

## Communication Skills and Guest Relations in Healthcare-Important as in Any Other Business

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My dual post as a breast surgeon and as a healthcare unit manager, created more questions and dilemmas regarding communication in healthcare.

To my surprise, only after my training in management I came to realize the importance of communication skills. These so far were limited in delivering bad news and complaint management. But as healthcare providers we should always pursue prevention. Improving communication skills is all about preventing numerous issues. These skills do not only affect the direct communication between doctors and patients [1] and are not only limited to the understanding of diagnosis and treatment options. They begin from the first telephone contact and so we talk about telephone skills- well known to the secretaries- and exceed to the welcoming of the patient in a healthcare facility. The latter is related to the guest relations- well known to the hotel business [2,3].

The benefits are documented and numerous, from patient satisfaction and loyalty, to less follow up workload. All healthcare staff members should receive appropriate training [4], even from the years of their basic training so to allow this knowledge to evolve as they mature professionally.

Many hospitals have already established guest relations departments, but if not everybody is trained then they risk not going any further than first impressions [5].

We spend time and energy in satisfaction questionnaires and feedback but we have not established the basics. It is like going to exams without studying.

Healthcare should always be open-minded and as we learn from aviation (checklists, training, crew resource management and sterile cockpit) [6] we should also learn from hotel business (guest relations). It goes without saying though, that every pattern adoption should be fully adjusted to the aims, complexity and nature of the healthcare field.

*Maybe communications skills and guest relations are what we need to guide our patients better than the internet.*

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