

KEY SKILLS FOR EMPLOYEES IN THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY



When choosing talent for a travel agency or tourism company, academic qualifications are one of many factors to consider. Certain targeted skills are equally important.

When hiring for a travel agency, what are the essential skills to look for?

The sense of customer service

In the tourism industry, providing excellent customer service is of utmost importance. It's not merely about fulfilling demands but creating memorable experiences for every traveler. However, this skill is not limited to just tourism professions. Comprehending and satisfying customer requirements is a valuable skill in many professional fields.

Whether catering, retail, or healthcare, empathetically considering clients' needs remains at the core of customer service.

So, when seeking candidates for a travel agency, it's essential not to restrict yourself only to those with experience in tourism. Individuals from different sectors with strong customer service abilities can provide a fresh and diverse perspective.

Their ability to handle stressful situations, address customer concerns with empathy, and always put the customer's needs first can be significant assets for any travel agency.

Mastery of (digital) communication

The tourism and travel sector has significantly changed in recent years, particularly regarding communication channels and methods. Effective communication today goes beyond traditional face-to-face interactions, and mastery of digital communication has become an essential criterion for selection.

The ideal candidates should be familiar with digital tools commonly used in the industry and understand online communication's nuances. This includes knowledge of social media platforms, content management systems, instant messaging applications, and online booking software. Each tool has codes and communication methods that require a specific approach.

Moreover, digital communication in the tourism sector has its specificities. For instance, the presentation of a travel offer may vary greatly depending on whether it is on a website or a social media platform. Therefore, a good candidate must know how to adapt their message to the communication channel while maintaining clarity and conciseness.

Finally, speed of response is a crucial aspect of digital communication. In a world where consumers expect almost instant responses, a candidate's ability to quickly manage and respond to online queries is a huge asset.

Adaptability to unpredictable environments

The map of popular tourist destinations keeps changing due to recent geopolitical events, social upheavals, and environmental disasters. A country once a popular destination can quickly lose its appeal due to political crises, natural disasters, or instability. Similarly, new destinations can emerge, offering unexpected opportunities for the tourism sector.

In such uncertain times, any travel agency must have a team that can anticipate, understand, and adapt to sudden changes. An ideal candidate should be able to analyze a situation quickly, revisit existing strategies, and change direction to stay ahead of the curve. This goes beyond flexibility; it is an ability to innovate and pivot according to market conditions.

Moreover, adaptability is not only essential on a macro scale. On a day-to-day basis, tourism professionals may face immediate challenges, such as last-minute cancellations, transportation contingencies, or specific customer requests. Having employees who can calmly manage these situations while ensuring quality service is necessary to maintain the reputation and competitiveness of any travel agency.

Linguistic and cultural sensitivity

Speaking English fluently is just the beginning of having language skills in the tourism industry. The ability of a candidate to fully grasp the nuances and subtleties of other languages makes them valuable to the industry.

Understanding other cultures and their specificities is equally important. This requires a familiarity with foreign national cultures and regional cultures, especially in larger countries.

When recruiting, looking for individuals with a passion for cultural discovery and a desire to learn more is essential. These individuals will be able to offer authentic and memorable tourist experiences that will enrich any travel agency's offer.

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