

Enhancing security process and systems in hotel industry tourism essay



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Introduction

Since its inception hotels have provided travellers with a place to stay away from home and which offers them amenities that would ensure their comfort and security. The hotel industry core value is to deliver quality service to their guest, and with it also comes the obligation of being responsible for their security while under their care. The security of a hotel's guest and how the hotel management and staff take the steps to ensure this spells the success or failure of any establishment. A lax security would mean exposing the guest to a different number of risks and would also reflect poorly on the hotel's reputation. Therefore security is something the hotel industry should invest upon to ensure its success, because the bottom line is – the question of whether or not a guest will choose to return to a hotel depends solely on how safe and secure they feel while staying in a hotel.

However this basic premise is not that easy to put in practice. While different establishments have endeavoured to put in place security measures that

would ensure the safety of its guests such as ensuring confidentiality of its guests personal data, using surveillance equipment and the like; the fact is technological advancements have also been used by some criminal elements to circumvent security measures for their own unscrupulous intentions.

Cases of identity theft using information stored in a hotel guest's key cards, and the recent threat of terrorist attacks are but some of the security issues that the hotel industry has to contend with. This paper seeks to study the security measures being put in place by the hotel industry and how it relates to their operational effectiveness. In particular this research study shall aim to achieve the following:

To identify the forms of breaches in hotel's security system;

To identify the security system and other safety policies of three hotels;

To determine recommendations that will enhance and further develop the security system of the hotel industry.

The method that will be used in this research paper is a case study of the security measures of three hotels: the Hotel Marriott, the Intercontinental Hotels Group, and the Shangrila Hotel. The three hotels were selected in this study because they are known to be among the leaders in the hotel industry; they have faced or are in danger of facing serious concerns related to security (the Marriot Hotel was attacked by terrorist bombers in the past); and they are also leaders in the field of hotel security. The analysis that will be used in this case study will be based on the assessment paper by Alan Orlob the Vice-President of Corporate Security for the Marriott International, the talk delivered by David Bradley Bonnel who is the Director of Global <https://assignbuster.com/enhancing-security-process-and-systems-in-hotel-industry-tourism-essay/>

Security for the Intercontinental Hotels Group, and the Security protocol issued by Shangrila Jakarta. This research paper shall also review related literature concerning the hotel industry its values and principles in relation to ensuring security, and related internet sources concerning hotel security procedures and measures.

Literature Review

According to Capparella J. (2002), the word hotel is derived from the 14th Latin word *hoste* meaning person or thing that provides something for a guest, usually lodging, and sometimes food. The concept of a hotel was to provide some sort of temporary lodging accommodations for transients. Hotels varied little in ancient times when they were first described as simply being a boarding house providing a place to rest and nothing more. Throughout the early centuries (1 AD forward) the evolution of the hotel was also minimal. In the middle ages the hotel began to transform. European and English inns became the variations of the hotel during the middle ages. More specialized functions and amenities were included in the inn's services. Among these amenities include the private rooms, public kitchens and public gathering rooms. Some inns have also constructed small taverns which were aimed to bring comfort and convenience of the traveller. During this period, the hotel variations were no longer treated and viewed as merely a place to spend the night. This development in the middle ages provided the transition of the hotel concept which will later on become part of the hospitality industry.

As the said development emerged during the middle ages, the latter part of the period provided another significant advancement in the inns. Laws, rules and regulations pertaining to the operations of the hotel as well as the corresponding responsibility of the owner were imposed. A French law during the 1300s dictates that any lost property of a client must be replaced by the landlord. A century passed when another French law mandates the registration of every hotel to the state. The English around this period has also formed another set of guidelines and regulations that discusses in detail the comfort and cleanliness provided by the hotel to their guests. The said guidelines eventually served as the European standard for hotels. However, in spite of these advancements, a number of hotels and inns remain lacking on measures involving the privacy and security of guests. Rooms that are considered private have no locks and the guests are exposed to an unsecured communal setting.

“ In the 16th century, France established culinary requirements for hotels that offered dining services that were based on a rating system geared toward quality, promotion, and competition. In the next century, this system of rating a hotel was formally established throughout Europe. By the 1700’s, particularly in France, is when the hotel industry or hospitality business formally established itself. Lodging also transformed into a mixed-use business that now offered a variety of services and amenities. The standards for quality, comfort, value, and service were now synonymous with any place of lodging adding to its definition of being a temporary place to spend the night.” (Caparella, 2002)

In America the concept of the hotel as we know it was further developed with the appearance of larger hotels during the 1800's. These hotels differentiated themselves from other lodging types by their size and by offering of luxurious amenities. Most of these hotels were in large cities and along the major travel routes of stagecoaches, and later the railways." (Ibid, 2002)

With the passage of time the core aspects of the services provided by the hotel industry was already well established with good service and security as one of the key concerns.

Based on common law hotel patrons commonly assume that hotels have created a relatively safe environment, and that the, " common law concept of the innkeepers doctrine addresses the hotelier's role in maintaining a safe and secure environment by requiring the hotelier to take all reasonable measures to provide a secure environment for guests and to safeguard guests' property". (Feickert, et. al. 2006)

The concept of " reasonable protection" was further advanced by the courts upon which the levels of liability of hotel owners were increased. The small and independent hotels were also similarly held liable to the standards imposed on large and popular hotels thus giving emphasis on the issue of security among the industry regardless of the size and popularity of the establishment. The said impression of the innkeepers doctrine's common law aims to highlight the role of the hotelier in sustaining a safe environment through the adaption of all logical measures to ensure a secure environment to be enjoyed by the guests. The concept of " reasonable protection" was

advanced by the court and has developed into increasing levels of liability of hotels.

To date, the issue of security within the hotel industry remains a primary concern among hoteliers. The said issue remains foremost in the minds of both the guests and hotel managers particularly in light of the turmoil of world events. Such concerns of managers often dwell on the most acceptable security measures to hotel guests which will directly be viewed as a measure that will ensure safety and security. With these concerns, hotels must also ensure that providing a welcoming environment remains their highest priority.

The hotel guests' needs reflect their view on the hotel industry. While a traveller looks for adventure in his travels in each area and country, he still expects to rest and relax within the confines of his hotel room. While he expects to experience thrills out of exploring places, he would need to have access to recreational facilities of the hotel such as the use of the pool and the services in the hotel bar. The guest anticipates the best treatment from the employees and expects traits such as honesty and respect for privacy to be recognized. Being on a holiday, the guest does not expect neither hassles nor inconveniences to hamper his trip. Adapting this perspective of the hotel guest, hotels have formed several quick and effective measures to ensure the security of the guest without invading the privacy.

Hotels have also become the ideal target for terrorists since 2004, the post-9/11 period. Militants can assume the same type of strategies to give a statement against the Western imperialism. Hotels remain one of the best

targets for such terroristic acts since Western businessmen, government officials, diplomats and intelligence officers frequent the hotels. Such place provides the ideal scene for inflicting terror through international media without penetrating the security ranks of Embassies.

The shift towards the targeting hotels was traced to the attacks against hotels in several parts of the globe i. e. Pakistan, Iraq, Jordan, India, Afghanistan, and Egypt. Attacks instigated in Amman, Mumbai, Jakarta and Sharm el-Sheikh were coordinated to hit more than one hotel.

Addressing this issue, hotels have adapted measures that will develop security within hotels. The hotel security was perceived to have improved since 2004. Such security mechanisms in several hotel have helped saved lives such as the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad. The hotel industry's vulnerability to attacks is caused however by the strategic nature of hotels.

In addressing security issues, the typical notion of general manages and security manages is that the installation of obtrusive and indiscrete security mechanisms will only generate more concern from the guests instead of creating a safe and secured environment. Other hoteliers often see security measures as unnecessary and merely increase the hotel expenses.

Nevertheless, the security department and its manager's role increased throughout the years. A main concern of hotel owners is the merging of security measures in the operations of the hotel. Instead of isolating the security department from others, security must be integrated within the operating procedures of the hotel. Security measure served as part of the hotel security routine particularly different types of technology such as

electronic card-locking system, camera and communication system, as well as a closed circuit television. Additional security features can include safe-deposit boxes, guest-door locks as well as the regular life-safety systems i. e. sprinkler systems, alarms and fire extinguishers.

Hotel security features have been increasingly developed in the past years. This can attributed to the increase in neighbourhood crime, technological advancements and a shift in the demographics of the hotel guests. Such is the case of the electronic door locks which generates a feeling of security expected from the safety measure. Hoteliers have also taken a closer look at the needs and wants of the female traveller being primarily concerned over safety and security measures.

As expected, hotel managers may face challenges as the media continuously work on bringing criminal actions to the limelight particularly since the news of the 9/11 attack have changed the perceptions on travelling and safety.

Body of the Study and Research Results

Case Study Number 1: The Marriot Hotel Experience

On July 17, 2003 the JW Marriot and the Ritz Carlton in the upscale area of Jakarta, Indonesia were attacked by two suicide bombers. The bomb blast killed nine people and injured about 52 individuals. Based on the investigation following the attacks it was found out that the suspects checked into the hotel as guests, and that the explosives they used were smuggled into the hotel in their luggage which was not checked because it was too big and had to be placed in a trolley. The hotel staff did not noticed anything because they assumed that hotel guests cannot be terrorists. On

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September 20, 2008 another Marriott hotel was attacked in Islamabad, Pakistan. A dump truck which was filled with explosives was detonated in front of the hotel killing 54 persons and injuring 266 individuals.

Based on the report that the Vice-President for Corporate Security Alan Orlob made before the United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs in 2009, the Marriott security measures helped in preventing a much bigger casualty in both the Jakarta and Islamabad attacks. In Jakarta during the time of the attack the hotel security were on Threat Condition Red. Orlob claims that the checkpoint placed at the hotel gates prevented the suicide bomber from driving a vehicle laden with explosives straight into the lobby of the hotel. Orlob also states that because of the alert response of the Marriott's three security personnel who were manning the checkpoints that day, helped in preventing the driver from entering the lobby of the Hotel.

In the Islamabad attacks a combination of a hydraulic barrier and a drop down barrier prevented the vehicle of the suicide bombers from approaching the main premises of the hotel. The vehicle filled with explosives was detonated at the barrier killing 56 people out of the 1, 500 people who were billeted at the Marriott during that day. Orlob claims that the casualties would have been larger if there were no security measures that were put in place. During the attacks in Islamabad, Orlob states that the hotel had 196 security personnel, 60 of which were on duty during that day. They also had sixty two CCTV cameras placed on the inside and outside of the hotel and bomb sniffing dogs.

However a paper by security expert, John Solomon the Head of Terrorism Research, World Check (2009) states that in both the Jakarta and Islamabad Marriott's security program has had shortcomings on two aspects. First is that the hotel did not have adequate measures for screening guest and staff for possible terrorism risk. Solomon pointed out that in both the Jakarta and Islamabad attacks the terrorists were able to study the area of the hotel and gather intelligence information by checking in as guests. The second shortcoming relates to the failure of the hotel security and risk manager to correctly analyze the possible security risks that the hotel faces. According to Solomon the problem is due to security and counterterrorism specialists' penchant for analyzing a security threat exclusively on historical patterns.

The common practice of hotels is to hire these security specialists to make a risk assessment which the hotel faces. However by seeing terrorist attacks as recurring patterns – what happens in the future will be the same to what is occurring in the present and what transpired in the recent past – fails to grasp the fact that terrorist tactics are constantly evolving and developing. The result of this way of thinking is that security experts fails to adopt concrete measures that are applicable to the possible dangers the situation poses.

Ironically Orlob also had a similar observation when, as part of a team of hotel security specialist, he visited Mumbai, India after the terrorist attacks in 2009 to the Taj Mahal, Oberoi, and Trident hotels. Orlob included these findings in the same Senate Committee hearing that i have mentioned above. According to Orlob the Taj Mahal hotel failed to address the following security concerns:

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Before the attacks the terrorists were staying in the hotel for several months posing as guests. They were seen taking photographs and have been studying the layout of the hotel;

The police who responded to the attacks were not familiar to the building layout and the plans that were outdated and did not indicate the renovations that has taken place;

The Taj Mahal hotel lowered their security measures due to a wrong intelligence report that was given to them;

The hotel did not have physical security measures such as barriers, sprinkler systems and the like which could have helped to slow down the terrorists if not deter them.

Orlob has noted during the Senate Committee report that after the attacks on the Marriott the security measures in placed have already been reviewed and developed to cope with the threat of terrorists groups.

Case Study Number 2: The Intercontinental Hotels Group

The Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG) is one of the leading international hotel chains in the world today. Currently there are about 4, 186 IHG hotels operating worldwide bearing the IHG brands of InterContinental Hotels, Crowne Plaza Hotels, Holiday Inn and many more which are franchised and are owned by private companies. The IHG main headquarters is based in the United Kingdom and there are regional offices for the Americas and Asia Pacific region.

During the 2009 Mumbai terrorist attacks the Intercontinental Hotels Group were able to send out instructions to two of its hotels in the area concerning security measures they should put in place. According to the Director for Global Security of IHG David Bonne, this quick response helped to shield the IHG properties from the attacks. Bonnel points out in a report dated March 11, 2009 that the IHG were able to address the threat posed by the Mumbai incident due to the timely and relevant information shared by individuals who are in charge of the security and counter terrorism program in their respective corporations. This association of professionals dealing with corporate security were instrumental in providing intelligence that helped to facilitate appropriate response to the crisis, effectively deploy resources, and ensured the flow of information between the corporate headquarters and the hotels that were affected by the attacks.

Bonnel states that after 9/11 attacks the IHG has developed a security plan that specifically addresses the threat posed by global terrorism. This security plan is based on the provision indicated in Title IX of the 9/11 Commission Act which has mapped out crisis management as the preparedness of the private and public sector on three aspects of operation which deals with rescue, restart, and recovery.

According to Bonnel the IHG crisis management system is an integral part of the whole structure of the corporation, organizational culture, and operations of the company, and provides an effective and flexible response to probable and expected threats to security. The IHG system works through different but interconnected aspects which focuses on the following: constant threat assessment; emergency action plans and business continuity plans that are <https://assignbuster.com/enhancing-security-process-and-systems-in-hotel-industry-tourism-essay/>

specific to the site involved; a crisis response plan for senior executives; crisis response teams; a network for internal communications; and a training program for emergency response. The IHG crisis management systems main thrust is to ensure that in the event of a threat or crisis its investments and guests are protected and rescued if the need arises, and in the event of damage to the corporation's asset, the system ensures continuity in operations and business functions.

One of the core aspects of this crisis management system is the development of a comprehensive counter terrorism program which is based on responding to threats and leads gathered from a reliable intelligence network connected with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This counter terrorism program works by evaluating and then categorizing all of IHG's hotels against a profile on terrorist risk. Each hotel location will also be assessed in a regional strategic threat assessment. The entire IHG hotel's capability to resist an attack will also be comprehensively assessed, and management will be provided with an action plan that would increase the hotel's security capability. A strict monitoring of compliance to the plan will also be carried out to ensure its implementation and in order to have a constant evaluation of the whole implementation process. According to Bonnel the IHG's counter terrorism program was designed with the view of implementing it within the framework of mandatory compliance with standards regarding operational and structural safety and security.

Case Study Number Three: The Shangri-la Hotel Jakarta

Hotel Shangri-la Jakarta is one of the hotels that are in operation in the

Southeast Asia region. The information issued by Shangri-la Jakarta states <https://assignbuster.com/enhancing-security-process-and-systems-in-hotel-industry-tourism-essay/>

that it has a superb reputation when it comes to ensuring the safety and security of its guests and personnel, and the hotel claims that many experts in security has considered it to be a preferred base in the city in case of emergencies. The security measures implemented by Shangri-la Hotel Jakarta are quite similar to the Marriot and IHG. It has a UVS or Under Vehicle Scanning system which is located at the main gate of the hotel; it has EVDs or Explosive Vapour Detectors; it employs bomb sniffing dogs that have been certified by the Australian Law Enforcement and Working Service Dog Handler Association; its X-ray machines for luggage scanning are state of the art; around 330 CCTV cameras are installed in the hotel; there are around 200 highly trained security staff; there are satellite telephones in case normal phone communications are cut off; and the hotel also has a helipad on its roof. The Shangri-la Jakarta also boasts of a comprehensive Civil Disturbance Plan designed to address different possible situations that might arise in its country of operation.

Like the Marriott and IHG the Shangri-la Hotel Jakarta hires security experts that acts as consultants to the hotel. Reliable intelligence is provided for by these security consultants. The Shangri-la hotel's team of local and international experts in security helps in keeping the hotel abreast to the security situation in Jakarta which develops its readiness and capacity to respond to any potential threat to its guest's safety and security. The chart below shows the comparative data of the three hotels based on the reference material used:

Hotel Marriot

IHG

Shangri-la Hotel, Jakarta

Secondary 1" deadbolt lock

Smoke detectors and fire sprinkler systems

CCTV cameras

Explosive Vapour Detectors

X-ray machines

CCTV Cameras

X-ray machines

Smoke detectors and fire sprinkler systems

Other security measures possibly use but not identified in reference material used by researcher.

UVS (Under Vehicle Scanning) system

EVDs (Explosive Vapour Detectors)

X-ray machines

CCTV cameras

Satellite telephones

Highly trained security personnel

Bomb sniffing dogs

Expert Consultant

Highly trained security personnel

Bomb sniffing dogs

Expert Consultant

Highly trained security personnel

Bomb sniffing dogs

Expert Consultant

Viewports in all guestroom doors

interior corridor access only

access control on all guest exterior access doors

Viewports in all guestroom doors

bollards and barriers

Same although not indicated expressly in the reference used by the researcher.

Same although not indicated expressly in the reference used by the researcher.

Roof helipad

Security Guidelines and Emergency Plans

Cooperation with International Security specialists groups and Government Agencies concerned

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Conclusion

The case study of the security measures being implemented by the Marriott, IHG, and Shangri-la shows certain similarities in terms of the equipment used, personnel involved, physical structures built, and development of a comprehensive security and crisis management plan. All three has hired security experts to provide detailed intelligence reports and to conduct and develop a crisis and threat assessment in order to develop the hotel's preparedness in the event that such threats will occur. It is also clear that security plans are directly related to the hotel's image and reputation, and most security plans is actually part of the hotel's commitment to its guests to ensure that their peace of mind and security are taken cared of while under their care.