

How to Create a ‘Welcome Story’

What is a Welcome Story?

A Welcome Story (sometimes referred to as a *Visual Story* or *What-To-Expect Story*) is a resource designed to provide people with accurate and useful information about what to expect when planning a stay at your accommodation.

Why should accommodation providers create Welcome Stories?

They provide predictability for guests, which can help them feel more relaxed and confident about booking and staying with you. They can also be used by guests as a reminder or ‘go-to’ resource to check key information and feel reassured throughout their travel experience.

What information is included in a Welcome Story?

A Welcome Story should consider the guest experience at every step of their journey. The guest journey begins during the travel planning and booking stages of a trip and concludes after the journey back home. A Welcome Story provides explicit written and visual information to support guests in knowing what to expect for each step in the journey and how to access additional support if needed.



Considerations

Creating your Welcome Story

- ✓ Use clear and concise language. Consider readability and font sizes.



- ✓ Use current photographs of the actual setting, wherever possible.



- ✓ Link to other resources or provide QR codes to learn more (e.g. maps, accessibility guides, menus, etc.). This will help to keep your Welcome Story concise and up to date.

- ✓ Make the Welcome Story easily accessible on your website. Consider having printed copies available at reception and/or in guest rooms.

Updating your Welcome Story



- ✓ Remember to update your Welcome Story if there are changes to any steps across the guest journey, or to the venue environment (e.g. facilities closed for maintenance or renovations, changes to operational procedures, new services, etc.).



- ✓ Consider having a handout of any updates or changes for guests on arrival. Ideally this information would be communicated ahead of time on your website, and via guest emails. Unexpected changes can cause significant distress for neurodivergent travellers



- ✓ Seek regular feedback on your Welcome Story from guests or other community members to assess effectiveness and to inform any changes.

The following sections provide key considerations for each stage of the guest journey and examples of what to include when creating a Welcome Story.



Use pictures, icons and text to communicate information whenever possible

Journey Planning

Consider the steps involved:

Finding the venue:

- ✓ Provide clear instructions to help guests find their way to your venue. This might include:
 - Street address
 - Public transport options
 - Maps
 - Driving directions including maps
 - Nearby landmarks.



Plane



Bus



Train



Consider the environment:

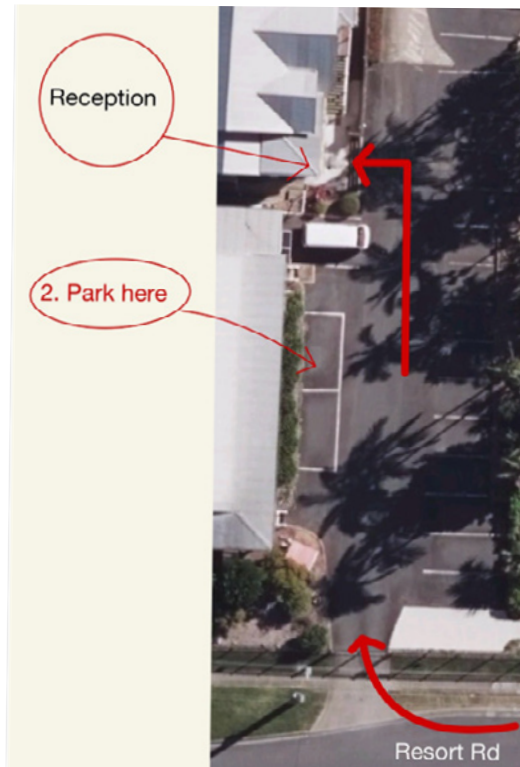
Parking options:

- ✓ Provide explicit information about parking options.
- ✓ When onsite parking is provided, consider information on the following:
 - Is there 24-hour access to carpark?
 - Is a code or key required for access?
 - Are parking bays allocated to guests or can guests choose where to park?
 - How can guests make specific requests relating to parking bay allocations if required (e.g. parking close to lift access)?
- ✓ Include visual information such as:
 - Photos of the parking
 - Carpark map
 - Link to a video tour of the carpark including access to lift/stairs and reception.
- ✓ Provide clear instructions for finding reception from the carpark.



Welcome to
AQTION RESORT

Finding your way



Arrival & Check-in

Consider the steps involved:

Check-in process:

- ✓ If you offer **flexible check-in options**, clearly outline these choices.
- ✓ Provide clear check-in **instructions** outlining each step of the procedure.
- ✓ The **check-in procedure** can be added directly into the Welcome Story.



See the 'How to Create a Check in Procedure' resource for more information.



Consider the environment:

Reception or welcome area:

- ✓ It can be helpful to describe the space guests will first enter when arriving at your venue (e.g. office, reception, or lobby area).
- ✓ Descriptions should include the sensory elements of the space as well as pictures or a video tour where possible.
- ✓ The combination of multiple sensations at once can make an environment particularly challenging to navigate. Adding predictability about what to expect in these spaces supports and empowers guests to be prepared.
- ✓ Below are a few examples of common sensory experiences upon arrival:

Sounds	Touch	Sights	Smells	Movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background music • Other people talking • Heavy traffic nearby • Luggage trolleys • Lift bell or 'ding' • Music in lift • Hand driers in bathroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidental touch from others queuing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright lights • Shiny reflective surfaces (e.g., mirrors, tiles) • Artwork and/or lighting displays • Lots of people moving about during peak times • Glass walls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Signature scent' or scent diffusers • Food smells from adjoining café or restaurant • Perfumes or colognes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowds or queues at peak times • Room access only via lift or elevator

During the Stay

Consider the steps involved:

Using accommodation facilities:

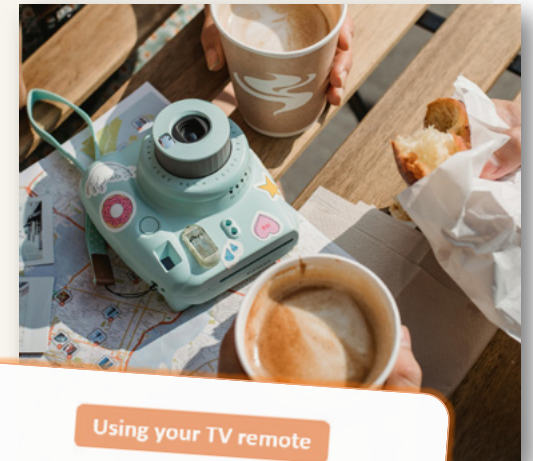
- ✓ Include copies of **venue maps** or links to access the maps online.
- ✓ Identify **opening and closing times** for facilities (e.g. restaurants, pool area, reception, games room, carpark, etc.). Be specific, for example, people may interpret 'open til late' differently. It is best to list times to avoid ambiguity.
- ✓ Outline or link to any specific venue **rules or expectations** (e.g. no glass in pool area or phones silenced in the day spa).



- ✓ Provide information on how to access hard copy or online **menus**.
- ✓ Describe **how to use lifts** (e.g. do you need to swipe an access card before selecting floor level?). This could also be linked to as a separate 'How to' document.
- ✓ Provide any **information specific to the type of room/booking** (e.g. breakfast included, requires use of shared bathroom on level 2, etc.).
- ✓ Describe **any options for customising the room** (e.g. Is there a choice of pillows or bedding? Adjustable lighting or aircon? How do guests action any special requests?).
- ✓ Provide information on how to access **step-by-step instructions for the use of any in-room facilities** (e.g. coffee machine, TV, aircon, washing machine, oven etc.).



To keep the Welcome Story concise, it is recommended to indicate or link to where guests can find this information in their room rather than including it all in the Welcome Story.

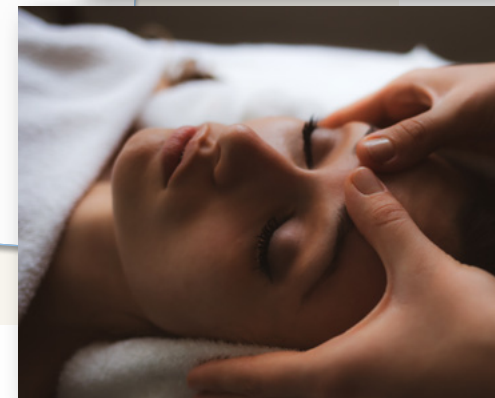


During the Stay

Consider the environment:

Activities and events:

- ✓ Include information about any **specific services or activities** on offer. This might include links to **information and timetables** for:
 - Kids Club
 - Day Spa
 - Child minding services
 - Tours
 - Special events.
- ✓ Information to highlight for these activities might include:
 - **Date** and **time**.
 - **Who** the activity is suitable for (e.g. age requirements).
 - **How to book** the service.
 - If the activity is included or if there are additional costs and **how to pay**.
 - Links to additional information and visual supports about the activity or event (e.g. a **visual schedule** of what will happen and when).





Use pictures, icons and text to communicate information whenever possible

Leaving & Check-out



Consider the steps involved:

Check-out process:

- ✓ **Clearly outline options for check-out**, (e.g. early check out the night before, contactless check-out, key drop etc.).
- ✓ **Step guests through the check-out process** using the same concepts outlined in the 'How to Create a Check-in Procedure'.
- ✓ Provide information or link to **local transport options** to support the journey home.
- ✓ Provide information on **how guests can provide feedback** about their stay.



Consider the environment:

Reception or lobby area:

- ✓ Provide information about **what to expect at checkout** and departure.
- ✓ **Describe the sensory environment** (e.g. sounds, sights, smells, touch, and movement).
- ✓ Highlight any **options for avoiding peak busy times** at check-out for guests to avoid sensory overwhelm.
- ✓ Provide or link to a **map** to support exiting the venue



For customised support in developing Welcome Stories or other inclusive resources, contact our Community Inclusion team:



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