

Lesson 4

Providing Valet Services

Objectives:

1. Explain the different skills and functions of a valet or butler is a Service .
2. Follow and Observe Proper Grooming and Personal Presentation Standards.
3. Perform the Proper Packing and Unpacking and Arrangement of Guest's Luggage.

What is a Valet?

The valet or butler is a specialist when it comes to providing personalized service to guests. For Valet Service, there are two (2) services: Valet Parking and Valet Housekeeping. However, some high – end establishments who handle frequent and regular Very Important Persons (VIPs) do provide full butler service. Valet housekeeping is expected to do everything that would make a guest's stay very pleasant and comfortable, It is like having a personal assistant, a helper, messenger, and secretary in one position and a service that is delivered to a VIP. That is why the characteristics and skills of the valet are superior to that of the typical room attendant. Valet Housekeeping Staff do research the personality/background of guests and observes their actual behavior to deliver the appropriate service based on the facts and actual observation.

Other Performed Tasks

A Valet Staff carries out a variety of personalized services, such as:

1. Pack and unpack guest's luggage.
2. Collect guest's items for laundry and pressing.
3. Shine and clean guest's shoes.
4. Assist with guest's request for repairs by suggesting accredited companies or agencies.
5. Facilitate the guest's special requests like travel and ticket reservations or other personal concerns.

Valet Runner

What is a Valet Runner?

The valet runner offers valet services under the housekeeping department. He/She ensures that all the guest's needs are met, including unpacking and packing clothes, cleaning and polishing shoes, etc. He may also be required or requested to run errands for the guests.

Duties and Responsibilities

Services can include, but are not limited to:

- Professionally and confidentially communicating
- Perform unpacking /packing guest luggage
- Cleaning and polishing shoes
- Check guest laundry and dry cleaning needs
- Repairing of clothes and other guest belongings
- Organizing guest activities and needs such as secretarial duties, restaurant bookings, car hire, tours, specified purchases of gifts or other items
- Provision of concierge function
- Recommendations for dining and shopping
- Suggestions for transport and sight-seeing
- Options for tourism and leisure activities
- Acquisition of personal services
- Making, altering or confirming travel arrangements.

Laundry Attendant

What is a Laundry Attendant?

The role of the laundry attendant is to issue uniforms and linen to staff according to systems and procedures laid down by the hotel management. He/She also takes inventory and control movement of soiled, damaged and fresh linen and uniforms.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Issue linens and uniforms
- Check and count laundry items
- Sort laundry items for washing, pressing or dry cleaning
- Tag laundry items
- Check laundry items for stains and/or damage
- Perform necessary repairs
- Perform appropriate laundering process
- Perform correct packaging of laundered items

Public Area Attendant

What is a Public Area Attendant?

The Public Area Attendant keeps all lobbies and public facilities (such as lobby restrooms, telephone area, the front desk, and offices) in a neat and clean condition.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Cleans rooms, hallways and restrooms
- Cleans and maintains restaurants and banquet halls

- Sweeps carpets
- Empties ashtrays and urns
- Polishes furniture and fixtures
- Vacuums and polishes elevators
- Keeps the front of the hotel free from trash
- Cleans rugs, carpets and upholstered furniture using a vacuum cleaner, broom and shampoo machine
- Washes walls and ceilings, moves and arranges furniture, and fixtures.
- Sweeps, mops, scrubs, waxes, and polishes floors
- Dusts and polishes metal work
- Maintains housekeeping carts
- Removes trash collected by room attendants
- Upkeeps responsibly all the equipment which he is using i.e., vacuum cleaner, trolleys, scrubbing machine
- Maintains a time schedule for cleaning of his areas
- Performs spring cleaning of his area as per the schedule is given to them
- Enters into offices with appropriate authority for maintenance or other activities like pest control, shampooing of carpet, etc.

Guest Room Attendant

What is a Guest Room Attendant?

The Room Attendant performs scheduled duties in cleaning and servicing of guest rooms and baths.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Clean and store cleaning equipment properly
- Clean room according to operational standards
- Check operational readiness of all items
- Replenish guest supplies and room equipment
- Report room defects and damaged items
- Report suspicious items and situations
- Handle lost and found items
- Provide turndown service

Good Grooming

The importance of good grooming is emphasized for Valet Staff because the position requires close and frequent contact with VIP guests. Good grooming covers personal hygiene, uniform, and overall presentation of the valet. All of which should be maintained at a high standard level considering the clientele who avails a valet service, therefore, Valet Staff are expected to be very hygienic, neat, and looking sharp. A well-groomed Valet staff who has good personal hygiene helps promote a positive and professional image of one's self and the establishment.

Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene is very important because the Valet Staff is always in direct contact with guests. The following are standard grooming activities that a Valet Staff should strictly observe:

- **Take a daily bath/shower** - given that everybody should be doing this, more so should Valet staff
- **Wash hands regularly** - regular hand washing should be observed not only because of regular contact with guests but also because personal belongings of guests are handled
- **Keep fingernails short** - although valet staffs sometimes wear gloves, these aren't worn all the time so keeping nails trimmed is necessary.
- **Oral Hygiene** - brushing of teeth, use of mouthwash and dental floss, and regular visits to the dentist
- **Use deodorants/antiperspirant** - sometimes just taking a bath or brushing teeth isn't enough. Deodorants or antiperspirants help in preventing body odor.
- Women Valet Staff's hair must be tied into a ponytail or kept in a bun/hairnet
- Male Valet Staff's hair must be maintained short and should not touch the collar of the uniform

Uniform

Wearing the required uniform helps influence the customer's opinions and first impressions of the establishment you work at. Also, it helps promote the establishment's prestige. A well-groomed Valet Staff who has good personal hygiene helps promote a positive and professional image of one's self and the establishment.

Uniform

A Valet Staff's uniform is different from regular hotel staff like the Guest Room Attendant or Public Area Attendant. This is because a Valet staff handles VIP clients and thus, his/her uniform is more formal/professional.

Checklist for Valet staff's uniform:

- **Fits properly** - inappropriately sized uniforms are unpleasant for the eyes and it limits the movement of the staff
- **Washed and pressed** - stains must be removed immediately and must be wrinkle free
- Loose threads are removed and all buttons are still attached
- Valet uniform varies with different companies. Whichever the company, Valet staffs must wear the complete uniform all the time.

Valet's uniform may vary according to:

- **Shoe type** - Comfortable leather black shoes.
- **Name tag** - unlike regular hotel staff, Valet Staff usually do not wear a name tag as it lessens the sophisticated look of the valet.
- **Jacket/ Suit type** - usually a formal suit in black or grey colors

Accessories

Jewellery should be worn to the barest minimum, meaning only watches, wedding ring, and simple earrings for female staff may be worn. Too many accessories might distract a guest and staff should never wear more jewelry than guests. A simple ring and a basic wrist watch and simple earrings for women are allowed.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Valet staff may act as a Room Attendant and therefore must employ all the necessary PPE when doing cleaning tasks. These may include but not limited to:

- Gloves
- Goggles
- Face Mask
- Hair Net

Dress Up a Valet Staff

Dress up the Valet Staff by dragging the appropriate pieces of clothing to his body and putting the unnecessary clothes to the laundry basket. Click on "Check" to know the right answer.

Preparing for Guest's Arrival

Obtaining the guest's information prior to arrival is crucial in effective delivery of valet services. The more the Valet Staff knows about the guest, the better the services would be provided. This could be done by referring to the guest history. Doing so allows the valet staff to prepare for most requests a guest might demand.

Obtain Guest's Information Prior to Arrival

One of the important characteristics required of a valet staff is being proactive. This means a valet staff must not wait for the hotel management to provide information about the guests. Valet staff themselves must ask the management to contact the guest to gather information from them. For some VIPs, this may be done through their secretaries or Personal Assistants.

If a guest is a previous customer, a hotel's guest history is a vital source of information as it contains the details of the guest's last stay at the hotel. The guest history may include about the likes and dislikes of the guest, do's and don'ts, personal preferences such as brand names, wake up calls, food, and beverage, room preferences, facilities required, among others.

The guest history would also show things that went wrong (if any) during the guest's time with the hotel. Such an incident report must have the root cause analysis of what went wrong and the recommendations made to prevent it from happening again.

Information about the guest may be provided by the guest themselves, or by a member of their staff. This information may come either as written or verbal requests.

If communication is done verbally, it is important to take note of the contact's details like their name, telephone number, email for follow up and verification purposes. While talking to the contact person, taking notes is a must. After the discussion, the notes have to be sent to the contact person for confirmation.

After all available information from the guest is collected. Having a pre-arrival meeting with other staff members would be very useful. The meeting will provide valuable information about the guest, especially the staff members' experience with the guest (if the guest is a previous customer). It could also provide small details that might have been missed in the previous information gathering.

Examples of guest information prior to arrival:

- **Names** - the primary guest and his/her party (Spouse, children, Personal Assistants, security, cooks, hair and makeup staff, advisors, media personnel, nannies)
- **Title** - how the guest wants to be addressed (professional titles, royalty, and culture-specific titles)
- **Special requests** - any specific tasks the guest requests to be delivered
- **Itinerary** - the schedule of the guest while staying at the hotel

Identify Guest Preferences

Before the guest arrives:

Skills learned in the previous topic are to be applied:

- Reviewing the guest history
- Reviewing of guest communication (notes on calls, emails or other means)
- Communicate with the guest or a member of his party
- Communicate with venue staff and third-party providers who worked with the guest before

Upon Arrival of the guest:

No amount of preparation can fully prepare the Valet Staff for everything that could possibly be wanted by the guest. When the guest requires service that has not been prepared prior to arrival, the following should be observed:

- **Common sense** - determine what service to provide based on one's own experiences, or product knowledge
- **Ask the guest or a member of their staff what is needed** - this should be done immediately after the guest is greeted. It is better to describe to the guest upfront what the available services are
- **Clarify when and where the guest needs the attendance of the Valet Staff** - identify the times the guest requires valet services

Ideally, asking the guest of their needs are not supposed to happen because all arrangements should have been done before the guest arrives at the hotel. Besides,

due to the busy nature of guests, contacting them is very difficult before they arrive at the hotel.

Valet staff has to make do with the available information with what they have. The important thing to keep in mind is to make all the necessary preparation based on the available information and be prepared for requests that the guest might make.

When asking the guest what they need, listen carefully and take note of every detail and ensure that the request is granted to the full capabilities of the hotel.

Asking the guest of their needs establishes their expectations, and all of these expectations should be addressed as much as possible.

Examples of guest requests:

- Particular brands of food or beverage
- Reading materials such as newspaper and magazines (with the brand in mind)
- Room temperature
- Calls (Reminders and wake up calls)
- Room Service - Food and beverage service, massage services, business support,
- Organized tours
- Restaurant reservations
- Making travel arrangements
- Other personal requests

These are just some examples of common requests. Some VIPs have over the top requests that cannot be addressed by valet service alone so coordination with other offices is a must.

Liaise with Other Staff

The Valet Staff can't do everything by himself/herself. Thus, there must be constant coordination with other concerned hotel departments or external providers in order to fully satisfy the preferences of the guest.

Liaising with other staff:

Valet Staff may be required to do the following:

- Coordinate with other hotel staff to discuss the stay of the guest and the required arrangements while the guest is in the hotel
- Coordinate the arrival of the guest:
 - Transportation
 - Preparation of room
 - Food and beverage
 - Security and logistics
 - Luggage movement

- Informing of other offices of the arrival of the guest that may include:
 - Informing the hotel officials - if they will personally welcome the guest
 - Informing the front desk - because standard check-in procedures may not be followed for VIP guests
 - Confirming the number of the guest's party with the Food and Beverage Department when the guest has a reservation
 - Coordinating with Security (number of guests, room numbers, close in security)
 - Coordinating with Housekeeping for confirmation of guest arrival, number of guests, room allocations, and special services
 - Other department staff necessary for delivering the required service of the guest

Liaising with Third Party Individuals

External Providers

External providers may include the following

- Various suppliers (food, beverages, flowers, equipment, etc)
- Transport providers (pickup and drop off, tours)
- Event organizers (venue staff)
- Operators of leased equipment (lights, sounds, etc)
- Local Government Units (local permits, courtesy calls)
- Sponsors of events (sponsor kiosks)
- Press/Media
- Other external providers

In dealing with external providers, it is important that the Valet Staff contacts them and update any new information they might need. The arrangement, including the new and updated ones, should be confirmed with them.

The Guest and Their Staff

Valet Staff would not just deal with the primary guest, but also communicate with the other party members of the guest. In dealing with them, remember the following:

- Introduce yourself as the valet staff
- Provide contact details
- Welcome not just the VIP guest but also their entourage
- Offer your services
- Identify any changes to previous plans
- If possible, find out more about the preferences of the guest through their staff

Checking of the Guest Room Prior to Arrival of the Guest

Before the guest arrives, the valet staff must check the room if they comply with house protocols and to the specifications of the guest.

Guest Room Preparation

In preparing the guest's room, the valet staff must do the following:

- Double check if the room is prepared according to the specifications of the guest
- The valet should be involved in the actual preparation of the room because ultimately, the valet would be the one who will have to answer to the guest in case the room turned out to be out of the specifications of the guest
- Prepare the room according to the usual hotel standards if the guest did not specify any requests for the room.

Things to consider when inspecting rooms:

- Timing - the room must be ready at least 3 hours before the estimated time of arrival of the guest
 - Three hours is allotted because it would be enough time to apply any changes to the rooms as to specific instructions

Concerned Inspectors:

The following personnel must inspect the room before the guest arrives and must do so separately:

- Guest Room Attendants
- Floor Housekeeper
- Executive Housekeeper
- Valets

Inspection Checklist:

- Floors, walls, ceilings, and carpets
- Fixtures, furniture, and equipment
- Appliances -
- Interior and Outdoor areas
- Complementary products
- Door locks
- Alarms are turned off
- Arrival items
- Reservation confirmations
- Guest specified items
- Vault (exact term)

Tips for Inspecting:

- See - look at everything inside the room, even the smallest. Check if everything looks right

- Smell - Your nose, knows. Any unpleasant smell must be taken care of.
- Hear - check if there are unnecessary sounds coming from appliances or equipment in the room or if there are noises from the surrounding area.
- Touch - feel counter tops if they are dusty or use your hands to check the overall cleanliness of the room.

The purpose of inspecting is to find out if there are things that have to be done to the room. Therefore, there would be instances when actions have to be done. Some of this corrective actions may include:

- Cleaning the room again
- Furniture, fixtures, items rearrangement
- Maintenance or repairs
- Room transfer

Welcoming Guests

Now that you have done the necessary preparations for the guest's arrival, it is now time to welcome the guest.

Procedure:

1. The Valet staff must greet the guest warmly and with a smile;
2. Use the last name of the guest or address him with Sir/Madame when talking to him/her;
3. Personally take care of the guest's immediate needs like assistance for carrying his/her luggage;
4. Open the door for the guest;
5. Explain the facilities to the guest;
6. Make suggestions to help the guest enjoy his stay;
7. Offer additional help and inform the guest how you can be contacted; and
8. Bid the guest goodbye.

Unpacking and Packing

Unpacking and Arrangement of Guest's Luggage

Once the guest has settled in the room, and you have addressed any immediate request of the guest. Unpacking and arranging the guest's clothes and other items should be done next.

Procedure:

1. As courtesy to the guest, the Valet staff will ask permission from the guest before touching the guest's belongings;
2. Use gloves as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
3. Choose an empty and flat surface such as a table or bed to have appropriate space for the items to be unpacked;
4. Segregate the items that need to be ironed, laundered or cleaned.

5. Put the items to be laundered inside the laundry bag which can be found inside the cabinet;
6. Check the shoes if it needs to be cleaned/repaired. Separate them for cleaning or repairing later. For clean and functional shoes, place the shoes at the designated place;
7. Sort hats, belts, scarves and other closet accessories out of the bag and hang on the hooks found on the side of the cabinet;
8. Place all toiletries such as makeup and hair care items on the shelf/vanity table;
9. Secure any electronic accessories, including cameras, extra batteries, game cartridges or DVD's and put them together on a shelf or table;
10. Check the small pockets of the bags as well the purse or carry on luggage for these items.
11. Arrange t-shirts and sweaters on separate shelves by color and sleeve length;
12. Fill in the drawers in the following order:
 - o Underwear on the top drawers. Shirts and sweaters underneath
 - o Hang blazers one by one, next to each other
 - o Put matching or similar colors together.
 - o Fasten, button or zip so that everything hangs right.

Note: Put the colors your client wears most often on the shelves that are easiest to reach.

13. All shirts should be hung up together in one section
14. Arrange by colors from light to dark with all of one color group together.
15. Follow the same process for skirts, pants, etc.
16. Hang pants from the waist or cuffs on a pants hanger
17. Check the cabinet for misplaced items
18. Close the cabinet

Packing of Guest's Luggage

Unpacking the guest's clothes and other items is the easy part. Packing them all back together is an altogether different skill and requires more attention to execute properly.

Procedure:

1. As a Valet Staff, ask permission from the guest before touching his/her belongings (When packing expensive items such as electronic gadgets or pieces of jewelry, the valet staff should be assisted by a Supervisor/ House Managers);
2. Lay everything on the bed including the suitcase. (Make sure that it is within the guest's sight);
3. Make a list of all items you will pack;
4. Use gloves as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
5. Gather all the equipment, tools and materials needed in performing your tasks:
 - o Luggage

- o Ziplock bags
 - o Clothes (clean/ dirty)
 - o Toiletries
 - o Shoes/slippers
 - o Name tag
 - o Mesh bag
1. Roll pajamas, nightgowns, sweaters, and other casual wear to fill small spaces, when possible;
 2. Layer each rolled up outfit on the bottom of the suitcase;
 3. Lay the first heavy clothing such as jacket or pants. Put it on top of the rolled items; lay it flat in the suitcase being folded;
 4. Put the next item on top - it should be placed in the opposite direction from the first item;
 5. Pack each item one at a time in a clockwise direction and allow sleeves, pant legs, skirt lengths to hang over the edges as you stack more and more items;
 6. Select an object to form the core of the bundle (books, papers or magazine);
 7. Put core object on top of the pile of clothes you have stacked;
 8. Start wrapping up your bundle. Begin with the last item you placed;
 9. Wrap sleeves, pant legs, skirts lengths over the core; neatly wrap the ends of that item across the core bag on top of the pile
 - o Wrap each item as neatly as you can.
 - o Pack tightly.
 - o Packing loosely wastes precious space and causes clothes to wrinkle;
 10. Place your remaining luggage items, like shoes, around the perimeter of the bundle;
 11. Put tag for identification;
 - o **NAME, DESTINATION, TEL. NO.**
 12. Inform the guest that you have finished packing their luggage; and
 13. Bid the guest goodbye.

Process Laundry and Pressing

Although the Valet staff does not actually do the laundry or pressing of guest clothes, part of their duties and responsibilities is to process them for endorsement to the Laundry Attendant.

Procedure:

1. Fill in the laundry list found inside the cabinet:
 - Name and room number of the guest
 - Type of service to be done on the item
 - Number of items
 - Type of items
 - Checking for possible damages on the clothes
 - Special instruction/s of the guest

2. Ask the guest to sign the laundry list for confirmation. Guest's signature means that the items were collected as listed;
3. Ask the guest if they still need further assistance;
4. Bid the guest goodbye;
5. Take the guest's items to the laundry's receiving area;
6. Sort the items according to:
 - Number of items to be laundered
 - Types of fabric
 - Washing procedure needed by the fabric
 - Stain
 - Colors
 - Sizes, etc.,
7. Ensure that the correct laundry documentation is filled out:
 - Guest details are recorded (date, room number, guest name, time)
 - Numbers of items correspond to the laundry list,
 - And note any discrepancies, damage or stains.
8. Endorse the laundry item to the right laundry personnel involved in performing the tasks
9. Report any discrepancies to your supervisor, e.g. shortage of items to documentation, damaged items, guest's special requests.
10. Collect guest's clothes from the laundry;
11. Deliver guest's clothes;
12. Knock on the guestroom door and announce, "Valet Service;"
13. Enter the room discreetly to avoid disturbing the guest;
14. Greet the guest and let the guest know your purpose
15. Ask the guest where you can place the laundered items;
16. Ask the guest to sign the delivery form;
17. Ask the guest if they still need assistance;
18. Bid the guest goodbye; and
19. Close the guestroom door carefully

Clean Guest Shoes

Procedure:

1. Prepare the materials needed:
 - Different colors of polish/wax
 - Polishing brushes
 - Polishing cloths
 - Cleaning brushes
 - Cleaning cloth
 - Shoe horn
 - Shoes
 - Gloves
 - Good morning towel/ newspaper
2. Wear protective clothing:
 - Put a towel on your lap (if sitting down) or,
 - Spread newspaper on the table or any flat surface (if standing)

- Wear disposable gloves
- 3. Sit properly on a chair and begin cleaning/polishing the shoe;
- 4. Pick up the shoe by holding the sole;
- 5. Carefully examine the shoe by observing the following:
 - Material used (leather, leatherette, plastic, synthetic leather, animal skin, with beads, gamosa)
 - Color of the shoe
 - Dirt
 - Dent/ scratch/ damage on the shoe.
- 6. If the shoe has damage, present to the guest for confirmation. Note: Minor repairs should be performed by the assigned Valet staff;
- 7. Make a mitten on your finger and clean the inner part of the shoe. Use a clean cloth:
 - Wrap the corner of the cloth around your first and second fingers of your dominant hand. Twist the remainder of the cloth to tighten the portion around your fingers and hold that part in the palm of your hand;
 - When removing dirt and dust on the outer part of the shoes, make a mitten using four fingers with outward motion;
 - Use a very soft brush if the shoes have beads or if the material used is sensitive. Remove all dust and dirt by wiping the shoe, especially the heel and sole with a cloth. Apply the polish; and
 - Start from the tip of the shoe and work your way towards the heel
- 8. Wait for the shoe to dry completely; and
- 9. Buff shoes with a clean, lint-free cloth or use a shoe brush to bring out the shine.

Receiving and Acting on Guest Requests

The human factor in all types of communication and customer service makes the difference. Guests need to feel taken care of. Good customer service includes effective telephone communication. The difference between a positive and negative experience with a phone call is you.

Procedure:

1. Telephone ringing;
2. Answer the phone on or before the third ring;
3. Make the standard greetings with a smile:
 - Identify your department then identify yourself.
 - Adding phrases such as “Housekeeping Department, good morning. This is (state your name), how may I help you?”
4. Have a pencil and a paper ready;
5. Listen attentively, focus your attention on the caller;
6. Write down immediately the caller’s name and room number, time of the request, special request and/or instruction;
7. Answer the inquiries of the guest;

8. Repeat all details such as the name and room number, special request and/or instruction of the guest;
9. Assure the guest of the immediate action. (example: I shall connect to the department your request now it shall be granted, Sir);
10. Bid the guest goodbye with some pleasantries;
11. Put down the telephone upon hearing the click from the other end; and
12. Make a follow up if necessary.

Preparation for Guest's Arrival

Arrange the proper sequence of events by dragging the activity on the left side of the notebook to the right side. Click "Check" when done.

Fix my Cabinet

In this activity, your task is to place all the clothes properly in their proper places in the cabinet by dragging them. Click "Check" to verify your answers.

Fix My Room

Fix the room by dragging and placing the items on their proper places.

Activity

Direction: Answer the given questions below.

1. What is a Valet?
2. What services does Valet Staff carry out as personalized services?
3. Cite at least 6 common Examples of guest requests.
4. What Services does External Providers or Liaising with Third Party Individuals Can provide to guest?

Performance

Instruction: Group into 4 and Perform the Following Activities with the Standard Procedure.

1. Welcoming Guests
2. Unpacking and Packing of Guest's Luggage's
3. Clean Guest Shoes
4. Receiving and Acting on Guest Requests