Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Operations Management

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<th>Unit Title</th>
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<td>Guided Learning Hours</td>
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**Unit purpose and aim(s):**

This unit aims to give learners a sound understanding of:
- the key features of operations management in the TTH industry
- the role of operating systems in delivering customer service
- the role of ICT in the development of operational systems
- the key features of services and their implications for operations
- standardisation and its impact on operations, service and consumer satisfaction
- the role of front-line staff
- health and safety responsibilities for employees and guests

**Learning Outcome 1**

The learner will: Understand the key features of operations management in travel, tourism and hospitality businesses.

**Assessment Criteria**

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<td>1.1 Define operations management.</td>
<td>1.1.1 Students will understand the meaning of operations management in travel, tourism and hospitality and be able to apply different definitions to the concept. They will be able to translate these definitions into an analysis of the key operational features of travel, tourism and hospitality businesses. 1.1.2 Operations management is about the management of the processes that produce or deliver goods and services. Operations management decisions directly affect the size, shape, quantity, quality, price, profitability and speed of delivery of the output of travel, tourism and hospitality organisations, whether at the luxury end of the market or a budget product or service. 1.1.3 Operations management as a function has changed significantly in recent years as a result of the increasing use of new technologies throughout travel, tourism and hospitality. It has also taken on board new management concepts such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and the attainment of quality standards for product and service benchmarks such as those of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO).</td>
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<td>1.2 Identify and describe characteristics of the travel, tourism and hospitality sector that impact on the management of operations.</td>
<td>1.2.1 Operations management functions in travel, tourism and hospitality include a wide range of activities, many of which are core to the experience of guests and visitors. In travel, tourism and hospitality, the term operations management is not widely employed, with the preference being for functional management responsibilities in the title, given that most businesses in the sector operate a wide range of product and service operations. 1.2.2 Examples of operations functions in travel, tourism and hospitality include:  - Food production under the management of a Head Chef;  - The dispatch function for an airline;</td>
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The check-in function at an airport;
- Fast food restaurant production and service;
- City bus tours organisation for visitors;
- Organisation of guest transport arrangements from airport to accommodation;
- Guest reception and queuing at the entrance to a theme park or other major attraction, and
- Handling customer complaints at a major tourist venue.

1.2.3 Students will recognise the key operational features of the main sub-sectors in travel, tourism and hospitality across a range of sub-sectors including hotels, restaurants, retail outlets, airlines, travel agents, tour operators and theme parks. They will understand how the main operating systems in travel, tourism and hospitality systems contribute to the effectiveness, efficiency and profitability of businesses. Students will also understand the role that these systems play in managing the customer service experience (through queuing etc.) and delivering service to customers.

1.2.4 Students will understand the evolution of operating systems in travel, tourism and hospitality and their changing impact on businesses, consumers and employees and, in particular, be able to articulate the key role of evolving technologies, in particular ICT, in the development of operational systems in travel, tourism and hospitality.

1.3 Identify and describe examples of the operational features of the main sectors within TTH.

1.3.1 The key structural features of travel, tourism and hospitality have significant implications for the management of operations in the sector. What might be called structural factors also influence the nature of operations in travel, tourism and hospitality. One of the most significant of these structural considerations relates to the impact of seasonality on demand for travel, tourism and hospitality. Many activities that are attractive to tourists but also play a significant role in leisure consumption at a local level are highly seasonal in terms of when it is feasible and enjoyable to engage in them. Skiing, for example, plays a role in both tourism and leisure but is an activity confined to winter months in most localities and operations relating to the provision of facilities and services are, therefore, time constrained. Likewise, outdoor activities dependent on warm weather (water sports, for example) are limited to summer months in all but tropical and sub-tropical locations. In many cases ‘the operational season’ can be exceedingly short in what might be called ‘extreme’ tourism destinations, lasting little more than six weeks to two months, during which time suppliers of tourism services seek to generate sufficient income to cover the full year.

1.3.2 Structural considerations, however, extend beyond seasonality. Location and distance from key centres of population, while essentially geographical in nature, can lead to the impact of peripherality on travel, tourism and hospitality provision. Peripheral locations suffer from poor communications and access, for example, and may face competitive disadvantage in relation to destinations offering similar facilities and opportunities but located closer to major urban areas or transport nodes. Island locations, for example, have been the subject of extensive study because of the particular influence that insularity has on the nature and performance of the tourism sector. Maintaining operational systems in remote areas can present a challenge in travel, tourism and hospitality.

1.3.3 A further consideration that can be included as a structural consideration is that of business ownership within the sector. The balance between small, independent operators and large, chain-owned multiples within each of the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors shapes the way that the sector operates and how they organise their business. In many parts of the developed world, there is a tendency towards increasing multiple ownership and operation, either through a direct model or through various forms of management or franchising. This imposes specific standards and requirements on the operational standards adopted in these businesses.

1.3.4 In newer destinations, particularly in the developing world, travel, tourism and hospitality operations exhibit extreme contrast between large multi-national operations and the micro operations of local entrepreneurs in the souvenir, food or
activities markets. Some countries in the developing world, having driven the early stages of growth in travel, tourism and hospitality on the back of multinational investment (Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)), now recognise the importance of micro businesses to the future sustainability of their industry. Wong (2004), in the case of Malaysia, outlines the importance of FDI to the early growth of the sector but recent government initiatives have stressed the need to raise operational standards in the micro-business sector, particularly in food service and accommodation.

**Learning Outcome 2**

The learner will: Understand the role operating systems in travel, tourism and hospitality play in delivering service to customers.

**Assessment Criteria**

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<td>2.1 Describe the interface between operations and the customer in most areas of TTH.</td>
<td>2.1.1 Most operating systems in travel, tourism and hospitality have an immediate and direct impact on the customer. This is the major distinction from their counterparts in the manufacturing sector. If we take all the examples of operations systems identified in Learning Outcome 1, we can see that all of them are designed to provide goods and services directly to the customer or are in place in response to identified customer needs. There is an immediacy in this requirement that has major implications for how operating systems are put in place and the way in which they are managed.</td>
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| 2.2 Explain where and how the customer comes into contact with operations in the TTH sector. | 2.2.1 Customer expectations in travel, tourism and hospitality vary greatly across the sector and also on the basis of the type of business, its location and the price-value benefit which customers perceive. However, operations and systems do operate according to some common criteria that are applicable across operational types.  
  - Timeliness and time dependency – guest expectations regarding the timeliness of product and service delivery vary across context and culture but customers everywhere do have expectations about the pace and rhythm of service delivery that they receive and operations need to be geared to meet these expectations. Fast food restaurants clearly indicate expectations with respect to the delivery of food and service and operations must be geared up to meet these. Ground transfer arrangements are intended to provide connections with time-bound air or train schedules and the operations that deliver them must be designed to ensure that these expectations are delivered upon.  
  - Place dependency – travel, tourism and hospitality operations are generally place bound and systems must be set up to ensure that products and services are available and delivered where and when the guest requires them. Baggage has to be available to passengers when they arrive at the destination airport and not anywhere else.  
  - Personalisation or bespoke service – although much of the service provided in travel, tourism and hospitality is highly standardised (or McDonaldised; see Learning Outcome 6), there remains considerable demand and scope for customisation or personalisation in the time, manner, place and pace by which the operational systems meet guest requirements. This is most clearly evident at the luxury end of the market, in 5* hotels and first/business class in aircraft, where guests expect personalised service and the luxury of time devoted to that service by staff. However, it may also be an expectation within different market segments. For example, a guest may seek changes to the garnishes provided as standard with a beef burger in a fast food restaurant. Likewise, an economy class passenger may request a special diet meal on a long haul flight, even though the fare paid is low.  
  2.2.2 These factors all impact on the design and management of operations and systems in travel, tourism and hospitality. This involves a further analysis of links between change in the internal and external environment and how businesses organise themselves to meet the challenges of such changes. |
2.3 Identify examples of how operating systems can have an impact on customer service and satisfaction.

2.3.1 Use of causal mapping could be useful to illustrate the impact of a decision in one of these areas on some or all of the others. Causal mapping is a tool that enables you to make sense of challenging situations so that you can get more out of them. In this sense, causal mapping, (also known as cognitive mapping) helps you create a structure for messy or complex data and hence something that is discussable and shareable. A causal map is a word and arrow diagram in which ideas and actions are causally linked with one another through the use of arrows.

2.3.2 The purpose of this exercise is to allow students to consider a range of operating systems in travel, tourism and hospitality and to consider how technology and other developments may impact on the operational systems. This, in turn, provides an opportunity for students to consider the effect that changes in systems may have on the businesses themselves, on customers and on employees.

2.3.3 Examples of system/operational changes could include:
- Introduction of self-service check-in kiosks by airlines at airports;
- Direct dial telephones in guest bedrooms;
- Wireless internet throughout hotel public and bedroom areas;
- Extra long-range aircraft on major routes, and
- Cut in legally permitted daily hours for tour bus drivers from 10 to 8.

**Learning Outcome 3**

The learner will: Understand the role of evolving technologies, in particular, ICT in the development of operational systems in travel, tourism and hospitality.

**Assessment Criteria**

**The learner can:**

| 3.1 Identify the extent of technological change over the past decade and its impact on the TTH sector. | 3.1.1 This Learning Outcome focuses specifically on the impact of ICT on operational systems in travel, tourism and hospitality and complements learning in the IT in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality unit. 3.1.2 ICT has become an integral part of almost all commercial and other enterprises. It can provide a wide range of benefits to an organisation across a wide range of activities, not least in the area of operations management. ICT can provide:  
- Very fact processing;  
- Vast storage capacity;  
- Rapid search and combination of data in many ways;  
- Instant response to customer queries;  
- Real time information on stock and reservations levels;  
- Accurate results;  
- Rapid communication between individuals and organisations;  
- Increased customer access and choice;  
- Access from a variety of onsite and remote locations;  
- 24/7 real-time access;  
- Enhanced company image, and  
- Reduced staff costs. 3.1.3 Of course, alongside these benefits, possible drawbacks may be identified in terms of operations management. They include:  
- Depersonalisation of systems and services;  
- Security risks;  
- Power/systems failures, and  
- Access issues, especially in the developing world. |
|---|---|
| 3.2 Identify the role of ICT in TTH operations. | 3.2.1 A useful approach to analysing issues and the theme relating to ICT and operations in travel, tourism and hospitality is to take a stakeholder approach and consider how the technologies have affected the interface between operations and stakeholders to include:  
- Customers;  
- Front-line staff; |
### Learning Outcome 4

The learner will: Understand the key features of services and their implications for operations in travel, tourism and hospitality.

#### Assessment Criteria
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<td><strong>4.1 Identify and explain the main characteristics of services.</strong></td>
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<td>4.1.1 The characteristics of services include a number of particular features. Sale, production and consumption of a service take place almost simultaneously, while there is usually a long lead time between production and sale of a product, in other words, the concept of inseparability as used in the continuum. Also known as heterogeneity, inseparability means that it is difficult to distinguish between the production of the tourism service and its consumption, especially when the customer is personally part of that production process. This has important implications for the management of quality in the tourism and hospitality industries, in that the level of checks and inspection characteristic of the manufacturing sector cannot be applied.</td>
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<td>4.1.2 A service cannot be centrally provided, inspected, stockpiled or warehoused; it is usually delivered wherever the customer is by people who are beyond the immediate influence of the management. This feature includes the notion of perishability, by which a hotel room, vacant exercise machines, an empty car on a theme park ride or an aircraft seat unsold at time of departure represents a loss which cannot be recouped. Yield management systems are used by airlines, hotels and other service providers to ensure optimum use of facilities and these are usually focused on pricing and marketing strategies. However, there is also a strong human resource dimension to the process; for example, in some hotels front-office staff may take responsibility for agreeing tariffs with late check-in guests and so must have the skills and authority to do so.</td>
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<td>4.1.3 A service cannot be demonstrated, nor can a sample be sent for customer approval in advance of purchase. This notion of intangibility also has strong marketing implications and attempts are made to overcome the problems that it causes at a marketing level through interactive use of websites and other technology as well as some element of sampling, for example, offering potential customers a free weekend in a timeshare complex. However, such substitution does not overcome the inherent problems caused by the individual nature of the tourism, hospitality and leisure experience and its dependence on the human element for its delivery. A customer receiving the tourism, hospitality and leisure service generally owns nothing tangible once the service has been delivered; its value is frequently internal to the customer.</td>
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4.1.4 The tourism, hospitality and leisure experience is frequently one that cannot be shared, passed around or given away to someone else once it has been delivered. The experience is, in some respects, unique, even among a group who are ostensibly sharing the same itinerary or facilities. This is a result of their differing expectations, previous experience, motivation in taking part in the experience and a variety of other concerns which may be affecting them at that time. This phenomenological argument needs not be taken to extremes and from a marketing point of view it would be difficult to do so, but from the human resource management perspective, recognising and responding to this individuality among customers is a very important skill. ‘Have a nice day’ may be an apt and sincerely meant farewell, appropriate to a group embarking on a day’s sightseeing, but would cause offence to customers setting off for a funeral!

4.1.5 Delivery of a tourism, hospitality and leisure service usually requires some degree of human contact; the receiver and the deliverer frequently come together in a relatively personal way. Although technological substitution for some aspects of service delivery has become important in some sectors of the industry (for example, automatic check-in and check-out at airports and in hotels), there is a probably a limit to how far this process can go and consumer demand may be for increased personal service rather than its reduction.

4.1.6 Quality control over a tourism, hospitality and leisure service requires the monitoring of processes and the attitudes of all staff. This, inevitably, presents certain problems in the industry, largely because of the heterogeneous nature of the delivery of these services.

4.1.7 Unlike a bad product, bad service cannot be replaced; at best, it is possible to be sensitive to customer dissatisfaction and recover the situation with such good service that the customer may both forgive and forget the bad service received earlier.

4.1.8 It is both difficult and undesirable to attempt to standardise service. The more spontaneous and custom-built a service, the greater its value in the customer’s eyes. This is probably the most contentious dimension within the classification in that there are many examples from the tourism and hospitality industry where companies have attempted to standardise service delivery, for example in fast food, budget hotels and theme parks.

4.2 Discuss the implications of these characteristics for a range of TTH operations.

4.2.1 The service characteristics have a fundamental impact on how TTH businesses operate and students should address each of these characteristics in terms of a range of TTH sub-sectors.
Learning Outcome 5

The learner will: Understand the role of customer feedback in enhancing services and operations in travel, tourism and hospitality.

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| 5.1 Explain the nature and sources of customer feedback in TTH. | 5.1.1 Understand how and why consumer demand and expectations change, what factors impact on this change process in different countries and how customer views can be measured.  
5.1.2 Notwithstanding the impact of globalisation and standardisation, consumers are different in different countries and cultures and what they want from a travel, tourism and hospitality experience will vary across national and regional boundaries. Identifying key trends in consumer behaviour in both developed and developing countries and relating these to travel, tourism and hospitality can be a useful starting point for this discussion. Such changes might include reference (in no particular order) to:  
- Increased disposable income in developed and emerging new developing markets;  
- Increased brand awareness and loyalty;  
- Shorter travel duration per trip but more frequent trips;  
- Seeking out new experiences and destinations;  
- Less destination loyalty;  
- Selective and niche product focused;  
- Adventurous (but safety and security aware);  
- New outbound markets less independent;  
- Environmentally conscious;  
- Smaller families, singles;  
- Constantly communicating with friends, family and work (ICT);  
- Value and quality focused, and  
- Seeking authentic culture, personal heritage. |
| 5.2 Explain and discuss the value of both positive and negative customer feedback. | 5.2.1 Each of these trends (and the many more that can be added to this list) presents challenges for operations in travel, tourism and hospitality. These challenges will vary from country to country. Exploring these in the context of a country that students know will be of value.  
5.2.2 At the same time, McDonaldisation refers to the increasing standardisation of tourism products and the travel, tourism and hospitality experience. The McDonaldised experience imposes systems and product specifications on the consumer worldwide, with little scope for choice and appears to operate contrary to some of the consumer behaviour trends indicated above.  
5.2.3 Provide a comprehensive summary of the benefits of effective customer feedback and complaints systems:  
**The benefits of successful complaint handling**  
Even the most efficient tourism business is likely to receive some complaints regarding its facilities, products or the service provided to customers by employees. Other customers may be dissatisfied with some aspect of what is provided, but may not actually make a complaint. There are a number of benefits to any tourism business from identifying dissatisfied customers and handling complaints effectively.  
These can include:  
- Providing an opportunity to rectify mistakes or solve problems;  
- Obtaining valuable feedback on what customers want, need, expect and think of your operation, which can be used to improve the customer experience;  
- Stopping minor difficulties escalating into major problems;  
- Increasing levels of repeat business;  
- Generating favourable word-of-mouth recommendations from customers who are satisfied with how their complaint has been handled; |
• Providing an opportunity to stop the same problem occurring again. Handling complaints successfully can lead to customers who are just as loyal as they would have been had the problem leading to the complaint not arisen. Failure to deal effectively with complaints at the first possible opportunity can result in the loss of valuable customers and, on occasions, unfavourable publicity or other damage to a business.

The value of complaints
When you lose a customer, you lose not only his or her business but also any future repeat business. You may also lose business through the dissatisfied customer telling others of their experience. Your business will also incur the cost of attracting a new customer to replace the one you have lost. Finding a new customer is estimated to cost five times as much as retaining the one you already have. So it makes sound business sense not to lose customers by failing to tackle complaints effectively. Investing time and effort in recovering from service failures and retaining customers is likely to pay off in financial terms. Complaints are therefore very valuable to tourism businesses, although they are often disliked by the employees who have to deal with them.

5.3 Describe the main techniques available for the collection of customer feedback.

5.3.1 Sample feedback and complaints principles:
• To acknowledge the importance and value of complaints and other customer feedback;
• To ensure that complaints are handled in line with the Corporate Customer Services Strategy and any other relevant legal and policy requirements;
• To provide a clear route by which customers can raise concerns about the service they have received from the company;
• To set out clear guidance to staff to assist them in answering customer enquiries and complaints;
• To clarify staff roles and responsibilities in handling complaints;
• To ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly and sensitively;
• To learn from our mistakes and use feedback from customers to continuously improve services, and
• To enhance the overall image of the company and its employees in the eyes of the service users and the wider community.

5.4 Identify and explain systems that can be put in place to handle and respond to customer feedback.

5.4.1 These principles can be translated into a number of key action directives for organisations:
• Make it easy for your customers to complain and your customers will make it easy for you to improve;
• Respond to complaints quickly and courteously with common sense and you will improve customer loyalty;
• Resolve complaints on the first contact and firstly, save money by eliminating unnecessary additional contacts that escalate costs and secondly, build customer confidence, and
• Technology utilisation is critical in complaint handling systems.
• Recruit and hire the best people for customer service jobs.
**Learning Outcome 6**

The learner will: Understand how the concept of standardisation, in particular McDonaldisation, impacts on operations, service and consumer satisfaction in travel, tourism and hospitality.

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| 6.1 Define standardisation and McDonaldisation in the context of TTH. | 6.1.1 Standardisation is a process whereby businesses seek to ensure that service and product delivery to customers is consistent and uniform. It is a necessary aspiration for many businesses seeking to meet customer expectations in TTH and is at the root of many branded products/services in TTH. If you stay in a Novotel in France and then visit another Novotel in Germany or the UK, you will expect a similar room in terms of size and facilities, similar menu items in the restaurant and a similar level of service. The process that seeks to deliver consistency across the service experience is known as standardisation.  
6.1.2 One of the best known interpretations of the process of standardisation is by the American sociologist George Ritzer, who coined the term McDonaldisation. This is defined as "the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurants are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world," (Giddeons and Dunner). This process extends its practices into businesses and lifestyles of all types. As people adjust to the McDonaldisation of business it crosses over into their everyday lives. |
| 6.2 Explain the main characteristics of McDonaldisation. | 6.2.1 McDonaldisation consists of four elements: efficiency, calculability, predictability and control. Ritzer calls these the ‘dimensions’ of McDonaldisation and they are the four pillars on which capitalism now builds its empire (Massey). Through efficiency, the service or product is offered in the most direct way. Calculability means convincing consumers that bigger is better and they get more for their money; ‘super size it’. In assuming that most people do not like surprises, businesses create homogeneous products or services offering a sense of predictability consumers come to expect. To accomplish all these dimensions, a high amount of control must be implemented.  
"Ritzer’s focus involves control through the substitution of non-human for human technology. By making tasks repetitive and forcing employees not to think, employers can maintain a tighter control over them" (www.McDonaldization.com).  
The McDonald’s corporation lists this aspect as a mission statement for the company in "leveraging the strengths of the McDonald’s system through innovation and technology" (www.McDonalds.com). |
| 6.3 Identify and explain how the principles of McDonaldisation apply across a range of operational areas in TTH. | 6.3.1 The features of McDonaldisation, borrowed and developed from manufacturing operations’ principles, are making an increasing impact on all sectors concerned with service delivery, but travel, tourism and hospitality, in many respects, have led the way in their implementation through companies such as McDonald’s and Holiday Inn. The role of people working within this model is very different from that which can be seen in terms of empowerment and managerial support. There is an inherent tension and incompatibility between the move towards standardisation and branding on the one hand, and demands for more locally delivered and quality services on the other, and it is not really clear at this point which shape the outcome will take. |
| 6.4 Discuss the benefits and limitations of McDonaldisation in TTH operations. | 6.4.1 Consumers, as we have seen, want both things – standardisation and a sense of the familiar but also experiences that are new and authentic. It is unclear how travel, tourism and hospitality can continue to offer both. |
## Learning Outcome 7

The learner will: Understand the role of front-line staff in travel, tourism and hospitality operations.

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| **7.1 Identify the roles undertaken by front-line staff in TTH operations.** | 7.1.1 Recognise the role of front-line staff in travel, tourism and hospitality operations and understand the implications of Bateson and Hoffman’s concept of ‘boundary spanning’ work for the use of operations management systems in travel, tourism and hospitality.  
7.1.2 Students will also understand the impact of human resource delegation strategies, such as empowerment, on the role of front-line staff and their use of operational systems in travel, tourism and hospitality. Recognising this impact will help students to understand the interdependencies that exist between operations and other areas of travel, tourism and hospitality businesses, notably HRM and marketing. |
| **7.2 Identify and describe the challenges faced by front-line staff in TTH operations.** | 7.2.1 The delivery of quality service in tourism, hospitality and leisure not only places significant responsibilities on the staff at the front-line who deliver such service but also places considerable onus and responsibility on staff members who, as we shall see in the next Learning Outcome, are frequently the lowest paid and least valued members of the organisation’s workforce. Bateson and Hoffman (1999) discuss the work of these key members of staff in terms of their boundary spanning roles, responsibilities that provide the critical link between the organisation and the environment in which it operates including, crucially, its customers. In a marketing context, they note that “strategically, contact personnel can be the source of product differentiation”.  
7.2.2 The primary purpose of boundary-spanning personnel is for information transfer and representation on behalf of the organisation. In this sense, contact or boundary spanning staff collect information from the environment, particularly customers, and feed it back to the organisation. This is a very significant role provided that the organisation, in turn, is willing and able to listen to the information it receives through such channels. At the same time, boundary spanning personnel communicate with the environment on behalf of the organisation, often conveying bad news on behalf of their employers. For example, first information about a flight delay is often communicated to a passenger by front-line staff at check-in. Boundary-spanning roles in tourism, hospitality and leisure take on particular significance because of the operating features of the sector, particularly because of the high number of customer contact zones that exist within the sector and the consequently intense level of contact with consumers that takes place. In addition, the dispersed nature of the business sector means that there are high levels of unsupervised work undertaken by boundary spanning personnel, involving decision making and action with respect to information flows in both direction between the organisation and its environment.  
7.2.3 Therefore, the role that personnel play in representing the organisation in this way does not come without its costs, and Bateson and Hoffman elaborate further with respect to the role stress that is inherent in undertaking work at the organisation’s boundaries. They note, in particular, that boundary-spanning roles are often characterised by low status combined with high stress and the potential for conflict. There are four main causes of stress:  
7.2.4 The inability of boundary-spanning personnel to create a social network with fellow employees due to customer demands that the staff be attentive solely to the needs of the customer. Unlike work environments where customer contact does not feature, there is little opportunity to engage, socially or otherwise, with colleagues during working hours when on check-in duty at an airport, as a museum guide or at hotel reception. Demanding customers, themselves often stressed because they are out of their normal life context, require levels of attention which make communication with colleagues, beyond the banal and brief, impossible. |
In many service encounters, the encounter is brief and therefore does not permit a normal social interaction between service provider and customer.

7.2.5 Many service encounters are time circumscribed by the organisation for which the front-line operative works. For example, customer service staff in reservations or call centres may be required to handle a specified number of queries or reservations within a set period of time and, thus, cannot engage with clients beyond a national set time period.

7.2.6 Alternatively, the time allocated to service encounters may by constrained by customer expectations or impatience. Thus, most front-line operatives want to move through many service engagements at airport check-in, in a shop or in a self-service café, as rapidly as possible, particularly at critical times such as lunch breaks or when travelling during rush hour. Obviously, there are interactions which are less time constrained, when the purchase in a travel agency is for a significant sum of money or where we are uncertain of the options available to us, but pressure still exists for boundary spanning staff as they may need to be conscious of the needs of other customers waiting for service. Thus, the service context does not permit any depth of social or personal engagement between front-line personnel and their customers and the former are expected to progress through the preliminary social rituals of engagement many times within the one shift without actually developing the relationship further. This work-based version of ‘speed dating’ can be very stressful for those working at the front-line.

7.3 Discuss the importance of effective and efficient front-line staff in achieving customer satisfaction in TTH.

7.3.1 The challenge of role conflict and role ambiguity relates to situations where boundary spanning staff members are required to represent their company in situations where their true sympathy may lie with the customer. Particularly in developed countries, there is significant role cross-over between those who serve in tourism, hospitality and leisure and those who are served so that the social distance between them, in terms of their experiences of tourism, hospitality and leisure, is narrow. Thus, role ambiguity can also be born out of the fact that we’ve all been on the other side of the fence at various times and can certainly see the other person’s viewpoint. Such situations place servers in positions of considerable stress.

7.4 Discuss the status and rewards of front-line staff in many TTH businesses.

7.4.1 Front-line stress is also the result of the fight that can occur in service encounters for control of the situation. Boundary spanning staff may find themselves in a competitive situation with clients or travellers, with both seeking control of the service situation. Control of information can provide a good example of stress induced by such competition. A travel agent, who is checking travel options for guests using a company intranet, may angle the computer monitor so as to have exclusive sight of the information presented. That way, he/she can control the service situation and provide only that information that he/she wishes. When the guest seeks to re-angle the monitor or moves round the desk to get a personal view of the options available, many travel agents react very negatively to such loss of control. Holidaymakers believe that they know more about their planned destination than their travel agent. Thus, a traditionally advantageous position held by travel agents as controller of information is in danger of being undermined, creating self-doubt and role stress. Likewise, tour or museum guides can react very negatively to clients who demonstrate a level of knowledge about a specialist subject that may exceed that of the guide, because this represents a reduction in the guide’s control of the encounter.
## Learning Outcome 8

The learner will: Understand the health and safety issues in the management of TTH operations from the perspective of both employees and guests.

### Assessment Criteria

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<th>Indicative Content</th>
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<td><strong>The learner can:</strong></td>
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| 8.1 Identify the risks to health and safety faced by employees and guests in the TTH environment. | 8.1.1 Health and safety issues are of major concern to managers and employees in the TTH sector in terms of both those enjoying facilities as guests (in hotels, theme parks, natural attractions and transport providers) and those who serve them. 8.1.2 TTH faces frequent and very high profile coverage of health and safety issues in the form of air crashes, pandemics (SARS, bird flu), water-related accidents etc. |
| 8.2 Describe how to put in place appropriate operational procedures to handle health and safety-related issues in the TTH industry. | 8.2.1 The UK’s Health and Safety Executive identifies a number of things which businesses must, by law, do:  
- Assess the risks. This means literally going around your business checking for hazards and risks to staff and the public (customers, suppliers and any external visitors). You must involve your staff and talk to them about health and safety. Risks are not just physical hazards; they can also be noise, lighting, ventilation, cleanliness and stress. Don't forget particularly vulnerable groups like children, the elderly and disabled people. When you've identified the risks you'll need to find ways to remove or minimise them. This is your risk assessment, possibly the single most important health and safety task.  
- Have a health and safety policy. All business must have one. You must involve your staff and consult them on health and safety issues, and if you have five or more employees then you must write your policy down (though this is a good idea anyway). The policy sets out who does what regarding health and safety in your business, what you do in house and what, if any, expert help you get. It goes along with your risk assessment to form a unique document about how you are keeping yourself, your staff and your customers safe.  
- Get Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance (ELCI). If you employ even one member of staff (unless they are a close relative) you must have this and you must display the certificate at your workplace.  
- Train staff. You must provide free health and safety training, for your staff so they know what hazards and risks they may face and how to deal with them, and, as best practice, it should be part of your induction process (the process you go through with new staff to help them understand how your business works and what is expected of them).  
- Get advice. The law says you must have competent advice, to help you meet your health and safety duties. This can be workers from your business, external consultants/advisers or a combination of these. In practice you can appoint yourself or members of your staff to be responsible for staying up to date with health and safety requirements and ensuring you comply, but whether it is you or someone else, you/they must have enough time to really undertake this job.  
- Provide basic welfare. You must provide washing facilities and drinking water for all your employees, including those with disabilities. These are basic health, safety and welfare needs.  
- Consult employees. The law says you must consult employees on health and safety matters. It cuts both ways, by consulting them you make them aware of hazards, and they make you aware of difficulties and problems that you may not have picked up.  
- Display a health and safety law poster (and/or distribute the same information individually to employees in their induction packs or similar). The poster describes the Health and Safety law, what you, their employer, must do by law and what their obligations are.  
- Report accidents. If you are an employer, self-employed or in control of work premises (i.e. your own building or your home is your place of work), by law you must report some work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences. |

| 8.3 Discuss how to handle the | 8.3.1 TTH puts both groups at risk of injury and illness in a wide variety of ways and it is the responsibility of organisations/owners to ensure that these risks are minimised. |
consequences of health and safety issues in TTH.

Risks faced by visitors and employees may relate to:
- Service of food and beverages, especially in terms of food poisoning and other food-borne health risks;
- Use of facilities and equipment and the potential for accidents — transport (cars, aircraft), leisure (fitness, swimming pools), small equipment (hairdryers, kitchen implements);
- Natural conditions — flooding, hurricanes/storms, tsunamis, wild animals;
- Political/social unrest in the destination, and
- Behaviour of guests — alcohol, other substance abuse, air rage.

Managing health and safety risks in TTH is challenging because of the varied situations which both guests and employees find themselves. TTH businesses often operate in situations where total control of the immediate and wider environment is difficult (mountains, beaches etc.). For both guests and tour operators or travel agents, there is also the danger that guests will encounter greater risks when obtaining services (food, an elephant ride, a bungee jump) from an external, third party provider over whom they have no control. To reduce risks, some forms of holiday have evolved where businesses do seek to minimise external risk factors — all-inclusive resorts, cruise tours — and where visitors are only exposed to selected and vetted service providers.

Students need to understand health and safety risks in terms of:
- The responsibilities of businesses to their guests and employees in moral and marketing terms;
- The consequences of health and safety problems from an operational, financial and, particularly, marketing point of view;
- The requirements of the law of the land in relation to health and safety;
- Insurance against health and safety risks;
- The need to train employees in health and safety compliance in relation to equipment (kitchen, fire, aircraft) and specific situations (safety announcements on aircraft);
- The need to inform guests of safety procedures (in the event of fire etc.);
- The need to provide safety equipment (life boats, life rings), and
- The need to assess risk in a formal and structured way (e.g. by undertaking risk assessments).

Students need to understand how to react when faced with health and safety issues, based on:
- The nature of the problem;
- The scale and impact of the issue;
- Further risks associated with engaging with the issue;
- The likely consequences if the issue is mishandled, and
- Training previously received.

Assessment:

- Assessment method: written examination (unless otherwise stated).
- Written examinations are of three hours’ duration.
- All learning outcomes will be assessed.

Recommended Reading:

- Please refer to the Tuition Resources section of the Members Area of the ABE website (www.abeuk.com) for the recommended reading for this subject.