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Business and Culture, Imatra  
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality  
Degree Programme in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management

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# **Internal Housekeeping Versus Outsourced Housekeeping**

Thesis 2015

## **Abstract**

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The objective of this research was to find out the reasons hotels outsource their housekeeping departments and the effects of having an outsourced or internal housekeeping department. Another objective was to find out why companies that were once outsourced decide to take back internal housekeeping. A secondary aim was to find out the working conditions and the effects outsourcing had on the housekeepers in the housekeeping departments and if there were any changes in attitudes towards them during or after the process.

The information about outsourcing and internal housekeeping was gathered from literature, articles and the internet. Interviews of both managers of the hotels and the housekeepers working in the departments were held. The interviews were semi-structured with the possibility to ask further questions to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons for outsourcing.

The final result of this thesis was that hotels do not outsource purely to cut costs or to gain a profit. The thesis showed that professionalism and skills of the service provider are just as important as monetary gain. The thesis also showed the feelings and opinions from the housekeeper's point of view and that improvements need to be made to working conditions so that quality and work satisfaction to improve.

Keywords: outsourcing, attitudes, costs, motivation, working conditions

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Table of contents .....	3
1 Introduction .....	5
1.1 Aim and objectives.....	6
1.2 Delimitations .....	7
1.3 Research questions .....	7
1.4 Research methods .....	8
1.4.1 Data collection method .....	9
1.4.2 Data analysis method .....	11
2 Hotel industry in Finland.....	12
2.1 Hotels in South Karelia .....	13
2.2 Types of hotels.....	14
2.2.1 Budget hotel.....	14
2.2.2 Mid-market hotels .....	15
2.2.3 Luxury hotels .....	15
2.2.4 Resorts and Spas .....	16
3 Housekeeping.....	16
3.1 Definition of housekeeping .....	16
3.2 Typical housekeeping day .....	17
3.3 Internal housekeeping .....	20
3.3.1 Effects of internal housekeeping.....	21
3.3.2 Costs of internal housekeeping.....	21
3.4 Outsourced housekeeping .....	22
3.4.1 Effects of outsourced housekeeping.....	23
3.4.2 Costs of outsourced housekeeping.....	24
4 Outsourcing .....	26
4.1 Definition of outsourcing.....	26
4.2 Types of outsourcing .....	27

4.2.1 Tactical outsourcing .....	27
4.2.2 Strategic outsourcing .....	28
4.2.3 Transformational outsourcing .....	28
4.2.4 Offshoring .....	28
4.3 Reasons and motives of outsourcing .....	29
4.4 Stages of outsourcing.....	30
4.5 Benefits of outsourcing .....	31
4.6 Challenges of outsourcing.....	33
5 Internal versus outsourced housekeeping .....	36
5.1 Outsourced but decided to go back to internal .....	36
5.2 Motivation of employees.....	37
5.3 Two classes of employees under the same roof .....	38
5.4 Shift in attitudes.....	39
6 Interview results .....	39
6.1 Management results.....	39
6.2 Employee housekeeper results .....	46
7 Summary and discussions .....	58
References .....	61
Appendix	

# 1 Introduction

This thesis is about the differences between an internal housekeeping department and an outsourced housekeeping department. The thesis will focus on the challenges, effects and costs associated with both having an internal or outsourced housekeeping department.

In chapter 1 the aims and objectives of the thesis are explained and the methodologies used to obtain the data. The analysis methods and the data collection process are explained in more detail.

Chapter 2 will give some background information about the hotel industry in Finland and the types of hotels used in this thesis. The thesis focuses on hotels in the South Karelia region as this region has experienced a growth in tourism over recent years.

Chapter 3 will focus on the topic housekeeping. The definition of housekeeping will be explained and some basic information about the typical works included in housekeeping was researched. In this chapter the effects and costs of both internal housekeeping and outsourced housekeeping will be explained.

Chapter 4 will focus on the definition of outsourcing and what it entails. The different types of outsourcing are explained and the reasons why outsourcing is chosen brought to light. The benefits and challenges of outsourcing not only on the company but also the employees were also researched.

In chapter 5 the focus is on internal versus outsourced and the impact the choices made have on the employees in the hotel. The analysis of the results in chapter 6 will focus on the results of the interviews with both the managers and the housekeepers of the hotels in question.

Finally the summary and discussion will focus on what could be done differently and how the housekeepers' working conditions could be improved.

### **1.1 Aim and objectives**

The objective of this thesis was to find out what were the definitions of the term outsourcing and the reasons companies decide to outsource their housekeeping departments. The secondary objective was to find out what outsourcing effects have on the employees of the companies in question as they first belonged to one company and are then transferred by outsourcing to a new company with different ideas and practices on how to work. The third objective was to find out whether the working conditions of the employees changed during or after the outsourcing process as new work practices are often brought into the workplace. The fourth objective is about the motivation of the employees and their relationships with previous work colleagues. This is to see if there were any noticeable changes in the attitudes towards outsourced workers who were once a part of the same company. The fifth objective will be the costs of both internal and outsourced housekeeping which need to be determined in order to understand why companies outsource or keep internal housekeeping. This was to find out if outsourcing is done only for monetary gain or for some other reason.

The final objective was to find out why companies that have already made the decision to outsource their housekeeping departments some years earlier made the decision to bring back internal housekeeping. What were the main reasons for the change of heart or do they regret the decision that they earlier made. The theory of this topic will focus on the hotel industry housekeeping department and the way they used to work before outsourcing became a trend. Then I will address the practices from working in an internal housekeeping department and also the outsourced one. It is important that the theory brings to light all the aspects of the housekeeping department both internal and outsourced.

## **1.2 Delimitations**

For this thesis the research was conducted in the South Karelia area only. The reason behind the choice was that the south eastern area of Finland has over the last five years seen an increase in tourists, especially from the neighboring country Russia (Imatran Seudun Kehitysyhtiö 2015). The hotels that will not be used for this research are the small hotels in this area. The amount of bed places in those hotels is so insignificant so they do not necessarily use outsourcing to take care of their housekeeping needs. The focus will only be on the larger hotels in this area.

The hotels used for this research were Holiday Club Saimaa, Imatra Spa and Hotel Lappee. These hotels are the three main hotels in this area and between them have a total of over 3500 bed places in South Karelia.

## **1.3 Research questions**

The main research questions for this research were:

- Why do hotels choose to outsource their housekeeping department?
- What kinds of effects are there to having an internal or outsourced housekeeping department?
- What are the factors that make a company want to go back to using internal housekeeping?

To gain the answers to these research questions other sub questions needed to be asked about the working conditions of the employees before the process, during the process and especially after the outsourcing process. These research questions will help to understand the effects of the outsourcing process not only from the company's point of view but also from the employees' point of view. The sub questions are:

- How has the working environment changed during the process?
- How have the attitudes changed during the process?

## **1.4 Research methods**

The primary research method was using the qualitative approach. This was made by interviewing the managers and the employees of the hotels that have undergone the outsourcing process and also managers of hotels that still use internal housekeeping. According to Patton (1990) Interviews are used to find out the perspectives inside someone's head. This is no easy task and each person we interview will be a little different from the previous person (Carson & Gilmore 2006, p. 73). The Hotels in question were Holiday Club Saimaa, Imatra Spa and Hotel Lappee, and a possible few more. In the event of not gaining enough answers the quantitative method will be used by preparing a survey which will be sent out to employees working in the housekeeping industry. Those results will be analyzed and recorded in this thesis.

According to Patton (1980) in Carson & Gilmore (2006, p.65) in-depth understanding is based on researcher immersion in the phenomena to be studied, gathering data which provide a detailed description of events, situations and interaction between people and things, providing depth and detail.

By choosing the qualitative method the motivations and feelings behind the choice of outsourcing will come to light. Qualitative research is suitable where the research emphasis is on in-depth understanding of how, why and in what context certain phenomena occur; and what impacts upon or influences such phenomena (Carson & Gilmore 2006, p.67).

This will answer the questions of why the hotel chose to outsource/take back internal housekeeping, how they went through the process and what kind of outcome did they experience. The other possible questions are what they would have done differently when faced with the same choice again. By using the interview the author had the possibility to question deeper the meaning or feelings of the interviewee. The opportunity to change or add a different dimension to the question is easily done by using this method.



### **1.4.1 Data collection method**

The collection of the data was by making interviews with the hotel managers and key personnel who have been involved in the outsourcing decision. According to Patton (1990) whatever an interview's form, its purpose is to get inside someone's head and enter into their perspective (Carson & Gilmore 2006, p.73). Interview dates were set up beforehand with the hotel managers and were held face to face; to be able to recall all that was said the interviews were recorded. According to Gordon and Robson (1982) individual interviews are 'more stressful' for respondents (Chrzanaowska, 2002, p.88). This is mainly as because the individual has to answer the questions of the interview by themselves. For this thesis the interviews were conducted using the semi-structured interview method. It could be argued that the semi-structured interview is the most important way of conducting a research interview because of its flexibility balanced by structure, and the quality of the data obtained (Gillham 2005, p.70) The semi-structured interview was chosen for the management personnel as the same questions were put to all the managers involved in the research and also as it was a flexible approach to the topic in question. The sample size was small, four managers all from different hotels were interviewed and the topic itself sensitive as issues about costs and agreements were discussed.

The semi-structured interview was also used for the interviews with the employees of the companies in question. The amount of interviews depended on how active the housekeepers were in answering the interview questions. In total 16 replies from housekeepers were received. This was mainly done using an interview questionnaire which was set up online and the link sent to the employees.

The interview questions were divided into two parts as this thesis is focusing not only on the manager's point of view on outsourcing but also the feelings and opinions of the employees' that have to go through the outsourcing process. This meant in practice that there would be two different sets of interview questions. The first set of interviews was for the managers by using a semi-structured interview

and the questions were about the practical, financial and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the outsourcing process. The questions to the managers were:

- Who makes the decision on which type of department to have, internal or outsourced?
- What are the costs of internal and outsourced housekeeping?
- Why do they choose to outsource or keep internal?
- By what criteria do they choose the service provider?
- What are the benefits of both internal and outsourced housekeeping?
- What are the challenges of both internal and outsourced housekeeping?
- Who monitors the quality of both internal and outsourced housekeeping?
- If they had the option to choose, would they make the same choice again?

Of course some case specific questions were asked as the hotels in question all had different ways of handling their housekeeping departments. Some of them were outsourced, some internal and some both, the questions asked were about their certain choices and experiences in their own departments.

The second set of interviews was for the housekeeping employees by using also a semi-structured interview which was conducted online and was about their opinions and feelings about being internal and then being outsourced. It is important as very rarely the opinions of the employees are taken into account when such big changes are taking place. The feelings before, during and after the process were needed to be documented so that future hotels can use the information as a guide on what to do and what not to do when thinking about outsourcing or bringing back housekeeping. The interview questions for the employees included some usual background information such as gender, nationality, have they worked in internal, outsourced or both and how long they had been working in the department. The questions afterwards focused on feeling and attitudes. The questions were:

- How do you feel about working in your present job?
- How are the working conditions in internal housekeeping?

- How are the working conditions in outsourced housekeeping?
- How is your working environment?
- Tell me about your motivation?
- Do you feel like part of a team? If not, why?
- What do you feel are the reasons for outsourcing?
- What changes (if any) are needed in housekeeping?

The participants were also encouraged to add any extra comments about working in an internal or outsourced housekeeping department.

Both sets of interview questions were written in English and Finnish so as to attract both Finnish and foreign employees. The manager interviews were conducted in both Finnish and English, depending on which one the manager was comfortable in using.

#### **1.4.2 Data analysis method**

The analysis of this data was done in two stages as the interviews were done with different types of employees. The first stage was to interview the managers of the hotels and influential people that have been a major part in the outsourcing process. The second stage was to get the point of view from the employees' perspective. Both the segments are important as by interviewing both parties the true effects of internal housekeeping versus outsourced housekeeping can be brought to light.

The analysis of the data means that the interviews will have to be transcribed. Transcription is the process of producing a valid written record of an interview (Gillham 2005, p.121). This means listening through the recordings of the interviews and writing down the answers from the managers. The analysis will mean that the reading of the results has to be done carefully and that any similarities in answers need to be noted and remarked upon. The data itself needs to be written down and documented in an appropriate way so that it is easily read and interpreted. When transcribing the interviews especially a semi-structured one it is best to use both capitals and italics: Capitals for the main questions and italics

for the prompts and probes. (Gillham 2005, p.124.) The data should be organized so that it is easily understood and that the results carefully reported. The data was organized into categories depending on frequency of word or phrase usage. For this thesis the approach of using alphabetic word lists that count the amount of times the word has been used will be beneficial and make the analysis quicker.

## **2 Hotel industry in Finland**

The hotel industry is big business all over the world and is growing all the time due to the increase of travelers. According to Visit Finland which is a registered association, in 2013 there were 20.2 million registered overnight stays in Finland of which 5.9 million were from international tourists (Visit Finland 2015). At the top of the overnight stayers were the tourists from the neighboring country Russia with over 1.6 million stays followed by Sweden with over 531,000, Germany with over 501,000, Great Britain with over 450,000 and France with over 200,000, the rest was made up of other countries many of which were from Europe and Asia. The main reason for travel was for leisure with 55% of international tourists stating the reason for their trip, followed by business trips 23% and visiting family and friends 10%. The revenue generated by these tourists in the year 2013 was 3.1 billion Euros. (Visit Finland 2015.)

In December 2014, the total number of nights spent in hotels was 1.3 million, which was 3.5 per cent less than twelve months earlier (Statistics Finland). This decrease was due to the economic problems caused by the recession, this uneasiness has not only hit Finland but the whole of Europe. Another reason for the decrease was because of political problems with the neighboring country Russia as the Russian currency the Ruble has decreased in value over the past few months. According to Investopedia the Russian ruble has fallen dramatically against the USD and EUR, inflation has increased, and its economic growth has slowed down (Mirzayev 2015); this is mostly due to the economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the European Union.

## **2.1 Hotels in South Karelia**

In the south eastern part of Finland, especially in the Imatra and Lappeenranta area there are more than 15 hotels, most of which are the normal type of family hotel. Included in the amount are also a couple of spas and one spa resort. In the hospitality industry employee turnover is generally high by comparison with other industries (Tesone & Pizam 2008, p.198). This is due to the long working hours and more importantly the rush hour stress caused by the large workload when peak season is on. According to Mullins (1992) in (Tesone, Pizam 2008, p.198) hotels and guesthouses had the highest turnover rate with 86%.

The hotels used as part of this research were all in the Imatra and Lappeenranta area. The reason to choose the hotels in this area is that they all have different ways to take care of their housekeeping departments. The hotels in question are Holiday Club Saimaa, Imatra Spa and Hotel Lappee.

### **Holiday Club Saimaa**

Holiday Club Saimaa opened in November 2011 and is the largest spa resort in northern Europe. Holiday Club Resorts Oy is owned by the management of the company, Varma, Finnish Industry Investment Ltd, Fennia Group, Ilmarinen and a group of private investors (Holiday Club Resorts). Holiday Club Saimaa started with an internal housekeeping department but then outsourced their housekeeping department to the professional cleaning company in December 2012, before that they had an internal department for a little over a year. As this is a relatively young spa resort it is interesting to find out why they made the decision so early on in the hotel's life to outsource their housekeeping department. Holiday Club Saimaa has 221 hotel rooms and numerous holiday homes and villa apartments.

### **Imatra Spa (Imatra Kylpylä)**

Imatra Spa is on the shore of Lake Saimaa a stone's throw away from Holiday Club Saimaa. The Spa started its business in April 1985 and is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup>

Anniversary this year. The Spa was at first well known for its rehabilitation of war veterans but over the years they have changed from a rehabilitation place to become a full grown holiday center. Today after lots of investments and still more in the pipeline they are striving for a well balanced approach to holidays that offer lots of opportunities to relax and try new activities. (Imatra Kylpylä Juhlalehti 2015.) Imatra Spa has a little different approach to housekeeping as they spent a long time with an internal department 1985-2009 but then outsourced the hotel and public areas to a professional cleaning company but their cottages and holiday apartment cleaning is still internal. The author would like to know why they made the choice to only outsource half of their workforce and how these two separate approaches work together. The Spa has 159 hotel rooms and numerous holiday apartments which are for rent.

### **Original Sokos Hotel Lappee**

Sokos Hotel Lappee is situated in the heart of Lappeenranta, near shopping possibilities, restaurants and get-together places. Original Sokos Hotel Lappee is also only a walk away from Lappeenranta harbour. The hotel comprises of 209 rooms and is a favourite for business travelers in the area. (Original Sokos Hotel Lappee 2015.) Hotel Lappee's housekeeping department was outsourced many years ago but during the last year they have made the decision to have an internal cleaning company. It interests the author to find out what the choices for that decision were and how the change back has impacted on their housekeeping department.

## **2.2 Types of hotels**

### **2.2.1 Budget hotel**

Budget hotels are known in the world as one star hotel. They are the lowest category of hotel; they offer virtually nothing else other than a room to sleep in and some meals. These properties focus on meeting the most basic needs of guests by providing clean, comfortable, and inexpensive rooms. (Nitschke & Frye 2008, p.4.) Budget hotels usually have a small staff working for them and in some areas they

are not highly educated in the hospitality industry. The staff of small budget hotels generally consists of a property manager, several room attendants, front desk agents and sometimes a maintenance person. (Nitschke & Frye 2008, p.5.) Budget hotels have grown in popularity over the years as travelers seek to travel with smaller budgets. This has increased the number of budget hotels being opened in recent times. For some tourists the pull of the cheap hotel is more important than other amenities, such as pool, room service and 24 hour reception.

### **2.2.2 Mid-market hotels**

Mid-market hotels are typically hotels that are three star based. These hotels are priced so that everyday families can enjoy being overnight. The service is usually good and amenities such as breakfast are usually included in the price. These hotels usually offer uniformed service and have full food and beverage facilities (Nitschke & Frye 2008, p.5.) Mid-market hotels are popular with families especially ones with children as the price range and services available are affordable to them. Mid-market hotels are usually situated in prime locations in cities around the world, so that the maximum capacity of tourists can be gained. The management staff of a mid-market property usually consists of a general manager and several department managers. The executive housekeeper manages the housekeeping department, the staff of which generally outnumbers that of any other department in the hotel. (Nitschke & Frye 2008, p.5.)

### **2.2.3 Luxury hotels**

Luxury hotels are the type of hotels that offer something different. They have a better quality of rooms available with a wider range of services available. A part of luxury properties' attraction is their ability to perpetuate and exclusive image by charging high rates. (Chon & Maier 2010, p.93.) The possibility to be able to add room service and order special requirements to the room are why luxury hotels are popular with so many travelers today. Luxury hotels' housekeepers have a more challenging job when catering to high class, important guests. The housekeeping staff is generally responsible for dispensing other items not normally linked to

traditional mid-market rooms. (Nitschke & Frye 2008, p.93.) Luxury hotels are usually in a unique setting and have a five star rating.

#### **2.2.4 Resorts and Spas**

Resorts and spas are larger, almost like small towns that have all possible amenities included on the premises. They are built so that the customer can experience many things under the same roof. Resorts of today offer all-inclusive experiences that capture the imagination and fantasy of the traveler. (Chon & Maier 2010, p.90.) A spa has some kind of water element tied into the experience. This is more often in the design of a water park as so to attract all kinds of potential customers. Spas and resorts include restaurants, health training facilities, bowling alleys and beauty salons. Resorts are a little larger by comparison and offer also holiday homes and apartments in addition to the normal hotel rooms. Resorts are usually on a larger scale: more possibilities to eat out in different restaurants and more possibility of other activities. There are also shopping facilities nearby and in some of the larger resorts movie theatres and casino possibilities. Resorts and spas cater to larger amounts of people and there is the possibility to even arrange events, fairs and concerts on their grounds.

### **3 Housekeeping**

#### **3.1 Definition of housekeeping**

The definition of housekeeping according to your dictionary.com is doing basic cleaning tasks in a house, hotel or other locations, or the department of employees who manage and perform cleaning tasks. These tasks may be performed by the household members, or by other persons hired to perform these tasks. (Your Dictionary.)

When we think of the term housekeeping we tend to think of the cleaning of businesses and other large establishments but the term housekeeping has been around for many years, though in earlier days it was known by the term



homemaker. A home maker was a person mainly a woman who would take care of the home and raise the children of the family by staying at home. The woman would take care of all the family needs, cleaning, shopping, cooking and looking after the children. According to Dictionary.com the definition of homemaker has two meanings. 1. A person who manages the household of his or her own family, especially as a principal occupation. 2. A person employed to manage a household and do household chores for others, as for the sick and elderly (Dictionary.com)

After the years passed and the economic situation changed it was financially more important for women to go back to work. Their independence was a lot more important to them than taking care of the home. Instead of taking care of the home themselves they would hire housekeepers to take care of the daily running of their homes. These housekeepers would clean the house; do the shopping and also take care of the children. Housekeepers today are more found working in hotels around the world in the hospitality industry or for the rich and famous taking care of their homes.

### **3.2 Typical housekeeping day**

This description of a typical day is based on the experience from the author of the thesis, who worked as the executive housekeeper in the housekeeping department of a large resort for two years.

Today housekeeping is still used in households especially people who are rich and famous but it is now better known in hotels and resorts around the world. Housekeepers have a wide array of tasks they have to take care of in a day's work. The housekeeper is one of the most important employees in a hotel, some departments think that the housekeeping department is not worthy of even mentioning but without the housekeepers the hotel would not have anything to sell. The work that they do is variable and changes daily. Housekeepers typically work 8 hours per day and the work shift is usually from 9am to 5pm or 10am to 6pm, but in some big hotel resorts the days can be significantly longer. The work day starts with picking up their charts for the day. The charts tell them how many rooms they

will be completing that day, what floor in the hotel they will be working on and whether or not they are leaving rooms or stay over rooms. The average rooms per day changes between twenty and thirty, this number also includes stay over and leaving rooms. The charts also show how many extra beds are needed to be placed in the rooms and if the customer requires something extra to be done. This could be allergy covers or a baby cot in the room.

Once the charts have been collected and the orders for the day are understood the housekeeper moves from the office to the storage part of the department. The storage part is where all the cleaning products and carts are stored at the end of the day. The housekeeper will collect the buckets, mops, cleaning cloths, cleaning products and all the other pieces of equipment that are needed for the day. The housekeeper also has the task of putting information booklets, offers in the hotel, safety cards, notepads and pens, soaps, chocolates and drinking glasses in the rooms.

The housekeeper then goes to the floor that they have been assigned. They also need to take to the floor the linen that they will use for the day. This includes sheets, duvet covers, pillow cases, towels and bathrobes. Only when the floor has been set up for the day then the housekeeper can make a start on the rooms for the day. The check out in most hotels is usually 12:00 noon. This means that the customer has the right to stay in the room until that time. That is a great thing for the customer as they do not have to rush in the morning and can enjoy a long breakfast or sleep in late. For the housekeeper this is not a good thing as she has 7.5 hours to complete the whole list of rooms in that time. If no rooms have left the housekeeper will make a start doing the stay over rooms. This means the hotel customer is staying for more than one night. In big resorts and hotels this means that the housekeeper has to knock on the door and ask the customer if they want their bed made, trash taken out and floors wiped. If the customer does not answer the door, then the housekeeper has the right to enter the room, unless there is a do not disturb sign on the door. Once going inside then the housekeeper has to make the beds, take out the trash, wipe the handles, change the glasses and

towels, wipe the floors and update any supplies such as toilet paper, coffee, tea, sugar, water bottles and the minibar. If the stay over guest is staying for a longer period of time most hotels have a policy of changing the bed sheets every two or three days. This is to of course keep the customer happy, with fresh sheets but it is also to minimize any possible bed bug or lice infections.

Once the housekeeper has taken care of the stay overs it is then time to see if any of the leaving rooms have left. When the customer has left then the next stage is to take out of the room all the dirty and used items, such as bedding, towels and glasses. All these items need to be brought back into the room for the next customer so time is spent making the beds and adding the new items. The last part of making the room is the cleaning. This starts with the bathroom, where everything is washed and wiped clean. After that in the sleeping/living area all surfaces and handles are wiped to stop any germs spreading to new customers. The last part of the cleaning is the floor, this is done with mops and is a very important part and needs to be done well. The housekeeper then uses the TV in the room to mark that the room is ready. The information from the TV goes straight to the reception so that they know that the room is ready.

The housekeeper will continue doing the rooms on the list until they are completed for the day. Usually hotels' check in is between 2pm and 4pm so all the rooms have to be ready by those times. Sometimes the hotel can offer the customer early check in's, this means that the housekeeper has to have the customers rooms ready even earlier than normal. After the rooms are ready the housekeeper cleans away all the extra linen from the floors and puts them back into the storage cupboards. The housekeeper then empties the cleaning trolley and puts the dirty cleaning cloths to the wash. It is important for the housekeeper to stock the trolley for the next day so less time is spent the following morning preparing, this means the housekeeper can make a start working on the floors a lot quicker than normal.

### **3.3 Internal housekeeping**

Internal housekeeping is where the housekeeping department and its staff belong to the hotel and the housekeepers are part of the hotel personnel. Internal housekeeping means all the cleaning of the hotel which includes not only the housekeeping department and room cleaning but also all public areas and behind the scenes areas of the hotel. Since the housekeeping department is responsible for cleaning and maintaining so many different areas of the hotel, planning the work of the department can seem like an enormous task. (Nitschke & Frye 2008, p.71.) The main areas for cleaning are the restaurants, hallways and foyers, the spa area which includes saunas, showers, swimming pools and changing rooms. Most of this kind of cleaning is taken care of in the evenings or during the night as most of the places are in use by the customer during the day.

With internal housekeeping the hotel's areas are totally cleaned according to the hotel's orders which do not cost them any extra. A strict regime of what is cleaned on what days is drawn up and the cleaning is carried out according to the schedule. Some people state that the cleaning done by internal housekeeping is of better quality as there is not necessarily the time constraint that is experienced when having an outsourced company. Another reason is that the housekeepers themselves have more pride in their work as opposed to outsourced housekeepers. Also as everything in an outsourced housekeeping department is charged hourly to the hotel, the hotel can pick and choose on what they want to be cleaned and the frequency of the cleaning. This could bring a drop in standards as the hotel may wish to save money especially in times of recession and off peak season.

Housekeepers are the eyes and ears of the hotel as their department is the only one that goes into all the hotel rooms on a daily basis. This is important in terms of maintenance to broken objects in the rooms. These will need to be fixed immediately so the following guest can be satisfied and get the best possible experience from the hotel. The housekeeping department works closely with the

engineering and maintenance division to ensure the proper preventative maintenance procedures are carried out effectively. (Nitschke & Frye 2008, p.11.)

### **3.3.1 Effects of internal housekeeping**

Some say that Internal housekeeping is the best way to go as the housekeepers feel more pride and belonging to the hotel. This was expressed by two of the hotel managers during their interviews. Having an internal housekeeping department gives the employees a feeling of belonging. They are part of a team and feel like they are so. The team feeling brings pride and contentment in their job along with motivation. According to corporate housekeeper Beena Batra in Sisodia & Batra (2006) "Ideally, the guest rooms and floors should be handled by the individual hotel staff, executives etc. Reason being - consistent quality service, dedication, sincerity, honesty can only be achieved if the above staff have a sense of belonging towards the organisation. Here, outsourcing will not be very effective. For providing excellent detailed quality service, lot of effort has to be made towards training the room attendants continuously. Additionally, the trained staff must be retained ensuring the consistency and dedication remains focused through various methods of training and motivation". (Sisodia & Batra 2006.)

Internal housekeeping not only brings a sense of belonging, it also keeps staff in the company, which in turn lessens the staff turnover rate. This is a big benefit for the hotel as it gains highly trained members of staff who they trust as opposed to outsourced where there could be a different housekeeper every week.

### **3.3.2 Costs of internal housekeeping**

While the use of outside contractors for cleaning services appears to be increasing in the hospitality industry, the executive housekeeper should periodically assess whether replacing outside services with in-house operations can be justified as a cost control measure (Nitschke & Frye 2008, p.238). The initial investment can be costly but then again the bought machines and products are from then on known as assets.

While wages and materials are monthly expenses that can be budgeted, the equipment needed to start an in-house cleaning program is a capital expense that occurs all at once. (Nitschke & Frye 2008, p.237.) This means the cost of buying equipment to start up an internal housekeeping department can be quite high depending on the size of the hotel in question. The machinery needed will be washing machines and drying machines to wash the housekeepers' dirty cleaning cloths at the end of the day. Different kinds of cleaning materials need to be purchased including products used to disinfect and clean the rooms. Cleaning carriages, buckets, brushes and other equipment need to be bought regularly so as to replace the worn and torn old ones.

An internal hotel housekeeping department has to make changes according to the flow of guests in the hotel. During peak season the increase of employees is necessary and in off season the reduction of staff is essential. This means that contracts are very varied and it is very rare that employees these days have full contract hours due to the fluctuating nature of the business.

### **3.4 Outsourced housekeeping**

Outsourced cleaning companies in Finland have got a bad reputation amongst workers. This is because of the way that they do business; their focus is primarily on fast, effective cleaning with extremely tight timeframes. The job is physically very demanding and results in a lot of strain on the body. Housekeeping service providers tend to think more about the profit the company can make than the wellbeing of their staff. According to Quelin and Duhamel (2003) in Jones & Pizam (2008, p.197) outsourcing normally involves a transfer of assets and possible staff from the outsourcing organization to the external suppliers. This is shown in the employee turnover rates, especially in the hospitality industry when uncertain fluctuations of occupancy combined with outsourcing can lead to job losses.

When outsourcing the housekeeping department the hotel has to determine many things before even starting the process. The first of which is to find out what needs to be outsourced.

When using outsourced housekeeping the scope of the housekeeping duties is determined by both the outsourcing company and the hotel together. They draw up an agreement between each other on what part of the housekeeping is to be taken care of during the working day. Sometimes a company can have a monthly fee for the hotels and certain areas of what has been agreed on in the contract are included in that price. When some extra task is taken care of then the permission needs to be asked from the hotel representative before undertaking the task. Sometimes contracts are based on what is used, so by how many rooms are cleaned. These are billed by the amount and any extra done, let's say a hotel customer leaves a day earlier than planned the housekeeper will clean the room but a little extra will be billed for the extra room. In outsourcing everything has a price, from washing the floors to cleaning the windows as not everything is included in the agreement between the two.

Outsourcing can be very profitable business as almost everything can be cleaned by the outsourcing company. For example the basic cleaning of the bathroom which is performed every year is billed as additional costs. The same goes for washing of the windows or taking down the curtains, which are then washed somewhere else is billed by the hour. The hotels even ask for offers on certain jobs so that they also can keep a check on the costs.

#### **3.4.1 Effects of outsourced housekeeping**

When moving to an outsourced housekeeping company many sources claim that the quality of the cleaning drops as the timing to clean the rooms is too tight. This is sometimes reflected in the complaints received by the hotel from the customer. Many hotels when outsourcing housekeeping believe that it provides the hotel with a high class service from the service provider. This is not always the case as the employees that were once working for the hotel have still been transferred to the new company. What if the problem is not with the outsourced company but with the employees themselves? Only by expert training and monitoring can the outsourced service provider produce the best quality. How can expert training be upheld if the staff turnover is high? This is another question that needs to be answered, as that

when a hotel is outsourced all they feel that they are doing is training new employees in the basics of housekeeping.

According to executive housekeeper Sharma Jayshree (2006) in Sisodia & Jayshree (2006) "Experience has shown that in-house staff is always quality driven, while on contract the systems of checks and balances is a difficult proposition. The aspect of accountability and sense of responsibility amongst the contract staff is comparatively lower. Contract housekeeping is going through a definite re-thinking process in the coming times. They are also not in sync with the concept and culture of the organization and hence have a feeling of detachment towards the property". (Sisodia & Jayshree, 2006.)

Of course all this depends on the outsourced company contracted to take care of the housekeeping department. There are many these days and finding the correct one to work together with the hotel can be a challenge itself. If the right one is found then I believe that there can be a long lasting relationship between the two.

### **3.4.2 Costs of outsourced housekeeping**

The challenges for every company or hotel that are thinking of outsourcing are basically the same. The balance between costs and benefits is widely disputed as the main reason for outsourcing. From the figure 2 below you can see that the possible costs of insourcing may be too high to be able to compete with many outsourcing firms. In the hotel business the occupancy fluctuates somewhat during peak season and off peak season. This makes it difficult for the internal housekeeping department to reduce working hours without having to go through employee temporary lay-off procedures.



## Balancing outsourcing & insourcing benefits and costs

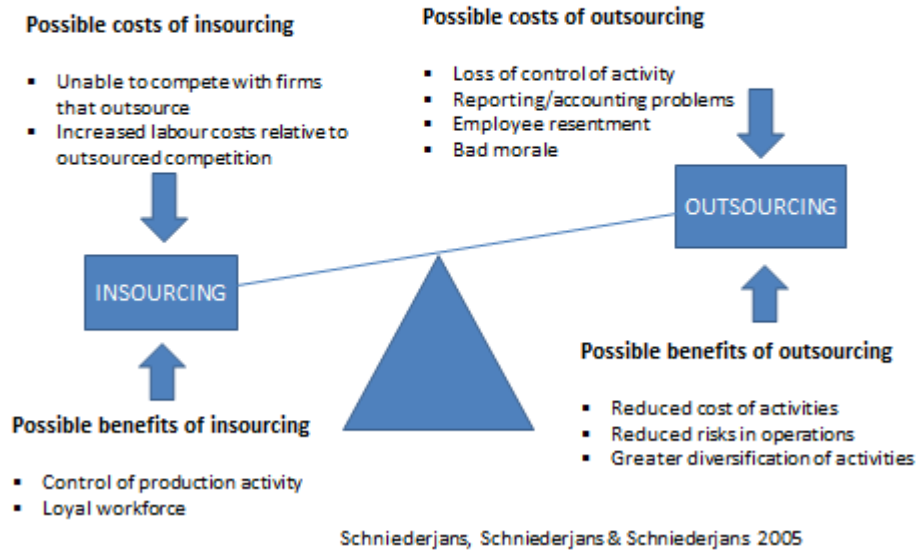


Figure 2, balancing outsourcing & insourcing benefits and costs.  
(Schniederjans, Schniederjans & Schniederjans 2005)

Outsourcing on the other hand makes it easier for staff to be moved around, especially if the outsourced service provided is situated in many different hotels in the area. If the work is reduced in all areas due to economic issues then the responsibility of lay-offs is transferred to the outside service provider, thus not involving the hotel itself, which is free to continue doing its job without the burden of lay-off procedures. Of course the costs of outsourcing for any company or hotel are measured a little differently as the cost could be measured in non-monetary form such as in loss of control, reporting or accounting problems, employee resentment and bad morale. When outsourcing takes place the staff of the housekeeping department is transferred to the take-over company, this may cause some types of upset amongst the staff and even resentment towards the previous employer as they are not primarily responsible for the staff anymore. According to Kakabadse & Kakabadse (2000) in Jones & Pizam (2008, p.197) this problem depends crucially on how well the outsourcing is planned, implemented and communicated to the employees within the organization This can all be avoided by

close communication with the staff during the outsourcing process, so that all concerns are addressed and talked through before, during and even after the transfer.

By bringing in an outside company, the way things were done before are changed and this in itself can bring problems for the hotel. The loss of control can be controlled by having a good working relationship between the hotel staff and the outsourcing company. This means the hotel will still have a say on what is done and how it is done. We must always remember that the hotel is still the paying customer of the outsourced company and has rights to say how they want their hotel cleaned.

The possible benefits of insourcing are that the workforce feel proud in their job and feel like they are a part of a team, this brings loyalty to their company and is possibly more important than any monetary costs. Of course the possible benefits of outsourcing are the reduced costs of activities that the hotel gains straight away once the outsourcing has taken place, this means salary payments to the housekeeping department will be taken over by the outsourced company. Probably one of the most important benefits is that the hotel is able to focus its expertise on doing what they do best and let the outsourced service provider focus on what they do best.

## **4 Outsourcing**

### **4.1 Definition of outsourcing**

Outsourcing by definition is the transferring of business functions or processes to other companies (Larson & Gray 2011, p.419); it can also be defined as the transfer of responsibility for performance of services that have been (or could be) performed by the organization's employees to an external service provider (Hayes & Ninemeier 2009, p.422). Almost all departments in the hospitality industry have the possibility to be outsourced. This is because the hospitality industry is large and has a variety of different occupations working in it. The most common

departments to be outsourced are housekeeping and the restaurants. This is mostly due to the fact that these departments have the most numbers of employees and cost the employer a lot financially to have.

According to Lam and Han (2005) in Jones & Pizam (2008, p.187) outsourcing is a management strategy in which a hotel utilizes and forms strategic alliances with specialized outsourcing supplier to operate certain hotel functions, in an attempt to reduce costs and risks and to improve efficiency. If we think of this definition then we assume that outsourcing is done only as a way to save money in a company. According to Chase et al. (2004) outsourcing is not only the act of moving some of the firm's internal activities but also including decision responsibilities to outside providers (Jones, Pizam, 2008, p.188). This could be interpreted that it is the opportunity for companies to hand over the running of the department to another company so that they are free to focus their attention on other departments in their hotel.

Outsourcing has many definitions but mainly the focus is on transferring the costs and responsibilities from one company to another. The service provider has expert training in the area being outsourced so in a sense the hotel trusts the service provider to run their department in the best possible way so that the hotel customer has the best possible hotel experience.

## **4.2 Types of outsourcing**

In the business world there are many different kinds of outsourcing. The following types of outsourcing are the most commonly used outsourcing methods.

### **4.2.1 Tactical outsourcing**

Tactical outsourcing is where the customer takes on the services provided for a project for a short period of time. This could be for short projects or larger cooperation agreements. According to Brown & Wilson (2005, p.21) the focus of tactical outsourcing is the contract, specifically, constructing the right contract and, subsequently, holding the vendor to the contract. Tactical outsourcing can be used

for projects not normally done in house and thereby relinquishing the task or project to a third party to get the job done.

#### **4.2.2 Strategic outsourcing**

Over time, as businesses sought greater value from outsourcing relationship, the goals of these relationships changed. Executives realized that, rather than losing control over the outsourced function, they gained broader control over all of the functions in their area of responsibility, hence, were freer to direct their attention to the core strategic aspects of their jobs (Brown and Wilson 2005, p.21). The aim of strategic outsourcing is to build long term relationships and forge business opportunities for the future.

#### **4.2.3 Transformational outsourcing**

Transformational outsourcing according to Linder (2004) is defined as partnering with another company to achieve a rapid, substantial and sustainable improvement in enterprise-level performance (MIT Sloan). But according to Brown and Wilson, (2005, p.25) outsourcing has emerged as the single most powerful tool available to executives seeking this level of business change. Those who take advantage of transformational outsourcing recognize that the real power of this tool lies in the innovations that outside specialists bring to their customers' businesses. Working together and knowing your customers and cooperation partners is an important part of transformational outsourcing.

#### **4.2.4 Offshoring**

Off shoring is a term used when companies move their business or parts of their business totally out of the country. According to Brown and Wilson (2005, p.ix) offshoring, a kind of outsourcing is the term used to distinguish projects that are being outsourced to overseas contractors. This could be by offshoring certain departments for example IT or accounts. Offshoring is the transferring of jobs from an organization in one country to an organization in another country (Hayes & Ninemeier 2009, p.422). These jobs would be done by other people in other

countries. This saves money on personnel costs as the taxation and payment of salaries in other countries can be lower in different parts of the world.

### **4.3 Reasons and motives of outsourcing**

Most people when asked about what the word outsourcing means the first reaction is about saving costs. These days the word outsourcing has become more common as more and more companies use outsourcing as a way to save costs. This combined with the term laid off or being made redundant has become one of most used terms in present times.

According to Brown & Wilson (2005, p.37) the most common reasons for outsourcing are:

- **To acquire new skills** - It may be that in some departments the skills of the employees are not enough and a certain amount of professionalism is needed to carry out the tasks involved. The services of a professional cleaning company may take over those tasks and bring a better result.
- **To acquire better management** – Of course it is not only the skills of the employees that may come into question, the manager of the housekeeping department may not be able to handle such responsibilities. The coordination of large amounts of employees and tight schedules are impossible to manage if you do not have the necessary training.
- **To focus on strategy** – The hotel in question may want to focus more of their energy on different ventures and hence by outsourcing it frees up more time for other projects.
- **To focus on core functions** – hotels usually have key core functions such as the restaurants or other money bringing departments. The hotel may want to focus their efforts towards them. Of course if the key core functions could be operated more effectively if it was outsourced, then the hotel will more than likely outsource it to achieve maximum output.
- **To avoid major investments** – with any department in a hotel expenses and investments can be high. The housekeeping department has many expenses,

especially with cleaning products, cleaning equipment that needs to be replaced regularly and larger cleaning appliances such as floor cleaning machines, mops and carriages.

- **To handle overflow situations** – in hotels there are peak season and off-peak seasons. This in reality is tough for hotels to staff their housekeeping departments. In peak season the amount of employees needed by the housekeeping department can double compared to normal off-peak season. By outsourcing the pressure is off the hotel to recruit and lay off employees.
- **To improve flexibility** – This is a good choice and is the same as the overflow situation. By changing the employee costs and outsourcing to a service provider the fixed costs change to variable costs and the bills paid will be according to the occupancy in the hotel.
- **To reduce costs** – hotels housekeeping departments have the highest costs in a hotel. This is due to the large amount of staff working in them and by outsourcing this department the costs are transferred to the service provider.

#### **4.4 Stages of outsourcing**

Before any kind of outsourcing can take place a very detailed assessment needs to be undertaken to find out answers to questions regarding the department in question. These questions will help determine the need for outsourcing and whether they are in the same line as the company's other business strategies.

The main questions that need to be asked are: How can the outsourcing help the business by reducing costs? Will outsourcing improve performance? Where will we find the potential service provider? How do we monitor an outsourced department still working on the premises? What will be the impact on the employees? Only when finding out the answers to these questions can the hotel make the decision on whether to outsource or not. Once the decision has been made then the following stages must be done in order to make the transition to an outsourced housekeeping department as easy as possible.

According to Hayes & Ninemeier (2009, p.424) the stages of outsourcing are as follows:

1. Determine exactly what is needed
2. Review resources available in-house relative to those available externally
3. Identify and evaluate potential bidders
4. Develop and issue a request for proposal
5. Evaluate proposal responses
6. Select a service provider and negotiate the contract
7. Administer the service agreement
8. Renegotiate or terminate the agreement at its expiry date.

By following these stages all areas of questions should be answered and the best possible decision on outsourcing can be made. However during these stages there are no evaluations of the feelings of the employees. The management should always keep in mind the human resources' impact and keep the employees of the hotel in the loop on all stages of the process. This of course will bring some strong feelings and questions regarding their employment to the surface but by addressing these feelings and questions as soon as they arise may help to ease the transition from old employer to the new one.

#### **4.5 Benefits of outsourcing**

##### **Personnel costs**

The benefits of outsourcing are determined by the companies using the services provided by the outsourced company. The most important benefit is that the personnel costs are removed totally from the company and are added to the costs for the outsourcing company. According to Quelin and Duhamel (2003) in Jones & Pizam (2005, p.191) increasingly, outsourcing has been employed as the top corporate-level strategy in many large companies in order to maximize their operation efficiency, and hence minimize costs. If the hotel is a large one, then there is the probability that they have a large housekeeping department. To be

able to meet the tight timeframe to have the rooms ready this means a large amount of people undertaking the tasks. A standard hotel with 500 bed places on peak season will have to employ between 25 and 30 housekeepers to get everything done on time. This is based on if all the rooms have been booked in the hotel this is called a full turnover. To employ that amount of housekeepers in Finland is quite costly as the pension and insurance costs that are added to the salary are quite high.

### **Level of expertise**

The second benefit of having an outsourced housekeeping department is the higher level of expertise brought in by the service provider. Outsourcing presents opportunities for companies to fully leverage the expertise, innovation and investments of the suppliers in the market (Jones & Pizam 2005, p.192). The company that takes over the housekeeping department has to be highly qualified and highly trained in housekeeping aspects of a hotel. This means that the employees will get expert training in the industry. The possibility for employees to gain experience and move up the ladder for promotion is high. Training is provided to all employees on how the job should be done and the employee is expected to follow the rules set in the housekeeping department. By bringing in an outside company to take over the housekeeping department, the cleaning of the hotel rooms should be completed at a faster pace. The training the employees' get is focused on precise timings of room cleaning in the hotel industry. This means that the maximum time spent cleaning a standard hotel room is between 12 and 15 minutes according to the dirtiness of the room.

If the communication between both companies is upheld and the customer is satisfied with the outcome then of course there is a possibility of having a long-term business relationship. For outsourcing to work, the individuals involved need to be effective negotiators capable of merging interests and discovering solutions to problems that contribute to the project (Larson & Gray 2011, p.431). This in turn reflects on if the hotel decides to open new ventures or expands the hotel. The first choice of course will be to the service provider they are already using. The



cooperation between the two will grow and the profitability will increase for both companies but the most important is the trust and the loyalty between them both. This for most companies is the most important aspect of doing business.

#### **4.6 Challenges of outsourcing**

##### **Communication**

The challenges for outsourcing are many as there are now two different companies working together. The risk of something going wrong is based on whether the communication between the two is good. Communication is the most important part of the cooperation between the two companies and they have to be on the same wavelength when embarking on such a significant change in the hotel. The key is to focus on the interests behind your positions (what you are trying to achieve) and separate these goals from your ego as best you can. Not only should you be driven by your interest, but you should try to identify the interests of the other party. (Larson & Gray 2011, p.433.) The outsourcing of the housekeeping department to a service provided requires extremely close coordination. This is done on a daily, hourly basis and when peak season is on, the tension between both parties is quite high. The ability to be calm in very demanding situations has to be top priority.

##### **Conflict**

Conflict is a main issue between two companies that come together. Different people have different ways to work and when they are put together into the same situations and projects, then it is common that some conflicts arise. Conflict itself is not necessarily a bad thing as sometimes it clears the air and everybody knows what they can and cannot do or say but in a close relationship the rules need to be set in order for the communication to work between the two companies. Conflict comes in many forms as the personalities of people working together can clash dramatically. Projects are prone to interpersonal conflict since the different

participants do not share the same values, priorities and culture. Trust, which is essential to project success, can be difficult to forge when interactions are limited and people come from different organizations. (Larson & Gray 2011, p.422.) People are different and some of them strive on working under pressure and others buckle under the strain. It is important for workers of both companies not to take the conflict personally and understand that high stress situations can bring out the best and worst in a person. Of course any personal conflicts should be dealt with in a swift manner so the behavior does not affect the relationship between the customer and client; in this case between the hotel and the service provider. Conflict can also be caused by misinterpretation of the conversation or by cultural differences. The hotel industry in Finland employs a large amount of foreign workers, especially in the housekeeping department. This is mainly because local workers prefer not to do cleaning work. The reasons are because the pay is so low and the workload high. At some point some service providers have had to advertise for housekeepers from outside Finland to fill the vacant positions. Where to find more housekeepers will also be a problem in the future as housekeeping is such a low paid job. The hotel industry and tourism in Finland are growing all the time so the question of how to be able to cope with the growing demand is quite a hot topic these days.

### **Cultural misunderstanding**

Cultural misunderstanding can be from both sides as the language and understanding in some aspects can be quite unclear. Complex cultural environments require fluency not only in words, but more importantly in understanding what is not said – and this takes time, patience and dedication (Mullins 2010, p.24). Language barriers between employees working in the same company can be a major challenge for everyone. How do you get a foreign worker with limited Finnish and limited English to understand everything that is being said? The company itself has to be patient and speak in a slower tone and constantly ask questions to see if the employee understands everything completely. Some of

the larger housekeeping service providers are now demanding basic Finnish for foreign workers.

### **Loss of control**

Relinquishing control of your housekeeping department to an outside service provider can also be felt as a loss of control from the hotel's point of view. There is a potential loss of control over the project. The core team depends on other organizations that they have no direct authority over (Larson & Gray 2011, p. 422). This is why communication is a very important part of the link between the hotel and service provider. Active customer involvement keeps the project team focused on the objectives of the project and reduces misunderstandings and dissatisfaction. (Larson & Gray 2001, p.439.) The hotel wants to make sure that their voice is heard on certain projects being taken care of. An issue to remember is that even though the department has been outsourced, the hotel is still the customer to the service provider and making sure the customer is satisfied with the service provided has top priority over anything else. When relinquishing control the other aspects of safety and security issues come into the equation. Depending on the nature of the project, trade and business secrets may be revealed. (Larson & Gray 2011, p.422.) The employees that were once part of the hotel employees are no longer allowed to go to certain places in the hotel. The restrictions are placed on them and this in turn makes the employees feel like they are not valued, even criminalized. A sense of distrust from their previous employer makes the employee feel undervalued and that their character has been shamed.

### **Complaints**

The overall cost of outsourcing is one of the main reasons to outsource. This is important in case of complaints from the hotel customers. We must remember that in the hotel business we are dealing with third party customers. They buy the service from the hotel and then the hotel buys the housekeeping service from the service provider. This sometimes causes delays in any complaints that come from the customers. The customer checks into their room and finds a fault that they are

not happy about. The first port of call is to inform the person working in the reception, who then informs the housekeeping supervisor, who then in turn informs the cleaner who is responsible for that floor, only then is the problem rectified. This also is reliant on the reception informing the supervisor. If reception is quite busy then the call to the supervisor may be delayed, causing a delay to the customer having their fault fixed.

Service providers too often either blame customers for the mistakes they complain about or make them prove their positions. In many cases, they take so long to respond that customers forget what they complained about when they finally hear back from organizations. (Barlow & Moller 2008, p.2.) Sometimes the hotel customers do not inform until they are leaving the hotel. This is done via email and the chain again is long with the email being read in the sales office and then the email being sent to the housekeeping manager and then the housekeeping manager has to find out all the details of who cleaned the room, when and what was the problem. This causes delays in returning the correct information back to the customer, who in turn relays the information to the hotel customer. The system is long and drawn out and could leave a bad taste for the customer.

## **5 Internal versus outsourced housekeeping**

### **5.1 Outsourced but decided to go back to internal**

Some hotels after many years of being with an outsourced company decide to go back to having an internal one. The reasons for this could be high costs or bad quality of cleaning. One reason could be also that they just want to give it a go and try for themselves what it is like. For some hotels they may have started off as being internal and then decided to try the outsourcing but then again go back to being internal. The reasons behind these choices are hotel specific and need to be examined more closely. Hotel Lappee has recently taken back internal housekeepers after many years of being outsourced. The reason behind this choice will be recorded in this thesis.

## 5.2 Motivation of employees

In the hospitality industry there are many employees and in a hotel there are many departments. The housekeeping department is usually one of the largest departments with the largest number of employees. When any changes happen in a hotel of course the changes affect the personnel of the hotel in question. Whether the changes are positive or negative the outcome of the changes affect the motivation of employees. Motivation is defined by Mitchell as the degree to which an individual wants and chooses to engage in certain specified behaviours. (Mullins 2010, p.253.) According to the chartered management institute “motivation is the creation of stimuli, incentives, and working environments that enable people to perform to the best of their ability” (Mullins 2010, p.253). This interpretation can be understood that if working environment, incentives and stimuli are not in the right amount, then the employee will struggle to find the right motivation to perform the tasks given to them.

Motivation is something that cannot be given to another person; it has to come from the person themselves. It is not gift wrapped in a package and given in the morning, afternoon or evening when the employees work shift starts. It is something that the employee has to feel when undertaking the tasks given to them. Social relationships would appear to be an important feature for many people, especially, for example, for those working in the hospitality industry where interactions with other people and the importance of supportive working relationships and good teamwork can be strong motivators at work. (Mullins 2010, p.255.) How can this motivate if the turnover of staff is high?

Of course the employer can help boost the motivation of the employees by offering chances to forward their career. This means by training the employees to high standards and giving them the opportunity to learn new things. If the employee is doing the same job day in and day out, then the chance of lack of motivation becomes higher and higher as the days pass. Another way for the employers to increase motivation is by making their employees feel like they are a valued part of the work community. This means making sure that employees are addressed and

asked basic questions about how their day went. The opportunity for employees to have some kind of input on how to improve the way that they work is important to keep motivation high.

Where there is little pleasure in the work itself or the job offers little opportunity for career advancement, personal challenge or growth, many people may appear to be motivated by primarily, if not exclusively, by money (Mullins 2010, p.256). One question that comes to mind is that how can people be motivated by money in the hospitality industry? We are talking about one of the lowest paid jobs with one of the highest stress levels, especially if working in the housekeeping department. Private cleaning companies and working agreements have driven down the hourly rates paid to housekeepers with the average hourly rate being between 8 and 10 euros/hour.

### **5.3 Two classes of employees under the same roof**

When the outsourcing has taken place and the new company has started its operations in the hotel, the shift then moves to the relationship between old and new co-workers. When once they were colleagues and friends, now they are working for another company but still situated in the same building. The tensions and feelings can be raised when the reality sets in that they no longer work for the hotel but are working for another company in the hotel. Unsurprisingly, outsourced employment has been generally characterized as precarious and contract workers are widely seen and see themselves as a second-class labour force (Barry & Wilkinson 2011, p.144). During the outsourcing stages it is important for the hotel to explain to the employees the reasons behind the outsourcing and to encourage the workers to be positive about the change. Of course not all people have the ability to accept change and rebellion sometimes comes into play. In these kinds of situations it is important the outsourced company takes the employees in question into discussions to talk about their feelings towards their company and the outsourcing.

After the outsourcing has taken place there is a real danger of the service provider's employees becoming second class as opposed to the other workers who are still in the employment of the hotel. The hotel itself has an important role to play even after the change. Quite often the hotel will become the target for disgruntled employees that are not happy about the decision to outsource them. The hotel has to keep the calm on both sides as these two groups of people will have to work together and form long-term working relationships.

#### **5.4 Shift in attitudes**

Outsourcing has over the years has grown in popularity amongst businesses, more so the hospitality business. Hospitality offers a unique opportunity for outsourcing as there are many departments included in hospitality.

Outsourcing is an agreement between the client and the external service provider to take a long-term responsibility for the carrying out of the customer's processes and development (Ekström & Lumijärvi 2007, p.195).

Most commonly the housekeeping departments are outsourced as the department has the most numbers of employees working in them. However, during the interviews with the hotel managers it came to light that the satisfaction with the outsourced companies was at an all-time low. This was mainly because of the communication between the two and the quality of the work provided by the service provider. Due to this lack of communication and quality, one of the hotels had already taken back internal housekeeping and one of the others had sent out for quotes from other service providers as well as investigating whether or not it would be beneficial to take back into use their own housekeeping staff.

## **6 Interview results**

### **6.1 Management results**

The management interviews were held using the semi-structured interview approach. This gave the freedom to probe a little bit deeper into the questions and

ask further questions to get a greater understanding of the choices made during the outsourcing process. In total one CEO, one resort manager, one housekeeping manager and one housekeeping supervisor were interviewed. The interviews were recorded and the results transcribed into text.

The analysis of the texts was done by reading carefully through the interviews and similarities with the answers marked. The sentences, phrases and words were placed into categories that reflected their points. The four categories were quality, benefits, challenges and costs as these were the issues that were most spoken about during the interviews.

It was noted during the interviews that the decision for outsourcing is made by the managers, operative management or investors of the hotels in question. During the interviews the word “quality” dominated the conversation and plays a very important role in the hotel. Other departments may think that housekeepers do not do much but in honesty they make the rooms that the hotel sells, so in part they have the most important role in the hotel industry.

***“Cleaning has become one of the most important parts in the service industry.”***

## **Quality**

This is important in all parts of customer service as you would feel cheated if you had paid for a meal that you did not enjoy. The same applies to customers of the hotel and more so between the hotel and the service provider. If you are paying for a service, you expect that you get that service. There have been some issues with quality in the hospitality industry, not only from outsourced but also internal housekeeping departments. Internal housekeeping quality issues are because of the lack of skills and leadership from the managers and leaders in question. All of the interviewees said that one of the reasons for outsourcing was to bring a sense of professionalism into the mix.

***“If the quality is not good, then paying the bill is unpleasant.”***



***“We are not housekeepers and we do not know anything about housekeeping, this gives us the opportunity to focus on what we do best.”***

For a hotel to succeed as a business they have to think about strategically what is the best thing for the company; and if this means outsourcing, then the decision has to be made to choose the most professional service provider.

***“Housekeepers promote the business, it is a calling card.”***

Outsourced also had problems with the quality of their work, this is caused by the lack of pride from the workers as they no longer are “a part” of the hotel. Some see this affecting the motivation of the staff as they feel like second class workers in regards to the rest of the hotel staff. To be able to make this negative situation better there needs to be more cooperation between the two companies and they need to engage in motivation building activities so that the entire staff working in the hotel feel like they are one team. This would boost morale and motivation and ultimately in the end have a reverse effect on the quality of the rooms.

***“Customers should feel like there is one staff.”***

Close cooperation is required from both parties to make sure that the housekeepers and the rest of the hotel staff work closely together and the bridge between them is brought closer together. This will give the customer the feeling of one team, even though they are actually coming from two organizations.

Quality related problems are linked to the frequency of staff turnover. Service providers are known for using foreign and local students for housekeeping. This is a great idea as the hotel industry is growing at an alarming rate. The problem lies with the fact they do not become permanent workers. Some work for one summer, some three months while the Universities are closed. When the company takes on a new housekeeper they spend 3-4 weeks training them in the operations of the house. Once the housekeeper is trained they work a couple of months and then the contract ends as their studies have to continue. This is wasting the time of the company as it seems like there is a constant training going on and no one

becomes a professional. The quality suffers this way as it costs a lot to invest time and training of a new employee. One of the interviewees said that:

***“One of the main reasons for going back to internal housekeeping was to stop the intensity of staff turnover. The hotel was not satisfied with having different housekeepers every week. Now the staff turnover has reduced dramatically and the hotel and the housekeepers work as a team on a first name basis as everyone knows each other.”***

Quality should never be compared to quantity; internal housekeeping is more focused on quality whereas outsourced is more focused on the quality and quantity of the rooms. One problem with quantity is that the quality of the rooms suffers as the day goes on. The housekeepers are not high class athletes competing in a high class gold medal race and they should not be expected to run through the rooms with the objective being to complete a certain amount of rooms in a short timeframe. Quality and quantity do not go hand in hand, if you want better quality then the housekeeper has got to be given time to do the job to the best of their abilities so that ultimately the customer is happy with the cleanliness of their room. Mistakes are made when people are forced to rush their work, it does not matter which profession you are. This does not mean that the housekeeper can sit down have a break and take all the time in the world to complete their jobs. This means that the housekeeper should be given the opportunity to decide how to complete the room in the best possible time by themselves. They should be given more freedom to decide on how best to go about their job. They are professionals in their chosen field and should not be reading from an instruction booklet on what to do and how long it should take to do it.

***“Housekeepers should have the power to decide for themselves what needs to be done to clean the hotel room.”***

Quality will always be an issue in the hospitality industry as the housekeepers are not machines and people do make mistakes, but they have to do their best to minimize those mistakes and take full responsibility when some quality issues

arise. By minimizing the staff turnover and by raising morale maybe the housekeepers will be more interested in doing a better job and leaving a much better calling card.

## **Benefits**

There are many benefits to having both internal and outsourced housekeeping. In internal housekeeping, as mentioned before, the hotel benefits from the team, one team that takes pride in their work as they feel part of a team.

***“Much more togetherness, staff takes care of the property.”***

This is also possible with outsourced housekeeping but this means a big commitment on both sides to make it work.

## **Benefits**

<b>Internal housekeeping</b>	<b>Outsourced housekeeping</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work satisfaction is better amongst staff</li><li>• Employee turnover is reduced</li><li>• Work pride</li><li>• Same rules for all staff</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No need to worry about recruitment, sick holidays or lay-offs.</li><li>• Professionalism in different situations of cleaning is important.</li><li>• Hotel can focus on its job and what it does best</li></ul>

Table 1. Benefits

The benefits of outsourced housekeeping focus more on the professional side instead of the motivational side of business. Outsourced housekeeping is good for a hotel as the occupancy fluctuates often during peak and off-peak season. This makes the hiring of staff from the hotel’s point of view challenging. By outsourcing

the department the hotel no longer has to worry about that problem. The outsourced service provider then has the responsibility to make sure that the hotel rooms are ready and that there is enough staff making those rooms. If there are any cleaning related problems, ones that you do not see on a daily basis for example the bathroom has some kind of problem such as mold or moisture damage. This means that the outsourced service provider is better equipped to deal with those problems. They have the professionalism and skills to find the solution and fix the problem for the hotel.

A hotel is a hotel, not a cleaning company, as one of the managers said “ ***this gives them the opportunity to focus on what they do best and sell rooms.***” This is probably the most important aspect for outsourcing.

### **Challenges**

The challenges of both internal and outsourced are many that are linked to the staff and how they are taken care of. The challenges for internal housekeeping are how to keep the staff costs down. If the staff costs rise, then the hotel may choose to outsource to save money. One of the managers interviewed said that “***staff costs cannot be more than 10% of total monthly turnover***”.

So keeping the costs to an acceptable level can be a challenge for internal housekeeping, especially when sick holiday payments need to be paid if workers are ill. Another challenge has to be managing the work force; housekeepers make up a large part of the hotel’s staff and are usually the largest group of employees in the hotel. This may mean that in some cases the workforce doubles in a short period of time. This can be difficult for the human resources departments as the workload increases due to the influx of employees. As the hotel grows then the workforce must grow too. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the quality has to improve and stay at an acceptable level. This puts pressure on workers to keep it at the level it should be. Too many slips in the quality or bad feedback from customers could be a setback for the hotels in question.

In outsourced housekeeping the challenges are more related to the cooperation between the hotel and the service provider. This is reflected in many answers during the interviews:

***“Key persons, reception staff and managers must work together and trust each other.”***

***“Trust, don’t need to think have I been billed correctly.”***

Trust is needed when reporting or billing, this needs to be done without the hotel feeling they have been cheated. Outsourced housekeeping needs to learn the best way to motivate their employees. It cannot only be about money as money is not only a sole motivator for workers, although it is high on their list. More activities with their own teams combined with activities that involve the whole hotel need to be organized so that it brings the feeling of teamwork. Staff turnover will reduce also if outsourced housekeeping used more permanent workers. In today’s hospitality industry the occupancy is uncertain and this is reflected in the hiring of staff. If the situation was more stable it would give the outsourced companies a better chance to foresee and predict employment issues.

## Challenges

Internal housekeeping	Outsourced housekeeping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping costs down</li> <li>• Managing one’s own workforce</li> <li>• staff turnover</li> <li>• Understanding amongst workers</li> <li>• Quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key persons must work together</li> <li>• Lack of motivation from employee</li> <li>• Trust in reporting issues</li> <li>• Staff turnover, not only housekeepers but also management</li> <li>• Keeping quality high</li> <li>• Costs</li> </ul>

Table 2. Challenges

## Costs

***“Money is a part of it, but not the main reason. Has to be more than just personnel costs.”***

This research found out that the costs of internal housekeeping versus outsourced housekeeping are not that different. The cost is more about how you take care of the staff and the quality of the hotel. ***One of the managers interviewed said that “in comparison to internal housekeeping, when all personnel costs are calculated, outsourced housekeeping hasn’t been much more expensive, but then again they haven’t saved anything”.*** This means the costs are likely to be same in both internal and outsourced housekeeping.

This brings into play the research question of why hotels choose to outsource their housekeeping departments. The fact is that most people, including the employees of the housekeeping departments think that it is purely for monetary gain and profit. This thesis has shown that that it is not the case and that there are more factors involved when making the decision.

### 6.2 Employee housekeeper results

The employee interviews were held with a semi-structured interview that was sent via social media to housekeepers working in the hotels in question. 16 replies were sent back in the timeframe given. The data collected included background information of the housekeepers working in the hotels, plus questions about their feelings and opinions about working in a housekeeping department both internal and outsourced. The background information was analyzed by using normal mathematics and is shown in the following graphs.

As we can see from below (figure 3) 75% of male housekeepers answered the questionnaire the most compared to 25% of female. This is a shift in attitudes as there is no longer a feeling that housekeeping is purely a woman’s job. The job itself is more physical, with lots of lifting and carrying. This requires a high amount of strength and stamina so suits quite well also to the male population. The highest

number of responses was from the male workers in housekeeping. This means that women were either unwilling to answer or are satisfied in their chosen career.

### Gender

■ Male ■ Female

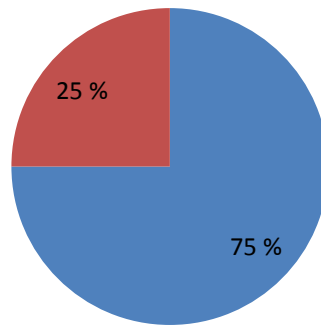


Figure 3, gender distribution

As figure 4 below shows, the popularity of outsourcing has grown as the housekeepers in this survey have been a maximum of four years working in a hotel and 50% of them have already worked in both internal and outsourced housekeeping departments. This shows that outsourcing is common in the housekeeping departments in hospitality.

### Have you been working in internal housekeeping, outsourced or both?

■ Internal ■ Outsourced ■ Both

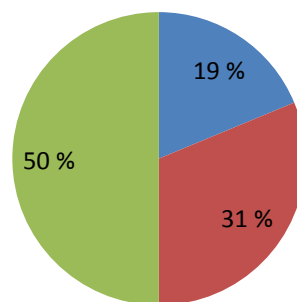


Figure 4. Have you been working in internal housekeeping, outsourced or both?

The staff turnover in the hospitality industry is high, more so in the housekeeping department due to the difficult physical working conditions. This is seen in the results that out of the 16 interview questionnaires that were sent back four of the persons are no longer working in the housekeeping department and only three have been there for 4 years. Of course we must bear in mind that Holiday Club Saimaa is a relatively young resort and only opened its doors in 2011.

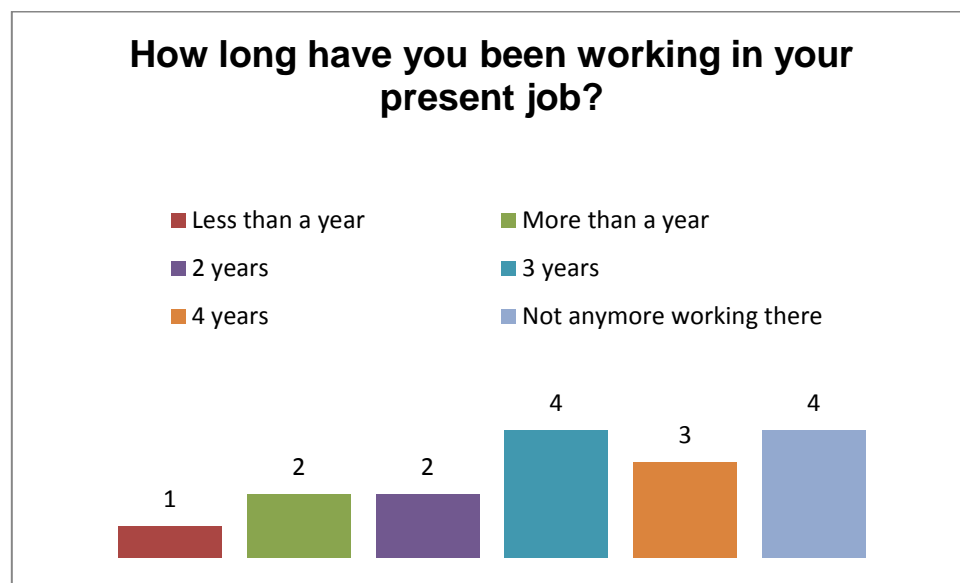


Figure 5. How long have you been working in your present job?

The feedback from the question “How do you feel about working in your present job?” (figure 6) brought a mixed reaction of feelings from the housekeepers. The feedback was both positive and negative and some of the comments focused on the working conditions in the housekeeping department:

***“Feels like cleaning is a secondary thing.”***

***“It’s ok except for some crazy days.”***

The most popular feelings were about the stress and pressure in the job and how physical the act of housekeeping is. Housekeeping is demanding as the time frame



to get the job done is quite tight, most housekeepers felt that this was the hardest part of their job. They joked about not needing to spend money on gym memberships; this is the tough side of the job.

***“The stress during the rush hours is quite high.”***

***“Lots of pressure and stress.”***

***“I love my colleagues but the work is very hard.”***

It is nice to see that some of the respondents still feel happy in their work and remember that the customer and the customer service are always the priority: The housekeepers are in direct contact with the customers on a daily basis as they not only take care of leaving rooms but stay over ones too.

***“Joy of seeing the customers happy during their stay.”***

The customers are the single most important reason of why we need housekeepers and it is important that all housekeepers learn that the customer comes first.

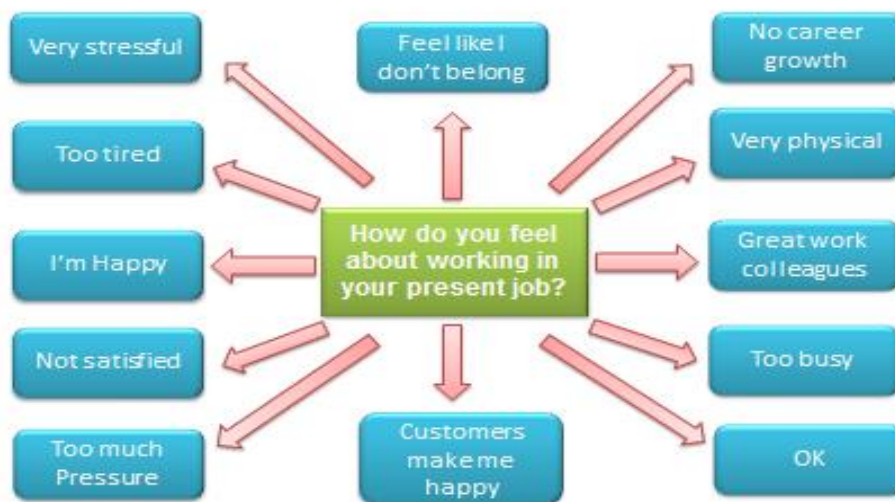


Figure 6. How do you feel working in your present job?

The results from the question “How are the working conditions in internal housekeeping?” (figure 7) brought to light that the housekeepers themselves felt like they were part of a team and of the hotel in question.

***“There was a lot of cooperation among the workers.”***

***“The company was taking care of work and workers.”***

These phrases came up a lot when talking about internal housekeeping. The team aspect brings the feeling of belonging and the job is done with pride.



Figure 7. How are the working conditions in internal housekeeping?

In comparison in figure 8 below the results came from the question “How are the working conditions in outsourced housekeeping?” the results are like night and day. Most of the housekeepers again mentioned the pressure and stress in the job and the fact that teamwork is greatly reduced and that they have their own work responsibility. Some of the comments were:

***“Quantity not quality.”***

***“Too much pressure to gain the profit, no matter the quality of work.”***

This is mainly because of the tight time frame and the amount of rooms the housekeeper has to do during the day. They feel that they are not given the time to do a good job. This then reflects back on them that they have not done a good job. The benefit of having an outsourced department is the professionalism of the outsourced service provider. This is reflected in the cleaning equipment and the training given at the start of the job.

***“Is more organized as professionals are in management.”***



Figure 8. How are the working conditions in outsourced housekeeping?

In figure 9 below the working environment question was asked as so to be able to gauge an idea on current working conditions in the hotel the housekeepers were working in at the present time. The results were varied with some being satisfied and others being quite negative. The subject of supervisor discrimination was

brought up as some workers felt that certain nationalities in housekeeping were treated better than others.

***“There is no equality among the workers.”***

Of course this could be the result of cultural misunderstanding between workers and supervisors. Sometimes things said may mean one thing to the worker and mean something different to the supervisor. This is why communication and understanding are very important things in the hospitality industry.

Again, the same phrase about quality versus quantity pops up, the workers feel they are not doing their best and are sacrificing on quality in able to meet profit target of the service provider.

***“Hotel wants QUALITY cleaning and employer wants QUANTITY cleaning.”***

It is nice to see that international workers have found their place in the hospitality industry this not only enriches the industry but provides great experiences on cultural diversity and understanding.

***“Lots of international workers! Friendly!”***

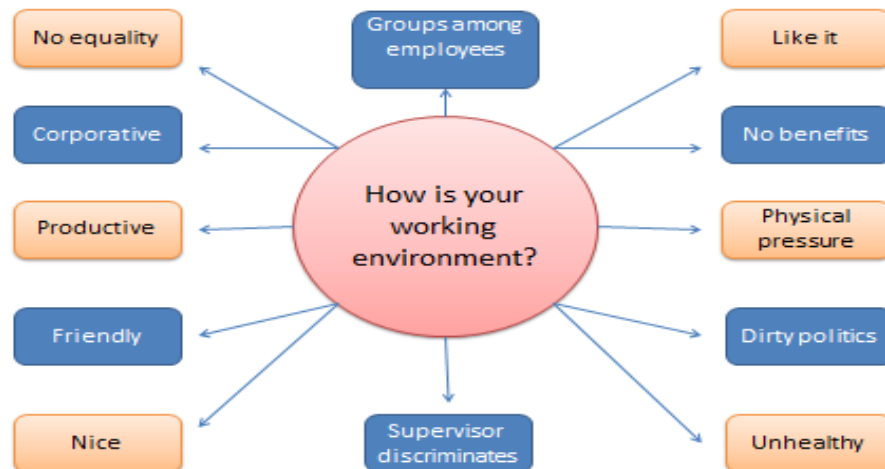


Figure 9. How is your working environment?

## Tell me about your motivation.

Positive motivation	Negative motivation
➤ Friends	➤ Too large workload
➤ Nice customers	➤ Looking for better
➤ Beautiful areas	➤ Survival needs
➤ Money	➤ Employee turnover is high
➤ Health	➤ Paid too little
➤ Personal Situations	➤ Nothing to motivate a worker
➤ Colleagues	➤ Zero
➤ Customer satisfaction	➤ Decreasing everyday
➤ Improve oneself	

Table 3. Motivation

Motivation and being motivated are difficult in any profession these days. The downward economic spiral that has been the last few years and the constant threat of companies going bankrupt and closing seems to be in the news daily. This also makes it hard for employees to get motivated, especially housekeepers (table 3). The job they do is one that not everybody can do, so to be able to do it with a smile on their faces in the company of customers take an exceptional worker.

***“Customer satisfaction, friendly relation with colleague.”***

It was nice to see from the results that most workers get their motivation from other workers in housekeeping; this means that some sort of team bonding is taking place. Money as for most of us was one important part of the motivational factor, we need it to survive and spend. Of course the motivation question brought up a lot of negative feelings towards the hotel and service providers. The housekeepers felt that they have no motivation.

***“There is nothing to motivate a worker.”***

***“If I score motivation there its just 0 out of 100.”***

Is this the fault of the service provider and the way they handle things internally in their own company or is this the feeling of the employee even outside of the job. Motivation comes from inside, of course certain factors can help improve motivation inside and outside but in my opinion the issue of motivation needs to be addressed in all its forms. One problem could be also the fact that the possibility to progress up the career ladder is quite low in this industry. Some of the respondents mentioned that:

***“No possibility of growth.”***

***“No opportunity to advance in the career.”***

This is one of the most important aspects of a job, if you do well why cannot you advance up the career ladder? Some workers feel that they are limited in their career and the same repetitive jobs day in day out makes their motivation drop.



Figure 10. Do you feel like part of a team?

Being part of a team these days is important as the sense of belonging is nowadays an important part of training in the hospitality industry (figure 10). The term “one for all and all for one” means that in times of struggle or peak season the teams must come together and work together to give the customer the best possible experience.

Again the results were mixed with some feeling like they are part of a team, even a family, with others feeling like they have no help and that it is a dictatorship instead of democracy.

## What do you feel are the reasons for outsourcing?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Cut back on responsibility</li> <li>➤ Easier to blame other than blame oneself</li> <li>➤ More professional</li> <li>➤ Hotel wants to cut costs</li> <li>➤ Make money</li> <li>➤ Don't care about worker</li> <li>➤ Reduce paperwork</li> <li>➤ Risk level is reduced</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hotel doesn't want to handle everything</li> <li>➤ Not good idea</li> <li>➤ Separate housekeeping</li> <li>➤ Save money</li> <li>➤ Don't want permanent employees</li> <li>➤ Profit</li> <li>➤ Don't know</li> <li>➤ No need to buy equipment</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

Table 4. What do you feel are the reasons for outsourcing?

The overall consensus from the employees' point of view about the reasons for outsourcing were quite negative and the blame was pointed at the hotel in question for not wanting to take care of their employees and that they thought that it is easier to blame others than take the blame for oneself, meaning that once outsourced and something is wrong it is easier to put the blame on the outsourced company than it being a problem for the hotel (table 4).

***“Saving money- not taking the risk and burden of human resource management.”***

Others mentioned that it is for the benefit of the hotel that they outsource the department; this improves professionalism and cuts back on cost for the hotel.

***“Specialization and cost-effectiveness.”***

***“Outsourced are more professional on managing housekeeping than hotel.”***

The fact is that the reasons for outsourcing can be many. It can be purely for cost or it can be that the hotel itself just does not have the skills to run a professional housekeeping department. Whatever the reason I am sure that the hotel goes through all options before making the decision to outsource or keep internal.



Figure 11. What changes (if any) are needed in housekeeping?

The changes needed in housekeeping are represented by the colours (figure 11). The answers are placed by the number of times the words or phrases were used



with the red one at the top being the most used to the blue at the bottom with least used. The housekeepers stressed that equal distribution of work and amounts of work should be top priority when starting the working day. This is followed by the fact that the housekeepers feel that they have too much work per person. This is emotionally bad for the motivation of the workers and should be changed as soon as possible. As we can see from the picture that the results all focus on the same problems mentioned earlier in the interviews; *“lack of workers”, “respect the workers” “end to treatment of workers as disposable assets”*.

Figure 12 represents the number of times the words popped up during the total interview times. The larger the word the more times it was mentioned during all the stages of the interviews. The most important ones were pressure, stress and quality compared to the least important ones workload and better services.



Figure 12. Most popular words during interviews

## **7 Summary and discussions**

The aim of this thesis was to find out the answers to the three research questions set out in chapter 1. The research questions were focused on the topic of the differences between having an internal housekeeping department and an outsourced one. The research questions focused on why hotels outsource or keep internal housekeeping departments and what kind of effects there are to having either internal or outsourced housekeeping. This thesis focused on three hotels in the area and all of the hotels had a different approach to how they had their housekeeping departments. The hotels in question had either internal, outsourced or both housekeeping departments. In order to understand the effects outsourcing had on the housekeepers of the hotels two subquestions were formed to find out the working conditions inside the hotels. This would bring not only the managers point of view but also the housekeepers'. The sub questions were about the working environment before and after the outsourcing process and if the attitudes changed towards the housekeepers once they had been outsourced.

The results of the thesis were not what the author expected. The interviews brought to light other issues about the reasons for outsourcing. It is a common belief that outsourcing is done to improve the financial situation of the company or to reduce costs. This research found out that that is not the main reason for outsourcing. The main reason is more to do with having a more professional approach to the housekeeping department. Outsourced service providers have more skills in cleaning and are able to bring a different level of workmanship to the hotel. The hotel is then able to focus their efforts on doing their job well. They no longer have to worry about the housekeeping department or its staff.

In a twist during the research one hotel manager interviewed mentioned that they are considering taking back an internal housekeeping department. This was a shock as the hotel has had outsourced housekeeping for many years. The reasons for this were the quality of the service and the communication and cooperation between the two companies. This also shows that money, cost and profit are not the only reasons to outsource. More important to companies are the other

influences such as trust, relationship, quality and communication. Without any of these the working environment will not be a healthy, productive one.

Both internal and outsourced housekeeping have many challenges, the hardest ones are about staff motivation. It seems that internal housekeeping makes the staff feel like they belong to the company and have a sense of pride which is reflected in their work. Work satisfaction is better and the pride in the job that they do is high compared to an outsourced housekeeping department where there is no motivation, satisfaction or pride. This is reflected in the staff turnover levels in the hotel and the quality of the cleaning in the rooms. Outsourced housekeeping is based on quantity not quality whereas internal is more quality not quantity.

The quality of the cleaning in the hotel rooms is what brings good reviews back from the customers, this brings new bookings. If the quality is not high, then the hotel will suffer the consequences with loss of booking and bad reviews. One of the main reasons that internal housekeeping is brought back into the hotel is to see if the quality can be better.

Hotels face a difficult question to answer when they think about outsourcing their housekeeping department. Is it worth risking employee de-motivation which eventually shows in the quality of their work or do they stick it out and try to build a great team that enjoy coming to work . Of course if outsourced companies took better care of their employees then it would be a win-win situation for both. Salaries need to be competitive and all should be paid the same regardless of which area of the hotel they work in. An improvement is needed to the working conditions; employees are not disposable assets that are thrown away when there is no more use for them.

One of the hotel managers interviewed said that ***“by taking care of the housekeepers they save money on sick holiday costs and rehabilitation of injuries”***. This has to be the way forward whether internal or outsourced; the workers have to have better working conditions so that they feel that at the end of the day they have performed to the best of their abilities without feeling exhausted

and sad about their day. Better resources in handling the outsourcing procedure and better communication internally to make sure that all housekeepers are informed of what is happening.

This thesis opened the author's eyes to the working conditions of the housekeepers and still they go back day after day and complete the jobs given to them, even with a smile on their faces. They are dedicated in the job that they do and are great ambassadors for their hotel. They know almost everything about the hotel, what events are going on and where and what time there are happenings in the hotel, they know where the rooms are and every nook and cranny of the complex. They shine in customer service situations and show guests where they need to go or help them with their luggage. They clean up some of the nastiest things in life and do it with such a professional manner. They need to be shown more respect for the job they do, I take my hat off to them.

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## Appendix



**Dear Housekeeper,**

I am a third year student of Hospitality management in Saimaa University of Applied Sciences. I am conducting my thesis as a student survey in USAS. The USAS is sponsoring my research. The purpose of the research is to find out the opinions from students about the working conditions and feelings when working in a housekeeping department of a hotel. The interview is based on questions about the differences in working in an outsourced housekeeping department and an internal housekeeping department.

The results of my thesis will be published in Theseus in May 2015.

The interviews are totally confidential and are anonymous. The interview should take about 15 minutes.

Please return the filled interview to me via email or through social media in a private message no later than 8.4.2015. For further information about the research, please contact me by email: [janet.pesonen@student.saimia.fi](mailto:janet.pesonen@student.saimia.fi) or via social media private message. I am more than happy to answer any questions concerning the study.

Thank you for participating!

Janet Pesonen

[Janet.pesonen@student.saimia.fi](mailto:Janet.pesonen@student.saimia.fi)



Interview questions:

Could you please answer the following questions and try to use full sentences.

Male  Female

Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been working in an internal housekeeping, outsourced housekeeping or both?

Internal  Outsourced  Both

1. How long have you been working in your present job?

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2. How do you feel about working in your present job?

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3. How are the working conditions in internal housekeeping?

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4. How are the working conditions in outsourced housekeeping?

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5. How is your working environment?

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6. Tell me about your motivation?

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7. Do you feel like part of a team? If not why?

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8. What do you feel are the reasons for outsourcing?

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9. What changes (if any) are needed in housekeeping?

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10. If you would like to add any further comments about internal or outsourced housekeeping then please add here

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Your answers will be treated as anonymous and strictly confidential. Thank you for your cooperation