

Ella Fabozzi

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Agent 3

Introduction

My third agent is the current manager of the Sayre Mansion bed and breakfast, Sarah. Sarah gave me a tour of the mansion last week and told me a bit about what a typical day looks like being a manager of a bed and breakfast. This conversation and tour also opened my eyes to how unique this type of residence is. A bed and breakfast falls in the middle of the spectrum of the type of residence with a hotel on one end, and your own private home on the other. It is more connected to the user than a hotel is because of how much care goes into each individual guest, but less connected to the user than that of a private home, because there is still a set of rules and schedule items that must be followed every day to keep the system running smoothly.

Sarah, the manager, is a very involved member of the team to keep the inn in great shape. Seeing the mansion through her eyes, I realized how many different ways people use the Sayre Mansion. The inn is used for regular travelers like students and parents touring Lehigh University or professionals coming into Bethlehem for business. There are also many accommodations for large meetings to be held and weddings are frequently held there. Sarah not only deals with the typical responsibilities that come with running a place for people to stay, but also the responsibilities of catering to all of the different events that take place there.

Sarah's Perspective

I wear many hats throughout my work day, such as being a waitress, a cook, a tour guide, an inspector, a front desk assistant, and night shift worker. I get in my car around 6:00 AM. to go to work. For 15 minutes, I drive from my home in Allentown to Bethlehem to get to work. When I finally arrive, turn in through the iron gate, up the long, winding driveway to get to the parking lot next to the events tent (syntagmatic). From the minute that my car crosses the property line, I make sure to be surveying the grounds and the building to look out for anything that could be out of place. This could be a branch that has fallen or paint on a window sill needing a fix-up. If I notice anything, I will make sure to call in our maintenance crew to take care of it. I park my car and make my way around the front foot-path, onto the porch, and in through the wooden double doors of the mansion (connected- the footpath, porch,

and doorway all connect the interior to the exterior of the building). I walk through the right-side foyer and into the dining room to get breakfast set up.

Breakfast at the inn is served from 7 AM to 9 AM. This means that right at 7:00, I will start taking orders for guests. The kitchen is located behind the dining room through a small corridor. The kitchen is the only room in the mansion with a modern set up of black and white checkered floors and updated appliances. The rest of the mansion is in an English Gothic Revival style and the designs try to stay authentic to the original aesthetic that Robert Sayre had in the house. (arrhythmic- the kitchen does not fit in with the rest of the inn) When the inn isn't very busy, I will act as chef for the morning, but when it is more crowded I will call in our other chef to cook. The way that a bed and breakfast is run is different than how a normal restaurant would be run. Rather than taking orders of multiple tables and reporting that back to the chef, I go to each table individually, ask what they would like from a small menu of three items, go make it myself, and then bring it back out for the guests (uncommon). This combined with the dim lighting and comfortable chairs create a peaceful atmosphere for the guests when they are eating here.

By 11 AM, breakfast is cleaned up. This is also when guests begin to check out. I make my way from the kitchen and dining room to the front desk in the left-side parlor and help them to check them out. From my desk, I can see the Bethlehem railroad and all of the cars going over the Hill to Hill Bridge on their daily commutes.

After all of the guests are checked out, it is now time for me and the rest of the crew to flip the mansion. This involves processing the payments for the guests who I had just checked out, getting rooms ready for the next rounds of check-ins at 3 PM, handling phone calls, meeting with clients if they have events, and doing site tours. I take people on tours to see the entire building, but their main purpose is to sell people on how the spaces at the mansion can best work for their events. One of the main event spaces that I will show people on the tours is the basement. It is a renovated cellar with an exposed brick foundation as the walls. The ceilings form running brick arches that span the entire room,(shape) and the floor was dug three feet to provide more headspace for the guests (diachronic- the room was originally shallower and pretty much an empty basement) . It is the longest room in the building, so a long table is there to hold dinner receptions. One thing that I like to highlight on the tours of the mansion is that when there are wedding receptions held here and it is getting late but a few guests want to keep the party going, we'll stick them in this basement event space so that they won't be bothersome to the rest of the guests.

After all of the tours are finished, I will go around to each of the rooms in the house to inspect that whoever cleaned them didn't forget about anything. Once that is all set, it is time to get ready for the next round of guests to get checked in at 3 PM. I make my way back to that front desk and wait for the guests to arrive to check them in and help them to their rooms. The bulk of the check-ins will be at 3 PM because the guests will try to get there as soon as possible. For anyone who has to arrive later, I will stay at the front desk until 10 PM to help check them in. After 10 PM, I go around to shut off the major lights and lock all of the major doors.

I don't work the overnight shift always, but when I do, I start by going to the laundry room and getting the inn all caught up on laundry from the day. After that is all done, I will retire to a room with a bed and lay down. This is so that if there are any concerns for overnight guests, I will be there to respond to their needs, such as getting locked out or something in their room not working properly.

This mansion is a 24-hour operation that takes a lot of work from the small staff that runs it. As I stated before, which is hopefully obvious now, I wear many hats throughout the day to keep the Sayre Mansion running smoothly for all of the guests and the people who I work with.