

Dealing with guests



speaking 1 Work in pairs. What makes a good hotel manager? Put these characteristics into order of importance and discuss your ideas with your partner.

A good hotel manager:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> likes people | <input type="checkbox"/> can think like a child |
| <input type="checkbox"/> likes variety | <input type="checkbox"/> can entertain like a clown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> is charming | <input type="checkbox"/> understands body language |
| <input type="checkbox"/> has good financial skills | <input type="checkbox"/> pays attention to routine detail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> needs good computer skills | <input type="checkbox"/> possesses a sense of humour |

2 What other skills and qualities do you expect a good hotel manager to possess?

reading The perfect hotelier

3 Read the article on the opposite page. Which of the characteristics are mentioned?

4 Read the article again and complete these sentences with one of the options below.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 Successful hoteliers | a) cannot concentrate on their work. |
| 2 Second rate hoteliers | b) want to be involved in many activities. |
| 3 Child-clowns | c) are polite but don't mean what they say. |
| | d) identify with their guests. |

Cloning the perfect hotelier

In a recent study Dr David Young, a leading psychologist, was hired to devise a personality test to reveal the characteristics that make hoteliers not just good but excellent.

The study showed – unsurprisingly – that the most successful owners and managers have two key qualities: the first, a genuine liking for people; the second, the ability to motivate others. These are the factors that put the X in excellence, but liking people is more than skin-deep. It has nothing to do with the ‘have a nice day’ attitude found among second-raters.

It means being good at dealing with all kinds of people, being able to share other people’s feelings and imagine what it is like to be in their situation. They understand body language and can detect non-verbal messages in order to gain a better understanding of a guest’s needs.

According to the psychologist, enthusiastic and motivating hoteliers are ‘child-clowns’. Like a child they must be filled with energy and enthusiasm and, like a clown, must be able to excite others so that they find their work more pleasurable and fulfilling. Another aspect of the child-clown personality is a love of variety and an equally strong dislike of routine.



Adapted from *Telegraph Travel*, 19 December 1998

vocabulary Describing people

5 Complete the table below.

-ed / -ing adjectives

-ed adjectives describe how a person feels:

I feel tired.

-ing adjectives say what makes the person feel that way:

It was a tiring journey.

noun	adjective	verb
1 motivation	motivating / motivated	motivate
2 charm
3 excellence
4 enthusiasm
5 fulfilment
6 pleasure
7 success
8 variety

speaking

6 What skills and qualities are required for the following jobs?

accountant housekeeper head receptionist sales manager

Language focus Articles

Read the extract from the text on page 41 and underline all the uses of **a** and **the** and all the nouns that do not have an article in front of them.

In a recent study Dr David Young, a leading psychologist, was hired to devise a personality test to reveal the characteristics that make hoteliers not just good but excellent.

The study showed – unsurprisingly – that the most successful owners and managers have two key qualities:



Read the rules and complete the information below with examples from the text on page 41.

- We normally use no article before the names of people and their titles.
..Professor Wilson, Dr David Young.....
 - We use *a* before professions
..a receptionist.....
 - We use *the* before a noun that has been previously mentioned or is clear.
..I had a passport and an identity card but the passport was invalid.
.....
 - We use *the* before a noun identified by a phrase or clause that follows.
..It's not the hotel that I stayed in last year.....
.....
 - We use no article when countable, plural nouns are used in a general sense.
..Guests staying in expensive hotels expect better facilities.....
.....
 - We use *the* in superlative expressions.
..The Lanesborough is the most expensive hotel in London.....
.....
- For more information turn to page 126.

listening 7 Listen to the stressed syllables in these words and mark the stress pattern on the following words.

■ ■ ■ ■
1 variety

■ ■
varied

5 excellence excellent

2 enthusiasm

enthusiastic

6 energy energetic

3 psychologist

psychological

7 excitement exciting

4 motivation

motivated

8 personality personal

Dealing with guests

8 Donald McCoy is a hotel consultant who maintains a website where he answers questions put to him by hotel managers. Read the questions and fill in the blanks using *a*, *the* or no article.

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar contains the URL <http://www.therealmaccoy.com>. The browser's navigation bar includes buttons for Back, Forward, Stop, Refresh, Home, AutoFill, Print, and Mail. Below the address bar, there are several search engines listed: Live Home Page, Apple Computer, Apple Support, Apple Store, Microsoft MacTopia, MSN, and Office for Macintosh. The main content area of the browser displays four email messages, each starting with a blue arrow icon and a salutation. The messages contain questions with numbered blanks for articles.

► Dear Donald
Hi! What can be done about reducing¹ noise at² motels? Many guests will often shout through³ open door to⁴ family members in other rooms while other people are trying to sleep.
gsimmons@kansas.tic.net

► Dear Donald
Just as there are floors where⁵ people aren't allowed to smoke, do you foresee⁶ non-kids floors? Personally, I see this as⁷ great selling point, blocking⁸ families away from⁹ business traveler.
m.estevez@Miami.us.org

► Hi Donald
.....¹⁰ last time we had¹¹ famous person staying with us we were invaded by¹² autograph hunters, reporters and¹³ paparazzi. Can you give any advice on how to prevent such threats to¹⁴ privacy of any guest who is in¹⁵ public eye?
janicebrian@Bostonet.com

► Dear Donald
We have¹⁶ number of guests who leave without paying. Some think¹⁷ account is going to be paid by someone else, others check in with¹⁸ intention of paying on departure but 'forget' to declare things that should be on¹⁹ bill such as drinks from²⁰ minibar. Worst of all are those who check in, usually for²¹ short periods, with no intention of paying at all. What steps can we take to deal with these people?
tony.bianchi@bsmontreal.ca

speaking 9 Work in small groups. What would be your responses to these questions?

writing 10 Reply to one of the emails offering a solution to the problem.

reading Communication problems

11 In his book *Running a Hotel on the Roof of the World*, Alec Le Sueur tells the story of his experience of working at a Holiday Inn hotel in Tibet. Before you read the extract below think about these questions.

- What physical problems could guests experience staying at 12,000 ft?
- What could the hotel provide to prevent these problems?

12 Read the extract and answer these questions.

- 1 What is meant by 'red carpet treatment'?
- 2 Why was it important to give this visitor 'red carpet treatment'?
- 3 Why do you think it was 'the last straw'?
- 4 What mistake did the operator make?
- 5 As the manager of this hotel what would you do to improve the situation?
- 6 Do you know any similar stories involving language problems?

'Why don't your staff speak English?' was a question which was asked by guests throughout the day. It became very annoying and although it was extremely tempting to reply, 'Why don't you speak Tibetan or next time stay at home?' this answer was not really acceptable in an international hotel. Instead I answered with a polite, 'Oh, I am terribly sorry, we are constantly looking for ways to improve the service to our guests and thank you so much for bringing this matter to our attention.'

The last straw with the 'lack of English' complaints came from an investment banker who had been invited to Tibet to discuss important financial projects with the local government. We had special instructions to provide red carpet treatment and the General Manager escorted him and his wife to the best suite in the hotel. The financier was concerned that his wife might suffer from altitude sickness and he looked around the suite for the oxygen supply. He found the bottle beneath the bedside table and followed the instructions on how to release oxygen into the room. But nothing happened and he called the operator to ask for someone to check the oxygen. 'Yes,' the operator responded. He waited patiently for an engineer to arrive. Fifteen minutes later no-one had appeared and his wife was complaining of a headache. He called the operator again to ask for the oxygen. 'Yes, wait a moment. I check for you,' was the reply.

Another quarter of an hour passed, and still no-one had arrived – his wife's headache was worsening and he was beginning to lose his temper. He snatched the receiver, dialled 2222 and demanded to know why there was no oxygen. The operator gave him an irritated reply, he had been wasting her time. 'Yes, I checked for you, but there is no Mr Oxygen staying in the hotel.'

Adapted from *Running a Hotel on the Roof of the World*, Summersdale Publishers Ltd.

speaking 13 What happened next? Role-play the situation. Student A is the guest and student B the General Manager.

vocabulary **Misunderstanding**

14 Complete the expressions with the words from the box.

cross crossed point stick tail

- 1 She completely missed the
- 2 They were talking at purposes.
- 3 She got the wrong end of the *stick*
- 4 I think we both got our lines *cross*
- 5 I couldn't make head nor *tail* of what she was saying.

listening **A complaint**

15 A guest checks in at a hotel and loses something of value. Read the following list of events. Then listen and number the events in the order in which they occur.

- 102 1
- 5 The porter shows Mrs Horton to room 212.
 - 5 Mrs Horton reports the missing necklace to reception.
 - 2 Mrs Horton goes to her room.
 - 2 Mrs Horton telephones her husband.
 - 5 Mrs Horton unpacks her clothes and uses the bathroom.
 - 6 The receptionist offers to ring the housekeeper.
 - 1 The receptionist misunderstands the name.

16 Listen to the conversations again and summarise the events so far. Use the words from the box.

first of all then after that because so

17 Later that afternoon, Mr Horton arrives at reception. Listen and answer these questions.

- 1 What does he think has happened to the necklace?
- 2 What does Mr Horton want to know?
- 3 What explanation does the receptionist give him?
- 4 Why can't Mr Horton find his wife?
- 5 Why couldn't Mr Horton speak to his wife on the phone?
- 6 What would you do now?

writing **18** Send a memo to the Duty Manager to tell her what has happened and what action has been taken.

TO

DATE

SUBJECT

Memo

listening Dealing with complaints

19 Match the complaints with the responses below. Then listen and check your answers.

- 1 It's disgusting, the sheet's stained. *a*
- 2 The shower curtain is torn in the bathroom. *h*
- 3 I'm afraid the room is terribly dusty. *e*
- 4 The fluorescent light is making a funny noise. *f*
- 5 The window's stuck. *e*
- 6 The faucets are dripping, I can't turn them off. *g*
- 7 I did ask for a newspaper in my room. *d*
- 8 The waste paper basket is full. *b*

- a) I'm terribly sorry about that. I'll have a clean one brought to your room.
- b) I do apologise. I'll have it emptied for you.
- c) I'll get it cleaned for you straightaway.
- d) If you tell me which one you read I'll have it delivered.
- e) Oh dear. I'll get someone to open it.
- f) I'll have it changed by the electrician.
- g) OK, I'll have them looked at by a plumber.
- h) Is it? I'm sorry, I'll get a new one fitted.

LANGUAGE TIP

When making an offer to help, make sure that you pronounce the 'll in I'll.

- I'll ask the porter to show you another room.
- I'll call a taxi for you.

Professional practice Dealing with complaints

Match the phrases in the box with the advice below.

I'm (very / terribly) sorry. What seems to have happened is that ...
 There's been a misunderstanding. We'll look into the matter and ...
 I suggest that we ... I'll see to it straightaway.
 I do apologise for the inconvenience.
 Thank you for bringing the matter to my attention.
 There seems to have been a problem / a mix-up.

- if the guest is angry go somewhere private
- listen carefully to the complaint and don't interrupt or argue
- thank the person for bringing the matter to your attention
 1. Thank you for bringing the matter to my attention.....
- speak normally without raising your voice
- apologise for the inconvenience
 2.....
 3.....
- explain what happened
 4.....
 5.....
 6.....
- explain what action will be taken and how soon
 7.....
 8.....
 9.....

speaking 20 Work in pairs. Student A you are a guest at a hotel. Look at the following problems and complain to reception. Student B you are the receptionist. Turn to page 113.

- you lose your key and the replacement key is missing
- the service in the restaurant is very slow and the waiter doesn't speak English very well and brought the wrong order
- there are no instructions on how to operate the TV set and the remote control is not working

Offering compensation

21 Work in pairs. Hotels often give meal vouchers or room upgrades in response to complaints. What other forms of compensation do hotels offer?

Overbooking

22 Work in pairs. Student A turn to page 115. Student B you are in charge of room allocation. A group of guests has just arrived unexpectedly. Look at the reservation chart and information below and deal with the situation.

- ask for proof and details of the booking
- apologise for the mistake
- explain what happened
- find out how many people are in the party and what rooms they need
- show sympathy and understanding of the guest's complaint
- allocate the cheapest available rooms – you are expecting a fax confirming bookings for the superior rooms so you want to keep them free

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Twins (20) ØØØØØØØØØØ ØØØØØØØØØØ □□□□□□	Twins (20) ØØØØØØØØØØ ØØØØØØØØØØ □□□□□□	Twins (20) ØØØØØØØØØØ ØØØØØØØØØØ □□□□□□	Twins (20) ØØØØØØØØØØ ØØØØØØØØØØ □□□□□□
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Singles (10) ØØØØØØØØØØ □□	Singles (10) ØØØØØØØØØØ □□	Singles (10) ØØØØØØØØØØ □□	Singles (10) ØØØØØØØØØØ □□
28	28	28	28
Groups	Groups	Groups	Groups
			AMEX group
			25T
			3 nights

Unit 5, Exercise 15 (CD 1 Track 13)

One

- A Good morning, can I help you ?
 B Yes, my name's Mrs Horton and I've a reservation for myself and my husband.
 A Fine. Yes. Sorry, can you give me your name again?
 B Yes, Horton. I phoned yesterday.
 A Orton, sorry I can't see your name.
 B Horton, H - O - R - T - O - N.
 A Ah, yes, very sorry. The porter will take you to your room, 112. Is that your luggage?
 B Yes.
 A OK, well, if you'll come this way, please.

Two

- B Hello, I've just been given a room, room 112 I think it is, but I'm afraid it's really very unsuitable. It's extremely small and I can hear the people in the next room. I really feel that with the prices you're charging the rooms should be much better than this one.
 A Ah, I'm sorry to hear that, can you give me the room number?
 B 112.
 A Right, Mrs Horton, I'll ask the porter to show you another room and if you find it suitable we can move you.
 B I'll wait for him to arrive.
 A Right, thank you.

Three

- A Ah, Joe, did you show Mrs Horton the room
 C Yes, she's gone into 212 but I don't know whether it was a good idea - she'd unpacked half her stuff, there were clothes all over the place and she'd already used the bathroom.
 A Oh, dear, did you help her move?
 C Yes, but she's going to be a difficult guest.
 A OK. Well, thanks anyway.

Four

- B Hello, this is Mrs Horton in room 212.
 D Ah, hello, Mrs Horton. Is the room to your satisfaction?
 B I'm not bothered about the room. My diamond necklace is missing. I had it in my suitcase with my blue dress and I can't find it anywhere.
 D Oh dear, you say it was in your suitcase?
 B Yes. But I took it out and I'm sure I put it on the bed.
 D Well, it must still be in the room you had before. I'll ring

the housekeeper and have the room searched for you. I'm sure it'll turn up.

- B I've had it for 25 years and it's worth a lot of money. I can't understand what's happened to it. My husband is going to hear about this!

Five

- E I can't find it anywhere. I've looked everywhere in both rooms and it's nowhere to be found.
 D Oh, dear, so what is she doing now?
 E She's phoned her husband who apparently's in a meeting at the moment. She's taken a sleeping pill.
 D OK. Well tell me if anything happens.

Unit 5, Exercise 17 (CD 1 Track 14)

- A Good afternoon. Can I help you?
 F I hope so. It's absolutely scandalous.
 A What seems to be the problem, sir?
 F I'll tell you what the problem is. My wife, Mrs Horton in room 112, checked in here and was given a tiny room. She unpacked and then she was moved into another room. Meanwhile, her diamond necklace was either lost or maybe stolen. At work I'm interrupted with a message during an important meeting. I phone the hotel and get through to a total stranger in another room. I've just been up to my room and it's locked and I don't know where my wife is.
 A Sorry, I think there's been some sort of misunderstanding. You're Mr Horton, is that right?
 F Yes.
 A Well, if I could just explain the situation. When your wife arrived she was unhappy with her room so we helped her move into a more comfortable one. She then said she had mislaid her necklace and I had the room searched by the housekeeper. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to find the necklace yet and your wife, as I understand it, is resting in her room.
 F Oh. Well, why isn't she in her room now? It's locked and there's no answer.
 A Well, as I said, she's now in another room, room 212.
 F And why wasn't I able to speak to her when I phoned?
 A I think I can explain that. What seems to have happened is that the switchboard did not know that your room had been changed so they put you through to 112 instead of 212.
 F That's incredibly inefficient!

A I apologise for the inconvenience Mr Horton. But I think the main thing now is to try to sort out the problem of the missing necklace. What I suggest we do if the necklace cannot be found is that we ...

Unit 5, Exercise 19 (CD 1 Track 15)

- 1 A It's disgusting, the sheet's stained.
B I'm terribly sorry about that. I'll have a clean one brought to your room.
- 2 A The shower curtain is torn in the bathroom.
B Is it? I'm sorry, I'll get a new one fitted.
- 3 A I'm afraid the room is terribly dusty.
B I'll get it cleaned for you straight away.
- 4 A The fluorescent light is making a funny noise.
B I'll have it changed by the electrician.
- 5 A The window's stuck.
B Oh dear. I'll get someone to open it.
- 6 A The faucets are dripping, I can't turn them off.
B OK, I'll have them looked at by a plumber.
- 7 A I did ask for a newspaper in my room.
B If you tell me which one you read I'll have it delivered.
- 8 A The wastepaper basket is full.
B I do apologise. I'll have it emptied for you.

Unit 6, Exercise 2 (CD 1 Track 16)

Sandra Good morning, Sandra speaking.
Caller Hello, is that Seaford Travel?
Sandra Yes, how can I help you?
Caller I'd like to book a city break in Madrid please, as advertised in your brochure. It's on page 57.
Sandra Right. When would you like to travel?
Caller April 13th for three nights.
Sandra April 13th. Fine. For three nights you say.
Caller That's right. Leaving from Heathrow. We're staying in London on the 12th.
Sandra OK, I'll check availability. Sorry to keep you waiting. The computer's just going to be a few seconds. OK, here we are. That's a direct flight with Iberia. What time would you like to leave?
Caller Early morning if possible.
Sandra Fine, there's a flight that leaves at 8.05.
Caller Yes, that sounds OK. How long does the flight last?
Sandra It takes 2 hours 20 minutes. With-check in an hour beforehand. And then back on the 16th. There's a flight at 16.45 or 17.50.

Caller The later one, please.

Sandra OK. Is it just yourself that's travelling?

Caller Yes, it is.

Sandra Could I just take some details? Can you tell me your name, please?

Caller Yes, it's Jones, Gareth Jones.

Sandra J-O-N-E-S ?

Caller That's right.

Sandra And your address, Mr Jones?

Caller 37 Bristol Drive, Swansea, SE4 7PG

Sandra And your telephone number, please?

Caller 07702 623479.

Sandra 07702 623479. And which hotel have you chosen?

Caller The El Prado seems to be very good. Is it with a continental breakfast?

Sandra Yes, that's right. It's a lovely hotel. I'm sure you'll like it. And is it a single room?

Caller Yes.

Sandra Right. OK. So that's three nights from 13 April for Mr G Jones, staying at the El Prado, departure Heathrow, return from Barajas airport on the 16th. The price is £325 in all. Do you have a pen and paper?

Caller Hang on. OK.

Sandra I'm just going to give you your booking reference number. It's BT 5473. I'll prepare everything for you and put it in the post this evening. And how would you like to pay?

Unit 6, Exercise 3 (CD 1 Track 17)

A, H, J, K

B, C, D, E, G, P, T, V

F, L, M, N, S, X, Z

I, Y

O

Q, U, W

R

Unit 7, Exercise 2 (CD 1 Track 18)

Rec. King James Hotel. How can I help you?

Caller Hello, I'd like to book a room for my husband and myself, please.

Rec. Hold the line, please. I'll put you through to Reservations.

Res. Reservations.