2120 FirstVisit Why vs ReturnVisit Why

Product Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/2120-firstvisit-why-vs-returnvisit-why/

These are two different mechanisms. Most operators treat them as one. That confusion is expensive.

The first-visit why is positioning pull. A stranger has never experienced your operation. They have no cumulative impression to draw on. The decision runs entirely on what they encountered in the discovery phase — your positioning, your most-desired value signal, the outcome-language that told them what kind of experience this is. If the positioning is unclear, the stranger doesn't come. If it's compelling, they do. The first visit is a positioning decision made by someone who doesn't know you yet.

The return-visit why is cumulative experience output. The Guest has been in your building. They have data — sensory data, emotional data, value-for-price data. The question they're answering when they decide whether to come back is not "does this place sound good?" It's "was what I experienced worth repeating?" Positioning doesn't drive that answer. The execution of the visit does.

The operator who optimizes for return-visit drivers — service quality, execution consistency, experienced value — and ignores the first-visit drivers wonders why nobody new is coming in. The door keeps opening for the same people. The operator who optimizes for first-visit drivers — compelling positioning, strong discovery surface presence — and ignores return-visit drivers wonders why the same Guests don't come back. The door keeps revolving.

Both are required. They are different jobs that require different thinking, different investment, and different measurement. Conflating them produces an operator who is either invisible to new Guests or forgettable to returning ones.

The first visit is the bridge. It is the one moment when the positioning promise meets the execution reality. What the Guest experienced in discovery was the promise. What they experience at the table is the answer. When the answer matches the promise, they return. When it doesn't, they don't — and no amount of positioning work recovers that.

Cross-fundamental note: connects to 1.X — How the Operator Sees the Value Market (positioning is a Perspective decision before it's a Product decision — the operator who doesn't understand

their own value market can't position into it) and 4.X — Three Numbers That Tell You Whether Your Restaurant Is Compounding (return visit rate is the measure of whether the return-visit why is working).