

Reservations

The Three-Ring Standard

Five steps for answering, holding and transferring a reservations call.
The caller decides how the hotel feels before anyone mentions a rate.

Who	When	You need
Reservations agents, and anyone covering the line	Every incoming call to the reservations line, 24 hours a day	Headset on, PMS open on availability, the transfer list

Measured by Answered within three rings · Hold asked first, under 30 seconds · Name and need passed on every transfer

1 Answer

Pick up by the third ring, about ten seconds. The sentence you were typing can wait. Greet with the hotel's name, your first name and an offer of help, in that order, on every call.

"Good morning, Grand Hotel Reservations, this is Giulia. How may I help you?"

Common mistake Answering so fast the caller hears "—ervations", or with the department alone. The first two seconds carry the hotel's name.

2 Take the name

Ask for the caller's name in the first 30 seconds and write it down, spelling included, before you check a single date. Use it once early and once at the close; more than that sounds rehearsed.

"May I take your name, so I can look after you properly?" Then: "Thank you, Mr Okafor."

Common mistake Going straight to dates and availability. Ten minutes later the call ends and nobody knows who it was.

3 Ask before holding

Never press hold without asking and waiting for the answer. Give a reason and a time. Come back every 30 seconds, even with nothing new, and thank the caller each time you return.

"May I place you on hold for thirty seconds while I check the sea-view rooms?" Then wait for the yes.

Common mistake "Can you hold?" and the music starts before the caller has answered. A question you don't wait for is not a question.

4 Transfer warm

When the call belongs elsewhere, stay on the line, tell your colleague the caller's name and need, then introduce them. If nobody picks up within 20 seconds, take a number and a time to call back.

"Ms Rossi, I have Paola from the spa with me. She knows you'd like a couples treatment on Saturday."

Common mistake The blind transfer into a ringing extension. The caller tells the story twice, or hangs up and tries another hotel.

5 Close

Before hanging up, sum up what was agreed in one sentence, thank the caller by name and let them end the call first. Log every call, booked or not, with a name and a contact number.

"So that's two nights from 14 May, and the confirmation reaches you within the hour. Thank you, Mr Okafor."

Common mistake Hanging up first. The caller remembered one more question, and now has to dial again and wait through three rings.

What the Caller Hears at Each Moment

Seven moments when the caller meets the hotel without seeing it. The middle column is what to say; the right column is what slips out on a busy day.

The moment	Say this	Not this
Answering	"Good morning, Grand Hotel, Giulia speaking."	"Reservations, hold please."
Asking to hold	"May I place you on hold for thirty seconds?"	"Hold on."
Back after 30 seconds	"Thank you for waiting. One more moment?"	Silence, then more music.
Back after a long hold	"I'm sorry that took longer than I said."	"Sorry, it's really busy today."
Transferring	"I'll stay on the line until Paola answers."	"I'll put you through." Click.
Nobody answers	"May I take your number? She'll call by four."	"Try again in a bit."
Closing	"Thank you, Mr Okafor. Enjoy your evening."	"Okay, bye."

How to use this with your team

Brief one row a day at the start of the shift and act it out in pairs for 20 seconds. On Friday the reservations manager listens to five live calls and ticks which rows were heard as written.

Part of the DolceVita Standards Library: free operating standards for every department of the hotel, at dolcevitahospitality.com/free-resources.