

## Reservations

# The Email Reply Standard

Five steps for answering a written enquiry within two hours. The guest who emails has often written to several hotels, and books with the first full answer.

| Who                                                                                                                   | When                                                       | You need                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reservations agents, checked by the reservations manager                                                              | Every email and web form, during reservations office hours | Shared inbox, guest history in the PMS, availability, room photos |
| Measured by Reply sent within two hours · Every question in the email answered · Signed with a name and a direct line |                                                            |                                                                   |

## 1 Acknowledge

Open the inbox every 30 minutes. Any email you cannot answer in full within two hours gets a short personal reply now, with your name and the time the full answer will arrive.

"Dear Mr Schneider, thank you. I'm checking the connecting rooms and will reply in full by 15:00. Anna"

**Common mistake** Letting the automatic reply count as an answer. The guest knows a machine wrote it, and keeps waiting.

## 2 List the questions

Before typing, number every question in the guest's email, including the ones in the last line and the PS. Your reply answers each one, in the same order, in its own short paragraph.

**Note on the draft:** "1 cot – yes. 2 airport – 35 min. 3 late checkout – to 14:00. 4 vegan breakfast – yes."

**Common mistake** Answering the dates and the price and skipping the question about the dog. That was the one that mattered.

## 3 Use their words

Address the guest by name and title as they signed, and reuse their words for what they want. If they wrote "quiet room", write "quiet room", not "superior category". No room codes, no rate codes.

"Dear Mrs Kowalski, for a quiet room I would suggest the courtyard deluxe on the fourth floor, away from the lift."

**Common mistake** Pasting the template with room codes and rate names. The guest has to translate the hotel before they can book it.

## 4 One next step

End with one clear next step: a link to book that room at that rate, a hold until a stated time, or a call at a time the guest chooses. Never end on "do not hesitate to contact us".

"I'm holding the room for you until Thursday at 18:00. Reply 'yes' and I'll confirm it straight away."

**Common mistake** Closing with three options and a general invitation to get in touch. The guest has the work to do, and puts it off.

## 5 Sign and follow

Sign with your first name, surname, role and direct line, never the department alone. If there is no reply after 48 hours, send one short follow-up, then mark the thread closed in the log.

"Anna Ferri, Reservations Agent. Direct line +39 055 000 0000"

**Common mistake** Signing as "Reservations Team". The guest has nobody to write back to, so writes to someone else.

## Before You Press Send

Thirteen checks for every written reply. Run down them in the last minute before sending; most take a glance.

- ☐ Name and title spelt as the guest signed
- ☐ One photo or link for the room suggested
- ☐ Every question answered, in the guest's order
- ☐ One clear next step, with a time
- ☐ Dates written with weekdays
- ☐ Your name, role and direct line
- ☐ Rate shown with what it includes
- ☐ Earlier emails kept below in the thread
- ☐ Taxes and city tax stated
- ☐ Subject line names the dates and the room
- ☐ Cancellation terms in one plain sentence
- ☐ Sent within two hours of the enquiry
- ☐ Room described in their words, no codes

### How to use this with your team

Print it beside each screen. For a week, the reservations manager picks three sent emails a day at random and checks them against the list with the agent who wrote them. Brief the most-missed item next morning.

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