

Total Quality Management guidelines in Tourism sector

1 TQM Guidelines:

These guidelines are designed to provide a service quality model that applies to Tourism Sector in Umm Qais. These are assumed to assist tourism industry – especially at local level where the “institution” is less incisive - to Developing and Delivering Service Quality.

This “lead activity” could be carried out by a permanent “steering” body, for example that built by the GOALS project as “Local Focus Group”.

The Guidelines focus on the following fundamental aspects:

- Consulting with tourists as an integral part of service design.
- Involving stakeholders in each stage of the process to mitigate the risk and assists in managing tourists' expectations.
- Embedding quality all along the entire process of product development.
- Measuring and using information to predict the future and plan improvement.
- Developing a service culture.

These aspects are developed in nine guidelines – below detailed - made up to apply a Total Quality Management from a Tourist service perspective; these can be applied in any sector of the Tourism Industry as “service quality” is seen as performance in public sector as well as in private sector :

1. Service Quality Framework;
2. Tourism quality requirements;
3. Consulting and engaging participants;
4. Product life cycle quality;
5. Integrated Quality (IQ);
6. Service fundamentals;
7. Measurement and feedback;
8. Service culture;
9. Continuous improvement.

2 Actions and guidelines

2.1 Service Quality Framework

It deals with the structural issues able to support and facilitate the development of high quality services for clients. To offer a service quality it is necessary to include:

- Improving the quality of life in our community by attracting new tourism related businesses.
- Considering Tourism as a primary development factor in our community.
- Developing an ecologically sound tourism program.
- Identifying the major Tourists and the value chain between Tourists and provider.

Actions

Tourism local industry should:

- Adopt “Tourism Standards Criteria”;
- Use a “service charter” which states its commitment in delivering;
- Review progress according to the framework;
- Use feedback from tourists to improve the product;
- Measure the impact of quality initiatives in terms of effectiveness and efficiency;
- Publish performance results, including when targets are not achieved;
- Use data and information predicatively and reflectively.

2.2 Tourism quality requirements

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) tourism quality requirements implies the satisfaction of all needs, requirements and expectations at an acceptable price.

Actions

Tourism local industry actions/initiatives should focus on:

- Integration: one good quality service is not sufficient to give rise to tourism product quality perception.
- Service Requirement: quality is often intangible and apparently difficult to measure. However, certain service elements are quantifiable, as waiting time, frequency of service (e.g. cleaning), the number and type of services included in the basic price, etc.
- Expectation: the consumer must receive what has been promised (or even more).
- Certification: the product quality should be assessed and certified by a representative or a recognized external third party.
- Underlying quality determinants: the minimum level of consumer protection under which quality, or total quality, is impossible to achieve.

2.3 Consulting and engaging with stakeholders & customers

“Tourism Standards Criteria” should be refined in coherence with the specificity of each context through engaging stakeholders & customers; it

- Reduces design and implementation costs by eliminating errors;
- Sets and maintains expected levels of service performance

Actions

A permanent board of tourism stakeholders (ex. Local Focus Group) should:

- Assess customers’ understanding of their rights and obligations
- Identify the major stakeholders & customers segments and their changes and innovations
- Act upon customers suggestions for improvement.

2.4 Product life cycle quality

The tourist industry must consider and embed quality at each stage of product development. The enterprise management should establish a methodology to measure standard product quality in all its life cycle and appoint a product owner with responsibility for the quality of the final product (no matter if it is a hotel of transport service, or handicraft).

Actions

Tourism enterprise:

- should engage with other local stakeholders & customers into the evaluation of product development life cycle.
- should insist on the engineering principle of revision processes as repeatable and replicable.
- should adopt a sound project management methodology
- should specify which channels be used to ensure a robust process for introducing a new product.

2.5 Integrated Quality (IQ)

IQ combines four key elements; it is related to a holistic approach considering the balance between the elements the basis for the quality of each single one:

1. Tourist satisfaction
2. Local tourism industry satisfaction
3. Local people’s quality of life
4. Environmental quality

Actions

The IQ approach for tourism is a cyclical model including basically five actions to follow:

- Identify the partners (a Local Focus Group for example).
- Decide on actions: human resources, natural resources, quality of life, cultural heritage, etc.
- Implement actions: public and private providers within and outside the system.
- Measure effects: using a set of indicators in order to survey the satisfaction of the various target groups, integration into the community and conservation of resources (sustainable development).
- Evaluate and adjust.

It is this ongoing repetition that causes the system to operate as a loop.

2.6 Service fundamentals

What tourist expects as the basic component of quality service are infrastructure, foods, transportation. Failure to meet standard quality in these fields leaves the institutions open to public criticism and loss of confidence and trust.

Actions

The tourism stakeholders (or a LFG) should develop standard operating solutions by responding to the following service fundamentals from a user's perspective:

- Reliability – ability to perform service dependably and accurately
- Responsiveness – willingness to help and respond to customers need
- Assurance – ability of staff to inspire confidence and trust
- Empathy – the extent to which the staff give caring, individualized service
- Third parties – service level agreements.

2.7 Measurement and feedback

Tourism institutions measure and publish their service standards. They systematically should determine key performance indicators as key components of the Tourism service quality framework.

Actions

The Local tourism stakeholders should employ various means of measuring service performance, including:

- Internal and external surveys;
- Complaint and compliment handling;
- Benchmarking against other best practices;
- Between comparable internal units.

2.8 Developing a service culture

To improve service quality, the tourism institution invests in the skills and capability of the staff who deliver its services.

Actions

The stakeholders (or its Local Focus Group) should:

- Regularly analyze skills needs in all aspects of service quality;
- Design learning programmes to ensure staff commitment and understanding;
- Empower staff to make decisions and solve problems;
- Make service delivery a profession for staff to aspire to;
- Give staff the opportunity to undertake professional development in service quality management, internally and externally;
- Ensure that frontline service delivery staff are appropriately compensated and rewarded for outstanding performance related to service quality.

2.9 Continuous Improvement

Tourism industry needs to respond to customers' demand through levels of service comparable to those they receive elsewhere. Striving for excellence depends upon innovation in product development. This requires a continuous improvement approach whereby the entire product life cycle is regularly reviewed in order to eliminate poor processes, create better processes and introduce new technologies.

Listening to customers and stakeholders (see Guideline 2) is the richest source of information for continuous improvement initiatives.

Actions

A continuous improvement programme combines all nine service quality guidelines.

Tourism local stakeholders should strive for continuous improvement using the plan-do-check-act cycle:

- Plan: Identify an opportunity and plan for change;
- Do: Implement the change on a small scale;
- Check: Use data to analyze the results of the change and determine whether it made a difference;
- Act: If the change was successful, implement it on a wider scale and continuously assess results. If the change did not work, begin the cycle again.