

# **A VIDEO GUIDELINE ON GIVING INFORMATION: A SOLUTION FOR THE RECEPTIONISTS' LACK OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS AT THE ALANA HOTEL SURABAYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

During my internship at an apartment equivalent to a three-star hotel, I found that the receptionists, who were mostly graduates from vocational high schools in hospitality major, had difficulty in giving information to foreign guests in English appropriately. As a result, the receptionists made the guests dissatisfied and unable to give a satisfactory service. From this communication problem, I thought that a video guideline on giving information in English would be the best solution for the problem. A guideline in a video will help the receptionists easier to learn about the guideline because they can just easily watch the role plays and listen the conversation. This video guideline which contains the steps and procedures for asking and giving information about check ins, hotel facilities, and check outs in English will help the receptionists to handle foreign guests appropriately and help hotels to maintain their customers by giving satisfactory services to the guests.

**Keywords:** Receptionist conversation, asking for and giving information, hotel procedure.

For my final project I decided to make a video guideline for a hotel. I got the idea of making this video guideline from my two-month internship experience at High Point Serviced Apartment, an apartment equivalent to a three-star hotel, in Surabaya. During the internship, I found that there was a serious language problem with the front officers there who mostly were graduates from vocational high schools in hospitality major. Most of them were not able to speak English fluently, so they have difficulty in giving information to foreign guests. For example, during my internship, I found a situation where the front officers could not explain the information about how to go to Bromo Mountain to a foreign guest from the Philippines who wanted to know how to get there. Therefore, I was asked to help them to explain how to get to Bromo Mountain and how much it cost to the guest.

This serious language and communication problem regarding how the front officers or receptionists give information to foreign guests seems to happen in many hotels in general. Looking at the situation that there will be many foreigners who come to nine big cities in Indonesia including Surabaya ("*9 Kota*", 2012), this situation may lead to a more serious problem. If they cannot speak English appropriately, they will have difficulty in giving satisfactory service to the guests or they will not be able to serve the guests appropriately. Therefore, the guests will be disappointed and find other hotels to stay. So, it is important for a hotel to have a guideline which contains the procedures to give information to foreign guests in English.

The Alana Hotel, a four-star hotel in Surabaya became the hotel where I did my final project. I made this final project together with my partner, Yosua Christian Murtono, a student of English for Business Communication at Petra Christian University. This video guideline for The Alana Hotel consisted of two parts. The first part was about giving information and the second part was about handling complaints. However, in the Business Communication Final Project (BCFP) report I was responsible for the part of giving information and Yosua would be responsible for the part of handling complaints. Therefore, in this report, I would discuss the first part only which was giving information to foreign guests in English.

There is a reason why this video guideline will be the best solution for the problem. This video guideline can help the receptionists at The Alana Hotel to improve their English skills. By watching all the conversations in the video guideline for giving information, the receptionists are

able to learn how to use English competencies properly. For example, they can learn how to use correct grammar and vocabularies and learn how to speak English with the correct pronunciations. Also they are able to communicate with foreign guests appropriately.

Moreover, by looking at the background of the business communication final project, I can say that the problem of the project is about how the front officers or receptionists in a hotel, who mostly are the graduates from vocational high schools, can give information to foreign guests in English appropriately. This Business Communication Product (BCP) can give several benefits for the hotel and for me. For the hotel, this video guideline can give two benefits. The first benefit is that this video guideline helps the hotel to improve English and communication skills of the receptionists. The receptionists can listen and watch all the conversations inside the video and it can help them to learn how to pronounce English words correctly and how to use correct grammar and vocabularies. Moreover, they can also improve their communication skills. By watching the video guideline, they will gain knowledge about how to ask and answer questions correctly and appropriately because there are steps to give information and ask information inside the video.

Secondly, this video guideline helps the hotel to maintain its customers. Because the receptionists are able to serve the guests appropriately according to the procedures and standards that are shown in the video, they can help the hotel to keep its customers. The hotel can maintain its customers because a customer who is satisfied with the service will not find other hotels to stay. The satisfied customer will also tell others about satisfactory service of the hotel.

In addition, this Business Communication Product (BCP) also gives me a benefit. It can be a real proof that supports me to be accepted in a company that I want to work at. In the future, I want to work in the marketing or training department in a company or a hotel, so it is important to have a real product (video guideline) that can prove to the company or hotel that I have a lot of experience in business communication. I have gone through many business communication activities to finish my project such as writing proposal and negotiating with the general manager of a hotel. Therefore, I have a bigger possibility to be accepted by the hotels or companies.

In making and completing the product (the video guideline), I used some concepts that I took from a book. I used those concepts for creating the steps for the video guideline. According to Donald Adamson (1992), there are some procedures to check in which are described as follows:

- Ask about the type of room

After the receptionist greets the guests, s/he should ask for the room that the guest needs.

- Ask about date of arrival

If the guest has booked a room by phone before, ask the guests for the date of arrival, so the receptionist can prepare the room for the guest.

- Ask about the length of stay

After knowing the date of arrival, ask the guest about how long s/he will stay in the hotel and the date of check out.

- Offer a room

It means that the receptionist should do an upselling technique which means s/he offers the most expensive room with the most complete facilities. Upselling is important for giving the front desk agent the opportunity to become a member of the sales department by selling upgrades (upselling) to guests upon arrival. Upselling allows a property to maximize revenue from its occupancy and increase the ADR, or average daily rate. (“*Why*”, 2011).

- Say the room rate

The guest will ask about the room rate, so explain the room rate clearly to the guest.

- Ask if suitable

Make sure that the guest is comfortable with the room that s/he chooses.

- Ask the guest’s name

Ask the complete name of the guest for the guest data and make sure that the name is correct.

- Finish politely

Finish the conversation and the process of check in politely by saying friendly greeting.

There are also some procedures to check out :

- The guest wants to check out

When the guest comes to the receptionist's desk, greet the guest in a friendly way.

- Asking about methods of payment

After that, ask the guest about the method of payment, by cash or credit card.

- Telling the guest what you are going to do

Ask the guest to wait for the bill and explain about the detail of the bill.

- Payment by cheque

If the guest pays by cheque, the receptionist should follow the procedures for paying the bill by cheque.

- Finishing politely

Finish the conversation politely.

The other concepts of check in procedures according to Garry K. Vallen and Jerome J. Vallen (2005) are on guest reception must welcome guest to the hotel with friendly greeting, address guest by name, explain any usual features within the room, and offer additional services (p.325).

Besides the concepts that I took from the books, I also took the concepts from an online article in the internet about check in procedures. According to an online article, there are some procedures to check in such as greeting the guest warmly with smile, asking if you may help him/her with a courtesy way, asking politely for the guest name, making your double check by repeating the guest full name, reconfirming type of the room required, asking for the length of stay and departure date expected, offering options with upselling techniques, and according to your rooms availability chart, reconfirming the mode of payment and follow up with payment procedures accordingly, asking to complete the registration card, offering additional services such as wake up calls or special guest needs to be covered, wishing your guest a pleasant stay ("*Hotel*", n.d.).

Those concepts helped me a lot in completing my final project. By using those concepts, I could identify what steps were needed by the receptionists in the hotel when they were serving foreign guests who wanted to know about the room types before checking in. For example, when the guests came to receptionist's desk, the first thing that the receptionists should do was greeting them in a friendly way. After that, the receptionists should ask if they may help the guests. Then the receptionists should do the next steps to guide the guests to check in. By knowing all the steps and procedures to check in, ask about hotel facilities, and check out, I could arrange the explanation for the video guideline.

## **PRODUCT AND RATIONALE**

This video guideline aims at giving information to foreign guests in The Alana Hotel. It contains the steps and procedures to help the receptionists of The Alana Hotel to handle foreign guests who ask about the room types before checking in, the hotel facilities, and the bill before checking out in English.

This video guideline consists of two main components. The first component is only the conversations which are fully shown in each situation. After that, the second component is the explanation of the procedures in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end of the conversation which are written in the video and repeated again by using voice.

Actually, in the proposal I decided to make two role play situations about room types and hotel facilities only. However, when I discussed the role play situations with Miss Nadya, the Training Coordinator at The Alana Hotel, she told me that in The Alana Hotel the receptionists also served foreign guests who wanted to check out. Therefore, I thought that it was better for me to add one more situation about check out. So, there are three components inside this video guideline for giving information. The first component is the role play situation about asking and giving information about check in. The second component is the role play situation about asking and giving information about hotel facilities in The Alana Hotel. The last component is the role play situation about asking and giving information about check out.

The reason why I decide to make a video guideline for giving information about check ins, hotel facilities, and check outs in English is that because I think those situations are the most

important situations that often happen in the hotel. The receptionists in every hotel will always deal with a guest who wants to do check in, a guest who wants to ask about the facilities inside the hotel, and a guest who wants to do check out. So, I think, it is important for the receptionists to know how to handle the local and foreign guests who want to do check in, ask about hotel facilities, and do check out appropriately.

In addition, the order of the role play situations inside the video guideline also becomes one of the important points that I should think about. In the video guideline for giving information, the first situation is about a guest who wants to ask about the room types before checking in. Basically, before a guest stays in a hotel, s/he will reserve or book a room in the hotel by phone or directly come to the hotel. Before the guest books or reserves a room, s/he will ask about the room types and the room rates. Therefore, in the video guideline for giving information I put the situation about asking and giving information about the room types as the first situation. I put eleven steps in the first situation because there are many procedures needed to be done when a guest checks in such as asking the room types that the guest needs, confirming about the length of stay, collecting the guest data, and filling out the guest form.

The second situation is about hotel facilities. The information about hotel facilities is also important for the hotel's guest. Before a guest chooses a hotel to stay, s/he needs to know what facilities that the hotel has, so that s/he can enjoy his/her stay there by using the facilities. If the hotel does not have the facilities that the guest wants, there will be a big possibility that the guest will not stay in that hotel. So, after the situation about check in, I put the situation about hotel facilities in the second order. Moreover, in the second situation, I only put three steps because the facilities that the guest wants are available in the hotel. So, the receptionist does not need to explain information about the other facilities in the hotel. The receptionist only needs to give information about the facilities that are asked by the guest. If the facilities that the guest wants are not available in the hotel, there will be some additional steps that are needed to be done by the receptionist such as offering the other facilities which are more or less the same and convincing the guest to try the best facilities in the hotel.

Lastly, I choose the situation about check out for the last situation in the video guideline. The information about the bill before checking out will always be asked in the end of the stay. The guest will ask about the bill before s/he leaves the hotel. That is why I put the situation about check out as the last situation for the video guideline. Besides that, I also put five steps in this situation. The guest finishes the payment process by cash, so the conversation does not last longer. If the guest pays by credit card or by another card, I will put more steps and procedures in the explanation part.

In addition, the explanation for the procedures inside the video guideline is recorded by using Jaqueline's voice because at that time my throat was not in a normal condition and Yosua was also attending a class. So, we decide to use Jaqueline's voice. Moreover, we decide to record and write the explanations for the procedure inside the video guideline because of a visual reason. Visually, if the explanations are shown only by voice, the video will be too plain and looks empty. Therefore, it is better to show the explanation by using voice and writing.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Shortly, for my final project I decided to make a video guideline for giving information to foreign guests at The Alana Hotel, a four-star hotel in Surabaya. The idea of making this video guideline I get from my internship experience at an apartment equivalent to a three-star hotel. I find a very serious language problem regarding how the front officers there, who mostly are the graduates from vocational high schools in hospitality major, give information to foreign guests in English. Most of them do not have proper English skills, so that they have difficulty in giving information to a foreign guest who mostly speaks English. As a result, it leads to customer dissatisfaction. Based on the problem, I think a hotel needs a video guideline which contains the steps or procedures for giving information to foreign guests in English.

There are three components inside the video guideline for giving information. The first component is about asking and giving information about check ins. The second component is about asking and giving information about the hotel facilities. The last component is about asking and giving information about check outs. Shortly, based on the project of a video guideline for

giving information, it can be concluded that if in a hotel, the receptionists are not able to give information to a foreign guest appropriately in English; it can lead to a serious problem that is customer dissatisfaction. Therefore, it is important for a hotel to have a guideline which contains the steps or procedures for giving information to foreign guests in English.

Finally, the writer hopes that the video guideline can be used effectively and efficiently by the training coordinator (trainer) to train the receptionists (trainees). For example, the trainer can show the video guideline in the morning briefing two or three times a week and after that ask the trainees to repeat the steps and procedures to check in, to ask about hotel facilities, and to check out inside the video. Also, after watching the video guideline, the trainer can give questions about the procedures or about the conversations inside the video in order to know how well the trainees can understand the video.

Suggestion for the next students of English for Business Communication of Petra Christian University who want to do the same Business Communication Project (BCP) as our project is that the writer suggests working on their proposal for hotels during their holiday. So, during the first month of the new semester, they will have been accepted by a hotel. By doing so, they will have enough time to finish their project well. In addition, the writer also suggests them to practice the role play more than 15 times, so they will not spend much time to finish the role play when they perform the role play in the lobby hotel.

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