

# INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

*"There's a sunrise and sunset every single day and they're absolutely free. Don't miss so many of them."*

UNKNOWN

**S**IMON SINEK IS A SEMI-GURU that makes sense of stuff. From unclear to clear and with such an ease that listening to him is almost like a religious experience. Some guides should have a little bit more SS in themselves. Seems like some have just a natural skill to talk and make things clear and understood while for others it does not matter if they have a PhD in communication, but they are still terrible in the art of information and communication or just a simple conversation for that matter.

Make things easy and repeat and verify that guests have understood. Like this "OK today we have our city tour around Florence. 5 meters outside the main lobby of the hotel there will be a bus 9.29 and 9.31 there will NOT be a bus outside. It is important that we respect the time since it shows respect for fellow travelers. My question to you: "What time is our bus for the City Tour" "9.29" "Sorry I cannot hear you" "9.29". Good. 9.29 seems perhaps dumb to say but in any major communications book people remember odd things and numbers and dates easier than standard information.

"But I told them a hundred times". Well that might be the case but if the receiver does not pick up then it is the transmitter that is broken. Sometimes the clientele is 100 years old and might be hard of hearing. Or they are simply from Norway. Understanding ones' audience is crucial when trying to deliver a message. Some process information visually and some via their ears and some tactilely. If something is of great importance, then it might be a good think to print things out and hand it out. Then it is always possible to refer to the handout. "You said we were visiting the Cheese-factory Thursday at 14.00 and I was waiting for the bus a few minutes prior". "Yes, we were looking for you when going to the Brie-establishment. But as I said verbally and, on the paper handed out, the little outing was on Tuesday 09.00 and funnily enough

everyone else understood and were on the bus”. There will always be someone sometimes that does not get the message even how much you try. Just try to minimize the damage.

Some people we simply do not want to let down and disappoint, therefore we tend to listen better. If you are one of those characters, then congratulations. If you are not, then there is room for improvement.

There are always mistakes being made in this line of work and many of them are related to how we communicate. Often we hear “we usually go down this road since it is so lovely and probably the highlight of the tour but not today since they have the marathon. Normally we stop here for a lovely scones and typical local tea but this morning they have closed for some reason. Often, we make a side-trip to see the pink-colored Tasmanian devil, but they are not here on Tuesdays”. FOR FUCK SAKE do not tell them what you are NOT doing. If you tell them what you are NOT doing, then all they will remember is what they did NOT experience or visit. Stop that. Today.

Another classic stupidity is: “We just passed the most historically important monument here in town. Some of you might be able to see it in the rear-view mirror”. Then it is too late. They will hate you. Prepare what you will see and where it is: “In 100 meters and just passed the next traffic lights you will see a small limestone building on your right-hand side. It used to be the first monastery and have been of great importance. We will drive slowly as we pass, and I repeat it will be on your right-hand side and just after the next traffic lights. It is also important to remember since we are having our visit there tomorrow where we will try different kinds of chocolate”.

If you get a question that requires a specific answer then it is perfectly safe to say “Bob that is a great question. I am not 100 % sure and we need to check the timetable for the bus since they just changed to autumn. I do not know at the top of my head but when we stop for our comfort break, I make sure to find out for you. I will also find out if you still can pay cash or if it is only credit card payment. There have been talks about that change ever since last season”.

Useless words are thrown around all the time. It is just a bad habit. These terrible words can be referred to as fillers and it has little to do with Botox. They

serve no purpose besides making the guide look stupid and annoy people. A few examples might be “You know” “So to say” “Actually indeed”. Or just stupid noises like “Uuuummmm” or “Eeehhhhh”. “Do you understand?” is also stupid to say. If you say do you understand then you devalue your own capacity of delivering a message and guests in the bus starts to doubt your skills and capability.

The art of under-promising and over-delivering is also key to good feedback and managing expectations. “This is the worst shithole in the whole of Provence and the owner is a crossbreed between a wolverine and an orphan wedlock-mother. The rooms they are what they are. You might to have to sleep standing. Food that they serve must come directly from the prison that we find in the outskirts of this godforsaken village. At the same time, it is the best hotel around. Simply since it is the only hotel around”.

If you under-promise like above, then guests might be happy if they have roof over their head and a place to put their feet. That is a good thing. Over-promise is something else and it might sound like:

“Hello my darlings. Today will be the best day in your life. Better than any other day and we will see the most amazing cave and have the best green tea in the world. Then we will drive on the most amazing and fantastic roads and visit a little church that will turn you all into believers. I am truly not lying but it is the most fantastic thing you have ever experienced. We will see triple rainbows and dancing unicorns and the trees make music that sounds like stairway to heaven”.

If you cannot deliver these fake rainbow-dancing-unicorns then you are screwed. Also remember that many guests already have been to the most amazing churches or caves or stuff like that in the world and they will compare notes. “Well you said that this was a fantastic day in the forest and the meal was out of this world. I must say that this was just a little above average. You should have been with us when we were in Africa and did the safari since that was the most amazing place ever”.

Do not paint yourself into a corner with your communication and you better talk the talk and walk the walk.

