

The Service You Promise

By the end of this session you can say who your institution serves, where it serves them badly, what standard you hold it to, and what you will and will not commit to.

01 LISTEN FIRST

12 MIN

Andrés is describing what actually happens to a family at Meridian — not the brochure version. You will hear it twice. Everything else on this sheet comes out of it.



Andrés on the journey • about 90 seconds

1.1 First listening — the big picture

Choose one answer.

a The real journey at Meridian is...

- ☐ exactly like the brochure ☐ not as tidy as the brochure ☐ better than the brochure

b Most of the complaints come from...

- ☐ the tour ☐ day-to-day communication ☐ re-enrolment

c Of the seven touchpoints, how many are owned properly?

- ☐ two ☐ five ☐ seven

1.2 Capture it

Drag a card into each box. Some cards are not used. One owner card appears more than once.

WHAT HAPPENS

changes announced late

a reply within one working day

a personal call from the head

no escalation path

both fine

three different emails

a welcome pack in the post

they have already decided

OWNED BY

nobody

Admissions

the class teacher

not mentioned

nobody

the campus head

not mentioned

nobody

Stage

What happens

Owned by — or nobody?

First contact

Tour and offer

Onboarding

Day-to-day

When it goes wrong

Re-enrolment

1.3 Think about it

- a Which stage is “the one part of the journey with a clear owner”?
- b Why does re-enrolment work well? Choose one.
☐ One named person owns it. ☐ Families have already decided. ☐ The office replies quickly.
- c What goes wrong during onboarding? Choose **two**.
☐ Three people send separate emails. ☐ Nobody owns the whole thing.
☐ The tour is cancelled. ☐ Admissions does not reply.
- d Andrés's commitment has three parts. Which part stops people chasing him?
☐ a published response standard ☐ by the end of June ☐ you will hear from me either way

02 WHO THE CLIENT IS

6 MIN

In most businesses the person who pays is the person who uses the product. In education they are almost never the same person — and the one who complains is often a third.

2.1 Match the term to its meaning CAN BE DONE BEFORE CLASS

Join the dots.

stakeholder	● ●	The person who signs the invoice. Usually a parent or guardian
end user	● ●	A colleague who depends on your team's work to do their own
payer	● ●	The person who decides whether to stay or leave next year
prospective family	● ●	Anyone with an interest in the institution — families, staff, the board, the regulator
internal client	● ●	Enquired or visited, not yet enrolled
decision-maker	● ●	The person who actually receives the service. Here, the student

2.2 Who is it?

Choose the right term from each menu.

- a Sofía, 14, studies at Scout Hill School, a Meridian school. She is the
- b Her father signs the invoice every term. He is the
- c The Ruiz family visited last week but have not enrolled. They are a
- d Finance cannot send invoices until Admissions confirms the list. For Admissions, Finance is an
- e Every March, Sofía's grandmother decides if the family stays next year. She is the
- f The regulator inspects the school once a year. It is a

03 TOUCHPOINTS

6 MIN

A **touchpoint** is any moment where a family deals with your institution rather than just attending it. Service is not one thing done well or badly — it is seven separate moments, each with an owner, and it fails at whichever one nobody owns.

3.1 Where does each complaint belong?

Drag each complaint to the right touchpoint. Two complaints for each one.

"We found out about the timetable change from our son."	"I filled in the website form and nobody replied for a week."
"I complained to the office and never heard back."	"We got three emails about the uniform, and they all said different things."
"Nobody asked us if we were planning to come back next year."	"The school trip was announced two days before."
"I phoned to ask about places and waited on hold for twenty minutes."	"Nobody could tell me who deals with a problem like this."
"Nobody told us which classroom to go to on the first day."	"The letter about next year's fees arrived after the deadline to stay."

First contact		
Onboarding		
Day-to-day		
When it goes wrong		
Re-enrolment		

04 SERVICE STANDARDS

10 MIN

4.1 Name it CAN BE DONE BEFORE CLASS

Drag each term to its definition.

turnaround	close the loop	service standard	owner	first-contact resolution	escalation path	response time
------------	----------------	------------------	-------	--------------------------	-----------------	---------------

	A promise about how you will respond — written down, and measurable
	How long before somebody replies at all
	How long before the thing is actually finished
	Sorted out by the first person they spoke to
	The agreed route for passing something upward
	The one named person responsible. Not a department
	Go back and confirm it was resolved — the step everyone skips

4.2 Real standard — or not?

A real standard names the thing, the promise and the time. "We answer emails quickly" is not a standard.

	Real standard	Not a standard
a We answer emails quickly.	☐	☐
b Every enquiry receives a reply within one working day.	☐	☐
c We look after our families.	☐	☐
d The office acknowledges every complaint on the same day.	☐	☐
e We try to solve problems as soon as possible.	☐	☐
f Uniform orders are delivered within five working days.	☐	☐

4.3 Build two real standards

Drag the pieces into place.

	within five working days	Every enquiry	are delivered	within one working day	Uniform orders	receives a reply
--	--------------------------	---------------	---------------	------------------------	----------------	------------------

	The thing	The promise	The time
Enquiries			
Uniform			

4.4 Words that go together

Join the dots.

close	●	●	it at first contact
meet	●	●	them back
escalate	●	●	the loop
resolve	●	●	in writing
confirm	●	●	that standard
call	●	●	it to the campus head

05 COMMITTING AND DECLINING

10 MIN

The two things you will say most often to a colleague, a campus head or a board member — and the two most likely to damage you if you get them wrong.

5.1 Sort the phrases

Drag each phrase to its group. Three in each.

I can't promise Friday, but...

Just to close this off...

I'll get back to you by Thursday.

That's not something we can offer this term.

As promised, here's...

Realistically, that's next week.

You'll hear from me either way.

I'd rather say no now than let it drift.

I should be able to...

Coming back to you on the question of...

Let me check and confirm in writing.

Unfortunately I can't do that, but what I can do is...

COMMITTING	HEDGING	DECLINING WELL	CLOSING IT OFF

→ "You'll hear from me either way" is the line Andrés used, and the most valuable one here. It commits you to *contact* rather than to an *outcome* — which is the difference between a colleague who waits and one who chases you.

5.2 What would you say?

Join each situation to the best reply.

A campus head asks for a decision you cannot make until next week.	●	"I'll get back to you by Thursday with the exact number."
The board asks for a figure you will have on Thursday.	●	"I can't promise Friday. Let me come back to you with a date this afternoon."
A colleague asks for something you are not going to do.	●	"Coming back to you on this — I owed you an answer on Monday. Here it is."
You promised an answer on Monday and it is now Wednesday.	●	"Realistically that's next week — but you'll hear from me either way by Monday."
You are not sure you can meet the deadline you are being offered.	●	"Unfortunately that's not something we can offer this term, but what I can do is..."

5.3 Which sounds more professional?

Tick A or B.

a You can't take on a new project.	☐ A "No. I don't have time."	☐ B "I'd rather say no now than let it drift — but I can help in January."
b A parent asks when the new timetable will be ready.	☐ A "I'll get back to you by Thursday — you'll hear from me either way."	☐ B "Soon, I hope."
c You finally send a report you promised.	☐ A "Sorry, sorry, I'm so sorry this is late. Sorry again."	☐ B "As promised, here's the report."

06 SPEAKING PRACTICE

12 MIN

Nothing to write here. Read the model, then say your own version out loud.

Step 1 Your clients • 4 min

MODEL

"At Scout Hill School, the person who pays is usually a parent, but the person who uses the service is the student. The person who decides to stay or leave is the parent again. The people who complain most are often grandparents, usually about the fees. So, for us, these are three different people."

Your turn — complete each sentence out loud:

At my institution, the person who pays is usually

but the person who uses the service is

The person who decides to stay or leave is

The people who complain most are, usually about

So, for us, these are **the same person** / **two people** / **three or four different people**.

Step 2 Your journey • 8 min

MODEL — FROM ANDRÉS

"First contact is usually the website form. It's owned by Admissions." • "Onboarding is three different emails. Nobody owns it."

Your turn — say two sentences for each stage of your institution:

1	2	3	4	5	6
First contact	Tour and offer	Onboarding	Day-to-day	When it goes wrong	Re-enrolment

WHAT HAPPENS

[Stage] is usually

WHO OWNS IT

It's owned by / Nobody owns it.

Finish with: "Our weakest stage is, because, What I can commit to is by — and you'll hear from me either way."

AFTER CLASS Voice memo, 90 seconds. Record Step 2 again on your own: walk through your institution's journey, name the stage that has no owner, and finish with one commitment — with all three of its parts.