

Safety & Security Concerns in Hospitality Industry

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Abstract: The hotels have become second home for leisure travelers and second office for business travelers. With rising acts of terrorism on board, the tourists and travelers have become skeptical about security issues within the hotel premises and often safety quotient of the property. The current issue looks into the safety-security issues haunting the thought process of guests and the modern options and approach that hotels have to gain the confidence of their guests.

Keywords: hotels, terrorism, safety, security, guests.

I. BACKGROUND

Hospitality means providing service to others, as well as demonstrating consistent excellence and quality. It should also mean profitably providing value at any price level, while demonstrating your own unique points of distinction. Most of all, hospitality should be a “place”, where people can still be exceptional individuals and they can extend their own personality and style (Hogan, 2008). The hospitality industry is part of a huge group of companies known as travel and tourism industry, which provides the necessary or desirable goods and services to travelers. The hospitality and tourism industries are the largest and fastest-growing industries in the world (Walker, 2010).

Frequent terrorisms incidents, natural disasters like Asian tsunami, hurricane and forest fire warn hospitality supplier’s and buyer’s to be prepared for just any imaginable crisis. Security is not limited to only a single aspect it is been classified into various types even Enz and Taylor (2002) stated that safety involves preventing employees and customers within the hotel property from potential death and injury, such as from accidental slips, falls, cuts, burns and so forth, as well as preventing related property damage. To improve safety, many hotel companies have installed electronic locks, fire sprinklers, smoke detectors, and closed circuit televisions (Okumus, 2005).

TYPES OF SECURITY:

- 1) Physical aspect
- 2) Security of persons
- 3) Security of systems

1. Physical aspect is divided into two parts Internal security and external security

Internal Security is against theft, Fire safety, Proper lighting, Safeguarding assets and Track unwanted guests.

External Security includes Proper lighting outside the building, proper fencing of the building, fencing of pool area to avoid accidents in the night, Manning of service gates to restrict entry and fixing of closed circuit TV cameras.

2. Security aspects in a property includes

a) Staff

Effective recruitment and selection, Identification of staff, Key control, Red tag system, Training and Locker inspection

b) The guest who needs to work out for protection of hazard is like:

Guest room security, Provide wide angle door viewer, dead bolt locks, night torch, chains on doors, Employees should be trained to not to give any information about in house guests to outsiders. Housekeeping staff should never leave keys expose on unattended carts in corridors.

3. Security Aspects of Systems includes Record of all losses and missing items immediately, Inventory control should be proper, Auditing should be done on a regular basis and Proper system for cash disbursements should be made.

These various types of security made hoteliers to think more on the safety and security issues. As in 2004 a survey conducted by travel weekly research of hotels, airlines, cruise lines and convention centers revealed that 53% responding hotel general managers and security managers across U.S said their hotel were vulnerable to terrorist attack. Yet over past few years hotel have increased their security budget as much as airlines and cruises.

II. RECOGNITION OF SAFETY AND SECURITY ISSUES AT GLOBAL LEVEL IN HOSPITALITY UNITS

The September 11 attacks (often referred to as 9/11) directed the world's attention to safety and security issues and created a domino effect with regard to the global economy and tourism. Hotel industries in major tourist destinations suffered significantly low occupancy rates due to mass cancellations of domestic and international flights. (Goodrich 2002). The tourism industry worldwide has been significantly affected by the threat of terrorism and instances of terrorist attacks in the modern era. Hotels, which serve a core function as suppliers of tourist accommodation and other amenities, are attractive targets and management has been forced to review and revise security measures accordingly. Terrorist incidents at destinations can have very harmful impacts on the hotel sector as a whole if there are dramatic falls in arrivals (Stafford et al 2002) and the financial and less tangible costs to individual properties are acute when they are the scene of the outrage. Hotels have a history of being targeted, some in popular holiday centers and others in troubled states where guests are mainly citizens and foreigners travelling for business or official purposes. Notable examples in the past few years are a car bomb at the Marriott Hotel in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta in 2003 which left 13 dead and 100 wounded and suicide bombings which killed at least 67 and injured almost 150 in the Radisson SAS, Days Inn and Grand Hyatt hotels in Amman, Jordan, in 2005. The susceptibility of hotels was made apparent most recently in the Indian city of Mumbai through an assault by terrorists belonging to a Pakistani-based organization which commenced in the late evening of 26 November 2008. The Oberoi-Trident and Taj Mahal Palace, luxury hotels much visited by foreign businessmen as well as more affluent Indian nationals and celebrities, were both occupied. Shooting began immediately and there were grenade explosions with fires reported in the Taj. A total of 52 staff and guests died at the Oberoi and 32 at the Taj, including the wife and two sons of the latter's General Manager. The hotels closed until 21 December when less damaged sections re-opened with a multi-faith prayer ceremony at the Oberoi and reception at the modern Tower Wing of the Taj. Business was also badly hit, with Mumbai hotel prices dropping by 41% in the last quarter of 2008 (Indian Hotelier, 2009), and return to normality or near-normality will be a long term process.

III. VULNERABILITY OF HOTEL

It is been consider that reasons for targeting hotels are that they offer a high degree of access, usually 24 hours a day. Larger hotels have many public spaces and entrances and exits and foreigners may gather there (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2004). Security is unlikely to have been a guiding principle in the architecture of most hotels and certain features such as grand lobbies and spacious entrances are vulnerable to individual suicide and car bombings. Research into hotel security has been limited to date, but work completed suggests that hotels commonly strive to create an environment which is both welcoming and secure against assorted manifestations of criminality (Gill et al 2002). This is not an easy task Security may upset customers if it is deemed to be over-intrusive and an invasion of privacy so should be discreet, although an obvious presence can be a deterrent. The hotels have now implemented a safety and security plan as well as quality plan such as providing training for the employees and guest's safety and security (Steene, 2009, Lockyer, 2007 and Helena & Natasa, 2010).

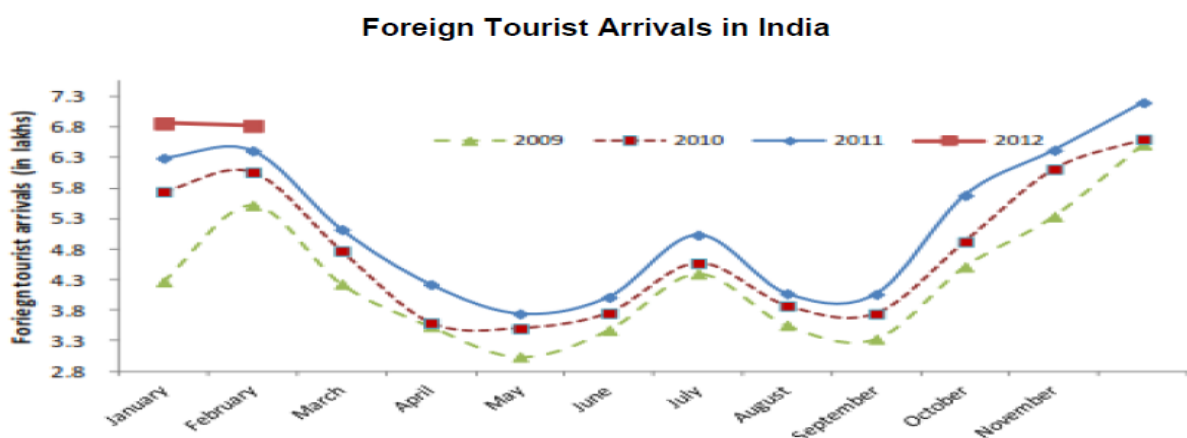
IV. THE CLASSIFICATION

The hotel management has separated the hotel safety into two broad categories which are safety and security. The management categorized safety as in the services provided the aspect of safety has been also included in the construction of the hotel interior designs whereby making sure they are safe built for the employees to work in and of course for in-house guests. However, security in hotel related to threats that set by people than setting by the physical surroundings, which means it depends on the person who set the security danger that cannot be predicted (Policy Department, 2008). It is crucial for the management to train every employee to be able to face any accidents such as fire, police and other emergency services so that the employee may help out if it is a needed (William, 2008). Based on a health and safety manager, Duncan Aspin, he had stated that managers need to shape up health and safety training policy for ensuring every employee have sufficient training on safety and security issues to reduce accident (Mottram, 2005). For example, according to Mottram (2005), providing program regarding on staff development and safety training has given a hand to North-West division of Birse Civil to achieve zero percent accident rate, which is also the top 1 company in UK as construction industry for safety. Therefore, training employees not only will help to save their lives but also help Shangri-la Hotel to rise up its hotel status.

Tourism is very different from what it was prior to the notable terrorist and criminal attacks the world has recently witnessed. Modern tourism is a multifaceted and complex industry involving many stakeholders. Safety and security therefore, needs to be prioritized for any tourism destination. Furthermore, policies and practices that protect both tourists and locals, and also that address how a crisis should be managed if the need arises are an essential component of tourism development. To reach the safety goal, governments should work on the implementation of an action plan that may include the following. Involving all stakeholders in crime prevention programmes (e.g. hoteliers, airline companies, the local population, transportation agencies, restaurants, bars, taxi drivers, etc.) since safety is everyone's responsibility.

V. PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SAFETY AND SECURITY ON GUEST

They safety & security issues affects the decision making process, (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998). Cook (1990) concluded that business travellers' propensity for international destinations is predicted by their reluctance to change their plans in response to media coverage of terrorism. Tourists' level of previous international experience also influences their reactions to terrorism, (Steiner, 2007; Ertuna & Ertuna, 2009). This included keeping a low profile, dressing down, eliminating conspicuous consumption etc. However, the study was of high level business executives who are required to travel to certain destinations for their jobs and hence have no handpicked their destinations themselves. This renders this study inadequate for the study of tourist's destination choices in the light of terrorism. Thirdly, the risk of terrorism causes tourists to substitute risky destination choices with safer choices. Tourists are rational consumers and move through the decision-making process by weighing benefits against costs.



Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and ICRA Estimates

New Trends

Items	Sources
X-ray machines for luggage scanning	Shellum (2003a)
Lifeguard	Best Western Sterling Inn (2004)
Employee photo ID	Best Western Sterling Inn (2004)
Adequate evacuation routes from the hotel	Barber (2004)
Communication systems	Fennelly (2004)
Closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs)	Fennelly, 2004; Harris, 2002
Safe deposit boxes	Best Western Sterling Inn, 2004
Automatic fire sprinkler systems	Akalla Hotel (2006)
Regularly tested smoke detectors	Akalla Hotel (2006)
Clearly marked fire exits and extinguishers	Akalla Hotel (2006)
Alarm systems at all points of entry	Akalla Hotel (2006), Best Western Sterling Inn (2004)
A daily sign-in and sign-out procedure for those employees needing a key/card as part of their normal duties	Akalla Hotel (2006), Fennelly (2004)
Walkthrough metal detector at entrance	Feickert et al. (2006), Shellum (2003a)
Emergency power generators	Akalla Hotel (2006), Best Western Sterling Inn (2004)
Emergency light	Barber (2004), Gunter (2004), Kwortnik (2005), Akalla Hotel (2006)

Sources: Compiled by author from various sources

VI. BENCH MARKING FROM OTHER INDUSTRY

The civil aviation industry, for example, has been compelled to take unprecedented steps causing considerable inconvenience to passengers in a bid to thwart terrorism in the air. There is an appreciation in other tourism sectors that tourists are cognisant of hazards and want assurance that safeguards have been installed (Tarlow, 2007). In an indication of the changing climate, hotels have borrowed ideas from airlines and airports such as checking of vehicles, inspection of luggage and screening of people by metal detectors. It has been argued that one of the most potent security stratagems is to incorporate prevention into building design. However, this is not an option for hotels which have already been constructed and adds to the development costs of new properties.

VII. CONCLUSION

Training personnel safety and security measures is important to the hospitality industry whereby without the important of measures, the hospitality and tourism industry will not have its boom so fast. This is because for everyone life is precious. Unfortunately nowadays, hotels only used technology for safety and security system to protect their guest. They should also use other training method and procedures to train their employees and educate guest as a precautions for accidents to happen. Moreover, the hospitality should be more concerned on which aspects will have a high rate of accidents happening in the daily routine. Training employees and educating in-house guests in order to keep themselves safe and secure is a very important elements in the hospitality and tourism industry nowadays. With the training of safety and

security, they will reach the employees and guest's satisfaction where they will feel safe just like they are in their own house. In the mean time, it will also increase the attention from the outsiders and travelers if they know the hotel manage well in safety and security matters, thus this will brings benefits to the hotel when they need more manpower and increase the economy and status of the hotel.

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