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Courtesy is Contagious

Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service

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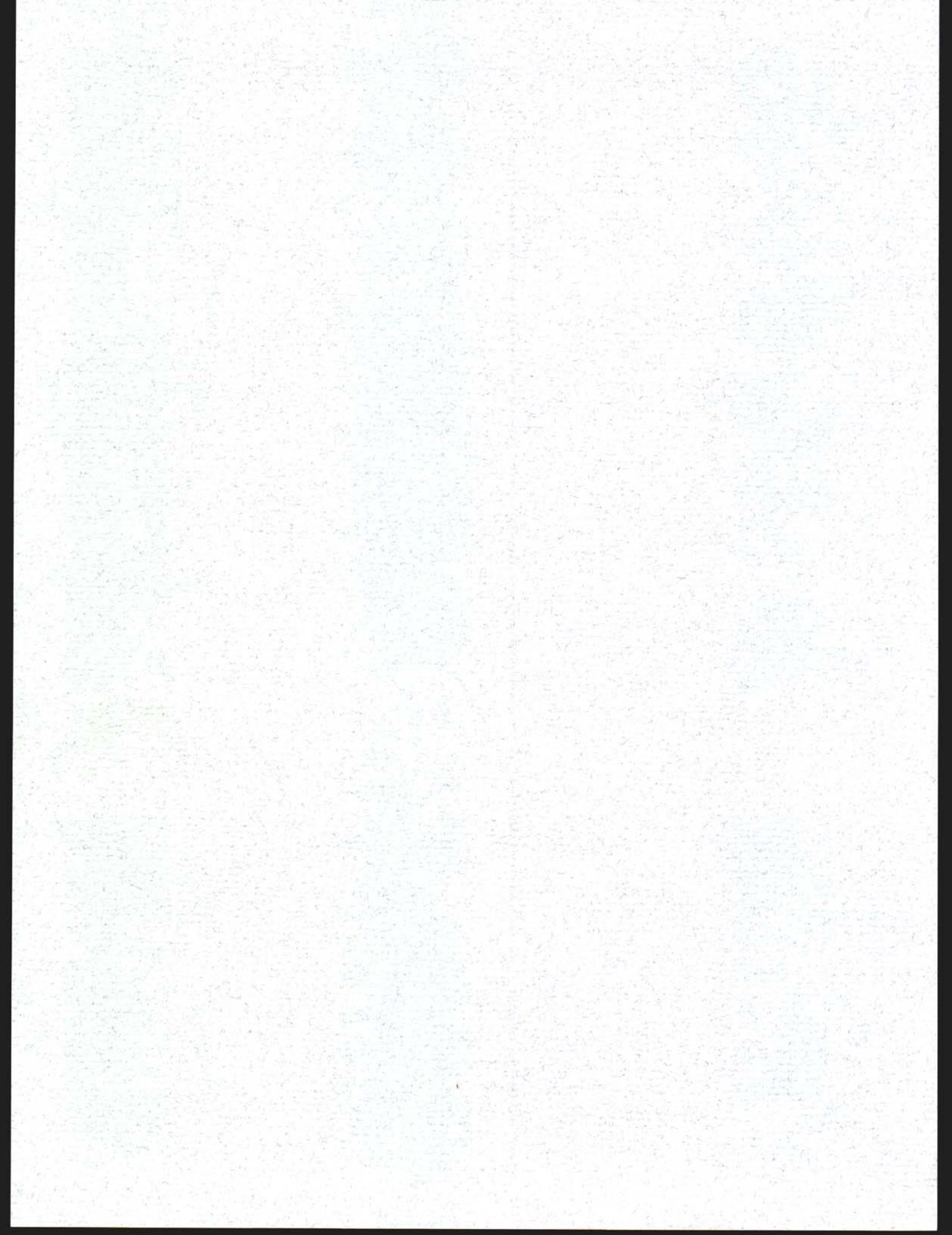
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The Importance of Tourism

Travelers, vacationers, visitors, and tourists to the Great Lakes return to where they are invited and made welcome. The attractions and resources of our inland seas are made available through our communities, service and recreational businesses, and public facilities.

Tourism is critical to the economy of many communities and businesses. Traveler expenditures support local employment. If you work in a restaurant, resort, lodging business, gas station, or marina, you probably realize that tourists pay a large portion of your salary. If you work in a grocery store, laundry service, print shop, or other service business, you may not be aware that you, too, are benefiting indirectly from tourist dollars.

Tourists spend money on a variety of products and services beyond those available at food and lodging businesses. Furthermore, employee salaries generated by tourist activities and expenditures are re-spent by these employees for products and services within the community. The re-spending of these tourist dollars creates a multiplier effect which further stimulates the local economy, employing others in grocery stores,

clothing stores, and medical professions. Furthermore, all of this economic activity generates local and state tax revenues that can enhance the public services and facilities available to tourists and local residents.

Tourist dollars reach many local businesses and indirectly benefit the entire community. To ensure those community benefits—and your salary—each season, it is necessary to make visitors and tourists feel welcome, want to return again, and ready to tell their family or friends about the courteous and friendly treatment at your business or in your community.

How U.S. Tourists Spend Their Travel Dollar

(1984)

Expenditure Category	Amount
Food	\$0.26
Public Transportation	.24
Auto Transportation	.17
Lodging	.16
Entertainment & Recreation	.09
Retail and Other	.08
	<hr/>
	\$1.00

U.S. Travel and Tourism Economic Impact in the Great Lakes (1984)

State	Visitor Expenditures (billions)	Employment Generated	Employee Payroll (billions)
New York	\$15.653	260,100	\$ 3.356
Pennsylvania	8.352	177,500	1.773
Ohio	6.420	131,700	1.274
Michigan	6.273	123,100	1.240
Indiana	2.770	66,300	0.570
Illinois	7.754	138,100	1.814
Wisconsin	3.850	105,700	0.778
Minnesota	4.933	105,900	1.003
TOTALS	\$56.005	1,108,400	\$11.808

Need for Hospitality

New advertising and marketing campaigns are started each day for products in the marketplace. The tourism industry is unique in that hospitality is one of its most important advertising and marketing approaches and also is an important component of the "product" itself.

Repeat business from returning customers is vital to the survival of many resort, lodging, restaurant, and recreation enterprises. Tourists who are satisfied return to a business or community over many years. For them, the services or experiences they seek change as their lives progress, from adventurous young adults to family-oriented parents, to retired couples on extended vacations. Regardless of

when or why people return, they are motivated in part by past encounters with courteous, considerate, and friendly hosts, residents, shop clerks, and servers.

Hospitality influences who returns or does not return. It also affects what tourists tell others about their visit. Many small businesses depend on "word of mouth" advertising as their most successful marketing tool. The effect of one visitor telling others about their experience can affect whether several dozen or several hundred other people will want to visit your town.

The success of any business or community as a tourist destination depends on the attitudes of those who contact the visitor. Sales clerks and servers are as important as the visitor information center receptionist and service station attendant. Local officials and residents contribute to the overall appeal and image of the community as they go about their daily routines. Tourism hospitality is the responsibility of both individual businesses and the entire community.

Just as hospitality awareness and skills are necessary to word-of-mouth advertising for a business, they are also important to any tourism promotion campaign by your chamber of commerce and state tourism agency. The ultimate success of any advertising and promotion project rests with the hospitality skills of public and private sector employees, local officials, and local residents.

A TOURIST...

Is the most important person in our business.

Does not depend on us—we depend on the tourist.

Does not interrupt our work, but is the purpose of it.

Is not a cold statistic, but is a person with feelings, emotions, likes and dislikes.

Is not someone with whom to argue or match wits.

Will bring us specific wants; it is our job to fulfill them.

Is deserving of the most courteous and attentive service we can provide.

Is the life blood of our business.

Understanding Tourists

Tourists are people just like yourself—away from home to visit and enjoy a few hours, days, or weeks in your community. The people visiting your community are probably no better nor worse than your own local residents vacationing elsewhere.

Tourists often arrive in unfamiliar settings when they are tired from a long drive, anxious to start their vacation, or frustrated by poor weather and traffic conditions. The result is that tourists may not, at times, respond well in unfamiliar circumstances because they are under pressure.

Often the problems of tourists are lessened if their needs are anticipated by an individual or community. Readily accessible rest rooms or trash cans will ease some traveler problems. Answering their questions or giving clear directions provides visitors with needed information and a sense of friendliness and community pride. The more you and your community understand and anticipate the visitor's problems, the fewer problems you will encounter and the better the visitor's experience.

Tourists travel to your business or community for many reasons and seek a wide variety of activities. Some are interested in local folklore and historical sites, some seek solitude on cross country ski trails, and others come as a family or group for social interaction. It is necessary to understand the interests and motivations of the travelers to your area even if you do not share those interests. Similarly, know what your business and community have to offer. Different opportunities appeal to different tourists. You are of great service to tourists when you understand and anticipate their needs and help them find what they seek.

It is your responsibility to know about the opportunities in your community and to inform tourists about them. Be polite, attentive, and helpful, but don't force information on them. If you don't know the answer to a question, refer them to someone who does or to your local chamber of commerce. It is better to admit ignorance than to give incorrect information or directions.

Tourists respect your business or community only as much as you appear to respect it. You are the symbol of that business or community to a visitor and any time you run it down, you discredit yourself. Therefore, be proud of the positive events and situations and work to improve those that are negative.

I'm A Nice Tourist...

“You know me. I'm a nice tourist. I never complain, no matter what kind of service I get.

“I'll go in a restaurant and sit and sit while the waitress gossips with her boyfriend and never bothers to see if my hamburger is ready. Sometimes someone who came in after I did gets my hamburger, but I don't say a word.

“If the soup is cold or the cream for the coffee is sour, I'm nice about it.

“If the service station attendant fails to check my oil or polish the windshield, I don't even raise my eyebrows.

“When I go into a store and get surly treatment and lack of sympathy with my browsing around, I don't make a fuss.

“When I register at a motel or hotel, I'm thoughtful of the other person. If I get a snooty manager who gets nettled because I want to look at my room before making up my mind, I'm polite as can be. I don't believe rudeness in return is the answer. You might say I wasn't raised that way.

“And it's seldom I complain about the poor room service, the broken-down elevator, the leaking bathtub faucet or the television set that doesn't work. I've found people are always disagreeable to me when I do. Life's too short for indulging in these unpleasant little scimmages.

“I never kick. I never nag. I never criticize. I wouldn't dream of making a scene, as I've seen other people do in public places.

“I'm a nice tourist! I'll tell you what else I am: I'M THE TOURIST WHO NEVER COMES BACK!

“That's my revenge for getting pushed around. That's why I take whatever they hand out. . . I know I'm not coming back. It's true that this doesn't relieve my feelings right off, but in the long run, it's far more deadly revenge.

“In fact, a nice tourist like me, multiplied by others of my kind, can just about ruin a business. And there are lots of nice tourists in the world. When we get pushed far enough, we go down the street to another restaurant. We eat hamburgers in places that are smart enough to hire help who appreciate nice tourists. Together, we do the rude people out of millions of dollars every year.

“The one who laughs best, they say, is the one who laughs last. I laugh when I see places frantically spending their money on advertising just to get me back, when they could have held me in the first place with a few kind words and a smile.”

Courtesy of the Canadian Tourist Association

Hospitality Skills

Greet people with enthusiasm and a smile—courtesy is contagious! Whatever greeting you use, it should be natural and easy for you to say with courtesy and sincerity. How you say something is often more important than what you say. Research on personal face-to-face communication has shown that body language and voice inflection are 90 percent of the message and are often more important than the words themselves. We have all met people whose attitude speaks so loudly we can't hear what else they are trying to say.

Asking interested questions of a tourist or making a cheerful comment adds to the friendly atmosphere of an interaction. Learning someone's name and using it in a natural manner is a challenge to help you recognize the tourist and establish a more personal relationship. Look directly at people to establish eye contact and to acknowledge their presence.

A pleasant voice and manner combined with a well-groomed and natural appearance for your job suggests a professional atmosphere that visitors respond to positively. The ability to be diplomatic and show concern for a tourist when you have disappointing information is less difficult in such an atmosphere. Be courteous and optimistic, especially when dealing with angry or dissatisfied customers.

Give prompt service by organizing your work area efficiently and by knowing your job thoroughly. Be alert and do your best to provide good service in your personalized manner. Learning how to do your job efficiently requires that

you anticipate delays, disruptions, and emergency situations.

Help solve visitors' problems or frustrations by letting them express their plight or situation without interruption. Remain calm, as they

are not attacking you personally, but are in search of some empathy and a solution. Show your interest and concern for the situation no matter who seems to be to blame for the problem. Calmly ask questions to ensure that everyone

COMMUNITY QUIZ

Can you answer the questions tourists ask most often about your community and surrounding area?

- 1.** *Are there any museums or historical sites here?*
- 2.** *What kind of lodging accommodations are available?*
- 3.** *Can you recommend a good place to eat?*
- 4.** *Are any local activities or special events happening in the next two days?*
- 5.** *Where can I get service for my car?*
- 6.** *Where will I find tourist information?*
- 7.** *What are the local recreational activities and parks?*
- 8.** *Are there any local tours available?*
- 9.** *Where are the local retail stores located?*
- 10.** *What is it like to live in this community?*

Hire Only Good-Natured People

“From this date you are instructed to employ only good-natured people, cheerful and pleasant, who smile easily and often. This ought to go for every job in the house, but at present I'll insist on it only for people who come in contact with guests.

“It does go, from this day, for all department heads, front office people, cashiers, captains, elevator men, porters, telephone operators, and other employees who have to deal directly with patrons.

“And it isn't to be only a case of hiring. That policy is to govern all promotions; and you are to begin, right now, to measure your present staff by it.

“If it's necessary to clean house, do it. Don't protest. Get rid of the grouches, and the people who can't keep their tempers, and the people who act as if they were always under a burden of trouble and feeling sorry for themselves. You can't make that kind of person over; you can't do anything with him profitably, but get rid of him. Let the other fellow have him, and you hire a man who can be taught.

“You want to lessen complaints, don't you? You want your organization more efficient, don't you? Well, I've been studying this one idea for months, and I'm convinced that it will help solve several problems we have—of complaints, of competition, of handicaps we've had in certain spots. Not immediately, perhaps; not tomorrow, or the middle of next week; but there will be noticeable improvements just as soon as it gets along.

“Unless you and your department heads are indifferent or antagonistic, in which case you'll want to go on just as before, without giving it a trial.

“But I've decided on this, and I'm going to do my very most toward seeing that it does get a fair trial, and that it gets the same attention and respect and adherence as any other basic principle of this organization.

“Which is exactly what it is—a basic principle! Hire pleasant, cheerful people, people of good disposition, and reject everyone who isn't.

“It isn't enough to be courteous to 74 patrons and pert with the 75th. It won't do to be cheerful 58 minutes of the hour and disgruntled the other two. It isn't sufficient for 10 employees to give service and the 11th to go slack on his job.

“In another hotel another clerk may have sold the guest just as comfortable a room, another bellman may have handled his bag just as deftly, another waiter may have served his piping hot dinner just as promptly, but the thing that made the impression on the guest was that these latter employees seemed *glad to do it*, they seemed interested in him personally.

“Gracious service means more than 'perfect' service. The guest will wait an extra minute for his chops if the waiter brings him a newspaper and explains the delay pleasantly.

“Every hotel employee is a salesman. He must satisfy customers with the only thing he has to sell—service—and he must please them with the way he sells it. I believe that a majority of the complaints in a hotel are due more to the guest's state of mind than to the importance of the thing about which he complains.”

—E. M. Statler (1917)

Founder of the famous Statler hotel chain.

understands the situation. Offer several reasonable options and give them the courtesy of making their own decision.

Part of the responsibility for solving a problem rests with each person involved. If your business is at fault, offer the customer replacement or substitute services or products according to business policies, and deliver as agreed upon. A complimentary service or courtesy gift can be added to promote good will and good customer and community relations.

Share your knowledge of and pride in local attractions with tourists. Make suggestions on activities or events they can participate in

within your community. Sincere enthusiasm and local pride is a strong advertising campaign. Give clear directions and information, or send them to a local visitor information center or chamber of commerce.

Results of Good Hospitality Skills

Your hospitality skills can help you get more satisfaction out of your job, increase your value to your employer, and make more money by providing better service.

Businesses and communities that develop their hospitality skills create a loyal group of customers who keep coming back because their needs are met and they feel welcome. Practice the motto, "If we

please you, tell your friends; if not, tell us." It will build a positive image of an area and lead to good word-of-mouth advertising. Ask visitors to come again and tell their friends, since word-of-mouth advertising is very effective promotion. Suggesting things to do in your community can keep tourists in your business or area longer.

A quality product at a reasonable price, delivered with excellent hospitality skills and service, contributes to healthy and growing tourism development. Improved hospitality skills help you better serve visitors and tourists who will return, increase the number of tourists each season, and ensure that jobs like yours will continue to be available.

Dear Abby:

After reading your column on 'HOW TO DRIVE A SALESPERSON CRAZY,' I felt compelled to give the customer's side of it:

How to Make a Customer's Day

- If a customer approaches, run and hide in the back room.
- Continue to chat with other salespersons about what you did last night.
- Never smile. A deadpan stare (or frown) will discourage customers from bothering you.
- Never offer assistance. Wait for the customer to ask for help.
- Never serve customers in the order they enter the shop. Wait on whoever has the nerve to elbow their way up to the front.
- Don't stop stocking or taking inventory to serve customers. The fact that their purchases pay your salary is immaterial.
- Forget the motto, 'The customer is always right.' They are always WRONG, so don't let them put anything over on you.
- Chew gum, eat candy or sneak a smoke while you're on the job. As long as the boss doesn't see you, it's OK.
- If a teenager (or someone who's not very well dressed) wants to be waited on, either ignore them or don't waste much time with them. They're probably 'just looking' anyway.
- If you do all the above, the customer will surely shop somewhere else and you won't be bothered writing up any sales.

Signed: Sore at the Salespeople in Milwaukee

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Hospitality Training

The following suggestions for hospitality training are taken from materials developed by the Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Arizona, the Canadian Tourist Association, Toronto, Canada, and the Tourism USA publications of the University of Missouri.

Suggestions for Restaurant Personnel

Tourists are particularly valuable to a restaurant because they often spend more for meals than local residents. It is a special occasion, and they make definite recommendations about restaurants to their friends who travel. Tourists will also return to restaurants where food and service have been excellent, rather than experiment with other eating places. General cleanliness of the personnel, dining area, and rest rooms may determine whether a tourist returns or recommends the restaurant to friends.

The waiter or waitress and the cashier have an excellent opportunity to invite the customer (in a warm, friendly manner) to return. This invitation will be appreciated by the tourist.

Special Problems of Tourists Dining in a Community

- They are often in a hurry because they have other commitments, perhaps miles away.
- They may want eating to be as interesting as their other travel experiences, and may hope for an improvement over those that were unsatisfactory.
- They may have sensitive appetites. They have had to make adjustments to new food, water, different types of service, variations in climate, and irregularity of meals and rest. These things cause people to be more susceptible to digestive upsets. Often the food is blamed, rather than recent changes in routine.

How the Restaurant Employee Might Handle These Problems

- Give the kind of prompt, courteous service that helps tourists relax and enjoy their meals and surroundings.
- Make the tourist's eating experience something to remember. Suggest the specialties of the house or dishes new to the tourist. If the visitor inquires about foods not served by the restaurant, refer to an establishment which specializes in these dishes.
- Listen attentively to the individual's food problems, and make appropriate suggestions.
- Suggest additional services the restaurant has to offer—telephone, lounges, special attractions. In emergency cases, refer the visitor to medical help.

- Suggest that the tourist take information folders about the community.

Suggestions For Waiters and Waitresses

DO

- Notice your customers right away. A cheerful nod and smile will do.
- Provide a menu and glass of ice water immediately. Then if you are rushed, tell them you will take their orders as soon as you can.
- Offer coffee immediately if it is breakfast time. Ask the customer when a beverage is wanted.
- Know your menu. Smile cheerfully when you come to take the customer's order.
- Double-check each order, so that the customer receives exactly what was ordered. Check before making any substitution.
- Be prepared to converse intelligently on information often requested by a customer.
- Look for an opportunity (but don't be pushy) to mention some of the outstanding scenery, historic sites, or other attractions in the area.
- Pay special attention to the needs of the very young and the very old.
- Make a point of giving excellent service: replenish ice water promptly; replace a dropped napkin or utensil with a fresh one; remove soiled dishes promptly.

DO NOT

- Don't hurry your customers unnecessarily, or show annoyance if they spend time over their coffee.
- Don't keep customers waiting for the check. Bring it immediately following dessert or coffee or ask if they're ready for it.
- Don't do anything or say anything that implies that you expect a tip.
- Don't visit with other employees during working hours. Your customers come first.
- Don't neglect your grooming or use cheap perfume. People will often judge the food by the neatness and cleanliness of the server.
- Don't be surly or discourteous in any way. An unpleasant attendant can ruin a meal for a customer and cut profits for a restaurant.

Suggestions For Hotel and Motel Personnel

Tourists are the reason for the existence of a hotel or motel. A pleasant experience encourages them to return or recommend the place to friends.

Because of the tourists' length of stay, hotel and motel employees are the key people to create favorable impressions and influence tourists to stay longer in the community. "One day longer" means more direct income to hotels and motels. Lack of attention by employees might be the number one reason that a tourist leaves after one day.

Special Problems of Tourists Seeking Lodging Accommodations

- They may need information about the community.
- They may be trying to duplicate a previous pleasant experience—or trying to avoid another unpleasant one.
- They may need adequate accommodations for family, two couples, or pets.
- They may be sensitive to interference with rest, indifference to requests for service, delays in making accommodations available, or in checking out.
- They may not adjust easily to beds, ventilation, temperature change.
- They may have difficulty adjusting to different service levels provided by accommodations in different areas.

Ways a Motel or Hotel Employee Can Help With These Problems

- The employee may provide information about the community and adjoining areas. A display of brochures in the office or lobby is often very helpful.

- The employee needs to understand the problems of tourists and provide service and accommodations to meet their needs.
- The employee may refer visitors to other motels, hotels or rooming houses with the required accommodations if your accommodations do not meet their special requirements. Telephone ahead; they will appreciate the courtesy.
- The employee can try to offer constructive solutions to other accommodation problems of visitors.
- The employee should be sensitive to visitors' complaints, and try to correct causes for the more frequent ones.
- The employee should be able to explain certain charges for services.

Suggestions for Front Office Personnel

DO:

- Make your guest feel at home. Use the guest's name several times; there is no sweeter magic to the visitor.
- Use a pleasant tone of voice. Be cooperative, courteous, attentive, alert and cordial—but not too "chatty."
- Compliment the guest's hometown. If the visitor has traveled a long way, comment on it.

- Inquire casually as to whether the guest has visited your community, or stopped at your place previously. Offer any assistance that seems appropriate.
- Inquire if the guest is expecting mail or messages.

DO NOT:

- Don't be abrupt, no matter how busy you are.
- Don't send a guest away if your establishment is filled, without first helping secure other lodging, or giving directions to a tourist information center.

Suggestions for Retail Sales Personnel

Some salespeople are reluctant to spend time and effort on customers they think may never return. They fail to remember that tourists may get only one impression of the store, and this may be their only impression of the community. Remember that this impression may determine whether the tourists return to the community and it will influence what they say about the salespeople, store, and community to friends who are potential customers. Excellent service can leave a tourist with the feeling that he/she has visited a friendly town, and shopped in a well-run store where the employees are polite and gracious. The reverse will happen if apathetic, inadequate service is given.

The tourist trade is valuable to the store. These customers may be freer spenders because they are on vacation and away from the worries of their daily routines. They are usually pleasant to help because they are in a vacation mood.

Special Problems When Shopping in a Strange Town

- Tourists probably don't have a charge account, but may want to pay for all purchases at one time with a single check or bank charge card.
- Tourists may be looking for souvenirs for friends or relatives. They don't usually know what they want, but probably want items characteristic of the area.
- They are likely to have a meager knowledge of price-quality relationships for local merchandise.
- They may be in a hurry, have limited time, and many things to do and see.
- They cannot return merchandise easily, so the purchase must be right the first time.

How Sales Personnel Might Handle These Problems

- Suggest the aid of any special department which handles personal shopping in the store, thus consolidating the customer's purchases.
- Be acquainted with the departments in the store which offer souvenirs—gifts, notions, stationery, Western clothing, etc.
- Advise the customer on difference in quality and price of items with which the customer is unfamiliar.

- Know the delivery system so the customer's purchases can be delivered in one large package to the hotel or motel, if time permits.

DO:

- Dress neatly. Personal appearance is very important.
- Treat the tourist like a special customer and give the little "extra" help that may be needed. It certainly is appreciated.
- Make the tourist feel at home and at ease.
- Allow the customer to browse, but be available the minute the customer needs help or has made a decision.
- Be able to make suitable suggestions in the same price range as the customer's budget. A suggestion too much lower is an insult, and one too much higher will probably lose a sale.
- Know your merchandise, its origin, and the details of craftsmanship. Know your local merchandise, and know it well. Volunteer a brief descriptive explanation on locally made products if it is in order.
- Show stock willingly. The tourist may not buy just then, but is more likely to return.

DO NOT:

- Don't allow the customers to get the impression that you are doing them a favor.
- Don't let customers wait while you visit with others on the sales staff.
- Don't be abrupt or short.

Suggestions for Service Station Personnel

Most travelers regard each service station as a separate tourism bureau and rest stop and the attendants as "fountains of information." Although you may be besieged by tourists asking the same questions and having the same problems, guard against giving distinterested, perfunctory answers.

The kinds of service tourists are most interested in include: accurate road information; excellent auto service; **clean, attractive restrooms**; drinking water and snacks; information about special attractions—local and along their way.

Since their time is usually at a premium, tourists appreciate all of these needs being attended to in one stop. Tourists who receive this kind of "plus" service are further convinced that they are doing business with the right oil company. They often encourage friends to deal with that company and to stop at that station for service.

Special Problems of Tourists Seeking Service and Information

- They may have had incomplete directions and may need further help to find their way. Or they may have been misdirected and be unhappy about retracing their routes.
- They may need special help in locating a local address or person.
- They may have a special car problem which needs attention.
- They may need information about road hazards, detours, distances, and weather.
- They may want some information about the community's attractions, or the station attendant may find a way to make them aware of special points of interest. Too often they speed on to the next community and learn later, to their disappointment, of the sites they overlooked.

How the Service Station Attendant Can Help With These Problems

- Ask if the tourist needs maps or information.
- Give accurate, easy-to-follow directions.
- Provide excellent, polite service for the tourist's car.
- Volunteer accurate and useful information about the condition of highways the tourist proposes to take.
- Know the basic factual information about the community, such as outstanding attractions, industries, schools, etc. Willingly provide this information.
- Make sure that restrooms are in excellent condition.
- Direct the tourist to the local chamber of commerce or other tourist information sources for available brochures on community attractions.

DO:

- Greet tourists cheerfully. They are probably tired from traveling.
- Know as much as you can about your community and area, and look for appropriate opportunities to tell interesting things about them.
- Check to see if a tourist has visited previously before giving directions. He/she may not need detailed descriptions.
- Direct tourists to the local chamber of commerce or other information sources if you cannot answer their questions. But be sure you know the answer the next time.
- Cheerfully direct the tourist to another garage for repairs of a type you cannot handle.
- Provide "excellence" in the services of a reliable service station. Clean a customer's windshield and headlights; offer to check the oil, battery and tires; look for water and fluid leaks; offer fresh litter bag services; provide clean restrooms, cold water, and snack foods.
- Invite the tourist back and mention that you were glad to be of service.

DO NOT:

- Don't "overdo" the car check.
- Don't try to sell the tourist something that is not needed.
- Don't give a grunt when answering a question.
- Don't forget that local service stations may give tourists the only impression of a community they ever have.

Acknowledgements

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