



**THE IMPACT OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ON GUEST SATISFACTION IN
HOSPITALITY ESTABLISHMENTS IN CAPE TOWN**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Abdallah Seif Bamporiki, hereby declare that the contents of this research project represent my own work and that the research project has not been previously submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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Date

ABSTRACT

Within the hospitality industry, where revenues are driven by guest satisfaction, service is a key to success. Internal communication plays a role that should be examined on how its performance affects guest satisfaction within hospitality. The purpose of this study is to determine if internal communication plays a role in guest satisfaction within hospitality establishments in Cape Town.

The study found that sources (such as newsletters, magazines, books, journals and peers) emphasised importance of internal communication in hospitality organizations. This internal communication serves as a nerve centre of an organization. If one does not have a functioning internal communication system, one may lose guests. In addition, advanced internal communication solution forms a backbone of a wide range of guest services, and increases the guests' motivation to stay.

Cape Town, where hospitality and tourism is increasingly competitive and diverse, human resource management becomes more problematic. There should be channels of internal communication, which transmit messages across the organization's structure. The guest's review demonstrated that growth of hospitality organisation will be determined by its ability to deliver superior guest value and importance of understanding guest needs and expectation. The reason for growing emphasis on guest satisfaction is that satisfied guests lead to a stronger competitive positioning, resulting ultimately in loyal guests, increased market profitability. Management teams in Cape Town and hotel industry sectors are under increasing pressure to demonstrate that their services are guest-focused and that continuous performance improvement is being delivered.

Internal communication research generates principles and strategies, which improve managerial performance, as internal communication acumen is essential to render success in a wide range of activities. Language proficiency, as well as what a manager says, and what a manager does, contributes to individual effectiveness. Furthermore, words and actions should be consistent and aligned so that they have maximum impact. Selected research findings regarding verbal internal communication and non-verbal internal communication as well as electronically are presented to demonstrate how wise internal communication choices can further managerial goals.

In addition to using words effectively, managers in all functional areas can also increase their effect and improve their performance by applying results of research that are focused on internal communication. A self-administered questionnaire was compiled to collect data, and the study was based on 10 selected hotels within Cape Town and a great value is given to Cape Town business centre where most of tourism businesses held. Information was

supplied by senior and junior managers from 4-5 star hotels and the final report combined results from the question about the role that internal communication plays in guest satisfaction within hospitality establishments in Cape Town by using an SPSS Program, while recommendations are also based on these findings.

At this period of twenty one century, the technology is challenging organisational internal communication, it take major part in marketing and marketing research. The management are busy straggling with internal communication which they will never know exactly how much they perform without guest concert. They run to the Internet to research what the guests comment about their satisfaction of service they received. The guest reviews about hotel service industry emphasized the quality of service received within the hotel organization even if most of the hotels in Cape Town were too expensive as guest review recommended.

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**“INDEED, ALLAH DOES NOT DO INJUSTICE, {EVEN} AS MUCH AS
AN ATOM’S WEIGHT; WHILE IF THERE IS A GOOD DEED, HE
MULTIPLIES IT AND GIVES FROM HIMSELF
A GREAT REWARD; QUR’AN 4-40”**

TO GOD ALMIGHTY BE THE GLORY

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the research

The hospitality industry is important to South Africa and Cape Town is one of the favourite places for visitors, with different visitors' attractions and up-market hotels and restaurants. Hospitality establishments, more than other businesses, can be described as "a collection of people working with a common purpose" (Frost, Vos, and Dreyer, 1997:147). Whatever the goal is, the activities of people within a hospitality establishment must be coordinated in order to achieve the goal. Thus, for this to happen, internal communication is needed (Frost, Vos, and Dreyer, 1997:147).

Guest satisfaction is the best indicator of success, but how is it delivered? Many factors might be involved, including quality of service, the quality of facilities, good information systems, and relationship between service provider and guests.

One other factor that might be important is internal communication, because increasingly staff come from different backgrounds, different countries, and different cultures; there is a lot of staff turn-over, and the means of internal communication changes with new technology (email, cell phones, hotel management systems, etc).

The hospitality workforce and the guests that they serve have become increasingly diverse, for example the ageing of the population leads to many older guests and worker mobility leads to variety in the workforce. Hence, those managing hospitality establishments require a heightened understanding of how the individual (whether a guest or a worker) adapts to new relationships, new behaviours, and new services (Brownell, 1994:3).

According to Corner, internal communication appears as a concomitant of all social life and as an exigency of social survival, in general. Internal communication can be defined as information handling, including activities of production, dissemination, reception and storage (Corner, 1994:125).

Internal communication in an establishment emphasises and focuses on the relationship between management and subordinates as individuals (Davis, 1993:156), but Brownell (1994:3) indicates that most of today's theorists have moved from highly relational models to perspectives that take into account the dynamic characteristics of service organisations as well as individualistic factors. According to Cummings, Long and Lewis (1983:32), internal communication is described as intra-organisational communication, and is a primary focus of

organisational communication. This intra-organisational communication is important because it permits internal communication management, whether to increase employees' satisfaction or to maximise their productivity efficiency; these goals require simultaneous consideration of intrapersonal, interpersonal, intra-group and inter-group internal communication.

It is necessary to get everyone working at the operational level within the organisation to work and communicate effectively with each other, also with management and with guests, in order to achieve internal communication in hospitality (Wolvin, 1994:196); from the comments above we find that this will depend on individual and organisational characteristics.

Previous comparable studies have been carried out in the developed world, for example in Australia (Solnet & Paulsen 2004), but there are no studies that could be found based on internal communication in the hospitality industry in Cape Town.

1.1.1 *Three stages to the study*

Because internal communication plays an increasingly vital role, this study sets out to determine the impact of internal communication on guest satisfaction in the Cape Town hospitality industry. It works in three stages:

- The first stage investigates the role that internal communication plays in providing a sound foundation on which to base language and behaviour, in ways that usefully direct hospitality services and deliver the required outcome. This stage in the study is based on the opinions of managers working in a selection of hotels in Cape Town.
- The second stage is based on measurement of the quality of internal communication of the same hotels.
- The third stage investigates the issues more carefully, based on actual guest opinions. Data describing guest opinions of service in the selected hotels was elicited in order to get specific and aggregated information about guest experiences, to be assessed against the evidence from the workforce within the hotels.

1.1.2 *Strategic issues in internal communications and guest satisfaction*

Internal communication is an increasingly powerful tool for organisations if the organisation adopts the new technologies and at the same time manages the impact on its people. Dealing with these two issues depends on how an organisation defines itself, and the value it places on employees within it. As companies are being pressurised to improve the bottom line and to develop appropriate strategies to achieve that, it is imperative for them to realise

that despite technological advances their most important asset is, fundamentally, their people (Olson 2006:35).

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the largest users of information technology (IT). Moreover, the industry is knowledge-intensive as a result of the nature of the service product, where guest satisfaction occurs as a result of interaction between manager and employees and where it is required that employees are knowledgeable of guests' needs in order to achieve guest satisfaction Kahle (2002).

Some experts consider that internal communications in hospitality will, beyond simply communicating with and engaging with employees, encourage employees to 'live the brand' in order to gain further competitive advantage, based on the effectiveness as well as the simple efficiency of internal communication strategies (Mandla & Van Wyk 2008). The same experts argue that making the right decisions in terms of internal communication strategies is the key to organisational excellence. Effective internal communication is given critical importance in achieving the potential success of any organisation (Fletcher, 1999:5).

Two issues challenge hotel management in dealing with staff, and ensuring the best possible services delivery: variety in "first" language, and culture. Success depends on how managers communicate with subordinates, and how both parties understand the work that should be done. Workers in hotels in Cape Town are from very diverse backgrounds and might speak (as their first language) Afrikaans, English, other European languages (if from the Francophone or Anglophone areas of Africa), or one of many African or even Asian languages. Thus, hospitality establishments should inculcate all aspects of language and cultural backgrounds in internal communication when delivering a service and ensure the quality of guest satisfaction.

According to Magurn (1987:106), managers provide information in the form of instructions; employees apply this information in ways that might or might not create good relationships among workers of different backgrounds, languages, cultures, race and colour, as well as politics. Clarity is needed to give the recipient of internal communication a clear, unambiguous understanding of what is required (Riley, 2001:83).

This research sets out to gain insight into the relationship between internal communication as a source of guest satisfaction and quality of service.

1.1.3 *The scope of the research*

The scope of the research is to investigate perceptions of the nature and impact of internal

communication inside hotels, and see whether guest satisfaction is affected by it in any particular way.

In a hotel establishment, with good internal communication one might imagine that all departments (such as food and beverage, house-keeping, maintenance and administration) would cooperate well together, exchanging information by way of internal communication, with guest satisfaction as the shared focus of their interest. Variations in the relationship between internal communication and guest satisfaction in the different hotels might also lead to interesting conclusions about the relationship between the two.

The following figure gives an overview of some of the concepts inherent in the research, as seen in an early working diagram.

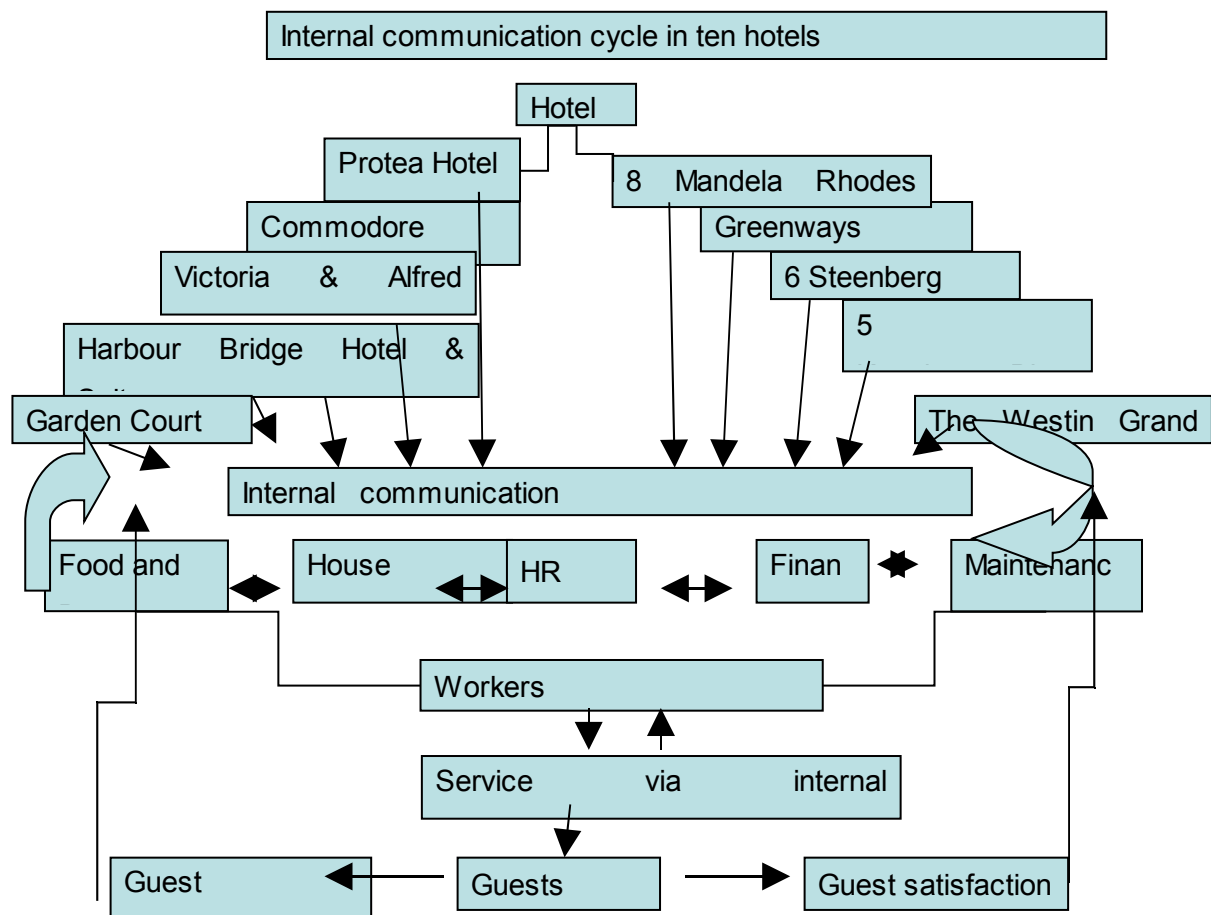


Figure 1: Guest satisfaction cycle (an early view of the research)

1.1.4 Definition of terminology

Some of the key terms and phrases inherent in the work are explained and discussed in the

paragraphs that follow.

Guest satisfaction

Hospitality researchers in India combined guest satisfaction and employee satisfaction within a Management Development Programme in hospitality (Sundar 2001:4), on the argument that satisfied employees are the only ones who can consistently satisfy guests, and that improved guest relations come from better service. Employee satisfaction is seen as a vehicle that can be used to achieve guest satisfaction. Similarly, Susskind, Kacmar and Borchgrevink (2007:1) point out that guest satisfaction comes from the commitment of the service provider toward their service process. It can be argued that good internal communications, as a key feature of employee's work, will relate strongly to employee satisfaction, but this needs to be established.

Internal communication

Dodd (2004:11) defines internal communication as action in which participants interpreting information by interacting through sending and receiving messages across a channel within an organisation context.

Internal communication takes place between employees or departments across all levels or divisions of an organisation. Internal communication can be formal or informal, upward, downward, or horizontal. It can take various forms, such as team briefing, interviewing, employee or works councils, meetings, memos, newsletters, the grapevine, and (with appropriate technology support) an intranet and management reports (BNET 2010).

Internal communications can be viewed as an opportunity to enthuse employees and provide them with reasons to promote the organisation (Verghese, 2006). By involving employees in the organisation's vision, giving them the right qualifiers or messages, educating them on the brand and the organisation's directions better and providing proof for the messages, their level of satisfaction is improved. Internal communications needs to encourage employees to take a personal approach and apply creativity while promoting the vision. Also in terms of planning, implementation and measurement, internal communications must integrate focus and direction. Learning, doing, measuring and introducing feedback to employees – when it is well done – is important to building their satisfaction.

Managerial communication

Managerial internal communication is an applied, interdisciplinary field, which focusing on language and behaviour within an organisational context (Wetlaufer, 2001: 12). It focuses on the individual manager as a unit of analysis, internal communication across various contexts such as of interpersonal, group, organisational and, in some instances, to mediate when it is required. It includes all relevant forms and channels of internal communication that managers may select in order accomplish their purposes, including written, oral, nonverbal, and mediation (Wetlaufer, 2001: 12)

Hospitality

According to Gilje (2004:36), the word hospitality refers to an act or practice of being hospitable, as seen in the cordial and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, and strangers, both socially and commercially. He notes that the ancient practice of hospitality embraced it as a social value, and reflected a natural relationship between guest and household.

Hospitality establishment - Hotel

An establishment that provides lodging, meals and other services to travellers and other paying guests (Gilje, 2004:36); a hotel is a building where people stay when away from home for business or leisure reasons, and they pay a fee principally just for accommodation and meals (Collins, 1997: 817).

Service

According to Ives (2000:1), service is defined as a unique opportunity to make a difference to someone else's life by using techniques and attitudes. It is also seen as something that has a behavioural impact on those concerned, including staff (Zeithaml et al., 1996).

1.2 Statement of the research problem

The problem that this study addresses is:

At a time when hospitality employees in Cape Town are working under difficult circumstances, with different work experience, internal communication background, culture, nationality, race, colour and gender, there is a risk that inadequate internal communication reduces guest satisfaction.

The purpose of this study is therefore to investigate the impact of internal communication on guest satisfaction in hospitality establishments in Cape Town. At the centre of the study is the need for effective interpersonal and intercultural communication within the industry, and hence good staff and departmental relationships. This is an important issue at the current time because the nature of the hotel business is changing with internationalisation and guest demographics, and the technology of communication is changing (for example the Internet, cell phones, and hotel management information systems) and thereby creates both problems and opportunities.

1.3 Main objectives, research questions and assumptions

The main objective of this study is to determine the impact of internal communication on guest satisfaction in large hotels within Cape Town, as well as to understand how internal communication can add real value to the hospitality industry. In this way, the study will determine the steps that can be taken by hotel managements to ensure that internal communications contribute to guest satisfaction.

In setting about this main objective, a range of issues had to be addressed. For example, the way in which the internal communication can be measured, the way the quality of guest satisfaction can be measured, and the relationship between internal communication and guest satisfaction.

1.3.1 Research questions

There are four principal research questions:

- What is the nature of internal communication?
- What is the measurement of the quality of internal communication?
- What is the nature and measurement of quality of guest satisfaction?
- What is the relationship between internal communication and guest satisfaction?

1.3.2 Assumptions

This study makes two significant assumptions:

- That the nature and quality of internal communication can be established by surveys of hotel management (at different levels).
- That the nature and quality of guest satisfaction can be established by analysis of volume guest opinions registered on public web sites (where the data contained therein is validated as to its source and intention).

Most workers can exercise far more creativity, responsibility and self-control than the job requires. Therefore it is the responsibility of every manager to learn how to make the best use of employee skills, in order to perform the job in the best way and to overcome the high levels of hospitality's business competition in the 21st century. It is therefore implicit in the study that hotel managements do in fact strive to deliver guest satisfaction and that hotel staff are willing to assist them through their best efforts.

As will be explained, the web was chosen as a source of information about guest satisfaction because hotels were not willing to allow surveys at or near their premises, and the guest satisfaction cards filled in within the hotels are not reliable, because of manipulation of the data.

1.4 Delimitations of the study

The study is limited to internal communication among hospitality staff from junior to senior management within ten selected hotels in Cape Town, and to the opinions of guests who have stayed in those hotels. The ten hotels are all four and five star graded, and should therefore have a clear intention to deliver guest satisfaction. They were randomly selected from about 20 such hotels operating in Cape Town.

In order to collect quantitative information, a questionnaire was distributed to selected junior, middle and senior managers, individually. Qualitative information was gathered from guest's comments about service they received in Cape Town as found in guest reviews on reputable web sites. The potential to generalise the results of this study might therefore be limited to higher quality hotels in the Cape Town region, and to guests who are responsive to the extent that they are willing to lodge their opinions on public web sites.

1.5 Purpose and significance of the study

The purpose of this research is to determine the impact of internal communication on guest satisfaction in hospitality establishments within Cape Town. Presently, hotels focus on a high rate of income. Income is dependent on management performance and quality of services. Service is a tool which generates this income. It can be argued that internal communication is a vehicle to deliver an effective service (Motlatla, 2000:264), and that is to be tested within this study.

The hospitality industry will benefit from this study since the results can be used to inform staff training, in order to deliver a better and more effective service to guests. If it is true that good internal communications improves guest satisfaction in any way, then hotels with

effective internal communication capability will achieve higher levels of guest satisfaction, which in turn will increase business turnover.

1.6 Summary and research overview

This chapter introduced the background of the research, which concerns internal communication within hospitality establishments and its impact on guest satisfaction; it then introduced the aims and objectives of the study and briefly indicated its scope, limitations and benefits.

- Chapter 2 will review previous work and studies done in the field of internal communication and guest satisfaction in the hotel industry, as well as the development of service quality management and issues of guest satisfaction.
- Chapter 3 will explain the methods used when doing the research: the design of the interviews, questionnaires and web enquiries that obtained the information needed in the study.
- Chapter 4 presents the findings according to the principal sources used (questionnaire, interview and web search)
- Chapter 5 discusses of the results of the research and works towards the conclusions that arise from the work.
- Chapter 6 summarises the results of the research and makes recommendations for hotel managers' benefit.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Approach to the literature review

The objectives of the study guided the literature review, being concerned with the role that internal communication plays in guest satisfaction, the nature and measurement of the quality of internal communication, and the nature and measurement of the quality of guest satisfaction.

This literature review focuses on evidence of the importance of internal communication, as a strategy that hotel organisations could utilise in order to attract and fulfil the expectations of guests. It also looks at issues concerning the organisation of the managers and workers who might implement that strategy, so as to manage demand for, and the supply of, guest services.

A range of sources and search terms were used, as summarised in the table below:

Table 1: Sources for the literature review	
Databases used	Search terms used
EBSCOHOST: Academic Search Premier (2008)	Internal communication
SCIENCE DIRECT: Expanded Academic Search (1990-2008)	External communication
SCIRUS (1995-2009)	Guest satisfaction
Business & Management Practices: GALE -2008	Relation between service & internal communication
EMERALD	Cape Town hospitality service
GOOGLE SCHOLAR	HR management in hospitality industry
Proquest internal Communications	The better hospitality service
Tripadvisor.Com	Importance of internal communication
	Guest reviews

Both “internal communication” and “guest satisfaction” are well represented in the literature, and what is presented here is only a small selection of the sources that could have been quoted.

2.2 The role of internal communication in hotels

In the hospitality industry, where service levels are of critical importance, internal communication structures are said to play an important role. According to Hubeli (2006:4), internal communications are part of the service package that both business and tourism have come to value as an expertise field. Others argue that the success of service hospitality depends upon the effectiveness of staffs in managing their interpersonal relations with guests.

2.2.1 *The management role*

Management's primary focus should be on communicative aspects of the service encounter, where internal communication can influence service satisfaction (Callan et al 1992:215). All note that it is important in the service industry to establish and build relationships with guests. This is crucial where there are no tangible goods exchanged and transactions are based on personal relations.

In order to achieve a truly internal communicating organisation, Wolvin (1994:24) believes that it is important to correlate external communication functions with effective use of internal communication channels. Internal channels are mostly perceived to be such elements as a weekly or monthly employee's newsletter, which provides in-house opportunities which recognise and reward good work.

External and internal communications issues can of course be separated. Brownell (1990:191) has stated that internationalisation of the hospitality workforce and rapid changes in guest demands have necessitated effective internal communication skills within the management of the organisation. Also, as the workplace becomes increasingly automated, clear and timely internal communication becomes vital; as the workforce become more diverse, the need to understand and respond appropriately to human dimensions becomes a key management task (Young and Smith, 1988:12).

Externally, in a competitive market place, effective management depends on effective internal communication; a business of leading and managing is accomplished largely through internal communication activities (Brownell, 1992:112).

2.2.2 *The interface with guests*

At the interface between the hotel and its guests, a common problem is that staff may gather into various ethnic groups. Rather than creating a convergent orientation, service staff may resort to "foreigner talk" and, as a result, contribute to unsatisfactory host-guest encounters (Sparks and Callan, 1992:221).

The interface with the guest is clearly critical. According to Dawson (2005:181), in his review of professional hotel service, information that is customised for a specific guest can be structured in a way that makes it usable in formulation action plans.

2.2.3 *Staff communication internally*

With regard to hospitality environments, Brownell (1994:7) argued the value of internal

communication among staffs: hospitality managers should take responsibility to ensure that employees feel free to exchange information in a timely and accurate manner, and they should be encouraged to reward employees' behaviours that promote healthy internal communication relationships both within and outside of the organisation .

Staying with management tasks, as well as staff when communicating, Hartley and Bruckmann (2002:120) have described the issue of "line structure", which is based on the idea that at each level, people control and administer the work of a group in the level below them. Furthermore, they state some advantages and disadvantages of such structures', as outlined below.

Advantages: It clearly sets out lines of administrative responsibility; you know what you have to do and who you report to, and all levels of the organisation can be informed about matters that are relevant to their area.

Disadvantages: It leads to excessively long lines of internal communication (for example, when messages should be sent across the organisation); people at higher levels can easily be overloaded with information, and it can lead to compartmentalisation or division of information.

In terms of firm's and employees' relationships Dawson (2005:244) proposes that building an effective internal communication and collaboration between employees is at the heart of developing powerful knowledge within a team. However, it is important to recognise that everyone is implicitly part of a team that deals with the delivery of service. How they communicate internally (or fail to do so effectively) will be central to how one is able to engage with them and create value.

2.2.4 *Getting the message out*

Internal communication can be used as a marketing tool by service employees, when it relates to external guests (Wirtz, 2004:125). Internal communication from senior managers to their employees plays a vital role in maintaining and nurturing a company's culture and providing value. In a service setting, internal communication tools for marketing are especially important because they help to create powerful images and a sense of credibility, confidence, and reassurance. According to Kimmel (2005:193), there is an array of strategies (tools) for marketing and his research emphasised word-of-mouth as a first marketing medium. By word-of-mouth, Kimmel means positive or negative communication about products, services, and ideals via the personal internal communications of personnel who have no commercial vested interest in making that recommendation. It typically takes

place among friends, acquaintances, experts, trusted advisers, and occurs among strangers.

According to Wirtz (2004:138) “advertisement” is the most dominant form of internal-to-external communication. An advertisement stands as a contact between service marketers and their guests, serving to build awareness, inform, persuade, and remind. Advertising plays a vital role in providing factual information about services and educating guests about product features and capability.

When an employee shares information with others, there should be a positive impact on guest satisfaction, as well as on individual work behaviours, recognition, and supervision (Cumming, Long and Lewis, 1983: 271). This point of view relates to the coalition of workers. According to Bruckmann (2002:311), the success of an organisation can depend on levels of the team that it employs, and positive working teams encourage flexibility, involvement and efficiency. Furthermore, maintaining employee relationships is important to developing good internal communication skills, which result in enhancing self-esteem, providing employees with positive support and more satisfaction for the guests they serve (Dodd, 2004: 64).

The formation of relationship teams should attract significant attention as the right team will enable effective knowledge-based relationships (Dawson, 2005:248). This requires rich and dynamic interaction between the hotel team (management and workers), and depends on how well individuals interact and understand each other. Effective internal communication is at the heart of relationships within a team, which will be able to achieve its key objectives of consistent guest internal communication, deeper guest knowledge and well managed guest relationships only when the team talks effectively within itself. In order to support hotel staff in selling the hotel and its services to guests, it is important to use appropriate merchandising materials, made available across the different departments or service areas. In support of this, managers have a responsibility to instruct employees properly and to supply what is necessary for staff to fulfil their service and selling obligations.

Gilmore (2003:148) considers that employee performance and attitude play an important role in selling services, but it is difficult for an employee to sell with inappropriate attitudes and without support. Hence, one of the first tasks of management is to market the hospitality operation and the role that employees play in it, and share the marketing messages with those employees. On the employee's side, personal selling by staff can be encouraged through good internal communication from manager and supervisor, by using practical internal marketing messages, and by ensuring that employees are friendly, hospitable, and strive to deliver guest satisfaction. Hence we again have the notion that there is an internal marketing and selling function to perform. This entails each department selling other

departments effectively, thereby communicating the whole range of hotel services not just their own. It will only be effective when an employee sells not only what is offered in their own area but also the products and services provided in other departments, and encourage guests to enjoy the complete “package”. This requires employees to know about and have some experience of all departments. Merchandising with brochures, leaflets, fliers and signage will help employees promote and explain all services to guests as one. However success will still depend upon the commitment of both staff and management, as such material as this needs to be kept up-to-date and relevant, and must be used as part of the overall strategy to serve guests what they want while offering as much choice as possible (Gilmore, 2003:148).

2.3 The prospects for the Cape Town hospitality industry

According to the CEO of Pam Golding Hospitality (a specialised hospitality division within the Pam Golding Property group) the outlook for the South African hospitality industry remains positive and considerably brighter when viewed against the backdrop of somewhat sobering global trends, (Demes: 2009). South Africa's hospitality industry is proving very resilient amid the global economic downturn. The country is less dependent on the overseas market as much of its business is generated from within South Africa's own domestic market, and its neighbouring Southern African countries

According to Smith Travel Research's global hotel benchmark survey (STR, 2009) the SA hotel industry in 2009 as a whole achieved a 4% increase in revenue per available room when compared to June 2008. The figure means that the effective room revenue or turnover for an average hotel across the country has actually increased by 4% despite the fact that the number of rooms in South Africa is increasing due to the opening of new hotels and lodges as well as the launch of new B&B's and guesthouses. A further positive aspect is that this in turn creates new employment opportunities. Demes says (contrary to negative comments recently published regarding hotels in Cape Town) that the well branded hotels in South Africa and in Cape Town remain in good shape, unlike those in many other cities and countries in the world. It must be born in mind that even when Cape Town is in the middle of its low season, which in any other city in the world routinely prompts special rates being offered, there has been no indication of a 'price war'.

2.4 Information technology in the hospitality industry

Recent and ongoing changes in technology have led to the emergence of new service standards and strategies. The hotel industry in particular has yet to fully embrace this change

to become more efficient and effective in delivering service with the assistance of new technologies (Chathoth, 2006:2).

According to Nikolis (2008:1) in her experience working as a manager in hotels and resorts, hotels were largely working to keep in touch with old and current guests using cards and paperwork – especially at the front desk. These “old-fashioned” methods are long since passé in most industries, and since the mid-to-late 20th century, information technology has offered extensive and reliable facilitation within the hospitality workplace. For example, information technology became important in dealing with billing and invoicing, because old-fashioned paper-based book-keeping is time consuming and inefficient, and is not able to quickly inform a hotel owner about their hotel's performance and achievement.

Recent research shows that there has been a massive increase in the application of new technologies in almost every aspect of hotel operations and management (Lee, Barker & Kandampully, 2003:5). Technology has traditionally been viewed as the key to productivity in manufacturing industries and in recent years it has helped service firms to innovate their service offerings and add value internally and for external customers. Most importantly, information technology can assist with internal communication and distribution of information across various departments of a hotel, and between different levels of staff (Lee, Barker & Kandampully 2003:5). The collection, analysis, and storage of readily accessible information has become a powerful tool that presents junior members of staff in a hotel with an opportunity to assume responsibility for making on-the-spot decisions without the need to consult senior management. Such applications allow for faster and better decision-making throughout the organisation (Durocher and Niman, 1993:4).

Riley (2001:86) states that “good internal communication is a good thing” – something that is hard to disagree with. But the process of internal communication is, to some extent, determined by the organisational structure (Wood, 1994:91); excellence in guest relations is most often rooted in a company's superior internal relations. In more progressive and successful companies, top level managers are carefully trained to be responsive and accessible to employees (Bischoff, 1989:124). According to Hai-yan and Baum (2006: 509) skills and quality of staff are among the most important factors in underpinning competitive success of hotel business. Skilled staff will communicate well, and ensure that organisational structures are appropriate. In order to upgrade guest service Bischoff (1989:124) urges marketers to understand that improving guest service requires long-term formal structures for internal communication, which allow continuous evaluation of service performance. In order to create a long-term improvement program, it is important to first assess the current

situation, know where to start from, set a clear course, and measure current progress as well as survey guest satisfaction with present service levels.

Information technology assists in the sharing of information between different units and departments as well as within different level of staffs, Prideaux, Moscardo, and Laws (2006:97). Hence we find that a range of internal activities within hotel firms can effectively use information technology that provides instant access to information, and motivates and stimulates hotel employees to embrace empowerment and deliver a higher level of service through its use.

2.5 Quality of internal communication

Effective internal communication will assist the development of self-directed or self-managed work teams. Self-directed teams provide a excellent opportunity for integrating the thinking, methods and tools of the quality movement into everyday work since the whole task (comprised of independent activities) is taken into account, rather than just the individual's jobs in isolation (Smith, 1998:4).

However, internal communication may be seen in bad way. According to Fletcher (1999:3) poor internal communication might lead to complaints that workers' participation and contribution are not valued by top management, leading to an unsatisfactory climate among employees. To overcome the situation, Fletcher provides some methods called "step changes" of internal communication improvement. This method is to survey employees and use modern statistical techniques to analyze survey responses; when management understand exactly which factors will make the biggest difference to overall internal communication satisfactory among employees, they can concentrate their efforts to them, that can add value to the business and to the internal communication itself.

Effective internal communication with internal stakeholders, whether they are employees or management, can develop a cohesive culture, where everyone is focussed on the same goal and has the same objectives. By working within a cohesive culture, stakeholders can work together and collaborate more effectively, resulting in the following specific benefits: employees can make more decisions themselves since they have the tools and knowledge to know the "right" decisions in line with the organisation's goals; staff can identify better with the goals, missions and procedures of the organisation, which can result in a sense of "making a difference" and increase effort and efficiency; programmes and departments share more resources and information resulting in less duplication of work and stronger impact as a whole organisation; day-to-day conflict can be reduced since a lot of conflict is

the result of conflicting ideas on what is important to the organisation .

According to Antonis (2005:193), internal communication should play different roles within an organisation. Human resources want internal communication to play a leading role in change management, organisation development initiatives and defining the culture of organisation. Internal communication plays a role in staff motivation, building of staff morale; it assists in linking the different directorates and helping to improve interaction and collaboration between units in order to improve operational delivery and productivity. Therefore, effective internal communication will assist in strengthening a team work activity (Fletcher, 1999:3), and ineffective internal communication will seriously hamper the work of an organisation.

When employees are involved in internal communication processes, and properly understand internal communication vehicles and channels, then internal communication become much more effective (Willard, 2008:1). According to Horwath (an accounting company), in their “Hotel Performance Confidence Indicator” research in the Western Cape, they establish the level of hotel service confidence by considering internal communication; room service, location, values, cleanliness and service performance are the aspects identified by guests when evaluating the hotel service provision (Bramwell 2009).

Hence, it is clear that quality in internal communications is a key component in an organisation’s employee engagement strategy; it is about the transfer of meaning or understanding, not just about moving information around (Verghese, 2007).

The paragraphs that follow summarise other factors (evident from the literature) that might affect quality in internal communications.

2.5.1 Hospitality language

Blue and Harun (2003:75) talk of “English for Occupational Purposes”, and suggest that the term “hospitality language” can be viewed as a reference to special aspects of language in the context of the hospitality industry. Whether in English or in another language, there is an identifiable cluster of language skills, which staff dealing with hotel guests should acquire. These skills include how to address a person, solicit and give necessary information, respond to questions, use prompts, use gestures, deal with difficult guests, and appease complainants.

Different contexts of internal communication practices (Jameson, 2001:123) are referred to as “provocative concepts’ and will screen effective management practices in the future. Secondly, this means that internal communication is a high-leverage activity. It is, therefore,

among the most potent tools to improve organisational effectiveness and to implement ideas that are gained from applied hospitality research.

2.5.2 *The nature of communication in organisations*

Communication management, according to Vos & Schoemaker (2004:23) can be seen as a circle of input, transformation and output – into, through and out of an organisation. Figure 1 below shows how they term input as “concern communication”, throughput as “internal communication” and output as “marketing communication”:

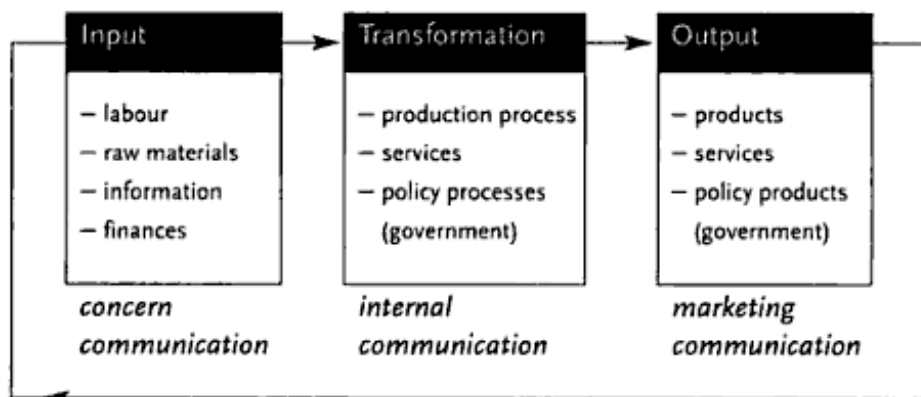


Figure 2: Internal communication management model

(Source: Vos & Schoemaker, 2004:23)

What they do not show is the way that the external world receives and then returns the messages that they receive (that is represented simplistically by the bottom arrow), but it does make clear a “systems” view of how information describes the components of input, throughput and output so that the operation of the organisation can be facilitated and managed. At all points in an organisation decisions have to be taken, and if they are “informed” decisions then we can see the organisation as a knowledgeable one. In this sense, Wood (1994:168) states that to succeed in an organisation, managers should be able to apply knowledge, through a variety of internal communication practices.

In the hospitality industry, where service levels are of critical importance, internal communication plays an important role. As Callan found, the success of service hospitality depends quite considerably on the effectiveness of staff to manage their interpersonal relations with guests. Management’s primary focus is on internal communication aspects of the service encounter, where internal communication can influence service satisfaction (Callan, et al.1992:215). Note that it is important in the service industry to establish and build relationships with guests. This is crucial where there are no tangible goods to be exchanged and the transaction is based on personal relationships.

In order to achieve a truly communicating organisation, Wolvin (1994:19) argues that it is important to correlate external communication functions with the effective use of internal communication channels such as weekly or monthly employee newsletters, which provide in-house opportunities to recognise and reward good work. Wheelhouse (1989) and Petcharak (2002) defined many rather more abstract kinds of internal communication, such as downward internal communication, upward internal communication, and lateral internal communication.

- **Downward internal communication:** Downward internal communication occurs from higher levels in an organisation to lower levels. It is mostly of an informative or directive nature. Internal communication from managers to subordinates is an example of downward internal communication. The other channels of downward internal communication used by managers are policy manuals, employee handbooks, newsletters, magazines, memoranda, annual reports, posters and bulletin boards. Each item should have a specific purpose and be written clearly.
- **Upward internal communication:** According to Cheng (1995:15) upward internal communication is the internal communication that comes from the lower level to the top level, such as from the employees to the managers. He regards it as the most important. Examples of upward internal communication include the suggestion box, employee satisfaction surveys, open-door policies, management-employee meetings, and exit interviews. Managers should accept new ideas, even the offbeat ones, without anger. They should encourage more frankness from their employees and make themselves more accessible.
- **Lateral internal communication:** Lateral internal communication is the interchange of information and ideas among all sectors of an organisation, or people, at the same level. Effective lateral internal communication is an essential element of teamwork. Without this interchange, the structure of the organisation would be no different from an office building and all employees working independently. Usually, a hospitality organisation is a group of people working together for the most satisfaction of guests.

Dodd (2004:4), in his study regarding internal communication, reminds us that personal skills include self-confidence, motivation and persuasiveness, which are necessary to make ideas clear, show sensitivity to cultural diversity, deal with conflict management, team building and leadership, and overcome internal communication anxiety. At the same level, Callan (1992:213) emphasises that – more than in most other industries – the hospitality industry relies heavily on the people skills of service providers. Hence, effective internal communication in organisations involves “face-to-face communication”. Gross (2004:62) in

her internal communication study asserts that various internal communication methods may be used, but insists that the use of face-to-face interaction is necessary to create real interpersonal relationships where other media such as audio, print and email do not of themselves encourage the development of personal and people skills.

Lockwood, in his research, found that managing quality is a difficult and complex problem in the hospitality industry because guest satisfaction depends on a high level of interaction between staff and guests. His experience in the hospitality industry shows that it is necessary for every employee to deliver a high standard of service in each and every corner of an establishment and in order to achieve and maintain a good image within its target market (Lockwood, 1995:3). Other research confirms that people are the key to both creating and sustaining an organisation's quality of service (Peters and Austin, 1994:98; Moscardo, and Laws, 2006:97). Understanding a guest's perception of service value is increasingly recognised as central to an organisation's continued success; whatever the actual level of service, it is what the guest thinks that is most important; what a guest thinks is greatly influenced by what they hear from employees within the hotel.

2.5.3 *Internal communication weaknesses*

As well as the good things that need to be done to deliver good service, the literature reveals typical problems as well.

Wood (1994:49) considers that hospitality and catering organisations have socio-technical problems that inhibit success; he finds that hospitality organisations do not develop internal labour markets whereby skills can be developed through internal promotion and upgrading. Communications skills need to be a major consideration in promotion of staff. In any organisation it is important to train employees and managers, about internal communication skills so that they can communicate effectively (Wolvin, 1994:197). Supportive relations are intended to enhance self-esteem and ego building, which contributes to subordinates' sense of personal worth and independence and they maintain their sense of significance and dignity (Mullins, 1993:121). As already noted, Blue and Harun (2002:1) suggest that "hospitality language", whether in English or another language, is a skill that hotel staff need.

Wolvin (1994:197) argues for an internal "communication committee" that can develop an internal communication plan that can address problems, identify any needed changes, and encourage the proper use of internal and external internal communication channels.

According to Bischoff (1989:124), in his study of good guest service, he states that companies often set out to upgrade guest services only to end up applying short-term (and

ultimately ineffective) “band-aid” changes. Marketers should understand that the process of improving guest service should be one that establishes a long-term, formal structure for internal communication which allows continuous evaluation of service performance. Furthermore, in order to create a long-term improvement program, it is first necessary to assess one’s current situation. One should know where one begins in order to set a clear course which measures progress.

It has been argued that the concept of internal communication requires a strategy that will equip employees with techniques, tools, and tactics to develop a solid internal communication strategy for the company and to drive it throughout the organisation . The power of internal communication had been overlooked in the past, however, modern top executives have come to realise that the effects of a well-developed and well-executed internal communication culture cannot be ignored (Evans, 1999). The way in which managers approach their jobs and behaviours that they display towards subordinates, is likely to be coordinated by predisposition about people, human nature and work (Mullins, 1993:116).

Different elements can interfere with internal communication and can lead to poor service. Boyatzis and Taylor (2002:158) have stated that when managers look at employees, and immediately realise that they have had a bad day or that cultural differences were responsible for someone’s reluctance to speak up, then the manager should use “emotional intelligence” (their ability manage their own and other people's emotions) in dealing with the situation. This personal judgment is always a factor that influences internal communication outcomes. According to Tesone, (2005:164), the practice of management involves accomplishing the objectives of the organisation, which can be achieved through activities of others. Thus, an ability to communicate effectively is crucial to the success of managers.

People communicate at work for a variety of reasons by means of a spoken word, written word, non-verbal internal communication, numbers, drawings and graphics, and by using a range of media including the telephone, face-to-face meetings, video-conferencing, e mail, letters and memos (Taylor, 2001: 6). Leadership is dynamic and interactive, and is concerned with the business of shared values and vision, clear and motivational language and appropriate internal communication strategies (Brownell, 1992:111). Furthermore, hospitality managers who emerge as leaders in 21st century are likely to be men and women who deal effectively with multi-cultural workforce, who present their ideas clearly, and who are able to mobilise others around common goals. Their competence and sensitivity will ultimately be effective for a large number of employees, travellers and guests worldwide.

Those who can not do this – the majority? - will never become leaders.

When internal communication fails to achieve its objectives, barriers have surfaced between sender and receiver. Perhaps it is because of bias on the part of one or emotion on the part of the other, or perhaps the distractions have impinged on both parties (Sigband & Bell, 1994:11). On the side of hospitality internal communication management, Sigband and Bell state that one must be able to identify barriers to successful internal communication in order to overcome them. They identified two kinds of barrier, namely nonverbal barriers, for example, when a speaker's gestures or facial expressions contradict the apparent meaning of the message; and verbal barriers, for example when one uses a word cautiously, the intended meaning may not be the meaning that the listener receives.

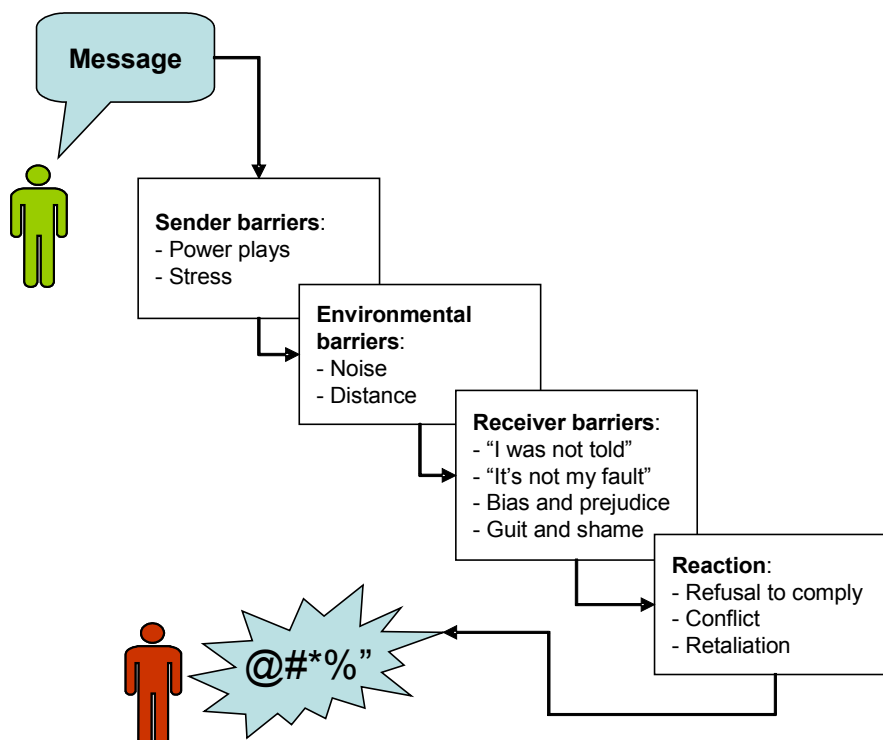


Figure 3: Internal communication barriers (based on Aquino and Cielens)

As shown in Figure 2, according to Aquino and Cielens (1999:11) there are many barriers that affect communication, for example just distance between two people is an understandable barrier if they work in different physical places. However a greater distance sometimes separates individuals who work in the same building but where there are differences in rank, status, or the amount of power that each hold in the system. The greater the extent of these circumstantial differences, the less people tend to communicate. Furthermore, they screened other internal communication barriers, namely a breakdown in understanding (variation of meaning), internal communication chains (message from A to B,

from B to C and from C to D), denial barriers (not wanting to hear or blocking the message), guilt, shame or stress (arising in difficult conditions or during emotional stress), fear of change and anger.

Lack of fundamental knowledge, according to Sigband and Bell (1994:15), can be classified as another barrier to clear internal communication of ideas. How can one intelligently discuss a problem with those who do not have a background to understand the intended message? Moreover, the same researcher identified other barriers such as: responsibilities of those involved in internal communication, appearance of communicators or the instruments used to communicate, distractions such as noise punch, presses, inadequate illumination, hissing ventilation, and so on, poor organisation of ideas and poor listening, which are classified as the most serious barriers to the internal communication of ideas. Therefore one of the main barriers hampering the development of quality service has seen as a lack of top management capable of seeing, understanding and dealing with these things (Fletcher 1999:3). If the whole organisation is not working together to encourage quality as a team, the effort will be in vain. When top management has proven its commitments, it will flow through the organisation and become part of the make-up of each employee in organisation .

Jones and George (2003:3) see two important aspects to be managed: the internal influence of co-workers (information transmitted through co-workers, via interaction or observation, may reflect organisational realities more accurately) and the organisation's culture (the values, norms, standards of behaviour, and common expectations that send messages to members about what goals they should pursue and how they should behave to reach those goals).

2.5.4 *Eliminating potential barriers of internal communication*

So it can be seen that that several factors can lead to the breakdown of internal communication. Scheepers and Jattiem (2002:17) also refer to these factors as "barriers". In their view, these barriers may originate with the sender (speaking too fast), a medium (a different language), channels (a crackling telephone), or the receiver (not listening carefully). For several reasons, co-workers respond to one another based not only on perceptions of individual competence, but in terms of their various identities and group memberships (Dodd, 2004:148). This perception of differences is what can inhibit the process of intercultural internal communication; hence it's management is critical if one is to maintain harmony.

When you send a message, you intend to communicate meaning, but the message itself doesn't contain meaning. The meaning exists in your mind and may not be the same as

comes to the mind of the receiver. In order to overcome barriers between communicators, Hahn (2005) reminds us of what we should always remember: that to understand one another, the sender and the receiver must share similar meanings for words, gestures, tone of voice, and other symbols.

2.5.5 Cultural variety and discrimination

According to Dodd (2004:143), stereotypes comprise a set mental picture of a particular group, and arbitrarily attributing the traits of that group to someone who belongs to it is based on incomplete information and limited exposure to members of that group. This can lead to errors in judgment and internal communication. Scheepers and Jattiem (2002), in their description of psychological, perceptual and social barriers of internal communication, expressed that feelings, perceptions religion, age, gender, and education, may cause breakdowns in internal communication.

Organisations have to represent or reflect the global society we live in, which is increasingly multi-cultural and diverse because of the limitless boundaries of modern radio, television, and media communications. This often leads to poor inter-personal communications because of a simple lack of cultural understanding of the way others actually work and think (Medley 2010). The failure to understand other peoples' backgrounds was said to be one example of poor internal communication, arising from a lack of mutual, cultural understanding.

Language is culturally embedded; those who speak other languages are privileged to have insight into other cultures, however understanding other cultures can only be accomplished if sincere efforts are made to literally speak their language (Rice, 2005:54).

When meeting people from other cultures, the chances are that both may consider the other to be "ab-normal" or "alien". Intercultural research shows that prejudice and stereotyping often result because of how difference is perceived and valued (Hall, 1990:86).

According to Rice (2005:56) cultural diversity in a workforce increases the probability that some people may become angry and annoyed with different behaviours from different people with whom they work. He revealed further challenges that face twenty-first century managers based on studies of cognitive style, diversity and its effects on organisational internal communication. Correspondence by e-mail can increase rapport (by putting a safe distance between sender and recipient, and invoking a more careful and formalised style of communication) but of course it lacks the richness of face-to-face communication and when the formality gives way to a style that offends one party, then it can become highly acrimonious (or worse).

To deal with language and culture in the context of South Africa, human resource managers have to work for effective diversity management in the workplace. Undoubtedly, good leadership that recognises this in hospitality and tourism companies plays an important role. It is acknowledged that the South African situation is unique and that it even differs from one part of the country to another (Tshikwatamba, 2003:2). Case studies by Prime (1996:4) showed the compelling need for South African companies to build a new corporate identity grounded on the integration of the diverse cultural forces. To sustain a successful cross-cultural management process the search for a combination of European, Asian and African worlds must be suggested. This could be developed through common social activities inside the workplace (in small group units with a thick network of informal relationships, trust and intimacy), or outside the workplace (in sponsored leisure and sports activities).

The vision of an organisation comes from management, and so the development of good internal communication can be regarded as a key managerial function. As such, in a multilingual context recognising this is a necessary minimum. Then, training people in literacy, linguistic skills, cross-cultural internal communication skills, must follow.

According to Doorley and Carcia, (2007:196) diversity is presently a buzzword, but it is a good step for businesses to embrace diversity. It means that everyone should respect people who may look, speak and think in a different way. Tesone (2005:74), using American culture as an example (it is influenced by many different races, ethnic background, community and global regions) notes the multiple influences and considers that this makes the American culture heterogeneous in nature. The hospitality industry is also heterogeneous and, for this reason, individuals in this industry should learn to disregard culture differences and embrace cultural similarities, which mean enrolling in cultural diversity training programs.

Problems with diversity in internal communication brings weaknesses among workers. They do not work; they do not succeed and can even cause productivity to decrease. Thus one should obtain a handle on diversity in internal communication (Argueta, 2006). The fact is that workforce demographics change. For example if one's workforce is composed of men, women, people of colour, or immigrants, one should learn how to profit from this; drive change from the top before throwing money away on programmes, seminars, workshops, training, speakers, newsletters, websites, consultants, and so on (Argueta, 2006).

According to Brian (2006) diversity management involves transformation of one's own self as well as the team. To manage and develop a diverse team one needs to develop and understand dependency, independency and inter-dependency; understanding the needs of others to survive and to succeed and observing again one's own positive or negative actions.

It is true that the quality of life that we lead, the clothes that we wear, the humanity that we exude, the food on our table, the education of our family depends on the quality of our relationships within and outside of the workplace. When seen in this context we begin to understand that there is a vital need for teamwork for us all to succeed. And the more diverse the backgrounds, skills and talents of the team, the more we win. In other studies on diversity management, it was concluded that informed management is essential, and that the effective management of diversity remains a challenge for many hospitality managers and their organisations (Hughes, 1999:396).

The widespread concern over standards of service quality in the tourism and hospitality sector may encourage more employer interest in managing diversity. After all, the very nature of the modern hotel industry comes from the diverse nature of its offerings, and diversity in the workforce should not just be accepted, it should be encouraged (Maxwell et al., 2000:24). As society becomes ever more diverse, the challenge of responding to cultural diversity in the hotel industry will heighten because the very service that is offered is a social experience – culturally relative and culturally defined (Christensen, 1993:33). It is not just about the workforce – a diverse guest base means that successful management of diversity not only addresses internal problems but also provides guests with a quality service experience that meets their expectations (Nykiel, 1997:4).

2.6 Understanding guest satisfaction

In the 1990s, the hospitality industry seemed increasingly to be acknowledging that quality was really about satisfying the needs and expectations of guests (Lockwood.1995:3). In this case, “quality” must take account of the predominance of guest requirements.

2.6.1 Service excellence

According to Dickson, Ford, and Upchurch (2006:3) service excellence, should be the mission of the hospitality industry, so that employees should develop an understanding of what the factors are that lead to service excellence and how they can be aligned. Alignment is the idea of developing and making consistent the various cues that managers use to communicate to employees what is important and what is not, what has value to the hotel and what does not, and what they should do for their guests and what they should not. When these cues are aligned they send a powerful message to guide each employee as to what the hotel's commitment to excellent guest service means in every encounter with every guest. Managing quality is a difficult and complex problem in the hospitality industry, it also needs to counter the problems of guest satisfaction through the high level of interaction

between staff and guests (Lockwood.1995:3).

2.6.2 The gap model

If the performance of a service does not live up to the standard which the guest was led to expect, it will result in a perception of poor service quality from the guest's perspective. It is the gap between a guest's expectations, and their perceptions of what was received, that is the most important gap to manage in delivering service quality. Interestingly, research conducted by Parasuraman et al. (1985) shows that actual service delivered is less important than the expectations and perceptions of the recipient. This work shows that service quality can be explained as a series of gaps between what the guest expects, and what management specifies should be delivered; it is interesting to note that the authors of this work point out that although their ideas apply in any service context, they might need re-interpretation in moving from one to another. The idea can be illustrated in the hospitality and educational contexts, as follows:

Gap 1. Consumer expectation – management perception gap

Managers frequently think that they have a good feel for what their guests want. However, there is evidence to suggest that they are frequently unaware of certain crucial guest expectations or do not rate some factors as important as do their guests. For example, Holiday Inns' resistance to providing tea- and coffee-making facilities in their rooms showed a product-centred adherence to room service standards. In education, students may want to develop the presentation skills they feel will be of value to them in industry but lecturers may see essay writing skills as much more important.

Gap 2. Management perception – service quality specification gap

Even when managers are aware of all that guests expect, there may be a number of factors – resource constraints, market conditions, and/or management indifference – which can prevent them from setting specifications to meet these expectations. In hospitality education, students may want to spend their industrial practice stages abroad; but time and financial constraints may prevent an institution from establishing and monitoring such placements.

Gap 3. Service quality specification – consumer satisfaction gap

Once formal service specifications are in place, it is still possible for the actual performance to fall short of these requirements. This is especially true in the provision of education, where

the role of the contact personnel – the lecturing staff – is so crucial to meeting expectations and ensuring student satisfaction. This can lead to wide variability in performance and, in turn, makes it difficult if not impossible to deliver standardised quality.

Gap 4. Consumer satisfaction – external internal communications gap

Another possible reason for the perception of poor service quality by guests is that their expectations are boosted by media advertising, sales presentations and other internal communications to a level exceeding the organisation's ability to deliver. On the other hand we may fail to tell them about features of our service that would enhance their perceptions of our offering. Education establishments which go out of their way to make themselves look good through the promises they make in their glossy literature or their promotional videos may be raising expectations that they cannot sustain when prospective students visit the site or over the extended period of contact that a student has with such an establishment.

These ideas concerning service quality are important, and have achieved wide acceptance; they are commonly referred to as the "gap model" of service management.

We learn that to understand guest satisfaction, it is necessary to understand what the guests themselves have to say about their expectations and perceptions of service. As will become clear, this became one of the principal challenges in achieving this research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to gather data to analyse and understand internal communications within the hotel industry, and its impact on guest satisfaction. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis were chosen.

3.1.1 Quantitative research

Struwing and Stead (2001:7-8) have stated that quantitative research can be defined as a form of conclusive research, which involves large representative samples and fairly structured data collection procedures. The emphasis of quantitative research is on the measurement and analysis of statistical data to determine relationships between entities, in order to draw quantifiable conclusions.

As explained in more detail in the paragraphs that follow (see section 3.2), quantitative methods were chosen to obtain an understanding of perceptions about internal communications within the hotels. There was a large group of potential respondents, and the intention was to investigate general feelings about internal communications in terms of mode (of communication), language, culture and so on. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data, and simple statistical analysis was undertaken; however, some open-ended questions allowed for limited qualitative data to be gathered.

3.1.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research (Ereaut, 2007:1) is used to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles. It is focused on analysis of the situation of individuals rather than groups, and is used to inform business decisions and policy formation.

As explained in more detail in the paragraphs that follow (see section 3.3), qualitative research was used to gain an understanding of guest satisfaction, as seen by guests. Here a smaller number of "respondents" was needed to provide some indicative evidence about the impact of internal communication on guest satisfaction. The Internet provided the primary source of this qualitative data.

3.1.3 Progression of the project

Following design of the main questionnaire, data concerning management's general perceptions of internal communication was first collected in 2008. Following the investigation of guest satisfaction using data from the Internet (see section 3.3 below) a second supplementary questionnaire was compiled focusing more on the quality of internal communication and its effect on guest satisfaction, as indicated in the figure below:

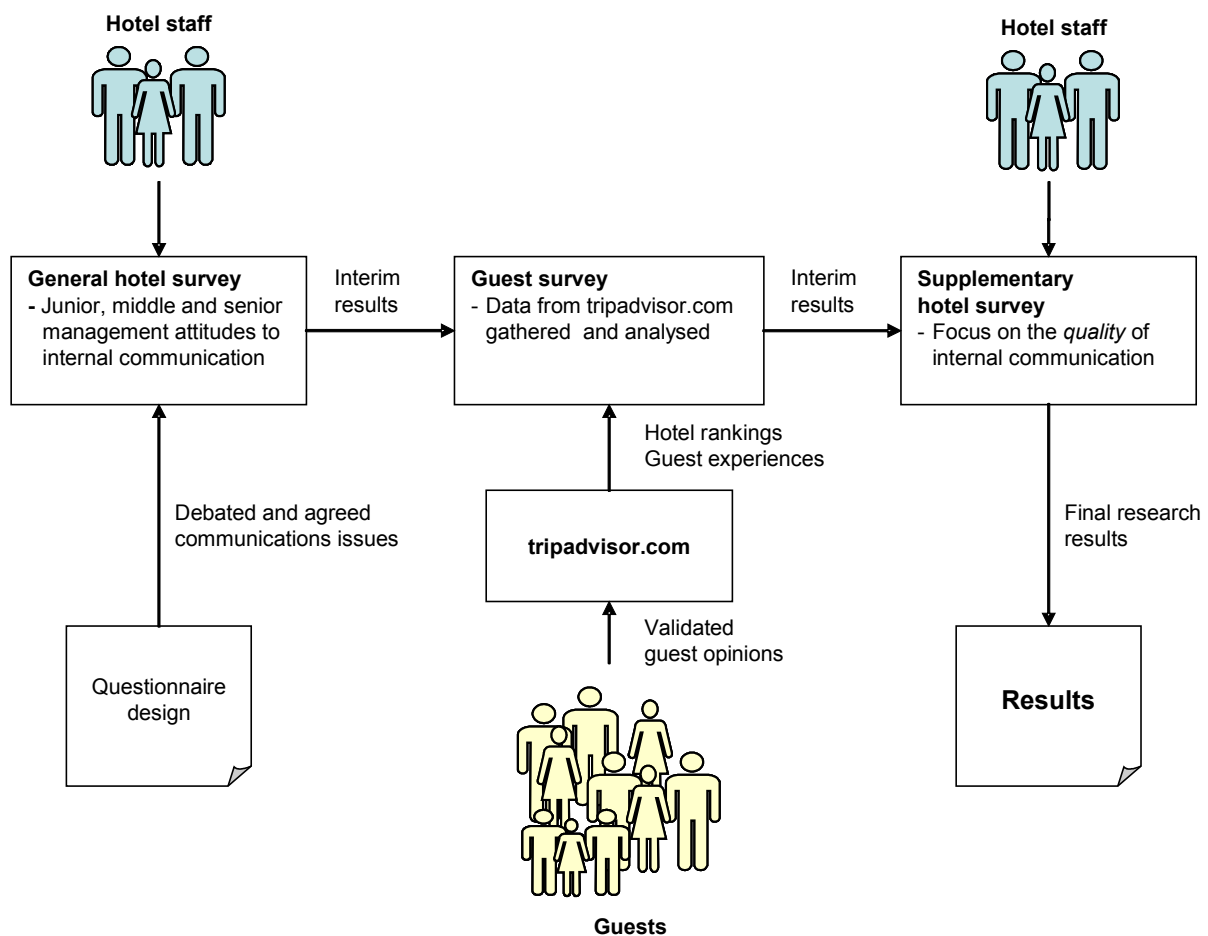


Figure 4: Overview of the data collection process

3.2 Data collection

3.2.1 Development of the main questionnaire

Before the first questionnaire was compiled, the researcher met with two general managers, five human resource managers and different post graduate students in Tourism and Hospitality in order to discuss the objectives of this study in detail. The results of the discussions were used to compile an appropriate questionnaire.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections: first demographic questions such as age, gender, languages spoken, and nationalities, and second specific questions about internal communications and guest satisfaction as seen within the hospitality operation.

The questionnaire included structured questions, as well as open-ended and closed-ended questions. The last page of the questionnaire provided additional space where respondents could add further comments.

A descriptive glossary of specific terms used in the questionnaire was provided which helped respondents to understand the proper meanings of the questions and to reduce ambiguity while answering the questionnaire. This main questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1 of this thesis.

3.2.2 *General survey of internal communication in the hotels*

Fifteen hotels in the Cape Town area with 4- and 5-star grading were approached. They were all located in strategically busy areas where most of the big volume hotels are located: in the Cape Town central business district, Northern suburbs, Southern suburbs, Camps Bay and Hout Bay.

Ten accepted the opportunity to participate in the study. In order to prepare the way for the survey, short meetings were held with managers in these hotels, to discuss their participation in the project and the completion of the questionnaires.

The objectives and intended value of the research were explained in the interviews with the managers. Once permission was granted, blank questionnaires were left to be distributed among all levels of their management team, including junior middle and senior management. Junior managers represented a range of functions including the food and beverages department, front office, house keeping department and security; senior managers tended of course to have an overview of all functions.

The reason for choosing this population is seen at two levels. Firstly, junior and middle managers form a direct relationship and collaboration with hotel employees and guests, hence it is they who are responsible, within their departments, to ensure internal communication and monitor its impact on guest satisfaction. Secondly, senior managers deal mostly with interdepartmental and intergroup communications and have to make decisions based on the way things are working; it is therefore important for this group to obtain information about how internal communication actually impacts on guest satisfaction so that problems can be dealt with.

Each questionnaire was distributed and returned in an enclosed envelope, which assured confidentiality and safety.

3.2.3 Guest survey

The hotels did not permit access to their in-house guest reviews, nor would they allow a survey to be undertaken “at the door”. It was therefore necessary to find an alternative source of information about the actual levels of guest satisfaction (as seen by the guests themselves).

A leading hospitality expert and tour operator in Cape Town was contacted and asked how the industry measures service performance (Snyman, 2009). She advised that there is no agency or guide that gives formalised or tightly structured ratings for the quality of service at hotels, but the primary source of information used today is the World Wide Web. She specifically referred to “tripadvisor.com”¹, a web site that receives qualitative feed-back from guests and – most importantly – that strives to ensure the quality of that feedback in appropriate ways, by proper identification of the originator and validation of their comments. This source can therefore be compared favourably (Snyman argued) with traditional sources such as the “Conde Nast Rewards”, “AA Awards”, “The World Luxury Hotel Awards” and “World Travel Awards”. Guests who know what they expect can see reported problems (and compliments) and thereby manage their expectations of service and make an appropriate choice of hotel.

In view of these clear precautions, and because all of the participating hotels were represented in the opinions available on tripadvisor.com, it was decided to use tripadvisor.com as the primary source of guest satisfaction data. It is important to note that the Internet is now the predominant source of information for virtually all “modern” travellers, and one might expect that hotel managers will attempt to make sure that what is said on the Internet reflects well upon them, and that they deal effectively with all problems that are reported. After all, if one finds a hotel that seems to deal promptly and effectively with problems (as will be evident via sources such as tripadvisor.com), one might be tempted to rate it more highly than a hotel that has never been the subject of any reports at all.

1 A number of other web-based sources were investigated and an assessment was made concerning the reliability of the sources. Tripadvisor.com was chosen because of the efforts made to validate the site content; specifically, it accommodates the opinions of literally millions of travellers, moderates and examines questionable reviews, encourages replies from reviewed hotels, encourages members to report inappropriate content, and applies applicable laws (it is illegal to post fake reviews in many countries such as the USA, United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Germany, Ireland, Sweden and the Netherlands).

3.2.4 *Supplementary hotel survey*

The first questionnaire garnered general evidence about internal communications and its potential impact on guest satisfaction, but it did not focus particularly on the quality of internal communications. Following the second survey of the quality of guest satisfaction, it was decided that it was necessary to supplement the data from the first survey with an assessment of the quality of internal communication. This would provide two data sets that might indicate more clearly the relationship between these two perspectives.

Some questions were selected from the main questionnaire, relating more closely to the quality of internal communication. A second questionnaire was developed, based upon them, but using wording that much more clearly elicited views about quality and adopting a Likert scale approach to make the collection of data simpler and quicker. This second questionnaire is presented in Appendix 2 of this thesis.

3.2.5 *Limitations of the study*

The research was limited to a study of information about internal communication within hotels, and the resulting levels of guest satisfaction. Further, it extended only to a selection of larger, highly “rated” hotels within the Cape Town area.

It must also be noted that some time elapsed between data collection within the hotel and from the Internet; this was further justification for the supplementary hotel survey and it is hoped that the general trends that are apparent give a useful result, and that the methodology that has been adopted might provide a basis for more detailed work in due course.

3.3 *Summary*

This chapter has outlined the research design and methodology for this study. Different methods were used in order to capture information about internal communications within hotels, and the general level of guest satisfaction that resulted from visits. The use of the Internet as a source is interesting (in comparison with more traditional methods of data acquisition) and provides an opportunity to make judgement about the reliability and usability of the Internet for travellers. It also provided a focus on quality issues that led to the supplementary survey within the hotels.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

4.1 The analysis of the research approach of the study

The previous chapter described the methods and strategies that were used to obtain respondents' information. This chapter presents the results of the surveys and web searches. The chapter follows the sequence established in the previous chapter:

- General hotel survey (main questionnaire)
- Guest survey (Internet)
- Supplementary hotel survey (supplementary questionnaire)

4.2 General hotel survey

The paragraphs that follow summarise the results of the questionnaire-based survey concerning internal communication as seen by the hotel staffs. The detailed tables and graphs are presented in Appendix 3. Here only the principal results are given. The response was adequate: 105 completed and usable questionnaires were received from the hotel management (junior, middle and senior managers).

The results presented here are organised according to the questions in the questionnaire: demographics first, then communication issues.

4.2.1 Demographics

The principal demographic characteristics were considered to be age, gender, nationality, home language, preferred working language and seniority. The notes and the table below summarise the distribution of respondents under these categories:

- Of the 105 respondents that answered and returned the questionnaire, the majority were young rather than old: 9% were younger than 20 years old; 44% (the largest group) comprised young managers aged between 21 and 30 years old; 38% were 31 to 40 years old; 7% were between 41 and 50 and 3% were over 50.
- Males dominated the sample of hotel managers: 62% were males and the remaining 38% were females.
- Nationality was based on two categories: South African (67%), or non-South African (33%).
- Language is always an issue in South Africa, and a range of home languages were

spoken by the sample of managers; 41% of respondents have English as their home language, 31% have Xhosa, 13% have Afrikaans, 6% Zulu, and 9% some other language.

- The language preferred by the majority for use in the workplace was English (75%). 11% indicated Afrikaans as the preferred working language and 10% Xhosa, in both cases because it would make visitors using those languages feel welcome. 3% preferred Tswana but provided no reasons for this choice...
- In terms of management level, the largest group comprised the junior managers at 69%; this compares with middle managers (23%) and senior managers (8%). One respondent did not want to state his management level and was recorded as a “don’t know”.

Table 2: Demographics summary

Description	Results	Percentages
Management levels	Junior Managers	69%
	Middle managers	23%
	Senior Managers	8%
Home languages	English	41%
	Xhosa	31%
	Afrikaans	13%
	Zulu	6%
	Others	9%
Language preferences	English	75%
	Afrikaans	11%
	Xhosa	10%
	Tswana	3%
Gender	Male	62%
	Female	38%
Nationalities	South African	67%
	No South African	33%

4.2.2 Communication issues

The remainder of the questionnaire was concerned with a range of communications issues, including: listening, understanding, importance of communication, place of communication, knowledge about hotel services, access to channels of communication, role of

communication in service delivery, dealing with diversity and culture, range of languages used, strengths and weaknesses, factors affecting communication, factors affecting guest satisfaction, training, managing change, decision making and solving problems. The table and notes that follow summarise what was found.

Table 3: Communication issues

Type of Communication	Scale of measurement	percentage	
Listening	Very good	39%	
	Excellent	29%	
	Good	25%	
	Fair	12%	
Understanding	Very good	43%	
	Good	30%	
	Excellent	19%	
	Fair	9%	
Importance of communication	Strongly agreed	49%	
	Agreed	40%	
	Uncertain	9%	
	Disagreed	3%	
Place of communication	Agreed	86%	
	Uncertain	11%	
	Disagreed	3%	
Knowledge about hotel services	Agreed	90%	
	Uncertain	8%	
	Disagreed	1%	
Access to channels of communication	Agreed	80%	
	Uncertain	14%	
	disagreed	8%	
Role of communication in service delivery	Strongly agreed or agreed	89%	
	uncertain	9%	
	Disagreed	2%	
Dealing with diversity and culture	Strongly agreed	45%	
	Agreed	33%	
	Uncertain	18%	
	Strongly disagreed	2%	
Range of Languages used	Ability of speaking international languages	Strongly disagreed	33.3%
		Disagreed	43%
		Uncertain	18%
		agreed	8%
	Communication channels preference	Verbal communication	42%
		Communication by memos	26%
		communication by e-mail	21%
		Communication by telephones	11%
Strengths and weaknesses	N/A	N/A	

These issues correspond to the questions included within the questionnaire and the results are summarised in the notes that follow (see Appendix 3 for the details). In so doing, the (edited) words of the question are presented first (in italics) followed by notes on the results.

Listening

How well do you listen to messages from your workplace colleagues?

The largest number (34%) consider that their capability to listen to messages is “very good”, 29% stated “excellent”, 25% “good”, and only 12% “fair”. This indicates that most hotel managers do not consider they have a problem when listening within their work.

Some reasons cited for “fair” listening included that some employees come from abroad and their English proficiency is poor; however, they were recruited not for their English language capability but because of their hospitality experience, or for other significant criteria such as foreign language skills.

Understanding

How well do you understand messages from your workplace colleagues?

Of course, listening is not the same thing as understanding. The largest number (43%) indicated that their understanding is “very good”, 30% “good”, 19% “excellent” and 9% only “fair”. This parallels the result for listening, but suggests more confidence to understand than to just listen. Perhaps they were referring to the extent to which they understand the messages to which they listen?

Importance of communication

“Communication undertaken by employees is important for building the hotel’s image and reputation” (agree-disagree).

There is little hesitation in agreeing with this statement. A majority of managers (49%) strongly agreed and almost as many (40%) agreed with the statement. A small number (9%) were uncertain and 3% disagreed. Where there are different perceptions amongst managers regarding relationships between communication and hotel image and reputation, there would be major implications in dealing with communication management. However, the results indicate that almost all managers agree about the importance of communications.

Place of communication

“Communication at the reception area determines guests' perceptions of the hotel's service image” (agree-disagree)

Almost all respondents, 86%, agreed that communication at reception areas, influences guests' perceptions of the hotel's service image. 11% were uncertain and 3% disagreed (it would be interesting to investigate further how this could possibly be the case). This indicates that managers place much value on the quality of communication at reception areas, as might be expected.

Knowledge about hotel services

“Knowledge of hotel products from the reception staff indicate the levels of service that guest can receive in the establishment” (agree-disagree)

Managers are clearly focussed on product (or service) knowledge at reception areas. 90% of respondents agreed that staff should be knowledgeable and trained to provide details of hotel products and services to guests. Only 8% were uncertain, and 2% disagreed.

Access to channels of communication

“Employees have access to channels of communication and are trained how to use them” (agree-disagree)

A majority of hotel managers, 80%, emphasised the accessibility of their hotels' communication channels and training of employees to use them. The remaining 8% seemed to consider this not necessary, and 14% were uncertain. Although managers should play a direct role in educating staff about the use of communication channels and other facilities available to them, in relative terms (compared with some of the answers above) this seems to point to a “weak spot” in some cases, possibly concerned with the need for training.

Role of communication in service delivery

“Internal communication plays a key role in delivering a service in a hotel establishment” (agree-disagree)

The results revealed different perceptions. 89% of respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that communication plays a key role in delivering proper services in a hotel; 9% were

uncertain, with the statement, and 2% strongly disagreed.

Dealing with diversity and culture

*“Managing diversity in the hospitality industry is the key for businesses to succeed or to fail”
(agree-disagree)*

The results indicate a strong level of agreement that managing diversity is important to success. 45% agreed and 33% strongly agreed; only 18% were uncertain and only 2% strongly disagreed with the statement.

*“Ignorance of other cultures by some employees affects their service performance”
(agree-disagree)*

There was less certainty about this. A majority of managers, 33%, believe that understanding culture has an impact, but 42% were not convinced.

Range of languages used

*“Having a lot of employees speaking international languages can enhance service performance”
(agree-disagree)*

Surprisingly, managers were not convinced about this. 33.3% of managers strongly disagreed, 43% disagreed, 18% were uncertain and only 6% agreed.

Communications channels preferred. There are different ways for employees to communicate, using different channels. These communication channels include all modes – from verbal to digital (email). Respondents were asked to choose between, verbal, memos, emails, notice boards and telephones.

What is your preferred internal communication channel to be used in your organisation?

The majority of managers (42%) indicated that they prefer to use verbal communication; 26% prefer to use memos, 21% e-mails, and 11% telephones. The use of SMS messages was not evident in the results.

Strengths and weaknesses

Identify your strengths and weaknesses

In the discussions leading to the questionnaire design, different aspects of communications were identified that might indicate strength or weakness – this might be regarded as a



Figure 5: Strengths and weaknesses

working list in that it is not validated by any previous research, but it does have the legitimacy that comes from expert and peer discussions. Respondents were asked to choose from the list, with the result shown in the chart below. By summing the responses the red bars (to the right) indicate where respondents consider they perform well, and the blue bars (to the left) indicate where they consider they are weaker. The different strengths and weaknesses have been ranked so the strongest (overall, across all respondents) appear at the top, and the weakest at the bottom.

It is interesting to see that delivery-related skills are seen to be the weakest, despite the simple assertion (in the second line) that “explaining clearly” is strength rather than a weakness.

Factors affecting communication

What factors mostly affect communication in the hotel?

Respondents were asked to choose what factors affect communication from a short list, including: poor internal communication channels, cultural diversity, language barriers, accent difficulties, and poor interdepartmental cooperation

33% rated cultural diversity as the factor that affects communication the most; 28% rated

poor interdepartmental communication. Poor communication channels were rated third, language barriers fourth (9%) and accent fifth (4%). The emphasis on culture and interdepartmental issues suggests quite strong challenges for senior managers to deal with.

Factors affecting guest satisfaction

What factor do you think most affects guest satisfaction?

Perhaps it is to be expected that the majority of respondents chose “guest behaviour” and “guest interference” as the factors that most affects guest satisfaction; employee diversity, internal communication, and management style were seen as less significant. This, of course, is seen from the inside of the hotel and needs to be compared with what guests would regard as important.

Training

How often do staff members receive communication training in your hotel establishment?

It might be expected that training is extremely important in ensuring the right skills, building team spirit and employee loyalty, and providing satisfaction to employees generally. The results are interesting, indicating that only 12% of respondents confirming “continuous” training; 20% monthly; 26% six-monthly; 30% annually, and 14% never schedule communication training in their hotel's operational program.

Guest satisfaction is determined by staff discipline and behaviour toward guests, both these attributes come from training and education and this is especially important when faced with diversity in the workforce.

Managing change

How much can communication enhance a company's ability to change?

Respondents were asked to comment on the contribution of communications to change: in the people working in the hotel, in beliefs attitudes and values, behaviours, systems and structure, the company's image, and (most importantly for this study?) service performance.

The results are interesting. A largest number of respondents (36%) consider that communication can influence change in service performance, which is the focus of this study; 33% believe that it can change behaviour; 28% that it can change people; 26% that it can change beliefs attitudes and values; 18% that it can change systems and structure; only 13% believe that it can change company's image. This final result is perhaps the most

unexpected – and worrying?

Decision making

Respondents were asked to rate 13 aspects of decision making and communications dependencies. The chart below presents the ranking, positive rankings shown by the bars on the right, and negative by the bars on the left. The 13 aspects have been sorted most positive at the top, least positive at the bottom.

The original questions asked for a four point response based on “Never”, “Seldom”, “Often”, “Always”; “Never” and “Seldom” have been summed to create the negative bar on the left, “Often” and “Always” have been summed to create the positive bar at the right.

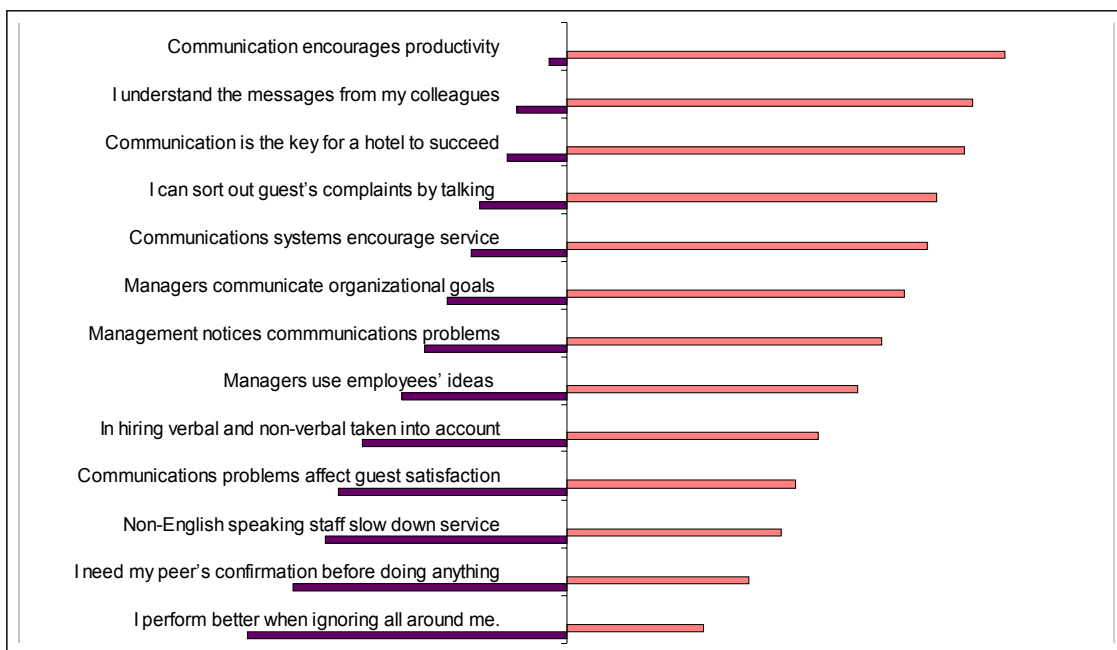


Figure 6: Ranking of decision making and related issues

Again a pattern can be seen, with the rather simpler issues coming out as truisms (issues of productivity, understanding and communications as a critical success factor) and the rather more challenging issues (such as peer relationships and language) being seen as not “true”. Overall, however, there are more positive responses indicating that the issues are more true than not true.

Verbal and non-verbal communication

When asked, the majority of respondents (87%) indicated that problems with verbal communication are often related to problems with guest satisfaction; equally the majority

(78%) indicated that problems with non-verbal communication are also related problems of service performance.

Solving problems

What methods are used to solve communication problems within the workplace?

Respondents mostly preferred to deal with individuals directly, then in writing, otherwise by means of a group meeting so as to find a collective solution.

4.2.3 *Communications strategies adopted by the hotels*

The investigation of the ten hotels revealed that they employed different communications strategies, for example in terms of their use of the Internet and other technologies. However, a detailed analysis of these communications strategies is beyond the scope of the present project and must be left for later investigation. Here we are principally concerned with *perceptions* of internal communications rather than formalised strategies that may or may not exist.

4.3 *Guest survey*

The paragraphs that follow present the data collected from the web, comprising guest reviews of service received in the hotels in Cape Town as found on tripadvisor.com (see the figure below for a sample review). The reasons and justification for this approach are dealt with in the previous chapter, but the significant factors are that these reviews are independent of the hotels, they are validated, and a range of reviews is available from different categories of visitors such as business visitors, couples, families, friends and solo travellers. Reviews generally deal with the location, quality of the hotel, the quality of service, and the actual services offered. Clearly, they are offered for the benefit of future travellers, and the information provided gives an overall picture of the quality and standard of hotels. Hotels have an opportunity to respond to comments.

As well as descriptive comments on the experience, reviews include details such as the date, an overall rating, detailed ratings for value, rooms, location, cleanliness, service and sleep quality. Readers of reviews can also indicate whether the review was helpful or not. The number and content of reviews changes day by day, of course, as different guests check in and report different hotel service experiences.

“My world cup great was made by the hosts, not by my Country”

Best Western Cape Suites Hotel



Save Review

chrisgeeza 1 contribution
London

Jul 9, 2010

I stayed here for the best part of 2 weeks during the world cup with the hope of having a wonderful holiday and watching England win their games. While I was let down by the latter this was more than made up by the hospitality I was shown by this hotel and all the staff. Everyone from the staff at reception through to the bar staff went out of their way to make sure not only me but all of my fellow countrymen were having the trip of a life time and really made the hotel feel like home. I would recomend anybody to go to Cape Town as its a friendly and vibrant place with loads to see and I would also recommend that they stay in Cape Suites - for me a place that will always be in my heart now

My ratings for this hotel

●●●●● Value

●●●●○ Rooms

●●●●○ Location

●●●●● Cleanliness

●●●●● Service

●●●●○ Sleep Quality

Date of stay June 2010

Visit was for Leisure

Traveled with Large Group/Tour

Member since July 09, 2010

Would you recommend this hotel to a friend? Yes

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC.

Was this review helpful? **Yes**

[View profile](#) | [Send message](#) | [Compliment reviewer](#)

[Report problem with review](#)

Management response from Home2wn, Manager

(Management representative)

Jul 12, 2010

Thank you so much for your fantastic comments on Tripadvisor. We are so glad that you enjoyed your time with us. Our staff hospitality is something we hold in a very high regard and we are proud that this stood out in your mind. Thank you again, and we look forward to your next visit.

This response is the subjective opinion of the management representative and not of TripAdvisor LLC.

Figure 7: A sample review from tripadvisor.com

4.3.1 The hotels

The notes that follow provide some descriptive material about each of the hotels, based on what is available on the trip advisor web site. In each case the number of reviews that recommended the hotel is provided, as a first indication of the quality of service.

Harbour Bridge Hotel & Suites

The Hotel is a new four-star hotel located at the Roggebaai Canal, Lower Long Street, on the fringe of busy downtown Cape Town. It thereby claims to be safe and secure, and within easy walking distance of all the major attractions including the popular V&A waterfront and the Cape Town International Convention Centre. 75% of reviews would recommend this hotel.

Garden Court De Waal

The hotel is a well established four-star hotel located at Mill Street in Gardens, some way from the city centre. It was formerly one of five Cape Town Holiday Inns and therefore there are fewer reviews, but it is popular: 88% of reviews would recommend the hotel.

Victoria & Alfred Hotel

Located on the Waterfront Pierhead, this hotel is at the centre of tourist activity on the waterfront. It has attracted many reviews (only two hotels having attracted more) and it is popular: 89% of reviews would recommend the hotel to others.

The Westin Grand Cape Town Arabella Quays

This large hotel is rated four-star and it is located next to the Cape Town International Convention Centre in Lower Long Street. Formerly it was the Arabella Sheraton Grand Hotel. It attracts more reviews than any other: a total of 247 reviews of which 92% would recommend the hotel to others.

Protea Hotel President

Situated on the Atlantic sea front, this four-star hotel is in Bantry Bay. It has received relatively few reviews (27) of which only 60% recommended the hotel to others.

Kensington Place Hotel

Situated up on the side of Table Mountain at the edges of the built up area, this hotel has received relatively few reviews (58) but they are uniformly positive: 98% would recommend the hotel to others. All reviews are either “good” or “excellent”.

Steenberg Hotel

This is a five-star hotel located well outside Cape Town, to the south in the Steenberg Estate. A useful number of reviews rate the hotel highly: 96% would recommend the hotel to others.

Greenways Hotel

This five-star hotel is located in the southern suburbs of Cape Town. Although there were relatively few reviews (31) 100% of visitors would recommend the hotel to others – the only hotel with this happy result.

Commodore Hotel

This five-star hotel is located on the V&A Waterfront, the centre of tourist activity in Cape Town, and a perfect location near the sea front and the shopping mall. A large number of reviews submitted (151) included 89% that would recommend the hotel to others.

Mandela Rhodes Place Hotel

This four-star hotel is located at the corner of Wale Street & Burg Street in the centre of Cape Town, a short stroll from Greenmarket Square and the Slave Lodge Museum. It is still new, and has fewer reviews than others (88) but 90% would recommend the hotel to other visitors.

4.3.2 Summarising hotel guest satisfaction

In order to summarise guest satisfaction the detail from tripadvisor.com was tabulated and summarised on a weighted scoring basis. The available ratings are based on the scale “excellent”, “very good”, “average”, “poor”, and “terrible”. These scores were weighted and aggregated as follows:

The total number of responses at each level of the scale was noted

The totals were summed to an aggregate but multiplied by a weighting factor in so doing:

- Excellent: x 3 (times three)
- Very good: x 2 (times two)
- Average: x 1 (times one)
- Poor: x -1 (times minus one)
- Terrible: x -2 (times minus two).

(This would lead to a best possible score of three, and a worst of minus two)

The aggregate assessment was normalised to 100% to give an easy-to use final figure.

This produced the following result (sorted high to low):

	Kensington Place Hotel	Steenberg Hotel	Greenways Hotel	The Westin Grand	Mandela Rhodes Place Hotel	Victoria & Alfred Hotel	Garden Court De Waal	Commodore Hotel	Harbour Bridge Hotel & Suites	Protea Hotel President
Excellent	50	83	28	155	53	75	6	59	7	5
Very good	4	5	2	63	26	29	3	74	3	13
Average	0	3	0	19	4	6	3	20	5	4
Poor	0	0	1	8	4	6	0	6	1	6
Terrible	0	1	0	2	1	4	0	1	0	3
Number of responses	54	92	31	247	88	120	12	160	16	31
Weighted aggregate score	2.93	2.83	2.81	2.42	2.38	2.29	2.25	2.11	1.94	1.06
Normalised score	89	86	85	73	72	70	68	64	59	32

Figure 8: Summary of hotel scores

This result can be seen graphically as follows:

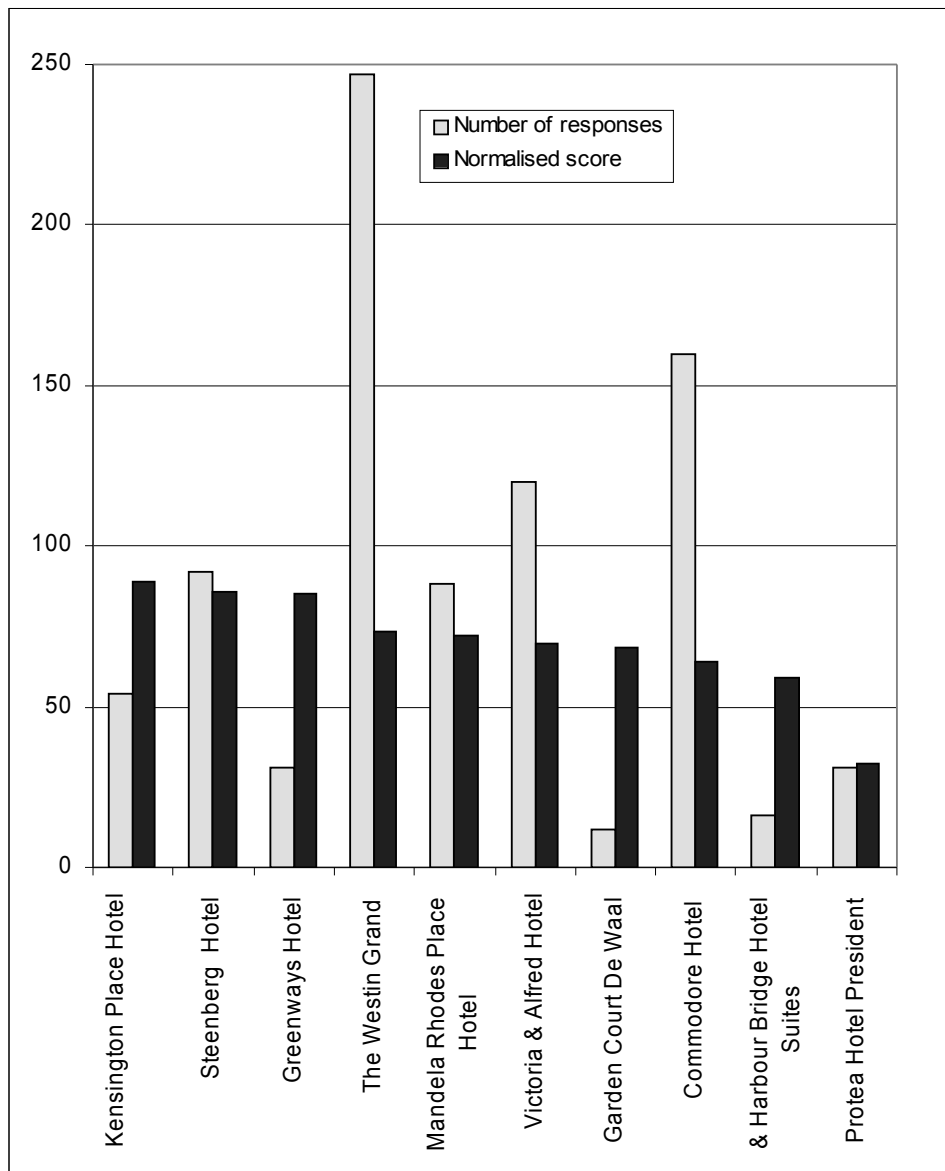


Figure 9: Graphical summary of guest satisfaction

4.4 Supplementary hotel survey

As can be seen, the analysis of web data has led to a single result, in the sense that the ratings on tripadvisor.com were able to be aggregated and normalised so as to give a single figure for each hotel. It was necessary to develop a single indication of the quality of internal communication within the hotels, for comparison.

Therefore, as explained in the previous chapter, a simple Likert-scale (agree-disagree) questionnaire was developed based on those items in the main questionnaire (see section 4.2) that dealt with the quality of communications. This was based on one principal question and 13 supplementary questions, all focused on the quality of internal communications within

the hotel. Seventy six (76) responses were received and the results are presented below (ranked highest left, lowest right), hence the hotels are not in the same sequence as in the figure above.

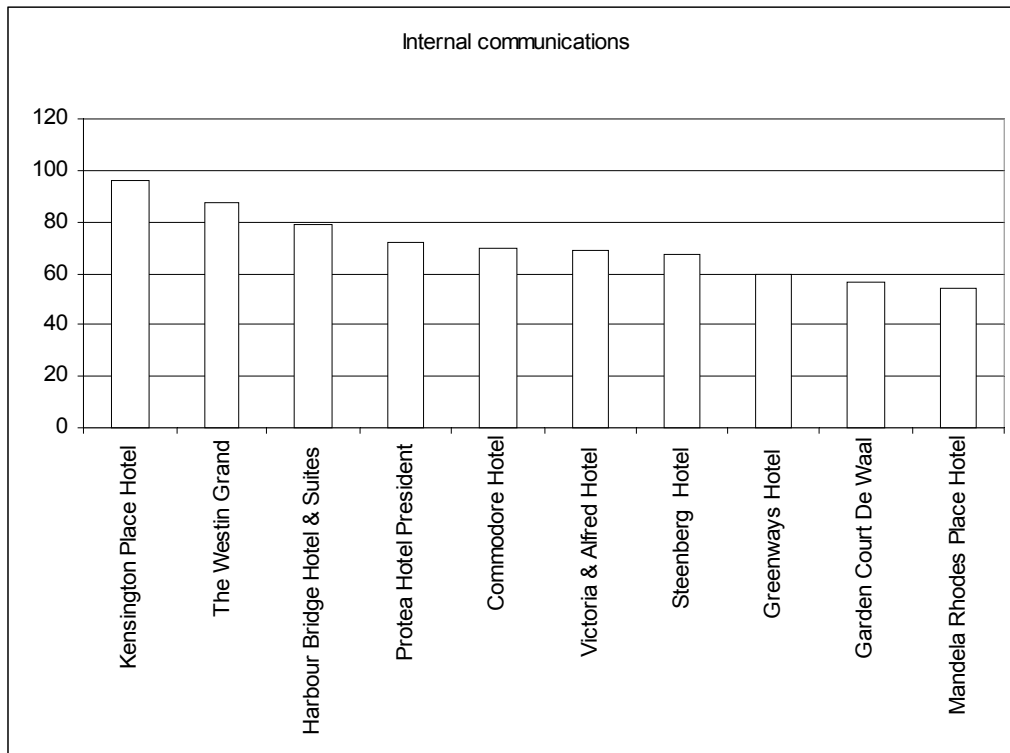


Figure 10: Summary of quality of internal communications

These results are presented again in a simpler format and discussed further in the next chapter.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has presented three sets of results: the initial main survey of managers' opinions about internal communications, within the hotels, the guest satisfaction data gathered from the web, and the supplementary survey of hotel staff concerning the quality of internal communications.

The first data set gives an overall understanding of the issues that are seen to be important, and how internal communications can be managed. There was general agreement that effective internal communications are important in achieving guest satisfaction, but some areas (such as staff training) seem to be given low priority. The second data set allows the hotels to be ranked according to guest satisfaction, based on willingness to recommend the

hotel to others, and based on an aggregation of detailed data about the level of satisfaction. The third data set allows the hotels to be ranked according to perceptions of the quality of internal communication based on 13 agree-disagree statements closely related to internal communications quality.

Guest satisfaction was found to be a rather ambiguous concept and the actual manifestation of satisfaction varies from person to person, and according to the product or service in question. In the next chapter, results of the research are discussed to develop a clearer view of the importance of internal communications, and the steps that hotel managers could consider taking to ensure that everyone in hospitality benefits.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion of the results

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the collected data, with a minimum of discussion. This chapter discusses the results more critically with the aim of presenting conclusions in the next, final, chapter. This discussion and further interpretation is provided in order to render a better understanding of the role of internal communication on guest satisfaction in hospitality establishments in Cape Town; it addresses levels of practical knowledge and understanding within all levels of hotel management as well as the relationship between internal communication and guest satisfaction.

The literature review and early interview findings support the notion that internal communication is important, not only to eradicate poor service performance leading to guest dissatisfaction, but also to improve business performance and contribute to economic growth within the industry, and even the nation. As will be seen, the findings emphasise the need for good working relationships and improved internal communication between hotel departments, employees, and management, to ensure that internal communication becomes a concern for the hotel business as a whole, not only for individuals, managers, employees, or departments. A key issue, of course, is to seek evidence that other factors might affect guest satisfaction; it is important to weigh the influence of internal communication against those other factors as it might not be the over-riding factor in achieving guest satisfaction.

The objectives of this study are revisited here in order to provide a structure for this discussion.

5.2 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to determine the impact of internal communication on guest satisfaction in large hotels within Cape Town, as well as to understand how well-managed internal communication can add real value to the hospitality industry. In this way, the study determines the steps that can be taken by hotel managements to achieve this.

There were four specific objectives, closely aligned to the four principal research questions (see Chapter 1, section 1.8 for the details):

- First, to investigate the nature of internal communication as seen by managers in large hotels in Cape Town, by means of interviews.

- Second, to assess the quality of internal communication as seen by hotel employees, by means of a questionnaire based survey.
- Third, to assess the quality of guest satisfaction, by means of a survey of guest reviews on the web.
- Fourth, to examine the evident relationship between the quality of internal communication and the quality of guest satisfaction.

Although not formally stated, it is worth noting that - as a new researcher, undertaking and understanding the research process for the first time - a further objective was to learn about research by adopting a range of different kinds of enquiry, especially in the matter of data collection. There are some comments about this at the end of the chapter.

5.3 Discussion of Results

The research results are based on a variety of sources, including interviews and surveys in the ten chosen hotels in Cape Town, and on data gathered from the web. The interviewed managers were from different countries (although the majority from South Africa) and were working at all levels. The composition of the workforce at the working level was even more diverse. It follows that the data sources are indeed diverse.

It should also be noted that the work was undertaken over an extended period of time, and so there is the risk that the data collected is not representative of the same period in time (although the supplementary survey of the quality of internal communication was undertaken simultaneously with the gathering of web data specifically to minimise that risk).

The paragraphs that follow discuss the results of the study under four headings that reflect the four objectives and research questions that were set for the study, making reference to the literature where appropriate:

- The nature of internal communication in hotels
- The quality of internal communication
- The quality of guest satisfaction
- The impact of internal communication on the guest satisfaction.

5.4 The nature of internal communication in hotels

There is evidence in the literature (and some evidence from this research) that internal communication is considered critical to service quality. Some hotel managements see it as a basic requirement that would threaten Cape Town's survival as a tourist destination, given

the high level of competition world wide.

Key issues identified include:

- Diversity
- Language
- Training
- Information technology

5.4.1 *Issues of diversity*

Respondents were asked what were the factors that can affect internal communication the most: cultural diversity came through as the factor that most affects internal communication.

In hotels, management and the workforce generally both include diverse people from different regions, different cultural backgrounds, and different previous experiences. This means that verbal- communication and non-verbal communication problems can emerge between hotel employees and management; as some managers indicated in their interviews, non-verbal communication works better amongst workers from the same cultural background and difficulties can arise when the backgrounds are different.

Dealing with diversity

Staff from different places must be able to communicate in order to develop a trust in each other; non-South Africans can only achieve good performance with difficulty because they face diverse communication challenges arising from language and from cultural background. Even amongst South African nationals, internal communication is challenging because of the level of job understanding and varying cultural backgrounds. Generally, verbal internal communication can be learned quickly, but difficulty emerges with regard to non-verbal communication and with expressing ideas rather than just listening to them. As Cape Town is known for its cultural diversity – a characteristic that attracts many visitors – it is particularly important to manage these things well.

Diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences that include factors such as gender, age, background, race, disability, personality, and work style. Managing diversity is founded on the premise that harnessing those differences will create a productive environment in which everyone involves his/ her talents.

In the study, the majority of respondents considered that Cape Town positively embraces the diverse cultural diversity that exists, and hotel managements seemingly accept the

importance of managing diversity in hospitality establishments. The question arises as to how this might be done, but several authors have adopted an enthusiastic approach toward diversity management. For example, Groschl and Doherty (1999:262) assert that the benefits range from being better able to meet the needs of diverse guests, improved decision-making, reduction in costs associated with turnover, increased productivity, quality improvement, and enhanced creativity and innovation. However, neither theorists nor practitioners in the diversity management area have a common view on the precise objectives and characteristics of diversity management. In this study, there is a similar feeling about the importance of it, without any consensus about the details.

Managing diversity means acknowledging people's differences and recognising these differences as valuable, and it demands the prevention of discrimination and the promotion of inclusiveness. Good management must work to deal with a diverse workforce.

The recognition of other cultures

In the hospitality industry, where more diverse workforces work together and follow an objective of providing service, recognition of other workers' culture, attitudes and behaviours should be given primary importance. It gives employees self confidence. Tesone (2005:74) considers that while social culture is applicable to the entire hospitality workers, there are also cultural "systems" that form within the overall organisation, for example in a context where specific messages are repeatedly communicated.

This study has found that the majority of staff feel confident in communications despite diversity, and so it can be concluded that hotel management is successful in dealing with it. Once a message is clear and understood the organisation has an opportunity to service success, although Tesone cautions us that success might arise as much from local circumstances rather than from the overall actions of management.

Local and global contexts

It begins to be important to note the different consequences of communication at the operational and management levels. Clearly, there must be effective communications with guests at the operational level, but at the heart of the management of any organisation there has to be good communications about management issues – success depends on the accumulation of ideas, sharing of information about what is working well and what is not, and effective contributions to discussions about strategic plans and their implementation. In recent years, the hospitality industry has experienced significant changes; for example due to

the interest of many hotel chains in “going international” (Burgess et al., 1995). Such competitive pressures as these have to be dealt with, and they significantly add to the burden of internal communications at all levels. This becomes an issue of more than just hotel image and reputation in Cape Town: the world is watching, and the manner of communication has to become appropriate to the global space. Employees have an important task in building image and reputation: workers, co-workers, supervisors, leadership and management, all play an important role in building a corporate identity (Miles and Mangold, 2004:45). When this happens in a global context, the nature of corporate identity might have to change.

The different perceptions of managers regarding relationships between internal communication and hotel image and reputation have major implications when in dealing with internal communication management in a changing strategic context. During any period of change, the first and foremost task of all managers should be to ensure that employees are aware of new values and priorities, and understand the ideas communicated by management that implement new strategies. Information sharing, in itself, is a symbolic way of equalising power, overcoming conflict and building trust (Spector, 1989)

5.4.2 Issues of Language

It has been found in this study that the English language is preferred as the first language in the workplace. Of course, English might be spoken by the majority but it is likely to be the first language of only a minority of staff. In diversity management, helping most of the staff to use the same language will reduce ambiguity in internal communication. Hence, the English language plays an important role in the hospitality industry in Cape Town. Managers influence culture and encourage shared organisational values through the languages spoken in the workplace. By encouraging the use of appropriate languages, management demonstrates appropriate responses to critical incidents that arise during the internal communication process. By using appropriate languages, managers show employees vividly how success can be achieved despite the different hospitality challenges. Since managers serve as information links in any organisation, their ability to listen objectively and to convey messages accurately is a prerequisite to smooth working. As a workforce becomes increasingly diverse, the language preference at the workplace is indeed a key issue.

Language in a strategic context

It was noted above that the hospitality industry in Cape Town works in an increasingly global context, forcing change in order to maintain success. To deal with the management of this

change, the literature elucidates some of the possibilities.

In order for any meaningful change to occur, managers must develop and articulate a vision of their organisation's future and implement strategies that will make that vision a reality (Hickman and Silva, 1984:34). Although services remain one of the most intangible and elusive aspects of organisation life, leaders should search for internal communication strategies that will deal with the intangibility and elusiveness.

Petzer, Steyn, & Mostert, (2008:5-6) remind us that part of the change is adjusting the service mix that is offered, by applying a suitable selection of Internal communication strategies. For example, a hotel that is in the "growth phase" of its service life cycle will focus on communicating with guests, to persuade them to choose its offerings rather than those of competitors; a hotel that is in the "optimisation phase" of its service life cycle will focus on internal communications that reduce costs and increase efficiency. A hotel that is able to compete successfully will position its service offering in such a life cycle in order to attract and then retain guests, and thereby create a sustainable competitive advantage for its service offering. Such a hotel should ensure that it has the necessary systems and strategies in place to manage the demand for its offering and the capacity to deliver it.

Such changes and strategies as these will clearly put pressure on the whole team's ability to communicate strategically, tactically, and operationally.

Home language barriers

In Cape Town there is a huge mixture of nationalities and backgrounds. Deeply rooted South African languages (there are 11 official languages in South Africa alone) and strong historical and political backgrounds that are considerably different from those of other nations combine to make one of the most varied mixes in the world. It includes western, eastern and African cultures and languages.

Myles (2009:3) in her research concerning oral communication in inter-cultural encounters, highlighted that to be a successful communicator in the work place requires the English knowledge as well as the requisite industry knowledge and skills. It also involves the ability to interpret body language, understand colloquial expressions, and the native language of other staff and guests who also have English as a second language. It has been found that we can no longer assume that staff with English as their second language can go on to work in workplaces where English is the first language. Those with English as second language must be able to accommodate the social and linguistic realities of the global workplace. In the

context of this study it was found that whilst some respondents had English as their home language, with other home languages performance and response to change is significantly affected. Difficulty also stems from people's voices, intonations from their home language, and the attribution of other meanings for words.

5.4.3 Issues of training

These important issues of communicative competence suggest that training programs for new employees will not be easy and must strive to deal with language as well as other skills.

Lack of Internal communication training

When asked how often staff receive internal communication training at their hotels, the results showed an ambiguity: managers understand the problems but do not emphasise communication training. Some never schedule communication training and others schedule it only once a year. Hence, it appears that communication training is not given the importance it deserves, since only a minority of managers provide staffs with training twice a year, or more. This is important in an industry that relies on efficient internal communication skills for its success.

The hotel industry is highly competitive and requires good communications capability and therefore adequate training for staff, ensuring that they know how to deliver the service that is required, and how to sustain and enhance the company's culture, staff attitudes, and benefits. Bonitz (2007:14) argues that anyone who wants a profitable business should learn how to make work meaningful to employees. The best way to do that is to put people first through open internal communication and training in communications competencies.

Internal communication Training

Employees' perceptions of how organisational conditions facilitate their environment and performance are important. The nature of the environment might be difficult to understand but growing emphasis on the effect of the organisational environment on employee growth and development is a step towards understanding the need for training.

Internal communication training should be based on employees' current knowledge. Previous researchers, educators and practitioners alike have placed increasing emphasis on internal communications; it is assumed that a strong internal communication environment leads to increased productivity, greater job satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, grievances, and turnover, and generally increases organisation commitment. It is here that the benefits of

training should be seen. The fundamental beliefs of the early (Kyle et al.2006) “human relations” movement were that happy workers are more productive workers. If this is the case, existence of a strong internal communication environment, effective training and education, and the subsequent good feelings generated, would all have a direct and beneficial impact on performance.

Internal communication training can take several forms. Management sets the example by being open, listening actively and speaking honestly; more formal internal communication training can help fill knowledge gaps according to analysis of training needs in all aspects of the work of the hotel.

Establishing communications training needs

There is a range of aspects of communications that might warrant an investment in training. The different communication channels that are used might not be familiar to new staff, and established staff might have to learn to deal with new technologies. Typically, this study has found that hotel managers in Cape Town prefer to use verbal communication, but also emphasised memos, e-mails, and telephones. Knowing which channel is the most appropriate to use might be one way of starting a training programme.

However, discussion of memos, e-mails, and telephones masks the purpose and significance of communications. Bonitz (2007) has emphasised that “open” internal communication encourages employees to question the service approach, even decisions made by management, and to vocalise their concerns. This is not quite the same thing as taking an order from the restaurant to the kitchen, or sending a chambermaid to a room that needs clean towels. If it is important for an employee to express an opinion, and to challenge management, then this is a quite different aspect to communications training.

At yet a different level, today the Internet provides information that is far beyond what might have been imagined 20 years ago. With an infinite source of information on all imaginable topics, how might hotel staff use this to good effect? Again, not when running to the kitchen or the housekeeper's office, but perhaps there are other points in the service operation where the Internet is a factor. If nothing else, guests expect today to be able to access the Internet from their hotels, and if the staff can not access it, where will that lead to?

Finally, there is the question of the style of a communication. Whether the expectation is to be open or not, whether staff send emails, memos or make telephone calls, the style and manner of the communication is important. On the one hand, it might be expected to keep it

informal but informative and on the other to show proper respect for seniors. In all cases, it is important to remember to provide contact information for return communications – an email address or phone number, at the least.

Hence we find that there are many aspects to communications that might be important to include in a training programme. Undertaking a needs analysis is almost certainly a necessary pre-requisite.

5.4.4 *Issues of information technology*

Information technology can work magic for a hotel. Front-end staff can be enabled to devote more time to guest requirements in a pleasing way, without compromising standard operating procedures. From the moment of reservation until the time of checks-out, everything can be recorded and the data can be made available where it is needed. The computer system monitors guest requirements, their likes and dislikes, their wants and satisfaction levels, all in a readable way that helps the hotel management improve and enhance future services (Shekhar, 2008). The impact on communication is, potentially, fundamental. As guests become familiar with the advantages of advanced information management systems in good hotels, they begin to expect it in all hotels. But in order to achieve good results from an information system one must first understand the requirement in terms of information needed, the flow of work that uses that information, and the proper procedures to achieve effective implementation. And then, staff must be able to use the technology.

Information systems form a fascinating and rapidly expanding field of study. The hospitality industry traditionally lags other sectors in adopting information technology, but this has changed in recent years, especially with the wide scale adoption of the Internet as an information source, and research into its application has followed suit (Connor and Murphy 2004:2). Information technologies require yet more skills in the hotel, and yet staff must still be able to help guests in cases of systems failure. In this study, one example was found where the concierge was not able to work the system to open more television channels for the guest – hardly rocket science, but then the concierge is probably one of the focal points in terms of information flow and perhaps it is there that the maximum information management competency is required?

Information technology is also very visible to the guest. A contentious issue proves to be the pricing of Internet services. Guests who are asked to spend more than \$10 for one hour of Internet access – irrespective of data volumes – are understandably shocked.

This study has found that guests are highly information technology aware, and that the way

that it is managed to enhance visitor satisfaction is critical. There are many examples where technology issues alone affected perceptions of quality of service in fundamental ways, and it is clear that guests prefer to undertake most routine communications using well-designed systems. It is clear that this is an area where developments continue apace, and – as we will find – the Internet even provides a valuable resource for researchers who are studying the hospitality industry.

5.5 The quality of internal communication

5.5.1 *The role of managers*

Managers can influence shared values through personal example and deliberate role modelling. By modelling desirable communication behaviour, hospitality managers demonstrate the appropriate responses to critical incidents that arise during the transition process (Brownell, 1990:200).

This study has found that the great majority of managers support good internal communication with their subordinates, and consider it helpful if not essential to good hotel service operations. Managers must explain to their subordinates that arrangements within the organisation are necessary, even when they might not personally realise the benefits. They must manage through difficulties so that individual failures do not preclude future success. They must display a positive attitude with which to greet each day, to influence the work of the whole team, and to respond to the people around them.

5.5.2 *The supplementary survey*

Following the general review of the nature of internal communication, the perceived quality of internal communication (as seen by the hotel staff) was assessed using a short supplementary questionnaire based on selected questions from the main survey, those relating specifically to accurate internal communication. Further, the questionnaire was reduced to a simple Likert survey in order to gather the necessary data rapidly, at the same time that the gather of web data from tripadvisor.com was undertaken.

The results of this survey, based on simple summation and normalisation of the responses, are presented in the chart below. It can be seen that there are significant differences between the hotels, with the Kensington Palace clearly ranked the highest, and the Mandela Rhodes the lowest.

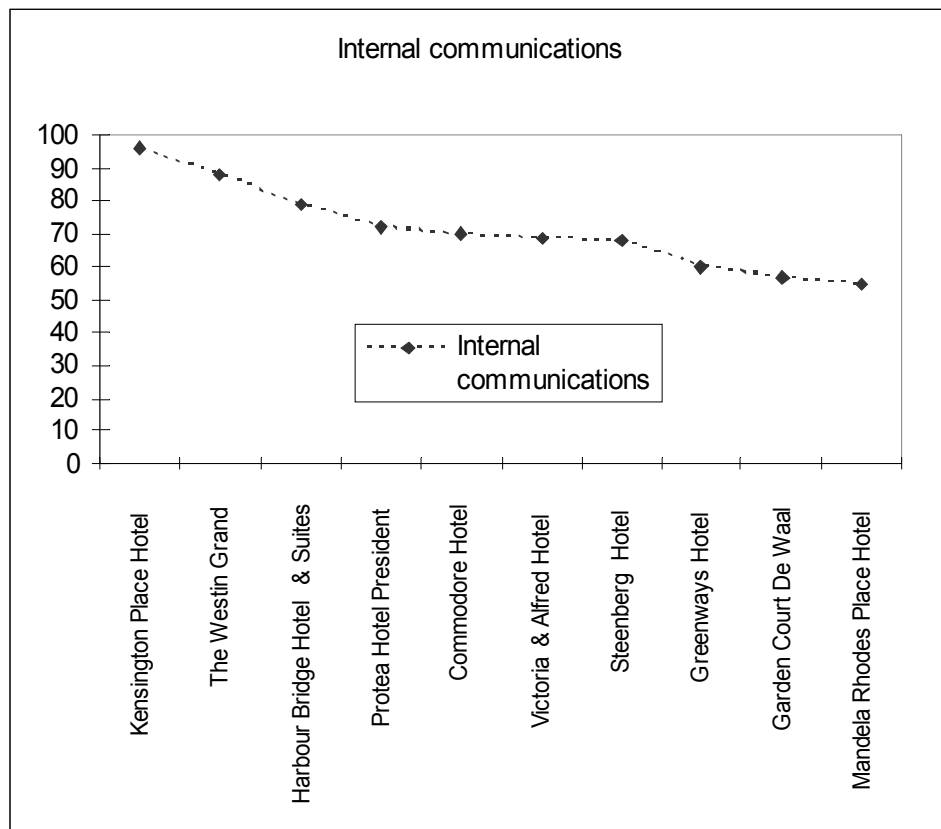


Figure 11: A summary of the quality of internal communications

It is interesting to dwell on some of the details (highest rated first).

- As noted, the Kensington Place Hotel did well, and the survey results showed that the management feels confident when dealing with internal communication issues although training was not high on their priorities. The hotel staff clearly have communications strengths already.
- Managers at the Westin Grand are confident when dealing with internal communication issues, and the evidence is that they pay careful attention to overcoming problems of culture. Overall, they did well in this assessment.
- At the Harbour Bridge Hotel the quality of internal communication is average. There was some evidence that management does not put emphasis on internal communication and do not see it as a tool to achieve guest satisfaction, but this has not led to a poor overall rating that might arise from their attention to managing diversity.
- In the Protea Hotel President, management's level of listening to and understanding messages was seen as problematic. Nevertheless, they achieved an average result, possibly because the reverse was seen to be a strength. There was a similar lack of training here.

- The Commodore Hotel does not seem to provide any internal communication training but other things are working well enough to earn an average result. There is concern for diversity management and for cooperation amongst the staff.
- Management at the Victoria & Alfred hotel showed their concern about internal communication but no strong interest in training, and their result was only average; dealing with diversity might have been an issue for many working there.
- The Steenberg Place Hotel places an emphasis on written communications but this has earned them only an average result. This is a pity because one would imagine that written communications have the advantage that they are usually more carefully formulated than oral communications, so the message conveyed tends to be more clearly stated and the recipient has time to think properly about it.
- In the Greenways Hotel, there was high importance placed on internal communications and in particular on managing cultural differences, but the result was not strong – possibly because of an acknowledged lack of training.
- The Garden Court de Waal did not do well either. There is a perception that the chain of communication between management and staff is good and the hotel management provide internal communication training. Hence, management is clearly aware of the significance of internal communication. However, the quality of spoken messages is rated low and so problems clearly remain.
- The Mandela Rhodes sees managing cultural diversity as a “key for the business to succeed or to fail” and are concerned about staff feeling happy in their work. However spoken messages are not always considered to be clear and internal communication training is seen as an issue. Worse, despite management's concern, at the working level messages between staff from different cultures and backgrounds are not always clear. The overall result was poor, as has been noted.

In summary, there is interesting subjective evidence that begins to explain the ways in which quality in internal communications can be achieved. There is a general high concern for culture and managing diversity. Where concern still fails to successfully manage culture and diversity, the clarity and security of written messages can overcome the problem. The quality of the internal communication amongst these ten hotels is found to vary, but it remains to be seen whether this relates in any way to guest satisfaction.

Barriers can arise at any point in the internal communication process, and it is found that a problem at any point can undermine the overall result. Hence, when internal communication is failing, it is of primary importance to identify where the causes of failure are. Common problems (in the general case, not just in hotels) have been reported by Zmorenski (2009:1);

a lack of time to communicate effectively, when staff are spread geographically, don't have the tools to communicate, suffer from language barriers, ethnic and cultural barriers, educational differences, and differences in experience. At the end of the day, the most important thing is how well the guests enjoy their stay in a hotel, and the extent to which problems in communications right through to the guest are recognised and dealt with. Here, it has been found that a majority of managers recognise that cultural diversity weakens internal communication, but the evidence shows that it can be dealt with.

5.6 The quality of guest satisfaction

From the results above, it seems to be difficult for managers to optimise the quality of internal communication. There are many facets to the problem, and dealing with all of them in a balanced way is clearly an issue. However, understanding guest expectations and determining the impact of internal communications (and other factors) on the actual level of guest satisfaction achieved is what is most important. In some cases, guests' expectations may be clear and in others they may not. Perhaps the importance of internal communications might vary according to the kind of guest, and their expectations?

The data from tripadvisor.com provides information about guest satisfaction. Data was accessed about each of the hotels in the survey and it was extracted and analysed in two ways: quantitatively in order to produce a numerical ranking, and qualitatively in order to produce insight into how guests think.

The quantitative results are shown in the Figure below. Note that the results are ranked according to this result, and therefore the sequence of the hotels is changed.

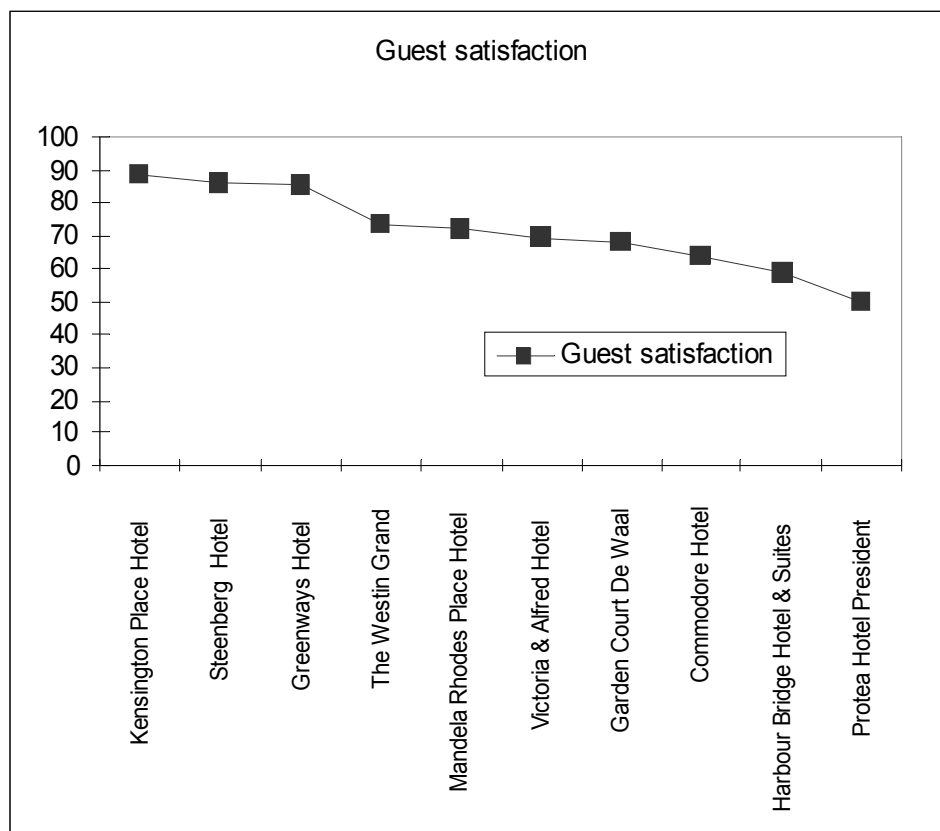


Figure 12: A summary of the quality of guest satisfaction

As described earlier, the results were generated from the overall tripadvisor ratings at five levels, from “Excellent” to “Terrible”; the count of opinions in each category was weighted and normalised to produce a single satisfaction figure for each hotel in turn. The Kensington Palace, Steenberg and Greenways hotels gained the highest ratings; the Westin Grand, Mandela Rhodes, Victoria & Alfred and Garden Court hotels earned an average but slowly falling rating, and the Commodore, Harbour Bridge and Protea Hotel President make up the tail of the distribution.

It should be noted that the numbers of responses for the different hotels is markedly different (there were 155 for the Westin Grand, but only six for the Garden Court), and that there were other measures available on tripadvisor such as the simple percentage of guests who would recommend a particular hotel to others, but these have been ignored at this stage.

It can be seen that the results seem to differ markedly from the previous results for the quality of internal communication, and therefore the differences become interesting.

5.7 The impact of internal communication on guest satisfaction

The combination of the two sets of results presented below (and sorted by the quality of

internal communications) shows that there is some evidence of a correlation between internal communications and guest satisfaction, but there are clear discontinuities.

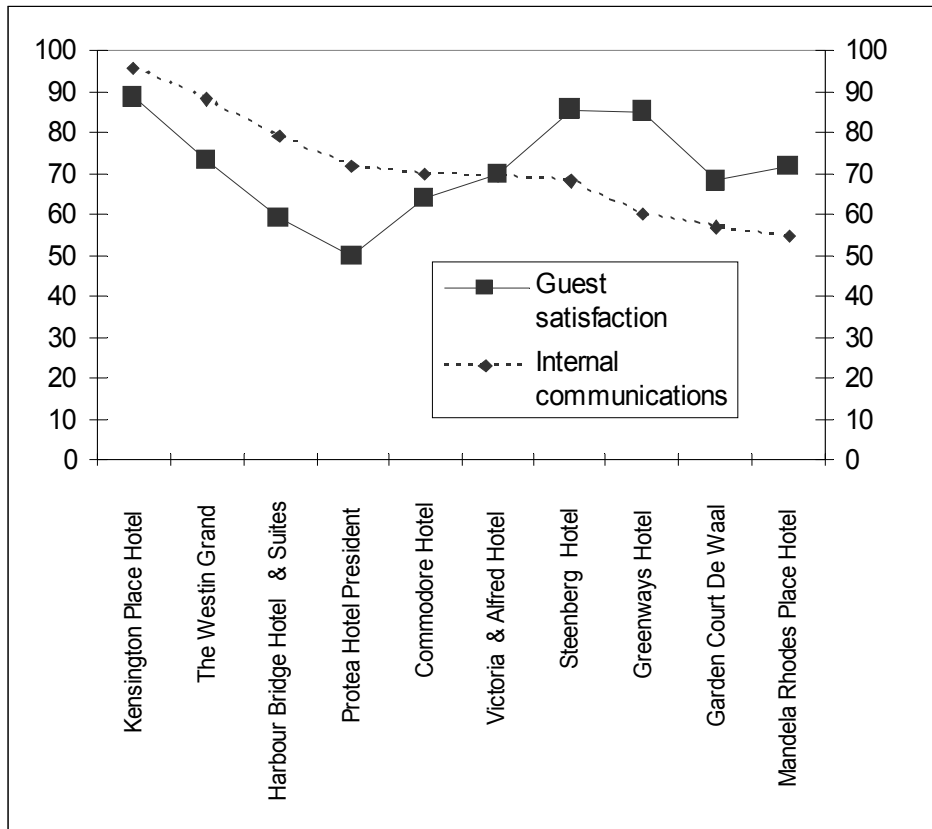


Figure 13: Internal communication and guest satisfaction compared

The Harbour Bridge and Garden Court hotels have only small samples so these results might not be reliable. The Kensington Palace, Westin Grand, Commodore, and Victoria & Alfred seem to indicate a relationship, and so the four remaining cases are worth picking out: two that seem to be below the expected guest satisfaction, and two that are above:

1. Protea Hotel President – it would be useful to see whether it has been marked down because of internal communications issues, or for other reasons.
2. Steenberg – how did it get such a high rating despite internal communications problems?
3. Greenways – the same question.
4. Mandela Rhodes - the same question again.

5.7.1 Protea Hotel President

The guest opinions are very helpful in understanding what has gone wrong here. There are minor problems with location:

"Very much in the middle of the 'hustle and bustle' of city life. Not a place to go to relax and for peace & quiet. Too busy"

more serious problems with excessive numbers of guests:

"Pool area packed over New Year with not enough sun beds to go round and yes people were towelling the sun beds and not returning till after lunch"

and other serious problems with service that might relate to internal communications, but seem to have more fundamental origins:

"They were very sorry that they lost our early arrival notice, they were sorry that the man had not checked out by 11, they were very sorry that it took 2 hours to clean a room. Unfortunately the computer said the room was not ready, so they could not let us in. Eventually I got the manager to go upstairs and check it and then we were allowed in"

"From the dated decor in the lobby and rooms, to the maid not leaving wash cloths in the room on 3 separate occasions, we were completely underwhelmed by the service at this hotel. We had to call the manager to get anything done because the service staff didn't have a clue!"

"The rooms are a fair size but the bathrooms are hopeless. Service is not great, Forgot the soap and tissues on day 1, the face cloth on day 2 and heaven help us for day 3"

There seems to be some confusion about the Internet services, which are reported to be free in one case, but chargeable in another:

"Wireless internet charge a bit of a rip off"

"Frankly, don't even bother trying to use the free wireless internet because it would be faster to print your email and mail it with a stamp"

Perhaps there are two levels of Internet service on offer?

The two cases where the manager had to be called indicate that there are almost certainly communications problems between guests and the staff, if the management have to be called in to act as intermediaries. However, the overall picture here is that the Protea Hotel President is simply prone to over-crowding, poor maintenance of the rooms, and poorly trained or managed staff. One report is particularly damning:

"the worst hotel have stayed at in years! So incredibly disappointing comparing to the Protea Fire & Ice stayed in a week before and loved it. The Protea President is extremely run down, the room was gross (dirt on the walls, smoke filled hallways from smoking rooms with no proper ventilation), they charged for everything, including internet (Protea

Fire & Ice offered free unlimited access - President says wireless throughout hotel but they charge ridiculous prices to use it!), and the staff were way below sub par. The staffs also did not say that rate included buffet breakfast the next day. The next morning the request was to pay for breakfast. This place is basically like a run down Best Western and suited to tour groups of 60 years old. Do not stay here if you want value for your money, because it should be described as a three if not two star compared to their four star rating”.

This echoes the problems that were found in the assessment of internal communications (earlier, see Section 5.5), but clearly there are basic issues that are causing this worrying level of guest dissatisfaction.

5.7.2 Steenberg Hotel

Guests were generally very positive about the Steenberg Hotel despite the perceptions within the hotel that there are problems with internal communications. The comments help us to see what they liked:

“The Steenberg is a beautiful place to stay. We were there for 5 nights in late February and loved staying there. With its colonial buildings and beautifully landscaped grounds, this is a 5++ star hotel. The golf course is lovely and the vineyard, with its newly designed building, is worth stopping off for lunch/wine tasting. We had our 19 month old son with us and on a couple of occasions had a staff member baby-sit for us so we could enjoy dinner at the delicious Caterina's restaurant. The front-of-house staff were exceptionally good, assisting with external bookings to enhance our stay even further”

“The hotel is on a wine estate and is converted from the original farm buildings which sit in the middle of beautiful vineyards and now a golf course. The aspect is fantastic with views of the vineyards and mountains. The location is behind the mountain and is 45 mins drive into town so its quiet rather than central. Having said that it is close to local shopping centres, other wine farms and other local restaurants.

Location stands out, and a hint of highly qualified staff at the front desk. There was more praise for staff in the restaurant:

“Breakfasts were very nice in the newly renovated restaurant and the staff were welcoming to guests that we had for breakfast which included young children. However I thought that the restaurant was not the best for dinner. I can't fault the food which was from an interesting menu and cooked well and the service was out of a text book but it was somehow cool and not friendly. Its a shame because the restaurant is a fantastic building with stunning views”

This comment is interesting because it hints at communication problems (“cool and not

friendly”) which might point to the somewhat lower assessment of its internal communications found previously.

5.7.3 Greenways

Location comes through again as a determining factor in guest satisfaction:

"We stayed for 5 nights during the World Cup. All of the staff were extremely friendly & efficient. The hotel was charming and immaculate and set in beautiful grounds."

But there was more – some faces were recognised and suggest a high level of repeat business:

"Half of the guests looked familiar from the last year, but there were also some new faces and a lot of families with children in all ages. The staff is very attentive, but not intrusive. Most of the staff members even know how to pronounce my name. Henry even remembers that I like my porridge prepared with water. It is hard to believe, but the garden looks lush, greener than last year. Samantha, the chef is a real asset for the hotel, her kitchen is fresh, healthy, simply delicious."

The personalities of the staff, and the closeness of the relationship with guests comes through strongly. There was much supporting evidence, consistently concerned with location and the qualities of the staff themselves:

"This hotel is relaxed, informal and about as far away as you could get from the stick on glitter of corporate identikit chain hotels. The gardens are amazing. Breakfast outside on the terrace was superb and the public spaces are relaxing and homely. The staff, without exception, were keen to please... but not intrusive. Which makes this is the place to go if you want to be treated as a visitor rather than a customer."

"We had a family room looking out over the front driveway, the room was clean, spacious and comfortable with two bedrooms, a shared bathroom and a lounge area, and a shared balcony. Rooms were made up promptly each day whilst we were at breakfast. The dining room looks a little old fashioned and a bit small and cramped, we took breakfast on the terrace which was very pleasant. The staff are very eager to please and try to be very helpful, sometimes a bit over attentive and nervous"

Just another hint that staff were either novices or uncomfortable in the context of the hotel, echoing the somewhat lower assessment earlier of internal communications.

5.7.4 Mandela Rhodes Place

Here we find more of a mixed bag of reviews, deriving from the overall average level of guest

satisfaction. Some were excellent:

"We originally booked a studio room and were upgraded to a spacious one bedroom apt with a view of Table Mt. Only concern with room was the lack of a in room safety deposit box. Location is great - across from the street from the Cathedral which is stop #5 on the Ho-Ho bus. Also easy walking distance to the Green Street Market. Breakfast was included in price - buffet with the ability to order eggs made to preference as well. Breakfast area located upstairs next to pool area. Main floor has an Italian restaurant which was quite good. Hotel has great security and an on-site ATM which made banking very easy. "

Somewhat more cautious, but still positive:

"The accommodation was excellent a 2 bed apartment, however with a very small view of Table mt even though we requested the Tower. 2 reasonable sized bedrooms and 2 bathrooms was brilliant together with a well fitted kitchen, which admittedly we didn't use, but the washer and dryer was a godsend. Breakfast daily in the restaurant was very good with a good selection and friendly staff, who were very knowledgeable about the region and areas to visit. The car park was safe and secure ... 50 Rand a day. location wise it's in the city rather than near the waterfront but a 50 rand taxi ride is easy enough. Not a bad place for a base in a wonderful city"

When we dig deeper we find real evidence that there are communications problems mixed in with staff incompetence and technical problems:

"The hotel has great potential but they continued to find ways to screw things up. Very simple things like: No hangers in the closet - waited 45 minutes before delivered, TV missing remote and not connected to the satellite, Can't exchange currency, Room service menu is very limited, Breakfast does not open until 7ish. Hard to make a business meeting on time. No electrical converters available..SA is a very different than Asia/Europe/USA. Laundry - said they would pick up, never did. No newspapers in the morning, Phone # to housekeeping/Laundry does not work. must call receptionist, Must pay for the internet by the HOUR, not even by the day"

5.8 Summary

From the comparison of the quality of internal communication and the quality of guest satisfaction we find that there is no clear relationship between the two, because there is in fact a range of factors other than internal communications that will affect guest satisfaction; the quality of internal communications is rather secondary to such factors as location, the condition of the rooms, the cost of additional services, and the capability and attitude of the

staff. However, it is clearly important that communication is nevertheless important, otherwise rooms will never be properly cleaned, guest expectations about extra services will be misguided, and the inherent ability of staff to work well (given a chance) will be obscured by unclear or ill-informed instructions from managers and supervisors.

A managerial focus on the quality of internal communication is therefore necessary, but the quality of internal communication is found to be not sufficient, on its own, as a criterion upon which to achieve high levels of guest satisfaction.

The following chapter will finalise the research by summarising what has been found and by giving recommendations concerning internal communications within hotels.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter expanded on the findings and re-visited the four principal objectives of the research:

- The nature of internal communication in hotels
- The quality of internal communication
- The quality of guest satisfaction
- The impact of internal communication on the guest satisfaction.

It has been found that the nature of internal communication is complex, and that managements struggle to deal with all the issues. There is generally inadequate attention to training about internal communications, and issues of diversity and culture need to be addressed energetically if guest services are not to be compromised. Measures derived from a simple survey successfully revealed differences between perceived quality of internal communication within the hotels, and the world web provided very useful data about levels of guest satisfaction that was able to be rendered into a simple single measure; comparison of the two sets of measurements suggests that internal communications alone will not ensure guest satisfaction, but that it is a necessary, if insufficient, criterion with which to work.

It follows that the research has achieved its four principal objectives.

This final chapter now reflects on the work and its significance, and makes recommendations that should ensure better levels of hotel service in the future.

6.2 Significance of this study

This study provides hotel managers with new information and insight into the importance and significance of internal communications, in delivering services that delight and satisfy guests.

Managers at all levels require confidence if they are to lead their business in a competitive environment, especially in the 21st century when technology changes and reshapes the landscape of the hospitality industry and tourism in general. This confidence will migrate down to staff at the operational level where it will benefit guest satisfaction and – hopefully – the profitability of the hotel.

The relationship between internal communication and guest satisfaction has been found to be elusive, but almost certainly in the nature of an “enabling” one: without effective

communications guest satisfaction will be severely compromised; with it, staff will be enabled to deliver to the best of their ability in the service roles that they fulfil. Evidence of guest satisfaction is the best advertisement for a hotel on the local, national and international levels, and it is interesting that the world wide web – the ultimate communications vehicle – has proven to be such an effective source of information not only for this research but also for travellers. In this research the use of tripadvisor.com provided high quality information that would have been very difficult to obtain within the hotel, and it is of course the very information that is now commonly used by many travellers when deciding where to stay.

6.3 Recommendations

It is found that good service requires good internal communications, although other factors such as location can override the effects of poor communications. Nevertheless, internal communications need management time and arrangements must be in place to ensure that it is established, sustained, and moved on in the light of new systems, new technologies and shifting visitor expectations.

6.3.1 General recommendations

The following general recommendations should be considered:

- Senior, middle, and junior management should develop trust in each other in the workplace, through effective internal communication.
- Management should help workers use all means of internal communication for the sake of guest satisfaction.
- Employees should receive continuous organisational culture training that focuses on behaviours, attitudes and service expected.
- Employees within all hotel departments should be trained to use better verbal and non-verbal internal communication techniques.

It is evident from the literature that communication training benefits employees in many ways:

- Increased interpersonal trust;
- Increased information sharing;
- Improved employee mental health; reduce stress
- Increased employee commitment;
- Increased accuracy of individual's self perception and confidence
- Reduced misunderstanding;
- Improved problem solving ability; and

- Increased frequency of employee recognition.
- Increased guest satisfaction.

Whilst this study has not examined these benefits of training in detail, the evidence supports each and every one of these claimed benefits – misunderstandings are common, staff are sometimes anxious and nervous, they fail to solve problems and sometimes the commitment to guest satisfaction is very low.

6.3.2 Cultural diversity

Cultural diversity has come through as a common issue, but where it is a problem it can actually be turned into an opportunity. Hotels that employ a diverse range of staff can respond to the diverse requirements of their guests, particularly when guests value cultural diversity of course. It is not about internal communication discipline, it is about playing the advantage of a varied experience for the guests.

Hence management should consider:

- Putting people first by means of open internal communication in the workplace
- Explaining, training and equipping staff with diverse backgrounds to use appropriate internal communication channels without denying their diversity.
- Providing diversity training and education whereby workers will learn about other cultures and how they can benefit from them.
- Insisting that staff should understand that nobody's culture is more superior than any other or to another in the workplace.
- Developing their own abilities so as to be appropriate to work in multicultural world.

All should be aware that any verbal or non-verbal internal communication is built from a language background; a hotel worker's cultural background should be acknowledged and respected at all points in the job.

6.3.3 Guest satisfaction.

Ultimately, this is all about guest satisfaction. Recommendations specifically relating to the enhancement of guest satisfaction extend beyond just effective internal communication, but are all related to it in some way. Management should:

- Encourage a problem-solving approach that engenders confidence amongst the staff and reduces the threat to guest satisfaction.
- Educate employees to be true representatives of the hotel and its services, and to understand that they have a responsibility to solve guests' problems.

- Equip staff with an attitude of information sharing so that they can all understand and promote the guest services offered by the hotel.
- Constantly monitor emerging technologies (such as tripadvisor) that might provide the means of innovation that would offer additional value to guests.

6.4 Final reflections on the project

For the researcher, this was a particularly challenging project. The initial objectives of the work were focused entirely within the hotel and not concerned with gathering data from outside; it became clear of course that this would not deliver a reliable indication of guest satisfaction, and opinions from within the hotel would inevitably be biased. The idea to reach out to tripadvisor came from an interview with an established tourism service operator who has to make decisions about hotel accommodation for inbound tourists every day, and it is interesting to reflect that at the start of the project very few people had ever heard of tripadvisor; the problems that caused delay in the completion of the project had at least that one advantage.

Another issue was the design of the research, which proved to be one of the principal risks to the successful completion of the work. Design of the initial questionnaire was poor: the quality of the wording used was marginal and led to some problems of comprehension, and the desire to formulate questions in different ways, in order to “see how it works”, led to some problems in the collation and analysis of the data. Happily, as the project progressed these issues were dealt with and a great deal of learning was achieved.

In summary, the researcher faced different challenges during this study, but addressed them as indicated below:

- The process of research design proved particularly challenging because of a lack of previous research experience and limited access to source material, support and guidance:
following the first examination of the thesis, additional supervisory support was engaged and the design was extended so as to reliably complete the data collection and analysis.
- Unwillingness on the part of some hotel general managers to accommodate the researcher, and the difficulty of accessing reliable guest satisfaction data:
expert industry assistant was sought and advice to use the world wide web was followed up.

- The usual difficulties of data collection (getting back all the questionnaires) were faced early in the project:
supplementary data collection was undertaken with an easy-to-use questionnaire having simple content and a simple agree-disagree approach.
- Analysis of the main survey data proved problematic, partly because of the inadequacies of the initial design, and partly because of inexperience:
a decision was taken to restrict the analysis of the quantitative data to simple descriptive statistics and to avoid embarking on an extended inferential statistical analysis; the use of Microsoft Excel and the presentation of the results was simplified in developing this final version of the thesis.

6.5 Concluding comments

The findings from this study show that the management of internal communication is important and that it contributes to guest satisfaction – the ultimate target of the hospitality industry – but that on its own it is not likely to be sufficient. Effective internal communication enables managers and staff to engage in an effective and efficient way resulting in improved service performance at all levels, but in the end guest satisfaction depends on other factors such as location. The belief within the hotels that good management of internal communications renders better service to guests needs to be balanced by an understanding of these other over-riding factors.

Language was expected to be a significant factor in achieving good internal communications, and it has been shown (as might be expected) that a majority of hotel workers in Cape Town use English as their principal working language; however, language did not materialise as an issue affecting the opinions of guests. A more common issue dragging guest satisfaction down was poor managerial attention to the need for communications training, that was evident in the main survey of hotel managers and in the guest reviews. Cultural diversity in the work force is both a problem and an opportunity – it gets in the way of effective communication but some guests enjoy the variety of staff with whom they meet.

Finally, the availability of guest satisfaction data on the web is changing the way that travellers choose their hotels, and it will change the way that hotel managements work. It is after all a two-edged affair: on tripadvisor (and other similar web sites) any comment from a guest can be countered and neutralised by an appropriate reply from the hotel management. If there is no reply, then potential guests will almost certainly assume the worst and go elsewhere. We must expect further changes in the patterns of tourism and hospitality

management as technological innovation takes us on into the future.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE ON MANAGEMENT PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

1. Age:

less-20	
21-30	
31-40	
41-50	
51-over	

2. Gender:

Female	
Male	

3. Nationality:

South African	
Non-South African	

Home language:

English
 Afrikaans
 Xhosa
 Zulu
 Tswana Tswana
 Others (please specify)

Which language do you prefer to use in your workplace (mark with X)?

English
 Afrikaans
 Xhosa
 Zulu
 Tswana
 Others (please specify)

Indicate your management level:

Junior management
 Middle management
 Senior management

How well do you listen to the message from workplace colleagues?

Indicate your preference by making a cross over your choice. (5 is the most preferable and 1 is not).

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1 | Poor |
| 2 | Fair |
| 3 | Good |
| 4 | Very good |
| 5 | Excellent |

How well do you understand messages from your workplace colleagues? Indicate your preference by making a cross over your choice. (5 is the most preferable and 1 is not).

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1 | Poor |
| 2 | Fair |
| 3 | Good |
| 4 | Very good |
| 5 | Excellent |

What is the most personal preference of the internal communication channel to be used in your organization?

- Verbal Internal communication
- Memos
- Emails
- Notice boards
- Telephones

Please read the following statements and indicate your response by making a cross over your preference. Managing diversity in the hospitality industry is the key for businesses to succeed or to fail. (5 are the most preferable and 1 is not).

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Strongly disagree |
| 2 | Disagree |
| 3 | Uncertain |
| 4 | Agree |
| 5 | Strongly agree |

Arrange the following statements of internal communication behaviour, according to your preferences. Mark 1 in the block next to your highest preference behaviour and 2 in the block of your next preference.

- Self-confidence
- Make idea clear
- Showing positive attitudes when facing cultural diversity
- Overcoming Internal communication anxiety
- Feel nervous about speaking

Identify your strengths and weaknesses: put the sign (+) next to what you do well; and the sign (-) behind what you think you do not do well.

1. Manage impressions positively
2. Listen well
3. Read effectively
4. Write effectively
5. Articulate ideas
6. Good verbal delivery
7. Good nonverbal delivery
8. Good telephone conversation skills
9. Effective Internal communication with subordinates
10. Avoid arguing
11. Cooperate willingly
12. Use appropriate technical language
13. Help others feel satisfied with the conversation
14. Explain clearly
15. Feel confident
16. Control outcome of the situation

Internal communication plays a key role in delivering a service in a hotel establishment. Indicate your preference by making a cross over your choice. Number 1 being the most preferable and 5 is least preferable.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Strongly agree |
| 2 | Agree |
| 3 | Uncertain |
| 4 | Disagree |
| 5 | Strongly disagree |

How much can internal communication enhance a company's change? Mark 1 in the block of your highest choice and 6 as your lowest choice.

- Changing the people in the hotel
- Changing beliefs, attitudes and value
- Changing behaviours
- Changing systems and structure
- Changing the company's image

Changing service performance

Please respond to each of the following statements by marking 1 for the highest factor, 2 for the next and 5 for the lowest .What factors mostly affect internal communication in the hotel?

- Poor Internal communication channels
- Staffs cultural diversity
- Language barriers
- Accent difficulties
- Poor interdepartmental cooperation

Please read the following statements and in each case indicate your preference by making a cross over your choice.

	Never	Seldom	Often	Always
I understand the messages communicated to me by my colleagues.	4	3	2	1
I can sort out any guest's complaints by talking to him.	4	3	2	1
I need my peer's confirmation before doing anything	4	3	2	1
I perform better when ignoring all around me.	4	3	2	1
In my hotel all our Internal communication systems help in the establishment of service performance.	4	3	2	1
Our managers use our employees' ideas in our workplace.	4	3	2	1
Our managers communicate the organizational goals of our workplace.	4	3	2	1
In my workplace Internal communication encourages productivity.	4	3	2	1
Internal communication is the key for a hotel to succeed	4	3	2	1
The non-English speaking employees slow down service performance in hotels in Cape Town	4	3	2	1
When interviewing people for employment, verbal and non-verbal Internal communication are taken into consideration.	4	3	2	1
Management quickly notices staff Internal communication problems in our hotel.	4	3	2	1
Internal communication problems in my hotel affect guest satisfaction.	4	3	2	1

Do you think that the ignorance of other cultures by some employees affects their service performance? Indicate your preference by making a cross over your choice.

- 1 Very much
- 2 Somewhat

3 Not at all

Having a lot of employees speaking international languages can enhance service performance. Indicate your preference by making a cross over your choice.

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Don't know
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly disagree

Please respond to each of the following statements by marking 1 for the highest factor, 2 for the next and 5 for the lowest. What factor do you think affects guest satisfaction at the hotel the most?

- Management style
- Product quality
- Internal communication
- Employee diversity
- Guest behaviour/ interference

Please respond to each of the following statements by marking 1 for the highest preference, and 4 for the lowest preference. What do you think is the employee's resource of preference when sending guest orders to the chef or to another back house departments?

- Manually
- Automatically (computer)
- By phone
- Fax

Can poor verbal internal communication be classified as poor guest satisfaction? Indicate your preference by making a cross over your choice. (1 is the most preferable and 4 is least preferable).

- 1 Always
- 2 often
- 3 Seldom
- 4 Not at all

Can poor non-verbal Internal communication be classified as poor service performance? Indicate your preference by making a cross over your choice. (1 is the most preferable and 4 is least preferable).

- Always 1
- Often 2
- Seldom 3

Not at all 4

What better methods can be used to solve internal communication problems within the workplace? (1 is the most preference and 5 is the least preferable,)

- Sending a letter of what is supposed to be done
- Phone whoever concerns and warn him
- Write the warning and post it
- Call each one and communicate the issue
- Call a meeting and find a group solution

Please read the following statement and in each case indicate your preference by making a cross over your choice.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Internal communication undertaken by employees is an important task in building a hotel's image and reputation	5	4	3	2	1
Internal communication adopted at reception areas often gives guests perceptions of the hotel service image.	5	4	3	2	1
Knowledge of hotel products from the reception staff indicate the levels of service that guest can receive in the establishment.	5	4	3	2	1
Employees have access to channels of Internal communication and are trained how to use them.	5	4	3	2	1

How often do staff members receive internal communication training in your hotel establishment?

- A Never
- B Weekly
- C Monthly
- D 6 monthly
- E Annually

Please use the space below to add additional comments, if any.

.....

.....

.....

If you would like to receive feedback regarding this research, please provide your email address below:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you,

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY OF QUALITY OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN HOTELS.

SURVEY OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN HOTELS

This short survey concerns the quality of *internal communications* within hotels.

Please **read** each of the statements in the table below and **think** whether you agree or disagree that they are true for your hotel. Then **tick** one of the five boxes, to indicate whether you **agree** (to the left) or **disagree** (to the right), or something in **between** (in the middle)

Statement	Agree	<	>	Disagree
1. My colleagues always listen very carefully to what people tell them				
2. My colleagues always understand spoken messages from other people.				
3. I believe that my colleagues' spoken messages are always clear				
4. My colleagues find it very easy to read and understand written messages				
5. They make sure that their written messages are always clear				
6. My colleagues have very good telephone conversation skills				
7. The chain of communication between management and staff is very effective				
8. There is a high level of cooperation amongst the staff in this hotel				
9. Messages always use appropriate technical language				
10. My colleagues always feel confident when dealing with internal communications in the hotel				
11. My hotel provides very effective communication training				
12. In our hotel we have a high regard for other cultures when we communicate				
13. Managing diversity in the hospitality industry is the key to success or failure				

2. Do you have any other comments that need to be considered?

.....

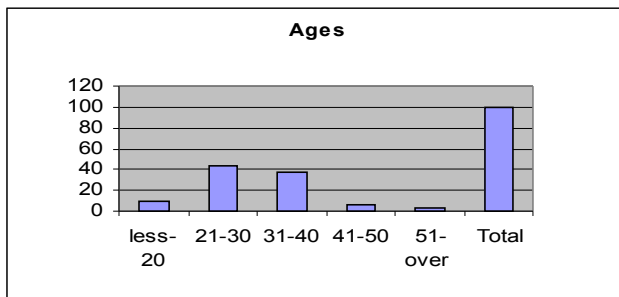
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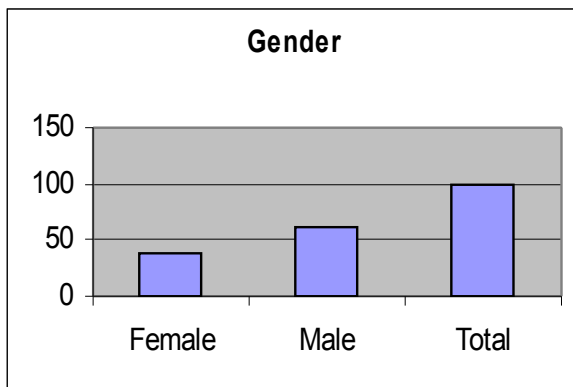
APPENDIX 3: WORKING GRAPHS AND FIGURES

The pages that follow provide working versions of the graphs and figures that were used in the analysis of the main survey results.

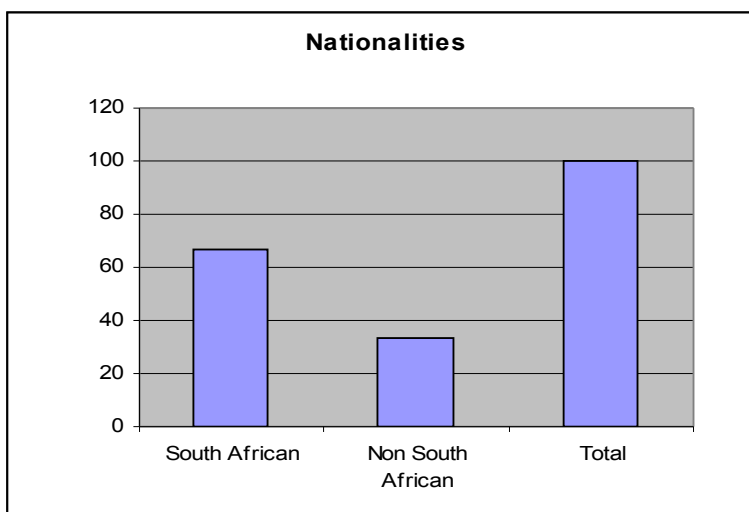
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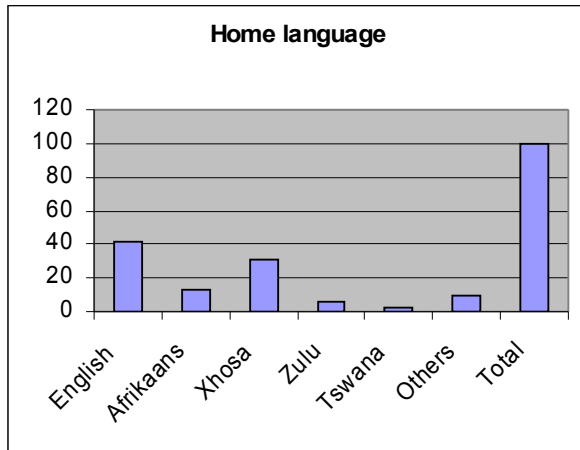
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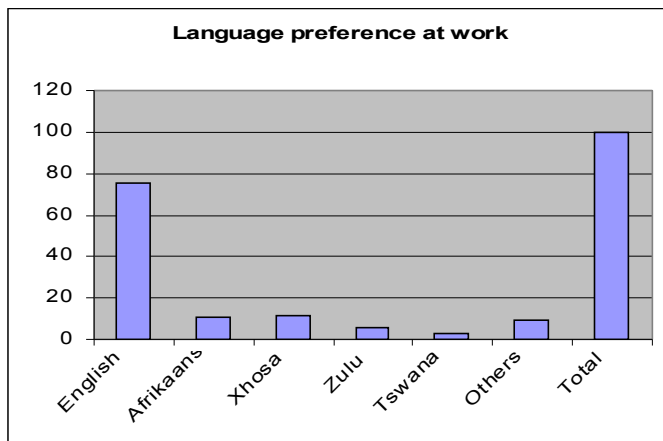
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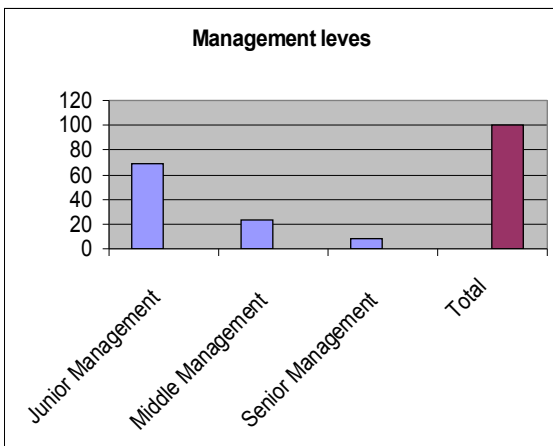
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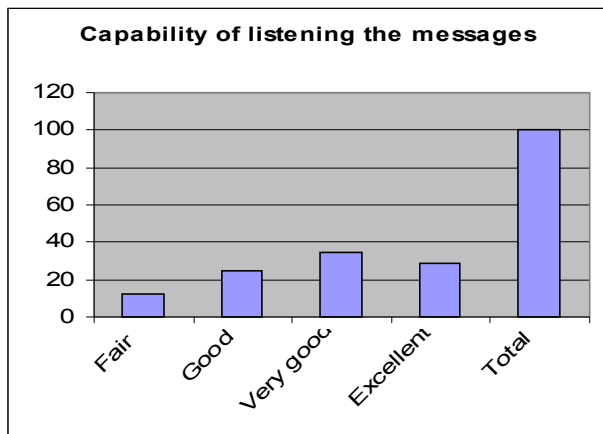
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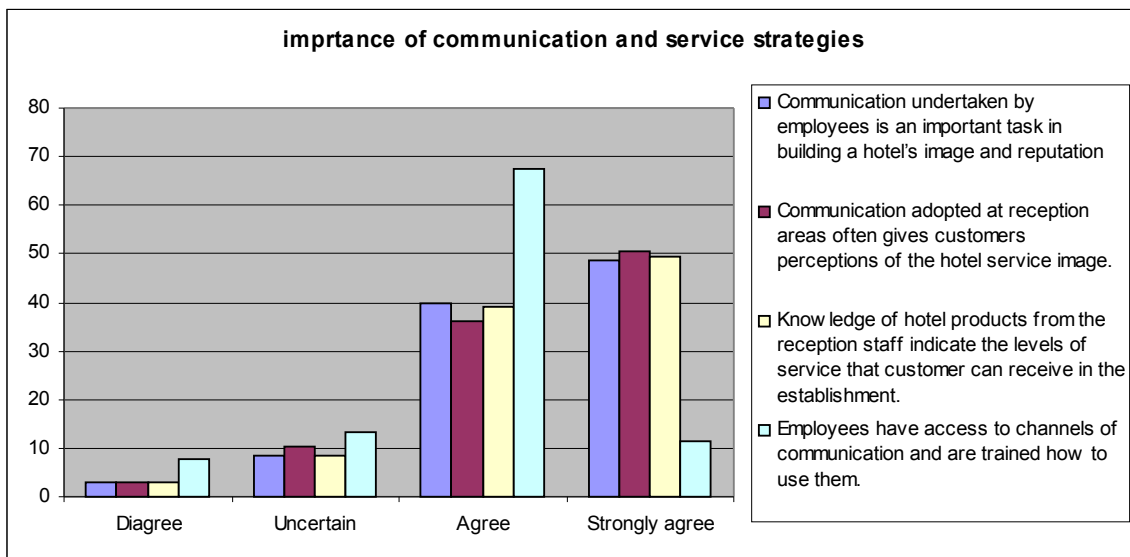
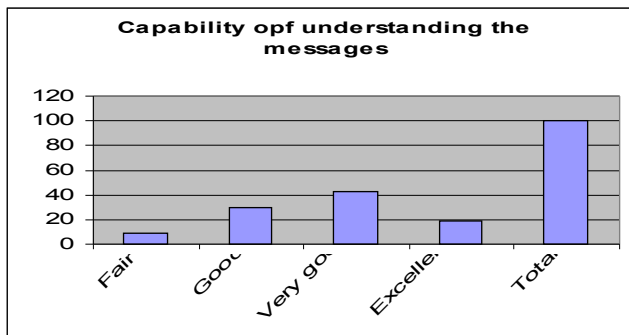
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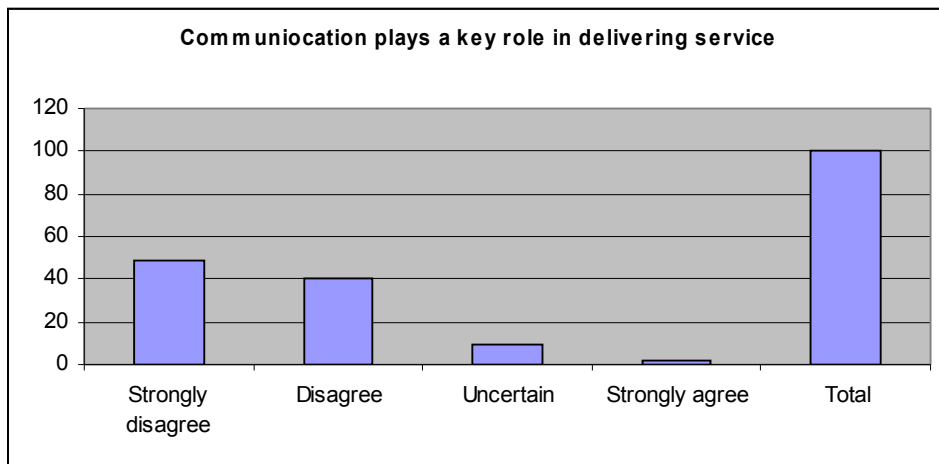


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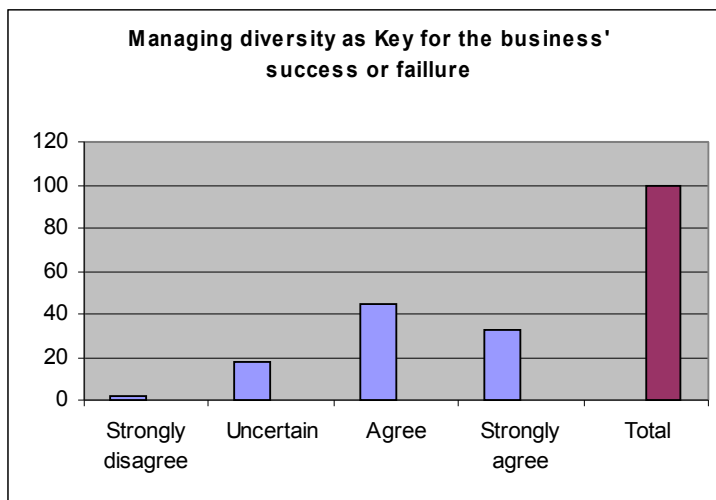


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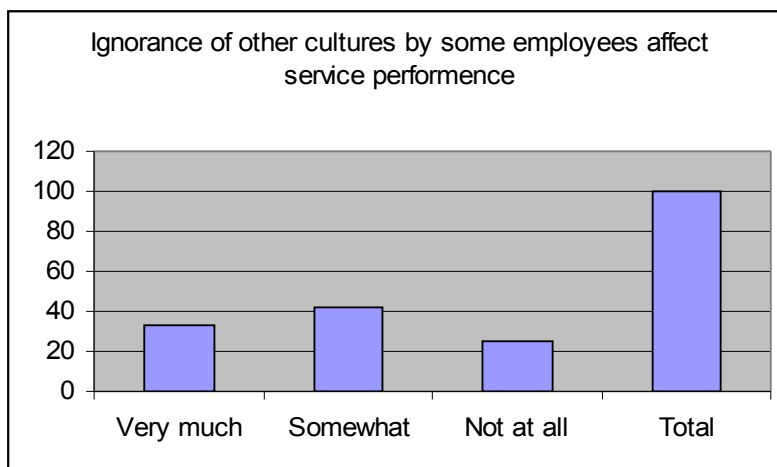
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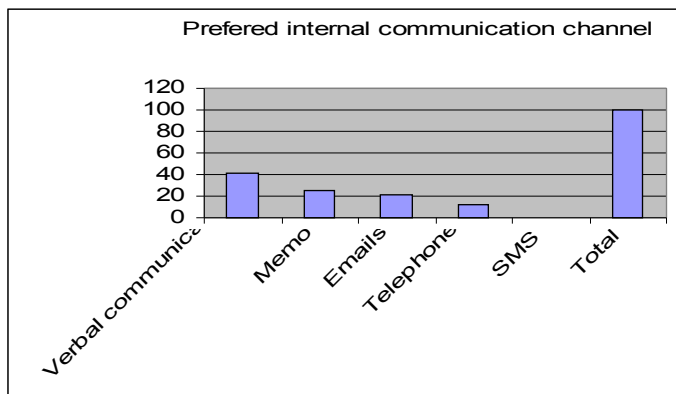
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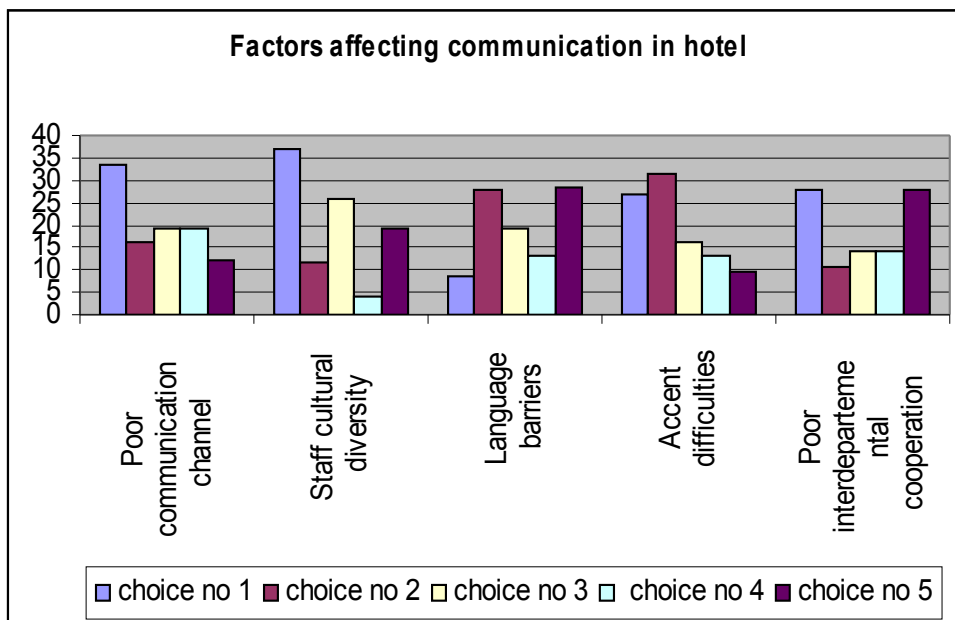
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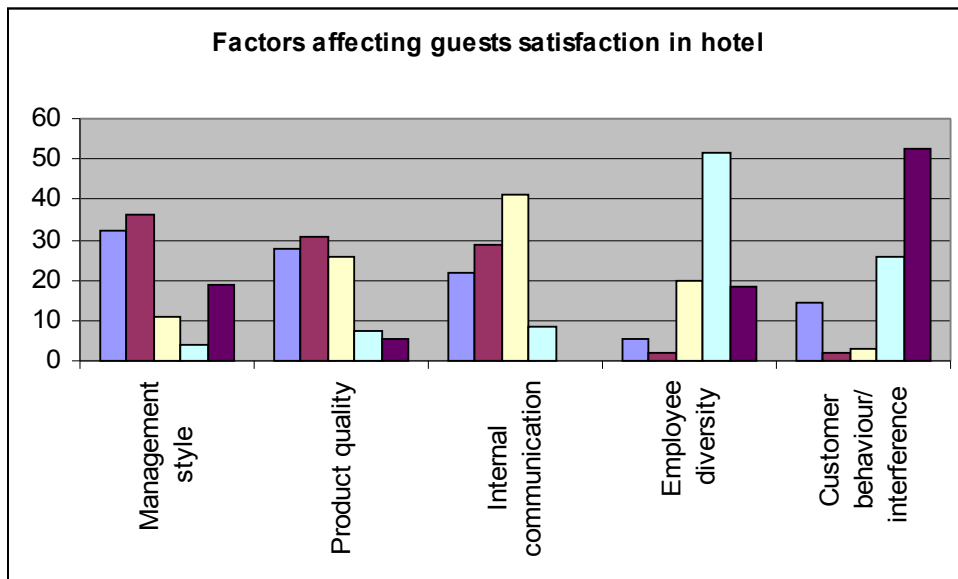
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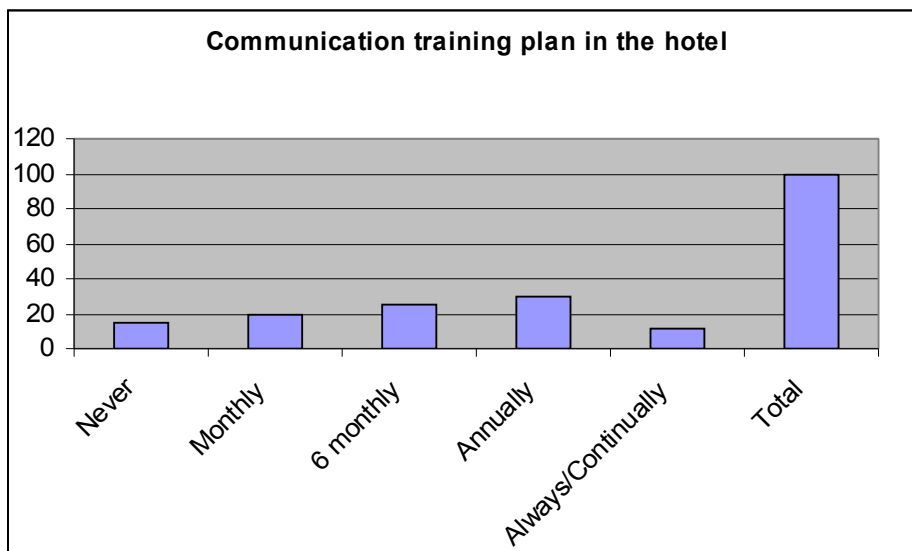
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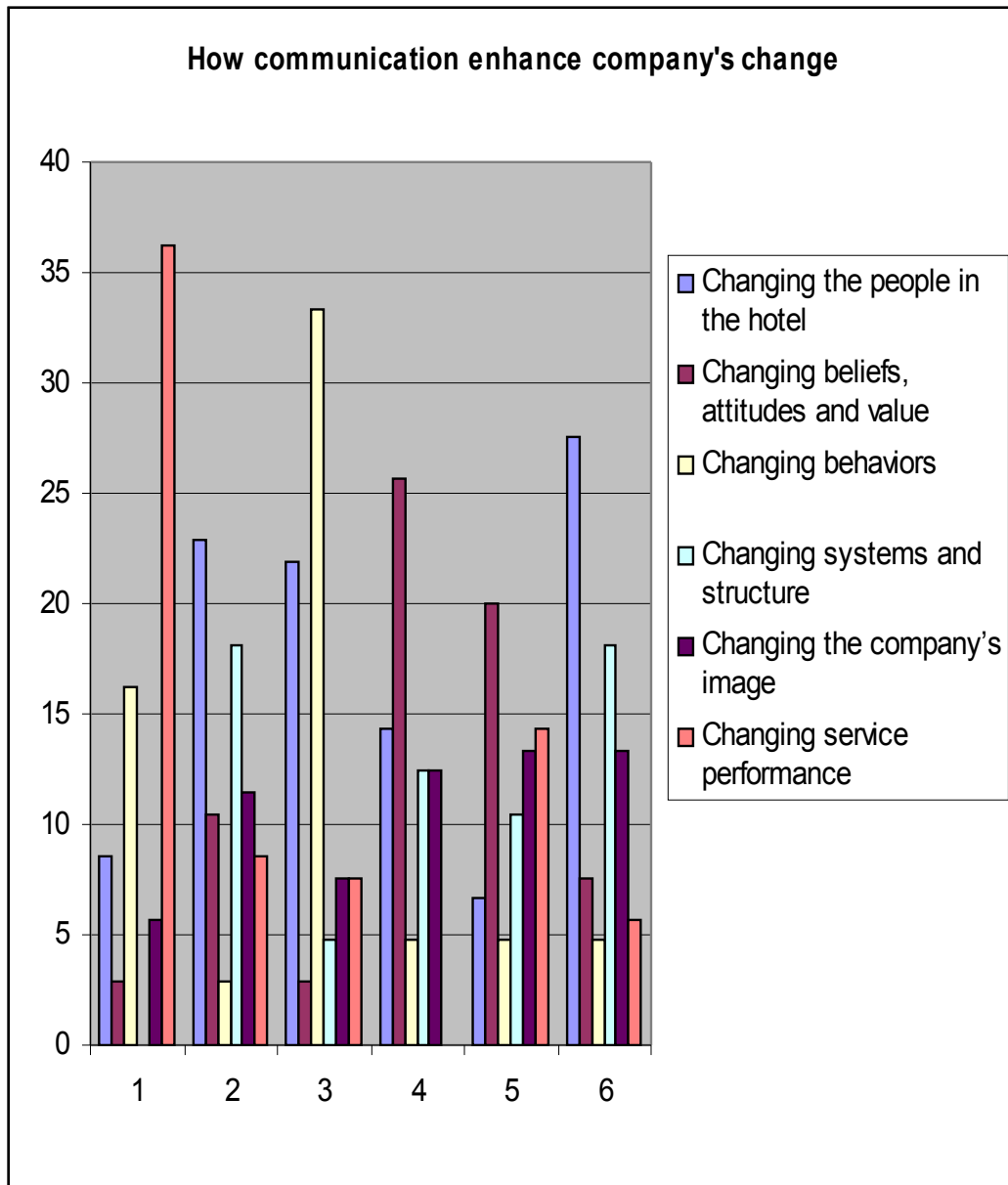
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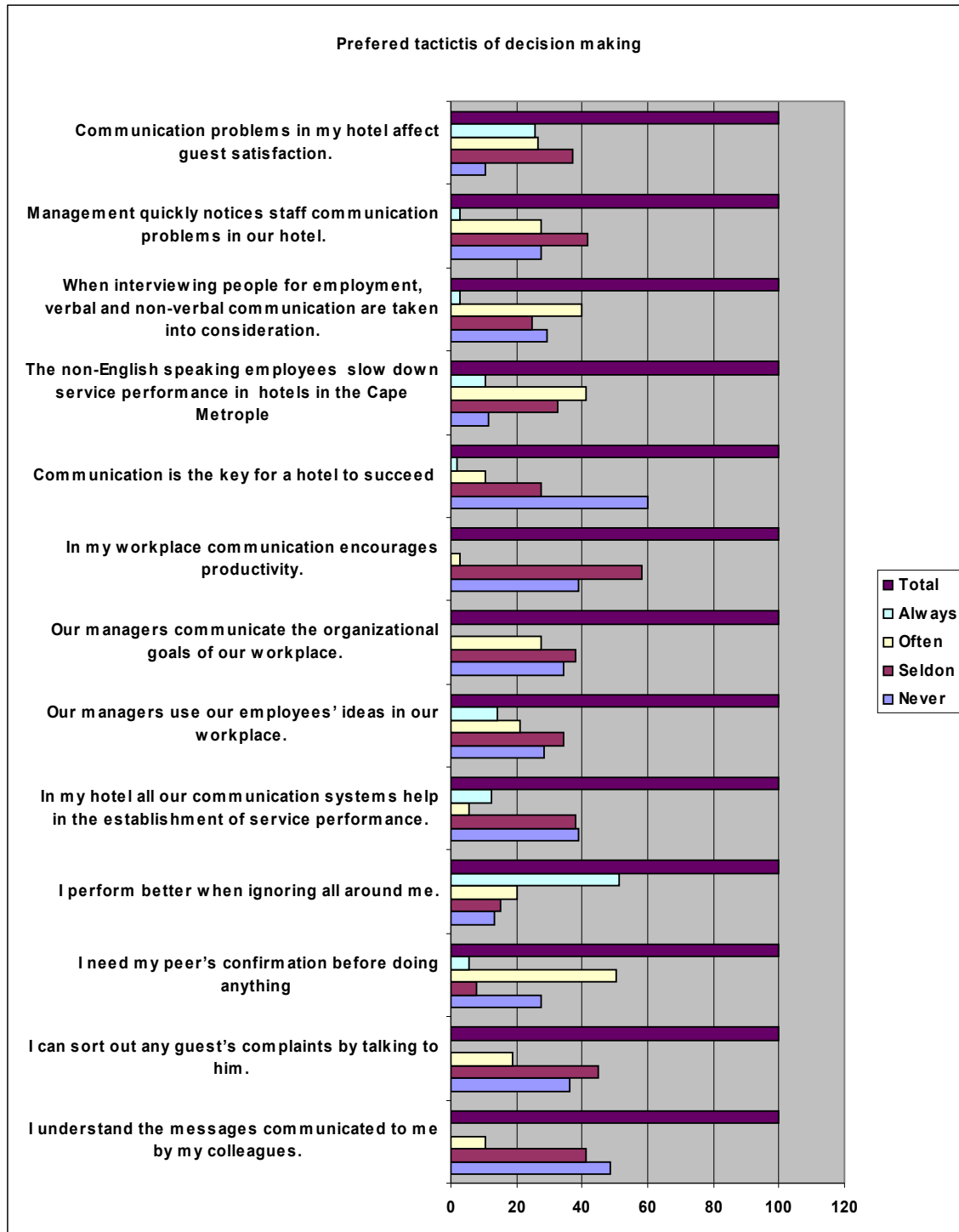
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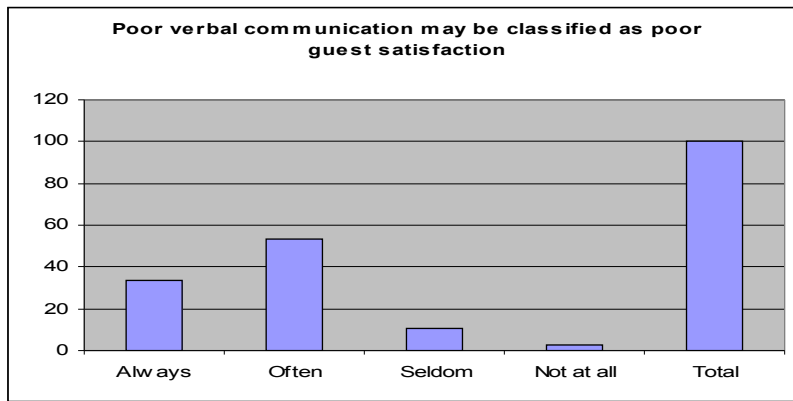
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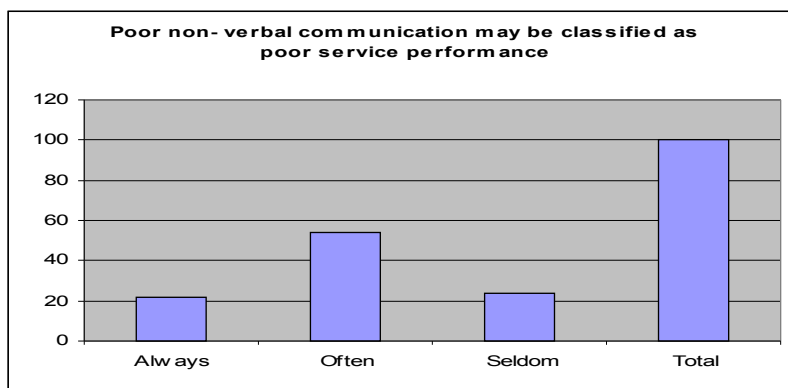
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19.



20.



21.

