



IN FRONT OF THE GUEST · SEASON 1: OPERATIONS · MODULE 1: FRONT OFFICE · LESSON 7

Information Worth Gold and the Art of Saying No

*Being a host to the destination, not just to the building.
And saying no without breaking the relationship.*

In five lines

There are two currencies that separate the ordinary front desk agent from the one guests ask for by name: information that truly helps and the way you say no. The first is crafted with curiosity (knowing your destination the way you know your home); the second, with a three-step method that turns a limit into service. Both cost nothing and both show in the review. This lesson trains both.

The script, step by step

- 1. Craft your golden minute.** Prepare — and rehearse — your answer to the most repeated question in the world: “What should we do this afternoon?” Three honest recommendations in your area, with the why and how to get there. Recommending for real (not the place in the brochure) makes you a host of the place.
- 2. Inform in order of priority.** What they need today, first; the rest, when they need it. The guest doesn’t want to know everything: they want not to miss what matters to them.
- 3. The positive no, in three steps.** One: acknowledge the wish (“I understand; after a flight like that, it would be very welcome”). Two: the limit, without false excuses (“today the hotel is full and I can’t guarantee you a 4:00 p.m. check-out”). Three: the real alternative (“what I can do is store your luggage and keep the spa shower free for you before you leave”).
- 4. Prices and charges, upfront.** They are stated naturally, looking the guest in the eye, before they appear on the bill. A charge announced is information; a charge discovered is a small betrayal.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Local knowledge (you're new)	Your golden minute is crafted by asking the veterans — servers, bell staff, maintenance — what they themselves really recommend. In a week you'll know more than many brochures.
A material alternative to offer	When there is nothing to give, you offer follow-through: “I can't do X, but I'll personally take care of Y and confirm it with you at noon.” Follow-through, committed to and delivered, IS the alternative.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Recommend what you would recommend to a friend. State prices in the same voice you use for good morning.	Hide charges “so they don't get upset now.” Answer “I don't know” and do nothing.	Make up an answer you don't know: you say “I'll find out right now” — and you find out. Promise an exception that your colleague on the next shift will later deny.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing the positive no with beating around the bush: three minutes of excuses are worse than a clear limit with an alternative.
- ◆ Always recommending the same thing to everyone: the golden minute adapts to whoever is asking (family, couple, sports enthusiast).
- ◆ Giving all the information on the first day and none for the rest: information is a daily service, not a welcome speech.
- ◆ Hiding behind “it’s hotel policy”: policy is explained with its reasons, or it becomes a wall.

THE GOLDEN RULE

“A no with an alternative is a yes to the relationship.”

This lesson’s exercise

A guest insists on a 4:00 p.m. check-out at no charge and the hotel is full. Write your exact answer, word for word, with the three steps of the positive no. Read it out loud: if it sounds like an excuse, rewrite it. In the answer that follows, I share mine.

Further reading: Hotel Operations, Volume II of the Hospitality Collection — Chapter 1, Front Office.
© Daniel Roiz Baztán · In Front of the Guest · All rights reserved