



## Ask Gail

by William D. Frye, Ph.D., CHE

# Determining why Housekeeping guest service scores are low

*Another great article from The Rooms Chronicle<sup>®</sup>, the #1 journal for hotel rooms management<sup>®</sup>! \*\*\*Important notice: This article may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher or the author.\*\*\* College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, P.O. Box 2036, Niagara University, NY 14109-2036. Phone: 866-Read TRC. E-mail: [editor@roomschronicle.com](mailto:editor@roomschronicle.com)*

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Dear Gail:

In relation to our other departments, the guest service scores for our Housekeeping department have been extremely low for the past year. Though the Housekeeping manager has been with us for several years, nearly all of the guestroom attendants have been employed with us for less than two years. I am not sure what has caused the perceived level of service and cleanliness to suffer; and the housekeeping manager has no idea either. Do you have any suggestions where to start so we can raise the GS scores immediately?

Timothy M., General Manager  
Knoxville, TN

Dear Timothy:

*If your hotel's Housekeeping GS scores have dropped significantly in the past year, clearly something has changed or gone amiss during that time. Based on the situation that you conveyed, the two key questions that come to mind are this: 1.) What has caused such rampant turnover in the Housekeeping department? 2.) Why are the newly hired room attendants not performing to standards or meeting guests' expectations?*

*The first thing is to thoroughly review any guest survey and quality inspection results, comment cards, or written or verbal complaints to look for both specific issues and general trends. If your housekeeping manager cannot shed any light on this issue, then you need to talk to others who are involved on a daily basis. This means speak to any assistant managers, floor supervisors and ultimately each and every room attendant. Ask them what they believe the problems are. In order to encourage candid feedback, my sense is that it would be best to speak with the assistant managers separately away from the supervisors, room attendants and the housekeeping manager. Speak with the floor supervisors separately, as well. Finally, talk with the room attendants individually when there are no other employees present. You might be surprised what you learn.*

*With regards as to why room attendants are failing to perform to standards, my first hunch is that each new hire was not trained to a uniform standard after she was hired, resulting in inconsistent work performance. If trained properly, most conscientious employees will acquire a penchant for adhering to cleaning standards from their first day, and it will stick with them, as most positive work habits should. The importance of cleanliness must thoroughly be conveyed to them through a comprehensive training program backed up by extensive inspections.*

*To ensure consistency from Day One, train every newly hired room attendant in the same manner and in the same order. But, do not expect the trainee to master or even remember every task associated with cleaning a guestroom in the first few days. New employees should be taught 6-12 tasks a day and then afforded the opportunity to practice them to perfection as they are paired with a senior room attendant. By Day Seven, the trainee should be ready to "solo" and clean their allotment of guestrooms to standard with confidence. TRC expert Paul Gingras, who is the Executive Housekeeper at the Park Hyatt Toronto, has developed a Basic Task List for new room attendants to master within seven days. It is enclosed herein for your reference. If implemented across the board, this task list will help ensure consistency in training and in meeting guests' expectations. I am confident your service scores will increase as a result. ✧*

*(Dr. William D. Frye is an associate professor of hotel management at Niagara University and a former resort general manager and hotel night manager. E-Mail: [wfrye@roomschronicle.com](mailto:wfrye@roomschronicle.com).)*