Front Desk
First Impressions









American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute

Leader's Guide

Front Desk First Impressions

Video Companion Leader's Guide

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Program at a Glance

Program Objectives

The objectives of the *Front Desk First Impressions* program are to:

- Prepare your Front Desk Team for correctly executing front desk procedures to ensure guest satisfaction and property profitability.
- Provide required training in a cost-effective way.
- Provide job accountability.

Overall, the program is intended to help improve the front desk operations at your property, an important part of guest satisfaction.

Program Materials

Program materials include:

- A **DVD** that presents scenarios covering eight skill areas front desk agents must master to serve guests while meeting property standards.
- A **Leader's Guide** which contains key points, discussion questions, and hands-on activities to reinforce learning and check understanding.
- A **Learner's Guide** which can be used either in a group or for self-paced use of the video and related materials. The guide contains key points and discussion questions.
- **In-Depth Sections** in the guides that cover material not in the video. These should be reviewed with employees prior to taking the Quiz.
- **Pre-shift Lesson Plans** covering specific areas of interest for ongoing training. These lessons are designed to take about 10-15 minutes to complete during pre-shift meetings.
- **Accomplishments Checklist** to measure how the training translates into on-the-job performance.

Who Should Complete the Program?

The audience for the program is all front desk staff. It is also appropriate for property and front desk leadership at all levels.

New hires should participate in the program, but it may also be used for any front desk employee whose job performance needs improvement.

How Long is the Program?

The program, including the 41-minute **DVD**, activities, and discussions, will take about 1 hour to complete.

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Preparing to Train

Familiarize Yourself with the Program

1. **Preview the DVD**

   » Preview the 41-minute **DVD**. Invite any trainers, supervisors, and/or managers who will be running the program to join you.

2. **Read the Leader's Guide**

   » Read all information in this guide thoroughly, including Key Points, Segment Questions, Segment Activities, and In-Depth Information.

Plan the Training Session

1. **Plan the Program**

   » Decide if you will show the video in a single training session or in segments as needed for refresher training.

   » Determine the points in the video where you plan to pause for discussion or to ask questions.

   » Add additional Segment Questions or Segment Activities to fit the needs of your location.

   » In this Leader's Guide, note any property-specific or brand-specific differences that apply to your property.

2. **Schedule the Training**

   » Allow adequate time to watch the video, review Key Points and In-Depth Information, discuss Segment Questions, and conduct Segment Activities.

3. **Prepare the Training Location.**

   » Set up the training location with the following equipment: DVD player, monitor, and the video (DVD).

   » Print and distribute the Learner's Guide to trainees.

   » Print copies of the Quiz for distribution at the end of the session.

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Conducting the Program

Introduce the Program

» Welcome participants to the *Front Desk First Impressions* program.

» Tell participants that correct front desk operations are a critical part of guest satisfaction. A well-run front desk is an important reason guests choose your property over others in the area.

» Tell participants that the session will take approximately 60 minutes and that it will include discussion questions, hands-on activities, a review of additional in-depth information, and property-specific information that will help them be successful in their jobs.

Option 1 - Leader Facilitated

» Watch and review the **DVD**

- ▫ Pause the video as needed for discussion.
- ▫ Review Key Points and In-Depth sections.
- ▫ Discuss Segment Questions.

» Practice Skills

- ▫ Conduct Segment Activities.
- ▫ Print and administer the **Quiz.**

Option 2 - Self-Paced

» Let the participant(s) view the **DVD**, review the information in the **Learner's Guide**, and answer the segment questions at the end of each video segment.

» Print and administer the **Quiz** after the employees view the **DVD** and review the In-Depth Information**.**

Follow Up

» Follow up with employees after training to answer questions and verify application of learned skills using the **Accomplishments Checklist** included on the **DVD**.

Ongoing Training

» Use the **Pre-shift Lesson Plans** on the disk to conduct short training sessions on specific topics.

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Note: We encourage you to adapt this program to enhance your employees' training. To achieve maximum results, supplement the program materials with property information and your own expertise.

The property information may be equipment operators' manuals, property or corporate policy and procedure documents, or specific information about the property, such as various guest services.

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Segment 1—The Pre-Shift

Preparing for your shift is an important part of your workday. Preparations you make before arriving at your property will help make your day go smoothly and help you provide exceptional guest service.

KEY POINTS

- Bathe or shower and use deodorant.
- Groom your hair.
- Wear a clean and pressed uniform with your name tag.
- Arrive on time for your pre-shift meeting. At this meeting you will be briefed on room counts, arriving guests, VIPs in residence or arriving, and special maintenance issues.
- Check the log book so that you are aware of important events and decisions that occurred during previous shifts. These could include such things as special requests from guests, or maintenance items on which you will need to follow up.
- Pick up your cash drawer and count your starting cash before leaving the manager's or disburser's office.
- Organize the front desk area so that you can perform your job efficiently.
- Make the necessary preparations for arriving guests.

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SEGMENT QUESTIONS

1. How does your appearance affect the way you are perceived by guests?

   Possible response – It shows that I take my job seriously and that I respect the guests and my co-workers.

2. Why is the pre-shift meeting important?

   Possible response – To maintain continuity of service. It assures that any guest requests or property issues are handled properly and that I know what to expect regarding check-ins, special events, etc.

SEGMENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 – Review your property's dress code with the participants.

Activity 2 – Review the front desk log book for examples of what to record and how to enter the information.

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Segment 2—The Check-In

Key points covered in this portion of the video are supplemented with additional In-Depth Information following this section of the guide.

Be friendly, pleasant, and sincere about how pleased you are that each guest has chosen your property. If there is a line at the front desk, welcome waiting guests with a nod or a smile and say, "I'll be right with you."

KEY POINTS

- Guests want a fast check-in with as little paper work as possible.
- Express check-in kiosks that bypass the front desk are available at some properties.
- Personal service provided by a front desk agent is still preferred by most guests.

Greet the Guest

- To make a good first impression, make eye contact with the guest as they approach the desk.
- Try to "read" the guest to determine the best way to interact.
- If the guest is a regular at your property, his or her preferences will be noted on the computer.
- Try to use the guest's name at least three times during check-in.

Request Payment

- Request a credit card or other form of payment and a picture ID. (Swipe the credit card immediately and return it to the guest.)
- Depending on the circumstances, this is a good time to suggest upgrades or special offers to the guest.
- Offer help with the guest's luggage if available.
- Provide directions to the guest's room using a printed map. Never say the room number aloud.

Issue Key Card or Key

- Ask the guest how many keys he or she would like.

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» Make note of any special requests the guest might have.

» If appropriate, point out the features of your property that may appeal to the guest's interest or routine.

» Ask if the guest has any questions or additional requests.

» Complete notes about the guest, highlighting anything that might require follow-up.

SEGMENT QUESTIONS

1. What check-in method do most guests prefer?
   Possible response – Personal service at the front desk.
2. When is a good time to suggest upgrades or special offers to the guest?

   Possible response – After requesting a credit card or other form of payment.
3. What is the last step in completing the check-in process?
   Possible response – Note anything that might require follow-up.

SEGMENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 – Discuss how your property's check-in process differs from the video.

Activity 2 – Divide the group into desk agents and guests and role-play a typical check-in scenario.

Activity 3 – Review the additional information about Check-In presented in the "An In-Depth Look at Check-In" section following this segment.

Activity 4 – At a training terminal, demonstrate how to check in a guest using your property's Property Management System (PMS). Allow participants to practice.

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An In-Depth Look At Check-In

KEY POINTS

» For guests with a reservation, verify:
  - The length of stay
  - The type of room desired
  - The number of people in the party
  - The room rate

» Ask the guest to verify the information on the card and sign it.

» For guests without a reservation, ask them to fill out a reservation card.

» Ask the guest's room preference.

Use of Registration Cards

» Guests with reservations:
  - Depending on local ordinances, the guest may need to sign the card to establish a legal guest relationship with the hotel.
  - Verify that the registration document is accurate.

» Walk-in guests:
  - Collect and input the data. This may be collected on a registration card.

Assigning the Room and Rate

» Select the room based on your perception of the guest's needs and room availability.
  - Room type
  - Room location
  - Room status

» Room assignment factors:
  - Assign female travelers rooms above the ground floor that do not have an adjoining room.
  - Offer business guests sharing accommodations a room with two beds.
  - Place business guests not sharing a room on the same floor and hallway.
  - Offer families connecting rooms near recreation facilities if possible.
  - Assign appropriate rooms to guests with disabilities.

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» Know all the marketing programs offered by your property including:
  - Commercial or corporate rates for frequent guests.
  - Complimentary rates (no charge) for business promotion.
  - Group rates for a predetermined number of affiliated guests.
  - Family rates for parents and children sharing the same room.
  - Day rates for less than an overnight stay.
  - Package-plan rates for guestrooms sold in a package that includes special events or activities.
  - Frequent-traveler programs.
  - VIP programs.

Establishing the Method of Payment

» Cash:
  - Make sure other departments are aware of the guest's paid-in-advance (PIA) status.
  - Secure positive identification and verify it against the registration card.

» Checks – Follow your property's procedures regarding acceptance of:
  - Personal checks
  - Payroll checks
  - Foreign bank account checks
  - Know how to handle refunds if the original transaction was paid by check.
  - Checks should be made payable to the hotel, not to "cash."
  - Know limitations on check acceptance including:
    ▫ Hours during which checks can be verified.
    ▫ Maximum amount of the check and if it can be for more than the cost of the guestroom.
    ▫ Acceptable identification.
    ▫ Undated or post-dated checks.

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- ▫ Government checks.
- ▫ Second- and third-party checks.

» Credit Cards:

- Check the expiration date.
- Make sure the name and signature match those on the registration card.
- Obtain authorization from the credit card company and document the authorization.
- Follow your property's procedures for dealing with credit problems and invalid cards.
  - ▫ Stay calm and focus on solving the problem.
  - ▫ Treat the guest with courtesy and respect – empathize.
  - ▫ Explain your property's policies in easy to understand terms.
  - ▫ If the situation becomes tense, move the guest away from other guests.
  - ▫ If the card has been stolen, follow card company and property policies.
  - ▫ Offer the phone to the guest so he or she can speak with the card company.

» Direct Billing and Master Billing:

- Follow your property's procedure for establishing these accounts.

Final Check-In Steps

» Give directions to the room and mark the room on the guest's map.

» Don't say the room number aloud – point it out to the guest.

» Indicate the location of preferred parking, preferred entrance, vending and ice machines, and other amenities.

» Review the property's security features with the guest, including:

- Operation of the key card.
- Availability of secondary lock systems.

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- The location of fire and other emergency information in the room.

» Call guests 10-15 minutes after they check in to make sure things are okay.

Fulfilling Special Requests

» Requests for specific room types could include:
  - The room location and view.
  - The bed type.
  - What amenities are desired.

» Be familiar with the property's features and special furnishings for disabled guests so that you can describe them.

Special Situations During Check-In

» Group check-in procedures:
  - Pre-register guests using the information provided at the time reservations were made.
  - Assign rooms.
  - Pre-assign room keys.

» Tracking missing reservations:
  - If rooms are available, ask the guest to fill in a registration card.
  - If you must find the reservation, do the following:
    ▫ Check spelling.
    ▫ Ask for confirmation number.
    ▫ Check under other names.
    ▫ Look under other dates/no-shows.
    ▫ Check company or group affiliation.
    ▫ Tactfully determine if the guest is at the right property – if yes, assign the guest a room unless you are sold out.

» Walking the guest to other accommodations:
  - Know alternate property options and their cost.
  - Secure rooms elsewhere in advance if "walking" is forecasted.

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- Know transportation options and your property's policies.

- Empathize with the guest:
  - Move the guest away from others if necessary.
  - Apologize.
  - Be calm and confident.
  - Reassure the guest.
  - Bring in the GM or Asst. GM if necessary.

- Take action:
  - Explain options for lodging and transportation.
  - Make lodging arrangements once the guest decides.
  - Offer the phone to the guest to inform his family or business contacts.
  - Check for guest mail and messages.
  - Notify the switchboard operator.

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Segment 3—The Unprofessional

Acting as a professional member of your property's staff begins before you arrive at the property. Personal hygiene, punctuality, observation of property rules, and a commitment to guest satisfaction are all part of a professional attitude. Following are examples of behaviors that reflect on your professionalism.

KEY POINTS

- Arrive at work on time and park in designated employee parking areas.
- Be sure you are rested, groomed, and ready for work.
- Look professional. Be sure your uniform is clean and pressed and be sure to wear your name tag.
- Use the employee entrance and don't bring items to work that could distract you such as iPods or games. Turn off your cell phone or store it in your locker depending on your property's policy.
- Remember to observe your property's rules regarding sanitary/hygienic practices. Wash your hands after using the restroom.
- Be aware of the message your body language sends. Show purpose in your actions. Don't slump or lean against the wall or counter.
- Don't take or make personal phone calls on the hotel desk phone.
- Greet each guest immediately (if possible) and make eye contact. Give the guest your complete attention. Do not leave your work area unless necessary and be sure to inform the guest why you are leaving and when you will return.
- Follow your property's policies for issuing room key cards. Be aware of any suspicious persons or activities and report them to the manager on duty.
- Respect your guests' and property's security and never say the guest's room number aloud.
- Be accurate with data entry, guest information, and messages. Strive for perfection.

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SEGMENT QUESTIONS

1. What are three key behaviors that show professionalism?
   Possible response – Appearance, Punctuality, Attitude.
2. Why is positive body language important?
   Possible response – It indicates a professional attitude and a willingness to meet guests' needs.

SEGMENT ACTIVITY

Activity 1 – Have the group brainstorm a list of behaviors other than those noted in the video that could be considered unprofessional in the work environment.

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Segment 4—The Upsell

The ability to sell and to increase your property's bottom line is an important skill, particularly in today's economy. But first, you must know what you are selling. Learn what your property has to offer and be aware of chances to suggest upgrades that will enhance your guests' stay and increase the profitability of your property.

KEY POINTS

» You must know your property and what it has to offer to effectively sell its features and services. These may include:

- Upgraded accommodations
- Pay-per-view in-room movies
- Room service
- Internet service
- Spa facilities
- Rollaway beds
- Extra linens
- In-room safe
- Mini-bar
- Internet/e-mail connectivity
- Copy or fax machines
- Guest computers
- Secretarial services
- Laundry and dry-cleaner services
- Transportation services
- Exercise facilities
- Food and entertainment facilities

» Be aware of the guest's needs and look for opportunities for suggestive selling.

» Suggest but don't push. Listen carefully to any concerns. Plant the idea and let it grow.

» Know when to stop selling.

» Promote the local community:

- Attractions, including museums, parks, and historical sites
- Cultural and sporting events
- Theaters, festivals, and local teams
- Restaurants and lounges

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SEGMENT QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think some guests might be interested in more expensive accommodations?
   Possible response – For convenience, comfort, or the view.
2. When should you stop selling?
   Possible response – When you have suggested the service or upgrade and asked for the sale.

SEGMENT ACTIVITY

Activity 1 – Let employees role-play scenarios where sales skills are used to help match guests with appropriate accommodations. Remind participants to match the guest with a feature and sell the feature by explaining the benefits.

Examples:

- A couple with two restless pre-school children
- A couple on their honeymoon
- A business traveler who has a laptop

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Segment 5—The Multitasker

The front desk can be a very busy place and often a front desk agent must balance competing demands and prioritize tasks. Guests waiting to check in, maintenance issues, and phones ringing are just a few of the things competing for attention.

KEY POINTS

- When faced with competing demands, the guest in front of you comes first. Make eye contact and acknowledge the guest. It is then easier to ask him or her to be a little patient.
- If necessary, after acknowledging the guest, ask if he or she can give you a moment to take care of an item that requires your immediate attention such as a ringing phone.
- Unless it is an emergency that requires immediate action, ask the caller if you may put them on hold.
- If a guest comes up to the desk and demands immediate attention, tell the guest you will be with him or her as soon as you take care of the guest already in line.
- After asking the guest who stepped to the front of the line to wait, return to the guest you are currently serving and complete the transaction.
- Make eye contact with the other guests waiting and let them know you will be with them as soon as possible.
- If you previously put a caller on hold, return to the phone before checking in the next guest.
- Above all, stay composed and professional and take one step at a time.

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SEGMENT QUESTIONS

1. When faced with competing demands, who do you deal with first?
   Possible response – The guest in front of you.
2. What are some steps that you can take to minimize the amount of time guests will have to spend waiting in line for service?
   Possible response – Do what you can before guests arrive; work as a team (ask for assistance when necessary and help co-workers when they need your help); assist more than one guest at a time.

SEGMENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 – Discuss how to handle the following situations:

- Guests are lined up at the front desk and the phone keeps ringing; you pick up the phone and the caller asks if you can provide room rates.
- The front desk computer goes down and several guests are lined up for checkout.
- The front desk is very busy and a guest calls down from his/her room complaining that he/she is unable to retrieve his/her voice mail and must leave for a meeting in five minutes.
- You are the only person at the front desk, no one from housekeeping is on staff, and a guest calls the front desk asking for extra towels.

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Segment 6—The Team

Key points covered in this portion of the video are supplemented with additional In-Depth Information following this section of the guide.

Teamwork is an essential element of providing quality guest service. By working together with other front desk agents and those in other departments, you not only help make your guests' experience rewarding, but your workday rewarding as well.

KEY POINTS

- Keep your work area organized and clean.
- Be courteous to your co-workers; say "hello," please," and "thank you."
- Help co-workers when needed and share supplies.
- Try to resolve issues yourself, but ask for help when necessary.
- Record new entries in the front office logbook to communicate important information to other team members.
- Keep housekeeping and engineering departments informed of room status and any maintenance required.

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SEGMENT QUESTIONS

1. What can you do to keep the front desk area clean and orderly?

   Possible response – File paperwork as you work; arrange and restock supplies during down time; empty trash and recycle paper.

2. Why is it important for the front desk and housekeeping to communicate about room status?

   Possible response – Housekeeping needs to know which rooms need to be cleaned; the front desk needs to know which rooms are available.

3. Why is teamwork so important to the success of your property?

   Possible response – Everyone has different strengths and areas of expertise; providing quality guest service is a collective effort.

SEGMENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 – Have employees identify which co-worker or department should be contacted in each of the scenarios listed. Discuss how to contact each individual or department for assistance.

- The electricity for an entire floor has gone off.
- A guest requests checkout 1 hour later than normal.
- You are unable to confirm a direct billing account that a guest has requested to have charges applied to.

Activity 2 – Review the additional information about Service During the Stay and Exceeding Guest Expectations presented in the "An In-Depth Look at Service During the Stay" and "An In-Depth Look at Exceeding Guest Expectations" sections following this segment.

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An In-Depth Look at Service During the Stay

KEY POINTS

» Understand the importance of providing quality guest service:

- Understand, anticipate, and meet each guest's wants and needs.
- Help co-workers meet and exceed each guest's wants and needs.

» Provide information to guests:

- Know meeting room locations.
- Know recreation facilities, times, and costs.
- Know the local area.
- Know locations, directions and general information about:
  - Golf, outdoor events and festivals
  - Restaurants (promote on-site restaurants first, off-site second)
  - Business
  - Attractions
  - Airports
  - Places of worship
  - Theaters
  - Universities, libraries, museums
  - Government buildings
  - Banks and automated teller machines
  - Ground transportation, (including fares and hours)
  - Community recreational facilities
  - Sporting events and ticket agencies

» Giving directions:

- Describe the simplest route, even if it isn't the shortest.
- Give street names and mention any landmarks.
- Use right, left, and straight directions rather than north, south, etc.
- Describe any security concerns if guests are walking.

» Handling mail, voice mail, messages, and incoming faxes:

- Determine if guest is registered, due to check in, or checked out.
- Notify the guest promptly, following property procedures.
- If the guest is due to check in, note the mail, message, or fax on his or her reservation card, and then file it in the proper location.

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- If the guest has checked out, follow your property's procedure.

» Understanding the telephone and other communication systems:
  - Make sure the caller knows the guest's name, not just the room number.
  - Do not give out the room number.
  - Log and make wake-up calls.
  - Understand how to use devices for hearing or speech impaired guests.
  - Know how to use two-way radios and public address systems.

» Promote business services:
  - Laundry/dry-cleaning
  - E-mail capability
  - Copy machines
  - Fax (number and/charges)
  - Newspaper delivery
  - Secretarial services

» Be familiar with other guest services:
  - Dining rooms, snack bars and specialty restaurants
  - Bars, lounges, nightclubs
  - Lost and found
  - Room service
  - Vending machines
  - Mini-bar
  - Gift shops, barber shops, newsstands
  - Banquet and meeting facilities
  - Entertainment reservations
  - Local and long-distance telephone service
  - Exercise rooms, health clubs, golf courses
  - Car rentals, limousine services, and tours
  - Pay-per-view movies
  - Valet parking and parking garages
  - Transportation arrangements

» Housekeeping issues:
  - Room status
  - Guest requests:
    - Extra linens, pillows
    - Rollaway beds
    - Irons/ironing boards
    - Maintenance issues

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- Additional clothes hangers
- Special equipment for guests with impairments
- Other amenities

- Maintenance uses log book/work orders to track maintenance problems reported by guests to the front desk.
- Maintenance forwards room status when rooms are under repair.

» Other departments' issues:
- Food and beverage
- Laundry and valet
- Fitness centers
- Parking facilities
- Security
- Recycling

» Maintaining guest folios:
- Manual/semi-automated systems:
  - A guest with credit privileges charges an item or service.
  - The charge is sent to front office where the desk agent posts the charge to guest folio.
- Computerized system:
  - Charges are automatically recorded into folio.
- Special procedures:
  - Split account folios
  - Master account folios

» Safety and the guest:
- Practice safe work habits.
- Know your property's emergency procedures.

» Understand and practice security procedures:
- Key control
- Electronic locking systems
- Safes
- Surveillance and access control
- Emergency procedures
- Crime – procedures
- Guests under the influence of alcohol or other substances

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An In-Depth Look at Exceeding Guest Expectations

KEY POINTS

» Professional appearance:
- Maintain a neat, well-groomed appearance.
- Wear a proper, clean uniform with name tag.
- Wear an appropriate amount of jewelry (conform to property standards).

» Friendliness:
- Smile and greet guests enthusiastically.

» Courtesy:
- Give guests your full, uninterrupted attention.
- Treat guests respectfully.
- Use guest proper names – e.g., Mr. Smith, Ms. Reynolds.

» Empathy:
- Treat guests as individuals.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to guests' feelings.

» Responsiveness:
- Satisfy guests' needs personally.
- Coordinate efforts with others to satisfy guests' needs.
- Follow up on all requests to make sure guests are satisfied.

» Anticipate and meet guest expectations:
- Read the guest:
  - Business or leisure
  - Emotional state
- Non-verbal cues to watch for:
  - Posture
  - Gestures
  - Facial expression
  - Tone of voice

» Be prepared to meet the guest's needs before they have to ask.

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Segment 7—The Complaint

Key points covered in this portion of the video are supplemented with additional In-Depth Information following this section of the guide.

Guests with problems are the biggest opportunity for repeat business. 35% of guests with an unresolved problem return to a property. 85% of guests without a problem will return while 95% of guests with a problem solved will return.

KEY POINTS

- Be aware of conditions at your property that could lead to guest complaints.
- "Read" the guest to try to anticipate a problem.
- Take these steps to solve guest complaints:
  - Acknowledge the complaint and repeat it back to the guest.
  - Empathize! Ask questions to determine the nature of the complaint.
  - Apologize. Say you are sorry for the inconvenience.
  - Avoid blame. Take ownership of the problem. Say "I" not "we."
  - Solve the problem. Offer options and allow the guest to choose a solution. Ask the guest what you can do to satisfy him or her if your solutions are not sufficient.
  - Tell what action you will take. Set an approximate time for completion of corrective actions.
  - Act. Take care of the problem or notify the appropriate staff member or station. Monitor the progress of other people working on the problem.
  - Follow up. Check back with the guest to see that action was taken. Report the entire event including the actions taken and the resolution.
- Occasionally a guest will complain to try to get something for free. Be diplomatic and stick to your property's policies.
- Stay calm and be polite. Focus on the situation and not the emotion.
- Protect the integrity of your rates.
- Make an effort to give these guests something that will provide the satisfaction they are looking for.

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SEGMENT QUESTIONS

1. How should you respond if a guest becomes irate?

   Possible response – Stay calm; let the guest express their feelings; empathize with the guest; offer possible solutions.

2. How can guest complaints result in a positive outcome for a property?

   Possible response – Resolving a problem to a guest's satisfaction demonstrates a property's commitment to quality guest service; guest complaints provide an opportunity for a property to improve the quality of guest service and earn recommendations.

SEGMENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 – Have employees demonstrate how to handle the following guest complaints.

- A guest complains his/her room is too cold.
- A guest complains there is too much noise coming from an adjacent room.
- A guest complains his/her non-smoking room smells like a smoking room.
- A guest complains that money has been stolen from his/her room.
- A guest complains another guest paid less for the same room.

Activity 2 – Review the additional information about Handling Complaints presented in the "An In-Depth Look At Handling Complaints" section following this segment.

Activity 3 – Brainstorm ideas for eliminating the attitudinal and service-related complaints detailed in the In-Depth section.

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An In-Depth Look at Handling Complaints

KEY POINTS

» Complaints can be separated into four categories.

- Mechanical:
  - ▫ Climate control
  - ▫ Lighting
  - ▫ Electricity
  - ▫ Room furnishings
  - ▫ Ice machines
  - ▫ Vending machines
  - ▫ Door keys
  - ▫ Plumbing
  - ▫ Television sets
  - ▫ Elevators

  Solve mechanical problems by dispatching a maintenance employee as soon as possible. Track the repairs to ensure timely completion.

- Attitudinal:
  - ▫ Guest insulted by rude or tactless hotel staff member
  - ▫ Overhearing staff conversations or complaints from hotel staff

  Attitudinal problems can be prevented if managers and supervisors attend to the complaints and problems of the staff.

- Service-related:
  - ▫ Long waiting time for service
  - ▫ Lack of assistance with luggage
  - ▫ Untidy rooms
  - ▫ Phone difficulties
  - ▫ Missed wake-up calls
  - ▫ Cold or ill-prepared food
  - ▫ Ignored requests for supplies

  Service complaints are more likely when the hotel occupancy is high.

- Unusual:
  - ▫ Absence of a swimming pool
  - ▫ Lack of public transportation
  - ▫ Bad weather

  Guests often expect the staff to resolve or listen to these complaints.

» How complaints are generated:

- Verbal - Given to a front desk agent or other hotel employee.
- Written - Generated using a comment card or questionnaire.

» Log complaints to identify trends.

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Segment 8—The Follow-Up

Key points covered in this portion of the video are supplemented with additional In-Depth information following this section of the guide.

KEY POINTS

» The true measure of good service and guest relations is the follow-up. Follow up on all guest requests, special orders, and maintenance requests from previous shifts.

» Be sure you make clear notes and communicate with other team members during shift changes.

» Take care of and follow up on any requests or complaints that you receive during your shift.

» Go the extra mile to accommodate your guests' needs and follow up even if the request or problem was handled by another department.

SEGMENT QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to communicate requests, complaints, and other issues to team members on other shifts?

   Possible response – To ensure that no issue is overlooked and that each is resolved in a timely manner.

2. If a request or problem was handled by another department, why should you follow up?

   Possible response – To make sure the issue was resolved and that the guest is satisfied.

SEGMENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 – Discuss your property's policies for following up on requests, complaints, and maintenance issues.

Activity 2 – Review the additional information about Checkout and Follow-Up presented in the "An In Depth Look at Checkout and Follow-Up" section following this segment.

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An In-Depth Look at Checkout and Follow-Up

KEY POINTS

» Ask the guest about the stay.
  - Maintain eye contact and attention.
  - Use the guest's name.
  - Record and take action to address any comments or complaints.

» Ask the guest if there are any recent charges.

» Post any outstanding charges.

» Present the guest folio and ask the guest to review it and verify the charges.

» Determine and process the method of payment – be aware of all property-specific limits and authorizations.

» Check for mail, messages, and faxes.

» Check for safe deposit or in-room safe key.

» Check for mini-bar key.

» Ask for the room key.

» Offer additional help including transportation, baggage, directions, or sign-up for frequent guest programs if applicable.

» Thank the guest for staying and ask them to return.

» Update the room's status.

» Complete the guest history and file it for marketing follow-up.

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Quiz Answer Key

The quiz is provided so you can test what participants have learned from viewing the video, reading the companion guide, from discussion, and from practice activities. Ten questions are provided. If you supplemented the information in the video with your property's information, add appropriate questions to the Quiz and revise the answer key.

Set your own grading scale, or simply use incorrect/incomplete answers to point out areas which need improvement.

The suggested correct answers are below. If you believe there are additional correct answers, please add them as appropriate.

1. The front desk log book.
2. Length of stay; number of people in the party; type of room desired; rate; method of payment.
3. Room number.
4. Arriving late; sloppy appearance; ignoring guests.
5. The property's features and services.
6. Acknowledge other guests waiting in line; get help.
7. Organization; courtesy; and communication.
8. Acknowledge the problem; apologize; take action; follow up.
9. Mechanical; attitudinal; service-related; unusual.
10. True.

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Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions according to what you have learned from watching the video, reading the companion guide, from discussions, additional in-depth information, and from practice activities.

1. What should you check at the beginning of each shift so that you are aware of important events and decisions that occurred during previous shifts?

2. What information should you confirm with the guest during check-in?

3. When issuing the room key card or key you should never say the guest's _____ _____ aloud.

4. List three behaviors that would be considered unprofessional.

5. What must you know to effectively sell your property to guests?

6. Name two things you can do to handle busy situations.

7. Three important components of teamwork are:

8. What are the four steps to take when handling guest complaints?

9. Complaints can be grouped into which four categories?

10. You should always follow up on a guest complaint or request even if it was handled by another department. **True** or **False**

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