



Alka Sharma of The Oberoi enacts a scene to illustrate a point



Empowered Housekeepers

classic examples of beautiful design that is a Housekeeper's nightmare. Most hotel projects, we learn, are taken up by entrepreneurs, who in turn, enlist the services of a hotel consultant. This broadens the gap between the architect and Accommodation Services. In addition, most Housekeepers have not even been recruited in the initial project stage. A suggestion was made to incorporate the ethnic in guest room interiors. After all, the globetrotting guest needs to know which part of the world he is in, when he wakes up.

The major drawback is security, so intensive security training is a must.

The vendors' panel comprising of representatives from Apurva, Eureka Forbes, Diversey Lever, Stefab and Anglo-French Textiles, patiently answered both queries and complaints. A large segment of the discussion was directed towards the need for better after sales service.

The General Manager's panel discussion, generated both interest and suspense. The impassioned introduction to the role of Housekeeping in the hotel set the mood for what was to follow. Altering the title of Housekeepers to Accommodation Managers was met with some reservations. How, for example, would a guest get accustomed to this change? Though the importance of the Housekeeper's role was acknowledged, the title still remained a question. Why is it that most General Managers have their roots in F&B? Why does the Housekeeper's career graph take all of 15 years to reach the Executive level, while the F&B staff can be appointed as General Manager in less time than that? Above all, the million dollar question — why can't Housekeepers be referred to as Accommodation Managers? These questions addressed to the panel had one underlying statement — the need for recognition.

One of the panel members Sunir Ahluwalia, is the first Manager to have risen from Housekeeping roots. She is the epitome of confidence as she delivers the action plan for the future. She will be looked upon as the Emmeline Pankhurst for Indian Housekeeping. Having already blazed a trail of success, this challenge should be an easy one.

There is a saying "When all is said and done, more is said than done". If H&FS and HOSTS'98, were to succeed in forming a Housekeepers' Association and altering the status of Housekeepers to Accommodation Managers, then the conference would be more than just a success, it would be an achievement. □

Such was the interest generated by the talk, transparencies and slides, that the participants asked to visit the hotel and the request was immediately granted.

There were four panel discussions conducted over the three-day workshop.

The first of these was concerning the functionalism of design. The panel included two renowned hotel architects, Prakash Mandkar and Premnath along with Housekeepers Aneeta Gurung and Alliamma George and Meenakshi. Seemingly, the gap that needs to be bridged, calls for an effort on both sides. Accommodation Services can become increasingly difficult when the design does not facilitate ease of cleaning. An inaccessible window pane in the atrium and brass handrails on the staircase are just two

The session on Personal Growth conducted by Ophelia Derosé created a sense of 'personal awakening' for all the participants. She had the audience eating out of her hand, with her interactive method of lecturing. Within a short time, the participants discovered what they were and what they wanted to be. The resulting SWOT analysis, established a guideline for strengthening the weak points and using the strong points to advantage.

Is Contract Cleaning a solution? The panel members in this discussion were representatives of two established contract cleaning companies and one new entrant in the field. Also on the panel was an Executive of Accommodation services from Escorts Heart Institute, Delhi. Apart from reducing capital investment, it also eliminates several labour problems.