



IN FRONT OF THE GUEST · SEASON 1 · MODULE 3: GUEST RELATIONS · LESSON 16

VIPs, Repeat Guests and Occasions: The Hotel's Memory

Personalization is information plus execution.

Without either one, it's luck.

In five lines

A hotel with memory feels like a hotel with a soul — and memory is crafted. The repeat guest recognized by name before reaching the front desk, the pillow that is already the way they asked for it a year ago, the anniversary someone remembered: none of that is spontaneous magic. It is a three-part system: capture only the information useful for providing the service, keep it in the authorized medium and execute it at the right moment. Good memory spares the guest from having to repeat themselves without turning their private life into open information. That is the standard; the size of the hotel is no excuse.

The script, step by step

- 1. Capture only what is necessary.** A useful preference shows up once: “prefers a high floor,” “requests a different pillow,” “is celebrating an anniversary.” It is recorded only if it improves the service, and through the established channel. Health data or especially sensitive data always follow the hotel's specific protocol.
- 2. Keep it in the authorized medium.** The PMS or an approved tool, with access limited to those who need it to look after that guest. No personal notebooks, loose notes or indiscriminate conversations: the hotel's memory must be useful, accurate and protected.
- 3. Prepare the arrival.** Before each day, the arrivals list is read with a magnifying glass: Who is coming back? What do we know about them? What occasion are they bringing? The repeat guest is welcomed by name and with their history: “Mrs. Díaz, welcome back — we've prepared the quiet floor for you, like last time.”
- 4. Execute the occasion with meaning.** An anniversary touch is valued not for its cost but for its aim: better a handwritten note that mentions what they told us than an impersonal standard. Personalization shows in the fact that it couldn't be for any other guest.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
PMS with complete profiles	A temporary record authorized by the hotel, with the minimum information, defined custody and later transfer to the official system. Never a personal notebook or a list accessible to anyone not involved in the service.
Budget for small touches	The well-aimed touch costs almost nothing: the personal note, the usual table, the greeting with history. What people remember isn't the object: it's that they were remembered.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Welcome the repeat guest with their name and their history. Confirm the preference elegantly ("Shall I prepare your room like last time?").	Make them repeat to different employees what they already said: every repetition is a small betrayal by the system.	Broadcast details of the occasion without their permission (announcing the anniversary to the whole table, for example): the occasion is theirs; the hotel accompanies it with the discretion they set.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Capturing and not sharing: information kept in your personal memory is personalization that lasts a single shift.
- ◆ Preferences noted and not executed: promising memory and failing at it is worse than not having any.
- ◆ Confusing VIP with "the one who pays the most": the humble guest who comes back every year is the hotel's most profitable ambassador.
- ◆ The cloned touch: when every anniversary receives the same thing, nobody receives anything.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"Personalization is information plus execution.
Without either one, it's luck."**

This lesson's exercise

About a repeat guest you know only three things: they always travel alone, they have breakfast first thing and they once asked for a room away from the elevator. Design their perfect arrival at almost zero cost: what you prepare, what you say to them when you welcome them and what you note for next time. In the answer that follows, I share my version.