



Guest Services

by Thomas Phelka

The proper way for a bellperson to assist an arriving guest

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The role of a bellperson in a hotel or resort varies from property to property. In a large scale hotel a bellperson is primarily responsible for assisting guests to their room with their luggage. In a mid-sized hotel the bellperson is often responsible for much more. The first contact a guest has with a hotel is very often the bellperson greeting them at the door. After a short stop at the front desk a bellperson is reunited with the guest and is responsible for familiarizing him/her with the hotel. Once the guest is comfortably settled in their room, a bellperson ensures any further comfort for the duration of the stay.

Greeting a guest

The first person a guest sees is often the bellperson. A bellperson should be willing to approach a guest immediately and welcome them to the property. Once the guest is welcomed, assistance with luggage should be offered as well as any other help the guest may need. It should never be assumed that the guest wants help, often times they are more comfortable on their own.

In the case that a guest does not want assistance with their luggage there are still services to be provided. Take advantage of the time with the guest to point out the main functions of the hotel including the front desk, restrooms, fitness center, restaurants, and business center. Hold the door for the guest as they enter the hotel and escort them to the front desk, this will allow time to give a brief overview of the hotel and build up a relationship with the guest. Assistance for any future concerns or questions should always be offered.



Some guests may not accept luggage assistance at first, but after a light joke or an introduction they accept. Never be forceful with a guest, but persistence is often necessary to give the highest possible level of service. Once the bellperson has the luggage in their possession it is a good chance to look for a luggage tag. This is an easy way to immediately learn a guest's name. Escort the guest into the hotel holding the door for them and accompany them to the front desk. Introduce the guest to the front desk clerk using their name which has been taken from their luggage tag and stand by to offer further assistance.

Escorting the guest to a room

Once the guest has completed check-in, the bellperson should greet him/her at the desk with luggage in hand or already loaded on the bellcart. The front desk clerk should introduce the guest back to the bellperson and hand the room key directly to the bellperson. The room number should be written inside the key packet, but never on the key. For guest safety, it is very important that the room number never be read aloud. Having the front desk clerk hand the key packet directly to the bellperson will prevent the need to disclose the room number aloud.

Once the key is acquired the bellperson should direct the guest to their room. The guest should always walk either ahead of or next to the bellperson so that they may set the walking pace. While walking through the hotel many of the

hotel services and amenities that it offers will be passed. This is the proper time to point them out to the guest.

Conversation with the guest should include the hours of operation and services provided at restaurants, gift shops, fitness centers, business centers, and any other provided amenities. Time spent in an elevator or long hallway is best used getting to know the guest and their reason for staying at the hotel. They will appreciate the personal touch of genuine interest in them. This is also a good time to summarize some of the local attractions near the hotel. However, it should be noted that in situations where guests seem preoccupied or unreceptive to such dialogue, the bellperson should respect this and complete the rooming experience without extensive verbal interaction. This is where learning to read the contextual cues emitted by guests is critical to assessing which approach is warranted.

Entering the guestroom

When approaching the guestroom the bellperson should point out the nearest fire exit and ice machine. Once at the room the bellperson should use the room key to open the door and should enter the room ahead of the guest. Having the bellperson enter the room first will allow a chance for one last, quick room inspection. If something major is out of place, the bellperson can have a new room assigned without the guest being disturbed.

Inside the room the bellperson should ask where the guest would like their luggage placed and offer to set up a luggage stand. The curtains should be opened (if it is still daylight outside) and lights should be turned on. The bellperson should quickly inspect the bathroom to ensure that sufficient towels, toilet paper, and other amenity items are in place to meet the needs of the group being roomed. Once the guest has had a few moments to observe the room, the bellperson should ask if the room is suitable.

Before leaving the room the bellperson should give a general tour of the room. The temperature control in the room should be explained along with the operation of any other items in the room such as the lights. The bellperson should conclude the check-in by handing the key to the guest and offering future service such as filling the ice bucket.

Other services preformed

While many positions in a hotel require employees to stay at one station, a bellperson traverses the entire hotel. It is not uncommon for a bellperson to greet guests in the lobby, but they may also be delivering a package to a room, troubleshooting printer malfunctions in the business center, writing out directions to local attractions, or driving a guest to a store to solve a last minute mishap. A proficient bellperson is a “jack of all guest service trades”.

The versatility of the bellperson makes them highly important in the smooth running of a hotel. Bellpersons are able to use creative thinking to solve problems on the spot not only for guests, but also for hotel operators. While their primary focus is to assist guests with their luggage to their rooms, the myriad of other responsibilities are equally important and should not be overlooked.

Because the rooming process is one that relies extensively on the personality and charm of the bellperson, it is not uncommon for guests to develop an affinity with the bellperson that first greeted them and got them settled in. This relationship, as temporary as it may be, is critical to ensuring that guests have a highly satisfactory stay at the hotel or resort. And remember, highly satisfied guests typically want to show their gratitude to those that they make a first connection with during their stay! ✧

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