



# DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN EMPLOYEES OF SERVICE COMPANIES

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## Abstract

*The relevance* of the research is determined by the fact that at the current stage of the development of the service sector, which is determined in particular by the introduction of new technologies in the service sector, as well as the desire of consumers to receive services of a professional level, the success of a service company is determined not only by the ability of an employee to produce and provide a high-quality service, but also communicate effectively with consumers and other participants in the process of providing services, build constructive relationships, avoiding conflict situations, possess a certain culture of professional communication and behaviour. The professional development of a service sector employee is a continuous process of personal self-improvement and self-realization, as well as effective development in the environment of a service company.

*Purpose:* with the base on the analysis of the model of the interaction between employees and other participants in the process of creation and provision of services, to identify the peculiarities of the professional communication of personnel to determine the factors that will affect the effectiveness of the development of the professional and communicative competence of employees of enterprises in the service sector, and to substantiate the effective methodology of developing the professional communicative competence of employees in environment of enterprises in the service sector.

*Methods:* study of regulatory and legal documents, reports, scientific sources, educational and methodological materials to clarify the state of the problem under investigation; application of the unified modelling language (UML) tools to visualize the behavioural design and interaction between employees of service enterprises and the environment that enabled to identify the peculiarities of professional communication of employees in service sector; carrying out theoretical analysis, synthesis and generalization to determine the factors that will affect the effectiveness of the development of professional communication competence of employees of service enterprises and justification of effective methods and forms for development of professional communication competence of employees in the environment of enterprises of the service sector.

*Results:* a model of interaction between employees and other participants in the environment of a service enterprise was developed. The model allowed to consider the process of creating and providing services as a system, analyse and visualise cases of interaction in the middle of this system and beyond; the peculiarities of the professional communication of the service personnel, which determine certain necessary communication skills and have an impact on the quality of service provision, were revealed; the leading factors that will affect the effectiveness of the development of professional communication competence of employees of service enterprises were determined; the methods and forms that could ensure the effective development of professional communication competence of the personnel of the enterprise in the field of services were substantiated.

*Conclusions:* modelling and analysis of situations of interaction between employees of the service company and other participants in the process of professional communication made it possible to determine the features of professional communication that affect the ability of employees to quickly navigate the situation, find effective means of communication, maintain feedback with participants in the communication process, i.e. not only to create a high-quality service, but also to provide it at a high level, which determines the success and competitiveness of an enterprise in the service sector. It has been established that the effectiveness of the development of the professional and communicative competence of employees of service enterprises directly depends on the creation of a special environment of cooperation, mutual support, and a high level of corporate culture in the companies of the service sector. The leading factors that will influence the effectiveness of the development of professional communication competence of employees of service enterprises were support for motivation and the desire to create and provide high-quality services; the need to exchange professional information between the employee and other participants in the process of creating and providing the service (clients, colleagues, management, etc.); creation of an atmosphere of trust, support, and development at the enterprise; persistent need for self-improvement; the selection of effective methods and forms for the development of communication competence of employees at the enterprise of the service sector; application of digital technologies. The methods (narrative, message, conversation, discussion, brainstorming, case method, gamification, simulation, communicative tasks and exercises, analytical exercises, presentations, video demonstration, video analysis of professional situations, analysis and solution of problem situations) and forms (individual work with published materials and exercises, self-education through Internet resources, group work during mini-lectures, communicative tasks and analytical exercises to practice individual communication skills, role-playing games, workshops, trainings, master classes, including implemented by means of video conferences), which could ensure the effective development of the professional communication competence of employees in the environment of the service company.

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**Keywords:** *професійна компетентність, комунікативна компетентність, сфера послуг, безперервна професійна освіта, підвищення кваліфікації*

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**Introduction.** The development of new technologies in the field of services, as well as the desire of consumers to receive services of a professional level, contribute to the development of networks of enterprises in the field of services and actualize the problem of training competent specialists for this field (Mohanty, & Mohanty, 2018; Tsaur, & Yen, 2018 ).

The service sector is considered to be a promising branch of the economy, which includes catering, trade, transport, tourism, the beauty industry, etc. In developed countries, in 2019, this sector of the economy employed up to 77% of the population, and its share of GDP reached 72% (Masa'deh, et al., 2019). The positions of the service sector significantly affect the level of the economy, and providing this industry with highly qualified personnel is one of the conditions for its successful development and growth of the state economy as a whole.

The service sector differs from other industries in that the service received by the consumer is aimed at satisfying certain human needs, and its result is consumed in the process of its provision (Matviichuk, & Kandziuba, 2017). Important for the existing research is the conclusion that in the process of providing a service, the needs of both the subjects who provide them and the people who receive them are met (Plakyda, 2013). It is also worth accepting the researchers' vision that services, for example, in the beauty industry can also serve as a way to escape the work routine and everyday restrictions, to relax and socialize (Johnston, & Kong, 2011). Therefore, there is a need for appropriate training of service workers who are in direct contact with the consumer, create an atmosphere and influence the company's reputation.

**Sources.** Researchers concerned with the problem of the development of professional competences of employees in the service sector emphasize the specifics of the professional competence of the personnel of enterprises in the service sector due to their direct contact with consumers, who are becoming more demanding, and technologies and equipment that are constantly being improved. Therefore, professional development should be carried out continuously. In different periods of formation, a specialist in the service sector needs different knowledge and skills that will determine their adaptation to the conditions of the labour market, the accumulation of experience, the formation of a client base and the prevention of professional burnout (Rudyk, Maksymova, & Zaletska, 2022).

Professional development of employees of service enterprises should be aimed at acquiring new knowledge, forming skills and working with new equipment, acquiring the necessary experience for the effective performance of professional tasks, supporting motivation, increasing corporate spirit, dedication to work, etc. (Lee, & Bruvold, 2003).

In the Law of Ukraine "On Education", the concept of "competence" is defined as a dynamic combination of knowledge, abilities, skills, ways of thinking, views, values, and other personal qualities that determine a person's ability to successfully

socialize, conduct professional and/or further educational activities (Law of Ukraine "On Education", 2017). Therefore, it could be concluded that professional development involves the acquisition of the latest knowledge, value orientations, experience, as well as the discovery of new contradictions that determine the continuity of professional development. Therefore, it is worth agreeing with the scientists that the concept of "professional competence" characterizes the specialist's focus on the effective performance of professional duties; and also includes knowledge, skills, experience specific to the specifics of professional activity (Borodiienko, 2017).

Among the most important skills and qualities of service workers, researchers emphasize communication skills, body language and appearance, especially for those workers who have direct contact with consumers (Al-Hussein et al., 2015; Alananzeh, 2017).

There are many approaches to defining the structure of professional competence, among the components of which the following are distinguished: general cultural, educational and cognitive, informational, communicative (Petruk, 2021), projective, informational, organizational, analytical (Uisimbaieva, 2006). Among the various structures of the concept of "professional competence", researchers undoubtedly single out communicative competence. So, we can conclude that the development of the professional competence of a specialist in any direction involves the formation and development of professional and communicative competence.

All over the world, the service industry is a highly competitive industry, so employees strive to provide customers with services that meet their diverse needs and expectations. One should agree with the conclusion that the client evaluates not only the quality of service, but also the way in which the service was provided. In addition, as the researchers emphasize, nowadays the client in search of competitive services most often turns to the global information network regarding a certain enterprise in the field of services, the equipment and technologies used, the professional level of specialists, as well as reviews of other clients (Mohanty, & Mohanty, 2018). Therefore, a service company should provide high-quality and professional services in such a way as to create a certain positive image in the mind of the consumer and limit his chances of choosing other competitors.

Since the success and competitiveness of a company in the service sector directly depends on the

ability of employees not only to create a high-quality service, but also to provide it at a high level, we consider the conclusion of scientists that communicative competence is extremely important for the existing research (Mehra, & Nickerson, 2019); Men, & Yue, 2019). Another important aspect for our research was that professional communication in a service company ensures the interaction of individual subjects, their cooperation and human-human relationships (Petruk, 2021). At the same time, professional communication is a way of establishing human-human relations (an employee of a service company and a client / colleagues / management, etc.). Therefore, in the present study we took into account the conclusions of scientists that communication is a means of organizing professional activities for the provision of services, coordinating the actions of participants in this process and realizing the goals and objectives of professional activities, developing professional functionality and establishing relationships between people (Ugandar, 2015), and the leading component of the professional competence of an employee is communication competence. On the one hand, the quality of professional communication of a service employee is determined by the specifics of their professional activity, and on the other hand, it determines the level of professionalism of the employee (Kapska, 2009).

**The purpose** of the study was with the base on the analysis of the model of the interaction between employees and other participants in the process of creation and provision of services, to identify the peculiarities of the professional communication of personnel to determine the factors that will affect the effectiveness of the development of the professional and communicative competence of employees of enterprises in the service sector, and to substantiate the effective methodology of developing the professional communicative competence of employees in environment of enterprises in the service sector.

**Methods:** study of regulatory and legal documents, reports, scientific sources, educational and methodological materials to clarify the state of the problem under investigation; application of the unified modelling language (UML) tools to visualize the behavioural design and interaction between employees of service enterprises and the environment that enabled to identify the peculiarities of professional communication of employees in service sector; carrying out theoretical analysis, synthesis and generalization to determine the factors that will affect the effectiveness of the development

of professional communication competence of employees of service enterprises and justification of effective methods and forms for development of professional communication competence of employees in the environment of enterprises of the service sector.

**Results and discussion.** Based on the results of previous research on the problem, it can be concluded that the professional communication competence of an employee in the service sector is an integrative quality of the individual, which includes the necessary and sufficient professional knowledge, the ability to establish contact with participants in the service provision process (consumers, colleagues, management, owners, mass media, etc.), transmit information and receive feedback; the ability to conduct a dialogue, hear and perceive the thoughts and wishes of other participants of the dialogue; manage one's own emotions, understand the emotions of other participants; prevent conflict situations, and is based on universal and professional values, mastery of the culture of professional communication and behaviour.

To find out the factors that determine the complex of communicative knowledge and skills, a model of the interaction of employees of service enterprises with the environment was built using the Unified Modelling Language (UML) tool in the form of a Use-case Diagram (UCD) (Unified Modelling Language, 2023; Kagramanova, 2022). Two main elements were used: Actor, which illustrated logically related roles that are performed when interacting with other participants, precedents and the system (in our case, actors were masters, customers, support staff, manager or owner of the enterprise, competitors, etc.); Use case described a separate aspect of system behaviour from the consumer's point of view, i.e. it was happening, but did not show how a certain result was achieved. The specified model (Fig. 1) allowed to consider the process of creation and provision of services as a system, to analyse and visualize cases of interaction in the middle of this system and outside of it.

The usual connection of the participant and the event is indicated by a solid line without a signature, which means the presence of the main event regardless of other (additional) events (cases). Additional events (optional system behaviour) were marked with a dashed line as "Extend". Additional events are activated only if certain conditions were met.

By modelling the relationship between an employee of a service company and the environment, it is possible to trace separate relationships that,

on the one hand, will determine certain necessary communication skills, and on the other hand, will affect the quality of service provision. Among them, the main ones are the following relationships:

- employee (master) – client;
- employee (master) – company (other employees, manager / owner of the company, support staff, suppliers, etc.);
- worker (master) – family.

During professional communication with the client, the employee must effectively convey information and receive feedback, hear and perceive the thoughts and wishes of clients, provide a constructive dialogue (without putting pressure on the client, pursuing the goal of achieving the desired result that will satisfy the client), manage their own emotions, feel and understand the mood and emotions of clients, prevent conflict situations, demonstrate a culture of professional communication and professional behaviour.

The relationship between the employee and the company is characterized by the degree of trust, the level of service quality, the psychological and ethical climate (Moslehpour et al., 2022), the degree of autonomy at work and interference in work and family (Wu & Zhou, 2020), and the level of employee satisfaction. The issue of organizational culture, i.e. the system of common values, norms and beliefs of employees of the service sector enterprise, which influence the behaviour and decisions of employees, requires special attention. A high level of professional culture has a positive effect on the effectiveness of communication, promotes the establishment of constructive relationships based on mutual respect, trust, support, and dedication to the cause. Employees spend more time with their colleagues than with their families. Therefore, strong supportive relationships allow employees to grow professionally, effectively perform professional duties and cope with stress.

Although the work-family balance is not directly related to the professional communication of an employee of a service company. It defines a certain microclimate that corresponds to the absence of conflicts between professional and personal responsibilities, when the employee devotes a symmetrical amount of time and effort to both work and family. Consequently, when a company provides a balance between the work and personal life of an employee, productivity and job satisfaction increase (Krishnan et al., 2018; Lamane-Harin et al., 2021).



professional qualifications, a service company can use the experience of senior and more skilled colleagues or the services of a staff coach. At the same time, the owner or manager, who are responsible for the professional development of employees, must be aware of effective methods and forms of training in the workplace in order to be able to organize effective training with the participation of senior employees in the company or to be able to evaluate the courses that will be offered by hired coaches.

To increase the effectiveness of the development of professional communication competence of employees in service companies, researchers recommend using methods that allow to provide employees with the necessary information, actively involve all trained participants, and direct them to constant self-improvement (Degtiarova, & Rudenko, 2010): narration and explanation (when introducing in the company new equipment or methods of providing the service), conversation (considering and definition of the client's portrait; determination of factors affecting the quality of the service and the client's satisfaction with the level of service; clarification of the client's needs, etc.), discussion (discussion of issues related to customer requirements for services, as well as how services and company employees should meet these requirements), brainstorming (identification of ways to improve the quality of services and improve the image of the institution), case method (discussion of particular work situations and search for optimal solutions), gamification (when employees get aware about the functions of colleagues in the company; awareness of technological connections between the employees and their responsibilities), simulation (for the formation and practice of professional communication skills in situations with different initial data and with different development scenarios), communicative tasks and exercises, analytical exercises, presentations, video demonstration, video analysis of professional situations, analysis and solving problem situations, etc.

The main forms for development of professional communication competence of employees of service companies should be individual work with published materials and exercises, self-education through Internet resources, group work during mini-lectures, performance of communicative tasks and analytical exercises to practice individual communication skills, role-playing games, workshops, trainings, master classes, including video conferences), which should ensure the effective development of the professional communication

competence of employees in the environment of the service company.

Mini-lectures can be held by senior colleagues, managers, the owner, and invited coaches. Their purpose is to convey basic information about the company's mission, vision and values, characteristics of customers, competitors, new technologies and equipment, etc. The same information can be provided in printed or electronic sources. In our opinion, the analysis and solution of problem situations organized as individual or group work could be effective in the service company environment. An effectively organized role-playing game helps to reveal the communicative potential of employees, to get acquainted with the peculiarities of all positions in the company, to try themselves in different roles, starting from the owner and ending with support staff, to carry out a reflective analysis of the communicative process (Butenko, 2009). A workshop is a corporate event where you can share skills and knowledge in a group. It is assumed that specially prepared exercises are also performed during the workshop, training participants interact intensively and, at the same time, gain knowledge independently, gain relevant experience through involvement in the process and personal experiences.

Communicative training is one of the most effective forms of developing social dialogue skills (Maksymova, 2016), which can be used to increase the level of communicative competence of service workers. Training, usually involving a mentor and a learner, focuses on learning and acquiring new skills through questioning and finding answers. The informal and relaxed communication that is created during the training reduces the feeling of limitations, allows the participants to open up, find many options for development and solving problem situations.

**Conclusions.** Modelling and analysis of situations of interaction between employees of the service company and other participants in the process of professional communication made it possible to determine the features of professional communication that affect the ability of employees to quickly navigate the situation, find effective means of communication, maintain feedback with participants in the communication process, i.e. not only to create a high-quality service, but also to provide it at a high level, which determines the success and competitiveness of an enterprise in the service sector. It has been established that the effectiveness of the development of the professional and communicative competence of employees of service enterprises directly depends on the creation of a special

environment of cooperation, mutual support, and a high level of corporate culture in the companies of the service sector. The leading factors that will influence the effectiveness of the development of professional communication competence of employees of service enterprises were support for motivation and the desire to create and provide high-quality services; the need to exchange professional information between the employee and other participants in the process of creating and providing the service (clients, colleagues, management, etc.); creation of an atmosphere of trust, support, and development at the enterprise; persistent need for self-improvement; the selection of effective methods and forms for the development of communication competence of employees at the enterprise of the service sector; application of digital technolo-

gies. The methods (narrative, message, conversation, discussion, brainstorming, case method, gamification, simulation, communicative tasks and exercises, analytical exercises, presentations, video demonstration, video analysis of professional situations, analysis and solution of problem situations) and forms (individual work with published materials and exercises, self-education through Internet resources, group work during mini-lectures, communicative tasks and analytical exercises to practice individual communication skills, role-playing games, workshops, trainings, master classes, including implemented by means of video conferences), which could ensure the effective development of the professional communication competence of employees in the environment of the service company.

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# РОЗВИТОК ПРОФЕСІЙНО-КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ РОБІТНИКІВ ПІДПРИЄМСТВ СФЕРИ ПОСЛУГ

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## Реферат

*Актуальність* дослідження зумовлюється тим, що на сучасному етапі розвитку сфери послуг, що детерміновано зокрема впровадженням нових технологій у сфері послуг, а також прагненням споживачів отримувати послуги професійного рівня, успішність підприємства сфери послуг визначається не тільки вмінням працівника виготовити та надати послугу високої якості, а й ефективно спілкуватися зі споживачами та іншими учасниками процесу надання послуг, будувати конструктивні взаємовідносини, уникаючи конфліктних ситуацій, володіння певною культурою професійного спілкування і поведінки. Професійний розвиток працівника сфери послуг становить неперервний процес особистісного самовдосконалення і самореалізації, а також ефективного розвитку в середовищі підприємства сфери послуг.

*Мета:* на основі аналізу моделі ситуації взаємодії працівників з іншими учасниками процесу створення та надання послуг виявити особливості професійної комунікації персоналу, визначити чинники, які впливатимуть на ефективність розвитку професійно-комунікативної компетентності працівників підприємств сфери послуг та обґрунтувати ефективну методику розвитку професійно-комунікативної компетентності працівників у середовищі підприємств сфери послуг.

*Методи:* вивчення нормативних і правових документів, звітів, наукових джерел та навчально-методичних матеріалів для з'ясування стану досліджуваної проблеми; застосування засобів уніфікованої мови моделювання (UML) для візуалізації поведінкової конструкції та взаємодії співробітників підприємств сфери послуг з оточуючим середовищем та виявлення особливостей професійної комунікації працівників сфери послуг; здійснення теоретичного аналізу, синтезу та узагальнення для визначення чинників, що впливатимуть на ефективність розвитку професійно-комунікативної компетентності працівників підприємств сфери послуг та обґрунтування ефективних методів і форм розвитку професійно-комунікативної компетентності працівників у середовищі підприємств сфери послуг.

*Результати:* розроблено модель взаємодії співробітників з іншими учасниками у середовищі підприємства сфери послуг, яка дозволяє розглядати процес створення та надання послуг як систему, проаналізувати та унаочнити випадки взаємодії в середині цієї системи та за її межами; виявлено особливості професійної комунікації персоналу підприємств сфери зв'язку, що визначають певні необхідні комунікативні навички та мають вплив на якість надання послуги; встановлено провідні чинники, які впливатимуть на ефективність розвитку професійно-комунікативної компетентності працівників підприємств сфери послуг; обґрунтовано методи і форми, які мають забезпечити ефективний розвиток професійно-комунікативної компетентності персоналу підприємства сфери послуг.

*Висновки.* Моделювання та аналіз ситуацій взаємодії працівників підприємства сфери послуг з іншими учасниками процесу професійної комунікації дозволив визначити особливості професійного спілкування, що впливають на здатність працівників швидко орієнтуватися в ситуації, знаходити ефективні комунікативні засоби, підтримувати зворотній зв'язок з учасниками процесу спілкування, тобто не тільки створити послугу високої якості, а і надати її на високому рівні, що визначає успішність і конкурентоспроможність підприємства сфери послуг. Встановлено, що ефективність розвитку професійно-комунікативної компетентності працівників підприємств сфери послуг напряму залежить від створення у закладах сфери послуг особливого середо-

вища співпраці, взаємної підтримки, високого рівня корпоративної культури, а провідними чинниками, які впливатимуть на ефективність розвитку професійно-комунікативної компетентності працівників підприємств сфери послуг є підтримка мотивації та прагнення створювати і надавати послуги високої якості; потреба в обміні професійною інформацією між працівником та іншими учасниками процесу створення та надання послуги (клієнтами, колегами, керівництвом тощо); створення на підприємстві атмосфери довіри, підтримки, розвитку; стійка потреба у самовдосконаленні; підбір ефективних методів і форм для розвитку комунікативної компетентності працівників на підприємстві сфери послуг; застосування цифрових технологій. Обґрунтовано методи (розповідь, повідомлення, бесіда, дискусія, мозковий штурм, кейс-метод, ігровий метод, симуляція, комунікативні задачі і вправи, аналітичні вправи, презентації, відео демонстрацію, відео аналіз професійних ситуацій, аналіз та розв'язання проблемних ситуацій) і форми (індивідуальна робота з друківаними матеріалами та вправами, самоосвіта через інтернет-ресурси, групова робота під час міні-лекцій, виконання комунікативних задач і аналітичних вправ на відпрацювання окремих комунікаційних навичок, рольових ігор, воркшопів, тренінгів, майстер-класів, у тому числі реалізованих засобами відео конференцій), які мають забезпечити ефективний розвиток професійно-комунікативної компетентності працівників у середовищі підприємства сфери послуг.

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**Ключові слова:** *професійна компетентність, комунікативна компетентність, сфера послуг, безперервна професійна освіта, підвищення кваліфікації*

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