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## THE GUIDE TO THE ULTIMATE GUEST EXPERIENCE

In the spa and wellness world, your guest experience is everything. Your guest experience is what sets you apart from the competition. It's the reason people will choose one spa over another and the reason properties win awards and become globally famous.

How do the world's top luxury properties do it? They know a few things others don't.

Here is your guide to creating the ultimate guest experience. Use these strategies to elevate your guest experience to new heights.



# THINK OF THE GUEST EXPERIENCE AS A CYCLE

The guest experience begins long before the guest arrives at your spa. From pre-arrival to arrival, through the treatment and beyond, the experience is cyclic, rather than linear, continuing after the guest's departure and through to the next appointment booking, where it begins anew.

A lot happens, for example, in the pre-arrival stage of the guest experience cycle. This includes the guest choosing to visit your spa out of all the spas out there, and you preparing for the guest's arrival.

The guests' choice will depend on many factors. This includes marketing, social media, your website, reputation, word of mouth, reviews, previous experiences

with your brand, location, your spa menu, and more.

It will also depend on ease of booking. Can the guest book outside of business hours and via website and mobile if they want to? Any barrier to booking appointments will turn people off and cause them to turn elsewhere. Make sure your booking process is easy and intuitive. This is where the guest experience begins. And it continues even after the guest leaves your spa, with follow up communication, such as customer satisfaction surveys. You need to know if a guest was happy with their experience, and this is the only way to find out. If the guest is not happy, this is when you make things right, if possible. Because that is where online reviews and word of mouth follows...and we are back to the beginning.

# GUIDE YOUR GUEST THROUGH THEIR JOURNEY

The spa should communicate information about safety and sanitation protocols even before a guest books an appointment. If guests are required to wear masks, for example, this should be made clear before booking, either on your website or over the phone. In a recent ISPA Town Hall, Deirdre Strunk, Vice President of Canyon Ranch, said that some guests had decided not to book when they learned about the spa's mask requirement. Make it all clear in advance, so you are less likely to have a cancellation. The same information should then be sent in a follow up email and posted in signage around your spa. Be available to answer any questions the guest may have.

Your online booking site can help you provide this level of guidance from the start, outlining what the guest can expect from you and

what is expected from your guest, from health and safety protocol to treatment descriptions. Your spa might have a Guest Advisor guiding people through their visit after arrival. Book4Time's [contactless experience](#) can offer similar guidance, through check in, providing instructions on when and where to change, advising guests of their locker number, where to meet the therapist, and so on.

This applies throughout the whole journey. Emma Darby, COO of Resense, told Spa Executive in an interview, "There should not be a time during a guest's spa journey that they don't know where they should be, what they should be doing, or what they should be wearing. They should be comfortable from the moment of first contact all the way through the treatment and leaving experience."

A casino experience should be the same. There's a reason there aren't any clocks around that keep people on a timer. You want your guest to be relaxed in any scenario - whether it's for a relaxing body treatment or for an exciting game of blackjack.



# PERSONALIZE, PERSONALIZE, PERSONALIZE

As soon as an appointment is made, you should be gathering the necessary intel to create the ultimate, personalized, guest experience. When sending out [intake forms](#) to be filled out before arrival, you'll be asking questions related to health, and you will also ask about needs and preferences. For example:

- Why are they booking a massage? Are they in pain or in search of simple relaxation? What shoe and robe size do they wear, if you provide these things, so you can have them ready.
- What sort of music would they prefer during their treatment?
- What is their favourite smell?
- Would they like a tea, coffee, or glass of wine?

You should also be able to refer to your notes about that guest in your software, if they have been to your spa before. And, if you are a hotel, resort, or spa with multiple properties, this information can be shared between properties, with the right software, so that the guest never has to provide it twice.

Ask yourself what information you need to make an impression. Personalization is the key to that impression.

Statistics show that:

- More than two in five consumers (42%) say that if a company doesn't provide them with a personalized experience, they're likely to switch brands.
- Even if a product or service disappoints, 72% of consumers say they'll give the company a second chance if it provides a hyper-personal customer experience.
- More than half (63%) of consumers expect personalization as a standard of service.
- 49% of buyers have made impulse purchases after a more personalized experience.

In an interview with Spa Executive about how spas can achieve a Five-Star Rating, Amanda Frasier, Forbes Travel Guide's Senior VP of Ratings, said, "We look to see what each spa is doing to not only set itself apart from the competition, but how they create unique, personalized service moments for each guest based on their specific needs or guest profile."

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## MEET GUESTS WHERE THEY ARE BY GIVING THEM WHAT THEY WANT

The days of doing things only one way are gone. Similar to offering guests the option to book from wherever they want, at any time of day or night, the option for as little contact as possible should now be on the table. Many guests are now looking for a contactless experience. The less unwanted contact a guest has to have with a stranger, the better.

This would include the aforementioned digital intake forms, as well as mobile check-in, and contactless payments. Mobile check in works, essentially, just like an airport, allowing you to check-in from your device and skip the front desk. This also provides much of the same service as the front desk, guiding the guest on where to get changed and meet their therapist. Similarly, touchless payments allow guests to pay for treatments directly from their mobile, while still offering the option to add gratuity, pay at the front, or charge it to their room. This means they can control their interactions and they will feel safer and more empowered.

# EMBRACE AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY

The very idea of luxury has gotten an upgrade in recent years, thanks to the numerous available technologies we have talked about here and some that we have not. The seamlessness of an experience that allows a guest to move from booking, to check-in, to treatment, and beyond, without having to stop, to wait for instructions or answers, or to pick up a pen, creates the prospect of an unparalleled and unprecedented luxury guest experience. To be able to arrive for a treatment or an entire spa day, whether the person is a new guest or a repeat guest, whether they are at a hotel, resort, casino, or day spa, and be welcomed in a way that makes them feel valued and understood - this is what technology can do for us today.

This feeling of being valued and understood, and ease of experience, is the reason we are so amazed by, and eager to embrace, refrigerators that anticipate our shopping needs, homes that know when to turn the lights off and lock the doors, and ads that appear online with the exact items we want to buy. We feel a sense of relaxation, because something is being taken care of for us. Similarly, in a spa, if a guest's likes and needs are anticipated, and their experience personalized, that guest experience is elevated and your spa appears in a whole new light.

# GO ABOVE AND BEYOND – AND THEN GO BEYOND

Amanda Frasier told Spa Executive, "While having a beautiful facility is absolutely necessary, spas that go above and beyond when it comes to service rise naturally in our system.

"We measure multiple behaviors throughout the spa visit, such as acts of graciousness and signs of guest comfort. When executed well, in a natural and intuitive manner, there is the ability to elevate the overall guest experience."

In 2020, when protocols have changed and comfort levels may be not what they once were, it's more important than ever to ask yourself what more you can do to make your guests happy. People are feeling vulnerable and uncomfortable, and your small kindnesses will go a long way towards alleviating that discomfort. If you're removing items from your waiting areas, like reading material and beverages, be sure to offer those things individually. If

you're requiring guests to shower before treatments, make that experience a luxury, rather than a chore. Be prepared to listen and answer questions.

The ultimate guest experience is one that exceeds expectations. And the only way to accomplish this is by asking yourself what you can do beyond what is expected of you -- and then go beyond that.

## GOT QUESTIONS?

Visit [Book4Time.com](https://www.book4time.com) or contact us to schedule a demo

