



International Institute of *Modern Butlers*

SPA SERVICE – ONE KEY FLAW...IT ENDS THE MOMENT A GUEST LEAVES THE SPA TO RETURN TO HIS OR HER HOTEL ROOM

Many high-end hotels and resorts offer spa services and are looking for a way to excel even further and so differentiate themselves in the minds of their guests. The same could be said of the butler service offered by many such institutions. Both programs add value and prestige, but is there a way to improve these service offerings? The short answer is, "Yes!"

Spa service has one key flaw: it ends the moment a guest leaves the spa to return to his or her suite. The way to make a guest's experience a complete one, and offer a total immersion in the "get away from it all" relaxation and rejuvenation, is to make the butler service an extension of the spa experience, wherein spa-trained butlers provide their usual high-end service in the hotel, but with the added knowledge and techniques that enable the spa environment to continue in the guest's own suite.

A guest, for instance, may well undergo a catharsis or detoxification as a result of his or her spa experience knowing how to deal with this with understanding and empathy can create quite an impact on guests. Moments of drama aside, when a butler knows and understands the spa program of a guest, he can converse about the guest's experiences with good reality, should the guest so desire, and can also take actions to enhance that program (such as adding a complementary (not complimentary!) bath salt to the bath, rather than one that conflicts with the spa program.

The spa butler is really the architect of the ultimate spa hospitality experience, designing and arranging the entire spa guest experience. The spa still delivers the spa services, but the butler acts as the main point of contact before, during and after the guest's stay. Because he understands and knows what the guest is going through, and the basic spa methodologies, he can be there for the guests and extend the entire stay into a smooth experience for them. That's the simplicity of the program.

Translated into the real world, this program means the butler asks and cares about the guest's goal in coming to the spa; he cares about the guest's room, ensuring that the space reflects the guest's needs and wants. The butler supports the guest by being a sounding board and conversing with understanding and empathy. He introduces the guest to the people, places and services he or she will be experiencing at the spa, answering all questions and resolving all concerns. He smoothes the preparations for each spa experience and helps the guest through the ramifications of each spa treatment, asking the right questions.

The spa butler understands the mechanism of each spa treatment in order to give accurate and convincing explanations of treatments to the guest. The application of hot or cold therapy to the body may seem odd or even silly to the guest without an understanding of the expected physiological effects and benefits. Earning the guest's confidence and compliance with intelligent answers to his/her questions is an important part of the spa butler service.

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Types of Guests

There are at least four categories of spa guests. Identifying them is key to serving them successfully.

“Fluff and Buff” guests are delighted with the ultimate in pampering. They are investing time, energy and money in the expectation they will be treated as kings and queens. They are enjoying a mini vacation from the stresses and strains of everyday life.

“ROI” guests are looking for a return on their investment. They are spa savvy, meaning that they have been to spas before and have preconceived notions about what a great spa experience is and should be. They expect their spa experience to deliver on the health enhancement and therapeutic expectations they have formulated.

“Solution seeker” guests want a spa experience to alleviate pain and discomfort from their ongoing medical conditions, such as multiple sclerosis, osteo-arthritis, etc. and are hoping to find relief and answers that will alleviate some of their suffering.

“Transformer” guests are committed to transforming their own worlds, understanding they play an integral and vital role in optimizing their health and well being. They trust the spa to have highly specialized facilitators who honor the holistic nature of man.

By knowing and understanding each guest’s goal and being there for them in their pursuit of that goal, the butler forms a unique relationship with guests and so brings about the ultimate spa hospitality experience.