

Duncan Private Hire Staff Communications Policy

Introduction

To support Duncan's Travel as a successful business we must communicate effectively with each other, partners and with our customers. Staff must have the information they need to carry out their daily business and be successful in their role

Overall we need to take a more tailored approach to communication with the business identifying responsibilities for staff at all levels. This policy has therefore been developed to meet those needs

Vision for Communications

In all our communications to demonstrate understanding and respect, ensuring that we communicate in a way that is open, timely, clear and appropriate to the recipient

Definition of Communication

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves the management of relationships and the need for staff involvement. Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message. Every member of staff has a role and a responsibility to support effective communication

For the purpose of this policy, communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated. Not only the responsibility for communication but also how effectively that responsibility is carried out

Methods of Communication

The methods of communication covered by this policy include:

Verbal Communication, face-to-face communication, one to one meetings, and discussions.

Written Communications, letters, emails, reports, memos, minutes, and any other written documentation that is necessary

Vertical Communication up and down the organisation usually via the line management structure

Lateral Communication across the business covering different services

Standards for Communications

All communications at Duncan's Travel should be
Open, Honest, Professional and Transparent

The reasons for decisions are available. Decision makers are accessible and ready to engage in dialogue. When information cannot be communicated the reasons for non-disclosure are articulated:

Questions are expected and answered

Factually Accurate and Timely

Information arrives at a time when it is needed, is relevant and able to be interpreted in the correct context

Clear

Messages are communicated in plain English. They are easy to understand and are not open to misinterpretation

Two way

Systems exist to support communication up and down the business as well as across the sites

Efficient

The communication and the way it is delivered is “fit for purpose”, cost effective and appropriate to the recipient

Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to demonstrate the business standards in communication. Specifically:

All Staff,

These are the core responsibilities for effective communication for all staff at Duncan’s Travel

- Staff should be aware of the Communications Policy and demonstrate the principles of good practice
- Staff are responsible for ensuring that they communicate effectively and appropriately in line with the standards for communication
- Staff should be aware of the various methods of communication and utilise them appropriately in their work
- Staff should tackle incidents of poor communication in a proactive and constructive way
- Information should be shared openly and appropriately in a timely fashion
- Where a colleague constructively raises an issue relating to poor, or inappropriate communication, the individual should consider carefully this feedback and reflect on their communication style

Line Managers

Those who have direct responsibility for the line management of other staff have the following additional responsibilities:

- Ensure effective two way communication operates to and from the Senior Manager and the team
- Ensure effective and appropriate feedback is provided to staff
- Reflect on communication standards and practices within the team and identify opportunities for improvement
- Where staff raise issues of poor communication to take action to ensure they are resolved
- Where communication issues are raised that cannot be dealt with successfully to ensure that they are taken to the Senior Manager for action and support
- Update the team communication skills as required
- Ensure effective lateral communication between the team and its' staff and other customers
- Support and promote a culture that encourages staff inclusion and involvement and challenges non-engagement

Director

In addition to the core responsibilities identified above those operating at Director level have the following additional responsibilities:

- Demonstrate leadership and proactivity in line with the vision for Communications
- Encourage involvement and inclusion from all staff throughout the business
- Ensure non-engagement is challenged and proactively and constructively resolve issues of poor communication
- Ensure that communication systems and processes actively support the vision for Duncan's Travel
- Regularly review and seek to enhance the business approach to communications
- To ensure there is equity and priority of application of good practice in communications across the institution

Principles of Good Practice

The following examples of good practice are provided as a guide to staff and managers. It is recognised that it may be appropriate to adapt these models to suit the working environment

Team Meetings

- Should take place on a regular and planned basis
- Should be attended by all members of the team
- Opportunities should be provided for all staff to contribute equally
- The agenda should be open to input from the whole team
- Meetings should be held at a time and in a venue, which allows and encourages input
- Agenda items for team meetings should include
 - Strategic and longer term planning
 - Team or service development
 - Opportunities to share good practice
 - Opportunities to understand the work and contribution of team members
 - Operational objectives and progress
 - Health and Safety
 - Staff, partner or customer feedback
 - Feedback to Senior Managers

One to One Meetings

Managers should have one to one meetings with staff who report directly to them on a regular basis. This provides the opportunity for the manager to maintain an understanding of the role and obtain progress on objectives and identify any support that is required

Open Door Policy

Managers should strive to develop a system that enables them to be easily accessible to staff. To allow this to happen Duncan's have adopted an "Open Door Policy" to allow drivers to chat on an informal/formal basis to discuss any current work issues they may feel need raised

All of the above will help to build mutual understanding and improve overall communication and decision-making within departments.

Feedback

Where staff have raised issues, made suggestions or put forward ideas for change, they should receive feedback on the outcome. It is also important that all staff are kept informed and provided with feedback from managers and Directors. The line manager therefore has a role in ensuring feedback is provided on business issues

Use of Internet

Duncan's will provide details of their Policy and Procedures within their business web page on the internet so that colleagues in other areas can be informed about how we operate. This will benefit lateral communication across the institution. Duncan's website can be found at www.duncanselfdrive.com

Email

E-mail communication should be effective, professional and succinct. Staff should consider if e-mail is always the best way to communicate or if face to face communication would work more effectively. All staff should respond to incoming e-mail and telephone messages directed for their attention at the earliest opportunity

Policy Review

Duncan's Management staff will review and update (if necessary) the Staff Communication Policy annually