

# REQUIRED SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF A MODERN MANAGER IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

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## **Abstract:**

This research was conducted on 209 respondents in the field of tourism and hospitality. The aim of the research was to determine the necessary leadership characteristics and skills of a modern tourism and hospitality manager, as leader of the organization or team in it. For the purposes of the survey questionnaire was used to ascertain the views and opinions of the respondents in terms of categories: psychological characteristics, personality, social characteristics, skills for establishing good interpersonal relations, intelligence and ability and characteristics related to work relations. As a result of the survey the following important characteristics and skills were determined: energy, mobility, self-confidence, originality and creativity, communication skills and ability to set and track goals.

*Keywords:* leadership, manager in tourism and hospitality, research, communication, characteristics and skills.

*JEL classification:* L83; J53

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism, as a non-production economy branch, today, in the world, represents a significant factor determining the overall development of a society or a state. The fundamentals of tourism as an economy branch, consists of: hospitality, traffic, trade, travel agencies, community services, agriculture, food processing industry and craftsmanship. The function of tourism is multiple: health-caring, social, cultural and historical, educational, entertaining, and above all economic. Hence, the main characteristic of tourism as a complex, mass and dynamic phenomenon, is the local, regional and global mobility of people. Tourism, and hospitality, as its essential constituent part, influences the global exchange of goods and represents a kind of bridge bringing closer people and cultures from all over the world. The development in tourism is in tight correlation with the development of a democratic, pluralistic and entrepreneurial society, as a basis for prosperity.

As it is the case with any other economy branch, the key factor to improvement and to efficient and effective working of tourism and hospitality organizations is good management.

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## MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

Management nowadays represents one of those terms that are very frequently used in everyday contacts and practice, but is rarely and not by everyone, taken in its correct meaning. It is necessary to treat management more like an activity or process rather than a term or event. The management refers to performing tasks or providing grounds for the things to happen and it refers to a process that everybody accepts as a manner or culture of living within the frames of their organizations.

The management is goal-oriented and takes care of achieving good results. Visible results understand establishing a set or a system of values regarding the nature of these results and the significance due to which the results are to be achieved. Becoming a successful manager is actually developing a capacity to understand the nature of results and achievements and their linkage within corresponding systems of values. This implies that the management is not and can not be neutral when it comes to values and results.

People are educated to become successful managers, both via the process of actual leading the organizations and via the formal and non-formal education. The management expresses itself by means of behavior. The successful manager is capable of working in conditions that are ranked among complex situations. In order to achieve this, the manager needs to possess skills for analyzing, setting priorities and communicating.

The term *management* derives from the verb *to manage* (the etymology of the word lies in the Latin roots of *manu agere*, or taking somebody by his-her hand) meaning: to direct, to govern, to supervise, to steer, to succeed, to take decisions for meeting the needs. The contemporary theory and practice treat the management from the aspect of:

- Process – it leads towards existence of managerial functions
- Institution – it refers to managerial roles
- Hierarchy – it discusses the existence of managerial levels.

The manager is a person that achieves results by means of the work of others, that is to say, his/her cooperators, individually or collectively, under complex circumstances of permanent change and suspension. Having in mind what was said previously, it is made clear that the managers are to be efficient and effective, they need to acquire certain competences (knowledge, skills and well-defined positions regarding certain issues), but also to display a specific kind of behavior. The essence of the successful management is the leadership.

The focus of the modern managers in tourism is placed upon creation and designing of corresponding organizational structure, including the way of distributing the activities, their organizing and coordination (Cerovic 2003). In this context the development of an appropriate organizational culture and creation of a healthy working climate are given important attention. In order to achieve the above, managers in tourism need to excel in decision taking and problem solving and be good motivators and communicators.

What is next, tourism managers need to have well developed emotional intelligence to help them cope with unknown and problem situations, to recognize and control their emotions, to recognize other people's emotions and to adjust their behavior to the given emotions in a given situation.

According to Professor Daniel Goleman from Harvard University, USA, emotional intelligence represents (2001): *“self-awareness; self-control; managing one's own emotions; motivation; empathy; ‘reading’ other people's emotions; socializing skills such*

as, team work capability, persuasiveness, listening, leadership and managing relations with other people”.

The emotional intelligence is being acquired through the experience of the individual, but it is being modeled in a process of education. There are four skills of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-governing, social awareness and interpersonal relations. These four skills define people’s ability to recognize and understand the emotions, as well as their capability to use this kind of awareness in managing their own behavior and their relations to other people (Cherniss and Goleman 2001).

Self-awareness is important for an objective viewing of one’s own situation and it represents ability to register one’s own emotions in a given moment and given situation, in line with one’s own general tendencies: controlling the typical reactions of one’s own. Situations creating strong emotions always require deeper thinking. As soon as the person admits and takes time to consider what s/he feels, that very moment s/he obtains the necessary information needed for making the right change in his/her life or work, to take an action. This is nothing more than managing one’s own self, or making a good plan that is to be implemented successfully. Managing one’s own self might mean taking an action or complete inactivity. Inactivity is also a kind of activity! Managing one’s own self is an ability to use the awareness about one’s own emotions in order to remain flexible and to positively direct the behavior of one’s own.

Whenever a person is able to analyze the things as they are, but from an aspect of other people, the way these people consider the things and activities, then this person is said to possess social awareness. Social awareness is an ability to register the emotions of other people and to understand what happens with these people and what they think. But it is very important to possess an ability for getting into relations with others, or an ability to establish good interpersonal relations. This provides clear communication and efficient acting in conflict situations. It is necessary to show confidence and respect towards collocutors. The four skills of emotional intelligence tend to group in pairs of the so-called primary competencies: personal (self-awareness and self-governing) and social competence (social awareness and interpersonal relations).

These four skills actually represent blocks that build on one another. Goleman creates a special model of emotional intelligence that is particularly designed for the work place (Cherniss and Goleman 2001).

	<b>Self</b> (personal skills)	<b>Others</b> (socializing skills)
<i>Recognition</i>	Self-awareness	Social awareness
	Emotional self-awareness	Empathy
	Precise self-estimation	Orientation towards the others
	Self-confidence	Organizational awareness
<i>Regulation</i>	Self-governing	Interpersonal relations
	Emotional self-control	Improving the others
	Reliability	Influence
	Conscientiousness	Communications
	Adaptability	Conflict management
	Aspiration towards achievement	Visionary leadership
	Initiative	Changes
		Relation building / networking
	Team work and cooperation	

**Figure 1.** Goleman’s model of emotional intelligence

## LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS

Every individual personality is validated through three essential elements: character, cognitive intelligence and emotional intelligence (Cherniss and Goleman 2001). The character is usually said to be the person's infrastructure. According to Robert Hogan, the term *person* is pretty ambiguous and the two meanings it might acquire are fairly contradictory. One meaning refers to the impression that the individual leaves on the others. This aspect stresses the societal reputation of a person and does not reflect just the description but also the grade awarded to the individual in the eyes of the others. The other aspect of understanding the personality, completely different from this one, emphasizes the "invisible" structures and processes inside the personality, that on the other hand explain why every individual behaves in a given manner or why the conduct of certain people tends to be relatively the same in different situations and different from the conduct of other people (Daft 1999).

Although each of these approaches provides useful perspective of introspection into the personality, still most of the research regarding the linkage between the person and his/her successful working activity, is based upon the approach that deals with characteristics or features. They refer to the things that are being repeated, or follow this trend in individual behavior. This approach implies that people support that type of behaving which results from the strong features they possess. In order to enter the structure of necessary qualities that a successful individual should possess, it is necessary to introduce the basic structure of the person that is characterized by its: abilities, temperament, character, will, interests, attitudes and physical features. There is one personality model which incorporates the following five dimensions: influence, perseverance, agreeability, adaptability and sensibility (Daft 1999).

The influence comprises of two personality features, predominance (the degree to which the person wants to control or influence the others) and socialization. Perseverance is connected to behaviors that are related to: endurance in accomplishing assignments, confidence and performance in accordance with the rules and policies. Perseverance as a characteristic is in direct relation with the energy capacity of every individual. It requires aspiration and dedication. Its constituent parts are the four features: orientation towards achievements, harmonization with the set goals, organization and credibility. In order to achieve the goals and to surmount the impediments on the way to it, it is necessary to possess self-confidence. Real self-confidence represents conviction based on: knowledge, future-orientation and proved successful work, which understands belief that one's personal views, aims and programs are the right directions leading towards solving the problems.

Agreeability relates to cooperation. A highly agreeable person is warm, cordial, accessible, whereas on the opposite side is cold and sullen person. Agreeability consists of three features: optimism, empathy and popularity.

Adaptability refers to the way of reacting of people in stress situations, or in cases of failure, or personal criticism. This dimension involves: emotional stability and self-criticism. People of high emotional stability seldom lose control, whereas the emotionally unstable people continuously complain about the situation, criticize team members and have emotional outbursts.

People of high sensibility, or intelligence degree are imaginative, curious, explorative, whereas those of low degree of sensibility (intelligence) always repeat what they have tried previously and do not want to make experiments.

A recent interesting research showed the features of managers that do not succeed in their businesses or functions: rudeness, showing no consideration for the others, bold, arrogant conduct, betrayal, over-ambitiousness, wrong interpretation of problems, inability to delegate responsibilities, inability to create teams or think strategically, selfishness. There are certain personal leadership characteristics that are considered of special importance for leaders in tourism. They are given as follows:

Psychological characteristics	Person	Socializing characteristics
Proactiveness	Carefulness	Ability to establish cooperation
Energy	Originality and creativity	Popularity
Social reputation	Personal integrity and ethical behavior	Communicativeness
Mobility	Self-confidence	
Intelligence and ability	Characteristics related to work relations	Skills to establish good interpersonal relations
Ability to make judgments	Wish to success	Ability for socialization
Confirmation Decisiveness	Stimulus for achievement	Carefulness
Knowledge	Stimulating responsibility	Diplomacy
Eloquence	Ability to set and pursue goals	

**Figure 2.** Personal characteristics of a leader

## EMPIRICAL COGNIZANCE

As a result of the survey conducted among 209 surveyed in the area of tourism and hospitality, as well as users of services in this area, certain empirical cognizance has been achieved. The aim of the survey was to determine the necessary leadership characteristics and skills of a contemporary manager in tourism and hospitality, as a leader of an organization or of teams within it. For the purpose of this survey a questionnaire checking the attitudes and opinions of the surveyed regarding: psychological characteristics, personality, socialization characteristics, skills to establish favorable interpersonal relations, intelligence and characteristics and skills as regards of working relations, was applied. The instrument was so designed as to make the surveyed produce ranking of the given skills and competences with grades 1-5 in accordance with the necessity, importance and usefulness.

Resulting from the survey, the following more important characteristics and skills have been determined: pro activeness (initiative and responsibility) – average grade 4.38, vigorousness – grade 4.51, mobility – 4.32, self-confidence – 4.42, originality and creativity – 4.56, communicativeness – 4.63 and ability to set and pursue goals – 4.47.

It should not be neglected that there were no big or significant differences in attitudes and opinions of the surveyed employees when compared to those of surveyed managers in tourism and hospitality, in correlation to attitudes and opinions of their customers and users of services, but still some of the notions were rather indicative. Largest portion of coincidence in attitudes and opinions falls within the parts relating to communicativeness, vigorousness and pro activeness. Tourism and hospitality workers, particularly the managers, put a special emphasis on the ability to establish cooperation, ability to set and pursue goals and the ability to judge, or in other words,

the abilities to establish good interpersonal relations and characteristics related to work relations. They prefer efficiency or efficacy in working. On the other hand the customers are more focused on the need for effectiveness, or quality and benefit. In this context, to them, communicativeness, ethical behavior, knowledge and pro activeness are the important features.

## CONCLUSION

Successful manager in tourism and hospitality as a leader should be a well-educated person with a high level of culture in various domains of life. The good knowledge and information provide the security in work, but they also make the manager appear attractive. The overall appearance, behavior, good manners, way of speaking, eloquence, all contribute to the attractiveness of the manager in public. High and rigid ethical standards and norms are a characteristic of a successful manager – leader. True leaders are highly motivated people with aspiration for achieving, ambitious, vigorous and original. They have confidence in their personal values, have capacity to accept, process and interpret huge amounts of data. They are capable of adapting to different personalities and situations, but they also wish to succeed as leaders.

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