# Relationships within your team

## Overview

There are different types of relationships that exist within your workplace including those with co-workers and staff members, managers, customers and clients, suppliers and contractors, as well as shareholders or constituents.

There may be disagreements in the workplace; however, effective relationships are essential in any successful work environments.

As a member of our team there are three primary elements that you need to address when working in our collaborative work environments:

1. Following our organisational standards, policies and procedures that relate to your work role
2. Understanding team responsibilities and duties, as well as your individual responsibilities and duties
3. Identifying and implementing conflict resolution techniques.

## Expectations

**The importance of satisfying our clients**

Customer satisfaction is essential in the tourism industry – we need people to come back to us multiple times.

What makes our role different is the idea of service and ensuring our client gets the best advice, experience and service that is possible to provide. Client service and satisfaction should be at the forefront for all businesses in the tourism industry.

**The skill-set required to work in the tourism industry successfully**

To have a successful career in the tourism industry, there are specific skills that go beyond technical skills. The attributes that are required include:

* Exceptional personal presentation.
* Being able to communicate with people from various cultural backgrounds
* The ability to work under pressure
* Responding appropriately to complaints
* Working as part of a team
* Paying attention to detail
* Being honest, reliable and punctual
* Good work ethics.

These are all often linked to five attributes which are: integrity, sense of responsibility, emphasis on quality, discipline and knowledge of teamwork.

**Interpersonal skills that are beneficial for individuals working in tourism**

Interpersonal skills are the skills that help to communicate and interrelate with others. It is, therefore, important in the tourism industry as they are required to interrelate and communicate with a wide range of people who are either working in that industries or who are seeking an experience outside of their normal life routine. Within the workplace, interpersonal skills are demonstrated via personal attributes, assertiveness, self-confidence and open-mindedness.

Interpersonal skills that are beneficial are outstanding personal presentation and grooming, communication skills, showing initiative in social interactions and good teamwork skills.

**The importance of personal presentation and standards of personal hygiene**

The importance of personal presentation and standards of hygiene must not be underestimated. It is important to remember that there is no second chance to make a first impression. The key elements to personal presentation are personal hygiene, grooming and uniform care/clothing care.

**Presentation standards for specific workplaces and job roles**

Hair and grooming should be neat and appropriate, including no outlandish hairstyles, good skincare with minimal make-up or a clean-shaven or neatly trimmed facial hair, and good oral and personal hygiene.

* Correct posture and suitable behaviour.
* Clean hands and nails
* Minimal perfume or jewellery.
* Clothing should be the provided uniform; if this is not available then a black skirt or black trousers or slacks, a white sleeved and collared shirt or blouse may be used. All clothing should be clean, pressed and in good repair.
* Shoes must be clean, in good repair and suitable for work.

**Behaviour that supports a safe and sustainable tourism work environment**

The issues that surround a safe and sustainable work environment are complex and can be tough to navigate. Adhering to a code of conduct which promotes a safe and sustainable work environment is the responsibility of all staff. Following a code of conduct is about doing the right thing, for the current workplace and employees, as well as the future.

Some areas need to be improved in the tourism industry, particularly around sustainable work methods. It is essential to consider that change can have a significant impact on suppliers, staff, customers and the local communities. However, through all of this, the business must maintain safe and sustainable behaviour.

Having a safe and sustainable work culture is a process that should be embedded throughout the business. The most simple of tasks, including recycling cardboard, installing timers on lights or having rainwater collection tanks, can have a significant impact on the sustainability of the work environment.

## Workplace standards, policies and procedures

Quality workplace standards, policies and procedures can serve a number of benefits, including:

* Setting the values of an organisation
* Complying with employment and other associated legislation
* Demonstrating that the organisation is being operated in an efficient and business-like manner
* It promotes uniformity and consistency in decision-making and operational procedures across the business and it can help support staff when legal actions arise
* It helps to make the problem-solving process more efficiently when issues come up
* It supports stability as well as continuity
* During periods of change, it supports the direction of the organisation
* It provides a framework for business planning
* It can assist in the review of performance for the business
* It helps to determine specific functions and responsibilities in various parts of the business.

### The process of establishing workplace standards, policies and procedures

**Step 1 – Management Support**

Senior management of the centre must initiate and be active in the process of designing, implementing or modifying a standard, policy or procedure. It is essential that senior management set an example for staff by behaving in a way that that they would like staff to behave. This will also assist in staff acknowledging policy guidelines. While the support for a policy from management is key, ideas and staff input is crucial.

**Step 2 - Consult with staff**

The inclusion of staff through the development and implementation of policies can have several benefits, including an improved awareness as well as an understanding of the outcome.

Furthermore, it assists in determining how and when the policy may apply, as well as potential unintentional outcomes from the policy.

**Step 3 - Identify the terms of the policy.**

Centre management must define the key terms in the policy from the start so that all staff understand what is being communicated. The workplace must be clear in identifying acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the workplace. Examples are useful in demonstrating problem areas as well as unacceptable behaviour. For example:

*The individual shall be deemed to be intoxicated if he/she exceeds a blood alcohol level of 0.05%.*

The policy must clearly identify who it applies to. For example, is it only applicable to employees of the company, or contractors and sub-contractors? This is key, particularly for workplace health and safety as policies in this area cover everyone in the workplace.

A policy should include information as to what happens when the policy cannot be followed. For example, if there is a policy regarding punctuality, there may need to be a procedure that outlines what to do if a staff member is going to be late.

It is also essential to include information on procedures when the policy is in operation, such as the implications when the policy is not adhered to.

**Example 1: Workplace health and safety**

*Under no circumstances is an employee to begin or return to work while they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Any breach of this policy can result in disciplinary action, up to and including the termination of employment.*

**Example 2: Email policy**

*The use of the centre's computer resources to seek out, access or send material containing offensive, obscene or defamatory nature is strictly prohibited and can result in disciplinary action.*

**Step 4 - Place the policies in writing and publicise them**

Policies must be publicised and promoted to all new and existing employees, including casual, part-time and full-time employees, as well as those on maternity leave or career breaks.

They must be written in plain English that is clearly understood by all staff. For staff who are not conversant in English, then it is the centre’s management responsibility to ensure the worker has access to the information in their first language.

Staff must clearly understand the meaning of the policies. It is important that all policies and procedures are explained to staff so that they can comply with the policies/procedures, as well as understand the consequences for not complying.

**Step 5 - Training and regular referral**

Policies may need to be explained to staff via information/ training sessions, staff meeting, and during inductions for new staff. The review of such workplace expectations with all staff must occur regularly.

Policies should be easily accessible and kept in folders that are centrally located, in staff areas, as well as in staff manuals or kept on the organisation's intranet.

**Step 6 – Implementation**

Policies must be consistently applied throughout the organisation. Any breach should be dealt with promptly and in alignment with procedures set out in the policy. The consequence of the breach and the severity of the breach should be in line with each other, whether it be a warning, disciplinary action or dismissal.

**Step 7 - Evaluate and review**

Policies should be continuously reviewed so that they are current and in line with any changes that occur in the centre. No matter the size of the change, changed policies should be promoted and made available to staff with a clear explanation of the changes. Changes should also be promoted throughout the organisation.

### Structure of a workplace policy

It is essential that a workplace policy:

* Sets out the aim of the policy
* Explains why it was developed
* Identifies who it applies to
* Identifies acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
* Defines the consequences of not complying with the policy
* Includes the date when the policy was developed or updated
* Be continuously reviewed and updated when necessary. For example, if there is a change in equipment or with workplace procedures, the policy may need to be amended or updated.
* Changes to employment law, the award or the agreement may also require a review of policies and procedures. To stay up to date, regularly check Fair Work Online [Fair Work Ombudsman].

The following workplace policies benefit the centre:

* Code of conduct
* Recruitment policy
* Internet and email policy
* Mobile phone policy
* Non-smoking policy
* Drug and alcohol policy
* Health and safety policy
* Anti-discrimination and harassment policy
* Grievance handling policy
* Discipline and termination policy
* The use of social media.

## Team responsibilities and duties

Team responsibilities and duties also relate to individual responsibilities and duties.

Some teams may have a formal leader, some may exist for a short time, and some can last for years. Teams may have regular meetings, whereas others may work together outside the workplace to get a specific job done. Nonetheless, no matter the team, all individuals have responsibilities and duties with their assigned teams that include:

* Stating their view clearly
* Listening to other team members
* Trying to understand and see things from different perspectives
* Speaking respectfully to other team members
* Accepting that they may not always get their way
* Committing to the job of the team

When members of a team do not cooperate, it can have several negative impacts, including:

* Lower quality work
* The loss of customers and income
* Staff being laid off
* A more stressful work environment

When staff members are spoken to about a job, it is essential to:

* Articulate what is to be said
* Ensure that staff members are ready to focus on what is going to be said
* All the focus is on the conversation
* Communicate in a manner that is easy to understand
* Ensure that the staff member understands what is being communicated by asking questions.

It is easy to become preoccupied at work; however, it is essential to remember the importance of effective communication.

For example, you and the team have been trying to unpack supplies before the café/restaurant at the centre closes for the day. Yourself, as well as all staff members, are working hard and the manager approaches to discuss changes regarding the next roster. As a team leader, you agree as there is too much work to complete to stop and discuss this with the manager. The next day, staff are unsatisfied with the changes that have been made, you are aware that they had made specific requests for shifts however your focus was not on listening; therefore, it didn't register.

When working as part of a team, it is important to listen to other staff members. In the workplace, it can be easy not to listen; this could be due to:

* A high level of noise in the room
* Speaking a different first language to another staff member
* Sleep deprivation
* Staff members being agitated
* Not feeling well
* The other staff member having a mental or physical disability
* Having previously engaged in a difficult discussion with another staff member.

There are several potential barriers for effective communication; however, working as part of a team is about understanding those barriers and attempting to overcome them.

### Conflict resolution techniques

Conflict will inevitably arise in the workplace. It is bound to happen, particularly when there are staff members with varying expectations. Conflict management is crucial, whether it is avoiding arguments, disputes, lasting conflict or litigation.

Conflict between staff members may be avoided by steps taken early to reduce anger and support effective communication.

### Conflict resolution techniques

There are various conflict resolution techniques, including:

* Understanding that communication is a two-way process
* Practising empathy
* Understanding that time may be of the essence, so it is critical to stay on track

When issues cannot be resolved effectively, seek assistance and consider following the conflict resolution process, outlined below.

1. Listen with no interruption and record visual information
2. Acknowledge the complaint or concern that is being discussed
3. Identify the problem by establishing the nature of the problem and attempting to confirm the issue
4. Confirm and agree on the solution

Take the necessary actions to ensure that the issue has been resolved, whether it is with another staff member or with a customer

Record any customer complaints by following the required steps within the organisation, this may involve notifying a supervisor or higher authority or competing a Customer Complaint form.

### Ineffective techniques to handle conflict

Within the workplace, staff may not feel comfortable with discussing a disagreement. When significant disagreement is continually allowed to fester, it may result in supressed anger and resentment and a bottling up of negative feelings.

Lack of input into a solution will also lead to a reduction in the effectiveness of the team. It is important to seek others to contribute ideas, even if they differ to those of others in the team. All contributions can assist in establishing the best possible solution to the problem.

Discussing differences in a manner that is belittling or judgemental only leads to resentment and bad feelings. If a staff member is insistent on having their way, it can result in the perception of bullying.

Another ineffective approach is bargaining. This approach is more effective than avoiding conflict; however, it is not the most creative. One of the parties involved may make an offer that they do not feel entirely comfortable with. Therefore, neither parties will agree upon something that they are satisfied with.

For example, if two team leaders are disagreeing upon the allocation of promotion funds and agree to share the funds equally. This may mean that the the centre’s budget has insufficient funds to refurbish the tourist front office. Solutions must be made with the best interests of the centre and its aims and purposes.

Putting in the additional effort, spending a little bit more time, establishing the needs of each party and establishing a solution that satisfies the needs of all parties as well as the centre can be of significant benefit.

### Effective Conflict Resolution

Conflict can be dealt with in a positive as well as constructive manner, enhancing decision making and adding to effective relationships in the workplace. These skills are referred to as conflict resolution skills.

Effective conflict resolution provides the chance for change, growth, as well as understanding. A key element in conflict resolution is making the shift from judgement to curiosity. For example, shifting the view from *"How would John think that someone would be interested in purchasing that?"* to, *"I wonder what ideas John has".*

Following through with a question can assist other staff members in feeling less defensive as they may feel that others are interested in their ideas. When individuals feel less defensive, they may be more likely to be considerate of new ideas and cooperate more effectively.

### How personal values, opinions and ethics can affect work

**Attitude:** refers to the beliefs of an individual and what they perceive to be the proper way of doing or thinking about something

**Value:** refers to the issues that an individual feels strongly about; it is also a core belief.

**Opinions:** refers to attitudes that are not as important to an individual

**Ethics:** these are a belief and are what an individual perceives to be the proper way of doing or thinking about something.

**Duties and responsibilities**

There are specific duties and responsibilities for each job role and staff members may seek assistance to complete these if the workload becomes too much to handle. When each member of a team identifies their goals and plans in the workplace and takes responsibility for each aspect, it helps to ensure the success for the centre and all its workers.

**Industry currency**

Conversations revolving around change are common in most workplaces, managing change and coping with it is a reality; therefore, businesses need to establish processes to deal with this change and remain relevant in the industry. The tourism industry is a prime example asit is continuously evolving and making changes in the way that it operates. It is key to update the necessary skills and knowledge while ensuring that staff keep in touch, maintain relevant knowledge, and are flexible to working in new ways.

**Feedback**

Feedback refers to the information that is received regarding work performance; this can be communicated both verbally and non-verbally. The value of feedback to an individual worker, the workplace and the industry is listed below:

***Individual worker:*** this ensures that the worker is informed on their performance and informs them about areas for improvement.

***Workplace:*** helps to define and overcome existing issues, can assist in changing established possible ineffective work practices, improves productivity, increases the quality of output and can help in developing strategies for future development.

***Industry:*** assists in improving business relationships, as well as productivity and the perception of the industry.

Feedback can be collected from several sources:

***Personal reflection:*** this provides an opportunity to reconsider events, as well as thoughts and feelings from a refreshed perspective.

***Formal/informal:*** Formal feedback refers to intentional feedback and a planned process of providing feedback to an employee. Informal feedback is the feedback received from a customer via informal conversations, as well as social conversations amongst customers.

***Direct/indirect:*** Direct feedback refers to explicit information on required improvements for factors that do not meet the standard expected. Indirect feedback is generally less specific, therefore requires more thorough input and effort to meet the expected requirements.

It is important to never underestimate the power of the support from other staff members. Mutual respect is key in any industry, as well as support and cooperation.

Social interaction refers to how individuals conduct themselves around others. It communicates attitudes, establishes if individuals feel comfortable with each other and invites them to communicate and establish relationships. Always remain friendly and approachable, as this will encourage others to do the same.

It is essential that our centre staff interact socially with customers and other staff.

## Communication in the workplace

Communication is one of the most important and widely used skills within the tourism industry. It is essential you have the information and attitude to perform your jobs effectively. It is also important to ensure information is being received. Always communicate with customers courteously, even if it is a complaint.

### Communication process/cycle

Communication begins when a message is sent to a person via a suitable channel or method. This can be verbal, non-verbal or written communication. The following steps outline the communication process:

* The sender considers what must be communicated.
* The sender transmits the information via a channel. (Encodes)
* The receiver determines what the information is about. (Decodes)
* The receiver responds by sending a message back to the sender, with the sender then interpreting that message.

### Types and effects of communication

A simple definition of communication is the act of transferring information from one place to another; however, it is a complex subject. There are several categories of communication and more than one can occur at the same time.

Verbal communication is speaking and can be face-to-face, telephone, answering machine and voicemail. Non-verbal communication is via visual cues or body language. Examples are body language, gestures, appearance and facial expression.

Written communication involves messages, emails, faxes, procedure and policy documentation, general correspondence such as letters, memos, minutes from meetings, proformas and reports.

### Effective verbal, non-verbal and written communication

Effective communication is a mandatory requirement to work with staff members and customers. Communication can be improved by paying attention to minor details. To improve listening skills, the following strategies should be utilised:

* Using active listening to understand and absorb what the other person is saying truly.
* Ensuring that any barriers are removed that could impede listening from occurring, such as noise, distractions, preconceived ideas and stereotyping.
* Maintaining objectivity and avoiding getting emotionally involved
* Using effective questioning as well as listening techniques

Active listening is a crucial skill; however, individuals often spend more energy in considering what they will say rather than listening and understanding what the other person is attempting to communicate. Active listening is a skill and is essential for effective verbal communication.

Skills required for effective and active listening are:

* Being prepared to listen - Maintaining an open mind and focusing on the main message that the other person is trying to communicate.
* Remaining objective - Not spending time thinking of the next question to be asked while the other person is providing information.

Effective questioning is another essential skill and can be used to:

* Obtain information.
* Start a conversation.
* Attract someone to a conversation.
* Seek support or agreement.
* Closed and open questions

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| **Questioning Techniques** | **Definition** | **Example** |
| **Open questions** | Are necessary to obtain detailed information. | What types of facilities do you require during the conference? |
| **Closed questions** | Are asked when short responses are required. | How many reservations do we have this evening? |
| **Reflective questions** | Are usually to clarify what has been said. | Would you like the roast beef with a vegetable side salad and a glass of Merlot? |

### Barriers to effective communication and strategies to overcome them

If barriers exist, they can impede effective communication. Potential barriers include:

***Bias and stereotyping:*** these may be existing prejudice or preconceived ideas, as well as judging a person based upon the way that they look, speak, act, their age or gender.

***Lack of empathy:*** this refers to the inability to be or show compassion

***Negative subtext:*** when something is implied or suggested despite the speaker never actually saying it

***Gender issues:*** treating other genders unequally

***Individual differences:*** failing to recognise that other people are individuals and need to be treated that way

***Inconsistency:*** failing to treat all individuals the same, or in cases that the same product or service is not consistently delivered the same way

***Emotions:*** Allowing personal emotions to impact actions; emotions must not affect work ethic, therefore, do not share any personal issues

***Physical barriers:*** this may be loud music or noise that impedes the message being received and understood

***Inattention:*** failing to show consideration or awareness of details

***The pressure of time:*** allowing the demand for performance to getting a task done, resulting in ineffective communication. Delegation should be implemented to complete jobs in the required timeframe. When this fails to occur, frustration and inconsistency in service are likely to occur.

## Workplace protocol regarding working with others

Workplace protocol refers to how a business is run and how staff are expected to act. They are often unwritten rules or guidelines, generally specific to the workplace, that are expected to be observed by all staff. These protocols can be difficult initially; however, they are important to follow as success often depends on understanding and following them.

### Importance of teamwork in the tourism workplace

A team refers to a group of individuals who work together collaboratively to achieve a common goal. Teamwork refers to a group that is working toward achieving a common goal. Characteristics involved with effective teamwork include shared values, mutual trust, inspiring vision, a plethora of skills and cooperation amongst team members. In the tourism industry, especially in our centre, there are several teams or workgroups that have different areas of responsibilities and duties.

### Supporting others and delivering quality work outcomes

It is important to support others to achieve team or workgroup goals as there are no individuals or isolated work teams in our centre. One bad experience can have a detrimental impact on the experience for the client, having long-term implications on this business and the tourism businesses that depend upon us. All workers must ensure that they are delivering quality work through effective teamwork.