



# Front Desk Agent

A TOURISM CAREER SAMPLER

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Facilitator Guide

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# About Tourism Career Samplers —

*Tourism Career Samplers* are career exploration tools enabling participants to experience careers by working through real situations in the classroom. Skills-based, participant-centered, informative, and interactive, each *Tourism Career Sampler* increases awareness through simulated and experiential learning.

*Tourism Career Samplers* provide an informal, practical introduction to the basics of the entry-level job and help participants make a decision whether to pursue a particular occupation. The job skills in this *Tourism Career Sampler* are based on the Canadian national occupational standards. These are available from your Tourism Education Council. Participants can use these basic skills to obtain a job and/or be well informed for job-shadowing.

## **Who can deliver *Tourism Career Samplers*?**

*Tourism Career Samplers* are best delivered by an experienced tourism teacher or a professional who has both practical skills for this specific *Career Sampler* as well as customer service experience.

## **Where can *Tourism Career Samplers* be delivered?**

All *Tourism Career Samplers* are designed to be delivered in regular classroom settings so the facilitator need not be limited by contrary weather conditions, lack of community resources or low budgets. Imagination and decoration will definitely stimulate further learning. It is more important, however, to focus on 'the learning' than to have the 'perfect' prop.

## **How long does it take to deliver at *Tourism Career Sampler*?**

All *Tourism Career Samplers* work on an 'elastic' time principle. All Samplers can be delivered in 8 hours, and most can be expanded to 20–40 hours. The expansion occurs when the learning is given over to the students. For example, part of the personal file in *Local Tour Guide Tourism Career Sampler* can take 15 minutes with pre-packaged brochures. The same lesson can be expanded to 30 minutes in the local info centre to gather brochures, 60 minutes to sort them into categories, plus travelling time and initial instructions for a total of about 3 hours. *Weigh the allowed time with the value of the learning.*

The choice is yours.



## How do I use the Facilitator Guide?

*Tourism Career Samplers* were designed by and with tourism teachers. They are straightforward teaching and learning programs which follow a 'tried and true' format:

**set up:** classroom, instructor, and participant supply list

**objectives:** learning objectives, completion requirements, completion certificates

**background:** historical context for the particular tourism career

**definitions and roles:** elements of the specific career and related jobs

**scenario:** simulated experiences to aid skill acquisition and career decision making

**evaluation:** assessment of the effectiveness of the learning experience

Your *Tourism Career Sampler Facilitator Guide* is directly aligned to the Participant Workbook. The same graphics and page layout are visible in both the Facilitator Manual and the Participant Workbook. At the top of each page, you will notice the corresponding page number in the Participant Workbook. This reduces page-flipping and allows the facilitator to focus on active classroom learning rather than searching for the overhead icon and appendices as in traditional training manuals.

Information written in **bold** means that the information is for the teacher/facilitator and is not contained in the *Participant Workbook*. The information in regular type is contained in the *Participant Workbook*. All the other information directs and supports you in facilitating your *Tourism Career Sampler*.

*Tourism Career Samplers* are copyrighted and we ask that you honour our years of industry and teaching experience, university degrees in learning theory, and personal financial risks so that you may offer quality, fairly priced tourism education products to your students and save yourself hours upon hours of prep time. By all means copy a graphic if you wish to make a transparency or other visual aid.

Thank you for your support.



# Set up and supplies

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## Suggested room set up

- work table with a box to serve as the front desk
- blackboard, white board, or flip chart
- appropriate writing tools
- TV and VCR

## Supplies

- *Front Desk Agent Facilitator Guide*
- *Front Desk Agent Participant Kits* (1 workbook and certificate per participant)
- an old phone, or a toy phone
- name badge, tie, or jacket to simulate uniform for front desk agent
- business cards in holder
- floral arrangement for front desk
- phone answering pads
- pen or pencil
- hotel front desk banner
- bell
- sample hotel documents
- prizes like hotel shampoo, soap and shower caps



# Objectives

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Advise participants to turn to page 2 in their workbooks

Quantum Learning's *Front Desk Agent Tourism Career Sampler* is an informal and interactive program loaded with background knowledge, definitions, skills, practical exercises, suggested career path and resources to aid the participants in their choice to become a front desk agent. The program is based on current occupational standards.

## By the end of this Tourism Career Sampler, participants will be able to:

- describe the background of the accommodation industry
- make room reservations
- register arriving guests and assign rooms
- respond to guest complaints
- compile and check daily record sheets, guest accounts, receipts and vouchers
- present statements of charges to departing guests
- receive payment for services such as accommodation, room service, and meals

## Successful course completion consists of:

- completed documents package for registration and guest accounts
- review test

## Upon successful course completion the participant will:

- receive completion certificate to include with your resume



# Background

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*Advise participants to turn to page 3 in their workbooks*

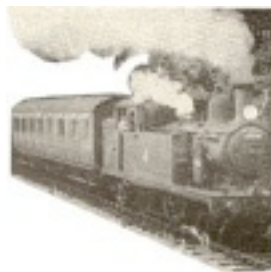
Humans living in ancient times were nomadic; we hunted and gathered food and carried their possessions with them. Early homes were **caves, portable tents and temporary homes made of indigenous materials.**

As they evolved, they became farmers, planting seeds and harvesting crops. Their dwellings became more permanent but they still travelled to trade their goods. Farmers journeyed to nearby towns to sell produce staying at **local inns** in the market towns.

As they became increasingly sophisticated, they journeyed greater distances to find new markets, to crusade, and to go on pilgrimages. People travelled on horseback, on carts, and in stagecoaches. Journeys stretched into days, weeks, and even years. **Coach houses** and inns were built along popular **trade routes** at intervals coinciding with travellers' needs for food, water, shelter, and fresh horses.

Following the Industrial Revolution in Europe, people travelled by steam train instead of on horseback and stagecoach. Early trains did not have kitchens, dining rooms or sleeping cars and so relied on **railway hotels** and inns for refreshment.

These early accommodations were spaced further apart as trains could travel faster and further than horses. Eventually trains with dining rooms and wagon-lits, or sleeping compartments, could bypass the intermediate stops. Large hotels were required **near train stations.**



# Definition and role

Advise participants to turn to page 6 in their workbooks

A front desk agent is a **front line hotel employee responsible for**

- **greeting guests**
- **making room reservations**
- **registering guests and assigning rooms**
- **maintaining hotel records and guest accounts**
- **answering enquiries about hotel services and**
- **receiving payments for accommodations, meals, services and taxes**
- **ensuring safety and security of guests**

A front desk agent can be an **entry level position** to a long and productive career within the hotel industry. Front desk agents are employable worldwide.

A front desk agent must be prepared to **stand** for long periods of time. Front desk agents usually wear **uniforms**. Some front desk agent positions are **unionized**.

Front desk agents usually work in **shifts**, typically:

**8:00am til 4:00pm**  
**4:00pm til midnight**  
**midnight til 8:00am**

The last shift is generally worked by a **night auditor**. Additionally, for busy periods such as 9:00am-5:00pm or 11:00am-7:00pm, a **cover shift** may be scheduled.





# The scenario

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*Advise participants to turn to page 10 in their workbooks*

Today is your first day as front desk agent in a popular world class hotel. You have taken care with your grooming and are wearing your uniform for the first time. You have already had a basic orientation to the front desk operations and have met the staff on your shift.

Your first activity will be to learn some of the terminology you will be using followed by a hotel tour to become familiar with the property.

Then it will be time to get right to the task of being a front desk agent. Fortunately, the front desk manager will be with you throughout your first day to ease you into your new job.



# Hotel site inspection

Advise participants to turn to page 13 in their workbooks

It is customary for tourism industry people such as travel counsellors and tour operators to tour hotel facilities in order to become familiar with them. Through familiarity comes better understanding and communications between the different sectors of tourism.

Hotels are generally keen to show tourism industry personnel and trainees through their properties as increased exposure means increased occupancy rates.

Arrange a site inspection with the sales managers of two local hotels or motels. If possible arrange to see one basic property and one deluxe property or one commercial property and a resort property to give participants an enriched experience.

Ideally, each site inspection will include visiting a minimum rated room, a moderate rated room, a deluxe rated room plus the coffee shop, dining room, pool or recreation area, and meeting rooms.

Ensure you receive at least one business card, brochure, and rack card from each property and attach to the back of this page for your future reference.

Site inspections are privileges extended to tourism industry members. Within the tourism industry, we follow certain protocols when touring any tourism facility. Some of the key points to follow include:

- **professional dress (clothes you would wear to job interview)**
- **group standing to one side to allow paying guests to pass**
- **completing hotel inspection sheet outside rather than 'interviewing' host**
- **not sitting on beds**
- **leaving room ready for arriving guests**
- **not removing such items as matches, mints, and toilet strips showing 'sanitized for your protection'!**
- **last one out turning off lights and ensuring door is locked**
- **keeping personal comments to self until end of site inspection**
- **one participant thanking the host on behalf of the group**
- **debriefing outside property using proper terminology**
- **debriefing beyond earshot of guests and host**
- **completing inspection sheets as a group and attaching brochure**
- **writing thank-you note to property**



# Hotel information sheet

Advise participants to turn to page 14 in their workbooks

Hotel name	_____	Contact	_____			
Address	_____	Phone/fax	_____			
Type of hotel	_____	Location	_____			
Number of rooms	_____					
Guest profile	<input type="checkbox"/> Families	<input type="checkbox"/> Seniors	<input type="checkbox"/> Singles	<input type="checkbox"/> Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Groups	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Long Stay					
Approach	<input type="checkbox"/> Well Kept	<input type="checkbox"/> Quiet	<input type="checkbox"/> Rundown	<input type="checkbox"/> Noisy		
Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Modern	<input type="checkbox"/> Traditional	<input type="checkbox"/> High Rise	<input type="checkbox"/> Spread Out	<input type="checkbox"/> Unique	
Grounds	<input type="checkbox"/> Well Kept <input type="checkbox"/> Rundown					
Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Café	<input type="checkbox"/> Dining Room	<input type="checkbox"/> Lounge	<input type="checkbox"/> Dancing	<input type="checkbox"/> Pool	<input type="checkbox"/> Gym
	<input type="checkbox"/> Spa	<input type="checkbox"/> Tennis	<input type="checkbox"/> Golf	<input type="checkbox"/> Ski		
Rooms	<input type="checkbox"/> Doubles	<input type="checkbox"/> Suites	<input type="checkbox"/> Kitchens	<input type="checkbox"/> Views		
Housekeeping	<input type="checkbox"/> Clean	<input type="checkbox"/> Dirty	<input type="checkbox"/> Well Stocked	<input type="checkbox"/> Under Stocked		
Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly <input type="checkbox"/> Helpful <input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent <input type="checkbox"/> Rude					
Disabled accessibility						
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Shuttle	<input type="checkbox"/> Taxi	<input type="checkbox"/> Paid Parking	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Free Parking	<input type="checkbox"/> Car Rentals				
Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguisher <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency exits <input type="checkbox"/> Safety route					
Overall Rating	_____					
How to Book	_____					



# Duties of a front desk agent

Advise participants to turn to page 18 in their workbooks

Now that you have some basic knowledge about your property and we know you were hired because of your excellent service oriented, communication skills, you are ready to perform the duties of a front desk agent. Let's review the main duties include the following:

- **greet guest**
- **make room reservations**
- **register arriving guests and assign rooms**
- **respond to guest complaints**
- **compile and check daily record sheets, guest accounts, receipts and vouchers**
- **present statement of charges to departing guests**
- **receive payment for services as accommodation, room service, and meals**
- **answer enquiries regarding hotel services**



# Taking a phone message

Advise participants to turn to page 19 in their workbook

Set up a front desk area with telephone, phone answering pads, and pen. Finishing touches could also include a bouquet of flowers, hotel brochures in upright rack, business cards in holder, and a name badge for the front desk agent. If possible, bring in tele-trainer phones from your local phone company (so caller can be outside door and ring the phone at the front desk), or use old phones or even toy phones.

Divide class into two by numbering them off 'one, two, one, two'... The ones become the front desk agents, the twos become the callers. Ask students to stand for the duration of these next exercises. If they attempt to sit down, remind them, this is an occupational hazard of being a front desk agent!

Now that you have some property product knowledge and know some terminology, the front desk manager now feels you are ready for some front desk action. You review the telephone answering and message taking techniques

## Beginning

- **have pen and paper available**
- **smile as you answer the phone - the caller can hear it!**
- **greet caller with hotel name and your first name**

## Middle

- **determine name of guest and record on message slip**
- **record detailed message including caller's phone number on message slip**
- **verify details of message with caller**

## End

- **advise caller you will deliver message to guest**
- **record date and time of call on message slip**
- **record your name on message slip**



# Taking the reservation

Advise participants to turn to page 21 in their workbooks

Class to remain standing!

Review details of a reservation card with participants



## Prepare and greet

- have pen and paper available
- smile as you answer the phone - the caller will be able to hear it!
- greet caller with hotel name and your first name

## Determine basic needs

- determine in date and out date and verify number of nights
- determine number of beds in each room
- determine number of guests
- determine type of room (smoking/mountain view/wheelchair)

## Selling the room

- check availability of rooms in computer reservation system
- advise guest of options beginning with top price and working down
- suggest additional options such as corner room/view/larger space
- determine appropriate rate and quote to guest

## Record personal data

- record name, address, phone numbers and special requests on card
- explain guaranteed reservation held regardless of check-in time
- explain if guest fails to cancel guaranteed reservation will be charged even if guest doesn't use the room

## Clarifying administrative details

- repeat reservation details to verify accuracy
- explain cancellation policy
- ask if caller wants receipt emailed or faxed to them
- advise guest of check-in time (usually after 11:00am)
- provide caller with confirmation number suggested they write it down
- thank caller



Sooooo.....

**Do you want  
to pursue a job in  
front desk agent?**

**Why?**

Remember a “no” answer is as useful as a “yes” answer during career exploration

