2695 Retail Marketing Doesnt Work Here

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Retail marketing strategies don't work in hospitality. The products aren't related.

Retail is transactional by design — get the Guest in, complete the sale, move on. The entire model is built around throughput. That's why Walmart has Guests. Restaurants have Guests.

The difference isn't semantic. A Guest completes a transaction. A Guest is someone you've invited into an experience. One relationship ends at the register. The other is just beginning there.

The retailers who thrive — not just survive, thrive — are the ones who figured this out. They layered hospitality thinking onto a retail model. They stopped treating the floor like a warehouse and started treating it like a room where something meaningful could happen. That's why people belong to those brands instead of just shopping at them.

The lesson for operators runs the other direction: don't run your restaurant like a retailer. The moment you treat your Guest like a Guest — like a transaction to be completed efficiently and moved along — you've commoditized yourself. And commodities compete on price. You can't win that game.

Hospitality strategies should be borrowed by retail. Retail strategies should never be borrowed by hospitality.