Hospitality & it's Origin

Introduction

Hospitality is treating people like you would want to be treated when you are traveling. In other words, it means making a tourist feel totally welcome not only as your guest but also as the guest of the complete family of the Hotel. Hospitality is a genuine smiling face.

Hospitality can be termed as a deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and the public i.e., the business of making and keeping friends, and promoting an atmosphere of better understanding. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "the act or practice of being hospitable; the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors or strangers". The word hospitality is derived from the Latin word "*Hospitalitias*"

Very frequently we hear phrases like "He is always hospitable to his visitors", "We are grateful to friends for their hospitality in putting us up while we were on holiday", "She is so inhospitable that she grudges giving us anything to eat or drink when we visit her", etc. All such statements are suggesting a positive or negative attitude of welcome towards visitors; friends or strangers. Hospitality activity covers everything, providing attentive and courteous services, facilities and amenities to a traveller, meeting and greeting him at the door, providing efficient and caring service of food and beverage to him in his room i.e., providing "*A Home away from Home*", and making his visit a memorable and pleasant experience.

Reception, welcome and, the treatment of a guest or a stranger in the most friendly manner is Hospitality. In most of the countries all over the world, a guest is received with a great amount of courtesy and warmth and is provided with entertainment. The basic concept of Hospitality is to make the guest feel that he has come amongst friends and that ***Guests Are Always Welcome***. Although the basic

concept of hospitality has remained the same, yet with the passage of time and development of technology and science, the needs and wants of travellers have changed greatly thus providing numerous services and facilities in terms of accommodation and other basic needs such as food and beverages. In olden days kings, lords, maharajas, landlords, and sometimes the panchayats used to provide food and shelter to travellers and their animals free of charge and it used to be a benevolent activity. But with the passage of time, it has not only remained a benevolent activity but has also become a flourishing business.

A part of hospitality activity is being attentive, alert, and cordial with the guest without forcing yourself and your ideas on him, and at the same time being very polite and cooperative. All those working in the hospitality industry have one common objective '***Creating an image of friendly reception and treatment***' for guests and visitors.

As front office personnel, the hotel staff, in order to provide hospitality, should make his guests feel at home and use a pleasant tone of voice smilingly, and offer his assistance wherever possible. Don't ignore the guest, and don't be abrupt no matter how busy you are, anticipate his needs and wants and provide the same without him asking them-this should be the motto.

As a hotelier, keep on checking the hospitality attitude of your organization. Make a checklist and be sure that you and your staff are fulfilling each and every point of the checklist. The checklist may include areas such as front desk and lobby, etc. Make sure that the front desk is always kept clean, orderly, and well lighted. Even the stationery used should be so designed that it does not create confusion and clearly indicates how it is to be filled in. and should be inviting. The lobby should be kept clean and furniture kept at the proper place. The lighting system should be soft and appealing. The welcome spirit that the guest is looking for should be there. Floor covering, pictures, furnishing, etc. should be appealing, attractive, and aesthetically designed.

Further, the checklist should include intangibles such as training of the staff and willingness and positive attitude of the staff. The arriving guest is always greeted with a smile and proper salutation to show interest in his trip and his well being. Hospitality means anticipating and satisfying a guest's needs.

Origins Of Hospitality Industry

Early travelers were either warriors or traders or people in search of knowledge and there were no hotels. Warriors and conquerors pitched their tents for accommodation while traders and persons traveling for knowledge placed a high value on hospitality and sometimes traded their merchandise for lodging.

Inn keeping can be said to be the first commercial enterprise for hospitality and one of the first services for which money was exchanged. Inns of the Biblical times offered only a cot or a bench in the comer. Guests stayed in large communal rooms with no sanitation and privacy. The rates were, of course, reasonable. The company was rough. Travellers shared the same quarters with their horses and animals.

King James Version of the Bible mentions that Mary and Joseph were turned away by a Bethlehem innkeeper because there was "no room at the inn". According to Biblical scholars the innkeeper may have meant that the room was unsuitable for a woman about to give birth to a child. At that time, and probably for several centuries after that, men and women shared ' the same accommodation accompanied by their horses and livestock. The stable where Mary and Joseph spent the night was probably almost as comfortable as an inn and at the same time certainly more private than the inn itself.

In the 3rd century AD, the Roman Empire developed an extensive network of brick-paved roads throughout Europe and Asia Minor, and a chain of roadside lodges was constructed along the major

thoroughfare from Spain to Turkey. Till the Industrial Revolution of the 1700s, no significant improvement was made in the inns and taverns and they were not very suitable for aristocrats. To accommodate wealthy travelers, luxurious structures were constructed with private rooms, individual sanitation, and comforts of a European castle. These elegant new establishments adopted the French word for mansion-'Hotel'. Their rates were beyond the reach of an ordinary person.

In America, early inns were modeled after European taverns with sleeping quarters shared by two or more guests.

Herman Melville in his novel Moby Dick has mentioned a seaman who checked into a room of a nineteenth-century inn and the next morning woke up to find out that he was sharing the bed with a cannibal. Sharing beds was a very common practice in early American and European inns. Throughout the 1800s American innkeepers improved their services and continued to build larger and more amply equipped properties and most of these properties were located near seaport towns.

The tendency of Americans to travel more provided inspiration to lodging operators. The nation' s democratic spirit also led to the development of comfortable and sanitary lodging within the reach of an ordinary person.

Hospitality Industry can be broadly defined as the collection of businesses providing accommodation and/or food and beverages to people who are away from home.