



# Before the Front Desk

A reflection tool for destinations shaping  
arrival, orientation, and trust

# Before the Front Desk

*A reflection tool for destinations navigating arrival, orientation, and trust*

## A shared lens for destinations, chambers, and tourism partners

*A one-page conversation tool to reduce visitor confusion without blame, campaigns, or control.*

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## Why this exists

Visitors often decide whether a place feels easy or stressful **before** they reach a front desk.

When orientation breaks down, confusion doesn't disappear.  
It gets absorbed by operators, visitor centers, and frontline staff.

This tool helps destination teams **see where that happens** — together.

Not to fix everything.  
Not to assign fault.  
Just to notice what guests are being asked to figure out on their own.

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## How to use this

Use in:

- A board or committee meeting
- A visitor services or stakeholder workshop
- A cross-department session (tourism, parking, transit, downtown orgs)

Time: 20–30 minutes

Materials: This page + honest discussion

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## Step 1: Walk the arrival

Read this prompt aloud **or** paste it into your AI tool of choice.

### **Prompt**

*Act as a first-time visitor arriving in our destination with no local knowledge, late in the day. Walk through the arrival experience step by step. Where are you unsure what's normal, where to go, or who to ask for help?*

Read the response together — or imagine it quietly as a group.

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## Step 2: Notice where guesswork appears

(No fixing yet.)

Discuss:

- Where does the visitor have to **figure things out** instead of being guided?
- What information exists, but **not in the order** a visitor experiences it?
- Where do we assume local knowledge without realizing it?
- Which questions are operators answering that didn't originate with them?

If visitors are confused, someone absorbs it later.

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## Step 3: Trace where it lands

Reflect:

- Who handles this confusion today?
  - Lodging teams
  - Hosts
  - Visitor centers
  - Town or parking services
- How does it show up?
  - Tension at check-in
  - Repetitive questions
  - Reviews that don't match the quality of the stay

This is about flow, not fault.

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## Step 4: Choose one shared moment

You don't need to solve everything.

Identify **one moment** where clearer orientation would reduce stress:

- Arrival into town
- Parking or wayfinding
- Local norms or expectations
- "What happens next?" after booking

The moment we're focusing on:

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## Step 5: Name what's normal here

As a group:

- What's normal in our destination that visitors don't know yet?
- What usually isn't a problem, even though it might feel like one?
- Where does a human fit when something goes sideways?

This becomes shared language operators can reuse.

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## Close the loop

**Alignment doesn't require control.**

**It starts with awareness.**

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**A note on AI** AI isn't used here to automate decisions.

It's used as a mirror — to help teams see what you may be too close to notice.

## **Direct bookings work best when trust, clarity, and control travel together.**

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