

## **ADVANCED LECTURE MATERIAL**

**Course Title:** Hospitality and Tourism Business Communication

**Week 3 Topic:** Oral Communication in Hospitality and Tourism

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### **Lesson Overview**

Oral communication is one of the most frequently used forms of communication in the hospitality and tourism industry. Every day, hospitality professionals interact with guests, customers, coworkers, managers, suppliers, and business partners through spoken communication. Whether assisting guests at a hotel front desk, answering customer inquiries through telephone calls, guiding tourists, or handling complaints, oral communication plays an essential role in maintaining service quality and customer satisfaction.

Because hospitality and tourism are highly service-oriented industries, the ability to communicate effectively through spoken words is very important. Guests often evaluate service quality based on how employees speak, respond, explain information, and handle interactions professionally.

This lesson focuses on active listening, customer interaction skills, and proper telephone etiquette. These communication skills help hospitality professionals build positive guest relationships, improve service delivery, reduce misunderstandings, and maintain professionalism in workplace interactions.

### **Importance of Oral Communication**

Oral communication allows immediate interaction and feedback between people. Unlike written communication, spoken communication allows employees and guests to ask questions, clarify information, and respond instantly during conversations.

In hospitality and tourism, oral communication is essential for many daily operations and guest interactions.

One important function of oral communication is assisting guests. Hospitality employees regularly provide assistance to guests by answering questions, giving recommendations, explaining services, and responding to concerns. Clear and polite communication helps guests feel comfortable and valued.

Oral communication is also important for giving instructions. Employees may need to explain hotel procedures, safety reminders, transportation schedules, or event guidelines. Clear instructions help avoid misunderstandings and ensure smooth operations.

Another important function is providing information. Guests often ask questions regarding hotel amenities, restaurant schedules, tourist attractions, transportation options, and local destinations. Hospitality professionals must provide accurate and understandable information.

Oral communication is also necessary when handling complaints. Employees must communicate calmly, professionally, and respectfully during difficult situations. Proper communication can help reduce guest frustration and improve problem-solving.

In tourism operations, oral communication is essential for conducting tours. Tour guides use spoken communication to explain historical information, share travel instructions, entertain tourists, and ensure safety during tours.

Most importantly, oral communication helps build customer relationships. Friendly conversations, respectful greetings, and professional interactions help create trust and improve guest satisfaction. Positive communication experiences often encourage guests to return and recommend the business to others.

### Active Listening

Active listening is one of the most important oral communication skills in hospitality and tourism. Active listening means fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and remembering what another person says.

In hospitality settings, listening is just as important as speaking. Employees who actively listen can better understand guest needs, concerns, preferences, and expectations. This helps employees provide more personalized and effective service.

For example, if a guest explains a problem regarding their room, employees should listen carefully before responding. Interrupting or failing to pay attention may make guests feel ignored or unimportant.

Active listening also helps reduce misunderstandings and improves communication between employees and guests.

### Characteristics of Active Listening

#### 1. Paying Attention

Paying attention means focusing completely on the speaker and avoiding distractions during communication.

In hospitality environments, employees should avoid looking distracted while guests are speaking. For example, checking phones, looking away repeatedly, or multitasking during conversations may create negative impressions.

Guests appreciate employees who give full attention during interactions because it shows professionalism and respect.

#### 2. Showing Interest

Employees should demonstrate interest through both verbal and nonverbal communication cues.

Examples include:

- nodding,
- maintaining eye contact,
- smiling appropriately, and
- using expressions such as “I understand” or “Certainly.”

These responses help guests feel heard and valued during conversations. Showing interest also encourages guests to communicate more openly about their concerns or needs.

### 3. Clarifying Information

Clarifying information means asking questions to confirm understanding and avoid misunderstandings.

For example:

“May I confirm if you prefer a non-smoking room?”

This type of question helps employees provide accurate service while ensuring that guest requests are clearly understood.

Clarification is especially important when discussing reservations, transportation schedules, dietary restrictions, or special requests.

### 4. Responding Appropriately

After listening carefully, employees should provide helpful, respectful, and professional responses.

Appropriate responses demonstrate empathy, professionalism, and willingness to assist guests.

For example, if a guest complains about delayed service, employees should acknowledge the concern politely and offer assistance instead of becoming defensive.

Professional responses help maintain positive guest relationships even during challenging situations.

## Telephone Etiquette

Although digital communication is increasing, telephone communication remains very important in hotels, airlines, restaurants, travel agencies, and tourism offices.

Guests often contact hospitality organizations through phone calls to ask questions, make reservations, confirm schedules, request assistance, or file concerns. Because telephone communication does not involve face-to-face interaction, employees must rely heavily on tone of voice, clarity, and professionalism.

Proper telephone etiquette helps create positive impressions and reflects the professionalism of the organization.

### Guidelines for Proper Telephone Etiquette

#### 1. Answer Calls Promptly

Calls should be answered as quickly as possible to avoid keeping guests waiting for long periods.

Delayed responses may create negative impressions and dissatisfaction.

#### 2. Introduce Yourself and the Organization

Employees should properly identify themselves and the organization when answering calls.

Example:

“Good morning. Thank you for calling ABC Hotel. This is Anna speaking. How may I assist you?”

This greeting sounds professional, polite, and welcoming.

### 3. Speak Clearly and Politely

Employees should speak clearly, calmly, and professionally during telephone conversations.

Because guests cannot see facial expressions or body language, tone of voice becomes extremely important during calls.

Polite communication helps guests feel respected and comfortable.

### 4. Listen Carefully

Employees must pay close attention to guest concerns, requests, and questions during phone calls.

Careful listening helps avoid misunderstandings and improves service accuracy.

### 5. Take Accurate Messages

When receiving messages, employees should record details correctly, including names, phone numbers, schedules, and requests.

Accurate message-taking helps maintain smooth communication and prevents service errors.

### 6. End Calls Professionally

Telephone conversations should end politely and professionally.

Employees may thank the caller and offer additional assistance if necessary.

Example:

“Thank you for calling ABC Hotel. Have a wonderful day.”

Ending calls professionally leaves positive impressions on guests.

## Customer Interaction Skills

Customer interaction skills are essential in hospitality and tourism because employees constantly communicate with guests from different backgrounds and cultures.

Positive guest interactions help improve customer satisfaction and strengthen the reputation of the organization.

### 1. Greeting Guests

A proper greeting creates a positive first impression.

Guests should be welcomed warmly using polite expressions, friendly tone of voice, and appropriate body language.

Simple greetings such as:

“Good afternoon, Sir.”

“Welcome to our hotel.”

can immediately help guests feel comfortable and valued.

### 2. Asking Questions

Asking questions helps employees identify guest needs and provide appropriate assistance.

Questions may involve:

- room preferences,
- dietary restrictions,
- travel concerns,

- transportation needs, or
- service requests.

Proper questioning also helps employees avoid misunderstandings.

### 3. Giving Directions

Hospitality employees should provide clear and accurate directions when assisting guests.

Directions should be simple, organized, and easy to follow.

Employees may also use landmarks or visual references to make instructions clearer.

### 4. Managing Difficult Conversations

Hospitality professionals sometimes encounter complaints, misunderstandings, or difficult guests.

During these situations, employees should remain calm, respectful, patient, and solution-oriented.

Professional communication helps reduce tension and improves problem-solving.

Employees should avoid arguing, interrupting, or responding emotionally to guests.

### Example Scenario

A tourist asks for directions to a local attraction.

Professional Response:

“The museum is approximately ten minutes from here. You may take a taxi from the hotel entrance, or I can help arrange transportation for you.”

This response is professional because it provides clear information, offers assistance, and uses polite communication.

## Conclusion

Oral communication is one of the most important skills in the hospitality and tourism industry. Employees use oral communication every day when assisting guests, answering questions, handling complaints, conducting tours, and coordinating workplace operations.

Developing strong oral communication skills helps hospitality professionals improve guest satisfaction, strengthen teamwork, reduce misunderstandings, and maintain professionalism in service interactions.

As future hospitality and tourism professionals, learning how to speak clearly, listen actively, respond professionally, and communicate respectfully will help you provide excellent customer service and create meaningful guest experiences.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does tone influence customer satisfaction?
2. How can communication create emotional experiences?
3. Why is active listening important in hospitality?
4. How does professionalism affect customer loyalty?
5. Why do guests remember employee behavior?

## ADVANCED ANALYSIS: ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is more than hearing words.

It involves:

- Emotional understanding
- Attention
- Patience
- Clarification
- Proper response

Poor listening may cause:

- Incorrect reservations
- Misunderstood requests
- Guest frustration
- Service failures

## **CASE ANALYSIS 1**

### **Situation**

A guest repeatedly explains dietary restrictions, but the restaurant employee appears distracted and continues checking a phone.

### **Questions**

1. What communication mistakes occurred?
2. How might the guest feel?
3. Why is attention important in active listening?
4. What could happen if dietary requests are misunderstood?
5. How should the employee respond professionally?

## **CASE ANALYSIS 2**

### **Situation**

A receptionist becomes impatient while answering repeated guest questions.

### **Questions**

1. What professional standards were violated?
2. How does impatience affect guest experience?
3. How can employees remain calm during stressful situations?
4. What would be a more professional response?

## **ROLE-PLAY ACTIVITY**

### **Objective**

Practice oral communication skills in realistic tourism scenarios.

## **SCENARIOS**

1. Front desk check-in
2. Tour guiding
3. Restaurant complaint handling
4. Telephone reservation
5. Airport assistance

6. Transportation delay announcement
7. Emergency communication
8. Assisting foreign tourists

### **ROLE-PLAY REQUIREMENTS**

Students must demonstrate:

- Clear speech
- Professional tone
- Active listening
- Proper greetings
- Empathy
- Problem-solving
- Respectful responses

### **PERFORMANCE RUBRIC**

| <b>Criteria</b>         | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Clarity of Speech       | 20%               |
| Professional Tone       | 20%               |
| Active Listening        | 20%               |
| Problem-Solving Ability | 20%               |
| Professionalism         | 20%               |

### **PRACTICAL EXERCISE: TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE**

#### **Instructions**

Students simulate professional hospitality phone calls.

#### **SITUATIONS**

1. Hotel room reservation
2. Restaurant booking
3. Guest complaint
4. Airport pickup confirmation
5. Tour package inquiry

### **REQUIRED COMPONENTS**

Students must:

- Answer promptly
- Introduce themselves professionally
- Speak clearly
- Take accurate information
- End calls professionally

### **CRITICAL THINKING DISCUSSION**

**Topic:**

“Why is oral communication considered one of the most important skills in hospitality and tourism industries?”

Students should analyze:

- Customer satisfaction
- Workplace coordination
- Emotional experiences
- Service quality
- Organizational image
- Customer loyalty
- Cultural interaction

**SYNTHESIS**

Oral communication is one of the foundations of hospitality and tourism service. Effective communication requires:

- Clarity
- Respect
- Professionalism
- Empathy
- Active listening
- Emotional intelligence

In hospitality industries, communication is not only about speaking correctly — it is about making guests feel respected, understood, valued, and welcome throughout the entire service experience.

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