Let’s Talk It Over: Telecommunications

Hotel Management
Presentation Notes
Let’s Talk It Over - Telecommunications

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Telecommunication is communication at a distance by technological means or by using technology.

It is a compound of the Greek prefix tele meaning "distant" and the Latin communicare, meaning "to share".
If technology is required, does that mean there was no telecommunications before technology came about?

NO!

Technology is relevant to the current time period. It is whatever technology is available and using it to communicate at a distance.

Early telecommunication technologies included visual signals, for example, smoke signals, signal flags and even visual signals such as those made by flashes of sunlight reflected by a mirror (generally using Morse code).

Other examples of pre-modern telecommunications include drumbeats, horns and loud whistles; usually in a certain sequence to mean different things.

Click on hyperlink to view video: Visual History of Telecommunications
Video montage prepared to help kick-off Location 2.0 Summit 2009 at CTIA in San Diego
Telecommunications evolution from 1850s thru Oct 8, 2009
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBuAujwygLw&feature=share&list=PLQRaesQXyAr2PoRZq2QQJ9AgjeTWraxAB&index=7
Again, technology is relevant to the current time period. Now that means today.

Computers, Internet, radios, satellites, and televisions are a few widely used and familiar devices that are used today.

The hotel industry today uses all of these daily.

Can you think of any other means of communication for a hotel?
Today’s telecommunication equipment allows the hotel industry to use these devices in two ways:

- To run the hotel efficiently
- To offer the devices as a service or convenience to the guests

For business:

- **Computers** - to operate the business such as accounting, reservations
- **Fax machine** – to receive an image of a document made by electronic scanning and transmitted as data by telecommunication links
- **Internet** - to send emails to employees, headquarters, guests and to show website
- **Radios** – to communicate with employees and guests
- **Telephone** - to talk to other employees, departments and guests
- **Television** - to give information to guests

For guests:

- **Computers** – for guest use
- **Fax machines** – for guest use to send/or receive an image of a document
- **Internet** – Wi-Fi for guests’ connection
- **Satellites** - to offer TV stations to guests
- **Telephones** - in rooms for communication and checkout
- **Video** – for business conferencing
The key to understanding the telephone requirements is to match the level of features needed to the hotel and guest that is serviced.

For example, a full-service hotel might service the business traveler and needs to provide a business center that offers video conferencing features. This type of phone would not be needed in a small town local budget hotel that services budget minded vacationing families.

Some of the more advanced features that today’s telecommunication technology offers are:

- Video conferencing
- Automated attendant
- Mobile soft phones
- Paging and intercom
- Presence technology
- Unified messaging
How many of you think the Internet and the World Wide Web are the same thing? Actually they are different.

Much like a computer is hardware and the operating system is the software on the computer to make it operate, in the simplest of terms, you can think of the Internet as the hardware and the web as documents on the Internet.

The Internet is actually a series of connected computer networks that link billions of devices worldwide. These devices include computers, tablets, phones, televisions and more. They are connected using an array of electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies.

The World Wide Web is a system of interlinked hypertext documents accessed through the Internet.

These technologies working together have created an evolution in communication. There has been a dramatic shift away from traditional communications since the 1990’s because of these advancements in the Internet technology and development of new software.

Traditional communication devices are slowly dying out. Now connectivity and communication over the Internet by electronic mail, instant messaging and voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone, two-way interactive video calls and the World Wide Web with its discussion forums, blogs, social networking and online shopping sites are as easy as turning on the device itself.
The hotel industry is no different from any other type of business in that they all rely heavily on computers, networks and connectivity to operate business.

Emails have replaced more formal letters and phone calls.

When communication is sent back and forth between hotel and guests regarding questions, complaints, lost property or any other general information, it is usually sent through email rather than letter.

It is essential that hotel employees learn to not only properly operate the equipment or computer and software, it is imperative that they understand the necessity to remain professional. Many people use email as a quick and informal way of communication and can easily forget to remain professional.

Communication through these devices has become second nature. The Property Management System is the software on the computers that is used to manage the operation of a hotel.

When a reservation is made, the front desk agent often asks if the caller (future guest) would like their confirmation sent to their email address or a text message on their smart phone. The Property Management System (PMS) in which the reservation is made can now make that communication for the hotel with a simple click of the mouse when making a reservation.
Hotels often use two-way radios to communicate

Televisions communicate hotel charges

Used by:
- Front desk agents
- Housekeeping
- Groundskeepers
- Security

Hotel staff also use two-way radio to quickly communicate with each other.

Front desk agents, housekeeping, groundskeepers are often walking the property and the use of two-way radio communication is a quick, efficient and very cost effective way of keeping in touch.

Example - the front desk can quickly inform housekeeping that a guest needs more towels.
Satellites are not often thought of by most people when they are discussing communication. They are often the backbone of how much of the communication is taking place. Satellites are launched by companies that allow the transmission of the communication signals between devices.

Some of the most common uses are for telephones and television, both of which are used by businesses such as the hotel industry.
Three things to consider with telephone communications:

- Telephone Systems
- Telephone Types
- Telephone Techniques
**Main systems:**
- Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS)
- Cellular phones
- Internet Protocol phones (VoIP)
- PBX – Private Business Exchange
  - Communication between people inside the business and access to external telephone lines

Landline telephone systems are part of the Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS). This is a direct descendant of the system that Alexander Graham Bell invented using copper wiring. The advantages of this system includes:

- standardized equipment
- predictable sound quality
- no need to share the system’s capacity with others

Because switches are in place, creating a private circuit for each phone call, it is also called the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

Cellular phones use radio frequencies rather than copper wire.

Internet Protocol (IP), also called Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) piggy-backs on existing Internet connections. Almost all VOIP telephone systems offer the same telephone options as those found in traditional phone systems.

PBX or Private Business Exchange – a private telephone switch that is installed in a business location to facilitate communication between people inside the organization while also allowing access to adequate external telephone lines.

Traditional PBX systems are used with POTS, but the same benefits can be achieved by using PBX with a VoIP system (digital) (rather than POTS and analog) without the hardware and software costs associated with traditional PBX systems.

PBX through VoIP systems are basically cheaper and much easier to install. Another advantage of a VoIP PBX is the ability to transmit calls internationally over the Internet, thereby avoiding long-distance charges.

Most of the hotel industry today is using PBX with either POTS or VoIP.
There are as many telephone types and models as there are companies that make them.

Each telephone model has different features.

Most have basic common features:

- **Calls** – each line can be placed on HOLD
- **Conference calls** – multiple lines/people on same call
- **Display** – shows time, date and caller information
- **Multiple lines** – capable of multiple calls at same time
- **Transfer calls** - capable to exchange calls from room to room, from Front Desk to a room or from outside to inside the hotel

Multiple phone models will be used in a hotel.

For example, each employee or department will have a phone that has the above features and the ability to transfer, conference and put calls on hold but the phones in each room for the guests might be “regular” phones without all of the capabilities and features of those used to run the hotel business.

Other models with a few limited features might be available to guests with upgraded rooms or in the business services lounge.
Now that we have the equipment covered, let’s turn our attention to the proper way to use them.

Let’s get back to the first question and consider… “Is what you say more or less important than how you say it?”

Many people will argue one over the other, that WHAT you say is more important while others will argue the point that HOW you say something is more important.

Truth – They are BOTH important! When on a telephone, neither party has the opportunity to watch or “read” the other person.

The use of nonverbal communication, such as hand gestures and facial expression, is not an option. So, how you say something is as important as what you say.

Other distractions can also interfere such as background noise, phone line issues, a soft-spoken person versus a voice that carries, and most of all, remembering you are in a service business and your business depends on good service.

Customers expect courtesy and that begins at the front desk and on the phone.
Radios and televisions are typically used to broadcast information. The distance can be relatively short, such as a local radio or TV station, or it can be huge such as broadcasting the information by satellite.

There are two types of signals - analog and digital

Analog - of or relating to a device or process in which data is represented by physical quantities that change continuously

Digital signals provide a sharper image and a clearer communication through more efficient lines. Most televisions today receive digital signals.

Televisions are not only used for entertainment. Hotels often tie in a closed circuit station in which to communicate the charges that are connected to a particular room. A hotel guest can tune in to a predefined station and view their bill on the television. This is tied into the hotel’s computer software that tracks those charges.
Other ways hotels can communicate with guests:

- Fax machine - a short name for facsimile which is a means of sending and receiving printed materials using telephone lines traditionally but is now also utilizing the internet to transmit documents. Fax machines can be standalone machines, tied into a telephone system or even tied into printers.

- Hotel website - one of the most used means of communication. The site should be easy to navigate, easy to use (such as making a reservation), contain useful and correct information and be updated to remain “fresh”.
References & Resources

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