



IN FRONT OF THE GUEST

The School Book

Guest Service in Real Hotel Operations

54 lessons · 54 answers from a general manager · 16 parts
Season 1 · Operations

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The origin of this book

These lessons began as the content of the first season of the free school **In Front of the Guest** (delantedelhuesped.com/en): a journey of 54 lessons in 16 modules devoted to guest service in real hotel operations. This edition keeps the sequence of exercises and answers, adapted to be read as a book: each lesson is followed by its answer, and the sixteen parts reproduce the training structure of the school.

The school is and will remain free, and so is this book: it is its organized, revised and permanent edition — designed for individual study, professional reference and team training. It is given to those who have followed the season and shared with anyone who needs it, but it is not for sale.

The texts come from the final audited edition of Season 1 · Operations, with editorial adaptation of the references specific to the channel broadcast.

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Why this school exists

I have spent my life in hotels. I have run resorts of eight hundred and sixty rooms in the Caribbean and hotel clusters in Europe, I have interviewed hundreds of professionals and I have promoted many of them. And in all those years I have seen the same scene repeat itself: a person who knows their craft — who makes a perfect bed, who serves an impeccable table, who runs a front desk without a single error — and who is left without answers at the exact moment the craft becomes what it really is: a person in front of another person.

School taught them the procedure. Nobody taught them what happens when the guest complains, enjoys, waits or hesitates. Nobody told them how to enter an occupied room, how to read a table before it speaks, how to accompany a complaint until it turns into a guest who comes back, or what a general manager looks at when deciding on a promotion. That gap — guest service in real operations — is the one this book sets out to fill.

Everything here began as a free school on WhatsApp: fifty-four lessons, one every day from Monday to Friday, with an exercise at the end of each one and my answer in the following delivery — how I would do it, thinking out loud the way a general manager thinks. I made it free out of gratitude for what this profession has given me, and very especially with the workers of Cuba in mind, with whom I shared years that changed the way I understand this craft. The school is still open and will remain free; this book is its organized, permanent form — to study it straight through, to consult it by department, to train teams with it.

The most beautiful thing about this profession is becoming part of the beautiful memories of the people who visit us. Over time I came to understand that so is training and developing the people you work with. This book exists for both. Welcome to the craft.

Daniel Roiz Baztán

Note on protocols, legislation and data

The criteria set out in this book must always be applied in accordance with current legislation, the establishment's internal protocols, safety rules and the remit of each job. In any conflict between a general recommendation and an official protocol, the latter will always prevail. This applies very especially to the sensitive areas of the craft: allergies and intolerances, minors, emergencies, security, alcohol service, room access and care for special needs.

When this book states that “the standard is not negotiable; the means adapt,” it must always be understood with one limit: no means is ever adapted at the expense of safety, legality, hygiene or the dignity of workers and guests.

On the people who serve. Everything this book demands in front of the guest presupposes what the law and good management guarantee behind the scenes: legal working hours and rest periods, working-time records, adequately staffed teams, occupational risk prevention and a real channel to report overload or risk without penalty. No rule in this work asks anyone to hold up with attitude what the organization must solve with resources: when this book speaks of method, presence or self-care, it speaks of professionalism within decent conditions — never of replacing them. An exhausted team is not a committed team: it is a management failure.

On privacy and data protection. The discretion this book teaches also has a legal dimension. As a criterion that applies across all departments: only the minimum information needed to serve is handled; a guest's preferences, incidents and circumstances are not shared outside the authorized departments; extreme caution is taken with minors, medical information, personal habits and room numbers, which are never said out loud where they can be overheard; and information is recorded only in the systems authorized by the establishment — never in personal notes, private chats or informal memory. This English edition keeps the Spanish legal framework on purpose; wherever you work, apply your own country's laws, collective agreements and your hotel's protocols.

Five steps, lesson by lesson

- 1** **Read the situation.** A real case from operations, told the way it happens: with a guest, in a hurry and with nuances.
- 2** **Decide what you would do.** Before reading on. That moment of decision is where judgment is trained.
- 3** **Write the exercise.** On paper, even if it's only five lines. Paper puts in order what the head takes for granted.
- 4** **Compare your response.** The answer that follows each lesson reasons the way a general manager reasons: diagnosis, decision, communication.
- 5** **Take a golden rule to your shift.** Every lesson ends with a sentence for your uniform pocket. Use it on your very next shift.

How to use this book

If you are just starting out in the craft, read it in order: the sixteen parts are linked and the first — the craft and the attitude — is the foundation of them all. One lesson a day is an excellent pace.

If you already work in a hotel, start with your department and continue with the cross-cutting parts: the difficult guest, the team and your career. Then read your colleagues' departments: understanding what others do is half of coordination — and that is, perhaps, the quickest advantage this book can give you.

If you lead teams or deliver training, every lesson is designed as briefing material: a real situation, a step-by-step script, the three-column code (what to do, what not to do, what never to do), the common mistakes and a golden rule to take away. It works read aloud in fifteen minutes, and the answer that follows it is designed to open a conversation. At the end of the book you will find a specific guide for working with teams.

A note on structure: the sixteen **parts** of this book correspond to the **modules** in which the original school was taught; when you read “Module 5” inside a lesson, that is Part VI of this book. The original numbering has been kept as part of the history of the work.

The method matters more than the reading: every lesson ends with an exercise. Do it in writing BEFORE you turn the page — and then compare your response with mine in the answer that follows it. There, in that comparison, is where the real learning happens.

PART I

THE CRAFT AND THE ATTITUDE

Everything you are about to read in this book rests on what happens before you see a single guest: at the staff entrance, at your locker, in the decision you make every morning about who is going to walk out that door. That is why we start here. This first part explains what this school is and why it exists, shows that the magic of service is a humble technique that doesn't cost a cent, and ends with the lesson that separates the person who does their task from the one who holds up a hotel: your job never works alone. If you could read only one part of this book, let it be this one — the other fifteen rest on it.

Lesson 0: Welcome to In Front of the Guest · Lesson 1: Before the Guest: The Locker, the Uniform and the Attitude · Lesson 2: Magic Is Real and It Is Crafted · Lesson 3: The Hotel as a System: Your Job Never Works Alone

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Introduction and “The Hotel as a System.”



LESSON 0

WELCOME TO IN FRONT OF THE GUEST

TODAY YOU'LL MEET THE SCHOOL, THE METHOD
AND THE JOURNEY THAT BEGINS TODAY.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS



IN FRONT OF THE GUEST · THE SCHOOL OF HOTEL REALITY · SEASON 1: OPERATIONS · INTRODUCTORY MODULE ·
LESSON 0

Welcome to In Front of the Guest

*Everything you have learned is about to change its nature:
now there is a person in front of you.*

In five lines

This school exists because of a border no other school teaches: the one that separates knowing your trade from practicing it in front of a person who complains, enjoys, waits or hesitates. At school you learned the procedure; here you will learn where the magic happens and where it is lost. I am Daniel Roiz Baztán, a hotel general manager, and I am going to tell you what I demand — and what I reward — when someone on my team is in front of a guest. One micro-lesson at a time, an exercise to think through in each one, and my reasoned answer right after it. Free, with no advertising and no commercial purpose. Just the craft.

How the school works

- 1. One lesson at a time, at your own pace.** Each one is a micro-lesson you can study on the website or download as a PDF to save, print or forward — and its answer comes right after it.
- 2. Every lesson ends with an exercise.** You don't send it to me: you think it through, and if you're one of the good ones, you write it down. Paper puts in order what the head takes for granted.
- 3. In the answer that follows, I tell you how I would solve it,** reasoning the way a general manager reasons: diagnosis, decision, communication. There is no textbook answer; there is judgment.
- 4. When you have completed all fifty-four lessons,** download the compact study book as a single PDF — every lesson and answer gathered in its sixteen modules — review it, and take the final exam that leads to the Certificate of Achievement.

In front of the guest: this school's code

Each departmental lesson will include this table adapted to its job. Today, the universal version — valid for any uniform in the hotel:

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Look, greet and use the name. Announce what you are about to do. Do what you say, and give your own name when you say goodbye.	Talk to colleagues about your own affairs in front of the guest. Recite technical jargon. Complain about the hotel or the shift where you can be heard.	Lie to a guest. Humiliate others or let yourself be humiliated. Touch what isn't yours. Tell outside what you saw inside.

The first rule, before all others

You will often work without all the resources you would like: product, spare parts, time, hands. This school will not ask you for the impossible; it will teach you the right order of thinking when resources fall short. And that order starts with a sentence we will repeat until it is yours: **the standard is not negotiable; the means adapt.** With a limit we will also repeat: no means is ever adapted at the expense of safety, legality or anyone's dignity. A guest can forgive running out of something. They won't forgive finding no one there.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“School taught you the procedure. The craft begins
when there is a person in front of you.”**

This lesson’s exercise

Write in one sentence — just one — why you want to do this work. Keep it somewhere it won’t get lost: we will come back to it in lesson 48, and you will know whether it is still true. In the answer that follows, I share what I would answer.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 1 EXERCISE

My start-of-shift routine

Let me share my routine — the one I’ve followed for years, whatever hotel I’m running, and which is a personal choice for my own comfort, not anyone’s obligation: what can be required is starting the shift ready and fully present, within your scheduled hours, with preparation organized as part of the working day. I come in with fifteen minutes to spare: the first five are for the changing room and the locker, unhurried; in there stay my personal phone and, with it, the pending call, the household bill and the rest of my world — I know that when I leave they’ll be waiting for me exactly where I left them. The next five are for the uniform: a full check, paying special attention to shoes and hands (you’ll find out why when we reach the lesson on grooming). And the last five are for the head: a mental run-through of what awaits me today and my doorway phrase — the gesture with which I leave the day outside before stepping on stage.

Now look at your comparison between the ideal routine and the real one. Almost everyone discovers the same thing: the difference isn’t in the gestures — it’s in the margin. The ideal routine needs a margin and the real one doesn’t have it, and without a margin no mental locker works: you walk in dressed but not prepared. And here it’s worth being clear: first check what time your working day really starts and which activities — changing, collecting equipment, taking the handover — are organized within it, because that is where they belong. Punctuality means joining your shift fully present at your time; it doesn’t mean giving away work before it starts. If a personal margin helps you come in calm, that is your choice — voluntary, not required and not assessed. And if you find that the preparation required of you doesn’t fit into how the working day is organized, that isn’t solved by leaving home earlier: you report it to your manager, so the organization can correct it.

And hold on to the big idea of this lesson, because it is the foundation for the fifty that follow: the hotel will ask you for technique, method and judgment — but all of that rests on the decision you make every morning in front of your locker. **Attitude is not a lesson in this school: it is the condition for all the others.**

LESSON 1

**BEFORE THE GUEST:
THE LOCKER, THE UNIFORM
AND THE ATTITUDE**

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO GET READY FOR YOUR SHIFT
WITHIN WORKING HOURS, WITH UNIFORM,
EQUIPMENT AND ATTITUDE.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Before the Guest: The Locker, the Uniform and the Attitude

*Service doesn't start at the counter.
It starts at the staff entrance.*

In five lines

This school's first lesson doesn't happen in front of the guest: it happens before — in how you arrive, how you look after your locker, the changing room and the staff canteen, how you put on a uniform that represents not just you but an entire institution, and what you decide to leave locked away before you walk through the door. Because on the other side there is someone who spent a long time saving to live these days with their family, and your profession — ours — is to be part of those moments. That demands coming in every day with the right attitude: giving your highest professional level — within your working hours, your duties and the resources available — whether anyone is watching or not. Everything else you are about to learn depends on this attitude.

The script, step by step

- 1. Be on time and arrive fully present.** Whoever comes in running serves running for the whole shift. Changing, getting ready and taking the handover are work, and the hotel schedules them within working hours — your part is to plan your arrival so you can do them calmly, without giving minutes away or borrowing them from the day. Calm punctuality is the first gesture of respect: to the colleague waiting for you to relieve them, and to yourself, because you deserve to start fully present.
- 2. Staff areas: that's where your responsibility begins.** Your locker tidy, the changing room in order, the staff canteen table left the way you'd like to find it. Whoever leaves the canteen in a mess is telling everyone who they are before they've even put on the uniform. Backstage is the rehearsal for the stage: whoever doesn't respect the space they share with their colleagues won't truly respect the guest's.
- 3. The uniform: you are putting on an institution.** When you button it up you stop being only you: you represent the whole hotel, with its history and that of everyone who keeps it going. It is worn with the neatness you already know — during service and in the professional areas where a guest might see you. Outside your working hours, your life is yours: the uniform represents the hotel while you are on duty; it does not turn your free time into an extension of the house.
- 4. The locker keeps your world.** Money, your personal phone, the argument at home, the worry you bring with you: under lock and key until you leave. Not because they don't matter — they do, a lot — but because in there are families who have saved for a year for this week, and that week is not to blame for your day. When you leave, your world will be waiting for you where you left it. And if what you're carrying is truly heavy, don't carry it in silence: tell your manager — lesson 45 will teach you to tell a bad day you can manage from a problem that must be reported.
- 5. Attitude: your highest level, watched or not.** It makes no difference whether the general manager, the shift leader or nobody at all is watching you: the level is the same — within your working hours, your duties and the resources available — because the standard isn't for the one watching you; it's for the one visiting you. This is the decision made every morning at the locker, and it is what separates a job from a profession.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Decent changing rooms or staff canteen	The team looks after what is shared — agreed order, mutual respect, leaving it better than they found it — but that care does not replace the company's obligation to provide and maintain adequate, decent and safe facilities. The shortfall is reported through the established channel and must be corrected: a temporary fix does not make a structural shortcoming acceptable.
Your own locker	A safe space for personal belongings is a condition of the job, not a favor: if there isn't one, request it through the established channel; the company must resolve it. While it is being fixed, a temporary, supervised place serves as a bridge — as a bridge, not as the norm. What you lock away isn't the object — it's the line between your world and your service.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Walk through the staff entrance with everything put away, an immaculate uniform and the right attitude on — every day, at the same level.	Bring your personal phone or private conversations into guest areas. Go out with a careless uniform where you can be seen. Wear your bad day like a flag down the corridors.	Speak badly of the hotel, a colleague or a guest where a guest might hear you — with the uniform on, your voice is the voice of the house. And never decide that “I’m not up for anyone today”: the person in there saved too much to be met with that.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Arriving at the exact minute and changing in a rush: a shift that starts in a scramble never straightens out — it drags.
- ◆ Treating staff areas as no man’s land: they are the real X-ray of a team — we general managers look at them before the lobby.
- ◆ Neglecting the uniform in professional areas where a guest can see you: while you are on duty, your appearance is the visible voice of the house — and off duty, the house no longer speaks for you, nor you for it.
- ◆ Locking away the phone but not the mind: the real locker is mental — and when locking it away isn’t enough, lesson 45 will teach you to ask for support in time.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Service doesn’t begin when the guest sees you.
It begins when you decide, at your locker, who is going to walk out that door.”**

This lesson’s exercise

Describe your ideal start-of-shift routine, minute by minute, from the staff entrance to your first guest: what time you arrive, what you do in the changing room, what you lock in your locker (besides your belongings), what you check on your uniform and the inner phrase you carry as you walk through the door. Tomorrow, compare it with your real routine — the distance between the two is your first project in this school. In the answer that follows, I share mine.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 0 EXERCISE

Your why — and mine

I asked you for a sentence: why you want to do this work. Let me tell you what I’ve learned from reading thousands of similar answers in job interviews.

Sentences that begin with “I like” usually last two seasons: the liking runs out in the first tough high season. Those that begin with “I want to become” last longer, but they break if the promotion is slow to come. The ones that truly sustain a career almost always talk about another person: “because I love seeing the guest’s face when...,” “because at home, welcoming people was sacred.”

If your sentence talks only about you, that’s not wrong — but keep an eye on it. If it talks about someone else, keep it safe: that’s the fuel that never runs out.

Mine: **because the most beautiful thing about this profession is becoming part of the beautiful memories of the people who visit us.** Over the years I came to understand that so is training and developing the people you work with. See you in lesson 48 to check whether ours are still true.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 2

MAGIC IS REAL AND IT IS CRAFTED

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN HOW SMALL DETAILS
CREATE EXTRAORDINARY MEMORIES.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Magic Is Real and It Is Crafted

A hotel sells nights. A professional sells the feeling of being expected.

In five lines

We call it magic: that moment when a guest feels the hotel knows them, expects them and looks after them — and remembers it years after forgetting the room rate. It looks like a gift some people have; it isn't. Magic is a humble technique with four ingredients that cost no money: seeing, naming, making a gesture and remembering. This lesson takes them apart one by one so that you stop admiring magic and start crafting it, whatever your job and whatever is missing.

The four ingredients, step by step

1. **SEE.** Magic starts with the gaze: whoever truly sees the guest — really, not in passing — picks up on the tiredness, the celebration, the doubt, the sleeping child. Without observation there is no magic; only correct service, its boring brother.
2. **NAME.** A person's name is the most powerful sound in the hotel. "Mrs. Díaz, your table is ready" is worth two smiles. Use it twice per conversation; more than that sounds like a technique from a manual.
3. **THE GESTURE.** Small, concrete, unrequested: the table with the best view, the coffee "like yesterday," the extra towel before they ask for it. The gesture says "I thought of you before you arrived" — and that is exactly what people remember. And always within your own ground: your duties, your training, your authorization and your safety; if the gesture belongs to another job, coordinate with whoever is responsible — without neglecting your own.
4. **REMEMBER.** Tomorrow's magic is crafted by recording today — but recording properly: of what the guest tells you, note only the preference that serves a specific service purpose (the anniversary they will celebrate here, the coffee the way they like it), in the medium your hotel authorizes, accessible only to whoever serves them, kept while it is useful and deleted afterwards. Everything else — their life, their confidences, their favorite team — is listened to and let go: listening is not filing. Sensitive data — an allergy, health, a minor — lives only in the authorized system, never in personal notes. A hotel with memory feels like a hotel with a soul — and professional memory has only one owner: the system, not your pocket.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Budget for small touches	The four ingredients cost nothing. Resource magic (the gift, the upgrade) is the most expensive and the least memorable; attention magic is free, and it is the kind people tell their friends about.
Time (an overloaded shift)	Seeing and naming fit into any shift: they are a way of working, not an extra task. Save the gesture for one or two guests a day — chosen by objective criteria: a detected need, the occasion of the stay, a real service opportunity; never by liking or appearances. Rationed magic is still magic.
System memory (no CRM, no guest cards)	A single medium authorized by the hotel — even a simple one — with access limited to those who need it, and five minutes of briefing. The best hotels in the world started remembering with very little; never with loose papers, and health or minors' data only through the established channel.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing magic with servility: magic is done as equals, with pride in the craft; groveling makes a guest as uncomfortable as coldness does.
- ◆ Overacting: magic whispers. Theatrical gestures, over-familiarity and unrequested humor are its caricature.
- ◆ Crafting it only for those who look important: today's discreet guest is tomorrow's review — and the general manager watches precisely how you treat the ones who “don't count.”
- ◆ Taking notes just for yourself — or noting too much — instead of recording the useful preference, and only that, in the team's authorized channel: individual magic dies with you; team magic becomes the hotel's reputation.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Magic isn't doing something extraordinary.
It's doing the ordinary as if that person were extraordinary.”**

This lesson's exercise

Remember the best service you have ever received in your life — in a hotel, a shop, a hospital, anywhere. Write down exactly what that person did, with concrete verbs. Then underline which of the four ingredients they used without knowing it. In the answer that follows, I share mine.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 2 EXERCISE

Your best memory, under the magnifying glass

I asked you for the best service of your life, written with verbs. Reread what you wrote and check three things.

One: the verbs you wrote down are small. Looked, remembered, asked, accompanied, came back. Nobody writes “gave me a suite.” Memory rewards gestures, not resources — the first proof that magic is free.

Two: almost certainly, that person saw a need and decided to take responsibility for getting it solved: they acted within their remit or coordinated with whoever was responsible, without abandoning their own work. Magic isn't about invading other people's roles — it's about not looking the other way, with the training, authorization and safety of your job intact.

And three: you remember how they made you feel, not how much it cost. What you felt is exactly what a professional who sees, names, makes the gesture and remembers creates. From today on, that professional can be you — with plenty of resources or with few.




DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN
HOSPITALITY BUSINESS LEADER

LESSON 3

THE HOTEL AS A SYSTEM: YOUR JOB NEVER WORKS ALONE

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN WHY YOUR JOB
NEVER WORKS ALONE.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Hotel as a System: Your Job Never Works Alone

Every visible experience rests on invisible connections.

In five lines

The guest believes their room, their breakfast and the air-conditioning repair are independent services. They never are. The room is ready on time because the Front Office, Housekeeping and Maintenance share the same version of reality; breakfast works because the Kitchen, the Restaurant and Purchasing talked yesterday. Understanding this changes your professional category: you stop being someone who does their task and become someone who holds up a system. And in front of the guest, the system has an iron rule: among ourselves, we speak plainly and put things right; in front of the guest, we are one.

The invisible chain, with a real example

1. **The promise:** the Front Office tells a family that their room will be ready at 3:00 p.m. For the guest it is a sentence; for the hotel it is an internal contract between four departments.
2. **The chain:** Housekeeping needs to know that room is a priority; Maintenance must close the air-conditioning work order today; the Laundry has to deliver the linen on time; the Front Office must give notice if the family arrives early.
3. **The broken link:** if one of the four doesn't share its information — doesn't give notice, doesn't report, doesn't ask — the guest waits in the lobby with two tired children. And it won't be "Housekeeping" or "Maintenance" that failed them: the whole hotel will have failed them.
4. **Your part:** in any job, your work has internal suppliers and internal customers. Knowing who they are, what they need from you and when is as much part of the craft as your visible task.

In front of the guest: how the system speaks

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Answer for the whole hotel: "I'll take care of it" or "Let me put you through right now to the person who can" — and check that it was resolved.	"That's not my job" / "that's another department." For the guest, departments don't exist: the hotel does.	Blame a colleague or another department in front of the guest. Whoever points at someone else is pointing at their own uniform.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Keeping information to yourself "because nobody asked": in a hotel, silence is a breakdown.
- ◆ Promising on behalf of another department without checking: the promise is yours; the failure is the hotel's.
- ◆ Fixing the symptom and keeping quiet about the cause: if room 214 breaks down every week, repairing it is no longer enough; reporting it is.
- ◆ Believing coordination is a job for the bosses: the system rests on the handovers, the reports and the warnings from the frontline.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Among ourselves, we speak plainly and put things right.
In front of the guest, we are one.”**

This lesson’s exercise

Choose your job — the one you have or the one you want — and draw its chain: the three departments without which your work fails, exactly what you need from each and what they need from you. You’ll be surprised by what you discover in the third column. In the answer that follows, I share my version — and we begin Module 1: Front Office.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 3 EXERCISE

The third column

I asked you for your job’s chain: three departments, what you need and what they need from you. The third column is the one that matters, and I’ll tell you why.

Anyone knows the first column. Whoever has been there a year knows the second. But the third — what others need FROM YOU — almost nobody has ever thought about, because nobody teaches us to see ourselves as suppliers. The room attendant is a supplier to the Front Office; the technician, to the room attendant; the cook, to the restaurant team. As soon as you see yourself that way, you stop “finishing your task” and start “delivering your work” — and delivering includes giving notice, reporting and asking.

Keep that chain: in every module of this season you’ll see it working from the inside. The next one begins with the link that faces the guest: **the Front Office**.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 0

“School taught you the procedure. The craft begins when there is a person in front of you.”

LESSON 1

“Service doesn’t begin when the guest sees you. It begins when you decide, at your locker, who is going to walk out that door.”

LESSON 2

“Magic isn’t doing something extraordinary. It’s doing the ordinary as if that person were extraordinary.”

LESSON 3

“Among ourselves, we speak plainly and put things right. In front of the guest, we are one.”

End of the Introductory Module. Next comes **Module 1: Front Office** — where the hotel shows its face.

PART II

FRONT OFFICE

The Front Office is where the hotel shows its face: the first face after a long journey and the last one before going home. Here you learn that arrival starts in the parking lot and not at the desk, that a check-in is a welcome with the paperwork inside it — and not the other way around — that assigning rooms is a craft of fairness, that saying no has a technique, that check-out builds tomorrow's reservation and that the night is an entire hotel in a few pairs of hands. Whoever masters this part doesn't process guests: they inaugurate stays.

Lesson 4: Arrival Starts in the Parking Lot · Lesson 5: Check-In: The Paperwork, the Welcome and the Upgrade · Lesson 6: Assigning Rooms Is a Craft · Lesson 7: Information Worth Gold and the Art of Saying No · Lesson 8: Check-Out Sells Too · Lesson 9: Night: The Shift Nobody Sees

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 1, Front Office.



LESSON 4

ARRIVAL STARTS IN THE PARKING LOT

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO TAKE CARE OF THE
FIRST IMPRESSION BEFORE THE FRONT DESK.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Arrival Starts in the Parking Lot

In the first seven minutes, the guest decides whether they chose the right hotel.

In five lines

Before anyone asks them for a document, the guest is already keeping score: Did anyone see me arrive? Did anyone smile at me? Do I know where to go? The first seven minutes — from the door to the front desk — involve no paperwork, and that is exactly why they are pure craft: eye contact, gesture and a managed wait. A hotel can have the best check-in in the world and lose everything in the corridor before it. This lesson brings order to that no man's land which, worked well, is everyone's land.

The script, step by step

- 1. The first look.** Whoever walks in with luggage has to meet a pair of eyes in the first few seconds: doorman, bell staff, front desk agent or whoever happens to pass by. A “welcome, come on in” on the way is worth as much as an entire front desk.
- 2. The luggage and the gesture.** If there is someone to help, they step forward — they don't wait to be called. If there isn't, words make the gesture: “Leave them here where you can see them, they're safe; I'll be right with you.”
- 3. The managed wait.** If there is a line, the wait becomes attention with three free tools: eye contact with each person, an “I'll be with you in a moment” with the first name of whoever is serving, and a visible order (whoever arrived first knows it, and appreciates that you know it too).
- 4. The transition to the desk.** The first sentence is never “Your ID?” First the welcome and the journey; the paperwork, afterward. The order of the sentences is the order of the craft.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Bell staff or doorman	The front desk agent steps half a pace out from the desk with their eyes and their words: they point the way, guide, reassure the guest about their luggage. The function exists even when the position doesn't.
Welcome touch (water, towel, cocktail)	Material courtesy is replaced by the courtesy of attention: nobody waits without being seen. Nobody remembers the water; everybody remembers being invisible.
Air-conditioning or comfort in the lobby	Brief honesty and speed: “I'm sorry about the heat, we're working on it — I'll have you checked in in two minutes, and your room is nice and cool.” Discomfort that is acknowledged bothers half as much.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
See and greet everyone who walks through the door, whether or not they are “your” guest. Announce the wait and keep to it.	Keep your eyes on the screen when you hear the door. Serve first whoever looks important. Huddling and chatting behind the desk.	Argue with a colleague or a supplier in full view of the lobby. Tell a guest about the workload or the hotel's problems.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Believing arrival starts at the front desk: it starts on the last stretch of the guest's journey, and they are already scoring you there.
- ◆ Leaving the lobby “without an owner” at shift changes: the seven critical minutes don't care about handovers.
- ◆ Managing the line by appearances: the discreet guest sees too — and writes reviews.
- ◆ Confusing speed with attention: serving quickly while looking at the screen is processing; serving well is looking.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Nobody is invisible in your lobby.
A wait that feels seen lasts half as long.”**

This lesson's exercise

Play guest in your own hotel (in your head or for real): walk from the door to the front desk with a stopwatch running. How many times was that guest seen? How many seconds were they alone, with no point of reference? Write down the longest blind spot: that is your first improvement project. In the answer that follows, I share how I would solve it.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 4

Arrival Starts in the Parking Lot

I asked you to time the first seven minutes and find the blind spot. Let me tell you what I find in almost every hotel I oversee: the blind spot is never where people think it is.

It isn't usually at the door (there's almost always someone there) or at the front desk (there always is). It's in the meters in between: the hallway, the corner with the sofas, the second suitcase nobody offered to carry. And above all, it's in one specific moment: when the front desk agent is busy with another guest and decides — without deciding — that the one waiting doesn't exist yet.

The solution costs one look: “I'll be right with you” with your eyes, even while your hands are still busy with someone else. If you spotted your blind spot, you already know your first project. If you didn't find it, walk the route again, more calmly: blind spots are called that because you don't see them the first time.



DANIEL ROÍZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 5

CHECK-IN: THE PAPERWORK, THE WELCOME AND THE UPGRADE

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO TURN
PAPERWORK INTO A TRUE WELCOME.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Check-In: The Paperwork, the Welcome and the Upgrade

*Everyone knows how to read a document and hand over a key.
The craft is in the moments almost nobody executes.*

In five lines

Check-in is the first long contact between the guest and the hotel: three to five minutes in which the attitude they will bring to their whole stay is decided. The paperwork is mandatory and doesn't set anyone apart. What does are five moments almost nobody executes in full: the name, the question that personalizes, the reconfirmation that secures the reservation, the honest upgrade offer and the farewell with your own name. This lesson turns check-in into a seven-step script that fits into the same three minutes.

The script, step by step

- 1. Before they speak, it has already begun.** Eye contact and a smile as soon as you see them approaching, even if you are finishing with another guest. Nobody is invisible at your front desk.
- 2. The time-of-day greeting — and the open question.** "Welcome. How was your trip? Is this your first time with us?" The answer gives you the tone (tiredness, hurry, celebration) — and, when a preference comes up that is useful for serving them better, that one and only that one is recorded in the authorized system, as you will learn in lesson 16: tomorrow's personalization is born here, not from writing everything down.
- 3. MAGIC MOMENT — The name.** As soon as the reservation or the document gives it to you, use it: "Mr. Fernández, we're almost done." The surname turns a transaction into a relationship. Twice; more than that sounds like a technique.
- 4. THE RECONFIRMATION — insurance for the stay.** With the reservation on screen, repeat it out loud: "Mr. and Mrs. Rodríguez, you have a double room with garden views reserved, seven nights on half board — is that correct?" Twenty seconds that secure the entire stay: the guest confirms what they bought, and any error in how the reservation was transferred shows up now, at the front desk — not tomorrow, in the form of "this isn't the room I booked."
- 5. HONEST UPSELLING — the upgrade only you know about.** They booked through a website and don't know the hotel's highlights; you are the one who knows them. Master your superior rooms and TODAY's availability, and offer it with a clear description and supplement: "Mr. López, as it happens, today I have a suite available with a living room and magnificent sea views; I can offer it to you for a supplement of only [X]." Telling them what you offer AND what it costs is what makes it an upgrade and not a surprise. The guest gains an experience; the hotel, results. Everybody wins — but only if you offer it.
- 6. The paperwork with your hands, the information in order of priority.** While you register them, today's essentials: breakfast, opening hours, Wi-Fi. Information that isn't needed today is noise; information that is needed and not given is a complaint tomorrow.
- 7. MAGIC MOMENT — The farewell that opens doors.** Hand over the key with a destination ("room 214, second floor, to the right of the elevator") and, if you can, walk them there: a great hotel doesn't point the way, it walks it with you. And close with your name: "I'm [name]; for anything at all, I'm right here." Giving them your name is giving them a host, not a front desk.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
The system (a crash or a power outage)	Paper registration with a template prepared in advance; the human script doesn't change a single step — reconfirmation included, reading from the guest's voucher or confirmation. Let them notice it in the lighting, never in the way they are treated.
Superior rooms available	The upgrade offer adapts to the day's inventory: category, orientation, a quiet floor or a special touch of attention. There is always some upgrade you can offer; knowing which one is your job at the briefing.
Time (a long line, a group checking in)	You cut the paperwork, never the moments: name, express reconfirmation ("double, garden view, seven nights, half board — correct?") and a farewell with your name fit into 90 seconds.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Talk to the guest, not to the computer. Reconfirm what they bought before registering them. State the upgrade with its price, in the same voice you use for good morning.	Recite the entire brochure. Offer the upgrade while hiding the supplement “so as not to scare them.” Use the surname zero times or five (the measure is two).	Promise what doesn't depend on you in order to look good for 60 seconds. Register a guest without looking them in the face even once. Argue over a reservation discrepancy in front of the line: it is managed, not debated.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Skipping the reconfirmation: a reservation error detected at the front desk is an anecdote; discovered in the room, it is a complaint — and the kind that gets written.
- ◆ Offering the upgrade without the price: without a clear supplement it isn't upselling, it's an ambush. And not offering it is worse: it denies the guest an experience they don't know exists.
- ◆ Talking to the computer instead of the guest: the paperwork is done with your hands, the relationship with your eyes.
- ◆ Finishing without introducing yourself: a check-in without the front desk agent's own name is a hotel without a face.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“The paperwork is what you have to do.
The reconfirmation, the upgrade and the welcome are what you decide to do. And
what people remember is what you decided.”**

This lesson's exercise

Rewrite your complete check-in, incorporating this lesson's three safeguards: the reconfirmation of the reservation out loud, an upgrade offer with its description and a clear supplement, and the farewell with your name. Word for word, like a theater script. In the answer that follows, I share how I would do it.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 5

Check-In: The Paperwork, the Welcome and the Upgrade

I asked you for your check-in script with the three safeguards. When I review this exercise in real training sessions, the mistakes always cluster in the same two places.

The first: the reconfirmation is missing. The greeting is good, the registration is quick... and nobody repeats out loud what the guest has bought. That twenty-second step — “a double with a garden view, seven nights, half board, is that right?” — is the safeguard for the entire stay: a reservation import error caught at the front desk is an anecdote you correct with a smile; one discovered in the room is a complaint, and the kind people put in writing.

The second: half-done upselling. The wonderful suite gets described... and the supplement gets hidden “so as not to scare them off.” It's exactly the other way around: a clear price is what turns your offer into an upgrade and not an ambush. And remember the other extreme: not offering it is also a mistake — you are denying the guest an experience they don't know exists, and the hotel a result only the front desk can produce.

And the third, as a bonus: finishing without your name. With a name, you are a host; without one, a desk.



LESSON 6

ASSIGNING ROOMS IS A CRAFT

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO ASSIGN ROOMS USING
OBJECTIVE CRITERIA AND RECORDED NEEDS.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Assigning Rooms Is a Craft

The system suggests rooms. Judgment assigns stays.

In five lines

For the system, all rooms of the same type are equal. For the guest, no two are alike: the one that vibrates next to the elevator, the one with the afternoon sun, the one far from everything when you have a baby in your arms. Assigning means matching the hotel's real map with the real people arriving today — and anticipating the conflict before the phone rings. It is one of the most invisible jobs in the Front Office, and one of those that prevents — or manufactures — the most complaints. This lesson turns it into a method.

The script, step by step

- 1. Know your real map.** Every front desk agent must know by heart which rooms are “good” and why, and which ones have fine print: noise, orientation, distance, partial views. If you don't know, ask to walk through them during a planned slot in your working day: it is work time well spent and the best investment in your career.
- 2. Read the day's arrivals — what is on record, not what you assume.** Before assigning, review what each reservation says: the booked category and the commitments made; the needs expressed and recorded (accessibility, safety, comfort, the crib requested); the documented incidents that are still relevant. What the reservation doesn't say isn't made up: you ask the guest or apply the neutral protocol. Five minutes of reading prevent five room changes.
- 3. Match with judgment, not in list order — and judgment has a hierarchy.** First, the booked category and the commitments made. Second, the needs expressed and recorded: the crib requested, the accessibility asked for, the “away from noise” on record. Third, the documented incidents that are still relevant: last year's noise complaint. And with all of that, the objective suitability of each room. An occasion the guest has mentioned — an anniversary, a birthday — gives context to the attention (the congratulations, the touch the house authorizes), but does not by itself allow you to infer a need or a room preference: for assigning, only what the guest has expressed and left on record counts. Being a family or a couple, or traveling with a baby, is not by itself a need: if the information isn't on record, you ask (“Do you need a crib? Would you prefer the ground floor?”) or assign by neutral protocol — never by stereotype.
- 4. Anticipate the conflict.** If you know a room has fine print and there is no other left, it is assigned according to the documented protocol to the reservation it objectively affects least — by type of stay, intended use and commitments made, never by assumptions about the people — and you win the game by communicating it yourself, first, with an alternative ready. And if no option meets what was committed, the hierarchy has one last rung: escalate to the person in charge, communicate transparently, offer an informed alternative and the compensation that applies.
- 5. Block and communicate.** A well-thought-out assignment is worth nothing if Housekeeping doesn't know what to prioritize. The assignment is finished when whoever is cleaning knows which room goes first.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
A sophisticated assignment system	A paper map of the hotel with your own codes (noise, view, sun), made once and updated by everyone — and, next to it, the assignment hierarchy in writing: 1) category and commitments; 2) needs expressed and recorded; 3) relevant documented incidents; 4) objective suitability; and with no compliant option, escalation, transparency, alternative and compensation. Judgment doesn't need software: it needs shared memory and written rules.
Rooms ready on arrival	An order of priority agreed with Housekeeping according to actual arrival times, and a managed wait: luggage held safely, an alternative (pool, coffee shop) and a specific time committed to — and kept.
The promised category (overbooking)	An objective, documented criterion: which reservation does the change affect least — by type of stay, occupancy and commitments made — and what real compensation applies? Never by the guest's personal characteristics. It is communicated head-on, first, with the best alternative already booked. Never let them find out on their own.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Present the room as chosen for them: "I've given you a quiet one, as you asked last year."	Debate the assignment out loud with a colleague in front of the guest. Convey that "it is what it is."	Promise a specific room number you can't guarantee. Hide fine print you know about and that they will discover at 2 a.m.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Assigning rooms in the order the reservations come in, without looking at who each one is: two minutes of efficiency, two days of complaints.
- ◆ Saving the best rooms "just in case" until they go unused: the best room left empty is wasted judgment.
- ◆ Not recording the reason for a room change: whoever runs into it next year won't have your memory.
- ◆ Treating the guest's request as a whim: for them, that request IS the hotel.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"The system suggests rooms.
Judgment assigns stays."**

This lesson's exercise

You have 6 rooms left: two with sea views, one next to the elevator and three on the ground floor facing the courtyard. Three reservations arrive today, all in the same booked category and with no special commitments: a couple who, when they mentioned their anniversary, left on record their preference for a room with a sea view, if available; a family who requested a crib and the ground floor; and a repeat guest with a noise complaint documented last year. Assign all three applying the lesson's hierarchy and — this is the important part — write the sentence you would use to present each assignment to each guest. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 6

Assigning Rooms Is a Craft

My assignment, applying the hierarchy in order — category and commitments (here, the same for all three reservations), needs expressed and recorded, documented incidents, objective suitability. The family goes to the ground floor: not because they're traveling with a baby, but because they asked for a crib and the ground floor and it's on record — without that request, the right thing would have been to ask before assuming. The repeat guest goes to the objectively quietest room available — their noise complaint is documented and still relevant — and I ALWAYS tell them so: "I've put you in the quietest part of the hotel; I remembered what happened last year." That sentence is worth more than the room.

The couple goes to a sea-view room if one is available: the preference for the view, expressed and recorded by the guest, is the assignment criterion — the anniversary only gives context to the attention (the congratulations, the authorized touch) and does not, by itself, allow you to infer a need or a preference. Without that recorded preference, the reservation would have gone into the neutral protocol like any other. And the one next to the elevator? It stays available, with no predestined owner: the protocol will assign it to the arrival it objectively fits best — whoever has no higher category committed to them and no recorded need that rules it out — and the guest is told so openly, because for more than one traveler being close to the elevator is even an advantage. When the information is missing, you don't assign by stereotype: you ask, you verify or you apply the neutral protocol. And when no option meets what was committed, the last rung of the hierarchy: escalation to the person in charge, transparency, an informed alternative and whatever compensation is appropriate. That — not the labels — is the craft.

Look at the pattern in the three presentation sentences: none of them says "it's what we had." They all say "I thought of you." The assignment is invisible; the presentation is everything.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 7

INFORMATION WORTH GOLD AND THE ART OF SAYING NO

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO GIVE PRECISE DIRECTIONS
AND SAY NO WITHOUT BREAKING THE EXPERIENCE.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

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.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 7

Information Worth Gold and the Art of Saying No

My reply: “I completely understand — with a night flight, those hours drag on forever. Today the hotel is full and your room is committed to an arrival, so I can’t give you 4:00 p.m. What I can do right now: I’ll look after your luggage, I’ll put you down to use the spa showers before you leave, and the terrace is yours until you go. Shall I book the taxi for you as well?”

Anatomy: first, the wish acknowledged with a real detail (not a plastic “I understand”). Then the limit with its true reason — “your room is committed” is information; “it’s the policy” is a wall. And the alternative isn’t one: it’s three small, concrete, immediate ones, finished off with a question that moves the conversation forward.

The mistake I read most often in this exercise: apologizing three times. You haven’t done anything wrong. The positive no isn’t apologized for: it’s accompanied.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 8

CHECK-OUT SELLS TOO

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO SAY GOODBYE, LISTEN
AND LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN FOR THE NEXT VISIT.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

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.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 8

Check-Out Sells Too

My version: I lower my voice a little — the line has no reason to hear this — and I say: "Mr. Fernández, I'm left with the feeling that something wasn't up to standard. I'm asking you sincerely, because it helps me: what did you like least?" And I stay quiet. The silence after an honest question is where the truth appears; whoever fills it with excuses scares it away.

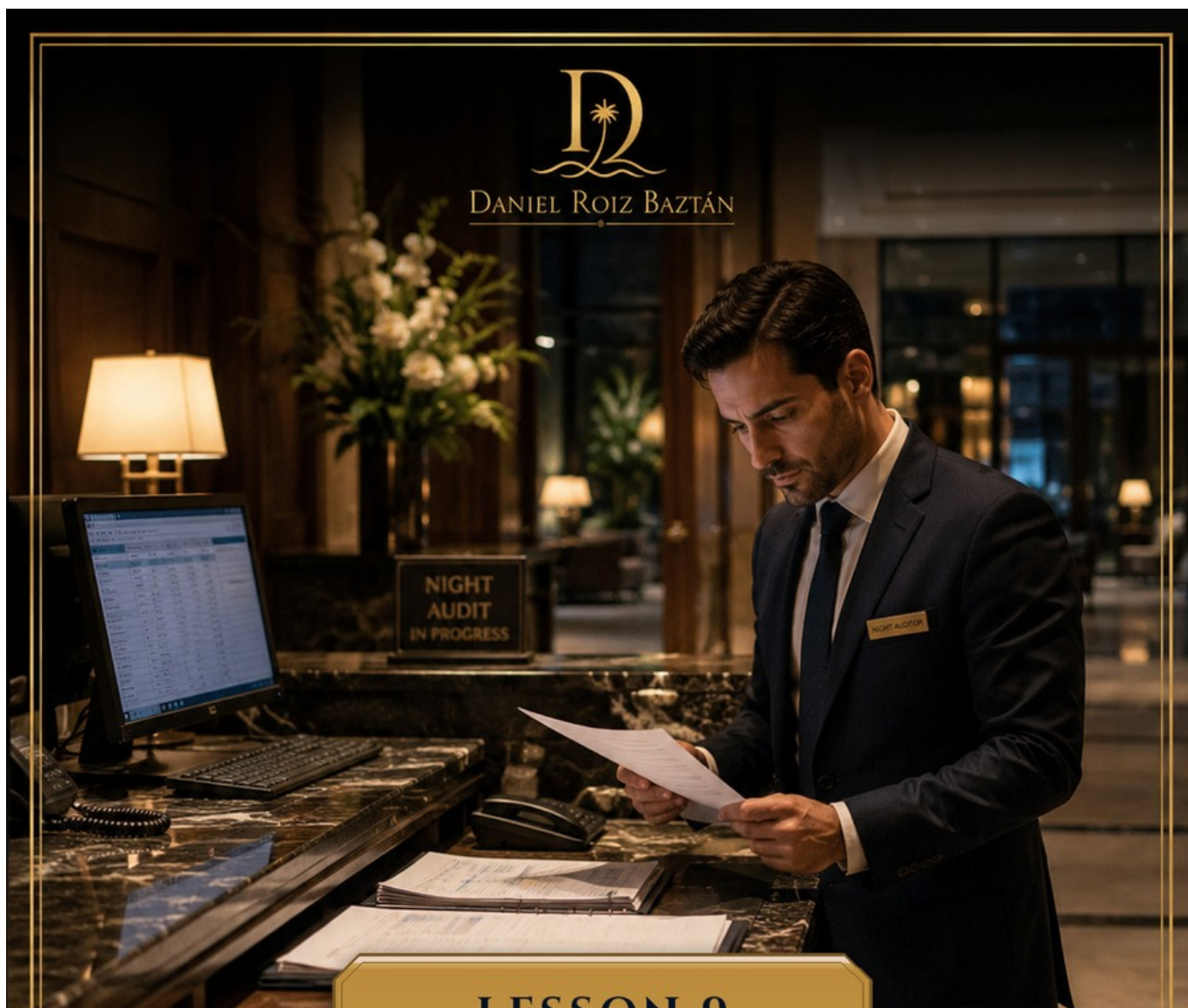
With his response I do three things in 30 seconds: I thank him for it without getting defensive ("you're right, and thank you for telling me"), I solve what can be solved right now (a charge, an arrangement) and I commit to the rest with an owner and a deadline — writing it down in front of him. And a fourth afterwards: I take it to the briefing. The truth that dies at the front desk is a public complaint in incubation.

What never to do: let him leave with his fake "all good" for the convenience of the line. That guest doesn't come back — and what's more, he writes about it.

And the B-side of the exercise: if the hotel asks for a review, the invitation must be neutral and applied by the same criteria to everyone — "If you feel like sharing how you experienced your stay, your opinion helps us improve, and the whole team reads it." Once, without asking for a specific score, without incentives and without making anything conditional on it. If there is an incident, it is dealt with first because that is what's owed; service recovery is never used to filter or steer what the guest wants to say.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 9

NIGHT: THE SHIFT NOBODY SEES

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO PROTECT
OPERATIONS WHILE THE HOTEL SLEEPS.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Night: The Shift Nobody Sees

General managers come from the people who shone when nobody was watching.

In five lines

At night the hotel seems asleep, and it is exactly the opposite: it is when the fewest people are left awake — sometimes just one, and that is only arranged when the risk assessment and the night-work protocol allow it, with means of communication and assistance always at hand. The night shift concentrates the three most serious responsibilities of the craft — the safety of those who sleep, the truth of the day's accounts and the guest who arrives broken at 3 a.m. — with support a phone call away, which is what the call chain and the night-work protocol are for: they organize the response, but they don't replace the staffing or the preventive measures that apply. That is why it is the best school of judgment there is, and why we general managers pay so much attention to who does it well.

The script, step by step

- 1. The round with all five senses.** At least twice per shift: doors, lights, noises, smells, access points. The round isn't a stroll: it is reading the building. What the night detects, the day doesn't suffer.
- 2. The close is the photograph of the day.** The night audit reconciles what was produced with what was collected and leaves the day ready to start. Do it understanding, not just executing: whoever understands a close is learning to read an entire hotel.
- 3. The 3 a.m. guest.** They arrive tired, sometimes without a reservation, sometimes with the system down. The order: first the person (a seat, water, calm), then the solution (paper registration if needed, a safe room), and at dawn, the full handover of their case.
- 4. Know whom to wake up.** Every hotel has its night-time call chain: learn it before you need it. Waking the right person in time is professionalism; not waking anyone "so as not to bother them" is the doorway to disaster.
- 5. The dawn handover.** The morning shift inherits your night: incidents, open cases, arrivals in the small hours, whatever is pending. Five minutes of orderly handover are worth an entire shift.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Company (working the shift alone)	The hotel's lone-worker protocol — means of contact, checks, whom to call — is learned before you need it. And priorities burned into memory: people's safety > the guest in front of you > the administrative close. Paperwork waits; an alarm or a guest, never.
The system (a night-time crash)	Paper templates prepared in advance (registration, pending payments, incidents) and a manual log of everything, with the time. A night without a system is documented twice as much, not half as much.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Low voice, calm presence, impeccable uniform at any hour: the night amplifies everything you do.	Let your image or your attention slip “because there’s nobody around”: there is always somebody — and it is usually the one who needs you most.	Open a room for anyone who cannot prove they are its occupant, however convincing or insistent they may be. No exceptions, at any hour.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Treating the night as a waiting shift: it is a watch shift, and the difference shows on the night something happens.
- ◆ Doing the close without understanding it: you lose the best free training in numbers this craft gives you.
- ◆ Solving something in the small hours and not putting it in writing: what isn’t in the handover didn’t happen — and it will blow up mid-morning.
- ◆ Not asking for help “so as not to bother anyone”: the boss would rather get a call at 4 a.m. than a catastrophe at 8.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“General managers come from the people
who shone when nobody was watching.”**

This lesson’s exercise

A guest arrives at 2:40 a.m., without a reservation and with the system down. Write out your complete course of action, in order: what you do with the person, what you do with the registration, what you leave ready for the handover. In the answer that follows, I share my version — and we begin Module 2: Housekeeping.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 9

Night: The Shift Nobody Sees

My order: first the person — “Welcome — you’re in good hands now: give me a few minutes and I’ll have everything sorted out for you”; a seat, water, calm. Calm conveyed truthfully: what you promise is your attention, not a control you don’t have yet. A 2:40 a.m. guest doesn’t need efficiency: they need the certainty that they have reached a safe harbor.

Then the solution with what you have: a paper form with the essentials (name, ID, contact details, license plate if they came by car), kept in your custody and never left in view; payment taken or a guarantee noted down, to be settled in the morning — and as soon as the system is back, everything goes into it and the paper is securely destroyed: paper is a bridge, not a file; and a room that I have checked MYSELF as ready — night is no time for cleaning surprises. I walk them there or explain the way in detail: a hotel in the small hours is disorienting.

And third, the handover: their case in writing, complete, first on the handover list — registration pending, payment pending and one human line: “arrived exhausted, handle gently.” If the 2:40 a.m. guest has breakfast at 9 a.m. and the morning shift greets them by name, that night was worth a review. And probably, in time, a promotion for you.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 4

**“Nobody is invisible in your lobby.
A wait that feels seen lasts half as long.”**

LESSON 5

**“The paperwork is what you have to do.
The reconfirmation, the upgrade and the welcome are what you decide to do. And
what people remember is what you decided.”**

LESSON 6

**“The system suggests rooms.
Judgment assigns stays.”**

LESSON 7

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

LESSON 8

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

LESSON 9

**“General managers come from the people
who shone when nobody was watching.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 2: Housekeeping**.

PART III

HOUSEKEEPING

Housekeeping is the most invisible department and the most decisive one: nobody writes a review about a correct room, but nobody forgives one that isn't. This part teaches you to look through the guest's eyes, to enter the most intimate space a person has away from home, to work with method even when the day gets tight, to respect objects and privacy as if they were sacred — because they are — and to hold one single truth between what the Front Office promises and what the room delivers.

Lesson 10: Inspecting the Room Through the Guest's Eyes · Lesson 11: How to Enter a Room · Lesson 12: The Cleaning Order Is a Method — and Resources Don't Change It · Lesson 13: Objects, Privacy and Trust · Lesson 14: Housekeeping, Front Office and Maintenance: One Single Truth

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 2, Housekeeping.



LESSON 10

INSPECTING THE ROOM THROUGH THE GUEST'S EYES

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO SPOT WHAT THE
GUEST WILL SEE BEFORE THEY ARRIVE.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS



IN FRONT OF THE GUEST · SEASON 1: OPERATIONS · MODULE 2: HOUSEKEEPING · LESSON 10

Inspecting the Room Through the Guest's Eyes

*It isn't clean when you finish.
It's clean when the guest finds nothing.*

In five lines

Cleaning a room and inspecting a room are two different crafts carried out by the same person. The first is done with your hands and the method; the second, with the eyes of whoever is going to sleep there tonight. The guest doesn't see your effort: they see the hair in the drain, smell what you no longer smell, find what was left behind the curtain. This lesson teaches you to do the final walk-through by switching characters: you enter as a room attendant and walk through as a guest.

The script, step by step

- 1. Enter the way they enter.** Close the door, open it again and walk in slowly: the first thing you perceive is the smell, and smell can't be seen — the room is aired, its cause is found, it is corrected. The nose decides before the eyes.
- 2. Walk it from the bed.** Sit, in your mind, where they will sit: from there you see the dust on the lamp, the stain on the ceiling, the corner that doesn't exist from the door. The perspective of rest is the one that keeps score.
- 3. Open what they will open.** Drawers, closet, curtains, minibar, faucets. The guest explores their room in the first ten minutes; your inspection has to have arrived before their curiosity.
- 4. The five critical points, always.** When there's no time for more, this is non-negotiable: smell, an impeccable bathroom, a perfect bed, working lights, security (lock, peephole, safe). Everything else can be rushed; this can't.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Time (high credits, short staff)	The five critical points + a 60-second walk-through with the guest's eyes are that day's minimum — and, at the same time, the signal that something must be readjusted: you tell the person in charge so they can redistribute workloads, reinforce the team or block inventory, because recurring short staffing isn't a standard: it is a staffing level that needs correcting (lesson 45). Cutting out the inspection entirely is giving away tonight's complaint.
Products or a finishing scent	The best perfume for a room is ventilation and the cause corrected. An air freshener that masks is a promise the guest sees through within an hour.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Greet every guest you pass in the corridor, by name if you know it. Move the cart aside to let them by.	Block the corridor without an apology. Work with music or your phone on where you can be heard.	Comment in the corridor on the state of a room or a guest: hotel walls are thin, and reputations even thinner.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Inspecting from the doorway: from there every room looks fine; none is scored from there.
- ◆ Trusting the memory of the method ("I already did that"): the inspection exists precisely because memory fails.
- ◆ Leaving the final touch for "if there's time left": the straight curtain and the centered pillow are 5% of the work and 30% of the perception.
- ◆ Not reporting what you find and can't resolve (a stain, a breakdown, a persistent smell): inspecting without reporting is looking without seeing.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"The room isn't clean when you finish.
It's clean when the guest finds nothing."**

This lesson's exercise

Think of the last room you cleaned or slept in: write down the 3 most likely faults a guest would find, and at exactly what point in a 60-second walk-through you would have detected them. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 10

Inspecting the Room Through the Guest's Eyes

The three flaws that show up most when I do this inspection for real, in any hotel in the world: one of smell, one of perspective and one of curiosity.

The smell one: the lingering odor (damp, stale tobacco, drains) that the room attendant no longer notices because she has been on the floor for four hours. It's caught in the first second of the walk-through — walking back in with a fresh nose. The perspective one: the dust or the stain visible only from the bed (lamp, ceiling, top of the headboard). It's caught by sitting where the guest will sit — second 20. And the curiosity one: what was left inside whatever opens — the drawer with the previous guest's sock, the half-restocked minibar. It's caught by opening — seconds 30 to 50.

If your three flaws match these, you already think like an inspector. If you found others, even better: add them to your mental list. Everyone's list is built from their own scares.



LESSON 11

HOW TO ENTER A ROOM

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO PROTECT THE
GUEST'S PRIVACY AND ACT PROFESSIONALLY.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS



IN FRONT OF THE GUEST · SEASON 1: OPERATIONS · MODULE 2: HOUSEKEEPING · LESSON 11

How to Enter a Room

*That door is the border between your work and their privacy.
You cross it by asking permission, always.*

In five lines

No school devotes an entire class to opening a door, and it is one of the most serious things your craft will have you do: enter, every day, the most intimate space a person has outside their home. The protocol isn't bureaucracy — it is respect turned into method, and it protects you both: the guest, from intrusion; you, from suspicion. This lesson sets it out step by step, including the situation nobody explains to you: what to do when the guest is inside.

The script, step by step

- 1. Knock twice, announcing yourself.** Two firm knocks and a clear voice: "Housekeeping, good morning." Your voice matters as much as your knuckle: whoever is inside has the right to know who is knocking.
- 2. Really wait.** Count to ten, slowly. The rush of your room sheet can't cost anyone a fright. Knock a second time before using the key.
- 3. Open while announcing yourself again, with a pause.** The door is opened slowly, with another "Housekeeping — may I come in?" into the gap. If there is a Do Not Disturb sign, a chain or any sign that someone is there — noise, the shower, the television — the door is closed and you come back later. Always.
- 4. If the guest is inside:** a brief apology, without drama ("Excuse me, I'll come back later"), a calm withdrawal and offer them a time: "Would around noon suit you?" Their comfort comes before your route, no exceptions.
- 5. While you work: the door open and the cart as a flag.** The door wide open and the cart visible at the threshold say two things: work is being done here, and there is nothing to hide here. It is your transparency and your protection.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Service signs / occupancy indicators	The voice protocol is doubled: two rounds of knocking and announcing, a longer pause, and coordination with the Front Office on confirmed departures before entering with the key.
Reliable occupancy information (system down)	Every room not confirmed as a departure is assumed to be occupied. When in doubt, you knock, announce yourself and check with the Front Office. Never go in "because it was next on the list."

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Announce yourself, ask permission, explain what you've come to do, thank them when you leave. Treat their mess with the same neutrality as their tidiness.	Enter wearing earphones or talking on the phone. Comment on their belongings, not even as a joke. Use their bathroom, their chair or their balcony.	Touch money, jewelry or personal items any more than is essential for cleaning. Stay alone with a minor in the room: if a child is alone, you report it and come back with someone. Tell outside what you saw inside.

Common mistakes

- ◆ The token knock with the key already in the lock: knocking isn't a formality before going in; it is a question whose answer you wait for.
- ◆ Taking silence as permission the first time: the person asleep, the one in the shower and the one wearing earphones are silent too.
- ◆ Closing the door "to work in peace": a closed door with you inside leaves you as unprotected as it makes the guest uncomfortable.
- ◆ Giving in to "come in, come in" without judgment: the guest's kindness doesn't replace your protocol (we work on it in the exercise).

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"That door is the border between your work and their privacy.
You cross it by asking permission, always."**

This lesson's exercise

You knock, the door opens and the guest, in a bathrobe, tells you, "Come in, come in, just do your thing." What exactly do you do and what do you say? Think before you answer: there is a kind option, a comfortable option and a professional option — and only one of the three protects both you and them. In the answer that follows, I share mine.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 11

How to Enter a Room

The kind one is going in ("if he's the one asking..."). The convenient one is going in (you get ahead on your work). The professional one is NOT going in: "Thank you, but I'll let you enjoy your breakfast in peace — I'll come back in a little while. Would around 12 noon suit you?" A smile, a step back, a specific time.

Why, if he invited you himself? Because a courtesy invitation is not real consent — in a minute that guest in a bathrobe will feel uncomfortable with you inside, and the discomfort is always paid for by the uniform — and because working with a half-dressed guest in a closed room leaves you unprotected: in any misunderstanding, it's your word against his. The protocol exists precisely so that you never end up on that ground.

A rule to keep: the guest's kindness doesn't replace your protocol. Your protocol protects him too — even if he doesn't know it.



LESSON 12

**THE CLEANING ORDER IS A METHOD —
AND RESOURCES DON'T CHANGE IT**

**TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO CLEAN WITH
SEQUENCE, SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY.**

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Cleaning Order Is a Method — and Resources Don't Change It

When resources run short, never cut the method short.

In five lines

The order in which a room is cleaned isn't an executive housekeeper's quirk: it is hygiene (from clean to dirty, from top to bottom), it is time (not undoing what has been done) and it is safety. And it has a virtue worth gold when resources are tight: method is the only thing that never runs out. Product, linen or amenities may run short; if the mental order stays intact, the standard can be defended. This lesson separates precisely what can be adapted from what is never touched.

The script, step by step

1. **The why behind the order.** You air the room first (the air works for free while you work), you collect and remove what is dirty, you clean from top to bottom (dust falls) and from the cleanest to the dirtiest (the bathroom last, or with its own materials). Break the order and you pay twice for the same work.
2. **What can be adapted.** Product brands, cloths, amenity quantities, the presentation detail: all of that allows for substitution and creativity. A single principle governs it: substitution can never compromise hygiene or safety.
3. **What is non-negotiable.** Bathroom disinfection, a complete change of linen and towels between guests, everything that touches mouth or skin (glasses, cups), and the elementary chemical rule: cleaning products are never mixed with each other or decanted into unlabeled containers. Here, no shortage is an excuse.
4. **Limited resources are managed, not improvised.** When something is missing, the decision isn't yours alone: you tell the executive housekeeper what there is and what is missing, you set priorities together (checkouts before stayovers, today's arrivals before everything) and it gets recorded — because what is missing today is tomorrow's order.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
The specific product	A substitution scale agreed by the executive housekeeper (what replaces what, in what dose) — never individual improvisations with chemicals. And whatever touches critical hygiene isn't "stretched": you prioritize where to use it.
Enough linen or towels	Absolute priority: checkouts with an arrival today > arrivals > stayovers who ask for it > routine change. The Front Office is told what isn't covered BEFORE the guest discovers it, with a solution and a time.
Amenities	They are distributed with judgment (arrivals first) and the gap is made up for with impeccable presentation and a short message from the Front Office to the guest if appropriate. The amenity is a detail; the bed and the bathroom are the contract.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
If a guest asks you for something in the corridor, write it down in front of them and confirm when they will have it — and make sure they do.	Pass on the stress of the shift (“we can’t keep up,” “there’s nothing left”): your shortage isn’t their problem; managing it is your job.	Skip a hygiene non-negotiable to make the day’s credits add up. That shortcut isn’t seen today — and it is always paid for.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing speed with method: whoever is fast without order repeats work; whoever is orderly is fast without trying.
- ◆ Keeping quiet about what is missing “so as not to cause problems”: the executive housekeeper can’t order what they don’t know is missing.
- ◆ Adapting in secret: any substitution that isn’t communicated turns your solution today into your colleague’s chaos tomorrow.
- ◆ Treating the method as a punishment: the method is what lets you leave on time with your floor done right.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“When resources run short,
never cut the method short.”**

This lesson’s exercise

You are short of amenities and towels to finish the floor, with three checkouts that become arrivals this afternoon. Write your complete decision: what you prioritize and in what order, what you tell the executive housekeeper and what the Front Office should know before the arrivals. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 12

The Cleaning Order Is a Method — and Resources Don’t Change It

My decision: the towels go, in full sets, to the three departures-turned-arrivals — the guest checking in today is the absolute priority, because their first impression gets no second chance. The remaining amenities go to arrivals too; the gap in stayover rooms is handled on request (“Need amenities? You’ll have them in 10 minutes.”) instead of handing out scarcity blindly.

The message to the executive housekeeper isn’t “we’re short of towels”: it’s “I have X, I need Y to cover Z arrivals; I’ve prioritized like this; can you confirm?” — with numbers. And the Front Office must know BEFORE 2:00 p.m. which rooms are left without a full set of supplies and when they will be completed, so that no promise is made on false grounds.

Look at the pattern: limited resources, well managed, have three verbs — prioritize, communicate, record — and no “we’ll see.” Whoever improvises alone fails in company.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 13

OBJECTS, PRIVACY AND TRUST

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO PROTECT THE
GUEST'S BELONGINGS AND PRIVACY.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Objects, Privacy and Trust

*Honesty isn't supervised: it's who you are.
And a whole career can fit in the wrong pocket.*

In five lines

Housekeeping staff go where nobody else goes: into a stranger's intimate space, with their belongings in plain sight and no witnesses. That privilege rests on two pillars that this lesson turns into protocol: the flawless handling of what the guest leaves — forgotten or in plain view — and absolute discretion about what you see. It isn't just ethics: it is the protection of your career, because on this ground a single shadow weighs more than a thousand perfect rooms.

The script, step by step

- 1. Their things are untouchable.** In an occupied room you clean around their belongings: they are moved only as much as is essential and put back in their exact place. Tidying is fine; reorganizing their life is not.
- 2. Money and valuables in plain sight, in an occupied room.** You don't touch them, you clean around them, and if the amount or the situation makes you uneasy (a lot of cash, loose jewelry), you tell the executive housekeeper that same shift: so there is a record that it was there — and that you reported it. The record protects you.
- 3. An item left behind in a checkout room.** It is logged immediately: what, where, room, date, time and who found it; it is handed to the executive housekeeper the same shift; if it is money or valuables, with a second witness for the count and the seal. The item travels with its paperwork, always.
- 4. Discretion as a uniform.** What you see inside — who was there, how they lived, what there was — doesn't exist outside. Not to your colleague in the floor pantry, not to your family at home, and never on social media. The trust of a thousand guests who don't know you rests on your silence.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
A system for logging found items	An official department logbook will do — never a personal note — recording the date, time, room, description and the signatures of whoever finds the item and whoever receives it; kept by the executive housekeeper, consulted only by whoever manages found items, retained for the period defined in the protocol — the period needed for its purpose and the applicable obligations, never longer — and securely destroyed when that period expires. The log doesn't need software; it needs discipline and two signatures.
A lost-and-found box or storeroom	A sealed envelope or bag with the log label, handed to the executive housekeeper the same day. What must never happen is for an item to spend the night in a pocket or on a cart.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Treat their belongings as untouchable and their privacy as sacred. Put each thing back in its exact place.	Move belongings "to tidy up" more than necessary. Comment among colleagues on what there is or what you saw in a room.	Keep anything, however small or abandoned it may seem. Photograph the inside of a room. Tell outside what you saw inside — discretion has no day off.

Common mistakes

- ◆ The "I'll hand it in later": the time between finding and logging is exactly the time in which you become a suspect without having done anything.
- ◆ Logging without detail ("a bracelet"): a poor description turns the return into a dispute.
- ◆ Showing off guest anecdotes outside work: every story you tell teaches others what you would tell about them.
- ◆ Keeping quiet about what made you uneasy (too much money, a strange situation) to avoid complications: reporting it in time is your shield, not your problem.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"Honesty isn't supervised: it's who you are.
And a whole career can fit in the wrong pocket."**

This lesson's exercise

Two scenes, two written answers: (a) loose money on the nightstand in an OCCUPIED room; (b) an envelope of cash left behind in a CHECKOUT room. Step by step, what you do in each one, with whom and what gets recorded. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 13

Objects, Privacy and Trust

Scene (a), occupied: the money is NOT touched — not even to "straighten it up." You clean around it, leave it exactly where it is, and if the amount or the situation worries you, you tell the executive housekeeper that same shift so there's a record: it was there, and you reported it. That record is your shield if tomorrow something is "missing."

Scene (b), departure: it's a valuable lost-and-found item — full, immediate protocol: you notify the executive housekeeper BEFORE moving anything, if possible; the count is done with a witness; it is recorded (room, date, time, amount, who found it, who received it), sealed and handed in that same shift. The envelope never waits in a pocket or on a cart "until I finish the floor": the time between finding and recording is exactly the time in which you become a suspect without having done a thing.

And the part that wasn't in the question: in neither scene is the find discussed in the floor pantry. Discretion applies inward too.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 14

HOUSEKEEPING, FRONT OFFICE AND MAINTENANCE: ONE SINGLE TRUTH

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO COORDINATE THREE
TEAMS WITH A SINGLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Housekeeping, Front Office and Maintenance: One Single Truth

*Your floor ends where someone else's promise begins.
Giving notice is serving.*

In five lines

Lesson 3 taught you that the hotel is a system; this one teaches you to speak its language from Housekeeping. Room statuses are that language: when you say “clean,” you are authorizing the Front Office to make a promise, and when you keep quiet about a breakdown, you are signing a complaint in someone else's handwriting. Coordination isn't a meeting: it is five daily habits — the truthful status, the understood priority, the well-written work order, negotiation without drama and the informed close-out — that turn three departments into a single hotel.

The script, step by step

- 1. The room status is a promise.** “Clean” means a guest can walk in NOW. Marking it early to make your sheet add up is manufacturing the worst possible first impression, with your signature on it.
- 2. Understand the priority, not just the list.** Today's arrivals come first, and within them, those with a confirmed early time. If the Front Office knows the family arrives at 2:00 p.m., your cleaning order is half of its promise.
- 3. The well-written work order.** What is failing, exactly where, since when, how urgent — and whether it affects a guest in the room or an arrival. A vague work order gets handled late; a precise one gets handled first.
- 4. When the Front Office asks for it “now.”** No drama and no heroics: tell the truth about your times (“214 in 20 minutes, I'm halfway through 218”), propose the possible order and let whoever has the full information decide. Negotiating the order is professional; promising the impossible is not.
- 5. The floor close-out informs.** When you finish: what was done, what is pending and why, which breakdowns are still open. Your floor is finished when the next shift and the Front Office know exactly what they are inheriting.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Radios or internal phones	Fixed coordination points and times with the Front Office (for example, at half past every hour) and a single physical channel for urgent matters. Coordination that is poor in resources must be rich in discipline.
The status system (down)	A whiteboard or a single shared sheet, with only one person authorized to update it per shift. Two different lists are worse than none: they are two truths.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
If a guest asks you about their room in the corridor, contact the Front Office YOURSELF and give them an answer with a time — walk them there if you can.	Answer “that’s a Front Office thing” and carry on with your cart: for them, your uniform is the whole hotel.	Promise times or rooms you don’t control. The promise you can’t keep is paid for by a colleague — and the relationship is paid for by the hotel.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Marking a room clean when it’s “almost done”: that almost is the exact distance between your report and the guest’s face as they walk in.
- ◆ Keeping the small breakdown to yourself “because it’s no big deal”: in a hotel, silence is a breakdown (lesson 3) — and today’s leak is Friday’s flood.
- ◆ Fighting the Front Office’s “now” as if it were an insult: they aren’t ordering you around; they are handing you the visible part of a promise.
- ◆ Closing the floor without a handover: what isn’t reported doesn’t exist, and what doesn’t exist blows up on someone else’s shift.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Your floor ends where someone else’s promise begins.
Giving notice is serving.”**

This lesson’s exercise

The Front Office asks you “now” for a room you have just started, and you have another one half done with an arrival at 4:00 p.m. Write your exact answer to the Front Office (the truth about your times and your proposed order), what you reorganize and what you report when you close out. In the answer that follows, I share my version — and with it, we close Module 2.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 14

Housekeeping, Front Office and Maintenance: One Single Truth

My word-for-word reply to the Front Office: “Let me give you my real timings: the one you’re asking for is started — ready in 20 minutes. 218, with an arrival at 4:00 p.m., is half done. I can finish yours now and close 218 at 3:30 p.m., or do it the other way around if your arrival is earlier. What’s your real time?” — and let whoever has the full picture decide.

Look at the three pieces: the truth about timings (no heroic “right this minute”), a proposed order (not a problem, two options) and the question that brings in the information you’re missing. That’s how professionals negotiate with each other: no drama, no “well, I’ve got my own work too,” no heroes.

And that day’s floor close-out includes an extra line: which arrival was given priority and what was pushed back. With this you close Module 2 knowing what a veteran executive housekeeper knows: in a hotel, information IS service. In the next module we start looking after guests in a different way: Guest Relations.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 10

**“The room isn’t clean when you finish.
It’s clean when the guest finds nothing.”**

LESSON 11

**“That door is the border between your work and their privacy.
You cross it by asking permission, always.”**

LESSON 12

**“When resources run short,
never cut the method short.”**

LESSON 13

**“Honesty isn’t supervised: it’s who you are.
And a whole career can fit in the wrong pocket.”**

LESSON 14

**“Your floor ends where someone else’s promise begins.
Giving notice is serving.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 3: Guest Relations**.

PART IV

GUEST RELATIONS

There is a jump in level that doesn't depend on your job or your uniform: the one that separates solving from anticipating. This part teaches you to read what the guest hasn't asked for yet, to build the hotel's memory so the guest never has to repeat themselves, and the cheapest and most forgotten tool of the craft: follow-up — the two-hour call that turns an incident into a story the guest will tell in the hotel's favor.

Lesson 15: Owning the Relationship: Anticipate Before You Resolve · Lesson 16: VIPs, Repeat Guests and Occasions: The Hotel's Memory · Lesson 17: Follow-Up: The Two-Hour Call

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 3, Guest Relations.



LESSON 15

OWNING THE RELATIONSHIP: ANTICIPATE BEFORE YOU RESOLVE

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO ANTICIPATE AND
STAY WITH THE GUEST UNTIL THE END.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Owning the Relationship: Anticipate Before You Resolve

*Whoever solves is good.
Whoever anticipates is in another league.*

In five lines

Guest Relations is not the complaints window: it is the position that reads the entire stay and acts before the problem speaks up. In the best hotels in the world, anticipation has one condition: that it goes unnoticed. If the guest mentions in passing that they're getting up early, the wake-up call is offered before they ask for it; if yesterday they asked for strong coffee, today it arrives strong without their asking. The magic lies in making it look like coincidence, not protocol. This lesson trains the muscle of seeing it coming.

The script, step by step

- 1. Listen to what is said in passing.** Real needs are almost never requested: they are mentioned. "What a grueling flight," "I'm up early tomorrow," "my wife has a cold." Every passing remark is an unspoken request — the professional who picks it up crafts anticipation.
- 2. Read the signs of a stay going wrong.** The guest who stops saying hello, the table that no longer comes back to the restaurant, the curt "everything's fine," the room that asks not to be disturbed for three days. Nobody has complained yet — and that "yet" is your golden window.
- 3. Act small and in time.** Anticipation isn't about big gestures: it's the umbrella at the door when rain threatens, the quiet table without being asked, the "I saw you're leaving early: I'll have breakfast ready for you." Small + in time beats big + late, always.
- 4. Without intruding.** Anticipating isn't watching or smothering: if the guest senses they are being observed, the magic turns into discomfort. The measure is simple: act on what they gave you (a sentence, a gesture), never on what you had to chase.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Profile system or CRM	A Guest Relations medium authorized by the hotel — with access limited to those who serve — and five minutes in the briefing are enough: what was heard yesterday — when it is relevant to the service, and only then — becomes a gesture today. Anticipation is team discipline, not software — and its memory lives in the established channel, not in personal notes.
Nothing material to offer	The most valuable anticipation is information and management: warning about the weather, booking before it fills up, handling a formality ahead of time. Anticipating costs nothing: it is acting before the need turns into an incident.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Pick up the passing remark, note it and turn it into a gesture — as if it were coincidence.	Turn attention into an interrogation or a constant presence. Show off the gesture (“Have you seen what we’ve prepared for you?”).	Use guest information for anything other than serving them better. Discuss their circumstances with anyone who doesn’t need to know them.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Waiting for the complaint before acting: by the time the guest puts the problem into words, half the solution is already late.
- ◆ Anticipating only for the VIP: the faint signal from the discreet guest is exactly as valuable — and more gratefully received.
- ◆ Picking up the signal and not passing it on: individual anticipation that doesn’t travel to the team dies with your shift.
- ◆ Confusing anticipation with mind reading: you don’t invent what the guest will want; you listen to what they already said.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Whoever solves is good.
Whoever anticipates is in another league.”**

This lesson’s exercise

Write down three early signs of a stay that is going wrong — before anyone has complained — and, for each one, the small, timely gesture you would act with. In the answer that follows, I share mine.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 15

Owning the Relationship: Anticipate Before You Resolve

My three signs, the ones I look for in any hotel I run: the greeting that fades (the guest who was smiling on Monday and walks past looking at the floor on Wednesday), the routine that breaks (the couple who came back to the restaurant every night and stop coming) and the “Do Not Disturb” that lasts longer than usual. None of them is a complaint. All three are a complaint incubating.

And the gesture: small, natural, no interrogation. A “Mr. Díaz, is everything to your liking? I’m really asking” when you cross paths at a quiet moment — not in an ambush. If something is wrong, you’ve just earned the chance to hear it before a review does. If everything is fine, you’ve just shown that the hotel pays attention.

The key almost nobody executes: these signs are caught as a team. The server sees the broken routine; the room attendant, the sign left on the door too long; the front desk, the faded greeting. If they travel to the briefing, the whole hotel anticipates. If each person keeps them, nobody does.



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LESSON 16

VIPS, REPEAT GUESTS AND OCCASIONS: THE HOTEL'S MEMORY

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO RECOGNIZE,
REMEMBER AND PERSONALIZE EVERY STAY.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

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.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 16

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

My arrival for that guest: a room in a quiet area assigned in advance — without him asking, because he already asked once and once is enough. In the greeting, his history: "Welcome back; I've prepared a quiet room for you, like the one on your last visit." Eight words that say "we remember you."

And the other two details working in silence: I let the breakfast team know he's an early riser — his usual table ready first thing, his coffee coming out with no wait — and no pushing him to socialize: he travels alone for a reason, and lesson 19 will teach you that the bubble is respected.

Notice the pattern: three humble details, zero euros, and that guest has just decided where he'll stay for the next ten years. Loyalty isn't crafted by the points program: it's crafted by memory put into practice.



LESSON 17

FOLLOW-UP: THE TWO-HOUR CALL

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO CHECK THAT THE
SOLUTION WORKED AND CLOSE THE LOOP.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Follow-Up: The Two-Hour Call

*Solving isn't closing.
It's verifying.*

In five lines

Almost every hotel solves; almost none verifies. And right there, in that gap, it is decided whether a problem leaves a scar or creates an ambassador. The two-hour call — “Mrs. Díaz, is the air conditioning in your room working properly now?” — is the cheapest and least-used tool in the industry: it turns a breakdown into proof that the hotel doesn't let go of the matter until the guest is fine. In the best hotels, the response to a mistake is part of the standard, not an exception: a problem resolved extraordinarily well generates more loyalty than a stay without incidents.

The script, step by step

- 1. Solve with an owner.** Every incident has a named person responsible from minute one — whoever received it, until they formally hand it over to someone else. “It's being handled” without an owner is an orphaned problem.
- 2. Close the loop with whoever suffered it.** Fixing the air conditioning doesn't close the incident: the guest closes it. Two hours later (sooner if it was serious), a brief contact: “Is everything to your liking now?” If the answer is lukewarm, the incident is still open — and you have just found out in time. And the loop doesn't close that day: the guest who had an incident stays on Guest Relations' radar until the end of their stay, and at their farewell it is mentioned and they are thanked. The guest with even the smallest complaint is treated with five-star delicacy: that is exactly where their return is decided.
- 3. Compensate with proportion and judgment.** Not everything deserves compensation; almost everything deserves acknowledgment. The healthy scale: a sincere apology → a small gesture → material compensation only when the harm was real. Over-compensating teaches people to complain; under-acknowledging teaches them to leave.
- 4. Record and learn.** Every closed incident feeds two lists: what failed (for Maintenance, Housekeeping or whoever it concerns) and how we responded (for the briefing). The hotel that records turns its mistakes into free training.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Nothing material to compensate with	The follow-up IS the compensation: the call, the face, the “we haven't let it go.” Most guests don't want gifts: they want to feel important to the hotel.
Time (an overloaded shift)	The follow-up fits into 40 seconds and delegates well: any informed colleague can make the call — the system from lesson 3 in action. What you cannot do is not do it.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Give your name when you take the incident and reappear when you verify it: the same face that heard the problem confirms the solution.	Hide behind another department ("that's Maintenance's job") or tell the guest about the internal difficulties of fixing it.	Consider an incident closed without asking the guest. Promise compensation that never arrives: the second disappointment weighs twice as much as the first.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Solving the technical problem and ignoring the emotional one: the air conditioning is cooling again, but the guest is still hot under the collar.
- ◆ The follow-up call with a survey script: two human sentences are worth more than five form questions.
- ◆ Compensating to keep the guest quiet in the review: it shows, it offends and it costs dearly. You compensate to repair, not to buy.
- ◆ Not giving notice of the delay: a problem that takes time, with information, is management; the same problem in silence is abandonment.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"Solving isn't closing.
It's verifying."**

This lesson's exercise

Write your two-hour call, word for word, for this case: a hot-water breakdown fixed this morning in a family's room. A 60-second script at most: greeting, verification, closing. In the answer that follows, I share mine — and we begin Module 4: Butler and Personalized Service.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 17

Follow-Up: The Two-Hour Call

My call: "Good afternoon, Mrs. Díaz, this is [name] from the front desk — we spoke this morning about the hot water. I'm calling just to confirm that everything was sorted out and that all four of you were able to shower without any problem. [...] I'm so glad to hear that. And thank you for your patience this morning: that was no way to start a vacation day. If you need anything, you know where to find me." Forty seconds.

Anatomy: I introduce myself and link myself to the problem (the same face that heard it verifies the solution — that's what having an owner means); I ask about the result as they lived it, not the technical one ("all four of you were able to shower" — it's a family, the detail matters); I acknowledge the bad moment without dramatizing it; and I leave the door open with my name.

What ISN'T there: no technical excuses, no "we hope you'll give us a good rating," no five survey questions. Two human sentences. If the answer had been lukewarm — "well, now it comes out tepid" — the incident would still be open, and I would have found out in time. That is verifying.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 15

**“Whoever solves is good.
Whoever anticipates is in another league.”**

LESSON 16

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

LESSON 17

**“Solving isn't closing.
It's verifying.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 4: Butler and Personalized Service**.

PART V

BUTLER AND PERSONALIZED SERVICE

Luxury is not marble: it is execution. This part takes apart the idea that personalized service is something for expensive hotels and teaches its three pillars — impeccable execution, presence without intrusion and professional discretion — as what they are: ways of working that any professional can adopt tomorrow, however many stars the hotel has.

Lesson 18: Luxury Is Not a Department: It Is Execution · Lesson 19: Bell Staff, Concierge and Butler Service: Presence Without Intrusion · Lesson 20: Discretion: What You See, You Keep to Yourself

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 4, Butler Service and Personalized Service.



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LESSON 18

LUXURY IS NOT A DEPARTMENT: IT IS EXECUTION

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO TURN LUXURY INTO
PRECISION, PRESENCE AND CONSISTENCY.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Luxury Is Not a Department: It Is Execution

*The same task, done with intention,
changes category.*

In five lines

There is an idea that luxury belongs to expensive hotels: marble, brands and suites. It's false. Marble can be bought; luxury has to be executed. Serving a coffee is a task; serving it remembering how they take it, in the spot where they liked to sit yesterday, without their asking, is luxury — and it costs the same. In the most distinguished hotels in the world, what the guest doesn't notice is as important as what they do notice: the silent corridor, the invisible detail, the intention in every element. That layer of intention can be applied in any hotel in the world, on any budget. This lesson teaches you to apply it.

The script, step by step

- 1. Intention as an ingredient.** The difference between correct and extraordinary is rarely the what: it's the how and the why. Ask yourself with every task: am I doing this to comply, or for someone? The answer shows in the result even if nobody can explain why.
- 2. The invisible detail.** What the guest doesn't see reaches them too: the glass without fingerprints, the door that doesn't creak, the uniform still pressed at ten at night. Luxury is the sum of a hundred small things nobody applauds — and that together create the feeling of being in good hands.
- 3. Consistency sustains the magic.** A great hotel tells a single story: the manner, the order, the tone, the care all speak the same language. When something breaks it — a careless gesture, a forgotten corner, a server who doesn't know their menu — the whole story suffers. You are a chapter of that story on every shift.
- 4. Elevate your task, not your position.** You don't need a promotion to work at the luxury layer: you need to execute today's task with anticipation, precision and pride. Promotions, besides, chase exactly those who already work this way.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Luxury facilities or materials	The luxury layer goes on top of what there is: precision, impeccable cleanliness, punctuality, exquisite treatment. A simple hotel executed with intention outperforms an expensive one executed half-heartedly — and the guest can tell the difference.
Specific luxury training	The teacher is in your hotel: identify the colleague everyone recognizes as the best and watch them for a week. Luxury is learned by watching those who carry it inside them at work.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Execute every task as if the guest were going to notice it — because the sum of them does. Take care of the whole scene: your area, your uniform, your tone.	Save your best care for “when someone important comes”: intermittent intention isn’t intention, it’s theater.	Break the hotel’s story in front of the guest: disdain for a detail, complaining about the shift, the “it is what it is.” One chapter out of tune spoils the whole book.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing luxury with servility or ceremony: true luxury is serene, warm and free of fuss.
- ◆ Believing it can’t be done without a budget: 80% of perceived luxury is execution, and execution is free.
- ◆ Looking after the visible and neglecting the invisible: the invisible is precisely where the feeling of quality is decided.
- ◆ Waiting to be asked: the luxury layer is applied out of your own sense of craft, not on instruction.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Marble can be bought.
Luxury has to be executed.”**

This lesson’s exercise

Choose the most ordinary task of your job — the one you do a hundred times without thinking — and describe it executed at the luxury layer: what changes in the preparation, in the gesture and in the closing. Without spending a single cent more. In the answer that follows, I share my example.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 18

Luxury Is Not a Department: It Is Execution

My example, with the humblest task there is: handing over a room key. Ordinary version: the card is encoded and slid across the desk, “room 214.” It does the job. Nobody remembers it.

Luxury-layer version, same time and same cost: the card is handed over in person — not slid — looking them in the eye, with directions included (“second floor, to the right as you come out of the elevator; you’re going to like it: it’s one of the quiet ones”) and a close that uses their name. In the preparation, thirty seconds earlier: checking that the room you’re about to promise is truly ready. In the gesture, the hand and the eyes. In the close, the host.

Notice what changed: nothing material. The intention changed — it stopped being a procedure performed for a line and became a moment performed for a person. That is the layer. And it can be put on top of any task, in any job, in any hotel in the world. Yours included.



LESSON 19

BELL STAFF, CONCIERGE AND BUTLER SERVICE: PRESENCE WITHOUT INTRUSION

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO BE PRESENT
WITHOUT INTRUDING ON THE GUEST'S SPACE.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Bell Staff, Concierge and Butler Service: Presence Without Intrusion

*Being available without hovering:
that is the distance of the craft.*

In five lines

From the luggage to the unspoken wish there is one single chain of craft: the bell staff who get there before anyone calls them, the concierge who turns a question into a plan, the butler who serves without being seen. All three master the finest skill in service: the right distance. Knowing when NOT to step in is as important as knowing when to do it — the guest doesn't want to be greeted every time they cross the lobby or interrupted mid-bite. Reading the moment and respecting each person's bubble, with the same precision with which their needs are attended to: that is presence without intrusion.

The script, step by step

- 1. Available shows; hovering bothers.** Availability is posture, gaze and location: being where you can easily be found, with open attention. Intrusion is constant initiative: offering, asking, appearing. The first reassures; the second smothers.
- 2. Read the bubble.** Every guest brings their own: the one who wants conversation, the one who wants silence, the one who today wants the opposite of yesterday. The signs are clear if you look: headphones, an open book, a quick pace, a searching glance. The craft is serving the person in front of you, not the imaginary guest from the manual.
- 3. The unspoken wish.** "I don't need anything" is almost never literal: it means "don't crowd me." You keep serving in silence: the information placed within reach, the gesture prepared just in case, the door left open with a single sentence — "I'm here if you change your mind" — and a real withdrawal.
- 4. Turn the question into a plan.** When the guest does approach, the short answer is a formality; the plan is a service: "somewhere for dinner?" is answered with two options to suit their plans for the evening, the booking offered and the way there explained. The concierge doesn't inform: they sort out the night.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Formal concierge or butler service	The function exists even if the position doesn't: any employee can be the concierge of their area — knowing the destination, having two honest recommendations and knowing whom to refer what they don't know.
Knowledge of the destination	It is built as a team: each person brings their two genuine places to the briefing and in a week the whole hotel has its own menu of recommendations.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Be visible and accessible, greet with your eyes, step in when the signal calls for it — and withdraw when it doesn't.	Interrupt conversations or meals to ask "whether everything is all right." Chase the guest down the corridors with offers.	Insist after a "no, thank you": the second offer is no longer service, it's pressure. And never make the guest feel that their wish for silence is a problem.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing attention with constant presence: great service is felt, not seen walking past every two minutes.
- ◆ The mechanical greeting at every crossing: by the fourth time, the repeated "good morning" is noise, not courtesy.
- ◆ Answering the question and not the plan: the guest didn't want an address — they wanted a good night.
- ◆ Taking the bubble as personal rejection: the guest who doesn't want to talk today will look for you, of all people, tomorrow, because you respected their silence.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"Knowing when not to step in
is half the art of serving."**

This lesson's exercise

A guest tells you "I don't need anything, thank you," kindly but firmly. Describe how you keep serving them for the rest of their stay without bothering them even once: what you prepare, what you observe, what your one sentence is. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 19

Bell Staff, Concierge and Butler Service: Presence Without Intrusion

My service for that guest has three layers, and none of them knocks on his door. First: information within reach without a personal handover — the map, the schedules and a written recommendation waiting for him in the room, not in his face. Second: observation from a distance — what he uses, what he avoids, what time he moves around; if he comes down every day at seven to go running, the cold water and the towel will be at the gym at five to seven. No note, no signature, no credit claimed.

And third: the only sentence, said just once and at the start: "Since you'd rather be left in peace, we won't disturb you — but I'm [name], and I'm one ring away if you change your mind." After that, real silence: we greet him when he greets us, we talk to him when he talks to us.

The result, almost always, is the same: on the last day, that guest goes looking for precisely the person who didn't chase him — to thank them. A respected bubble is the most remembered service, because it is the rarest to find.



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LESSON 20

DISCRETION: WHAT YOU SEE, YOU KEEP TO YOURSELF

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO PROTECT THE
GUEST'S TRUST WITH PROFESSIONAL SILENCE.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Discretion: What You See, You Keep to Yourself

*Inside, we serve.
Outside, it doesn't exist.*

In five lines

Guest-contact staff see private lives every day: who travels with whom, what is being celebrated, what is being mourned, what is kept in the nightstand. That access is a professional privilege with only one thing asked in return: absolute silence. Discretion isn't a desirable quality of the craft — it is the craft: the trust of a thousand guests who don't know you rests on your never telling what you see. And in the age of social media, the rule has become more serious: a story told "in confidence" or an "innocent" photo can cost a reputation — yours, the guest's and the hotel's, in that order.

The script, step by step

- 1. The two-lives rule.** What happens inside the hotel belongs to the guest; your professional memory is a safe with no master key. Not to the curious colleague, not to the family at dinner, not to your group of friends: the juicy anecdote is exactly the one that isn't told.
- 2. See without looking.** Discretion starts with the gesture: don't examine belongings, don't read papers left in view, don't let your gaze linger where it makes people uncomfortable. The guest must feel that their privacy doesn't arouse your curiosity — because it doesn't.
- 3. The face of having seen nothing.** Awkward situations happen: the couple's argument, the guest at a bad moment, the unexpected visitor. The professional walks on by with perfect naturalness, serves what needs serving and doesn't change their manner by a millimeter the next day.
- 4. The exception that proves the rule.** Professional silence has only one limit: safety. Anything that puts a person — especially a minor — or the hotel at risk is not kept quiet: it is reported to whoever is responsible, through the proper channel, with the same discretion. Keeping quiet about a risk isn't discretion: it's negligence.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Written confidentiality rules	The rule lives in the team's culture: the veteran who cuts off a piece of gossip with "that's not talked about here" trains people better than any manual. Be that veteran, whatever your age.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Treat every piece of guest information — their face, their company, their habits — as classified material. Change the subject when others gossip.	Discuss “in confidence” within the team what you saw: the back of house has thin walls, and stories have long legs.	Photograph anything of the guest or their spaces. Post anything, not anonymously, not “so nobody can tell who it is.” Recognize a guest outside the hotel and give away their stay (“You stayed with us!”) unless they make the first move.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Believing internal gossip is harmless: a team that gossips among itself sooner or later gossips outward.
- ◆ The anonymized anecdote that isn’t: if the context gives the person away, changing the name isn’t discretion.
- ◆ Confusing discretion with coldness: you can be warm, close and airtight at the same time — in fact, that is the exact blend of the craft.
- ◆ Keeping quiet about a real risk so as “not to get involved”: the lesson says it clearly — that is no longer discretion.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Inside, we serve.
Outside, it doesn’t exist.”**

This lesson’s exercise

In the changing room, a colleague starts describing in detail what they saw in a suite this morning. The others laugh. Write down what you do and what you say, exactly — and what you would do if what they were telling revealed a risk to someone. In the answer that follows, I share my response — and we begin Module 5: Restaurant and Bars.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 20

Discretion: What You See, You Keep to Yourself

What I do: I don’t laugh, I don’t ask, I don’t feed it — and I cut it off with a short sentence and no sermon: “That’s not something we tell here, man. Today it’s their suite; tomorrow it could be your mother’s.” And I change the subject myself, so the awkward silence isn’t left hanging. The tone matters: you’re not the changing-room police — you’re the veteran who sets the culture, whatever your age.

Why this way: gossip isn’t fought with speeches but with normality — the normality of a team where that simply isn’t done. A team that gossips among itself ends up gossiping to the outside; the one that cuts it off inside protects the outside.

And the second part, the serious one: if what was said revealed a risk — someone in danger, a minor in a strange situation, something illegal — silence stops being discretion and becomes negligence. It isn’t discussed in the changing room or investigated on your own: it is reported immediately to your direct supervisor, with the facts and no embellishment. Discretion protects people’s privacy; it never protects the risk.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 18

**“Marble can be bought.
Luxury has to be executed.”**

LESSON 19

**“Knowing when not to step in
is half the art of serving.”**

LESSON 20

**“Inside, we serve.
Outside, it doesn't exist.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 5: Restaurant and Bars**.

PART VI

RESTAURANT AND BARS

The restaurant and the bar are the hotel's theater: everything is seen, everything is heard, everything leaves a memory. Here you learn to read a table before it speaks, to carry out the service sequence with soul and not as an empty choreography, to recommend without selling and sell without pushing, to hold the bar as the elegant confessional it is, and to treat an allergy as what it is: a safety matter where the craft never improvises.

Lesson 21: Read the Table Before You Speak · Lesson 22: The Service Sequence, With Soul · Lesson 23: Selling Without Selling and the Buffet That Looks Abundant · Lesson 24: The Bar: Speed, Memory and Conversation · Lesson 25: Allergies and Special Needs: Where You Never Improvise

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 5, Food and Beverage.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN

LESSON 21

READ THE TABLE BEFORE YOU SPEAK

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO READ THE TABLE'S
RHYTHM AND SERVE AT THE RIGHT MOMENT.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Read the Table Before You Speak

Adapting your tone is half the service.

In five lines

Two tables order the same thing and need opposite services: the couple celebrating wants a slow pace and a sense of complicity; the guest alone with a laptop wants efficiency and space; the family with tired children wants speed and understanding. An ordinary server serves plates; a professional serves people — and to do that, before opening their mouth, they read: who these people are, what they came for, how much of a hurry they're in, how hungry they are for conversation. Ten seconds of reading decide the tip, the review and the return visit. This lesson trains that reading.

The script, step by step

- 1. The ten seconds of reading.** Before approaching: celebration or routine? Business or pleasure? First time or regulars? Tension or relaxation? Body language, clothing, the ages in the party and the time of day tell you almost everything — if you look before you recite.
- 2. Calibrate tone, pace and distance.** With the celebration: warmth, time between courses, discreet complicity. With business: precision, silence and speed with the check. With the family: agility, tolerance and a gesture toward the children that disarms the parents. The same server, three different services.
- 3. Silence is service too.** You don't interrupt an intense conversation to recite suggestions, nor ask "is everything all right?" when the guest's mouth is full. The moment to step in is chosen: between courses, in the natural pause, with your eyes before your voice.
- 4. Reread during service.** The table changes: the business dinner relaxes at the second wine; the celebration fades if bad news arrives. The professional adjusts in real time — the table's manual is written while you serve.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Time (a full dining room, a short-staffed team)	The reading isn't cut: it speeds up. The ten seconds become three — celebration, business or family — and the basic calibration of tone is kept. Reading fast is still reading.
Experience (you're new)	Turn every table into deliberate practice: before approaching, bet silently on what kind of table it is; when you finish, check. In a month you'll have read five hundred tables — and it will show.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Look at the table before speaking to it. Choose the moment to step in. Treat children as guests, not as nuisances.	Recite the same speech to every table. Interrupt conversations or ask about everything at the worst moment.	Make comments about a table with colleagues in view of the dining room: guests don't hear — but they see. And rank tables by the tip they look likely to leave: service is not auctioned off.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Serving the manual and not the table: the standard is the floor of service, not its ceiling.
- ◆ Confusing friendliness with familiarity: complicity is offered; the guest sets the degree of closeness.
- ◆ Ignoring the invisible host: at every table there is someone who decides and pays — identify them and look after their role without neglecting the rest.
- ◆ Reading once and not rereading: the table at the start isn't the table at dessert.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“An ordinary server serves plates.
A professional serves people.”**

This lesson's exercise

Describe how your service changes — greeting, pace, tone, the moment for the check — between these three tables: an anniversary couple, a guest alone with a laptop and a family with two exhausted children. Three columns, no theory: concrete gestures. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 21

Read the Table Before You Speak

My table, in gestures: with the anniversary — the best table the service allows, because a communicated occasion is a service criterion, a slow pace between courses, discreet complicity (“Celebrating something? Then this is on me: the table is yours for as long as you like”) and a check that doesn't appear until they ask for it. With the laptop — a brief greeting, one quick recommendation, the outlet pointed out before he asks, silent refills and the check offered as soon as he closes the screen. With the family — speed with everything for the children (their plate goes out first, always), visible tolerance for chaos, a gesture with the little ones that disarms the parents, and zero look of annoyance: that table is the most grateful and the one that comes back most.

Notice the pattern: neither your menu nor your technique changed — the pace, the tone and the order of priorities did. That is reading the table.

And the craft nuance: the reading is corrected live. If the laptop closes and he orders wine, he has just changed columns — and your service with him.


DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 22

THE SERVICE SEQUENCE, WITH SOUL

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO EXECUTE EVERY STEP
WITHOUT LOSING WARMTH OR NATURALNESS.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Service Sequence, With Soul

Technique sets the script.

The guest sets the pace.

In five lines

The technical service sequence — welcome, order, firing, the pass, dessert, check — is in every manual and sets nobody apart: it is the dining room's routine. What people remember about a dinner are the touches nobody required: the sincere recommendation, the detail noticed, the right sentence at the right moment. And one condition of great restaurants that costs nothing: synchronization — a table's plates leave the kitchen together and are served at the same time, because nobody starts eating while looking at their companion's empty plate. This lesson puts soul into the sequence without touching the technique.

The script, step by step

1. **The welcome, with your reading already done.** The first twenty seconds apply the previous lesson: a calibrated greeting, a comfortable table and a first real attention — the water offered, the chair adjusted, the “today I especially recommend...” only if it's true.
2. **The order as a conversation.** Taking the order is a formality; advising is a service: knowing every dish (what's in it, how it's made, what substitutions it allows), suggesting according to what the table is looking for and confirming the delicate points — the doneness of the meat, allergies, timing.
3. **The three magic touches.** Choose three non-required moments per service: the gesture as you serve (“the plate is very hot on this side”), the elegant check after two bites — with your eyes, not by interrupting — and a closing touch that signs off the dinner. Three, not ten: rationed magic is still magic; constant magic is a siege.
4. **Synchronize or give notice.** A table's plates leave together: this is coordinated with the kitchen when the course is fired, not at the pass. And when something goes wrong — a dish running late — you inform the table before they ask: an announced delay is management; a silent one, abandonment.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Enough dining-room staff	You cut the walking, not the contact: dining-room routes designed to pass by every table, a full tray both going out and coming back, and the three magic touches concentrated in the serving — which is when you're already there.
Extensive menu or full product range	A short menu is backed by deep knowledge: mastering every available dish and describing it truthfully turns the limitation into an offer. “Today I recommend this because it's at its best” is worth more than twenty lines of menu.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Announce the dish as you serve it. Confirm with your eyes. Give notice of timing before they ask.	Serve in silence like someone making deliveries. Clear plates in a hurry while others are still eating. Recite the suggestions like a town crier's memorized proclamation.	Argue with the kitchen or among colleagues in view of the dining room. Keep someone who has already asked for the check waiting: a slow ending erases the whole dinner.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Executing the perfect sequence without a single human contact: technically impeccable, utterly forgettable.
- ◆ Asking "is everything all right?" as a tic every five minutes: checking in is a chosen moment, not a refrain.
- ◆ Starting strong and disappearing at dessert: service is scored as a whole, and the ending counts double.
- ◆ Not passing the information on to colleagues on the shift: the table that mentioned its allergy over the aperitif shouldn't have to repeat it at the main course.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"What people remember about a dinner
are the touches nobody required."**

This lesson's exercise

Design your three magic touches for a two-course dinner: at exactly what moment they happen, what you say in each one and what you observe. Write them as a script. In the answer that follows, I share mine.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 22

The Service Sequence, With Soul

My three touches: the first, when serving the main course — "Careful, the plate is hot on this side; and the meat is cooked exactly the way you ordered it." Useful information plus a promise kept, in one sentence. The second, two bites in and without a word: I walk past, catch their eye, read their face. If there's a problem, I catch it in time; if not, I haven't interrupted anything — the elegant check is the one the guest can ignore.

And the third, at the close: one personalized with what the table gave me during dinner. If they mentioned it's their first time in the city, a recommendation for tomorrow written in two lines with the check. If they were celebrating, congratulations by name. The closing touch signs the dinner — it is the last memory on the way to the door.

The discipline that holds them up: there are three, chosen, at moments of natural pause. The server who makes ten "touches" isn't giving magic: he's laying siege. Magic, like good service, knows when not to be there.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 23

SELLING WITHOUT SELLING AND THE BUFFET THAT LOOKS ABUNDANT

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO RECOMMEND HONESTLY
AND PRESENT THE BUFFET INTELLIGENTLY.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Selling Without Selling and the Buffet That Looks Abundant

*The perception of abundance is management,
not quantity.*

In five lines

Two dining-room skills worth hard cash: the recommendation that raises the check and trust at the same time, and the buffet that looks generous until the last minute. Both share one principle: perception is managed with honesty, never with tricks. The honest recommendation — suggesting what fits, not the most expensive thing — wins the loyalty of the guest who discovers they can trust you; and the well-run buffet — lively replenishment, careful presentation, gaps managed — feeds the sense of abundance regardless of quantity. This lesson trains both.

The script, step by step

- 1. Recommend as you would to a friend.** The litmus test: would you say the same thing to someone in your family? If the answer is yes, sell it with enthusiasm. The short-term sale of an expensive dish that doesn't fit is paid for with distrust on every visit that follows.
- 2. Raise the check by raising the experience.** Good dining-room upselling offers more enjoyment, not more spending: the suggestion of the wine that goes with the dish, the dessert to share, the special coffee. Always with the price mentioned naturally — a surprise on the check destroys in one second what was built over two hours.
- 3. The living buffet.** Abundance is perceived in movement: trays replenished before they empty, display fronts tidy and clean on every round, fruit and bread cared for like shop windows. A half-full but impeccable buffet looks generous; a full but neglected one looks like the end of a party.
- 4. The gap is managed, not disguised.** When a product genuinely runs out: the empty tray is removed (nothing screams scarcity like a gap with leftovers), the display front is rearranged and an alternative is offered to whoever asks — “we’ve run out, but I’ll bring you some X, freshly made.” Honesty with a solution keeps the perception intact.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Variety or a star product	Fewer items, better executed and better described: a short buffet with three excellent things and impeccable presentation beats a long, mediocre one. And live cooking of a single dish — where possible — multiplies the perception of freshness.
Fast replenishment (a swamped kitchen)	Smaller, more frequent trays: the same total product, a constant perception of freshly made. Tray size is a decision about perception, not logistics.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
State the price of what you suggest in the same voice as everything else. Remove what is empty right away. Describe the alternative with genuine enthusiasm.	Systematically push the most expensive item. Answer “we don’t have any” without offering anything in return. Let the guest discover the gap with leftovers.	Lie about a dish to sell it (“it’s freshly made” when it isn’t): one lie detected at the table invalidates all your future recommendations — and those of the entire hotel.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing upselling with pressure: the second push is no longer selling, it’s discomfort with the tip at stake.
- ◆ Recommending without knowing: the generic suggestion (“everything is very good”) is the absence of a recommendation.
- ◆ Neglecting the buffet in the last hour: the guest at 10:25 a.m. paid the same as the one at 8:00 a.m. — and writes the same reviews.
- ◆ Treating the gap as a disgrace: managed with an alternative and the truth, it is a service opportunity; hidden, it is a guaranteed disappointment.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Recommend as you would to a friend.
Trust is the best average check.”**

This lesson’s exercise

There are 40 minutes of breakfast left and a star product runs out with no way of replenishing it. Write down your complete handling: what you do with the physical gap, what you say to whoever asks and what you note for tomorrow. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 23

Selling Without Selling and the Buffet That Looks Abundant

My handling, in three steps. The physical gap, first and immediately: the empty tray is removed entirely — nothing screams scarcity like a dish with leftovers — and the front is rearranged so the buffet closes ranks: compact and well kept looks complete; full of holes looks sold out.

To anyone who asks, the truth with a solution and real enthusiasm: “We’ve run out — it flew today. But I’ll bring you [alternative] right now; it’s freshly made and you’re going to like it.” No drawn-out apologies and no blaming anyone: honesty served with energy keeps the perception intact. And if the alternative can be brought to the table by hand, even better: the gesture turns the failure into attention.

And for tomorrow, the record: what ran out, at what time, at what occupancy. The buffet that takes notes learns; the one that doesn’t repeats the gap every day at 9:40 a.m. What’s missing today is tomorrow’s order — it should ring a bell from lesson 12, and it’s the same discipline in a different uniform.



LESSON 24

THE BAR: SPEED, MEMORY AND CONVERSATION

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO COMBINE SPEED,
MEMORY AND PRESENCE AT THE BAR.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Bar: Speed, Memory and Conversation

An ordinary bartender serves drinks.

A good one serves moments.

In five lines

The bar is the only spot in the hotel where the guest sits down to watch you work — and sometimes to tell you about their life. That turns the position into a triple craft: speed (a full bar shows no mercy), memory (the returning guest expects you to remember their drink) and conversation (knowing how to chat, how to listen and how to keep quiet, with each person's bubble properly read). The bartender is host, psychologist and time manager with a shaker in hand. This lesson puts the three crafts in order.

The script, step by step

- 1. The order of a full bar.** Clear, communicated priority: the person waiting on their feet is attended to with your eyes even if your hands are busy ("I see you, be right with you"); the dining-room order isn't left to die late (the server also has a table waiting); and the regular understands the wait if you've greeted them by name.
- 2. Liquid memory.** The second visit is greeted with the first: "the usual?" is the most profitable phrase in the bar. It is built by recording, in the medium the bar authorizes, the relevant service preferences of the returning guest — their drink, how they take it — only what helps to serve them better and only while it does: the bar's memory is pure loyalty-building, and it lives in the team's channel, with access for whoever serves them — not in your own notes or in profiles made out of curiosity.
- 3. Conversation à la carte.** There is the chatty guest, the quiet guest and the guest who needs to unburden. You play along with the first without monopolizing them; the second gets impeccable service and peace; the third, genuine listening and prudence — you listen to everything, give few opinions and repeat nothing (the discretion of lesson 20 lives above all at the bar).
- 4. The limit, with elegance.** The guest who has had too much to drink is handled with respect and firmness: a slower pace, water offered and the "no" served without humiliation — in a low voice, without an audience, with an alternative ("let me make you something alcohol-free and we'll keep chatting"). If the situation escalates, you give notice according to protocol — never handle it alone out of pride.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Fully stocked back bar	A short list becomes a signature list: mastering what you have, two house creations well presented and the honesty of the alternative ("I don't have that one; try this, it's along the same lines"). The guest forgives the absence; they don't forgive the shrug.
Time (a swamped bar)	Conversation is replaced by eye contact and the name: three seconds of recognition per guest keep the bar human even when your hands are flying.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Greet whoever arrives even if you can't serve them yet. Remember the returning guest's drink. Listen without judging and keep quiet about what you heard.	Get absorbed with one guest and neglect the bar. Give opinions on politics, the hotel or other guests. Speed up the drinking of someone who shouldn't.	Serve someone who clearly shouldn't keep drinking, however good the tip. Repeat outside what was told at the bar: the bar is a confessional with ice.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Showing off technique while ignoring the guest: a show without a host is a circus, not a bar.
- ◆ Treating the dining-room order as an interruption: that ticket is a guest too — you just can't see them.
- ◆ Unrequested familiarity: the guest sets the humor and the closeness; you go along with them.
- ◆ Handling excess in front of an audience: humiliating firmness turns a one-drink problem into an incident that ends up in a review.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“The bar is a confessional with ice:
you hear everything, you repeat nothing.”**

This lesson's exercise

A full bar: a new guest waiting on their feet, two regulars mid-conversation with you and a dining-room order running five minutes late. Put your next minute and a half in order: what you do, in what order, and what your face says at each step. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 24

The Bar: Speed, Memory and Conversation

My minute and a half: second one, eye contact with the newcomer — “I see you, I'm coming” without words; he's no longer invisible, and someone who feels seen will wait twice as long. Seconds two to forty: the dining room order, first — it's the most overdue, and it's a guest who can't speak up for themselves because you can't see them; the server waiting for it has a table watching him. It gets made while I tell the regulars with a half smile: “Don't go anywhere, I'll be right back with you.” The regulars understand — they're regulars precisely because they know the house.

Seconds forty to eighty: the newcomer. Full greeting, order, and if his drink is quick, it goes out right away; a bar's first impression is decided with the first drink. And the close of the minute and a half: back with the regulars, picking up the chat where it left off — memory is also remembering the conversation.

The pattern: priority isn't set by how loud someone's voice is or how long they've been coming — it's set by who has gone unattended the longest and who can't speak up. And the whole juggling act is done without losing the friendly face: at the bar, your face is the menu everyone reads.



LESSON 25

ALLERGIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS: WHERE YOU NEVER IMPROVISE

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO INFORM, COORDINATE
AND SERVE WITHOUT IMPROVISING.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Allergies and Special Needs: Where You Never Improvise

*When in doubt, you verify.
Always.*

In five lines

There is one area of service where magic, speed and tact have no place: the guest's safety. Allergies and intolerances, children, reduced mobility, medical or religious diets — here the craft comes down to a single verb: verify. You don't assume, you don't think you remember, you don't reassure to look good. The chain is sacred: you ask precisely, you write it down, you pass it to the kitchen verbally and in writing, you confirm the dish when serving it and you carry it over to the rest of the stay. A mistake here isn't a bad review: it can be an ambulance. This lesson has no shortcuts.

The script, step by step

- 1. Ask precisely; don't diagnose.** "Do you have any allergies or intolerances we should know about?" When they answer, record exactly what the guest declares — the ingredient and whether traces could affect them — and activate the hotel's protocol. Service staff do not determine the severity or downgrade an alert because it seems mild.
- 2. Write it down and pass it on through two channels.** Anything delicate travels to the kitchen in writing AND verbally — the order with the alert flagged plus a direct word with the person in charge of the pass. Never entrust an allergy to anyone's memory, starting with your own.
- 3. Verify at the pass and confirm at the table.** Before serving: "is this the nut-free dish?" — to the kitchen. When serving: "your nut-free dish" — to the guest. The double confirmation closes the loop and, what's more, it shows: the guest with special needs who feels safe is the most loyal there is.
- 4. When in doubt, escalate.** Don't know whether a dish contains the allergen or whether cross-contact is possible? Check the official information and ask the designated person in charge. If the establishment cannot guarantee the preparation in line with its protocol, you tell the truth and do not present the dish as safe. Losing a sale is a ridiculous price compared with putting a person at risk.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Up-to-date allergen chart	Operational truth rules: you ask the kitchen at that moment, dish by dish, and whatever can't be guaranteed is communicated as such. Transparency about what isn't known is part of the protocol, not its failure.
Alternative product	An alternative is offered only when the Kitchen can prepare it in line with the protocol and the available allergen information. Something simple and verified is worth more than something elaborate and doubtful; if nothing can be guaranteed, it is explained honestly.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Always ask, always write it down, confirm when serving. Treat the special need with complete naturalness, without turning it into a spectacle.	Look annoyed at the “complicated” table. Answer from memory what requires verification. Make promises without having asked the kitchen.	Say “it’s nothing to worry about” about an allergy to avoid complications. Serve a doubtful dish trusting to luck. Hide a mistake you’ve detected: if it was served wrong, it is removed and reported immediately, with no calculating.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing the protocol question with real verification: asking and not passing it on is worse than not asking — it creates false security.
- ◆ Trusting the “I’m almost sure it doesn’t have any”: in this area, almost means no.
- ◆ Not carrying the information over to the rest of the stay: the allergy mentioned at dinner must exist at tomorrow’s breakfast without the guest having to repeat it.
- ◆ Treating a religious or medical diet as a whim: for that person it is identity or health — and your respect is remembered as much as your food.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“You can play with service.
With a guest’s safety, never.”**

This lesson’s exercise

A guest orders a dish and mentions, downplaying it, a “mild allergy” to an ingredient that dish might contain. Write down your complete course of action step by step: what you ask them, what you do with the kitchen, what you serve them and what you confirm when serving. In the answer that follows, I share my version — and we begin Module 6: Kitchen.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 25

Allergies and Special Needs: Where You Never Improvise

What I do: first, precision without drama — “I’m asking seriously because it matters to me: is it an allergy or an intolerance? Do I also need to flag possible traces?” I take down exactly what the guest declares and activate the protocol; I am not the one who diagnoses the severity or decides that an allergy is mild.

Second, the truth about the dish: I don’t answer from memory. I check the official information and ask the person the Kitchen has designated as responsible. If the dish can be prepared in line with the protocol: the order flagged, a verbal alert, verification at the pass and confirmation when serving. If it can’t be guaranteed, that is said clearly, and the only alternative offered is one the Kitchen can verify; if none exists, no one invents safety.

And the close: the alert travels through the authorized channel to those who need it during the stay, with the minimum information and restricted access. The goal is for the guest not to have to repeat it, without turning health data into open information.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 21

**“An ordinary server serves plates.
A professional serves people.”**

LESSON 22

**“What people remember about a dinner
are the touches nobody required.”**

LESSON 23

**“Recommend as you would to a friend.
Trust is the best average check.”**

LESSON 24

**“The bar is a confessional with ice:
you hear everything, you repeat nothing.”**

LESSON 25

**“You can play with service.
With a guest's safety, never.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 6: Kitchen**.

PART VII

KITCHEN

The kitchen no longer lives hidden away: it shows its face at the buffet, at the show cooking station, at the pass. This part teaches the cook's presence in front of the guest, the pass as the moment of truth where quality is decided plate by plate, and the double mandate that defines the great ones: using everything without lowering the standard and being inflexible where food safety allows no discounts.

Lesson 26: The Kitchen Faces the Guest Too · Lesson 27: Kitchen and Restaurant: The Pass Is a Conversation · Lesson 28: Using Everything, Safely, With Limited Resources

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 6, Culinary Operations.



LESSON 26

THE KITCHEN FACES THE GUEST TOO

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN HOW EVERY DISH AND
EVERY ANSWER REPRESENTS THE HOTEL.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Kitchen Faces the Guest Too

*The guest doesn't audit your technique.
They audit what they see.*

In five lines

The kitchen believes it works behind closed doors, and that is less true every day: the live buffet, show cooking, the swinging door that opens, the cook who crosses the dining room. In all those seconds, the guest doesn't evaluate your technique (they wouldn't know how): they evaluate what they see. The uniform, the hands, the order of the line, the gesture toward a colleague, how the food is touched. Visible hygiene is the language in which the kitchen speaks to the dining room, and a single careless gesture in plain sight can undo a hundred flawless plates. This lesson brings the kitchen out onto the stage.

The script, step by step

- 1. Everything visible communicates.** In view of guests, a tidy line, clean cloths, a clear cutting board and the correct uniform aren't aesthetics: they are the hygiene certificate the guest really can read. Visible disorder translates automatically into invisible doubt.
- 2. Your hands are the message.** Gloves or utensils where required, the habit of not touching your face or your uniform over the food, the tongs that don't go back onto the tray after falling: the buffet guest watches the cook's hands the way a front-seat passenger watches the speedometer.
- 3. The cook facing the public is also dining-room staff.** At show cooking or the live station: a greeting, eye contact, a sentence about the dish ("I'll finish it for you in a minute; this sauce has..."). Describing the product with pride turns a portion into an experience — and it is the best brand-building there is.
- 4. What never happens in view.** Corrections to a colleague, shouted hurry, tasting with your finger, product on the floor even for a second. What in a closed kitchen is a bad habit is, in a visible kitchen, a review — with a photo.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Open-kitchen facilities or show-cooking equipment	The kitchen faces the guest all the same: at the buffet when replenishing, at the visible pass, at every crossing of the dining room. The principles of this lesson apply to every second of exposure, whatever the format of your kitchen.
Complete uniforms	Whatever you have, impeccable: a humble, clean apron communicates more professionalism than an embroidered chef's jacket with stains. Neatness is the uniform money can't buy.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Greet the guest who is watching with your eyes. Describe the dish with pride if they ask. Keep the scene — line, hands, uniform — always ready to be seen.	Argue, correct with shouts or show annoyance in view of the dining room. Handle food with gestures you wouldn't accept at home.	Rework a returned dish in public with bad manners or comments: the dish comes back, it is remade professionally and that's that. And never serve anything that has touched the floor or broken the hygiene chain, however expensive the product.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Believing technique makes up for image: the guest can't see your technique — they can only see your image.
- ◆ Relaxing the standard in the buffet's last hour: exposure has no closing time.
- ◆ Treating the guest's question as an interruption: it is the only chance the kitchen has to sell itself live.
- ◆ Neglecting how you cross the dining room: the cook passing through is an ambassador in a chef's jacket — so walk like one.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“One careless gesture in plain sight
undoes a hundred flawless plates.”**

This lesson's exercise

List five things a guest can see on your line, buffet or station — gestures, objects, situations — that would destroy their trust in the kitchen, and for each one, the habit that prevents it. In the answer that follows, I share my list.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 26

The Kitchen Faces the Guest Too

My list of five, the one I check on every inspection: one, the cloth — the gray rag hanging from the shoulder is a kitchen's surrender flag; clean cloths, in their place. Two, hands to the face — the unconscious gesture of touching your face and carrying on plating; the habit is camera awareness: in sight of guests, you're working live. Three, the dropped tongs that go back to the buffet — they're removed and replaced, always, even if nobody is looking; precisely because someone is always looking. Four, the visible telling-off — correcting a colleague with gestures in front of the dining room; corrections belong in the back. And five, the floor — product or a box on the floor for one second; in visible hygiene, seconds don't exist.

Notice that none of the five is culinary technique: they are the theater of trust. The guest can't judge your stock — they judge your cloth.

And the positive flip side: the same exposure that watches you gives you a shop window. The cook who says hello, talks about the dish and works clean in plain sight is the best advertising a restaurant can buy — and it costs nothing.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 27

KITCHEN AND RESTAURANT: THE PASS IS A CONVERSATION

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO COORDINATE THE
PASS SO SERVICE FLOWS WITHOUT ERRORS.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Kitchen and Restaurant: The Pass Is a Conversation

*The dining room and the kitchen owe each other nothing:
they owe everything to the same guest.*

In five lines

The war between kitchen and dining room is the oldest internal sport in hospitality — and the most expensive: every clash is paid for in timing, in cold plates and in tension the dining room can smell. The pass isn't a border: it's a continuous conversation where the dining room brings information (the table, the timing, the returns) and the kitchen brings truth (what there is, what's running late, what went out). The two house rules: problems are discussed at the pass with facts, not pride; and in front of the guest, zero blame — the plate goes out speaking well of everyone.

The script, step by step

1. **Firing with complete information.** The order says what; the dining room adds the how: the table in a hurry, the exact doneness, the allergy through both channels, the “fire them together” that synchronization calls for. The kitchen can't get right what nobody told it.
2. **The truth about timing, in real time.** If a dish is going to be late, the kitchen says so at the pass BEFORE the dining room finds out — and the dining room passes it on to the table before they ask. The chain of notice (lessons 8 and 22) starts at the stove.
3. **The return without judgment.** A dish that comes back brings information, not an accusation: you listen to what the guest says, decide with judgment (remake, adjust, replace) and execute fast. Who was to blame is analyzed after service, within scheduled working hours — during service, only the solution exists.
4. **The respect the dining room can smell.** How the kitchen and the dining room talk to each other filters into the whole experience: the tone at the pass, the help at the peak, the thank-you at the end. The best hotels don't have two teams with a door in between: they have one team in two uniforms.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Ticket system or digital communication	The pass by voice, with double discipline: orders are called out, confirmed by repetition (“Heard: two sea bass, one without sauce”) and anything delicate also goes in writing. Less technology demands more ritual — and it has worked for a hundred years.
Staff at the service peak	The pass becomes a control tower: a single voice directs what goes out, the dining room picks up on time (a dish dying at the pass is a cold plate with witnesses) and egos wait until closing.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Pass the timing on to the table truthfully and calmly. Defend the dish with facts if the guest asks (“it needs its resting time — one minute and it’s ready”).	Carry the tension of the pass into the dining room with your face, a huff or a comment. Promise timing the kitchen hasn’t confirmed.	Blame the other department in front of the guest (“it’s just that the kitchen today...” / “it’s just that the floor didn’t fire it...”): whoever points at a colleague is pointing at their own uniform — you learned it in lesson 3, and here it is played out in every service.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Holding back information because you’re in a hurry: the twenty seconds you save when firing, you pay for ten times over at the pass.
- ◆ Turning the return into a lawsuit: while the kitchen and the dining room debate who was right, the guest waits without dinner.
- ◆ The silent pass: a kitchen that doesn’t call out and a dining room that doesn’t confirm create the mistakes they then blame each other for.
- ◆ Winning the argument and losing the service: at the pass nobody wins — either the table wins, or everyone loses.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“During service, only the solution exists.
Blame is handed out once the kitchen is cold.”**

This lesson’s exercise

The dining room sends back a dish “because the guest says it’s cold,” and you know it went out just right ninety seconds ago. Write down your complete handling: what you say at the pass, what you do with the dish, and what conversation takes place — and when — about what happened. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 27

Kitchen and Restaurant: The Pass Is a Conversation

My handling, and a warning: half of the people who do this exercise fail it by winning the argument. At the pass, zero dispute: “Heard — remaking it now.” The plate is remade or reheated immediately, because while the kitchen and the floor debate who is right, there’s a guest with no dinner looking at the door. During service, only the solution exists — the lesson’s golden rule, applied in the heat of the moment.

After service — within the scheduled working day, never on personal time — and with the kitchen cold, the real conversation — and with data, not pride: did the plate wait at the pass? Was the table on a windy terrace? Does the guest call “cold” what is merely warm? Each answer fixes something different: the floor’s pickup, plating for outdoor tables or the information on the order. The returned plate was a piece of data disguised as an affront.

And the detail that defines teams: when the remade plate goes out, it goes out without a message — no “let’s see if it’s right this time,” no long face from the server. The plate goes out speaking well of everyone. The guest must never find out that their dinner was, for ninety seconds, a diplomatic incident.

D
DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN

PLANIFICACIÓN

- COMPRAR SOLO LO NECESARIO
- ALMACENAR CORRECTAMENTE
- CONTROLAR FECHAS
- APROVECHAR AL MÁXIMO
- EVITAR DESPERDICIOS

ARROZ
LENTEJAS
GARBANZOS
CEBOLLA 5/9
ZANAHORIA 6/9
PIMIENTO 6/9
POLLO 4/9
CALDO 4/9
HIERBAS 5/9
CALDO 4/9

LESSON 28

**USING EVERYTHING, SAFELY,
WITH LIMITED RESOURCES**

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO MAKE THE MOST OF
FOOD WITHOUT COMPROMISING FOOD SAFETY.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Using Everything, Safely, With Limited Resources

You can play with the product.

With food safety, never.

In five lines

Cooking with limited resources is a double exam: of creativity and of character. Creativity lies in using everything — yields squeezed to the last, second lives for the product, substitutions that keep the level — and that is where the skilled cook shines brighter the less they have. Character lies in the red line: food safety is not adapted, not stretched and not negotiated — not for expensive product, not for a boss in a hurry, not for the walk-in that suffered a power outage. This lesson separates, with a scalpel, the territory of ingenuity from sacred territory.

The script, step by step

- 1. Using everything is technique, not a quick fix.** The yield of each piece planned before touching it, trimmings with a destination (stocks, forcemeats, garnishes), production adjusted to the real service history. Waste isn't a residue: it is money and work thrown away twice.
- 2. Substitution with judgment.** An ingredient is missing: it is replaced by function (acidity for acidity, fat for fat, texture for texture), tasted before serving and communicated to the dining room if the dish changes noticeably — the guest can accept a change; not a surprise.
- 3. The cold chain during a power outage.** An ironclad protocol: cold rooms kept closed (every opening costs degrees), the time of the outage and the temperatures recorded when power returns, priority use or processing for the most sensitive products and, at the slightest doubt about any product — it is removed. The universal rule: when in doubt, it doesn't go out.
- 4. The record that protects you.** Temperatures, waste, incidents and decisions are written down: the kitchen's humble paperwork is its technical memory and its professional defense. What was decided well and recorded can always be defended; what wasn't recorded doesn't exist.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Product or variety of ingredients	The menu is shortened with dignity: few dishes, in their best version, described truthfully by the dining room. A limitation that is managed is an offer; one that is disguised is a disappointment.
Stable refrigeration or power	Production in short batches, cooking that secures safety early, and the outage protocol applied with recording discipline. Technical adversity demands twice the method, never half.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
If the guest sees the kitchen or asks, describe your use of everything with pride: a kitchen that doesn't throw things away is a kitchen with craft and with values.	Carry into the dining room your stress over missing product. Justify a weak dish with the resources: the guest pays for the result, not the circumstances.	Serve product of doubtful safety, under any pressure whatsoever: not that of cost, not the boss's, not that of a full service. That refusal is the most professional of your career.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing using it up with pushing it past its limit: the product's second life has the same standards as its first — or it doesn't get one.
- ◆ Substituting in silence: a change not communicated to the dining room turns your solution into the server's problem.
- ◆ Trusting the cold chain to memory: without a temperature record, all your diligence is invisible — and indefensible.
- ◆ Giving in to the pressure of "serve it, nothing will happen": if something does happen, it happens with your signature. Whoever removes a doubtful product is never wrong.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"When in doubt,
it doesn't go out."**

This lesson's exercise

A four-hour power outage with the cold rooms full in the middle of high season. Write down your complete protocol: what you do during the outage, what you check and record when power returns, what you decide for each type of product and what you communicate — and to whom. In the answer that follows, I share my version — and we begin Module 7: Events and Banquets.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 28

Using Everything, Safely, With Limited Resources

My protocol. During the outage: walk-ins closed and sealed off from use — every opening costs degrees, so what is needed is decided BEFORE opening, just once if it is essential. The exact time of the outage is noted, and service is organized with what is outside and safe. No heroic inventory feats in the dark.

When the power comes back: thermometer in hand and a written record — the time power was restored and the temperature of each walk-in and of the most sensitive products. With that data and the establishment's HACCP procedure, decisions are made by category. What stayed within the established limits can continue; whatever went out of control or cannot be verified is removed. Cooking it afterwards does not automatically make a product safe when its storage cannot be proven. When in doubt, it doesn't go out.

And communication closes the loop: to the person in charge, the complete record with the decisions made; to the floor, the dishes that aren't available today, with an alternative presented with dignity. A technical crisis managed with method and paper isn't something to hide in shame: it is a craft exam passed — and your record is the diploma.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 26

**“One careless gesture in plain sight
undoes a hundred flawless plates.”**

LESSON 27

**“During service, only the solution exists.
Blame is handed out once the kitchen is cold.”**

LESSON 28

**“When in doubt,
it doesn't go out.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 7: Events and Banquets**.

PART VIII

EVENTS AND BANQUETS

An event is a promise someone sold once and that seven departments must deliver at the same time. This part teaches you to read the banquet event order as the internal contract it is, and to run D-Day knowing that for the hotel it is a Tuesday — but for the bride, the conference delegate or the family it is a day that will never come again. That asymmetry is the key to the whole craft of banquets.

Lesson 29: Sold Once, Delivered by Seven Teams · Lesson 30: D-Day: Serving Two Hundred as if They Were Two

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 7, Events, MICE and Banquets.



LESSON 29

SOLD ONCE, DELIVERED BY SEVEN TEAMS

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO TURN A SALES
PROMISE INTO COORDINATED EXECUTION.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Sold Once, Delivered by Seven Teams

*In events, there is no memory:
there is the event sheet.*

In five lines

An event is a promise made months ago by someone in sales who may not even be here anymore — and on the appointed day it must be kept, all at once, by the kitchen, the dining room, setup, the front desk, maintenance, audiovisual and security. The only thread linking that promise to this execution is the event sheet (the banquet event order, or BEO): the document where everything lives — schedules, setup, menu, quantities, contacts, extras. That's why in events the rule is absolute: the sheet is read in full, questioned in time and obeyed to the millimeter. What isn't on the sheet doesn't exist; what is on it is a contract.

The script, step by step

1. **Read it in full, even if it isn't "your part."** The dining-room team reads the setup; the kitchen reads the schedules; everyone reads the extras and the client contact. Event failures almost always live in the seams between departments — and the seams can only be seen by whoever reads the whole document.
2. **Question it in time, not during setup.** The timings don't add up? What was signed doesn't fit in the room? The menu clashes with the kitchen's capacity? You raise your hand at the pre-event meeting, when changing costs a phone call — not on D-Day, when it costs a conflict in front of the client.
3. **The event briefing.** Before the doors open, five minutes with all the uniforms together: what event it is, who the host is, which moments are critical, what changed at the last minute. A team that knows the story serves the event; one that doesn't just moves trays.
4. **Changes, through the channel.** Every event has last-minute changes. The discipline: the change is authorized by whoever is responsible, communicated to everyone affected and noted on the sheet. A verbal change that doesn't travel is the seed of the next two failures.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Formal pre-event meeting or coordination time	Individual reading becomes mandatory and the briefing is compressed into three minutes at the pass or in the service pantry: event, host, critical moments. Three minutes of shared story prevent three hours of disjointed improvisation.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Meet any request from the event client with “Of course, I’ll coordinate it right away” — and take it to the person in charge to authorize and communicate it.	Accept or refuse changes to what was signed on your own. Debate with colleagues, sheet in hand, in front of the host.	Tell the client “that isn’t in the contract,” using the sheet as a shield: the sheet is your internal map, not a weapon against someone celebrating the most important day of their year. Limits are communicated by the person in charge, with tact.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Reading only your section: you will perfectly execute your piece of the collective failure.
- ◆ Spotting the problem and keeping quiet “because it’s none of your business”: in events, everything that affects D-Day is everyone’s business (lesson 3, once again).
- ◆ Improvising the solution without communicating it: your silent fix throws off the other six teams working with the previous version.
- ◆ Treating the sheet as paperwork: it is the event’s biography — the professional who masters it is the one everyone looks for when something goes wrong.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“What isn’t on the sheet doesn’t exist.
What is on it is a contract.”**

This lesson’s exercise

During setup you discover that the layout signed on the sheet doesn’t fit in the room: there are two whole tables too many. The event starts in three hours. Write down your course of action: whom you notify first, what two solutions you propose and what you don’t do under any circumstances. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 29

Sold Once, Delivered by Seven Teams

What I do: first minute, the alert — to the person in charge of the event (or whoever signs on their behalf at the hotel), with the problem measured, not with alarm: “The signed layout doesn’t fit: we have two tables of ten too many; I have two solutions and three hours.” Whoever raises the alert with solutions is a professional; whoever raises it in a panic is one more problem.

The two solutions, ready to choose from: (a) redistribute — move from tables of ten to tables of twelve where protocol allows, keeping the head table intact, and the hall can breathe; (b) expand the space — open the adjoining hall or the terrace for the cocktail reception or the bar, freeing up square meters in the main one. Each with its cost in time and staff worked out. The one who decides is whoever can talk to the client — but they decide between options that can actually be set up, not in front of a wall.

And what you never do, in order: you don’t keep quiet hoping it will “fit if we squeeze” — two hundred people will pay for the cramped room for five hours; you don’t improvise an unauthorized solution — your silent fix throws off the other six teams; and you don’t mention the problem to the host when the moment comes — for the host, the hall was always meant to be this way. The difficult births of a setup never make it into the wedding photo.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN

HOSPITALITY BUSINESS LEADER



LESSON 30

D-DAY: SERVING TWO HUNDRED AS IF THEY WERE TWO

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO DELIVER A LARGE
EVENT WITH PRECISION AND A PERSONAL TOUCH.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS



IN FRONT OF THE GUEST · SEASON 1 · MODULE 7: EVENTS AND BANQUETS · LESSON 30

D-Day: Serving Two Hundred as if They Were Two

*The perfect banquet is the one the host
never had to manage.*

In five lines

The banquet is the operation's trial by fire: two hundred people, one menu, a kitchen at its limit and a host whose memory of their most important day is on the line. The paradox of the craft is that volume demands industrial method and the occasion demands handcrafted service — and both at once are achieved with three tools: synchronization (the pass in waves, the dining room coordinated by a single voice), reading the room (the event sets the pace, not the kitchen) and the client within the client: the host, the person who must be freed from managing anything so they can live their own day. This lesson closes the Food and Beverage run in style.

The script, step by step

- 1. A single voice runs the service.** At a banquet, the dining room moves in coordinated waves: the person in charge calls the start of each course and everyone serves the whole table at once. Two hundred hot plates is a clockwork problem — and clockwork needs a single conductor.
- 2. The room sets the pace.** Speeches run long, the dancing starts early, the lingering after dinner stretches out: the live event outranks the timing on paper. The person in charge reads the room and renegotiates with the kitchen in real time — the worst decision at a banquet is serving the course because it was “scheduled.”
- 3. The host doesn't manage: they enjoy.** A single hotel contact for the host, who anticipates their questions (“everything's on time; the next moment is the toast at six”) and solves things before they ask. Every minute the host spends managing is a team failure — their only job today is to live their day.
- 4. Critical moments, locked down.** Every banquet has three or four instants that allow no mistakes: the entrance, the toast, the cake, the first dance. They are identified in the briefing, each is assigned a person in charge and during those minutes everything else can wait. The event is remembered for its moments — protect them.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Staff for the volume	Service goes by prioritized zones, starting with the head table, with honest timing toward the host and cross-support between stations. Two hundred guests with a short team demands more coordination ritual, never less.
Complete banquet equipment	The menu and service are designed around what there is — better three impeccable courses with the equipment available than five half-done. A banquet's elegance lies in the execution, not the inventory.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Serve each guest as if they were the only one: eye contact, care, the dish announced at the head table. Attend to individual requests within the collective machinery.	Show the effort: the rushing, the sweating and the shouted orders belong backstage — the room sees only fluidity.	Argue about an unexpected problem in front of the guests or the host. Neglect a guest “because it’s a banquet”: for every person in that room, this is their celebration too.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Serving the paper and not the room: the timing is a plan, not a law — the law is the event.
- ◆ Ten points of contact for the host: each one gives them a different version, and between them they hand the host the job of coordinating them all.
- ◆ Relaxing after the main course: the banquet is scored as a whole, and the cold coffee at the end of the meal is the last impression of two hundred people.
- ◆ Forgetting that among the two hundred there are guests from the previous lessons: the allergic guest, the child, the one who needs help — volume doesn’t suspend a single rule of this school.

THE GOLDEN RULE

“The perfect banquet is the one the host never had to manage.”

This lesson’s exercise

The bride moves her speech forty minutes earlier and the second course is half served. Write down your complete handling: what the dining-room manager decides, what is negotiated with the kitchen, what the host is told and how the waves are reorganized — without the room noticing a thing. In the answer that follows, I share my version — and with it we close the Food and Beverage and Events modules: Module 8 begins, Maintenance in Front of the Guest.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 30

D-Day: Serving Two Hundred as if They Were Two

My handling, with the clock running. The floor manager decides, in ten seconds, the only question that matters: what rules, the plate or the moment? And in a banquet the answer is always the same: the moment. The bride’s speech is one of the day’s locked-down moments — the plate can wait; her speech with the room half served and servers crossing in front, cannot.

The execution: the pass frozen with one clean order to the kitchen — “Holding all waves: speech moved up; I’ll call the restart” — and the kitchen protects what’s already plated so it can be brought back to temperature without loss (that’s why banquet menus are designed with dishes that can take a pause: flexibility is cooked before the event). The floor team quietly completes the half-served tables or discreetly clears whatever would spoil the photo, and everyone takes up critical-moment positions: still, attentive, invisible.

And the single point of contact does the fine work: you don’t tell the bride “wait, we’re halfway through the course” — you tell her “Perfect, we’ll get the mic ready for you; two minutes and the whole room is yours.” Those two minutes buy the regrouping. When the applause ends, the order to resume, and the waves pick up as if nothing had happened. The room noticed nothing — and that is exactly the top grade of the craft. With this lesson you close F&B; and Events: what comes next is the hotel from the inside.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 29

**“What isn’t on the sheet doesn’t exist.
What is on it is a contract.”**

LESSON 30

**“The perfect banquet is the one the host
never had to manage.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 8: Maintenance in Front of the Guest.**

PART IX

MAINTENANCE IN FRONT OF THE GUEST

The maintenance technician is one of the few professionals who enter the guest's privacy with a toolbox. This part teaches how to go in for a repair with the guest inside, how to handle the breakdown when the guest wants to watch — and give their opinion — and the preventive round as the art of fixing things before the guest knows they ever existed.

Lesson 31: How a Technician Enters a Room · Lesson 32: The Breakdown With the Guest Watching · Lesson 33: The Round That Prevents the Complaint

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 8, Engineering and Maintenance.



LESSON 31

HOW A TECHNICIAN ENTERS A ROOM

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO REPAIR WITHOUT
INTRUDING AND EXPLAIN EVERY STEP TO THE GUEST.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

How a Technician Enters a Room

*In that room your craft is twofold:
the repair and the trust.*

In five lines

Nobody has to teach a maintenance technician their specialty: that's what their craft is for. What nobody taught them is what that specialty becomes when it happens in a stranger's private space, sometimes with that person right there. The entry protocol you learned in lesson 11 applies in full — knock twice announcing yourself, really wait, open with a pause — and on top of it comes the technician's own layer: the protected area, the tidy tools, the explanation of what is going to be done and absolute respect for what isn't yours. In there, you fix two things: the breakdown and the trust.

The script, step by step

- 1. The door protocol, in full.** "Maintenance, good morning" — twice, in a clear voice, with a real wait and an announced, unhurried opening. The urgency of a work order can't cost anyone a fright. If there are signs someone is inside and they aren't expecting you, you coordinate and come back.
- 2. Introduce yourself and explain before you touch anything.** If the guest is there or arrives: who you are, what you've come for, roughly how long you'll take. "I'm here to check the air conditioning; it'll take about twenty minutes — is now a good time, or would you rather I came back?" Their comfort outranks your route, always.
- 3. Protect the scene.** A drop cloth or protective cover under the work area, tools kept tidy in their box or on a cloth — never spread out on the guest's bed or furniture — and footwear and hands aware of where they are. The area is left better than it was found: no debris, no marks, no trace.
- 4. Their belongings: untouchable.** If something of the guest's gets in the way of your work, you ask them to move it if they are there; if they aren't, you move only what is essential and put it back in its exact place. And what you saw in there — tidiness, mess, belongings, people — doesn't exist outside: the discretion of lesson 20 wears coveralls too.
- 5. A close with a face.** When you finish: what was done, what is still pending if anything, and a goodbye with your name. "Your air conditioning is working now; I'm [name], from Maintenance — if you need anything, the front desk can reach me in a minute." A technician with a name turns a nuisance into a service.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
A spare part to close out the repair today	The truth, with a plan: you apply the safe temporary solution, explain to the guest what will happen and when ("the part comes in first thing tomorrow; in the meantime I've left this working like this") and notify the Front Office with the case already closed out — never leave the guest as the messenger of their own breakdown.
Reliable presence indicators	A reinforced voice protocol and coordination with the Front Office and Housekeeping before entering with a key: when in doubt, the room is treated as occupied. Always.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Announce yourself, ask permission, explain what you'll do and how long it will take, protect the area, say goodbye with your name and leave everything better than you found it.	Comment on the state of the hotel ("everything here is old"), diagnose catastrophes out loud, use the guest's bathroom or furniture, take personal calls inside.	Touch belongings more than is strictly necessary. Stay alone with a minor in the room: if a child is there alone, you report it and come back accompanied. Tell outside what you saw inside. Promise what doesn't depend on you.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Going in "because the work order says so": the work order calls for the repair; the protocol governs the entry.
- ◆ Working with the guest present as if they weren't there: a greeting and one sentence of context turn an intrusion into attention.
- ◆ Leaving the technician's signature — the mark on the wall, the plastic on the floor, the moved chair: a perfect job that leaves a trace is a job half done.
- ◆ Fixing it and not reporting its real condition: if the part will last a week, someone has to know today — silence is a breakdown (lesson 3).

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"In that room your craft is twofold:
the repair and the trust."**

This lesson's exercise

You're doing a repair with the guest present, and they want to stay and watch and make conversation while you work. Write how you handle the situation: what conversation you accept, which you redirect kindly, what you never comment on — and how you close. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 31

How a Technician Enters a Room

My answer: the guest who watches is not a nuisance — they are an opportunity with conditions. You welcome them naturally ("of course, stay — I'll talk you through it"), you explain what you're doing in plain language (curiosity that is attended to builds trust) and you use it for the fine diagnosis: nobody knows that room's symptoms better than the person who sleeps in it. "How long has it been making that noise? Only at night?" — the guest is your best work order.

What you handle with tact: the conversation can't make the repair take twice as long or distract you from the delicate part. The formula is attention in bursts — you work, you comment, you work — and if the chat gets out of hand, the friendly close: "let me finish this in five minutes and it'll be perfect."

And what you never do: give opinions about the hotel or the state of the installation ("everything here is old" is sabotaging your own house), diagnose catastrophes out loud, accept tips to "take a quick look at something else" outside the work order without logging it, or let closeness lower the protocol: their belongings remain untouchable even when the guest is right there inviting you to be at ease. The guest's friendliness doesn't replace your method — it should ring a bell from lesson 11, and in maintenance it counts double.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 32

THE BREAKDOWN WITH THE GUEST WATCHING

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO REPAIR, COMMUNICATE
AND PROTECT THE EXPERIENCE AT THE SAME TIME.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Breakdown With the Guest Watching

*Neither alarm nor promise:
the truth, with a plan.*

In five lines

Diagnosing a breakdown is technique; diagnosing it with the guest watching is craft. The technician who blurts out “this is in terrible shape” has just ruined the trust of an entire stay, and the one who promises an “it’ll be fixed tomorrow” they don’t control has just manufactured the complaint of the day after tomorrow. Between alarmism and the empty promise there is a professional path: the truth, with a plan — what is happening, what can be done right now, what will happen next and who will confirm it to them. The guest doesn’t need the breakdown not to exist: they need to feel they are in good hands.

The script, step by step

- 1. Diagnose inward, communicate outward.** The technical analysis happens in your head; what you say out loud is chosen. No frightening jargon and no mechanic’s sighs: “I can see what it is” reassures more than any explanation of compressors.
- 2. The truth about timing, without heroics.** If it can be fixed now, you fix it and say so. If not: “I can’t leave it perfect for you today — let me explain what I can do.” An honest timeframe with an alternative is worth twice as much as optimism that doesn’t deliver.
- 3. There is always a meanwhile.** The safe temporary solution, the fan while the part arrives, the room move if appropriate — but you don’t promise that last one: the Front Office triggers it. Your job is to hand over the complete case: breakdown, status, temporary fix applied and need identified.
- 4. Close the loop before you leave.** A breakdown in front of the guest doesn’t end in the room: it ends when the Front Office or Guest Relations know what happened, what was done and what is still missing — so that the two-hour follow-up (lesson 17) has something to work with — and so that the incident goes into the quality report with the guest’s name, not just the room number: from that moment on, that guest is under personalized follow-up by Guest Relations until the end of their stay. The technician who reports turns their repair into a hotel experience.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don’t have...	How to hold the standard
The part or the permanent fix	The temporary plan is explained with the same dignity as the permanent one: what has been left working, how long it will hold and when it will be finished. A limitation explained with a plan is professionalism; explained with a shrug, it is abandonment.
Authority to offer compensation or a change of room	You don’t promise what isn’t yours: you hand the case to whoever decides, in front of the guest if necessary — “I’m letting the front desk know right now so they can give you the best solution.” That sentence delivers, because you are the one who delivers on it.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Explain in plain words what is happening and what is going to happen. Give honest timeframes. Leave a decent temporary solution and the case reported.	Diagnose disasters out loud. Blame the hotel, the budget or another department ("the thing is, this hasn't been replaced since...").	Promise deadlines or compensation that don't depend on you. Play down what is serious for the guest ("it's not that big a deal"): their discomfort is theirs to measure, not yours.

Common mistakes

- ◆ The theatrical diagnosis: the technician's huff and "ugh" count as three breakdowns in the guest's head.
- ◆ Fixing it and disappearing: without an explanation or a close, the best repair leaves the feeling of a botched job.
- ◆ Optimism to look good: every broken "tomorrow for sure" is paid back with interest in the review.
- ◆ Forgetting that the room is still theirs during the repair: you ask to get past, you thank them for their patience, you respect their space even while you are working.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"Neither alarm nor promise:
the truth, with a plan."**

This lesson's exercise

The air conditioning in 214 can't be fixed today and the hotel is full. The guest, standing in front of you, asks: "But is this going to work or not?" Write your exact reply — what you say, what you do before leaving the room and what handover the Front Office receives from you. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 32

The Breakdown With the Guest Watching

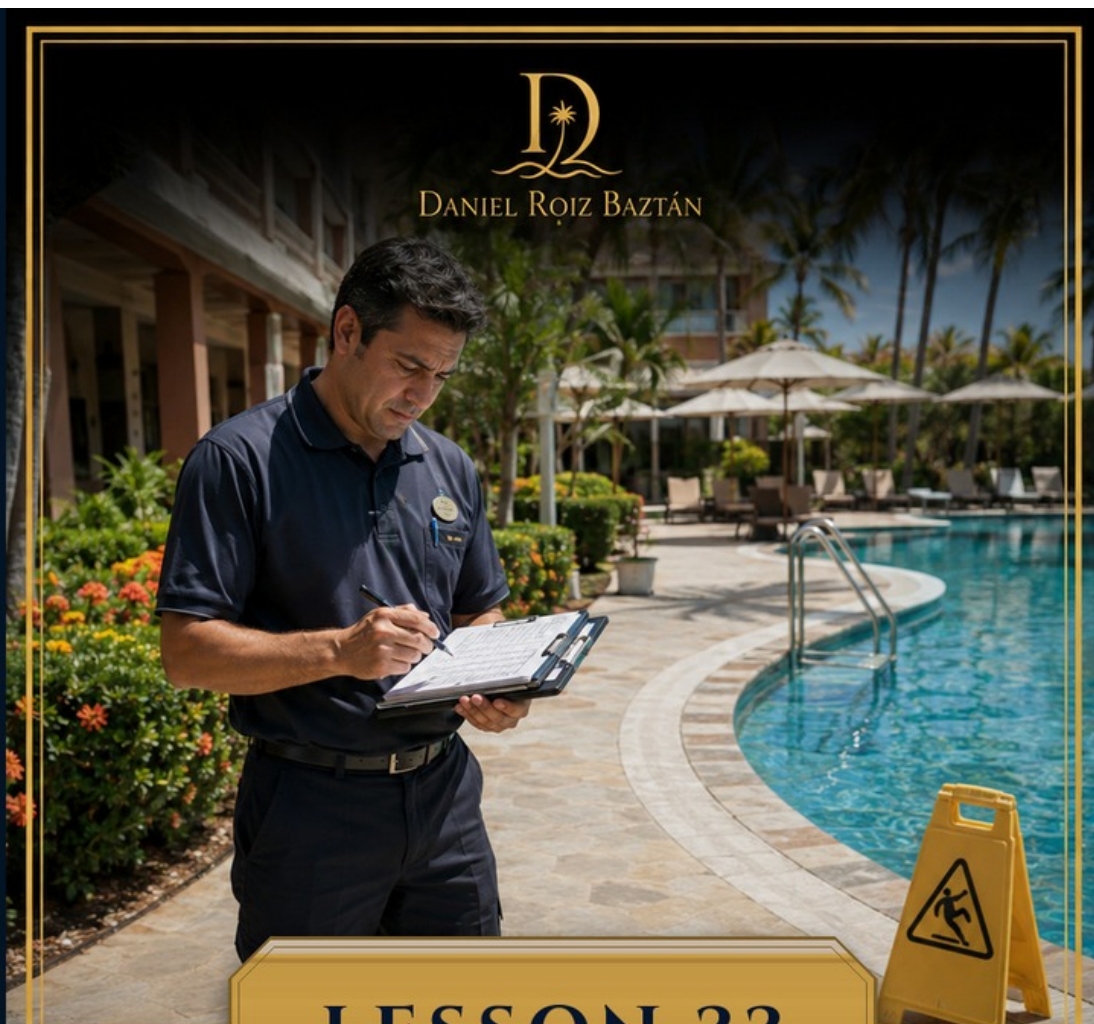
What I say, in the room: "I'm going to be honest with you: I don't have the part it needs today — it comes in first thing tomorrow and it'll be sorted. In the meantime, I'm not leaving you like this: I'll bring a fan up right now and let the front desk know so they can find you the best solution for tonight. They'll confirm within ten minutes." Truth, plan, immediate relief and a next step with a deadline. Not one technical excuse, not one "this happens a lot."

What the hotel sets in motion, and this is the half the technician can't skip: the Front Office is notified in person or through the channel, with the complete case — room, breakdown, stopgap in place, the real time the part arrives. The Front Office decides with that information: a room change if a vacancy opens up, a proportionate gesture of compensation, and the two-hour call (lesson 17) to verify that the night was a decent one.

The mistake that ruins all of this: closing your technical part and leaving the guest as the messenger of their own breakdown ("tell them at the front desk"). The hotel closes the chain, never the guest. The technician who hands the Front Office a closed case has just done work of a higher grade — and we general managers take note of those names.



DANIEL ROJIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 33

THE ROUND THAT PREVENTS THE COMPLAINT

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO SPOT AND FIX
FAULTS BEFORE THE GUEST SEES THEM.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Round That Prevents the Complaint

Reporting is professional.

Keeping quiet is sabotage.

In five lines

Corrective maintenance puts out fires; preventive maintenance keeps them from existing — and its cheapest tool isn't software: it's the daily round of eyes and ears. A twenty-minute walk with trained senses detects the hinge that is starting to complain, the timid drip, the flickering light, the smell that wasn't there yesterday. Every early detection is a complaint no guest will ever make. And the round has a second half without which it is worthless: the work order. What is seen and not reported is exactly the same as what is not seen — with the aggravating factor that someone knew. And so you know where the bar is: in the most distinguished hotels in the world, the standard is twofold — zero tolerance for visible defects and daily inspection, with resolution in under four hours from detection. You won't always have their means; always keep their clock in your head.

The script, step by step

- 1. Design your round by areas and senses.** A fixed route (public areas, entrances, mechanical rooms, one rotating floor a day) and a mental checklist by sense: what I look at (lights, seals, new stains), what I listen to (motors, drips, squeaks), what I smell (damp, burning, drains), what I touch (temperatures, looseness, pressures).
- 2. Look for the change, not the failure.** A failure shouts; a change whispers. An expert round compares with yesterday: the elevator's new noise, the stain that grew, the consumption that went up. Whatever changed without explanation is your work list for tomorrow.
- 3. A precise work order or nothing.** What, exactly where, since when, how urgent and whether it affects a guest or an arrival — the discipline of lesson 14, now from your side. A vague work order gets lost in the list; a precise one prioritizes itself.
- 4. The round faces the guest too.** You'll cross paths with guests all along the route: a greeting, giving way, tools kept discreet. And if a guest stops you with "Excuse me, in my room...", the response is the one from lesson 14: you take it, you channel it, you confirm who and when. For them, your coveralls are the whole hotel.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Spare parts for what you detect	Detection is worth just as much: it is reported with its real urgency and safe containment is applied. Preventive work without spare parts still gains time — which is exactly what it buys: time for the part to arrive before the complaint does.
Time for the full round	It gets split up, not dropped: ten minutes of critical areas today, the rotating floor tomorrow. A short daily round is worth more than a long one that never gets done.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Greet every guest along the route. Take ownership of whatever they tell you and channel it with a name and a timeframe.	Cross guest areas with tools on display, a radio at high volume or workshop talk.	Answer a guest with “that’s not my area”: you learned it in lesson 3 and lesson 14 — for them, departments don’t exist. And never disable or bypass a safety device “so it stops acting up”: that isn’t maintenance; it’s risk with your signature on it.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Doing the round with your feet and not with your senses: strolling isn’t inspecting.
- ◆ Normalizing the long-standing defect (“it always makes that noise”): what gets normalized stops being watched, and what stops being watched picks the worst day to break.
- ◆ Detecting and trusting it to memory: the work order is filed on the spot — a technician’s memory at the end of the shift is a sieve with good intentions.
- ◆ Measuring preventive maintenance by what it fixes: it is measured by what never happened — and that can only be seen if it is recorded.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Reporting is professional.
Keeping quiet is sabotage.”**

This lesson’s exercise

Design your twenty-minute round of the public areas of your hotel (real or imagined): the route in order, what you look at, listen to and smell in each area, and the three spots where most complaints are brewing. In the answer that follows, I share my version — and we begin Module 9: Spa and Wellness.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 33

The Round That Prevents the Complaint

My 20-minute round, in sensory layers. The eyes (minutes 1-12, on the move): blown or flickering lights, new damp stains — the new stain is the queen of the round: today it’s a ring, by Friday it’s a leak — doors that don’t close on the first try, grout and silicone in the public restrooms, wobbly or splintered furniture in walkways. The ears (the whole route): the hum that wasn’t there yesterday, the compressor that kicks in more often than it should, the squeaking door, the drip behind a partition wall. The nose (elevators, windowless corridors, technical rooms): damp, electrical burning, drains. Your sense of smell detects breakdowns you can’t see yet.

And the notebook (the final minutes): everything you caught, however minor, goes into a work order with its exact location and its urgency. A round that isn’t written down is a stroll; one that is written down is predictive maintenance without a budget.

The touch of craft: you do the round greeting people. A visible, friendly and attentive technician in the common areas is also the hotel’s presence — and more than once the guest who passes you will hand you the best work order of the day: “excuse me, there’s a light flickering in my corridor.” Listen to it like gold: they’ve just done your round for free.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 31

**“In that room your craft is twofold:
the repair and the trust.”**

LESSON 32

**“Neither alarm nor promise:
the truth, with a plan.”**

LESSON 33

**“Reporting is professional.
Keeping quiet is sabotage.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 9: Spa and Wellness**.

PART X

SPA AND WELLNESS

The spa is the only place in the hotel where the guest lets their guard down: in silence, in a bathrobe, with sky-high expectations of peace. This part teaches you to safeguard that sanctuary — the tone, the pace, the privacy — and to practice the calm sale: the one that suggests without breaking the calm the guest came to buy.

Lesson 34: The Sanctuary: Silence, Privacy and Boundaries · Lesson 35: From the Desk to the Treatment Room: The Calm Sale

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 9, Spa and Wellness.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 34

THE SANCTUARY: SILENCE, PRIVACY AND BOUNDARIES

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO PROTECT THE
SPA'S CALM, PRIVACY AND BOUNDARIES.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Sanctuary: Silence, Privacy and Boundaries

*The spa sells a state of being.
Your silence is part of the treatment.*

In five lines

The spa is the only department whose product is a state of mind: the person who walks in has come to let go — of the noise, the rush, sometimes a hard chapter of their life. That turns every detail into treatment: the tone of voice that doesn't rise, the pace that doesn't hurry, privacy handled with a naturalness that causes no discomfort, and unbreakable professional boundaries that protect client and therapist alike. In the sanctuary, the professional isn't only the one who performs the technique: they are the one who guards the atmosphere. And the atmosphere is broken by a single gesture out of tune. In the world's top spas, the standard adds three pieces that cost nothing: a structured welcome that reads the physical and emotional state of whoever arrives ("How are you feeling today? What do you need from this session?"), a treatment adapted to that reading — not to the script — and a calm close that accompanies the departure. The complete ritual, not just the technique.

The script, step by step

- 1. The spa voice.** Low volume, slow pace, short sentences: the voice is the first massage. From the spa reception to the treatment room, the tone says "here, time moves more slowly" — and the professional sustains it even if, outside, the day is on fire.
- 2. Privacy, handled naturally.** Managing modesty is pure technique: clear instructions beforehand ("I'll leave you here to get ready; cover yourself with the towel, I'll be back in a moment"), a knock before entering, correct draping throughout the treatment and zero gestures that betray discomfort or scrutiny. The professional's naturalness creates the client's comfort.
- 3. Boundaries, in both directions.** The therapist maintains impeccable conduct — strictly technical contact, conversation opened by the client and only as far as the client takes it — and has the right to demand the same: in the face of an inappropriate comment or behavior from the client, the treatment is calmly interrupted, the boundary is set professionally and the person in charge is informed. No service includes tolerating disrespect.
- 4. Clinical silence.** In the treatment room you hear confidences — pain, grief, insecurities. All of it is classified material of the highest level: not to a colleague, not to the next appointment, not to anyone. Lesson 20 in its most sensitive version: here, people undress twice.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Facilities or an extensive treatment menu	The state is created with what you have: careful lighting, a clean scent, real silence, punctuality and calm execution. A humble treatment room with atmosphere is worth more than a full spa circuit done in a rush.
Staff to cover the spa reception	The therapist takes on the welcome in the same spa voice: the state begins with the greeting, not on the treatment table. Two minutes of calm welcome are part of the treatment, not time stolen from it.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Explain each step before carrying it out. Ask about pressure and preferences. Protect the client's modesty with absolute naturalness.	Make conversation to fill the silence: in the spa, silence isn't awkwardness — it's the product. Comment on the client's body, weight or skin, except for a necessary technical indication phrased with tact.	Tolerate inappropriate behavior in silence: you interrupt it, report it and record it. And never repeat outside what you heard in the treatment room: here, discretion is doubly sacred.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Carrying your rush onto the treatment table: the client feels in your hands what you have in your head.
- ◆ Too much chatter: the therapist who entertains is stealing exactly what the client came to buy.
- ◆ Neglecting the thresholds — the door that bangs, the light that blinds when the door opens, the phone that vibrates: the atmosphere always breaks in the transitions.
- ◆ Confusing professional closeness with personal familiarity: the spa's warmth has the same boundary as the whole craft — the client sets it; the professional guards it.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“The spa sells a state of being.
Your silence is part of the treatment.”**

This lesson's exercise

During a treatment, a client starts making personal comments that make you uncomfortable and keep escalating. Write exactly how you handle it: the first sentence you use to set the boundary, at what point you interrupt if it persists, and whom you inform and how. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 34

The Sanctuary: Silence, Privacy and Boundaries

My three levels, and I want you to memorize them because they protect your profession. Level one, the calm sentence that reframes without escalating: “I’d rather we make the most of the treatment — let’s focus on you walking out feeling like new.” A neutral, professional tone, with no nervous giggle that encourages and no abruptness that turns discomfort into conflict. Most situations end here.

Level two, if they persist: the treatment is paused — hands withdrawn, with total calm: “Let’s leave it here for today. I’ll wait for you outside when you’re ready.” No arguing, no justifying, no negotiating. Your comfort and your professional safety are not an extra of the service: they are its condition. No treatment is worth working through while you feel uncomfortable.

And level three, whenever there has been a level two (and also after a level one that left you feeling uneasy): you inform the person in charge that same day, with facts and without drama, and it is put on record. It isn’t a complaint: it’s a professional report that protects you, protects the next colleague and allows the hotel to manage that guest with full knowledge. In the sanctuary, serenity also means knowing that your house has your back.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 35

FROM THE DESK TO THE TREATMENT ROOM: THE CALM SALE

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO RECOMMEND
WELLNESS WITHOUT PRESSURING THE GUEST.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

From the Desk to the Treatment Room: The Calm Sale

*Wellness isn't sold with pressure.
It's recommended with honesty.*

In five lines

The spa has a commercial paradox: it is one of the hotel's highest-margin departments and, at the same time, the place where being sold to feels worst. A client who has just relaxed doesn't want a closing pitch — and yet they may appreciate an honest recommendation based on what was observed during the service and within the professional's qualifications. Spa selling is calm or it isn't selling at all: it is framed as care, not as diagnosis, and it leaves the decision entirely in the client's hands. Sold that way, the next appointment isn't a receipt: it's a relationship.

The script, step by step

- 1. Professional observation is your authority.** During the treatment you can identify sensations or responses that are typical of the service and within the scope of your training. Explain them in careful language, without diagnosing medical conditions, attributing clinical causes or taking the place of a healthcare professional. If a warning sign appears, the treatment is stopped and the client is referred according to the protocol.
- 2. The post-treatment recommendation, in 45 seconds.** The moment is the close, with the client calm: what you found, what would do them good and why, and a specific proposal — “with the tension you're carrying in your neck, it would do you good to come back in two weeks for something more targeted; if that works for you, I'll put it down for you.” Truth, benefit, option. And silence: the decision is theirs.
- 3. Products, only if it's true.** The cream or the oil is recommended when it solves something real for that client — and it is shown by using it or explaining it, not by reciting it. A product sale that doesn't fit is charged once; lost trust is paid for forever.
- 4. No chasing.** A no — or a silence — closes the sales chapter with the same smile it was opened with. The client who didn't buy today but left at peace is the one who comes back, recommends and buys tomorrow. The one who left feeling pressured doesn't come back — and neither do their friends.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
A product range to sell	You sell what you always have: the next appointment, self-care advice, the at-home routine explained generously. The professional who gives knowledge away creates the demand for their own hands.
Time between one client and the next	The recommendation is built into the close of the treatment. If there isn't enough time, you provide only the wellness information authorized by the spa, without improvised clinical notes or personalized instructions outside professional competence.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Recommend based on what you observed, in plain words and leading with the benefit. Accept a no with the same warmth as a yes.	Recite the monthly promotion to everyone the same way. Turn the close of the treatment into a sales counter.	Use the vulnerability of the moment — the client relaxed, in a robe, grateful — as leverage for pressure: that sale is the exact betrayal of what the spa promises. And never invent findings (“this is in awful shape”) to justify a sale.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Selling before serving: a recommendation only has authority once your hands have earned it.
- ◆ The discount as the only argument: price convinces for a day; a professional, prudent and well-explained recommendation builds a relationship.
- ◆ Recommending nothing for fear of looking like a salesperson: keeping quiet about what the client needs is bad service too — the line isn’t whether to recommend, but how.
- ◆ Forgetting the authorized record: continuity is documented with the minimum necessary information, in the approved system and with restricted access. Never in personal notes or informal client histories.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Wellness isn’t sold with pressure.
It’s recommended with honesty.”**

This lesson’s exercise

Design your perfect 45-second post-treatment recommendation for this case: a client with obvious neck tension, first visit, leaving tomorrow but living an hour from the hotel. Write it word for word — finding, benefit, proposal and close. In the answer that follows, I share mine — and we begin Module 10: Entertainment.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 35

From the Desk to the Treatment Room: The Calm Sale

My 45 seconds, stopwatch in hand: “How do you feel? [answer] I’m glad. During the session you mentioned tension in your neck area, and we worked on it within the treatment you chose. If you found it beneficial, we can consider another tailored session during your stay and see how you’re feeling then. If the pain persists or gets worse, the right thing to do is to consult a healthcare professional. If it suits you, reception can find you a slot — no obligation.”

The anatomy of why this sells without selling: it starts with how the guest feels, carefully explains what service was performed, proposes an option within professional competence and clearly marks when a referral is appropriate. No invented causes, no diagnosis, no improvised clinical instructions. The recommendation is born of the attention given, not of the catalog.

The comparison that explains everything: “we have a promotion on five-session packages” is pressure with a discount. “If you found it beneficial, we can consider another session and see how you’re feeling” is a careful wellness recommendation. Same possible financial result, opposite feeling — and only one protects trust.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 34

**“The spa sells a state of being.
Your silence is part of the treatment.”**

LESSON 35

**“Wellness isn't sold with pressure.
It's recommended with honesty.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 10: Entertainment**.

PART XI

ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment is the face of the hotel in full sun: the department expected to bring energy, closeness and joy — with method underneath. This part teaches the difference between entertaining and intruding, and devotes an entire lesson to the place of greatest trust and greatest responsibility in the hotel: the kids club, where guests hand over what they love most.

Lesson 36: The Face of the Hotel, All Day Long · Lesson 37: Kids Club and Minors: Joy With Protocol

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 10, Entertainment.



DANIEL ROJIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 36

THE FACE OF THE HOTEL, ALL DAY LONG

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO ENTERTAIN, CONNECT
AND REPRESENT THE HOTEL ALL DAY LONG.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Face of the Hotel, All Day Long

Joy is also served à la carte.

In five lines

The entertainment host is the employee who spends the most hours in front of the guest — from the morning activity to the evening show — and that makes them the most visible face of the hotel: their energy, their manner and their judgment weigh on the experience as much as the room or the food. Their craft has two engines that seem contradictory and aren't: managed energy (enthusiasm is a professional resource you administer, not a mood you suffer) and a fine reading of who wants it and who doesn't — because joy, like everything in this school, is also served à la carte.

The script, step by step

1. **Invite, don't force.** The invitation to take part is made with energy and withdrawn with elegance: a "Want to join in? — no pressure" and, if the answer is no, a smile and the way left clear. The guest who said no today, if they were respected, is the one who signs up on their own tomorrow. The one who was chased doesn't even come back to the pool.
2. **Read the bubble in swimwear too.** The open book, the headphones, the couple in their own world, the nap in the sun: the signals from lesson 19 apply at the pool just as they do in the lobby. Quality entertainment shows as much in the activities it organizes as in the loungers it knows to leave in peace.
3. **Warmth without overfamiliarity.** The entertainment host lives on the most slippery ground of guest contact: humor, play, daily contact. The professional boundary is the usual one — the guest sets the familiarity, you guarantee the respect: no jokes that single anyone out, no nicknames nobody asked for, no physical contact beyond what the activity requires and the guest consents to.
4. **Energy is managed.** Nobody can — or should — be up for an entire working day, and there's no need to be: you dose it by moments (maximum during activities, calm in transitions), lean on the team through rotations and real breaks, and protect it with the judgment of lesson 45, which is still to come — speak up in time rather than keep up a false front: the 10:00 p.m. guest deserves the same entertainment host as the 10:00 a.m. guest.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Entertainment equipment or facilities	The program is built on what can't be bought: classic games, tournaments with whatever is available, workshops in what the team genuinely knows how to do. Memorable entertainment was never the equipment: it was the person.
Team (a solo entertainment host)	Fewer activities, better chosen and at peak-audience hours — and the rest of the time, presence and personal attention: the entertainment host who greets half the pool by name is entertaining even without a microphone.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Learn names and use them. Invite with energy and accept a no with the same smile. Give each guest the amount of attention they ask for.	Single out or ridicule the guest who doesn't take part ("Come on, sleepyhead!"). Monopolize the friendly ones and forget the quiet ones.	Humor at a guest's expense: twenty people laughing doesn't pay for one person's humiliation. And no physical contact or joke the guest hasn't clearly invited — when in doubt, distance and respect.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing volume with energy: a loud microphone doesn't liven anyone up — connection does.
- ◆ Measuring success only by participants: the guest who didn't play but enjoyed watching you is your audience too.
- ◆ Letting the mask slip between activities: the entertainment host complaining in the corridors contradicts their own show — the consistency of lesson 18, in a tracksuit.
- ◆ Repeating the program without reading that week's audience: every week the hotel is a different hotel — the program adapts or it dies.

THE GOLDEN RULE

"Joy is also served à la carte."

This lesson's exercise

Two guests, the same day: one doesn't want to take part in anything and the other won't let go of you and wants to monopolize you in every activity. Write how you handle both without failing either — what you say, what you do, where you set the limits. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 36

The Face of the Hotel, All Day Long

The one who doesn't want to take part: you respect it the first time — and you truly respect it, not with that friendly insistence every morning that ends up as harassment with music. A single "we're here if you feel like it," and from then on the usual treatment: a greeting, a smile and zero pressure. The paradox of the craft is that this guest, treated this way, often ends up showing up on Thursday of their own accord — and if they don't, you won't: their review will say that this is a hotel where you can rest. Entertainment is offered; it is never imposed. It's the bubble from lesson 19, with loudspeakers.

The one who won't let you go: it's affection and it's a risk — a monopolized entertainment host neglects forty others. You handle it with warmth and structure: give them a role ("will you help me get the tournament started? you take this team"), turn their energy into part of the activity and use the honest exit with an appointment: "I'll leave you to it, I've got aqua aerobics — see you at petanque at five." Never running away or brushing them off: that enthusiastic guest is the hotel's best loudspeaker.

And the pattern common to both: a professional entertainment host shares out their presence the way a server shares out the dining room — nobody invisible, nobody owned. The energy is yours; the schedule belongs to everyone.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 37

KIDS CLUB AND MINORS: JOY WITH PROTOCOL

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO CREATE SAFE
FUN WITH CONTROL AND RESPONSIBILITY.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Kids Club and Minors: Joy With Protocol

*A family's trust is earned with order,
not just with games.*

In five lines

The kids club is the only place in the hotel where parents hand over the most valuable thing they have — and that handover turns fun into a custody system. Here the protocol doesn't accompany play: it makes it possible. Documented registration and handover, constant visibility, respected ratios and an absolute golden rule about who picks up whom. The brilliant kids club host isn't the one who knows the most games: it's the one a mother looks in the eye and decides, without hesitation, that she can leave with peace of mind. That look is earned with order — and lost with a single lapse.

The script, step by step

- 1. Registration is the border.** Every child comes in with a registration form: who they are, who brings them, who is authorized to pick them up, allergies and needs, the parents' immediate contact details. Without a complete form there is no entry — with all the kindness in the world and without a single exception. And the form exists only for the child's safety: it is kept under lock and key or in the authorized system, only whoever is looking after the child consults it, and it is securely disposed of when the purpose that justified it ends.
- 2. Handover only to whoever is on record.** The child is handed over exclusively to the adult registered on the form or authorized in writing on it — by verifying, not by recognizing them by sight. If anything changes ("his uncle is coming to pick him up"), you contact whoever registered the child before handing them over. The awkwardness of verifying lasts a minute; its absence can last a lifetime.
- 3. Constant visibility.** Spaces open to view, doors that stay open, activities where everyone sees everyone — and the professional rule that protects children and the team alike: no adult alone with a minor, ever. Bathroom trips are accompanied by staff in pairs, or the parents are notified; the rule allows no shortcuts because of haste.
- 4. Ratios and the headcount.** Every host knows how many children they are responsible for and counts them — at every change of activity, space and shift. Counting out loud isn't mistrust: it's the heartbeat of the kids club. And every incident, however minor it seems (a fall, a long bout of crying, a scuffle between children), is recorded and reported to the parents at pickup.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
A formal kids club facility	The system works in any space that is authorized, suitable and assessed for children's use (with its ratios, its visibility and its preventive measures): the registration form, the verified handover and the headcount don't need a room of their own, but they do need an approved space. An assessed space with a protocol is safer than an equipped club without one.
Staff for the ideal ratios	You adjust the capacity, not the standard: fewer children admitted per time slot rather than more children less well supervised. "There's no space right now; there will be in an hour" is a message of seriousness that parents appreciate — even if they protest for a minute.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Greet every child by name and every parent with the registration form at the ready. Count out loud. At pickup, report how everything went.	Relax registration with returning children ("I already know them"): the protocol protects precisely because it makes no distinctions.	Hand a child over to an adult who is neither registered nor authorized, whoever they are and however convincing they seem — you always verify with whoever registered the child. No adult alone with a minor. And no photos of children on personal phones, ever.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Mistaking the protocol for off-putting red tape: well explained ("it's for everyone's safety"), it is the kids club's best selling point.
- ◆ The mental headcount "because there are only a few": custody incidents almost always happen with few children and too much confidence.
- ◆ Not reporting a minor incident "so as not to worry them": the parent who finds out from their child and not from you loses all their trust.
- ◆ Forgetting that the child is a guest too: they are listened to, respected and never ridiculed — children are the audience that never forgets a slight or a kindness.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"A family's trust is earned with order,
not just with games."**

This lesson's exercise

An adult who says he is the father — and who is neither the person who registered the child nor on record as authorized — wants to take the child "to the pool for a moment." He is friendly, in a hurry, and the child seems to know him. Write exactly what you do, word for word, from start to finish. In the answer that follows, I share my version — and we begin Module 11: Security.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 37

Kids Club and Minors: Joy With Protocol

My course of action, and in this lesson there are no shades of gray: friendly in form, unbending in substance. "Happy to help — it's for everyone's safety: I can only hand children over to the person who registered them or to someone listed as authorized. Would you come with me for a second so we can sort it out? We'll call [the person who registered the child] right now and in a minute you'll be at the pool with him." Full smile, full protocol. The child does not leave the area in the meantime — and another kids club host keeps the group looked after: checking on one can never leave ten without eyes on them.

If the verification confirms it (the person who registered the child authorizes it then and there or comes over), the release is logged with the time and that's it — complete normality, zero drama. If it can't be confirmed or the adult gets overly uncomfortable, the child stays, the person in charge at the hotel is notified and a record is made. An adult's discomfort for two minutes weighs nothing against the safety of a minor. Nothing.

And notice the argument that defuses 99% of the annoyance: "it's for everyone's safety — we would do exactly the same with your child." The real father, when he hears it, isn't offended: he's pleased. He has just confirmed that his child is in the one place in the hotel where nobody can take them away. That sentence is the most important sales minute of the kids club — and of the whole hotel.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 36

“Joy is also served à la carte.”

LESSON 37

**“A family's trust is earned with order,
not just with games.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 11: Security**.

PART XII

SECURITY

A hotel's security is felt when it isn't seen. This part teaches firmness with a smile — how to set a limit without humiliating — the handling of the delicate incident with absolute discretion, and the truth that closes the module: security is not a department; it is a culture in which every uniform takes part.

Lesson 38: Hotel Security: Firmness With a Smile · Lesson 39: The Delicate Incident: Alcohol, Conflict, Emergency · Lesson 40: We Are All Security

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 11, Security.



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DANIEL ROJZ BAZTÁN

LESSON 38

HOTEL SECURITY: FIRMNESS WITH A SMILE

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO PROTECT WITHOUT
INTIMIDATING AND INTERVENE WITH RESPECT.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Hotel Security: Firmness With a Smile

The best security is the kind that says hello.

In five lines

The hotel security officer works inside a paradox: their presence must deter whoever comes to do harm and, at the same time, welcome whoever comes to rest — in the same uniform and in the same second. That's why hotel security is unlike any other: its main tool is not force but friendly observation, the greeting that takes note, the presence that reassures some precisely because it makes others uncomfortable. A good hotel security officer is, above all, a host with trained eyes.

The script, step by step

- 1. The greeting that observes.** Every “good morning” of yours does two jobs: hospitality toward the guest and silent verification of observable circumstances — are they registered? Where are they heading? Does their behavior call for help or directions? Courtesy is your best control tool: for the guest it is a welcome; for the intruder, a warning that they have been seen.
- 2. The friendly interception.** When behavior doesn't fit — coming in without registering, a long wait with no apparent purpose, heading toward a restricted area — the first approach is always one of service: “Good afternoon, may I help you? Who are you visiting?” Said with a smile, it resolves 95% of cases without friction: it guides the legitimate visitor and deters the rest — without having accused anyone.
- 3. Discretion as a uniform.** Security matters are handled in a low voice, without an audience and without a show: the hotel sells peace of mind, and nothing breaks it like seeing security in dramatic action. Effective firmness is the kind almost nobody notices.
- 4. A record of everything.** Every incident, check or oddity is entered in the authorized report: time, place, an objective description of the facts and the action taken — with no unnecessary personal data and no judgments about people; it is consulted by whoever needs it and kept according to the hotel's protocol. The security report is the hotel's protective memory — and your professional backing if one day what happened has to be reconstructed.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Technical means (cameras, access control)	Presence and method complement whatever is missing — they never replace the means required by the risk assessment, regulations or protocol: if those are missing, they are requested and the shortfall is corrected. A temporary measure is only acceptable when the risk assessment and the protocol allow the activity to continue without those means; if they are necessary to operate safely, the area or activity is shut down and the corresponding contingency plan is activated. Where the activity is permitted: patrols at irregular times (predictable only to you), well-chosen observation points and coordination with the front desk as a second line of eyes. The hotel's best camera was always an attentive professional — working with the proper means, not in their place.
Team (a solo shift)	The support chain is prepared before you need it: who responds at night, how the alert is raised, what is done and what is not done alone. A lone security officer never handles on their own what requires two: containing and raising the alert are one and the same action.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Greet everyone: the greeting is hospitality and verification at the same time. Intercept by asking how you can help. Handle things in a low voice and without an audience.	Look at a guest with visible suspicion because of their appearance: a profile is not a criterion — behavior is. Turn a check into an interrogation.	Touch anyone except when strictly necessary for protection. Humiliate the person you intercept in public: security that shames creates the very conflict it was meant to prevent.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing presence with intimidation: the security officer with crossed arms and a fixed frown makes the guest more uncomfortable than the intruder.
- ◆ Easing off observation during quiet hours: incidents choose precisely the hours when nobody is watching.
- ◆ Trusting the shift's memory to your head: what isn't recorded didn't happen — and what didn't happen protects no one.
- ◆ Acting out of territorial pride: your job isn't to win the situation — it's to make sure the situation never comes to exist.

THE GOLDEN RULE

“The best security is the kind that says hello.”

This lesson's exercise

Someone unidentified crosses the lobby toward the elevators with a determined stride, without looking at anyone. Write your complete interception: how you approach, your exact first sentence, what you do if they respond well — and what you do if they respond badly. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 38

Hotel Security: Firmness With a Smile

My interception, word for word: I step forward to meet them naturally — not as a barrier, but as a host — and then the secret weapon of the craft: the helpful greeting. “Good afternoon — can I help you? Are you heading to the front desk, or can I point you somewhere?” Notice the move: I haven't accused them of anything, I haven't asked them for anything, and yet they have already stopped, they are looking at me and they have to say what they are there for. A friendly greeting is an access control that offends nobody.

The answer resolves 95% of cases: the real guest answers normally (“I'm going to my room, 320”) and you send them off with a “have a good rest” — looked after, not policed; the legitimate visitor is accompanied to the front desk (“they'll announce you right away”); and the one who hesitates, dodges or speeds up has just told you everything you needed to know — then, yes, a firm escort toward the front desk and a report through the channel, without making a scene.

The rule that sums up the module: in a hotel, security that is noticed attacks the experience, and security that doesn't exist puts it at risk. The exact point is this: the honest guest feels a friendly hotel and the intruder feels an impossible hotel — with the same sentence.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN

HOSPITALITY BUSINESS LEADER



LESSON 39

THE DELICATE INCIDENT: ALCOHOL, CONFLICT, EMERGENCY

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO INTERVENE WITHOUT LOSING CONTROL.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Delicate Incident: Alcohol, Conflict, Emergency

*First calm, then control,
always the record.*

In five lines

Sooner or later it comes: the guest who has had too much to drink and is bothering others, the argument that escalates, the real emergency. In those minutes, the whole hotel's peace of mind rides on how a single person acts — and the professional response has an order that is not improvised: de-escalate first (the low voice, the space, the dignified way out), contain next (protect others, isolate the situation, ask for support) and always record. The rule that governs it all: the goal is never to win the incident — it is for it to end with the least possible harm to everyone, including the person at its center.

The script, step by step

- 1. De-escalate with your voice and with space.** A voice lower than theirs (volume is contagious in both directions), a respectful distance, their name if you know it, and the dignified way out up front: "let's talk it over here, where it's calmer." Most incidents are defused when someone stops climbing the ladder.
- 2. Protect the scene.** If there is an audience — and in a hotel there always is — the priority is to separate: invite the person to a space apart, put distance between them and other guests, ask a colleague to look after those affected. An incident without an audience loses half its fuel.
- 3. Contain without touching and ask for support early.** Physical contact is the last resort and only to protect against imminent harm — never to impose. And support is requested before you desperately need it: raising the alert in time isn't weakness; it is the difference between an incident and a serious incident. If the situation is beyond what the hotel can handle, the appropriate emergency services or authorities are called without hesitation.
- 4. Close with a record and with care.** Once the moment has passed: a report in the authorized channel — time, objective facts, only the strictly necessary data of those involved, action taken; access restricted to whoever needs it, retention in line with the protocol and secure deletion when the period expires — and the human close — the affected guests looked after, the team that lived through it supported and the information passed to management so consequences can be decided with a cool head. What was handled well and recorded can always be defended.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Security staff on site	The protocol is carried out by whoever is there — server, front desk agent, executive housekeeper — with the same three phases: de-escalate, protect others, raise the alert. Nobody has to be the hero: containing and asking for support is the complete response, not half of it.
A written hotel protocol	The minimum protocol is agreed in the briefing and fits in three lines: who responds, who gets called, where it is recorded. Three agreed lines are worth more than a manual nobody read.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Low voice, a dignified way out, separate from the audience, look after those affected, record everything.	Argue the substance with someone who is in no state to reason. Threaten consequences that aren't yours to decide.	Humiliate or expose the person in front of an audience — making a public example of someone creates an enemy of the hotel. Touch anyone except to protect against imminent harm. And never look the other way at a sign of violence toward someone vulnerable: that is always acted on and reported.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Answering volume with volume: you've just doubled the incident.
- ◆ Handling it alone out of pride: whoever didn't raise the alert in time turned their courage into problem number two.
- ◆ Forgetting the collateral victims: the family at the next table also needs a couple of sentences and a small courtesy.
- ◆ Not recording it "because in the end nothing happened": it did happen — and the record of what almost happened is next month's prevention manual.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"First calm, then control,
always the record."**

This lesson's exercise

Midnight: a guest who has had too much to drink raises their voice at the bar and starts bothering another table. Write your complete sequence of action — approach, phrases, handling the audience, support, close and record. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 39

The Delicate Incident: Alcohol, Conflict, Emergency

My sequence. First, remove the fuel: the audience. I approach within his field of vision — never from behind — speaking quietly, using his name if the bartender gives it to me: "Mr. Torres, would you come with me for a moment? Let me offer you something more relaxed, just next door." Getting him off the stage is half of the de-escalation: without spectators, almost nobody needs to win.

Second, the conversation away from others: a calm tone, zero lecturing ("you've had a lot to drink" only inflames things), dignified options — "I'll walk you to your room" or "I'll get you something to eat somewhere quiet." The bartender, coordinated with a glance, has already cut off alcohol service gracefully (lesson 24: quietly and with an alternative). If he accepts any of the dignified ways out, we all win and tomorrow nothing will have happened — and that is success, exactly that: that tomorrow he has breakfast without embarrassment and without a complaint.

And if it escalates: the minimum containment necessary, never alone, an immediate alert through the channel to the person in charge — and to medical assistance or the authorities if there is real risk — and never an avoidable struggle or a hand-to-hand fight out of pride. Third, always, calm or not: the record in the authorized channel — time, objective facts, the strictly necessary data, action taken; with access restricted on a need-to-know basis, a retention period documented in the protocol and secure deletion when it expires. A well-recorded incident protects the guest, the hotel and, above all, you. What wasn't written down, someone else will write tomorrow — their own way.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 40

WE ARE ALL SECURITY

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO OBSERVE,
REPORT AND PREVENT FROM ANY JOB.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

We Are All Security

See, report — and don't be the hero.

In five lines

A hotel's security isn't made by one department: it is made by the sum of all the eyes that work in it. The room attendant sees the door that doesn't close; the server, the child who has been alone for too long; the technician, the smell of burning; the front desk agent, the long wait of someone who isn't heading toward anyone or anywhere. None of them is a security officer — and all four are security. The system works with a three-verb formula that closes this school's departmental modules: see (the eye trained on what doesn't fit), report (through the channel, in time, with facts) and don't be the hero (your job is to trigger the response, not to star in it).

The script, step by step

- 1. Train your job's eye.** Every position sees things no other position sees: make your list of the five risk signals your job can detect before anyone else — the blocked emergency exit, the abandoned object, smoke, the forced door, the behavior that doesn't fit, the child alone. What isn't on your list, you won't see when it happens.
- 2. When in doubt, report it.** A weak signal is reported even if it's probably nothing — because the cost of the two mistakes is asymmetrical: an unnecessary alert costs a minute; a silence when the alert was needed can cost everything. "I didn't want to bother anyone" is the phrase that comes before every avoidable serious incident.
- 3. Report it well: channel, facts, calm.** To whoever it concerns (Security, the shift leader, the front desk), with the precise what-where-when, and without alarming the public: an emergency is communicated with the same discretion with which it is managed. An alert that spreads panic creates the second problem.
- 4. Your role ends where the risk begins.** Contain the immediate problem if it is safe to do so — shutting off a valve, moving a guest out of the way, putting up warning signs — and leave the intervention to whoever is responsible for it. The employee who triggers the response properly saved the situation just as much as the one who carries it out: the whole chain is the hero.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
An in-house security department	Culture multiplies what you have, but it doesn't replace the staffing, the means or the protocols the risk assessment requires — if those are missing, they are requested and the shortfall is corrected. In the meantime: the list of signals for each job, a clear reporting channel and the point in the briefing where yesterday's oddities are discussed. A small hotel with a reporting culture is safer than a large one with a lone security officer.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Keep your job's eye active while you do your work. Report discreetly and with facts. Reassure the guest if they ask, without claiming a control that hasn't been confirmed: "we are handling it; please follow the team's instructions" — and "it's resolved" only when it truly is.	Discuss the signal with colleagues instead of reporting it. Voice alarms in front of guests.	Ignore a signal that affects a vulnerable person — a minor, someone disoriented, someone in danger: that is always acted on and reported, without exception and without weighing up whether "it's really something."

Common mistakes

- ◆ Believing that keeping watch is someone else's job: the uniform you wear includes the eyes.
- ◆ Normalizing the repeated oddity ("that one's always hanging around"): what gets normalized stops being seen — you'll remember it from lesson 33, and here it protects people.
- ◆ Reporting late for fear of looking foolish: in security, looking foolish is the best possible outcome of an alert.
- ◆ Turning the alert into a chat session: the signal travels through the channel, not through the service pantry.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"See, report —
and don't be the hero."**

This lesson's exercise

Make your job's list: the five risk signals your position can detect before the Security department — and for each one, whom you would report it to and in exactly what words. In the answer that follows, I share my list — and we begin Module 12: The Difficult Guest.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 40

We Are All Security

Here are the five that, in my experience, have saved the most lives in hotels, each one owned by a different job. The room attendant: the room door that doesn't close properly — nobody else in the hotel will touch it today; if she doesn't report it, it will spend the night open. The breakfast server: the small child alone near water or stairs — each parent thinks the child is with the other; whoever sees it stays with the child and raises the alert. The technician: the smell of electrical burning or the breaker that trips — their nose gets there weeks before the smoke. The night front desk agent: loitering — the person who comes in and goes nowhere, the car circling the parking lot. And the entertainment host: the swimmer in difficulty or dangerous exhaustion at the pool — an entertainment host's attention has prevented more drownings than many life buoys.

Notice the pattern: Security can't see any of the five in time, because Security doesn't live in your square meter. You do.

And the second half of the rule, as important as the first: see and REPORT — don't go it alone on what is too big for you. The hero who tackles an electrical panel alone or wades in to break up a fight adds one more victim to the incident. The channel exists so that your eye counts without your body paying for it. With this, you wrap up Security: the whole hotel has just gained forty pairs of eyes.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 38

“The best security is the kind that says hello.”

LESSON 39

**“First calm, then control,
always the record.”**

LESSON 40

**“See, report —
and don't be the hero.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 12: The Difficult Guest**.

PART XIII

THE DIFFICULT GUEST

The difficult guest is the final exam of the craft — and also its greatest opportunity. This part teaches you to receive a complaint as the gift it is (free information that most people keep to themselves), to recover without giving away — with a gesture, not with a discount — and to recognize the red line: the point where the guest stops being right and the professional's dignity is not negotiable.

Lesson 41: A Complaint Is a Badly Wrapped Gift · Lesson 42: Recover Without Giving Away · Lesson 43: The Red Line and Your Own Mistake

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 3, Guest Relations, and Chapter 14, Quality.



DANIEL ROÍZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 41

A COMPLAINT IS A BADLY WRAPPED GIFT

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO LISTEN, ACT
AND REBUILD THE GUEST'S TRUST.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

A Complaint Is a Badly Wrapped Gift

The guest who complains gives you the chance.

The one who says nothing doesn't come back.

In five lines

Of all dissatisfied guests, only a minority complain; the rest stay silent, leave and tell the story outside. That is why a complaint, for all its bad wrapping — the tone, the timing, the occasional injustice — is a gift: it is the only dissatisfaction that gives you the chance to fix it. The professional sequence has four steps that are never skipped or reordered: listen all the way through (without interrupting, without getting defensive), empathize for real (with their experience, not with a form), decide with judgment and act now. And one prohibition that runs through all four: no excuses, no blame, no “the thing is” — the guest isn't interested in why the hotel failed; they're interested in what you are going to do.

The script, step by step

- 1. Listen all the way through.** A complaint needs to empty itself out before it can be resolved: eye contact, nodding, zero interruptions — not even to agree with them. Whoever interrupts to solve it too soon forces the guest to start over, and louder.
- 2. Empathize with the experience.** “I understand that after a day of traveling, this is the last thing you needed” — empathy names THEIR specific experience; it doesn't recite a formula. And careful: empathizing isn't taking the blame or arguing about the facts; it's acknowledging that their upset is real. That disarms more than any argument.
- 3. Decide with judgment and say it.** What you can solve yourself right now, what you need to escalate and when they will have an answer: “I'll fix this for you right now; the other matter I'll handle with the executive housekeeper and confirm with you before seven.” The guest tolerates almost anything except vagueness.
- 4. Act now and close the loop.** The first action, immediate and visible — even if it's small: instant action communicates that the complaint was heard. And the closing is the one from lesson 17: checking with the guest that it was put right. A complaint without verification is a complaint only half handled.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
The ability to solve what they ask for	You solve what can be solved and manage the rest with an owner and a deadline — lesson 8 already taught you this at the front desk. The guest can tell perfectly well a hotel that can't from a hotel that doesn't take care of things: always be the first one, visibly.
Authority to compensate	Listening, empathy and immediate action require nobody's authorization — and they are 80% of the recovery. The material side is escalated; the human side is carried out now.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Listen without interrupting, thank them for the complaint (“thank you for telling me — this way I can fix it”), decide and act now.	Interrupt to justify yourself. Explain the hotel’s internal problems. Let the guest’s tone rub off on you.	Argue the facts to prove you’re right: you can win the argument and lose the guest, the review and the next table, which is listening. And never blame a colleague in front of the guest — the iron rule of lesson 3 applies twice as much under pressure.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Taking the complaint as a personal attack: they’re complaining about the failure, not about you — and if they are complaining about you, all the more reason for professional calm.
- ◆ Opening with “the thing is”: every recovery sentence that begins with an excuse ends in defeat.
- ◆ Overpromising to placate: a broken overpromise turns one complaint into two.
- ◆ Not recording it or passing it on: the complaint that dies on your shift will be repeated by another guest on Thursday — quality is crafted from the memory of failures.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“The guest who complains gives you the chance.
The one who says nothing doesn’t come back.”**

This lesson’s exercise

Remember a complaint you saw handled badly — in your hotel or as a customer. Identify the exact step of the sequence where it broke (listen, empathize, decide, act) and rewrite that moment as it should have been, with the exact words. In the answer that follows, I share my analysis.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 41

A Complaint Is a Badly Wrapped Gift

I don’t know your case, but I bet it broke in one of these three places — because 90% of badly handled complaints always die at the same crossroads. Break one, in the listening: the employee interrupted to defend or explain themselves before the guest had finished. At that instant the guest understood that their problem mattered less than the excuse — and from then on you’re no longer arguing about the breakdown: you’re arguing about the disdain.

Break two, in the blame: “that’s Maintenance’s job,” “the thing is, the previous shift...” The guest doesn’t want to know whose fault it was: they want to know who is taking charge. Every finger pointing at someone else confirms to them that nobody is. And break three, in the close: a promise was made (“we’ll look into it and let you know”) and nobody came back. A broken promise after a complaint is the complaint squared — now with evidence.

What I would have done fits the lesson’s method: listen to the end with my body still, taking notes for the hotel’s record; empathize with the annoyance without arguing the facts yet (“I completely understand that this has spoiled your afternoon”); decide with judgment what I can do and say so with a deadline and an owner; and verify — the two-hour call from lesson 17, which is where complaints turn into ambassadors. The gift was well wrapped; you only had to open it all the way.




DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN

LESSON 42

RECOVER WITHOUT GIVING AWAY

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO COMPENSATE WITH JUDGMENT
AND RECOVER VALUE WITHOUT IMPROVISING.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Recover Without Giving Away

*When there's nothing to give,
you give your word — and you keep it.*

In five lines

The myth of recovery is that it can be bought: the drink on the house, the discount, the upgrade. And it helps — when it's available. But real recovery, the kind that creates ambassadors, is made of a different material: heightened attention, a promise kept and visible follow-up. A guest with a breakdown that can't be fixed right away, in a full hotel with nothing material to offer, can still leave composing the best review of your month — if, during the problem, they felt like the most important person in the hotel. This lesson teaches you to recover when the gift drawer is empty: which is, moreover, when professionals stand out.

The script, step by step

- 1. Raise the attention, not the spending.** From the moment there's a problem, that guest has visible priority: they are greeted first, asked first, kept informed without having to ask. The most powerful compensation is no longer being just one more guest — and it doesn't cost a cent.
- 2. Your word, with a date and a name.** “The part arrives tomorrow at 9 a.m.; at 10 I'll confirm with you personally” — and at 10, the confirmation arrives, whatever happens with the part. A small promise kept with religious punctuality rebuilds more trust than a big gift.
- 3. Update them even when there's no news.** Silence during a problem reads as abandonment: “no news yet; I'm still on it and I'll let you know at five” is extremely valuable information even though it contains nothing. The guest doesn't demand that the problem not exist: they demand not to be left alone with it.
- 4. The closing people remember.** Once the problem is solved, the human finishing touch: the written note of apology, the “is everything really all right now?” in person, the thank-you for their patience, with their name. The kind ending is what memory takes home — and what gets written in the review.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Nothing material to offer	That is the scenario of this entire lesson: attention, your word, information and closing. And one more resource, free and extremely powerful: involving the guest in the solution (“would you prefer we try X, or would Y suit you better?”) — whoever chooses stops being a victim and becomes part of the solution.
Time for personal follow-up	You delegate the task, never the face: another colleague can carry out the follow-up, but the confirmation to the guest comes from the person who made the commitment — or from someone who names them (“[name] asked me to confirm with you...”). A promise carries a full name.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Visibly prioritize whoever is suffering the problem. Keep every time you committed to. Close in person.	Hide from the guest while the problem lasts — it's the natural temptation and the fatal mistake. Make flat promises ("this will definitely get fixed") about things you don't control.	Buy silence ("it's on the house if you don't post a review"): it shows, it offends and it turns a breakdown into a story worth telling. Recovery repairs the experience; it never bargains with it.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Measuring recovery in euros: the guest doesn't keep count of what was given away — they keep count of how they felt.
- ◆ Immediate compensation as a shortcut to avoid handling it: a discount that replaces attention confirms that the hotel would rather pay than take care of things.
- ◆ Disappearing after the first step: recovery is a movie, not a snapshot — and it's scored on the ending.
- ◆ Not telling the rest of the team: the guest in recovery must receive the same reinforced treatment at breakfast, at the pool and at the front desk — or one person's recovery is undone by another's carelessness.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"When there's nothing to give,
you give your word — and you keep it."**

This lesson's exercise

A room with a breakdown that can't be fixed until tomorrow, a full hotel (no room change possible), nothing material to offer. Design the complete recovery for the next 24 hours: what you say now, what contacts you make and when, and how you close tomorrow. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 42

Recover Without Giving Away

My recovery, without a single euro of budget. Piece one: the truth with a plan, in person and with a name — you already know it from lesson 32; it's the foundation of everything. Piece two: visible attention — the immediate stopgap, the best possible arrangement for tonight and a management touch that shows the hotel is thinking of them: the good table reserved at dinner, a flexible check-out tomorrow, the genuine interest of the manager who stops by for two minutes to apologize. None of it costs anything; all of it says "you matter to us."

Piece three, the queen: chained follow-up. That night, the discreet check; in the morning, the technician's first visit IS their room and they know it ("the part arrives at 8:30 a.m.; you'll be the first"); and at the close, the verification, by name. A guest who receives three follow-up contacts over a breakdown doesn't remember the breakdown: they remember that an entire hotel moved for them.

And the module's final warning: don't try to buy silence or the review ("I'll make it up to you if you don't mention it") — people can smell it, it offends and it turns your recovery into a bribe. Recover in order to repair. The good review arrives on its own, and it usually begins like this: "we had a problem, and the way they handled it was the best part of the trip."



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN

HOSPITALITY BUSINESS LEADER



LESSON 43

THE RED LINE AND YOUR OWN MISTAKE

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO OWN THE MISTAKE,
SET BOUNDARIES AND ACT WITH HONESTY.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Red Line and Your Own Mistake

*A mistake you own up to works in your favor.
A mistake you cover up defines you.*

In five lines

Two uncomfortable lessons that no manual puts together, but reality does. The first: withstanding pressure is part of the craft; withstanding humiliation is not — and knowing where that line is, and how to defend it professionally, protects your dignity and your team's. The second: you are going to make mistakes — wrong charges, mixed-up reservations, forgotten promises — and at that moment your career is decided more by your reaction than by the mistake: whoever owns up, corrects it and reports it comes out stronger; whoever covers it up, plays it down or lets it be discovered is marked. Both lessons share a root: the calm of knowing who you are professionally.

The script, step by step

- 1. The red line in how you are treated.** The guest can be angry, unfair and even rude about the situation — all of that is handled with lesson 41. What is not handled: the personal insult, degrading treatment, the threat. There the script changes: with complete calm, “I want to help you, and for that I need us to speak respectfully.” Once. If it persists, you withdraw with dignity and inform your supervisor — withdrawing in time is professionalism, not defeat.
- 2. Defend your colleague too.** If you witness a colleague being humiliated — especially a new one — you step in: you join calmly (“can I help you?”), shift the focus and take over the handling. Nobody holds out alone in front of a guest: that is the under-pressure version of lesson 3's “we are one.”
- 3. Your own mistake: the owning-up sequence.** Once you detect the failure: first, you correct or contain what can be corrected; second, you inform your supervisor BEFORE they hear it from others — with the mistake, the cause and your proposed solution in the same sentence; third, if it affects the guest, the professional apology: eye contact, “It was my mistake, and this is how I'm fixing it,” without groveling and without embellishment.
- 4. The apology without theatrics.** Neither drama (“I don't know how this could have happened to me”) nor minimizing (“well, it's not that big a deal”): the professional middle ground is responsibility + solution + gratitude for their patience. Guests forgive mistakes with astonishing ease — what they don't forgive is the feeling that someone tried to slip one past them.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
A supervisor on hand to escalate to	The red line is defended the same way, and you report to the first person in charge you can reach — or it is recorded and communicated as soon as possible. What never changes: you neither endure degrading treatment alone nor cover up the mistake until you “find the right moment.”

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Keep exactly the calm the other person lost. Own up to your mistake with the solution included. Protect your colleague under fire.	Answer an insult with an insult or with sarcasm — the guest will record only your half. Hide the mistake hoping no one will notice: it always gets noticed, and late.	Humiliate yourself to placate them: professional dignity is not negotiable, and a hotel that lets its people be humiliated teaches its guests to do it. And never let a colleague take the fall for a mistake of yours — that can never be recovered.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing pressure with humiliation: anger about the problem is attended to; an attack on the person is stopped.
- ◆ Putting up with too much “so as not to make a scene”: they already made the scene — you only decide whether it ends with your dignity intact.
- ◆ Reporting the mistake halfway (“there’s been a little hiccup”): the supervisor who later discovers its real size won’t believe you the next time.
- ◆ Beating yourself up in public: endless self-criticism makes the guest uncomfortable and devalues your solution — correct, learn and keep serving with your head held high.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“A mistake you own up to works in your favor.
A mistake you cover up defines you.”**

This lesson’s exercise

This morning you charged a bill incorrectly — 40 too much — and you discover it on your own at midday. The guest is still in the hotel and hasn’t noticed. Write your complete sequence: what you do first, what you say to your supervisor (word for word) and what you say to the guest. In the answer that follows, I share my version — and we begin Module 13: The Team, the Shift and Quality.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 43

The Red Line and Your Own Mistake

My course of action, and the order matters more than the steps. First: as soon as I detect the mistake, I tell my manager — before speaking to the guest. Not out of fear: out of method. A manager who hears it from you has an honest employee with a mistake; one who hears it from the guest’s complaint has a problem with two layers. Thirty seconds: “I charged 214 incorrectly — here’s what and here’s why; I’m going to correct it and tell them myself.”

Second: the complete, verified technical correction — the refund issued, the receipt in hand — BEFORE looking for the guest: you arrive with the solution already carried out, not with the promise. And third, showing my face: “Mr. Díaz, I owe you an apology — yesterday I charged you [X] too much because of a mistake of mine. It has already been corrected: here is the proof. Thank you for your patience.” No excuses about the system, no diluting the “mine” into a “we”: the apology with an owner is the one that restores.

The result? Almost always the opposite of what the one who covers up fears: a guest who discovers a mistake that was confessed and corrected before they even noticed it trusts MORE than before the mistake. You’ve just shown them that in this hotel failures aren’t hidden — in other words, that they can sleep easy. A mistake you cover up defines you; a mistake you manage sets you apart. With this, you wrap up the difficult guest: the one left to manage, as you can see, is almost never the guest.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 41

**“The guest who complains gives you the chance.
The one who says nothing doesn’t come back.”**

LESSON 42

**“When there’s nothing to give,
you give your word — and you keep it.”**

LESSON 43

**“A mistake you own up to works in your favor.
A mistake you cover up defines you.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 13: The Team, the Shift and Quality.**

PART XIV

THE TEAM, THE SHIFT AND QUALITY

No shift starts from zero: it inherits information, debts and promises from the one before. This part teaches the briefing and the handover as the moments where the continuity of service is at stake, the hard day handled with craft — communicating in time is also professionalism — and a truth that changes the way you look at things: your work writes the reviews — every gesture of every shift ends up, sooner or later, published.

Lesson 44: The Briefing and the Handover: Information Is Service · Lesson 45: The Hard Day: Serve With Craft, Ask for Support in Time · Lesson 46: Your Work Writes the Reviews

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 14, Quality, and Chapter 17, Human Resources.

BRIEFING - TURNO DE MAÑANA			
OCUPACIÓN	LLEGADAS	SALIDAS	EVENTOS
82 %	18	11	2
NECESIDADES REGISTRADAS CONSULTAR PMS AUTORIZADO			
ALERTA ALIMENTARIA CONSULTAR SISTEMA AUTORIZADO			
MANTENIMIENTO FUERA DE SERVICIO: 2			

LESSON 44

THE BRIEFING AND THE HANDOVER: INFORMATION IS SERVICE

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO TURN SHIFT
INFORMATION INTO BETTER SERVICE.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Briefing and the Handover: Information Is Service

*You look after a colleague
the way you look after a guest.*

In five lines

There are two moments in the day when a hotel decides whether it will work as a team or as a sum of individuals: the briefing that opens the shift and the handover that closes it — both planned and organized within working hours, because they are work. Ten minutes well used in the first put the whole day in order; four minutes well spent in the second keep the next shift from inheriting mines without a map. Both share the same principle, which is the thesis of this module: you look after a colleague the way you look after a guest — with complete information, on time and without them having to chase it. Internal service is the invisible scaffolding of external service.

The script, step by step

- 1. The useful briefing, in 10 minutes.** Four points and not one more: the snapshot of the day (occupancy, key arrivals and departures), the spotlights (VIPs, occasions, guests in recovery from lessons 41-42), the live issues (what is broken, what is missing, what was promised) and the message of the day (one priority, not seven). A briefing that drags on dies; one that gets skipped kills the day.
- 2. Listening to a briefing is a craft too.** You arrive on time, note what concerns you in the authorized shift log (the VIP's name, the room that is out of order; an allergy or any other sensitive data is looked up in — and lives in — the authorized system, not in personal notes) and ask about whatever wasn't clear — the doubt you keep quiet in the briefing reappears at five in the afternoon in front of a guest.
- 3. The handover that loses nothing.** Four minutes with a fixed structure: what's open (tasks half done, with an owner and a status), what was promised (to whom, what, by when), what's odd (the weak signal, the oddity of the day) and what's pending verification (the lesson 17 follow-ups that fall due on the incoming shift). The critical items in writing: spoken memory expires in the parking lot.
- 4. Receiving a handover means accepting it.** The incoming shift asks questions until it understands: from the "OK" on, following up on what you inherited is yours — its ownership, its deadlines, its promises. Whatever wasn't communicated to you remains the responsibility of whoever failed to communicate it, and an impossible promise is not inherited: it is renegotiated with the guest and recorded. "Nobody told me" is never said to the guest: you guarantee continuity and, through the internal channel, the incomplete handover is corrected.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Time for a formal briefing	It is compressed, not eliminated: three minutes standing in the service pantry covering the four points deliver 90% of the value. And if one day even that isn't possible, the briefing travels in writing — read and confirmed, not just sent.
Handover tools (logbook, system)	A single shift log — whichever one the hotel authorizes — with the four fixed sections. What matters isn't the format: it's that there is only one authorized place where the truth of the shift lives — two logs are two truths, and you already know from lesson 14 that that is worse than none. Sensitive data (health, allergies, minors) doesn't travel in it: it lives in the appropriate system.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Convey perfect continuity to the guest: “yes, my colleague passed it on to me — it’s under way for five o’clock.”	Make them notice the shift change (“that was the morning shift,” “I have no record of that”): for the guest, the hotel doesn’t have shifts — it either has a memory or it doesn’t.	Blame the previous shift in front of the guest: it’s the internal version of the sin from lesson 3, and it defines teams that sink.

Common mistakes

- ◆ The monologue briefing: with no questions and no focus, it’s a weather report nobody remembers by eleven.
- ◆ The corridor handover (“all quiet, see you”): that ‘all quiet’ is where the next shift’s bombs lie sleeping.
- ◆ Hoarding information as power (“I’m handling that, end of story”): in a hotel, withheld information doesn’t make you important — it makes you a bottleneck.
- ◆ Not closing the handover loop: the note in the authorized system, within your shift (“214 sorted, thanks for leaving it all tied up”), builds the culture that later saves you. You don’t message a colleague who is already resting — unless they are on call, there is an emergency or availability has been formally established: their disconnection is also part of a handover done well.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“You look after a colleague
the way you look after a guest.”**

This lesson’s exercise

Write two pieces: the 10-minute briefing for a complicated day (hotel at 95%, a group checking in, a hotel-wide breakdown and two absences on the team) with its four points, and the perfect 4-minute handover to the afternoon shift that same day. In the answer that follows, I share my version.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 44

The Briefing and the Handover: Information Is Service

My briefing for a critical day, in the order that pays off: first the people (two minutes) — today’s sensitive arrivals, the group with its time and its protocol, the guests with an open story (yesterday’s complaint, the anniversary — and safety alerts, such as an allergy, checked in the authorized system and communicated only to those involved in that service). Second, operations (two minutes): the open breakdown with its real status and its plan (“214 without air-conditioning; part at 12 noon; until then, a fan and honesty”), the tight room count, the extra hands. And third, ONE focus for the day — just one: “today, with the group arriving, nobody waits without being seen.” A briefing with seven priorities has none.

The 4-minute handover, with a fixed structure so nothing gets lost: minute one, what’s open (live cases with an owner and a status); minute two, what’s been promised (every commitment to a guest and its time — a promise is a debt of the hotel, not of the shift); minute three, what’s odd (what doesn’t add up, what to keep an eye on); minute four, questions. And the essentials in writing: a spoken handover evaporates; a written one protects.

The rule that governs it all: the incoming shift inherits guests, not someone else’s problems — “that was on the previous shift” is the forbidden sentence of the craft. For Mr. Díaz there is only one hotel, and he doesn’t care who was on duty when they promised to call him. It should ring a bell from lesson 3 — in front of the guest, we are one, across shifts too; and on the inside, you report, you record and you correct the cause through the appropriate channel, without looking for culprits in the corridor.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 45

THE HARD DAY: SERVE WITH CRAFT, ASK FOR SUPPORT IN TIME

A BAD DAY IS MANAGED.
STRUCTURAL EXHAUSTION IS CORRECTED.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Hard Day: Serve With Craft, Ask for Support in Time

*A bad day is managed.
Structural exhaustion is corrected.*

In five lines

Tiredness can appear as a one-off, but it can also be the sign of insufficient rest periods, overload, understaffing or poor organization. These are not the same situation and must not receive the same response. A professional takes care of how the guest is treated, recognizes when their capacity is diminishing and communicates it before a mistake or an accident occurs. The person in charge assesses the risk, reorganizes the service and keeps a record when appropriate. If the exhaustion recurs, it stops being an individual problem: it is a problem of planning, prevention and leadership that management must correct.

The script, step by step

- 1. Tell a bad day from a structural problem.** A difficult night or a personal worry may require one-off support. Fatigue that recurs because of extended working days, insufficient rest periods, overload or understaffing requires a review of how work is organized. Calling the latter a matter of attitude only hides the problem.
- 2. Recognize the signs before the mistake.** Loss of attention, clumsiness, irritability, forgetfulness, difficulty making decisions or drowsiness are warnings. If they may affect safety, health, the treatment of guests or quality, you don't wait for an incident to happen: it is reported immediately to the person in charge — and if the risk is serious and imminent, the affected task is interrupted while the protocol is activated.
- 3. Communicate facts, not guilt.** Explain what you are noticing, since when and which tasks may be compromised. A colleague can provide one-off support, but must not silently take on a permanent shortfall. The response must be coordinated by whoever is running the shift.
- 4. Act and correct the cause.** The person in charge assesses, redistributes and arranges whatever relief or rest is due in accordance with working time, the collective agreement and the protocol, activating the prevention channel when appropriate. If the situation recurs, management analyzes working hours, rest periods, workloads, shifts and staffing levels. Protecting the service starts with not making it rest on exhausted people.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Sufficient rest or staffing	You don't improvise an impossible normality. You inform the person in charge, prioritize the essentials, interrupt or escalate any tasks that could compromise safety and record the incident through the established channel — operational facts, with no unnecessary health data. Management must correct the cause; the team's willingness is no substitute for adequate staffing or adequate rest periods.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Communicate in time if tiredness compromises your capacity. Maintain a courteous manner while the person in charge organizes a safe response.	Hide the signs, promise you can carry on without assessing the risk or shift onto a colleague the permanent solution to an organizational shortfall.	Work, or ask someone to work, when fatigue compromises safety. Normalize inadequate working hours, rest periods or workloads as proof of commitment.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing professionalism with enduring in silence: communicating a real limitation protects people and the operation.
- ◆ Treating all tiredness as a lack of attitude without analyzing working hours, rest periods, workload, health and organization.
- ◆ Solving a permanent overload through favors between colleagues: one-off support does not replace the line manager's responsibility.
- ◆ Waiting for the mistake or the accident before stepping in: signs of fatigue must trigger an assessment and a proportionate response.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“A bad day is managed.
Structural exhaustion is corrected.”**

This lesson's exercise

During service, a colleague makes two slips, loses coordination and admits they have gone several days without recovering. The hotel is full and replacing them isn't easy. Explain what the colleague should do, how the person in charge of the shift should act and what management should review if the situation recurs. In the answer that follows, I share my decision.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 45

The Hard Day: Serve With Craft, Ask for Support in Time

As the person in charge of the shift, I would not ask them to hold out, nor would I leave the solution in the hands of their colleagues. I would talk to them in private — without diagnoses or clinical details, which are not my place: what matters to me is the operational limitation, which tasks may be compromised and since when, and their confidentiality stays protected. If there is a risk to their safety, to others' safety or to the operation, I would stop the affected tasks and apply the corresponding protocol, activating the established prevention or health channel when appropriate.

Then I would reorganize the service with clear priorities: redistribute tasks within reasonable limits — without exceeding anyone's duties, training or safety conditions — look for relief or reinforcement and tell the affected departments what can be guaranteed. A full hotel conditions the response, but it does not make the risk acceptable. Service continuity never justifies hiding an unsafe situation.

Finally, I would put it on record through the established channel — operational facts, without unnecessary health data — and review the cause. If it is a one-off episode, I would agree on the support needed. If it recurs, I would analyze working hours, rest periods, shifts, workload and staffing with management and the prevention service. An employee must communicate in time; a supervisor must act; management must correct what the system is causing. A bad day is managed. Structural exhaustion is corrected.



LESSON 46

YOUR WORK WRITES THE REVIEWS

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN HOW EVERY OPERATIONAL
DECISION ENDS UP IN THE GUEST'S VOICE.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS



IN FRONT OF THE GUEST · SEASON 1 · MODULE 13: THE TEAM, THE SHIFT AND QUALITY · LESSON 46

Your Work Writes the Reviews

*Quality isn't a department:
it's the memory you leave behind.*

In five lines

Every interaction today is tomorrow's review: the reservation that comes in next month is born of the gesture someone made — or didn't make — this afternoon. That is the whole chain of the business, told without jargon: the way you treat guests creates their memory; their memory writes the review; the review sets the reputation; and the reputation fills or empties the hotel where you work. That is why quality is not a department that audits: it is the sum of the memories each job leaves behind. And it comes with a personal reward almost nobody tells you about: your name in a positive review is the best résumé there is — verifiable, public and written by a stranger.

The script, step by step

- 1. Understand the whole chain.** Gesture → memory → review → reputation → occupancy → your paycheck and your future. It isn't a metaphor: it's the industry's real accounting. The day a professional sees the whole chain, they stop "putting in their shift" and start building their hotel — and their career.
- 2. Craft moments with a signature.** Reviews that name employees are always born the same way: someone solved, anticipated or brightened something specific AND could be identified — they gave their name, as you have been learning since lesson 5. Excellent anonymous service is appreciated; excellent service with a name gets written about.
- 3. A negative review is read without getting defensive.** When it comes — and it will — the team reads it the way it read complaints in lesson 41: without "the thing is," looking for the fact. Behind the occasional exaggeration there is almost always a real process failure; the team that catches it and corrects it has just turned public criticism into free training.
- 4. Reputation is also looked after from the inside.** What you say about the hotel on the street, on your social media, at the family dinner table, also writes its reputation — and yours. The professional who speaks badly of their own house is telling the world how they will speak of the next one.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
A formal quality program or surveys	Handcrafted quality works just the same: the honest question at check-out (lesson 8), the two-hour check (lesson 17) and the briefing that gathers what has been learned. Tools measure quality; they don't make it — you do.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Serve every interaction knowing it is tomorrow's review. Give your name at the moments that matter.	Pressure guests for a review or beg for it ("if you enjoyed it, you know, five stars"): a begged-for review is worth less, and it always shows.	Respond to criticism — in person or on social media — with sarcasm or resentment. And never fake reputation (commissioned reviews, pressure on guests): the shortcut that destroys exactly what it claims to build.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Believing reputation is managed by marketing: marketing communicates it — this afternoon's shift makes it.
- ◆ Working for the review and not for the guest: it shows, it's cloying and it backfires. The review is the consequence, not the goal.
- ◆ Ignoring reviews out of self-defense ("only angry people write"): the people who write are the ones who felt something — and both extremes are giving you the map.
- ◆ Not celebrating the review that names a colleague: read it out at the briefing, with their name and a round of applause. What gets celebrated gets repeated — that's how culture is built.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"Quality isn't a department:
it's the memory you leave behind."**

This lesson's exercise

Find (or imagine in detail) a review that mentions an employee by name. Take the moment apart: what exactly they did, which ingredients of this school you recognize (the name, anticipation, follow-up, magic) and what would have to happen in your job tomorrow for that review to be about you. In the answer that follows, I share my analysis — and we begin the final module: Your Career.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 46

Your Work Writes the Reviews

I've read thousands of reviews while running hotels, and the ones that carry a name — "ask for María," "thank you, José, for everything" — always tell the same story in different uniforms. They never say "did the job perfectly." They say three things: they saw me (remembered my name, noticed I was tired, realized it was our anniversary), they took one step outside their own box (it wasn't their job, it wasn't their table, it wasn't their shift — and they did it) and they came back (asked the next day whether it had been resolved, came over to say goodbye). See, take the step, come back. It's lesson 2 — the ingredients of magic — turned into print by a stranger.

Now the business side, because this module closes with it: that review with your name raises the hotel's rating, the rating sways thousands of strangers, the strangers fill the rooms and full rooms pay the paychecks — yours included. The complete chain, from gesture to salary, without skipping a link. Quality is not the department that audits: it's you, multiplied by every guest on every shift.

And the final secret: we general managers read reviews with a list of names. An employee who is thanked three times in a season doesn't need to ask to be noticed. We've already noticed. That is exactly what the module starting next is about — the last one: your career.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 44

**“You look after a colleague
the way you look after a guest.”**

LESSON 45

**“A bad day is managed.
Structural exhaustion is corrected.”**

LESSON 46

**“Quality isn’t a department:
it’s the memory you leave behind.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **Module 14: Your Career**.

PART XV

YOUR CAREER

Nobody gets promoted for seniority: people get promoted for reliability. This part tells you, without embellishment, what a general manager really looks at when deciding on a promotion — and closes the season by going back to the beginning: to the sentence you wrote in the first lesson, to check whether it is still true and what to do with it from here on.

Lesson 47: How You Really Get Promoted in a Hotel · Lesson 48: Your Plan for the Next Twelve Months

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

The Hotel General Manager's Handbook, Volume I — and the complete Collection, for the plan that starts today.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN

HOSPITALITY BUSINESS LEADER



LESSON 47

HOW YOU REALLY GET PROMOTED IN A HOTEL

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN WHICH ATTITUDES AND RESULTS OPEN THE WAY TO NEW RESPONSIBILITIES.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

How You Really Get Promoted in a Hotel

*Promotions are decided months before
they're announced.*

In five lines

Let me tell you a secret from the general manager's office: when a promotion is announced, the decision was made months ago. It was made by watching who arrived on time when nobody was looking, who treated a colleague as well as the boss, who solved problems without seeking applause, who acted exactly the same with the general manager present as without. We general managers don't promote whoever asks the most: we promote whoever already works like the position above — because a promotion isn't a reward for the past, it's a bet on the future, and we bet on what we have seen. This lesson teaches you to be visible for the right reasons, and to talk about your work the way people who grow do.

The script, step by step

- 1. The four pillars we look at.** Reliability (your work gets done, always, without anyone chasing you), attitude toward colleagues (how you treat those below and beside you weighs more than how you treat those above — it says who you really are), hunger to learn (the one who asks, volunteers and gets trained) and behavior without witnesses: how you act when you think nobody is watching is exactly who you will be with power.
- 2. Make yourself visible without making noise.** Constant self-promotion subtracts; constant excellence adds up on its own — but it needs two legitimate boosts: volunteer for what nobody wants (the difficult shift, the new project, the thankless task you learn from) and let your results have data (lesson 46 taught you that your name in reviews is a public résumé).
- 3. Tell your achievements with structure.** In your performance review, in the interview or in the corridor: situation → action → result. Not “I work really well in the Front Office,” but “when the system went down in August (situation), I set up registration on paper and coordinated with Housekeeping (action) and no guest waited more than ten minutes (result).” Three sentences, zero hot air, guaranteed to be remembered.
- 4. Ask for the map, not the promotion.** The career conversation with your manager isn't “I want to move up”: it's “what do I need to demonstrate to be ready when there's an opportunity?” — and then demonstrating it. That question puts you on the general manager's mental list that very day; demanding without merit takes you off it.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Promotion opportunities in your hotel	The honest plan B: train and build yourself a portable track record (your results with data, your reviews with your name, your training — this school included) so that opportunity, inside or outside, finds you ready. A hotel's ceiling is not the ceiling of a career.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Treat every guest and every colleague as if the general manager were right there — because that, exactly, is what the reports you never see are made of.	Work for applause and switch off when there's no audience. Step on a colleague to stand out: in this industry everything gets known, and long careers are built with allies.	Take credit for someone else's work or keep quiet about their merit: the general manager who finds out — and they do find out — already knows everything they needed to know about you.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing seniority with merit: years add up to experience only if they add up to learning — repeating one year twenty times is not twenty years.
- ◆ Burning through your current stage while looking at the next one: the best argument for the position above is how you do the one you have now.
- ◆ Saying nothing out of misplaced humility: if your work isn't known, it doesn't exist in the decision — the structure in step 3 isn't bragging, it's informing.
- ◆ Giving up after a missed opportunity: ask for the reason with good sportsmanship, note the gap and close it — whoever handles a no well is first in line for the next yes.

THE GOLDEN RULE

“Promotions are decided months before they're announced.”

This lesson's exercise

Write down one of your achievements — from any job, even one outside hotels — in exactly three sentences: situation, action, result with data. And a second line: the two things in your current job (or the one you want) where you could stand out without anyone asking you to, starting this week. In the answer that follows, I share my example — and we turn what you've learned into a twelve-month plan.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 47

How You Really Get Promoted in a Hotel

Let me show you the difference with a real example, one of the hundreds I've heard in interviews. Weak version: “I'm a great problem-solver and I work well under pressure.” It says nothing — everyone says it, it can't be verified and it's forgotten in a minute. Version with the structure: “One night the system went down with twenty arrivals still pending (situation). I set up check-in on paper using the template we had prepared and organized the line so that nobody waited without being attended to (action). All twenty were in bed on time, without a single complaint, and the hotel adopted my template as protocol (result).” Same employee, same night: the first version is an opinion about you; the second is proof.

The three mistakes I always correct in this exercise: the achievement with no situation (without context there's no merit: was it hard, or was it just Tuesday?), the action in a vague plural (“we handled,” “it was resolved” — what did YOU do?) and the result with no measure (always end with something verifiable: a number, a change that was adopted, a before and after).

And keep this: that structure isn't only for interviews. It's a mental habit — the professional who thinks about their weeks in terms of situation-action-result starts creating achievements on purpose instead of waiting for them to happen. Your track record from lesson 46 and your story from lesson 47 are the same muscle. Next, we turn it into a plan.



LESSON 48

YOUR PLAN FOR THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO TURN YOUR AMBITION
INTO GOALS, ACTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Your Plan for the Next Twelve Months

We began with a sentence of yours.

We finish with a plan of yours.

In five lines

After everything we have covered so far, the school comes back to you. In lesson 0, I asked you for a sentence — why you want to do this work — and asked you to keep it. Today it's time to take it out, reread it and ask it the brave question: is it still true? If it is, this lesson gives you the tool that turns learning into a career: a twelve-month plan — where you are, where you want to be and the three concrete things you are going to do. And if your sentence is no longer true, that's good to know too: this craft deserves people who want to be here, and you deserve to know where you want to be. The journey continues with five more lessons; this is the moment to sort out where you want to take it.

The script, step by step

- 1. Reread your sentence from lesson 0.** Out loud, ideally. Sentences that talked about others — the guest, the magic of welcoming people — tend to stay alive; those that talked only about you have sometimes grown too small. Rewrite it if it has grown with you: your why today is worth more than the one you wrote back then, because now you know what it takes.
- 2. The honest diagnosis in three lines.** Where you are (job, real level, what you have mastered), what you lack (the two or three gaps holding you back — technique, languages, leadership, visibility) and what you have too much of (the habit, the complaint or the fear that is costing you opportunities). Without an honest diagnosis, every plan is decoration.
- 3. The twelve-month goal, in one measurable sentence.** Not “grow professionally,” but “become assistant section head,” “master the full restaurant service,” “get into a higher-category hotel.” If in twelve months you can't check whether you achieved it, it wasn't a goal: it was a wish.
- 4. The three actions — and only three.** One for training (what you are going to learn and how), one for execution (what you are going to demonstrate in your job, with the tools from this season) and one for visibility (the career conversation from lesson 47, the track record with data, your name in the service). Three actions with a date beat ten intentions without one. And at the review six months from now, this lesson will be waiting for you.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
A supportive environment or a mentor	The plan works just as well on your own — this entire season is your mentor in writing: 54 lessons, 16 modules, one method. Go back to the lessons on your gaps (the diagnosis tells you which ones) and turn them into your personal review program.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Serve tomorrow with everything you have learned — tomorrow's guest doesn't know you finished a school: they will notice it in how you treat them.	Put the plan away in a drawer: a plan that isn't reread in six months is lesson 48 left undone.	Forget where you come from when you grow: the day you are the one in charge — because some of you will be — remember that the school that trained you was free, and give it back by teaching.

Common mistakes

- ◆ The perfect plan that never starts: the imperfect version carried out on Monday is worth more than the flawless one forever pending.
- ◆ Measuring yourself against others: your only competitor in this plan is your diagnosis from step 2.
- ◆ Mistaking the plan for a farewell: there are still five lessons left to complete the journey, and the craft is studied for a lifetime.
- ◆ Not sharing the school: if these lessons helped you, pass them on to whoever needs them — sharing knowledge is also a way of practicing this profession.

THE GOLDEN RULE

“The most beautiful thing about this profession is becoming part of the beautiful memories of the people who visit us.”

This lesson's exercise

Your complete plan on half a page: your sentence — reread or rewritten — your diagnosis in three lines, your measurable twelve-month goal and your three actions with dates. Keep it next to your sentence from lesson 0: a year from now, read them together and you will know how much you have grown. In the answer that follows, I share how to turn that plan into concrete decisions, and we begin the Extra Module: Selling Is Serving.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 48

Your Plan for the Next Twelve Months

At the beginning I asked you for a sentence about why you wanted to do this work. Now that sentence must become a plan: an honest starting point, a measurable goal and three actions with dates. What you've learned so far stops being a syllabus when it goes into your calendar.

I'm leaving you three assignments. One: really do the lesson 48 plan — half a page, today, not “when I can”; in six months, read it again and adjust. Two: choose one lesson — just one — and make it your specialty until you carry it out better than anyone in your hotel; that's how reputations are built, one at a time. And three: if this school was useful to you, pass it on to someone who is just starting out. This training travels from hand to hand or it doesn't travel at all.

And the journey continues with an extra series of five lessons that complete the map: SELLING IS SERVING. The table that recommends the day's specials and the off-menu wine, the cocktail bar that creates to measure, the spa that accompanies responsibly, the impeccable appearance that sells without a word and the five-star incident that rebuilds trust. We start next.

Make your lesson 48 plan today — and I'll see you in the first lesson of the extra series. — Daniel

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 47

**“Promotions are decided months before
they’re announced.”**

LESSON 48

**“The most beautiful thing about this profession is becoming part
of the beautiful memories of the people who visit us.”**

End of the module. The next part continues with **the Extra Module: Selling Is Serving**.

PART XVI

SELLING IS SERVING

The final series takes apart the last prejudice of the craft: that selling and serving are different things. The table that recommends, cocktails with a story, the spa that accompanies, impeccable grooming as a silent selling point — and the close of the whole school: the five-star incident, where everything you have learned comes together to turn a guest's worst moment into the reason they come back.

Lesson 49: The Table That Recommends: The Day's Specials and Off-Menu Wines · Lesson 50: Cocktails With a Story: Off the Menu at the Bar · Lesson 51: The Spa That Accompanies: The Wellness Plan · Lesson 52: Impeccable: The Uniform, Grooming and Your Own Square Meter · Lesson 53: The Five-Star Incident: From the Incident Report to Loyalty

FURTHER READING FOR THIS PART

Hotel Operations, Volume II — Chapter 5, Food and Beverage; Chapter 9, Spa and Wellness; and Chapter 14, Quality.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 49

THE TABLE THAT RECOMMENDS: THE DAY'S SPECIALS AND OFF-MENU WINES

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO RECOMMEND NATURALLY.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Table That Recommends: The Day's Specials and Off-Menu Wines

*Everyone gets the menu.
The recommendation is yours to earn.*

In five lines

The menu is the document every guest receives in the same way; the recommendation is the layer only you can add — and it is the one that turns a dinner into an experience and a check into a result. It works with the same mechanism you learned at check-in in lesson 5: you know what the guest cannot know — what is at its best today, the off-menu wine, the finishing touch at dessert — and offering it to them with its description and its extra cost made clear is a service, not a sale. What decides everything is the moment you say it and the truth with which you say it. This lesson gives you the exact timing.

The script, step by step

- MOMENT 1 — When you hand over the menu: opening with the day's specials.** Before they dive into it: “Before you look at the menu, let me tell you: today we have [this and this], which are at their best right now.” Two or three, not seven; told with appetite, not recited. You have just given them information the menu doesn't have — from that instant on, you are their advisor, not their server.
- MOMENT 2 — At the order: the off-menu wine.** Once the dishes are chosen, the targeted recommendation: “And if you'll allow me a recommendation, to go with this we have an off-menu wine — [twenty-second story: winery, grape, why it's special] — for just [X] extra. It's a little gem.” The short story makes it desirable; the clear price makes it honest. Without both pieces there is no recommendation: there is an ambush or there is a mystery.
- MOMENT 3 — When you serve dessert: the finishing touch.** Never with the check — when you serve dessert: “Would you like a glass of champagne with it? It rounds off the meal.” You already know from lesson 8 that the last impression is the one that turns the stay into a memory: the finishing touch at dessert is its table version.
- Once, with elegance.** Each offer is made once, and the no is accepted with the same smile as the yes. The guest who declines today and didn't feel pushed is the one who asks tomorrow, “What do you recommend?” — and that guest is already yours.
- The truth as the limit.** You only recommend what is truly at its best, and you only tell the story that is true. The day the fish didn't arrive as it should have, that day you don't recommend the fish. Your credibility is the most expensive inventory to restock.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
A large cellar or exclusive labels	The “off-menu” doesn't require a luxury cellar: it is the special bottle the hotel keeps in small numbers, the local label the wine list doesn't include, the manager's own find. Scarcity, well told, is exclusivity.
A sommelier or wine training	It is built at the briefing: at every service, the manager presents to the team what is worth recommending that day and its twenty-second story — and whoever can, tastes it. Nobody recommends well what they don't know; nobody needs a diploma to truly know three wines.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Tell the recommendation with a brief story and a clear extra cost, looking them in the eye. Accept the no with the same smile as the yes.	Recite the same soulless “today we have” at all twenty tables. Systematically push the most expensive item. Insist after a no.	Invent a wine’s story or its origin: a lie uncovered at the table invalidates all your future recommendations. Hide the extra cost and let it show up on the check: it is the small betrayal from lesson 8, in its expensive version.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Offering the champagne with the check: the finishing touch is served with dessert; after that it is no longer a finishing touch, it’s a charge.
- ◆ The three-minute story: twenty seconds seduce; three minutes hijack the table.
- ◆ Recommending without knowing: “everything is very good” is the absence of a recommendation (lesson 23) — and the off-menu demands that you know it better than the menu.
- ◆ Measuring success only by the check: the declined recommendation that left a good taste also sold — it sold your credibility for tomorrow.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Selling is serving
when what you offer makes their evening better.”**

This lesson’s exercise

Write your complete script for the three moments for a real dinner in your restaurant: your opening with the day’s specials (two dishes), your off-menu wine with its twenty-second story and its extra cost, and your finishing touch at dessert. Word for word. In the answer that follows, I share mine.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 49

The Table That Recommends: The Day’s Specials and Off-Menu Wines

Here is my script — notice where the difference lies. The opening: “Before you look at the menu, let me tell you about today: this morning we got in a fish straight from the fish market that we’re cooking over the coals, and the rice dish we only make on weekends. I’ll let you take your time.” Two things, told with relish, and then you step away — the opening sows; it doesn’t reap.

The wine, when taking the order: “For that fish, if I may, I have something off the menu: a white from a small winery in [region], barely three thousand bottles a year — we brought it in because we fell in love with it. The bottle is [X] more than the one on the menu. I think you’re going to love it.” Count the seconds: twenty. A story (small, human, true), a match with THEIR dish and the price said naturally. And the finishing touch, with dessert on the table — never with the check: “Shall we pair it with a glass of champagne? It’s the ending this dessert is asking for.”

The two mistakes I read most often in this exercise: the story that turns into a lecture (at forty seconds the wine no longer matters; what matters is that you stop talking) and the whispered or hidden supplement — which turns your gem into an ambush. The rule of lesson 5, applied to the dining room: telling them what you offer AND what it costs is exactly what turns it into service.



LESSON 50

COCKTAILS WITH A STORY: OFF THE MENU AT THE BAR

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO TURN A DRINK
INTO A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Cocktails With a Story: Off the Menu at the Bar

*The cocktail on the menu gets ordered.
The one you made for them gets talked about.*

In five lines

In a bar with real craft, the menu is the floor, not the ceiling. Above it live the experiences no piece of paper captures: the cocktail created to measure from the guest's tastes, the special spirit told in twenty seconds, the preparation ritual that turns a drink into a small show. It is the most experiential upselling there is — the guest doesn't pay more to drink more: they pay more to live something made for them. And it has the same two conditions as always: the price stated beforehand, and the bar's limits (lesson 24) intact: the experience is never sold to someone who shouldn't keep drinking.

The script, step by step

- 1. The question that opens the workshop.** To the guest who is settled in and receptive: "Shall I make you something off the menu? Tell me what you like: citrusy, dry, sweet, smoky?" Three answers from them and you have the most personal commission in the hotel: a cocktail that didn't exist until they arrived. Present it with its price up front: "I'll make you something tailor-made for [X]."
- 2. The spirit with a story.** The special bottle on the top shelf sells itself if it is told well: "If you like [type], I have one off the menu — [twenty-second story: where it's from, what makes it different] — [X] a glass." Short story, clear price, zero solemnity: it is a recommendation between connoisseurs, not an auction.
- 3. The right moment.** Never in the first minute — the first order is their landing. The off-menu lives in the second order, in the lingering after dinner, in the conversation that is already flowing: when the guest is comfortable, the proposal is a gift; when they have just sat down, it is pressure.
- 4. The visible ritual.** Preparation in plain sight — the careful gesture, the hand-carved ice, the chilling of the glass, the presentation — is half the value: they are also paying for the discreet show. The visible hygiene of lesson 26 and the calm theater of the craft, in the same shaker.
- 5. Christen it and give it to them.** The master touch that costs nothing: "Did you enjoy it? Then it has a name now: the [their surname / something from the conversation]. When you come back, ask for it by name." You have just turned a drink into a reason to return — the bar's memory (lesson 24) working for loyalty.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Premium bottles or a cocktail pantry	Tailor-made creation is technique, not inventory: with six honest bottles, citrus and a homemade syrup, you can build a worthy off-menu drink. The value lies in the "made for you," not in the label.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
State the price before you prepare it, always. Read whether the guest is up for an experience or for their usual drink in peace.	Turn the off-menu into an invasive show for the whole bar. Put showing off your technique above the guest.	Invent false vintages, origins or exclusivity. And never use the off-menu to prolong the drinking of someone who shouldn't continue: the limits of lesson 24 override any sale — no exceptions, and no tip can buy one.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Offering it to everyone by default: the off-menu is a tailor-made suit; offered off the rack, it becomes a menu by another name.
- ◆ The taste question as an interrogation: three flowing questions are enough; seven are a guest card.
- ◆ Preparing it with your back turned: the visible ritual is half of what they are paying for.
- ◆ Not recording the success: the cocktail's recipe and the relevant service preference are noted in the bar's authorized medium — with the same limits as lesson 24: only what is needed to serve them better, with access for whoever serves them — and that is what turns it into a repeat guest's "the usual."

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"The cocktail on the menu gets ordered.
The one you made for them gets talked about."**

This lesson's exercise

Design your off-menu for this week: your taste question, three different creations for three typical answers (citrusy, dry, sweet) with their prices, and your spirit with a twenty-second story. In the answer that follows, I share mine.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 50

Cocktails With a Story: Off the Menu at the Bar

My off-menu selection, so you can see the mechanism. The question, at the second order and only if the conversation is flowing: "May I make you something off the menu? Tell me which way you lean: citrus, dry, sweet?" Citrus: a gin base with lime, a touch of basil from the garden and a sparkling-wine top — fresh, aromatic, with a twist. Dry: an Old Fashioned with our own house touch, described while it's being made. Sweet: a rum base with vanilla and a hint of coffee. And always, BEFORE touching the shaker: "I'll make it for you for [X]."

The spirit with a story: "If you like rum, I have one off the menu that we keep in just a few bottles — [where it's from, what makes it different, in twenty seconds] — at [X] a glass. It deserves to be sipped slowly." No solemnity, no tasting sermon: a confidence between connoisseurs.

And the close that multiplies everything: if they liked it, it gets christened — "well, now it has a name: the [their surname]. When you come back, ask for it by that name." A cocktail with their name on it is the cheapest loyalty builder ever invented: you've just given them a reason to come back AND a story they'll tell at home — with your bar as the star. Remember the non-negotiable limit of lesson 24: the experience is never sold to someone who shouldn't keep drinking. No sale is worth more than that judgment.



LESSON 51

THE SPA THAT ACCOMPANIES: THE WELLNESS PLAN

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO PROPOSE PERSONALIZED, CALM WELLNESS.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Spa That Accompanies: The Wellness Plan

A treatment relieves.

A plan builds loyalty.

In five lines

Lesson 35 taught you the calm sale of a single session; this one teaches you to think in wellness plans, not in one-off treatments. The first visit lets you listen to what the guest is looking for, provide the service within the scope of the professional qualification and, at the close, propose prudent continuity if it truly adds value. Without diagnosing medical conditions, attributing clinical causes or promising therapeutic results: the plan comes from a professional assessment within the remit of the role, never from the catalog.

The script, step by step

- 1. The first visit begins by listening.** The question from lesson 34 (“How are you feeling? What do you need from this session?”) is completed at the end with a prudent assessment of the experience: what sensations the guest reports, what service was performed and which wellness option might fit. If pain, an injury or a warning sign appears, you don’t diagnose: you stop and refer the guest according to the protocol.
- 2. Continuity with a why they can understand.** Explain what wellness goal another session would have and what they can reasonably expect, without clinical language or guarantees: “If you found it beneficial, we can repeat an adapted session during your stay and see how you’re feeling.” The guest understands the proposal without receiving a diagnosis that is not the spa’s to give.
- 3. The honest complementary treatment.** “This massage pairs with [this other treatment], which completes it: one works the muscle, the other settles and reduces inflammation. Together, it’s a different experience.” Only if the pairing is real — the catalog complementary treatment that complements nothing is the cross-selling that destroys the trust you have earned.
- 4. The stay plan.** If you know they leave on Sunday, you can offer them a reasonable schedule, leaving room to assess how they feel between sessions. Guiding the stay is service; the spa billing more is the consequence — in that order, always. You never promise they will walk out “like new.”
- 5. The door open for their return.** When you say goodbye, provide only authorized wellness guidelines within your remit. If the guest accepts the continuity, record the minimum information in the approved system, with restricted access and in accordance with the privacy protocol. Loyalty is sown by remembering well, not by writing everything down.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don’t have...	How to hold the standard
A wide treatment menu	The plan doesn’t need a catalog: it is built with frequency, intensity and areas of focus on the treatments you do have. Two techniques well combined and well explained are a plan; ten in a brochure add up to nothing.
A guest card system	Use only the record authorized by the hotel, with the minimum necessary information, defined custody and restricted access. If it doesn’t exist, the need is escalated to the manager; it is not replaced by a personal notebook or an informal history.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Recommend within your qualifications, with clear prices, prudent expectations and a flexible schedule. Record only what is necessary in the authorized system.	Propose the house's standard plan to everyone alike. Use the appointment book as pressure ("I'm getting booked up, make up your mind").	Invent or exaggerate a problem to sell continuity ("this is in really bad shape") — fear is not a sales tool, and in wellness it is the ultimate betrayal. Promise results that don't depend on you.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Closing the first session without a map: the guest who leaves without knowing what their body needs has once again received just a massage — not a spa service.
- ◆ The plan that sounds like a bundle deal: if the proposal starts with the package price and not with the need the guest expressed, you have already lost.
- ◆ Recommending continuity without making it easy: a plan with no appointment offered on the spot ("Shall I book you for Thursday?") is an intention, not a plan.
- ◆ Forgetting the authorized record on the second visit: making them repeat information they have already shared destroys the promised continuity; consulting it without need violates their privacy.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**"The plan comes from a careful professional assessment,
never from the catalog."**

This lesson's exercise

A first-time guest who reports neck tension; a seven-night stay, arrived on Monday. Write your close of the first session word for word: an assessment within your remit, a proposal of continuity without clinical promises, a possible complementary treatment, a flexible schedule and a goodbye that leaves the door open for their return. In the answer that follows, I share mine.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 51

The Spa That Accompanies: The Wellness Plan

My close for that first session, word for word: "How do you feel? [answer] I'm glad. During the session you mentioned tension in your neck area, and we worked within the treatment you chose. If you found it beneficial, we can consider another tailored session on Thursday and see then how you are feeling. If the pain persists or increases, the right thing to do is to consult a healthcare professional about it. If that works for you, reception will find you a slot — no obligation."

Look at the pieces: it starts with the guest's own perception, explains prudently what service was performed, proposes continuity without clinical language or guarantees and makes clear when a referral is appropriate. The schedule adapts to their stay, but also to how things develop and to their decision. Prices are stated naturally when the details are confirmed.

And the spa's memory is managed just like the hotel's: only the minimum necessary information, in the authorized system, with restricted access and in line with the privacy protocol. Remembering well doesn't mean writing everything down.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN



LESSON 52

IMPECCABLE: THE UNIFORM, GROOMING AND YOUR OWN SQUARE METER

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR IMAGE
AND THE SPACE THAT REPRESENTS THE HOTEL.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

Impeccable: The Uniform, Grooming and Your Own Square Meter

*Before your first word, your appearance has already spoken.
And so has your workstation.*

In five lines

There is a sale that happens before any word: the one made by your uniform, your personal grooming and the state of your workstation. The guest reads them in two seconds and deduces everything else from them — quality of service, level of detail, exquisite cleanliness, the class of the house. It is the cheapest and most powerful message a hotel can send, and every employee sends it, on every shift, whether they know it or not. The visible hygiene of the kitchen (lesson 26), the invisible detail of luxury (lesson 18) and the impeccable uniform at four in the morning (lesson 9) are chapters of this same law: neatness is not aesthetics — it is information. This lesson turns it into daily discipline.

The script, step by step

- 1. The uniform as a contract.** Clean, pressed, complete and with your name badge on: the uniform says “there is a standard here” before you say “good morning.” And remember the law of lesson 26: the humble garment kept impeccable communicates more class than the expensive one neglected. Neatness isn’t bought — it is practiced.
- 2. Personal grooming: where the guest looks.** Hands and nails first of all — they are what the guest looks at in whoever serves them a plate, hands them a key or shakes their hand. Then: hair well kept or tied back, clean-shaven or a well-groomed beard, a neutral scent (neither tobacco nor overpowering perfume: the leading scent is the hotel’s, not yours) and your breath kept in check. The mirror before you go in is the last professional gesture before the guest.
- 3. Your square meter is a showcase.** The counter clear, the tray gleaming, the cart tidy, the side table clean, the service pantry that can’t be seen but can be sensed: the guest deduces the kitchen they can’t see from the counter they can. Your tidy workstation is the visible proof of all the hotel’s invisible standards.
- 4. Neatness works a continuous shift.** The uniform at nine in the morning must be the uniform at eleven at night: a micro-check at every break, the stain dealt with on the spot or the garment changed, the counter cleared between one guest and the next. Impeccability that slackens by mid-afternoon wasn’t a standard: it was posing for the opening.
- 5. Understand the message you send.** All of this tells the guest one single thing: “here, detail is looked after.” And their deduction is automatic and inevitable: if this is how they look after what I see, think how they’ll look after my room, my food, my safety. Neatness is the visible guarantee of everything the guest cannot inspect.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don’t have...	How to hold the standard
New uniforms, or enough of them	Enough uniforms, their replacement and their cleaning — or the corresponding compensation — must be provided by the company: the shortfall is reported through the established channel so that it is corrected, in accordance with the applicable regulations and collective agreement. While it is being corrected, impeccability with what there is: repairs requested in time, clean shoes. A veteran uniform cared for lovingly tells a story of craft; a wrinkled new one tells the opposite.
Laundry or touch-up supplies on shift	The touch-up supplies and spare garments are provided by the house — if they are missing, they are requested through the established channel. What does belong to the team is the pact: we check each other before going out on the floor. A colleague’s mirror is the most honest one.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Check yourself before you go in and keep it up throughout the shift. Leave your workstation impeccable for the handover: whoever relieves you inherits your showcase (lesson 44).	Primp, adjust your uniform or check your reflection in surfaces in front of the guest. Eat, drink or chew at your workstation. Lean on the counter as if the shift were weighing on you.	Show up with an unchecked uniform or careless grooming “because it’s quiet today”: today’s guest doesn’t know how many guests there are — they only see you. And never handle the guest’s food or textiles with hands that have just touched something else: neatness is also a sequence.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Believing neatness is for the boss: it is for the guest — the boss is only the second one to notice it.
- ◆ The “I’ll change it later”: between the stain and the later, there are forty guests reading the wrong message.
- ◆ The perfect workstation only when there’s an inspection: an intermittent standard is theater, and the 4:40 p.m. guest pays the same as the one during the general manager’s visit.
- ◆ Perfume as a substitute: neatness smells clean, not of cologne. What is masked gets noticed — and it shows that it is being masked.

THE GOLDEN RULE

“Before your first word, your appearance has already said welcome — or already apologized.”

This lesson’s exercise

Run the mirror-and-square-meter audit on yourself: write down ten points a demanding guest would look at today — five about you (hands, shoes, uniform, hair, name badge) and five about your workstation. Score yourself from 1 to 10 on each, honestly. The two worst get fixed first thing tomorrow. In the answer that follows, I share what I look at when I walk through a hotel.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 52

Impeccable: The Uniform, Grooming and Your Own Square Meter

Let me tell you what I look at when I walk through a hotel — the real order of my gaze, which is also that of the demanding guest. First, the shoes: they are the item nobody thinks gets looked at and the one we all look at; a clean shoe with a veteran uniform says craft, a dirty shoe with a new uniform says costume. Second, the hands and nails of whoever is serving me: they are going to touch my key, my glass, my plate — they are the hotel’s hygiene in portable form. Third, the name badge and the overall look: complete and straight, or half-done and sagging. And fourth, the desk or the station: if its square meter is impeccable in mid-afternoon — not at nine in the morning, which is easy — that hotel has a real standard.

Notice that all four are gestures of professional habit — the touch-up, the name badge, the mutual check, the square meter — and that none of them replaces what is the company’s responsibility: enough uniforms, footwear where applicable, replacement, cleaning or compensation, and work equipment, in accordance with the applicable regulations and collective agreement. Appearance rules, moreover, must be objective, proportionate, justified by hygiene or safety, non-discriminatory and respectful of privacy. With the proper means on the table, this test does reveal something: the habits of the teams. That’s why it’s the first diagnosis I make when I arrive at a new hotel: tell me what your uniforms look like at five in the afternoon — and how the house provides them — and I’ll tell you the state of your entire operation.

If in your audit the two worst points were about your workstation and not about you, take note: it is the most common result and the most revealing — we look after what we wear and neglect what surrounds us, and the guest sees it all together, as a single message. Tomorrow, those two points. And next, we close the season on a high note.



DANIEL ROIZ BAZTÁN

HOSPITALITY BUSINESS LEADER



LESSON 53

THE FIVE-STAR INCIDENT: FROM THE INCIDENT REPORT TO LOYALTY

TODAY YOU'LL LEARN TO TURN AN
INCIDENT INTO RECOVERY AND LOYALTY.

FREE SCHOOL OF GUEST SERVICE IN REAL HOTEL OPERATIONS

The Five-Star Incident: From the Incident Report to Loyalty

A complaint resolved closes a problem.

A complaint accompanied can turn the guest into someone who comes back.

In five lines

This lesson brings together everything you have learned about incidents — the report (14 and 33), the truth with a plan (32), the two-hour call (17), recovery (41-42) — into the complete chain that five-star hotels execute: a quality report logged, a resolution confirmed twice, and the guest under personalized follow-up from Guest Relations until the end of their stay. Because the guest who had even a minor complaint is not a closed file: they are a person whose trust must be rebuilt until departure, with delicacy, acknowledgment and gratitude. Their loyalty is decided in those days, not only at the moment of the breakdown.

The script, step by step

- 1. The report with a person's name.** Every incident is logged with the guest, not just with the room: room 214 has a breakdown; Mr. Díaz has a bad experience. The quality report that only says "A/C 214" repairs machines; the one that says "A/C 214 — Díaz family, departing Sunday" repairs stays.
- 2. The resolution is confirmed twice.** Technically (whoever made the repair closes their work order) and personally (whoever faces the guest checks with them that it was left to their satisfaction — the two-hour call). Without the second confirmation, the first is just paper.
- 3. The handover to Guest Relations.** Here begins what almost no hotel does: from the incident until check-out, that guest has a guardian angel with a name. The greeting with memory ("All good since Tuesday?"), the table looked after a notch better, the small touch at the right moment, the response always personalized — never the template. Delicacy without constant reminders: they are looked after more, not reminded of the problem every time.
- 4. The goodbye that closes the circle.** At their check-out, the acknowledgment and the thanks: "We're truly sorry about the air conditioning on Tuesday — I hope the rest of your stay made up for it. Thank you for your patience and for the way you handled it." And the door open for their return, with memory: "Next time we'll be ready from minute one." Trust and loyalty are also decided in those twenty seconds.
- 5. The close feeds quality.** Every accompanied incident bears two fruits: a recovered guest and a piece of data — what failed, how long it took, what worked in the accompaniment. Into the briefing and into the record: the incident that teaches nothing will repeat itself under another name in the same room.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
A Guest Relations or PR department	The role exists even if the position doesn't: it is taken on by whoever received the complaint, or by the Front Office — one person with a name who knows they own that guest until departure. The guardian angel is a function, not an org chart.
Material touches for the accompaniment	Five-star delicacy is above all attention: the greeting with memory, the sincere question, the discreet priority. Follow-up with no budget is still 90% of the effect — lesson 42 taught you that.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Treat them those days with an extra delicacy that is felt and not announced. Always respond to them in person and in a personalized way — never with a formula.	Remind them of the problem at every contact (“Nothing else has gone wrong since, has it?”). Turn attention into smothering.	Label them within the team as “the complainer”: whoever labels the guest who complained didn’t understand lesson 41 — that guest gifted you the opportunity. And never say goodbye to them without acknowledging and verifying: the incident that leaves in silence leaves for the review.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Closing the file when the report is closed: the breakdown lasts hours; the experience lasts until Sunday.
- ◆ Template follow-up (“We hope everything is to your liking”): a generic response after a complaint confirms that the hotel didn’t see them.
- ◆ Accompaniment with no handover between shifts: the guardian angel who doesn’t hand over (lesson 44) leaves the guest orphaned on the angel’s day off.
- ◆ Chasing the review instead of the return: you don’t accompany them so they score you well — you accompany them so they come back. The good review is the consequence.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“A complaint resolved closes a problem.
A complaint accompanied can turn the guest into someone who comes back.”**

This lesson’s exercise

A guest was affected by a breakdown on Tuesday, resolved on Wednesday morning; they leave on Sunday. Design their complete accompaniment from Wednesday to Sunday: who their guardian angel is, each day’s contacts and gestures (without smothering) and the exact sentence for their check-out. In the next delivery, I share my version — and with it, I close the season.

THE ANSWER · HOW I WOULD DO IT · LESSON 53

The Five-Star Incident: From the Incident Report to Loyalty

How I would accompany them, from Wednesday to Sunday. Wednesday: the double confirmation — the technician closes their work order and, two hours later, the personal verification call, by name (lesson 17). From that moment on, the Díaz family has a guardian angel: one specific person who knows they own that stay. Thursday: contact without reminders — a greeting that remembers at breakfast, a slightly better table, no mention of the breakdown unless they bring it up. Friday or Saturday: the gesture at the right moment — the discreet touch, the personalized recommendation, quiet priority in whatever they ask for. Delicacy that is felt and not announced.

And on Sunday, the twenty seconds that decide everything: “We are truly sorry about the air conditioning on Tuesday — I hope the rest of your stay more than made up for it. Thank you for your patience and for how you handled it. Next time, your room will be perfect from minute one — and we already know which one you like.” Acknowledgment, thanks, an open door to return — with memory. That family isn’t going to write about a breakdown: they’re going to write about a hotel that rose to the occasion — and they’re going to come back.

This was the last lesson, and it’s no coincidence that it was this one: the whole method of the season fits inside it. See the person, tell the truth, execute with craft, follow up and leave a good memory. Now read my farewell message.

The module's golden rules, to take with you

LESSON 49

**“Selling is serving
when what you offer makes their evening better.”**

LESSON 50

**“The cocktail on the menu gets ordered.
The one you made for them gets talked about.”**

LESSON 51

**“The plan comes from a careful professional assessment,
never from the catalog.”**

LESSON 52

**“Before your first word, your appearance has already said welcome —
or already apologized.”**

LESSON 53

**“A complaint resolved closes a problem.
A complaint accompanied can turn the guest into someone who comes back.”**

This module closes **Season 1 of In Front of the Guest**. On the next page you will find my farewell message. If this book has helped you, share access to the free school In Front of the Guest with someone who is just starting out: it was born to travel from hand to hand.

Farewell — the craft continues

Fifty-four lessons. Sixteen modules. A whole season of school. We began with a sentence of yours — why you want to do this work — and we end with a plan of yours and a complete method: you know how to enter a room, lock down a reservation, read a table, recommend an off-menu wine, turn a message into a plan, safeguard a child, de-escalate a small-hours incident and accompany a complaint until it becomes a guest who comes back. All of this is yours: keep it, print it and share it with whoever needs it — this school travels from hand to hand, or it doesn't travel at all.

The channel will stay open to keep the materials available and to announce any new initiative when it is truly ready. There is no need to promise what comes next to recognize everything we have already built together.

I say goodbye with the sentence that sums up how I understand this craft: “The most beautiful thing about this profession is becoming part of the beautiful memories of the people who visit us.” Over the years I came to understand that so is training and developing the people you work with.

Thank you for making it this far. Now it's time to take it to the hotel, in front of the guest. — Daniel Roiz Baztán

CLOSING

The craft that comes next

If you have made it this far doing the exercises, you no longer look at a hotel the same way: you see the invisible chain behind every promise, the gesture behind every memory, the locker behind every shift. That change in the way you look was the goal of this book — everything else is practice.

The craft, however, doesn't end in operations. On the other side of the desk there is another kind of learning: how a department head thinks, how a hotel's numbers are read, how a team is led without losing the craft this book teaches. That is the next season of this school — and, if life allows, the next book.

Meanwhile, the school is still open and free at delantedelhuesped.com/en. And you have an assignment: train someone. With this book, with a lesson read at a briefing, with an answer discussed in the service pantry. Because the most beautiful thing about this profession is becoming part of the beautiful memories of the people who visit us — and of the growth of those who work beside you.

See you in front of the guest.

Daniel Roiz Baztán

The 54 golden rules, gathered together

LESSON 0

**“School taught you the procedure. The craft begins
when there is a person in front of you.”**

LESSON 1

**“Service doesn’t begin when the guest sees you.
It begins when you decide, at your locker, who is going to walk out that door.”**

LESSON 2

**“Magic isn’t doing something extraordinary.
It’s doing the ordinary as if that person were extraordinary.”**

LESSON 3

**“Among ourselves, we speak plainly and put things right.
In front of the guest, we are one.”**

LESSON 4

**“Nobody is invisible in your lobby.
A wait that feels seen lasts half as long.”**

LESSON 5

**“The paperwork is what you have to do.
The reconfirmation, the upgrade and the welcome are what you decide to do. And what
people remember is what you decided.”**

LESSON 6

**“The system suggests rooms.
Judgment assigns stays.”**

LESSON 7

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

LESSON 8

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

LESSON 9

**“General managers come from the people
who shone when nobody was watching.”**

LESSON 10

**“The room isn’t clean when you finish.
It’s clean when the guest finds nothing.”**

LESSON 11

**“That door is the border between your work and their privacy.
You cross it by asking permission, always.”**

LESSON 12

**“When resources run short,
never cut the method short.”**

LESSON 13

**“Honesty isn’t supervised: it’s who you are.
And a whole career can fit in the wrong pocket.”**

LESSON 14

**“Your floor ends where someone else’s promise begins.
Giving notice is serving.”**

LESSON 15

**“Whoever solves is good.
Whoever anticipates is in another league.”**

LESSON 16

**“Personalization is information plus execution.
Without either one, it’s luck.”**

LESSON 17

**“Solving isn’t closing.
It’s verifying.”**

LESSON 18

**“Marble can be bought.
Luxury has to be executed.”**

LESSON 19

**“Knowing when not to step in
is half the art of serving.”**

LESSON 20

**“Inside, we serve.
Outside, it doesn’t exist.”**

LESSON 21

**“An ordinary server serves plates.
A professional serves people.”**

LESSON 22

**“What people remember about a dinner
are the touches nobody required.”**

LESSON 23

**“Recommend as you would to a friend.
Trust is the best average check.”**

LESSON 24

**“The bar is a confessional with ice:
you hear everything, you repeat nothing.”**

LESSON 25

**“You can play with service.
With a guest’s safety, never.”**

LESSON 26

**“One careless gesture in plain sight
undoes a hundred flawless plates.”**

LESSON 27

**“During service, only the solution exists.
Blame is handed out once the kitchen is cold.”**

LESSON 28

**“When in doubt,
it doesn’t go out.”**

LESSON 29

**“What isn’t on the sheet doesn’t exist.
What is on it is a contract.”**

LESSON 30

**“The perfect banquet is the one the host
never had to manage.”**

LESSON 31

**“In that room your craft is twofold:
the repair and the trust.”**

LESSON 32

**“Neither alarm nor promise:
the truth, with a plan.”**

LESSON 33

**“Reporting is professional.
Keeping quiet is sabotage.”**

LESSON 34

**“The spa sells a state of being.
Your silence is part of the treatment.”**

LESSON 35

**“Wellness isn’t sold with pressure.
It’s recommended with honesty.”**

LESSON 36

“Joy is also served à la carte.”

LESSON 37

**“A family’s trust is earned with order,
not just with games.”**

LESSON 38

“The best security is the kind that says hello.”

LESSON 39

**“First calm, then control,
always the record.”**

LESSON 40

**“See, report —
and don’t be the hero.”**

LESSON 41

**“The guest who complains gives you the chance.
The one who says nothing doesn’t come back.”**

LESSON 42

**“When there’s nothing to give,
you give your word — and you keep it.”**

LESSON 43

**“A mistake you own up to works in your favor.
A mistake you cover up defines you.”**

LESSON 44

**“You look after a colleague
the way you look after a guest.”**

LESSON 45

**“A bad day is managed.
Structural exhaustion is corrected.”**

LESSON 46

**“Quality isn’t a department:
it’s the memory you leave behind.”**

LESSON 47

**“Promotions are decided months before
they’re announced.”**

LESSON 48

**“The most beautiful thing about this profession is becoming part
of the beautiful memories of the people who visit us.”**

LESSON 49

**“Selling is serving
when what you offer makes their evening better.”**

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**“The cocktail on the menu gets ordered.
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LESSON 53

**“A complaint resolved closes a problem.
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Glossary of the craft

Amenity. A courtesy touch the hotel leaves for the guest: fruit, a note, toiletries, a welcome gesture.

Average check. The average spend per guest or per table. It rises with honest recommendation — never with pressure.

Banquet event order (BEO). An internal document that describes an event: timings, setups, menus, people in charge and commitments to the client.

Briefing. A short start-of-shift meeting: news, important arrivals, open incidents and the day's priorities.

Check-in / Check-out. The guest's arrival and departure: registration on arrival, and the settling of the bill and the farewell at the end of the stay.

Courtesy call. A brief contact with the guest after an incident or after arrival to check that everything is in order.

Handover. The transfer of information between shifts: what is pending, what was promised and what is delicate. A poor handover breaks the continuity of service.

No-show. A reservation whose holder neither shows up nor cancels. It affects planning and is usually subject to its own rate policy.

Overbooking. Selling more rooms than are available, counting on cancellations and no-shows; managing it in front of the guest requires a delicate protocol.

Pass. The point in the kitchen where finished plates are checked and handed over to the restaurant team; the final quality filter.

PMS. The hotel's management system (Property Management System): reservations, room assignments, charges and guest profiles.

Room rack. A board or screen showing the status of every room: occupied, clean, dirty, blocked, due out.

Serious and imminent risk. A situation in which serious harm to safety or health is reasonably likely to occur in the immediate future, and which requires activating the applicable preventive measures.

Show cooking. Cooking in view of the guest, where the preparation is also part of the show and of the service.

Structural exhaustion. An editorial and preventive expression used to describe a recurring situation of fatigue or overload linked to the way work is organized. It is not a clinical diagnosis.

Traceability. The ability to reconstruct the path of a product or an incident: who, when, where and with what result.

Upselling. Offering a worthwhile upgrade (a superior room, a more complete treatment) honestly and at the right moment. In this book: selling is serving.

Walk-in. A guest who arrives without a reservation. An opportunity and a test for the Front Office at the same time.

Thematic index

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How to use this book with a team

This book is also designed to work as in-house training material. The approach that works best, tested in real operations:

- 1. One lesson per briefing.** No more. Fifteen well-run minutes are worth more than a two-hour session.
- 2. Reading the situation first.** The person in charge reads the situation and the script aloud during the session itself — or the reading is organized at another point within planned working time.
- 3. Five minutes of responses.** Each team member says — or writes — what they would do in the exercise. No correcting yet: thinking comes first.
- 4. Comparison with the answer.** The general manager's answer is read and discussed: where we agree, where we don't, and why.
- 5. An operational commitment for the shift.** The team chooses one specific gesture from the lesson and applies it that same day. The golden rule is written where everyone can see it.
- 6. Review a week later.** Two minutes of the next briefing: what happened when you applied it? That is where training becomes the standard.

A warning that is part of the method: any reading, exercise, briefing, meeting or training required by the company must be organized within recorded and paid working time. Personal, voluntary participation in this free school does not replace the training the company is legally required to provide, especially in occupational risk prevention.

For specific departments, the book's table of contents lets you build learning paths: Part II for front office teams, III for housekeeping, VI and VII for restaurant and kitchen — and the cross-cutting parts (XIII and XIV) for everyone.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel Roiz Baztán



HIS PHILOSOPHY

“Only through the training and development of teams do you achieve the sense of belonging to the brand and excellence in guest service. And with it come the results: satisfaction, guest loyalty and the trust of tour operators and agencies. Efficiency in financial management provides the rest.”

General Manager with international experience leading luxury resorts, lifestyle and wellness hotels, and complex hotel operations in Spain and the Caribbean. Specialized in premium guest experience, personalized guest journeys, management of VIP services, wellness, operational excellence and the development of high-performance teams.

He has led reopenings, asset repositionings and operational transformations at luxury resorts, lifestyle hotels, Adults Only concepts, Diamond Club and high-end hospitality settings. Recognized for building cultures of service excellence where guest experience, leadership and operational discipline generate sustainable results.

He is the author of the **Hospitality Collection** — three volumes devoted to the craft of managing and operating hotels — and the creator, director and teacher of **In Front of the Guest**, the free school of guest service in real hotel operations from which this book was born.

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