# Operations - Front Office

**VB COLLEGE**

## The Situation

The 190-room Copa Hotel located in downtown Boston, Massachusetts, is struggling with the delicate balance between making profits and reaching guest satisfaction targets. The Copa is a commercial hotel that serves mostly transient business guests during the week, who stay for 2.5 - 3.0 days (Monday -Thursday or Tuesday - Friday) to visit local retail and wholesale entities. Out of town visitors also come on the weekend. The weekday average daily rate usually exceeds $250. The typical business guest stays at hotels 100-150 days a year and 60% of the guests are repeats. Weekend leisure visitors also tend to be frequent travelers. Because of this guest satisfaction is of paramount importance.

## Your Role

You have just been hired as the Front Desk Supervisor for the Copa. You are in charge of scheduling agents and setting key policies to address guest issues. You have been given a profit goal and a target for your guest/customer satisfaction scores (CSS).

## Learning Phase

Step-by-step instructions will guide you through determining appropriate staffing levels for your front desk at a small practice hotel. You'll review arrival and departure rates which drive the need for front staff personnel. Using basic math and heuristics, you'll establish staffing levels. Next, you'll learn how to set policies for handling guest issues at the front desk. Many of the policy choices will present a tradeoff between short-term gain and long-term success. Finally, you see how guest feedback can be monitored and how customer satisfaction scores (CSS) can be tracked. You'll also see how to track profit impacts of your decisions.

## Challenge Phase

As the Front Desk Manager at the Copa, your goal is a monthly profit target for October and an ending CSS level as specified in the simulation. You'll need to monitor arrival and departure patterns, plan staffing accordingly, and set policies to handle numerous guest issues.

At the option of your Professor, you may be able to retry the Challenge Phase multiple times. Only your best grade will count.

### Front Office in the Simulation

The simulation model contains thousands of simulated potential guests, each with different lodging needs and preferences. Each arrival at the front desk is simulated and wait times, satisfaction with rooms available, and satisfaction with responses to requests is modeled and recorded. This information is then reflected in customer satisfaction scores and guests decisions about return visits. Accurate financials are kept that reflect the costs of staffing decisions made.

## Discussion Questions

If you ever worked in the front office in a lodging property, how would you go about creating a staffing plan?

Give examples of how the front office, when handling guest requests/issues/complaints, will have to communicate with other departments?

What are some difficult guest issues that front desk personnel need to address?

How would you address them?

Explain why training is so important for front desk staff?

**Knowledge Matters**