

# COMMUNICATION AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE ANIMATION IN TOURISM AND HOTEL INDUSTRY

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## **Abstract**

People communicate among each other every day. Researches indicate that about 70% of the time (excluding sleeping) is used for accepting and sending information through listening, speaking, reading, using computer or watching TV. Concerning the heterogeneous structure of people within the process of communication their interpretation of same things can be different.

The ability for clear and positive communication is one of the most important skills needed for everyone. This has particularly important meaning for tourism industry employees because the absence of such communication will disable clients' needs and expectations. Beside this, good communication enables good cooperation between colleagues.

The author of this paper deals with the issue of communication within the animation in tourism and hotel industry, pointing its importance toward successful animation activity. Further, she explains why good communication is necessary for tourism animation, which kinds of communication can be used, the importance of good communication skills for the employees and some of the obstruction which enables the communication.

*Key words: animation, animator, communication, tourism, hotel industry.*

## INTRODUCTION

Communication as an expression indicates the transmission of information and feelings from one person to another through sending and receiving messages mutually. It is an interaction among two or more persons where an active relation between the "sender" and "receiver" is established (Miller et al., 1998, 60).

The existence and development of methods and theories concerning communication is numerous and different indicating that there is no unified definition about communication. At the same time there is no method that guarantees 100% successful communication. Experts in this field usually indicate why people make mistakes during the communication or why they succeed in the communication and at the same time they can explain the reasons for such successful communication but, they can not establish a formula which will be applicable for everyone, at any place in any time. Man's ability to establish clear and positive communication is one of the most

important skills used in everyday practice: at work, at home, during the receptions, on holidays, while traveling and others. It is of a great importance particularly for those whose job needs direct contact with other persons: clients, colleagues, students etc. Good communication is very important for the employees in tourist industry because the absence of good communication will disable the satisfaction of clients needs. Tourist industry employees communicate all the time. They communicate with their clients as well as with their colleagues and others involved in tourist process.

The animator, as tourist employee, is usually in double role: as "sender" and as "receiver" where its two roles are very important. He/she should satisfy tourists' needs in its two roles. As a sender the animator needs to evaluate on which way, with which tool and in which time he/she will send the information to tourists. In this context it means: introducing tourists with the animation programs, conditions for their realization, the size of the group for organizing a sport game or other entertainment program, in which period of the day, week or year the programs can be realized, their duration, are the planning activities indoor or outdoor, do they need active participation of all participants etc. Besides sender, the animator is in role of receiver because the feedback is very important to fortify whether the desired animation effect is accomplished.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR TOURISM AND HOTEL INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES

Communication skills are integrated part of interpersonal communications and they include the ability of people to communicate each other. Usually *listening*, *speaking*, *writing* and *reading* are named as most important skills for good communication, which doesn't mean that the other skills don't have their significance. Listening and speaking are basic but not simple communication skills. On contrary, they are active processes which need particular attention from two sides: the speaker and the listener.

It's very important for the employees in tourism and hotel industry (THIE) to have particular listening abilities because they are in everyday contact with their clients-tourists who have different needs, wishes, come from different societies, with different backgrounds, education etc. They may be in different situations which will need solutions and, their communication skills are always on test. While listening, THIE should show their interest to clients carefully, concentrated, by following and understanding them, which need focusing of face and eyes to the person they're speaking with, to follow its reactions. Besides listening, speaking as communication skill need from THIE to choose appropriate words followed by appropriate body position, appropriate intonation and, organization and presentation of conception. It can be formal and informal. In both, it's very important to establish direct contact between speakers for successful communication.

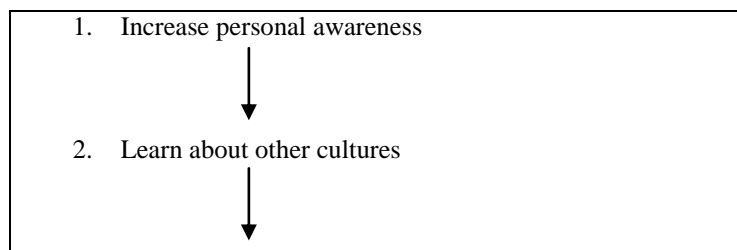
Other two very important communication skills which obligatory include listening and speaking are *negotiation* and *solving conflicts*. Conflict as situation may occur everyday in different situations. Whether it will become problem or not it depends on participants and their ability to handle with a concrete situation. Conflict handling is

a process, which include solving of misunderstandings in peaceful way. One of the basic tools for handling conflict situations is negotiating which includes speaking and listening between participants. Results may be: different proposals for solving misunderstanding between participants, suggestion of concrete solution if there is only one way for problem solving or other proposals. What kind of solutions will be suggested and choose depends the most of interpersonal and communication skills of participants.

The use of books, brochures, tourist guides, animation programs, and others is very useful for getting information which help THIE handle their everyday obligations. Many of job activities demand written evidence and transmission of information, data, messages, and even orders. How they'll be written it depends most on educational background, professional education, and cultural level of the THIE. THIE should give great attention to their writing skills because it's very important for they professional communication, whether it is with their clients, colleagues, supervisors or business partners.

In present time electronic communication becomes more frequent way of communication. This kind of communication presumes different electronic products: computers, mobile phones, pagers, talky-walk, portables or laptops. During working processes in tourism and hotel industry different kinds of mentioned communications are used. In this context e-mail communication becomes everyday reality and, even more necessity. But, although all these kinds of communication have many advantages, yet interpersonal communication is primary and irreplaceable for communication between THIE and guests.

Interpersonal communication is particularly important during the animation because its success depends of good communication between the animator and tourists. Appropriate professional education, cultural behavior, knowledge for other cultures, psychology of person and communication skills are very important prerequisites that animator has to possess. Animator as a professional has to be able to establish and develop intercultural communication as an important moment for successful animation. Experienced animator should be able to understand different cultural background of tourists and, their differences in understanding and interpretation of other cultures. Frankle and Owen (Miller et al., 1998, 49) suggest four basic steps which should be done in function of developing cross-cultural communication skills (Figure1):



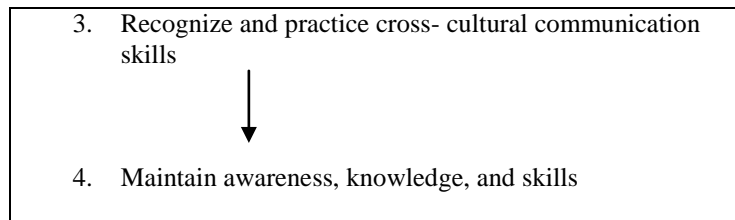


Figure 1. Developing cross-cultural communication skills

Respecting own culture is characteristic for every person who possesses certain cultural level. Positive perception for own culture enables to learn its real value and, it's a process which is under influence of the family, education and environment. At same time the cultural level is a reflection of the education, work, family, authority and, personal self-respect. After getting known and increasing the conscious for own culture, the next step is to learn about other cultures. For animator it's very important to see other cultures as more objective as possible without giving his/her own judgments for them. By learning about other cultures, the animator will be able to understand better others from different cultures and, to be understood from them as well. In this context it should be mentioned that it's very important to respect every culture by itself, without generalizing the perception for them because on that way the culture perception might be stereotyped. Knowing the differences about traditions, customs and habits of different cultures enables animators to widen their horizons and, help them in their communication with tourists. Therefore animators should upgrade their information about other cultures and, they should be opened to a continue learning and practicing their skills. Such knowledge will help them to get closer to tourists, understand them and decrease cultural differences between tourists.

Differences in *background, education, experience and intelligence* might be frequent reason for problems that lead to communication obstructions. For example, long sentences, complicated words or high level expression can not be understandable for a person who is not educated or has lower educational level and intelligence. Or the other example, the use of slang can be difficult to understand for the older people in conversation with the younger. As a sender, animator should be adjustable to such differences. He/she should be able to judge these characteristics in order to clear and understandable communication with tourists.

There are differences between people in their *behavior, thinking and valuating* that might lead to communication obstructions as well. For example, when a person speaks about some joke in a relaxing and informal atmosphere and, it's acceptable for others, for someone it might be shocking or unacceptable which will lead to wrong perception for the joke. *Prejudices* of some persons may also obstruct good communication. Most common prejudices are about peoples' background, race, sex, education, belongings to ethnic groups, minorities, women etc. *Presumptions* and *expectations* might be obstructions for a good communication, also. There are many situations when the speaker expects that his/her listener knows what he/she is speaking, although in some cases it is not so. In such situations the whole conversation or

transmission of information is wrong understood or not understood at all. The biggest creators of obstructions in communication are *emotions*. As most affected emotions which are reflected on people are anger, hate and fear. Usually the real meaning of the information/message disappeared under the emotions' influence in which case they take the role in communication. In this case, communication is not only obstructed but it loses its real truth and it might become impossible.

#### A NEED FOR A GOOD COMMUNICATION IN TOURISM ANIMATION

Why a good communication is so important?

It is a very frequent question among people whose nature of their job needs communication. It's an important question for animators, too. Because most of the time animators are in role of senders they think it's more important than to be receivers, but the nature of their job asks from them to be both: senders and receivers. Animators direct their activities towards tourists because their main role is to animate tourists, introducing them with the content of animation, different animation programs, duration, group size etc. They also inform and introduce tourists with their roles in animation program, the way of participation (active or passive) and, realization of programs. Skilled animators know the best ways to direct tourists-participants in animation program to communicate among them and, enable them to follow the program. They also enable participants to communicate with them (animators). Communication among participants depends on the most of animator who has main role in introduction with the animation process. Good communication among animator and participants and, among participants produces positive results manifested as participants' satisfaction, joy, and feeling of fulfillment and group appartenance. Animator's good communication skills, particularly to be sender and receiver at same time during the realization of animation program, usually produce positive results from animation.

During the communication process, besides animators, tourists as participants appeared in role of senders and receivers of information and messages among them and in communication with animators. While communicate with other tourists or animator as senders, tourists indicate their interest for certain program, time when they want to involve in the program, duration of their involvement, their role or other. Such messages are very important for the animator who receives them and should take appropriate activities to go over eventually problems.

As receivers, tourists receive information and messages mostly by listening after which they interpret and understand them. If they understand the message of the sender communication will be successful and will results with mutual understanding and positive results. If any omission happens during the communication among tourists or tourists and animator certain problems may occur. In that case very important are animator's skills for making compromises, balance, and improvement or over passing unpleasant or unwanted situations.

Wrong interpretation of information and messages produces unwanted situations which lead to animation failure. Because of that, animator as a bearer of animation process should know the importance of communication and to understand tourists' needs, wishes and desires. He/she should carefully listen to them which will

help him/her to get additional information that will help in realizing of predicted animation programs and avoid eventually omissions. Such situations are reason for tourists' frustration because of inappropriate leading of animation program.

Above mentioned situations during communication process are important for successful realization of animation programs. As a result of this, communication should be clear, appropriate, on-time and led by skilled animator. It indicates that there are many reasons for good communication during the animation process. The following listed reasons are as most important:

- *good understanding* between participants in animation process (among tourists and between tourists and the animator)
- *avoiding misunderstandings* (among tourists and between tourists and the animator)
- *appropriate realization of the animation program* (as it is predicted: size of the group, program duration, time, participation)
- *clear communication* (among tourists and between tourists and the animator)
- *tourists' satisfaction*
- *animator's satisfaction*

#### ANIMATION AND ITS ROLE FOR THE TOURIST OFFER

Tourist offer success is in close relation with the structure and quality of its content. Therefore during the process of tourist offer creation a proper attention should be attend by involving different elements which will correspond to the tourist demand's needs. In the structure of the tourist offer attractions have particular place because they are usually the main reason for tourists' visit. As an integrated and more represented part of tourist offer in contemporary tourist offer is animation, which plays very important role in tourists' decision to choose particular tourist resort, or a hotel or destination.

Animation's bigger role in tourist offer mostly becomes from the changes on the tourist demand's side as a result of increased demand for different types of travels, interest for new destinations, new experiences, discovers, adventures and, quality spend of leisure time. On the basis of such changes it is more evident that in their content is involved and presented the need for animation as essential element for creating different, interesting, attractive and rich content of tourist offer.

As an element of tourist offer, animation gives opportunities for tourists to choose different cultural, sport, recreational or other entertainment programs. Through different programs animation motivates tourists to choose some of them for which they are most interested and have affinities. There are many positive animation effects reflecting in many ways. But they are usually manifested as: animation effects on tourists and animation effects on organizers. The manifestation of animation effects on tourists is reflected as satisfaction, fulfillments, joy and, other feelings. Positive animation experience in much time is reason for tourists to be repeat visitors in the same

hotel, resort or destination. Further it leads to increased tourist expenditure, and promotional effects that attracts other potential tourists.

For the organizers, successful animation means higher tourist expenditure, high occupation of capacity, longer season and positive financial results which are manifested as direct incomes on the basis of selling tickets for manifestations, programs, different games and competitions.

With animation incorporation, tourist offer can attain the following:

- enrichment of its content with different sport, entertainment, recreational and cultural activities,
- enlargement of tourist demand's scope
- positive economic effects.

Researches indicate that organized tourist offer which includes programs with active tourists' participation becomes more attractive and takes the place for tourist offer which includes only attractions in its programs. The demand for animation programs is increased, which indicates that the animation becomes more important component in tourist offer creation and, even a factor that influenced and tourists decision.

## CONCLUSION

Although it sounds simple, yet communication is much more than a simple sending and receiving information, messages and feelings. It's a complex process consisted of more elements needed to be involved for its success. Incorrect and inappropriate communication may produce different problems or unwanted situations manifested as dissatisfaction of tourists, frustration, anger, and other feelings. It can be very negative not only for the animator and its personal image but, for the hotel, tourist resort or destination. Communication has a particular role during the animation process. The success of animation depends on good communication skills of the animator and it contributes to the enrichment of tourist offer.

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