

Business with no customers - The gritty reality of customer experience for some sectors now

On Wednesday I headed to Hamilton. A purposeful trip to collect a new motorcycle and return to Nelson - officially breaking the shackles of lockdown.

It was also a time to ponder widespread changes as the wind swept past. And, as it turned out, to experience directly the impact of Covid on the hospitality and tourism sectors in New Zealand.

It's a New Zealand that no one has seen before. An eighties vibe where there is space to relax and enjoy, coupled with an eerie silence of empty motels and tourist attractions.

Tonight I am staying in one of the more beautiful - The Masonic Art Deco Hotel in Napier. Yet I am alone. That's the reality for this business now.

But what sparked this article, as well as an unusual sense of self-isolation in one of the most superb establishments I have been, was the extraordinary service extended to me by the front of house.



My one rub when I got there was that as an irrationally protective new vehicle owner, I needed my baby locked away at night to be able to sleep. Rob, who checked me in on arrival, and also turned out to be the General Manager, graciously explained, '1850's building's don't come with carparks - there were no cars then!'

I had not rebuttal to his sound and charismatic logic, and was a little sheepish at missing that glaringly obvious point. Yet I could see his enthusiasm for me to stay, as he probably could mine.

'But we did store a motorcycle in the Gatsby Conference Room once', he added after a long pause. My ears pricked up.



Which one of these is not like the others?

What Rob had done in that moment was reveal to me one of the more evident examples of 'above and beyond' service I have witnessed. No surprise given his philosophy that great customer service is about finding the 'yes' - a philosophy that has clearly rubbed off well on his staff.

And that was the bit that touched me. I admired Rob for the extraordinary hospitality he had afforded, yet this was for one, not many, and it definitely wasn't sustainable that way.

No customers, no customer experience, no results. It's that simple.

So what does the future of the Masonic Art Deco hotel look like for now? As I walk along down the hallways past original artefacts on display. Until borders open the answer to that question lies in the hands of New Zealanders hands.

My hope is that this article, like many others of a similar note, encourage you to travel domestically now. To explore your land in a way that it is unlikely to be explored again. And to enjoy remarkable locations and service like what I received at the Masonic Art Deco Hotel in Napier. It is an opportunity worth prioritising.

Thank you Rob and your team for going above and beyond - and for making my stay thought-provokingly special.