



IN FRONT OF THE GUEST · SEASON 1: OPERATIONS · MODULE 1: FRONT OFFICE · LESSON 8

Check-Out Sells Too

*The first impression opens the stay.
The last one turns it into a memory.*

In five lines

Check-out is the most underrated moment of the guest's journey: hurry, the bill, the taxi. And that is exactly why it is where standing out is easiest. It is the last scene of the movie — the one that decides the flavor with which the story gets told. Three well-executed minutes produce three things: a bill without surprises, a truth about the stay that no survey will give you, and the seed of a return. This lesson brings order to those three minutes.

The script, step by step

- 1. The walk-through without surprises.** The bill is gone over WITH the guest, not handed to them: "Two dinners, Tuesday's spa and Thursday's minibar — does it all add up for you?" A charge explained before they ask is transparency; the same charge discovered by them is suspicion.
- 2. The honest question.** Not "Everything okay?" (which only allows a polite yes), but "What did you like least? — it genuinely helps me." Today's uncomfortable answer is the public complaint you'll avoid tomorrow.
- 3. Resolve at the desk what can be resolved.** A doubtful charge is clarified, not argued over: you review it together with them, correct it if appropriate, and if you can't decide it yourself, you take down the details and commit to a follow-up with a deadline — and it gets done.
- 4. The seed of the return.** A farewell with their name, help with the next leg (taxi, route, luggage) and a specific open door: "In October the hotel is beautiful and quieter — it would be a pleasure to see you again, Mr. Fernández."
- 5. Feedback: invite without selecting.** If the hotel asks for feedback, the invitation is offered neutrally and with the same criterion for everyone: "If you'd like to share how you experienced your stay, your opinion helps us improve and the whole team reads it." Once, naturally, without asking for a specific score, without incentives and without making anything conditional on it. If there has been an incident, it is addressed and accompanied first; their right to give their opinion is never filtered.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Time (checkout rush hour)	Express check-out with the essentials: a 20-second walk-through pointing out the charges, the short version of the honest question and a farewell with their name. The three moments fit into 90 seconds; what gets cut is the paperwork, not the person.
Authority to void a charge	Never hide behind "the system won't let me": take down the details, tell them who will resolve it and when, write it down in front of them — and chase it yourself until it is done. The guest forgives a limit; they don't forgive being abandoned.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Go over the bill with them, thank them by name, say goodbye looking them in the eye.	Argue over a charge in front of the line. Process the departure like a cash-register formality.	Let an angry guest leave without recording their case and notifying a superior: the last chance to win them back walks out the door with them.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Believing the departing guest no longer matters: what leaves is the stay, not the relationship — nor the review, which they haven't written yet.
- ◆ The trick question "Everything okay?": it invites an empty yes and wastes the hotel's best source of truth.
- ◆ Promising "we'll look into it and call you" with no owner and no deadline: it is the most repeated polite lie in the industry.
- ◆ Not passing on what you heard: the truth the guest gives you at the desk dies if it doesn't make it to the briefing.
- ◆ Selecting whom to invite according to their satisfaction: the request for feedback must be neutral, without filtering guests or chasing a score. The incident is addressed because it should be, not to influence what they may want to say afterward.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"The first impression opens the stay.
The last one turns it into a memory."**

This lesson's exercise

At check-out, a guest tells you "everything's fine" with a face that says everything's wrong. You have 90 seconds and a line behind them. Write what you say to them — word for word — so that they tell you the truth, and what you do with it afterward. In the answer that follows, I share my version.