

MODULE 3: Hospitality & Professionalism

The general term of “hospitality industry” covers a vast array of service providing businesses including travel and tourism establishments. Recreational diving and water sports is part of the tourism activities taking place in and around seaside resorts like the main Red Sea destination resorts, be it in the Red Sea governorate or in South Sinai.

The business of recreational diving and water sports is based on providing these services to tourists. Thus, it is concerned about how to make tourists comfortable and happy all during the time these services are being provided. Because the tourists are spending time in places that are not theirs, they should be treated as guests and the service provider will have to play the role of their “host”.

While playing this role, the host will have to show that he is well trained to satisfy the needs of his guests. Only well trained people deserve the name of “professional”. Hence, the center manager who is leading a team of professionals will have to be aware and ready to take the adequate measures when it comes to the following points:

- **Cleanliness:**
 - Tourism in general is very sensitive to how clean the place is.
 - Tourists will be reluctant to go to a location that is dirty or polluted. They will often associate that with lack of hygiene and will think that their health may be at risk.
 - On the other hand, pollution can also be esthetic. Although plastic waste in not necessarily a risk to health, but it decreases the quality of any natural resources only by the fact it does not look pleasant.
 - Any place visited by tourists should be equipped with adequate garbage bins, regularly cleaned and free of any kind of pollution.
 - Cleanliness should cover transportation means, premises, boats, equipment, etc.
- **Uniform & Appearance:**
 - A tourism outlet needs to convey a good image to its clients. The “uniform” is a dress code that helps this image being created.
 - Uniforms will ensure clients will easily identify the employees would they need help or otherwise if they have other requests.
 - A good practice would be to have all staff members wearing a name badge or tag especially if they are in contact with clients.
 - Personal grooming is also advised. Clients will feel much more comfortable dealing with staff members who have their hair brushed, who smell good and have clean and neat uniforms.
- **Timing & Punctuality:**
 - Timing is to set a specific time where the different activities will take place.
 - Punctuality is to do the required job at a prefixed time.
 - Clients will feel neglected if they are not served at the precise time they have been told. This will leave the impression the staff members are not professionals and that the whole company is not organized.

- While asking clients to wait for some services like equipment delivery can be acceptable, being late for transportation is not tolerable.
- **Greeting clients:**
 - Upon arrival, the clients will be waiting for a welcoming statement from a smiling staff member.
 - Clients would feel offended if they ask you for something and do not receive answer. Would the staff in charge be busy doing an important task, he should answer back to the clients that he will be with them in the shortest delay.
- **Problem solving:**
 - No service providing is trouble free. Problems may arise anytime.
 - In case of a problem, even if the concerned staff member considers it small, the manager should be notified.
 - Problems should be tackled promptly. This will help to make the affected client pleased knowing that his satisfaction is important.
 - The best way is to prevent the problem of growing. As an example, there would always be onboard spare “save-the-day” equipment: e.g. extra tanks, weight, masks, fins, snorkels, O-rings, etc.
 - Whenever the problem is related to operation mistakes, the client should be granted an apology and offered compensation. Denial will only make the problem worse.
 - When being in the problem solving process, safety has to be set as the prime priority.
- **Meeting clients’ needs:**
 - To be able to provide a good service, it essential to know who the client is: what are his skills and what training he had if any. It is also good to know his preferences.
 - Once the above information is obtained, it will be easy to meet the clients’ needs especially regarding the selection of the sites and the kind of activities the client can join in.
 - For example, experienced divers will not be satisfied if they are taken to dive in shallow inner lagoons, which may be a good choice for beginners.
- **Info board:**
 - An info board is a necessary tool that clients need to have in a clear and accessible place within the reception area.
 - Some clients prefer to read written information than receiving it verbally. This will prevent any potential misunderstanding and will reduce the possibility of a client complaint.
 - The information should cover the offered activities and their time schedule.
 - The price of each activity has to be included in the info board.
- **Price list:**
 - All activities and their respective price have to be listed in the price list.
 - The published full price of each activity is called the “rack rate”.
 - No client should be asked to pay a value exceeding the rack rate. However, the client can be granted a discount as needed to boost sales or for any other reason.
 - If the prices are in foreign currency, the exchange rate to Egyptian pounds should be indicated.

- **Clients satisfaction form & complaint box:** (can be digital)
 - A client satisfaction form is a mean to assess the quality of the delivered services. It is a very powerful tool to indicate if there is a problem that should be tackled. (Attachment)
 - This form lists the main components of the delivered services such as the sites where the activity took place, the equipment in use, the staff, the boat, etc.
 - The client filling in the form is asked to give each of the above components a grade or a note, usually from 1 (poor) to 4 (very good).
 - The client is also asked to write the date and, although not necessary, his name.
 - While this form is not a requirement, it is highly recommended to use it because it can sometimes be used to prove that the service quality was adequate, especially in case of criticism or dispute.
 - On the other hand, the complaint box is mandatory. It is necessary for any manager to be able to follow the clients' comments and critics for the sake of improving the service quality. It is also a mean to get back to the unsatisfied client to try to take the needed measures to please him.
- **Code of conduct with, and in front of clients:**
 - Clients should be treated with extended courtesy and politeness as guests, not as friends.
 - Smoking in front of the clients is a sign of disrespect. It should be confined to places where there is no contact with clients.
 - Staff members should always be aware of the fact that while most clients do not speak Arabic language, some of them do. Thus they should not use bad vocabulary at all.
 - Staff members should also pay attention to the culture difference. They should respect the clients' culture while showing the best of ours.
 - Shouting, even if for joking, will make the clients fell unease. Staff members should always use lower voice even when talking to each other in front of clients.
 - Clients will be most comfortable when staff members will be showing signs of friendship in between each other.
 - Respecting the environmental conservation rules will increase the clients' esteem towards the staff members.
 - **Staff members should always act in a responsible manner:**
 - Always demonstrate enthusiasm for Egypt.
 - Be willing to provide maximum support and best possible service quality.
 - Never discriminate in rendering services to any client based on color, gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, etc.
 - Never provide clients with misleading information.
 - Never encourage patronage of souvenir or other retail shops for the purpose of obtaining commissions.
- **Sexual harassment, the different ways and its impact:**
 - Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances.
 - Sexual harassment is not necessarily a physical contact.

It has other different forms like:

- Following a person around, or placing unwelcome phone calls, or using social media means to send unwelcome messages.
 - Using verbal propositions or explicit vocal sounds.
 - Using explicit drawings, pictures or written material.
 - Using explicit body language or hand signs.
- Sexual harassment can be resulting of actions made with good faith. In such case, it will be difficult to prove a potential false accusation. Therefore, special care should be taken especially when dealing with females. Before helping, the staff member should ask the permission first, e.g. when helping clients to put on or take off wet suits.
 - The client who suffers a sexual harassment or what he thinks is a sexual harassment will immediately feel threatened, endangered and disrespected.
 - Sexual harassment is one of the most harmful acts jeopardizing the whole tourism business in Egypt.
 - Staff members committing or accused of committing acts of sexual harassment should immediately be suspended. At the manager's discretion, especially if the allegation is proved true and even if the client does not want to press charges, the staff member should be reported to the tourism police. The staff members have to know that such an act is a crime that will not be dealt with lightly.
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