



FURTHER READING

Module 1

Introduction to management

Lesson 2- Soft and hard skill in management

In this new lesson we have briefly explain some of the most important hard and soft skills in the tourism industry.

In this document we will develop further the concept of some soft skills.

1) TEAMWORK AND TEAM BUILDING

Organizing a team and working with team members is a vital soft skill. Simply having employees that work in the same office does not constitute a team. Building a real team requires teamwork, trust and reliability, effective negotiation, and proper task distribution. Team members must be able to successfully divide tasks and split workloads in a fair and proper manner while combining individual strengths and skills towards a common goal. People are the problem and the solution in effective teamwork. Creating a team that knows how to work together can be very simple but also extremely complex. Working in teams can increase productivity and have wonderful benefits but can sometimes produce large problems and dysfunction in the workplace. Have you ever worked as part of a team? Think about the issues you were faced with and how you overcame them.

Benefits of teamwork in the workplace:

- Encourages creativity and learning
- Combines individual strengths and skills
- Builds trust and reliability
- Teaches conflict resolution skills

Questions to ask yourself and your team to ensure effective teamwork:

1. Does your team understand the mission, vision and purpose? Do all members agree?

People work better when they feel they have a purpose or are making a difference in a greater cause. If employees cannot see the bigger picture they are likely to get bogged down in daunting everyday tasks and forget why they are even trying. Working together to set a group mission is an excellent way to assure that all team members feel like they are part of the team and the vision.

2. Does the environment encourage a little room for risk?

Team member must be able to take chances and make their own decisions in order to feel fulfilled in the workplace. This will encourage individuals to take responsibility and focus on the greater mission of the team.

3. Does your team use respectful communication?

Members should feel free to express themselves openly and honestly without fear of backlash or judgement. All members should feel equal in communication and must listen to one another and understand each others point of view.

4. Do you make participative decisions?

All team members should take part in the leadership and decision making processes. If all members are actively contributing you will end up with higher quality decisions and less conflict.

5. How do you solve problems?

Do team members have arguments or conflicts because of personality differences or personal clashes? If so, your team is not functioning properly. Teams should develop and agree on specific methods for problem solving and should always work for the goal of the team.

6. Does your team have a sense of group commitment?

Each team member should feel valued and irreplaceable in their position. The beauty of teamwork is that each person's experiences add a uniqueness and offer different ideas. When people have a sense of belonging and a commitment to the group, they will produce higher quality performance and take action to resolve conflicts.

7. Do you strive for improvement?

Teams should be open to constructive criticism and continuously reflect on strengths and weaknesses in order to correct past mistakes and progress in areas of weakness. Open

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dialogues and discussions should be used to encourage participation and reflection.

8. Is there room for creativity?

Innovation comes from diversity and creativity. When all members of a team feel free to let creativity flow, beautiful things can happen. Positive reinforcement and freedom encourage strength in the team.

2) CULTURAL AWARENESS

In a multicultural world intercultural awareness is crucial in order to be successful. Intercultural awareness is understanding one's own culture and other cultures, as well as the similarities and differences between them, including values, beliefs, and behaviour. These differences are very important when interacting with people from different backgrounds or cultures.

Although it would be wonderful to individually learn about every culture, it is understood that this is a daunting, unrealistic task for most, and not necessary in order to become an interculturally effective person. It is simply necessary to understand that there are many different cultures and each one comes along with its own behaviors and beliefs. No culture should be considered correct, wrong, nor strange. Accepting diversity is a two-way process, and is vital for social cohesion. "Social cohesion is the willingness of members of a society to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper." (Stanley 2003)

Cultural Identity:

"Culture is the shared characteristics of a group of people, which encompasses , place of birth, religion, language, cuisine, social behaviors, art, literature, and music. Some cultures are widespread, and have a large number of people who associate themselves with those particular values, beliefs, and origins. Others are relatively small, with only a small number of people who associate themselves with that culture. However, the value of culture cannot be defined by its size.

No matter if a culture is widespread or kept within a small region, is young or old, or has changed over time or stayed the same, every culture can teach us about ourselves, others, and the global community." (National Geographic 2020)

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3) TIME MANAGEMENT

Why is it that everyone has the same amount of time in a day, yet some people can achieve so much more than others in that same time frame? Time management is what sets the achievers apart from the rest. Someone with effective time management skills focuses on results rather than tasks and understands that occupying your time is not the same as effectively working. Time management plans have to be personal, well structured and flexible. "Time management is a skill and individuals should learn effective time management irrespective of their age, work, jobs, caste, class, creed or religion. It is done in a successful manner by giving priorities; things that are more important should be put into practice first and other things that are lesser important can be procrastinated. Practicing time management always prevents an individual from keeping behind in his work and studies" (Kapur, Radhika. (2018). Time Management - A Case Study).

Benefits of time management:

- Stress relief
- More time
- More opportunities
- Ability to reach goals

Time management process:

- Set goals correctly: the first thing to do is knowing your goals. If you don't know where to start, you can use SMART goals. That means: Specific, Meaningful, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound. Then write them down and start planning the activities in accordance
- Planning: start by planning your work weekly to reduce fatigue and have a clear insight of what's to come. You can check this article for more tips on how to plan your week:
- Prioritize wisely: categorize the tasks weekly and review them daily.
- Take breaks between tasks: to reduce exhaustion and to increase productivity.

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- Remove non-essential tasks: you can either say “no” to some tasks or delegate those that can be done by others

One of the most important steps of this process is to have a “Plan”. Planning your week schedule for personal and professional purpose is a way of avoid fatigue when having a lot of decisions to make, it is also a way to learn how to prioritize time and projects.

In order to make a good plan you have to look at the whole picture, not only specific tasks. Take one day a week (Friday, Saturday or Sunday; for example) and see everything you need to do, including routines, social events and leisure activities.

Once you know everything you need to do, prioritize, decide between what is urgent and the work you can delegate.

And finally, when planning your working schedule include breaks. Remember that studies show that those who give in to a distraction once an hour do better than those who just keep at it without a break.