

8 RUNNING A HOTEL

UNIT MENU

Grammar: *have/get* something done

Vocabulary: *-ed/-ing* adjectives

Professional skills: making presentations

Game: transform the team

Aims and objectives

In this lesson students will:

- read about what running a hotel involves
- focus on adjectives with *-ing* and *-ed* endings
- listen to a hotel manager talk about his job

Reading

HAVE YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO RUN A HOTEL?

Exercise 1, page 68

Find out if students have any experience of running a hotel or if they would want to and why. Students then skim the article to find the words in the box for qualities and skills. During feedback, elicit where the qualities and skills were mentioned in the article and check meaning.

Exercise 2, page 68

Students read the article, comparing answers with a partner before going through them as a class. Check vocabulary, e.g. *aesthetic*, *exasperating*. Ask any student who expressed an interest in running a hotel if they would still want to and why.

- 1 They have to be like Superman because there are so many things to do.
- 2 Because the manager is always on stage, smiling and keeping the guests happy.
- 3 You have to work hard for 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- 4 They provide food, warmth, comfort and friendship.

EXTRA ACTIVITY

Students work in pairs or in small groups. They discuss experiences of the best hotel they have stayed in and explain why they think it was so good.

If your students are thinking of taking the LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Spoken English for Tourism, explain that being able to describe character and disposition (i.e. the skills and qualities required by hotel management) is one of the linguistic competencies listed on the syllabus and ask them (in pairs) to discuss a further 5–8 adjectives that relate to qualities and skills.

Vocabulary

ADJECTIVES ENDING IN *-ING* AND *-ED*

Exercise 3, page 69

Go through the Vocabulary box with the class. Students then refer to the text from Exercise 2 and find examples of *-ed* and *-ing* adjectives to describe feelings. They discuss in pairs which ones can take both forms. Elicit ideas from the class.

Adjectives in the article:

quick-thinking, outgoing, motivated, motivating, tiring, irritating, demanding, exasperating, tired, exhausted, fascinating, rewarding, boring

Adjectives that can be both:

motivated/motivating
tiring/tired
irritating/irritated
exasperated/exasperating
exhausting/exhausted
fascinating/fascinated
rewarding/rewarded
boring/bored

Exercise 4, page 69

Students complete the sentences. They then check answers with a partner before you go through the answers with the class.

- 1 motivated 2 irritating 3 rewarded
4 exhausting 5 irritated 6 rewarding

Listening

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A HOTEL MANAGER

Exercise 5, page 69

Find out if students have any experience of being a hotel manager and elicit some of the tasks a hotel manager is responsible for. Explain that they are going to hear a hotel manager talk about his job and they should put the activities in the order they are mentioned. Students compare ideas in pairs before you go through them as a class. Check vocabulary, e.g. *(staff)retention, initiative*.

- 1 Review the Night Manager's reports
- 2 Check emails
- 3 Check the breakfast arrangements
- 4 Say hello to the guests
- 5 Attend the daily staff briefing
- 6 Attend a strategy and planning meeting
- 7 Have lunch with staff members
- 8 Do administrative work

Exercise 6, page 69

Allow students time to read through the information before they listen a second time. Alternatively, with a stronger class, students could complete the information and then listen to check answers.

Problems this morning:

- 1 room service
- 2 bread rolls
- 3 overbooking

Ongoing projects:

- 1 refurbishment
- 2 conference
- 3 late-charge

Audio script Track 8.1, Exercises 5 and 6, page 69

I = Interviewer, J = Jim

I So, Jim, could you talk us through a typical day's work for you?

J Well, you have to get up early when you work in the hospitality industry and my day starts just before 6.00 a.m. The first thing I do is review the night manager's reports and check what happened during the night. Then I spend some time reading email messages and catching up. I try to visit the restaurant between seven and eight to check that the breakfast arrangements are in order, and then I usually spend some time in the

reception area ... I like to say hello to the guests as they come down.

I What happens after breakfast?

J We have the daily staff briefing at nine. This is an essential part of the day, where the staff report on the night before and we discuss problems. For example, last night one guest's room service didn't arrive for an hour and a half, so we need to find out why. And this morning we ran out of bread rolls in the restaurant. This meeting is also when I brief the team for the day ahead and we discuss any future events we have planned. We look at who's staying at the hotel – any VIP guests, celebrities, or politicians or whatever, and which rooms are not in use. We also talk about occupancy rates and targets. We've actually got a potential overbooking problem at the end of this week, so we had to discuss alternative accommodation arrangements for the extra guests.

I How long does that last?

J About an hour. Then I have a strategy and planning meeting. At the moment we're planning a major refurbishment of all the guestrooms and suites at a cost of 9.5 million dollars. We discuss everything down to the last detail: the colour schemes, the choice of furniture, the position of the power points, the perfume of the shower gel. It all has to be right.

I That sounds like a big job! Do you have any time for lunch or is it just a quick sandwich?

J No, at lunchtime I always eat in the staff restaurant, and I try to sit with a different person each day and talk to them about any concerns they have. A hotel stands or falls on the quality of its customer service, so finding good staff and keeping them – staff motivation and retention – is a big concern in our industry. I'm absolutely passionate about this. As I always say: 'Unhappy employees lead to unhappy guests'.

I It sounds like a good principle. What happens after lunch?

J After lunch, there are more meetings, for example once a week there's a big marketing and promotions meeting. Our latest promotions initiative is we're sending the sales team over to Australia and New Zealand to get more conference business. On other days I might be talking to the finance team or accounts – we've had problems with check-out times recently so we're reviewing our late-charge policy. And when the meetings are over, I have to finish all the admin work that I haven't been able to do during the day.

I So what time do you finish?

J I hope to be able to get away by 6 or 7 p.m. It depends.

RESEARCH HOTEL STAFF ROUTINES

Students find out about the daily routine of a member of hotel staff, sharing their findings with the class. You may want to spend time discussing possible interview questions in class by way of preparation and decide on how many questions would be ideal for the interviews.

Homework suggestions

- Students write 12–15 of their own sentences using *-ed* or *-ing* adjectives (including some from this lesson). Where possible, the focus of the sentences should be work-related.
- Students write 12–15 questions, which can be chosen from those discussed in class, in preparation for their research task.

Photocopiable notes 8.1 (page 125)
-ed or *-ing*? (Card activity page 126)

HOTEL INSPECTION

Aims and objectives

In this lesson students will:

- discuss how hotel standards are evaluated
- listen to a hotel inspector talk about what she looks for when evaluating a hotel
- study the use of *have/get* something done

Speaking

INSPECTION CRITERIA

Exercise 1, page 70

Introduce the topic of hotel inspections and ask students to discuss in pairs how each aspect given might be evaluated by an inspector. Elicit ideas, noting them on the board.

Listening

THE HOTEL INSPECTOR

FACT FILE

A *mystery guest audit* involves a visit to a hotel by a mystery guest with the aim of assessing the quality of the hotel and the services on offer based on quality standards.

Exercise 2, page 70

Elicit what a mystery guest audit is or what a mystery guest does before students listen to a hotel inspector talking about what she looks for when evaluating services. It might be a good idea to play the recording twice. Ask students which of their ideas are mentioned and elicit any extra ones, adding them to the list. Check vocabulary, e.g. *upselling* and *cutlery*.

The hotel inspector mentions the following:

- 1 **Reservations:** She checks how quickly the call is answered, whether or not the clerk announces his or her own name and the name of the hotel, whether the clerk can answer her questions.
- 2 **Reception area:** She checks the general appearance of the reception area – whether it is clean, tidy and welcoming. She expects someone to help carry her baggage and show her to her room.
- 3 **Rooms:** The room and en-suite facilities must be clean and tidy with everything in its place. The fridge should be properly stocked.
- 4 **Room service:** She times how long it takes for her order to arrive. Questions about the menu should be answered properly and the order confirmed. The staff should attempt some upselling.

- 5 Restaurant: She evaluates the quality of the service, the cleanliness of the cutlery and dishes, the quality of the food and the time it takes to be served between courses. She expects to be greeted and asked if she enjoyed her meal.
- 6 Staff: She checks whether the staff are friendly and polite and use her name.

Exercise 3, page 70

Students listen to the recording again and match hotel services with the hotel inspector's criteria. Allow time for them to compare answers in pairs before going through the answers with the class.

1 d 2 c 3 e 4 f 5 a 6 b

Audio script Track 8.2, Exercises 2 and 3, page 70

Well, when I inspect one of our hotels, it's obviously as a mystery guest – the staff don't know who I am. If they knew who I was, they wouldn't necessarily behave in the same way. The inspection starts when I ring to make my reservation. I evaluate how quickly the reservations clerk answers the phone, if they give their own name and the name of the hotel, and if they can answer my questions about the hotel and its services correctly. On arriving, I check the general appearance of the hotel reception area. It should be clean and tidy and look welcoming – and I also expect that somebody should offer to help me with my baggage and show me into my room.

Obviously, the room and en-suite facilities should be clean and tidy with everything in its place, and the fridge should be properly stocked. I always ring room service and order something and then time how long it takes to arrive. The person taking the order should be able to answer any questions I have about the menu and confirm the order. Preferably, they should try to do some upselling, that is encourage me to order something else or something more expensive.

I have both an evening meal and breakfast in the restaurant and I evaluate the quality of the service there: whether the cutlery and dishes are clean and, of course, the quality of the food and the time it takes for me to be served between courses. I expect to be greeted properly when I arrive. And when I leave, the staff are supposed to ask if I have enjoyed my meal.

During my stay, I have to check whether the staff are friendly and polite and use my name. This is important as our policy is to treat people as individuals and obviously using a name is part and parcel of providing a personal service.

EXTRA ACTIVITY

In pairs, students think of other jobs where *upselling* (a technique where a customer is encouraged to buy more products or services) is expected. Round up by eliciting ideas. Find out if students have to do any upselling in their jobs and what kinds of things they have say or try and sell.

Speaking**AN INSPECTOR CALLS****Exercise 4, page 70**

Tell students they are now going to roleplay being hotel inspectors. Put them into pairs and allot roles A and B. Allow time for students to prepare. With a weaker class, As (and Bs) could prepare in pairs before returning to their original partners. Monitor conversations, providing help as needed. Round up by asking students to report back on their decisions.

See Pairwork files.

Listening**HOTEL STATISTICS****Exercise 5, page 71**

Ask who has visited the USA and what they thought of their accommodation. Students listen to part of a report and fill in the missing statistics. Allow students to compare answers in pairs before eliciting them.

1 91% 2 35% 3 16% 4 19% 5 22%
6 76% 7 58% 8 68% 9 21% 10 12

Audio script Track 8.3, Exercise 5, page 71

One significant area of improvement was in wireless internet access. Ninety-one percent of the hotels inspected had wireless internet connection compared with only 35 percent from just four years earlier. In addition to this, the number of hotels that charge for in-room internet use is decreasing. Sixteen percent of hotels inspected currently charge for this service, down from 19 percent last year and 22 percent in the previous year. Thirty-five percent of the hotels inspected offer iPod docking stations in-room. Of these, 76 percent were five-star hotels and 58 percent were four-star hotels.

It is also encouraging to note that hotel managers are becoming more environmentally responsible. Sixty-eight percent of hotels now use energy-efficient lighting. Twenty-one percent of the hotels inspected are planning to adopt Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) standards in the next 12 months; 20 percent have already done so in the past quarter.

Grammar

HAVE/GET SOMETHING DONE

Exercise 6, page 71

Go through the information in the Grammar box, using extra examples as needed before students complete the minutes of the meeting. Allow time for them to compare answers before class feedback.

1 get/have 2 repainted 3 get 4 install
5 get 6 put up 7 get/have 8 replaced
9 get 10 look at 11 get 12 rewire

Homework suggestions

- Students write a report for their boss detailing the decisions they reached in Exercise 4 (200–250 words). Remind them to incorporate grammar and vocabulary from the lesson where possible.
- Students write 12–15 sentences using the construction *have/get* something done and their own ideas. Encourage them to be adventurous in their use of language.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS PRESENTATIONS

Aims and objectives

In this lesson students will:

- read the DOs and DON'Ts of giving presentations
- listen to a hotel manager giving a presentation on the Kaizen principles in hotel management
- do an activity where they discuss how to improve a run-down hotel and present their ideas

Reading

MAKING PRESENTATIONS

Exercise 1, page 72

Focus students' attention on the photo before eliciting what it shows. Ask how the presentation is going and how they can tell. Students then list common mistakes made when giving a presentation and discuss their ideas in pairs before the discussion is opened to the class.

EXTRA ACTIVITY

Students work in pairs and talk about how often they have to give presentations, who to, which language(s) they use, etc. They also find out what each other enjoys or finds difficult about giving presentations, and why.

Exercise 2, page 72

Refer students to the Professional skills box and ask students to complete the advice, comparing answers in pairs before class feedback. Discuss the DOs and DON'Ts given and find out which students feel are the most useful and why. Ask students if they have any other advice.

1 c 2 e 3 f 4 i 5 a 6 h 7 d 8 g
9 j 10 b

Listening

KAIZEN

Exercise 3, page 73

Ask students if they have heard of *Kaizen* before and what they know about it. Explain to students that they are now going to listen to a Japanese hotel manager talking about Kaizen. After listening, allow students time to discuss their answers with a partner before class feedback.

- 1 Principles in hotel management which involve all employees, from upper management down to chambermaids and cleaners, who, on a regular basis, make suggestions for improvements to the running of their hotel.
- 2 Kaizen means 'continuous improvement'.
- 3 Toyota Motor Company

Exercise 4, page 73

Students read the information on the slides before listening to the presentation again. Remind them of the word limit. Elicit answers from the class.

- 1 upper management
- 2 chambermaids and cleaners
- 3 all the time
- 4 anywhere
- 5 a better way
- 6 in teams
- 7 make decisions
- 8 a reward

Audio script Track 8.4, Exercises 3 and 4, page 73

Good morning everybody and welcome to this presentation on Kaizen principles in hotel management. My name is Yusuke Takahashi and I'm responsible for the housekeeping staff at the Empire hotel in Hiroshima.

So you are probably wondering what this Japanese word *Kaizen* means? Well, the term is made up of two words: *Kai* which means 'continuous' and *Zen* which means 'for the better', so *Kaizen* is usually translated as 'continuous improvement'.

This Kaizen principle of continuous improvement has actually existed for quite a long time. It first appeared at the Toyota Motor Company in Japan just after the end of the Second World War, and was developed as a fundamental part of their production philosophy. Although the Japanese have long recognized the importance of Kaizen in manufacturing, I don't think it has yet been applied to the running of a hotel. But the principles are important and can be applied to any service industry and not just production.

So, who does Kaizen concern? The answer is everybody. Kaizen is a system that involves every employee – from upper management down to chambermaids and cleaners. The idea is to encourage all the personnel to come up with small suggestions for improvement on a regular basis. This is not an activity that takes place once a year, or once a month or even once a week. It takes place all the time.

Suggestions are not limited to a specific area such as marketing or dealing with complaints. Kaizen is

based on making changes anywhere where improvements are possible. There's no one best way of doing something, there is always a better way.

If Kaizen is to work, you have to create the right atmosphere and adopt the right practices. This means encouraging staff to work in teams, so that they feel involved in and motivated by all aspects of running the hotel, and not just their own little area. Secondly, it means sharing information and empowering staff to make decisions so suggestions can be implemented immediately. It's also a good idea to provide incentives, so if an employee's suggestion leads to greater efficiency then that employee should be rewarded.

Exercise 5, page 73

Students discuss the questions in pairs before class feedback. Round up by asking if they think Kaizen would work in their company and why/why not.

Speaking**MAKING HOTEL IMPROVEMENTS****Exercise 6, page 73**

Go through the task and set a time limit (say 15 minutes) for students to list some ideas, before putting them into groups of three. Before students start their meetings, it might be a good idea to revise the useful phrases given in Unit 7, page 65 for taking part in meetings. Depending on time, the preparation might best be done as homework.

RESEARCH**CUSTOMER LOYALTY PROGRAMMES**

Students look into a range of customer loyalty programmes offered by large international hotel chains and compare them. In a subsequent lesson, they give a short presentation of their findings. You could set a time limit (five to ten minutes) and limit the number of slides (five to eight) for each one. Encourage students to ask questions after each presentation and if time, discuss which loyalty programme students think is the best and why.

Homework suggestions

- Students write an article on Kaizen for a business magazine (200–205 words), explaining what it involves and how it works, as well as any advantages and disadvantages of its use.
- Students write a short report summarizing the main differences and similarities between the customer loyalty programmes they researched for the final activity. (200–250 words)

Photocopiable notes 8.2 (page 125)
True or false? (Card activity page 127)

CASE STUDY

TRANSFORM THE TEAM

CASE STUDY MENU

Refer students to the lesson's aims and objectives before focusing their attention on the photo. Ask who it shows and where they work.

Human resource problems

Exercise 1, page 74

Ask students if they have ever worked in a hotel and what it was like or what they think it would be like if they have not. Ask them to imagine they are a hotel manager and ask what kind of problems they might have running a hotel. Tell students they are going to read some of the human resource problems facing hotels in Paris and allow time for them to compare ideas in pairs before class feedback. Check vocabulary, e.g. *province* and *incompetent* and ask them if the manager talked about any of the problems they discussed.

They face high turnover of staff and a skills shortage. Many staff leave within six months because of low salaries, anti-social working hours, they feel undervalued and have limited career prospects. As a result staff aren't motivated and are often incompetent.

Interview with staff

Exercise 2, page 74

Go through the situation and ask students to note what each member of staff says when interviewed. Remind students that they will listen to four different interviews and if necessary, play the recording twice. Students then compare their answers with a partner before sharing them with the class. If time, discuss which problems should be resolved first and why.

Louis Moulin

Problems: lack of staff, unreliable temporary staff

Suggestions: employ more full-time staff

Fatoumata Dembele

Problems: physically demanding work resulting in backache, low pay

Suggestions: pay rise, at least the minimum wage

Munir Gadouche

Problems: he's unhappy with the job rotation scheme – not doing work he was trained to do

Suggestions: go back to the previous system

Mercedes Rodes

Problems: she's the only permanent receptionist and has too much responsibility, temporary staff lack training and motivation
Suggestions: give staff proper training, invest in better software

Audio script Track 8.5, Exercise 2, page 74

1

LM = Louis, Moulin, C = consultant

LM My name's Louis Moulin, I'm the restaurant manager. Everything here was fine before Monsieur Huchet arrived. I've always run my department as I wanted to but now I'm told I have too many staff – which is definitely not true. During peak periods there's never enough people. How am I supposed to run a busy restaurant with only one waiter?

C I understand there have been problems in the kitchens recently.

LM Oh that. Yeah, last week was a very busy time because of New Year and the two temporary kitchen assistants we had employed for the holiday period didn't turn up. We couldn't find anyone to replace them at short notice and it was a disaster! In my opinion, we should employ more full-time staff and not rely so much on casual and temporary labour.

2

C = consultant, FD = Fatoumata Dembele

C So you are ... Fatoumata Dembele, is that right?

FD Yes, Fatou, people call me.

C OK, and what do you do here?

FD I Chambermaid. Change sheets, clean room.

C Do you enjoy your work here?

FD I like here but job very hard, always lifting, bending, many, many backache.

C Yes, I suppose that's one of the intrinsic hazards of your occupation.

FD No understand.

C I said that's one of the bad things about your job.

FD Yes, very bad, and pay. Very small money. We want pay rise, minimum wage at least.

3

C = consultant, MG = Munir Gadouche

C So, Munir, you're the maintenance engineer, is that right?

MG Yes.

C I'd like to ask you a question. When Monsieur Huchet came here, he introduced a number of changes into the running of the hotel. What did you think of them?

MG The same as everyone else! We didn't like it at all. He wanted everyone to move around and do everyone else's job – called it flexibility. The accounts staff were taught how to make beds, the reservations staff went to the kitchen, the waiters

and waitresses were on reception and I was sent to the kitchen to make salads and wash dishes. I did a three-year apprenticeship as a carpenter and now I'm washing dishes! All this job rotation is a load of rubbish, if it doesn't stop, I'm leaving and my wife too, 'cos she works here as well. We should go back to what it was like before; everyone knew where they were and what to do.

4

C = consultant, MR = Mercedes Rodes

C Your name's Mercedes Rodes, is that right?

MR Yes, I'm Spanish. I work as a receptionist.

C Right, OK. So do you get on with the other members of staff, Mercedes? Is there a good working atmosphere?

MR Well, I'm the only permanent receptionist. There are six part-time employees who are usually temps from an agency or student trainees on work experience. Most of them just don't have the knowledge and experience to cope with any kind of problem or crisis. Since they are hardly paid anything, and don't get any training or benefits, they aren't always very motivated. Nobody tells them how the system works so they can't cope with the computers. I feel like I'm responsible for everything and everyone, and it's too much.

C OK, well that's very interesting. So do you think that the hotel needs to invest more in training for reception tasks?

MR And in better software! But training would be a start.

Exchanging information

Exercise 3, page 75

Put students into pairs and allot roles A and B. Allow them time to read their information and to prepare for the activity. With a weaker class, As (and Bs) could prepare in pairs before returning to their original partners. Monitor during the activity, providing help as needed. Round up by discussing what students found out on the various aspects.

See Pairwork files.

TASK

Refer students back to page 72 and to the list of DOs and DON'Ts on giving presentations. Then put students into pairs. Allow them time to discuss what changes might be needed to improve the management of the hotel and remind them to limit the number of slides to ten when they do their preparation for their presentation. Depending on time, they could prepare their presentations for homework. Students could then give their presentations in a subsequent lesson. Feedback by discussing with a class whether they think that the

hotel is well managed or not. They should try to agree on which recommendations are the best and why.

POSSIBLE OUTCOME

Although Alexandre Huchet appears satisfied with the changes he has implemented, they caused staff dissatisfaction and had a negative impact on working methods.

Changes that need to be made:

- Recruitment of more waiters for the busy restaurant
- Employment of permanent staff, e.g. kitchen assistants, receptionists
- Payment of the minimum wage (it is illegal to pay less in France)
- Less emphasis on flexible working and the Kaizen approach
- Better pay and conditions to attract competent staff and reduce turnover
- Proper training for both full-time and part-time staff
- More up-to-date reservations software

Extra points:

- The monitoring of staff time and productivity is unlikely to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and increase motivation. The competitive element in the use of software to measure performance and choose who to give more money to or to promote is unlikely to produce effective team work and defeats the purpose of the Kaizen approach.
- The abolition of overtime in a low-paid industry will also decrease motivation as potential earning power is thereby reduced.
- The decision to reduce discounts could also be harmful if tour operators stop using the hotel.
- Guests may or may not be satisfied with frozen packaged meals. This is a trend in French restaurants but will not satisfy the guest who expects a gourmet meal.

Writing a report

Exercise 4, page 75

Go through the model report on page 101 of the Writing bank before asking students to make notes and write their own report. With a weaker class, students could work in the same pairs as the task. Depending on time, reports could be completed for homework.

UNIT 8: KEY WORDS

Highlight the key words box and elicit definitions for a selection of the words. Check on parts of speech, syllable stress and pronunciation as needed.

Suggest that students use the DVD-ROM Mini-dictionary for further self-study.

Homework suggestions

- Students write about staff motivation and staff retention at a company they know. Encourage them to explain the positive features of human resource management and to make suggestions on further improvements. (150–200 words)
- Students write a sentence for each of the key words given for the unit (15 sentences in total). Encourage them to use a variety of structures and language from the unit.