

# **Unit 2: Communicating with Tourists**

- Building rapport
- Communicating with tourists
- Handling complaints

# Building Rapport

What is  
rapport?

A close and harmonious relationship in which the concerned people or groups understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well.

Building rapport is the process of establishing connection/relationship. It is usually based on shared experiences or views, including a shared sense of humor. Building rapport tends to be most important at the start of an acquaintanceship or working relationship. The rapport created, however, can last for many years<sup>1</sup>.

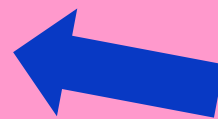
Let's watch a VDO about  
building a rapport.

Soft Skills - Rapport Building & Small Talks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYuTCZJz9w0>

Rapport is similar to trust. You can build trust and rapport simultaneously, but rapport focuses more on establishing a bond or connection, whereas trust relies more on establishing a reputation for reliability, consistency and keeping your promises.

First Impression



Physicality

Tonality

Words

## When you have a rapport with someone, you share<sup>2</sup>:

- **Mutual attentiveness:** you're both focused on, and interested in, what the other person is saying or doing.
- **Positivity:** you're both friendly and happy, and you show care and concern for one another.
- **Coordination:** you feel “in sync” with one another, so that you share a common understanding. Your energy levels, tone and body language are also similar.

# Building rapport

No awkward  
moment

Small talks

Do not talk only  
about yourself or  
your own interest

Compliments

Ask the  
opposite's  
interest

Learn to ask (in  
natural conversation  
manner, not  
interview manner)  
(but not personal  
topics)

Don't judge.

Learn to  
listen

Ask questions  
that give more  
answers than  
“yes” or “no”

# Summarized into these 4 principles- EASS<sup>3</sup>

Empathy

Authenticity

Similarity

Shared Experience

# Building and keeping rapport with your tourists

Building good relationship between you as a local guide and your guests/ tourists

Why is it important?

- *Create friendly environment*: using warm smiles, keeping eye contact or shaking hand firmly are good examples of good rapport building techniques.
- *Foster cultural experience*: show tourists real, authentic cultural features of your destination.
- *Identify guest needs easier*: If tourists have good impressions with local people, they will find it more comfortable to tell them what they are looking for when coming to the destination.
- *Increase opportunities for exchange*: It is very nice to encourage tourists to tell local people their interesting cultures and compare cross-cultural differences.
- *Ease the complaints handling process*: If people are happy, they are easy to forget and forgive mistakes and problems happening during the trip.



- *Be friendly*: using warm smiles, keeping eye contact or shaking hand firmly are good examples of good rapport building techniques.
- *Identify what guests want and need*: using past experiences of the local people; making observations to try understanding tourists' needs and wants; openly talk and ask tourists if local people could help them.
- *Share stories and interesting information*: open to talk to tourists and give them interesting stories of the destination, especially those related to their traditional cultures or natural environment.
- *Inform of services*: tell tourists your available services in the destination such as lodging, tour escort or traditional foods and drinks.
- *Always smile and offer assistance*: this show friendliness and caring to guests
- *Resolve complaints quickly and in full*: never ignore inquiries from tourists. Be patient to listen to tourists when they make complaints, try to understand the root of the problem and deal with them completely.

How should we start a conversation with tourists?



### Technique

Think in the way you are tourist, which can be interesting for you?

**Show interest in a person's background:** people are usually comfortable to talk about their favorite topics related to their educational/ life background. Make sure that you will talk about what people want to talk to you, not what you insist talking to people.

**Impart your own story:** use your own story where possible to tell people especially interesting features of the local destination.

**Connections through geography:** find similar things between your destination and tourist's resident environment to evoke interesting associations and experiences. + do's and don'ts

# Communicating with Tourists

## Most common ways to communicate

- *Speaking*: verbal communication to convey your expressions to tourists
- *Body language*: using your appearance and signs to illustrate an expression to tourists
- *Writing*: using simple and short words/ phrases to tell people
- *Visual image*: using graphs to express a communication message (e.g. maps, symbols, pictures)

**Likely, tour guides in the current digital world should:**

*Be digital savvy.*

*Know about Internet of Things.*

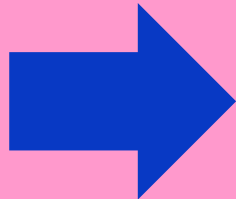
*Think creatively* with their tour programs and environment around them.





communication is important to:

- ✓ Tourists
- ✓ Local Guide
- ✓ Others



- ✓ Understanding each other
- ✓ Offer/sell services to tourists
- ✓ Avoids frustration
- ✓ Create a good environment
- ✓ Meet information needs of tourists.

## Communication barriers

- Your style and character
- Lack of preparation and bad presentation
- Lack of clarity
- The receiver is not ready to receive the information
- Information overload
- Distractions e.g. noise

- **Physical:** try to use face-to-face communication frequently
- **Perceptual:** recognize we have different values
- **Emotional:** try to build trust
- **Cultural:** recognize we have different culture
- **Language:** body language, gestures

## Ways to overcome barriers

# Friendliness behind the mask!



# Communicating with tourists: a tour guide showcase

Rick Steves Tour Experience: Great Guides

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqrSRSIBJzI>



# Communicating with tourists: a tour guide showcase

A tour guide in London

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv\\_niyhdKLE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv_niyhdKLE)

Any interesting techniques this tour guide applies in his city tour guide conduct?

Answer in Padlet

# Handling Complaints

Why tourists complain?

What do tourists need when they complain?

Answer in Padlet



**Wrong  
Information**

*Wrong information:* tourists pay you because they expect to hear interesting and relevant information about local attractions. Therefore you have to provide the expected information; they would make complaint otherwise.



**POOR CUSTOMER  
SERVICE**

*Poor service:* local tour guides are expected to facilitate conducting the tour by arranging local travel services such as booking homestay, taking care of tourists, etc. If they do not understand local suppliers in full, they may choose unreliable and low standard services which make tourists unhappy and complaint.



*Overcharged:* although tour price must be transparent and agreed with tourists before the tour, tourists may be aware that they are overcharged when they meet other fellow travellers in the destination. When this situation happens, most of tourists will feel so bad and make lots of complaints.

### *Other reasons?*

*Tour unsatisfactory:* there are various reasons making tourists unsatisfied during the tour such as unplanned change in tour activities and services (in a down grading manner), ignoring tourist's requests, unfriendly attitude of local people.



# Some bad example reviews from tour customers



marti64

Rome, Italy

 135  122

## The worst English ever

Review of Private Tour: Bangkok's Grand Palace Complex and Wat Phra Kaew

●○○○○○ Reviewed 19 December 2017  via mobile

We booked this tour through Viator.

The tour guide didn't speak good English, it was not understandable. We had to stop the tour because it was an effort to understand her.

She spent the first 30 minutes taking pictures to us (we didn't ask for it) taking literally our phones and taking pictures to the temples that for her were important without providing any detail about what we were looking at.

We had to tell her to stop with pictures and start with the explanation. But at that point we understood why she was taking pictures!!! She knew 5 words and kept repeating the same things all the time.

At that point we stopped the tour and bought audio guides in English.

We had a second tour the day after and we called the Agency to make sure we had a GOOD guide the next day, explaining the problem that we had had. The second guide that we had (KIAT) was good.

We requested a refund for the first tour and it was denied because the guide that we had "has been a guide for 30 years". No doubts about it, in Thai she must be pretty good, but not for English customers.

I put 1 star because there is no customer care, the tour went badly, and nobody seems to care about what we have experienced.

[Ask marti64 about Private Tour: Bangkok's Grand Palace Complex and Wat Phra Kaew](#)



Reviewed 18 December 2017  via mobile

## Felt like a sheep...

### Review of: Thailand's Ayutthaya Temples and River Cruise from Bangkok

Dantim77  
Brisbane, Australia

 31  15

I was not quite sure what to expect on this tour, started off great with a pickup in a minibus at 6.30am, I thought this is a nice small tour group of 7 people... how wrong I was!!! We were dumped with a dozen other minibuses at a staging point filled with old large busses... the busses were packed with people. First thing the guide said was something about buying more packages and cruises from them... set the tone of the trip for me... I felt like we spent more time being herded back on the bus than looking at the temples and the palace. We probably spent 6 hours on the bus 2 hours walking around and 2 hours on the cruise. Every stop we made was preceded with the sales pitch buy from this person or that person and not those people over there, kickbacks maybe?... if your going to spend this money on a tour make sure it's a small tour company with a small group... I wouldn't recommend this one cannot say I learnt much due to the amount of people crowded around the guide... lunch was served cold and we were the first bus to get on board the boat... I also wasn't overwhelmed by the sites we visited...

**Ask Dantim77 about Thailand's Ayutthaya Temples and River Cruise from Bangkok**

# What tourists needs when they complain?

## Needs as individuals (psychologically)

- To be heard
- To be understood
- To be respected



## Needs relating to the complaint (problems to be solved)

- To have their concern dealt
- To be given what they have been denied
- To have action taken





# Handling Complaints

## **LAUGH Method<sup>4</sup>**

L = Listen

A = Acknowledge

U = Understand

G = Give Solutions

H = Hit Home (Following Up)

Some possible expressions to show your attitude and empathy to tourist's problem (acknowledging and understanding)

I understand how you feel.

I can see why you feel that way

I see what you mean.

That must be very upsetting.

I understand how frustrating this must be.

I'm sorry this happened.

I'm sorry about this.

Let's see what we can do to fix the problem.