to conduct the three stages of the action plan.

5.1 Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the action plan is to implement a training program for new employees who start working in the hotel Housekeeping Department. As the case study is Hotel Indigo Helsinki which has been introduced in chapter 2 (Business context), the training protocol is also suitable to be applied to other hotels which have similar business context. In particular, the small- to medium-sized hotels which operate internal Housekeeping Department can implement this action plan. The author used to be the trainee in the Housekeeping Department of the commissioner hotel, she realized the lack of an appropriate action plan for training new housekeepers. That was the main reason why the author came up with the thesis subject.

Additionally, the action plan is intended to be a well-planned internal training program for the commissioner hotel. Housekeeper training is beneficial for both hotel employer and employees. For employer, it helps to ensure the safety in the workplace and to minimize the occupational hazards as the job is undertaken properly. Training is cost-effective strategy that brings long-term benefits to employers. For employees, this is a good chance to obtain work-related knowledge as well as to equip themselves with housekeeping skills for their own personal development and for professional adaptation.

There are several objectives that had been set up for the action plan. Firstly, the training program is intended to provide the relevant knowledge to the new housemaids. Knowledge about the property layout and the general hotel operation are necessary as a housekeeper should not get lost in the workplace and should know the hotel directions and areas for guiding customers when being asked. On top of that, knowledge about health and safety in the work environment is given high priority to lessen the occupational hazards as much as possible. It is also important that a hotel housekeeper, who works in the hospitality industry, has a good understanding of customer service to deliver the memorable experience to the hotel guests.

The second objective regards to practical housekeeping skills that would be trained for the new staff. As a basis of the hotel housekeeping job, a housemaid should know the guest room cleaning procedure and follow it to maintain the hotel standard. Moreover, the trainee would obtain the instruction of how to use the housekeeping cleaning supplies, especially when handling cleaning chemicals. Besides, basic skills in four areas, such as reading, writing, numbers and communication should also be developed.

All in all, the goals and objectives of the study have been set up and clarified. Duration of the action plan for training new hotel housekeeper is estimated to be two weeks. The Executive Manager is in charge of conducting the training as well as supervision. It needs also the support

from the Assistant Housekeeper and other experienced worker in the department. After the training implementation, the employee should be groomed for the housekeeping tasks with the trained knowledge and skills.

5.2 Training stages

The action plan comprises three essential stages of the housekeeper training protocol. The first stage regards to knowledge training which acts as a preparation step for the trainee to obtain the understanding of safety and health in the workplace; the property; cleaning supplies and customer service. Secondly, practical training is instruction component referring to the housekeeping daily routine, guest room cleaning procedure and time management aspect. The last stage explains how the supervisor follow up the trainee and conduct the post-training evaluation. These key features are created based on the data collected from the qualitative research methodologies mentioned in previous chapter.

5.2.1 Knowledge training

Workplace safety and health training is considered as the first and foremost concern when conducting the housekeeping knowledge training. Especially fire safety of the property would be acknowledged at first, so that the housekeeper will not be in panic and know how to handle the case when it happens. It is also important to ensure the security for the workers themselves as well as for the hotel guests by following the job description and regulations. For instance, the room door must be left open while cleaning or it is always possible to refuse to serve a customer if he is behaving badly or strangely. The trainee should be engaged to the hotel policies and safety regulations that support the property security and enhance guest satisfaction.

Property knowledge training is conducted as the introduction to the new housekeeper about the layout of the property. In the beginning, the trainee is arranged to work together with experienced housekeepers and follow their working procedures, learn about the hotel public areas and know how to access staff rooms, etc. As a hotel worker, the trainee should be able to show directions to customers, if asked, and inform them about hotel services operation time as well as the main facilities and service areas of the hotel. For instance, if a guest asks the way to sauna rooms or time when breakfast is served, a housemaid should be able to guide and inform the guest. (Casado 2012, 170.)

Additionally, appropriate understanding of the housekeeping cleaning supplies is essential part of the knowledge training. They are considered as the extensions for housekeepers to implement their cleaning duties productively. It was clarified in subchapter 3.4 (Housekeeping cleaning supplies) three main categories, including manual cleaning accessories, mechanical equipment and housekeeping chemicals. Manual cleaning accessories are the basic nonchemical tools that are manually used to maintain the surface cleanliness. The mechanical equipment that

are used in the department for cleaning function includes vacuum cleaners, floor polishers, washing machines, clothes dryers, dish washer and ozone gun. The trainee should be well-trained before utilizing the electrical equipment for safety reason and for maintaining the good condition of the machines. Knowledge about the cleaning chemicals that are used for the cleaning duties must be well instructed for the trainee. Understanding of handling the chemicals keeps the staff safe from the occupational hazards and secures the health and safety of guests.

Regarding customer service knowledge base, the trainee is introduced to the IHG training manuals. Not only housekeeping staff, but all the workers of IHG hotels are also eligible for the customer service training conducted on the IHG learning platform. ‘True Hospitality’ is IHG brand’s promise which is about making everyone feel welcome and cared for, whoever and wherever they are. According to the manuals, IHG hotels staff are well-trained in delivering great services and experiences to guests; and treating colleagues with respect; looking after the environment and giving back to the local community. (InterContinental Hotels Group 2020.)

5.2.2 Practical training

Once knowledge training had been undertaken thoroughly, the next stage practical training is processed accordingly. Firstly, the trainee gets adapted to the typical daily routine of a housekeeper. This helps the trainee to obtain an overview of a working shift and to manage working time and housekeeping duties effectively. Secondly, it is important to focus on the guest room cleaning procedure as it is the main duty of the housekeeping job. By following the hotel standards of cleaning practices appropriately, the housekeepers create great stay atmosphere and deliver the as best as possible experience for the hotel guests. In the last place, an essential practice of the housekeeping job is time management. It is considered as the key skill desired by a housekeeper to ensure all cleaning duties are accomplished in a timely manner.

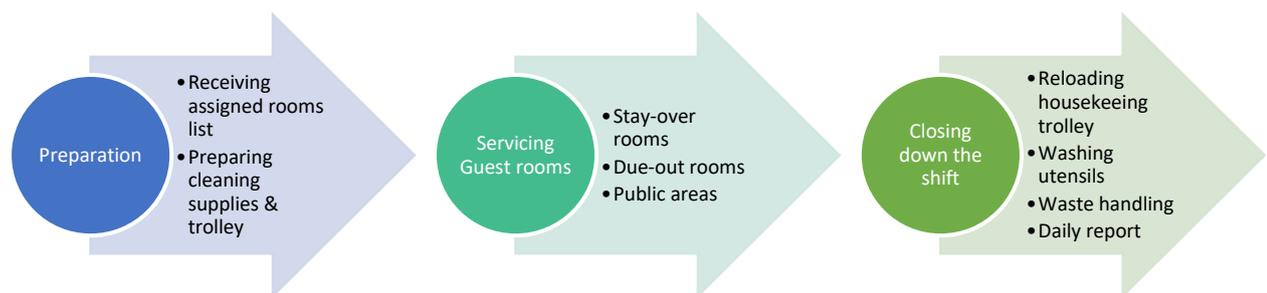


Figure 7: Housekeeping daily routine

Figure 7 shows the housekeeping typical daily routine at Hotel Indigo as the result of the participant observation research. A housekeeper starts the shift by preparing cleaning supplies

including manual cleaning accessories, bathroom cleaning detergents and housekeeping cart. Each housemaid is provided with a master key and assigned a list of rooms to be serviced. Once the housekeeper has prepared all necessary supplies, she starts servicing available guest rooms, including stay-over rooms and due-out rooms. The assigned duty floor corridors and stairways should also be kept in good appearance. Lastly, there are several small tasks for closing the shift. All dirty utensils collected from guest rooms are separated into two groups, housekeeping utensils would be washed using the department dishwasher, other utensils which belong to the restaurant would be transferred to the kitchen dishwasher in the restaurant area. Waste needs to be handled and housekeeping cart needs to be organized and restocked at the end of the shift, so that it is ready for the next shift. Then the housekeeper completes the daily report by filling the work time sheet and returns the master key. A shift may last from five to seven hours depending on the amount of work available.

Servicing guest room is the main duty of hotel housekeepers. The procedure is created based on the data collected from observation participant research and in-depth interview with the Executive Manager. Though it is commonly used procedure, different housemaid might adjust the tasks order to suit their way of working, as long as all tasks are accomplished accordingly. During the practical training, the procedure is firstly shown as an example for the trainee to follow. Then the trainee will be assigned with simple tasks, and practice other tasks gradually. This procedure is mainly used for servicing due-out rooms which are unoccupied, proper cleanings are required to get the rooms ready for the next customers. For cleaning stay-over rooms which are occupied, the guests' personal belongings are still in the rooms, so there is the limit of items that the housekeeper can touch. As a result, the procedure for servicing a stay-over room is simplified with less tasks than that for a due-out room. The differences are explained to the trainee in order to implement the cleaning duties correctly. Table 3 presents the guest room cleaning procedure as the hotel standard.

Tasks	Activities
<i>Entering guest room</i>	Enter guest room (leave Do not disturb rooms) Keep the door open by door stopper while working Open curtains & windows for fresh air (Ozone gun may be used if necessary) Maintenance check and report Collect all rubbish and check the lost property
<i>Making bed(s)</i>	Remove soiled bed linens and bathroom linens Collect clean linens and supplies from housekeeping trolley Make bed(s)
<i>Cleaning bathroom</i>	Flush toilet & apply toilet cleaner evenly under rim and around bowl Replace bathroom linens, utensils and toiletries Clean basin, vanity area, tiles, walls and doors Clean tiles, shower/bathtub, fixtures and mirror Clean and disinfectant toilet
<i>Finishing up</i>	Replace trash bags Replace guest room utensils (glasses/mugs/spoons/etc.) Replenish guest room supplies (coffee/tea/water bottle/sugar/honey/etc.) Replenish minibar products and minibar report Dust all surfaces/windows/furniture/mirror/artwork Vacuum & mop bedroom, bathroom floor
<i>Inspecting & Reporting</i>	Make the final visual check on standards Close windows/Remove the ozone gun Report room as 'cleaned' using the TV system Report the lost property and minibar products used Switch lights off, leave the room & make sure the door is closed properly

Table 3: Guestroom cleaning procedure

Time management skill is especially important standard feature in hotel housekeeping job. Housekeepers work on their own and must accomplish numbers of rooms need to be serviced every shift. For the commissioner hotel, it is estimated to take 24 minutes to clean a due-out room and 10 minutes per stay-over room. Based on that standard, the Executive Housekeeper would be able to estimate the time required for every rooming list, and it is also the time goal set for the workers themselves. New housemaid is trained how to manage time properly in order to assure all assigned tasks are accomplished accordingly and punctually. However, it is understandable that the new worker might not be able to work as fast as the timing standard in the beginning. As long as the work safety and quality of the work are ensured, the trainee

can practice managing time gradually. The time frame planned and organized well helps housekeepers to complete their work on time as expectation of manager. This skill is advantageable in their own lives and career.

5.2.3 Follow-up and evaluation

There are several methods that are used by the Managers to follow up and evaluate the new housekeeper performance during and after the training process. Those include supervisor evaluation, guest feedbacks on rooms' cleanliness and the right attitude of the new housemaid. Following up and post-training evaluating are essential for the training implementation. Thus, the trainee understands what criteria are expected from her performance and how to ensure the work quality. Figure 8 indicates the three aspects of post-training evaluation of a housekeeper.

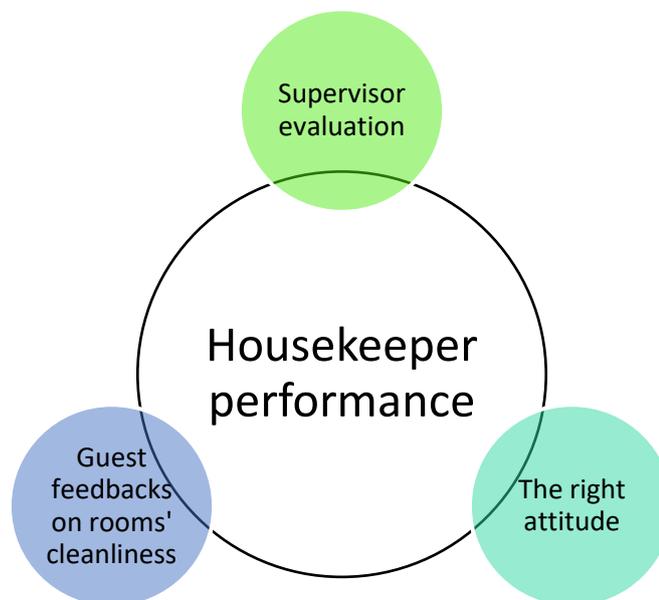


Figure 8: Post-training evaluation of new housekeeper

Supervisor evaluation is an effective method that is commonly applied for evaluating workers performance. Before the trainee can work independently, the Housekeeper Manager or supervisor may work together with the trainee to assure the work is carried out accordingly and all tasks that have been trained are followed properly. The experienced supervisor plays important role in supporting the new housekeeper as well as in evaluating the work after it has been accomplished. In the case hotel, the supervisor evaluation of a serviced guest room is conducted by using IHG Room Cleanliness Inspection Application as a base to inspect the room. The application supports the supervisor in evaluating the completed work by established room cleanliness standards of different areas and items of guest room. Mark scheme can be used to discuss

with the new staff so that she is notified the areas needed to be improved. (Polo & Tweed 2018.)

Another aspect that the managers would consider when evaluating housekeeper performance are guest feedbacks on rooms' cleanliness. Customer satisfaction and memorable stay experience are the key goals for any hotel workers. Therefore, reviews from the hotel customers on rooms' cleanliness present faithfully and realistically the evaluation. This is commonly used by the Hotel General Manager to keep track of the Housekeeping Department, as well as the new worker performance. Additionally, negative feedbacks on the cleanliness of guestroom indicate the areas that need to be improved in the housekeeper performance. This method of evaluation not only helps the new worker development, but also enhances the productivity and professionalism of the hotel operation.

There is no a perfect way to make the bed, it may vary from person to person. That said, the managers do not expect the perfection, but they want to see the right attitude and positive development of the trainee. Strong desire to work is even more appreciated by employers or managers than the work experience. Workplace attitudes have great impact on many individuals involved in the hotel, either on teammates, on customers or on the employer. Every worker with the proper attitude creates the positive workplace environment which brings out certain benefits such as enhancing productivity, improving worker motivation and morale. After the training, the new housekeeper should have enhanced the awareness of performance as a respectful teammate, a customer-oriented staff and a loyal employee.

It is also necessary to maintain the good performance of the trainee by giving positive evaluation. Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses toward the work performance. Empathy from the supervisor is the important management skill to give good feedback on the trainee efforts, to keep up the good work and to improve the overall performance. Hotel housekeeping is a physically tough and tiresome profession that requires various tasks and responsibilities from the workers. That is the reason why it is meaningful to create the worker motivation and satisfaction as well as express the recognition towards their great effort at work.

5.3 Training milestones & Gantt chart

The action plan for training new housekeeper in the case hotel comprises three stages. Components of the action plan include knowledge training; practical training; follow-up and evaluation. The author builds the plan as an easy guide to developing an effective training for new housekeeper at Hotel Indigo Helsinki. It is based on the results of relevant theory development and qualitative research methods, including in-depth interview and participant observation.

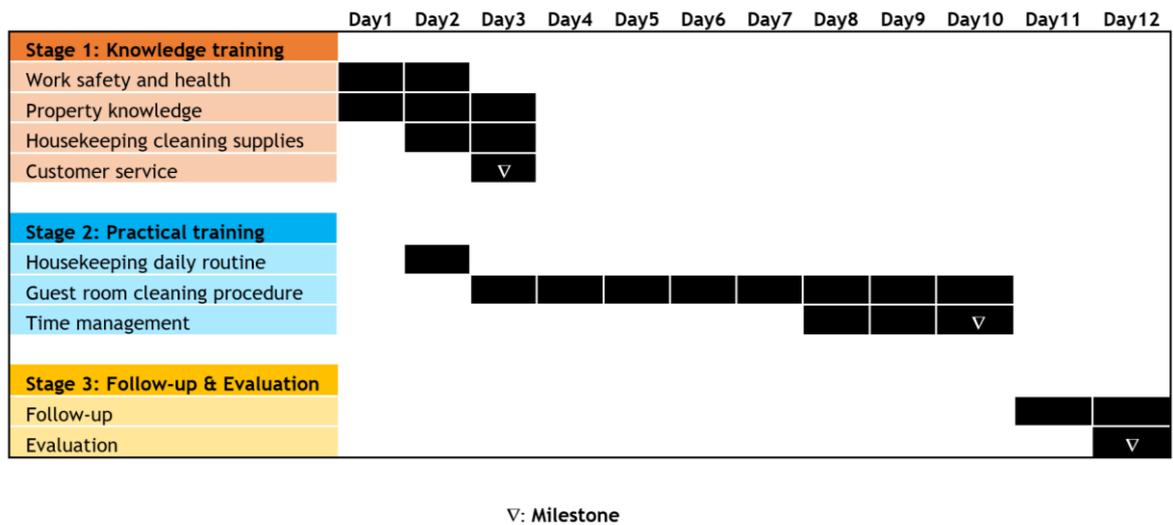


Figure 9: Gantt chart

Figure 9 is the Gantt chart that shows the overview of the action plan stages and tasks scheduled over time. The chart illustrates the action plan by scheduling the tasks to be done on specific days. Days are counted as working days which are five days a week. That means the action plan is estimated to take more than two weeks. The duration may vary depending on the learning acceleration of the trainee. It is possible to adjust the schedule in order to meet the organization needs and suit the participants.

Accordingly, there are three milestones marked in the Gantt chart that signifies each stage in the trainee development. After three days of the first stage, the trainee should have obtained the knowledge base of work safety and health; the property; housekeeping cleaning supplies and customer service. The practical training can be conducted only when the knowledge training had been undertaken. After ten days of the first two stages, which counts for two working weeks, the new housemaid has been trained how to run a housekeeping daily routine, how to service guest rooms appropriately and how to manage time for an efficient work-life integration. Lastly, the stage of following up and evaluation is under the direct responsibility of the Chief Housekeeper or the supervisor. The last milestone marks the accomplishment of the training action plan, that means the trainee can work independently.

6 Conclusion

The main conclusion is that the thesis's goal of creating an action plan for new housekeeper training program has been achieved. The action plan is applied for the commissioner Hotel Indigo Helsinki and it may also suit other lodging businesses that have similar size and context. Theoretical framework with relevant concepts, definitions and literatures was reviewed in order to strengthen the study. Additionally, the case hotel was the author's workplace, so the study was based on realistic findings and the outcome was aimed to develop the human resources of the hotel housekeeping Department. The thesis outcome addressed the key features of the training program following a measurable time frame.

By using the specific qualitative research techniques, the author collected valuable and informative data for the thesis outcome. In-depth interviews with the Hotel General Manager and the Executive Housekeeper reflected the various perspectives of the managers on the housekeeper training program. The author achieved deep understanding of the training importance, the training procedure as well as evaluation criteria of new housekeeper after the program. Besides, the findings from participant observation method helped author obtain the great exploration; experience the work culture and gain empathic insight into the research topic. The chosen methodologies were efficient in providing sophisticated descriptions of participants' experience regarding the research question.

Honestly, there were challenges that the author experienced and valuable lessons she learned from this thesis implementation. It was struggling to determine the key objectives of the outcome. However, the author overcame the difficulty by finding, selecting and integrating relevant theoretical framework to explore the case study aspects that need to be concentrated on. As a result, the thesis was structured accordingly, and relevant theoretical subjects were determined. On the other hand, the research and development process were implemented smoothly and effectively. The results not only provided the valuable source of information for the thesis outcome, but also helped deepen the author knowledge about various aspects of training hotel housekeeping staff. Additionally, the author learned how to implement a research and development to investigate, solve or improve an issue.

The author hopes that this action plan would act as an effectual tool in the human resource development of the case hotel Housekeeping Department. Thus, it improves the hotel performance and sales. This may be used as the protocol for developing training program in other departments of the hotel. Future work on different accommodation establishments is suggested by the author. With further development and adjustment on the outcome, it can be applied for other cases of lodging business.

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Appendix 1: Expert Interview Form - Housekeeping Manager

Expert Interview Form - Housekeeping Manager

Interview Details			
Property:	<u>Hotel Indigo Helsinki</u>	Date: <u>22.05.2020</u>	Time: <u>15:30</u>
Interviewer Name:	<u>Gitta Hemmo</u>		
Interviewer Title:	<u>Housekeeping Manager</u>	Contact info	: <u>+358 44 xxxxx 611</u> Gitta.hemmo@crowneplaza.helsinki.fi

Questions to Ask Interviewer

Question #1: In your opinion, how important is it to conduct training program for new housekeepers?

Answer: It's very important. Almost all housekeepers come from different fields. For example, I'm professional photographer and I never studied any cleaning. The work is very physical, so a good training is important for health. And I'm always worried about the safety, so I always try to train the things that I learned the most important. Also, its safety for guests when housekeeper have had good training and knows what to do in different situations.

Question #2: Give me an example of a time you were responsible for training a new employee in your Housekeeping Department. What did you do to help him/her learn the new job and about the hotel?

Answer: First, we go through the fire safety of the house. It is important not to panic and know how to act. Then I will show an example of how you can increase your own security. For example, why do we leave the room door open when we clean. And that it is always ok to refuse to serve a customer if he is behaving badly or strangely. We also go through why it is not allowed to open the room door when the client requests. And why we double check that all doors are locked after us. When safety things are ok will we start learning about cleaning. In that order, ergonomics is important. We have IHG way to clean-system. We have videos, instructions. Usually trainee goes with Housekeeper who I trust. It's also reason why I checked rooms, I want to see everyone knows how to clean well and I see everything is ok on the floors. After the day we talk how it was, what thing we should practice next. For me minutes/time is not the first things to expect, I want to see first good quality.

Question #3: How long does it usually take to train a new worker in your department?

Answer: Safety does not take so long but I expect after two weeks housekeeper can do job independent. Every day I put trainee with older housekeeper. First days goes learning make the bed, finding places, etc.

Question #4: How would you evaluate the work performance of a housekeeping trainee?

Answer: I always say there is no one right way to make a bed. The others may advise quite differently. It's like a handwriting. Usually I go to check the work myself and then decide. In large hotels, you can leave a more experienced housekeeper next to the trainee in the same corridor, so can always ask for help. Many times, I ask older housekeeper to inspect the rooms if I don't have time myself.

We have IHG Room Cleanliness Inspection App, so it's kind of base. I don't expect perfection, but I want to see positive developments. An important part is also being able to serve the customer. Even a smile and polite behavior does a lot.

Appendix 2: Expert Interview Form - General Hotel Manager

Expert Interview Form - Hotel General Manager

Interview Details			
Property:	<u>Hotel Indigo Helsinki</u>	Date: <u>25.05.2020</u>	Time: <u>10:00</u>
Interviewer Name:	<u>Kirsi Leisma-Stolt</u>		
Interviewer Title:	<u>Hotel General Manager</u>	Contact info: +358 xxxx 64268 Kirsi.Leisma- Stolt@hotelindigohelsinki.fi	

Questions to Ask Interviewer

Question #1: Who is responsible for hiring new workers for the Housekeeping Department in your hotel?

Answer: Executive housekeeping manager

Question #2: In your opinion, how important is it to conduct training program for new housekeepers?

Answer: Very important

Question #3: Tell me about the method(s) you use to keep informed of your housekeepers' activities, achievements, progress toward their work performance.

Answer: Daily conversations with hotel hostess, through Heartbeat Customer feedback system. I follow the customers feedback of cleanliness, and my door always open if someone needs to share something with me.

Question #4: How you define a good performing housekeeper?

Answer: For me the most important thing for all employees is their attitude and desire to do their work. Of course, work experience and education are important too, and ability to work in a team.

