

Plan 9: Guest Complaint Recovery

60-DAY OUTCOME Resolve guest concerns quickly, respectfully, consistently, and in a way that produces organizational learning.

Control	Plan Requirement
Plan owner	_____
Start and end dates	_____ to _____
Baseline period	_____
Primary shift/daypart	_____
Supporting roles	_____

Measures and targets

Measure	Baseline	Day-60 Target	Actual
Complaints per 100 guests	_____	_____	_____
Time to manager acknowledgment	_____	_____	_____
Resolution at first contact	_____	_____	_____
Repeat complaint themes	_____	_____	_____
Follow-up completion	_____	_____	_____
Guest return or response after recovery	_____	_____	_____

Recommended target boundaries

- Manager acknowledgment within the approved standard
- 100% documentation of material complaints
- 100% assigned follow-up for unresolved causes
- Reduce the leading repeated complaint category

Likely causes to test—not assume

- Employees become defensive
- Managers arrive late
- Authority limits are unclear
- Recovery is not documented
- The immediate guest is helped but the cause remains

Minimum operating standard

- Listen without interruption and acknowledge the effect
- Clarify the desired resolution and act within authority
- Never debate the guest at the table

- Document the event, cause, recovery, owner, and follow-up

Training requirements

- Listen–acknowledge–resolve–verify
- Manager escalation
- Recovery authority
- Cause classification and follow-up

The 60-Day Guided Action Calendar

Day	Phase	Required Action
1	Learn/Measure	Review 30 days of complaints, comps, reviews, and manager notes
2	Learn/Measure	Review the completed step with the plan owner; clarify questions and document what was learned
3	Learn/Measure	Classify service, food, accuracy, speed, facility, policy, and expectation issues
4	Learn/Measure	Repeat the step on a second representative shift or sample before accepting the result
5	Learn/Measure	Measure response time and repeated themes
6	Learn/Measure	Explain the purpose to the affected employees and confirm understanding in plain language
7	Learn/Measure	Clarify employee and manager recovery authority
8	Learn/Measure	Observe the process without taking over; record where additional instruction is needed
9	Learn/Measure	Choose the leading repeat cause for correction
10	Learn/Measure	Coach one identified gap, allow another attempt, and document the evidence of improvement
11	Define/Prepare	Share baseline findings with managers and confirm no coaching began early
12	Define/Prepare	Check the result against safety, quality, hospitality, fairness, and workload boundaries
13	Define/Prepare	Approve the target, definitions, and data owner
14	Define/Prepare	Review the completed step with the plan owner; clarify questions and document what was learned
15	Define/Prepare	Publish the recovery sequence and escalation triggers
16	Define/Prepare	Repeat the step on a second representative shift or sample before accepting the result

Day	Phase	Required Action
17	Define/Prepare	Train listening, acknowledgment, options, and verification
18	Define/Prepare	Explain the purpose to the affected employees and confirm understanding in plain language
19	Define/Prepare	Role-play common high-emotion situations
20	Define/Prepare	Observe the process without taking over; record where additional instruction is needed
21	Train/Practice	Launch one complaint record and ownership log
22	Train/Practice	Coach one identified gap, allow another attempt, and document the evidence of improvement
23	Train/Practice	Pilot manager follow-up on material concerns
24	Train/Practice	Check the result against safety, quality, hospitality, fairness, and workload boundaries
25	Train/Practice	Observe the pilot without rescuing every difficulty
26	Train/Practice	Review the completed step with the plan owner; clarify questions and document what was learned
27	Train/Practice	Revise the standard only when evidence supports the change
28	Train/Practice	Repeat the step on a second representative shift or sample before accepting the result
29	Train/Practice	Confirm every affected employee received training
30	Train/Practice	Explain the purpose to the affected employees and confirm understanding in plain language
31	Guided Execution	Review every material complaint daily
32	Guided Execution	Observe the process without taking over; record where additional instruction is needed
33	Guided Execution	Coach defensive language and delayed escalation
34	Guided Execution	Coach one identified gap, allow another attempt, and document the evidence of improvement
35	Guided Execution	Correct the selected repeat cause operationally
36	Guided Execution	Check the result against safety, quality, hospitality, fairness, and workload boundaries
37	Guided Execution	Verify promised follow-up occurs

Day	Phase	Required Action
38	Guided Execution	Review the completed step with the plan owner; clarify questions and document what was learned
39	Guided Execution	Compare resolution and recurrence with baseline
40	Guided Execution	Repeat the step on a second representative shift or sample before accepting the result
41	Guided Execution	Hold a ten-minute mid-plan review with assigned owners
42	Guided Execution	Explain the purpose to the affected employees and confirm understanding in plain language
43	Guided Execution	Document exceptions, causes, and corrective actions
44	Guided Execution	Observe the process without taking over; record where additional instruction is needed
45	Guided Execution	Recheck the highest-risk handoff
46	Guided Execution	Coach one identified gap, allow another attempt, and document the evidence of improvement
47	Stress-Test	Audit authority use, documentation, and privacy
48	Stress-Test	Check the result against safety, quality, hospitality, fairness, and workload boundaries
49	Stress-Test	Review online and direct feedback together
50	Stress-Test	Review the completed step with the plan owner; clarify questions and document what was learned
51	Stress-Test	Complete final complaint-pattern analysis
52	Stress-Test	Repeat the step on a second representative shift or sample before accepting the result
53	Stress-Test	Recognize recoveries that protected dignity and learning
54	Stress-Test	Explain the purpose to the affected employees and confirm understanding in plain language
55	Verify/Hold	Lock weekly complaint review and corrective-action ownership
56	Verify/Hold	Observe the process without taking over; record where additional instruction is needed
57	Verify/Hold	Obtain employee feedback on usability
58	Verify/Hold	Coach one identified gap, allow another attempt, and document the evidence of improvement

Day	Phase	Required Action
59	Verify/Hold	Assign the ongoing report owner
60	Verify/Hold	Check the result against safety, quality, hospitality, fairness, and workload boundaries

Weekly Review Record

Review	Result	Primary Cause	Decision / Owner	Due
Day 10				
Day 20				
Day 30				
Day 40				
Day 50				
Day 60				

Day-60 Verification

- Was the baseline measured consistently? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Was the standard trained and observed? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Did the primary metric improve? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Were safety, quality, hospitality, and fairness protected? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Decision: ☐ Standardize ☐ Extend controlled test ☐ Redesign ☐ Stop

Sustainment rule: Review material complaints daily and patterns weekly; close the cause, not merely the conversation.

Manager verification: _____ Date: _____ Next review: _____