

**Subject: Tourism & Hospitality**

Production of Courseware

**-Content for Post Graduate Courses**



**Paper 14: Tourism and Hospitality Marketing**

**Module 24: Effective communication in tourism and hospitality**

**industry**



**THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

**Principal Investigator**

**Prof. S. P. Bansal**

*Vice Chancellor, Indira Gandhi University, Rewari*

**Co-Principal Investigator**

**Dr. Prashant K. Gautam**

*Director, UIHTM, Panjab University, Chandigarh*

**Paper Coordinator**

**Dr. Rajesh Verma**

*Mittal School of Business, Lovely Professional University, Punjab*

**Paper Co-Coordinator**

**Dr. Rahul Sharma**

*Assistant Professor Mittal School of Business, L.P.U (PB)*

**Content Writer**

**Mr Shubham Mendiratta**

*Assistant Professor, Mittal School of Business L.P.U (PB)*

**Content Reviewer**

**Prof. Balram Dogra**

*Campus Director, Rayat Bahra University, Kurali, Punjab*

TERMS	DESCRIPTION OF MODULE
Subject Name	Tourism & Hospitality
Paper Name	Tourism and Hospitality Marketing
Module No.	26
Module Title	Effective Communication in Tourism and Hospitality Industry
Objectives	To study the meaning and importance of effective communication in Tourism and Hospitality Sector
Keywords	Communication, Hospitality, Tourism

TABLE OF CONTENTS
1.0 Learning Outcome
2.0 Introduction
3.0 Definition of organizational Communication in Theory & practice
4.0 Benefits of Effective communication in Tourism and Hospitality Sector
5.0 The Effective Communication Process in Tourism and Hospitality Sector
6.0 Measuring Communication Effectiveness
7.0 Barriers to effective Communication in Tourism & Hospitality Sector

## QUADRANT-I

### Measuring Communication Effectiveness

#### 1.0 Learning Outcome:

After completing this module students will be able to:

- a) Understand the concept of Communication
- b) Know the various benefits of effective communication in tourism and hospitality sector
- c) Know how to measure effective communication in organizations.

## 2.0 Introduction

Today businesses are borderless and economies are interlinked more than before which I why practitioners and researchers argue that people and organizations will survive by means of effective communication only. The balance between organizational objectives, profitability and stability is ensured by means of effective communication. Effective communication ensures necessary information and having the necessary skill set to perform the job. Communication has been characterized as the most important and one of the most used of all skills in every industry and particularly in tourism & hospitality sector which is one of the fastest growing sectors not only in India but throughout the globe.

Effective communication is very compelling in the tourism and hospitality sector which is the reason why companies spend a lot of money in training their staff. The behaviour of the staff indulged in the communication process are very elements which are responsible to build a good image of a hotel. Managers in tourism and hospitality sector spend bulk of their time in either verbal or written communication with their subordinates and higher ups. Researchers have recognized communication as the means by which both the organization and people survive. The performance of job in tourism and hospitality sector depends on having the required information and the necessary skill set and both of these are heavily dependent on the quality of communication. According to American Hotel and Lodging Association (1999) communication is a two way process in which employees transfer ideas or feelings to each other. Further researchers argue that verbal and non-verbal interacted messages among the employees are very crucial and essential to complete the process.

Effective communication is also very important in leadership roles. An old saying goes, “it’s not important what you say, but how you say it.” Managers and leaders usually do six major functions like leading, planning, organizing, staffing, controlling and communication but it’s the communication which helps to synchronize and tie all of these functions together. The main distinction between a good leader and a transformational leader is in terms of his communication with the employees. Effective communication is a key to good leadership. Effective communication helps to remove mis-understanding between the employees which will automatically help to maintain a healthy and peaceful environment which is very crucial in every

industry and particularly in tourism and hospitality sector. Research has also shown that effective communication in an organization helps to improve productivity and performance.

### **3.0 Definition of organizational Communication in Theory & practice**

Researchers have defined communication as the exchange of messages performed between the individuals in order to meet the desired objectives (Craig, 1999; Lolli, 2013). According to Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, (2014) in fast growing industries like tourism and hospitality effective communication is pivotal in order to maintain productivity and performance. Researchers have also defined communications as the process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour” (Merriam-Webster, 2009). Communication is not just transferring information. According to Lane, (2000) communication also includes “how people use message to generate meanings within and across various contexts, cultures, channels, and media”

Therefore effective communication is the exchange of information for the intention of creating denotation that is satisfactorily received and comprehended. Majority of other researchers have defined communication as the process of transmitting a message containing specific information from a source to the recipient (Cüceloğlu, 2000; Adler & Elmhurst, 2002; Kayak, 2003; Koçel, 2001; Okay & Okay, 2005; O’Hair & Fredric, 2005). Researchers also argue that in order to develop a understanding about each other in the organization and work in teams so that problems are solved easily there is a need for effective communication (Sabuncuoğlu & Tuz, 2001; Ruche & Welch, 2012).

Researchers have also used the term communication competence to explain how effectively communication goals are achieved. Communication competence is defined as “the ability of an interact ant to choose among available communicative behaviors in order that he (she) may successfully accomplish his (her) own interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of his (her) fellow interact ant’s within the constraints of the situation” (Wiemann & Backlund, 1980).

### **4.0 Benefits of Effective communication in Tourism and Hospitality Sector**

Effective communication is the central pillar of any organization. Effective communication is a very important issue because customers are not paying just for the food, the room or the facilities but for the service also. There are usually two areas which hospitality communication covers

customer service, and 'behind the scenes' staff and management interaction. The various benefits of the effective communication in tourism and hospitality sector are as follows:

**4.1 Helps in Team Building:** Team building is very important in hospitality and tourism sector to ensure free flow of the information. Effective communication will help managers to form highly efficient teams which will have a positive correlation with the organizational productivity. The unnecessary competition within the teams is also reduced by means of an effective communication. It helps the individual team members to know their roles and responsibilities thereby helping to improve synergies within the teams. Managers would be able to bridge the gaps between the expected performance and the achieved performance without having a hostile environment.

**4.2 Employee Morale:** Good remuneration is the concern for many employees but research has highlighted that it's not their only concern. Effective communication can help to improve and boost the overall employee morale. Employees appreciate the effective and clear communication coming from top management. Effective communication can help in transforming workplace into a very healthy work environment which is very crucial in tourism and hospitality sector to provide good quality services. Ineffective communication in tourism and hospitality sector may lead to frustration and confusion among the workers which can have negative consequences on the organizational performance.

**4.3 Helps with Diversity:** Hotel and hospitality sectors these days have people from all cultures, religions, castes and languages. They have become more diversified than any other business. Therefore, effective communication becomes more crucial to remove the various cultural and language barriers. It's very essential to remove all these barriers in order to provide a good quality customer service. Companies can avoid all these differences and confusion by providing good quality training to employees before joining and also on a regular basis post joining.

**4.4 Global Businesses:** The businesses in tourism and hospitality sector are more global and borderless than ever before. Therefore, the need for effective communication in tourism and hospitality sector has become more crucial. Managers and employees must know how to communicate with their international counterparts. The difference in the cultures across different countries in international business requires managers to understand that similar terms used in one country might be offensive in other. E.g. In England pants are commonly referred to as underwear while as in United States it means trousers. Therefore, if

businesses want to expand their businesses beyond their national border effective communication is a very crucial element.

**4.5 Improved customer service:** Customer service is of a huge importance in hospitality and tourism sector. Effective communication channels can bring greater understanding among the employees in an organization which will result in a positive attitude thereby improving customer service. Effective communication also helps in better understanding of the latest technology used by the companies which will automatically improve productivity.

## **5.0 The Effective Communication Process in Tourism and Hospitality Sector**

Organizations spend millions of dollars in training and development of employees so as to ensure that communication channels in and out of the organization are effective. How to ensure effective communication in tourism and hospitality management sector has been a burning issue of late. Many researchers and practitioners have tried to bridge this gap with least success. The various steps in effective communication process are as follows:

**5.1 Conduct Staff Training:** The first step to ensure effective communication is to conduct a training for all of the employees as how to effectively communicate effectively with guests in handling with complaints, harmonization between departments, attending to visitors at the front desk and helping in documentation like menus, bills, reports and other hotel procedures. The training has to be conducted on a regular basis and the progress needs to be monitored before the training and after the training.

**5.2 Listen to Your Employees:** Management needs to listen to their staff for their ideas and feedback on a regular basis because communication at the end of the day is a two way process. Listening to your employees is very crucial in order to ensure effective communication and improve the customer service because they are dealing with the customer directly. The best way to give a listening ear to employees is by holding weekly feedback sessions. The feedback from the employees needs to be rewarded in order to motivate them.

**5.3 Train your Staff on Attending Guests:** It's very much important that the employees working in the hospitality and tourism sector should know as how to communicate well with the customer. Communication with guest is absolutely crucial in service industry and particularly tourism and hospitality sector in order to give a great customer

experience. These days with the variety of online tools available for customer in the form of social media bad customer experience can have a serious negative impact on the overall image of the company.

**5.4 The Mirror Technique:** Good professionals having experience in customer service in hotel industry take every customer on his merits. For instance some customers are interested in a lengthy conversation thereby building a personal relationship while others would be interested in a quick solution of the problem. Therefore, it's absolutely crucial that every customer has to be taken on his merit.

### 6.0 Measuring Communication Effectiveness

Measuring communication effectiveness in tourism and hospitality sector can be quite a tedious and complicated task. Some people suggest that statistics is the best way to measure the communication effectiveness but exclusively focusing on stats at times can be misleading. Therefore researchers suggest a mixed method involving some elements of statistics and a variety of subjective methods. Subjective methods will involve assessing all of the elements of the business. The various methods of measuring communication effectiveness are as follows:



**Figure1 :** Steps in effective communication Process

**6.1 Define Your Goals:** People in charge of measuring communication effectiveness in tourism and hospitality sector need to define the role of effective communication in reaching the organizational goals. It's very imperative that the goals are set before measuring communication effectiveness. Management teams need to look whether the

international communication programs are in line with the overall organizational vision and mission statements.

**6.2 Understanding the employee engagement levels:** Lots of research in the recent past has been done on employee engagement level. Researchers argue that employee engagement levels can make or break the company. Managers and practitioners on the other hand have highlighted the various difficulties in keeping up the engagement levels. In order to watch and monitor employee engagement levels companies are commonly taking the help from social intranet. Human resource practitioners suggest that an effective communication strategy in tourism and hospitality sector will drive engaged employees using company intranet. At any point of time if the usage is falling for specific employees, it is right time to have a cup of coffee and discuss the reasons behind the fall in usage.

**6.3 Setting Benchmarks:** Many managers and practitioners believe that there is no one fit approach and every organization is different but nevertheless it provides a reference point to the organizations. Setting benchmarks will help an organization to get better insights on the company intranet. Benchmarking will also help the organization to understand the performance gaps by analyzing the expected and the achieved results. Companies in hospitality and tourism sector need be vigilant and careful selecting the benchmarks.

**6.4 Surveys:** There are two things people believe in one is God and the other one is data. Survey can be very useful to assess the effectiveness of communication channels in an organization. It's very important that the survey questions are kept specific to the objectives, are neither too short nor too long that the respondents have to spare a lot of time to fill the questionnaire. Companies in hospitality and tourism sector can choose from a wide range of options like online survey, mobile survey or simply a paper survey. Survey is a great tool to measure the effectiveness of the internal communication process. Surveys will help the management to make well informed decisions.

**6.5 Focus Group/ Interviews:** Focus groups are one of the most effective techniques recommended by researchers to explore issues, test concepts and spawn recommendations. Focus groups will help the companies in hospitality and tourism sector to make meaningful changes to the overall communication program. Companies can also conduct one-on-one interviews with the top management and other managers at leadership roles to gain perspective and generate ideas. Focus group interviews can be of great help in hospitality and tourism sector to explore as 'why people hold certain opinions. It can be also helpful to know beliefs and attitudes by asking more open ended questions. Researchers mainly use



focus group technique after the successful accomplishment of the survey results in order to get deeper into the survey results.

**6.6 Scorecards:** Scorecard provides a blueprint of how effective communication program is performing. Constantly reporting on the effectiveness of internal communication channels will help management to know the value of their efforts. The key is in designing the right scorecard by selecting right metrics.

## **7.0 Barriers to effective Communication in Tourism & Hospitality Sector**

As discussed earlier that effective communication is one of the key success factors in tourism and hospitality sector. When it comes to effective communication there are certain barriers which companies in this sector face on daily basis. One of the main problems is that people consider communication as one of the easiest things in the organization. The various barriers which organizations face in effective implementation of the communication process are as follows:

**7.1 Language Barrier:** Most of the management professionals working in hospitality and tourism sector identify that language barrier as one of the most critical challenges. A 2013 survey of Kigali hotels by Rwanda Development Board (RDB) involving almost 85,730 workers working in different hotels are not fluent in English language thereby hampering customer service. The survey further found that many other employees are not even able to speak in Kiswahili language which is commonly spoken in the region. Language barriers can occur even when the two persons are communicating in the same language. This is because the terminology and jargons used by the communicator may not be well understood by the receiver.

**7.2 Physical Barriers:** Physical barriers have been defined as the distance which is separating the sender and the receiver. With the advent of technological developments the face to face interactions between the employee's and the clients has reduced to some extent. Therefore, physical barriers have grown over the years. Researchers have classified interior work place designs, noise, technological problems, time etc as the physical barriers for effective communication in organizations.

**7.3 Psychological barriers:** Psychological barriers are defined as the individual differences between the employees. These barriers can take many shapes like stress, anger and sometime unfamiliar accent. There are people in organizations who cannot manage any level of stress in the communication neither can they manage stress because they have no

hold on their emotions. People will burst with anger and emotions which might prevent or distort the exchange of ideas.

**7.4 Physical Barriers:** The geographical distance between the sender and the receiver is termed as physical barrier in communication. Communication is always better when the distance between the sender and the receiver is shorter. The organization environment or at times even the interior workspace design, noise and technological problems are some of the examples of physical barriers in communication process. These days technology has become one of the major barriers in communication. Therefore, managers advocate the barrier is less if the proximity between the sender and receiver is high because fewer technologies are used.

**7.5 Attitudinal Barriers:** Personality conflicts, poor management and resistance to change or even poor motivation are some of the attitudinal barriers in the process of communication. Any nature of conflict in terms of attitude can make communication very difficult between the sender and the receiver. Managers should try to overcome the attitudinal barriers in communication so that the process of communication is clear.

**Summary:** This chapter has highlighted how effective communication can make and break an organization. Communication is one of the key pillars in tourism and hospitality management. Secondly this chapter focused on the various tools which can be used for measuring effectiveness in communication. Third, barriers like language, cultural, attitudinal and physical barriers can be cancerous for effective communication. Further over the years social media has become an effective and efficient marketing communication tool.