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Briefing No. 2

Confirming Requests

1. ***Starter***

(Start the exercise with the Side Stretch. Make sure that they all really stretch - five seconds to the right and five seconds to the left, then five seconds stretching both arms sideways).

2. ***Announce the Topic***

This briefing is about checking to make sure that we understand what the guest wants, and confirming or repeating so that the guest knows we understand.

3. ***Why is this Important***

We want to make our guest feel important. We want to show them that we are happy to take care of their needs. And we want our guest to know that we understand them.

By confirming what the guest want we avoid the mistake of bringing the wrong item (for example the guest who asked for an adapter was surprised when the “doctor” arrived his room; “Restaurant” instead of “Rest Room”; “Bill” instead of “Beer”

By avoiding mistakes we save our time and energy and our service is more efficient.

It is basic courtesy to let the guest know that we understand what he wants - and it can be very discourteous to give service silently without using courteous words.

Many foreign guests are anxious about being misunderstood. They don't know how well we speak English, so they are afraid we might not understand them. And many of our guests - Europeans and Asians - are speaking English as a second language, just like us, and they feel that their English is not clear enough for us to understand. So it is really very important to confirm guest requests.

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4. *Common Mistakes and Discourtesies*

Very often guests ask for something and staff behave discourteously. And the staff usually don't realise how rude they are. Let me give you a couple of examples: (Pick out a few staff and ask them to call you over and order a beer, or stamps or something relevant to your department. When the staff asks for "Coffee" just say "OK" or "Yep" or silently walk away. Your staff will immediately see the point. Then ask them what other words and actions are rude in this situation. Make sure you cover all the points below).

Wrong Actions

- ◇ Going to get what the guest wants without saying a word
- ◇ Just nodding without words when the guest asks for something
- ◇ Acting without showing the guest that you understand his request
- ◇ Pretending that you understand what he wants even though you are not sure

Wrong English

- * Replying the guest request with:
 - "Yep"
 - "Yah"
 - "OK"
 - "No Problem"
 - "Alright"
 - "Yes"
 - "Sure"
 - "No"
 - "Of course"
- * Saying "Yes Sir" when you don't understand what the guest wants.

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5. Our Standard of Courtesy

(Ask staff to tell you the correct way of checking and confirming requests. then explain the Standard and display your prepared flip chart)

Courteous Actions

- ◇ If the guest calls you from a distance, look at him and bow or nod to show you will take care of him
- ◇ If the guest calls you and you do not know what he wants, then offer service (May I HELP you. sir?)
- ◇ If you are pretty sure what the guest wants, double check when you approach (“Some COFFEE, sir?”)
- ◇ When the guest asks for something, look in his eyes and nod while you repeat his order and confirm that you will get what he wants
- ◇ Stand where the guest can comfortably see you and talk to you

Wrong English

- * Check what the guest wants and show that you understand by repeating his request.
e.g. “A BEER?”
“The BILL?”
“Some TOWELS”
- * Confirm that you will take care of the order, and show your eagerness by saying:
“CERTainly, sir.”
e.g. “Another BEER? CERTainly, sir”
“A HAIRDRYER? CERTainly, madam”
“Some more TOWELS? CERTainly, madam”
- * We can also say:
“A COFFEE? YES, sir”
- * But it is much better to say:
“CERTainly, sir”. It shows much more attention and interest than a simple
“Yes, sir”.

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6. **General Points**

This briefing is a combination of two things: Checking what the guest wants and confirming that you understand his request and will take care of him.

CHECKING means asking a question: “More TOWELS?”

CONFIRMING means letting the guest know that you will get what he wants: “CERTainly, sir”

The word Certainly is very powerful. It gives the message: “We are eager to take care of you”. This word gives a very good impression to guests, and it is so much better than saying “yes” or “OK” or “allright” or “sure”.

When to use “Certainly, Sir”

- Use “Certainly, sir” when a guest makes a direct request for one particular item
- Use “Certainly, sir” when the guest asks for something which you can serve or order right away
- Do not use “Certainly, sir” when taking long food orders or dealing with complicated requests


Generally the rule is: if you can take care of the request right away, use “Certainly, sir”. If the request is complicated or you need more information, don’t use “Certainly”.

7. **Questions**

Any Questions?

8. **Drill the language**

(Drill the language and make sure the staff speak with enthusiasm. keep the drill interesting by giving them lots of different items to repeat. Don’t repeat the same ones over and over or staff will get very bored)

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9. **Activity: Checking and confirming**

(Prepare for this activity by writing out about 7 typical guest requests. Write each one on a small piece of paper: e.g. “more coffee”, “the bill”, “a taxi”, etc.)

This is how to do the activity:

Ask the group to stand up. Select half the group as guests, half as staff. Give each guest a paper with a request written on it. Get the guests to stand in different parts of the room. Get each staff to choose a “guest” as a partner.

Staff should approach the guest and say “May I help you, sir?” Then the guest makes his request, e.g. “More towels” The staff then says: “Some more towels? Certainly, sir” then the staff moves on to a different guest and repeats.

The activity continues until staff have dealt with every guest. Then guests and staff change: Guest become staff and staff become guests and the activity is repeated.

Two Points:

- Demonstrate the activity first by giving an example of what to do.
- Instruct staff to move around the room clockwise so there is no confusion about which guest to approach next. The guest should be spread around the room to allow for as much privacy as possible.

Food and Beverage “guest” should definitely sit, because this is similar to the reality of service, i.e. guests sit and staff stand.

While the activity is running, you should walk around the room listening, looking, correcting and praising.

Stop their activity several times and remind staff about the key points of body language and remind them to say the language with feeling. If the group is noisy, get their attention by clapping your hands.

If you have an uneven number of staff, play this game with fewer guests and more staff.

It is easier to control this game if you get the “guests” to sit down.

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10. **Questions?**

(After finishing the Activity, let staff sit down and then answer their questions)

11. **Summary**

(Summarise the main points)

We want to make guests feel that we are happy to look after them. So we use expressions like “Certainly, sir” when a guest asks for something. this expression is very powerful, very positive.

Also, we need to show guests that we really understand what they want, so we confirm their requests by repeating briefly. This saves mistakes and gives guests more confidence in our service. this is very important.

And again, remember the courteous body language we’ve discussed in the past: give the guest your full attention. even if you are dealing with him for just a short time, let him feel that you respect him and you are happy to serve him.