

Personal qualities and knowledge necessary for work in tourism and features of work in tourism

Manas University

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Who am I? ... And Why am I here?

Why is it important to know this?



Why is it important to know this?

- My background and my experience will affect what I say.
- What works for me might not work for you.
- Always listen to the speaker and think about what they've said ... ask yourself if it is appropriate for you ...

Who am I? ... And Why am I here?

- British (English) ...
- Teacher and
- Trade Union Official
- ... turned Businessman
- Came to Kyrgyzstan in 1995
- ... for one year
- ... still here
- Invited today as a Tour Operator



- British (English) - So I understand foreigners, the interests and expectations, in a way that locals may not
- Teacher - Religious Studies, Maths and Computing ... quite a wide range ... also having studied Psychology)
- Trade Union Official ... turned Businessman – so I understand both sides of business
- Came to Kyrgyzstan in 1995... for one year ... still here - so I know Kyrgyzstan, the land, people, history and culture
- Invited today as a Tour Operator – and I know about tourism, and I am also a potential employer

Celestial Mountains

- Tour Department
- "*Silk Road Lodge*", a hotel in Bishkek
- Celestial Mountains Guesthouse (Naryn)
- Consulting



The brief ...

I was asked to address two issues:

1. the

- Personal qualities
- Knowledge

... necessary for working in tourism, and

2. features of work in tourism



... but

Personally, I think that's the wrong order ...
it should be:

1. features of work in tourism

2. the

- Knowledge, Skills and Experience
- Personal qualities

... necessary for working in tourism.



Also, I think number two should include: skills and experience as well as Knowledge and Personal Qualities.

Most job descriptions list the “Knowledge, skills and experience” required to do the job and the “Personal qualities” that the employer is looking for in an applicant.

I was told that you are:

- First year students
 - ... in the tourism school
- Not yet been on Practice, so
 - Limited experience of tourism



I presume that you chose tourism as a subject ... but there could be all sorts of reasons why you did ...

- You want a career in tourism ...
- You want to work “outdoors” and enjoy activities like climbing, horse riding, trekking etc. ... and want a job that lets you do this
- Your other choices are not clear ...
 - (at 18, I wasn’t sure if I wanted to be a Priest, a mathematician or a teacher)
- It was the only thing left ...
 - (When I was a student I wanted to do a course on Mapping, but it was full and I ended up on a course about nutrition)
- ...

Terms

- Tourism, Tourist, Tour ...
- Agents, Operator, Service Providers ...
- Inbound, Outbound, Domestic ...



Like most specialism, Tourism has a lot of jargon ... specialist terms

Tourism: travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes.

Tourist : a visitor who spends between 1 night and 6 months away from home ...

Tour: A journey, usually for pleasure, in which several different places are visited.

Agent: Someone who agrees and is authorized to act on behalf of another to legally bind them in particular business transactions with others – they make arrangements but are not responsible for the services, product, tour.

Operator: A tour operator is responsible for delivering a complex of services which comprise a tour, (transport, accommodation, food, guide services, etc ...)

Service Provider: is responsible for the delivery of a specific, limited, element of a tour package, such as accommodation, or transport, usually under subcontract to a tour operator.

Inbound: where the tourists arrive in a country from abroad

Outbound: when someone goes out of their own country for a tour

Domestic: involve residents of the country traveling only within this country

The **tourism industry** is comprised of sectors that deal with the tourist's needs. Sectors include:

- **Marketing specialists** – travel agents, tour wholesalers and tourism promotional agencies
- **Transport services** – including rail, coach, airlines and shipping services
- **Accommodation sector** – including hotels, resorts, motels, campgrounds, B&Bs, caravan parks, restaurants and cafes
- **Attractions sector** – including theme parks and other tourist-oriented entertainment facilities
- **Tour operators** – offering a complex of services : tourism guides, tour group leaders, drivers and hosts

Some sectors overlap; others operate independently. For example, a large tourism resort might offer accommodation, attractions, tours and marketing services, while a travel agent is likely to be only involved in the marketing sector.

Tourism in Kyrgyzstan

- Recreational – “Issyk Kul”
- Adventure – Mountaineering, Trekking, Skiing, Rafting, Hunting, Horse Riding, Caving, ...
- Silk Road – Historical, Cultural, ...
- Business – Conferences, “Shop” Tourism, ...

also niche markets such as ...

- “Elite” Tourism ... “Trophy” Tourism



Here I am concentrating on the **inbound tourism industry** here in Kyrgyzstan which means I am concentrating on **operators** and **service providers**.

I am not considering **outbound** ... which is mainly an **agency** business.

There are many different aspects of inbound tourism – each with their own specifics ...

Historically **recreational** tourism is the most important – in terms of numbers and revenue ... Most, but not all, of the clients come from Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan or are Domestic tourists.

Adventure tourism makes use of and stresses the physical, geographical features of the country. Most, but not all, of the adventure tourists come from the “Far abroad”.

Silk Road Tourism combines transit through Kyrgyzstan on a longer tour along the historic Great Silk Road, taking in the Mysterious Orient, (China), and ancient civilizations represented by cities in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, Turkey and Greece.

Business Tourism involves providing services for travelers who visit a destination for the purposes of business ... it includes arranging Conferences, exhibitions, incentive travel, corporate hospitality, outdoor events and individual business travel.

Niche markets are targeted towards particular groups of clients with specific interests. **Elite tourism** aims to provide services to rich foreigners who pay for high quality services whereas **Trophy Tourism** aims at rich tourists who want to visit exotic and unusual places which are not major destinations.

The importance of Domestic Tourism

- A basis for a strong Inbound market
- Survival
 - It's another market
 - Issyk Kul 2010
- Social Cohesion
- Educative for those in the industry



Domestic Tourism involves residents of the country traveling only within this country ... Kyrgyz citizens or ex-pats who travel within Kyrgyzstan.

As such, it does not bring money into the country, merely redistributing money within the country. However, it does have some important benefits ... after all, “Domestic tourists” from one part of Kyrgyzstan (for example, the Chui Region) are inbound tourists as far as Issyk Kul or Naryn are concerned.

What Jobs are there in tourism?

- “Front of House”

Working directly with the clients

- “Back of House”

Supporting the work of the organization, but not necessarily coming into contact with clients



Another way in thinking about it is that some jobs are specific and specialist to tourism ...

- Tour Company Managers
- Booking Agents
- Tour Guides
- Tour leaders
- Activity specialists, (porters, cooks, horsemen, instructors ...)
- Event Managers
- Entertainers
- Drivers (bus, limo, etc), pilots (plane, helicopter), captains (cruise ship, sightseeing boat, dive boat, ferries, etc)
- Air cabin crew,
- holiday company representative,
- Jobs in hotels:
 - Manager, reception, cleaner, concierge, security, cook, waiter, barman, technicians, cloakroom attendants, gardener, ...
- Jobs in cafes and restaurants:
 - cook, waiter, barman, administrator, busboy ...
- Jobs in Museums and attractions
 - Cashier, guides, specialists, technicians ...
- ...

... whilst others are more generic ...

- accountant,
- IT specialist,
- marketing
- HR management
- Technician
- Gardeners

Jobs in tourism

- Tour Company Managers
- Booking Agents
- Tour Guides
- Tour leaders
- Activity specialists, (porters, cooks, horsemen, instructors ...)
- Event Managers
- Entertainers
- Drivers (bus, limo, etc), pilots (plane, helicopter), captains (cruise ship, sightseeing boat, dive boat, ferries, etc)



... also ...

- Jobs in hotels:
 - Manager, reception, cleaner, concierge, security, cook, waiter, barman, technicians, gardener, ...
- Jobs in cafes and restaurants:
 - cook, waiter, barman, administrator, busboy ...
- Jobs in Museums and attractions
 - Cashier, guides, specialists, technicians ...
- and more



What do they have in
common?



What do they have in common?

1. They deal with people
2. They are giving a service



... but ...

... there's always a but ...



... but ...

Many jobs in the tourism industry are casual and part time, with work opportunities becoming strong during the tourist season, and weak in low season.

Some people work full time in this industry, but many others do this work as a supplement to another regular job.



... and, to be honest, remuneration for many of those who work in tourism may not be particularly high, although for owner operators of small businesses, or senior staff in larger tourism businesses, a lucrative professional salary may apply.

Remuneration in the Adventure Tourism industry can vary but most full-time positions earn an average salary. Managers or business owners can earn a more comfortable salary (**if the business is successful**).

It also depends on the employer – casual or temporary work may be the only work available, or work **dependent on clientele frequency** (i.e. the activities offered may not be in high demand for a small retreat in the mountains therefore the outdoor activity coordinator may have only sporadic group bookings).

Some work will be seasonal (i.e. white water rafting guides), may require travel to different parts of the world due to this seasonality (i.e. alpine skiing), **depending on the initial location**.

Nevertheless, some jobs are permanent and offer adventure activities all year round, it often depends on the destination.

Usually, people who pursue these types of jobs are not in it to gain high salaried positions (although a selected few do). Of course it would be a bonus but the main benefit is **working outdoors ... running activities they love or leading groups through spectacular natural places**.

Rates of pay can be below or at the minimum wage for people starting out (**irrespective of whether they have a qualification or not**), but those who have formal training and can demonstrate useful skills, are **likely to advance faster than others**.

... and ...

- Working conditions vary – depending on role, size of company and other factors ...
 - Office work (clerical) as opposed to “Fieldwork”
 - Working hours ... are often irregular
 - Ethnic / Gender issues ...



- Work conditions vary according to your role. You may work in an office, in a customer service environment, outdoors or on board a plane or a cruise ship.
- For permanent posts at graduate level, pay rates will vary, depending on skills and the levels of expertise required. This sector is not generally known for high remuneration but management positions will demand higher salaries and minimum wage legislation has brought lower paid positions in line.
- Working hours vary depending on the role but you should expect to work unsocial hours in many of the roles in the tourism industry.
- There are good opportunities in the industry to work part time or undertake seasonal work.
- The travel and tourism industries tend to be female dominated with a 60/40 female to male employee ratio, (a UK statistic, but although I haven't seen a similar one for Kyrgyzstan, the situation seems similar).
- Employees from Black and ethnic minority groups make up around 10% of the tourism sector workforce in the UK.

Dealing with people

- Sociable
- Communication
- Common Sense
- Flexible



All people are different ... they have different interests and needs.

We need to be able to get on with people.

We have to be able to communicate with people, to find out what their interests and needs are, (especially when something goes wrong!).

Tourism is never static – almost more than any other industry, tourism is affected by such things as natural disasters, political instability and economic downturns. Adverse circumstances such as a tsunami or civil conflict in one area can lead to a boom in another, safer area. More predictably, the tourist industry is also affected by seasonal swings – with thousands of tourists visiting favoured destinations in the 'high' or peak season then abandoning them in droves during the 'low' season.

Anyone involved in the travel and tourism industry needs to be prepared for such changes. They must also have excellent product knowledge, including knowledge of their customers, the services the customers will use, and the destinations they will travel to.

There are risks associated with every career, but some are particularly pertinent to Adventure Tourism, including the following:

- Most jobs require some degree of risk taking such as being close to dangerous wildlife, hanging off cliffs or paddling in treacherous waters. This is also a risk to children and members of the public participating in these activities.
- Another risk may involve working in remote areas with clients. This introduces a number of risks but is generally only undertaken by experienced individuals.
- The possibility of physical injury is often high. Appropriate safety procedures can help in avoiding this.

When something unexpected happens we have to respond – to deal with the situation, sensible and possibly having to adapt our plans and usual way of working.

Dealing with “difficult” people

- Clients
 - Colleagues
 - Officials
 - The Press
- ... and even
- The “Boss”



Old English saying: “There’s now’t more difficult than working with people!”

People can be difficult for all sorts of reasons:

- Things do, sometimes, go wrong ...
- It’s not what they expected ...
- Some people are just like that – argumentative
- Sometimes it is just a personality clash
- ...

Colleagues: Driver and guide personality clash story

Officials: GAI (Traffic police) story

The Press: especially if something has gone wrong!

The Boss: Stress story

The Client is always right

NO, he's not ...

... but, the client has rights!



You'll often hear it said that the "Client is always right", but that's not true ... neither is it true that "the client is always right even when he's wrong".

He is not right when he is rude, when he lies, when he tries to leave the hotel without paying, when he steals from you, when he ...

I prefer the phrase: "The Client is King!" ... "his wish is your command".

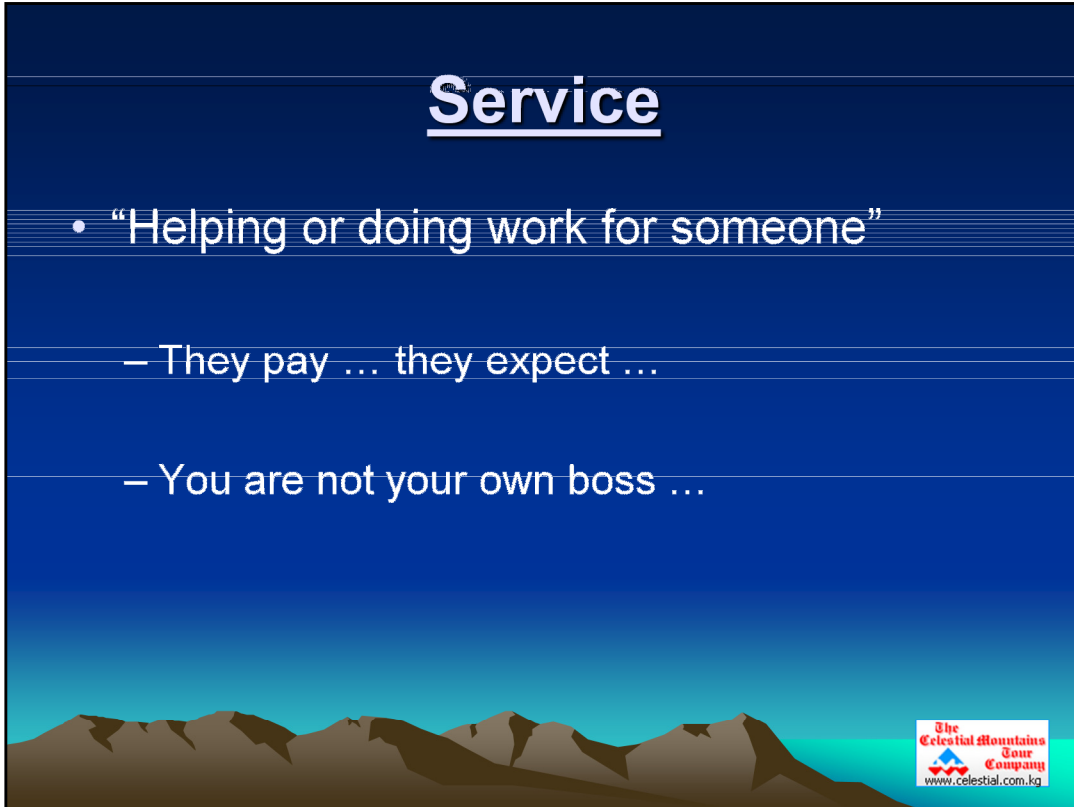
For example:

- to get the service that he has paid for, (that may depend on the adverts, contract ... and so on)
- to be upset when something goes wrong;
- to be treated with courtesy;
- to be listened to
 - Especially, (but not only), when he complains and
 - to receive a response



Service

- “Helping or doing work for someone”
 - They pay ... they expect ...
 - You are not your own boss ...



Remember: “The Client is King!” ... “his wish is your command”.

What is needed to work in tourism?



Knowledge

- General
 - Language, numeracy, First aid,
- Specific
 - Know the Industry
 - Procedures involved
 - Relevant background knowledge to do the job: History, Geography, wildlife, culture, society



First aid story ... “Have you done your Military Service?”

Guide who wanted to be an interpreter story ... “Because I speak German very well!”

Skills

People skills

- Sociable: employers, colleagues, clients, authorities, the press, others ...
- Communication : listening, speaking, reading, writing, IT skills(?), Foreign languages (?)

Experience

- General – An all round personality
 - Sports and activities, performing, responsibility
- Specific – Work experience
 - Existing knowledge and skills, confidence ...
 - Successes and handling difficulties



Theory v Practice

What you learn in the classroom is good, but it's not the real world. You need experience.

Some employers don't look for the degree ... and may give preference to someone with some years of experience. However, experience alone is not enough ... it doesn't give a context, a background to explain why things are as they are.

General – acrobat story – baby sitting – newspaper rounds ...

Experience will help you

- Make decisions when you meet new circumstances, give you a context and help you be flexible and adaptable
- Make decisions about your future

Personal qualities

- Enjoy working with people
- Good in a team, ...but able to work independently
- Like a challenge? Prepared to take on situations and sort out problems? Flexible, adaptable and able to use initiative and common sense?
- Not a 9-5 person
- Enthusiastic and not afraid of hard work?

What didn't I include?



- Reliability
- Polite
- Honesty
- Can be trusted to get on with the job – efficiently, effectively, professionally
- ...

Finally ...

- Remember ... experience ...

Have you been a tourist?

- What did you look for?
What did you want?

Ask yourself:

- What was good?
What was bad?



The importance of Domestic tourism ... one of the key advantages is that it helps people understand what tourists want from a holiday.

Why do people go on holiday?



Remember: everyone is different with different needs and expectations

Why do people go on holiday?

- To Relax
- To take a break
- For adventure
- To experience a new culture
- To visit loved ones
- To watch a sporting event
- To top-up a tan
- For the nightlife
- To do Christmas shopping
- To use up annual leave



These are just some of the reasons I came up with:

1. To Relax - Sometimes there's nothing better than sitting by a pool or on a beach and getting into a good book. Those that do feel instantly relaxed.
2. To take a break - Occasionally, it's not that we want a holiday, it's that we need one. If life's too hectic at home, people often use a holiday to escape.
3. To experience a new culture - From museums and galleries to rich history and amazing people, new countries offer new cultural experiences and most tourists thoroughly enjoy it.
4. For adventure - Travelling is good for the soul and there's no better adventure than one in another country.
5. To do their "Christmas shopping" - Many people go away in October and November to get bargains ahead of the festive season.
6. To top-up your tan - Sun worshipers are everywhere and, while it's essential you're covered in sun protection, there's nothing nicer than returning from holiday with a good tan.
7. To use up annual leave - It's hard to believe, but some people go on holiday reluctantly. If they have lots of days to use up and don't want to use them on their sofa, a break abroad is just the ticket.
8. To watch a sporting event - From football to athletics, the world (and Europe in particular) has a host of sporting events that people flock to see.
9. To visit loved ones - People's friends and family are often now based all around the world, which means seeing them requires a flight overseas.
10. For the nightlife - There are many European holiday and tourist destinations that offer up a wild and eclectic offering of an evening, which draws many a crowd.
11. To attend a conference or a training session.

"Tourists travel to almost every country in the globe, looking for adventure, recreation and entertainment. They seek both new and familiar experiences, both close to home and far abroad. Some travel independently, others in organised groups. Some look for security, others prefer their travel spiced with excitement and danger."

Remember ...

- Every tourist is different ... and needs (wants) different things
- Every tourist is special, (not just the VIPs)
- Behind every tourist is a queue of friends, relatives, colleagues, acquaintances ...



This is, perhaps, the most important slide in this presentation – the most important thing I want to say ... The client is King!

Thank you for your attention

