

**Module 10A**

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OK, I don't want to spend too long on this but we've got quite a few new members of staff with us this month, and some of you who've been here a while are going to be taking on new duties. So, the purpose of this meeting is just to quickly run through some of the training points that can get forgotten in busy periods. They're all written in this booklet called *The Service Guide*, which you all have a copy of, but I'll just remind you anyway.

First of all, I'd like to talk about the reception desk. Now, whether you're actually staffing the desk or not, most of you will work in reception at some time or another and in busy times, any of you may be asked to help out there, so it's imperative that you know not just the basic procedures but also our customer service policy.

The company regards the reception desk as one of the most important places in the hotel. It's where people arrive, where they have direct contact with staff and where they go if they want help or if they want to complain.

So, first and foremost, remember the three golden rules: Firstly, if you can, always address guests by name – this is quite often written on credit cards and booking documents – or type in the room number and it'll come up on the screen.

Secondly, it's important not to keep people waiting. If you have to, greet them and apologise for the delay, tell them how long you're going to be – anything rather than just ignoring them as they're waiting.

Thirdly, remember to smile no matter how tired or harassed you're feeling or how horrid guests might be. We're there for them and we want them to feel welcome, whoever they are.

Now, most guests have two main points of contact with the reception desk. When they check in and when they leave. So, I'll go through those two procedures in detail.

When guests first arrive, check whether or not they have a booking – most will have – and the list of guests expected will show up on the screen with their room allocation. Check this first. Room allocations change according to when departing guests check out and how this fits in with the cleaning rota. So, make sure that there is a red flag against the room number on screen as this will indicate that cleaning is complete and the room is free. Most rooms are non-smoking and any guests requiring a smoking room will usually need to have booked this in advance. Check this with them and make sure the room allocated is correct.

Before handing over the key, there are a number of other questions to ask. Firstly, establish whether the guest has a car in the underground parking area and if so, make a note of the registration number. Ask for the guest's credit card and take an imprint, explaining that this is a deposit against payment. And finally, check whether the guest requires a wake-up call in the morning and enter the details in the database. Then, if all is well, hand over the room key and call a porter to show the guest to the room.

So, that's check-in. Although there are busy periods for this, it's not as bad as checking out. Most people check out just after breakfast and this is when queues can occur. For normal checking out, the main thing is to make sure that there are no outstanding room service, bar or restaurant accounts. A blue arrow will appear on the screen if this is the case or a green flag if there are no other payments to go on the bill.

Remember that guests who are leaving often ask for information about the hotel and may ask you to book a taxi for them. No matter how busy it gets, you must try to be as helpful as possible because how they were treated on departure often leaves a lasting impression on people.

Now, I hope you're all familiar with the procedure for settling accounts ...