

# Facilitator Guide - The Art of Anticipation: *Foundational Service Skills for Exceptional Guest Experiences*

## Course Overview:

- **Course title:** The Art of Anticipation: Foundational Service Skills for Exceptional Guest Experiences
- **Duration:** 1 Hour 30 Minutes
- **Audience:** Front & Back of House Hospitality Staff (*ex. Front desk staff, concierge, guest services*)
- **Delivery method (in-person, virtual, hybrid):** In-Person, *can also be offered virtually if requested*
- **Course Summary:** How do hospitality professionals anticipate guest needs without being told? This course reviews foundational skills for anticipatory service.
- **Optional Add-Ons:** This can be done in conjunction with Anticipatory Luxury Service → Advanced Application which is an optional add-on course expanding upon this course and delving deeper into luxury service.

## Course Description:

This training introduces foundational service skills that enable hospitality professionals to move beyond reactive service and toward proactive, guest-centered experiences. Participants will learn how to recognize unspoken needs, communicate with intention, and take ownership in solving guest challenges, laying the groundwork for anticipatory, luxury-level service.

## Learning objectives:

By the end of this training, participants will be able to:

1. **Identify** verbal and nonverbal cues that signal guest needs
2. **Demonstrate** effective questioning and active listening techniques
3. **Apply** a structured approach to solving guest problems with ownership
4. **Recognize** opportunities to anticipate guest needs before they are expressed

# Required materials:

- Slide deck
- Facilitator guide
- Participant notes sheet
- Scenario cards (printed or digital)
- Whiteboard or flip chart

# Room setup:

U-shaped or circular set up so all participants are facing the center of the room. The focus of this training is to learn

- U-shaped seating to encourage visibility, discussion, and shared learning
- Open center space for live role-play demonstrations
- Participants will engage in paired activities within the U-shape, with select scenarios facilitated in the center for group observation and feedback

# Session Agenda:

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Time	Agenda
0:00 - 0:10	Welcome & Framing
0:10 - 0:25	Module 1: What Guests Remember
0:25 - 0:45	Module 2: Awareness
0:45 - 1:05	Module 3: Communication
1:05 - 1:25	Module 4: Ownership
1:24 - 1:30	Module 5: Bridge to Luxury

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# Detailed Facilitation Plan:

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## 0:00–0:10 | Welcome & Framing

**Objective:** Set tone and establish relevance to the participant's work

**Facilitator Notes:**

- Welcome participants warmly
- Introduce yourself and your background briefly
- Frame the session as *practical, not theoretical*

**Say (in your own words):**

| “Today isn’t about scripts, it’s about how you think in guest interactions.”

**Activity: Reflection Discussion**

- Ask:
  - “Think of the best service experience you’ve ever had—what made it memorable?”

**What to Listen For:**

- Emotional responses (“they made me feel...”)
- Personalization
- Ease or effortlessness

**Facilitator Instructions:**

- Ask the group to share their examples

**Key Point to Reinforce:**

| Guests remember how you make them feel, not just what you do.

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## 0:10–0:25 | Module 1: What Guests Actually Remember

**Objective:** Shift mindset from task-based to experience-based service

**Facilitator Notes:**

- Contrast “transactional service” vs “experience-driven service”

**Key Teaching Points:**

- Service = completing a task
- Experience = shaping how the guest feels
- The best service feels effortless to the guest
- The highest level of service feels seamless and often anticipates needs before they are expressed.

**Activity: Group Share**

- Ask:
  - “What’s the difference between good service and exceptional service?”

**Common Responses to Build On:**

- Speed vs personalization
- Accuracy vs anticipation

**Facilitator Instructions:**

- Ask the group to share their examples
- Write these examples down on the white board/flip chart (highlight key themes)

**Facilitator Tip:**

If energy is low, call on specific participants and validate contributions.

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## 0:25–0:45 | Module 2: Awareness – Reading the Guest

**Objective:** Build observational and intuitive awareness

**Key Teaching Points:**

- Guests rarely say exactly what they need
- Awareness = noticing patterns, tone, body language

**Examples to Share:**

- Guest checking watch repeatedly → likely time-sensitive
  - Short responses → may want efficiency, not conversation
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### Activity: “What’s Unsaid?” Scenario Exercise

**Instructions:**

1. Present a scenario:
  - “A guest says: ‘Hi, I was wondering if my room might be ready soon.’”
2. Ask the Group:
  - “What might they actually need or feel?”

**Expected Insights:**

- Tired from travel
- Frustrated but polite
- Needs reassurance or timeline
- What can you offer the guest? If their room isn't yet ready - can you offer another solution in the meantime to help with their core need?
- This is the foundation of anticipation—recognizing needs before the guest fully communicates them.

**Facilitator Instructions:**

- Ask the group to share their examples
- Discuss key themes
- Discuss how to connect the unsaid to a need the guest has

**Facilitator Notes:**

Push beyond surface-level answers:

| “What else could be going on?”

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## 0:45–1:05 | Module 3: Communication – Asking & Listening

**Objective:** Improve clarity and connection in guest interactions

**Key Teaching Points:**

- Ask open-ended questions
  - Listen for intent, not just words
  - Avoid robotic or scripted responses
  - The right questions don’t just solve problems—they uncover opportunities to elevate the experience.
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### Activity: Paired Practice

**Instructions:**

- Partner A = Guest
- Partner B = Staff

**Scenario:**

Guest says:

| “I need help planning something special.”

**Task:**

- Staff member asks clarifying questions

**Debrief Questions:**

- What questions worked well?
- What felt natural vs forced?

**What to Listen For:**

- Specific vs vague questions
- Tone and pacing

**Facilitator Instructions:**

- Ask the group to pair up with the person next to them
  - Walk around to answer questions and assist participants as needed
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## 1:05–1:25 | Module 4: Ownership – Solving Without Friction

**Objective:** Encourage proactive problem-solving

**Key Teaching Points:**

- Ownership = “I will take care of this”
  - Avoid passing the guest between staff
  - Offer solutions, not just explanations
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## Activity: Problem-Solving Scenarios

### Example Scenario:

“A guest arrives and their room isn’t ready.”

### Ask Participants:

- “What would you say?”
- “What would you *do*?”

### Strong Responses Include:

- Acknowledgment
- Clear next steps
- Added value (drink, lounge access, get ready in the spa, etc.)

### Facilitator Instructions:

- Bring the group back together after 10-15 minutes
  - Invite 2-3 groups to share their responses with the group
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### Facilitator Tip:

If responses are basic, ask:

“How could we elevate this?”

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## 1:25–1:30 | Module 5: The Bridge to Luxury

**Objective:** Inspire and connect to advanced service

### Facilitator Notes:

This is the *signature moment*. Slow down here.

### Paint the Picture:

Describe:

- Being greeted by name
- Room ready with preferences noted
- Needs handled before asking

Then say:

“This level of service isn’t accidental. It comes from mastering the skills we discussed, at a deeper level.”

“That level of service isn’t about doing more, it’s about noticing more, understanding more, and acting with intention.”

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### Closing Reflection:

Ask:

- “What is one thing you can start doing today to better anticipate guest needs?”

**Facilitator Instructions:**

- Using some of the service examples and scenarios we have discussed as a group today, connect that back to luxury service
  - Discuss what makes luxury, luxury
  - Open the floor for participants to discuss their reflections about anticipating guest needs
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## Appendix A: Scenario Bank (Optional Add-On)

Include 3–5 scenarios such as:

- Late check-in issue
  - Guest complaint about noise
  - Special occasion stay
  - Upset guest at front desk/restaurant/spa (adjust according to audience)
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## Appendix B: Facilitator Flex Notes

Include notes like:

- If group is quiet → use direct calling + smaller groups
- If group is advanced → shorten explanations, expand scenarios
- If short on time → prioritize Modules 2 and 4