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## Communication-It's the way you say it

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### Abstract

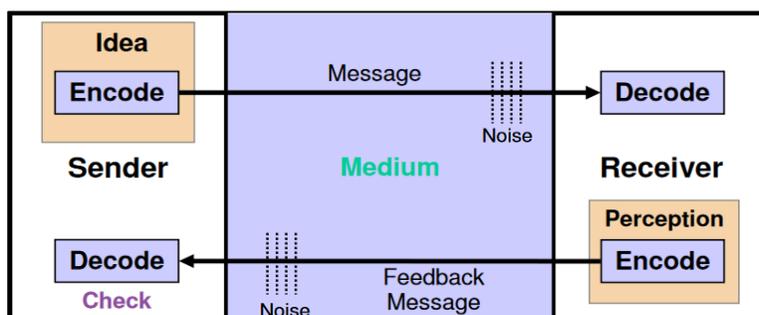
Tourism is an industry that sells intangible experiences. Communication is vital to the success of tourism businesses since it is only through the effective use of communication that tourism marketers can offer to customers tangible cues about those intangible experiences. Communication plays a vital role in this industry. Tourism, Culture & Communication is international in its scope and will place no restrictions upon the range of cultural identities covered, other than the need to relate to tourism and hospitality. Also, while communication is an essential component in the conduct of any service business, it has got an overarching role in tourism. Bearing in mind the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of the phenomenon of tourism, one must lay special emphasis on what is conveyed and how it is conveyed. Tourists are individuals who want to escape from the routines of the mundane world. They want to experience 'THE OTHER' aspect and enjoy their "ME TIME" of their selves not allowed to be expressed in the ordinary life settings. Such a conceptualization of the tourism phenomenon gives us clues about the type of communication that will be well appreciated by tourists.

**Keywords:** Communication, service industry, tourism

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 The sender-receiver model

The sender-receiver model is the simplest communication model and underpins most others. The sender has an idea or concept he/she wants the receiver to appreciate. Before any useful outcome can be achieved from the communication, the receiver has to accurately understand the sender's idea! This means the message has to be effective in the receiver's space; if the message does not engage the receiver, the sender is wasting his/her time.



Source: Stakeholder Circle® including White Papers, Published Papers and books,  
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Fig 1

- **Encode:** To translate thoughts or ideas into a form of language that can be understood by the receiver; eg, written English, spoken French or a drawn diagram.
- **Message:** What is sent: the output of encoding?
- **Medium:** The method used for sending the message (face-to-face, telephone, email)
- **Noise;** Something that interferes with the sending or understanding of the message (distance, culture, language differences)
- **Decode:** The translation of the message by the receiver from the medium into their thoughts.

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Communication is a very important tool in any field, especially in the tourism field. This is one field that revolves totally upon how things are conveyed and through which medium. Communication behaviour of those involved in the communication process are elements that achieve a good image of a tour operator and a travel product. In tourism field, an effective communication is essential for a business to have success.

The relationship tour operators and their tourists must be an open offer. There must not be an erroneous communication, but a sincere and real one, in order to develop good business relationship in the future, so those who sell and those who buy to be happy. Hierarchically structured, grammatically proof and elitist communication formats are known to engender aversion in the minds of them. So, the key to success in communication with tourists is to exhibit by means of verbal and non-verbal means a relaxed attitude while ensuring that the same is not misconstrued as carelessness, recklessness, or unruliness.

A customer not only pays for the food, room, or product, he also pays for the service. Communication is an integral part of service. A customer can be in a bad mood but a broad smile on the faces of the employees in a restaurant can change the mood of the customer and make him feel good and contented. The unique weapon in the hands of the crusaders of modern day organizations is social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc., are revolutionary advances in the social media front and the popularity of mobile communication devices, business communication has acquired a social media-friendly format. In the context of tourism business communication, purportedly objective third person narratives are increasingly giving way to patently subjective first person narratives: industry professionals consider it important to impress their persona to others rather than to keep the same insulated from their professional conduct. A good communication is very important in being able to sell a tourism offer and keep your clients and make them loyal.

## 2. Communication and its Outreach

**2.1 Communication Enhances Understanding:** It is age-old wisdom that communication is a means to facilitate understanding. It is widely held now that the power of communication to facilitate understanding increases in direct proportion to the degree of live interaction in the communication. For instance, live chats can help you reach understanding much faster than asynchronous emails. For instance, in a problem solving situation, a lengthy speech by the Managing Director of a firm highlighting the issues and his or her solutions do not do so much good as a semi-structured round table interaction among the concerned executives. Constant and live interaction helps to speed up the development of yet another important objective of communication: the development of shared meanings.

**2.2 Communication that Captures the Audience:** A potential tourist is an information seeker. That means they expect communication to be full of relevant information, say, on attractions, accessibility, and amenities available as part of a vacation. It is crucial to offer all the relevant information but at the same time steer clear of information overload. Most tourists are busy individuals in their routine lives and do not have the time or resources to swim through an ocean of information.

**2.3 Communication that Presents Information in Assorted Ways:** Individuals are different and these differences are reflected in their preferences for media. Some are fans of the print media while some like visual presentations with interactive content. Some learn explicitly from information presented with bullet points while some others want to learn implicitly and experientially with information interspersed in realistic contexts. In the initial stages of a negotiation, it is often better to have unstructured and informal communication styles for the liberal generation and quick dissemination of ideas.

**2.4 The Importance of Listening:** For service-oriented businesses like tourism, the old adage 'customer is the king' is particularly true. Good listening skills are at least as important as good speaking skills: or, if you hold a broader definition for speaking, good speaking always has ingrained in it a good listening component.

## 3. Communication Problems in Workplace

### 3.1 Language Barriers

A diverse workplace has several benefits to a business, such as a variety of solutions to company issues and insight into international markets during expansion. But the language barrier that can sometimes occur in a diverse workplace, or any workplace, may become a communication problem. There might be language barriers between people of different ethnic backgrounds, people of different ages and people with different levels of industry experience.

### 3.2 Personal Issues

Effective communication in a workplace is based on professional correspondence designed to assist in the daily operation of the company or the continued growth of the organization. When employees allow personal issues to affect company communication, a communication problem develops that could take a long time to track down and resolve. People who refuse to communicate based on a personal disagreement are damaging the company's ability to do business and slowing the growth of the organization.

### 3.3 Lack of Feedback

One-way communication can become an ineffective way to exchange information throughout the company. Employees and managerial staff should provide feedback at all times to improve the quality of information disseminated and the manner in which the information is delivered. For example, if a department tends to send out information in a format confusing to other people in the company, then that department needs to be informed of its communication problems immediately or else the information coming from that group will always pose a communication challenge.

### 3.4 New Hires

When new employees are brought into the organization, they need to receive a comprehensive introduction into the proper ways to communicate throughout the organization. Companies that do not include communication training in their new-hire orientation programs will be forced to struggle with new hires who are forced to learn proper communication procedures by a process of hit and miss. Communication problems in the workplace can cost your company productivity and money. Without efficient communication, your company is unable to exchange

information essential to daily operations and create a communication network to carry new product data.

#### **4. Suggested Measures to Enhance Communication**

##### **4.1 Conduct Staff Training & Learning**

Arrange for a communication skills program that will be helpful for your employees to communicate effectively with the guests in crucial circumstances like dealing with complaints, co-ordinating between departments, attending to guests at the front desk and helping in documentation like menus, bills, reports and other hotel procedures. The training should be conducted once a month so that they get a chance to improve their communication skills.

##### **4.2 Pay heed to you Employees; Listen to them**

Successful communication is a two-way process which requires the management to periodically listen to their staff member's views and ideas. If the management head does all the talking, employees tend to become lethargic. One needs to employees as they are the ones dealing with the guests on a direct, day-to-day basis. For all you know, they might have ideas to better customer service or improvising of hotel functions if they encounter problems.

##### **4.3 Coach your Staff on Attending to Guests**

Your employees should know how to communicate well with your guests. There may be instances where your hotel might receive a complaint from guests in verbal or written form through reviews. The person in-charge to solve these matters must be well-trained in order to handle the issue wisely and subtly rather than ignoring it or dismissing it. Urgent matters can be handled with ease if your staff has good communication and behavioural skills

##### **4.4 The Mirror Technique**

The best way to successful communication is to observe your guest's own communication style and to respond accordingly. For instance, when you are dealing with a guest, you may notice that some guests make small conversations and others may be interested in the issue to be dealt with quickly and spontaneously. So observe your guests and act accordingly as it is important to think how you address your guest or deal with complaints (use humour for light-hearted guests)

##### **4.5 Results of Great Communication Skills**

- a. Improved customer service
- b. Better understanding of the instructions from supervisors among the staff members
- c. Great understanding of the latest technology used by hotels
- d. Boosted confidence to approach guests
- e. Positive attitude towards the workplace and higher level of understanding between the department heads

As stated above, effective communication skills is a learned art and not a natural skill so it doesn't mean that the relevant skills cannot be developed. Hotels should emphasize on providing communication skills training courses which cover everything from basic communication techniques to advanced empathy skills program

#### **5. Conclusion**

At this so-called "Age of Communication", the hospitality and tourism workplace continues to be challenged by endless concerns related to communication. Since communication with different stakeholders and for different purposes demand different skills, it is important for students to have mastery over a comprehensive set of commonly used media and formats. Teachers of tourism should demonstrate how communication skills such as conveying information clearly in speech and writing and listening carefully, contribute to the successful operation of a tourism business. The hospitality and tourism workplace is people oriented, as it is focused on providing excellent service to target clientele. It also employs a vast manpower resource to get things done. In this service-oriented industry, day to day work calls for continuous flow of information that should be delivered promptly, accurately and efficiently through the most appropriate medium.

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