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Be Our Guest: A Hotel's Guide to Guest Service Hospitality Training

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Be our Guest: A Hotel's Guide to Guest Service Hospitality Training

Abigail Ehlert
Honors Thesis Project



Abstract:

With the rapid growth of competition in hospitality, training companies are researching new and innovative techniques in training and development that will set them apart from the rest. Using research, interviews with experienced trainers, and a compilation of topics learned while attending the University of Tennessee, this project has been written in the form of a proposal made by a theoretical training company. The company, Be Our Guest, provides training business process outsourcing (BPO) to varying hotel establishments in the hospitality industry. The proposal is to be presented to potential clients prior to outsourcing its guest service training.

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Be Our Guest

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Who Are We?

Executive Summary

Be Our Guest offers on-site guest service training for various hotel establishments, providing top-notch quality training through customized sessions that cater to your wants and needs. We are a corporation specializing in hospitality and guest service, and have worked with hotels across the nation to increase satisfaction and provide experiences that leave guests planning their next stay before they even walk out the door. Since opening our doors in 2012, we have strived to follow our mission and values by providing an atmosphere of communication and respect among employees that is naturally passed on to the guests. We continue to work towards our goals by providing our clients with the best training in the industry while customizing our services to each establishment's strengths and weaknesses.

At Be Our Guest, we offer a variety of services, from one-hour seminars to multi-day management development courses. Every hotel holds a unique trait, and we aim to customize our services to best suit yours. Our courses of focus are employee onboarding, employee development, and management coaching. In addition to on-site training, we operate training offices all over the country that house our local trainers and contain technology that fully immerses your employees in a realistic simulation that allows them to watch themselves interact with guests. To provide our clients with 24-hour support, we have recently opened a call center with employees prepared to answer any inquiry or concern you may have.

In today's day and age, guest satisfaction can be shared across the internet on multiple platforms in a matter of seconds. Hotels are relying on top-notch guest satisfaction and feedback to set themselves apart from their competition and make themselves a recurring choice for vacation. At Be Our Guest, we understand your drive to create positive experiences, and want to provide you with service that will have guests leaving high praise reviews while they plan their next visit. Together, we can work towards equipping your employees with the skills and knowledge necessary to uphold this level of service, and to ultimately create an atmosphere that will make your guests feel as if they are coming home when they step through the front doors.

Mission Statement

At Be Our Guest, it is our mission to create positive guest experiences and satisfaction by offering exceptional hospitality training services to hotel establishments of all shapes and sizes. Whether you are an up and coming limited-service hotel, or an experienced five star resort, we customize our services based on your strengths and weaknesses. With a focus in teamwork, our friendly and experienced staff aims to work with all areas of your hotel to build a network of shared knowledge and expectations. Together, we will create a solid network of employees prepared to successfully provide an unbeatable experience that will have your guests planning their next visit before they walk out the front doors.

Objectives

1. To provide top-ranked and uniquely customized guest service training to each individual client.
2. To show significant results of proven impact on guest satisfaction after completion of training.
3. To create a network of communication and positive morale within each client's establishment.
4. To build a strong management team that can effectively lead each area with an atmosphere of respect and equality.
5. To build and retain strong relationships with our clients and their employees.
6. To maintain a positive reputation with our clients, shareholders and surrounding communities.

Key Performance Successes

1. Our services are customized to best match the specific strengths and weaknesses of our clients.
2. We focus on promoting an atmosphere of communication and team building.
3. We grow and retain strong relationships with our clients and shareholders.
4. We collaborate with all of our trainers to create well-rounded training sessions for each area of our clients' properties.
5. We give back to the community through partnerships with non-profit organizations and planning volunteering initiatives.
6. We aim to provide a positive return on investment and maintain a respectable reputation with company shareholders.

Why Choose Us?

1. We provide individually customized on and off-site guest training service that best fit your property's unique traits.
2. We utilize current technology to create an off-site fully immersive training simulation system that allows employees to watch themselves provide service to guests.
3. We coach management of all levels on acting as a mentor and providing positive feedback to his or her subordinates.
4. We have had proven significant impact on guest satisfaction at client properties through online reviews.
5. We are one of the largest BPO training companies in the country with a continual growth in innovative ideas and techniques.
6. We hold seven easily accessible training offices from coast to coast for off-site training.
7. We will work with each participating employee individually until everyone feels comfortable and prepared to provide exceptional service.

How Do We Operate?

Management

Be Our Guest is led by a Board of Directors with varied backgrounds that meets once a month to discuss how to improve operations and strategies. The management team chosen to help run the company, both in the corporate and training departments, collectively has a varied and extensive background in hospitality training and leadership. From assisting in starting up a 60-room limited-service hotel to maintaining employee development and morale at a world famous ski resort, our team has seen it all. With our history and collaboration to provide the best-fit service, you can be assured you and your employees will be given an exceptional experience that will leave you feeling prepared to satisfy your guests.

Company Ownership/Legal Entity

Be Our Guest was filed and incorporated in 2012 in the state of Tennessee as a domestic corporation, and is currently certified as active. Our registered agent is the Secretary of State's office, and contact information can be found at the Division of Business Services. Our Board of Directors meets at the beginning of every, and we hold an annual meeting with our shareholders in the month of July. We are certified as a foreign professional corporation in every state except Alaska and Hawaii, and have been granted to provide business process outsourcing (BPO) in said states. For further information about our articles of organization or other legal inquiries, please contact Abigail Ehlert, President, at aehlert@beourguest.org.

Locations

We are located from coast to coast to best fit your needs, no matter your location. Our corporate office is located in Nashville, Tennessee, while our training offices are located in major cities throughout the country. Whether you are located in the mountains of North Carolina or the deserts of Arizona, our trainers will be there to assist you. Additionally, we recently built a call center in Jacksonville, Florida to answer your questions or concerns 24 hours a day. The following are the locations and contact information for our corporate and training offices, as well as our call center:

Corporate Office

Nashville, TN
4198 Andell Road
Nashville, TN 37901
Phone: (615) 242-3973

Call Center

Jacksonville, FL
2150 Sprint Drive
Austin, TX 73301
Phone: 1 (800) 874-8378

Training Offices

Los Angeles, CA

246 Ashcraft Court
Los Angeles, CA 90001
Phone: (619) 367-8033

Seattle, WA

3149 Cerullo Road
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (502) 465-4279

Chicago, IL

1034 Lowland Drive
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: (815) 371-7083

New York, NY

2905 Jarvisville Road
New York, NY 10005
Phone: (516) 908-1427

Orlando, FL

4783 Linden Avenue
Orlando, FL 32801
Phone: (407) 642-5430

Las Vegas, NV

2712 Hickory Ridge Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89101
Phone: (702) 635-8840

Austin, TX

2150 Sprint Drive
Austin, TX 73301
Phone: (386) 822-0783

Hours of Operation

The following information is our corporate, training, and call center hours of operation. Our corporate and training offices operate on a set schedule, and close on national holidays. Each training office's time is set to the time zone in which it is located. We tailor our on-site training hours to your requests, and can adjust them to any length of time throughout the day on any day of the week. Recently opened, our call center is available to contact any hour of the day, every day of the week.

Corporate Office

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Call Center

Monday – Sunday
24 Hours

Training Offices

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 6:00 PM
Saturday
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

On-Site Training

Monday – Sunday
At Request of Client

What Services Do We Offer?

At Be Our Guest, we offer a variety of services to complete an all-encompassed training experience for your employees. Each service is customizable, and we will provide all training materials and lesson plans to you for review prior to the arrival of our trainers. Our training structure is set into two categories: training courses and training sessions. With the training courses, we work with you to set up full training programs, such as employee onboarding, that will be utilized with your teams in the future. Training sessions are more team-specific and can be utilized to focus on certain areas within a team that need to be improved. The following are our available courses, sessions, and common areas of training. If additional training is requested in an area not listed below, we will discuss it prior to the arrival of our trainers and set up a customized plan for the employees in the designated area.

Training Courses

Employee Onboarding

From the first day on the job, an employee should be aware of and prepared to meet his or her expectations, as designated by the supervisor. These expectations should meet the description of the job, and should be taught first thing to ensure the employee is equipped to succeed. Whether the onboarding lasts a day or a week, each employee should be given an equal amount of attention and experience as the rest of the team, and should be able to have a smooth start when setting out to complete tasks on his or her own. Be Our Guest believes all of these points are necessary for the employee's smooth transition into working independently. Drawing on your property's strengths and weaknesses, we will customize the onboarding process in each department for which you wish to set up the program. Employee onboarding focuses on what the employee needs to learn immediately in order to be successful, and will have them on their feet and ready to start in no time.

Employee Development

While employee onboarding focuses on the task at hand to be completed in the employee's first few days of training in order to smoothly transition into the company, employee development focuses on the employee him or herself. This program is designed to assist the employee throughout his or her career with the company, and utilizes tactics such as coaching and performance appraisals to improve his or her experience and skill level. Be Our Guest offers customized employee development programs that will best fit the unique traits of your teams. We understand that an employee on the housekeeping team may have different self-realized goals than an employee on the front desk team, and aim to provide programs that will best match the wishes of each to improve his or her morale and sense of importance in the company.

Management Development

Although the management teams are often the employees assisting their subordinates with employee development, we understand that they also need to be recognized and have as much potential to improve or advance as the rest. Additionally, we have found that when you train management on

how to act towards their subordinates in situations of varying degrees, those actions are passed on to other employees as they interact with guests. Our management development plans differ based on which areas you would like to focus, such as positive coaching or interviewing, and can include anywhere from one supervisor to the entire management team.

Training Sessions

Seminars

Seminars are the most traditional training sessions, and take place in the form of a classroom lecture. We typically offer this traditional method for training sessions that will include over fifty employees, and the information presented is usually in the form of a PowerPoint that cannot be taught other than by presentation. An example of this session: A training coordinator uses a PowerPoint while teaching the property's employees about chemical safety to illustrate pictures of the different types of chemicals they need to understand not to handle.

On-The-Job

On-the-job training allows an employee to be taken around to all work areas to show him or her exactly how to perform the job. This method allows the employees to understand and remember his or her expectations task by task by being taught in real time exactly how it should be done, rather than told beforehand by a presentation. An example of this session: A front desk agent is taken to one of the desks, where she watches how her peer interact with guests to understand the dos and don'ts of guest service.

Roleplaying

Roleplaying allows employees to experience various situations to receive a well-rounded preparation for what could arise in his or her job. Instead of learning one method, multiple scenarios can be created to match the unexpected situations that arrive when interacting with guests. The scenarios used in these sessions would be catered to your property's operations and common occurrences. This session would be particularly beneficial for employees that consistently interact with guests, so they will remember certain things that can and cannot be said in specific situations.

Management Teambuilding

In our experience, we have found that leaders learn teamwork best by playing strategy based games. Whether this game takes the shape of a computer simulation or a life-size board game, when managers work together in a light-hearted game with underlying business strategies, they gain insight into one another that help them work together at work. Although our management teambuilding sessions are focused around this concept, you may customize your sessions by adding other desired activities to promote communication.

Management Coaching

Our management coaching is an ongoing service that assigns your management team to an off-site trainer. Whenever necessary, members of your team can contact this trainer at any time for

assistance or answers. Whether a leader needs a suggestion on how to handle a guest situation, or simply inquires ways to boost employee morale, our designated trainers have been trained in multiple divisions to provide you with the answers you need. Management coaching is based on a monthly service, and you can opt out of it at any time.

360 Degree Simulation [Off-Site]

Introduced in 2014, our 360-simulation software allows the employee to watch him or herself interact with guests in varying situations. The employee first is placed in a scenario with an actor that interacts with the employee as if he or she were a guest. The actor has specific lines and actions to say and do, and the response of the employee is recorded on camera. During these scenes, the actor is wearing a camera on his/her head that records the employee up-front. After shooting the varied scenarios, the employee puts on a virtual reality headset that allows him or her to see the same surroundings that the actor/guest experienced, including him or her standing in front of and interacting with the guest. This experience allows the employee to view how he or she handles varied situations, and can see up front what should be improved.

Self-Taught – Training Materials

This type of training is hands off for Be Our Guest, and the responsibility of training is placed solely in your hands. The materials are customized to what you request in order to feel prepared to successfully train your employees, and will be sent to you after you review the final proof. These training materials can assist you in conducting anywhere from seminars to management development, as well as any additional exercises you discuss with our training team. If you have any questions about your training materials, our employees at our call center are well equipped to answer your questions and offer additional assistance.

Training Areas

At Be Our Guest, we understand that every hotel is unique. The number and level of property teams vary by type of services the hotel offers, as well as its scope. We have used our experience to compile a list of property teams we tend to work with often. If you desire for us to work with a team not listed below, we will collaborate and create an additional plan to provide additional assistance.

1. Operations:

- Front Desk
- Concierge/Ticket Sales
- Bell and Valet

2. Food and Beverage (Front of House):

- **Restaurant**
 - Servers
 - Server Assistants
 - Hosts
- **Grab & Go Stores**
 - Cashiers

- **Banquets**
 - Set-Up
 - Servers
- 3. **Food and Beverage (Back of House):**
 - **Kitchen**
 - Cooks
 - Bakers
 - Dishwashers
- 4. **Retail:**
 - Cashiers
- 5. **Housekeeping:**
 - Housekeepers
 - Public Space Attendants
 - Room Inspectors
- 6. **Facilities and Maintenance:**
 - Technicians
- 7. **Management:**
 - Administrative
 - Managers
 - Supervisors
 - Leads

Pricing

The formats of our service charges vary by each training session’s layout. For the majority of our services, we charge an hourly rate that will cover the cost of training materials used in that period. The lengths of our hourly sessions are customized by your requests, and can range from one hour to multiple days. For our management coaching and self-taught services, we charge a monthly fee. These are ongoing services, and you will receive a monthly bill until you decide to end these services. Our training courses have a one-time service fee that will cover the costs of the materials used in the course, as well as the cost of outsourcing our program to you on a recurring basis. Regardless of the rate, each service grants you lifetime access to the information given out by our call center employees, as well as a login account on our website to access additional helpful training materials. For information concerning charges for additional requested service, please contact us at 1 (800) 874-8378.

Hourly Service Fee	
Seminars	On-the-Job
\$50.00 / Employee	\$70.00 / Employee
Roleplaying	Management Games
\$57.00 / Employee	\$85.00 / Employee
360 Degree Simulation	
\$175.00 / Employee	

Monthly Service Fee

Management Coaching

\$850.00 Fixed Rate

Self-Taught Materials

\$765.00 Fixed Rate

One-Time Fee

Training Courses

Employee Onboarding

\$3,000.00 / Team

Employee Development

\$2,700.00 / Team

Management Development

\$2,400.00 / Team

Conclusion

At Be Our Guest, we aim to provide you and your employees with top-notch guest service training that will leave your guests wanting more. We hope your experience with us will be long lasting, and that you know you can contact us for additional services and support in the future. With technology and techniques that are consistently growing and improving, our customized services will be able to match your strengths and weaknesses more and more every year. We at Be Our Guest thank you for taking interest in our services, and wish you the best with providing guest satisfaction and experiences in the future.



Be Our Guest

Sample Lesson Plan

The following is a sample lesson plan that utilizes our hourly on-the-job service. In this scenario, it is a restaurant server's first day on the job. This lesson plan is one of many customizable plans, and can be used for multiple employees as they are hired and come in for their first days.

Be Our Guest: Guest: On-the-Job

Course Title: Employee Onboarding

Lesson Title: Put Out Service to the Test

Lesson Length: 5 hours

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this training session, the trainee should be able to:

1. Feel prepared to complete his/her work without the assistance of a supervisor or peer.
2. Provide guests with high quality customer service and be able to answer any questions.
3. Present him or herself in a professional manner with the server uniform provided.
4. Comfortably and securely handle the cash he/she accrues throughout his/her shift.
5. Understand the POS system used to make transactions for guest checks.
6. Point out the names and faces of his/her leaders to know who to go to for support or questions.
7. Know the location of his/her leader and team offices, as well as the finance office, to turn in items at the end of the shift.

Target Audience: First-Day Restaurant Servers (Food and Beverage)

Prerequisites:

- **Trainee:** Experience in guest service, restaurant service, and money handling.
- **Instructor:** Familiarity with the hotel property, Food and Beverage team, team leaders, specific property processes, and extensive knowledge in guest service.

Room Arrangement: Property Restaurant (regular operating hours)

Materials and Equipment Needed:

- Server uniform
- Pen and pad
- Apron (for pad, tips, etc.)
- Login pin for POS system
- Beverage glasses
- Dishware
- Serving tray
- Payout slips for finance

Evaluation:

- Three months into the job, an online anonymous survey will be sent to the trainee asking for feedback on his/her on-the-job first day training.
 - This feedback will be used to enhance future training sessions.

Lesson Outline

	Instructor Activity	Trainee Activity	Time
Introduction	Presenting	Listening	10:00 – 10:15 AM
Overview and Presentation of Employee Uniform	Demonstrating Presenting	Watching Participating	10:15 – 10:30 AM
Restaurant Walkthrough	Leading	Participating	10:30 – 11:00 AM
Kitchen Walkthrough	Leading	Participation	11:00 – 11:30 AM
Presentation of the Locations of Items used During Shift	Demonstrating	Participating	11:30 – 12:00 PM
Lunch Break	-	-	12:00 – 12:30 PM
Meeting Guest Needs	Demonstrating	Participating	12:30 – 1:00 PM
Fixing Guest Situations	Demonstrating	Participating	1:00 – 1:20 PM
POS System Walkthrough	Demonstrating	Watching Participating	1:20 – 1:45 PM
Location of Finance Office and Pay Out Slips	Leading	Participating	1:45 – 2:00 PM
Introduction to Server's Leaders	Introducing Mediating	Participating	2:00 – 2:30 PM
Wrap-Up	Answering Questions	Questioning	2:30 – 3:00 PM