

Marriott International

Effective communication is a key driver of organisational success, influencing service quality, employee performance, customer satisfaction, and overall productivity. In hospitality, communication is especially critical due to the fast-paced, guest-focused nature of the industry. This report examines communication practices within Marriott Hotels UK, assessing how the company communicates internally and externally, the challenges it faces, and strategies for improvement. The discussion draws on relevant academic literature and hospitality-specific research to evaluate how Marriott maintains effective communication across its multicultural workforce and diverse customer base.

Communication Methods

Communication in a business context involves sharing information, feedback, and ideas to achieve organisational objectives. At Marriott Hotels UK, communication underpins service consistency, teamwork, and guest engagement. The company prioritises transparent and collaborative communication systems across its operations (Marriott International, 2023).

1. Internal Communication

Marriott relies on platforms such as Marriott Global Source, internal email, and daily team briefings to coordinate operations. Staff meetings help align departmental goals with Marriott's service values. Research shows that structured internal communication enhances employee satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty in hospitality settings (Čuić Tanković, Bilić & Brajković, 2022). Effective internal communication also strengthens team cohesion and reduces operational mistakes.

1.1 Real-Time Operational Communication

To maintain high service quality, hotels must support real-time operational communication, particularly during busy periods. Duarte and Silva (2023) show that transparent internal communication is significantly associated with lower turnover intention among hospitality staff, due to increased job satisfaction and perceived organisational support.

In practice, hotel managers can implement dedicated messaging platforms or task-management apps so that team leaders issue urgent operational updates (e.g., guest requests, maintenance issues) instantly. This approach reduces mistakes and helps frontline teams to stay coordinated, which is especially critical in a fast-paced environment.

1.2 Feedback Loops and Employee Engagement

Feedback mechanisms—both formal and informal—are essential for improving staff satisfaction and organisational performance. Duarte and Silva (2023) emphasise that employee satisfaction with internal communication works through perceived organisational support to reduce turnover.

Moreover, when employees can voice suggestions or concerns regularly (via surveys or briefings), they feel valued, which strengthens loyalty. The literature suggests that such feedback-rich environments foster higher levels of commitment and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement.

2. External Communication

External communication involves interaction with guests, suppliers, and partners. Marriott uses corporate websites, social media, and CRM systems to respond to enquiries and manage customer feedback. Social media has become especially important in hospitality branding and guest communication, enhancing loyalty and shaping reputation (Sotiriadis & van Zyl, 2013). External communication is therefore a central part of Marriott's customer service strategy.

3. Digital Communication Tools

Digital transformation has accelerated communication efficiency within hotels. Marriott uses tools such as Microsoft Teams, mobile apps, and cloud-based systems to facilitate real-time collaboration. Digital communication played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling hotels to coordinate operations during restrictions (Toanoglou et al., 2022). These technologies help streamline tasks, share updates quickly, and support remote collaboration when needed.

3.1 Crisis Communication in Hospitality

During crises (e.g., pandemics, natural disasters), hotels must adopt structured communication protocols to protect both reputation and operations. Research on hotel PR during COVID-19 highlights that public-relations teams in hotels formed crisis committees, coordinated with government guidelines, and used communication channels proactively to maintain stakeholder trust.

Effective crisis communication also involves clear internal messaging: management must brief staff quickly, explain measures, and provide emotional support. This clarity helps reduce uncertainty and ensures that all team members understand their roles, contributing to safer and more resilient operations.

3.2

Digital Communication Tools for Coordination

Digital platforms are now central to how hotels communicate, especially in distributed or high-pressure settings. Using cloud-based messaging systems and mobile-access tools allows managers to dispatch updates, task reminders, and safety alerts in real time. These tools played an especially important role during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing hotels to maintain operational continuity. They enable flexible collaboration, real-time coordination, and rapid sharing of crisis protocols or guest-related updates, increasing speed and reducing risk of miscommunication.

4. Non-Verbal and Cross-Cultural Communication

Marriott's global and multicultural workforce makes non-verbal and intercultural communication vital. Non-verbal cues—such as smiling, eye contact, and gestures—significantly influence guest perception in hospitality settings. Cross-cultural miscommunication is common in hotels due to diverse employee backgrounds, making cultural competence training essential (Grobelsna, 2015). Marriott invests in training programmes to help employees understand cultural differences, communication norms, and guest expectations (American Hotel & Lodging Association, n.d.).

1. Cultural Intelligence and Communication

Cultural intelligence plays a crucial role in enhancing communication effectiveness within a diverse hospitality workforce. Arora and Rohmetra (2010) describe CQ as the ability to navigate and adapt to different cultural norms, which helps staff understand non-verbal cues, preferences, and work styles.

In a hotel context, high CQ enables employees to engage better with guests and colleagues from varied cultural backgrounds, leading to more empathetic service and smoother interactions.

1. CQ, Self-Efficacy, and Employee Voice

Empirical research confirms that CQ is not just about understanding culture—it can also drive self-efficacy (belief in one's own ability), which in turn fosters voice behaviour (speaking up) and leads to greater job satisfaction. Yuan, Kim & Min (2023) found that cultural intelligence positively affects hotel employees' voice behaviour through self-efficacy, and that voice mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

From a managerial perspective, cultivating CQ through training can therefore yield multiple benefits: more confident staff, more open communication, and better organisational morale and innovation.

5. Importance of Communication

Communication enhances leadership effectiveness, customer satisfaction, and service performance. Studies show that strong communication in hospitality improves operational efficiency and strengthens organisational culture (Čuić Tanković et al., 2022). At Marriott, clear communication ensures consistency across UK branches, reduces errors, and enhances customer experience.

Common Issues

Despite its strong communication systems, Marriott faces several challenges common to large hospitality organisations.

1. Miscommunication and Information Overload

Large hotel chains often experience information overload due to excessive emails, briefings, and updates. Miscommunication can lead to service errors, such as incorrect bookings or delayed responses, negatively affecting guest satisfaction (Lolli, 2013).

2. Cultural and Language Barriers

Marriott employs a diverse workforce, leading to differences in communication styles, language proficiency, and cultural norms. Research highlights that multicultural hospitality teams often experience misunderstandings and conflicting expectations (Grobelna, 2015). These barriers can impact teamwork and customer service.

3. Hierarchical Communication Gaps

In large hotels, communication from senior management does not always reach frontline employees effectively. Hierarchical structures can hinder message flow and create inconsistencies in policy implementation (Lee, 2015). This can affect staff motivation and operational clarity.

4. Technological Challenges

While digital tools improve communication, not all employees adapt at the same pace. Some staff struggle with new technologies, especially older employees or

those with limited digital experience. Ineffective training can lead to reliance on outdated communication methods and reduce efficiency (Toanoglou et al., 2022).

5. Emotional Barriers and Work Pressure

Hospitality is a high-pressure industry. Stress, emotional fatigue, and long working hours can impact communication quality, reducing empathy, attentiveness, and conflict management (Karatepe, 2013). This affects both teamwork and guest interaction.

Recommendations

To address these challenges, Marriott Hotels UK should consider the following communication strategies:

1. Enhanced Training and Cultural Awareness

Marriott should implement regular intercultural communication and emotional intelligence workshops. Cultural training improves teamwork, reduces misunderstandings, and enhances service delivery (Grobelna, 2015). Emotional intelligence training can help staff manage stress and communicate more effectively with guests.

2. Streamlined Digital Communication

Marriott should integrate multiple communication tools into a single platform (e.g., a unified staff app). Consolidating communication channels reduces information overload and helps staff access updates more efficiently (Toanoglou et al., 2022).

3. Open-Door Leadership and Feedback Systems

Introducing digital suggestion boxes, anonymous surveys, or regular check-in sessions can strengthen trust between staff and management. Open communication strategies improve employee engagement and decrease communication blockages (Lee, 2015).

4. Regular Communication Reviews

Quarterly reviews of communication systems would help identify gaps and ensure employees understand and use digital tools effectively. Continuous evaluation strengthens communication consistency and operational performance.

Conclusion

Communication is central to Marriott Hotels UK's service excellence and organisational performance. Marriott uses a blend of digital, interpersonal, and intercultural communication methods to support its diverse workforce and customer base. However, challenges such as miscommunication, cultural differences, and hierarchical barriers still exist. By enhancing training, streamlining digital tools, and promoting open communication, Marriott can strengthen its communication practices and maintain its leadership in hospitality. Future research could explore how artificial intelligence may further transform communication in hotel environments.

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