

GUEST RELATIONS · OPERATING STANDARD 114

The After-Stay Standard

WHO

Guest relations, with the duty manager and the front office

WHEN

From the evening before departure to the third day after it

YOU NEED

Departures list, after-stay log, profiles with consent, a direct email

TIME TO TRAIN

45 minutes, with one role-played question and two messages

What this standard achieves

Every guest is asked about the stay while there is still time to put something right, and hears from a person after they have gone, with every promise made during the stay kept. The guest leaves with no loose ends, and the hotel learns what to keep and what to change for the next visit.

Measured by

01

Every departing guest asked one open question before leaving

02

Answer written in the guest's words within 30 minutes

03

A problem raised before departure passed on within 10 minutes

04

Personal message sent within 48 hours of departure

05

No template sentence in five messages checked each week

06

Every promise kept by the date given to the guest

07

Every reply to a message answered within 24 hours

08

After-stay log closed within 72 hours of departure

PHASE 1

Prepare the departures

STEPS 1–4

- 01 By 16:00 the day before, read tomorrow's departures and note for each guest: nights stayed, any complaint logged, the moment delivered (The Memorable Moment Standard) and anything still owed to them.
- 02 List every open promise from the stay in the after-stay log: a recipe, the name of a product, a photo, a booking, a copy of the bill for a company, with who owes it and by what date.
- 03 Choose who speaks to each guest: the colleague who looked after them most during the stay, or guest relations. A guest with a complaint still open is seen by the duty manager.
- 04 Check the contact consent in the profile. A thank-you about this stay goes to every guest who gave an email; news, offers and a note on a date next year go only where consent is marked yes.

PHASE 2

Ask before they leave

STEPS 5–10

- 05 Check yourself against The Presence Standard before the first conversation, with each guest's name, stay and open promises in mind.
- 06 Ask the evening before departure or at breakfast on the last morning, in person where you can. Never at the moment of paying: by then nothing can be fixed and the guest is watching the time.
- 07 Ask one open question about the stay, and listen to the whole answer with your eyes on the guest, not on a screen or a notepad.
"Before you leave us tomorrow, Mr Al-Harbi, how has the stay been for you?"
- 08 Ask one follow-up question about the part the guest mentions first, good or bad. Then thank them. Never ask for a score, a survey or a review.
"You mentioned the breakfast. What would you change about it?"
- 09 If you cannot see the guest in person, call between 18:00 and 20:00 or send one question through the hotel's messaging service, signed with your name, and say you will read the answer yourself.
- 10 Write the answer in the guest's own words in the after-stay log within 30 minutes, with who asked, when and how. Never write only "happy" or "fine".

PHASE 3

Act before departure

STEPS 11–14

- 11 Anything that went wrong goes to the duty manager within 10 minutes, and is fixed or answered before the guest leaves the building, as The Recovery Standard sets out.
- 12 Pass any praise of a named colleague to that person and their manager the same day, in the guest's words.
- 13 If the guest asks for something after the stay, say what you will send and by when, and write it in the log as a promise with your name.
"I'll send you the chef's recipe for the lentil soup by Thursday, Mrs Laurent."
- 14 Before check-out, tell the front office in one line what the guest said, so the desk does not ask again as if for the first time. The goodbye at the desk and the car follows The Farewell Standard.

PHASE 4

Write the message

STEPS 15–20

- 15 Send a personal message within 48 hours of departure, by email or by the channel the guest used during the stay, from the colleague who looked after them most.
- 16 Write each message fresh: four to six lines, with one detail of the stay that only this guest would recognise. No template sentences, no photos of the hotel, no offers and no request for a review.
"Dear Mrs Tanaka, I hope the journey home was easy, and that the castle route was worth the early start."
- 17 If something went wrong during the stay, say once, in one sentence, what has been done about it since. The duty manager or the guest relations manager signs that message.
- 18 Deliver every open promise with the message or before the date given: the recipe, the photo, the copy of the bill. If one cannot be kept on time, say so in the message, with the new date.
- 19 Sign with your first name, surname and role, and give a direct email or telephone number that a person answers. Never send from a no-reply address.
- 20 Before sending, check the guest's title and the spelling of the name against the profile. Write in the guest's language where a team member writes it correctly; otherwise in English.

PHASE 5

Answer the reply

STEPS 21–24

- 21 Answer every reply within 24 hours: the person who signed the message, or guest relations when that person is off. Name the colleague who will follow up if it is not you.
- 22 A reply that raises a problem goes to the duty manager the same day and is answered in private, as The Recovery Standard sets out. Any gesture is decided by the general manager.
- 23 Send a booking request to reservations within 2 hours, with the guest's name, the dates and what they liked this time, and tell the guest who will confirm it and by when.
- 24 If the guest writes a public review, it is answered as The Review Response Standard sets out. Nothing from the private messages is repeated in public.

PHASE 6

Close the stay

STEPS 25–28

- 25 Within 72 hours of departure, check in the after-stay log that each departed guest had the question, the message and every promise, and mark each one closed with the date.
- 26 Update the profile with what the guest said before leaving and in any reply, as The Returning Guest Standard sets out: what to keep for the next stay and what to change.
- 27 Where the profile holds an occasion date and consent is marked yes, set a reminder 10 days before it for a short personal note on the date, signed by the occasion owner.
- 28 Each Monday, guest relations counts last week's departures, questions asked, messages sent within 48 hours and promises kept, and reads the four numbers at the heads of department meeting.

What to record

Before departure

- ☐ Who asked, when and how
- ☐ The answer, in the guest's words
- ☐ Problem passed on, and the time
- ☐ Praise passed to the person named

Promises

- ☐ What was promised
- ☐ Who owes it
- ☐ Date given to the guest
- ☐ Kept on: date, or the new date

After departure

- ☐ Message sent: date and channel
- ☐ Signed by, with role
- ☐ Reply received and answered: dates
- ☐ Consent for news and dates: yes or no
- ☐ Profile updated: date

When the situation changes

The guest leaves before anyone asks

Put the question in the message within 48 hours, worded so it can be answered in one line, and treat the answer as if you had heard it in person.

The stay ended in a complaint

The duty manager writes within 24 hours, saying what has changed since. No thank-you template, no invitation to review, and no offer the guest did not ask for.

The guest asks not to be contacted

Note it in the profile at once and send nothing after the stay. Keep any promise through the channel the guest chose for it, with no other message.

Something is found after departure

Tell the guest within 24 hours, as The Lost Property Standard sets out, and mention it in the message if it has not been sent home yet.

A booker made the reservation

Write to the guest if they gave their own email during the stay. If not, send it through the booker, addressed to the guest by name, with nothing private in it.

A regular who stays every month

Write after the first stay of the year and after any stay with a problem or an occasion. Otherwise, one personal line at the next arrival is enough.

Common mistakes

MISTAKE

Asking "how was everything?" at the desk while the card machine runs. The guest says "fine", and the real answer goes into a review.

MISTAKE

Sending every guest the same thank-you with the name merged in. The guest recognises the template from the first line and stops reading.

MISTAKE

Promising a recipe or a photo at the door and forgetting it. The last thing the guest remembers is a promise the hotel did not keep.

MISTAKE

Adding a request for a review to the thank-you. The message turns into a favour asked, and a guest with a complaint is reminded where to write it.

MISTAKE

Sending from a no-reply address. The guest who answers with a problem or a booking gets nothing back.

MISTAKE

Writing private details into the message: who they travelled with, the room, what they spent. Messages are forwarded and read on shared screens.

Check your team

After training (45 minutes, with one role-played question and two messages), each person answers these without the sheet.

- 01 When is the question asked, and why never at the moment of paying?
- 02 Within what time is a problem raised before departure passed on, and to whom?
- 03 Give two rules that keep a message after departure personal.
- 04 Who signs the message after a stay that ended in a complaint?
- 05 Which messages after the stay need the guest's consent, and which do not?
- 06 What do you check in the after-stay log within 72 hours of departure?

Your Three After-Stay Messages

Three messages cover most departures. Write the shape of each for your hotel, so every message starts from the same rules and none from the same words.

After a stay that went well

Who signs it _____

How the first line opens _____

The detail to look for _____

How it closes _____

After a problem put right

Who signs it _____

How the first line opens _____

The detail to look for _____

How it closes _____

For a returning guest

Who signs it _____

How the first line opens _____

The detail to look for _____

How it closes _____

How to use this with your team

Fill it in together at Monday's guest relations briefing. Each day one person reads aloud a message they sent and the team checks it against the card. On Friday the manager reads five messages and marks any template line.

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