

Three Expert Service Secrets

When the world's top hospitality companies set out to improve their service standards, many call on Rob Hebler, the assistant dean of the Centers for Leadership Development and Management & Executive Education at Rollins' Crummer Graduate School of Business. Prior to joining Crummer, Hebler spent more than two decades in leadership positions with hospitality brands like Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, and Wyndham. We tapped Rollins' resident service expert for three secrets from the hospitality industry you can use to make the most of each on-campus interaction.

The 10-5 Rule

A standard in the hospitality industry, this two-part rule may seem like common sense, but it has the potential to improve each of your on-campus interactions. First, the rule says you should visually recognize and make eye contact with a colleague, student, or campus visitor when you come within 10 feet of them. Within five feet, you should give them a positive, upbeat greeting. Sure, it sounds simple, but how often do you find yourself transfixed by your iPhone as you traverse campus?

The Moment of Truth

In the hospitality industry, service interactions are often referred to as moments of truth. The stakes are high for each and every moment. In fact, studies have shown that it takes 10-12 positive experiences to overcome the negative feelings that result from just one bad experience. One of the best ways to ensure each moment is positive is to approach service as a choice rather than an obligation. Choose to provide a positive service experience, and you'll deliver it in a different way than you would if you're just obligated to do so.

The LAST Process

LAST is an acronym for listen, apologize, serve, and thank, and it's an effective method of resolving service experiences gone awry. The first step is to listen to the person's complaint and try to understand why the experience wasn't positive. The next step is to issue a sincere and authentic apology. Once you have apologized, it's time to serve or provide a resolution. For example, if you were a barista whose customer has complained about his cup of coffee, you would provide a new cup of coffee or offer a free coffee on a future visit. The last step is to thank the customer for bringing the issue to your attention, because that's the only way the service experience will improve.