047 The Arc Youre Already Running

Perspective Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/047-the-arc-youre-already-running/

You think the Guest experience starts when they walk through the door. It doesn't. It starts the moment they form an expectation about what walking through your door will feel like — and that moment happened before you had any say in it. Your reputation, your price point, the friend who recommended you, the photo they saw online, the review they read at 11pm before they booked — all of it loaded an expectation. The Guest arrives with trust already extended. The arc is already running. The operator who doesn't know that is designing for a Guest who doesn't exist.

The [Trust Arc] has three beats: Trust Extended, Trust Tested, Trust Verdict. Most operators design for the middle beat — the experience itself — and ignore the first and third. That is not a hospitality problem. That is a seeing problem. The first beat was set in the market before the door opened. The third beat is rendered before the Guest stands up. Both are outside the window most operators are looking through. You cannot close a gap you cannot see, and you cannot see a gap you don't know exists.

The alternative position is that the Guest experience is what happens inside the four walls — that the operator controls the experience and the experience produces the verdict. That position is half right and all wrong in its implications. The operator controls the middle beat. The first beat was set by everything the market said about you before the Guest arrived. The third beat is the Guest's private calculation of whether what they got matched what they came expecting. If the operator only designs the middle beat, they are designing into a context they never examined and producing a verdict they never measured.

What Changes Tomorrow

Before service, name the expectation your Guests are arriving with tonight. Not the experience you plan to deliver — the expectation they formed before they got here. Price point, reputation, last visit, what they told their friend when they recommended you. That expectation is the first beat of every [Trust Arc] in your dining room tonight. Design the experience to close it.