



Top Questions Guests Ask and How to Answer Them

Including the Really Hard Ones!



Are Your Team Members Prepared to Go Off Script?

When it comes to guest questions, you already know the ones your team will likely hear a million times over:

- ▶ What are your hours?
- ▶ How much does admission cost?
- ▶ Where can I find your menu?
- ▶ How long does XYZ usually take?
- ▶ What do I get with this?

The thing is, all these questions have simple, straightforward answers and every team member should be trained on them from Day One. (If you're not including these basics in your onboarding, put this guide down — for now — and check out our [tips for a great new team member onboarding process](#).)

In addition to all the usual suspects, your team members are also going to get A LOT of vague, open-ended questions from guests. And these are the ones that can really trip them up, throwing the doors wide open to a less-than-stellar guest experience.

The challenge is no single script can sufficiently prepare team members for these types of questions. Memorizing an answer won't work. Instead, you have to **train your team to be respectful, responsive and resilient**, so they can turn even the most difficult questions into an opportunity for your facility to really shine.

Read on for:

- ▶ The tough questions everyone gets asked—at least once
- ▶ Words to avoid when answering guest questions
- ▶ Why skills not scripts should be your focus

The Tough Questions Everyone Gets Asked—At Least Once

“ How does all this work? ”

This is the biggest, broadest, vaguest question your team members will likely get. Variations include:

- ▶ What do we do, exactly?
- ▶ How does this work?
- ▶ So...now what?

Offering two choices is great when a guest asks a broad question or is struggling to decide from a large selection. This also positions you as an expert advisor. It's especially useful when dealing with guests who want to decide quickly or those who are more tentative or easily overwhelmed.



Guest: "This is our first visit. Wow, there are so many choices."

Team Member: "We do have a lot of attractions/offerings, but I can help make it easy for you. You could purchase any attraction individually or we have an unlimited play pass that allows you to try them all and would save you a bit of money as well!"



..... OR



Guest: "Do I just pay for everything separately or how does it all work?"

Team Member: "[Smile] That all depends on you! It's about lunch time so you could do our tacos and tag combo for food and fun, or you could do our all access pass if you want to focus just on the fun today."



“ Is the burger (or salad or martini or attraction) good? ”

If it's a question regarding a menu item or attraction you haven't tried, be honest. Telling a white lie can backfire. Badly. Instead, respond with an observation. For example: "I haven't tried that item personally, but people really seem to love it paired with our sweet potato fries."

If it's something you have tried, you should still tread carefully. "Good" is relative. Remember, this isn't about you, it's about them. Rather than blindly giving the guest an unfiltered opinion, ask them a question instead: "I love our black bean burger because the texture is dense and not mushy. But tell me more about what you're looking for and we'll go from there?" Then you can make an informed recommendation based on what their unique needs are.

“ Can you tell me about your packages? ”

Whether it's birthday party packages, play-and-stay options or something else, this seems like a simple question that just requires a recitation of the details. Easy, right? Wrong. Without giving prospective guests a moment to think about what you're telling them, let alone engage with you, you're missing a critical opportunity to build rapport.

Invest in your guest by asking them a few quick questions that can give you everything you need to start building a relationship between your facility and your prospect. This goes for any packages you offer, but here's a birthday party scenario as an example:



Guest: "Can you tell me about your birthday party packages?"

Team Member: "I'd love to! Whose birthday is it?"



Guest: "My daughter's."

Team Member: "Great, what's her name?"



Guest: "Chloe."

Team Member: "And how old is Chloe turning?"



Guest: "She'll be nine."

Asking whose birthday is it will often prompt the parent to give you both the gender and the child's name (without an uncomfortable boy or girl conversation). Be sure to ask the child's name and use it throughout the call to make it a personalized experience.

Once you know how old Chloe will be turning, you'll also be able to eliminate non-age appropriate packages when you explain your options and dive deeper into the great packages you have for 9-year-olds, building trust and confirming the right decision was made by calling you.

“ Is this safe? ”

That's a loaded question right there. And answering poorly could really tarnish your facility's reputation, so short, sweet and to the point is best. Any answer should have three parts. No more. No less.

1. State your commitment. "Safety is our number one concern here and we're committed to making sure the time you spend with us is exceptional!"
2. Refer to your documentation. "That's why we insist all our guests respect and follow the Safety Rules agreed upon at admission."
3. Empower them to take responsibility. "I'll get you a copy so you can feel completely comfortable with the activities you choose today."

Words to Avoid When Answering Guest Questions

Service interactions are tough to navigate well because every guest need and situation is different. If a team member says the wrong thing, it can be like hitting the nuclear button. Even the most seasoned team members sometimes misspeak, but, without a doubt, there are some guest service phrases team members should avoid at all costs.

“ I don’t know. ”

“I don’t know” and its derivatives can cause a good guest interaction to go wrong in many ways. Here’s what your guest may be hearing when you reply with “I don’t know”:

- ▶ I don’t care to find out for you.
- ▶ That’s not my job, so stop bothering me.
- ▶ I don’t know because I don’t eat or play here, and you shouldn’t either.
- ▶ I wish you’d ask someone else.
- ▶ I haven’t been trained well enough to do my job.
- ▶ I have no idea what I’m doing. You (guest) should really ask for a manager.

I don’t know is the old “I just work here” excuse, and there’s simply no place for it in guest service. It’s our job to know, and when we don’t, it’s our job to find out. A simple, truthful answer is best, for example: “That’s a great question. Let me find out for you quickly.” Then ask another team member or radio a manager.

Bottom line

- ▶ Always keep the burden of the request on you. Don’t push it back on a guest to ask someone else.

“ You can’t... ”

Negative language has virtually no place in guest service. Even though you have clear guest policies and safety procedures, try phrasing interactions positively from a guest’s perspective and in a way that benefits them.

Instead of “You can’t bring in outside food,” try: “While we don’t allow outside food, we have some great options in our café and can store your [item] to take home later.”

Instead of “You can’t run in laser tag” try: “Let’s all walk so we can stay safe.”

Bottom line

- ▶ When responding to guest requests, try to respond with what they can do versus what they can’t.

“ Our policy states... ”

Like avoiding negative language, policy statements are also best delivered from a guest’s perspective.

For example, don’t tell guests that “policy states only one coupon can be used per group.” Instead, explain how the coupon will be applied, and then offer them any current specials that they might be interested in.

Bottom line

- ▶ Guests don’t care what the policy is if they disagree with it. They care about what our facilities offer that they can enjoy.

Why Skills Not Scripts Should Be the Rule

Okay. So, now you know what not to say. But what should you say? Not every interaction with a guest is linear—especially if they’re coming with open-ended or vague questions—so scripts have limited value.

Instead of teaching your team one scripted response that may or may not work for their interaction, **teach them the five skills that will naturally create conversation**. Give guests a personalized, world-class experience every time by training your team to practice follow these five rules:

#1

Leave Your Opinion (and need to be right) At The Door

You might understand your processes or your policies better than anyone but remember that if you seek first to understand you can still get your desired outcome—without anyone having to be on the losing end. This means that you put aside any feelings you might have and think about another person’s point of view.

#2

Ask Them Questions and Then Actively Listen

Every guest question is an opportunity to make their day the best ever. But it requires a willingness to get to know people, to ask them questions and then actually listen. Hear what the guest is saying—and not saying—by searching for clues as to how they’re feeling in their speech and in their body language. Don’t treat “listening” as waiting for your turn to speak or assume you already know what they’re asking. Active listening tips include:

- ▶ Don’t just hear what you expect to hear; you’ll miss things.
- ▶ Take in the verbal and nonverbal message.
- ▶ Engage with the right eye contact and body language of your own to show that you’re listening.
- ▶ Ask yourself, “What does this information tell me?”

#3

Know Your Product

Team members need to know what you offer and be able to recall the right offer at the right time for the right guest. This is called “product fluency.” Like with any language, product fluency is the ability to speak (about your product) with ease, speed and accuracy. But knowing what you offer doesn’t get you anywhere unless you also know why your guests should want to get it from you. Teach team members product differentiators and some common guest motivators so they understand how to offer the attractions, events or products that are right for each guest.

#4

Show Empathy

We all know that when a guest is upset, we should show empathy by using important phrases like “I’m sorry this is so frustrating” and “I would be upset, too, if this had happened to me.” But it’s easy to forget that every situation requires the same care. Try to find a way to relate to what a guest is saying. For example, if you ask what brings a dad and his kids out and he says it’s his weekend with them, you might respond with, “What a great idea to spend it having fun together here. Those are some of my best memories growing up.”

Keep Them Focused on the Fun

The best way to make sure your team members can answer all the questions guests throw at them is to keep them focused on the fun—and that means making sure your POS doesn’t get in the way. If your team has to struggle with technology all the time, how will they ever manage to create a great guest experience?

Make sure your POS has an intuitive screen with built-in prompts, can be confidently trained on in less than a day and is robust enough to handle anything your team needs to do!

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