

# FLOURISH!

Success,  
Naturally

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM ANDRÉ TAYLOR

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## *When Luxury Isn't*

After an experience with a bad luxury hotel I shared my experience with clients of my marketing strategy firm, in the hospitality business, but every company can learn from these ideas.

My thoughts:

Hotels make multi-million dollar investments in real estate, décor, atmosphere, and amenities to create luxurious settings for their guests. Yet, hotels that define themselves by what they have, rather than what they do, are more likely to miss the mark on providing true luxury. Every luxury hotel puts in place strategies and operating procedures designed to create luxury experiences for their guests. The problem is that often these strategies and procedures are just not working.

A luxury hotel must consistently perform at the highest levels during hundreds of transactions every day. Because this involves the recruitment, training and management of the right people, this is a luxury hotel's most challenging objective. Staff members come to hotels with different concepts of what luxury is and under pressure, despite their training, they default to this behavior. In today's casual culture that's bad news for hotels and their guests. Most hotel executives have no idea that they are falling short of providing guests with luxury experiences half of the time.

Missing the mark on providing luxury usually starts the moment the telephone is answered. Most hotel operators greet callers with a phrase like: "Thank you for calling Luxury International Resort & Spa. How may I direct your call?" The problem is that most callers can't make out what is said. The volume of incoming calls turns a beautifully crafted greeting into a mechanical, rushed, and garbled mess. Regional accents usually complicate this exchange. The first interaction with the customer is far short of luxury. This is a luxury greeting that isn't.

Incoming calls are just one of the routine situations where even the best luxury hotels fail to convey a luxury experience. Try sending a 12-page fax to a guest at a large hotel, or getting unrushed directions while en route to a luxury hotel. These daily opportunities to showcase luxury are often failure points in the guest experience. That hurts the efforts of the sales and service staff focused on building the property's event, catering, and convention business which should, instead, find these wonderful examples of their hotel's uncommon sense of luxury. Many luxury hotel chains employ "mystery shoppers" to evaluate the guest experience. This

