

# Welcome

Travel Counselors and  
Certified Travel Specialists



**Only when normal  
things are not normal  
anymore**

**do we realize how special  
normal things are.**

A hand holding a magnifying glass over a landscape. The magnifying glass is held by a hand on the left side of the frame. The lens of the magnifying glass is focused on a landscape, which appears to be a body of water with a shoreline and some vegetation. The background of the image is a blurred landscape with mountains and a body of water under a clear sky. The text "Revisiting the Visitor Experience" and "A Fresh Focus" is overlaid on the image in a white, sans-serif font.

# Revisiting the Visitor Experience

## A Fresh Focus



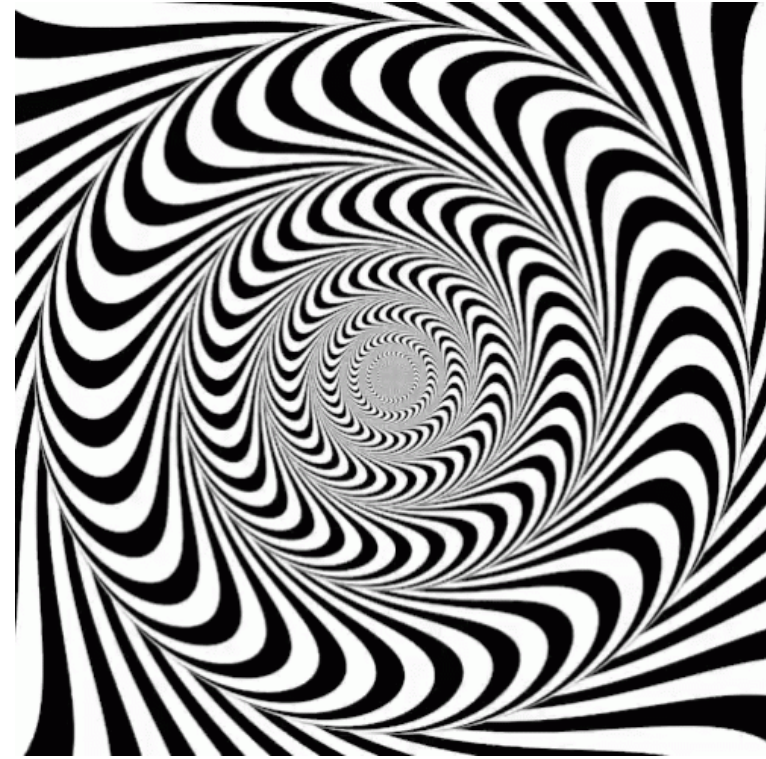


**"The real act of discovery  
consists not in finding new lands  
but in seeing with *new eyes*."**

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French novelist Marcel Proust

# Best Practices... an illusion?



- You've reached an endpoint  
–nothing left to top
- Challenge: Continually  
search for **BETTER PRACTICES**

# Challenge: “Think Different” – “Think”

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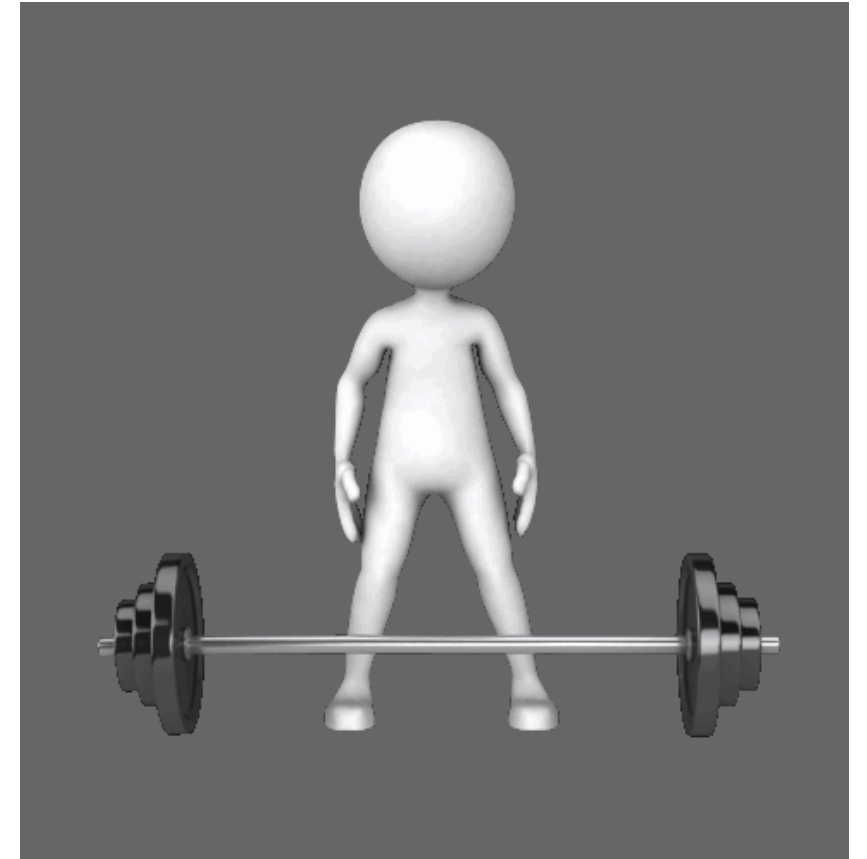
- “Visitor Servicing” vs. “Visitor Information Center
- It’s all about the Destination Experience
- You are the ‘Custodian’ of Regional Stories
- Identify gaps and OFI’s
- Embrace Digital Visitor Servicing (manage/respond to on-line reviews – tap social media to share stories – provide on-line messaging + chat)
- Engage/Collaborate with local industry
- Help educate service providers
- Never accept the Status Quo

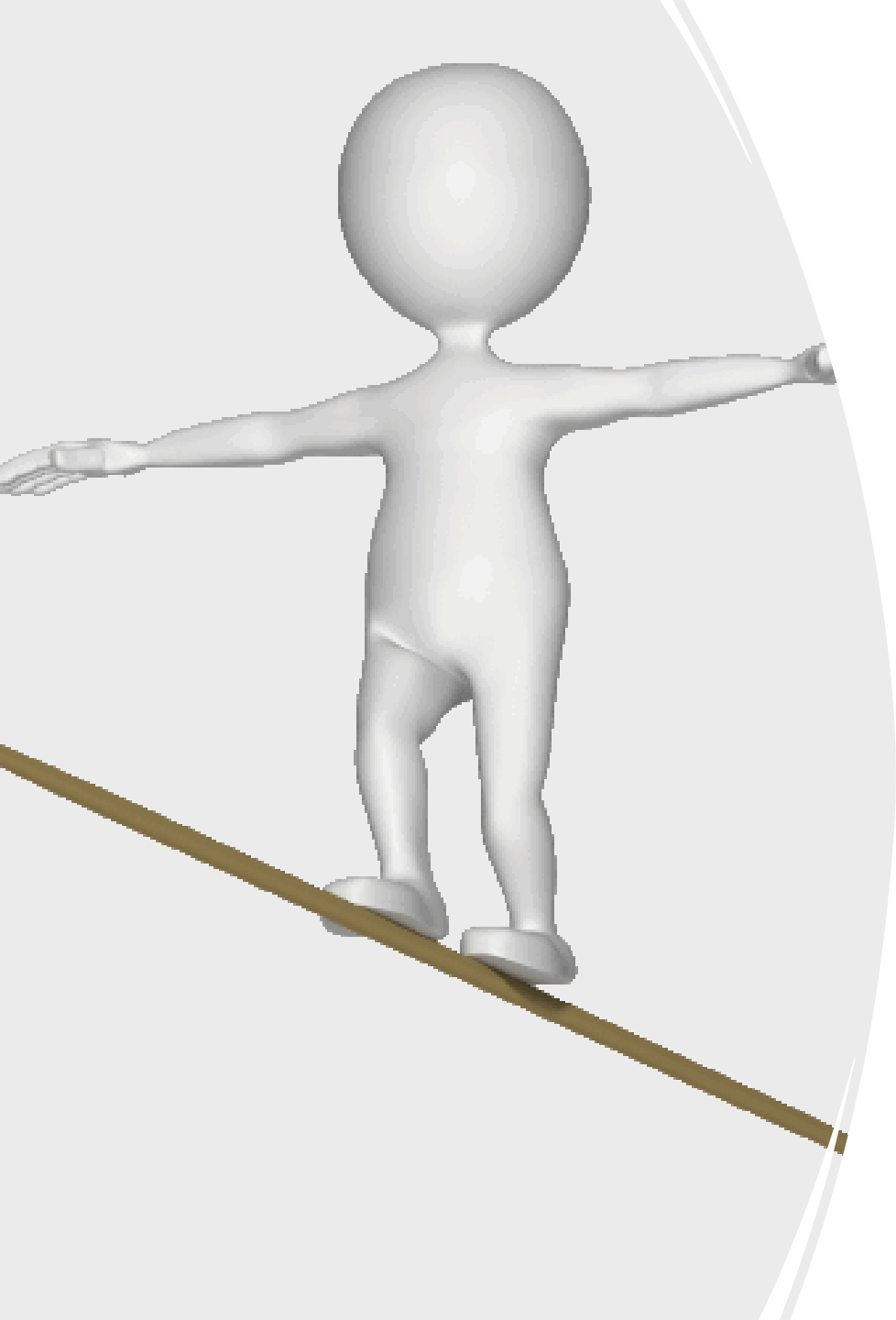


# LA Welcome Center Strengths

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- Ability to customize assistance for travelers based on age, gender, family, singles, conservatives
- Engaging visitors into FUN
- Not a very physical job – easier to promote from within or recruit retirees
- Supervisors are given leeway to customize local policy based on their personality and who they work with, i.e., scheduling/uniforms
- Effective leaders who listen





# LA Welcome Center Challenges

- Delivering unpleasant news: hotel availability/ rates/dates and travel time to events
- Limited input when policies are changed
- Communication (policies that are changed/updated)
- Balancing staff and automation (visitors still prefer tangible items)
- Staffing due to current pay scale...although improved
- Visitors lack understanding that literature/coffee are FREE



# KEY TOPICS



**Travel Trends**



**Reviews**



**Staff & Visitor  
Engagement**

# TOPIC

# 1

**Today's  
Travel  
Trends**



# Travel Trends



- Consumers spending less on products – more on experiences
- Leisure travel returned to 2019 levels (Mastercard Economics Institute)
- “*New sense of urgency*” to hit the road: 73% plan to travel
- Major economic boogeymen: inflation, staff shortages, and supply chain issues



# Travel Trends Cont'd.

- 57% of travelers wish for a single all-inclusive app for their travel planning and booking needs (travelperk.com)
- 5 out of 6 travelers are choosing secluded mountains, rural escapes and waterfront getaways (prnewswire.com)
- The Year of the “GOAT”...Greatest of all trips (Expedia)
- Family Reunions and “Friendcations” are popular (VIP Traveler)





# Certified TRAVEL Specialist

**8 State Welcome Centers**  
**44 Regional Centers**





# Goals

## Simplify

- and personalize the travel planning experience

## Offer

- complementary services and proactive one-on-one marketing

## Benefit

- maximize tourism expenditures in the state



**WELCOME**  
**CENTER**

# BE INTENTIONAL



- Stay informed
- Monitor customer feedback
- Post on website/social media...small/non-intrusive banners
- Tap into community resources
- Clean and Sanitize (EPA-approved)
- Open line of communication...clear messaging

# TOPIC

## 2

**Reviews  
...do they  
matter?**

# Tripadvisor Testimonies



- The **Lake Charles Visitors Center** is aesthetically beautiful with alligator sculptures and artwork. Picked up brochures of areas of interest in southwest Louisiana.
- We felt like the people of the **Atchafalaya Welcome Center** are family...they care as much as family about making our vacation a good one. The Welcome Center itself has terrific nature and product displays, information, and brochures about the Atchafalaya basin. The center even has a small "Disney" like theater in the round that does a short film. Outside, there are life size alligators, tortoises, a gazebo, and areas for kids to play. We highly recommend stopping here.
- **I learned about many historical sites around this visitor center that are not on TripAdvisor.** Glad I stopped in to pick up historical site brochures. I also **took a picture of the Father of Zydeco**, ...
- **Finally, A Visitors Center!** The **Louisiana Welcome Center** is located in an historic building in the heart of the French quarter on Jackson Square. After 2 other stops in places that were calling themselves visitors centers, we found a real one here. Though small in size, we found maps, information and brochures on everything for New Orleans and the surrounding areas and a very helpful staff. French spoken and free coffee.

# Tripadvisor Testimonies



- We couldn't decide what yours to book, which company to book with and there were so many different places to go and see in **New Orleans** it was confusing. So, we went to the **Welcome Centre** and saw **Sam**, who was brilliant! Everyone should just go see Sam. He described every tour, found out what we wanted to see most, booked us on the right tour and hopefully saved us money too. He was such fun and so descriptive we could've spent all day just chatting, really fun.
- **Slidell Visitor's Center:** Made it into the building just as huge rainstorm hit. I barely beat the storm across the state line and wanted to make sure of where I was going before I went much further in that weather. Appreciated the **clean restrooms and free coffee and the knowledgeable, helpful staff**. People were constantly coming and going, but the one lady (I'm sorry I forget her name) **treated me like I was the only one in the building**, made sure my questions were answered, and marked some other places on the map that we might be interested in. She took the time and really listened to where we came from and what we were interested in doing instead of just handing us a set list. She then also didn't just tell us where to go but made sure I knew how to get there.

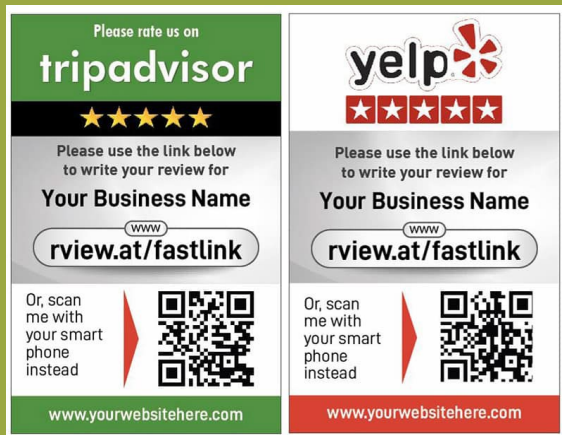


# Testimonies...Attention to Detail

- **AESTHETICALLY BEAUTIFUL; STROLL ON THE DECK; GOOD PARKING; WELL DONE DISPLAYS**
- Felt like the **PEOPLE ARE FAMILY**...they care as much as family about making our vacation a good one
- After 2 other stops in places that were calling themselves visitors centers, **WE FOUND A 'REAL ONE' FRENCH SPOKEN and FREE COFFEE**
- **SAM**, was brilliant
- **APPRECIATED THE CLEAN RESTROOMS AND FREE COFFEE AND THE KNOWLEDGEABLE, HELPFUL STAFF**
- **TREATED ME LIKE I WAS THE ONLY ONE IN THE BUILDING**
- **DIDN'T JUST TELL US WHERE TO GO BUT MADE SURE I KNEW HOW TO GET THERE; STAFF WILL STEER YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION**
- **KNOWLEDGEABLE VOLUNTEERS EAGER TO HELP...RECOMMENDED STOP**
- **NICE PLACE/FRIENDLY STAFF EAGER TO HELP**

**ASK –**  
**Link on Website –**  
**TripAdvisor & Yelp**  
**Review Cards**

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER REVIEWS**



**Key driver to attract more visitors**



**Increases brand trust and credibility**



**Improves service delivery**



**Better understanding of your visitors**



**Powerful marketing tool**



**Ability to personalize response**



# Secure Zip Code & Number in Party

## Sign In Sheet

\*Want to receive a Lafayette E-Newsletter?

[illegible]

# TOPIC

# 3

**Staff and  
Visitor  
Engagement**

# INTERNAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

## Who are Internal Customers?

- People on your Team
- Your Supervisor
- People in other departments

## Common Characteristics


- Frequent interactions
- Close relationships
- Two-way service

**Treat your team as you would like to  
be treated!**

**First Step:**

**Define Outstanding Service**





PEOPLE PERFORM  
BEST AND DELIVER  
THE BEST SERVICE  
WHEN

**THEY LIKE  
WHAT  
THEY DO!**



**RACELAND**



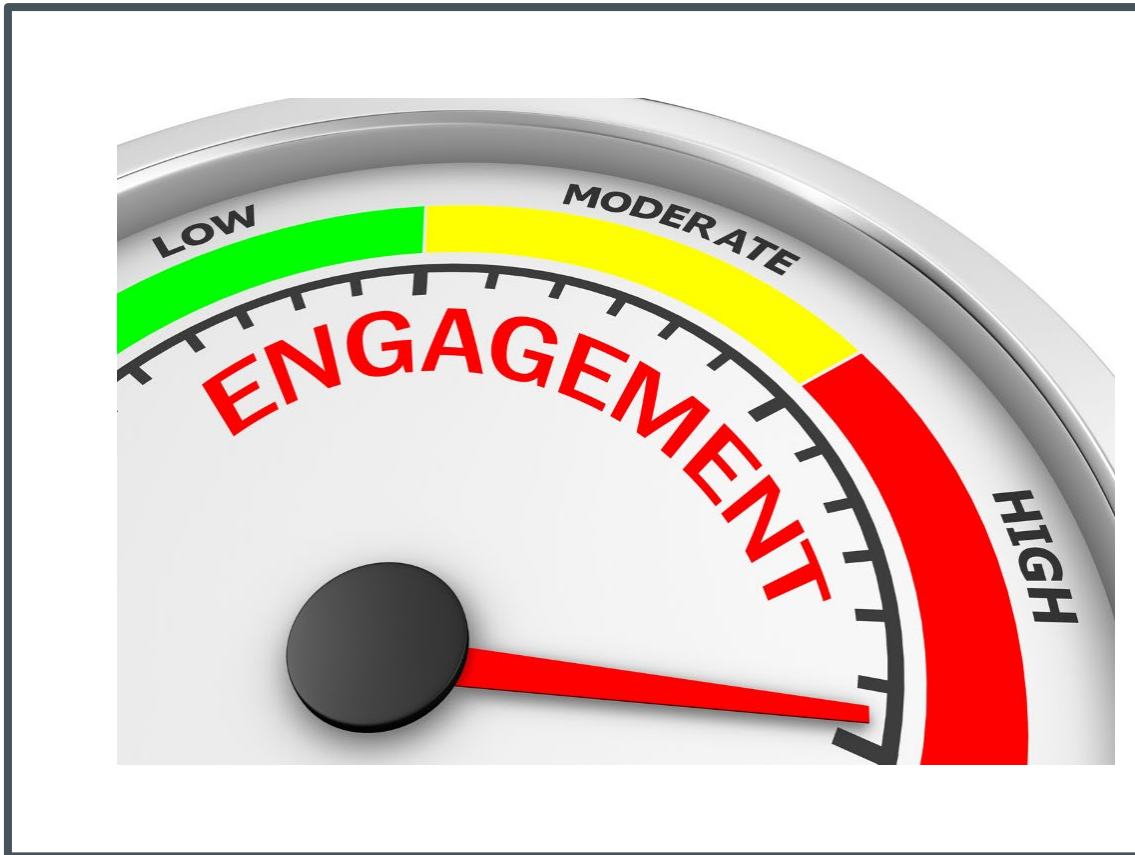
**THIBODAUX**





SLIDELL WELCOME CENTER

# STAFF ENGAGEMENT...WHERE VISITOR ENGAGEMENT STARTS



- Collaborating teams/individuals are success drivers
- Motivation, commitment, and satisfaction propel employees to utilize skills
- Exceptional interactions stand out...extra-mile travelers
- Positive attitudes are contagious...a 'rallying call'
- Increased higher levels of safety and innovation
- Social interactions impact well-being



**WHAT'S  
YOUR  
SUPER  
POWER?**





# VISITOR ENGAGEMENT...RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

## The 'Key' to Repeat Visitors



**YOU are  
your Parish,  
Region and  
State**



**Undivided  
attention**



**Personalize  
interactions**



**Understand  
needs**



**The 'Hello'  
and  
'Goodbye'**

# EQUALLY BENEFICIAL IN ELEVATING YOUR BRAND IMAGE

## Visitor Experience

- The emotional connection; how visitors feel
- A holistic metric which develops an image in the mindset of a visitor...hassle-free, accessibility

## Visitor Engagement

- The reaction visitors have while visiting an establishment
- Tangible actions includes all the touch-points that exist between the brand and visitor



# Does Your Center project a “**WELCOMING PRESENCE?**”

- Aesthetically – rocking chairs/interactive exhibits/clean restrooms
- Polite, engaging, and knowledgeable staff
- Wi-fi - Kiosk
- Free coffee
- Human touch

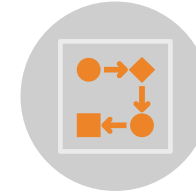


# CUSTOMER SERVICE ETIQUETTE

## CUSTOMER SERVICE



**Attitude & Impressions**



**Proactive Service**



**Personalize**



**Manners & Vocabulary Matter**



**Expectations:  
Meet before  
Exceeding**



**Follow-up  
and Follow-through**

# MANNERS & VOCABULARY MATTER



- Good manners are ageless and genderless
- How you say what you say is '**FIVE TIMES**' more important than the words you use
- Adopt positive words and phrases
- Acknowledge when concerns/issues/recommendations are brought to your attention



“  
With knowledge  
you attract minds  
and with good manners  
you attract hearts  
”

Moustafa Nour



**SmartGuests/Rupesh Patel**

- “Welcome.” / “We’re so glad you are here.”
- “It’s my pleasure.” / “I am happy to...”
- “Thank you...” / “We appreciate...”
- “Is there anything else I can do for you?”
- “We appreciate your choosing Louisiana.”

# TWO DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE



## Procedural

- Information
- Products and Service
- Assistance

## Personal

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| ■ Empathy      | Helpfulness    |
| ■ Enthusiasm   | Responsiveness |
| ■ Expertise    | Reliability    |
| ■ Friendliness | Patience       |



# HOSPITALITY & SERVICE



**Remember regardless of positive feedback, you always start over with the next customer.**

## SERVICE

- Professionally responding
- Taking action
- Task-driven
- Order-taking

## HOSPITALITY

- Welcoming professionally
- Demonstrating a sense of urgency
- Service-provider
- Building an emotional connection

# PERSONALIZE

- Humanize Interactions (coworkers/customers)
- Ask open questions
- Offer options
- Obtain – Document – Use Feedback



**Caring interactions are a result of listening before acting.**





*Dear Customer*

**BECOME SOMEONE  
ELSE'S CUSTOMER.**

MARTYN JONES

**CUSTOMERS  
WHO DON'T  
FEEL VALUED**

# TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE



**YOUR  
'STOREFRONT'  
WINDOW**

**The Human Connection**



**UPON 60 SECONDS PEOPLE WILL MAKE  
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT YOUR...**

**EDUCATION – BACKGROUND – ABILITY – PERSONALITY**

**based on your voice alone**



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# **MANNERS MATTER:** Reflect respect and professionalism... always noticed and in style.

Introduce your business  
with a cheerful,  
greeting: "Good  
Morning/Afternoon,

*"How may I help you?" or  
"How may I direct your call?"  
vs. "May I help you?"*

Speak with clarity  
and enthusiasm -  
slow down. Your Tone  
is 86% - Words 14% of  
your message

Repeat anything  
involving  
numbers twice  
(prices/dates/  
CC numbers)

Never eat –  
drink – chew  
gum during a  
call or interrupt  
the caller

Listen attentively  
– take notes

Ask permission  
before placing a  
caller on hold

Always allow  
caller to hang  
up first!

## EXPECTATIONS: MEET BEFORE EXCEEDING

- FINE-TUNE THE  
‘BASICS’
- QUALITY AT EVERY  
TURN
- EXCEEDING ...  
“A TEAM EFFORT”
- SOLUTION-ORIENTED
- CONSISTENT



Keep the Main Thing...the Main Thing



# THE POWER OF IMPRESSIONS

You have a grand  
total of...



10 Seconds

# Senses Impact Customer Perception

**What Customers  
See**



**What Customers  
Hear**



**What Customers  
Smell**



**What Customers  
Touch**

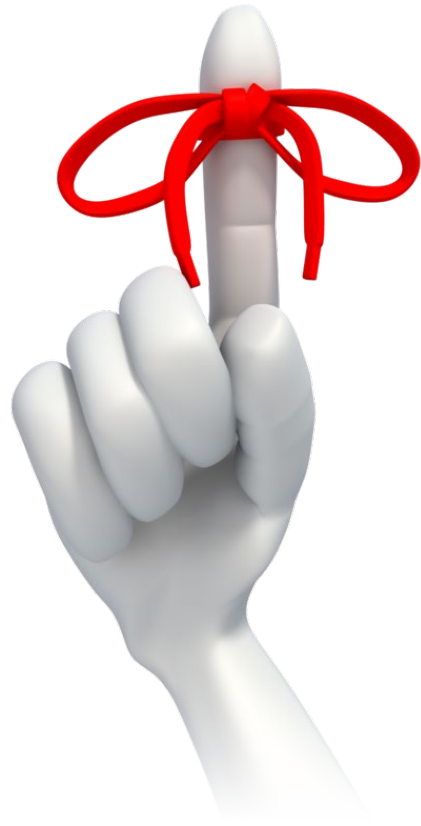


**customer  
experience**




**Will Customers talk  
+ or – about their  
experience?**

# FIRST IMPRESSIONS



- Appearance Matters
- Optimistic Mindset
- Authenticity - Sincerity
- Acknowledge...individuals and groups
- Facial expressions speak volumes
- Maintain eye contact
- Positive body language
- Active listening
- Names personalize
- Mutual respect

A close-up of a silver mesh microphone on the right side of the frame. The background is dark with out-of-focus stage lights in shades of purple, pink, and blue, creating a bokeh effect.

Every contact we have with a visitor  
influences whether they will come  
back.

We must be 'ON STAGE,' every single time.



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**WHENEVER  
YOU DO A  
THING...**

**ACT AS IF THE  
WORLD WERE  
WATCHING.**



**Thomas Jefferson**

# **THANK YOU, LTA...**

## **PROUD TO SERVE AS YOUR PARTNER IN PROGRESS**

**MY SOUL HAS BEEN FED...**  
**THANKS TO MY EXPERIENCE WITH YOU!**



**FIVESTAR**  
☆☆☆☆☆ Customer Service Strategies, LLC

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