

Problem-Solving Steps

Problem-solving steps are somewhat generic and can be summarized as:

1. **Define the problem**— analyze it
2. **Prioritize the resolution**: What is most immediately needed and which is secondary?
3. **Brainstorm possible means of enacting the solutions** based on priorities:
 - How can priority #1 be addressed immediately and subsequently how can priority #2 be addressed?
4. **Come to a mutually agreed upon solution**
5. **Put the resolution into operation**
6. **Evaluate the results**

Read on to see the problem-solving steps applied to a scenario:

Problem-solving: Steps 1 and 2

- 1) Define the problem: A disabled person in a wheelchair has been accidentally given the only other remaining room which is not specifically designed to accommodate the disabled.
- 2) Prioritizing the response to the problem might look like:
Priority A: Right now the disabled guest needs to rest somewhere while management resolves the situation.

Priority B: The guest needs to be moved to a room that will accommodate their needs over time.

Priority C: Then the guest needs some kind of remuneration for the inconvenience.

Step 3: Brainstorm possible means of enacting the solution based on the priorities you identified.

Priorities:

Priority A: Right now the disabled guest needs to rest somewhere while management resolves the situation.

Brainstorm idea: Research if there are there any rooms that accommodate disabled guests that will be available in the next few hours.

Priority B: The guest needs to be moved to a room that will accommodate their needs over time.

Brainstorm ideas:

-Is the bridal suite or presidential suite available to accommodate the person and would it be accessible for the guest?

-Does the hotel across the street have any available accommodations for the disabled is all else fails? If so, will the GM approve the hotel picking up the tab on the other hotel room?

Priority C: Then the guest needs some kind of remuneration for the inconvenience.

Brainstorm ideas:

Depending on the resolution- Free dinner or room service or free stay.

Step 4. Come to a mutually agreed upon solution.

You research the reservations and see that an adequate room will not be available until the following day. You research suites and find that the larger suite that you have available accommodates wheel chairs (you had the bus boy run up with a tape measure and measure all the doorways).

Priority A: Present the priority solution to the disabled guest and get his/her agreement.

“I’m so sorry. This was our fault. We would like to accommodate you right away instead in our Master suite on the 10th floor with dinner service included compliments of the hotel (priority 3) if that is alright. The only caveat is that it does not have a wheel chair accessible shower or sink.

Would your accompanying guest be able to help you with that for tonight and then (**priority #2**) we can move you tomorrow when one our more accessible rooms opens up?”

Always have a backup solution:

If they deem that the previous solution is not acceptable, present the alternative of accommodating them at another hotel nearby at your hotel’s expense (**priority 3**).

Note: This is always the least desirable due to the possibility of losing the guest’s positive association with their hotel stay transferring to the competitor.

Step 5. Put the resolution into action.

Note: This may involve multiple departments.

Once the guests have moved to their room or rooms, make sure they are adequately comfortable and that you have anticipated their needs for beverages or food that should be sent to the room preferably compliments of the house.

If they are going to move the next day to accessible accommodations, make sure you book the room and put a note on their reservation explaining that these guests need special attention due to the hotel's mistake.

Ask the guests what time they want to be moved from the suite after check-in time the next day, if they will want lunch upon changing over, and get their order.

- Then inform the Bell Captain to move their luggage over from the suite to the new room at the guest's specified time.
- Call housekeeping and inform the manager of the time your guests in the suite will move out so they can clean the suite.
- Call the room service manager and explain the guest's order for the next day's lunch and arrival time and circumstances.

Step 6. Evaluate the results.

Make sure that the elevator staff and the front desk person ask them how their stay was. Also, review their guest evaluation form.

Analyze the feedback to determine if the steps taken to resolve the issue were sufficient to ameliorate the situation in the opinion of the guest and determine if they will indeed return as a result.

Then send a follow-up email with any discount or additional feedback and incentive to visit again.

- How can the problem be avoided in the future?
- Once the problem occurred, was the solution viable for the guest?
- What went right and what went wrong? How can the hotel and the personnel improve their guest service going forward?
- Will the guest consider returning?

Now answer the **Challenge Questions** by noting your answers on a separate note pad and then compare your responses to the expert's.

Question #1:

If you have a defined complex problem, the next step is to enact a solution.

- a. True
- b. False

Question #2: You have a guest who needs to get someone to pick up a VIP at the airport an hour from the hotel right away. You know as GM that the hotel is totally inundated with arriving guests. Who could you call to help resolve this issue and what step would be important here?

- a. The Front desk attendant can help. The step that takes precedence is to come to a mutually agreed upon solution.
- b. The Concierge can help. Brainstorming might be the priority right now.
- c. The Bell Captain can help. Defining the problem would be important right now.

Access the [expert's responses](#) when you are ready.